

Englesea Extra

No. 7 : March 2025

Price: justice

Strange Times

Here's a bit of an inside scoop for you all – what do the site managers of the four Methodist museums do when they get together for a business meeting? We visit a museum of course! The Faith Museum, in Bishop Auckland, only opened in October 2023. It's an ambitious project, the brainchild of modern-day Christian philanthropist Jonathan Ruffer who has a long-term plan to rejuvenate tourism in this area of the north-east. The Faith Museum is one of a number of tourist attractions developed as part of the Auckland Project.

The Faith Museum is in a purpose-built building and explores faith in Britain. The Welcome board states 'Many people sense that there is more to life than just living'. Centring around 3 key questions: Where do I belong? Am I alone? and How do I live?, visitors follow the timeline of Faith in Britain from 6,000 years ago to the present day – no mean feat! While there is no specific reference to Primitive nor Wesleyan Methodism, Methodism features, as do many of the social justice issues in which they engaged – slavery, temperance and trade unionism. I was struck by 2 of the objects used to



represent Methodism – the John Wesley teapot ('everyday things hiding powerful meanings' as promised at the outset of the visit) and the Bishop's bone. The latter, a very unusual object, is made from the vertebra of a heavy horse and is painted as a caricature of a Methodist preacher. These were sometimes displayed in pubs where preachers were not welcome, reminding us of the hostility and persecution faced by many of the early Prims.



The upstairs gallery turns to 'Faith today' and 'Faith in art'. Starting with the figures from the latest census, there were thought-provoking statistics from the voluntary question 'What is your religion?': 37% no faith, 46% Christian, 6% didn't answer, the rest expressing a belief in other faiths. Finally there was an inspiring exhibition of contemporary artists' work responding to those original 3 questions. One spoke of how the balance of faith and doubt 'imbues everything I do.... [and is] an essential process of self-reflection'. Another about how her faith journey of 35 years has helped her to recognise 'the difference between times of solitude, which are rich, both creatively and spiritually, and loneliness'.

I would highly recommend a visit – although the ticket price includes all the places to visit in Bishop Auckland, so its not cheap!

Every blessing

Ruth

Pause for thought

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

Abraham Lincoln, (1809-1865), 16th President of the United States

'To what lengths will Bourne go?': a postscript

Further to her Strange Times in the last Extra, Elizabeth adds a warning for our churches today who wish to be attractive to the curious...and to preachers in particular!

From the PMM, 1841, from Hugh Bourne: 'A Tunstall local preacher...occupied near four hours in preaching and leading the class; and most of [the members] being farm servants, his keeping them so long brought them into such difficulties, that they durst not attend anymore...His appetite for long preachings, and long speechings in prayer, hardly could be satisfied. At length he left us; and in my opinion, it would have been better if he had never joined us.'

And an article from the PMM, 1850, entitled 'Christian Moderation' that has a message some of our world leaders should heed:

'The absence of bigotry and animosity. -Bigotry would fain reduce the minds of men to a dull uniformity – would stereotype thought itself. It turns men into angry zealots, and produces bitterness, hatred, and contention...Wishing to have things, according to one mould, to reduce them to uniformity, is contrary to the mind of God, as developed in his works. No two human beings are exactly alike, - no two flowers resemble each other in every point; the face of creation is varied, and the variation adds beauty to the whole, as the several colours do to the rainbow.'

Randle's rummaging

One particularly interesting item in the Museum's collection is the cruet set that belonged to PM minister, Rev Edward Clements. Its story is well documented, and it was on display in the Museum during last year, so many of you will be familiar with it. Instead I will use a less well known item to tell the same story.

It is a pewter jug with an inscription round the neck: Presented to Mr John Clews by the Primitive Methodist Society, Newport, Salop on his leaving the town July 1893. There is a second inscription on the foot: Seized under the Education Act 1902 and sold March 16 1906. The Act favoured Anglican schools, and Mr Clews was one of many nonconformists who consequently refused to pay part of their rates and became known as passive resisters. It was not that they objected to supporting Anglican schools, but they felt that the money should be equally available to all schools. As the inscription records, the jug was sold by auction, it was purchased by a supporter of the resisters and given back to Mr Clews. In the case of the cruet set this process was repeated over several years.



Unfortunately, no picture of Mr Clews is known to survive, but the one reproduced here is of his son Sydney outside his home at Brocton, near Stafford, taken in 1964, showing the jug on the table beside him.



Another local passive resistor was Mr John Liversage, who played a prominent part in the building of the new PM church at Gnosall, near Stafford, in 1901. When the case against him and several other Gnosall men came to court even the magistrate said that he considered the Act 'objectionable' but ordered that the full rates must be paid. The resisters were not allowed to read a statement in the court at Stafford, so they held a meeting outside immediately after, during which Mr Liversage said that Gnosall had set an example and struck the first match in Stafford which he hoped they would fan into a great flame. This is a case of poacher turned gamekeeper – Mr Liversage later became a Justice of the Peace! He died in 1946 and there is a memorial to him in Gnosall Methodist church.



ENGLESEA BROOK PROUDLY PRESENTS... A DAY OF DRAMA!

Are you aged between 9 and 12 years?

Do you love stories?

Then come along to our drama workshop and explore **'The Tale of Old Booty'** through performance.

A tale of intrepid sailors, a fiery volcano, mystery, and the search for truth!



Book your place:
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brook.org.uk

Booking closes
21st May

Wednesday 28th May 2025

10am - 2pm

Performance: 2-2.45pm

£10 per child (siblings £5)

Limited places. Bring a packed lunch

Led by an experienced drama practitioner, we will recreate the story in the chapel space, using skills, props and costumes and show it to our grown-ups at the end of the day!

Englesea Brook, Crewe, CW2 5QW. Tel. 01270 820836
Registered charity number 1132237



Peace Garden – official opening.

Many thanks to those of you who have generously donated to our Peace Garden appeal. You are all invited to come along and join us at the official opening of the Peace Garden on Friday 25th April, when those who worked on the garden, including the children from Weston Village Primary school. It's from 1.30-2.30pm, and we are pleased that Rev Helen Kirk and the deputy mayor of Crewe, Sally Graham, will also be joining us. Please let me know if you are able to come: director@engleseabrook.org.uk.

Book Group – NEW!

Do you enjoy reading? Do you enjoy a chance to chat over tea and cake?

Come along to our new Book Club. The first session is at Englesea Brook on **Thursday 12th June 3.00-4.30pm**. The first book we're going to read is **'Anna of the Five Towns' by Arnold Bennett**. Set in what is now known as Stoke on Trent, this book has been chosen for its insights into the world in which the Primitive Methodist movement flourished – as well as the Prims themselves. So, get reading and come along to discuss it over tea and cake in June. If you can't get hold of a copy (there are lots of second-hand copies available online, and I'm sure the Alsager Book Emporium will have a copy or two!), please get in touch and we can let you borrow a copy.

Chris' conundrums

I've mentioned before that Philip Thornborow is exploring unusual uses for former chapels now closed for worship. Here's another to add Philip - a chapel that became a chip shop, commended on Trip Adviser. The chapel in the village of [Cayton, near Scarborough in Yorkshire](#). has a page on My Primitive Methodists because Keith Guyler in his collection of photographs of chapels labelled it as Primitive Methodist. It turns out to be a former Wesleyan chapel.

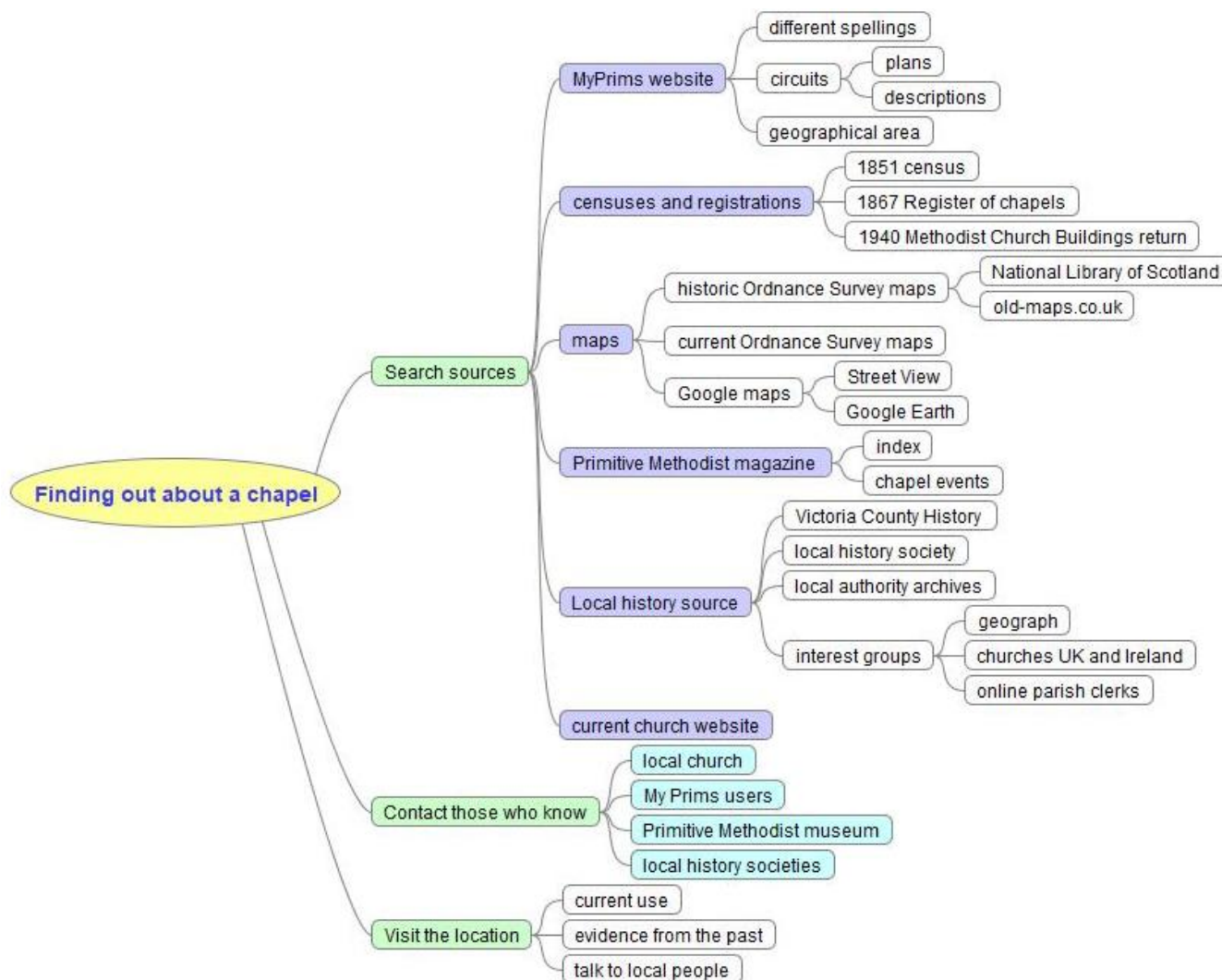
We were contacted by Colin Nolan about a painting he had of the chapel by Brian Eade (1822 - 1903). Colin's parents lived in Cayton, and once his father retired from the Police Force, he bought the chip shop. Colin presumes that is when he came into possession of this painting. On the back it states 'Brian Eade 1822 - 1903', so it was probably painted from the 1870's onwards. The picture is on [My Wesleyans here](#). We'd like to know more about Brian Eade; can you fill the gap?



Finding out about a chapel

In the last Extra I promised some guidance to finding out about a former Primitive Methodist chapel. My mind map explores three different ways to approach it

- Search information sources
- Contact those who know
- Visit the location.



In terms of information sources, [the My Prims website](#) is by far the best single place to find out information about a particular chapel. Everything we know about a particular chapel will be on that chapel's page and many pages have additional information in comments from visitors. If you search the site using the search box at the top right hand corner of each page, it will find not only chapel pages, but references to a chapel in wider articles, circuit plans and some of the people associated with a particular location. What's more, My Prims is the easiest link to a range of other sources, such as the 1940 Register of Methodist Buildings.

There's a fuller guide to [finding out about a Prim chapel here](#).

And a warning; piecing together the jigsaw of a chapel's story can draw you in and take over your time. You have been warned!

Dates for the Diary

Community Worship at Englesea Brook

Good Friday 18th April – a reflective service at 3pm. All welcome

Drama Workshop – NEW!

Wednesday 28th May: Save the Date. Elizabeth will be running a full-day drama workshop for 9-12 year olds in the May half term. See the [poster here](#) – and book your place because spaces are limited.

Heritage talks:

Saturday 15th March – 11am on Zoom with our very own Amy Wilkinson talking about Just Women, based on the research she undertook for the exhibition and book of the same title

Crafty Ranters

This year, we're doing it differently. We've discovered that folk like to learn new craft skills – and that 2 hours just wasn't long enough!! So we're introducing those who are interested to new cottage crafts, which would have been so familiar to the Prims. Come and have a go – £2 per adult, £1 per child

Thurs 15th May 11am-2pm: Cottage Crafts: Learn to rag rug (adult group). £10 per person, includes tea and coffee. Bring own lunch. Cake available

Sat 16th August 12 noon – 4pm: Learn traditional Cottage Crafts – family event. Come and have a go: Spinning and carding, knitting nancy, weaving, butter churning, basket weaving

Peace Garden

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Book Group – NEW!

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Lent Bible Studies:

Led by Rev Rob Hilton, this year's theme is : Turning Points, exploring the moments in Mark's gospel which took Jesus to the cross and beyond. All are on zoom, from 10.30am – 12 noon.

Wednesday 19th March: Lent Bible Study 1 – Blind Bartimaeus – what did he actually see?

Wednesday 26th March: Lent Bible study 2 - The pain of communicating – Jesus' invitation to take up the cross

Wednesday 9th April: Lent bible study 3 - 'Let the children; - radical inclusion

Wednesday 16th April: Lent bible study 4 - Resurrection is just the start – the mobius strip approach to Mark

<https://zoom.us/j/97608787997?pwd=XgLmZLuEDcl0b7cvx6MhpANWGyxrEe.1>

Meeting ID: 976 0878 7997

Passcode: 446193

Copy and publication dates for Englesea Extra 75

The plan is to publish Extra 75 on Wednesday, April 2nd. Contributions to Ruth by Friday March 28th please.

And a final prayer from Jerome (c. 342-420)

Blessed are those, O Christ, in whose souls, you are constantly born, those in whose lives you are daily crucified and those in whose hearts you are risen for ever.

Amen.