

Englesea Extra

No. 82: Christmas 2025

Price: justice

Strange Times

I've had a very strange, but wonderful, time this month, with a trip of a lifetime to New England in the 'fall'. Being more of a walking-boots,-caravan-and-Cornwall girl, skyscrapers, hire cars and hotels were a rather novel experience. But exploring the history of the area and visiting museums are more common holiday activities for us – and we weren't disappointed.



Visiting the home of Louisa M Alcott, author of Little Women, was something of a highlight. Seeing her simple writing desk, the sketches on the wall because they were too poor to have paper, together with the original oil paintings by May Alcott Nieridker (AKA Amy March!) displayed on the walls of the house was very special – but I was reminded of how enthusiasm from museum guides elevates a visit into something truly memorable....

Visiting Ellis Island and the Immigration museum in New York was incredibly moving, imagining how it must have felt to see the Statue of Liberty

for millions of those immigrating to the US, often at the end of gruelling journeys. The friends we were travelling with spotted this small plaque in one of the numerous galleries. Well done Methodism for taking the care of heritage so seriously – here is a small sign of gratitude from across the pond.

The photographs in this gallery belonged to Robert Watchorn, Ellis Island's commissioner, 1905-1909. They were found with his papers in 1986, stored in the basement of the Watchorn Methodist Church in Alferton, England, the town where he was born.



Storm Lorenzo (how Prim!) scuppered our plans one of the Sundays we were away, so off we went to the local Methodist church.

We received a typical Methodist welcome and hospitality (the US is a fine place to visit for coffee drinkers; tea drinkers have a trickier time of it!), a gowned choir and the sermon translated into Korean. However, the highlight for them – and me – was the communion set they fetched from the church safe for us to see, used by Bishop Francis Astbury (see photo). I must brush up on my early Methodist history and visit his childhood home in Great Barr.....

Plaque at the Immigration Museum, Ellis Island

Read about [Watchorn chapel in Alferton here](#).

Hope you are all enjoying the last vestiges of Autumn colour!

Every blessing

Ruth

Pause for thought: from William L. McKnight (11 Nov 1887-1978)

If you put fences around people, you get sheep. Give people the room they need.

News from the Book Emporium

Great news from the Book Emporium just keeps coming! In the financial year ending August 2025, they have smashed their previous best year's total money raised by £6,000!! A huge thanks to all the dedicated volunteers at the Emporium, who give hours of their time and energy to making the Emporium the success it is. Particular thanks to Malcolm and Keith for their unstinting commitment.

There are two initiatives that the Emporium is supporting this month. **Home**, a local café, and **The Mere**, a local pub, have teamed up to run a treasure hunt for their running group this coming Sunday. We are delighted to have offered discount at the Emporium for the winners and runners-up.

Also, **Be Book**, a UK based volunteer initiative which supports children in Ukraine, and Ukrainian families in the UK, were extremely grateful to receive some of our excess stock to send in their next shipment to Ukraine this coming weekend. We are happy to help spread the love of books whenever we can!

**Hassall Road Book Emporium, Hassall Road, Alsager.
Open Friday and Saturday. 10am-2pm.**



Be Book

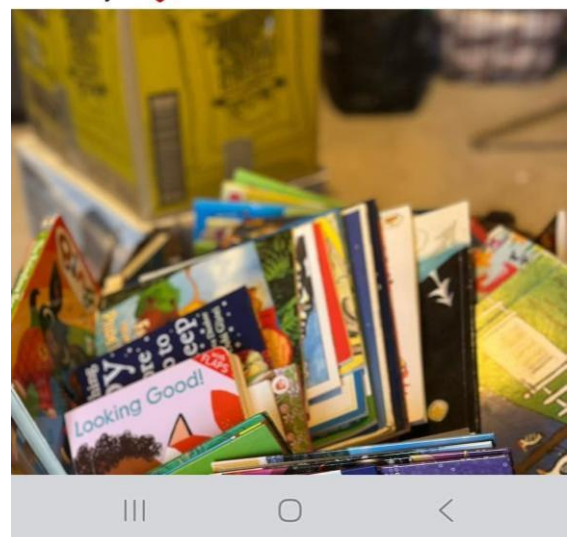
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We don't post often about every single donation, but please know that we feel the spark of love every time you give us a book or a penny! 💙📖

This time, our heartfelt thanks go to **Alsager Book Emporium**. Their donation was the cherry on top, arriving just in time as we prepare our next shipment of books to Ukraine this weekend. 🇬🇧➡️🇺🇲

Thank you ❤️



Chris' Conundrums

Handsacre Methodist church is in Staffordshire, north west of Lichfield. It is a former Primitive Methodist chapel and in 1900 The Christian Messenger published a description of the Stafford Circuit. It included a reference to Handsacre Temple, complete with pictures of the building outside and inside. You can read the article [here](#). I used the pictures in 2020 to create a page on My Primitive Methodists for the Handsacre chapel. You can see it [here](#).

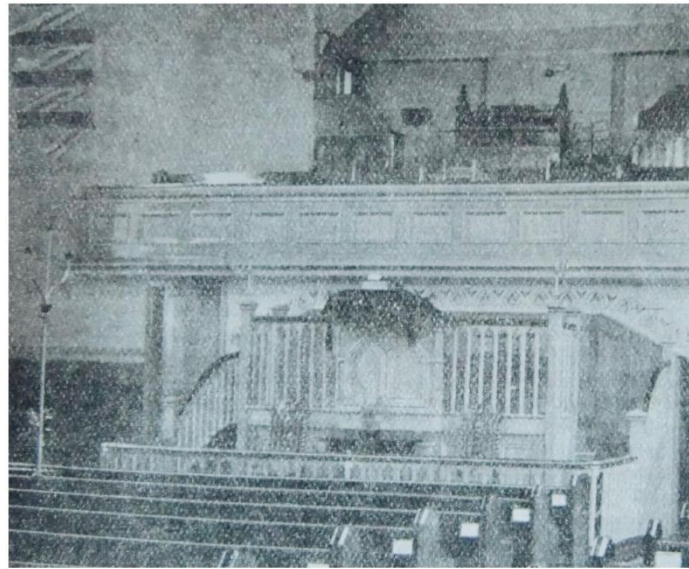
This month, five years after the page was created, a comment was added by Gifford Foote. It said,

"Despite the second picture being published in The Christian Messenger 1900/53, it does not show the interior of Handsacre Primitive Methodist church.

The picture must have been taken elsewhere. I have a picture of the church interior taken in the early 1900s if you would like it."

Mr Foote proved his point by providing the picture that he is sure is Handsacre Primitive Methodist chapel taken around 1900. They are on the next page.

What do you reckon? Can you crack this? The interiors are clearly different! I did wonder whether one photograph was of a Sunday School building. Help appreciated!



Handsacre Primitive Methodist chapel interior | Christian Messenger 1900/53

The Christian Messenger picture



Handsacre Primitive Methodist chapel 1905 | provided by Gifford Foote

from Gifford Foote

Randle's rummaging

One of the more unusual items in the collection is a Biblical Herbarium which we received from Layton Methodist (formerly Primitive Methodist) church, near Blackpool, in 2021. Dating from 1897, it is in a box measuring 54 x 28 x 17.5 cms and consists of over 80 specimens of plants and plant products mentioned in the bible. Each one is in a separate cardboard box, envelope or glass jar. Item 4a in the herbarium is apple, but the accompanying leaflet tells us that apples don't grow in the eastern Mediterranean. The Hebrew word 'tappach', translated as apple, means any fruit that is strongly scented, and apricot is probably intended.

Items 9 to 12 are bramble, briars, thistle and thorn and items are attributed to each of these, but the leaflet tells us that about 20 Hebrew words are used in the Bible to express prickly shrubs or weeds, translated as one of these four indifferently. Item 13 is Bulrush, noted as papyrus in the Revised Version of the Bible. It once grew in Egypt like a forest on the banks of the Nile, but was extinct there when the leaflet was written.

Spices represented include cinnamon (19), coriander (20), frankincense (29) and myrrh (47) and among the woods are cedar (18), cypress (23), ebony (24), oak (51) and poplar (57). Onions (53) were much used by Orientals when on a journey, being considered an excellent preservative against thirst, but the priests were forbidden to eat them.

For all of the items in the herbarium, biblical references are given in the leaflet. Perhaps the least expected item is a piece of mummy linen. It isn't mentioned in the leaflet, but it is also present in at least one other set of the Herbarium.

If you would like to know more, then visit the museum (when we re-open in April!) and ask to see the Herbarium, or at least the accompanying pamphlet.

Plants and Plant Products of the Bible

1 Almond	21 Cotton	39 Leeks	56 Pomegranates
2 Algum, or Almug	21a Cucumber	40 Lentils	57 Poplar
3 Aloes	22 Cummin	41 Lily	58 Reed
4 Anise	23 Cypress	41a Mallow	59 Rye
4a Apple	24 Ebony	42 Mandrake	60 Rose
5 Balm, or Balsam	25 Fig	43 Manna	61 Rue
6 Barley	26 Fir	43a Melons	62 Saffron
7 Bean	27 Fitches	44 Millet	63 Shittah Tree
8 Box	28 Flax	45 Mint	64 Spicery
9 Bramble	29 Frankincense	46 Mustard	65 Spikenard
10 Briers	30 Galbanum	47 Myrrh	66 Stacte
11 Thistle	31 Gall	48 Myrtle	67 Sycamine
12 Thorn	32 Garlic	49 Nettles, or Field Weeds	68 Sycamore
13 Bulrush	33 Gourd, Wild Vine	50 Nuts	69 Tares
14 Calamus	33a Grove	51 Oak	70 Terebinth, Tiel
15 Camphire	34 Jonah's Gourd	52 Olive	71 Thynie Wood
16 Desire	35 Heath	52a Oil Tree	72 Vine
17 Cassia	36 Husks	53 Onions	73 Wheat
18 Cedar	37 Hyssop	54 Palm	74 Willow
19 Cinnamon	38 Juniper	55 Plane	75 Wormwood
20 Coriander	38a Ladanum		76 Rose of Jericho, or Resurrection Flower



What's on at Englesea Brook

There's a lot to look forward to at Englesea. We very much look forward to welcoming you

Zoom Heritage Talks

Saturday 15th November – 11.00am

Long-time friend of Englesea Brook, John Bell, will be regaling us with family anecdotes under the intriguing title: 'And where, pray, is Ramshaw?'

Saturday 17th January 2026 – 11am

John Anderson explores 'Methodist Love Feasts'

I hate to say it.... But Christmas is coming and we have some lovely events planned:

Wreath making workshops



Sessions held in the beautiful chapel which will be decked out for Christmas

Choose from two dates:

Wednesday 3rd December 6.30 - 9pm OR

Friday 12th December 10am -12.30pm

*Cost: **£20 per person**, including refreshments – great value!*

Book now to avoid disappointment, as there are only 12 places per session.

Contact: admin@engleseabrook.org.uk to book a place

We are running two wreath-making sessions at Englesea Brook in the run-up to Christmas for those of you with a crafting bent. We have an evening session on Wednesday 3rd December from 6.30-9pm and a morning session on Friday 12th December from 10am-12.30pm. Both sessions will take place in our beautiful chapel which will be fully decked out for Christmas, and there will be Festive refreshments. All equipment will be provided but please bring any greenery or decorations that you would like to personalise your wreath.

Last year's sessions booked out and those who came had a great time so we are expecting a lot of people to come again. If you would like to book a place please email admin@engleseabrook.org.uk.

Advent Bible study

Gifted

4 SESSIONS FOR ADVENT

NOVEMBER 26TH:
YOU ARE A GIFT

DECEMBER 3RD:
THE ORANGE IN THE
STOCKING

DECEMBER 10TH:
GIVE HOPE

DECEMBER 17TH:
WITH LOVE FROM GOD



WEDNESDAYS, 10.30-NOON VIA ZOOM
MEETING ID: 956 9223 3055
PASSCODE: 863497



This will be a slightly different format, more akin to a house group, using the Advent material from the Methodist Church. Ruth will be facilitating, and the sessions will not be recorded – this is an opportunity to listen and learn from each other ‘a peaceful space to grow together’. Again, there is no need to sign up for all 4 sessions – join in when you can. Although the session is from 10.30-12 noon, it will probably only be for an hour, but it depends how talkative you are!! However, we will definitely be finished by 12 noon.

Looking forward to seeing you then.

Friday theatre

A Christmas Carol



by Charles Dickens.

Performed by Elizabeth Morris.

7pm-8.30pm, Friday 12th December

Tickets £8 each, £3 for students, under 14s free.
Seasonal refreshments included.

Pay at the door. Parking available. Seating is limited so please email or phone to book tickets:
learning@engleseabrook.org.uk / 01270 820836

Englesea Brook Chapel and
Museum, Englesea Brook
Lane, CW2 5QW



Victorian Family Christmas

A VICTORIAN FAMILY CHRISTMAS

Saturday 13th December, 2-4pm

Enjoy a Victorian Family Christmas experience in our beautifully atmospheric Primitive Methodist Chapel.

- ◆ Christmas Carols ◆
- ◆ Christmas Crafting ◆
- ◆ Victorian Refreshments ◆
- ◆ Storytelling ◆

Pay on the door: Over 14s £2; under 14s £1; under 5s free. Parking available.



Google Maps



Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum

www.engleseabrook.org.uk. Registered Charity No. 1132237



Carol Service

ENGLESEA BROOK CHAPEL AND MUSEUM

INVITE YOU TO A

CAROL SERVICE

* 3PM SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER 2025

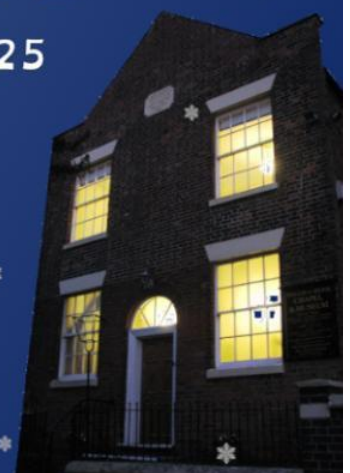
A service of carols, readings and sketches in the beautiful and atmospheric setting of the Englesea Brook Chapel, to be followed by seasonal refreshments.

Free entry, parking available

Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum, Englesea Brook Lane, CW2 5QW
www.engleseabrook.org.uk



Scan to find us on Google Maps



Englesea Diary

More details on pages 5, 6 and 7.

Heritage talks

Saturday 15th November 11:00 “**And Where, Pray, Is Ramshaw?**”

<https://zoom.us/j/96669086942?pwd=IWdKwolvLJtqrmOoqonrJbBuPWY5Rc.1>

Meeting ID: 966 6908 6942

Passcode: 022956

Saturday 17th January 2026 – 11am John Anderson: ‘Methodist Love Feasts’

Advent Bible study

November 26th 10:30 am - 12:00 pm **Advent Online Bible Study: 1 of 4**

<https://zoom.us/j/95692233055?pwd=SQraQGpBgPSWXxtKAwNKiMGVVi4lBe.1>

Meeting ID: 956 9223 3055

Passcode: 863497

Craft workshop

December 3rd 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm or Friday 12th December 10am-12.30pm - **Festive Wreath Making**

“A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens

December 12th @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

A Victorian Family Christmas

December 13th 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Carol Service

December 14th 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

[See the Englesea Events diary here.](#)

Copy and publication dates for Englesea Extra 83

The plan is to publish Extra 83 on Wednesday, January 14th. Contributions to Ruth by Wednesday, January 7th please.

And a final prayer from Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179).

We offer you our hands, O Lord, to do your work; our lips to sing your praise; our life to proclaim your glory and our heart to serve you in our neighbour; for Jesu's sake.

Amen.