

Alsager Book Emporium Newsletter Spring 2026



WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first of what we hope will be our regular Newsletters. If you are interested in books, and the Emporium in particular, keep reading!

Some of you may remember the Chapel on Hassall Road as a place of worship. Well, it still is! From time-to-time Christian services are held here. But that is not your first impression as you walk through the door. Rather, it's BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS! On every subject and very affordably priced.

We think we are Alsager's best kept secret. Even though we've been here for over 10 years people are still surprised to be finding us.

All books have been donated (please keep your donations coming!). If we think we can sell a book in the Emporium – the majority – it will be priced up and put on the appropriate shelf. A book signed by the author will normally command a higher price. For example, we sold a book about the 1953 Everest expedition signed by one of the authors for £75. Some rare books we will offer for sale on the internet. Others will be sold on to World of Books, which will make us an offer for what they can sell. What remains will be pulped. Nothing goes to landfill. Some of our books – particularly Bibles – are donated for use in Africa. (See below for short note on our Bibles).

SO WHAT HAVE WE GOT ON OFFER (USUALLY FOR BETWEEN £1-£3)?

There are nearly 60,000 books to choose from. Since this is a Methodist Foundation you won't be surprised to find Methodism well represented

among the 20,000 religious titles. But all major parts of Christendom, and all major religions and world views, are to be found.

Local history is one of our best sellers with a particularly strong interest in Cheshire and Staffordshire. Walking books are popular.

DIY texts are in demand, especially older books on woodworking.

Hidden in a side room (like in a WW2 bunker!) is an amazing collection of First and Second World War texts.

Recently, we had many very high quality Art books.

Don't forget our music section by the organ. Loads of sheet music and books about music and composers.

Romantic novels and crime fiction are very popular and we have at any one time over 1,000 Crime books by a variety of authors.

Science fiction has its devoted followers, not forgetting the modern fantasy novels.

Gardening and Cooking go well.

Hundreds of Children's books. And so it goes on!

A QUIRKY REQUEST – AND A BONANZA!

The Little Girl and the Spider

One Saturday morning a little girl (around 5) came in looking for a book on Spiders. We were able to provide her with one and her face lit up. "This is the bestest book I've ever had" she said as she delighted in the pictures of spiders of all shapes and sizes, some blown up to double and triple size. She loved spiders and she said she was going to take it home and scare her 10 year old older sister who didn't like spiders!

Well, if it makes a little girl happy!!!

Sometimes a **real gem** comes in. We received “Night Thoughts” illustrated by William Blake. It was produced by the Folio Society some twenty years ago as a limited edition. It wasn’t just a coffee table book - it was the *size* of a coffee table!

It was the largest book we have ever had and most beautifully illustrated. It was sold to a member of the William Blake Society in London for £600.

OUR BIBLES SECTION

We sell more Bibles than many might think. At least one a week. There are folks often standing reading by the relevant section. Some ask questions of the many versions we have on sale eg a recent question was: which version has the largest margin in which I can write notes?

Some visitors are seemingly amazed at the range of Bibles available. Some are drawn to the well-known and well-loved King James version – partly perhaps because it often has that distinctive black soft faux or genuine leather cover. Originally published in 1611, it has never been out of print!! Some people think that because of its beautiful though stilted and hard-to-follow Elizabethan English it is the only “proper” Bible!



“Now he is alive.” (Luke 15:24)

But there are perhaps 20 different versions which we may have at any one time, all of which have their devotees. Many judge the New International Version (NIV) published 1979 to be a quality modern translation for its combination of readability and close attention to the original Greek texts.

Very easy to read is the Good News Bible published 1976. It is famous for its minimalist line drawings which so perfectly mirror the simplicity of the text. An example is the illustration of the return of lost/prodigal son.

We might be part of a trend towards Bible reading. New Bible sales nationally have been growing. In fact they have reached a record high in the UK. According to a new survey by the Christian publisher SPCK, purchases have increased by 134 per cent since 2019.

This parallels data about the reported “Quiet Revival”. A recent investigation by the Bible Society has found that churchgoing amongst 18 to 24-year-olds has quadrupled over the same period.

Perhaps changes in our society - perhaps throughout the world - have made people more uncertain about the future and their values. Could a Christian faith have something to offer after all? £2 or less could buy a Bible to explore.

If we find we cannot sell some Bibles we donate them to a national organisation which then packages them for shipment to partners in Africa where they are sold at locally affordable prices. The proceeds (plus money raised in UK) pay for the cost of shipping/distribution and local ministries.

MALCOLM’S MUSINGS AND SHORT NOTES

Helping to run the bookshop is always interesting. There are always fascinating books coming in.

Not to mention the people!!! Such as the man who carved walking sticks with snakes wrapped around them, or the man who runs a Lighthouse archive.

We have sorted the **ART BOOKS** section and put over 200 Art books all at £1 each - plenty of bargains.



We have recently received 3 significant donations:

Railways - **BackTrack** magazines in binders (offers invited).

Many books on **The American Civil War**

Books on **Civil Aircraft** and the **War**

A big thank you to all our volunteers especially three new young people who have volunteered on the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

Barbara has worked on a new plan of the bookshop. This is now on display. Find out where everything is.

We now have two sheds open to the public:

One, called "**TRANSPORT OF DELIGHT**", is dedicated to transport in all its forms - Cars, Railways, Canals, Cycling, Aviation, Industrial Archaeology and Humour.

The other shed is called “**SERENDIPITY**”. You never know what you may find there! We invite you to look inside and find that book which is just for you!

And if you are visiting one of the sheds, take note of the new paved area outside. Who knows? On a sunny day you could think of it as a Mediterranean patio/terrace. We hope to have tables and chairs outside in the summer.

THE FOLIO SOCIETY

From time to time, books published by the Folio Society come into the Emporium. These are not just books, they are works of art designed for longevity and to appeal to the discerning book collector; they are visually striking editions of classic and modern works, catering for both the bibliophile and art lover. (The Folio Society was founded on the principle that books should be beautiful to the eye as well as captivating to the mind - Abebooks). Founded in 1947 by Charles Ede, the Society has worked with illustrators, typographers and artists to elevate its books into works of art using traditional craftsmanship with decorative slipcases providing another signature touch.

Collecting Folio books is not without its challenges; they are certainly more expensive than standard hardback editions. However, there is something deeply satisfying about the physicality of a Folio edition - the weight of it in your hands, the texture of the cloth or leather binding, the crispness of the paper. It is an experience that goes beyond reading; it is about appreciating the book as a work of art. (Folio maintains and exceeds its own standards and it is a pleasure and a privilege to be one of their authors - Hilary Mantel).

So if you wish to collect Folio books, yes they are expensive and rarer editions can fetch thousands of pounds on the secondary market. However, there are much more affordable titles available and there is usually a small selection in the Emporium.

Paul Adams

WE ARE STARTING A NEW BOOK CLUB AT THE EMPORIUM

It will be **monthly** on a **Friday afternoon, 2.30-4.30pm** at **Oakhanger Methodist Church** (2 miles towards Crewe, under the motorway, on the left in Oakhanger).

The first Book Club will be on **Friday 27th March**.

Come and share what you are reading – or just listen. Hear a talk about a book or books (perhaps from a local author), and share a chat over Coffee and Cake (small donation). Second half - Comic book heroes. "Just William books". Any ideas most welcome.

FINAL WORD

Please pass it on! We are much more than a bookshop. We are a social resource. We want young and old to feel welcome, have a chat, be happy, and READ. Remember that 2026 is The National Year of Reading.

We are open Fridays, Saturdays and Bank Holiday Mondays 10am – 2pm.





If you've enjoyed browsing the treasures here at the Book Emporium, you'll find the perfect "sequel" just four miles down the road - **Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum of Primitive Methodism**. It's not just a historic site; it tells the story of the **Primitive Methodist movement**, a radical grassroots story of faith, social reform, and the power of the printed word. All proceeds from the sale of books at the Emporium support the work of the Chapel and Museum.

Why make the short trip?

- **Discover "The People's History":** See how ordinary folk - agricultural labourers, miners, and potters, men and women - found their voices and worked for social justice.
- **The Printing Press:** Get a firsthand look at the very technology used to spread revolutionary ideas across the countryside.
- **Peaceful Surroundings:** Enjoy the quiet beauty of the historic chapel and its serene graveyard, a perfect spot for reflection after a busy day of book hunting.

Whether you're a history buff, a fan of vintage typography, or just looking for a beautiful spot for a post-book-shopping stroll, Englesea Brook offers a fascinating glimpse into how words on a page can truly change the world. Oh, and there's always 'Cake of the Day' to enjoy in the tearoom too! Open April – October, Thursday – Sunday. Please check the website for more details: <https://engleseabrook.org.uk/>

You can view the route from the Emporium to the Chapel and Museum by using this [link](#).