

Annual Newsletter 2025/26

Follow us:



@EngleseaBrookChapel



engleseabrook



@engleseabrook.
bsky.social



@engleseabrookchapel
andmuseum

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Director's Report	2
Volunteer News	3
Funding	5
Heritage News	6
Learning	8
Crafty Ranters	11
Book Emporium	12
Visitor Breakdown 2025	13

From The Chair of the Executive Committee

It is a privilege to introduce this year's Annual Report and to reflect on all that has taken place at Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum over the past twelve months. What follows is a testament to the dedication, imagination and resilience of those who make this place what it is. This has been a year of significant behind the scenes work, not least the immense task of preparing our reaccreditation return. The commitment shown by staff and volunteers alike has been remarkable, and I want to express my deep gratitude for the countless hours of careful, diligent work that have gone into this milestone.

Alongside this, the daily life of Englesea Brook has continued to flourish. Our partnerships with schools, our SEND engagement, creative learning, community worship, heritage events and the extraordinary achievements of the Book Emporium all demonstrate how the Primitive Methodist story continues to inspire welcome, learning and transformation. I also want to acknowledge the meticulous care given to our collection this year – a quiet but vital labour that safeguards our shared heritage and ensures these stories remain alive for generations to come.

To every volunteer who has given time, energy, expertise or encouragement: thank you. Your generosity sustains this project in ways far beyond what can be measured.

We remain mindful of financial challenges, yet we look ahead with confidence. Our Forward

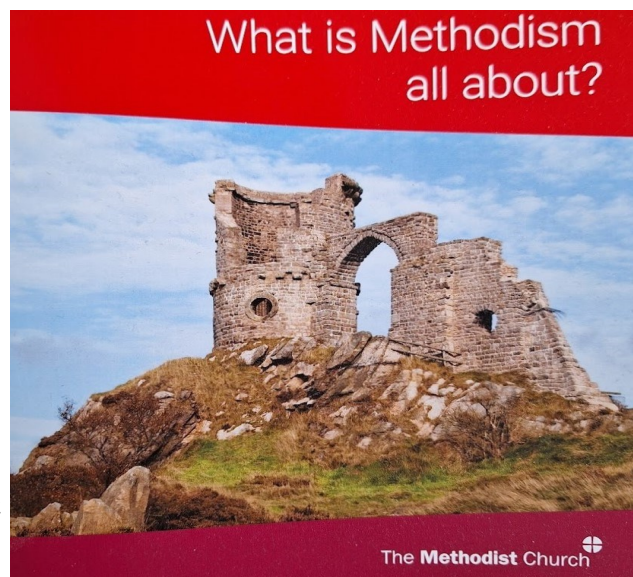


Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum

Plan offers a clear and hopeful direction rooted in inclusion, sustainability and the radical hospitality at the heart of our tradition.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Revd Helen Kirk
The Methodist Church
Chair of Chester & Stoke on
Trent District



Helpful guide produced by the Connexional Heritage team

From The Director

2025 has been another busy year, as the reports within attest. However, behind the scenes, the focus has been on our re-accreditation return. Accreditation, in the heritage world, is the equivalent of OFSTED! It is the UK industry standard for galleries and museums, confirming they are well-run, securely manage collections, and provide quality visitor experiences. Managed by Arts Council England, it boosts reputation, helps secure funding, ensures ethical practices, and applies to institutions of all sizes, from national to volunteer-run.

I am pleased (and relieved!) to say that 30 documents were finalised and 24 of the mandatory documents uploaded to the Arts Council portal – 2½ weeks before the deadline! We now await the outcome, which we will announce in the Englesea Extra and on social media.

This has been a group effort in many ways, Elizabeth as Learning Officer has produced a Learning Plan and an Access Plan and trustees and volunteers have been involved at various stages. Amy, as Heritage Officer has borne the brunt of the burden, reviewing, amending and rewriting Documentation plans and policies, Collection plans and policies, a Care and Conservation plan, a

Security audit, and her piece de resistance the 76-page Emergency Plan!!

The central document produced is the Forward Plan, what are our priorities for the next 3 years and how are we going to achieve them? They are four-fold:

1. Increasing footfall and diversifying audiences. We want to get ourselves on the map, shout about what we do, welcome busloads to the museum on a daily basis. OK so the last one is ambitious, but we are aiming high!

2. Growing and sustaining the volunteer base. Our volunteers are the life blood of this project – the fun, commitment, enthusiasm, knowledge, and energy that they bring rubs off on the staff and visitors alike – but without a few more, how are we going to supply enough cups of tea and a warm welcome to the daily busloads?? Is there anyone you know looking to offer a few hours a week/fortnight/month who could be asked to be a volunteer?

3. Improving financial sustainability. This is a big one! Times are hard, demands on grant-making bodies ever greater. But all at Englesea Brook remain committed to keep the site free to visit – so that means finding ways to increase our income in other ways. The



One of our Christmas wreath-making sessions

Book Emporium is a fabulous source of funding, and there are fundraising events throughout the year. However, new ideas – and donations – welcome!

4. Strengthening Englesea

Brook as a welcoming, inclusive space, particularly for marginalised groups. This is at the heart of the Primitive Methodist story, and is at the heart of where we want the Chapel and Museum to be. This year, we are hoping to develop sessions and worship for those with dementia and their carers. If any of you want to be involved in any way, please do get in touch. Elizabeth is developing her work with SEND children and families – and there's more to be done.

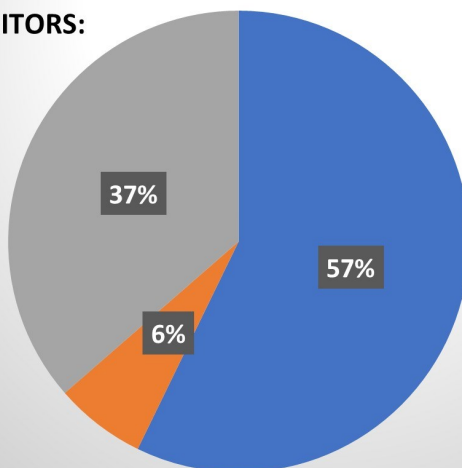
Please pray for staff, volunteers and trustees as we continue to work together to build on our successes and continue to make Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum the best it can be.

Every blessing

Ruth (Hilton – Project Director)

VISITOR ENGAGEMENT 2025

**TOTAL VISITORS:
2239**



- Site - Visitors, Group Visits, Schools, Special Events, etc.
- Online - Heritage Talks, Book Club, Bible Studies, etc.
- Offsite - Visits to Schools and Interested Groups and Societies

Volunteers

Many thanks again to the wonderful volunteers who have faithfully supported both the Chapel and Museum, and the Alsager Book Emporium. Every minute you can offer makes a huge difference to what we can do and what we can deliver, so thank you! The joy of volunteering at Englesea Brook is that we offer flexible volunteering opportunities tailored to individual needs. We are also committed to inclusive volunteering and actively

welcome applications from people with additional support needs, so please do encourage those you know to explore volunteering with us.

Here is a little insight into the many and varied things you might get involved with as a volunteer:

Volunteers Report

Variety is the spice of life - Volunteering at Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum!

I first visited Englesea Brook in the May of 2023 - my friend from Keele University had been on placement there, and wanted to show us her display on "Children in the Museum". I was struck by the welcoming atmosphere of the Museum, especially the staff. We had some tea and cake and chatted with Ruth about the courses we were taking at University, and I happened to mention that I hadn't done a placement because I was doing a joint honours degree and didn't want to lose learning time. Ruth suggested that if I volunteered over the summer, I could do everything that a placement student would do, so I signed the volunteer forms then and there, and I have never regretted it.

My time as a volunteer has been wonderfully diverse - I never know what I will be doing next. I love serving customers in the café as there is always someone interesting to talk to, from Cyclists to Ministers, Mayors to Historians, or couples just passing through, and families attending the events. The home education and school events are fun too; Elizabeth and I have helped kids make Christmas crackers, looked at child labour in the eighteenth century, and done grave rubbings (yes, I said rubbing, not robbing), but that had to be explained to a group of boys.

A job that I seem to have ac-

quired is the Pest Traps: I'm not scared of spiders, so Amy has gladly given me the job of counting them. Last summer, Englesea had two young people doing work experience - they weren't too impressed with the pest traps either. My Granddaughter was horrified that one spider was still alive and twerking. We howled with laughter at that, so I guess it will continue to be my job for a while.

I think the strangest thing I have been asked to do was weigh some walking sticks for the emergency plan. It sounds easy enough, but how do you weigh a walking stick on kitchen scales? As soon as they are placed on the scales, the handle dips down. I tried a few different methods, but in the end, I used a metal teapot, so the lid of the teapot would counter-balance the walking stick handle, stuffed a tea towel inside, so the walking stick wouldn't get scratched, and deducted the weight of the teapot and towel from the total weight. Bizarre, but it worked. Looking forward to more diversity and fun in the coming year.

Alex Newbigging

'The chapel has maintained its sacred feel. Loved the peace of the buildings'



'lovely friendly staff who went out of their way to welcome us'

Building Matters

This year, there have been no major incidents with the building I am pleased to report. A local roofer, recommended by the Cheshire South circuit, assessed the roof of the chapel, museum and the cottage, and reported that while there were no significant concerns, minor repairs were required on the cottage roof. Those will be carried out in February.

The rolling maintenance programme for the site ensures issues are spotted before they become a major problem. The staff toilets had a long-overdue lick of paint, and the parlour in the cottage has also been refurbished. Storage space remains a challenge, so new shelving space has been created in the museum store room. Look out for a new layout in the museum this year to try and utilize the space we have more creatively!

‘Reliving memories of my Methodist upbringing inspired by the chapel and its artefacts’



Rev David Leese

David Leese

Rev David Leese, a long-time volunteer, died suddenly in December. His own Primitive Methodist links down the generations and interest in researching different aspects of Methodist history made him an invaluable member of the team. Sue and his family generously named Englesea Brook as the recipient of half the donations made in his memory, so we will be working with the family to find a suitable way to remember him.

Out And About

Staff members deliver talks and workshops off site to various groups, for example, WI, U3A and local history groups, as well as going into schools and online. Because of the work we've been doing with SEND children, autistic children in particular, we were asked to give a presentation at the Museums North conference held at the Guildhall in York. How to make the PM story, as well as the site, accessible to a myriad of additional needs, is something Englesea Brook staff are able to support other museums to develop and it was a privilege to hear of the work of other museums in this area.

John Cooper, director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR), is an active member of the Englesea Brook Exec and asked if I would share the story of the Primitive Methodist 'Peace' church at the weekly FoR Prayers for Peace zoom gathering. I shared the nuanced story, focusing particularly on stories of conscientious objectors and was very moved when afterwards, I met a conscientious objector in Ukraine and heard his story. Never let it be said that the Primitive Methodist story is just a thing of the past – it resonated in a powerful way with him, and others who heard it.



Fundraising

As outlined in the Treasurer's report, this financial year ended with a healthy surplus, thanks to two back-payments. Without that, the Project would still have returned a surplus, but much reduced. Therefore, fundraising has remained at the forefront of what we do. One of the artefacts from the store has been moved into the museum as an additional 'Donation' box – the letterbox labelled 'Letters for the minister', and a Perspex donation box has been added next to the till in the tearoom - the idea is to encourage support rather than visitors feeling pressurized or obligated. It's a delicate balance.

In the spring, Elaine and Richard Pearce, who have organised the Friends of Englesea

Brook for many years, retired. They collected subscriptions, sent out the Digest, kept in touch with all the Friends and, until a couple of years ago, oversaw the Alsager Book Emporium. Richard became something of an expert in acquiring and erecting sheds! Englesea Brook owes them an enormous debt of gratitude.

Ruth Parrott, longtime volunteer at Englesea Brook and former President of Methodist Women in Britain, has taken on the role of co-ordinator. She is working closely with the Project Director to develop good relationships with the Friends, to learn about and from those who are committed to the future success of Englesea Brook. With ever increasing postage and printing costs, and

Funding Matters

comments from some Friends about cutting paper use, the Ranters' Digest is now emailed out to Friends, so up-to-date contact information is key. However, in recognition that not everyone likes a digital version, paper copies and large print copies are still available to those who request it. There is also a plan to run exclusive events for the Friends too.

'We were able to find out lots of information without it being too much to take in'

Treasurer's Report

My second report as Treasurer, and the first to encompass a full twelve months.

Thanks again go to the Executive, Staff and other Volunteers who all assist throughout the year.

My second year can be summed up as "Catch-Up". For various reasons there have been some historic underpayments made to us which have all now been made good. This has resulted in an exceptional surplus for the 2024-2025 year.

There has also been another record-breaking year from the Volunteers at Alsager Book Emporium.

The real financial world continues to have its challenges. The increase in National Insurance rates, salaries, the increase in energy costs and the increases in costs from many of our suppliers who service our organisation all continue to affect us.

Our budget/ forecast still shows a deficit when looking to service our commitments, as it has done in most previous years. Whilst we have previously managed to complete the

financial year "in the black", nothing can be taken for granted and vigilance will be required to ensure costs continue to be controlled.

Over recent months, much work has been completed towards our museum accreditation which has involved taking a close look at all our funding opportunities. We would hope to develop these during this year to diversify our income and reduce the risks attached to relying on any one income source.

Anthony Bellis, treasurer



Our Treasurer, Anthony Bellis

Heritage News

Over the past couple of years, the number of volunteers working with the collection has increased. As such, this year I created a 'Collections Team' that meets every three months. The purpose of the team is to identify tasks and projects that should be undertaken regarding the care and cataloguing of the collection. This allows us to deal with cataloguing backlogs, such as ensuring all MODES entries have photographs attached.

Projects we have identified so far and shared between the group include:

- Labelling the cabinets and drawers in the Collections Store with their location codes. These location codes are detailed on MODES and in the Accessions Registers to make searching for objects easier
- With the help of Randle, our Volunteer Curator, I am writing guidance on how to catalogue items
- With the help of our volunteer Alex, we have acquired

cleaning equipment that is safe to use in historic buildings and on historic furniture.

Any volunteers who would like to get involved in collections work are very welcome to join the team.

'You don't have to be religious to enjoy it'

Collections Team



Our Collections Team hard at work



The beautiful banner for Abbey Hay Methodist Church— one of the many such banners in our collection

Banner Cleaning

The first big task the Collections Team undertook was the cleaning of several banners that had been on loan to Mow Cop Chapel. Due to the length of time since these banners had last been inspected, it was decided that they were due a bit of TLC and a rest back in the Collections Store at Englesea Brook.

The Collections Team, alongside two work experience students, spent a day at Mow Cop Chapel. The first task was to inspect the banners for pests like carpet beetle larvae and moths. Thankfully, apart from one lone silver fish, there were no pests and now signs of pest damage.

Task two was to clean the banners using the Museum Vac (no ordinary Henry will do for historic artefacts). A piece of netting on a wooden frame was placed between the banner and the

vacuum nozzle to allow the dirt to be removed without damaging the fibres.

The banners were then carefully wrapped in Tyvek (an acid-free material) and returned to the Englesea Brook Collections Store for hibernation.

'It is more than just a day out'

Our Work Experience Students

Rosalind

In July, A-Level student Rosalind created a social media campaign linked to our 2025 theme of peace. We celebrated the contribution of several individuals to the campaign for peace, including Methodist minister Donald

Soper, poet and political activist Eva Gore-Booth, and Conscientious Objector and Primitive Methodist Local Preacher Robert Wright.

Elijah

Our display charting the evolution of Primitive Methodism from cottage meetings, through evangelism to chapel building was curated by Elijah, an Open University student who has been volunteering with us. Artefacts showcased included

Thomas Russell's carpet bag, William Clowes' lantern, a portable font, and the ceremonial trowels and spirit level used for chapel stone-laying.

Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum

CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

THE STORY OF ROBERT WRIGHT



Robert Wright was a Conscientious Objector during the First World War, beforehand in 1914 he was a Primitive Methodist local preacher in Southport 3rd circuit. He was court martialled on the 15th of March 1917, and on the 11th of April sent to Wormwood Scrubs. In June 1917, Wright was sent to Wakefield Prison Work Centre and later to Manchester to be put to work in a working party. Sadly, his treatment during the war years affected him so deeply and in 1940 he suffered a nervous breakdown. He suffered another breakdown in late 1963, and in July 1964 he unfortunately took his own life, his family believing it to be as a result of his wartime experiences.



Chris

GCSE student Chris helped to increase the number of objects from the Englesea Brook collection that are featured on the My Primitive Methodists website. He selected objects from around the Chapel, Museum, and Collections Store, which he photographed and uploaded to the website with a short blurb.

Hugh Bourne's Travelling Chest
at Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum of Primitive Methodism



Hugh Bourne's Travelling Chest, c.1844
Chris Brown

On July 3rd, 1844, Hugh Bourne left Liverpool for Canada, on board the *Oberon*. The voyage took 53 days, and he thought he was going to die from sea sickness. He was 72 years old, and he returned home, via America, on March 26th, 1846.

On Saturday the 29th of June 1844, he put in his Journal an 'Account of H. Bourne's Clothes'. This is what he packed in his chest:

Artefacts at the Museum of Primitive Methodism
A Solid Fuel Stove
American Organ
Bible box from Nantwich
Bike owned by Primitive Methodist
Commemorative Vase
Communion Tray and Glasses, 1924
Cottage meeting kettle
Elijah Cadman's Pulpit, c.1870
Elizabeth Evans' Pulpit
Friendly Society Loving Cup (c.1840)
Harmonium, Tunstall, c.1890
Housekeeper's Cupboard, c.1810
Hugh Bourne's Travelling Chest

Accreditation

The Accreditation Scheme, overseen by Arts Council England, covers the nationally agreed standards that museums should aim to achieve. These standards ensure museums are sustainable and can be trusted by the public and funding bodies. Every few years Accredited museums must undertake Re-accreditation to prove they are still adhering to the standards. We received our call for Re-creditation in June 2025, to be



submitted by 2 February 2026. Thankfully, I have been editing the documents we will need to

submit since 2021, when we were meant to be called, but the scheme was paused due to the pandemic. The key plans,

policies and procedures the scheme covers include the Collections Development Policy, Documentational Procedural Manual, Learning Plan, and Emergency Plan.

‘The chapel has maintained its sacred feel. Loved the peace of the buildings’

Learning

Throughout the school year, we welcomed pupils from Adelaide School, Crewe (a social, emotional and mental-health specialist school) each week for a morning session of RE. We met curriculum requirements of the Christian element, uniquely using the Primitive Methodist story. Years 5 to 9 came on a three-weekly rolling basis for two rotations and explored themes of Creation, life after death, accepting difference, did Jesus come to save the world?, faith expressed through buildings and much more. We made good use of the whole site, including the new Peace Garden, playing games, crafting, role-playing and enjoying immersive storytelling.

The pupils benefitted from being out of the classroom



Pupils from Adelaide RE

Adelaide RE

which helped them to engage with occasionally challenging

subjects and ideas in an informal setting, and where they could have ‘hands-on’ experience of a place of worship and acquaint themselves with a remarkable faith community. Feedback from teachers was positive, especially that there were teamwork activities, lots of practical, creative work...and food!

A large cohort of Adelaide pupils and staff returned for the now annual Dickens’ ‘A Christmas Carol’ special performance that included festive refreshments, exploration of the museum and some really interesting questions and discussions about the Prims and the real reason for Christmas.

‘Excellent place to visit and to spend time reflecting’

Peace Garden

The Community Peace Garden at the side and back of the collections store was officially opened by Sally Graham, Crewe Deputy Mayor, on April 25th. Many who had donated and helped to build the garden attended, including Ben, the landscaper, Sue, the installation artist, and a group of Year 6 pupils from Weston Village Primary who recited a beautiful jointly-written poem about what peace means to them.



Opening of our Peace Garden

Picking Up A Lost Thread

We worked further with Adelaide School when we invited a group of sixth-formers to the museum in January to spend a week filming the three videos for our alcohol project. Picking up a Lost Thread was born out of the successful bid for further funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, awarded through the Association of Independent Museums, after our partnership with the Probation Service. With the help of Phil Summers, a Methodist minister and film-maker, we created short films exploring the effects of alcohol consumption on relationships, money and health.

The young people spent time listening to stories from the archives about tragic consequences of drunkenness and the heart-warming help given to those affected by court missionaries, poor man's lawyers and others. Some of the help came from the Primitive Methodist Whitechapel Mission, from whence came the inspiration for the title.

The efforts of the temperance movement were discussed and

the young people were able to handle artefacts. A probation officer also came to talk to them about modern criminality as a result of alcohol misuse. They were struck by the similarities between historical accounts and now.

We completed the filmed material at the National Waterways Museum in Ellesmere Port. There we utilised one of the boatman's cottages from the 1830s. Ruth led the young people through the cottage,

explaining the living and working conditions of the time. Hidden like a bundle of rags in the kitchen was 'Flo', a woman who had lost everything and was awaiting eviction as a result of her husband's drunkenness and violence, and who was grieving the removal of her children by the parish as she had been deemed an unfit mother as a result of her own drinking. During her explanation of her plight, the young people, armed with the

knowledge of church and temperance societies that could help, offered her non-judgmental advice and touching kindness, being fully immersed in her story.

The completed films are now available to schools, colleges and youth groups, and are accompanied by worksheets to help participants go deeper into the subject. A trial workshop looking at the health topic was led by Elizabeth at Adelaide Link (the sixth form).

We are in the process of making a fourth film, funded by the District, to be available to church groups. This will explore biblical material on alcohol use and the work of Recovery Church and other faith initiatives to help those struggling with alcohol addiction, and their families. We hope to have a three-part study guide ready in 2026.



Community Worship

This year we have departed a little from our usual heritage services and love feasts to try and involve the local community in the life of the chapel. Our first community worship was a pet service which was held on the front lawn. Although advertised via facebook and leaf-letting of the village, attendance was poor, but we did welcome some beautiful dogs who all got along fairly well! We held our third annual Messy Church in August on the theme of good neighbours and were again disappointed with numbers. In September, however, Jazz Chapel was a great success – led by Chris Hill and his ensemble. It just goes to show that the spirit of the Prims is alive and well – improvised, informal worship with good music!

Hope Journey

This Christmas, for the first time, Englesea Brook took part in the Circuit Hope Journey events. This is a half-day event aimed at year 2 children which gives them the opportunity to meet Nativity characters such as Mary and Joseph, Angel Gabriel, the shepherds, the Magi, Innkeeper and a very grumpy donkey. As part of the event the children make a

Christmas decoration to keep. We welcomed Betley Primary to the chapel and took the characters on the road to Weston Village Primary.

Both children and staff loved the opportunity to chat to the characters and share in the wonder of the Nativity.

History and Other Groups

We are building our network of interest groups who either come to the museum for a special talk and tour or who welcome a member of staff to present a talk or performance to them...and one often leads to another! Throughout the year we have visited or had visits from Women's Institutes, U3As, village guilds, church groups, local history societies, stroke survivors, scouts and beavers and ladies' associations. These are wonderful opportunities to share the Prim story abroad and they offer further speaker bookings as so many are involved in multiple interest groups.

Friday Forum Theatre

In May Elizabeth presented 'The Magic Methodists of Delamere Forest' as told by Mary Dannel. This is a fascinating and intriguing story of the early influence on Hugh Bourne and William Clowes of James Crawfoot and the (mainly female) visionaries who met in Delamere Forest. The tale is muddled by unrequited love, jealousy and a flawed Mary Dannel who may have an axe to grind! She is definitely one of the most enjoyable characters Elizabeth has played!

Sadly, due to bereavement, the second presentation of the life of William Clowes was postponed until 2026.



THE MAGIC METHODISTS OF DELAMERE FOREST

THE WINDOW
Friday 12th September, 7-8.30pm

September's Forum Theatre was the imagined tale of a mother in World War One who watches at 'The Window' for her sons to return from the war – one a Tommy, the other a conscientious objector. Using archive accounts from our library and other sources, a tale was woven to give a glimpse of the tensions in both families and chapels when duty to country and faith-based pacifism sit uncomfortably together. It also explored the remarkable change in the Prim Church from peace-making to jingoism.

'Brilliant museum'

Day Of Drama

The May half-term holiday saw several primary school-aged thespians come to the museum for a Day of Drama! Taking

the story of 'Old Booty' that inspired Hugh Bourne to set forth in his evangelistic ministry, we created a dramatisation

to share with parents and carers at the end of the day. The children used the pulpit and dais area in the chapel and recreated an 18th century sailing ship, a volcano and a court room. After some warm-up exercises and drama games, they improvised scenes and chose characters and costumes. The grand performance was given to a packed chapel and included a rousing rendition of 'What shall we do with a drunken sailor?', plus an invitation to all present to join in with 'Bananas of the world' (one of the most fun warm-ups, ever!).

Preachers' Training Day

'Resource! Refresh! Remember!' was held in September, led by John Cooper from the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Elizabeth. It was intended to inspire preachers to place peace and reconciliation at the forefront of Remembrance Sunday events. John led the participants in reflections and discussions, inspired by the Bible and notable peace-makers. Elizabeth performed an abridged version of a Friday Forum Theatre monologue 'The Window', set in World War One which explored the tensions between faith and duty to nation.

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!

Wednesday 28th May 2025
10am - 2pm
Performance: 2-2.45pm
£10 per child (siblings £5)
Limited places. Bring a packed lunch

Book your place:
learning@englesea-brook.org.uk

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!

Heritage Day

On the 31st May, an auspicious day in the Prim calendar (the first camp meeting at Mow Cop in 1807), we hosted 'Stepping out from Mow', celebrating the Prim and Methodist missions that went out from these parts across the world. David Leese gave a very interesting presentation on Prim missionaries to Australia and New Zealand, Elizabeth gave a performance of 'A Tale of Two Missions' about Amy Richardson and Betty Stead - Prim missionaries from Leeds who served in Nigeria a few years apart, and Rev Jimi Kaci spoke animatedly about his own faith journey as a result of later missionaries to his island in Fiji.

Lunch was provided free of charge and the great many who attended agreed it had been an educational, entertaining and inspiring day.

STEPPING OUT FROM MOW
Heritage Weekend

Saturday, May 31st
11-3.30pm
at Englesea Brook,
CW2 5QW

plus **Sunday, June 1st**
3-5pm
"Fire" Service at Mow Cop
Castle

SATURDAY'S SPEAKERS:

- Rev Jimi Kaci
- Rev David Leese
- Forum Theatre

Performance 'A Tale of Two Missions' by Elizabeth Morris

Come and discover how Primitive Methodism impacted those beyond our shores and what that legacy means for today

THIS IS A FREE EVENT. LUNCH PROVIDED

To book contact:
director@englesea-brook.org.uk

Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum

DONATIONS WELCOME

Our 2025 Heritage Weekend Poster

Cheshire Buddies

We welcomed back the group of learning disabled adults for several sessions throughout the year including banner-making and exploring the natural environment. The Buddies made banners to express where they belong and what is important to them after visiting the store to see some of the banners on display there. In the summer they explored the site, including the graveyard and heard tales about the 'fairy tree' (hawthorn) and the 'Elder Mother'. They foraged for rosehips and elderflowers and were even able to make some cordial from them. They then experimented with natural remedies and we discovered the butter and parsley plaster for bruising really does work!

They returned for a special Victorian Christmas where they enjoyed traditional crafts, food and stories.

Crafty Ranters

It's been all change with Crafty Ranters this year. Instead of a monthly meeting we decided to offer two all-day events based on traditional crafts as the monthly gathering had been declining. The first gathering was a rag rug workshop which was well supported with over a dozen participants. We had great fun chopping up strips of fabric and then hooking them into pieces of hessian to create small mats. Many memories were shared of mothers and grandmothers making mats and rugs for the home, and much loved but worn out garments being repurposed. We took great delight in seeing how different all our mats were. We were reminded of how many of these crafts were family events where everyone played a part from the youngest to the oldest. Our second event was a Family Cottage Crafts Day in August. We had

spinning, weaving, butter making and knitting dolls with our equivalent of a wooden cotton reel and 4 nails. Although we didn't have large numbers, those who came had lots of fun and the children (and adults)

learned new skills. It's amazing what you can do with a small glass jar, a marble and a dollop of double cream.

There's been real value in our two gatherings; friendship, community, learning old skills,

and developing the skill of repurposing what might ordinarily be thrown away.

Frances Biseker.



Our Crafty Ranters display their handiwork

'Worth a second visit'

Alsager Book Emporium

A Decade Of Growth

As we look back over the last ten years, it is inspiring to see how far the Book Emporium has come. Selling second-hand books began to raise funds for Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum, and the Alsager Book Emporium continues to play a vital role in supporting the Museum's work and community outreach.

When we first began, our volunteers were drawn almost entirely from local churches. Churches also served as our main collection points, and many early donations came from retiring ministers. At that stage about 75% of the books we received were religious and we were pleased to be able to send around 20 boxes per month to World of Books. Much has changed in past 10 years.

Today we hold over 60,000 books, carefully organised into subject areas and displayed in well-defined sections. Along-

side the chapel space we now have two sheds at the back, open for browsing and buying. Our volunteer base has expanded too: while many still appreciate the aims of Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum, most are no longer drawn exclusively from church communities.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the project is that we have never needed to advertise for books. Donations simply continue to flow in – steady, generous, and abundant. The nature of these donations has changed significantly as well; now, only about 20% of our books are religious, and 80% of the books we sell are non-religious.

To maximise income for the Museum we have developed a wide range of selling routes, including auctions, eBay, Ziffit, Music Magpie, and occasional sales at book fairs. A dedicated team of committed volunteers works tirelessly to ensure every

book is used to its full potential.

Their hard work shows. Our average weekly takings now reach £500–£600, and last year we raised over £25,000 for Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum.

The project also supports the wider community. We contribute to a literacy initiative for Ukraine, provide books to local schools, and supply reading groups and other community organisations.

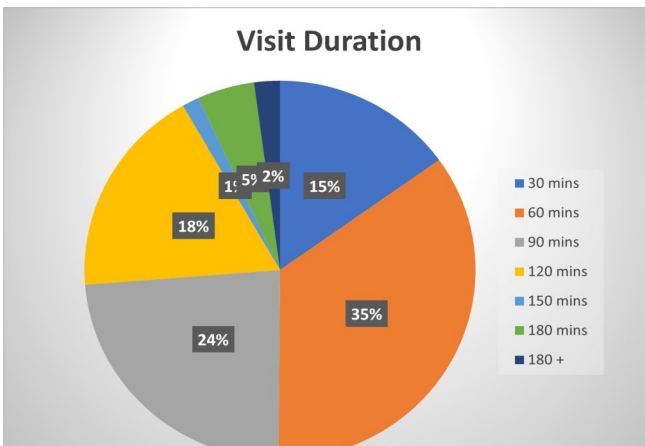
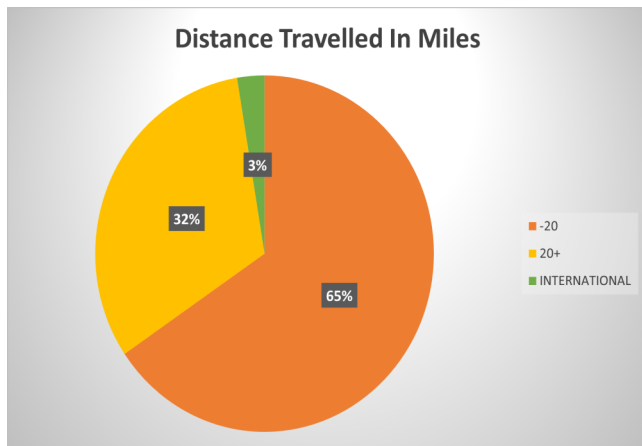
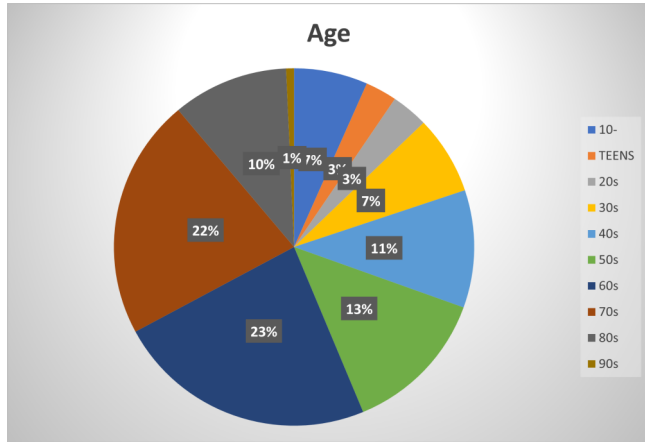
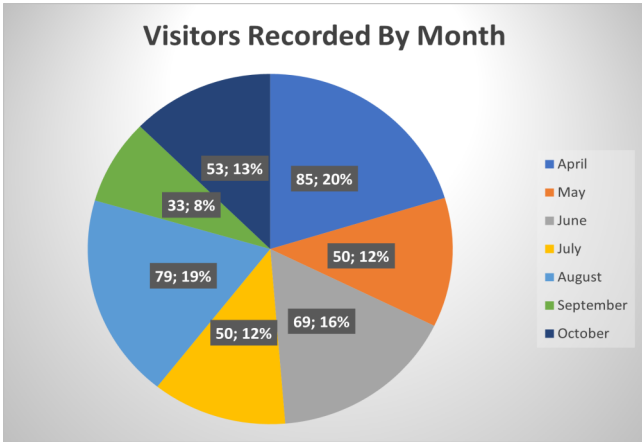
Ten years on we are deeply grateful—for our volunteers, our donors, and everyone who supports the project in any way – to build and sustain what is a thriving source of funding and community engagement for the Museum.

If you haven't visited for a while please do call in. We would be delighted to welcome you.

Rev Malcolm Lorimer



2025: Visitors At A Glance



Look out for forthcoming events at Englesea Brook on our website, our Facebook page and on our Instagram and Bluesky feeds. Please see the front page for links.

Contact Us:

Ruth Hilton, Director: director@engleseabrook.org.uk

Elizabeth Morris, Learning Officer: learning@engleseabrook.org.uk

Amy Wilkinson, Heritage Officer: heritage@engleseabrook.org.uk

Stephen Brown, Administrator: admin@engleseabrook.org.uk