# Englesea Extra

**No. 87: July 2026** **Price: justice**

## Strange Times

You can almost hear a collective sigh of relief in some parts of the Connexion as July arrives and the Methodist Conference draws to a close. Conference is about far more than church governance. Alongside overseeing the life and doctrine of the Church, it provides a space to discuss issues affecting the Church, the nation and the wider world. That was what drew me there this year.

The Connexional Heritage Committee led discussion on reparative justice - a sensitive and challenging subject that the Church is continuing to explore. This short video helps explain why reparative justice matters.

Watch here:

When I returned to Englesea Brook and shared some of the discussions with colleagues, Elizabeth had come across an account in the diary of William Clowes, one of the co-founders of Primitive Methodism just a few days before.

Around 1807-08, Clowes travelled to Delamere and, as he recorded, "ministered extensively" alongside James Crawfoot. Together they visited Warrington, where they held a prayer meeting in the home of Mrs Richardson on Bridge Street. Mrs Richardson owned a plantation in the West Indies and, after her conversion by Clowes and Crawfoot, she freed her slaves.

When Clowes later published his journals in 1844, he added a reflection on this story. Looking back, he wrote:

*"This was a great sacrifice in a temporal point of view; but when true Christianity assumes the empire of the soul, it proclaims, instantly, war against tyranny and oppression in all their forms. And it inspires magnanimity and real greatness. If all the West India slave-holders had been converted, they would not have insisted on compensation, and the people in this country would never have been called upon to pay 20 million of money for the emancipation of the slaves; and if true Christianity were enjoyed by the Americans, they would soon arise and erase the dark stain of slavery from their country."*

His comments, written decades after the events he describes, are particularly interesting because as he reflects on actions that took place in 1807-08, he was writing after the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, under which slave owners received £20 million in government compensation while formerly enslaved people received nothing.

This insight into the thinking of our Methodist forebears - in their own words - reminds us that these stories matter because they help us listen to the experiences of our Black Christian brothers and sisters, while also reminding those who see reparative justice as a modern concern that questions of slavery and oppression were being confronted by Methodists long ago. Above all, they matter because, as Christians, we are called to engage honestly with our history and to pursue justice, reconciliation and truth wherever they lead us.

*Every blessing*

*Ruth*

## Pause for thought:

Be thou the first true merit to befriend, his praise is lost who stays till all commend.

**Alexander Pope, poet (21 May 1688-1744)**

## L Frank Baum

*Heritage officer Amy Wilkinson's wormhole discovery*

Being a musical theatre nerd who also enjoys research and learning random facts, I ended up down a bit of an internet wormhole recently. I was reading Gregory Maguire's Elphie: A Wicked Childhood (2025), his prequel to his 1995 novel Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West (the inspiration for the musical Wicked, but it is VERY different to the musical). Maguire's Oz includes various religions, including Unionism, which focuses on the worship of the Unnamed God. In Elphie, Frexspar Thropp is a Unionist preacher who has travelled to Quadling Country to convert the Quadlings. To do so he holds camp meetings, using the novelty of his daughter, Elphaba, singing hymns to draw crowds (again, if you know the musical, this is VERY different). I wasn't quite expecting, when picking up a book set in Oz, to find myself comparing it to Primitive Methodist camp meetings and their use of girl preachers/singers.

All this resulted in an internet wormhole in which I learnt that L Frank Baum, the author of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (1900), came from a devout Methodist family.

Despite a Methodist upbringing, as an adult he joined the Episcopal Church so he could participate in community theatricals. Unfortunately, I couldn't find out why the Methodists wouldn't allow him to participate in theatricals. Later, Baum joined the Theosophical Society.

In Baum's Oz there is no mention of religion, other than the Cowardly Lion accidently knocking over a porcelain church in Dainty China Country. However, describing how he came up with the idea for The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, Baum hinted that it may have been divinely inspired! He stated: "I think that sometimes the Great Author had a message to get across and He was to use the instrument at hand".1

Baum, unfortunately, appears to have had rather contradictory views. As the son-in-law of a well-known Suffragist and feminist, he supported women's right to vote and gender equality. However, in 1890-91 he wrote two articles advocating for the genocide of Native Americans to protect white settlers, contradicting an earlier article he had written in which he stated that white Americans should not fear Native Americans. His mother-in-law was admitted to the Iroquois Council of Matrons due to her support of Native Americans. There is debate about what exactly Baum's views were and whether the 1890-91 articles were meant to be sarcastic. If they were intended to be sarcastic, it was extremely poor taste!

*Photo credit: Interim Archives/Getty Images*

[1] Morena, Ph.D., G.D., 2014, *The Wisdom of Oz: Reflections of a Jungian Sandplay Therapist*, Cardiff, CA: Waterside Productions, Inc.

# Summer's Here

# SO ARE THE EVENTS!

**AUGUST** **2026** **ENGLESEA BROOK**

**SAT 8TH**
**11 AM - 4 PM**

## FUN FAMILY CRAFT DAY

Twig weaving
Bread making
(11am & 2pm)
Pottery & much more!
No need to book

ADULTS £2.50, CHILDREN £1.50

## BARBEQUE & QUIZ

£12.50 (UNDER 16S £6.50) BOOKING REQUIRED

**FRI 14TH**
**6 - 8 PM**

**SUN 23RD**
**3 PM**

## MUSEUM 40TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE

FOLLOWED BY CREAM TEA.

No need to book

## INTERACTIVE CHILDREN'S TRAILS

FOR OLDER & YOUNGER ONES - FREE

**TUES - SAT**
**11AM -4PM**

**TUES - SAT**
**11AM-4PM**

## TEA ROOM OPEN FOR HOMEMADE CAKE, ICE CREAM & MORE

FREE ENTRY TO MUSEUM, DONATIONS WELCOME

Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum
The Story of Primitive Methodism

**WWW.ENGLESEABROOK.ORG.UK**

**CW2 5QW**

## Reflection on Land's End to John O'Groats Ride - May 2026

*Geoff Dickinson reflects on 1000 miles in 19 days cycling from one end of the country to the other!*

Since returning home the most common question people have asked is "Have you recovered yet?" A better question would have been "Have you adjusted to normal life again?"

It was a privilege to put down the 'day to day' to cycle the length of the country with no other objective each day but to get to the next night's lodging, try not to eat too much and enjoy the beauty of the varied countryside we were travelling through.

Jane, my wife, and I were part of a group of twelve 'mature' cyclists - aged sixtyish to 80+ - shepherded by two guides who took turns riding and driving the support vehicle. Our route took us passed many historic sites in England, Wales and Scotland. We experienced short sharp hills in Cornwall, wicked sidewinds across the Somerset Levels, cool weather with frequent showers, especially through Lancashire and Cumbria, some sunshine and favourable winds in Scotland, along with some long climbs and exhilarating downhills, and arrived at John O'Groats in pouring rain and hail. The arrival was a bit of an anticlimax but reinforced the view that the most important thing was the journey, developing new relationships with fellow travellers and guides and enjoying the sights along the way.

The highlights are almost too many to mention - stone circles in Cornwall, cycling up Cheddar Gorge, the Clifton Suspension Bridge, the Severn Road Bridge, Tintern Abbey, Hereford Cathedral, Ironbridge, round the Wrekin (literally), greeting friends in Audlem, visiting an Air Ambulance Station in the Eden Valley, the centre of Edinburgh, Forth Road Bridge, Scone Palace near Perth, the Cairngorms (ski country), Clara Cairns and Culloden Field near Inverness, the emptiness of the landscape north of Inverness, to name but a few.

We stayed in a wide variety of overnight lodgings - B&Bs, country pubs, a golf and country club, some pretentious hotels and some Premier Inns (other hotels are available!) travelling to the start and returning home. All in all it was a truly memorable experience. Jane raised about £1,400 for St Lukes Hospice, Winsford, and I expect the total raised for Englesea Brook will be over £2,300.

## Randle's Rummagings

*Englesea Archivist Randle Knight writes about a magnificent and important addition to our collection at Englesea Brook.*

The Revd David Leese, together with his wife Sue, regularly volunteered and supported of the museum, and his death last year was received with universal regret. Sue continues to volunteer, and together with the family, has donated a significant portion of his collection of Methodist memorabilia to the museum, over 30 ceramic items, as well as 25 PM postcards and more than 50 other items of ephemera.

Among the ceramics are two PM teapots (one, like several other items dating from 1910, carries the inscription 'God Buries His Workmen, but Carries on His Work') and a Davenport spill vase depicting Hugh Bourne and William Clowes, which are new to us, a PM inkwell, a smaller version of the one we already have, and other PM items of great interest. We also accepted a few Wesleyan items, including a love feast cup, different in that it has only one handle, rather than the usual two, making it look like an oversized mug.

Among the postcards are pictures of Frances Storr, the girl preacher, William Doughty, who was jailed in 1823 for preaching the Gospel, and Thomas Bateman who was the lay President of the PM Conference in 1857 and 1867. Other postcards include a Jubilee Procession of Spring Bank PM Sunday School in 1906 and the four chapels in the Matlock PM Circuit, also in 1906, with their minister, the Revd James Burton.

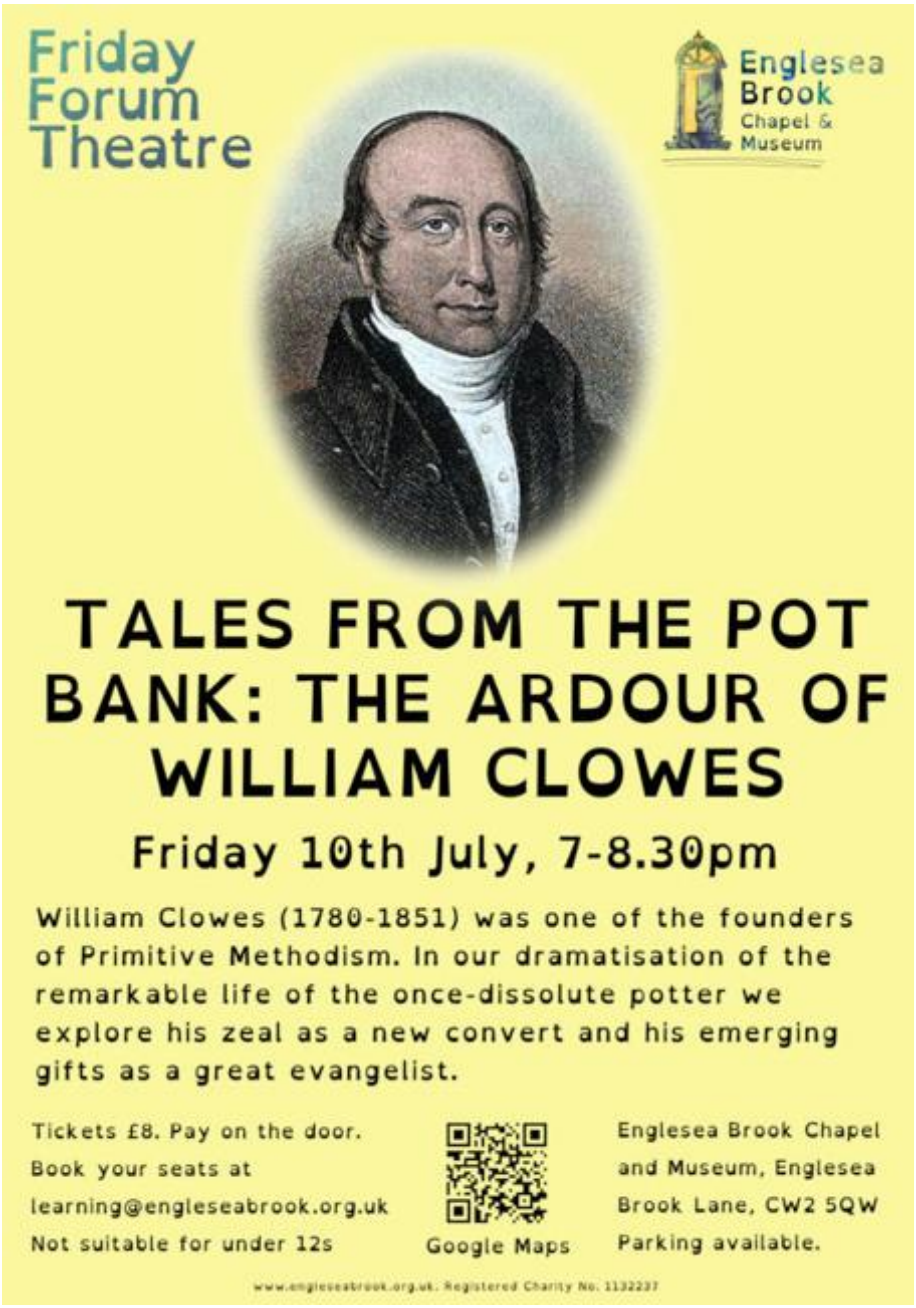
There are four PM class tickets that we didn't have, and copies of five more that are not in our collection. There are also a few membership tickets for the Wesleyan, MNC, UMFC and UM churches. Not PM, but of particular local interest are the five postcards of Bethesda MNC Chapel, Hanley, and the 'Star Register' from Zion MNC Sunday School, Longton, 1893. Among the books we received from the same source is a splendidly bound copy of Petty's *History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion* (1880).

## Chris' conundrums

### ***Egg and flower Sunday***

In last month's Extra I asked whether the annual Egg and flower services held each summer in my Wiltshire village ex Prim chapel were known elsewhere – and the answer is yes. Regular My Primitive Methodists contributor Mark Churchill remembers them too. Was it just a west country thing? Mark wrote:

*My brother and I grew up in a village Congregational chapel and we had a Toy Service before Christmas and an Egg and Flower service in the summer. The proceeds of both went to a Methodist Mission in Portsmouth / Southsea which we believe to have been Eastney which appears to have been Wesleyan. We remember Harry Woodruff coming to talk to the children and receive the gifts for a good many years and later The Rev Wesley Peacock. This was 1940s/50s but we don't know when it originated*.



# Fun Family Craft Day

**Explore the creativity and activism of the Primitive Methodists!**

**Try your hand at traditional crafts:**

- **Flour grinding & butter churning**
- **Pottery flowers and coilpots**
- **Stick weaving**

**Plus!**
**Shape & Bake bread workshops**
**11am & 2pm**

**Make your point:**

- **Embroider or draw a flag**

**Choose from prepared designs or create your own**

No need to book!

Dogs welcome!

**Saturday, 8th August**
**11am to 4pm**
**Adult: £2.50**
**Child: £1.50**

Light refreshments, including home-made cakes, available in our Tea Room

Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum

CW2 5QW
www.engleseabrook.org.uk
01270 820836

## ENGLESEA BROOK CHAPEL & MUSEUM

# CELEBRATING 40 YEARS: 1986-2026

Join us for a celebratory service followed by a delicious cream tea.

Sunday 23rd August, 3-5pm
Free event, all welcome

Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum

GOOGLE MAPS

Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum of Primitive Methodism
Englesea Brook Lane
CW2 5QW
Parking available.
Tel: 01270 820836

# DOES GOD DO CARTWHEELS?

An exploration of children's spirituality and lessons we can learn for intergenerational worship through:

- bible study
- creative practice
- Methodist heritage

**Open to all, and particularly for preachers and worship leaders**

Where: **Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum**

When: **Saturday 19th September**

**9.30am for 10am start - 3.30pm**

Cost: **£15 to include lunch**

**To book email:**

**learning@engleseabrook.org.uk**

# SUMMER BARBECUE AND QUIZ

## Friday 14th August, 6-8pm

Tickets £12.50 each (under 16s £6.50) includes barbecue, cake, drinks (non-alcoholic) and free entry to our general knowledge quiz (with small prizes for winners!).

Bring a picnic rug or chairs if weather fine; event to be held inside if not.

To book email admin@engleseabrook.org.uk.

Vegan or veggie? Let us know when booking.

Please note: alcohol is not permitted on Methodist premises.

Pay on entry.

Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum

Tel: 01270 820836. Parking available.

Scan the QR code to find us.

Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum,

Englesea Brook Lane, CW2 5QW

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

GOOGLE MAPS

## Englesea Diary

See the posters on pages 5,6 and 7 for details.

### ***Friday Forum Theatre***

***Friday 10th July 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm*** – Tales from the pot bank: the ardour of William Clowes

### ***Collectors' Fair***

***Saturday 11th July 10am-4pm*** at Wesley Place Methodist Church Alsager. Organised by Rev Malcolm Lorimer, together with volunteers at Alsager Book Emporium.

### ***Cottage Crafts Day***

***Saturday 8th August*** – Cottage Crafts Day for all the family!

### ***Interactive Children's trails***

***All through August*** - Tuesday-Saturday 11am-4pm.

### ***The Annual Barbeque and Quiz***

***Friday 14th August 6-8pm*** - The Annual Barbeque and Quiz

### ***Sunday service***

***Sunday 23rd August*** – Celebrating 40 years of Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum. Led by Rev Helen Kirk

### ***Does God do cartwheels?***

***Saturday 19th September 10am-3.30pm*** Details on the poster.

### ***Opening times for 2026/27***

| | |
|---|---|
| **April to July** | Thursday, Friday and Saturday 11am-4pm |
| **August** | Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday 11am-4pm |
| **September to October** | Thursday, Friday and Saturday 11am-4pm |

## Copy and publication dates for Englesea Extra 88

*The plan is to publish Extra 88 on Wednesday August 5th 2026. Contributions to Ruth by Friday, July 31st please.*

## And a final prayer from Margaret Fox (1614-1702)

*Let us love the constancy of your light, O Lord, and rejoice in it.*

*Let us walk in brightness of your light, O Lord, and be blessed by it.*

*Let us live in the glory of your light, O Lord, and be judged for it.*

*Amen.*