

WINDOW ON WESLEY'S



**AUGUST/SEPTEMBER
2017**

STAFF

Ministers: The Revd the Lord Leslie Griffiths MA
(Superintendent – until 31 August)
Rev Jennifer Potter BTh MA MSc

Associate Ministers: Rev Pauline Barnett MA (Supernumerary)
Rev John Cooke MA (Supernumerary)
Rev Brian Goss MA (Supernumerary)
Rev Dr John Lampard BA M.Th (Supernumerary)
Rev Stephen Penrose (Supernumerary)
Rev Ian Yates (Supernumerary)

Student Presbyter: Mr Kido Baek BTh MA

Leysian Missioner: Mrs Judith Bell MA (Cantab)

Lay Members: Dr Peter Briggs OBE
Dr Joy Leitch BSc DipEd MA

Museum: Mr Christian Dettlaff MA (Curator)
Miss Aisha Al-Sadie BA (Hons)(Learning
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Ave atque Vale.

Hail and Farewell.

And so, my dear friend, I draw these thoughts to an end. The words at the head form the title of a Latin poem which I read as an A-level student a whole lifetime ago. But they say what I want to say. I must greet you and take my leave of you. The time has come to go. I've had the privilege of leading a vibrant cause, an energy-packed congregation, for over two decades. I'm no longer the middle aged man I was when we arrived in 1996. It's time for someone younger and stronger, someone with new ideas and proven abilities, to take on the task. And Jennifer Smith is just that person.

At the opening of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the old king lays down his responsibilities after a lengthy reign, and he contemplates a simpler life. His words strike home to me at a time such as this:

*This my first intent,
To shake all cares and business from our age,
Conferring them on younger strengths, while I,
Unburdened, crawl towards death.*

We'll hope that death doesn't come just yet, of course, and that we'll not have to crawl too much, but a simpler life seems so enviable and compelling now after all these years of endeavour. What memories I'll take with me! It's been a truly wondrous time. The poet Tennyson remembers just such an experience and describes it in these words. Please note the words I've added within square brackets:

*Short swallow-flights of song
That dip their wings in [joys and] tears
And skim away.*

We may be leaving Wesley's Chapel but I assure you we'll be taking Wesley's Chapel with us. In our hearts. And our minds. We will never forget the friendships we've forged, the battles we've

fought together, the causes we've served, the children and young people we've seen grown and develop.

And so I take my leave. Over the years I've ended my monthly letters to the congregation with a simple but distinctive blessing. It runs thus: "The Lord bless you and bless you kindly." Some of my readers may have wondered why I use it and where it comes from. Well, it's part of a longer, much longer, Scottish blessing which I came across right at the beginning of my ministry. It was far too long to use at the end of a normal service. So I just used the words with which it concludes. But then, on my very last Sunday in any appointment, at the very last service, I've used the whole blessing – lock, stock and barrel. The people of Reading, Loughton, Hinde Street, Golders Green have all heard it in their turn. And it's with these words that I bow out from City Road. And here they are now as I bring this last letter in Windows on Wesley's to a conclusion.

*May **the blessing of light** be on you – light without and light within.
May the blessed sunlight shine on you like a great peat fire
So that the stranger and friend may come and warm themselves at it.
And may the light shine out of the two eyes of you
Like a candle set in the window of a house
Bidding the wanderer come in out of the storm.*

*And may **blessing of the rain** be on you.
May it beat upon your spirit and wash it fair and clean,
And leave there a shining pool where the blue of the heaven shines
and sometimes a star.*

*And may **the blessing of the earth** be on you,
Soft under your feet as you pass along the roads,
Soft under you as you lie out on it, tired at the end of day;
And may it rest easy over you when, at last, you lie out under it.
May it rest so lightly over you that your soul may be out from under it
quickly, up and off and on its way to God.*

And now may the Lord bless you and bless you kindly. Amen.

Church News

It is with great sadness that we report the news of the death of *Ivy Green*. She was a long-time member of Wesley's Chapel and before that of the Leysian Mission. She was also a member of Sisterhood. For the last year she had been in a Residential Home in Ilford where she was well-cared for. At present we have no details of the funeral arrangements.

Norman Beasley, who has had a long attachment to Wesley's Chapel also died in July. For many years Norman sang in the Wesley's Chapel Choir, supervised our weekly Tuesday Music Recitals and was a Heritage Steward. His funeral is planned for the 23rd August at Wanstead Methodist Church – further details still awaited.

We have also welcomed two young children into the church by baptism in July. On the 1st July we baptised *Benjamin Ezra Frederick Pratt*, second son to *Liza and Elvis* and brother to *Jethro*. It was a lovely occasion especially that grandma *Georgette* was able to read a lesson in the service before she travelled back to Freetown. We pray that young Benjamin will be a great blessing not just to his family but to the whole church family here at Wesley's Chapel.

On the 23rd July we baptised *Eloise Jacqueline Benn*, daughter to Eunice. Young Eloise smiled her way into everyone's heart – we welcome her into our family at Wesley's Chapel.

At the beginning of July *Barnabas Masukume* had an accident. He was a pedestrian and was knocked over by a car. It is nothing short of a miracle that only his foot was injured and he is now back with us though not yet fully recovered. We give God thanks that his situation is much better that it could have been given the horrific nature of the incident.

Our condolences go to *Elijah Darko Mensah and Emmanuel Awuah-Antwi* on the death of their mother in Ghana on the 29th June. May her soul rest in peace.

We held two memorial services during July. On the 1st July there was a service for *Joy and Graeme Cruikshank*. Joy was our front office person here at the Chapel for many years as well as a member of the congregation. Her husband, Graeme, was also a regular at church and is remembered for his dramatic Bible readings. They went to live in New Zealand to be near one of their sons and shortly after arriving experienced the devastation of Christchurch by the earthquake. They died within weeks of one another at the end of 2016 and their remains have been brought back and are now buried in our Memorial Garden. May their souls rest in peace.

The second Memorial Service was just one week later for *Pauline Webb*.

She was well-known in Methodism and throughout the ecumenical world as a passionate exponent of women's ministry and a tireless worker for social justice, most notably that of eliminating apartheid in South Africa.

In her twilight years she was very lovingly cared for by Robert and Shirley Maginley and so we saw more of Pauline while Robert was a minister on our station in 2015-2016. The Memorial Service was illustrated by photos and video clips of her eventful life. The service was recorded and can be seen on our own website. May Pauline rest in peace and may her example continue to inspire others.

Patzy Tyzack has been unable to attend church for a very long time because of mobility problems. She had a knee replacement operation which did not go well. In a few weeks' time, after months of delay she hopes to go into hospital for further surgery. We pray for her, that there will be no more delays and that she will recover quickly and be able to come and worship with us again.

Congratulations to *Greg Hayes*, son to Nicola and Nick and brother of Annabel who was married at the beginning of July. Greg has had ongoing bouts of illness and is currently undergoing treatment. We pray for him and for his family.

It was wonderful to see *Alan Watts* here at the service on the 24th July. This was the first time for him to come to Church since his hospitalisation. We hope his recovery continues and that we will see him from time to time with us.

Welcome back to *Denzil Awuku*, who has been studying in the USA for a year. We pray that the rest of his University course goes well.

Junior Church will be closed during August. Crèche should be running as normal. Youth Group will not be meeting on 20th August, and the other sessions may be subject to last minute cancellations.

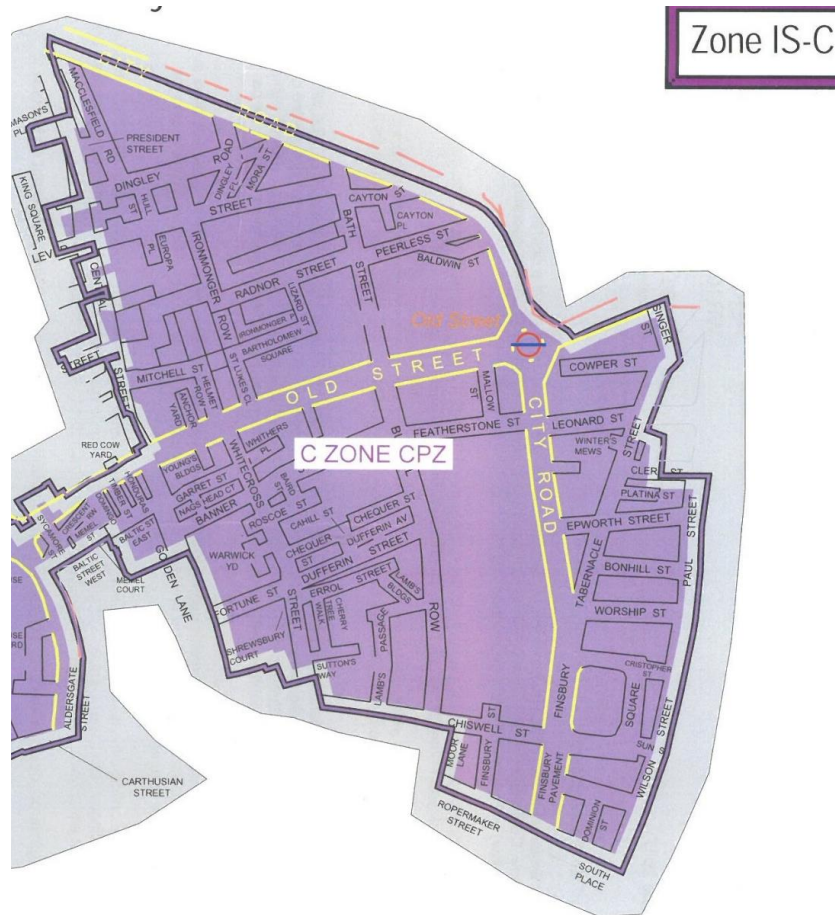
INTERNATIONAL LUNCH 3RD SEPTEMBER



Don't forget that **Sunday September 3rd** marks the beginning of the new Methodist Connexional Year when we welcome the President of Conference and the Vice President to the morning service. In celebration of this we are planning to have an International lunch after the service in the chapel's memorial gardens so pray for good weather.

We would like to invite people to contribute to this occasion with a national dish from their home country (savoury or sweet). Or just one of your favourite dishes, it's entirely up to you. But it would help with the planning of the event if you could let us know which dish you plan to bring. If you are not up to cooking perhaps you might like to donate soft drinks. We will also require help on the day to: set things up, serve food and drinks, wash-up, tidy-up etc. If you are happy to lend a hand please speak to: Judith Bell.

For those who drive to Church – Changes to parking restrictions around the Chapel



Up until recently the parking restrictions on the roads around the Chapel have operated from 8.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday and on Saturdays from 8.30am until 1.30pm. With effect from the end of June these hours of restriction have been extended to 24 hours from Monday to Saturday and then from 12.00am to 6.00am on Sunday. So there is no problem parking at church times on Sunday but it is the Saturday change which will affect people coming to weddings, choir practices etc. on a Saturday. Also there will no longer be free evening parking. Please be aware of these changes and tell your friends.

Temperance Nursery Rhymes

Recently our Museum received a letter from a lady living in France. She wrote saying that her maternal grandmother was 'a strict Methodist' and that she had come across a small cash notebook in which her grandmother had written 'Temperance' Nursery Rhymes.



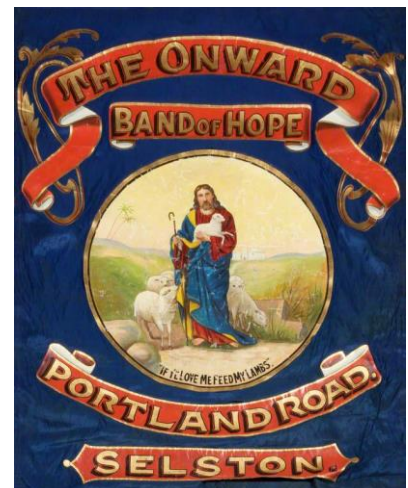
Abstinence from alcohol was never a requirement for membership of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, but temperance was a strong movement for some 30 years or more at the start of the 1900s with thousands of people 'signing the pledge' (not to drink alcohol) and joining organisations such as the Band of Hope.

Here are some of the nursery rhymes from the notebook.

Sing a song of Temperance
A cupboard full of gold
Four and twenty bank notes
In a cupboard rolled.
When the door was opened
Out the bank notes rolled
Tell me, where's the drinking man
That can show such gold?

Mistress Mary, wise and wary
How does your money go?
With temperance cherries many a pound
We have put in the bank to show.

Little Tommy Dun, the piper's son
Drank some beer and tried to run.
He tripped his toes and broke his nose
And went to jail in ragged clothes.
Poor Mrs. Horner sat in a corner and said, with many a sigh,



“He has gone to that den drinking again
O what a sad wife am I?”

We will roll the barrels out boys
And smash them through and through
And say to all the drink sellers
“We’ve had enough of you.”

There is a little public house
That everyone may close:
It is the little public house
Just underneath the nose.



Our Museum has other temperance items in its possession
including three medals on display.

Jennifer Potter

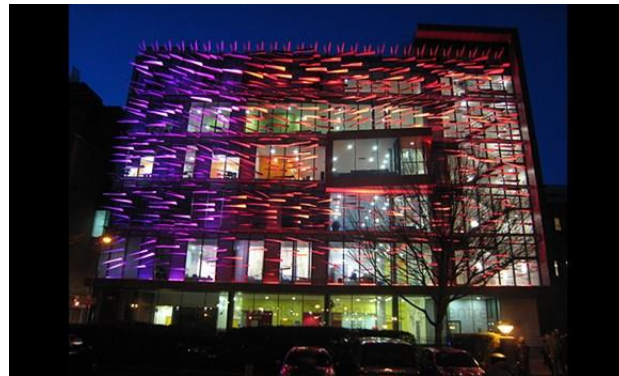
Moorfields Eye Hospital



One of our close neighbours in south Islington is the Moorfields Eye Hospital – a place known and respected around the world for its innovative work in the treatment of eye diseases. I am sure that a number of people reading this article have reason to be thankful for the expertise of this hospital. Certainly when I got some superglue close to my eye they were quick to examine me and ensure that no damage had been done. They do ground-breaking

work on glaucoma, macular degeneration and cataracts as well as a whole host of problems that most people scarcely know about.

Moorfields also has a specialist children's wing built much more recently behind the main hospital. It is not only attractive and colourful on the outside but extremely child-friendly on the inside.



Wesley's Chapel has long enjoyed a close relationship with Moorfields. In earlier days when there was residential training for nurses at Moorfields they used to hold their graduation ceremonies here at the Chapel.

Jennifer is currently a visiting Chaplain at Moorfields as were many of her predecessor ministers both from the Chapel and the Leysian Mission.

These days the links between the Chapel and Moorfields are mainly through the Friends of Moorfields. This is an organisation which seeks to assist the hospital in a number of ways. They have about 200 volunteers who help patients find their way around the hospital. This is a much more important role than one might at first imagine. Patients at Moorfields often have to have lots of different eye tests, some of which involve eye drops and other procedures which blur the vision for a time and the volunteers guide them around and reassure people as they wait between tests. The Friends run a shop in the hospital which is a real asset for patients who have to be at the hospital for a long time and is also a way in which the Friends raise money. They hold concerts and have a range of other events and initiatives to help raise money to buy specialist equipment for the hospital.

The Friends paid over £300,000 towards the building of the Ronald McDonald House which provides free accommodation to



families when a child needs treatment at Moorfields. The Friends also pay for play therapists to keep children happy, both in outpatient clinics and in A&E. They provide toys and other equipment. If children can play for most of their waiting time, their stress levels lessen.

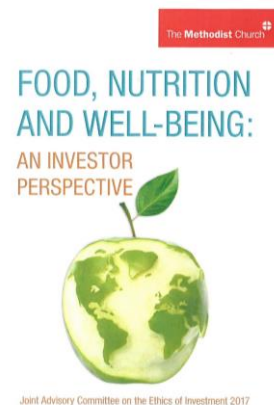
families when a child needs treatment at Moorfields. The Friends also pay for play therapists to keep children happy, both in outpatient clinics and in A&E. They provide

We have recently been visited by representatives of the Friends of Moorfields who are eager to make the work of the Hospital and of the Friends better known to all of us. They have left us some leaflets and details of how people can make contact with the Friends if they wish to volunteer in the hospital or join the team of collectors at local shops and stations. If you wish to find out more please contact them on 020 7251 1240 or email friends@moorfields.nhs.uk or get in touch with Jennifer Potter.

An Ethical Approach to Food, Nutrition and Well-Being

We have written in Window on Wesley's before about the work of the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church, whose offices are located very close to us in Bonhill Street. They invest Methodist monies from pension funds and circuits, churches and Methodist organisations in order to get the best returns yet with an ethical basis.

There is a joint committee between the Finance Board and the Church which looks at the ethical performance of companies and also makes studies of certain sectors of our economy in order to advise those who invest Methodist monies. It will not surprise you to learn that studies have been done on the mining industry and the pharmaceutical industry but more surprising is the latest study which deals with the food and beverage industry.



It has been said that ‘health is like money; we never have a true idea of its value until we lose it’ and the world is in something of a crisis as far as diet-related health is concerned – hence the Finance Board’s interest in companies producing food and beverages and how they are responding to the obesity epidemic around the world especially through reduction of sugar and salt in their products. The Ethics Committee believes that there is a strong case for action and a clear need to increase the level of proactive engagement with the companies in the sector particularly around the marketing and promotion of foods with the marketing to children a special focus.

If you would like to read more, look out for the booklet in the Chapel or go to www.methodist.org.uk/jacei or speak to Jennifer.

Into the new Connexional Year

This edition of Window on Wesley’s straddles August and September and takes us from one Connexional year into the next. Usually we do not really notice this apart from welcoming the new President and Vice President on the first Sunday of the year. This year there will be much more of a significant change as having said ‘goodbye’ to Leslie and Kido we welcome a new Superintendent on the 1st of September and a new lay-worker.

As most of you will know our new Superintendent is Revd Dr



Jennifer Smith, coming to us from the Ealing Trinity Circuit. Her husband is also a clergyperson, Rev Dr Keith Riglin, an Anglican priest and Chaplain at King’s College, London.

The welcome service will be on the evening of the 1st September when our District Chair, Revd Nigel

Cowgill will be the preacher.

(By the way to try to avoid confusion the two Jennifer's – Potter and Smith have decided that it will be Jen Smith and Jennifer Potter though we have no illusions about the fact that there will still be confusion!)

As always Wesley's Chapel has the privilege of welcoming the new President and Vice President of the Conference on the first Sunday in September, this year the 3rd of September. The incoming President is Revd Loraine Mellor, who is currently the Chair of the Nottingham and Derby District of our Church.



At her induction at this year's Conference in Birmingham in July Mrs. Mellor said "I want to encourage and enable the Church to put God back on the agenda in our communities and enthuse people to share the Good News. The Church has reached a tipping point, the time has come for us to take some risks in our mission and in our discipleship in order to help us grow."

Jill Baker, the Vice President, is a local preacher and tutor in the Scotland District, exploring and leading pilgrimages. She enjoys writing and, in the past, spent eight years as a mission partner in the South Caribbean. Jill was President of Methodist Women in Britain between 2011 and 2013.

"I am thankful to the Methodist family for the prayer and for the support it offers in hard times. I am committed to working locally and connexionally for an inclusive, just, compassionate and creative Church."

Jill has really been pivotal in the development of Methodist Women in Britain so I hope there will be a good turnout of our, Wesley's Chapel MWIB on the 3rd of September.

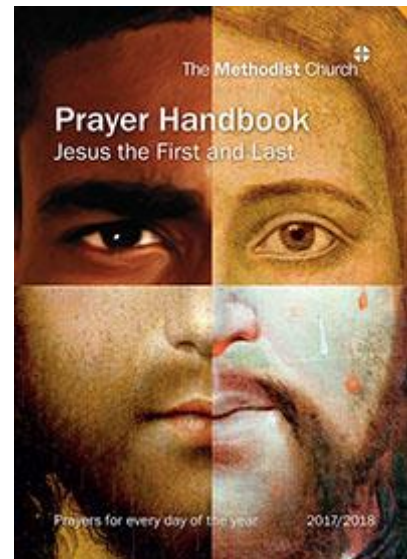
Let us not forget that Kido, Seunghee and Haim will be being welcomed into their new Circuit, the Barking, Dagenham and Ilford Circuit in East London on the evening of the 3rd September at 6.00pm at Gant's Hill Methodist Church – the closest Tube Station is Gant's Hill on the Central Line.



Please also remember that there will be a new Prayer Handbook for the beginning of September which helps us to pray with our fellow Methodists around the country and around the world.

The theme for this year's Handbook is "Jesus the first and the last" which is, as most of you will probably recognise taken from the hymn, 'This, this is the God we adore'

'Tis Jesus, the first and the last
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home
We'll praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that's to come'



A Day of Prayer and Fasting

The 2017 Methodist Conference, meeting in Birmingham earlier this summer, recognised the challenges and changes facing every community in these islands and the urgent call of God on the Methodist people to share the love of God in Jesus Christ in word and action.

The Conference therefore called on every local church to launch the new Methodist year with a day of prayer and fasting. This could be on **1 September**, the official start of our year, or on a date close to it to suit local circumstances.

A Yorkshire farm boy who founded the Methodist Mission to China George Piercy 1829 – 1913

There are many wonderful things about being at Wesley's Chapel not least that every day is different and one never knows just who is going to walk through the door.



One of these wonderful things is the way in which the past and present, heritage and mission and Britain and the rest of the world intersect.

In 2013 we received a visit from a group of Hong Kong Methodists. They had recently celebrated 160 years of the introduction of Methodism to Hong Kong and parts of China. We have good relations with our fellow Methodists in Hong Kong and this visit enhanced that relationship. The amazing thing about this visit was where they were travelling on to – it was not the usual destinations for Methodists of Bristol or Epworth but Pickering! Where, you may ask, is Pickering? And why Pickering?

Pickering is a lovely market town in North Yorkshire set in the midst of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park and it was the home of George Piercy, the pioneer missionary who was inspired to be a missionary in China and arrived there in 1851.

Despite fierce opposition and the death of his wife and child, George Piercy did succeed in founding a Christian mission in China and worked there for 30 years. He is now held in great esteem by the Methodists in Hong Kong and parts of mainland China and Pickering



CHINESE MISSION-HOUSE (LIMEHOUSE).

has become a place of pilgrimage. When Piercy returned from China he established a mission to the Chinese people of the Limehouse area in East London and also to Chinese seamen.

Piercy's last years were spent in Leytonstone as a Supernumerary Minister.

Why do I return to the subject of George Piercy now? The great granddaughter of Piercy, Jane Ashby, has just written a book about her ancestor which we are about to stock in the Museum Bookshop. It is well worth reading – why not go and have a look?

Jennifer Potter

September Lunchtime Recitals

5th Stephen Binnigton – Organ

12th Grzegorz Mania – Clarinet

19th Sergei Podobedov – Piano

24th Brieuc Vourch – Violin

***Entry free of charge
Tuesdays @ 1.05pm***



Thursdays Lunchtimes August/ September

“Praying Twice: Congregational Singing across the Centuries”

- August 10th Introduction: The Power of Congregational Singing
- August 17th “The day of resurrection”
John of Damascus (c675-750)
- August 24th “Sing my tongue, the Saviour’s Glory”
St Aquinas (1225-1274)
- August 31st “Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire”
John Cosin (1594-1672)
- September 7th “Sweet is the work, my God, my King”
Isaac Watts (1674- 1748)
- September 14th “What shall we offer our good Lord”
Spangenberg (1704-1792)
trans John Wesley (1703- 1791)
- September 21st “When in our music, God is glorified”
Frederick Pratt Green (1903- 2000)
- September 28th “O God, you search me and you know me.”
Bernadette Farrell (b 1957)

Holiness and Justice: Mechanisms of Injustice



This is the fifth in a series of 7 paintings that Ric Stott, a Methodist Mission Pioneer in Sheffield have made for Methodist Conference of 2016.

Of all the themes I was invited to explore for this series of paintings this is the one I approached with the most trepidation. I was asked to make

painting exploring the experience of asylum seekers in the world today.

Some issues feel too big and are so overwhelming that my temptation is to turn away and do anything to distract myself from the responsibility we all share in the way our increasingly interconnected world crushes those least able to speak out. We live at a time where 1 in every 122 people in the world is a refugee or is internally displaced and more than 3,700 refugees are thought to have died crossing the Mediterranean in 2015.

I don't even know where to begin with this abhorrent story of our planet. This is why I'm grateful for the likes of Rachel Lampard, last year's Vice President of the Methodist Church and her call to engage not in the sentimental manner of a hand wringing do-gooder, but with a strong, focussed and informed approach that respects all human beings as people to work alongside and not objects for us to do things to.

There are cogwheels in this image, the mechanisms of injustice that I am a part of. In the way I live, in the products I buy, in my silence and inaction I am complicit in systems that oppress the poorest in our world, that lead to the displacement of humanity from their homes. I am complicit in racist systems and systems that discriminate against those who are disabled. The complex web of interconnections in the world mean that my actions and your actions have consequences that ripple across continents.

When faced with the enormity of our responsibility if we don't succumb to the temptation to disengage and look the other way and have the courage to face the grief and pain of this world how can we avoid being overwhelmed by hopelessness? It's too big for us.

I've come away from making these paintings realising that I know less than I thought I knew when I started; art is at its best when it opens up a journey into not-knowing. This is one more question I don't know the answer to. But I suspect the answer does lie somewhere in the interplay between holiness and justice. When

we find for ourselves a spirituality that sustains us and calls us to a deep embracing of the world's grief then I sense that this gives us the wisdom, energy and (above all) love to enable us to live in such a way that the ripples we send out through the international web of interrelationships result in liberation rather than oppression.

In this image the wheels are cogs that crush and consume, we need wisdom and courage to live in such a way that we are not simply one more cog in the mechanisms of injustice but become the wedge, even the small piece of grit, which disrupts the whole machine.

Ric Stott

“For part of July we had an extra member of the team at the Chapel – Donnell Bowes came to us for two weeks on a ‘Community Action Placement’ as part of our link with The Rank Foundation. He is the third student that we have had as part of this scheme – Tom came in 2014, and Archie in 2015. As well as supporting students like these, The Rank Foundation supports Wesley’s Chapel – it was a grant from them which allowed us to employ our Learning support and Community Engagement Officer (Aisha) who works wonders in the museum.

Donnell visited the Chapel on a Sunday, joined Sisterhood, saw some of the activities our staff are involved in, and worked on projects that we hope will help the chapel in its work. Here’s his reflection on his time with us:”

In the two weeks that I have spent at Wesley’s chapel through the Rank foundation I have genuinely learnt a lot not just about the Chapel and what they strive to do, but I have also learnt a lot about myself.

Firstly though, I think that it is important to touch on the topic of the Rank Foundation and what they aim to do and what they have done for me. The Rank Foundation like Wesley’s chapel are all

about helping people in whatever circumstances they may be in, in my situation they sponsor me and give me the opportunity to attend a boarding school in Surrey, for which I am immensely grateful. In return for this amazing opportunity it is compulsory for me to complete two summer placements, my first of which is here at Wesley's chapel.

While I have been at the Chapel, I have been truly blessed with opportunities that not many people will have the pleasure of doing in their lives for example, I was able to go to radio 4 with Leslie but not only was I able to just sit in on the action, but also take part by reading a Bible reading live on radio. This is something that I never would've imagined doing, but thanks to Leslie this was made possible.

In addition to this, I have also had the opportunity to go on a tour of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, previously things I had only seen from the outside, or pictures of. So actually being able to experience these buildings first hand was just an extraordinary experience, again at expense to Leslie and the chapel.

The time spent in the Chapel for me have mostly been working on the lotus project which is essentially just copying data from one system to another, while it may not necessarily be one of the more interesting things to do, it has given me an insight as to what office work is like. Also the fact that I know after a long day of hard work, I have made a change is rather quite rewarding. However, this is not the only thing I have been doing in my two weeks here, I have also been tasked with going around the site and looking to see how Wesley's chapel could be more appealing to people of my generation which I found quite enjoyable, and again the sense of aiding people and trying to make a difference feels very rewarding.

When I first arrived here I was oblivious as to what Wesley's chapel actually do, initially I thought it was just a chapel that had a museum attached to it. However, I have been pleasantly surprised

to find out that it is so much more than that, this chapel has so much history, with the work of John Wesley helping people and the roots of Methodism being right here on this site. Also it's inspiring how the chapel are so proud of their history and uphold the foundations that made the chapel what it is today. Living proof of this is Sagan Daniels who, like me did not come from a privileged background, but was blessed with the opportunity of going away to boarding school through Wesley's chapel to give him a better shot at life. He now works for England rugby, where he too helps people and provides rugby lessons for youth.

I now hope one day I will be in a position that I can help people by putting them in a better position.

SERENDIPITY TWENTYSIX **A Brand Plucked from the Burning?:**

Part One: John Wesley and the Epworth Rectory Fire.

The previous articles presented in Window on Wesley's under the banner of Serendipity have usually come about principally as a result of discoveries made while acting as a Heritage Steward. This latest article is a little different because its preparation was prompted by a recent incident that happened at the Chapel. But, before what this was is revealed, it is useful to place it in context by relating some Methodist history, and for a start we need to borrow Dr Who's Tardis to travel back a few hundred years in time and to move ourselves many miles from City Road. Then, as with all the best stories we are going to start with a birth.

Three hundred and fourteen years ago, on Sunday 17th June 1703, their fourteenth child and sixth, (possibly seventh), son was born to Susanna and Samuel Wesley at the family home, the rectory of the Anglican Church of St Andrews. The church, where, during the years 1697 – 1735, Samuel ministered as parish priest to the inhabitants of the small north Lincolnshire market town of Epworth.

Epworth, situated, as it still is, in a mainly agricultural area, about midway between Goole and Gainsborough, some 150 miles north of London, has never been of any great significance. Nevertheless, the town is of historical importance, if only, because of the baby boy who came into the world that June Sunday, and was baptised with the recycled name of John. Because he grew up to become the Rev John Wesley, the co-founder of the world wide Methodist Church and the commissioner of Wesley's Chapel.

We begin this serendipitous chronicle at Epworth because it was both John Wesley's birthplace and also the scene of one of the many momentous events in his life story; in this case, the site of the event that so very nearly could have put an end to John's life.

The family that John became a part of in 1703, then consisted of his mother and father, five sisters and a brother, (then away at school); other brothers having perished in infancy. Their rectory home, which they shared with some family servants, was located a short distance from Samuels church, a stone building which since the 12th century has stood on a hill at the heart of Epworth.

In 1703, the rectory, unlike the church, was constructed mainly of lath and plaster on a heavy timber frame and roofed with straw thatch. It was an old building of a type which still exists in Lincolnshire, and elsewhere, and capable of remaining in a habitable condition for many centuries providing careful attention is paid to maintenance. Nevertheless, as usually only the fireplaces and chimney stacks are made of stone or brick, the main structure and roofs of such houses are far from fire proof and indeed, are very vulnerable and liable at any time to be damaged by fire started either from sparks blown from the chimney or embers falling from an open hearth. Indeed, the Epworth rectory was not immune from such dangers, for in 1702 a fire broke out and caused serious but not irreparable damage to the property. At that time it was considered that the cause was not entirely accidental, but might have been the result of something more sinister than a stray spark. This was, sadly,

because Samuel was not popular with a significant proportion of his unruly parishioners who often misunderstood him, and had strong political views which differed substantially from his own.

The likelihood of arson cannot be ruled out either both in the loss of the flax crop from his glebe farm in 1704, and the far more serious event which occurred five years later.

This was when, between the hours of 11.00pm and midnight on the bitterly cold and frosty night of Saturday 9th February 1709, so fierce a conflagration broke out that in less than a quarter of an hour, the entire rectory building was burnt to the ground and the majority of its contents destroyed. That the Wesley family did not perish also was in part owing to Samuel being alerted by shouts of fire from below his bedroom window. He thus had time to ensure that his heavily pregnant wife Susanna, most of the children, including the infant Charles, as well as the household servants, were roused. With difficulty and minor burns they were able to scramble to safety before the fire had taken hold on the staircase and the lower rooms. But, only after they had all gathered was it discovered that one of the family members, the six year old infant John, was not with them. Instead, he remained trapped in his first floor bedroom. The rector, once he realised the plight of his son, tried desperately to find a way to get him to safety. But Samuel's desperate attempts to re-enter the blazing house were in vain as he was beaten back by the fierceness of the flames and the destruction of the staircase. Thus, in despair he resorted to gathering with members of his household to appeal to God in prayer. Meantime those neighbours of the Wesley family, who were assisting at the scene, were also seeking ways to save little John. Through the smoke and the glare of the fire they were able to glimpse the boy hanging out of his open bedroom window.

When John recalled the adventure, in later life, he related that he awoke to find the ceiling of his room and the bed hangings all afire, and no one answering his urgent calls. Fortunately, he had

the presence of mind to climb onto some furniture, in front of the window, then to lean out and to call to the people below. They saw him out of reach above their heads, at his first floor window, but were quick witted enough to realise that a man clambering up on the shoulders of another could, in this way, gain sufficient height. This is what was done, and although he slipped at off, at his first attempt, the rescuer by quickly scrambling back on, was just in time, to reach John and haul him out of the room, before it burst into flames with the falling in of the ceiling and the roof.

All the members of the Wesley family escaped with their lives, but their home, the bulk of their possessions, including Samuel's books and manuscripts and Susanna's collection of family memorabilia, together with what money they had, were lost. Despite this, in his relief that he and all his family had avoided a fiery death, Samuel called to his neighbours to kneel down with him and to thank God for the safety of all his nearest and dearest which was worth more than any material loss. As for John's mother, she is said to have thought long and hard over John's last minute escape, decided, "*that God must have saved John for some special purpose*", and, as she recorded in her diary, "resolved to take good care of the boy". John, himself, on later occasions considered that he had, in a transliteration of verses from the Old Testament prophets Amos and Zechariah, been especially chosen to be saved by God like, "*A Brand plucked from the burning*".

In less than a year Samuel Wesley had his rectory rebuilt on the ground plan of the old and incorporating the surviving base of the main chimney. This time he was taking no chances so had the new house constructed from fireproof brick. The cost was high, and despite the help of funds from the Church Commissioners, Samuel was left with a substantial debt which was not paid off for many a year.

When her husband died in 1735, Susanna and the remaining children who were still at home had to vacate the rectory as it was needed for the new incumbent. It then remained in use by

succeeding Rectors of St Andrews until 1954. Then the Church of England built a new rectory and sold the old property to the Methodist Church. Now, under the name of the “Old Rectory”, the refurbished former home of the Wesley family has become, like Wesley’s Chapel, a heritage centre for Methodist visitors, and others, from all over the world.

Although, as noted, London, and Wesley’s Chapel are some 150 miles from Epworth, the Museum of Methodism does have on show a souvenir of the rectory fire. This is in the form of a copy of the Bible printed in 1608. It is in a badly charred condition which is not surprising since it was recovered from the rubbish and rubble of the rectory. Further, a somewhat “romanticised” depiction of the rescue of John Wesley forms part of the audio-visual display shown to visitors to the Museum.

At this point in the narrative, having described the escape of John Wesley from the fire which burnt his family home to the ground, this part of the article comes to a close. The continuation of the story is being left, to a later edition of Window on Wesley’s, when it will be seen that Mr Wesley’s City Road Chapel, has, like him had several similar escapes from apparently certain destruction.

Keith Dutton - Heritage Steward

CRADLE ROLL BIRTHDAYS

August

1 st	Maison Forbes-Gray	5 years
14 th	Joel Annang-Allotey	4 years

September

1 st	Elijah Carlos Alberto	2 years
3 rd	Zachariah Morris	4 years
8 th	Jackson Coley	4 years
11 th	Simonette Bobie	4 years
14 th	Arianna Nutor	4 years
15 th	Rowan Hutchings McDowell	1 year
25 th	Benjamin Pratt	1 year
28 th	Haim Baek	1 year

And finally.....

I've thought long and hard about the piece I'm about to write. It concerns the most difficult moment in my 21 years at the Chapel. It would be convenient to brush it under the carpet, to pretend it never happened; but I've always aimed at transparency, always refused the road of denial. Truth must out. The account of my time here must be told in all its colours.

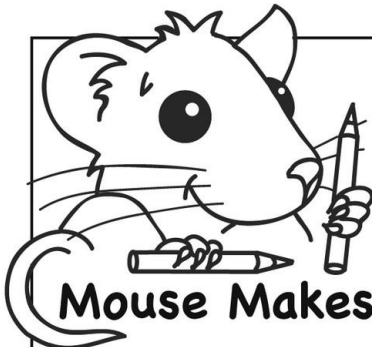
We've done incredible things together, not least in terms of maintaining and developing our property. Just consider this list of achievements and make your own judgement. We insulated the Chapel's roof area and repainted the entire Chapel without missing even one service and We installed new boilers and a computer-operated zonal heating system – thus diminishing our “carbon footprint” and spending less on our energy needs. We re-styled the Philadelphia room making it serve a much larger variety of needs. With the generous help of the Milbourne family we created a memorial garden which is now widely used and greatly appreciated by our visitors. We knocked two fairly useless rooms into one and brought the Kwanglim room into being. We installed the first generation of audio visual equipment?? (*there is a screen and wifi but not like the Radnor*) in the Kwanglim Room, the Radnor Hall and the Chapel, making our meeting space much more attractive to organisations which meet on our premises. We enhanced our three bed sitting rooms by providing them with en-suite facilities. We advertised our services with state-of-the-art roadside signage boards. And, the glory of glories, we stripped out everything from our crypt and built our brand-new, much-admired Museum of Methodism. All this in addition to regular maintenance and upkeep. You simply have to admire this record of our achievements in this area.

So what's the problem? It's this. The implementation of all this work was overseen by Robin Kent. He will be remembered, of course, for quite other reasons. He engaged in fraudulent activity and stole a considerable sum of money by his manipulation of our finances. And he's paid a heavy price for his wrong-doing. But his contribution to the work we've done in my time here simply has to

be recognized for what it is. And we must somehow thank God for his expertise even as we pray for him as he prepares to face a bleak future.

Leslie Griffiths

CHILDREN'S PAGE



Have you ever been on a long journey?
 Where did you go?
 How long did it take you to get there?
 The Bible reminds us that wherever
 we travel and wherever we go, God is with us!



Where did God ask Jonah to go?

Read Jonah 1-4



What did Jesus tell his disciples *not* to take with them on their journey?

Read Matthew 10:9-10



Who spoke to Saul on his journey to Damascus?

Read Acts 9:3-8



What animal took Balaam to Moab?

Read Numbers 22:22



How did God guide the Israelites on their journey through the wilderness?

Read Exodus 13:21



Who did Abram take with him on his journey to Canaan?

and

Read Genesis 12:4-5

= a	= f	= n	= t
= b	= h	= o	= u
= c	= i	= p	= v
= d	= l	= r	= w
= e	= m	= s	= y

Can you decipher the verse on the suitcase?

Evening

Taizé

Wesley's Chapel



A Service of prayer, Song and Contemplation

**Last Sunday of every month
at 7.00pm**

Weekly programme of events

Sunday	9.45am	Holy Communion (except 1 st Sunday in month)
	11.00am	Morning Service
	12.30pm	Methodist Women in Britain (MWIB) (First Sunday in the month)
	12.30pm	Wesley's Chapel Ghana Fellowship (Last Sunday in the month)
	7.00pm	Taizé Evening Service (Last Sunday in the month)
Monday	7.00am	Prayer Meeting
	2.00pm	Sisterhood Fellowship
Tuesday	1.05 pm	Lunchtime Recital
	6.30pm	Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association (11 & under))
	7.45pm	Boys' Brigade (over 11's)
Wednesday	10.00am	Stay and Play (pre-school)
	12.45pm	Service of Holy Communion
Thursday	12.45pm	Lunchtime Service

**If you would like to submit an article, poem, prayer or item of interest for this magazine please email it to:
pa@wesleyschapel.org.uk or leave it at the Church Office
marked FAO Tracey Smith**