



WINDOW ON WESLEY'S



JULY 2020

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Dear Friends,

I write just in the moment of not knowing exactly what is lying ahead, just after the guidance about re-opening church has been issued by the government, but before the Methodist Church has brought out its own advice. This means I cannot give specifics about how exactly we are going to go about re-opening, but I can say this: we will be unhurried and have safety at the heart of what we do.

We are also keen to regather, and to help all of us together to rebuild. It is a time of great uncertainty still for many of us, with question marks over jobs, schools, and supporting family overseas, and we will stand with one another. We have grieving to do together, and thanksgiving also.

There is much talk about a 'new normal,' and our trustees have been doing prayerful discernment about what our 'new normal' will look like. We want to be bold, and to build your resilience in every way we can. What can we keep, and expand now, to help our mission? What should we not begin again?

There is one calling of the Methodist Church: **'...to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.'** This, we do in four main areas of life together: **worship, learning and caring, service, and evangelism.**

Our trustees have been working virtually on a statement of values in each area: not the church we wish we could be or think we could build if we had extra time, money, and people, but the heart of who we are. Who God has made us, and is making us.

Welcome, international and cross cultural awareness, worship that equips God's people with the tools of faith, engagement with scripture, low-to-the-ground community presence and a supple response to need around us, partnerships, and sharing faith are all themes crossing the different areas, that clearly shape who we are at City Road. In due course, the wider congregation will be

asked to take the reflection the next step, building on the workshops last October where we dipped our feet in the water. Again, it is about who God is making us, not what we think a 'perfect' church would look like. 'Never waste a crisis' is one of the good scripture lessons we see leaders in the Bible enact over and over again – this has been and is a crisis, and we will look to see where God is at work.

Friends, there will be some interesting times ahead: keep one another in prayer. And if you want a challenge just small enough to be effective, why not do what I've suggested our trustees do? Choose one of the Gospels, and read one chapter each day – not more, even if tempted. See what you notice, what surprises you even in the passages you think will be most familiar. What do you notice about the disciples, and about Jesus? How might we inhabit these insights? God is faithful, and we are at work.

With every good wish,

Jennifer

Conference Greetings



As I write, I am in the midst of the annual meeting of the Methodist Conference, meeting as never before by technological marvel, with all of its members conferring intensively but remotely from our homes. Together with Sarah Murray—one of our members—we are part of the representation of the London Methodist district at the Conference, and I look forward to bringing you much news of the Conference's work next month.

For now, I simply bring you greetings from the Conference. Greetings with great warmth: I miss you! As lockdown restrictions gradually lift, and bit by bit it becomes more possible for us to gather as the Wesley's community, I can't wait to see you all again. As Jennifer outlines, it will take a bit of time though. As we wait, it has been really great to gather with some of you each

Sunday afternoon at our weekly Zoom fellowship gathering (the socially-distanced equivalent of tea and coffee in the Radnor Hall after worship!) If you haven't discovered this yet—and if it would be, as it were... your cup of tea—please do give it a try. It's possible to join in both online or simply by phone. You would be so welcome!

Meanwhile, please do be in touch with your news; and don't hesitate to contact me (07483 160593 / minister@wesleyschapel.org.uk) or my colleagues here at the Chapel if you'd like a listening ear or if we can be of support in any way.

I wish you every blessing this July, as always.

Steven

BLACK LIVES MATTER: MY STORY

I arrived in Britain on a cold, wet November morning in 1962. My dad had come to England from St Lucia three years earlier on the then Labour Government's invitation to Caribbean British subjects, men and women, to help rebuild the country after the devastation of the former war years.



My mum, older sister and youngest brother (who was 2) joined my dad 2 years later, and in 1962 my eldest brother, a younger brother and I came to join the family here in the UK.

My sister attended an all-girls school near our home in the Borough of Islington, and a place had been reserved for me there. Everything was different; the cold, dark and damp climate, compared to the bright sunshine of the Caribbean. The people were mostly white and not friendly. We tried to say 'good

morning' or 'good afternoon' as we were accustomed to when meeting someone in St Lucia, but no-one replied.

My first day at school was met with curiosity by the girls who had many questions for me: Where did I come from? Why is my skin dirty (not white)? Do we live in trees? I could answer the first question: where I was from? But the second and third questions puzzled me. My skin was not dirty, I had washed that morning before going to school; and I didn't know anyone who lived in trees. We had formerly lived with my grandad in a fairly large house about a mile from the sea. I was 13 years old.

I had enjoyed studying and my favourite subjects were Maths, English (language and literature) and Scripture (R.E). I was moved three times that week into higher classes since my work was above the average of the work being done in the lower classes. I focused on doing my classwork and homework and got good grades. My first knockback came when I came 1st in an English test. My English teacher (who was white) seemed displeased, and said to the rest of the class "Girls, Betty comes all the way from India and you let her beat you in your own language. You should be ashamed". I started to tell the teacher that I was not from India and she gave me detention (outside the headmistress' office) for being rude and talking back to a teacher. My elation at coming 1st was soon broken for it felt as though I had done something wrong. No one said 'congratulations!' At home, my mum and sister said 'well done' and my dad said that I should ignore the teacher's comments. But it was not so easy to do.

Later on, in my Maths test I came 2nd among 50 girls (2 classes put together). It was again mentioned in the class, that something was wrong, how I managed to get such high marks when I was from such a backward country. Some of the girls said 'I was showing off'. In my family, we are encouraged to do ones best: at school it appeared that I was reprimanded for doing well.

In French lessons, I could recognize simple nouns because of the French based Creole Patois which we spoke in St Lucia as an unofficial 2nd language. After getting some questions right, my French teacher told me that I was not allowed to answer any more questions as it would be cheating, since I had more knowledge of French than my classmates. I soon began to realise that my teachers did not want me to make any progress in my education.

The pattern was repeated in my music lesson, where I was ignored by the teacher and took little or no part in the lesson. As a result, I played truant whenever I could get away with it and chose a different subject as soon as I was allowed to.

At games, I was told that I should be good at running because my PE teacher was sure that I'd had 'plenty of practice in the bush'. I learned to be quiet and sink into the background. I did the minimum amount of school work so that I would not be singled out for good nor bad.

Two subjects which I enjoyed were Scripture and Cookery. I was familiar with the Bible stories and my teacher was nice. Perhaps because she was a Christian!

In cookery classes, we were left very much to our own devices as long as we followed the recipe given. Therefore, our cooking and baking results were not dissimilar so there was not much need for competition here!

The more lively and troublesome girls invited me to come to the toilets at break times for a cigarette and then to go and meet some boys, from a nearby boy's school, at the back school fence. I declined their offers and, after telling me what a boring person I was, they left me alone.

I was the only non-white girl in a class of 30. My sister was in a class above me and had told me to let her know if anyone was mean to me.

During my 3-year duration at the school, I only saw a black teacher once. She had come to our class on teacher training. She left in tears a few hours later and did not return. The children had called her 'monkey' names and made appropriate sounds. I could empathise with her and felt her pain. Children can be cruel and if they continue in that vein, they become cruel and insensitive adults, not realising how their behaviour can have long lasting ill effects on the recipient. I was called names such as 'Paki' and although I didn't know what it meant at that time, I knew it was meant unkindly.

Are you tired of my whinging? I'm sorry, but I could write a book. There is so much to say on the subject since I'd like to point out some of the reasons why so many black children don't achieve academically - because the whole educational system (in my day, over 50 years ago and even at present - though done more covertly,) is stacked against them. In my case, there was no-one I could talk to about my unhappy time at school. My parents had not gone through the educational system here in the UK, so could not understand. Our family were brought up to respect older people, teachers and those in authority, so my treatment at school was incomprehensible. I told my mother that I didn't want to go to school anymore but she said that having an education was important. And in any event, she and my father, as parents, would get into trouble with the law if they kept me at home during the school term.

Before I left school I was interviewed by a Youth Employer who generally came to the school a few months before the end of the school year, to try to place school leavers into suitable positions. When I was asked what I would like to do after leaving school, I told the youth employer that I'd like to work in a bank because I enjoyed working with figures. She surprised me by saying: 'I'm sorry Betty, but they do not take coloureds in banks. So you'll have to choose something else. You can go into service, or become a nanny'. I wondered then whether I'd wasted my time going to school.

Sometimes I hear remarks like 'these blacks have a chip on their shoulder'. Perhaps we have, for we have learned from early experiences, that we stand alone and have to fight our own battles, emotionally and, please God, not so much, physically

Betty Maynard - Trustee & Church Member

Law Scholarships available for students in Year 12

Are you interested in a career in law? Are you a student in Year 12? Do you know someone who is?

I am passionate about improving social mobility. I am therefore really supportive of my firm's scholarship programme which is now open for Year 12 students wanting to read law at university. I want to spread the word about this scholarship, so if you know of someone who could benefit from this, please let them know.

I am a partner at international law firm, CMS. I studied law at Bristol University and I was very lucky to have parents who could support me through my time at both school and university. Most people who went to my school did not have this support.

We have 6 scholarships available with £2,500 per year to help you through your law degree. The scholarship includes mentoring support through the UCAS application process and paid working experience during your first year at university.

Note that the closing date for applications for this year is 22 July 2020.

The entry requirements are as follows:

- Year 12 student (S5/S6 in Scotland)
- State school/college student
- Predicted grades of at least ABB at A Level (ABBBB or AABB in Highers)

- First generation to university
- Either eligible for free school meals or at a school with 20% or more students on free school meals or have a home address in POLAR4 young participation quantile 1

The application process involves writing a 750-1,000-word essay response to either of the following questions:

- Will the current lockdown create more advantages than disadvantages?
- "Until climate action becomes profitable, positive climate change will not happen." Do you agree?

You can find full details of the scheme and how to apply on our website: <https://cms.law/en/GBR/About-Us/Corporate-Responsibility/CMS-Law-Scholarships>

My firm also has other initiatives aimed at improving Social Mobility: there is an apprenticeship scheme and our new #CMSBuildingBetterFutures Hub contains useful insights into the legal industry and the general world of work, which is hopefully useful for those considering their future.

I am always happy to speak to people about a possible career in law.

Cheryl Gurnham – Trustee & Church Member

Emerging Adults programme for July

July 4th - Planning forward session and social

July 11th - Bible Study on Philemon

July 18th - Social

July 25th - Bible study on Book of Jude

If you would like to join any of the sessions the following recurring link is Sally Rush is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Emerging Adults Bible Study and Social
Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81202007536?pwd=dGIZeVNvOWVBRIJDNWk5d3BoaXVLZz09>

Meeting ID: 812 0200 7536

Password: 028099

If you're in the 16-30'S age group and want to know more contact Sally Rush (cw@wesleyschapel.org.uk)

Sally Rush - Community Worker (Emerging Adults)

A theft at City Road!

Judith Lampard, one of our wonderful band of heritage stewards, particularly enjoys telling this story when she is on duty and showing our visitors round John Wesley's House:

John Wesley recorded in his journal of Saturday 20 November 1784, that 'about 3 in the morning, two or three men broke into our house, through the kitchen window. Thence they came up into the parlour and broke open Mr Moore's bureau, where they found two or three pounds.' Fortunately, Mr Moore had previously been dissuaded by his host from leaving £70 there (according to the inflation calculator this would be £10,500 today!)

Suddenly, at 3.30am, instead of the 4am which he'd intended, Mr Moore's alarm clock went off 'with a thundering noise', and the thieves ran away speedily, though their work was 'not half done'! The whole damage, said John Wesley, scarce amounted to six pounds (today this would be £900!)

Surprisingly, Wesley didn't seem too worried by the £6. Maybe the money in the Bureau belonged to Mr Moore, and Wesley wouldn't bother replacing the silver teaspoons!

Judith Lampard - Heritage Steward & Local Preacher

Tales of a Travelling Preacher – Part 2 Memories of Fifty Years as a Methodist Local Preacher

In the second instalment of this wonderful memoir we look at Graham's road to becoming a Local Preacher & his time at Cliff College

First Steps

In 1967, I became a 'Local Preacher on Note' in the New Forest South Circuit. My mentor was another Dennis, he was Head of RE at the local Grammar School, and really put me through my paces. I have some of my original early, hand-written, Orders of Service and Sermons, it is interesting to look back and see how God had been working at my development then and continually over the years.

Early in the new year I was on my own as a 'Local Preacher on Trial'. It was truly as a travelling preacher, I may not have had a horse, but I did have a 175cc BSA Super Bantam motorcycle and together we travelled to pretty villages with tiny chapels with small, mainly elderly, congregations. I still have Orders of Service/Sermons for, Bransgore, Brockenhurst, Lymington, Milford on Sea, Sway, and Thorney Hill, they were the regular visits. I also visited Highcliffe, Burley, Ringwood, Poulner, Stuckton, Frogham, Godshill, and Wood Green which were further across the New Forest.

One summer evening I was planned at Thorney Hill 10 miles away across the open Forest. The weather was beautiful when I left but at about halfway a violent thunderstorm blew up and it rained – very heavily. I was wearing some rain gear but not my

leather boots. My legs and feet were soaked. When I arrived, there was a congregation of three and I led the service and preached whilst squelching in my shoes. We had no organist and I thanked God that he had blessed me with the ability to sing and I led the singing too. Jesus had been there with the four of us as we worshipped. The ride home was good and the warm breeze began to dry me out by the time I got there.

I know that John and Charles Wesley had some problems with their horses and they both fell off a couple of times. Not wishing to upstage them, but so did I. Bransgore had a busy church and in the winter a Youth Fellowship after the evening service. One frosty, misty, November evening we had a good service and I stayed for a coffee and cake with the Young People. I left about half an hour later than usual. By then the mist had come down thickly and it was freezing. I rode carefully and knew that the lane I was on met another where I had to turn left. At the junction, there was a five-barred gate opposite which was a helpful navigation point but I couldn't see it. Then suddenly it appeared out of the mist straight in front of me, fortunately I was travelling slowly. I hit the brakes but the bike skidded on frozen leaves in the gutter and I knew I was going to hit the gate post. I remember saying,

'Lord, I'm going to hit that gate post!' - and in what seemed like slow motion I did.

I was pitched off into the road and the bike fell over. The engine kept going with the rear wheel still spinning round. I was afraid fuel might spill onto the hot engine and catch fire. I turned off the engine, and managed to pick the bike up, got on and rode very gingerly back to the chapel where I could get light to check the bike out. It was ok, so was I, unhurt, but a bit shaken. On the way home, I started to shake and changed right down to bottom gear and crawled, safely, all the way home. Mum hadn't been too concerned because she thought I had probably stayed to the Youth Fellowship longer than I intended.

I was following my Old Testament Studies by distance learning and was finding it difficult with working as well. Then I had the opportunity to apply to Cliff College in Derbyshire a well-known Methodist Lay Training Centre. I couldn't get a grant as it didn't fit Hampshire County Council's criteria. Mum decided to go back to teaching to help provide the funds. God moves in a mysterious way as she had been toying with the idea for a while and this provided the impetus.

Cliff College

Without doubt God had intended me to go to Cliff College. I started in October 1968 and it changed my life. I had failed my eleven plus because, being left-handed I found handwriting difficult and I wrote quite slowly. I had done well but as there were only 25 places at Wimborne Grammar School and 125 candidates the authorities thought I would find it too difficult to cope. The local secondary school offered no opportunity to take O Levels. However, the weekly four hours of Woodwork and Metalwork lessons were not wasted, and I have frequently remembered with thanks my teacher for the skills he taught me.

At Cliff I studied Theology, Old and New Testament Studies and Worship and Preaching which met the requirements to become a Local Preacher. I also did some Community Service and, significantly, studied to obtain five GCEs.

We were out preaching almost every Sunday across the Peak District and the East Midlands. We were transported to the various places by cars or the College minibus and sometimes by bus. Many Chapels did not have morning services but afternoon and evening services and we were invited to tea with a member of the congregation before the evening service which could be at a different, local, chapel. Their hospitality was always generous and sincere.

I have kept records and have Orders of Service and some Sermons from Bamford (x2), Shirland, Egmanton and Normanton

(Nottinghamshire), Newtown, Longnor, Sparrowpit, Winster (x2), Warslow, Rewlach, Thurgoland, Wisewood (Sheffield), Youlgreave, Elton, Foolow, Moneyash (x2), Penistone, Bakewell, Rowsley, Old Tupton, Flagg, Calver, Hognaston and Clay Cross. There was at least one service a week during term-time and often two. If they were different chapels, you could use the same service again. I also took part in Evangelical Missions to Bradford, Colne, Sleaford and Barnet, from September 1968 – July 1969 I preached and participated/led Sunshine Corners many times. I had become a genuine 'travelling preacher' and not yet 'Fully Accredited'.

For different reasons three churches in particular stand out for me – Newtown, Penistone and Hognaston. In November we had heavy snow and I was planned to preach in the 'White Peak' at Newtown in the afternoon and Longnor in the evening. Those of us planned in the area were taken by Mini-bus to Youlgreave where we transferred to local cars. The Minister took me towards Newtown and when we got to the top of a hill he stopped and told me he had to go on to the church where I was preaching that evening. He pointed to a farm in the distance and told me the key for the Chapel was kept at the farmhouse, I only needed to knock and ask for it, as I would be expected.

Having said farewell and driven off, I trudged through the snow to the farm it took about twenty minutes. When I arrived at the gate a large angry dog came racing down towards me. Fortunately, he was attached to a long wire and couldn't get at me. The lady from the farm gave me the key. By now I was cold. The chapel was easy to find but when I unlocked it was like walking into a freezer. I had about half an hour to wait for the service. There was an electric heater on the wall, but I didn't know how to turn it on, or, in my ignorance, if I was allowed to. I was wearing a thin overcoat and getting colder. It was almost 2.30 before a man arrived and turned the heating on. He also informed me that he was my host for tea after the service. Eventually a lady arrived who played the organ and then another lady arrived.

I had planned five hymns and I felt it was a bit much for them to sing. I suggested perhaps we could have a less formal service and some Bible Study. My host abruptly told me,

‘We’ve come for service lad, get into pulpit.’

I did and preached in my overcoat. We sang all five hymns, one lady played, one lady sang, my host sang, I sang and we managed to make a ‘noise’ to the Lord. I’m not sure if it was joyful!

My biggest shock was yet to come, the congregation left quickly after the service and my host, who had a ‘gammy leg’, led me to his car, a large, somewhat dated saloon. As I got in he told me it was the only car he could drive because of his leg. By now it was getting dark and freezing we started off and it quickly became clear he didn’t drive the car but aimed it. In the half-light, we had an uneventful but ‘interesting’ ride to his farm on the top of a hill. The wind was biting cold and as we sat around a lovely warm fire for ‘high tea’ my face was burning, and my back was freezing.

After tea, we prepared to go onto Longnor. It was about a half-hour drive. It was full dark with brightly twinkly stars and below zero. The snow twinkled in the starlight and the snow packed roads looked like a toboggan run and they were. We set off out of the farmyard and then sped along these narrow, thankfully, empty roads until we reached the end of the ridge. Then we hurtled down this long steepish slope and I suddenly realised the car was out of gear and we were free-wheeling. This was before safety belts had to be fitted. I prayed that I would arrive at my service in a fit state to preach. My host was oblivious he was enjoying his toboggan ride. We arrived in Longnor safely but it was the most frightening ride I have ever had. The church was bigger, had a larger congregation and was warm! We sang all the five hymns lustily and it was a good service.

I was driven back to College, very well, by a member of the congregation. However, it was after 9.00 pm when I arrived back.

I was the last preacher 'home' and they were getting a bit concerned that I might have been stuck in the snow. They had left me a slice of cold meat, a couple of slices of bread and lukewarm tea at the bottom of the large, almost empty tea-pot. It was a tradition that after tea that we gathered around the piano and sang hymns to welcome the preachers as they returned. I sat and munched my cold meat and drank my cold tea feeling a bit down. Then those around the piano launched into 'Abide with me', it was so moving, despite the experiences of the day I had not been alone. God had been with me and I had taken the gospel to small congregations to enable them to worship.

In March, I went to preach in Penistone Methodist Church. It had been a harsh winter and there was still some snow about. The afternoon service was well attended with some children and it went very well. A lovely, genteel, petite, elderly lady introduced herself as my host for 'tea'. She was charming and so caring. As we chatted I discovered she lived on her own, and I think had been widowed for quite a long time. To host a visiting preacher was a 'highlight' of her week and she only used the parlour for meals with special visitors, mainly preachers. It was magnificent, beautifully laid out with bone china, silver cutlery and a full Sunday Roast and a blazing fire. It was a wonderful experience and she got so much from it as I did.

The evening service was a traditional evening service, I really miss them now. To close I had chosen what is probably my favourite evening hymn: '*Father in high heaven dwelling,*' (George Rawson, MHB 938, H&P 640) It was a fitting end to a lovely day and I wasn't the last one home either.

One of my last preaching appointments at Cliff was at Hognaston near Wirksworth, it was a pretty, little chapel on the ridge of a low hill surrounded by farmland and animals. It was a lovely Summer evening and a very poignant service. Sadly, you won't find that valley today for shortly after that service the valley was flooded to make Carsington Water. The congregation were worried about the effect it would have on them. Some of them were farmers and

were concerned about their livelihoods. It was, to some extent, a sombre service and I hoped that it had given them a message of hope and uplift.

When I returned some years later the road that led to the valley stops at the water's edge and you can see it continuing the other side of the lake. It reflects that time passes and things change but God never does he is always with us.

Soon after arriving at Cliff I began to believe that I was being called towards the Methodist Ministry, but it was about halfway through the year when a small group of us went to a little tin Chapel near Barnsley. We had gone with an Evangelist to help in the worship. Part way through the service God made it clear to me, that I was to complete my Local Preacher Training but to apply to Teacher Training College. As he had called me to Local Preaching he now called me to teach.

My time at Cliff seemed to pass so quickly. I had learned so much and grown spiritually. When I finished my final 'Trek' to Barnet I was ready for a rest. We returned to College to pack. After a final worship and prayer time we all set off on our different ways home. A group of us travelled to Chesterfield station and waited for our various trains. As the trains came in on either platform we all sang the Gospel Song:

*Down in the valley with my Saviour I would go,
Where the flowers are blooming and the sweet waters flow,
Everywhere he leads me I would follow, follow on,
Walking in his footsteps 'til the crown be won.
Follow, follow I will follow Jesus, anywhere, everywhere,
I will follow on,
Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus, everywhere he leads me
I will follow on.*

*Down in the valley with my Saviour I would go,
Where the storms are sweeping and the dark waters flow.
With his hand to guide me I will never, never, fear.*

Dangers cannot frighten me if my Lord is near.

*Down in the valley, or upon the mountain steep,
Close beside my Saviour would my soul ever keep.
He will keep me safely in the path that he has trod,
Up to where they gather on the hills of God.
(William Cushing)*

As the various trains left the groups became smaller until only a handful of us were left waiting for the Bournemouth train. I don't know what the other passengers on the two platforms thought but it was a very moving and special memory of a page turning.

Graham Warr – Local Preacher & Heritage Steward

Look out for part 3 in the August edition of Window on Wesley's

Our Learning Officer writes:

I hope the July edition of WoW finds you well!

Working through lockdown has provided me with the chance to develop and take part in several new projects that otherwise I might not have had the chance to do. Whilst I miss the site and going out to schools, it's certainly been interesting to try new things.

This month I gave my first live science session in partnership with Benjamin Franklin House. I've worked on a couple of projects with them in recent months but this was the first time I'd led a live class online. Benjamin Franklin House have been delivering weekly classes based on Franklin's scientific discoveries and inventions.

The session I delivered was 'Materials and their Properties' on 30th June. I was inspired by John Wesley's boat trip to America and the fierce storm he encountered and we explored which materials float and why. If you'd like to take a look please see the

Education page of their website <https://benjaminfranklinhouse.org/education/> . The session is most suitable for Key Stage 2 and 3 (ages 7-12).

We also took part in Children's Art Week for the first time with a remote activity. Children's Art week has compiled an amazing range of free art activities and the event runs until 19th July, more activities can be found here <https://engage.org/happenings/?project=childrens-art-week>.

Our free activity is inspired by the Physic Garden we planted last year and the 'Creative Critters' that have moved in whilst we've been closed. We've asked you to get your imaginations fired up to invent the critters that are currently living in the garden, and either draw or create them from things around your home and garden. The full activity sheet can be downloaded from our website: <https://www.wesleysheritage.org.uk/family-visits-projects/>. You'll also find all the Wesley's Wednesday Challenge packs there.



Thank you to everyone that's given the new projects a go, I hope you've enjoyed them. Take care all!

You cannot always believe what you See or are told!!

It is often said that something carved in stone must be true, or indeed that an item of information that has been repeated frequently over a long time period, or been written down and is in print in many books, is certain to be correct. Nevertheless, as is suggested in the title of this article, in some instances this might not actually be the case. People are fallible and get things wrong, do not bother to check the veracity of their source, or else may misinterpret information. Indeed, in and around the Wesley's Chapel campus there are several instances where misunderstandings, or else simple mistakes have become literally

engraved in stone or else have been stated both orally and in print to be true.

This latest article, in the Serendipity series, is an attempt by quoting actual cases, to show that long apparently accepted truths associated with members of the Wesley family, including our own John Wesley, are not always what they seem and therefore should not be taken at their face value.

Part One: Information Carved in Stone

The Birth Date of Charles Wesley

For the first example we need go no further than the interior of Wesley's Chapel. Here can be found an error that is both carved in stone and has been staring generations of worshippers in the face for nearly two hundred years.

In the Chapel interior, at the right-hand side of the apse, high above John Wesley's altar/communion table, is a stone tablet which was placed there as a memorial to Charles Wesley. That is the younger brother of John and the prolific hymn writer, who is often known as the "Sweet Singer" of Methodism. The words of the epitaph on the memorial, both attempts to sum up the significant facts of Charles' life and to provide specific information relating to such matters as the dates of his birth and death.

Nevertheless, from the time of its installation it has been providing misleading data about Charles. But because his tablet is mounted high on the wall of the apse and is difficult to read without getting a crick in the neck, the actual information on the plaque is often ignored and errors missed. Nevertheless, it is worth taking the trouble to peruse the text of the plaque, when it will be seen that certain dates are carved in Roman numerals. We are not accustomed to utilize these nowadays, but the date for Charles birth is given in the following form: "*He was born XVIII of December MDCCVIII*". Which being interpreted, is the 18th day of December in the year 1708. Now many of us can recall that

Wesley's Chapel, along with the whole of world Methodism, celebrated the tri-centenary of the birth of Charles with a service which was broadcast on BBC TV in 2007. This means that Charles was actually born in December 1707, and not 1708, indeed, if modern biographies of Charles are consulted, then the actual year of his birth is confirmed and although the exact day of December he was born is conjectural, he was baptized on the 29th day of that month. Incidentally, Charles was a premature baby and tradition records that he was kept wrapped in wool for several weeks until the date he should have been born and until then he neither cried or opened his eyes.

Monument in Westminster Abbey

The memorial in Wesley's Chapel is not the only place where an erroneous date for the birth day of Charles Wesley is recorded in stone. In fact, an even grander place of worship houses a prominent example in the form of the monument to the Wesley Brothers on display in Westminster Abbey. There, in the south aisle can be found a memorial to the brothers in the form of a large wall mounted stone plaque. This has carved on its portraits of both John and Charles as can be seen from the copy that is displayed in the Museum of Methodism. The original in Westminster Abbey also provides the names of the Wesley Brothers together with their respective dates of birth which, in the case of Charles, is given as 18th December 1708; the same error as on the memorial in Wesley's Chapel. Incidentally, the authorities at Westminster Abbey actually raised the matter with the curator of the Museum of Methodism at the time of the tercentenary in order to check whether the celebration was being held at the right time.

So how did this mistake, which has been repeated elsewhere, as well as in biographies of Charles printed right up to the early years of the 20th Century, actually come about. Well, as with other such errors, it resulted from a misinterpretation of something that was either said or written by John Wesley.

Charles is understood to have once needed to know the date of his birth, because presumably any written record was lost in the fire that destroyed his home in Epworth Rectory on February 9th 1709. John is believed to have answered the question by replying enigmatically, *“You were certainly born before Christmas 1708”*. This answer being understood to mean that Charles was born in 1708. It was not until the 20th Century that research in the records at Westminster School, where Charles was a pupil, uncovered evidence that enabled the correction of the error.

Susanna Wesley’s Monument

The memorial in the Chapel is not the only place on the Wesley’s campus where incorrect information is displayed. It is only necessary to go into the courtyard. There just in front of John Wesley’s House will be found the memorial to Susanna Wesley, the mother of John and Charles. It takes the form of a 14-foot-tall Sicilian Marble obelisk which carries an inscription recording both the year of her death 1742, and her age when she died. When new, the obelisk inscription gave her true age, although, if read now it will be seen that it suggests she died in her 78th year.

Everyone who attended the special service at Wesley’s Chapel in January 2019, will remember that this was held to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Susanna’s birth on 20th January 1669. As she died in 1742 this means that her true life-span was no more than 73 years. The alteration to the inscription apparently resulted when the monument was restored a few years ago and the mason mistakenly changed the badly eroded figure three to an eight.

If this resulting misinformation were not bad enough, there is also another error in the inscription. But this time it owes nothing to a slip of the masons’ chisel, and instead must be attributed to a mistake of John Wesley himself. That is the date of the day of his mother’s death which the inscription on the monument suggests was the 23rd July 1742. This being in harmony with the following entry in Wesley’s Journal.

“July 1742: Friday 23rd

About three in the afternoon, I went to my Mother and found her change was near. I sat down at the bedside. She was in her last conflict; unable to speak, but I believe quite sensible. Her look was calm and serene, her eyes fixed upward, while we commended her soul to God. Then without any struggle, sigh or groan, the soul was set at liberty.”

On the basis of this Journal entry, the 23rd of July was long taken as the definitive date of Susanna’s death, because, does not her son say so in his published Journal. For some time, no one seems to have noticed that John Wesley, in the 1781 edition of the Arminian Magazine as well as in a letter of July 31st 1742 to his brother Charles, and also a letter of August 6th 1742 to Howell Harris, gives Friday July 30th as being the true date of Susanna’s passing. Tying in with the date of her burial as being 1st August, only two days after her death, which at the height of summer in the days before artificial refrigeration, would have been most desirable.

It can only be concluded that a failure of John to “proof read” the text of the entry in the Journal before it was printed, or else an oversight by a very busy man operating on a tight schedule was responsible for the wrong date making it into print. Further, this excerpt from his Journal was of course, not actually printed before some time had elapsed since the actual death of Susanna.

Bunhill Fields

For the next two examples of information carved in stone which are not to be believed, it is only necessary to go through the Chapel gates and to cross the City Road to Bunhill Fields Burial Ground. The last resting place of more than 123,00 people including a significant number of Dissenters and other non-conformists. Among them being William Blake, John Bunyan and Daniel Defoe. But, Bunhill Fields is of course also where, on August 1st 1742, at about five in the afternoon, John committed to

earth the body of his Mother Susanna. Attended by, as John recorded," *Almost an innumerable company of people*".

It will be noticed that despite Susanna being one of the famous people to be buried in Bunhill Fields, her name is not among those recorded on any of the granite pillars supporting the railings fronting the City Road. Instead, her Husband, Rev Samuel Wesley is named as being one of the occupants of a plot. This of course cannot be, as Samuel is of course buried in the graveyard of St Andrews the parish church of Epworth in Lincolnshire where he was Rector until he died in 1735. Indeed, John Wesley is recorded as standing on his Father's grave to preach when he was refused permission to use the pulpit in St Andrews on one of his first visits to Epworth.

Nehemiah Curnock, who edited the standard edition of John Wesley's Journal, notes; "By a singular inadvertence, Susanna's grave plot was purchased and entered in the burial register, in Samuel Wesley's name, hence the appearance of her husband's name instead of her own, on the granite pillar". It has been there for a long time now so unfortunately for Susanna she is unlikely ever to be given her due.

Further, her grave marker also bears the same erroneous date for her death, that of the 23rd of July 1742 as inscribed on the obelisk in the front garden of John Wesley's House. Really this time, no excuse can be made, since the last time her gravestone was renewed the actual date of her death had long been known. So, to see a display in public of the true date when Susanna died then it is necessary to find the memorial to the Foundery which is in the form of a plaque affixed to the back wall of the Epworth Building in Tabernacle Street, just a five-minute walk from Wesley's Chapel. There it can be read that the Foundery was the place where Susanna died on 30th July 1742.

As this article has sought to tell, there are, in and around the Wesley's Chapel campus, several examples of pieces of information on prominent display, which their age suggests ought

to make them authoritative. Nevertheless, as can be gathered, this is not necessarily the case, so that it is not always possible for us to believe our eyes.

The final part of this article relates two instances where information long regarded as fact, and repeated as such, over and over, are again are examples having questionable provenance. So, if you want to know more, then make sure to acquire a copy of the next edition of *Window on Wesley's*.

Keith Dutton - Heritage Steward

And finally.....

Online book of remembrance opened at St Paul's

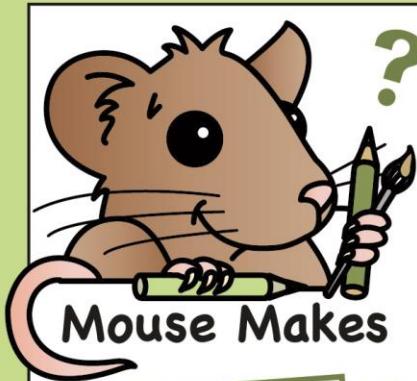
St Paul's Cathedral has launched [*Remember Me*](#), an online book of remembrance for all those who have been living in the UK who have died as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. People of all faiths, beliefs or none are invited to contribute to *Remember Me*.

HRH The Prince of Wales, who recorded a video message, said: "This virtual book of remembrance is here not just to recall our loss and sorrow, but also to be thankful for everything good that those we have loved brought into our lives."

Family, friends and carers of those who have died can submit, free of charge, the name, photograph and a short message in honour of a deceased person via the *Remember Me* [website](#). The deceased person must have been living in the UK. *Remember Me* will be open for entries for as long as needed. It is intended that the *Remember Me* site will become a physical memorial at the Cathedral.



Children's page



Mouse Makes

WHO AM I?

The last letter of one name is the first letter of the next name.

P			L	

- Wrote 13 New Testament letters
- He wrote the third Gospel

I				
		R		

- Mother of John (Luke 1:3)
- Sarah's servant (Genesis 16:21)

- Joseph's mother (Genesis 29:35)
- His wife turned to salt (Genesis 11:31)

S				

- Paul's friend (2 Corinthians 8:27)
- A brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55)

N				

- Ruth's mother-in-law. (Ruth 3:1)

IT'S A PUZZLE!

God sent 9 plagues on Egypt...

What were they?

Change each letter to the one after it in the alphabet to find out.

AKNNC
EQNFR
FMZSR
EKHDR
CHRDZRD
OKZFTD
GZHK
KNBTRSR
CZQJMDRR



FIND THE MISSING HUSBANDS

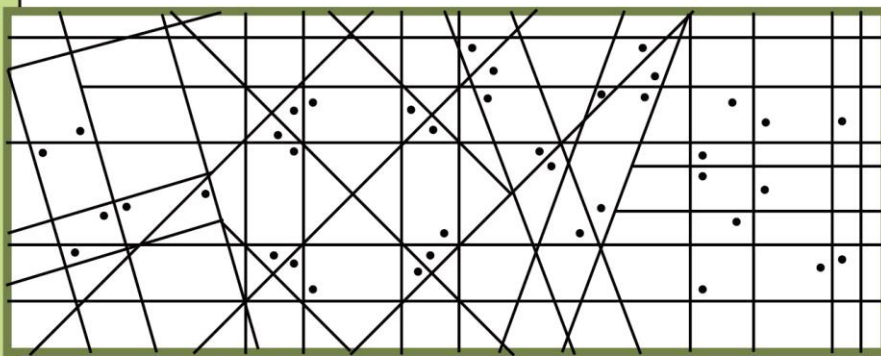
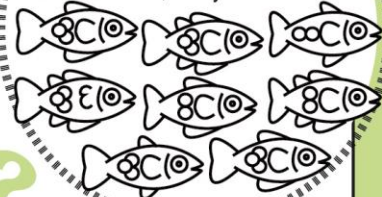
Match the wife to their husband

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| MARY | BOAZ |
| SARAH | JACOB |
| RUTH | ZECHARIAH |
| REBEKAH | JOSEPH |
| RACHEL | ABRAHAM |
| ELIZABETH | ISAAC |



FIND THE FISH

The Disciples have been fishing and have caught TWO fish the same, can you find them?



Colour in all the shapes with a DOT to find out what Jesus wants us to do

Worship at Wesley's Chapel & Leysian Mission

Whilst the Chapel is currently closed to meeting physically, our worship continues via livestream on the internet. Join us at www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/livestreaming

Worship services are available and are livestreamed at the following times:

Monday – Saturday

10.00am Morning Prayer from the Methodist Worship Book

Wednesday

12.45pm Service of Holy Communion

Thursday

12.45pm Service of the Word

Sunday

9.45am Service of Holy Communion

11.00am Morning Worship

All live-streamed services remain viewable afterwards: find previous services at www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/previous-services

We also have a new dedicated email address for prayer requests which will be received directly by our ministers Jennifer Smith and Steven Cooper, and will be prayed during the course of the Daily morning prayer service. Please send all prayer requests to: prayer@wesleyschapel.org.uk

If you would like to submit an article, poem, prayer or item of interest for this magazine please email it to:
[**manager@wesleyschapel.org.uk**](mailto:manager@wesleyschapel.org.uk)