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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor: E. ALAN ROSE, B.A.

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JOHN WESLEY'S 1770 WILL

LATE in 2001, a previously unknown copy of John Wesley's will, dating from March 1770, was purchased at auction by the Bridwell Library Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. The transcript which follows was made by Wanda Willard Smith, Archives Assistant at Bridwell, and we are grateful to the Library for providing this copy.

No 6 To be returned when inquired for / Mr John Wesley's Will/

In the Name of God Amen I, John Wesley, / Clerk late Fellow of Lincoln College in the City of Oxford enjoying my / perfect Senses Do make Publish and Declare this to be my last Will and / Testament in manner following (that is to say) After payment of my Debts / funeral Expences and the Charge attending the Probate of my Will I Give / and Bequeath All my Books (Except such as I shall hereinafterwards / otherwise particularly dispose of) which are upon Sale in any part of Great / Britain or Ireland and the copies of the same and the produce of such Books / or Copies to arise by such Sale together with all my Books in my House / at Kingswood near Bristol Unto the Reverend James Rouquet of the / City of Bristol Clerk the Reverend William Ley of Tilbury in the County / of Essex Clerk and Thomas Simpson now or late of Aberdeen Gentleman / In Trust that they do and shall by the produce thereof in the first place / pay the Annuity or Sum of one hundred pounds of lawful money of Great / Britain unto my Brother Charles Wesley on the twenty fifth day of March* / in each and every year and unto all and every the child and children of / my said Brother for and during the Term or Terms of his her or their life / or lives if more than one share and share alike And if only one Child, / to that child only And in case of no Issue of my said Brother living / at the time of his decease that they do and shall pay such annuity to / such person or persons as my said Brother shall by his last Will and / Testament or Deed of Instrument in Writing direct and appoint and / for want of such Direction or Appointment In trust and subject to such / Charge that they the said James Rouquet William Ley and Thomas Simpson / do and shall pay apply and dispose of the produce of such Books and copies / to Thomas Lewis of the said City of Bristol

Glazier and William Pine of the / said City of Bristol Printer the present Stewards of the School at Kingswood / aforesaid and to such Steward or Stewards to be from time to time hereafter / appointed for the use and benefit of such School Also I give and / Bequeath unto my beloved Wife Mary Wesley as a Token of my affection / for her only, as my said Wife is amply provided for, All my Pictures and / Pocket pieces in my Bureau in London to and for her use and benefit. / Also I Give and Bequeath to my daughter in Law Jane Smith a full/set of Books called the Christian Library which are in my Study in London. / Also I Give and Bequeath all my other English books in my Studies / in London Bristol and Newcastle upon Tyne together with all my household / Goods and Furniture unto the said James Rouquet William Ley and Thomas / Simpson In Trust that they do and shall permit and suffer the several / [p. 2] Travelling Methodist Preachers who shall from time to time Preach in / such respective places *to have the full & free use of them.* Also I Give and Bequeath unto my Executors / hereafter named and unto Edward Slater and Thomas Tennent my fellow / travellers and to each of the Travelling Methodist Preachers who shall continue / Members of the Society called the Methodist Society of which I am a member / for the Term of Six Months after my decease severally a compleat set of the / Notes on the Old Testament or such other Books as they shall approve of and / accept in lieu of the same and of equal value. Also I Give and Bequeath / unto Christian Simpson of Aberdeen the several Books or the Money or / produce to arise by the sale thereof which shall be in her hands or possession at / the time of my decease. Also I Give and bequeath unto the said Thomas / Simpson my Watch and unto Ann Bolton of Witney in the County of / Oxford Spinster my Seal and unto Jane Pottinger of Henley upon Thames / Spinster my •mourning Ring presented to me on the death of Mrs Lefevre. / Also I Give and Bequeath unto the person or persons who shall be Steward / or Stewards of the said Society in London at the time of my decease my chaise / and all my Horses In trust that they do and shall so soon as conveniently / may be after my decease sell and dispose of the same and the Money to arise by / such Sale distribute to and amongst such of the Poor belonging to the said / Society as they the said Steward or Stewards shall approve. Also I Give and / Bequeath all the Money which shall be found in my Bureau in London or in / my pockets at the time of my decease to such person or persons who shall/carry my Body to be Interred hereby requesting my said Executors not to / make use of or suffer to be used any Herse Coach or other carriage at the / time of my Funeral. And all the residue and remainder of my Goods / Chattels Estate and Effects if any such there be of what kind or nature / soever of which I shall die possessed or intitled to I Give and Bequeath / unto my said Brother Charles Wesley for his Use and benefit. And I/hereby nominate constitute and appoint the said James Rouquet, John Horton / of Woodstreet in the City of London Silk Dyer and James Ward of Old Street / Road in the County of Middlesex WineCooper Executor of this my last Will/hereby revoking all former Wills by me at any time heretofore made and / do hereby publish and declare this

to be my last Will and Testament. / In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and Seal the sixteenth day of March in the Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and seventy. / Signed Sealed Published and Declared / by the Testator as and for his last Will and Testament / in the presence of Us who in his presence at his request / and in the presence of each other have subscribed our names / as Witnesses

Thomas Eden Alice Eden *John Wesley*

* March 25th, Lady Day, was the beginning or-the fiscal year. B. Words in Wesley's own hand are in italics.

Notes on the Will by Page Thomas

'In the Name of God, Amen, I John Wesley'. So begins John Wesley's Will, dated March 16 1770, signed John Wesley and witnessed by Thomas Eden, Alice Eden. The Will is not in John's hand, but written 'in a neat eighteenth-century clerical hand. Before signing the will he inserted the following nine words on the 2nd line on page 2: ..Travelling Methodist Preachers who shall from time to time Preach in such respective place 'to have the full and free use of them'. Bridwell Library recently purchased this apparently unrecorded will. There is no reference to this Will in Wesley's Journal for March of 1770 nor is there any indication that Wesley was in bad health or that his life was threatened in any way. There is no entry for the 16th in his Journal. The entry under Thursday 15 reads 'I met the select society after preaching at Evesham about noon, we rode through a furious shower of snow driven, full in our faces, to Broad Marston..... The very uncommon severity of the weather somewhat lessened the congregation in the evening.' The next entry is Saturday 17. 'We rode, in another bitter day, with the wind and snow just in our face, to Birmingham.' Telford in Wesley's *Letters* records a letter written to Mrs Marston, dated Broad Marston March 16.

The two witnesses, Thomas Eden and his sister Alice Eden, were residents of Broad Marston. So there seems no doubt that Wesley signed and dated the will in front of Thomas and Alice Eden in Broad Marston. But it was probably not written there. Remember that 'we rode through a furious shower of snow, driven in our faces, to Broad Marston' and that 'the very uncommon severity of the weather somewhat lessened the congregation in the evening.' It is doubtful if the 73 line 1000 word carefully written document was written after the evening preaching and before he left the next morning 'with the wind and snow just in our face, to Birmingham.'

The will is written on one folio sheet of paper (390 by 496 mm). The writing begins on the right half of the sheet with page 2 beginning on the verso of the right half. When folded the left half of the sheet becomes the wrapper as it is folded like a road map. The Will was purchased with a 'fragment torn from left margin with loss of approximately 6 words on verso, 4 tiny holes, small splits in folds.' When examining the torn away wrapper, the missing fragment was found still attached to the

wrapper. We were then able to restore the Will and wrapper. There were now 8 tiny holes, and when folded the 8 holes became one hole running through the centre of the 8 folds. Evidently, after the will was dated, signed and witnessed the Will was placed on a spindle. The outer fold at the top reads 'Mr John Wesley's Will' and the verso in a different hand reads 'to be returned when inquired for.'

It is thought he had made several wills during his life as he was close to death more than once. But only two wills have survived, one dated April 27 1768 and 'His last Will and Testament' dated February 20, 1789. The 1768 Will can be found in Tyerman's *The Life and Times of John Wesley*, (1872) III pp. 15-16. The 1789 Will can be found in Curnock's *Standard Journal*, VIII, where he states that he has compared it with the copy in the Registry Office.

We must now ask the question why did John make a new Will when he was in good health only two years after the previous Will? Why did he make this Will in March 1770?

Events in 1769 may have led him to this. Tyerman (*Wesley*) III, p 46: 'The two topics of interest (at the Conference) were Methodist missions and the perpetuation of the Methodist system after Wesley's death.' And again on p49: 'The other important matter before the Conference of 1769 was the perpetuation of Methodism after Wesley's death.' His primary concern in the 1768 Will had been his brother Charles, the Kingswood school, and 'the keeping the Children of Travelling Preachers at the School', and the 'continual relief of the Poor of the United Society in London.' Although he does not go into any detail about the perpetuation of the Methodists after his death, (in 1770) he shows concern for his Travelling Preachers which he did not do in the 1768 Will. In the 1770 Will 'my other English books... together with my household Goods and Furniture unto the said James Rouquet, William Ley and Thomas Simpson In Trust that they do and shall permit and suffer the several Travelling Methodist Preachers who shall from time to time Preach in such ... (London, Bristol, and Newcastle upon Tyne) to 'have the full and free use of them'. Also I Give and Bequeath unto my Executors ... named and unto Edward Slater and Thomas Tennent my fellow travellers and to each of the Travelling Methodist Preachers who shall continue Members of the Society called the Methodist Society of which I am a member for the Term of Six Months after my decease severally a complete set of the Notes on the Old Testament or such other Books as they shall approve of and accept in lieu of the same and of equal value.' These two items were carried over into the 1789 Will.

John Lenton adds that another reason for the new Will in 1770 may have been the fact that during the winter 1768-70 he had been considering going to America. If he had gone, having made a Will was a sensible precaution to take beforehand.

(Page Thomas is curator of the Methodist collection at Bridwell Library)

Additional notes by John Lenton.

1) **James Rouquet** (line 10 of the original) appears as the most important person in this will in terms of Wesley's trust in him. Not only is he named as the first of the three executors, he is also first of the trustees to look after Wesley's books (as in the 1768 will), to pay Charles and his family the annuity of £100 from the sale of the Wesley's publications to which they were entitled under the agreement at Charles' wedding, to work on future publications with Thomas Lewis and William Pine in Bristol and to allow the use of the New Room, the Orphan House and the Foundery to the Travelling Methodist Preachers. It is clear that in 1770, with Grimshaw dead, Jones and Maxfield gone, and Fletcher not yet the designated successor he was to become, Rouquet was seen by Wesley as the Church of England clergyman who was best able to assist Charles in running the societies and Preachers.¹

2) **William Ley** (line 11) is a figure who is much less clear than Rouquet. Born in 1739 at Exeter, he had become a Travelling Preacher by 1758 when appointed to Ireland. In 1760 he was with Wesley when he travelled to Carrick on Shannon, and was probably with him at Newry in 1762. In November he arrived at Madeley (to act as temporary curate for Fletcher?) from London. He seems to have left the itineracy in 1763, presumably seeking ordination as he appeared matriculating at St. Edmund Hall in Oxford in April 1764. He became ordained and next appeared as curate of Lakenheath 1768. In Wesley's 1768 Will he was left a set of Wesley's publications but according to Tyerman was liable to be dismissed by his vicar because of his 'Methodist preaching'. In 1769 this had presumably happened and he was 'minister' in London who introduced Wesley to the Danish divine Liden. In this Will he is given considerable responsibility by Wesley and is described as 'of Tilbury'. He was still alive in 1774, but we know no more about him. Again his position in this Will shows Wesley's trust or perhaps the lack of more trustworthy alternatives. Ley was a Church of England clergyman, and that seems to have been in Wesley's eyes the chief criterion.²

3) **Thomas Simpson**, 'now or late of Aberdeen, gentleman' (line 12), who received Wesley's watch as well as being one of the three trustees, and his wife Christian, who appears later on the second page in line 8 as a beneficiary, are the headmaster of Kingswood and his otherwise unnamed Presbyterian tartar of a wife, who have gone down in Methodist report as the joint bane of the young Adam Clarke.³ Simpson was a Scot, presumably with a degree from Aberdeen. He appears on

¹ For details of Rouquet's life see A.B.Sackett *James Rouquet And His Part In Early Methodism* (1972).

² Tyerman *Wesley* 2; 353,3; 17, *Alumni Oxoniensis, Proceedings*, xvii, pp 2-5

³ Anon (Hare) *Life and Labours of A. Clarke* (1834) pp51-62.

the stations, often in Scotland, between 1765 to 1772. He was a witness to the 1768 Will. However Wesley had him as Headmaster of Kingswood by January 1770 and clearly he was still there when this Will was made. In autumn 1770 he was travelling again but by December he was back at Kingswood, where he remained til 1783. In that year he was dismissed for the 'corruption' there. Ives shows this means mismanagement, bullying and neglect of the preacher's sons⁴. Perhaps Clarke had got Wesley's ear and had told Wesley his experience at Kingswood. Simpson opened his own school at Keynsham, doubtless in rivalry with Kingswood and taking away some of Kingswood's pupils. His son eventually became vicar there. Despite all this, relations with Wesley seem to have remained good. Simpson's sister became housekeeper at Kingswood in September 1783 and Wesley visited Simpson in 1787, typical of his generally good relations with men who had left his order of travelling preachers. In any case in 1770 Wesley trusted Simpson as being like the other two former Methodist preachers, and now Headmaster of Kingswood.

Christian or Christiana, presumably Simpson's wife, was also named as a beneficiary in the 1768 Will. Then 'at Aberdeen', she was bequeathed 'all the Books that shall remain with her at the time of my decease'. Was she acting as a most northerly base for the travelling preachers, a sort of embryo Orphan House or New Room for Scotland, with books left by Wesley in Aberdeen for those preachers who ventured to the frozen North?

In 1768 James Morgan was to receive Wesley's watch. He was an Irish preacher, settled in Dublin in 1767, whose constitution made him unable to itinerate. After the 1768 Will he quarrelled with Olivers and 'sank into deep mysticism.' In 1770 Wesley thought Simpson more worthy.

4) Thomas Lewis (line 25). He was a wealthy Methodist glazier in Bristol, friendly with both John and Charles Wesley. In 1777 Charles Wesley wrote from Bristol to his wife: 'I got little rest last night after preaching. T. Lewis takes care to send me home in a coach. Who would take so much thought in London?' Lewis died in 1782.⁵

5) William Pine (1739-1803) (line 26). William Pine was a prominent Bristol Methodist who was Wesley's main printer in Bristol at this period. He was a trustee of the New Room and remained close to Wesley until the American War of Independence. At that point he supported the colonists strongly, and Wesley as a loyalist ceased to give him business. Later he was a Church Methodist, supporting the Trustees of Portland Chapel against the Conference.

6) Mary Wesley (line 30), formerly Mary or Molly Vazeille, baptised as

⁴ A.G. Ives, *Kingswood School in Wesley's Day* (1970) pp 89-97

⁵ *Charles Wesley's Journal* II p 268. Letter dated Bristol 4 October.

Mary Goldhawk 1710, married Anthony Vazeille, a London merchant, 1731 (he died 1747), having a daughter and at least three sons by him. She married John Wesley in February 1751. She received the 'residue of his goods and papers' in the 1768 Will. The next year after this Will, on 23 January 1771 she separated herself from him, leaving for her married daughter in Newcastle. She died in 1781. The unhappy history of the marriage is told by Rack.⁶

7) '**Daughter in law**' (line 33). In the 18th century this phrase meant step daughter, i.e. the daughter of Mrs. Wesley by her first husband Anthony Vazeille. Jane, Jeanne or Jenny was born 1736 and did not die till 1820, despite being described by Wesley in 1774 as 'sickly'. She married the leading Methodist layman, local preacher and Newcastle corn merchant William Smith (witness in the 1768 Will) on 7 March 1769, at St. Luke's, Old Street, i.e. a year before this Will was made. His 1768 Will had also left 'Jane Smith' (was she already engaged to be married?) 'the Christian Library now in my study in London'. Wesley's final Will had nothing for Jane Smith, but included a bequest of the coins and whatever else was in his bureau to their two daughters Mary and Jane (described there as his granddaughters).⁷

8) **Edward Slater**, 'my fellow traveller' (Page 2 line 2), was actually at the time Wesley's coachman. Margaret Lewen had presented Wesley (after a severe fall from his horse late in 1765) with a chaise and pair (mentioned in the will, so clearly something he valued) to travel the country. It should be said that well into the 1770s Wesley's references to the chaise are typically 'The chaise stuck fast... and I took horse.'⁸ Slater, who was born in Settle, was Wesley's coachman (when he needed one for the chaise), presumably from 1766 to 1770. In 1770 at Conference he became a Travelling Preacher until 1776 when he left because of 'poor health and few gifts'. He then married and eventually settled in Manchester where he had a business by 1785. He died in 1808, being the benefactor of Methodism in Settle, having left the society land where the first Methodist chapel was built.

9) **Thomas Tennant** (line 2) was, like Slater, another future itinerant preacher, but younger and to be more successful. Wesley had him travelling with him to train him up on the job as he did with many others. This had happened with Tennant the previous year, March to August 1769, as well. This time it was more successful and Tennant became travelling preacher at Conference 1770, dying in harness in 1793. Tennant had been born in London in 1741. He was already a local

⁶ HD Rack *Reasonable Enthusiast* (1989) pp 264-7 and notes.

⁷ WW Stamp *The Orphan House of Wesley* (1863) p119.

⁸ e.g. *Journal* 27 March 1772.

preacher. He remained close to Wesley, e.g. he acted as his amanuensis in 1783 when appointed to the London Circuit.

10) **Ann Bolton of Witney** (line 11) was the Nancy or Anne Bolton (1743-1822), whose 30 years correspondence with Wesley had begun two years earlier.⁹ She was left £100 in his final Will, as compensation for the gold seal being left to Elizabeth Ritchie.

11) **Jane Pottinger** of Henley (line 12), otherwise unknown apart from here being left Wesley's ring. Was Israel Pottinger a London bookseller, related?¹⁰ Was Jane Pottinger another friend of Mrs Lefevre (line 13)? She was a friend of Mary Bosanquet. She lived in London and had much influence and many spiritual gifts. She died in 1756 at the age of 33, leaving to be published posthumously her *Letters upon Sacred Subjects*. In the 1768 Will, the ring was left to his 'faithful housekeeper, Ann Smith,' who was no longer his housekeeper in 1770, so the ring went elsewhere.

12) **Sale of chaise etc.** (line 15). A very similar provision appears in Wesley's final Will, where the Stewards are named unlike this Will, though in that Will half the money was to be given to Hannah Abbott.

13) **No 'herse, coach or carriage at the funeral'** (line 23) was repeated in the final will, elaborated with 'no escutcheon, no pomp...'

14) **John Horton** (c1741-1803), originally a native of Bristol, drysalter of Wood Street, London (lines 28-9) and member of the Common Council of the City, had been named as executor in 1768 and acted as executor in Wesley's final will. He married Mary Durbin, daughter of a leading Bristol Methodist and was present at Wesley's deathbed. He left Methodism after Wesley's death.¹¹

15) **James Ward of Old Street** (lines 29-30) was, in Wesley's final will, not one of the three executors as here, but a Steward of the London Society and therefore named with his fellow steward to sell the chaise and horses, and use the money to care for the poor of the society. He does not appear in either Wesley's letters or his Journal. It is interesting that this almost unknown person replaces Melchias Teulon who had been named with Horton two years earlier as executor, though Teulon remained a Methodist until his death in 1806.¹²

16) **Thomas Eden** of Broad Marston, belonged to the family who were

⁹ see J. Banks *Nancy, Nancy* (1984).

¹⁰ cited in S.J.Rogal *A Biographical Dictionary of 18th Century Methodism* (1997-9).

¹¹ *Methodist Magazine* 1803 p211.

¹² *Methodist Magazine* 1808; pp241-8, 292-7.

entertaining Wesley on this visit. There were probably three different Thomas Edens of this period in the family, which was an extended one with several households in the area. It seems likely that this one was the son of Wesley's host, Henry Eden, grazier of Broad Marston. This Thomas was born c1750, educated at Hertford College Oxford, later marrying Mary Loxdale of Shrewsbury (1778) and becoming Curate of Ilmington, dying in 1792.

17) **Alice Eden** was a member of Wesley's host's family, being the daughter of Henry Eden and probably sister of the other witness Thomas. She is referred to in Wesley's correspondence from 1772 to 1781 as 'Ally'. No more is known about her.

In summary, this Will is an example of the continuing importance of the Church of England and its clergy for the founder of Methodism. In 1770, over 30 years after the 'Rise of Methodism', two Anglican clergymen were made executors. One of the two witnesses was soon to be a clergyman. It was no wonder that Wesley welcomed Coke and gave him so much responsibility in the 1780s.

Wesley's Wills. The whole question is an interesting one. References provided by Professor Heitzenrater are most useful in showing when he made his Will. Six occasions are now known:

- A) 19 March 1747 (Journal).
- B) 27 April 1768 (Tyerman 3; pp 15-7), original in Wesley's hand at Wesleyan University Middleton Conn.
- C) 16 March 1770 at Broad Marston, the 'new' Will, now at Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
- D) 25 January 1771 'I revised and transcribed my Will' after his wife had left for Newcastle (Journal). Did he cut her out at this point or did he wait for her death?
- E) 8 August 1788 Diary, 'Codicil'. Journal; 'Revised my Papers'.
- F) 9 January 1789 Final Will, printed *Standard Journal* viii, pp 342-4.

There is no evidence that D and E have survived. They may well have been destroyed by John himself when making later Wills. Neither B nor C were known to exist from the Journal. It is therefore possible that other Wills were made, and might even possibly be discovered, like this latest one, particularly from the lengthy 21-year period apparently without any Will from 1747 to 1768. Alternatively they could have been held by John himself and destroyed when a later Will was made. The other references he makes to Wills in his letters, April 26 1772 to Charles

¹³ *Standard Letters* 5; p316. 6; p267 .

Wesley and 25 July 1777 to Walter Churchey,¹³ do not necessarily imply making a new Will. Professor Heitzenrater wonders whether the January 1771 reference was misplaced by Wesley and should apply to the March 1770 Will which has now been discovered.

It is always important in judging an individual to see who their principal beneficiaries were. In 1768 they are his brother Charles and Kingswood School. In 1770 it is still Charles and the School, and in his last (1789) Will, with Charles dead, the travelling preachers. The preachers had become his 'family'.

(John Lenton is WHS Librarian)

Final Note by Henry Rack

John Lenton's suggestion that Wesley was contemplating a visit to America at this point might well suggest a motive for a new Will. But the 1768 one already provided much the same bequests apart from the books for preachers. I agree that the use of clergy to secure the provisions in both wills is significant. There is other evidence that Wesley was still considering some kind of clerical successor to himself, with or without (I would think with) the aid of the preachers' conference.

Wesley certainly had the succession after his death much in mind at this time. The letter to the preachers in August 1769 in conjunction with the Conference proves this. But it is noticeable that the proposal for a kind of junta with a rotating moderator is not pursued further. Instead there is simply the signing of a bond of union in 1769 and again in 1770s.

But it may be that it is a mistake to expect anything in Wesley's Wills about the succession. They only relate to the disposal of his personal effects, though admittedly these tend to be mixed up with the Conference assets. Perhaps one should assume that Wesley believed the succession was settled by the Model Deed and it was only in the 1780s that its legal defects became clear. But as the Conference of 1791 showed, Wesley also left an executive gap between Conferences which was not satisfactorily filled despite District Committees. Perhaps the efforts at a clerical supervisor or a committee and moderator were intended to remedy this.

(Dr Henry Rack is author of Reasonable Enthusiast)

MISSION FROM MOTCOMBE

FOLLOWING the encouraging progress of their evangelism in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire in the years before 1820, the Primitive Methodists began a new thrust southwards that eventually led to the establishment of a Western Mission in Somerset and Wiltshire between 1824 and 1827, with circuits being formed in Frome and Brinkworth. The latter was an obscure Wiltshire village that not only headed a circuit, but eventually a District. Even before it secured circuit status in 1827 its preaching 'frontier', served by three itinerant preachers, had reached the northern tip of Dorset in the Shaftesbury area. In the Brinkworth tradition (and that of places like Scotter in Lincolnshire) the new circuit that was soon established evolved around a village hub, although its later outlying branches were based on market towns. After nearly forty years the circuit centre of the Home Branch shifted from Motcombe to Gillingham, a town on the new railway line. This paper follows the circuit's fortunes into the late Victorian age.

Typically its first itinerant preachers opened up a constant stream of new societies, but were more successful in the task of consolidation than fellow preachers in many other places. Dorset and Wiltshire farm labourers were amongst the lowest paid in England during this period of the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs', but the movement was generally well supported for half a century or more. Particular local support focused on the thriving agricultural village of Motcombe (with a parish population rising from 1184 in 1821, to 1405 in 1831) and upon an outlying settlement of Shaftesbury at Enmore Green in August 1826. By the end of the month a large room was opened for preaching at Enmore Green and a society of ten members was formed. A strong society quickly grew at Motcombe and the village became head of a circuit two years later. New lines of evangelism travelled in different directions. One stretched to Salisbury, which itself became the nucleus of a new circuit in 1831. However, Motcombe's main lines penetrated the heartland of Dorset, leading to a new branch in 1833 centred on Blandford. By 1838 the mission had reached Poole, nearly forty miles away. Here a new circuit stretched westwards to Dorchester and Weymouth. Other developments took the preachers into adjacent sections of Wiltshire which were to remain as part of what was known as the Home Branch, and to two new branches linked to Sturminster Newton and Sherborne.¹ Motcombe's novel way of using evangelism as a means of extinguishing debt has been discussed elsewhere.²

¹ Kendall, H. B. *History and Origin of the Primitive Methodist Church* (c.1905) vol.1 pp. 296-298, Petty, J. , *The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion to 1860* (1864) pp. 320-321, 441, Motcombe PM Circuit Plan Sept.-Dec. 1842.

² *Proceedings* xlviii p. 180

Because of erratic methods of compiling and publishing records and statistics it is often difficult to get a clear picture of early developments, partly because branches were sometimes treated as separate circuits. This study mainly follows the Home Branch. The first baptism register indicates a very wide area of operations by 1830, including Shaftesbury, Gillingham, Stalbridge, Tisbury, and Salisbury. Until 1831 both parents' signatures were obviously written by the officiating itinerant preacher, and then ensued a series of eighty blanks at the appropriate place, before there was the reappearance of a preacher's hand, and then eventually parents began to write their own names. There is some evidence of more informal baptism, for in 1836 the child of Isaac Jacobs was apparently baptised by a Poole pawnbroker! The first published Circuit Report (1837) showed 610 members (an increase of 100 in a year), five travelling preachers, and 58 local preachers. Two years later membership was down to 445, but rising again over the next two years to 540. There was no circuit debt.³

Several chapels were built in the first dozen years. The first of these was in the small village of Kington Magna, about eight miles west of Shaftesbury. It seems that the land was donated, but the chapel cost nearly £96 to erect in 1827, and within a year the total debt was £188. Although income was derived from seat rents, anniversary collections, and a small burial ground, the basic debt remained and there was a deficiency in the annual accounts until 1843. In 1851 the local man who gave the land died and bequeathed adjacent land to the society. Two cottages were built to let, helping to accumulate a balance in hand by 1854, and within a few years the capital debt was considerably reduced. There were two services each Sunday in 1842, increasing to three by 1846.⁴

The Primitive Methodists in the small town of Gillingham first met in a labourer's house near Lytten Bridge, registered in 1829. This was replaced five years later by the house of Leah Rose until a chapel was built in 1838 in Turner's Lane, formerly known as Tantrum's Lane. Again it looks as if the land was given, but there was an immediate mortgage of £100 to a sieve and basket maker. There was a hint of changing status after the 'Hungry Forties' when it is noted that one of the trustees of 1838 described as a yeoman had become a clock-cleaner and labourer by 1852, and another changed from schoolmaster in Motcombe to labourer in Gillingham.⁵

The final example for this period is Hindon, across the county

³ Motcombe PM Circuit Baptism Book at Dorset CRO, NM5, (*Primitive (M)ethodist (M)agazine* (1837) pp. 360-361, (1839) pp. 349, 469, (1841) pp. 390, 394.

⁴ Kington Magna PM Account Book 1827-1927, Motcombe PM Circuit Preachers' Plans 1842,1846.

⁵ Registration certificates 14-11-1829, 31-7-1834, 17-1-1838, Mortgage bond, and Trust documents at Dorset CRO, NM5.

boundary in Wiltshire. A scheme to erect a chapel was launched in 1840 when the prospects were promising, but it ran into immediate difficulties with the initial debt, which proved to be 'much too large for the poor people worshipping therein to pay the interest thereof.' This was the only chapel in the circuit to carry such a burden and the unusual step was taken by the travelling preachers of including an appeal letter on a Preachers' Plan. A family offered £20 if the rest of the circuit raised £100 over two years. The immediate outcome is unknown, but the debt was cleared before the end of the century.⁶

Gaining a foothold for the cause was not always easy, but persistence was sometimes rewarded. A hard community to enter was the little Wiltshire town of Mere, with about 3,000 inhabitants. Success was eventually achieved in 1844, after the Wesleyans and the Primitives had been trying for fifteen years. A Primitive Methodist itinerant preacher, Henry Sharman, with supporters from Motcombe, processed through the streets one October evening, and the marchers were invited into a cottage, where Sharman preached. Rapid success led to the formation of a society and a search for a larger, rented venue. There were so many conversions that 'penitents' had to meet in the mornings at a private house. After 18 months there were 50 members, apparently with a fair degree of prosperity, for the members were 'remarkable for paying their class-money weekly; it has been remarked that not one of them has omitted to do this for many successive sabbaths.' In 1845 a plot of land 80ft x 40ft was purchased at Bishops Corner and work immediately begun on a chapel 35ft x 30ft. At £415 it was a relatively extravagant building, but one benefactor gave £150, other donations raised £120 (mainly through the efforts of one woman), and the Duchy of Cornwall provided the services of its architect and stone from its quarries free of charge. Others donated materials and services. Support of a different kind came from Mere's Congregational minister and Bath's Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel minister who assisted in the opening services. All the circumstances of this venture were very different from what had been seen as the norm, and this continued for some time, for in 1851 a considerable amount of land surrounding the original site was acquired and used to enlarge the chapel and school room and to build a minister's house. Four years later a Sunday camp meeting attracted upwards of 3,000 people 'and a very gracious influence pervaded the services.'⁷

A revival was also experienced in the opposite direction where Sturminster Newton headed its own branch of the Motcombe Circuit. It was reported that it, 'though a small town, has long been proverbial for its superstition, immorality, and opposition to the cause of God. Here,

⁶ Motcombe PM Circuit Preachers' Plan June-Sept. 1846, Motcombe PM Circuit Report 1892, at Dorset CRO, NM5.

⁷ *PMM* (1846) pp. 369-370, pp. 749-750, Charity Commission : The Return of the Wiltshire Charities Vol, II, Southern Division (1908) pp. 324-325.

our preachers and members have often met with cruel treatment, while worshipping the Lord in the open air. On one occasion an influential tradesman fired a gun over the heads of the congregation; but soon afterwards he accidentally shot himself with the same instrument, and expired.' An improved, more centralised chapel was constructed in 1846, with an adjacent minister's house and cottage, and opened on Good Friday.⁸

The early days were stimulated by the novelties of open-air preaching, processions, and cramped cottage meetings, with the opening of a chapel as a dream-object. There was the danger of complacency when a chapel-based community developed its own routine and began to resemble its Wesleyan and Independent neighbours. Camp meetings sometimes brought the excitement of a large crowd occasion, with picnics and the social mixing of different age groups, but these drew from a region rather than a single community. In 1851 the Motcombe Circuit planned to revive its societies through a concentrated prayer campaign. A note was inserted on the Preachers' Plan urging all congregations to hold a revival prayer meeting every night of the week throughout the entire quarter! Kington Magna accepted the challenge and experienced a revival in both chapel and Sunday School. Zeals was one of the places that failed to do so at that time, but introduced its own scheme five years later when it organised nightly prayer meetings for six weeks, and a day of fasting. Its membership rose from about 30 to nearly 80. 'Our chapel is filled to overflowing; the people literally tread on one another', and there were plans to add an end gallery. The impact on the village spread to the members of the Wesleyan and Independent congregations, who were also 'stirred up to activity and diligence.'⁹

Sunday schools were sometimes associated with the societies, as soon as suitable premises were available. There seems to have been no shortage of staff. In 1841 the Motcombe Circuit numbering 540 members, had three Sunday schools, accommodating 133 children and 53 teachers. One was also opened at Hazelbury Bryan, in the Sturminster Branch, in 1851, and celebrated its first anniversary the following February, when 'the pieces recited by the children gave general satisfaction, and the collection was liberal. The inhabitants of the place say "we never saw it on this fashion before; we were left to wander in the fields, and none cared for our souls; but now a brighter day has dawned upon us"'. A tea was provided the following day. By 1861 the Home Branch provided five Sunday schools: Motcombe with 20 teachers for 37 scholars, Kington Magna with 11 teachers for 41 scholars, Gillingham with 20 teachers for 76 scholars, Enmore Green with 10 teachers for 37 scholars, and Twyford with 8 teachers for 46 scholars. Twenty years later there were 16 schools with 149 teachers instructing 757 scholars.¹⁰

⁸ *PMM* (1848) pp. 501-502, (1846) pp. 434-435.

⁹ *PMM* (1851) p. 306, (1856) p. 106.

¹⁰ *PMM* (1852) p. 249, Motcombe PM Circuit Reports at Dorset CRO.

There were also chapel anniversaries around the circuit, sometimes with tea parties, and these were opportunities for worshippers to travel round the circuit and provide funds for the maintenance of the buildings. A noteworthy feature was the support offered by preachers from other dissenting churches: Wesleyan, Independent, and Baptist. A regular 'course' of overseas missionary services was introduced to the circuit in 1855. Special sermons were preached at five chapels. Money was being collected throughout the year, mainly by females. A similar pattern was established in the Sturminster Branch.¹¹

By about 1860 the Motcombe Circuit had a relatively settled look and the mission dynamic was fading. Although there were fluctuations from time to time the membership total did not change significantly during the rest of the century, until the last few years. In the decade beginning in 1860 it varied between 610 and 730, and suffered a sudden slump 1863-64 when 158 members were lost by death, removal, and backsliding. From 1861 there were 14 chapels and rooms on the Connexional Plan and between 8 and 13 other preaching places. The next decade saw a steady rise from 618 to 725 and an increase in chapels from 15 to 18, with 10 or 11 other places. From 1880 membership fluctuated between 690 and 740, with a similar number of buildings to the previous decade until 1884, when there was a drop in other places to 6. During the final decade membership declined from 665 to 564, but the number of chapels rose to 20 in 1894, with 4 other places.

There was no great period of chapel building. In each decade from 1820 to 1880 between two and four chapels in the Home Branch were opened, and one in each of the final decades of the century. That excludes the rebuilding of three of the oldest chapels at Motcombe (1852), Enmore Green (1868), and Gillingham (1876). Because of a general decline in agriculture during the last quarter of the century (and sometimes thirty years earlier), the depopulation of farming villages could be considerable, although there was growth in places such as Gillingham and Tisbury that were served by a main railway line. Meanwhile in 1864 the official address of the circuit had changed from Motcombe to Gillingham, where the superintendent resided. By 1885 the other two ministers lived at Mere and Tisbury. Another indication of an urbanising tendency occurred in 1873, when the circuit objected to a proposal to rename the District, but were willing to tolerate 'Swindon' being added to 'Brinkworth.'¹²

It would seem that the proportion of members to chapel-goers followed the common trend in Methodism for the long period when membership was based on class attendance and not Sunday worship. Chapel attendance was usually about three times greater than official membership. No doubt some of the attenders belonged to other

¹¹ *PMM* (1855) p. 748, (1858) p. 236.

¹² Motcombe PM Circuit Reports.

denominations whose service times were different. Thomas Hardy, in one of his short stories, referred to them as 'the mixed race which went to church in the morning and chapel in the evening, or when there was a tea.'¹³ The 1851 Ecclesiastical Census shows that most local Anglican services were in the morning or afternoon, although several parishes recorded a large evening congregation. There was no particular pattern for the considerable number of Independents and the small number of Baptists. Evening was the favourite time for Wesleyans and Primitives. Wesleyans often had a morning service as well, but the Primitives preferred afternoons as their second choice. The following statistics compiled from the Motcombe Circuit Report for 1891-92 gives a useful guide to the impact that was being made on local communities towards the end of the century, remembering that sometimes worshippers came from more than one settlement. It is not certain that the population areas used in the report were identical to those included in national census returns.

Place	Population	(1851)	PM Sittings	Attendance	(1851)	Members
Motcombe	600	(1535)	200	160	(145)	55
Enmore Green	1000		320	100	(140)	31
Kington Magna	400		140	50		26
Zeals	560	(604)	193	180	(76)	53
Ludwell	600		139	100		40
Gillingham	4,482	(2806)	250	200	(n/a)	74
Mere	2,931	(1156)	300	180	(300)	78
E. Knoyle	877	(1110)	110	70	(80)	19
W. Stour	165		80	60		13
Penn	401		106	90		16
Cann	560		80	70		14
Melbury	328		139	100		32
Hindon	554	(710)	130	120	(65)	32
Hatch	200		100	50		17
Buckhorn Weston	517		120	40		14
Tollard Royal	404		110	70		14
Tisbury	2,445	(1625)	120	80	(53)	20

Attendance is for the most popular Sunday service.¹⁴

Only four of these places - Gillingham, Tisbury, Shaftesbury (adjoining Emnore Green), and Motcombe - had Wesleyan chapels by 1884, together with eleven other villages, but most villagers could have walked to an alternative, if they had wished.¹⁵

¹³ *The Distracted Preacher* (1888) p. 1

¹⁴ Motcombe PM Circuit Report (1892)

¹⁵ Shaftesbury WM Circuit Preachers' Plan Feb.-April 1884 at th1. Dictionary of National Biography, hereafter DNB

It is possible to imagine what kind of influence Methodism had in this region by the end of the nineteenth century with such a comprehensive presence. The pioneering work had been largely undertaken in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by the Wesleyans, but the second great Methodist movement, launched in the late Georgian period through the village of Motcombe, filled in most of the gaps, not only in the smaller rural communities - and the town of Mere - but amongst social groups that had often remained outside.

BARRY J. BIGGS

(Dr. Biggs died earlier this year after a varied teaching and preaching career)

SAMUEL WESLEY (1662-1735) AND ST BOTOLPH-WITHOUT-ALDRSGATE

A biographical note of the early years

THE following account has arisen from curiosity about the relatively unexplored circumstances of Samuel Wesley senior's curacy at St Botolph-without-Aldersgate in 1688. Several historians mention this in passing but little attempt seems to have been made to root it firmly in the available original sources. This is an attempt also to provide a chronological framework for the period which he spent in London before removing to Lincolnshire. Much of the information is taken from a letter written by him on 22 August 1692 from South Ormsby, probably addressed to Dr Charles Goodall FRCP (1642-1712). Goodall was a well known physician of the day; he studied at Leiden, and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and published treatises relating to the College of Physicians of which he was President, 1708-1712. He was also Physician to the Charterhouse.¹ The letter survives, as a copy only, in the Rawlinson Ms at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. This is the first of 3 autobiographical letters and it has been published, with the third letter, appended to an article by Dr H. A. Beecham, which also makes it clear there is little need to doubt the authorship of the original.² The second letter was published in Samuel Wesley's lifetime.¹⁴

A special interest attaches to St Botolph's, standing, as it does, at the foot of the A1 'highway to the north' and at the epicentre of John

¹ *Dictionary of National Biography*, hereafter *DNB*

² H. A. Beecham, 'Samuel Wesley senior: New Biographical evidence' in *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, Vol VII, 1963 (University of Nottingham). Frank Baker, in *Investigating Wesley Family Tradition in Methodist History*, Vol 26.3 April 1969, points out that this 'new evidence' had mostly been adduced by him in his *A Methodist Pilgrim in England* (1951)

Wesley's London, midway between Charterhouse, where John went to school, St Paul's, where he frequently worshipped, and between St Giles, Cripplegate, where his father-in-law was incumbent and St Bartholomew the Great, where he was welcomed long after other churches in the neighbourhood, even St Luke's, forbade him their pulpits.

Across Little Britain are the last minute remains of what was almost certainly the house of John Bray, where John and Charles Wesley frequently lodged between 1738 and 1740 and from which they published many of their most important hymns and held dialogues with the Moravians. It was there that Charles Wesley was staying at the time of his conversion experience. Across Aldersgate Street, beneath the site of the Museum of London and the modern Nettleton Court is the site of the ancient Nettleton Court, where the Moravian bookseller, James Hutton,³ had his weekly meetings on a Wednesday, at one of which, on 24 May 1738, John Wesley felt his heart 'strangely warm'd'. This event is now widely regarded as the spiritual birth of Methodism.

All around St Botolph's there are churches and places mentioned by both John and Charles Wesley in their diaries and journals, yet in all the material available to modern scholars not a single reference has so far been found to this church which the brothers must have passed so often. It had escaped the Fire of London in 1666, John Bray was a parishioner and features in the Land Tax records for the parish, but the Wesley brothers, apparently, did not frequent it.

That there should have been no apparent link between the Wesley brothers and St Botolph's is the more teasing because of the strong links that now exist between the Guild and Ward Church life of today and the Methodists who celebrate Aldersgate all over the world. Some plaques and a beautiful, but modern, window are the only memorial to the proximity of this church to those momentous events which gave rise to the Methodist Church.

However, a generation before the young Wesleys came to Aldersgate their father spent almost a year as curate at St Botolph's to the then Perpetual Curate, Dr Adam Littleton, and makes clear reference to this in the letter to be here examined.

Samuel Wesley's date of birth has not been found but he was baptised 17 December 1662 at Winterborne Whitchurch, Dorset, where his father, John, had been appointed to the vicarage in May 1658 but was ejected in 1662 under the Act of Uniformity. Samuel's grandfather, Bartholomew, suffered the same fate.⁴ Thus, in the turmoil of mid-seventeenth-century religious affairs, Samuel's family stood firmly on the side of dissent. Writing of his father's death in 1671 he tells how it followed the imprisonment (for refusing to use the Book of Common Prayer) in 1670

³ *Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland* ed John A Vickers (2000)

⁴ *DNB*

and was caused by 'lying on the cold Earth.'⁵ The young Samuel would have been about 8 or 9 years old.

The responsibility for the upbringing and education of Samuel remained in the hands of the dissenters. After a period at Dorchester Grammar School and destined for the ministry of the Independents, he was sent to London for training under Theophilus Gale (1628-1678), tutor and Independent minister at Newington Green.⁶ However, before Samuel arrived in London on 8 March 1678, aged 15, Gale had died; he then attended a grammar school before entering the academy of Edward Veel (or Veal, ?1632-1708)⁷ in Stepney. He remained there two years before removing to the academy of Charles Morton (1627-1698)⁸ at Newington Green.

During this period Samuel began to question, with his fellow students, the bases of dissent and at the same time came into contact with Dr John Owen (1616-1683), theologian and from 1652 to 1658 Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University,⁹ who sympathized with the dissenters and encouraged Samuel to go to Oxford, believing that the restrictions against dissenters imposed by the Test Act might soon be lifted.¹⁰ Accordingly Samuel proceeded to Oxford, but with his mind already questioning the validity of the schism in the Church caused by the dissenters. At this time Dr Owen was paying him an annuity of £10 and he had also received £30 from the dissenters.¹¹

An account by Samuel's son, John, describes Samuel's attempt to vindicate the dissenters as the reason for his change of heart and his move towards the Church of England. He is said by John to have been living with his mother and an aunt; their attachment to the dissenters was so strong that Samuel preferred not to reveal his thinking to them and rising early one morning set off on foot for Oxford in secret.¹²

The life of debauchery and extravagance which Samuel Wesley found in Oxford went much against his own inclinations and, despite being warned, he was deeply offended. He was not yet, however, quite firm in his intention to join the established church and therefore he returned to London, he says, for 'about a Quarter of a year' at the end of which time his doubts were resolved. He returned to Oxford arriving, he says, on 22

⁵ Beecham, South Ormsby letter. Beecham points out that Dr J. S. Simon in *John Wesley and the Religious Societies* (1921) assigns the date of John's death to 1670, perhaps following Calamy and Adam Clarke; Tyerman and Stevenson place it in 1678 without giving any reference. The actual date in the Winterborne Whitchurch Parish Registers is 1671; for this information I am indebted to Henry D. Rack.

⁶ DNB

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ *ibid*

¹⁰ South Ormsby letter

¹¹ South Ormsby letter

¹² Adam Clarke, *Memoirs of the Wesley Family* (1823)

September 1684¹³ and entered Exeter College as a servitor.

Having received financial help from the dissenters he was not beyond feeling a little guilt at leaving them: 'The Ungenerosity of quitting 'em in their Meaner Fortunes, when I had been a sharer in their better, I know not how to get over...'.¹⁴ Later in his 'Defence of a Letter' he excuses himself by saying the money he received was only used to pay off his debts and not to get him to Oxford.¹⁵

After a quarter of a year he found himself destitute and unable to pay his bills. He also intimates he was humiliated by his fellow students on account of his dissenting background and felt himself at risk of moral breakdown: 'had not Gods providence recall'd Me to myself by those kind afflictions, I beleeve I had grown as ill a man as most in ye university.'¹⁶ He applied for help to his friends but not to his mother 'whom I would not acquaint with my circumstances because I told her at my leaving London I would desire nothing from her.' It is comforting to know, however, that his mother, presumably still ignorant of his plight, sent him a cheese. He was then helped by a Mr Colmer.¹⁷

Foster's *Alumni*¹⁸ records Samuel Westley [*sic*]'s matriculation on 18 November 1684, his graduation to B A (under the spelling Wesley) 19 June 1688 and adds he was made M A at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in 1694.¹⁹

According to the South Ormsby letter Samuel 'came up to London the day after the B[isho]ps were acquitted.' This refers to the seven bishops who refused to have the required reading in their churches of James II's Declaration of Indulgence proclaiming full freedom of worship. They were tried on 29 June 1688 and acquitted the following day.²⁰ Samuel, therefore, must have arrived in London on 1 July 1688. Having, he says, a Chaplain's place offered him in Cornwall he now sought ordination. The *DNB* of 1899 states he was ordained deacon at Bromley on 7 Aug 1688 by Thomas Sprat, Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster. There is no record of this ordination in the Rochester Diocesan records,

¹³ South Ormsby letter.

¹⁴ *A Letter from a Country Divine To His Friend in London Concerning the Education Of The Dissenters, In Their Private Academies; In Several Parts of this Nation* (1703). This is the second of the three letters and was printed as a pamphlet without Samuel Wesley's permission or knowledge in 1703

¹⁵ *A Defence Of A Letter Concerning the Education of Dissenters In their Private Academies With A More full and Satisfactory Account of the same, and of their Morals and Behaviour towards the Church of England: Being an Answer to The Defence of the Dissenters Education* (1704)

¹⁶ South Ormsby letter

¹⁷ South Ormsby letter

¹⁸ Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxoniensis : 1500-1714* (1892)

¹⁹ The day and month of graduation to BA are supplied from *DNB*.

²⁰ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1957)

the relevant registers are missing and although another document confirms that there were ordinations at Bromley, his name is not listed. Samuel's ordination would have been performed by the Bishop of London, but the incumbent Bishop, Henry Compton, was under suspension, for his implied criticism of James II, from 6 September to 28 September 1688. Sprat, who was also Dean of Westminster, and the Bishops of Durham and Peterborough administered the See of London during the suspension.²¹ The chaplaincy in Cornwall was not taken.

The next passage in the South Ormsby letter reads

'a Freind of mine in the Parish of St Botolph Aldersgate desiring a sermon of me before I left London & asking whether I might have the Pulpit, was answered, I might have that & probably the Church & all if I pleas'd, ye Curate being just then pr'fer'd by my Ld. Bp. of London. On this my Freind made an intrest for Me wth Dr Littleton who gave me the place, where I continued about a 12 month.'

This statement is, so far as has been found, the only piece of documentary evidence for Samuel Wesley's curacy at St Botolph. Examination of the parish records reveals no signature in the registers nor any other confirmation of the appointment. The Churchwardens' Accounts from Easter 1688 to Easter 1689 record no payments to him by name for services. Two entries refer to an 'allowance of money etc... paid for Reading prayers the Guift of Mr Xto Tamworth' and 'pd more Reading Divine Service this yeare...'.²² These seem to suggest that Dr Littleton was elsewhere engaged. A payment of £5 to 'mr Littleton the Clerke his sallery' is also recorded. No licence to Samuel Wesley to preach has yet been found. It is perhaps conceivable that the appointment was of a casual nature born of an agreement between Littleton and Wesley during Bishop Compton's suspension.

Adam Littleton (1627-1694) was a student at Christ Church Oxford, in 1647 and was expelled by the Parliamentary Visitors in 1648; he graduated BD and DD on 12 July 1670. He was an eminent grammarian and published a Latin dictionary. In 1658 he became second master at Westminster School, and in 1674 he was appointed a prebendary of Westminster and later became Sub-dean. In 1670 he was made chaplain to Charles II and rector of Chelsea. 'He served the curacy or donative of St Botolph's Aldersgate 1685-1689 and was also rector of Overton, Hants from 1683. He died 30 June 1694.'²³

²¹ *DNB*. There are no background source papers surviving for the 1889 edition. I am indebted to Mary Ludlow and the Centre for Kentish Studies for information about Henry Compton's suspension and for details about the Rochester diocesan records.

²² Corporation of London Guildhall Library MS 1455/Vol 2

²³ Foster, *op cit*

The statement in the South Ormsby letter seems to suggest that Samuel Wesley was not known to Dr Littleton until his unnamed friend effected some kind of introduction. However, the fact that deacon's orders were received from the bishop who was also Dean of Westminster, where Littleton was one of the prebendaries, and perhaps at this date also Subdean, may not be a coincidence. There appears to be no reference in the Westminster Abbey muniments which were searched by the Assistant Keeper. No relevant papers of Adam Littleton are known to the National Register of Archives. Botolph-without-Aldersgate was anciently a Rectory in the gift of St Martin-le-Grand to which church it was united 18 December 1399. From this date it continued as a curacy. It was annexed to Westminster Abbey with St Martin's by Henry VII.²⁴

According to Samuel Wesley's memory the curacy at St Botolph's lasted about a year. The continuing account of his life at that time presents a tight schedule. On the security of the curacy he married Susanna Annesley, youngest daughter of Dr Samuel Annesley, whom he met, aged 13, at her sister's wedding in 1682.²⁵ Defending this hasty marriage he pleads, engagingly, I have no excuse, unless a most passionate Love may be taken for one, tho' all the hardships I have yet ever suffered or still do or may can never make me repent it.²⁶ The marriage is recorded, at old St Marylebone Church, on Monday, 15 November 1688 and the register was signed by Randolph Ford, minister. The parish registers were published by the Harleian Society in Vol 47, where, however, Susanna's surname is wrongly transcribed as 'Angly'.²⁷ It seems clear from an examination of the original register that the 'e' and long 's', closely written, have been misread as a 'g'. In the South Ormsby letter Samuel himself gives the date of the wedding as Monday 12 October, but in 1688 October 12 was a Friday.

Apparently finding the curate's allowance insufficient, Samuel next sought a naval chaplaincy from the Bishop of London. At this point in his narrative he describes an encounter which may have taken place during his time at St Botolph's. Samuel met his former friend Bishop Hall of Oxford, who invited him to his lodgings in or near St Martin's Lane. There were other meetings at Cockrill's bookshop in the city, where he also met Mr Stephen Lob, a dissenting minister who 'had formerly taken care of my Education, getting me the first 30£ a year.' Lob tried to persuade Samuel to help in his campaign to get the penal laws against dissenters and the Test Act repealed. Although he says he was tempted by the recollection of his father's sufferings Samuel felt it

²⁴ George Henessy *Novum Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiae Londinense*, (1898)

²⁵ John A Newton, *Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition in Methodism* (1968). Newton, however, says she was 12 but gives her date of birth as 20 January 1669

²⁶ South Ormsby letter

²⁷ Frank Baker, in *Methodist History*, Vol 26,3 April 1988 'Investigating Wesley Family Traditions', notes the spelling 'Angly'

his duty to decline - 'My business not being Politicks but Obedience.'²⁸

Samuel was ordained priest by the Bishop of London on 24 February 1689 at St Andrew's, Holborn.²⁹ Two days earlier, on 22 February, he signed the Subscription Book agreeing to the Three Articles.³⁰ On 24 June 1689 his licence to preach the word of God as a chaplain on board the naval ship *Hannibal* is recorded in the same volume with his signature. Thus from his ordination as deacon, August 1688, to his licence to serve as a Naval Chaplain covers a period of only about eleven months during which he was, presumably, at St Botolph's.

The South Ormsby letter continues 'att sea I tarry'd about 6 months where I was very ill used and almost starved and poisoned... I came home then well wearyed about the latter end of November 1689.' If his date of return is correct he could only have been at sea about five months. He then spent 'som months' writing and 'correcting to a Press' [?proof reading] before obtaining another curacy at Newington Butts, where he took a house for his family.³¹ Susanna had meanwhile given birth to their first child, Samuel, on 10 February 1690 at her father's house in Spitalfields, where the couple had evidently been lodging. He was presumably conceived before Samuel senior went to sea. The move to Newington must have been some time about March or April 1690.

Samuel then openly admits 'Mr Bardley the minister of Newington was dissatisfied with my performance.' He therefore returned to London where he says his [?book] business was more valuable. While employed by a Mr Gaskarth he received an offer for Virginia which he declined³² in favour of the living of South Ormsby, where he was presented 25 June 1691 and instituted 7 July.³³

After the institution Samuel returned to London and, impecunious as ever, had some difficulty in paying his debts and raising money for the journey north. His patroness, Lady Massingberd, assisted him with loans of £10 for the journey and £10 for housekeeping. He complains of the cost of setting up house and remarks that his father-in-law had given less help with providing furniture than he had expected! The move to Lincolnshire must have been before 25 August 1691, which has been identified as the date of Samuel's first entry in the South Ormsby register.³⁴ On his own admission Samuel Wesley was weary of London

²⁸ South Ormsby letter

²⁹ Corporation of London Guildhall Library MS 9535/3

³⁰ Corporation of London Guildhall Library MS 9540/6. The articles related to simony, canonical obedience and residence.

³¹ South Ormsby letter

³² South Ormsby letter

³³ Beecham, loc cit, discusses the confusion over this date in Stevenson. Revised *DNB* gives 25 June 1691 presented followed by institution on 9 July

³⁴ Beecham, loc cit

and longing for 'privacy & retirement.' He was then aged 28 and was to spend most of the rest of his life in Lincolnshire.

SHEILA HIMSWORTH

The above account was compiled at the instigation and with the support of Martin Ludlow of the Aldersgate Trust. Advice has been given and suggestions have been made by John Vickers and Henry Rack and several archivists in the repositories used. Years for dates between 1 January and 24 March in the period before 1752 have been adjusted to the New Style.

(Sheila Himsworth is a retired archivist and the WHS Conference Secretary)

Methodist Archives: Manuscript Accessions February 2002 - February 2003

Purchase from American dealer of the William Seward 'Manuscript copy book of correspondence pertaining to the Methodist movement in England and Wales in 1738/9'. The letters are contained in an octavo volume of c. 300 pages.

Letters of Dr Maldwyn Edwards re. S. E. Keeble, c. 1970. Deposited by Maureen Edwards.

Balance sheets of the Wesley Guild, 1917-21, 1936.

Minute book of the Wesleyan Education Committee, 1847-61.

Ms. volume containing detailed notes on Holy Scripture in the hand of Alexander Kilham, founder of the MNC. Transferred from WHS Library, Oxford.

Three ms. letters of Charles Wesley to the Countess of Huntingdon, 1763-66, one ms. letter of John Wesley to the Countess of Huntingdon, 1766. Purchased from Mrs. R. B. Francis, Halstead, Essex.

Watlington, Oxon, Circuit Plan 1857-8. Deposited by Mrs Farquhar-Monkpetit, Canada.

Ms. 'diary' of Isaac Bradnock (incomplete), Oct 1801-March 1808; May 1809-June 1810.

Deposit of Regnal League archives, mainly 1920s and 1930s.

Deposit of personal papers of the late Rev. Brian Duckworth, relating to the Division of Social Responsibility (DSR), 1970s and 1980s (includes papers on the 'Toronto blessing' controversy, and the Beckly Lecture Trustees' minute book, 1925-980s.).

Nine folders of files on Jewish Refugees to the U.K. and the Methodist Church provision, c. 1940-1.

Diaries of A. S. Worrall, c. 1931-91 (incomplete).

BOOK REVIEWS

A Brand from the Burning. The Life of John Wesley by Roy Hattersley
(Little, Brown, 2002, pp. viii, 450, £20, ISBN 0 316 86020 4).

Lord Hattersley's lively and candid portrait of William and Catherine Booth made the prospect of his life of John Wesley an enticing one. Here he faced a rather different task. Most of the sources have long been in print in some form and at least a sample of the revealing unpublished diaries more recently available through the work of Vivian Green and Richard Heitzenrater. Added to this has been a long list of biographies and numerous studies of Wesley's wide-ranging ideas on a variety of subjects in addition to his theology. Failing the discovery of a large cache of personal manuscripts, the problem is less of information than of interpretation and here there certainly remains scope for biographers and if Methodists have usually been better on the details of his life, non-Methodists have often been more candid on his personality.

Lord Hattersley has several advantages for his task. As a veteran politician and experienced writer, lacking either the advantages or disadvantages of a Methodist background, he brings a freshness of narrative and insight to what for some of us is in many respects a too well-worn story and this makes for very readable book. He has taken advantage of recent work to supplement the old Curnock and Telford editions of the *Journal* and *Letters* and as regards his attitude to Wesley one senses he perhaps views him, as he remarked of the Booths, that if he was a second-rate saint he was remarkable as a human being. Certainly he has much to say by way of critical analysis of Wesley's character as is natural for a modern biographer but not so conspicuous in Methodist treatments. Wesley's dedication to his mission is fully recognised, backed by a sense of providential calling. But there is also his taste for the supernatural, though Hattersley shrewdly remarks that 'spiritual revelations were rare, but intellectual revelations were frequent' (p.211). Then there is his highly authoritarian personality and passion for control and his sometimes unscrupulous handling of controversies. Though Hattersley sometimes may be too ready to ascribe devious motives to Wesley he very fairly says that it is impossible to determine how far he was motivated by personal ambition and how far by devotion to the cause (pp.400-01). A good deal of attention is paid to his flawed relationships with women, which deserve emphasis, not for prurient reasons but because they significantly affected both his private life and his mission as well as being revealing of his personality. As a theologian he was 'not an original thinker' but 'a lifelong student of other men's ideas' (p.vii). This led to frequent changes of mind along with a proneness to deny that he had done so and 'theological intemperance' (p.322). Like John Kent in his recent *Wesley and Wesleyanism* Hattersley sees Wesley as essentially an anti-Enlightenment man: he used the language, not the methods of the Enlightenment (pp. 84-5).

It is more surprising that Hattersley, unlike most secular writers on Wesley, grapples seriously and rather successfully with Wesley's theology. While he emphasises Wesley's early concentration on salvation by faith, it is interesting that he plays down the significance of May 1738 and even the influence of that whole year in favour of 1725 and the early concern for perfection as the vital turning point (p.137). This will go on being debated but Hattersley rightly sees the central importance of Wesley's perfectionism and the modifications in his position after 1728 as well as the impact of the perfection revival of the early 1760s.

The 1760s, indeed, he sees, more clearly perhaps than earlier writers, as a major turning point in the consolidation of Methodism. This was expressed in the Model Deed, the final failed attempt at cooperation with Anglican Evangelicals, the beginnings of published Minutes of Conference, a new edition of the Large Minutes. The claim in this last that Methodism's mission was not to set up a new church but to revive the nation and the Church and spread scriptural holiness over the land was in conflict with Wesley's irregularities and the increasing signs of a self-sufficient organisation under his own control. On the relationship with the Church, Hattersley is surely right to believe that his ultimate loyalty was to the preservation of the Methodist mission rather than obedience to the Church: he had said as much to 'John Smith' as early as 1746. In his later years he admitted that his main concern was to keep Methodism united and capable of continuing after his death despite denials of separation.

Hattersley also suggests an interesting and probably new interpretation of Wesley's actions from the 1760s. This is that the proliferating rules of conduct mark a shift from his earlier concern for theological correctness as well. The motive for this was that Methodism was attracting a larger nationwide membership of people unlikely to be attracted by theological niceties and needing to be held together in a 'broad church' rather than being at the risk of divisive theological disputes. The remarkable reflections against rigid views of justification in his coach in 1767 are seen as evidence of this (pp.308, 314). Hattersley also sees Wesley's lifelong attempt to hold together loyalty to the Church with the interests of Methodism as breaking down in his last years in favour of the latter, due to lay pressure and, perhaps, senility.

As to Wesley's overall achievement and significance, Hattersley plays down his success during his lifetime. He certainly did not revive the nation or the church, nor did Methodism 'save England from revolution'. His real achievement came later. By imbuing his followers with love and reverence he made them aspire to his vision of becoming 'whole Christians'. Methodism encouraged the working poor to be 'ambitious, industrious and respectable' and so 'become the backbone of industrial and imperial England' (p.410). This judgement that Methodism became attractive as a vehicle for the realisation of secular rather than spiritual virtue is again reminiscent of John Kent's recent analysis. But Hattersley's large claim probably exaggerates Methodism's specific contribution and ignores the

possible effects of the larger evangelical world. Lord Hattersley's book deserves to be welcomed as a lively and realistic portrait of Wesley, certainly for general readers but also with valuable insights and suggestions for debates by specialists. Unfortunately it also suffers from two irritating drawbacks on which a health warning needs to be issued. They are factual inaccuracies and unreliable end-notes. Some of the former are alarmingly obvious. The claim that Wesley was baptized 'John Benjamin' is a nineteenth-century legend (p.20); it was Wesley not Whitefield whose enthusiasm was condemned by Bishop Butler as 'a very horrid thing' (p.185); there is confusion over the Kingswood schools (p.219); 'John Smith' was almost certainly not Secker though the alternative of Herring is suggested (p.210); and John Bennet was not converted by a glance from Wesley (p.232 perhaps a confusion with an incident in John Nelson's life). There are also less obvious errors in names and quotations mixed with paraphrase. As to end-notes, spot checks show that they cannot be relied upon to be accurate and some statements need sources to be cited. One note may be forgiven for its unconscious wit: A. G. Matthews's great biographical dictionary of the Ejected of 1662, *Calamy Revised* (1934) appears as *Calamity Revisited*, 1832! It is a great pity that a book which has attractive and valuable suggestions for further debate should be marred in this way. It deserves to be corrected before appearing, it is to be hoped, in paperback.

HENRY D. RACK

Wesley and the Wesleyans. Religion in Eighteenth-Century Britain by John Kent. (Cambridge University Press, 2002. pp. vi + 229. ISBN 0 521 45532 4 hardback; ISBN 0 521 4555 3 paperback.)

The blurb on the back-cover of John Kent's latest book promises that this will shatter the myth that there was a large-scale Evangelical revival in the eighteenth century. This is a bold claim and it is not surprising that Kent fails always to convince. In some ways this is a curious work - the lay-preacher's egg comes to mind - as it contains a mixture of penetrating but controversial insights, that will provide much debate, with well-known generalisations and commonly-cited information. This means that it is difficult to know who the intended audience is meant to be. Kent's most original and distinctive contribution, and this is one which historians of all Christian denominations, and perhaps all religious traditions, will find thought-provoking, is to explore what he calls 'primary religion'. Kent defines this as an individual's need for some kind of extra-human power to cope with anxiety, and he sees this as a constant, and presumably universal, human search. Conventional religious systems (such as Anglicanism, Methodism, and presumably Buddhism and Islam) are to be tested for how far they can supply it or meet its demands. The early attraction of Methodism, so Kent argues, was that it was more effective in connecting

individuals to a supernatural power than the established Church. In this he agrees with Bishop Lavington that there was a similarity between Methodism and Roman Catholicism: the stress both movements placed on feeling and providential intervention, Kent argues, indicates that they were more successful in harnessing primary religion than the Church of England. All this, Kent wants to prove, means that Methodism did not represent an Evangelical Revival - which he defines as a Christian institution recovering the primitive form of the gospel - but it did, at least during its first thirty years or so, demonstrate a remarkable ability to chime in with primary religion. Kent's understanding of primary religion is that, as a constant, it cannot decline, hence it cannot have a revival; rather what changes is the historical context in which it finds a home. His emphasis on primary religion also leads him to conclude that we should not think of religion in terms of theology - and he gently chides even Wesley and Whitefield for not realising that what counted much more than their doctrine was the freedom which they gave to primary religion to find an outlet.

Much of this is interesting, if necessarily speculative. Nevertheless there are some problems with this argument. Kent plays down the extent to which Wesley was consciously attempting to revive what he understood as the forms and spirit of the primitive Church - on a whole raft of issues, from questions of theology, liturgy, and organisation, to the ownership of goods, the model of the primitive Church can be seen to have provided a key to Wesley's thought and action. Kent's dismissal of doctrine would certainly have surprised Wesley, and it goes against the testimony of numerous followers who were gripped and moved by their leader's doctrinal statements. And rather surprisingly, Kent does not address the large body of literature on the sociology and psychology of religion, which might have refined his thinking about 'primary religion' and how it functions in individuals and society.

What Kent's argument also does is deliberately down-play Wesley's achievement, and this will surely provoke debate among readers of this journal. It is not clear how far Kent thinks that Wesley was even conscious of how successful he was in harnessing 'primary' religion: at times it seems to have been a matter of luck. His view is that Wesley in the 1740s was attempting to redefine Anglicanism, through a clerically-led movement, but that he failed to realise that those who flocked into his societies were more motivated by primary religion. At a certain level this tension seems to have been within Wesley himself, and Kent sees a sharp contrast between Wesley's formal theology and what he calls the 'chaotic underside' of Wesleyanism which affected the leaders themselves. More damningly, perhaps, the narrative argument of the book is to show that if Wesley was successful at first in harnessing primary religion he was also to lose it. Kent's overall vision as set out in the first two chapters is that Methodism was a destabilising force during its first thirty years, but after that it became more concerned with order. From about the 1760s, Kent argues, the Wesleys wanted more professional control and he suggests that W. R. Ward is

mistaken to see Wesleyanism as a lay movement. Throughout these two chapters there are some interesting insights although the overall thrust of an organisation tightening up will be familiar.

The third chapter on women in Wesleyanism is really about John Wesley's treatment of women, and again the framework is the issue of freedom and control. Some of Kent's most original research is actually in this chapter and he is particularly good at close analysis of the spiritual autobiographies and writings produced by women. The general argument, as mirrors the larger model of shift from liberation to order, brings out the contrast between experiences of women in the 1740s, which were written by women themselves, and later spiritual testimonies of women's religious conversions, which were often written and shaped by Wesley. He concludes that in its limited way Wesleyanism was, on balance, liberating for women.

Alongside demolishing the Evangelical Revival, the blurb also promises an unexpectedly sympathetic picture of Hanoverian Anglicanism. This statement does make one wonder how far historians of the Church of England and historians of the Methodist movement have been working in overly self-contained fields. The last fifteen years or so has in fact seen the development of what some might term a remarkably upbeat view of the established Church in the eighteenth century. In this context, Kent's version, as seen in the final chapter of the book which looks at Anglican responses to the emergence of Wesleyanism, seems quite tame. He does admittedly use the well-known diary of the shop-keeper Thomas Turner, who was a staunch Anglican, to suggest that this provides a modest rebuttal of Wesley's criticisms of the Church, and that the Church was not as completely out of touch with primary religion as we have usually supposed. What Kent does not do, however, is to engage with the powerful arguments of historians such as Mark Smith and W. M. Jacob, who have shown the remarkable affection demonstrated by members of the laity for the Church in the eighteenth century, indicating that the Church was able to fill the primary religious needs of a surprisingly large number of people. Some of the most recent research would also suggest that the Church was more adept at activating feeling and harnessing providential intervention than the conventional stress on this as the 'age of reason' has given it credit for. It might be, too, that we should not assume that primary religion can only be satisfied by miracles. The 'reasonableness of Christianity' has its own satisfactions too.

In conclusion, this is a stimulating, if problematic, book. Its success, I suspect, will be shown by how far historians of religion in eighteenth-century Britain in ten years time will be talking about 'primary religion' or if they will still prefer to use the concept of an Evangelical Revival.

JEREMY GREGORY

Thoughts from a Warmed Heart: A commentary on John Wesley's Notes on the New Testament by James T. MacCormack (Colourpoint, 2002, pp. 174, £9.99, ISBN 1 898392 25-0)

Though clearly a labour of love, this is a book we did not really need. By extrapolating from Wesley's exegetical *Notes* his doctrinal teaching under twelve headings, the author leaves us with the impression of a more systematic theology than Wesley ever aspired to. The *Notes* are now of little more than antiquarian interest and this treatment of them does little if anything to justify our continuing lip-service to them as doctrinal standards. (A much better case can be made for the 'standard' sermons.) In any case, there is nothing here that a reasonably intelligent use of the *Notes* themselves could not readily yield. One might have expected an opening chapter indicating and evaluating Wesley's sources, but this is not dealt with, and then only in the briefest possible way, until p.169. Before that we have unexplained references to 'Heylin' (pp.27-8), and a few scattered references to Bengel, Doddridge and Guyse. References to Kummel's exegetical rules on p.33 are explained only in a note on p.35 that reads like an afterthought.

The author confines himself almost exclusively to the *Notes* even though here and there the discussion might have been enriched by reference to Wesley's other writings; e.g. his comment on the inerrancy of Scripture in the *Journal* for 24 July 1776, which contrasts with his recognition in the *Notes* of clear inconsistencies (arising from human error) within the Bible text. One exception is on p.46, where the contrasting motives of fear and love are helpfully cited from the *Journal* for January 18 1736. On the other hand, there is no examination of Wesley's treatment of passages that he found especially problematical (such as Romans 8:29-30, dealt with also in his sermon 'On Predestination'). So we await a more thorough (and more critical) treatment of this part of Wesley's output in the new edition of his Works.

JOHN A VICKERS

Those Awakening Days: the Kafue Story by Philip C. Pearson (Fairway Folio, Alsager, 2002 pp84 C/B £5.50 ISBN O 9534295 4 7)

This Zambian missionary centre originated in 1890 with Primitive Methodist missionaries trekking from Kimberley to an area still African and without European settlers. Deaths, disease and danger from wild animals were the price of mission, greatly mitigated with the arrival of the railway in 1904 and the use of quinine. This is a well-researched, brief illustrated account, in part autobiographical, relating how the hardships of those pioneers has led to an educational institute, influential in the country, with related medical and agricultural work. The work has developed despite tensions not only between missionaries, but also between them and the Connexional Committee, as well as the conflicting demands of a native church with those

of white settlers. This account contributes to our further understanding of Primitive Methodist African missionary activity. Many of the names, such as the Rev, John H. Hirst and Dr. H. S. Gerrard, will be familiar to those with a specialist knowledge of the Connexion but this otherwise excellent account would have gained by the inclusion of short biographical details of leading participants.

D. COLIN DEWS

NOTES & QUERIES

1557 THE MMS HISTORY PROJECT

The MMS History Project was launched at a Conference in Edinburgh in July 2002 under the joint auspices of the Archives & History Committee of the Methodist Church and the Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies. The project's editor-in-chief is Professor Andrew Walls of Aberdeen assisted by Dr Kirsty Murray of Edinburgh.

A further Conference is to be held at Sarum College, Salisbury on 25 and 26 November 2003. Papers are invited on all aspects of 'the history of Methodist missionary activity and its outcomes'. The Steering Group hopes that there will be contributions dealing with every period from the early days of Methodism to the near contemporary.

More information can be had from Andrew Walls, MMS Project, Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, Mound Place, Edinburgh EH1 2LX (email: a.f. walls@ed.ac.uk). Andrew would welcome a brief synopsis of any proposed paper for the Conference by 31 July. It is hoped that many of the papers will be published.

JOHN PRITCHARD

THE ANNUAL LECTURE

- will be delivered in St. David's
Methodist Church, Llandudno
on Monday, 30 June 2003 at 7.30 p.m.

by **Professor Richard P. Heitzenrater**

'Wesley and America'

Chairman: The Rev. Dr. Henry D. Rack, MA

The Lecture will be preceded by TEA* for members at 5 p.m.
and the Annual Meeting at 6 p.m.

*Please book with the General Secretary by 14 June, cost £2.50 per head

TRAVEL DIRECTIONS

To St David's Methodist Church, Mostyn Avenue, Craig y Don, Llandudno.

TRAIN - to Llandudno Junction where you change trains for Llandudno. At Llandudno telephone for a taxi. Ask for St David's Methodist Church, Mostyn Avenue, Craig y Don. (Don't let the driver take you to St David's Church, Penrhyn Bay). Trains on 30th June 2003 are scheduled to leave Llandudno Junction for Llandudno at 16.04, 16.14, 17.15, 18.14 and 18.26. Return trains from Llandudno to Llandudno Junction are scheduled to depart at 20.34, and 21.33. The journey takes about 14 minutes

COACH - Get off at the Llandudno Coach Station (opposite ASDA) and either phone for a taxi or turn left on leaving the coach station and walk about 1 mile to St David's Methodist Church, which is on the left hand side of the same street as the coach station walking away from Llandudno town centre.

CAR - A55 Dual carriageway from either the Chester or the Bangor direction. Leave the A55 to go on to the A470 (near Llandudno Junction) to Llandudno. Follow the A470 to the 4th roundabout and then take the second road off into Queen's Road. After you pass the park on your right the 3rd road is Mostyn Avenue. Turn right by the shops and St David's is on your left. If you are coming from the centre of Llandudno go onto the promenade and with the sea on your left go in the direction of the Little Orme to the roundabout and left take the second exit and then the first exit into Mostyn Avenue. St David's Methodist Church is on your left past St Paul's 'Church in Wales' and the shops. There is side street parking. There is no parking in the church grounds.

WALKING - From the Conference Hall and the North Wales Theatre walk along the promenade with the sea on your left towards the Little Orme and after half a mile turn right into Queen's Road and then past the shops left into Mostyn Avenue. St David's is on your left past more shops.