

BULLETIN
of WHS in WALES
WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Number 2 - 2012

To promote and facilitate the study of all aspects of Methodism in Wales from the preaching of John and Charles Wesley, through its evolution to the Methodist Church of 1932 and subsequent developments to the present day.

Edited by
Graham Tennant

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[unless otherwise acknowledged]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the numerous people and institutions who have readily granted permission to quote from their work or to reproduce their illustrations.

Illustrations in Alan Thorne's article on the Penarth Shipping Dynasty (p.22) are from his own collection. (Some of these images have also appeared in National Museum of Wales publications and the Museum has sanctioned their use here.) An extensive collection of related pictures, and further information, can be found in "*Morels of Cardiff*" by John Morel Gibbs, National Museum of Wales (1982), and in "*Trinity Methodist Church, Penarth : A Portrait*" by John and Sheila Gibbs, Methodist Publishing House (1994)

Rev Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch and Jo Hibbard for permission to quote from the "*Methodist Heritage Handbook 2010*" in Gordon Maslem's article on John Wesley in the lower Rhymney Valley (p.44).

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Dr Digby James for permission to reproduce his photographs of Moriah Chapel, Loughor (Figures 3 and 5 in Rev John Rowe's article on the Welsh Revival of 1904-1905, p.104). Other illustrations in this article are by permission of the '*Western Mail*'.

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PREFACE

In the two years since some of us first met in Llanidloes to establish an English-language Wesley Historical Society group in Wales we have done quite a lot and I feel that we can be justly proud of what has been achieved. Not least has been the publication of this Bulletin which is an outstanding example of its kind. Much of the credit for this is down to the hard work of our Editor, Graham Tennant, but also to those who have so willingly contributed articles and helped with its distribution – including to several people beyond the borders of Wales and the UK.

Apart from arranging our twice-yearly meetings, the Executive Committee has been looking at ways of furthering interest in Methodist history across Wales and broadening our membership base. If you know of anyone who you think might be interested, please invite them along to one of our meetings or ask if they would be interested in receiving the Bulletin. We are also exploring the best way to establish a network of link people in each circuit who would be willing to promote our work across Wales.

There are lots of local histories and publications relating to chapels and circuits. Often, of course, these have been produced to mark a centenary or other particular anniversary. We are starting to draw up a list of these and would also like to have copies of them, if possible, so that they could be kept in a safe archive – perhaps in the relevant local record office and/or the National Library. If you have any knowledge of such publications, however slim, please contact Colin Merrick our Treasurer who is co-ordinating this search, or any other member of the Executive Committee.

During 2012 we established a pattern of meeting in the Spring, when we also have our AGM, and the Autumn. In April we met in Blackwood Church under the heading of ‘John Wesley – Rhymney Valley and the World’. In the morning Alan Thorne gave a talk on ‘West-Country Wesleyan Industrialists in South Wales’. In the afternoon Gordon Maslem spoke on the topic that gave the day its title. We also visited local places of historical Methodist interest. Fuller account of these may be found elsewhere in this Bulletin. In the midst of this busy day we also found time for our AGM.

In October those of us who live in Aberystwyth were pleased to welcome people for a day exploring the Methodist history of that area. Lionel Madden gave an introductory overview of Methodism in Ceredigion followed by an illustrated talk by Jenny Smith on Methodist buildings in the town. Meeting in the still relatively-new St. Paul Methodist Centre, we were pleased to hear an account of the building of that church by one of its prime movers, Len Kersley. Good weather enabled an enjoyable walk

around the several Methodist sites, including the two inns where Aberystwyth Methodism first had its home. Again, reports of these talks are to be found in the Bulletin. In 2013 we will be continuing the practice of alternating our meetings between the south and elsewhere in Wales.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to all our officers for their hard work and to all of those who support our cause in any way. Rather unexpectedly, I shall be moving to Scotland this year but feel privileged to have played a small part in helping to establish our group. I will, of course, continue to receive the Bulletin and hope that the Scottish WHS is as active and successful as its Welsh counterpart.

David Easton
Chairman

Aberystwyth
December 1st 2012

EDITORIAL

Within the following pages are a record of the talks given at the Society's two meetings in 2012, in the spring at Blackwood, (including visits to Llanbradach Fawr Farm and St Michael's Church Lower Machen) and in the autumn at Aberystwyth. Although not formally recognised here, we visited many of the Aberystwyth buildings described by Jennifer Smith in an interesting walk led by Rev.Dr.David Easton.

In addition to the speakers at the WHS in Wales meetings I have included material from other sources. Two very different non-WHS meetings are recorded. Rev John Rowe spoke at a church fellowship meeting at Llanishen (supported by others from churches in the Cardiff Northern Cluster) about his Sabbatical study of the Welsh Revival of 1904-5. In June the Neath & Port Talbot Circuit arranged a meeting over two days to reflect on the work of Thomas Coke of Brecon. Colin Merrick provided a report of the events and I am pleased to include the text of a booklet prepared by Rev Sobanathasar Sinnathamby for the occasion

It has been a pleasure to work with the various speakers to arrange their texts for inclusion in this volume; and to select illustrations to accompany them.

After including in last year's Bulletin the Pentre Llifior Heritage Leaflet No.1 on Rev James Buckley, I have reproduced here Leaflet No.2 on another Wesleyan Methodist Preacher, Thomas Carlill. I have also included a facsimile of the first of Rev Richard Butterworth's Methodist Rambles from 1908. In this article he travelled by train to Dinas Powis and visited Wesley-related sites in the area. In contrast we have a request from Martin Crampin for information about the location and history of stained glass windows in Welsh chapels.

Last, but not least, there is an invitation to the Wesley Historical Society's 120th Annual Meeting to be held in June in Epworth

Colin Merrick is searching for local "Church Stories". In some cases this might be a complete Church History; but if this sounds a bit pretentious the memories of local people with recollections of how the local church was established, or celebrated its mile stones, would

form an admirable start. The important thing is that the story of the local church (and the community in which it exists) is recorded for posterity before it is too late. This may involve exposing articles or publications already in existence or organising people in your church or circuit to put pen to paper. **Please contact Colin Merrick to talk about it.** Tel : 029 2062 6068 or wernlas3@talktalk.net.

If you come across anything which you think may be of interest, for next year's Bulletin please let me know.

Finally, I must thank my wife, Barbara, for meticulously reading through the text and identifying many inaccuracies and inconsistencies. Although she cannot possibly have found every such error, she has considerably reduced their number. Thank you!

Graham Tennant

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