

BULLETIN
of WHS in WALES
WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Number 1 - 2011

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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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Speed's 1610 Plan of Cardiff reproduced by kind permission of Glamorgan Archives.

Cardiff Guildhall (1742-1754) drawing included by Courtesy of Cardiff Council Library Services.

Line drawings of Rev John Wesley, Rev Charles Wesley, Rev George Whitfield and Howell Harris are taken from “Wesley his own biographer : selections from his Journal” published in 1890 by CH Kelly, London for the centenary of John Wesley's death

Roath Road Review the magazine of the Sunday School of Roath Road Wesleyan Methodist Church, Cardiff (1908). Rev Richard Butterworth's article on the “Cardiff Martyrs” is from a copy in the possession of Graham Bennett

Plas Watford photograph from HP Richards “A History of Caerphilly”, 1975, Brown, Cowbridge

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EDITORIAL

I am most grateful to all those who have willingly made the effort to contribute articles for this first issue of the “WHS in Wales Bulletin”. Not only is this a record of the meetings and visits of the Society, but also reflects the interests and activity of our members. In addition, it is a source of administrative and contact information

I hope that anyone, member or not, with information of interest to our members will feel able to submit an “article”. This may be many pages with detailed references or what I suppose more illustrious journals would call “Letters to the Editor”, or just historical tit-bits, or sources of information – books, libraries, church histories, societies – share your discoveries, please.

Graham Tennant

FOREWORD

The Wesley Historical Society was delighted last June to welcome several members of the new WHS in Wales to its annual meeting at the Gladstone Memorial Library at Hawarden in Flintshire. This was the first time for a number of years that the WHS had held its Annual Meeting and Lecture in Wales and probably the very first occasion on which the lecture was introduced by the guest chairman, Dr Lionel Madden, in both English and Welsh. Dr Eryn White's lecture which followed then presented an illuminating and detailed study of the impact of both Wesley and Whitefield on Wales; and the afternoon concluded with rousing renderings of Charles Wesley's 'Love Divine All loves Excelling' and William Williams' 'Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah' both to their powerfully expressive Welsh tunes.

There was a real sense of excitement that such a committed and enthusiastic group had emerged within Wales to extend the WHS objectives of 1893 of historical enquiry and shared fellowship in the exploration of our common heritage into the twenty-first century. On behalf of the Wesley Historical Society may I offer you our warmest good wishes as you develop your programme of activities, research and outreach in Wales.

May I also express the hope that we might see as good a representation of WHS in Wales in Bristol on Saturday 30 June 2012 for our Annual Meeting which will provide opportunities to explore the New Room and Charles Wesley's house and to hear Professor John Wolffe of the Open University examine patterns of growth and decline in both Methodism and Anglicanism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

With very best wishes to you as you enter your second year,

(Dr) John A. Hargreaves,
General Secretary of the Wesley Historical Society and
Vice-President of the World Methodist Historical Society
December 20th 2011.

PREFACE

Welcome to the first edition of the Wesley Historical Society in Wales Bulletin. This publication marks a milestone in the establishment of a branch of the WHS in Wales - although there has been a Welsh-language group (Cylchgrawn Hanes yr Eglwys Fethodistaidd yng Nghymru) for many years. CHEFN has been responsible for some excellent research into, and publication of, material relating to the history of Welsh-speaking Methodism, mostly in the Wesleyan tradition.

Of course, the Wesleyans, as well as the other branches of nineteenth-century Methodism, also established English-language work across Wales. Much of this history, particularly of the non-Wesleyan strands, has received little attention from historians. The focus has often been upon John Wesley's relationship with the leaders of the Welsh evangelical awakening of the eighteenth century. One of my hopes for our Branch is that it will stimulate a wider interest in our Church's history in this part of the Connexion: wider in terms of the years covered, but also in its recognition of the part played by the smaller Methodist denominations. For example, as a Cornishman, I would love to see a thorough account of how those West Country Methodists, the Bible Christians, established and sustained their work across South Wales.

The possibilities for our group are many. I hope that we will be able to look at the bigger picture - denominations; issues; the relationship of Welsh Methodism to the wider connexions and so on. But sometimes the bigger picture needs to be informed by more particular and local research. I know that research of this nature often seems to attract people who are absorbed by what might be termed 'arcane particularity' - obsessing about the minutiae, oblivious or indifferent to the bigger picture. But both these approaches - the general and the particular - can and must inform one another if we are to have a proper understanding of our Church's history.

The Bulletin will provide a forum for people to share ideas and research in both these general and more particular ways. If you have anything in the nature of particular research you have carried out on the history of Methodism in Wales, or if you have an idea or hypothesis you would like

to test on a wider audience, then this Bulletin offers you such opportunities.

I am grateful to Graham Tennant who has taken on the task of editing the Bulletin and for many others, especially Andrew Mathieson, who have worked hard to get our Branch off the ground from its preliminary meeting in Llanidloes last year (September 2010) through the formal establishment of a Wales branch of the WHS and now this publication, which I hope will do much to promote and encourage a truly worthwhile consideration, in all its aspects, of 'the people called Methodists' in the land of Wales and beyond.

Rev Dr David Easton
Chairman "WHS in Wales"
Aberystwyth
December 22nd 2011