

*The  
Congregational Historical Circle Magazine*



The Congregational Historical Circle Magazine No.5.  
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Secretary

Mr. John Bray,  
"Shangri-La",  
14 Pillar Crescent,  
Brixham, Torbay,  
S.Devon. TQ5 8LE.  
Tel:Brixham 4771

Editor

Rev. Trevor Watts,  
"Wayside",  
31 Woodfield Road,  
Shrewsbury, Salop.  
Tel:Shrewsbury

Treasurer

Mr. David Morrell,  
66 Golden Park Avenue,  
Torquay, Devon. TQ2 8LS.  
Tel: Torquay 311324

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EDITORIAL

It is with a sense of deep loss that we record the passing of the late Reginald Watkins Cleaves. We mourn the loss of an outstanding Minister and Preacher. He was a divine in the best Congregational Tradition.

I had the privilege of serving his home church at Abersychan as minister for many years. His father was a deacon and his family are still leading officers and members of that congregation. "Reg" as he is fondly known, was one of three young men who offered themselves for the ministry during the period of the Rev. Ben Davies's pastorate at Abersychan during the years 1925 - 38. He graduated from the University of Wales and proceeded to the Memorial College, Brecon gaining his B.D., so joining that great company of Ministers who had gained a double degree from the Welsh University.

He was more than an historian, he, with others had made history during those stormy and turbulent years which preceded the formation of the Congregational Federation after the events of 1972. He did not indulge in self pity, for he was forward looking and saw with prophetic foresight the changes and challenges that were to come. He was convinced that the Congregational Faith and Order was worth preserving. He who

had done so much with others to preserve that rich heritage wrote the official of those events & decisions in his book "Congregationalism 1960-1976. The Story of the Federation." This was printed by the John Penry Press, Swansea & is obtainable from the Congregational Federation Office, 12 Canal Street, Nottingham, Price £1.25, postage extra.

It is the record of the efforts made by the "few" who sought to stem the ecumenical tide. He, and those who saw it as he did faced it not with bitterness but with the conviction that Congregationalism had an abiding value. He was no detached observer or recorder of events, but a warrior valiant for the truth which he considered to be of supreme value.

In his Chairman's Address to the 142nd Assembly held at Leicester in 1973, he called everyone "to tread the high and lofty path of freedom to march & do as God pleases. Be strong for the Lord is with Thee." (Page 90) It is the prophet that speaks, when he added, "The possible is hardly worth living for: it is the ideal that kindles enthusiasm & gives inspiration & vigour to all human effort". (Page 93). His clear and tenacious grasp of Divine truth and his urgent sense of Commission to preach the Gospel enabled him to steer the Federation away from the shallows of self-pity into the deeper waters of the divine purpose, so fitting the local church to be an instrument in God's hand to redeem society.

Rev. Trevor Watts.

FROM THE SECRETARY -

With your edition No.5. of the Congregational History Circle Magazine you should receive the following to keep you in touch with the latest developments of the Circle:-

1. Copies of the Minutes of the A.G.M. of the circle held at Bristol on Saturday 10th May 1980 last.
2. Membership renewal slips from the Treasurer inviting you to renew your membership for the period January 1981 to December 1981 & covering the May & December editions of the Magazine. We hope that you have enjoyed the editions of the magazine to date & that you will decide to renew your membership if you have not done so already. Should you not decide to renew your membership however we should appreciate a line from you as to why this is.
3. Brochures & Booking Forms for the International Congregational Fellowship Conference to be held at Bangor, North Wales from July 8th to July 12th 1981 and which the C.H.C. is to be actively involved in.

4. Quite a number of receipts have accumulated in the office for subscriptions paid by members for the period May 1980 to December 1980 & where these are still outstanding I enclose these attached to the Renewal Slips. I am pleased to report that we are steadily increasing our publicity to see that the Circle is made as widely known throughout the world as possible. Besides the monthly inclusion in the Congregational Panel in the British Weekly to which many of our Churches subscribe we also now have a regular advert in the Irish Congregational News & the American Congregational Journal has kindly offered to include an article on the Circle in one of their future editions. We are also allowing the American Congregational Journal to reproduce articles from our magazine in their magazine & they are allowing us to reproduce material of theirs in our magazine in future which hopefully will enable us to bring readers of the C.H.C. Magazine relevant items of interest from American Congregationalism. I would say that the increasing acceptance of the Circle Internationally is more than reflected in this magazine in as much as it contains articles from England, Wales Ireland & an article on the Heckmondwicke Academy inspired by a contribution from New Zealand. Only Scotland is unfortunately omitted as I have had difficulty in making contact with the Editor of the Scottish Congregational Newspaper despite several letters. One minor hiccup has been the fact that we have not been able to involve the Trustees of the Unaffiliated Congregational Churches in our work due to technical reasons or to involve them on the Main Committee of the Circle but I am pleased to report that several Unaffiliated Churches are amongst our membership & hopefully this will increase. I am also sad to report that the Congregational Federation did not feel able to allow us to include the insertion we enjoyed in the 1979/80 edition of the Congregational Federation Year Book but this problem was resolved by a kind benefactor who stepped forward to pay for a  $\frac{1}{4}$  page advert for us in the 1980/81 Year Book. This is on sale now.

5. Plans for the involvement of the Circle in the Interest Evenings of the International Congregational Fellowship Conference at Bangor in July are progressing well and it now looks as though the programme will be as follows:- WEDNESDAY 8th JULY 1981 - Following a day of Conference Sessions it is hoped that those attending the Conference may like to get some fresh air

and take a short coach trip to Angelsey to view an ancient Congregational Church or Church ) with a short tour and talk at the Church. This evening is being arranged for us by Rev. Dafydd Wyn William of the Union of Welsh Independents.

THURSDAY 9th JULY 1981 - Following a day of trips around Snowdonia something a little more relaxing has been planned for the Circles Interest Evening & Rev. Tudur Jones has offered to talk on the subject "Off to Cincinnati in the morning: A Portrait of Principal Michael D. Jones". After a break it is hoped then to have a discussion on the resources for studying Congregationalism in our various countries with a number of prominent persons taking part. Also during the Conference we hope to have a stand advertising the Circle & selling back editions of the magazine & distributing its publicity. Various other items are also planned. The History Interest Evenings are being jointly planned by Rev. Dafydd Wyn William (Union of Welsh Independents), Dr. Arvel Steece of the American Congregational Churches & Mr. R. J. Bray for the Circle & should you have any comments which you may feel useful for this event then we should be pleased to hear from you.

6. Unfortunately our original plans to hold the 1981 Annual General Meeting of the Circle at the Memorial Hall are not now possible as the Trust does not take evening bookings for its Halls outside of the normal working day of its regular staff i.e. between 8 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. daily. However it is still hoped to hold a Friday Evening Meeting in London as per the Minutes and ideas and suggestions would be welcomed by the Secretary.

Lastly may I wish all members of the Circle a very Happy Christmas & a Happy New Year & hope that as we go forward into 1981 we shall deepen our knowledge of Congregationalism together.

R. J. Bray.

FROM THE POSTBAG - "Change & Decay - The Future of our Churches" the Mobile Exhibition sponsored by the Arts Council & re-arranged from its static form when it was shown at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London by Marcus Binney will be visiting the following locations in early 1981:-

January 16th - February 15th .... Buxton Museum  
February 16th - March 31st .... Swansea Museum  
April 1st - May 15th .... Bristol Museum & Art Gallery  
May 16th - June 30th .... Gloucester, St. Nicholas's  
July 1st - August 15th .... Cardiff, Museum of Wales.

"THE FALL OF ZION" is a new book recently published by the Save Britain's Heritage Group. Written by Ken Powell, the Northern Secretary of Save this book is a major survey of Nonconformist Architecture in the North - an area which was the great stronghold of Nonconformity in the 19th Century. The book is interesting in that it discusses the Chapels of Baptists, Congregational & U. R.C.Churches, Methodists, Quakers & Unitarians as well as smaller or more recent denominations & churches such as the Christian Scientists. Many of the buildings illustrated are included for the first time.

Nonconformist Chapels are closing at an increasing rate, and many have now been demolished. However there exist many possible alternative uses for these buildings and the book illustrates some of the most successful examples. These include the conversion of the former U.R.C.Church at Headingley Hill, Leeds as offices by a group of design consultants - retaining the interior undivided - and the rescue of the remarkable Art Nouveau former First Church of Christ Scientist, Victoria Park, Manchester (once described by Pevsner "as one of the most original buildings of its date anywhere") as an auditorium for a teacher training college.

"The Fall of Zion - Northern Chapel Architecture and its Future" with over 100 photographs most of them specially taken for the book is excellent value at £2.50 (inc. postage in the U.K.) & can be obtained by writing direct to "Save Britains Heritage", 3 Park Sq. West, London NW1 4LJ enclosing remittance.

An exhibition of selected photographs is also visiting other venues in the North & if you would like details of this ring Mr. Ken Powell, Hebden Bridge 456I (Work) or Leeds 756538 (Home) or Mr. Marcus Binney 01-261-6562 (Work) or 01-828-8788 (Home). Copies of the photographs are available direct from "Save".

ST. MARY'S HALL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, GLOUCESTER - The Rev. W.M. Jones has been giving part time pastoral help to this Independent Church & would welcome information from anyone who might be able to help on the history of the Church. This Unattached Church began when followers of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion bought premises for followers of Whitefield in his native city; and from the Church records it apparently stayed in the "Connexion" for 80 years before it became independent. For a period it was attached to Southgate Cong. Church Gloucester. The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion have very few records of the Church so any information on

the Church or clues as to where information might be found would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Rev. W.M. Jones, 34 Riversley Road, Gloucester direct with any information.

SOUTH BRENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, DEVON - Would welcome any information on the dates & history of the Church & in particular of the dates & history of the new Church building erected in about 1880. Anyone with information please contact the Secretary of C.H.C., Mr. John Bray.

THE AMERICAN CONGREGATIONAL JOURNAL - Is published every September, January and April and reaches some 1,300 families in over 45 countries. It particularly encourages thoughtful, scholarly writing and it would greatly welcome more articles from the United Kingdom. If you feel that you may have something of interest please contact either David Watson, 61 Oakroyd Avenue, Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 2EN (U.K. Official Correspondent) or Mr. D. Gray (editor), Business Office, Congregational Journal, 7065 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, California, 90028, United States of America.

REV. TREVOR WATTS - has a large number of Theological Books and works by leading Congregational and Free Church Authors which he is willing to let go to interested persons in return for a donation to the Congregational History Circle plus postage. For full details contact Rev. Trevor Watts, 31 Woodfield Road, Shrewsbury, Salop, Telephone Shrewsbury 54104.

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#### SITING OF MEMORIAL HALL LIBRARY

David Watson, who had replaced John Wilcox as the Congregational Federation's representative on the Fact-Finding Sub-Committee of the Memorial Hall Trust, reported to the November meeting of the Federation's Council as follows:--

Discussions with the Trustees of Dr. Williams' Library have established that they would be willing to lease premises in Gordon Square, London WC1 to house the Memorial Hall Library. The premises concerned are next door to the building in which the Dr. Williams' Library is housed (with full communication one to the other) and are presently occupied by the University of Ghana - their lease expires on 31st Dec. 1980. There was confirmation



that the premises would house all the books now at Memorial Hall with room for modest additions. It was agreed that the Memorial Hall Library would remain a distinct and separate collection and be so identified on the outside of the building in which it was housed. However, to reduce costs, it would be possible to share reception facilities, reading room and staff with the Dr. Williams' Library but, additionally, two cataloguers would be employed to complete the cataloguing of the Memorial Hall collection. Central to the whole concept would be the appointment by the Memorial Hall Trust of a Library Committee on which all three constituent bodies would be represented. Staff charged with the care of the Memorial Hall Library would respond to that Committee (and to no-one else) on all relevant matters.

Mr. Watson strongly commended removal of the Library to Gordon Square under the above conditions. Capitalisation of the space released at Caroone House (in which the Library is at present housed) would substantially increase the investment income of the Trust. It would, indeed, be for consideration whether Caroone House should not be entirely vacated - thus maximising the increase in income - and the Administrative Offices of the Trust housed elsewhere.

The Council of the Congregational Federation having considered Mr. Watson's report & one from John Wilcox, who serves on the Budget Group of the Trust, approved the following policy statement:-

The Council of the Federation finally agreed unanimously that in their view it would be in the best interests of the Congregational Memorial Hall Trust to go forward as follows:-

1. Completely vacate Caroone House, capitalise the space which was thereby released and invest the proceeds.
2. Negotiate with the trustees of Dr. Williams' Library for the renting on a long lease of accommodation in the basement, ground and first floors of their premises in Gordon Square.
3. Transfer the Administrative Office of the Trust to Gordon Square together with the three members of staff.
4. Transfer the bulk of the Library to Gordon Square.

5. Transfer the remainder of the Libra. and appropriate Congregational memorabilia to the new Congregational Centre in Nottingham.
6. Establish a Library of modern theological books together with those library books not transferred to Gordon Square either in, or adjacent to, the new Congregational Centre in Nottingham.
7. Make an annual grant to the Congregational Federation towards the administration of the Hall & Committee Rooms on the understanding that these would be let to Congregationalists, i.e. half the commercial rates.

It is understood that the matter will now be discussed by the Council of the Memorial Hall Trust and, subject to their approval, by an extraordinary general meeting of members. Implementation of the proposals would necessitate the publication of a Scheme by the Charity Commissioners.

See also article by Mr. J. D. Gowlett (Secretary Memorial Hall (1979) Ltd in this issue.

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### ROBERT RAIKES - A SOCIAL PIONEER

This year we celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of the pioneering of the Sunday School movement. It was in July 1780 that Robert Raikes opened his first Sunday School in St. Catherine's Street, Gloucester.

In 1757 at the age of 21 Robert had succeeded his father as proprietor of the Gloucester Journal and in a short time gained considerable local respect as a businessman. The Journal was then the only newspaper covering a large area & quickly grew in importance & power under his guidance.

In 1768 he began an agitation in his newspaper against the appalling conditions in the prisons at Gloucester & over the whole country. He was well aware of the circumstances in the local prisons because he had been helping the prisoners by reading to them & by arranging for the occasional literate prisoner to read to the others, in Bridewell and Castle Gaols in Gloucester for a number of years, but the campaign did not

make him popular. The two gaols were shunned as pest houses by almost everyone in the city, including the prison chaplain; sentences were harsh, gaol fever was rife and prisoners were herded together regardless of sex, age or condition. He cared nothing for his unpopularity, however, being a devout Christian who enjoyed reading the stories of Jesus as a Healer & Teacher. He wrote in later years "It is that part of our Saviour's character I try to imitate; He went about doing good."

One day a woman who washed linen for Robert Raikes stole some of his shirts and pawned them. Rather than see her severely punished by reporting her to the authorities he talked with her until she was sorry for her wrong doing and promised not to steal again. He then got the shirts out of pawn and said no more about the matter; but gradually he came to realise that his success with the prisoners was not so complete. To many of those he had befriended and placed in jobs had sooner or later found their way back into gaol since a life of crime was the only life they knew.

Raikes's Gospel of Social Reform was based on the thoughts - "Vice is preventable"

"Idleness is the parent of vice"

"Ignorance is the cause of idleness"

Pondering over his apparent failure to reform adults he amended the first text to read "Vice is preventable - begin with the child." What is regularly taken for granted today, but was possibly never even thought about in those days is the fact that if children are brought up in good habits they are less likely to fall into evil ways in later years.

Then, while he was visiting a poor area of the city an area in which most of the population were employed in the local pin factory - he saw a group of ragged children playing in the street. He asked an inhabitant if they were local children & was told "If you could visit this part of the city on a Sunday you would be shocked indeed, for then the streets are filled with multitudes of these wretches, who, released from employment on that day, spend their time in noise and riot, playing at chuck and cursing and swearing in a manner so horrid as to convey to

any serious mind an idea of hell, rather than of any other place..." The area was the St. Catherine's Meadows district of Gloucester not far from the River Severn.

The idea of a Sunday School was of course not a new one. It had been tried in various places from the sixteenth century but previous attempts were spasmodic and isolated and had come to nothing. In Robert Raikes, however, the idea found a champion of great vigour and perseverance & one who possessed in the Gloucester Journal a medium for making his experiments widely known and generally adopted.

The exact steps Robert Raikes took to open his Sunday School are not known but we do know that it was started in association with the Rev. Thomas Stock, Headmaster of the Cathedral School and curate of the Parish Church of St. John, & that they employed teachers to work for them. The first Sunday School was opened in the house of Mr King in St. Catherine Street in July 1780. At first Mrs King was employed at a salary of one shilling and sixpence per Sunday, of which Raikes paid one shilling & Mr. Stock sixpence.

Soon afterwards a second school was established this time by Robert Raikes himself in the house of Mrs Sarah Critchley at the corner of Greyfriars & Southgate Streets and not far from Robert Raikes's own house. The school met in the kitchen and there was great emphasis on the children being clean and well disciplined. Lessons lasted from ten o'clock to twelve noon and from one o'clock to half past five each Sunday. The children learned to read & memorise verses of Scripture and listened to stories from the Bible; after school finished Robert Raikes would take them across to the Church for the evening service. At first this did not meet with the approval of the Churchgoers but steadily Robert Raikes gained the respect not only of the Churchgoers but of the scholars as well.

Initially Robert Raikes made little effort to publicise his work, preferring to see that the experiment was successful before saying to much. Even so, in the town where he had once had the reputation of being a bit of a dandy & had been

nicknamed "Burr" Raikes, he was now jeered at for his ideas and derided as "Bobby Wild Goose." He carried on with his experiment, however, calling it "botanising in human nature" for he believed that these wild weeds of the street, would, if transplanted and carefully trained in the Sunday School Garden, become beautiful flowers, full of beauty & joy.

The Rev. Mr. Stock later started a third Sunday School in his Parish of St. John & gradually the idea spread to other areas of Gloucester. Eventually Robert Raikes considered that the experiment had proved successful enough to consider launching a National movement & on Nov. 3rd 1783 he brought his Sunday School idea to the attention of the public without, however, making any mention of his own name. By a happy coincidence on the day that he proposed the scheme in the Gloucester Journal his eldest son was born. He called on ministers & clergy everywhere to take up the scheme based on his results and concluded by offering them full information if they would write to him.

People wrote in and eminent Christians like Hannah More and William Wilberforce championed the scheme. John Wesley, who stayed with Robert Raikes at his house, wanted a Sunday School started wherever there was a Methodist society. People who came to the city to see the experiment were first shown the rough uncouth & unschooled children of the city & then the Sunday School children clean and disciplined. As the visitors saw the children firstly bow or curtsy & then answer Bible Questions intelligently, repeat the Catechism, sing hymns and take part in prayers with quiet reverence, they were quite astounded.

As the fame of the work spread so did the the opposition. Small minded persons who were jealous of his success accused him of breaking the fourth commandment by teaching children on the Sabbath; he was accused of interfering with the designs of Providence by setting the peer above their stations in life and making them discontented; because he was neither a teacher nor a minister he was accused of meddling with other people's work. His opponents caused such a stir that a leading statesman of his day seriously intended to

introduce a Bill into Parliament to suppress Sunday Schools. Faced with opposition, many of the people who had backed Robert Raikes fell away and we find the pioneer declaring in his paper "I walk alone it seems as though I have discovered a new country where no other adventurer chooses to follow".

Robert Raikes persevered to the end and when he died in 1811 by his express wish all the children attending his funeral were afterwards given a shilling and a plum cake.

Today there are two statues erected in memory of this pioneer, one in Gloucester Park and the other, reflecting the importance of his achievement, looking out over Embankment Gardens to the Thames at Westminster.

John. R. Bray.

In connection with the 200th Anniversary of Robert Raikes founding the first Sunday School in Gloucester the National Christian Education Council, Robert Denholm House, Nutfield, Redhill, Surrey, NHI. 4HW. have published a book on Robert Raikes by Frank Booth Price £6.95 each plus 75pence postage. There are guidelines for a special commemorative service available Price 10pence plus postage and a special musical "A Grain of Mustard Seed" by Roger Jonnes is also available (Vocal score £2.50, Record £3.95 or Cassette £3.95). In addition a special limited edition Commemorative Cover was issued by the N.C.E.C. on June 4th 1980 and was specially franked by the post office Price £1.25. All enquiries should be addressed directly to the N.C.E.C. at the address above.

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#### A SHORT HISTORY OF KILMAINHAM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, DUBLIN.

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The Congregational Denomination was established in England around 1580, having seceded from the Church of England about the same time as the Presbyterians. In those days Congregationalists were known as Independents, as each church consisted of individuals who had professed faith in Jesus Christ as Lord & Saviour in an act of conversion & whose churches were autonomous & independent. Although these Churches enjoyed fellowship one with another there was no overall leader such as a bishop or moderator as it was felt that Christ alone, in accordance with Holy Scripture, was the Head of the Church. Independents first became known as Congregationalists (the name by which they are known today)

when early settlers in America preferred to be known as such. The early development of the U.S.A. has much to thank the Congregationalists for; for example, Yale & Harvard Universities both of which have Congregational origins.

Many of the famous Puritans of England were Congregationalists, & some of them came to have associations in Ireland. The theologian John Owen became a trustee of Trinity College, Dublin. Most of the Early Congregationalists came to Ireland in the mid 17th century about the time of Oliver Cromwell. His army brought 150 Congregational chaplains with it. It is from this first period that the first Irish Congregational Churches came into being; the one in Youghal (Nr. Cork), is the oldest recorded church dating from 1650. Oliver Cromwell worshipped for a time there.

Nowadays, 11,000 Congregational adherents in the whole of Ireland, most of whom live in Belfast & County Antrim, are Congregationalists. At the present there are only three small churches in the republic of Ireland, two in Donegal, & one at Kilmainham a suburb of Dublin.

The one in Inchicore Road, Kilmainham, Dublin of which the writer was Pastor, dates from 1815. It was built by one Obadiah Willen, a Leeds woollen industrialist who also built 17 houses & a mill in the locality. The first worshippers were mill workers. Until the British Army left Southern Ireland in 1920, there were always some soldiers & their families connected with the church. When the railways came in 1845, church attendance was greatly increased by those who worked at the nearby Inchicore Engineering Works, most of whose first employees were Protestants who came from England. There was no other churches in the district at that time. The Kilmainham Church has always been blessed with a godly ministry there being amongst them some very long ministries namely: Rev. W. Foley 1837-1855 Rev. P. Davis 1887-1944; Rev. E. G. Fletcher 1955-1978.

The writer of this article began his ministry in November 1978.

The Congregational Denomination, including the Kilmainham church, exists today for the same purpose that it has always existed for; that believers in the Lord Jesus Christ might worship together, & to tell all people, Roman Catholics & Protestants alike that although we are all sinners & out of touch with God, we can be sure of pardon when we trust Jesus as our

person Lord & Saviour, & that God speaks to man through the Holy Bible.

This article when originally written was written on 25th November celebrating 150 years anniversary of the Congregational Union of Ireland. This came into being in Belfast in 1829 to prompt even closer fellowship & co-operation between Irish Congregational Churches. In those days there were as many Churches in the South as in the North but most of those in the South have now closed. The Congregational contribution to Irish History, proportionately speaking, has been high. Our contribution to Ireland in the future is in telling people, in our services & through evangelism, that Jesus came to seek & to save those who were lost.

Those who are interested in the History of the Congregational Church in Ireland should take the opportunity to read, "I will build my Church" by Rev. Malcolm Coles which is available from the Congregational History Circle at 79 pence including postage or from the author Rev. Malcolm Coles, The Congregational Manse, 38 Edgecumbe Gardens, Belfast, BT4 2EH.  
(Tel: 0232-653140) Rev. J. D. Hazlett.

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The Story of BEILIALOG by Rev. T. Watts

(Please see illustration on outside back cover of this issue)

A Congregational Church built in 1690 & situated 1 mile beyond Gwenddwr near Brecon, Wales. Services are still held there during the Summer.

For almost 300 years the Congregationalists of Gwenddwr and Crugcadarn, Breconshire, have worshipped within its walls.

#### Beginning of Congregationalism in Breconshire

The Independent Puritans who had separated from the Church of England during the reign of King James the First (1603-25) established Churches which during the years 1642-1660 used the Parish Churches for worship. Llanfaches was the first Independent Church so founded in Wales under William Wroth, Nr. Newport. By 1660 the movement had increased having hundreds of members in scores of Churches.

The Struggles for religious freedom was foreseen by JOHN PENRY of Cefnbrith, Llangammarch (1563-1593), who



in his first book entitled "The Treatise" sought more ministers who could preach in the Welsh tongue. Penry's dream was not fulfilled until long after his death, for in 1653 "An Act for the Proagation of the Gospel in Wales" was passed by the Commons to ensure an adequate supply of such preachers. This was the first attempts to give Wales autonomy in religious matters.

The Independent movement spread to nearby Llanigon where by 1650 it was led by Jenkyn Jones and Charles Lloyd and Thomas Gwyn with connections at Crugcadarn and Gwenddwr. During this period Jacob Wood a Royalist cleric was removed from Llandefalle and Crugcadarn and replaced by John Davies an Independent with Meetings held in the Parish Churches. The Independents grew in numbers as did the Baptists, with promise of every greater increase for the future. It was these meetings that led to the establishing of the Mother Church at Beilihalog, Breconshire, in 1670.

#### BEILIHALOG or BEILHAULOG - the Sunny Pasturage.

Beilihalog was along with Maesyronen a branch of the Church of Llanigon. Before it was built however services were held at the farm of that name and Nantyroffeiriad. We also have the homes of the Penry's, Maesyckettwr; D. Williams, Beilihalog; Mrs. Williams of Gellirhydd; Mrs. Williams, Werdyfodwg; and Powell of Pentwyn all places where services were held. It is on record that a William Jenkins paid fines of £20 on more than one occasion for holding a conventicle, but with the passing of the Indulgence Act in 1672, Jenkins' house in Crugcadarn and another in Gwenddwr as well as that of Alice Parry in Gwenddwr were licenced for worship. This Act known as the dissenters "Magna Charter" enabled the local members to build their own Chapel, possibly about 1672 when they may have rebuilt a barn connected with the Beilihalog Farm.

Among the Great Preachers who preached and had the oversight of the new Church was Henry Maurice, 'The Apostle of Breconshire', and Rees Prydderch, the learned and much travelled successor of Maurice. But in order to be practical we need to pay tribute to the faithful members who through the years of the persecution had opened their homes for worship & had remained true to their Christian conviction. Among the

members there were no doubt a number of young men & women & one young man in particular who served to be better known in these parts.

HOWELL POWELL of MAESYCLETTWR. The First Pastor

This young man had heard of the great preaching of Henry Maurice & had himself been brought up under the ministry of Rees Prydderch when the later visited Beilihalog. Howell Powell must have exercised his gifts as a preacher in the various cottage meetings & made a deep impression, whenever he was asked to preach. His proclamation of Jesus Christ as Saviour & Lord endeared him to many & consequently he was encouraged to become a minister, possibly with Beilihalog in view. The Church then sent him to Samuel Jones, Brynllwarch, Maesteg, & then he went to the famous Academy at Saffron Waldon, Essex. We have it on record that sums of £5 were paid him annually the first on 5th April 1697, & again in 1698, also in 1702 & 1703 though the latter must have been to assist him while a minister at Beilihalog. The Grants were made by the Congregational Board.

The County of Essex was a stronghold of Independency and Powell's tutor was Wm Payne. One of Powell's contemporaries at the Academy was Theo Lobb. M.D;FRS;LRCP. The Lobb family was involved in the Rye House plot.

From all this we see that Howell Powell had been in touch with the most prominent leaders of Independency. During all this time & possibly until 1712, he lived at Maesycclettwr. During those years he read the works of the great Puritans & translated two of them for the benefit of Welsh speaking people. While ministering here he translated a small book entitled 'The Hearer' by Dr. John Edwards printed 1706; by 1709 Howell Powell had published a Welsh translation & he added an interesting preface, signing it "H.P." eich gwasanaethwr anwiw" Lundain. Gorff II. 1709". That is "H.P." Your unworthy servant. London. July II. 1709".

The second book runs into 350 pages bearing the title "Traethawd Ymarferol am Gyflawn Awdurdod Duw a'i gyfiawnder Ef". being a translation of Elisha Coles "A Practical Treatise of God's Sovereignty" 1678 & later editions. This book was in great demand among the Independents & others & Howell Powell sat down in his home at Maesycclettwr & perhaps during 1710 & the long winter translating the 350 pages of that

important work for the benefit of the people of Wales. He signs its preface to "Y Cymro Annwyl", H.Powell, Maescytlewyr, Yn Shir Frycheiniog, Tachwedd 2.1711". These two books were in great demand throughout Wales for over a century.

From this it can be seen that they had in Howell Powell a man of very considerable stature. One can imagine the sorrow when he decided to emigrate to Cohensey, in New Jersey.

#### Howell Powell Emigrates to New Jersey 1712.

All the Welsh history books end after telling the reader of Powell's emigration in 1712. They all stated however that he had gone to Cohensey, New Jersey. I therefore wrote & got this account from Mr.Loren F. Hitchener "the Church where Howell Powell served was up the river near Fairton. This was founded in 1680 & they were Presbyterians. Howell Powell died 1717 & is believed to be buried in the large cemetery there." Following Mr.Hitchener's advice I wrote & got this quotation from Mrs.Dora A Kreiss of the State Library, New Jersey. "Howell Powell attended the Presbytery of the above Church 1714.. they seeing him a fit Pastor gave him an unanimous call, & he accepted. He was installed October 14 1715. The Rev. Mr. Andrews preached the sermon. Howell Powell died the two years later. The worthy descendants of Mr.Powell have perpetuated his good name & influence in this place for 160 years". Powell's will dated 13 Aug 1716 was proved 29 December 1716. An inventory is added showing how he had settled comfortably but not for long in America.

Trevor Watts.

#### JAMES SCOTT AND THE HECKMONDWICKE ACADEMY

We are grateful to Mrs.Dorothy Knight of No.6RD. Taihape, New Zealand, for a number of enclosures. One of them is a list of students at the Heckmondwicke Academy. "James Scott began his ministry at Heckmondwicke in 1754 & became the tutor of the Academy founded there by the Northern Education Society. He cooperated with other Evangelical leaders to revive religion in Yorkshire". See Congregationalism in England 1662 - 1962 R.Tudur Jones. Independent Press. 1962. p.152. "James Scott also had charge of the Tockholes congregation from 1750-1754 & his successor was Thomas Waldgrave, his first student at Heckmondwicke & a convert of Whitfield's ' a no mean imitator of his pulpit

style who gave to Tockholes sixteen years of earnest evangelical ministry". (see above, page 154, ) "Of the 57 students trained under James Scott of Heckmondwicke until his death in 1783, of those whose courses were unfinished at the time of his death, ten entered Samuel Walkers academy at Northowram, but this was dissolved in 1793 & four of his remaining students were put under William Vint of Idle" (see above, page 177).

I have taken the liberty of quoting from Dr. Jones' book by way of introducing the Heckmondwicke Academy, & more can be found about it from that work & the many references to other works found in it. The students names in Mrs. Knight's quotation from William Vint's book give surnames only. Only 56 are named in the list from Mrs. Knight, & I have added a few christian names where I could find them. One name is missing? This academy was contemporary with that of Doddridge at Northampton, and I gather was united with the Yorkshire United College Bradford and now in Manchester.

Mrs. Knight traces her ancestry to Joseph Cockin one of the students named.

The Editor.

Mrs. Knight writes and quotes as follows:-

...I have copied a few items from Joseph Cockin's memoirs on his stay and love of Heckmondwicke Academy in the hope that it may be of interest to you. The book was printed by J. Vint, Printer of Idle.

"The number of students at the Academy at Heckmondwicke varied from eight to eleven. They were under the care of the Rev. James Scott, a man of whom we knew just enough to make us wish to know him more. Mr. Cockin went to the Academy to Kipping. Mr. Cockin was a man of strong feelings and his character was formed for friendship. He never left a place where he had been kindly treated without emotion and at that time had never been more kindly treated by any human being than by Mr. Scott. Some years afterwards Mr. Cockin said of the Academy "We have reason to be thankful for that Institution in which many of the Independent Ministers in this country and some others received their education. Perhaps no institution of similar size has been on the whole and for the extent to which it went been more singularly blessed. The men who have come thence have been

for the most part been both orthodox & experimental. They have preached what they have known of the world of life & promoted the spirit & power of true religion. By their Instrumentality decayed congregations have been revived & many new ones encouraged. (Evangelical Magazine for November 1795).

The Tutors of some other Academies at that time were won't to speak of this with contempt but if their institutions had equalled it in some of its excellencies they would have been more useful to the Church of God. These good men served their generation by the will of God. They have now fallen asleep. A list of the men educated by the Rev. James Scott is included below:-

<u>Name of person</u>	<u>Town to which went</u>	<u>Name of person</u>	<u>Town to which went</u>
Waldegrave	St. Edmunds, Bury		
Thomas.	(a convert of Whitfield's)		
Crowe	N. Walsham,	Gill.	Market Harborough
Priestley	Jewin Street.	Walker	Northoweram.
Plumbe	Nottingham.	Hollingsworth	(Declined
Allatt	Forton.		the ministry)
	(Minister from 1758)	Northend	Bridlington
Popplewell	Beverley.	Grundy	Lutterworth.
Tetley	Sowerby.	Sykes	Guestwick.
Gurnell	Delph.	Bruce	
Tunstall	?	David.	Liverpool.
Pratman	Gotherston.	Pickles	America.
Lambert	Hall.	Sharp	St. Helens.
Toothill	Hopton.	Spencer	?
Armitage	Chester.	Cockin	Halifax
Dawson	Cleckheaton.	Joseph.	Bn. 1755-1804
Offwood	London.	Waring	Rendham.
Galland	Holmfirth.	Sutcliffe	Chapel-en-le-
Linnet	Oakham.		Frith.
Brook	Stockport.	Blackburn	
Clegg	Sunderland.	Noah.	Delph.
Shufflebottom.	Bungay.	Kenworthy	Norwich
Carter	Nottleshall.	Rhodes	New York
Bottomley	Scarborough.	Hogg	Thrapstone
Ashburn	Gloucester.	Stephenson	Trowbridge
Scott	Hinkley.	Simpson D.D.	Hoxton
Whitehead	Charlesworth.	Robert?	College.
Pickersgill	To near London.	Wilby	Durham
Grimshaw	(Minister from	Bruck	Wakefield
James.	1782-1832	Scholfield	Henley
	Forton)	Smith	Nantwich.

<u>Name of person</u>	<u>Town to which went</u>
Wilkinson	Howden.
Tapp	South Cave.
Bartlett	New Malton.
Townsend	
Henry	Darwen.
Hudson	Tintwistle
Smelle	Grimsby.

Rev. James Scott:- His manner was well adapted to encourage a timid character & help forward a dull scholar. Besides the lessons he taught professedly, he imparted wisdom very freely in general conversation & in familiar intercourse. The dinner service always continued over an hour & the principal part of the time was spent in friendly, & sometimes animated discussion on interesting subjects. Mr. Cockin says that he welcomed the time when the students re-assembled & the first sight of the Academy house from the road, an adjacent eminence gladdened his feelings.

Dorothy Knight.

Church Treasures Mr. Stell replies.

Recently I preached at the Welsh church at Newtown, Powys and called to see a very interesting piece of plate at the U.R. Church in the same town & made some rough rubbing of the marks on it. Also I asked about some iron cast-like items & a cup at Newport. Salop & seeking light upon the maker of a small statue of John Wesley in white robe & band with bible in hand size 6 or so inches, which I have in my possession.

The following is Mr. Stell's reply (Editor).

"I append a Note on the Newtown plate, the objects at Newport may be coffin plates, "the pottery cup" is "very like Methodist love feast cups but inscribed 'Do this in remembrance of Me'. Of china figures of John Wesley which are relatively plentiful you will find a particularly extensive collection on view at Wesley's "New Room" in Bristol."

"Note on Newtown plate. The 'old silver 2 handled bowl' inscribed 'The Gift of Hannah Williams, to the Church of Protestant Dissenters in Newtown. Mont: 1734' is presumably a communion cup. The rubbings submitted appear to show the Hall marks of the London assay office with Leopard's Head crowned, Lion passant, &

date letter for I668-9. The maker's mark appears to be inverted ( ) relation to the others, having in an oval punch between two rosettes the Initials I.R the last letter being indistinct on the rubbing, but see Sir Charles J. Jackson, English Goldsmiths & their Marks (1921) p.132 where this mark is given as of 'John Ruslen?' from vessels of I670-I. This cup was thus presumably domestic silver later given for communion use as it frequently found."

#### Documents received.

1. Centenary of New Zealand Congregationalism. 1842-1942.
2. Order of service for the Induction of a Minister at Wellington. Service in English, Cook Island & Samoan.
3. Souvenir programme of the Golden Jubilee of the Cambridge Terr C Ch Wellington. 1887-1937.
4. International Congregational Fellowship Newsletter Voll.No I & 2. with details of the I.C.F. to meet at Bangor, Gwynedd. North Wales. July 4-12 1981.
5. Bulletin's of The Congregational Library' 14 Beacon St. Boston, Massachusetts. The proprietor of the library is The Congregational Association. Dr. Harold Field Wortheley is librarian.
6. An historical summary of Bardon Congregational Church, Queensland, Australia which is affiliated to the Cong. Fed. and some notes on "A Migrating Congregational Church" which may well prove of interest by Dr. G. K. Nelson.

Dr. J. W. Ashley Smith sent this interesting note from the Huddersfield Examiner issue 9/5/80.

#### AN END TO FRIENDSHIP

One of the country's oldest "church" friendly societies is coming to the end of its days.

At the annual meeting of Hopton Congregational Chapel's Management Committee on Monday it will be proposed that the Church's Sick & Funeral Friendly Soc. be wound up. The committee feel that it has fulfilled its purpose.

The maximum sickness benefit is 60p per week - & the cost of payment is much more than the benefit. But the society still has assets of over £13,000.

The society was officially registered in 1896 & the earliest member on the roll was born in 1841. A complete record of admissions from 1886 onwards exists

and so it is probable that the society is well over 100 years old.

During this time, 1,737 members have passed through the books.

Before the National Health Service the society acted for the Government and had many additional members for National Insurance purposes only. At that time the society's office at the church was open daily and a full-time secretary was employed.

Thirty years ago there were 750 members compared with 200 today, many of whom live in different parts of the country.

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### A WINDOW INTO THE PAST

Resting from the wear & tear of the centuries, there stands in Loddiswell Congregational Church, Devon, two reminders of our Congregational heritage. One is a table, the other a chair.

The table of dark old English oak can be traced back through 200 years at least, though it may well be even older than that. It first came into the limelight in February 1749. Hitherto it had served the usual purpose of tables in a dwelling at the western end of Mill Street (previously The Bishop Blaise ancient tavern & later the smith's dwelling), but on the 8th February 1749, this table came into its own. In the solemn still moonlight of that February night, a thousand souls gathered eagerly to hear the Rev. George Whitefield, with his powerful voice, urge them 'to work while it is day'. Though hearing him well, the enthusiastic gathering could not see him, and so, from its humdrum abode in the quiet house, the table came into its glory on the moonlit street, and proudly supported the weight of the inspired preacher who had ridden from Plymouth to bring his soul stirring message to Kingsbridge.

From this time, we know not how or where the table stood, dreaming of its past fame, before it eventually came under the care of the Kingsbridge Congregational Church. That care ended when a German bomb hit the Church, but the table survived to come to rest at length in Loddiswell Congregational Church, and remind us of our christian heritage.

What of the chair? In all probability, it was an elder brother of the table by a hundred years. How



does it come into the picture of our past? To its courageous owner, the Rev. Tooker, it was a treasured possession enshrining in its old oak the memory not only of his father sitting there but of the joyous days when he sat there nursing his long awaited little son. To us the old chair has a deeper meaning, for it enshrines the memory of a man whose stand for freedom of belief transcended much hardship & bitter persecution. In 1662 the Rev. Tooker refused along with 2000 others to conform to the Act of Uniformity. In consequence he was deprived of his living at Dittisham Parish Church & with his family sought refuge in the Kingsbridge area at Norden. Even there persecution followed him. By trickery, Master Beare (Anti-nonconformist of Kingsbridge) arraigned him under the Conventicle Act of 1664. The Rev. Tooker was fined £30 for allegedly holding an illegal meeting of five people. The pathetic truth was that the Rev. Tooker & three sympathisers were praying for his grief-shocked wife, that she might find strength & comfort to withstand the bitter blow of their son's death. Into this sad little group came Master Beare dragging in a passerby to justify the arrest. Rev. Tooker & his wife had but £15. in cash so all his possessions were seized down to the last cup & plate. The last object to be removed was his treasured possession, this old chair. But the Rev. Tooker could still assert - 'I have treasure still'. If only its wood could talk! Where did it go? Who sat in it during the next three centuries? Perhaps we shall never know. What we do know is that it did eventually come into the care of the Kingsbridge Congregational Church until the same bomb ended the latter's trusteeship, & it found a home in Loddiswell Congregational Church. There it stands to remind us that "our fathers were high-minded men, who firmly kept the faith; to freedom & to conscience true in danger & in death." Miss D.V. Hooper.

GEORGE WHITFIELDS CHAIRS AT DURSLEY AND RODBOROUGH  
CONG. (NOW U.R.C.) CHURCHES.

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Regarding George Whitfields Chair I have made research into the early history of Dursley Tabernacle - the results will, I hope, be published next year. No local records exist until 1771/2 when the first registers were begun so that before that what is known has been pieced together from many other sources. In none have I found any reference to Whitfields Chair

so that we have only traditions, the same applying so far as I have been able to establish to that at Rodborough Tabernacle. George Whitfield visited the Dursley Societies Meeting house only once-in 1769 when a sick man & it is probable that the chair dates from then. Rodborough he visited frequently. It would be interesting to get a furniture specialist to date the chairs.

Yours sincerely, David Evans, (Dursley).

### CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY

Many of the English Presbyterians in the eighteenth century adopted unitarian beliefs & this resulted eventually in the majority of the Trustees of Dr. William's Library (commonly called the Dissenters' Library) in those days, being of that persuasion. Congregationalists of the day were much exercised by this & withdrew their support & established the Congregational Library with a munificent gift of books from Joshua Wilson (1795-1874) in Blomfield St, London, E.C.4. in 1831-the Library being primarily for the use of Independents.

After intermediate moves the site of the Old Fleet Prison, in which so many Congregational martyrs languished, was purchased & the Old Memorial Hall erected in 1872 in which the Library was housed. After the War the old Building having become very dilapidated was replaced in 1972 by the present Memorial Hall.

The chief interest of the Library lies in its value for research in the history of Dissent of the seventeenth & eighteenth centuries. Its nature & extent are known to scholars throughout the world since the publication in 1945-51 by D. Wing of The Short Title Cat. of all books published in England or in English 1641-1700. This has revealed the rarity & value of numbers of books in the Library, very many of which are not in the Brit. Museum, many not elsewhere in London & some not elsewhere in the Kingdom. Comparable libraries include, apart from Dr. Williams', Lambeth Palace Library & Sion College Library.

The contents of the Library amount to over 40,000 books, 10,000 pamphlets and 500 manuscripts including a first edition of Milton's Paradise Lost, Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World, 20 incunables (books printed before 1500) and 14th and 15th century manuscript missals, etc, with illuminated letters.

Two Catalogues were published in 1895 and 1910 respectively listing approximately 30,000 items and a third volume is in preparation.

The Library is for reference only as the bulk of the books are valuable and many are frail and requiring re-binding. This work continues year after year. The accommodation for books and readers is ideal, not to say luxurious, and is adequate as apparently it was never the intention to add largely to the Library to make it an up-to-date theological one nor could it be easily justified in London where others already exist.

J.D.Gowlett  
(Secretary).

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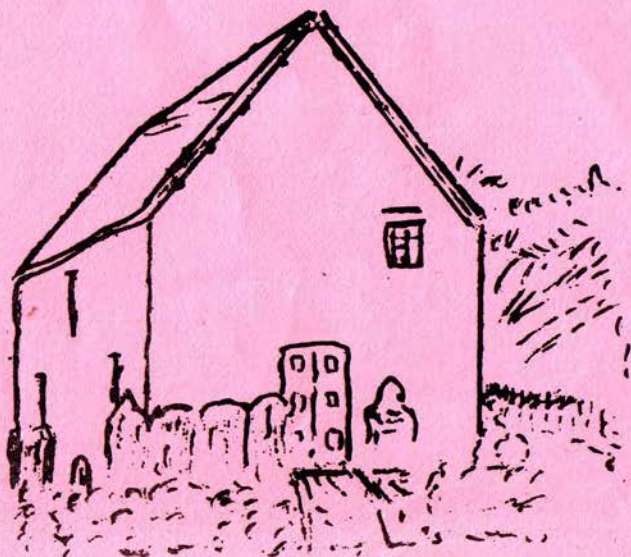
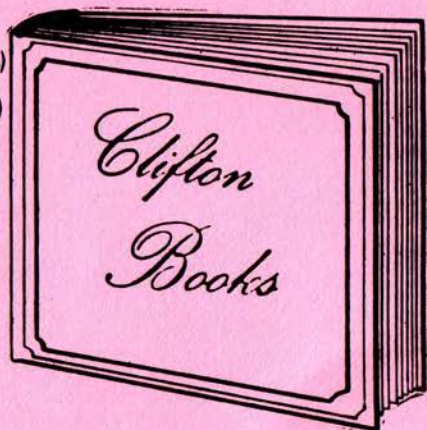
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