THE NEW ROOM

John Wesley's Chapel in the Horsefair

A Brief Guide

THE OLDEST METHODIST BUILDING IN THE WORLD

In February 1739 Britain's greatest preacher, George Whitefield, began preaching in the open air in Bristol and drew immense crowds. He also developed strong links with the religious societies which existed in the city, particularly the two that met in Nicholas Street and Baldwin Street. Whitefield had committed himself to working in America so he asked his friend, John Wesley, to continue his work in Bristol. At first Wesley was reluctant to preach outdoors because the Church disapproved of such behaviour but he then became convinced of its value by seeing the impact that Whitefield was having. He also recalled that Jesus had preached in the open. On Monday 2 April John Wesley went to a brickyard in the the St Philips area and preached to a crowd of about three thousand:

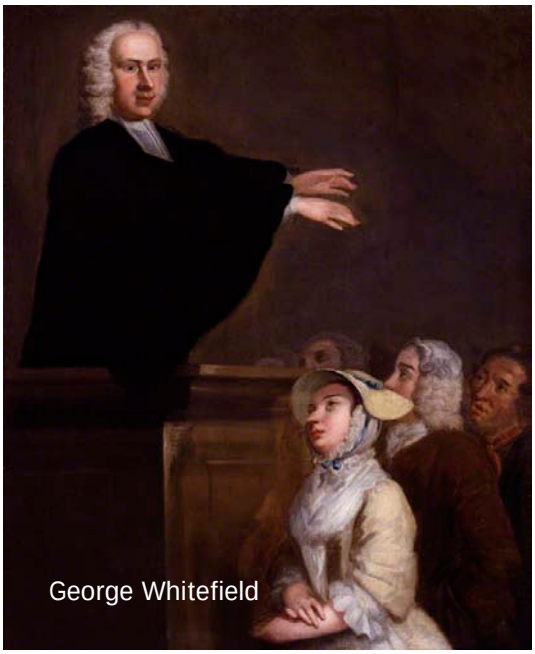
'At four in the afternoon I submitted to be more vile and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation'.

The members of the two societies which had supported Whitefield asked Wesley to help them build 'a new room' where they could jointly meet and run a school to help educate the poor.Wesley agreed, encouraged by Whitefield, who promised to help raise money for the project. Whitefield had already promised the colliers who worked in the Kingswood coal mines just outside Bristol that he would build a schoolroom for them and John Wesley agreed to make sure that this was also built. The first stone for 'the New Room' was laid on 12 May on a piece of ground in the Horsefair, near St James' churchyard and by 3 June Wesley could record the first meeting had been held in it:

'In the evening we met in the shell of our new society room... We sang 'Arm of the Lord awake, awake!' and God ...gave us his blessing!'

The speed of this development probably means that the original New Room was built as an extension of an existing building rather than built from scratch - we know there was a house on the land that had been bought. As well as being used as a meeting house, the New Room acted as Wesley's home because he had a small bedroom in it. Wesley decided that in Kingswood he ought to build not just a school room but a preaching house because there was no church in that area. Work commenced on 'Kingswood House' shortly afterwards. It opened in the summer of 1740.

The word 'Methodist' was not chosen by Wesley for use with either building - he simply described them as being bases for the work of 'united' religious societies. However, ordinary people soon described them as being 'Methodist societies'. The reason for this was that they had often heard Whitefield refer to how his faith had been



George Whitefield

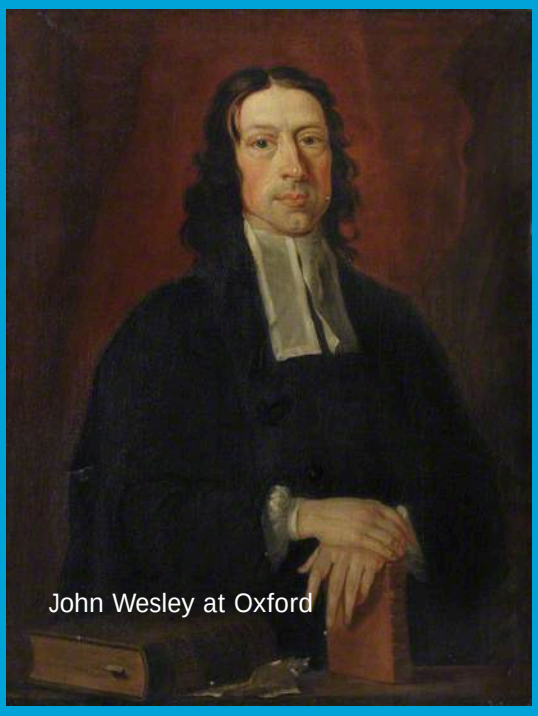
strengthened when he was a student and belonged to the 'Oxford Methodists', a religious group run by John and Charles Wesley. Some students had mocked this 'Holy Club' and had applied the nickname of 'Methodist' to its members because of their emphasis on adopting a methodical approach to living as a Christian. The Wesleys had encouraged setting aside regular times to pray, to study the Bible, to attend church, to support each other in society meetings, and to serve the needs of the local community. That same approach was now being promoted in Bristol.

The original New Room was only half the size of the current building and badly constructed. In 1748 it was enlarged and redeveloped into the current building. This was registered as a place of worship for the Methodists and so the New Room was soon nicknamed 'John Wesley's Chapel'. This makes it the oldest chapel in Methodism. Sadly Kingswood House, the other building created by Wesley, no longer exists, although its pulpit can still be seen in the gallery of the dining hall of the modern Kingswood School, which is now situated in Bath.

THE CRADLE OF METHODISM

The movement which became Methodism took shape at the New Room. John Wesley made immediate changes to the way that religious societies were run in Bristol. He first encouraged them to divide into 'bands' - these were small single-sex groups of friends who would support each other. The groups usually contained people of a similar status and so, for example, some groups were entirely composed of unmarried men or widows. In 1741 Wesley developed the idea of larger 'class' groups (normally about twelve people). These were men and women who lived in the same neighbourhood. The idea was first suggested by a member called Captain Foy as a way of collecting money to help repay the cost of building the New Room, but Wesley realised, if he appointed the right class leaders, then classes might become the ideal way for members to receive leadership and support and to have their views and lifestyle monitored. The 'band' and 'class' system was vital to the subsequent growth of Methodism. Membership had to be renewed every three months by the award of a membership ticket - this was only given if Wesley (or a designated leader) approved of how a person was behaving. The membership tickets have sometimes been described as 'tickets to heaven'.

Bristol was a city in which the deep divide between rich and poor was very obvious. From the outset Methodism was rooted in challenging that divide. Wesley described himself as 'God's steward to the poor'. The New Room



John Wesley at Oxford

THE EARLY LIFE OF JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY

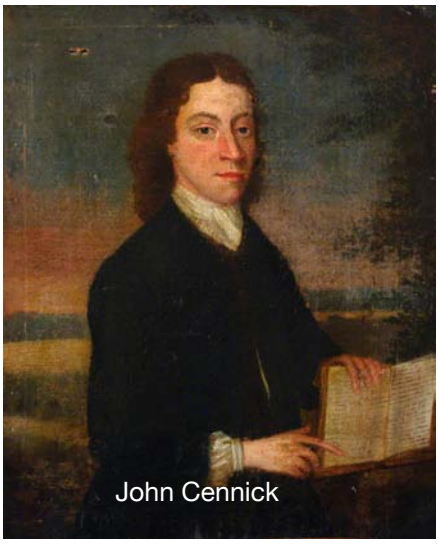
John Wesley was born in 1703 and his brother Charles in 1707. They were the sons of Samuel Wesley, Rector of St Andrew's Church in Epworth, Lincolnshire. John was very lucky to escape being burnt to death when a fire engulfed the family home in 1709. His mother Susanna brought him up to believe God had saved him for a special purpose. Both the brothers went to Oxford University and in 1730 they started a religious society that became known as 'the Holy Club'. In 1736 the two brothers went as missionaries to the newly created American colony of Georgia. The resulting contact with missionaries from the Moravian Church changed their lives. It gave them a love for hymn singing (an activity that was condemned by the Church of England) and a Moravian called Peter Bohler helped them when they were back in London to experience a deep spiritual awakening - John described it as having his heart 'strangely warmed'. It convinced them that God's salvation was a gift open to all, however unworthy a person was. The brothers and their closest friends (including George Whitefield) vowed to devote their lives to creating a religious revival.

These nineteenth-century pictures show not just crowds listening to Methodist preaching, Wesley travelling with an assistant, and Methodists meeting, but some examples of the practical help offered: visiting the poor and dealing with the sick and mentally ill.

was not just used for religious meetings - it was, for example, sometimes described as 'the schoolroom in the Horsefair' because it ran a school and a lending library. It acted for a time as a dispensary of free medical care and some members were appointed as visitors to the sick and dying. In times of extreme need, it acted as a food bank and also offered recycled clothing to the needy. Wesley encouraged regular visits to the nearby Newgate Prison to help support prisoners and he encouraged Methodists to campaign for better prison conditions. All this explains why the New Room had to be a multipurpose space. The pews you see today were not introduced until long after Wesley's death. Wesley developed Bristol into the biggest publishing centre outside London by the sheer scale of his publications and, in the early years, the New Room acted as a chief sales centre for these.

When Wesley ran out of money to run a free medical dispensary, he wrote a self-help guide to medicine called 'Primitive Physic' and it was published in Bristol in 1747. It became a best-seller for a century. Some of the remedies reflect the poor state of medical knowledge in the eighteenth century. His suggestion to make pills from cobwebs to treat fever, for example, was taken direct from a respected medical textbook. However, many of his ideas, often based on traditional herbal treatments, were effective, such as the use of honey as an antiseptic. The book's emphasis on prevention is its most remarkable feature. He stressed the importance of regular exercise and fresh air, cleanliness, having a sensible sleeping pattern, drinking plenty of water and avoiding spirits, and eating simple foods and never eating excessively. Wesley was later to become a pioneer in offering electrical treatment for some diseases and he wrote one of the first books on electricity. There is a special display on 'Primitive Physic' in the museum at the New Room.

Wesley knew that the Church did not approve of anyone preaching unless they were an ordained clergyman but he also recognised that most clergy were not prepared to support his work. John therefore decided to use lay preachers but described them as 'exhorters'. The first to be given this role was John Cennick, who had come to Bristol to help run the school that was being created in Kingswood. He was first authorised to exhort in the summer of 1739. Wesley told his fellow clergy that exhorting was not preaching. It was simply giving personal testimony and occasionally explaining a piece of scripture. The Church did not accept this view. In 1740 Wesley began describing Cennick (and four others who had also started 'exhorting') as his 'sons of the gospel'. Later he began calling his lay preachers 'assistants'. Wesley thought that men and women were equal in the eyes of God and so women had an equally important role to play as men. This view found early expression at the New Room when he appointed women as band and class leaders and, in 1743, appointed a former Quaker called Sarah Perrin to be in charge of the building as 'housekeeper'. Sarah was not just responsible for running the domestic side - she led groups and was permitted to 'exhort'. Wesley believed God could also use women as preachers.


John Cennick

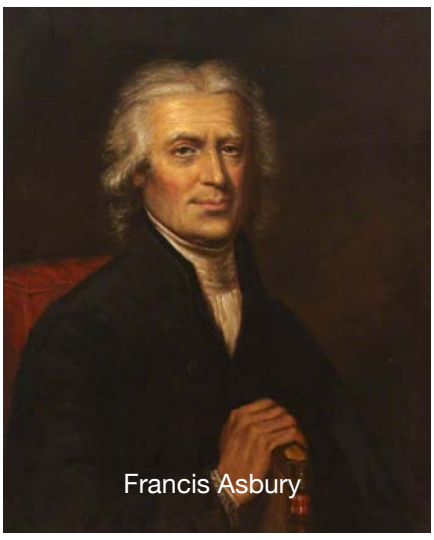
The New Room became the model for other Methodist centres - first the Foundery in London and then the Orphan House in Newcastle. The New Room and Kingswood House were so important that Charles Wesley alternated his time between Bristol and London throughout his life and he had his family home in nearby Charles Street from 1739 to 1771. Many of Charles' hymns were almost certainly sung for the first time at the New Room or at Kingswood. John Wesley was very itinerant throughout his life but it is estimated he spent more nights in Bristol than anywhere else. Some features of early Methodist worship, such as the love feast (at which cake and water were shared) and the watch-night service (which went on overnight until dawn), were first used in Bristol.

The New Room contained accommodation for preachers and over the years almost every lay preacher of any significance stayed in it. two of the most famous were John Nelson, the stonemason preacher who first encouraged the Wesleys to make Methodism a nationwide movement, and Dr Adam Clarke, who became a leading figure in turning Methodism into a separate Church. John Wesley also created a new model Christian school at nearby Kingswood in 1748 and this brought many of the best preachers to the Bristol area. These included John Jones, the first chief master of Kingswood School and Wesley's right-hand man until the 1760s; James Rouquet, the second chief master, who became a clergyman and a leading prison reformer in Bristol; and Joseph Benson, a later chief master who became a leading theologian for early Methodism.

Thomas Webb

The important annual Methodist Conference met at the New Room eighteen times during Wesley's lifetime and some very important decisions were taken here. The most significant was the creation of circuits (societies being linked together for preaching purposes) in 1746. At first there were only seven of these and the Bristol circuit more or less stretched from Birmingham in the midlands to Penzance in Cornwall! The first account of Wesley organising a special service to mark the official appointment of a lay preacher is one that took place at the New Room.

Bristol's strong trading links with America also hugely affected early Methodism. John Wesley took a huge interest in the colonies and, after George Whitefield's death in 1770, began appointing preachers to work in America. They sailed from nearby Pill. One of the New Room members, Captain Thomas Webb, was responsible for building the first Methodist chapels in America, and it was from the New Room that Francis Asbury volunteered to go to America in 1771. He became the central figure in making Methodism the largest and most important of all the Christian churches in the newly created United States. Wesley published a number of tracts in Bristol encouraging the British to be more sympathetic to the demands of the colonists for better treatment. Although he did not support the colonists when they declared their war of independence, Wesley remained concerned for the welfare of the American people. It was in Bristol that John Wesley first ordained preachers to go as clergy to America in 1784. This happened in a private home in Dighton Street because the New Room members were opposed to it happening. They accepted Charles's view that John had no right to ordain and that such a move would eventually create a separate Methodist Church not only there but also in Britain.


Francis Asbury

Bristol was for a time the leading centre of the slave trade and much of the city's wealth came from trade associated with it. The New Room gave sanctuary to two escaped slaves in the 1770s and John Wesley became a leading anti-slavery campaigner, writing the first ever successful propaganda for the anti-slavery movement in his 'Thoughts Upon Slavery' in 1774. In 1788 he famously promoted the abolitionist movement that had been created to lobby Parliament by giving a speech against slavery from the New Room pulpit.

JOHN WESLEY'S CHAPEL

It is not known for certain who designed the 1748 building but it is thought to have been George Tully, a Bristol builder. The chapel which you see today is much as it was in the eighteenth century except it would have had no pews. It is thought those downstairs either stood during a service or sat on the type of backless bench that you can see at either side of the chapel. There would have been similar benches in the gallery. Men and women were expected to sit separately but is not certain whether it was the men or the women who stayed downstairs. Some have argued that Wesley would have copied the Moravian practice of having the men occupy the upstairs, but as he had become an opponent of the Moravians by 1748, it may have been the women who were encouraged to use the upstairs. Pews were first introduced in the nineteenth century by Welsh Calvinists who took over control of the building in 1808. In the gallery close inspection of the panelling shows some graffiti dating back to the 1830s. The Calvinist pews on the ground floor had become affected by rot by the twentieth century and so the current downstairs pews only date from 1930 when the building was restored.

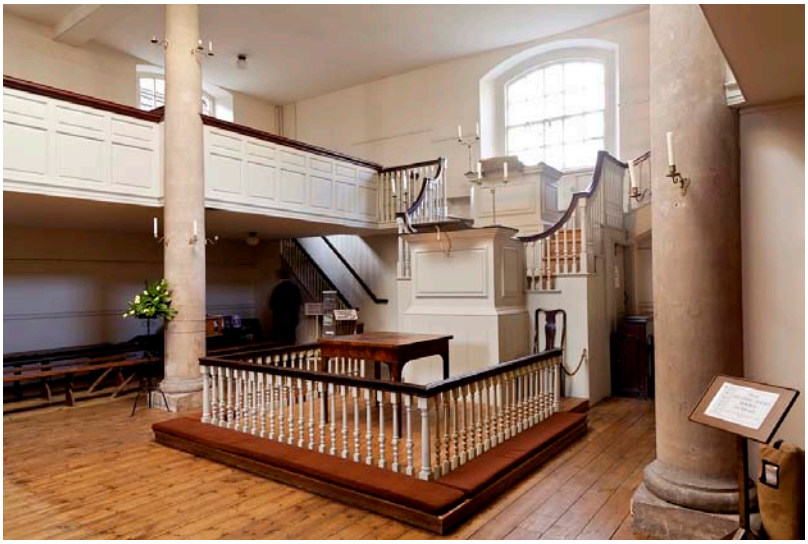
Services were held at 5.00 am before people went to work, and sometimes in the evenings. Behind the rail is a Communion table used by Wesley. The top pulpit was used by the preacher. It is so dominant because preaching was a central feature of the early worship. Wesley provided the large clock so there was no excuse for a service going on too long. The lower pulpit was used for leading prayers, for reading passages from the Bible, and for conducting the unaccompanied hymn-singing. One interesting feature is that the entry to the two pulpits is not from the ground floor. That was partly because there was a danger of mob attack and so it made sense to make access to the pulpit not straightforward, and partly because John Wesley and others leading the worship had their accommodation in the rooms above the chapel. The door leading to the upstairs accommodation can be seen but is no longer in use except as a fire exit.

All worship began and ended with singing. John's brother Charles is widely regarded as the world's greatest hymn writer and he lived in Bristol between 1739 and 1770. His hymns were written to popular tunes and sung unaccompanied and in unison. An organ was not used in the eighteenth century. The one you can see is a Snetzler chamber organ, which dates from 1761. It was given to the New Room in the 1930s and is today used for worship and recitals. If you look on the ground floor to the right of the double pulpit you can see what is thought to be the original preaching desk that was in the 1739 building. This was given away in the 1820s and returned to the New Room in 1999. In the intervening years it was kept in various Welsh chapels and it has been so heavily repaired and rebuilt that some experts would question whether any of the original wood and design remains.

Methodists often came under attack from the mob and that explains why there are no downstairs windows. If you look up into the octagonal lantern window you will see two windows so those upstairs could see if anyone broke into the chapel when it was not in use. John Wesley liked the octagonal shape and so he may have influenced the design of the lantern window. It lets in considerable light - an important feature because the only alternative to natural light was candlelight.

The reasons for the hostility to Methodism varied. Ignorance and the opposition of clergy, who objected to the open-air preaching and use of lay preachers, led to various rumours being spread about Methodism. It was said that John Wesley was a secret Catholic out to bring down the Protestant monarchy and, on one occasion, it was alleged that Charles Wesley was really Bonnie Prince Charlie! Local gentry often hired men to create mobs who would attack Methodists and ransack their homes. The New Room was at the centre of a riot in 1740 and it is commonly accepted that his sermon against slavery probably evoked a similar riot in 1788. Having no windows had another advantage : it meant you did not have to pay the eighteenth-century Window Tax.

Before leaving the Chapel do not miss looking out for the eighteenth century donation box used by Wesley to collect money for the poor. It is in the door behind the double pulpits that leads out of the Chapel into the atrium of our new Visitor Centre.



WESLEY AND THE METHODIST CHURCH

John and Charles Wesley preached extensively - John travelled about 402,000 kilometres, mainly on horseback, and preached about 40,000 sermons. They never intended to create a separate church. That happened because the Church of England opposed their use of lay preachers, their promotion of religious societies and their encouragement of hymn singing. Some clergy would not even let Methodists enter their churches. After Charles had died in 1788 and John in 1791, the Methodist preachers took the decision they had to create a Methodist Church. The fact that Methodists in the newly independent United States had already taken that step encouraged such a decision. Today the Methodist Church has approaching 80 million members worldwide. It is very committed to working with those from other Christian denominations and with those from other faiths or no faith. It exists:

- to increase awareness of God's presence and to celebrate God's love
- to help people to grow and learn through mutual support and care
- to be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice
- to encourage people to become followers of Jesus Christ

Go to www.methodist.org.uk if you want to know more about the Methodist Church in Britain and to www.worldmethodistcouncil.org if you want to know more about the worldwide association of Methodist churches.

THE PREACHERS' ROOMS AND THE MUSEUM

Wesley's study

Upstairs above the Chapel are what were originally the living quarters for John Wesley and his 'helpers' or 'assistants' (two of the names given to the early preachers). There are twelve small rooms and a large central Common Room. The latter served as a meeting space, dining area and study room. You can still see graffitti etched into a pane of one of the lantern windows by some of the early preachers. This includes the following lines written by Francis Woolf:

On brittle glass I grave my name
A follower of the bleeding Lamb
But Thou canst show a nobler art
And grave Thy name upon my heart

The Common Room

It is likely that at least three of the small rooms would have been used by the housekeeper and whatever assistant she had to provide meals and undertake other domestic tasks. Of the remaining rooms Wesley kept two for his use - a study room with a hinged section of wall that opened into his bedroom. In the latter he had a specially designed window ledge created so it could act as his writing desk. He did not believe it was good for you to spend hours sitting down. You can still see where he has absent-mindedly worn away the ledge on the floor with his foot. The hinged wall was probably so that he could open it just before he went to bed and let heat from the fire in his study warm up his bedroom. He usually went to bed early so he could get about seven hours sleep before rising at 4 a.m. for private prayer. He was ready to lead public worship by 5 a.m. Most preachers thought the rooms at the New Room were very good compared to other lodgings they had to use. However, not everybody liked living at the New Room. Adam Clarke, for example, wrote that the presence of so many people downstairs made it a very unhealthy place because of the transmission of disease.

The rooms now contain a Museum that tells the story of the Wesleys and of eighteenth-century Methodism . Opened in July 2107 to much acclaim, the hands-on displays are designed to be accessible to children as well as adults. They have been produced by Cod Steaks, a Bristol company who are used to working for television, films and theme parks.

Among the displays are ones on eighteenth-century Bristol, the slave trade, the role of lay preachers, medical self-help, eighteenth-century education, and the spread of Methodism across Britain and America. There is also an audioguide which gives visitors the opportunity to hear what eighteenth century people had to say about their lives as Methodists. The audioguide is available in three languages - English, Spanish and Korean. There is also an audioguide specifically produced for children.

There are many important historic items on display within the Museum. These range from a one-handed grandfather clock that was originally in the childhood home of the Wesleys to the chair from which Wesley preached his last open-air sermon in 1790. There are items that belonged to either John or Charles Wesley, ranging from small things, such as a door key, scissors and a letter opener, to large pieces of furniture, such as John Wesley's chair, table, desk, and fourposter-bed. Some objects in the Museum are items that belonged to others connected to the Wesley's, including the guitar of Charles' wife, the eye-patch of Captain Webb, and an amazing chair made for Adam Clarke from a tree stump.

A number of the rooms present

Some of the rooms present issues of social justice and other concerns raised by John Wesley - all of these still have a relevance to the world today. Although John Wesley was in some ways very conservative (e.g. he believed in the divine right of Kings to rule), much of what he advocated was very radical - even by today's standards. This is very evident in what might be termed his political manifesto on display in the Museum. This helps explain why Methodism has often played a major part in the creation of movements for reform and why it was critical to the development of the trade union movement (whose early meetings were called 'chapels') and the British Labour Party. If you go round the Museum prepare to be challenged as well as entertained and informed!

Please note that there is a charge for entry into the Museum (details are available on the website and from volunteers on duty at the New Room).

THE RESTORATION OF THE NEW ROOM AND THE CREATION OF THE COURTYARDS

The New Room was sold in 1808, largely because it had become identified with the 'old Methodism' (i.e. the Methodism that wanted to remain within the Church of England). Its members had been too much influenced by Charles Wesley, who had totally opposed the creation of a separate Methodist Church. It was taken over by the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists. For over a hundred years the services held at the New Room were therefore in Welsh. Fortunately the Calvinists did little to alter the building but, less happily, they lacked the money to keep the New Room in a state of good repair. By the 1920s the building was in serious danger of collapse. In 1929 A philanthropist, Edward Sykes Lamplough, provided the money to buy the New Room so it could be returned to the control of the Methodist Church. He also paid for a major restoration in the 1930s, using the famous Bristol architect, Sir George Oatley, who had been responsible for designing the iconic Wills Memorial Building for Bristol University. Oatley said :

> 'Never in all my experience have I carried our work with greater joy, or experienced greater satisfaction as a result'.

Directly outside the New Room was the stable where Wesley had kept his horse and, built when he was older, a coach house. The latter was judged in too bad a state to retain it but the stable was kept and it can still be seen. The restored New Room was surrounded by slums and old warehouses so Lamplough set about buying these so he could demolish them and create an open space at the front - it was named 'the Broadmead Courtyard'. Lamplough was encouraged to commission an equestrian statue of John Wesley to go in it. This was produced by George Arthur Walker, the sculptor also responsible for the famous statues of Florence Nightingale and Emmeline Pankhurst in London. Unveiled in 1933, it has become such an iconic image of Wesley that pictures of it can be found all round the world and an exact copy of it has been erected in Washington D.C.

The Broadmead Courtyard was covered with stone cobbles, partly because it was felt grass would not survive and partly because the original path to the New Room from that side was cobbled. However, afterwards Oatley felt perhaps he should have planted some plants. This idea resurfaced seventy years later and in 2010 the Broadmead Courtyard was 'greened' with trees and shrubs being introduced. This has made it a very popular place to relax in - an 'oasis' at the heart of Bristol's busy city-centre shopping area.

The success of the Broadmead Courtyard encouraged Lamplough to undertake a similar exercise at the rear of the New Room and create a Horsefair Courtyard. He died before this was completed, but a statue of Charles Wesley was commissioned for it by Sir Arthur Monro Sutherland. Unveiled in 1938, it was produced by Frederick Brook Hitch, a sculptor best known now for his statue of Lord Nelson in Portsmouth and Captain Flinders in Adelaide. Work on the Horsefair Courtyard was stopped by the advent of World War Two.

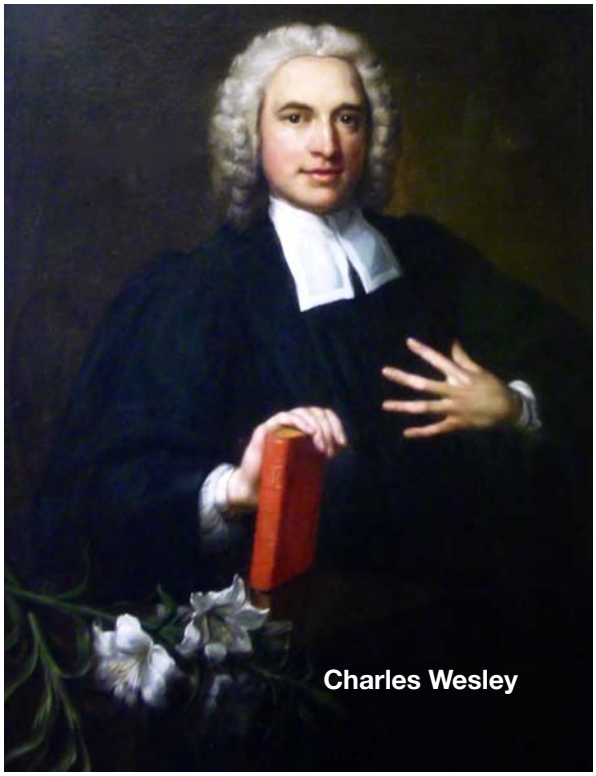
The New Room was one of the very few buildings in the city centre to escape destruction during the Bristol Blitz. The trap door that you can see near the stable leads to what was then a boiler room and worshippers took refuge in that on a Sunday evening in November 1940 when there was an intensive bombing raid that destroyed virtually all of the Broadmead area. After the war was over the city authorities saw the survival of the New Room as a nuisance because it prevented them having an entirely clear slate on which to build a new shopping centre! After a long battle the city was prevented from taking over control of the building but it compulsory purchased some of the land that Lamplough had bought. This reduced the size of both the Broadmead Courtyard and the proposed Horsefair Courtyard. The latter remained in a very unsatisfactory state, not helped by the retention of a nineteenth-century lean-to building on the back of the New Room and the building of an ugly twentieth-century toilet block. In 2010 Gary Best, Warden of the New Room, began work on the Horsefair Project. This has led to a new three-storey Visitor Centre being opened in the courtyard in 2017 and various other improvements, including the creation of the new museum.

The statue of Charles Wesley now stands at the Horsefair entrance to the new Visitor Centre. The Centre is on three levels connected by a lift and a staircase. On the ground floor there is a spacious atrium with an artisan cafe, which offers a variety of drinks and an exciting menu for brunch, lunch and afternoon tea - including those on vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free diets. Most of the food is produced in-house by our expert caterers. There is also a shop which has a wide range of souvenirs and books.

On the first floor are toilets and the New Room library and archives for those interested in research. This is one of the best Methodist libraries in the country and anyone is welcome to use it. Opening hours are advertised on the website. It is preferable to make an appointment so that someone is present to assist you. Included in the archives are many first editions of Wesley's works.

On the top floor are the offices used by the staff and volunteers and the Horsefair Room, which is used by school groups and tour groups and also available for letting by outside groups. The top floor also provides access to the museum.

CHARLES WESLEY'S HOUSE


Charles Wesley

Charles Wesley was vitally important to early Methodism for three reasons. First, he was a very gifted preacher who, until his health collapsed, travelled widely. Second, he was a very friendly man whose character won over many to support Methodism. And, third and most significantly, it is said 'Methodism was born in song' and Charles is widely regarded as the world's greatest hymn writer. When he started writing his hymns, most churches disapproved of hymn-singing. The quality of hymns like his 'Love Divine, all loves excelling' changed that. Some of his hymns, such 'And can it be', were intensely personal and he wrote many hymns to fit the particular circumstances that a person might be facing - such as getting married, having a baby, losing a child, being sick, and facing death. He was the first man to attempt to write hymns specifically for children (e.g. 'Gentle Jesus meek and mild') and the first to write hymns for events in the Church Year (such as 'Come Thou long-expected Jesus' for Advent; 'Hark! the herald angels sing' for Christmas and 'Christ the Lord is risen today' for Easter). He often wrote hymns about the Methodist habits that he and John were promoting (such as 'O for a thousand tongues to sing' about worshipping; 'Ye servants of God' about evangelising ; 'All praise to our redeeming Lord' about Christian fellowship; and 'Forth in Thy name I go' about service to others). He also wrote many hymns for Holy Communion and over two thousand that collectively told all the key events in the Bible.

Charles was very happily married to Sarah Gwynne. Three of their eight children grew into adulthood and their two sons were both musical prodigies. One of them, Samuel, was described as 'the English Mozart'. The house where Charles lived with his family in Charles Street was bought by Edward Sykes Lamplough after he had restored the New Room. It has been subsequently restored and visitors can now see family portraits and six rooms as they might have looked in Charles' day, as well as an eighteenth-century herb garden. The house also contains short video presentations on two of Charles' hymns and a room that explores hymn writing through the ages. Although Charles drafted most of his hymns whilst travelling, they were often written down and finalised when he got home and many of them would have been sung first at the New Room. The House is a fifteen minute walk from the New Room and it can only be viewed by joining a pre-arranged tour (minimum of ten people). There is a charge for the tour. See website for details.

THE NEW ROOM TODAY

We welcome people of every and no faith as well as those Methodists who come to see this important historic building. The trustees of the New Room are dedicated to communicating the story of the Wesleys and their continued importance. The Museum is central to that and so too is the publication of books and booklets on early Methodism. These range from very scholarly works to short introductory guides. Particularly popular has been the book called 'Gospel's Story' written for young children - it tells the story of Wesley as seen by his horse. The New Room has its own Educational Officer and she works with schools and has a wide-ranging educational programme.

We engage as much as we can with the local community and the New Room continues to operate as a multi-purpose space in the centre of the city, offering worship, recitals, dramatic productions, exhibitions, lectures, and many other activities, many aimed at families and young children. Details of special events can be found on our website.

Many people come in off the busy streets to pray and to be quiet in the Chapel. Special services are held throughout the year and there is a regular communion service at 1.00 p.m. every Friday. Anybody is welcome to attend it.

The New Room operates through a small dedicated team of staff and through many volunteers who help in a variety of ways.

Do all the good you can
By all the means you can
In all the ways you can
In all the places you can
At all the times you can
To all the people you can
As long as ever you can

Attributed to John Wesley

Please pick up one of our volunteer leaflets if you are interested in helping us.

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WEBSITE:

www.newroombristol.org.uk

£1.50

The New Room is open to the public Monday to Saturday 10.30 p.m. virtually all year (please check for Easter, Christmas and New Year opening times)

Methodist Heritage

the new room bristol