

Chronicle

Cornwall Methodist District

No. 76

Winter 2006

Gwennap's heritage boost



Cornwall's Gwennap Pit - one of John Wesley's favourite preaching places - is now officially a world treasure.

The decision by UNESCO to give World Heritage Site status to ten mining areas in Cornwall and West Devon includes Gwennap Pit, near Redruth.

The open-air round modelled in 1806 as a memorial to John Wesley who preached there eighteen times, is included in the granting of this status.

When the UNESCO assessor visited the site last September, David Phillips, who oversees the Pit and Visitor centre, and the Rev Ian Haile,

former District Chairman, presented a written submission on behalf of the Management Committee at the request of Cornwall County Council.

They answered questions about the historical, religious, sociological and cultural influences of Methodism: its impact on the mining community, the Cornish way of life and on the current importance and use of the Pit.

The assessor showed a lively interest in the way in which, as the mining industry declined, emigrating Cornish miners took Methodism to other parts of the world.

Reflecting on how to be open to a challenging God

When we don't agree

Dear Friends,

This year's Methodist Conference met in Edinburgh – the first time that Conference has been held in Scotland since Methodist Union.

The agenda was full and complex with many issues of church policy and social concern to consider.

As always, there were some issues on which Conference was in unanimous agreement, while there were other



By Chris
Blake

issues over which opinions were strongly divided.

At times these differences of opinion concerned the evaluation of one course of action over another, but on some occasions they concerned matters of deeply held but contrasting convictions.

In this respect Conference reflects our experience in our local churches. In some areas, while we see things differently, we recognise that these differences are simply matters of personal preference.

In other areas, we are aware that our differences go to the very heart of what we personally believe to be a key issue in Christian discipleship.

Examples of such issues in recent times may be the areas of abortion, divorce,

human sexuality and the debate between a just war and Christian pacifism.

At Conference, the Faith and Order Committee brought a report entitled "Living with Contradictory Convictions in the Church" which explores how, as a church, we can deal with such situations.

It includes reflection on the need for "openness to a challenging God" while at the same time recognising the danger of the church simply reflecting the current values of the society in which it is set.

There is also a consideration of the four areas of Scripture, Christian tradition, experience and reason.

These four sources of insight

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Looking for stories to touch people's hearts

Have you ever had a burning issue that you just wish people would listen to your view on?

Or maybe you hear something and think "that's not right, I must put them straight"! Every Sunday morning, from 6am to

9am, BBC Radio Cornwall's weekly live faith programme aims to unite the county's faith communities, giving people a voice and a platform.

Presenter Naomi Kennedy, searches for fascinating stories

to touch every heart and if you'd like to become a contributor, or have a subject which should be explored, please contact Naomi on 01872 475263 or naomi.kennedy@bbc.co.uk. She'd love to hear from you.

Living with contradictory convictions

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are sometimes called the "Methodist Quadrilateral" and the report raises the question of the relationship between them.

Do they each have equal authority or is, for instance,

Scripture to be treated as having more authority than the others?

These are key issues in many areas in which contradictory convictions are held in the life of the church. The report discusses these and concludes

with some reflections on what it means to be a church in such a context.

Conference commended the report for prayerful and constructive discussion and use in relation to all areas of the Church's life in which diversity

and disagreement appear. You may wish to do this in your local church or circuit. Copies of the printed report can be obtained from our District Office.

Yours in His service,

Chris Blake

Why Landrake bucks the trend

The June dedication of the new Landrake chapel represents a heartening exception to the trend of Cornish chapels closing and Methodism's presence in communities declining.

The 2001 quinquennial report highlighted the need for replacement chapel floors and roofs. There were not the resources for such a major refurbishment, and so selling the existing buildings to finance a new chapel was looked at.

This summer, about 170 people gathered in glorious

sunshine for the dedication of the new church when District Chairman Chris Blake suggested that in this holy place, Christians were being called to be holy people and to lead holy lives in their communities.

So what will this splendid new building offer? It certainly gives new freedom, for example from the almost inevitable damp problems associated with old buildings.

Yet there will also be many new opportunities to use the modern facilities: a



flexible, comfortable area for the congregation and local community... whether putting on concerts, serving lunches or providing a Sunday Club for children.

A crucial factor over these six years has been the tremendous support

and enthusiasm of the local congregation who have shown great vision and a repeated willingness to trust God, despite setbacks. The church's weekly prayer meeting has surely been significant as well as the kindness and generosity of people.

Taize - it's a completely different world

A combined group from the Cornwall Methodist District Youth Synod and the Cornwall Diocese Youth Synod travelled to France over the Easter holidays to spend a week with the Taizé Community.

Twenty of us joined with 5,000 mainly young people from all over the world to share in a common life of prayer, discussion, teaching, and a lot of fun.

It was wonderful, an awesome experience, to see the young people growing in their faith and discovering new bonds with young

Christians from other cultures.

Here's what some of them said:

Taizé is a completely different world – no one worries about what you look like, what you sound like, or how you act – it's just so normal

I felt it was possibly the first time ever that I have managed to use prayer to effectively talk to God

Everyone gets along, even if they don't understand

All the problems that I have had in the short fifteen years of my life all made sense, it all seemed to piece together like a jigsaw. That night, I felt that God touched me big time.

I didn't realise that it's so simple to live in a calm, relaxed way.

At the beginning of the week I was expecting it to be really dull, and I wouldn't be able to stay quiet, but now I love it and I'm looking forward to coming back for longer.

Theologians tackle the major issues

The 12th year of lectures to Truro Theological Society again touches on some of the major issues of the day. The programme began on September 6 with renowned theologian Prof Alister McGrath from the University of Oxford.

His topic - *Has Science killed God? Richard Dawkins and the meaning of life* - is linked to

his landmark book *Dawkins' God: Genes, Memes and the Meaning of Life*.

On Monday February 12 next year Dr Sajjad Rizvi from the University of Exeter looks at the subject of *Interpreting Islam: Qur'anic exegesis and textual hermeneutics?*

The final lecture for this

year is on Monday, May 21, and features Prof Dan Cohn-Sherbok from the University of Wales (Lampeter). He will speak on *Christian Zionism and the End of the Jewish People*.

The lectures take place in Truro Cathedral Chapter House. More information is in the advert on the back page of this edition of Chronicle.

UMC witness remembered

Don't forget you have a chance to recall the witness of the United Methodist Church, 1907-32.

On Thursday, October 5, Roger Thorne (Plymouth & Exeter District Archivist) will give the Cornish Methodist Historical Society annual lecture at Truro Methodist Church, 7.30pm.

A large print version of this Chronicle is easy to get. Simply enlarge this copy 141% onto A3 paper. Ask your chapel stewards for help if you need this done.

Around 1,000 Methodists are expected to meet up in Bratislava next August for the second European Methodist Festival.

The theme will be Let's Celebrate and more information will be available during the year but booking begins this month (September) so you need to get moving if you want to be in Slovakia for the festival, which will run from August 1 to 5.

Bratislava calling

Bishop Patrick Streif, of the Central and Southern Europe Central Conference, says: "Our variety and that which we have in common are treasures that we can experience in this Europe-wide meeting.

"At the same time we are celebrating the 300th birthday of Charles and we shall sing

and make music. We shall use various ways of listening to and working on Biblical texts, and experience various forms of spirituality."

Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, lies on the River Danube, just 50km from Vienna. The Festival will take place in the grounds of the

Economic University at Horsky Park.

Bratislava, is easy to get to with cheap flights available. There will be an inclusive conference fee, including accommodation of different types, available at the University or a list of local hotels offering festival prices. More information can be got from the Rev Ian Souter in Saltash or the District Office.

Tools of our trade

During my ministerial training, aptitude tests showed that my creativity was at the extreme point of the scale. That was very fortunate as I was called into ministering with Deaf people and could not use the normal 'tools of the trade' in the Church I serve.

The Bible was inaccessible to most of my congregation, so was most of the liturgy used by the Church of England.

For several years, deaf members were thrilled to be at a service where BSL (British Sign Language) was used to interpret a hearing-style act of worship. They watched and they were very grateful.

Then expectations were raised and people wanted to get 'involved', so services based on words were replaced with services presented in sign and symbols. Later, people began to realise that they could also lead worship and minister to others.

Now we are looking at creating training material suitable for deaf people and liturgy is being created by the community for the community.

A project to translate the Bible into BSL will be launched officially this month - and may take as long as 50 years!

We have just held a Deaf Alpha Course, All our speakers

**By the Rev Debbie Harvey,
Chaplain to the
Deaf Community**

were profoundly deaf Christians who led in BSL. The group were all sign language users and we held our course in a local pub.

The church among deaf people is on the move and radically changing.

- Methodist minister the Rev Stephen Bales is a member of the Deaf Chaplaincy support group and the district benefits greatly from the lack of ecumenical barriers.

Barrie bows out

Barrie May, a member of Carharrack Methodist Church and a local preacher, has been attending the annual Gwennap Pit Rally since he was a young boy.

He has missed very few rallies through the years, attending with his camera to

... and here's a date for a Wesley sing-in

Gwennap Pit will be the venue for the *Wesley Hymn Sing-in* to mark the 300th anniversary of the birth of Charles Wesley.



keep a photographic record.

In due course he became a Trustee of the Pit and in 1976, being a TSB Bank Manager, he became the treasurer.

He retired this year when his meticulous oversight of the Pit finances was acknowledged at this year's Rally. The gratitude

of the Management Committee - on behalf of the District - was expressed with the gift of a pen and pencil set and book token.

• *Barrie May (right) is pictured with former District Chairman, the Rev Ian Haile, who made the presentation at the Bank Holiday Rally.*

There's more information to come but mark the date in your diary: Sunday, July 15, 3pm.

It has been suggested that each circuit chooses a hymn

and that church choirs around the county form a District Choir for the event. You can contact: the Rev Ian Haile on 01872 223755 for more information.

Book charts history and memories of Camborne Wesley

Everything from pantomimes to community care and past ministers is featured in *Camborne Wesley: History & Memories, 1939 - 1999*.

This 81-page book, written by Franklyn Trythall, includes

information about many aspects of the church's life: ministers, the choir, clubs, Sunday school, Dove House, fundraising, pantomimes, care taking, the building and its renovations.

The book also features local

chapels, past and present. There are 30 photographs taken throughout the years as well. All proceeds from the book, cost £4.99 plus £1 p&p, will go to Camborne Wesley Chapel.

Send a cheque for £5.99,

made payable to Camborne Wesley Chapel, along with your name and address to: Mrs A Herring, 11, Hughville Street, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 8TR or you can buy a copy at the Wesley Centre.

District Diary



September

6	7.30	Truro Theological Society – Prof Alister McGrath, Cathedral Chapter House
9	10.30	Synod (Rep) at Camborne Centenary
9	10.30	Quiet Day - Mrs Jennifer Llewellyn - "Walking with Benedict", Epiphany House (booking required)
14	3	(to 9pm) Fresh Expressions seminar, Launceston Central
19	10.30	Network Autumn District Day - Elaine Turner - <i>Building Bridges</i> , St., John's Church, St. Austell
20	2.30	Gwennap Pit Committee
24	6	e:merge, café church, Wadebridge MC
26	7	Property, Grants and Stationing
27	7	Evangelism Strategy Group
29	7	Alternative Harvest, Wadebridge Town Hall

October

5	7.30	Cornwall Methodist Historical Association annual lecture, Truro MC
9	7	District Policy Committee (Trispen)
14	10.30	Quiet Day - Revd Sian Yates – <i>Sacred space, sacred moments</i> , Epiphany House (book)
22	6	e:merge, café church – <i>Speaking in Drums</i> , Wadebridge MC

November

4	1	Prayer and Painting, Epiphany House (book)
5		Visit of Gordon Gatward to district
7 - 9		Network District Annual Conference, Trelohan
11	10.30	Quiet Day - Revd Mgr Adrian Toffolo, Epiphany House (book)

14	7.30	Circuit Stewards (Camborne)
16	7.30	World Church Committee
16	7.30	Taize worship, Epiphany House
18	10.30	Preachers and Worship Leaders Quiet Day, Trelohan
19	7.30	Soul Xpansion youth worship, Saltash
20	7.30	Circuit Stewards (Liskeard)
23	10	Vocational Committee (Trispen)
25	6	Epic youth worship, Launceston FC

December

3	8	The Saturday Night Service, youth worship, Camborne Elim Church
10	7.30	Soul Xpansion youth worship, Saltash
18		The Event youth worship, Richmond Chapel, Penzance

January

22	7	Property Grants and Stationing
29	10	Network District Executive Meeting

February

6	10	LP/LW Committee
7	10.30	Synod (Ministerial) at Camelford and Tintagel
8	10.30	District Manses Committee
12	11	Network District Committee, Truro Methodist Church
15	7.30	Circuit Stewards (Lanivet)

Whistling up some youth action



Andrew Nicholson is taking up a new challenge this year - as the District Youth Enabler.

Andrew, pictured left, is already a familiar sight at district events and has been working with children and young people for some years.

He has led trips to Taize (see the

report on the latest visit on page 2), been involved with the Youth Synod and helped organise the MAYC's 6T anniversary celebrations in Cornwall.

Andrew and Helen, his wife, are often seen as members of the group *Speaking in Drums* who are part of the trade justice campaign in the county.

Part of the afternoon worship at the September Synod in Camborne will be to welcome Andrew to his new role.

Ichthus editor in the county

The Leaders of Worship and Preachers' Trust is inviting preachers, worship leaders and friends to a day of fellowship and learning.

It will be on November 18 from 10.30am to 3.30pm at Trelohan Manor and will be led by Mrs Ros Peedle, Editor of *Ichthus* magazine. You can book with Ivor Cresswell, 1 Coldrose Court Truro TR1 2LE, 01872 276768

Items for the February Chronicle to Gareth Hill at Runnymede, Fernleigh Road, Wadebridge PL27 7AZ by December 28. Email photographs and stories to rev.gareth@cybervicar.com.

Book Review



By the Rev Dr Stephen Dawes

Much good theology comes via novels and *The Short Day Dying* is a first novel by Peter Hobbs, published by Faber & Faber in 2005.

It's written almost as the diary of a young Methodist preacher and blacksmith in Quethiock around 1870.

It doesn't preach, and it's not a religious novel: but it does explore life, faith, love, loss and chapel-going.

On that score the young preacher bemoans the emptiness of the chapels compared with his grandfather's day, as he walks miles to preach to a handful.

He is actually in love with bed-ridden and blind Harriet Farr and grieves over her death – but only slowly recognises that this is what is happening to him.

As far as I can tell it's an accurate portrait of its period. It is certainly an evocative and compelling sideways look at the meaning of life and faith. It's a good read too.

TRURO THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

(inaugurated 1995)

AIM - to hear respected and published theologians thinking aloud

Programme for 2006-7

Wednesday September 6th

Prof Alister McGrath University of Oxford
Has Science killed God?
Richard Dawkins and the meaning of life

Monday February 12, 2007

Dr Sajjad Rizvi University of Exeter
Interpreting Islam

Qur'anic exegesis and textual hermeneutics?

Monday May 21

Prof Dan Cohn-Sherbok University of Wales (Lampeter)
Christian Zionism and the End of the Jewish People

7.30 for 8pm

The Cathedral Chapter House
Admission £4

Or £10 for the year payable in advance (to SD) or at the first meeting

For wheelchair access please phone Stephen Dawes in advance on 01872 223181