



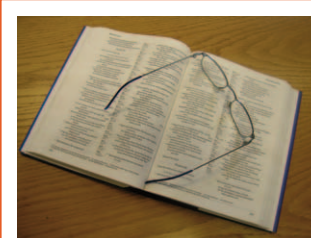
## NEWS FROM AROUND THE CONNEXION

Pages 4 & 5



## CHANGES IN THE STATIONS 2019/20

Pages 11-14



## LEARNING TO LOVE READING

Page 24

# Future of Tolpuddle Old Chapel now secure

AFTER years of uncertainty, the future of the Tolpuddle Old Chapel – Methodist meeting place of the Dorsetshire labourers who later became known as the Tolpuddle Martyrs and sparked the rise of the trade union movement – looks secure following a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund of £329,300.

Together with funds already raised from other sources, including Methodist donations, this brings the Friends of Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust (TOCT) within sight of the £655,000 needed for the repair and development of the historic chapel, which is not

by [JOHN SINGLETON](#)

owned by the Methodist Church.

The Grade II\* Listed building is of international importance, but it is in a poor state of repair and on Historic England's "At Risk Register". A statement by the trust, which purchased the building in 2015, said the new funding would finally put the trust in a "strong position" to realise its vision of renovating and extending Tolpuddle Old Chapel.

"Thanks to money raised ... the project will renovate and extend the former chapel to provide the

potential for the appropriate re-use of the building as a 'quiet place in the heart of this historic Dorset village', as well as creating interpretation and community engagement activities to tell the history of the building and its connection to the Dorsetshire Labourers later known as the Tolpuddle Martyrs," said the statement.

Former President of the Conference the Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal, who joined the pilgrimage from Bristol to this year's Tolpuddle

Festival (**Recorder**, August 2), said that he welcomed the news that the future of the Tolpuddle Old Chapel was secured.

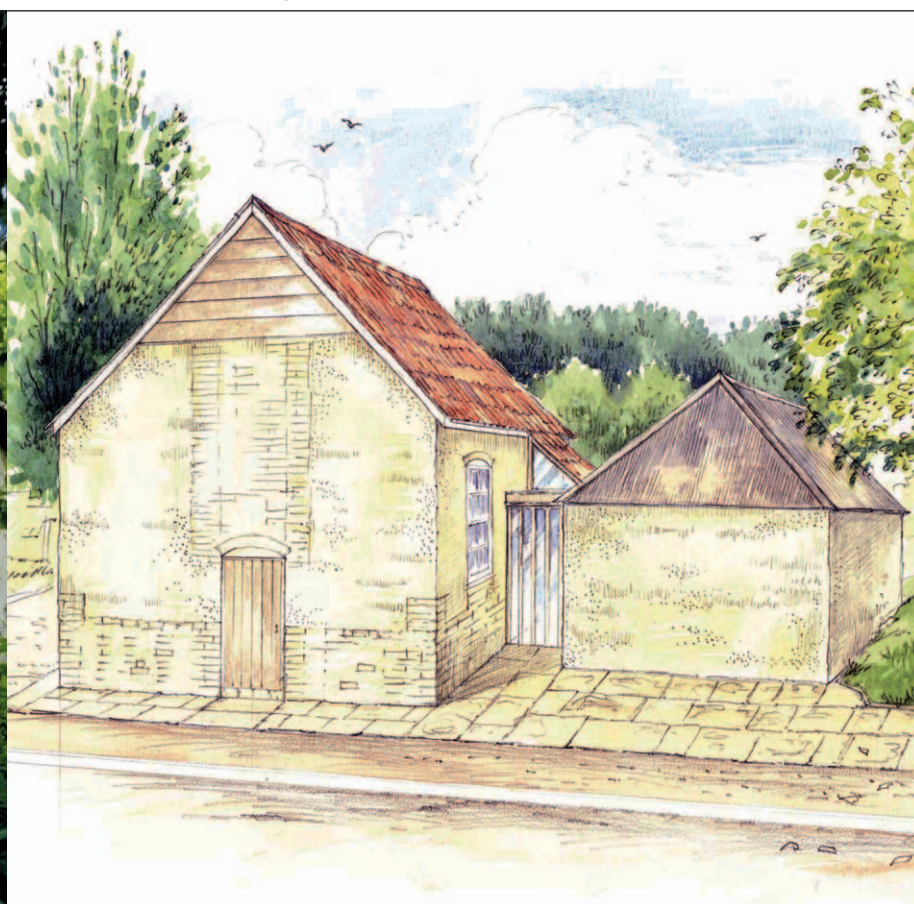
### Icon

"It is an icon of justice, equity, solidarity and fairness," he told the **Methodist Recorder**. "Here radical Methodist local lay leaders met 200 years ago to work and pray together to stand up against brutality and unfairness in the work place and developed principles for human rights and worker solidarity, with the Gospel and 'God as our guide'.

"The witness of these leaders draws 10,000 trade union leaders, members and others annually for the Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival to honour the witness of these Methodist leaders. I am thankful to all those who are working to maintain the Old Chapel. I want the Methodist Church today to do all we can to keep this beacon lit for future generations and to do so with pride. Wage equity and fairness in the work place remain matters of importance throughout the world today."

Chair of TOCT Andrew Mc-

Turn to Page Three



Left: Tolpuddle Old Chapel prior to its acquisition by the trust. Right: an artist's impression of the chapel once renovated and extended.



# Future of Tolpuddle Old Chapel now secure

Continued from Page One.

Carthy said: "This final highly significant National Lottery funding will allow the trust's architect, Paul Richold of Architecton, to move plans forward in order to start building work, as well as ensuring this wonderful legacy is saved for future generations."

The full restoration of the old chapel will include a new extension, situated adjacent to the east wall of the chapel to support event and activities; a year-round programme of activities and interpretation; a pilot schools programme (engaging students with the history of Tolpuddle and the Dorsetshire Labourers) and various volunteering opportunities.

MP for West Dorset Sir Oliver Letwin congratulated the trust and paid tribute to the "voluntary efforts of people who have nothing to gain by it and whose enthusiasm

for the cause derives exclusively from their concern to improve the place in which they live and to celebrate the links of that place with a part of our history that is of global significance. I am proud to have supported Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust during its three years' development and look forward to building work starting to provide this additional heritage destination for West Dorset."

## Significance

The chapel's heritage significance is intrinsically linked to its development and use by the Dorsetshire Labourers (known as the Tolpuddle Martyrs from 1838) and its role as a central focus of the early 19th century Methodist circuit in rural Dorset. It was built in 1818 as a Methodist chapel and it is thought that two of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, George Loveless and Thomas Standfield, were



Tolpuddle Old Chapel in 1930.

involved in the construction of the cob building.

The chapel was used by at least four of the six Martyrs. Under the guidance of local preacher George Loveless, the chapel provided a space where the Dorsetshire Labourers were able to meet, exchange ideas and build their confidence to challenge the injustices of their harsh liv-

ing and working conditions. Subsequent events played a huge role in the creation and rise of the trade union movement which is still celebrated by the annual Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival.

For further information visit the website ([www.tolpuddleoldchapeltrust.org](http://www.tolpuddleoldchapeltrust.org)).

See "Recorder Comment" - Page Six.

# Failure to meet RE legal requirements continues to impact on A-level entries

SCHOOLS' failure to meet legal requirements on Religious Education (RE) continues to impact on A-level entries, according to the National Association of Teachers of RE and the RE Council of England and Wales.

Responding to the news that the number of Religious Studies A-level entries has declined again this year, they say that the growing number of secondary schools in England and Wales that are failing to provide RE to all pupils until the age of 16 is continuing to impact on Religious Studies A-level entries.

While the reduction in number of students taking an RS A-level examination in Religious Studies in England and Wales slowed this year, the number of entries has declined significantly since its peak in 2016. Figures show a drop of 5.1 per cent in 2019 and 22.8 per cent in 2018.

However, the decline comes in the context of a smaller cohort of 18-year-olds this year and an overall reduced number of A-level entries across all subjects.

The number of schools failing to provide RE at key stage 4 has been in-

creasing. The latest data from the Department for Education's School Workforce Census suggest that a third (33.4 per cent) of all schools are failing in their legal duty to offer the subject, which in turn has consequences for A-level entries.

The National Association of Teachers of RE and the RE Council of England and Wales say that the figures are an indication that RE remains vulnerable and that the Government should engage further with the recent recommendations for change from the Commission on Religious Education.

# Methodist Action (North West) Ltd goes into liquidation

THE Methodist Church in Lancashire has expressed its sadness after a housing charity with Methodist links went into liquidation.

Methodist Action (North West) Ltd provided accommodation for homeless and vulnerable adults in the Preston, South Ribble and Lancaster areas.

A statement from the independent charity said: "The board of Methodist Action North West met with an insolvency practitioner and, in view of the financial position, has resolved to place the charity into voluntary liquidation."

"All creditors and interested parties will be notified

directly. The board is acting urgently with local authorities and others to preserve the interests of our tenants."

The Chair of the Lancashire District, the Rev Paul Davis, said: "The Methodist Church in Preston and Lancashire have been kept informed of the attempts by the charity over the last months to keep working and while we are saddened by the outcome are grateful for the way in which the charity has worked for the last decade and are hopeful that at least some of the work can continue into the future."

He said Methodist Action North West had been a separate charity but with links to

the Methodist Church in Lancashire for the last 10 years. It began with the care of homeless men in Preston through the Fox Street Centre attached to Central Methodist church in Lune Street.

Through national grants the charity was able to refurbish the Fox Street Centre and look after 20 homeless men. Through various government initiatives the charity was encouraged to look after not just the homeless but also those moving on into their own accommodation. In this way the charity had worked with landlords and brought empty homes back into use, providing accommodation for single people

and families. The charity also provided specialist workers to provide supported living programmes for these families.

Mr Davis said that because of changing government initiatives and the introduction of universal credit, the benefits coming in had been less than the outgoings.

"The charity has worked with landlords and others but these efforts have failed to reduce the ongoing deficit and the correct and appropriate action has been to resolve to take steps to put the company into liquidation as the best way to support the tenants and those at greatest risk," Mr Davis said.

# Call to pray for the people of Hong Kong

A METHODIST minister wants the Church in Britain and around the world to uphold the people of Hong Kong in prayer after witnessing at first hand the growing tensions there.

The Rev Keith Garner, a former British Chair of District who is now Superintendent/CEO of the Wesley Mission in Sydney, Australia, flew into Hong Kong on the first of three days of sit-in protests in the International Airport.

He said there were thousands of young demonstrators making their presence felt and endeavouring to hand out leaflets, but they were largely peaceable.

"Following the airport demonstrations, I saw a young person with a poster on their back which said, 'We could have done it better ... please stand with us.' I thought it carried a very powerful message," he said.

"The reality of the situation is that during weekdays Hong Kong carries on as normal and one is able to walk around quite safely.

"Having said that, there is no mistaking the tension that has built up and people hold many different perspectives on present circumstances.

"Most folks have not found it helpful to listen to Donald Trump's tweets referring to Chinese troops gathering on the border. Hong Kongers are well aware of this and don't need his contributions, which are much more about self-interest than they are to help Hong Kong."

## Domestic

Mr Garner said there was no doubt that the current "trade war" conversations, together with worrying domestic matters in China, were exacerbating people's fears.

Tension had been building over many weeks, made worse by the extradition law proposed by Hong Kong's chief executive officer.

"This bill would mean that people accused of breaking the law could be taken to mainland China, rather than being dealt with in Hong Kong. There is no doubt whatsoever that the matter is complex to say the least.

"I am sure that Methodists in Britain and around the world will want to pray for Hong Kong in general and the Christian community in particular."

Mr Garner said this was his third visit to Hong Kong and on this occasion he had been invited to preach at a Summer Bible School for the Methodist International Church, which is led by a friend, the Rev Eden Fletcher.

"The Christian influence in Hong Kong remains strong and our Methodist Church, which has a long history, has continued to exercise its most effective ministry among the Hong Kong community. The model of an international church is deeply valued by Christians from across the world."

Mr Garner said his own Wesley Mission in Sydney had many congregations and has just celebrated the 30th anniversary of its Chinese congregation, which began following the incidents in Tiananmen Square.

See "Charity calls for China to grant religious freedom" - Page Eight.



Protesters marching in Hong Kong.