

VALE OF AYLESBURY

METHODIST CIRCUIT

MAGAZINE



From the Wingrave and Rowsham Heritage Association archives

19th Century Wingrave Methodist Church, Story—see pages 6,7,8 and 9

July Aug Sept

2020

PASTORIAL LETTER -



Rev Richard Atkinson

It is very strange composing this piece in these uncertain times. By the time you read it things could be the same, restrictions may have been eased or sadly the lockdown may have become more severe.

In the midst of these tempestuous times church life goes on. Firstly I want to express thanks to those who are at the fore front of our pastoral response. Phone calls and letters received have been a source of real blessing as we endeavour to keep connected. In addition there are so many who are, in love, responding to those beyond the church from being involved in feeding the homeless, to doing shopping for neighbours, to , on a Thursday evening doing a roll call of the neighbours to check all is well. In these days of isolation any contact is a real blessing. I seem to be spending a lot of time using zoom and cannot express how re-assuring it is to see faces of those with whom I meet and to sample their positivity in spite of the restrictions we all live with.

Secondly to commend those who hold office in the churches, at the time of writing we are just beginning to think about what the church beyond lockdown might look like. Those who serve as church stewards, especially those who are the contact name on the Circuit plan, never anticipated having been involved in thinking about how church premises might need to be adapted to ensure the safety of those who come in. These folk are at the forefront of our response and I am so grateful for the way in which they link your church with the wider circuit. Finally there are church treasurers who are doing their best to collect offerings so bills can be paid and assessment provided so something of our ministry can continue. We all owe a debt of gratitude to those who continue to rise to the challenge of these days to enable the life of our churches to continue.

Thirdly there are those at circuit level who have stepped up to the plate. Roy Collis and Peter Green who spend time dealing with the technological wizardry required to post the daily devotional videos on the website and have had to contend with systems that do not always work the way they should. Then there are the Circuit Leadership Team who are endeavouring to support the churches and ask what then Circuit can do to help the financial hit that each church will take in this period. And there are my colleagues trying to live out their call in these times as well as coping with the impact of these days on themselves, their family and friends.

We are called to be a community of thanksgiving, I want to express on all our behalf thanks to all for the part or parts they play.

There will be a new normal. We do not know when our churches will be allowed to re-open, when it will be practicable for congregations to gather. Your church leadership are working on a plan to allow re-opening, reflecting on what it will mean to be a congregation in the midst of social distancing. Worship will be different but it will still be worship. All that we do may need to be rethought, zoom meetings may become the norm. We are though a dynamic community and we will rise to the challenge to incarnate the Gospel as best way we can and where possible for this to happen in public. We know we are not alone, that the Spirit will be in our midst inviting us individually and collectively to seek a vision for our new reality. Most importantly though we remember that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

In the midst of all for whom we pray there is great importance in praying for each other that , with one voice, we may continue to be the people of God, living out the Jesus way, and in the midst of these days of darkness seek to walk in the light

Blessings

Richard

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Ministers' Rest Days:

Rev Richard Atkinson..... Saturday
Rev Donna-Marie Broadbent-Kelly Friday
Rev Keith Edwards Wednesday
Rev Anthony Howells Friday
Rev Romilly Micklem Monday

Please respect their days off and avoid contacting them except in an emergency.

The ministers and Arthur Sara are taking it in turns to produce a video we are calling **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY** for everyday of the week, except Sundays, when there are streamed or recorded services from Aylesbury and Thame. (Pages 15 & 16)

If you wish to travel further (virtually of course) you can find details of other streamed services on the Methodist Website.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/>

PREACHING PLANS

We are still waiting for Government and Connexional advice regarding future services. There have been discussions concerning the ways and means that may be necessary if and when we are allowed to re-open our churches for worship, but it is not possible to Plan at present therefore there will be **no Preaching Plan published for the next quarter.**

You will be kept informed by Email (as appropriate) and by documents published on the Website.

BE VIGILANT!

COVER STORY

19TH CENTURY WINGRAVE METHODISTS

This history of the Wingrave Methodists starts in 1835 when the Rev James Pole was the Primitive Methodist Superintendent for the Hounslow Circuit. His diary entry for 9th March of that year says “Attended the quarter day at Hatton. It was agreed for me to open a mission on entire new ground in the county of Buckinghamshire”. A month later, on 8th April, he walked the 20 miles from Hounslow to High Wycombe and “fixed his standard in Queen’s Square”.

James Pole was an energetic and charismatic preacher and the Primitive Methodist movement quickly spread across Buckinghamshire, with chapels being built in many towns and villages from about 1838 onwards. By 1841 Thomas Fleet, a Wingrave carpenter, had provided the Primitive Methodist Connexion with a plot of land in Nup End Lane and a chapel was built there at a cost of £260.

From the outset the Primitive Methodists in Wingrave were faced with a strong Baptist influence in the village, where an “Independent and Baptist” chapel had been opened in 1832. This is demonstrated by the Ecclesiastical Census of attendance on 30th March 1851, which also records the total population of the parish as 813; there seems to have been a remarkably high level of church attendance in the parish, particularly as the Independent Minister reported that “a considerable number absent through illness and the state of the weather”.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Parish Church	101	180	-
Independent & Baptist Chapel	117	257	171
Primitive Methodist Chapel	30	-	120

1851 was a time of major social change in Wingrave and this change continued through the second half of the 19th century. Agriculture was being mechanised, drastically reducing the need for labourers, and the opening of a new railway station at nearby Marston Gate in 1857 had a major impact on the mobility of people

and goods. There was a growing need for new skills and trades, including bricklayers to construct the new houses which were springing up, often under the patronage of the Rothschilds.

Many of the new tradespeople and artisans worshipped at the Primitive Methodist Church. One of them was Thomas Jones, who was a builder by trade, but also a local Methodist preacher for 20 years and, by all accounts, a supportive, energetic and popular man.

The growing confidence and influence of the Primitive Methodists in the 1880s and 1890s was of concern to the local farmers and the Parish Church Vestry who between them had dominated village life for many centuries. Matters came to a head when a Parish Council was created under the Local Government Act of 1894; the majority of the newly elected councillors were nonconformists who worshipped at the Primitive Methodist and Independent chapels.

In January 1895 a number of local farmers wrote to the Bucks Herald "Sir: We, the undersigned, hereby attach our signatures as a protest against five of the so-called parish councillors acting for the above parish,

Letter to Vicar
re shutting
Council out
from
the Parish
School room
furniture

The Clerk also reported that he had written the Vicar, as instructed respecting his having stripped the school room of its furniture. - "Rowsham 19 Mar 1895"

"Dear Sir. The Wingrave Parish Council have directed me to write you concerning your having stripped the school room of all its furniture on the occasion of their meeting last evening, leaving only the floor for their use and convenience. The Council beg to point out to you that such procedure is contrary to the word and spirit of the Local Gov act, which gives to them the use of the school-room"

on the grounds that they are disqualified according to the requirements of the Parish Councils Act, 1894”, the five councillors in question all being nonconformists, including Thomas Jones.

This letter was ignored, but a few months later, on 18th March 1895, the conflict was escalated when the councillors arrived at the village schoolroom for their meeting only to find that the furniture had been removed by the Vicar, the Rev Thomas Lockhart, “leaving only the bare floor for their accommodation”.

The conflict between the nonconformists and the established village gentry rumbled on for a few years, but by 1900 a working relationship seems to have emerged and the Primitive Methodists had become fully established as part of Wingrave’s community. They were particularly active in furthering the temperance movement and played a major role in the construction of a Temperance Hall which opened in 1891 and which became an important social centre for the village in the early 20th century.

By 1903 it was apparent that the existing building was too small for the expanding Primitive Methodist congregation, the growing Sunday school and increasingly popular musical and social activities. It was therefore decided to construct an extension to accommodate a schoolroom and vestry and to add a kitchen on the back. After a lot of negotiation a plot of land to the rear of the existing building was leased from Lord Rosebery and was subsequently purchased from him five years later.



The construction of the extension was underway in 1905, which proved to be a significant year for the Primitive Methodists. Thomas Jones died suddenly in April – he was only 50 years old - and a memorial stone was laid in the wall of the extension.

In December six new trustees were appointed, four of them were bricklayers and two were labourers. These new trustees (including George Bignell, William Fleet and William Roberts, who were photographed in their “Sunday Best”)



remained in office for many years and, through their drive and energy, ensured that Wingrave Primitive Methodists flourished into the 20th century.

But that's another story!

Fairtrade - The now and the future!

It is not uncommon for people to be asked to recall what they were doing when a significant event took place. What will you say if asked to reflect on 2020? What might be said about what wasn't done? Many people's lives across the world have been impacted upon by restrictions and lockdown. All will have the ability to explain what the effect will have been for themselves and have an idea what the consequence has been for others. We have all yet to fully realise or experience the long-term effects. We are told it will be different but everyone is likely to have their own idea of what that means, and experience it differently.



In common with all service providers, manufacturers and growers, those supplying Fairtrade items are encountering issues related to production and transportation that go with policies of isolation and self-distancing.



Systems and processes for production require adaptation and, where this is impossible, or not enacted in a timely manner, crops can fail, be wasted or deadlines for delivery delayed. Further,

issues arise from cancelled orders or lost markets because of closed businesses in other parts of the world.

To maintain production of leaf for quality tea, bushes need picking regularly to stimulate a supply of fresh growth.



Picking has been affected. For items such as Coffee Beans, rice and flowers there needs to be markets to buy them. Markets have reduced or closed completely. Seed is

required for subsequent crop production, and if seed is not available, there are consequences for coming years. Seed provision is not without issue.

Such issues are potentially catastrophic to anyone, but when livelihoods are dependent on maintaining the norm, and in the absence of resources to fall back on, they present real concerns for health and wellbeing, particularly for those who are amongst the most vulnerable.

Fairtrade Premiums are being released to help alleviate issues and respond to the needs brought about by the Covid 19 virus, and in the case of parts of Africa, the plague of locusts.

While it is not possible to revert to a world without Covid 19, it is possible to do what we can to reduce the consequences of it. It is possible to do something to meet the humanitarian needs it causes. If you feel you would like to support those trying to work their way out of poverty, please look out for items bearing the Fairtrade label. Fairtrade may not be the ultimate solution but it can provide a means to aid individuals and communities to find a way through the current issues and allow you to add to the list of things you did in 2020 in response to the pandemic.

Thoughts from a pandemic

What to do? Reflecting on consequences.



I imagine, like many I am not alone in having a 'To do' list. Also, like many, I imagine that when browsing it, the realisation strikes home that during a pandemic, previously 'important' tasks will need to wait or take on a different priority. Tasks that have been waiting for ages, or did not even appear on the list, have now been completed.

Issues of compliance, managing risk, availability of items have prompted searches of the mind, the cupboard shelves and the freezer. For some it will have become more of a make do existence. Circumstances and shortages have prompted trying alternative products and ways of doing things.

Being challenged and restricted is not necessarily a comfortable experience but I would like to think that it has, and will, encourage me to recognise what is essential and the habits we have established.

In my former career, I tried to encourage individuals to test any action they thought necessary against the phrase, 'Just because you can or have done, doesn't mean you should or need to continue'. I suppose my hope is that the learning that has come about through our recent experiences won't be lost, and that the anticipated 'new normal' will reflect in what practices are taken forward in response to the world wide pandemic.

Chinnor Church During the lockdown.

In keeping with churches nationwide our building has not been able to hold services. Neither has it been possible to continue with the activities offered to church or community members that involved mingling. However, we have been working to serve needs of members and to recognise events in the Christian and National calendar

Pastoral groups already existed. Contact has been continuing by phone or in ways compliant with social distancing. The idea of improving prayer links, as identified in the Growth plan, has been actioned by the introduction of Prayer Pods, with 4-6 persons sharing concerns and pieces that have inspired them. Letters, cards and art work have been posted to those in care homes or without internet access, alongside regular telephone calls.

Use of electronic facilities has increased. For the first time our church magazine, Chime, was presented in electronic form. Ideas for activities were distributed electronically to children who attend church clubs and emails have also been sent to keep folk in touch. One member, finding they had more time, has temporarily taken on being a sub editor and is in the process of updating the Chinnor church Website page. Do check it out.

On a practical level, flowers were delivered to Members for Mother's Day. Further, members and affiliated contacts have contributed squares to the Circuit banner, initiated by Donna. Provision of Fairtrade food item has continued. Sales of plants, prepared pre lockdown for charity tables due to be held in the village, have been offered to members and friends, raising some £150 for Ataxia and £100 for Barnabas to date.

More publically, efforts have been made to keep the notice board up to date in anticipation that those taking their daily exercise will take time to read it and become more familiar with the location of our church. Many positive comments have come through about the decorations provided for both the Easter and VE Day celebrations.



It was regrettable that plans to perform an ecumenical based Passion Play on 25th April had to be shelved as a result of the pandemic. Plans for our annual Combined Churches Marquee services are ongoing but, as with the weekly services, it remains subject to permissions and further lifting of restrictions on public gatherings

HOME WORSHIP

For up-to-date details of the resources available for Home Worship and for details of the Services being screened on **SUNDAY MORNINGS** please take a look at the **HOME WORSHIP** page on the **Circuit Website**

The information there is changed at least weekly.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY on the welcome page of both websites is renewed at 5 am each morning. They will take up only 3-4 minutes of your time. If you are an early riser, they are a great way to start your day, but you don't have to rise at 5.00 am.

You can also join the **VIRTUAL FELLOWSHIPS** The times can vary a little so please let Richard have your Email address so he can update you with invitations.

Finally, this issue will only be distributed by Email and published on the Websites. If you have not received a copy and would like to be included in the Email of this and other Circuit News, Please let Roy know.

LIVE SCREENING of Morning Service

10.30 am

from Aylesbury

During the lockdown period, the Church cannot be used for live streaming the Morning Service, but the system has been modified to allow live streaming of a Morning Service from the manse. This has meant that Richard has had to be Producer, Director and Production Crew, as well as conducting these services.

We owe Richard and Louise, who helps with readings and with the singing, a great debt of gratitude, for leading this Worship, which many round the Circuit (and probably beyond) are finding so helpful.

As with the services from the Church, these services are recorded so if you cannot join the 'live' broadcast you can join in the service later.

So make a date for 10.30 am each Sunday and use this link to find the Services:

<https://thesundaysevice.gallery.video/aylesburymethodist>

YOUR CIRCUIT WEBSITE

www.aylesburyvale.org.uk

The Circuit Website, in its current form, is now 74 months old, during that time it has had, on average, over 6000 visitors each year; are **YOU** in that number?

It can be accessed on most Smart Phones, Tablets, Laptops and Desk Top Computers so most folk will have the ability to see what is going on round the Circuit.

What you can see is, of course, dependent upon what is posted there; have **YOU** ever considered writing an article or even suggesting a topic for inclusion?

It is impossible for one editor to know everything that is happening in the Circuit without your help; by far the best way to help is to become a **Sub Editor** for your church, there are some already in some churches, **ideally there should be at least one for each church!**

Could that be you?

Sub-editors have permission to:

- Edit Pages
- Create/ edit articles
- Add files to the document library
- Add images to the picture galleries
- Add dates to the Circuit Diary

Are you willing and able to serve your church in this way? If you are, please Email r.collis245@btinternet.com for further details.

ITEMS FOR THE MAGAZINE:

Items for the Oct—Dec 2020 issue should be forwarded to the following Email addresses:

Solomon Awadzi **01296 489384**

Email: solokawadzi@hotmail.com

Items for the Magazine should be copied to Roy Collis - see below.

Please submit Magazine Items by the 15th August 2020

AMENDMENTS to CIRCUIT Database:

Details of changes to existing information in the **Circuit Database** should be sent immediately they occur to: Rev Richard Atkinson :revrja@outlook.com and to: r.collis245@btinternet.com

ITEMS FOR PUBLISHING ON THE WEBSITES:

WEBSITE ADDRESSES:

Circuit: www.aylesburyvale.org.uk

Aylesbury: www.aylesburymethodists.org.uk

Fairford Leys: www.fairfordleyschurch.org.uk

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