

Methodist Heritage Committee Annual Report

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	For approval
Resolutions	105/1. The Council receives the report. 105/2. The Council authorises the Committee to explore with the University of Manchester Library ways in which material already deposited with the University may be made available to other institutions of learning.

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	This is an update on progress to date with Heritage 2.0, the Methodist Heritage Committee's current Development Strategy, which started in 2014. It outlines key achievements in its first year.
Main Points	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activities and achievements in delivering year 1 of the 2014-2019 Development Strategy. 2. Update on the disposal of the historic collections of the former Wesley College Bristol (section 2.2). 3. Changes in membership of the Methodist Heritage Committee.
Background Context	Heritage Committee Development Strategy 2014 –2019 presented in MC/14/40 item 3
Consultations	Methodist museum curators/managers, Methodist Heritage Officer, Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives, Chair of the Archives and Records Advisory Group

Summary of Impact

Financial	Confirmed – 2015/16 Heritage central services budget includes membership of the National Conservation Service and collaborative storage costs
Legal including impact on other jurisdictions	New SOs in development with Law and Polity Committee in relation to implementing the Connexional Collections Management Policy.

Methodist Heritage Committee Annual Report

Achievements of the first year of 'Heritage 2.0' the Committee's 5-year Development Strategy 2014–2019

1. Background

1.1. The Heritage Committee's 'Heritage 2.0' 5-year Development Strategy was agreed by the Methodist Council in April 2014 and implemented from October 2014. It builds on the work of the 2011–2014 Strategy of the Heritage Committee, developing further the key concept of Methodist heritage as a tool for mission.

1.2. Strategic outcomes

1.2.1. Reflecting its dual tasks of the preservation of Methodism's heritage, and its use for mission, the Heritage Committee's current strategy has a particular focus on the local church and is structured to deliver three outcomes:

Improved conservation
Transforming discipleship
Living a generous life

1.3. Focus areas

1.3.1. 'Heritage 2.0' builds on the Committee's successes and focus areas to date, but seeks greater integration and local ownership of them – the effect of connexionalism on strategic thinking. Thus it seeks to deliver the three outcomes across three areas of work (the previous strategy had these further disaggregated into six):

Heritage places
Collections
Communication & promotion

The choice of 'Mission and Heritage' as the theme for the President and Vice-President 2015–2016 has been warmly welcomed by the Committee.

2. First year achievements

2.1. Heritage Places

2.1.1. Since September 2014 the four key heritage sites have received annual funding from the Connexional Priority Fund. A Service Level Agreement with the Connexional Grants Committee defines what is meant by mission both universally across the sites and in each local setting. The trustees will submit annual monitoring reports. The first report for 2014–2015 has been presented by each site's manager and reflects on their particular contribution to facilitating mission at their site.

2.1.2. It is noted that there is no longer a Heritage Stream of the Connexional Grants Committee. The Heritage and Grants officers and Committees are continuing to explore ways of resourcing the grant streams to consider applications for 'Heritage and Mission' grants that

may encompass display (including digital content), outreach events and property development elements, for example.

- 2.1.3.** An exciting project is underway which brings together Methodist Women in Britain (MWiB) and **Epworth Old Rectory**. MWiB is currently collating material on the history of the Methodist Women's movement, which will result in an exhibition at Epworth Old Rectory in the kitchen where Susanna Wesley brought up her children. The development of this project was showcased at the European Historical Conference in Ruse, Bulgaria in September 2015. The particular benefit for the Old Rectory is the broader community with which this project engages them. A pilot exhibition will open in spring 2016, with a view to a major funding bid to renovate another section of the Old Rectory and create a more permanent display space for MWiB and its predecessor bodies.
- 2.1.4.** In February 2015 the **New Room, Bristol** was awarded a grant of £2.6 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Now, the grant from the HLF, alongside a grant of £1.4 million from the Bristol Methodist District, will enable the trustees to create a new three-storey building in the Horsefair Courtyard and update the existing facilities. The ground floor of the new building will feature a shop and a café for visitors. On levels 2 and 3 there will be a large multi-media lecture and education room for up to 60 people, an extensive resource library on Methodist history, an archives room and offices. A lift will connect the floors and the existing museum will be completely redisplayed to reflect John Wesley's work in Bristol, in 18th century Britain, and around the world. The renovations should increase the museum display by 40%. The interior of the chapel will not be changed.
- 2.1.5.** **Wesley's Chapel** has received a grant of up to £98,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the final exhibition display case in the refurbished Museum of Methodism, City Road, London: 'World Parish'. Using as a catalyst the creation of a display about worldwide mission, this project will include collecting oral histories from the Chapel's church members from across the globe, as well as developing resources and delivering a programme of visits for schools.
- 2.1.6.** **Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum of Primitive Methodism** continues to offer a thriving schools programme with a 20% increase in numbers this year. This work has been enhanced by the presence of the Gospel Car in recent months. An exhibition on World War I with a focus on chaplaincy and conscientious objectors has been well received.
- 2.1.7.** The Methodist Heritage Officer has been involved in the series of Joint Property Strategy Group Roadshows, sharing a presentation, 'Partnership in Welcome' on opening for 'casual' visitors, with a representative of the United Reformed Church. Both are trustees of the Churches Visitor and Tourism Association. This is part of ongoing development of a closer working relationship with Property and with the Conservation Officer.
- 2.1.8.** The Committee has been updated throughout the year on a number of heritage as mission projects at historic chapels, and so-called 'smaller' heritage site developments. These include the purchase for community use, by a new local Trust on which the Methodist church is represented, of the chapel building in Tolpuddle, Dorset, where the Tolpuddle Martyrs actually worshipped. Also the Keelman's Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne, where John and Charles Wesley were the chaplains. This is welcomed as part of the greater emphasis on localisation in the current strategy. Following the adoption of District Resolution 57 at the 2015 Methodist Conference discussions have started on developing the heritage offer in the Cornwall District.

2.2. Collections

- 2.2.1. After much preparation and discussion, new Service Level Agreements have been signed with our two main archive depositories, the **John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester (JRLUM)** and the **SOAS Library (School of Oriental and African Studies) at the University of London**.
- 2.2.2. The Methodist Heritage Committee have become members of the National Conservation Service (NCS), the benefits of which include an allocation of expert conservation advice (face to face and by phone/email) and access to a collaborative storage scheme, provided to PD 5454:2012 standard by storage supplier Restore, at Upper Heyford: <http://www.ncs.org.uk/collaborativestorage.php>. The NCS Director, Chris Woods, is currently chair of the British Standards Institution's committee responsible for BS/PD5454 Guide for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Materials and BS4971 Repair & Allied Processes for the Conservation of Documents – see <http://www.ncs.org.uk/ourpeople.php>
- 2.2.3. A contract has been agreed with NCS and Restore on behalf of the Council for the interim storage of historical collections. The Heritage Committee intends this as a safe space for the appraisal of collections before their long-term deposit with our museums, archives or, with Council's agreement, alternative institutions in the wider Methodist community and beyond.
- 2.2.4. The Heritage Committee can nominate 'affiliates' who can then benefit from a portion of the conservation advice allocation and have access to the storage facility, **but any storage and access costs are borne by the affiliate**. The first beneficiary of this arrangement will be the trustees of the New Room, Bristol, who are seeking to care for their accredited collections off-site during the building works.
- 2.2.5. The cost of using storage at Upper Heyford is £76.01+VAT/m³ per annum (plus additional access and retrieval costs). However, and most importantly, this is not 'deep store' and this provider is working with more than 50 major museums, art galleries and organisational archives to house complex collection material on the understanding that it may need to be made accessible for reference, conservation or cataloguing.
- 2.2.6. Work has continued with the **relocation of the former Wesley College Bristol historic collections** as directed by the Council. More than 300 boxes of historic books and archive material have been deposited with JRLUM, including some items that may later be transferred to the facilities being built at the New Room, Bristol. This significant acquisition will be celebrated in October.
- 2.2.7. The artefacts are to be catalogued and a proposal of which artefacts should be deposited with which of our museums (or elsewhere) will be presented to the Council in due course for approval.
- 2.2.8. To link with the 200th anniversary of their founding, a new online community archive website has been set up focusing on Bible Christian ancestry: www.mybiblechristians.org.uk. Following the approval of the Historic Artefacts Collections Management Policy, the Committee is working with a representative of the Law and Polity Committee to bring necessary Standing Order changes to the Council with a view to presenting the proposed changes to the Methodist Conference in 2016.

2.2.9. Future works - Further items for the New Room, plus the historic artefacts and the modern records of Wesley College Bristol – a further 450 boxes – have been removed into Upper Heyford. A budget has been allocated in the 2015-2016 central services budget for Heritage for the Heritage Committee to arrange for the appraisal of the modern records according to our retention policies. Those records deemed appropriate for immediate and permanent preservation will be removed to JRLUM. Any sensitive records to be retained for a statutory period before destruction will be held at Upper Heyford, due to space constraints of Methodist Church House. In addition there will be continuing need to budget for such storage, access and conservation in general eg, in order to tackle work such as preserving the MMS collection currently in the basement strong room of Methodist Church House.

2.3. Communications and Promotion

2.3.1. In July 2015, 75 contributors and delegates met at Cliff College for the second Methodist Heritage Conference, entitled 'Mission-shaped Heritage'. With support from the President and Vice President of the Conference, the programme combined lectures and workshops on best practice in heritage, collections management, and marketing ideas, as well as having an academic research stream. This was the first collaborative project with Cliff College.

2.3.2. A new, third edition of the *Methodist Heritage Handbook* was published in December 2014, again with increased content. The format of the *Handbook* and its method of compilation will be revised for the next edition (2016).

2.3.3. Early discussions have taken place on ways in which Methodist Insurance can support the development of 'Heritage 2.0', with particular reference to support for promotional materials.

3. Changes in Methodist Heritage Committee membership and Methodist Heritage staff

3.1. Methodist Heritage Committee

3.1.1. The Committee came into being in 2009, and therefore this year has seen the first significant changes in membership. For the four key sites, they are required to appoint a trustee representative to the Committee. For the New Room, Bristol, and Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum of Primitive Methodism, changes have already happened in the life cycle of the Committee due to the sites' own internal changes. (NB The New Room, Bristol, trustees have already appointed a new representative to serve from March 2016.) New representatives for Wesley's Chapel and Epworth Old Rectory will serve on the Committee from October 2015.

3.1.2. In addition, two other members of the Committee have served 6 years (finishing at the March 2015 meeting) and a third will finish after the October 2015 meeting. A thorough and open recruitment process has been followed to fill two of these vacancies. Details of current serving Committee members and nominations for new members have been submitted to the Council.

3.1.3. The third Committee vacancy has been filled by Alison Butler, who is the Liaison Officer for Historic Objects. She joins the Committee from October 2015 to lead on the extensive preparatory work carried out in 2013/4 under the Committee's first strategy, which resulted in the implementation of the Historic Artefacts Collections Management Policy and Guidelines. She will be helping Churches to care for, appreciate and use their historic objects to tell their story and share the love of God with others. She will provide guidance and support as Churches make often emotive decisions about the retention (or not) of accumulated artefacts in the event of Church amalgamations or closures.

3.1.4. Three other voluntary role vacancies, which serve the Committee but do not have places on the Committee itself, have been subject to a similar recruitment process. This has resulted in the appointment of James Strawson as our Publications Co-ordinator and Hannah Tweedie as Electronic Communications Co-ordinator developing our social media presence and email newsletter. We continue to seek additional archiving expertise to assist Philip Thornborow, Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives.

3.2. Staff restructuring

3.2.1. The staff restructuring within the Mission and Advocacy Cluster (summer 2015) has impacted on the work of the Heritage Committee. The new structure combines heritage with fundraising and marketing at a senior level, in the role of Director of Engagement. The role of Heritage Officer, which is recognised in SO 337(3), is likely to be a more junior role and consideration may need to be given to whether this restructure will require any changes to SO 337.

3.2.2. The Committee raised concerns about these changes with the Head of the Mission and Advocacy Cluster, not least because of the impact on the then Heritage Officer, Jo Hibbard, who faced her post being put 'at risk' and because it raised concerns about the future role of Heritage within the Connexional Team. But the Committee is delighted that Jo Hibbard has been appointed as the Director of Engagement and looks forward to working with her and the Head of the Mission and Advocacy Cluster as her role and that of the new Heritage Officer are developed.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

105/1. The Council receives the report.

105/2. The Council authorises the Committee to explore with the University of Manchester Library ways in which material already deposited with the University may be made available to other institutions of learning.