

WELSHPOOL METHODIST CHURCH
CELEBRATING COMPLETION OF DEVELOPMENT
March 2017



COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET

OUR CHURCH BUILDING – A BRIEF HISTORY

In August, 1769, John Wesley arrived in Welshpool, but was refused permission to preach by a Town Hall bailiff, so he simply passed through the town and preached in Newtown instead, which meant that the focus of Methodist growth in the area moved further away. However, nearby societies, such as Pentre Llifior and Trefnant Hall, helped to supply the Welshpool Methodists with both preachers and encouragement.

Soon, ministers were stationed in Welshpool, which became the centre of a new circuit. Despite difficulties and antagonism towards non conformists the society flourished, and culminated in the first Wesleyan chapel in the town being built in 1818, where Ballard's Garage now stands. Rapid growth prompted the expansion of the premises, the subsequent financial pressures being alleviated only when the Welsh speakers rejoined the congregation.

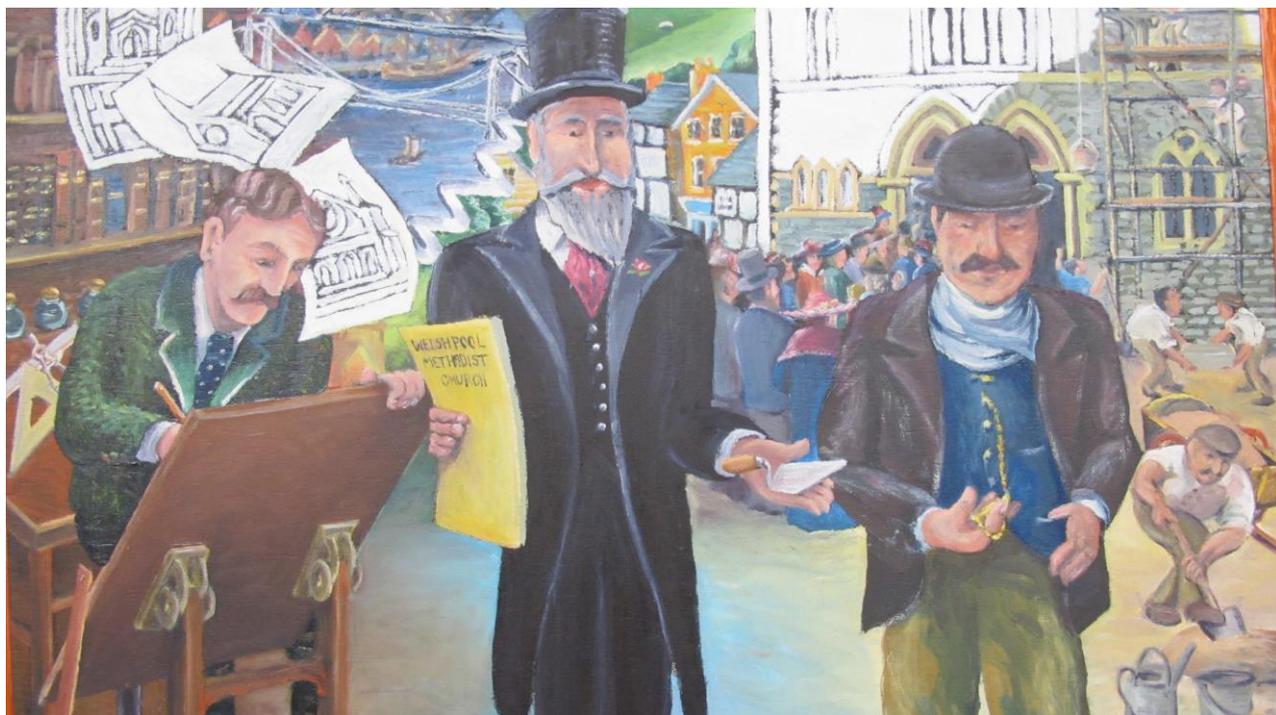
A major step forward took place in 1864 with the building of much larger premises prominently situated on the High Street, where worship continues to this day. Built on a plot of land purchased from Powis Estates for £470, the church was designed by the eminent Victorian architect George Bidlake, and cost £2,300. Thomas Hazelhurst, a notable benefactor to Methodist causes, laid the foundation stone and the church was officially opened on 2nd December. It seated 600 people, and soon Methodism became the leading denomination in the town, and, prompted by the growth of the congregation and the Sunday

School, the church became the centre of a new circuit.

Decline in the late 1890s led to the creation of a Severn Valley Mission circuit involving Newtown and Oswestry churches too. Further, World War One meant energies were devoted to the town's efforts to support soldiers fighting in France. The church played an important role in the work of the Welshpool Free Church Council, until that was replaced by the all-inclusive Welshpool Churches Together in 1948. In 1932 the union of three Methodist denominations saw the closure of the Primitive Chapel in Back Lane, their congregation uniting with this one. Since then this church has both flourished and contracted, and the decline in public worship in recent decades has posed fresh challenges.

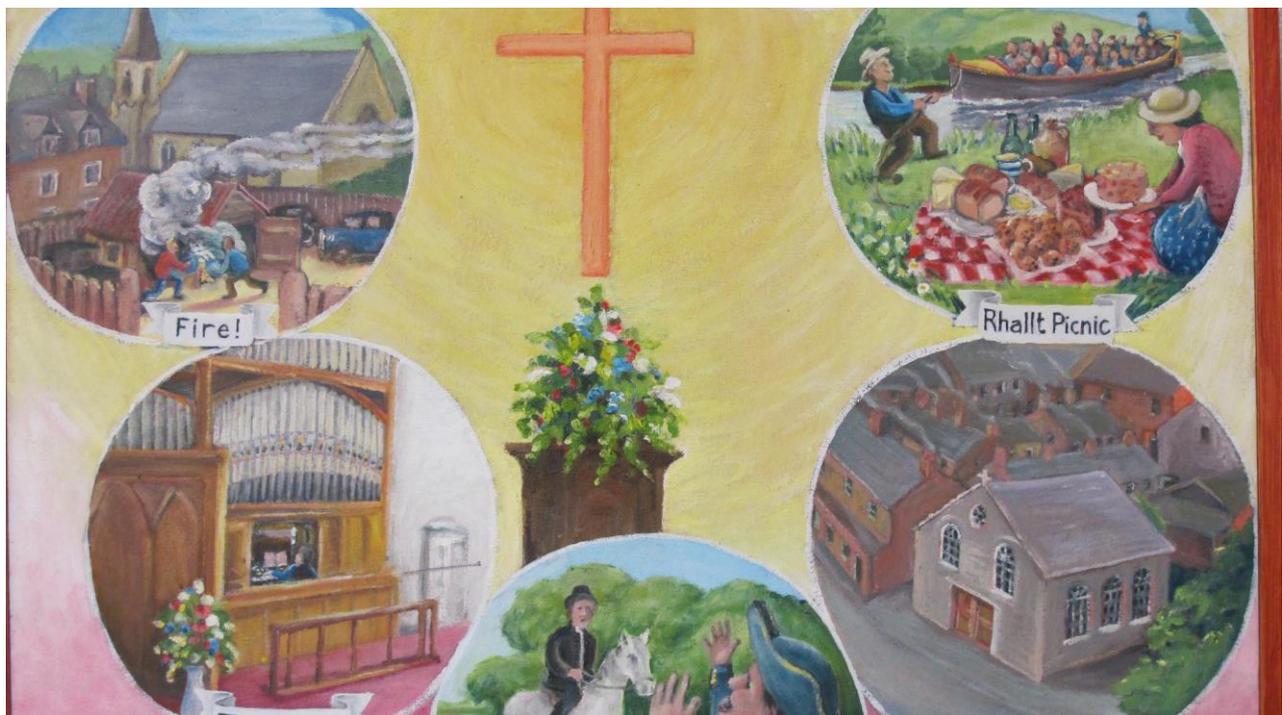
Few, if any, churches can escape the demands of premise deterioration, or the necessary alteration to meet new requirements or regulations. This church undertook significant works in 1897 (installation of organ), 1912 (schoolroom), 1929 (work to spire), 1970 (worship space, when the pews were removed and a false ceiling installed) and 1990 (rear premises). Looking ahead to celebrating its 150th Anniversary in 2014, the church launched its most recent re-development scheme in 2012 to further improve its premises, the completion of this work in February 2017 prompting today's Thanksgiving Service and Commemorative Booklet.

Richard Oke, a local artist, has produced two interpretive panels displaying the church's history.



Architect, Benefactor and Builder

These panels have been hung in the Foyer each side of main doors into the worship area.



Church History Snapshots

The Development Work, Phases 1, 2 and 3

The Development Group, which was commissioned by Church Council to undertake the planning and overseeing of the works, first met in February 2013, and employed Hughes architects to draw up plans. Work began in 2014 and was carried out by local builders Davies, Roberts and Bowen. Whilst essential maintenance was included in the scheme, the main focus was on providing additional meeting space, improving access, ensuring comfort for all users, and reducing our 'carbon footprint'. While some loss of historical features was inevitable, a record of some of the past events has been retained in the Richard Oke panels.

Phase 1

This concentrated on turning the little used first floor space into a smart meeting room, The Gallery, suitable for a variety of purposes – worship, meetings, community group activities, exercise classes, small conferences etc. It is equipped with its own kitchenette and store room, and has new carpet, chairs, window blinds and LED lighting. Importantly, the installation of a lift provides access for all, and a loop system helps the hard-of-hearing. An additional feature of Phase 1 was the refurbishment of the foyer kitchenette with new units and water boiler.

Phase 2

Phase 2 concentrated on access to the premises from outside. The parking area in Chelsea Lane was re-surfaced and a designated bay and drop-off point for disabled visitors has been provided. Access to the rear

of the premises has been greatly improved with a ramp from the parking area and lowered door step into the building. A spin-off is a new walled flower bed!

Access from the High Street has been improved by the provision of new hand-rails, and the frontage has been enhanced with a new side gate, notice boards, and flower troughs.

Phase 3

Here the emphasis has been on the worship space and rear rooms. The worship area has new LED lighting, carpet and chairs, and the sanctuary area has been opened up by removing the pulpit (redesigned to create a preaching desk – also used as a flower stand - and communion table), and by making the communion rails moveable. The sanctuary arch has been given a new cross and colour scheme, and a new audio and projection system has been installed. The rear premise rooms have been enhanced with an enlarged fully equipped kitchen, refurbished toilets, and LED lighting throughout. The Meeting Room has a new vestibule entrance, the window has been replaced and new blinds fitted, the floor has been refurbished, and a loop system has been provided. Finally, in order to present a 'we are open for business' aspect to the public, a new set of glazed front doors has been installed, with the colour and feature hinges retained, a requirement of Conservation Officers.

Craft Group meeting in the new Gallery



New Ramped Access

Extended and re-fitted Kitchen



Volunteers at work

Catering for 1940s Lunch



Saturday Friendship Lunch

New-look Sanctuary, Harvest Festival, October 2016



Morning Worship, February 2017

DEVELOPMENT FUND EXPENDITURE

Planning and Reports

Architects Fees	£10,510.10	
Energy Audit	£2,487.60	
Planning – Powys County Council	£166.00	
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		£13,163.70

Construction

Building Work and Doors	£118,925.67	
Additional Electrical Work	£2,396.63	
Additional Plumbing	£280.00	
Schoolroom Floor Treatment	£1,577.00	
Schoolroom Replacement Window	£1,968.00	
Gas Disconnect	£57.00	
Miscellaneous Materials ('DIY' jobs)	£885.72	
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		£126,070.02

Fixtures and Fittings

Kitchen Cupboards and Worktops	£15,790.02	
Kitchen Equipment	£3,697.06	
Platform Lift	£17,784.00	
AV System and Induction Loop	£10,447.08	
Kitchen and Kitchenette Shutters	£1,735.20	
Additional Heaters for Church	£1,716.00	
Glass Fish Symbol (Gallery)	£120.00	
Whiteboard (Gallery)	£46.00	
Wrought Iron Handrails and Gate	£2,814.00	
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		£54,149.36

Furniture and Furnishings

Chairs & Tables, Church & Gallery	£8,922.66	
AV Desk	£1,428.00	
Book Trolley	£385.00	
Communion Table & Preaching Desk	£1,097.37	
Carpets and Flooring	£7,403.04	
Window Blinds	£683.00	
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		£19,236.07

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

£213,302.15

DEVELOPMENT FUND INCOME

Reserves

Transfers from Futures Fund	£17,256.91	
Transfers from Accessibility Fund	£3,785.96	
Transfers from Bequest Fund	£11,000.00	
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		£32,042.87

Fundraising

Donations – General	£3,847.30	
Donations – Gift Days	£14,101.00	
Donations – In Memory	£4,108.00	
Events and Activities	£15,303.04	
Interest	£547.20	
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		£37,906.54

Grants

Methodist Connexion (Property)	£30,000.00	
Wales Synod	£19,302.00	
Circuit	£38,413.00	
Powys County Council	£26,653.00	
Lottery Awards For Wales	£10,000.00	
Grant-making Trusts & Organisations, National and Local (12 donations)	£23,150.00	
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		£147,518.00

TOTAL INCOME

£217,467.41

The project came in on budget, and the remaining income of £4,165 has been transferred to a new Futures Fund to be used for any further works in future years.

Last of many Fundraising Events, November 2016



Task completed! Development Group celebrates!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the support we have received from the church family and the wider community, without whose encouragement and financial input these works would not have been possible.

We also wish to acknowledge the responses to applications for grants, amounting to £147,518, from:

Welshpool Bro Hafren Circuit	£38,413
Methodist Connexion	30,000
Powys County Council	26,653
Wales Synod	19,302
Garfield Weston Trust	10,000
Lottery Awards for Wales Small Grants	10,000
Pantymfeddwyn Foundation	4,000
Laing Family Trusts	2,000
Vronhaul (Llandinam) Charity	2,000
Methodist Insurance	1,800
Allchurches Trust	1,400

with smaller grants from Burgess Lands (£500), Welshpool Air Show (£500), Harry Tuffin (£400), Masons Lodge (£250), Welshpool Town Council (£150) and the Bodfach Trust (£100).

We also acknowledge the generous donations given in memory of loved ones, which have been used as follows:

AV Desk in Memory of John Pritchard	£1,428
Loop System in Memory of Arthur Painter	£1,000
Kitchen Bain Marie in Memory of Doreen Trow	£740

with donations in Memory of Joan Roe, Betty Puleston Jones, Peter Montague, Violet Ellis and Mary Gordon having been used towards work to create the Preaching Desk/Flower Stand and Communion Table (£940).

“OUR CHURCH IS NOT JUST FOR SUNDAYS”

Ours is a very community-focussed church, so as well as using our premises for our own church activities, we welcome different user groups and organisations over our threshold every day of the week. Current regular user groups include:

Choral Society	Music Club	Art Group
Yoga Groups	Sugarcraft Guild	Line Dancing
Women’s Institute	Flower Club	Hard of Hearing
Field Society	MWT Bird Group	Valley Arts and Crafts
Powys Carers	Powys People First	U3A and WEA Groups
Baby Group	Visually Impaired	Powys Dance

Our church-organised activities also offer a warm welcome to members of the community:

Monday Coffee Mornings	Saturday Lunches
Monday Playgroup	Friday Fellowship
Jubilate Singers	Bible Fellowship
Reading the Bible Together	Gallery Group
Craft Group	Walking with Friends
Day Trips	Concerts, quizzes etc

Coming events:

Saturday 1 st April	Spring Fair, Coffee and Lunches
Sunday 9 th April	Jubilate sing “Torn Curtain”, 6pm
Monday 10 th April	To Birmingham for Organ Recital
Saturday 20 th May	Plant Sale, Coffee and Lunches
Saturday 1 st July	Concert: “Voices in Harmony”
Saturday 29 th July	To Lichfield & National Arboretum

... but our Church is ALSO for Sundays!

Holy Communion on 3rd Sunday at 9am followed by breakfast.

Morning Worship weekly at 10.45am (HC usually 2nd Sunday) followed by tea and chat, and on the 1st Sunday by a Bring and Share Lunch.

Evening Worship at 6pm (Compline 1st Sunday)

(Afternoon Tea Service at 4pm during winter months)