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**THE
CONGREGATIONAL
HISTORY
SOCIETY
MAGAZINE**

Volume 8 No 6 Autumn 2018

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EDITORIAL

This issue of our *CHS Magazine* contains a previously unnoticed letter from Philip Doddridge, as Grayson Ditchfield explains. Professor Ditchfield is now retired from his post in the history department of University of Kent, Canterbury. We welcome him and our other contributors to our magazine—three of whom are new to our pages. The articles include two papers delivered at the joint study day of the Friends of the Congregational Library and the Friends of Dr Williams’s Library in Dorchester on 2 June 2018. This event, arranged by Revd Dr John Travell, was well supported and we are especially pleased to have these papers, from David Cuckson and Peter Mann, which relate directly to the nonconformists of Dorchester. In addition we have here a timely paper from Michelle Thomasson on one of the Congregational women who campaigned for female suffrage in the early 20th century. Her paper commemorates the extension of the votes to women over the age of 30 years which occurred a century ago in 1918 (women over 21 in the United Kingdom gained the vote in 1928).

This magazine therefore presents our readers with articles ranging from the 17th to the 20th centuries. We hope that you enjoy reading them and should be pleased to learn of your responses.

NEWS AND VIEWS

We are reminded by friends who have recently visited Germany that the Thirty Years War which devastated central Europe broke out three hundred years ago in 1618. As a result several galleries and museums are hosting exhibitions about this conflict which involved Spain, France, the Low Countries, Sweden and the various peoples of the Holy Roman Empire. England played a marginal role but was not entirely removed from the fighting, given that James I’s daughter, Elizabeth, was the ‘winter queen of Bohemia’ and that her sons, Princes Rupert and Maurice, served Charles I with distinction. Indeed, officers and soldiers on the various sides in the Civil Wars in this country from 1642 onwards learned their trade on the continent.

The Thirty Years War is being commemorated at **the Austrian Military Museum** in Vienna. As their literature explains, ‘it has been 350 years now since the end of fights between Protestant and Catholic powers, between emperor and empire. Only the memories have remained. Armours, muskets, pikes and soldiers’ clothing constitute the only military aspects of the time. The

big battle paintings by Peeter Snayers, however, not only offer military details but also a multitude of historico-cultural insights into this era.’

The German Historical Museum in Berlin has a display of engravings from the Thirty Years War. As the website tells us, ‘impressive graphic images reflect the events and social mood of the era. In addition to extremely popular print portraits and satirical leaflets at the time, a series of pictures depict the effects of the war on the ordinary population.’

A joint exhibition by museums **Bad Dübén, Delitzsch, Eilenburg, Taucha** and **Torgau** in northern Saxony is supported by the Krostitzer Brewery and runs until October. The managing director is aware of the close link between the history of central Germany and that of his brewery. The Swedish King Gustavus Adolfus was a guest in Krostitz in 1631. The thirsty monarch is said to have been given a beer and in gratitude presented the brewmaster with a ruby-studded gold ring. No wonder the trademark of Krostitzer beer became a Swedish head.

Revd Dr Colin Morris

We note with sadness the death of the eminent Methodist minister Colin Morris (1929–2018) who connects to Congregationalism through his admiration for the ministry of Leslie Weatherhead, the influential minister of The City Temple, who was also a Methodist. He attended the launch of John Travell’s biography of Weatherhead some years ago. Morris was also an admirer of the writings of Daniel Jenkins, the theologian and former minister of the King’s Weigh House and later of Regent Square United Reformed Church. Perhaps here is a further link, given that in 1969 Morris became minister of Wesley’s Chapel, City Road, and few dissenting chapels exist in central London, leading their ministers to form a bond.

CF Archives

The group collecting together the archives of the Congregational Federation are still hard at work. Four members of the group are hoping to check what records may survive in Nottingham before the budget for the whole enterprise will be determined.

Archives and records are important assets for any organisation, and good record keeping is an increasingly important part of running a charity, community group and/or a church. The records of voluntary organisations—local and national—are and must remain of particular interest to historians.

Dr Williams’s Library

On the advice of structural engineers Dr Williams’s Library is closing to readers

from October 2018 for some eighteen months or so. This closure will affect its neighbour and tenant, **the Congregational Library**, also. Some essential building repairs will be carried out to make the libraries safe for readers, staff members, books and manuscripts. Those who wish to know more should contact the library in the new year.

CORRESPONDENCE

In response to Roger Ottewill's letter about the role of women in Congregational churches in the c19th, in the previous edition of the *CHS Magazine*, Peter Flower has written:

'My comment that women in Congregational churches had enjoyed full voting rights in church decisions for a hundred years, before the parliamentary franchise was given them in 1928, in my article about the first minister of the Vineyard Congregational Church, Richmond was based on wider research made into the role of women in decision making, as well as serving as deacons and then ministers. My research was published in the *Journal of the Richmond Local History Society* Number 24, in 2003, under the title 'Women in the Vineyard Church'.

It is available on line at <https://www.richmondhistory.org.uk>.

While I did not draw on the material at Gosport of which Roger wrote, I did draw on a number of sources—Sarah Ellis (1812–72) wife of Revd William Ellis (a Congregational minister with the London Missionary Society), John Angell James, the distinguished minister at Carrs Lane Congregational Church, Birmingham, Benjamin Parsons, minister of Ebley Chapel near Stroud, as well as the details of what occurred at Richmond throughout the c19th; I also looked at other churches—Brotherton Congregational Church in Yorkshire, and the Kings Weigh House, in central London, for example. I was greatly assisted by the late Dr Elaine Kaye whose work 'Daughters of Dissent (1998) was a great help. I believe that Janet Wootton, and other female scholars especially, may have worked with her and been helped by her with their own research into women's ministry within the Free Churches.'

Peter Flower has also written in response to the item in our last issue in the News and Views section about the Van Gogh in London Exhibition next year at the Tate Britain gallery in London,

'I also hope that mention is made of Vincent's Christian faith and his involvement in Turnham Green Congregational Church under his then mentor Revd Slade-Jones. Slade-Jones was the Headmaster of the school in Isleworth where Vincent taught as well as the minister of that church. Because of the possibility that Vincent preached at the Vineyard Congregational Church,

Richmond, I wrote an article on ‘The Preacher with Red Hair’ in the *Journal of the Richmond Local History Society* No 25 in 2004. The article dealt with the six months in which he lived in Isleworth in 1876. This article was revised and re-published on-line with a section dealing with both his Christian faith and his mental illnesses. It can be found at:

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

Martin Bailey, the art historian and author of *Young Vincent* and other books on Van Gogh, prompted me to write the original article and provided general guidance for my research. He read the original as well as the revised article prior to publication. As he is a co-curator of the Exhibition, I hope that something of Vincent’s journey of faith in London will be included. Do make a note in your diary to visit the Exhibition; 7th March to 11th August 2019.

SECRETARY’S NOTES: CHRISTIAN UNITY THROUGH MUSIC—‘THE GATHERED CHURCH’ BY J R GRIFFIN

Among my father’s papers I recently deposited in the Congregational Library, Gordon Square, London, is the score of a remarkable cantata for solo tenor, choir and organ, by J R Griffin, the organist and choirmaster at Clarendon Park Congregational Church in the 1960s when my father (R W Cleaves¹) was minister of the church. Its first performance, and I fear its only performance, was on Saturday, 21st October 1967, when an augmented church choir was joined by Claude Gamble, a local soloist who sang the tenor part, and accompanied on the organ by John Cooper of Leamington Spa.

A keen member, as he had always been, of the local ecumenical ministers’ fraternal, and very involved with his church in the local Knighton Council of Churches, my father was frustrated with the direction of travel of the ecumenical movement at the time. He felt prompted to celebrate the unity of the church in an act of worship that would bring together Clarendon Park’s rich tradition of church music and his love of the Bible in the Authorised Version. He turned to Jack Griffin, the church organist who caught the vision and composed the music for the cantata.

Jack Griffin had studied the organ under a renowned local teacher, Ben Burrows. Working in administrative jobs in Leicester and latterly as a teacher in a local school, his first love was music. He had studied for a degree in music in his own time and went on to become a Fellow of the Royal College of

1 For R W Cleaves see C Binfield and J Taylor (eds) *Who They Were in the Reformed Churches of England and Wales 1901–2000* (2007)

Organists and a Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music. Under his leadership the choir at Clarendon Park had grown from strength to strength and regularly sang an introit and an anthem in the morning and evening services.

The first part of the cantata was an evocation of the great theme of ‘the People of God’ and brought together texts from the Psalms and the Prophets. Part two is a celebration of Jesus Christ, the Church he gathered, and continues to gather, and the oneness he sought for his church. Writing in the notes prepared for that first performance, my father summed up the vision of Christian unity at the heart of the cantata: ‘The prayer of Jesus was that His people should be as one people, whose unity was equated with the unity of Himself and God. The assurance he gave was that where His people gathered there he gathered with them.’

The cantata was called ‘The Gathered Church’ and had as its subtitle ‘Christian Unity through Music’. Set in the context of an act of worship with hymns and readings around the title’s theme its purpose was to challenge all who had gathered together to hear the cantata to make their own such a vision of Christian Unity. As my father wrote in those notes, ‘Fears are dispelled and promise is fulfilled in the coming of Him who is called JESUS. He is exalted, and all shall confess “Jesus Christ is Lord”. It is the basic creed of all Christians. He gathers them as a shepherd gathers his sheep. In Him they are one. He commissions His disciples to be his agents in all the world, engaged in His work of “gathering”. But, sing the joy, He both sends them and goes with them always.’

What a vision to share! Who knows, now that the cantata has been deposited in the Congregational Library someone, someday, may come across it and re-discover the joy of its music and capture again its vision!

Richard Cleaves

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF PHILIP DODDRIDGE

The correspondence of Philip Doddridge (1702–51), one of the most influential Dissenting ministers of the eighteenth century, has been expertly identified and arranged in calendar format by Geoffrey F. Nuttall.¹ In view of Doddridge's importance within and beyond the Dissenting communities of his time it is not surprising that so many letters to and from him survive, although often in unexpected locations. In 2001 Dr Nuttall published his 'Supplement' and noted that more than fifty additional letters had come to light since the publication of the *Calendar* twenty-two years earlier.² The process of discovery will almost certainly continue. This article adds one more letter to the existing corpus, and it is unlikely to be the last to be found.

Addressed to Frances Seymour (1699–1754), duchess of Somerset, the letter provides further evidence of the connection between evangelical religion and prominent members of the British aristocracy which has been observed by several historians.³ The daughter of the Hon. Henry Thynne and the granddaughter of Viscount Weymouth, she married in 1715 Algernon Seymour (1684–1750), 7th duke of Somerset, styled at that time earl of Hertford, his courtesy title during the period when his father, Charles Seymour (1662–1748) was 6th duke of Somerset. As Lady Hertford she had served as lady of the bedchamber to Caroline, Princess of Wales and from 1727 to 1737 the Queen Consort of George II. Queen Caroline's death in 1737 ended Lady Hertford's career as a courtier and her last years were devoted to a life of rustic piety on her estate of Percy Lodge at Iver, Buckinghamshire. Her retreat became more pronounced when Algernon Seymour, who succeeded his father as 7th duke of Somerset in December 1748, died little more than a year thereafter. He was the 'late' duke of Somerset to whom Doddridge referred in this letter. The duchess survived him for a little over four years. She described the routine of prayer, healthy exercise, and the study of improving literature which she established at

1 G F Nuttall, *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge (1702–1751)* (London, 1979). I am grateful to the Rev. Dr Alan Argent for encouraging me to write this article and to Dr David Wykes for helpful advice during its preparation.

2 G F Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge: Additional Letters. A Supplement to the Calendar of Philip Doddridge* (London: Dr Williams's Library Occasional Paper No. 15, 2001), p. 4.

3 For example, I Rivers, 'Doddridge, Philip (1702–1751)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XVI, 405–12.

Percy Lodge in several charming letters to Lady Luxborough, in which she drew a sharp contrast between her earlier and later life, writing on 31 December 1751:

This to the fine World would sound a melancholy monastic Life; and I cannot be supposed to have chosen it from my Ignorance of the Splendour and Gaiety of a Court, but from a thorough Experience that they can give no solid Happiness; and I find myself more calmly pleased in my present Way of Living, and more truly contented, than I ever was in the Bloom and Pomp of my Youth.⁴

One member (and beneficiary) of this community was Theophilus Lindsey, whose associations within the Church of England at that time were with its Evangelical elements. He had been chaplain to the 7th duke of Somerset, and his nineteen surviving letters to the duchess during the early 1750s reinforce the impression of her as a patroness and trusted confidante.⁵ Lindsey's connection with the duchess's family continued after her death on 7 July 1754. Her daughter Elizabeth (1716–76) married Hugh Smithson (1714–86), who subsequently took the name Percy, and from 1750 was earl of Northumberland.⁶ The earl and Countess of Northumberland were patrons of Lindsey's early career; both were sympathisers with evangelical religion, and both were subscribers to Doddridge's *Family Expositor*.⁷

The duchess's interests were literary as well as religious. A published poet in her own right, she had helped to sponsor the careers of other poets, notably Elizabeth Rowe, William Shenstone and James Thomson, who at various times displayed their gratitude to her by tributes and dedications. It appears, however, that she and Doddridge did not become correspondents until late in their lives. It is unlikely that they ever met in person. Nonetheless in September 1750 Selina, countess of Huntingdon, could inform Doddridge that the duchess would be pleased to read any of his sermons and would regard a letter from him as an honour.⁸ Later in the same month the duchess, extolling *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, told its author 'I never was so deeply affected with any thing I ever met with as with that book'; she added that her late husband, too, had expressed admiration for his published work.⁹ Probably Doddridge's letter of 15 February 1751 was a reply to this letter. Perhaps because of the circumstances of Doddridge's death in Portugal it seems that his letter did not reach the duchess

4 *Select Letters between the late Duchess of Somerset, Lady Luxborough, ... and others* ed T Hull (2 vols, 1778), I, 167.

5 They may be found in *The letters of Theophilus Lindsey (1723–1808)* ed G M Ditchfield (2 vols, Woodbridge, 2007–2012), Vol. 1, Letters 3–21.

6 He was lord lieutenant of Ireland from 1763 to 1765 and created duke of Northumberland in 1766.

7 P Doddridge *The Family Expositor* Vol. V (1756) (unpaginated list of subscribers).

8 Nuttall *Calendar* 339.

9 Nuttall *Calendar* 340, duchess of Somerset to Doddridge, 15 September 1750.

until some eighteenth months after it was written. For on 11 September 1752 she wrote from Percy Lodge to James Wilkins, vicar of Hurstbourne Tarrant, Hampshire:

It was a surprize to me last Week to receive a Letter from D^F Doddridge which I found was owing to some Advantageous Impressions which Lady Huntingdon's partiality has made her give him of me, but which cannot flatter me as I am too Conscious I do not deserve them.¹⁰

Had Doddridge lived beyond 1751, a more extensive correspondence between them would probably have ensued, characterised, no doubt, on his side by the deference evident in the letter reproduced here. Indeed, on 14 April 1751, in her second and last surviving letter to Doddridge, the duchess expressed an intention to become a subscriber to Doddridge's *Family Expositor*, a promise which she duly fulfilled.¹¹

By February 1751 Doddridge's health was in serious decline after more than twenty years of service as minister to the Castle Hill congregation at Northampton and as head of one of the best-known of the Dissenting academies. In addition to contracting a cold while visiting St Albans to preach the funeral sermon of Samuel Clark, he was probably suffering from overwork and, at the end of his life, from consumption. He preached what amounted to his 'farewell' sermon at Northampton on 14 July 1751. After a sojourn at Bristol to take the waters which did not have the hoped-for therapeutic effect, he travelled to Falmouth, from where he embarked for Lisbon in search of warmth and recuperation, and supported by financial subventions from his friends. Arriving there on 13 October he was well-received by the English community in the city but died two weeks later.¹² In 1754 the playwright, novelist, pamphleteer and magistrate Henry Fielding followed in Doddridge's footsteps to Lisbon, sadly with the same outcome.

G M Ditchfield, University of Kent

¹⁰ Archives of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle, DNP: MS 31, f. 35 (BL microfilm 295). It is more likely that Doddridge's letter was actually despatched some considerable time after it was written than that Doddridge wrote another (non-surviving) letter to the duchess subsequent to 15 February 1751.

¹¹ Nuttall *Calendar* 352; Doddridge *Family Expositor* IV (1753) xv (list of subscribers).

¹² There is a detailed account of his last weeks by his faithful memoirist and friend Job Orton in Doddridge *Works* (10 vols, Leeds, 1802-05), I, 183-201.

Appendix:
Philip Doddridge to Frances, duchess
of Somerset, 15 February 1751

The manuscript of this letter may be found in the Archives of the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle, DNP: MS 30, ff. 156–157; there is a microfilm copy in the British Library, BL Microfilm 294. We are grateful to the Duke of Northumberland's Archives, and especially to the Archivist, Christopher Hunwick, for permission to publish the text of the letter and the quotation from the Duchess of Somerset's letter of 11 September 1752.

The change of calendar by Act of Parliament in 1752 brought dating in Britain into line with that in Western Europe. All dates here are given in the New Style, with the year beginning on 1 January.

Madam,

Northampton Feb. 15. 1751

When I was honoured with that very condescending & obliging Letter from your Grace, which I had the Joy to receive so many Months ago, had I followed the warmest Impulses of my own Heart, I should have replied but according to my poor Manner, by the Return of the Post, but I durst not allow my Self to appear pressing in a Correspondence with one, in all Respects, so very much my Superior. I determined therefore not to trouble your Grace again, till I could inform you of the Publication of the Proposals for printing my Exposition on the Epistles, which indeed I expected would have been offered to the World long ago. Various Accidents deferred them from Time to Time, so that it was but last Saturday that I received them from London, & it is in Obedience to your Graces Command, that I now inclose a Copy of them.¹³ The name of the Dutchess [*sic*] of Somerset will be esteemed a great Honour to the little List which I expect to be able to prefix to this Part of the Work. I speak of it Madam as a little List, because my Expectations as to the Number of Subscribers are very low, when I consider the necessary Price of so large a Book, the frugality of the Age in affairs of this Nature, & the Station & Circumstances of Life in which the Author is fixed.¹⁴ But I hope I can most truly say, for my Soul frequently says it to Him who knows its most secret Language, that my great View in the

¹³ Doddridge referred here to the 'proposals' for volumes IV, V and VI of the *Family Expositor*, which were published in 1751. Volume IV covered the epistle to the Romans and the two epistles to the Corinthians; volumes V and VI covered the remaining epistles.

¹⁴ The title pages of these volumes do not state the price. However, according to the *Gentleman's Magazine* XXIII (1753) appendix p. 60, the price of volume IV was thirteen shillings. The total number of subscribers to the six volumes of the *Family Expositor* was approximately 2,800; Rivers 'Doddridge' 410–11.

Publication is to Testify my Love to those divine Oracles, which are the great Foundations of all my Hope & my endeavour to assist well disposed Minds in understanding them & in drawing vital Christianity pure & genuine from the Fountain Head. And permit me most faithfully to assure your Grace, that it greatly animates & encourages me in the prosecution of so laborious a work, to be so seasonably informed of the Approbation with which you honour that & my other Writings, & of the Regard which so illustrious & excellent a Person as the late Duke of Somerset was pleased to bestow upon them.¹⁵ When I think of the Decisions of Providence, with Relation to him, & that most amiable Branch of our Young Nobility Lord Beauchamp, methinks I need all the Consolation which the thought of their anticipated Happiness can give, to comfort me under the Loss which their Country has sustained by their Removal, tho the Sorrow of a Heart like that of your Graces were to be put quite out of the Question.¹⁶ What I think of that Heart, especially after the Glimpse you have condescended to give me of it I dare not say, & while I am addressing your Grace I hardly dare to pause on the thought, lest something should escape from the Fulness of my own. But I have such a Conception of it, & such an Impression too, that your Grace may be assured of this, that while we both continue in this State of Warfare, there is not & will not be a Season in which I bow my Knee in solemn Intercession, for those whom I esteem the most invaluable Friends upon Earth in which I do not recommend you to the Divine Presence & Support, & humbly supplicate for you Madam, & those dearest to You, the best of those Blessings by which the supreme Fountain of Felicity makes known his Goodness to the Children of Men, & to the dearest of his own Children. Nor can I easily express the Pleasure & Joy of Heart which it gives me to hear the distinguished Virtues of the Earl of Northumberland celebrated as I do where ever I hear his Name mentioned, when I consider them as bearing so large a Stock of Blessings in them. To the Countess & to your Grace I know not how sufficiently to thank you for the Testimony, which from so intimate a knowledge you bear to him as one of the worthiest of Men, whose kindness to your self falls not short of that of the best of Sons, whose Loss he repairs to the utmost of his Power by every mark of Duty & Affection.¹⁷ I could wish that your Grace exactly knew from how great a Burthen that Clause of your Letter has eased my Mind. That exquisite sensibility of Temper which, merely from what I have seen of

15 Algernon Seymour (1684–1750) 7th duke of Somerset, who died on 7 February 1750.

16 George Seymour, styled Viscount Beauchamp, the only son of Algernon, 7th duke of Somerset and Frances, duchess of Somerset, died at Bologna on 11 September 1744, his nineteenth birthday.

17 This is a reference to Elizabeth, countess of Northumberland, daughter of the duchess of Somerset and her husband Hugh Smithson (later Percy), earl of Northumberland and the duchess's son-in-law.

your Manner of Writing, I should certainly know to be your Graces Character, demands from all that are honoured with any Degree of your Friendship a tender Sympathy in all your Joys & Sorrows, & indeed, Madam such is the Turn of my Natural Disposition, that it is not difficult for me to confirm that Demand.

I presumed to order my Bookseller to send to send [*sic*] to your Grace the Funeral Sermon I have just published, on the Death of my ever honoured Friend D^r Clark of S^t Albans, which your Experienced Candor encourages me to hope you will please to receive as the Tribute of most cordial Esteem & humble Gratitude, tho in it self so inconsiderable.¹⁸

I cannot easily express what I have suffered by the Illness of that excellent Countess of Huntingdon, whom I mention now with Pleasure as I can inform your Grace, if you have not received very late Tidings from her Ladyship that she is now on the recovering Hand, & I flatter myself that if she go to Bristol this Spring, as I believe she will (& the Apprehension is confirmed by a Letter of good News which I have received since I began to write this Sentence) I shall see her on her Way to London, which if I do, I shall rejoice the more as I may presume it will soon be attended with an Interview between your Grace & the Countess who are so worthy of each other that it would be difficult for me to name one who would deserve to be a third in ther [*sc. their*] Company. Her Virtues have been approved in roportion to her Trials & I think her Ladyship much more distinguished by them than by her Rank.¹⁹

In the Midst of all that unaffected Humility with which your Grace speaks of your self, I evidently perceive & I rejoice in the Evidence of it, that GOD hath brought you like Gold out on [*sic*] the Furnace of Affliction & melted you down in it, that you might wear his Image in fairer & brighter & more exact Lineaments. Go on Madam still to assert & adorn Religion, & may GOD multiply the Years of your Comfort & Usefulness! May he fill your Heart daily with the Consolations of his Divine Spirit, & strengthen your Faith in those Promises in Comparison of which, all that Earth calls great & sure, is minute as an Atom & brittle as a Bubble.

I bless GOD Madam I am recovering from an Illness, which tho not very

¹⁸ Samuel Clark (1684–1750) was minister to the Independent congregation at Dagnall Lane, St Albans, from 1712 until his death. Doddridge's sermon was entitled *Meditations on the Tears of Jesus over the Grave of Lazarus: a Funeral Sermon preached at St Albans, Dec. 16, 1750* (1751). Clark had been one of Doddridge's most important mentors; his son of the same name took responsibility for Doddridge's congregation and academy in 1751 after their minister and teacher left Northampton in search of improvement to his health. The sermon was sold by the publisher and bookseller James Waugh of Lombard Street, London, who was also the publisher of the *Family Expositor*.

¹⁹ For some examples of the 'trials' of the countess of Huntingdon, including persistent ill-health and injury from a coaching accident, see E Welch *Spiritual Pilgrim. A reassessment of the life of the Countess of Huntingdon* (Cardiff, 1995) 60–61.

severe has confined me much of late, & so hindered me in my usual & necessary work that almost every kind of Engagement has felt it, but it is with Pleasure I consecrate to a Lady whom I esteem so much above what I can express, some of the first Minutes I have been able since my Proposals came down to rescue [me] from the Chains of various kinds which are calling for my Attention. The length of my Letter might now seem to need an Apology almost as much as that of my former Silence but I trust in the abundance of your Graces Goodness to forgive both to him who is

With a Respect which thro Months of Silence he has perpetually carried in his Heart as inseparable from it

Madam

Your Graces most obliged and most obedient humble Servant

P. Doddridge

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WILLIAM BENN AND THE GREAT EJECTMENT

A window in the United Church, Dorchester, a building that was originally Dorchester Congregational Church, commemorates William Benn (1600–1681), regarded as the first minister of a separate Congregational Church in the town.

Immediately prior to coming to Dorchester he had been chaplain to Helena, Marchioness of Northampton, a former maid of honour to Elizabeth I but now living in secluded retirement with her family at Redlynch in Somerset. Benn would have been appointed for his puritan credentials rather than his social standing. He had attended Queen's College, Oxford as a servitor, a student performing duties for a social superior in exchange for assistance from college funds, and he left Oxford without a degree.¹ He arrived in Dorchester in 1629 to be rector of All Saints Church. A church building still stands on the site in High East Street, albeit a rebuilding and now disused as a church.

David Underdown in his book, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion—Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603–1660*, writes that

By the 1620s Dorchester was in the grip of an authoritarian Puritan regime which regulated the most minute details of its residents' lives with fanatical rigour Of all the towns in the western counties, Dorchester was the one in which Puritan reformation was most systematically imposed.²

This was largely due to the leadership and inspiration of the John White (1575–1648), who was rector of the other parish in Dorchester, namely Holy Trinity which also incorporated St Peter's. When the town was looking for a new rector for All Saints (the town had acquired the advowson from the Crown in 1617), White would have encouraged them to look for a minister who was in sympathy with his reformist path.³

In order to understand the character of the town of Dorchester at this time, we need to take into account its earlier history. When John White first arrived

¹ M Russell 'Rev William Benn (1600–1680)' <http://www.opcdorset.org/fordingtondorset/Files2/WilliamBenn1600.html> (Russell uses the old style date for Benn's death early in 1681). For Benn see also *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford 2004) [hereafter ODNB] and A G Matthews *Calamy Revised* (Oxford 1934) [hereafter CR].

² D Underdown *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603–1660* (Oxford 1985) 52.

³ For White see D Cuckson *Dorchester's New World—The Vision of John White, 'Founder of Massachusetts'* (YouCaxton, 2017) and ODNB.

in Dorchester in 1605 it was no different from any other market town of its size, and he encountered opposition from some of the leading burgesses, who objected to their private lives being questioned, and apathy from many other citizens who paid little heed to his calls for renewal. There was a lot of poverty and unemployment in the town, and disorder and drunkenness were frequently a source of trouble. But everything changed dramatically with a great fire which swept through the town in 1613, destroying many homes and businesses and forcing folk to rebuild their lives from scratch. The town then wanted leadership, which it found in John White, who inspired the leading citizens to take a radical look at its ordering, including its provisions for social welfare. A hospital was founded for the care and education of the poorer children, almshouses were established for the needy elderly (these charities continue today and one of the buildings, Nappers Mite, still stands in South Street); the provision of welfare payments for the poor and sick became a model of its kind, assisted by the establishment of a profitable business in a new municipal brewery (which was also a means of controlling the sale of alcohol). The policing of both criminal and immoral activities was also tightened up. The mass of the population accepted and even came to welcome these reforms.

White himself gained an enthusiastic following, to hear him preach and lecture and attend the weekly biblical expositions—he went through the Bible from beginning to end in the course of six years and then again from the beginning. This lasted through to the Civil War and up to his death in 1648, so Benn was very much under his shadow for this period. The parish of All Saints was the poorer part of the town and relied on financial support from the other richer parish and this was reflected in the relationship between the two rectors. Part of Benn's ministry involved helping with services in the other churches.

John White also took the lead in the town in drawing up a covenant, known as the 'Ten Vows', which can be seen as a formal expression of the puritan vision that motivated him and of a type which became common in this period.⁴ The first vow was to keep to the pure worship of God, without innovation or corruption; it is not expressly stated but presumably he means here worship free from both High Church or Roman Catholic elements and also the wilder excesses of the radical puritan sects. Then there is reading and meditating on the scriptures, the instruction of children and families in the fear of the Lord, penitence for failings, both receiving and giving 'brotherly admonition' (the latter to be carried out sensitively), sorting out any differences with other people speedily, avoiding 'ways of gain adjudged scandalous by the godly-wise', looking for opportunities to spread the gospel message both at home and abroad, caring for the afflicted by

4 F Rose-Troup, *John White, the Patriarch of Dorchester ... and the Founder of Massachusetts, 1575–1648* (1930) 418ff.

prayer and generous gifts (for example, food, clothing and practical help), and, finally, reviewing with one another how these vows are being fulfilled. All the people were called on to assent to this covenant, although John White was against excluding those who would not give their assent, in the hope that they would come round in time to such a commitment. William Benn followed a similar line to begin with but later came to regard those who had assented to the covenant as being a special group of faithful within the wider congregation.

Generally the town resisted the efforts by King Charles I and Archbishop Laud to undo many of the changes introduced by the puritans. When in 1633 Charles issued a declaration, known as the 'Book of Sports', which encouraged people to engage in recreation, such as dancing and archery, on Sundays as opposed to just during the week, White and Benn refused to read it out in church, as required. Local worthy, William Whiteway, in his diary records how the Bishop of Bristol took special steps to urge White, in particular, 'to read it before the Archbishop's Visitation, and upon his refusal, the Churchwardens in his absence procured Mr Holiday to read it on a Friday morning, 11 July, none being then at Church but he and the Clerk and the Churchwardens'. He goes on to comment that 'When Mr White heard of it he was exceeding angry', also that 'Mr Benn refused utterly to read it'.¹ However, no action seems to have been taken against White or Benn as a consequence of this. The town also stopped theatrical productions, and travelling companies were banned from performing and told to leave the town. This was done even when their leader was able to produce a patent from the Master of the Revels, which authorised them to perform anywhere in the country.

Neither White nor Benn stuck slavishly to the Book of Common Prayer in conducting worship. In Benn's case one disgruntled parishioner said that he objected to passages in Benn's sermons and complained that his prayers were too long, he did not speak loud enough when giving names at christenings, and did not read the Common Prayer, the Commandments and Epistles and Gospels.² Benn was generally thought to be somewhat long-winded. His son-in-law, Nathaniel Mather, gave a more favourable assessment of him as 'a man so shining in holiness, so excelling in clearness of Gospel Light, and so abounding in solid, spiritual, practical, scriptural notions, that I have not known many that have gone beyond him, few that have equalled him'.³ A particular part of his ministry related to the town's gaol, which was just down High East Street from All Saints Church at the corner with what is now Icen Way; Benn was appointed chaplain and is said later to have arranged for the erection of a chapel at the gaol.

1 W Whiteway *William Whiteway of Dorchester—His Diary 1618 to 1635* Dorset Record Society, vol 12 (1991) 146–7.

2 Rose-Troup *White* 245.

3 Rose-Troup *White* 257.

When the Civil War broke out between King and Parliament royalists noted the resolution and courage of Dorchester folk in support of Parliament. An outstanding propagandist for the Royalists, Mercurius Aulicus, had no doubt about where the blame for this lay: 'By letters from Dorchester we were this morning advertised, how miserably the people thereabouts have been cozened, by their Patriarch Master White and (his sub-levites) Thompson and Benn, that Mass was said openly at Oxford, that none but Papists were about his Majesty, that 20,000 Scots were already entered England, that they should not look in any book printed at Oxford, or published by His Majesty's command, by which means they seduced almost all the town to take the covenant [this is the oath and covenant, as ordered by Parliament, abjuring the Papists and all their works, and promising to uphold Parliament against all their plots]; assuring them most martyr-like that they would seal it with their blood; but (like men of their religion) left no other seal but the print of their fugitive heels'.⁴ This last charge had some basis in truth, in that both White and Benn did flee to London and supported the Parliamentary cause from there, but this reflected the military situation of Dorchester. When asked how long the town's defences would withstand the Royalists a commander replied 'about half an hour'. After news arrived that Bristol had surrendered to the Royalists, Dorchester capitulated to an advancing force without a struggle.

Both White and Benn returned to Dorchester as soon as it was safe to do so. They found the town impoverished and they had to apply to the parliament's committee for plundered ministers for financial assistance. The town failed to recover its former energy and enthusiasm. John White was now an old man and in failing health. He died in 1648 and Benn was left holding the fort until a new rector was appointed. This was Stanley Gower (1600?-60),⁵ in similar mould to John White, perhaps most appropriately categorised as a Presbyterian; Benn was involved in assessing Gower's fitness for the post, so he does not appear to have been pushing for a more radical line at this stage.

Benn does not seem to have been a great supporter of the new rulers in London. When the Rump Parliament required all holders of municipal office to take a new oath, the 'Engagement' to be 'true and faithful to the Commonwealth of England, as it is now established, without a King or House of Lords', Benn followed the example of some Dorchester worthies in subscribing 'in this sense only, that I will live peaceably under this present power and obey them in lawful things'.⁶ Nor was the town as a whole keen on Oliver Cromwell: the collection on the Fast Day to commemorate Cromwell's death

4 Rose-Troup *White* 316. Hugh Thompson of Dorchester was the father of John Thompson, Student of Christ Church, Oxford, see *CR*.

5 For Gower see *ODNB*.

6 D Underdown *Fire from Heaven—Life in an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (1992) 214.

produced only £2 10s od from the parish of Holy Trinity and St Peter's, with Benn's parish of All Saints showing a slightly warmer response of £2, a good amount from a poor parish.

Benn now felt able to exercise a freer hand in the ordering of his church and its worship. David Underdown's research found that no purchases of bread or wine were recorded throughout the 1650s, from which he concluded the sacrament of communion was never officially administered at All Saints during this period, communion presumably being restricted to 'the elect'.⁷ It is interesting to note that in 1655 Alice Limbury, a widow from Fordington, left money in her will to 'the church whereof I am a member in Dorchester'; she did not say 'parish' or give the name of a church, and she asked Benn to be one of her overseers. A committed puritan, Philip Stansby, became mayor for 1657, and he played a valuable role in supporting Benn and the new independent congregation, although he did not show similar support for the Baptists, who were refused permission to meet in any of the town's churches, nor, indeed, the Quakers, the most persecuted group of all.

Dorchester folk seem generally to have welcomed the Restoration in 1660, perhaps hoping for the return to a more orderly society after the upheavals of war and unstable government. There were also signs that the new Bishop of Bristol, Gilbert Ironside (1588–1671), was going to be reasonably accommodating. Some cavaliers locally, however, took a number of Dorset ministers to court at the assizes in September 1660 for not using the Anglican liturgy. Among them were William Benn and Joshua Churchill (1627–94), minister at Fordington. Benn suffered a period of imprisonment but did not lose his living at this stage.⁸

As the new regime at Westminster sought to promote a more positively pro-royalist agenda, the Corporation Act 1661 ordered the removal of all members of corporations who refused the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, would not receive the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, repudiate Parliament's 1643 oath of loyalty, the Solemn League and Covenant, and swear that it was unlawful 'upon any pretext whatsoever to take arms against the King'. Philip Stansby was among those who refused to repudiate the Covenant and he was expelled from the Corporation. Similar action was taken against the clergy in the Act of Uniformity, which required all ministers to take the same oath and declaration as in the Corporation Act and, specifically, to declare their loyalty to the re-established Church of England by St Bartholomew's Day, 24 August 1662. When the bishop conducted his visitation in September, neither Benn nor the Presbyterian-minded George Hammond (1619/20–1705), rector of Holy Trinity and St Peter's, had done so. Action against Hammond was delayed until

7 Underdown *Fire from Heaven* 217–219.

8 Underdown *Fire from Heaven* 234. For Ironside see *ODNB*. For Churchill see *CR*.

March the following year, perhaps in the hope that he might change his mind.⁹ Benn was not regarded so charitably, and on 10 September Bishop Ironside issued the ‘intimation’ removing him from the parish of All Saints. Benn clearly retained local support in the town clerk who managed to intercept it, and it was not delivered to the Apparitor, the appropriate officer of the ecclesiastical court, until 12 January 1663. A new rector, Richard Wine, arrived in February 1663 when Benn was formally ejected from his living.¹⁰

Benn could no longer take services in All Saints Church but evidence suggests that a group of followers continued to meet with him as a ‘gathered church’. When William Dry made his will in December 1663 he left ten shillings to Benn and the same amount to ‘the poor of the church under his ministry of which I am a member’. The language clearly implies an identifiable group of worshippers who can thus be identified as the beginnings of a Congregational church in Dorchester. For a time this state of affairs seems to have been tolerated, except that individuals might be sent to gaol for breach of the obligation to attend worship within the Church of England. Even in gaol nonconformist worship continued. Renaldo Knapton, the keeper of the gaol, initially took a tolerant line, at least until he perceived that his tenure in his post might be threatened. He then took steps to stop sermons being preached in the gaol, though it was still possible for clerical prisoners to be brought food and drink by their supporters and for baptisms and churchings to be conducted.¹¹

As to the reference to ‘clerical prisoners’ there were a number of nonconformist ministers in and around Dorchester. Several ejected ministers, including Benn, were imprisoned in the aftermath of a nonconformist plot in Yorkshire, but most of them gave bonds for good behaviour and were released. This did not stop them remaining in Dorchester and carrying on as before but in a low key manner, meeting as ‘conventicles’ in private houses. In fact, Underdown concluded that ‘Dorchester was the biggest nest of ejected ministers in the western counties, and few towns had so large and influential a dissenting community’.¹² This may have led the King to visit Dorchester in September 1665. The court was then based in Salisbury, there to escape the ravages of the plague in London, and the King took the opportunity to make a tour through Dorset. However, he chose Dorchester in particular to ceremonially give the royal assent to what is known as the ‘Five Mile Act’. This prohibited nonconformist ministers who would not swear the oath of non-resistance from living within five miles of any corporate town (which included Dorchester), or any place where they had previously held a living. George Hammond and

9 For Hammond see Hamond in *CR* and *ODNB*.

10 Underdown *Fire from Heaven* 236–7. For Wine, who later became a nonconformist, see *CR*.

11 Underdown *Fire from Heaven* 237–9.

12 Underdown *Fire from Heaven* 240.

Benjamin Way (1629–1709), both associated with St Peter's, and a few others took the oath and remained in Dorchester. William Benn moved to Maiden Newton, far enough to comply with the Act but still near enough to keep in touch with Dorchester. Others who moved away included Joshua Churchill who went to Compton Valence and the ejected rector of Winterborne Came, Christopher Lawrence (1613–67), who took up residence in Frampton.

It was not long before the exiled ministers drifted back into Dorchester. By 1669 Benn and Churchill were preaching to a congregation in Fordington, not actually within the borough of Dorchester but clearly in breach of the Five Mile Act. Then, in 1672, came the Declaration of Indulgence which formally permitted nonconformists to worship publicly. In Dorchester and Fordington dissenting congregations were quickly licensed, one Presbyterian congregation served by George Hammond, and three Congregational fellowships, led respectively by William Benn, Joshua Churchill and Benjamin Way. Benn's conventicle met in the home of Philip Stansby, the former Mayor of Dorchester. Churchill assisted Benn in Dorchester as well as serving a conventicle in Fordington.

In this way the new gathered churches became established and, although the withdrawal of the Declaration of Indulgence led to a fresh bout of persecution, with leading dissenters such as Stansby fined for being absent from the parish churches, the congregations continued to meet. Evidence for this is seen in a number of wills of the time. In 1671, for example, John Bartlett left two pounds each to a long list of dissenting clergy, including Benn, and James Palfrey, who died in 1673, did the same. Elizabeth Bedford left money for 'the poor of the society I belong to in Dorchester'. Philip Stansby left two pounds to the poor of the congregation 'with whom I have walked in the fellowship of the Gospel'.¹³

Benn's involvement with the ministry at the gaol seems to have continued, for it was in 1674 that the chapel was built within its walls, principally, we are told, 'at his own charge'.¹⁴

Benn continued to minister into old age. He is said to have been able to read without spectacles at the age of eighty and to have prayed in his study seven times a day. He died in 1681 and was buried at All Saint's. Joshua Churchill published a collection of his sermons under the title, *Soul Prosperity*, in tribute to his memory, but Benn's real legacy was the continuing fellowship of dissenters, which would become formally Dorchester Congregational Church.

David Cuckson

¹³ Underdown *Fire from Heaven* 243.

¹⁴ E Calamy revised by S Palmer *The Nonconformist's Memorial Vol I* (1775) 450.

MCCLUNE UFFEN: MINISTER OF DORCHESTER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 1891–1911¹

Introduction

McClune Uffen was born in Devonport in 1846.² Initially a teacher, he entered the Congregational ministry in 1867 at the age of 21. He served for 17 years at Sawston, Cambridgeshire, followed by 7 years at Queen’s Walk Church, Nottingham. By the time he came to Dorchester in 1891, he was 45 and at the height of his powers. Throughout his 20 years’ ministry in Dorchester, McClune Uffen’s sermons were regularly reported in the *Dorset County Chronicle*³ and through pulpit, press and political platform, he established a towering local reputation. One listener said,



‘No-one who knew Mr. Uffen can ever forget him’. Another enthused, ‘What a vivid personality! A vast vocabulary, well and widely read, eloquent, persuasive, convincing’. Yet another described his endearing idiosyncracies, ‘His utterance is slow, deliberate, impressive, each word perfectly articulated, while the sense is frequently emphasized by the expressive elevation of the eyebrows’.

McClune Uffen seems to have been particularly newsworthy because he regularly engaged in controversies. He said, ‘The work of the church is to protest against all evils, social, municipal, imperial’. One observer said, ‘When he puts on the gloves and enters the fray, he is a doughty antagonist; but his good feeling and good temper towards his opponent never fails. All that he wants is to beat him well!’

1 This article has benefitted from the records of Dorchester Congregational Church held at the Dorset History Centre, Dorchester. Particular reference has been made to the Diary of the Revd. McClune Uffen NP5 MS 2/2; Jubilee Statement of Accounts and Letters 1907–08 NP5 TR11/1; Photographs of Ministers NP5 MS4/5.

2 For James McClune Uffen, who came to Congregationalism from the Wesleyans, see Surman’s Index at Dr Williams’s Library; *Congregational Year Book* (1924) 107 and W Densham and J Ogle *The Story of the Congregational Churches of Dorset* (Bournemouth, 1899) 126, 224.

3 The *Dorset County Chronicle* microfilm at the Dorset History Centre.

Towards the end of his ministry, the *Dorset County Chronicle*, politically well to the right of Uffen, reported that while he was on holiday in Nottingham, he had attended a Guy Fawkes party, stumbled in the dark over a rockery and, in falling, fractured his collarbone. The newspapers commented rather mischievously, 'Come now, Mr Uffen, you must not be so fond of fireworks!' However, by this time, the well-known controversialist and exploder of fireworks appears to have won the respect and even affection of very many townspeople and so the newspaper adds some more kindly advice, 'You must certainly not celebrate Guy Fawkes day again by any more such breakages'.

Sense of History

McClune Uffen had a strong sense of history. He asserted, 'From apostolic times through the centuries, there have been men who have placed conscience and God above the decrees of kings and ecclesiastics. To these men, to the heroic stand they took, to the sufferings which they endured, we of the present day owe civil and religious freedom'.

One of McClune Uffen's heroes was certainly William Benn who after more than 30 years as rector of All Saints, Dorchester, was evicted from his living in 1662, on St Bartholomew's Day, because he would not accept the Act of Uniformity. According to his famous contemporary, Richard Baxter, 'When he was silenced, he still continued among his ancient people and preached to them as he could, for which he was often brought into trouble and sometimes imprisoned'.¹ In 1905, following this wife's death the previous year, McClune Uffen arranged for the installation of two stained glass windows; one, a personal tribute to his wife, the other a commemoration of Benn's stand for religious liberty and the beginnings of Congregationalism in Dorchester.

The present church opened in 1857, so McClune Uffen again seized the opportunity to emphasize the costly historic struggle for religious freedom, when he planned the Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1907. He made contact with the Congregational church in Dorchester, Massachusetts, heirs of the puritan settlers from this Dorchester, who in 1630, in the hope of greater liberty, entrusted themselves to the unknown hazards of the North Atlantic voyage. In response, the American church wrote, 'Our lineage, both literally and spiritually, is to a great extent traceable to Dorchester, England, where your ancestors, side by side with ours, fought the long and desperate battle for the right to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences'.

The 1907 Golden Jubilee was also the 40th anniversary of McClune Uffen's ordination. From the still surviving invoices we know that tea was prepared for 360 people. The provision included 2 lbs of tea (3s.8d.), 5 gallons of milk

¹ For Baxter see *ODNB*. For Benn see previous article by David Cuckson.

(5s. od.), 16 lbs of butter (£1 1s. od.), 42 lbs of gammon (16s.5d.) and 20 lbs of currant cake (10s.od.). A great occasion!

Relations with other Churches

'The fundamental principle of Free Churchmen', said McClune Uffen, 'is that the relationship between the human soul and God is immediate and direct. Neither Parliament nor priest must stand in the way'. He founded the Dorchester Free Church Federal Council in 1896 and regular joint services took place with the Wesleyans, Primitive Methodists, Baptists and Salvation Army. In 1901, on the death of Queen Victoria, the Free Churches held a combined memorial service here in the Congregational Church with McClune Uffen the preacher.

The church which then had a seating capacity of 600 was full to overflowing, and many were turned away.

In 1906, crowds lined the streets and people waved or hung flags of welcome for the visit of General William Booth (1829–1912).² McClune Uffen gave the vote of thanks at a crowded meeting in the Corn Exchange, saying that his church had been used many times by the Salvation Army.

Relations with Church of England clergy were more complex. At a personal level, in organizations like the British and Foreign Bible Society, they were friendly enough, but Uffen was a strong advocate of disestablishment. 'We must cease not to labour until every church in the land is governed and supported by its own members'. He was particularly antagonistic towards what he saw as a growing threat from the Anglo-Catholic movement. Every seat was taken when he hired the Town Hall to give a lecture on 'Sacerdotalism', 'We will have nothing to do with genuflections, draperies, processions, candles and incense'.

Working with young people

McClune Uffen had a great appeal for young people with his unbounded physical and intellectual energy. In the eyes of one observer, he had the 'secret of eternal youth'.

In Sawston, before the days of Board schools, he attracted young people to the church by organizing evening classes. In Nottingham, he built close relationships with local football and cricket clubs. Here, in Dorchester, he took every possible opportunity to meet young people. He was for many years a regular lecturer at the YMCA covering a wide range of social, political, philosophical and religious themes. He founded the Dorchester Debating Society, later to become the Debating and Dramatic Society and finally, the Hardy Players, all of which met in the Congregational church with up to 150

2 For Booth see *ODNB*.

members. He introduced a young men's Sunday afternoon Bible class which regularly attracted 100 or more young people, discussing many new ideas such as new theology, heredity and socialism.

Working tirelessly for the Sunday School movement, McClune Uffen served on the National Executive of the Sunday School Union and was President of the Dorchester Sunday School Union. There were 1600 Dorchester children—almost 20% of the entire population and virtually the whole of the age group—on the books of a Sunday School, with an attendance rate of nearly 80%. The Dorchester Congregational Sunday School expanded to around 250 and the annual outing was a masterpiece of planning, with picnic food for the day and an amazing assortment of carts, drays and wagons. McClune Uffen took personal responsibility for training his Sunday School staff of over 30 people, in preparation for sitting an exam on 'The Principles and Art of Teaching'.

The expansion of the Congregational Sunday School persuaded McClune Uffen of the need for additional accommodation. In 1886, the church bought four cottages in Charles Street, immediately to the rear of the church, for £675. It still has reason to be grateful for this far-sighted move. The additional accommodation has been adapted and improved but, to this day, it provides the hub for much of the church's youth work, including Junior Church, Creche, Toddlers Group, Child Contact Centre, providing a safe, neutral meeting place for parents and children of broken families, and the Dorchester Learning Centre, supporting troubled young people who have fallen out of mainstream schools.

Poverty

The years of McClune Uffen's Dorchester ministry coincided in this area with agricultural depression, low wages, high unemployment, poor, insanitary and overcrowded housing. His sympathies were always with the underdog. In 1906, he played a leading role in the constituency Liberal Party's victorious election campaign, speaking three times in one day at a tent meeting on Fordington Green to 400 people, then on to Dorchester Market, and finally to a crowded meeting in the Corn Exchange. His rallying cry was always the same, 'God help the poor!'

He served on the town's Charitable Aid Committee which each winter when food was in short supply, would regularly organize a soup kitchen which in half an hour would serve the waiting queue with some 40 gallons of soup. He served on the committee of the Soldiers' Home, intended especially for soldiers and working men, where tea, coffee and cocoa were served for 1d a cup, hot dinners for 4d or 6d, and hot or cold baths for 6d. He also served on the Dorset County Hospital Management Committee as Governor and Financial Secretary, supporting the hospital's aim to 'treat the labouring poor', arranging regular financial contributions from the church and organizing special services each year for hospital Sunday. It was McClune Uffen who led the way in suggesting

that the best way to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee would be to provide an additional almshouse. How pleased he must have been that before he left Dorchester, he would be able to welcome the first ever Old Age Pensions and the first National Insurance Scheme against sickness and unemployment.

Votes for Women

The Suffragette movement became increasingly violent from 1903 onwards with the formation by Emily and Christabel Pankhurst of the Women's Social and Political Union.³ This alienated many men but not McClune Uffen, who often spoke at meetings of the Women's Political Association and Women's Liberal Party. He totally rejected the traditional Victorian model of womanhood and intellectual meekness. 'Today,' he said, 'woman is man's equal'. 'She is not to be toyed with, she is not his property, she is not his slave'.

House of Lords

Another increasingly contentious issue was the power of the House of Lords. In 1893, McClune Uffen commented moderately enough, 'As a second chamber, it might do good in checking hasty legislation, but it sometimes blocks legislation long considered and upon which the public mind is definitely and emphatically set'. Following the Lords' blocking of the government's budget in 1909, he was far more forceful. 'The privilege of the peers means the privation of the people and the paralysis of progress'.

World Perspective

McClune Uffen was keenly interested in world affairs. Perhaps this had something to do with his own far-flung family. His uncle emigrated to Australia in 1840, became MP for Adelaide for 36 years, Prime Minister of South Australia and eventually knighted, becoming Sir Henry Ayres GCMG. In the next generation, McClune's daughter Gertrude emigrated to New Zealand. McClune himself became a director of the London Missionary Society. During his ministry, the church's giving to the London Missionary Society increased more than fivefold from £14 per annum to £75 per annum. There were additional special collections, for example for the Armenian Relief Fund (1896) and the Indian Famine Fund (1900). In 1897, the church joined in a protest to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for the Colonies at the ill-treatment of black Africans by the Cape Government.

The outbreak of war against the Boers presented McClune Uffen with a major challenge. Dorchester was a town with a long-standing military tradition as

3 For the Pankhursts see *ODNB*.

headquarters of the Dorset regiment and, for many years, site of the summer camp of the Royal Scots Greys Horse Artillery. The latter's red tunics, grey bearskins and clanking swords were a colourful sight around the town and regularly on Sundays were to be seen on military parade in the Congregational church. These strong traditional ties must have made it difficult for McClune Uffen to oppose the Boer War. He remained on friendly terms with many individual soldiers but, as to the war itself, he was unequivocally opposed. 'I have the privilege', he said, 'of being called pro-Boer and I am not ashamed of it. This is a cruel and costly war'. He believed the decision for Britain to fight was driven by ambition to expand the empire and to exploit the natural resources of Africa. He would have been particularly shocked by Kitchener's strategy of burning farmhouses as he advanced, massing civilians, women and children in concentration camps where many met their death. We can be in no doubt that to speak out, in this military town, required considerable courage and moral strength.

Passive Resistance

The 1902 Education Act presented a further moral challenge. Here again, McClune Uffen showed courage, a willingness to oppose the civil authorities and to take personal risks. The 1902 Education Act was offensive to many nonconformists. Church schools were to be financed from the rates but at the same time to keep control of religious teaching and to select their own staff. Nonconformists were to pay rates for religious teaching to which they objected and over which they had no control. They believed that it was wrong in country areas, with only one school, for Free Church families to be required to attend rate supported voluntary church schools. They also thought it was wrong for Free Church teachers to be requested to submit to religious tests in rate-supported Voluntary Church schools and to be debarred from becoming head teachers.

McClune Uffen led a campaign of passive resistance against the Act. A Dorchester Passive Resistance League was formed and a great protest meeting was held in the Town Hall with the Archdeacon of Dorset on one side and McClune Uffen on the other. In March 1904, 18 'passive resisters' were summoned to appear before the Dorchester magistrates for non-payment of their education rates. Elsewhere, ministers and Free Church people had been sentenced to gaol. The *Dorchester County Chronicle* takes up the tale. A broad blackboard, hung outside the Congregational church, announced in large white letters to passers-by that at the People's service on Sunday evening, on the eve of the magisterial proceedings, the pastor (Revd J McClune Uffen) who is generally looked upon as the leader and champion of the movement in Dorchester, would preach a special sermon on 'Passive Resistance'. The church was well filled. The service began with the singing of the hymn 'Before Jehovah's awful throne'. The lesson, taken from Acts 5, told the story of the

friction between the apostles, headed by Peter, and the magistrates of their day. It was from this lesson that Mr. McClune Uffen chose his text—the words of the enlightened Gamaliel who gave his colleagues of the Sanhedrin the following advice: ‘And now I say unto you, refrain from these men and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought, but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it’.

The Revd McClune Uffen and his fellow resisters were at the court betime on Monday morning. The space reserved for spectators was crowded, the gathering including many who sympathised closely. Warrants were issued by the court for recovery of amounts owing, but Mr Pearce, the rate collector, arranged to pay various amounts himself. Were the arrears paid by sympathisers? Or perhaps by opponents who did not want them to become martyrs for their cause? We cannot be certain, but we can say for sure that McClune Uffen’s words in court summarised his whole life and ministry. ‘Our consciences will not allow us to leave things as they are’.

The Legacy

McClune Uffen’s impact on the Dorchester church was remarkable. Membership almost trebled from 70 to 200 but, perhaps even more telling, he was well remembered many years after he had gone. In 1941, the church held a service of thanksgiving to mark the 50th anniversary of his induction here and, eventually, in 1948, a commemorative stained glass window was unveiled by a member of his family—almost two generations after his departure.⁴

His impact on the wider church was also very significant. A ministerial colleague said ‘McClune Uffen knows how to get young blood in and train it!’ He inspired at least 25 young men to enter the Congregational ministry, their service probably spanning almost a century from the 1870s to the 1960s. One of those young men was the famous hymn writer and Congregational minister Charles Silvester Horne, author of ‘Sing we the King who is coming to reign’ and ‘For the might of thine arm we bless thee’. He visited Dorchester in 1906, saying that he was there to repay a debt of many years’ standing. Some 25 years earlier, McClune Uffen had visited his town in Shropshire and spoken in a way he could never forget. He could recall vividly the address he delivered which made a deep and lasting impression on his mind and heart. He could remember not only the principal points but also the special illustrations and nearly the whole of what was, to him, then and still, a very remarkable address.⁵

4 Letters concerning the commemorative service and memorial window 1941–48 at Dorset History Centre—NP5 DC3/5.

5 For C S Horne see *ODNB*.

Conclusion

McClune Uffen invested so much of himself that his leave taking from Dorchester was not easy. He records in his diary that ‘many were on the railway platform to bid me a final goodbye. I looked my last upon their faces as the train left the platform and then, the compartment being empty, I broke down’. He spent the next year with his daughter in Dunedin, New Zealand, then resumed the ministry in Cornwall, until his death in 1923, aged 78. He was a man of strong convictions and outstanding gifts. Religion and politics became for him closely intertwined. He accorded primacy to individual conscience. He campaigned for greater religious and political freedom. He campaigned for the underdog. He challenged the church establishment. He defied and subverted the civil authorities. He faced personal risks. In all these ways, his ministry in Dorchester was a fine example of a long tradition, from the 17th century onwards, of dissent. I suggest that he would have been pleased to be regarded as a true descendent of William Benn.

Peter Mann

BOOKS WHICH MAY INTEREST CHS MAGAZINE READERS:

Selected from Congregational Federation publications available in 2018. Order by email to admin@congregational.org.uk

The Challenge of Preaching the Gospel (revised edn 2016) edited by Lisa Isherwood and Janet Wootton £10

The Spirit of Dissent—A Commemoration of the Great Ejection of 1662 (2015) edited by Janet Wootton £10

The Transformation of Congregationalism 1900–2000 (2013). Alan Argent examines a century of change for Congregationalists. £35

The Nature of the Household of Faith—Some Principles of Congregationalism (2011) by Alan Argent. £5

Available elsewhere (through various web sites):

Elsie Chamberlain: The Independent Life of a Woman Minister (Routledge 2012) by Alan Argent. Now published as a paperback and eBook as well as hardback.

The Angels' Voice: A Magazine for Young Men in Brixton, London, 1910–1913 (London Record Society/Boydell and Brewer 2016) edited by Alan Argent.

MINNIE TURNER AND THE SUFFRAGETTES IN BRIGHTON¹

The centenary commemoration of the suffrage movement is well underway, marking the passing of the Representation of the People Act in 1918 which gave a limited number of women the right to vote. As celebrations began it felt difficult to imagine the obstacles, fears and hardships of these brave women without a glance into documents and old archival film of their struggle stored at 'The Keep', Sussex's archives and the valuable material online from The National Archives and The Women's Library (held at the London School of Economics) in London.

Since 1832 attempts had been made to create legislation that gave women the vote; over thirty years later the first Woman's Suffrage Committee was formed in 1866 by Barbara Bodichon (1827–91),² but it then took another 40 years for suffrage voices to be loudly ever present in the public consciousness. These more militant cries came from the Pankhursts and the women who became part of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903.³

The votes for women movement can be split into the 'Suffragists' who preferred the use of concessionary, constitutional methods such as those of Millicent Fawcett (1847–1929)⁴ who formed the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (1897) and the more radical 'Suffragettes', most famously led by the Pankhursts. However, this basic division does not reveal the interwoven membership between many of the women's groups during the campaign years. Some took less direct action than others, buildings may not have been burnt by members of the Women's Freedom League but they did hold to a mass boycott of the 1911 census, while others from the Tax Resistance League avoided paying their tax with the slogan 'Taxation without Representation is Tyranny'.

There were centres of activism all over the country, with notable

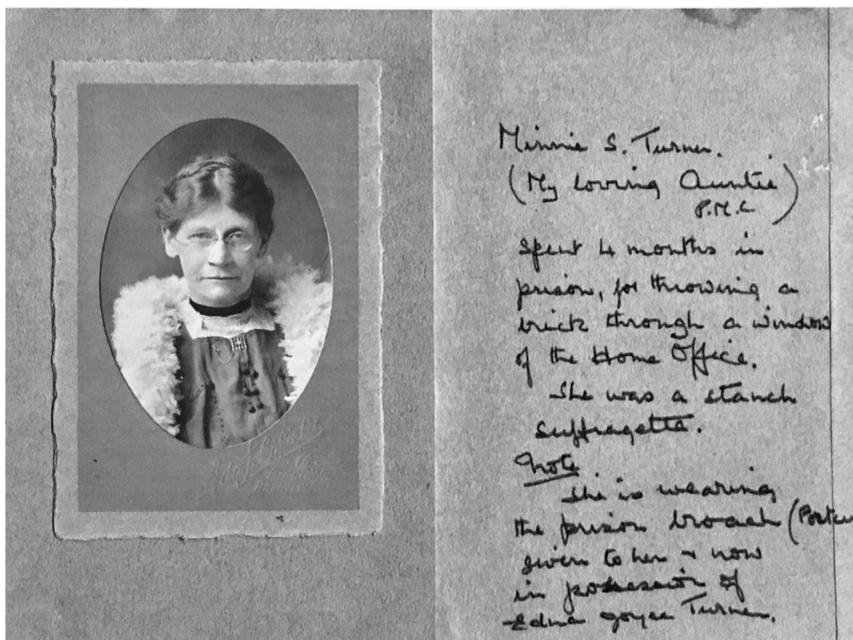
1 Thanks to the kind and helpful staff at The Keep Archives and also to Dan Robertson, the curator of the Local History and Archaeology department at the Royal Pavilion and Museums in Brighton.

2 For Bodichon, artist, women's activist and a founder of Girton College, Cambridge see *ODNB*.

3 For the Pankhursts, Emmeline (1858–1928), and her daughters, Christabel (1880–1958) and Sylvia (1882–1960) see *ODNB*. See also M Joannou and J Purvis (eds) *The Women's Suffrage Movement, New Feminist Perspectives* (1998)

4 For Fawcett, a founder of Newnham College, Cambridge, see *ODNB*.

concentrations in such places as Manchester, Warwickshire, London, East Sussex and especially Brighton; although considered an aristocratic, fashionable town, the political atmosphere there was not wholly conservative. There were residents who supported Chartism and the strengthening of Trade Unions. The newspaper the *Brighton Argus* often reported the activity of Women's Suffrage, giving mention to Keir Hardie's question on votes for women in the House of Commons and the revolutionary protests in London.⁵ This lit the imagination of teachers in the town (many at nearby Roedean School), members of the Women's Co-operative Guild and other notable ladies such as Helen Ogston (1883–973), Mary Cozens (1857–1928), Mary Hare (1865–1945) and Mary Jane Clarke (1863–1910), the younger sister of Emmeline Pankhurst, who lived at a boarding house run by Minnie Turner (c1867–1948). They were all active in the local Women's Suffrage Society formed in 1907.



Minnie Turner source: Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove

⁵ For Hardie (1856–1915) see ODNB and A Peel *The Congregational Two Hundred 1530–1948* (1948) 255–6. He was associated with the Evangelical Union church in Legbrannock, Lanarkshire.

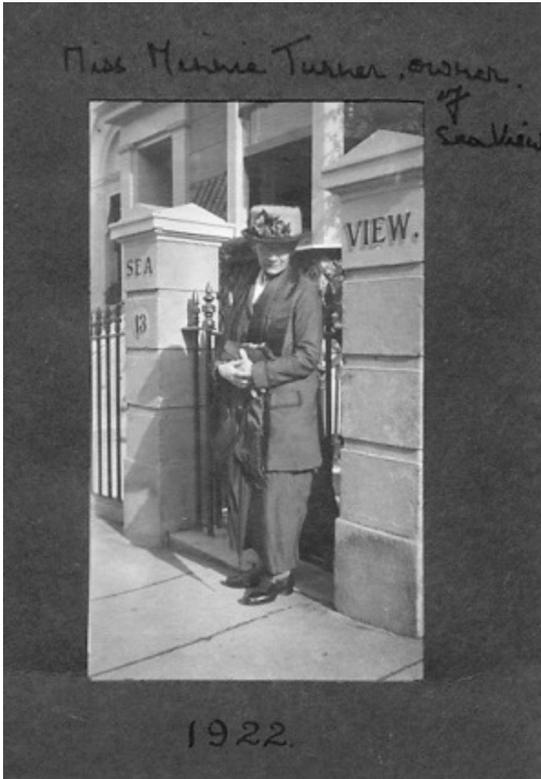
Who was Minnie Turner?

Minnie, a Brighton born and bred suffrage champion, offered refuge and support to suffrage women in her boarding house, named the ‘Sea View’, on 13–14 Victoria Road with the advertisement:

‘Suffragettes spend your holidays in Brighton, central. Terms moderate’

And they did, as well as the long term resident Mary Jane Clarke (organiser of the Brighton office of the WSPU), Annie Kenney (1879–1953), Lady

Constance Bulwer-Lytton (1869–1923), Emmeline Pankhurst, Lady Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence (1867–1954), Emily Wilding Davison (1872–1913), Mrs Minnie Baldock and Mrs Drummond all stayed with Minnie.⁶ In fact during some of the busier periods Minnie used a potting shed annex in no. 12 and a wooden hut in the garden of no. 13. Minnie, a staunch believer in social justice, also ensured that visitors had the latest books to read on the social position of women and supported many through difficult times. For example, Mrs Baldock, an active member of the WSPU, became ill and needed surgery to fight cancer; it was Minnie who paid her expenses while she recovered at her Sea View guest house and Minnie



Sea View and Minnie Turner

Source: Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove

also offered a recuperative home to some who had endured hunger strike in prison.⁷

6 For Kenney, Bulwer-Lytton, Pethick-Lawrence and Flora Davison see *ODNB*.

7 E. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide, 1866–1928* (Routledge, 1999)

Minnie grew up on Preston Road where her family ran a knitwear shop. Although she had a fairly modest upbringing, by her late twenties Minnie was honorary secretary of the Brighton Liberal Association, but she became disappointed in the Liberal government because it did not introduce any legislation that would give women the right to vote. It was at this point in 1908 that she joined the militant suffrage group known as the Women’s Social and Political Union.

Minnie Turner was also a member of the Tax Resistance League (TRL); their motto was ‘No Vote No Tax’. Due to this stance, in 1912, Minnie had some of her goods seized and auctioned in lieu of the tax she hadn’t paid. Minnie also had a reluctance to give information to the authorities about her guests; this can be seen on a census document written in 1911, where it is recorded that she was the ‘Head’ of the property and that there were ‘probably 11 other females’ lodging there but it is noted that ‘Further information was refused’.



Minnie Turner’s Votes for Women Sash

Source: Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove



Holloway Brooch

Source: Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove

Turner was also arrested a couple of times, once for demonstrating outside the House of Commons with Mary Clarke in 1910, and again in November 1911 after breaking a window in the Home Office, but on this second occasion she received a 21 days sentence in Holloway Prison.

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A LEADER OF THE SUFFRAGETTES

Death of Miss M. S. Turner

THE days before the first World War when women were vigorously engaged in fighting for their rights are recalled by the death of Miss Minnie Sarah Turner, aged 81, of Seaview, Victoria-road, a well-known leader of the suffragette movement in Brighton.

Miss Turner devoted her life to public work, and many of the organisations to which she gave stalwart service were represented at the funeral at the Downs Crematorium on Tuesday. These included the Suffragette Fellowship, the Women's Freedom League, the Actresses' Freedom League, and the Women's International League.

Although she took such an energetic part in championing the women's cause—she was sent to prison for her part in an incident in 1910 when windows at the Home Office were broken—Miss Turner was known to her friends as a quiet, gentle and kindly woman. She was a friend of Mrs Pankhurst, and many leaders of the suffragette movement visited her Brighton home.

Miss Turner was elected to the old Brighton Board of Guardians for the West Ward soon after the 1914-1918 war, and served for more than seven years. She was a keen member of the Clifton-road Congregational Church.

After World War One, Minnie was elected to the Brighton Board of Guardians because of her strong sense of community responsibility and her recognised love of social justice, education, peace and fellowship. In this role she worked hard for seven years to improve the conditions at the workhouse on Elm Grove. She was also an active member of Clifton Road Congregational Church. When Minnie died in 1948 many attended her funeral with representatives from the Women's Freedom League, the Women's International League and the Suffragette Fellowship. In 2015 a relative of Minnie's donated a Holloway brooch and sash awarded her after her time in prison; while some of her other possessions are in the Museum of London. In 2017 a Brighton bus was named after Minnie in her honour and a school session for all school Key Stages is run by Brighton and Hove museum: 'Minnie Turner, Life of a Brighton Suffragette'.

Michelle Thomasson

Minnie Turner's Obituary

Source: Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove

REVIEWS

***Baptists Through the Centuries: A History of a Global People.* By David W Bebbington. Pp xii + 371. 2nd edition, Baylor University Press, 2018. £34.99 paperback. ISBN 978-1-4813-0866-3**

The first edition of this work came out in 2010 and it is a tribute to David Bebbington's scholarship that this second edition should appear. In this he has extended his coverage of world Baptists by adding chapters on Latin America (Baptists in Brazil alone amount to 2 million), Nigeria and the Naga Hills in India (Baptists constitute over 80% of the region's population). Otherwise the changes from the first edition are minor, with some updates and corrections and improvements to his end notes and recommended reading for each chapter. Bebbington here provides a good introduction to his denomination's history and to its growth and geographical spread throughout the world.

Between his introduction and conclusion are 17 chapters covering roots in the Reformation, Anabaptists, Particular and General Baptists in the 17th century, 18th century revivalism, 19th century theological divisions, gospel and race, women in Baptist life, church, ministry and sacraments, religious liberty, foreign mission, Baptists throughout the globe, then the 3 new chapters and Baptist identity. In addition are several pages of end notes and a full index. The latter includes references to Congregationalists, the London Missionary Society, David Livingstone, all of interest to readers of this *Magazine*, as well as to William Carey, John Clifford, H Wheeler Robinson, Ernest Payne and Martin Luther King, all as expected. But here also is Buddy Holly, the novelist John Grisham as well as Baptists in Poland, and the Bohemian Baptist Mission. This book offers a world view and combines the fairly familiar with the surprisingly little known. It shows a remarkably vigorous community of faith throughout the world.

David Salter

***A Life of Purpose: A Biography of John Sulman.* By Zeny Edwards. Pp xvi + 372. £38.70 Hardback. Longueville Media, Haberfield, New South Wales, 2017. ISBN 978-0-6481719-2-8**

"John who?" you may be tempted to ask. Yet you may have worshipped for many years in a church he designed, as I have, although I have also regularly visited a public library of which he was the architect. Dr Zeny Edwards, an architectural historian, sketches Sulman's upbringing in Greenwich and the

family's attendance at Blackheath Congregational Church whilst James Sherman (1796–1862) was minister there. Sulman (1849–1934) was from an up and coming family, whose name derived probably from “soilman”. She describes Sulman's training and the commencement of his practice as an architect, being commissioned by the Congregational Chapel Building Society to design Dedham Congregational Church, Essex. The church was completed on time and within budget and was described warmly in the *Congregational Year Book* (1872). As a result, designing Congregational churches all over England and Wales became the mainstay of his early career.

Having emigrated to Australia in his 30s, Sulman moved to designing public buildings and banks. This was not merely to copy styles favoured in Britain but to make designs appropriate for the Australian climate. Later in life he became an early advocate of town planning and garden suburbs. In an unofficial capacity, he was hugely influential by promoting his choice for the location of Australia's federal capital, Canberra. Eventually he was appointed to chair the advisory committee on the federal capital.

Edwards has distilled a wealth, perhaps even an overabundance, of archival material into a handsome book, adorned by numerous illustrations, mostly of buildings actual or proposed but also a number of photographs of Sulman at work and leisure. A handy list of all Sulman's known works, along with endnotes, bibliography and index complete this scholarly but very readable volume. With an introduction from Prof Clyde Binfield, Edwards' work comes highly recommended.

Peter Young

***Trees along the river: 117 new hymns and song texts 2008–2018 with other verses.* By Christopher M Idle. Lost Coin Books, 2018. £10 Available from The Good Book Company Ltd, Blenheim House, 1 Blenheim Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 9AP. Pp xxv + 157. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-784-98425-0**

Readers of this magazine will have seen Christopher Idle's article about his time at Eltham College in a previous edition. Idle is well known as a hymn writer and this is the third volume in a series of hymn collections published to celebrate special birthdays. Each of the hymns is based on a Bible verse and the order in which they are presented is the order in which the verses appear in the Bible. For someone preparing to lead worship this could help in finding an appropriate hymn but hymns are not arranged under themes as in a typical hymnbook. Christmas hymns based on Matthew's gospel are separated from those from Luke for example. Below the hymns suitable tunes are suggested, related scripture verses are given and Idle writes about when and often why the words were written. He is a writer of lyrics and relies either on known hymn tunes,

traditional tunes or music written by collaborators to enable congregations to sing his words. Musicians amongst our readers might like to take up the challenge of setting some of the hymns with ‘new tune needed’ after them to music.

At the beginning of the book Idle writes about his life as a hymn writer and in a section entitled ‘Ten FAQs: People Sometimes Ask’ he gives his personal definition of the difference between hymns and songs. In his own writing he has ‘two or more matching verses in a regular pattern’ and is clearly happy for singers to use different tunes. Perhaps his most telling comment is that ‘hymns are for the whole congregation’ rather than for solo performance. Here we find hymns for children, hymns about the need to care for creation—including some about the trees mentioned in the title—and a hymn written for the 2012 Olympics amongst others. As an old Elthamian, he also has a hymn entitled ‘Blackheath to Mottingham, Walking the Miles’ which commemorates, a century later, the removal of Eltham College to its ‘new’ site in 1912. If you are looking for new, thoughtful, gospel-centred hymns, it is worth considering this book, although you may find some items more appealing than others. It could also simply be read as a meditation on verses of scripture. In addition this work will be an excellent source of material when future writers are considering why hymns were written in our time. We certainly learn a lot about Idle himself.

M Lesley Dean

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