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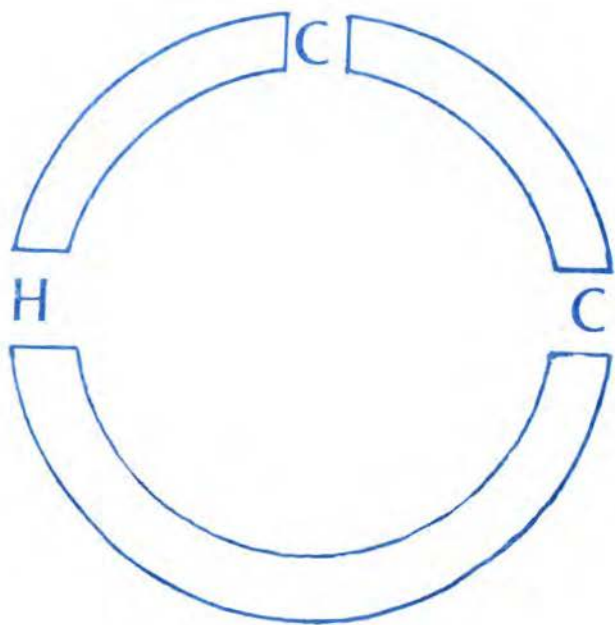
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*The
Congregational Historical Circle Magazine*

1.

THE CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY CIRCLE

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The Circle was founded in 1978 to encourage an interest in all forms of Congregational History. It holds an Annual General Meeting in May each year and these meetings are generally arranged in different areas of the country. Plans are in hand to link a study weekend to this each year and we are actively working on plans to regionalise our activities. We are steadily building up our archives with material being received from a number of countries of the world. We were actively represented and involved with the International Congregational Fellowship Conference held at Bangor, North Wales in July 1981 and have fought to keep the Memorial Hall and Congregational Library in London and in this we have been reasonably successful. The Congregational History Circle is accepted by all three branches of the Continuing Congregational Churches and two of these are represented on its Committee. Circle Members receive a magazine in May and November each year. The Annual Subscription for 1982 is for U.K. Members £1. and for Overseas Members £1.50 per year. Subscriptions are due on January 1st each year.

THE CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY CIRCLE MAGAZINE

Editor: Rev. Trevor Watts, 16 Shelton Road, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire.

Back numbers (Issues of Editions 1 - 6 available) contact the Secretary.

Published twice yearly by the Congregational History Circle to record the history of all branches of Congregationalism

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at home and abroad. Our intention is to produce a balanced interesting publication and the editor welcomes original articles, drawings and photographs for possible publication. Articles should preferably be typed. The Editor appreciates a stamped addressed envelope if a reply is required. A complete range of back numbers is available from the address above.

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EDITORIAL

The International Congregational Fellowship
Bangor - July 1981

It is not the purpose of our Magazine to cover recent events. Its function should be to draw attention to events and movements of historical interest and importance.

I hope to be understood, however, when I write of the International Congregational Fellowship which met at Bangor in North Wales in July as an event of historical importance.

It will therefore be natural and proper that this note should concentrate on its historical aspects. It was a time of rich experience for all able to attend. It was a great

family gathering) British and International Congregationalists. We got to know our brethren here in these Islands - and there are four Congregational communions in Britain, as well as our cousins in the American Congregational Churches and those of our persuasion in other lands.

The former International Congregational Council was established in 1891, and with the Congregational communions being larger than they are today it was an august and honoured body. Those who were present at the I.C.F. held in London four years ago will agree that it was a gathering worthy of the great I.C.C. of former years. After the events of 1972 when the major part of the Congregational Church of England and Wales entered after union with the Presbyterian Church of England in the United Reformed Church, the I.C.C. would appear to be another casualty of that Union.

We were fortunate, however, to have leaders here in Britain and in the United States and elsewhere who were anxious to preserve this International meeting of Congregationalists and who, after an initial meeting in 1975 held at Chislehurst, called the first I.C.F. since the events of 1972. The first I.C.F. was strengthened and sustained by the generosity of our brethren in the American Churches, and the Meetings held at the William Booth Memorial Centre and the Kings College Hall of Residence were outstandingly successful and a time of great blessing and encouragement to Congregationalists everywhere.

The second I.C.F. held at Bangor in July 1981 was by comparison an improvement on that held in London. We were blessed with good conference weather and well provided for by our painstaking officers of I.C.F. Time and space will not allow more than the mere mention of the number of events with the colour of history upon them - the Special "Pilgrim Train" which brought delegates from far and near via London, the Civic Reception given by the Mayor of Bangor City, the visit to the Ebeneser Chapel, Rhos-meirch, to unveil a commemorative tablet to the Rev. Jenkin Morgan and the pleasant ceremony of presentation to Dr. Harry Butman and the Rev. Charles E. Surman in appreciation of their services to the International Congregational Fellowship and learning. All who were present can bear witness to the fine leadership given in all our sessions by Dr. Butman, and his presidential address will live long as a much needed re-statement of our Congregational Faith and Order. The Rev. Charles E. Surman is best known as a leading Congregational scholar and historian. Reference was made to his 30,000 Index of every Congregational Minister in the United Kingdom which in itself is a life's work and an invaluable guide to those researching the details of our Congregational Church's history through the centuries.

Another Historical gathering was the resources study consisting of a panel of four - Dr.R.Tudur Jones, Dr.E.D. Jones, Aberystwyth, The Rev.Dafydd Wyn William, Secretary and Editor of 'Y Cofiadur' and Mr.John Bray who was to have taken part but was hindered owing to a heavy cold. Dr.Bill Ashley Smith was Chairman. The Historical Lecture was delivered by Dr.R.Tudur Jones on "Michael D.Jones - A Pioneer who sought to establish Welsh Churches in America."We had hoped to include the article in this issue but we shall all be able to read it in the official I.C.F. report which will appear in the New Year.

The sight and the sound of so many English and American guests sporting badges entitled "Cynhadledd Annibynwyr y Byd" - The International Congregational Fellowship - and struggling with the phonetics and succeeding in due course was certain to win many a Welsh heart. Our stay at Bangor was made the more pleasant by the comfortable and secluded accommodation at Plasgwyn, Neuadd Reichel and Neuadd John Morris Jones, with sessions held at the Pritchard Jones Hall of Arts and other centres. The Wayne State University Men's Glee Club were in good voice for the Friday afternoon concert, and were on their way to the International Musical Eisteddfod at Llangollen. Dr. Harry M.Langsford was the conductor.

SNOWDON SUMMIT AND ARGENTINA

On Thursday a majority of our number set out early for Snowdon. We travelled to Llanberis by coach in the rain and began the ascent in still rainy conditions with the mist allowing little glimpses of the surrounding hills. As we reached the summit the clouds had partly cleared and we had a view of the Lakes beyond, while down in the passes 3,580 odd feet below, we could see the occasional car make its way. The cafe and the impossibly busy gift shop were besieged. We climbed to the highest point, cameras clicking in our honour at every turn. Soon the little train, the only one of its kind in Britain, was waiting to take us down to the Hotel where we were generously entertained, and once more the conversation flowed and new friendships were formed. The two friends who sat at our table told us they were hoping shortly to hear Lou Palou the great Argentinian Evangelist, and we were able to say that Mrs.Watts' brother who had spent 50 years in the Argentine as a Missionary had the honour of taking Lou Palou as a young man out on his first attempt at christian witness, as he accompanied our relatives David and Cissie Morris on one of their preaching itineraries. And Palou says as much in a film he has made in preparation for his British Crusade.

THE CIRCLE GROWS

In addition to all the items mentioned-and many have not been covered - one important aspect was the interest shown in the Circle by the friends who visited the Circle Bookstand organised by Mr. John Bray our hard working secretary. The circle of members has grown as the result of the many friends from the States and elsewhere who have joined and shown their support in practical ways. Mrs. Watts found a niche as stand-in for Mr. Bray, and enjoyed the experience of chatting with customers.

VISIT TO CHAPEL EBENESER, RHOS-MEIRCH

On Wednesday evening after supper, two bus loads set out for Rhos-meirch, crossing the Bridge to Anglesey and obtaining a view of the Menai Straits and Telford's Bridge, for a ceremony at the ancient Independent Church. After crossing the Bridge and passing through Porthaethwy we passed through the little village with the long name. I had better take a deep breath and spell it carefully - Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch. This means, roughly, The Village of the Church of St. Mary's near the whirlpool of Llan Tysilio of the red caves. The buses slowed almost to a crawl, the American and English passengers struggled with the phonetics and went home with the idea that all Welshmen are long winded. At Llangenfi, at the centre of Ynys Môn, we turned right and saw the Christmas Evans Memorial Chapel. Christmas Evans is usually known as the Welsh Spurgeon, - and some way further on we turned down a quiet lane and saw the newly decorated Chapel where the Rev. Jenkin Morgan built the first meeting house and after an eventful ministry died in 1762. A Commemorative Tablet was unveiled by Dr. Harry R. Butman (inscribed in Welsh and English) and prayer was offered by the Rev. Lyn Cleaver after which the visitors entered the beautiful Chapel where the local folk welcomed them. The Rev. Dafydd Wyn William, a Minister on the Island and an outstanding authority on all things Independent and Ynys Môn in particular, spoke of the outstanding service and ministry of The Rev. Jenkin Morgan. Those desiring further information should look up the Dictionary of Welsh Biography to 1940. This is published by the Hon. Cymrodorion Society, 20 Bedford Square, London, 1953.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED BY DR. HARRY R. BUTMAN

We are coming to the end of this second Conference of the International Congregational Fellowship. We are assembled from the far places of the earth to bear witness to our faith in the Congregational cause. We have talked, planned, broken bread together, been superbly entertained - gastronomically and histrionically speaking - held fellowship

and worship. In this concluding hour let me try to say some of the things that seem worth saying about the values that have brought us to this gathering, The Nature, The Necessity and Strength of the Congregational idea. This paper will carry no weight of authority, but it will be the voice of one man, but he is a man who has long loved our way, thought about it much and got involved in certain of its doings.

"In a critical time in American history when the country was facing civil war Abraham Lincoln made a speech ...and opened the address with words we can well adapt to this moment. "If we could better know where we are, and whether we are tending, we could better know what to do and how to do it." Let us then look at what has brought us to this place in order to have a better understanding of what we stand for, who we are, and our place in the world's religious scene during the closing decades of the 20th. Century. The struggle of the Lord's free people to become free and stay free is an old and continuing battle. Its origins are lost in the mists of pre history. Yet we have a clear record of the God-aided effort of a brickyard gang of slaves to be released from Pharaoh's bitter yoke.

"And time would fail to tell of even the major battles of that long war from which there is no discharge. That cry in the night, that yell of rage we call the 'London - Amsterdam Confession' of 1596 which tells of the martyrdom of John Penry, Henry Barrow and John Greenwood, records one bloody skirmish. And the exiled Pilgrims and the 50 deaths by famine, frost and disease amid the scrub-roots of Plymouth plantation during the winter of 1620-21 is enough; And the ejection of 1662 when two thousand brave dissenting ministers out of fidelity to conscience accepted poverty ... rather than surrender their principles. In 1831 representatives of the Independent local Churches gathered in the Congregational Library, London to witness a firm and militant loyalty to the scriptural right of every separate church to maintain its independence and to that end formed the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Not long after in America true Congregationalists assembled at Albany, New York, in 1852, to found a similar Union. In November 1955, men and women from Churches which refused to surrender their autonomy and independence gathered at Detroit to create The National Association of Congregational Churches.

"In England in 1960, the pressures of organisational ecumenicity again set in motion the .. forces of ecclesiastical freedom. The several meetings in London in

1972 resulted in the foundation of the Congregational Federation of Continuing Congregational Churches. And it was felt by some that there should also be an International Congregational body lest the scattered churches in diverse lands die in isolation and despair. Accordingly a meeting was held at Chislehurst Kent in 1975 at which people from six countries affirmed their intention to form the International Congregational Fellowship, and the first meeting was held in London in 1977 as many who are listening can witness.

"This hasty review which the knowledgeable will know to be sketchy, will nevertheless come as news to some. It is made to show that the fight for spiritual and ecclesiastical freedom is not a thing of shallow chronology unrooted in history. We are assembled here in Wales, a very citadel of Independency, to renew our allegiance to the Congregational cause, a notable example of freedom in Christ, and to reach out around the world to join hands with those of like heart and mind. The Chislehurst meeting decided that, in addition to choosing a name and making plans for our first Conference, some sort of symbol of theological and ecclesiastical agreement ought to be reached. Accordingly a statement called 'The Chislehurst Thanksgiving' was written, amended and unanimously signed by those present. While, of course, it is not a formal confession of faith binding on persons and churches, it does attempt to state in precise form the principles which hold us together. I quote in full as follows.

THE CHISLEHURST THANKSGIVING

"We are gathered from the far corners of the world, from the East and from the West, we have walked the Congregational way to this meeting under the favour of Almighty God and by the leading of the Holy Spirit, to reaffirm our allegiance to Christ as faithful co-workers with Him 'according to the word of God' and in reliance on His sure promise that He is with us in our gathering.

"Although stress and strain and schism across the years has brought us to this day and place, we come not with sadness or with rancour but with a strong and sober joy that we are accounted worthy to witness to the way our fathers walked, in which, through the mercy of God, the headship of Christ and the communion of the Spirit, our children may travel after us in the generations to come. We have eaten our bread and held discourse with delight with one mind and heart because today God is renewing His people as he has ever done.

"We would not boldly presume to say that our declaration is binding on the Churches, upon the conscience of any christian, nor dare we give our words the solemn force of a covenant. These are but some of the things centrally

confessed by us in this hour of expectation and they are said out of grateful hearts. First, we believe that the controlling truth of the Congregational Way is that Jesus is Lord and great Head of His Church, both in its local gatherings and in the awesome and eternal sweep of the Church Universal. Although we extol in the family the wholeness and completeness of each gathered local church, as our distinctive and cherished witness, we do not narrowly deny the liberty of other Church orders or esteem them to be ways of darkness. The lamps are many, The light is one. Secondly, we believe that Independent local Congregational Churches should be joined in fellowship, in a free relation of affection. Ours is a brotherhood a 'koinonia' a sharing which reaches out beyond those known things, in a sense of mission to those 'whom having not seen we love in the bonds of Christ. Therefore we depart with thanksgiving from this place to which we came with question and concern, rejoicing that God by His power by the prompting of His Spirit has brought us to this fresh experience of Christ, and is sending us forth in simple discipleship in which complexities are reconciled, to be steadfast witnesses to His Kingdom and His Church in all the world.

"In gratitude and testimony on this thirteenth Day of May 1975, we hereby set down here..looking forward in hope to continue our work and witness as the International Congregational Fellowship. In the name of God. Amen."

Dr. Butman then proceeded to enlarge on his theme, 'The Nature, and Necessity and the Strength of Congregationalism'. The address came alive with well chosen illustrations and a rare quality of eloquence. His exegesis of the New Testament terms 'one fold' and 'one flock', and his reminder that the Minister was always referred to in connection with his flock., was reminiscent of the language of the 17th Century Ministers of Massachusetts in reply to requests from the Independent Ministers and Churches of Britain before and during the 1640's. Their replies as shown in such books as "Church Covenant and Church Government Discussed" reiterated the formula that they knew from Scripture and from experience of no other sort of church but the individual and separate and local congregation.

Dr. Butman's address will appear in full in the Report of the I.C.F. Bangor 1981. The few quotations I have provided will serve as a tasty morsel before the main course. It deserves to be circulated for the benefit of congregationalists generally and I hope that we may be sent copies by our American friends. It deserves to be distributed widely as it is full of good meat so much needed in these days. I must however apologise for errors due mainly to transcribing the quotations from tape.

DR. ARVEL STEECE AND THE ICC 1871 to ICF 1981

Dr. Steece had arranged a display of the work of the International Congregational Council from its inception in 1871, with scores of Photographs of the leading Congregational pioneers of that era. We are greatly indebted to Dr. Steece for his display and advice on so many matters Congregational, historical and practical. Another item publicised was the question mark that hangs over the Union Chapel, Islington, reference to which will be made in this issue.

THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS AND
THE I.C.F. BROADCAST SERVICE.

I will close by quoting Dr. Harry Butman's remarks as he summarised a wonderful week and introduced the final Session on Saturday morning. He said, "We are coming to the end of the 2nd Conference of the International Congregational Fellowship. We are assembled from the far places of the earth to bear witness to our faith in the Congregational cause. We have talked, planned, broken bread together, been superbly entertained, gastronomically and histrionically speaking - held fellowship and worship".

That evening, we attended a Festival of Praise, with a Welsh Male Voice Choir, a Ladies choir and a German youth band taking part.

The only cloud was the departure, in rather a hurry, of the Rev. Alan Argent and party on account of the report of trouble at Brixton. The next morning we were all at Pendref Welsh Congregational Church, Bangor for a final Service conducted by the Rev. J. Gwilym Jones and a sermon by Dr. Erwin R. Britton, followed by a memorable communion service conducted by the out-going president of ICF Dr. Harry R. Butman. The 1985 ICF will be held at Boston, Massachusetts.

Footnote: For the record, quoted from the I.C.F. Bi-lingual newsheet.

Thirteen countries were represented at Bangor.

Australia	3	Nigeria	1
England	115	Samoa	3
Greece	3	Scotland	2
Guyana	11	South Korea..	1
India	2	United States	
Nauru	1	of America...	216
New Zealand....	7	Wales	88

There were four children from England.
The Total being 457.

FROM THE SECRETARY

May I firstly welcome everyone to this the first printed edition of our Congregational History Circle Magazine. Both Rev. Trevor Watts and myself will appreciate receiving your comments on it and any suggestions that you might have as to how it can be possibly further improved, both in layout and in content. A considerable amount of time was spent at the May Annual General Meeting discussing how the magazine could be improved and we have tried to incorporate as many as possible of these ideas and suggestions as is practical in this edition.

As we come to membership renewal time again it is to be hoped that members and friends will decide to continue their support of our efforts as a Circle and that you will feel able to recommend the Circle to a friend during the 1982 year. Another suggestion might be to present a person with membership of the Circle for one year as a Christmas present perhaps, or even a New Year or Birthday present.

The printed magazine as opposed to a duplicated issue will considerably add to our costs and to meet these we do need to considerably increase our membership. It is to be hoped that everyone will endeavour to obtain a new reader for the magazine during 1982. During the early parts of 1982 it is hoped to distribute leaflets on the Circle to the E.F.-C.C. and Unaffiliated Congregational Churches and to some of the Scottish Congregational Churches. Leaflets are already in the process of distribution to the Churches in the Congregational Federation and it is hoped that Church Secretaries will make the details of the Circle known to as many people as possible in their Churches on receipt of this literature. A distribution of literature on the Circle to the Personal Members etc. of the Federation will be made early in the new year. We are grateful to the Federation for their kindness in distributing this material for us. If you feel that you could make use of some of the Circles advertising leaflets please do not hesitate to let the Secretary know.

We have also started work on beginning to regionalise our activities as was agreed at the last Annual General Meeting. In the last few months letters have gone out to all the officers of regional committees of the Federation in order to find a link person in each area who would be willing to act as a promoter for the Circle and also possibly display Circle literature at the many regional Rallies that take place. We trust that this will develop gradually as time goes on.

Finally, may I wish all readers of the magazine a very Happy Christmas and a successful New Year and hope that 1982 will be a year of blessing for you.

R. J. Bray.

FROM THE TREASURER

As we come to the end of another successful year for the Circle I am pleased to be able to report that subscriptions for 1982 will remain the same despite increased costs due to inflation etc. It is to be hoped that you will consider renewing your membership for 1982 and will return the membership renewal form enclosed with this issue at the very earliest. If we are to cover the increased costs of a printed magazine we do need to increase our membership of the Circle and it is to be hoped that as you renew your membership of the Circle you will consider recommending the Circle to a friend or close acquaintance in the hope that they might consider joining as well. Better still, why not give them membership of the Circle for a year as a Christmas, New Year or birthday present.

May I wish all members of the Circle a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year and hope that as we go into 1982 that the Circle will grow and increase its activities. Much has been achieved during 1981 hopefully even more will be achieved during 1982. To do this however, we need your support so we trust that you will renew your membership for 1982.

D. Morrell.

FROM THE POSTBAG

1. As we go to press I hear that the Annual Congregational Studies Conference of the E.F.C.C. is planned again for 1982. The first Conference held in 1981 was a great success and included a number of historical lectures that were of considerable interest. It is planned to hold the 1982 Conference at Westminster Chapel, Buckingham Gate, London, on Saturday 3rd April 1982 and it is hoped that members and friends of all branches of Congregationalism may like to attend. The Conference is in particular geared for lay men and women. The lecture programme is due for publication in January 1982 and if you would like to receive fuller details of what is proposed then write to Mr. P. Collins, 4 Reddons Road, Beckenham Kent. BR3 1LZ, at the earliest. The Conference will last one day.

2. A full schedule for the 1982 "Change and Decay" - The Future of our Churches Exhibition has now been published,

the details of which are as follows :-

The Travelling Exhibition will visit the following centres during the early part of 1982 as follows :-

1st January 1982 to 15th February 1982

Colchester and Essex Museum.

15th February 1982 to 30th March 1982

Norwich Museum.

1st April 1982 to 15th May 1982

Coventry Museum.

15th May 1982 to 30th June 1982

Burnley.

1st July 1982 to 15th August 1982

Sandwell (Wednesbury Art Gallery)

15th August 1982

The exhibition will be situated for three weeks at the Torbay end and then for three weeks at the Plymouth end.

Fuller details of the second half of the years programme will appear in the next magazine.

THE CASTLE GATE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (CONGREGATIONAL CENTRE)
NOTTINGHAM, STAINED GLASS WINDOWS.

Not very long ago I received a very interesting letter from Miss D. Hooper who has now come to live at Churchstow, Near Kingsbridge, Devon & who was a member of the Castle Gate Congregational and then U.R.C. Church in Nottingham, which is now being adapted to form the Congregational Centre, drawing the Circles attention to the fact that the previous stained glass windows at Castle Gate had been removed and from her enquiries it seemed unlikely that they would be replaced. These were the 1914-1918 War Memorial Windows which had apparently been condemned as they encouraged war. In consequence, Miss Hooper carried out some more research into these windows and now writes as follows :-

"..... After some ten years absence my memory retained only an impression of a soldier in uniform. I therefore wrote to Mr. E.B.Armitage and he has written quoting Rev. Duce's publication on "Castle Gate in the Twentieth Century" namely "the designs depicted in the pictorial scenes are "The Call", "The Response", "The Sacrifice" and "The Reward" and were artistically conceived in the styles of the period. The centre piece of both windows was the young knight in the four phases of his response to the challenge, the giving of his life".

Undoubtedly such a memorial would perhaps not be chosen today - tastes change, outlooks alter, but nevertheless the significant factor is not the form of the commemoration but

the very genuine feeling of regret, sadness and horror at the magnitude of the slaughter - no one who lived through that time could possibly imagine anyone wanting to glorify war.

To discard completely a genuine expression of feeling because it is not in accordance with the way we should express it today, seems to me to not only deny the historical value of the past, but to assert our right to pass judgement on the credibility of a past generations sincerity.

I sincerely hope therefore that there may still be time for these windows to be found a place in the new Congregational Centre at Nottingham or at least preserved in some form for prosperity."

Secretary.

BOOKSTALL

A number of books have been brought to the attention of the Secretary and details of these are contained below :-

1. The Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches has now published an excellent little book "Evangelical and Congregational" which contains amongst other things a copy of the Savoy Declaration and some basic principles of Congregationalism. Fairly heavily subsidised these books represent excellent value at 50 pence each plus postage and copies can be obtained either from the Secretary of the Cong. History Circle or from Rev.E.Guest, 8 Northfields, Braughing, Ware, Herts., SG11 2QQ.

2. The Stuckton Congregational Church, Hampshire celebrated its 125th Anniversary during September 1981 and for this they produced a history of the Church from 1856 - 1981. This is a very well produced book and copies of it can be obtained, price £1 plus postage from Mr.John Drew, "The Firs", Frogham, Fordingbridge, Hants. The book is printed and runs to 20 pages.

3. A new book on Gloucestershire Churches edited by David Verey has been recently published to raise funds for the Gloucestershire Historical Churches Preservation Trust. its contents include a forward by John Betjeman. a Concise History of Christianity in Gloucestershire in the Saxon and Roman periods by Michael Hare, the development of Church Architecture from the Norman period to the present day by David Verey and a chapter on Non-Conformist Meeting Houses and Chapels by Phillip Hayden. There are 43 coloured plates of churches, a Church Gazetteer and a map and the Congregational Federation Churches at Kingswood(Wotton-under-Edge)

Chalford; Fairford and Morton-in-the-Marsh are featured. Copies of the book may be obtained, Price £2.50 per copy from GHCPT, P.O. Box 8, Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1SZ.

4. "Church Planting" - A Case Study of Westmorland Nonconformity" by Rev. A.P.F.Sell, a U.R.C. Minister and Principal Lecturer at the West Midlands College of Higher Education has now been published. This represents the first comprehensive account of nonconformist movements over Westmorland as a whole. Reference is made to Quaker origins; to the older Dissent, both Independent and Presbyterian (and thence Unitarian); to the visits to the country of Fox, Nayler, Ingham, Whitfield, Wesley and Woolman; to the coming of the Baptists; and to such later developments as Primitive and United Methodism, the Brethren and the Pentecostals. The book is about 160 pages long and is illustrated fully, referenced it is furnished with a list of sources, three indices and a map. Copies of the book may be obtained from the publishers and orders for the book should be sent direct to The Managing Director, Henry E. Walter, Ltd., 26 Grafton Road, Worthing, Sussex, BN11. 1QU.

5. Copies of Part One of the Catalogue of the Congregational Library is now available from the Congregational Federation, 12 Canal Street, Nottingham, NG1 7EH at a price of £5-00 per copy. It is expected that the second part will be available during January 1982.

6. A book somewhat different from that usually reviewed in our columns must be mentioned, written by Mr. George H. Murgrave the Minister of St. Leonards Congregational Church it is certainly worthy of note. "Friendly Refuge" studies the shipwreck of St. Paul and the period the Apostle spent in Malta but also spotlights certain aspects of life in the early Christian Church. The author has in recent years made a special study of some early Christian Catacombs previously little known and which he believes to be an important source of information. There is a chapter on the agape taker.

Among the 48 photographs and illustrations not previously published are examples of early Christian graffiti and a wall carving discovered by the author. The book is available in paperback from Heathfield Publications, Station Road, Heathfield, Sussex TN21 8DR at £1.40 per copy plus 25p postage and packing. 8"x5½", 120 pages.

7. "Methodism and the Revolt of the field" deals with the contribution made by the various branches of methodism in the counties of Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk to the growth of Trade Unionism. The experience of religious conversion amongst the methodists helped to generate resolve and determination in agricultural workers. They were encouraged to demand better conditions of work and shorter working hours. Methodism also provided the labourer with many opportunities for reading, writing and public speaking as well as experience of organised

church business and working. The Methodist organisation provided a model for agricultural union structure and also a vehicle through which agricultural unionism spread. Methodist buildings provided a home for quite a number of union gatherings. This book covering the years 1872-96 is written by Nigel Scotland and is available at £10.00 per copy plus £1.10 towards postage and packing from Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 17a Brunswick Road, Gloucester GL1 1HG.

8. The Rev. Frank Quick, a Devon U.R.C. Minister has published his autobiography privately, covering all aspects of his life and ministry at Albion Hall, Market Street, Farnworth; Assistant Home Secretary LMS; Minister at Paddington Chapel and Sherwell U.R.C. Church, Plymouth. It is an interesting account of a Ministry covering some 60 years and covers a period of great changes in emphasis and outlook. Copies can be obtained by writing direct to Rev.F.E. Quick M.A., 7 Launceston Close, Roborough, Plymouth, Devon PL6 6DD. The price is £4.35 including postage.

THE MEMORIAL HALL AND CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY, LONDON

There has been a long silence about this matter whilst various technicalities and legal matters have been cleared up but I can now report that progress is being made as follows:-

Final proposals are now in the hands of the Charity Commissioners for the preparation of a scheme the main points of which are:-

1. That the Library should be removed to 15 Gordon Square, i.e. the premises next door to Dr. Williams' Library; that the Library should continue to be quite independent to Dr. Williams' but that the two libraries should be managed by the Dr. Williams' Librarian and Staff acting under the directions of the Memorial Hall Trust Library Committee.
2. That two rooms should be retained on the first floor of Caroon House, the existing Memorial Hall building, as the offices of the Memorial Hall Trust, but that the remainder of the building be let to the Post Office who already occupy the 4th Floor and the Front portion of the building.
3. That the Memorial Hall Trust Library Committee (composed of two members of each of the constituent bodies) and the Congregational Federation has elected Rev. John Travel and Rev. Ivor Morris as its two representatives, shall be responsible for the removal of the Library to Gordon Square and the disposal of surplus books, portraits and stained glass.

These proposals if put into effect would greatly increase the income of the Trust and hence the money which is available for support of the Trust's housing scheme and for disposal to

the constituent denominations to use in accordance with the original purposes of the Trust. In its new location the Library is likely to be more extensively used than at present and to be more expertly managed. The Trust will retain an interest in the old building with the presence of its Offices.

It is likely that the Charity Commissioners scheme would be produced about the beginning of December, and subject to any amendments, proposed by the Trust before being accepted by the Charity Commissioners. The plan would then be published and a period of one month allowed for any objections to be made by interested parties. If a serious objection was received then the whole scheme would have to be put back until the Charity Commissioners themselves had a chance to examine the objections. If no objections are received to the scheme the whole plan could be agreed by the end of 1981.

Two other matters concerning the Library may also be of interest to readers. Firstly it is not yet clear as yet what the rules will be governing the new Library facilities but it is likely that these will be very similar to those under which the Dr. Williams' Library operates at present. The Secretary is looking into this matter at present and will let you have further details as soon as is possible.

Secondly, as you will have read in the minutes enclosed with this magazine, it has been suggested by our members at the A.G.M. that in view of the historic connections of the Caroon House site with Congregationalism, that an open air service ought to be perhaps organised annually at the site, if the site is vacated. It has been suggested that this might be on the eve of St. Bartholomews day each year, i.e. August 24th. Readers views and comments on this idea would be appreciated.

The Secretary will endeavour to keep members and friends in touch with developments on this issue as is practical.

N.B. Full details of the Charity Commissioners scheme for the Congregational Library can be obtained by writing to:-

The Secretary, The Charity Commissioners, 14 Ryder Street London SW1.

"CANADA"

Abridged from "Our Sons Far Away" published by the Independent Press, Sept. 1936 (cont. from last issue)

The story begins from that of a John Wilkes who attended the Carrs Lane Church in Birmingham at the time of the Ministry of the Rev. J. Brewer and who had a son called Henry Wilkes. During the period of the depression that followed the European War his business failed and he was forced to emigrate to America in the year 1819. A few months later he was joined

by his wife and seven children, one was named Henry. The voyage across the Atlantic took 44 days.

The Wilkes family eventually settled in Montreal, where young Henry found happiness in a surrendered life, and joined the fellowship of a Congregational Church, in which he became an active worker and gained the confidence of his associates. On the 20th December, 1827, a society was established, composed of Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists, to work on a catholic basis as the Canada Education and Home Missionary Society and Henry Wilke was appointed secretary. Thus began his public career in the service of an early attempt at Canadian Church Union.

Wishing to give himself to the work of the ministry he sought the first opportunity of returning to England for training and found an opening in Glasgow where he joined the church of which Dr. Ralph Wardlaw was minister. It was a tribute to the reputation the young man had acquired that he should have been charged with the task of bringing the claims of Canada to the notice of the Churches in Scotland and England, and seeking financial support and urging the great need for ministers. Wilkes graduated at the University and studied theology under Dr. Wardlaw. One interesting incident took place during his student days which is worthy of recollection. After the usual practice by which students are sent out to neighbouring villages and towns to preach, one Sunday he found himself ministering to a small congregation at Hamilton. At the evening service, was one who had been invited to attend by one of the worshippers who had noticed his depressed air when passing on the street. This stranger found the words spoken by the student peculiarly apt to his case, his burden was lifted and he became a changed man. He continued to attend the chapel at Hamilton where he had found peace and later became a deacon there. Neil Livingstone was the father of the weaver boy whose tomb in Westminster Abbey is probably thronged by more pilgrims than visit any memorial save that of the Unknown Warrior. The story of the young student from Canada whose sermon was the means of bringing salvation to the house of Livingstone is one of the romances of the colonial missions, and of Henry Wilkes as one of the links which bind missionary societies of the world together in the service of the Master.

At the close of his theological training Wilkes was invited to settle as minister of the Albany Street Church in Edinburgh and seemed destined to become the popular minister of a city congregation. His heart was in Canada however and the way was being prepared for his return. The Rev. Richard Miles who had been a missionary in South Africa had settled in Montreal and founded what became known as Old

Zion Church. In October 1836 it was necessary to seek his successor, and the eyes of the congregation were directed to Henry Wilkes, who by unanimous vote was called to the pastorate. In considering the invitation he took counsel with his friends, many of whom were deeply interested in the formation of the Colonial Missionary Society. The conjunction of circumstances seemed to be the guidance of God, and the Colonial Missionary Society saw that here was the very man to assist them in meeting the needs of their countrymen in the West.

Wilkes was dedicated to this service at the King's Weigh House Chapel, Duke Street, London, and as there was no suitable hymn in the books especially for the occasion Josiah Conder wrote the first hymn for colonial Missions. Thus at this service was sung the hymn beginning :-

"Churches of Christ, by Gods right hand
Thick planted in this favoured land,
If to your heart his Word be dear,
O think of those who pine to hear,
Far from their native shore exiled
A Pastors voice amidst the wild."

On his arrival in Canada, Wilkes immediately arranged a tour of inspection. He was welcomed in churches of other denominations, and thrilled the Canadians by telling them that sixteen hundred Congregational Churches in Britain had formed a society especially for their countrymen in the colonies. Within two years there were thirteen ministers working in Canada partly sustained by grants from the society and a chain of stations had been strung along the great highway of the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes.

Canada was at that time a prepared field for the Free Churches with only about one tenth of the people either having association with or attending the established Church of England. A scheme of emigration promoted by John Galt, the Scottish novelist, was introducing to the vacant lands between Huron and Ontario, emigrants who were entering Canada at the rate of forty thousand a year, and were moving in a steadystream towards the western forests. There were no railways, and though in 1839 the first railway was opened, the settlement was for many years miles beyond the rail-head, where men and women faced the rough life of the backwoods.

The early missionaries lived lives of peril and adventure amid uncleared lands and impassable roads. Some of the pioneer preachers were rough and untrained men, but they were none the worse for that, and only the strongest could survive the hard life. In perils by water, in perils by snow, in perils by wild beasts, the missionaries journeyed on to carry the good news. The winter was the chosen time for travelling because during the summer months the settlers had too much

work to do. Sometimes a hundred sleighs would gather for services, and not only the preachers who lived on the outposts but ministers from the towns, would make long journeys, which would take them many weeks to reach the lonely settlers. There they would enjoy the primitive hospitality of the pioneer shack, a log cabin with a single large room, with screens and curtains to ensure some privacy, and with a wood fire roaring up the chimney all through the long winter night. These were the conditions in which Canada was evangelized.

Henry Wilkes, the apostle of Canada, did not confine himself to one neighbourhood, nor to one province. In 1842 the Colonial Missionary Society urged him to go and see what conditions were like in the seaboard provinces. In Halifax, Nova Scotia, he preached in a Presbyterian Church, and found that they were singing Watts' hymns, and the inscriptions on the tombs told him that it was once a Congregational Church. This was not the only church in similar conditions. Absence of organisation had made it impossible to maintain the old witness. There was no need for competition, there was much land to be possessed, the Presbyterians welcomed the coming of Wilkes with the promise of help. Through the Colonial Society ministers were sent to the colonies of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and before many years the churches had been united into an association, and when years afterwards, the Congregational Union of Canada was formed, there were thirty churches brought into the Union through the fostering care of the Colonial Society in those early years.

From the early days the Society made its contribution in terms of men and money, and especially in the training of Canadian men for the Canadian needs. A friend of Henry Wilkes comes into the story here. Adam Lillie was also a member of Dr. Wardlaw's Glasgow church, and was then sent as a missionary to India by the London Missionary Society. The climate affected his health and he was forced to return to Edinburgh and in 1834 met up with Henry Wilkes again. He was moved by the claim of the West and went out to Canada to become a pastor of a church at Brantford. Here he was able to preach to a settlement of Mohawk Indians, and also to a colony of slaves who had escaped over the border. The Colonial Missionary Society placed under his care a young Canadian, Ludwick Kribe, to be trained for the ministry, and this first native Canadian to enter the Congregational ministry was a token of what proved to be perhaps the most enduring work of the Society for Canada. Dr. Lillie soon moved to Toronto, where he continued to teach young men who were called to preach, and by 1843 he had eleven students under his care.

In 1843 the Kings College was founded in Toronto, and the McGill University in Montreal, a regular contribution coming from the Colonial Missionary Society and by special grants. When Dr. Lillie visited England in 1848 he returned

with 500 books for his library and nearly four hundred pounds. The college continued in Toronto until 1864 when it removed to Montreal and began its association with McGill. First on the roll of benefactors to the College is the Colonial Missionary Society, whose grants had averaged £260 per year, and through whom had come not only money but good counsel and good men introduced for service in Canada.

The middle years of the 19th Century saw rapid political development which culminated in the federation of all the provinces into the Dominion of Canada. The way to confederation was paved by the growth of union sentiment in the churches, and the organisation of Congregationalism was one of the influences at work in creation of that sentiment. Both in Lower and Upper Canada there had been missionary societies, and in 1853 these were united to form the Congregational Missionary Society, whose aims were toward the planting of new churches and the support of those that were weak. The tide of emigration was still flowing, the population of Canada in 1853 being about 2 million which had risen to three million by the time the Dominion was proclaimed in 1867. These settlers were pushing beyond the boundaries of Upper Canada into the great Central territories from which would soon be carved a new province, Manitoba. The help of the Colonial Society was continually needed to keep up with these pioneers. The churches of Canada were doing their best but even as late as 1867 the income of the churches was only 6,000 dollars, together with a grant of fourteen hundred dollars from the Colonial Missionary Society. A nation was being born and was struggling toward independence, a continent was being opened up to colonization, and letters were being received from Canada and being forwarded to almost every village post office in England; and yet the resources at the disposal of those who faced the responsibility of evangelising a continent were in the region of fifteen hundred pounds.

In 1881 the first sod of the Canadian Pacific Railway was cut, and in four years time the last spike had been driven home and the link between the oceans completed. In the next twenty years enormous changes were to take place. A simple frontier fort where a company of mounted police camped and from which they supervised the trappers and Indians, saw almost in a night the lonely Fort Garry become the City of Winnipeg where thousands of alert western men and women built homes and warehouses, schools and churches. Wheat came into its own and the Prairies were peopled. The first load was exported in 1877, and soon wheat supplanted timber as the greatest Canadian interest. The rapid advance was a strain on the colonial society, then in its fiftieth year, and it was struggling to meet the need of continents with an income little more than adequate for a dozen parishes.

During the early years of expansion efforts were made to concentrate upon strategic centres, of which Winnipeg was the most important. A committee in Montreal explored the possibilities, and the Colonial Missionary Society encouraged new work in the province of Manitoba and as far west as Vancouver, a statement that conveys very little until one realises that a new church was established at Brandon and another at Nelson which are a thousand miles apart. Here was the continual problem of the dominions, to bridge distance and to continually press a little further on.

By the beginning of the 20th century the number of emigrants passing through Canadian ports reached unprecedented levels so that until just before the outbreak of the Great War 360,000 entered Canada in one year. In one year a single society sent out fifteen thousand, whilst such institutions as Dr. Barnardo's sent a regular supply of healthy lads to settle on the farms in the West. The society had instituted its Hands-across-the-seas Department to assist in shepherding its new chums. Experience had taught that the important days for a new arrival were the voyage out and the early days in the new land, so the society arranged that when they were told of someone going out to the Dominion they would arrange for that person to be met on the other side, given a welcome and an effort made to link them up with some church. Some idea of the extent of this work is given by the fact that the minister of Quebec in a single year met 1,350 new arrivals at the port. At the beginning of the 20th century Congregationalism in Canada had reached a perilous condition. The churches were crushed by the load of debt incurred in trying to keep up with the flood tide of immigrants. A period of depression had followed the period of expansion and a burden of 40,000 pounds in property debts was sapping energy and crippling usefulness. It was then that a deputation from the society kindled new hope. They recommended that Britain should shoulder 10% of the liability if Canada would endeavour to clear the debt. The Canadian churches responded with enthusiasm and when the Canadian Union celebrated its Jubilee the Churches had been freed from this crushing debt. It was then possible to face the years ahead of rapid expansion with new vigour.

Just before the first world war it looked as though Canada was really on the crest of the wave. At one time half of those entering Canada eventually crossed the border into the States but now this had ceased and Canada itself was the attraction. A continual flow of young men were going out to be trained in Montreal and many a remote settlement was being visited by a man whose heart was aflame for God. The flow of youth was ever toward the West and North. It was then that the First World War intervened and the work of the Society was tested by fire. In many an English home there was a welcome for the colonial boys and it was in these years that

the Colonial Missionary Society was able to introduce the lads from the colonial churches to British friends, and in training camps and in recuperation at a convalescent home many friendships were formed and many were led to thank God for the Society which had a thought for the kinsfolk overseas. During the War the Society had the difficult task of keeping things going in Canada with fewer young lads being available to train for the ministry.

It was during the War that men dreamt of a new fellowship after the war. Whilst other Dominions and the Old Country, talked and conferred, Canada acted. The Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists came together to see where the comradeship of the trenches might continue and eventually the United Church of Canada came into being. It was in the year 1926 that the Union was finally accomplished. The Colonial Missionary Society continued to send out earnest and devout men from the English churches to train on Canadian soil for the ministry in the United Church. The crisis of recent years has caused further changes in the position with immigration having nearly ceased and the years of depression having caused the United Church to conserve manpower, and there was a pause in the call for men. Thus the close of a century of work for Canada finds the Society contemplating a completed task. Canada was the first-born, and now the first of the children able to do without the help of the old home. Thus a story beginning with Henry Wilkes ends when Union was achieved and with a Canadian Church facing its own responsibilities, strong with the vigour of youth and grateful to those whose nurture has led to robust independence.

Abridged from the original by Mr.R.J.Bray.

"THE MAYFLOWER"

- A DEFINITE PLACE IN OUR CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY?

An extract in the Department of the Environment Historic Buildings Bureau Quarterly List of Buildings which are for sale or to be let and which carry listed status drew my attention to a little bit of Congregational History which perhaps is often overlooked or not known. The simple advert read as follows:-

OXFORDSHIRE

The United Reformed Church, The Square, Abingdon, Oxfordshire.
 The United Reformed Church, The Square, Abingdon, Oxfordshire (formerly the Congregational Chapel), consists of two buildings, one in front of the other. The early Meeting House at the rear dates c.1700 and has some claim to being of International Interest. This is due to the use of a pair of pillars reputed to be the masts of the 'Mayflower'. The front building an addition of c.1862, is a dignified classical style and forms a notable feature of the Square. The stone front is of

5 bays with giant pilasters of the Composite Order carrying an entablature and pediment. The Arched windows are matched by a pair of carved doorways. The simple interior has a gallery on three sides with an elaborate cast iron balustrade. The Church is listed grade II.

The Church building is situated in the square in the centre of the small, very pleasant, riverside town of Abingdon, which possesses many fine period buildings. Oxford is 7 miles to the North and London about 58 miles distant.

The building is approximately rectangular in shape and principally comprises a lofty sanctuary with a balcony on 3 sides, with a number of ancillary rooms at the rear, such as a vesting room, kitchen, W.C. etc. The total floor area is about 5,800 sq. feet. The building is in some need of repair.

The Trustees of the Church are anxious to find a new use for the building and would be willing to consider any reasonable propositions. They are prepared to offer the building on a very long lease at a reasonable rent, this and the other terms to be a matter for negotiation. Alternatively they are prepared to consider reasonable offers for the sale of the Church. "N.B. Abingdon Cong. Church is listed in the 1971 Cong. Year Book as seating 580."

Somewhat interested by the reference to the "Mayflower" which has decided Congregational links anyway I promptly wrote off to Mr.G.S. Grossart, the Secretary of Abingdon U.R.C. which now worships as a joint U.R.C./Methodist Fellowship worshipping at the Methodist Church (hence the sale of the Cong. Building), subsequent letters to the British Library in London and armed with copies of the "Oxford Mail" of Friday 9th August 1929 and a copy of the "Herald Advertiser" of Friday 11th February 1955 I was able to piece together a little of the story behind the "Mayflower" masts appearing at Abingdon.

Timber from the Mayflower which carried the Pilgrim Fathers to America from Britain in 1620 is greatly valued. A piece of it was presented to the Pacific Highway Association and is now in the Peace Portal, which marks that Highways entrance into Canada and models have been made from the timber and presented to Sir Winston Churchill, President Roosevelt and Mr.Truman.

The "Mayflower" sailed from Plymouth on September 6th 1620 with about 100 passengers to found the first permanent colony in New England. On November 11th 1620 some 41 of them signed the famous "Mayflower Compact" in Provincetown Harbour and a month later a small party chose to settle at what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts. The Mayflower which served these early settlers so well was very small by modern standards of about 180 tons. At a later date the Mayflower returned

to England and was believed to have been eventually preserved and placed on exhibition. Unfortunately at a later date given as variously 1624, 1641 and 1655 she was broken up. Some documentary evidence exists to suggest that the date of 1624 is the most likely. A document dated 1624 states "The appraisment on valuation of the shippe the "Mayflower" of London and her tackle and furniture, taken and made by authoritye of His Majesty's highe courte of Admiraltye the 26th day of May, 1624 at the instance of Robert Childe, John Moore and _ .Jones, owners. A document in Latin at the same time states that the condition of the Mayflower to be "Mayflower candemque navern in ruinis esse". The valuers decided on a price of £128-8s.-4d which was very low for a ship of its day and was obviously a breaking up estimate.

Dr.Rendell Harris, author of the 'Finding of the Mayflower' visited England in 1929 as guest of the English Mayflower Club and whilst here inspected the timbers of a barn at Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire which has long been associated with the remains of the Mayflower and which has now been proved to contain in its construction quite a few of the remains of the "Mayflower" with the exception of its masts. Dr.Rendell Harris at the same time also inspected the timbers of Abingdon Cong: Church and from his other researches drew some interesting conclusions. It is thought that the masts together with other timber from the Mayflower lay in the barn known as Jordans Barn, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire before being transported by barge to Abingdon when the Cong. Church was built there in 1672. As the masts alone would have made a very small load it is extremely likely that other timber went with it at the same time. Similarities were found by Dr.Rendell Harris with the timbers at Jordans Barn and the roofing timbers at Abingdon so it is likely that these too were constructed from ex-Mayflower material. The masts themselves are built into the older schoolrooms and classrooms of the original meeting house at Abingdon built in 1672 and although there are stories that the masts were originally part of a John Williams Missionary Ship and masts from the ship that brought William Prince of Orange to England expert examination has proved that they are certainly the lower portions of masts from deck level to platform of an old style 'step' mast of the type used on the Mayflower. The masts themselves are some 30 feet in height, their circumference tapering from 54 inches to 38 inches along their length. When the old building was originally constructed the side entrance of the new one was the original door to the old facade and was 30 feet high. The masts stretched the full height of the building. The full view of them was interrupted in 1858 when the floor of the upper schoolroom was built around them. Some of the roof timbers in the loft which are thought to be also from the

Mayflower are massive one having a circumference of 64 inches tapering down to 40 inches in its 40 foot length. Bolt holes, mortice holes and wooden pegs in the wood suggest that they were constructed for a very different task to their present one. A report by a shipbuilder Joseph Hyams made for Dr. Rendel Harris reports remarkable similarities between the timbers of Jordans Barn at Gerrards Cross and those at Abingdon. All are of Oregon Pine, the measurements tallying with the known statistics of ships of the Mayflower type.

As I said at the beginning of this article the Church premises at Abingdon are now for sale or lease and it is to be hoped that whatever the fate of the buildings might eventually be that the timbers of the Mayflower will remain preserved. The Church is Government Listed Historic Grade II so it is to be hoped that this timber which has stood the test of time for some 300 years without warping or shrinkage will be allowed to rest in peace.

R.J.Bray.

CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY-SUPPLEMENTARY CATALOGUE, PART 1 pp347

We are grateful to Mr.S.O.Gowlett, Secretary of the Congregational Memorial Hall Trust Ltd for the following note on the New Supplementary Catalogue.

During the time the Library was temporarily housed at Lown Hall, Cricklewood, while the present Memorial Hall was being erected, the late Bernard Honess and the Rev. Charles Surman prepared initial lists consisting of approximately 20,000 books for Volume III (1910-1970) of the Congregational Library Catalogue. It was the wish of the Council of the Trust, and in particular Mr. John Wilcox, that this immense amount of labour in preparation of a Supplementary Catalogue should not be wasted and so it was decided in 1980 to finalise and publish this work.

Final checking of these lists is being made by Mr.Surman and verified by the Memorial Hall staff against the books and index cards in the Library and typed in all its stages by Mrs.M.J.Mould of the Congregational Federation Office at Nottingham - Mr.John Wilcox undertaking the supervision of the printing and publishing. At present Part 1 (Aa-Fy) has been published, copies of which are obtainable from The Memorial Hall for £5, and subsequent Parts will be forthcoming in due course.

The publication of this 1st Volume fills a gap and meets a deeply felt need for guidance and insight into the treasures of The Memorial Hall Library. Its first entry under 'A.F' Narrative Hymns, a proper introduction

to Hymnology. The last entry, Finch; Martin (1628-98) lists, 'An Answer to Mr. Thomas Grantham's Book,' called a Dialogue between the Baptist and the Presbyterian 1691. Richard Baxter has 22 Titles, Philip Dodderidge has 14 items. All the great Religious leaders are here represented. Another helpful device is the placing of an asterisk indicating that the author's name appears in the Dictionary of National Biography.

Commending the 1981 Volume Mr. Fred Riceman says, "As a member of the Trust for over 20 years, and chairman for 18, I know something of the efforts that have been made to complete this volume of the Catalogue thus enabling a greater use to be made of this valuable asset of the Trust." and wishes that it "further the work and witness of the Church of which we are a part."

J. O. Gowlett.

"ISLINGTON CHAPEL IS UNDER THREAT"

Article printed in The London Weekender, September 25th 1981

One of the grandest non-conformist Chapels in London - the cathedral like Union Chapel in Islington is in danger of destruction.

Islington Council have agreed to ask the G.L.C. to let demolition go ahead despite the building being listed. But Save Britains Heritage, the architectural preservation group, is pleading for the great 19th century gothic building to be saved as "one of the ten greatest Victorian Town Chapels".

A dwindling congregation has meant that the Union Chapel, set back from busy Upper Street in Compton Terrace, is becoming a burden to the handful of worshippers. When it was built in the heyday of church construction, it had seating for 3,500.

Its great brick tower with spire, turrets and gothic clock has been a landmark for the area since 1877 when architect James Cubitts masterpiece was opened.

Said a SAVE spokeswoman: "We believe a scheme can be evolved to retain the chapel by using it for a wider range of activities. Concerts, Conferences and Meetings. As one of the surviving grandest chapels in London, it should certainly qualify for a Historic Building Council Grant."

Chapel Minister, the Rev.Gareth Jones, says, "The chapel was built to this size at a time when Canonbury and Islington were out of London and it became a fashionable thing to be seen to go to the Union Chapel. Today our congregation is down to about 20. Even so, demolition is not imminent. Re-development is only one of the several options we are looking for

Mr. S.R.Forster of Union Chapel adds the following:-
 "On the 17th September 81 Islington Planning Committee passed as expected Outline Planning Permission for the scheme and have passed it on to the G.L.C.Historic Buildings Board and we shall now have to see what their decision is.

Over 34 objections were received at the planning committee meeting, but not one was read out, also the debate on the scheme for the new chapel lasted only 3 minutes 40 secs. You can imagine therefore that conservationists are furious. Certainly Islington have acted very naughtily.

Save Britains Heritage, The Ancient Monuments Society and the Victorian Society to name but a few are all objecting to the proposal to rebuild the chapel, saying that the "replica Georgian Chapel is no more that a facade, a pastiche and that the existing chapel is one of the finest town chapels in this country. Much publicity has appeared in local and now national press and I enclose a page from the London Weekender (as produced above).

The three conservation groups I mention above, particularly Save Britains Heritage believe that a scheme can be evolved making use of the chapel for Concerts, Conferences etc and are making suggestions in that line. Also a group of residents are hoping to form a "Friends of Union Chapel" so we shall see what happens. Meanwhile the Church has yet to decide which option it wishes to take, refurbishment or rebuild. Will keep you in touch with developments."

THE CHANGING FORTUNES OF A CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - THE FINAL
CHAPTER OF AN OLD AND SAD STORY

The local council in St.Austell,Cornwall has for some time wished to acquire the site of the Continuing Congregational Church to demolish it to redevelop the site which is adjacent to the new town centre in Aylmer Place, St.Austell, Cornwall. Finally in 1974 the council clinched the deal to buy the Congregational Church site and to offer the Halifax Building Society who were strong contestants for the site an alternative site. The council at that time agreed to the stipulation that the council paid the same sum for the church as the building society was prepared to offer. The Congregationalists were granted the use of their church until such time as it was demolished. Because of financial stringency this work was delayed, and as it happened, the demise of the church as a community occurred late in 1980, though the building was still standing. This was the last, sad chapter of a story that began a long time ago.

It could be said that the St.Austell of years ago was overchurched. At one time the town, with a very much smaller population than today, was served by the Parish Church, a

Roman Catholic Church, St. Johns Methodist, Zion United Methodist, East Hill United Methodist, a Baptist Church in West Hill, a Primitive Methodist Church in South Street, the Congregational Church in Victoria Place, the Society of Friends (Quaker) meeting house in High Cross Street, a Salvation Army citadel and buildings for the Plymouth Brethern and, more recently Spiritualists. A short distance away in Mount Charles, there were two non-conformist churches.

One of the earliest records of Congregationalism in St. Austell was in 1787 when a lease was executed between Bennetts Trudgeon, carpenter, Walter Pomeroy Snr and Walter Pomeroy Jnr, of the garden called Easterbrooks where occasional services were held. By 1805 sufficient advance had been made to launch a plan for pastoral oversight and the company of worshippers came under the care of Walter Pomeroy who gave his services once per month on a Sunday.

A covenant was signed by the members on May 26th 1805 and in June 1837 a Declaration of Faith and Practice of the Independent Dissenters was accepted by the members. Previously St. Austell came under the watchful eye of Mevagissey and Truro. Prior to 1805 the Congregationalists were meeting at what was referred to as the Tabernacle, St. Austell.

Mr. Leslie Lobb, Treasurer of the St. Austell Congregational Church for many years stated in his address during the final service at the church that he thought the church was probably the oldest non-conformist church in St. Austell.

The present Congregational Church in Victoria Place was built in 1850, so up to the date of its final service there had been 130 years of continuous worship there. Minute books of the early years still exist. The oldest is a suede bound volume whose unlined pages are of hand-made paper. It contains a record, in copper plate handwriting of a covenant made on May 26th 1805 by a number of men and women several of whom made their sign because they could not write. These names are John Roberts, Sampson Vivian, W. Pomeroy, William Knight, John Williams, John Dan, Elizabeth Williams, Honour James, Elizabeth Pomeroy, Elizabeth Cullis, Walter Pomeroy Jnr, Susanna May, Elizabeth Woolcock, Phillipa Scantlebury, Richard Francis and Elizabeth Saunders. We are also told that on May 30th, 1805 at the Church Meeting it was agreed unanimously to receive Mr. and Mrs. Vivian, Mrs. Croggon, Anna Maria Blackmore and Mr. Lambe as occasional communicants next Lords Day, and that David Axford was received unanimously as a member of the church David Axford's signature is appended.

A Covenant Centenary service was held in May 1905, when the pastor was the Rev. G.L. Hurst, A.T.S., and the Sunday School Superintendent was Mr. J.T. Hawke.

A Sunday School Souvenir of 1905, a stiff card, shows a photographic reproduction of the front of the Congregational

Church is Victoria Place, Duke Street and at that time there was a small garden which looked very pretty in front of the church and belonging to an adjacent house.

OLD CHURCH AWAITS DATE WHEN IT WILL BE DEMOLISHED

The Minute Books of the Congregational Church record the week by week progress not only of worship but of necessary business matters. They also reveal some facets of life outside.

In 1958, its many officers included: Sunday School Superintendent, Deacons Secretary, Weekly Offertory Secretary, organist and choirmaster, pew steward secretary, superintendent of fabric, London Missionary Society collector and treasurer, church correspondent, choir fund collector, pulpit flowers supervisor, delegate to the Assembly of England and Wales, Cornwall County Union delegates, collector for church anniversary, and of course the pastor.

Going further back to 1838, the ground (or high) rent of the Independent Chapel, payable to Mrs. I. Phillips of Polgooth, was £1.5s a year. In 1848, eight weeks board was paid to a Mr. Balfour at 8s. per week, total £3.4s. Six pounds of mould candles cost 4s. and a pair of snuffers 1s.

In 1839, £5.10.4d was paid by the deacons to Mr. Cope, the pastor, for the Lady Day quarter. On March 26th, 5s was paid to Mrs. Williams for cleaning the chapel and lighting the candles, and on April 19th there is an entry "Cash paid to Mr. Knight for repairing the roof, 7s". In February 1840 Joseph Grose paid rent of a workshop, 15s a year.

One item states that in 1952 the church had an overdraft at the bank of £87. which the bank wished to have paid off. In 1954 100 Hymn Books, plus music books for the choir were bought for £60.

Early in 1940 the pastor, the Rev. J. Emrys Evans left and in August that year the Congregational Manse was let for 12 months to the evacuated staff of the Royal Sailors Orphan Girl's School. In the same year there was an entry which referred to the straightened circumstances of ministers from evacuated areas.

The Rev. Emrys Evans was to be asked to resign, in view of his absence on service and the Rev. Hugh C. Wallace was to be asked to become the new pastor. In May, 1942 the names are given of members of the church serving in the war.

Going back to April 1927 there is an entry which gives another idea of the difference in money values then, and now. Hele and Sons estimate for rebuilding and thoroughly overhauling the church organ and rotary blower and putting in a new stop was £171. Mr. Perry George agreed to pay for the extra stop at a cost of £28.

As far back as 1957 there was mention of demolishing cottages adjoining the church, land being required by the local

authority for improvement purposes. In 1960 it was noted that the proposed new road would cut off the church lavatory, and then the minister the Rev. F.W. Card, suggested that in place of that land the church ask for six feet of land at the back of the church to build a new cottage and two lavatories.

Shortly before the war, cottages owned by the church were condemned as unfit for human habitation, but no steps were made to enforce the order before 1939. During the war, and because of the acute housing shortage, the church was asked to make the cottages habitable and this was done by Mr. T. Reeves, a member of the church, at his own expense, he being eventually reimbursed from the rents of the cottages. In 1942 the total rental from five cottages was £52. per year and the income to the church was £30. Rates on four of the cottages were £9.18s 1d per year.

Two or three years previous to 1958 the council refused to allow the cottages to be re-let for human habitation and it was agreed to sell them to the council for £275.

Council proposals for development, discussed as far back as 1960 involved the demolition of the church premises, but the whole scheme was only in the initial stages. There were discussions with the then Urban Council and on the future of the church itself, in 1963, 1965 and 1966. It was agreed amongst the worshippers that the church must remain a worshipping community if there was to be a claim for compensation.

The council agreed to buy the church in 1966. For some years subsequently, the church was uncertain as to what was to happen, but services were continued. The Halifax Building Society was looking for a site, in St. Austell and as the council had not set out in writing that it would buy, the Society was told that the church was still for sale.

On hearing this the Council which by now was Restormel Borough Council, offered the society an alternative site, which was accepted, on condition that the council paid the sum for the church that the Halifax Building Society offered. The council agreed to acquire the site in 1974.

The council granted the Congregationalists the use of the church until such time as it was to be demolished. Owing to financial stringency this work was delayed and at present there is no firm decision on a date to take down the church.

Meanwhile the Congregational worshippers dwindled to a tiny band, and though the Council offered the church any site within reason, the challenge was not taken up. A site was available at Sandy where a building could have been put up to serve as a church on a Sunday and for secular purposes during the week, with a flat for the minister.

Some members of the church were willing to accept the offer, but others particularly those who were older, did not feel they could shoulder the responsibility.

The money received from the council was used for a number of good causes including medical and agricultural missions, providing special lighting equipment for remedial work amongst babies in a Botswana hospital, and the payment of "umbrella" insurance premiums for Congregational churches which could not afford them. The fund will be administered by the Congregational Federation from March 31st 1981.

From the annals of the past come many names formerly known to many people in St.Austell and still known to some. Mr.H.M. Box was a deacon for some 30 years, treasurer from 1908-22, secretary from 1922-38, member of the executive committee of Cornwall Congregational Union for more than 20 years and its secretary for seven years, and a President of the County Union. He was also a Governor of the County School and Chairman from 1936-38, a member of East Cornwall Public Assistance Committee, and a county magistrate from 1937. He died in August 1938.

Other names include Messrs.W.L.P.Croggon, J.T.Hawke, Perry George, Jonathan Couch, T.Reeves, J.H.Laity, J.C.Rowe, A.E. Gaved, A.G. Watkins, D.I. Rendell, S.H. Tamblyn, J.Rowse, J.P.Teague, George Williams, E.L.Lobb, T.Prout, T.Dunn, F.G.Cox, E.Goodman, George Best, Leonard Forster, W.J.Rich, Mrs.Hawke (in 1936 the oldest member of the church, whose husband had been church secretary for about 40 years) and many others. Mr. Horace Crocker was church organist for many years. He died in 1961.

The closure of the Congregational Church in St.Austell, Cornwall ends a long tradition of service in the town. In due course, the building in Victoria Place will become just a memory. The names of those associated with it might be forgotten also, but their good influence in the community is something that is far and away beyond measurement.

Copy of article printed in the Cornish Guardian on Thursday March 12th 1981 and Thursday March 19th 1981. Written by Mr. Cyril Bunn, from information provided by Mr. Leslie Lobb.

FROM OUR CONTEMPORARIES

Since the last issue of our magazine in May 1981 I am pleased to report that the following magazines have been received by us:

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY
Volume 2. No.8. October 1981. This issues contains amongst

others interesting articles on "The Hateful Mystery"; "Non-conformists and Hell" by Michael R. Watts; "Methodism and the older Dissent: Some Perspectives" by Geoffrey F. Nuttall and "The appointment of a Pew Opener" by Andrew A. Smith. Also with the magazine come brief details of the U.R.C. History Society Summer School which is proposed for Sept. 17th - 19th 1982 at Trefecca College, Near Brecon, Powys. The estimated cost is £16 per person and the theme "Welsh Dissent". Speakers will include Dr. R. Tudur Jones and Rev. Geraint Tudor of Cardiff.

THE BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Baptist Quarterly, Volume XXIX October '81 No. 4. This edition contains articles on "In the Study", comments on Dr. Guthrie's 'New Testament Introduction' by N. Clarke, 'Baptists and the current debate on Baptism' by M. J. Quicke; 'The state of Religion in Northamptonshire (1793)' by G. F. Nuttall and 'Robinson and Robertson: A brief Correspondence' by G. G. Nichol.

THE WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Proceedings of Volume XLIII May 1981. This issue contains details of the proposed constitution for the society; and an article on the "Behind the alternative order" on the Alternative Order of Service for the Administration of the Lords Supper, or, Holy Communion" which formed part of the 1936 Book of Offices.

THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON'S connexion and Sierra

Leone Mission: - "Voice" Issues No. 276 and 277 for July-Sept. 81 and Oct-Dec. 81. These issues contain much news and views of the Connexions churches as well as details of the 200th Anniversary Celebrations of the Connexion which were held on Saturday 24th October 1981 at the American Church in London (formerly Whitefield's Tabernacle) and which included in the celebrations a visit by The Lady Margaret, Countess of Huntingdon and an Historic Lecture by the Revd. Gilbert W. Kirby M.A., For those not able to be present copies of this lecture are available for a voluntary donation plus postage from The Secretary, Countess of Huntingdon Connexion, Huntingdon Hall, 65, De La Warr Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex. RH19 3BS.

Another Milestone - Preparations are well in hand for the opening in Nottingham next year of the Congregational Centre. It will house the Offices of the Cong. Fed., have a large hall for public services and other meetings, with smaller halls for Council meetings and other gatherings, a Library, as well as flat accommodation for retired ministers, as well as for youth and other groups attending conferences. Services of Thanksgiving have been held when the Centre was on view. We heard very encouraging reports of work on the premises proceeding space, and supported by gifts from the Churches and The Memorial Hall Trust, for it will be the Home of the Congregational Federation.

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