

Creating a new Education Centre

The Horsefair Project will result in creating a new Education Centre that, combined with the new hospitality facilities, will transform what the New Room can offer to visitors.

There will be an Education Room capable of holding up to 60 people and with a refreshments facility alongside it. It will have disabled access and will open out onto a small roof garden that overlooks the historic New Room building.

This will protect the tranquil atmosphere of the Chapel and enable the New Room to develop a range of audio-visual presentations and offer:

- a far more extensive programme of lectures, special events, themed retreats, heritage courses and larger scale exhibitions
- a far more ambitious programme for schools and for large visiting groups

- a new family programme linking experiential learning that uses a range of senses and that also offers storytelling sessions

It is also envisaged that the room will display a number of portraits of famous Methodists and act on occasion as a large exhibition space.

'The only building in the world that spans the whole of John Wesley's evangelical ministry.'

The Historical Tablets of the New Room



From the outset Wesley used the New Room as a place of education.

Wesley created a library in Bristol and so it is very fitting that the new building will also contain a large modern Resources Centre with study facilities. Work has already started to build up links with higher education institutions so that the New Room can offer help to those engaged in historical research on the eighteenth century church revival and offer undergraduate placements in heritage management and work with archives. The resources centre would equally be available to anyone seeking to understand more about the Methodist movement or those wishing to find out more about their Methodist ancestors. There will also be a special temperature-controlled archives room, a small office for the Museum Curator/Librarian, and book storage facilities for those items that are only occasionally used by researchers.

Unless we create this new building, we will have to transfer our archives to another institution. This would be a very sad loss because the manuscript collection at the New Room contains over 1,200 letters and other items. It is built around the original collection made by the Rev Dr William Watkinson (President of the Wesleyan Conference in 1897) and it includes letters of John Wesley and all the major figures of nineteenth-century Wesleyan Methodism. With a purpose-built archive facility we would hope to attract further acquisitions.

If we can create the new Resource Centre we may also receive part of the library of the recently closed Wesley College in Bristol – thus ensuring this important asset remains accessible to researchers and the general public.



A new Education Centre

JOHN WESLEY'S CHAPEL
THE NEW ROOM
BRISTOL



‘His investment in education was pervasive, extensive, and personal. Wesley was the teacher for Methodism. There was a teaching purpose to almost everything he did, and he was willing to teach almost anyone he met who proved in any way open and responsive. Certainly he taught his preachers, in conference and out; and he held them accountable to educate themselves using the resources that he provided... He created systems that clearly served educational purposes. His correspondence, tracts, republications, sermons... [his] classes and societies... indeed the entire structure of Methodism – betray a remarkable drive to educate people’.

Russell Richey, Dean Emeritus at Candler School of Theology, Atlanta, USA