

# Told by the Dial



## Mount Zion Peer Education and Learning A Teacher's Guide

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## Preamble

This booklet provides a short guide for teachers to the history of Mount Zion Heritage Chapel. It is aimed at teachers whose children are involved in Told by the Dial (TBTD): Stories in Stone peer education work. It details the aims and objectives of TBTD, provides a generic overview of the programme and explains the roles of both adults and children. Supporting classroom resources are available to download free for from the Mount Zion website <https://mountzion.cmch.org.uk/>

## 1. Setting the scene

In 1773 when the first Mount Zion chapel was built, King George III was on the British throne. In 1820, five years after the building of the second chapel, he died and was succeeded by his son George the IV. When George died, his younger brother William the IV became King. In 1837 on William's death, his niece Queen Victoria succeeded to the throne. Nationally and locally, this was a period of social and political unrest, campaigns for the right to vote, an end to slavery and religious reform. It saw the beginnings and escalation of the Industrial revolution.

Particularly in areas such as Calderdale, the latter resulted in a change in lifestyle for many people and a move away from cottage industries and farming to factories and urban life. This was not always seen as positive and the result was agitation both against change (e.g., the use of mechanical looms) and for reform (e.g., workers' rights and the right to vote). Calderdale was a hot bed for rebels and reformers and clashes with the establishment, representatives of the state and national church (the Church of England), were commonplace.

### Methodism

Mount Zion Chapel was established by Christians known as Methodists. Methodism may be traced back to two brothers, John and Charles Wesley, sons of an Anglican (Church of England) vicar from Epworth in Lincolnshire. Both went to Oxford University. Here they met a group of like-minded friends. This 'Holy Club' of methodical, young Christian men met regularly to worship and support each other in 'good works'. They were given the nickname 'Methodists' by their peers.

The Wesley brothers spent time in America. On their return to England. John attended a prayer meeting, which changed his attitude to faith. His life and ministry were transformed. As a result, he began to travel around the country on horseback, preaching wherever he could, sometimes in churches, but often outside in public spaces. Through his ministry Methodism developed into a national movement, with members initially attending both Anglican services and Methodist meetings.

At the latter the Bible was read and debated. Ordinary people learnt how to speak in public and how to agitate for change and social justice. Over time Methodists (particularly the New Connexion and Primitive Methodists), became involved in campaigns for workers' rights, trade unions and against transatlantic slavery. They supported prison reform, women's rights and were innovators in education.

As the years passed, Methodist groups began to challenge the teaching and practices of the Church of England. Consequently, they were increasingly excluded from the parish churches, and Methodism gradually became a separate Christian denomination. John Wesley never wanted division. He remained an Anglican priest all his life. After Wesley's death in 1791, tensions intensified between those who wished to stay with the Anglicans and those who felt it right to be independent, leading to several separate Methodist denominations. All the different groups came together again in 1932 when the present Methodist Church was formed.

## Mount Zion – a special place



Methodism has a long history in Calderdale. John Wesley first preached in Halifax on the 22nd of August 1748. In the crowd was James Riley, a local man, who stated that '*Wesley disturbed my conscience and troubled my soul.*'

Consequently, he instigated regular meetings in his house and others, in the Anglican parish of Bradshaw.

Mount Zion (Sion), means God's dwelling place, or a beautiful, special, space where God should be worshipped. In the sunshine, Mount Zion looks well named, with its dramatic backdrop of moorland. However, the existence of the Chapel is in part due to the area's inhospitable location

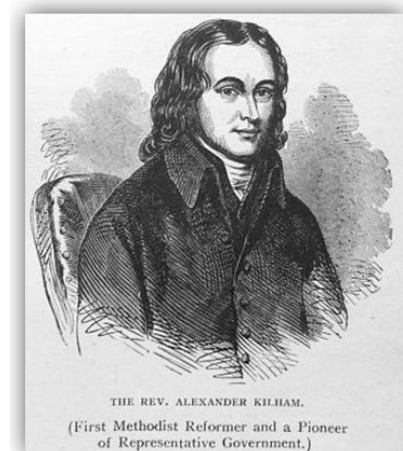
and climate.

In 1772 a snowstorm resulted in impassable drifts, which left a visiting preacher stranded for a week at James Riley's house. Hearing he was stranded, local people struggled through the snow to hear him preach on for four consecutive nights. It was this enthusiasm and the inclement weather, which prompted the building of Mount Zion in 1773, with accommodation for travelling preachers and a stable for their horses.

John Wesley first visited Mount Zion in 1774, he commented, not altogether favourably: '*I rode to Bradshaw House, standing alone in a dreary waste. But, although it was a cold and stormy day, the people flocked from all quarters*'. He also noted that the '*house afforded hospitality and shelter for man and beast*'. Wesley is recorded as staying in the sexton's cottage which still adjoins the Chapel in a small first floor room, now known as the 'Prophet's Chamber'. He made his last visit in 1790 aged eighty-seven.

## Rebels and reformers

After John Wesley's death in 1791 the community at Mount Zion, like other Methodist societies, debated the way forward. They were influenced by a man called Alexander Kilham (1762-1798), who argued for equality in the Methodist Church and in society. He was both a rebel and a reformer and, although he never visited Mount Zion, he played an important role in the history of the Chapel. Kilham set out new principles for Methodism.



These included the right: to hold public religious worship at convenient times, not only as appointed by the Church of England; to receive Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion/Eucharist) from the hands of their own ministers and in their own places of worship; for lay people (not just ministers) to be represented in all aspects of the government of the community, locally and nationally; to have a voice, in the acceptance and expulsion of members, the choice of local officers and in the 'calling' of the ministry.

The community at Mount Zion was very interested in Alexander Kilham's ideas. In 1796 his New Methodist Connexion became a separate group and in 1797 Mount Zion became a New Connexion chapel, making it the first in Calderdale and one of the oldest in the country. The Wesleyan Methodists were no longer allowed to worship in the chapel – they met in the barn (now a house) opposite. Although the Methodist New Connexion was primarily a northern movement, its members were involved in campaigns and activism, which influenced political and social reform not just locally, but nationally.

## The building and grounds

The original Mount Zion chapel was demolished, and the present building opened its doors in 1815. All that remains of the 1773 chapel are the sundial on the front of the building and the foundation stone in the vestry. However, the original sexton's cottage provides evidence of the architectural style of the 1773 meeting house. The interior of the current Chapel was designed and installed in 1881. There was 170 ground floor and 180 gallery places. Worshippers paid 'a



pew rent' to secure their seat. The original pew rent board may be seen in the vestry. The organ is Belgian. It was made by Charles Anneessens and was installed in 1892. It is believed to be one of only six of this type of organ, which survives.



Sabbath classes were held in the Chapel for local children and adults as early as 1784. In 1816 a purpose-built Sunday and day school opened its doors. Day classes for children were held, until the 1870 Education Act provided free elementary education for all. In 1887 a new Sunday school was built, which thrived well into the late twentieth century.

This building adjoins the monumental graveyard and is now a house.

The monumental graveyard contains over 6,000 graves. The first Methodist grave probably dates back to 1788 and is adjacent to the front of the Chapel. However, in 1877 a Bronze Age tomb was discovered, containing an urn and the remains of a woman and child, who were buried at Mount Zion approximately 3,400 years ago.

### More recent times

The original 1773 sundial was restored in 2012, and the Irene Cunliffe Memorial Peace Garden was opened in 2014. Although services are still held six times a year, regular worship at Mount Zion ceased in 2014, when it was designated a Methodist heritage chapel. It now houses a growing collection of artefacts, Methodist memorabilia, and archive material. One book in the archive, 'Told by the Dial' was written and published in 1901 by the Reverend William Walker. In this book the Dial recounts the comings and goings at Mount Zion over a period of 128 years, it tells 'tales' of Calderdale people and events, explaining the history of the building and Methodism. It was this book which was the inspiration for the 'Told by the Dial: Stories in Stone' project 2025.

## 2. The Told by the Dial Project 2025

The 'Told by the Dial' (TBTD) project involves children in researching, interpreting, recounting and creating stories about people from Calderdale. It focuses on heritage as something we all share, something which is important in helping us to understand the past, the present and which may inform the future.

The stories explored, are on the whole, those told by the built environment at Mount Zion and so have common threads running through them e.g., Calderdale, Christianity and Methodism. However, no presumptions are made as to the religious belonging or beliefs of participating children and adults. We value diversity and take an inclusive, interpretive approach, encouraging individuals to share their own beliefs, values and views with others; the project aims to develop positive attitudes, self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder.

Through engagement with TBTD the children should:

- Have an increased knowledge and understanding of the stories of Calderdale's diverse people, both past and present
- Be able to articulate information and re tell at least one story about a person from the past
- Recognise the importance of memory, remembering and memorials
- Identify appropriate ways in which stories and information may be shared with other children and adults
- Develop the dialogic skills and confidence to be agentic learners and effective peer educators and learners
- Contribute to, interact positively and work with members of the wider community, as active citizens
- Reflect upon, articulate and creatively express, their own beliefs, views, ideas and stories
- Understand that people's religious beliefs and worldviews (as exemplified by Mount Zion), have influenced our heritage, the built environment and the world we live in today.



### 3. The role of the Storytellers and their teachers

The TBTD project involves partnership working between two schools and Mount Zion. It employs peer education and learning, bringing children from different schools together. The TBTD Storytellers take over the Chapel as peer educator guides; they have agency over their own learning and that of others. Teachers take a back seat, allowing the peer educators to take the lead. The table on page 11 outlines the shape of the project, where learning is situated, the participants involved, the focus of sessions and facilitators.

#### TBTD teachers

Teachers are involved in the planning and evaluation process and work in partnership with Mount Zion staff and volunteers. It is important for teachers to familiarise themselves with the objectives of the project and the content. They are asked to take responsibility for assigning children to stations (where possible allowing choice and following children's interests) and knowledge and skills consolidation in school (see programme). It is important that the children feel prepared for their 'takeover days' at Mount Zion. Lead teachers complete their own risk assessment and the TBTD visit agreement form. The school is responsible, for the cost and organisation of transport to and from the Chapel and the recruitment of volunteers for Heritage Open Day.

#### The Storyteller role

The expectation is that the Storytellers will act as peer educator guides. They should:

- Learn about people who live in Calderdale now and who have lived here in the past
- Compare different histories, religions and worldviews and reflect upon their own beliefs and heritage
- Learn about Mount Zion and why it is important to Christians and all the people in Calderdale
- Talk, listen to and work with children from at least one other school, passing on (in the way they think best) information and stories

- Be active citizen, doing things to help people to think about how people have lived together in the past and how and why it's important for us to live together as friends now and in the future
- Do a real job, for real people in a real place as peer educator guides.

The Storytellers act as guides and peer educators during visits by peer learners from at least one other school. Each pair of Storytellers has responsibility for introducing visiting children and adults, to one part of the Chapel or grounds. This is their 'station'. During the visit peer learners move from one station to another in a clockwise direction around the Chapel. The Storytellers stay at their stations.

## The TBTD process

Date	Venue	Participants	Focus and Facilitators
Feb	SCHOOL	MZ staff/teachers	Initial discussions about the project. <b>MZ</b>
April	MOUNT ZION	MZ staff/teachers	Familiarisation with Mount Zion and collection of ideas. <b>MZ</b>
May	SCHOOL	Year 5	Introduction to the project in school and the idea of being 'detectives' and 'storytellers'. <b>MZ</b>
May	MZ	Year 5	Initial orientation and exploratory visit to MZ; investigating the building, the artefacts stories; ownership/stations allocated. <b>MZ</b>
Ongoing	SCHOOL	Year 5	Research, fact files, stories, creative writing, stations allocated, peer education practice; art activities <b>Teachers</b>
June	MZ	Year 5	Peer education practice. <b>MZ</b>
Ongoing	SCHOOL	Year 5	Research, fact file activities, stories, creative writing, retelling stories, peer education practice; art activities <b>Teachers</b>
June	MZ	Year 5 from one school, Year 4 from another.	Peer education takeover days at MZ. <b>MZ</b>
July	MZ	Year 5, teachers, significant adults, MZ	Celebration event and open night for teachers, governors, parents and carers. <b>MZ</b>
September	SCHOOL/MZ	Year 6	Call for Heritage Open Day volunteers; volunteer practice and reorientation day. <b>Teachers/MZ</b>
Ongoing	SCHOOL	Year 5	Peer and community education practice. <b>Teachers</b>
September	MZ	Year 6, MZ staff, significant adults, members of the community.	Heritage Open Day, Community Celebration Event Celebration, tours and storytelling led by the volunteer TBTD guides. <b>MZ</b>

## 4. The role of peer learners and teachers

This is a very different learning outside the classroom experience. Although supervised by adults *the Storytellers are in charge, they have the responsibility for leading learning*. It is important that visiting children and adults are aware of this before the visit, and that they understand the Storytellers' role.

Obviously, it is important for accompanying adults to monitor children, their behaviour and to make sure that they are safe in what is a public space. However, for this experience to work well, research has shown that it is necessary for teachers to allow the Storytellers to teach and the children from the different schools to interact and talk to each other.

Teachers are encouraged to move around the stations and enjoy the experience of seeing the Storytellers in action and to explore the building. However, our Storytellers request that teachers please refrain from '*teaching*' during the session and to allow them '*to do what we do best!*', to tell their stories and peer educate.

### What to do before a peer learner visit

Before visiting it is useful for peer learners to have some previous basic knowledge about Christianity and to be aware of the existence of a multiplicity of religious and non-religious world views. They should understand that Mount Zion is a Methodist Chapel and so is distinctive of one form of Christianity, and that its buildings, grounds and artefacts tell stories about Calderdale's diverse people and provides authentic evidence about what some Christians believe and do.

To many Christians the Chapel is a special space, so talking to children before they visit about acceptable ways to move around the building, and how to show respect for people and the things that they will find at Mount Zion is important. Peer learners need to be aware that their visit to Mount Zion will be led by peer educators. It is useful if the children are

divided into pairs or threes depending on the size of the class, before the visit, ready to begin work with the Storytellers.

## 5. What happens on a takeover day?

The Storytellers act as guides and peer educators during the visit. *Each pair has responsibility for introducing visiting children and adults, to one particular part of the Chapel. This is their 'station'. During the visit children move from one station to another in a clockwise direction around the Chapel. The Storytellers stay at their same station. Peer educated visits last 1.5 hours (including introduction and plenary).*

Each one follows a set pattern:

1. Storytellers arrive before the peer learners, check their stations and have a short practice
2. Visiting children enter the building and sit in the central pews
3. The visitors are welcomed by Chapel staff (this includes a synopsis of health and safety); they introduce the Storytellers and their role.
4. The activities are explained and the 'Detective Sheets' given out. These sheets are just for notes
5. The Storytellers go to their stations, taking with them a pair of visiting peer learners
6. Peer learners are tasked with investigating each station and writing down one interesting thing, before moving on **IN A CLOCKWISE DIRECTION** to the next. The Storytellers will help with this
7. At each station the Storytellers will pose questions as well as offer information and/or engage the children in activities
8. Plenary everyone reconvenes, and visiting teachers collect the Detective Sheets to take back to school
9. The peer learners will be asked to respond to their experience and ask any questions still outstanding
10. Peer learners return to school

11. Storytellers' plenary and feedback and then return to school.

**Please Note:** the Storytellers wear official lanyards and a number badge, provided by the Chapel. It is advised that high viz waist coats are worn by children in the grounds. All participating teachers are expected to ensure safeguarding and health and safety, but to leave the Storytellers to do the teaching.

## 6. Curriculum links

A TBTD Storyteller led visit to the Chapel has the potential to cover many different areas of the curriculum, including aspects of history, geography, art, PSHCE, citizenship, RE and worldviews. It also provides opportunities for children to reflect and respond to the building and the experience, which often elicits expressions of awe wonder and mystery.

## 7. General visits to Mount Zion

The Chapel offers a menu of cross curricular visits that address a wide range of themes and topics. These are led by the education team. To find out more or to book an additional visit please go visit the website.

## 8. Resources for the classroom

The website contains a selection of TBTD factfiles, which include possible classroom activities, a glossary of terms and a list of extension activities. These are all free to download and print for educational use. Visit <https://cmch.org.uk/> and click on the Education and Resources and then Told by the Dial tabs at the top of the home page.



## 9. Acknowledgements

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