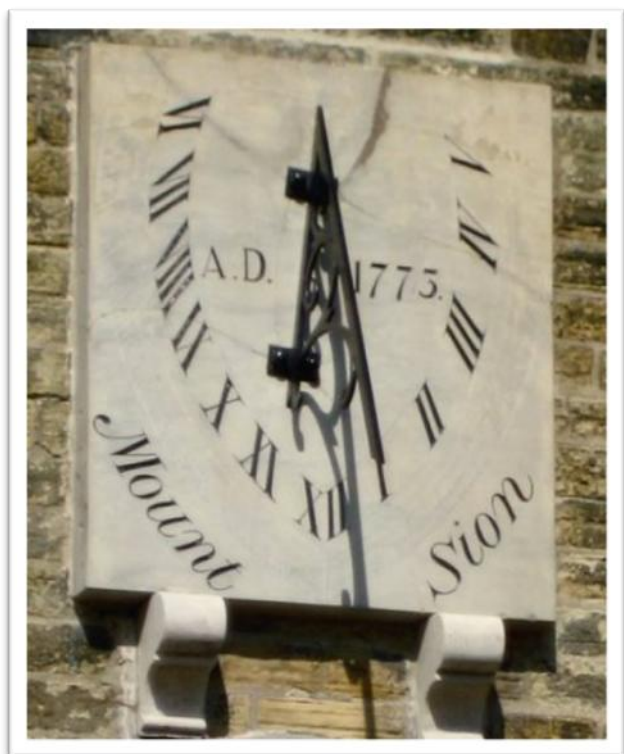


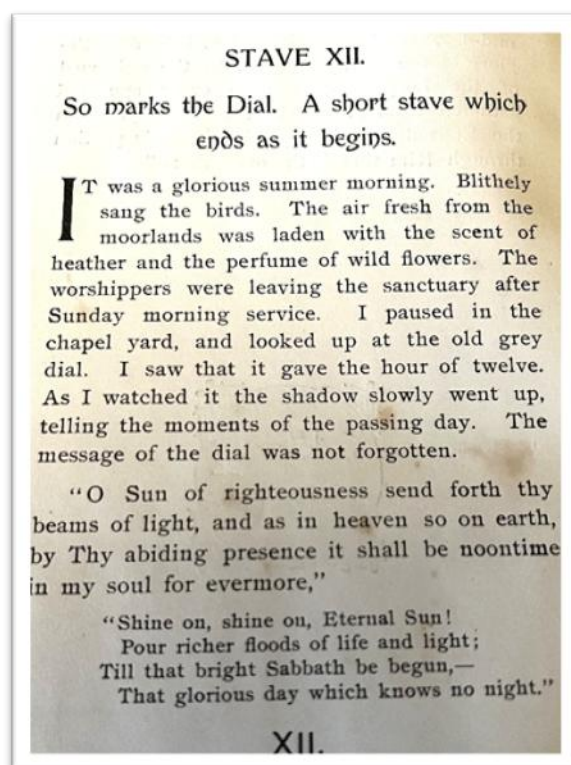
## Told by the Dial: stories in stone

### The project



Although the current Chapel was built in 1815, high up on the front façade is a sundial, which started life on the original 1773 building. In 1901 Mount Zion's New Connexion minister, the Reverend William Walker, decided to write a small book, relating stories about the history of Mount Zion, Methodism in Halifax, and the people who attended the Chapel. The stories in his book are told from the perspective of 'the Dial', which by 1901 had observed the comings and goings at Mount Zion for one hundred and twenty-eight years.

Told by the Dial: stories in stone, is a school and community project, focusing on 'CalderTales', the re-telling of the stories of ordinary people and events, commemorated in the buildings, artefacts and grounds of Mount Zion Methodist Heritage Chapel. The project is funded by a grant from Calderdale Council, (backed by the Heritage Lottery Fund), as part of their CultureDale initiative.



The Told by the Dial, stories in stone project, is a twenty first century take on the Reverend Walker's idea. Using the building, monuments in the burial ground, archive documents and

artefacts as creative inspiration, children from two very different Calderdale primary schools, will explore the idea of memory, memorials and commemoration. Identifying stories from the distant and recent past, which *they* see as important and adding their own stories to those previously ‘Told by the Dial’.

The project participants will retell these ‘CalderTales’ for other children and adults, through dialogue, art, factual and creative writing; in so doing helping to increase understanding of why for many people, particularly Calderdale’s Methodists, religion was and remains a central part of their lives.

#### Mount Zion Heritage Chapel



Mount Zion is one of two designated heritage chapels in the Calderdale Circuit. The original building (just the sexton’s cottage remains) was built in 1773, the existing chapel was built in 1815. In 1796 Mount Zion became the only chapel in the area to have a majority of members sympathetic to the teaching of Alexander Kilham; it officially became a Methodist New

Connexion Chapel in 1797.

Mount Zion has an impressive monumental burial ground, which provides the final resting place for over 6,000 people from across Calderdale. The first Methodist grave dates to 1788. However, in 1877 a Bronze Age burial urn was discovered, evidence of people from Europe settling in this part of Calderdale over 3, 400 years ago; migration is nothing new.



More recent evidence of moving people may also be found in the graveyard. One headstone dated 1981, is inscribed with a Chinese derived script, suggesting a more contemporary, but just as important migration 'CalderTale'.

### [The schools](#)

The two key primary schools involved in Told by the Dial are St Augustine's and Abbey Park. St Augustine's is situated in central Halifax and is one of Calderdale's first Schools of Sanctuary, many of its children have their own migration stories to tell. Abbey Park is in Illingworth, less

than two miles from Mount Zion. Year 5 children (aged nine and ten) and teachers from St Augustine's and Abbey Park, will work independently and together on the project, both in school and at Mount Zion, supported by Calderdale's heritage workers.

Told by the Dial: stories in stone, will culminate in a community event at Mount Zion, attended by the children's significant adults, where proceedings will be led by the children acting as Heritage Volunteers. For some children this role will be reprised at Mount Zion's Heritage Open Day extravaganza in September 2025.



## Legacy of the Told by the Dial: stories in stone project

Told by the Dial teaching resources for use by schools across Calderdale and beyond will be available to download from May 2025; there will be a small Mount Zion Told by the Dial guidebook for visitors to the Chapel, along with external interpretation boards. These will relate elements of the 'CalderTales' uncovered during the project.



## Keep up to date

Visit the Mount Zion website <https://mountzion.cmch.org.uk/> to find out more about Told by the Dial: stories in stone, to access the teachers' resources and to learn about our generic education offer for schools. You might also like to keep up to date by following Mount Zion on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/mountzion1773> You can of course also join us on in September at Mount Zion; come and explore the Chapel and grounds, meet our young volunteers, hear the stories that the 'Dial' and they have to tell, and perhaps even share your own 'tales'. You would be very welcome.