

Wesley Chapel Harrogate : Renovation Scheme 2014

The long awaited renovation scheme began on 31 March 2014 and lasted for about 10 weeks. A daily photographic record of the project was kept.

Before any work could begin in the chapel the 100-year old organ had to be covered in a protective sheet and the Yamaha grand piano stored in a piano-shoe. Seat cushions and other furnishings were removed from the chapel and stored in the gallery



Protection for the organ

Grand piano in a shoe

An ingenious invention to transport the pew cushions to the gallery

As a result of careful planning renovations were carried out simultaneously in the Lower Hall and in the Chapel, which enabled the congregation to continue to worship in the building. Work in the Lower Hall was planned out so that Sunday morning services could be held there during the ten week period. All other activities were suspended for about six weeks.



The Lower Hall was set up as a worship area for our Sunday services for the next few weeks

Lower Hall

Work downstairs consisted of:

- the updating of one office and formation of another from an existing vestry; hatches were created; key pads fitted; display panel for the new fire and smoke detection system fitted; infrastructure for updated technology was installed
- the main hall itself was divided into three separate rooms by sliding partitions, thus enabling a variety of combinations of room layout, which involved the creation of a third door.
- fire door was installed in the corridor
- a second vestry was refurnished in order to create an addition office/community room

		
<p><i>Hatches were created for the new offices</i></p>	<p><i>Creation of a third door</i></p>	<p><i>A comfortable community/meeting room was created from a vestry</i></p>

Once the Lower Hall had been renovated the offices were soon made habitable, and very few admin working days were lost. When our Administrator was unable to carry out her usual duties, she was to be found alongside our Premises Manager painting and decorating. One office continued to be the Wesley Centre Administration office and some creative thinking was evident when the wooden surround retrieved from the dismantled kitchen upstairs was made into a desk surround. A coat hanger was also made from wood from one of the pews. Occupation of the second office was taken by Hope Church who opted for a modern colour scheme and furniture.

Normal activities resumed in the Lower Hall after six weeks.



Three separate rooms, or one large room - the installation of sliding panels has meant much more flexibility

Upper Hall

At the same time the Upper Hall became a no-go area and during the first two weeks the pews were removed and the existing kitchen in the foyer was dismantled.



A last look at the pews



An investigation into the back of one of the pews revealed the red padding beneath the wood, indicating that the material had been used in the original pews.

During the course of the next few weeks work continued in the Chapel:

- the floor covering and the central heating pipes were removed
- the PR system was dismantled (to later be relocated to a more suitable position)
- work was carried out in the room on the left-hand side of the chapel - a partition was erected, creating possible office space and a more defined fire escape route
- casing was laid for the electrical cables; pipes for the new central heating system were laid
- sub flooring was laid in readiness for the heating system
- the insulation for the new heating system was laid
- cabling for the underfloor heating system was installed
- by week 8 the floor in the Chapel had been laid and was looking lovely (two of our visitors confessed to trying it out by having ballroom dance)
- the manifold for the heating system was installed in a side room and boxes for the communications system were installed
- a new communion kneeler was fitted (to accommodate the change in the height of the floor which had been levelled during the process)
- a new fire door was installed at the fire exit in the gallery
- secondary double glazing was installed throughout



The PR system was dismantled



It looked bare without the pews



Flooring and cables for underfloor heating



new communion kneeler fitted to accommodate the change in the height of the floor which had been levelled during the process





'They could have danced all night'

two of our friends confessed to trying out the new floor with a ballroom dance when no one was looking

Meanwhile, in the foyer:

- the kitchen was ripped out
- a new counter replaced the old, and wall units, a dishwasher and a fridge were fitted.

Serving at coffee mornings would now be a delight - no more kneeling and bending to retrieve crockery from the low cupboards and no standing for hours at the sink washing up!



There was some amusement when members of the congregation finally viewed their new Chapel – the outlines of the pews on the side walls looked like a line of giraffes going in one by one.



What happened to the pews?

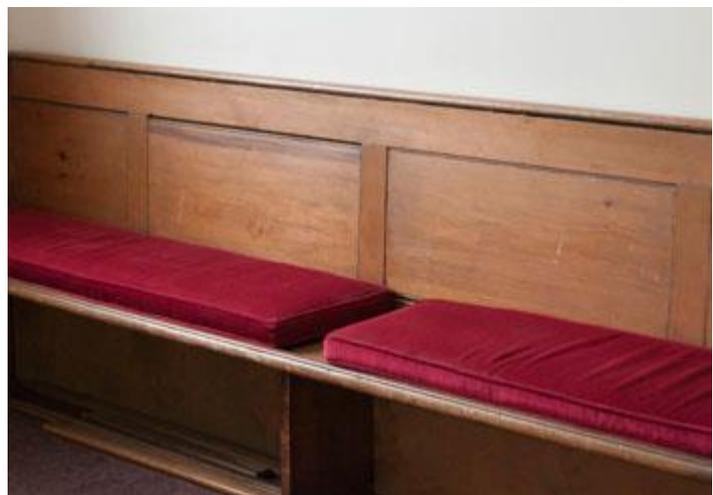
Firstly the pews were offered for sale to members of the congregation and those who were interested had first choice. The remainder went to a good home!

They went to Edinburgh-based organisation, the Grassmarket Community Project, a partnership between the Grassmarket Mission (a charitable trust whose main mission is to address problems of social exclusion as a consequence of poverty, hunger, loneliness and homelessness as well as ministering to those who have, or have had, problems with substance abuse) and Greyfriars Kirk (a worshipping congregation of the Church of Scotland in the heart of Edinburgh's Old Town). Specifically they were to be used by *Grassmarket Furniture* - a self-sustaining social enterprise established as part of the Grassmarket Community Project to provide work, training and enhanced life opportunities for people facing long term social exclusion. <http://www.grassmarketcommunityproject.co.uk/grassmarket-furniture>

There were some pews that, when dismantled were not suitable to be sold on or useful for the above project. The wood from these were made into shelves, cupboards, coat hangers, anything that could be usefully reconstituted.



Don't worry. You can still 'take a pew' in Wesley Chapel. We were required to leave some pews in place. We left three at the back of the chapel and placed one in the foyer.



Buy a chair?

Several members of the congregation expressed an interest in buying one or more chairs either as a memorial of a special person or simply as a thanksgiving gift for not having to sit any more on uncomfortable pews or for some other reason. A memorial book will be available. This initiative was popular and generated a useful income for the renovation fund.

There is still work to be done. The renovations are not quite finished. There is still redecorating to be done, which will require the organ to be covered again and scaffolding erected. This work has been scheduled for the next few months.

Wesley Centre Launch 27-28 September

A special weekend was held to launch Wesley Centre (now coming under the auspices Nidd Valley Methodist Circuit); to celebrate, give thanks and show off our new facilities.

On Saturday 27 September refreshments were provided by members from Starbeck Methodist Church in aid of their church funds. There were exhibits from some of our working partners which included Lifeline; Harrogate International Festival; Harrogate Homeless Project; NYMAZ (making music happen in North Yorkshire); Musical Mums; Supporting Older People; Mencap; Hope Church; Ashville College. Wesley had its own displays as well: one presenting the history of Wesley Chapel and another relating the recent renovations. Our own Fairtrade stall was present, and for those many people who lament the lack of a Christian bookshop in Harrogate, we had the presence of Cornerstone from Skipton for the two days.

Whilst people were taking refreshment and browsing they were treated to live music on piano and organ from our own organists as well students from Ashville Methodist College playing various instruments. The day ended with a concert in the evening by Students from Chetham's School of Music.



On Sunday 28th we held our usual morning service; a happy, reflective service with Rev. Trevor Dixon, who had done much to ensure the success of the renovation work, acting as Clerk of Works for the entire period. Then later in the day we held an inspiring circuit service led by Deacon David Hunt, with an encouraging message from our Chair of District, Rev. Dr Liz Smith. The Mayor and Mayoress were present together with other special guests. Many people took part in the service including a specially formed Circuit Choir and the well-established Circuit Dance Group. The day finished with tea and cake and fellowship in the Lower Hall.

It was a very special weekend. But now the hard work really starts!

Wesley Centre Development Group

The Wesley Centre is now run by a Management Group appointed by the Nidd Valley Methodist Circuit and is seeking to make full use of the facilities to the benefit of the community for charitable work, community events and Christian outreach.



Wesley Centre Harrogate
Oxford Street
Harrogate HG2 0PP
Administrators Office 01423 509917
Website www.wesleycentreharrogate.org.uk

*Report compiled by Judith Yeats
e-mail judith@wesleycentreharrogate.org.uk
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