

Churches and chapels – the post-war period

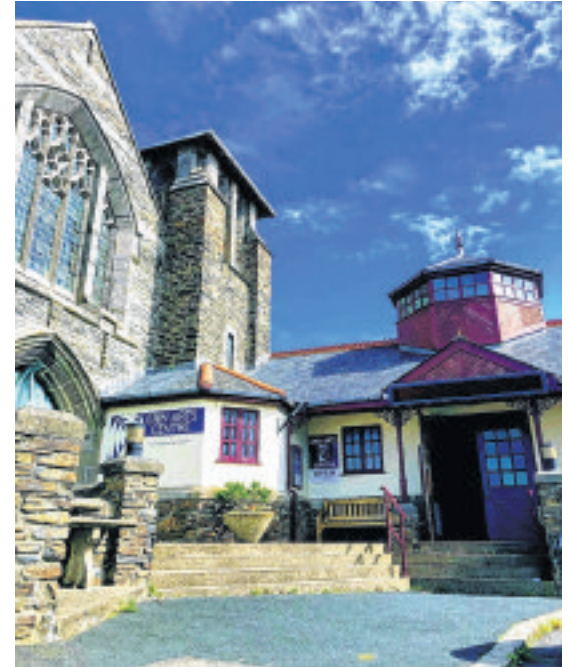
Buildings at Risk covers buildings and structures – dwellings, commercial and civic – lost, at risk and saved. In this instalment, **Frank Cowin of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society** concludes the story of the Manx Church and the evolution of its buildings with analysis of a group of Chapels to show how many have been lost and how many have found new lives.

The post-war period saw the loss of a lot of the smaller 'family' chapels of countryside Methodism. In the light of this, some of the larger chapels had to examine their own position.

As this is the last of our series about the island's churches and chapels, it seems right to test one or two of the 'general' statements often made, using the Methodist chapels as an example.

Firstly it is said that there were nearly 100 chapels when the Second World War ended and that they have now reduced to approximately one third of that number.

The adjoining lists taken from the Methodist Circuit



(Above) Kerrowkeil which is now up for sale and (right) Port Erin Wesleyan Chapel, now the Erin Arts Centre. (Below) The site of the former Braaid Chapel which is now just a few low stone walls behind a bus stop

Right photo courtesy of EAC

preaching plans readily to hand, dated between October 1955 and October 1958, show that at that time there was a total of 83 with a reduction to the present 28 on the September 2021 all-island preaching plan.

As some had already been lost in the late 1940s and early 1950s, it leaves that statement close to correct.

The other statement often made is that their early

buildings were designed to be easily altered for use as housing.

Re-use as housing seems to have continued as a strong option with the 'not-so-old buildings'.

Of the something like 44 buildings sold, 19 were converted into dwellings and only five demolished, three of which were during local authority or government schemes.



Former Dhoor Chapel - which is now a dwelling



The former Lhen Chapel



Demolition of the former Loch Parade Methodist Church prior to constructing the Promenade Methodist Church



Former Park View, Michael Wesleyan Chapel, new life but still in Methodist Church ownership. (Below) Former Glascoe Chapel, Bride which is now a dwelling

Peel Circuit (bold = still in use)	
1955	Now
Peel Atholl Street	Still in use
Peel Christian Street	Sold and went through multiple uses before conversion to apartments
Lambfell	Sold and converted into house
Kerrowglass	Now a farm building
St Johns	Became the central point in the planned closure of a number of chapels. New hall built
Lherghydhoo	Sold and converted into house
Greeba	Sold and converted into house
Lower Foxdale	Sold and converted into house
Foxdale Village	Sold and converted into house
Dalby	Sold and converted into house
Glen Maye	Altered to be more suitable for community use
Patrick	Sold, used for some time as Parish Hall then converted to dwelling

Castletown Circuit (bold = still in use)	
1956	Now
C'town Arbory Street	Merged together to use the Arbory Street premises. Malew Street buildings sold and became office/commercial use
C'town Malew Street	
Santon (Memorial)	Sold and converted to a dwelling
Ballasalla 'Wesley'	Building condemned and demolished. Site sold, dwelling erected
Ballamoda	Sold, present use uncertain
Ballagarey	Still in use, presently extended at rear
PSM Bay View Road	Sold to another church group who have since demolished and rebuilt
PSM Mount Tabor	Still in use
Howe	Still in use
Colby	Still in use, extensively extended / altered
Croit-e-Caley	Sold and redeveloped as a dwelling
Ballabeg	Still in use
Port Erin Station Road	Chapel currently offered for sale and plans for redevelopment of the hall
Port Erin, Wesley (Vic.Sq)	Sold and redeveloped as the Erin Arts Centre
Ballafesson	Still in use
Ballakilpheric	Still in use
Kerrow Keil	Property being offered for sale
Ronague	Sold and redeveloped as a dwelling



Douglas Circuit (bold = still in use)	
1958	Now
Rosemount	Merged to form Trinity in the Rosemount building. Having been offices, Bucks Road now being converted into apartments
Bucks Road	
Victoria Street	Victoria Street (site now Barclays Bank) merged with Loch Parade which was demolished and rebuilt as Promenade Methodist Church
Loch Parade	
Salisbury Street	Sold and used for other purposes
Willaston	Sold and recently demolished as part of Central Willaston area improvements
Braid	Sold and demolished (road improvements)
Union Mills	Still in use
Crosby	Still in use [has sometimes been in Peel Circuit]
Quines Hill	Sold, now a workshop
Pulrose	Still in use
Coil	Still in use
Newtown	Sold and converted into house
Onchan	Sold original building and moved to new building across the road
Marathon Road	Sold and converted into house
Abbeylands	Still in use
Hilberry	Sold, now a workshop / store
Laxey Glen	Laxey Glen and Laxey Minorca merged to form Laxey in the former Minorca Sunday School building. Both former Chapels now houses
Laxey Minorca	
Lonan	Original and replacement Chapels sold for conversion into residences
Baldrine	Still in use
Balacowin	Sold, now a workshop / store
Ballaragh	Sold and converted into house
Agneash	Still in use [one time on Ramsey Plan, later transferred to Douglas circuit]

Ramsey Circuit (bold = still in use)	
1958	Now
Parliament Street	Sold, demolished and site redeveloped for commercial use
Glascoe	Sold and converted to residential
Bride	Still in use
Kerrogarrow	Sold and converted
Jurby East	Sold, now a dwelling
Glen Auldyn	Sold and used as Anglican Chapel
Kerrowmoor	Sold and became stores / family playroom
Agneash	[transferred to Douglas Circuit, still in use]
Ballaajora	Sold and converted into a dwelling
Cardle	Sold, being converted
Waterloo Road	Became Ramsey Methodist Centre, then sold (other uses). Congregations from Waterloo Road and former Ramsey United Reform Church now meet together at St Paul's Hall
Strand St (Ramsey)	Sold and demolished in South Ramsey Clearance Scheme
Dhoor	Sold and converted into a dwelling
Regaby	Sold for other uses
Ballakaneen	Chapel demolished and Sunday School (original Chapel) re-used. Since sold and converted into a house
Lhen	Closed. Now almost covered in ivy.
Michael (Ebenezer)	Still in use
Michael (Park View)	Closed but retained and used by playgroup and community
Barregarrow	Still in use
Ballaaleigh	Sold and converted to a house
Orrisdale	Returned to heirs, now an ecumenical chapel
Ballaugh (Village)	Sold and converted to house
Ballaugh (Ballaterson)	Sold, demolished, new dwelling built on site
Sulby	Still in use, plans being pursued for alteration
Sandygate	Still in use
Ballaugh Cronk	Now a store
Ballaugh (Ballakinnag)	Sold, now a private garage
Ballaugh Curragh	Sold, now an animal shelter
Jurby West	Sold, now a private dwelling
Smeale	Sold, now a private dwelling

Looking to the future

At the present time, in common with most of the secular organisations, the church is heavily involved in considering the way forward.

If we are to plan for the future, we must know both where we are and how we arrived there.

We need to know the things and places which are of importance and strive not only to protect them but enable them to serve future generations.

The best protection for most things, especially buildings, is continued use. The conflict is in deciding the amount of change they can withstand before they

lose those qualities which made them special and important.

The hope is that these articles will help those who read them to decide for themselves their priorities and so join in an informed debate.

The inescapable fact is that, without the necessary funding, very little can happen.

With regard to those church buildings, objects or sites of the greatest importance to the heritage of us all, it is clear that additional financial support must come from outside those currently charged with their care.