

Methodist Records

Methodism developed after the death of John Wesley in 1791. As the movement grew, new ideas and teachings saw the emergence of different groups; The Primitive Methodists in c.1810 and the United Methodists in 1907. Consequently the original movement became known as the Wesleyan Methodists. In 1932 these branches united to form the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

Methodist chapels are arranged by circuit. These work to organise worship and pastoral care for their congregations. The circuits can often span different counties so care should be taken to ensure we hold the records you are looking for.

Oxfordshire History Centre holds collections covering the following areas:

NM1 Chipping Norton and Stow
NM2 Witney and Faringdon
NM3 Thame and Watlington
NM4 Banbury
NM5 Oxford
NM6 Wantage and Abingdon

Within these collections we hold records for individual chapels and The Wesleyan, Primitive and United Methodist circuits, as well as the new circuits formed after 1932. Please note that with the closure of Thame and Watlington Circuit the churches were transferred to the Oxford Circuit and the Aylesbury Vale Circuit.

Many of the chapel and circuit registers of birth and marriages have been transcribed and are available on the open shelves.

What will I find?

The records date from the early 19th to the late 20th century, and include registers of baptisms and marriages, circuit plans and schedules, minutes of meetings, accounts, class books, chapel deeds and correspondence.

The Oxford Methodist Circuit collection also contains records for The John Wesley Society, which is an Oxford University Society.

Interesting examples

NM2/D/A2/42 Faringdon Primitive Methodist Circuit reports, 1880

This series of documents contain a wealth of information about the history of the circuit, interesting for anyone whose ancestors were Methodists. This includes the number of members, scholars, accounts and subscriptions and Sunday school reports.

Where are these records?

The Oxfordshire History Centre only holds circuit and chapel records. The Oxfordshire circuits form part of the Oxford and Leicestershire District and these records held at [Leicestershire Record Office](#)

Records relating to the Bicester area come under the Buckingham, Brackley and Bicester Circuit and are held at the [Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies](#). The Centre also holds the records of the Aylesbury Vale Circuit. Records relating to the Henley area were part of the Reading Methodist Circuit and can be found at [Berkshire Record Office](#).

Where is the catalogue?

The records themselves are not online, but the catalogues of the records are available on [Heritage Search](#). A copy of the catalogue is also available in the searchroom.

[Visiting the Oxfordshire History Centre](#)