Bishop Street Methodist Church named in the attractions of this year’s Heritage Open Day on 8 September.

Heritage Open Days is England's largest festival of history and culture, bringing together over 2,500 organisations, 5,000 events and 40,000 volunteers. Every year in early September, places across the country throw open their doors to celebrate their heritage, community and history.

Bishop Street Methodist Church has been listed on the National Churches Trust website as one of 10 Heritage Open Day Churches recommended for a visit. <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/explore-churches/hods-2018>

In recognition of the centenary of the Universal Suffrage Act, there will be hundreds of events taking place on the theme of ‘Extraordinary Women’ – focusing on both well-known and less celebrated women.

Apart from its noteworthy Georgian features, Italianate wrought ironwork on the pulpit, and a beautifully carved Father Smith organ case, the church will host a special display about early Primitive Methodist women preachers in Leicester. The preachers especially featured are Mary Clarissa Buck (1810-1876) and Elizabeth Evans (1775-1849). Both hailed from the Leicestershire mining village of Newbold. Elizabeth Evans was the aunt of the writer, George Elliot, and the character Dinah Morris in her first novel “Adam Bede” was based on her.

“It is not known how many women preachers there were in eighteenth-century Methodism but contemporary sources indicate that their number was not insignificant. After John Wesley's death in 1791, the attitude of the Wesleyan Methodists towards the concept of a female preaching ministry changed from reluctant acceptance to positive discouragement. In the first half of the nineteenth century Methodism split into several bodies and it was the breakaway churches which made the most use of their female membership. The Primitive Methodists and Bible Christians (established in 1811 and 1815 respectively) in particular made extensive use of the novelty value of female evangelists in expanding into new areas.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

On the 8th September 2018 there will be guided tours of Bishop Street Methodist Chapel and heritage room and an opportunity for family historians to consult our marriage and baptism registers and additional heritage displays, for all of which development a Methodist connexional grant was received. The Church and Chapel Café will be open for refreshments and light lunches between 10am and 4pm on the 8th *S*eptember.

1. <http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/special-collections/guide-to-special-collections/methodist/using-the-collections/researching-women-in-methodism/the-role-of-women-in-methodism/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)