

**Carter's Kitchen:
'Extraordinary tea drinkings for the starving poor.'**

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William and Hephzibah Carter worked in the Victorian slums of London's East End south of the River Thames, an area known as 'London's Larder'¹ due to its location of food processing industries and docklands—but at the same time notorious for crime and poverty.² The Carters themselves lived in this area,³ also known as the Surrey Side of the Thames in historical county demarcations, covering the industrial districts such as Lambeth, Walworth, Bermondsey, Southwark, and Rotherhithe. William Carter was born in Nunhead (1824/5), son of George and Eliza Carter.⁴ William's father was a Methodist lay minister.⁵ When living at Poplar (Isle of Dogs, also London's East End) with his parents and siblings, William had an evangelical conversion at the age of 16.⁶ His wife, Anna Hephzibah, was the daughter of chimneysweep Samuel Boulter (from Charlton in Kent), and was born in Brighton, East Sussex, in

¹ 'CabbieBlog', <<http://www.cabbieblog.com/londons-larder/>> accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

² A website provided by the National Archives explores this nationwide contradiction: 'Victorian Britain: Fair or Foul?' <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/victorianbritain/intro/main.htm>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

³ A website provided by London School of Economics allows identification of home addresses and church locations in comparison between old and modern street names 'Charles Booth's London', <<https://booth.lse.ac.uk/>>.

⁴ The census of 1841 lists 5 other siblings.

⁵ 'The Late William Carter', *South London Chronicle*, 16 Nov. 1872, 3; 'The Late William Carter and his Work', *South London Chronicle*, 3 May 1873.

⁶ 'The Late William Carter', 16 Nov. 1872, 3: "He was the son of a Welseyan minister, and early evinced a deep concern about his soul; at the age of sixteen he ran home from a meeting to convey the news that he had found joy and peace through believing the gospel."

1830. William and Hephzibah were married in Dover in 1846.⁷ The Carters had been associated with the Brethren, but shortly after their marriage, broke with them for twelve years, for reasons that are not known.⁸ He died at his home in Wynne Road, Brixton Road, in Lambeth, on 1. November 1872, and was buried in the family grave at Nunhead Cemetery (plot 130/131, grave 12070) in the Dissenters



William and Hephzibah Carter

Section near the Welsh Path,⁹ not yet 50-years-of-age, no doubt owing to his working and living conditions as a Master Chimneysweep.¹⁰

⁷ The biographical dates are taken from the national census records and are made available by Tom Chantry at <<http://brethrenarchive.org/family-trees/carter-family-tree/>>, accessed 31 Aug. 2017; see also, Ron Woollacott and Michèle Burford, *Buried at Nunhead: Nunhead Notables*, Vol. 3 (London, 2014), 25–26.

⁸ Alfred Mace, *Preaching Christ for Sixty-Five Years: Reminiscences and Experiences in the Life of Alfred Mace, Evangelist and Bible Teacher* (Sydney, 1934), 10. This and related resources are made available by Tom Chantry at <<http://www.brethrenarchive.org/people/alfred-mace/>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

⁹ Nunhead Cemetery burial register, with thanks to Ron Woollacott, editor of FONC newsletter.

¹⁰ *Woollacott and Burford, Nunhead Notables*, 25; Janice Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland 1859–1905* (Dublin, 2000), 152. Mace described

William Carter preached at the same kind of mass open-air meetings as Richard Weaver and became as sought after a public preacher.¹¹ Carter also preached at the interdenominational Mildmay Conferences in Islington.¹² From January 1864, Carter was able to superintend extensive charity relief work through his South London Homeless Refuge, colloquially known as ‘Carter’s Kitchen’,¹³ located at Blackfriars Bridge on the south side of the River Thames. Both branches of this missionary work came under the auspices of his South London Mission.¹⁴ He and his team of volunteers perambulated several Bible carriages around London, for which purpose he founded an ‘Institution for reading aloud the Word of

him as a ‘comparatively small man’ and commented: ‘It is hardly surprising that this none too strong man succumbed comparatively early to these superhuman efforts. We may ask here: Is it better to **rust** out—**wear** out—or **last** out?’, Mace, *Preaching Christ*, 6, 10–11.

¹¹ Richard Weaver first preached in London by invitation from Carter at one of his tea-meetings for about 400 chimneysweeps in Euston Road: William Carter, *The Power of God* (London, 1863), 20. When on one occasion in 1860 Weaver was prevented, due to illness, from preaching at the even larger Victoria Hall (the Victoria Theatre, later known as Old Vic), with a capacity for over 4,000, Carter was able to take his place. Making it quite clear that his preaching style differed from Weaver’s, in that it would be regarded as less eloquent (lacking personal anecdotes for embellishment), Carter’s directness and in-depth exposition of a single verse (John 3:16) ensured that he was accepted by the audience and was asked to return at the next speaking engagements: Carter, *Power of God*, 24. Carter’s ability to style-switch between the formality of the Authorised Version and the Cockney vernacular, no doubt also stood him in good stead with his London audience.

¹² William Carter, *The Power of Grace* (London, 1868), 16; A. P. Baggs, Diane K. Bolton and Patricia E. C. Croot, ‘Islington: Undenominational Missions’, in *A History of the County of Middlesex*. Vol. 8: *Islington and Stoke Newington Parishes*, (eds), T. F. T. Baker and C. R. Elrington (London, 1985), 115–17, ‘British History Online’, <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol8/pp115-117>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

¹³ Thomas Archer, *The Terrible Sights of London and Labours of Love in the Midst of Them* (London, 1870), 274.

¹⁴ Carter, *Power of Grace*. This and further primary source materials are available through Tom Chantry at <<http://www.brethrenarchive.org/people/william-carter/>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

God in the open air', which also had a presence at the international exhibitions as part of the wider revival movement of that time.¹⁵ His work was widely publicised in the newspapers and through his own writing of three books.¹⁶ The weekly magazine *The Revival* (renamed as *The Christian* from 1870), regularly published the same information about his work, written in a sympathetic tone, often by Gawin Kirkham,¹⁷ himself a well known preacher in the revival movement and secretary of the Open Air Mission that also attended the international exhibitions.¹⁸

Different social groups—such as thieves, policemen, unemployed men, labourers, costermongers, wood choppers, pottery men, servants, seamstresses—would be invited free of charge to Carter's meetings in theatres and music halls: large buildings with great seating capacities, that were rented at first but purchased on lease and put in trust ownership wherever possible. Here the gospel would be preached, followed by the opportunity for private conversation at enquirers meetings. The preaching would be preceded by the provision of 'good tea, cake, bread-and-butter, and plenty of it—all free and no collection', advertised as such in the local newspapers and on the distributed admission tickets. The strategy of inviting the weakest members of society to a tea-meeting, an event usually reserved for high society, attracted a great deal of attention, by word of mouth and through newspaper reports. Some evangelistic meetings in theatres and music halls intentionally started at midnight to reach certain groups of people, for instance thieves,¹⁹ who were typically invited with the words: 'No persons of good character will

¹⁵ 'Open-air Scripture Reading', *The Revival*, 31 July 1862, 45–6.

¹⁶ These were: *The Power of God* (1863); *The Power of Truth* (1865); *The Power of Grace* (1868).

¹⁷ *The Revival*, 28 Jan. 1869.

¹⁸ Kirkham wrote many books on preaching skills. Frank Cockrem published the biography, *Gawin Kirkham: The Open-Air Evangelist—A Record and a Tribute* (London, 1894).

¹⁹ 'Midnight Meetings', *London Daily News*, 16 Jan. 1865, 2.

be admitted'.²⁰ The sheer crowds gathering outside before the start of a meeting were in themselves an advertisement for the desired clientele, who might be hoping for rich pickings but would be surprised as to the nature of the meeting. Edward (Ned) Wright, who later became an influential evangelist in his own right,²¹ fell asleep at such a meeting, suddenly woke up wondering how long he had been asleep, but heard Carter repeatedly calling out the word 'eternity', which proved to be a wake-up call and led to Wright's conversion.

The London society journalist and historian, Thomas Archer, reminded his readers in 1870: 'Let it be remembered that Walworth, Bermondsey, Southwark, and Lambeth represent half a million of people ['nearly all these are of the lower classes'²²], to form a rough estimate of the number of destitute and starving creatures in that unfashionable quarter.'²³ Archer describes these south-east London districts as 'places near which it is dangerous to pass after nightfall, and where even in broad daylight sudden assault and robbery are common', before going on to explain: 'It is suggestive that there should be a locality distinctly known by the name of Little Hell.'²⁴ It was in this precise locality that Carter opened his Walworth Mission Hall and Park Hall. Carter chose as the motto for his work Luke 14:21: 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city.' Referring to Carter and his team for the first time in April 1860, the *South London Chronicle* reported that 'a band of really heroic men have broken through the iron bonds of conventionalism and prudish

²⁰ Tom Chantry, 'No persons of good character will be admitted', 9. Mar. 2012, <<http://www.brethrenarchive.org/mini-blog/posts/no-persons-of-good-character-will-be-admitted/>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

²¹ In 1866 he preached, for example, with William Carter at the Metropolitan Hall, a former music hall, in Lower Abbey Street, Dublin: *Freeman's Journal*, 28 September 1866.

²² William Carter, 'Destitution in London', *Western Daily Mercury*, 16 Jan. 1864.

²³ Archer, *Terrible Sights of London*, 277.

²⁴ Archer, *Terrible Sights of London*, 276; Carter, *Power of Grace*, 38.

respectability'.²⁵ Carter and his team visited prisons, liaising with chaplains and governors, also to receive discharged prisoners.²⁶ In spite of the great need, his South London Refuge remained the only night shelter on that south side of the River Thames.²⁷ Archer gives a detailed description of his investigative visit to Carter's refuge in the newspapers and in his book of 1870, *The Terrible Sights of London*.²⁸ The premises for the refuge had been converted by Carter from a disused wheat-flour factory, the London Flour Mills, evidence of his practical way of thinking. The main gate and the side door would open after 6 o'clock in the evening, to admit alternate groups of seventeen men and women, allowing them to have a foot bath, and to wash their hands and face after their long day of walking the streets of London, possibly barefoot even in the winter months. Before the doors were opened, Archer met the team of volunteers and the superintendent and matron, J. A. Schulkins and Mrs Schulkins,²⁹ and was told: 'We make it a rule to kneel down in prayer before we open the doors. We make no difference in that respect when we have visitors.' So Archer witnessed how each member of the team offered up their simple petitions: 'to send funds to enable us to keep open the soup kitchens; that when the doors are opened at six o'clock, may my pointing finger be directed to those who are most in need—and God bless the baker.' The two large dormitories had the capacity to accommodate 150 men and 100 women. They were cared for through the night by Carter's assistants. Air shafts along the walls would circulate warm air from the downstairs gas boiler room, and hot water pipes were laid 'all around the wards',³⁰ making the

²⁵ 'The Social Evil in South London', *South London Chronicle*, 14 Apr. 1860.

²⁶ 'South London Refuge for the Destitute', *The Era*, 2 July 1865, 9.

²⁷ Thomas Archer, 'In a Night Refuge', *South London Press*, 26 Jan. 1867, 5.

²⁸ Archer, *South London Press*, 26 Jan. 1867, 5.

²⁹ J. A. Schulkins, Letter to the editor: 'South London Refuge for Houseless Men and Women and Public Soup Kitchen for the Destitute Poor', *London Evening Standard*, 7 Jan. 1869, 6.

³⁰ 'Christmas in the Refuges', *Morning Advertiser*, 25 Dec. 1866, 5.

accommodation as temperate as ‘the Palm House at Kew on a warm summer’s day’.³¹

Carter tells the story of one family who had walked from Maidstone to London (about forty miles) on a winter’s day and were accommodated in the night shelter, with the father being happy to sleep on one of the side benches instead of a berth.³² A typical year would have 75,000 men, women and children helped in this way. Each night 500 gallons (2250 litres) of stew would be kept ready in the basement kitchen in two steam-heated copper cauldrons containing meat (from ‘pieces of beef, large knuckles of ham’ or mutton³³), carrots, barley grain, plus seasoning. Another cauldron held coffee, which would be served with milk and sugar. Breakfast for each person consisted of one penny three farthing’s worth of bread and coffee,³⁴ which would be about one litre, served at 6 a.m. to allow people to leave by seven at the latest: to find work—unlike the late dismissal in a workhouse that meant people missed any chance of finding work that day and had to go back into the workhouse every time (or wander the streets aimlessly). People might stay two weeks, until they found employment again. To be able to carry out this work, Carter liaised with district nurses,³⁵ who would visit people in the affected areas and distribute free vouchers

³¹ Thomas Archer, ‘In a Night Refuge’, *South London Press*, 26 Jan. 1867.

³² William Carter, ‘The Annual Report of the South London Refuge’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 23 July 1865. Carter noted: ‘The north-east wind was blowing keenly’.

³³ Archer, *South London Press*, 26 Jan. 1867; id., *Terrible Sights of London*, 280.

³⁴ This is equivalent to about 30 new pence or Euro cents, according to The National Archives website, <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

³⁵ Ellen Henrietta Ranyard (1810–1879) was the pioneer for district nursing, and founder of the London Bible and Domestic Female Mission in 1857: see, Mark K. Smith, ‘Ellen Ranyard (“LNR”), Bible Women and Informal Education’, <<http://infed.org/mobi/ellen-ranyard-lnr-bible-women-and-informal-education/>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017. By employing these women, who were trusted by those they came to help, she was credited with having found the missing link in the relationship between the weakest members of society and the aid available from the authorities: ‘Bible Women and Nurses’, *British Workman*, 15 Nov. 1894, 12.

for meals and overnight stays at the refuge.³⁶ Apart from accommodation, timely help included: clothes donations; tools of trade to labourers and carpenters; maternity linen boxes for young mothers; and, most importantly, a good character reference for finding new work with Christian employers. Carter's South London Mission had support from many, not least Lord John Russell, who

Table 1: Preaching events led by Carter in music halls and theatres in 1868

Venue	Frequency per week	Seating capacity
Victoria Hall, Blackfriars	9	800
Victoria Room, Bermondsey	7	400
Gospel Hall, Horseleydown	4	200
Park Hall, Walworth	7	400
Beulah Hall, Camberwell	6	150
Islington	4	200
Hounslow	4	150
Victoria Hall, Southampton	12	500
Chelsea	Tea-meetings, Sunday worship	800
Victoria Hall, Bedford	Prayer, worship, Bible study	800

was a notable social reformer.³⁷ When Carter held his tea-meetings in Bedford, Lord Russell 'bore good testimony to his zeal and sincerity'.³⁸

³⁶ William Carter, 'A Seasonable Appeal', *Brighton Gazette*, 12 Dec. 1867, 6.

³⁷ Russell did not always gain the necessary support of the Whig Party, but notable dates he was involved with include the Parliamentary Reform Act 1832; Factory Act 1847; Public Health Act 1848. 'Lord John Russell, 1st Earl Russell',

The extent of Carter's work is illustrated, by way of a sample overview, with the statistics from his annual report published in 1868 (Table 1). With the support of his wife and children in an ever growing team of assistants to organise the activities, such as mothers' meetings and day trips to the seaside or countryside, Carter's work then included:

- three Sunday services per week for 800 people, held at The Horns Assembly Rooms in Lambeth (corner of Kennington Road/Park Road) and at Deptford Lecture Hall;
- Bible study at various venues in the evenings and on Sunday afternoons;
- six schools and a home for boys on Clapham High Street,³⁹ which admitted children irrespective of creed or nationality (recording a day trip to Streatham Common with 1500 children);
- Home for Reduced Female Servants in Southwark;
- Industrial Home (with manufacture of firelighters) at Suffolk Place, Snows Fields, The Mint (near the location of the Marshalsea debtor's prison well known from Dickens's *Little Dorrit*).

It would take the attitude of a real Scrooge to resent and oppose Carter's charity work—opposition which duly came on 9 June 1870 in the form of a three-hour long conference convened by the Earl of Lichfield at the Charitable Relief Society, Buckingham Street, Strand, entitled: 'Mode of dealing with the houseless poor'. We should remember that Members of Parliament were wealthy and could also be music hall owners,⁴⁰ to understand what direction the

<<https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/lord-john-russell-1st-earl-russell>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

³⁸ 'Free Tea at the Victoria Hall', *The Bedfordshire Mercury*, 8 Feb. 1868.

³⁹ The building was later used by Barnardo's Childrens Charity. "Clapham Home formerly Carter Home" <http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_history/barnardos_homes/barnardos_homes_london/barnardos_homes_london_clapham.htm>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

⁴⁰ One later example would be Walter de Frece, nominally MP for Blackpool, but resident in Monaco. 'Wish you were here—well our MP was!', *The Gazette*, 26 June

opposition came from. Although the directors of refuges across London had been invited to present their case, the conference was led by a handful of influential politicians, whose views were foregrounded in the newspapers. One such powerful voice was Charles Trevelyan, who is remembered in Irish history for his failure to act in the Great Famine,⁴¹ regarding it as a divine intervention to reduce surplus population for the common good, in line with Adam Smith's accepted theory that the invisible hand of the market self-regulates the national economy.⁴² In his other role as the founder of the modern civil service, Dickens caricatured Trevelyan as Tite Barnacle, the director of the Circumlocution Office and Department (the family of Barnacles permanently sticking to their post at the wreckage of the sunken ship *Britannia*).⁴³ Of note in this context is also a sign affixed to a Welsh Congregationalist Church round the corner from Carter's Refuge—still in place today, stating: COMMIT NO NUISANCE—that seems to relate to a vicar from that church making a complaint in a police court about Carter's activities, saying that he had not noticed too many poverty stricken people in this area. He was accusing Carter of spreading false information that would 'create undue alarm in the metropolis'.⁴⁴ Carter's annual reports

2013, <<http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/wish-you-were-here-well-our-mp-was-1-5797894>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

⁴¹ 'BBC history (2014)', <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/trevelyan_charles.shtml>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

⁴² A representative quote comes from his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), stating that the rich are 'led by an invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessities of life, which would have been made, had the earth been divided into equal portions among all its inhabitants', cited at: 'The invisible hand', *The Wealth of Nations*, Book IV, Chapter V, 'Digression on the Corn Trade', p. 540, para. b 43, <<https://www.adamsmith.org/adam-smith-quotes/>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

⁴³ Dickens used this as a metaphorical name in *Little Dorrit* (Chap. 10) for the circular link between the two Houses of Parliament and the connected miserly Treasury department. <http://research.omicsgroup.org/index.php/Sir_Charles_Trevelyan,_1st_Baronet>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

⁴⁴ G. M. Murphy, 'The Alleged Frightful Distress in South London', *Morning Advertiser*, 18 Dec. 1868.

showed figures such as the winter of 1866, when 3,000 destitute families were supported by his South London Mission in their own homes, while his night shelter and soup kitchens dispensed necessary basic aid to a further 42,000 people.⁴⁵ Carter always advertised his work as being open to any visitors for inspection, but on this occasion he had to summon the help of two solicitors to defend himself in court, referring also to local church representatives to preserve his good name and confirm the accuracy of his statements.⁴⁶ At the subsequent conference of 1870 led by the Earl of Lichfield, the attending elite politicians voiced their opinion that the refuges were slanderous, and an insult, as if the government were not doing enough through the Poor Law with its provision of workhouses.

Despite such attempts at closing down the refuges, they evidently stood their ground,⁴⁷ and this conference may, in fact, signify that the government was at last recognising the state's responsibilities. An open letter by Anglican clergymen in opposition to the claims that were to be made by this conference had already been published in *The Revival* of 30 January 1868, in response to articles in *The Times* that had represented the government's view that the Poor Law with its workhouse scheme was adequate. Contrary to this, they stated emphatically that even the combined efforts of all the many different charities were not sufficient in addressing the problem: 'the aid received from all societies, the East London Mission and Relief Committee included, and from private sources, has not been equal to the appalling distress which prevails around us, and which is daily

⁴⁵ William Carter, 'The Distress in London', *Somerset County Gazette*, 21 Dec. 1867.

⁴⁶ 'The Great Distress in South London and Mr. Carter's Night Refuge', *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 27 Dec. 1868.

⁴⁷ For example, a young priest attended the conference, representing Father Daniel Gilbert of the Catholic charity Providence Row in the north-east of London: 'Mode of Dealing with the Houseless Poor', *The Morning Post*, 9 June 1870, 6. Providence Row Night Refuge has been described as 'the first non sectarian shelter in London, open to anyone regardless of their race or religion' <http://www.providencerow.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/history_shortv1.pdf>.

increasing.’ The clergymen also took this as an opportunity to reject accusations that such charity work took advantage of people’s misery to proselytise. Coinciding with the timing of the conference, Archer published his book, *The Terrible Sights of London*, in 1870, in which he gave a thorough investigation of London charities, which he had himself visited (also having inspected the state-run institutions, such as prisons and workhouses). Archer explained that the government’s provisions needed to change. He suggested not only more financial support, but also a more equitable distribution between charities great and small—which he felt would be best administered through the tax system. He praised Carter’s activities because of the transparency in publishing his financial reports, which many charities in those days refused to divulge, regarding it as an insult to expect more than a gentleman’s word of honour. In 1867 Archer had already published a newspaper article about his investigative visit to Carter’s refuge,⁴⁸ so that public opinion and many wealthy donors made it possible for the Carters to continue. It also made their final ten years intensely demanding, affecting their health.⁴⁹

The context of the contemporary religious landscape should also be taken into account when considering Carter’s efforts and achievements. There were some conservative voices opposing the revivalist style of preaching. A parliamentary debate was reported in *The Revival* magazine on 3 March 1860:

⁴⁸ In similar content this had already appeared as a report in a German magazine in 1866 with a detailed drawing. This could have a link to Christian Pundsack (the German co-worker of Lawrence in Spain) after his conversion through a British seamen’s mission. Perhaps Pundsack arranged for the report to be published, considering that Lawrence’s daughter mentioned his activity as a journalist while engaged in their missionary work: see Christina Lawrence, ‘Some Very Early Bremen Brethren’, *BHR* 10 (2014), 2.

⁴⁹ *Woollacott and Burford, Nunhead Notables*, 25. Updates on his health were given in *The Revival* (23 Mar., 30 Mar., and 13 Apr. 1865) by George Pearse in his role as Honorary Secretary of the South London Mission, during Carter’s convalescence in Paris and then the south of France. Carter himself wrote an update on 19 Oct. of the same year from ‘the Hydropathic Establishment “Ben Rhydding”, [near Ilkley in the Brontean countryside of the Yorkshire moorlands] where I have been under treatment for some weeks with great benefit’: *The Revival*, 26 Oct. 1865.

On the evening of Friday (24th ult.), in the House of Lords, Viscount Dungannon moved a resolution condemnatory of the performance of Divine worship at Sadler's Wells and other theatres, by clergymen of the Church of England, as highly irregular, inconsistent with order, and calculated to injure, rather than advance, the progress of sound religious principles in the metropolis and throughout the country. ... It was quite extraordinary to see a clergyman preaching in a playhouse as it would be to see a comedian ascend the pulpit of a parish church on Sunday morning. ... What possible benefits could be derived from such extraordinary and novel proceedings. ... Lord Shaftesbury, in what Earl Granville declared to be a "remarkable speech, temperate, eloquent, and impressive," showed the incorrectness of Viscount Dungannon's statements, and the worthlessness of his conclusions.

Dungannon was forced to withdraw this motion, but such debates ultimately affected anyone engaged in unorthodox preaching, in other words, William Carter. The subsequent witness accounts in that article show that the Victoria Theatre was used then by Anglican vicars for their sermons, to the same crowds of people to whom Carter would soon preach. The presence of the revival movement at the Great Exhibition of 1862 was also characterised by an inter-denominational United Prayer Meeting Committee.⁵⁰

Regarding Carter's relationship to the Brethren movement, one might ask why such a popular preacher with a Brethren background desisted from making it the de facto affiliation expected from his 'Members of the Church of Theatre Converts',⁵¹ with each theatre or music hall having an audience capacity of hundreds of people.⁵²

⁵⁰ *The Revival*, 1 and 8 May 1862. Viscount Dungannon, Arthur Hill-Trevor (1798–1862), was a Conservative MP. He opposed the Parliamentary Reform Act (1832). On 27 May 1862 he led the opposition to the parliamentary motion for the abolition of clerical subscription proposed by Lord Ebury: 'London: 'Open Air Mission', *The Revival*, 12 Apr. 1862; 1 May 1862.

⁵¹ Carter, *Power of Truth*, 3.

⁵² One typical example is the Victoria Hall in Bedford, which had a capacity of 550 people: 'Free Tea at the Victoria Hall', *The Bedfordshire Mercury*, 8 Feb. 1868.

Examples of personal support from the Brethren community are plentiful, for instance the Brethren dignitary, Lord Congleton. He was treasurer to Carter's Bible-carriage work⁵³ and preached at the wedding of Carter's eldest daughter Sarah in 1866.⁵⁴ The Exclusive Brethren preacher and author, Alfred Mace, was one of the people converted through Carter's preaching in 1869;⁵⁵ Carter introduced him to the Brethren assembly in Alderminster Road, which had visits from J.N. Darby that were described by Mace with much admiration. Still, Carter was always careful not to encroach on the outreach activities of others,⁵⁶ and so made it clear that in his meetings he would encourage people to attend *any* church in their locality. Carter's occupation in the census of 1861, when he and his wife were visitors⁵⁷ of George and Sara Lawrence with the Brethren Assembly at Leominster, while the Carters were on a preaching tour in that area,⁵⁸ is given as 'Minister of the Gospel'. This occupational term was the same for Lawrence, whose support for mission work at home and abroad included that of the Hereford Assembly from 1852 onwards. One tea-meeting organised by the Carters in the countryside far from London gives us a connection with the Bevan family, when in 1868 an 'ample supply of hot water was obtained

⁵³ Carter, *Power of Grace*, 16.

⁵⁴ *The Revival*, 23 Nov. 1861

⁵⁵ Mace, *Preaching Christ*.

⁵⁶ There was, for example, a Brethren Assembly in Welbeck Street in Westminster that was supported by the Dowager Lady Radstock, who also supported Hudson Taylor's missionary work in China. Her daughters 'devoted much of their time to philanthropic and evangelistic work among the poor and down-and-out in London', David Fountain, *Lord Radstock and the Russian Awakening* (Southampton, 1988), 57.

⁵⁷ Their main residence was at 159 High Street, St. Pancras, with five children, a servant and two fellow chimneysweeps. (The previous census has the address 43 Queen Street, Ramsgate, with three children and a chimneysweep apprentice.) The next census of 1871, the year before his death, gives his occupation as Minister of Christ, living at 165 Walworth Road (Newington, St. Saviour Southwark), with his wife, four children, a servant, a boarder, but notably also a resident nurse.

⁵⁸ *The Revival*, 18 May 1861.

from the large coppers in the domestic offices of the mansion of R. C. L. Bevan, Esq., whose steward most willingly rendered us every assistance.’⁵⁹ The second wife of Robert Cooper Lee Bevan, banker of Fosbury Manor in Wiltshire, was Frances Bevan, a prolific author and hymn writer, included in the *Little Flock Hymn Book* and *The Believers Hymn Book*.⁶⁰ Carter’s large-scale Sunday worship may have been somewhat Brethren style, in the sense of being non-denominational, which explains his frequent mention in *The Revival* magazine and his participation at the Mildmay Conferences. He himself published hymn collections,⁶¹ and the Carters’ home was also used for smaller-scale worship meetings.⁶² Carter’s theatre preachings were always intended to attract to that ‘place of worship all those who never frequent any other’.⁶³ This basis of the revival movement was at odds with sectarian thinking, therefore one answer to the question surrounding Carter’s separation from his early affiliation with a specific assembly could be that his understanding of the concept of Brethrenism was to be non-denominational. As a reminder of Brethren characteristics we might turn to Roy Coad, who listed some of these as the abolition of pew rents to level out social distinctions; the principle of freedom to speak at Sunday worship; a

⁵⁹ Carter, *Power of Grace*, 110–11.

⁶⁰ John S. Andrews, ‘Frances Bevan: Translator of German Hymns’, *Evangelical Quarterly*, 34/4 (1962), 206–213; 35/1 (1963), 30–8., Bevan supported the Crystal Palace Bible Stand by administering donations through Barclays Bank, of which he was chairman, for William Hawke (*Revival*, 27 Nov. 1862).

⁶¹ Their hymn books included *Little Flock*. Carter also published collections of popular hymns, for example his *Young Convert’s Hymn Book* in 1865, cited by Tom Chantry at <<http://www.brethrenarchive.org/people/william-carter/>>, accessed 7 Aug. 2017.

⁶² Mace also recorded that his conversion through Carter occurred at their later address in Wynne Road, Brixton: Mace, *Preaching Christ*, 6.

⁶³ ‘Free Tea at the Victoria Hall’. This corresponds with other sources, for example: Carter was ‘preaching in all the theatres of the South of London, to those who never enter a place of worship’: ‘The destitute—the helpless—the fallen in the south of London’, *Morning Advertiser*, 29 Dec. 1863, 4.

weekly Lord's Supper;⁶⁴ and believer's adult baptism—but the desire to be un-denominational, rather than initiating another new denomination.⁶⁵ Coad notes the inclusive nature of ministry and meetings of Müller and Craik in Bristol,⁶⁶ so this would again make Carter a suitable candidate for being subsumed under the Brethren label, regardless of his early association with the Brethren. In any case, there has always been a form of Brethrenism that has shaded off into non-denominationalism, which can make individuals and churches difficult to exactly place on a Brethren spectrum.

A novel published later by Frank Bullen, *The Apostles of the Southeast* (1901)—telling the story of a theatre preaching converted chimney-sweep, interwoven with a semi-autobiographical narrative—may afford another perspective on the practicalities of Brethren membership in the London of the nineteenth century. While Bullen tried attending several Brethren assemblies in turn, he was reprimanded for preaching at places of worship conducted by other denominations, which led to his resignation each time. He found it an inconsistency with the term 'Brethren' to allow the overriding decision of an elder 'as the real ruler of the meeting'.⁶⁷ He expresses

⁶⁴ Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement* (Exeter, 1968), 38, 20. Thus Mace says about Carter: 'Every Lord's day, he and others assembled to "break bread" and drink of the Cup in remembrance of the One who "loved them" and had "washed them from their sins in His own blood", with the gladdening promise of His sure return': Mace, *Preaching Christ*, 10.

⁶⁵ Referring to the Groves' acquaintance with the sisters Paget in Exeter, Coad explains that the removal of denominational distinctions and barriers had resulted from Anglo-Irish Protestant minority groups in Dublin finding their common ground in the matters of their faith: Coad, *Brethren Movement*, 23, 19–20. Coad (on back flap) quotes Groves: 'I know no distinction, but am ready to break the bread and drink the cup of holy joy with all who love the Lord ... when will the day come, when the love of Christ will have more power to unite than our foolish regulations have to divide the family of God.'

⁶⁶ Coad, *Brethren Movement*, 42.

⁶⁷ Frank T. Bullen, *The Apostles of the Southeast* (New York, 1901), 51: 'I myself have been warned off three "gatherings" where I was a member, simply because I would reserve my right to go and preach the Gospel in any meeting where I was invited at times when my own band did not require my services. And, as a rule, there

his frustration over the inconsistency in the decisions made by elders that is apparent when a member of a strict Brethren assembly was allowed to join with other street evangelists by playing the musical accompaniment for them.⁶⁸ Despite his expulsion by Brethren elders, he makes frequent use of the term 'Brethren' for his characters. As he used Cockney for his Dickensian dialogue, he often renders the term as 'Brevren', and 'Bruvver' for 'Brother',⁶⁹ which is consistent with the 'Brothuren' of Carter's verbatim rendition of a conversion testimony.⁷⁰ The absence of 'church elder' in their religious discourse, or any kind of hierarchical title, paradoxically becomes the reason for their separation from groups taking 'Brethren' as a denominational label. Perhaps it is also noteworthy that Carter's outreach meetings were advertised as having no collection, which may have had a similar aim as the removal of the collection boxes in the Bristol chapels during the time of Müller and Craik: that of removing any semantic traces of a ministerial caste.⁷¹ While certainly attracting large audiences, Carter never entirely dominated the limelight at the large preaching events, instead making sure that the newly converted gave their testimonies and preached, irrespective of their familiarity with formal rhetorical style.

is no papal rule more inflexible than that wielded by the elders of these tiny gatherings.'

⁶⁸ Bullen, *Apostles of the Southeast*, 50–51, 95. Compare Bullen's autobiographical description in *Buchan Observer and East Aberdeenshire Advertiser*, 16 Mar. 1915, 6: 'Nothing has taken hold of my heart and soul like the Bible. I used to preach in the open-air, and sometimes, when I felt I had no words of my own, I would recite a whole chapter by memory from Isaiah or Job or one of the Gospels.'

⁶⁹ Bullen, *Apostles of the Southeast*, 248. The occasional use of the standard form 'Brother' in spoken dialogue was reserved for mock formality (Bullen, *ibid.*, 165). Carter also used 'Brothrun' in one of his narrated dialogues: Carter, *Power of Grace*, 16, and 'Brethring' elsewhere: *ibid.*, 13.

⁷⁰ Carter, *Power of Truth*, 102.

⁷¹ Coad, *Brethren Movement*, 52, 56, 155.

After William Carter's death on 1 November 1872 at the age of 47,⁷² as his wife Hephzibah had already had a prominent role in the work she was able to continue superintending it, with support from, among others, their son-in-law, Charles Golding-Dwyre, and Hephzibah's second husband, Rowland Ernest Ashton.⁷³ As the death certificate shows, Golding-Dwyre also attended to William Carter's needs in his dying moments. The cause of death is given as pneumonic phthisis: a medically certified condition, from which he had suffered for the past two years—coinciding with the timing of the public conference convened in 1870. Hephzibah Carter was provided for with an inheritance of about £200, equivalent to some £14,000 today.⁷⁴ She died in Brixton, also less than 50 years of age, on 27 April 1877. William Carter's vision had also included the setting up of a scheme whereby unemployed men would be trained in carpentry, agriculture or other occupations, and then enabled to start a new life in Australia.⁷⁵ While lack of financial support for this venture may suggest opposition from the establishment in England, perhaps still regarding the settlement of the so-called colonies as a convenient method for criminal punishment, it nevertheless shows Carter's progressive thinking. Government enforced transportation had ended by the 1860s: abolished in New South Wales in 1850, and Van Diemen's Land (renamed as Tasmania), three years later. However, a better organised settlement of Australia and New Zealand was proposed by Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1796–1862), a London born colonisation theorist, who initiated many colonisation

⁷² C. Golding Dwyre, Letter to the editor, *Morning Advertiser*, 20 Dec. 1872; C. Golding Dwyre, to the editor, 'Christmas Appeals', *London Evening Standard*, 24 December 1872, 5; 'South London Mission', *South London Press*, 23 Feb. 1884, 10. The preacher James Flanagan was to continue the South London Mission in 1891: Holmes, *Religious Revivals*, 153.

⁷³ *The Christian*, 2 Oct. 1873; 22 Mar. 1877; 4 May 1882; 22 Feb. 1883; 14 Jan. 1886; and 16 Dec. 1886. On 31 January 1878, *The Christian* reports on special children's services at Carter's South London Mission, and it was later supported by the Christian Endeavour Movement: *The Christian*, 21 Feb. 1895.

⁷⁴ *Woollacott and Burford, Nunhead Notables*, 26.

⁷⁵ 'South London Refuge for the Destitute', *The Era*, 2 July 1865, 9.

schemes, but eventually attracted criticism over scandalous personal conduct, resulting in negative publicity for his projects. His rationale behind the colonisation programmes was that the colonies were valuable assets because they would alleviate overcrowding in British cities, but that they needed to be better managed. Therefore he proposed that land should be sold and the profits used to subsidise the immigration of selected colonists, for instance shepherds and domestic servants. Consequently, if the men whom Carter had in mind were trained before they emigrated, they would have been ideal candidates for this system.⁷⁶ As Carter's major projects were always subject to the approval of his sponsorship committee, which included Lord Shaftesbury,⁷⁷ public opinion may have hampered its progress, or larger organisations may have simply attracted more support for emigration projects.

One legacy of William Carter's many activities was the sending of missionaries, Wenman and Marsh, to Trinidad and Demerara in British Guiana.⁷⁸ However, one other legacy must surely be the missionary work carried out by George Lawrence: along Cardiff docks during the 1880 decade, when he provided relief work for sailors in the form of a 'Welcome Home' and a Temperance movement 'coffee tavern'; and on the Iberian Peninsula under similar social conditions, with civil war adding to the prevalent poverty.⁷⁹ From that census record of 1861, when the Carters stayed with the Lawrences at their home in Leominster,⁸⁰ it would be reasonable to assume that Lawrence assisted the Carters in London when he had some time to spare. Lawrence would have gained a

⁷⁶ Prof. Marjory Harper to Neil Dickson, e-mail, 19 July 2017.

⁷⁷ Holmes, *Religious Revivals*, 152.

⁷⁸ Carter, *The Power of Grace*, 3.

⁷⁹ Joaquim Campistrón Téllez and Christina Lawrence, 'Don Jorge and the School for the Poor: George Lawrence (1830–1894)', *BHR* (2016), 49–72.

⁸⁰ Carter wrote to *The Revival* at that time: 'Do pray for these converts in Cardiff, Newport, Hereford, Ludlow, and Leominster, and pray much and continually for your brother William Carter. I am in a strait as to what to do, I must give up my business or give up evangelizing (and dare I do that?)': *The Revival*, 18 May 1861.

different kind of valuable experience when not occupied at the international summer conferences with the Crystal Palace Bible Stand under William Hawke. He would have had time to support the work of the Carters after his enforced departure from Spain in 1865, when Carter's South London Mission had been in operation for about a year. The Lawrence family were able to return to Spain after a change of government in 1868, when the charity work of the Carters in England was at its most successful.

The Carters' son Samuel (1858–1938) became a printer and Brethren evangelist and author in Australia, but found it difficult to choose between attending Open and Exclusive Brethren assemblies.⁸¹ Mace mentions that in 1869 Carter considered re-joining the Brethren assembly after twelve years absence from 'practical fellowship',⁸² but as we have seen, the elders might not have agreed with his supra-denominational outreach work. To Carter, limiting himself to preaching within the confines of an orthodox assembly, church, or chapel, would have been as unthinkable as limiting his geographical reach. It is no surprise to find him preaching at Carrubbers Close Mission in Edinburgh in 1861, alongside another church 'the name of which I do not know'.⁸³

⁸¹ Primary source material on Samuel Carter is available at <<http://brethrenarchive.org/people/samuel-james-boulter-carter/>>.

⁸² Mace, *Preaching Christ*, 10.

⁸³ *Revival*, 15 June 1861; Carrubbers Christian Centre nowadays is a non-denominational evangelical church in Edinburgh.' <<http://www.carrubbers.org/>> accessed 30 Aug. 2017.