



## The Wesley Brothers

### The Family of JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY

**JOHN WESLEY** [1703-1791] was the 15th of 19 children of the **Rev. Samuel WESLEY** [1662-1735] Rector of Epworth in Lincolnshire and his wife Susanna formerly **ANNESLEY** [1669-1742]. **CHARLES WESLEY** [1707-1788] was their 18th child.

**Samuel WESLEY** was born in Whitechurch in Dorset and educated at Dorchester Grammar School and Exeter College, Oxford before taking Holy Orders. He was Rector of South Ormesby in Lincolnshire from 1691 -1695 before his appointment as Rector of the parish of Epworth with Wroot in 1695. He was unpopular with the people of Epworth who tried to burn down the Rectory on two occasions. In the second fire in 1709, John was rescued seconds before the thatched roof fell in. Samuel was buried in Epworth churchyard on 25th April, 1735.

**Susanna ANNESLEY** was born in London in 1669, daughter of Samuel Annesley. She married Samuel Wesley in 1688 and gave birth to 19 children by Samuel between 1690 and 1709 of which 10 survived infancy. She brought up her children by imposing a strict daily routine which included lessons in the 3Rs – Reading, Writing and Arithmetic – in the Rectory kitchen. After Samuel's death she travelled extensively visiting her surviving children and was staying with John at the Foundery in Moorfields in London at the time of her death. She was buried in Bunhill Fields on 1st August, 1742.

### The Wesley Family

**Samuel** - Born in London 1690, Died in Tiverton, Devon in 1739. Headmaster of Blundell's School, 1732-1739.

**Susanna** – Born 1691 in South Ormesby, died there in 1793.

**Emelia** – Born 1693 in South Ormesby, married Robert Harper of Epworth in 1737, died in London in 1771.

**Annesley and Jedediah** [twins] - Born 1694 in South Ormesby, died there in 1695.

**Susanna** – Born 1695 in South Ormesby, married Richard Ellison, died in London in 1764

**Mary** – Born 1696 in South Ormesby, married Rev John Whitelamb, Rector of Wroot, died there in 1734.

**Mehetabel** – Born 1697 in Epworth, married William Wright, died in London in 1751

**Infant** – Born 1698 in Epworth, died soon afterwards.

**John** – Born in Epworth in 1699, died soon afterwards

**Benjamin** – Born in Epworth in 1700, died soon afterwards

**Twins** – Born in Epworth in 1701, died soon afterwards

**Anne** – Born in Epworth in 1702, married John Lambert, date of death not known

**JOHN** – Born in Epworth in 1703, founder of the Methodist Movement, died in London in 1791

**Infant** – Born in Epworth in 1705, died soon afterwards

**Martha** – Born in Epworth in 1706, married Wesley Hall, died in London in 1791

**CHARLES** – Born in Epworth in 1707, married Sarah Gwynne,

**Keziah** - Born in Epworth in 1709, died in London in 1741

**JOHN WESLEY** was educated at Charterhouse School and Christ Church College, Oxford, graduating in Divinity and Classics in 1724 and becoming a Deacon in the Anglican Church in 1726 and priest a year later. He was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford in 1727 and became a lecturer in 1729. In the same year he founded the Holy Club. He and his fellow members were nicknamed “Methodists” because of their austere and methodical way of life. After a disastrous two years in Georgia in America [1735-1737] as a Missionary and chaplain, Wesley returned to England where on May 24th, 1738 while attending a meeting of the Moravian Society in Aldersgate Street in London, he experienced a wonderful conversion and from that moment set out to revive the Anglican Church. In 1739, he started preaching in the open air and over the next 52 years is said to have travelled 250,000 miles on horseback and preached 40,000 sermons. By the time of his death in City Road, London on March 2nd, 1791, the Methodist Movement within the Anglican Church claimed to have over 70,000 members and half a million adherents. By ordaining 3 presbyters to go to North America as missionaries in 1784, Wesley opened the door for the Methodist Movement to break away from the Anglican Church after his death, although he remained an Anglican priest for the rest of his life.

**CHARLES WESLEY** was educated at Westminster School and Christ Church College, Oxford. A founder member of the Holy Club, he graduated in 1730 and was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1735 shortly before accompanying John to Georgia as secretary to Governor Oglethorpe. On his return to England, he too experienced a conversion - on Whit Sunday, 1738 and became an evangelist within the Anglican Church. He made Bristol his main base and went on many evangelising journeys between 1739 and 1761 when ill health caused him to move to Bath. In 1771 he moved to London, and continued to preach as much as his health allowed. He strongly disapproved of John’s ordination of 3 presbyters in 1784 but the brothers were reconciled before Charles’ death in 1788. Charles is best remembered as the composer of more than 6,000 hymns of which a large number are still regularly sung in churches today.