

Watton-at-Stone Methodist Church Centenary 1991

T H E

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Y E A R S

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A POTTED HISTORY

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THE FIRST 100 YEARS

FOREWORD :

Soon after being asked to produce this publication (or did I volunteer?) I began to panic and think of every good reason not to proceed. After the initial set-back and receiving much kindness and enthusiasm from many I set about the task.

As a relative newcomer to the Chapel it proved quite a challenge, however, I actually found myself enjoying it and left it to the stories of members past and present, the help of an old minute book, personal recollections and information gleaned from the County Library. I do sincerely hope there will be something of particular interest to you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Many people have contributed to this publication, directly or indirectly and many responded enthusiastically. My thanks for their support and love and the opportunity to meet and make new friends. God is good.

DEDICATION :

To the memory of all members of Watton Methodist Church, past and present, who have kept alive the spirit of Christian values and fellowship since 1891.

"I LOOK UPON ALL THE WORLD AS MY PARISH" so wrote JOHN WESLEY in the eighteenth century. John Wesley died on March 2nd, 1791 and 100 years after his death a Chapel was founded in Watton to mark the century. We are now privileged to be celebrating 100 years of worship in this same Chapel.

Sandra Robey
Editor

NB

The Editor accepts responsibility for any errors and omissions and would be delighted to hear of any corrections and additions which may come to light.

Please contact at 49d High Street, Watton-at-Stone.

Let us begin with a letter from MICHAEL DE VISME who as many of you will remember was a former local preacher in our circuit.

"There seems to have been a Wesleyan Methodist Society in Watton some fifty years before the Chapel was opened. I have been told that my Grandfather (who was born and brought up in Watton) joined himself to this Society after a conversion experience in Manchester where he visited as a young man. This would have been in the 1860's. Apparently a group of people met in the living room at the back of the butchers shop for their 'class'. They met in secret because in those days most people owed their livelihood to the Squire who did not approve of Methodism - for they would have lost their livelihood and the homes which went with it.

I always imagine this shop to be the one now a dwelling house at the south end of the village, with the overhanging upper storey. The Chapel was built on land owned by this butcher and was one of the few plots not in the hands of the Squire. When first built it must have been on the outskirts of the village.

A Minister once suggested that it was called the WESLEY CENTENARY CHURCH because it was built at the time of the 100th anniversary of John Wesley's death. My Grandfather travelled from Wisbech to be at the opening.

At the time of the building, and later, the Methodists were greatly helped by farmers who moved into the district from Cornwall. Many of us remember the stables at the back of the Chapel which were used to house the farmers' horses by which they came to Church.

On one of my very first visits to Watton, when in my teens, I remember the welcome drink of water drawn from the well on the south side of the Chapel. This was the drinking supply. Later I learned other water used was rainwater from the roof, which was collected from a nearby house. At one time, when I was a Trustee, one of the matters under discussion was the supply of mains water. As this would have to be brought from the far side of the road, the cost was prohibitive. In the end a nearby farmer kindly agreed to a pipe being linked up with his mains."

METHODIST CIRCUIT:

Until 1885, the Waltham Abbey and Hertford Methodist circuit was known as the Bishops Stortford and Hertford Circuit and included chapels existing at different dates throughout the whole of East Hertfordshire and West Essex. In 1831 these were Bishops Stortford, Hertford, Ware, Saffron Walden, Newport, Dane End, Benington, Brickwell, Howe Green and Braughing.

In 1855 the chapels at Bishops Stortford, Hare Street, Braughing, Berden and Harlow split away to form a separate circuit later known as the North West Essex Mission.

From 1902-1912 the churches to the North West Essex Mission were again amalgamated with the Hertford circuit to form the much larger London and Hertford mission circuit.

In 1912 two circuits were again formed and Cheshunt, Waltham Abbey, Ordnance Road (Enfield Lock), Hoddesdon, Hertford, Ware, Wareside and Watton at Stone became the new Waltham Abbey and Hertford circuit. Sewardstone also formed part of this circuit from 1931 until its closure in 1970 and the church at Wareside was closed in 1973.

Today this circuit consists of the churches at Waltham Abbey, Hoddesdon, Cheshunt, Hertford, Ware and Watton at Stone and our circuit forms part of the London North East District of the Methodist church.

THE WATTON MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY:

So what of the Society first mentioned by Michael de Visme? An extract from an old minute book dated November 1898, will I am sure be of interest to you.....

"It is advised that a Society had been formed and called THE WATTON MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY. Committee members were: MR. BROAD Hon. President MR. F. GUBBIN Vice President MR. PECK Secretary and MR. BAILEY."

A series of meetings were held on Tuesday evenings at 7pm for one hour at which various papers were read. Subjects were as diverse as:

THE MOTHER OF THE WESLEYS
MAN IN THE MOON
RECOLLECTIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA IN 1848
DEVONSHIRE FARMING
LEATHER DRESSING, and
TRAVELS INTO SWITZERLAND - using OXYHYDROGEN LIME-LIGHT VIEWS, when it was reported "MR. ELSDEN and MR. YOUNG paid for gas and met part expenses of an Ostler, at 6d!!"

At subsequent meetings, topics ranged from THE DISCOVERY AND SYSTEMS OF MARCONI'S WIRELESS, to Miss Ashley's account of A WOMAN'S INFLUENCE ON MAN, which sadly was cancelled and replaced with three papers, entitled GEORGE ELIOT, THE CULTIVATION OF ONIONS and THE INFANCY OF THE IRON HORSE!!

Three

Musical evenings were also held and a programme for one of these as follows:

Recitation:	THE PRIEST & THE LADY	Mrs. Peck
Reading:	MRS. BROWN AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY	Mr. Broad
Solo:	THE HOLY CITY	Mr. Bailey
Violin Solo:	**	Mrs. Broad
Piano Forte Solo:	**	Miss Booker
Solo:	STAR OF BETHLEHEM	Master Booker
Reading:	THREE BRASS BALLS:	Mr. Peck
Solo:	WAIT TILL THE TURN OF THE TIDE	Mr. T. Bailey
Solo:	QUEEN OF THE EARTH	Master Booker
Duet:	JOE PERKINS	Mr. W. & F. Bailey
Reading:	THE RAZOR SELLER	Mr. Broad

Finally ending the performance with the Jeremiah Eames Rankin's hymn, GOD BE WITH YOU TILL WE MEET AGAIN. A collection of 18/5d. was produced. These certainly were THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

For anyone interested in these early minutes, they make fine reading and are kept by Ralph White, Oaks Cross Farm. Well worth a read.

PROPOSED WESLEY CENTENARY CHAPEL:

On June 13th 1891, nestling between two newsworthy reports of a Ladies Cricket Match in Hertford and a charge of burglary at Datchworth, the Hertford Mercury reported on the Wesley Centenary Chapel.

PROPOSED WESLEY CENTENARY CHAPEL:

"The memorial stones of the proposed WESLEY CENTENARY CHAPEL at Watton will be placed on Monday 18th June 1891 when the President of the Conference, the Rev. P. Thompson (London Mission), Alderman Cardell, JP and the Rev. B. T. Hallows will take part in the proceedings. A large party will leave Hertford for Watton about 1.30pm and over 200 tickets for the public tea have already been disposed of."

I have included the Mercury's advertisement for the stone-laying ceremony, showing other classified sections, which I hope will add extra interest of the period in question.

HALL, WARE.

MR. PERCY COLSON'S
SECOND
EVENING CONCERT

TUESDAY, JUNE 23rd, 1891, at 8 o'clock.

ARTISTES:

Vocalist, MISS MAGGIE DAVIES, of the London Ballad Concerts.

Pianist, MR. HAYDN PARRY, composer of Gwen.
Solo Violin, MR. PERCY COLSON.

Recitations by MISS ALICE CHAPIN, the popular actress.

Conductor, HERR OTTO PEINIGER.

Reserved seats (numbered) 3s.; front seats, 2s.; back seats, 1s. Tickets to be obtained of Mr. Price, High Street, and at 10, New Road, Ware.

"WESLEY CENTENARY" CHAPEL,
WATTON, HERTS.

MEMORIAL STONES

WILL BE PLACED

MONDAY, JUNE 15th, 1891, at 3 o'clock.

TEA at 5 o'clock.

MEETING in Large Marquee
at 6 o'clock.Chief speaker the REV. W. F. MOULTON, M.A.,
D.D., President of the Conference. (See Bills).

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

CHEAP EXCURSIONS.

TO LONDON (Handel Festival, Naval and German Exhibitions, etc.), June 19th and 20th, from Hertford (G.N.), 9:30 a.m.; Hertingfordbury, 9:35; Cole Green, 9:39; Hatfield, 9:15 and 9:54; returning each day at 7 and 9:35 p.m., and 12:10 midnight.

TO PORTSMOUTH, June 20th, from Hertford (G.N.), 6:35 a.m.; Hertingfordbury, 6:42; Cole Green, 6:47; Hatfield, 7:15; returning at 8 p.m.

Tickets, bills, &c., at stations.

o HENRY OAKLEY, General Manager.
London, King's Cross, June, 1891.

THREE COUNTIES ASYLUM,

Near Arlesey, Bedfordshire.

TO MILLERS, MEALMEN, AND OTHERS.

PERSONS desirous of contracting with the Committee of Visitors of the Lunatic Asylum for the counties of Bedford, Hertford, and Huntingdon (called the Three Counties Asylum), for supplying the Institution with SECONDS WHEATEN FLOUR and MALT during the quarter ending the 30th day of September, 1891, are invited to TENDER for the

Peckham, Harlow, Hampstead.

TO LADIES.—DO YOU WANT A GENERAL SERVANT?—The above office will be found an excellent medium for obtaining what you require. Note the Address:—THE FANCY BAZAAR, opposite Corn Exchange, Bishop Stortford.

A GENERAL SERVANT WANTED, about a good wages.—Apply, Mrs. E. Woolf, Waltham Cross, Herts.

WANTED GENERAL SERVANT, age about 20, tall and respectable; good quiet home to one willing to make herself useful; references will be paid.—Apply in the first place to Mrs. Busby, 1, Bloomsbury-square, London, W.C.

WANTED, GENERAL SERVANT, with good character; age about 20. Wages, £10.—Mrs. N., 91, Layton Road, Stoke Newington, London, N.

DRESSMAKING.—WANTED, IMPROVED APPRENTICES (out doors).—Miss F. N., 16, Chamber's Street, Cowbridge, Hertford.

WANTED, HOUSEMAID about 19; good family; very comfortable home in suburbs; good references indispensable; no beer.—Apply to Miss HULL, Orchard, Southgate, N.

WANTED, a HOUSEMAID, not under 18, of age.—Apply, Mrs. PEARCE, Mill Lane, Stanstead, near Ware.

TO TAILORS.—Wanted at once a GENERAL HAND.—Apply to J. N., Watton, Herts.

WANTED, an ASSISTANT to the Dressmaker A. CUTLER, Ware-road, Hertford.

WANTED, a STRONG RESPECTABLE person, age about 17, as an assistant in the kitchen of a Coffee Tavern; must have good character.—Apply to J. N., 9, Old Cross, Hertford.

Situations Wanted.

MISS FANNY DRUMMOND seeks a situation of engagement as GOVERNESS to YOUNG CHILDREN, having satisfactorily filled a similar post for the past two years in the Head Master's school of one of our largest London schools. Subjects taught included English, Music, Drawing, Latin and French.—Apply to J. N., 31, Ware Road, Hertford.

YOUNG LADY, certificated, Oxford University, wishes DAILY ENGAGEMENT, neighbourhood Hoddesdon. English, French, German, Italian, &c.—"T. G.," 18, St. Thomas-road, Finsbury Park, London, N.

WANTED, a situation as UNDER NURSE or NURSEMAID. Seventeen months' experience. Age 18.—Apply to "A. B.," Mercury, Hertford.

YOUNG man seeks situation as under GARDENER or ODD MAN, to make himself generally useful. Age 27. Good character.—T. N., 22, Parliament-row, Hertford.

THE LAYING OF THE MEMORIAL STONES
15TH JUNE 1891

It is known that Wesleyans had been holding cottage services at Watton since 1841 and from time to time, the idea of building a chapel had been mooted. It was not until the Rev. F. Tunbridge was appointed superintendent of the Hertford circuit that definite steps were taken to erect a building.

Negotiations for the purchase of a suitable piece of land at Watton commenced, but considerable difficulties were experienced. It seemed likely at one time that the projected scheme would have to be abandoned, however, in 1890 a plot of ground was purchased from Mrs. Parker, for £130. Circulars were at once issued appealing for subscriptions and it was agreed that the whole project should be a WESLEY CENTENARY effort.

It was felt that there was a genuine need for a chapel at Watton, which at that time had a population of over 1,000 people with no Non-conformist place of worship within a reasonable distance.

Promises of liberal support were made from all parts of the country and the building finally commenced in May 1891. The architect was Mr. F. Boreham of Finsbury Pavement and the builder Mr. D. Neighbour of Ware. It was hoped that the building would be ready for the opening of services in August 1891 and designed to take 120 persons, with a small schoolroom in the rear to take 40 children.

The Chapel and the schoolroom were built at the same height in order eventually for them to become one, with a new schoolroom to be built at the rear. The building itself was built on simple Gothic lines.

A ceremony for the laying of memorial stones took place on MONDAY, JUNE 15th 1891 in the presence of a large gathering of some 300 people. The proceedings commenced with the singing of the hymn: PRAISE YE THE LORD! TIS GOOD TO RAISE, YOUR HEARTS & VOICES IN HIS PRAISE. Devotional exercises were led by the Rev. J. Gibson and followed by another hymn: CHRIST IS OUR CORNER STONE, ON HIM ALONE WE BUILD. In his address, the Rev. Tunbridge said he noticed with satisfaction that the Non-conformist churches were being drawn closer together and what was really wanted was that all Protestant churches in England should become united and be one in spirit, standing shoulder to shoulder. He said "We are friends of all and the enemies of none!"

Rev. Tunbridge made a financial statement and at the conclusion of this the memorial stones were placed in position. The first stone on which £20. was placed, was laid "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" by the President of the Conference on behalf of Mr. Mrs. R.B. Jackson of Tottenham. In a cavity under the stone was placed a bottle hermetically sealed containing copies of the Hertfordshire Mercury, the Herts. Guardian, the Methodist Recorder, Joyful News, a circuit plan and six new coins.

Six:

Other stones were laid and after the ceremony, the whole company adjourned to a large marquee for tea, which had been provided by the various friends in Watton. It had been planned to hold an evening meeting in the marquee, but there was a hurricane of wind and rain and part of the marquee was blown into shreds. Mr. F. Newman placed a large shed at the disposal of those present and the evening meeting continued with considerable enthusiasm. Such was the fighting spirit of those early day Wesleyans!

OPEN FOR SERVICES:

The anticipated opening date of August 1891 came and passed and it was not until Wednesday, October 14th that the WESLEY CENTENARY CHAPEL opened its doors for the first service.

The Mercury reported on Saturday, October 17th, 1891 as follows:

"The Wesleyans in Watton and the neighbourhood now possess what for a long time they have much desired, a suitable building in which to meet and in which services can be conducted from time to time.

At three o'clock, the time fixed for the formal opening of the doors of the church, a large number of persons, many of whom had come a considerable distance, were assembled outside the principal entrance. The hymn: GREAT GOD, THY WATCHFUL CARE WE BLESS, WHICH GUARDS THESE SACRED COURTS IN PEACE was sung and Mrs. C.A. Morris of London, by invitation of the Rev. J.E. Creasy circuit minister, then opened the Chapel. The building was almost immediately filled and the opening service proceeded with the Rev. C.H. Kelly ex. President of the Conference officiating. At the close of the service an adjournment was made to a large shed lent kindly by Mr. Newman, where tea was partaken by a large number of persons.

At the later evening service the Rev. Creasy made a financial statement to the effect that the total cost of the chapel was £600. and it was with considerable pleasure that he announced the fact that the building had been opened FREE OF DEBT."

And so the firm foundations of Methodism were layed down at Watton and many people came together in God's name offering their own talents and gifts to spread His word. We thank God for these people and their Christian endeavours on our behalf.

I have attached the text given at this service, which I hope you will find of interest.

TEXT OF SERMON GIVEN AT THE OPENING FOR SERVICES
OCTOBER 14TH 1891 :

Rev. C. H. Kelly, ex-President of the Conference, officiating. The certificate of the registration of the chapel as a place of worship was read, and another hymn having been sung the Rev. C. H. Kelly offered a suitable prayer. The lessons were 2 Chronicles vi. and Luke iv., verse 16 to end. Appropriate hymns were also sung, and the Hertford Choir rendered Sir John Stainer's well-known anthem "Ye shall dwell in the land." The sermon was preached by the Rev. C. H. Kelly from Jude, part of verse 3, "Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." During a forcible discourse the rev. gentleman urged upon his hearers that the Christians of the present day were exactly in the same position as the early Christians. The religion that was then given to them for their enjoyment, for promulgation, and for them to defend was exactly the same as that given to-day, and the experience of the Church in the early days of the Christian era was a similar experience to that of the present-day Church, because history repeated itself. If they were to carefully study the history of the Apostolic Church in the first century they would find that notwithstanding the blessed results of Apostolic preaching and work there was much to be regretted; and they would also find that there never took place a revival of religion on a large scale in which there would not be incidents that scoffers could make capital out of. It would not be wise, however, to take upon oneself to refute all the stupid statements made by those who were opposed to the dissemination of Christian truths, because if one troubled one's brains about everything that foolish people said, no time would be left to carry out more important work. And there was work of the greatest importance to be done. They should earnestly contend for the faith as revealed in the Scriptures, and he urged upon those present, especially those who were going to take an interest in the building just erected, that there was no substitute under the sun for thorough-going earnest devotion in the cause of God. If they wanted the Wesley Centenary Church at Watton to prosper they must work. It was not enough to erect a building, though that was doing much; it was not enough to subscribe towards the cost of it, though God would accept their gifts, but if they wanted God's blessing to rest upon it they must work, and why should they not work? This was the time for toil and strife, and earnest efforts should be made to spread the truths of Christianity. The nation was blessed by such work as that in which they had been engaged at Watton. He never saw a place of worship being erected in which real prayer and praise would be offered to God without a feeling of thankfulness, because he knew that the nation must benefit from it. Every brick in a building like that in which they were assembled, every brick in a church, school, or chapel, was one brick less in a workhouse or a prison, and therefore they ought to be thankful when buildings for worship were erected, no matter by what denomination.

Eight

IN MEMORY

Many fine accolades have been made to the memory of MRS. ELLA BOWCOCK for the very special contribution she made to the chapel. She was, and is, much respected and particularly in our thoughts as we reach our Centenary.

MARY TONGUE adds her personal tribute, which has been echoed by many:

"When I first came to Watton Chapel with my husband Michael in 1967, there were a few faithful members and it was an enormous contrast to the lively church of 100 at Hoddesdon.

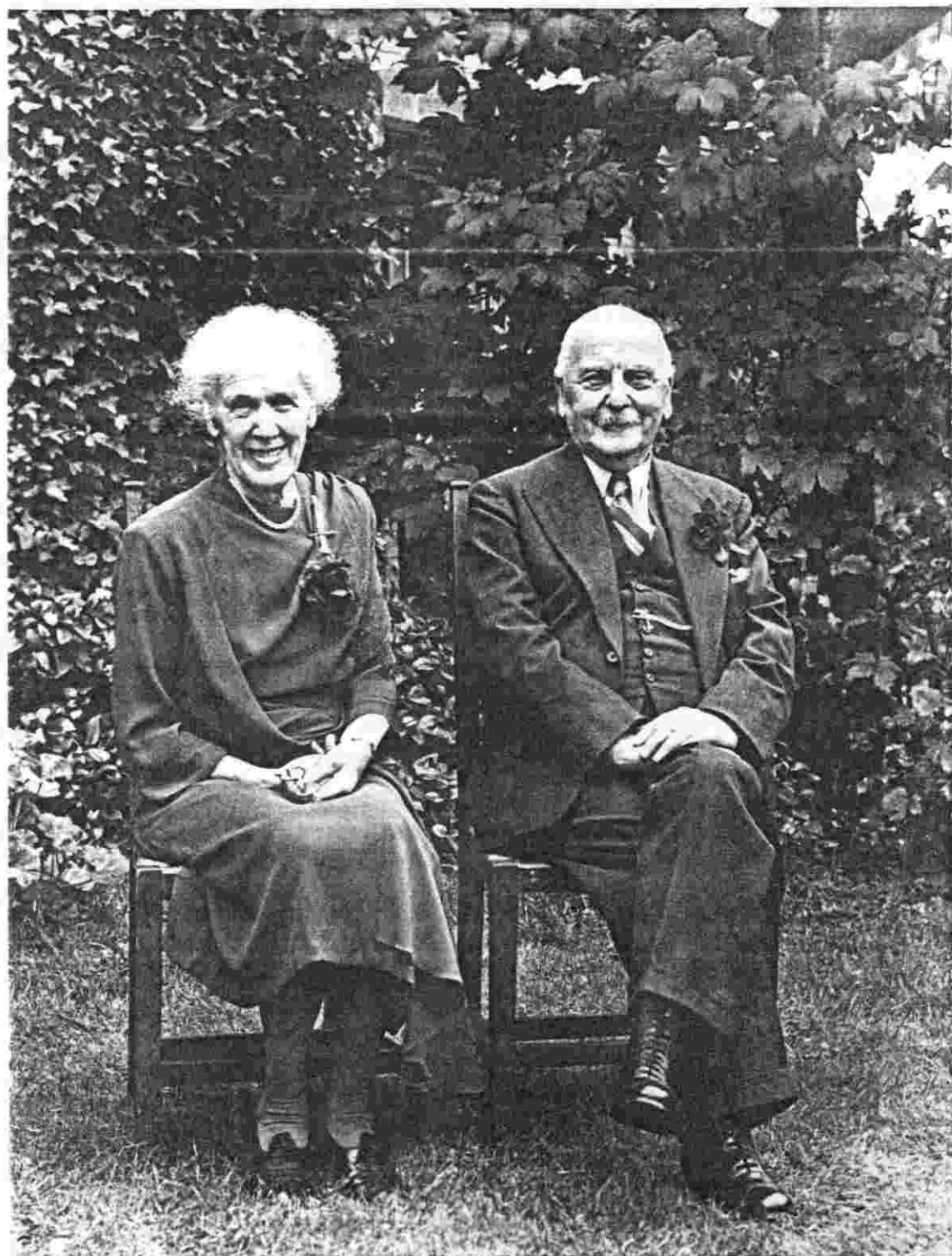
However, when our first child arrived, we felt we should worship here in the village and Michael soon found a place as Organist. Together with Ralph, Audrey White and others, we helped to start a Sunday School, the Chapel began to grow in numbers.

It was the witness of Audrey's mother ELLA BOWCOCK who inspired me to do more. She was a lovely Christian lady, wise and caring,; she showed us by example how to show God's love in practical ways. I am so grateful for her life and example. Others too have come and gone since then, dear friends, with whom we have shared very deep truths."

We also include in our memory another stalwart member MR. JOHN (JACK) MERRILLS, a former Steward who did much for the Chapel over and above the call of duty. We owe him much and are proud to say that he is still represented today by his wife MRS. JESSIE MERRILLS one of our longest serving Chapel members, their Son JOHN and grand-daughter SARAH. A proud record.

CHAPEL FURNISHINGS represent noteworthy stories; one such is the brass plaque in memory of GERTRUDE GUBBIN, the only daughter of one of our founders, Treasurer/Chapel Steward MR. F. GUBBIN. Gertrude was a nurse attending soldiers at Woodhall Park in the First World War, she caught pneumonia and died tragically at the age of 26.

The communion-table cloth and blue covers for the altar prayer stools, the collection bags and various cushions in use today were made by Mrs. Nellie Griggs and her sister Miss Betty Parker and dedicated by the Rev. David Caink, in memory of their sister Emily.



*G. H. Blake
New York*

MR. MRS. PECK

(ONE OF OUR
FOUNDERS)

CHAPEL FURNISHINGS

The cross on the wall was made by Gill Day's husband Gerry, at the request of Mrs. Bowcock and the Lectern and Bible placed there by Mrs. Bowcock's family and friends in her memory.

Two solid oak tables were made from the legs of an old table belonging to Irene Milton by Richard Bone. If you look closely at these you will see they are inscribed with the names "MARY" and "MICHAEL" (Tongue); a fitting dedication for the work they do behind the scenes for many people both in the chapel and in the village.

EARLY MEMORIES

MRS. AUDREY WHITE recalls.....

"I have been attending the Methodist chapel now for 43 years and remember the first person to look after the Church was Mr. Peck. He and I used to light the old tortoise stoves - one in the schoolroom, one in the Vestry and two in the church. These stoves burnt a lot of coke and used to smoke terribly when lit.

In my time we have had John and Bessie Shute teaching Sunday-school along with Gordon and Jessie Hind, Mrs. Hills, Janet Brighten, Jim and Jean Scrimshire, Janet Evans, Gill Day, Rob and Jane Weston, Mary Tongue, Alison Walker, Vicky Green, Ralph White and myself.

Our Ministers over these same years have been the Revs. Aldridge, Frank Spencer, Arthur Dent, Owen Thomas Stanley Luke, Charles Gill, David Caink and Brian Gameson.

Mrs. Wilson used to play the organ for us, also Mrs. Hawkins (formerly Margaret Sheppard). Our Treasurers have been: Mr. Peck, Mrs. Bolter, Robin Sheppard, Ralph White and Michael Tongue.

We had a Junior Guild, run for many years by my husband Ralph and I am proud to say that the Chapel was registered for marriages in 1957 - ours being the very first."

As I have been researching this history, it has become very clear just how much Ralph and Audrey White have done for the "little chapel they dearly love" and it would not be right to leave this out of our publication. We are grateful for their continuing love and support.

Eleven:
EARLY MEMORIES:

Mrs. R. Day recollects when all the windows in the chapel were stained glass. Sadly these were smashed during the Second World War and the chapel boasts only one remaining stained glass window - over the entrance. A stray bomb dropped at the rear of the chapel knocking out the windows and actually lifting the roof. This is held firm today by ties.

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Music for hymns was played on an old harmonium and during summer months there was an outing to the seaside, or a "big house", where tea was put on. Mrs. Griggs recollects how the children were all transported from Watton to Ware railway station in a Gubbin's farm trailer, sitting in their "Sunday best clothes", on chairs made from bales of straw.

Betty Parker remembers how the children were given stars for attendance and their books stamped by Mr. Peck in the old schoolroom. Good attendance was marked officially by the presentation of an illustrated bible or Methodist School Hymnal and both Mrs. Griggs and Miss Parker treasure their own copies to this very day.

The kitchen in the schoolroom catered for many social events and some of the original 1891 crockery is still in use today.

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THE OLDEST PRINT OF THE CHAPEL

Kind permission
Mr. Bowcock

NOTE the iron
balustrades
taken away
during the War
for armaments.

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Twelve:

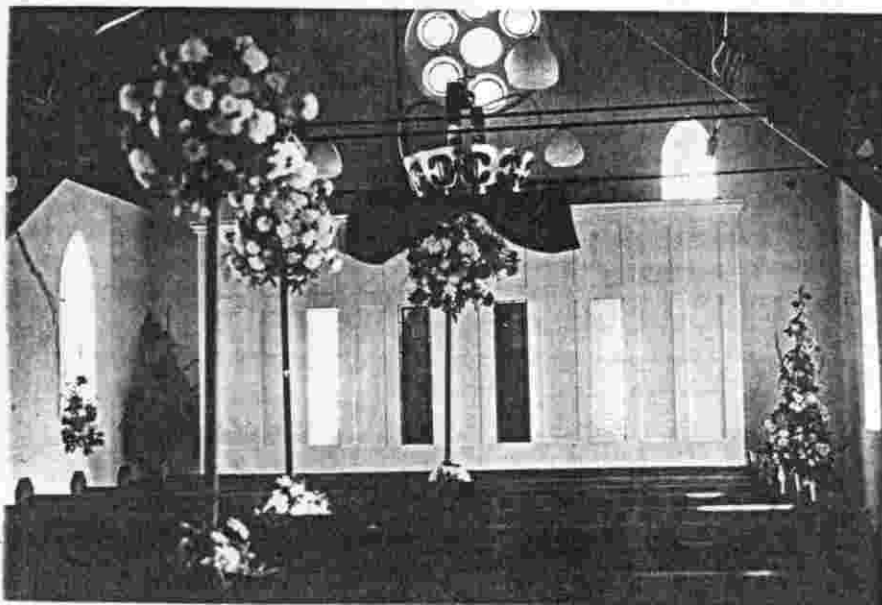
FLOWER FESTIVALS:

The early records first mention a Flower Show in September 1904, when a Bazaar was held and an evening concert. As it was considered illegal to charge entrance, the organisers charged 3p each for a programme of events and a profit made.

Other FLOWER FESTIVALS have been held over the years and in particular MRS. VERA COPLEY recollects with pride the SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS in June 1977. Mrs. Bowcock first had the idea of holding the Festival and funds raised by holding a coffee morning where donations reached the sum of £100. The flower arrangements were expertly displayed by: GILL CUBITT, MURIEL WESTON, PEGGY AYRES, MOIRA GREEN, MAUREEN EVENS, ALISON CARTER & VERA COPLEY.

The Flower Festival tradition is continuing in our Centenary Year, when Watton Flower Club have kindly agreed to decorate our chapel, we are proud of this association.

PHOTOGRAPHS by kind permission of Mrs. Copley
SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS



THE CENTENARY YEAR :

The last year of the first Century of worship has been marked by a number of lively activities organised to raise funds, but more importantly to bring others in contact with our Christian fellowship.

The first Centenary event was a most successful BARN DANCE in the summer of 1990, followed by a happy and fun QUIZ EVENING in the Autumn. The Aston Handbell Ringers joined us in an early Christmas celebration and a Spring Concert was held in the village school, where the Stevenage Male Voice Choir entertained over 90 people.

At the time of going to press over £800. has been raised for chapel funds, so a special thank-you to all who were involved in these events.

Other fund raising has included the collecting of aluminium cans; the making and selling of jam by one of our members and the sale of over 200 commemorative mugs.

Spring bulbs were donated and planted out by volunteers and Watton Flower Club kindly agreed to decorate our chapel with flowers for the official May celebrations of worship. Many local people and organisations have been invited to attend. The chapel has been re-decorated, again by a volunteer, and several of our ladies are making a Centenary wall-hanging.

It is our wish to find the "hermetically sealed bottle" placed on the FIRST SERVICE ANNIVERSARY and place this with another from our time. Who knows, perhaps in the year 2091 others may do the same.

OUR FUTURE STARTS TODAY.

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We began with a WESLEY quote, so it is appropriate that we end on another.

John Wesley preached his last sermon at Leatherhead Surrey on 23rd February 1791. On March 2nd he died. His last message was "the best of all is God is with us...."

God is with us at Watton as we continue to worship. We hope that future generations will follow in firm Christian values and feel part of God's own family here.

May 1991