

As we celebrate the Centenary of our Church we reflect with gratitude on the faith, vision and sacrificial service of those early Methodist people who founded the Clayhanger Methodist Society, who built the Chapel and have served faithfully throughout the years. If we could summons them into our Church today what a story they would have to tell of how the work was begun; what hopes they had, what circumstances they had to deal with, and how they overcame their difficulties.



Now part of the "Cloud of Witnesses" they watch us to see if we hold high the torch of faith they bequeathed to us, to see if the warmth of Christian Fellowship is maintained. During this year of 1985 we pause and meditate with gratitude and love on the lives and service of those who preceded us, and in our worship and praise we give thanks to God who has led us and blessed us, helped and guided us to this present hour. Surely these hallowed memories and our noble heritage are a source of renewed faith and hope and service in these tremendous times of challenge.

May this Centenary be a call to each of us to re-dedicate ourselves anew to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us pray that we may be filled with a greater love for HIS Church. Let us see that we take our rightful place, and play our rightful part, believing that God has a word for this day and generation and that word can only be received if we open our minds and hearts to the Holy Spirit.

To serve the present age
My calling to fulfil
O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will.

Donald H. Booth
(Superintendent Minister)

A BRIEF LOOK BACK IN HISTORY

Where the Methodists of Clayhanger met for Worship prior to 1885 is not revealed in any of the records available, presumably it was in someone's home, but there was certainly a keen band of folk, for it was on 2nd September, 1884 that the first Trustees of the present Church and the then Superintendent Minister signed the conveyance for a piece of land 35 yards by 20 yards from the Trustee of the estate of the late Phineas Fowke Hussey. The amount of money paid to the estate according to the conveyance was £7.00 but from information passed down the years from former generations it would seem that the land was a gift for the building of a Primitive Methodist Chapel. There were 16 Trustees consisting of a variety of occupations namely – 11 miners, an agent, bricklayer, boatloader, carrier, and a contractor. Unfortunately there are so few records available (no Minutes or Account Books) that information of the early years is sparse. As far as the cost of the building itself is known, a mortgage document for a loan of £180 was executed on 11th June, 1885, (this would seem to be somewhere near the cost when one considers the cost of houses in the early 1900's).

Bethel Primitive Clayhanger Methodist Church, in the then Parish of Norton Canes, became part of the Lichfield Primitive Methodist Circuit, the Superintendent Minister being the Rev. William Evans who lived at Rose Villa, High Street, Brownhills, this was to remain the Circuit Manse until 1938.

In September 1937, a further piece of land the length of the Chapel ground and 9 feet wide was obtained for a rental of 5 shillings per year from Mrs. Wallace. The conditions of the agreement were that a wall be erected at the Chapel expense, but any old bricks on the site (from the demolition of a previous building) could be used. This arrangement continued until March 1964, when Mrs. Wallace very kindly gave the piece of land to the then Clayhanger Trustees.

by Mr. F. Booth

MEMORIES by V.M. Smith

I am the oldest serving member of the Clayhanger Methodist Church, and I am still treasurer, a job I have been connected with for 31 years. Looking back over the past seventy two years I am reminded of womens work, the auxilliary was it's name. When I was 15 years of age I had to go to the Womens Auxilliary meeting to play the organ, and sing a solo, my friend, who came with me used to sing while I played the organ for her, and she did the same for me.

One thing that stands out in my mind was the monthly missionary letter, I was also called upon to read it when the meeting was held at this church, I am sure many of the ladies who came could not read or write.

The ladies from Burntwood and Lichfield used to come in a Brake or Buggy Cart horse drawn. Tea was always served after the meeting, and the rolls and butter used to be delicious. It was amazing how many sandwiches our oldest member Mrs Bailey would make out of a tin of salmon. A large quantity of bread crumbs was put into the salmon which had been tipped into a large basin with vinegar and pepper added, and it