

seemed enough for everybody to have enough sandwiches plus a slice of fruit slab cake. I remember one old lady saying to me "I love these meetings it gives us the chance to meet each other.

My father was a Welshman and music was his hobby. He formed a quartette, I myself was a controlto. Many are the times we used to entertain special efforts organised at other churches, I can only remember once having to let a church down. We were going to sing at Wesleyan Watling Street Church and when we were in the middle of Brownhills Common, now known as the Parade, we were caught in a heavy thunderstorm, we had no coats, no umbrellas. We had such a drenching, my dress stretched with the weight of the water down below my feet. We all had to return home with my dress completely ruined. The people from that Church were not amused. Memories that will always remain with me.

Treasured Memories of Bygone Days at Clayhanger Methodist Church by Miss G.H. James

My parents were Weslyans and attended the Watling Street Wesleyan Chapel (now called Park View). For several years my father went through the Sunday School becoming a Sunday School teacher and at the age of 21 was the Organist and Choir Master.

When they moved from the Watling Street to the Pelsall Road in 1913 my father decided it was too far to take his daughter Violet to Watling Street Wesleyan Chapel and so they joined Clayhanger Methodist Church, where he was welcomed with open arms by George and Joseph Willetts and family, Richard Poxon and family, Mr and Mrs Baily and Mr Soloman Upton and family and many others.

The organist had resigned so my father Mr F.W. James was appointed the organist and Choir Master a post he held until just before his death in 1953. He was also the Superintendent of the Sunday School for over forty years and devoted his life to working with the young people. He formed concert parties founded young mens bible class, Clayhanger Methodist Cricket Club and raised lots of money with pantomimes, concerts, carnivals, etc. to install new choir seats which are still used today. In 1921 enough money had been raised to buy a secondhand army hut from Hednesford as the small schoolroom attached to the chapel was not big enough to house all the activities and groups.

The chapel was heated by one big coal stove, and oil lamps provided the lighting. The loads of coal came from Walsall Wood Colliery and it was tipped outside the church gates. The oil for the lamps had to be fetched and so caretaking in those days was very hard work for two shillings a week. There was only one tap in a brewhouse at the back of the chapel. All water for tea making scrubbing and cleaning had to be boiled in the copper boiler with only candles for lighting. The toilets were also at the back and it was a terrifying experience to find your way in the dark.

Mr & Mrs Upton lived in an old cottage next door to the chapel, they had a well at the front of the cottage which came in handy when the tap at chapel froze up.

MY CHURCH by Mrs F.L. Dunn

I started Sunday School when I was 3 years of age and taken by my father the late Mr. William Poxon, who at that time was a Sunday School Teacher and also Secretary of the Mens Bible Class. The Superintendent of the Sunday School in those days was the late Mr. George Willett, who was a very strict man but even so we had a large membership in the Sunday School. His brother Mr. Joe Willett each Sunday would mark our attendance

cards. During the week he would spend his time raising money for the children of the church, going from house to house selling sweets, etc., so that the profits could go towards the childrens parties and outings. The late Mrs. S. Sunderland used to help at the parties and social evenings preparing the food and drinks for everyone. My great grandfather Mr. Poxon was one of the miners of the village who helped to build the Church alongside families such as the Morris, Mason, Bailey, Craddock, Willett, Upton, Johnson, Jones, Bywater and Howdle families. In later years the Sunderland, Smith, Harrison, James and Benton families were also hard workers within the church. My grandfather, Mr. Richard Poxon was the choir master and he and his wife Minnie were caretakers, later a group of young men from the Church helped with the cleaning followed by Mr. & Mrs. E. Benton and then by my father and his wife, Nellie who carried on for 45 years. When I was 8 years of age I joined the Girls Club. We went on camping holidays, parties etc. Although the club no longer exists ladies from the Girls Club now belong to the Good Companions, who are the main working team in the Church. Working as a team is the reason why the Church has reached the age of 100 years old. Our past members over the years have worked in God's Spirit and as a family. At the age of 16 I became a church member and I am now one of the Church Stewards. With the help of our members we all hope to carry on with the good work.

THE CLAYHANGER GIRLS CLUB By Miss G.H. James

The Clayhanger Girls Club was founded on January 12th, 1932 by Mrs V. Smith and Mrs G.W. McCarthy. For the miners daughters during the years of depression, which progressed under their leadership to become the finest club in Staffordshire.

It was first affiliated to the Wolverhampton and Birmingham Union of Girls Clubs with Dame Elizabeth Cadbury as president and then when Staffordshire Service of Youth opened it was transferred to this and also became affiliated to the National Union of Girls Clubs and remained with these two organisations until it closed in 1968.

When Mrs McCarthy married in 1940 her sister Gwen James, became organising secretary and co-leader and in 1961 she was presented to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother at St. James Palace, London for her service for Youth in Staffordshire at a reception to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the National Association of Girls Clubs.

A log book and photograph album covering the life and times of Clayhanger Girls Club from 1932-1968 contains some very interesting records and will be on show at the Centenary Celebrations. These include the report of the beautiful book compiled by the affiliated Clubs in the Midlands signed by Gwen James and Hilda Hassall and presented to the Queen Mother for her Coronation Year 1936.

Also a report and photograph of the Chintz three piece suite presented as a wedding present to Princess Elizabeth from the National Association of Girls Clubs and the names of the girls from Clayhanger Girls Club chosen to go to London to see this suite on show with all the wedding gifts at St. James Palace.

At Queen Elizabeths Coronation in 1953 Mary Hassall and Elsie Robothem were chosen to represent Clayhanger Girls Club. The National Association sent them a permit to stay at the Devonshire Club and another permit to stand in a special place along the processional route reserved for representatives of offiliated clubs.

The log book also shows the work and service this club gave to the church and community during it's 36 years also the money raised and grants received for improvements.