

Tranmere Mount Tabor PM chapel



*Mount Tabor Chapel, late 1960s?
(taken by Roy Dennett)*

Holt Road itself still exists. The chapel was sited at the junction of Holt Road (north side) with Leighton Road (west side), where private residences nos. 40 and 38 Leighton Road (CH41 9DZ) now stand.

Tranmere is an area on the Wirral banks of the Mersey immediately south of Birkenhead. According to the [1850 Bagshaw Directory for Cheshire](#), page 695, 'It [Tranmere] is pleasantly situated on high ground, and commands a delightful view of the Mersey. Extensive tracts of land, which a few years ago was a barren waste, is now covered with elegant mansions, terraces, and handsome villa residences. ... The township contains 1,130 houses and about 6,700 inhabitants. Population in 1801, 353; in 1831, 1,168; in 1841, 2,554.

Three Tranmere PM chapels have been found:

- Grosvenor Street South Tranmere
- Queen Street Higher Tranmere
- Mount Tabor, Holt Road, North Tranmere

The following tentative history, pieced together from a number of sources.

1861: According to [Kelly's 1902 Directory](#) p.69, under Birkenhead schools, Other Denominations:

Primitive Methodist (Mount Tabor), Higher Tranmere (mixed & infants). Holt Road, built in 1861, at a cost of £800, for 270 boys & girls and 110 infants;

average attendance, 260 boys & girls & 75 infants; Albert Oliver, master; Miss E. Bown, head mistress.

I have not been able to find this school on any maps of the time but the entry suggests that the society already existed.

1872: According to [Genuki](#), this chapel was founded in 1872 (does this mean when planning for the new chapel started, perhaps at the Queen Street chapel in Lower Tranmere?).

1879: The *1879 Primitive Methodist magazine* page 60 (see [here](#)) tells us ‘they’ were working on a new Primitive Methodist chapel at Tranmere in the Birkenhead station to replace the previous less “commodious” one [Queen Street or Grosvenor Street?]. It was expected to cost £3,000 and would include a school room and class rooms.

[Kelly’s Directory 1902](#), page 60, states ‘The Primitive Methodist chapel, in Holt Road, Tranmere, erected in 1879 at a cost of £3,400, is of brick with stone dressings, in the Italian style, and will seat 600 persons.’

A [1909 map](#) is the first map I have found that shows the chapel, labelled (‘Meth. Ch. (Prim.)’). It is a T-shaped building. The stem is the chapel with an entrance from Leighton Road which scales at about 53ft x 40ft; across the back, scaling about 61ft x 29ft, are presumably the schoolrooms. Behind this is another building, presumably also a school (perhaps the original 1861 school) which scales 50ft x 28ft. There are schools next door to the west in Holt Road (Tranmere Higher Grade Presbyterian School) and to the north in Leighton Road (the Holt School of Science & Art).

There are numerous reports about events and activities at Mount Tabor chapel in the *Birkenhead News* between 1880 and 1940; these mostly report on Chapel, Sunday School and Schools Anniversaries, Christmas events and Harvest Festivals. Some are included below.

1880: The *Birkenhead News* 3 January 1880 reported:

‘CHRISTMAS TREAT. – Mr. and Mrs. G. Green, of Hampden-street, Tranmere, gave, on Christmas morning, a free breakfast to about 250 scholars, teachers, and friends in connection with the Primitive Methodist Church, Mount Tabor, Tranmere. Breakfast was provided in the Queen-street chapel. After it the party formed in procession and walked to Mount Tabor, where a suitable discourse was delivered by Rev. R. Phillips. All received oranges, apples, books, and cards.’

1883: The [1883 Slater Directory](#), Birkenhead section p. 64, lists only one Tranmere chapel, at Holt Hill (this chapel).

1883: The *Birkenhead News* 5 May 1883 reported:

MOUNT TABOR PRIMITIVE METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY. – The services in connection with the above were held on April 22nd and 23rd in the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Holt-road, Tranmere. Preachers ..., popular lecture on Rowland Hill ... an amusing dialogue ... On Monday evening a public tea was given in the chapel, to which two hundred persons sat down.

1887: The *Birkenhead News* 31 December 1887 reported:

MUNIFICENCE OF A TRANMERE GENTLEMAN.

For many years past Captain Price, of Tranmere (managing partner of the firm Messrs Price and Co., shipowners), has invited the poor of Tranmere to breakfast and tea at Mount Tabor Primitive Methodist Schools (with which he is connected) during the Christmas season. This year was no exception to the rule. A hearty invitation to breakfast on Monday morning was given to the Sunday School and Band of Hope children connected with Mount Tabor, and placards were posted throughout Tranmere inviting all poor children to come to breakfast. As a result of the general invitation over 750 children sat down and were regaled with buns and coffee. Oranges were distributed to the children, and an entertainment given for their amusement. In the afternoon 350 aged people, the eldest of whom was over 97, assembled in the schools and were treated to a good substantial meat tea. After tea a public meeting was held in the church, at which Captain Price himself presided. Addresses ... interesting recitations ... a humorous Lancashire reading ... songs ... a pianoforte duet ... The whole of the arrangements for breakfast and tea were carried out by the Sunday school teachers, assisted by a few friends. The schoolroom was decorated for the occasion. The cost of the whole was defrayed by Captain Price, who, in responding to a hearty vote of thanks, said it was as great a pleasure to him to give it as it was for them to receive it. After the meeting the old people were presented with packages of tea, sugar, and tobacco.

1892: The *Birkenhead News* 23 July 1892 reported:

CRICKET NOTES

The Nemo, however, made amends for their defeat by the St. Matthews Bible Class by making an example of the Mount Tabor on Monday. The match was played on the ground of the Nemo [Church Street], the latter scoring 50 to the visitors 15.

1893: The *Birkenhead News* 22 July 1893 reported:

NEW SCHOOLS AT TRANMERE.

On Wednesday afternoon the foundation stones of a new infant school in connection with the Mount Tabor Primitive Methodist Schools, Tranmere, were laid in the presence of a gathering of friends. The Primitive Methodist Schools have been in use for ten years, and provide accommodation for 250 senior scholars and 42 infants. The latter department is much overcrowded, and many children have had to be refused admittance solely from want of accommodation. An extension was therefore necessary. Mr. W. P. Pritchard interested himself in the matter, with the result that Mr. Edmund Taylor purchased a quantity of land adjoining the schools from Major Orred, and presented it to the managers. The land is valued at £150. The new infant school will be a plain building of one storey, and will accommodate 147 infants. The remainder of the land facing Holt-road will be railed round and utilised as a playground.

1899: [The Preaching Plan for the Birkenhead Circuit 1899 Q2](#) shows Mount Tabor chapel, Tranmere, as the second largest society in the circuit, after Grange Road, with 109 members. This contradicts another source which stated that the Birkenhead Circuit split in 1895 into No. 1 Circuit headed by Grange Road and No. 2 Circuit headed by Mount

Tabor. The Plan also shows that the chapel had one of the four Circuit Mission Bands with seven members.

1902: [Kelly's Directory 1902](#) page 69, Birkenhead section, gives details of the Birkenhead PM No. 2 Circuit which consisted of Mount Tabor (Holt Road), Poulton (-cum-Spital), [Irby](#) and New Ferry. The minister was [Rev Jn. Bradley](#).

1916 on: The [Cheshire Record Office](#) holds marriage registers for Mount Tabor for 1916-1955.

1920: The *Birkenhead News* 29 May reported that 'The Birkenhead Second Circuit, which includes Mount Tabor and the churches at New Ferry, Poulton and Irby [the same constituents as 1902], held a great circuit gathering on Whit Monday at Storeton House Farm'.

1923: A [1923 booklet](#) describes the chapels of Liverpool and Birkenhead. After describing Birkenhead First Circuit based on Grange Road chapel, it continues 'The Second Circuit which was created in 1895 [incorrect? See 1899 entry above] has a vigorous centre at Mount Tabor with over 300 members. This church was built in 1879.'

1927 on: From the [National Archives](#) entry for 'TRANMERE MOUNT TABOR PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH': 'The Wesleyan Methodist church in Church Road, Higher Tranmere was built in 1862 and enlarged in 1875. The Mount Tabor Primitive Methodist church in Holt Road was built about 1872. The former lay in the Birkenhead Circuit, the latter in the Bebington Circuit. The two churches were merged in 1965/66 when a new building was erected in Church Road.' The Cheshire Archive holds 'register, minutes and plans for the period 1927-1964' for Mount Tabor. The 'new building' is the church that still exists at the junction of Church Road and Whitfield Street in Tranmere, now known as the 'Church@The Cross' following the merger of Tranmere Methodist and Charing Cross Methodist (Birkenhead).

1940: The [1940 list of Methodist chapels](#) has an entry for Mount Tabor in the 'Districts L' download, pages 178/9: 'Mount Tabor: Structure brick; Seating 568; Type of seating pews; School Halls 2; Other rooms 4'.

1965: According to [Genuki](#), Mount Tabor church closed in 1965.