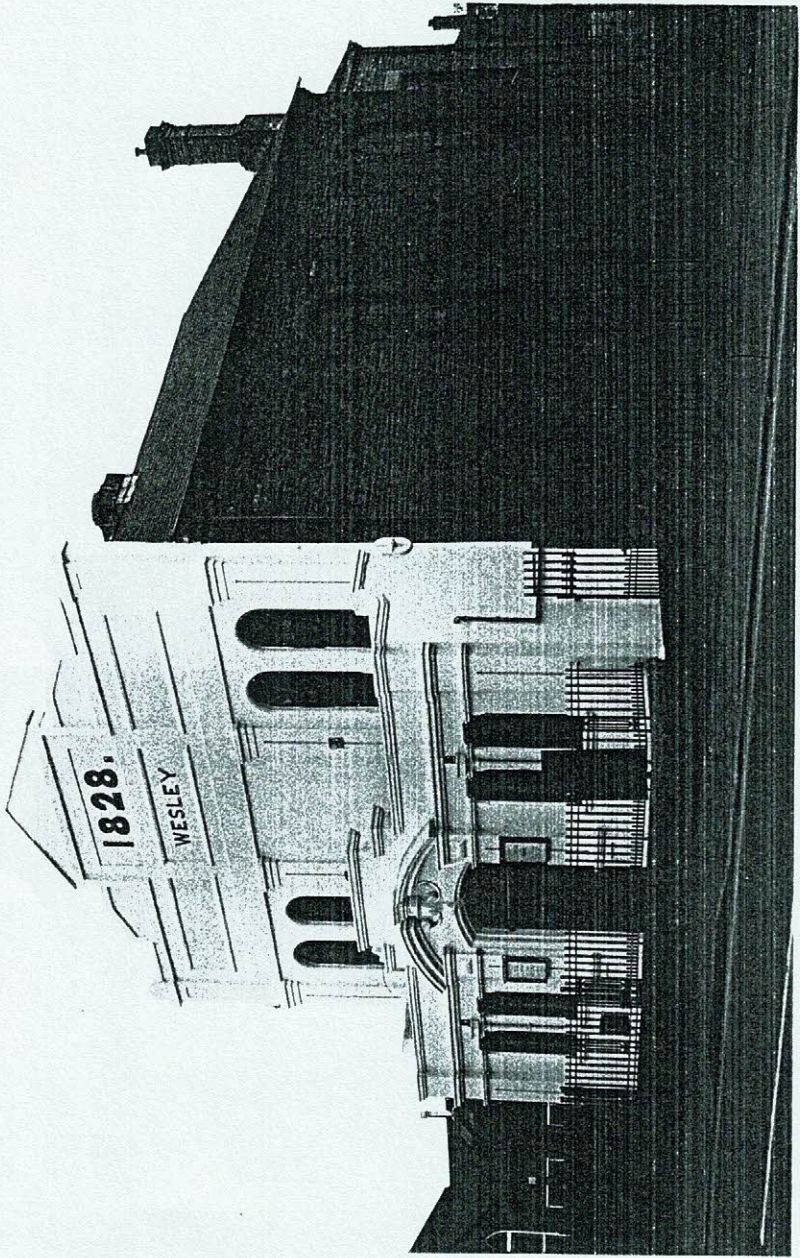


**MOUNT PLEASANT
METHODIST CHURCH**

1828 - 1998

**170TH
ANNIVERSARY**

MOUNT PLEASANT, QUARRY BANK



MOUNT PLEASANT METHODIST CHURCH 1828 - 1998

The last history of Mount Pleasant Church was written about 1928 we assume to celebrate the 100 year's anniversary. Unfortunately we have lost people in recent years who could have contributed much to our writings namely, Vic Palmer, Len Sidaway, Bill Holden, Mable Guise and Horace Grove to name but a few. Our existing historians only came into the Sunday School from about the early 1930's, so there will be a few gaps in our history.

We note from the previous history of Mount Pleasant that up to 1925 the church had a plain Georgian exterior, whilst the interior was unadorned and gloomy, with a high gallery for the organ and choir at the back and a gallery round the other three sides. Between 1925 and 1927 the chancel was added and the organ was overhauled and built at the side of the chancel. The stained glass window was presented by Mr Ernest Stevens, who had also made the new additions possible by his support. We have to assume that the two vestries and the front of the church were added at the same time. After all this work the church was in debt to the sum of £900.

The next details we have regarding the church's finances are from the "County Express" dated February 18th 1939 when, three months earlier the debt was £500, but with the help of Mr Ernest Stevens they have been able to clear £400 of this. In the same article it says, "On Wednesday evening they held the annual tea and 'stripping of the tree' in the Sunday School rooms, at which a favourable amount was raised. Nearly 150 guests sat down to tea given by Mr &

Mrs S Green". NOTE:- 'Stripping of the tree' meant removing envelopes from the tree containing gifts placed there by members of the church. We assume that this was an earlier form of our gift day

An earlier extract from the "*County Express*" dated *Saturday 14th August, 1937,*

"MOUNT PLEASANT METHODISTS :-

Mr T Field preached the sermon on Sunday morning service at the Mount Pleasant ex Wesleyan Methodist Church and in the evening the Rev. T Richardson (Cradley) who was preaching his farewell sermon at the church before his departure to Stockland Green, conducting a memorial service to the late Mr W Roberts. Special hymns were sung, Mr W Bache officiating at the organ (by special request of the relatives of the late Mr Roberts), and in a fitting tribute Mr Richardson spoke of the excellent work accomplished by Mr Roberts during his connection with the church. He had, said Mr Richardson, occupied the offices of Senior Trustee, Sunday School Treasurer and Chapel Steward, and he would be missed by every member of the church and circuit". The memorial to Mr Roberts can be seen in the church.

During the 1930's Mount Pleasant Church had a very successful football team. They played in the Cradley Heath League, division 1, and won the Cradley Heath Senior Cup in 1935. The team was managed by Mr David Batham Snr., who was a stalwart of the church throughout his life.

During the war years there was a good youth club at Mount Pleasant. It kept the young people together at a very difficult time. Mrs Clare Plant a teacher at the Sunday School was the youth club leader, and many of its members went on to hold responsible positions in the church. There were lots of activities including a table tennis team (members of a local league). Various social events were organised to combat the gloom of war. A 'Mock Wedding' was arranged at which the male parts were played by females and vice versa. There was also dancing round the maypole, and plays were performed on the stage in the school room.

Up to the late 1940's there were 3 cottages in the church grounds in front of the Sunday School. One of these was demolished, the remaining two were made into one house. A veranda was added which was fitted out as a kitchen. The coach house belonging to Robert's Cornmill was used to build a bathroom for the house. The front portion was used as a garage. New caretakers (Mr and Mrs Bill Holden) were installed.

In 1950 the church roof was replaced and the small wall in front of the chancel was built. This was paid for by a good friend of Mount Pleasant, namely, Mr Ernest Stevens.

Between March 1950 and March 1951 quite a lot of work seems to have been carried out on the electric's of the church, the Sunday School and the caretaker's house. There is an invoice on file for £141 19s 5d.

During the 1960's and 1970's the church income was low, and it was necessary to hold fund raising efforts, i.e. bazaars, jumble sales, beetle drives, etc. In the 1970's a group was formed

called "Mount Pleasant Songsters". It was composed of members of the church and friends.. The group wore period clothes, and sang "Old Tyme" melodies. Concerts were performed in the school room, and the group visited many senior citizen clubs etc. These performances were fund raising efforts and were extremely successful. They had to call a halt because several male members passed away.

Every year the church held a "Ladies Day". A choir was formed by ladies of the "Bright Hour" and some church members. The Bright Hour has been part of the weekday worship at Mount Pleasant for many years. One of the first presidents was Mrs Kendrick, then Nurse Green, Mrs Grove, Mrs Dwyer, Mrs Ganner and Mrs Allchurch. The name has now changed from 'Bright Hour' to 'Ladies Class' still meeting on Monday afternoons.

In April, 1973 new heating equipment was installed in the church, changing over from coke to gas. This cost £712.80

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Extract from "County Express" May 16th 1975

MOUNT PLEASANT CHURCH GETS A PLEASANT NEW LOOK

Quarry Bank's 150 year old Mount Pleasant Methodist Church was looking like new for Sunday's anniversary - thanks to the work of eight volunteers.

For the men of the church, fed up with the dowdy appearance of the building, decided to give it an extra special spring clean.

They spent a fortnight putting three coats of paint on the front of the 60 foot high building. The top of the church was completed with the help of scaffolding after plans to hire a hydraulic platform fell through.

Mr Frank Cooper, Trust Secretary said; "We decided the front of the Church was looking really dowdy and it would be nice to paint it for the Sunday School Anniversary.

"In three year's time the church will be 150 years old and now people have started talking about doing some work on the inside. I think you can expect to see some action from these talks in the next 12 months," he added.

Helping with the painting were Messrs, A Perrins, J Perrins, L Sidaway, H Grove, F Batham, W Holden, H K Edwards and F Cooper.

Extract from County Express 1978

CHURCH SALE BOOST FOR RESTORATION WORK FUNDS

Approaching 200 people attended the sale held by Mount Pleasant Methodist Church, Quarry Bank, on Saturday when takings were £267 for the church's restoration fund.

The money will go toward the redecoration of the interior of the church which is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

A relative of one of those who laid the foundation stones of the Church's Sunday School building in 1902, Mrs Margaret Heathcock, of Wollescote, declared the sale open and showed the company the silver trowel used on that occasion.

Miss Emmie Webb the Church Treasurer, presided and she was supported by the Rev. and Mrs Stanley Hills.

Flowers were present^{ed} to them by Julie Homer, Katherine Welding, Julia Lavender and David Cooper.

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CONCORDE VENTURE was a scheme set up by the government to find work and training for young men on the dole. The Church Council made enquiries about the work carried out by this association, and a decision was made to ask for work to be done on our Sunday School. We were very disappointed at the standard of the workmanship. They started work in May 1987, and their last job was the demolition of the caretaker's house. This gave us a car park which was tarmaced and wrought iron gates fitted. Over 5 years, £8,000 had been spent on the Sunday School building. Soon after dry rot was discovered in the premises.

In September 1991 the Reverend Neville Pugh joined the circuit as Superintendent Minister and it was at about this time that the surveyor's report was received. We were given a figure of £60,000 to treat the building, but could not be given a guarantee that the rot would not return. It was suggested that the school building would have to come down, and that the Church would have to become a multipurpose building.

Work started in 1992 with the fitting of new doors and windows at the front of the church (£1,643). Between October 1992 and January 1993 a new heating system was installed (£6,076). Between January and May 1994 the old organ was taken out and two new rooms built in its place to house the

Sunday School (£5,634) In September 1994 carpet was laid in the new rooms and on the chancel of the church (£1,043) From December 1994 to March 1995 pews were removed, a new floor was laid and a screen was built under balcony (£1,550). By adding the screen this gave us a room in which to hold meetings. The cost was for materials only. The Rev. Pugh carried out most of the work helped by other members of the congregation. About June 1995 the choir vestry was used to install a new kitchen (£3,825). New chairs were purchased to replace the pews, the majority of the members paid for a chair.

When all the work was completed it had cost around £28,000, and the Church Council were left with a debt of £6,343. This sum had been a loan from circuit funds. Repayments were started in September 1996 and the debt cleared in November 1997. Most of the members had made a contribution of £250.

When the work on the church was completed, the Sunday School buildings were demolished. It was taken down carefully, and the special materials were sold. A capsule was found in the foundations, put there when the school was built in 1902. It contained copies of the "County Express", bus tickets, church programmes, etc. The capsule was opened at a special service on 15th October 1995. The church was rededicated at this services and lots of photographs were taken.

At this time, mention must be made of some members (most of whom have now passed on) who gave so much of their life working in our church and Sunday school:- Vic Palmer, Fred Roberts, Fornham Batham, Len Sidaway, Oliver Plant, Horace Grove, Sam Green, Bill Holden, Clare Plant, Rene Batham, Mabel Guise, Nellie Gilder and Ivy Cooper. There are others and apologies are given for any name

missed. In a previous church history which dated from 1828 to 1928 many names of members who gave of their time and money are mentioned.

Some of our members who came into the Sunday School as children i.e. Phyllis Holden, Olive Allchurch Emma Hanglin, Daphne Dwyer are still carrying on the Lord's work in our church today, helped by other stalwarts who joined us more recently.

In 1992 Kathryn Wood and her family joined our church. All the needlecraft in the church, i.e. altar cloths, cushions, hangings and the two crosses are the work of her hands. Sadly Kathryn died in 1997.

Fund raising is proceeding. We hope to have enough money eventually to build a new Sunday School hall, This year (1998) a "Celebrity Auction " was held. This was the brain child of our Minister's wife, Sheila Barker. The sum of £3,000 was raised and this has been invested for future use.

There is 170 years of history in our church building. Many changes have taken place. It started out as a Georgian type exterior, dull and gloomy inside, but now is a warm comfortable church, giving a welcome to all who enter.

Compiled by Ron. Hanglin

OUR CHURCH by Phyllis Holden

*Our church at Mount Pleasant has stood since 1828,
Of course there have been changes occurring from that date
Most of them internal, externally almost the same.
Stating it's age and bearing Wesley's name.*

*A spiritual home for many through the years
A source of comfort when in sadness and courage when in fears
Where all can gather in the presence of the Lord
Join to sing His praises and listen to His word.*

*We pray that in the future its influence will grow
But we know that we shall reap only what we sow
We trust we'll have God's blessing and go where we are led,
Building on the past and moving on ahead*

