

Wesley Methodist Church

LAMBERHEAD GREEN

“Down the Arches of the Years”

Brief History

of the

last 170 years

1776 - 1946

PORTRAIT OF A METHODIST.

By John Wesley.

"A Methodist is one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him. One who loves the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength. He rejoices evermore, prays without ceasing, and in everything gives thanks. His heart is full of love to all mankind and is purified from envy, wrath, malice, and every unkind affection. His one desire and the one design of his life is not to do his own will but the will of Him that sent him. He keeps all God's commandments from the least to the greatest. He follows not the customs of the world, for vice does not lose its nature through becoming fashionable. He fares not sumptuously every day. He cannot lay up treasures upon earth, nor can he adore himself with gold and costly apparel. He cannot join in any diversion that has the least tendency to vice. He cannot speak evil of his neighbour any more than he can lie. He cannot utter unkind or evil words. He does good unto all men, unto neighbours, strangers, friends, and enemies. These are the principles and practices of our sect. These are the marks of a true Methodist. By these alone do Methodists desire to be distinguished from all other men."



THE REV. WILLIAM ATHERTON.
President, Bristol, 1846.

The Rev. WILLIAM ATHERTON was born at Lamberhead Green, in the county of Lancaster. In early life he was made a partaker of justifying and renewing grace. He commenced the work of the Christian ministry in 1797, and faithfully fulfilled the duties of that ministry, with few and brief intermissions, for the space of fifty-three years. For more than a quarter of a century Mr. Atherton was actively and extensively engaged, both in the pulpit and on the platform, and throughout the length and breadth of the land, in advocating the claims of our

missions, chapels, and schools ; his pleadings for those great objects were eloquent, sincere, and fervid. He had largely availed himself of the opportunities for study and mental improvement afforded by an early and long residence in Scotland ; and the effects of habits thus acquired strongly marked his whole subsequent life. He possessed a clear, vigorous, and masculine intellect. He justly appreciated the beauties of our best writers ; and, although exception might be taken to some peculiarities of expression in which he at times indulged, yet his style was, on the whole, peculiarly forcible, epigrammatic, and racy. His discourses were logical in arrangement, well studied throughout, and full-fraught with evangelical theology ; and his style was terse and antithetical. The grasp and tenacity of his memory were great ; and his sermons were delivered to the last with readiness, earnestness, and power. Their results, through the blessing of God, were found in many of his Circuits, in the conversion of sinners and the edification of believers. Notwithstanding the impression sometimes made upon strangers by his manner, he had a kind and benevolent heart. His friendships were not numerous, but they were warm and lasting ; and the heart of his friend might safely trust in him. He was truly independent in thought and purpose. He formed his judgment with care ; and, when formed, it was not easily shaken. He was decided in action, and firm and faithful in the exercise of discipline. At the Conference of 1846 he was elected its President, and discharged the onerous duties with impartiality, vigour, and kindness. He continued to do the work of the ministry until within a fortnight of his death. He lived to see his son become Her Majesty's Solicitor General for England. His last affliction was short, but severe ; and it precluded him from giving any lengthened statement of his religious experience. But the unflinching patience with which he bore the excruciating pains of a fatal malady attested the presence of " the Comforter ; " and left no necessity for words to show that, through Christ, death had lost its bitterness. He had for some time been ripening for heaven ; and death found the labourer prepared for his rest, trusting only in the atonement of his Lord and Saviour. He died on September 26th, 1850, in the seventy-fifth year of his age and the fifty-fourth of his ministry.



REV. JOHN ROBERTS

FOREWORD.

It was thought desirable that, in connection with the Ter-Jubilee of the Sunday School at the Lamberhead Green Methodist Church, a souvenir Book, such as this, should be published. Actually Wesleyan Methodism at Lamberhead Green goes back further than 170 years as may be seen by the history recorded in these pages.

For the gathering together of the information herein contained, deep appreciation must be expressed to Mr. John Gaskell and the Rev. C. Deane Little, who have been untiring and most painstaking in all the research work involved, also to Mr. Meadows, (*Editor of the Wigan Observer*), Mr. A. J. Hawkes, (*Borough Librarian*) and others.

Ever since Wesleyan Methodism was established at Lamberhead Green there has been an unbroken line of men and women who for the sake of Christ and His Church have kept the torch burning and handed it on from one generation to another. With deep gratitude those working to-day in the Church and Sunday School can testify that theirs is indeed a goodly heritage.

While we are grateful at this Ter Jubilee celebration for all our past history we are equally blessed today with a faithful company of men and women and young people in both Church and Sunday School who are worthy successors of those who have gone before, and who will, we believe, pass on to the next generation even greater traditions of all that faithful service to the Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, can mean in the life and service of the people.

In this book, we of this generation, leave behind a permanent record of the history of this Church in the belief that it will become a valuable and greatly treasured possession in many a Methodist home where live those who realise how great is the debt they owe, under God, to Methodism at Lamberhead Green.

JOHN ROBERTS,

Minister.

THE ORIGIN OF WESLEYAN METHODISM IN
LAMBERHEAD GREEN.

1776 - 1820.

PART I.

An Irish-American humorist has aptly said that "the further ye get from anny period the better ye can write about it."

In these brief notes the temptation to indulge one's imagination has been resisted and every effort made to secure accuracy and conciseness. This record is mainly for "eur own folk" and hence much has been taken for granted.

A wealth of information regarding early Methodism in South Lancashire can be found, or rather quarried, in some unexhausted mines. These are Wesley's Journals and Letters, Minutes of Conference from 1744. The Arminian (later Methodist) Magazine from 1788; the "Lives of early Methodist Preachers," together with local histories on the origin of Methodism in various parts of S.E. Lancs. Much local detail from 1820 onwards is obtainable from Circuit or Society Deeds, Minutes, Account Books, and similar records which are preserved in safes and cupboards on Church premises. In this record of 1776-1820, the writer "has gathered gear by every wile that's justified by honour" and has indicated the source of information wherever practicable.

When our story begins Lamberhead Green (2½ miles west of Wigan) was but a hamlet mostly of one-storey cottages inhabited by poor handloom weavers and coal miners, plus a few scattered homesteads of a larger size.

Similar greens lay all around e.g. Goose Green, Marsh Green, Kitt Green, Hall Green, etc.

THE EARLY DAWN.

John Wesley first reached this area when he visited Downall Green in 1759. The Manchester Round (as Circuits were then called) covered large parts of Cheshire, Staffordshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Its old Account book shows that from 1759 Downall Green and Wigan Societies began to pay Class money quarterly to the Manchester Stewards.

Wesley came to Wigan in 1764, and in 1765 the Lancashire Circuit was formed. In 1766 this was divided into Lancashire North including Liverpool and Wigan etc., and Lancashire South with Manchester as its head. Another old Stewards' book still preserved shows that in October 1771 "Aspull-moor" began to pay Class money (8/-) followed by Lamberhead Green (7/6) in 1776.

Thus while we are this year (1946) celebrating 150 years of Sunday School life and work, Methodism was alive and active in Lamberhead Green 170 years ago.



SAMUEL BRADBURN

In 1774 one of the Liverpool Ministers being lame sent a young man aged 22 to itinerate in the Bolton and Wigan area. This young man, Samuel Bradburn, was greatly gifted and through his influence the first Methodist Chapel in Wigan was built in 1775, and was popularly known as Bradburn's Chapel.

When Methodism first began to touch our area meetings were held in the homes of the cottagers and in some of the larger houses dotted around the Green. Quakers were often friendly. Such were the Cartwrights whose house or cottage was the first to be opened to Methodists in Lamberhead Green. The immediate des-

cendants of this Cartwright family are with us today and are amongst our regular worshippers. John Cartwright, Cotton Manufacturer, another member of the family became a trustee in Wigan in 1803, and was an uncle of the celebrated Peter Cartwright, the "Backwoods Preacher" born in the U.S.A. (1785-1872).

THE AGE OF PERSECUTION.

The Rev. J. Poulton who was Superintendent Minister in Wigan in 1878-1881, tried like St. Luke "to trace the course of all things accurately from the first." He secured manuscripts and other information from those who had preceded him and to his own manuscript we are greatly indebted. Poulton records the persecution suffered by the parents of a Mrs. Margaret Ashcroft,— whose house at Far-moor was converted into a preaching-room. Her four brothers had to guard their cottage, two at a time, whilst meetings were being held.

Mrs. Richard Battersby related that when about 9 years of age, "I heard a report about something that was called "Methodist" passing by my father's house . . what they were, man or beast, wild or tame, horn or hoof, I knew not but I went to look through the room window and it proved to be men going towards Chowbent." Chowbent is the old part of Atherton and was then in the Circuit.

"The mob used to go from one place to another if they could hear of a preaching. They actually led Mr. Samuel Woodcock (Circuit Preacher in 1771) to the Market Place in a halter to the bull ring, and treated him shamefully after they had loosed him. He went singing into the Chapel." It was worth while being a Methodist in those heroic days!

CHRISTOPHER HOPPER.

There is no record that either of the Wesleys ever visited the "Green" but God raised up as their "Assistants" some mighty men of valour. Amongst the most notable of these was Christopher Hopper. Although in this area he followed in the footsteps of Samuel Eradburn, he had been a great pioneer in many parts of the North for nearly forty years and had also been the first Methodist preacher to carry the gospel into Scotland.

In 1784 Bolton, Wigan, etc., were detached from Liverpool and formed into the Bolton Circuit with Hopper as Superintendent. Lancashire had now three Circuits, Manchester, Liverpool and Bolton, which included Lamberhead Green. Bradburn 8 years after Wesley's death became President of the Conference, but Hopper had the unique honour of being the only man who presided over Conference in the lifetime of John Wesley (who was absent in Ireland in 1780).

WHO'S WHO AMONG THE ATHERTONS.

There were several families named Atherton living in this area. One man was called Billy the Bellman for he was a marine dealer and carried a bell. Another was commonly called Atherton, the Rover, whilst a third was nicknamed Atherton, the old Squire, (whose daughter became Mrs. Topping). These men were not related as far as they knew. Poulton transcribed a copy of a narrative (then owned by Mr. John Hartley) written by James Atherton the Rover. This tells how he was "moved" to go out with Thomas Atherton, Squire, Junior, without purse or script begging for funds to build a New Chapel. They made a wide tour through Lancashire, Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire, and were successful.

1790—THE FIRST CHAPEL AND SCHOOL.

This historic site is now held by the Wigan Corporation who have kindly given us access to the original Methodist deeds. These authentic documents are dated October 15th and 16th, 1792, and relate to "a building or edifice used as the Methodist Chapel, or preaching house, or meeting house." This then was the original cradle of our Sunday School in 1796.

It is notable that the place name in the deed is given as LAMMERHEAD GREEN, it had not yet become Lambert's Head Green, now shortened to Lamberhead Green.

THE ORIGINAL TRUSTEES.

Samuel Barker, of Pemberton		Weaver
Thomas Atherton	..	Weaver
(the elder)		
Thomas Atherton	..	Weaver
(the younger)		
James Buckley	..	Weaver

THE ORIGINAL TRUSTEES.—*continued.*

Thomas Sharrock	Pemberton	Chapman
Henry Darbyshire	„	Weaver
James Atherton	„	Weaver
Thomas Waite	„	Weaver
James Barrow, of	Wigan	Hatter
Thos. Kennerdale	Wigan	Watchmaker
George Wilding of	Blackrod	Chapman
Michael Alsop	„ Lowton	Schoolmaster
John Baxendale	„ Pemberton	Whitster (Bleacher)

“The last shall be first.” John Baxendale, who probably acted as Secretary to the Trust, became the first in rank and honour. He was a local preacher and was Wesley’s correspondent in Wigan. Four letters from Wesley to Baxendale are printed in Wesley’s Letters.

Wesley had invited him to become an itinerant preacher, but on April 3rd, 1787 wrote agreeing that he ought to remain in Wigan, “Considering two things—first, the peculiar love of the people towards you and secondly, your usefulness to many of them—I judge that Providence clearly calls you to remain at Wigan.”

This our first Chapel was opened by the Rev. Thomas Hanby, Superintendent of this, the then Bolton Circuit. Hanby was another grand man and he was raised to sit in Wesley’s Chair as President in 1794, only three years after our founder’s death.

The Chapel with a room beneath was a humble two-storey building similar but smaller than the Buck i’t’h Vine Chapel in Wigan.

The opening of this Chapel or Meeting house gave a great impetus to local Methodism and led to the formation of the Wigan Circuit in 1793.

Lamberhead Green soon took rank as the second place in the Circuit and was followed by Leigh, Ashton, Downall Green, Wingates, Chowbent, Tyldesley, Astley, Lowton and some small places.

JAMES ATHERTON—THE ROVER.

A debt remained and so the Chapel was mortgaged to John and Roger Darbyshire for £80. A few years later they called in their mortgage. “There was no one who would advance the amount, therefore, I, James Atherton

the Rover, wrote to Dr. Adam Clarke at Liverpool for advice. He replied "Go out and beg it." I and John Taylor set out for Liverpool (about 1794). We begged 33 guineas in that town alone. We went to other places round about and collected enough to pay every penny of the mortgage."

Joseph Meek, a lover of the ancients, preserved an amusing story that when the two worthies were returning with the money they had collected, the Mersey towards Runcorn was so rough that many of the passengers feared that the boat would be swamped, but old John Taylor kept on shouting they would not sink "because the Lord's money was on board."

"With Christ in the vessel
I smile at the storm."

Money was scarce in those days and an old man named Tabernacle tells, in an unpublished letter, how Wesley once preached in Wigan on "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." The collection was small, very small. Wesley smiled and said very calmly "Now Brethren you have sown very sparingly. I will give out a hymn "My God, the spring of all my joys," and the collectors will go round again. Sow the seed a little thicker." The narrator adds "they got 24 shillings more !"

A NEW DEPARTURE.



ROBERT RAIKES

The Sunday School movement had now begun. Robert Raikes of Gloucester "the Apostle of Sunday Schools" organised his successful School in 1780 and then in 1783 he began, as an Editor, to give publicity to his ideals and experiments. Our Wigan School begun in 1783, was one of the earliest in England and was followed by Manchester, Stockport and Leeds in 1784, Bolton 1785 and by Lamberhead Green in 1796. Many early Schools gradually petered out including

Raikes' own School, but ours has persisted in its faithful and effective work all through these years. The Wigan Circuit Year Book 1872, gives our date as 1788 but that appears to be an abortive start made in a cottage. In what premises did our Sabbath School (as it was then called) meet in 1796? Obviously in the only place we had, i.e., the Chapel, and a dingy room beneath with a very low ceiling.

The trustees had not the money and perhaps not the foresight to provide any real accommodation for the coming Sabbath School, and yet did they not "build better than they knew?"

In order to visualise our Sunday School begun 150 years ago one must seek to understand the social, economic, and educational situation of that day.

Who were the teachers? Doubtless some of them are to be found amongst the 13 trustees. Others are "unknown and yet well known." Their names are written in the book of life.

SOME EARLY PROBLEMS.

Conditions in the School were delightfully primitive but the spirit of Robert Raikes prevailed. "All that I required were clean faces, clean hands, and hair combed. If you have not a clean shirt, come in what you have on."

Space does not permit us to deal with very interesting questions relating to the staffing and management, discipline, hours, books, curriculum and furnishing of these earliest Sunday Schools. Some light upon these and similar matters will be found in two booklets on Wigan and Bolton Sunday Schools by Deane Little and obtainable from the Wigan Library.

To the Rev. John Poulton, we owe this gem from a manuscript written by Wm. McKittrick.

"In February 1803, I took the Canal Packet from Liverpool to Wigan I went to Mr. Healey's, Church Croft. On Sunday he took me to Lamberhead Green to preach. Most of the people were hand-loom weavers and miners and very poor. But they had been long without preaching and did not expect it today. However the bell was tolled for 20 minutes, but the people had not prepared their Sunday Clothes. Yet they

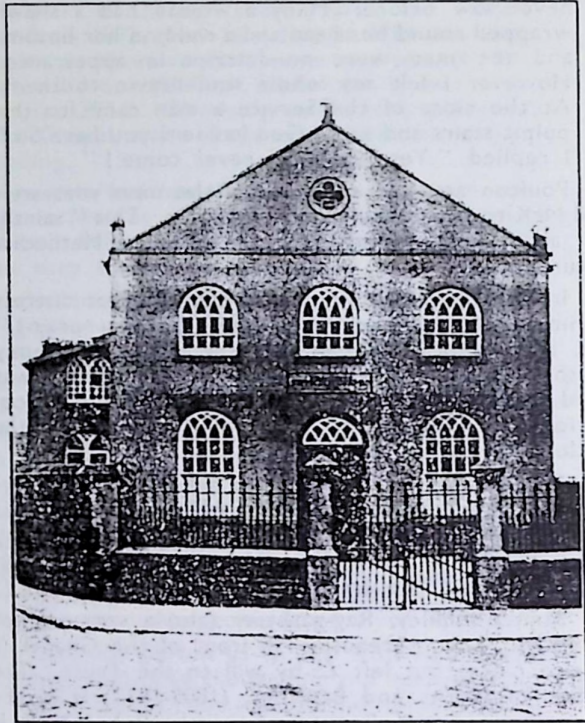
came to hear and such a motley congregation I never saw before. Many a woman had a shawl wrapped round her head and a child on her bosom, and the men were nondescript in appearance. However I felt my whole soul drawn to them. At the close of the Service a man came to the pulpit stairs and said ' God has sent you here Sir.' I replied " Yes, or I had never come ! "

Poulton assumes that one of the men who welcomed McKitrick was William Calderbank. This " saintly man " acted as a colporteur and distributed Methodist literature.

In Burscough at one door a man in great distress met him with the enquiry, " Man, can you pray ? " " Yes, I hope so." " Then come in and pray with my wife, she's dying." Prayer prevailed. The cottage was opened for Prayer Meetings, then a Chapel and School soon followed. Such were some of " the Acts of the Apostles " living on the " Green."

The Chapel in a year or two needed to be white-washed and painted and to meet the expense the Trustees decided to use the unused land as a Cemetery. They raised £12 in all by selling " breadths " of land, or as Dr. Kitto called it " the freehold of a grave."

James Buckley, Rag-gatherer (also a weaver) not only bought one " breadth," in front of the Chapel (a favourite place) but left £5 by will to the Trust. The Register of Births and Baptisms, (1805-1837) is in the safe custody of the Registrar-General. But where is the Register of Burials ?



THE 1820 CHAPEL

* THE 1790 CHAPEL IS SHOWN IN THE REAR

In August 1819 a new Trust was constituted thus :—

<i>Five surviving Trustees :—</i>	<i>Eight new Trustees :—</i>
Thos. Atherton the younger.	John Almond,
Thomas Sharrock,	Thos. Sharrock, the Younger.
James Atherton, (the Rover).	Peter Barlow (Circuit Steward).
George Wilding,	Thomas Knowles,
John Baxendale.	John Taylor,
	Thomas Hitchen,
	John Barlow (Shoemaker),
	Robert Dalglish (Engineer).

The deed from which these names are extracted gives no occupations or addresses.

It will be noted that this Trust, like the earlier one of 1792, consisted of 13 men, mostly weavers. "Not many wise . . . not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God called the foolish things of the world that He might put to shame them that are wise."

The Chapel and School were by now (1819) outgrown, and there came a clamant cry especially from the Sabbath School for better quarters.

Robert Daghish, (1777-1865) of Huguenot extraction, the great colliery engineer who had introduced the Blenkinsop rack rail engine to Orrell as early as 1811, was the most able and energetic of the new trustees. Largely through his influence and enterprise they now embarked upon a bold scheme of reconstruction and enlargement. The Chapel was extended towards the street and in the front wall a date stone over the doorway was built in the fabric bearing the lettering "WESLEYAN METHODIST CHAPEL 1820." The interior was roomy and spacious with a gallery on 3 sides, North, East and West.

This composite old building of 1790 and 1820, familiar to many, was sold to the Primitives in 1868 and only demolished in 1902.

The original premises had thus been greatly enlarged, improved and renovated, but a crippling debt, rising to £400, remained for many years.

James Martin who came to Wigan in 1802 and lived till about 1850 was the ablest financial Nestor that the Circuit had yet known. The Circuit was becoming waterlogged by debt and in a narrative he observes that some trustees were poor financiers despite their spiritual zeal.

James Atherton, the Rover, in old age became Chapel keeper, and received 2/6 from James Gaskell Knowles towards a grave. In his receipt he wrote, "I, James Atherton, Rover, do agree that 2/6 be stopped out of my wages for Chapel Keeping by John Almond, (Chapel Steward.)"

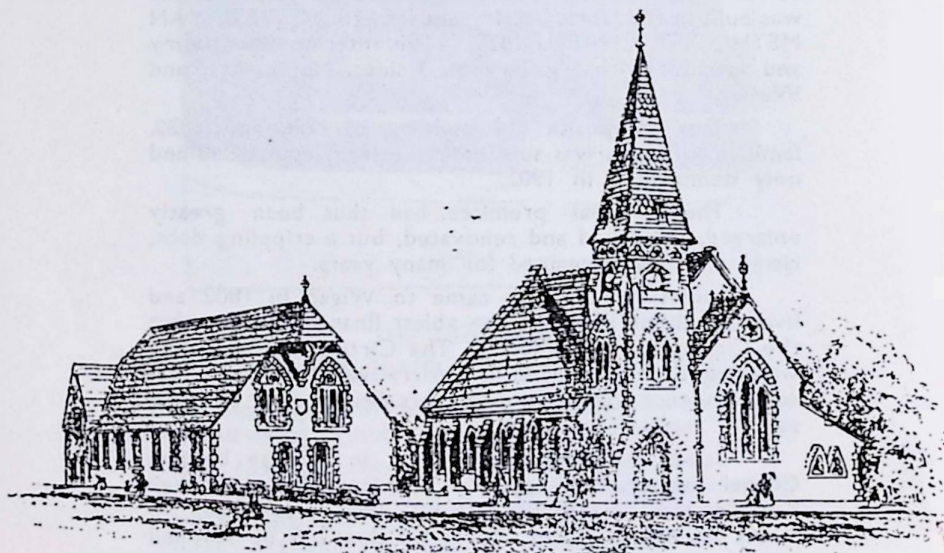
Poulton remarks (1881) that many of the early Methodists are still represented in and about the Green and gives their names "Hartley, Atherton, Lipprot,

Darbyshire, Molyneux, Kilshaw, Calderbank, Ashurst, and others." Names still decipherable on the old gravestones are Atherton, Barlow, Cartwright, Highton, Crooks, Davies, Gaskell, Gorner, and Taylor. Other families like the Baxendales and Daglishes had graves in Upholland.

To many of these—the pioneers of our Early Methodism and Society on Lamberhead Green—our indebtedness as a Church and Sunday School is reverently and proudly due.

"They who on glorious ancestry enlarge
Produce their debt, not their discharge."

END OF PART ONE.



Wesleyan Chapel and Bethel Schools, Lamberhead Green, near Digun.
JAMES WILSON F.S.A. ARCHITECT. B.A.D.

THE THIRD CHAPEL AND "ATHERTON" SCHOOLS.

PART II.

1820-1946.

"To a poor weaver's home at Lamberhead Green in 1776 "a child is born, a son is given." When Wesley paid his last visit to Wigan in 1790 this lad then of 14 years resolved to see and hear the great evangelist.

William Atherton—for he it was—long afterwards confessed that his father would not allow him to go as he would be out late, and moreover took care to hide his shoes. But William went in his clogs!

Wesley says "The house in the evening was more than filled and all that could get in seemed to be greatly affected while I strongly applied our Lord's words "I will, be thou clean." William decided to return for the Service next morning at 5 a.m. But alas he overslept! When he awoke Wesley was already on his way to Leeds.

This eager youth had easy access to the old Chapel and used the vestry as a study. He became a teacher, then a local preacher, and entered the ministry in 1797. He led a studious life yet gave himself unsparingly to all the work of the ministry especially preaching. He developed his many gifts; became a power in Methodism; and in 1846 was elected President."

So writes Poulton in his Mss. Poulton, who also had heard him preach concludes

"But taking him for all in all

We may never see his like again."

A warm appreciation of his life is given at the beginning of this booklet, reprinted from "Wesley and his successors" whilst a further survey of his character and gifts appears in the "Wesleyan Takings" of 1840.

In January 1853 another new Trust was appointed, this time the number being 16 made up as follows:—

Four Surviving Trustees.

John Almond
Robert Daghish
Peter Barlow
John Barlow

Peter Molyneux

James Moore
Joseph Meek
John West
John Cordeaux
John Hartley
Henry Hartley
James Alker
John Parkinson
Thomas Ashton

Twelve New Trustees.

Richard Almond
William Altham

The buildings "across the green" provided for public worship in the North-Eastern portion, and for School purposes at the rear. Although the buildings could not claim to be of any particular architectural beauty, they were well appointed and served their purpose as a Chapel and Sunday School for the Wesleyans for approximately seventy years. But they had again become too small to accommodate the growing number of adherents. Consequently, on the 8th November, 1854, the Trustees resolved that a Sub-Committee be appointed to enquire after land for a new Chapel. There is no record of any further action in the matter until the 3rd March, 1857, when the Trustees at an adjourned meeting passed the following resolution:—"That the land offered by Miss Hartley for a new Wesleyan Chapel be purchased forthwith, and that one portion of the land be appropriated for School building and the other portion for the Chapel."

1860.—FOUNDATION STONE LAYING AND OPENING OF THE NEW CHAPEL AND SCHOOLS.

Rev. William Atherton died in 1850, leaving a worthy descendant in the person of his son, Sir William Atherton, a Queen's Counsellor, Member of Parliament for Durham and the Attorney General of England. He it was who laid the foundation stone of our present School in March, 1857, after having made a substantial contribution to its cost.

On July 19th, 1858, while the School was in course of erection, the foundation stone of the new Chapel was laid by the Reverend W. Willan of London, who described himself as "a Wiganer bred and born" and as one who when a youth of 17 years, had lived "on the green."

In the cavity of the foundation stone of the Chapel, enclosed in a sealed bottle, are the following:—

Preachers' Plan of the Wigan Circuit for the current quarter and one for the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

Copies of the current "Wigan Observer" and "Wigan Examiner."

Printed report of the Foundation Stone laying of the School.

Circular announcing the proceedings of the Opening Day with drawings of the new buildings.

A Document with names of Trustees, Ministers of the Circuit and other items.

The School, completed first, was opened in December 1858 by Sir William Atherton, Q.C., M.P. and with him on the platform were Henry Woods Esq., M.P. for Wigan, Reverend J. Bowers — President of the Conference, Reverend S. D. Waddy—President-Elect, and others.

There is no detailed record of the proceedings at the opening ceremony of the Chapel. The first Services were held on Sunday, the 13th March, 1859, the special preacher being the Rev. J. J. Topham, instead of the Rev. Dr. Hannah, followed by a Meeting on Monday, the 14th, and further Services on the 20th.

The total cost of the Chapel and School was given as £2,600, towards which the Board of Education contributed the sum of £684 in respect of the School. The amount of the debt following the opening of the Church and School was later reduced to £123 12s. 11d., which sum, however was quickly liquidated.

The Church Bell and the Clock in the Tower were both the gifts of Mr. John Atherton of Preston, who was born and lived at Lamberhead Green for over 50 years. The inscriptions on the Bell and Clock are :—

BELL. G. Mears—Foundry—London.

This Bell and Clock were given to the Wesleyan Chapel and "Atherton" Schools, Lamberhead Green, near Wigan, by John Atherton, Machine Maker, Preston, who is a native of this village.

January, 1860. (3 cwts. 26 lbs.)

CLOCK. This Clock with the Bell is the gift of John Atherton, Machine Maker of Preston, to the Lamberhead Green Wesleyan Chapel and "Atherton" Schools, as a memorial of his warm attachment to this, his native place.

March A.D. 1860.

The actual date of the installation of the Bell and Clock is unrecorded but at a Trustees' Meeting held on the 26th April, 1860, it was "resolved that a Tea Meeting be held when the Clock is ready and that Mr. John and Mr. Henry Hartley be requested to make preparation for the same."

A Tablet in the School bears the following inscription:—
 In memory of the Reverend William Acherton
 Born at Lamberhead Green ... A.D. 1776
 President of the Conference ... A.D. 1846
 Died at Whitefield ... A.D. 1850

NEC TEMERE—NEC TIMIDE.

Other Tablets to the memories of stalwarts of bygone days are erected in the Chapel, namely:—

*** IN MEMORY of the late Mrs. Daglish of Orrell Cottage who was a consistent and attached Member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society for about fifty years. Died October 11th A.D. MDCCCXLIX, Aged LXX years. *SDW 1849 70*

In loving remembrance of Elizabeth—wife of William Hampson and daughter of Edward and Ann Calderbank—who passed through Death into Life at Southport June 7th, 1888, Aged 55 years, and is interred at Southport Cemetery. "Let her own works praise her." Prv. 31c. 31v. Grave No. 5823.

To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of George Darbyshire, Died May 12th, 1899, Aged 64 years. Who was Treasurer of the Sunday School for 23 years.

Erected by Members of the Sunday School and Congregation as a Tribute to the memory of Giles Heaps who passed into Rest February 5th, 1908. For over fifty years a faithful Servant of God at Lamberhead Green. "Peace Perfect Peace."

The beautiful Oak Pulpit, Communion Table and Chairs were given and dedicated in loving memory by the parents of Peter Gaskell Simpkin, who died at the age of 23 years, 10th August, 1924. "A young life devoted to the Active Service of God in this Church and Sunday School."

The beautiful Oak Font, in keeping with the Pulpit, was presented and dedicated by his parents in loving memory of John Birchall Gaskell, who died 6th July, 1929, at the age of 23 years.

*** In addition there are Memorials to those who gave their lives in the First World War, 1914-1918.

In the year 1368 the Old Chapel and School was sold to the Primitive Methodist Connexion for the sum of £300, of which £150 was granted to the Standishgate Chapel and £50 to the Hindley Chapel.

In 1873 the present Organ was bought with the permission of the Trustees on the understanding that

"no contribution towards the cost would be made out of Trust Funds."

In 1876 the Chapel was first licensed for the solemnization of marriages.

Another new Trust was created in 1880, and further Trusts in 1901 and 1918.

In 1881 the Trustees sanctioned drastic alterations to the interior of the Chapel and the erection of a Band Room and Vestry at the rear, the whole at an estimated cost of £400.

The present Chapel had a gallery at the Western end with the Organ in the centre of the gallery, the Choir on the North side of the Organ and a few family pews on the South side. The seatings faced the Communion which occupied the space now known as the recess. The pulpit stood in front of the Communion on the North side, while the Preachers' Vestry was in the North-east corner, the room now being used as a secondary entrance to the Chapel. The present ceiling was installed, completely obliterating the beautiful roof timbers rising to the ridge. The Chapel, with the Close, was bounded on the East and South sides by a low brick wall which gave an uninterrupted view of the whole edifice. The present wall of Yorkshire blue stone which was substituted for the palisadings was the gift of Mr. William Hampson of Shepley, an earlier Member and Trustee of our Church.

It is thought by many today who well remember the original lay-out of the interior and the general appearance of the exterior, that the extensive alterations were ill-conceived. Some credence may be given to this view by the fact that in 1903 there was an agitation for an entirely new Chapel, and funds were collected for the purpose, but in 1909 the scheme was abandoned and the monies raised disbursed.

Many outstanding personalities of more recent years have been reared in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" at Lamberhead Green. Some have stayed in their native village all their allotted span, having striven humbly and quietly, yet gloriously, in the Church and Sunday School which was their spiritual home. Of these, the names of three at once occur to the mind—Mr. Willie White, Sunday School Teacher, Superintendent, and Local Preacher; Mr. John Ashurst, Sunday School Teacher, Superintendent and Choirmaster; and Mr. John F. Simpkin, Sunday School Superintendent for thirty

years and Trust Treasures for twenty-five years : who performed their respective tasks with devoted zeal. Many others, like the Reverend Thomas Knowles, familiarly known throughout the Connexion as " Knowles of Bristol," and Reverend Peter Simpkin who became a Minister in Salt Lake City, have gone far afield, but their happiest memories were ever of their associations with Lamberhead Green.

So much for the past ! What of the future of our School ?

It may be truthfully said that never in the history of this Country has the Christian Church been confronted by such a challenge as it faces today. Economically and socially almost the whole of the civilized world is upside down and cries out to be righted. It is said that of the 47 million people in this Country not more than 9 million ever enter a place of worship. Largely as a result of this, as every true Christian believes, gambling is increasing enormously, and drink and immorality are not far behind. These things are not conditions with which our lives have no connection, because what is true of this Country and of the world at large is in some degree true of the neighbourhood in which our Sunday School is set. In twelve to fifteen years the Scholars of the Sunday School will be men and women with all the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, and the stuff of which they are made will matter tremendously to the moral and social well-being of the community. As officers and teachers of the Sunday School we are resolved to be faithful to our high calling and to see to it that every scholar committed to our care shall be so grounded in Christian principle and conduct that each and all, as the years go by, shall become a purifying and ennobling influence in the neighbourhood in which they live.

We are the heirs of a great inheritance. The past has left us grand traditions which we can, and must, maintain. It is our great responsibility to hand on to posterity even higher traditions than we have received. Let us rally to the call that should sound in each of our hearts to make the Church at Lamberhead Green a rallying point for all that will lift the life of the neighbourhood above all that is sordid and commonplace and to be a centre of all things good and beautiful and true. By God's help it can be done.



REV. R. A. REES

CONCLUSION

The Methodists of today in Lamberhead Green have a glorious heritage. For over one hundred and seventy years the Christian Witness has been borne, and these pages will tell of some of the triumphs and trials in which our forerunners shared.

The issue of this Souvenir Handbook has involved many hours of delving into ancient deeds and letters, and minute-books, and we who have the result of such enquiry in so convenient a form are very grateful to those who searched so patiently and carefully. Yet even the compilers of this record would be the first to say that the story is but half-told. How could it be otherwise? Certain occasions are recalled and certain names are mentioned, but there must have been many gatherings of the faithful of which we have no record when hearts were stirred, and many made worthy contributions to the development of the work whose very names are forgotten.

Glad as we are to have this story of great days and great personalities, let the ordinary member of the Church of today take heart in the assurance that Methodism in Lamberhead Green (as elsewhere) owes an inexpressible debt to those quiet, steady, faithful folk who have left No Name to fame, but who loved the House of God because it was their Spiritual Home, and who in utter sincerity prayed and worked for the coming of the Kingdom in this locality.

In the hope and in the confidence that our people, and their sons and daughters in years to come, will experience a deeper pride, and will be enheartened to seek a richer loyalty, and will offer a more Christlike Service to the Church their fathers so passionately loved, the Compilers of this Souvenir Handbook send it out.

R. A. REES.

JOHN WESLEY wrote in his famous Journal :—

“April 18, 1788 : Notice having been given at **Wigan** of my preaching a Sermon for the Sunday School, the people flocked from all quarters in such a manner as never was seen before. I preached with all possible plainness on ‘Repent ye and believe the Gospel’ and it seemed to sink into the hearts of the hearers. Surely ‘the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand’.”

ARISE ! for the day is passing
And you lie dreaming on !
The others have buckled their armour
And forth to the fight are gone :
A place in the ranks awaits you,
Each man has some part to play ;
The Past and the Future are nothing
In the face of the stern To-day !

A. PROCTOR.

You are invited to contribute
a minimum of **One Shilling**
for this Souvenir Handbook.
