

Blakeney Methodist Church

1812-2012



200 Years
Compiled by Church members

Foreword to Methodist Church Book

This lovely little book comes as a welcome sequel to the one published in 1997 to celebrate 175 years of the building. Now, 25 years later it has been lovingly prepared to celebrate 200 years and to give an account in words and pictures of all that has been going on. You will be reminded of many happy events and recognise several young and old friends.

That the Methodist Church in Blakeney, set in the middle of the High Street, is still alive, well and active is a remarkable achievement, when all over the country, chapels have been converted into private homes.

How has this come about?

By the extent of its Welcome, Hospitality, Generosity, Warmth & Friendship. The premises are open for use by any non-profit making organisation in the Glaven Valley simply for a contribution towards heating & lighting.

For many of us, its ecumenical focus is what makes it so dear to our hearts. Anglicans, Catholics & Methodists frequently come together to join in worship, prayer & study throughout the week. In fact, the Anglicans hibernate there each Wednesday from Advent to Easter for midweek Holy Communion to escape the freezing conditions of the large church of St. Nicholas up the hill.

Every part of the building is used; the chapel, school room & kitchen; not to mention the spacious courtyard. This is where we, Churches together in Blakeney, gather to sing carols at Christmas & from where we begin our procession on Palm Sunday. On Good Friday it becomes Pilate's judgement Hall during our procession of witness round the village.

This is the year of the Queen's Jubilee & the chapel precincts will be used as part of the Big Jubilee street party.

As usual, everyone will be welcomed in!

Jo Fawcett Assistant Priest Glaven Valley Benefice.



Men of Blakeney Harbour
1880



William Hammond Starling
1831-1883



William Starling
1858-1944

Rev Edwin Softley (EDP August 2011)

A Methodist minister for more than 40 years, the Revd Edwin Softley, who has died aged 77, was always in demand as a preacher in his native Norfolk. A keen writer of hymns and poems, he wrote a special seven verse celebration for the Queen Mother to mark her 100th Birthday. He was delighted to receive a letter from Clarence House and also thanks from the Queen.

Edwin John Softley, who was born at Thuxton, near Dereham, was popular, especially with young members of his congregation and was always willing to share his love of music with a wide circle. A good organist, he had also acquired several good examples of pipe organs.

After working as a nurse at Aylsham, he decided to study for the ministry and went to Handsworth Theological College, Birmingham, and also studied at Cliff College, Calver, Sheffield.

In his first post, he served with the Birmingham Central Methodist Mission, dealing mainly with drug addicts and alcoholics.

He was also chaplain to Boy's and Girl's Brigades and three hospitals in Birmingham.

In September 1972 he returned to Norfolk as minister of Wells Methodist Church. When the church needed major repairs, including replacement of the floor in 1978, he was again to the fore.

His energy on pastoral duties in the former Fakenham and Wells Circuit was much appreciated and he was soon receiving many requests to preach beyond North Norfolk.

Pictured, he is playing the electric organ at Blakeney.



The Bishop of Lynn at the
1980 Lifeboat Service



Thanksgiving services for the RNLI are held on the Quay every year during August and an archive is held by the Blakeney Area Historical Society.



The donkey leads an ecumenical
procession of witness through
the village on Palm Sunday.

Palm Sunday gathering in the
Methodist Chapel Courtyard
2012





Events

To raise funds for the upkeep of the building, many events are held by members in the chapel and throughout the village.

Tea in the garden



Retirement party for the Reverend Rosemary Wake in August 2006



Reminiscing on 90 years 100 years



Farewell tea party for Ruby Brown and Dulcie Cannell

Three o'clock teatime.
Lilian Timms, Mary Ferroussat and Margery Gray

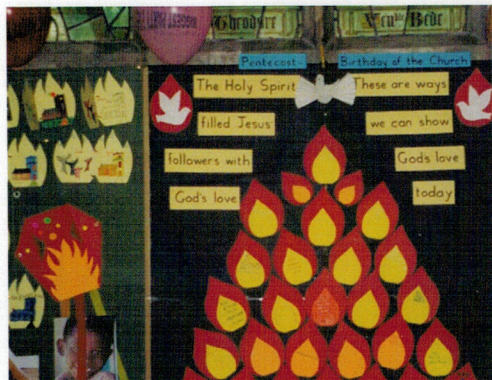


Youth Work

The 7-11 club formed in 1988 and later known as 'Treasure Trove' and then 'The Drop-in Club' catered for 11-15 years old, a number of whom were originally 7-11 club members



Jill Davis at the birthday of the Wednesday Club for Mothers and Toddlers. Their notice board is avidly read by villagers and visitors alike.



Children's workshop ran from 1999-2004 involving 21 helpers and an average of 30 children aged 4-11

Missionary Work

The church supports the work of the East of England Leprosy Mission and gives aid to starving children in Cambodia through an old Sunday School pupil, Deborah Reed



A stall in aid of the Leprosy Mission. Mr and Mrs Commins, Lal Wright, Margery Gray and Ann Rumsey



Gambian children in some of the 200 jumpers and vests knitted by Ruby Brown

Missionary work continues with donations to the Gorakhpur Nurseries Fellowship in India, an organisation founded by Emma Page of Blakeney and a team of missionaries in 1909. 'Muriel's Children' by Mary Cundy tells the story (ISBN Number 0 86347 293 1).

The Blakeney History Group which later became the Blakeney Area Historical Society held many exhibitions in the Chapel as well as yearly courses and monthly lectures.



John Wright and Gerald Cubitt, both founder members, writers, exhibitors and lecturers.



Tony Wright (John's father), May Stevens, Margery Gray, Sidney Loose and others listen to a tape recording made possible through the skills of Bill Timms.

A collection of tapes is held by BAHS



The present Chapel gates and Courtyard have replaced these Cottages condemned in 1937

Community outreach to the Glaven Valley, the central Norfolk circuit and through the media, has risen steadily over the past 200 years. The Reverend Rosemary Wakelin has taken it to Norwich prison in her capacity as a member of the Prison Chaplaincy.

The Reverend Colin Riches revitalised favourite Bible stories through his retelling in Norfolk dialect on radio and in print. Thursford 'Songs of Praise', a yearly event, united all in song. A fondly-remembered band of young musicians called 'The Mariners' filled churches with the youth and raised money for charities.

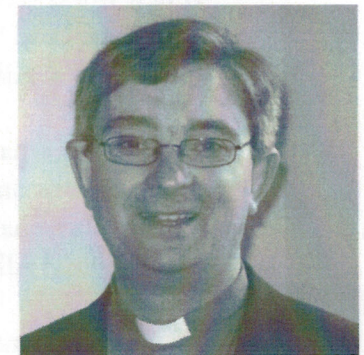


Local Preachers Fellowship Supper
July 2nd 1996
To say *Thank you* to
Reverend Roy Coppack



Former Minister, Reverend
Judith Stevens with Billy
Barstard and Fred Thompson
on the site of the 1993 chapel
reconstruction

Reverend Andrew King
Present Methodist Minister
Andrew is Superintendent
of the Central Norfolk
Circuit and has oversight of
31 Churches in that area,
supported by 5 Ministers



In conclusion, let us look back to all the people hitherto unmentioned from past and present, doing the daily, weekly, and yearly jobs that keep a building clean, warm and welcoming and to those of the distant past, their leaders and preachers, and those who gave hospitality in an age of horse transportation. Without any one of them the church would not be here today.

A big thank you to all the people who have helped in this second edition compilation. Thank you everyone.