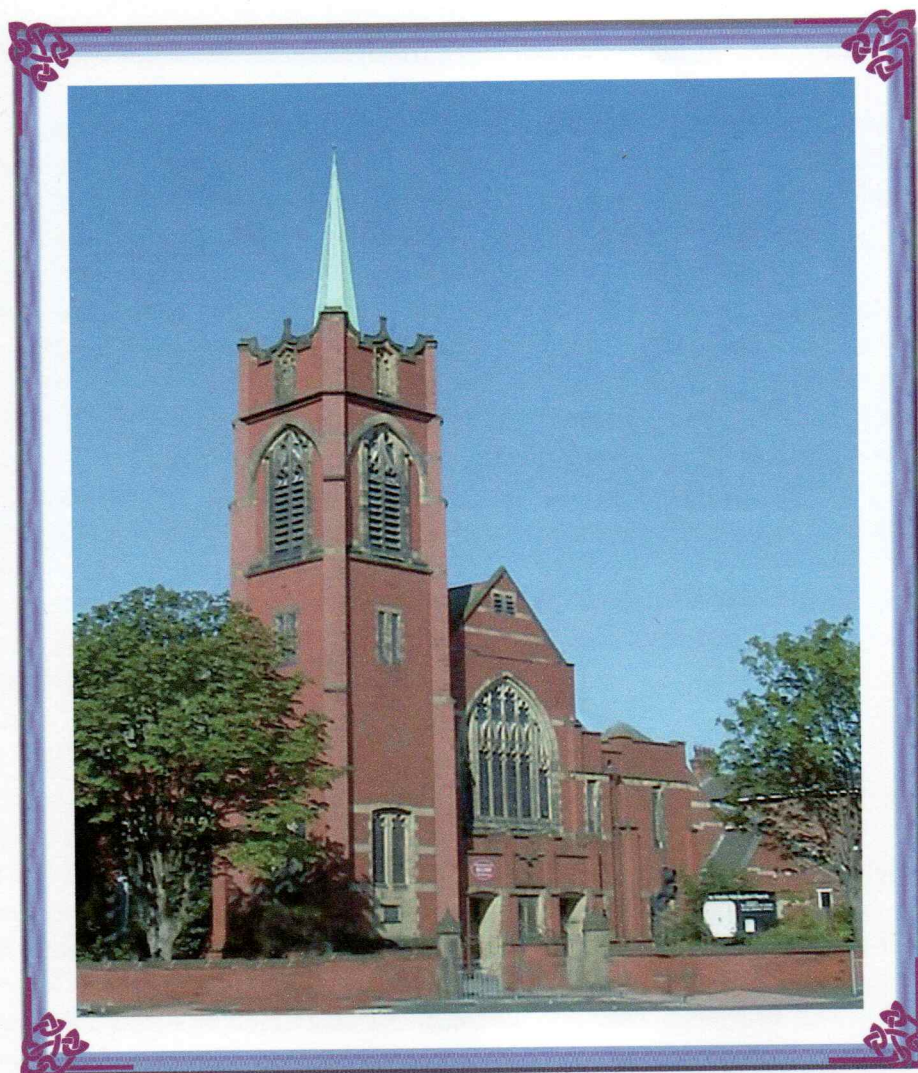


A
CELEBRATION
OF
CHURCH STREET-
ST. MARK'S METHODIST
CHURCH 1848-2002



METHODISTS WORSHIPPING AT ST MARK'S CHURCH FORMERLY KNOWN AS "LONDON STREET METHODIST" WHICH, SADLY, WILL NOW CEASE TO BE USED BY A METHODIST SOCIETY

It is good to look back and remember events and happy times enjoyed by so many and to recall various ministers and officers, but as the history of the church goes back to beyond our present day knowledge details of such are taken from a recording made for the centenary celebrations in November 1948.

THE BEGINNINGS

The Methodist Church was one of the most important denominations of the Free Churches in Southport. By 1776 a class meeting was being held in Churchtown and a chapel erected by 1816. The town centre had, by 1823-4, both an Independent and a Wesleyan chapel. Following an open-air service in Churchtown which was commissioned by the Circuit Quarterly meeting in Hull, there grew small Societies in Banks, Marshside and Southport itself. The Preston Circuit fostered this new enterprise and sent both ministers and lay people to encourage these small beginnings. It is known that in 1848 a few people formed a Society which met for prayer and fellowship in the cottage of a Mrs Alice Todd who lived behind the "Rabbit Inn" on Manchester Road. They raised sufficient money to erect their first chapel in Hawesside Street in 1854 at a cost of £50. An oil painting of this building was made – a copy of which is shown in this booklet.

As the congregation grew a bigger building was needed and this was erected in London Street 8yrs later. However, fire gutted this in 1890 so services had to be held in the Cambridge Hall. Such an impact was made upon the town that plans for a new church in Derby Road were quickly drawn up. Within a year the foundation stones were laid. This building served both as a Church and a Sunday School. Numbers were rapidly growing and the gallery with its numerous rooms leading off were used by the 400 strong members of the Sunday School whilst the floor area was kept as the Church.

The activities of the church were such that further accommodation was required, and so under the guidance of the Rev. H. J. Taylor a "spacious Lecture Hall" was built alongside the church at a cost of £1000.

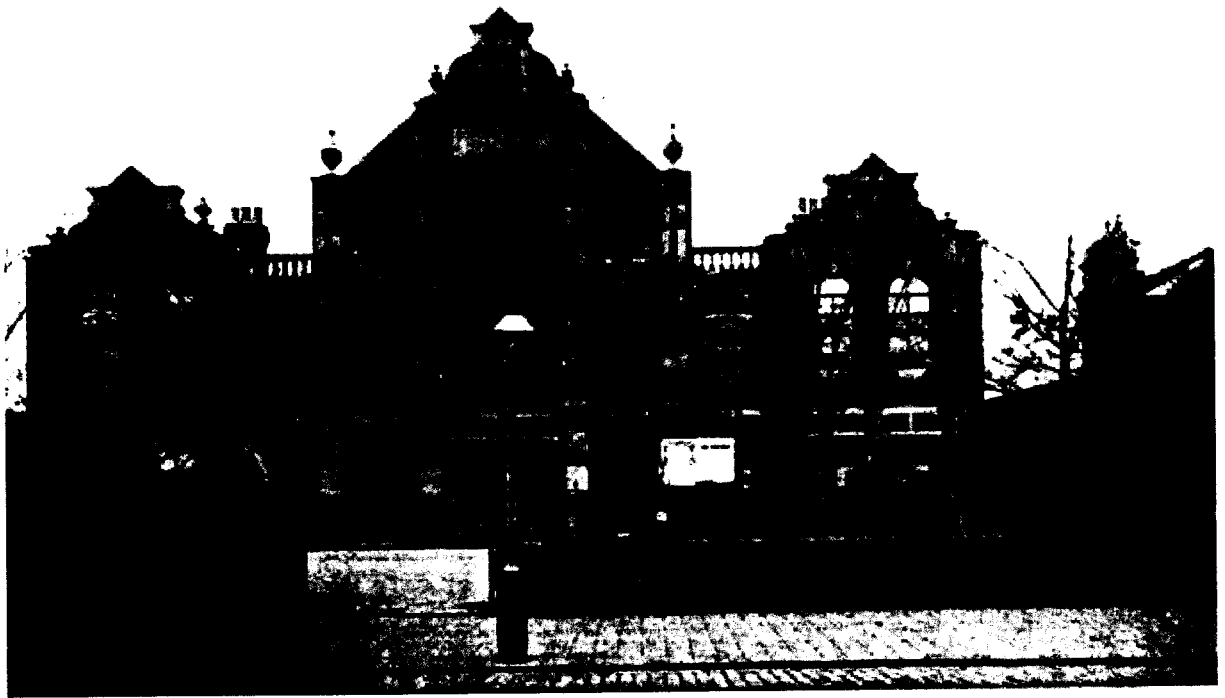
THE NEW CHURCH

During the ministry of the Rev. J. T. Barkby, (the successor to Rev. Taylor) Sir William Hartley and family came to live in Southport. As his home was in Sussex Road and he was a Primitive Methodist he went to the nearest church of that persuasion – namely the one in Derby Road. In due time he could see that a new church building was required and he issued a challenge to the church members. Pound for pound he would give if they could raise enough to purchase further land and be prepared to build. The challenge was accepted and with sacrificial giving by many of the congregation sufficient money was raised. The cost of the actual building was £12,000 but the total cost came to £25,000. The lecture hall was demolished and on

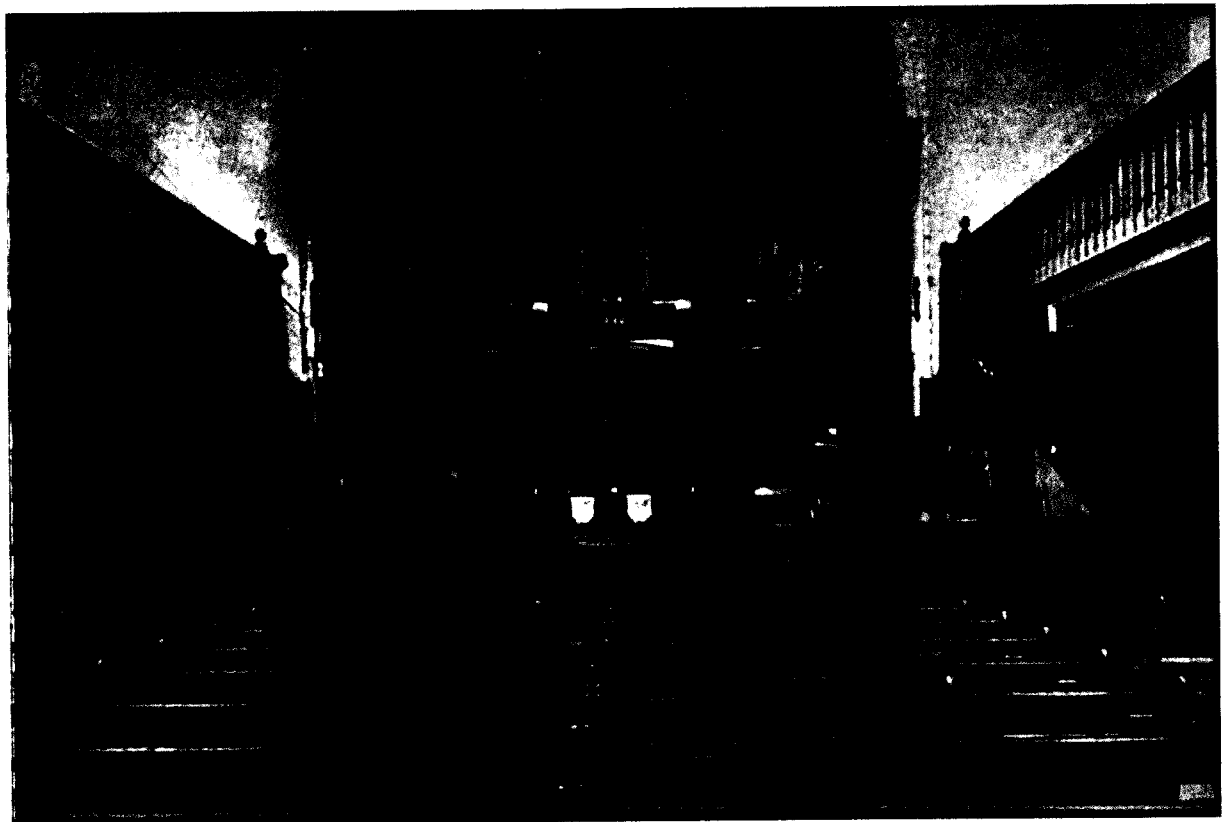
*This Chapel formerly in Hawesside St. was first erected
by the Church St. Society and was opened in 1854*



School Chapel from 1901 to 1906



The School Hall with Lecture Hall (on right)
previous to present Church being erected



The School Chapel from 1891 to 1906

27th Sept 1905 the foundation stones were laid. A member of the church, Mr Vaughan, was the builder. One year later the new church, built in the smooth, red Accrington brick, was opened. Sir William, along with Mr Samuel Hall furnished the building. It was the expressed wish of Sir William that oak should be used instead of the more usual timber, pine, and so all the wood panels within the chancel, the communion table and rail, the pulpit and the font are all beautifully carved oak. The pews and choir stalls are all of solid oak which over the years has retained its appearance and been enhanced by constant use.

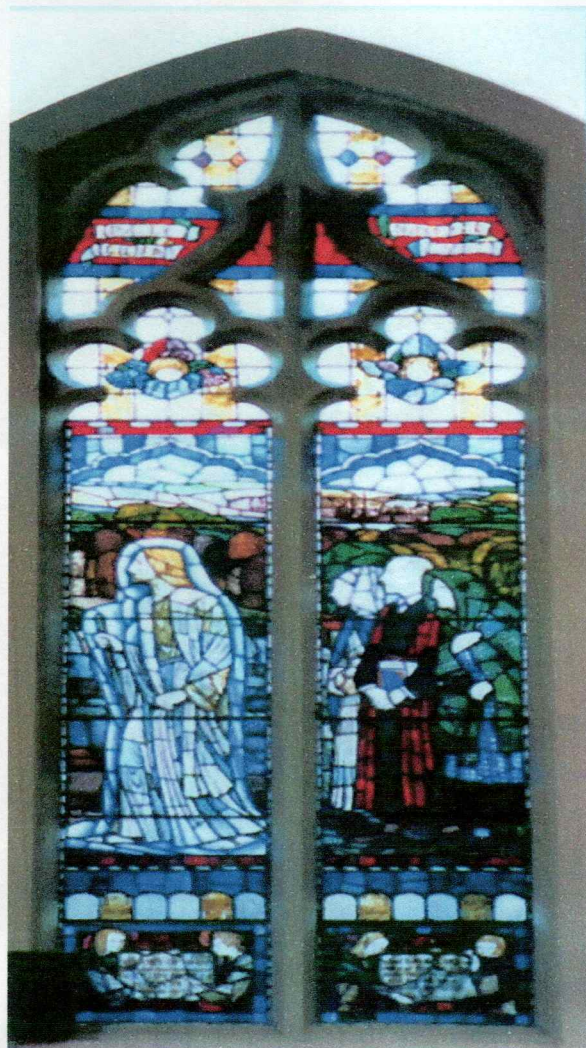
It has been said that "dignity and quiet beauty mark the church's interior" and the effect of the stained glass windows certainly lends credence to this statement. The window in the chancel, a gift of Mr Hall, represents Christ blessing the children. As one turns to face the congregation the beauty of the "Nativity" window over the gallery can be seen to best advantage. Down the nave, on either side are windows representing the Apostolic Succession of the Evangelical faith; Moses and Isaiah link the present day with the great prophets and priests of the Old Testament: John and Paul represent the expansion of the Christian faith to Jews and Gentiles: Athanasius and Augustine represent the champions and teachers of the Early Church, bringing the Scriptures to this country, whilst Luther and Wesley are the instigators of the great revivals of Evangelical Christianity. These windows were made and installed for Sir William Hartley to mark his election to the Presidency of the Primitive Methodist Church in 1909.

The central windows on either side were given by two of the daughters of Sir William and Dame Martha – Mrs J. S. Higham and Mrs J. P. Gabbatt. One of these windows, dedicated to Dame Martha, represents the visit of Mary Magdalene to the Sepulchre on the Resurrection Morning, whilst the other commemorates the chief interests of Sir William. His enthusiasm for both religious and secular higher education is depicted by a scholar in the academic gown of a doctor of divinity – (it may represent Dr. Peake, a noted Professor of Theology in the Primitive Methodist Church). The nurse commemorates his devotion to the cause of the hospitals and the relief of suffering, whilst the old lady dressed as a Lancashire cotton millworker, in clogs and shawl, must surely have been a familiar sight to Sir William in his home town of Colne. The background is depicting a cotton town nestling among the hills. These are reminders of his efforts to improve the conditions of manual workers. Ahead of these three figures goes the figure of the Risen Lord. Whilst quite different these two windows are complementary reminding us that Christ is not in the tomb but is a risen Lord showing each of us the Way, the Truth and the Life.

EXPANSION.

To remain alive and vibrant there has to be an "outreach" – a "mission". And so it was that Church Street became responsible for the building of two smaller "daughter" churches – one in Cemetery Road and the other at Shirdley Hill. Sadly both of these no longer survive as churches, the buildings being put to other uses. Through the work of the Women's Missionary Auxiliary several missionaries in Western and Central Africa were helped and encouraged. Added to the missionary interest by the ladies was also the work and collections by the J.M.A. of the Sunday School.

The Ladies of three churches of the Circuit met regularly to raise both awareness and interest in missionary work and to raise money for this. Miss Leggett and Miss Richardson were members of Church St. and were working in Nigeria. As Methodist Union came about in 1932 the interest of missionary work was extended beyond Africa to all parts of the world although the Rev. A.F. Slater went to Nigeria. He and



Following The Lord



Missionary Window

The Limer And Wale Windows



Detail From The Nativity Window



The Luther And Wesley Windows

three other men met the challenge of the Gospel and entered the ministry from this church. At a later date Sister Jean Abram trained as a Methodist Deaconess. A window in the foyer is a memorial to Miss Christiana Hartley whose interests in maternity and missionary work and welfare are widely known, both in this town and elsewhere.

THE MEN OF THE MINISTRY.

There were 28 ministers who served Church Street from the early days until more recent times.

Rev. R.V.Spivey was followed by Rev. E.Smith who was the minister leading morning worship when he surprised the congregation by announcing war had broken out and asking people to quietly go home. After him came :- Rev. L.H.Wood, Rev. W.Fletcher Fleet, Rev. R.Hodgkinson, Rev. J.Jones, Rev. A.Burch, Rev. B.Anderson, Rev. J.Heaven, Rev. C.Cooper, Rev. G.Palmer, Rev. S.Jackson and the present minister Rev. D.King.

THE CHOIR.

Methodism was "born in song" so it is of no great surprise that the choir of Church Street Methodist Church was one which took great pride in presenting music of the highest quality and laying down excellent standards. The Choir Anniversary in Spring was the occasion for the performance of Passion Music and in April 1941 Miss Isobel Baillie, the greatest English soprano at that time joined with the Choir in a performance of Hayden's "Creation". During the year not only did the choir lead the morning and evening worship but entered Music Festivals, gave concerts and even broadcast. Without the enthusiasm and skilful playing of the organist the work of the choir master/mistress would be not as effective. It was the dedication of such people as Mr R.D.K.Bannister, Mr A.Lees and Mr B.Parker which has been behind the excellent work and the good reputation which has been gained through the hard work of the choristers.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The Primitive Methodist Sunday School in Derby Road opened on 2nd September 1891 and the various classes dispersed into the appropriate room in the gallery. When the new church was built the Sunday School was able to use all the Derby Road premises. The re-organisation allowed for a more comprehensive grading of classes starting with Beginner, Primary and Senior departments. The Intermediate and the Senior departments formed the Junior Church and the young people were encouraged to organise and conduct their own services.

There will be members of the present church who remember their own days in the School and will recall such persons as :- J.Rodwell, T.L.Minshall, E.P.Guttery, J.Gaynor, Misses J.Spencer, D.Ebsworth, to name but a few.

All the usual activities associated with Sunday School were embarked upon – such as the Scripture exams, Rose Queen, Anniversary Services, outings and demonstrations as well as involvement with Harvest and Christmas festivities. However, it is interesting to note that in 1959 concern was expressed at the decline in numbers as the young people were "drawn away by other activities" – no new thing!

The May Morning Breakfast, (which was quite a feature with a Speaker) and which had a substantial cooked breakfast was started by the Christian Endeavour Society but



St. Mark's Church Choir-1969



was later taken over by the Sunday School. This institution was continued until 1982, by which time numbers had declined.

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP.

The roots of the Fellowship went back to just before the 1914-18 War when a Boys' Life Brigade was started. After the war a Girls' Guild began and a few years later a Boys' Guild – the two meeting with a Badminton Club. Various concerts and musical productions were performed each year but during the 1939 – 45 War the groups were closed down.

In August 1946 the Youth Fellowship commenced as a combination of all three organisations and a Sunday Discussion Group was added. The Men's Guild and the Snooker Club were popular and Sunday evening meetings in the Hall were well attended.

MEN'S FIRESIDE.

A small gathering of men met in the Autumn and Winter and for many years enjoyed the friendship and fellowship with each other and entering into debates on topical issues or listening to speakers on various subjects – medicine, the legal world, travel talks etc. Billiards, snooker, chess and dominoes as well as table-tennis, badminton and tennis have all been the interests of the menfolk who in tournaments met with ladies having similar interests. (And who knows what other interests followed?!) Eventually the group finished as circumstances altered.

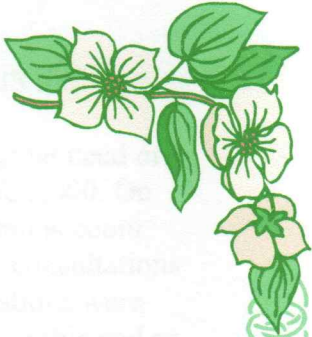
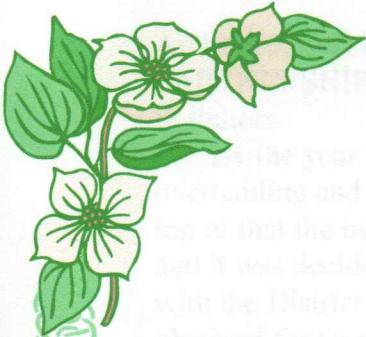
Each generation has different needs as the situations of home and work alter and at sometime between the Wars was "Four o'clock on Thursday" instituted. This gave members an opportunity to meet informally with a "three fold object of sharing the good news of Church progress, hearing of the joys and sorrows of their fellow members and deepening their acquaintance." It was so obviously successful as "the cares of the day are often forgotten in a flash of humour and the mind sweetened by a sense of our unity together in the love and service of God," that it lasted for many years.

To some extent the more recent needs have been met through the Wednesday meetings of "Rendezvous" which has had a veritable "feast of speakers" and stimulation of "the little grey cells" through quizzes and games, ending with a short epilogue.

OTHER ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS.

The need for smaller premises became necessary as the numbers of members decreased and repairs to the property were increasing so the school building with the adjacent caretakers house were sold and in May 1992 to celebrate the opening and dedication of a new Hall a Flower Festival was organised. This theme was "Praise through the Church Windows" which are, of course, somewhat unique for a Methodist Church and are prized by us.

The Rev. Canon J.A. Newton, Chairman of the Liverpool District, Rev. G. Barton, Superintendent Southport Circuit and Rev. S. Jackson, Minister were involved in the opening ceremony of the new Hall. This was formally opened in April '92 by Councillor S.C. Whitby Mayor of Sefton. Messrs. CONDY & LOFTHOUSE were the



St. Mark's Church. Wednesday Rendezvous. June-11 1997



Architects, WILLIAM SCOTT the builders, BINGHAM WILTSHIRE PARTNERSHIP, Structural Engineers and COCKSHOTT PECK LEWIS the Solicitors.

By the year 1996 having been in use for 90 years the organ was in great need of overhauling and repairs. The cost of this would have been in excess of £27,000. On top of that the insurance and the maintenance annual costs were taken into account and it was decided that we could not possibly consider this repair. After consultations with the District Advisor and the Property Division in Manchester quotations were obtained for an electronic organ. A fund was set up to raise the monies for this and so we were able to continue to worship with the beauty of organ music.

You may be asking how did Church Street Methodist Church become known as St. Mark's Methodist Church? All churches suffered the loss of members during and after the last war and people began to question the role of the Church in their lives. Mornington Road Congregational Church decided that they could no longer remain viable so in 1963 a merger took place and some of their members came to Church Street whilst others decided to join Lord Street West Congregational. It was expedient to change the name to one which combined elements of both churches' names and so "St. Mark's Methodist Church" was chosen.

Over the ensuing years Summer or Autumn Fairs have been held. On one occasion Miss Jean Alexander of Coronation Street fame came with 200 signed photographs to help raise funds. The Summer months have seen the premises being used by Boys Brigade from as far afield as Ireland for their summer camps whilst in the past groups of National Children's Home young people, and Brownies have brought their bedding and had holidays in Southport.

For many years the church was the "Convention Church" of the Methodist Holiness Convention which was held in July in the marquee on the site ground in Mornington Road. Many great preachers have taken the morning service and we have been uplifted by their messages. In latter years the format of the Convention changed and we were host to the young children's activities during the week whilst their speakers took Sunday morning services in other churches.

Both church and hall have been used by groups such as the North West Prophetic Ministries, Phoenix Club, Saturday Club, Mums and Tots, and "Scarecrows" playgroups, Gramophone Society, T'ai Chi and Arthritis Care groups, "Network" Study mornings as well as Daffodil Day, Ladies Day and our own regular Bible Study evenings where we seek to deepen our own spiritual lives by searching the Scriptures. The "Alpha" course has been used and we have also had campaigns led by various well-known evangelists in order to encourage the local residents as well as ourselves. House to house visitations have been undertaken and of course we have been greatly involved in the Christian Aid House to House collections.

On a lighter note the Table Tennis Teams, which started in 1987 caused some amusement as the majority of the players were a little older than 21 yrs ! However, great fun and enjoyment were the "order of the afternoon" and with regret the group had to close the sessions as members found they could no longer manage. Nov. 2001 was the final date.

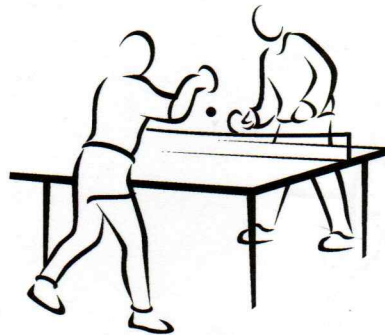
Many present members will recall that once a year the majority of church members went for a "Church Weekend". The venue was different over the years but Llandudno and Colwyn Bay seem to have been visited more often than the South Lakes area. In recent years a very much reduced number of members have been to Morecambe where they have enjoyed a time of fellowship together.

In Memoriam of Dorothy [unclear]

Some of us were alive
When Dorothy gave us life
We decided then to play
As long as we were able



Some Members of the Table Tennis group - 1997



In Memoriam of Table Tennis

Some of us were already getting on
When Dorothy gave us the table
We decided then to play Thursdays pm
As long as we were able

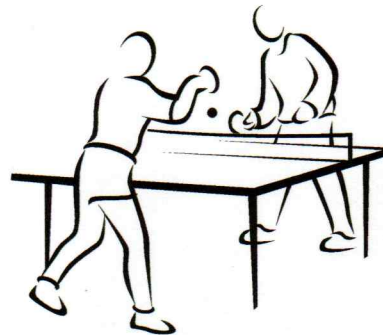
And so we played here for many a year
Though we kept on getting older
But it gave us a shock and a bit of a knock
When Ida cracked her shoulder.

Some of the rest are past their best
Though they keep turning up on the day
But it isn't much fun when you are trying to run
If you can't keep up with the play

We do our duty, say our prayers
And go to Church on Sunday
But Thursdays we find are a bit of a grind
But no, it is really a fun day.

Derrick has always got people to see
So now there is only me
Me and the question I have asked for years
Who will make my cup of tea?

BILL HAYES
2001





*Church Weekend
"Bodlondeb". Llandudno*





One of the Ladies Fellowship summer teas at Home-1993

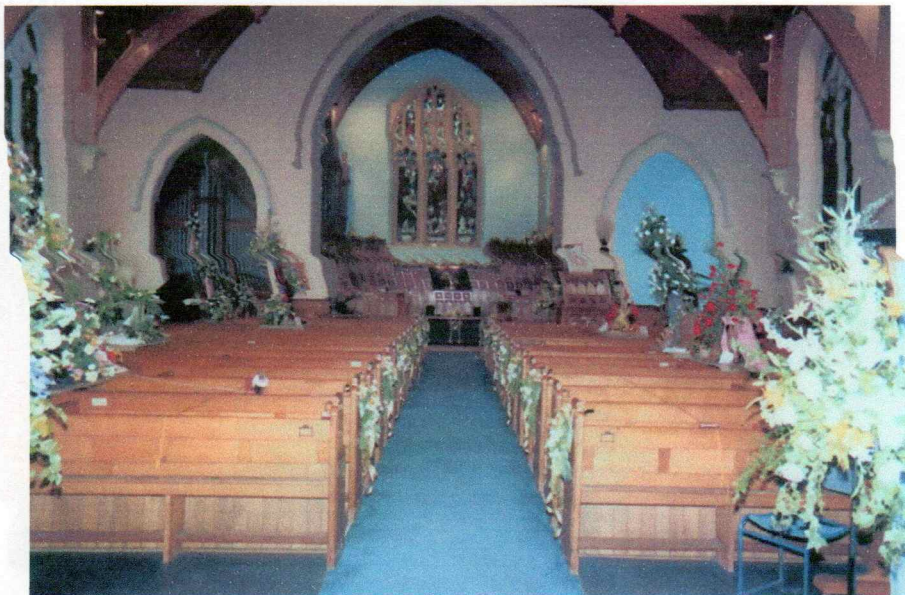


Opening Ceremony of the new hall –1992





*View from The
Balcony*



Looking down The Nave



Decorations Celebrating The Windows





St. Mark's Harvest Festival Sept. 17, 2001



FINALLY.

The church over the years has been faithfully served by its officers and ministers and as can be seen the standards set by them have been handed down to the present time. We have to be grateful to God for the love and influence the Church, the Body of Christ, has been and although there now is "a scattering" of its present members who can at this time say what influence we, as individuals, may have where-ever we may go? We have to remember that "Love changes everything".

May God's blessing surround you this day
As you trust Him and walk in His way,
May His Presence within
Guard and keep you from sin –
Go in peace
Go in joy
Go in love.

CYNTHIA B. LAMBERT.
MAY 2002

----- and Lastly,

My thanks are due to the many members who have willingly shared their memories and loaned their photographs.

Most of all I want to thank Mr. Joe Shortall who has undertaken the "donkey work" of typing, printing and doing it all over again due to my "editing". His patience and undertaking the work has been great and is much appreciated.

C.B.L.



Sir William Pickles Hartley

Born at Frawden near Colne 23 February 1846. Married Martha Horsfield Whit Monday 1866. Founded the preserve manufacturing company of Wm. P. Hartley Ltd Aintree London. Knighted in 1908 for his services to the community. Died in 1922. aged 77. Buried at Frawden.