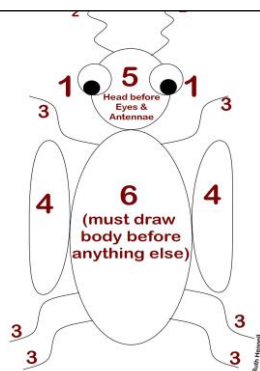


Chapter 69: Methodism in the Late 1950s.

Mum, dad and grandma remained actively involved in Bourne Methodist chapel during this period although the nature of mum and dad's involvement changed over time to reflect that they were now married and had started a family. At the start of 1955, in addition to attending Sunday School and chapel on Sunday, mum was going to Seekers on Monday¹, Choir Practice on Tuesday and Preparation Class and Rainbow Follies practice on Friday. There were often other activities, particularly in the run-up to Sunday School anniversaries. Commonly, after Preparation Class and Rainbow Follies on a Friday, mum would go to Edna Bust's house. The young people were also meeting as a youth fellowship after chapel on Sundays.

Mum only recorded Seekers' activities until March 1955. After that time, it is not clear if the activities stopped or mum just stopped attending. She noted that there were often speakers at Seekers. Sometimes, they had a religious theme, e.g. [Captain Kirkup](#)², speaking on the work of the Church Army³, and the Methodist chaplain from Nottingham prison. Sometimes they did not, for example, dad talking about insurance. Mum often rated the speakers. For example, Rev Kirkup, dad and the prison chaplain merited "VG" while Mr Purvis achieved "QG". In March 1955, Mr E Ashley of Skegby spoke at Seekers and mum rated it "VVG". His topic was "*Ghosts I have known*"!

Example of a card for a Beetle Drive



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It does appear that the chapel youth club continued.⁴ Mum noted going there three times in

January 1957. On two of those occasions, they had beetle drives. She also attended in February and March that year. This period of attendance coincided with the time that dad was away on a course in Norwich. Perhaps this explains why she went then. However, it seems she continued to attend even when he had returned from Norwich. Her attendance continued into June 1957. One of the sessions in April she called "*record request*"⁵ and, in May, there was another Beetle Drive. Dad also sometimes attended these sessions. At the end of May, dad went to one session while mum stayed in. However, it seems that mum and dad did not resume attending later in 1957 after any summer break



Bourne Methodist Chapel in Kirkby



Church Army badges

¹ Although it may not have been held every week

² George Brookes Kirkup was a Church Army Evangelist. He was born in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1916 and he died in Walsall in 1985. Some details of him talking about his work during the [Battle of Monte Cassino](#) are available on the Diocese of Derby's [website](#).

³ An evangelistic [organisation](#) and mission [community](#) founded in 1882 in association with the Church of England. In her book(let) "*I Remember*" (p17), Edith Searson recalled a visit to Clopton by the Church Army before the first world war.

⁴ I did wonder if it had been replaced by Seekers.

⁵ Presumably where people could request music to play?

that youth club had. Regardless, mum must have been involved in some youth activities as, in February 1958, she went to a Youth Council meeting at New Cross.⁶ In October 1958, mum noted that grandma had attended a Youth Council meeting at Bourne.

Something similar, that is a reduction in attendance, appears to have happened around the same time in terms of youth fellowship meetings after chapel on a Sunday, although she noted that the young people came to their house after chapel in December 1955.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, in place of youth activities, mum started to record activities for women, such as “*Bright Hour*” which appears to have been held on a Tuesday afternoon. She and grandma went there on 1 January 1957 and they took the reel-to-reel tape recorder. Following that, mum went most weeks. The sessions often included a speaker. Dad spoke there at least twice and, in September 1957, mum spoke about John Williams.⁷ Other speakers included Rev Wright⁸, Captain Beecham⁹ and Mrs Hartley.¹⁰ Mum contributed to sessions in other ways, including reading lessons and short stories and playing the piano. Mum sometimes took Tricia and, on one occasion noted that she left Tricia sleeping outside the chapel.¹¹ On other occasions, grandma looked after Tricia, including sometimes taking her out during the address. In September 1959, mum was elected as Bright Hour Assistant Secretary. Mum was also involved in other ladies’ activities at chapel including rallies and jumble sales. In June 1959, mum went to a meeting of the British Women’s Total Abstinence Union at chapel.¹² In October 1959, mum went to something called “*Family Circle*”. Whatever it was, she attended again twice in December 1959.



Left – prams outside a butcher in Newcastle

Centre – leaflet produced by the Women’s Total Abstinence Union decrying the use of alcohol in medicines

Right – white ribbon badge of the National British Women’s Temperance Association

⁶ See Chapter 54.

⁷ I am not sure [which John Williams](#) this was! I imagine it would have been more likely to have been one of the clergy than say one of the criminals! Possible candidates include John Williams, [a Welsh non-conformist preacher](#) in the 17th century who figured in a history of the Methodist revival in Wales published in 1820. Another possibility was the [missionary to the South Pacific](#) who was killed and eaten by cannibals. Personally, I think the missionary is most likely!

⁸ He is mentioned in Edith Searson’s book(let) (p33) as someone who was a scholar in Bourne Sunday School and who went on to be a Methodist Minister and missionary to China. He was born in Kirkby on 2 July 1919. According to the 1939 Register, he was a student at Richmond Methodist Training College. He [entered the Methodist Ministry](#) in 1940 and went to China as a missionary on 23 March 1942. He died in Falmouth on 6 July 1995. He had a collection of Chinese objects which he donated to the [Royal Cornwall Museum](#). According to Edith Searson, his wife was called Edith but I have not found any details of their wedding.

⁹ A Salvation Army missionary in Africa

¹⁰ Edith Hartley. I believe she was the mother of Winifred Howells, the wife of Rev William Edwards Howells, who was Minister at Bourne from 1953 to 1959.

¹¹ This was a common practice in the fifties and sixties and is still [common in Nordic countries](#).

¹² Now the [White Ribbon Association](#). The Canvey Island.org [website](#) has a photograph of a women’s temperance group meeting in the 1930s. The 1969 Kirkby Directory has details of a group in Kirkby (p29).

Mum and dad remained involved in choir during this period although mum's involvement reduced after Tricia was born. Mum sometimes recorded when the choir sang and what they sang. For example, at the end of January 1955, the Sutton Choral Society came to afternoon service and mum noted that the Bourne choir sang "[O How Amiable](#)" at night. In October 1957, the choir sang "[Send out Thy Light](#)". In April 1958, at a family service, the choir sang "[Bells across the Meadow](#)".¹³ The choir held their general meetings in January during this period. They were held on a Saturday night, combined with a supper and social. In 1955, mum noted that the supper was at Adams chip shop.¹⁴ In 1957, the choir annual meeting was followed by supper and a Beetle Drive. Apparently, dad won first prize! In 1958, at the annual choir supper, there was a choice of pork pie or ham! Dad and Ron Rowe acted as masters of ceremony. There was also a choir social in October that year. Mum went but only from around 8.30. In October 1959, as part of the choir effort, there was a Beetle Drive on the Saturday with a supper of sausage, mash and peas.

ANTHEM

13 BELLS ACROSS THE MEADOWS
A. W. Ketelby

While the sun is setting, All our cares forgetting,
Comes the sound of ev'ning bells, Far across the lea
and dells,
Peace to all the message tells, From above;
Hearts with joy are singing, While the bells are ring-
ing,
Though the shades of ev'ning fall, And the day's be-
yond recall,
Night will bring content to all, Peace and love.

Trebles:
Ah, Ah, Fondly lovers wander, In the gath'ring twi-
light yonder,

Altos:
While the shadows are falling, Heart to heart is call-
ing.
Lovers wander, In the twilight yonder,

Full:
While their love they reveal, Bells ring out their
joyous peal,
Ring out their joyous peal.

While the sun is setting, All our cares forgetting
Comes the sound of ev'ning bells, Far across the lea
and dells,
Peace to all the message tells, From above;
Hearts with joy are singing, While the bells are ring-
ing,
Though the shades of ev'ning fall, And the day's be-
yond recall,
Night will bring content to all, Peace and love.
Night will bring content to all, Peace and love.

*The anthem "[Bells across the Meadows](#)"
taken from the Sunday School Anniversary
programme for 1959*

Mum continued to record going to Preparation Class (PC) until the end of December 1955 but then only mentioned it again in August 1956. It is not clear if this had stopped, if mum had stopped attending it or she just didn't record it. She did note it weekly from then. From August 1957, it seemed to switch to a Tuesday night, so she went to this after choir practice.¹⁵ Her last note of attending Preparation Class was in March 1958, two months before Tricia was born.

From August 1956, mum started attending a bible class on a Monday night. The first of these was held at Rev Howells' but they were then held approximately monthly at various houses including K Marsh¹⁶ in Newton¹⁷, Joan Storer, John Melanaphy¹⁸, Miss E Denis¹⁹ in Skegby, Barrie Smith²⁰ and mum and dad's. It is tempting to think that mum moved from Preparation Class to these bible classes but this seems unlikely as, for much of 1956 and 1957, she attended both. Her last note of attending the bible classes was also in March 1958.

A lot of time and effort was put into anniversary practices which started in February or March each year and ran until the anniversaries in May and June. These practices seemed to take place on a Tuesday before choir practice and/or on a Thursday. As the days of the anniversaries approached, there might be two practices per week including separate practices for boys and girls. In addition, if

¹³ This also appears as the final anthem in the hymn sheet for the Sunday School Anniversary in 1959.

¹⁴ See [Chapter 54](#).

¹⁵ This seemed to continue in 1958 although there was one week in January when it was held on a Friday night instead.

¹⁶ I worked out that they were probably a Methodist local preacher. Grandad refers to hosting a local preacher by this name in June 1958. Based on the list in Barrie Smith's book, "[A Brief Record of the Ashfield Circuit](#)", it turns out that this was Ken Marsh who became a local preacher in the Ashfield circuit in 1961 having previously been a local preacher in the Sutton and Kirkby circuit.

¹⁷ This is quite some distance from Kirkby (18 miles) so perhaps this was a circuit or district event?

¹⁸ I struggled to identify him as the surname looks like Millanijig or something like that! I asked about this on the [Kirkby Living Memory Facebook Group](#). John Green thought the name might be Millanify which he recognised as Melanaphy. I then found John Melanaphy in Barrie Smith's book, "[A Brief Record of the Ashfield Circuit](#)". It turns out that he became a local preacher in the Ashfield Circuit in 1959 having previously been a local preacher in the Sutton and Kirkby Circuit. He left the district in 1964. According to Gill Crisp, the Melanaphys were part of the congregation at Forest Side ("Clock") chapel in Sutton.

¹⁹ Or Dennis.

²⁰ In addition to hosting bible study classes, he spoke at the Sunday School Teachers' weekend in February 1958. He was also best man for Graham Hardy and Joan Storer – see [Chapter 62](#). He has written a number of books about Methodism in the Kirkby area.

mum was playing the piano, she would have separate practices with whoever was playing the organ, usually Hazel Munns.

Rainbow Follies continued to give concerts throughout this period but dad gave the concert party up in June 1958. There was less about Rainbow Follies after that point although mum did report a concert at Bourne in December 1958. Rainbow Follies practiced most Fridays and held concerts²¹ in a wide range of places including Alfreton²², Annesley²³, Bentinck²⁴, Bourne, Brook Street (Sutton)²⁵, Butler's Hill (Hucknall)²⁶, Codnor Park²⁷, Diamond Avenue²⁸, Forest Side²⁹, Hill Methodist³⁰, Huthwaite³¹, Nuncargate³², Selston³³, Stanton Hill³⁴ and Swanwick³⁵. They performed to groups of ladies, old age

²¹ For some of these concerts, mum did not say explicitly that these were Rainbow Follies concerts but I have assumed that they were. In a few cases, these could have been concerts she attended rather than ones that Rainbow Follies gave.

²² In November 1955, Rainbow Follies gave a concert in Alfreton although mum does not specify where. I doubt it was at Watchorn Memorial church as I think she might have said this specifically if it was. It seems more likely that it was at [Alfreton Wesley Methodist Church](#). The church [website](#) has a detailed history section. The first Wesleyan church in Alfreton was built in 1809 in Chapel Street. But, the church moved to new premises in 1885 in High Street. Both these buildings have since been demolished. The [current building](#) was opened in 1983. However, it is also possible that the concert was held in what was the [Pensioners' Hall](#) and is now the [community hall](#).

²³ Rainbow Follies gave concerts in Annesley both in the Methodist chapels (see [Chapter 54](#)) and at the miners' welfare (see [Chapter 59](#)). During this period Rainbow Follies gave concerts in Annesley in February and December 1955 and in December 1956. Previously, the Youth Club from Bourne gave concerts at Annesley Welfare in November 1947 and in December 1954. Rainbow Follies gave concerts at Annesley Main Street chapel in February 1948 and at Annesley Sherwood Street chapel in March 1948 (see [Chapter 38](#)) and again in January 1953. Rainbow Follies also went to Annesley in January 1949 and in February 1954.

²⁴ In February 1955, Rainbow Follies gave a concert to Bentinck ladies. Mum mentioned another concert at Bentinck in November 1956 for national savings. Initially, I was not able to find out many details of the Bentinck chapel but it was a United Methodist chapel originally. It is recalled as a tin chapel in Gerald Lee's book *"Kirkby-in-Ashfield: Yesterday Remembered"* (p106). It is mentioned as one of ten Methodist chapels in Kirkby at the time of Methodist Union in 1932 in Bill Clay-Dove's book *"Kirkby-in-Ashfield: An Interesting Township"* (p59). The book provides further details in a brief chapter on the church (p57) which explains that the church building opened in 1901 and closed in 1966 when the building was sold and later demolished with the remaining members joining The Hill Methodist Church. National Archive [records](#) confirm that the church operated from 1901 to around 1967. While I have not found a photograph of the building, I have found a [picture](#) of their Sunday School banner. While Bill Clay-Dove does not explicitly state where the church was, it appears, from a 1969 map, that there was a chapel on Princess Street in Kirkby Bentinck opposite where the station was. This location was confirmed by John Ringrose and Elizabeth Smith in a [discussion](#) about this chapel on Kirkby Living Memory Facebook Group. There are not many mentions of this chapel in mum's and grandad's diaries. In April 1949, mum and grandma went with Joan Storer to the youth club at Bentinck (see [Chapter 38](#)). In March 1950, the Bentinck players performed at the Bourne youth club (see [Chapter 54](#)). In her book(let) *"I Remember"*, Edith Seardon mentions Bentinck church (p42). She says, *"Ben used to like to visit Bentinck Church because it had been his first Sunday School, I used to like to go too. The members were a happy and hardworking band, and I remember the splendid concerts they gave. The Anniversaries too, were well attended..."*

²⁵ See [Chapter 54](#). In October 1955, Rainbow Follies gave a concert for old age pensioners at Brook Street Hall in Sutton.

²⁶ Mum noted giving a concert here in December 1955. There is an excellent local history [website](#) which includes details of former and current Methodist churches in Hucknall. Butler's Hill refers to an area of Hucknall to the south and east of the town centre. Two former Methodist churches were located there as is one of the current churches. Bethesda in Bestwood Road was a [Methodist New Connexion](#) church. The foundations were laid in 1875 and the chapel opened in 1876. The Primitive Methodists held meetings in Butler's Hill Boys' Schoolroom from 1878 to 1879 but a chapel was then opened in Cavendish Street. These two churches merged in 1963. A [new church](#) was constructed in Bestwood Road and it is known as [Hucknall East Side](#).

²⁷ Rainbow Follies gave concerts in Codnor Park in June 1955 and specifically for the old age pensioner Christmas party in December 1955. Mum does not give more specific detail of where these concerts were. Codnor Park is a village close to [Ironville](#) that also developed around an ironworks. I have not found any details of a Methodist church or chapel in Codnor Park. There were [several](#) in Codnor but the diaries specifically say Codnor Park.

²⁸ This relates to the Methodist church in Diamond Avenue, Kirkby that was originally Wesleyan and became Trinity following the merger with Bourne in 1959. Mum refers giving a concert for *"old folks"* there in June 1955.

²⁹ See [Chapter 54](#). In April 1956, mum went to a concert at Forest Side. Prior to this period, mum went to Forest Side with Rainbow Follies in October 1948.

³⁰ See [Chapter 54](#). Mum referred to giving a concert there in April 1957.

³¹ See [Chapter 54](#). In May 1955 and December 1956, mum referred to giving concerts to *"old folks"/"OAP"* in Huthwaite but she does not give more detail of where these concerts were. Many of the photos of Rainbow Follies in this chapter are from the 1956 concert in Huthwaite.

³² Mum refers to giving a concert at Nuncargate in October 1957. She did not give more details of where it was. The Methodist church in Nuncargate appears to have been a [United Methodist Church](#) (rather than Primitive Methodist or Wesleyan), The first chapel seems to have been built in 1878 with a [new chapel](#) in 1905.

³³ Mum noted that Rainbow Follies went to Selston to give a concert in February 1958. Mum had previously been involved in giving concerts there in February and December 1954 – see [Chapter 54](#).

³⁴ See [Chapter 54](#). In December 1955, mum noted giving a concert in Stanton Hill. In April 1957, mum noted going to Stanton Hill to give a concert at the Albert Street chapel.

³⁵ Mum mentioned giving concerts in Swanwick in April and November 1955. There should have been a concert in January 1955 but this was cancelled because of fog. Mum did not say where these concerts were specifically. There is a [Methodist church](#) in Swanwick and its website has a [history page](#). There was a Primitive Methodist society in Swanwick from as early as 1820. A chapel was built in 1880 on Pentrich Road but this closed in 1965. The building [remains](#) and is used as a [pre-school](#). I suspect this is where Rainbow Follies performed.

A detailed street map of the St. Hilfred's Church area in Scarborough, Ontario. The map shows the church building, its rectory, and surrounding streets including Birchmount Road, Midland Avenue, and Midland Avenue. Key locations marked include St. Hilfred's Church, Rectory, Castle Hill, Grave Yard, and various schools and parks. A red circle highlights the intersection of Birchmount Road and Midland Avenue, near the church grounds.

A photograph of the exterior of the Swanwick Pre-School. The building is constructed of red brick with a steep, gabled roof covered in grey tiles. A large, dark, arched window is prominent on the right side of the facade. Below this window, a sign reads "Swanwick PRE-SCHOOL" in blue and white. To the left of the main entrance, which is a large, dark, arched doorway, there is a smaller sign that says "MAIN ENTRANCE". Above the entrance, a small, triangular window is visible. The building is surrounded by a low brick wall, and a paved area with parked cars (a dark grey car and a red car) is in the foreground. A tall, thin utility pole stands to the left of the building.

Above left – Location of the Bentineck Methodist chapel

Above right – Former Primitive Methodist Chapel in Swanwick. This closed in 1965 and the building is currently used as a pre-school

Right – Swanwick Methodist Church – note this is view from Derby Road and the original building is the reddish building at the back and to the right



In March 1956, mum noted that she sang a solo “*Japanese teapot*”.³⁹ Mum noted that Rainbow Follies annual meetings were held, in 1955 and 1956, at Ken and Pearl Hodges’ house. In March 1957, a meeting about Rainbow Follies was held at mum and dad’s. I am not sure what this was about. I am also not sure why mum and dad withdrew from Rainbow Follies. Perhaps it was because they had recently had a baby and no longer had time for such activities. But, they continued to be involved in plays and productions of different types so this might not be the explanation. Perhaps they were dissatisfied. In October 1957, mum noted that the Rainbow Follies concert at Bourne was “*not as good as usual*”. In January 1958, a concert in Swanwick was cancelled because of fog. In February 1958, dad

³⁹ Not sure what this is.

went for a practice but no-one else came. So, the next week, he didn't go although he did resume attending practices from the following week when there was also a Rainbow Follies meeting.⁴⁰ Mum was involved in practical arrangements for Rainbow Follies and other productions. For example, in March 1956, she pressed clothes for the concert party and, in October that year, she made costumes for herself and dad. In November 1959, she bought "net etc." for the pantomime and, between Christmas and New Year did some sewing for it.



Rainbow Follies performance to old age pensioners in Huthwaite December 1956

Top – Jack Bond, dad, Arthur Cross, Ken Roome, John Overfield, Robert Ollerenshaw (back row); Pearl Hodges, mum, Ken Hodges, Margaret Varnam, Joan Storer, Margaret Bostock (front row)

Middle row – “There’s nothing much wrong with the army” – it is hard to identify people but I think Ken Hodges is at the piano and Ken Roome doing press ups. In the picture on the left, I think the others may be Arthur Cross, Joan Storer, mum, Margaret Bostock, dad, Margaret Varnam, unknown

Front row is just labelled “sketch”. I think the people in the picture on the left are mum, Joan Storer, Margaret Varnam, John Overfield and Arthur Cross

⁴⁰ Might this meeting conceivably have been to discuss the poor attendance?

After ceasing to be involved with Rainbow Follies, in January 1959, mum noted that dad went to a play practice at chapel. A few days after that, mum went to chapel for a concert for the manse fund. Dad and the stewards did "[Bold Gendarmes](#)" and Rev Howells and Ben Searson did "*Bill and Ben the flowerpot men*".⁴¹ Grandma sat with Tricia so both mum and dad could go. At the beginning of February, dad was involved in play practice and men's practice on a Sunday afternoon. He also attended play practice on a Thursday. I presume this was preparation for the play "*Jesus Rex*"⁴² given by the Sunday School teachers as part of a teachers' weekend. In October, mum noted going to ladies' practices at chapel. I think these were for a pantomime held in early 1960. Mum also referred to pantomime practices at this time. Some of these were at Diamond Avenue church. There was also a practice for Christmas tableau taking place at the same time. This was presented in the Festival Hall on 20 December 1959.



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Bill and Ben were popular characters on the TV show "Watch with Mother" in the 1950s

While I am not sure of the details, mum referred frequently to a group called Canorum which was somehow connected to Rainbow Follies. It seems it was some form of singing or performing group, perhaps the former, given that "*canorum*" is [Latin for melodiousness](#).⁴³ It seemed more overtly religious than Rainbow Follies which was more focused on entertaining and giving concerts. Activities carried out by Canorum during this period included participating in services at Bourne and other Methodist chapels including in Annesley⁴⁴, Brook Street⁴⁵, Forest Side⁴⁶ and Newstead.⁴⁷ They also occasionally went to churches of other denominations, e.g. Stanton Hill Baptist⁴⁸ in 1958. They often contributed to particular "*efforts*", e.g. by the choir, ladies or Sunday School teachers. Mum did not often note what they sang but, on one trip to Newstead in 1957, they sang [St Johns' Passion](#) by Bach. In December 1958, mum noted being the chairlady⁴⁹ in the afternoon for Canorum but I am not sure if this was a service/concert or a meeting.

There were also events at chapel on a Saturday night and, in 1955, these appeared to be monthly, on the last Saturday of the month, at least for the first few months. In January, a service and concert were held to mark the chapel's reopening following decoration. In February, there was a Rainbow Follies guest night at chapel. This included a dancing school from Newark and a male voice quartet. Mum rated the evening "*NB*".⁵⁰ In March, there was a ladies' social which mum considered "*very nice*". In

⁴¹ Edith Searson notes in her book(let) "*I Remember*" (p73), "*The last Circuit Concert was given at Bourne. One item on the programme caused considerable interest. It was given by the Rev Bill [Howells] and Ben [Searson] who, in full regalia, sang the song "Bill and Ben the flowerpot men". At that time this song was popular on TV and so it proved with all at the concert...*"

⁴² I have not found details of this.

⁴³ Although from my O level Latin I thought it was something to do with dogs!

⁴⁴ For chapel details, see [Chapter 54](#). In October 1955, Canorum gave a service in Annesley in the afternoon.

⁴⁵ For chapel details, see [Chapter 54](#). In November 1956, Canorum went to Brook Street in the afternoon.

⁴⁶ For chapel details, see [Chapter 54](#). In September 1956, mum went with Canorum to Forest Side's harvest festival.

⁴⁷ For chapel details, see [Chapter 54](#). In March 1956 and April 1957, mum went with Canorum to Newstead at night.

⁴⁸ See [Chapter 52](#).

⁴⁹ It is interesting, and perhaps surprising, that mum described herself in that way as I remember her arguing that the term "*chairman*" could be applied to either a man or a woman. She was not a fan of the term chairperson!

⁵⁰ Not bad.

early April, the chapel anniversary was held on a Saturday night with Rev A W Hall⁵¹ as the speaker. It appears that the ladies' effort social may have been an annual event as there was also one in March 1956. In April 1956, mum noted going to the table tennis club's social. There were other recurring annual social events including the choir social and supper in October. The standard supper for the choir seemed to be stewed steak, peas and potatoes. Other socials occurred at different times, e.g. as part of Sunday School teacher weekends and men's effort. Beetle Drives seemed particularly popular. Mum was often involved in catering, sometimes with others, e.g. Margaret Roome (nee Varnam). Dad often acted as master of ceremonies (MC). Other MCs included Ron Rowe, Ken Roome, John Smith and John Overfield.

In January 1957, on a Tuesday night, mum attended something at chapel called "[Brains Trust](#)".⁵² The following year, also on a Tuesday in January, she attended a Bero film show.⁵³

Parties continued to be held at chapel during this period. In March 1955, a silver wedding anniversary party was held there for grandma and grandad. 21st birthday parties held during this period included for Robert Ollerenshaw, Hazel Munns and John Overfield.⁵⁴ There were a number of weddings at chapel during this period including mum and dad's in June 1956. Other weddings included those of Joan Storer and Graham Hardy; Margaret Varnam and Ken Roome; Joy Munns and Alan Jones; Maureen Hobbs and John Smith; and Hazel Munns and Richard Ward.⁵⁵ In April 1958, the chapel invited everyone who had been married there to attend a family service.

In April 1957, Ron and Barbara Rowe asked mum and dad to be godparents to their daughter Sharon. The ceremony for this⁵⁶ took place in May of that year. On 3 August 1958, Tricia was christened by Rev Howells. In January 1959, mum noted sending both Tricia's and Sharon Rowe's names to the [Methodist Recorder](#).

There were a lot of trips and outings organised from the chapel and mum, dad and grandma frequently went on them. In May 1955, mum noted going to Margaret Bostock's to collect details of the Sunday School trip. This took place in June 1955 to Wicksteed Park.⁵⁷ Mum noted that she and dad organised it and that they went in Trumans buses from Shirebrook.⁵⁸ Mum rated it "v. nice" and commented that the weather had been cool but fairly fine.



Example of Trumans bus

⁵¹ He had been Minister at Bourne from 1946 to 1950, see [Chapter 54](#).

⁵² This appears to be referring to a radio and TV [programme](#) of that [name](#) that was popular in the 1940s and 50s.

⁵³ See also [Chapter 54](#).

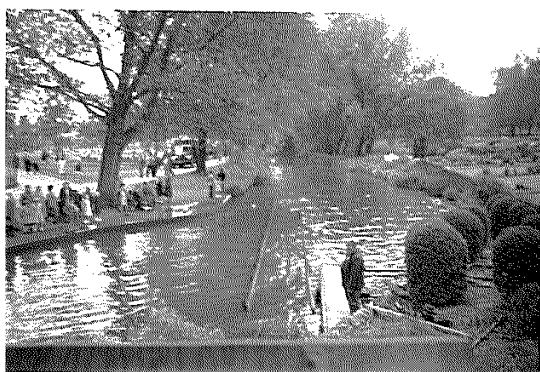
⁵⁴ See [Chapter 66](#).

⁵⁵ See [Chapter 62](#).

⁵⁶ Her christening?

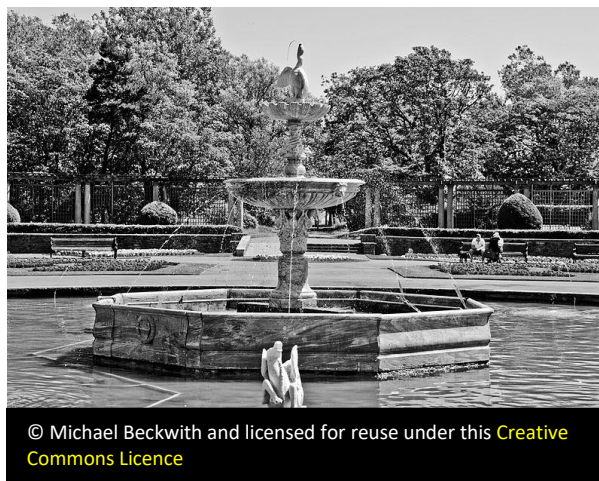
⁵⁷ See [Chapter 51](#).

⁵⁸ This was a [private bus company](#) in Shirebrook that operated from 1919 to 1956 and later became part of East Midland Transport.



Sunday School trip to Wicksteed Park June 1955
Above left – Edna Bust and dad
Above – dad and Hazel Munns with Celia Bradbury
and Christine Greensmith looking on (somewhat
bewildered!)
I have no idea what dad is doing in either photo!
Left – water splash at Wicksteed Park

Also in May 1955, grandma and grandad went to Cliff College⁵⁹ with Rev Howells. Grandad also noted that Ben Searson went with them on that particular trip. In June 1955, mum noted going on a Rainbow Follies outing to Nottingham. They went to the Theatre Royal⁶⁰ to see “[White Horse Inn](#)” on ice. Mum rated this “VG”. They had tea at the Odeon⁶¹ beforehand. In October 1955, mum was collecting money for a chapel trip to Blackpool for the weekend. The trip happened a few days later. A group of 30 went. They travelled by an Evans bus⁶² on a Friday evening, leaving Kirkby at 6.50pm and arriving in Blackpool around 11.45pm. They stayed with Mrs Clarke at 29 Lord Street.⁶³ On the Saturday, they went round the shops, in the morning, and mum bought some sheepskin mitts. In the afternoon, they went to the tower for ballroom dancing and, in the evening, they went to the Opera House to see “*Wedding in Paris*”⁶⁴. On the Sunday, they went to Central Methodist⁶¹ in the morning and to [Stanley Park](#) in the afternoon. They left Blackpool at 5.30 arriving in Kirkby at 10pm. Mum noted that they had had “*lovely time all weekend – best yet*”.



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Fountain in Stanley Park, Blackpool in 2011

⁵⁹ See [Chapter 63](#).

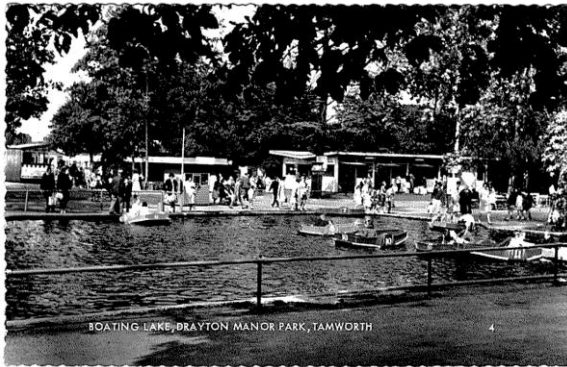
⁶⁰ See [Chapter 31](#).

⁶¹ See [Chapter 52](#).

⁶² I have not found details of this company but I think Arthur Evans operated one or more buses.

⁶³ See [Chapter 53](#).

⁶⁴ See [Chapter 66](#).



Unposted postcard from Drayton Manor Park
circa 1950s

In February 1956, mum and dad went for a Sunday School teachers' weekend to Eastwood Grange⁶⁵ in Ashover. They went with Joan Storer and Steve.⁶⁶ Mum noted that she was in Room 9, sharing with a Mrs Oakley who had been Miss Pickbourne. Mum commented that it was "very very nice time, the best yet." In March 1956, mum and dad went to Nottingham for a Rainbow Follies outing. This involved tea at the Odeon⁶⁷ and then to the Theatre Royal⁶⁸ to see [Michael Denison](#) in "Love Affair".⁶⁹ In May 1956, the Sunday School outing went to [Drayton Manor Park](#) near Tamworth.⁷⁰ However, mum's diary is not completely clear as to whether she and dad went that year.

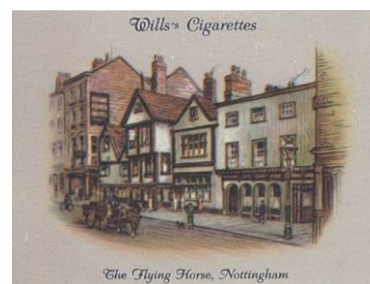
In 1957, mum and dad once again went for the Sunday School teachers' conference in Ashover. Others who went included John Overfield, Marion Slater and Brenda Scothern. Mum commented that it was "very nice". In June 1957, there was another Rainbow Follies outing to Nottingham. They had dinner at the Flying Horse⁷¹ then they went to see "Alibi"⁷² at the Theatre Royal.⁶⁸



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The Flying Horse Inn, Nottingham, from an old painting.



Images of the Flying horse pub Top left – unposted postcard
Top right – former Flying Horse pub circa 2015 Above left –
print circa 1916 Above centre and right – Wills cigarette card

⁶⁵ See [Chapter 54](#).

⁶⁶ I am not sure who this is.

⁶⁷ See [Chapter 52](#).

⁶⁸ See [Chapter 31](#).

⁶⁹ A play written by [Dulcie Gray](#), Michael Denison's wife, in 1956. It had a successful tour that year but was not a hit in London.

⁷⁰ This is in Tamworth, very near to where our son Stephen and his partner Hannah lived before they bought their current house.

⁷¹ This [pub](#) closed in 1989. The name lives on in the [Flying Horse Walk arcade](#).

⁷² A [play](#) based on an Agatha Christie novel.

In June 1957, grandma went to Cleethorpes with the ladies from chapel. In August 1957, the Sunday School outing went, once again, to Wicksteed Park in Kettering. This year, as Lynne and Anne Evans were staying with them, they went too.



Sunday School trip to Wicksteed Park August 1957

Left – Sylvia Bust, Lynne Evans, Anne Evans

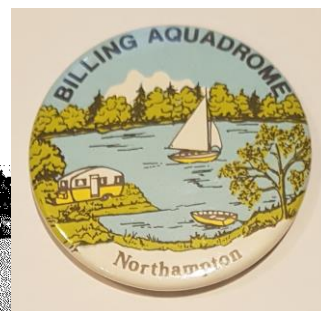
Below left – Maureen Martin, Susan Price, Anne Evans, Lynne Evans, Sylvia Bust

Below right – Sylvia Bust, dad and Anne Evans

Bottom – postcard of Billing Aquadrome posted in 1967 with badge inset

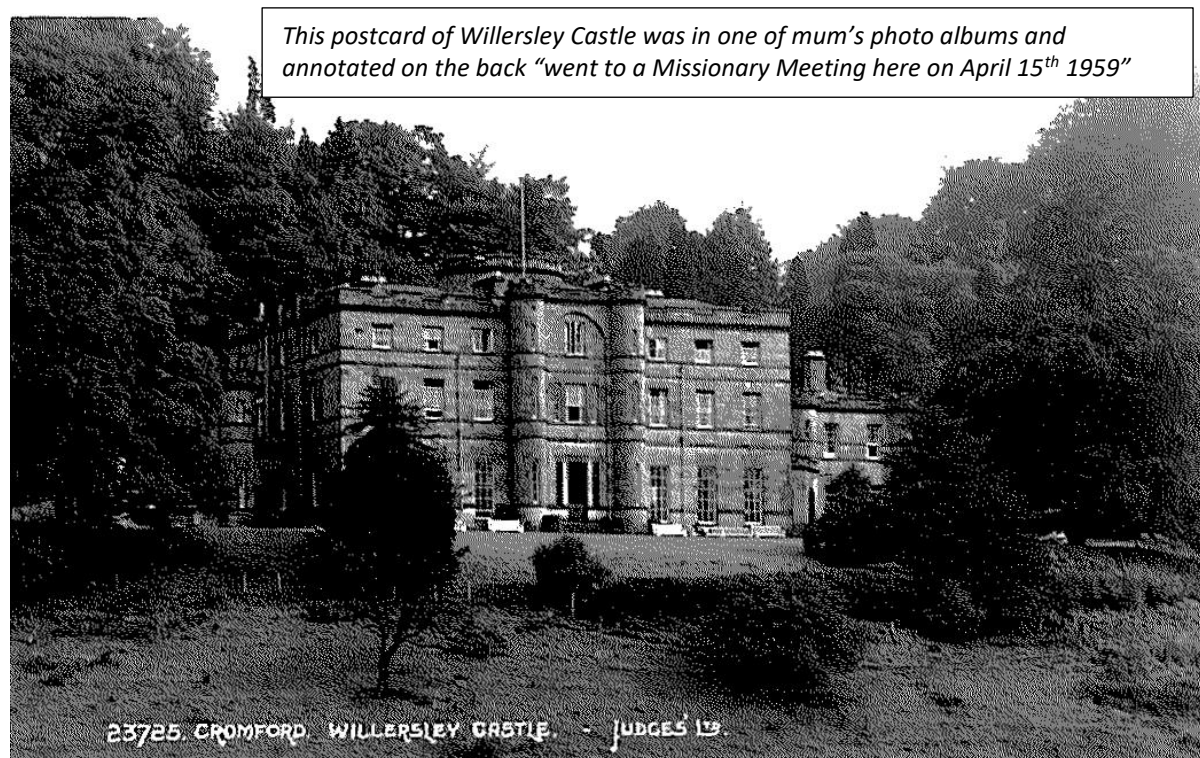


In June 1958, grandma went with Renie to Trentham Gardens with a ladies' outing from chapel. That same month, the Sunday School outing was to [Billing Aquadrome](#)⁷³ near Northampton.



⁷³ This [flooded](#) badly in 2020. –

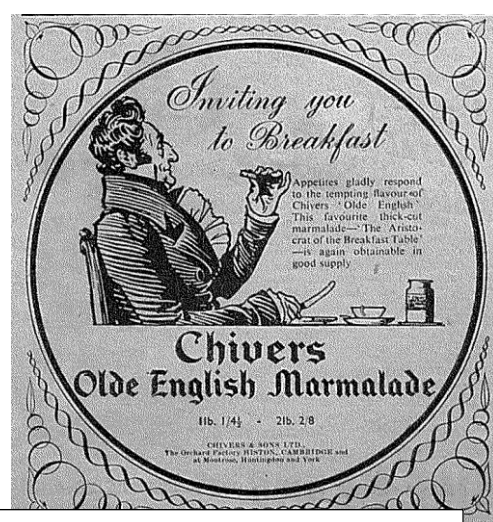
In April 1959, the ladies from Bourne chapel went by bus for a missionary meeting to Willersley Castle⁷⁴ near Cromford. Mum, grandma, Tricia, Auntie Bertha and Edna Bust went also but by car.



In May 1959, mum, dad, grandma and Tricia went on a trip with the ladies to [Tissington Well Dressings](#). In June 1959, grandma went on the Bourne Sunday School outing to Wicksteed Park and, in August 1959, she went, with Carole Holland, to Bridlington with Bourne ladies. In November 1959, mum went with a ladies' trip to Cambridge. Grandma did not go as she had a cold and had lost her voice. Tricia stayed with grandma and grandad. Mum noted that the trip was to the Chivers factory in Histon.⁷⁵



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Left – cycle path near former Chivers factory in Histon Right – 1950s advert for Chivers marmalade

⁷⁴ This 18th century [mansion](#) in Cromford operated as a Methodist Guild Holiday Centre from 1927. It became a maternity hospital during the second world war and then returned to being a hotel, initially under Methodist Guild and then Christian Guild. Mum went there regularly in later years including for Gilbert and Sullivan activities. When she died, she left Willersley Castle a legacy of £4,500. The hotel closed in 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown and, in July 2020, the owners announced it would not re-open but would be sold. It appears that it has been sold to Manor Adventure who intend to operate it as an outdoor pursuits centre focused on schools.

⁷⁵ [Chivers](#) is an Irish brand of preserves and jams. The business was sold to Schweppes in 1959 and the brand was temporarily retired in 2004 before being relaunched by the Boyne Valley Group.

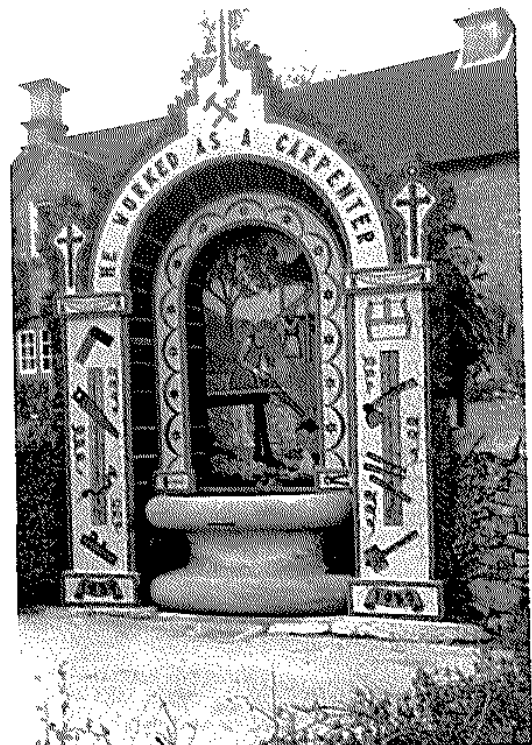


Model vehicles bearing the Chivers and Sons Ltd livery. The one on the left is Days Gone DG43 by [Lledo](#) and was made in England. I [think](#) this means it was made sometime between 1983 and 1999. The one on the right is part of the [Matchbox](#) Models of Yesteryear series. It appears to have been made in 1973 and is based on a 1927 [Talbot](#) van

Bourne ladies' trip to Tissington May 1959.

Below – group photo = red circles show left to right – dad, Tricia, grandma, mum (possibly)

Bottom – well dressings in Tissington



There were also sometimes sports events organised by chapel. For example, at the end of July 1955, mum went to watch a cricket match between Bourne and Huthwaite.⁷⁶ She noted that Huthwaite won. In July 1956, dad took part in a cricket match on the park involving Bourne, Diamond Avenue⁷⁷ and Hill⁷⁸ churches. It was organised as married against singles. In November 1959, dad watched a youth club football match in the morning.

Mum, dad and grandma remained involved in Sunday School throughout this period. In January 1958, mum noted that she stepped down as Sunday School Junior Leader. She noted that Marion Slater was trying it. However, mum was still clearly involved. In February, she noted hosting a committee meeting regarding a Sunday School quiz.⁷⁹ In January 1959, on



Three girls from mum's Sunday School class 1954/5 – Maureen Dawn, Alison Freeman and Glenda Gregg

one Sunday, mum noted that she went to primary in the morning and juniors in the afternoon. On one Sunday in February, she went to senior school in the morning and juniors in the afternoon. That month, mum noted that she was to be registrar for the junior department and she also noted delivering Sunday School “*telegrams*”.⁸⁰ Later that month, mum noted doing some Sunday School visiting in the afternoon. She noted doing further Sunday School visits in September 1959.

In February 1955, mum noted that she went to a Sunday School council meeting at Ken and Pearl Hodges' house. Annual Sunday School teachers' meetings were held in September or October most years. Mum and dad also attended multiple other teachers' meetings and it seems these were held every couple of months. In September 1958, dad went to a meeting at Joan and Graham Hardy's about Sunday School classes but mum did not note what the meeting was about. In March 1959, grandma attended the teachers' meeting and gave a report of mum's visits. In May 1959, mum went to a Sunday School committee meeting at night at Graham Hardy's house. In July, there was a further meeting, also at Graham's house and mum noted that this one was about amalgamation of Bourne and Diamond Avenue⁷⁷ chapels. Later that month, mum went to a joint meeting of Sunday School teachers at Diamond Avenue.

Sunday School teachers also organised chapel events at least once per year in a teachers' weekend. In April 1957, mum noted that they had a Beetle Drive and buffet supper, which mum, Margaret Varnam

⁷⁶ For details of Methodist chapels in Huthwaite, see [Chapter 54](#).

⁷⁷ The Wesleyan chapel that merged with Bourne to form Trinity Methodist church.

⁷⁸ See [Chapter 54](#).

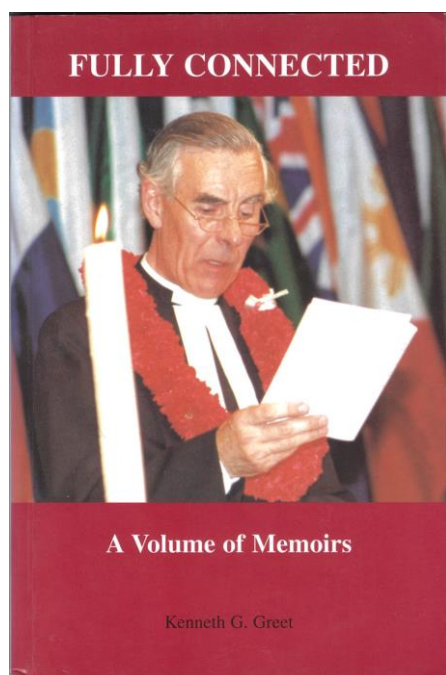
⁷⁹ The same time the following year, she noted that dad attended a meeting of the Bible Quiz Committee at the manse. Dad also attended a Bible Quiz meeting at the manse in December 1959. However, I do not know if these quizzes relate to the Sunday School specifically.

⁸⁰ Whatever these were! I am also not sure what the role of Sunday School registrar involved. It [seems](#) that the “*telegrams*” might have been something sent to scholars who did not attend to try to boost attendance.

and Margaret Bostock organised. Mum commented that it was “*very nice*”. As part of that weekend, teachers sang in the Sunday evening service. In December 1959, Christmas cards were given to all the children who attended Sunday School.

At the end of 1954, the chapel underwent some redecoration and refurbishment. A re-opening service was held on Saturday 29 January 1955. The speaker was Rev Kenneth Law Waights⁸¹ and a concert was held at night. It is not clear from mum’s diary if the chapel had been closed in the earlier part of January or if this service and concert was a more formal opening whereas the practical opening had occurred earlier. Whatever, mum prepared for this event by polishing seats at chapel on at least two occasions.

During this period, mum attended chapel three times most Sundays. Dad also attended frequently, although sometimes, e.g. in March 1955, he only went once when he was studying for his insurance exams. Sometimes, mum noted when they had communion (“*sacrament*”), but it seems likely that she did not always note this.⁸² She did note other special events at chapel including civic services; services devoted to favourite hymns; visits by choirs, such as the Eastwood Collieries Male Voice Choir⁸³ and the Welbeck Colliery Male Voice Choir; or particular speakers, such as Harrison Slater⁸⁴, Rev Victor E Vowles⁸⁵, Arthur Lofthouse⁸⁶, Barrie Smith⁸⁷ and G Cresswell.⁸⁸ She also noted when Canorum or the Bourne choir sang, when particular plays were performed and when there were particular efforts, e.g. by the ladies, men or Sunday School teachers. She also noted when her friends, e.g. Joan Hardy (nee Storer), Margaret Roome (nee Varnam), John Overfield and Ron Rowe took services.



Kenneth Greet's memoirs published in 1997

Mum continued to attend annual Society meetings⁸³ at chapel. These were usually held in January or February. In 1958, mum noted that dad and Ron Rowe went and she went to sit with Barbara. In 1959, grandma went and took Mr Marshall and Mr Deakin. She brought them and Mrs Deakin home. Dad also attended. In August 1959, a joint Society meeting was held between Bourne and Diamond Avenue. Dad went but mum did not because she had unexpected visitors, Marion Slater and Ray(mond) Stephens. Mum did note (with disappointment) that there were only 27 people at the meeting.

Mum was involved in some form of leadership within the chapel during this period, for example, attending leaders’ meetings. Dad also attended such meetings. Mum did not state if these meetings were specific for Sunday School or the chapel more broadly. In July 1957, Mum went to a conference meeting at chapel. She noted it was “VVG” and that the speaker had been [Rev Greet](#).⁸⁹ That month, the

⁸¹ [Kenneth Waights](#) was originally a [Wesleyan Minister](#). He was born in Bournemouth on 15 May 1909 and was ordained as a Minister in 1931. He became President of the Methodist Conference in [1971](#). He died on 10 June 1984 in Shaftesbury, Dorset.

⁸² Details of which services had the sacrament were marked “S” on the Ashfield circuit plan in 1959.

⁸³ See [Chapter 54](#).

⁸⁴ See [Chapter 38](#).

⁸⁵ A former minister at Bourne – see list in [Chapter 54](#).

⁸⁶ See [Chapter 31](#) and list of ministers at Bourne in [Chapter 54](#).

⁸⁷ See footnote 20.

⁸⁸ See Chapter 17.

⁸⁹ If this was Rev Kenneth Greet (there was also a Methodist Minister called Brian A Greet – I think they were brothers), he was President of the Methodist Conference in [1980](#). He was Kenneth Gerald Greet. He was born in Bristol in 1918 and [entered the ministry](#) in 1943. He [died](#) in Rustington, Sussex in 2014.

Methodist conference was held in Nottingham.⁹⁰ Grandma, mum, dad and Renie went into Nottingham to the old Market Place to hear speakers from conference. It seems that, at some point during this period, dad became a steward and he began to attend stewards' meetings.⁹¹

Mum and dad also sometimes took services during this period.⁹² In particular, they did these with Margaret Varnam and Ken Roome. Chapels they visited included Bourne, Kirkby Park⁹³, Annesley⁹⁴, Newstead⁹⁴, Huthwaite⁹⁴, New Cross⁹⁴ and Newton.⁹⁵ Mum and dad also sometimes took services on their own⁹⁶ including at Bourne and in Huthwaite⁹⁴, Newton⁹⁵, New Cross⁹⁴, Kirkby Park⁹³, Stanton Hill⁹⁴, Annesley⁹⁴, Kirklands⁹⁷ and Nuncargate.⁹⁸ Sometimes, dad went without mum if she was playing piano at Bourne. Other people they sometimes did services with included Gillian Dulson, Joan Storer, Marion Slater, Graham Hardy and Mary Leach. On one occasion when dad was taking a service at New Cross⁹⁴, Dorothy Lofthouse was visiting so she went with him. On another occasion, dad took a service for Graham Hardy at Annesley Woodhouse.⁹⁴ Mum commented that there were only four there and no pianist or organist! On another occasion, Ron Rowe came round to ask dad to take a service on Sunday as the person who was due to do it was sick. Mum contributed in various ways to the services they took including children's addresses and playing the piano. In December 1956, mum and Joan Storer took the service at Bourne, in the morning, as part of the ladies' effort. Mum said she took the sermon and spoke on Ruth 1.16. As far as I know, this was the first sermon mum preached. She would have been 22 years old.



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Newton Methodist Chapel

Ruth 1.16: But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."

⁹⁰ Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, it is not easy to get an online list of where Methodist conferences have been held. So, I have started compiling one for the period from 1932 and it is at the end of this chapter. The Primitive Methodist [conference](#) was held in Nottingham in 1916 and it was the sixth time the conference had been held in the city. I am not sure how and why particular towns and cities were chosen to host conference but it appears that the intention was for conference to visit different parts of the connexion with delegates hosted by different members in the host district(s). From [2004](#), conference has become fully residential with a central venue and centrally-organised accommodation. From online records, it appears that conference was held in Nottingham in 1972 and 2018 as well as in 1957 as noted by mum. Edith Searson noted in her book(let) "*I Remember*" that Conference was held in Nottingham in 1947 and she recorded how she hosted a delegate. Details of this are included at the end of this chapter after the list of conference locations. However, it appears that she may have been referring to 1945 when the conference was held in Nottingham. In 1947, the conference appears to have been held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

⁹¹ In Edith Searson's book(let) "*I Remember*" (p72), she lists a number of stewards including dad (Roy D) and Ron Rowe (Ron R). She describes them as "*all faithful*".

⁹² In the Methodist circuit system, different Ministers and local preachers take services at different churches and this is organised and scheduled through the circuit plan.

⁹³ See [Chapter 17](#).

⁹⁴ See [Chapter 54](#).

⁹⁵ There is an existing Methodist church in [Newton](#). They have a Facebook [page](#) but the last entry dates from 2018. Originally, it seems this may have been a [Primitive Methodist](#) chapel. Edith Searson describes a trip to Newton when her husband Ben was preaching there in her book(let) "*I Remember*" (pp56-57).

⁹⁶ They may not have taken the service on their own but others involved may not have been mentioned in the diaries. For example, on 11 October 1959, mum noted that dad went to Nuncargate in the morning. According to the Ashfield circuit plan for 1959, Derrick Leach was taking that service so dad may well have gone with Derrick.

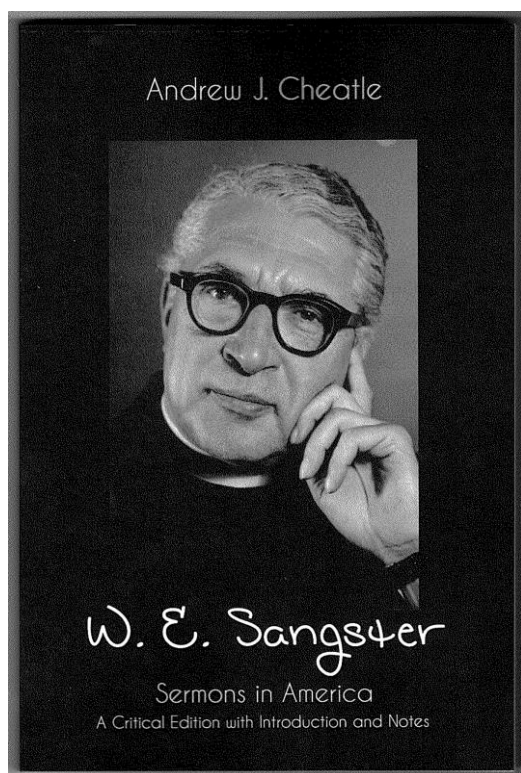
⁹⁷ This was a care home in Kirkby that [closed](#) in 2016 and was [demolished](#) in 2020. It was located in Fairhaven and the site is now relatively new housing. There are some photographs of Kirklands in the book "*Kirkby-in-Ashfield: A Pictorial View 1889/1989*" produced by Nottinghamshire County Council (#18-20). Edith Searson refers to this home in her book(let) "*I Remember*" (p55).

⁹⁸ See footnote 32.

		VIII	X	XII	XIV	XVI	XVIII	XX						
1959		July 19	July 26	August 2	August 9	August 16	August 23	August 30	September 6	September 13	September 20	September 27	October 4	October 11
OUTRAM STREET Sutton 10-45 Thursday 6-00 7-30	Stead Wright	Eddyslaw Freeman	H. Ball Newble	Miss Pearson W. Johnson	Verrinder F. Ball	D. Johnson H. Clarke	Standen Wright s	Dibben Dibben s	Vowles Overfield	Melanaphy Hardy Dibben	Dibben Dibben HF	Dibben Stead Dibben	Leach Wilkins	
SKEGBY 2-30 Thursday 6-00 7-30	D. Johnson	F. Ball	R. Ball	Miss Pearson	J. H. Wragg	Wright s	Miss Gray	Holloway	Henstock Dibben	Dibben Dibben HF	B. Smith Dibben	J. Smith	Freeman Dibben	
TIBSHLEP 10-45 Wednesday 6-00 7-00	Supply Miss Gough	Wright Brettie	Supply F. Ball	Supply Jenson	Supply Buttery	Supply W. Johnson	Wright Shrad s	Provide Hayes	Dibben Mrs. Bantall s	Provide Green	Verrinder Verrinder HF	Collins H. Clarke	March March Dibben	
PILSLEY 2-30 Wednesday 6-00 6-45	Miss Holmes Miss Holmes	Wright Wright s	Fletcher Fletcher	Standen H. Clarke	Miss Pearson Miss Pearson	Jenson Jenson	Wright Miss Gough	Collins Collins Dibben	Dibben H. Clarke	Verrinder Verrinder HF	J. Smith J. Smith	Butler Butler Dibben	Eddyslaw Eddyslaw	
BROOK STREET Sutton 10-45 Monday 8-00 3-00	Howells J. Smith Howells	Melanaphy Vowles s	Howells W. Corbett	Vowles C. Dennis Vowles	B. Smith B. Smith	Vowles Howells s	Provide Hayes Vowles LM	Eddyslaw Hall	Verrinder Swarbrick	Vowles Vowles HF	Stead Wilkins	H. Ball C. Wright	Miss Ash Miss Ash Miss Ash	
NEW CROSS Sutton 11-00 Wednesday 6-00 3-00	H. Smith Vowles s	Holloway D. Corbett Howells	Vowles Mrs. Dennis	Hayes Provide	Wheatley Green Vowles	Fisher Vowles s	Howells J. Smith LM	Vowles Miss Holmes Vowles	Leach Leach HF	Hall Stead	Vowles Miss Clayton	West West Vowles	Dibben H. Clarke	
FOREST SIDE Sutton 2-30 Tuesday 6-00 7-00	Marsh Marsh Howells	Howells Howells s	Butler Butler	Overfield Overfield Vowles	Vowles Provide	Vowles Mrs. Dennis Vowles LM	B. Smith B. Smith	C. Wright C. Wright Vowles	Seaton Seaton	Meadows Meadows Vowles	Vowles Vowles HF	Wheatley Wheatley Vowles	Dibben H. Clarke	
NEWTON 2-45 Thursday 6-00 7-30	Sutcliffe Sutcliffe	Provide Chadburn Howells v	Howells Howells s	Henstock Henstock	J. Smith J. Smith	Butler Butler	Howells Gtra Vowles LM	Vowles Vowles s	Stead Stead Vowles v	Burton Burton HF	Wheatley Wheatley	Marsh Marsh Vowles	Osley Osley	
ALBERT STREET Sutton Hill 10-45 Tuesday 6-00 6-30	Fisher Hardy	Vowles B. Smith Vowles s	Provide Holloway	J. Smith C. Wright	Hayes Vowles Howells s	Howells Henstock	J. Melanaphy J. Melanaphy Vowles LM	F. Ball H. Ball	Marsh Freeman	Miss Gray H. Clarke	Provide Provide HF	Vowles Vowles s	H. Smith Miss Clayton Vowles	
BOURNE DIAMOND AV. Tuesday 10-45 6-00 2-30	Vowles Howells s	W. Corbett Hayes	Provide Green	Howells Marsh Howells LM	Vowles Provide	Melanaphy Melanaphy Vowles	Hardy Howells s	Leach Leach s	Swarbrick F. Ball	Leach Leach HF	Verrinder Mrs. Bantall	Leach Dibben	Chapman H. Smith Vowles	
HUNGARGATE 2-30 Wednesday 6-00 3-00	Wheatley Wheatley	Collins Collins	Vowles Vowles s	Howells Howells	Provide Provide	Marsh Marsh	Holloway Chadburn Vowles	H. Clarke H. Clarke	Miss Clayton Miss Clayton	Mrs. Webster Mrs. Webster Leach	Provide Provide HF	W. Corbett W. Corbett	Leach Leach	
NEWSTEAD 11-00 Wednesday 6-00 6-45	Overfield Overfield Howells	Howells Seaton	Provide Hayes Howells v	Wheatley Collins	Howells Howells s	Holloway Holloway	Vowles W. Corbett	R. Ball R. Ball	Henstock R. Ball s	C. Dennis Miss Holmes	Leach Leach HF	Willetts Provide Leach	Fisher C. Wright	
ANNESLEY & NEWSTEAD 2-30 Tuesday 6-00 7-00	Walker Walker	R. Ball R. Ball	Miss Holmes Miss Porter	Verrinder Miss Porter	Standen H. Clarke	Quinton Quinton	H. Ball H. Ball	Leach Fisher	Verrinder Verrinder s	Holloway Holloway Leach	Provide Provide	Goodland Goodland HF	Miss Holmes Mrs. Chadburn Leach	
HUTHWAITE Sutton Road 10-45 Monday 6-00 7-30	R. Ball Eddyslaw	H. Clarke Newble	Mrs. Webster Worthington	Eddyslaw Verrinder s	Quinton Lee	Hall Gough	Verrinder Miss Holmes	Melanaphy J. Smith Verrinder	Collins Dibben s	Dibben Worthington Verrinder	C.E. Wright C.E. Wright HF	Verrinder Verrinder s	Verrinder Verrinder	
HUTHWAITE New Fall Street 2-30 Monday 6-00 6-15	Green	Marsh Howells	Provide	Vowles Vowles s	D. Corbett Vowles LM	C. Wright	Mrs. Dennis	C. Dennis Vowles	Eddyslaw	Overfield Overfield HF	Hayes Verrinder	R. Ball	Dibben s	
KIRKBY The Hill 10-45 Tuesday 6-00 7-30	Jones Verrinder s	Fletcher Miss Porter	H. Clarke Oakley	Verrinder Hall	Miss Holmes L. Gough	H. Ball D. Johnson	Eddyslaw Verrinder s	Verrinder Verrinder CA	Chadburn Porter w	Verrinder Mrs. Dennis Verrinder	Chapman Overfield	Jarvis Jarvis HF	J. Smith Verrinder	
KIRKBY The Park 2-15 Tuesday 6-00 6-00	Henstock Henstock	Wheatley Wheatley	Provide Provide	Holloway B.M. B. Howells	Howells Overfield	Collins Collins	Vowles Vowles s	Miss Gray Miss Gray Verrinder	Melanaphy Melanaphy	Jensen Jensen	Seaton Seaton HF	Worthington Worthington Verrinder	Mrs. Webster Mrs. Webster	
ANNESLEY WOODHOUSE Forest Road 2-30 Thursday 6-00 7-00	Verrinder H. Ball	Chapman Chapman	Walker Walker	H. Ball H. Ball	Verrinder Verrinder s	Wright F. Ball	H. Clarke H. Clarke	J. Smith J. Smith	Vowles Vowles HF	C. Wright C. Wright	Marsh Marsh Verrinder	Leach Melanaphy	Gettill Gettill CA	
ANNESLEY WOODHOUSE Sherwood Street 2-30 Tuesday 6-00 7-00	Collins Howells	Melanaphy	Provide	Howells Howells s	Hardy	Wheatley	Marsh	Jensen	Miss Holmes Leach	Wilkins	Rowland HF	Leach	Miss Gray Verrinder	

Part of the Ashfield Circuit plan for 1959 covering the period July to October. It shows the churches in the circuit at that time, including showing that Bourne and Diamond Avenue were operating as one church at that time. It also shows the Ministers and Local Preachers that were taking particular services. I am grateful to Barrie Smith for permission to include this graphic which comes from his book "A Brief Record of the Ashfield Circuit (22/13) 1959-2010"

Z. Annual Trustees Meeting G.C. General Chapel Fund P. Parade Supply S. Sacrament
 M.H. Men's Effort O.M. Overseas Missions S.A. School Anniversary C. Covenant Service
 C.H. Choir Effort H.M. Home Missions S.M. Society Meeting C.E. Christian Endeavour
 L.M. Leader's Meeting C.A. Chapel Anniversary W.O. Women's Anniversary W.G. Wesley Guild



Biography of W E Sangster by Andrew Cheatle

People often came to the Parkins house for dinner and/or tea on a Sunday. Mum and dad often went there after they were married and had moved out. Other people who came included Ken and Pearl Hodges; Bert and Doris (when they were visiting from Hastings); Bert, Edie, Marilyn and Jennifer (when visiting from Drifffield); Eva (when visiting from Grantham); Auntie Bertha and Uncle Frank; Jim and Renie; and Joan and Graham Hardy. On occasions, the Parkins would host a visiting speaker. For example, in March 1956, grandad noted that a local preacher came for the day – Mr Maule from Orston near Bingham.⁹⁹ Mum noted that it was part of LPMA¹⁰⁰ Sunday. Similarly, in June 1958, grandad noted that a local preacher, Mr K March, came for dinner. In January 1957, mum noted that Barbara and Ron Rowe came back to theirs after chapel and, in April 1957, John Overfield did the same. Sometimes, particularly if they were going somewhere else for chapel, mum, dad and grandma would go to someone else's for tea on a Sunday. For example, they went to Auntie Bertha's in November 1955 when they were going to hear the Messiah at the Baptist church in Mansfield¹⁰⁰ and again, in December 1956, when they went to hear Rev William Edwin Sangster¹⁰¹ speak at Bridge Street.¹⁰⁰ In April 1957, mum noted going to John Overfield's after chapel.

It was mum and dad's practice to attend chapel when on holiday. So, in 1955, when on holiday in Cornwall, they went to chapel in Bolingey¹⁰² and, when they were on a chapel weekend in Blackpool, they went to the Central Methodist Church¹⁰³ there. In November 1955, while they were in Hastings, for Peter Cirket's wedding, mum noted attending an armistice service there. In June 1956, while on honeymoon in Torquay, they attended chapel, presumably in Torquay itself. In January 1957, when mum was visiting Dorothy, she not only went to chapel with her but also went to a youth club party at Carlton. That same month, when she visited dad in Norwich, they attended chapel at Central Hall in Yarmouth.¹⁰³ Presumably, they chose to go there as they had been there before when on holiday in a previous year. In July 1957, when they were in Guernsey, mum and dad attended the Ebenezer Methodist chapel.¹⁰² In June 1959, when they visited Dorothy and Alf Taylor, mum went to chapel with Dorothy in the afternoon and dad went with Alf in the evening.

Mum noted that the Scripture exams took place in March between 1955 and 1960. However, it was not clear what role she had, if any, in these. I don't think she was taking them any longer but she might have been involved in some way. In September 1957, mum went into Nottingham for the Scripture prizes.

⁹⁹ He came again in September 1956 but only came for tea. He should have come for dinner also but mum, dad and grandma went to Nottingham Eye Infirmary about mum's eye so he went to Mrs Deakin instead.

¹⁰⁰ See [Chapter 54](#).

¹⁰¹ Well-known Methodist preacher and speaker. He was [born](#) in 1900 and [died](#) in 1959. Edith Searson, in her book(let) "*I Remember*" recalls going to hear Dr Sangster speak at a circuit rally in 1950. It could be that there were two separate visits but that would mean that neither grandad nor mum noted the earlier visit. The other explanation is perhaps some mis-remembering of dates.

¹⁰² See [Chapter 66](#).

¹⁰³ See [Chapter 52](#).

The chapel had a regular annual calendar for certain events, many of which related to the Sunday School. Sunday School Christmas parties were held either at the end of the year or very early in January the following year.¹⁰⁴ Sunday School prizegivings usually took place in early January each year. Mum was sometimes involved before these in obtaining prizes and sticking labels in. The earliest that grandma went to get prizes for prizegiving was in October in 1959. Mum noted when Mothering Sunday was in 1959 but this did not seem to merit major activities at chapel. Similarly with Easter, but the week before Easter in 1959, mum noted that there was an Easter Egg Festival at chapel.

Sunday School anniversaries remained an annual highlight, perhaps the annual highlight.¹⁰⁵ The main anniversary was held over two weekends in April/May with the primary anniversary taking place later, in June. There were intense and prolonged preparations. In 1956, mum noted that Arthur Cross provided the music for the anniversary in January and, in the same month, in 1959, he brought printing for the anniversary. Practices started from February. There were various speakers at the anniversaries over this period including Rev B White¹⁰⁶, Jim, Rev Vowles¹⁰⁷, Mrs Else¹⁰⁸ and Rev Verrinder.¹⁰⁹ Mum often played the piano during these events, sometimes sharing this responsibility with Joy Munns. Anniversaries were a key fundraising event with both mum and grandad noting how much money was raised. Over this period, around £100 was raised by each annual anniversary. The anniversaries also provided opportunity for family members to attend. Grandad sometimes did so. Other family members who came to the anniversaries included Uncle Frank, Auntie Bertha, Jim, Renie, Eva, Olive, Alf and Carole. Among mum's papers was a hymn sheet for the anniversary in 1959.

<p align="center">BOURNE METHODIST CHURCH KIRKBY-IN-ASHFIELD</p> <hr/> <p align="center">96th SUNDAY SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY</p> <hr/> <p>Sunday, 26th April, 1959.</p> <p>Morning at 10-45 Preacher : Evening at 6-0 Rev. E. B. WRIGHT, of Buxton.</p> <p>Special Children's Service at 2-30 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>Sunday, 3rd May.</p> <p>Morning at 10-45 Preacher : Evening at 6-0 Mr. B. SEARSON, Kirkby-in-Ashfield.</p> <p>Special Children's Service at 2-30 p.m.</p> <hr/> <p>Organist—Miss Hazel Munns. Pianists—Mrs. W. Howells and Miss P. Fownes. Conductor—Arthur B. Cross. Recitations directed by Mrs. R. Ollerenshaw. Collections for Sunday School Funds.</p>
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Hymn sheet for 1959 Bourne Sunday School Anniversary

On the Saturday before the anniversary started, mum and grandma went to chapel to put flowers in. On the first Sunday of the anniversary, the speaker was Rev Ewart Wright.¹¹⁰ Grandad attended in the afternoon. Mum attended three times and dad twice. Marion Slater took Tricia for a walk in the afternoon and, in the evening, grandma took Tricia to chapel. She went to sleep. On the second Sunday of the anniversary, mum noted that the preacher was Ben Searson and that he was good at night. Mum noted that Kath, Lynne, Anne and Mrs Kemp all came to chapel at night.

¹⁰⁴ In 1955, the Christmas parties for junior and intermediate Sunday School (for 1954) were held on New Year's Day. In 1956, the senior Sunday School party was held on 2 January with other parties on the 5th and 7th. In 1957, junior and intermediate Sunday School parties were held between Christmas and New Year. In both 1957 and 1958, the senior party was held on New Year's Eve but, in 1958, the other Sunday School parties were held very early, in November. Mum did the catering for the senior party in 1958. In 1959, all the Sunday School parties were held on 12 December. A combined primary and junior party was held from 3.30pm to 6pm and a combined inters and senior party was held from 7pm to 9.30pm. Dad and Ron Rowe were masters of ceremony for these. Grandma helped out by bringing Tricia home and putting her to bed.

¹⁰⁵ Although that honour perhaps fell to the Whit procession.

¹⁰⁶ See [Chapter 54](#).

¹⁰⁷ Who was one of the ministers in the circuit during this period – see [Chapter 54](#).

¹⁰⁸ From Riddings. She spoke at the anniversary in May 1957.

¹⁰⁹ I think this was Rev Wilfred John Verrinder. He spoke at the primary anniversary in 1959 and also in 1960.

¹¹⁰ See footnote 8.



Top – Bourne Sunday School Anniversary April/May 1959 – the person holding the baton is Arthur Cross. Dad and mum are circled in red.
Above – Walking round 1955

Another highlight was the annual Whit procession or “walking round”. In both 1956 and 1957, granddad watched the procession from home. In May 1958, mum did not participate in the Whit parade as it was only ten days after Tricia had been born. Jim went. Mum noted that she watched though. In 1959, mum and grandma joined in the procession and Tricia went part of the way in her pushchair.



Top – Whit parade 1957 – mum in photo to right

Above – Whit parade 1958 – these photos were taken by mum from the window of 41 Diamond Avenue and show the corner of Diamond Avenue and Crocus Street

Harvest Festival was another major event that took place in September.¹¹¹ Gifts were brought and the chapel decorated prior to Sunday services. On the Monday, there was often a social event and harvest supper, of something like pie, peas and potatoes, with gifts being later distributed. In both 1955 and 1956, mum, dad, Pearl and Ken Hodges, and grandma took fruit etc. to Mansfield General Hospital.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Or early October. It is shown as “HF” on the Ashfield circuit plan for 1959 and took place over four weeks in the circuit between 13 September and 4 October. Most churches had harvest festival on either 27 or 20 September (9 and 6 respectively) while two churches had it on 13 September and two on 4 October.

¹¹² See [Chapter 50](#).

In 1957, Harvest Festival fell on mum's birthday. The day before, mum went to decorate the church¹¹³ ready for harvest. That year, the gifts were donated to "*the sick and aged*" and this was done by mum and dad, Ron Rowe, John Overfield, Hazel Munns and Rev Howells.

In some years, Bourne held a bazaar in November.¹¹⁴ In 1955, as early as January, Rainbow Follies started selling sweets and chocolate to raise funds for the bazaar. However, mum and dad missed the bazaar that year as they were away at Peter Cirket's wedding. In 1957, mum attended several planning meetings for the bazaar with the first in April. Mum decorated and ran the Sunday School stand which raised more than £25. Overall, the bazaar raised more than £250. Also, in November, there were sometimes missionary events around Missionary Sunday. Different events included missionary teas and jumble sales.

Of course, there were special events around Christmas including carol services and carol singing. In 1955, the senior Sunday School gave a play in the service a week before Christmas. That day, there was a carol service in the afternoon and children brought gifts for the National Children's Home and Orphanage (NCHO).¹¹⁵ Three days after the service, mum, grandma and Hazel Munns took those gifts to the National Children's Home in Nottingham.¹¹⁶ On New Year's Eve, there was usually a watchnight service. Before that, in 1957 and 1958, the senior Sunday School had a party. Instead of this, in 1959, there was a family party which mum was quite involved in organising. She did the catering with a Mrs Robinson.¹¹⁷



Springfield Children's Home Nottingham

As well as involvement in Bourne, mum also had involvement in other Methodist chapels. She and others from Bourne supported the Sunday School anniversary at Newstead¹¹⁸ which happened shortly after their own. Mum and dad also sometimes attended other anniversaries including Kirkby Park¹¹⁹ in June and Diamond Avenue¹²⁰ in July. Mum, dad and grandma also attended quarter day meetings which were held at various chapels including Bourne, New Cross¹¹⁸, Newstead¹¹⁸, Forest Side¹¹⁸ and Huthwaite.¹¹⁸ In September 1958, the first united quarterly meeting was held at Outram Street¹²¹ in Sutton in Ashfield.

¹¹³ I cannot be certain but I think this is the first time mum described Bourne as church and not as chapel.

¹¹⁴ It could have been held all years with mum only noting it in some. Edith Searson described her experiences of bazaars in the later 1950s in her book(let) "*I Remember*" (pp57-58).

¹¹⁵ See [Chapter 54](#).

¹¹⁶ This operated [two properties](#), Springfield, a hostel branch, opened in 1936, and Southbank, which opened in 1947. Springfield is [now](#) private accommodation and Southbank housed a family support agency although, in August 2021, there was a [notice outside](#) saying it had been acquired for development.

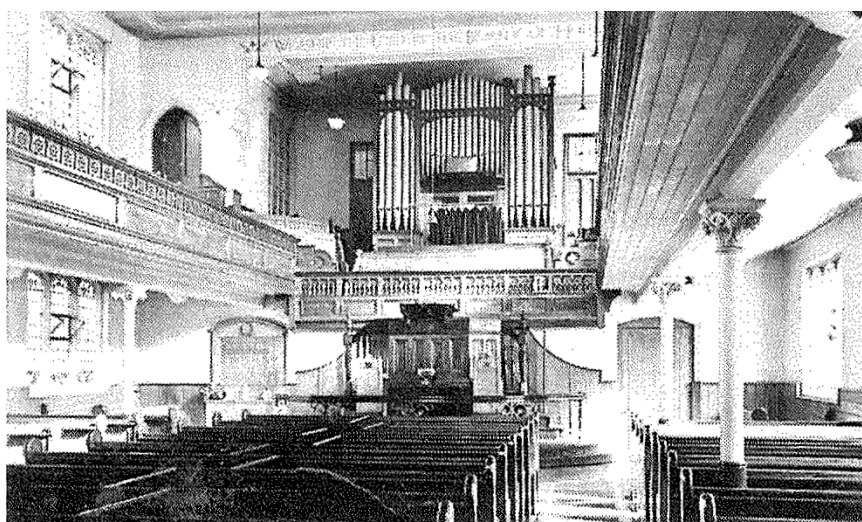
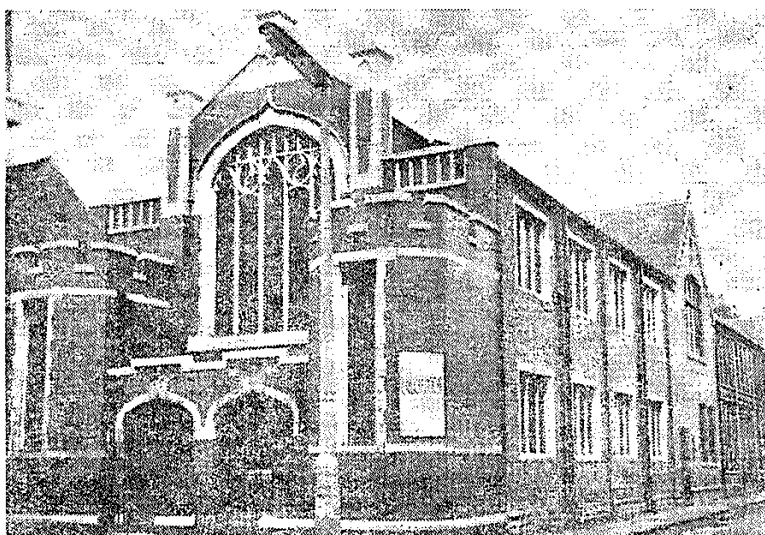
¹¹⁷ I am not entirely sure who this is. I thought it might be Minnie and Albert's mother, Mary Robinson, but she died in Mansfield in 1954. It could have been the wife of the minister Peter Robinson but I think he was at Bourne from 1950 to 1952 so was not here at this time. There were other Robinsons, e.g. the local dentist and someone called Freda Robinson. Perhaps she was one of those.

¹¹⁸ See [Chapter 54](#).

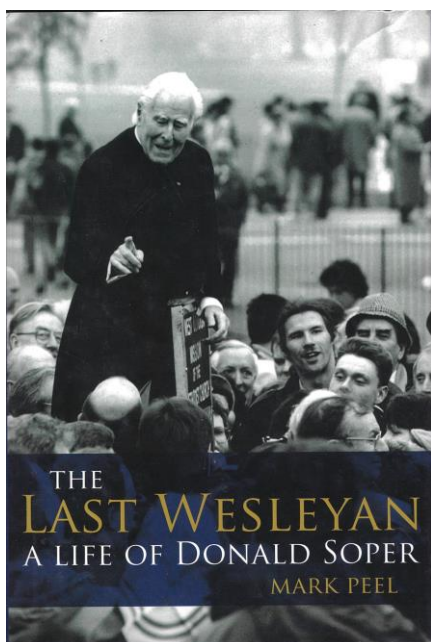
¹¹⁹ See [Chapter 17](#).

¹²⁰ See footnote 77.

¹²¹ This was a Wesleyan chapel and it opened in [1883](#). It closed in [1975](#) to make way for a [shopping centre](#). It appears that it was on the corner of Welbeck Street and, based on [StreetView](#), it looks like there are new buildings there now. There was a picture of the exterior of the chapel on the Ashfield Community Pages [website](#) but when I last checked this was not accessible. There was also an Anglican church on Outram Street but this closed in 2003 and was [merged](#) with New Cross Methodist Church to form New Cross Community Church.



Images of Outram Street Methodist Church showing the outside before (top) and after (middle right) alterations. Above shows the interior. These photos are from Barrie Smith's book "A Brief Record of the Ashfield Circuit (22/13) 1959-2010" and are used with his permission.



Biography of Donald Soper by Mark Peel published in 2008

In October 1955, mum, grandma and John Smith went to a circuit rally at Brook Street¹²² to hear Kenneth Waights speak. Mum rated it “VG”. In November 1955, mum, dad, Margaret Varnam and Ken Roome went to Stanton Hill¹²² for something mum called “Mission Band”. In November 1956, mum went one Wednesday night to see three one act plays at Brook Street.¹²² She rated it “VG”. In February 1957, grandad noted that grandma and mum went to Bridge Street¹²² in Mansfield to hear the President of the Methodist conference.¹²³ In April 1958, mum went to a service at Hill Chapel¹²² and dad and grandma went to a Bible Quiz at New Cross.¹²² It seems to have been a competition among chapels which Newton¹²⁴ won. In November 1958, mum, grandma, grandad and Tricia went to Outram Street Methodist¹²⁵ in Sutton to hear [Rev Donald Soper](#) speak. Grandad noted that, although it was held at Outram Street, it was a Sutton and Kirkby circuit engagement.¹²⁶ In February 1959, grandma and Mrs Howells went to Hill Methodist¹²² ladies’ day of prayer. In April, mum went to a Bible Quiz at Sutton.¹²⁷ A few days later, there was a circuit rally at which Norman Smith, the then [President of the Conference](#) spoke. Mum went to the service in the

afternoon as Edna Bust had Tricia. Dad went at night. Grandma took Auntie Bertha. Mum noted that it was “very good”. However, there was a tea between the services and mum took Tricia. Apparently, Norman Smith said to Tricia “*Oh what a poor baby, doesn’t she look hungry*”. I can only imagine what mum made of that! In May, grandma spoke at Brook Street ladies’ meeting. Tricia and mum went with her and played in a nearby park. At the end of September 1959, mum noted going to a service at Kirklands at night. Mum noted going there again in November. Also, in November, mum went to “Merry Market” at Edna Bust’s chapel in Heanor.¹²⁸

Grandma also attended missionary meetings at various Methodist chapels including Annesley Woodhouse¹²², Sutton¹²⁷, Newstead¹²² and Forest Side.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** On at least some occasions, other people went with her, including mum, Tricia, Edna Bust and Mrs Deakin. In May 1959, mum went to a missionary meeting in Kirkby Park.¹²⁹ She played the organ for that meeting. In October, mum noted going to a missionary meeting and not needing to take Tricia out at all. In

¹²² See [Chapter 54](#).

¹²³ Although he is not named, I [think](#) this might have been Harold Roberts.

¹²⁴ See footnote 95.

¹²⁵ See footnote 121.

¹²⁶ I was not entirely sure of the point grandad was making here. He could have been saying that it was not an individual church event but for the wider circuit. However, in his book “*A Brief Record of the Ashfield Circuit (22/13) 1959-2010*”, Barrie Smith points out that it was a long time after the Methodist Union of 1932 that any changes were made to circuits in the Kirkby area. This meant that the four original circuits continued to operate as before. These were (1) the Mansfield Bridge Street (formerly Wesleyan) circuit, (2) the Mansfield West and (3) Ripley (formerly United Methodist) circuits and (4) the Sutton and Kirkby (formerly Primitive Methodist) circuit. This meant that circuits overlapped and these were organised not on a geographical basis but on former denominational affiliation. Making changes was difficult and a number of schemes were put forward, discussed and rejected. It was only in 1959, 27 years after Methodist Union, that a new Ashfield circuit was formed. So, the point grandad was making, I think, was that this event was a Sutton and Kirkby circuit event even though it was held in a church not in that circuit.

¹²⁷ Presumably Brook Street – see [Chapter 54](#).

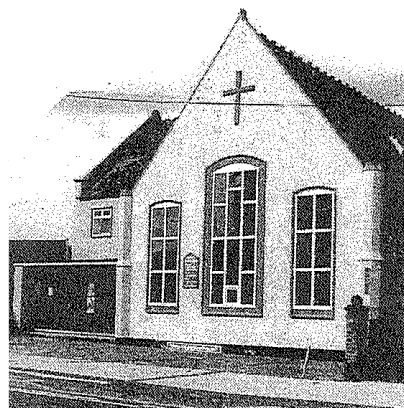
¹²⁸ I have found mention of at least [four Methodist chapels](#) in Heanor. There was a Free Methodist chapel in Mount Street, a Methodist chapel in Tagg Hill, a Primitive Methodist chapel in Park Street and a Wesleyan chapel. The [Mount Street chapel](#) was founded in 1890 but closed in 1974. It has been demolished and replaced with a car park. The [Tagg Hill chapel](#) was the earliest Primitive Methodist chapel in Heanor dating from 1849. The [Park Street chapel](#) operated from at least 1929 to 1968. In fact, it dates back to [1887](#) and it seems it did close in [1968](#). It was demolished and replaced with a(nother) car park. There is currently a Methodist Church in Market Street. Although this looks to be a modern building, it dates from 1839 but the front has been masked with a newer building dating from 1974. It appears to have originally been the [Wesleyan chapel](#). It seems at least three of these chapels were still operating in 1959 so I don’t know which one Edna Bust attended.

¹²⁹ See [Chapter 17](#).

December, she attended a missionary meeting at Brook Street¹³⁰ in the afternoon and, in the evening, went to a missionary meeting at Trinity which included a film show.

In September 1957, a group from Bourne went to look round Diamond Avenue¹³¹ church. I am not entirely sure of the reason. It could have been part of discussions about a planned merger. It does not seem that they were visiting to see refurbishment work that had been done as that was [not done until 1959](#) or later. Whatever the reason, those who went were mum, dad, grandma, Ron Rowe, John Overfield, Joan Hardy (nee Storer) and Rev Howells. It does seem likely that the visit to Diamond Avenue church was part of the preparation for a possible merger. Less than two weeks later, a meeting was held to discuss amalgamating. According to grandad, grandma went to a meeting to discuss forming a Methodist circuit for Kirkby, Sutton etc. But, mum noted that she attended the meeting and that it was a Society meeting to discuss (chapel) amalgamation. She noted that they decided to amalgamate with Diamond Avenue and, if necessary, close Bourne. Mum does not explain why this decision was taken.¹³²

In February 1959, a joint service was held at Bourne with Diamond Avenue. In April, mum noted that dad had had a look at plans for altering Diamond Avenue church and, in July, mum attended a Sunday School committee meeting to discuss amalgamation.¹³³ Later that month, there was a joint Sunday School teachers' meeting at Diamond Avenue. In August, there was a combined Sunday School activity in the afternoon at Bourne. That same month, the Howells, Mrs Hartley and Ben Searson went to grandma and grandad's to write invitations for a united family service that was held at the end of August. In September 1959, all those attending Sunday School were given a hymn book to commemorate the amalgamation of the two Sunday Schools. In October, grandad first referred to the church as "*Trinity*" and noted that Arthur Lofthouse preached there morning and evening.



Left – Diamond Avenue Methodist Church in 1959 Right – Trinity as it looked from 1962 to 2000. This photo is reproduced with permission from Barrie Smith's book "*A Brief Record of the Ashfield Circuit (22/13) 1959-2010*". There is also a photo from circa 1980 in the book "*Kirkby & District: A Second Selection*" by Frank Ashley, Sylvia Sinfield and Gerald Lee (p110).

¹³⁰ See Chapter 54.

¹³¹ See footnote 77.

¹³² According to Bill Clay-Dove's book "*Kirkby-in-Ashfield: An Interesting Township*", the first step was to unify circuits and that took until 1959 (see footnote 126). Once that was agreed and there was an Ashfield circuit, the union of Bourne and the Diamond Avenue chapel was envisaged (p60). Perhaps the clearest and most detailed account is in Barrie Smith's book "*A Brief Record of the Ashfield Circuit (22/13) 1959-2010*". He noted that it was not straightforward merging three circuits – Mansfield Bridge Street which had been Wesleyan, Ripley, which had been United Methodist and Sutton and Kirkby, which had been Primitive Methodist.

¹³³ According to a newspaper article at the time, which is included later in this chapter, the amalgamation of the two Sunday Schools created the biggest headache.



Top – postcard view of Diamond Avenue with Wesleyan chapel on left. The writer says that the “x” marks where they are going to school. This photograph is also included in the book “Kirkby & District from Old Photographs” by Frank Ashley, Sylvia Sinfield and Gerald Lee, p43.

Following the formation of the unified Ashfield circuit and the decision to merge Bourne and Diamond Avenue chapels, the two chapels operated as one unified society under the Trinity name. In practice, from 1959 to 1961, meetings were held at Bourne while the Diamond Avenue chapel was renovated.¹³⁴ Services moved from Bourne back to Diamond Avenue in February 1961 although, for a period, the Sunday School hall had to be used while the renovations were completed. An opening ceremony was held on 26 May 1962¹³⁵ and there was a newspaper cutting and the order of service among mum's papers.



Order of service for opening and dedication of Trinity Methodist Church in Kirkby in May 1962

From the order of service, it is apparent that the opening and dedication service was held on a Saturday afternoon with a tea and then an evening rally. The opening was carried out by Mrs Bower of Mansfield with the service of dedication conducted by Rev Swarbrick who was Chairman of Nottingham and Derby District at the time. The preacher was Herbert Simpson. Mrs Richard Ward (formerly Hazel Munns) was the organist and the choirmaster was Arthur Cross. It is clear from the notices at the end that Derrick Leach was still the Minister.

By this time, we were living in Norwich and mum's diary does not mention this service at all. However, grandad notes the basic facts as captured in the order of service and that grandma was there all day. Grandad also noted that grandma, Jim, Renie and Vera went to the evening service the next day. The newspaper article overleaf mentioned that that service was packed with additional chairs having to be placed in the aisles. Presumably, grandma kept the order of service and either gave it to mum or it passed to mum when grandma died.

The newspaper article in the Notts Free Press contrasts the opening with the pomp and ceremony of the opening of Coventry Cathedral¹³⁶, which had taken place

the previous day. The article noted some of the structural changes including installation of modern windows and a vestibule entrance, covering of the front of the church with grey-green cement and removal of the front wall. There were significant changes inside including bringing in the old pulpit from Bourne¹³⁶ and the organ from Diamond Avenue. Apparently, the driving force behind the changes was the minister, Derrick Leach¹³⁷. The article also notes that dignitaries and leaders from other churches attended, including the Chairman and Clerk of Kirkby Council and Pastor Pinchbeck, who had recorded mum's wedding for grandad so he could hear it.

¹³⁴ I found some of the accounts of this period a little difficult to follow and potentially contradictory. What is summarised here is essentially the description given in Bill Clay-Dove's book *"Kirkby-in-Ashfield: An Interesting Township"*. According to grandad, the last service at Bourne took place on 29 January 1961. However, according to Edith Searson (p58 and p62), Bourne closed in September 1959. It seems that they are talking about slightly different things. She appears to be referring to when Bourne merged with the Diamond Avenue chapel to form Trinity, and ceased to exist as a separate entity, rather than the last time the building was used for services which is what grandad is referring to. Interestingly, she transferred to *"the Park church"* rather than joining Trinity. It was only when Kirkby Park too closed in 1975 that she joined Trinity. According to Barry Smith's book *"A Brief Record of the Ashfield Circuit (22/13) 1959-2010"*, Bourne and Diamond Avenue churches amalgamated to form Trinity in 1960 but the Ashfield circuit plan in the same book shows Bourne and Diamond Avenue churches together from 1959. I thought he might be referring to when they became known as Trinity but grandad used that name as early as October 1959.

¹³⁵ A date not mentioned on the Trinity website at all.

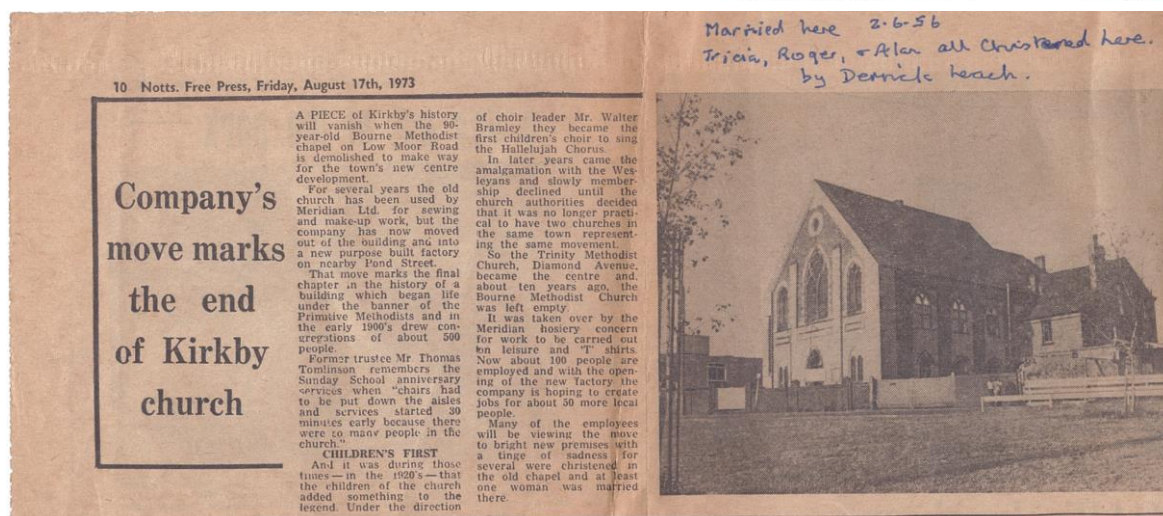
¹³⁶ See [Chapter 79](#).

¹³⁷ And, according to Bill Clay-Dove, Mr J Hibbert.

Mum also had, among her papers, other newspaper cuttings from the Notts Free Press including one from August 1973. This was documenting the final demolition of Bourne chapel. This article noted that the church closed around ten years previously¹³⁸ and had been used since then by a firm called Meridian¹³⁹ for sewing and make-up work.¹⁴⁰ The article is annotated by mum to say that Tricia, Alan and I were all christened by Derrick Leach there.¹⁴¹

Right – news cutting from Notts Free Press dated 1 June 1962 concerning Kirkby's "new" Trinity Church. The photograph shows (left to right) Rev Herbert Simpson, Rev JV Dibben (circuit minister), Rev J W Swarbrick, Mrs Bower and Rev Derrick Leach.

Below - news cutting from Notts Free Press dated 17 August 1973 documenting the final demolition of Bourne chapel.



The 1973 article gives some idea as to why the merger took place and why Bourne closed. Essentially, numbers declined both before and after the merger. While the numbers present in the 1950s seem

¹³⁸ See footnote 134

¹³⁹ This [firm](#) was established by James Blount Lewis in Nottingham in 1815 but it only adopted the name Meridian in 1951 when it became a public company. It was known for its underwear and knitwear and operated from sites in Nottingham, Clowne, Calverton, Ilkeston and Kirkby. In 1963, Courtaulds acquired a stake in Meridian and gradually took it over. There are some [memories and recollections](#) of Meridian on the Kirkby Living Memory Facebook Group.

¹⁴⁰ Also, according to grandad, Meridian paid the church £5,750 for the building.

¹⁴¹ This is doubtful on a number of counts. First, while Tricia was christened at Bourne, this was in August 1958, a year before Derrick and Mary came to Kirkby. She was christened by the previous minister Rev Howells. Second, Alan was only christened on 5 August 1962 which is well over a year after grandad noted the last service at Bourne. While it is possible that the ceremony was conducted at Bourne, it seems more likely that it was in the Diamond Avenue chapel.

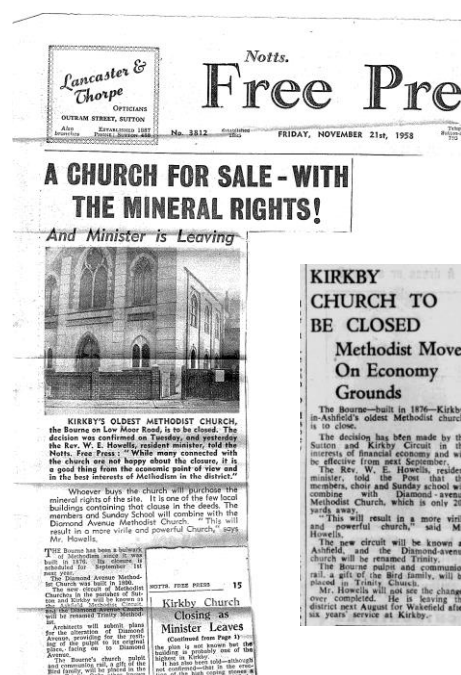
large by today's standards, they were much lower than the hundreds who attended in the early part of the 20th century.

However, there was also an earlier cutting among mum's papers, from November 1958. This emphasised that the church and its mineral rights were for sale. It also noted that Bourne was Kirkby's oldest Methodist church, having been built in 1876¹⁴², and that Rev Howells was still the Minister but he was leaving. Rev Howells justified the decision "*from the economic point of view and in the best interests of Methodism in the district*". He also commented that the merger with the Diamond Avenue church would result in a "*more virile and powerful church*". In that article, the merger of the two Sunday Schools was described as the "*greatest headache*" facing the amalgamation of the two churches.

Mum also had some engagement with chapels and churches of other denominations. The most frequent of these was with the Baptist chapel in Mansfield¹⁴³ which Jim and Renie were attending at this time. Mum visited to go to their Sunday School anniversary, their Harvest Festival and also attended for other special events, e.g. performance of parts of the Messiah in 1955, and to hear Jim preach. Grandma and Auntie Bertha also sometimes visited the Baptist chapel with Jim and Renie. Very occasionally, mum went to one of the Anglican churches in Kirkby. In February 1957, mum went to St Wilfrid's¹⁴⁴ for her grandfather's funeral. She went with Cyril and Eva but, as far as I know, grandad did not go. In July 1958, grandma helped Mrs Deakin cater for a wedding at St Wilfrid's. At the end of September 1959, mum, grandma and Tricia went to the [Church of Christ, Mutton Hill](#).¹⁴⁵ According to grandad, grandma spoke and, according to mum, grandma was chairlady. Grandma took Tricia home on the bus as apparently, according to grandad, Tricia wanted a ride on the bus!

Sometimes, mum and/or grandma went to Christian events at the Festival Hall. In February 1958, mum attended a "*do*" for National Children's Home and Orphanage (NCHO) at Festival Hall. She considered it "*v good*". In November 1958, grandma attended a remembrance service at the Festival Hall. In December 1959, mum was involved in presenting a Christmas tableau at Festival Hall.

Grandad continued to have some relatively peripheral involvement in chapel. He sometimes helped with practical maintenance and repairs. For example, in January 1955, he and grandma went to repair a desk. In July 1959, he and grandma went to Bains' for the framed wall map for Bourne.¹⁴⁶ He



News cuttings from November 1958 explaining that Bourne chapel was for sale from:

Left – Notts Free Press

Right – Nottingham Evening Post from [Kirkby Living Memory Facebook Group](#)

¹⁴² It also states that the "*new*" Sunday School building was added in 1907. This may explain why photos of the side/back of the chapel that were among mum's photos have a building at the back which is labelled Centenary 1907 Schools. The centenary referred to appears to be the founding of the Primitive Methodist Church in 1807.

¹⁴³ See [Chapter 54](#).

¹⁴⁴ See [Chapter 62](#).

¹⁴⁵ I don't know much about this chapel. I have found [reference](#) to a Christian meeting house on Shoulder-of-Mutton Hill, erected in 1894. There is also a [discussion thread and photo](#) on the Kirkby Living Memory Facebook Group. It appears that it was on the corner with Nuncargate Road but it is [not there now](#). It is also mentioned in the book "*Kirkby & District: A Second Selection*" by Frank Ashley, Sylvia Sinfield and Gerald Lee (p101).

¹⁴⁶ I don't know exactly what this is, perhaps a memento of the chapel. Bains were, I believe, a firm of builders – see, for example, [Chapter 70](#).

sometimes attended Sunday School anniversaries. In August 1958, he attended Tricia's christening and, in August 1959, he attended the united family service which was Rev Howells' last service.¹⁴⁷

While I thought that Rev Howells might have been replaced as Minister at Bourne in late 1954, this was not the case and he continued until August 1959.¹⁴⁸ He was a friend to both grandma and grandad but not perhaps as close as the Lofthouses or as the Leaches would become. He did go with grandma and grandad to Cliff College in 1955 and, in August 1958, he christened Tricia. The Howells were replaced by Rev Derrick¹⁴⁹ and Mary Leach who I remember, as a child, as firm family friends.¹⁵⁰ Mum noted that she went to a welcome service for them in September 1959 at Outram Street¹⁵¹ church in Sutton in Ashfield. She also noted that that night they came to visit mum and dad from 9-11pm. The following day, Derrick preached both morning and evening. Grandma went with Cyril in the morning and with Minnie in the evening. The Leaches came round to mum and dad's again after chapel that day. On the Tuesday, the Leaches met the ladies of the church over a cup of tea after Bright Hour. From that point on, the Leaches frequently visited mum and dad, for example, after the Harvest Festival services in September, after the choir effort in October and after going to the Festival Hall in December but they also often visited after other services and on many occasions

Methodist Conference locations

Year	Location	Evidence source
1932	Royal Albert Hall, London	26
1933	London	29
1934	Leicester	30
1935	Bristol	32
1936	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	33
1937	Bradford	31
1938	Hull	25
1939	Liverpool	34
1940	Sheffield	35
1941	Leeds	36
1942	Manchester	37
1943	Birmingham	38
1944	Leeds	39
1945	Nottingham	40
1946	London	41
1947	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	42
1948	Bristol	43
1949	Liverpool	44
1950	Bradford	45
1951	Sheffield	46
1952	Preston	24
1953	Birmingham	47
1954	London	28
1955	Manchester	28
1956	Leeds	1
1957	Nottingham	1
1958	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	1
1959	Bristol	1
1960	Liverpool	1
1961	Bradford	1
1962	Stoke-on-Trent	1
1963	Preston	1
1964	Sheffield	1

¹⁴⁷ According to the 1959 circuit plan, Rev Howells was taking that service but grandad noted that G Cresswell was the speaker.

¹⁴⁸ For a list of Ministers at Bourne, see [Chapter 54](#).

¹⁴⁹ His first services were in September 1959 and he is noted as taking both services at Bourne/Diamond Avenue on 6 September according to the Ashfield circuit plan.

¹⁵⁰ Over the past few years, I have been in touch with their daughter, now Kate Thompson. Sadly, Derrick died in August 2018 from a brain tumour and it then became apparent that Mary was suffering from (vascular) dementia. She went to live in a care home and died in May 2020.

¹⁵¹ See footnote 128.

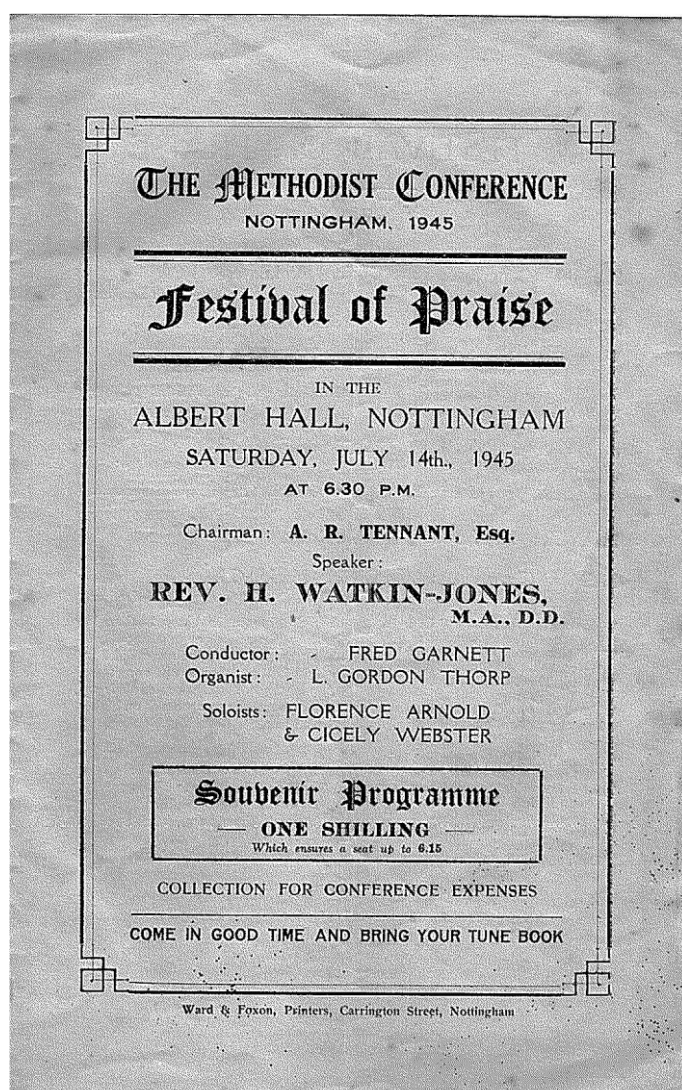
Year	Location	Evidence source
1965	Plymouth	23
1966	Wolverhampton	1
1967	Middlesbrough	1
1968	London	1
1969	Birmingham	1
1970	Manchester	1
1971	Harrogate	1
1972	Nottingham	1
1973	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	1
1974	Bristol	1
1975	Liverpool	1
1976	Preston	1
1977	Hull	1
1978	Bradford	48
1979	London	28
1980	Sheffield	1
1981	Norwich	1
1982	Plymouth	1
1983	Middlesbrough	1
1984	Wolverhampton	1
1985	Birmingham	1
1986	Stoke-on-Trent	1
1987	Portsmouth	1
1988	London	1
1989	Leicester	1
1990	Cardiff	1
1991	Bolton	1
1992	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	1
1993	Derby	21
1994	Leeds	1
1995	Bristol	1
1996	Blackpool	1
1997	London	28
1998	Scarborough	20
1999	Southport	1
2000	Huddersfield	28
2001	Ipswich	19
2002	Wolverhampton	1
2003	Llandudno	18
2004	Loughborough	16
2005	Torquay	17
2006	Edinburgh	16
2007	<i>Details not yet identified</i>	
2008	Scarborough	15
2009	Wolverhampton	14
2010	Portsmouth	13
2011	Southport	12
2012	Plymouth	11
2013	Westminster Central Hall, London	10
2014	Birmingham	9
2015	Southport	8
2016	Westminster Central Hall, London	7
2017	Birmingham	6
2018	Nottingham	5
2019	Birmingham	4
2020	Online (scheduled for Telford)	3 4
2021	Birmingham	2
2022	Telford	27

The Conference meets, usually in late June or early July, and traditionally this was in different parts of the connexion each year, with the representatives being offered hospitality in the homes of members in the host District(s). Latterly, for reasons of practicality and availability, many representatives began to use hotel accommodation. In 2004 the Conference met for the first time fully residentially, at Loughborough University, and in 2006 met for the first time in Scotland. (The PM Conference had met

in Edinburgh in 1895.) Recent practice is to choose a venue with appropriate conference facilities and to use centrally organized accommodation, and circulation around the connexion and links with host Districts have thus been significantly reduced.

In her book(let) *"I Remember"* (p55), Edith Searson recalled that the 1947 Methodist Conference was held in Nottingham. *"In 1947 the Methodist Conference was held at Nottingham. We were privileged to entertain a delegate, the Rev. D¹⁵². Edward Langton, from Nantwich, Cheshire. He had to go to the Albert Hall each day, involving either a bus or train journey. What I remember about Rev. Langton was his great concern about his son who was a prisoner of war in Japan. He told me something of the terrible conditions his son was living under. Shortly after Rev. Langton had returned home after the conference had ended he wrote to tell me that his son had died, as did many prisoners of war in Japan, from lack of food and disease. It must have been difficult for him to attend the conference knowing his son was suffering in this way. My admiration for two heroes."*¹⁵³

The son was called James Willis Langton. Willis was the maiden name of his mother, Helen Mary. He had been born in 1922 and was a gunner with the Royal Artillery. He was [taken prisoner](#) by the Japanese in 1942 and he died in June 1945. He is buried in [Yokohama War Cemetery](#).



*Programme for Festival of Praise
held in the Albert Hall
Nottingham in 1945 at the time
of the Methodist Conference*

¹⁵² I wonder if this should be Dr.

¹⁵³ Given this story, I had some doubts that the conference she was describing was in 1947 as I don't think there were still Allied prisoners in Japan then. I checked and it seems she may have been mistaken about dates and may have been referring to the 1945 conference which was held in Nottingham..