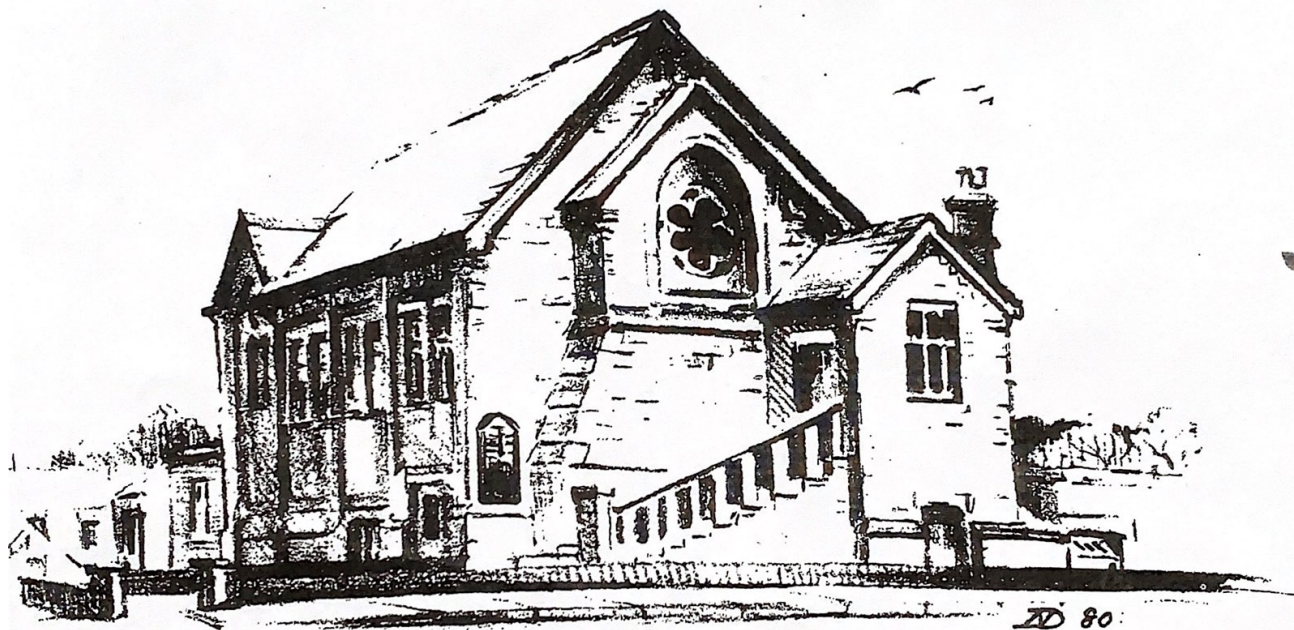


ORMSKIRK METHODIST CIRCUIT



CENTENARY of **HOLMES METHODIST CHURCH** **1880 - 1980**

OUR OWN MINISTER'S MESSAGE A CENTURY OF FAITH

In introducing our centenary brochure, we hope that you will both enjoy our celebrations of 100 years in our present Chapel and that it will be an occasion for Christian reflection and renewal.

I doubt if any other century has seen such changes — the onslaught of war, the decline of the empire, growth of an interdependent world, the emancipation of men and women from hard labour and low wages — we have all experienced this.

Part of being a Christian is to celebrate God's presence in our world, despite our sinfulness and barbarity. When I think of these last 100 years, they are surely a testimony above everything else to God's wonderful patience and steadfast love to us, despite attempts to compromise the impact of the Gospel in a permissive society.

When I think of Holmes Methodist Chapel, I think like many other ministers of ages past, of a special warm welcome that is based on just that — a working belief in the steadfast Love of God. Mind you that is not to say we do fail Jesus from time to time, but that is, of course, the most amazing thing of all, God still loves us, despite our occasional failure to witness and Love Him.

So, as we rightly celebrate 100 years, let us ask ourselves, have we responded to His faithfulness to us throughout our lives. Then this occasion may become more than just a celebration but a time for renewal and recommitment to Jesus Christ.

The sole reason our Chapel was built was to extend God's kingdom in this area that in itself is cause for reflection today as in years past.

May I thank all those who have contributed to this brochure, and especially Mrs. Anne Merrills for producing it. We send special greetings to Ministers, Local Preachers and Friends of Holmes who are unable to be with us through illness or infirmity.

Finally may I thank you personally for your support, your interest and above all your prayers for Holmes Methodist Chapel as we prepare to witness and proclaim Jesus Christ into the next Century.

Love and Peace.

REV. DAVID B. JONES.

THE METHODIST SOCIETY OF HOLMES

This year, as we celebrate the Centenary of the present Chapel building, we must look back with gratitude at the vision of our forefathers. Our present chapel is 100 years old, but the story goes back much earlier than that.

We believe that John Wesley preached in the area in the 1760's although we do not know much about the event. In August 1807 the Methodist Conference stationed two men at North Meols (Southport). In April 1809 a farmer in Holmes invited these two men Rev. J. Hollinsworth and Rev. B. Wood missionaries to preach in his barn. This event was widely circulated and acclaimed when it took place. People had never heard such "gospel truths revealed as good tidings of great joy". These Sunday events continued; people from many surrounding villages gathering in this barn at Holmes. The Holmes Society was founded in 1809, and by 1810 a Chapel had been formed and Communion Services were being held. The people of the Society then were basically a rural community as still is the case today.

In 1810 the Ormskirk and Southport Circuit was formed, Ormskirk becoming the head of this. Holmes was regarded as one of the founder members of the Circuit and had 32 members in 1811. One of the first Circuit Stewards, recorded in Circuit Writings of 1822 was Mr. Wm. Southworth of Holmes. On further reading Mr. Southworth did not appear to do his job very well.

In 1832 the people of Holmes laid the foundation stone for their first structure on the present site. An 1833 document states that they leased the land from Sir Hesketh for £1-1-0 per annum payable on 1st May. Wm. Southworth was one of the signatories for the Society. This lease was for 21 years. In 1833 the Chapel was opened and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was often observed there. Again people were coming from villages around and leaving the established church.

In 1853 the Circuit split up in to two parts and Holmes was part of the Ormskirk Circuit. On many early Circuit Schedules Holmes comes second on the list of Churches. Holmes is shown as the second to be established in a purpose built church.

In 1869 a certain minister was sent by Conference to "sort out the Ormskirk Circuit"; but wheher he had any success as Conference required we do not know. About this time the Sunday Schools were progressing very well. Holmes with 36 members had 82 in the Sunday School with attendances between 40 and 70 each Sunday. At Holmes, though, the Catechism was not always learnt or followed as the powers that be instructed.

A 99 year lease of the land from Sir Fermor Hesketh was taken in 1879 for £2-0-0 per annum. People had begun, in 1879, to give donations to a New Chapel Building Fund. On Good Friday, March 26th, 1880, the foundation stone of the New Wesleyan Chapel at Holmes was laid. The newspaper of the day recorded "The site of the new building is that which was occupied by the old one which was erected in 1832 but as it had become dilapidated and even dangerous it had been decided to build a new edifice of more modern style with schools underneath". The foundation stone cannot be seen and we presume it is covered by the porch added to the end at a later date. The foundation stone was laid by Mr. Wm. Southworth's son, Mr. Jabez Southworth of Bolton. A second and third were laid by Mr. T. Harrison and Mr. H. Harrison. A fourth stone was laid by Rev. J. Harris

to represent other Societies. Thirty-three young people laid bricks having donated £1 and were presented with commemorative mallets. After an address by Rev. R. Roberts tea was provided in Mr. Jackson's barn when 350 friends sat down for tea. After tea a Sermon followed from Rev. R. Roberts.

The present Chapel was built at the cost of £732-16-4, this amount being raised by donations, loans, efforts and the sale of the old chapel for £50-0-0. The Chapel was officially opened on October 20th, 1880, when services had overflowing congregations. The sermons were much appreciated as was the singing of The Ormskirk Choir. The Chapel was described as "a neat brick building calculated to seat 150 persons with schoolrooms underneath. The style is plain Gothic with Terra Cotta facings. The pews are of pitch pine, varnished and are very conveniently arranged."

At this time Pew Rents or Seat Rents were collected. In 1882 these Pew Rents raised £14-0-6 for the year, but this sum collected, dwindled slowly until the last year with a recorded entry was 1926 when 18s. Od. was received. In the 1880s Services of Song were frowned upon. The Quarterly Meeting Minutes record on many occasions that these should not be given in Sunday Services.

Holmes seems to have been a rather awkward and irksome Society to Circuit Officials and others. In 1887 the new chapel keeper had to be instructed as to what were and were not extras to his duties. In 1888 the Circuit Quarterly Meeting of September, decided that Holmes Society was 'wayward'. The Circuit Officials were to meet Holmes leaders in order "to come to a better understanding about the work of God". The Circuit Quarterly Meeting does not record any outcome from this meeting or whether it even took place.

In 1887 we have the first recorded New Year's Day Party and Christmas Tree raising £5-9-0. In 1890 Holmes was reported to be at a low ebb. Pew Rents had dropped to £5-0-0 signifying maybe a loss of several families or unwillingness to pay. In the early 1890's Sunday Schools were again being urged to use the Catechism regularly, according to the schedules of the time Holmes now appeared to be doing this. Often as we read the Circuit Minute Books the Circuit Stewards seemed to be in debt and having to make constant appeals for extra money from the Churches. In 1893 they levied two assessments, one to clear the debt and a second showing the lowest level of giving on which the Stewards could stay solvent. In 1897 a Circuit cab was suggested for the Bretherton, Tarleton, Holmes end of the Circuit. This was deferred due to cost. This transport came in to being in 1906 but we do not know how long it continued.

Often there seemed to be rebuilding, repairing or redecorating as the Account books show many reopening collections. We have an 1897 plan showing the altered appearance of our Chapel as we now know it; with the porch and steps being at the end and not at the side as originally built. A new entrance was also to be made to the Sunday School down below, this now having been altered again because of the boiler house. These alterations were carried out at a cost of £97-6-0.

In 1906 the Society bought the piece of land on which the Chapel stands for £40.

In 1914 a mission was reported but no reference is given as to the Spiritual significance but only to the amount that had to be paid for extra cleaning. In 1918 we find the first reference to Bananas and Grapes being purchased and used for the Harvest display. How long the Harvest display has been like we have it, is not recorded. When reading the scanty records and minutes nobody seemed to bother about signing the minutes of meetings.

We were not intended to celebrate a century in the present building according to the Trust book of 1922. At this annual trustees meeting we read "discussion with respect to serious state of repairs of property and its conditional causes; it was agreed that repairs just essential should be attended to and that some time when the opportunity offers itself a new chapel should be erected in a more central position of the village". Pew rents were also discussed on this occasion. Repairs were carried out costing £109-2-2.

Several times there has been suggestions of amalgamation with the Banks Circuit. The first occasion was in 1929 when Union between all branches of Methodism was being discussed. Again from 1962-1968 there were discussions along these lines, but though there were many meetings and hours of discussion nothing satisfactory ever came from it.

In 1931 we had electricity installed at a cost of £25-2-6. Our first electricity bill was £1-1-7 but after this average 10/- for a long time. In 1932 Rev. W. Sangster of Aintree (he later became President and Dr. W. Sangster) came for the Chapel Anniversary. This was spoken of as a great day in the life of the Chapel. In 1935 the Organ Fund was begun to replace the Harmonium, so Bazaars, Concerts, Hot Pot Suppers and Garden Parties for the money raising became popular. In 1937 the organ was installed costing £475-0-0 and dedicated. The December Quarterly Meeting records "Holmes friends were congratulated on organ".

1944 saw the Society adopt the New Model Deed. In 1945 the Wesley Guild was started and this has proved a strength to our Society. Also reported at one of the Circuit Meetings "there is a splendid group of young people gathering for new activities week by week". Four of the young men were thanked by the Circuit in 1948 for meeting preachers at stations and conducting them to Services.

In the 1950's these young people spent their time in helping with concerts and money raising efforts towards a building fund. The Married Folk had a concert. The Society felt the need to enlarge our premises for Sunday School work. Now instead of the Circuit requesting, the Society was offering to help the Circuit with increased quarterages to may be help poorer societies. The increased family atmosphere of the Society is reflected in minute books which not only record the business but people's birthdays, passing driving tests. People absent due to 'Combining', 'taking pigs to the butchers', or 'cutting lettuce'. Still our rural base which again brings us very near to our dependance on God and his creation. Many of the young people spoken of earlier married in the 1950's.

During the past twenty years we have seen campaigns when there has been renewed spiritual awakenings. Members have become Local Preachers, others have moved to work in other Christian spheres of service. One of

our members became a Circuit Steward. We again did much to improve our premises and our witness to the community around. In 1978 our organ was rebuilt at a cost of £3,240 so willingly raised and given in a space of six months.

We thank God for all that is past but we trust God for his presence with us as we continue to worship and witness for him in the next 100 years.

Our Choir Mistress has written a Centenary Song which sums up our feelings.

COME ON EVERYBODY

Come on everybody let's Praise the Lord,
And celebrate to say,
Our Church has stood a century,
And still lives on today.

We're thankful Lord for those, who built
This little church, now gone
Who worked and witnessed in your name
And still the work goes on.

For all these years we have worshipped you,
In this place at Holmes,
We thank you Lord for all that's past,
And trust the future that comes.

Come on everybody let's praise the Lord
And shout His name today,
Christ Jesus is the greatest one,
And we will follow His way.

Now Jesus is the same today,
As a hundred years ago,
He wants us for His very own
As Saviour we may know.

Come on everybody let's Praise the Lord,
And celebrate to say
Our church has stood a century
And still lives on today.

by PEARL SPENCER.

GREETINGS FROM FORMER MINISTERS OF HOLMES

Rev. N. A. Priestley 1928-1931

Congratulations on the Celebration of your Centenary. Well do I remember my three years 1928-1931 as your Minister, when living at Burscough. I made periodic visits to Holmes in addition to the occasional Sunday Services. The kindness of many Holmes friends still remains with me. Those were the days of oil lamps, bicycles and walking, but we enjoyed our friendships and Christian fellowship.

May your celebrations bring you deepened joy and richer dedication.

With every blessing for the future: and memories and thoughts aglow with friendship's light.

Rev. C. Crew 1931-1934

It gives me pleasure to send greetings and good wishes to Methodists and friends at Holmes on this occasion of your Centenary. I am sure that everybody throughout our Connexion, who know of your achievement, will want to join in heartiest congratulations to you. It is nearly half a century ago that I came to take pastoral charge of Holmes Society. I found a good company of very faithful and very dedicated members. They were busy in many good works, and only the best was good enough for them. I remember occasionally friends from Burscough came with me to give concerts, or perform plays. They were memorable occasions because they were always successful and followed by most gorgeous refreshments that were served to us before we left for home. One Chapel Anniversary time we were privileged to have as our guest speaker and preacher, the Rev. W. E. Sangster — minister at Aintree then; who became Dr. W. E. Sangster — President of Conference — author of valuable pamphlets and books, and one of the great leaders of our Church.

There were other times of grand inspiration of which I still have vivid memories, but there is no space to write of them now. I always anticipated my appointments and visits to Holmes because one always came away better for them, and as we join in thanksgiving for all that has been in the past and as you go forward in your second century, we pray that the fellowship and witness will truly flourish and be richly blessed of God.

Rev. M. Harker 1938-1945

I looked up in an old diary and there it was "1938, September 1st to Ormskirk Circuit" and I duly arrived to live at Burscough and have charge of six other places one of which was Holmes. It was a new experience for me, the geography of the neighbourhood was quite staggering, rather like Waterloo to Liverpool and all stations in between. In addition it was largely, indeed wholly, an agricultural area and the world of agriculture was a strange world to me. We had no idea then that we were to have seven very happy years, for our two children were born during that time.

It was also a time of great anxiety because the war started soon after our arrival and everything was to be changed quite dramatically. An Air Station was to be built on our front doorstep and within a space of a few weeks we had hundreds of army and naval personnel to care for. To look through the old diary leaves one wondering however we coped with that situation. However, it was within that framework that Holmes gave us an escape route and on a few Sundays and every other Thursday Holmes be-

came the place where I could relax, wandering around the various homes. It took some time to sort things out especially the various tribes. To get to know all the branches of the Harrisons, the Hunters, the Ascrofts and the Dandys was quite a task. I can sum everything up under three headings:—

1. I remember it was a hard working community. I am sure the farming industry of these war days had hard times, planting a few thousand lettuce plants, picking a field of potatoes or peas was not easy, but there were some rewards. I discovered a new word "baggin" and I found myself more than ready to help carry the baskets when it came to 'baggin time', and having cycled from Burscough I was more than ready to share in the contents. I suppose times have changed, Preston North End was a team worth watching in those days. Some things have changed and I am very much looking forward to seeing Holmes again. I hear they have pulled down some barns and built bigger, but I imagine the children that grew up in my time will be carrying on in the hardworking industry that I remember.

2. I remember the hospitality of Holmes. Every fortnight I started on the rounds and it usually happened that in the early part of the afternoon someone would say "we shall be having our tea about 6 o'clock" and back I would go for tea, but in the meantime with every call there was an invitation for tea so that it finished up with having a booking for tea for the next few months. Perhaps I have a wrong sense of values, but I remember this one and that one because of first class Lancashire hot-pot or custard tarts, and when a pig had been killed no prodigal son was so lavishly entertained.

3. I remember best the loyalty of our folk at Holmes. The same people came on Thursday evening "come wind or weather". Was there ever such loyalty as that of "Nicky" Dandy or an organist that in my time never missed a service? There was tremendous family loyalty. All the young folk sat at the back but always there. I shall never forget Harvest Festivals at Holmes. The Chapel was full in the morning, all men except one a most loyal caretaker. What I did not know was that all the women were missing having a massive baking day. The afternoon service and the place full again, but on that day no visitor ever went home, everyone was invited for tea and the final result was that the place was packed out for the evening service. I well remember Mr. Dandy saying at 5 o'clock "We may as well start the service we cannot get another person inside the doors".

What a community it was to work with and share the deep experiences of those years.

It is a great joy to recall the days and the experiences at Holmes and I am very much looking forward to a visit during the celebrations. May the future years be able to erect a strong and vigorous church on the foundations that were laid by a devoted and loyal people of earlier years, for "they without us cannot be made perfect".

Greetings and all good wishes.

Rev. R. Wilkinson 1945-1949

I am glad of this opportunity to send greetings and good wishes for the Centenary celebrations. My mind goes back to the years immediately after the war, when I was privileged to be with you. Among events of those

days, which stand out, are a service for the reception of new members, several choral occasions and memorable Guild evenings. But the overall impression is one, of the warmth, the good humour and the generosity of the Holmes folk. The community spirit of those days was tremendous. May you find great joy in your celebrations and may they prove to be a spur to fresh endeavour.

Every blessing.

Rev. R. Crawford 1949-1954

Greetings to friends at Holmes. A hundred years makes you think. Yet the faith we proclaim is so much more. We are all aware of the pressures of this time in the history of the world. The Church tells us that Jesus knows all about our difficulties. The important thing for us is to show our faith as we meet for worship and fellowship. At the Centenary we will recall many things which we have done and also we will think of things which we can do at the Chapel, but most of all, through past and future events we will seek to please Him.

Do you remember these words "and to the angel of the church in . . . write . . .". They are found in chapters 2 and 3 of the book of the Revelation. Some churches are commended, others are chastened, but above all there is the call to hear Christ speaking the word of life to them. May Holmes continue to be a place where men and women shall hear Christ's word.

Rev. and Mrs. Amos Edwards 1954-1958

My wife and I congratulate you on the occasion of your Centenary. Our association with the dear folk of Holmes stretches over 25 years. With joy we look back on the many occasions we have shared your fellowship and hospitality. We remember your great love for the Lord and the generous support of your Church. We remember the evangelistic missions and the happy times we spent with the Guild.

Through the years Holmes has been blessed with many saintly men and women. We remember with deep affection their faithfulness. They left their mark on you and you have endeavoured to follow their faith. Throughout the years Holmes people have been alive to the challenges of the times and have not been slow to make their Christian response to the many needs that have claimed their love and concern.

We give thanks to the Lord for all the way He has led you these Hundred Years.

Your Centenary comes at a time when the Churches are entering a decade of evangelism. May the Lord pour out His Spirit upon you all and give you a new vision and hope for the future. May He grant you a new experience of His power, a new faithfulness to His Word, and a new readiness to make the Lord Jesus Christ known to others by word and deed.

Yours affectionately.

Rev. L. F. Lovell 1958-1963

It is now over sixteen years since I had personal contact with Holmes but I have vivid memories. I remember the Chapel being packed for Sunday School Anniversary and Harvest Festival to such an extent I feared for the safety of the floor and how all would get out easily through the one door; I remember that enthusiasm that penetrated even the Trustees Meeting. the hearty singing and the sense of sharing a live Christian faith. A faith that was in no wise superficial for all its liveliness.

I wish I could share with you on this occasion, but Cornwall is not exactly down the road. I pray that God will bless you on this occasion and will continue to do so. You celebrate 100 yrs. of worship and service in the present building and nearly 150 yrs. altogether in Holmes. May your faith and work last on even more to the glory of God in Jesus Christ the Saviour.

Rev. R. A. Owen 1963-1970

When you seriously consider life you begin to realise what a remarkable and mysterious thing it is. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that much of it is influenced by chance happenings. "If" we had not visited this place, or met that person everything would have been so different and so forth. Yet we set against the conclusion the remarkable fact that God in His wisdom and love uses these events to fulfil His purpose. A Centenary is a time when we look back through the years and see how this process has been accomplished. How many of the present generation at Holmes must be aware of the fact that God has marvellously ordered the happenings in their lives for this purpose.

It is obvious that through these hundred years by chance and design a faithful witness to the Love and Mercy of God has been borne by succeeding generations. To those who built in the first place and those following on, who maintained the work and witness, we offer our thanksgiving. With sincere gratitude to past generations we offer the present generation our greetings and encouragement.

Now what of the future! We need not trouble ourselves over much. God has promised not to leave us without a witness. It may not be in the same mould or method we have known but it will be so. All that we have is the present and we must make sure we make the most of it for the Glory of God.

Saluting the past, serving the present, leaving the future in God's hands, we go on, rejoicing in the knowledge that God is always with us.
Every blessing throughout your Centenary celebrations.

Rev. N. Catherall 1970-1978

Thank you for letting me have a share in the Centenary Celebrations at Holmes. Congratulations to you for your part of the 100 yrs. work and witness, and for the preparations you are making to ensure, as far as you are able, that the work continues. Be confident in the God that inspired those who began the work, for He is able now as He was a century ago.

I shall treasure memories of the Tuesday Guild and Afternoon Sunday School. It was here that I was reminded of those loyal, devoted folk who kept me, and many others, in our growing years and brought us to an experience of Jesus Christ which has lasted and remained effective through all life.

I trust that in continued witness Holmes will continue with tried and trusted fellowships that have stood the changes of 100 years. Many voices have called down the years in the same way as they do today for CHANGE. The world has changed a great deal in my lifetime and we must adapt to change to a degree BUT there are words of St. Augustine I have ever in mind - "The God who can CHANGE EVERYTHING, CHANGES NOT!" and of a less distinguished writer. "It is the simple things of life if you like, the things that have not changed that are most worthwhile and give us most satisfaction in life". The only change needed now, as ever, is that folk will shift the centre of life from SELF to HIM. It is accomplished now in the same place as He Himself worked it out — in every day relationships with all kinds of people.

Have a HAPPY BIRTHDAY and remember in all your work you are building not just for another 100 years but for Eternity.

THE PRESENT DAY IN HOLMES

We are still basically a Rural Community but the times definitely leave their mark. With advances in travel and education some of our young people take their rightful places in spheres of life other than in agriculture. We endeavour greatly to hold on to our family traditions, for in our family of the Church we are upheld and guided. With being a smaller village we find that we can exercise a widespread pastoral care and visiting. Communication is swift and if anybody is in difficulty or trouble help is at hand — no crops allowed to spoil or work left undone. We welcome into our midst newcomers and we have gained several new families in recent years and hope they will stay secure in the family of the Church.

As we meet together week by week we pray for God's blessing on our witness and in His strength and power go on. A few members meet for a Prayer Meeting on Sundays at 5-50 p.m. when the Society and the work of God is brought before him in prayer.

We find because of our rural base that Autumn, Winter and early Spring are the times for weeknight meetings. As soon as lighter nights come the majority of our people are working on the land. At about monthly intervals some of our number meet together for Bible Study and prayer. Over the years we have gained much strength and spiritual food from these times together.

We have a good choir which everybody enjoys. We do not practise every week but gather together for 'special occasions'. All the singers enjoy making music together and their singing enriches our worship. We hope everybody during this year will hear the Centenary Song — Come on Everybody — specially written for the year.

Another of our midweek activities is the Wesley Guild which meets every Tuesday evening 7-30 p.m., from mid October to early March. Our Wesley Guild is 35 years old but still has plenty to offer. The meetings are full of variety and interest as we seek to uphold the motto of the Guild

EVENTS IN OUR CENTENARY YEAR

- March 26th, 7-30 p.m.
Centenary of Foundation Stone Laying
Led by Rev. N. Catherall of Preston.
- April 27th
Sunday School Anniversary.
Preacher: Rev. R. A. Owen of Barton-on-Humber.
- June 15th
Joint Walking Day with Merebrow Methodist Church.
- July 12th
2 p.m.-4 p.m. Gift Day.
- July 13th
Chapel Anniversary.
Preacher: Rev. M. Harker of Bournemouth.
- October 12th
Harvest Festival.
Preacher: Rev. A. Edwards of Leeds.
- October 13th
5-30 Harvest Supper and Sale.
- October 18th
Centenary Tea and Rally - Exhibition.
Led by Rev. F. Thewlis of Sheffield.
- October 19th
Centenary Sunday - Exhibition.
Preacher: Rev. F. Thewlis of Sheffield.
- October 21st
Centenary of Opening - Exhibition.
7-30 p.m. Led by Rev. N. Denny - Chairman of Liverpool District.
- October 25th
7-30 p.m. Rally led by 'His Folk' of Tebay.
- October 26th
10-30 a.m. - 6-30 p.m. Preacher: Rev. H. Anfield of Dudley.
2-30 p.m. Request Service.

Everybody is given a warm welcome to all these
Celebrations and Services.

The compilers of this book and organisers of the Centenary wish to thank anybody who has helped in any way. Our sources of information have been numerous and to all we are very grateful.