

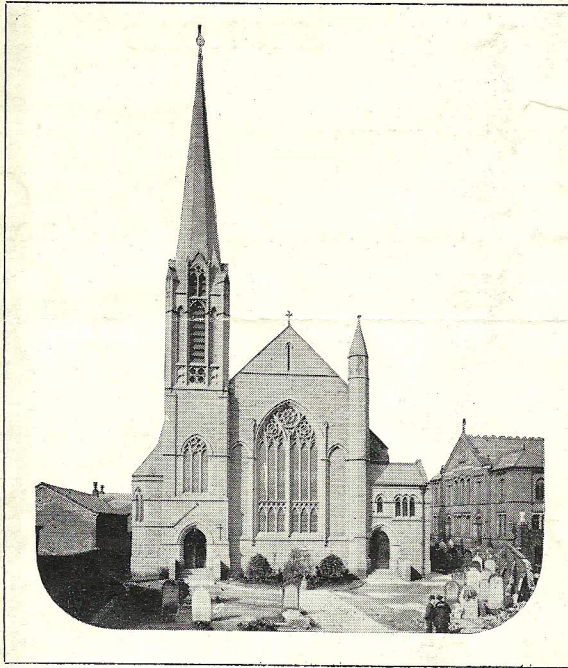
## **History of Methodism in Swinton and Pendlebury**

The document which follows was written in 1959. Since that time closures and amalgamations of churches has resulted in (at the time of writing – April 2012) a reduction of churches to three – likely to further reduce to two in the near future. They are Worsley Road, Manchester Road and the Height, with Worsley Road likely to close soon.

There have also been Circuit amalgamations with the Swinton and Pendlebury Circuit amalgamating first with the Salford section of the Manchester and Salford Mission Circuit and then the Cadishead and Eccles Circuit to form the present Salford Circuit. Church amalgamations have resulted also in a reduction in the number of churches which would have been in the Salford, and Cadishead and Eccles Circuits at the time the History was written.

Thus the document, written as a history, is itself very much a historical document now!

Methodism  
in  
Swinton and Pendlebury



1809—1959

K. H. Fell,  
20 LAURENCE AVENUE  
SWINTON



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# CELEBRATIONS

to be held in

**ST. PAUL'S METHODIST CHURCH  
STATION ROAD**

**SATURDAY, JULY, 4th 1959**

- 5 p.m. Tea  
6.30 p.m. Organ Recital given by S. Gee, Esq., A.R.C.O., L.R.A.M.  
7 p.m. RALLY

*Chairman:* H. C. Rawlinson, Esq.

*Speakers:* Rev. G. Osborn Gregory (Lichfield)  
Rev. Kenneth Mackenzie (Bolton)

**SUNDAY, JULY 5th, 1959**

- 9 a.m. United Communion Service  
10.45 a.m. Morning Service  
6 p.m. Community Hymn Singing  
6.30 p.m. EVENING SERVICE  
*Preacher:* Rev. G. Osborn Gregory  
8 p.m. Open-air Hymn Singing
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# THE STORY of METHODISM in SWINTON and PENDLEBURY

THERE is no record that John Wesley ever visited Swinton, but tradition has it that on one of his journeys from Manchester to Bolton he took his stand somewhere near our Victoria Church, and preached to a crowd drawn by curiosity to see and hear him. The introduction of his teachings into this district was very similar to its introduction into many other places; first the cottage meetings, then the early chapels, followed by the building of those places of worship which still stand, to witness to the devotion of our fathers.

The secessions from Methodism which took place during the 19th century were evident in Swinton and Pendlebury as in most parts of England. Fortunately these secessions brought very little bitterness in this district, and for many years before Methodist Union was achieved there was the utmost friendliness between the different sects of Methodism. This is amply evidenced in the files of the *Swinton and Pendlebury Journal* and of its predecessor, the *Swinton and Pendlebury Times*.

In 1909 Centenary celebrations centred round only one church—Swinton Wesleyans. It is with gratitude and humility before God that we celebrate a century and a half of Methodism by describing the growth of all the Methodist Churches in the district. In some cases there are few written records, but throughout there is the spirit of complete dedication which inspired John Wesley and all the early Methodists—the spirit which is a challenge to us now, as we face the next 50 years of Methodist history.

At the Centenary Service on July 11th, 1909, the pioneers were remembered in the hymn, "For all the saints who from their labours rest." Then the vast congregation went on to ask the Help which they and their predecessors had never asked in vain.

"As in the ancient days appear,  
The sacred annals speak Thy fame,  
Be now omnipotently near,  
To endless ages still the same."

And finally they sang the words which have echoed through every Methodist Chapel since its foundation.

"O that with yonder sacred throng,  
We at His feet may fall,  
Join in the everlasting song,  
And crown Him Lord of all."

In July, 1959, we, like them, salute the past, seek help for the present, and await that glorious future.

## THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCHES

### Swinton

Although it is true that the first Methodist Chapel in Swinton was not built till 1809 (18 years after John Wesley's death), there had been Methodist prayer meetings in the district for several years before this time. They took place mainly in cottages in Worsley Road, Folly Lane, and Swinton Hall Road. They were probably undertaken by preachers from Manchester. At the same time, open-air services were held in Swinton, Pendlebury and Clifton. Despite opposition and some persecution, the cause flourished; a class book of 1807 names 16 persons as members, with Joseph Hulbert as their leader.

They decided to build a chapel, so that the Society might find a permanent home. Although money was scarce, they continued with their plans, and chose a site where St. Paul's

now stands. Both the architect and the builder are unknown, but by the end of June, 1809, the little building was nearing completion. Methodists had not yet learned the art of raising money by bazaars or foundation stone ceremonies, and so only £100 of the required £300 had been obtained when the chapel was opened on July 9th, 1809. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Joseph Entwistle, of Manchester, who had interested himself in the scheme from its inception.

The first Methodist building in Swinton was plain and unpretentious, but during the 40 years of its existence it provided—for many—both comfort and inspiration. The congregation quickly increased, and soon the Methodists became respected and esteemed in the district. There were 12 trustees, and their next ambition was to form a Sunday School, for there was no such institution in Swinton or Pendlebury. They decided to admit children of all denominations, and on June 23rd, 1811, the school was opened, with 64 boys and 107 girls as scholars. For many years the Sunday School Services were held in the chapel, for there was no separate building till 1849. Hundreds of children received in those services the only smattering of education they ever knew, for they were taught not only the Scriptures, but the three R's as well.

In 1829 they had an epoch-making experience—the first Whit Week treat. On Whit Friday a group of 40 teachers and 137 scholars marched in procession to Monton Green, where they sang hymns with scholars from Eccles and Worsley. The groups then returned to their own schools for tea.

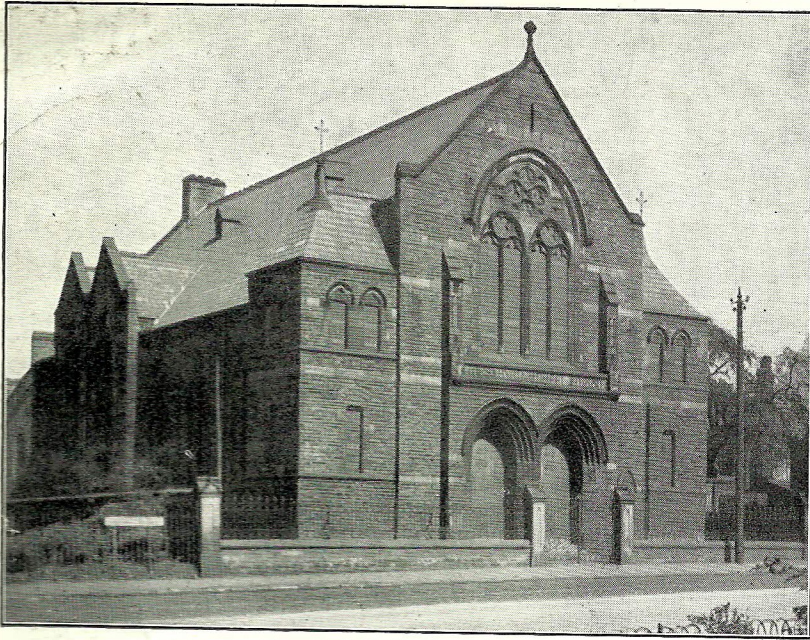
In 1814 the Manchester circuit, to which the Swinton members belonged, was divided: Salford became the head of a new circuit, which stretched as far as Clifton, Mosley Common, Barton and Carrington. Of this extensive circuit, Swinton was a part. In those days, meetings were held on Sunday morning and afternoon—to the accompaniment of a string band! (the first organ was not installed till 1854). On Sunday evening as many as 10 mission groups would conduct cottage services and prayer meetings in many parts of the district.

Although the chapel had been extended by the erection of a gallery in 1825, it became increasingly evident that not only a new chapel, but a school too, must be provided. By a singular coincidence, the last sermon in the old chapel was preached just 40 years from its opening day—July 9th, 1849. Seven weeks later the first Sunday School building was opened, and in the following December the first services took place in the new chapel. Both internally and externally it was a great advance on its predecessor, although some people considered its panelled ceiling and white pulpit rather too elaborate.

Within a few months, however, there was serious trouble: not about the building, but about organisation and control. The Reform movement was sweeping the country, and many of the Swinton members sympathised with it. For instance, the trustees claimed the right to say who should conduct the services, but in the Model Deed all the usual rights and privileges were attributed to the Superintendent Minister, acting for the Conference.

When the Trustees asked a Congregational Minister to conduct the Anniversary Services in 1850, the Superintendent objected, and obtained an injunction from the Court of Chancery to prevent the services from being held. The minister and the congregation assembled, and when the Superintendent informed them of the injunction, all the members except 14 left the building and marched in procession to a room in Pendlebury. (This was the beginning of the Happy Land Society.)





WESTWOOD CHAPEL

Soon peace was made between the Superintendent and the remaining trustees, and years of prosperity followed. In 1859 the Salford Circuit was divided, and Swinton became part of the Irwell Street Circuit, with its first resident minister, the Rev. John Rhodes. There were now 265 members, and so it was decided to enlarge the chapel. To meet the cost, more than £300 was raised by a four-day bazaar—probably the first to be held in the district. Two years later the Jubilee of the Sunday School was celebrated with great rejoicings. There were then 64 teachers and 280 scholars.

The Swinton Wesleyan Day School was established in 1866, and its third Headmaster, Mr. John H. Sargent, occupied the position from 1874 until the scholars were absorbed into the new Cromwell Road School in 1912. His influence, and that of his staff, has profoundly affected the lives of thousands of Swintonians. Within four years of his assuming the position a new school was built, one of the finest in the country. The architect was Mr. S. Rawlinson, and the builders Messrs. J. Gerrard & Sons. This building is still used by the congregation and scholars of St. Paul's.

Swinton was no longer a village, for the opening of the railway and the tramway had brought hundreds of new residents into the district. Once again the chapel proved inadequate for all those who wished to attend it. The trustees decided on a new building—to be called, not a "chapel" but the "Swinton Wesleyan Methodist Church." This magnificent Gothic building, with its spire 120 feet high (which has been such a landmark for more than 60 years), was opened on January 28th, 1892. It was built by Messrs. S. Rawlinson & Son, and much of the cost was met by the proceeds of four large bazaars held between 1890 and 1905.

#### Irlams o' th' Height

Although it is likely that John Wesley passed through Irlams o' th' Height at least once, there is no record of the first preaching of Methodism there. No doubt the followers—as in Swinton—met in cottages, probably with help from members of the Manchester connection. It was at one of these cottage meetings—in August, 1810—that the following resolution was passed: "That we commence a Sunday

School for definite religious teaching." Within a few months premises were obtained and equipped—two cellars at the junction of Manchester Road and Bolton Road. Increasing numbers soon led to removal to King Street and then to a house at the corner of Claremont Road. A financial statement of this period refers to:

40 spelling books	.. ..	£1
6 dictionaries	.. ..	4/6
7 lead pencils	.. ..	2/-

As in all early Sunday Schools, the chief object was to teach the children and adults to read and write, so that they might come to know the Bible and to teach its truths to others.

Within a few years, increased accommodation had become imperative, and subscription lists were opened. The gift of a plot of land was welcomed, and there—on the site of the present Westwood Church and School—the first school was built in 1821. Within a few years there were 12 classes with 175 scholars, and by 1835 twenty classes with more than 200 scholars.

The next event was the building of the first Methodist Chapel in Irlams o' th' Height. It was a brick building adjoining the School, and was opened on Good Friday, 1834, at a cost of over £600. Within a few months, however, a cleavage occurred in the Society which was to have serious repercussions.

Although there was unanimity amongst Methodists about Wesley's teachings, there was in many districts serious criticism of the government of the Church. In 1835 a widely-signed petition asked that the laity, through elected representatives, should have a voice in legislation, finance, and discipline. When the Conference, composed entirely of ministers, showed itself unsympathetic, the critics formed the Wesleyan Association and called together a Great Assembly at Manchester in 1836.

Many of the members of the Irlams o' th' Height congregation joined the Association; some formed a school at Pendlebury, which later developed into the Ellesmere Street Society, but the majority, after taking temporary premises, finally became the Bolton Road Church. Happily, there was little jealousy or recrimination between the two Methodist groups in the village. Many years later an old





INTERIOR—HAPPY LAND CHAPEL

Anglican resident wrote : "Irlams o' th' Height owes much to the earnest religious spirit and friendly rivalry in which these two branches of the Methodist body have worked: goodwill has always prevailed between them and my Church."

More than half the teachers and almost three-quarters of the scholars had left the school, and for a time there were fewer than 50 boys and girls in attendance. Within twenty years, however, that number was doubled, and in 1857 a new school was built. It had its own library and its own branch of the Penny Bank, and these continued to flourish when a new building was opened in 1878. Almost £500—half the total cost—was raised by a Bazaar at the Pendleton Town Hall.

In 1880 the chapel was so severely damaged by fire as to make it unsafe for public worship. For the next few months services were held in the school whilst the new chapel was under construction. It was formally opened in July, 1881, and has continued to increase the spiritual life of the district.

#### Ellesmere Street

Ellesmere Street was formed in 1834. There were some members of Irlams o' th' Height Wesleyans who lived in Pendlebury, and when the secession took place, a few of them chose a room over a smithy at the top of City Walk. Their leaders were Thomas Hall, John Tyrer, and Matthew Chapman. Before long they transferred their worship to a room over another smithy on Eolton Road, near the top of Ellesmere Street.

In 1838 they formed a Sunday School. Their numbers were small, and for many years the Bolton Road Methodist Church provided a rota of teachers. Yet their enthusiasm was unbounded, and in February, 1854, they opened a newly-built chapel in Ellesmere Street. For the next 40 years this building was used as school and church.

In 1892 it was decided to erect a school on ground adjoining the chapel. The foundation stones were laid on August 19th and the trustees advertised this event by sending round the "bellman". Six months later the school was opened,

and from that time only church services were held in the chapel. The exception was the Sunday School Anniversary, which was always awaited with the utmost enthusiasm. The music of a string band was a great attraction.

The society developed steadily during the latter part of the 19th century. The 20th century was to bring trials, triumphs—and finally decline and closure.

#### Happy Land

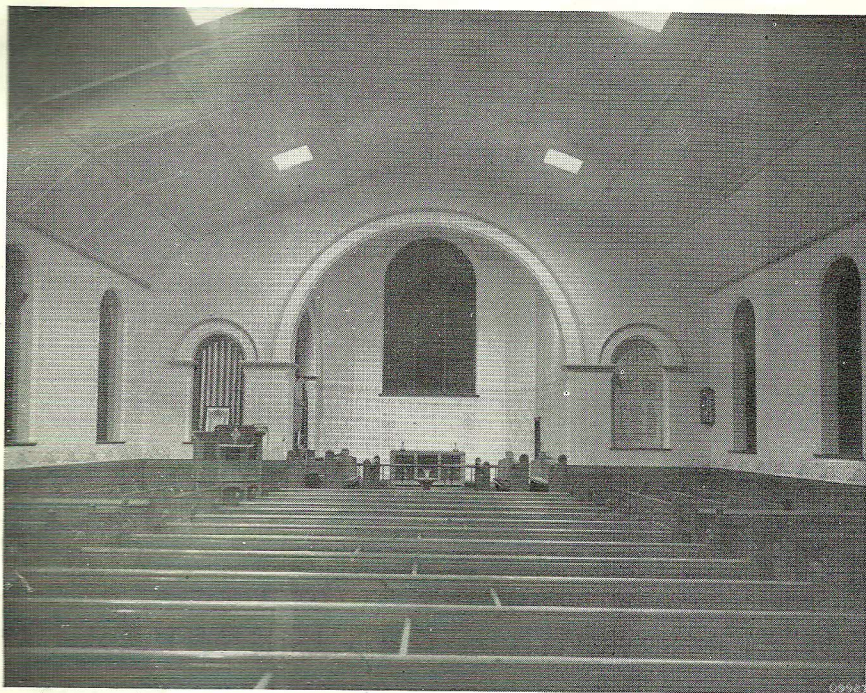
Happy Land commenced in an upper room over three houses in Engine Brow, Pendlebury, in 1846. Its founders were a few men from the Swinton Wesleyan Chapel. One of the cottages belonged to Abel Seddon, and he soon became a prominent member of the little fellowship.

A Sunday School and a Church were formed, and they prospered so much that in 1850 a School Chapel was built in Moss Lane. Soon the fellowship became connected with the Wesleyan Reformers, and in 1858 became part of the Salford Circuit of the United Methodist Free Churches.

In November, 1874, a separate Sunday School was built to hold 300-400 scholars. The *Swinton and Pendlebury Times* described it as "exceedingly plain but most substantial." At the opening ceremony one speaker welcomed ministers from other denominations, and pleaded for more co-operation amongst non-conformists. Unfortunately there was soon dissension amongst the leaders of the Happy Land fellowship, for some of them wanted to join the Wesleyan Church. The congregation was about equally divided, and it was finally agreed that the Wesleyan party should have the School Chapel, and the Free Church party the new school. (These Wesleyans became the Moss Lane, later the Victoria, Church.)

The Free Church party continued to flourish, and a large vestry was added to the school. But many problems of accommodation remained, and in 1886 a building fund was established for the erection of a new chapel. Five years later the foundation stones were laid, and in September, 1891, the Rev. George Whaite, of Manchester, conducted





## VICTORIA CHURCH INTERIOR

### Victoria Church

Victoria Church, Pendlebury, was built by members of the Moss Lane Wesleyan Chapel. For many years they had worshipped devotedly and successfully in their Moss Lane premises. Two of their earliest leaders were Richard Sharples and Abel Seddon. The open-air prayer meetings in Pendlebury were extraordinarily fervent, and Abel Seddon (himself a fireman at the Wheatsheaf Colliery) was particularly successful with the miners.

The Moss Lane Chapel would hold about 150 worshippers. The members worked hard to repair and improve their property, e.g., in 1879 the Sunday School teachers gave £20 towards the cost of repairing the front wall. In 1881 steam heating was introduced, but by lectures, Services of Song, etc., the

cost of the installation was met within four years.

By 1893, when Moss Lane was transferred from the Irwell Street Circuit to the Pendleton Circuit, the Society had 56 members. They decided to open a Building Fund, for they were determined to erect new premises. Efforts of many kinds were undertaken in order to obtain money; by 1896 they had £200, and by 1899 more than £600. A sub-committee, consisting of the Rev. J. B. Maltby and four trustees, inspected several sites, and finally recommended one in Bolton Road.

The members enthusiastically supported their leaders, and on September 20th, 1901, the stone-laying ceremony took place; by then almost half of the necessary £4,000 had been obtained. The congregation were determined on expansion, and so they built a church to hold 500 and a school to accommodate 350 scholars. Abel Seddon, who had contributed so much to the fellowship at Moss Lane, was spared to see the accomplishment of one of his dearest ambitions.

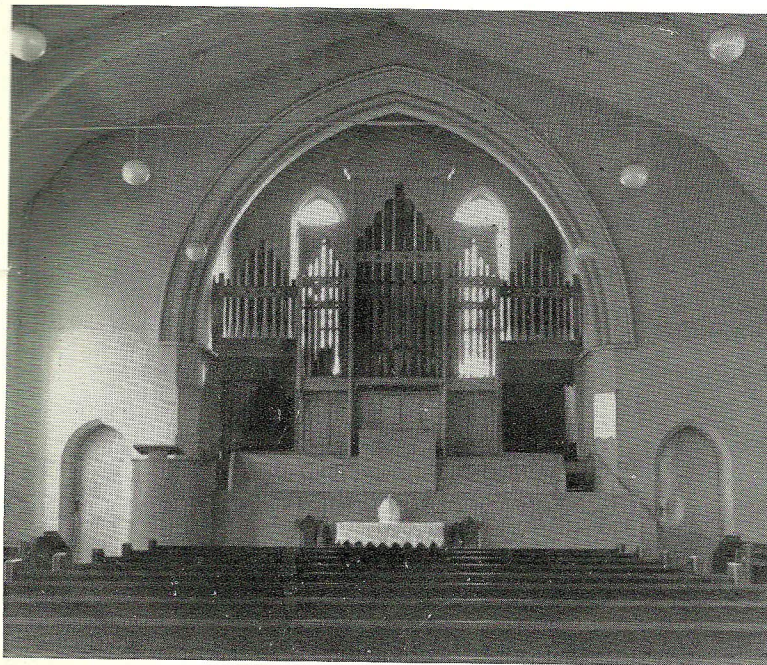
### Chorley Road

The founder of the sect of Primitive Methodism was Hugh Bourne, who lived from 1772 to 1852. He was a Wesleyan local preacher, but his zeal for open-air meetings led to criticism, and his repeated defiance of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference led to his expulsion from the Society. His evangelical style of preaching was extremely popular, however, and the first Primitive Methodist Chapel was opened in the Midlands in 1811. Forty years later the new Methodism had more than 100,000 members.

the opening services. The chapel was designed and built by Messrs. Jonathan Gerrard & Sons. It has accommodation for more than 300 people. A Bazaar in December, 1896, provided funds to clear the debt and to supply a new organ.

When the Jubilee of the Sunday School was celebrated in 1924, a verse was sung which aptly described the spirit of these earnest and sincere men and women:

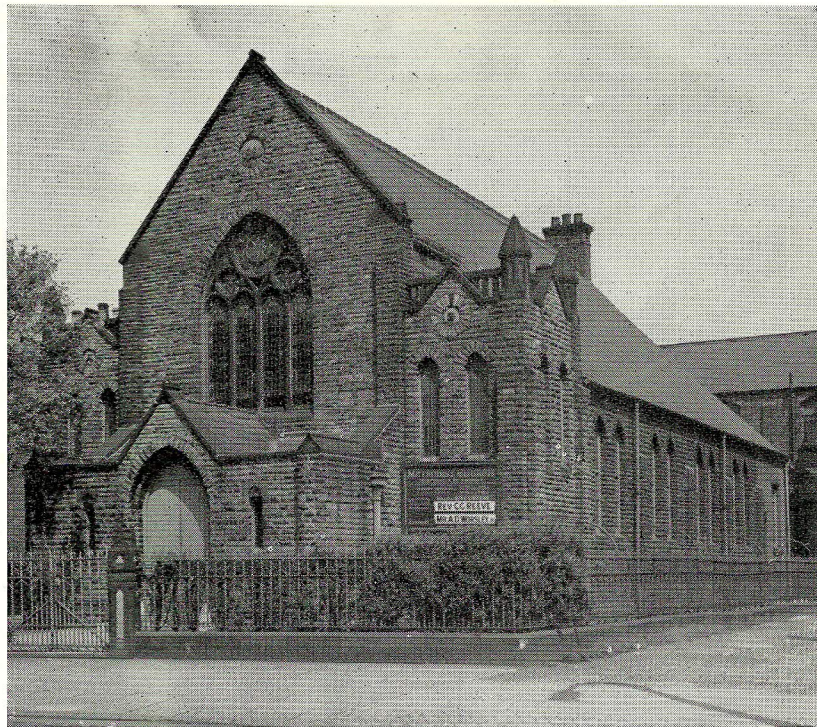
"Behold, O Lord, before Thee stand,  
Our works of thought, of heart and hand,  
We humbly bring them to Thy throne  
And render back with joy Thine own."



## CHORLEY ROAD CHAPEL INTERIOR



## MANCHESTER ROAD CHAPEL



It is difficult to determine the date of the introduction of Primitive Methodism into Swinton. Certainly about the middle of the 19th century services were being held in a house in Wardley Lane. Soon the whole of the house was taken over and adapted for use as a place of worship. The cellar was used as a Sunday School. There were at first two teachers and twenty scholars. In 1852 the first Sunday School Tea Party was held in the cellar.

Within a few years, larger premises were needed and in 1860 a chapel was built, almost opposite the present Chorley Road Church. Later a school-room was added, but these buildings had to be taken down in 1886 when the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway was extended through Swinton and Moor-side. The Railway Company contributed handsomely towards the building of the present church and school, both built in 1886. Five years later the Pendlebury (now Bethel), Chorley Road and Manchester Road Churches were formed into a separate Circuit, under the ministry of the Rev. R. Heppenstall.

The members of Chorley Road have always tried to raise money with a smile. At a bazaar many years ago, Shakespearean quotations abounded, e.g.,

(1) "To do good business is our sole intent. Now make your choice."

(2) "This day let no man think his business lies at home."

Like modern Methodists they agreed with the old adage "The Lord loves a cheerful giver."

### Manchester Road

Amongst the worshippers at the Wardley Lane Church and Sunday School were Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Gerrard and their family. They lived in Worsley Road, at the end of Long Street, a good distance from the church which they attended three or four times every Sunday.

About 1850 a cotton wholesaler named Bannerman, who lived in Swinton Park, had built some cottages in what is now called Prospect View. Two of the cottages were left without inside walls, for they were to be used as a Presbyterian Mission Room. The Presbyterian minister from Little Hulton came over to conduct a service every Sunday afternoon.

In 1870, however, the Mission Room was closed and the whole of the property was advertised for sale. A friend suggested to Mr. Gerrard that this position—known then as Swinton Bar (after a toll-bar that used to cross Manchester Road there)—would be a good opening for the Primitive Methodist cause. Mr. Gerrard was by no means rich, for he was struggling to set up a business as a joiner and builder in Long Street, but he was keen to develop Methodism in that part of Swinton, and he managed to obtain the property for £200. It comprised an Assembly Room (to hold 200 people), a smaller room, and a caretaker's cottage.

The opening services were conducted on January 29th, 1871, by the Rev. William Hall. On the following Wednesday a Society Class was formed, with Mr. Gerrard as leader—a position which he occupied until his death in 1907. The first Class Book of the "Swinton Bar Society" shows that of the 16 members five were connected with the Gerrard family.

On February 5th, 1871, a Sunday School was formed with four teachers and 13 scholars. The first Teachers' Meeting was held on March 16th and Mr. Gerrard was appointed Superintendent, a position which he occupied for the next 36 years. The minutes record that "Miss Sackfield will teach Reading Made Easy, and Mr. Lockett will teach the Alphabet." Within two months decisions were being made about the Whit Thursday Walk. "We shall try to get our wives and friends to join. . . . Subscribers will have tea to the amount of their subscriptions . . . scholars under 12 will pay 4d. all others 6d. . . . we shall buy half a hundred oranges and 12 lbs. of nuts."

Within 10 years the debt on the property had been cleared, but it had already become evident that much more commodious premises were essential.

By sacrifice and self-denial over £1,000 was raised by Good Friday, 1891, when the foundation stones of the "Primitive Methodist New Chapel, Manchester Road," were laid. At the opening service in the following November, one speaker caused amusement by saying, "To open a Methodist Chapel free from debt is against all the law and order of Methodism." Another said, "The day of splits and new sects has passed; the time of union has arrived." Unfortunately 40 years were to pass before his words came true.

Having built their chapel, the members now decided on a new school. Accordingly, more efforts were organised, and more sacrifices made, culminating in a Bazaar in March, 1899, which realised nearly £600. Thus it was possible to open the new school in November, 1899, quite free from debt. Never were new premises more deserved, for the average attendance of scholars had doubled during the last eight years. There were now 400 on the books. In 1907 a new Infants' School was built, but in the same year Mr. Jonathan Gerrard passed to his well-deserved reward.





**BETHEL  
CHURCH**

#### Bethel

More than 100 years ago on Sunday evenings a small group of people from Swinton and Pendlebury used to attend service at Walkden. One wet Sunday, as they were returning over the Moss, they decided to form their own Society. A prominent member of this group was John Partington, and soon meetings were held at his cottage, just off Bolton Road, Pendlebury. It is interesting to note that John Partington's descendants have been—and still are—stalwarts of the Bethel fellowship. When the Jubilee of the present church was celebrated in 1952, the Sunday School scholars and the church members walked in procession to the plot of land on which his cottage stood.

After a time John Partington and his colleagues found that the cottage was inadequate for religious services, and so they built their first church, a small compact building which stood in front of the present Sunday School. There they witnessed for many years, and when the membership reached 50 it was decided to erect a larger church. Most of the members had no great financial resources, e.g., when the Building Fund was opened by the Rev. R. Heppenstall in 1891 five shillings was regarded as a very large donation. But they had determination and perseverance and an overwhelming joy in their Faith. Like many of the other Methodist Fellowships, they raised money by concerts and lectures and socials, and in 1896 a three-day Bazaar swelled their funds by over £100.

The new church—only a few yards from the old—was completed in 1900. The cost was more than £2,000, but the congregation were equal to the challenge, and within a short time the outstanding debt was cleared. Thus, within a few years, three new Primitive Methodist Chapels had been built in the district. The members of all three would echo the words of John Partington's great-grandson: "Let

our gift to God and the Church be our hearts that He may fill them with His Love, our minds that He may flood them with the Light of the Gospel, and our bodies that they may be a living sacrifice to His Glory."

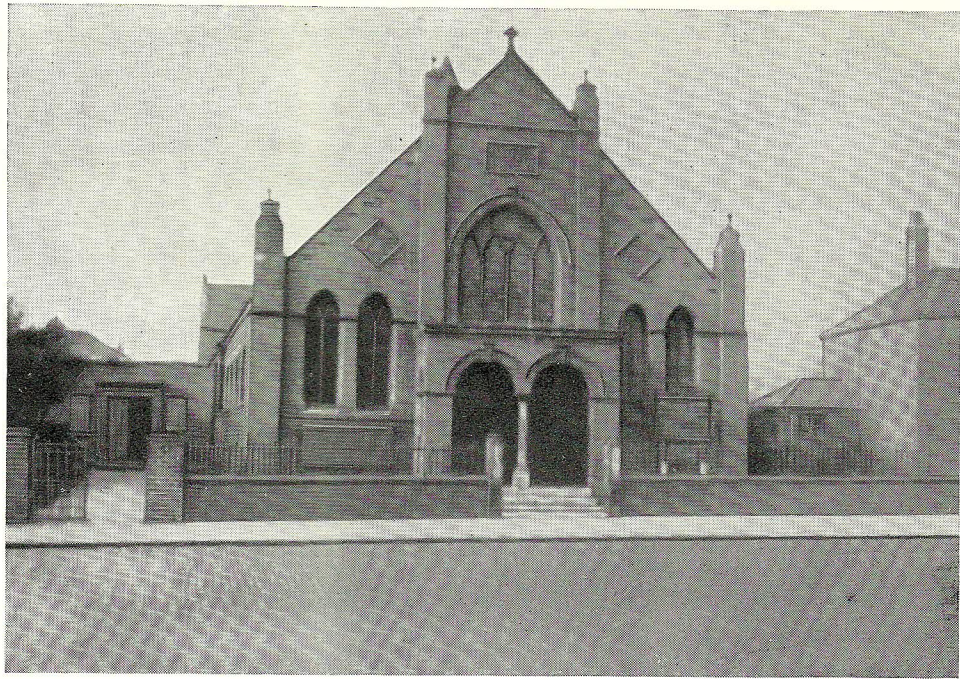
#### Wesley Chapel

Wesley Chapel originated about the middle of the 19th century when some earnest Christians in Pendlebury began to hold services in a room over a blacksmith's shop owned by Robert Ormrod. During week-night services it was possible to hear horses being shod in the workshop below—hence the nickname, the "Hammer and Wedge Chapel." Later there was a period during which services were held in small cottages in Swinton Hall Road.

The members, though small in number, were zealous and enterprising. They determined to build their own premises, and in 1871, under the leadership of the Rev. James Chalmers, they raised sufficient funds to erect a chapel on Bolton Road. A member of the fellowship, W. G. Rennington, generously provided an organ. This rendered yeoman service until 1919, when the Rev. F. J. Gould arranged the purchase of a new instrument costing over £300. (This is now installed in the Victoria Church.)

Until 1873 Wesley Chapel, like Swinton, Irlams o' th' Height, and Moss Lane, belonged to the Irwell Street Circuit. In that year it had about 40 members, and amongst the leaders were Edward Beswick and Robert Ormrod. When the Circuit was re-organised in 1893 the four Churches became members of the Pendleton Circuit. The Wesley Chapel continued to witness for God until circumstances compelled its closure in October, 1942.





WORSLEY ROAD CHURCH

#### Worsley Road

In 1850 a few people who sympathised with the objects of the Wesleyan Methodist Association began to hold services in the neighbourhood of Worsley Road—then called Moor Lane. John Chapman and James Johnson were the leaders of these cottage meetings and open-air services, which were so successful that two new cottages were rented in Shaftesbury Road (then called Bold Street). For several years these cottages were used as a chapel and as a Sunday School.

In 1857 the Protestant Methodists, the Wesleyan Methodist Association, and the Wesleyan Reform Association amalgamated to form the United Methodist Free Churches. The "Moor Lane Society" became part of the Salford Circuit about seven years later. By then the preaching room in Bold Street was far too small, and in 1865 a school and chapel were built. Within 12 years the outstanding debt of £200 was paid off, but a few years later much greater accommodation became essential. There were then about 50 church members and more than 100 scholars.

Their energy and determination won the sympathy and admiration of the other Christian communities in Swinton. The memorial stones of the new church were laid in July,

1899, after a procession had paraded the district headed by the band of the Swinton Industrial Schools. The church was opened 10 months later in the presence of a very large congregation. Once more the local firm, Messrs. J. Gerrard and Sons, were the contractors. The total cost, including furnishing, was over £1,300, but the whole amount was realised within the next six years.

Nineteenth-century Methodists could be very outspoken. One of them—not a member of the Moor Lane Society—thus criticised the introduction of harmonium and organ: "Everything's dun by machinery nae-a-days. We'en spinnin' machines and weyvin' machines, an nae we'en gotten wershippen' machines. Wee'st ha' prayin' machines and preichin' machines next!"

Perhaps our ancestors believed in concentration in worship more than some of us may do today. For an advertisement in the *Swinton and Pendlebury Times* of November, 1876, stated: "Disturbers of congregations should get a bottle of Gestry's Cough Elixir from Messrs. Sagar, Swinton, or Mr. Banks, of Pendlebury.

Yes—religion meant so much to so many in those days. At the opening of a chapel in 1891 a speaker pointed out that three other chapels and one school were being erected in Swinton and Pendlebury at that very moment.



## THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The 20th Century has witnessed many developments in Methodism, both locally and nationally.

In this district new premises have been built at Worsley Road, Manchester Road, and Irlams o' th' Height. Several Jubilee celebrations have been held, and there has been a good deal of consolidation, though that has been tempered with regret at the closing of the Ellesmere Street and Wesley Chapels in 1942. In the former case, many worshippers had left the vicinity because of housing clearance; in the latter, some redundancy and the poor condition of the building occasioned the closure. We trust that the spirit of the pioneers lives on in those who now work in other societies.

Many of the events of this century are summarised below. More detail is required to describe the recent tragedies at Irlams o' th' Height and Chorley Road, and to pay tribute to those devoted and generous souls who have so valiantly overcome these catastrophes. During the Manchester "blitz" of December, 1940, a landmine fell within 50 yards of the Irlams o' th' Height Church. The school was so badly damaged that the ruins had finally to be pulled down. The church suffered less, but could not be used for 18 months. The friends at Bolton Road generously loaned their school to their homeless neighbours. Permission to build a new school was not obtained till 1949. This beautiful building was opened in September, 1950, by Mr. H. W. Smethurst, the oldest member of the church. Representatives came from all the Anglican and Nonconformist Churches, and an address was given by the Rev. F. L. Hines, who was resident minister at the time of the "blitz". Within the last few weeks the War Damage Commission has promised a substantial contribution towards the cost of extensive reconstruction of the church which has already been started.

The tragedy at Chorley Road happened on May 14th, 1953. The church roof collapsed whilst workmen were engaged on repairs. Fortunately no one was seriously injured, but only the main entrance wall and the rear wall remained standing.

For the next 15 months church services were held in the school, whilst rebuilding was in progress. Efforts of many kinds were made to raise money, one of the most successful being a house-to-house collection in Swinton and Pendlebury, undertaken by members of the Chorley Road, Manchester Road and Bethel Churches. Over £400 was collected by this means.

The reconstructed church was opened on Saturday, August 21st, 1954, the ceremony being performed by Mr. S. Tatlock, one of the oldest members. Greetings and congratulations were conveyed by the Mayor of Swinton and Pendlebury and by representatives of the Anglican and Nonconformist Churches. The resident minister, the Rev. W. B. Barton, expressed the feelings of all when he said, "May this building quickly become the real living church it has been in the past."

The outstanding event in Methodism during this century has been the union of the Wesleyan, Primitive Methodist and United Methodist Churches. This had been planned and awaited for many years, and its final realisation in 1932 occasioned great joy. There was a mass meeting at the Albert Hall, London, on September 20th, 1932, where the Duke and Duchess of York represented His Majesty King George V. The Duke said, "This union of the Methodist

Churches marks the opening of a new era in the life of one of the greatest spiritual forces in the modern world." This challenge was echoed at a memorable meeting in Swinton on the following evening. Alderman T. L. Gerrard presided, and addresses were given by the Methodist Ministers—the Revs. C. Penney Hunt, R. M. Rutter, and Miss M. Sunman, and by the Rev. Canon D. Fletcher of St. Peter's, and the Rev. G. Nuttall for the Congregational Churches.

One sentence spoken at that meeting—27 years ago—has a message for all the Methodists of Swinton and Pendlebury as we look back on 150 years of Methodism in the district. The Rev. C. Penney Hunt said: "I did not sigh with regret at the last Wesleyan quarterly meeting; I said 'Thank God that's over; now for the future!'" The last four words are a challenge to us all, and particularly to the Swinton, Pendlebury and Pendleton Circuit, with its 13 churches, its six ordained ministers and its 1,000 Church members. We salute the devotion, the courage and the determination of all those who have created for us such a goodly heritage. May we echo the prayer spoken in hundreds of Methodist Sunday Schools on September 25th, 1932: "O God, Who didst call and convert and mightily use Thy servants, young and old, in the Methodist Churches during the past years, help us to hear Thy call, to yield our lives to Thee, and grant us grace to serve Thee humbly, faithfully, courageously, utterly, to our life's end. Amen."

- 1900 Worsley Road; new Chapel opened.
- 1901 Victoria Church built.
- 1909 Centenary of Swinton Wesleyan Church and School (1911).
- 1910 Extensions to Worsley Road and Irlams o' th' Height Schools.
- 1911 Centenary of Irlams o' th' Height School.
- 1921 Jubilee of Wesley Chapel.
- 1924 Jubilee of Happy Land Sunday School.
- 1927 Ellesmere Street Chapel rebuilt.
- 1931 Diamond Jubilee of Manchester Road Church.
- 1932 METHODIST UNION.
- 1933 Worsley Road: new School built.
- 1940 Westwood Church and School damaged during "blitz".
- 1942 Ellesmere Street and Wesley Chapels closed.
- 1946 Centenary celebrations of Happy Land.
- 1949 Jubilee of Manchester Road Sunday School.
- 1950 New Sunday School at Westwood. Centenary of Worsley Road Church.
- 1951 Synod of Manchester Second District held at Swinton.
- 1952 Diamond Jubilee of St. Paul's Church. Jubilee of Bethel.
- 1953 Chorley Road Church seriously damaged.
- 1954 Swinton and Pendlebury and Pendleton Circuit formed.
- 1959 Tri-Jubilee of Methodism in Swinton.

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