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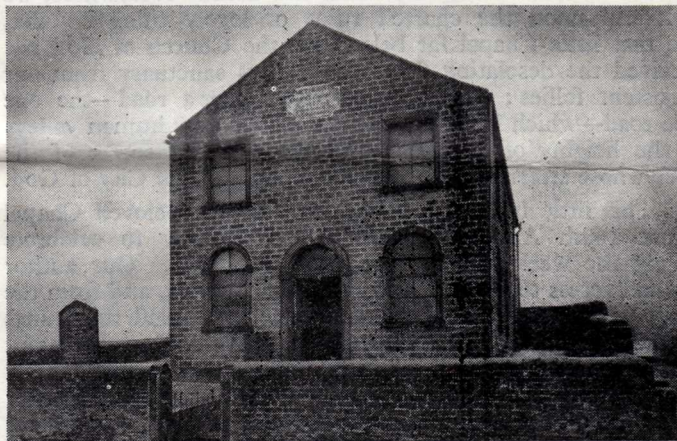
**A Short History  
of 140 Years  
of Methodism  
in Brightholmlee**

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1807—1947

*The  
140th Anniversary  
of Brightholmlee  
Methodist Chapel*



Within these walls, thy Fathers said  
Their prayers in days gone by;  
And now forever at my feet,  
Dust of the Hill they lie.

*A. Wrigley.*

Compiled by H. A. AUCKLAND  
and issued in connection with  
**THE 140th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS**  
JUNE 8th—JUNE 14th, 1947

PRICE 1/-

# Foreword

It is my happy lot to be the Minister of Brightholmlee Chapel, and as a Ministrant in Holy things it is my most glad task to be the leader of this loyal band of folk who keep the light burning in the dubious shadows of our time. Here in this wayside Bethel we lift high the lamp of Hope, we preach the gospel of Him Who is the Light of the World. There was a summer's day, not far distant, when I stood upon the Craggs which dominate this village, and looking down beheld the little Chapel and the houses clustered near, and the long main road running like a ribbon of grey velvet through the valley. Between me and that distant scene were the charred trees where fire had raged in the woods, and below, the river winding its way to the distant sea. It was as if I were looking at a picture of the world that is and the kind of world we want. For have not the fires of war ravaged our world again and again in this last 140 years, and isn't it true that in city, town and hamlet everywhere, we look still upon the charred ruins of lovely things? Yet, like that little Chapel far below me, the Church of God has survived the desolating flames and offers sanctuary from our persistent follies; still stands guard upon a road—the one true road—which leads upward out of our grey human valleys to the heights of heaven; still possesses the secret of the river whose streams make glad the citizens of the City of God.

This little booklet tells the story of our beloved Chapel whose 140th Anniversary we expect fittingly to celebrate during the week commencing June 8th, 1947. Our author has had access to all those records which survive, and from the dusty parchments and the faded pages has culled the names of the saints of yesterday and the toilers of more recent times whose faith and sacrificial labours we salute. 'But some there be that have no memorial,' whose names somehow never found their way into the written records, but whose lives were enriched by the fellowship which they found within this wayside Bethel. Here an innumerable host of men and women and little children have sung 'the praises of our God and King,' have yielded life to the control of the only One Who has the right to be called 'Master and Lord,' and, by the treasure which they themselves possessed, enriched the lives of many others.

For all these faithful servants of God, the named and the unknown, whose lives adorned the truth which they professed, we offer humble thanks to God, together with a prayer that this great Anniversary Year may bring such inspiration to us their children, and to the inhabitants of our village, that we may not prove unworthy of our spiritual heritage.

A. WILLIAMS-BOOTE.

# Brightholmlee

## A SHORT HISTORY OF 140 YEARS OF METHODISM IN BRIGHTHOLMLEE.

It would be very difficult for any of us to picture what our village—or, in those far away days of 1807, our 'hamlet'—and its inhabitants looked like. Their mode of life, their dress, and even their form of worship would be so different from ours of the present day.

Picture, if you can, a Brightholmlee whose small population consisted chiefly of agricultural workers and men in trades associated closely with agriculture, such as the Blacksmith, the Wheelwright, the Miller, etc., with a small sprinkling of Pen-knife and file makers. This, as we have said, would be difficult to imagine, but of one thing one may be certain: many of these folk were Methodists, who, with their wives and families, and arrayed in their best homespun, foregathered in various farm-houses for Sunday worship years before our Chapel was built. Through the consecrated efforts of these our ancestors, Brightholmlee Chapel was built and has flourished for the past 140 years.

If one compares the leisurely speed of such vehicular traffic as existed in those days with present-day speeds, and if one recalls the difference which modern transport has made, one might say that comparatively speaking, the Brightholmlee of 1807 was very much more distant from Sheffield than it is today. The Manchester, Sheffield and Lincoln Railway which runs through Wharncliffe Wood, and which we consider such an ordinary means of transport, was not even thought of, for not until 1845—thirty-eight years after our Chapel was built—was this line opened. The only means of conveyance to Sheffield were the Horse Coach from Oughtibridge (on Tuesdays and Saturdays); a chance lift in a Carrier's Cart or a Milk Float; or the old and time-honoured method which our forefathers used far oftener than we do, namely, 'Shanks Mare.'

John Holland of Sheffield, Journalist and Poet, and writer of hymns for Sunday School Anniversaries, himself a Methodist who attended the Wesleyan Chapel in Carver Street, Sheffield, and who was also a great Pedestrian, says in his 'Tour of the Don' (1837), 'Nearly opposite the Methodist Chapel at Brightholmlee, and which stands close to the Manchester roadside, the pedestrian will see a green lane that leads down to the adjacent margin of the Don in the direction of a cottage called Wharncliffe Holm.' This cottage is known to the present generation as Ewing's Farm.

To return to the more intimate history of the Chapel itself. Definite facts regarding its building seem to be lost in the mists of antiquity. But we may allow our imagination to play with facts and figures to be found in the original Trust Deed and Purchase document of Bargain and Sale. This is a great parchment measuring 2½ feet by 2 feet, and is entitled 'Bargain and Sale. Mr. John Helliwell to Mr. Thomas Holy and others. Dated 2nd January, 1810.' These are the names concerned in this transaction:

John Helliwell	Farmer	Worrall
being the Vendor, and the following:		
Thomas Holy	Esquire	Sheffield.
Jonathan Beet	Cutler	Sheffield.
Thomas Smith	Cutler	Sheffield.
Henry Froggatt	Farmer	Sheffield.
Joseph Hague	Miller	Lower Bradfield.
Reginald Bramwell	Farmer	Storrs.
Thomas Ibbotson	Mason	Worrall.
John Booth	Joiner	Brightholmlee.
George Ashford	Cabinet-maker	Brightholmlee.
John Roper	Blacksmith	Brightholmlee
Thomas Blackwell	Farmer	Bentyn.

Without attempting to bore the reader with the legal phraseology of this massive deed it may be said that it legalises the sale by John Helliwell to Thomas Holy (a personal friend of John Wesley) and the other ten gentlemen named above, of a plot of land known as 'The Great Horse Close,' containing 440 square yards or thereabouts, and abutting towards the East upon the **intended new** turnpike road leading from Wadsley to Langsett, 'and whereon they (i.e., the eleven gentlemen referred to) have built a Methodist Chapel. As there are no records whatever of the builder, one may fairly assume that the Eleven gentlemen built the chapel themselves. Apart from the farmers and cutlers we find (see list) that the trustees counted among their original numbers a mason, a joiner, a cabinet-maker, and a blacksmith. It would not be strange to find such men as these building their own place of worship. The stone, we are led to believe, was quarried on land at Spout House, Brightholmlee.

Among the signatories to the Trust Deed, to which we now return, was John Rimington, Attorney, of Hillsborough Hall. Examination of this Deed reveals that the purchase price for the land was £6 13s. 4d. Certainly a bargain, even in those days! Two important items in this original deed will be of interest. One reads as follows: 'Provided always that the said persons shall preach no other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's Notes upon the New Testament



and four volumes of sermons.' The second reads: 'that whensoever death or other causes reduce the number of Trustees to seven, additional Trustees shall then be elected.' This apparently has only occurred four times in the past 140 years, viz: 1835 1871, 1910 and 1933.

To take a great stride in history to 1910, we now come upon the names of families who in various ways have given years of service to Methodism in Brightholmlee, among them being those of Wood, Brooke, Ellison, Rhodes and Reid. These families have, as Superintendents, Musicians and Sunday School Teachers, given honourable service, and this History would be incomplete if we failed gratefully to acknowledge our appreciation and indebtedness to them and to many others who have played a vital part in the life of the Chapel, including such families as the Marshalls, Crawshaws, Horsfields, Spooners, Wests, Hawleys, Hollings, Machins, Micklethwaites, Oxleys, Robinsons, and innumerable others.

1937 was a golden year for Brightholmlee Methodism, for in that year Mr. L. Platts, builder of the new residential estate, gave, by Deed of Gift, some 246 square yards of freehold land at the rear of the Chapel. This will prove invaluable for the extension of our premises as necessity arises. Such development would have been impossible apart from the munificence of Mr. Platts, whose name will be gratefully remembered by future generations of Methodists in our village.

Another outstanding event of this generation has been the acquisition of the present beautiful organ which was purchased by money raised over a good many years through efforts by the Congregation, and was installed with much rejoicing on February 24th, 1940. The late Mr. W. Wood presided at the opening. With the recent introduction of electricity into the Chapel, an electric blower has become possible, greatly facilitating the work of our organist.

The present writer has always found pleasure in conversing with the older inhabitants of the village. Their reminiscences of the 'good old days' frequently touch upon happy times associated with 'the Chapel.' The trip by wagonette to Smallfield at Bradfield, for instance, was always a red-letter day, as was also the Whit-Monday singing in which both young and old took part, later in the day all joining in the fun on the Gala Field at Grayson's Farm. We are told stories of the Christmas Carolling, when the Chapel Choir, led by the Double Bass and Fiddlers, turned out at 6 o'clock on Christmas morning, wet or fine, and brought seasonable cheer to the outlying farmsteads by the rendering of "Hark, Hark! What News!" and other grand old carols. Our mouths water as these older friends linger among

fragrant memories of ' Ham Teas ' (run by the Sunday School), and of Fruit Banquets held at the time of the Harvest Festivals. One seems to detect a note of regret in the voices of those who recall these high occasions to mind, as though they speak of good things that can be no more, but it seems to us that with just a little ordinary human effort, and a recapturing of the zeal and consecrated spirit of our fathers by this generation, they could all happen again. What better year could be chosen for the revival of these simple pleasures than this year of grace, 1947, during which we celebrate the 140th Anniversary of our Chapel !

One of the most popular features of life in the Chapel is the fortnightly Sisterhood, meeting on Wednesdays, where women of the village may listen to interesting talks on various topics, and where they may enjoy a good cup of tea. Occasionally in the summer months short local walks are arranged, which always prove enjoyable.

We have been concerned in this short essay with the past, and it is only fitting that we should give thanks to those eleven yeomen of Brightholmlee who built our Chapel and to their descendants who have wrought so mightily in our village during the past 140 years. Thanks to the vision which they had our Chapel doors are still open, and fellowship and friendship are offered to all who enter.

Our Sunday services are simple and cheerful, with opportunities for hearty singing and are conducted by preachers who have fully entered into the inheritance of John Wesley. In the Sunday School and Band of Hope care is given that our children shall receive that Christian instruction and background without which life is purposeless and empty.

We look back with gratitude for all that has been achieved in the past, and with the aid of our present strong band of workers face the future with confidence that Brightholmlee Methodism shall move on from strength to strength.

Dear to my childhood were the banks of Don ;  
As year to year succeeding passes on,  
And memory still is adding to her store  
Of hoarded sweets, she never charms me more  
Than when she leads me on by days of dream  
Through the wild beauties of my native stream.

*(from 'THOUGHTS ON HAPPINESS' by  
Rev. Francis Homfrey, Oriel College, Oxford).*

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# Officials

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*Trust Secretary:*

Miss L. MACHIN.

*Trust Treasurer:*

Mr. H. REID.

*Society Stewards:*

Mr. E. BROOKE, Mr. A. WEST, Miss L. MACHIN.

*Poor Stewards:*

Miss D. HORSFIELD, Miss A. RHODES.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL.

*Superintendent:* Mr. F. REID.

*Asst. Superintendent:* Miss L. MACHIN.

*Secretary:* Miss V. WOOD.

*Treasurer:* Mrs. F. REID.

*Band of Hope:*

Miss V. WOOD, Miss M. WOOD.

## SISTERHOOD.

*President:* Mrs. C. DIBNEY.

*Secretary:* Mrs. H. WOOD.

*Treasurer:* Mrs. E. SPOONER.

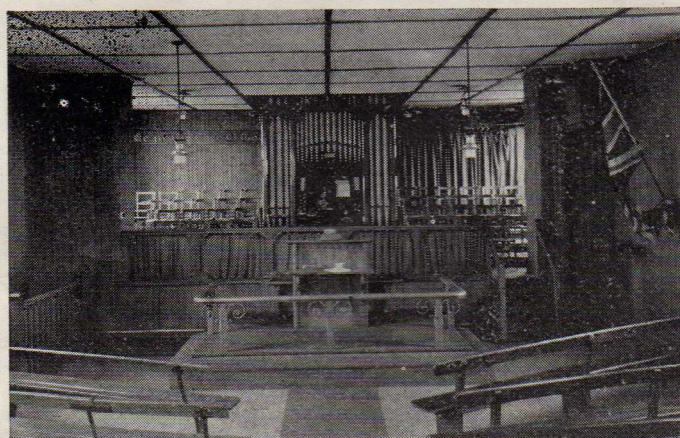
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The Chapel at Brightholmlee as it was in 1807.



and as it is today, 1947



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