



**THE STORY OF
UPPINGHAM
METHODIST CHURCH**

The Beginning

According to records, and the date stone on the front of the building, our Church was built in 1819 at a cost of £486 13s 3d. Behind these historical facts however, lies a story of the early days of Methodism, and of great commitment, courage, and faith by a few farsighted and thinking people of the town. These were not the 'gentry', or people with money and influence, but well respected trades people, farmers, and ordinary families who were prepared to question the 'status quo' and then act upon it. The result of their labours is still with us today in a thriving outward looking fellowship, serving the town.

We do not know whether John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, ever came to Uppingham, but as he was travelling the country, and preaching almost up to his death in 1791, it is possible that some of the early Uppingham Methodists or their forbears could have heard him preach. He first visited Leicester in 1753, and in Northampton, Methodists were meeting from 1767. By 1815 there were Chapels in all the Leicestershire towns, and Rutland had a Wesleyan Chapel in Dean Street, Oakham by 1811.

Methodism usually thrived in areas where the established Church had become moribund. The Wesley brothers brought a breath of fresh air to religious practices, and a 'method' for living that espoused both a deepening faith and a practical outworking. John Wesley was an ordained member of the Church of England until the end of his days, and it was not until after his death that Methodists separated from the established Church. In Wesley's time Methodist services were held at 5am in order that the people should then attend Parish Communion. However Wesley's style of preaching was not always welcome, hence his practice of preaching to a crowd outdoors, or in a barn or any suitable building.

Charles Peach

We have some knowledge of the very early Methodists in Uppingham from a book written in 1909 by the Reverend Josiah Gill,

a Minister from the Melton Mowbray Circuit. He tells us that the first Uppingham Methodist was Charles Peach, and that ‘for some years until the Chapel was built, the preachers found a welcome under his roof’.

A Methodist ‘Society’ as it was called was usually formed a considerable time before the money was raised to build a Chapel. Following the practice laid down by John Wesley, Ministers travelled their Circuit preaching in barns and ordinary houses where there was no Chapel. Hence, as we shall see, Charles Peach enabled services to be held in his Schoolroom.

Charles Peach was, in fact, not born in Uppingham, but came from the village of Deenethorpe, Northants where he was born in 1770. Deenethorpe was an estate village belonging to the Brudenells of Deene Park, and Charles’ father, Bartholomew, was the Chief Constable for the Estate. This status must have enabled Charles to get an education, as he became a Schoolmaster. In 1795 Charles married Elizabeth Leaton of Uppingham, a saddler’s daughter, and at least two children were born to them in Deenethorpe, but by 1802 they were in Uppingham where six more children (some of whom died in infancy) were born between 1802 and 1809.

Charles, Elizabeth and their family lived in High Street East, at what is now Vine House and it is probably in this house that we have the first recorded evidence of a Methodist Society.

The law required that buildings used for religious worship, other than the established Churches, were required to be registered by the Bishop. So on December 1st 1817, Charles Peach applied, in beautifully executed ‘copperplate’ writing to register his Schoolroom as a place of religious worship (see back cover). This was granted on December 13th 1817, and thus began our Church.

Although Charles Peach is noted as the founder of the Chapel and was the Leader in 1820, by 1825, apart from remaining as a Trustee, his name disappears from the records. His father in law, Christopher Leaton, died in 1821, and Charles inherited the house in the High

Street. In 1829 the High Street property was sold by Charles Peach and his wife who are described at that time as ‘late of Uppingham and now of Newborough, Northamptonshire’. It is not known what prompted this move. Newborough, which is now in Cambridgeshire, on the outskirts of Peterborough, was a village newly created in the 1820s when the Fen was drained. One would assume perhaps that Charles went as a Schoolmaster, however, in 1841 Charles was living alone, and was described as a grocer. On his death in 1843, aged 70, he was described as a shopkeeper.

He does not seem to have founded another Chapel in this village, but may have attended the Peterborough Wesleyan Methodist Church in the Registers of which are found between 1831-37 the Baptisms of 7 children of Christopher Leaton Peach, presumably Charles’ son. Christopher is described as a Grocer of the Parish of Eye.

Early Families

From 1817 onwards, Uppingham appears in the records of the Melton Mowbray Circuit, which had itself been part of the Leicester Circuit up till 1808. The first Methodist Baptisms were recorded in Uppingham in December 1818. This would have been the point at which Methodists would have clearly marked themselves out as different. It was not legally possible at that time to marry in a Methodist Church, and although legal, not usual to be buried other than in the Churchyard. Baptism of ones’ children would have been a courageous step, particularly for the tradespeople, who might have lost business by marking themselves out in this way. By declaring oneself ‘Chapel’ at that time many avenues in life would have been closed.

Amongst the earliest Methodists are names of families still around in Uppingham today, or in recent memory – **Drake, Jackson, Gamble, Houghton, Thorpe, Knight and Clarke.**

The Drake family was to be prominent in the Methodist Church from its’ beginnings right into the middle of the twentieth century. John Drake, and his son Henry were stonemasons and their mark can be seen on many of the gravestones in Uppingham churchyard. John

Drake was born in 1788 and married Mary Catling of Oakham in 1812. He is said to have been converted in 1819 and was a leader and Local Preacher for 50 years, dying in 1870. John and Mary, who lived in North Street, had a big family, at least four of the children being baptised as Methodists, but it was their son Henry who followed in his father's footsteps, in the Chapel. Henry, born in 1813, built Wisteria House for himself and had a son, John James, who predeceased him, and a daughter, Mary Ann born in 1850. Mary Ann, and John James' daughter Lillie are noted as holding various offices in the Church well into the twentieth century. Mary Ann died aged 80 in 1936, and her niece Lillie in 1953 aged 70.

John Houghton was a Watchmaker born around 1791 and living in the High Street. He married Susannah Clarke of Lyddington in 1818 (who could have been the daughter of Joseph Clarke, Stonemason of Lyddington and one of the original Trustees). At least three of their children appear in the Baptism register. John was an active leader in the Chapel until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Another family, which was connected with the Chapel for many years, was **Jackson**. John Jackson was a chair turner, and he and his wife Elizabeth had at least four children baptised as Methodists in the early days. Their son Berridge was noted as a Local Preacher in the 1860s.

In the High Street lived **William Gamble** and his wife. William was a currier, and six of their children were baptised as Methodists between 1821 and 1835.

The Building of the Chapel

The Society is noted as having 13 members in 1819, but it is likely that many more would have attended services who were not in formal membership. Nevertheless it must have been a courageous step to acquire land, and build a Chapel.

The land on which the Chapel stands was originally part of a garden and was sold to the Trustees of the Chapel by William Seals on 12th May 1819 for the sum of £58 16s, and the registration of

‘a certain Building called “Wesleyan Chapel” in the Town of Uppingham’

was granted by the Bishop on February 21st 1820.

The legal transactions give us an insight into how the Chapel was managed and who was involved. Methodism required that Chapels were owned by Trustees. These were respected Methodists from around the Circuit, not necessarily from Uppingham. In the days before state education, it would have been desirable to have men (and women did not become Trustees until much later) who could sign their names, and on the Uppingham documents all eleven signatures are clear and legible.

The original Trustees are listed as follows:

*‘Charles Peach of Uppingham aforesaid Schoolmaster **John Drake** of the same place Stonemason **Joseph Clark** of Lyddington in the said County of Rutland Stonemason **John Cooke** of Oakham in the said County of Rutland Grocer **John Katt** of Hambleton in the said County of Rutland Grocer **John Almond** of Langham in the said County of Rutland Shoemaker **William Hayes** of Whissendine in the said County of Rutland Grazier **David Wall** of Melton Mowbray in the County of Leicester Draper **William Phillips** of Halstead in the said County of Leicester Farmer and Grazier **Samuel Mayne** of Somerby in the said County of Leicester Baker and **John Houghton** of Uppingham aforesaid Watchmaker*

No documentation remains to tell us who built the Chapel, but no doubt local labour was used. The building as it stands today is larger than the original. When first built, it stood back from the road with a small garden in front (see front cover). The interior was fitted out with pine pews and a pulpit. In 1820 only the Chapel itself existed, with no rooms behind. There was probably a yard and cottages adjoining. This of course was before the days of mains drainage, gas or electricity, or central heating. To modern eyes it would have seemed a grim place, but it is likely to have been built, to a most up



above - the nineteenth century interior
below - the interior in the 1980's



to date specification for the times. Usually plans had to be approved by 'Conference', the Methodist governing body.

It must have been a great day when the completed chapel was opened. However, there still remained a lot of money to raise and a debt remained for a considerable number of years.

The Life of The Chapel

From the circuit records we can now learn about the ordinary folk of the town, as well as those who were Leaders. John Wesley had laid down that each Society should be organised into Classes. This system continued into modern times, and had much to commend it. Class Leaders were responsible for both the spiritual as well as the physical welfare of their members. In the early records each class is listed under the Leader's name. There were columns to record attendance, those who left the district or emigrated, those 'on trial', and even 'backsliders'!

In 1827 the classes were listed as follows:

<i>John Houghton Leader</i>	<i>John Freeman Leader</i>	<i>John Drake Leader</i>
<i>William Gamble</i>	<i>Elizabeth Clapham</i>	<i>Elizabeth Freeman</i>
<i>Mary Drake</i>	<i>Thomas Clapham</i>	<i>Elizabeth ?Morris</i>
<i>Elizabeth Gamble</i>	<i>John ?Morris</i>	<i>M. Jackson</i>
<i>Richard Cross</i>	<i>? Wade</i>	<i>S. Thorpe</i>
<i>Joseph Freeman</i>	<i>Ann Thorpe</i>	<i>J. Gamble</i>
<i>Thomas Wade</i>	<i>Susan ?Hough</i>	<i>S. ?Mould</i>
<i>Mary Thorp</i>	<i>Thomas Wright</i>	<i>J. Clarke</i>
	<i>Mary Thorpe</i>	

By 1835 there were 50 members in three classes with more families represented – **Knight, Bullock, Nutt, Blackwell** and others.

Whilst the Trustees were men of standing and education, the members were usually ordinary working people.

Thomas **Wade**, was probably the agricultural labourer who lived on North Street in 1841 aged 50, with his wife Elizabeth aged 40.

There are probably several generations of the **Freeman** family represented. A John Freeman married Elizabeth Baines in 1801 in Uppingham, and it was probably their son William who was baptised in the Parish Church in 1803. In 1841 a John Freeman, grocer aged 61 was living in the High Street, with his wife Elizabeth aged 60. 'Mr Freeman' and 'J. Freeman' held various offices in the Church through the 1830's and 40's, and 'Joseph Freeman Junior' became a Trustee.

Richard **Cross** was a cordwainer when he and his wife Elizabeth had their son John, baptised a Methodist in 1822.

The **Kirk** family are interesting. Later some become butchers and Trustees and moved away, but James Kirk, the earliest mentioned was described as a Tollgate Keeper when his son William was baptised a Methodist in 1829. This was presumably the W. Kirk who held the office of Society Steward for about 30 years later in the century. In the middle years of the century, three members of the family were Trustees – 'Mr Kirk of Uppingham, Mr John Kirk of Birmingham, Mr James Kirk of Nottingham'.

Various Stewards were appointed to oversee the organisation of the Society. The Freeman and Drake families mostly held the offices of Society, Chapel and Poor Steward between them up until the 1880s.

In 1863 **Mark Flint** was a Watch and Clock Maker in the High Street. He held various offices from the 1860s onwards' and was also a Local Preacher. In 1871, 'Sister Flint' is noted as a Class Leader – we can surmise that this was his wife. However in 1879 there is a note of 'Mark Flint Trustee of Liddington, but now of Tunstall'.

Mr Geeson, or Samuel Geeson appears in the middle of the century. He was a Whitesmith, who lived in the High Street, and has a gravestone in Uppingham Churchyard.

As well as services on Sunday, there were many meetings to attend – Class Meetings, Stewards meetings, Circuit Meetings, Fund raising Events, etc. But if there was any spare time, the Members were

encouraged to read ‘improving’ literature. Magazines were supplied and records remain of who subscribed in the 1840s:

<i>Sixpenny Magazine</i> -	<i>Mrs Drake, Sarah Cross</i>
<i>Youth’s Instructor</i> -	<i>Mr Kirk</i>
<i>Shilling Magazine</i> -	<i>Mr Geeson, Mr Hope</i>
<i>Youth’s Instructor</i> -	<i>James Kirk</i>
<i>Cottager’s Friend</i> -	<i>Mr Jackson, Mrs Drake, Mrs Burbidge 6 copies</i>
<i>Child’s Magazine</i> -	<i>James Kirk, Mr Jackson, Mrs Drake, Mrs Knight</i>

Perhaps **Mr Hope** was the 40 year old Chairmaker, William Hope, living in High Street in 1841 wife his wife Mary and numerous children.

The Ministers and Preachers

Uppingham became part of the Oakham Circuit in 1825, which presumably covered all 17 Rutland Chapels. For most of the nineteenth century, two or sometimes three Ministers were ‘stationed’ in the Circuit. They were placed by the Methodist Conference, usually for a two year period. It is not clear for how long Uppingham had its’ own Minister living in the town, but from 1817 – 1820, Baptisms of Uppingham infants were carried out by Reverends John Hobson, Leonard Posnett and William Trampleasure. The usual practice was for the Minister to travel the Circuit according to the ‘Circuit Plan’, setting off sometimes for a fortnight at a time, in the manner of John Wesley. Each Society was required to provide hospitality when the Minister visited. The Oakham Ministers were fortunate that the Circuit provided a horse, but nevertheless it was a hard life for them, living on a subsistence income, and hardly seeing their families.

In addition to ordained Ministers, Methodism, from its’ early days, used ‘Local Preachers’, lay men from all walks of life who assisted in taking services in the Circuit. From the records of the Quarterly Preachers Meetings, we find names and detail about their training and

discipline. It was not uncommon for an enquiry to be held if a Preacher had not 'fulfilled his appointment'.

As well as names already mentioned, **Mr Stanyon** was a Local Preacher in 1847. He was probably Charles Stanyon, a Brazier and Tinman living in High Street.

In 1897 it was reported that:

'Bro Browett, Dalby, Hill and Parr continued on trial. The reports of the trial sermons of Bros Hill and Parr were highly satisfactory but inasmuch as they had not finished reading Wesley's 53 Sermons and notes on New Testament it was decided they should come up again at the March mtg.'

It is recorded that Bro Dalby passed in Dec 1898, but Bro Browett was still 'on trial' in 1903, and there is no record of him ever passing. Perhaps the 53 sermons proved too much for him!

Sunday Services and Collections

No records have been found to tell us what the Sunday Services were like in Uppingham, but they are likely to have followed the pattern of other Methodist Services of the time.

The great hymns of the Wesley brothers would have been sung. As many of the congregation would not have been able to read, the practice of 'lining out' was probably followed – the words being read out, usually two lines at a time, before being sung. A harmonium was purchased in 1874, but prior to this the singing may have been unaccompanied unless perhaps a string instrument was used.

The Sermon was a highlight of the Service, the most popular Preachers being those who could teach and exhort, but could also relate to the lives of the members.

In the early days of Methodism there were no regular collections at the Sunday Services, but members of a Society paid a Pew Rent to meet the costs of a Chapel. At Uppingham, Pew rents were not

abolished until 1928. There were, however, 'Free Sittings' for the poorer folk, or those not full members.

Societies were required to collect money for various Methodist causes. In 1877 Uppingham raised 16s 3d for the 'New Kingswood and Woodhouse Grove Schools Collections' (Methodist Schools originally started by John Wesley), and 17s 11d for the 'Chapel Fund' (this might have been a fund for 'distressed Chapels'). A less well supported cause was the 'Worn Out Ministers' Fund which in 1881 raised only £1.

Growth and Rebuilding

Reverend Gill records that there was dissension in the Church in the middle of the nineteenth century causing several leaders and Trustees to leave, and that 'the second Minister who had resided in Uppingham was withdrawn'. He notes that a membership of 40 dropped to a handful under 'two loyal leaders', John Houghton and John Drake. Certainly records show that for the 10 years, 1852-62, there was only one Minister for the Circuit.

However numbers seemed to have been fairly large when the first and only Religious Census was taken in 1851 that showed that 'Uppingham Wesleyan' had:

*130 'sittings' with an additional 64 free 'sittings'
Morning attendance 50, with an additional 30 in the Sunday School,
Afternoon Sunday School 27
Evening congregation 150*

By the 1860s the Church had grown again. John Drake and Mark Flint were joined as Leaders by **Thomas Marchant**, and **GH Holmes**. A lay evangelist was appointed to the town and a revival led to the need to enlarge the Chapel.

The 1870s rebuilding brought the Chapel forward to the level of the two adjoining cottages on North Street. Details of the enlarged space is given in a 'Schedule of Sittings' in 1891:

*additional seats obtained by enlargement, 50
average number of inches allowed per sitting, 18
available for letting 120, free 20
set apart for schoolchildren other than free sitting, 40
Total 180*

The windows were altered, and it is possible that a heating system was installed at this time. Lighting may have still have been by oil lamps or candles as there is no mention of a gas bill before 1893 and electricity was not installed until 1932.

It is likely that Henry Drake, the Stonemason, worked on the alterations to the Chapel, as in 1874, it is noted that £12, the final instalment on the building account was paid to Mr Drake.

The Sunday School

In 1887 the Schoolroom was built (now occupied by the Meeting Room and kitchen). It was reported in the Stamford and Rutland Mercury in September 1887:

Memorial stones of the Wesleyan Sunday School were laid on the 15th inst. The proceedings commenced by singing hymn 993 after which the Rev.F. Truman, superintendent, offered prayers. The stones, five in number, were laid by the following gentlemen:-The Rev. T. Inglis Walsh of Leicester, chairman of the Nottingham and Derby district; Mr George Barnett, of Wing, senior circuit steward; Mr John Clarke of Stockport, who 40 years ago resided in Uppingham, and was a teacher in the Wesleyan Sunday School; Mr J.W. Sneath, of Uppingham; and (in the absence of Mr James White, junior circuit steward) the Rev.W. Nash, Congregational minister of Ashley, near Market Harborough. Several bricks were afterwards laid by scholars of the school, who at the same time deposited thereon the money they had collected for the building fund. A meat tea was afterwards provided in the chapel, at which about 70 sat down. A 6.30. service was held, the preacher being the Rev. T. Inglis Walsh. The attendance was not large. The collection and tea realised about 10l.

The five memorial stones can still be seen on the building, but if they ever held inscriptions, time has obliterated them.

There is also a stone inscribed:

'Wesleyan School Jubilee 1887'

It is not known which Jubilee this commemorates – the Methodist Conference had laid down rules for the management of Sunday Schools in 1827; perhaps this was when it was formalised in Uppingham.

Mr J. Clarke of Stockport, mentioned in the report as an early teacher was probably the 'J. Clarke' who was in the list of members in 1827, and could have been the son of Joseph Clarke, Trustee, thereby making him the brother of Susannah, wife of John Houghton.

Mr J.W. Sneath (John Wesley Sneath) is the first mentioned Sunday School Superintendent. He was also a Class leader, Chapel Steward, and Trustee both at Uppingham and Tugby. However, in the list of Trustees for 1906, he is noted as being in Australia. There was also a William Charles Sneath, and in 1932, James William Oliver Sneat(sic) was a Trustee.

The Cottages

The building works in 1887 included more than the Schoolroom. It was noted that there was 'a new school, classroom and vestry, and the dwelling house at back was restored'.

Prior to 1887, the Chapel consisted of only the main worship area. The vestry area was a separate cottage. It is not known precisely when this cottage came into the possession of the Chapel, but at some point, both this cottage and the present No 3 North Street West were owned by the Chapel, No 3 North Street West being known as Wesley House, and presumably intended to be used as a Manse.

The alterations seemed to have been ongoing over several years as in Sept 5th 1892, the builder E.H. Dorman, of Adderley Street, sent to Rev. Clutterbuck, Wesley Cottage, Oakham:

'Specification for proposed alterations and new roof to Wesley House, North Street, Uppingham'

These alterations seem to have caused a neighbourly dispute as a correspondence ensued regarding the encroachment of a gable end onto 'Mr Haslam's property'. Mr Haslam is noted as of Brooklands, and a Master at Uppingham School.

A letter from William H. Brown, 4, St Charles Square, North Kensington dated 9/10/1892 states:

'The piece of Garden Ground was purchased by my father about 40 years ago from Lord Gainsborough. It was then a Farm Yard occupied with (sic) the Falcon Hotel. An old barn extended the whole length on the North side which was pulled down and it was found that the cottage at the East End was built into the Gable of this old barn.....the Gable end of the Barn was then pulled entirely down and rebuilt by my father running the cottage into it as it was in the old Barn Gable before'

The alterations were presumably completed, with further repairs noted by Thorpe and Dalby, but from records it seems that from that time the two cottages were let out. One cottage was let to Mrs Pennistone, and later, rent is also received from H. Glenn, both of these being Chapel members. At some point part of the cottage immediately next to the Church was partially amalgamated with the Chapel to form a vestry. Later it became a shop, and was used as such intermittently from 1911 at until 1977, when for the first time a kitchen was provided.

The end of the Nineteenth Century

New names came into the Chapel as the century drew to a close. In 1891 the Stewards were

W.Kirk, Society Steward; FA Green, Poor Steward; JW Sneath, Chapel Steward

and in 1892 the Class Leaders and numbers are listed as:

Mrs Field 9 RL Lawn 3 Mrs Green, Mrs Gilbert 14
Mr Pearce 18 FA Green 10

In 1898 a request was made to the Circuit Meeting to change the time of the Morning Service from 10.30 to 11am, but a compromise was recommended of 10.45am, at which time it continues today!

So by the end of the nineteenth century, Uppingham had a flourishing Methodist Chapel with a building suited to the times, which, with some modernisation was to remain largely unaltered until the end of the next century.

The Twentieth Century.

Methodism had split into various factions throughout the nineteenth century, the best known being the Wesleyans and Primitives. Gradually various amalgamations took place, and by 1932 it became the Methodist Church of Great Britain. Uppingham had always been Wesleyan. By 1935, it had again become part of the Melton Mowbray Circuit, and remained as such until 1997 when it was moved to the Stamford and Rutland Circuit

With the dawn of a new century, women appear more frequently in office. In 1902 Mrs Gilbert, and Mrs J. Harris were Class Leaders, and Miss Drake was a Chapel Steward

The fifteen Trustees in 1925:

<i>Amos Thorpe</i>	<i>Ridlington</i>	<i>farmer</i>
<i>George Spencer</i>	<i>present residence unknown</i>	
<i>George Hickling Thurman</i>	<i>Knossington</i>	<i>farmer</i>
<i>Thomas Hickling Thurman</i>	<i>Knossington</i>	<i>farmer</i>
<i>Robert William Dyer</i>	<i>Uppingham</i>	<i>baker</i>

<i>Robert Charles Brown</i>	<i>Uppingham</i>	<i>Doctor's servant</i>
<i>Seth James Bellamy Brown</i>	<i>Uppingham</i>	<i>retired postman</i>
<i>Fred Burn</i>	<i>Uppingham</i>	<i>porter</i>
<i>Mary Ann Drake</i>	<i>Uppingham</i>	
<i>Zillah Gilbert</i>	<i>Uppingham</i>	
<i>Alfred Henry Dyer</i>	<i>Uppingham</i>	<i>confectioner</i>
<i>Alfred Gray</i>	<i>Bisbrooke</i>	<i>farmer</i>
<i>Ernest Price</i>	<i>Uppingham</i>	<i>boot merchant</i>
<i>Walter Squirrell</i>	<i>Uppingham</i>	<i>retired tradesman</i>
<i>Hedley William Worley</i>	<i>Uppingham</i>	<i>woodwork instructor</i>

Zillah Gilbert, or Mrs Gilbert first appears as a Class Leader in the 1890's. She is still shown as a Trustee in 1925 and is said to be a founder member of the Sisterhood in 1928. In the 1920's, a **Miss Gilbert** is the organist and Choirmistress, – perhaps she is a daughter. Both Mrs and Miss Gilbert appear on the photograph of the Sisterhood taken in 1931.

Father and son **RW** and **AH Dyer** were bakers and were active in the Chapel in the early part of the century. **Mrs Dyer**, another founder member of the Sisterhood also appears on the photograph.

Bisbrooke had no Methodist Chapel, so **Alfred Gray** is remembered as travelling by horse and trap, and sitting in the front seat using a large ear trumpet.

Another family prominent in the early part of the century was that of **Brown**. **Mr Seth James Bellamy Brown**, variously described as a postman or shepherd was a respected Local Preacher, serving as Choirmaster and Sunday School Superintendent. His daughter, Minnie, married **Tom Woods**, and was also an organist. The lectern, still in use today, was given in their memory.

The name of **Glenn** is well remembered in the town today. 'Bro Glenn is first mentioned as a Class Leader in 1877, and John Henry Glenn was a Steward and Trustee from 1906. His wife was an organist in 1915.



The Sisterhood in 1931

Back row left to right: M. Brothwell, Mrs Tyers, Mrs Roberts, Miss Tawn, Mrs Thorpe, Mrs Liquorish, Mrs Chamberlain, Isobel Price, Miss Macmillan

3rd row: Mrs Burn, Mrs Wadland, Mrs Barney Smith, Mrs Barnett, Mrs Maraton, Mrs Buzzard, Mrs Smith, Mrs Trace, Miss M. Davies.

2nd row: Eileen Langford, Mrs Dyer, Mrs Wignall, Mrs Reeve, Mrs Cooper, Miss A. Gilbert, Mrs Glitheroe, Mrs Nutt, Lillian Weed, Mrs Robb, Mrs Smith

Front row: Mrs Blackie Thorpe, Mrs Wignall, ?, ?, Mrs Gilbert, Mrs Foster, Mrs Kernick, Mrs Grace, Mrs Atton

seated on ground: Mrs Holmes and Ted, Jean and Mrs Stephens

Other names within living memory are **Mr Squirrel**, who married **Miss Nutt**, and named his house (still so named), ‘The Nutshell’, **Mr and Mrs Robb, Fred and Sarah Burn**, and many other ‘saints of God’ who faithfully served the Chapel and are lovingly remembered.

During the twentieth century, before the days of mass entertainment, the Chapel was the focus of social life for its’ members. The Wesley Guild was in existence for the whole of the first half of the twentieth century. The Sisterhood and the Women’s Bright Hour were popular Meetings for the women, the Sisterhood only finally closing in the 1990s. The Choir, first mentioned in the records in the 1900s is likely to have given concerts and played a prominent part in services and special events. Missionary work had an important profile – in 1907 Miss L Drake was the Foreign Missions Secretary

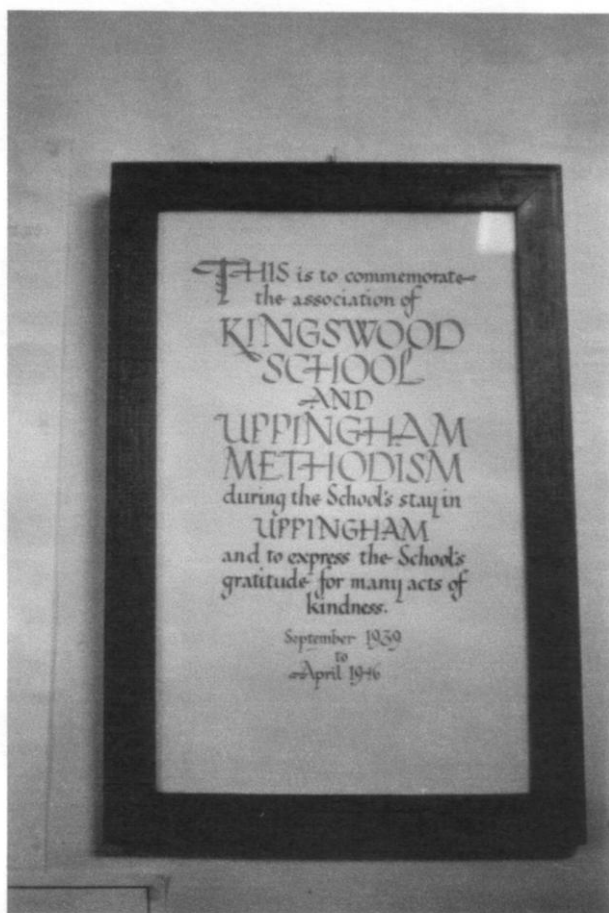
A pipe organ was installed in 1913, and after discussion in 1928, electricity was connected in 1932 but by 1935, the building was again in need of repair, and the Circuit Meeting congratulated Uppingham on ‘new heating apparatus and redecoration of church and school’.

World Wars

Unusually, the Chapel does not have Memorials to either of the two World Wars. The town of Uppingham, in common with most small communities lost many young men in World War I so it is likely that some would have been Methodists.

The Second World War saw the evacuation of the Methodist School, Kingswood, to Uppingham School. Strong links were forged with the Chapel which are remembered to this day. The Kingswood Chaplain, the Reverend R. Davies, assisted with the Ministry in Uppingham and helped to keep the Chapel going when it was at a low ebb. When Kingswood left they gave a commemorative board.

In common with all buildings, in 1940, the Chapel had to purchase ‘black out’ curtains – the cost of which is recorded at £2 13s 10d. When the blackout restrictions were lifted in 1944, a formal request was made for a light bulb in the porch



The Board presented by Kingswood School commemorating their wartime links with the Uppingham Methodists

Post War Changes

As at most times in its' history, the Chapel experienced both ups and downs in the twentieth century. The Sunday School attracted quite large numbers in the first half – in 1948 there were 37 children, but by 1960 it had to close, and the Chapel itself was at a very low ebb, with the buildings needing refurbishment. Fortunately new families began to arrive in the town, and things took off again. Wesley House was sold in 1971, and the rooms at the rear of the Chapel, which many local people remember being used as a Barber's Shop, were no longer let out, but converted into a vestry and kitchen.

However, by the 1990's, the whole of the buildings, part of which were by then about 170 years old were in a very bad state, and not suitable for modern needs.

The Crossroads Project

In 1994, the Crossroads Project was launched to raise money to completely refurbish the premises.

Many fundraising events were held and together with personal giving, and grant aid, in excess of £180, 00 was raised in five years.

In 1999 the refurbishment of the premises was complete, keeping the historic exterior, but providing a comfortable modern multi purpose building inside. As in the past, local labour was used, the building firm F.C. Evans carrying out most of the work.

The Church (as it is now known) reopened in September 1999 ready for a new century of Christian Service to Uppingham and beyond.

The New Millennium

And so our Church continues the work begun nearly 200 years ago. We are proud of our heritage, and remember the folk who stepped forward in faith two centuries ago, but above all, our emphasis is on looking forward.

Today we are a thriving fellowship, outward looking, and together with other Churches in the town seeking to bring the Christian message and to serve our town and community in many different ways.

Margaret Stacey September 2001

Acknowledgements and Sources

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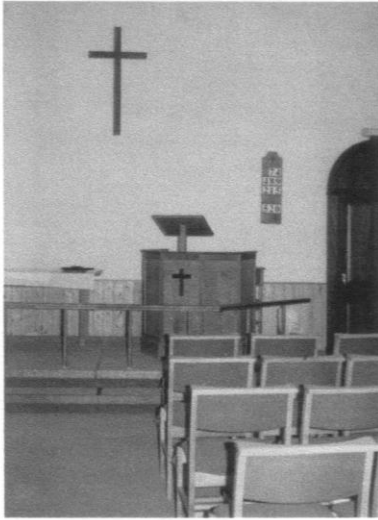
Professor Alan Rogers and the Uppingham Local History Group

The main sources used have been Methodist Records, Parish Registers and Census Returns seen in various Record Offices and Libraries.

For further information on references, sources, or bibliography, contact

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New Millenium**

The refurbished
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I, Charles Peck of Uppingham
in the County of Rutland do hereby certify, that
my School Book

is intended forthwith to be used as a place of religious worship by an
Assembly or Congregation of Protestants; and I do hereby require you
to register and record the same according to the provisions of an Act passed
in the 52^d year of the reign of his Majesty King George the Third,
intituled "An Act to repeal certain Acts, and amend other Acts, relating
to religious Worship, and Assemblies, and Persons teaching or preaching
therein;" and hereby require a certificate thereof. Witness my hand this

first day of December. 1817

Charles Peck