

# MEMORIAL BOOKLET



## HORWICH MOOR METHODIST CHURCH

**1869 - 2016**

"Tucked away in a fold of the hill below the crest of the moor, snugly shielded from the biting winds of winter, but admirably situated to receive the full glow of summer sunshine, rests a little stone building which to successive generations has been a second home . . . . their chapel".

(Horwich Journal, 11<sup>th</sup> April 1969)

*Historical notes extracted from "Horwich Moor Methodist Church 1869-1994" by Christine Aplin.*

*Photographs by Brian Senior.*

*Editors: Kathy Denton and Helen Stuart*

Sadly the life of the chapel at Horwich Moor has come to its natural conclusion and life must move on in a world which is ever changing and which calls for Christian people to respond to changes by bringing their love, dedication and enthusiasm to bear wherever it is needed.



Horwich Moor chapel may cease to host worship, but the rich story of its Christian presence in Horwich should never be forgotten.

The start of Methodism at Horwich Moor predated the building of the chapel. The Primitive Methodist Sunday School was established in 1834. It met in the "Upper Room" at the end of the block of cottages which still overlook the chapel. It also served as a day school and the place where "the church" met. The cornerstone of the chapel was laid on April 17<sup>th</sup> 1869, as can be seen in the ceremonial trowel which hangs in the chapel.



The opening of the Horwich Locomotive works in 1892 caused a massive increase in the local population and the churches were not slow in their missionary activity. Horwich Moor was part of The Horwich Mission Station which was part of the Manchester District Mission Committee of the Primitive Methodist Connection.



The Minister was in charge of all the work of the Mission in Horwich as well as leading the weekly services and weekly Fellowship Class (with a salary of £110 per year!). In 1903 there were about 20 members of the church.

In 1898 the work at Horwich became independent of the Manchester District Mission Committee and by 1907-8 the church became independent with its own body of trustees. It then joined the Bolton One Circuit.

The war memorial in the chapel bears witness to the impact on the community of the First World War. The chapel members put on social evenings "For Soldier's Parcels".



Between the wars life was very active in the chapel community. As well as days out by wagonette there were Anniversary processions touring the district and operettas and concerts. The Annual Carnival was held in a field near The Blundell Arms,



All these issues were overcome with the help of amazingly generous personal donations which shows both the faith and the commitment of the worshipping community.





It is clear that there have been many dedicated individuals who have served the chapel over the years. Some have carried out roles such as leader of the choir, church organist, Sunday School leaders and Church officers over many decades. There is a long history of people dedicated to maintaining the chapel in good condition.

Major renovations were carried out in 1928. In 1951 the chapel needed to be completely rewired. Since then there have been many problems with the roof, the heating and with dry rot.



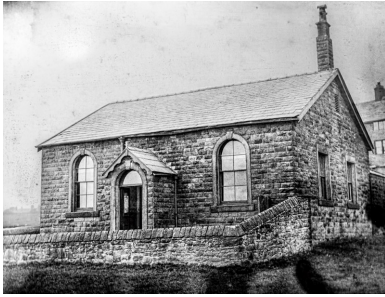
complete with a Rose Queen and Morris Dancers.

The concerts were well rehearsed and successful events with scenery specially painted for the occasion. There were quite a few children and Children's Operettas were performed and proved very successful. There seemed to be a concert for every occasion and to support every cause. The Men's Class had an annual trip to Southport where they held a Bowling Handicap.



Sunday Worship was often led by choirs invited from other places of worship and also included Horwich Moor's own choir. In June 1931 Horwich Moor folk joined a United Methodist Rally at the Victoria Wesleyan Church. With the Union of all Methodists the following year (1932), Horwich Moor became part of the Park Street, Bolton Circuit.





1919

The Second World War brought further stress and hardship and the church did much to support families where the man of the house had gone off to "The Front". Many of those that didn't worked at Horwich Locomotive Works on tanks and munitions. Membership suffered again, but once more, when the war was over, the chapel revived and proceeded as before despite austerity. There was a keen interest in amateur dramatics in the 1950's. Plans were even submitted to alter the building for the productions of plays and pantomimes. But the trustees were clear that it should remain as a church as was its primary purpose.



2016

The 1970's and 1980's was another period of great activity. Regular retreats took place at Whalley Abbey and Crawshaw Booth. The Sunday School had 12 on the roll with 7 attending regularly. In 1981 the garden was cleared and planted. It now forms a tranquil surround to the chapel.



Many offerings, including a font, organ, a cross, a Memorial Bible and the Last Supper tapestry were made in memory of deceased loved-ones so enhancing the sense of devotion in the building.