



A

HISTORY

of the

Cheltenham Methodist Church

Charman Road

1854 - 1954

by

Dr. K. A. STEPHENSON

## PROGRAMME



- Saturday, 21st—5.45 p.m.: Welcome Tea  
8 p.m.: Impromptu Concert
- Sunday, 22nd—11 a.m.: Rev. Rex Matthias, M.A.,  
Dip.R.Ed.  
2.45 p.m.: An Afternoon with the Sun-  
day School  
7 p.m.: Rev. C. W. J. Mannering  
L.Th.
- Tuesday, 24th—8 p.m.: Grand Concert
- Thursday, 26th—2.15 p.m.: Ladies' Guild Birthday  
Party  
8 p.m.: Circuit Youth Rally  
Speaker: Rev. N. Kemp, Presi-  
dent of Conference
- Saturday, 28th—9 a.m.: Centenary Fete  
2.30 p.m.: Garden Party, Tennis, Pony  
Rides, etc., for children.
- Sunday, 29th—11 a.m.: Rev. Alan Walker, M.A.,  
3 p.m.: Mission to the Nation  
7 p.m.: Leader

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# Cheltenham Methodist Church

Charman Road

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1854 - 1954

A CENTURY of METHODISM.



CHELTENHAM METHODIST CHURCH

## Centenary Souvenir Program

A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

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## Foreword

One hundred years have passed! It is difficult for us to go back in spirit to those early days of our capital city, so much that has become almost an essential part of our life today was then unknown. In one particular at least we can feel a bond of sympathy - the country lay under the threat of war. England was at war with Russia in the Crimea, and the invasion of Port Phillip Bay by a Russian fleet was regarded by many as a distinct possibility. One almost modern touch was the suggestion that, in such an event, the neutral shipping should be placed outside the British, and the author of this scheme confidently predicted that the Russians would hesitate to fire on the Stars and Stripes.

The Bible was handled as a book of puzzles in those days, just as at present. The public in Melbourne were invited to a meeting to hear what prophecy had to say about the state of things in Europe, just as we have been invited recently to hear prophetic comments on the H-bomb. Past failure to predict the date of Armageddon seems to have no deterrent effect on others who glibly foretell the future from the dark sayings of the Apocalypse and Daniel, and who know all about Gog and the prince of Rosh in Ezekiel. There are so many people who arrive at the infirmities of age without having attained any of its wisdom. The Christianity of the Russians was discussed in the press, and one man claimed to know for a fact that millions of Russians were no better than pagans - a comment which has also a distinctly modern sound.

Melbourne in 1854 had a population of about 100,000 - a census had just been taken but the figure obtained must be regarded as approximate as many letters appeared in the daily papers complaining of the inefficient work done in gathering information. The tempo of the city was much slower than it is today, and lorry drivers were fined for trotting their horses in the main streets. The first steam railway ever to be operated in Australia was still to have its official opening when our Church began, though officials had made the trip from Melbourne to Sandridge (now Port Melbourne) a few months earlier. The Melbourne Omnibus Company, the forerunner of the Tramways Board was not formed until 1869 and the first Horse Tram commenced operations in 1887.

Originally Beaumaris covered a much larger area than at present, and the name Cheltenham gradually came into use from the "Cheltenham Hotel" erected near the corner of Centre Dandenong Road and Nepean Highway.

The district was originally densely wooded. It is reported that a certain horse thief who was away from home was wanted by the police. His wife and child set out to warn him, became lost and died of starvation. Adam Lindsay Gordon was educated at Cheltenham, England, and he found the country very attractive, especially that between Brighton and Cheltenham. He often rode between the two places and it is said that some of his best scenery verse was inspired by what he saw during these rides.

Moorabbin was declared a Roads Board district in 1862, proclaimed a shire in 1871 and a city in 1934.

"Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that begat us".

It was on Sunday, August 24th, 1854, that the Rev. J. Bickford, of the extensive Brighton circuit, called on Mr. Stephen Charman of Beaumaris, and discussed with him the founding of a Chapel. Mr. Charman donated about two acres of land on which to erect the building, but as a church is not the building but the body of worshippers, we may officially date the opening as August 31st, when the first service was conducted on the verandah of Mr. Charman's home. This was a wattle and daub structure on the west side of Charman Road a little north of Balcombe Road, and it stood there for many years afterwards.

I would like to discuss in some detail the colourful personality of the man who preached on that occasion. Mr. Charles Stone was born in London in 1819 and emigrated to Hobart where he landed with his parents in 1834. He attended the church there and on March 4th, 1837, he said "I found peace through believing in Jesus, my Saviour". Next year he left for Victoria and here he continued to study and also helped to conduct church services. At the first local preachers' meeting held at the Swanston Street preaching house, July 5th, 1840, Charles Stone was received on trial as a local preacher. Later he opened a day school at Williamstown but removed to Brighton in 1845. Here for six years he continued teaching but later relinquished this work and opened business as a gardener and florist. He gave an increasingly larger amount of time to his Master's service and went many a weary mile on horseback to outlying parts - riding through bush and swamp to carry the good news. He was popularly known as Father Stone and he not only preached and conducted prayer meetings, but was a source of comfort and help in other directions, having some knowledge of law and "bush medicine". Such was the man to whom was entrusted much of the spiritual guidance of the young church.

Conference still holds a large legal document dated 2/1/1855 where it is stated that, for the sum of five shillings sterling, Stephen Charman agreed to sell all that parcel of land etc. to the Rev. James Bickford, Charles Stone, and then follow the names of eight others who belonged to either the Brighton or Moorabbin district.

On March 20th, 1857, Rev. J. Bickford laid the first block for the building and on April 6th, Zion Chapel was open for worship and the first service was conducted by the Rev. D.J. Draper. The building erected in Balcombe Road was a weatherboard structure 30 feet by 15 feet with seating capacity for 80 persons, and it was packed for this service. The cost of the building and furnishings was £150 and this was covered by subscriptions and the opening day collections.

Helpers in those early days were Mr. & Mrs. Moysey - a George Bickford Moysey later became a Church of Christ Pastor, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Marshall Miller - Mr. Miller was a blacksmith and veterinary surgeon. Mrs. Miller lived until June 25th, 1898, surviving her husband by about 13 years. They were the parents of Mrs. Buckley who lived in Collins Street, Mentone. Mr. and Mrs. William Wraight - Mr. Wraight was born May 5th, 1810 and died October 2nd, 1891. In England he had had a small private school in Bromley near London and had also been a sexton. He became the local grave digger and I have seen the cover of the Bible (printed by the

British and Foreign Bible Society) that was used by him at the cemetery. In those days an old spring cart was the only means of conveying a coffin, and Mr. Wraight is said to have lent an air of dignity to the primitive arrangements on those sad occasions. Mr. and Mrs. Judd, who have many descendants in the district, Mr. and Mrs. Beasley - Mr. Beasley had a butcher's shop and his wife was a well-loved old lady affectionately known as Grandma Beasley. There was also Mr. Hughes. Charles Stone was class leader.

For a time all seemed well, but more difficult days lay ahead. A great philosopher has said that as a beginning is uncreated it cannot be destroyed, but we know that many a promising beginning has failed to bear fruit, and for a time the little church struggled to keep its witness alive. This was largely due to the opening of another Church of a different denomination in the district.

As we go through the years we find that the number of church members fluctuated between 7 and 12 although the number of "hearers" was much larger. In 1863 we note the following:- Beaumaris possessed one Chapel, had two day school teachers and three Sabbath school teachers. Number of Church members 8, Sabbath scholars 18, with an average attendance of 13.

The September quarter 1863 shows these collections;- Church Fund £8/ 3/ 4., Poor's Fund 4/8., Chapel building £1, Church extensions fund 10/5, Benevolent institutions £1/ 4/ 2., Building Church Fund 13/-. , Education of minister's children 9/11d., Worn Out Minister's Fund 12/10d. This last may raise a smile as a naive expression, but I feel that the difficulties of travelling must have imposed a big strain both on the preacher and the horse that carried him. During one quarter of 1864 church members rose to 12, but in the following quarter we find church members 10; backsliders 2.

The above collections are not to be thought of in terms of present money values. Moorabbin was first rated in 1862 and a glance at these rates will give a better indication of the intrinsic worth of the donations.

One farthing per acre on waste land, one penny per acre on meadow, one shilling per acre on cultivated land and 1/-d. in the pound on the annual rental value of properties - and rents were low in those days!

In 1865 Mr. and Mrs. George Woff came from the Clyde district to reside in Beaumaris, and under their influence the life of the Church revived. Mrs. Woff was a Mundy (hence Mundy Street, Mentone) and the Woff garden adjoined that belonging to Mr. Mundy, Mrs. Woff's brother. Mr. Woff reformed the Sunday School and filled all the offices of the little church, his wife not only helping in the school, but also doing all the cleaning of it as well. She was married at an early age and had eleven children, three of whom are still living. Her husband died when her youngest child was but two years old, but she herself lived to see our present church established. Robert Woff took over after his father's death and taught in the Sunday School and held church office. He was ably assisted by Mr. Thomas Chandler who had the Post Office Store in those old coaching days. This was close to the corner of Chesterville Road and Nepean Highway on the East side. He sold stationery, homeopathic medicines and made and repaired shoes also. Both he and "Grandma" Chandler were great church workers and Mr. Chandler was for some time Trust Secretary and Choirmaster in addition.

The Chapel belonged, of course, to the Brighton circuit and at the quarterly meeting of this circuit held at South Brighton on March 31st, 1890, it was proposed to approach the Loan Fund for money to help build a church at Cheltenham on land given by the government. The railway line to Frankston was completed by August 1882 and the government grant was close to the railway station, and on it a weatherboard church was erected.

Thus we find two churches fairly close together in a district much more sparsely populated than at present. Zion Chapel still flourished and in 1893 it had a Sabbath School of 46 with an average attendance of 29. It possessed a library of 140 books, but if these were (as I strongly suspect) of the same type as the books given for Sunday School prizes in those days it is perhaps not surprising that the weekly circulation was only eight.

The year 1893 was a time of transition in many respects. Politically and socially it was a difficult period - the land boom burst, insolvencies were common, and a number of banks failed, amongst them being the one where the Brighton circuit had its funds. By this time the circuit, which covered an immense area, had become unwieldy, and it was decided to divide it into North and South. It was agreed that North Brighton should be responsible for the circuit debt, but that South Brighton should accept the responsibility for the cost of the land purchased for a church site at Mentone.

Beumaris and Cheltenham belonged to the South Brighton or Moorabbin circuit. Unfortunately the minutes dealing with the early days of this section have not been preserved and I have not been able to glean any detailed information.

The wooden church near the railway at Cheltenham was burnt down in 1893 shortly after a Sunday morning service. The exact cause was never known but it is thought that a spark from a passing train set fire to dry leaves in the eaves, the church being surrounded by gum trees. However, history does not relate that the Railways accepted any responsibility for the loss. Later a meeting of the members of the Cheltenham and Beumaris Churches took place, and it was agreed that the two connections should unite and build a brick church in Charman Road near Weatherall Road. On September 14th, 1893, at a meeting of the Building and Loan Fund Committee in Melbourne, a report of the loss of the Cheltenham Church was received together with a statement that the trustees had £120 in hand for rebuilding and at the same meeting the amalgamation of the two churches was approved. Later in January, 1894, the same body also approved of plans and specifications for a brick church to be built at a cost not exceeding £250.

The foundation stone of this church was laid on June 18th, 1894, and members from Mentone and Cheltenham, as well as those from the old Zion Chapel, met later in the completed building for worship. The Balcombe Road church was sold to the Frankston circuit and did good service at Langwarrin for many years. The old Chapel folk felt the parting very much, and some time later services were conducted in a building at Beumaris as well as in the Recreation Hall at Mentone. This meant that the new church served mainly Cheltenham, and as early as 1913 it was felt that a more central site would be preferable. With this in view there was a move to sell the old block of land near the station at £4 per foot, and the brick church as it stood. The committee of the Building and Loan Fund pointed out that the

proceeds of any sale of the church would have to be divided, part going to Mentone, part being retained by them for a future Beaumaris Church, and the remainder being available to Cheltenham.

In 1915 the Cheltenham-Mentone circuit was formed. At least one person was present at both the meetings - first that in which it was agreed to the division of the Brighton Circuit, and the later one when the Cheltenham circuit came into being. This was Cr. Robert Mills J.P., of Heatherton.

We are now at the period of the First World War and a number of young men of the church volunteered. Later an Honour Roll was erected in the Church (it is now in our present church) and on it are the following names of men who never returned - W. M. Whitehead, R. W. Whitehead, L.M. James, C. Keefer and R. E. Marshall.

The Honour Roll was the gift of Mr. William James in memory of his son. Mr. James was a local preacher and trustee and both he and his wife were greatly respected and active church members.

In March, 1918, a deposit was paid on the site of the present church and some time later further land near Hall Street at the rear of the present area was bought, but this was resold by July, 1921. On surveying the old church block near the station, it was discovered that we had included 9 inches of railway land in the property. As good Methodists we hastily restored this to its rightful owners, and then prepared to sell the remainder in blocks at £6 per foot. This was raised to £7 per foot in May, 1917, and it was all sold by 1919 though, through a misunderstanding, the last three blocks were sold at the original price.

In 1891 the Livingston Home for Children was established in Cheltenham and continued to grow. The children attended church and Sunday School and twice during the occupancy of the old brick church additions had to be made to accommodate them. In neither instance did we receive any outside financial assistance for this.

It is interesting in these days to know that the old church was cleaned for 12/6d. per month. For this sum it was to be swept and thoroughly dusted twice a month and washed out twice a year. However for six months during 1919 young ladies of the Rambling Club did this for 6/-d. per month. This Rambling Club commenced about 1918 and included many of the young people, both single and married. A ramble was held on the first Saturday of each month and a picnic on public holidays. They helped to prepare for socials and to clean up afterwards. A number of romances grew out of the club's activities though it was stressed that the rambles were not to be "couple" affairs.

Even after the new block of land was acquired the thought of moving to a new church was painful to many of the members, and at a special meeting 58 voted for renovating the old church and 54 for removing to the new site. However, an amendment was later moved to the effect that after selling all blocks of the station property, a new church be built at once, and this was carried.

In November, 1919, Mr. Robert Woff, who had given "long, steadfast and faithful" service (I quote Mr. Whitehead's minutes) as Trust Secretary



and Steward, resigned and Mr. J. J. Whitehead was appointed secretary in his place.

At first it was proposed to erect a wooden church on account of the scarcity of bricks due to the post-war building programme; but by April, 1920, it was felt that the cost of even a wooden church was prohibitive, so plans were made to renovate the old building and the new block was rented at 2/- per week. However, after the sale of the land near Hall Street, the trustees took their courage in both hands and tenders for the erection of a brick church were invited. When these were received even the lowest of them was thought to be beyond our means, but after a few minor alterations to the plans and specifications, the tender of the late Mr. L. H. Butterworth for £1500 was accepted. The trustees also recorded the following "Resolved that Mrs. Woff, senior, better known to us as Grandma Woff, on account of her long and honourable connection with our Church and cause here, be requested to lay the foundation stone." Her name is engraved on the stone which was placed in position on October 22nd, 1921.

After the church was completed a letter of thanks was sent to Mr. Butterworth expressing gratitude for the extra work he had done for which no charge was made, and also expressing the pleasure and gratification of the Trust in the successful completion of the building. In passing I may mention that the foundation stone was removed by some lads before the ceremony and its temporary loss caused some slight consternation. The philosophy of such acts of depredation has not received the attention it deserves. When an extremely powerful man walks off with the gates of a city (Judges 16.3), his action - especially if you dislike the inhabitants of the city - is regarded as heroic. When young lads carry away a foundation stone in which you have a certain proprietary interest, you feel that their action approaches vandalism, and any humour in the situation is appreciated only after the passage of time. We may smile now about the foundation stone, but I have a feeling that the citizens of Gaza always frowned on any expressions of levity about their missing gate.

In February, 1922, the Rev. Percy Bladen opened our present church and during the week a knife and fork tea was held in the Mechanics Hall, followed by a packed meeting in the church itself. The building finance was arranged through certain private loans, money from the Building and Loan Fund, as well as money received from the sale of land. By 1924 all interest bearing loans were paid, Grandma Woff requesting the pleasure of donating the last £100 of this, and from full and thankful hearts the trustees closed their next meeting by singing the Doxology.

The Church near Weatherall Road was purchased in 1926 by Mr. L. H. Butterworth and it is interesting to know that the old foundation stone was incorporated in the Dingley vicarage.

Grandma Woff passed into the higher service of the unseen church in 1926. She was then 87 years of age and was survived by four sons, three daughters, 33 grandchildren and 40 great grandchildren. Very few are spared to be surrounded by so many loved ones and very few have such a wonderful record of pioneering work for their church. In 1931, Robert Woff, who had left the district, was also called home.

About the same time we suffered the loss of a great church worker in the untimely death of Mr. C. H. Fairbank. Nineteen years previously he had come from Brunswick, and had been a circuit steward first at Moorabbin and later first senior steward of the Cheltenham circuit. He did much to foster the Methodist cause at Mentone, and it was largely due to his initiative that a church was erected there. He is perhaps best known for the wonderful work he did as leader of the Cheltenham young men's class. He was a trustee both of the church and the parsonage and was largely responsible for the purchase of the latter.

On August 19th, 1934, an 80th birthday party of the church was held. Several former ministers and church members were present. It was a happy family gathering -- there was a cake with 80 candles presented by the youngest trustee, and the candles were lit by Mrs. McCurrie representing the Woff family, and Mrs. Percy Woff, eldest grand-daughter of the late Thomas Chandler. May I again quote Mr. Whitehead: "The day was almost ended when we closed the church. The workers were tired but went home happy, with a feeling of gratitude to our Heavenly Father for all His goodness through the 80 years that have passed."

In 1935 Mr. A. L. Boston, who had also come from the Brunswick Circuit, left us to live elsewhere. He was the first choir master in our new church, taught in the Sunday School, held office as a trustee and was treasurer of the Trust for many years. He still retained his place as a Trustee until his death in 1938. Mr. Boston, Mr. Fairbank and Mr. Whitehead spent many hours working and planning together before our present church eventuated.

Numerous minor improvements to our property were instituted commencing in 1939 with special matting for the interior, in 1940 the asphalt paths were replaced by concrete, the interior was repainted and new lights were introduced, some of these being gifts from members. In 1942 an electric blower was installed for the organ, and it was decided that a new Kindergarten building was to be erected as soon as funds were available. Much of the money for these improvements was given by the Ladies' Guild, but in addition the sum of £37/15/-d. was raised by a very fine concert arranged by the late Mr. H. J. King, who personally paid all the expenses. Mr. King was a trustee and Sunday School secretary for many years. I should also mention Mrs. King and her collections for church cleaning and other expenses and the special "Box Afternoons" that she held. She is still an active worker in the Ladies' Guild and has a long church tradition behind her, being related to both the Woff and Beasley families. Another indefatigable worker--an apron expert--is Mrs. J.H. Longmuir and years have not dimmed nor custom staled her infinite variety as a reciter.

In 1940 Mr. L.H. Butterworth, who had been a trustee for many years, and whom I have previously mentioned as the builder of our church, died after a long illness. He knew that he had no chance of recovery but the cheerfulness with which he faced the future was a lesson to all who had the privilege of visiting him.

This was the period of the 2nd World War and for some time we had black cardboard screens over the windows to conform with the black-out regulations. Most of our young men were called up for service and the Church seemed strangely bereft.

In 1943 we were left the residue of the estate of Nurse Watt, over £700, and this together with other money on hand for building purposes, was invested in War loans. These building funds have been augmented by an energetic band of ladies---mainly "young marrieds"---who have worked since 1948 as the Sunday School Auxiliary. Past and present members were also invited to contribute so that the Kindergarten building might be erected as soon as possible after war time restrictions were lifted.

In 1945 church members were asked to vote on our proposed future building activities, and the result was that 7 voted to retain the present building as a church and 56 to use it as a Sunday School and erect a new Church. A plan and elevation of a church building was displayed to act as a stimulus, but as the years have passed we realise that it is a vision for the future, and we must work to make our present building serve the dual purpose, improving it if possible so that, whilst serving as a school it might also have an air of dignity and reverence befitting a church.

In 1941, Mr. Whitehead wished to resign as Trust Secretary, stating that as he had passed the three score and ten mark, he thought better service could be rendered by a younger man. The Trust, however, refused to accept his resignation and promised to give him all possible help so that they would not be deprived of his services. He continued the work until 1946 when he felt that he could no longer carry on the task, and less than a year later the grand old man was with us no more. What an amazing amount of energy was stored in that small frail body! Besides important outside social interests, he had been Sunday School superintendent and had occupied nearly every position in the church, and had held the post of Trust Secretary for 27 years. Few men have worked as hard and consistently for their Master as J.J. Whitehead and few who have had the harrowing experience of losing soldier sons have been able to face life so confidently. His faith lifted him very close to the Great Comforter. The present writer would like to pay a tribute to him for the careful way in which his Trust minutes were kept and also for the very helpful historical summaries which he made, first in 1923 and later in 1935, both of which have been freely used in writing this survey of the Church's activities.

Mr. C.J. Spencer, a trustee of long standing, took over Mr. Whitehead's work and remained with us for about four more years. Besides his secretarial duties, he did many minor repairs about the church premises, and he was presented with a fine water colour painting on leaving us for Geelong.

During this period the schoolroom was used for some time by the State School. Owing to building difficulties, school space could not keep pace with the growing population and we were willing to help in this way. However, it was found almost impossible to keep the room in order, small chairs were broken and in view of this and other minor damage, the Education Department was informed that the room would not be available after the end of 1950. The gift received from the Department more than covered the damage, but we were glad that the children could be accommodated elsewhere. The Ladies' Guild in particular found their meetings more peaceful.

A baptismal font was given to the Church by the parents of Flight Sergeant Donald Stephenson and the Trust erected a tablet to his memory. He



**GRANDMA WOFF,**  
A Great church worker  
who was chosen to lay  
the foundation stone  
of present church.



**MR. A.L. BOSTON,**  
Choir Master and treas-  
urer of trust for many  
years.



**CHARLES STONE,**  
Class Leader who con-  
ducted the first Method-  
ist service in Beaumaris.

**MR. C.H. FAIRBANK,**  
Circuit Steward and  
noted leader of young  
men.

**MR. J.J. WHITEHEAD,**  
a great trust secretary  
who filled many offices  
in the Church.





WILLIAM WRIGHT,  
early worker and 1st sexton.



MR. THOMAS CHANDLER,  
a trust secretary  
and Choir Master.

REV. ALAN WALKER,  
Noted leader of  
The Mission to the Nation  
who conducts the services  
Sunday, August 29th.



REV. C. MANNERING,  
Our Minister today.



was the only young man of the church who did not return from active service. He was a junior steward before enlisting and a member of the young men's bible class.

This class was conducted for many years by our good friends Mr. J. W. Allnutt, who was greatly loved by all the boys who were privileged to have fellowship with him. He has been a trustee for many years and his wife, sons and daughter are all active members of the church.

In 1950 the church Trust accepted the responsibility of raising a certain sum each quarter as Cheltenham's allocation towards the circuit expenses. This meant that if the collections failed to reach a sufficient amount the Trust would have to pay the balance out of Trust funds. Eventually this has led to the re-establishment of the envelope system, but this has not yet been in use for a sufficient period to estimate its efficacy. It is hoped by this means that those who use the church, especially those who send children to Sunday School but who do not attend church themselves, may realise their responsibility to the institution which is working for them.

After Mr. Spencer left us, Mr. D. H. Clark was elected Trust Secretary. It would not be surprising if he is the youngest trustee ever to act in this capacity in our church. In talking of gifts of grace, St. Paul mentions a word translated in our Bible as "governments". The word properly refers to the steering of a ship, and in St. Paul's sense, it means the ability to guide the church in its business affairs. I feel that Mr. Clark has this gift and with the co-operation of our Minister and fellow-trustees much has been achieved during the short period he has held this position.

In 1951 a plan to beautify the church grounds was commenced and £100 was spent as an initial effort. In the same year--mirabile dictus heating units were installed. A heating system had been discussed for years, but previously no one seemed to have the courage to do more than discuss the matter. It has taken some time to accustom ourselves and the Church ventilation to them; on the first occasion they were used, the members of the choir had the sensation that they were being slowly asphyxiated. It was also moved in 1951 that plans for a Kindergarten building be obtained. These plans and specifications were ready in June 1952 and tenders were invited. When these were tabled, the tender of Mr. Sterry was accepted (£3,732/17/-d.) It was hoped to have the building completed before the end of the year but owing to the inevitable shortages (especially Australian roofing iron), the building was not opened until May 1953. The ceremony attracted a large attendance and the Mayor of Moorabbin, Councillor Le Page, in a congratulatory speech, declared the building open, and our Minister, the Rev. C. W. Mannering, dedicated it in words that found an echo in our hearts. It has since been in constant use as a Kindergarten room. On that same Sunday afternoon the primary scholars who were trained by Mrs. Humphreys, presented a pageant and later Dr. E. Cunningham Dax spoke to a crowded church on the care of mental patients. He was guest speaker for the Men's Society and invitations were issued for the occasion.

Since then further improvements have been made to the grounds and the quite extensive lawns give a much neater appearance. I feel that our building now looks as if its members have taken some pride in its surroundings and have expended a considerable amount of loving labour in its upkeep.

In 1953 the organ was repaired and we were without its services for a considerable period. The old motor was sold and a new one installed in the organ and the manual was altered. Mr. J.D. Campbell very generously paid all the expenses for these extensive alterations. We are hoping to effect other improvements to the interior of the church before the actual centenary celebrations are held.

The church, indeed the whole circuit, suffered a sad loss when the wife of our well loved minister died suddenly on April 23rd, 1954. Although not in good health she had not spared herself and had taken her place in all the women's activities of the circuit. The overcrowded church at the service held a few days later, testified to the esteem with which she was regarded - indeed she had won all hearts by the charm of her personality. But the wonderful faith of Mr. Mannering has, I feel sure, lifted up all hearts and drawn us closer to him, and we have been gainers by his example.

As I have read through the minutes of meetings I have felt that we have been blessed with leaders who have had a sense of their vocation, and that between our ministers and our members there has been a sincere co-operation in their endeavours to render the work of the church more efficient.

I would like to mention well known past members and indicate in brief any special church organisations with which they were associated. It is inevitable that some names will be omitted and I apologise in advance for any errors in this regard.

Mr. & Mrs. Buckley and family of Collins Street, Mentone. Mrs. Buckley taught at a little school near the Latrobe Street railway gates, she was the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Miller of the very early days. A son's name is on the Honor Roll. Mr. and Misses Richmond, Miss Francis, Mrs. Francis (grandmother of the Sullivan family), Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Clem. Phillips and Misses Phillips (all choir members. Clem worked at Thompson's store, afterwards Fairbank's and now Clark's and Lucas'). Mr. & Mrs. Fred Lake, Amy and Aubrey (Dandenong Road, members of the Choir). Mr. & Mrs. C.E. Bright, Paul, John and Noel (Mrs. Bright was the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. James). Mr. & Mrs. Lumley, Kath, Isobel, Evelyn and Geoff. (Mr. Lumley was a local preacher), the Orgill family (Mr. Orgill was the architect of our present church and donated quite a proportion of his fees back to the Trust). Mr. & Mrs. Jas. Coyle, Dorothy and George. Mr. Parsons (choir) and Mrs. Parsons, Mr. & Mrs. S.M. Barley (Choir), Mr. Robert Pickering (choir), Mrs. Hallam and Ralph, Gerty and Marjorie. Mr. & Mrs. J. Follett of Balcombe Road, Mr. & Mrs. G. Allnutt (Mrs. Allnutt was a very faithful member, a daughter Ella was the first to be married in the new Church). Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Faulkner and family (Mr. Faulkner was a trustee for years). Wm. Jewell and family. Mr. & Mrs. Drew (although they have left the district, Mr. Drew still attends trustee meetings regularly.), Rex Spowart, Mr. & Mrs. Thoroughgood.

Matron Trudgeon and staff at Livingstone Home, Mrs. Hilda Andrews (Mrs. McCurrie's daughter), Mr. & Mrs. Revell (Mr. Revell was a local preacher), Mr. & Mrs. F.L. Gray (Mr. Gray choir and Sunday School teacher). Mrs. Clem Roberts (nee Clarice Gray, Sunday School teacher), Mrs. Rosina Squire (a church visitor with Mrs. Robert Woff), Misses King (Mrs. Ken Whitehead and Mrs. A. Billings), Miss Isobel Gray.



THE LATE MRS. MANNERING.



Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Rose, Ida Rose (choir), Arthur Rose and family. Mrs. Phoebe Cant (Granny), Mr. & Mrs. and Miss Lily Crease, Mr. F. Farmer (Trustee, Sunday School Teacher and Choir), Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Bodley, Charlotte & Charles, Mr. & Mrs. Mark Bodley, Mr. & Mrs. Syd. Chandler, Lily, Eric & Arthur (Mrs. M. Bodley lived next door to the old Charman Road church and was the Mother of Mrs. Syd. Chandler). Mr. & Mrs. A.H. Rose, Albert, May, Evelyn & Tom, Mr. & Mrs. Jas. Tilley, Ruby, Gladys & Allen. Mrs. Ross, Mr. & Mrs. Nichols, Bobby, Joyce and Ian, Mrs. Alex. Nicol, Ilma, Mavis and Don.

Mr. & Mrs. John Ellery (Mr. Ellery was a church steward and a trustee--his wife was a close friend and contemporary of Mrs. Boston; she assisted in starting and led the Junior Endeavour for some years. Mrs. A. Butterworth is a daughter.) Mrs. C. J. Spencer (interested in young people and Sunday School activities), Mrs. F. Usher (nee Janet Allnutt, for some time secretary of the Ladies' Guild).

In 1919 there were 81 church members, in 1930, 117 and 144 in 1950. The Trust income--apart from any church collections other than special ones for the Trust--has varied over the years; in 1929 it was £75, in 1940, £198 and £107 in 1950.

The following were organists:- Mrs. S. McCurrie, Miss Winnie Dyson, Miss Sylvia Pascoe, Miss Fanny Woff (Mrs. Ted Fisher), Mrs. H.J. King (nee Doris Woff), Miss Edie Boston (Mrs. P. Delbridge), Misses Gwen and Vera Thomas who were also Sunday School Teachers.

#### LADIES' GUILD.

The present Ladies' Guild has functioned continuously since 1926. From 1926 to 1940 it was known as Time and Talents Guild and then the name was changed to the Ladies' Guild. Mrs. Hodge, Mrs. Butterworth, Mrs. S. Woff, Mrs. McCurrie and Mrs. Allnutt were foundation members. There had been a previous guild but no record of this has been kept, although it is known that the following were amongst its members:- Grandma Woff, Mrs. J.J. Whitehead, Mrs. Dark, Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Boston, Mrs. Allnutt and Mrs. Butterworth with Mrs. Rhyls-Jones as first president. The present guild is affiliated with the Women's Home Mission League and the United Nations' Organization.

Each year one of the city missions is chosen and helped by donations in cash and kind. Also the Melbourne Home for Aged and Infirm is visited and the old folk entertained. A Market Day Fair, Garden Party and Thanksgiving Box Day are held each year to raise funds.

Last year £221 was raised, the Church Trust benefiting to the extent of £145 and the Parsonage Trust by £20. There are at present 28 members, the Honorary Secretary being Mrs. J.D. Campbell.

#### LADIES' SUNDAY SCHOOL AUXILIARY.

This first met on June 23rd, 1948, Rev. F.G. Lewis was chairman and 18 mothers and 11 Sunday School teachers were present. There is now a membership of about 30. Monthly meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday and

there is usually a speaker or demonstrator on various subjects domestic or cultural. A monthly subscription of 1/-d. is paid for funds and there is a yearly money-raising event such as a Fete or Concert. This year the Auxiliary held a film night. There is also a monthly social evening in a member's home. All money raised goes to Church Trust funds to be earmarked chiefly for Sunday School equipment. Last year £80 was handed to the Trust and £50 to date this year and it is hoped to increase this during the Centenary Celebrations. The Honorary Secretary is Mrs. G. Watson.

### MEN'S SOCIETY

On August 17th, 1941, after a service at 11 a.m. conducted by the Rev. F. Metcalfe, assisted by men of the church, it was decided to invite speakers from the Murrumbidgee Men's Society to address a meeting to be held on August 31st. After this meeting it was agreed that a society be formed, namely the Cheltenham Methodist Men's Society. Office bearers elected were the Rev. F. Metcalfe, President, Dr. K.A. Stephenson & Mr. J.W. Allnut, Vice Presidents, Mr. C. Squire, Secretary & Treasurer, Mr. B. Forden, Musical Director, Mr. H.J. Curnow and Mr. A. Treloar, Stewards. Sixteen men were present at this meeting. Mr. Curnow has given wonderful service as a steward ever since the first meeting.

Monthly meetings are held with average attendance of about 20. Speakers are invited and a wide range of subjects has been covered.

The Society has organised working bees to clean up the church grounds, laid out and planted lawns and undertaken to contribute to the maintenance of the grounds.

Each December representatives of other organizations of the church are invited to a Christmas Tea. Honorary Secretary, Mr. G. Squire.

### CHOIR

As Methodism was almost born in song it is not surprising that the musical part of our worship has received considerable attention. Early choir singing was conducted by Mr. Chandler, and the Rose and Woff families supplied a large proportion of the members. Later Mr. A.L. Boston conducted and he was in charge when our new church was built and continued to be so until 1926. After this date the name of Campbell comes into prominence--some were born Campbell, and others achieved the name through marriage (I decline to suggest that any have had the name thrust upon them). Mr. J.D. Campbell became organist and choir master after Mr. Boston, and on his resignation in 1939, Mr. D. Campbell was appointed organist and Mr. J.S. Campbell choir master. In 1949 Mrs. G. Squire (nee Jean Campbell) now senior organist, was appointed assistant to Mrs. G. Holloway. Mrs. L. Ash, (nee Jessie Campbell) although she has left the district, still assists with her lovely soprano voice on special occasions. In addition the important positions of leading soprano and choir secretary are held by Mrs. J.S. and Mrs. J.D. Campbell respectively. It certainly seems as if the old Scottish clan has sounded more than just a pibroch in our midst, and amongst the repertoire of anthems the choir possess and are proud to sing are several composed by Mr. J.D. Campbell himself. We are very proud of our contralto Miss Betty Fair-

bank who is well known in musical circles. Quite recently, in preparation for our celebrations, we have received the help of several additional singers whose voices we hope to hear for many years to come. Mrs. R. Horne is one of our present organists, Mrs. Holloway and Mr. J.D. Campbell still giving their services when required. May I make a special mention of Mrs. McCurrie who was a choir member for many years. On her retiring in 1923, she was presented with a gold wristlet watch. Her name is also found amongst the past organists.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School has functioned ever since Zion Chapel was built, and after the advent of the Woff family it gradually gained in numbers. When the Livingston Home was founded in Cheltenham, these children added to the number of scholars and the church premises had to have additions. Members of the Home staff usually assisted in the school and we had their co-operation until the Home closed down late in 1952. For a while the loss of the children created quite a gap in our school, but as the district has continued to grow the numbers have been built up again until at present the total is 175 in all.

When the first addition was made to the old church premises about 1914, the Kindergarten was founded, the first leader being Mrs. Fred Lake, then Miss M. Squire--Miss V. Thomas for a period whilst Miss Squire was in the country, Miss G. Fairbank, Miss E. Wheeler, Miss Joyce King, Miss Merle Taylor, Miss Dorothy Spencer and at present Miss Edna Allnutt is in charge. The Primary scholars have been apart from the Kindergarten since 1953 and are led by Mrs. Humphreys

Excellent school concerts were held in the old days under the guidance of Mrs. H. King (nee Doris Woff), Mr. A.L. Boston was a good conductor at anniversaries and more recently Mr. B. Forden, who has held many offices in the Church, being a local preacher and trustee, was very successful in training the children. Mr. Ray Hodge more recently still, has ably done his share in this work.

The Cradle Roll was begun in 1913, Mrs. McCurrie was first cradle roll superintendent, later Miss Trixie Rose and the position is now held by Miss L. Squire. Miss M. Squire's work in the Sunday School merits a very special mention. She has been connected with it as a teacher almost continuously since 1918 and being a trained teacher of the Education Department, she has been able to assist the work with her special knowledge. In addition, Miss Squire has filled other important positions in our church and has been of great assistance in collecting information for this little publication.

Our records show the following:

	<u>Superintendents</u>	<u>Secretaries</u>
Prior to 1922	Mr. R. Woff	Mr. H. King
1922	Mr. J.J. Whitehead	"
1923-28	"	Mr. A.E. Boston
1929-32	Mr. A.L. Boston	Mr. P. Delbridge
1933	"	Mr. J. Bright

1934	Mr. P. Delbridge	Mr. J. Bright
1935-36	Mr. A. Faulkner	"
1937-40	Mr. B. Forden	Mr. A. Butterworth
1941-42	Mr. A. Treloar	"
1943-44	Mr. F. Hill	"
1945-46	Mr. W. Gatford	"
1947-48	Mr. F. Hill	"
1949-53	Mr. A. Duke	Mr. J. Campbell, Jnr.
1954	"	Mr. K. Gibbs

### CHURCH EXTENSION SOCIETY

The C.E.S. has a combined representation of all societies and clubs incorporated in our Church. These representatives meet on each second Monday of every month and endeavour to bring to the notice of the Church Trust or the Church people any suggestions which originate in the organisations. It has one way especially of keeping the people of our church well informed of any news of interest, and that is by means of our monthly paper "The Highway". This paper is distributed throughout our district by the Zone Convenors of the C.E.S. These convenors undertake to contact any new Methodist families in their zone and to see that they regularly receive "The Highway". At present we print 250 copies a month. There have been three editors to date, Mr. B. Forden, Mr. Ian Frencham and at present Dr. Stephenson. The C.E.S., in endeavouring to be of service to the Church, would appreciate any suggestions that might improve its efficiency.

President: Rev. C. Mannering  
 Secretary: Mr. K. Spencer  
 Treasurer: Mr. J.S. Campbell, Jnr.

### TENNIS CLUB

The Tennis Club was founded in 1924. The Trust gave permission for the making of the courts and also some financial accommodation. Ten years later the courts had to be remade at a cost of £185, an interest-bearing loan being made to the club for this purpose. In 1949 a very successful Silver Jubilee was held, the proceeds being equally divided between the Tennis Club and Sunday School. There are at present 25 members. In the past, the club has competed successfully in local competitions and has run some good tournaments. New members are invited.

President: Rev. C. Mannering,  
 Secretary: Mr. Keith Wilson,  
 Lay President: Mr. R. Gay,  
 Treasurer: Mr. Keith Gibbs.

### W.A.O.M.

The first meeting was held in 1923 at the home of Mrs. Roberts in Parkdale. Mrs. Butterworth was the first Secretary and Treasurer and Mrs. Thomas the first President. That year the sum of £2/3/9d. was raised and a parcel forwarded to the Rev. Mr. Margetts who was then in New Britain where the Rev. F. Lewis is today. Last year the sum of over £50 was raised and during

the years parcels have been sent to various mission fields. There is a meeting on the second Thursday of each month, readings from Mission journals or a special speaker is included in the monthly programme. There is only one public appeal to the Church members, this is by a special envelope at Easter time.

Secretary: Mrs. Gibbs.

### ENDEAVOUR

There has been a Christian Endeavour for many years and with very few lapses it has functioned continuously since its inception. At times it was so strong that the church had a Wesley Guild as well. The leader of the Young People's Endeavour is Mr. A. Duke. The meetings are held on Friday night; most nights are devotional in character, occasionally there is a social and sometimes a special speaker. Visits are paid to other Endeavours and visitors from other churches are welcomed. A Junior-Intermediate Endeavour is conducted by Miss B. Fairbank and Mr. B. Longmuir. The meetings are at the Church on Sunday morning before service and it has recently been the practice for a young Endeavourer to lead the alternate readings at the morning service. The membership has risen from five to twenty-two since the commencement of the Society three years ago and it is now proposed to form an Intermediate Society so that better attention may be given to the two separate age groups. A library is being formed and it is hoped that this band of enthusiastic youngsters, who are the future church, will continue to grow in numbers and in Christian character.

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And so we come to the end of our first century. How many questions we might ask ourselves! Are we sufficiently grateful to those who helped to build up our church? Are we doing our share to pass on the witness to those who follow? These and many similar questions should occupy our thoughts during the Centenary Celebrations. May it be a time of spiritual uplift for us all.

What of the future? Here I think we must look to our Sunday School and Youth Organizations, and I believe that it is encouraging to find that the emphasis in the School is being placed on the Mind of Christ. Children are being taught to try and imagine what Christ would think and say concerning various aspects of our life and our personal problems if He were living bodily in our midst today. This tends to break down the purely historical aspect and put the growing mind into a relationship with the Glory of the Risen Lord.

The Church on earth may have her failings and many use this as a convenient excuse for refusing to become members. Others from unworthy motives join a congregation, but the Church has no real meaning for them; but to those who truly hunger and thirst after righteousness, there is a peace and a joy which the world cannot give. For the uncreated and indestructible Beginning of the true Church is her Lord and Saviour. Until we all grasp the

fact that we belong to the Greatest Company of all time, the Eternal Church which exists not only here in the physical but also in the spiritual world: that we have as partners all the saints who have gone before, we have not realised our heritage. It is our duty to pass on this glowing faith not only with undiminished light but shining with an ever increasing splendour as we grasp more and more the meaning of the Self sacrificing love of God in Christ Jesus; that love which in stooping to man has caused him to look up to sublime radiance of a Person he may call not only Master but Friend.

"So shall crown Thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown"  
 May God give us grace to be worthy.

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LIST OF MINISTERS

Circuit.

1902	Moorabbin	George Schofield
1903-05	"	Henry J. Cook
1906-08	"	James R. Currie
1909-11	"	Thomas J. Cory (S. Brighton)
		Richard E. Hooper (Mordialloc)
		Thomas C. Trueman "
		Richard M. Jennings "
1912-14	"	Charles Fowler
		Arthur G. Adamson (Mordialloc)
		Albert H. Horton "
1915	Cheltenham	Joseph Penna
1916	"	Leonard Hartshorn
1917-18	"	William C. Bridgborn
1919	"	Horace Michell
1920-22	"	Edward Tonkin
1923-25	"	Thomas J. Thomas
1926-28	"	Walter Beckett
1929-32	"	Frederick Delbridge, B.A.
1933-37	"	John F. Long, B.A.
1938-40	"	Frederick C. Ivory
1941-45	"	Frederick H. Metcalfe
1946-49	"	Frank G. Lewis
1950-54	"	Cornelius W.J. Mannering, L.Th.

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LIST OF TRUSTEES & CHURCH OFFICERS

OF CHELTENHAM METHODIST

CHURCH.

Minister:

Rev. C.W.J. Mannering, L.Th.

Communion Stewards:

Miss H. Forden  
Miss G. Hughes  
Miss B. Fairbank  
Miss B. Billings

Trustees:

J.W. Allnutt  
H.J. Curnow  
G. Drew  
R.C. Fairbank (Treasurer)  
Dr. K.A. Stephenson  
W.J. Gatford  
G.F. Squire  
D.H. Clark (Secretary)  
J.S. Campbell  
A. Butterworth  
L.G. Allnutt

Church Representatives:

Mrs. A. Boyd  
Mrs. Allnutt  
Mr. R. Hodge

Sunday School Superintendent:

Mr. A. Duke

Choir Conductor:

Mr. J.S. Campbell

Church Stewards:

H.J. Curnow  
E. Longmuir  
A. Wright  
M. Williams  
G. Fagg  
L. Longmuir

Organists:

Mrs. G. Squire  
Mrs. R. Horn

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