

## Methodist Chapel - Bridge

The first record of Methodism in the Village is a minute dated 1823 authorising one William Fordred to rent a house for Methodist Meetings ' at no more than 2/6 per week'. He was obviously successful as a Methodist Society was formed with 14 members in 1892(sic). The March Preaching Plan of 1827 shows that services were held on Sundays at 10.30am and 6.30pm, and 10.30am and 2.30pm on alternate weeks. Thus began the gradual build up to 1884. However the first non-conformist Chapel in Bridge was built by the Primitive Methodists in 1868 (The original Treasurers Book is still available) This was situated in Dering Road almost opposite Filmer Road and was built of wood [in use as a dwelling when demolished in 1951].

The Wesleyans meanwhile continued to meet in the rented house until the 'Iron Chapel' was built in 1894. There was some controversy with the Chapel Committee in Manchester, who preferred a brick built structure as more economical in maintenance, and if this choice were made, were prepared to advance a loan to assist finances. However should the Trustees persist in their choice of an 'Iron Chapel' then no loan would be forthcoming, furthermore they decreed that all the money for the Chapel must be raised before permission would be given for the opening. It must be 'debtless'. The Wesleyans of Bridge were stirred to greater fund raising efforts, and by dint of [a] lot of hard work raised the money.

The cost of the building, seating, hymn books, mats and oil lamps amounted to £139-17-03 (The farthing showing in the costing for matting, carpets etc £1-4-93 )

ONE HUNDRED YEARS from that momentous occasions for those humble men and women, the church is used for worship regularly, and many village organisations have made good use of the premises. During the Second World War the baby clinic operated from the Chapel and continued until 1987. From oil lamps and coal burning stoves, to gas lamps and fires, to electric lighting and power, gas fired convector heaters and double glazed windows, the church has moved with the times, and plays its part in the community.

Pat Grant

The Wesleyan chapel, built in 1894, is of corrugated iron and wood, and seats 150 persons

Transcribed from the text of the 'Methodist Chapel' board from the 1994 Bridge Parish Centenary Exhibition