



METHODIST CHURCH COTTINGHAM

1808 - 1958

Souvenir Handbook

FOREWORD

In the following pages my colleague has endeavoured to tell something of the story of Methodism in Cottingham. His task has not been an easy one, as he has been confronted with a mass of detail from which to select or reject interesting material. He has also been faced with the problem of filling in gaps which occur in the Minute Books. He is to be congratulated on writing this brochure to mark the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary.

As he points out, Methodism must have been in existence in Cottingham before the year 1808. We salute that small and gallant band who by faith and vision acquired a sanctuary in which to worship and to offer Christ to others.

The story has been using the information available in documents and Minute Books. Names have been recorded of those who planned and built and gave of their substance. These facts and incidents we can observe, but what we cannot see are the spiritual fruits of the work of our cause in Cottingham over this hundred and fifty years. Lives will have been changed, ideals implanted, unobtrusive service given, and faith and hope instilled into many a heart. There will be those who have gone out from this Church to a wider world, taking with them characters formed by the influence of this Fellowship.

My congratulations and that of the Kettering Circuit on reaching your hundred and fiftieth birthday.

I pray that the story of these years will inspire you to step out into the future with zeal and enthusiasm. For I am confident The Cottingham Methodist Church has before it a great and glorious future.

I am reminded of a Chinese proverb which I came across a few years ago, "If you're planning for one year plant grain; if you're planning for ten years plant trees; if you are planning for a hundred years plant men." Because we are planning, like those who went before us, for the centuries which are to be, we endeavour to maintain here a fellowship of worship and service in the Church. We want to plant in the world redeemed and consecrated men and women.

My warmest congratulations on your achievements of the past, and every good wish for your work of the future.

FRANK B. ROBERTS,

Superintendent Minister.

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Anniversary Arrangements

SATURDAY, JUNE 7th.

3.15 p.m.—Divine Worship

Preacher: The REVD. WILFRED SHEPHERD
(Chairman of the District)

4.30 p.m.—Tea will be served in the Schoolroom.

6.30 p.m.—Grand Anniversary Rally

Speakers:

The REVD. WILFRED SHEPHERD
(Chairman of the District)

The REVD. FRANK B. ROBERTS
(Superintendent of the Circuit).

The REVD. FREDERICK W. J. STEDMAN
(Minister of the Church).

CHAIRMAN: Councillor HARRY CROSS of Rothwell

Musical Items will be given by the Choir of the Rockingham
Road Methodist Church, Kettering.

Anniversary Arrangements

(Continued)

Sundays prior to Church Anniversary

SERVICES: 2-30 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Preachers:

May 18th.—Revd. Frank B. Roberts

May 25th.—Pastor Joseph Smyth
(Formerly Pastor of the Church)

June 1st.—Revd. Frederick W. J. Stedman

SUNDAY, JUNE 8th-CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

Services: 2-30 p.m. and 6-30 p.m.

Preacher: **REVD. FREDERICK G. THOMAS**
(Formerly Pastor of the Church)



To Lovers of the Lord Jesus Christ of Every Denomination.

An opening having presented itself for the Preaching of the Gospel at Cottingham in the County of Northampton a Place was procured by the People called Methodists in which they have dispensed the Word of Life for some time and find the Congregation very much increase so that the present place is too small to contain the People that do and would attend could they hear with comfort and it being evident to every impartial observer that notwithstanding these disadvantages great good hath been done to the Soul of the People (which every true Christian must feel interested in). We are advised by many that wish well to the cause of Christ to erect a Chapel, but this cannot be done without the Assistance of the Public in general. But our dependance is particularly placed on the Benevolent and Candid followers of the Lord Jesus Christ Whoever therefore are desirous to promote the Glory of God and that Immortal Souls may be now and everlastingly happy and the Peace and Welfare of our Country continued it is hoped they will come forward and lend a helping Hand in so good a Work and the bearer of this will thankfully receive and faithfully apply whatever may be Subscribed for this important purpose.

£ s. d.			£ s. d.		
James Cole	30	0 0	Charles Brampton	2	2 0
A Friend	5	0 0	John Brampton ...	2	2 0
A Friend	5	0 0	George Cave	2	12 6
J. Chettle	5	0 0	I. Burditt	1	1 0
R. Neal	5	0 0	James Bradshaw...	1	1 0
Joseph Bayes	5	0 0	Mrs. Frans. Stafford	1	1 0
John Stretton	5	0 0	Miss Jane Meadows	1	1 0
William Phillips ...	5	0 0	A Friend	1	0 0
Saml. Brampton ...	5	0 0	Mrs. Warner	1	1 0
Bradshaw & Nursey	2	2 0	Mrs. Tailby	1	1 0
Willm. Cook	5	0 0	Sam Cox	1	1 0
Miss Cole	5	0 0	Collection	5	1 4
Willm. Rose	1	1 0	Mrs. Manning ...	1	1 0
Tho. Mee Jun. ...	1	1 0	Mrs. Wood Thorp	0	14 0
A Friend	2	2 0			

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METHODISM IN COTTINGHAM

In 1808, "the People called Methodists", acquired their first Chapel in Cottingham, and we are now celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the original building. This building still stands adjoining the present Chapel, and is now being used as the School-room. The acquisition of this building, however, was not the beginning of our witness in this community for there is evidence which points to Methodist activity in the village prior to 1808. With this evidence in mind let us see what we can learn about the origins of Methodism in Cottingham.

1 Beginnings

There is no evidence in Wesley's Journal to suggest that he ever came to Cottingham, and it is probable that the nearest place which he visited was Northampton. There is a piece of traditional information which does throw light on the way work began in this village. The tradition suggests that, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, men from Cottingham used to walk two or three miles to Preaching Camps where Methodist Preachers held evangelistic services. As a result of these visits and of the conversions which certainly followed, a place was procured in the village to be used as the centre of Methodist worship and preaching. We do not know where this place was situated, but that such a Meeting Place was obtained we can be quite sure. This is implied in the fascinating document which is printed on the opposite page. You will read these words there:

"An opening having presented itself for the Preaching of the Gospel at Cottingham in the County of Northampton a Place was procured by the People called Methodists in which they have dispensed the Word of Life for some time."

You will notice that this letter is undated and unsigned. The date need not present any difficulty, for obviously it must be placed either early in 1808 or possibly prior to that year. We do not know who composed the letter or who took it around. We might make a reasonable surmise and suggest that it was the one who headed the list of subscribers with a gift of £30—one James Coles of Kettering, a Woolstapler. However we cannot be sure of this and whoever we suggest, it will still be a matter of pure speculation.

2 Progress

We have no means of ascertaining how long this Preaching Place was used by our Methodist forebears, but we do know that success attended their efforts. This is made plain in the letter in two different ways. On the one hand the congregations increased for we read that they "find the Congregation very

much increase so that the present place is too small to contain the People that do and would attend could they hear with comfort." So Methodist preaching found acceptance among the inhabitants of Cottingham and they flocked to hear the Gospel. On the other hand a sympathetic interest was created among Christian folk for the letter goes on to say: "We are advised by many that wish well to the cause of Christ to erect a Chapel."

Encouraged by growing congregations and this sympathetic interest the Methodists decided to erect a Chapel. This meant money so they took the first step towards the realisation of their goal by sending out the letter, to which we have been referring, as an appeal for financial help. Once again success attended their efforts and the sum of £108. 4. 10. was contributed towards the cost of the new building.

The next step to be taken was that of finding a suitable site or building for the new venture. Now this is a part of the story which is shrouded in mystery. It is not clear whether a building was taken over and adapted for use as a Chapel or whether a building was erected in the yard of the cottage to which certain Methodists were admitted tenants. Whatever happened, we do know that at the Manor Court of the Manor of Cottingham with Desborough, held on October 13th 1808, eight men—who represented the Methodists—were admitted Tenants of a Cottage and yard together with a new building standing in the yard, which they planned to use as a Chapel. The tenancy of the property was held by John Stretton and his wife Mary who surrendered their rights as Copyhold Tenants for the sum of £55. It is evident that this John Stretton was a Methodist sympathiser for you will notice that his name appears on the subscription list, at the foot of the letter, with a gift of £5.

As evidence that wives were not henpecked in those days it should be noted that when the matter was brought before the Manor Court, the Steward of the Manor took the wife of John Stretton on one side to "separately and secretly examine" her and ensure that she consented to her husband's action in vacating the tenancy of the property.

It is interesting to note, too, that one of the conditions in the surrender of the tenancy was that John and Mary Stretton retained the privilege of "nailing and fastening Fruit Trees to such of the Walls of the said premises as adjoin the said John Stretton and his wife's garden and to gather the Fruit at all reasonable times doing no injury to the said walls nor obstructing the light of the windows belonging to the said Building or any of them."

So the Methodists acquired their first Chapel. A building, newly erected, standing in the yard of the cottage which was leased to them by the Lord of the Manor of Cottingham with Desborough. Whether the Methodists erected the building prior

to taking over the tenancy of the cottage and yard, or whether someone else had erected it and they simply took it over and adapted it to their use, we do not know. What we do know is that in 1808 the first Chapel was obtained.

The names of the men who held the tenancy for the Methodists were:

James Cole	Woolstapler	Kettering.
Richard Neale.	Draper	Kettering.
Joseph Bayes	Mason	Kettering.
William Cooke	Glazier	Kettering.
Joseph Chettle	Grocer	Kettering.
William Phillips	Farmer	Medburn.) in the County
George Bellamy	Miller	Medburn.) of Leicester.
Benjamin Cort	Grazier	Pipewell.

3 Consolidation

There is little available information concerning the life of the Society at Cottingham during the years 1808-1809. These years cover the period between the acquisition of the first Chapel and the building of the second, present place of worship.

An interesting description of that first Chapel has come down to us in which we are told that it had a Gallery, a red brick floor, and was lit by candles.

A glance at some of the Circuit Plans for this period (1808-1879) show that there has been very little variation in the times of the services held at Cottingham down the years. In 1850 the Sunday services were held at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. with the addition of a fortnightly morning service at 10.30 in the August-October quarter. The Preaching service was held fortnightly on Mondays. In 1860 the Sunday service was being held at 5.30 p.m. instead of 6 p.m. as in 1850, and the fortnightly Preaching service had been changed from Monday to Wednesday.

Our Methodist forefathers were active in open air witness and shared readily in such meetings. We have before us a document entitled "A Plan of the United Open-Air Services for the summer of the year 1862". It is apparent that these acts of public witness were shared by the Free Churches of the area. Such services were planned for 50 places over a very wide area which included Kettering, Isham, Weldon and Medburn in Leicestershire. The Plan covered 18 Sundays from June 1st to September 28th. and a staff of 66 preachers was available for the work. Of this number, 21 were Ministers drawn from Kettering, Rothwell, Well-ingham, Desborough, Uppingham, Burton Latimer, Old, Crea-ton, Walgrave, Weldon, Ashley, Gretton, and Market Harborough. The Methodist Ministers from Kettering were the Revs. William Exton and Henry Fish. Among the 45 lay preachers there are some familiar Methodist names such as, for example: James Spence,

Kettering; J. Mobbs, Pytchley; and T. Groocock, Desborough; to mention only a few. It is interesting to glance down the printed directions. They are:

1. The time of the service must be punctually attended to.
2. Each agent must fulfil his appointment, or provide a proper substitute.
3. The Open-Air Service is to be limited to an hour.
4. About ten minutes to be appropriated to singing, if practicable.
5. The mode of conducting the service to be left to the discretion of the agent, but should be varied according to circumstances.
6. The obstruction of the Queen's highway must be carefully avoided.

Then the following warning is given:

"Open-Air Services not taken at the time indicated x on the Plan, will not be recognised by the Committee."

Finally a reminder to the Preachers:

"A Report of each respective Service to be promptly forwarded to the Secretary, J. Chamberlain sen., Cottingham, near Rockingham."

During this period there were the inevitable changes in the personnel of the leaders and workers at Cottingham and in the Circuit. In 1808, when the first Chapel was acquired, the tenancy of the property leased from the Lord of the Manor was held by a group of eight men who were the representatives of the Methodists. In 1832 a new agreement was drawn up at the Manor Court and from it we learn that five of the original group had died and the remaining three surrendered the tenancy to a new group of men.

The new people were.

Joshua York.	Farmer.	Corby.
John Collins.	Hatter.	Cottingham.
William West.	Gardener	Middleton
Benjamin Porter.	Woolcomber.	Rockingham.
Henry Porter.	Woolcomber.	Rockingham.
Richard Lane, the Younger.	Farmer.	Pytchley.
Samuel Thompson, the Younger.	Lace Merchant.	Desborough.
John Nursey, the Younger.	Farmer.	Desborough.
John Perkins.	Tailor.	Desborough.

Again in 1862 a new agreement was drawn up and we find that of the original group of nine names mentioned in 1832 only three remain and these three surrendered the tenancy to a fresh company of men, who incidentally were the first official Trustees to be appointed for the Cottingham property.

The names of these Trustees are as follows:

John Tordoff.	Gentleman.	Kettering.
Job West.	Farmer.	Middleton.
David West.	Carpenter.	Leicester.
John Mash.	Surveyor.	Pytchley.
George Mobbs.	Cordwainer.	Pytchley.
John Hooper.	Cordwainer.	Kettering.
Samuel Barratt.	Draper and Grocer.	Corby.
Alfred Cook.	Baker.	Rothwell.

It is interesting to note that in this agreement, drawn up between the Lord of the Manor and the above Trustees, mention is made for the first time of a Model Deed by which the use of Methodist property is to be governed. It is stated that while the tenants are to be governed by the customs of the Manor, they are also to be governed by the provisions of a Deed drawn up in 1832. This Deed relates to a Methodist Chapel at Shircoat in the Parish of Halifax in the County of York and sets out the conditions and terms upon which Methodist property is to be held. The last change in this period took place in 1875 when a new body of Trustees were appointed. This was necessitated by the surrender of the tenancy of certain property on the part of William West of Middleton. The Methodists took over this property and the Trust Board consisted of the same men appointed in 1862 with the exception of George Mobbs of Pytchley. In all probability the property taken over was that which later became the site of the new Chapel built in 1879.

One final word concerning this period. On the 15th March, 1861 the Chapel at Cottingham was registered as a place of Meeting for Public Worship. The Revd. William Exton, Minister of the Circuit certified that it had been used for such purpose prior to the 30th June, 1852 and that it was intended to continue to use the building for Public Worship.

4 Development

On January 11th 1878 a Meeting of the Trustees of Cottingham Methodist Chapel was held at Kettering School Room. There were present: Rev. G. Russell, Messrs. Lane, Cook, West, Hooper and Mash. The Minutes of the meeting say somewhat cryptically:

"Mr. Russell having an unexpected offer to make to the Trustees, it was resolved on his proposition, Seconded by Mr. Lane, that this Meeting be adjourned to Friday the 25th instant, for the purpose of obtaining Plans and Specifications for a new Chapel, and that Mr. Payne be employed to prepare them."

The meeting was duly held on March 25th and the records say: "Plans and Estimates produced. Probable cost of the New Chapel £500. To raise and enlarge the Old Chapel it will cost £365. Resolved to have the New Chapel as Mr. Tordoff promises £200."

On March 27th the Trustees met at Cottingham and agreed that the New Chapel be built upon the site now belonging to the Trustees. It was also decided that Mr. Payne be asked to get out Plans and Specifications for the New Chapel and that Messrs. Cook and Lane be asked to see him and inform him what kind of Chapel the Trustees want.

On June 21st 1878, tenders were advertised for and on July 12th the Trustees met to consider them. The contract was given to Mr. Crisp of Market Harborough whose tender of £423 was the lowest received.

The Stone-Laying took place on August 22nd 1878 and among those laying stones were Mr. William West and Miss Catherine Threadgold. This lady was a great help to the cause at Cottingham. It is said that she used to come to almost every function held at the Chapel. She travelled out from Kettering in a brake drawn by two horses and driven by a man known as Billy Briggs. Miss Threadgold headed the list of subscribers with a gift of £200 towards the cost of the new Chapel. What happened was this. Mr. John Tordoff died in 1878 and Miss Threadgold inherited his property. She honoured his promise of help for the new Chapel with the generous gift which appears against her name on the subscription list.

On December 30th a meeting was held to make arrangements for the opening of the new Chapel. The following names were put forward as possible preachers for the opening day, Easter Sunday, 1879.

1. S. D. Waddy Esq., 2. Dr. Melson, 3. The Chairman of the District.

The Rev. Benjamin Gregory, D.D., was invited to preach on Easter Monday, and W. S. Allen Esq. M.P., on the following Sunday.

One sad note appears in the minutes of this meeting. It is this: "Resolved that Mr. Russell (he was the Superintendent Minister of the Circuit—Ed.) be invited to preach on the 27th of April. But he died on the 25th."

The Chapel was opened on Easter Sunday and the Chairman of the District preached the sermons. It is said that the place was packed out, and that people were even sitting on the stairs leading to the Gallery. In passing we might mention that the Choir used to sit in the Gallery in those days, and that the harmonium was also situated there.

The actual cost of the new Chapel was £607. 3. 0. and there appeared to be a debt of £35 on the old Chapel to clear off. Over £305 was raised by subscription, and it is worthy of note that among the subscribers were the Copyholders of Cottingham and Middleton, tenants of the Manor, who donated the sum of £25. At the opening services, £52 was taken and through various efforts the debt remaining was reduced to £160. The extension fund gave £30 towards this, and the Chapel Committee made a loan of £60 to be repaid by half-yearly instalments of £3 over a period of 10 years. The balance of £70 was loaned to the Trustees by Miss. West.

It is apparent from the Minutes that the Trustees were not entirely satisfied with the contractor's account, for the following record appears: March 31st 1879. "A Trustee Meeting was held at Pytchley. Present Rev. H. Gibson, Messrs. Lane, Hooper and Mash. The Builders Bill for Extras was laid before the Meeting amounting to £80. 4. 0. which was thought to be very exorbitant. And it was decided to have an Independent Valuer to Value the work." Two interesting points arise out of this Minute. First, that the Trustees Meeting was held at Pytchley, and second, that the result of this independent valuation was that the bill was reduced to £77.

So Cottingham got its new Chapel and a new era in its history began.

The building was registered as a Place of Religious Worship on the 5th April, 1879 by the Superintendent Minister, Rev. Henry Gibson.

Certain information has come down to us concerning the life and worship of the Methodists during this period. The Chapel was lit by oil lamps. These were set on long rods reaching up from every other pew. There was an oil lamp on each side of the pulpit. During these days, of course, there was no street lighting and the worshippers used lanterns with tallow candles to light them on their way to Chapel. As soon as they arrived and got inside they used to put out the candles and place the lanterns under the seats. It is said that the smell from the extinguished candles was rather pungent and there is a story of one lady who regularly brought a bottle of smelling salts to counteract the smell of the tallow.

There were several short seats at the side and in the front of the Chapel, and these were known as the "Free Seats". Anyone sitting in these seats did not have to give any collection and the stewards did not go to them with the collection plates.

The Sunday spent by our predecessors was rather a full one. In summer-time a Prayer Meeting was held at 7.30 a.m. and it is

said that when Mr. Alfred West conducted it, he invariably began with his favourite hymn: "Sweetly down the Sabbath morning on the world so full of care." From 9.30 to 11 would be the Sunday School, and on the first Sunday of each month a Prayer Meeting would be held at 11 o'clock and continue to 12. Sunday School was held again from 1.30 to 2.30 and then the afternoon service would begin at 2.30 p.m. In the summer Open-Air meetings were held at 5 o'clock, at Cottingham one week and at Middleton the next, and then would follow the evening service at 6 p.m.

Then, as now, the Chapel had three main functions during the year. At Easter the Chapel Anniversary was held and on the Monday a tea would be held and a number of friends from Kettering would come out by brake and join in the celebrations. In August the Sunday School Anniversary took place and the children's tea. The Harvest Festival was held in September. On one memorable occasion Mr. Job West, a farmer from Middleton, gave a pig for the Harvest Festival and during the Monday evening service the pig stood outside the Chapel in a float awaiting the start of the auction sale.

The only transport available for the preachers was pony and trap, and as many of them came from Kettering this meant a long journey. We have been given to understand that the only lighting on the trap was the two small oil lamps and that there was no cover or protection for the preachers. Quite often, after leaving Kettering and taking the Corby preacher to his appointment, the Cottingham preacher would arrive very wet and uncomfortable. The pony and trap were stabled down at the "Spread Eagle" and it is only within the last few years that the word "Stabling" on the sign outside has been removed and replaced by the more modern term "Garaging".

An account of this period would be incomplete if we did not mention the Band. The Wesleyan Mission Band, to give it its proper title, was formed about 60 years ago. It is probable that it was the revival of a Salvation Army Band which had been in existence in the village previously. The Band figured largely in the life of the Church and the village, and played at many local functions. One very special event in which the Band played a prominent part was the annual Sunday School Treat which was held each August Bank Holiday Monday. The Sunday School scholars were taken on a tour of the surrounding villages in waggons borrowed from local farmers. They were accompanied by the band which played selections on the various village greens and the children sang their Anniversary hymns. (Incidentally tradition has it that the Sunday School Anniversary hymns were selected from the Sunday School hymnbook). Later the children, and the Band, we presume, were regaled with minerals and other delicacies prepared by the Sunday School teachers. This Annual Treat was the highlight of the year and greatly enjoyed by both

the young and the old. Unfortunately it had to be discontinued when, with the coming of mechanical equipment on the farms, waggons and horses were no longer available to take the children on their journeys.

The Band continued to function until the outbreak of war in 1939. In 1952 it was re-formed and again assisted in various ways until 1957 when it was found impossible to continue. This was due to the "call-up" of the younger members.

In 1894 the Trust was re-formed and only two of the old Trustees continued to serve. They were Job West and John Hooper. The new names were:

Edmund Bull.	Cloth Dresser.	Cottingham.
Lewis Crane.	Labourer.	Cottingham.
John Coltman.	Builder.	Kettering.
Henry Damms.	Butcher.	Cottingham.
Herbert Evans.	Stationer.	Kettering.
George Foster.	Labourer.	Middleton.
William Goode.	Shepherd.	Middleton.
Wentworth C. Heighton.	Machine Dealer.	Kettering.
David Jarvis.	Labourer.	Cottingham.
Arthur Lenton.	School Teacher.	Kettering.
Arthur Minns.	Labourer.	Cottingham.
Bryan E. Spriggs.	Commercial Traveller.	Retford.
John Spriggs.	Farmer.	Cottingham.
Catherine Threadgold.	Spinster.	Kettering.
Alfred West.	Shoemaker.	Middleton.
Charles W. White.	Manager of Prick Yard.	Cottingham.

In 1925 the Trust was again renewed and the following continued in office, Lewis Crane, Henry Damms, William T. Goode, David Jarvis, Arthur Lenton, Arthur Minns and Charles W. White.

The new Trustees were the following:

Thomas Albert Licquorish.	Blast-furnaceman.	Cottingham.
Charles Lewis Crane.	Ironstone-worker.	Cottingham.
William Sydney White.	Woodman.	Cottingham.
George Alfred Licquorish.	Furnace-worker.	Cottingham.
Frederick Crane.	Iron-ore worker.	Cottingham.
William Sydney Licquorish.	Furnace-worker.	Cottingham.
Herbert William Goode.	Horse-keeper.	Middleton.
Arthur James Jarvis.	Tailoring.	Middleton.
Annie Elizabeth Goode.	Tailoring.	Middleton.
Florence Crane.	Home-duties.	Cottingham.
Edward Simms.	Wholesale Confectioner.	Kettering.

The last renewal of the Trust took place in 1949, and the following former Trustees continued in office: T. A. Licquorish, W. S. White, G. A. Licquorish, F. Crane, H. G. Goode, A. E. Crane (formerly Goode), and C. L. Crane.

The people who took up office and assumed responsibility as Trustees were:

Kenneth Neville Crane.	Engineer.	Middleton.
Alfred Charles Licquorish.	Tube Worker.	Cottingham.
Frederica Crane.	Married Woman.	Cottingham.
Ernest Edward Beadsworth.	Roadman.	Cottingham.
Dorothy Geraldine Cooper.	Married Woman.	Middleton.
Stanley Cooper	Foreman Platelayer.	Middleton
Bernard Thomas Minns Crane.	Coal Merchant.	Cottingham.
Arnold George Crane.	Shop Assistant.	Cottingham.
Arthur Bullerwell Walton Bell.	Heating Vent Engineer.	Cottingham.
James Henry Tansley.	Signalman.	Corby.
Cyril George Licqorish.	Charge Hand Packer.	Middleton.

In 1937 the property became the freehold of the Trustees on the extinguishment of the Manorial Rights and Incidents and so today we own the ground and the Chapel at Cottingham.

5 A Century of Growth and Development Seen Against the Social Background of Methodism

We can well claim that the century from 1808 to 1908 was one of growth and development as far as our Methodist work was concerned. There is little available detail concerning membership in our Societies to hand as we write this historical survey. However one figure is before us and that is for 1815. This was the year after the Market Harborough Circuit was formed and the number of Methodist members in Kettering (and we presume this means the Circuit) is given as 120. The next information we have relates to the years from 1860 to 1886. The details are set out below.

	1860	1870	1880	1886
Kettering.	95	120	132	211
Desborough.	27	30	61	48
Pytchley.	35	28	22	24
Rothwell.	28	20	41	63
Cottingham.	24	30	48	38
Corby.	5	12	4	20
Pipewell				8
Burton				13
	214	240	311	425

Today our membership stands at 693.

But not only do we see indications of the spread of our work in the increasing numbers, there are other signs as well.

In 1847 the Chapel at Corby was built, in 1867 Silver Street was erected, 1879 saw the building of the second Chapel at Cottingham, and 1880 was the year in which the Rockingham Chapel was opened. In 1893 the second Chapel was built at Rockingham Road and in the following year the Desborough building was opened, taking the place of the Chapel which had been used since 1814. In 1823 our Pytchley friends had their own building and ten years later, in 1833, the work was begun at Rothwell. Here in 1900 a new Chapel was erected, and in 1907 the Stanion Chapel was opened.

What a century of growth and expansion!

Then let us consider for a moment the varied social background from which Methodism drew her servants. As we have been perusing the documents relating to our property at Cottingham we have been fascinated by the amazing pageantry of profession and occupation that marches through their pages. In the early days of the eighteenth century we meet with a farmer, a draper, a mason, a glazier, a grocer, a miller, a grazier and a wool-stapler. Just over 20 years after we find ourselves in the company of a hatter, a gardener, woolcombers, a lace merchant and a tailor. Thirty years later we are introduced to a carpenter, a surveyor, cordwainers, a draper and grocer, a baker and one John Tordoff, gentleman.

Another thirty years pass by and we share in the Trustees Meetings with a cloth dresser, a builder, a labourer, a butcher, a stationer, a shepherd, a machine dealer, a school teacher, a commercial traveller, a shoemaker and the manager of a Brick Yard. Another generation passes and into the meetings there now come a blast-furnaceman, ironstone-workers, a horse-keeper, a woodman, a furnace worker, tailors and a wholesale confectioner.

Let the clock move on another twenty four years and new faces and callings join us in our deliberations. This time we share the work with an engineer, a tube-worker, a married woman, a roadman, a foreman platelayer, a charge hand packer.

From so many different walks of life and from such a variety of callings they come and yet they are all moved by the same deep desire to serve the Kingdom of God in the place to which He, in His Providential Care, appoints them.

We thank God for them all. We rejoice in the work which they have done.

6 Hopes and Anticipations

We have been engaged in this story in looking back over the past years. We have sought to trace the origins of our work at Cottingham from the dim and ill-lit days of the early nineteenth century. We have wandered away at times from our immediate purpose to look at some matter or other of interest and importance, but we have always returned to the major interest—the work of Methodism in Cottingham. So much for the past—what of today and tomorrow?

We thank God for the loyal band of workers which we are privileged to have in this Society. Their names are names that recall former workers in this place. Again and again we find the family tradition is being continued and the present generation is taking its place in the life and worship and work of the Church. So we would say with all sincerity, and in the name of the Methodist Church which we love—"thank you" to those who labour so faithfully today, in this particular part of the Lord's vineyard.

But what of tomorrow? We face it with high hopes. We believe that the best is yet to be. We are confident that the day will dawn when men and women, at present drifting from the ways of God, will turn again to His House and seek the Truth. We believe that as we hold fast and faithful to our charge we shall be preparing for that day, when it comes. Above all, we are bold to say, **"The best of all is, God is with us"**.

F. W. J. Stedman.



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