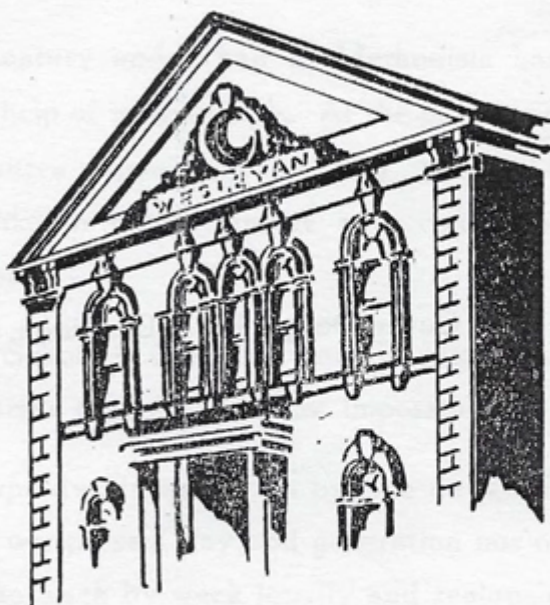


St. Paul's Methodist Church Shaw

1811



1961

150th
Sunday School
Anniversary

PREFACE

The record of a century and a half of Methodism has been compiled with the help of many people. At the outset, on behalf of the Committee appointed to deal with the celebrations, I would like to record sincere appreciation of their kindly co-operation.

The history of the School is so linked with the history of the Chapel that to separate the two is almost impossible.

A survey of this type dwells mainly on bygone days, but one is not unmindful of our present day and generation nor of the officers and staff who week by week loyally and zealously carry out their work.

Harold Booth

One hundred and fifty eventful years have passed since the Wesleyan Methodists began to worship in this town. James Buckley in his book "History of Oldham," published in 1817, says in the chapter headed Township of Crompton: "Shaw, or what is generally called Shaw Chapel, is the principal village in the township of Crompton; it consists of one irregularly-built street, divided by its inhabitants into what they denominate Higher and Lower Shaw. At Lower Shaw there was lately erected a Methodist Chapel of the Wesleyan connection, denominated Bethel: it is a small but neat building. The gallery is semi-octagonal, and so contrived that every auditor therein has full view, if not of the pulpit, at least of the preacher. The seats in the bottom part thereof are not yet completed, but are intended to be formed on the same plan as the gallery. The first stone of this building was laid by Mr. James Cheetham, of Clough, near Shaw, on the 22nd June, 1815."

The Reverend George Allen, M.A., in his book "Shaw Church in bygone days" records this: "The first mention we have found of the Wesleyans at Shaw is in the year 1790, when a number of persons singing hymns marched through the village after dark. This caused much sensation at the time as people generally were quite at a loss to know what it meant. I am informed that they first started a school in an upper room over the Woolpack Inn, and as they increased in numbers another room for senior scholars was taken in Duck Street¹. The Chapel in Rochdale Road was built in 1815 in "Bell Meadow," the foundation stone being laid by Mr. James Cheetham, of Clough. This building was called little 'Bethel' and it has since been considerably enlarged. For some years many persons attending this building were practically churchmen, going to Shaw Chapel to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, and also attending special services there, such as Trinity Sunday Musical Services. One of the ministers, Mr. Hardcastle, is said to have so arranged his hour of service at these times that both he and his people could get to Shaw

1. Now named King Albert Street.

Chapel afterwards, thus proving at the outset there was no intention of breaking away from the Church of England. The Primitive Methodist Chapel at Shore Edge was built in 1846. It was erected on common land belonging to the township, for at a Vestry Meeting held at Shaw Chapel it was resolved to sell them so many yards of land as was required for the nominal sum of 20s. Surely this was a case of toleration. The building in Refuge Street dates from 1835."

Within these few lines our beginning as a Church is recalled and mention made of Societies which ultimately became our Sister Churches. Let us turn to a more detailed account of our first century, and here I quote from "A Short History of the Wesleyan Sunday School, Shaw," compiled by Urban Sellers, Esq., in 1911. "The earliest mention of the Non-conformist movement was in 1790, when a number of persons, probably from Oldham, wended their way through Shaw one night, quite late, singing hymns, which created much consternation. In this year Mr. Cheetham became a trustee of the Manchester Street Chapel, Oldham, and soon afterwards a Society Class was formed. In 1805 a Class was existing at Burn with Mr. John Buckley as leader. His members were John Rhodes, James Clegg, Robert Low, Edmund Mills, Mary Clegg, Mary Bentley, William Rhodes, Thomas Rhodes, David Platt, James Stott, Joseph Greaves, Elizabeth Greaves and Publius Platt. In 1806 public worship was conducted in the house of John Farrar, a cotton weaver, as the following extract from a document will show. We must remember that many of the disabilities imposed on dissenters in the reign of Charles II had not yet been repealed, hence this registration:

"To the Right Reverend Father in God, Doctor Majendie, by divine permission Lord Bishop of Chester.

"We whose names are hereunto subscribed being his Majesty's Protestant Dissenting Subjects Dissenting from the Church of England have agreed to set apart for the Public Worship of Almighty God the dwelling house of John Farrar, Cotton Weaver, of Shaw, in the Township of Crompton, in the Chapelry of Shaw and County of Lancaster, and Diocese of Chester, and desire that the same may be registered according to an act of Parliament made in the first year of the Reign of their late Majesties King William and Queen Mary Intituled an act for exempting their Majesty's Protestant Dissenting subjects dissenting from the Church of England, from the

Penalties of Certain Laws as witness our hands this 14th day of March, in the year of our Lord one Thousand Eight Hundred and Six.

John Farrar,
Henery (?) Smethhurst,
Samuel Gandy,
Abram Hilton,
John Wild.

Registered July 12th, 1806, in
the public Episcopal registry
at Chester according to the act
above mentioned.

William Nicholls, Clerk."

The first Sunday School held in Crompton was in 1802 at the premises last used for the Local Board Offices, in High Street, and what was then known as Shaw Lane. "Four masters to superintend" are recorded. The Wesleyan Methodists were not long behind, and in 1811 commenced a Sunday School in a room over the Woolpack Inn, now demolished, but standing on the site now occupied by Mr. R. Levers shop¹. When that became too small, a room in Newtown, and later the room now used as a joiner's shop² by Mr. Joseph Street at the bottom of Duck Street were used, and in the latter place, until the erection of the Chapel in 1815, public service was held. It is not difficult to imagine the many meetings held in the late evenings by candle light, the many casual conversations, and the numberless prayers offered for guidance in the serious undertaking of erecting a Chapel. The time had gone past when agriculture formed the chief employment, the boom of the woollen trade had departed and the cotton trade was now getting well established, though it gave little indication of assuming the proportions of today. In 1815, Publius Platt, weaver, of Saddleworth, a member of the Burn Class, executed an indenture with the Rev. Sir Thomas Horton, of Chadderton, whereby the plot of land "Lately forming parcel of a certain close or field there called Lion House Meadow, bounded on the Southerly side by the King's Highway leading from Shaw to Rochdale, on the Easterly side by an intended street of ten yards wide, and on the Northerly and Westerly side by the said Lion House Meadow" was secured for the erection of a Chapel. The first stone was laid by Mr. James Cheetham, of Clough, on Thursday, the 22nd day of June, 1815. This was four days after the battle of Waterloo, the news of which could not have long before reached Crompton. The defeat of Bonaparte would give intense satisfaction (for his name was used to inspire terror) and so the accomplishment

1. Now the premises of Timothy White's and Taylors (Chemists).
2. The site of The Chapel of Rest.

of their hearts desires in the commencement of a Chapel and the defeat of the national enemy made their sky unclouded. The trustees were : Publius Platt, George Hadfield, William Hill, James Cheetham, John Travis, Jonathan Mellor, John Bamford, James Fletcher, Thomas Cussons, Thomas Cooper, John Stead, James Hoyle, Abraham Thornton, Nathan Stott, James Taylor, William Taylor, William Sudlow, James Firth and John Mellor. The cost was £878, and of this amount £400 were subscribed before the opening, which took place on Sunday, June 16th, 1816, the preacher being the Rev. John Bryan, of Manchester.

The collection at the opening was £30 18s., and a tea for the singers cost 3s. The Chapel was named "Bethel," and the original stone bearing name and date is to be found over the door leading to the Vestry of the present Chapel. A detailed account of income and expenditure has been preserved, and throws many interesting sidelights on the life in Shaw at that time. We find the postage of the license was 3s. 1d. and the postage of the deeds 4s. 1d. There is an account for "Slating and Moss," showing that stone slabs and not blue Welsh slates were used, for, being uneven, they had to be bedded in moss. "Candle Snuffers, 1s." "Quick Thorns and Setting, 7s. 4d." Amongst those to whom wages were paid were "Old Yem," "Old Stott," and "Joseph and James from Yorkshire." A curious item is "Wiskets and Pitchers, 3s. 11d."

This edifice was jointly used as School and Chapel. The floor was flagged, and the walls bare plaster, so that in appearance and reality it was cold. The first Sunday School Anniversary was held in the Chapel in 1816, the preacher being the Rev. William France, and the collection £8 9s. 9½d. Until 1821 only one service was held, and for many years afterwards only two on this festive day. A fee of threepence was charged on the admission of a scholar, and continued to be charged until 1848, when the annual Teachers' Meeting abolished them. The only exception to this rule was a resolution passed in 1826. "That any teacher may bring his own child or children at any time and have them admitted without the accustomed fee." There is no record of the number of scholars at this time, but that considerable increases were made is manifest from the collections, which in 1824 amounted to £22 4s. 1d. Mr. John Travis was the School Treasurer, and Mr. Joshua Cheetham the Secretary, an office which he held

until 1856, when Mr. Joshua M. Cheetham succeeded him. For a time Mr. James Taylor acted as his assistant. The neatly and carefully written minute and treasurer's books showed how methodical he was and what zest he threw into his labour of love. In 1828 a funeral fund was established, and continued until 1857, when the Sick and Burial Society was established by some of the teachers and others, as the funeral fund was not sufficient to meet the needs of the poor people. A "wall and pallisading" was subscribed for in 1825 and cost £41 4s. 9½d., and the Chapel was painted and whitewashed in 1826, the cost being equally divided between Chapel and School. A clock was purchased the same year from Mr. Anderton for £7 6s. The following resolution was passed at the annual meeting in 1829: "That all children stand up while taught their lessons," and in the following year this minute was penned: "That as the Chapel bottom is very damp and cold in the winter season and as several teachers and scholars have suffered in consequence, it is in the opinion of this meeting that it would be expedient to board the Chapel bottom at the expense of the School, but in case a School should hereafter be built, the Trustees of the Chapel to make a reasonable remuneration to the Managers of the School for the expense incurred by boarding the Chapel bottom." The regulations the teachers adopted for their own conduct were stringent. The resolutions "most unanimously passed" provided "that if a teacher was absent two successive Sundays, or came late twice after being reprov'd, the Committee might exclude him." In 1830 the Trustees decided to light the Chapel with gas, and this was done by subscription at the cost of £18, the "friends at Luzley Brook" who had now a School of their own contributing £2 4s.

There had been some agitation for a new School, and in 1831 it was decided to erect one. The foundation stone was laid on September 15th, 1831 (one week after King William the Fourth was crowned) by Joshua Cheetham, of Clough. It was built at the rear of the Chapel, and a further parcel of land was leased from "Lion Meadow." The new buiding was soon erected, for on Sunday, February 26th, 1832, that is twenty-one weeks from the laying of the foundation stone, the boys were taught in the lower room for the first time. The upper part of the School was occupied as cottages for about six years. From the cash book it appears

there were five tenants, and the annual rent was £25. 4s. 8d. The cost of the building was £468 15s. 7d. The opening service was conducted by Rev. Joseph Forsyth, of Delph, who preached from Isaiah xi 9, and the collection was £23 6s.

In 1838 the cottage dwellings were abolished, and upper storey used as a Girls' School for the first time on Sunday, February 11th. The trustees were Joshua Cheetham, John Thornton, John Travis Sen., Eli Collinge, James Firth, Edwin Travis, Abram Bottomley, Josiah Wild, James Whitehead, James Hoyle, William Sudlow, and John Travis Jun. From the Sunday School funds the sum of £50 was given towards the cost. Forms or benches were provided, and a "pulpit to answer also as a bookcase." Gas was installed in December, 1838.

Up to this time it had been customary to provide a supper for the teachers and singers on the evening of the Anniversary, but this custom was abolished, and tea and coffee provided on Christmas Day, when the annual meeting was always held. The children were trained for the special singing by Mr. William Pogson, and afterwards by Mr. John Turner, and 10s. were annually paid to the trainer. An instruction was given in 1842 that only good, plain hymns, and only good, plain congregational tunes without any pieces should be rendered, with "as few strange singers as possible."

The Anniversary was held in the autumn, near the end of September or early in October. Most carefully written and elaborate reports covering many pages were read. The reports for 1843, '44, '45, '48, '49, '51, '52 and '57 are preserved. They are intensely interesting, and worthy of publication. I give, as a sample, an extract from the report of 1843: "The professed and real design of this Institution is to give the children plain learning, and instruct them in the knowledge of God, their Saviour. It is true it has an eye to the Health of the Body, by means of temperance and action; to the comfort of life arising from industry, frugality and honesty; to domestic concord and peace resulting from decorum, fidelity and love; to the improvement of society by assiduity, probity and public spirit, but it more especially and ultimately looks to the soul, as having a superior claim to attention, being involved in more afflicting and alarming circumstances than the body, and presents, explains, and recommends a remedy sufficient to extricate it, and render it permanently and for ever happy.

To insure these objects much more is required than merely learning to read, to say their catechism, or to repeat some passages from the Scriptures or other good books. It is by an education early begun and long continued that we may expect to see them exhibiting fixed principles and moral habits. Principles, motives, and examples are to be drawn from the pure sources of sacred truth, for this is the broad and solid foundation upon which alone we wish to erect the goodly fabric of morality and religion. And what Christian heart does not glow at the thought of the weekly assemblage of so many young people met to worship God and to be instructed in that Book which is to be their guide through this world to another ; and it is a pleasing fact that more than 320 young persons attending this Sabbath School can read this blessed Book.

" We confidently assert that through the instrumentality of this School a barrier has been raised against that flood of immorality and irreligion to which the youthful population was exposed, and the feet of so many who might otherwise have wandered in the paths of folly and destruction, have been happily directed to the House of God." The number of scholars was 471. " The Committee have to lament the death of one of our warm, long-trying and liberal friend to the School in the Person of John Travis, Esq. He was one of the original projectors and Trustees of the School and for 20 years its Treasurer. The Committee have to acknowledge the very liberal donation of £350 from him, given a short time before his decease, and appropriated at his request to the liquidation of the debt upon the School." A tablet to his memory is now in the North wall¹ of the present School. The boys were taught in the bottom room and the girls in the upper room. On very rare occasions the boys were taken there, to what they considered almost sacred ground, to have an address. The scholars assembled at 9.0 in the morning and were dismissed at 11.30. In the afternoon the meeting was from 1.30 to 2.30, and then to Chapel for the afternoon service. " Tasks " were given to be committed to memory and repeated the following Sabbath. The females used to attend the morning School with a silk kerchief on their heads and wearing print dresses, newly-cleaned clogs and spotlessly white stockings. In the afternoon, boots, stuff dresses, and bonnets for old and young were the fashion. The discipline was somewhat severe. The superintendent would walk about the room with an ash stick,

1. Removed to East Wall when stage erected in 1946.

two or three yards long. These sticks were procured in bundles and stored in the attic, with the tables used for tea parties. Writing and arithmetic were taught, but after a time a week evening was set apart for this exercise until the establishment of a Government Day School. The School funds were drawn upon for the cost of candles.

The annual Sunday School Tea Party was held on Good Friday, and it was a high day for both scholars and parents. Recitations, addresses, vocal and instrumental music was the fare provided.

Whit Friday was a great day, and the procession much enjoyed. No band accompanied, and the route taken embraced Luzley Brook, Heyside House, Woodend and Clough. No wonder the fare provided was substantial. In 1866 it was stipulated the buns should weigh half-a-pound. Four hundred and fifty were provided, fifty quarts of buttermilk to drink, and ten quarts of new milk to put in coffee. In this year James Mellor, Joseph Clegg, James Henthorn, Abraham Sunderland and John Mills were "water fetchers."

On Trinity Monday, 1857, Mr. Joshua Cheetham records in his diary, "Took a waggon load of Wesleyans and a waggon load from Refuge Street to Peel Park."

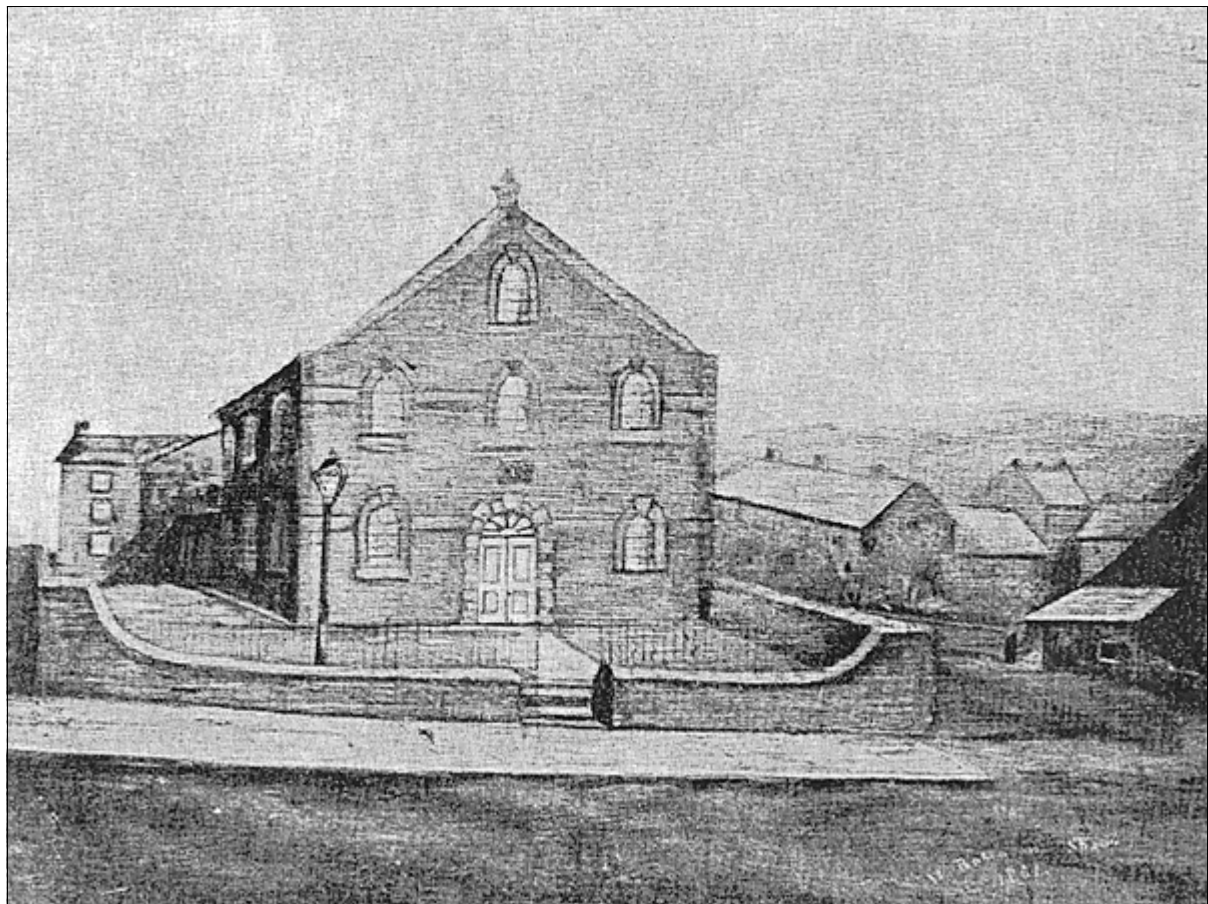
In 1857, Joshua Cheetham, Esq., of Clough House, died. He became a member of the Church at the age of 17, and for the last 35 years of his life was a kind and faithful Class Leader in connection with it. The School greatly benefitted by his aid during its early history, and for more than 40 years this institution had his warmest attachment, his most anxious thought, and his most assiduous care. During that period more than 3,000 children were enrolled on its books, and with pious zeal he sought to promote the eternal welfare of each of them. By his Will he bequeathed £400 towards liquidation of the debt remaining on the School, and £100 to form a nucleus of a fund for their enlargement. A tablet to his memory was erected in the Chapel by the Trustees.

Amongst those who gave of their best to further the interests of the School were John Thornton, James Firth, James Milne (James o' Sally Clegg's), William Sudlow, James Harop, Eli Collinge, William Butterworth, James Longbottom, Robert Townend, James H. Rogers, Thomas Rogers,

Hepsibah Bakewell, Grace Longbottom, Ralph Byrom, Samuel Mason, John Farrar, Abraham Hall, Mr. Byron, Mrs. Abraham Stott, Joseph Clegg, John Mills, Robert Whitehead.

In 1872 the present Schools were erected, at a cost of £1,920 14s. 2d. Towards this £1,300 was raised at once, and the debt cleared off in 1876. The suite of vestries was erected in 1886 at a cost of £1,138 9s. 11d., and the final payment was made on December 9th, 1888 " There is enough to show that our fathers, in spite of many difficulties, laid the foundations of this noble institution, and that we have entered upon a rich heritage built up by their toil and self-sacrifice. They now inherit the promises, and we are left to carry on their work. How shall we do it?"

Mr. Sellars posed the question 50 years ago. Have we carried out the challenge? Over the remaining pages are accounts of the various departments of our Society, written by ex-members or serving members. They all show how over the years the work of teaching the Gospel has been linked with other activities and how methods have changed.



St. Paul's Methodist Church, Shaw, 1861

THE INSTITUTE MOVEMENT

Urban Sellars recalled : "The Reverend Robert Davidson, M.A., the first resident minister appointed to Shaw in 1869, commenced a Bible Class, which met on Friday evenings, at which discussions formed a prominent feature. When he left the district, meetings were continued and termed "Mutual Improvement Meetings." These meetings continued with varying regularity until 1881 when the present "Christian Association" was formed, the Reverend Robert Passmore being the first President. It was launched at a very elaborate "Conversazione" held at Christmas, 1881, the forerunner of the Christmas Eve Parties.

Meetings were held from September to April, on Friday evenings, when papers, addresses, etc. were given by the members. Rarely was an outsider invited. In 1883 a room for reading was provided and the leading monthlies and quarterlies were lent by members. Later another room was added for games and recreation and continued in use, with occasional intervals, until the present premises over Mr. Duckworth's Market Street shop were rented, and here billiards were added to the attractions."

THE CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The Shaw Wesleyan Christian Association was formed in 1879, and, apart from a period during the first World War, continued until 1940, which represents a period of 60 years. It will be appreciated that when it was formed, compulsory education had only been in force since 1870, and, therefore, a society like this would represent the first surge forward of the community which was now receiving a measure of education it had not enjoyed previously. The result of this was the emergence of an enquiring mind as to why things were as they were. It is significant that around this period similar Societies were springing up, certainly all over the North of England, and traces of some can be found in respect of the Mechanics' Institutes, some of which still survive as buildings, but I should imagine that very few are performing the service with which they started.

The contact of the writer with the Christian Association dates from the year 1919, and from this period to its ending

during the season 1940-41 a continuous attendance was made at each meeting. It is quite right that the question should be asked "How did it function?" and an endeavour will now be made to answer this question.

By constitution there was a President, who was always the Minister of the Church, two Vice-Presidents, elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association, a Committee of six members elected similarly and a Secretary.

The programme of any winter season was built on as broad a basis as possible. The President would read the first paper and subsequently papers would be given by other members and would cover such subjects as biography, travel, literature and others of more general interest. One of the highlights of each session was the debate. In the opinion of the writer one of the outstanding debates was held in 1924, the subject being the Capital Levy, which at that time was a vital Political issue. The late Mr. Robert Mellor supported the motion and the late Mr. Edward Butterworth opposed the motion. The debate aroused more than the interest of our own members and attracted a number of people who had a particular interest in this subject.

Another popular occasion was the Impromptu Evening when a number of subjects approximating to the number of speakers were put into a box. In another box the names of the speakers who had volunteered to take part were placed. The President would open the evening by taking a subject out of the box. Before he commenced to speak on that matter he would select a name out of the speakers' box and this person would then pick a subject out of the appropriate box. Each person was allowed three minutes in which to speak, and during that time the next speaker would be considering what he would say. This procedure was repeated until everyone had taken part. Many amusing incidents come to mind. One member who, about 1926, had studied intently for a situation in the Mining Industry, drew the subject "Coal" but was unable to express any opinion. Another member, a Local Preacher, drew the subject "The Modern Girl" and promptly, in true Local Preacher's style, sub-divided it under three headings.

There is one particular statement that has always stuck in my mind, not heard personally but related to me,—the

speaker who said that the British Army (First World War) was composed of 90 per cent scalliwags. The course of history subsequently proved that whatever the merits or demerits of this statement, the British Army, as it was then constituted, played a vital part in preserving the liberties which we all cherish so highly.

The younger generation will, no doubt, ask "What did the Christian Association do?" I would answer this as follows: In the first place it made anyone who took an active part in the affairs of the association able to stand criticism. It also taught members to ensure that the statements they were making were, so far as it was possible to know, correct in substance and fact. It opened out wider worlds for the younger members. It drew their attention to nobility in manner, grandeur in thought and courage in action. Woe betide the speaker who might be taking a principle or a subordinate part in the particular discussion of the evening if he made statements that could not be substantiated. In addition it created a Christian point of union between all those who were interested in its activities.

It was responsible for other activities in addition to the Friday meetings. The Committee was responsible for the Institute, first opened over Duckworth's shop in Market Street and then in 1925 transferred to the Memorial Institute built by generous donation in memory of those of our School and Church who fell in the First World War.

It is always invidious to mention names but I consider that the name of Mr. Harry Gledhill, who for a long period was a very active Secretary of the Association, should be recorded.

An attempt was made after the Second World War to revive the Association, but it was not a success. The Association has gone but the necessity for the qualities which it created is as great as ever.

If the younger generation find the enjoyment, benefit and Christian Fellowship which the writer found in the Association they will have a very rich heritage. It is the wish of the writer that they should do so, and when they come to see in retrospect, as the writer is now doing, it will bring happy memories which the writing has given to past member, Christian Association.

Through such mental exercise as debating and the fellowship created the members had the keen desire to form a club for physical recreation.

THE CRICKET CLUB

In the early months of 1897 a meeting of the Shaw Wesleyan Young Men's Christian Association resolved "That a Cricket Club be formed." A Cricket Club Committee was appointed and went to work on the project with all speed. A field at Clough was rented and became the home of the Shaw Wesleyan Cricket Club.

One corner of the field was occupied by the remains of the pit head and shale dump of the Holebottom Colliery. The oldest inhabitant could not remember any use of the field other than rough grazing for horses. There was a very quick slope of the land from East to West. It bore little resemblance to Old Trafford.

Whilst a willing band of would-be cricketers chose a spot somewhere near the centre of the slope and began to excavate a sort of shelf about 30 yards by 6 yards to form a playing crease, the one professional joiner member of the Club, assisted by some of the older members who did not care for navvying, commenced to build a pavilion. An amount of £5 was allocated for this purpose. Though showing signs of its age, the old pavilion is still useful.

Cricket was commenced as soon as a strip of the crease was levelled. Work, in addition to play, was expected of the members and each Saturday afternoon throughout the winter the work continued. Under the guidance and with the help of a navvy the members moved the bank of clay and the shale dump to the lower part of the field where, with the help of a few hundred loads of ashpit refuse the ground was gradually filled to a reasonable relation to the rest of the playing area.

A reasonably good crease was carefully established, but the outfield was a little unsporting in the way it would occasionally trip up the unwary fielder who had not noticed the bucket handle just raised above the rough ground.

It should be remembered that in the early years of the century people were only just becoming accustomed to a full

Saturday afternoon's rest. The cotton trade worked a 55½ hour week and other people, such as the shopkeepers, worked considerably more.

The opportunity to play cricket was grasped eagerly, and promptly at 6.30 p.m. each week night a large group of cricketers would be seen on the field "tossing-up" for order of batting practice. Unfortunate was the player who could not get home, swallow his tea and walk or run up to Holebottom by that time; he would have to bat in the gloaming or even the dark. Such keenness made the Shaw Wesleyan team into a very useful side, which played well and sportingly.

As a member of the Oldham and Ashton Cricket League many championships were won and after transfer to the Rochdale and District League the club was at the top of that League for three years in succession.

There was a strong family flavour about the club in this first period of its history; brothers, cousins, and more distant relations were to be found in the teams, and consequently family rivalries imparted much keenness to their cricket.

Holiday matches were arranged with village teams in pleasant places like Bakewell, Youlgrave, Settle, Gargrave. These were very popular outings even though to play at Bettws-y-Coed meant a daybreak start and a midnight finish.

This somewhat legendary period in the history of the club ended abruptly with the outbreak of the First World War.

With the return of peace, but not, unhappily, with the return of all our boys, a new period of the club's history began.

In the summer of 1919 the ladies of the Sunday School requested that courts for tennis, which was becoming a popular game, should be provided at the cricket ground. This request was, of course, granted and the club was now the Shaw Wesleyan Cricket and Tennis Club.

A great deal of work was undertaken to improve the ground generally. The Cricket Pavilion was moved to make room for two tennis courts to be made. An old clogger's shop was carted from Lyon Street and attached to the end of the pavilion so that the ladies could have their own room. The cricket crease was re-laid, the land drains were re-made and the money was raised to pay for all the work the members could not do themselves.

Another phase of the club's career was off to a good start and it was further consolidated when Mr. Wilfred Hall purchased the field and handed it to the Trustees of the Church in memory of his parents and his many friends of the Church and Sunday School.

Now began an interesting attempt to reconcile the conflicting claims of cricket and tennis. Cricketers whose wives and sweethearts played tennis were batting on a "sticky wicket." If they did not play with the ladies they felt uncomfortable and if they did play instead of practising cricket they ran a risk of being dropped from the cricket team.

In 1926 there were so many lady members of the club that they needed more and better accommodation. Instead of "pop and pie" of pre-war years the ladies, working in cramped space, were producing real teas and, incidentally making considerable profit. A new pavilion was built at a cost of £300 and the money was raised by gifts and loans from players and supporters.

The years between the wars were most encouraging to the Sunday School and the club, not so much because of Cricket championships won, and several were won, but for the very full use that was made of the field. From tea-time to dark the crack of the ball on bat, and the ping of ball on racquet never ceased. Tennis matches and tournaments were arranged, Rose Queens were crowned and Gala Weeks were organised, so that there was something to enjoy throughout the summer.

The Annual meeting of Members of the 1897-1914 period were noteworthy for the racy yearly reports of the Secretary, and always attracted a good attendance; perhaps the opportunity to remove any unsympathetic member of the Selection Committee was an added attraction. In the years following the introduction of tennis the meetings were enlivened by attempts to explain to the ladies the working of the slate system which governed the order of precedence in the use of courts.

The family aspect of the club was still very noticeable, for we now had the second generation coming along to play alongside their parents at both games. This was a stabilizing influence of great help to the Selection Committee.

In 1939 the cricket teams, now known since the Methodist Union, as Shaw St. Paul's, gained admission to the South

Lancashire League after the ground had been accepted as suitable. The first season proved the teams suitable also.

This interesting venture for a Sunday School Club was cut short at the end of the season, when flannels were again exchanged for khaki.

After a six years interval an enthusiastic re-start was made in both cricket and tennis. The respective Secretaries had worked hard to keep the club alive during the war, so that when the boys returned they were able to resume play immediately.

In 1946 we rejoined the Oldham and Ashton League. The following year, being the 50th birthday of the club, a successful and most enjoyable dinner was held at the close of the season. The past and present members of the club were invited, so the affair was also a reunion.

The teams had celebrated the anniversary by winning the three cups of the Oldham and Ashton League.

A consistently good record has been maintained since that year, but without so good a result.

Tennis, which had lost some of its popularity in the late 1930's, also revived when the boys came home, and for some years the field seemed to recapture the attractiveness of earlier years. Latterly, however, the courts have fallen into disuse and a great deal of work will be required to make them playable when a revival comes.

Looking through the names of the cricketers who have played in the teams during the past two or three years it will be noticed how many families are represented; there seem to be few brothers playing. Two players only are of the third generation of those who played in the early years. It is not that the families have died out, but rather that the need to seek more stable employment than that offered by the Cotton Trade in the 1930's spread our young men throughout the country in search of their opportunity.

The present infusion of fresh blood into the teams, and young blood at that, should ensure a continuance of happy cricket at Holebottom. A revival of tennis is overdue and when it comes the social value of the club will be as in former days.

One thing must be said in conclusion and in a deep sense of gratitude. Right through the years of its history Shaw St. Paul's Cricket and Tennis Club has ever had a loyal band of workers, who, though not playing much or maybe not at all, have given of their time and money without stint so that the young members of the Sunday School and Church might enjoy their games. The thanks that they would appreciate most would surely be those expressed in work to ensure that a happy and successful club shall continue as a useful part of the Church and Sunday School.

THE BAND OF HOPE

During the early 1920's an active group of young people met weekly, held their devotional Service and heard of the strive for temperance. They were inspired by devout leaders, Charles Hill and J. A. Winterbottom.

THE BOYS' LIFE BRIGADE

The Company was formed in 1905, the Captain being Mr. George Durant. The membership of 75 had a band of 12 bugles, 4 side drums and 1 bass drum. It was attached to the Oldham Battalion, which was over 1,000 strong and commanded by Captain Sinclair. A very high standard was attained in various activities, particularly Ambulance and Life-saving Work. Several Wakes Week Camps were held firstly at Penrhynside, Colwyn Bay, and later at Grange-over-Sands.

The first Headquarters were over Partington's Wheelwright's shop, now the workshop of Messrs. Houghton Bros., in Crompton Street. The Company was a source of high spiritual and moral value to the church until the lack of Leaders occasioned by the incidence of the 1914-18 War caused a complete break in its activities.

Mention should be made at this point of the short-lived Company of the Girls' Brigade.

THE BOYS' BRIGADE

Trying to write a short account of the life of the Brigade at St. Paul's, the writer, an ex-member, found it difficult to know just where to start. He goes on to say that it was founded in 1922 and was supported by several of the young and

enthusiastic youths of the day. The principle of the Brigade was good Christian citizenship, discipline and fellowship. Two very well known names were connected with the Company, the late Mr. H. S. Butterworth was the President, and the late Mr. R. W. Perkins the Captain. His discipline at drill meetings went against the grain, but many members were later to be thankful for it. Thursday night of each week was reserved for drill, gymnastics, First-Aid and other interesting activities. The Brigade had not a good record for sporting successes, in fact in this respect it is said that they won a far better thing than cups and medals—the way to be good losers. On one occasion at the presentation of awards at a meeting of the Oldham Battalion the President said, "If only there was a cup for the best losers Shaw St. Paul's Company would win it by a big margin, they are a most popular team who go down fighting hard and always come up smiling."

The Captain organised many excellent camps in such places as Grange-over-Sands, Rothesay and London and at a cost that every boy could afford to go.

Every Sunday morning the Captain held a Bible Class for the Company and older boys were encouraged to give the address. Afterwards all members paraded into the Chapel for the Morning Service. It is said that at one time every male teacher in the Junior Department of the Sunday School was an ex-Brigade boy. Several Local Preachers served in the Company.

When the Captain retired the members missed a good friend to whom they owed a great debt for his inspiring leadership. The Company lost strength and ended in 1934.

SCOUTING

The first record of Scouting at St. Paul's is in the year 1935 when the Troop had a strength of fourteen members. The Second World War with its demands for military and Civil Defence duties brought the activities of the Scouts to an end. Associated with the Troop was an active Cub Pack. It was not until 1956 that Scouting was revived but the Cubs had been re-formed some years earlier. At the time of writing the Troop is twenty strong.

One of the highlights in the Troop's history came in May 1959, when 8th Shaw camped at Ashworth Valley along with

the Crompton Association. The occasion was the farewell visit of the Chief Scout of the day, Lord Rowallan. He was about to leave Scouting in Britain to take up the post of Governor-General of Tasmania. Out of seven Associations camping, Crompton was chosen to have tea with the Chief Scout and three Scouts from 8th Shaw were among the chosen few.

GIRL GUIDES

The history of the Girl Guide Movement at St. Paul's began with the arrival of Mrs. Tom Taylor from the South of England some thirty years ago. She allied inexhaustible knowledge of Guiding with great organizing ability and enthusiasm. From a small group learning knots, there grew quickly a full Company of 28 Guides with a waiting list of would-be entrants. The Guides were "fed" from the exuberant Brownies who also had a full Pack. At one time there was a Ranger Patrol and all three Groups regularly attended the monthly Church Parade Service.

The movement lost momentum before the Second World War but we are now in a position to report further Guiding activity because, in October, 1954, the Company was re-formed, commencing with 12 Guides, two of whom are still members. The present membership is 29 of whom 7 are working for their first class badge, 16 are working for their second class badge and seven are preparing for their enrolment.

A number of the Guides, with Captain and a party from the St. John's Church, Royton, Company, went to camp in August, 1959, for the first time and thoroughly enjoyed it. It is hoped that it will be possible for larger parties to camp for longer periods in the future.

1960 is the Guide Jubilee Year and the Company is planning to take part in as many of the local Guide celebrations as possible.

Affiliated to the Guide Company is a very strong Brownie Pack. Co-operation between the two groups has always been good. Several of the Guides began their Guiding days in the Pack, and it is hoped that more Brownies will become Guides in this Company.