

Burnham-on-Sea
Methodist Church
Centenary Souvenir



1879 - 1979

FOREWORD

This Centenary Booklet has been produced through the co-operation of many people. It is printed in the hope that it will be acceptable and helpful to those who read it. The Church is rightly proud of its history there is much to be thankful for and a great deal to look forward to. A hundred years of witness in this beautiful part of Somerset is worthy of acknowledgement in some way. Whilst what follows cannot do justice to all that ought to have been included, may it be a publication that will be appreciated and enjoyed

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Brief History

Did the Church come back home ?

Before 1860 the Wesleyan Methodists met in a room in College Street that was also used as a drapery and grocery business. This followed an agreement between Richard Hodges, grocer and draper and Richard Hodges, senior, Joseph Board, Henry Board, Gilbert Frost, James Lovibond, J. M. and James Leaker to let the room for an annual rental of 3.0s.0d. for five years. According to a document of 1963 Richard Hodges occupied a house on the south side of College Street and his father owned a house and coal yard in Berrow Road.

The foundation stone of the first Methodist Chapel in Burnham was laid on July 12th, 1859, following the purchase by eleven trustees, of a plot of land on the corner of High Street and Adam Street on June 27th, 1859 from George Reed.

It was built at a cost of £300 by Albert Hodges, brother of Richard, and opened on January 17th, 1860 by Rev. J. Rattenbury.

The stained glass window borders, which cost 1.4s.0d. were still visible until 1968. This 'new Chapel' was in use for 19 years and housed the Sunday School until 1906. In 1862 a harmonium was bought for 12, and in the same year bills of one shilling each were paid to remove the snow and mow the chapel yard.

It was soon realised that a new Church must be acquired, and the Methodists moved back to College Street. Was this to the site where the draper's shop had been?

1879 -1979

Our present Church was opened on June 25th, 1879 by the Rev. M. C. Osborn. The land cost £200 and the building £1,041.10s 0d. the money being raised from bazaars, subscriptions, tea meeting and lectures, and the letting of the seats in the Church at a cost ' 1s.0d 1s.3d. and 1s.6d. In 1878 a bazaar realised £130.15s.8d and subscriptions brought in £250.

The Church was heated by "two gas stoves, placed on brick chambers, under the floor, one in each aisle, covered with iron grating". Outgoings were: Insurance 1s.3d.p.a. Drainage 6d. Following the licensing of the Church for Marriages in 1884, the first couple wed were Mr. & Mrs. Gilling, who were presented with a Bible and hymn book.

The Transepts and Sunday School Premises added.

In 1906 the premises were felt to be too small, so two transepts were added and the Sunday School premises built at the rear of the Church at a total cost of £1250.

The income from the sale of the old Chapel left a debt of £200, which was repaid by

1910.

By 1911 the heating apparatus was in an unsatisfactory condition and in 1913 a man was appointed to put two screws in the schoolroom to prevent the water going upstairs.

During the First World War the schoolroom was opened daily for the use of troops, and 5,000 sheets of notepaper and envelopes were provided. 1916 saw the provision of blackout and insurance against air raids for £3; 1921 Roll of Honour erected; 1923 Electric Light installed; 1939 The Diamond Jubilee was celebrated and a Service of Thanksgiving was held at The Ritz Cinema; 1940 Thirty members of the Church served in the Forces, and in 1943 and 1944 each was sent five shillings.

Wesley Guild.

The Guild was formed by forty enthusiastic young people in 1897. In 1899 tea was provided for 100 people, and in 1900 five shillings donated towards a Children's Social. Musical Evenings were popular, with admission 1d.

There were many festivals and outings, including a trip to Bournemouth in 1908 for 3s.9d. return, and the formation of a 'Glee Party'.

The Guild supported an Indian child by annual subscriptions in the early 1920's. In 1931 rambles and visits were held for the 55 members and in the following year a Junior Guild was formed. At the Guild Rally it was stated that "this society has members from 6 to 82 years, all having a truly youthful spirit".

120 children evacuees were entertained on Guild nights during the war, and German P.O.W's were welcomed, providing "an excellent musical entertainment".

In 1961, the Guild became known as the Church Fellowship and has supported Indian children, Ilesha Hospital, and many other concerns.

Women's Fellowship.

This is first mentioned in 1904 as a 'Sewing Circle', which raised money for Trust Funds. Although the sewing had practically disappeared by 1936 they were able to give £16.10s. to the Church, and in 1937 £14.

In 1947 the title was changed to Women's Fellowship and their activities are summed up on the president's report for 1967: "Mrs. Sheppard expressed her appreciation of our loyalty and willingness to take on such work for God as our time and talents permit". There were numerous special events including an outing to Dunster "enjoyed by all, though Mrs. P. suffered from her feet"!

Choir

In 1860 the Choir was provided with six hymnbooks at 3s.0d. each, and by 1896 a hymn board had been provided.

Mr. Martin Broad was organist from 1896 until at least 1949. An organ costing £204 was bought in 1897 and a leader was appointed for the choir in 1904. In 1936 it had 17 members, one of whom attended 104 times during the year!

Sunday School.

This was started on January 29th, 1860 and the rules of conduct were set out most precisely in the Minute Book.

It met on Sundays at 9.15 a.m. and 2 p.m., and the scholars were taken to morning service in the chapel, the teachers sitting with them to 'preserve order'. Attendance and Good Behaviour tickets were given out—ten tickets being 1d. in value.

By 1869 the number of children had risen from 23 to 68, and the annual 'treat' was held on August 8th at the Cremorne Puzzle Gardens. The charge was 1d each (with hot water!). (Lucerne Cottage, Berrow Road now stands on the site of these gardens).

Someone who contributed much the life of the Church and Sunday School was.

JOSEPH ROCKETT CHURCHILL (1864 -1936)

Joseph was the son of David and Harriet Churchill, who were married on August 6th, 1863. Harriet was the grand-daughter of the Rev. Caleb Rockett. Vicar of East Brent, and David was a saddler and postman. Their class tickets for September, 1863 are still amongst the records.

Joseph took a degree at London University and enjoyed success as a tutor. All his life had been linked with the Church, as Bible Class Leader, Sunday School Superinten-ent. Local Preacher, and Trustees' Treasurer, and he had a wide outlook on religious matters. He also took part in the life of the town including the bowling, football and cricket clubs. District Nursing Association, Hospital Carnival, T.B. Care Committee and others.

THE MINISTRY — 1879 TO THE PRESENT DAY

1879 Richard H. Higson.

1880 George E. Scutt.

1883 Samuel Arnold.

1884 R. Watkin Jones.

1885 William Flint (address given as Fairview House, Burnham).

1888 George C. Clarke.

1889 James Goudie.

1892 Henry H. Gower.

1894 John Morton.
1895 Thomas Stephenson, B.A.
1897 William H. Lofthouse, M.A.
1899 J. Sidmouth Cooper.
1901 Llewellyn Roberts.
1904 Joseph Martin.
1905 Edwin P. Roussel.
1906 Alfred Hoad.
1907 John Angus.
1910 John H. Sanders.
1913 W. Jackson Bush.
1916. J. Percival Martin.
1918 W. Palmer Morris.
1919 Frederick Cowles.
1920 Tilden B. Bissek. (The Manse during this period was at
32 College Street).
1923 Thomas Ewbank.
1926 A Percy Bourne.
1929 G. A. Elliott.
1933 W. Loxiey Chamings (Address given as 9 Berrow Road.
The Manse was at this address until 2006).
1937 John Pickles.
1941 Frank M. Cooker, M.C.
1945 W. Stanley Gifford.
1949 Norman E. Dando.
1952 John D. Musgrave.
1956 Roy J. Harvey.
1963 John Tucker.
1971 Peter B. Philipson.
1976 Terence Isherwood.

Acknowledgement is made of the invaluable help of Mr. William Leary, B.A.the Connexional Archivist of the Methodist Church, in the compilation of the above list.

REV. P. M. COOPER (1941 - 1945).

Arriving in Burnham, it was with the feeling that we had arrived on another planet. There were no signs of the violence and destruction we had left behind in Bristol. All was so fresh and peaceful, we loved the Church and the people were kind and welcoming.

Hundreds of black American troops arrived in the area, and we felt that we must do all we could to help them. A room was made available to them and we welcomed them at the Manse. Services were cheered by the rendering of some beautiful hymns and songs by the troops. My wife wrote to mothers, sweethearts and wives, receiving letters in reply, and sometimes food parcels. It grew nearer to the Second Front and we were genuinely saddened when they all went.

We are still enjoying life. I am looking different now to when this photograph was taken in 1945.

We both send our love and good wishes for your big celebration. Our time at Burnham is a cherished memory.

F. M. Cooper

REV. W. S. GIFFORD (1945 - 1949).

My family and I came to Burnham after six years in wartime Bristol, and we enjoyed its beauty. The countryside and the seashore were pleasant, but we especially liked the friendliness of the people.

After the death of my wife, three years ago, I came to live in 'Cedar Lane,' one of the Methodist Homes for the Aged. Our only daughter, Margaret, is an ordained minister in the Forest of Dean. I remember some members of the Church at Burnham quite vividly.

I send my good wishes.

W. S. Gifford

REV. J. D. MUSGRAVE (1952 - 1956).

It is surprising to realise that twenty-three years have passed since we left Burnham, and no doubt both Church and town have changed almost beyond recognition. We have never been back to see! But we recall those days of quiet retreat from a boisterous world, and some of the loyal and gracious folk who gave us of their friendship.

It is good to know that the Methodist Fellowship at Burnham still continues to worship and to serve, and on this occasion of your centenary we send our congratulations for past achievements and our good wishes for the coming years.

J. D. Musgrave

REV. R. J. HARVEY (1956 - 1963)

It is a great privilege to be allowed to send greetings to the Burnham-on-Sea Methodist Church on the occasion of its Centenary Celebrations. My wife joins me in sending congratulations and good wishes, and we join with you in giving thanks to God for all that we hear about you.

We came to Burnham in 1956, when things were pretty difficult, and we stayed for seven extremely happy years. We look back now with thankfulness and very great joy, and are so grateful for all the folk at Burnham were to us in these days.

We rejoice with you now at this time of thanksgiving. As you prepare for the next century we pray God will make the days ahead even more fruitful than the past.

To God be the glory! Great things he has done!

Roy J. Harvey

REV J. E. TUCKER (1963 - 1971)

Congratulations and every blessing to you all in this your special centenary year. Our memories of Burnham are very happy ones; a lovely place to live in with a growing family, and such a friendly church for the family to belong to.

What are my memories of the 'not too long ago ministry' in Burnham? The hesitant beginnings of the House Groups when, with Sister Jean's encouragement we helped the Tuesday Fellowship to spread its wings. The monthly Bible studies and the Carols by Candlelight, already a thrilling occasion when we came but always an inspiring event.

Then there were the holiday congregations, the joys of sharing worship with fellow Methodists. We had a growing Sunday School with devoted teachers, a lively bunch of trustees, and a supportive group of stewards.

It is our joy to have present family involvement in the church, so us are kept well informed.

Every blessing.

John E. Tucker

(The Link' was started during Mr. Tucker's ministry at Burnham).

REV. P. B. PHILIPSON (1971 - 1976)

It is reputed that Adam said to Eve as they left the Garden of Eden 'My dear, we live in a time of change!' Burnham has seen many changes as the Methodist Church has developed in the past few years. People have come to live in that most salubrious of places, often in retirement, contributing to the life of the Church. The members of Berrow have most graciously joined in. Work has gone on in many ways, more perhaps with young people, but never to the neglect of those who are older. Cliff College has sent its teams: there have been ecumenical relationships: experiments in worship; development of music; and newsletters reaching out. Also there has been growth in numbers and service to the community. It is all very encouraging. Now the centenary is celebrated with a thriving Church —and it is not very long ago that there was talk of closing it down because of lack of numbers.

We started with Adam and Eve: the Book of Revelation declares that there is to be a new heaven and new earth; change seems to go on! May God grant continuing growth in the things of the Spirit, and new adventures in His Name.

Peter B. Philipson

FROM THE PRESENT MINISTER—REV. T. ISHERWOOD (1976 -)

It is a great pleasure to see how many former ministers have referred to the friendliness of the Burnham people. It is certainly a church in which a minister can very quickly feel at home. There is an enthusiasm which is generated from so many of our members which is stimulating, for it makes for a healthy atmosphere. There is something exciting about being a part of a church which has vision and is willing to venture in thought and service.

Since arriving in Burnham we have added to our family: Christopher was born in Somerset, and Stephen and Ruth are very much a part of the scene. We both are content and yet excited for the future.

It is a joy to be part of the Church in this celebration year. Jean joins me in congratulating the Church on its centenary and in praying for its continued witness.

For the future, we seek to build together through the power of God. As St. Paul writes to the Ephesians:

To Him who is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of, by means of the power working in us, to God be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for all time.

Terry Isherwood

THE CHURCH

List of Officials

Church Stewards:

Mr. C. H. May, Mr. R. Course, Mr. P. Hampshire,
Mr. G. H. Phillips, Miss A. M. Hyde & Mr. M. Cook.

Treasurer: Mr. S. Tarr.

Property Stewards:

Mr. H.W.May Mr. C.H.May Mr.W.Strickland

Secretary: Mr. J. Oldham

Church Council Secretary: Mr. A. Houldin

Chairman Church Family: World Service and Mission:

Mr. T. Lansdown and Mr. L. Jenkin.

Secretaries: Mr. M. Stephens and Mr. A. Houldin.

Organist and Choirmaster:

Mr. T. Christian.

Burnham Church has a present membership of 155. The average morning attendance is 110 adults with an evening average of 45 people. The Church is well attended by members and adherents and Sunday collections average over £100 per week (present Circuit Assessment is £2,964 per annum). Since 1977 the church notices have been printed, and a prayer is included each week to help worshippers in their devotions before service begins. A book stall has been in the church porch since 1978. It is worth recording that Messrs Walter and John Browning have been door stewards for over forty years.

During the spring of 1978 the Sunday School was decorated and the stage area improved at a cost of £1,650. This Centenary year has seen the completion of an £11,000 scheme to modernise the kitchen, & vestry and toilet areas. The alterations were officially acknowledged at a ceremony on 12th May, 1979. A sincere word of appreciation was given to the former Berrow Society for its contribution of over £6,000.

There are a number of church activities which take place every week. The premises are used extensively, not only in the evenings, but during the day as well. The following gives a brief account of them.

The Men's Forum held their first meeting on 25th October, 1976 when it was decided that further meetings should be held monthly during the winter season. From a modest beginning, membership has steadily grown to a group consisting of about 24 members. These meetings, for men who have retired from business life, have been very successful; gathered together in fellowship to talk, listen and plan, thereby giving an added interest to life. The programme is varied by discussion and talks given by invited speakers, and on two occasions members have visited the local Radio and Nuclear Power stations. For the first two years since its formation the Forum has provided a supper and entertainment, resulting in over 100 being raised for church funds. In the Centenary year a Car Trek was organised and was followed by a buffet supper at East Brent. The Forum is well and truly established. Its chairman is the Rev. F. O. Le Sueur, a retired minister living at Berrow.

In contrast. **The Ladies' 20's/40's Group** was formed to give opportunity for women of that age group to meet together on a Monday evening. Present membership is 15 and the programme is varied, having already covered such topics as steam engines, ghosts and India. The group has also had visits from speakers who have dealt with subjects such as the Samaritans, Prison Chaplaincy. Honey Bees and Art Education. Time is afforded for lively discussion; also evenings are set aside for quiz games and record sessions. The ladies have also given time to knit squares so that a blanket can be given to charity.

A number of these ladies meet with others on Wednesday mornings for **Mothers' & Toddlers' Coffee Morning**. The last few years have seen the need for a crèche on Sunday mornings and mothers enjoy meeting informally on Wednesdays for a chat and a cup of coffee. With nine local preachers and four supernumerary ministers in the church it is not surprising that a **'Link' Preachers' Meeting** exists. Held most months, discussion takes place on worship, preaching and theology. One of the members introduces a subject and lively discussion usually follows. As one of our local preachers writes: "In many respects the preacher is something of a loner, going where appointed, leading the worship and returning home. Preparation is done in the quiet of the study. The sharing of concerns, problems and joys in our group goes a long way towards overcoming the feeling of isolation".

Now we turn to longer-established groups:

The Badminton Club has met on Friday evenings for some years and continues to prove itself successful and worthwhile.

Church Fellowship. As will be seen from the historical account of the former Wesley Guild, the present Fellowship is its successor. However, its format has changed and the present emphasis is upon devotional and Bible-study sessions. The minister and local preachers lead the meetings but there are also guest speakers and forum meetings. House groups continue to meet on the second Tuesday in the month and are well supported; they give opportunity for lively debate and include people who are neighbours of the members who do not normally attend church in the Methodist premises at College Street. The Fellowship, therefore, not only gives opportunity to build the church in knowledge, but its function is also to provide a wider understanding of belief and mission.

The Choir makes a valuable and acceptable contribution to worship; they enjoy both practice and presentation, which is good to know in these days when choirs are disappearing from their regular position in churches. Concerts of songs, sacred pieces from Stainer's 'Crucifixion' to Bach's 'St. Luke's Passion' have been presented. In our Centenary year a joint production with Berrow Choir entitled 'The Cross of Christ' was well received.

Women's Fellowship. I accept the call to Christian womanhood and promise by God's help to serve the Lord Jesus Christ; to make my home a place where He is loved, my Church a centre where He is worshipped, and my country a realm where He is honoured"—such is the promise which members of the Women's Fellowship reaffirm at the annual Dedication and Communion Service, and this is reflected in the subjects of the weekly meetings. The minister addresses the meeting once a month and the Fellowship is visited by other clergy in town and circuit. The lay speakers include some of the Fellowship's own members. Also, Members' Days are held whenever possible, and many of the members take part. Home Missions, Overseas Missions and the Bible Society are supported by the Fellowship and a contribution is made to church funds.

The average attendance is 40 each week. The names of those who are sick, and the elderly no longer able to attend, are kept in touch with and remembered in prayer. By these means we are made to feel that they are still very much a part of the fellowship.

There is a steady flow of new members into the meetings and they quickly experience a sense of friendship, and with the members, receive true blessings from the 'togetherness' of Thursday afternoons.

Active and devoted secretaries generate interest and help in mission, relief work and children's societies. Considerable amounts of money are raised each year. In 1978 the World Service and Mission Committee reported on the distribution of approximately £1,800.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Sunday School.

The Sunday School is a very important part of the life of Burnham Methodist Church and its objectives are still the same as those which prompted Robert Raikes to found the first Sunday School in Gloucester in 1780, namely, "to give children the opportunity to [earn". Whilst Raikes included the teaching of reading and writing in his curriculum, these aspects of children's education have now been taken over by the day schools and the staff of our Sunday School channel their main efforts into teaching the children about the Bible and the love of God. The Sunday School staff currently number 16 and each Sunday morning are involved with approximately 75 children of all ages, from babes in arms in the crèche to teenagers in the senior department.

The following list will give our readers an indication of the numerous activities which our Sunday School pupils and staff are involved in each year and it should be particularly noted that several of these events are linked with other churches:

District N.C.E.C. Scripture Examinations, certificate presentations and recreation afternoon;

Mothering Sunday presentation of posies to mothers at Church;

Sunday School Anniversary, with demonstration services, followed by the annual Sunday School Outing later in the summer.

Circuit Youth Week activities ranging from swimming galas to barbecues; Decoration of part of the Church for Harvest Thanksgiving Services;

Toy Service bringing toys for needy children just before Christmas;

Carol Singing in aid of the National Children's Home;

Candlelight Carol Service;

Sunday School Christmas Parties.

From this list it will be appreciated that enjoyment and playing together is well catered for within the year's activities. However, the staff are concerned with the children's learning, teaching demands dedication and so opportunities for teacher training are regularly taken by attendance at courses held in the district for the benefit of Sunday school teachers.

It is impossible to know the full effects of the work of the Sunday School within the community, but we do thank God for the glimpses of His power which we see in the lives of people who have learned and those who have taught about Him in Burnham Methodist Sunday School. Robert Raikes began a great tradition which has already been continued for over 100 years in Burnham-on-Sea, and we hope that everyone will do their part to ensure a continuity of the work in the years ahead.

The Boys' Brigade.

The Boys' Brigade Company was founded in September, 1975. After weeks of planning the doors were opened to boys shortly before 6 p.m. on Thursday, 4th September. Twenty-four boys were welcomed on the first night, but after six weeks twenty boys were attending regularly.

During the sixth week the Company was inspected by Mrs. Irene Griffiths and a favourable report was submitted to the Somerset Battalion Executive. The Executive approved the enrolment of the Company, and it was registered as the 2nd Burnham-on-Sea Company.

The members of the Company were enrolled on Sunday, 16th November by the Chaplain, the Rev. Peter Philipson. Mr. G. Phillips was enrolled as the Captain, Mrs. H. Malpas as Lieutenant, and Mr. M. Kempson as an Instructor, along with 21 boys.

The highlight of the first year was the Display Evening and Presentation of Awards by Mr. K. Page, the Battalion Vice-President.

The second year started well. Although during the year we again entered the Battalion Competitions and National Games Competition, the membership declined.

The beginning of the third year saw the formation of the Company Section which, after teething troubles, settled with a membership of six boys. The Junior Section began to grow, and at the end of the year had a membership of 22 boys. During the year we welcomed to the Company Mr. T. Keates and Mr. N. Tench as instructors. At the close of the year Mr. Keates was enrolled as a Warrant Officer and Mr. M. Kempson as a Lieutenant in the Brigade.

The Junior Section again entered the Battalion Competitions, winning the Figure Marching Shield. The Company Section entered the Swimming and Football Competitions, but without success.

The highlight of the year for the Company Section was taking part in the Somerset Battalion Camp at St. Brelade's Bay, Jersey.

Our fourth year again saw the formation of a new section to our Company: the Pre-Junior Section or 'Anchors' was formed under the leadership of Warrant Officers A. Keates and B. Phillips, with the invaluable help of the Misses Z. Jenkin and F. Course. The Section now has a membership of twenty boys.

The Company total membership is now fifty-two, consisting of Pre-Junior Section 20, Junior Section 22, Company Section 10.

This is only the beginning of this story, but with God's help the continuation of the story will be even greater, and we may work out the object of the Brigade: "The Advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys, and the promotion of habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness".

The Youth Club.

Until the Second World War the youth section of the Church had been incorporated into the Junior Wesley Guild. However, on 7th October, 1953, an official Methodist Youth Club commenced. They met on Wednesdays and members had to be at least 14 years of age. The initial activities were table tennis, bagatelle, draughts and chess. They had a magazine corner. An epilogue was held at the close of each club meeting. In 1954 it was decided that the club should have a television set. The set could be loaned to any person desiring the use of it for short periods if a donation was given for the use of it. On May 17th, 1954 the membership was 36.

No more information is available until 5th March, 1975. At this time the club was under the leadership of Mr. P. Brint, who has since moved away. Since then, Mr. & Mrs. P. Hampshire have been the club leaders. Most Saturday evenings are spent playing badminton, table tennis, board games and there have been evenings ie-skating at Bristol, as well as barbecues, discos and ten-pin bowling at Weston. Also there have been trips to Kelston Park. The club has raised money for various charities by collecting waste paper and by organising famine lunches.

Young People's Coffee Bar.

Every Monday a number of young people make themselves available to serve coffee and meet with other young people in the town. This has proved to be a success both in terms of Christian service and of witness. Mr. & Mrs. Hampshire started this evening meeting-place along with friends from the Baptist Church in 1977, and it has progressed extremely successfully since then.

Junior Missionary Association.

Burnham has a long tradition of helping with J.M.A. and the total donated has risen gradually over the years. In 1978 the 14 collectors, along with the Sunday School collection on the first Sunday of each month, managed to raise over £300. If a collector raises £5 or more for the first time they receive a medal. In the following year a bar is added for each time they top £5, and after seven years they gain a long service medal. Zoe Jenkin received hers in 1976 and Hilary Jenkin in 1977. Karen Martin and Nigel May received theirs in 1978. Duncan Keats and Rachel Gilbert received their first medal in 1978 and Stephen May, Neil Jenkin, Ian Course, Claire Phillips, Rachel Hampshire and Andrew Dixon all got bars. Susan Mcken is our present secretary and this work is doing much to help people all over the world to know about the love of God.

The Youth Fellowship.

Some of the young people meet every Sunday night for discussion and Bible study. From time to time they also meet at the Manse with some of the young people from Brent Knoll. Two years ago they organised a most successful sponsored walk for the Bible Society, raising £200.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Built on sand or built on a rock?

There is some truth in the fact that Burnham is built upon sand, not upon rock. You have only to look at the leaning tower of the Parish Church for proof of that. The teaching of Jesus regarding the wise man who built upon rock may be contradicted by the foundations of our buildings, but not by our resolve. Whatever the future, it will be built upon the rock of faith which was the strength of those who went before. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. It is faith in Him which builds and sustains.

The town is growing. New housing estates have mushroomed over the last ten years and consequently the population of Burnham has increased. We now not only have the 'Saints' area but also the 'Cathedrals'. It is not only St. Andrew's Road which can be found but also Gloucester Road and Winchester Road. New housing development can be seen off Berrow Road, Stoddens Road and Highbridge Road, so with them comes a new challenge to the Church. Will there be even further housing development? It would appear from the roads leading out of the new estates, at this moment to nowhere, that the answer must ultimately be that this will be so.

The resources of the Church are plentiful. A strong spirituality in the life of the Church is prominent. A worshipping people must radiate a love from God. There is a feeling of belonging, which breeds a family atmosphere. The age-range within the Church is reasonably balanced. Ecumenical relationships are encouraging and there must be a possibility of developing links with a view to wider service for the future. A healthy youth programme is an obvious asset to any church. Premises, which are large, help in accommodating so many activities. The day could well come when the Church has to look to expanding: this is surely a good sign.

So, there are questions to be asked: What are the needs of the town and the community? How can the Church help? What is to be the role of the neighbourhood committee? We reach a crossroads where decisions have to be made and new ventures entered upon. May the Church look back in years to come and see that the heritage of faith has borne fruit because its foundations, and thus its decisions, were sound.

The people who brought this brochure to you. IN APPRECIATION

Warm thanks to the people who have helped in contributing to this brochure. Special mention must be made of Miss Mary Nash who, with the help of her father, put many hours into collecting information from many sources. Also Mrs. Brenda Reed, Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Houldin, Mrs. Susan Mcken and Mrs. Anne Keates who have played their part in the brochure's formation. To the person responsible for the photographs, Mr. Les Jenkins, we extend our gratitude, and to all who contributed in any way. However our Church records its depth of gratitude to those who have gone before, for it is because of their dedication and sacrifice that such a brochure can be published at all. That which they sustained and developed is our heritage, not only for now, but for the future.

A CENTENARY POEM

This Church, dear Lord, in its centenary,
Renews, as of old, by Thy decree
All that is pleasing, perfect, pure.
Long shall its second century bring
Resounding honours to the King,
Whose glory will more than endure.

In spiritual stature it has grown
As all its worshippers have shown
Their love of God's Church on Sabbath days.
Our prayers with gratitude we say,
'Lord make us Thine, now and always,
And make our voices ever sing Thy praise'.

On such an important occasion as this
May its memories remain ones of such bliss
That we can look back with happiness
On a century of history made,
Dear Master, through the heavenly aid
That crowns this century with success.

With these glad thoughts within, we journey
Strong on the power of Christ, the One
Who of His great mercy ever gives
To those who glory in His grace.
And would His loving arms embrace
By which he recreates our lives.

Colin Barnett,
Kathleen Chambers Home for the Deaf-Blind,
Burnham-on-Sea.