

## Wilsthorpe Road Evangelical Church - The Early Years

In 1949 there was a tent mission in Chaddesden (Sussex Circus/Roe Farm area) run by the Derbyshire Evangelistic Mission. A fairly small group of local people had a vision to start a new church in Chaddesden.



1949 Tent Mission

Land was bought in 1952 at the top of Wilsthorpe Road for £250 to build a church on. The trustees listed on the deeds were:-

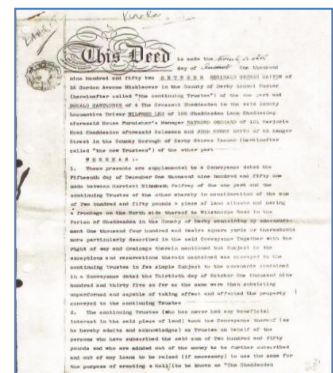
Reginald George Catton (Derby School Master) of 35 Corden Ave, Mickleover

Donald Cawthorne (Locomotive Driver) of 4 The Crescent, Chaddesden

Wilfred Lee (House Furnisher's manager of 108 Chaddesden Lane, Chaddesden

Raymond Orchard (Salesman) of 101 Marjorie Road

John Henry Smith (Derby Stores Issuer) of 63 Bangor Street



Trust Deeds

The Church was to be known as 'The Chaddesden Assembly Hall'. (later changed to the 'Gospel Hall').

The Trust Deeds were signed on 28th August 1952

These deeds included a Statement of Faith, (a creed listing what we believe as a church). This has never been changed from what was first laid down.

Practices. A short section of the document that includes baptism by immersion, breaking of bread and meetings conducted under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Whilst the building work was progressing, the wives met at Mr Adams House in Worcester Crescent (taking their young children with them if they hadn't started school).

The first building on the site was affectionately known as 'the wooden hut'. Gordon Smith remembers as a child going to an ex-army site with his father John and Reg Cotton to view and purchase it. The army hut was transported back to Chaddesden and erected for use as the church.



Army hut for sale

Whilst the building work was in progress (foundations for the wooden hut being laid) a Sunday School was started in Roe Farm School. A class for younger children was held in the 2 classrooms near the playground, being taught by Olive Walker and Celia Dimmock.

There were also home meetings for Sunday - Breaking of Bread, Bible Studies on a weekday and a young people's group (YSL).



David and Olive Walkers wedding (13 June 1959)



Work began on the new brick built building in the 1950s.-

David and Olive Walker married in the wooden hut (13/06/1959)

The new brick built church was completed in 1960 at a cost of £5,000. The church had grown from 11 to over 50 members and the capacity of new building was nearly 200. Professor FF Bruce, a Manchester University Lecturer spoke at the opening meeting and Christian Brethren from a 20 mile radius of Derby attended.

The Derby Evening Telegraph reported, 'The new hall contemporarily decorated in pink, blue and grey has more than trebled the seating capacity to nearly 200 members. Curtains were made by women members. The old hut is to be used for assembly Youth Fellowship Meetings'.

There were three main meetings on a Sunday:-

**BREAKING OF BREAD**, essentially the communion service. The congregation sat around the communion table, bread and wine. The meeting was Spirit led, a quiet and reflective meeting where men as they were led would stand to give out a hymn, say a prayer or share a thought. Hymns were sung without musical accompaniment. The ladies were expected to remain silent throughout and wear head coverings (hats).

One morning, during the Breaking of Bread service the shop across the road caught fire. Fire engines came with sirens sounding and the tin cans in the shop were exploding. We continued the service as if nothing had happened, but on conclusion of the meeting everyone rushed out to view the damage.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**, 2.30 in the afternoon. Usually well attended, lots of singing from large hymn sheets. For the lesson time children would break up into classes separated by age and sex. The Sunday School was attended by 60-80 children regularly, and we had about 10 teachers.

**GOSPEL MEETING**, was a preached service, frequently taken by visiting speakers usually from other Christian Brethren churches in the area.

Singing choruses and hymns played a big part in the services.

During the weekdays there would be services for ladies where they would be able to take part (no men attended). There was a

### Christian Brethren's new building FROM A TENT—TO £5,000 HALL

THE Assembly of Christian Brethren's new £5,000 Gospel Hall in Wiltshorpe Road, Chaddesden, was officially opened on Saturday when a capacity audience overflowed from the new hall into a wooden hut next door where hymns and speeches were relayed.

Members of Christian Brethren Assemblies from a 20-mile radius of Derby attended. Mr. W. Lee, secretary of the Wiltshorpe Road Assembly, recalled that work by the Assembly began ten years ago—in a tent at Roe Farm Estate. A Sunday School was later started and was an immediate success. Evening and women's meetings followed in members' homes until officials bought land in Wiltshorpe Road and erected a wooden hut.

**NEED TO MOVE**  
Mr. Lee said that membership rose from 11 to more than 50, necessitating the building of their new Gospel Hall.

Professor F. F. Bruce, a Manchester University lecturer, also spoke. The new hall, contemporarily decorated in pink, blue and grey, has more than trebled seating capacity to nearly 200. Curtains were made by women members. The old hut is to be used for Assembly Youth Fellowship meetings.

### Death of Mr. Edward Morley

MR. EDWARD MORLEY, of 128 King's Drive, Littleover, died in Manor Hospital, Derby, on Friday, aged 65. A railway clerk at St. Mary's Goods Wharf, Derby, he was secretary of Derby Branch of the Royal Artillery Association for 10 years. In March, 1959, he gave up the secretaryship, owing to ill-health, and became vice-president.

**LEGION WORK**  
A founder member of Littleover Branch of the British Legion, he was twice its chairman, and was a vice-president of the Sherwood Foresters Old Comrades Association. Before the 1939-45 War, in which he served as a quartermaster sergeant with the Royal Artillery,



Ladies Outing (1960 ish)

Women's meeting and a Sewing group. The ladies were the backbone of the church, doing lots of very good work in supporting each other.

After a few years some of the younger ladies started a new evening group called 'Young Wives and Business Women'. This eventually became 'Midweek at Two' and more recently 'Midweek at Eight'.

There was also a 'Ladies Sewing Group'. Members would meet to knit, crochet or sew items to be sent directly to missionaries or to sell in aid of missionaries. During the year there was a missionary sale, which always made me smile to think of the ladies selling missionaries. In the centre is Marjorie Cawthorne who would be going to Guatemala the following year.



Ladies Sewing Group, 1967

A major occasion in the church year was the Conference. Sometimes known as Gospel Conference at other times Missionary Conference. It was always well attended by church members and others from local Christian Brethren churches.

By 1966 the church was well established and some members from the Gospel Hall and from the Curzon Street meeting left to help establish a church in Allestree.

There were also Children's campaign's when a children's evangelist would take a week's worth of evening meetings. Tom Bradshaw (Uncle Tom) and Bob Loughborough. They were always well attended.

A highlight of the year was the Sunday school treat. The first treats to Rowsley comprised a bus trip to a field where we would have a sports day and play a game of rounders. The community hall at Rowsley, was where tea was prepared by the ladies. One year, it rained so heavily that the field was unusable so the bus driver drove us around Derbyshire whilst tea was being prepared.



Sunday School Trip (Trentham Gardens, 1962)

As years passed, the Sunday School treats became more adventurous. Visits were made to Trentham Gardens, Woolaton Hall, Twycross Zoo, Alton Towers, Wicksteed Park, Mablethorpe and Drayton Manor Park. Two double-decker buses transported the whole church. One year, at Twycross Zoo a gorilla escaped so we had to return to our buses until it was recaptured.

In the 60's there were a significant number of weddings at the church. Many of these had been young children when the church started. There were four weddings in 1966. In the photo the wooden Hut can be seen in the background.

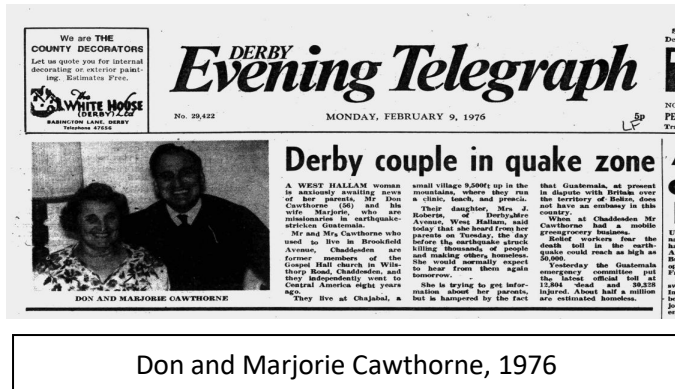
Gordon and Ann Smith's Wedding, 1966



Church became very busy for me in my late teens especially on Sundays when I would attend five

services, Morning meeting, Young Peoples Bible Study, Sunday School, Gospel Service and YPF (after church meeting usually at someone's home). It was not a hardship or cause for complaint, because all my friends were there as well. Nowadays we need to work much harder to encourage going to church, as it isn't the 'done thing' in society any more, Sunday trading laws mean that all shops are open, Sunday is also the main day for sports, children's activities, family days out etc.

In the 1968's. One of the elder's of the church Don Cawthorne went to Guatemala as a pioneer missionary with his wife Marjorie. They set up a church and clinic in a mountain village Chajabal. A few years later they were in the news because Guatemala was hit by an earthquake. They returned on furlough in 1978 and for good in 1981 mainly due to health reasons.



Don and Marjorie Cawthorne, 1976

In the late 60's the midweek boys and girls groups joined the Covenanters movement. Gordon Smith and John Ratcliffe ran the Covenanters, David Walker ran the Juco's (Junior Covenanters). The Covenanters ran local area rallies and national rallies.

Other groups set up in the 70's and early 80's were the Youth Club and the Bible Study at Graham Hunt's house in Marjorie Road.

In 1969, Billy Graham's brother-in-Law Leighton Ford came to Derby to run a tent crusade in Markeaton Park. A huge tent for 3,000 people was erected and we were involved as a church. Our young people attended and many were saved making a commitment to Christ. It was like a mini revival for our church.



Youth camps, 1968, 1973 and 1981

A highlight of the year for the youth clubs was the youth camp, which was under canvas. Putting tents up, cooking your own food, singing and bible study.

Youth for Christ was a great organisation and very popular in Derby. Young people from churches all over Derby met once a month for a rally. It was a good opportunity for young people to meet other young people from other churches.



In the early 70s every boy was mad on football. The Gospel Hall was a founder member of the Youth For Christ (Church League) of between 15 and 20 teams. The Gospel Hall were winners in 1973 and 1976.



Gospel Hall Football team, 1967 and 1970

In 1975 the Youth Centre was built on the back of the Church. This was to replace the Wooden Hut which was dismantled not long afterwards. One night, at the boys club the door had burst off its hinges whilst we were playing British bulldog.

Music was always a major part of church worship and witness. The Kingsmen were a gospel beat group playing coffee bars and youth clubs. The Cinderella rooms provided a good opportunity to witness. Young people would be invited to attend and asked what they thought of the band, and then 'what about the words'. Sometimes this would lead to a conversation about God and Jesus.

Resurrection, New Life and the Pewshakers played mainly at youth clubs and Youth for Christ rallies. It gave an opportunity to talk about Christianity to those who wouldn't normally go to church, in the introductions between songs.

The Kingsmen, Resurrection, New Life and the Pewshakers



In 1982 there were 11 people baptised in one year

In 1984 we had the first 'Holiday Bible Club' which was to later change into Fun Week. Our first guest speaker was Ray King, a local magician. The morning event in Chaddesden Park included singing,

quizzes and bible stories, the afternoon event was for games on the park and the evening event was another session of singing, games and bible stories, but this time at church.

They were well attended by children, but also good for the church members, all working together with one aim.

Holiday Bible Club (1984)



The Fun week had a different theme every year, pirates, Olympics, storytellers, space superheroes etc. Usually had a children's evangelist to take messages, Jem Hudson, Keith Munro and Uncle Michael.

In 1987 the Youth Club camp moved out of tents, I guess that many of those who had been on camp were finding tents more difficult. We went to Skendleby, Skegness for the weekend. This developed into a houseparty for the whole church. Other later houseparties would take place in Bala, Rhos on Sea and Conway.



Church Houseparty (1987, Skendleby and 1990, Malton )

By the 70s and 80s the church had almost become three separate churches. One for the Sunday School and Youth, another where only the men were allowed to take part and a third for women only. Significant changes took place when the Family Service was introduced, when the youth camp became the Church Houseparty and men were allowed to go to Midweek at Eight. These changes have resulted in a more rounded Evangelical Church more appropriate for today.

Andy Timms



1949 Tent Mission

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### LEGION WORK

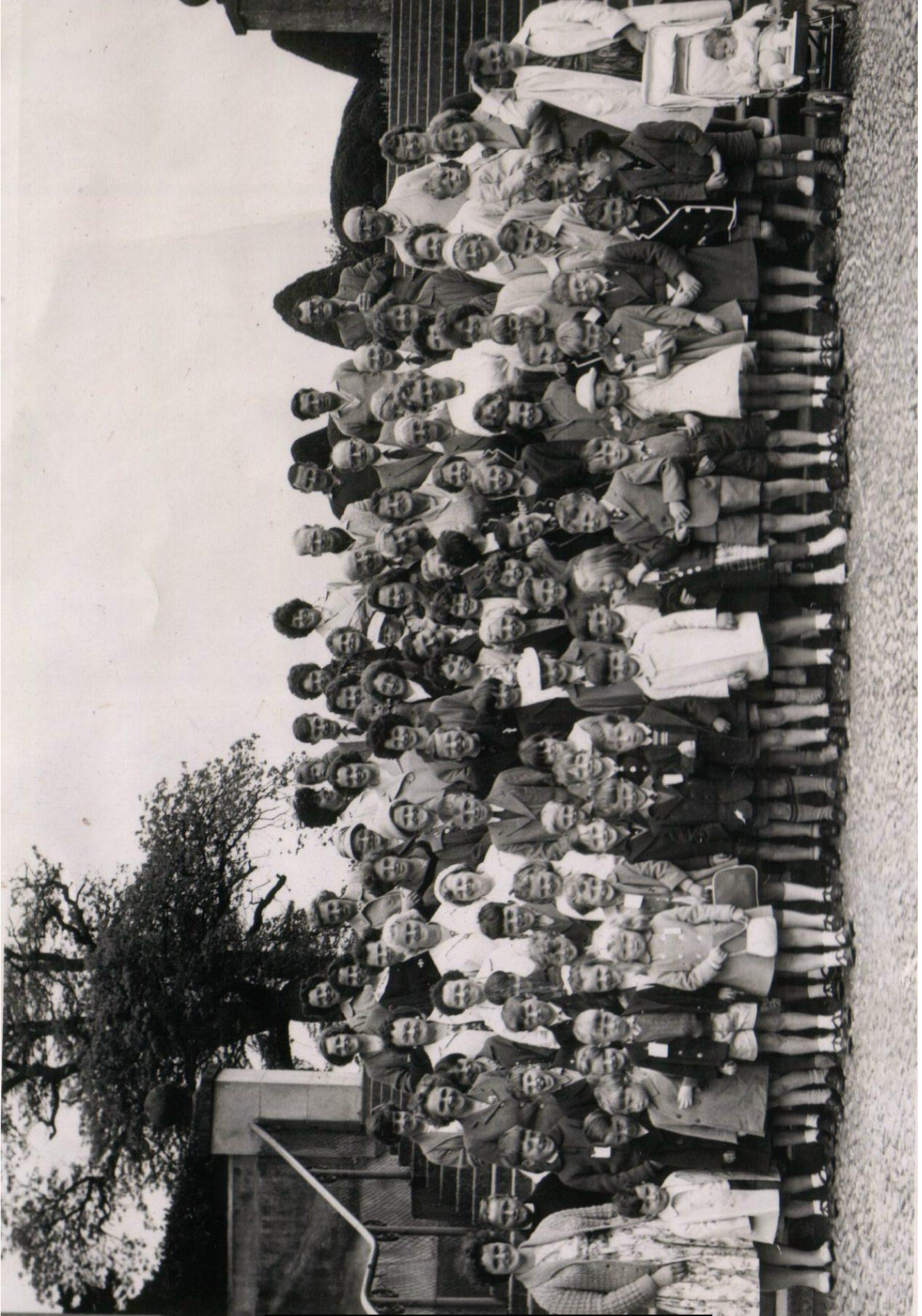
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Ladies Outing (1960 ish)



Ladies Sewing Group, 1967



Sunday School Trip (Trentham Gardens, 1962)

# Gospel Fellowship conference

There was a large attendance on Saturday at a Christian conference in the Gospel Hall, Wilsthorpe Road, Chaddesden. The guest speakers were Dr. W. F. Naismith, of Harrogate, and Mr. G. J. Polkinghorne, of Sutton, Surrey. The chairman in the afternoon was Mr. J. Coward, of Spondon, and in the evening Mr. J. Tidmarsh, of Chaddesden.

Tea was served to the older members in the Gospel Hall, and to the others in the Public Hall, Chaddesden Lane. Catering arrangements were made by the Fellowship Ladies. This was the third conference since the opening of the hall three years ago.



Gordon and Ann Smith's Wedding, 1966, (note: wooden hut in background)

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# DERBY Evening Telegraph

No. 29,422

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1976

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DON AND MARJORIE CAWTHORNE

## Derby couple in quake zone

A WEST HALLAM woman is anxiously awaiting news of her parents, Mr Don Cawthorne (56) and his wife Marjorie, who are missionaries in earthquake-stricken Guatemala.

Mr and Mrs Cawthorne who used to live in Brookfield Avenue, Chaddesden are former members of the Gospel Hall church in Wilsforth Road, Chaddesden, and they independently went to Central America eight years ago.

They live at Chajabal, a

small village 9,500ft up in the mountains, where they run a clinic, teach, and preach.

Their daughter, Mrs J. Roberts, of Derbyshire Avenue, West Hallam, said today that she heard from her parents on Tuesday, the day before the earthquake struck killing thousands of people and making others homeless. She would normally expect to hear from them again tomorrow.

She is trying to get information about her parents, but is hampered by the fact

that Guatemala, at present in dispute with Britain over the territory of Belize, does not have an embassy in this country.

When at Chaddesden Mr Cawthorne had a mobile greengrocery business. Relief workers fear the death toll in the earthquake could reach as high as 50,000.

Yesterday the Guatemala emergency committee put the latest official toll at 12,804 dead and 30,328 injured. About half a million are estimated homeless.

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Don and Marjorie Cawthorne, 1976

## 600 ATTEND YOUTH FOR CHRIST RALLY

MORE than 600 attended the monthly Derby Youth for Christ Rally in Greenhill Central Methodist Church. The guest speaker was Douglas Cook, a former member of the local rally committee and now a Borstal officer at Lowdham, Notts.

Gospel songs were sung by the youth group from Wils-  
thorpe Road Gospel Hall,  
Chaddesden, who were intro-  
duced by Ian Collins and led by  
Ivan Bulwer. Testimonies were  
given by Kevin Peat, Debbie  
Porter, Sue Shepherd and Brian  
Allsop. Duets were sung by  
Jenny Riley and Norman  
Bulwer. A highlight of the  
programme was a "This is Your  
Life" feature on Stuart Hinks,  
the leader of the youth group.

Conducted by Roland Hill and  
accompanied by Jim Kennedy  
(piano) and Gordon Smith  
(organ) the Derby Youth for  
Christ Choir sang. Royce  
Warner was compere.

Good wishes were extended to  
Peter Craddock, who is  
emigrating to Australia and a  
welcome was given to the Rev.  
Geoffrey Turner, the Vicar of  
St. Peter's, Derby, who is to  
join the rally committee.



Youth camp, 1968



Youth camp c.1970



Youth camp 1973



Youth camp 1975



Youth camp 1977



Youth camp 1981



Gospel Hall Football team, 1967



Gospel Hall Football team, 1970



The Kingsmen 1966



Resurrection, 1977



Resurrection, 1982



Pewshakers , 1984



Holiday Bible Club (1984)





Church Houseparty (1987, Skendleby)



Church Houseparty (1990 Malton)