



MONTHLY GLIMPSES

THROUGH

THE 200TH

ANNIVERSARY YEAR.

OUR 200TH ANNIVERSARY SONG

WRITTEN BY KATH DAVIES

1. Our Chapel in the Valley
Began so long ago,
When a man whose name was Wesley
Came to Wales to let us know,

Chorus

Jesus is our Father,
We are His children all.
His love will live for ever more,
Come listen to His call.

2. John Wesley held a rally
upon Devauden Green,
Welshmen came from far and wide,
For miles they could be seen,
On foot and some on horseback
His story filled their hearts,
So joyously they walked away,
This message to impart.

Chorus

3. Ann Lewis and her husband James
Were there upon that day,
The news had spread along the lanes,
And they remain ed to pray.
Ann Lewis built our Chapel,
With help from folk around.
She changed her name to Rosser
And many converts found.

Chorus

4. Together as we kneel to pray,
Thank you Lord we say
For our Chapel of 200 years,
We celebrate this day.

Chorus

JANUARY

What better way to begin our 200th Anniversary Year than by joining members and friends of all our Circuit Churches at Caldicot for the Covenant Service. Many of those we met there joined us later in the year at Earlswood Valley for some of our celebrations.

The book, "Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel 1791-1991" was on sale and being received with much interest, with its many photographs and story of the chapel over the years.

1991 saw the start of our weekly notice sheet in place of pulpit notices.

A letter of thanks was received from Severn View Residential Home following the visit by the Valley Singers, Young Members Activity Group, parents and friends, at the beginning of the month.

A chapel council meeting was held to finalize the proposals accepted at an open meeting held in 1990 relating to the Bicentenary Celebrations.

Our Superintendent Minister, Rev. Joseph Rooney thanked all who had sent donations in lieu of flowers, in memory of his wife, Margaret.

£1,200 was donated throughout the circuit and was divided between St. Davids Foundation and Caldicot building fund.

The highlight of the month was surely the Diamond Wedding of Mr & Mrs Clifford Lewis of Chapel Farm on Sunday, 20th January. Many chapel friends joined the Celebration at Earlswood Hall the previous evening. It was the wish of Mr & Mrs Lewis that instead of gifts donations be given to Tenovus and friends of the chapel donated £65 to this cause.

On their Anniversary Day, they attended Afternoon Worship at Earlswood Valley with their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The service was conducted by Rev. Joseph Rooney, B.A. The Lesson, from Mark, Chapter 1, Verses 14-20 was read by grand daughter, Mrs Kerry Williams.

This month saw the start of choir practices for the opening of Celebrations on Easter Sunday and for the visit of the President of the Methodist Conference on 28th April.

FEBRUARY

With February came the first real snowfall of the winter and Earlswood Valley with the Chapel in the centre made a very picturesque view from Spout Lane.

On Tuesday, 19th February Mrs Lewis, Chapel Farm kindly invited Activity Group children to meet there with their Mums. It was their half term break and this was an opportunity to make up the blanket with squares knitted by some of the ladies. The children arranged the squares on the carpet to form a full size blanket and it already looked very colourful and warm. While Mums started sewing up, one Mum, perhaps not keen on sewing took some of the group for a Gray Hill ramble. Of course the kettle went on at Chapel Farm and cups of tea were in plentiful supply.

We were invited to make a donation to the Military Scripture Association, which supplies Bibles and other spiritual materials to the armed services. A large number of bibles had been recently sent to the Gulf and stocks needed replenishing. We were also invited to write to H.M. Forces serving in the Gulf, addressing letters to Rev. Alan Price, Senior Chaplain, 7th Armoured Division. Rev. Price had previously been Chaplain at Beachley Army Camp, Chepstow and conducted services in some of our circuit chapels.

Preparations for the Bicentenary Celebrations continued and there were regular choir practices.

MARCH

The theme of March Family Service was caring for those in need. The completed blanket was on display and Y.M.A.G. had invited the ladies who had knitted squares to the service. The children spoke of the various ways as a group they were helping to care for those in need. They decided that the blanket should be sent to Romania and later in the month Rev. Rooney delivered it to Mission House, London.

2nd March was the 200th Anniversary of the death of John Wesley, the man who had so inspired Ann Rosser, the Founder of our Chapel.

MARCH (CONTD)

John Wesley died in the year our Chapel was opened.

The Circuit Meeting, which was held at Earlswood Valley, invited Rev. Rooney to stay on as Superintendent Minister for a further period from September 1992.

At the beginning of Holy Week, the Activity Group Children made an Easter Garden beside the path leading to the chapel door. During the Palm Sunday service Palm Crosses were distributed during the service. During Holy Week we were invited to join our friends at Caldicot for evening services but on Wednesday they were invited to join us.

On Saturday activity group girls met to make posies of spring flowers to decorate the chapel and for distributing to the congregation on Easter Day.

Finally the last Sunday in March arrived. It was Easter Day and the opening of our 200th Anniversary Celebrations. The service was conducted by our Superintendent Minister, Rev. Joseph Rooney with the Valley Singers and Young Members Activity Group taking part. The chapel had been beautifully decorated by Mrs Ivy Bevan with lovely Spring flowers from her garden. Mrs Kath Davies was there with her guitar and sang the song she had written especially for the bicentenary year. Following the service the children enjoyed an Easter Search in the Valley Meadow but not before distributing posies of spring flowers to the ladies in the congregation.

APRIL

A letter of thanks was received from Rev. Alan Price for letters received by the 7th Armoured Division in the Gulf.

28th April was now getting very close and it was now a case of checking that all arrangements were going ahead as planned, delivery of marquees and portoloo, chairs and tables to be collected from Earlswood Memorial Hall, china from the hall and Caldicot Chapel, electricity to the Valley Meadow for boiling water, the amplifier for the meadow, floral arrangements, fields for parking cars, those suitable to use as extras in case of heavy rain, car park attendants well organised to ensure no parking problems, stewards to direct ticket holders to their seats and those without tickets to the Valley Meadow, order of service booklets, refreshments, organists to provide music from 1.30p.m. until the service at 3p.m., there was so much to think about and so many willing helpers.

There was just one thing no one could do anything about and that was to plan the weather for the first visit of The President of the Methodist Conference to Earlswood Valley. Just a week to go and the weather forecasters just could not seem to make up their minds.

The strimmers and lawn mowers came out in beautiful sunshine and worked in the Valley Meadow, both chapel yards, the bank, the sides of the road, there was nothing left undone. Earlier the interior and exterior of the chapel had been completely decorated and Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel looked ready to welcome its President.

The three marquees were erected, one for serving teas and two for the overflow congregation.

Friday arrived and then there would be just one more day to prepare. The portoloo arrived and placed behind the chapel, flowers were beautifully arranged throughout the chapel, electricity supply taken to the meadow, the amplifier connected up and then Friday evening was rehearsal time for all those taking part in the service.

Saturday came and the vestry exhibition had still to be staged. Earlier in the week a carpenter had fitted ~~had fitted~~ a wooden fireplace where the old one had been. With the long logs of wood and the two old iron kettles, each capable of holding a bucket of water on the fire, it took ones mind back to the time when those kettles boiled water on the open fire for tea party days.

Many items were contributed for the exhibition, many photographs were sent by several descendants of Ann Rosser and one of the earliest ones was of the great grand daughter of Ann. There were photographs of 'local' local

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Preachers, a 1917 membership ticket, a photo copy of what was thought to be Ann Rossers membership ticket, Sunday School photographs dating back many years, Sunday School prizes dating back to 1889, a 1910 plan, photographs showing family links over many years, Sunday school registers and many other interesting items.

Sunday 28th April arrived and what a team of workers made a 7.30a.m. start at Earlswood Hall with tractor and trailer and van to transport chairs and tables to the chapel. By 9a.m. the tables were fixed in position in the tea marquee and 200 chairs set out in the others for the overflow congregation, each one being tested for safety and comfort.

The sun was shining, it could do no other with the atmosphere surrounding the valley that morning, it was happy, it was joyful, the birds were singing but everyone was very, very busy. There were preparations to be made in the tea marquee. china to be put out and water to be carried to fill the two very large boilers and a table laid for the Presidents party which was to include Rev. Wyndham Bold, a former Chairman of the South Wales District, who had grown up in the Chepstow and Caldicot Circuit.

There were flowers to arrange outside the marquees, refreshments were arriving, more helpers were coming all the time, notices were being put up directing people to the Valley and to the various car parks. There was certainly no time for Sunday lunch even the Superintendent Minister had a picnic lunch sitting on the steps leading to the Valley Meadow.

one o'clock and the many helpers were at their posts and St Johns Ambulance discreetly parked at the rear of the chapel. Car park attendants were now welcoming the first visitors, very wisely cones had been used to close the road to the chapel gate. Cars came steadily into the Valley from both approach roads for the next hour until about 350 people were chattering in small groups in the sunshine. It seemed almost reluctantly, that those with tickets eventually made their way into the chapel, out of the sunshine, away from the cherry blossom and the sound of the cuckoo calling near by. Everyone seemed to be settling down, most of the chairs were occupied in the meadow, some deciding to take their chair which had been so carefully placed in the marquee that morning, out into the sun and onto the slope of the meadow! (well if it did slip a bit it was their decision!) The music from the organ came through beautifully to the meadow and now everyone eagerly awaited the arrival of the President. soon word went around that he was arriving and Rev. Rooney greeted the party in the Chapel car park.

What had been planned and talked about for so many years was at last actually happening. The President of the Methodist Conference, Rev. Dr. Donald English accompanied by our Superintendent Minister, Rev. Joseph Rooney was walking up the road towards the chapel and happily smiling, looked up to those in the Valley Meadow. Mrs English was accompanied by the Chairman of the South Wales District, the Rev. Donald Knighton. Mr Roger Smith welcomed the President at the vestry door. Before leaving the vestry the President and Chairman signed a scroll which had been carefully prepared by Miss Beverley Moore and decorated by Mrs Rita Herbert with a border painting of wild flowers of Earlswood Valley. Later it was signed by Rev Rooney and Mr Roger Smith, Chapel Steward. Later it was framed and can be seen on the wall of the chapel.

The congregation stood as the President walked up the aisle to the pulpit. He was given a very warm welcome by Rev. Rooney who then thanked the many people who had been involved in the preparations for this special afternoon. He went on to make a very special announcement. He said that Mr and Mrs Lewis of Chapel Farm were making a gift of land to the Chapel in Memory of their daughter, Doreen, in order that a toilet and kitchen area could be built. This was indeed exciting news for those who had realised the great need for such an extension with the work going on with young people. Rev. Rooney thanked Mr and Mrs Lewis on behalf of the chapel members and friends. Following this six children of The Young Members Activity Group gave their own welcome as they carried a banner of welcome up the aisle. Again Miss Beverley Moore had helped with the preparation of the banner by doing the printing, while Mrs Minetta Morris helped by painting a picture of the chapel. The banner was received by Rev. Rooney and placed on the wall.

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In replying to the welcome Dr. English said how pleased he was to be with us as we celebrated 200 years of witness at Earlswood Valley. He mentioned how saddened we all were that Mrs Margaret Rooney was not with us. At Earlswood Valley we all knew how much Mrs Rooney had looked forward to joining in our celebrations.

Rev. Donald Knighton, Rev. Joseph Rooney and Rev. Andrew Cordy, our Chepstow Minister, all took part in the service.

The Valley Singers sang "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones" and the children of the Activity Group sang, "The Lord, The Lord, The Lord is my Shepherd". The inspiring address given by the President was heard very clearly in the Valley Meadow with the splendid relay equipment. Many people remarked on the clarity of the whole service in the meadow which had helped to provide the right atmosphere for this very special occasion.

Immediately following the service Dr. English presented Mr Roger Smith with a painting of the Chapel and surrounding area in recognition of his many years of service at the Chapel. A former Sunday School pupil, Mrs Rita Herbert painted the picture. Her marriage to another former Sunday School pupil, Mr Donald Herbert, in 1948 was the first wedding to take place at Earlswood Valley.

It was then time for the President and party to make their way to the Valley Meadow., where after mingling with the people for a short while they went into the marquee for tea. The interior of this very large marquee was quite colourful and their table was at the one end with a buffet arrangement at the other. There were hundreds of people in the meadow, sitting and standing around in groups, chatting and meeting friends from other chapels and churches, United Reformed, Anglicans, Baptists, Pentecostals, Methodists etc. and they had all come to join us in our Celebration, and they were all certainly ready for a cup of tea and some of the lovely refreshments all provided by friends of the chapel. It was a very busy half an hour for those serving refreshments as the queue seemed to lengthen rather than shrink, but the ladies in charge were so well organised beforehand that all went according to plan. Eventually everyone was served and enjoying their picnic tea in the sunshine.

With a service to conduct in Cardiff at 6p.m. Dr. English had to leave quite soon but not before shaking the hand of as many people as possible.

The last to say farewell were three little girls of the Activity Group, Stephanie Drake, Claire Hodges and Emma Williams who waited patiently at the bottom of the steps to present Mrs English with a basket of flowers and to say thank you for coming.

The sun was still shining on this April evening as hundreds of people went into the Chapel and on through into the little vestry to see the exhibition, among them some of Ann Rossers descendants who had travelled from London, Cardiff and other places to join in a celebration which had such meaning for them.

Slowly the crowds left for home and finally the Valley was still again, only to be disturbed by the sound of the tractor arriving to return the chairs and tables. The helpers were still busy, washing up, packing china away and generally tidying up. They were very tired but very happy that the day they had planned for such a long time, was a day of sunshine in every way, when so many people had joined in fellowship together in their Valley Chapel.

The next day just two people returned, one to collect china and the other to collect flowers for someone who had missed the Celebration through illness. It was pouring with rain as they paddled through the puddles to the vestry door and in the stillness wondered at the beauty of the Valley in the April sunshine the day before.

Following the Celebration, our Chairman of the District wrote, "Warmest congratulations on that magnificent and memorable bicentenary service of celebration on Sunday, 28th April. Everybody played his or her part beautifully and the children were superb. It was a joy to share in such a joyful and meaningful service of worship. The arrangements all went off perfectly. The parking, refreshments and the welcoming were all carried out most impressively."

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Among other letters received was one from a descendant of Ann Rosser. It said, "What a wonderfully happy day the 200th Anniversary proved to be. The Lord was truly with us. It was a day certainly to be remembered"

A member from our Chepstow Chapel wrote, "I am sure that great glory was given to God as we all shared together. An afternoon that will long be remembered."

MAY

Family Service on 7th May was very special for the family of Natasha Chapman, who in her baptism on that day was received into Gods Family. The service was conducted by the Chairman of the District, Rev. Donald Knighton but the service of baptism was conducted by Rev. Joseph Rooney. Following the service Rev. Knighton walked along the lane to Old Home where Natasha's grandparents had prepared the christening tea.

Throughout Christian Aid week we were invited to join friends at Caldicot for a full programme of events taking place there.

Letters of thanks were sent to many people following the 200th Anniversary Celebration on 28th April.

It was with much sadness during the month that we learned of the deaths of Mrs Vera Holt, one of our local preachers, Mrs Bevan of Gwern-y-Saint, the mother-in-law of Mr. Roger Smith and Mrs Anne Knighton, the wife of Rev. Donald Knighton, whose unexpected death came following an operation. Letters were sent on behalf of friends of the Chapel and the Chapel was represented at each service.

JUNE

This month was quite an eventful one with two weddings, a baptism and a very special family Service. June 1st was the wedding day of Cheryl Watkins of Little Cherry Orchard, Earlswood Valley and Andrew Nevins of Cheltenham. Many guests attended this pretty wedding.

On 2nd June the third event of our 200th Anniversary took place. It was a very special Family Service for it was shared with the family of our Founder, Ann Rosser. About sixty descendants of Ann made their way from Australia, America, Scotland, London, Cardiff, Bristol, West Wales, The Midlands and other places to join the Family of the Chapel in Family Worship. The visitors from Australia and London stayed on in Earlswood Valley spending a week at Parsons Grove.

On the Saturday evening before the Sunday service some of the descendants arrived at the chapel forming themselves into a choir to sing the next day. On Sunday about thirty of them met for lunch at Tintern, some meeting for the first time.

Meanwhile down in the Valley preparations were being made for the afternoon. A marquee had been erected for tea and the overflow congregation, the amplifier had been connected up, and picnic tea prepared.

The car park attendants and stewards were on duty again and by 2.30p.m. the Valley was humming with excitement. Soon the chapel was full, with the Ann Rosser Choir and children of the Activity Group in the front seats and the overflow climbed the steps to the Valley Meadow.

The service started with what must surely have become family service signature tune, "Down in the Valley with my Saviour I would go,"

Rev. Rooney gave a very warm welcome to the many visitors. The hymns chosen were those sung at the Celebration on 28th April and the singing was such that it must have resounded through the Valley.

The Activity Group were responsible for a short sketdh entitled, "Why are there so many people here" They briefly told the Ann Rosser story of 200 years ago and decided that it would be up to them if the chapel was to continue into the future. Then the banner of welcome was carried up through the chapel and received by Rev. Rooney while the children sang, "As your family Lord, see us here".

Among those in the congregation, and listening intently to the children's story, was the oldest descendant of Ann Rosser, Mr. George Lee of Newport.

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"O trust in the Lord, wait patiently for Him," was beautifully sung by Miss Elizabeth Tiplin, with her father Mr. Gilbert Tiplin at the organ. Elizabeth is the great, gt. gt. gt. ~~gt.~~ grand daughter of Ann Rosser. The Ann Rosser Choir sang "O God our Father, who dost make us one," Another descendant, Rev. Chris Lee, the rector of Cromhall, Gloucestershire, read the Lesson from the First Letter from Peter, Chapter 2, commencing at verse 1.

Mrs Kath Davies sang her 200th Anniversary song with the congregation joining in the chorus.

The Offertory was taken by Mr Robin Harris, a former Sunday School pupil and now a member of the Chapel. Robin is also, a great, gt, gt, gt, gt grandchild of Ann Rosser.

Rev. Rooney asked the brother of the late Rev. Leslie Tiplin Vickery, M.A., O.B.E., L.Th., a past President of the Methodist Conference of Queensland, Australia and also a gt. gt. gt. ~~gt.~~ Grandson of our Chapel Founder, to read a letter which he had brought with him from Australia.

He read the following:-

44, Barrymore Street,
Everton Park,
Queensland 4053,
Australia.

To the Congregation of Earlswood Valey Chapel,

In 1981 and 1985 my husband the Rev. Leslie T. Vickery felt greatly honoured to lead worship in your chapel. As he walked through the door to another sphere of living on 3rd January 1987 I thought I would like to share in thought with you on this historic 200th Anniversary Celebration.

Our present is inevitably linked with the past and today we acknowledge our great debt to those who have kept the faith in a God of love. Always my husband proclaimed the great love of God for all people and today, as 200 years ago that steadfast love is with us and with all people.

I congratulate you and give thanks to God for your 200 years of witness to that love and pray that in the days yet to be you will continue to pray and proclaim and demonstrate that love in your daily life.

Jesus our Master said This is my commandment, Love one another as I have loved you.

My prayers go with you,

Edna Vickery.

Mrs Vickery's son with his wife attended the service. They now live in Scotland.

Rev. Rooney in his address said, "In all our Celebrations during the year we are remembering Ann Rosser, the Founder of the Chapel, who after hearing John Wesley preach on Devauden Green, Felt the power and presence of God in her life and wanted to share it with others. She became an active community worker, gathering others, stirring their enthusiasm and in the end causing them to build this chapel. We thank God for her commitment and the work and witness of this place over 200 years and may it go on until, perhaps, one of the Activity Group children here today becomes a missionary of the gospel committed to Jesus Christ."

The prayers of Intercession were led by Rev. Lee who prayed finally using these words:-

"We rejoice as the people of God, Christ lives in us and in Christ all things are possible. Gods reign of peace and love will come on earth as it is in Heaven. This is what God asks of us, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with Him for ever and ever, Amen.

The service closed with the Benediction and the final hymn was "O Thou who camest from above.... The other hymns sung were "Our Father, by whose servants, Our house was built of old" "And can it be that I should gain, An interest in the Saviour's blood?" and "For the might of thine arm we bless Thee, our God, our father's God."

Following the service the Ann Rosser Family really got together as they grouped in front of the chapel close beneath the Memorial to Ann on the wall near the Chapel door which reads, " Sacred to the Memory of Ann Rosser of this parish, who died Jan. 2nd 1832, Aged 84 years. We write her

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name on this plain stone because of Memory dear, But in the book of life it shines, Far more divinely clear.

There were introductions, hand shaking and much joy and happiness as they all chatted together with relatives from various parts of this country and from far across the sea. Although not welcome, a rather nasty storm did hasten their steps to the tea marquee in the Valley Meadow where the ladies of the chapel were ready to serve them with a cup of tea. Once again there was an abundant supply of very appetizing sandwiches and cakes provided by friends of the chapel. In the centre of the table was the Golden Wedding Cake of Mr and Mrs Gilbert Tiplin of London, which they had brought along to share with everyone.

Many cameras were in use which resulted in some interesting Video viewing of the whole afternoon. The time passed too quickly, much had not been said, but many had a long journey home. There were many thank yous and farewells. Everyone realised that never again would these members of the Ann Rosser Family all meet together for fellowship in the chapel founded by their ancestor. It was again a day many will remember for a long time.

On returning home Mrs Margaret Katterheinrich of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, U.S.A. wrote:-

"We enjoyed the service ~~so~~ much, The singing was wonderful and words inspiring..... It was thrilling for us who live so far away to share in a family event in a beautiful chapel founded by our ancestor."

There were other letters of appreciation. Those who stayed on in the Valley visited the Chapel several times during the week and Mr Tiplin spent some time sitting in the top yard sketching the chapel. They also visited Caldicot Methodist chapel to see the Memorial inside the chapel to James Tiplin, another descendant of Ann who for many years was a class leader and local preacher and it is said he did much work on the woodwork at Earlswood Valley. They were given a very warm welcome at Caldicot when they arrived just in time for coffee.

On Wednesday, 19th the Caldicot Girls Brigade visited the Exhibition and learned something of the story of the Chapel. Before they left Rev. Rooney joined them in the Valley Meadow for refreshments and a game of 'Pig in the Middle'.

On 29th June the second pretty wedding of the month took place. It was the wedding of Tracey, the daughter of Mr and Mrs Ron Fisher and the grand daughter of the late Mrs Daisy Morgan, a life long member of the chapel.

On the last day of June, Alexander James, the son of Sara and Michael Powell, and the grandson of Mr and Mrs Powell of Parsons Grove was received into God's Family in his Baptism.

JULY

With this month came thoughts of the fourth event of our Celebrations. It was to be a Sunday School Reunion. It was planned for late afternoon and evening of Wednesday 10th. Invitations had been sent far and wide after searching through registers from about 1920, finding addresses and tracing the whereabouts of many past pupils. There was much enthusiasm and excitement over the event as for the other celebrations, but again from another group of people.

A marquee was again hired to serve teas in the meadow and the splendid group of volunteers were at work again providing refreshments and getting everything ready.

Again we were blessed, this time with a beautiful summer evening. The programme was to serve teas from 5p.m. and a Reunion Service conducted by Rev. Rooney to commence at 7.30p.m.

Those who were able, wisely turned up promptly at 5p.m. and even this proved to short a time to chat with childhood friends, have tea, look at the exhibition, where the old registers proved very popular---how regular was my attendance they wanted to know! Much attention was attracted towards 'The Guess Who Table' People had loaned childhood photographs and there was much amusement as people tried to guess who was who. On arrival each person was invited to wear a label with their name as a

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child. By 7p.m. about 70 past pupils had Arrived and 90 people in all attended the service. there were groups all over the Valley Meadow, having tea, taking photographs and some trying to catch up on news of many years. They had come from North, South, East and West and there were many memories to recall.

Among those delighted to be there, were members of three families, the ancestors of whom had been connected with the chapel for many, many years. As children they had grown up together in Earlswood Valley. They were six brothers and sisters of the Lewis family of Pandy Farm, six of the Davies family of New Mill and some of the Morgan family of Chapel House.

It was difficult to persuade people to leave the evening sunshine, for time had gone so quickly, and come into the chapel, but with the seats soon full the reunion service began.

Among the hymns sung was one many remembered singing with Miss Dolly Holder, "When he cometh, when he cometh.....". It was an emotional service with Lessons read by Mr. Harold James, a Sunday School pupil in the 1920's, Mrs Maureen Dale (Ostler) a pupil of Miss Holders Sunday School and Mrs Kerry Williams (Powell) a pupil with Mrs Vera Morris and Mr Roger Smith.

The service over, some stayed on to recall still more events of their youth and take yet more photographs.

It was pleasing that so many had come from so many places, to retrace, although too briefly, their childhood steps and perhaps in a quiet moment to remember those who sadly were no longer with us.

AUGUST

This was a busy month especially for the Young Members Activity Group. Although their Holiday month, they held an event to raise money for the starving children of the world, they entertained the residents of a residential home, as well as preparing their part for the final celebrations in September.

They needed to raise money for their Harvest Festival Project, 'Starving Children of the world'. On 7th August with the help of their parents and chapel friends they held a Garden Party at the 'Holly Bushes' the home of Mr and Mrs Derek Williams.

It was fun preparing for it, selling tickets, planning beforehand and on the day preparing stalls, teas and games. It was a splendid afternoon in every way and it resulted in raising £236 to provide meals for the starving children of the world.

On 11th of the month came the 5th event of the Bicentenary Celebrations, "Methodist Hymns Ancient and Modern" Community Hymn singing. again on a beautiful summer evening which enabled those not in the chapel because every seat was taken, to sit outside. As folk came along from their evening services in other circuit chapels and elsewhere, there was a cup of tea waiting for them. Some of the descendants from Cardiff were with us again, not wanting to miss yet another celebration.

The singing that evening was such that it must have been heard right through the Valley. Our Superintendent Minister, in spite of the fact that he had already conducted four services was on top form. Following the evening many people said how much they had enjoyed it.

On 21st August the children were busy again. This time with the help of some adults they entertained residents from Severn View Residential Home. The folk were brought out in their mini bus to the Chapel, some were able to walk in but one or two were in wheel chairs.

They enjoyed the songs the children sang for them and then chose their favourite hymns and joined in the singing.

Following this they enjoyed tea served to them by the older children and adults.

It is on occasions like that, it is realised how much the kitchen area and toilet extension is urgently needed.

SEPTEMBER

The beginning of this month found us sending our Best Wishes to Circuit Minister, Rev Andrew Cordy, who from the beginning of the month was taking sabbatical leave.

Final preparations were being made for our final Celebration events on 15th and 16th. The Harvest Thanksgiving Service on the Sunday and Harvest Service of Song on Monday and there was still plenty of organising to do for both these events.

On Saturday gifts were received and the chapel decorated by members, with some help from Young Members Activity Group. As is usual at Earlswood Valley there was an abundance of locally grown vegetables, fruit of many kinds and beautiful flowers. It was difficult to find a space for everything. Sunday afternoon arrived and again cars were streaming into the Valley and again a field was kindly loaned for parking cars.

With a congregation filling the Chapel to overflowing, the service conducted by Rev. Rooney commenced. During the lively singing of the first Harvest Hymn the children carried their gifts up the aisle to be received by our Superintendent Minister and placed on the table reserved for these gifts. The Valley Singers and Activity Group Children took part in the service.

The children took part in a sketch which related to their Harvest Festival project 'Starving Children of the World'. Finally they placed their Garden Party cheque for £236 on the Harvest Table. This was later sent through Tear Fund to help provide meals for starving children in third world countries.

Again it was good to welcome several Ann Rosser Descendants to this final weekend of Celebration.

Monday evening came and this was the final time of six months of celebrations, and what a grand final it proved to be, of fellowship not only with our own Valley friends but with circuit friends and those from other denominations. Kath Davies came to sing once again her 200th Anniversary song which had proved so popular, the Caldicot Methodist Church Choir items were very much enjoyed by everyone. The Valley Singers sang their much practised item which had been so well received when the President visited. The children sang their lovely Harvest Songs so well that they received a very warm congratulations from the Caldicot Choir Master and were well applauded. Finally after a short message Rev. Rooney thanked everyone for the part they had played.

Before everyone left for home there was a very brisk sale of produce which delighted some visitors, who had not attended a truly rural chapel Harvest Festival for many years, where carrots, parsnips, beetroot, swedes, turnips, onions etc. hung from every available hook and where garden flowers surrounded you.

It was a splendid evening to end our Celebrations as many circuit friends with other friends joined in fellowship together and perhaps looked up towards our Welcome Banner with its words which had been with us throughout all our celebrations:-

"The Best of All is God is with us" those last words spoken by John Wesley, who so inspired a young Earlswood Valley Woman that as a result Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel was built.

One of our Valley Singers was missing from our final weekend of Celebration. He was raising money for the surgery without tears appeal fund.

Dr. Michael Penney, a consultant in chemical pathology at the Royal Gwent Hospital drove his 1932 Morgan Supersport to Poland in aid of the appeal. In Poland he attended the 9th European Congress of Clinical Chemists. The appeal was launched in 1990 to buy a £750,000 lithotripter which dissolves kidney stones without the need for surgery.

Following the final bicentenary celebration our weekly notice sheet said, "Members of the chapel would like to express their appreciation of the help given by so many people in so many ways throughout the 200th Anniversary Celebrations, for this has played a large part in making each event such a memorable occasion.

They would also like to thank their superintendent Minister, The Rev. Joseph Rooney for his unfailing support during the organisation of events over the

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past year and for conducting each of the services."

In the notices for 29th September could be read:#

"The wedding of Mandy Goulding and Leighton Long took place at 10a.m. yesterday. The bride looked lovely, the rain seemed to make very little difference for once inside, the chapel seemed to give a very warm welcome with the lights on and the heaters giving that lovely glow.

We wish Mandy and Leighton much happiness in their future life together."

Mandy is the grand daughter of Mr and Mrs Lewis who celebrated their Diamond Wedding at the Chapel in January.

Our celebrations ended but we were asked to note in our 1992 diaries the Garden Festival of Wales and the Churches Combined programme. To note especially that possibly a circuit coach would visit the Festival on 23rd May for a Wesley Day Celebration with the President and Vice President.

OCTOBER

During our celebrations we had visitors from all the Circuit Chapels and others. the opportunity came now to visit them. We were able to join our chapel at Earlswood Hope and Gaerllwyd Baptist for their Harvest Festivals and Rogiet Methodists for a Harvest Supper with proceeds for Christian Aid.

We were asked to lend a hand if it was possible at the Harvest Festival at Mount Pleasant Hospital.

There was an invitation from Caldicot Sisterhood to join in their events for Christian Aid in One World Week.

We were delighted during the month to have Rev. Ernest Ball to conduct one of our services. Rev. Ball was at Chepstow and our Superintendent Minister in the 1970's and is now living in retirement in Devon.

The Young Members Activity Group received a letter from Tear Fund which said "Thank you for your kind gift of £236 which has been allocated to our Meals Sponsorship scheme. The scheme enables approx. 15,000 children to receive daily nourishing meals. one of the projects we support is Moulmein Leprosy Hospital in Myanmar, formerly Burma, This programme gives 80 children two good meals of rice and curry a day. their parents are all ill from leprosy and can only earn their living by begging....."

At the end of the month the wedding of Jane, the grand daughter of Mrs Violet Waters, took place. Before moving to Chepstow Mrs Waters had lived in the area all her life.

NOVEMBER

Mr. David Venn conducted his trial service at the chapel. Mr Venn had been studying for several years to become one of our local preachers.

The death occurred of Mr Edgar Jones who as a boy attended Sunday School at the Valley and lived in the district all his life. At 91 years of age he was still able to follow his interest in gardening and woodwork. The beautifully carved Hymn Number Box, which he made earlier in the year and presented to the Chapel for the 200th Anniversary will long be treasured.

On the suggestion of one member of the Activity Group a collection of Children's shoes for Romania was started.

It was with sadness the death of Mr Jack Tiplin was recorded. A descendant of Ann Rosser who attended the special Family Service in June and spent the following week in Earlswood Valley with his wife, sister-in-law, brother, niece and Australian cousins.

DECEMBER

The first day of the month was Advent Sunday and children's Gift Service. Some children had met earlier in the week to make the Advent Ring which was now standing on the pulpit ready for the first candle to be lit. In the one corner at the front of the chapel stood a beautifully decorated Christmas tree, provided and decorated by Mrs Ivy Bevan. Mrs Bevan is the grand daughter of Mrs Rhoda Williams who was a very active member of the Chapel early in this century.

There was excitement as the congregation arrived and occupied almost every seat.

DECEMBER (CONTD)

There was a table in the front covered in parcels of all shapes and sizes. About forty children attended the service, thirty of them being members of the Young Members Activity Group with an age range from 1-16 years. The others had been invited to come along with their Grandma or Aunt. You see this was a little thank you service to the children for all their hard work during the year and the valued contribution they were making in so many ways to the life of the chapel. It was a thank you, too, to the adults as they brought children with them.

Usually our children were thinking of others as they reached out in their activities to the community and the wider world. Although this was their special day there was an empty box beneath the Christmas tree, ready to receive parcels to be distributed to the elderly in Cardiff Royal Infirmary.

During the singing of the first hymn one of the children lit the first Advent Candle. They read the Lessons, then at last the time came for them to receive their gift and some wondered if their name would ever be found. The final hymn and a prayer and they guessed it was time for tea and what a supply of cakes and sandwiches all with a distinct Christmas flavour. It was not easy serving tea around the crowded chapel and even less easy in the vestry with the boiler full of boiling water, trays being carried in and out and then a child coming in to use the elsan toilet, sometimes perhaps it was an excuse to see what was going on in the vestry, who knows? Then as the washing up was done in the bowl and the waste water carried across the yard to empty over the wall, was there a glimmer of hope? Perhaps next year the new kitchen, a flush toilet, hand washing facilities, would this be possible? It was certainly priority No. 1 with a lot of the older children almost teenagers, would they welcome a coffee bar in the extension?

Early in the month some chapel friends attended the Social Evening at Gaerllydd Baptist in aid of Christian Aid. The Valley Singers contributed an item. £64 was raised.

Following the children's Gift Service a donation of £50 was sent to The National Children's Home.

It was agreed at a Chapel Council Meeting that Bibles were needed to be put in seats so that members of the congregation could follow the Lessons if they wished. Twenty were ordered, and presented to the Chapel by friends as a gift at the end of this splendid 200th Anniversary Year.

Early in December Mrs Pam Sloman conducted her Trial Service, following all her study and preparation to become a Local Preacher.

We were invited to join a group of Carol singers at Caldicot who were travelling by coach to Cardiff Royal Infirmary to sing carols and deliver the gifts for the patients. The box beneath our Christmas Tree contained fifty parcels for delivery.

The collection of shoes for Romania finally reached 500 pairs.

Our Bicentenary Year saw the tenth anniversary of carol singing through Earlswood Valley. On a damp drizzly night the singers were out again, this time collecting to launch a fund for the chapel extension. They raised £80. Over the 10 years the collections had amounted to almost £1,000.

Through our notice sheet an invitation went out for voluntary helpers for the Patients Social Club at Mount Pleasant Hospital. As a result one chapel member found a reliable caring volunteer who attends the club regularly.

Not to be outdone by the adults, some members of the Activity Group went out carol singing and collected £25 which they sent to help provide meals for starving children of the world.

It was good to have a congregation of over 100 at the Annual Carol Service. The Offertory received was £100-36. The Valley singers and Activity Group children took part in the service conducted by Rev. Rooney. Many favourite carols were sung and the service combined the Nativity Scene, readings and special carols by Valley Singers and the children. Following many Christmas Greetings were exchanged and each child at the service received a chocolate Christmas Novelty.

What better way to end this 200th Anniversary Year than with a visit by children, parents and Chapel friends to Severn View Residential Home where they entertained the residents with carols while the children acted out the Nativity. Afterwards the children shared a large box of chocolates with the elderly residents as they chatted with them, while the adults enjoyed a cup of tea.

AND FORWARD INTO 1992

As we entered 1992, our hearts reached out in thankfulness for a year of Celebration far beyond our expectation. It was a year of looking back with grateful thanks to God for those dedicated people who had gone before, especially Ann Rosser the Founder of our Chapel.

It was a year of Witness, Fellowship and Friendship which enlisted the support of the whole neighbourhood. With the passing of another milestone, we could sum up 1991 as a year when so much help had been received by so many, far, far too many to mention all by name, a year that had been planned and awaited with eager expectation and a year of excitement and looking forward to the future. A year that provided us with a link with many fellow Christians from our own country and overseas, whose ancestor founded our Chapel.

Christian friendships were formed and families were brought together. It brought friends of our Chepstow and ~~CALDICOT~~ Caldicot Circuit together in fellowship on a number of occasions.

It was a year that aroused enthusiasm especially among the work with young people.

It was a year when our young people put extra effort into their activities and out reach.

What were some of the achievements of the adults of our future chapel? They enlisted help to follow up the suggestion that a blanket be made, as a result a full size blanket was sent to Romania.

They followed up a suggestion by one child that childrens shoes be collected as a result 500 pairs were sent to Romania.

The adults of our future chapel sent £5-50 monthly to provide meals for starving children of the world and then for the same cause raised £236 at a Garden Party.

These same children raised a further £25 for starving children by carol singing.

They visited residents of a residential home and later in the year entertained them in their own chapel.

They came up with ideas to raise money for the extension and awaited permission to begin.

The adults of our future chapel played a very active part in all our 200th Anniversary Celebrations.

Our adults of tomorrow's chapel are very different from those of bygone days, when the chapel was a meeting place for all and where people arrived on foot in a leisurely manner. Today's young people find chapel just one of the many places to which they belong. Often they rush there by car only to stay a short while before rushing off to another activity. Sadly their chapel is the only place at the moment where they find no modern facilities.

The adults of today's Earlswood Valley have a tremendous responsibility regarding these young people. These splendid children must be given every support. It is no good to think changes will be made sometime for they will not wait, these young people will be gone elsewhere perhaps, never to return. Their achievements in 1991 show they are playing a tremendous part in making our chapel a living witness, not just a chapel for an hour on a Sunday afternoon. Those who are only seen once now and again must not be neglected but all must be encouraged in every way. The chapel must continue its outreach to the sick, the sad, the lonely, the starving and the homeless of the world. In this way our chapel can look forward to the future without fear of being isolated within its four walls.

As they can now look back over almost another year, how do the adults of today's Earlswood Valley regard the achievements of 1992. Has it been a year of lost opportunity or one where a living chapel has reached out beyond its four walls and looked forward to the future.