

## Methodist Church. Sprowston Road - Wroxham Road.

Primitive Methodism began to flourish in Sprowston by the mid-19th century. A few brave and stout-hearted people, who used to meet in a small house on Sidney Row, off Sprowston Road, now City of Norwich, saw the great need for missioning Sprowston, and, despite much local opposition, progress was made.

Among the leaders of this movement were Mr. G. Want and his father, and Mr Noah Rudd who later went to Old Catton Society. The group then moved to a lean-to room, attached to a row of cottages near the present chapel (on Sprowston Road?). One of the earliest houses used for meeting was in Sidney Row and then a lean-to room belonging to a family called Holborn on Sprowston Road. After some years, part of a large orchard on the corner of Sprowston Road and Shipfield was bought for £40 and Sprowston Road Methodist Chapel built. The foundation stones were laid on the 16th April 1875, one of them on behalf of the Norwich philanthropist and mustard manufacturer, J.J. Colman, M.P. and the new chapel was opened on 29th July 1875 with a sermon by Robert Key. The society had 37 members and an average Sunday congregation of 170. The plain brick chapel had a neat look with round-headed windows and doorway. Its cost was £417.8.5 1 / 2 d of which £250 was borrowed at 5%. It seated 200 people and the whole was surrounded by a low wall topped by iron palisading.

Sunday School treats were great events and were held in Moore`s Field, far up the Sprowston Road. Then, on one memorable occasion, a local contractor (William Graver) volunteered to take the School to Beeston Park, with a Traction engine pulling two large farm wagons, laden with children, teachers, food, etc. Perhaps the event would not have been so well remembered if it had not been for the performance of “stoking up” on the way. This occurred twice, with the result that the unfortunates in the first wagon arrived at Beeston covered in soot!

The leaders of the School also took an active part in the activities of the Chapel. There were the weeknight services alternating with the Prayer Meetings, while another regular feature was the open air services, with an annual camp meeting when the Society marched down the Sprowston Road towards the City, singing hymns, stopping near Humphrey Lusher`s Timber Yard, near Hoopers Lane, to hold meetings there morning and afternoon. We leave the early days of the Church remembering such names as those of Want, Pointer, Rudd, Patterson, Drake, Holborn, Lusher, Lovett, Ribbons, Watson, Marsh and many others.

On July 14th 1949, a ceremony took place which marked another milestone in the Chapel`s history. This was the handing over to the Trust of the Deeds of a parcel of land, 1.3 acres in extent, situated in the Parish of Sprowston, as a site for a new church.



Sprowston Methodist Church,  
Shipfield, Sprowston Road, C.1900.



The stone-laying ceremony was on the 10th May 1958, with one of the main stones being laid by Mr. Basil Cozens-Hardy, overseen by the architect, Mr. C. H. Dann.



Rev. R. W. Salmon addressing the gathering prior to the door-opening ceremony, date September 1958.



Sunday School Members and Staff in 1977 taken by Malcom Burton.



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Boy's Brigade 4th Norwich Company, 1974, on the occasion of its 25th Anniversary.



Leaders and Members of the 4th Sprowston (Methodist) Guides, date early 1980's.



Morning congregation on Sunday 17th April 1983.



Opening of the Wesley Suite: Rev. Wesley Kenworthy cuts the tape, as Chairman of the District Rev. Richard Jones and Circuit Superintendent Rev. John Whall look on, date 1986.





Albert Ward, organist, and member of the Church, poses here in the festive surroundings.



Albert Ward's superb Cauliflowers, grown at his Spixworth nursery, being displayed for the Harvest Service.



Sisterhood/Cameo ladies in happy mood for their annual outing.



Church activity and services, Easter Sunday 2008.



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