

Dictionary of Methodism

by John Vickers



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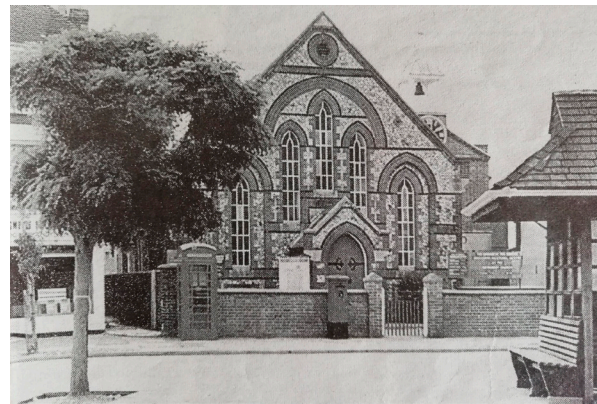
Despite its numerous contributors, the Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland can claim to be an Emsworth product. As the work approaches its twentieth birthday, it may well be time to recognise its local origin.

I am a historian whose main focus over the years has been on Methodist history.

Several years after we moved to Emsworth in the 1990s I found my mind reverting to the need for a single-volume source of reference on biographical, historical and other aspects of the Methodist movement. Dr Cyril Rodd, a biblical scholar and author, had also retired locally and very conveniently was the convener of the editorial board of the Epworth Press. Through him I was fortunate to gain support and encouragement to go ahead with the project, and the result was a volume of over 400 pages, comprising more than 1,600 entries by some 140 contributors. But the reins remained firmly in Emsworth hands and so far continue to do so, though plans are in hand to transfer the Dictionary to the Wesley Historical Society's website.

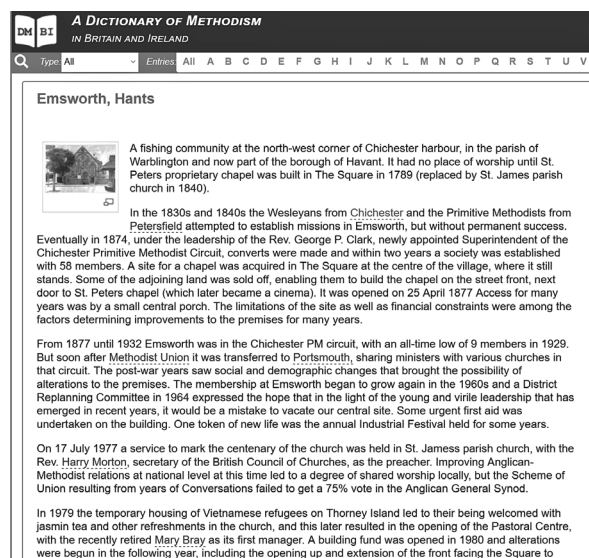
Quite soon after publication in 2000 I became aware of the need for expansion. I was fortunate in having my son Stephen experienced in the world of information technology and its advantages over printed sources; and he designed both the database and the website we needed to enlarge the original Dictionary and to make it much more widely available. The permission of the Epworth Press who were the copyright holders was obtained, and the rest, as they inevitably say these days, is 'history'.

As the twentieth anniversary of the original volume approaches, its digital offspring continues to expand, to include many new entries from past centuries and from more recent times. New features include



Emsworth Methodist Church, St Peter's Square


appropriate quotations and illustrations (chiefly portraits and architecture). The tally is gradually approaching 4,000 entries and evidence of its usefulness grows daily. The online edition is available at <https://dmbi.online>



A DICTIONARY OF METHODISM
IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Q Type All Entries All A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V

Emsworth, Hants

 A fishing community at the north-west corner of Chichester harbour, in the parish of Warblington and now part of the borough of Havant. It had no place of worship until St. Peters proprietary chapel was built in The Square in 1789 (replaced by St. James parish church in 1840).

In the 1830s and 1840s the Wesleyans from Chichester and the Primitive Methodists from Petersfield attempted to establish missions in Emsworth, but without permanent success. Eventually in 1874, under the leadership of the Rev. George P. Clark, newly appointed Superintendent of the Chichester Primitive Methodist Circuit, converts were made and within two years a society was established with 58 members. A site for a chapel was acquired in The Square at the centre of the village, where it still stands. Some of the adjoining land was sold off, enabling them to build the chapel on the street front, next door to St. James chapel (which later became a cinema). It was opened on 25 April 1877. Access for many years was by a small central porch. The limitations of the site as well as financial constraints were among the factors determining improvements to the premises for many years.

From 1877 until 1932 Emsworth was in the Chichester PM circuit, with an all-time low of 9 members in 1929. But soon after Methodist Union it was transferred to Portsmouth, sharing ministers with various churches in that circuit. The post-war years saw social and demographic changes that brought the possibility of alterations to the premises. The membership at Emsworth began to grow again in the 1960s and a District Replanning Committee in 1964 expressed the hope that in the light of the young and virile leadership that has emerged in recent years, it would be a mistake to vacate our central site. Some urgent first aid was undertaken on the building. One token of new life was the annual Industrial Festival held for some years.

On 17 July 1977 a service to mark the centenary of the church was held in St. James parish church, with the Rev. Harry Morton, secretary of the British Council of Churches, as the preacher. Improving Anglican-Methodist relations at national level at this time led to a degree of shared worship locally, but the Scheme of Union resulting from years of Conversations failed to get a 75% vote in the Anglican General Synod.

In 1979 the temporary housing of Vietnamese refugees on Thorney Island led to their being welcomed with jasmín tea and other refreshments in the church, and this later resulted in the opening of the Pastoral Centre, with the recently retired Mary Bray as its first manager. A building fund was opened in 1980 and alterations were begun in the following year, including the opening up and extension of the front facing the Square to