

I remember.....

Very enjoyable coffee mornings -Jerry and Pamela

Always being in the kitchen and making marmalade - Marie Louise

Lovely teas, warm fellowship, great people – thank you – John Robinson

MacNally's, my husband's family's firm, built the church hall. The photo shows the opening of the hall and my husband is the little boy in the picture. Everybody bought bricks which were £1. There's a very good welcome at the Fellowship. I made a lot of new friends. – Marlene

Enjoyed the coffee mornings, fellowship meetings and quiz evenings – Doreen Slowgrove

1987 – terrible gale brought down several large trees which were alongside Chapel Road. All over the churchyard – just missing the Chapel

1980s – A memorable carol service including the youngsters from 1119. Alex Windsheffel stood on the altar as Gabriel. – Sylvia Mullenger

I will never forget the Chapel – I had 11 lovely years after losing my husband - I loved helping with the young people and seeing them grow up - it is sad to think they are closing. In 1985 nearly every seat was taken. I enjoyed doing many things with the Chapel and around the village. I wish everyone blessings. **Kath Chalkley** (Kath moved to West Bergholt from Marks Tey and was very involved in all Church life including helping to run the young people's group)

We shall never forget the kindness of the Methodist Church, because when we asked if it was possible that a seat could be put inside the Chapel gate, in Memory of a dear daughter and her mother, there was no hesitation in granting permission for it to happen. Also, it is somewhere for people to sit and have a quiet moment and a prayer, and for that we are grateful. Also memories of a friend's wedding which took place in 1975. And the Christmas carols by candlelight will be missed – **Kenneth and Lina Smith**

Pat and I have many happy memories of the Sunday School, which had about fifty or more children in four or five classes at its peak. One of the highlights was a production of "Psalty...", a musical set around a singing song book. The children gave an enthusiastic performance, which was well received by the congregation. At least three of our pupils went on into full time ministry.

Another wonderful memory was Ron Boam's healing from terminal cancer. He lived another twenty years, into his eighties, but always said he was in remission!!!

Roy and Pat White

Ten years ago we were welcomed to hold our group in the hall on a Wednesday. We are now a group of friends who chat, laugh and exercise. Thank you. - **Pat's pals**

I'm Steve and I've been the Tai Chi instructor for Pat's Pals for 10 years. I would like to thank you for bringing so much happiness to our group for so long. It has always been the highlight of my week. Bless you.

It is a surprise that your circuit should take such a drastic step and stop having services at the Chapel in West Bergholt.

My family have had a long association with the village: both my maternal grandparents and several of my mother's cousins are buried in the churchyard. This is in addition to my parents being married there in 1947, and of course my own marriage in 1971.

Both my children were baptised there too. Although my small branch of the family moved from the village in 1978, I still keep up an association with it even though my parents have now died. My aunt still lives there.

I hope your winding down activities will be a fitting way to remember the countless lives that have been touched by the ministers and other officers who have served in the village. All good wishes to you all - **Janet Metcalfe**

When we moved to West Bergholt 16 years ago Stan and Jean Dean lived across the road. Because of our common connection with Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade, Stan recommended the church as a friendly place. On my first visit I was surprised when the minister (Richard Chappel) came and sat next to me and had a chat. I think the steward was anxious to start the service, so I said I think they want you up there. I have always been made welcome and remember the friendship of people who have now passed away. I still feel their presence sitting in their places in the pews. Now is the time to move on and take all that goodwill with us.

Pat Kay

Wedding of Pauline (nee Cotton) to Martin Broom

16th September 1967

Pauline's parents were Cecil and Lena Cotton. Cecil lived with his parents in a cottage at Westwood Park from 1929 and later became Sunday School Superintendent. His parents are buried in a marked grave in the Chapel graveyard.

Pauline's uncle (on her mother's side) was Len Polley and his wife Essie played the organ for many years.

After WW2 Cecil and Lena purchased a bungalow in Albany Road and Pauline was brought up at West Bergholt Chapel and became a member. Martin was a member at Wimpole Road. They met when Martin took part in a Mission Band Service at West Bergholt in July 1965.

At the time of the wedding the Chapel was not licensed for weddings and with some difficulty Martin arranged for the Registrar to attend the wedding. The Registrar had no car and had a prior appointment at West Mersea. Travelling by bus and changing at Colchester he arrived at the Chapel only a few minutes before the service – the worse for wear having had "a few drinks".

After the Wedding Service the Registrar claimed that he had not felt well so had left the Chapel and did not therefore hear the wedding vows.

When Pauline and Martin went into the vestry to sign the Register it was necessary to repeat their vows in front of the Registrar – this took some time much to the bemusement of the congregation not least Essie Polley at the organ who gamely played on through "Moonlight and Roses" several times!

Cecil and Lena Cotton moved from West Bergholt in 1969 and became involved in the work at Wimpole Road.

Pauline and Martin returned to the Chapel to celebrate their Silver Wedding Anniversary in 1982 and celebrated their Golden Anniversary last year.

Memories of West Bergholt Methodist Church

I was first taken to West Bergholt Methodist Church by my parents when I was about 3 years old. I have a memory of sitting in a pew with mum and Vera Ruffle during a morning service (while dad was at home with my baby brother Neil I believe).

I attended the Sunday School for many years. When I was very small the minister and his wife used to give all the children in the Sunday School a book every year. I must have had a number of Sunday School teachers over the years but I particularly remember Alan Sheratt, Pat & Roy White and Mike Collins.

My dad became the Treasurer of West Bergholt Methodist Church when I was about 5 years old (and still is to this day) and I used to love going into the vestry after the service with him and the steward of the day to count the collection. Mum used to take us in with her when it was her week to clean the church and we would 'help' by polishing the table on the platform.

I remember doing Kids Praise in the church (1984) and I remember collecting money every week for JMA (Junior Mission for All), from Ed Sumner, Ron Boam and Deni Isom amongst others.

Robin and Judith Searles and their family came to the church in 1984; I can remember the date because it was the summer before I moved up to secondary school. For most of my teenage years I attended a weekly meeting in their house on a Thursday evening with other young people from the sector.

Whilst at secondary school I was a member of the 1119 youth group at West Bergholt Methodist Church. We used to meet up every Sunday evening and I particularly enjoyed the annual MAYC (Methodist Association of Youth Clubs) weekends in London. We also did a number of 24 hour table tennis marathons for charity which were good fun.

One of my strongest memories is getting married in the church in September 1996. It was lovely to be able to get married in the church where I had grown up, surrounded by many of the people who had watched me growing up there and had such a positive influence on my childhood.

I have not lived in West Bergholt for over 20 years now but I come back regularly to see my family and have attended morning service and other events at the church with my parents on a number of occasions over that time. It is sad to think that services will no longer take place in the church building but I am sure that the church people will still have a presence in the village in other ways for quite some time to come.

Michelle Smith (Wilks)

Memories of West Bergholt Methodist Chapel

The strongest memories of the Chapel centre around our parents and music, particularly hymns played on the organ as Mum, Esther Polley (nee Worth) was Organist at the Chapel from the age of 16 for over 50 years and Dad, Len Polley a Steward, Choir Master and Local Preacher.

Our earliest memories were in the 1950s and 60s. The Chapel layout was different then in that it had a pipe organ and raised choir pews on either side of it.

My brother Richard and I along with our cousins Pauline and Rosalind and our friends Carol and Jill Isom were the only children attending the services at that time.

The pipe organ interested us as initially it had to be pumped by hand and if there was not enough wind in the pipes, it groaned upwards until it hit the note! This didn't happen very often but it amused us. Later it was powered by electricity much to the relief of my father and others!

For the morning service we sat in the choir seats with Dad and could see the congregation. Mum joined us for the sermon. In my mind's eye I can still envisage our maternal Grandparents, Samuel and Elizabeth Worth and my cousins' Pauline Broom and Rosalind Cotton's Grandparents, Mr and Mrs Cotton sitting in their favourite seats on each side of the Chapel every Sunday.

Mum was disappointed and sad that the pipe organ had to be removed. She had been trained by Professor Uff and was a very accomplished organist. Sometimes if the singing was a little timid or a particular hymn was unfamiliar to the congregation, she would pull out the stops and lead the congregation along although usually the singing was hearty. After the alterations to the current layout, we used to sit with Dad and I can still hear his harmonies when listening to hymns.

We have a box full of Mum's music which she played before and after the service and which she chose very carefully. She also played for weddings, funerals and Women's Own meetings, other functions and at other Chapels throughout the Circuit.

Family Association

As some of you may know, there has been a long family association with the Chapel and Methodism: my Grandfather mentioned above, who was a Steward and lay preacher. Mum's brother Creasey Worth was a Minister in the Colchester circuit and latterly a Superintendent Minister in the Stockport area. Dad's sister Auntie Lena and her husband Cecil Cotton and our cousins Pauline and Rosalind also previously mentioned above; Pauline marrying Martin Broom in the Chapel in 1967.

Dad, also a talented musician, played in the Boxted Silver Band and latterly became its President. He therefore played an important role in the music of the Chapel assisting Mum with timing of difficult hymns and also acting as Choir Master and Steward. In November 1992 he became a Local Preacher.

Important Events

Sunday School was held in the afternoons and later on, before the Sermon, the children left the service and went into the School Hall.

The Sunday School Anniversary was an important event in the year for us as we sang special Anniversary anthems, learned poems and solos. We practised these during the weeks leading up to the day with Mum on the organ and Dad conducting us. We always had new clothes for the occasion!

Sunday School Outing

This was an exciting event for us and we went by coach to different coasts such as Felixstowe, Clacton-on-Sea or Walton-on-the-Naze. As children I remember the stony beach of Felixstowe burning our feet and preferred the sands of the other areas.

Remembrance Sunday

This was a major event in the Village and eventually the Church of England and Chapel alternated the venue for the service. I particularly remember the Chapel services. Dad played the Last Post on these occasions. I always worried about the first note! I also remember feeling curious and sad as my Grandmother 's sister, Annie who lost her husband Arthur Towns in WW1, always attended with her two sons Reginald and Louis. We later found out that he was buried in Tournai in Belgium.

Marriage in 1985

On a happier note my marriage to Mark on the 21 September 1985 is highest on the list of memories. Despite living in the North West, I wanted to be married in the Chapel . It was especially lovely as it was Harvest Festival and the Chapel was beautifully decorated. We were always grateful to the Members for sharing this occasion as it was extra work for them.

We were sad to learn that the Chapel has closed and send best wishes to all those attending at the end of September.

Christine Austin (nee Polley) with contributions from my brother, Richard Polley