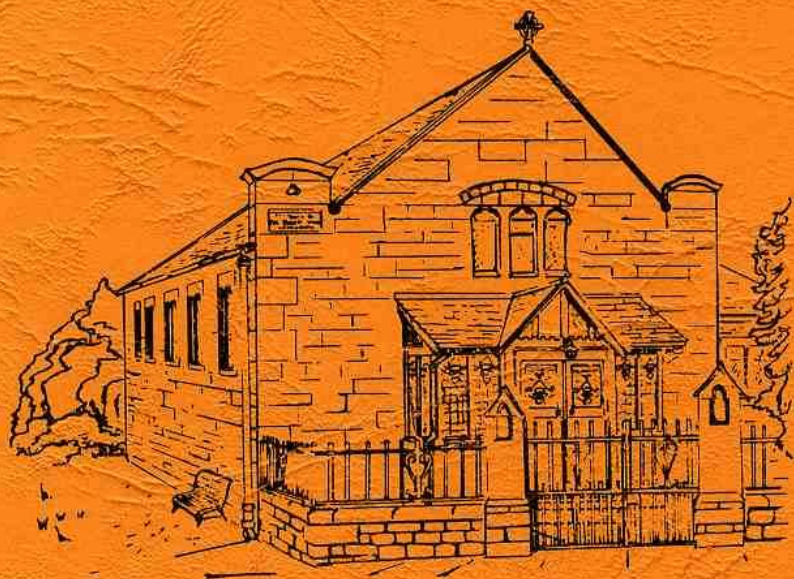


BARRHEAD METHODIST CHURCH



CENTENARY CELEBRATION
1884-1984

BY REV. JACQUELINE BETTS B.A.

A CENTURY OF BARRHEAD METHODISM

The Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of St John's, Glasgow Wesleyan Circuit, record that in 1889 the members of Barrhead Methodist Church applied to join the St John's Circuit. Mr Carmichael, a member at Barrhead, told the meeting the story of Methodism in Barrhead, a story at that time covering only five years. How good it would be if Mr Carmichael's story were still available to us to-day. In fact we know very little about those early years.

The beginning of Methodism in the area was at the Hurlet cross-roads, about a mile from Barrhead, in 1880. The meetings here and at Pollokshaws further to the east were under the guidance of the Paisley, St James Street, Primitive Methodist Society which provided weekly preachers for the services. One of these was Mr Tom Robinson, proprietor of a local chemical works, a widely honoured and distinguished layman. At one time Vice President of the conference he, together with his wife, had a great influence on the history of Primitive Methodism, not only around Paisley but further afield.

It could well have been through his influence that a Methodist cause was started in Barrhead - indeed some of its early members may have been his own employees. However, whether it was due to Barrhead people who had joined with the worshippers at the Hurlet and then decided to begin a Methodist Society in Barrhead itself, or whether it was due to the evangelistic zeal of the Paisley members, it is fairly certain that the first Methodist congregation met in Barrhead in the year 1884. The small hall in which they met was situated at the back of Messrs Paterson Brothers, ironmonger's shop in the Main Street, entry to it being through a pend at the side of the shop.

What were the reasons for the formation of that small society? Were the Methodists mainly English 'foreigners' who wanted to establish their own identity as a worshipping community and be different from the 'state' Church? Certainly, at the end of the nineteenth century the population of Barrhead had almost doubled and the 1880's in particular had seen an influx of skilled workers from the English Midlands to Shanks Tubal Works or Thomas Thomsons. Perhaps these 'incomers' wanted a Church which they felt would meet their needs in the same way as the Catholic Church had met the needs of the Irish 'incomers'; for the English particularly, Methodism could have formed a link with home. Moreover, since the Disruption in 1843 it had not been by any means unusual to build new Churches. James McWhirter in 'Mine Ain Grey Toon' describes the forming of splinter groups as a national tendency.

It is possible that the early Methodists felt that a smaller Church engendered more enthusiasm, made possible closer fellowship and gave opportunities for leadership to those who would otherwise have been denied such responsibilities. Maybe they met together because of a zeal for evangelism or were eager to oppose Calvinism and offer something more hopeful and joyous that they had found in the teaching of the Wesleys.

There is much we do not know and there are two specific questions which seem as if they must remain unsolved in relation to Barrhead Methodism. First, why did it start? and second, why did it move so quickly from the Primitive to the Wesleyan branch of Methodism? In Joseph Ritson's 'Centenary of Glasgow Primitive Methodism, 1826 - 1926' no mention is made of Barrhead in the founding of preaching places and missions. This seems to suggest either that its origins were forgotten by the time the book was written or that it was not a large enough cause to be worthy of mention. It is interesting to note, however, that in a

chapter on 'Famous Characters' reference is made to a Jane McKinney who was a member of the Barrhead Church and later became a most effective preacher in the North of England.

The history of the Church written in 1954 implies that from its beginnings the cause was served by local preachers from both Paisley and Glasgow, while Robert Murray in 'The Barrhead Annals', makes clear reference to the fact that there were both Primitive and Wesleyan members in the society. This is not surprising if some of the early members were of English origin, but once away from their home backgrounds the differences between the two branches of Methodism were probably less pronounced. A completely different reason for the change could be the financial benefit to Barrhead if the cause was seen as a Mission Church of St John's.

We don't know. The first five years of Barrhead Methodism must remain something of a mystery but we do know that in 1889 seventy-eight members of the Barrhead Methodist Church made a successful request for their society to be joined with the St John's circuit. By this time the members were meeting in the Templars Hall in Robertson Street (after meeting for a short time in what is now known as the Westbourne Hall) and it was here in 1887 that the first Minister, a Cornishman, Pastor Quintrell, had been appointed.

At the same time as the members made this request they were also making plans to acquire a building of their own. At a meeting held in Grahamstone Cottage, the home of the Carmichael family, in January 1889, it was agreed that the offer of James Lee, Manchester, to erect an Iron Church be accepted, the Church seating two hundred people. At a meeting in April 1889, it was decided that the Henry Street site would be most suitable. Three months later the opening services took place on the last Saturday and Sunday in July.

In 1890 arrangements were made to purchase a harmonium. In 1891 Mr R Allan was appointed the first Church Officer and held this office until his death in 1926. Only two other people have held this office - Mr D Allan (one of the founder members) and Mr A Chalmers who both gave long and faithful service to the Church. Records for 1891 show a membership of sixty with one hundred and thirty-two scholars and fifteen teachers in the Sunday-school. In 1892 the question was raised of having a married Minister for whom a manse would need to be provided. Some idea of how times have changed is given when we read that the total income for 1898 was £19:15:1½d and the total expenditure £19:10s. Following the itinerant pattern of the Methodist ministry, the years up to 1900 saw four Ministers serving the society. After the Reverend W Kelson there followed the Reverend Albert J Dixon, the Reverend J Hillary, the Reverend William Bruce and the Reverend Percy J Grubb.

McWhirter in 'Mine Ain Grey Toon' has this to say about Barrhead Methodism. "It has never been very strong numerically in Barrhead but what they lack in numbers they make up in enthusiasm". He points out that at the turn of the century, about 1902, Messrs Shanks imported workers from Staffordshire when they established their Victorian Pottery. More recently the Yorkshire Imperial Metals and the Barrhead Kid Works have repeated this industrial pattern. A number of the workers employed in these two firms linked up with the Barrhead Methodist Church. It is interesting, however, and perhaps rather surprising that there does not seem to have been any link between the Barrhead congregation and the I.L.P., the Co-operative or the Local Union branches. This omission is not typical of Methodism.

Early in 1900 the Trustees were informed that the site on which the Church had

been built had been bought by the Glasgow and South Western Railway. The Trustees meeting felt that, with an average attendance of seventy to eighty and an average Sunday collection of £1.00, the cause should not be deterred by this setback. After several meetings it was decided to build a new Church seating two hundred and fifty with a hall separated by a folding screen to seat one hundred and twenty-five at an estimated cost of £1,450. The new Church was to be in Cross Arthurlie Street.

The formal opening took place on Saturday, January, 16th, 1904 and was performed by the wife of one of the circuit officials, Mrs Mary Jack Brown Darlington. She, in fact, opened it in the unavoidable absence of her father, Baillie Brown, who received a presentation key in honour of the occasion. The opening services on the Sunday conducted by Reverend Cecil M Weeks were well attended and subscriptions and collections for the first week-end amounted to £48:16:11d. Much work had been put in to various activities by members of the congregation to raise money for the new Church and their efforts were amply rewarded by the knowledge that after all expenses were paid, totalling £1,763, £203:2s:3d remained in hand. New Church hymn books were bought for the opening services and the old books were handed over to the Girvan Church.

Mrs Darlington died in September 1904 and her husband erected a tablet on the north east wall inside the Church and the cross over the facade of the Church in affectionate memory of his wife. In 1972, sixty-eight years after the opening, the Minister, Reverend Derek Sutcliffe, received a letter from a Mr Gordon Bell of Londonderry who had bought the presentation key, presented to Baillie Brown at a local auction. Arrangements were made for the key, in its original presentation box, to be returned to Barrhead.

It would not be proper to suppose that with as much concentration on the new building the wider work of the Church was being neglected. The Church records of the early 1900's mention the existence of a Band of Hope and while the Leaders' Meeting Minutes for 1901 record that the Mothers' Meeting was discontinued, other spheres of work were flourishing. This is clearly attested in another quotation from 'Mine Ain Grey Toon'.

"Methodism in Barrhead has always had a lively air about it. For many years the Methodists were noted for their experimental approach to the social problems of the town. Under the Reverend Cecil M Weeks (1902-5) they ran a Men's Brotherhood which at one time had over a hundred members including Robert and Andrew Murray, both of whom were noted social reformers in Barrhead".

People still talk of the Brotherhood meetings when young men would crowd in on a Sunday afternoon, even sitting on the pulpit steps, to listen to one of their number present a paper. In 1903 United Evangelistic Services were planned for the town and it was arranged that, on December 25th of that year, two hundred poor children of the town would be given a party as a new year treat.

On 10th August 1906 the first wedding took place in the new Church. The bride and groom, Mr and Mrs Dugald Allan, were presented with a hymn book to mark the occasion. The ceremony was conducted by the Reverend Wilbert F Howard who later became President of the Methodist Conference and for many years was Principal of Handsworth College, Birmingham. Dr Howard is, to date, the only President to have visited Barrhead during his presidential year. His visit was on 27th November 1944 when the rally was chaired by Miss Dalziel.

In June 1905 it was arranged with St John's that one circuit meeting per year should be held in Barrhead. In 1906 a small piece of land to the rear of the Church was purchased. In 1907 Barrhead was complimented by the circuit meeting on the very satisfactory financial position of the Church while an interesting note in the Minutes of the 1907 Trustees' Meeting refers to damage done to the Church pews by the children of the Sunday-school.

The Reverend W Howard was succeeded by the Reverend Joseph Bonsall. A post-card belonging to one of our present members shows Mr Bonsall preaching at the Harvest Festival service. The Church is shown to be beautifully decorated and over the pulpit are painted the words 'Praise waiteth for thee in Zion'.

In 1908 it was decided to start a junior class meeting, while during the ministry of Mr Coley (1908 - 11), the Brotherhood meetings were re-started in the Church on Sunday afternoons. There was now an average attendance of two hundred at these meetings and the singing was led by an orchestra comprising some of the members. A few of the present Church members still remember these meetings and the Brotherhood orchestra. Mr Coley in his greetings to the Church in 1954 wrote "Memories of Barrhead? They are all happy, thank God. The sometimes crowded evening services, the Brotherhood we started, the fellowship and supper afterwards with Miss Dalziel".

In 1909 the membership roll which had been increasing steadily topped the one hundred mark for the first time. Frequent references were made at this time to the system whereby all Ministers received yearly invitations. In 1913 the Church was completely cleaned and repainted. The whole bill was paid by members of the ladies Sewing Meeting. In the same year forty-one members of the Junior Class were meeting with Miss Dalziel and by the next year their numbers had risen to sixty. It was also recorded that this year the Church would be closed on Fair Sunday.

During the First World War the Minister at Barrhead was the Reverend Joseph Coombs. Saturday night open-air meetings had been started in 1914 for young men but these were doubtless affected by the outbreak of war. Mention is made in 1915 of the difficulties of obtaining a new Minister because of war conditions and preparations were begun for a Roll of Honour. In March 1917 Mr Coombs was released from part of his duties in order to take up work on munitions while the Sunday-school reported thirty-seven men on active service. A plaque in the Church vestibule records the names of those who died.

Yet, despite the war, or maybe because of it, the Church was flourishing. Membership was increasing steadily and in 1916, despite an increase in stipend for the Minister to £110 per annum, the financial situation was very satisfactory. In fact the Church Leaders were praised by the Circuit Quarterly meeting for an income of £63:4:0d compared with an expenditure of £48:1:5d. By the middle of 1917 income was twice expenditure. However, it must be noted that actual Church attendance was still causing some concern and as early as March 1915 plans were made to encourage members to turn out on the Sabbath and take a greater interest in the Church, while in the September of that year the falling away of attendances during the summer months was noted.

In 1918 the war ended and the Church was then facing the possibility of being without a Minister. However, the services of Pastor Wood were secured and he was followed in 1919 by the Reverend Albert Hutchison. This year the Minister's salary was raised to £180 and the Church Officer's salary was also increased. Mr Hutchison was followed by the Reverend F N Wilson. Reports in the Minutes indicate that at

this time the Bible Study and Guild were flourishing, the Brotherhood was re-formed and the Sunday-school, Bible Class and Band of Hope were all doing well. There were one hundred and forty members in the Abstainer's League.

In September 1921 application was made for a rented house for the Minister. The March meeting of 1922 recorded a scarcity of suitable houses but happily the June meeting was able to report that a house from the Burgh Treasurer would be ready in September at a rent of £32 with rates and taxes of £10. The house referred to was Langdale in Arthurlie Street. Ten years later 100, Paisley Road was purchased as the manse and the first Minister to occupy it with his wife was the Reverend A Harvey, now living in Yorkshire.

The Minister at this period (1921-4) was the Reverend Cecil H Rose. After the Harvest Festival services in 1921, flowers and fruit were taken to the Darnley Hospital and the vegetables to the schools for distribution amongst needy families. During Mr Rose's ministry discussion on Methodist Union took place. The Minutes of 1923 show that the Trustees in Barrhead were in favour of the Union which actually took place nine years later. It was also during this period that the Freewill Envelope system was first introduced. The Minutes for St John's Circuit Meeting in 1923 record how, in replying to invitations, the Ministers of both St John's and Barrhead, referred to the intense spiritual atmosphere within both Churches. Certainly the Barrhead membership was increasing rapidly at this period from 110 in 1918 to 175 in 1922.

Mr Rose was followed by the Reverend Ernest Brown (1924-27) and then the Reverend Harold Rigby (1927-30). In January 1928 electric lighting was installed in the Church and a revision of the membership Roll brought the numbers down to 146.

The year 1928, however, was also significant for other reasons. The St John's Quarterly Meeting Minute Book intimates that in March 1928 negotiations were taking place between Barrhead and Paisley Mission. It was felt that their geographical proximity offered opportunities for closer fellowship. Several members of the meeting, though in favour of the change, expressed their regret at breaking old ties. The June records indicate that the proposal had been approved by the District Synod and was likely to be accepted by the Conference. This was indeed the case and in September 1928 the Barrhead Church was transferred from the St John's Circuit to the Paisley Mission Circuit. The Superintendent at Paisley Central Hall at this time was the Reverend Cecil D Eades who was later to become Chairman of the Synod.

The 'Order of Religious Services' for March to June 1928 in Glasgow, St John's Circuit, lists some familiar names as 'officials' of the Barrhead Church, e.g. Society Stewards, Mr T McKechnie and Mr A McMillan; Church Stewards, Mr D Allan and Mr D McGeachie; Sabbath School Superintendent, Mr A Davidson; Secretary, Mr W Lawn; Treasurer, Mr W Boag; Church Officer, Mr R Allan; Local Auditors, Misses J Hunter and J Turnbull. At this time Sunday Services were at 11.15 am and 6.30 pm, Bible Class 5.30 pm, Sabbath school at 2 pm and Fellowship meeting on Wednesday at 8 pm.

Mr Rigby was succeeded by the Reverend Albert Harvey who in 1954 summed up his ministry in these words.

"There were difficulties in 1930-33 due to the industrial depression but I recall the courage, loyalty and sacrificial giving of the members with thankfulness".

James McWhirter in 'Mine Ain Grey Toon', also referring to the years of

depression, makes favourable mention of two Methodists, Joseph Goddard and Dugald Allan who, he said, bore the main brunt of running a workshop for unemployed men. It is also recorded that when in 1930 the Church Organist moved to Newcastle he described the Methodist choir as the 'best in Barrhead'.

Mr Harvey was followed by the Reverend Wilfred Shepherd who in turn was succeeded by the Reverend Laurence Jefford whose wife was largely responsible for starting the weekly Women's Meeting. Between 1935-39 one of the Church members kept an interesting record of the special services and events which took place in the Church. Examples are of a special crusade, basket teas and the Syllabus for the Wesley Guild during the 1937-38 session, while a printed notice about the Harvest Festival in 1937 indicates that refreshments would cost 6d. Mr Jefford in his greetings to the Church in 1954 mentions 'The Messenger', the monthly newsheet of the Church which obviously ran for several years. The Overseas Missions Sunday in 1938 was truly international with speakers from Africa, India and China.

The Reverend Philip Watson arrived in 1939 and this year also saw the outbreak of the Second World War. The devotional meeting and the Junior Guild were discontinued due to the blackout and references are made on different occasions to parcels for the Forces and to the five shilling postal orders which were sent to the men as a Christmas Box. References are also made to the difficulties visiting speakers experienced in making journeys to special services and rallies and how during the latter part of the war, because of the situation, Ministers did not change stations. Shortly before his death in 1983, Mr Watson wrote the following description of Barrhead Methodism during the war.

"Quite a few of our members were called up into the Forces and more were in occupations connected with the war effort which involved long and exhausting hours of work, often including Sundays. A good deal of responsibility for the life and work of the kirk was shouldered by a band of devoted women and shared in a measure by the members of the youth group that met weekly at the manse for a devotional hour. Our people played their part too, of course, in the Home Guard and the W.V.S. and they were particularly generous with hospitality for members of the armed forces who came to our services from the barracks at South Arthurlie".

In 1944 Mr Watson, who subsequently became Principal of Handsworth College, Birmingham, then Professor in the University of Ohio, U.S.A. was succeeded by the Reverend Edward Baguley. As the war came to an end arrangements were made to welcome home the Forces. A men's fellowship was begun and in October 1946 Men's Anniversary Services were held. At the end of 1945 mention is made of a Bring and Buy Sale and Social Evening in aid of the re-building fund for war-damaged buildings. Other practical difficulties occasioned by the war were to be evident for some time, eg in 1947 because of the bread rationing it was decided that there would be no tea following the Monday Harvest Festival Meeting.

During Mr Baguley's ministry additional furnishings for the Church were acquired. In 1945 the organ from the Westbourne Hall was gifted to the Trustees by the Arthurlie Church of Scotland, Barrhead, the cost of erecting the organ in the Church being borne by the late Mrs Annie Brown. The opening ceremony performed by Mrs J Turnbull took place on 16th September. Mr Thomas Boyd of the Methodist Central Hall, Paisley, was the organist for the service. In 1946 an oak Communion Table, Font and chairs were placed in the Church and dedicated to the memory of members of the Church who had been killed in

the 1939-45 war.

For some time it had been felt that, in addition to the Sunday-school, some further activity was required for the young people of the Church and in 1947 a company of the Girls' Life Brigade was formed, their enrolment service taking place on 23rd March 1947. Over the last thirty-seven years the G.L.B. (now Girls' Brigade following the union of the G.L.B. with the Girls' Guildry and the Girls' Brigade of Ireland) has performed a very valuable work in the life of the Church. Numbers have fluctuated as is common with such organisations, but many 'old girls' have very happy memories of their time spent in the G.L.B./G.B. (several now bring their own daughters to the weekly meetings) and are grateful for the skills which they learnt there. Our present company has twenty-six girls and five Officers.

As far as boys are concerned, the picture is less happy. A Life Boy company was started in 1946 but attendances were not very high. Subsequent attempts to form a Boys' Brigade have met with only limited success. At the present time boys connected with our Church are members of other Boys' Brigade companies in the town.

One of the earliest records of Sunday-school activities was in 1891 when there were one hundred and thirty-two scholars and fifteen teachers. The highest number of scholars recorded is in 1907 when there were two hundred and fifty with twenty-four teachers. In 1945 the Sunday-school won the Missionary Shield for their project work in a competition for the whole of Scotland and were placed third the following year. A sympathetic comment in 1946 tells that of five children entered for the scripture examination, three girls gained first, second and third class certificates and two boys failed. In 1964 Sunday-school time was changed from 2.30 pm to 12.30 pm. In 1980 a further change was made so that now the Sunday-school meets at the same time as the Church service with the children sharing in the first part of our worship. Although this limits the amount of space and time available to the children for their classes, the change has fostered a much closer link between the children and the congregation. The present Sunday-school has just under thirty children.

Youth work in the Church has also met with mixed success over the years. Various activities have been tried meeting on different nights and at one point a Youth Club was held in Barrhead High School. Most of these groups, alas, have been of short duration though some did meet a particular need at a particular time. A more hopeful note in this respect is that since 1981 the Methodist Church has been the meeting place of the Barrhead Christian Fellowship, an inter-denominational group comprised of our own Methodist youth, plus other young people drawn from Barrhead and the surrounding area. The fellowship meets on Saturday evenings for a rally with visiting speakers and on Tuesday evenings for prayer and Bible study. From small beginnings this group has grown in a remarkable way and the life of all the Barrhead Churches and the community itself have been enriched. *consisting*

However to return to Barrhead Methodism as it was immediately after the war. In 1946 we have the first mention in the Minutes of the plays produced by Mr W Boag which are recalled by many of our present members as times of great fun and fellowship. The 1947 Women's Anniversary week-end ended with the performance on the Monday evening of 'The Broken Box' and the 'Giver of Light'. More plays were performed in June 1948 and in 1951 a 'fine production' of three one-act plays raised £18:13s 3d for Church funds. In 1955 the Barrhead Church Players gave an evening of plays to raise funds towards the Home Missions

Methodist Extension Fund and on another occasion £20.00 was given to Girvan to help their financial situation.

In 1947 Mr W Reid passed his Local Preacher's exams with flying colours. Mr Reid was the author of the history of the Church written in 1954. In 1949 Mr Baguley was succeeded by the Reverend Arthur Candeland. This year the Quarterly collection exceeded £100 for the first time. The Men's Club which had been formed was proving successful. A women's Missionary Fellowship was also formed at this time. For a Church Garden Fete in 1950, one thousand tickets were printed. In 1951 the G.L.B. won the Battalion Shield which they retained for the next two years. This post-war period also marked the beginning of the Auchinback Housing Scheme. As new residents moved in they were visited by the Minister and some open air meetings were held.

In 1953 Mr Candeland was succeeded by the Reverend Edwin Turner. It was at this time that close links were formed between Barrhead Methodists and the Darnley Hospital. Several of our Ministers have been full or part-time Chaplains to the Hospital and members of the Church have helped to swell the singing at the Sunday afternoon services or visited in the Hospital. Christmas parcels, bought with money donated by the different Churches in the town, have been wrapped by members of our Women's Meeting. At the present time the Minister, as part-time Chaplain, is ably assisted by members of the Barrhead Christian Fellowship, but sadly, with the closure of Darnley Hospital likely to take place in the near future, this link will cease.

The year 1954 saw the 50th Anniversary of our present building and to mark the occasion a Souvenir Handbook was published which included a history of Barrhead Methodism and greetings from former Ministers, the President of the Methodist Conference and the Chairman of the Synod. Society Stewards at the time were: W Reid and T Dykes; the Church Secretary was R Turnbull and the Treasurer, J Paton; W Boag was Church Steward. The Trustees were W Y Allan, A Davidson, D Allan, T Lawn, W Boag, R Turnbull, W Reid, W Lawn, J Simpson, W McKechnie, H Knox and J Johnson. Members of the Leaders' Meeting were W Reid, T Dykes, R Turnbull, W Turnbull, Mrs Bromley, Mrs Beattie, Mrs W McKechnie, Mrs Dykes, Miss Marshall, Miss Thomson, Mrs Muir, J Simpson, Mrs Reid, Mrs Munro, Mrs McCredie, Mrs McNicol, Miss Driver and Miss Boag.

On Saturday, 16th January a Grand Concert was given by the Paisley Male Voice Choir. Thanksgiving services on Sunday, 17th January were conducted by the Reverend Wilfred Shepherd of Leicester. Then on Tuesday, 19th January, at the Jubilee Rally, the chair was taken by Harold Skuce Esq and the speakers were the Reverend Cecil D Eades and the Reverend Wilfred Shepherd. Musical items were given by Annie Tait, Mina Forrest, James Sinclair and John Hannah.

In 1955 the membership roll was increased by twenty-one members and it was reported to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting that several people, who had been visiting different Churches in the town, had joined the Methodist Church because they had been received there with great friendship. In 1956 the membership roll topped the two hundred mark for the first time.

In 1958 a Junior Missionary Association was started in the Church with twenty-five children collecting money for Home and Overseas Missions. Though numbers are much smaller now we still have J.M.A. collectors and have recently started a J.M.A. Club to encourage the children to learn more about the work of Home and Overseas Missions.

In 1961 one of our Local Preachers, Alastair Mitchell, was awarded the Swire Prize for obtaining the highest marks in the Christian Doctrine examination for Methodist Local Preachers. In 1962 Mr Turner was succeeded by the Reverend Horace Barker. In 1964 the 60th Anniversary of the present building was celebrated. The Preacher at the Anniversary Services on 8th March was the Reverend E J Turner with Ian Martin as soloist. On the following Tuesday there was a visit from the Girvan Methodist Male Voice Choir. The chairman was Mr W Johnston from Paisley and the speaker and choir conductor the Reverend Sidney Pearson. On Sunday, 15th March, services of thanksgiving were led by the Reverend H Barker.

Some indication of the enthusiasm and energy in the Church at the time is given in the souvenir programme, for example, the efforts of the Sunday school staff gave us our fine new stacking chairs in the hall. The Women's Meeting and Women's Club coffee mornings are billed as 'the best in town' (a reputation they still hold.) The boys' club was proving popular and the G.L.B. then meeting in Cross Arthurlie School was well attended. Letters from several former Ministers sent for the anniversary speak of the rich fellowship and happy times they enjoyed in Barrhead. One letter from the Reverend Wilfred Shepherd mentions the death of Mr A McMillan, a loyal and hard-working member of the Church. His wife, Mrs Isabel McMillan, is at ninety-six, our oldest member and hopes to be able to share with us in our Centenary celebrations. Our second oldest member, Mrs Margaret Munro, is ninety.

During Mr Barker's ministry the Women's Club was started. Among the present members some remember the enthusiasm of Mr and Mrs Barker for this venture. Mr Barker also made attempts, with varying success, to get Boys' Brigade work going within the Church. Both the Women's Club (fortnightly evenings) and the Women's Meeting (weekly afternoons) still meet with a varied programme of speakers and activities.

The Anniversary Week-end in 1968 also marked the 21st Anniversary of the G.L.B. which was celebrated by a re-union dinner for former members. In September 1968 Mr Barker was succeeded by the Reverend Derek Sutcliffe. The next year must have been a difficult one in the life of the Church when Mr Sutcliffe was stationed by Conference to Kilcuth. Barrhead Methodists fought hard to retain their Minister and the outcome was that Mr Sutcliffe remained at Barrhead although he assisted for a year in the work of the Glasgow Mission.

The year 1970 saw a resumption of what has proved to be an extensive house-building programme in the Paisley Road area and letters of welcome were sent to the residents of Fern Drive. During this period there was a steady increase in membership and improvements in the financial situation. Plans to obtain a new Church Hall proved unsuccessful but alterations at the rear of the Church provided new toilet and kitchen facilities. No longer was it necessary to make the hazardous trip down a slippery path to the boiler-house when hot water was required.

In 1974 Mr Sutcliffe guided the Church through the maze of re-structuring when Trustees and Leaders' Meetings were replaced by the various Committees with which we are now familiar. In 1975 consultations took place regarding the possibility of union between Methodism and the Church of Scotland and 90% of those who voted felt that Methodism should continue as a separate body.

This, however, should not be seen as an indication that Barrhead Methodists are not 'ecumenically-minded'. From the beginning of the century records show evidence of united services. At the present time, under the auspices of the Association of Barrhead Churches, good working relationships exist between the

various Churches of the town. United services are held at Christmas and Easter. There is also integration between the Churches in the sphere of ladies' groups and youth organisations and events like the bi-annual Christian Aid market and the annual Christian Aid collection, illustrate the desirability of the Churches working together.

Mr Sutcliffe moved to Inverness in 1976 and was succeeded by the Reverend Frank Sanderson who in turn was succeeded by the Reverend James Mack in 1977. Mr Mack was Superintendent of the Paisley Mission Circuit during his four years in Barrhead. In 1979 Mr Mack started a Church Newsletter with the apt title (since it was delivered by foot) of Shanks Pony Express. A previous monthly newsletter known as 'The Messenger' had been discontinued for some time. Our present newsletter, sadly without a title, began circulation in April 1983.

In 1979, when it was decided to discontinue regular evening services, the Minister and some members of the congregation started visiting Bellfield Court, a sheltered housing complex in Paisley Road, for a short service on the last Sunday of each month. These services continue to be held and are much appreciated by the residents.

By the end of 1980 the Church's financial position was causing real concern and at the beginning of 1981 it was felt that there was no alternative but to close the Church. However, in spite of the recommendations of the Church Council to this effect, the general Church Meeting, by a narrow majority, voted that the Church should stay open.

Mr Mack retired in August 1981 and the Reverend Michael Metz from U.S.A. came to Barrhead for one year. Although with his family he experienced one of the severest winters in recent years, which played havoc with the Church heating system, both the Barrhead members and the Metz family benefitted from the fellowship which was shared together.

In 1982 Barrhead welcomed its first Lady Minister, the Reverend Jacqueline Betts to her first appointment.

So we come to 1984 and the end of our story of the first Hundred Years of Barrhead Methodism. As Mr W Reid found thirty years ago, in many ways, the story is more difficult to write the closer we are to the events and the people.

It would be easy to look on this history as simply a collection of facts and figures, information which will jog our memories and remind us of so much that has been shared in the way of fun and happiness, pain and frustration over the last hundred years. But of course the history of a Church, the history of Barrhead Methodism, is much more than facts and figures. It is the story of how a group of people have been led and challenged and inspired by God; of how they have found comfort and strength in God at the crisis points of their lives and known His presence in 'the daily round and common task'. Through the worship and fellowship of the Church they have grown closer to Him and found their Christian experience something which affects the whole of their lives.

They have sought to be obedient to God's message in a society which, particularly in the latter part of their history, has constantly been changing and in a world which has often been apathetic or openly hostile. These deep matters of personal faith and loyalty are not to be found in the written records of our Church. They are inscribed rather in people's hearts and can be read most clearly in people's lives. As someone summed it all up - 'We are a wee kirk with a big gospel'.

So, as we look back over one hundred years of Barrhead Methodism and forward to the future of our Church, we can do no better thing than join with all those who have been part of Barrhead Methodism since its beginning and say with a joy that comes from adoration and trust -

This, this is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable friend,
Whose love is as great as His power,
And neither knows measure nor end.

Tis Jesus the First and the last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home,
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come.

MINISTERS WHO HAVE SERVED THE METHODIST CHURCH IN BAREHEAD

1888	Pastor Quintrell
1888 - 91	Rev W Kelsall
1891 - 93	Rev Albert J Dixon
1893 - 95	Rev T J Hillary
1895 - 98	Rev Wm Bruce
1898 - 1900	Rev Percy J Grubb
1900 - 02	Rev S B Gregory, BA
1902 - 05	Rev Cecil M Weeks
1905 - 07	Rev Wilbert F Howard, MA DD FBA
1907 - 08	Rev Joseph Bonsall
1908 - 11	Rev S Ernest Coley, MA BD
1911 - 14	Rev Frank Ellis
1914 - 18	Rev Joseph Coombs
1918 - 19	Pastor Wood
1919 - 20	Rev Albert Hutchison
1920 - 21	Rev F N Wilson
1921 - 24	Rev Cecil H Rose, MA BA
1924 - 27	Rev Ernest Brown
1927 - 30	Rev Harold J Rigby, BA
1930 - 33	Rev Albert Harvey
1933 - 36	Rev Wilfred Shepherd
1936 - 39	Rev Laurence D Jefferd
1939 - 44	Rev Philip S Watson, MA DD
1944 - 49	Rev Edward C Baguley, BA
1949 - 53	Rev Arthur Candeland, MA BA
1953 - 62	Rev Edwin J Turner, BD
1962 - 68	Rev Horace Barker
1968 - 76	Rev Derek Sutcliffe, BA
1976 - 77	Rev Frank Sanderson
1977 - 81	Rev James Mack, BD
1981 - 82	Rev Michael Metz, BA M.Th
1982 - 90	Rev Jacqueline Betts, BA
1990 - 93	Rev Adam Wells
1993 - 96	Rev P. Aker - Isabel Aker
1996 - 2001	Rev Ann Staton
2001 -	Rev Joan Proctor

