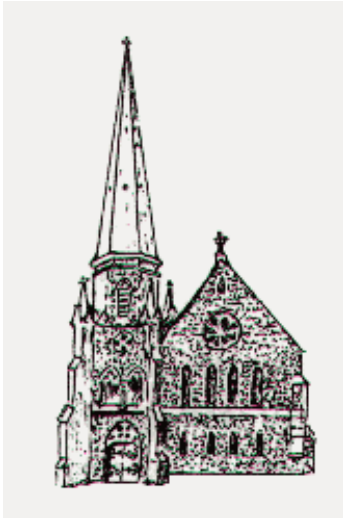


## A Guided visit to Chislehurst Methodist Church

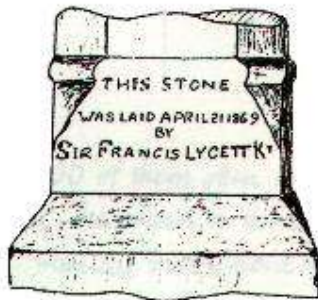


During the construction of the church (1868 - 1870 ) there were several problems. The foundations were flooded and a stream had to be diverted. Frost got into the ragstone walls and they had to be rebuilt.

**The church**, built in the Early English style was almost finished when a violent storm seriously damaged the tower and the spire, 25 metres ( 82 feet ) high, necessitating further rebuilding. The Church finally opened on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 1870.

As you stand at the entrance to the car park and face the church you are looking due West. The facade before you is surmounted by a Celtic cross with the rose window below.

In the front entrance stands the old **stone font** with the inscription ' Suffer little children to come unto me '. As you enter the church you pass beneath the gallery which was added in 1880 to provide additional seating capacity. The church has two side aisles rather than a central aisle and notice that the pews have a staggered division line preventing you from passing across the body of the church.



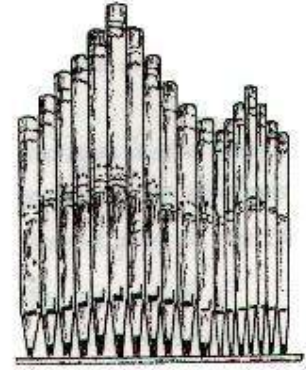
The left aisle opens on the South to the side chapel where a **foundation stone** can be seen at the base of the column. The inscription reads,

**' This stone was laid April 21 1869 by Sir Francis Lycett Kt. '**

Originally this stone was on the outside of the church, the side chapel having been added one year after the gallery to provide still more seating. It was intended to add a second side chapel to the opposite North side of the church to make the ground plan cruciform in shape but this additional work was never undertaken.

Examining the windows of the side chapel, we see first the ' Adlard ' window, installed by the Rev. J. Cartwright who was a minister in the Circuit between 1930 and 1935. Rev Cartwright's only daughter aged 27 years died in 1930 shortly before he and his wife came to Chislehurst. Sadly his wife also died very soon afterward.

They are commemorated by the two pencil windows depicting Mary the mother of Jesus and the other Mary, who in the gospel story anointed the feet of Jesus. The church is adorned at different times in the liturgical year by a variety of banners or hangings which have been created by the Church Fabric and Thread group.



Forster and Andrews of Hull built the **church organ** and installed it in 1883. The organ has 1600 pipes, many of them ornately painted. In antiquity it was pumped by hand bellows but today it has a powerful electric blower. George Watto provided the man power for the bellows for many years.

George was an African, he was rescued from a group of Portuguese slave traders by Dr. David Livingstone. He was one of 6 boys who brought Dr. Livingstone's body home to England. He settled in Chislehurst where he worked for the Vanner family.

The Vanner brothers, James and William, were founder members of the church. James was Sunday School Superintendent and William was the organist for 30 years. This family is commemorated by a tablet on the wall of the nave.

**The pulpit** provides a useful vantage point for the preacher enabling all to see and hear as the sermon is proclaimed. It is interestingly carved and carries two notable motifs each inscribed in Greek, the language of The New Testament. The uppermost combines the Greek Letters IHS and are the first 3 letters of the name of Jesus. The lower of the two entwines the letters alpha and omega, AW and finds its origin in the verses from the book of Revelation.

*(Revelation 1:8)*

8 "I am the **Alpha** and the **Omega**," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

*(Revelation 21:6)*

6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the **Alpha** and the **Omega**, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the fountain of the water of life without payment.

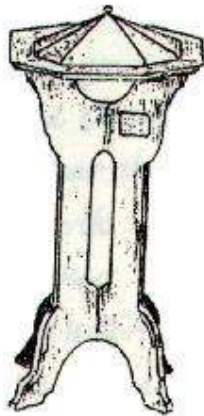
*(Revelation 22:13)*

13 I am the **Alpha** and the **Omega**, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."



In the apse a beautiful stone reredos, with the Ten Commandments to the right and the Apostles Creed with The Lord's Prayer to the left, portrays the last supper with Jesus and the twelve disciples. The window high above bears the message ' God is Love '.

In 1990 the sanctuary area was extended into the body of the church thus making a more useful space for the placing of the communion table and facilitating participation in drama etc.

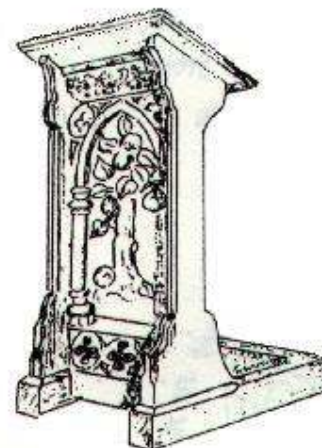


A recent addition to the furnishing in the church is the octagonal wooden font, a memorial gift, designed and crafted by the son of one of our members. It bears the ancient Christian symbol of the fish.

Continuing round the church in a clockwork direction to the longest interior wall of the church, the North wall, there is a plaque honouring Mary Calvert. With her husband Rev. W. W. Holdsworth, she gave 12 years in missionary service in India. Due to her ill-health the family returned to England to Chislehurst and Rev. Holdsworth became the minister of Chislehurst Methodist Church from 1901 - 1904.

Sadly Mary died here. In 1906 the Mary Calvert Memorial Hospital was opened in Mysore, India.

There is another memorial window, this time in the North wall and commemorating John Chubb. He died 2 years after the church was opened. His son, the first Lord Hayter of Chiselhurst (apparently he refused to spell his name Chislehurst ), was a member of the church for 78 years before he died at the age of 98 years. He is remembered by the plaque on the wall near the pew he occupied with his wife. He is also remembered by the beautiful lectern which he carved himself. It has a very intricate carving suggesting both the Garden of Eden and the True Vine.



There are two War memorials near the Chubb window. The one for the Great War has a mosaic motif representing St. George. The British legion colours reside here.

The rose window, first viewed outside of the church from the car park, is now seen to the East above the gallery. It was given by the Norman family in 1955 in memory of their daughter Myra who died at the tender age of 16 years, and her grandmother Anne Keeble. On the balustrade at the front of the gallery there is a mirror. This enables us to study the window's reflection in detail.

The church is within a conservation area and as with many church buildings the cost of maintaining this beautiful church continues to spiral beyond the means of the local congregation. Some benefit derives from the letting of ancillary rooms and the hall but the cost of repairs and maintenance is very high indeed.

If you would like to make a bequest or a donation please write in confidence to;

The Church Treasurer, Chislehurst Methodist Church, Prince Imperial Road, Chislehurst, BR7 5LX. We would respectfully draw your attention to the fact that a donation may be Gift Aided and therefore it's value significantly enhanced.

*This guide is adapted from a hand written, hand drawn original prepared for the Chislehurst Circuit Centenary in June 1992.*

*Original credits:-*

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