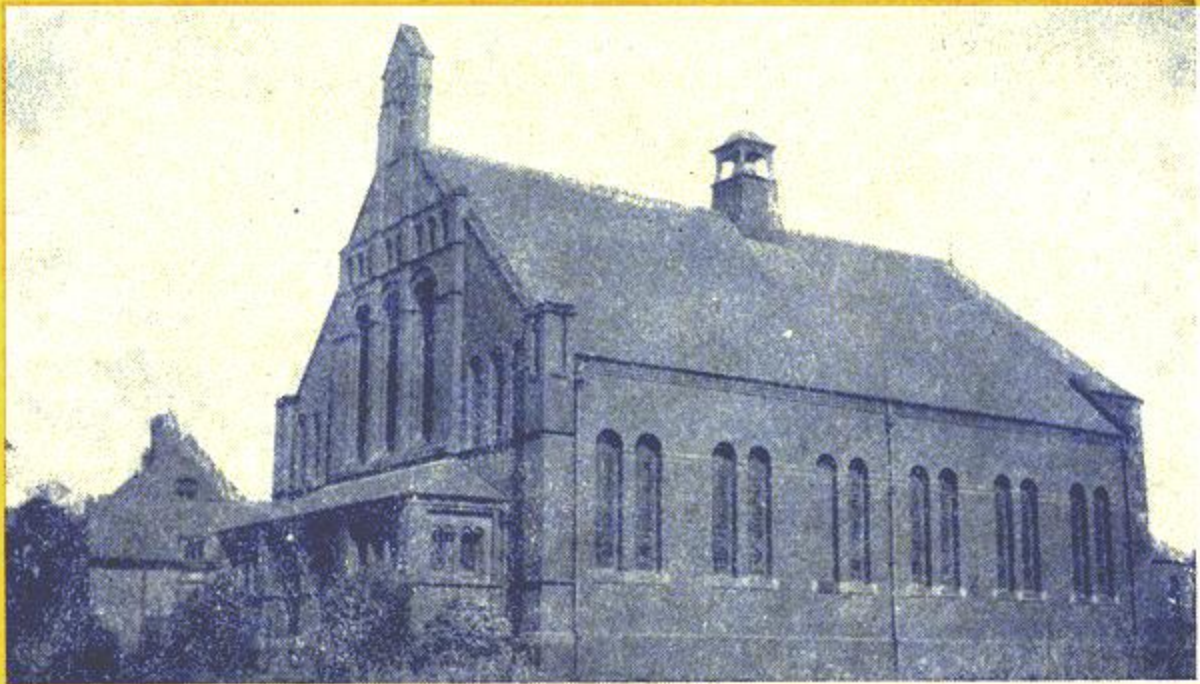


Broadheath Congregational Church ✓

1860 — 1960 ✓



**CENTENARY
CELEBRATIONS**

April 30th, 1960 — May 8th, 1960



Souvenir Brochure

With the Compliments of the Church

Broadheath Congregational Church

Minister :

Rev. C. R. BRUFORD,
"One Ash," Navigation Road, Altrincham, Ches.
Tel. : ALT 2909

Secretary :

Mrs. H. M. GODLEY,
8, Marford Crescent,
Sale, Ches.

Treasurer :

Mr. R. ASHBURN,
23, Hayling Road,
Sale, Ches.
Tel. : SALE 2164

Deacons :

Mr. R. CAMPBELL
Mr. G. G. GUEST
Mr. F. S. GUEST
Mr. E. GILKS
Mr. J. HIGSON
Mr. G. LINDSAY
Mr. H. R. NEWTON
Mr. K. NEWTON

Deaconesses :

Mrs. N. ECCLES
Miss J. KENNEDY
Mrs. W. OLLIER

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Sunday : Family Church, 10-45 a.m.
Evening Service, 6-30 p.m.
Monday : Life Boys, 6-30 p.m.
Boys' Brigade, 7-30 p.m.
Tuesday : Young Wives' Fellowship, 7-45 p.m.
Wednesday : Women's Meeting, 2-30 p.m.
Youth Club, 7-30 p.m.
Thursday : Ladies' Fellowship, 7-45 p.m.
Friday : Choir Practice, 7-45 p.m.

Gardening Club Tennis Club

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CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

1860 - 1960

Saturday, 30th April

Centenary Birthday Party in the School

Reception at 5 p.m. to be followed by tea at 5-30 p.m. with entertainment to follow.

M.C. : Mr. K. Newton, assisted by Mr. B. Clark, Mr. J. Guest and Mr. D. Lindley.

Tickets 2s. 6d. each. Make sure of your ticket from Mrs. R. Ashburn or Mrs. H. M. Godley. *Admission by ticket only.*

Sunday, 1st May

Morning Service at 10-45 a.m. at which their Worships the Mayor and Mayoress (Councillor and Mrs. J. L. Baxendale) will be present.

Evening Service at 6-30 p.m., followed by Holy Communion. The Services will be conducted by our Minister, Rev. C. R. Bruford.

Guest Soloist : Mr. E. Poole.

Guest Organist : Mr. H. Wigglesworth.

Tuesday, 3rd May

A Concert will be given by Sale Musical Society in the School, conducted by Mr. E. Higson, and commencing at 7-45 p.m. prompt.

Admission will be by Programme, 2s. each.

Wednesday, 4th May

Youth Rally in the School, commencing at 7-45 p.m.

Our Youth Club will be host to members of Youth Clubs in the district and the programme will take the form of an "Any Questions" discussion, put to an invited Panel and arising from a film to be shown at the commencement.

The Panel will be :—

Mrs. E. Hoyle, J.P. of Altrincham.

Rev. R. T. Brookes of the B.B.C.

Mr. J. J. MacMillan, Chief Probation Officer, Manchester.

Mr. M. Berisford, International Athlete.

Chairman : Rev. C. R. Bruford.

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Thursday, 5th May

A Ladies' Rally in the Church, commencing at 7-45 p.m. prompt.

The Speaker will be the Rev. Kathleen Hendry, B.A., B.D., of Shaw.

Chairman : Mrs. D. Shannon of Hale, President of the Cheshire Federation of Congregational Women.

Guest Soloist : Mrs. I. H. Charnock.

Guest Organist : Miss K. Higson.

A Ladies' Choir led by Mrs. K. Newton.

Light Refreshments will be served following the Rally.

Saturday, 7th May

Civic Reception in the Church commencing at 7 p.m.

We shall have the privilege of receiving many guests representing both the denomination and the civic community, amongst whom will be their Worships the Mayor and Mayoress.

Speaker : Mr. B. J. Hartwell, O.B.E., LL.M., Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

Our guests will be entertained to tea in the School at 5-30 p.m.

Sunday, 8th May

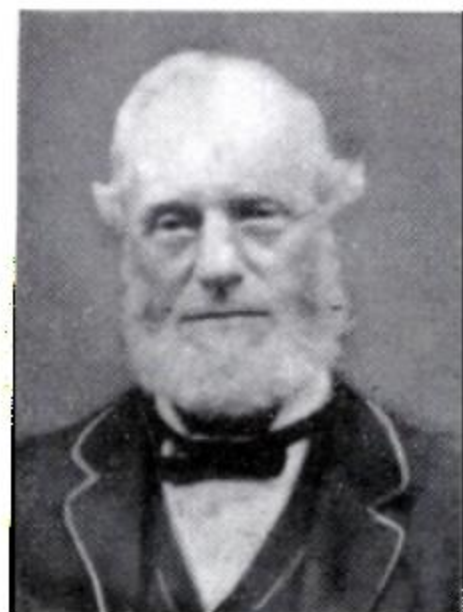
Morning Service at 10-45 a.m.

Evening Service at 6-30 p.m.

Both services will be conducted by the Rev. D. A. Smith, Executive Secretary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

Guest Soloist : Miss B. Clough.

Organist : Mr. G. G. Guest.



Evangelist Mr. S. NICHOLLS

1881—1899

Rev. W. D. THOMAS
April 1900—December 1916



The kind invitation received through one of my "Old Boys" to contribute a Message to your Centenary Brochure, pleased me greatly, but, as I have explained to Mr. Lindley, sustained writing is very difficult for me at present. I would, however, seize this opportunity of re-expressing my thankfulness to God that, as I firmly believe, I was led by him to begin my pastoral work at Broadheath; that for seventeen years I had the warm-hearted co-operation of a devoted, loyal and very tolerant people; and that friendships begun in "Navi. Lane" sixty years ago have been kept in good repair to this day.

In my old age it is an inexpressible joy to me that many of those to whom, as children, Broadheath introduced me, are now serving Jesus Christ and extending His Kingdom through your or some other Church. I honour my memories of their parents and feel constrained to remind those among you who are still young, of Psalm 45/16, "Instead of thy father shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes . . ." Remember the spiritual heritage that is yours and resolve, God helping you, to prove yourselves worthy heirs of those who nourished their souls by participating in the worship and fellowship and service of their Church. In these your forefathers found invaluable aids as they sought to live the Christian life, the life inspired and sustained by Him who is "The Prince of Life." Because I covet for you true princeliness of life, I would urge you not to neglect those steps to its attainment which the Church of Jesus Christ provides.

W. D. THOMAS

Rev. MILES WILLIAMS

May 1917—May 1947



My dear Friends,

It seems but the other day that we were celebrating the Jubilee, but that was of the building of the church. Looking at this fine block of buildings, what Faith they express, and what devotion they witness, and what possibilities they invite!

Our Fathers builded for the future. I often wondered when I was the Minister, why they built so large a place. Did they have a faith bigger than ours and a devotion more singular and intense? I can only conclude they did. I can only pray, and I do so fervently, that we recover it.

I love Thy Church, O God,
Beyond my highest joy.
I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.

That is my first word, then, appreciation and wonder of the century now closing, and my second word is, Count your blessings. How much we have received because of the Gospel! Christian Homes, there's a countless number of them: every child's right to education: the uplift of women: the sacred rights of the individual: liberty, priceless liberty: hospitals and doctors, Red Cross Units and the care of the aged—and so much more besides. These follow in the enlightened path of Christianity, and they are threatened should the Church be lost or lose ground.

And so my third word is a plea to accept and pursue our responsibility. Old General Booth used to instil into a Salvationist convert that we are saved to serve. That, more than anything else, after the Gospel itself, accounts for the phenomenal success of the Salvation Army, especially in those earlier years. An old convert who had seen this, and remembered, used to pray, "Lord, do it again." The Lord will do it again when the Church has regained her zeal, her passion, her love and her faith.

Here is our opportunity as well as our responsibility, and I would die happy, I think, could someone advise me that Broadheath was rising to her great opportunity with prevailing power in the new century.

With all my love,

Affectionately,

MILES WILLIAMS

Rev. W. WALTON

October 1947—February 1956



It is with great pleasure that I respond to the invitation to write a small contribution to this Centenary booklet. One hundred years of work and witness to Jesus Christ within one Christian Church is a great achievement and worthy of every commendation.

My own relatively brief period of eight to nine years as Minister of Broadheath was an enriching experience and one that holds many memories for myself and my family. There were times of great joy and also times of sorrow when death came heavily upon the Church. It was, however, a privilege to share in these experiences both grave and gay. I came to you at what was the end of an era in the Church's history following upon a memorable thirty years' ministry, and I did what I could to bridge the old and the new. Many of the older members of that day have now, alas, passed from our midst, but it is good to know that some of those who were young at that time have now found a real place in the life and work of the Church.

These are difficult times for the Churches of Jesus Christ, but I earnestly hope and pray that, while you may remember all the lessons and the blessings of the past, you will go forward in the hope and with expectation firmly grounded in the faith that God is with you and that He will richly bless the years that lie ahead of this century of service which you so rightly commemorate. William Carey's words are a fitting challenge with which to start a new century at Broadheath :

“ Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God.”

WILLIAM WALTON

Rev. C. R. BRUFORD

June 1956—

Dear friends,

A hundred years is a long time, and in celebrating the Centenary of our Church, I'm sure we shall all feel a very real sense of joy and privilege. We shall remember with admiration those who first met together and formed a Congregational Church at Broadheath, and we shall be proud to be associated with those who have maintained the work and witness ever since.

It is amazing how the Church has stood the tests of time : ministering to the needs of men and women in all the changing circumstances of their lives : facing new problems and overcoming every

obstacle. A wonderful record of devotion and achievement, which makes us mindful of the glorious heritage that is ours.

In celebrating this Centenary, there surely comes to us, as members of the Church to-day, a call to yet more faithful and zealous service, that the Church may continue to exercise a powerful influence, here in Broadheath, and even throughout the world.

“ As faithful as our fathers were
May we, their children, be.”

Yours in the service of the Church,

CHARLES R. BRUFORD

Historical Sketch

1860 - 1960

The first services in Broadheath date from about 1859 or 1860, when meetings were held aboard a boat on the canal. These were later transferred to an iron foundry and then to houses first in Wharf Road and then Manchester Road.

These first meetings were led by Mr. John Rigby, a member of the Bowdon Downs Congregational Church.

In 1864 a chapel was opened by the Downs Church under the auspices of their Rural Mission Committee, pastoral work being undertaken by Mr. W. Fielden from 1864-74 and by Mr. Hughes from 1874-81.

In the year 1881, Mr. S. Nicholls of Prestbury became Broadheath Evangelist. He was originally invited to conduct services over a period of five weeks and following this, invited to become permanent pastor.

Some idea of the numerical strength of the Church at this time is available in the fact that two hundred friends attended a tea party given to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Nicholls.

Little record remains to us of these times. An abiding reminder however, is our present school building. Named the Rigby Memorial School after Mr. John Rigby, this building was opened in 1885 and marked the first advance of the Church beyond the chapel opened 21 years earlier.

Mr. Nicholls continued until 1899, when he resigned from the pastorate through ill health. Shortly before this the Rural Mission Committee, having regard to the extent of the local population, had reported to the Downs Church its views that a new and spacious Church should be built and a minister appointed.

The extension of the cause then passed into the care of a Joint Committee elected by the Downs Church and the Broadheath members and with the new church building in mind, a large plot of land was secured behind and adjoining the chapel and school land.

A meeting of the members on the 19th November, 1899 resolved that Mr. W. D. Thomas of Cheshunt College be invited to become resident minister. The invitation was signed individually by the members, they pledging themselves to support him in his ministry by all means in their power.

Mr. Thomas took up his ministry in April, 1900, the prime objective at this time being the new church building. Plans and estimates for its construction were obtained and accepted early in 1901. The following year a subscription list was opened and by April 1902, two-thirds of the cost had been raised. Much of this came from the members of the Downs Church and is yet another example of the wonderful way in which they cared for the Church at Broadheath.

The work of building started in May, 1902, and in July two stones were laid on either side of the main door by Mr. Nicholls and Dr. McKennal of Bowdon.

The new Church was completed in 1903, the first preacher on the 29th September being the Rev. W. F. Adeney, Principal of Lancashire Independent College.

W. D. Thomas, however, was not the man to sit back in idle contemplation of the achievement. Addressing the members he wrote, "Our work is just beginning. We must pray and labour and then we must labour and pray. 'Broadheath for Jesus Christ,' that is our motto, our ambition, our prayer."

It was in this spirit that Mr. Thomas served Broadheath. A man of deep conviction, he frequently voiced his feelings on things he regarded as wrong.

In 1904 he ranged himself with the "Passive Resisters." This was the name given to those people who, on grounds of conscience, found themselves unable to pay a rate levied by the 1902 Education Act, part of which was to advance established church religious work.

Referring to two friends who took this stand and were imprisoned for a week as a result, he wrote, "Those of us who have taken this stand, hateful and costly as we find it, are determined to maintain it because we believe we are standing for religious liberty and equality."

Mr. Thomas continued his ministry until 1916. The outbreak of the Great War had naturally had some effect on the Church, notably in its claims for the young men for armed service. In this year Mr. Thomas was offered an army chaplaincy and after much prayerful consideration, felt himself bound to accept. His work at Broadheath had been an example of enthusiastic devotion. The Church meeting called to receive his resignation recorded its appreciation of all he had laboured for and, bowing to the greater need, wished him happiness in the future.

Mr. Thomas ultimately went to serve the Congleton Congregational Church and for many years after was a frequent and welcome visitor to Broadheath. There are many who will be hoping to see him again during these centenary celebrations.

Faced now with the appointment of a new minister, the Joint Committee invited the Reverend Miles Williams of Ludlow to visit Broadheath. Looking back on this, it is of interest to note that on his first visit some difficulty was experienced in hearing Mr. Williams from the back of the Church. At this time the acoustics were not of the highest order and Mr. Williams was asked to take further services.

It is safe to assume that in succeeding visits Miles Williams cleared away all doubts and in April 1917 accepted the pastorate and embarked on a ministry which was to extend over thirty years. What a wonderful record of loving and devoted service this was. The name of Miles Williams is rightly honoured by all who love the Broadheath Congregational Church.

During the war the Church tried to maintain its voice under difficult conditions and to keep in touch with serving members. In due time the war ended and the soldiers returned home. Plans were set in hand for a Roll of Honour and this was unveiled on the 23rd November, 1919. For some time the Lecture Room was used as a demobilisation centre.

The years following the Great War saw marked advances at Broadheath. In 1920 the present manse, "One Ash," was purchased by Mr. J. H. Batchelor, a well remembered figure, and offered for purchase on behalf of the Church. It was decided to instal a false roof in the Church building in 1921 and later new classrooms were added in the school and extensive repair work undertaken.

The various meetings and activities began to develop and expand anew; week night services were re-started, a Boys Brigade company formed, Whit-week camps for boys and girls were held. In 1930 the Church membership was given as 200 with 300 Sunday School scholars in five departments.

These years were also very difficult for many people. Depression and unemployment conspired to make life very hard for many homes. In 1921 school accommodation was used for relief work among the unemployed and about this time the Institute was opened each afternoon for the use of unemployed members.

The position apparently was worse in other parts of the country for in 1928 Mr. Williams outlined a scheme to remove boys from distressed areas and place them in work elsewhere. In this way our local churches were able to help some boys from Durham and Broadheath assumed responsibility for one of these.

These difficult times continued through the 'twenties and even in December, 1931, Miles Williams wrote, "I wish with all my heart that prosperity would return, that the grim struggle would cease."

In retrospect it is surprising that so much was accomplished in the midst of such circumstances.

Without doubt, no picture of the Church at Broadheath could be complete without some reference to the members who in times past, as in the present, have rendered such faithful and willing service.

Mr. F. H. Holgate became a member in 1901 and for many years served as Church Secretary and later Church Treasurer until leaving the district in 1930. Mr. L. S. Guest's association went back to the days of Mr. Nicholls and he remained a tireless worker until his death. Who can forget the many acts of kindness done by Mr. J. H. Batchelor?

There are many others, too, were there but time and space to tell. The value of their labours can never be calculated, but we owe them more than we can realise.

Later in the 'thirties times improved somewhat and during these years the Church received the present pulpit, communion table and chairs and choir screen, all of which are dedicated to the memory of past friends.

In 1936 Mr. and Mrs. Williams celebrated their silver wedding anniversary and received a gift of appreciation from the Church. In the following year "One Ash" became available as the minister's residence and Mrs. Williams kindly invited friends to visit the house in parties.

And so the work proceeded until 1939, when once more the clouds of war appeared.

As before, military claims fell upon the younger men and the Church, indeed the whole country, faced new needs and responsibilities.

The beginning of the war brought about an increase in the number of Sunday School scholars, due to evacuation and a new problem arose for their safety in the event of air raids. Home Defence regulations required the removal of the Church's name from the public notice board; the war effort demanded the removal of the iron railings.

Although two possibilities of requisition of the premises by the military did not materialise, the Church buildings were used as a Labour Exchange, by the Civil Defence authorities, and as a British Restaurant.

Once more the Church tried to keep in touch with serving members and resolved to bear up until such time as the war should end.

Following the war, it appears that the Church saw its first need as re-establishing a lively contact with young people in order to plan effectively for the future.

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The day was approaching for the end of Miles Williams' ministry at Broadheath. Feeling that the Church should have the pastoral care of a younger man, in April 1947 Mr. Williams tendered his resignation.

This brought to an end thirty years of loyal and devoted service over those years which many regard as the most tumultuous in the history of the world. Mr. Williams asked that the love of the Church be freely given to his successor in his ministry.

It is humanly impossible to assess the labours of Miles Williams. He has the respect, love and gratitude of us all.

First seeking the advice of the provincial moderator the members then invited the Reverend William Walton of Retford to the pastorate. Mr. Walton took up his ministry in October, 1947.

Certain new advances were made under Mr. Walton. Broadheath as a church began to contribute towards the work and witness of other churches through the Home Churches Fund. Mr. Walton sought the revival of mid-week fellowship and as a result the Wednesday Forum meetings were started. He also directed the attention of the Church to the "Forward Movement" an attempt to consolidate and extend the Congregational cause.

From the point of view of history, perhaps the best remembered event during Mr. Walton's time was the celebration in 1953 of the Church's Jubilee.

This was a time of re-union when we welcomed friends of previous years. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Williams were present, together with Mr. F. H. Holgate.

Of that occasion Mr. Walton wrote, "Our fine building has stood as a silent sentinel of Christian values and service. May those within its walls turn its silence into a joyous proclamation of the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ."

Mr. Walton continued at Broadheath until 1956 and later in that year the Church welcomed our present minister, the Reverend C. R. Bruford of Dunstable.

Still seeking the most effective means of work and witness, perhaps the two most notable advances to date under the present minister have been the decisions first to adopt Family Church and later the Every Person Canvass Scheme.

Family Church was adopted in April, 1957, with the aim of restoring the ideal that we worship God as a family and to bring whole families together for our acts of worship.

The Every Person Canvass Scheme, prepared for in 1959 and put into operation in January, 1960, seeks to bring home to members and friends the extent of the Church's work and its needs in carrying out that work and asks for an assessment on the part of each one of us to help discharge that work.

The "Canvass" brought an excellent response from many people. We pray God that it will continue to do so.

This then is something of the past of Broadheath Congregational Church. The obvious danger is that in concentrating so much on great achievements and records of personal service that readers may be misled to the conclusion that earlier years were free from the problems and fears and anxieties which from time to time beset us.

This is not so. There has never been a time when the way has been easy and all that has been achieved has come about through unselfish, hard and loyal labour and above all through faith in God.

The writer wishes it to be known that he regards it a joy and a privilege to have come to know in closer detail something of the lives and times of those who have gone before.

May we, heartened by their example, re-dedicate ourselves to the Lord.

WILLIAM COCKER

Broadheath, 1960.

A Word of Thanks

To Miss J. Kennedy and all who have helped her to make our Centenary Celebrations a success.

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