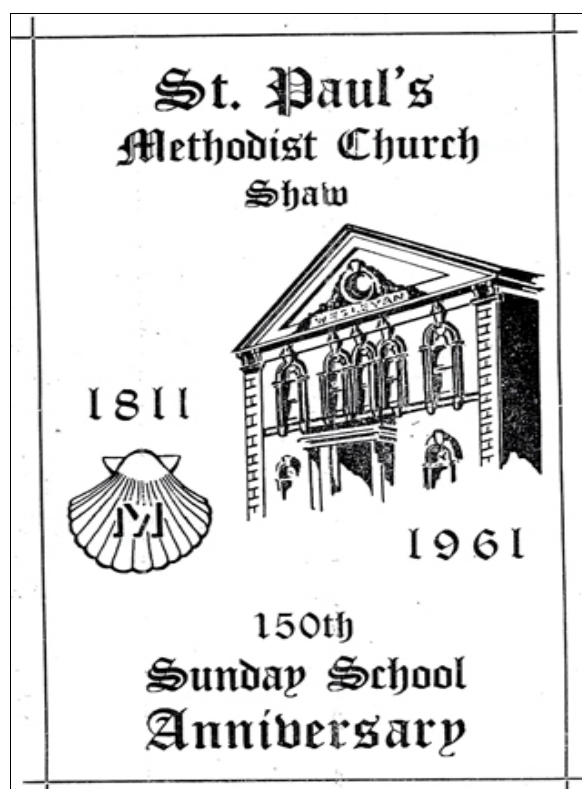


ST. PAUL'S METHODIST CHURCH, SHAW

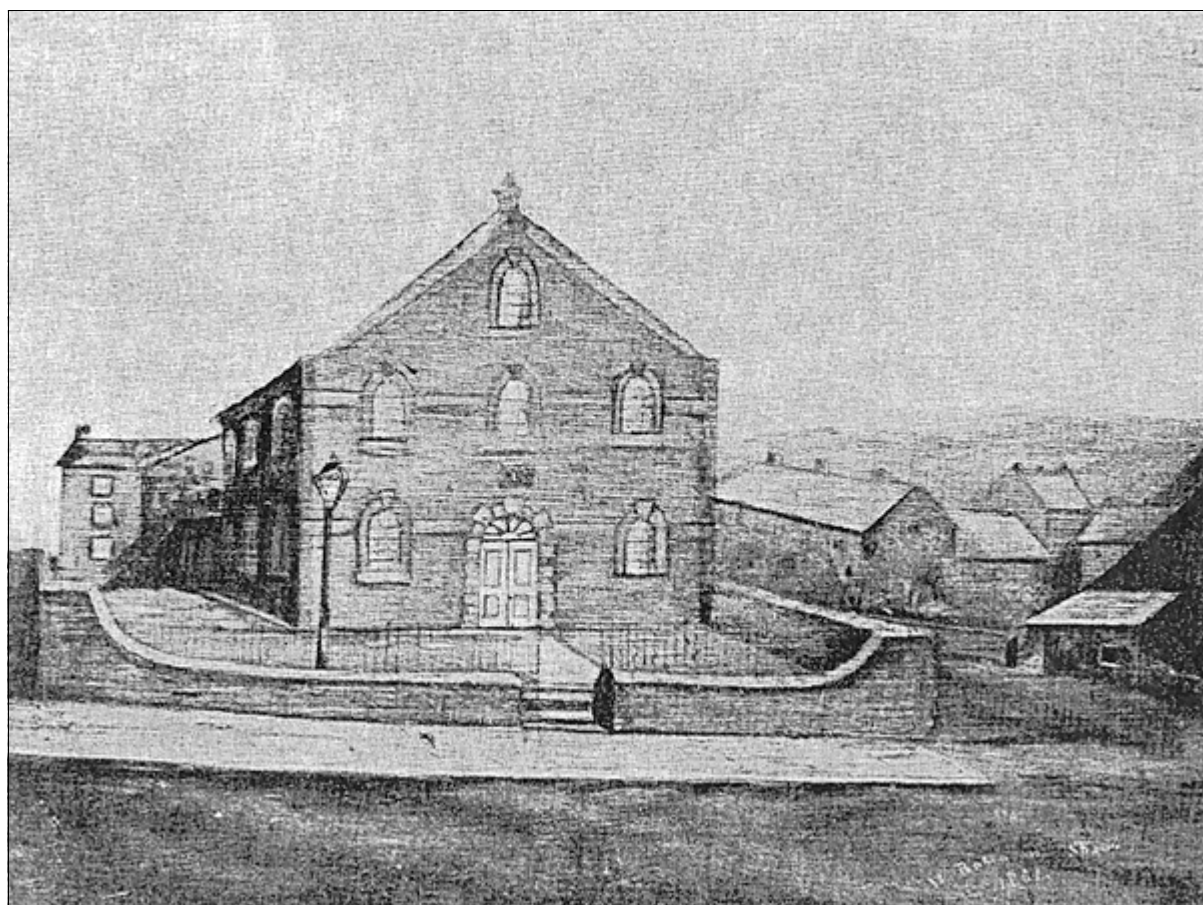


2nd part of the
150th Anniversary Booklet
(first part [HERE](#))

St. Paul's Burial Records and more [HERE](#)

*Ministers who have served on the Oldham
Circuit, and later the Shaw & Royton Circuit,
from 1791 [HERE](#)*

*on the MLFHS, Oldham & District Branch
website [HERE](#)*



St. Paul's Methodist Church, Shaw, 1861

The picture reproduced on the opposite page has associated with it a rather intriguing story. The subject is, of course, the Chapel as it appeared in 1861. The painter has used a tea chest lid as his "canvas" and done his work in oil paints. On the back is the name of John Turner, Tea and Coffee Dealer and he was the grandfather of our Senior Society Steward. His shop was opposite the Town Hall. He asked William Robinson, a schoolmaster at Shaw Wesleyan School, to paint the picture for him.

If you look closely at the picture you will see an engraved stone over the main entrance to the building. Over the Rochdale Road entrance to the present building you will see that same stone.

The painting was cleaned in 1959 and the colours of the bushes in the cottage gardens were once again seen. The painting now hangs in the Minister's Vestry.



THE GIFT SUNDAY

A most important date in the Sunday School calendar is the first Sunday in December—Gift Sunday. But who, today, realises that the inauguration of the Children's Gift Service took place 37 years ago? At a Primary and Junior Department Teachers' Meeting held in 1923 it was resolved to answer an appeal for unwanted toys and books for distribution to poor children at Christmas. The Central Hall Mission, Manchester, arranged for a Sister to attend the service, accept the gifts and give the address. The service was a success and year by year a local carrier has been able to deliver to the Mission many large packing skips filled to overflowing with books and toys. Special large sized models have been made in recent years by the Junior Guild under the guidance of a skilled woodworker. Visiting Sisters have told the scholars of the use made of these models by children when their parents are attending service in the Central Hall.

JUNIOR CHURCH

The inception of the Junior Church, about 25 years ago owed much to the devotion and reverence of its founder, Mr. Leonard Marsland, who, with its first secretary, Miss Alice

Leach, trained the members in its method of worship until they were able to run the church without adult assistance.

The cross was given to the Junior Church and dedicated by Mrs. Sharpe, widow of the Superintendent Minister of that period.

The Second World War had a marked effect on the membership but it is pleasing to report that in 1948 the membership began to increase again. When the Junior Church Room was redecorated in 1957 the Communion Table, Rail and Remembrance Chairs from the Refuge Street Chapel were installed.

Today we are justly proud of the inheritance that is ours and of the many scholars who have come to love Jesus and to serve Him regularly through the services of our Junior Church.

THE YOUNG LEAGUERS' UNION

The National Children's Home and Orphanage was founded by Dr. Stephenson in 1869 to provide care and shelter for the many unwanted and needy children. A branch of the Young Leaguers' Union was formed at Shaw in 1902 to raise funds to support the cause. The target for the first year was £2 10s., being the amount required to clothe two children for one year. At the end of the the year the Secretary, Miss Henthorne, was pleased to report that the sum of £10 5s. 4d. had been raised. The amount donated annually has steadily increased and on March 31st, 1960, £130 was sent to Headquarters.

Of all the efforts during the past fifty years, the best remembered are the Young Leaguers' Concerts, organised by the late Miss Gladys Sellars who trained the children and occupied many offices on the Committee during her lifetime. More recently Jumble Sales, Coffee Mornings and American Teas have been held in order to raise funds. It is interesting to note that in 1909 a Garden Party was held at "Homeleigh," the price of admission being 4d. and this included tea, bread and butter and a cake. A large part of the income today is collected from the League of Light Lanterns and the sale of "Sunny Smiles" by the children of the Sunday School.

The need for the Children's Home is just as great today and it is hoped that there will always be found willing workers at St. Paul's to support the work of the Homes.

THE DRAMATIC SOCIETY

An enthusiastic group of people, in the early 1930's, worked in support of St. Paul's Dramatic Society. Amongst their outstanding productions were "The Private Secretary," "She Stoops to Conquer," (described as a mammoth production) "The Admirable Crichton," "Hobson's Choice" and "Bird in Hand."



Lack of space prevents the inclusion of detailed accounts of many other organisations. The reader is asked to accept this acknowledgement of :

- The Sick and Burial Society.
- The Cottage Meetings.
- The Sisterhood and Minister's Class.
- The Ladies' Circle.
- The Ladies' Fellowship.
- The Men's Fellowship.
- The Church Choir.
- The Guilds and Youth Fellowship.
- The Juvenile Missionary Association.

THE FILM UNIT

The most junior of our organisations came into being in May, 1958 with the motto, "For the Promotion of Christian Knowledge." Senior members of the Sunday School staff acted as advisers and many younger men formed two-man operating teams.

The first film, "South China Century" was shown on the 22nd June, 1958. From that date some thirty or more films have been shown to the various departments of the Sunday School on Sunday afternoon and several have been repeated in the evening for the benefit of the Church congregation. Certain films have been specially shown for the Church and Circuit, two of these were "John Wesley" and "The Shield of Faith." A good reception has been given to this new innovation.

The Film Unit is not only engaged in the showing of religious films but also has a programme of Social Work in the Church. Many films have been shown for entertainment at

the Christmas Fair and other similar functions. The Unit has extended its activities in recent months to that of assisting charitable organisations, a notable example being publicity for Support Groups for the Lancashire's Leonard Cheshire Home at Littleborough. The members hope to be able to operate their equipment in Hospitals, Old People's Homes and other similar places where, by showing travel and topical films, enjoyment can be given to those who cannot take an active part in life.

A standing charge of 10s. per week has to be covered together with a film cost which is approximately 1s. per minute for black and white and 1s. 6d. for colour.

The Film Unit has the ambition to provide the best possible films with the best possible projecting and viewing conditions thereby upholding the view expressed in their motto that the film is a valuable piece of equipment in the promotion of Christian knowledge.

SHAW METHODIST DAY SCHOOLS

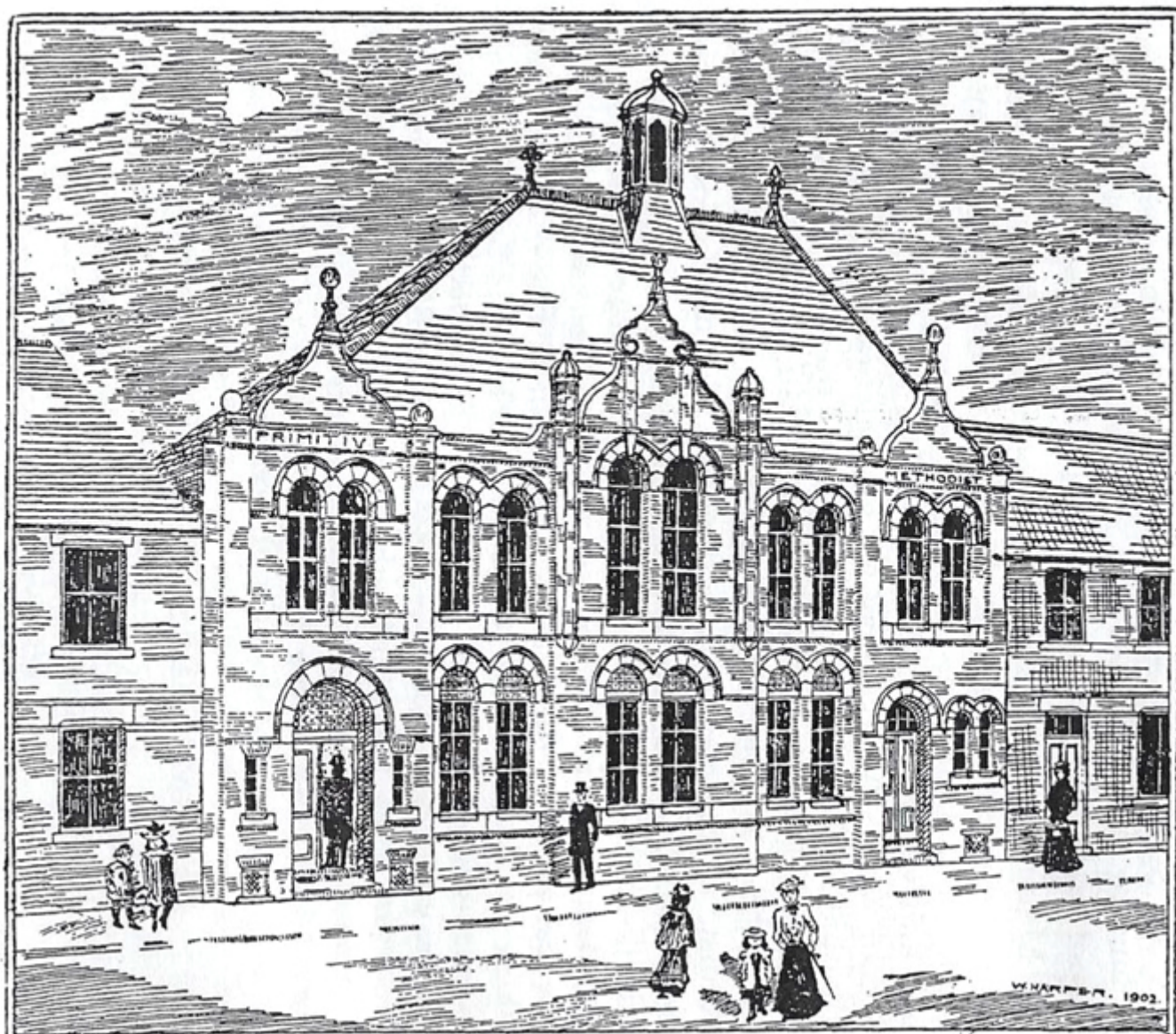
From quite early on in its history, the day schools have been closely associated with the Sunday Schools. As early as 1828, classes were being taken to enable the children of the Sunday School to learn to read and figure. By 1842 a fully-fledged Wesleyan Day School was in operation in the Schoolroom behind the Chapel. Little is known in detail of this early school, but during the next two decades it developed into a thriving day school with up to more than two hundred children on the roll. In 1863 it was re-organised under the Education Acts of the time and became eligible for increased grant purposes, the children's pence being supplemented by a quarterly grant to assist in the payment of the teachers' salaries and the provision of slates and exercise books. During the third quarter of the nineteenth century the number of children attending the school varied week by week and even day by day according to the level of unemployment in the local mills. After the Act of 1870, when education became compulsory, the number of children attending the school became more stable. In the 1870's the school buildings were extended, and whilst this work was carried out temporary accommodation was found in the Co-operative Hall. Just before the First World War the additional classrooms now used by the Infant Department,

were added to the School. In the early 1930's, this school, along with the Church of England voluntary schools in the district, became an Infant and Junior Department only, no longer catering for children over the age of eleven. After the Act of Methodist Union in 1932, the name of the school was changed from Shaw Wesleyan School to Shaw Methodist School. Since the last war the School has ceased to be a Voluntary Aided School and is now a Controlled Methodist School under the Lancashire Education Authority.

Many scholars, from the very earliest days, have passed through the classrooms of this School between Monday and Friday, and those same scholars have grown up to become the men and women who helped to build and maintain the Sunday School whose Anniversary we are celebrating in this booklet. It would appear that in the early days there was no noticeable distinction between the School which taught the three R's and the School which trained children in the Christian Faith. Whilst, as the years have gone by, the distinction between these two Schools has become gradually more apparent, we still like to think that they are to a very large extent mutually complementary to each other; and the fact that they are both integral parts of the Methodist Church in Shaw is something which we should keep close to our hearts. Space will not permit us to name all the people who have made their mark, in one way or another, on the Day School at Shaw, but we hope and trust that the spirit which has inspired so many will continue to live in these buildings and in any extensions of them which may in the future be made.

HEADMASTERS OF THE DAY SCHOOL

1864	Mr. W. Robinson.
1864-1865	Mr. Joshua Hall.
1865-1866	Mr. David Hughes.
1866-1868	Mr. Charles J. C. Gardner.
1868-1872	Mr. William J. Dunkin.
1872-1879	Mr. Howarth Barnes.
1879-1881	Mr. John Rogerson.
1881-1921	Mr. Urban Sellars.
1921-1925	Mr. William Ridgway.
1925-1954	Mr. Fred P. Hancock.
1954-	Mr. Jack T. Greenwood, B.A.



The Refuge Street Chapel and School, Shaw.

AMALGAMATION

Earlier in the book we read of a church in Refuge Street in the year 1835. A later record tells of the dedication of a piece of ground to the Service of God in 1845 when the United Methodists built a Chapel School thereon. In 1859 the Congregationalists took it over but in 1874 the Primitive Methodists acquired it. The work so prospered that at the turn of the century new premises were necessary. Sites desired were too costly so the Society stayed on the ground they held, demolishing the old and building new premises which were opened in 1902. Until 1951 the Church was in Oldham First and Fourth Circuits.

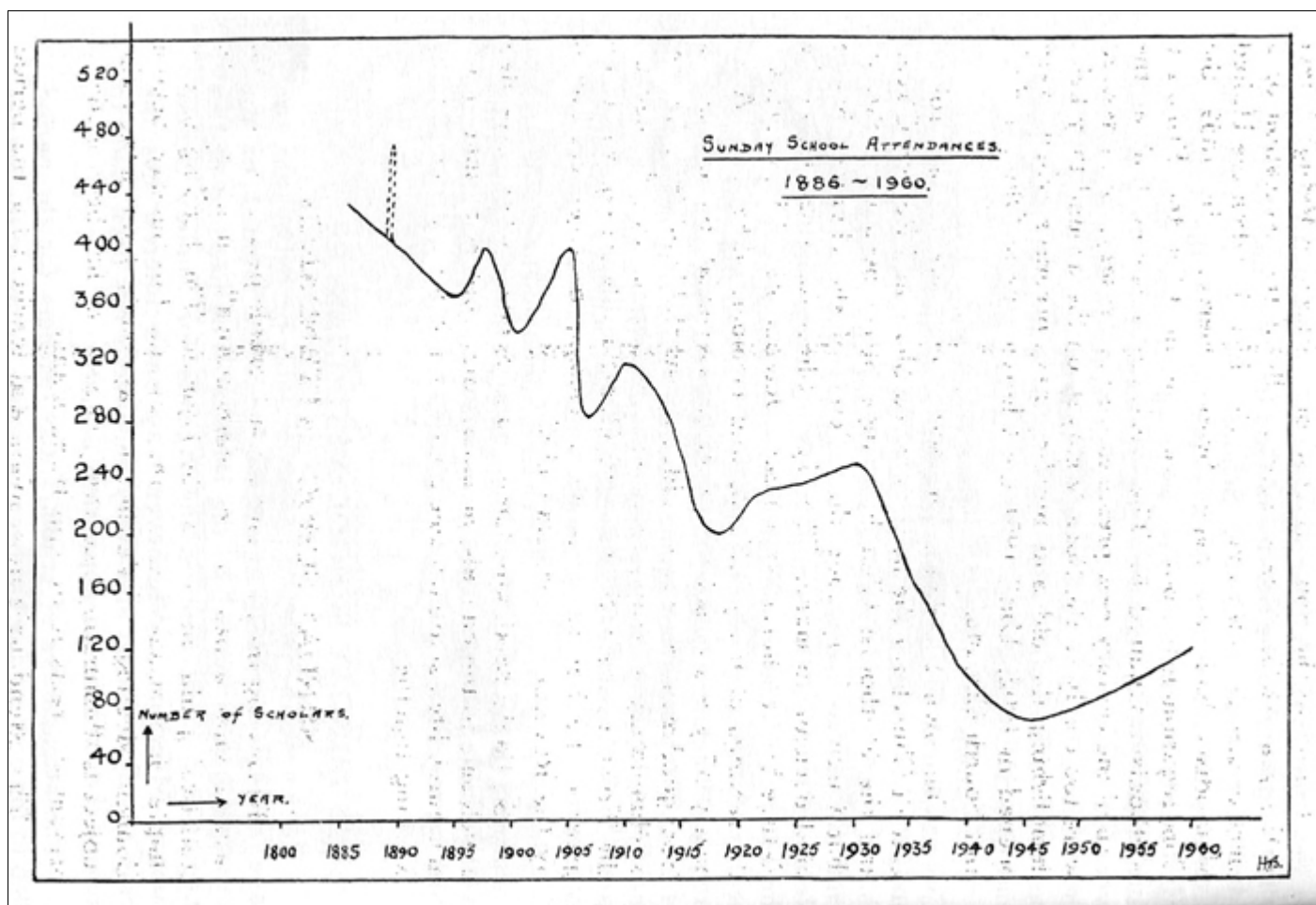
Our own St. Paul's, in 1951, took over a new role—Circuit Church for the newly formed Shaw and Royton Circuit and the Methodist Church, Refuge Street became a part of that Circuit. Very soon the officials of the churches had a vital decision to make. The Hymn Sheet for a service at the Refuge Street Church on Sunday, October 6th, 1957, expresses the feelings of many, officials and members alike "After nearly 55 years of splendid service, sacrificial toil and giving from good men and women, aided by faithful Ministers, the cost of eliminating a serious recurrence of dry rot was deemed by the Trust, Leaders, Society and Quarterly Meetings to be too great to be borne, hence these closing Services conducted by the Reverend C. H. Ratcliffe."

St. Paul's Methodist Church and Sunday School extended a welcome to the officials, members and scholars to share fully in Church life ; share became the operative word with everyone working together.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCES

Reviewing the past, and a considerable period at that, can have a vital appeal to the mathematically minded or the statistical genius but not to the layman. The heading of this chapter is a usual item on the Agenda for Sunday School Council Meetings. Whichever way one's interest lies the subject is illuminating and every endeavour has been made to present the facts in an appetising manner.

The attendances of scholars and teachers for the period 1886 to the present day has been recorded. Many of the entries



the Church and scientists, the outcome of which was a grave decline in Spiritual Values and a rapid growth in materialism.

The 1914-18 War did not appear to alter the rate of decrease in the attendances of scholars but it is significant that the end of the war marked the turning point, leading to an increase in the number of scholars which was maintained throughout the '1920's.

The maximum of 1930 coincided with the commencement of the great trade recession, but the information is too scanty to assume that this was the cause of the further decrease in attendance during the 1930's. The rate of decrease was greatly increased in 1939, with the Second World War, and continued to decrease for the duration of the war.

Since 1945 the Sunday School attendances have been increasing again and now stand at about twice the 1945 value. The present rate of increase is very encouraging, especially if it can be maintained over the next few years. However, one must not be over optimistic since part of this increase is accounted for by the post-war increase in the birth rate and part by the amalgamation with the Refuge Street Sunday School in 1957.

A book of this type would not be complete without a chapter such as you have just read. The compiler gratefully acknowledges the work done by one of our University students in carrying out the necessary research.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TODAY

It would not be possible for anyone to take responsible office in the Sunday School today without being made aware of the faithful service which has created it. We inherit the present position through the gifts of men and women who, having found Jesus Christ for themselves, had a burning desire to share Him with others.

Against this background of devoted work we are bound to compare our own contribution, both as a Church and as individuals. On a previous page the reader will have seen the record of attendances throughout the past seventy-five years and will have observed the gradual falling off in our numbers. Many theories will be offered as to the contributory causes of this decline in the Church's influence in the local community, but it will not be denied that the future of our Methodist

Society depends on the gifts of service which we are willing to make.

The Sunday School can be described as the Church doing its work among the children, where the responsibility for young people does not belong to a small number of enthusiasts, but is one which is shared by the whole Church. It is now the custom to hold a "Junior Church" service each Sunday morning, with the arrangement that the children are present for the early part of the service in the church and also have a period of worship conducted by their own leader. There is nothing but good to be said of this since it both accustoms the children, as they grow up, to the atmosphere of the church's family worship and also gives them a time of worship especially adapted to their own needs.

The Sunday afternoon session takes the form of a graded school where the children and young people meet together for worship and instruction which is appropriate to their age group. The Church seeks to lead its young people into a growing Christian experience and it is obviously an advantage for our teachers to be able to prepare lesson material for a definite age group. Whilst the school is well equipped with modern aids to teaching, we recognise that the friendship and personal example of a teacher is one of the greatest influences in winning children into the Church fellowship and that the personal relationship between teacher and scholar is as important as ever.

Membership of the Church is offered to our young people when it is considered they are old enough to make such a decision and classes of instruction and preparation for membership are led by the Minister. It is very important that the "Junior Members" should be brought together in regular fellowship. They learn more of the consequences of their decision and are able to re-affirm it with greater meaning at a later stage, upon coming into full membership of the Church.

In the Church, the Sunday School is one of several youth organisations. The mid-week meetings in Scouting, in Guild work and the Youth Club are complementary and their relations to each other within the framework of the Church are of the utmost importance. In recent years a Youth Council has been formed to co-ordinate all the Church's work amongst its young people.

This work will continue whether it seems to fail or succeed. All we can do, and it is much, is to make our contribution under the guidance of God as well as we know how. To prepare ourselves, to study and pray and worship and practise fellowship in the Church and then to teach and run our Sunday School as well as, by the grace of God, we can.

RANDOM JOTTINGS

Extract from the "Rochdale Observer" dated 27th May, 1911.

AN ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

In the collection at the Shaw Wesleyan Anniversary Services on Sunday there were: £5 note, one; Sovereigns, eleven; Half-Sovereigns, twenty; Crowns, nine; Double Florin, one; Half-Crowns, seventy-two; Florins, seventy-five; Shillings, four hundred and eighteen; Sixpences, eight hundred and thirty-nine; Three-pences, nine hundred and ninety-six; Pence, three hundred and fifty-one; Half-pence, seventy-five; Postal Orders, two; and Two Dollar-Bill, one; Total: 2,871.

Advertisement in Church Magazine, dated November, 1896.

WESLEYAN CHAPEL, SHAW ORGAN OPENING

The large new Organ (built by Messrs. James Conacher & Sons) will be opened
on Tuesday, November 10th, 1896.

When a
GRAND ORGAN RECITAL
will be given by
MR. DAVID CLEGG, Organist of Littleboro Parish Church
and Rochdale Public Hall.

VOCALISTS

Miss Anna Dewsbury. Mr. Fowler Burton.

Admission by Programme Only

From the Oldham Wesley Circuit Monthly Greeting, of May, 1888 A meeting of the Society and Congregation has been held to bring before them the balance sheet of the extension of the Chapel Premises by which we learn that nearly £1,000 has been raised and £200 has yet to be raised. It was decided to remove the debt as early as possible by re-

opening the subscription list and by getting up some lectures, concerts and other public meetings....

MEMORIAL AND THANKSGIVING BAZAAR

February 12th, 13th and 14th, 1920.

Prices of admission included: Family Season Tickets, 10s. 6d.

Stalls included: Congregational and Sewing Meeting, Young Ladies' No. 1, Young Ladies' No. 2, Institute and Young Men's, Crockery, Flower, Young People's, Refreshment, Cafe, Tea Room and Supper Room.

Concerts and Entertainments: Organ Recitals by Frank Evans, Esq. and Wm. Lawton, Esq.; Mr. Arnold Fitton's Orchestra, Mr. Shimmels' Concert Party, Mr. W. H. Seddon's Party, Mr. J. T. Nuttall's Party, The Whizz Bangs and Prof. Winterbottom.

SHAW WESLEYAN SENIOR SCHOLARS' PARTY

January 20th, 1900.

Extracts from Statement of Accounts:

Tickets Sold	127 at 1s. = £6 7s.
Keil Butter	1/2 per lb.
Pineapple Chunks	4½d. per tin.
Lump Sugar	2d. per lb.
Ham	5½d. per lb.
Loaf (White)	2½d.
Loaf (Brown)	1½d.
Oranges	140 for 5s.
Apples	2½d. per lb.
Milk	3d. per quart.

A collection of Hymn Sheets dated 1837, 1838, 1839, 1843, 1853, and 1858 was received in answer to the appeal for interesting documents. Small in size and yellow with age they carry a choice of hymn that today could only be described as morbid. An interesting point to note is the metre "T.M." of a hymn for the Afternoon Service for 1843. The name of the Chapel is given as the Wesleyan Chapel, Shaw, except on the sheet for the Afternoon and Evening Services held on October 2nd, 1853, where it appears as the Methodist Chapel, Shaw. So far no explanation has been given of coming events casting their shadows beforehand.

....from a teacher's notebook.

A small boy surprised his parents by saying: "This afternoon two babies were born." On hearing of this was the Primary Department Superintendent's face red!! In actual fact the boy was reporting on a Cradle Roll Service.

The effect of a special service on a child's mind is far from obvious. This was brought home to the teaching staff of the Primary Department when a small boy asked his teacher, "Do people eat Aspros?" The teacher, in her wisdom, suggested that the medical profession would supply such needs if required, but why did he ask. Not to be outdone, the boy answered that his mother was ill and could he take some home from Sunday School. No doubt the Harvest Festival Message had left its mark.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

.... I left Shaw in 1895 but have made many return visits and the first place I visited was the church. When I left, the chapel and Sunday school used to be nearly full at every service, but the last few visits I made the attendance was small.

My grandfather, George Lee, was the caretaker for many years and took great care of the organ. At that time we had a small one manual pipe organ in the Sunday school. I remember that one of our chapel organists had a hand that could span two octaves.

When Sunday school finished at 10.30 a.m. we went into the gallery of the chapel, each teacher sitting with his or her class. Sunday afternoon school started at 1.45 p.m. and finished at 3.30 p.m. and the third service of the day in the chapel from 6.0 p.m. until 7.30 p.m.

My most precious thoughts are of the days spent in Sunday school and I am still going every Sunday and will be 85 years old in January (1960).

A further thought comes to mind about the old heating system in the church where the pipes used to snap and crack when the heat came on but now you have radiators....

Geo. W. Holland,
Rhode Island,
U.S.A.