

SHEILA PERRY  
(nee Fellows)



Some of my memories of Two Gates Ragged School.

I was born on July 27<sup>th</sup> 1936, the second daughter of Major and Jessie Fellows and for the first eight months of my life lived in Mogul Lane, Netherend. In 1937 we moved to High Park Road (No2), a brand new council house in Two Gates area. It was back to my Dad's roots for he was born in a little cottage next to The Why Not Inn, which it is still there today.

Between the ages of 2 and 3 years I became aware of Two Gates Ragged School by asking were my sister Greta was going on Sundays. She was 7 years older than me and my Mom told me she was going to Sunday school so of course I also wanted to go. But, my Mon said I had to wait till I was

older. It was between my 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4th birthdays that Mom said I could go. I remember my teacher was a lady that lived in the houses down from the Chapel. I remember going on the Anniversary for the first time just before my 5<sup>th</sup> birthday and I went on for the next 10 years or so.

When I was 6 years old Mr Willetts came to our house to tell my Mom he had a lovely poem for me to say. I told him I was not going to say any poem but my Mom told me that if she said I was, then a poem I would say. It was entitled '*A New Baby*' and Mom had had a new baby who had been born in March of that year, so I did say the poem and I still remember the first verse of that poem after all these years.

I remember the trips to the seaside that we were taken on for going on the Anniversary, about 4 or 5 coaches would leave the Chapel because parents were allowed to go, but they had to pay. We didn't, it was the highlight of our year because we couldn't afford to go away on holidays then. The Anniversary in those days had between 40 and 50 children

on the platform and the services were morning, afternoon and evening; and then Sunday evening of the next week.



A typical coach trip led by Cliff with May by his side

Prize giving was also a very special occasion. With a special prize if you went to Sunday school morning and afternoon for twelve months. I think I only had three special prizes in all the years I went to Sunday school.

When my husband Peter and I got married in 1957 we held our wedding reception in the Chapel and the ladies of the 'Bright Hour' prepared it and waited on the tables, serving food and drinks. For the next few years I didn't have much

to do with the Chapel but every year I came to the Anniversary. Gradually over the years I saw the number of children drop off and by the turn of the century there was no more Anniversary. Then in 2003 Hazel Willetts (former Superintendent) decided to call on old pupils to try and revive it. Unfortunately Hazel wasn't very well at that time and didn't live to see it take off again to what it is today.

They say what goes around comes around and at the Annual General Meeting in 2006 I was elected as Secretary, a post I still hold today. I will never forget my years associated with Two Gates Ragged School and all the friends I have made there for they are some of the happiest years of my life.