

‘Memories of the Chapel over the past 50 years’
Glenda Tedstone (Willetts)

As a child I went to chapel (Sunday) mornings at 10.30 for a brief service given by Cliff Willetts. This was always a very small gathering in the vestry and consisted of a prayer, short talk and a couple of hymns. Mr Willetts let us choose what hymns were to be sung. In the afternoon Sunday school was held where we now have the coffee mornings with ‘classrooms’ dividing the age-range. The older children led the younger children and numbers attending were around 20-30 mark, particularly at Anniversary time. Some years we all crammed onto the stage 3 times on anniversary day with best dresses kept for the evening when the Mayor generally



visited. Mr Cox co-ordinated the event with Mr Bate on the organ.

Then a few years on there was the annual scripture exam. Once a week for several weeks we would attend chapel and selected passages would be studied in depth. An exam would be held in Cradley Heath.

We would attend en-mass accompanied by Hazel and Norman. We would generally get the bus there but the highlight of the evening would be walking back with fish & chips, ‘weeks of study!’ ‘Well worth it’. The scripture results evening was a big event with children and their parents attending. Every chapel was nominated each year but it was

taken in turn by venues in Cradley and Cradley Heath. I entered for 3 years and on 2 occasions got the ‘gold’ medal for coming first in my age category—so I must have listened at the meetings.



Then there was the annual trip to London—the first Saturday in September. Always a full and eventful day. Certain sights were ever popular Carnaby Street, Trafalgar

Square, etc. Having our photos taken outside No 10 (can you imagine that today?). The trip always concluded with a boat-ride to Battersea Fun Fair.

A few more years on and my most memorable memories in my mid teens, as today, there was nowhere for teens to go in the evening so we were allowed to have an unofficial youth club in the chapel for just the chapel goers. Several came and went but a small core group went throughout; Neal Clarke, Linda Jeavons and Jane While to name but a few. Neal living the closest bought in his TV & record player after Sunday service and again on Thursday evening. However, we did have to attend the Sunday evening service, much to the disgust of some members of the congregation. We always sat on the back row under the supervision of Hazel and Norman. Mostly we were well behaved but every now and then something would amuse us and once one giggled we all did. The black looks and icy stares from certain people only made us worse. However, we were never discouraged and I am still here to tell the tale.