



Dorridge Methodist Church

1965 - 2015

The First
50 years

In the beginning

By Chris Griffiths

In the late 1950's a group of folk having moved into the area, seeking to serve the Lord, set-to with the objective of establishing a Methodist Society in Dorridge. With the enthusiasm, drive, invaluable support and guidance of Rev. E. Gordon Davies together with a tremendous amount of hard work by all concerned this is how it was achieved.

It is interesting to note that at this time we were in the pre-electronic era. No computers, no mobile telephones, no emails, no text messages, typewriters were manual and any copies were achieved with carbon paper!!

Also all the members involved were young professional couples, some with young children, seeking to establish their future careers.

Meeting on Friday 13th June 1958

Members of the Methodist Church met at 9, Besbury Close, Dorridge to plan the establishment of a Methodist Society in Dorridge.

Following this meeting members met each month for fellowship in Dorridge Primary School, weekly in each other's homes and they started to plan for a church building.

Members at the meeting

Ed and Connie Davies
Peggy and Norman Smith
Charles Brown (Barbara in spirit but at home baby sitting)
Tom and Betty Guest
Janet and Gordon Yapp
Philip Lucock
John Parkes (Kay in spirit but home baby sitting)
John and Pam Hall
Sian Morgan
Mrs Aldington (elderly lady whose parents were at the first meeting to start a Methodist Society in Solihull)
Rev.B.Arnold Jones (Minister of Solihull Methodist Church)

The start

Bentley Heath Methodist Society (as it was then named) invited all the local community to public Sunday Morning Services at Dorridge Primary School at 11.0 am each Sunday, commencing on 5th April, 1959. The first Society Stewards were Norman Smith, John Parkes and John Hall. Members were 22.

Inside

<i>Forward planning</i>	2
<i>The Big Day</i>	3
<i>Going up!</i>	4
<i>1961</i>	5
<i>The cost</i>	6
<i>Worship</i>	7
<i>DMC 2015</i>	8

Ministers at DMC since 1965

Rev Wilfred J Tyrer
Rev Leslie Thexton
Rev Cyril Cornah
Rev David Reddish
Rev John Hope
Rev Keith Roberts
Deacon Steven Hill
Deacon Margaret Matta
Rev David Hulme
Rev Tony Malcolm



Forward Planning and Consideration

The situation

Dorridge was growing with new houses springing up and families moving in.

The need -

A Church Building at once. To welcome, to teach and to preach. To grow with the community. To set worship of God at the centre of the site. To build the families round the site.

The problem -

We need it NOW – NOT TOMORROW. No time to wait – the new habits and patterns are being formed. We cannot afford to build and any way a new church might not “go” here.

Yet—All that is really required is a site, planning permission and the vision for a New method.

A new solution

A mobile Terrapin building delivered to the site ready for use, open in hours, 12 possibly, 48 certainly. If it is too small, extend it any time, if it is too big reduce it, If it doesn't work – take it away, but when it works and whilst it is working, plan and prepare for the church it shows you really need.

It was an exciting time to be part of this development.



In the meantime

The services in the School room were going well, with sandpit, buckets and spades and dolls an additional attraction. The members were enjoying fellowship at church services and generally bringing babies in carrycots. During the week stimulating groups were held at each other's homes.

We all felt a real responsibility to do all we could to further that fellowship and support all that we could to ensure the society grew.





The Land

A parcel of land at Mill Lane had been purchased from Solihull Council at a negotiated price but then we came up with a problem with the Methodist Church Property Division at Manchester. Dorridge had asked for planning permission together with a grant from the Joseph Rank Benevolent Fund. This was not approved as a temporary building was against the rules

and it was too costly despite the fact that other divisions of the Connexional Departments were very supportive. **STERLING EFFORTS FOLLOWED AND GORDON DAVIES AND SOCIETY STEWARDS WON THE DAY**, the grant was allowed we could now have our Terrapin.



Now the Hard Work Begins

The Terrapin could now be ordered but there was a considerable amount of work before it could be delivered. The site was just a field, with a five bar farm gate. The site for the building had to be levelled, brick pillars built before it could be erected. Land

had to be cleared and levelled for car parking and the site cleared and made to look respectable. All this was done voluntarily by men, women (providing the usual sustenance) and some children "helping", all mainly at weekends. It was back breaking and very hard work and had

to be fitted into business, family and household commitments. A loaned tractor was made available to help – everyone vying for an opportunity to try it.

One member was heard to say "I don't know why I am doing this here and paying someone to do the same thing at my house".

Martin Lindsay. MP for Solihull stopped at the site one afternoon, had a good look around all that was being done and remarked "I suspect none of you are used to this work - Good luck".

In the end everything was ready for the big day.

Going up.. In a day

8.30 am on 7th February, 1961 the Terrapin arrived on two huge lorries. Members of the church who were able, some members of the media, "Midlands Today", and a number of passers-by arrived during the day to witness this great occasion, the fulfilment of dreams.



It did go up in the day. The doors were locked at 6.00 pm

The opening

On the 11th March the building was opened, The Mayor of Solihull, Councillor P.E. Lightfoot and Rev. Russell Shearer, the Chairman of the Birmingham District shared in the ceremony in the presence of many special guests.





11 March 1961

Members of the Elmdon Circuit and some members of Dorridge MC but some of the family had to hold back to ensure guests were seated. The remainder of us were outside listening to a relay. It was a joy to be in our own "home", able to worship in a lovely simple building. We were able to enjoy the fellowship in full.

Now was the time for all of us to pull together to make it all work. We were able to have Sunday School on Sunday morning, Young Wives Fellowship (we did not have any senior citizens yet!), began a youth club, and as the Wednesday evening fellowship in member's homes had worked so well, they were continued in homes. More people came as they moved into the area and there were many who came from other denominations but we fitted in well together.

We had to care for the buildings ourselves and we had a cleaning rota every week. This was made up of 4 people, one week made up of women and next week we would have 4 gents. No one was excused unless they were pregnant. The women were always delighted when they were on the rota with Barbara Brown because she was the only one with an electric polisher and they did not have to get down on their knees! One barrister came from work to clean and he wore his pin striped trousers and black jacket.

Being resourceful

All, of course, was not perfect but we were resourceful. The only other room combined a toilet, wash-hand basin cupboard and a Vestry. Kitchen we did not have. For the Chapel Anniversary in 1962, Russell Shearer was the guest and we wanted to show off what we could do and in the Church itself we had a Baby Burco (for those

unfamiliar, normally used for boiling nappies) properly sterilised of course.

On this occasion it was used for preparing soup (from packets) it took a long time to keep on stirring and we decided it could be left whilst we went home to change. On arriving back later, we discovered it had

settled with a thick sludge at the bottom. Bang goes the first course. However the Chairman said he had had a superb feast the like of which he had never had before during Lent!

We made use of the site for social activities.

In the summer it was ideal for a barbecue and American picnics.

What did it cost?

The Terrapin Church cost £2,120 as delivered. This is and was owned by a syndicate of supporters who took up twenty one £100 shares, repayable at £10 per annum.

The Dorridge Society paid to the Terrapin Society £4 per week which covered these repayments.

In addition they paid for a connection to the main deep sewer (which in this case proved rather costly, but had to be done in any case for the building site.

They paid for the main

water connection and for the electric main.

The Dorridge members did in fact supply and provide the light fittings and Ekco heaters themselves exactly as estimated.

These would have cost £112 and the contract was reduced by that amount.

The Dorridge members had of course to pay for these items, but saved a proportion of the net cost.

They designed and had made locally a beautiful folding altar piece which closed up when the hall was used socially and opened out for a sanctuary at times of Public Worship £30.

They bought chairs, and acquired a few necessary items of furniture, lectern, etc.

For this they had a church which seated 70 spaciously, 90 easily. We had a congregation of well, over 100 for "specials". The building once held 180 as a hall for a Sale of Work.

It was used until the new Church was built and it was sold to Shipston on Stour Town Band. Any members passing through Shipston always checked to see if it was still in situ.





Worship

We all thoroughly enjoyed worshipping in the Terrapin, the fellowship we had was great and enriching. We gave thanks for those who had had the vision and put it all into being. They had judged the situation accurately and as the church grew we agreed that a more permanent building was necessary.

But that is another story, taken on by others...





1965 - 2015

Minister
Rev Tony Malcolm

01564 779720
tony@malcolm212.wanadoo.co.uk
07976 981022

Lay Pastoral Assistant
Joan Pulley

01564 205121
pulleyj151@gmail.com

Lay Community and
Family Worker

Rick Carstairs
07713 832692
rickcarstairs@outlook.com



***"There are no
strangers here,
only friends we
have not yet met"***



**What people say is special
about DMC in 2015**

God's love
reflected
through
people

Shared love
in good and
troubled
times

Thoughtfulness
Kindness
Friendship

Welcoming
and friendly

Sharing God's love
with the others in
prayer and
friendship



What does DMC offer?

Worship each
Sunday at
10:30am +
Junior Church

Messy Church
2nd Wednesday
each month at
9:30am

Baptisms
Weddings
Funerals

Windmills
Pre-school

Bowling

Breakfasts for
men and women

Friday Lunch Club

**w
e
l
c
o
m
e**

More information contact dorridgemethodistchurch@gmail.com
For pastoral support ring 01564 205121



www.dorridgemethodists.org.uk
Email
dorridgemethodistchurch@gmail.com