

From Joanne Malcolm

My family moved to Westcliff in March 1979 and my new school friend took me along to the Junior Choir practice, and I was introduced to Chalkwell Park Methodist Church. In my many years I have lots of memories. Junior Choir outings where we always had to 'sing for our supper' in many different Churches. Carol singing around old peoples homes, ending up at The Granger's house. Us trying to be quiet so it was a surprise when we started singing. Them playing along and pretending they did not know we were all there.

As a teenager I went to the Youth club, dressing up in yellow and green and attending the MAYC rallies in London. Camping over the August bank holiday at Greenbelt. It was such a great atmosphere, I always felt so safe as I walked around the site, listening to musicians and talks. (thank you to Laurie for taking us)

I remember a full church for the Carol service where extra rows were set out in the Church lounge and the panels removed to accommodate everyone.

On a personal note, I got married at the Church and both my children were baptised there. The church family is my second family and I have so many good memories and have met so many lovely people and sadly said goodbye to some, but they live on in my mind. Quite often there will be a hymn or a piece of music played on the organ and I can hear them singing. And who can forget when John Low played the organ and how often we got to the last verse of a hymn and suddenly there was a key change so we all had to dig deep to sing that bit higher.

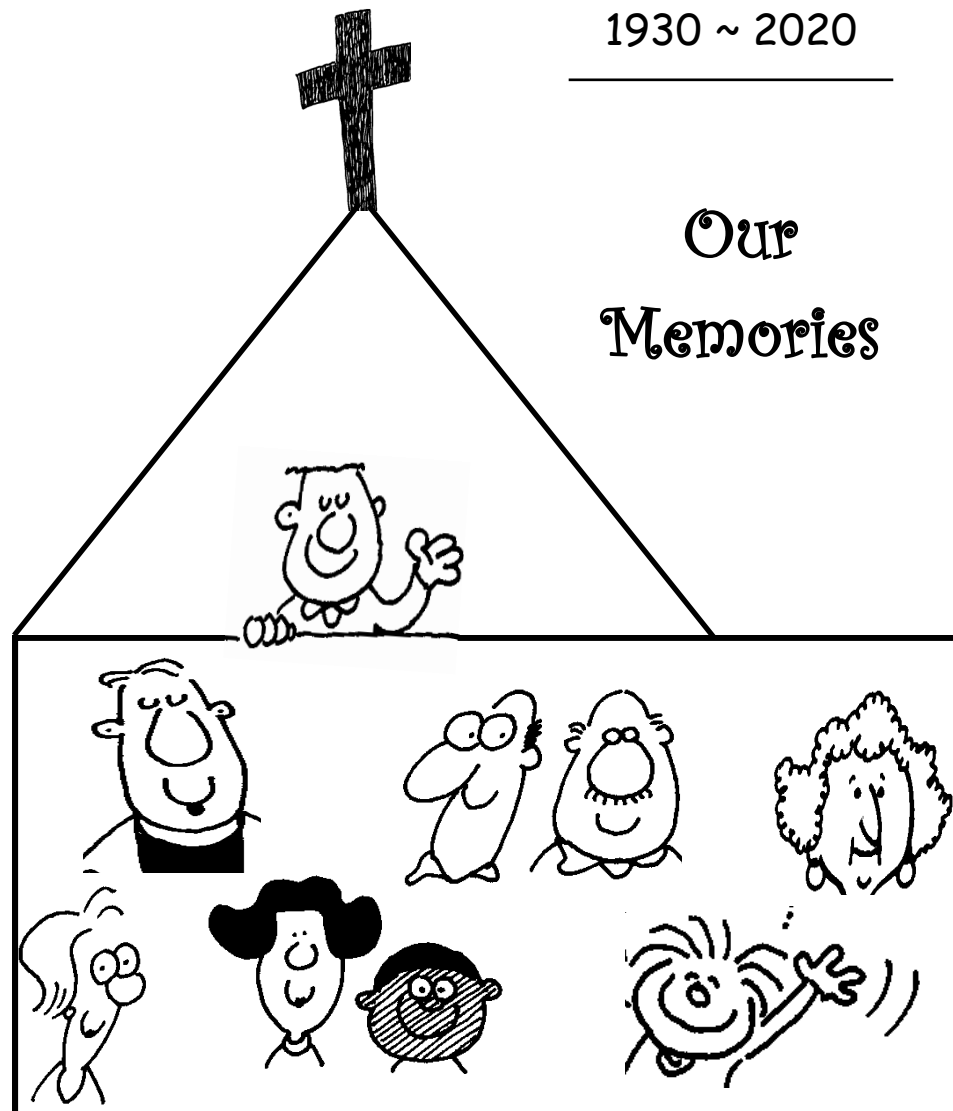
Happy times and great memories, too many to write down but all cherished.

Jo

CHALKWELL PARK METHODIST CHURCH

1930 ~ 2020

Our Memories



Welcome
please enjoy
our memories



Apart from the time Marjorie and I were catching the train from Billericay, can't remember why. Unfortunately, there had been an incident on the line, so no trains were running, we thought of hitching a lift! but in the end Laurie had to drive all the way back to Billericay and pick us up.

What lovely days out they were.

Sue

From Rita Scott

I have memories of the Young Wives Club (now Ladies Monday club) where we used to cater for the Harvest Supper and have over 100 people plus ourselves to feed. We would set out the plates on the pews and do a salad for everyone and make soup in the little kitchen and a sweet to follow. Then, while everyone went into the hall for entertainment, the ladies of the Young Wives Club would have their meal. The clearing and washing up went on forever, but we all enjoyed the years that we catered in the lounge for a large gathering.

Another memory is also food related. The main anniversaries of the Ladies club were gatherings of old and new members in the hall and we always had a lovely time, talking never stopped and it was a pleasure to meet up with old friends and the food was always delightful.

Lovely memories of so many people.

Rita

From Sue Allum

Sunday School Picnics: Remember the heady days when we had a large Sunday School and the annual outing was a visit en-masse to Lake Meadows in Billericay. What fun it was, loading up the assorted cars outside the church with games, food, drink, bread (more of that later), parachute and of course children. Some families avoided this kerfuffle and made their own way to Billericay, very sensible!!

On arrival the first thing was to grab our spot, usually on the slope opposite the boating lake, near the Pitch and Putt, then make ourselves at home. Out would come ground sheets, blankets, umbrellas and all the other paraphernalia.

Some would go off to feed the ducks, remember the bread (the ducks had a feast) walk round the lake and spot the squirrels, take a boat out but only the older children, or go on the swings and roundabouts and take lots of pics.

When we were all starving, lunch would appear and quietness reigned for a while. There was always a good supply of squash thank goodness... After lunch, and after all the parents and teachers had had a rest, games would commence, usually rounders, then maybe the parachute game, or a little mini tennis. When we were bored of this the Pitch and Putt came in handy, a quick round of that.

Afterwards when we were all worn out, food all gone, no drinks left we would all make our way home after a lovely day.

continued ..

Some of the members from Chalkwell Park Methodist Church have shared their memories of our church.

If you are reading the full version with photos, old photos (mainly 10 years old) have been added of those people sharing their memories.

Thank you to all who have contributed.

Also included are a few photos of events that have taken place and of some members from the past.

From Rev. Margaret Deans

Before I came to Chalkwell, whenever I led worship here, my most poignant memory was of a small Matthew Kilgour with his hand up, ready to give an input - bless him. He made my days. He was never wrong and often challenging!

The first visit I made, once stationed with you, was to hospital to see dear Brian Morris after his hip operation. We had such a lovely chat; he made me feel completely at home.

Confirmation sessions with Michael and David were good – teenagers are so honest. Then we were joined by Brian Haves for him to learn about Methodism. Wow, he questioned almost everything Methodism does and the reasons for our ways. He made me think though!

Highlights are weddings, a blessing for Cecile and John; baptisms that fill me with hope. We have said farewell to many dear Christian members of our church family and been filled with sadness at our loss and joy knowing they are in God's heaven. The support for each other never fails and warms my heart.

Monday Club parties and 'passing the hat' had me in tears of laughter. I was next to Norma – say no more... Eve's funeral affected us all deeply in the club as she was a founder member and loved by all.

These past weeks will remain in our minds for the rest of our lives and bring such weird memories. Yet, you have been supporting and caring for one another in different but immensely valuable ways. God's Spirit certainly lives here among us.

I am so grateful [I nearly said 'proud'] to be your minister again – your acceptance means the world to me.

God bless you all. *Revd Margaret*

Recently I found a video clip of the summer fete held by the church at Whitehall grounds being opened by the Southend Carnival Princess. We must have had a fancy dress competition as Tim was dressed up as a clown and David as a lion. I remember one year that John Wilson dressed up in drag and turned up in high heels to open the fete; a little bit shocking as he was new to the church and we hadn't got to know him so well then. A lot of hard work, manpower and teamwork was needed to organise the summer fete as it involved bringing tables, chairs etc down to Whitehall and always reliant on good weather.

I often wonder what would have happened if I had stayed a member of Hadleigh Methodist, would I have been so involved? I feel that I have certainly grown at Chalkwell Park, been encouraged to become more involved and felt so at home here after my initial shyness, although I still find it difficult to talk to people. Was this God's plan all along?

Gill

From Julie Adams

I remember the happy occasion when I married Derek Adams on 27th July 1963 at Chalkwell Park Methodist Church. The minister then was Rev. Deryck Adams!

Julie

From Gill Palmer

When I got married, I left Hadleigh Methodist church, which I had attended all my life, as it didn't occur to me that I could just drive there. When I eventually plucked up the courage to come to Chalkwell, I was pregnant with my first son Tim and Rev. Peter Perowne was the minister.

Each Sunday I was going to stay after the service ended but each Sunday I bottled it and left quickly. One Sunday Peter King stopped me before I could leave the pew, I was in what was known as the 'cheap' seats near the organ, and invited me to join the fellowship group that he attended. I think they were studying Serendipity material and Peter Moulton was also in the group and possibly Esther Hazell. That was my first experience of fellowship at Chalkwell Park Methodist church.

When Tim was born, John Panter suggested I joined the Parent and Toddler group run by Marjorie Ward and mentioned she was also looking for help as her friend and co-worker Alison had moved to the Netherlands. Although I attended occasionally at first, as Tim had a sleep in the morning, I became more of a regular member once my second son David arrived. It was then that I started helping and took over the role of treasurer from Linda Blackburn and somehow never left. Embarrassing sometimes when parents ask how long I have been involved in the group as Tim is now 34 and David is nearly 32. I feel that Marjorie Ward guided me into my deeper fellowship and involvement with Chalkwell, encouraging me every step of the way.

continued

From Maureen Gutteridge

As I am the one with the longest connections with Chalkwell, I have many memories.

I started to attend Miss Winnie Carter's Primary department in the Sunday School in 1941. She was also Brown Owl so I began in the Brownies when I was 7. I became a Primary teacher when I was 13. At about the same time, Mr. Leslie Fullick started a branch of the Order of the Morning Star. This was to encourage young people to go to church and also to meet on a weekday evening for games and a time of devotions. From this the Youth Club developed and was where I met my first husband Charles. We married in 1957 at Chalkwell and had our three boys, Phillip, Martin and Paul christened there.

Throughout these years I continued teaching in Sunday School, becoming Superintendent in about 1969. I joined the choir and in 1959 was a founder member of the then Young Wives Club which later became the Ladies Monday Club.

I moved to Benfleet in 1984 and didn't attend any church until I came back to Chalkwell in 1997 where I was welcomed back so graciously and lovingly.

I became a Worship Leader in 2006 and then a Local Preacher in 2011. Also in the 90s and early 2000s I became a steward and then senior steward.

I find it hard to express how much my Church family at Chalkwell mean to me. They have loved me and supported me through some very difficult times and also joyous ones especially when I married Steve in 2014. All my memories of Chalkwell are very precious and I thank God that he placed me in such a loving environment for so long.

Maureen

From Glynis Ward

I have vivid memories of Bethany as a toddler always climbing around the church pews and at one particular point, going up into the pulpit when Christopher Jones was preaching! He was amazingly good and unfazed by it.

When I had Daisy, Roger Larkinson came on a home visit. I was caught out sitting on the sofa in my underwear so I had to conduct the whole visit from under a blanket in order not to let him know!

Of course we have happy memories of two christenings (Daisy and Madeleine) and my Mum's wedding to Brian. Also funeral services for my Mum and my Dad which were both very special in their own way.

Glynis

From Doris Hubbard

My memories of Church life have been many and very varied. Rev Stanfield was minister when I first attended Chalkwell Park Methodist Church.

My husband died early 1986 when I, then, attended the Wednesday Club. Ruth Low was Chairman. At that time Rev Perowne was the minister and in 1987, when Ruth gave up the position because of ill health, Rev Perowne mentioned my name as being the next Chairman. I was dumbstruck, so felt that I should take the position. (I actually held it for about 20 years)

Quite often the minister's wife would take the Christmas meeting for the clubs – but Mrs Perowne said to me “you can do it”. That was the beginning of my full involvement with the Church, especially when I later became a steward.

For many years now I have always thought of the Church as my second home.

Doris

From Margaret Cooper

I first got to know Chalkwell Park Methodist Church in the summer of 1978 when I visited the annual fete which used to take place in the Whitehall field. Uncle John of the Magic Circle was entertaining and I was so impressed with the warm welcoming atmosphere, that the next day I went to my first service at a Methodist Church. I'd always been Church of England but John's family were Methodist. The children joined the large thriving Sunday School and later we all sung in the Junior Choir. In those days there was also a Senior Choir and the organists were John Low and Noel Cox.

Times have changed but the friendly supportive nature of the congregation has not!

Margaret

From Marjorie Ward

The very first service we attended at Chalkwell was in September 1976, Jill and Colin Ladd were welcome stewards that morning. What a wonderful welcome they gave us, I can still visualise their smiling faces, we felt instantly at home.

In 1981 my friend, Alison and I approached Dorothy Moulton and asked her if she was aware of any Parent and Toddler groups in the area. She promptly said “No - You had better start one, and I'll do the coffee”. How could you argue with that. Thanks Gill for keeping it going.

Marjorie

From Barbara & John Pearce

Our son, David got married at Chalkwell Park in July 1976. We had arranged with the flower lady at the time to decorate the church, but when we went to check that things were ok in the morning, we found no flowers!! Luckily, a lady named Sylvia (a few people will remember her) was there at the time and rode into action, re-arranging the existing flowers from the previous Sunday and making a passable display. The real flower lady was on the beach, having completely forgotten!!

Our 1st grandson, Joseph Alexander - Janet's baby was christened—no snags this time!

We can always remember Janet , (who was at that time, with Colin, in the Junior church choir), singing the first verse of “In the Bleak Midwinter” at the carol service when she was about 10 or 11 years old. It still gives us goosebumps when we sing that at Christmas.

I will never forget John playing Father Christmas for several bazaars. He was so hot in that costume!!

Other occasions I remember are when, as Young Wives, we put on plays and variety shows for the church's entertainment. A great deal of fun was enjoyed during our rehearsals, and the actual shows went down a bomb—specially the “Can Can”!

Also, a big “Thankyou” to Laurie, who took the youth club away for a canal holiday. Colin & Janet persuaded us to try it and from then on we have spent many happy holidays touring different areas of the British waterways.

Barbara & John

From Jill Allen-King

My first memory of Chalkwell Park Methodist was in 1969 when I took my daughter Jacqueline aged 4 to the Pre school Nursery. I had been totally blind for 5 years and had never been out on my own. I walked to the church with Jacqueline and I was supposed to have been met by my Social worker for the return walk. Well she never did turn up, so I had to walk back by myself. This was my first walk as a blind person.

I was trained with my first guide dog in 1971 which gave me my independence back.

I started to give talks and I have just looked up the times I spoke at the church. The first 2 were in 1972, October 4th and 23rd. On July 2nd 1973, I spoke to the Sunday School. On September 22, I spoke to the Townswomen Guild that used to meet at the church. Another 2 in 1974 in March and July.

On May 31 in 1977, I think it was the day I opened the church summer fete, that used to be held in the White Hall grounds, I can remember I had a red suit made and I wore a white hat, gloves and shoes. I know I had my guide dog Topsy with me.

The last 2 listed in my old talk book was in 1988 on February 6th and 1989 on July 20th which was another Townswomen Guild. All the rest had been to the Ladies Monday club.

My 2 books were blessed at the church in 2010 and in 2012.

Jill

From Beryl Granger

As a family we moved from Hornchurch to Westcliff 63 years ago and I have been going to Chalkwell Park Methodist Church ever since so I have many memories from over the years.

My first memory was when my father and I walked into the Church entrance we were stopped by John Low who asked if we were on holiday, when we said we had just moved he flung his arms round my father and said another man, another man he then ran and fetched Mrs. Lilly Cox to have a chat to me who had me in the Sunday School the next week plus into guides a few weeks later.

Apart from that there have been so many:

The Junior Choir coming to 42 Second Ave each Christmas after carol singing for refreshments, 30 to 35 members and nearly a sack full of potatoes in the oven ready, plus other goodies, but it was always an enjoyable time together and much laughter.

Youth Club on a Saturday evening was always great fun plus many rambles on Bank Holidays, receiving tickets for the MAYC weekend at the Albert hall was always a highlight, especially one year we were selected for the Choir.

Having joined the Luncheon Club, after 2 months Esther Hazell came to me, would I help at the next lunch, which I did and from then I was around for 21 years. It was very rewarding and over the years we had a few very special meals including Esther and Ted's Diamond Wedding anniversary.

There is one memory that stands out and that is from the Circuit Sports day, always very friendly but very competitive.

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We at Chalkwell were very lucky in having a good team of older and younger members. The Races started and we were getting good results, but panic - the older girls had worked it out if they got points for the relay and 200/220 they could win the cup for the larger Sunday Schools. They came to me and said would I help them out and run in the relay. I would be the first to run. Well I had not run for years and was well over the age - 'that's alright as long as you are not younger' - 'Please, please.. so in the end I said yes. They took me to one side to practice passing the baton. We won the race and got the points required. There was a real buzz around the Chalkwell supporters and competitors and by now we needed 1 point for the cup. Again 'Beryl you can do it, all you have to do is cross the finishing line' - I am left well behind the other runners, but all the way round the track John Low was running at the side calling out 'keep going Beryl, keep going, not far now, keep going - well I made it, we got the 1 point and the cup. What an afternoon. - By -the-way I had gone to the sports straight from work so had to run as I was, no sports gear. Was I stiff on the Sunday, which was the Sunday School Anniversary? But the cup was proudly on show and certificates were presented.

Beryl

From Fay Baker

I first attended the Church 40 odd years ago when my husband and myself moved to Westcliff. My visit was with my next door neighbours Miss Willder and Mrs Billingham. I was made very welcome.

My son and daughter were both baptised there - David by Rev. John Stanfield and Raelene by Rev. Stanley Field. Some years later my son and his wife were married there. The ceremony officiated by Rev Margaret Deans.

Fay