

Moor Street Primitive Methodists Brierley Hill

On 19 March 1770, William Newton born 1694 and William Newton born 1734, my 5th and 6th Great Grandfathers, heard John Wesley speak at Cradley. John Wesley had a profound effect upon these men and they became Wesleyan's.

John Wesley wrote in his diary:

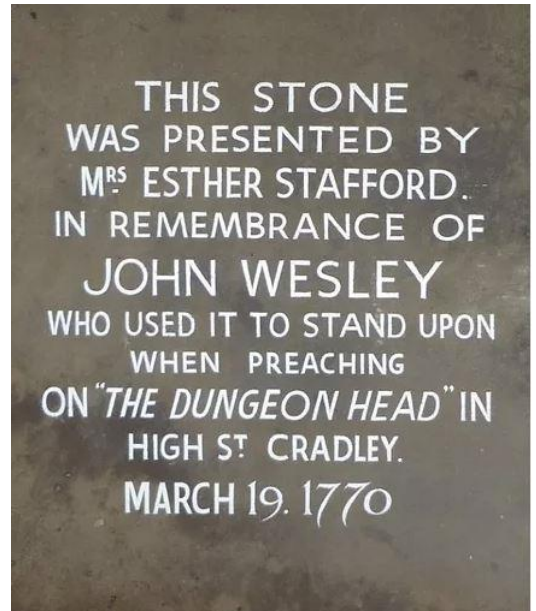
Monday, 19, March 1770.

I rode to Cradley (from Wednesbury). Here also the multitude obliged me to stand abroad, although the north wind whistled about my head. About one I took the field to Stourbridge. Many of the hearers were as wild as colts untamed; but the bridle was in their mouths. At six I began in Dudley. The air was as cold as I had almost ever felt, but I trust God warmed many hearts.

The stone that he stood on in Cradley, still exists. *The historic site from which Wesley preached is the terrace to the far left going down from the churchyard steps towards Colley Lane. The location*



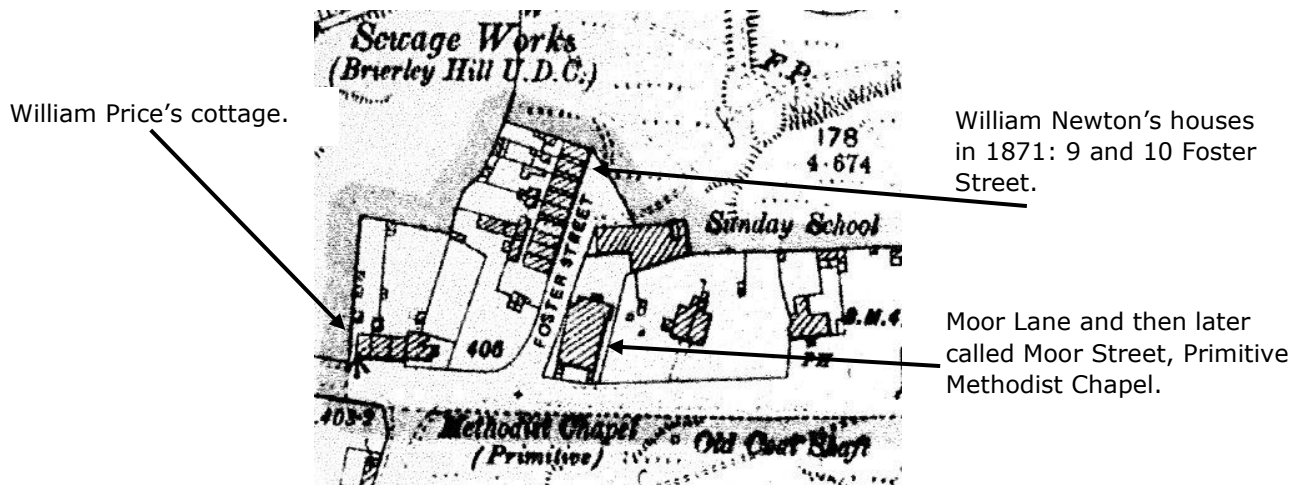
was the site of a former jail and was called Dungeon Head. On the land was a large flat upping stone used by riders to mount their horses. As the site and stone were slightly raised, it was used regularly for public proclamations and announcements. According to tradition it was from this stone that Wesley preached. When the former High Street was improved some years later the upping stone was first removed to Windmill Hill before being inscribed with a memorial to John Wesley and presented to High Town Ragged School.¹



These William Newton's brought their children up to love God and often married people within the church. My 2nd Great Grandparents, Edwin Newton and Sarah Guest, met at Moor Street Chapel.

In 1839 four men were inspired to build a chapel near to their homes on the corner of Foster Street (Now Norwood Street) and Moor Street: William Newton (1794-1875, My 3rd Gt Grandfather), Joseph Norwood, James Watts and Henry Watts. It grew as an offshoot from the Round Oak Methodist Church. The first prayer meetings were held at William Price's home prior to 1839. It was originally known as Moor Lane Chapel and later became Moor Street Chapel. None of the four men had money, but they had great faith. They dug out the trenches for the foundations and they carried bricks. As money and bricks came in, they built.

¹ <https://www.stpeterscradley.org/high-town-ragged-school-cldgz>



20 people started in the congregation. As the church grew, they enlarged it six times. In 1898 there were 100 children in the Sunday School, with 30 teachers, and 300 in the main church, so they needed larger premises.

John Corbett (Salt King of Impney Hall Droitwich... my 3rd Gt Uncle) contributed money for the new build.

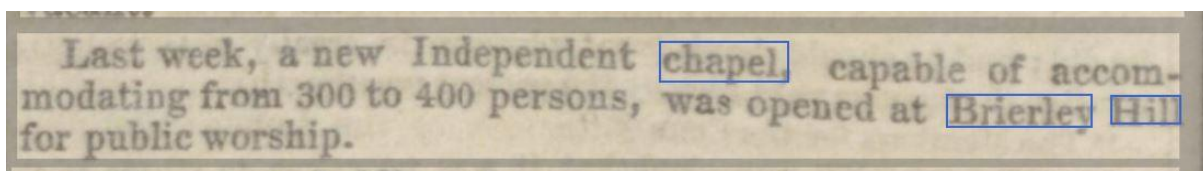
Tom Price, William Price's Grandson reminisced about the chapel in a newspaper article of November 1897.

In those days of the 1840s and 50s, the Moor Lane Chapel had a famous string and instrumental band and choir. The leading figures were Edwin Newton, (My 2nd Great Grandfather) (clarinet); C Palmer and J Bowden, (violins); I Beddard, (flute). When this band and choir played and sang a hymn, it felt as if they would lift the roof off.

By 1898, when a new Methodist Church was being built on the same site at Moor Street, Brierley Hill, the parishioners remarked that 80% of the churchgoers had at one time been through the Sunday school at the church. They recognised the importance of reaching children, so that they grew up knowing and loving God.

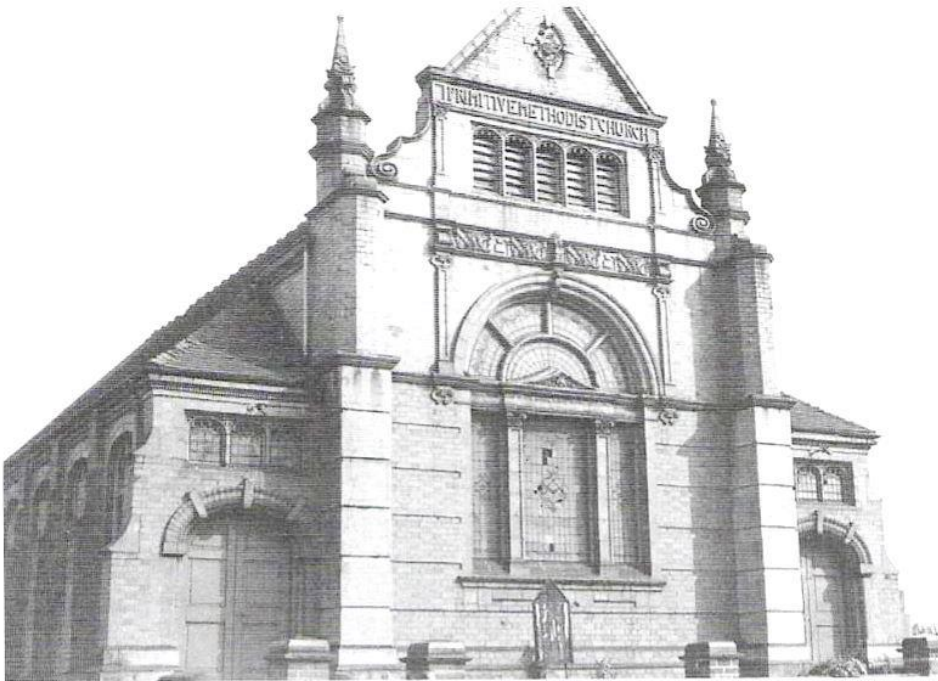
Twenty of the children who had been through the Sunday School became local preachers or ministers, including my 3rd Gt Uncle, David Newton 1840-1879. There was also talk of a blind preacher called C or G Newton, and I. C. Guest, an Episcopal preacher, as well as John Guest 1828-1888 (my 3rd Gt Uncle). It was stated that *Truths graven into the minds of young people were not easily worn away.*

The new church was fronted onto Moor Street and Foster Street. It was 70 feet long, 38 feet wide and 26 feet high with a raised orchestra at the far end. The



choir gallery could accommodate 50 and the body of the building would seat 300 worshippers.

At the time of the opening in 1898, Harriet Crannage nee Newton, (1834-1917)



my 3rd Great Aunt, was the eldest member of the church. She was given the privilege of presenting the key to a Mrs Newton (I suspect one of my relatives) to open the church officially.

The church was closed in 1965 and was later demolished.

Thomas Price, in 1898, reminisced about the days of the church when he was a child in 1854. He said that: *"I well remember how the spots from Mr Edwin Newton's (my 2nd Great Grandfather) clarinet used to drop on my head and ears as I sat underneath him whilst he was playing. The fathers of this church were men of undoubted zeal, and men with a rich deep Christian experience. Sometimes their prayers were simple and other times striking.*

I am sure I will discover more as I research, but I wanted to put this chapel on the map and tell of some of its history.

Anna.