

**From Pub  
to Pulpit**



# **An Exhibition about Knaphill Village**

*150 years of Methodism in Knaphill  
and much, much more*

**Easter Weekend:  
Friday 25th to Monday 28th March  
at Knaphill Methodist Church**

*Souvenir*  
**Programme**

[www.knaphill-methodist-church.com](http://www.knaphill-methodist-church.com)

*Memories*

*Wynne*

**150 YEAR ANNIVERSARY 1866 - 2016**

# Welcome

The minister and members of Knaphill Methodist Church warmly welcome you to this exhibition outlining something of the development of the church and the village over the last 150 years of the life.

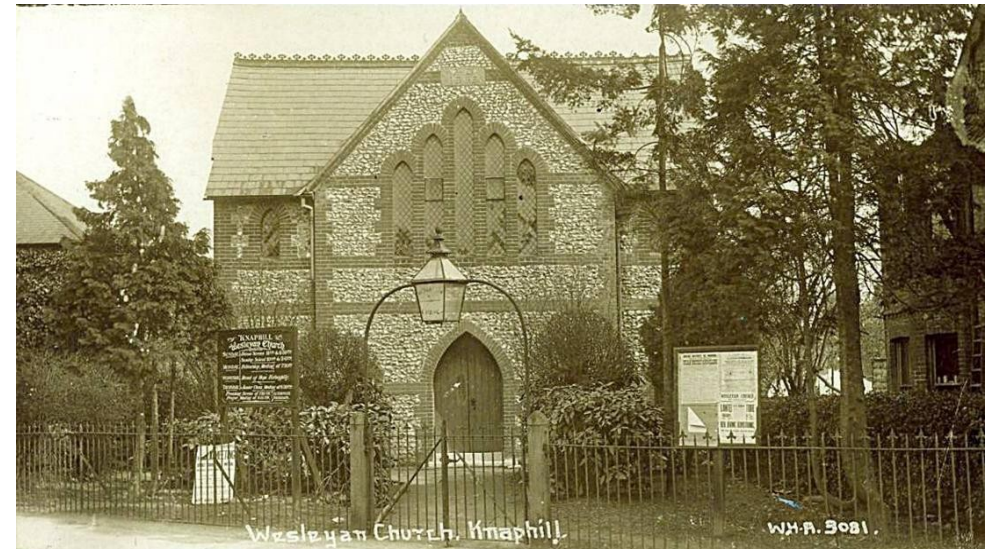
In putting together this exhibition we have had several objectives in mind. Among these was celebrating and giving thanks for the work and witness of this church. But the story of the church can not be told without telling something of the story of the village itself.

To the casual observer, Knaphill might appear to have little of obvious historical interest, and could easily be dismissed as no more than a bland modern suburb of Woking, conveniently situated for its road and rail links to London. But the mid-Victorian period witnessed a rapid expansion of the village, both in terms of population and economic activity, as a result of a number of factors we refer to in the exhibition. The reasons for that growth and the public buildings constructed here constitute a fascinating story.



At the same time, we felt that we could not tell the story of Methodism locally without telling something of the wider Methodist movement. The impact of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, on society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, both in Britain and overseas, cannot be overestimated, and yet today is often forgotten. So for visitors unfamiliar with Methodism, we have tried to provide an introduction.

Finally, although it's been fascinating to research the history of the village and Methodism, locally and nationally, it is our firm belief that we



deemed unsafe. Fortunately Mr Frank Derry, a trustee, offered to pay for the construction of the present church - a large red-brick Art Deco-style building with extensive oak panelling and furnishings. It was opened in November 1935. The first baby to be baptised in the new chapel is still a member of the church.

Before the end of the millennium, the former organ space in the church was removed to create direct access from the church to the rear of the premises. And finally in 2004, a central welcome area was created between the church itself and the church hall.

We are now giving consideration to another redevelopment. Ambitious plans have been presented by an architect specialising in church projects. These plans could include the levelling of the slope in the church, turning the worship area round by 90°, providing a new frontage on to the Broadway and installing a mezzanine floor. Some of the plans are on display today and we welcome your comments.

## Pied Piper Pre-School Group

Pied Piper has been running for nearly 30 years, previously at The British Legion Hall and for the last 15 years at Knaphill Methodist Church. We take children aged 2-4 years and are a small community/non-profit making group where all monies received are for running costs and new equipment when required.



We are open 4 sessions a week 9-12 on Monday and Tuesday, 9am-1pm on Thursday and Friday. We welcome visitors who are interested in a place for their child. Telephone 07946 284636  
[hannahdeluce.wix.com/piedpiper](http://hannahdeluce.wix.com/piedpiper)

## 1st Knaphill Scout Group

1st Knaphill Scout Group was started in 1983 and met in the Methodist church hall until 2000 when they obtained their own premises. It is an extremely active Scout Group providing activities for over 100 young people supported by a great team of voluntary leaders. The Group has been running at full capacity for several years now and has a long waiting list. Camping and hiking are great favourites with something going on most weekends throughout the year.



## 5. Our buildings, past, present and future

In 1877 a hall was constructed at the rear of the flint chapel to accommodate the Sunday School. By the 1920s the growth in numbers of children meant that the original hall had to be replaced by a larger one. That hall is the venue for this exhibition, although the ancillary premises were further extended in 1968.

The original flint chapel survived until 1935, but by then its condition was

don't do history for its own sake. A better understanding of our history helps us both to make greater sense of our lives today and to set our course for the future. And so the exhibition both looks at the work which is done here in the present and displays some plans for possible future redevelopment of our premises.

We have for sale copies of the book "The Methodists of Knaphill" and other anniversary memorabilia, together with copies of the book "From Asylum to Community Care" by Alison Craze. It recounts the history of the hospital as told by those who worked and lived Profits are being donated to mental health charities in Guildford and Woking.

Please take your time to enjoy this exhibition and do ask the Stewards any questions you might have. Refreshments are available throughout. We are very grateful to all those who have lent items for our displays.

## Guide to the Exhibition

The Exhibition has five sections:

1. Knaphill 1865 and after
2. Our Methodist Heritage
3. Knaphill Methodism down the Years
4. Serving the Community Today
5. Our buildings, past, present and future



## 1. Knaphill 1865 and after

The earliest references to Knaphill date back to the thirteenth century, and certainly by the late eighteenth century there were significant nurseries and brickworks in the vicinity, the latter no doubt spurred on by the building of the nearby Basingstoke Canal in 1787.



But perhaps two factors drove the mushroom growth of Knaphill in the mid-nineteenth century, the building of the railway line from London to Southampton between 1834 and 1840 and the doubling of the population of London between 1800 and 1850.



The population explosion meant that London churchyards were rapidly running out of space to bury the dead, and so the London Necropolis Company was founded. The Company bought a large tract of land south west of Woking to use as a vast cemetery to bury the London dead, which were transported using the newly built

## Jenny Reeds School of Dance

The school was started at the outbreak of the Second World War when a young ballerina's touring career with the Sadlers Wells company was curtailed and she started her ballet school under the name of Jeanne Bamforth. She had a branch in New Haw and was, by all accounts, a strict traditional teacher.



Her daughter, Julia Frost, took over the school, believed to be in the late 1960s, and started classes in the old Knaphill Community Centre in Waterers Rise. She also held classes in the Knaphill Methodist church hall from 1983 and we continue to do so.

Jenny Reeds taught for Julia Frost and took over and renamed the Knaphill and New Haw branches in 1986. During that time Jenny has had great pleasure and pride in introducing the 'Joy of Dance' to local children and has started many dancing careers.

07428517334 [www.jennyreedsdance.co.uk](http://www.jennyreedsdance.co.uk)

## Bisley Ladies Choir **BISLEY LADIES CHOIR**

Bisley Ladies Choir

was started in 1970 by John Wisdom with between 8-10 ladies. Today we have about 25 members. We meet on Tuesday evenings in the Methodist church where we rehearse a variety of songs in preparation for our different events. We hold 2 concerts a year in the church and also sing at the Naval Association Veterans parade in June and at the remembrance service in November accompanied by the Salvation Army band. In December we sing at the guide dog service at St Peter's Old Woking (the owners come too!).

Our music director is Callie Swarbrick, a professional classical soprano who brings enthusiasm and fun to the rehearsal. We are also fortunate to have Julie Aherne to accompany us on the piano. She is a professional pianist, accompanist and teacher.

If you would like to know more about the choir you can contact us on 01483 725527 [www.bisleyladieschoir.uk](http://www.bisleyladieschoir.uk)



supported the cause both by gifts of money and by giving generously of their time. The prayers of the people have also been enormously important.

Enthusiastic singing has always been a key feature of Methodist worship. Our church continues that

tradition with an active Worship Group which leads the music-making. Services are held each Sunday morning at 10:00am. A Junior Church operates for children. Evening services are held periodically at 6:30pm. In addition house groups meet for fellowship during the week and every fortnight there is a meeting at church addressed by a speaker. For more details see our website [www.knaphill-methodist-church.com](http://www.knaphill-methodist-church.com)

#### 4. Serving the Community Today

Outreach remains a key activity of our church today. On the tree we have described some of the ways in which members of the congregation serve the local community. In addition a former member of our congregation is supported in her work in India providing musical education to children from impoverished backgrounds.



The church has long supported the Methodist Whitechapel Mission in the East End of London. Members of the church have in the past worked as volunteers at the Mission, taking care of the homeless and destitute. Nowadays we focus on providing material support.

Our church is the meeting place for a number of local organisations some of which have provided displays for this exhibition and whose activities are briefly described below.

railway to Brookwood station. But the Company soon ran into financial difficulties and decided to start selling part of the land.

One parcel was sold to the Home Office to build a special prison for disabled prisoners. This later became Inkerman Barracks before being demolished in the 1960s.

Another part of the land was sold to build what later became known as Brookwood Hospital. This opened in 1867 and was finally closed in 1994. The hospital had its own farm, a cobbler's workshop, a large ballroom, fire brigade, gasworks and sewage farm.



The original construction of, and later extensions to, the prison and the hospital prompted a need for additional local labour, first in developing the sites, and then to work in these establishments. The local population grew in response to these demands.

Further sales of land for building as Knaphill took place during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries to respond to the demand for housing as commuting to London became more popular and with the growth of local bus services and eventually of car ownership.

## 2. Our Methodist Heritage

John Wesley (1703 – 1791) was a Church of England priest who in 1738 underwent a profound spiritual experience. This gave him complete assurance in God's love and forgiveness and urged him to convince others that this love and forgiveness was freely available to all. Although initially reluctant he began to preach in the open air, by which he could reach many thousands of poor people who rarely crossed the threshold of a church. In his lifetime he travelled an estimated 250,000 miles and preached 40,000 times. The strength and impact of the Methodist movement led to an eventual separation from the Church of England.



Wherever he went, Wesley sought to put in place a structure to support and nurture those new Christians who had responded to his preaching. They were organised into local societies and subdivided into classes, small fellowship groups for encouraging Christian growth. Each Society member received a quarterly class ticket.

In everything Wesley was ably assisted by his brother, Charles, who is remembered in his own right as a prolific hymn-writer. Many of his hymns, including "Hark the herald angels sing", remain popular to this day.

During John's life, and after his death, Methodism spread out overseas, first to the USA and since then all over the world. Today it has approximately 40 million members in over 100 countries.

## 3. Knaphill Methodism down the Years

In 1865, objecting to cricket being played on a Sunday(!), local Christians started to hold open air services in the village. They sought help from Methodist Preachers from Guildford. They held a Sunday School in a barn that summer, and later in two pubs, the Anchor and the Royal Standard (later demolished).



In 1867 the first chapel was opened where the present church now stands. It was the first place of worship on top of the hill and the first Methodist Chapel in the whole Woking district.

By 1875 the church had opened a Day School (the first in the village) which was taken over by the Woking School Board in 1877.

Over the years the work of the Society, particularly amongst young people, grew and prospered. It's not an exaggeration to say that for many the Church was not just a place of spiritual refreshment, but also the focus of social life, offering sporting opportunities, dances and excursions, and no doubt creating many marriages!

Over the years, with gradually rising living standards, more opportunities for travel, and the huge social changes witnessed in the twentieth century, the role of the church has had to adapt continuously, but it has always preserved its reputation of being a friendly, caring, and accepting community, with a strong commitment to service in the village. In recent years this was amply demonstrated through its engagement with the Kings House Coffee Shop which operated in the village for nearly twenty years as a joint project between many of the local churches.

From its origins the church has benefitted enormously from the sacrificial giving of many loyal and devoted members. Members have