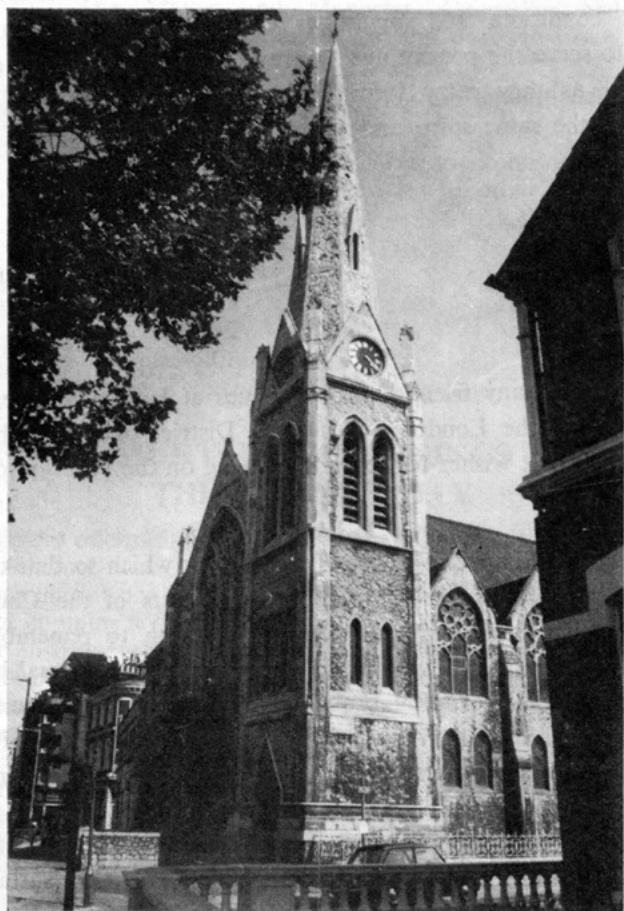


# Rivercourt Methodist Church Hammersmith

1875—1975



'Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.'

Psalm 100

"Many people travelling west on the District Railway must have caught a glimpse of Rivercourt Church, and the Methodists among them probably know of its notable record of service and witness.

On the occasion of its Centenary I send to it my congratulations and best wishes. Rivercourt Church has adapted its ministry to modern conditions and sought, as Charles Wesley's hymn suggests, 'to serve the present age'. I pray God's blessing upon all its members as they carry forward into the next century of their existence the same spirit and the same zeal which has led them thus far."

A. Raymond George

President of the Conference.

"To the many friends and colleagues at Rivercourt I extend on behalf of the London South West District of the Methodist Church, all best wishes for joy and blessing on the occasion of the Centenary.

There will be much to celebrate, and for which to thank God as you think back through one hundred years of the Church's existence. Research and recollection will bring to remembrance people, young and old, who made Rivercourt their spiritual home. The years have inevitably brought their changes, and the character of the life of the Church has, in consequence, altered with the coming of the different generations, but the main elements in Christian witness have been the same, and people have been fortified and enriched, and integrity has been maintained. We thank God for all those today, minister and people, who are sustaining the work, and we hope and pray that re-unions and services of thanksgiving alike will bring added enthusiasm and encouragement to all at Rivercourt."

Cyril Wainwright

Chairman — London South West District

## **THE RIVERCOURT CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS**

**Sunday, 5th October, 1975**

- 11.00 a.m. Family Worship  
Preacher: The Rev. Roy Dew of Deptford Mission  
assisted by the Rev. David Mason.  
Parade of the Colours by the 25th Hammersmith Boys  
Brigade and the 7th Hammersmith Girls Brigade.  
The Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor and Mrs.  
Beresford, and members of the Borough Council will  
attend.
- 3.30 p.m. Get-together of all friends associated with Rivercourt.
- 4.30 p.m. Tea will be served.  
Our hostess will be Mrs. Marjorie Johnson.  
Friends from local churches will bring greetings.
- 6.30 p.m. Evening Worship  
Preacher: The Rev. Roy Dew.  
Reception of gifts.

**Saturday, 11th October, 1975**

- 7.30 p.m. Centenary Concert  
by the Rivercourt Music Group and Friends.

### **RIVERCOURT: ITS BEGINNINGS UNTIL THE PRESENT DAY**

We are celebrating one hundred years since our present church at Rivercourt was built, but Methodists have worshipped in Hammersmith since as long ago as 1798. The 'Methodist Magazine' of 1822 contains a memoir of Mrs. Mary Blake who was described as 'the instrument of introducing the doctrines and disciplines of the Methodists into Hammersmith'. Mary's husband Jacob, a market gardener, was one of Wesley's converts at Brentford in 1798, and the Blakes opened their home in Goldhawk Road for meetings. Later, rooms in a local hotel were used, and then in 1809 a chapel was built in Plough and Harrow Lane (Waterloo Street, now Macbeth Street). The first minister, the Rev. W. Williams, was in charge of a circuit which stretched from Harrow to Croydon, and from Walham Green to Twickenham, and which in 1818 was named the Hammersmith Circuit. The chapel was considerably enlarged in 1856, but the Industrial Revolution had made its mark upon Hammersmith. Nursery gardens gave way to brick fields, and with the industry came an increase in the population. To meet the needs of these people, an appeal was made for funds, and in 1874 work began on a new church in Rivercourt Road. The building was designed by Mr. Charles Bell in decorated Gothic style, and built of Kentish rag stone with Bath stone dressings. At the corner of

Rivercourt Road is placed an imposing tower, surmounted by an octagonal spire, the total height being 125 feet. The spire was originally to have been topped by the traditional weather cock, but the trustees, remembering the cock that crowed when Peter denied Christ, decided that a dove bearing a leaf in its bill was more fitting for the pinnacle of the church. This alteration incurred an additional cost of 10/-! There are four gables to the tower, in each of which there is a clock dial 5 feet in diameter. The clock strikes the hours on a 5 cwt. bell, and is thought to be the first of its kind in Methodism. The church can seat 650 persons on the ground floor and 410 in the gallery. It was originally panelled in dark oak with a rich dado of Minton tiles. This was replaced by light oak panelling in 1938. There are two three-light windows in the chancel designed and decorated in stained glass by Mr. J. B. Jackson, a member of the church, who charged for the materials only. This amount of £32 was raised by the Sunday School, and appropriately, the design illustrated respectively, 'Forbid them not, for as such are the Kingdom of Heaven', and Christ's injunction to Peter 'Feed my lambs'. Above them is a stained glass circular window donated by the architect of the church. The windows were largely destroyed during the 1940 bombing, and it was the Rev. A. B. Cannon, who during his ministry, organised their replacement by the modern stained glass windows on the same themes which adorn our church today. The cost this time was £400.

Two other notable features of the church are the organ and the pulpit. The pulpit is beautifully carved from solid oak. The organ was purchased second-hand at a cost of £400. It was built by Byfield and Green in 1771 and is thought to have been originally installed at St. Mary's, Islington. Mr. Byfield was renowned for the beautiful tone of his flute stops, and his partner, Mr. Green, was the man who changed the existing order of black and white notes to the white and black notes with which we are familiar today. Rivercourt's organ was one of the first made in this way. The organ was acquired from the firm of Bevingtons, who installed it for £100. The organ has been lovingly maintained and is almost in its original state, for which we are grateful to Mr. Goddard and Mr. Terry Fearn.

In 1905, the trustees acquired the land known as Rivercourt Nursery, 229 King Street, but it was not until the ministry of the Rev. Norman Dunning that use was made of this land, Rivercourt Church House was dedicated on October 22nd, 1938 at a service conducted by the Rev. C. Campbell Morgan, D.D.. The Church House has two shops fronting on to King Street with access between to a large hall with a stage and ancillary rooms. On the first floor are two reading rooms and an office, and a hostel designed to accommodate twelve men. On the top floor is the caretaker's flat.

The hall was taken over as an air raid shelter when the war began, and the Rev. J. E. Bolam and other Rivercourt members gave great help and support to those using the shelter. Rivercourt

also became the home of the local St. John's Ambulance Brigade and the Society of Friends when their own premises were bombed.

The hostel was planned to provide reasonable accommodation for young Methodist men from all over the world while they were studying in London. Rivercourt can be justly proud of their fine record of achievements. They have trained in theology, medicine, law, music, art and teaching. Many have returned to serve in their own countries, and all who lived in the hostel recall the kindness and motherly care shown by Mrs. Hibberd who for over thirty years cleaned the hostel and took a sympathetic interest in 'her boys'.

For many years the Warden of the hostel was Ted Hodge, a Chief Inspector of Police, whose kind and Christian approach had a profound effect on the young men in the hostel. After his death in 1960, his place was taken by Mr. Fred Pearce, who now lives in a Methodist Home for the Aged in Wales. Sadly, in 1960 also occurred the death of Mr. Fred Ball who had worked as a Steward and Youth Leader at Rivercourt with great generosity and kindness.

In 1974 the hostel was closed and the Trusteeship of the Rivercourt Church House, with the exception of the caretaker's flat, was transferred to the London Mission. It was hoped to use the premises for the Methodist Book Room, but unfortunately this proposal was frustrated by the refusal of planning permission. Meanwhile, the basement of the church has been converted and renovated to provide very satisfactory accommodation for church meetings. Our present caretakers are Mr. and Mrs. Capel, who take an active part in the life of the church, Mr. Capel making a great contribution to our music with his fine Welsh baritone voice.



Mr. E. D. GODDARD



One hundred years seems a long time until one speaks to such lively personalities as Mr. and Mrs. Goddard and Miss Ball. Miss Ball was brought to Rivercourt to be baptized in 1899 and, like the very first Methodists in Hammersmith, her father was a local nursery gardener. Mr. and Mrs. Goddard have also lived in the district all their lives. They joined the Rivercourt Sunday School in 1896 and 1897 respectively and were married here in 1919 by the Rev. Fred Church. Mr. Goddard is only the third organist and choirmaster in Rivercourt's 100 years! Mr. Goddard took over the work in 1934, having already served as Sunday School Superintendent. Miss Ball and Mr. Goddard have for many years served as Trustees of the church, and we are grateful to them, and to Mrs. Goddard, for their continuing devotion.

It is impossible to mention all the fine people who over the years have shared in the life at Rivercourt. Our ministers with their various talents have each contributed a great deal to the church. We have also been inspired by the visits of such great preachers as the Rev. Dr. Sangster, Mr. Hugh Redwood, the Rev. Dr. Leslie Weatherhead, and Lord Soper. Many will also recall with pleasure the visit of Miss Gadys Aylward, wearing her simple Chinese costume, and standing tiptoe on a stool in the pulpit to speak to us.

During its 100 years many organisations have flourished at Rivercourt. A Junior Sisterhood existed in 1925., the Secretary of which was Miss A. M. Perrett, who still worships at Rivercourt. Our present Sisterhood is administered by Mrs. Burrows, Mrs. Ball, Miss Ball and Miss Batchelor. It was begun in 1938 by the Rev. Dunning who put up posters saying '500 Women Wanted!' Our members may be far fewer than that, but they meet faithfully every Monday for a varied programme of speakers and events and enjoy an outing together each summer.

Rivercourt has always placed great emphasis on work with young people. The Sunday School continues to maintain a friendly and happy atmosphere. Looking back we recall the devotion of Mrs. Bartlett to 'her babies', and in the late 1940's, the children brought in by Roy Dew's open air Sunday School in Ravenscourt Park. Our present Superintendent, Mrs. Margaret Smith, has always encouraged an interest in missionary work and since 1945 the J.M.A. collections have amounted to the grand total of £2,731. Many of the youngsters also take part in the Christian Aid Walk and this year Rivercourt raised £225. Every year very satisfactory results are achieved in the Scripture Examinations, and, on the lighter side, great fun is had by all at the annual outing to Chessington Zoo. To widen the scope of its activities, the Sunday School has recently become affiliated to the South West London Sunday School Union.

For some years after the war there was a lively Young People's Fellowship under the leadership of Ernest and Vivian Sansom,

Gordon Hall and subsequently Mr. and Mrs. Fred Ball. For ten years there was also a flourishing Girls Brigade under the leadership of Miss Mavis Brown, Mrs. Woodman and Miss Hocking.

During the Rev. A. B. Cannon's ministry, Rivercourt became host to a club for blind and handicapped people led by Mr. Jack Barnes. This continued until the closure of Rivercourt Church House.

At the present time the church doors are opened up each Saturday for a friendly coffee morning in the church vestibule. Coffee is also served after morning service. The kitchen facilities for this were installed by Mr. Burrows and Mr. Michael Ball.

In recent years fundamental changes have occurred at Rivercourt which have involved the members a great deal more in the running of the church. In 1968/69, Rivercourt became part of the new Hammersmith Circuit and the Rev. Rodney McNeal came to the church as a Supernumary Minister. His place was taken in 1971 by the Rev. David Mason. David Mason is what is called in Methodism a Sector Minister, that is to say he is officially authorised by the Methodist Conference to work full-time in a secular job. The particular role that he fulfils is as Director of the Hammersmith Community Development Project. In practice this means that he is the leader of a team of community workers and other helpers in the Grove Ward which lies immediately north of Rivercourt Church. The main achievements of the Project this last three years has been the establishment of the Grove Neighbourhood Council which is the only example of its kind in the metropolis. In addition to his responsibilities in the field of community work, he has also been authorised by the Methodist Conference to be a Parliamentary candidate, and he fought in both of the General Elections of 1974. In the field of politics he is also very busy as an elected member of the Greater London Council. At Rivercourt, David Mason is responsible for leading the Sunday worship. The pastoral ministry has been carried out by a colleague from a church in the Third World, in the first instance by the Rev. Choon Young Kim from South Korea, and from July 1975, by the Rev. Rajah Jacob from Sri Lanka.

A great contribution to life at Rivercourt has been made by Mrs. Ann Mason who has organised a young people's music group, now named Young Pilgrims.

She herself sings and plays the guitar and the group includes her daughters Deborah and Sarah, Carolyn, Louise and Stephanie Ball, Anne and Andrew Collier and Paul and Bruce Collingwood. These young people often take part in services and on special occasions have organised entire services both at Rivercourt and at other churches in the district.



Our hundred years at Rivercourt therefore ends on an optimistic note. On Whit Sunday this year eight young people and two adults were confirmed in membership of the church. We believe that we must continue to be forward-looking and willing to continue our witness in Hammersmith. We are faced with great economic and social problems in 1975, but we remember at all times our Lord's words 'Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment . . . . seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.'

### **Rivercourt Men serving in the Christian Ministry**

Ordained in

1955	Rev. E. George Bruce	now in Huddersfield
1947	Rev. Roy Dew	now at Deptford Central Hall
1955	Rev. John Fail	serving as an Army chaplain
1962	Rev. A. M. Cannon	now at Carshalton
1951	Rev. Glan Magor	formerly overseas, now in Glasgow
1957	Rev. Joe Stephens	now in Birmingham
1956	Rev. Ron Tait	now in Nottingham
1960	Rev. Colin Nowell	now in Mansfield, Notts.
1956	Rev. Kenneth Garrard	now in Nottingham

### **Church Flowers**

We are grateful to Mrs. Barbara Jarvis and others who week by week add to the beauty of the church by arranging the flowers. This has been further enhanced recently by the donation of two fine wrought iron stands, one from the Sisterhood and the other from Mrs. Susan Bold.



## MESSAGES OF GREETING

"Rivercourt has been in my prayers for forty years. I well remember the group of devoted people associated with the church when I became minister in 1935: Mr. Charles Lean, Mr. Rainger, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Pattison, Mr. Goddard, Mr. Godfrey and Mr. Jarvis, as well as Mrs. Braithwaite, Miss Johnson, Miss Shepherd and Mrs. Bartlett. When we prepared to restore the old building, and add the Church House, they were joined by others equally devoted, including Mr. Tyler, Mr. Fred Murray, who became Mayor of Chiswick, Mr. Fred Pearce, Miss Hilda Porter and Miss Winifred Taylor who edited the Church Magazine. May the blessing of God continue to be on both minister and people who in these days call Rivercourt their spiritual home."

Norman G. Dunning.

"We do thank God for the opportunity we had to minister at the Rivercourt Church and Hostel from 1942 to 1951. There were many difficulties including war years, with the continued bombings and also in providing a place for the multitudes who wanted shelter from the raids. We rejoice as we recall the opportunities that were provided to present the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. We proved and demonstrated the adequacy of Jesus Christ to meet a persons every need.

We recall with joy the Christian Fellowship and admirable service rendered by Jack and Vida Miller, Ernest and Vivian Sansom, Roy Dew, Mr. and Mrs. Pattison, Mr. and Mrs. Rainger, Mr. and Mrs. Goddard and so many others.

The fact that eight men who had been living in the Hostel are now in the Christian ministry speaks eloquently of the work of the Holy Spirit in those days. There were also those who have exercised a Christian Ministry as Doctors both at home and abroad as David Cannon and others.

We do pray that the Ministry we endeavoured to fulfil may be continued in the years that are to come."

J. Ernest and Marjorie Bolam

"It is a pleasure to send Greetings and Good Wishes for the future to the Rivercourt Church at this time of Centenary Celebrations. My husband and I and our family spent seven happy years at Rivercourt and it has been a joy to keep in touch with the Church and its members during these years of retirement.

One of my happiest recollections is of the Class which met each Wednesday evening in the Manse and I still have letters from several members.

The Hostel Residents were a great strength to the church in those days and one recalls many who are serving in various parts of the world. One name I would like to mention is that of Inspector Edward Hodge who exercised such a wonderful influence in the Hostel for many years and whom we knew in our early married life in Girvan.

Recently I have been reading old letters from many people who were in London for a brief period and attended Rivercourt. It has been enheartening to read of their appreciation of the welcome they received and the fellowship they enjoyed. May Rivercourt exert a great influence for good in Hammersmith for many years to come."

Jessie Cannon

I am extremely honoured and happy to send you warm congratulations on reaching the Century. Memories flood into one's mind but space will not permit them all to be recalled, so may I say, from my family and myself, may every blessing be yours in the following years, and may God prosper the work you are all so faithfully doing under His guidance."

Marjorie Johnson

"It is with very great pleasure that I send greetings to you all at Rivercourt on the occasion of your Centenary celebrations. My wife and I have many very happy memories of the fellowship we spent with you all in Hammersmith and we pray that the coming years will be full of truly satisfying and effective service in the community in the name of Christ."

Gilbert Norgett

"My wife and I shall always carry with us happy memories of Rivercourt. I was a very tired man when we came from Whitechapel but there was a great thrill in the work and we received great kindness from you all. Mrs. McNeal loved her women's meetings and all the other work she did in the circuit which I knew was greatly appreciated. Believe me, we have missed you all — the Sunday evening practices on the new hymn book with the irrepressible Mr. Goddard — the Hostel with its problems and fellowship — the Alcoholics Anonymous who met in Church House. We shall never forget Mr. and Mrs. Burrows to the end of the Chapter and how often I have rung him up about everything under the sun.

You will be happy to have Roy Dew in the pulpit on this great day — how he loved Rivercourt. We send you our prayers and our greetings. These are not easy days for the Church but we are most tremendously needed in a harsh and bitter world. Greetings, love and every blessing. We shall hope to meet you again from time to time."

Rodney and Violet McNeal

"Christian history spans almost two thousand years. The churches of Hammersmith are not unmindful of this great heritage as together they rejoice that this October our Rivercourt Church celebrates one hundred years witness to the Glory of God and in the service of man.

The early Methodist fathers in this area translated their faith and vision into the very fine buildings, the stones of which proclaimed the word of God and the lives of the founders gave practical evidence of Christian discipleship.

Congratulations to members, officials and friends throughout these historic celebrations and the blessing of God lead and inspire you as you begin your second century. I trust this occasion will teach new truths in the value of worship and service. In true worship we draw near to God bringing the best we have in mind, will, heart and body. Such worship issues in action for "loving God with all one's heart, mind, soul and strength" in the love and service of our neighbour."

Go with God,

Yours sincerely

Ronald Philipps

Former Superintendent Minister.

"I am very glad indeed to have this opportunity to express to all our friends at Rivercourt our very best wishes and congratulations as they prepare for the celebrations of the Centenary.

One hundred years is a very long time, but even a thousand years, says the psalmist, in the time of God is but an evening. As we reckon time it is about four generations, great-grandparent to great grandchild. Regularly on every Lord's Day, they have come in their generation to worship, to share in Christian fellowship, to receive instruction and enter into commitment.

May the work at Rivercourt increase, and may you all receive God's blessing as you strive to continue His work in this difficult age."

Irvonwy Morgan.

Home Mission Division.

"It gives me great pleasure to send greetings and good wishes as you celebrate your Centenary at Rivercourt Methodist Church and to express our great appreciation of the continuing generous support especially from those involved with Women's Work and your JMA collectors.

I am sure our colleagues overseas would wish to join me to say 'thank you' for the new opportunities and purpose you make available to them through the gifts of so many caring people.

The present Society at Rivercourt has inherited a great tradition and I crave for it a second century as illustrious as the first."

Good wishes,

Colin Morris,

General Secretary

Methodist Missionary Society

## THE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

1875	H. L. Church	1912-1915	W. Forster, B.A.
1876-1879	J. D. Tetley	1915-1920	F. Church
1879-1882	T. Chope	1920-1923	A. Binks
1882-1885	J. Mason	1923-1926	T. Edgar Jackson
1885-1888	T. McCullagh	1926-1932	J. Crowle-Smith
1888-1891	W. Slack	1932-1935	R. Everett Jayne
1891-1894	T. Nicholson,	1935-1941	N. Dunning
	B.A., LL.D.	1941-1942	C. Craggs
1894-1897	W. G. Beardmore	1942-1951	J. E. Bolam
1897-1900	W. Brown	1951-1958	A. B. Cannon
1900-1903	J. Dixon	1958-1964	H. G. Johnson
1903-1906	F. Parkinson	1964-1968	G. Norgett
1906-1909	F. Stuart	1968-1971	R. McNeal
1909-1912	W. Allen	1971-	D. Mason, BD, STM

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## OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH IN 1975

Trust Secretary	Mr. A. J. Burrows
Church Treasurer	Mr. D. T. Collier
Church Stewards	Messrs. E. D. Goddard, A. J. Burrows, D. T. Collier, G. L. Cooper, O. Cooke.
Communion Stewards	Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Burrows, Mr. K. Seth, Miss J. Mason.
Property Stewards	Messrs. E. D. Goddard, A. J. Burrows, T. M. Ball, T. Fearn, J. Collingwood.
Women's Work	Mrs. A. Burrows
Division of Social Responsibility	Mr. R. Smith
Sunday School Staff	Mrs. M. Smith, Miss M. Hocking, Mrs. V. Ball, Mrs. Y. K. Collingwood.
Cradle Roll	Mrs. J. Collier.
Secretary to the Church Council	Miss Judith Higgs, LL.B.

We extend our grateful thanks to all who have made it possible to produce this brochure.