



# A Social History

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## Introduction

The following document outlines a social history of the St Just Miners Chapel. Beginning before its construction and ending with the voices of the young people of the Community. The content has been captured through the generosity of the community, and, as with any undertaking of this nature, it has demonstrated the wealth of knowledge that sits under the rooftops of St Just, waiting to be unleashed. Great care has been taken regarding factual accuracy, but we have left room for the lore that has surfaced; these stories come from somewhere, even if we can't find the evidence. And evidence is unfortunately missing, at some point in the last century, great swathes of documents and information that would be the backbone of the Chapel's archive, disappeared, highlighting why it's essential that work such as this takes place.

As one contributor quoted:

“She has a most enviable and important task ahead of her, mining the rich vein of memories of the diminishing number of “old St Justers.”

But this is only part of the story, an archive is not just the old, battered, browning documents or curled photographs, it's what is happening right now. In this modern age, it's easy to leave photographs on phones or computers, to see adverts on social media, news on websites. Collect them, view them not as mayflies, but the future fossils of our social lives.

“Our memories remind us of who we are. They are the architects of our identity. They can teach us things from the past. And because of that, they can shape our sense of self, and they can actually make us understand in a deeper level how we react to things”.

**Pau Garcia**



## Part 1: The Start of Methodism



*A forest stands on foreign lands, evergreen pitch pine whispering in the wind. If we stand long enough, we might hear the chatter of birds but there is something more industrious attracting attention. The sound of metal pushing through wood, the scent of almost burned pine and then a chorus of voices as the mighty tree falls. The trunk is split to timbers and transported to the waiting ships and a voyage. Sailing, timber on timber, through storms and sunny days, against and with the prevailing wind, under moonlit, star filled nights, through shrouded, clouded evenings. For leagues, until in the distance the first sight of land, a granite kingdom that is breathing tirelessly, hungry for the timber that is feeding its innovation.*

*A port, the clamour of activity as they are hauled from the ships and loaded for the last part of their journey. There are roads now, the old rough paths transformed to take the weight and number of goods and materials transported to and from the mines. A group of small children stop to watch as these timbers arrive in their town, a procession forms, and they decide to follow. Through the Market Square, past the Plen-an-Gwarri, and down to the open downland. Unloaded, the timbers join the granite that has been blasted from the quarry, lying ready and waiting to feel the skilled hands of the community, and local contractors to start work.*

Perhaps it is fanciful to have imagined the journey of the roof timbers, but the sheer scale of the operation is something that has captured the imaginations of the St Just community. The origin of the timber is unknown, but it is likely to have come from either Norway, or the virgin forest of the north American seaboard <sup>1</sup>. These were the sources of most of the pitch pine used in Cornish mines. There is much discussion of where it could have come into port, whisperings of being beached off Porthleddan but it is probable that it would have come into Penzance or even Hayle, which was a major import export port of the time and fed most of west Cornwall's mines with coal and took their resultant copper ore to South Wales for smelting <sup>2</sup>. And likewise, the granite. Exactly where the granite came from is somewhat uncertain. Whilst the frontage of the 1860 rebuild is thought to have come from Lamorna, that used for the remainder of the building looks like typical local tabular granite. But where was the quarry? Possibly some from the small quarry on Carn Bosavern, possibly from that at Carn Praunter in the Kenidjack Valley, possibly from the quarry near the airport. But none of them seem large enough to have supplied all the building stone used in the great building phase in St Just in the 1830s and 40s. Some would have been dressed moor stone from fields, and moors, some might have been mine waste.

<sup>1</sup> Sharpe (personal communication) and Tomlison and Norseng (2024)

<sup>2</sup> Adam Sharpe (Personal Communication)



As with all things historical, there is always the question, where to start?

We could have started with moment the doors opened for Divine Service on the 27th of September 1833 <sup>3</sup>. Or perhaps the laying of the Foundation Stone, in 1832 by Reverend John Hobson, Superintendent of the Penzance Circuit at the time. But to understand the social history of the St Just Methodist Chapel, we need to go back further.

**In 1729, John Wesley has returned to Oxford University to take up teaching duties. His younger brother Charles is still an undergraduate, and finally taking a more studious approach to his learning and his faith. Together, John, Charles and his circle of friends begin such a regular, methodical, schedule of study and religious observance that they are nicknamed the Methodists <sup>4</sup>.**

## The Growth of St Just

St Just in the mid to late 1700's was on the cusp of major change. The landscape, already marked from the small-scale tin mining benefitting only the wealthy local landowners is beginning to see investment in deeper copper mining. Martyn's 1746 map shows only one copper mine in the St Just parish, roughly approximating with Cock. At this time the later development at Levant, Botallack and St Just United are still on the horizon. The local families divide their time and thus ensuring their survival through a combination of mining, farming and fishing. It was this St Just that the Wesley brothers first visited in 1743 and immediately spotting an unmet need within the parish community who had become both geographically and spiritually distant to the Anglican Church <sup>5</sup>. "Here it is" Charles Wesley wrote "that I expect the largest harvest." <sup>6</sup> This St Just, consisted of a cluster of buildings surrounding the Church, most of Fore Street, the northern part of Market Square and the Plen-an-Gwarri, a population that was dispersed, largely rural and relatively small.

Charles Wesley's visit to St Just on 30th July 1743 was the first of over 30 visits made by the Wesley brothers to St Just over the course of the next 40 years <sup>7</sup>. His visit swiftly followed by John's, who preached from the Town Cross on the 10th of September of the same year, and returning a year later to find that the society was fully active <sup>8</sup>. However, the history books do not omit the work that was carried out prior to the Wesley brother's arrival. Williams, from St Ives is said to have been the first Methodist preacher in St Just, preaching from the Plen, without a book, and acquiring the rather unfortunate nickname of the 'Mad Priest' prompting John Wesley to reflect that is was, "They admitted me into this Society, and not I them." <sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Royal Cornwall Gazette, (1883)

<sup>5</sup> Cornish Studies Resources, (2025)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Wesley Memorial Church Oxford, (2025)

<sup>6</sup> Penwith Local History Group (2023a)

<sup>8</sup> MH book

<sup>9</sup> Penrose., (1933)



It is during the 1744 visit that John Wesley states that *"It is remarkable that those of St. Just were chief of the whole County for Hurling, Fighting, Drinking and all manner of wickedness but many of the lions have become lambs* <sup>10</sup>." There is a rumour that Carn Praunter (the Carn of the Preacher in Cornish) in the mid Kenidjack Valley was so named after one of the Wesley's had preached there to a large crowd of locals sitting on the valley slopes to the north. The Wesley's, and other travelling preachers, took their hospitality from the Inn owned by William Chenhalls, directly opposite the parish church, the site of the first Methodist meetings. That building remains today but as a private home.

Although welcomed by huge numbers of 'ordinary' people who found little relevance in the parish church, the Wesley brothers were no strangers to trouble. Their presence led to the reading of the riot act and warrants for their arrest <sup>11</sup>. They were preaching against the backdrop of the Jacobite Rebellion, Methodism viewed by wealthy landlords as a potential threat to order. Despite the fact that the Wesley's were Anglicans themselves, attended church services and whose aim was the reform of Anglicanism, not replace it. In St Just, the chief persecutors were two families, 'Madron' who lived in the Church Town itself and Eustick, of the Botallack estate <sup>12</sup>. John Wesley was almost twice arrested via a warrant signed by Dr. William Borlase and other travelling preachers also succumbed to similar treatment.

Yet, this accomplished nothing to stem the tide to the growth of the Methodist movement. Their message: one of personal salvation through grace, a recognition that transformation required the support of a community, this preaching of self-improvement was pulling this community together.

John Wesley kept diaries from 1725 to 1791, the year of his death. Contained within them are fascinating insights into his visits to St Just which show the gradual progression from the weekly cottage class meetings held at William Chenhalls Inn (c.1744), to the first dedicated Meeting Room on North Row used for twelve years (c.1745-1756). John Wesley was in St Just again (13th September 1755) to preach from the foundation stone of the newly built chapel on what is now Cape Cornwall Road. Returning again in 1757 to preach within the chapel and saying *"I preached in the new house at St. Just, the largest and most commodious in the County"* <sup>13</sup>. On a visit in 1766, the congregation was so large that this 'largest' Chapel in the county couldn't accommodate it, and once more John Wesley preached in the open air. The final visit of John Wesley is recorded as the 20th of August 1789. A decade later in 1798 the Chapel was widened by 28 feet to accommodate the still growing congregation, in 1818 the end gallery added. Finally, it was decided that there was no further option for expansion, it was no longer big enough.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Penwith Local History Group (2023a)

<sup>12</sup> Penrose, (1933)

<sup>13</sup> Penrose, (1933)



This first part of this social history began with the question, where to start. Starting in the obvious place of the build of the chapel itself, would have discounted the c.100 years of history preceding and the foundations of the town's identity that was the reason itself for the build. Two brothers and a small group of peers had travelled the length and breadth of the country, building the Methodist movement at a time when the population had been largely disillusioned by the Anglican Church. Here in St Just, despite the persecution of the movement, the town was rapidly building the 'largest society in Cornwall' <sup>14</sup> Organising itself around the Methodist principals and laying the groundwork for the generations to follow. Generations that in the next century would work hard, play hard, learn, innovate and begin taking their skills, language and methodist message across the globe.

<sup>14</sup> John Wesley's Diaries



## Part 2: 1800s The Great Revival

The St Just Methodist Chapel opened on the 27th of September 1833.<sup>15</sup> There are reports that the morning services were often attended by a congregation of 650, and approximately 900 in the evening.<sup>16</sup> A description of the opening by Rev. John Hobson states '*St Just Chapel was in the morning more doubly filled, upwards of 1200 people were present and all were bathed in tears. At night the Chapel was crowded almost to suffocation. The steam ran down the walls, the gallery stairs were flooded with it, and had not all the windows been opened, every light would have gone out.*'<sup>17</sup> The amount of seating in the original chapel is uncertain, but it seems to have been just under 1,000. (Reports that it could seat c.1800 are erroneous). It was the second of three chapels to be opened that year, the first in Nanquidno where the congregation had swelled to such a number that one evening service was held on the moor by moonlight, and the third was at Trewellard.

What had happened in St Just to account for this surge? Visiting in the 1790s, Maton described St Just as a '*sad, dismal place, situated in a most inhospitable and cheerless corner of the country.*'<sup>18</sup> But we are now in the 19th century and the alteration is obvious, commencement of deep mining is under way. The smaller mines, working cliff exposures or moorland lodes are being eclipsed by larger workings; Levant, Botallack, Boscaswell, Wheal Owles, St Just United.<sup>19</sup> These mines plunged deep and pushed their fingers far out to sea. What does this mean for St Just? What we are seeing is the beginning of a rapidly growing population. Hamlets are fanning around the manor houses (Truthwall, Botallack, Carnyorth) but it is not enough to meet the demand, miners are moving to the area in droves.<sup>20</sup> The land in the town of St Just that had thought to be 'worthless down' is being urbanized; starting in the 1830's and accelerating in the 1840s. St Just must have resembled one huge building site at this time. Buller states '*on one side was a large space, covered with unsightly quarry pits, the receptacle of every sort of filth and dirt, on the other side was an uncultivated waste: both of which are now covered with streets.*'<sup>21</sup>

The population, 950 in 1780, 2779 in 1801, 7047 in 1841 and 12,803<sup>22</sup> in 1861<sup>23</sup>, is evidence to the scale of change we are about to see. As well as miners moving to the area, the parish population was swelling with rapidly 'growing' families. The land to west and the south of the medieval centre of St Just is going to be taken up to accommodate the rapid growth. The 1841 tithe map<sup>24</sup> shows St Just teetering on the precipice of change. Between 1831 and 1841, 500 new houses were built, some in a rather haphazard fashion, others conforming to a more regular plan.<sup>25</sup> An example of more formal planning is evident in the regular grid set out to build Pleasant Terrace, Princess Street, Queen Street and Victoria

<sup>15</sup> Penwith Local History Group (2023b)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Penwith Local History Group (2023b)

<sup>18</sup> Sharpe et al, (1992)

<sup>19</sup> Buller, (1842) and Sharpe et al, (1992).

<sup>20</sup> Buller, 1842

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> These figures include Pendeen, from 1841 the population of Pendeen was split.

<sup>23</sup> Cahill, (2002),

<sup>24</sup> (Cornwall Council, 2023b)

<sup>25</sup> Cahill, (2002)



Row. The regularity ends, however, with the neat rows themselves. Each house was built according to the means of the occupant, lavish double fronted houses are sandwiched with single fronted cottages<sup>26</sup> and a quick view of the census records for 1891 shows occupations such as Life Insurance Agent, Miner, Tailoress, Battery Sergeant Major, Mine Engine Drivers and Carpenters as close neighbours. Many cottages were rented on a three lives system rather than owned, so it was the builders (quite possibly contracted by the landowners) who dictated the variations in the cottages. The turnover in occupancy, as evidenced by the census returns, reflects the inherent uncertainty of continuous employment within any specific mine locally. By 1891 St Just had passed the peak of mining, however. If you look at the returns for 1851 or 1861 it's clear that mining underpinned the economy and society of the parish. By 1891, although somewhat in decline, St Just had become somewhat more genteel. The rows are carved diagonally to maintain a medieval trackway known now as Bosorne Road that leads to Cot Valley. Developments avoided agricultural land and formerly mined ground (no-one wanted their house to collapse into an old shaft).<sup>27</sup>

The rapid need for accommodation was met with banks, inns, pubs, shops and workshops of other trades, including an iron foundry in Tregeseal Valley.<sup>28</sup> And of course new places of worship; there were chapels and Sunday schools in Truthwall, Botallack, Carnyorth, Trewellard, Boscaswell, Pendeen and Bojewyan the north and at Nanquidno and Kelynack to the south. The St Just made up of tinning, farming and fishing, interspersed with a few large landowners, had suddenly grown to include (and accommodate) a rapidly growing 'middle class'. St Just was becoming home to mine managers, pursers, agents, surveyors, doctors, surgeons, bankers.

The area surrounding the Chapel is backfilled with cottages and workshops, a centre for non-residential and non-retail activity. It is also an area for communal functions, housing the Fire Station, Drill Hall, Band Room, and the only pub not in or just off the square, the Chapel and of course the St Just Literary and Scientific Institute.<sup>29</sup> In 1847, the St Just Literary Institute was founded on the principle of "*... being solely the promotion of useful knowledge*,<sup>30</sup>". The Institute was home to a library of 500 books, a reading room and upstairs, a large galleried lecture theatre. Later (1858) it became home to the Society of Arts and a museum.<sup>31</sup> It was linked by membership and ideals to methodism, both sharing the path to self-improvement through education. Its main audience was the growing middle class element of the local population, who either paid a membership subscription or to attended individual lectures. During the 1860 renovation of the Chapel, it provided a temporary home for Methodist Services. It also shared speakers. Lectures were varied. In the year 1853 they included; the Problem of India, Circassia and the Circasseins, De Quincy, Thomas Heed, Power in Nature, English Sacred Poetry, Sermons in Stones, a Genial Gossip about Birds, the Tin Trade of the Ancients, the Ingoldsby Legends, Frederick the Great, Edward III, the French

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Cahill, (2002) and Sharpe (2025).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Sharpe, (2023).

<sup>30</sup> The Lafrowda Club, (2023)

<sup>31</sup> Trustees of the Lafrowda Club, (2023)



Revolution, the Wonders of Electricity, the visit of Charles Fox of Falmouth's visit to the Holy Land and the lecture entitled 'Britain, as it was, is, and probably will be.'<sup>32</sup>

Todd's study of the Institute's minutes that were made available to him asserts that over the first fifty years of the Institute's existence, *'every taste and interest, known or unknown, was catered for'*. Other topics or personalities included in the itinerary were Mahomet, Tyndall, Columbus, Wesley, Leigh Hunt, Sheridan, Thomas Arnold, Paley, Samuel Johnson, Shakespeare, Byron, Macaulay, Luther, George Fox plus 'contemporaries' Lord Eldon, Disraeli, Gladstone, Bright Mill and the Prince Consort. Of 'topical importance' The Crimean war, Indian mutiny, slavery, the American Civil War, the 'East question; From Suez to St. Petersburg, or passing notes on Egypt, Turkey and Russia' were included. Matters of 'Things in General' and death; 'Eastward Ho 'Disengaged by Death' were covered, the latter, as Todd states, to remind members of 'loosening of the Silver Cord.'<sup>33</sup> Todd states that to fill the lecture programme in any given year, twenty-two lecturers needed to be found and whilst some came from further afield and were engaged through the Institutes affiliation with the Royal Society of Arts, more often they were local residents such as practicing and retired ministers of religion, doctors, schoolmasters and mining engineers. The visits from the 'professionals' were seen as great occasions and for these, the doors of the Institute were opened to the general public and advertised in papers.

St Just was a place to learn, there was space to think, space to innovate. And, as evidenced within the *Diary of a Cornish Shopkeeper*<sup>34</sup> those that attended the Chapel, shared this space, the methodist preacher was a regular speaker at the institute and socially active within the community.

*"Ms Jane Hall, Grocer of Arica House from 1887 to 1930, a staunch methodist and matriarch of her family, she was regularly serenaded from the wide pavement outside her house by miners forming an impromptu choir on leaving the different pubs of the town. Such a feature of St Just life was this that it said that when miners emigrated to South Africa from the town, they designated a 'Jane Hall Corner' from which to sing from. This is not her only claim to fame though, she was also said to be one of the first in St Just to have an inside lavatory installed. One Sunday, following tea with the preacher, she dutifully made her way to the Chapel and sat within her family box pew eagerly awaiting the sermon. Like many of the congregation, she grew restless when he failed to appear, and eventually, confused by his lack of appearance despite having had tea with him only an hour earlier, she returned home. A furious banging alerted her on return, and she approached her lavatory with some trepidation knowing that she had locked it and taken the key with her to ensure that her maid didn't take advantage of the luxury in her absence. But it was not the maid that banged the door with all their might, it was the missing preacher."<sup>35</sup>*

<sup>32</sup> Old Cornwall Society, (2022)

<sup>33</sup> Old Cornwall Society, (2022)

<sup>34</sup> Grylls, (1997)

<sup>35</sup> From personal communication with JH descendants)



As documented, St Just had boomed during the first half of the 1800's, but by 1850 the impact of international competition was already beginning to have an impact. Miners were leaving, following a pattern seen across Cornwall since the 1830s, when the skills of miners followed the export of the innovations. Early emigrations were largely the result of 'pull' factors, exciting opportunities with the opening of foreign mining fields. Later, in the second half of the century the 'push' factors began. In the 1860's mines began to fail, and the great emigration began. In 1867 over 7000 miners left Cornwall.<sup>36</sup> In total, between 1860 and the start of the 20th century, around 250,000 Cornishmen left Cornwall, that is 20% of the male population emigrating every decade<sup>37</sup>. The population of St Just (not including Pendeen) held steady at c.9000 for 1861 and 1871<sup>38</sup> but by 1881 it had dropped by almost a third to 6500.<sup>38 40</sup> Copper prices had plummeted against the competition from mines across the globe, the same affect to be seen later in tin prices.<sup>41</sup> Between 1869 and 1876 the number of miners employed on local mines fell by over a half.<sup>42</sup> They were leaving for Australia, for America, South Africa, leaving behind wives, children, sending home pay whilst they could. An article reproduced by Sharpe et al (1992) states that it was calculated that some £800 or £900 a month arrived in St Just through the Post Office. (In today's money, that equate to roughly £110,000).

1874 was reported as a disastrous year in the history of mining.<sup>43</sup> Here in St Just, Balleswidden and Wheal Owles are abandoned, Botallack is partially closed. Across Cornwall 47 mines closed that year, 48 more in 1875, and 37 more in 1876.<sup>44</sup> Alongside the abandonment of the Cornish mines there was a roaring trade in second hand beam engines, foundries were no longer required to build new beam engines, the innovation was taken up overseas, leaving the remaining mines in Cornwall with falling standards of maintenance and rendering them old-fashioned<sup>45</sup>. Returns on tin and copper ore were dropping wildly, so investment was rare, and where it occurred (as for instance at Levant) it was often misplaced and led to further losses.

Wolf Rock, Tater Du, Longships, Pendeen, Bishop Rock, Seven Stones, Round Island familiar names and landmarks on the Cornish coastline. But add to that, the chimney at Cape Cornwall, deliberately maintained following disuse as daymark. And the Chapel, it too becomes a beacon, the last thing the emigrating miners see after they sail from Southampton or Plymouth before turning for America, South Africa, Australia, and the first thing they see on their return. But it is also a beacon, a place of safety and comfort for those who stay. The dwindling congregation work hard, hold their faith and play too. Tea Drinking, Parades, Sunday School, Choir or Guild outings to nearby coves at Sennen or Porthgwarra, were all part of the ebb and flow of the year.

<sup>36</sup> Payton, (2004)

<sup>37</sup> Cornwall Place Board, (2025)

<sup>38</sup> Cahill, (2002)

<sup>39</sup> West Penwith Resources, (2023).

<sup>40</sup> Figures are conflicted and range from 6500-8430

<sup>41</sup> Payton, (2004) & Sharpe et al, (1992)

<sup>42</sup> Sharpe et al (1992)

<sup>43</sup> Payton, (2004).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Ibid



*Outside of the Commercial Hotel, various Dillies (horses and wagons) owned by the local farmers have lined up alongside the horse bus owned by Ben Eddy Junior, or perhaps 'Arky's Bus', the Gersey or Brake owned by Mr Archelaus Thomas. They are awaiting this early morning for the arrival of the Wesleyan Sunday School children, their parents and the choir. As they leave for their annual summer outing, they sing "The day thou gavest lord is ended" and begin their journey to Sennen. Waiting for them is the Hot Chip Potato Van owned by Mr. Dick Hall. They knew it would be here; it was always at all their community events.*

In 1883, at the time that St Just was weathering the storm of the depression caused by the collapse in mining revenue, the Chapel and its congregation has come together to set about launching an improvement scheme, one that would fund a revival in the Circuit, the appointment of a third minister and to pay off its debts. This was achieved in 1885 and in such a fashion that would repeat itself over one hundred years later; through donations of what could be afforded; coming from not just the local communities, but across Cornwall, England, and South Africa. From Bazaars, Teas, Sermons, Lectures and Concerts. Each pound, shilling and penny securing a future.



## Part 3: A Place of Belonging, A Place to Belong

The history of methodism in St Just has been well documented, not least because of its critical part in the history of the Wesley brothers. As previously discussed, the disenfranchisement with the Anglican church and their ties with the wealthy landlords, coupled with the Methodist's message of a united community and social justice, spoke to the people of St Just, becoming a part of the town's identity that is still evident today. This is a community where belonging is as much a part of its nature as the fog laden days of summer. But it is the objective of this writing to tell the story from St Just. Of how the Chapel has been a part, a focal point, in the lives of the community. These are stories of music, meeting, humour, learning, sadness, near misses, culture, hireth. These are stories of belonging.

### A Changing Building

Brought about by necessity or changing times and tastes, the work to extend or maintain the Chapel has been carried out by local companies and therefore local people whether paid or voluntarily. The Chapel was refurbished in the 1850s, extensively remodelled and enlarged in 1860 when it gained its new frontage and its gallery, re-seated in 1892, with further work being undertaken in the 1930s and 1940s. At some point in the past couple of decades the roof covering has been replaced, rotting window frames, rotting fascia boards have been replaced. In this sense, its physical fabric reflects the changing fortunes of St Just, as well as a considerable amount of continuity.

The following section attempts two things; a timeline of the changes and the stories that accompany.



1833: Chapel opened by Reverend Hobson

1860: Chapel enlarged; East End refronted, Tuscan entrance porch added, West End extended by 1 bay to allow Communion apse, burial ground extended new oval gallery inserted

1860-1875: Old domestic building replaced with vestry and school room

1893: Ground floor box pews replaced with Pitch Pine, timber screens leaded and coloured glass inserted behind rostrum. Communion rail bough forward, same style screen added to East end to create vestibule. The re-opening service overshadowed by Wheal Owles Disaster

1914-1919: First World War

1919: Levant Mining Disaster

1933: Redecoration of ceiling; including removal of decoration.

1959-60: Organ Restoration, Tree of Memory painted by Mr. Alfred Olds with each leaf representing a donation

1972: Redecoration of ceiling, decorative panelling removed by this point

1973: Chapel becomes a listed building, awarded Grade II\*

1996: Former Vestry altered and expanded

2017: St Just Miners Chapel Charity is registered with Charity Commission, chapel placed on Historic England's [at Risk](#) Register, roof above organ replaced. Restoration of Levant Graves and tidy up of Burial Ground begin.

2024: 15<sup>th</sup> March, Chapel put up for sale

2025: 8<sup>th</sup> August, Chapel bought by St Just Miners Chapel Trust



There is an image of the chapel undergoing maintenance in the 1930s, carried out by William Trezise's company, faces of the workers include a Grandfather, an engine driver at Geevor by day, who would join in the Chapel maintenance taking place in the evening light. Savvy to the costs to the Chapel, the timber used to support the work on the ceiling was laid upside down, as to not wear the tongue and groove, so that it could be reused and cost the Chapel nothing. Scaffolding platforms aside, much of the work on the great building were nothing short of feats of daring-do.

*Working in 50s/60s a young Bryan Cuddy would help paint the fascia boards, no scaffolding; three sets of wobbling, wooden ladders. Robert Matthews got halfway up and froze in fear, Bryan had no choice but go up and put his arms round him to bring him back down.*

Anyone who has braved the lofting heights of the roof space deserves a medal. They return with stories of the roof resembling an upside-down ship made of 64ft stretches of pitched pine, or the discarded galvanised sheeting still laying aside from when the gas lighting was replaced by electric, gone now perhaps but the steel pipe leading from the central rose through to roof space to cowl is still poking out of the roof covering. All forming part of a sort of archaeological dig in the clouds giving evidence to the middle decorative rose that once formed part of the ventilation system. The gas, powered by the Holman Factory and the Organist, who had the additional job of opening the vent via a pulley system situated by his side to relieve the sweating walls. An estimation for the removal of the gas system and replacement of electric was given in 1944, the work completed in 1947.

*"You were putting new windows in the front of the chapel, and you called me, and I went up and you were on top of the portico, and you said look at that, and you said you couldn't put a penknife blade between those stones."*

*"If you look at the picture of the chapel, the three middle windows, there's an arch, the stonework inside of that arch is absolutely unbelievable. Even better than the stuff around, and those are roughly hewn stones, in the wall but there's no shrinkage cracks, nothing."*

It's 2017, the roof above the Organ has become dangerously unstable as the fascia boards had rotted away. One more high wind and it will be blown off and the Organ will be ruined. H. Matthews are contacted and erect scaffolding to protect it and the interior of the chapel now looks like a construction site and not becoming for the wedding taking place this weekend. Resourceful, the Trustees band together and purchase yards and yards of white muslin, draping it around and over the austere poles and somehow, miraculously, creating the illusion of beauty.

You can't see it now; the Communion Window is boarded up and no longer looks out over the fields and towards the sea. If you could see it, you might read the timber Commandment tablets, or read the scripture beneath; "This do in remembrance of Me."



## Congregations

The Chapel was built to house the growing congregation of St Just Wesleyan's. Reports of 1000 or more filling the pews are not hard to come by. In those days, a family from Botallack would have to leave early to walk over in time to get a seat. It is supposed that the congregation began to fall again following the First World War, and again the Second World War, when men returned with a slightly different view on the world than they had when they left. Perhaps another turning point was when motor cars became a more affordable option for families, and developments in communication; the television for instance, introduced new ways for the community to find entertainment.

If pews could talk, they would whisper the names of the families that sat amongst them. Of those who paid their pew rental and had their names etched into brass plates that slid into the doors to say who lived there. They would tell of those who scratched their initials into their wood, graffiti yes, but a lasting tattoo of remembrance. Perhaps they might tell us who caught whose eye one Sunday evening and the tales of courtship that began here and ended with the Chapel full for their wedding a year or so later. They could recount the baptisms, new life for the congregation and fuelling the Sunday School, and yes, count the tears shed during the funerals of those now laying at rest in the burial yard. And perhaps they might tell us too, why the local Police Constable had his own designated pew on the ground floor, at the back on the left...

*Alfred Olds is delivering milk for his father. A Sunday, the small boy balances a 2.5-gallon bucket on his bicycle and pedals hard, to get back to chapel on time.*

*A family sit in their pew ready for the service, dressed in their best clothes; the children wait for their father, who today is part of a parade, to appear in the middle aisle. They spot him, watching as he draws level with them. He grins at their mother as he opens his coat and displays all his pistols.*

*A Preacher stands in the pulpit, he is recounting a story from his week. Walking through a field he sees a bull charging towards him. He orders the bull to "stop in the name of the Lord", and watches in wonder as bull came and knelt before him and he rested the bible on his head. He tells the congregation that "If you don't believe me then leave the chapel now," A wife hastily pins her husband down.*

*A young man sits in his family's pew in the Gallery. They are listening to the service with one eye on the window looking out towards Truthwall for the first sight of the bus, if they wanted to catch it, they would have to leave now, to beat the crowds exiting the chapel, so that they could go to Penzance and walk the Promenade as they did most Sunday evenings. But tonight, the Minister is taking his time, with a little dismay, this young man and his friend have caught wind that the Minister has twelve pages of notes to direct his sermon, and they must come to terms with the fact, that they will not reach Penzance this Sunday.*



*Another Minister is also careful to take his time, not because of lengthy notes, but because he has poor eyesight and issues with his sinuses. He pauses in his service, removes his jam jar glasses to polish them, takes the opportunity to blow his nose, replaces his glasses and picks up his service again.*

The last time that the Chapel is remembered to be full, is the St Just Circuit Rally in the 1950s, or 60s. The 17 chapels within the Circuit came, for tea, a concert and hymn singing. Each Chapel had to choose a hymn to sing the first verse of. Our Chapel congregation always sat in the middle of the Gallery, awaiting their turn which was traditionally last. When they sang, everybody joined in for the rest of the hymn.

In c.2011 the St Just Circuit was merged back in with Penzance. It was the end of a resident Minister for St Just. On the last night of his service, a congregation member sits alone in the Gallery. He is asked why he chose to sit there and replies to the Minister that he wanted to sit in the pew where he once sat with his mother and look to the other pews where his family and friends had surrounded them.

## Levant Mining Disaster

*In October 1919, bells are clamouring across the parish of St Just. Miners have dropped tools and hurried to aid in the rescue efforts at Levant. Unable to free the trapped miners via the collapsed Man Engine, they are scaling cliffs to reach them through adits. As the days go by and the rescue efforts draw to a close, St Just is silent.*

*It's 2017, the McFadden's have offered their services free of charge to start clearing the jungle of aster and laurel that has swamped the Chapel Graveyard. They cut back a bramble covered headstone and to their delight, they have found Granny. Bryan Cuddy has typed up his father's records and entered them into a database. He now has the location of the Graves for the 4500 people buried at the Chapel, thanks to meticulous records kept by his Undertaker and Carpenter father. As it approaches 2019, and the 100-year anniversary of the Levant Mine Disaster, the combined efforts of the Chapel team mean that each of the 15 miners that were buried at St Just Methodist Chapel can be found, even that of William Ellis whose grave was hitherto unmarked. The anniversary is marked with a service, stones to mark their graves and a plaque that joins that in remembrance of the Wheal Owles Mining Disaster in 1893 where 26 miners lost their lives.*



## A Near Miss

27th September 1942, the Luftwaffe are flying towards Penzance hotly pursued by the RAF who take aim and fire at the German Dornier bomber as it heads over the town of St Just. The residents of St Just, alerted not just by the air raid sirens, but the sound of the gunfire and aircraft engines overhead having taken cover under tables, or in backyard shelters, huddled waiting as the aircraft skims the roof of the Old Chapel Sunday School, leaving a scar visible to this day, before finally crashing into two homes on the convergence of Chapel Road, Chapel Street and Boswedden Road, almost directly opposite the Chapel itself. It seems to the residents of St Just that the whole of Chapel Street is ablaze. One German Pilot parachuted to safety, picked up and arrested by a farmer in Kelynack, the remaining three perish in the wreckage.

As the new day dawned the damage to the town becomes obvious, aside from the two houses completely destroyed, windows across town have been blown out, roofs damaged, half the town cordoned off by the Home Guard, but miraculously no civilian casualties. Parts of the wrecked aircraft were scattered about the town. And, unfortunately, so were the remains of the German Crew. A body blown in through a bedroom window, an eyeball found lying in the road by curious children looking for relics, and a leg, found days later on top of a bedroom wardrobe. And yet, despite the widespread damage to the town, the largest building, unconscionably close to the point of impact, was left undamaged and the only change to the building as a result of the war, was removal of the iron railings<sup>46</sup>, leaving lead socketed attachment points empty around the town. Iron railings were removed from towns as part of a patriotic 'scrap drive'. Iron for tanks, battleships, bombs and shells. Most of it was never used, as was also the case with the aluminium pots and pans donated by housewives to make Spitfires. It was the wrong type of aluminium.

<sup>46</sup> Knifton, (2015)



## The Sunday School

Until the late 1970s, the old chapel is in use as a Sunday School. Three teachers with ten-twelve pupils in each class would meet every Sunday afternoon after attending the service at the chapel in the morning. Prizes of books are given out for attendance. Bible quiz competitions are held with neighbouring Sunday Schools. The teachers are remembered for their quirks, a reminiscence of a 'hard of hearing' teacher gently teased by boys pretending not to talk and causing him to pause to remove his hearing aids and check they are working. There is a 'one piece bizarre', a gentleman on the boy's floor trying to sell items that 'men' would be interested in, but the eleven-year-old pupil cannot yet see a use for a wet shave razor. At Christmas there would be parties, and halfway through Nicky Harvey would arrive from his baker's shop on Fore Street with a great tray of pasties. Tea Treat outings continued as they had done in the previous century, with expeditions for example, to Carbis Bay beach by Coach. Pupils would be taught, encouraged and remember performing, songs or passages standing on trestle tables to recite, girls dressed in little white dresses, white socks and sandals.

Little pretty dresses, white socks and sandals is a memory that is also attached to the many social activities of the Sunday School and Chapel.

*It is the 24th of July, a Thursday this year and the schools are therefore closed as the Midsummer Parade is about to begin. The pupils of the Wesleyan Sunday School are gathered outside on Cape Cornwall Road awaiting the arrival of the brass band, it is their turn this year to lead the parade. With their banner held high, they lead the way, out to West Place and the top of Bosorne Street where they would pick up the Bible Christian Sunday School. Then down to the Free Church, up Green Lane (South Place), down through Gear Lane, through the Square and into the Plen-an-Gwarri to hear the service. This year Harry Rosee, a Congregationalist minister who spent most of his ministry in Callington, has returned as he does every Midsummer to lead the service. In fact, the population of the town has swelled visibly, people have returned home for Midsummer as they might do for Feast, or Christmas. The Sunday Schools sing a rousing rendition of 'Summer Suns a Glowing' as they do every year come rain or shine.*

*The parade leaves the Plen-an-Gwarri, crosses the Square and heads down Nancherrow Terrace, up Chapel Street, down Cape Cornwall Street, through Princess Street, up Bosorne Road, back through Queen Street and then arrives back at the Sunday School. Outside, they sit on the grass and eat Tea Treat Buns, a saffron bun 'as big as your head' and play games. The girls study their white shoes and socks, blackened now by the parade on the hot, melting, tarmacked roads of St Just.*



The Midsummer Parades came to an end when the Sunday Schools began to close in the 1970s, ending completely in the early 1980s. Attempts to revive the parade, to open it to all and not just the Sunday Schools, start and wither away again; later it is replaced by Carnival, and later again by the Lafrowda Festival, the current community celebration day. The Old Chapel closes its doors and is sold, but the Sunday School is moved to the Chapel and takes on a new lease of life. The pupils of the 'Old Chapel Sunday School' are now fifteen years of age and are running the classes that take place in the 'Vestry' as the service runs in the Chapel. This part of the building is 'a little grim' but is renovated in 1997 with a new kitchen, a larger footprint and nicer toilets. New Sunday School teachers have taken up the mantel, and teach from the suggested Methodist Publications, stories, materials; what you could sing or draw that taught the message of the sermon delivered next door. A small play might be practised, and the young pupils hustled into the main chapel to perform their learning on the pulpit.

## **If music be the food of love, play on**

*It is a wedding day at the Chapel. The bride is looking nervously out of her window, not because of the momentous day ahead for her but because a storm has blown in, tremendous winds, thunder and lightning were not what they had ordered for the day. As their neighbour's dress and make their way to the Chapel for the service, they are pulled aside. The electric has been cut off, the only way to power the organ is the old-fashioned way; "Mr Hattam, would you mind terribly..." The children watch as their smartly suited father steps into the magical space behind the organ. Entranced, by the sound and sight of the matrimonial service taking place, they almost forget that the only reason the organ is playing is because their father is making it happen. They remember swiftly enough though, the sight of him climbing out of that magical space, tie and jacket removed, collar loosened, dripping in sweat.*

The Organ, as well as the Chapel itself has a history. The current organ is not the original; despite being restored in 1959/60, it was replaced by the organ from Trewellard Chapel after that closed down and the original organ 'died' in the 1970s.

*The Choir has gathered in the Vestry and are now make their way up to the Choir Stalls. In the Gallery Pews, eager children look towards them, finding their mother's face, wondering at the magnificent hats or imagining that they magically appeared from the two rooms behind the organ. This Choir meet*



*for practice every Wednesday, more if they were preparing for an event such as Feast, or Easter. As the organ begins, they stand, ready to fill the Chapel in harmonic chorus.*

The Choir is of the Chapel, but is a social group of their own, gathering together for Choir dinners, responding to requests for concerts away from their home Chapel. There exists a recording of the Choir, singing not in the St Just Chapel but in the neighbouring Trewellard Chapel. At the request of Willy Eddy who was home from America, the choir sings "Bless this House" as he prays during the Harvest of the Seas Service that he organised.

Sadly, the Choir seemed to fizzle away during the 1970s, but that doesn't mean that the Chapel has been devoid of the sound of voices in harmony. There have been, and are, a number of notable events that have kept the building alive with music. In any year, the Chapel is home to musical events such as the Mayor's Charity Concert, host to the Mousehole or St Buryan Male Voice Choir and Pendeen Silver Band. The St Piran's Parade have their concert here, and International Male Voice Choral, biannual concert here. These are events that continue to bring the community together.

*July 2019, a beautiful summer afternoon and I have returned home from work early and I'm washing dishes. My rather melancholy meditation is interrupted by my eight-year-old son who wants to know what the noise from the street is. I take his hand and decide that we are going to go and find out. We head down Fore Street, following the sound of the drums that are emanating from the Square. A Choir has gathered, entranced we watch, listen, oblivious to the reason for this gathering. I see a familiar face and ask what's happening. It's the Langa Choir, they say, over from Cape Town, fresh from Glastonbury. There is movement, the Choir are dancing, they are singing, they are making their way out of Market Square and heading towards Bank Square. Behind them, we follow, the town follows, as if bewitched by their song. We follow them down Chapel Street and in through the doors of St Just Methodist Chapel. And as we move with the music in the gallery, we are grateful to the skilled workmanship that took place over 100 years ago, safe in the knowledge that the pillars will take our weight.*

The volume of the singing, heard for miles, over centuries. You have to be there to feel it, not just hear it. Following the concert of the Oggymen in November 2024, not just a few tears were shed from the emotion of the packed Chapel. There will be more about music in the coming sections, but we will pause here to ask a question; is it true that Dame Nellie Melba during her farewell tour of Britain in 1926 sang from a purpose-built platform placed on top of the pulpit?



## Hireth: A Place to come home to

In a previous section we have discussed the great emigration, those hundreds of thousands of miners and their families who left Cornwall when the mining economy crashed during the 1800's. But for those families, and their descendants, the Chapel has remained as a beacon, a place to turn to and remember. Hardly a week will go by without someone arriving, looking for information on their ancestors, perhaps a grave to pay respects to, or a place to sit where once their family sat. The closest that they come to touching history.

These people come from across Cornwall, across Britain, they come from America, Australia, armed with names that are still familiar in the town. They support the Chapel from afar. It is their home to come back to.

When the Miners Chapel began fund raising to secure its purchase, the donations came in from; St Just, Pendeen, St Ives, Hayle, Penzance, Marazion, Camborne, Perranporth, Falmouth, Truro, St Agnes, Helston, Wadebridge, Launceston, Liskeard, Callington, St Austell, Par, Bude, Newton Abbot, Plymouth, Stroud, Bristol, Bromsgrove, Wrexham, Caemarfon, Llanymynech, Tonypany, Woodhouse Eaves, Baldock, Highbridge, Hitchin, London, Swindon, Woking, Brighton, Eastleigh, Evesham, Houghton le Spring, Belvedere, Warwick, Worcester, Taunton, Loughborough, Sheffield, Leicester, Westbury, Birmingham, Leeds, Buxton, Loughborough, Bedford, Peacehaven, Nottingham, Cranbrook, Jersey, Ravenshoe (Australia), Tura Beach (Australia), Oregon (US), Michigan (US) and Maryland (US). And whilst geographically distant, these supporters remain spiritually present.

*In memory of my Hosking family buried in the churchyard and my great grandfather, Wm. Henry Hosking, who lived in Pleasant Terrace in 1866.*

*In memory of Annie Hill Roberts and Ralph Hill Roberts, all my other ancestors and relatives who are buried here and to the mining community of St Just.*

*The Miners' Chapel means so much to me. My Great Grandad Edward Bennetts was the chapel-keeper back in the late 1880's. and the family lived at Victoria (is it Avenue?) New Downs, St Just. They were a mining family originally. My Granny, Mary Ansell Bennetts, their daughter, was married in the Chapel just after WW1 to my Grandad Ralph Hill. who she had nursed (she was a VAD in Bristol) after being wounded at Gallipoli. He farmed near Totnes, in S Devon, so that's where I remember her when I was a little girl. Most of her siblings went off to America in the 1900's and so we have relatives in California, and Michigan. I like to think of them all when I come down to St Just each year to visit my Great-grandparents grave. I have lived in Somerset all my life, but feel Cornwall, especially St Just, to be my spiritual home! I would be devastated if anything bad happened to the Chapel.*



## **Hospitality and Social Activity;**

### **A Building that wants to be used, to be loved**

It's Harvest Festival, a small girl is taking her turn to take her offering of fruit and vegetables up to the Minister. On top of the offering a bunch of grapes are wobbling perilously, before a few take a tumble, and she watches in dismay as they fall from the dish and into the metal gratings in the floor. The Chapel is full of fruit and vegetables, the ceremonial harvest loaf taking centre stage amongst small, crepe paper decorated baskets of strawberries. The Chapel's pillars are decorated with sheaves of corn, and following the festival there will be a concert, an auction of produce and of course, the harvest supper.

The Methodists have always been renowned for their hospitality, it is a central tenet of their belief. Every Chapel had their own decorated china sets, the Wesleyan design a deep maroon in colour. The harvest festivals of neighbouring chapels never to take place on the same day so that they may travel around and enjoy each other's celebration. Whilst the congregation attending services might have dwindled over the last century, the social and hospitable doors have remained fully open. The list of activities that have taken or take place is considerable and this next section will try and elucidate that the Chapel is a base, not just for religious life but our social life too.

In its more distant past, the social life of the Chapel was centred around assorted Guilds and Fellowships, remembered now by the grown children who were only allowed to attend special events, unlike their parents who attended the weekly meetings. The 'Winking' game, or 'Cod, Shrimp, or Whale.' Nobody quite remembers the rules, but they remember the energy, the fun.

In its more recent history, the Vestry has been home to a youth club, catering for children up to the age of 11 from whence they would graduate to the Nancherrow Youth Centre. The Boy's Brigade was housed here. There was (and this is by no means an exhaustive list) a Breakfast Club on a Monday, aimed at young mums after dropping older children at school but attracting a wider, more mature, audience, Tuesday Afternoon Story and Tea gatherings (perfect for sharing memories), Soup Lunches, Musical Munch, Porridge with Prayer and Messy Church, an initiative jointly run with the Parish Church that still runs today. Fondly remembered are the monthly dress-up occasions; themes include Cowboys, Pirates, Dad's Army, Last of the Summer Wine, Alice in Wonderland to name a few. Many of these activities suffered first due to the amalgamation with the Penzance Circuit and the resultant the loss of an enthusiastic, permanent minister, secondly the lockdowns that occurred during the early years of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and thirdly due to the increase in legislation regarding Safeguarding and Volunteer activity, necessary, unfortunately but burdensome.



The Chapel is home to many annual events, concerts as already discussed, but featuring high in the calendar is the Annual Christmas Tree Festival. A sight to behold, as the various community groups in St Just decorate a tree to a theme on a single morning in December to be enjoyed by the whole town as they file in throughout the Christmas period to enjoy the sight of 24 twinkling trees amongst the pews. It's become a tradition, the concept rescued from neighbouring Sennen after it ended there. Open from the day of decoration to New Year and only closing on Christmas Day itself. Beloved by the community, and the perfect backdrop for the season's services. The perfect example of doing for the love of doing.

Creatively, the Chapel has earned an international reputation, with acoustics and capacity of a size and scale that has welcomes huge crowds to extremely successful performances and cultural events.

In 2018 David James opened the doors to the Chapel, it's only illumination the backlit pulpit. The atmosphere was enough to convince Ed Rowe (the Kernow King) that this was the place to stage his now award-winning play Hireth, written to mark the centenary of the end of World War One. The production told the story of Cornwall's forgotten war heroes, those who swapped the "dirty, dark and dangerous tunnels of Geevor for the deadly underground warzone beneath the Western front". Speaking later Ed Rowe said;

*"We knew Hireth would require a sizeable venue, but nowhere seemed to quite fit the bill...we needed somewhere very special. Magical, almost. I stumbled on The Miners Chapel in St Just after a recommendation that I check it out, and what can I say? I fell in love straight away! ...as soon as I stepped through those doors, I knew Hireth (Cornish language meaning longing for home) had to be there"*  
Edward Rowe, performer, playwright, Cornish legend

It remains to be said, that there cannot be a family in St Just with children attending the local schools who haven't sat in the pews to watch their children sing Christmas Carols or attend any number of concerts instigated by the school. We will turn to their voices in the following section which focuses on the battle for the Chapel, and its future but the relationship between the school and its community is worthy of a pause. At a time when the national curriculum has become a 'one size fits all' plan for education, the local schools, have maintained an approach that weaves the local history of the community throughout its daily timetable. The Chapel is part of this story, a performance space for concerts yes, but it is also a classroom, ready to provide the schools with an arena in which to explore our history, and our place within the community.



## **A Story of Saviour: Standing on the shoulders of everyone before**

*Susan sits in the pews and looks towards the organ. She sees the face of her mother, before she turns and begins to play, as she did for over 50 years. Beside her, she feels the presence of her Grandmother and remembers tugging at her and needing the lavatory. This was a different memory to the time she couldn't understand why she couldn't talk, "he's talking" she says, gesturing towards the preacher. Susan comes to remember these moments, she comes to sit and contemplate, to find her peace.*

Sometimes, it can be just one moment that changes everything. When a lost Korean trumpeter earns £10 from a private lesson, and hands that precious money over to help save the chapel, it ignites a movement. A movement that will see the St Just Methodist Chapel taken on by a charitable trust named the St Just Miners Chapel who will spend years working to keep the doors open and secure its future.

This is a Chapel that wants to be used, this is a Chapel that is alive. Every floorboard, pew, window, granite block breathes with the two hundred years of life that has sung and moved within it.

*The fabric of the building, of the echoes of the people that sat in it. You are absorbing it, the community, the sense.*

In June 2025, pupils from Cape Cornwall School came to the Chapel for a workshop, its aim to gather meaningful input from young people about the Chapel, what it means to them, how it makes them feel and how they see its future. The purpose of this writing has been to capture the Social History of the Chapel, but also go further, to try and get to the heart, the soul, the sense of awe, wonder, its sense of place. It seems fitting to end with the voices of those young people who perfectly sum up the desires of the whole community, and its diaspora.

It was clear that the students felt it was important to preserve the Chapel's history, architecture, and spiritual purpose. They wanted to protect features like the roof, organ and piano. They definitely wanted to see upgrades as well but these upgrades should be a balance between modern use and historic integrity, challenging us to ensure it is carefully managed.

*It makes me feel like I need to be respectful and sensitive, about the people that have been in here, prayed here and socialised here.*

*It helps people unite as a community.*



## A Conclusion, of sorts

*A figure stands in the fog smitten burial yard. They have come in looking for something but they aren't sure quite what it is. Guided here by a sense that that missing thing could be found amongst the stones, perhaps the pews? They make their way around to the front of the Chapel, feeling a little overawed, unsure if they should be there, they creep to the door and listen. It's open, why shouldn't they go in? A door crashes open, and they freeze, they are about to be caught and then a friendly voice says, "Hello, welcome, come in out of that weather. Are you looking for something?"*

*"A name" The figure says, "I was looking for a name."*

*"Ah, I see, well we can certainly help you there..."*

*The figure moves inside, looks up to the pulpit, amongst the pews, and they know.*

*This is the place that they have been looking for. Hireth.*

The strength of the Chapel's identity comes from the three hundred years of the people that brought it to every next moment. Three hundred years of donations, fundraisers, concerts, teas, bazaars; of sermons, services, funerals, marriages and baptisms. We are of the Chapel; the Chapel is of us.

Writing a Social History of such a beloved, important place as the St Just Miners Chapel is like opening a treasure chest. Photographs, artefacts, memories, hopes and dreams come tumbling out and demand to be organised, to be celebrated. It is impossible to end.

## Acknowledgements

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