

Opening of Albion Square

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Opening Services to be on Thursday, 22nd November, when The Rev. G.B. Macdonald of London will preach in the Forenoon at 11 o'clock and in the evening at 6. A Public Tea Meeting will be held at half past Three o'clock in the Bank Buildings. The following Sunday, 25th November, Rev. J. Harding will preach in the Forenoon at half past Ten and in the Evening at Six o'clock, and J.N. Knapp Esq. (of Newport) will preach in the Afternoon at half past Two o'clock.

The following Sunday, 2nd December, the Rev. J. Lomas (Late President of the Conference) preached. The following week, the Chepstow Advertiser reported on these events. The Celebration of the opening of Albion Square Wesleyan Methodist Church was a great cause for celebration. By this time, all but £200 had been raised towards the building costs of £1260 16s 5d. The debt was cleared within 2 years, an achievement which made possible the consideration of further development. This took the form of a schoolroom, with a vestry and two other small rooms added later.

OUR CHURCH IN 1855

The pulpit was centrally placed in the sanctuary under the stained glass window, the communion area being enclosed by a semicircular rail. The original communion table was still in use 125 years later. A set of choir pews faced the centre, with a small pipe organ standing in the corner. This was serviced by a lad who was paid 3d to pump it. Displaying commendable ingenuity, the designers managed a seating layout to accommodate 250 people, about 80 more than at present. Obviously comfort had a low priority. Each family had its own pew and for this privilege, they paid rent, their names being shown on a card inside the pew door which was thoughtfully provided with a bracket to accommodate umbrellas.

Impression of how the interior must have been at the time of the opening of the Albion Square Wesleyan Methodist Church, painted by Jack Vallis.

