

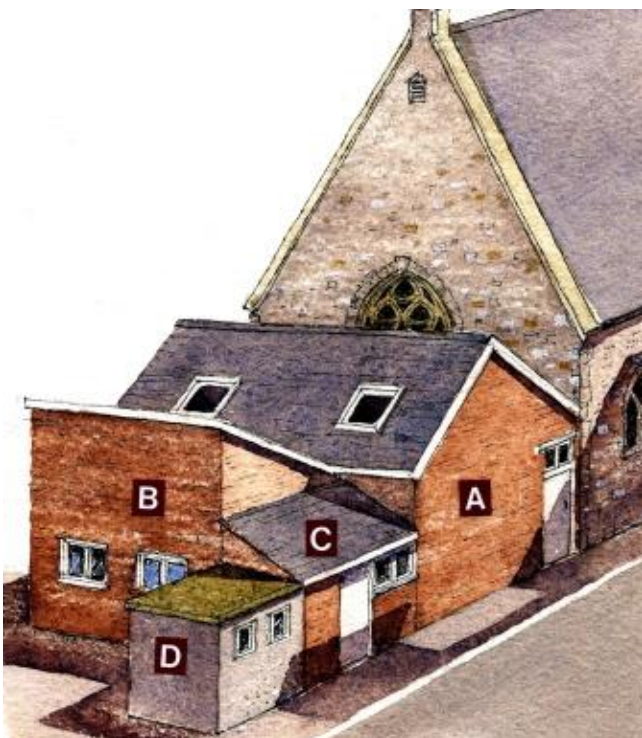
A Growing Methodist Church

Finally, under the Act of Union 1932, the Wesleyans, together with the Primitive Methodists, formed The Methodist Church as it is today. The church, in fact, seemed to reflect the generally difficult period of the late '20's and the 1930's. For many years finances were very lean, with collections as low as 15/- (75p) per Sunday, and it was necessary to make several "special efforts" to pay their way. In **1933**, after many meetings, it was decided that the "United Methodist" Church in Moor Street (now the site of the Conservative Club) should be sold, and the members joined Albion Square. Following the sale of Moor Street Church, it was also decided to purchase a new pipe organ. The organ came from Worcester, but the cost, plus fitting a new motor and alteration of the Church, came to double the proceeds, so it took two years of continual efforts to pay for it. The stewards even started a waste paper collection to augment finances. Contrary to expectations, the amalgamation seemingly did not result in any real improvement, and by 1936, the membership was only 58 with an average weekly attendance of 10.

Revival

By the early days of the Second World War, however, a marked improvement became evident largely due to the growth of a very strong youth section. The minister was Rev. Geoffrey Joycey, who later served as Chaplain to the army before moving to Canada and joining the United Church.

The approach of the **1955** Centenary prompted a series of renovations. The organ was completely overhauled after 20 years service. As well as re-slating the roof, rewiring, replacing windows and painting doors, new notice boards were ordered. In an attempt to increase comfort, the pews were remodelled which resulted in a reduction in the capacity to 200. The cost was £1760, the Trustees being guarantors for a loan from the Chapel Committee. It was 1964 before this debt was finally cleared, by which time a further expenditure of £620 was incurred with the discovery of dry rot in the gallery. The 1960's saw an increase in the population of Chepstow with the building of Llanwern Steelworks which necessitated the provision of housing for the workers. The opening of the Severn Bridge in October 1966 also brought more people into the area which proved to be convenient for commuting to work in Newport, Cardiff and Bristol. As a consequence of these developments, new life was being brought into the Church. While this was to be welcomed, it became increasingly evident that the schoolroom could not provide an adequate base for future activities, so once again discussions about funding became crucial.



Methodist Premises up to 1975

- A. The Old School Hall
- B. 2 small meeting rooms
- C. Kitchen
- D. Toilets (access outside from the left)