

Recollections of Bethany

From an early age I was taken to Bethany Church at Coppins Bridge, so my memories span over 65 years. The things that stand out in my mind are the Sunday School outings including trips to a London airport. In my teens I remember many visiting speakers including the London Metropolitan Police and Fred Lemon, an ex-prisoner. Norman Thompson also arranged for youth groups to come over from France with Brian Tatford. It was great to see other young people from a different country. John Knight, a visiting speaker, did "magic" so he was very popular.

I don't remember much about the transition from the old Bethany to the new one since I was away as a student at the time. When I returned to Bethany in the late 70s there seemed to be a lot going on in the church. The Bethany Gospel Singers led by Margaret Dawson were in full flow as well as the Junior Choir and Junior Orchestra. The new Bethany church was packed when the choir hosted senior citizens' teas. People were collected by car and when they arrived they were given a tea provided by the Bethany Gospel Singers (Meg and Mir did the washing up). This took place on a Sunday afternoon and the tea was followed by a service with the choir on the platform leading the singing. Joe Dawson had fun with quizzes and giving out prizes, followed by a gospel talk.

About the same time there was a lively young people's fellowship led by Phil and Brenda before they went to Honduras. Then we had camps in the summer on farmland belonging to John and Ann Humphreys at Mottistone.

We've always had great teaching at Bethany thanks to the elders and visiting speakers in all the time I can remember.

Valerie Wills