

Brixham, Devon. TQ5 8JR

Thursday 4th Feb. 2010.

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter enclosed with the February (March issue of the Awerley Centre Echo. We would like to continue to receive the magazine by post and to this end we are enclosing a cheque for £10 to help with production and postage costs. It's amazing how time rushes by, it is certainly some while ago that we made our last contribution! We will be celebrating our forty-eighth wedding anniversary in August, the memories of the happy times that we had from the mid nineteen fifties to nineteen sixty two as members of the Awerley MAYC Youth Club are ever with us, those good folk in charge helped to set our paths in life and establish our faith, for which we will be ever grateful! As you may know, we lived in North Devon for about thirty years, moving here almost five and a half years ago to be near members of our family. Being small-Methodist-Chapel people we transferred our memberships from Combe Martin to Higher Brixham (Milton Street) where we found a welcome and very special fellowship. The Chapel was built in 1889 to serve the Primitive Methodists of that part of Brixham (Cow Town), Brixham proper having it's large 1862 building in Fore Street. We soon found ourselves involved and I was appointed Property Steward which kept me very busy. Our dear place of worship and community life related to the Hall was suffering the ravages of weather and time, each yearly property condition return involved some soul-searching replies, and when it came to arranging my first quinquennial report with circuit help I was really worried! At that time we had a change of Minister who took one look, the inspection revealed expenditure beyond our means to rectify faults, a meeting was called and a decision made that the Chapel and Hall be closed, an alternative meeting place be found for the members and the buildings disposed of by sale! You can imagine how we all felt, particularly as it all happened so quickly. We held our last service there in August, the nearby Parish Church kindly offered us the use of it's Hall on Sunday mornings which we accepted, so that we have kept our little fellowship

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together. We have a large walk-in storage area and have to set everything up before services and pack everything away after. We have the use of facilities for the long-established refreshment and necessary get-together after services. One of our older members, still hurting, recently said, "we are a Church in a cupboard, nothing to show when we have gone home." I went into the Chapel after the last service and looked around, memorial stones, the dear old pews and thought of all the good folk who had worked so hard over the years, the doors closed for ever to regular worshippers and visitors and must admit shed a few tears. I know that it is not the buildings that we worship, but they do become precious to us, and the loss of a place of witness so prominent in a community is hard to bear. What upset me and others was that we enjoyed a wide secular community use of our Hall, Cubs, Scouts, two dance schools, playgroup etc. and when we expressed concern at the closure meeting were told by one who you would not expect to utter such words, "they will have to find somewhere else for their activities". I removed the top section of the pulpit together with the IHS fall and incorporated them in a new preaching lectern that I made, it is placed on a table in our new place of worship, so that Ministers and local preachers can use it and if they wish as is custom place their hands on the edges as they deliver the word, as countless others have done before them over the past 120 years! The main Methodist Church in Brixham allow us a Saturday Coffee Morning once a month in their Hall in the main shopping area, so that we can make a contribution to the Parish Church for our use of their Hall. Ann cooks and contributes items for the cake stall, she will by the way send Marian the next recipe in good time for the April/May Anerley Centre Echo.

Sorry if I have gone on a bit about our worship situation, but I thought that as Property Steward of our beloved Anerley Methodist Church you would understand and pray for us. May your Church continue to serve its community for many years to come and may God bless you all!

Mike and Ann Vickery.