

## **Quakers in Bromsgrove**

The first Quaker meeting took place around 1655, probably at the Manor House in Chadwick. Later a meeting house was established in Hanover Street.

## **Methodists in Bromsgrove**

John Wesley passed through Bromsgrove several times in the course of his travels.

Noake records that in 1797 there was a society of nineteen members 'steady but not very lively' including John Bott, a needle maker.

A chapel was built in Kidderminster Road in 1832. It was replaced in 1884 by a chapel in New Road. The present church building in Stratford Road opened in 1981-3.

The Primitive Methodists did not exist as a separate body until 1810. At the opening in 1861 of their chapel in Birmingham Road, the floor became unstable, and the congregation had to be evacuated outside for the service.

## **Congregationalists in Bromsgrove**

There were four independent meeting houses in Bromsgrove in the mid 1660s. John Spilsbury (who was also vicar of the parish church) founded an independent chapel in Windsor Street c.1689; it was originally two barns converted for worship. [It was later used by Methodists before it came back into Independents' hands]. It seems to have been in possession of the Methodists in the early nineteenth century.

Bromsgrove Independents suffered much from persecution in their early days, apparently by those opposed to the Act of Toleration of 1689.

By 1716 it was recorded that there were 400 'Independent hearers in Bromsgrove and 150 Baptists.'

Disagreements concerning theology arose over the years, and the congregation split to form their own separate congregations on several occasions. (this was not unique to the Independents, it can, for example, also be seen in the history of the Methodist church). As a result of the split, a new chapel was built by the seceders in Worcester Street. This Worcester Street chapel was sold to the Baptists in 1815 and was then used as a playhouse and by the Wesleyans.

The Independents (Congregational church) built a new chapel in Chapel Street, which opened in 1832. The Congregationalists became united with the English Presbyterians to form the United Reformed Church in 1972.

The transfer of property between the non-conformist congregations is complicated, but seems to indicate some tolerance of the beliefs of other dissenters.

## **Baptists in Bromsgrove**

It has been written that to date, Bromsgrove Baptists have met in at least 7 different buildings.

The founder of Bromsgrove Baptists, John Eckels arrived in 1651 and had been 'trained' at the Baptist church in Bewdley. There were already a 'few' Baptists in the town when he arrived. By 1672 the church covenant bore the names of 13 members - the poor increase probably due to persecution. Disputes among the members resulted in the founding of a second church by Eckels and many left with him. The dispute was finally resolved, but the two distinct churches remained.

By 1719 a Baptist meeting house had been built on land at the back of a house owned by Potter Arnold. A new meeting house was built in 1770 in Howe, or Holy Lane (now Church Street).

More disputes followed, which depleted the 'parent' church and in 1814 a group of seceders took the former Independent chapel in Worcester Street. After this split was resolved the Church St meeting house was too small, so they all removed to the Worcester Street chapel. The Church St chapel was sold in 1828.

The congregation in Worcester Street continued to grow and a new chapel was built in New Road, opening for worship in 1867.

There was another secession in 1868, and the group leaving, purchased the old chapel in Worcester Street!!

The New Street building was replaced in 1976 and again in 1990.