

## HISTORIC KIDDERMINSTER

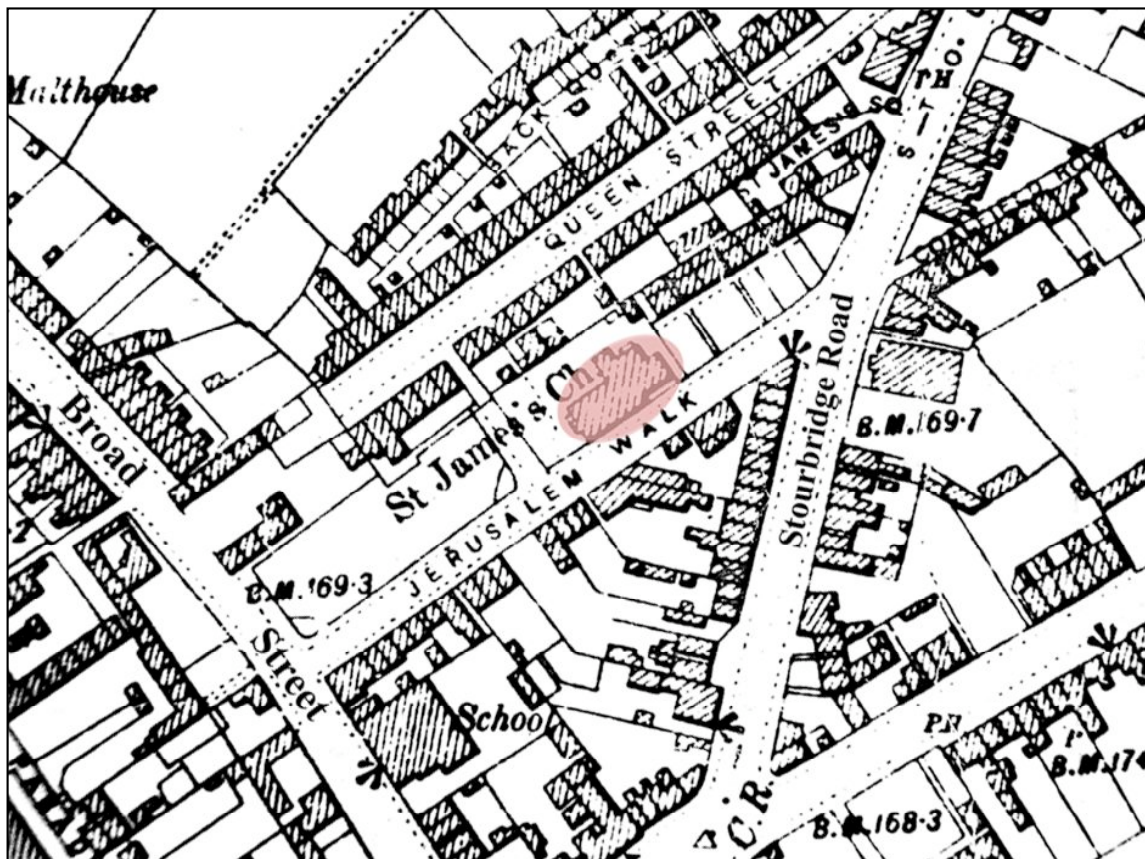
### ST JAMES'S CHURCH JERUSALEM WALK, HORSEFAIR KIDDERMINSTER

Grid Ref: SO 833773

Project Ref: 153 By Patricia Fisher, October/November 2006

This research forms part of the Historic Kidderminster record of buildings "A Local Heritage Initiative Project".

#### Location



OS Map 1902, Grid Ref: SO 833773

In researching St James's Church I used various sources both in Kidderminster Library and at home. Margaret Bradley had covered St James's for a Bishop's Certificate and there was also quite a lot of information in 'Born on the Manor' by Betty Park. I also used the IGI index on Family Search.org Ancestry.com for 1851 and 1861 census entries 'Access to Archives' and 'Google' websites to search for information. The photographs of St James's Church were supplied by Mattie Underhill.

In her study Margaret Bradley said that St James's Church was opened in 1873 and was

closed as an Anglican place of worship in 1977. It later re-opened as the Salvation Army Hall and exists as such today. She goes on to say that St James's Mission Church was built on land given by Rev H J Fortescue who was a curate at St Mary's Church. The venture was intended to be self-funding. He and his sisters also paid for St Barnabas Church, Franche, to be built in memory of their parents. In 1875, rooms were opened as the St James's branch of the Church of England Temperance Society and the Rev Fortescue paid for this himself. In 1885, the Rev Fortescue sold even more land near to St James's to the Borough Council on condition that it became open space forever. This is recorded in the Corporation minute book, and the Jerusalem Walk playground was thrown open for children.

Rev J H Fortescue came to the town from Worcester where his father was a Canon. However the family originally came from Castle Hill in Devon which was the family home.



**St James's Church, Horsefair – Front/Side view (Mattie Underhill 2004)**

St James's Church was built as a chapel of ease for St Mary's Church. Wooden Galleries which were at St Mary's became unsafe and this meant that there was not enough room for all of the congregation. The people who attended St James's Church were included on the Electoral Roll of St Mary's and All Saints Parish Church. (Betty Park, *Born on the Manor*, p 41) According to George Hall the church was designed by a Birmingham architect John Davies and was built by Richard Thompson of Park Lane Kidderminster. Work began in late summer 1872. The church is of red brick construction in Gothic Style. The nave measures 50 feet by 25 feet and the chancel measures 22 feet by 18 feet. The seating capacity is about 200. The inside of the church is very plain although at some time a false ceiling has been fitted which obscures any architectural features which may still be there.



**St James's Church, Horsefair - Rear view (Mattie Underhill 2004)**

### **Bibliography**

1. 'A History of St James's Church, Horsefair, Kidderminster' - Margaret Bradley
2. 'Horsefair and Broadwaters - Born on the Manor' - Betty Park
3. 'St James's Church' - George Hall
4. 'Ancestry.com' census data
5. IGI index Family search.org
6. 'Access to Archives' website