

Introduction

We sincerely hope you enjoy reading or browsing through this book produced to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Methodist Church in Bretton. Some Bretton families, with connections to the Church, have provided photographs of Old Bretton and these have been painstakingly restored and reproduced by Mr Bill Hanks, a resident in the village for 25 years. Bill has dedicated considerable time and energy in the lead up to the celebrations, listening to people who were willing to share with him their treasured memories of life in Bretton. As a result he has gathered, co-ordinated and selected words and images for this publication which he hopes will act as an important marker in Bretton's long and rich history.

In addition to the visual images you will also find a reprint of the booklet produced by the late Eric Williams to mark the Church's Centenary celebrations in 1959. Eric not only tells us about the history of the Church and its founders, but also provides us with a succinct history of the ancient village of Bretton. He reminds us of what was happening in the world in and around 1859 when the Church was built, largely by families living in the village at the time. Reference is made to the *Crimean War of 1854-56*, the *Great Indian Mutiny of 1857-58* and the *American Civil War*. The Williams family name appears in the minutes of many Church Council meetings, evidencing lifelong membership of Bretton Church. Eric was not only a scholar but also organist and Property Steward. He played the old organ – referred to by one member as the 'brute' because it was so temperamental. Shortly after Eric's death the 'brute' became even more unpredictable. Its blower, situated in the School Room, made the strangest of uncontrollable moans and rumbles and everyone knew the 'brute' had to be replaced. Money donated by the Williams family was used to purchase a new organ but for some time the two, new and old, little and large, remained alongside each other until the 'brute' was eventually removed.

Reflecting on 1959, when Eric wrote his Centenary booklet, reminds us that this was, for a whole host of reasons, an important year in 20th century history. Life for many was improving and Britain was in recovery through a period of transition after the Second World War. The space race was underway and the USSR probe, Luna 3, sent back images of the dark side of the moon, just before the USA launched Explorer 7 - strange to think that even Luna 2 had landed on the moon before the first stretch of the M1 had been completed! 1959 was also the year in which Alec Issigonis put his radical design solution on the road in the form of the 'Mini', which then replaced the 'Morris Minor' as the UK's most popular car. The film 'Some Like it Hot', starring screen icon Marilyn Monroe alongside Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon was released and had a major influence on style and fashion. 1959 saw the first 'Barbie Doll' on sale and 'Rock and Roll' was getting underway. It was also the birth year for several of the now influential, or rich and famous, for instance film director Kevin Spacey, television mogul Simon Cowell, musician Morrissey and Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York. Posters of Che Guevara were appearing on every student's wall and many young people were getting ready for the revolutionary 1960s (see Wikipedia for more information on 1959).