

whole of the district around Bretton was a marshy quagmire, full of danger and infested by evil characters. The whole area was subject to floods at every tide and the parish registers record many tragedies, including one dated 1551 where it is recorded that "One Foulke Duckworth and his 6 children were drowned at Hope's Place."

In the 18th century a paved way was made over this marshy land by order of the Glynnes of Hawarden with a tollgate at Bretton, and later a canal was constructed from Bretton to Saltney, most probably alongside, and parallel to, the fairly new turnpike road. Hemingway's History of Chester, written in 1831, gives a most interesting account of this canal which was built in 1768 by order of Sir John Glynnne with a view to effecting easier communication between his colliery at Sandycroft and the city of Chester. Hemingway goes on to say that "The coals were accordingly carted to a coalyard at Bretton and forwarded thence on pongs constructed for the purpose. This canal, however, proved an unsuccessful speculation. the coals having being unloaded at Bretton, reloaded on the pongs of the canal, unloaded at the end of the canal and reloaded on pongs on the river, became so broken as to be scarcely saleable." The canal itself appears to have been filled up about the year 1775, and three years later an Act of Parliament led to the reclamation of the whole of the Saltney marshes, some 2000 acres, and this work in the course of time led to the pleasant pasture lands familiar to all of us.

Having sketched in so very briefly and inadequately the history of Bretton itself let us turn to a time exactly 100 years ago when our Church was built. One hundred years ago - what a vastly interesting exercise it is to project one's thoughts back and sketch in for oneself the historical background of those years, when a few faithful and determined people - our own forebears - were meeting together to discuss the building of the Church. Although it was actually built between July and September 1859 it is safe to assume that there would have been many talks and meetings over a fairly extensive period prior to the actual building, and during these years were fought the Crimean War (1854-56) and the Great Indian Mutiny, which began in 1857 and ended in May 1858 just over a year before the Church was built, while within two years of its building there was to take place the great American Civil War. What a comfort and an inspiration to know that in spite of war and rumours of war. God's work, as always, moved forward slowly but surely.

Although the records of the early days of the Church are very few and most difficult to trace, I will do my best to convey to the reader the sequence of events as they most likely occurred. Prior to the building of the Church there seems to be very little doubt that non-conformist religious meetings were held in various houses in the village and also, as