

WESLEYAN METHODIST CHAPEL
Back Ends, Chipping Campden



From: Non-Conformist Chapels and Meeting-Houses Gloucestershire RCHME
SP 148390

Stone with ashlar E front and slate roof; built as a house in early 19th century, converted to a chapel c.1840 when the doorway was resited. Remains of defaced denominational inscription on N wall. Restored to domestic use c. 1975.

From: Chapels and Meeting Houses in the Vale of Evesham B G Cox 1982

There appear to have been Methodists here in the 18th century, but the earliest reference to a meeting place occurs in 1808, when the house of William Robins was licensed. Christopher Whitfield, in his *History of Chipping Campden* (1958), said that the chapel in West End Terrace was built in 1841 on the site of a house bought by the Methodists for the purpose. Later in the century the cause at Campden had declined to almost nothing; the chapel was closed and the vicar had the use of it for parish purposes. Joseph Webb was later instrumental in regaining possession of it for Methodist use. **The chapel was again allowed to fall into disuse in the 1970s and is again a private house. It is clear from the exterior that it was built as such, and there is nothing now to indicate that it was once a chapel.**

1851 Census HO 129

Erected 1841 [former tablet: 'Wesleyan Chapel 1841']

Building: Separate and entire, exclusive use

Sittings: Free 150 Other 60 Total 210 Standing none

Attendance 30 Mar: Aft 150 + SS 35 Total 215

Eve 110 Total 110

Avge Attnce Aft 180 = SS 35 Total 215

Eve 120 Total 120

Dates 31 March 1851

Signed John Long , chapel steward [silk throwster employing 58 people – 1851 census]

[In 1841 Robert Miles sold his house to the Methodists for their use as a chapel – Chipping Campden History Society]

Kelly's 1914

Weslyan Methodist (Evesham Circuit) 10.30am & 6.30pm

Kelly's 1919

Weslyan Methodist (Evesham Circuit) 10.30am & 6.30pm

Gloucestershire Archives: limited historical information

PRIMITIVE METHODISTS

1851 Census HO 129

Denomination	Primitive Methodist Preaching House [crossed out]
Name	None
Erected	[not given]
Building	No
Sittings	Free 40 Other none Standing room for 20. Total 40
Attndce 30 Mar	morning none, aft none eve 60 Total 60
Avge Attndce	[not given]
Remarks	Service only in the evening
Dated	6 April 1851
Signed	Richard James, class leader [labourer on the turnpike road] Sheep Street, Chipping Campden



From the 1851 census, Richard James probably lived in the right hand cottage, possibly the meetings were held there.

UNDER THE ELM TREE



In the late 1800's the Elm Tree in Lower High Street was the frequently-used site for open-air gatherings. Joseph Arch came in 1874 to address local agricultural labourers, but more often the speakers were religious evangelists who used their voices to full effect, perhaps even 'rabble-rousing' in style. The disturbance was not welcomed by those living nearby, and eventually a complaint resulted in a court case and a question in Parliament.

Evesham Journal Saturday 9th June 1883:

On Wednesday evening a Gospel Temperance address was delivered by Mr Bruce (of the Weston Temperance League) in his usual effective style. The weather being favourable the meeting was held under the "Old Elm Tree". There was a large number in attendance: several pledges were taken.

According to the Evesham Journal report in 1889, a Wesleyan Methodist Lay Evangelist, R. M. Kedward, was taken to court for continuing to preach loudly after being asked to stop one evening, having similarly preached on previous evenings.

Frederick Pethard made the complaint because two of his children were ill, as testified to by Dr Dewhurst, although the defence solicitor forced the admission that *'he was not aware that one of his boys, aged ten years, was at the service on Tuesday night, joining lustily in the singing. He did not admit that the service closed at nine o'clock. It had been the practice to hold services under the tree for many years. The Salvation Army were there most Sundays, and the Baptists held services there sometimes. These services, however, were not held so late as the one he complained of.'*

Mrs Pethard, said *'she did not like this loud preaching. Defendant was not rude, but excitable. He used such a loud voice he drowned his own words.'*

The question asked in the House of Commons of the Home Secretary referred to the part played by Rev. Canon Bourne, the local Church of England clergyman who *'sat upon the Bench to judge the case, and that upon an adjournment being asked for by the evangelist, in order to secure legal assistance, and without hearing the evidence, Canon Bourne described the Wesleyan Evangelist as a street brawler...'*

The Home Secretary declined to intervene, but it reflects the strong feeling at the time between the established church and the non-conformists, which also marked the political and social divide.