

1940s

It was wartime. ...the church, belonging to the Methodists, lay derelict, the wind howling through a gaping hole in the roof, rain and snow having free play, great parts of the ceiling burned down, almost every window broken...the floor covered with ashes and sand which had mounted up through the three or four years that the building had been out of use, no light, no water... At last the great dedication day came. On Sabbath, November 18th, our new home was consecrated to God... The Croydon church now stands as a monument showing us that as God was with our pioneers so He is with us. It speaks to us of the high duties and responsibilities yet to be won. *By A.H. Brandt, from British Advent Messenger, Dec. 29, 1944*

1950s

The Croydon members with loyal help from Lewisham, Brixton, and Wimbledon gave out 30,000 handbills. It was a colossal task and made more so by the uncongenial ground conditions...however, through the weeks that were to follow, while the attendance was never very large, we were greatly encouraged to see the same people come back each Sunday. Then we moved to a smaller hall, the interested ones followed... On the beautiful summer's evening of July 24th, the Croydon church was full to capacity, for members from the Wimbledon, Brixton, and Lewisham churches, as well as the Croydon members, were assembled to witness Pastor J.C. French baptise seven new believers... We do pray that the Lord will be very near to these dear souls as they strive to follow their blessed Lord through the perils of our earthly way. *By Hazel McMullen, Croydon Church Clerk, British Advent Messenger, September 30, 1950.*

1960s

Sabbath February 15th, was a cold, snowy yet sunny day. It was also the climax of all the re-building, and renovating of the church in Sydenham Road, West Croydon. On this day the church, once belonging to the Evangelical Free Church, and one dedicated by that denomination to God, was re-dedicated by Dr Bernard E. Seton, President of the British Union Conference. For this service he was assisted by Pastor E. H. Foster, President of the South England Conference, and the church pastor, James C Collins... May we all be dedicated to God's service in this corner of His great field, and may we as a Church serve as a beacon set on a hill until Jesus comes. *By M. J. Sayers, P.R. Sec. British Advent Messenger, May, 9, 1969*

1970s

During the warm and sunny evening of Sunday, September 20th, an interesting Investment sale was staged at the Croydon Church, which was we-patronized by

church-members, friends, and well-wishers from our sister churches. Before the commencement of the sale, a variety musical programme was presented under the leadership of Mr. Ronald Luke. It not only consisted of solos, double mixed quartet, but also the "Golden Chords"- an all male quartet from the Balham church. An organ recital by Bill Tolman of the Chiswick church was an added feature... To conclude the programme, a colour film: "Crossroads of History" was screened... As a result of this effort a handsome sum of £30 3s. was realized. *By Ronald I. Valens. P.R. Secretary, British Advent Messenger, November 6, 1970.*

1980s

Sunday, 20 September 1981, was a great day in the life of the Croydon church, for it was on this day that the years of prayer and waiting, months of preparation and hard work were finally rewarded with the dedication of the new church. With a seating capacity of over four hundred, the church was filled on this lovely day; the air was electric with anticipation and excitement, and we were not disappointed... The amount you love is the amount you sacrifice. May you never lose the vision of sacrificing to God or you'll lose your soul. You're never richer than when you give your best for God. May the saving power of Christ be introduced from this pulpit. Bring your friends to worship here. This is the Gate of Heaven. *By David Coshan, Messenger, 22 January 1982*

1990s

The Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition is one of the most prestigious choral competitions in Europe for amateur choirs, and receives national television coverage... The London Adventist Chorale were placed first in the competition with the Croydon Gospel Choir one of the runners-up in the final. Ken Burton conducted both choirs, and was applauded by all for his achievement in taking two choirs through all the stages of the competition... *By Trevor Johnson, Messenger, 3 March 1995*

One of the four elders in ordained at Croydon Church on Sabbath 18 March, three were ladies! The ordination took place before a packed congregation of 465 members and visitors who gathered for the Communion service. While it says something about the entire Croydon congregation in asking three ladies to serve in a total number of eight elders, it also reflects the desire of the pastor, Hamilton Williams, to ensure that all talents and gifts are put to use in the church... *By Com. Sec. Messenger, 5 May 1995*

2000s

Wallington SDA was formed in 2005 by Pastor Kavaloh who was pastoring at the time and Pastor Dusan who was an intern at Croydon at the same time. Pastor Kavaloh and Bro Burton felt the need for a branch of Croydon to be started in Wallington, this was

because Bro Burton had been sowing the seeds of the gospel to the people of Wallington some years prior to the inspiration. Bro Burton also felt that the members who lived in Wallington and the surrounding areas who worshipped in Croydon needed a church of their own and prayed for God to plant a church in the area after he had sowed the seeds of Gods truth to the people in Wallington... *By Jeremie Toussaint-Bourne, A written message to Croydon church on her centenary, 21 Oct. 2017.*

Around 2002 Pastor Bovell and a few members from Croydon church sought to establish a church in the Beckenham area. They set up church in the Pabya Centre and were joined by members from other churches who lived locally. They wanted to be a Community Church that was relevant to the people around them. Initially the group consisted of 12-18 members and grew over the years. They were able to purchase the building they had been worshipping in and the members continue to bring Hope to their community. *Adapted from Paulette Bradnock message to Croydon church on her centenary, 21 Oct. 2017.*

2010s

Danny Shelton, founder of the Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN) recently encouraged the Croydon members to take personal 'responsibility and take the Gospel to a lost and dying world'. This was part of his effort to rally support for soul-winning in preparation for the 3ABN-SEC outreach scheduled for September this year. He shared stories of how he and his TV ministry had made inroads in areas once considered too tough to evangelise. He encouraged the audience not to be discouraged by remarks that London is too tough an area to evangelise, as everybody needs the Gospel: 'Some just don't know it yet.' Mr Shelton was accompanied by singers from The Gaithers, who warmed hearts with the high quality of their singing. *By Neil Nunes (elder) Messenger, 11 March 2016*

"Since then several members and ministers have come and gone – taken by an adventurous spirit, death, or other callings. Yet, somehow, their spirit lies interred within the very memories and reminiscences of present members. A sense of 'holy heritage' – bequeathed to the children of the 80's – haunts those who have, in imagination, toiled with the Pathfinders of yester year, trying to catch the broken threads of time, and purpose, mission and destiny. "Lord God of hosts, be with us yet, lest we forget, lest we forget". Pastor Hugo Kennedy, 1986, 70 years in Croydon.

Compiled by Marlène Levy

Lest we forget! Lest we forget!

As the curtains are coming down on our double celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the reformation and the 100th anniversary of the existence of our church, we ought to take this opportunity to remind ourselves that history has a way of repeating itself. Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it. As we are living in the last days and the prophesied end of the world, it is high time we reformed our lives. Despite the relative and apparent tranquility, the church will soon experience its most severe test. Therefore, let us live fearlessly like our advent pioneers in an eager expectancy of the Second Return in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. For sister wrote: " We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." *Pastor Sam Ouadjo, A message to my Church, 24 Oct 2017.*

Our predecessors have left us a rich heritage that needs to be honoured. They left us a rich history that also needs to be taught to our children. Maybe you could share these snippets with your children today, tomorrow, next week, next month, next year...

1930s

The early part of our campaign (in 1937) in Croydon brought much that might have discouraged, had we not believed in the promises of God... For five successive evenings we had tempestuous rain, and all through there was the counter-attraction of Sunday cinemas. Our budget allowance, being small, restricted us to a cheap hall at the Public baths, which was uncomfortably cold, so that many who came once failed to return because of the unavoidable currents of cold air... then came a really fine Sunday evening which raised our hopes of a good audience, but on arriving at the theatre we found to our dismay, that it was already occupied by an amateur theatrical company. There had been a mistake on the part of the secretary in booking us the hall for that particular evening. We all felt that this was the worst blow of all...Bro. Bonney found a small club-room nearby. Nevertheless, the hall began to fill, and by the time we started our service fifty people had crowded in, and some members stood outside the door. We had a great blessing that night. The Lord came in to help us at the time when all our efforts had seemed to point to failure...The following Sunday we moved into our church meeting-hall, behind West Croydon Railway Station, and here we continued for the remainder of the year. *By F. C. Bailey, British Advent Messenger, March 18, 1938*