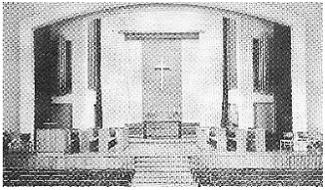


## World War II (1939 – 45) and Post War Developments



In many respects, WWII created similar conditions for local people as WWI, and the Leysian Mission tried to help wherever possible. A communal kitchen was provided for bombed-out people of the area, and in 1941 Darsdale, a property in Northamptonshire, was acquired as a home of rest and recovery for local Londoners. However, the Leysian Mission suffered a great loss itself, the bombing of its biggest meeting hall, and the slow if natural ageing process of its building. The post-war years thus became primarily a period of renewal and re-organisation. The 'New Hall' in the old building was opened in 1955; it was smaller than the original but more in keeping with the spirit and requirements of the times. The welfare state was beginning to assume many of the functions the Leysian Missions had once sought to provide for local people.

## A Changing Mission in Changing Times- 1980 Until Today



By the 1980s the world the Leysian Mission was set up to serve had changed dramatically. There was less obvious local need than in the 1880s, and many former members had either moved or passed away. The ageing building required expensive maintenance and fire and health and safety upgrades. One option was to look for smaller premises – the other to enter a fruitful partnership with a body of the same principles. Joint aims, close proximity in City Road and ties

with the same local community finally led to a partnership of the Leysian Mission with Wesley's Chapel on Easter Day 1989.

Links with the Leys School in Cambridge continue strong. A Wesley scholarship offers a number of children from the Islington area the opportunity to attend as boarders at the school. A dedicated Leysian Mission officer continues to look after the physical and spiritual welfare of people in the congregation and responds to their needs. Through advice and advocacy, representation and often dealing with complex and detailed casework, assistance is given to members who have difficulties with health and social care services, housing, settling disputes with organisations, money or who simply need advice; the original spirit and fire of the Leysian Mission are still very much alive!

# The Leysian Mission

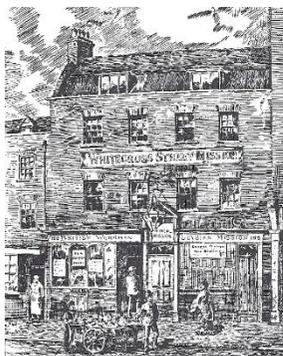


## A Short History

**Wesley's Chapel and the Leysian Mission have been joined since 1989 and form the present Methodist 35/1 (London District) circuit. However, for over one-hundred years, the Leysian Mission had a distinct separate identity and its own set of buildings close to the City of London and Wesley's Chapel.**

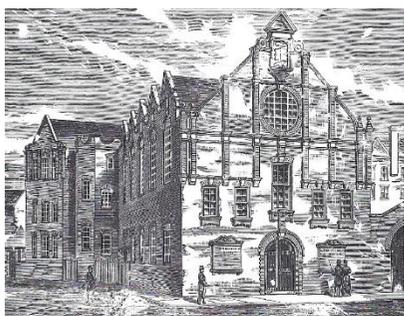
The Leysian Mission has, and always has had, close ties with the Leys School in Cambridge. This was opened in 1875. The school was set up to train prospective Methodist university entrants, who had only very recently started to be admitted to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge (1873). At the time the renowned churchman and biblical scholar, Dr William F. Moulton, was its headmaster.

## Beginning and First Premises



The Leysian Mission traces back its roots to 1886, when former pupils from the Leys School decided to help alleviate the bad social and living conditions in the Islington area (then Finsbury) and London's East End. The first premises were at 199 Whitecross Street and were paid for by the Wesleyan London Mission Authorities. From its start, the Mission provided a host of services, including daily prayer meetings, bible classes, a medical mission and a dispensary. There was also a library.

## Move to Errol Street



and survives to this day (occupied by the Royal Statistical Society).

By 1888 the Whitecross premises proved too small for the expanding Mission. Two plots in Errol Street were purchased for a combined sum of £4,150. The plan was to build purpose-designed premises to replace the Whitecross Street building, and the foundation stone for the new mission building was laid in 1889 by the Rev. Dr W.F. Moulton. The building was finished by 1890

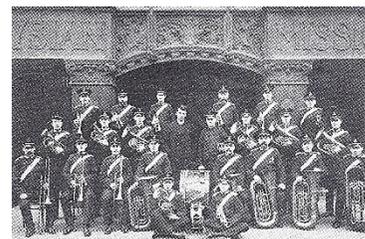
With more space, the offer of activities was broadened quickly; a Cricket Club, a Lad's Institute and Gymnasium, a Woman's "Total Abstinence Society" and a Brass Band, known as the 'Silver Band', were formed and a Penny Bank was organised. Early activities centred much on prayer and temperance, however, sport and physical well-being were also considered essential. It was around this time, in 1890, that the Leysian "Excelsior" Cricket Club first travelled to Cambridge to play The Leys School's "Third Eleven" team, thereby establishing a long-lived sporting tradition.

## Further Expansion



Within ten years of moving to Errol Street, the Mission found itself once more outgrowing its premises. A large and prominent site on City Road/Old Street was thus chosen and a new Mission, christened the 'Queen Victoria Hall' (also referred to as the 'New Building'), was built between 1902 and 1904. In comparison to the previous buildings, the new accommodation was palatial and helped to usher in the heyday of the Leysian Mission. Over 1,000 worshippers met every week, and so-called 'Monster Men Meetings', which arose from the contemporary Brotherhood movement popular at the time, often exceeded the number of weekly worshippers. It is said that whole housing blocks in the area lay deserted of men when the meetings were in progress! Through work such as this, the Leysian Mission managed to reach and assist many local households.

## World War I (1914-18 and the Interwar Years



The outbreak of war put a temporary break on the activities of the Mission, with many of its missionaries and members serving in the forces. Paradoxically, life for some local families also became easier during this time, as some families who had previously relied on casual and missionary relief work filled free posts left by those who had gone to war. Once over, the Mission's work was soon back to pre-war levels and experienced further expansion as the 1920s wore on – partially also due the ill effects of the Wall Street crash in 1929 and the General Strike. The orchestra, choir and brass band were hugely popular at this time, and attendance at Sunday School continued to rise, with 2,000 regular students signed up by 1930.