



H. GUY CHESTER

GENERAL SECRETARY 1919-1929.

IN rendering an account of the activities of the Muswell Hill Young People's Institute from the time of its inception in March 1919, one is conscious of the fact that we owe something to the past. Before giving therefore details of our inaugural Meeting, I would like to refer to the splendid work done on behalf of our Young People during those terrible four years of War, and also to those who laboured in this work prior to the War.

As far as I can gather, a Wesley Guild was in existence for many years, although it was a little overshadowed by the Literary Society, and greatly weakened during the War period. The Junior Temperance Guild was founded in 1908, and later this became the Junior Wesley Guild. When the War ended, and the young men returned, we had this background to work on, and we owe a debt of gratitude to all those who worked among the young people in the early years, and especially to the devoted and loyal band who carried on during 1914-18, among whom were Mr. S. Sowton, Mr. W. E. Labrum, and Mrs. Axtens.

In the early part of 1919, I, together with Miss Haigh, Mr. G. F. Copeland and Mr. W. H. Partridge, jnr. was asked about forming a Tennis Club. The Rev. T. Seaton Davies, who was then our Minister, gave us a good lead, and very soon many of us were working on some rough ground in Cascade Avenue, endeavouring to produce something on which Tennis might be played. Hard work and a good pull together, also a moderate outlay of money, soon had the place looking sufficiently attractive for a start to be made, and so the Muswell Hill Wesleyan L.T.C. came into being. The following September, with its shorter evenings, made us think of week evening activities, and a Meeting having been summoned, programmes were arranged, and sections formed to meet all the varied interests of the Young People for the Winter.

Our Devotional, Literary and Social Committee, fixed up an attractive list of Meetings once a week, and many of us can still remember the first night when Mr. Philip Middlemiss held us spellbound by his recital of Rudyard Kipling Poetry. Besides these regular gatherings, we set going the following Clubs: Football, Hockey, Badminton, Photographic and Debating, while our work on Sundays was the Meeting of the Institute in the Church Parlour every Sunday afternoon. The first Winter's work proved very successful, and the young people felt that a real effort had been made to meet their needs.

Since 1919 we have never turned back. Our Presidents have supported, encouraged, and inspired our efforts, and each in turn has become one of us. A real loyalty to the Church has been maintained throughout, and whenever the call has been made, the Institute has responded nobly. Although a few Sections have ceased, yet others are stronger to-day than ever they were, and there is a unity and comradeship in our midst and a pride in the Institute and all that it stands for, that stimulates one to renewed efforts, and to fight on for "the best that is yet to be."

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