

## Why "The Saltbox"?

In 1983, when a group of Christians were beginning this new venture, one of them found the story of the original "Salt Box" and felt led to bring back a name that belongs to the spiritual history of Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent.

The name "The Salt Box" had been used in 1799 as a colloquial name to describe Zoar Chapel in Burslem **3**. It was most probably situated on the area of land occupied by the Royal Doulton Pottery Factory complex for many years until its closure in 2005. **4**.

In 1798, the chapel that Job Ridgway, the famous potter and Christian philanthropist, attended in Hot Lane Burslem became too small for the growing congregation. He therefore acquired land adjacent to the ground known as Kiln Croft and built a new chapel there, calling it Zoar Chapel. It was situated in Prince's Row, Nile Street and known by the working people as the "Salt Box" possibly because of the scriptural allusion to the "Salt of the earth" **2**.

The people and activities associated with the "Salt Box" in those days were variously described:

"They seek the glory of God in the regeneration and salvation of their fellow men" **1**

"They were men of holy fervour and burning passion in the service of their God" **1**

"They were blessed with a plenitude of Divine influence" **1**

"The delightful seasons spent within its walls, the times of spiritual refreshing, the manifestations of the Divine Presence and power in the awakening and conversion of souls, the noble characters that were moulded and developed under its influence, and the Christly work done there by zealous and loving hearts are remembered and spoken of". **1**

"It continued to be a house of prayer and holy ministries and splendid work was done for God within its wall" **1**

"There have occurred many remarkable seasons of spiritual power and exaltations, remembered today with affectionate interest" **2**

In the 21st century, The Saltbox Christian Centre is happy to be associated with the past application of the title "Salt Box".

**1** "After a hundred years" by John Young, pages 32 to 41

**2** "In the Power of God" by John Chappell, pages 30 to 37

**3** "The Romance of Primitive Methodism" by John Ritson, page 221

**4** "Staffordshire Pottery and it's History" page 130 map of Burslem 1800