

Our History continued

Sick Visiting Societies

Our Independent Chapel, like the Baptist churches in Chesham at the time, had its own Sick Visiting Society. This was the Victorian predecessor of the system of Health Visitors that still exists today. These consisted of ladies who visited people in their homes to give advice on all aspects of health and hygiene. Our records appear to include subscriptions made by our members for this benevolent work.

There don't appear to be any newspaper reports of Christmas celebrations at our chapel but one of the earliest reports we have in the South Bucks Free Press of 31st December 1859 was "An Acrostic" which was composed by Revd W Skemp of Great Missenden for recitation at the Annual Meeting of the Sick Visiting Society of the Independent Chapel, Chesham. This took place on Tuesday December 27th, 1859. The poem ran as follows:-

In every land, whate'er its clime,
North, South, East, West, the wide world o'er,
Disease and Death keep pace with time,
Excepting neither rich nor poor:
Prince, peer, and peasant know their might;
Each soul has seen affliction's night.
Not one of all the sons of earth,
Dare claim exception from their blow;
E'er since Eve gave the first man birth,
Not one ne'er felt a pang of woe;
To trouble born, both low and high,
Christians, or not, we all must die.
How precious, then, must be the balm
A friend may pour on riven hearts!
Priceless must be the words that calm!
Effectual oil for healing smarts!
Let Christians "weep with them that weep,"
So shall they ease their anguish deep.
In every man, whate'er his kin,
Cradled in poverty or not,
Kingly or rustic, grand or mean,
View one whose nature you have got;
Inquiring not his clime or creed,
Show mercy in his hour of need.
If in your walks ye meet with one,
The victim of some villain's lust;
In no wise that poor frail one shun,
Nor turn aside in deep disgust;
Go, try the fallen one to win;
Save, if ye can, her soul from sin.
O'er all the hapless sons of grief
Condole; and o'er the erring grieve;
In Jesu's name, O give relief,
Expecting, when the world you leave,
The King will say, "Come, blest are ye,
Ye showed those favours unto me!"



*Nineteenth century ladies
sanitary inspector
(one of the first health visitors).*

Some notes on Dissenters' Training Colleges and Degrees

Originally, Nonconformists/ Dissenters could not matriculate from Oxford and Cambridge Universities because those universities were tied to the Church of England and graduates needed to declare their adherence to at least part or all of their Articles of Faith. After the Great Expulsion of 1662, the 2000 expelled ministers were prevented from preaching but not from teaching so they turned to establishing educational academies countrywide to teach up to degree standard. After the Act of Tolerance in 1689, dissent expanded with freedom of worship and there was high demand for ministers. The academies were now free to train students for the ministry. These academies became the basis of some of the provincial universities.

Two colleges mentioned below in the details of our past ministers are New College**, founded in 1850 in the Congregational Tradition by the merger of two colleges - Coward, Highbury and Homerton - which were founded in the 18th century as academies for the higher education of dissenters. In 1900, New College became part of the Theological Faculty of the University of London. In 1924, Hackney College merged with it. Until 1936, it was called Hackney and New College. In 1976, it closed and the library of 13,000 books was divided. The incunabula (i.e. those published before 1501) went to the University of London Library and the rest are in other collections.

Paton Congregational College began as the Nottingham Congregational Institute in 1866 as a theological college for Congregational Ministers, established by Revd John Brown Paton, a Scottish Congregationalist. In 1880, a series of lectures, that he helped to promote, led to the establishment of Nottingham University College. The Congregational College was renamed Paton Congregational College in 1921. In 1968, it amalgamated with the Northern Congregational College and moved to Manchester

The Qualification, mentioned in the ministers' details below; ***ATS**, is Associate of the Theological Sanctus - a degree granted to qualifying candidates in lieu of a university theological degree which were at that time refused to nonconformists.

The Ministerial Succession continued



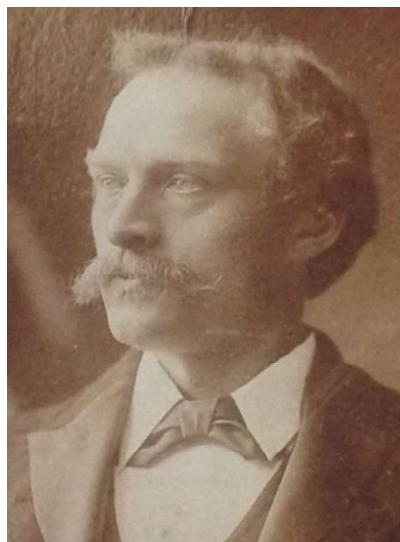
1879 – 1889 Revd John Pither continued

Revd Pither laboured indefatigably, not confining his labours to the pulpit but being a constant visitor amongst his people, and amongst the poorer class he would have been greatly missed. He gave words of sympathy and encouragement, and wise and prudent counsel. He drove the project to replace the old and inconvenient chapel with the modern and most convenient edifice which was a great improvement to The Broadway.

He was a true "Townsmen", universally esteemed for his readiness to take part in anything proposed for the good of the town, for example the positioning of the railway station. He once gave a talk on travel in Scandinavia - had he indeed been there? All this despite not having good health for several years. He returned in May 1907 and gave an illustrated lantern lecture on his visit to Palestine.



Revd W A Linnington



Revd J H Skipper

1889 - 1891 Revd William Alfred Linnington

Born 1841 in Cheshunt, Herts and educated at Paton College, Nottingham. He had been the Minister at Thetford, Norfolk (1868 - 71); Ash, Kent (1871- 75); Gateshead (1875 - 78); Zion, East Grinstead (1878 - 88) before coming to us at Chesham. His was a short pastorate here (18 months) because a suitable residence could not be found for him in Chesham, so he felt compelled to resign. 9 members were added in this time. He moved on to a pastorate at Horsley Down, Surrey (1892 - until his retirement in 1902). He died in 1934.

1891 - 1893 Revd John Herbert Skipper ATS

No birth details available but he was a New College student where he had gained his ATS. He had a noble character and sterling integrity. His removal from Chesham was a distinct loss to the moral and religious life of the town. A strong and faithful ministry. Untiring energy for Christ; ready sympathy with good enterprises. Deeply esteemed. He removed to Willesden Green (1893 - 95) from where he resigned but there are no further records of him in the Congregational Year Book.

1894 - 1901 Revd Charles Nicholas Barham (no photo)

There are no birth details but he was educated at University College London. Previous ministries were:- Flamshaw, Yorks (1875 - 77); Grosvenor Square, London (1877 - 79); Whitstable, Kent (1879 - 89); Nottingham (1889 - 94).

His ministry at Chesham opened with a bang. On entering the house found for him and his wife in Berkhamsted Road, to stay overnight for the first time, accompanied by Mr E Reynolds, Mrs Barham lit the gas in the drawing room and there was a loud explosion, throwing all three of them to the floor. Mrs Barham was bruised and shocked and Mr Reynolds sustained burns and scorching. Mr Barham was only slightly injured. All the ground floor windows were blown out and the house and furniture considerably damaged. A gas leak in the hydraulic pendant, that had already been reported, had not been dealt with.

During his ministry at Chesham, 37 members were received. Though retiring from the ministry in 1901, he continued to live in Chesham until 1907. In 1900, he was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn. and took chambers in King's Walk, Temple. In 1901, he opened the Sessions at Aylesbury and after this joined the Midland Circuit.



Revd Ernest Bristow



Revd Dr A E Fox

1902 -1908 Ernest Bristow MA

Born 1874 at Oakham, Rutland. Educated at Paton College, Nottingham and Cheshunt. Was Assistant Minister at Folkestone, Kent (1901 - 2) before his Ministry in Chesham. He received 52 members during his pastorate here. The young people particularly regretted his departure and loved him for his fire and spirit and social force.

On Sunday morning 9th July 1905, there was a very severe thunder and lightning storm over Chesham with the streets running with water. Many people stayed in the places of worship until it eased. Our minister's residence was struck with a thunderbolt making a hole through the roof, much to the shock of those indoors at the time.

He moved on to ministries at Royston (1908 - 1916); Derby (1916 -1921) and Manchester (1921 - 1941). Whilst in Manchester, he took his MA at the university. He retired to Rhos-on-Sea , Denbighshire where he died in 1943.

1909-1911 Revd Dr Albert Edward Fox

Born 1883 at Caister, Lincolnshire. Educated at Paton College, Nottingham. Minister at Millfield, Peterborough (1907 - 1909) before coming to Chesham.

Came with a glowing tribute as to his character, ability and service. An earnest, forceful preacher, a progressive thinker and a strong personality. He resigned in 1911 on medical advice. The church held him in deep affection and appreciated his gifted pulpit messages, giving him a purse of gold when he left. In his 2 years, 28 members joined and the membership grew to 116.

His further ministries were Grays, Essex (1912 - 27). Within this period, he was Chaplain to Forces in Malta, Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria (1916 - 19). Then Dudley, Worcs (1927 - 38). Died 1938.



Revd Arthur Lambert



Revd Clifford Welch

1912 - 1917 Revd Arthur Lambert ATS

Born in Draycott, Derbyshire 1872. Educated at Paton College, Nottingham and New College, London. We had called him originally in 1902, but at that time, he was completing his college course and had accepted the call from Plumstead, Kent, from where he subsequently came to us in 1912.

He married in 1912 and the church gave them a purse of gold as a wedding gift. He and his wife were greatly loved. They were presented with a purse of notes, a picture, a tea service and several books as leaving gifts. He researched and wrote up the history of our church to this point in time. He held further ministries at Bolton (1917 - 1926) and Blackburn (1926-1929), passing away in 1929.

He had an older brother, Revd George Christopher Lambert MA, BD who gained his degrees at Yale and Harvard, returning to England and taking various ministries until 1936, passing away in 1955.

1918-1926 Henry Welch ATS (no photo)

Born in London in 1867. Educated at New College. Ministries prior to Chesham were Canning Town (1895 - 1901); Wolverton, Bucks (1902 - 1911) and Bow, Middlesex (1911- 1918). When leaving Chesham, he was presented with an armchair and his wife with a beautifully chased bowl. Subsequent ministry at Billericay, Essex (1926 – 1930). Died 1930.

His son, **Revd Clifford Lawrence Welch** was born in 1910 at Wolverton and would have grown up into his teens here in Chesham. He was educated at Paton College and held ministries at Southport, Lancs (1934 – 36). He was then resident missionary for the London Missionary Society (LMS) on the island of Nauru, one of the Micronesian Islands in the Pacific (1936 – 1941). Subsequent positions were:- ministry in Auckland , New Zealand (1941 -1947): LMS North West Secretary, based in Manchester (1947 -1953); with the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Johannesburg, South Africa (1953 – 1968).

Whilst serving on Nauru, his patience, skill and reconciling spirit cemented the reunion of the Congregational churches. Also, the converted from Nauru, desiring to share the gospel that had been so important to them, became very important evangelists to Papua New Guinea and the other Pacific islands.

Did you know??....

The Broadway has been a place for many sights and gatherings including the Charter Fair, before it moved to The Moor, and it was once known as “The Place of the Great Tree” and at another time as “Pillory Green”.