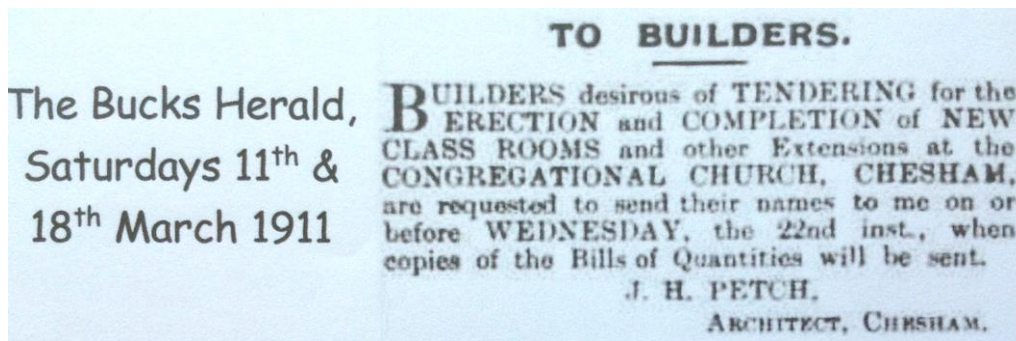


Our History moving into the Twentieth Century

The Church Meeting minutes, as well as the written record of business contain occasional newspaper articles and photos, and pamphlets.

A main issue - the need for more rooms for Sunday School etc



This Bucks Herald notice doesn't appear to be followed up by action in the Church Meeting records.

Our Church life during "The Great War" (1914 -18)

Reading the Church Meeting Minutes of the period of The Great War, you would hardly detect that a war was going on. The church newsletter was still being produced and distributed though, so far, no copies have turned up in our archives. Deacons (=Elders) and Church Meetings and Annual Church Meetings etc generally kept to their schedules though there were gaps. Lots of sewing went on for sales of work which were most successful. We were involved with entertainments, presumably musical, for the troops billeted in the town, which were "generally appreciated".

In September 1915, Edwin Reynolds died who had served the church as a Life Deacon (Elder) since 1862. In 1916, the death of Mr S Reynolds was recorded. He had been involved with our fund raising for the London City Mission "with great effect". In July 1918, the Misses Millicent and Dorothy Reynolds were brought forward for Church membership.

Extensions and Renovations

In September 1915, a letter from the Minister, Revd Arthur Lambert and Joseph Reynolds (the Church Secretary?), was sent out to the congregation to invite funding for improved sanitary arrangements – ie. lavatories for adults and Scholars (children) - part of a larger scheme of improvements to the church building. For 29 years, they had been living with "the crudest (toilet) arrangements". Better arrangements should have been included when the current building was planned in the 1880s. There was a sewer running under the High Street and water supply was available then. A larger scheme of extensions had been drawn up to give ultimately several additional rooms for small meetings, class work etc. The estimated cost of the work including cleaning and renovations to the Church and the School was £350 towards which they had £55. They were asking people to give either a lump sum or monthly instalments over a year.

Change of Minister

In 1917, Revd Lambert who had served our church since 1912 announced that he had answered a call from another church. We called Revd Welch to whom work with young people was of paramount importance.

Armistice Day

The Bucks Examiner of November 15th 1918 reported that it had been signed at 5.00am on Monday 11th November. The official news percolated out from London arriving in an expectant Chesham by telephone between 10.00 and 11.00am. The early cries of "Is it true?" turned to "It is true!" The celebrations began with much noise and merriment and flag-waving but tinged with sadness.

In the afternoon, there was an impromptu gathering in The Broadway with a cart as a speakers' platform for the local Councillors. A huge crowd gathered including a mass of soldiers, The Town Band, the Boy Scouts, the Church Lads Brigade. The bands played the National Anthem and then a parade formed through part of the town. The Chairman of the Council made a meaningful speech but few could hear him for the noise.

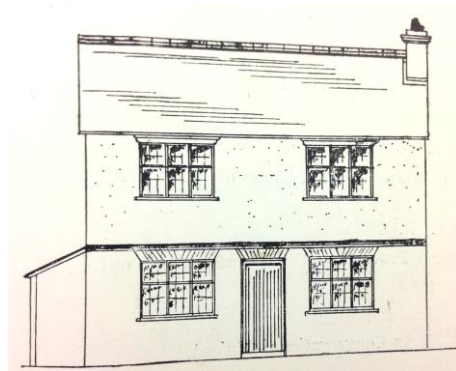
In the evening, while a band concert was playing in The Broadway, our minister, Revd Welch, and other church ministers and worshippers gathered in Broadway Baptist Church for a United Service full of triumphal, grateful hymns to God. Our minister gave the address beginning by saying “Never in all my life have I felt less in the mood for speech. My feelings are too deep for words. The emotions that sweep over me as I stand before you cannot possibly be translated into human speech. All I can say is “Thank God! Thank God! Thank God! Praise God from whom all blessings flow!....”

Rolling forward to 1920:- one assumes that proper toilets had been installed as there is no mention after this point, but there was still desperate need for other rooms.

Revd Henry Welch launched the **“Peace Thanksgiving and Extension Fund 1920-1921”**. The church had already been able to purchase the adjacent land and the old shoeing forge that stood on it. Mr Wallis had died and his family had sold it to a bank. The purpose of the fund was to transform the old building into a Primary Department and Institute for our “young men and women”, which was to begin at once. The total cost was projected to be £1,050 of which they only had £250. If there were “favourable opportunities”, the church would continue with “removal of the organ” to the front of the sanctuary close to the choir, installation of electric light and the provision of a Memorial Tablet to the men belonging to the church who had served their country during the Great War. The published pamphlet contained the following drawing and photos.



The old shoeing forge



The planned transformation to the Institute



Proposed position of organ at front of church so that both organ and choir were at the same end of the church. Presumably the problem was solved by the choir moving up to the organ and singing from the gallery?

The Hall, until 2013 known as The Schoolroom

Early in the Second World War, we were approached by the Buckinghamshire Education Committee for the use of the hall during school hours (9.00am to 3.00pm) for classes for evacuee children. This use continued until 1945 when the evacuees were able to return home. From that time onwards, the 11-15 year-olds of the Sunday School met in the Schoolroom whilst the younger ones met in The Institute.