

A HISTORY OF THE NEWBURY BAPTISTS

By David H Brazier



A History of Newbury Baptists

Front Cover Photograph of Newbury Baptist Church taken by
Mr. Roger Ryton in 2002.

A History of Newbury Baptists

**A
HISTORY OF
NEWBURY BAPTISTS**

**By
David H Brazier**

A History of Newbury Baptists

First Published November 2002

© David H Brazier

**All rights reserved. No part of this book may
be reproduced in any form or by any means
without the prior permission of**

Newbury Baptist Church

Proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to the Baptist
Union Home Mission Fund

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the men and women who have borne witness their faith through their actions in making the history of Newbury Baptists. It is a tribute to their devotion, vision and actions, which show their love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is also an encouragement to those who follow that they may continue this work in faith and with the sure knowledge that Jesus is Lord.

“Lord for the years thy love has kept and guided”

FOREWORD

On a pastoral visit in November 1998, the Rev. Grenville Overton and I were actually talking about the Baptist Churches in my home town of Luton when Grenville suggested to me that I might like to consider writing the History of Newbury Baptist Church. Never one to shrink from a challenge I agreed to look at the subject. I am glad that I did although there were times when I wondered what I had let myself in for. The whole exercise has been a fascinating and uplifting experience.

I am deeply indebted to the late Mr. W.J. Lewendon who produced a booklet called “Notes on the Newbury Baptists” in 1940 for the Tri-Centenary celebrations and these I have used as a basis for much of the information for the years 1640 up to the early 1900’s. His book being long out of print I am obligated to print this text where used verbatim in italics.

Unfortunately information for the next forty years is rather sketchy as a hand written note from Mr. Lewendon in the margin of his book states that “the Deacons refused any further notes as they (the ministers) were still living hence I just gave dates of their pastorates”.

It does not appear that either Mr. Lewendon or myself were the first to attempt this challenge, as it is recorded that in the first history of Newbury Baptist Church the Rev. James Bicheno wrote: -

“Those few records that have been made serve to inform us of the necessity of mending our ways and our doings that God may cause us to dwell in this place”

A History of Newbury Baptists

I have been unable ascertain the whereabouts of any minute books until 1934 to help with this, although I have managed to obtain a few other documents which were of assistance for this period.

It was a fascinating experience poring over the old records, documents and newspaper reports that were made available to me. This was slightly difficult at times due to the style of the scripted handwriting, the uses of the English language and even in some cases words that are no longer used today or have a different meaning to that originally intended.

Even the various accounts of the same events differ and it is not uncommon to find different dates stated or even different spellings of surnames.

The problem relating to the different spelling of surnames dates back to the time when births were only registered when the appointed registrar visited the town or village. As most of the people could neither read nor write, he would write down the names as he thought that they should be spelt which were then changed in later years. Another explanation is that record keeping was not considered a priority, and often neglected. When there was a prospect of an official examination of the record, it was necessary to recall the forgotten detail as best as could be managed. The registrar was scarcely better educated than the informant, which compounded the likelihood of variant spellings.

Even in the Church records as late as the latter part of the Nineteenth Century members are only referred to as Brother, with no title, initials or Christian name and in a few very rare cases Sister.

Another problem I encountered was the practice even up to quite recently that when a woman married, she adopted her husbands' initials and this coupled with the fact that her husband could even have the same initials as his father, led to some confusion.

A History of Newbury Baptists

Some of the records for the latter part of the Century were not available to me, and certain issues in the later years have been omitted due their sensitivity but not to the detriment of this account. As Mr. Lewendon also found, there is no information regarding local Baptist living in the early part of the 17th Century.

This book could never have been written if it were not for the devotion, Christian witness and vision of our forefathers who had the commitment, enthusiasm and courage to establish the Church as it is today and to those who have continued this work. As I recorded events one could sense the leading of the Holy Spirit, although it might not have been apparent at the time. It is this that has kept the Church going for over 350 years and will for another.

As I wrote this book I could not get the words of the first line of the hymn recorded below out of my mind.

“God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year”

I wanted to show the work of the Church in the wider life of the community. I hope that I have achieved this.

I would also like to record my appreciation to Mrs. Margaret Titcomb for her help in obtaining and supplying much of the information and for her proof reading of the first draft. To Mr. Roger Ryton for his interest and encouragement, to Mr. Cyril Moon, Deacon Emeritus and Church Secretary from 1945-1985 for his knowledge and memories of events and also to the many others who unknowingly contributed to this book by answering my questions on various issues. Also to my wife Christine, who gave me a great deal of support and encouragement, especially as the deadlines set came and went along with my patience.

**David Brazier
November 2002**

CONTENTS

DEDICATION	5
FOREWORD	6
1. INTRODUCTION	11
2. THE BEGINNING.....	13
3. THE NORTHCROFT LANE MEETING HOUSE.....	16
4. THE NORTHBROOK STREET CHURCH.....	29
5. ST. MARY'S HILL BUILDING.....	65
6. MINISTERS	142
Associate Ministers.....	143
Other Appointments	143
Ministers Photographs	144
7. CHURCH OFFICERS	149
Church Secretary	149
Church Trustees.....	150
Deacons	153
Honorary Deacons	158
Senior Deacon.....	159
Life Deacons.....	159
Elders	159
Deacon Emeritus.....	160
8. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AND JUNIOR CHURCH	162
The Sunday School.....	162
Sunday School Statistics.....	163
The Junior Church	164
Leaders of the Junior Church.....	164
Junior Church Statistics	165
9. THE BRIGADES.....	166
The 1 st Newbury Girls Brigade.....	166
The 1 st Newbury Boys' Brigade	167
10. CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR SOCIETY	169

A History of Newbury Baptists

11. READY SALTED THEATRE COMPANY	171
12. MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS	172
13. THE VILLAGE CHAPELS.....	174
Introduction	174
Berries Bank	175
Long Lane.....	182
Newtown.....	187
Headley	188
Ashmore Green.....	195
Bishops Green.....	198
Summary.....	198
14. PEOPLE PROFILES	199
Introduction	199
Mr. Albert Percy Morton.....	199
Mr. Cyril F Moon	200
15. CONCLUSION.....	205
16. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	206
Sources.....	206
Documents.....	207
Drawings.....	207
Photographs	208

1. INTRODUCTION

The following taken from Mr. W.J.Lewendon's book "Notes on Newbury Baptists" serves as useful background to accounts recorded in this book.

In the early part of the 17th century, when Baptist Churches were being established in Britain, controversy divided them into two camps, "Particular" or Calvinistic, and "General" or Arminian. The Local Church came under the former head, until amalgamation of the two Bodies at the close of the 19th century.

It is recorded that the last Englishman put to death for heresy, Edward Wightman, was burnt at Lichfield in 1612. At this time separate Churches were being formed by the Puritan element. Leonard Busher, a London Baptist, published in 1614 "A Plea for Liberty of Conscience". This was reported to be the earliest writing upon the subject known.

Charles I, the dictator, as we are aware, allowed the ecclesiastical courts full power, and from their cruel findings there was no appeal. That Newbury Baptists had their full share of suffering at this period is quite evident; but we have very little authentic information regarding this inquisition. Many people fled to Holland and New England to seek freedom and peace.

In Money's first History of Newbury is an account of those sturdy Puritans who left their native town, owing to persecution, to found a settlement in Massachusetts, North America. We learn that the Rev. Thomas Parker, M.A. (son of a prominent Puritan preacher) was a Master at the Newbury Grammar School, and also assisted the famous Dr. Twisse, the Rector of Newbury.

The History of Newbury Baptist Church – The Beginning

In 1634, he with many other local citizens of kindred mind, crossed the Atlantic and established the settlement which they named after their native town. Doubtless many others, in the years following fled to find refuge with their fellow townsmen at Newbury in North America.

It is recorded that, for being a Baptist preacher Thos. Brewer, of Ashford, suffered fourteen years in jail, and was released in 1640.

The following year Ed. Barber, of Bishopsgate (former clergyman of the established Church) received twelve months imprisonment for publishing a book on Baptism by immersion.

This same year the Episcopacy was overthrown in England; and the Newbury Baptist Church had been founded.

*They had stiff knees, the Puritans,
That were not good at bending;
The home-spun dignity of man
They thought was worth defending.*

Anon

2. THE BEGINNING

Baptists founded the basis for their Revolutionary views in the Bible. Their radical attitude affected their politics too. Cromwell's army had many Baptists in its ranks. So, with Newbury being such an important place in the English Civil War it is not surprising that a Baptist Church was soon founded here. The British Museum houses a little pamphlet "True News from Newburie" published in 1647 in which the outrageous views of three Baptists are ridiculed. In fact the first Baptist Church on English soil predates Newbury by three decades. Thomas Helwys had fled to Amsterdam owing to persecution here in England. Not only did he come under conviction to return and to establish a separate Church, he also sent a copy of his detailed and bold plea to King James calling for complete religious liberty. Helwys was soon imprisoned in Newgate where he died, but Baptists follow his example by maintaining the right of this freedom universally.

Two early parchment books were loaned and placed on view at the exhibition at Stockholm in 1924. One book contains an entry dated 6th day of September 1770 relating to the appointment of new trustees of the Northcroft Meeting House. Five men were elected from Newbury, Messrs. Nias, Whitewood, Wilkins, Coombs and Horler while the following were nominated from Abingdon, Messrs. Joseph, William and Benjamin Tompkins and Joseph Butler. At the other end of the book eight pages partly printed with portions in script contain what is described as "The Church Covenant of a Society of Christians Baptised upon profession of faith usually meeting at Newbury". These Articles were read over at a Church meeting held on 25th September 1775 and duly approved by the Pastor, and signed in the book by eight members and five non-members.

The History of Newbury Baptist Church – The Beginning

A precise date for the founding of the first Baptist Church is difficult to ascertain. It appears from a circular letter from the ministers of the particular Baptist Churches assembled in Newbury in 1826 that a Church or Society was in existence at least twenty years before the Act of Uniformity was passed in 1662.

The Baptist Magazine of 1826 also refers to the first meetings of the newly formed Association of Churches held that year at Newbury at which meetings the date of 1640 was mentioned as the date of formation of Newbury Baptist Church. We are told that the Baptists suffered much during the Civil Wars from the soldiery of King Charles army when quartered in private houses in the town.

In an official return made in 1669 to Seth Ward Bishop of Salisbury of all conventicles in his diocese, it is recorded that at this time there was but one congregation of Anabaptists in Newbury and they are returned as “very small”.

Their place of meeting is given at the house of Thomas Merriman - the location not known. A hand written note by Mr. W.J. Lewendon in his book Notes on Newbury Baptists written to celebrate the Tercentenary, records that his research indicates that it was the Georgian House that A.W. Neates then occupied, but he does not say where. I have been unable to verify this.

The first regular minister of the Baptists, who had now formed themselves into a separate Society was a Mr. James who preached to a few followers in an upper back room, which overlooked Victoria

A History of Newbury Baptists – The Beginning

*Park at the house of Mr. Jabez Hill, a grocer in Northbrook Street.
This building is standing today and is part of Camp Hopsons Store.*



First known Meeting Room
(Upper storey)

3. THE NORTHCROFT LANE MEETING HOUSE



The Northcroft Lane Meeting House

By the beginning of the 1700's the membership numbered about 50 and a piece of freehold land measuring 63 feet by 40 feet was purchased for eighteen pounds in Northcroft Lane. A meeting house was erected on this site, which was licensed as a place for religious worship at the Borough Quarter Sessions in October 1702. The building continued to be used as a place of worship by the Brethren until 1998, when they joined a Reading fellowship and the building was demolished. The details of this are recorded later on in this book.

Mr James continued as Pastor for about six years until his death and he was buried in the meeting house near where the pulpit used to be situated, under the tiny balcony near the entrance.

The church was without a Pastor until about 1716 when a Mr. Jefferies of Taunton was invited to the Pastorate. His granddaughter married Mr. Caleb Evans who was minister at Broadmead Bristol

when the Rev. James Bicheno came to Newbury It is recorded that during his five-year ministry Mr. Jefferies baptised about 50 people. When the minister of the Taunton Church died, Mr. Jefferies returned there in 1721 to become Pastor leaving the Newbury Church in a most promising state with a membership of over one hundred. The un-named Minister who succeeded Mr. Jefferies managed to reduce the congregation substantially with many of them, it is thought, joining the Presbyterian Church which at that time was sited where the Waterside Youth and Community Centre now stands. It was the oldest non-conformist place of worship in the town having been erected in 1697. This non-conformist group was originally known as the Presbyterian and Independent who in 1684 formed two distinct bodies. The Presbyterians formed one group and the Independents formed the other group. Is it just co-incidence that the Independents were led by the Rev. Benjamin Merriman who was ordained to the office in 1686 when only 24 years of age? He was a native of Newbury who had studied at Oxford.

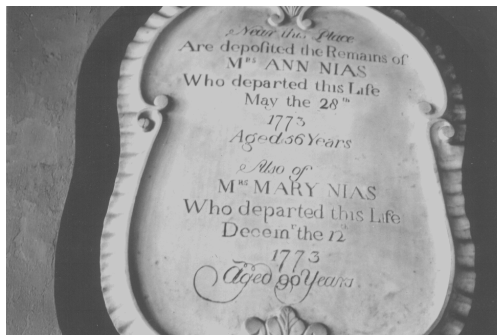
In about 1730 a Mr Britten became pastor, but only for a short time as he received an invitation to Whitchurch and his Ministry at Newbury was terminated. The next Pastor, Mr. Taylor stayed for a few years before moving to a London Church where he became a Presbyterian. A Mr. Elkanah Widgery then ministered to the Church for a short time before moving to Brampton in Devon. He was followed by Mr. Edward Harrison who stayed a few years before moving, leaving to become an assistant to Mr. Bernard Foskett, the Pastor of Broadmead Bristol. For some years the Church was without a pastor and various members led the worship before Mr. Harrison returned remaining a few years until he was obliged to resign due to “unsatisfactory conduct”.

For some time the services were maintained by various members reading from printed sermons. This must have been about 1740, the year when John Wesley formed his separate society of seventy-five members at the famous Foundry in Windmill Street, London and also

paid his first visit to Newbury preaching in the Parish Church on February 3rd. That same year a Mr. Wilkins, a much-respected former member of the Church who was living in Warminster following his retirement from business, was invited to return and take charge of the Church. This he did for seven years before returning to Warminster. Because he was a layman he was not allowed to administer the sacraments and these were administered as the occasion demanded by Rev. Bezley of Wantage.

Probationary ministers now supplied the pulpit until 1748 when a Mr. Francis became Minister in what is described as a difficult task for which he received little financial support, as it recorded that the subscription for the minister for some years was not more than ten shillings and sixpence annually, but from Christmas 1770-1771 it was three pounds eighteen shillings and nine pence. Twenty years of his ministry passed and then it appears a revival is registered. The numbers increased and an effort to pull together was evident. The meeting house needed restoration and repair and the Pastor made wide appeals collecting £154 towards the necessary work, only £18 of this being obtained in Newbury.

In 1773, the remains of Mrs Ann Nias and Mrs Mary Nias were interred in the church and the photograph of their memorial stone shown below, records this event.



Memorial Stone for Mesdames Nias

In 1774 through a misunderstanding and difficulty within the Church, the pastor felt compelled to resign. He continued to hold services in his own house which some of the Church members attended there. This same year a piece of ground adjoining the Church was purchased for £30 for use as a burial ground.

After Mr Lewis separated from the Church, students from Bristol supplied the pulpit until the spring of 1776 when Mr. Stephens took charge and remained for two years. Then in 1779, a reconciliation took place between Mr. Lewis and the Church, which only lasted for six months. He died in January of the following year 1780 then Mr. Timothy Thomas supplied the pulpit for brief period.

Having completed his studies at Bristol College and served the Falmouth Church for about eighteen months the Rev. James Bicheno M.A. was strongly recommended by the Bristol Ministers to the Newbury Church. He came to preach in April 1780 and at the Church meeting held on 28th May 1780 it was agreed by 51 members and subscribers that an invitation be issued to him to the pastorate of Newbury Baptist Church.

The Rev. James Bicheno was appointed Minister in 1780, a position he occupied for 27 years until he retired in 1807 due to failing health and stress of work. He had a remarkable career. He was born at Over in Cambridgeshire and when he was about fifteen years of age went to London seeking employment. Here he encountered a well known crimp of the Government who at that time decoyed men into the Army and Naval services. This man was the famous Crispe who is mentioned by Goldsmith in his “Vicar of Wakefield” as having trepanned the Vicar’s son. James Bicheno was tricked into boarding a ship for America where he was promptly sold into slavery. The Colonel, who was his master, put him to work as his children’s tutor. Eventually Bicheno secured his release and on his return to England went to Bristol College where he qualified for the Ministry. The Rev. Bicheno became the author of a number of sacred historical and

religious works and for his writings received his master's degree from an American University.

In the first history of Newbury Baptist Church James Bicheno wrote:

“Those few records that have been made serve to inform us of the necessity of mending our ways and our doings that God may cause us to dwell in this place”

While in Newbury he stirred up controversy with his many publications and in addition to his pastoral duties, ran a boarding school, known as an Academy for young gentlemen, near the railway station, which is now Greenham House, the grounds of which are now a small Public Garden. He also had the honour of being presented with his portrait by the Lord Chancellor.

The Rev. Bicheno remained in association with the Newbury Church for some years after his retirement, then moved to Coate. He returned to Newbury in 1820, four years later he suffered a stroke and died at his home in London Road in 1831.

In February 1805 a public appeal was made and the Meeting House was thoroughly restored with a wall being built around the burial ground at a cost of £237-19s-9¾d. being covered by public subscription.

It so happened that when the Rev. Bicheno expressed the wish to relinquish the pastorate of the Church, that Mr. John Perry of Brockenhurst, Hants who had been preaching at Malmesbury, Wiltshire for twelve months, was visiting his nephew who was at Mr. Bicheno's school. This led to Mr. Perry's introduction to the Church and his appointment as Assistant Pastor for eighteen months. His subsequent ordination took place in September 1807. During his pastorate he seems to have devoted special service to the village causes and also the Children of the Church. He also instigated Annual Church meetings from 1810. A quaint entry in the minute

book of 1811 reads “We decided that no person or persons be permitted to put a lock or locks on any pews or pews and any placed thereon to be taken off”. After just over four years service at Newbury Mr. Perry contracted a serious illness, which he died from on 24th November 1812. He was buried in the meeting house the following Sunday.

The Baptist Magazine of 1813 records the following about Mr Perry. Born at Fareham, Hants. in 1759 he was, at an early age, placed under the care of the Rev. Bowden of Tooting, Surrey. His Father was Captain of a small coasting vessel and young Perry often sailed with him around the rugged English coast sharing the dangers of the sea. At 14 years of age he was apprenticed to an Uncle at Lymington Hants and attended with him the Baptist Church at which a Mr. Stradling was Pastor. John Perry was baptised in 1778 and after taking a useful part in Church work he moved to Brockenhurst where he took charge of the work.

While carrying on his business he also preached around the villages and for many years, although he was not strong, he travelled about eighteen miles every Sunday taking services at three different places. At Burley, a meeting house was built through his influence. Mr. Perry would sometimes cross to Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight and preach in the surrounding districts. He received no remuneration for his work and paid his own expenses out of his business earnings

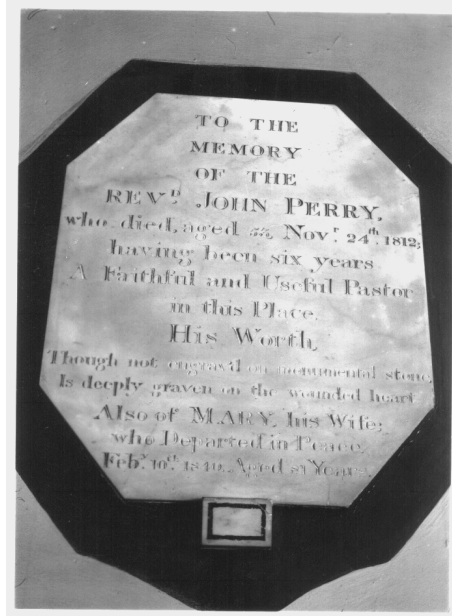
In 1804 Mr. Perry relinquished business and accepted the call for twelve months to the Church at Malmsbury, Wiltshire after which he visited Newbury and became assistant pastor with the Rev. Bicheno.

It is stated that while at Newbury, Mr. Perry preached four sermons a week and yet found time to frequently visit the villages until his physical strength failed him. When lying in weakness and great pain and asked how he was he would reply “Helpless, but blessed be God, not hopeless, Christ is more than sufficient”

A History of Newbury Baptists – Northcroft Lane Meeting House

After Mr. Perry's death the Church was also destitute of Deacons so on Sunday December 14th 1812 a ballot vote was taken, resulting in John Elkins and John Sargent being appointed.

A photograph of the memorial stone to Mr. Perry, which was placed on the church wall is shown below.



Memorial stone for Rev. Perry

Having resigned the pastorate of Lynn, Norfolk the Rev. Thomas Welsh was led to Newbury on the recommendation of Dr. Ryland and he settled here in October 1813. The following year John Sargent was set aside to preach in the villages around town being supported by special prayer meetings at Newbury.

In 1815 the Church had greatly increased in membership and a enlargement of the meeting house was undertaken in the Summer of that year and meetings were held in the Town Hall which itself was later demolished to widen Mansion House Street. The re-opening of

the Church took place in November and the special services then held marked the formation of an Association of four Berkshire Churches - Reading, Newbury, Wokingham and Wallingford with the view that others would come in later- the formation of the Berkshire Baptist Association.

In 1818 Thomas Godden a member of this Church became our first missionary when he was accepted for missionary work and subsequently went to Jamaica. Then in 1826 another members of the Church, Mr. Samuel Whitewood, after a course at Stepney Academy was ordained Pastor of the newly formed church at Andover in Hampshire.

It is interesting to note that a register of members compiled by the pastor about this time shows women members on one side of the page and men on the opposite side. Their occupations are also stated showing that many of them were still engaged in the cloth and weaving trade, although other occupations are also mentioned such as Broom Maker, Boat Builder, Brewer, Paper Maker, Cutler and Straw Bonnet Maker.

An applicant for Church membership in about 1826, when giving his testimony, stated that he was a labourer from Newtown, and prior to his conversion claimed to have been very ignorant and fond of bad company. Now, however he could read and write and for this he was indebted to an African black servant who was employed by General Cockell. This Negro had taught himself and considered that every Christian should be so enlightened that he could read the Bible.

In 1831, a Clothing Society was formed by the Church for the benefit of the poor. It was to be run on similar lines to one which had existed at Chieveley for some years.

The successful ministry of Rev. T.S. Welsh extended over a period of twenty-six years until his resignation in March 1839 when he moved to Uxbridge. During his time at Newbury he had the joy of

baptising three daughters and one son, John Sutcliffe Welsh, who, after preaching in the villages for a time, entered Stepney College for ministerial training. Also during his ministry places of worship were erected at Berries Bank, Long Lane, Newtown and Headley. That the Rev. Welsh was held in such high esteem is clearly indicated by the fact that a public subscription was made to provide him with an annuity of £25.

On 11th January 1814, Mrs. Ann Bicheno, the wife of Rev. J Bicheno died. Her obituary notice in the Baptist Magazine of 1814 reads “ On January 11th after some months of suffering, died at Aston Parsonage near Witney aged 65, Mrs. Ann Bicheno late of Newbury. The sorrow of relations on such occasions is the common tribute, which nature pays to the most undistinguished virtues, but on this occasion not only the sorrow of relatives but also the gratitude of a thousand youths, who in the course of the last twenty-five years experienced the maternal attentions of this worthy woman, bears testimony to her many superior excellencies. Her kind solicitude for their welfare will long be remembered”.

In that same year James Ebenezer Bicheno F.S.L, who was the son of Rev. J Bicheno M.A., joined the Church. He subsequently moved to London but retained his membership until 1838. In 1817 he wrote a book relating to the Poor Law and in 1821 he married a Miss Floyd who sadly died within twelve months. In 1822 he was appointed secretary of the Linnean Society - a position he held for seven years. In September 1842 he was posted as Colonial Secretary to Tasmania where he rendered very creditable service in this capacity. He was held in such high esteem by the Australian Colonists that they named a small town Bicheno after him. He died on February 25th 1851 at Hobart.

In July 1839 the Rev. J.B. Pike from the first Baptist Church in Boston became the next minister. He had been ordained just three years before. His father the Rev. J.G. Pike who was the author of the

book “Persuasions to early Piety” and took the Sunday School Anniversary Services in 1840 which was the Bi-centenary year of the Church, the date almost coinciding with the introduction of the penny adhesive stamp.

It is interesting to note that in this year discussion took place regarding the “propriety of adopting the principal of open communion”.

In 1843, a memorial stone, as photographed below was placed in the Church in memory of John Elkins a deacon for 25 years, his first wife, Sarah and Elizabeth, his second wife.



Elkins family memorial stone

The Rev. Pike tendered his resignation in 1844 and was succeeded by Rev. D. Trotman who was advanced in years and owing to increasing infirmity resigned as pastor the following year in favour of Rev. Joseph Drew who came to Newbury from Whitchurch. Two years into his ministry the question of open communion was again raised and on November 4th 1847 it was decided that “we therefore

hereafter admit to fellowship of the Lord's table members of anti-Baptist Churches provided such members stand on honourable terms with the Churches to which they belong”.

Then on November 2nd 1849 a note reads “It is agreed that tea shall be provided in the vestry on ordinance days for country members who have walked long distances, the expense to be defrayed out of money collected at the Lords table”.

In 1850 it is recorded that Benjamin Higgs died aged 100. He joined the Church in 1785 and was in membership for 65 years. That same year Mr. N Knight left the Newbury Church to take up work in London as a City Missioner.

In his recollections of the old meeting house dating back as far as 1851 we learn from a Mr. Joseph Miller, who for many years was a Deacon at Northbrook Street, that the Baptistry at the Northcroft Lane Building was in the centre and the candidates after baptism had to walk to the rear end.

The back gallery was used for the Sunday School, which met at 9a.m. and 2p.m. Also at the rear end of the building were sliding partitions, which were opened for public worship. The pews were high backed, and some were covered with green baize and studded with brass nails. Most of the women in those days wore wooden pattens or clogs and as the aisles were made of stone one can imagine the clatter they made as they assembled for worship. Therefore the Officers of the Church placed a notice at the entrance “Please remove your pattens at the door”.

On several occasions the river, which flowed close to the Church, flooded and the water came right up to the Church Door. The singing in Church was led using a tuning fork to set the pitch and later a wooden pipe may have been used. A string band also accompanied the singing on occasions and later on a harmonium was introduced which caused quite a commotion.

In 1850 the first steps were taken towards the building of a new Church and at a special meeting two committees were formed - one of males and one of females to collect funds. In July 1851, a tea meeting was held in the Mansion House in aid of the building fund. Upon the termination of the Crimean War in June 1856, the scholars of the Sunday School with their banners, joined other schools in a street procession halting in the Market Place for dinner.

The minutes for the Church Meeting of January 30th 1857 record: -

“It was stated by the Pastor that the congregation has during the present winter been unusually late at the morning service, and he suggested whether it would not be well to alter the time of commencing worship from 10-30 to 10-45 and it was resolved to adjourn consideration of the subject till next Friday evening.”

At the meeting on Friday February 6th 1857 we find that:

“It was decided that the above proposal be acted upon.”

It was not until April 1857 that anything further appears to have been done regarding a new building. A Building Committee was formed to seek a suitable site and secure plans and specifications for a new place of worship.

A site in Northbrook Street, which was a dwelling house with a walled garden, was secured at auction on May 21st 1858 for the sum of £930, the nominal purchaser being Mr. Henry Flint, the Church organist and choirmaster. Within a fortnight trustees were appointed, the plans completed and passed at a Church meeting in October. That same month the foundation stone was laid.

Only nine months later on July 2nd 1859 the new Church was opened for worship. The total cost including the purchase of the site was approximately £3000.

“The Church and congregation had now come out of Egypt for the New Building in Northbrook Street”.

The story of the Northcroft Road Meeting House does not end there. It was used by the Brethren until 1998 when they joined a Reading fellowship. The building and land were sold to John Grooms Association to make way for housing.

On demolition of the building the burial ground was unearthed with a large number of coffins and tombstones.

Thanks to Mr. Noel Davies, photographs were taken of the broken tombstones.

Subsequently the human remains were re-interred at Shaw cemetery 9 Coffins in three graves with the inscription as detailed below: -

**DEDICATED TO THE
MEMORY OF THE
PASTOR AND MEMBERS
OF THE BAPTIST MEETING
HOUSE NORTHCROFT
1704-1859
WHOSE REMAINS WERE REINTERRED
IN THESE THREE GRAVES
ON 17TH JUNE 1998**

**“They preached the Gospel and
they kept the faith”**

4. THE NORTHBROOK STREET CHURCH



Northbrook Street Church

The new building was opened on 2nd July 1859 - the ministers attending the opening celebrations were the Rev. W. Brock of Bloomsbury, the Rev. C. Vince of Birmingham and the Rev. J.J. Brown and a Public Dinner was held in the Congregational Church Lecture Hall.

The schoolroom was built mainly of materials salvaged from the old house that originally stood on the site and was demolished to make way for the Church. An unusual feature within the Church was the absence of pillars to support the

gallery. A source of attraction too was the massive circular gas chandelier suspended from the centre of the glass dome. This contained no less than 62 gas jets, which became a source of great amusement to some of the children in the Church who would sit there and count them during services.

The Rev. Drew closed his pastorate at Newbury in July 1864 after receiving an invitation to Trinity Road Halifax.

His successor two months later was the Rev. Thos. M. Roberts B.A. who came from Aldborough, Suffolk., but only stayed a short time, resigning after only two years in 1866 as he sensed certain opposition which seemed to hinder his work. The minutes for that year, kept by Rev. Roberts, recorded that “The use of the Baptistry and vestments were granted to the Plymouth Brethren to baptise candidates of their own persuasion”. He also records that on March 2nd “It was agreed to unite with our Congregational friends in their schoolroom on the 9th instant for special prayer for removal of Cattle Plague”.

April 1867 marked the commencement of Rev. J.E. Cracknell’s ministry and a few months after his arrival the harmonium brought from the old Meeting House was replaced by a pipe organ, which was erected in the small gallery at the back of the pulpit. The organist at that time was a Mr. Henry Flint who was also a Deacon.

In his notes written in 1940 Mr. W.J.F. Lewendon refers to the Church Accounts for 1867, which stated that the pew openers’ salaries amounted to £7-13s-1d. Unfortunately he does not say who or what they were. One can only surmise that they were possibly people employed to open the gates at the end of the pews when showing people to their seats for services and then bolting them in!

On September 12th and 14th 1869 the Preachers engaged for the Anniversary are stated to have been Mr. Spurgeon and Rev. J Drew, the collections on this occasion amounting to £26.

In 1871, the Church closed for five weeks for repairs and renovations, and was then re-opened free of all debt. This caused great rejoicing, and at the next annual Church meeting tea and music were provided and addresses given by Brethren Coxeter, Davies, Terry and Josey. After prayers of thanksgiving for “Peace” the proceedings ended with the singing of “God Bless the Prince of Wales”.

The Rev. Cracknell resigned in April 1873, transferring to South Shields Tabernacle, having made it his concern that he did not leave the Church until it was entirely free from debt.

The Rev. Frederick Robertson, after serving the Church for six months, received an almost unanimous invitation to the Pastorate in 1873. However his stay was cut short owing to an unfortunate state of affairs arising in 1874. The question at issue was a proposal to provide unfermented wine for use at Communion Services. A vote was taken which revealed a small majority in favour of the adoption of the use of unfermented wine. When certain deacons and other members tried to override this decision, further dissension arose. The Rev. Robertson who, it is stated, acted throughout with perfect fairness and no possible reflection could be cast on his Christian character, was forced to resign by those who were pledged to support him. Consequently more than thirty members who now felt unable to worship freely at Northbrook Street formed a separate Church, which met at the Temperance Hall with Rev. Robertson as their Pastor.

Shortly after this the Rev. George Howe from Rugby received an invitation to Northbrook Street in June 1876. He was

responsible for introducing the weekly offering envelope scheme.

In November 1876 a member Mrs Coxeter who was aged 102 was called home. It is stated that as a girl aged 14 she had heard John Wesley preach at Witney.

The Church suffered the loss of their Senior Deacon, Mr. Henry Flint who died in January 1879. He had been in membership of the Church for 53 years and served as a Deacon for nearly forty years.

In January 1880, after a short time a reconciliation took place when the two fellowships re-joined. The Temperance Hall services had been well attended and both memberships of the Church and Sunday School were increasing. The Deacons from Northcroft retained their offices thus doubling the Diaconate to eight. The increase of teachers and scholars created problems in the Sunday School and it was evident that new impetus had been given to the work. Increased accommodation was badly needed and at a special meeting a committee was appointed to deal with this. The officers together with Messrs. Selwood and W.E. Lewendon were empowered to act. Mr A Jackson, a local businessman who lived in a large house called Gorselands on the Andover Road, was appointed treasurer of the Sunday School Building.

An extra floor was added to the schoolroom thus giving three more upper rooms. The iron pillars, which supported the main beams of this extension, were a sore temptation to the boys of the Sunday School who used to climb up them to the ceiling to slide down the “greasy pole”. The cost of this building work amounted to £320 of which £160 was raised from a three day bazaar held in the Town Hall.

The centenary of the Sunday Schools was celebrated on June 27th 1880. Scholars of the Local Free Churches united and together with adults held services in the Corn Exchange. On the following Tuesday nearly 3000 people went by train from Newbury station for an outing to Barton Court.

In November 1881, Mr. J.W. Davies joined the Church. On leaving Newbury, he entered Spurgeons College and afterwards took up work at South Lee Baptist Church in London in 1886. The church had only been established for 12 years but before long a tabernacle was built. Mr. Davies had a remarkable ministry remaining in the same pastorate for 44 years until his death on 1930. He occasionally occupied the pulpit at Newbury where he would enjoy recalling his youthful experience in the Newbury Sunday School.

In 1884 the Rev. G. Howe's ministry in Newbury terminated and he left Newbury. He died five years later.

The Rev. Elias George, formerly at the Farringdon Church, accepted a call to Newbury in the spring of 1885. Within two months of his arrival the Church Building had been renovated at a cost of £145. The work took five weeks during which time services were held in the Town Hall. The re-opening service was conducted by the Rev. Charles Spurgeon and the evening service constituted Rev. George's public recognition.

During the closing months of 1885, twenty-seven candidates were baptised and the membership of the Church increased by forty.

A History of Newbury Baptists – Northbrook Street Church

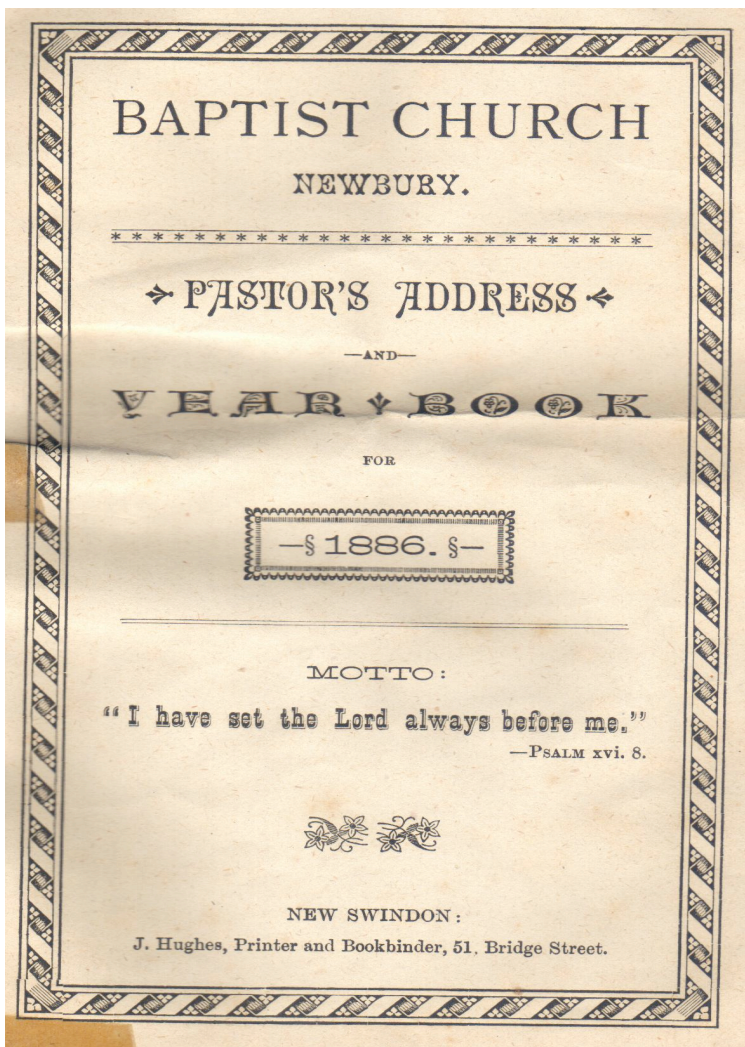
Inside of Northbrook Street Church



In 1886 a Church Secretary was elected, Mr. Phillip E Davies being appointed. I assume that he was the first ever Church Secretary as this is the first ever written record I can find confirming such a position. A note in February of this year reads :

*“Our beloved brother Benjamin Freeman was called home at
the advanced aged of 101;
he was as the shock of corn fully ripe”*

The following extracts are taken from the Church Year Book of 1886 and contains interesting information about the Baptist Church Newbury: -



Front cover of Year book 1886

BAPTIST CHURCH

NEWBURY.

Notices.

SUNDAY	..	MORNING SERVICE	..	10.45
"	..	EVENING	"	6.30

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is observed the first Sunday in every month, from October to March after the Morning Service, and from April to Sept. (inclusive) of the Evening Service. Communion Tickets are supplied to members to be used at these Services so that a record may be kept of the attendance. Members absenting themselves for three successive months, will be visited, and if no satisfactory explanation can be given for their non-attendance they render themselves liable to be dealt with by the church.

A short Prayer Meeting is held after Service every Sunday Evening.

Week Evenings.

MONDAY	..	PRAYER MEETING	..	7-15
TUESDAY		YOUNG CHRISTIAN'S ASSOCIATION	..	8
WEDNESDAY	..	PREACHING SERVICE	..	7-15
FRIDAY		YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRAYER MEETING	..	8

The Monthly Church Meeting is held the Wednesday preceding the first Sunday in the month at 7.15.

Baptism.

The Ordinance of Believers' Baptism is administered as required after Sunday Evening Service. Friends wishing to unite with the Church are requested to communicate with the Pastor or Deacons.

Members leaving the town are earnestly requested to unite with some other baptized church as soon as possible; and where for any sufficient reason this is not done, such members are desired to communicate with the Pastor at least once a year. Should this be neglected, the name is liable to be removed from the Church Book.

Any member of the Church or Congregation who is sick, and desires to be visited by the Pastor, is requested to *send word to him* to that effect, and not leave such illness to be heard of in a casual and indirect manner.

As Nonconformists, conscientiously adopting the voluntary principle, and wholly dependent upon its efficiency for the maintenance of Christ's cause, the Officers of the Church hope that *all* the members will cheerfully give as God shall prosper them, and so aid the various Christian Societies connected with us.

Sittings.

Persons requiring sittings, are requested to apply to the Deacons, or to Mr. J. Wyse, Fernlea East Fields.

Marriages.

Information respecting the celebration of Marriage may be obtained of the Minister or Deacons. There being no legal difference between marriages solemnized in Nonconformist Chapels and Episcopal Churches, it is naturally expected of those who have made Newbury Baptist Chapel their religious home, that they will associate this pleasant and important act of their lives with the place where they are accustomed to worship, and with the minister who watches for their souls as one who must give account.

Burials.

As by the Burials' Bill Nonconformist Ministers can conduct Funeral Services in Churchyards, persons wishing to avail themselves thereof will please apply to the Pastor, giving him as long notice as possible, to prevent disappointment.

CHAPEL KEEPER:

ALFRED CLARK, Waldegrave Place.

Obituary.

MRS. TARDIF, DIED JAN. 5th, 1885.
 MRS. MAY, DIED FEB. 9th, 1885.
 MRS. WARNE, DIED APRIL 22nd, 1885.
 MRS. JOSEPH MILLER, DIED DEC. 19th, 1885.
 MRS. JAS. FREEMAN, DIED DEC. 19th, 1885.

Statistics.

Having thoroughly revised our Church Roll, the number of Members now on the Book is 209, of which 27 were received by Baptism, 13 by transfer from other Churches, during the past year.

Visiting Committee.

Mr. Coxeter,	Mr. J. Wyse,	Mrs. Tubb,	Miss Johnson
Mr. W. Hughes,	Mr. Whittington,	Mrs. Hasell,	Mrs. Shaw,
Mr. Jackson.	Mrs. Cooper,	Mrs. P. E. Davies,	Miss King,
Mr. Nias,	Mrs. Nias,	Miss Ewing,	Mrs. Davies,
Mr. P. E. Davies,	Mrs. Jackson,	Mrs. Lawrence,	

General Balance Sheet.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Balance from last Account	0	3	0	By Amount paid to Pastor	171	18	2
Weekly Offerings and Subscriptions	141	19	9	Supplies & Expenses of do.	15	10	0
Dividends and Cheque from Oxford	41	18	5	Gas	11	3	11
Subscriptions to Incidental Expenses	30	6	4	Chapel Keeper	10	0	0
Profits on Tea, Almanacs, &c.	1	6	4	Insurance	1	10	0
Balance due to Treasurer	12	15	6½	Sundry Trade Bills	13	6	7½
				Expenses of Representative to Baptist Union Meetings	2	0	0
				Organ Blower and other Sundries	3	0	8
	£228	9	4½		£228	9	4½

*Audited and found correct, A. G. WHITTINGTON,
 ALF. CLARK.*

Ordinance Fund.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Collections	19	19	6	By Amounts to Poor and Sick	13	11	0
				Missionary Society for Widows and Orphans	3	3	0
				Bread and Wine	2	2	8
				Balance in hand	1	2	10
	£19	19	6		£19	19	6

Foreign Missions Account.

Collector	£	s.	d.	Mr. J. J. DAVIES.	£	s.	d.
To Collections, Northbrook-st	12	4	3	By Amount remitted to Parent Society	81	3	5
" Ashmore Green	1	11	0	Expenses	0	8	0
" Berris Bank	3	12	0				
" Headley	3	0	0				
" Long Lane	0	0	3				
Sunday School Boxes	13	6	10				
Juvenile Missionary Association for Nilento Church-roberty	12	0	0				
Do. for General Fund	5	14	9				
Boxes by the Misses Jackson, Taylor, Whittington	2	16	10				
Amounts from Ordinance Fund for Widows and Orphans	3	3	0				
Subscriptions*	24	11	0				
	<u>481</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>				
					<u>81</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u>

• LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Mr. Coxeter	6	6	0	Mr. Whittington	0	10	6
Mr. J. J. Davies	4	0	0	Mr. Lewendon	0	10	6
Mr. A. Jackson	4	0	0	Mr. Nias	0	10	6
Mr. Keene	1	1	0	Mr. Thorn	0	10	6
Mrs. Hasell	1	1	0	Miss Hodges	0	10	6
Mrs. Flint	1	1	0	Mr. F. Clarke	0	10	0
Mrs. Mills	1	0	0	Mr. Hughes	0	10	0
Mr. P. E. Davies	1	0	0	Mrs. Pettifer	0	10	0
Mr. Tubb	1	0	0				

Sunday School.

Motto for 1883.

"Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ."—PHIL. I. 27., B.V.

Father, raise me higher, higher,
Nearer heaven and nearer Thee;
Let me ever be a witness
Of Thy power from sin to free.

Christ-like, tender, strong, and noble,
Let my actions always prove
That my life to Thee is given,
That I feel Thy power and love.

President, Rev. E. GEORGE.

Superintendent, Mr. W. HUGHES, JUNR., 102, Northbrook Street.

Secretary, Mr. G. T. EVANS, West Street.

Treasurer, Mr. P. E. DAVIES, 63, Northbrook Street.

Librarian, Mr. W. E. LEWENDON, Oxford Street.

Officer of Literature, Mrs. H. O. BARR, 4, Berkeley Terrace.

The Superintendent, Secretary, Treasurer, & one Teacher form the School Executive.

14

STATISTICS.

Teachers including Officers	21
Members of Bible Classes	55
Boys 54; Girls 58	112
Infants—Boys' 20; Girls 21	41
	229

HOURS OF ATTENDANCE.

Morning 9-30	Afternoon 2-15
Young Men's Bible Class	2-15.	Leader, Mr. P. E. DAVIES.
Young Women's	"	Mrs. NIAS.
Servants'	3	Mrs. GEORGE.

Sunday School Account.

	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To Balance from last Account	1 2 11½	By Anniversary Expenses	2 8 0
Subscriptions *	9 6 0	Tracts	0 13 8
Anniversary Collections	13 0 4½	Printing, Stationery, & Books	2 18 1
Proceeds of Tea	0 5 0	Binding Library Books	0 3 0
Cash from Library Account	0 2 11	Bibles for Scholars and for use in School	0 16 6
Proceeds of Rev. H. O. Mackey's Lecture	0 10 6	Advertising	0 8 7
		Summer Excursion	8 4 6
		Balance in hand	8 15 4
	£24 7 9		£24 7 9

* LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

s. d.		s. d.		s. d.	
10 0	Mr A. Jackson	5 0	Mr P. E. Davies	4 0	Miss Ewing
10 0	Mr W. Hughes	5 0	Mr Lewendon	3 0	Mrs Boer
10 0	Mr Keems	5 0	Mr Whittington	3 0	Mr Evans
10 0	Mr Nias	5 0	Mr Dyer	3 0	Mrs Wynn
10 0	Mr Hill	5 0	Mr Beer	2 6	Mr W. J. Davies
10 0	Mrs Flint	5 0	Mr A. J. Chivers	2 6	Mr T. Waite
10 0	Mrs Mills	5 0	Mr Povey	2 6	Miss Waite
8 0	Mr Tubb	6 0	Mr Freemantle	2 6	Miss Jerome
5 0	Mr Hughes	5 0	Rev. E. George	2 6	Mrs Duck
5 0	Mr Coxeter	5 0	Miss Hazell	2 6	Mrs Cooper
5 0	Mr Sellwood	5 0	Miss Matthews	2 0	Miss Whittington
5 0	Mr J. J. Davies	5 0	Miss Jackson		

Clothing Club Account.

	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To Balance from last Account	0 0 10	By Trade Bills	19 8 4
Children's Pence	18 5 11	Balance to next Account	0 1 0
Interest	0 8 6		
Bonus from School Funds	0 9 1		
	£19 4 4		£19 4 4

15

Miscellaneous Account.

S. S. BOXES.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Young Women's Bible Class	0	7	0	Miss Waite's Class	0	18	0
Mrs Nias' do.	2	14	0	Mr. Evans' do.	0	6	2
Mr Davies' do.	2	14	0	Mr. Dell's do.	0	3	2
Miss Jackson's Class	1	2	0	Mr. Beer's do.	0	11	0
Mr. W. Davies' do.	0	9	6	Mr. T. Waite's do.	0	7	0
Miss Matthews' do.	0	10	0	Infants' (Miss Hall)	0	11	3
Miss James' do.	0	8	5				
Miss Terry's do.	0	17	9				
Miss Whittington's do.	0	7	0				
					£12	6	4

Christmas Collecting Cards.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Norman Lewendon - - -	1	4	0	Miss Dunn - - -	0	9	6
Annie Davies - - -	1	3	0	Bessie Dyer - - -	0	9	0
Nellie Davies - - -	1	0	2	Miss Hall - - -	0	6	6
Miss Shoorman - - -	0	12	0				
Mr. Beer - - -	0	10	6		£5	14	9

Juvenile Missionary Association for Wilton Churchbury.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Collected by				Nellie Davies - - -	0	10	10
Kate Hughes - - -	1	15	9	Boxes by			
Annie Rice - - -	1	13	2	Miss Terry - - -	0	14	5
Charles Percy - - -	1	8	7	Norman Lewendon - - -	0	2	6
Annie Davies - - -	1	5	6	Mrs. Keens - - -	0	1	5
Kate Waite - - -	1	5	6	Annie Rice - - -	0	1	3
Herbert Hughes - - -	1	4	3	Kate Waite - - -	0	1	1
Mr. T. Waite - - -	0	17	7				
Ada Ward - - -	0	15	7		£11	17	6

Baptist Total Abstinence Association (Newbury Branch).

Superintendent, Mr. H. C. BEER, 4, Berkeley Terrace.
 Secretary, Mr. G. T. EVANS.
 Treasurer, Mr. W. E. LEWENDON.

Number of Children in Band of Hope:—BOYS, 42; GIRLS, 39. Meetings held every Alternate Tuesday, at 6-45.

Balance Sheet.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To Balance from last Account	2	1	10	By affiliation Fee to B.T.A.A.	0	12	6
„ Collections and Books Sold	0	4	1	„ Printing and Books ...	1	17	6
„ Subscriptions ...	0	11	6	„ Balance in hand ...	0	7	5
	£2	17	5		£2	17	5

Young Christian's Association.

President, The PASTOR.

Secretaries, Messrs. A. WINDSOR AND W. CHURCH.

Meetings are held Weekly.

The Object of this Society is to help in Christian Life, and instruct in doctrine those who have already decided for Christ, and to endeavour to lead others to Jesus.

Lay Preachers' and Colportage Society.

President, Rev. E. GEORGE.

Secretary, Mr. A. JACKSON.

Collector, Mr. P. E. DAVIES.

Colporteur, Mr. GRIMWOOD, West Fields.

Preachers :

Mr Ashdown, Waterloo Place,
 " G. Bird, Crookham,
 " W. Braine, G.W.R. Hermitage,
 " I. Bunc, Enborne Road,
 " A. Clarke, Waldegrave Place,
 " F. Clarke, Ham Bridge Dairy,
 " P. E. Davies, 63, Northbrook Street,
 " G. Grimwood, West Fields,

Mr B. C. Heath, Hill Farm, Enborne,
 " A. Morton, Farleigh Cottage,
 " G. Pocock, Cold Ash,
 " Palmer, Eochinswell,
 " Swindon, Sarum Cottages,
 " Thicks, Market Place,
 " Whittington, West Fields.

Stations :

ASHMORE GREEN,
 BERRIES BANK,

HEADLEY,
 LONG LANE.

Colportage Fund.

	£	s	d		£	s	d
To Subscriptions*	21	10	0	By amount remitted to Metro-			
" Collections Headley -	4	11	6	politan Tabernacle Col-	40	0	0
" " Berries Bank	3	6	11	portage Association -			
" " Ashmore Green	2	0	0				
" " Long Lane	0	7	3				
" Balance due to Treasurer	8	1	10				
	£40	0	0		£40	0	0

* LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

	£	s	d		£	s	d		£	s	d
Mr Oxeter	5	0	0	Mr Hughes	1	0	0	Mrs Hazell	0	10	0
Mr A. Jackson	5	0	0	Mr Nias	0	10	0	Mr James	0	10	0
Mr J. J. Davies	2	0	0	Mr Morton	0	10	0	Mr Wyse	0	5	0
Mr J. Tubb	1	10	0	Mr P. E. Davies	0	10	0	Mrs Horaman	0	4	0
Mrs Mills	1	1	0	Mr Whittington	0	10	0	Miss Jackson	0	2	6
W. E. Palmer, Esq.	1	0	0	Mr Hill	0	10	0	Miss Hodges	0	2	6
A Friend	1	0	0	Mr Sellwood	0	10	0	Miss Ewing	0	2	6

17

Village Accounts.

\$ s d		£ s d	
ASEMORE GREEN—		By Sundry Bills ...	6 14 0
To Subscriptions, Collections, and profit on Tea -	7 10 0	" Balance in Hand (general fund) ...	0 16 0
" Ditto Sunday School -	6 13 5	" Clothing Club, Rewards, School Account ...	4 15 5
		" Balance in Hand, Sunday School ...	1 18 0
	£14 3 5		£14 3 5

£ s d		£ s d	
BERRIES BANK—		By Sundry Bills & Coal Club Bonus ...	5 3 5½
To Collections & Subscriptions	5 15 0½	" Balance in Hand, (general fund) ...	0 12 3
" Ditto Lord's Supper	0 15 5	" Cost of Tea and Bonus to Clothing Club ...	9 17 1
" Ditto Sunday School	10 16 0½	" Balance in Hand, (School Account) ...	0 16 11½
		" Amount to Poor and Sick	0 10 5
		" Balance in Hand, (Lord's Supper) ...	0 5 0
	£17 7 5		£17 7 5

£ s d		£ s d	
BREADLEY—		By Sundry Bills and Repairs to Chapel ...	7 7 4
To Collections & Proceeds of Tea ...	11 5 4½	" Tea to poor ...	2 7 3
" Ditto Lord's Supper	1 1 8	" Balance in Hand, (general fund) ...	1 10 0½
		" Bread & Wine & amount to Poor ...	0 14 0
		" Balance in Hand, (Lord's Supper) ...	0 7 5
	£12 7 0½		£12 7 0½

£ s d		£ s d	
LONG LANE—		By Repairs to Chapel, New Organ, & Sundry Bills	35 10 8
To Collections, Subscriptions, and proceeds of Tea	36 7 8	" Balance in hand ...	0 17 0
	£36 7 8		£36 7 8

Dorens Society.

Secretary, MRS. P. E. DAVIES, Treasurer, MISS HUGGELS.

Meetings Monthly.

Balance Sheet :

£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
To Members Subscriptions	3 5 6	By Expended in Materials	2 13 3
		" Balance in hand	0 9 3
	£3 5 6		£3 5 6

Zemana Working Society.

Secretary, MRS. J. J. DAVIES,

Treasurer, MRS. NIAS.

Meetings Monthly.

Balance Sheet :

		£ s. d.			£ s. d.
To Balance in hand	...	7 1 0	By sundry Trade Bills	...	1 11 1
„ Sale of Work	...	3 17 0	„ Amount to Mission House	...	5 0 0
			„ Balance in hand	...	4 8 5
		<u>10 19 0</u>			<u>£10 19 0</u>

Chappel Renovation Fund.

Secretary, MR. P. E. DAVIES,

Treasurer, MR. HUGHES.

		£ s. d.			£ s. d.
To Subscriptions		139 18 2	By amount paid to Mr. James	195 0 0	
„ Collections		27 12 5½	„ „ „ „ Cary	28 8 0	
„ Proceeds of Tea		8 13 7½	„ „ „ „ Edwards	20 0 0	
„ Loan (Temporary)		140 0 0	„ Sundry Trade Bills	71 2 0½	
			„ Balance in hand	1 14 2½	
		<u>£316 4 3</u>			<u>£316 4 3</u>

Regent's Park College.

Collector - - - - - Mr J. J. DAVIES.

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

		s. d.			s. d.
Mr A. Jackson	-	10 0	Mr Tubb	-	10 0
„ J. J. Davies	-	10 0			
„ Coxeter	-	10 0			
„ Nias	-	10 0			
					<u>£2 12 0</u>

Pastor's College.

To Amount collected by Pastor £2 4 0. | By Amount to Treasurer £2 4 0

Irish and Home Missions.

Collector - - - - - Mr J. J. DAVIES.

		£ s. d.			£ s. d.
To Subscriptions		3 2 6	By Amount to Parent Society	4 7 0½	
„ Collections		1 4 6½			
		<u>£4 7 0½</u>			<u>£4 7 0½</u>

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

		£ s. d.			£ s. d.			£ s. d.
Mr A. Jackson	0 10 0		Mrs Hazell	0 5 0	Mr Taylor	0 5 0		
„ J. J. Davies	0 10 0		Mr Hughes	0 5 0	„ Sellwood	0 2 0		
„ J. Tubb	0 7 6		„ Keane	0 5 0	„ Whittington	0 2 0		
„ Coxeter	0 5 0		„ Nias	0 5 0				

Bible Translation Society.

Collector - - - - - **Mr. J. J. DAVIES.**

To Subscriptions £1 12 6. | By Amount to Parent Society £1 12 6.

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Mr Coxeter	0	5	0	Mr Thorn	0	5	0	Mr Jackson	0	2	6
" J. J. Davies	0	5	0	" Tubb	0	5	0	" Hughes	0	2	0
" Keens	0	5	0	" Nias	0	3	0				

Extracts from the Church Year Book of 1886

In 1886 the Sunday School held their 100 year anniversary, for which a photographic record was produced.

Sunday School Anniversary 1886



During the year of the Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887 the Church pump, which I assume drew water from a well or underground water supply, refused to function and the Towns' water supply was laid on to the premises.

In that year it was decided to arrange to hold an “Olde English Faire” in order to liquidate the debt on the renovation fund.

A handbill for this event reads “Ye olde English Market would be holden on ye 22nd 23rd and 24th dayes of October 1888 (Godde Willinge). Ye olde style houses contayning ye wares were attended by Faire Ladyes in Puritan dress; and ye people were entertayned with sweet musicke”

This event was held in the Corn Exchange and raised £256. The Chief organiser and Committee Chairman was Mr. W.E. Lewendon.

Also during the month of October 1888 the Rev. George’s brief but fruitful ministry closed at Newbury when he took up secretarial work with British and Foreign Bible Society. Later on in his life Rev. George suffered the loss of a leg but still continued his work on behalf of the Bible Society.

After an interval of six months, an invitation to the pastorate was accepted by Rev. George James Knight who was then at Bank Buildings Church Weymouth. He settled here in May 1889.

In 1890 Mr. Jackman, who had proved his worth in village work, was accepted for entry to Spurgeons College for training with a view to taking up missionary work in the Belgian Congo.

The fact that Newbury Baptist Church has taken an active role in the wider community was evidenced when in 1891 one of the Deacons of the Church Mr. Alfred Jackson was elected as Town Mayor for a two year period.

About 1891/2 Mr. P.E. Davies resigned as Church Secretary and Choirmaster and was replaced by Mr. W.J Davies who also served as Sunday School Superintendent.

In October 1898 an American organ replaced the old Harmonium in the School Room. In 1899 when Mr. W.J. Davies moved to Reading, Mr. Clayton succeeded him as Secretary, and Mr. MacDavies became choirmaster and Mr Fred Pocock honorary organist, a post he held for 25 years.

In 1901, after a connection with the Church since 1848, Mr. J.J. Davies, a greatly esteemed deacon, died. He was the founder of the firm of J.J Davies and Sons, and was a victim of polio being confined to a wheelchair. For his funeral service the pulpit was draped in black.

Also in 1901 the small choir gallery behind the pulpit was removed and the pulpit reduced in size when a new organ built by Messrs. Martin & Coate of Oxford was installed, which cost £219-10-0d. A special service was held on 1st May when the new organ was dedicated. In December 1901 one of the Deacons, Mr. T. Rowles died and for his funeral service in the Church the pulpit was also draped in black.

1902 will be remembered for the Education Act, which put the control of schools under the newly created County Councils or County Boroughs. Up to this time the Church schools or voluntary schools had been run by School Boards consisting of Church people. They had been labouring under increasing difficulties, mainly financial, and it was felt by the Prime Minister of the day, Mr. A.J. Balfour that the solution was to close them down. This pleased the Liberal non-conformists but greatly offended the Church and Conservatives.

John Clifford, a leading Baptist Minister of the time organised a national protest and spoke at meetings throughout the Country on this issue, although whether he ever came to Newbury I do not know. Since schools were now to be financed through the rates, he advised non-conformists that

they should refuse to pay their rates. Those that followed his advice were prosecuted, having their good and chattels seized; to be sold at auction to pay their rates and some also went to jail. They became known as “Passive Resisters.”

The Church’s Minister, Rev. Knight took the line of passive resistance against what he and many others thought was an unjust Act of Parliament. He was fully prepared to suffer the penalty of the law for his principles. Accordingly, the Church found themselves without a minister for a year when he went to prison. His goods were sold at Auction where they were bought by one of the Deacons, Mr. W.E. Lewendon.

At the start of 1903 the day of the mid-week service was altered from Wednesday to Thursday evening with the Christian Endeavour meeting moving to Tuesday evenings. In 1903, Mr. Clayton left Newbury and Mr. MacDavies became Church Secretary, a position in which he served for 30years. Again, in 1903, the role of the Church in the local community was shown when Mr. W.E. Lewendon a church member and ardent temperance worker, already a Justice of the Peace was elected as the Town Mayor. In the May of 1903 four days of celebrations were held in connection with the Sunday School Centenary. A report in the Newbury Weekly News at that time refers to the growth of the Sunday School as being tremendous and the fact that the buildings are really inadequate for the work. It also refers to the fact that many of those who have passed through the Sunday school now occupy positions of usefulness in business and commercial life. Some entered the Ministry - among whom are the Rev. Alfred Hall, editor of the South African Baptist in Port Elizabeth, Rev. J.H. Jackman of Peterborough, Rev. W.B. Nicholls in Kington Hertfordshire, Rev. J.W. Davies in Lee Kent, Rev. Augustus Windsor a missionary in India and the Reverends Frank Grimwood, Roger Grimwood and Alfred Clarke who joined the established

Church. On the Sunday, the Rev. E George of Yeovil, a former pastor of the Church, was the guest preacher. Mr. M.J. Davies of Reading, a former Scholar, Teacher and Sunday School Superintendent presided over the afternoon service with the speaker being the Rev. J.W. Davies, an old scholar and now Pastor of Lee Baptist Church in Kent. The afternoon service was also attended by the Sunday School of the Primitive Methodist Church who brought with them greetings in the name of their School which were accepted by the Newbury Baptist Sunday School Superintendent Mr. A Jackson. On the Monday, a re-union of old scholars was attended by over 120 persons. On the Tuesday, the current scholars and teachers together with their parents and guardians were entertained to tea. This was followed by an evening of entertainment of singing and recitations by the children. On Wednesday, the celebrations were concluded when the Rev. Charles Brown of Ferme Park, a former minister of the Church, preached in the afternoon followed by a tea and an evening meeting presided over by Mr. Edward Jackson of Reading.

In 1905 the Church organ had a manually operated blower. It is recorded in the minutes that complaints had been received about the erratic behaviour of the organ blower (the person who used to pump up the bellows for the organist to play the organ) and a better understanding was required!

In April 1907, Mr. T.M. Nias, the senior deacon passed away aged 79, having held the office of Deacon for 32 years. His membership dated back to 1847. He served as a Sunday School teacher and local preacher. He was a stalwart in the temperance cause and did useful pioneer work in Newbury.

During 1908 the pastor Rev. Knight suffered a period of ill health and resigned in October that year. He had given nearly twenty years of devoted service to the Church. A testimonial

fund for him realised over £64. During the period without a Minister, Mr. Alfred Jackson chaired all meetings. After leaving Newbury, Rev. Knight became the minister of a Church at Minehead and carried on a successful ministry there for many years.

On 7th November 1909, the Rev. C.V. Pike from Amptill accepted a five year pastorate to Newbury Baptist Church. A public recognition service was held for him in December that year with the Rev. Fred Humphrey of Leystone preaching. In celebration of the Jubilee opening of the Church, the buildings were renovated which included a new heating system, installation of mains drainage and a new outside lamp. A new ladies cloakroom was provided and new toilets, a new classroom and a pastors vestry.

In April 1910 the pew doors were removed and a Mr. Elliot was appointed as Chapel Keeper in place of Mr. J Smith, who resigned after many years service. A letter was received from Mr. Elliot thanking the Church for the honour conferred on him in electing him as Chapel Keeper. In June of that year individual Communion cups were adopted for use in Communion services and Evangelistic Song Books were purchased for use in the Evening services. The Rev. Pike's first Anniversary was celebrated with the guest preacher on the Sunday being Rev. E.E. Smith of Wokingham and a service on the Wednesday afternoon with the preacher being Rev. T Humphrey of Leytonshire, followed by a tea and public meeting presided over by Mr. T.C. Hopkins J.P. During the year 1910 it is recorded that a Mr. Gale first raised the question of the formation of a Boys' Brigade Company in the Church but the idea was dropped as the Sunday School was to form a Boys Legion although it does not appear that this happened either. It is also recorded in the minutes that in 1910 a member of the Church was suspended when he was found to have a

gambling addiction to horse racing and to finance this habit had embezzled money from his employer.

On June 18th 1911, the Church joined with other churches for a service of celebration in the Corn Exchange for the Coronation of King George V, at which the Rev. C.W. Pike preached the sermon. The Rev. Pike was also elected as president of the Free Church Council for a two year period. During that year Mrs A.J. Chivers gave the Church a gift of a communion chair in memory of her late husband who founded the building firm of A.J. Chivers.

In 1912 the Church suffered two losses when, at the beginning of the year one of the Deacons Mr. H.C. Beer died. He had joined the Church in 1883 being leader of the Band of Hope for many years. At the end of the year Brother Selwyn, another deacon was killed in an accident at work. Also that year, the choirmaster, Mr. MacDavies resigned due to ill health after 14 years service, being replaced by Mr. C.H. Freeman.

1913 saw the creation of a Communicates Roll for those who regularly worshipped at the Church and took communion but were not members. This did not confer the right to attend or vote at Church meetings. By the end of the year the debt on the renovation fund had been cleared.

In 1914, it is recorded that the Rev. E. George, a former pastor of the Church, suffered an accident resulting in the loss of one of his legs. The singing of Amen at the end of hymns was introduced but dropped after a month.

In 1915, Sunday School attendance had declined by 30 and was regarded as serious. A week of special services for young people was held during October. During the year the Rev. C.W. Pike became Secretary of the Berkshire Baptist Association, a position he held until 1926 when he left Newbury. In 1915, it is

recorded that the Minister requested absolution from the Church as he allowed smoking in the Schoolroom on a recent visit to the town by new Clergy.

In 1916, the call up for military service of many of the young men of the Church had caused the temporary collapse of the Young Men's Bible class. In October of that year the Church held a mission, at which it is stated that 106 people professed conversion and 81 signed decision cards. In addition, 31 letters were received from children under thirteen professing conversion.

In 1917, it is recorded that the usual tea meeting which normally preceded the Annual Church meeting could not be held as the school premises were occupied by the military and the pastor was to undertake National Service for three days a week. It is also recorded that the names of young incoming members should be referred to the "look out" Committee of the Christian Endeavour who would then be in a position to make them welcome. In May 1917, the Rev. George Knight, a former pastor of the Church, died. During the summer months, because of the War, the Pastor did not take his usual holiday month and neither did the Congregational Minister. During August, the two congregations united for worship with the morning service at the Baptist Church and the evening service at the Congregational Church. In September, the Church Secretary, Mr. MacDavies was elected as President of the County Association of Berkshire Baptists and also that month the first meeting of the new young peoples society, which replaced the Christian Endeavour, was held. On 4th October 1917 it is recorded that Mr. George Alfred Leathen was the first Church Member to be killed in action during the war. On Wednesday 28th November 1917 special services were held in commemoration of the 277th Church Anniversary and the eighth year of the ministry of Rev. C.V. Pike. Due to the war

conditions there was no public tea, but sufficient time was allowed between the afternoon and evening meetings for those attending to return home for tea. The preacher on this occasion was the Rev. W Thomas M.A. B.D. of Caversham, a newcomer to this part of the Country but whose ministry had already been marked with a great deal of success. At night, a public meeting was held presided over by Alderman Jackson J.P. the Church Treasurer. The Church Secretary's report showed that 28 new members had been received into the Church. The Rev. C.V. Pike in his address referred to the men of the Church away at war, particularly the Sunday School Superintendent and Deacon Mr. A.P. Morton.

In 1918, the records show that membership of the Sunday School had increased. Also, the pastor, on behalf of the Church, sent letters of sympathy to Messrs Arbury, Lipscombe and Macabee who had all been disabled in the war. In March it is reported that the newly formed Young Peoples League was most successful with an average attendance of thirty - the success being attributed the leadership of the President the Rev Charles Pike. Owing to the War conditions a week-night meeting was not held this year as part of the Sunday School Anniversary and during the month of August the Church again combined for worship with the Congregationalists.

During the period 1915-1919 there had been no election of Deacons because of the War. Those in office in 1914 remained until 1920, although in 1919, two lady Deacons, Miss N Langford and Mrs Scuton were elected for a one year period. During the War years reference is also made to the work of the ladies who made hundred of garments for the sick and wounded soldiers of the First World War. In the month of August united services were again held with the congregational church in 1919. On 6th November Alfred George Whittington died - it is stated at a good old age. He had for some years done

good service as a Deacon and one of the Church Treasurers, having been baptised in 1866, his membership extended for a period of 53 years. Following his move away from Newbury he had been unable to take any active part in Church matters although he maintained an interest in the Sunday School and the Baptist Missionary Society by his regular gifts.

In 1920, as a memorial to those killed in the war, the church organ was renovated at a cost of £430 and in March of that year over 100 attended a welcome home supper for soldiers who had served in the war. Each soldier was allowed to bring a lady partner. In June that year the Berkshire Baptist Association held their annual assembly at Newbury, the address being given by Dr. J.H. Shakespeare and described in the Minutes as outstanding. The Rev. Pike was elected as Vice President for 1920 becoming President for the year 1921. In November Mrs Nias died following an operation. She was one of the Churches first lady Deacons.

In March 1921 a Pulpit Bible, which had belonged to Rev. George Wallis, was presented to the Church and in August the church again united with the congregational Church for services. On Wednesday 5th October 1921, a service of Remembrance for the men of the congregation who served in the Great War 1914-1918 and unveiling of memorial tablet was held at 6p.m. in the Northbrook Street Church. The tablet was unveiled by Lieutenant Colonel The Reverend F.J. Walkey O.B.E. M.C. who also gave the address.

When the Church was demolished the tablet was removed and is now sited on the inside West wall of the Church at St Mary's Hill with the inscription as shown: -

THIS TABLET GRATEFULLY
COMMEMMORATES THE NAMES OF THE
MEN ASSOCIATED WITH THIS CHURCH
AND ITS VILLAGE MISSIONS WHO LAID
DOWN THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR
1914-1918

ARTHUR J BEW	HAROLD FREEMAN
CHARLES ROWLES	DOUGLAS J SALWAY
FREDERICK PEARCE	EDGAR DAVIES
VICTOR KNIGHT	CHARLES HUGHS
ALBERT FRY	GEORGE A LEATHER
FREDERICK BEW	REGINALD J MACCABEE
JOHN AUSTTIN	GEORGE PROUT
LEONARD BEW	HARRY BUTLER
FREDERICK HISCOCK	STANLEY BELCHER
ERNEST FRY	THOMAS MACCABEE

“THEY WERE A WALL UNTO US BOTH BY NIGHT AND
BY DAY”

In 1922, the records show that the Sunday School was growing but the work was being hindered by the size of the premises and no money was available to expand the building. At the end of the year Mr. & Mrs Miller and Mr. & Mrs Pocock moved to Wokingham, severing a 150 year connection of the Miller Family with the Church. Mr. Miller himself had served the Church for 70 years 30 years as a Deacon and Mr. Pocock was the Church organist for 25 years.

In 1923, monthly cinema services proved very worthwhile reaching over 200 people and electric lighting was installed in the Church at a cost of £49. At the end of the year, Mrs Mary Hannah Davis, widow of the late Mr. J.J. Davis, died aged 85 years. She had been a member since childhood and was baptised in the old chapel in Northcroft Lane.

In 1925, the Rev. C.W. Pike was again elected as President of the Newbury Free Church Council. In March 1925, Mr. Lipscombe accepted an invitation to take on the oversight of the work at Abingdon Baptist Church and consequently relinquished his membership of Newbury Baptist Church and work at Headley Chapel. On 17th May 1925, the Church suffered a great loss when the Senior Deacon and Church Treasure Alderman Alfred Jackson J.P. died in his eightieth year. He had joined the Church in 1871 was elected a Deacon in 1879 and was also the Sunday School Superintendent. Mr. T.S. Waite succeeded him as Church Treasurer. In July Mr. Richardson took charge of the work at Headley and joint services were again held with the Congregationalists in August. In October of that year it was agreed that the number of Deacons should be increased to ten.

At the beginning of 1926 a new boiler had to be installed for the Church heating system. Mr. H New succeeded Mr. Franklin as Superintendent at Headley. In February 1926, after a most notable ministry of sixteen years, the Rev. Pike tendered his resignation from the Church when he accepted a call to Oxford Road Baptist Church, West Hartlepool where he remained until his retirement when he returned to live in Berkshire. At a packed farewell gathering in July, many tributes were paid to both his public and ministerial work in the Town being Vice President of the Newbury District Nursing Association, and having served on the Borough Education Committee for a period of five years, and the Borough Relief

Committee of which he was Chairman. During the War he was the officiating Minister in connection with the United Board for Chaplaincy among soldiers.

During the period without a Minister it appears that the Church Secretary chaired all meetings and took responsibility for the Church.

In April 1927, Mr. William Charles Johnson accepted an invitation to occupy the pulpit on the first and third Sunday of each month for a period of six months. In May, Mrs Joseph Franklin passed away. She had been associated with Ashmore Green Chapel for over 67 years and was number one on the Church Roll. Her memorial service was conducted in the Chapel on the 15th May 1927 by Councillor A.P. Morton. In June, Mr. Johnson transferred his membership from Harrow Green Church at Leystone to Newbury and in August joined the Church as a student Minister presiding over his first ever Church meeting that same month. In November, Mr. Joseph Miller, a Life Deacon, died aged 80 years after a short illness. He joined the Church 1872 having transferred from High Wycombe and was elected as a Deacon in 1892 being made a Life Deacon on 1923.

In February 1928, it is recorded that the Rev. Elias George a former Minister of the Church had died. At the Annual general meeting of the Church held March members of the congregation were invited to attend in addition to Church members. On Sunday 6th May 1928, having completed his ministerial training, the Rev. W. Chas Johnson was inducted as the Minister of Newbury Baptist Church at the morning service conducted by Rev. P.W. Evans B.A. B.D. the Principal of Spurgeon's College. The following Wednesday a welcome meeting was held in the afternoon with the Rev. R. Gordon Fairburn B.A. of Reading preaching. This was followed by a

public tea presided over by Mr. MacFarlane Davies the Church Secretary, at the conclusion of which the Rev. and Mrs Johnson were presented with a cheque as a wedding gift as they had recently been married, the Rev. Johnson's wife being a vocalist of exceptional ability. In the evening the mayor of Newbury Mr. J.H. Thompson presided over a meeting when various speeches were given. On 13th June that year Mr. Phillip E Davies died following an accident. He had been a Deacon, Church Secretary, Sunday School Teacher, Choir Leader and village preacher. In October that year the Local Council proposed the re-grouping of elementary schools in the Borough which would mean that all children under the age of eleven would have to attend Church of England Schools and all above eleven Council Schools. This meant that Religious Education would be sectarian and the appointment of teachers in the hands of Church of England School Managers The Church agreed to send the following resolution to the Council "That the religious instruction in schools should be on a basis approved by the Local Education Authority and that all teachers should be appointed by the Education Authority not school managers". The Pastor and Church Secretary were to act as the Churches representatives as a part of the delegation of the Free Churches to the Education Committee.

In February 1929, a fund was opened for the additional building on another site when circumstances permitted with Mr. A.P. Morton, Secretary and Mr. Shepherd, Treasurer of the Fund. In the mean-time all the present school premises were re-decorated and the Sunday School was still increasing in size both scholars and teachers. The Annual General Meeting was again open to members of the congregation and in May that year Mr. Walter Hancock was appointed Church caretaker in place of Mr. Elliot who had resigned as Chapel Keeper. Thursday November 28th saw the enrolment of the 1st Newbury Girls Life Brigade Company. This took place in evening in the

School Room of the Church when the Chairman for the proceedings, Mr. A.P. Morton commissioned the Rev. C.W Pike as the Chaplain, Miss. May Jones as the Captain and several others as Officers before handing out membership cards to the members of the Company. A flag, which had been bought as a gift by Miss May Jones, was presented to them. A display of team games, signalling and drill then followed. On Sunday 1st December, the full Company then paraded at the evening service for a special young peoples service conducted by the Rev. W. Chas Johnson.

At the commencement of 1930 a Church Magazine was introduced and in March the third Annual General Meeting of the Church and Congregation was held. In April 1930, there is the first ever record of an infant dedication - that of Eric George Parker, baby son of Mr.& Mrs Parker. During the month of June the Berkshire Baptist Association held its Annual meetings at Newbury Church. On Tuesday 24th June the Rev. A.G. Parry was inducted as president followed by a communion service conducted by Rev. W. Chas Johnson and a service led by the Rev. R. Martin Harvey of Wokingham. On Wednesday after the business meeting, lunch was held in the lecture hall attended by the Mayor Councillor H.C. Metcalf. At 4p.m. a service was held in the Church conducted by the Rev. F. Towney Lord B.A. B.D. of Bloomsbury Baptist Church. Then after tea, a public meeting was held presided over by Mr. Walter Davis of Reading who recalled that himself and his two brothers had, with one small break, occupied the position of Church Secretary at Newbury Baptist Church for a period of nearly fifty years The sermon was given by Dr. Townley. On Monday 3rd October Mr. & Mrs MacDavies celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary and the prayer meeting that evening took the form of a meeting of congratulations to them. Mrs MacDavies was unable to be present due to ill health. The minister, Rev. Chas W. Johnson presented Mr. MacDavies with

a beautiful upholstered easy chair. Mr. MacDavies had been a Deacon since 1902 and Church Secretary since 1903. In December, a bazaar organised in aid of the school extension scheme raised £260. That month Mrs Prudence Jackson, widow of the late Alderman Jackson J.P., died aged 82. The record in the minutes relating to her death states that her gracious hospitality was a feature in the life of the Church.



Sports Club 1930

In 1931 the fourth Annual General meeting of the Church and Congregation was held and in June open air services were held on the same lines as in the previous year. The year of 1931 also saw the formation of a Boys' Life Brigade, a division of the Boys' Brigade for 8-11 year olds.

At the commencement of 1932, Mr. John Wyse was made a Life Deacon. In June of that year the Church accepted the offer of a piece of land at Princes Place in Cheap Street from Mr. A.P. Morton on which to build new school premises.

On September 30th that year the death is recorded of Mr. John Wyse aged 91. He joined the Church following Baptism in 1885 and was elected a Deacon in 1919 being made a Life Deacon in 1932. He had been the Superintendent of Berries

Bank Chapel, a local preacher and until his death was Chairman and Director of Newbury Building Society.

At the commencement of 1933, Mr. T Waite was now acting as Church Secretary due to the prolonged illness of Mr. Mac Davies who, in February that year, resigned due to ill health after 30 years of service. In April, Mr. W.J. Lewendon was appointed to succeed him and that month the plans were approved for the new Sunday School Building, which was to be built by Mrs Arthur Chivers, one of the Church Members, at a cost of £2930. In May the Church agreed to appoint new Trustees and appointed all of the serving Deacons plus Messrs G.H. Freeman, W.A. Murray, T.H. Flint and H.D. Mayers. In June the Rev. Chas W Johnson accepted a call to Camden Road Baptist Church, London and left Newbury in November that year for this new pastorate. On 9th June 1933 the Churches Lady Deacon Mrs. F.E. Tallyn died. She was elected a deacon in 1929 and rendered useful service in the Sunday School, Christian Endeavour Society, and Young Peoples Fellowship. She also served as Missionary Treasurer. On Tuesday 25th July 1933 at 6-45p.m., a stone laying ceremony was held when the Rev. W. Chas Johnson laid the foundation stone for the new Sunday School building at St Marys' Hill.

In March 1934, the Annual Church Meeting of the Church was confined to Church Members only and in May that year, following an interregnum of only a few months, the Rev. A.J. Stanton commenced his ministry in at Newbury Baptist Church. On Wednesday 30th May 1934, the new building was opened at St. Mary's Hill for Newbury Baptist Church Sunday School. The Opening ceremony was performed by Mr. A.P. Morton the Sunday School Superintendent who said:-

“To the Glory of God and with the earnest desire that here little children may be blessed and made happy. That

boys and girls may be led into the way of life that youthful life and character may be enabled and that Christ's Kingdom may be extended in the hearts of all who shall spend time within its walls. I declare the building open."

A service was then held, conducted by the Rev. W. Chas Johnson, a former minister of the Church and the present Minister, the Rev. A.J. Stanton. This was followed by a tea presided over by Percy S Clarke J.P. of Wantage, the Treasurer of the Berkshire Baptists Association. In the evening a public meeting was held, presided over by Arnold S. Clark Esq. the Joint Treasurer of the Baptist Union and Chairman of the Council and Board of Management of the National Sunday school Union with an address being given by Rev. L.G. Braham M.A. the General Secretary of the National Sunday School Union.

On July 6th 1934 Mr. MacFarlane Davies died aged 78 years after a period of illness. He joined the Church in 1892, was elected a Deacon in 1902 and became Church Secretary in 1903, a position he served in for 30 years. He was also a Councillor and Magistrate and had been Chairman of the Belgian Refugees Relief Committee during the war and at one time Chairman of the Housing Committee. He was also a member of the Board of Guardians. No open air services were held this year but in the Autumn the Sunday School held a most successful Mission. The Church united with the Congregational Church for a Christmas morning service. At the end of the year it was agreed to change the method of voting for Deacons to that of written nominations rather than the previous practice of voting on a printed list of all members.

In February 1935 it is recorded that the debt on the Headley New Church Building had now been liquidated. On May 25th

1935 the death is recorded of Arthur Edwin Flint aged 86 years. He had been a member for over 40 years and was Superintendent of Headley Sunday School for 11 years. He was laid to rest at Headley with his wife who had died a few days before him. On August 29th Mr. William Clare Gale died suddenly aged 75 years. He had been a local preacher in the village Churches for over 50 years and had a great interest in young peoples work especially the Christian Endeavour movement. During the year of 1935, Mr. A.P. Morton had a hall built on land he owned next to the new school building as he felt it imperative that the Brigades should have a building for themselves.

The year 1936 saw the introduction of the revised Baptist Hymnal into the Church services. In January 1936 the Church received and accepted an offer for the Northbrook Street premises of £6,600 from Messrs. Dyer Son and Creasey of Blackheath. Mr A.P. Morton then most generously gave the Church a portion of land he owned next to the School Building in St Mary's Hill and the Church purchased an adjacent piece of land from Messrs. Neates and Sons on which to build a new Church. The account of the Annual Church Meeting that year does not show any record from the Young Peoples Fellowship which I assume had now closed being replaced by the Christian Endeavour Society from whom a report was given by Mr. W.K. Westlake. March of that year saw the formation of the Local Free Church Council with the Rev. A. Stanton being elected as President and that month Mr. W.J. Lewendon resigned as Church Secretary due to ill health, being replaced by Mr. C.H. Freeman. The treasurer Mr. T.S. Waite also resigned being succeeded by Mr A.P. Morton. In June that year the sale of the Northbrook Street buildings was concluded and the final services were held in the Church on Sunday 7th June 1936 both conducted by Rev. A Stanton. At the morning service both the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade paraded and

a Communion Service was held at the conclusion of the evening service with the words of the final prayer being”.

“So long Thy power hath blessed us sure it still will lead us on”

The organ was removed from the Church to be installed in the new building at St Marys’ Hill. The buildings themselves were demolished to make way for shop premises which today house three retail units.

In concluding his book in the year 1940 Mr. W.J. Lewendon wrote:-

“ In reviewing the past we give humble and grateful thanks to God and, looking forward, take courage as we start a new chapter in our Church’s history.

A little Christian Community was founded three centuries ago. A fire was kindled which has sometimes burned brightly, and at other periods become a faint flicker; but neither the cold water of persecution, nor the dark days of difficulty have quenched the flame. To our young people especially is entrusted the task of keeping the fire aglow; by earnestly taking up the work as others lay it down. May they with Whittier”

*“Stand in their place, and testify
To coming ages long,
That truth is stronger than a lie,
And righteousness than wrong.”*

5. ST. MARY'S HILL BUILDING

Following the closure of the Northbrook Street building and its subsequent sale in July 1936 the Church commenced using the hall in the School Buildings at St Marys' Hill for services. During the month of August they again united with the Congregationalists for services.

In March 1937 the following resolution was passed "That the members of Newbury Baptist Church respectfully urge the Licensing Justices of the Borough of Newbury to refuse the application by the Licensed Victuallers Association or any other body for the extension of hours for the sale of wines spirits or any intoxicating liquors." That month it was agreed that Mrs Arthur Chivers would be the builder of the new Church and Messrs Floyd and Robson the Architects. However in view of the disappointing response to the recent appeal for funds for the new Church building, the Church felt unable to proceed with this at the present time.

In February 1938 Mr. T.S. Waite was appointed a Life Deacon and the Church agreed not to proceed with the building of the new Church until the building fund had reached £5500.

In May 1939, an estimate of £4937 was accepted from Messrs A.J. Chivers for the building of the new Church. On July 26th 1939 at 6-30p.m. a service was conducted by the Rev. A.J. Stanton and the commemoration stone was laid by Mrs. William Davies.

A History of Newbury Baptists – St Mary's Hill Building



Laying of Foundation stone for new Church building in 1938

During the month of August 1938 united services were again held with the Congregationalists. In September of that year the Brigade Hall at St Mary's Hill was opened as a rest room for men on service. At the end of the year the Boys' Brigade Company was closed down due to the Officers being called up for war service and in the absence of any further reports from the Christian Endeavour Society after 1939 I have to assume that it closed also during that year.

In the year of 1940 a new chapter was begun in the life of the Church when to coincide with the Ter-Centenary of the Church the new buildings were opened at St Mary's Hill. A special souvenir programme was produced for this event with a week of celebrations being held. On Wednesday September 18th the New Church Building was officially opened at a ceremony attended by a large number of people including the Mayor and Mayoress of Newbury, Councillor and Mrs E.G. Slater. The opening ceremony was performed by the Church's Life Deacon, Mr. T.S. Waite who had been associated with the

Church for over 75 years. He was presented with a Gold Key by Mrs Bessie Chivers, to whom the building of the Church had been entrusted. A dedication service was then held at which Rev. A.J Stanton preached the sermon followed by a tea, for which it is interesting to note that the rationed food for this was given from the home allowances of some of the women of the Church. In the evening, a meeting took place presided over by the Mayor, Councillor G.E. Slater when an address was given by the Area Superintendent the Rev. F.J. Walkey O.B.E M.C. The Sunday services were conducted by the Rev. M.E. Aubrey C.H. M.A. the Secretary of the Baptist Union. On Monday in the afternoon the Womens' Devotional meeting Anniversary took place with the speaker being Mrs. E.C. Britton, the Baptist Women's League president elect. A tea followed this before an evening meeting chaired by Rev. A.J. Stanton with the Speaker Mrs. E.C. Britton and soloist Mr. J.A. Clark. On the Tuesday a public meeting was held with the Chairman Rev. G.C. Matthews President of the Berkshire Baptist Association who later became the Rector of Newbury and the speaker being the Dr. H.R. Williamson Foreign Secretary of the B.M.S. The weeks' celebrations were concluded on Wednesday 25th September when a re-union was held of both past and present members and associates of the Church under the Chairmanship of Rev. A.J. Stanton with the speakers being Rev. C.V. Pike and Rev. W. Chas Johnson, both former Church ministers.

A report in the Newbury Weekly News at the time of the opening of the New Church states that, "The fact that it has been possible to erect a Church in war time is an achievement in itself". It also records that the building was delayed due to severe weather conditions and the outbreak of the war and that the congregation have to sit on chairs as the Government will not release the wood for the pews to be made.

A History of Newbury Baptists – St Mary’s Hill Building



New Church building opened in 1940

In October 1940, the Brigades Hall was purchased by the Church on very generous terms from Mr. A.P. Morton (£500 payable at £50 per year over ten years).

The following is recorded in the Church Meeting Minutes of March 1943;

“The Members of Newbury Church gathered at their Annual meeting, place on record their grateful thanks to Almighty God that our Church Buildings have escaped serious damage”

During the year of 1944, seven United States soldiers based at Greenham Common were baptised at Newbury Baptist Church.

On Wednesday 20th September, a Valedictory service conducted by the Rev. A.J. Stanton was held in the Church for the Rev. and Mrs. Walter Fulbrook who were shortly to depart to work as Missionaries for the Baptist Missionary Society in Africa in the Portugese Congo.

During the period of the Second World War the Bentworth Road School in London were evacuated to Newbury and used the Newbury Church Sunday School buildings.

In 1946 the Church first established a reserve roll for members who had ceased to share actively in the life and worship of the Church, but did not wish to be deleted from the records. In November of that year a welcome home celebration was held for those who had served in the services during the war. At the end of the year the agreement with the Education Authority for use of the School Buildings was terminated.

In October 1947, having only received six years repayments towards the purchase of the Brigade Hall, Mr. A.P. Morton most generously gave the Hall to the Church, which he hoped would continue to be used for the furtherance of youth work within the Church.

In January 1948 Mrs. E. M. Stanton the wife of Rev. A.J. Stanton died and a memorial plaque to her memory was fixed on the wall in the ladies room in the early 1950's. In April that year a Mr. Roy Herrington, under the direction of Spurgeons College, undertook duties associated with the Church and village chapels prior to his entry into college for ministerial training. In November the heating was kept on over Saturday night due to complaints that Church was cold on Sundays and the gas lamp outside of the Church, disconnected during the war was reconnected. At end of year it was decided that Church Chronicle would continue for a further year.

A History of Newbury Baptists – St Mary’s Hill Building



Map showing location of St. Mary’s Hill Church buildings. Circa 1945

At the commencement of 1949 the Church accepted the resignation of the Rev. A.W. Stanton and he terminated his fifteen year ministry on 26th May 1949. Then in October 1949 the Church were advised by him that he had once again joined the Roman Catholic Church. A request from Berkshire County Council in March that year for use of School hall in an emergency situation was declined due to the reason that it was in constant use during the week. In the event of a real emergency and no other accommodation being available, the matter would be re-considered. Mr. K Carter succeeded Mr W.E.G. Stone as Sunday School Superintendent that month. In May Mr. F.J. Moon, who was the father of Mr. Cyril Moon who became Church Secretary the following year, was appointed Church caretaker in place of Mr. S Atkins and the wood required for the Church seating was finally released by the Board of Trade. Messrs. Ryder & Sons were given the job of making the pews for a price of £750. In May the Church hall was renovated at a cost of £350 by Messrs. A,J .Chivers. In June the Bible Pentecostal Church were granted use of the Junior Room in the School Hall for two services and also use of the Church for a Baptismal Service. In September an invitation to appoint a representative to serve on the Newbury War Memorial Committee was declined and Temperance Sunday was observed in November. That month the surplus effects removed from the old Northbrook Street building and which had been held in store were finally disposed of. At the end of the year Mr. F.J. Scruton tendered his resignation as Church organist and was replaced by Mr. Roy Burgess. The Church Chronicle was revamped to be a printed edition monthly at a cost of 2/6d per annum or 3d per copy with 200 copies being produced each month.

In February 1950 Mrs Margaret Scruton was appointed a Life Deacon and a weekly meeting of the Mothers of children whose names were on the cradle roll was started by Mrs. K.C.

Carter. In March, Mr Cyril Moon was appointed as Church Secretary in place of Mr. C.H Freeman who, after 14 years service as Secretary, retired. Also in March the lease was not renewed on the property in Porchester Road which had been used as a manse. April saw the formation of a “Ladies Committee”, comprising of the wives of serving deacons and the ministers wife who were to be responsible for their own communion duty rota, hospitality of ministers, Church Teas and any other duties normally undertaken by the women of the Church. In June it is recorded that a request from the Catholic Church to borrow our trestles and table tops was not granted. In August, the new Church pews, were installed in the Church and then waxed and polished by Messrs Camp Hopsons at a cost of £45, and that month Mr. C.H. Freeman was presented with a monetary gift in recognition of his fourteen years devoted service as Church Secretary. A note in the minute book for that year refers to Mr. Shelford Grimwood being elected president of the Baptist Union for the four provinces that make up Western Canada in July 1950 and states that as a young man he was a member of and an earnest worker in the Baptist Church at Newbury. In September Mr. Roy Herrington the Church lay pastor who had been undertaking this role since June 1949 was moved on the direction of Spurgeons college to the Isles of Scilly to commence pastoral work there. Mr. J.A. Clarke and Mr T.E. Davis took over editorship of Church Chronicle from him and Mr .Brian Maskell, assisted by members of the Youth Club took responsibility for the work at Headley. In October, Mr. R.E. Maskell resigned as a Deacon after only eight months of service following his move to the Midlands. At the end of year plans were approved for a dwelling house within the Church grounds and eleven photographs of previous ministers of the Church donated by Mr. W.J. Lewendon were hung in the Ministers Vestry.

At the beginning of the year 1951, a change to the service was made when it was decided that the Lords Prayer would now be recited not sung and the introit and vespers sung by the choirs were also changed. Electric lighting was installed to the approach to the Church at cost of £45 during March and at the end of that month the Church Organist, Mr. Roy Burgess, resigned to take up a post of organist and Choirmaster with the Church of England. During the early part of the year the Youth Club, in conjunction with the National Young Life Campaign, an organisation that Mr. Roy Herrington now worked for having declined the invitation to enter into Spurgeons College for ministerial training, organised an Evangelic Mission for a week. In April Mr. B.A. Whiting was invited to the pastorate of the Church with 100% of the membership in favour. His ordination and induction service conducted by Rev. R.L. Child the Principal of Regents Park College, was held on 4th July followed by a tea in the School Hall and a service at night when the preacher was Dr. Theo H Robinson. That same month the Church purchased a manse in Chandos Road Newbury at a cost of £2550. It is of interest to note that this was the first time in 311 years that the Church had ever owned a manse. A Committee was also established to organise and cater for the social and cultural needs of the many foreign girls now living in the district. In October, the Local Branch of the National Young Life Campaign commenced using the Brigade Hall on the second and fourth Friday each month for meetings. In November the Church launched an appeal to raise £2800 for the manse brick fund. That month the Church received a letter from Miss. Vera L Pike, the daughter of the former Minister of the Church the Rev. C. W. Pike who was serving with the Baptist Missionary Society in Cuttack, appealing for gifts to enable them to build a Church at the Leper Asylum in Cuttack. The sum of £3-13s-6d. was raised for this work.

At the commencement of 1952 Mr. C.H. Freeman resigned as Choirmaster after forty years service and Mr. Francis F North was appointed as both organist and choirmaster. In March, the Treasurer, Mr. A.J. Clarke resigned due to ill health and was replaced by Mr. A.R. Gildersleve. That month the Church was used for a rally of the Village Churches. In June Messrs A.J. Chivers commenced construction of a house for the minister sited next to the Church for which plans had been approved in 1951, but a building licence only granted in March of that year. In June a gift of a leather bound copy of the Baptist Church Hymnal was made to Mr. C.H. Freeman in recognition of his many years service as Choirmaster. In September Mr. A.H. Hackman, finding that his move to America was to be permanent, resigned as a Deacon after twenty five years of loyal and devoted service. At the beginning of September, the Boys Brigade started meeting in the Brigade Hall on Wednesday evenings from 7p.m. to 9p.m. under the leadership of Mr. Cyril Moon and the Rev B. Whiting. In October the Newbury Baptist Sports Club was formed with the stated aim and purpose being “To promote the spirit of sportsmanship and comradeship on and off the sports field and to encourage the playing of indoor and outdoor games under a Christian influence”. In November, the Church agreed that instead of holding triennial elections for the whole of the Diaconate, a third of the deacons would from now on be elected each year with effect from March 1953. At the end of the year Mr. R Evans replaced Mrs Whiting as Sunday School Superintendent.

On Friday morning 22nd January 1953 Mr. A.J. Clarke passed away suddenly aged 63 years. He was an ardent Church worker all his life and before coming to Newbury in 1937 from Walthamstow had been a Deacon, Choir Secretary and Finance Secretary at Central Baptist Church. He continued his Church work at Newbury being a Deacon and Church Treasurer until 1952 when he relinquished the position due to ill health. He

was a gifted singer with a lovely tenor voice, which he used effectively for the Church and in massed choirs at the Royal Albert Hall. He was a keen athlete until late in life and also a teetotaler and strong observer of the Sabbath taking a prominent stand against the opening of cinemas in Newbury on Sundays.

At the start of 1953 the decision was taken that the Church should remain open daily for private prayer and meditation. In February the Bible Pattern Church used the Church for a Baptismal service one week day evening. In March Mr. W.J. Lewendon gave the Church two notice boards which he had made and these were sited each side of the entrance to the Church. Also that month woodworm was discovered in parts of the Church buildings, which required urgent treatment. In April the ministers' house was completed next to the Church building so the manse at Chandos Road was sold for £2300. In July, the Sports Club was granted permission to use the Brigade Hall for badminton on Wednesday evenings. In September, the pupils of Miss Brookes were granted permission to use the Church hall for a maximum of three Wednesday afternoons, the point being made that to grant an outside body use of the Church Premises was an exception to the rule. In September it was also agreed that "Amen's" would only be sung after hymns as appropriate. A Temperance Sunday was again held in November with 200 leaflets being obtained and distributed in the church pews and in November a motor bike was purchased for the minister to assist him in his work with the village Churches. At the 313th Church Anniversary Services that year the quest preacher was the Reverend Dr. Earnest A Payne M.A. D.D. the General Secretary of the Baptist Union. At the morning communion service conducted by the Rev Whiting a set of pewter communion plates believed to have been used in the Church

during the 1750's and recently recovered from private hands were brought into use again.

In February 1954, the Church agreed to loan any available seating they had to an Interdenominational Sunday School which had been started among the inhabitants of the huts at Bishops Green by a regular worshipper of Newbury Baptist Church. In April the offer of a gift of an oak lectern from a Church member for use in the Church services was declined since it was felt that the introduction of such an item into the Church Life would not be generally welcomed by the membership. In May a new gateway to the Church approach was finally completed with brick pillars supporting iron gates, which had been generously given by a Church member. In June the minutes record that the Secretary was asked to convey the Church's sympathy to the neighbouring Congregational Church who were at that present time undergoing a grave crisis due to the insecurity of their buildings. Practical help was also given in the loan of fifty chairs containing book boxes. In July the exterior of the Sunday School Buildings was painted at a cost of £90 and St Hildas' Church were loaned trestle tables for a function held on a Saturday during that month. In July it was also agreed that two notice boards be displayed on either side of the new Church gateway. In August, the Berkshire Baptist Association held a Youth Rally in Newbury, which comprised of a boat trip, then swimming and tea by the riverside and concluding with a meeting in the Church Hall with the Rev. W David Jackson the President of the Baptist Youth Movement as speaker. At the end of August the Rev. B.A. Whiting obtained his Master of Arts degree. In September 1954 the practice was introduced that after the Harvest Festival Services the produce left after first having catered for the sick and elderly was sold by auction. This practice continued until about the year 1963. In October, as part of the Church Anniversary celebrations, a programme of

music was given by the Newbury Singers at which the Mayor of Newbury was present. In November, a Bazaar was held in the Church hall organised by many of the Towns religious bodies in aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society Jubilee celebrations. In December the Newbury Round Table were granted permission to use the Church Hall for a Childrens' Party. At the end of the year Mrs E. N. Wheeler bequeathed her property at Gloucester Road to the Church on the condition that the Church took responsibility for keeping in good order both her own and her husbands graves at Caversham cemetery.

At the start of 1955 efforts were made to resuscitate the Christian Endeavour movement but as no one came forward to lead it, the concept did not materialise. That month the Newbury Relief Committee was granted permission to house a quantity of foodstuff in the Church storeroom. In April the advertisement in the Baptist Times advising details of Church Services was subjected to a 50% increase in the cost. Despite the Deacons recommendation that it should therefore be discontinued, the Church membership disagreed and voted for it to be continued. In July the Church Caretaker, Mr. F.J Moon left after 10 years service and in recognition of his service he was presented with a large type morocco bound copy of the Baptist Hymnal bearing his initials. The new caretaker appointed was a Mr. C Bishop. That year the preacher at the September Harvest festival Sunday was Mr. Anthony Hurd M.A who was the member of Parliament for Newbury. That same month the Church sent Christian greetings to Mr. Geoffrey Newton, a former member of the Church, who was to commence his ministry at Zion Baptist Church, Armley, Leeds. In October, the Boys Brigade Company, which had restarted in 1952, was discontinued. In November of that year an Evangelistic Mission team was formed to personally visit 500 houses in Newbury distributing invitations to the Church Anniversary celebrations at which the preacher was the Rev.

E.H.Robertson M.A. B.Sc. Assistant head of religious Broadcasting for the B.B.C. Also that month the Sports Club, which had grown in size from 7 to 40 was given permission to use the Church hall on Wednesday as well as Saturday evenings.

The beginning of 1956 saw the Newbury Singers give a recital of Christmas music in the Church on the 1st January and the Newbury Round Table again used the Church Hall for a Childrens' Christmas party on the 4th January. The Conservative Association were granted use of a room in the Church Hall that month for a meeting and the problem of unauthorised parking in the Church forecourt necessitated the erection of notices defining parking rules. In February the minister discontinued using his motorcycle in the interests of his health and the machine was sold. In April it is recorded that the Sunday School required extra coat hangers because of a growth in attendance. In May, on Empire Sunday the Church acted as hosts to between 400 – 500 young people who attended a Youth Rally in the afternoon. During June the Berkshire Baptist Association held their Assembly at Newbury Church. In July, a Church Fete was held in the garden of the ministers house. It was opened by the Mayor of Newbury with stalls, side-shows, entertainment and competitions. In November the preacher on Temperance Sunday was the Rev. C.H. Cheal M.A. B.D. Director of the Christian Citizenship Department of the Baptist Union which emphasises the importance the Church attached to this matter. During that month the Royal School of Music used the Church Hall on two days for the purpose of conducting music examinations. At the end of the year Miss D Mayers left the district thus ending sixty years of association of the "Mayers" family with the Church primarily at Ashmore Green. The Church Anniversary was conducted by Rev. David Russell M.A. B.D. B.Litt Principal of Rawdon College.

At the commencement of 1957, the introduction of petrol rationing was having an effect on the minister's use of his car. As a result of the most successful drama production in December 1956 of the play "Lonely Road", a drama group was formed confined to members of the Church only. On Tuesday 5th March 1957 the Church suffered a severe loss with the death of one of its former members, Mrs Bessie Chivers at the White-Knights Nursing Home Reading. Mrs. Chivers was the only daughter of Mr. John Dyer, a Town Trader, and married a local builder Mr. Arthur Chivers in 1922. He died in 1930 aged only 43 years leaving Mrs Bessie Chivers to run the business until 1943 when it was then sold. Mrs Chivers firm built the Church at St Marys' Hill where she had been a member since 1917 and also served as a Deacon for many years. The Rev. Brian Whiting conducted her funeral service which was held at Newbury Baptist Church on Friday 8th March. During the first week of March as part of the Baptist Union and Baptist Missionary Society Week, prayer meetings were held each evening in the Church with the different organisations within the Church each taking part. On 5th April 1957, the death is recorded of a former member Mr. C.H. Freeman who was a deacon of the Church from 1935-1959 and Church Secretary from 1936-50 and also served the Church as Choirmaster for many years. In May the premises at Berries Bank were finally sold for £200. In September resurfacing of the Church car park was completed with a major part of the cost being borne most generously by Messrs A.W. Neate & Co. That month the harvest Festival sale had to be cancelled due to lack of produce. In October, as part of the Church Anniversary celebrations, a gift day was held on the Saturday which raised £102, followed by a social in the evening. In November having served as stewards for many years, both Mr. R.J. Terry and Mr. K.R. Moon were appointed as Joint Chief Stewards. In December, the planned Christmas Bazaar did not take place due to the shortage of time to

organise it and a social gathering was held instead. At the end of the year a new Trust Deed was drawn up incorporating all the Churches property in both the town and villages and a further seven persons were appointed as trustees.

The year of 1958 started with the Newbury Round Table again using the premises for a Children party. In February the Rev. Whiting initiated a men's meeting which met monthly in his home. In April Mr. Brian Maskell did not seek re-election to the Diaconate but Mr. David W. Lewendon was elected meaning that both Father and Son were serving together, thereby creating a chain of ancestry amounting to almost 100 years service as Deacons. In June the Church published the first Church Year Book, which after being issued to the Church membership, copies were then distributed to one of the new housing estates in Newbury. In July the exterior of the Church was painted by Messrs Payne Bros at a cost of £88. At the 318th Church Anniversary in October the guest preacher was the Rev. Dr. W.M.S. West M.A., a tutor and the bursar at Regents Park College. This was preceded on the Saturday by a gift day which raised over £135 and a social hour in the evening. In December a number of members of the church and congregation responded to the invitation to donate a tree or shrub to be planted in the Church forecourt in memory of someone or some event. That month the Young Wives club changed their meetings from the afternoon of the first Friday of the month to the evening of the third Thursday each month and appeared to be drifting away from the purpose of their original formation.

Commencing in January 1959, the School for the Mentally Handicapped started using the Church premises on Wednesday and Friday mornings and by the end of that year were using it for 5 days a week. Also that month Mr. Barton was accepted by Regents Park College Oxford for ministerial training and at the

end of that month Mr. K Moon was unable to carry on as Chief Steward, so a rota of deacons was prepared to assist in this work. In March, Mr. C.T. Palmer resigned as a Deacon since he was moving away from the district. He was presented with a framed photograph of the Minister and deacons with whom he had served during his four years as a Deacon. Mr. Brian Gildersleve was elected to the Diaconate for the first time. A series of Holy Week services in the evenings concluding with a communion service on Maunday Thursday night were held this year, the guest preacher for the series being Rev. Dr. W.M.S. West M.A. of Regents Park College who had also been the preacher at the 318th Church Anniversary. In April the Church agreed to purchase a vacant cottage and land adjacent to the Church for £350. In July the Newbury Singers commenced using the Church Hall on Wednesday evenings for practices. In September Mr. David Rolfe was appointed Youth Club Leader now that he was a member of the Church. In October the Church agreed for a one year trial period to display posters in the town advertising the Church Services. The preacher at the Church Anniversary in October was the Rev. Ithel Jones M.A. B.D the Principal of South Wales Baptist College and the preceding Saturday was a gift day when the minister sat at the gate of the Church rather than in the vestry to receive gifts. That month the Young Wives Club commenced using the Church Hall on Monday evenings and the South Berks Division Cadet Guides Company were granted use of a room in the Church Hall for the purpose of holding training classes on Friday evenings for the older Guides. At the end of the year the Church agreed to instigate a trial of the use of an envelope scheme for freewill offerings since Bazaars, Fetes and Garden Parties as a means of raising money did not meet with everyone's approval, although a Bazaar was held in December in the Church Hall by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

On the 21st January 1960 Mrs. Margaret Scruton, the Churches only Life Deacon died. She was the music and drama critic of the Newbury Weekly News for over 36 years who described her as “a Town personality”. She came to Newbury in 1913 when she married Mr. P.J. Scruton, a local jeweller and joined the Church at that time where she had been a Deacon since 1919 and was made a life Deacon in 1957. She had a fine contralto voice and sang at many concerts always accompanied by her husband. She was an accomplished speaker, never using notes and spoke at many women's meetings in the district. She also conducted a most acceptable ministry to the village Churches. She was cremated privately at Reading and a memorial service was held at Newbury Baptist Church on Wednesday 27th January. That month the Church agreed to the appointment of Elders for Deacons of long standing and accordingly Mr. A.P. Morton and Mr. R.J. Terry were appointed such. In June Rev. Whiting was elected as President of the Berkshire Baptist Association - the first time for 30 years this honour had been bestowed on Newbury Baptist Church. To assist him in carrying out his duties as President necessitated the Church in providing him with a new car as his old car was considered to be incapable of making the long journeys. In July the Church Organist and Deacon Mr. North left the Church as he moved to take up a job in Cornwall. Mrs M Titcomb was elected a deacon in his place being the first lady deacon since 1953. In October the preacher at Church Anniversary was Rev. Stanley J Turl of West Ham Central Mission. In November that year the Red Cross Society were granted use of the Church Hall on alternative Saturday mornings for the purpose of entertaining old age pensioners and the Church agreed to give Junior Church a trial period of three months.

On the 30th January 1961 Miss. May Jones, a former Girls Brigade Captain died as the result of a road accident. She came to Newbury from Reading in 1919 and worked as a buyer in

A History of Newbury Baptists – St Mary's Hill Building

the haberdashery and fancy department of Camp Hopsons retiring in 1947. She joined the Church in 1925. For a time she did part-time night nursing at Norvic House in Clifton Road and also helped with the Old Folks Restaurant. She was also a member of Wash Common Women's Institute. At the beginning of February a memorial service was held for her at the Church. During January, Mr. Lewendon made a wooden cross eight feet by three feet from a piece of 30 year old oak he had in his workshop This was dedicated and hung in the Church just before Easter.



Photograph of inside of Church, which shows wooden cross, made by Mr. Lewendon

At the end of March that year the Rev. Whiting left the Church to take up the position of Minister of the Free Church in Letchworth which had a membership of over 400 people. His last service was conducted on Easter Day. During his ministry at Newbury Men of the Road would often call at the manse of and be given an hours work of some description by Rev Whiting in return for which he gave them a ticket for a meal at the Empire Café. It is said that he was never short of labour. In September 1961, Mrs Eira Davies was appointed Church organist. The Church Anniversary in October was preceded by a gift day on the Saturday, with the Deacons in attendance to receive gifts, and a social in the evening .The guest preacher on the Sunday was the Rev. E.J. Truckle of Worthing. November that year saw the introduction of lunch-time services on each Thursday during the season of Advent in the Church. The services were preceded by a buffet lunch and have continued up until the present day a period of over forty years.

March 1962 saw the formation of Newbury & District Council of Churches with four delegates from Newbury Baptist Church representing the Church at the inaugural meeting. That month also saw the ordination in Newbury Baptist Church of Mr. Edward Barton, who had been training for the ministry at Regents Park College and had now accepted a call to the pastorate of the Union Free Baptist Church at Ampthill, Bedfordshire. In May, the Rev. R.F. Mitchell B.D, who had previously spent 17 years at a Church in Woodmanstern, was inducted to the pastorate of the Church as the 27th minister. The Rev. Mitchell and his family purchased their own house in Andover Road. In September, Mr. & Mrs Williams were appointed leaders of the Junior Church which had now become well established and in November the Manse next door to the Church which was not needed for the minister was let to tenants.

During Holy Week in 1963 united services were held at Newbury Baptist Church on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings with a service also on Good Friday morning and in March the Church acted as hosts for the first annual service of the Newbury and District Council of Churches. In May the Kennet Hall fellowship used the Church hall for their Annual General Meeting. A missionary exhibition was displayed in the Church Hall on Thursday to Saturday in June and new fluorescent lighting costing just over £90 was installed in the Church. September saw the introduction of the New Church Hymnals and in addition to the Harvest Festival services on the Sunday, a Harvest Supper was held on the Monday when produce was again sold by auction for the last time. The proceeds from this sale were used to buy gifts for the sick and needy at Christmas. In October, a gift day preceded the Church Anniversary with the monies raised going towards the work of the village Churches. The usual Saturday evening social was not held this year and the Anniversary guest preacher was the Rev. Dr. W.D. Hudson of Exeter University. Monies raised from the proceeds of a coffee morning organised by the ladies committee was used to purchase kitchen and canteen requisites. Also in October, a Bible Study Group was started on Thursday evenings for those aged between 13-20. In November, four overhead electric heaters were installed in the Brigade Hall at a cost of £150. In December, the Newbury Singers gave a recital in the Church on a Sunday evening and on Christmas morning a united service of worship was held at the Congregational Church.

In January 1964, the Church purchased a second hand mini bus and converted a property adjoining the church premises into a garage for it. They also passed a motion supporting the objection made by the Methodist Circuit in opposing the application for another betting shop in Newbury which, if granted, would bring the total of such shops in Newbury to

five. Commencing in February the Brigade Hall was used for table tennis on Monday evenings and a kitchenette was installed in the Brigade hall at a cost of £145. Also in February the 5th Newbury Guide Company used the premises for meetings on a temporary basis until Easter whilst their current meeting place underwent restoration. In March both Mr. W.J. Lewendon and Mr. D.W. Lewendon retired as Deacons and Mr. T.J. Terrett was appointed to the position of Church Elder in recognition of his loyal and valued service. On Easter Sunday morning the Congregational Church shared a communion service and breakfast afterwards with the Newbury fellowship. In April, a Youth weekend was held in Littlehampton. May saw the formation of Newbury and District Council of Churches with the Rev. Mitchell being appointed Chairman and Mr. C.F. Moon Secretary. In June a visitation circle was formed with Mrs M Titcomb as convenor and comprising of twelve other church members. In September, there was no harvest Supper but gifts were still distributed to the sick and elderly. At the Harvest Festival, special envelopes were provided for monetary gifts in support of the Feed the Hungry Appeal by Christian Aid. This appeal was supported this way until 1966. The Sports Club commenced holding meetings in the Brigade Hall on alternate Tuesday evenings for badminton matches in addition to Wednesdays. In September, the church allowed the Church crockery to be used by Brimpton Baptist Church who were hosting the Newbury and Basingstoke District Council Rally. In October the Church Anniversary was restricted to two services only on Sunday taken by Rev. A.H. Paling of Ilford. In November the fellowship at Ashmore Green had the opportunity to move to premises in Thatcham - the former Brethren Hall but they decided against such a move.

At the start of 1965, Mr. Gore was appointed as resident caretaker in place of Mr. Bishop who had left due to ill health.

Mr. Gore occupied the manse in the Church grounds as the tenant had now left. In January, Mr. T.E Davis relinquished the position of Editorship of Church Chronicle after 12 years service and was replaced by Mr. Noel Davies. Miss Wendy Roberts and Miss Beryl Goldsack became joint leaders of the Junior Church. In March, the term Elder was discontinued and replaced by the name of Deacon Emeritus which it was felt more appropriately reflected the honour bestowed on the recipients. Accordingly, Messrs. A.P. Morton, J.T. Terret and R.J. Terry currently elders, were appointed Deacon Emeritus together with Mr. T.E. Davis who had not sought re-election as a deacon this year as he wished to retire. In April, the Berks County Council who had been using the Church Hall as a training school, terminated their tenancy of the premises and the Newtown Singers used the Church hall for a concert on a Wednesday evening of that month. In May, the Kennet Hall fellowship again used the Church Hall for their Annual General Meeting. In July, a monthly fellowship meeting for men was started by Mr. H.C. Summersby. In August, the Sports Club entered a fourth team to play competitive table tennis in the Newbury and District local league which necessitated the additional use of the Brigade Hall. In September, the church found that they were to lose the use of the second mini bus that they currently employed, as the owner of it was to sell it. Such was the reliability of it that the minister Rev. Mitchell purchased the mini bus himself for which he allowed the Church complete use of it on Sundays. September saw the Church have for the first time, a site at Newbury Agricultural Show, which took the form of a rest tent depicting various aspects of Church Life with a bookstall and other literature. Mr. Cyril Moon recalls that at the planning meeting for this event on the Monday evening before the show on the Saturday the Rev Mitchell drew a chalk plan on the hall floor of the Church for the venture. On the Friday evening prior to the show it was raining very hard and the lorry loaded with the

equipment was unable to drive into the show ground due to the water-logged ground. It had to park in the road outside the ground and everything had to be lifted over the fence and carried to the site of the rest tent. What a start to a venture with which the Church continued until 1976 when the Newbury and District Council of Churches took it over as the show was spread over two days a Saturday and Sunday. Members of the Church still assisted with the rest tent as indeed they do today. At the end of the month Mr. and Mrs C. Prismall asked to be relieved of the work at Headley, as despite every effort, they had met with no success in trying to revive the work there. In October, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows started using a classroom in the Church hall for meetings on the second Monday of each month. It is interesting to note that the November Deacons meeting that month was held at the home of the minister due to his indisposition due to illness with him presiding over the meeting from his bed. In November, Mr Roy Herrington applied for full time service as a Baptist Minister and Mrs Fuller took over as leader of the Junior Church from Miss Beryl Goldsack and Miss Wendy Roberts. November saw the Minister commence a bookstall selling books on two mornings that month. In December, the rotary club held a carol service in the Church and the Nurses and staff of Newbury District Hospital also held a carol service and party in the Church hall and the Church joined with the Congregational Church for a New Years' Eve party and watch night service. At the end of the year the Church acquired a small strip of land at the East of the main entrance to the Brigade Hall due to the generosity of Mr. Arnold Shepherd.

At the beginning of 1966, the Church Chronicle was increased in size to eight pages and cost 6d with a determined attempt being made to increase the circulation, The Church instigated a budget scheme for Church Finances having previously given such a system a successful 12 months trial period. This system,

much refined, is still in operation today. In February the composition of the ladies committee was re-organised as it was found not to be in line with the original motion. In March, the Headley Chapel was again found to be in danger of closure but the Diaconate were determined to keep the Church open. In April, Messrs S.F Maccabee, and H.C. Summersby stood down as Deacons and Mrs M Titcomb was re-elected with three new Deacons, Messrs. R.N. Hansford, K.W. Rolfe and N.E. Westall and that month it was decided that one Deacon should be on duty in the vestry for each morning and evening service. In May, the Kennet Hall Fellowship used both the Church and Church hall for their Annual Assembly and Mr. Gildersleve was forced to resign as Treasurer due to ill health, being replaced by Mr. Brian Maskell who, although a Church member, was not now a deacon. In June, the Berkshire Baptist Lay Preachers Association was formed and the names of Messrs. K.C. Carter, R Herrington, S.F. Maccabee, J Pocock, D Rolfe, H Cave, B Maskell, A.H. Reid, J.T Terrett and Mrs F Kingham were submitted to the association as lay preachers from Newbury Baptist Church. In June, a special gift day was held which raised nearly £500, a great help in relieving the serious financial situation in which the Church found themselves. In July, Mrs Elizabeth Hubbard, a professional journalist, took over as Editor of the Church Chronicle from Mr. Noel Davies until the end of the year. In July, having obtained planning permission, an illuminated sign bearing the letters Baptist Church was erected at the entrance to the Church. This is still in place today. In August, the Sunday School held a Holiday Special using the Church as a base but with a canvas camp site in the Turnpike area of the town. In September the tenant of the Church Cottage was given permission to erect a large sectional wooden building in the grounds adjacent to the cottage. In October, the Newbury Girl Guides used the Church Hall for an Autumn Fair and that month oil fired heating was installed in the Church Hall at a

cost of £411. A church supper was held at the end of November which was a very informal affair, allowing friends to meet and talk to each other. In December, an illuminated cross was erected on the outside of the South wall of the Church over the Christmas period and even though Christmas day fell on a Sunday in this year the normal services were still held.

The start of 1967 saw the Church Chronicle now being printed by the minister instead of a local printing firm and a deacons meeting that month did not finish until 11-10p.m., prompting them to pass a unanimous motion that in future deacons meetings do not continue past 10p.m. In March, the Annual General meeting was held in two parts on two separate evenings - the first part being for Church members only and the second open to both Church Members and members of the congregation. Commencing in March the Casualties Union, a branch of St. Johns Ambulance, started using the Primary Room for meetings on Monday evenings. In April Mrs. Edith Fuller a Church member who had been holding a small playgroup in her own home brought the nucleus of this group to the Church premises forming the Merrie Hill Play Group, who commenced using the School Hall on two mornings a week. Mrs Fuller was assisted in this venture by Mrs. Emberlin, Mrs. Minnie Bosley and Mrs Margaet Titcomb who eventually took over the leadership of the Group. In June, the Berkshire Baptist Association held their Annual Assembly at Newbury Church. That month the Billy Graham Crusade was relayed to Oxford and was attended by 110 people from Newbury, when three coach parties attended one on each night. In July, Mr. R Herrington, a Church member and local preacher was inducted to the pastorate of Green Lane Independent Evangelical Mission at Thatcham and that month the Sycamore Trees School used the Church hall for their Annual Speech day on a Thursday afternoon. During August

the new amplification system, which had been installed in the Church was taken out by the suppliers as it did not work and a holiday special was organised by the Young People of the Church. In September, Messrs A.R. Gildersleve, W.J. Lewendon. and S.F. Maccabee were appointed as Deacons Emeritus and commencing that month, the Rev. Mitchell started to teach religious education at Park House School for about 3 hours each day during term time but gave it up in 1968 in favour of Church work. For the Harvest Festival, which unfortunately clashed with the Young Peoples Youth Weekend, members of the Church and Congregation were given the opportunity to give monetary gifts in lieu of produce towards the B.M.S. Operation Agri Appeal. In October, oil fired heating was installed in Church at cost of £450 and the Newbury Temperance Society organised a youth rally in the Church for Uniformed Youth organisations, which was attended by our Girls Brigade Company on a Friday evening. In October, the Church Chronicle continued to be produced by the Minister with help from Miss Eileen Hazell, as Mrs Hubbard was leaving the district and that month it was discovered that the tenant of the Church Cottage had absconded. In November a Church Supper was held on the Wednesday evening prior to the Church Anniversary Services which were conducted by Rev. Dr. Ithel Jones the President of the Baptist Union. During that month, the Young Life Guards, a Junior Branch of the Lord's Day Observance Society, held a public rally in the Church Hall on a Monday evening. At the end of year Miss Maureen Coughlin and Mrs W.J. Lewendon were appointed as deputy organists.

In 1968, the Church organ which had been installed in Northbrook Street Church some 70 years before and dismantled and rebuilt in new Church at St Mary's Hill, was found to be in need of modernisation, restoration and overhaul at cost of £3000 and a special fund was established to cover the

cost of this work. In January, Mr. Gary Scupham took over as leader of the Young Peoples Squash. In January, a report in the local press referring to two members of the Baptist Sports Club playing in a table tennis tournament on a Sunday led to much concern. In February, Mr. T.E. Davis, who had been a deacon for 30 years and Deacon Emeritus for the last 3 years, died. In March the South Berks Conservative Association used the Church Hall for a conference on a Saturday. The Church Secretary Mr. C.F. Moon was elected as President of Berks Baptist Association. His presidential message was "Not only with our lips but in our Lives". In April, the British & Foreign Bible Society held their Annual rally in the Church. In May, the Kennet Road Gospel Hall used the Church premises for their annual Assembly. In June, the Merrie Hill playgroup started to use the premises on Thursday mornings as well a Monday and Friday and Mrs Hansford was appointed Secretary of the Young wives club in place of Mrs. M. Thomas who wished to resign. In July, no rent having been received from the tenant of the cottage for the last six months, his tenancy was terminated. Also in July, one of the Church mini buses was replaced at a cost of £800. In August, a holiday special was held and at the start of September, an Autumn canvass took place with members visiting homes in the immediate vicinity of the Church south of the River Kennet. In September, a youth week-end was organised, and this year again for the Harvest festival, monetary gifts were requested in lieu of produce for Biafra relief work. In October, the preacher at the Church Anniversary was the Rev. Alec Gilmore M.A.B.D. of West Worthing. In November, the Merrie Hill playgroup commenced meeting on four days a week. Towards the end of the year infiltration of Scooter Boys at the Young Peoples Squash club caused problems. At the end of 1968, Mr. K Rolfe resigned as Sunday School Superintendent and was replaced by Mr. A.J. Bowyer and the work at Headley was now being maintained by Mr. Reg Knight. The year closed with a New

Years Eve party and a watch-night service conducted by a church member Rev. David Reddaway, as the minister was away in Ireland for a few days.

At the start of 1969, it was decided to leave the Church open from 8a.m. to 10p.m. with remainder of premises remaining locked. In February, a brick pillar at the entrance to the Church was knocked over by a lorry and a shed was erected on land cleared at North end of Brigade Hall for temporarily housing the Merrie Hill play group equipment. That month the youth club at Headley closed when the leader walked out. In March, a group of students from Regents Park College held a break-through campaign over a 10 day period, resulting in at least 10 young people receiving counselling in the Christian faith. In March, Mr. B.D. Gildersleve retired as a deacon. In April, the church cottage, which was now out of the hands of the official receiver, was found to have been left in a disgusting state by the former tenant. A shed on the site contained property of the tenant which the church sold and what remained was disposed of by the Council. In May, Mr. N.E. Westall asked if he might assume responsibility for keeping the borders of the Church Forecourt clean and tidy and supplied with flowers. In accepting his offer the Church appointed him as “keeper of the grounds”. Also that month the Reading and North Berkshire Baptist Women's league held their annual rally at Newbury Church when Mrs. Reddaway, a Church member, and wife of Rev David Reddaway was inducted as President. In June, Mr and Mrs Kimber took over the work of the Young Peoples Squash with assistance from Mr and Mrs Scupham, the minister having previously taken on the responsibility for the young peoples bible study group which met on Saturday evenings. Also that month renovations to the kitchen were approved costing £320. In July, the ordination of David Carter was held in the Church with Rev. Dr. Beasley Murray officiating and in September he was inducted as the minister

of Westoe Road Church in South Sheilds. In July, work started on the organ refurbishment including the installation of a new detached console at a cost of £859 - a gift from several church members. At the end of August, a youth week-end was held at Worthing. In September the Church had a stall at the Fairclose Autumn Fair for the first time ever, in support of the work being done for the older citizens of the town. At the harvest festival in September, the church was decorated using agricultural tools and equipment and the preacher was the Rev. E Morley Jones B.Sc. B.D. of Kings Road, Reading Church. Monetary gifts were again requested in lieu of produce to go to the B.M.S Operation Agri appeal. What produce was received was distributed to the sick and elderly on the Monday following the services. In October, a men's meeting was started by Mr. L.J. Cumberland and Mr. M Wilding. The Junior Bible club which had been started some years ago was now being run by Mr. and Mrs. G. Warlow with between 15-20 young people regularly attending and Mr. K Moon succeeded Mr. R Clayton as secretary of the sports club. At the end of October, the organ fund stood at £2792 and an opening was cut for the new organ chamber in the Church wall by A.J.Chivers. The Church Anniversary in November also celebrated 25 years in the Christian Ministry of Rev. Mitchell B.D. On the Saturday evening a social evening was held in celebration of Rev. Mitchells 25 years of Christian Ministry which was attended by the Mayor of Newbury. On the Sunday, the Church Anniversary services were conducted by the Rev. W.G. Channon B.A. of Portsmouth. In December, at Christmas on Sunday 21st a Toy Service was held in the afternoon and a Carol Service at night. A United Free Church Christmas morning service was held at the Methodist Church. On the 31st December a watch night service was held at 11-30p.m. At the end of the year some members of the Church formed a Christian beat group called "A-MEN"

The year 1970 started with a Prayer and Dedication service in the evening of 1st January. The refurbishment of the organ was completed at a cost of £3170 and only £300 remained outstanding to pay for the work. At the end of the month the leader of the Young Peoples Squash resigned and they now ran things themselves with a Committee. The refurbished organ was dedicated on 4th March which was followed by an organ recital given by Mr. Arnold Richardson, a distinguished British organist. At the end of that month, Rev. David Reddaway accepted the call to return to the full time ministry at Tooting Baptist Church thereby resigning as a teacher within the Sunday School and leader of the Saturday Club. In May, the Sunday School and Church Anniversary services were conducted by the Rev. C Walter Fulbrook. In June, the ordination took place of Michael Herbert at an evening service. In August, a Holiday Special was run by students from Regents Park College. In September, for the Harvest Festival, monetary gifts were again requested in lieu of produce for operation Agri. Mr. T. Dent took over as leader of the Young Peoples Squash. In October, a Youth week-end was held at the Church led by Mr. K. Humphries of Spurgeons College. In November an Auction sale was held which cleared the debt on the organ fund and for the Church Anniversary that year, the guest preacher was Sir Cyril Black J.P. D.L. M.P. president of the Baptist Union. That month the Rev. Mitchell conducted the services on Citizenship Sunday. On Christmas Day a morning United service was held at Newbury Baptist Church conducted by the Rev. Colin Richards B.D. the minister of the Congregational Church. A watch-night service was held on New Years Eve.

At the beginning of 1971, Rev. Mitchell accepted the invitation of Free Church Council to become Free Church Chaplain of Newbury Hospital for a three year period. In February, a special men's week end service was conducted by Rev. Rex

Mason M.A.B.D. That month it is reported that the minister had cause to speak to the members of the Young Peoples Squash, pointing out to them that the Church had plenty to offer them without them having to have recourse to public houses and similar places. It is also noted that the Church now used the church cottage as a storage facility. In February Messrs R.G. Cooper, R.N. Hansford, T. Stephenson-Jones, C. Scupham and J Watson were added to the list of lay Preachers. On 24th February 1971, Mr. Albert Percy Morton Deacon Emeritus died aged 86 years. His funeral service was held at Newbury Baptist Church followed by burial at Newtown Road Cemetery. In April, in recognition of his 21 years continuous service as Church Secretary, Mr. Cyril Moon was presented with a leather bound edition of the Baptist Hymnal. That month due to a decline in numbers, the Saturday Club was discontinued although Mr. & Mrs Tim Dent held a Tuesday evening group meeting at their own home for prayer and bible study. However in May, it restarted with members running it themselves with each meeting presided over by an adult member of the church. In May, Mrs A Stevens resigned as Girls' Brigade Captain after 12 years service, for which the last five years she had served as Captain of the Company with distinction. Eventually Mrs. E.L.F. Harris took over from her in September. Also in May the church chose not to support the united service for Christian Aid in the Parish Church but hold their own evening service and sent a small delegation only to the Parish Church service. A very successful Youth week-end was held at Greenhills by Mr. Phillip Vogel. In July, a Garden Party at the ministers home raised £129 which enabled the next phase of improvements to the Church kitchen to be commenced and that month one of the Church mini buses was written off following an accident and was not replaced. During an evangelistic mission in August and September when over 300 homes were visited, eighteen people had expressed sufficient interest to merit a follow up visit. In October, one of

the serving deacons, Mr. Norman Westall, sadly died. A follow-up youth week-end was held at the end of the month with the Church “Amen Group” performing at the evening service. In November, on Citizenship Sunday, the evening service was taken by Mr Paul Cassels, the Chief Registrar at St. Barts.Hospital, as it was also Remembrance Sunday, and the morning service was taken by the minister. This is the last reference I have found to a Sunday being designated as “Citizenship Sunday”. The 331st Church Anniversary services in November were conducted by Rev. Charles Johnson, a former minister of the Church. At the end of the year the Film Society ceased to use the Brigade hall for meetings due to their refusal not to show certain films considered unsuitable by the Deacons.

In March 1972, a service of dedication and thanksgiving was held when the Brigade Hall was re-named the Morton Hall to serve as a memorial to Mr. & Mrs. Morton who between them had given 134 years of service to the Church and had presented the building to the Church in 1947. That same month the church caretaker resigned but there appeared to be no shortage of candidates for the position with Mr.& Mrs Looker taking the job together with the tenancy of the former manse. During Lent, the Church commenced lunch time services which were held in the Church with a buffet lunch being served before the service. These continued for nearly 20 years up to 1991. In April, Mr. A.J Bowyer did not stand for re-election as Sunday School Superintendent and in May, the Sunday School Anniversary had a new look with services confined to Sunday only. Following the morning service, a lunch, attended by nearly 200 persons, was held with a prize giving and service in the afternoon. Also in May a men’s week end was held. In July the Church forecourt had to be resurfaced at a cost of £570. A discipleship week end for young people was held in August with a group of student from Regents Park College led by Mr.

Steve Flashman and his folk group. In September, the Newbury Show this year had a change of venue to Seige Cross, Thatcham but the Church continued to provide a rest tent at the event. In September, following the closure of the Junior Bible Club last July, Mr. Geof Warlow, who had been the Club's leader left the district. A Jucos Group catering for boys aged between 9 to 13 and meeting on Friday evenings was started by a Mr. Chrys Webb and Mrs. Hansford resigned as leader of Ladies Circle In October, the Newbury District Council of Churches organised a special service for Racial Harmony which was held at Newbury Baptist Church for the first time ever outside of an Anglican Church. During October, the Church collected and sent two van loads of clothing to Greenham Common Air Base which was being used as a transit camp for refugees from Uganda. At the Church Anniversary in November, the preacher was the Rev. Dr Raymond Brown President of the Baptist Union. In December, the Salvation Army used the Church Hall for an over 60's Christmas party. On Christmas Eve, the Church held a Carol concert and a watch-night service on New Years Eve. Over the Christmas period four members of the Young Peoples Squash held a sponsored 100 hours table tennis marathon.

In February 1973 repairs to the Church hall roof were completed costing. £300. Mr. A.J. Bowyer took on duties of Sunday School Superintendent again after a years' break and Mrs Deacon took over as leader of the Creche from Mrs Gildersleve. In April 1973, the Church Treasurer, Mr. B. Maskell resigned and was succeeded by Mr. F.M. Deacon and that month a choir from Earlsfield Baptist Church performed "No Greater Love" in Church on a Saturday evening. Also in April, the Headmaster of Mary Hare Grammar School provided the necessary equipment to install a loop hearing system in Church for benefit of his pupils who attended morning services. In May, regret was expressed that no one from the

Church had taken part in the Christian Aid Sponsored Walk held in April particularly as it had been changed that year from a Sunday to a Saturday to accommodate the wishes of the Baptists, who objected to the event taking place on a Sunday. The Rev. Mitchell then issued a challenge to the Church to accompany him on a 10 mile walk in August to raise money for Christian Aid, which they did, making £75. In May Mr. T.R. Dent was appointed as a Deacon and Mr. C. Scupham did not seek re-election. Also that month improvements were made to the Church lighting and an Ascension Day service was held as usual. In June, Messrs J. Clements, R.G. Cooper and W.P. Howe were appointed as new trustees in place of Messrs. A.P. Morton, R.J. Terry and Mrs P Scruton who had died. That month the church caretaker, Mr. Looker was forced to give up due to health reasons and was replaced by Mr. Woodward. In October, the Jucos group formed in 1972 had shown an increase in numbers and it was now decided to form a Covenanters Group to cater for the older teenagers. Also a Sunday morning Bible Class meeting at 11-15a.m. each Sunday apart from Parade Sundays was formed for those too old for Junior Church under the leadership of Mr. Colin Tattersall. In October, leadership of the crèche was taken over by Mrs. C. Winfield from Mrs Ruth Deacon who had died. In October the Church book stall, started by the minister in 1970 and which had run for many years, was closed down due to lack of support and after some minor restoration work the Church cottage was turned into a store. In November, the Church Hall started to be used as a day centre for the blind on Thursdays. The Rev. Douglas Hicks, President of the Baptist Union for that year conducted the 333rd Church Anniversary. In December the Royal College of Music Players visited the Church to give a concert and Christmas lights were installed outside the Church porch. The Free Church Christmas service was held on Christmas morning in the Church, conducted by Rev. D. Ratcliffe, a senior Methodist minister.

In March 1974, Messrs R.R. Rolfe and H.G. Taylor were added to the list of lay preachers. Also in March, Mrs E.L F Harris resigned as a deacon and Girls Brigade Captain as she was moving away from the district. She was replaced as Girls Brigade Captain by Mrs Joan Luxford. In April, Mr. C.F Moon became a lay member on the Baptist Union Council. In May, on Ascension Day, a service was held at lunch time preceded by a buffet lunch and taken by the Rev. David Ratcliffe the Methodist minister. That month Mrs E.E. Terret stood down as the local B.M.S. Secretary after 20 years service and was replaced by Mrs J.E. Clements. In May, Rev. Mitchell became assistant Chaplain to the Air Training Corps and the Sunday afternoon Bible Class closed down. In June, a Songs of Praise recorded at Newbury Parish Church was shown on television resulting in Newbury Baptist Church only holding a short evening service in order that people could watch it. That month the Church commenced its "open letter box" campaign by delivering copies of the open door friendship leaflet in Greenham Court and Wash Common. In August, Mrs Joan Luxford left the District and was replaced as Girls Brigade Captain by Mrs Rita Smart. In September the Rev. Mitchell started to teach scripture at Down House School on a temporary basis for one afternoon a week. Also that month a Youth Week-end was held at Bystock Court and Mr. M.K. Brook, who was a Church member but not a Deacon, was appointed Treasurer in place of Mr F.M. Deacon who resigned. In October a buffet supper was held in the Morton Hall with a concert in the Church hall, which raised £60 for the Parish Church restoration appeal fund. In November, the Church Anniversary preacher was the Rev. George Cummins and there was a Sale of Work that month for the B.M.S. The external painting of the Church was completed at a cost of £190. At the end of the year the activities of the Jucos club and Covenanters group were suspended due to illness of the leader and members being out of control causing considerable damage to the church

equipment and premises. By the end of the year, what had been termed the “hole in the wall” project, was concluded when a set of organ pipes were installed on a stand in the aperture above the church notice boards. The stand was made from the same wood and of the same pattern as the organ itself and was designed and expertly crafted by Mr. Francis Titcomb. The organ pipes had been obtained by the Rev Mitchell who had spent many months scouring the Country in order to find pipes compatible with those used in the Church organ construction.

On a Sunday evening in February 1975, eleven people were baptised during the evening service. It is recorded in the minutes “that never in living memory had so many people been baptised at one service in the Church”. In April, the church caretakers left and were replaced in June by Mr & Mrs Boomer who were members of Clarence Road Baptist Church, Southend on Sea and who moved to Newbury to take up this position. In May, the usual Ascension Day service was held. In July, Mr. John Durrant took over the leadership of the Junior Church from Mrs J Fuller. In September, a Church conference was held on the first Sunday that month starting at 4p.m., followed by tea and an evening service with communion. At the end of the month the Covenanters group and Jucos club was closed down. During September, Mr. J.T. Terrett, Deacon Emeritus, died. In October that year work started on building a new toilet block costing £3000 in the School Hall and a Youth weekend was held at Worthing. The Church Anniversary in October was taken by Rev. Stanley J Turl J.P. as President of Baptist Union. In November, on Remembrance Sunday, morning worship did not commence until 11-15a.m. In December, the Air Training Corp held a Church parade at Newbury Church during a morning service in December.

In January 1976, a Boys Club was formed for boys aged between 7-13 and numbered 27 boys and in May that year it

was enrolled as the 1st Newbury Boys Brigade with the Mr. Michael Gurr as Captain. In January, the treasurer Mr. Brook resigned and was replaced by Mr. Fulker another Church member who was not a deacon. In February, the builders finished work on the new toilet block and a concert and film evening was held with the proceeds going towards the cost of this project. An Auction sale was also held during March for the same purpose. At the beginning of March, the Women's World day of Prayer was held in Newbury Church on a Friday. At Easter that year the Newbury District Council of Churches Easter Services, supported by the Church, comprised of a United Communion Service at Newbury Baptist Church on Maunday Thursday evening, then a service on Good Friday morning at the Methodist Church followed by a procession of witness through the Town attended by the Bishop of Oxford, terminating in the Mall in the Kennet Shopping Centre where a brief service was held. During April, the Rev. Mitchell moved from his home in Andover Road to a cottage outside of Newbury, which he had purchased for his pending retirement. Therefore the Vestry and Ladies room at the Church were put at his disposal as an Office and consulting room and he commuted daily to the Church. In June the Berkshire Baptist Association held their assembly at Newbury Baptist Church and an 80 piece set of plates, cups and saucers were given to the Church in memory of the late Mr & Mrs J.T. Terret. In July, a complete ban on smoking was introduced on all Church premises with the exception of the Morton Hall and a garden party raised over £40 towards the Development Fund. During August, Mr. J. Kimber left the district and consequently resigned from the Diaconate. In September, this year the Newbury show was held over two days - a Saturday and a Sunday and the Church did not have a trade space this year in their own right, but the Newbury and District Council of Churches took this venture on, with help from some members of Newbury Baptist Church and this arrangement has continued

until the present day. At the Church conference in September, consideration was given to the ten propositions of the Churches Unity Commission report. A gift day was held in October on the Saturday before the Church Anniversary raising £620 towards liquidating the debt on the development fund. In November Thames Valley Water Board had to give permission for a Baptismal service to go ahead due to a water shortage in the area. At the end of that month £220, a part of the proceeds from a Sale of Work, was used to finally liquidate the debt on the development fund. In December, a leak in a water pipe under the Church forecourt was discovered. The Newbury Phoenix Singers gave a concert of Christmas music in the church. On Christmas Day, a united service of worship was held in the Parish Church organised by the Council of Churches. At the end of the year, Mr. G. Scupham resigned as a Deacon as he was moving away from the district and Mr. Tim Dent relinquished the position of leader of the Young Peoples Squash after many years service. A Bible study group for the 15-19 year olds, which met on a Sunday afternoon once a month, was started by Mr & Mrs Bryant in their own home.

At the beginning of 1977, it was found that the life of the Church Mini Bus was very limited and as it was no longer a paying proposition with fewer and fewer people using it, it was accordingly sold for £275. At the end of February, the leaders of the Saturday Club, Captain and Mrs Garrick left Newbury and the club was now run by a Committee and the members of the Young Peoples Squash, who now did not have a leader, became responsible for organising their own Sunday evening meetings. In March, improvements to the manse cost over £1000. At Easter, the Council of Churches organised a united act of worship on Good Friday and a 7a.m. service on Easter Sunday in the market place. In April, Mr. K.R. Moon stood down as a Deacon after 12 years service. In May, the names of Mrs R.W. Browell and Messrs C.P. Coventry, Michael Bryant

and Colin Tattersall were added to the commended list of lay preachers and two people were engaged to do the Church cleaning, which because of ill health was becoming too much for the caretaker. In July, Mrs Marion Durrant took over responsibility for the crèche from Mrs C Winfield and the water leak in the forecourt was finally repaired at a cost of £430, having taken nearly 6 months to locate. That month the death is recorded of Mr. Gore, a former church caretaker, whose funeral service at Swindon was taken by the Rev. Mitchell. In July, the Newbury Academy of Dancing stopped using the Morton Hall but the Newbury Field Club commenced using the premises for meetings. At the end of September, concern was expressed over the running of the Young Peoples Squash and a Deacon or Senior Church member had to be present at each meeting. Then, in October, a supplementary group was started by Mr. & Mrs Thompson, meeting in their own home for those aged 13-21 who were not members of Young Peoples Squash. The Church Anniversary celebrations were expected to include an exhibition on the Saturday relating to the History of the Church but this did not take place. As Christmas Day fell on a Sunday this year, no evening service was held at the Church. A New Years Eve Party followed by a watch-night service was held at the end of the year.

At the start of the year 1978, the Boys' Brigade Sunday morning Bible Class was incorporated into the Friday night parade evenings due to the difficulty in getting boys to Church at 10a.m. on a Sunday morning and the Sunday School Superintendent Mr. David Thompson resigned as he left the District. It does not appear that anyone succeeded him. In May 1978 Rev. Mitchell preached his final sermon on Whit Sunday and then over 300 people attended a farewell gathering for him on the following Monday. He left the Church a gift of all his printing equipment. to enable the Church magazine which he had produced and edited for the past ten years to continue. Dr.

W.A.J. Garton took on the Editorship and Mr Tim Dent the production. During the interregnum period Rev. A.E. Oakeley was appointed moderator. At the beginning of June, an Antique dealer was granted use of the Morton hall on Thursdays to sell antiques. The Church conference held in September was led by the Rev. David Wilson M.Sc., a lay pastor from Sindlesham and that month the boundary wall at rear of the Morton Hall collapsed damaging several vehicles which apparently was not the Churches responsibility. Prior to the Church Anniversary, on the Saturday evening, Rev. Mitchell gave an illustrated talk on his recent visit to India. On 10th October 1978 Mr. W.J. Lewendon one of the Church Trustees and a Deacon from 1923-1941 and also 1950-1964 who wrote the book in 1940 to celebrate the Newbury Baptist Tercentenary died in his seventieth year. At the end of the year, in conjunction with the Baptist Housing Association, the Church produced plans for developing land at the rear of the Church into sheltered accommodation and applied for planning permission to build on the land.

At the start of 1979, Mr. Ken Paskin took over as leader of the Young Peoples Bible Class from Mr. C. Tattersall whose work took him to Nigeria for three and a half years. Coffee was now served after each morning service. Work commenced on up-rating the church lighting with the re-wiring of the church and side rooms which took over two years to fully complete at a cost of over £1000. In March, it was decided to produce a Church Newsletter three or four times a year with Mrs Stevens as the editor. The first edition was called "Baptist Bulletin" and was issued on Mothering Sunday when every mother was also presented with a posy of flowers, a practice which still continues today. In March, the Young Peoples Squash was disbanded. In April, a local branch of the Gideons was formed of which a number of men from the Church were members and they appealed to the Church for help in adopting local schools

to provide with Bibles. In May Mr. Grenville Overton M Phil. and his wife Mrs Alison Overton B.A. were invited and accepted the call to the pastorate of Newbury Baptist Church. A manse at Bartlemy Road was purchased for them at cost of £35,000. In June a Gift Day, which was preceded by a week of prayer for the new ministry and purchase of the new manse, raised £18734. In July the Rev. and Mrs. Mitchell moved from Newbury to Bedford where they joined Steventon Baptist Church. Also in July, the Church caretakers, Mr & Mrs Boomer left and gave up the tenancy of the manse at Church. Their duties, from now on, were undertaken by teams, with leaders of the organisations who used the premises being responsible for the cleaning. Grenville and Alison Overton were ordained as ministers at Leicester in August and their induction service was held at Newbury in September with the Rev. Grenville Overton becoming the Minister and Rev. Alison Overton the supplementary minister. September also saw a further change as, after meeting in the afternoon for the past 176 years, the Sunday School transferred to the mornings and the Young Peoples Bible Class merged with the Junior Church. A group for young people aged 10 –15 commenced meeting on Sunday evenings at 5 p.m. and a group for the over eighteen's met at 8p.m. after the evening service. As a result of these changes, the pattern of worship was revised so that the second Sunday of each month, when the Brigades paraded, was directed towards Young People except when it was a family festival. Also in September, an amplification system was installed in the Church and as the Church no longer had a resident caretaker, the Church was locked during the week. In October, the Church Anniversary services were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Morris West J.P. who was the Principal of Bristol Baptist College and President of the Baptist Union this year. A youth week-end was held at Worthing. At the beginning of December, the manse adjacent to the Church was let to a Staff Sergeant of the United States Air Force and his family. In

December, at Christmas time a Family Festival Service was held in the morning and a service of lessons and carols in the evening on the 23rd. There was a short morning service on Christmas day and the year concluded with a New Years Eve social and watch-night service.

At the beginning of 1980, four communion chairs were purchased with money donated in memory of Mr & Mrs Arnold Shepherd. It is also noted that Youth work was going well with a 10-16 age group called Young Trekkers led by Ken Paskin now meeting from 6p.m. to 8p.m on Saturday nights. On Sunday mornings a Bible Class met, led by Beryl Rowney, with a group for the 10-15 year olds meeting at the manse, led by Ken Paskin and a group for the over fifteens meeting on Sunday evenings in peoples homes, led by Miss Julie Ford and Mr. Robin Clayton. All Church services were now tape recorded for those unable to attend. The Merrie Hill Play Group were now meeting for four mornings a week with a membership of 24 and a waiting list. At the end of January, a Deacons conference was held. In February, Mr. John Durrant was appointed as assistant Treasurer to help the Church Treasurer, Mr. R Fulker who had suffered a heart attack. In March, the church joined membership of the Churches T.V. Centre, which was an organisation set up by Lord Rank. For a rental of £75 per year, they provided a projector screen and 6 films a year Also in March, a Mother and Toddlers club was set up at the Church by Rev. Alison Overton which met on Monday afternoons. In June, the Rev. Grenville Overton became a member of the Local Marriage Guidance Council. In July, an anonymous donation enabled the windows at the North end of the Church to be replaced and two other anonymous donations enabled the Church amplification system to be extended to individual hearing aids. Having at the beginning of the year sent a letter to Newbury District Council expressing interest in establishing a Baptist presence in Thatcham, on

Sunday 31st August family worship commenced at the Thatcham Children's Centre with ten families attending morning worship. In September, another Church Gift day was held together with a Church family week-end and the Church decided that the Morton Hall would no longer be let to outside organisations for Jumble Sales - only their own Church organisations could use it for such purposes. In October, with no afternoon Sunday School now, the Church Anniversary had to be changed. It was led by Rev. Dr. Barry White Principal of Regents Park College with a family festival in the morning with the Brigades parading and Junior Church taking part. Also in October, Badminton sessions were started in the Church Hall on Wednesday afternoons. In November, a Church parking permit scheme was introduced for members of the Church who wished to use the Church car park during the week. By the end of the year, the work at Thatcham was growing so much that the Berkshire Baptist Association Grants Committee had agreed to the provision of an initial pastorate grant to help with the work both at Long Lane and Thatcham. In December, the Church was used by the Newbury Council of Churches for a presentation of Living, Giving and Growing by the Theatre Roundabout. At Christmas, a service of nine lessons and carols was held on the Sunday evening before Christmas and a Christmas Day morning service with a social evening and watch night service on New Years Eve. This Christmas saw the introduction of a Christmas post box for members of the congregation and the outside Christmas lights were vandalised this year.

At the beginning of January 1981, the Church acted as hosts for the farewell of the area superintendent the Rev. Hugh Logan M.A as Berkshire was to become one of the new association areas with the new Superintendent being Rev. Geoffrey Reynolds, who was to live in Newbury and was a member of Newbury Baptist Church. No evening service was held on

Sunday 25th January in the week of Prayer for Christian Unity to enable attendance at the United service at the Methodist Church and during that week, a united lunch time service was held in Newbury Baptist Church. At the end of the month Mr. Ken Paskin gave up leadership of the Young Trekkers Group. In February, Mr. Michael Gurr resigned as Boys' Brigade Captain after difficult nine months and was replaced by Mr. Brian Winslade. The Church House was now occupied by an accountant from Greenham Common Air Base. In March, Mr. J Pargeter resigned as a Deacon as he moved away from the area. This year, Easter arrangements by the Newbury Council of Churches included a 7a.m. Sunrise Open Air Service in Victoria Park followed a communion service at the United Reformed Church at 8a.m. In April, the Green Lane fellowship were granted use of the baptistry on a Sunday afternoon. The Church Anniversary was held in May this year and was conducted by the new area superintendent the Rev. Geoffrey Reynolds. In June, the son and daughter of the late Mr. Sidney Maccabee, donated a microphone for use on the communion table in his memory. That month saw the establishment of a pastoral care committee and also the Church commenced participating in a scheme run by Regents Park College for assessing the preaching of sermons by student ministers. In July, the Church Chronicle was discontinued and replaced with a news-sheet until such time as a better publication could be produced. In July, Ken Paskin, who was under training for the ministry at Regents Park College, was appointed Ministers Assistant at Dedworth Green, Windsor and also served the Church at Victoria Street, Windsor who provided him with a manse. At the end of August, the Church cleaners contract was terminated and the church members undertook this work themselves on a rota basis. In September, the ordination and induction took place at Newbury Baptist Church of Len Clarke who had been called as an associate minister to the pastorate of Long Lane and Thatcham fellowships and that month students

from Regents Park College conducted a weeks mission in Thatcham. In September, the mid-week fellowship which had been struggling for some time, altered its format to a meeting for Bible Study with a coffee break followed by a time of discussion. In September, Eira Davis celebrated 20 years of service as the Church organist and was presented with a Baptist Hymn Book and Bible on the anniversary of her appointment. In October, the newly formed focus group arranged a harvest supper on the Monday evening following the harvest festival services. That month the Newbury Council of Churches held a day of Vigil in Newbury Church in respect of One World Week. The day commenced with a communion service at 7-30a.m., an austerity lunch was served between 12-30p.m. and 1p.m. and concluded with an evening service at which Rev. G Overton was the preacher with the Theme "It is more blessed to give than to receive". At the end of October, it was found that the Sponsors of the Christian Television Company from whom the Church leased a film projector had gone into liquidation and the Church was thereby released from their commitment with them but was also allowed to keep the film projector. In November, the Church Hall roof was found to be in danger of collapsing in the event of heavy rain or snow and its repair cost nearly £3500 for which a gift day raised over half of the amount required. Also in November, the church membership would not agree that Alcoholics Anonymous should be permitted to use Church hall for meetings as they would clash with Young Trekkers meetings for young people which were now very well established. At Christmas the Junior Church took the Sunday morning service on the 20th December and a Carol service was held in the evening. Only an evening Carol and Communion service was held on 27th December and a watch-night service on New Years Eve was preceded by coffee and mince pies.

At the commencement of 1982, a new Church magazine of about sixteen pages was produced called "Baptist Viewpoint" costing 15p and Mr & Mrs Tim Dent revived the after eight meetings on Sunday evenings for young people. Mrs Hildegard Marsh and Mr. Richard Westall became co-leaders of the Young Trekkers Group for 10-15 year olds meeting on Saturday nights. Mrs Vivien Stevens resigned as leader of the Junior Church and Mrs Judy Creek took over from her as Co-ordinator/Administrator. During the week of Prayer for Christian Unity, no evening service was held at Newbury Baptist Church to enable members to attend the united service at St Francis and that month a gift of 100 Good News Bibles for use in the pews was accepted in memory of a member who had recently died. In January 1982, it is minuted that Members expressed their dislike of flash photography in Church services. A missionary week-end was held in March which included a Rally at Newbury Baptist Church on the Saturday and Rev. Overton was elected as Vice Chairman of Newbury Council of Churches. During Lent, House groups were given a trial period and proved very successful so more were planned for the months of May and June. On Maunday Thursday, an evening communion service was held at the United Reformed Church and on Good Friday following a service at the Methodist Church, a silent procession of Witness took place through the town. In the evening a concert of sacred music by the Cromwell Singers was held in the Newbury Baptist Church with proceeds going to Tear Fund. In May, the Church Anniversary was taken by Rev. G.W. Rusling and the usual Ascension Day lunch time service was held in the Church. During May, Mrs D Pawley took over the supervision of the running of the crèche in addition to her work with the Junior Church and Cradle Roll. In June, the Berks Baptist Association held their annual assembly at Newbury Baptist Church. During July, Mr. Nigel Jones a student from Bristol took over the work of Grenville and Alison Overton while they were on holiday.

He and his family resided in the Manse during that period. At the end of July, Mr .J.E. Clements, a Deacon of the Church, left Newbury for pastures new. In September, the Rev. Len Clarke resigned from the initial pastorate of Long Lane and Thatcham to take up a teaching post at Baughurst and during that month the Church acted as hosts on a Saturday to Shirley Baptist Men's contact club. During October, the Newbury Council of Churches organised a pilgrimage of prayer as part of the World Week of Prayer. This assembled at Victoria Park and visited all the Churches in Newbury arriving at Newbury Baptist Church at 8p.m. and concluding with a prayer vigil at St Nicholas Church. In October, after several years of waiting, agreement was finally given to proceed with the building of flats at the rear of the Church in conjunction with the Baptist Men's Movement Housing Association. Also in October, members of Andover Baptist Church gave a performance of the Saints Alive in the Church and Rev. G Overton led a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In November, the initial pastorate of Long Lane and Thatcham was revised. It became one Church, which met in four places Newbury, Headley, Thatcham and Long Lane. For an initial period it would have one membership, one diaconate and Grenville Overton as the Senior Minister. In December, the Cromwell singers again gave a concert in the Church and for this year, as Christmas day fell on a Saturday, only one morning service was held on the Saturday and Sunday. A watch-night service and social was held on New Years Eve. At the end of the year Mr. Brian Winslade resigned as Captain of the Boys' Brigade but remained as an Officer in the Company.

At the commencement of 1983, Mr. Norman Moon was appointed as caretaker Captain of the Boys' Brigade and confirmed as Captain in September when the new session started. The Newbury Young Trekkers group recommenced meeting in January. In 1983, the Newbury Ministers Fraternal

was held six times at Newbury Baptist Church with breakfast being served at the commencement of each meeting. During January, a Deacons Conference was held away from Newbury and led by Rev. Roger Hayden. In February, Mr. Ken Paskin was accepted into Regents Park College for training into the ministry although he was to remain at Windsor as a lay pastor. In February, when Mrs M Titcomb retired as leader of the Merrie Hill Play Group, there was no qualified Church member available to take over leadership of this Group so the Rev. Alison Overton was appointed Chaplain to the group with two other Church members being appointed to the Committee. The group was led by Mrs Sue Emberlin, a qualified member of the staff. In March, the Newbury Council of Churches held a conference at the Church on a Saturday and Rev. G Overton was elected as the Berkshire Baptist Association ministerial representative on the Baptist Union Council. That month the Rev. David Thomas accepted the call to be an Associate Minister with specific responsibility for Thatcham and Long Lane. His induction service was held at Thatcham Memorial Hall in May. In April, the tenancy of the old manse in the Church grounds was vacated and was not re-let due to the proposed future developments. In May, Mr. Mike Harris was appointed Choirmaster and Organist with Mrs Eira Davies, who had served in this role for over twenty years, now becoming deputy organist. The Rev. G. Overton was appointed Chairman of the District Council of Churches in May. The Church Anniversary that month was conducted by the Rev. Frank Cooke of Andover (formerly Purley) with the Junior Church taking part in the Morning service. A social evening was held on the Saturday, which included an exhibition of items of historical interest. In June, Dr. David Creek and Mr. R.G. Cooper became co-editors of the Church magazine. In June, it was agreed to appoint the Baptist Union Corporation as co-trustees of all Church properties because of their expertise in legal matters. This required the Church to adopt the Model

Trust for Chapels and Halls known as the Fairbairn Trust. In August, a Holiday Club was held organised by Mrs Catherine Moon. In September, the Methodist Church in Northbrook Street used Newbury Baptist Church for a performance of the Messiah as their own Church was undergoing extensive renovations. On a Saturday evening in October the members of Camberley Baptist Church gave a recital of Music in the Church in aid of Christian Aid. During October Mr. David Harmer enrolled as a probationary supplementary minister with the Baptist Union. In November, the Annual B.M.S. Sale of Work was held which raised over £1000. Also that month, the Young Trekkers group closed following the resignation of the leader Mr. Richard Westall and the Rev. Overton became a Justice of the Peace. On a Saturday in December the C.N.D Pilgrimage of Prayer used the Church as a stopping place for prayer. On Sunday 18th December the Junior Church gave a presentation in the morning service. Only one service was held on the morning of Sunday 25th December as it was Christmas Day. A watch-night service was held on 31st December preceded by a social.

The year of 1984 commenced with a programme of growth being proposed under the banner "Roots down Fruit upwards". This had three main projects a Bible Club, Student pastorate and a Partnership Mission. In January, Mr. Roger Ryton was appointed Church Treasurer in place of Mr. John Durrant who was leaving the District. Mr. Ken West assisted by Mr. Ron Howell took over the leadership of the Young Peoples Group called Newbury Youth Trekkers who met on Saturday evenings. Money from the legacy of Miss Kathleen Johnson was used to purchase further copies of "Hymns for Today's Church" in her memory. In March, Rev. Alison Overton joined part of a team with the Methodists and United Reformed Church ministers to attempt to stop the decline of the Free Church at Hungerford. That month an over 21 group meeting

after Church on Sunday evenings was established by Brian and Sheila Rawlings. In May, pew runners were purchased for the Church following a bequest from the late Brian & Violet Davey, and the numbers at Thatcham Baptist Church had increased to 46, with a further 17 Sunday School Scholars. The Church Anniversary in May was taken by Rev. Gordon Thomas M.A.B.D. The land at the rear of the Church was finally sold for housing development for £115000 to the Baptist Housing Association. From the monies received, a tithe (tenth) was given, divided between the retired Baptist Ministers Housing Fund and Bristol Baptist College towards the purchase of a house for students training for the ministry. A further £38500 was used to acquire a manse for the use of the Thatcham minister, with the residue being invested for future developments at Newbury. In June, the over 20’s group meeting at the home of Brian & Sheila Rawlings on Sunday evenings was reported to be going extremely well and they took an evening service that month. In July, a bequest from the late Mrs Gertrude Newman was used to purchase a mobile microphone and that month the monthly Saturday morning prayer meeting started in 1983 was discontinued due to poor attendance and was integrated into the Thursday night meetings. At the end of July, Mr Alan May, a student from Bristol College, with his wife Jean, visited Newbury for a month where he worked alongside the Newbury Churches Ministers preaching, teaching and leading worship. He also assisted at the Holiday Club, which was attended by over 100 children. In August, repairs to the Church Roof of the Sanctuary were found necessary costing £4700. The Saturday night Youth Club did not re-open after the Summer break as a rowdy element had been causing disruption leaving the leaders very discouraged. In September, a group from Mount Vernon Baptist Church in America visited Newbury on a “Partnership Mission” and a plaque commemorating this visit can be found in the Church. In October, Mr. John Scothern, a member of the

Church, became an open option student at Bristol College working alongside a Senior Baptist Minister at Chipping Sodbury and that month the Rev. Overton along with the Area Superintendent led a party to Greece following in the steps of St Paul. In October, Mr. Colin Tattersall became choirmaster when Mr. Mike Harris stepped down. At Hungerford the Methodists, United Reformed Church and Baptists were now worshipping together in one building. The work of the Baptists was now being led by Les Caldecourt, a lay pastor from Farringdon and student at Regents Park College who in July 1986 following his ordination took over full responsibility for this witness, which had been engineered by Newbury Baptist Church. In November, the Americans from the Air Base were granted permission for the use of our Baptistry on a Sunday afternoon. At Christmas, a Toy and Parade service was held on 9th December, the Junior Church did a nativity play in the morning with a Carol Service in the evening on the 23rd December. A Christmas Day service was held at 10a.m. and a watch-night service on 31st December.

At the start of the year 1985, work was expected to start on building the flats at the rear of the Church, which, at Rev. Alison Overton's suggestion, was agreed would be known as Thomas Merriman Court. This was because the first recorded meetings of Baptists were held in the home of one Thomas Merriman, which it is believed by some to have been in Princess Court, which was the name of the present site. In January, the Deacons conference looked at the Ministers Vision for the Church in 1985/6 and Mr. David Harmer resigned as a Deacon as he was moving to Birmingham. The Rev. Brian Whiting, a former minister of Newbury Baptist Church between 1951–1961, died in January 1985. In February the Church agreed to purchase a manse at Thatcham from Rockhold Ltd, a developer of new houses in Pipers Lane. In March, the Church received a visit from Rev. Martin Adhikary,

General Secretary of Baptists in Bangladesh, and a friend of Rev. Grenville Overton. The Communion service offering taken during his visit, enabled the Church to buy him a typewriter and also give him £50 towards his expenses whilst in England. In April, Bob Cooper and Roger Winfield were appointed to the positions of Deacon Emeritus and Rev. Grenville Overton was appointed as a magistrate serving Newbury Petty Sessions Division, as a consequence of which he resigned as District Secretary of the Berkshire Baptist Association and from the Marriage Guidance Council. In May, the Church Anniversary was taken by Rev. Bernard Green M.A. B.D. General Secretary of the Baptist Union. Also in May, a group called the Tumble Tots commenced using the Church Hall on Wednesdays. At the end of May, the Rev. David Thomas terminated his Ministry at Thatcham due to ill health but continued as an Associate Minister of Newbury Baptist Church with responsibility for Long Lane. The Rev. Grenville Overton took over responsibility for Thatcham until such time as a new Minister was appointed. In July, due to the increasing size of the family of the Minister the manse at Bartlemy Road was extended to provide for a ground floor study and an additional bedroom. The Church purchased 100 copies of Mission Praise this month. During August, the Church again held a Holiday Club culminating in a Youth Festival on the first Sunday in September. On the 1st September that year Thatcham Baptist Church was given its independence from Newbury after five years of association. Newbury Baptist Church had given Thatcham Baptist Church its roots and it was now time to give them their wings. This resulted in 30 members of Newbury Baptist Church being taken off the roll as they became the founding members of the New Church at Thatcham. The commissioning service for Thatcham was held on Sunday evening, 8th September, at Newbury followed by a foundation service on Sunday morning 15th September at Thatcham. The manse at Thatcham, having now been built,

was taken over by Newbury Baptist Church until such time as a minister was appointed and was rented out at £200 per week, but with the Thatcham fellowship having use of the study, which had its' own separate entrance, for meetings. At the commencement of the September school term, the Gideons were able to provide 145 copies of the New Testament to St Bartholomews School pupils as a result of the generosity of Newbury Church members who raised £94 for this. In September, Mrs Rita Smart stepped down as Captain of the Girl's Brigade but was to remain as an officer in the Company. She was replaced by Mrs Angela Robinson. During September, the Church purchased a Photocopying machine resulting in one of the upstairs rooms of the Church hall being changed into a print room. In October, there had not been any progress made on the building of the flats at the rear of the Church which had been expected to have commenced in 1985. A Court eviction order had to be obtained by the Church to remove squatters from the old manse which was then secured to prevent this happening again. In November, the Church heating system, having been in use for over 40 years, was showing its age and it was decided to install a large gas main under the Church forecourt in preparation for a new gas warm air heating system. On Remembrance Sunday, for this year only, the Church held their morning service at 9-30a.m. to enable the Brigades to parade at this Service and the Town Service at the war memorial and St Nicholas Church, with others having the option to attend either or both services. In November, Mrs Joan Browell resigned from the Diaconate as she was moving away from the area. As part of the Sanctuary refurbishment it was also agreed in November that the ceiling lighting would be replaced by wall up-lighters and that the damaged panels in the ceiling, including those containing light fittings, would be replaced and painted off white. All the timber framing would be re-polished and the roof insulated where appropriate. In December, the Christmas Day service this year was held at 10-

30a.m. and only one service was held on the following Sunday morning, a practice which has continued to the present day. The New Year watch night service was preceded by a social gathering.

At start of year 1986 work finally commenced on the building of flats at the rear of the Church and saw the demolition of the old cottage and manse, although part of the old manse was used to form the foyer of the flats. During March the Rev. Grenville Overton visited Bangladash where he met Mother Teresa, lectured at Serampore College where the work of the B.M.S. first started, had a weeks tour of the rural districts and shared Eucharist with the Rev. Desmond Samuels in Dehli Cathedral. The bookstall was re-introduced in the vestibule of the Church. During May, a Mission Newbury was held on the Race Course. Rev. Alison Overton was transferred to the list of fully accredited Baptist Ministers at the Baptist Union Assembly held in London. Also that month, Mr & Mrs Robbie and Carolyn Forrest took over the running of the "After Eight" group which met on Sunday evenings after Church and the Rev. David Thomas became Minister of Long Lane Chapel whilst remaining as Associate Minister of Newbury Baptist Church. In June, the induction took place of Rev. Ken Paskin to Victoria Street Windsor, and the Rev. Grenville Overton was appointed Newbury Hospital Chaplain. In August, Mr. Michael Docker, a mature first year student at Bristol Baptist College, with his wife Cheryl spent four weeks with the Church during which time they ran the August Holiday Club. At the beginning of September, Mr. Roger Winfield Deacon Emeritus died and during September, a mission team from Newbury Baptist Church of Reverends Grenville and Alison Overton, Mrs Gladys Brown, Mr. Bob Cooper, Mrs Marie Cox, Miss Maggie Dick, Mr & Mrs Tim Taylor, Mr. George Rixon and Miss Nicola Norris spent just over a week in America as guests of Mount Vernon Baptist Church. They also took with

them a love gift of £200 to the Headquarters of the Baptist World Alliance. Also in September, a Youth Club for those aged 13-16 was started on Saturday nights by Mr. Robbie Forrest and Mrs Pat Dent took over as leader of the Junior Church from Mrs Judy Creek the Co-ordinator. That month the Women’s Fellowship provided a new Pulpit Fall in the sanctuary and a Communion Fall was provided by an anonymous donor. In October, the renovations to the sanctuary were final completed with the lighting costing £5090, the ceiling £3190 and the heating £6540. At the end of the year the Rev. Arthur Glinn was called as the first Minister of Thatcham Baptist Church. He came to Thatcham from Limbury Baptist Church in Luton and spent a fruitful 8 year ministry in Thatcham where he saw the Church grow and increase its witness in the area. Unfortunately he met with a serious accident in 1992 when he was hit by a car when crossing the road with his dog. The animal was unscathed but Rev Glinn suffered lasting injuries and he left Thatcham in 1994 to become the Minister of a Baptist Church in Ventnor on the Isle of Wight where he still is today.

At the beginning of 1987, the Church started to consider the possibility of refurbishing the Church Hall and building a vestibule extension in readiness for the 350th Church Anniversary celebrations and also commenced the “One Step Forward” campaign by means of House Groups. In February, the Exeter University Singers gave a concert in the Church in aid of the “Save the Children Fund” and a problem arose with the builders of the flats who had, without permission, decided to brick up the windows in the Church Hall and toilets. In March, a Christian Drug Counselling Service called “Off the Record” commenced using the premises on three days a week. The Church agreed to finance a door entry scheme costing £200 in each of the flats at Thomas Merriman Court. On Saturday 11th April, the new Baptist Church at Thatcham was

A History of Newbury Baptists – St Mary’s Hill Building

opened and the Rev. Grenville Overton accompanied a group to Spring Harvest. In May, an annual dedication service for Deacons was established at the communion service and Rev. Grenville Overton was co-opted onto the B.M.S. General Committee because of his experiences in India and Bangladesh during his recent sabbatical. In June, the preacher at the Church Anniversary was Rev. Brian Gilbert author of the One Step Forward campaign. Commencing in September, a fortnightly news-sheet was introduced and to enable production of this news-sheet the Church had to purchase a new photocopier costing £2500. Also that month the 20+ Group meeting on Sunday evenings was disbanded as Brian and Sheila Rawlings gave up the leadership, but a group for teenagers, with an average attendance of 15 young people, was started by John and Di Cullen. In October, the dispute with the builders of Thomas Merriman Court who had blocked up the windows at the rear of the Church Hall was finally resolved. The Buildings were officially opened by Lady Porchester on November 21st, followed by a Thanksgiving Service and viewing of the flats, concluding with a buffet tea in the Church Hall.



Thomas Merriman Court

At the beginning of 1988 the Church magazine, “Baptist Viewpoint” was discontinued in favour of weekly news-sheet.

Miss Maggie Dick, having been accepted as a B.M.S. Missionary candidate, began her training at St. Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak, Birmingham. In January, an anonymous donor gave the Church a silver plated chalice for use in Communion Services and that month James Whysall, a student pastor from Regents Park College, commenced work with the Church for one and a half days a fortnight as part of his ministerial training. In March, Mr. Cyril Moon was bestowed with the honour of the appointment of Deacon Emeritus in recognition of his loyal and devoted services to the Church as a Deacon for over forty continuous years. Mrs M. Titcomb was appointed to the new role of Membership Secretary. In that month no one will ever forget the shooting tragedy in Hungerford. The funeral service of one of the victims Ian Playle, who worked at the Magistrates Court at Newbury with Grenville Overton, was held in Newbury Baptist Church. The Church also raised over £750 for the Appeal Fund. On Palm Sunday, part of the morning service was held outside with a donkey and on Easter Sunday morning, a lamb was the special visitor. In April, Mr David Corry was appointed Church Secretary and Mr. Tim Dent, Assistant Church Secretary in place of Mr. Cyril Moon who was stepping down after 38 years service and at a special lunch in his honour on a Sunday in May, he was presented with a cheque and chair in recognition of his long and devoted loyal service. In June, the Church agreed to proceed with the vestibule extension and hall refurbishment at a cost not exceeding £250,000. The Church Anniversary Services in June were taken by the Rev. Dr. John Morgan-Wynne from Bristol Baptist College. In July, Miss Maggie Dick completed her missionary training but unfortunately there was no place available for her in Nepal or anywhere else at the time. That month the Youth Club was closed down. In August, the Rev. Grenville Overton visited Australia on a lecture and preaching tour at the invitation of the Australian Baptist Union. In September, the Merrie Hill Play Group and Tumble Tots found

alternative accommodation, due to anticipated building work, and ceased using the Church premises. Also in September, the flat roof of the rear of the Church was renewed at a cost of £1000 and part of the South boundary wall of the Church was found to be leaning dangerously. The Rev. David Thomas and his wife moved into a retirement flat provided by the Retired Baptist Ministers Housing Association in Audley Close, Newbury. During September, because of their close links with Headley Baptist Chapel, the Rev. Larry Mosely, Chaplain to the U.S.A. Air Base at Greenham Common was granted permission to use the Newbury Baptist Church baptistry. In October, the Church forecourt was closed for one day in order to prevent any “right of traverse” arising and new windows were installed in the manse costing £3000. That month the Church acted as hosts for the St Luke’s Hospital service conducted by two of the hospital chaplains, the Rev Grenville Overton and Father George Bennett. The Newbury Baptist Church Choir and Junior Choir gave musical items and Dr. Ivan Johnson, a member of the Church, gave the address. Following the service, patients and the congregation were entertained to tea. In November, the Rev. David Thomas suffered a serious break down in health and he had to relinquish the pastorate of Long Lane and the Associate Ministers position at Newbury Baptist Church. On 11th December, the morning parade service took the form of a Gift Service, while the evening service on 18th December took the form of a Christmas Pageant preceded by a fellowship tea. Then, on News Year Eve a social was arranged concluding with a short informal service. The Annul report for 1988 records that two of the Churches’ Young people were serving overseas. Simon Stevens spent 6 months of the year working in Guyana on a development project and Shirley Cooper was in Thailand with YWAM(Youth With A Mission) working in a refugee camp.

The Deacons conference in January 1989 focused on Evangelism in the Church and use of the buildings when extended and refurbished. At the end of the month, the garage in the Church forecourt was demolished to make way for the new extension. In February, the proposed Methodist and United Reformed Church venture at Hungerford had not been fruitful and it was agreed, following a request from the United Reformed Minister there, that someone from Newbury Baptist Church would take their services from time to time. At Easter a production of Peter Howards "The Ladder" was performed in the Church. On Good Friday the combined choirs of Newbury Baptist Church and Newbury United Reformed Church gave a performance of Stainers Crucifixion. James Whysall took his last service at Long Lane Church on Easter Sunday before moving to Conisborough Baptist Church Yorkshire as Pastor. In April, work started on the new vestibule extension and a brochure was issued outlining this work and requesting donations towards the project. On April 8th the Rev. Ken Paskin was inducted to his first pastorate as minister of Earlsfield Baptist Church London. Rev. Paskin was a former church member who led the Young Trekkers group before training for the ministry at Regents Park College. In May, the Church of the Vine used the baptistry at Newbury Baptist Church for a baptismal service on a Sunday afternoon. The foundation stone for the new extension was laid on 4th June 1989. At the end of June the Church assisted with the live satellite link at Greenham Common High School for the Billy Graham Crusade held in London. In July, work commenced on the refurbishment of the Church Hall. The Rev. Grenville Overton took the remainder of his sabbatical leave by attending Regents Park College during the Summer term. In September that year it was decided to discontinue with the associate membership roll and all names on it were removed although names still appear to be transferred to it until 1990. That month the Church became a member of the Evangelical Alliance. A

youth week-end held in September featured the drama group Potters Clay and the singer Martyn Joseph and also a Gospel band from Winchester. In October, a large cavity was found under the foundations of the Southern wall of the Church hall during the renovation work necessitating excavation and rebuilding of the wall at a cost of £10,000 and during that month the Church sold the painting “Christ and the Centurion” which had been hung in the back of the Church for £3270 with the monies raised going towards the new extension. In November, a 24 hour prayer chain and gift day was organised which raised £49,405 in gifts, loans and promises for the refurbishment and renovation fund and the Basingstoke Male voice choir gave a concert in the Church that month. At Christmas, members of the music group sang carols and handed out leaflets in the Kennet Centre. In 1989 the Annual Church report states that Mr. Cyril Moon became Chairman of Newbury District Council of Churches following the Rev. Laurence Stevens. It also records that Howard Grace and family gave up their jobs and left home and security to work in Schools around the Country spreading the Gospel Message. Also Simon Stevens was now serving overseas temporarily with the health Authorities in Malawi and Shirley Cooper was now serving with YWAM in Taiwan.

The year of 1990 was a time of much rejoicing as the Church celebrated their 350th Anniversary with many special events being held. A special commemorative calendar for the year of 1990 was also produced. In January during the week of prayer for Christian Unity, a united service was held in the Church conducted by Canon Ivor Smith Cameron and that month the Church held a Baptismal service when the Rev. Frank Cooke was the preacher. On the 15th January 1990, Mr Bob Cooper, Deacon Emeritus died aged 83 years following an accident. He was a retired paper merchant who came to Newbury in 1970 when he sold his paper-merchandising business. He was very

much involved in setting up Thatcham Baptist Church to whom he left £10,000 in his will and also £10,000 to Newbury Baptist Church. He was also the Deacon responsible for Branch causes leaving £6000 to Long Lane Baptist Chapel. Also that month, Greenham Church used the Baptistry on a Sunday afternoon for a Baptismal service. In February the Salvation Army used the Church for Concert and Dr. John Biggs, President of the Baptist Union was the guest preacher at an evening service on the theme of Ecology. In March, Mrs M Titcomb stood down as a Deacon after 30 years continuous service, but continued as membership secretary and a concert by Derek Moon the evangelist was held at the Church that month. A special celebration was held in Bristol with all of the other eight Baptist Churches who were also celebrating their 350th Anniversaries. These celebrations included a pageant in which many members from Newbury Baptist Church took part. On Good Friday evening the choir gave a recital of Olivet to Calvary. In April, the London Emmanuel Choir gave a concert in the Church. In May, with the support of the Church, Richard Westall started the Loose Ends Project. The Morton Hall was used for this project on Wednesdays from 9a.m. to 5p.m. as a drop in day centre for the homeless where they were provided with food, drink and counselling. On a Sunday morning that month a farewell and commissioning service was held for Miss Janet Busk, a Church member who was leaving Newbury to work in Carlisle for “Send the Light” - a major distributor of Christian Books. During May improvements were made to the Church public address system costing over £3000 and a United service for Christian Aid was held in the Church with the Rev Michael Taylor Director of Christian Aid preaching. In June, in celebration of the 350th Church Anniversary, a service of Thanksgiving and Dedication was held on Saturday 9th June when Mr. Cyril Moon, Deacon Emeritus and former Church Secretary, unveiled a plaque recording the formal opening of the new Church vestibule.

A History of Newbury Baptists – St Mary’s Hill Building



Opening of new vestibule¹

It is recorded that Cyril Moon attended the 300th Anniversary of the Church in 1940 when he cycled from Swindon to be present. The dedication ceremony was conducted by the Rev. Grenville Overton, followed by a celebration supper in the newly refurbished Church Hall for over 300 guests, including the Mayor of Newbury, Captain Adrian Edwards. The guest preacher on the Sunday was the Rev. Raymond Brown of Eastbourne and the service was attended by the Newbury Member of Parliament, Sir Michael McNair-Wilson. In recognition of this anniversary, special glass-ware was produced and sold to Church members and all of the children in the Junior Church were given a commemorative leather bookmark. A Baptismal service held on a Sunday evening in June was recorded by the BBC Television for inclusion in its programme “Songs of Praise” to be broadcast later in the year. One Sunday evening service in July was led by the Christian Association of Brass bands, followed by an open air service in Victoria Park. In July, members of the Church took part in a Special Open Air Songs of Praise at Bristol, which featured

¹ Photo courtesy of the Newbury Weekly News
Page 127

eight other Baptist Churches who were also celebrating their 350th Anniversary this year. The programme was broadcast on B.B.C. television on Sunday evening, 7th October when the Church did not hold an evening service in order that members could watch it. In September, Thatcham Baptist Church paid Newbury Baptist Church £40,000 for their manse in Wheelers Way and the refurbishment of the Church hall upstairs rooms commenced at a cost of £17000. Watership Brass commenced using the Morton Hall for practices on Tuesday evenings and the minutes record that both St Johns Ambulance and Alcoholics Anonymous were regular users of the Church premises. The Church celebrated its Harvest festival in September and at the end of that month Grenville Overton accepted an invitation to speak at the European Baptist Federation Meetings in Holland. In October, it was decided that the old crèche room would be converted into a lounge and renamed the "Cooper Room". Also that month, the Church forecourt was improved and included the removal of the old cycle shed, garage and store. During the months of September and October the premises were used to run courses organised by the Rev. Steve Chalke on the subject "Christmas Unwrapped" The annual St Lukes' day service was held at Newbury Baptist Church this year. In November, on Remembrance Sunday it was decided to continue to hold a service at Newbury Baptist Church at 10-45a.m. whilst recognising the fact that some members would wish to attend the Town civic parade service. The Church held a missionary week that month with several special events taking place. The Loose Ends project had received over 250 visits from one hundred different people in need since it opened in March and was now also opening on Sunday afternoons from 3p.m. to 5p.m. On 21st December the Brigades led the singing of Carols in the Kennet Centre in the evening whilst on the 24th December the music group sang carols in the Kennet Centre in the morning. On two consecutive Wednesdays in December, a

Christmas meal was served to the Loose Ends clientele. At the end of the year, Grenville and Alison Overton visited Russia where they spent time in both Moscow and Leningrad, their primary contacts being the leaders of the Baptist Churches there to whom they took a gift of £1000. During 1990 Shirley Cooper, having completed her discipleship training with YWAM, was now working with Mothers Choice in Hong Kong.

In March 1991 the morning service on Palm Sunday followed the pattern previously established with part of the service outside with a donkey. After a period of almost twenty years Lent lunch time services were discontinued. On Good Friday, the joint Choirs of Newbury Baptist Church and Newbury United Reformed Church performed Thiman's Last Supper in the Church. April 1991 saw the formation of the Ready Salted Drama Group consisting of members of the Church. They have continued since then to perform at least one major production each year. In May, on Ascension Day, a lunch time service was held in the Church for the first time. In June the Church premises were used as a live link Mission station for the Billy Graham Crusade held in Scotland. This was achieved using video by satellite link which at that time was a very new innovation. During that month Grenville Overton visited Romania teaching and preaching on behalf of the Baptist Union taking with him gifts of £100 each to a Theological College, a Home for the handicapped and £100 each to three of the new Church established in that Country. At the 351st Church Anniversary on 30th June, the guest preacher was the Rev. Roy Jenkins President of the Baptist Union. On one Sunday evening each month in June, July and August, instead of holding an evening service in Newbury Church, an open air service was held in Victoria park. In July, the entrance to the Church forecourt was improved and the department of Employment commenced running a job club in an upstairs

room of the Church Hall on four mornings a week. In August, a joint holiday club was held at Newbury Baptist Church with St Nicholas Church, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and the Salvation Army. In September, concerts were held in the Church hall featuring “Nia” and “Martyn Joseph” and a Bible Alive Exhibition was held in the Church hall for a week. Commencing in September, the Y.M.C.A. started using the Church premises on four mornings a week and a room in the Church Hall was used by Mrs Margaret Johnson, wife of Dr. Ivan Johnson for a post-natal clinic in regard to her work as a health visitor. The Berkshire Emergency Committee were also given permission to use our premises in the event of a major disaster. At Christmas the Boys’ Brigade and Girls’ Brigade Companies sang carols in the Kennet Centre. At the end of the year, as a result of contacts made by Grenville Overton during his visit to Bangladesh in 1988, discussions were started with St Joseph’s and St. Francis de Sales Roman Catholic Churches regarding the possibility of a joint project to build 15 basic houses in that Country at a cost of £2000. Shirley Cooper was now serving overseas with the St. Stephens Society in Hong Kong.

Commencing in 1992, the Red Cross Disabled Club started to use the Church premises. A church gift day was held in March and that month saw the time of the morning service changed to 11a.m after 135 years. At Easter, the Good Friday afternoon service was discontinued but on Easter Sunday a fellowship breakfast was held followed by a communion service. In April the Berkshire Baptist Association launched its 40-Day Evangelism Project at a service held in the Church. That month saw the Church forecourt being resurfaced and a pedestrian walkway being constructed leading up to the front of the Church.

A History of Newbury Baptists – St Mary’s Hill Building

Photograph of improved forecourt and church buildings



In June Grenville Overton stood down as free Church Chaplain to Newbury and District Hospital after six years of service and commenced attending Regents Park College as a Pastoral Tutor for one and a half days a fortnight. That month he also visited Rome to visit Father Toni in connection with the Bangladesh Housing Project. In July, Regents Park College began sending students to Newbury Baptist Church for preaching assessments with Grenville Overton leading the assessment team. In June and July open-air services were again held in Victoria Park on the first Sunday of each month at 5p.m. In July and August Grenville Overton visited Australia - this time taking his whole family with him. In August, Mr. Paul Lavender, who was undertaking postgraduate studies in Music at Regents Park College and was currently Director of Music at New Road Baptist Church, Oxford, agreed to join the Church as an Assistant with special responsibilities for Youth and Music. His commissioning service was held in the Church on Saturday 26th September. In September 1992 the Church agreed to join in full membership of a new body called “Churches Together in Newbury”, which was the successor to

the Newbury and District Council of Churches. In November the Church commenced the mammoth task of producing their own Worship Book containing over 400 Hymns and Songs together with Readings and Prayers and other liturgical material. Since it would intentionally not contain any Carols copies of Carol Praise were also purchased. Also in November, a gift, received anonymously, was used to purchase a keyboard and set up a music fund. The running of the Loose Ends Project was taken over by Gerry Lynch and a Christmas Lunch was provided for their clients on 23rd December. In December, the Newbury Hospital Helpers League held their Annual Carol Service at Newbury Baptist Church and the Church went Carol singing inside the Kennet Centre on Saturday 12th December and outside Tesco Store on Sunday 20th December. Towards the end of the year Shirley Cooper returned from her overseas service in Hong Kong.

The year of 1993 commenced with a Valedictory Service on Sunday 24th January for Andy and Jenny Wilson who were to fly out to Cameroon at the beginning of February for Missionary service, where they would be working with the European Baptist Mission on secondment from the Baptist Missionary Society. In the evening, members attended the united service at the Methodist Church at which the Rev. Geoffrey Reynolds, our Area Superintendent and Church member was the preacher. In February, the Baptist Celebration Orchestra paid a visit to the Church and the Church received a gift of two trays of stainless steel communion cups from the Central Evangelistic Church in Reading, which was closing. Commencing on 3rd March, the Church introduced three Sunday services to cater for the growing needs of the congregation. A traditional service was held at 9-30a.m., followed by a family Service at 11a.m. and an evening service at 6p.m. with coffee being served between the two morning services. In April, on the Monday before Easter a Mother and

Toddler service was held in the Church and on Maundy Thursday there was a fellowship supper with a special service on Good Friday afternoon followed by tea and Hot Cross Buns. On Easter Sunday a communion service was held at 9-30a.m., a Baptismal Service at 11a.m. and a Celebration service at 7p.m. On Easter Monday 1993, a fire, which had been started deliberately, caused a great deal of damage to the Morton Hall and meant that it would be out of commission for some considerable time. During the month of May the Berkshire Baptist Association organised several evangelistic events, which included a Celebration service in Newbury Baptist Church on Sunday evening 2nd May followed by Evangelistic Activities with St Nicholas Church on the Bank Holiday Monday in Victoria Park. On the 9th May a concert was given by various groups associated with the B.B.A. and on the 16th May, a guest speaker was a Christian Police Woman with a final service on 27th May at which the preacher was the Rev. Harry Weatherley, the association evangelist. Towards the end of May the Loose Ends Project was experiencing staffing difficulties and only meeting for restricted hours on Wednesdays and Sundays, aiming its work primarily now at the rootless of society. On the Thursday before the Church Anniversary in June, an Italian Evening was held at the Church when Grenville Overton gave a presentation of his visit to Rome in 1992 and the profits from the evening were given to the Churches in Bangladesh. The preacher for the Church Anniversary that month was the Rev. Dr. Brian Haymes President of the Baptist Union. In July, the Church put on a performance of the musical "Saints Alive", which was repeated as part of an evening service in October. There is also a reference in the minutes as to the organ being overhauled during July at a cost of £5000. In July, Grenville Overton took a week of his sabbatical leave at the Rushlikon Baptist centre in Switzerland. From the 1st September, Mrs. Angela Robinson was appointed to the part-time position of Minister's Secretary

to assist with the ever increasing administrative workload. In October, Mrs Margaret Titcomb was appointed as Pastoral Carer, a position which she combined with the duties of Membership Secretary. In November, Grenville Overton visited the William Carey Bicentenary celebrations in Bangladesh when he also took the opportunity to visit the homes that had been constructed there with the gifts from the Church that were given last year. In December, the Job Club ceased use of the Church premises and Paul Lavender took up post of Chaplain to Newbury College. A Saturday night Youth Club was started for younger teenagers with the Leadership coming from the 18+ group. The Christmas service arrangements for 1993 included a parade and gift service on the morning of 12th December and for the first time a Christingle service on Sunday morning 19th December. In the afternoon carols were sung outside of Tesco Store and in the evening a carols by candlelight service was held. On Christmas Day, the usual family service was held.

The year 1994 commenced with services on Sunday January 2nd when a family service was held at 10a.m and a communion service at 7p.m. The beginning of the year also saw the launch of the Churches new Hymn Book, which had taken nearly two years to produce. In February, the Girls' Brigade planted rose bushes in the Church forecourt to mark their Centenary. In April, Mr. Tim Dent, having served as Assistant Church Secretary for six years was appointed Church Secretary in place of David Corry who had resigned. The new appointment of Mrs. Valerie Vardy as Minute Secretary was confirmed. At the beginning of May, Grenville Overton took part of his sabbatical study leave at the South Western Seminary at Fort Worth Dallas Texas at their invitation. In May, the Morton Hall, having been renovated following the fire damage, was used by the Council for the European Parliamentary Elections. The Church Anniversary Services on 22nd May were conducted

by the Rev. Bruce Keeble B.D. J.P. M.Th. of Hillhead, Glasgow who later was moderator for the Church between 1999-2000 during its interregnum. The evening service took the form of a special musical and drama event. The previous Saturday, the Junior Church held a family day at Northcroft Leisure Centre with tea in the Church Hall. Mrs. Pat Dent stepped down as leader of the Junior Church at the end of May being replaced by Juanita Brown for the 3-7 year olds with Mr Paul Stirrney having responsibility for the 8-11 year old Trailblazers Group. In July, Norman Moon resigned as Boys' Brigade Captain eventually being replaced by Roger Vogel as acting Captain in December after a very difficult period for the Company. He was then appointed Captain in the following year. In September, members of the Church took part in the "March for Jesus" through the town. During the afternoon of Saturday 10th December Church members sang carols outside Sainsbury's store. On Thursday evening 15th December, "King of Kings" was performed in the Church. On Friday 23rd December members of the Church performed "The Gift" a musical by Graham Kendrick.

In April 1995 the Churches Assistant Paul Lavender married Judith Jennings at Newbury Baptist Church, the service being conducted by Rev. G Overton. The Morton hall was again used as a polling station - this time for the Local Council Elections. The Blood Transfusion service started using the premises for collection of blood from donors and Watership Brass used the Hall for Band practices once a week on Tuesday nights. In June, the Berkshire Baptist Association used Newbury Baptist Church premises for their Annual assembly. Work commenced at the end of that month to refurbish the Church organ at a cost of nearly £5000 by Osmans. At the end of July, Mr. Paul Lavender left the Church when his contract ended and went to take up a new challenge at Weymouth Baptist Church. In July and August both Grenville and Alison Overton took their

sabbatical leave together having been invited as guests of Gordon Baptist Church, Sydney, Australia. In their absence the Rev. Bernard Green took on moderating duties with the pastoral group taking responsibility for the Church fellowship. The Rev. Gerry Ball, a minister from Australia took the services during the Overtons sabbatical.

In September, the fund for the organ overhaul was only £365 short of the targeted amount but it was now found that the life expectancy of the blowers was in question and would need replacing at an extra cost of about £5000. In November, on Remembrance Sunday only one service was held in the morning at 9-30a.m. to enable the Brigades to attend the Town Remembrance Parade and service. The December Parade service took the form of a Christingle service and on Friday 22nd December the Church went carol singing outside Sainsbury's in the evening. Christmas services took place as usual. At the end of the year a gift, received in memory of the late Mrs Frances Fair, was used to improve the amplification system.

The Church commenced 1996 with an Epiphany Party on Saturday 6th January and on Sunday 7th January a service at 10a.m. took the form of a Covenant Service with a New Year Communion Service at 7p.m. At the beginning of the year a parking permit scheme was introduced in an attempt to solve the parking problems in the Church car park during week-days. In April, a member of the Church, the Rev. L Stevenson was elected as Vice President of the Berkshire Baptist Association for 1996/7 and Mr Alec Daley, a Deacon of the Church, was appointed as Church Steward - a role he carried out most diligently until he relinquished the post in October 1999. During May, a bequest from the late Grace Russell, was used to purchase a seat to be sited outside the Ministers Vestry window in the forecourt and dedicated to her memory. The

schoolroom was also renamed the Frances Fair Room in memory of the late Mrs. Frances Fair. At the end of May the Church adopted the Safe to Grow Policy in regard to its Children and Young Peoples work. In June, Grenville Overton visited the Baptist Theological Conference and European Baptist Seminary held in Prague. In July an overhead projector and screen was installed in the Church to aid worship and a Prayer Board was also introduced in the Church. On Sunday 24th September a commissioning service was held for Andy Noble who was going to work for the COINS Trust. In October, in view of break-ins and thefts, alarm systems were installed in the Morton Hall and Church main hall at a cost of £3000. In November, the old shed at the back of the Church was demolished and the fences and walls around the perimeter of the buildings were replaced and the area landscaped. The Church’s audio system was upgraded and replaced as the result of theft. On Sunday December 22nd the Junior Church gave a presentation in the morning service of the production entitled “The Old Russian Shoemaker” and the evening service took the form of lessons and carols.

At the start of the year 1997 security lights were installed outside of the Morton hall and Church Hall. The role of the Deacons was reviewed, resulting in a Deacon always being on the door to welcome people to Church services, a Deacon being linked with each organisation within the Church and a Deacons Handbook being produced. In February urgent repairs were required to the manse chimney when a piece of it collapsed landing on the Rev. Overton’s car. In March, the Church called the Rev. Jim McNaughton as a Minister/Missioner, a post which he accepted. On Easter Sunday 30th March, the annual sunrise service held in Victoria Park was led by the Rev. Alison Overton, followed by breakfast at the Church and a morning service at 10a.m. In April, the Church commenced running an Alpha Course which

lasted for 10 weeks and at a gift day that month raised over £18000 towards funds for the cost of the new Minister/Missioner appointment. In July, the Church said farewell to Rev. David Thomas and his wife Barbara as they were leaving the district following retirement. In August, the Church purchased a manse in The Folly, Stroud Green at a cost of £120,000. for the use of Rev. Jim McNaughton and family, whose induction service took place on 13th September 1997, followed by a tea in the Church Hall. The Harvest Festival in September was celebrated with the now familiar Harvest Supper. In October, another Alpha series was started and in November, Rev. Alison Overton led a group from the Church on a visit to the Holy Land. On Sunday December 21st the morning service took the form of a family festival with the evening service being lessons and carols by candlelight.

The year of 1998 commenced with a week of prayer with guidelines from the Evangelical Alliance, culminating with an early Morning Prayer breakfast on Saturday 10th January. This year also saw the introduction of the Six a Clock Shows once a quarter on a Sunday evening and the creation of the Church's own five a side football team who played in a league up at Greenham Common. In February 1998, Mrs Angela Robinson resigned as the Pastors secretary - a position she had held for nearly three years. In the Church meeting minutes of February 1998 there is the first ever reference to a "Friends List". This was created since the Associate Roll had been misused as a listing for those whose membership had clearly lapsed but for family or friends reasons were not removed entirely from church records. Therefore the Friends Roll was created to note those former members now geographically distant who still wished to retain a link with the Church though unquestionably no longer active members. On a Sunday in March a valediction service was held for Annelise Matthews who was going to Lesotho to work in a hospital in Tellebong as part of

her training to become a Doctor. On Mothering Sunday, during the morning service, flowers were given to all the Mothers and the fellowship also joined in an infant dedication and blessing of two families. In April, on Maundy Thursday, a Passover Meal was held at the Church during the evening. On Easter Sunday following the Sunrise service in Victoria Park, a breakfast was held at the Church followed by a Communion Service, this being the only service that day. In April, the Rev. Grenville Overton visited Georgia in the former Soviet Union, with Dr. Ivan Johnson, a Church member, who was visiting Georgia to locate his fathers birthplace Whilst there, they took part in many services and also met with Church leaders in the area. They also visited an orphanage in Tblisi. They took with them a love gift of £500, which had been collected at a subsequent communion service for the work in Georgia. In July, the Rev. Jim McNaughton was appointed Chaplain to Newbury College and the Rev. Alison Overton was appointed as a “Free Church” Chaplain to Newbury and Sandleford Hospitals. In September, Margaret Scarr took over the leadership of the Toddlers group from Rev. Alison Overton and that month saw the introduction of five-a-side football for Children aged between 7 and 11. In November, it was agreed that following a successful trial period, the monthly men breakfast that met on Saturday mornings once a month would continue. At the end of the year, the Church was notified that Rev. Grenville Overton had accepted the call to be minister of Queens Road Baptist Church Coventry and would be leaving Newbury at the end of July next year.

At the beginning of 1999, Anne Davey took over as leader of the Junior Church from Juanita Brown. During the year, Newbury Baptist Church Football Club was introduced. In March, Tim Dent resigned as Church Secretary after 6 years service and was replaced by Dr. David Creek. In April, the Rev. Bruce Keeble B.D. J.P. M.Th. commenced his duties as

Moderator during the interregnum and Rev. Grenville Overton took his 3 months sabbatical leave. During June, a Womens Refuge started using the Church premises for meetings. On Sunday 11th July the Church bid farewell to the Rev. Grenville and Rev. Alison Overton when they led the worship at all three services and joined with the membership at a farewell tea in the afternoon. Commencing in September, contractors were employed in the cleaning of the Church premises apart from the Church, which continued to be cleaned by volunteers on a rota basis. In October, Alec Daley resigned as a Deacon and also left his post as Church Steward. That month a bequest from the late Sister Eileen Stevens was used to purchase a new set of Communion cups and trays. In November, the new worker for the Coins Trust (Christian Opportunities in Newbury Schools) was granted use of an Office at Newbury Baptist Church as the planned accommodation at St Nicholas Church for this venture was not yet ready. Then on Sunday, December 5th at 6p.m., the play, "Rumours of Angels", was performed by members of the Church. On Saturday, December 11th a Church party was held in the evening. On Friday 17th December the Brigades held their Annual Carol Service. During the Christmas period the Church took part in the Operation Christmas Child Appeal. This appeal involved filling shoe boxes with small toys, sweets and gifts for children in Romania. The boxes were then delivered by Link Romania to families in that country. On December 31st an Ecumenical Service was held at 9p.m. at St Nicholas Church followed by a procession through the Town finishing at the Market Square at 10-30p.m. with bands playing and the rector of Newbury the Rev. David Cook speaking.

On the 1st January 2000, to mark the new millennium, David Corry led a short service in the Church at 12 noon and only one service was held on Sunday 2nd January at 10a.m. taken by the moderator. At the start of the millennium year 2000, the Rev.

Jim McNaughton took his three months sabbatical leave in Australia where he attended the Baptist World Conference in Melbourne and also a Salvation Army Conference. He also visited Churches in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. February saw the new issue of a Church magazine produced by Mike Wilding. In March, on Good Friday, a united service was held at the Methodist Church followed by a procession of witness march through the Town and on Easter Sunday an early morning service was held in Victoria Park. Another Alpha course was held in the Autumn. In December, as Christmas Eve fell on Sunday this year, only a morning service was held and on Christmas Day a family service was arranged at 10a.m. At the end of the year, the Rev. Bruce Keeble stepped down as Moderator due to a combination of ill health and other work pressures. The Church Secretaries Annual Report for 2000 records the fact that there had been a gradual demise of house groups and Prayer Meetings

So ends this period of history on the life of Newbury Baptist Church. We have already entered the New Millennium and the year 2001. It would be wrong not to record the following significant events of that year.

In January, the Rev. Sylvia Stephenson B.A. Pastor/Secretary of the Berkshire Baptist Association accepted the appointment of Moderator in place of Rev. Bruce Keeble who left at the end of the last year.

In September, the Rev. Jim McNaughton left the Church to commence a new ministry in York.

In November, the Rev. Jon Stannard B.A.. was inducted as the Minister of Newbury Baptist Church thus beginning another new chapter in the life of the Church.

Then
from the
years
between
1730 up
to **1764** **MINISTERS**

A History of Newbury Baptists

I have been unable to find many details regarding the very early ministers of the Church and cannot verify with any certainty the exact dates they held office. They are mostly referred to as the Minister or the Pastor and recorded as being Mr. not Reverend. This leads one to believe that the majority of the early ministers were in fact lay pastors, never having been ordained. However, the only evidence I can find to support this view relates to Mr. Wilkins where the records clearly state that he was not allowed to administer the sacraments, as he was a layman.

c1650 – c1750	Mr. James
c1711 – c1715	Various Supply Preachers
c1716 – c1721	Mr Jefferies
c1722 – c1729	Unknown
	Mr. Britton
	Mr. Taylor
	Mr. Elkanah Widgery
	Mr. Edward Harrison
	Members led Worship for a time
	Mr. Edward Harrison
	Mr. Wilkinson
	Probationary Ministers
1748 – 1774	Mr. Francis Lewis
1774 – 1776	Students from Bristol College
1776 - 1778	Mr. Stephens
1779 - 1780	Mr. Francis Lewis
1780 – 1807	Rev. James Bicheno M.A.
1807 – 1812	Mr. John Perry
1813 – 1839	Mr. T.S. Welch

A History of Newbury Baptists – Church Officers

1839 – 1844	Rev. John Barker Pike
1844 – 1845	Rev. D. Trotman
1845 – 1864	Rev. Joseph Drew
1864 – 1866	Rev. Thos. M. Roberts B.A.
1867 – 1873	Rev. John E Cracknell
1873 – 1875	Rev. Frederick Robertson
1875 – 1884	Rev. George Howe
1885 – 1888	Rev. Elias George
1889 – 1908	Rev. George James Knight
1909 – 1925	Rev. Charles V Pike
1928 – 1934	Rev. W.C. Johnson
1934 – 1949	Rev. Arthur J Stanton
1951 – 1961	Rev. B.A. Whiting M.A.
1962 – 1978	Rev. R.F. Mitchell B.D.
1979 – 1999	Rev. Grenville Overton B.A. J.P. .M Phil.
1979 – 1999	Rev. Alison Overton B.A
1997 – 2001	Rev. Jim McNaughton (Missioner)
2001 to date	Rev. Jon Stannard B.A.

Associate Ministers

The following did not have a role in Newbury Baptist Church and are recorded as part of the History of Newbury Baptists. They were termed Associate Ministers having responsibility for the Long Lane and Thatcham Fellowships.

1981 – 1982	Rev. L Clarke
1983 – 1987	Rev. D Thomas

Other Appointments

Between the years of 1992 – 1995 Mr Paul Lavender was engaged as an Assistant with special responsibilities for Youth and Music. His appointment is recorded under this section purely for the purpose of the historical record.

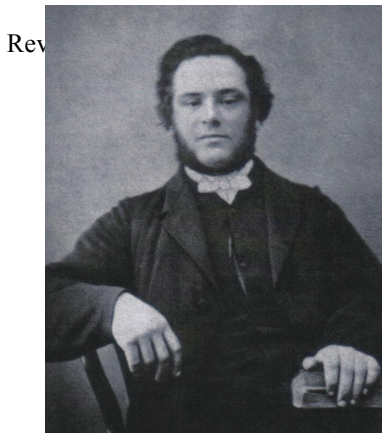
Ministers Photographs

A selection of photographs belonging to the Church of former Ministers of the Church are reproduced below:-



Rev. James Bicheno M.A. (1780 – 1807)

Rev. Joseph Drew (1845 –1864) Rev. John E. Cracknell (1867-1873)



A History of Newbury Baptists – Church Officers



Rev. Elias George (1885-1888)



Rev George James Knight (1889-1908)

A History of Newbury Baptists – Church Officers



Rev. Charles V. Pike (1909-1925)



Rev. W. Chas. Johnson (1928-1934)

A History of Newbury Baptists – Church Officers

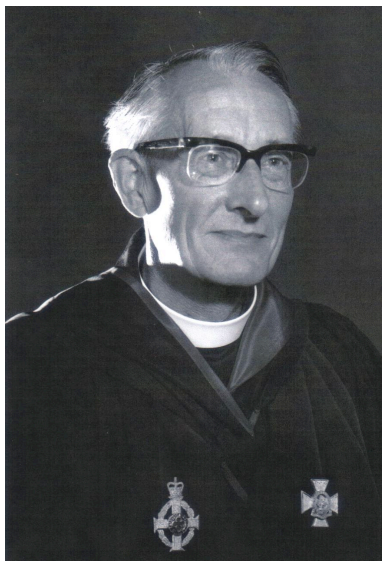


Rev. Arthur J. Stanton (1934-1949)



Rev. Brian Whiting (1951-1961)

A History of Newbury Baptists – Church Officers



Rev. Ronald F. Mitchell (1962-1978)



Rev. Grenville Overton B.A. J.P. M.Phil. (1979-1999)

Rev. Alison Overton (1979-1999)

7. CHURCH OFFICERS

Church Secretary

It would appear that no such position officially existed until 1886 when the first recorded Church Secretary is shown as being Mr. Phillip E Davies. One must assume that the secretarial work prior to that time was part of the minister's duties. It is known that several of the Ministers of the Church took the minutes of meetings in the 1700's and 1800's.

Mr. Philip E Davies	1886-1891
Mr. W.J. Davies	1891-1899
Mr. Clayton	1899-1903
Mr. MacFarlane Davies J.P	1903-1933
Mr. W.J. Lewendon	1933-1936
Mr. C.H. Freeman	1936-1950
Mr. Cyril Moon	1950-1988
Mr. David Corry	1988-1994
Mr. Tim Dent (Assistant)	1988-1994
Mr. Tim Dent	1994-1999
Dr. David Creek	1999- to date

It is worthy of note that Mr. C.F. Moon served for 38 continuous years as Church Secretary whereas the "Davies" family accumulated nearly 45 years service between the years 1886 to 1933 with Mr. MacFarlane Davies serving for 30 of these years. During both of the years of 1925 and 1932, Mr. T.S. Waite acted as secretary due to the illness of Mr. MacFarlane Davies. Following the retirement of Mr. C. F. Moon in 1988 the position of Church Secretary for the next six years was shared by Mr. David Corry as Secretary and Mr. Tim Dent as Assistant Secretary for the period 1988-1994.

The Church Treasurer

From the records made available to me, the first reference I can find to the appointment of a Church Treasurer appears to be that of Alderman A Jackson J.P. in 1886, who sadly died in office in his eightieth year in 1925.

Prior to this there were various Treasurers for specific funds who kept their own accounting records.

1886 – 1925	Mr. A. Jackson J.P.
1925 – 1936	Mr. T.S. Waite
1936 – 1947	Mr. A.P. Morton
1947 – 1952	Mr. A. J. Clarke
1952 – 1966	Mr. A.R. Gildersleve
1966 – 1973	Mr. B. Maskell
1973 – 1974	Mr. F.M. Deacon
1974 – 1976	Mr. A. Brook
1976 – 1980	Mr. R. Fulker
1980 – 1984	Mr. J.E. Durant
1984 – to date	Mr. R. Ryton

None of the Treasurers for the period 1973-1980 namely Messrs F.M.Deacon, A.Brook and R. Fulker were serving Deacons and neither was Mr. A.P.Morton between the years of 1941-1947.

Church Trustees

Trustees were appointed to act on behalf of the Church in the administration of its business affairs, particularly in regard to the property owned by the Church. Trustees were normally Deacons of long standing and persons who had held a high office within the Church. Once appointed as Trustee the position was for life or until resignation.

The first record to the appointment of trustees refers to the Northcroft Meeting House and is dated 6th day of September 1770 stating five members were elected from Newbury, viz, Messrs. Nias, Whitewood, Wilkins, Coombes and Horler.

The first written reference to a Trust Document that I have found is in 1933, when it is recorded that the Church found it necessary to appoint new Trustees and that the Solicitors Lucas and Marshall were asked to draw up the trust deed. All of the serving Deacons were appointed as Trustees and also Messrs C.H. Freeman, W.A. Murray, T.H. Flint and H.D. Mayers, the Trust Deed being signed, sealed and witnessed at a Special Church Meeting in September that year.

In November 1957 with the passing of certain of the trustees and removal of others, it was found that only six remained in office. Therefore it was found necessary to appoint new trustees and at a Church meeting on 9th July 1959 the necessary document was signed and witnessed.

In 1980, when the Church first proposed to ask the Baptist Union Corporation to become the trustees of the Church, those trustees still living were required to resign from Office, but two of them, even though they were no longer Church members, refused and therefore the Church will only be able to adopt the Fairbairn Model Trust in its entirety on their demise.

Consequently in 1983, the Church appointed the Baptist Union Corporation as co-trustees with the four surviving private trustees. The trustees were requested to adopt the Baptist Model Trust for chapels and halls and also the Baptist Model Trust for Manses. The trust deeds applicable being the “Fairbairn Trust “ and the “Holborn Trust”.

Those who have held the position of Trustee are:-

A History of Newbury Baptists – Church Officers

Mr. T Nias	1903-1907
Mr. A. Bowdon	1903-1904
Mr. MacFarlane Davies	1903-1934
Mr. J. Miller	1903-1927
Mr. A. Jackson	1903-1925
Mr. T. Waite	1903-1938
Mr. W.A. Murray	1903-1983
Mr. C.H. Freeman	1903-1957
Mr. T. Flint	1903-1959
Mr. H.D. Mayers	1903-1948
Mr. A.P. Morton	1933-1971
Mr. A.H. Hackman	1933-1959
Mr. T.G. Davis	1933-1983
Mrs. Scruton	1933-1960
Mr. W.J. Lewendon	1933-1978
Mr. A.L. Shepherd	1933-1974
Mr. R.J.Terry	1933-1983
Mr. C.F. Moon	1959 to date
Mr. B. Maskell	1959 to date
Mr. H.C. Summersby	1959-1988
Mr. B. Gildersleve	1959-1973
Mr. D.W. Lewendon	1959-1978
Mr. A. Terrett	1959-1975
Mrs M. Titcomb	1959 to date
Mr. W.J. Murray	1973-1983
Mr. J.E. Clements	1977-1983
Mr. R.G. Cooper	1977-1983
Mr. W.P. Howe	1977-1983
Mr. D. Ford	1978-1983

Currently the Baptist Union Corporation is a Corporate Trustee of Newbury Baptist Church with Mr. Brian Maskell, Mr. Cyril Moon and Mrs. Margaret Titcomb. The Trust Deeds being applicable are the “Fairbairn Trust” and “Holborn Trust”.

Deacons

The earliest recorded reference I have found appertaining to Deacons in the Church is recorded by Mr. Lewendon's notes on the History of Newbury Baptist Church, when he writes;

“After Mr. Perry's decease, the Church was also destitute of Deacons, so on Sunday December 14th 1812 a ballot vote was taken resulting in John Elkins and John Sargent being appointed.”

In other cases there is just a passing reference to someone having served for a number of years as a Deacon, but no factual documentation appears to exist until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

It would appear that in the early years the method of electing Deacons was that all Church members were given a list of all Church members and they simply put a cross by the name of the person they wanted to elect. If anyone with a cross against their name was elected or it was based on a number of votes required, or even how many people were elected, I do not know. However, in 1902 it is stated that the number of serving Deacons should be six.

During the period of the First World War 1914-1918, no Deacons elections were held. In 1919 the number of Deacons was temporarily increased to eight when the Church decided to appoint an additional two lady deacons. The first ever being elected were Mrs. Scruton and Miss Langford. The number of Deacons remained at eight for some years after that due to at least three members getting an equal number of votes for only one vacancy. In 1925 it is recorded that the number of Deacons was increased to 10. It seems this practise for electing deacons continued until 1934 when written nominations were required

from then on. In March 1953, instead of holding triennial elections for whole of the diaconate, the Church adopted the method whereby a third of the deacons would be elected each year. In 1964, it is recorded that a ballot was held for the election of Deacons at the Church Annual General Meeting with only those present being able to vote and from 1967 a successful candidate required a two-thirds majority to be elected. During the years of 1973-1976, the number of serving Deacons was reduced to nine and sometime in the late 1970s and early 1980s the diaconate was increased to twelve members. The first time this number was ever achieved was in May 1983 although in later years this figure has rarely been achieved. In 1984, the housebound who regularly received communion were, at the ministers discretion, given the opportunity to vote at the forthcoming Deacons Election if they so desired. As far as I can see this only happened this once.

The names of those known to have served as Deacons, although for what period is unknown, are recorded below with what little other information I have been able to find: -

Mr. J Elkins – Thought to be one of the first ever Deacons appointed in 1812.

Mr. J Sargent - Thought to be one of the first ever Deacons appointed in 1812.

Mr. Alfred George Whittington – Recorded that he died in November 1919, had been a member for 53 years and for some years had done some good service as a Deacon.

In the Church Year Book of 1886 the following are shown as being Deacons :

A History of Newbury Baptists – Church Officers

SAMUEL COXETER Southampton Terraces, Newbury

JAMES J. DAVIES Brook Villa, Newbury

THOS. M. NIAS Cravehurst, Newbury

JAMES TUBB Mount Villa, Newbury

ALFRED JACKSON Ingleside, Newbury

WILLIAM HUGHES 102 Northbrook Street, Newbury

ALFRED G. WHITINGTON Westfields, Newbury

PHILIP E. DAVIES 63 Northbrook Street, Newbury

Those who have served as Deacons and for which the period of time is known from the mid 1800's to the year 2000 are: -

1839-1879	Mr. H Flint
1848-1899	Mr. J.J.Davies
1875-1905	Mr. T M. Nias
1875-1925	Mr. A. Jackson
1875-1891	Mr. P.E. Davies
1899-1901	Mr. W.J. Davies.
1892-1922	Mr. J Miller
1899-1901	Mr. T. Rowles
1899-1905	Mr. A. Bowdon
1899-1902	Mr. Clayton
1902-1934	Mr. MacFarlane Davies J.P.
1902-1939	Mr. T.S. Waite
1905-1912	Mr. H.C. Beer
1905-1912	Mr. Selwyn
1912-1941	Mr. A.P. Morton also 1950-1960

A History of Newbury Baptists – Church Officers

1912-1932	Mr. J. Wyse
1919-1920	Miss. N. Langford
1919-1950	Mrs. M. Scruton
Feb–Nov 1920	Mrs Nias
1921-1928	Miss. K. Read
1923-1925	Mr. C. Lipscombe
1923-1941	Mr. W.J. Lewendon also 1950-1964
1926-1935	Mr. A. Shepherd
1926-1960	Mr. R.J. Terry
1932-1939	Mr. A.H. Hackman also 1941-1952
1929-1933	Mrs. F.E. Tallyn
1932-1965	Mr. T.E. Davis
1935-1938	Mr. A.D. Sutton
1935-1950	Mrs A. Chivers
1935-1950	Mr. C.H. Freeman
1938-1955	Mr. S.F. Macabee also 1960-1966
1938-1960	Mr. R.J. Terry
1938-1941	Mr. R. Putuance
1941-1950	Mr. Batstone
1941-1951	Mr A.H. Hackman
1941-1953	Mr. J. A. Clarke
1941-1950	Mr. F. Sirman
1941-1960	Mr. R.J. Terry
1947-1988	Mr C.F. Moon
1950-1967	Mr. A.R. Gildersleve
Feb/Oct 1950	Mr R.E. Maskell
1950-1964	Mr J.T. Terrett
1950-1964	Mr W.J. Lewendon
1950-1960	Mr A.P. Morton
1952-1957	Miss. D.E. Mayers
1953-1958	Mr. B. Maskell also 1960-1966
1955-1959	Mr. C.T. Plomer
1957-1966	Mr H. C. Summersby
1957-1965	Mr. D.W. Lewendon
1959-1969	Mr. B.D. Gildersleve

A History of Newbury Baptists – Church Officers

Mar-Aug 1960	Mr. H North
1960-1966	Mr. B. Maskell
1960-1966	Mr. S.F. Macabee
1960-1990	Mrs M. Titcomb
1964-1966	Mr. N. Davis
1964-1977	Mr. K.R. Moon
1964-1979	Mr. C.E. Prismal
1966-1972	Mr. R. Hansford
1966-1968	Mr. K.W. Rolfe
1966-1971	Mr N.E. Westall
1967-1985	Mr. R.G. Cooper
1967-1974	Mrs. E.L.F. Harris
1968-1974	Mr K.C. Carter
1969-1979	Mr. W.P. Howe
1971-1973	Mr. C. Scupham and also 1975-1979
1972-1978	Mr. E.E. Smith
1972-1978	Mr. L.J. Cumberland
1973-1999	Mr. T.R. Dent
1974-1985	Mr. J.E. Clements
1974-1976	Mr. J. Kimber
1975-1979	Mr. C. Scupham
1976-1984	Mr. A.J. Payne
1977-1980	Mr. J. Pargeter
1977-1980	Mr. R.W. Boswell
1979-1985	Mr. D. Ford
1979-1984	Mr. J.E. Durrant
1979-1985	Mr. J.R. Winfield
1981-1984	Mrs. M. Deacon
1983-1985	Mr. D. Harmer
1983-1992	Mr. B. Rawlings and also 1993-1996
1983 to date	Mr. R. Ryton
1982-1885	Mrs. J. Browell
1983-1985	Mr. D.Harmer
1985-1997	Mr. C. Tattersall
1985-1995	Mr. C. Warren

A History of Newbury Baptists – Church Officers

1986-1992	Mr. T. Taylor
1987-2000	Mr. D Corry
1987-1990	Mr. M. Phillips
1987-1990	Mrs. C. Winfield and also from 2000
1989-1995	Mr. J. Cullen
1990-1999	Mr. C. Scott
1990-1996	Mrs. B. Thomas
1991- 1993	Mr. T. Hurley and 1996-1999
1993-1996	Mr. B. Rawlings
1993-1999	Mrs. J. Phillips
1993 to date	Mr. N. Freeman
1995-1999	Mr. A. Daley
1996-1999	Mr. T. Hurley
1996-1999	Miss D. Hale
1996 to date	Mr. S. Vardy
1998 to date	Mrs D Cullen
1998 to date	Dr. D Creek
1998 to date	Mr. C. Malcolm
1996-1997	Mrs T. Bullock
1999 to date	Mrs S Corry
1999 to date	Mr. P. Davey
2000 to date	Mrs M. Rule
2000 to date	Mrs C. Winfield
2000 to date	Mr. P. Stirney

Honorary Deacons

It is recorded that in 1899 Mr. J.J. Davies having been connected with the Church since 1848 was made an honorary Deacon of Newbury Baptist Church. He died in 1901.

In 1905, Mr. Nias was made an Honorary Deacon in order to create a vacancy on the diaconate to accommodate Messrs Beer and Selwyn who had tied with equal votes for election to Office.

Senior Deacon

There are several references to a Senior Deacon. I believe this to be a term used to denote seniority in terms of age and service.

Life Deacons

In common with many other Baptist Churches, the position of Life Deacons was established to recognise the service given as a deacon. The appointment being exactly what it implies-a Deacon for life. Those appointed as Life Deacons have been: -

Appointed 1923 Mr. J. Miller died 1927

Appointed Feb. 1932 Mr. J Wyse died Sept 1932

Appointed 1938 Mr. T.S. Waite died 1951

Appointed 1950 Mrs M Scruton died 1960.

In 1960, Life Deacons were replaced by Elders, although at that time there was no one holding the position of Life Deacon.

Elders

Only three people have been appointed as Elders and only two of them Mr. A.P.Morton and Mr. R.J.Terry served as Deacons. In the case of Mr. J.T.Terret, who was appointed in 1964, the Church Secretary in proposing him for this office said “ there was no precedent for an appointment of a person who was not a deacon but he was sure there was none more worthy or suited to hold such an office. Mr. Terret had been a loyal and devoted servant of the church and its village causes for many years and the church would wish to express its appreciation”.

1960 Mr. A.P. Morton

1960 Mr. R.J. Terry

1964 Mr. J.T. Terret

In 1965 the title of Elder was changed to Deacon Emeritus and the Elders being re-designated accordingly.

Deacon Emeritus

In 1965 the position of Deacon Emeritus was established. Those who have been appointed to this position are as follows:-

Appointed 1965 Mr. A.P. Morton died in 1971
Appointed 1965 Mr. J.T. Terret died in 1975
Appointed 1965 Mr. R.J. Terry moved away now deceased
Appointed 1965 Mr. T.E. Davis died in 1968
Appointed 1966 Mr. A.R. Gildersleve died 1970
Appointed 1967 Mr. W.J. Lewendon died
Appointed 1967 Mr. S.F. Maccabee died 1980
Appointed 1985 Mr. R.G. Cooper died in 1990
Appointed 1985 Mr. J.R. Winfield died in 1986
Appointed 1988 Mr. C.R. Moon

A History of Newbury Baptists – Church Officers

Shown below is a photograph of the Deacons taken when Rev. Johnson was the Minister of the Church, circa 1932.



Back Row (left to right): Mr. A. Shepherd, Mr A. Hackman,
Mrs. M. Scruton, Mr. W. Terry, Mr. A.P. Morton.

Front Row (left to right): Mr. W. J. Lewendon, Rev. W.C. Johnson,
Mr. T.S. Waite.

Church Deacons, circa 1932

8. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AND JUNIOR CHURCH

The Sunday School

The fact that Newbury Baptist Church had a sizable Sunday School is demonstrated when in 1930 when the minutes refer to the fact that the Sunday School had outgrown the Northbrook Street premises.

The Sunday School itself consisted of four departments - Beginners, Primary, Juniors and Seniors each with a leader and teachers. Many still remember the annual Sunday School outings and Christmas parties. Each year the Sunday School held a Sunday School Anniversary, usually in May with a specially invited preacher and the scholars taking part in the three services with special singing and recitations. A Sunday School Superintendent was appointed to oversee this work. I have only been able to ascertain such appointments since the late 19th Century. Those occupying this position at Newbury Baptist Church were:

1886-1891	Mr. W. Hughes Jnr.
1891-1899	Mr. W.J. Davies
1899-1902	Mr. A.P. Jackson
1902-1905	Mr. T.S. Waite
1905-1947	Mr. A.P. Morton
1947-1949	Mr. W.E.G. Stone
1949-1952	Mr. K Carter
1952-1958	Mr. R Evans
1958-1960	Mr. & Mrs Williams
1960-1967	Mr & Mrs Carter
1967-1968	Mr. K.W. Rolfe

1968-1977 Mr. A.J. Bowyer
1977-1979 Mr. D. Thompson.

Up until 1979, the Sunday School met in the afternoon and comprised of four departments Beginners, Primary, Junior and Senior. It commenced meeting in the mornings after that date when it amalgamated with the Junior Church. The final afternoon Sunday School was the Harvest Festival on the 30th September of that year. From October 1979 it amalgamated with the Junior Church with the role of Sunday School Superintendent being discontinued.

Sunday School Statistics

No annual figures are available for the very early years. It is a question of finding the numbers stated in minutes or reports relating the work of the Sunday School. However in 1915 the records state that the Sunday School showed a loss of 30 scholars but in 1920 the numbers had increased by a third. In 1922 the expanding work was being hindered by the size of the premises and in 1927 the accommodation is stated to be inadequate for the work One thing is certain that in the late 1950's Newbury Baptist Church had a very large Sunday School, but it common with other churches, the numbers have sadly declined over the past 30 years.

YEAR	NUMBERS	REMARKS
1886	208	
1932	218	Plus 42 Teachers
----- No figures available for 1933 – 1955 -----		
1956	155	
1957	240	
1958	225	
1959	230	
1960	244	
1961	235	
1962	227	
1963	237	
1971	150	

The Junior Church

In November 1960, it was agreed to give Junior Church a three month trial period. In 1961 the leaders Mr. and Mrs. G. Dark reported to the Church that it was a success with an average attendance of 10 and the crèche being a great help to parents. In 1979 when the Sunday School ceased to meet in the afternoons it amalgamated with the Junior Church. Members of the Junior Church attend the first part of the morning service before going out for their own lessons except for the monthly parade service when they stay in for the whole of the service.

Leaders of the Junior Church

1960-1961	Mr. & Mrs. G. Dark
1961-1962	Mrs. A Barton
1962-1964	Mr. & Mrs Williams

A History of Newbury Baptists – The Sunday School and Junior Church

1964-1965	Miss W Roberts/Miss B Godsack
1965-1975	Mrs. Fuller
1975-1980	Mr. J. Durrant
1980-1982	Mrs. V. Stevens
1982-1986	Mrs. J. Creek (Co-ordinator)
1986-1994	Mrs. P Dent
1997-1998	Mrs. Juanita Brown
1999-	Mrs A Davey

Junior Church Statistics

YEAR	NUMBERS	REMARKS
1960	10	
----- No figures available for 1961 - 1991 ----- Amalgamated with Sunday School in 1979		
1992	60	
1997	58	

9. THE BRIGADES

The 1st Newbury Girls Brigade

The Girls Brigade movement was founded in 1894. The 1st Newbury Girls Brigade Company was formed 35 years later at Newbury Baptist Church in 1929 by Miss May Jones who died in 1961 following a road traffic accident. It was originally called the Girls' Life Brigade but changed its name in 1965. It has as its motto " Seek, Serve and follow Christ" and the Newbury Baptist Church has always had a strong and successful Company. In 1994, in celebration of the Brigades Centenary the Newbury Company planted rose bushes in the Church forecourt.

Captains of the Company have been

Miss. May Jones	1929-1936
Miss D Smith	1937-1955
Mrs. T. E. Davis	1956-1966
Mrs. A. Stevens	1966-1971
Mrs. E. L .F. Harris	1971-1974
Mrs J Luxford	March to August 1974
Mrs. Rita Smart	1974-1985
Mrs. Angela Robinson	1985 to date

The 1st Newbury Boys' Brigade

The Boys Brigade was founded in 1883 and it was nearly 50 years before a Company was established at Newbury Baptist Church, although in 1910 Mr. Gale first raised the question of starting a Company, but the idea was dropped in favour of the Sunday Schools wish to form a Boys Legion. The first Company known as 2nd Newbury was formed in 1932 under the leadership of Mr. Hugh Townsend but was closed down in 1940 due to the officers being called for service in the Second World War.

Then in 1952, Mr. Cyril Moon with the Rev. Whiting re-started a Company but I cannot find any official documentation to confirm this or for how long.

In 1969, a Mr. Carr attempted to revive it without success. It was not until 1976 that it was restarted by Mr. Michael Gurr and has continued until the present day.

The motto of the Boys Brigade is “Sure and Steadfast” with the object “The advancement of Christ’s Kingdom among Boys and the promotion of the habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness”.

Captains of the Company have been

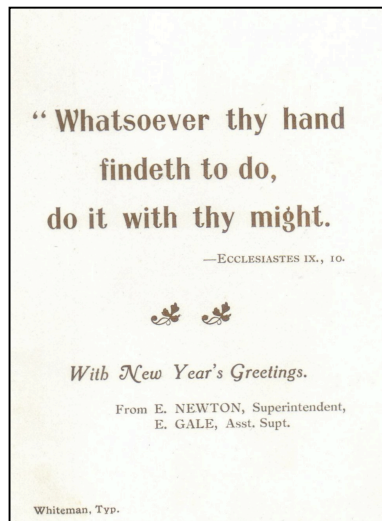
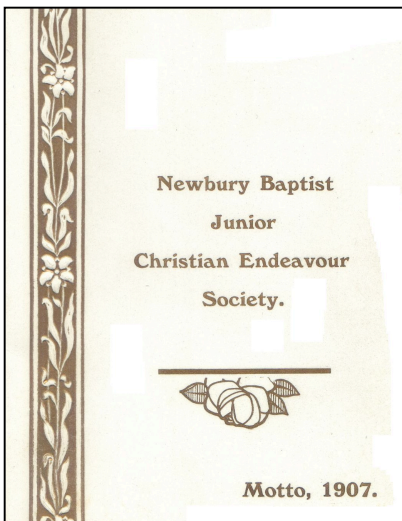
Mr. H Townsend	1932-1940
Mr. C Moon	1952-1955 ²
Mr. Michael Gurr	1976-1981
Mr. Brian Winslade	1981-1982
Mr. Norman Moon	1982-1994
Mr. R Vogel	1994 to date

² There is some uncertainty regarding this period of time. It is however, a fact that Mr. Cyril Moon had to relinquish the role of Captain after a year because of his duties as Church Secretary and Rev Whiting carried it on, although he could not be appointed as Captain, but for how long the Company continued is not really known.

10. CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR SOCIETY

I have included a section on the Christian Endeavour as it was a Society that has very fond memories for many people, not least of all, the writer, who in 1966 met his wife at a Christian Endeavour Holiday Home.

I have been unable to ascertain when a branch of the Society was first founded at Newbury Baptist Church but it was most certainly in existence at the end of the 19th Century. A minute in the Record of Church Meetings records that at the commencement of 1903, the day of the week-day service was changed to Thursday evening from Wednesday evening with the Christian Endeavour Meetings moving to Tuesday evenings. The motto card for 1907 reproduced below shows Mr. E Newton as Superintendent and Mr. E Gale as Assistant Superintendent.



Christian Endeavour Motto Card

In 1917, at the instigation of the pastor Rev. C.W. Pike, it was replaced by a group called the Young Peoples League, also known as the Young Peoples Fellowship. It would appear that this group ceased to exist in about 1934 when the Christian Endeavour Society started again but only until 1939.

On June 9th 1933, one of the Church Lady Deacons, Mrs. Tallyn died and it is recorded that she rendered useful service in the Sunday School, Christian Endeavour Society and Young Peoples Fellowship.

In August 1935 the obituary for Mr. William Clare Gale states that his interest in young peoples work especially the Christian Endeavour Society was very keen.

In 1954 plans were made in an attempt to resuscitate it and in early 1955 the General Secretary of the Society the Rev. Andrew Wright visited Newbury to speak about it, but nothing appears to have materialised due to a lack of leaders.

11. READY SALTED THEATRE COMPANY

This was founded in 1991 and since then has performed the following productions: -

1992	The Acts of Ludicrus
1993	Drama in the park
1994	The Coca-Cola Challenge
1995	Ludicrus Returns
1995	Stable Beginnings
1996	The Calvary Incident
1996	Olympic Series
1996/7	Angels At Large
1998	Flatmates: (The One With The Kiss)
1998	The First Miracle
1999	Flatmates: (The One Where Beckham Gets Sent Off)
2001	The Man With The Goldleaf Bible
2002	Walk The Talk

12. MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

The following table has been included in this book in order to give an indication of the size of the Church membership over the years. From the early records and writings I have been able to obtain an indication of the size of membership for certain periods only. What is more surprising is that even for the later years these figures were not easily ascertainable as it appears to be have been the practise not to record the annual statistics every year. From 1900 I have only recorded the figures for every ten years and every five years from 1970.

YEAR	MEMBERSHIP	REMARKS
1640	6	T. Merriman's House
1670	20	Home of Jabez Hill
1700	50	Northcroft Lane
1721	100	
1780	51	Fellowship split for a time
1860	150	Northbrook Street
1885	209	
1900	248	
1910	230	
1920	250	11 members on active service in 1918
1930	237	
1940	233	St Mary Hill
1950	162	
1960	172	
1970	176	
1975	194	
1980	235	
1985	205	30 members transferred Thatcham
1990	219	
1995	241	
1999	233	Active members stated as 180

The History of Newbury Baptist Church – Membership Statistics

I cannot account for the loss of 70 members in 1950 but would surmise that it may have had something to do with the ending of the Second World War and movement of people away from Newbury. The records refer to the fact that only active members were recorded in the statistics for that period.

13. THE VILLAGE CHAPELS

Introduction

The earliest reference to evangelistic work in the country districts is contained in the minutes of a meeting held on 2nd February 1815 which reads :-

“Our brother John Sargent has been led, and it is hoped by providence to speak with acceptance several times in the villages from portions of Scripture”.

It was then unanimously resolved “that our Brother be requested to speak from a portion of God’s Word before the Church for the approbation of the Brethren with a view to the continuance of this good work, and its more frequent exercise”

After hearing Mr. Sargent speak at several services the Church unanimously agreed, “that we do encourage him to continue to spread the name of Christ wherever God shall give him opportunity”.

Mr. Sargent joined the Church in 1811, was elected a deacon and for 27 years consistently served the Baptist cause in Newbury and the surrounding area until he died in 1838.

Other preachers were appointed in the year 1828 when it is recorded that “within the last year the number of labourers in the villages having been diminished, Messrs. B Long, H Flint and W Ruddy supplied the lack, their efforts being acceptable”.

In 1948 Mr. Roy Harrington undertook duties in regard to village Churches pending his entry into Spurgeons College as a

means of preliminary training until 1950 when he was directed by the college to commence pastoral work in the Isle of Scilly.

During the month of March 1952, the president of the Berkshire Baptist Association accepted an invitation to speak at a Rally of Village Churches held at Newbury. Following this, in 1953, a Council of representatives of the four village Churches was formed, comprising of the Pastor of Newbury Baptist Church and the four Superintendents of the village churches.

The village Chapels were not independent bodies - they came under the auspicious of Newbury Baptist Church.

Berries Bank



This picture was drawn by Mr Tony Redstall in the summer of 1970

The first Chapel to be built was at Berries Bank. A cottage occupied by Jacob Gore had been licensed for preaching at the beginning of 1822. In May of the following year the Pastor Rev. Welsh reported, “that the cottage was too small both for the people who met for public worship and the children who came to be instructed”. It was further stated that as the Rev. Thomas Durrant, Pastor of the Independent Chapel of Poole was the proprietor of land near the spot he was written to. The following is an extract of his reply “My Dear Sir, You are at perfect liberty to have as much land as you want without money or without price”. Having received such a generous offer it is rather surprising that the Church Officers of that time used so little of the land offered to construct the new Chapel.

Having started a subscription list towards the cost of the building, the work was soon started and the Chapel was built in under six weeks under the care of Mr. John Sargent and Mr. John Brown. On the 13th June 1823 at 6p.m. the Chapel was opened with Mr. John Sargent reading the scriptures. Prayers were then led by Mr. Hopkins, an independent minister from Essex, with the Rev. Thomas Welch, pastor of Newbury Baptist Church and Mr. Dryland, an independent Minister of Newbury, preaching. It is of interest to note the prominent part that Congregational Ministers, formerly Independents, have played in the life of the Chapel.

In 1850 the work started by Mr. John Sargant and Mr. Samuel Coxeter was taken over by Mr. James Freeman when they gave up. Then in 1885 Mr. John Wyse became leader of the small community.

In 1891 the building was enlarged with the roof being made higher and the building extended some six feet in length.

In 1910 Mr. Lipscomb became superintendent of the Chapel when Mr. John Wyse gave up the leadership.

On 13th June 1923 the Chapel celebrated its Centenary with a service in the afternoon and a public meeting at night presided over by Mr. George Griffen with addresses being given by Rev. C W Pike and Rev. Pitt Bonarjee, a congregational minister from Reading.

In September 1932, a former Superintendent of Berries Bank, Mr. J Wyse died.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, an air base was established on Greenham Common, which split the district in two and meant a number of members of the congregation making a detour of two and a half miles to reach the chapel. This and other wartime conditions meant that few if any services were held at the Church during the war years.

In 1948 repairs to the roof and interior decoration were sanctioned and in 1949 the chimney stack was found to be unsafe, cracks appeared in the walls and the school room ceiling was found to be coming down the repairs of which cost £100. .

In February 1951, Mr. Alan Royston was appointed Superintendent of the Sunday School and in September that year succeeded Mr. A.H. Hackman as Chapel Superintendent.

In October 1953, with no likelihood of any further domestic development in the area and the U.S. Force now in full control of Greenham Common resulting in a very small number attending services, it was decided to proceed with the closure and sale of the Church. However it was not until April 1955, when no services had been held for the preceding six months, that it was agreed it should close completely in November of

that year, although commencing in July 1956 services were held in the Church on the third Sunday of each month. The Church was finally sold for £200 in May 1957 when all distinguishing marks were removed from the building. The new owner used it as a store for surplus supply goods. The building was eventually demolished in 1970.

The following is an extract of an article about Berries Bank Chapel which appeared in the August 1971 Newbury Baptist Chronicle:

“Mr. A. P. Morton passed away in February of this year but he told the writer that he remembered Mr. & Mr. Ernie Cook who lived in the Folly (off Pyle Hill) and that Mr. Cook was at the organ there for years and that he was a good player. Another was Mr. Luxton who was the father in law of Mr. Titcomb senior. Also Mr. & Mrs E Barlow when living at Berries Bank were faithful supporters of the Chapel.

Mr. Morton’s acquaintance with Berries Bank was through Mr. Dowling who lived next door to him. Mr. Dowling had formally lived on Greenham Common, but had moved down into Newbury, but still supported the Chapel, and took the young man up with him often. There was also a Mr. Adams who lived at Pigeon’s farm, of which Mr. Baxendale was the Squire. Another one was Mr. John Wyse, who was a foreman at Plenty’s Engineering works. He lived in Howard Road, but spent his Sundays at Berries Bank It is gratefully and confidently asserted that without the valiant labours of John Wyse, the Chapel would not have been the going concern it was. He spent his Tuesday afternoons off in visiting the families on the common.

Another family to be remembered was the family of Bew. They lived on the common too, and there were some four fine sons and some daughters. Several sons were killed in the first world war and their names are commemorated on the memorial tablet in Newbury Baptist Church. They were Arthur Bew, Frederick Bew, and Leonard Bew. Only Leonard Bew came back from the war, and was most useful to the Chapel, he playfully called himself a “Deacon” of Berries Bank and didn’t mind what he did for the chapel. Miss Edith Bew was the eldest child of the family, and was also a very active worker and was for a long time the leader of the Sunday morning school.

In those days, of course, Berries Bank, as a part of Greenham Common, was a lovely open space with clumps of trees, gorse, broom and heather, a riot of colour in the season. It was a very popular place for recreation from Newbury. During the First World War, it was used by different regiments for practising and as a rifle range. Mr. Morton remembers going up there early one morning to watch six different regiments in all their colour, with bands playing, arrive and depart.

The services on Sunday began with morning school, and this was followed by afternoon worship, and then again worship in the evening. Some of the afternoon congregation which included often a few Newbury people, stayed on for the evening service, and were then provided with tea, which on a summer Sunday afternoon was very pleasantly taken on the common. About six families took it in turns to provide the teas.

The services were supplied by a band of preachers from Newbury, and there was always a plentiful supply, as the Northbrook street church was a strong one. Although

Berries Bank was the first venture of the Newbury church in outreach, other villages became involved, for the thriving church in Newbury had to have an outlet for enthusiastic and talented young men and women. In the course of time, Headley, Long Lane, and Ashmore Green with Berries Bank were all operating successfully, the work being carried on with a preaching plan of young men from the town church.

In later times Roy Herrington (now Pastor at Green lane Independent Evangelical Mission at Thatcham), preached one of his earliest sermons at Berries bank, taken up by Mr. Hackman another famous name connected with the chapel.

The common was a popular place for outings, and as by no means all the young people of that day had bicycles, some walked and all met at the chapel for tea, and possibly some sort of rally afterwards.

Mr. Charles Lipscomb, now living at Craven Road, remembers that Mr. Morton preached his first sermon at seventeen years of age and it was about the five wise and five foolish women awaiting the wedding reception. Charles Lipscomb was already an acceptable young preacher, and having gone the circuit of the Baptist chapels and many others besides, when Mr. John Wyse found the work more than his advancing age could carry, so he asked Charlie Lipscomb, a young unmarried man, if he would take charge of the work at Berries Bank.

At this juncture John Wyse gave his support to Northbrook Street and became a deacon. Charlie Lipscomb and Will Lewendon being elected deacons of Newbury Church in 1923, the former representing the

village churches and the latter the Newbury Sunday School.

An outstanding preacher Charlie Lipscomb took for his text on John Wyse's last Sunday "...and John, departing, returned to Jerusalem." The text so apt, that it has never been forgotten!

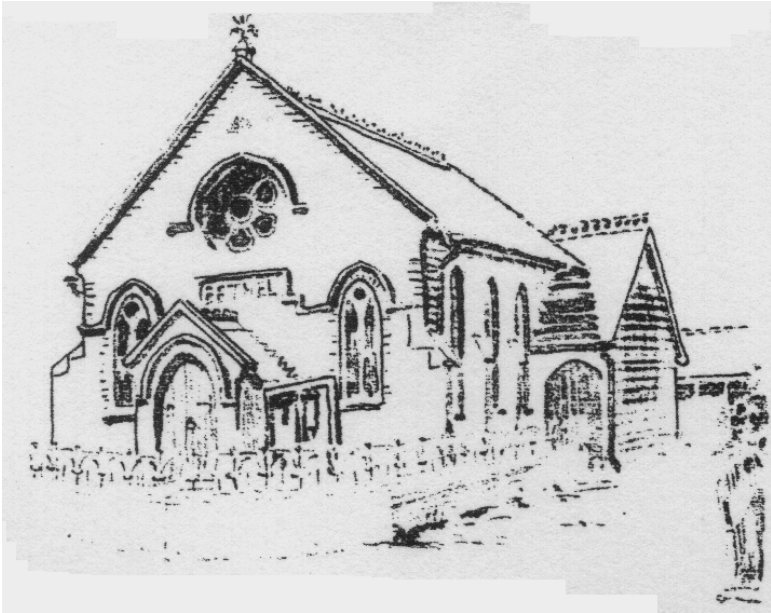
About this time Mr. Cook, who had been organist for many years, also felt that it was time to give up, so one of the first tasks young Lipscomb had was to find an organist. He heard that they had several at Headley, so off he went to steal one for Berries Bank (those were the days!) but found that, although they had several there, only one possessed a bicycle. This proved to be Miss Foster who agreed to come one Sunday evening to see what she could make of it. She certainly impressed several, including the young Lipscomb, who after the service, thought the least he could do for her services was to accompany her home the fair distance to Ashford Hill.

The rest was bound to follow! Eventually she became his wife, and they continued many years together in happy service at Berries Bank until 1925 when Charles Lipscomb was called to the assistant pastorate at Abingdon. His place at Berries Bank was taken by Mr. Richardson".

Within this article it states that a Leonard Bew was one of those killed during the First World War but then goes on to state that only Leonard Bew came back from the War. I know for a fact that a Leonard Bew was killed in the War. I assume that there were two brothers both called Leonard one returned and one did not.

There also seems to be some confusion as to the spelling of Berries Bank. The current road was named Burys Bank Road in 1960 taking its name from the series of banks running north-south across the Northern part of Greenham Common. They were part of an ancient earthwork and are believed to have been a settlement boundary of an early British tribe. It is possible that the early spelling of this part of Greenham may have been recorded as “berries bank” or as some believe was so called at that time because of the numbers (banks) of bushes bearing berries found in the area.

Long Lane



Long Lane Chapel drawn by Charles Stanley

About 1813 preaching services and a Sunday School were started at the house of Mr. Pocock. As the numbers increased the accommodation was found to be insufficient.

Early in 1833 Mr. Pocock gave a piece of on which to build a place of worship. In that same year, on July 4th, the sum of £60 was reported to have been raised at Long lane towards the cost of the building. The Chapel was built and opened on 2nd August 1833, the preachers being the Pastor Rev. Welsh and Mr. Hinton of Reading.

After sixty years the building was found to be in need of considerable repair and had also become too small for the large congregation. Early in 1894 plans were made to rebuild it - the prime mover in this being Mr. W Brain who was then the Station Master at Hermitage station. He lived in Hermitage but later moved to Newbury. A report in the Newbury Weekly News dated 29th March 1894 contained the following announcement “Lord Wantage, through his agent Col. Colebrook Carter has intimated his willingness to present a piece of land some three-quarters of an acre adjoining the railway for the purpose of erecting a new Chapel. His Lordship has also allowed the option of exchanging the land for a more suitable piece if such should be forthcoming”.

On August 30th 1894, the old building was closed and the present Chapel constructed at a cost of £400 by Messrs Arthur Chivers of Newbury, the architect being Mr. W.G. Bell. It is recalled that one of the friends closely interested in this project was Mr. George Palmer of Messrs Huntley and Palmer the biscuit manufacturers of Reading.

In the wall of the present building there is a stone inserted which reads: -

THIS STONE WAS LAID BY
G. POCOCK
IN MEMORY OF HIS FATHER
WHO GAVE THE FIRST CHAPEL SITE

On 16th May 1904, Mr. Maskell, a Lay Preacher who was very much involved in the work at Long Lane, died. He had joined the Church in 1889.

On Sunday 10th September 1913, the Church was re-opened after re-decoration, the preacher on that occasion being the Rev. E Smith of Wokingham.

On 17th September 1920 Mr. George Baston died. He had been a staunch worker at Long Lane for 29 years.

In 1926, Mr. H New succeeded Mr Franklin as Superintendent and in August of that year the Chapel had a communion table designed by Mr. Lloyd Godfrey and built in fumed Austrian oak by Messrs Elliots of Newbury as a memorial to those of the fellowship killed during the 1914-18 War. The table bears a brass plate, which reads: -

“Given in loving memory of those of our fellowship who in the Great War 1914-1918 died for us and in fervent thankfulness to God for those restored to us and for peace”.

“Armistice signed Nov.11th 1918”

“Peace declared June 28th 1919”

The table was unveiled by Rev. C.V. Pike and in the afternoon service the Rev. John Stay of Thatcham preached followed by a public tea with an evening meeting under the chairmanship of Rev. C.V. Pike. Addresses were given by Rev. John Stay and Messrs. A.H. Reid and C. Lipscombe.

In 1933 the Chapel held their Centenary celebrations and in 1952 Mr.George Pocock, a member of the Newbury Baptist

Church for 62 years, was presented with a fountain pen in appreciation of his service to the Long Lane Chapel.

In 1955, it is recorded that a van belonging to the Reading Co-operative Society skidded on the ice and demolished part of the front wall of the Chapel. This was repaired at the Co-operative Society's expense but caused much consternation as the Contractor employed to carry out this work did it on a Sunday.

In 1956, there was a problem with an owner of an adjacent property to the Church wishing to build a boundary wall, which was not resolved until 1959 when an agreement was reached between all parties concerned.

Mr.W.J. Lewendon relinquished the position of Superintendent after 14 years service in March 1959 and a rota of helpers was drawn up to assist in this work until Mr. Pocock took over.

In 1961, it is recorded that help was requested with the Sunday School which numbered 37 scholars aged between 11 and 16 years.

Although the pioneers of this building had the faith and foresight to put in a baptistry, it was not used until 1965 as, until then, to do so would have meant carrying buckets of water from a nearby well and there was also no means of heating the water. Believers who wished to confess their faith would, up to that time, have been baptised at the Newbury Baptist Church. On 7th March 1965, five persons in the village who wished to be Baptised by immersion were baptised by the Rev. R.F. Mitchell and the event aroused much interest - a picture even appearing on Southern television. That year was also the year of the first wedding in the Chapel. The building was licensed just in time for the wedding on 23rd October 1965.

In 1969 the premises were found to be badly in need of improvements and since no future work was now envisaged at Ashmore Green, the Church having been condemned in 1960, it was agreed that from their Building Fund, which stood at £500 the sum of £400 should be used for Long Lane improvements.

In 1972, Mr. J Pocock was presented with a leather bound copy of the New English Bible by the Newbury Church in recognition of his long service at Long Lane.

In 1977, the Rev. Mitchell purchased two cottages behind Long Lane Chapel, which had suddenly come on the market, for £7200. Access to them was by the driveway adjacent to the Church and partly owned by the Church. The Church consequently sold the land that the cottages stood on, but they did not require, to the garage owner next door and also purchased a strip of land behind the Church. The land retained enabled them to widen the driveway to the church by sixteen feet.

In 1983, the chapel celebrated its 150th Anniversary with a special service led by Rev. G Overton with the Area Superintendent preaching. Guests of honour included Mrs Mitchell, wife of former minister Rev. Mitchell and Miss M Morton, daughter of the late Mr. A.P. Morton.

In April 1985, a bequest was used to erect new gates at Long Lane Chapel in memory of Miss Daisy Mayers and in 1986 the Church required underpinning at a cost of £3000.

In 1987, there is a report of a fire causing damage at the Church resulting in an Insurance claim but nothing further is stated.

In February, 1988 Mr. John Pocock retired as Secretary of Long Lane after many years service, and no successor could be found. It is recorded that there were only nineteen members and friends attending the Church services of which eighteen were over 60 and sixteen required transport. In March that year the Sunday School superintendent, Mrs. Edith Fuller also resigned and as the Sunday School only had sixteen scholars of which eleven had to be collected from the army camp at Hermitage, it was agreed that it would close at Easter.

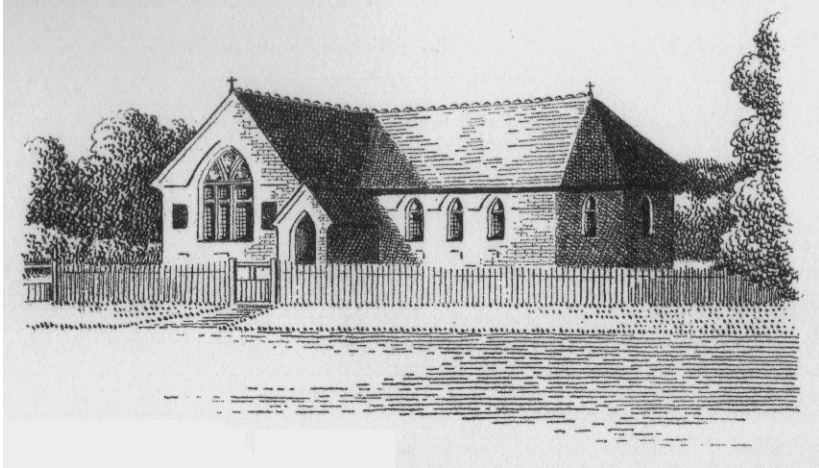
In November 1988, a preaching team was established for the work at Long Lane comprising of Tim Taylor, Andy Wilson Liz Lewin and James Whysall, who also assisted with pastoral work there.

In 1996, a memorial service conducted by the Rev. Grenville Overton was held at the Church for the Rev. R Mitchell who died that year and a plaque was dedicated to his memory.

Newtown

In September 1834 a small place of worship was erected at Newton about which little is recorded. It was in use for some years, being closed and eventually sold in 1870 due to failing attendance. It was then demolished and its location is therefore unknown.

Headley



Headley Chapel

The first reference to Headley states that “Our friend James Andrews had laboured for the Lord on Headley Common and many had been aroused to assemble for the worship of God”. This good man, owing to a speech impediment, had been requested to discontinue preaching from the village pulpits. His cottage meetings increased to such an extent that a tent was erected nearby. Later, when he left the district, the Newbury Church took over the work and Mr. Gale, a member of Newbury gave a piece of land on which to build a chapel and in the Autumn of 1838, the Rev. Welsh opened a building for public worship.

In 1890, the Headley Chapel was found to be in a serious state when the roof was in danger of collapsing. In 1899 it was

agreed that a new Chapel should be built and a building fund was started.

In May 1915, Miss Selby died having been associated with the Church for 42 years and in 1923 the Church suffered a severe loss when Mr. A. Aldridge died following an accident.

It was not until 1924, when, during the Rev. C.V. Pike's pastorate, a former scholar of the Headley Sunday School gave a generous gift to encourage the start of a new Church building, that a building Committee was formed with Rev. Pike as Chairman and Mr. Arnold Shepherd as Secretary and Alderman Alfred Jackson J.P. as Treasurer. In September that year at a service conducted by the Rev. T Bates, Primitive Methodist Minister of Newbury, the Rev. C.W. Pike laid the foundation stone for the New Church Building. Other stones were laid by Alderman Edward Jackson J.P. of Reading, Alderman W.P. Reavell J.P. of Windsor and Mrs. W.G. Brown on behalf of Mr. James Brown. Each stone layer was presented with a silver trowel with an ivory handle. Fourteen smaller stones were then laid and over £800 was raised towards the building fund. It is stated in the records at that time that the average attendance at the Church was 36.

In February 1925, the building of the new Church and Schoolroom was completed at a cost of £1200. The Architect was Mr. Walter H Bell of Newbury and the builder Mr. Edwin Waite of North End, Woodhay. Memorials to the memory of Mr. W. Selby and Mr. Vince both loyal supporters of the Church were placed inside the new building.

The new building was opened on Wednesday 25th February 1925. The opening ceremony was performed by Mr. J.J. Goldsmith, the Chairman of the London Chamber of Commerce to whom was presented an engraved key by Alderman Alfred

Jackson J.P. of Newbury. There was standing room only for the service in the Church, which was conducted by Rev. A.H. Fowler M.A. with the sermon being preached by Rev. Alexander Corbet of Wycliffe Baptist Church, Reading, the president of the Berkshire Baptist Association. Some 200 people attended the tea which followed and at the evening service the speakers were the Rev. C.W. Pike of Newbury Baptist Church, The Rev. W. St John de la Bere, Vicar of Kingsclere, Mr. Goldsmith of Croydon and the Rev. E Grainger and Rev. F. Noad

During 1925, Mr Lipscombe left the Headley Chapel to take on the oversight of the work at a Chapel in Abingdon and Mr. Richardson took over from him.

In 1927, a memorial tablet was unveiled in the Church to the late Mr. Vince at a service attended by fifty people.

In 1935, it is recorded that the new Church debt had been liquidated and Mr. Arthur Edward Flint the Superintendent died. He was laid to rest within the grounds of the Church with his wife, who had died a few days before him.

In March 1936, the centenary services were well attended and taking part on the Wednesday were two former Pastors Rev. C.V. Pike and Rev. W.C. Johnson together with the present Minister the Rev. A.J. Stanton.

In December 1949, the Headley village school was granted use of the School Room to perform a nativity play.

In February 1951, permission was given to carry out repairs and decoration to the Church.

In 1954, a Miss Brenda Dyer moved from Essex to Newbury and soon became a very active addition to the work of the Headley Sunday School. That same year, due to an increased congregation, necessary improvements were made to the sanitation.

In October 1955 the Church obtained a licence in order that marriages might be conducted. That same year permission was granted for the schoolroom to be used for an old folks tea.

It is recorded that in 1956 persistent breaking of the glass in the windows at Headley by vandals caused much aggravation. That same year Headley W.I were granted use of the Church hall for play rehearsals until Christmas.

In 1957 a new organ was purchased for the Church from Messrs Duckson and Pinker of Bath made by Mason and Hamlin. It was handsomely finished in walnut and had a depth and refinement of tone. It was consecrated by the Rev. Chas W. Johnson on 22nd September 1957, prior to the harvest festival service.

In 1958 a water supply was installed to the chapel at cost of £54 and at the beginning of 1959, Mr. Brain Maskell resigned as Superintendent after 8 years of service, cycling the five mile journey each Sunday in all weathers. He was replaced by Mr. E Barton, who continued in that position until 1960 when he was appointed to a position at Regents Park College. Mr. A Gillman took over from him.

In 1959, on the Whit Monday, the Church acted as hosts to a party of old folk from West Ham Central Mission.

In 1962, Mr. Reg. Knight took over as the Superintendent of the Headley Church. In 1964, Miss Brenda Dyer and Mr Reg Knight were married and both of them continued to give

faithful service to the work at Headley, Mr. Reg Knight until his death in 1998 and Mrs. Knight to this present day. In June 1964, it is recorded that the Church only had three or four regular worshipers and in September Mr. & Mrs Prismall started to assist with the work. They met with little success in trying to revive the work and asked to be relieved of this duty after a year.

In March 1966, the Church was again faced with the threat of closure, as it was only supported by two people from the village, Mr. & Mrs Reg Knight. They managed to maintain the work there despite losing the services of Mr. Derek Trivett who walked out of Young Peoples work in 1969, forcing the Youth Club to close. In 1969, a Ladies meeting was started and still meets on the second and fourth Monday of the month. In 1970, it is recorded that the Sunday School was in a most healthy position, although some form of pastoral oversight was needed.

On May 10th 1970, the Rev. C Walter Fulbrook, a former Church member, conducted the Anniversary there with the Sunday School Scholars who now numbered 18 taking part.

In 1972, due to a serious decline in attendance, the Church was only able to hold one service on the first and third Sunday of each month, and during that year Mr. Reg Knight was presented with a leather bound copy of the New English Bible by the Newbury Church in recognition of his long service at Headley.

By 1977, things seemed to be picking up again and the Church was granted permission for an extension costing £3200 which included a new kitchen and toilet block. In April of that year they celebrated their 138th Church Anniversary with the Rev. G Coming B.D. as guest preacher.

In 1980, Mr. Tim Taylor took on the pastoral oversight at Headley although a note in records states that Headley refused to accept the concept of a Lay Pastor.

In 1982, it is recorded that the work at Headley was now in decline and in October that year the Southern Baptist Convention, led by the Rev. Alf T. Revell, who were a group of Southern American Baptists from Greenham Common Air Base were granted permission to use the Chapel on Sundays for a Sunday School and worship and also on Wednesdays for Bible Study. In February 1984 this work showed most encouraging signs and it was agreed that Newbury Church develop integration and constitutional links with this group now known as Emmanuel Church, resulting in the formation of a Headley committee in June that year.

In September 1985, bulletproof glass was installed at Headley to combat vandalism the same year as the church was solemnised for marriages. A number of alterations and improvements were also made to the Church at the request of Emmanuel Church.

At the beginning of the year 1988, the Emmanuel Church ceased using the Headley Chapel as they moved to Bishop Green Hall and the decision was taken that the work of Newbury Baptist Church at Headley would cease by the 31st December 1988.

On Saturday 4th June 1988, the Church celebrated their 150th Anniversary, when the Rev. R Mitchell B.D. presided over an informal evening and on the Sunday, a service of thanksgiving was conducted by Rev. Grenville Overton J.P. M.Phil with Rev. Dr. J.E.Morgan-Wynne M.A. B.D. Ph.D of Bristol Baptist College preaching the sermon.

At the end of the year 1988 the Headley Chapel was closed although discussions took place with the Emmanuel Church regarding the possibility of them leasing the premises. These came to nothing when, in June 1989, it was found that they were using premises at R.A.F.Welford and were no longer interested in the Headley Chapel.

Various options were now considered for the Headley site but before any thing was decided in June 1991 an approach was received from the Ashford Hill and Headley Parochial Church Council who wished to expand their Youth Work and as a first step wanted to lease the premises during the summer months. In September 1991 the Headley Church was let to the Anglicans for their youth work and in October 1991 it is recorded that Mr. Reg Knights group used the Chapel for a Sunday Service. At the end of the year it is reported that the Youth Club had over 80 people attending.

In February 1992 the presentation key from the opening of the Headley Church in 1925, given to Mr. J.J. Goldsmith of Croydon, who performed the opening ceremony, was kindly returned to the Newbury Church by his grandson for safekeeping. In July 1992 an agreement was reached regarding the future management of the Chapel with a management committee being formed, comprising of representatives of Newbury Baptist Church, Headley and District Youth Club and Headley Baptist Fellowship thereby still maintaining a witness in this community.

In 1998 Mr. Reg. Knight died aged 78 years old after giving more than 35 years loyal and devoted service to the Chapel. A plaque to his memory was placed in the Chapel.

Ashmore Green



Ashmore Green Chapel

For about eleven years meetings were held in the cottage of a Mrs. Willoughby. Mr. Clayton and other friends conducted these meetings and also collected money for a place of worship, which was erected in 1866. Three years later the Church was put in the trust of the Newbury Church who regularly supplied them with preachers.

In April 1909, Mr. Alfred Pocock died after a short illness having been associated with the Chapel since 1868.

A History of Newbury Baptists – The Village Chapels

In October 1913, Mrs Susan Evans died having been a member since 1857 and must have been one of the founding members of the Chapel.

On 30th December 1918, the Rev. H Clarke a great worker at Ashmore Green Chapel died.

In March 1919, in memory of those who served in the War the Chapel purchased a new organ and were also given a communion goblet no longer used by Newbury Baptist Church for use in Communion services. In May of that year a service was held when a memorial tablet to those fallen in the war was unveiled and the new organ was dedicated by the Rev. C.V. Pike who was presented with a framed testimonial. A tea followed for all returned soldiers in the district and then a service, presided over by Reginald Dyke Ackland K.C.

In 1921, a weeks mission resulted in a large increase in the number of Sunday School scholars necessitating the building of a new school room which was opened in 1923 with the Rev. C.H. Fowler preaching in the afternoon and Rev. J Stay of Thatcham in the evening.

In 1927, the Chapel celebrated its Golden Jubilee the same year as one of its members, Mrs J Fanklin, died. Her memorial service was conducted by Mr. A.P.Morton.

In 1949, urgent repairs were needed to the building costing £160.and at the end of 1954 external painting of the Church was sanctioned at a cost of £32.

In September 1956, Miss D Mayers, the Superintendent of Ashmore Green, announced she was leaving the District thus ending a 60 year connection of the Mayers family with the Church. Miss Daisy Mayers served the Church for forty years as Organist and was also said to be an acceptable speaker and

local preacher. Mr. WL Herman succeeded her as Superintendent in April 1957.

In 1959, the church was found to be unsafe when large cracks appeared in the walls and at the beginning of 1960 services were no longer being held in the Chapel due to the state of the building and fact that it's position did not warrant any money being spent on it.

In 1962, with no hope of restoring the chapel, it was sold for £250 to Mr. A Piper, a local builder, who used it for storage purposes.

The Ashmore Green weekly Sunday School and monthly women's fellowship was maintained by meetings in peoples homes and a Sunday service was held jointly with Long Lane. During 1963, it was proposed to purchase a cottage and land at Ashmore Green with the intention of demolishing the cottage to build a new Chapel but when planning permission could not be obtained, the plans were dropped.

In 1964, the fellowship at Ashmore Green declined to move to Thatcham where they had been offered the former Brethren Hall.

In October 1966 with no hope of a new building at Ashmore Green, the small number that remained joined the Long Lane fellowship.

Today the Chapel has been completely rebuilt in the same style as the old Chapel and now contains a flat in the roof space. The only part of the old chapel which remains, is the plinth over the front door bearing the inscription Baptist Chapel. The building is used to store old organs and the owner occasionally opens it up for people to view these.

Bishops Green

There is a reference in the Minutes of the Deacons Meetings in March 1955 to a large building being made available at Bishops Green with a seating capacity for 200 worshippers. It is stated that it would be an interdenominational free church, the Rev. Whiting being Minister. I have been unable to ascertain anything else about this so I must assume that it was proposal that never materialised.

Summary

Each Country Chapel could tell its own story of faithful men and women who have carried on the work; and of the loyal laymen who have given consecrated service in carrying the Gospel message into their pulpits. Many have passed on but are still remembered who along with others have a long and worthy record of service and are still maintaining the work, albeit in a much reduced area.

Only two of these Chapels remain today. Long Lane, which is supported by Newbury Baptist Church and Headley, which operates independently.

14. PEOPLE PROFILES

Introduction

It is the people who make the Church. Throughout the history of Newbury Baptists, there have been many people who have contributed greatly to the work of the Baptist cause in Newbury whose life stories would be worthy of a book devoted purely to them. Maybe one day someone will undertake this task but for now I give just details of two of them.

Mr. Albert Percy Morton.

Mr. Albert Percy Morton died on 24th February 1971 aged 86 years. He was born in May 1884 and, apart from a period in the army, spent his life in Newbury Town. He attended the British School and later St. Bartholomew's Grammar School, leaving aged 14 years to take become a clerk in the office of a builder and then a job at the desk of Griffin's Butchers shop. At 21, with the help of a friend, he started his own pork butchers business in Market Street subsequently moving to Market Place. Forty years after starting the business, he sold it in 1959 to the Reading Co-operative Society. He was first elected to the Council in 1926 but did not seek re-election when his term of office expired in 1929 because of pressures of business. He re-joined the Council in 1945 and one of his principal aims was to get comfortable housing for elderly people. He also took a strong line on the Sunday opening of cinemas. He was the Council representative on the Speen Hostel House Committee. He was also Treasurer of the relief committee founded by Mr. W.E. Lewendon when he was mayor between 1903/1904 and served on the committee of the London Trustees Saving Bank. He was Chairman of the Old Newbury Dispensary, a charitable

organisation for the poor to obtain medicines. He was first taken to Church aged three by his Mother and joined the Sunday School when he was six years old. He was baptised aged 16 by Rev. G.J. Knight in October 1900 and joined the Church in November of that year. He took his first service in a village Chapel aged 17 and gave faithful and devoted service in almost every department of the Church's work. He married his wife Evelyn, who was the daughter of William G. Gale, who had a grocery business in Oxford Street, on 15th January 1912. He became a Deacon of the Church aged 28 in 1912 until 1941 and again from 1950-1960 when he was appointed an Elder in recognition of his long and devoted service to the Church, then, in 1965 he became a Deacon Emeritus until his death. He was Sunday School Superintendent from 1905 to 1947 having previously been the Sunday School Secretary. He was the Church Treasurer from 1936 to 1946 and was the main driving force in the Church's move from Northbrook Street to St. Mary's Hill. He bought the land next to the School Building as he felt it imperative that the Brigades should have a building for themselves. He built the hall, then presented it as a gift to the Church. His funeral service was held at Newbury Baptist Church followed by burial at Newtown Road Cemetery.

Mr. Cyril F Moon

Cyril was born in West Hampstead in North West London just at the end of the First World War- in fact the last Zeppelin raid on London was taking place while his mother, Alice, was giving birth. He was one of three boys. It was a humble home and life went on day by day, week by week to a regular pattern. His parents attended a mission attached to an Anglican Church in Hampstead but young Cyril only went to the Mission Hall on Mondays and Fridays to Christian Endeavour and the Band of Hope. On Sundays, he was a choir boy in the Church itself and went to the Church's Sunday School in the afternoon. As

soon as he was old enough, he joined the Church Lads Brigade and, of course, on one evening a week there was Choir practice. Those early days left their mark on Cyril. The second thing he did influenced his later life and that was cricket. The Hampstead Cricket Club wanted a scorer and one of their umpires asked Cyril if he would do it. Although he was very young, he said yes, and he played cricket right up until the 1960's. He was a thrifty boy, saving the money he earned from a paper round, the money he was paid for scoring for the cricket club and his earnings from singing in the Church Choir, so when he wanted new clothes he paid for them himself. He was a mischievous lad too – the choir boys tucked out of sight in the choir stall got up to a lot of tricks and young Cyril was well in it all. They had ladies in their choir and there was one lady who, when she came into choir practice, somehow seemed to hold the attention of everyone. She had a lovely voice and one of Cyril's earliest memories of her was hearing her sing "I know that My Redeemer liveth". She was always immaculately dressed and wore white gloves and the boys were not above playing tricks on her. She had to come through a gate with a latch into the hall for practice, so the boys repainted the latch with black paint just before practice time and the white gloves took the impact. Cyril was docked one quarters pay for this escapade. The leader of the Christian Endeavour, Mr. Kirkpatrick had a great influence on him, but the question of a committal did not come until sometime later. He was an average scholar at school, but did not have a chance to take any examinations while he was at Grammar School because of something that happened when he was fourteen. The family Summer Holiday was always a trip to Newbury to stay with Auntie and Uncle Hackman. Auntie was Mrs Alice Moon's sister and her husband a Deacon of Newbury Baptist Church. Mr. Hackman was the Manager of Walkers, a large grocery and provision shop at the bottom of Northbrook Street and young Cyril loved during the holiday to go down and help Uncle and

earn some money too. Mr. Hackman started his own business in Bartholomew Street in 1931/2 and wanted some help so he wrote to Cyril's' Father, Mr. Frank Moon asking if it would be possible for Cyril to come and work for him. It was agreed, so in 1932 Cyril left home and came to live with the Hackmans in Newbury and worked for his Uncle for three years. A new life started for him, he got on well but was worth something better and with his Uncle's blessing went to work for Mr.A.P. Morton the butcher- the man who bought the land on which the present Church stands. There he worked with Mr. Hugh Townsend and -apart from the war years - was there for eighteen years. During the war years he was called up and put into a non-combat branch of the Royal Engineers on Railway construction being stationed at Swindon, Bristol and Bicester. He was demobbed in 1946 and went back to work for Mr A.P. Morton. He attended church firstly in the ministry of Rev Charles Johnson. In those days the church had a playing field and young Cyril took an active part in tennis, cricket and football. He was baptised and joined the Church in 1935 under the ministry of Rev A.J. Stanton and became a Deacon in 1947 in an inter-regnum period and was appointed as Church Secretary three years later in 1950. He occupied this position for 38 years until he retired from office in 1988. He was largely responsible for Brian Whiting coming to Newbury, firstly as a "fill-in" student from Regents Park College and then for the call to the ministry in 1952. It was the Rev Brian Whiting who felt that a shop assistants job was not good enough for Cyril, so made an appointment for Cyril with Arnold Shepherd who had a hire-purchase lending business in Newbury and was another Deacon. Cyril kept the appointment and Arnold took him on to teach him auditing and that was his business career from then on until retirement, with Arnold until he retired and then with Mercantile Credit who took his business over. Cyril says that he has done every church job at some time or another except treasurer, including pumping the organ at Northbrook Street

from 1932 to 1940 when the church moved to St. Mary's Hill. This was a very exacting job, especially when the organist wanted to play "forte" and more wind was wanted. He has even been pseudo caretaker. He joined the Boys' Brigade in 1932 and rose to the rank of Sergeant – then there was a break of some years. When the Boys' Brigade was re-started at Newbury Baptist Church in the Rev. Brian Whiting's time in 1952, Cyril joined up becoming Captain for a short period but had to give it up due to the pressures of the duties as Church Secretary. Cyril has been Chairman of Newbury Council of Churches, President of the Berkshire Baptist Association and for ten years was on the Baptist Union Council. He was largely responsible for starting the rest tent at Newbury Show. He played football for Newbury Town Wednesday Team for many years and cricket even longer for Newbury Town Cricket Club and when a veteran was captain of Newtown Cricket Club. He has found Newbury a very friendly place and the Church a very friendly Church and recalls that one of the happiest times of the week was after evening service on Sundays when a group of young teenagers went to the house of Mr. and Mrs. Smith for fellowship and it was as a result of the baptismal service of their youngest daughter, Laura that Cyril was converted. Cyril married Mr. And Mrs. Terrett's daughter Grace in 1945 and they had two children, Norman and Carol. His wife unfortunately died in 1961 after a distressing illness. He was a widower for twelve years. Somehow he and Myrtle Westall were thrown together in Church work. Myrtle's husband, Norman died in 1971 and some months later Cyril asked Myrtle to go with him to a concert at Greenham Church and things progressed from then on and they were married in 1973. In April 1988, after serving for 40 years as a Deacon, Cyril was awarded the honour of being appointed as Deacon Emeritus in recognition of his loyal and devoted service as a deacon and the following month he retired from the position of Church Secretary after 38 continuous years. As part of the celebration

of the 350th Church Anniversary in June 1990, Cyril was given the honour of performing the opening ceremony for the new church extension by unveiling a plaque recording this event. Cyril is a deep-dyed Baptist since coming to Newbury, he describes himself as a traditionalist and records that the happiest memories of his life were his visit to the Holy Land and his two visits in 1970 and 1980 to the Passion Play at Oberammergau.

Much of the above information was taken from an article in the Baptist Viewpoint Magazine written by Bob Cooper following an interview with Cyril.

15. CONCLUSION

It has been a long haul. When I commenced writing I realised that I did not have all of the information needed and some further research was necessary. Pointers as recorded in documents refer to places that no longer exist, some street names have gone and others changed, and in some cases the information recorded had to be subject to further clarification.

There were a few surprises along the way. Not least of all when I read the minutes from a Church meeting of 5th February 1906 that Harold Albert Smith aged 23, had applied for baptism and membership, Brethren Nias and Miller being appointed to visit him. He was accepted into membership after baptism on the recommendation of Brothers Nias and Miller supported by Brother MacDavies. Then on 30th April 1906 he was granted a transfer to Ecton Baptist Church, Northamptonshire. Harold Smith was my Grandfather and was a journeyman carpenter. I had been told once that he came Newbury for a short time and worked on the Newbury Racecourse, where he is reputed to have made the wooden toilet seat in the Royal Box but I had no idea that he was a member of Newbury Baptist Church. He went on to become a Deacon and Sunday School Superintendent at the Ceylon Baptist Church in Luton. I never knew him as he died before I was born.

What a story - from a meeting of 2/3 people in a house to a membership of over 200 in 350 years.

16. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sources

Sources used in the production of this book have included the following :

Newbury Baptist Church Minute Books for:-
Deacons Meetings
Church Meetings

Newbury Baptist Church Minute of Meetings of:-
The Deacons
The Church

Church Year Books

Church Annual Reports & Accounts

Newbury Baptist Church Chronicle

Various Programmes of Events

Notes on the History of Newbury Baptist 1740-1940,
produced for the Tercentenary and written by
W.J. Lewendon

Newspaper Articles and Reports
Newbury Weekly News

Documents

The following Documents have been reproduced in this book :-

Pages 36-45 Church Year Book 1886

Page 70 Map Circa 1845 supplied by Mrs M Titcomb

Page 167 Christian Endeavour Motto Card 1907

Drawings

The under mentioned drawings have been reproduced in this book

Page 173 Berries Bank Chapel 1970
By Tony Redstall

Page 180 Long Lane Chapel
By Mr. Charles Stanley

Page 186 Headley Baptist Church
From Church Leaflet.

Page 193 Ashmore Green Chapel
From 1973 Booklet in aid of
Long Lane Improvement Fund

Photographs

Photographs reproduced in this book are detailed below

- Page 15 First Known Meeting Room (Upper Storey)
 (From Mr. W.J. Lewendon’s Book)

- Page 16 Northcroft Lane meeting House
 (From Mr. W.J. Lewendon’s Book)

- Page 18 “Nias” Memorial Stone
 (From Church Records)

- Page 22 Rev. Perry Memorial Stone
 (From Church Records)

- Page 25 “Elkins” Memorial Stone
 (From Church Records)

- Page 29 Northbrook Street Church
 (From Mr. W.J. Lewendon’s Book)

- Page 34 Inside of Northbrook Street Church
 (From Mr. W.J. Lewendon’s Book)

- Page 46 Sunday School Anniversary 1886
 (From Church Records)

- Page 60 Sports Club 1930
 (From Church Records)

A History of Newbury Baptists

A History of Newbury Baptists

A History of Newbury Baptists-Acknowledgements

*Ye house
of one
Thomas Merriman*

