

THE VERY BEGINNINGS

Richard Beadon, bishop of Bath and Wells, was very busy in 1811-1812 granting the right to meet in premises set apart for worship to dissenting groups throughout his diocese. Winscombe's turn came at the very beginning of January 1812

The group was evidently well established with a pastor, Rev Robert Hoopell who appears in the deeds drawn up in 1827

The group met in the house of **Peter Pim**. Apart from the fact that he could not even write his name, we know nothing of him or where the house was. The same is true for 5 of the other signatories, all of whom could at least write their names. Only **Job Marshman** appears in later records - his house was close to the present Methodist Church in Sandford Road.

The group continued to meet in people's houses, we assume, until a group of Bristol worthies, from various religious traditions, got together to buy land and establish a chapel in the Lynch. A map of the Lynch at that time shows only one other building down what was little more than a track and of course no railway! The map is a tithe map and on it the chapel is described as a Baptist Chapel and yard belonging to the Baptist Society.

This is deceptive: from its very inception the Union Chapel was a non denominational dissenting chapel established for the worship of God. And following the rites of both the pedobaptists (Independents, later Congregationalist and later still United Reformed) and antipedobaptists (Baptists)

The trustees were concerned to set their mark on the chapel's worship. They laid down what any pastor should preach:

The pastor shall hold and preach the doctrines of the deity of our Saviour Jesus Christ the fall of man his recovery by the free and sovereign grace of God his redemption by Jesus Christ alone justification by faith in him sanctification by the Holy Spirit the moral law contained in the sacred scriptures being the rule of conduct and the inseparable connexion of holiness of life with the pardon of sin and shall habitually in their ministry exhort sinners to repentance towards God and faith in our lord Jesus Christ

They also laid down voting procedures – women were allowed to vote for a new pastor which must have been very forward thinking at the time - and what would happen if the chapel ever had to be sold. They did like to be in total control of the future in those days!

THE NEW CHAPEL

By 1906 it was felt that the chapel needed to be enlarged, partly to accommodate the visitors in summer months and partly because the Wesleyans were thinking of building a chapel in Winscombe!

A building fund was started, plans were drawn up and accepted but the meeting rejected the scheme for warming and ventilating the new building. Then Mr Ford of Cheddar was asked to quote and the whole scheme was put on hold!

In 1908 it was suggested that instead of enlargement long overdue remedial work should be carried out. This still had not happened by mid 1910. In September of that year various representatives of the Baptist Association came down by train for the day and consulted with the Winscombe congregation. At the end of that meeting the proposed plans for a spend of £300/£400 was rejected and the meeting had adopted one costing £800! This was indeed an act of faith for the building fund stood at £240.

Within half a year the work was in hand and by 30th August 1911 the new chapel was in use and was free of debt.

The vestry and the end wall of the chapel (the pulpit end) are all that remain of the original 1827 building

DISASTER AVERTED!

March 17th 1911

While some workmen were engaged in removing the old roof timbers of Union Chapel, Winscombe, a rotten foot beam suddenly collapsed, precipitating one of them to the ground and bringing down a good portion of the roof.

The men were extricated as speedily as possible and medically attended.

Two of the men were removed to their homes at Cheddar, while the other, belonging to Shipham, is reported to have sustained a broken arm.

MOVING FORWARD IN FAITH

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL HALL

Reginald H Maliphant was appointed to the pastorate in 1932 – during the Depression. Despite the hard economic outlook, the chapel moved forward again in faith, agreeing to their new pastors' vision of a Sunday School project. The foundation stone for a new schoolroom was laid in January 1933 and was opened four months later by Mrs Francis Robinson of the Bristol Children's Help Society.

THE COST? £700 over half of which had been raised since the centenary celebrations of 1928

Before the building of the schoolroom the Sunday School had met at the Woodborough Hall – now the Scout Hut. Things came full circle last year when we hosted the scout groups after their hall suffered flood damage!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School originally met in the Woodborough Hall. This was originally a British Day School but by the time the chapel began to use it it was used as a village/parish hall. By 1906 it was popular as a venue to play bagatelle and billiards so Sunday School teaching was carried on amidst the tables which had become a permanent feature by 1933.

In 1928, deemed a suitable date to celebrate the centenary of Union Chapple, it was decided to launch a New Sunday School Centenary Fund. Funds were soon forthcoming and in January 1933 the first stone of the new schoolroom was laid. The new building was opened in May 1933.

MOVING FORWARD IN FAITH AGAIN

FURTHER MODERNISATION

The schoolroom and the chapel stood as separate buildings until 1990 when they were linked together by the kitchen and toilet block. (The original toilet was apparently the present broom cupboard (the mind boggles!) Again the congregation was small, the cost considerable and the debt paid off in less than 10 years.

That left the chapel free to purchase the land behind the chapel which it had been using as a car park.

Further modernisation took pace in the first decade of the 21st century with the modernisation of the interior of the church including the removal of pews.

All these improvements have never been to make ourselves more comfortable but to make the buildings more fit for purpose in witness and outreach to our village

LYNCH ORGANS AND MORE

1st organ (? - 1924) - a reed organ

1913 first conductor appointed. Cantata sung
2 months later choirmaster resigned even before the appointment was ratified
1920 suggested money be put aside for a pipe organ
1923 concert for organ fund

2nd organ (1924 – 1945) - a pipe organ

1925 Pipe organ purchased by Mr Frank Winslade erected by Percy Daniels. Bought from a church in Cornwall, its pipes were made of Cornish tin and had to be straightened out after their journey

1925 in debt to tune of £12 on organ Organ blower engaged

1926 Total cost of organ £61.15
1927 choir to meet in the vestry prior to the service for prayer
1938 New organ fund created
1941 organ blower resigned
1945 Electric organ blower proposed

3rd organ 1945 - 1990 a cinema organ (Cassens Organ)

From Clevedon purchased for £200. Originally a player organ but adapted to its new purpose, again by Percy Daniels
By 1972 it was in need of a complete rebuild as only about half the pedals worked. It soldiered on in a sorry state, thanks largely to the tender loving care of Ken Brown, church secretary and organist. The panels in the corner by the present organ are all that is left of organ number 3: they were turned into a housing for the speakers for the electronic organ in memory of Ken

4th organ 1991 – electronic organ

A gift in memory of Norman Clear a former treasurer of the Lynch, and father of Anne Holloway, church secretary in the 90's

2004 - Rowland Electronic Keyboard

This was added to the music making capacity as an anonymous gift

For many years we had a choir.

Ruth Uffindell, Bob Keel, Doris Brown (Hooper) Kate Larder and **Beryl Flook** were all stalwarts.

Harold Flook was choirmaster and **Ken Brown** and **Margaret Weeks** were organists

When the organ was moved from the north to the south side, the choir seating was removed

PASTORS AT LYNCH CHAPEL

pre 1827 -1859

Rev Robert Hoopell (died in his 81st year)

Association with Cheddar Baptist

1863 – 1875

Rev Thomas Davies (1 Sunday per month)

1875-1886

Rev Thomas Hanger

1887 – 1892

Rev T B Field

1892 -1994

Rev William Glidden

1895 – 1904

Rev J W Padfield

Rev D T Richards – 1914

1914 – 1918

Rev Leonard Tucker

End of Cheddar Association

1918 – 1924 (initially invited for 3 months!)

Rev J Kitto Baker

1st Wrington and Langford Association

1926 – 1928

Rev David Lloyd

Rev Ralph B Scurrah

1932 – 1933

Rev R H Maliphant

1934 – 1936

Rev R C Griffin

1938 – 1941

Rev George Gear

1945 – 1959

Rev S P Record

1960 -1965

Teams of students from Bristol Baptist College

2nd Association with Wrington

1965 – 1969

Rev J Michael Rees from Swansea Memorial College

1969 – 1981

Rev Arthur Simmons

1981 – 1991

Rev Norman Moon

1982 – 1990

Rev Robert Brown

1991 – 2005

Rev Stephen Newell from Mansfield College

1994 - 1999

Mr Trevor Boulter

2000 -2007

Rev Colin Speed

2007 -

Rev Mary Burgess

EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES

In September 1916 it was agreed to purchase blinds for the windows at a cost of £3/7/6 to shade the outside light

In August 1940 it was agreed that to save blacking out afternoon services would be held

Collections were only taken during the summer months until 1936

The envelope scheme was introduced in 1925

In 1932 the minister – Rev R Maliphant suggested having a magazine – the suggestion was rejected!

In April 1919 Mrs Carwardine presented separate communion cups to the chapel

After a great deal of discussion in 60s and 70s the name of the chapel was changed from UNION CHAPEL to THE LYNCH CHAPEL