

The present St Mary's was preceded by an Iron Church. The latter was the first church at the top of The Avenue, but not the first church in Cuddington parish. By 1100 there was a stone church, in what is now Nonsuch Park, perhaps replacing an earlier wooden church. Side aisles and a tower were added later.

Photograph by Margaret Rymill.

c 1100





1538

The medieval St Mary's Church, together with Cuddington manor house and adjacent farmhouses, was swept away in 1538 to make room for Henry VIII's Nonsuch Palace. The church's foundations were revealed when the Palace was excavated in 1959 (centre back in photograph). For over 300 years, Cuddington was a parish without a church.

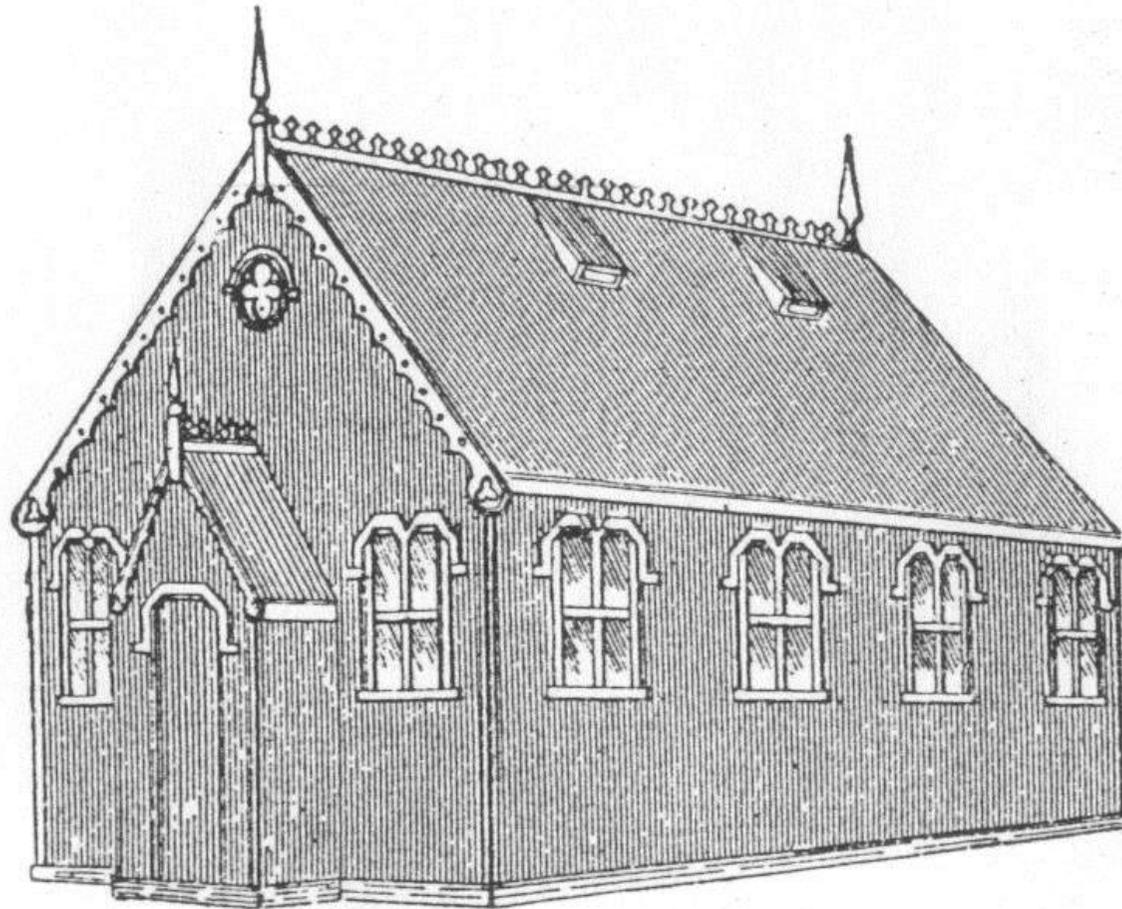
Photograph by Margaret Batt.



1859

The railway line from Wimbledon to Epsom was opened in 1859, with a station at Worcester Park, and the area was now attractive to commuters.

In 1864 the Landed Estates Company was formed to develop The Avenue, and the new



1866

A site at the top of The Avenue, between The Avenue, St Mary's Road and Royal Avenue, was reserved for a church. As in many parishes, the first step was to install a temporary iron church. Like most temporary churches of the time, it was probably timber framed with a corrugated iron exterior.

No photographs of it have been found, but it's likely that it looked something like this; the picture is from a catalogue in the parish records produced by Humphreys of Knightsbridge.



28 Nov
1866

On 28th November 1866 the Bishop of Winchester licensed the Revd Thomas Smith to take services in the 'temporary Church situate in the liberty of Worcester Park in the parish of Cuddington in the County of Surrey and Diocese of Winchester' (Guildford Diocese was not formed until 1927).

This Ordnance Survey map, produced in 1894-5, shows that the Iron Church was positioned between the present church and lych-gate.

The first services in the Iron Church were held on 13th January 1867.

The hymn book used, published by the Christian Knowledge Society, includes a number of hymns that are still in regular use, such as *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*, *New every Morning is the Love* and *Jesus Christ is Risen Today*.

Surrey History Centre: 2508/1/1

13 Jan 1867

WORCESTER PARK Temporary Church.

THE ABOVE CHURCH WILL BE OPENED FOR
DIVINE SERVICE

On *SUNDAY, JANUARY 13th*, 1867,

WHEN

TWO SERMONS WILL BE PREACHED;

That in the Morning, by

The Rev. SIR GEORGE GLYNNE, Bart. M.A.

VICAR OF EWELL.

That in the Afternoon, by

The Rev. W. CHETWYND STAPYLTON, M.A.

VICAR OF MALDEN.

Services at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

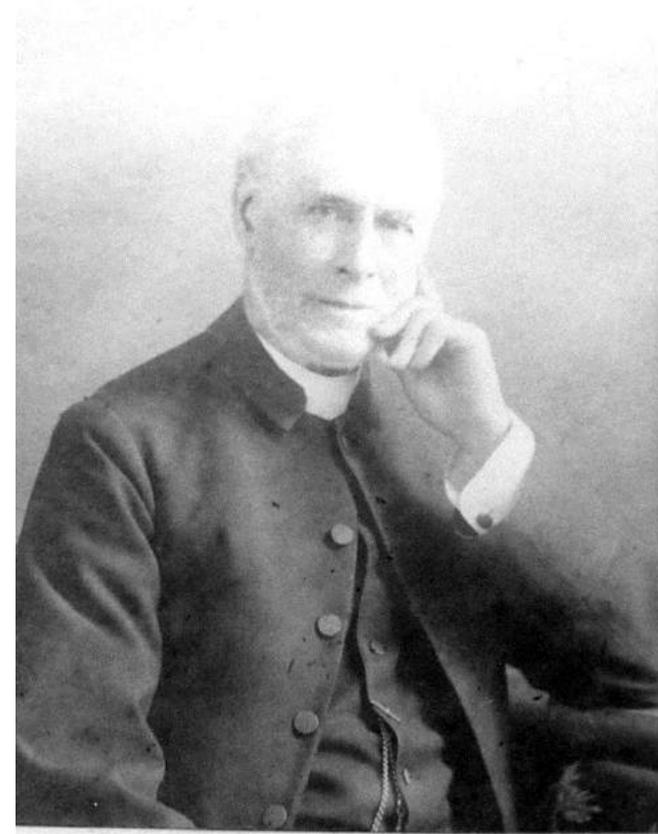
*COLLECTIONS will be made for the completion of the
internal fittings, and other expenses.*

The Hymn Book to be used will be that published by the
Christian Knowledge Society.

MALDEN.

WORCESTER PARK TEMPORARY CHURCH.

On Sunday last the iron church, which has been erected in Worcester Park to supply the spiritual wants of the neighbourhood now springing up there, was under the license of the Lord Bishop of the diocese opened for Divine services. There are already about 40 first class houses erected, or in the course of erection, and there can be no doubt, looking at the picturesque character of the spot, that in the course of a few years it will be largely built over, and a handsome permanent church erected in the place of the temporary church—another addition to the many which during the last ten years have sprung up in this immediate neighbourhood. The services on Sunday last were very well attended considering the heavy fall of snow on the previous day, the afternoon especially. The sermon in the morning was preached by the Rev. Sir George Glynne, Bart., and in the afternoon by the Rev. W. Chetwynd Stapylton, the incumbent of the two parishes immediately contiguous to the parish of Chessington in which the church stands. The present church will only accommodate about 280 persons. The collections on the occasion amounted to the liberal sum of £16. The incumbent of the church is the Rev. Thomas Smith, M.A., formerly senior curate of St. Matthew's, Brixton, who will enter upon his duties next Sunday.



W. Chetwynd Stapylton

13 Jan
1867

A report of the first services in the Iron Church on 13th January appeared in the *Surrey Comet* on 19th January 1867, and mentioned the good attendance despite the snowy weather.

The preacher in the afternoon was the Revd William Chetwynd Stapylton, Vicar of St John's Old Malden (above right). He later took on the oversight of the Iron Church, and took some services.

a 24

Clergy Register

Year appointed		
1867	Thomas Smith	licensed
1878	E. A. Richardson	
1879	H. J. Wale	
1885	W. A. Hoales	
1892	Clergy from A.C. Society	
1894	W. A. Cooke	licensed
	J. M. Glubb	Chaplain to Bishop of Winchester
1895	W. E. Layton	as Vicar of the Parish see Report. page 6. paragraph 6 Church of St. Mary, Cuddington

- Iron Church -

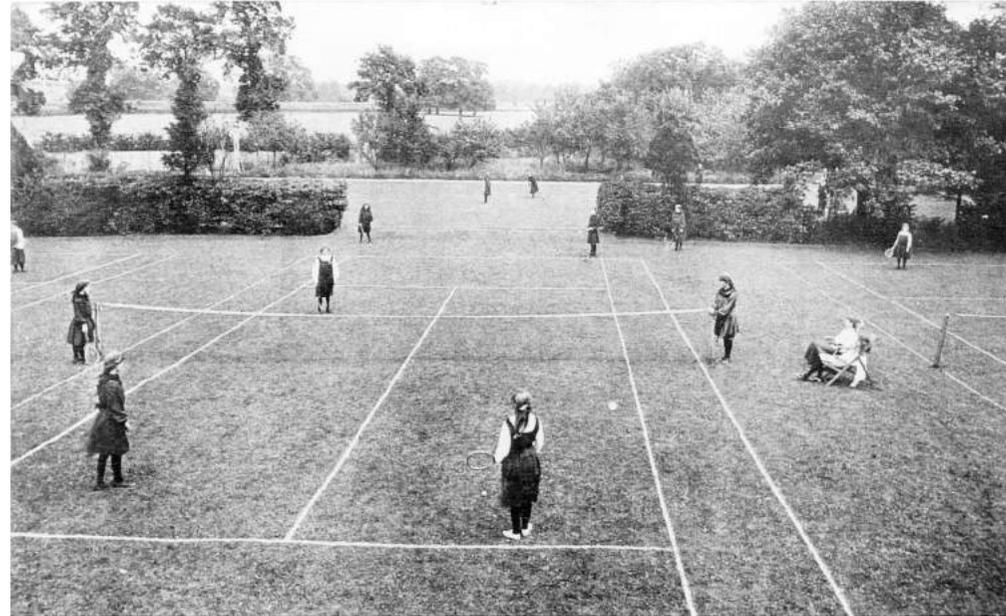
Thomas Smith was a former Curate of Chobham.

Henry Wale was a lieutenant in the 15th Hussars and the Scots Greys before being ordained; he wrote a memoir titled *Sword and Surplice*.

John Matthew Glubb was one of the Bishop's Chaplains; in 1896 he married Adelaide Kuhner from The Cottage (now Iris House) off Old Malden Lane (near the River Club).

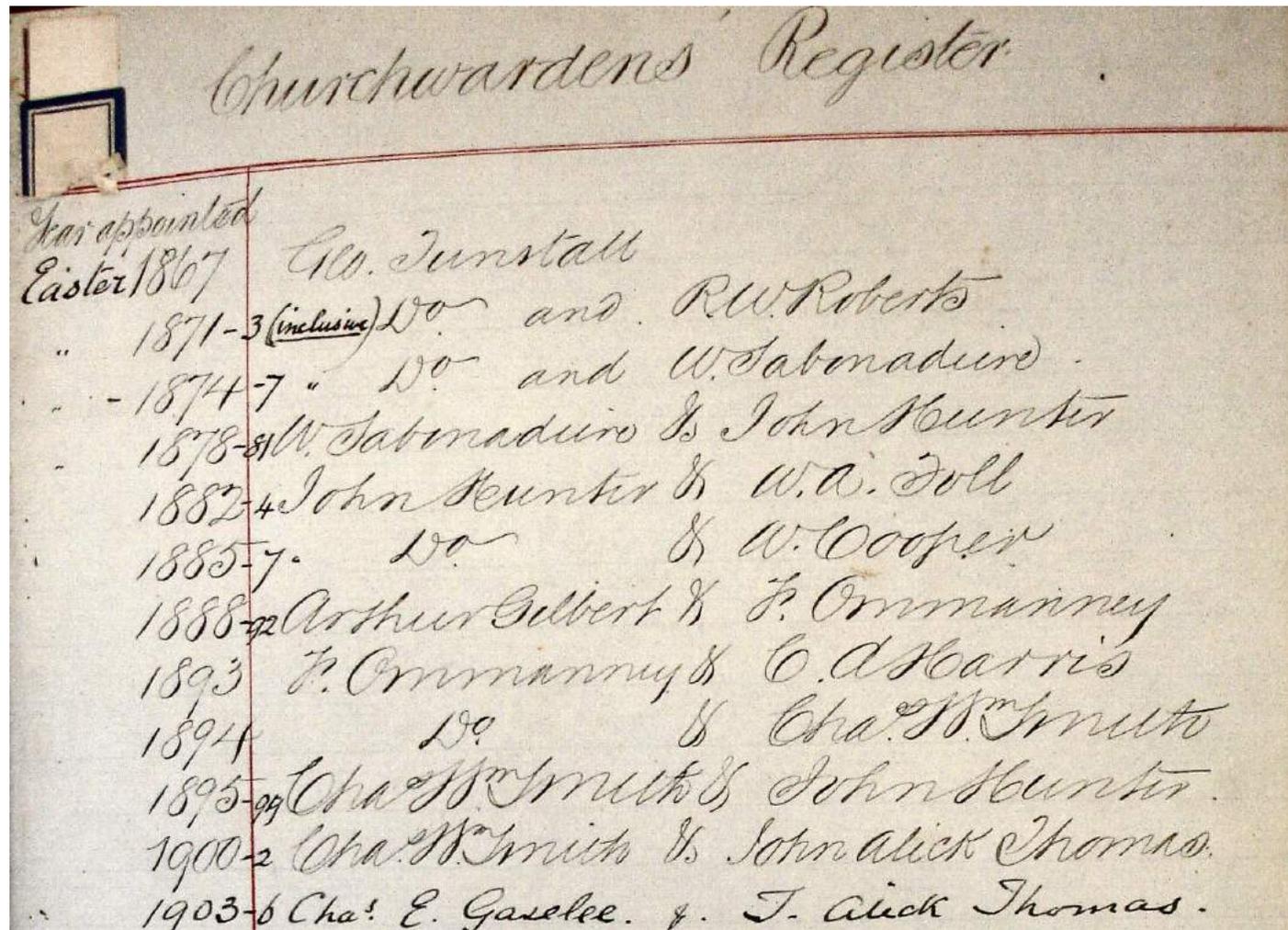
1867-1894

This list records the clergy who regularly officiated in the Iron Church. There was no vicarage, and some of them had to travel by train, which occasionally caused problems when they found themselves carried on to Leatherhead.



1880s-
1890s

For about eight years in the 1880s-90s, services were taken by the Revd William Atherstone Hales. Half his stipend came from his role in helping to run a girls' boarding school in The Avenue (where Lansdowne Court and part of Rushmere Court now stand), and the collapse of the company that ran the school prompted one of the financial crises faced by the churchwardens running the Iron Church. The original 'Lansdowne' and its tennis courts are shown above.



1867-

1895

The role of churchwarden of the Iron Church cannot have been an easy one, with a temporary church, no vicarage, no resident clergy and a succession of financial and legal crises.

We know the names of ten churchwardens of the Iron Church, but so far we only have a photograph of one of them, C Alexander Harris (above, taken when he was Governor of Newfoundland).

Date.	Day.	Text.	Subject.	Preacher.	Communicants.	Collection.	
						Sum.	Objects.
Nov. 2	21st S.			Wattales. Celab.	9	4.7	Ch: Xp.
8 a.m.	"			Wattales.			
11 a.m.	"	Heb. XII. 1	Cloud of Wit:	Wattales.			
3 p.m.	"	Eph. VI. 10	The Xtian's armour.	Wattales.			
Nov. 9.	22nd S.	S. Math. ^{XVIII} 35	Forgiveness	Wattales & Celab.	25	1.15.6	Ch: Xp:
3 p.m.	"	S. P. to Phil 3	Link of love bet ⁿ S. Paul & his converts	Wattales			
Nov. 16	23d. S.			Wattales Cel.	13	7.7 $\frac{1}{2}$	Ch: Xp.
8 a.m.				Wattales			
11 a.m.		S. Math ^{XXII} 15	Render unto G ^d	Wattales			
3 p.m.		Phil: III. 20	Gay conversation etc	Wattales			
Nov. 23	25th S.	S. John VI. 5	The people.	Wattales	17	£2.0.4	Ch: Xp.
11 a.m.			"	Wattales			
3 p.m.			"				
The new lectern, the gift of Mrs Helli's pupils used today - A							



23 Nov 1884

The service registers record the usual pattern of services, at 11 am and 3 pm weekly, with Communion at 8 am twice a month. This page also records the gift of a wooden lectern by the pupils of Parkside School, situated where Timbercroft and Sterry Drive were later built. The lectern remained in use in the new church (above right) until the brass lectern was donated, and many years later the wooden lectern was given to St Francis' Church, Ruxley Lane.

In 1892 the parish considered replacing the Iron Church with... another iron church. This letter from Humphreys Ltd to Arthur Gilbert, one of the churchwardens, in 1892, includes an offer to provide a new iron church for £244.

1892

FROM *Humphreys Limited.*

Knightsbridge, Hyde Park,

London, S.W. 23rd July 1892

*Arthur Gilbert Esq,
Worcester Park, Surrey*



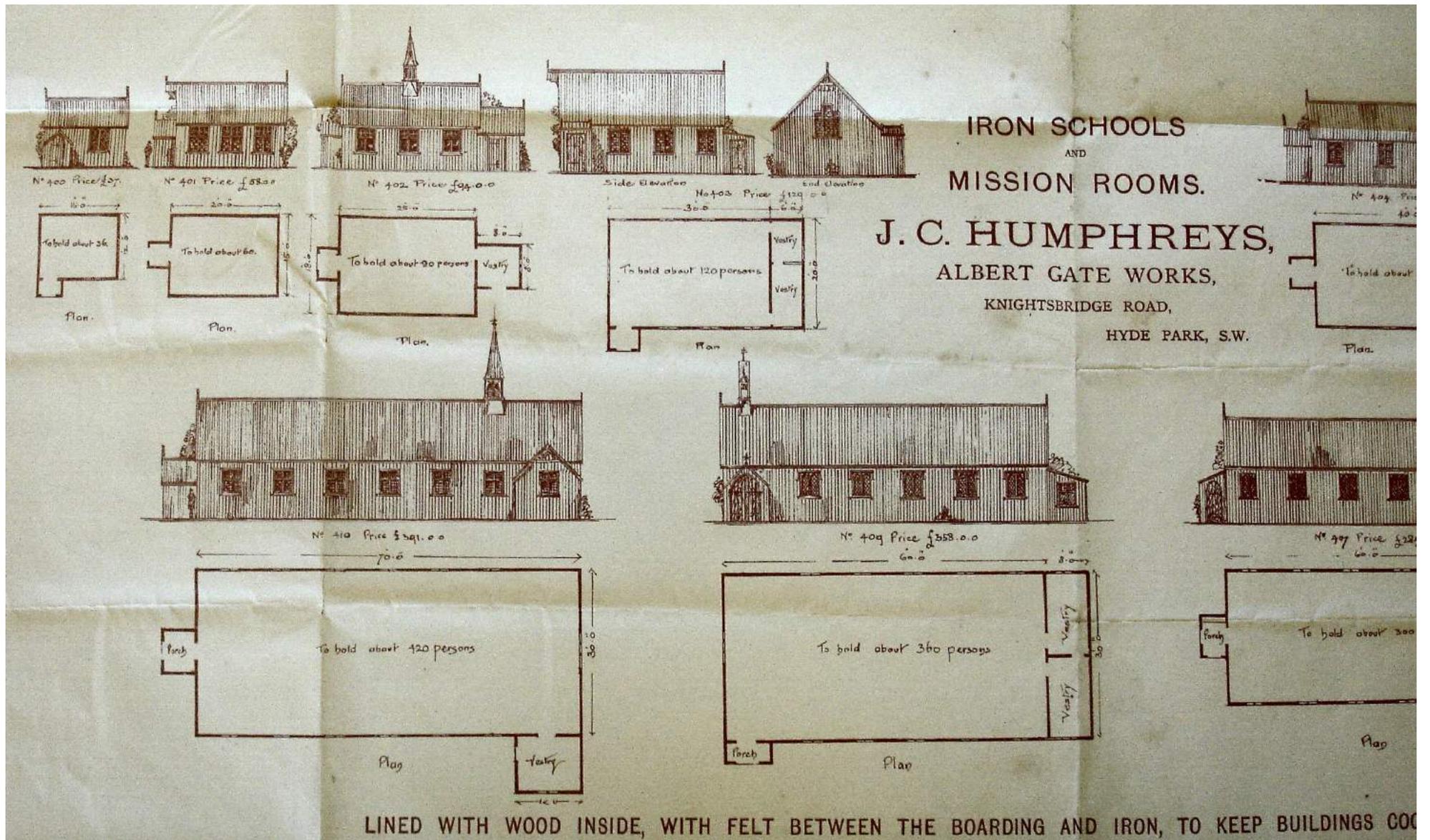
Dear Sir

Replying to your favor of the 21st inst we beg to enclose specification for proposed new Iron Church 55 x 31 x 10 with porch 5 x 4 and turret, our price for which erected on your foundation completed in a thorough substantial + workmanlike manner being £244.0.0. Open back benches stained + varnished would cost 2¹/₈^d per sitting - Rush bottom Church chairs 2¹/₂^d + 2¹/₄^d each. Pulpit about £5 + reading desk £3.10.0 - our representative will be in your neighbourhood on Monday or Tuesday next + will be pleased to call + furnish any other particulars required if you will kindly name a time.

Yours faithfully
HUMPHREYS, LD.

J. M. Mans

J. M. Mans



1892

This catalogue, preserved in the parish records, probably dates from the time of the 1892 proposal for a new iron church. By this time Humphreys Ltd offered a wide range of temporary church and school buildings.



1892, September.

Date	Day	Text	Subject	Precher.	Communicants	Amount of Offertory.	Objects
4th. 8 am	12th. S			Wattles Cel.	8	2/2	
11 am	aff.	S. Math. ^{xxiii} / ₂₄	"to the end."	Wattles	.	7/9 ¹ / ₂	
3 pm	Trin.	S. Mark ^{vi} / ₃₁	Ephphatha.	Wattles		2/0 ¹ / ₂	
11th. 11 am	13th. S	L. Ki. v.	Lessons from Cap.	Wattles. Cel.	10	16/3	
3 pm	"	The Good Samaritan.		Wattles		4/4 ¹ / ₂	
18th. 8 am	14th. S			Wattles Cel	11	6/7	
11 am	"	Phil. iii. 12	"but, I press on."	Wattles.		11/9	
3 pm	"	The Gospel.	"Was not the <u>ten</u> <u>hired</u> ?"	Wattles.		3/10	
25th. 11 am	15th. S			Wattles			
3 pm	"			Wattles			
	16th. S.	Church taken possession of by		forcible entry - & service conducted by Bennett's nominee			

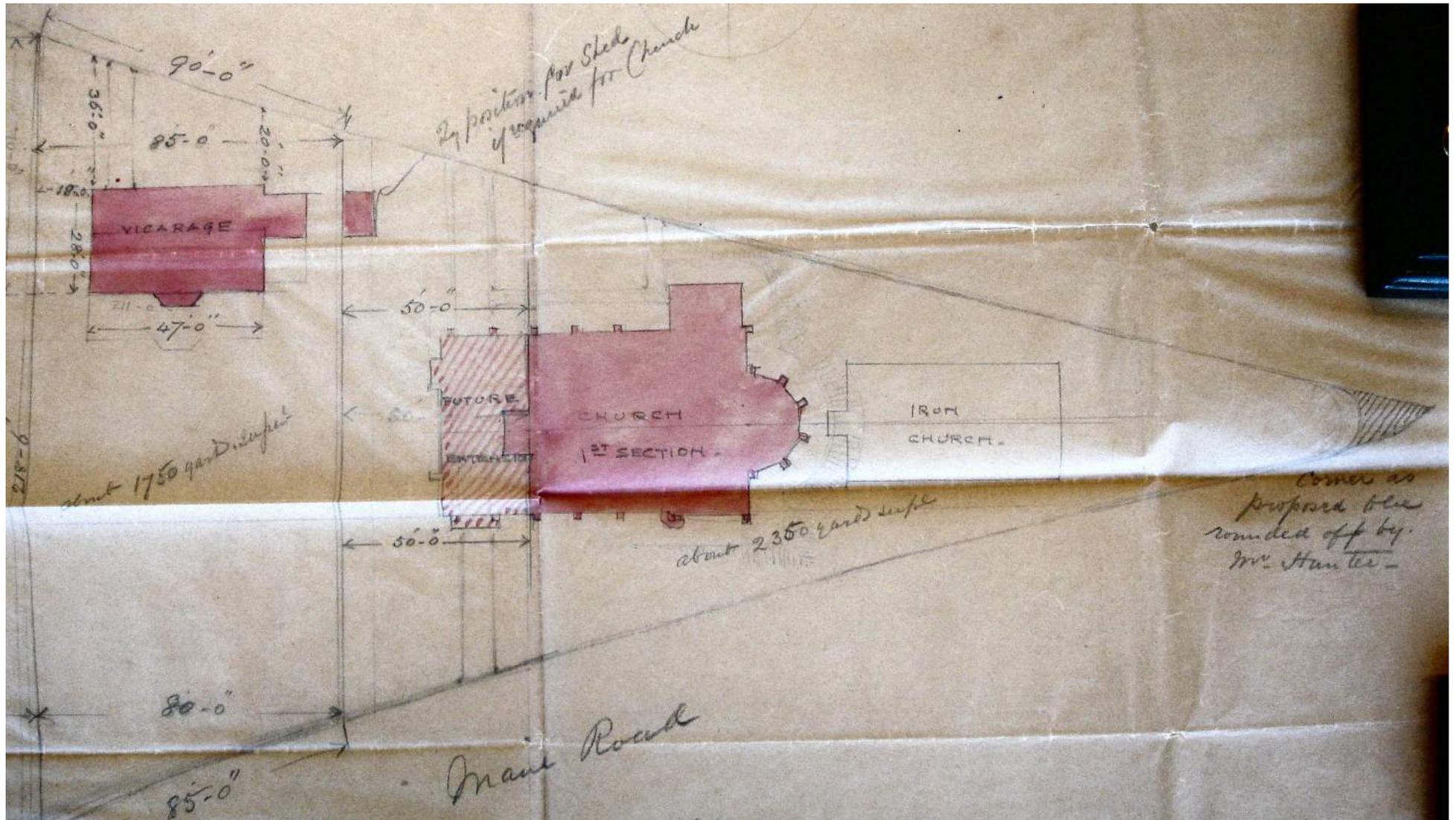
1892

As events turned out, 1892 was not an ideal time to think about a new church, temporary or otherwise. A Mr Bennett claimed to have bought the triangular plot of land and in May the congregation was locked out, and the service was held in the double drawing-room of The Hermitage in Cleveland Road, home of Alexander Harris (left). A similar problem appears to have occurred in September when the church 'was taken possession of by forcible entry & service conducted by Bennett's nominee', according to the register.

Date.	Day.	Text.	Subject.	Preacher.	Communicants.	Amount of Offertory.	Objects.
1894							
Aug 11	1.45		Foundation-stone of the new	Church of S. Mary, laid by the Bp. of Winc.		22. 11. 11	Ch. & Vic. Bp. F.
12	8	12 S. 4. T.	-	W. A. Cooke Advt.	17	11. 1	
11		2 Kin. 2. 1.	"Elijah's Preparation for Death"	"		1. 6. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	
3			Catechizing	"		3. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ + 6	
7		L. Mat. xxv. 1, 2	"The Ten Virgins"	"		7. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	
19	8	13 S. 4. T.	-	H. L. Croft Advt.	18		
11		Rev. 22. 9.	"Whore"	"		1. 17. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	
7		1 Cor. 9. 24.	"So run that ye may obtain"	"		4. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	
26	8	14 S. 4. T.	-	W. A. Cooke "	7	2. 3	
11		S. John i. 47.	"S. Bartholomew"	"		1. 15. 10	

11 Aug
1894

When it became possible to plan for a new church, in 1893, it was decided to build a permanent structure. The foundation stone of the present church was laid in 1894, as recorded in the service register. Services in the Iron Church continued while the new church was being built.



1895

This plan, drawn in April 1895 by the architect of the new church, J Alick Thomas, who lived in The Avenue, shows the relative positions of the old and new churches, the intended future extension of the new church, and the vicarage (now The Old Vicarage).

Date.	Day.	Text.	Subject.	Preacher.	Communicants.	Amount of Offertory.	Objects.
June 24.	12	8 ^o . Ino. Bpl.			25.	1/7.	✓
29.	8 ^{am} .	3 ^o . aft. Trinity	8 ^o . Ino. iii. 30. "Self-sacrifice"	J. M. S.	23.	15/-	✓
"	"	"	↗			2.. 14-4	✓
"	7.	5 ^o . Mal. v. 11.	The Great Mission	J. M. S.		14. 8 ¹ / ₂	✓
July. 7.	8 ^{am} .	1 ^o aft. Trinity			5.	- 2-6	✓
"	"	1 ^o M. K. xi. 20.	"Power"	J. M. S.	8.	3-8-2	✓
"	7	1 ^o S. M. xiii. 12.	The Slave who became Great.	J. M. S.		15/10 ¹ / ₂	✓
14.	8 ^{am} .	5 ^o aft. Trinity			36.	1-2-0 ¹ / ₂	✓
"	"	8 ^o . Lu. Ke. v. 5.	"Yet & though."	J. M. S.		7-16-3 ¹ / ₂	} Winchester Diocesan Society
"	7.	8 ^o . Lu. K. xx. 1.	The Lost Sheep.	J. M. S.		- 12/8 ¹ / ₂	

Sunday 14th July 1895.
the last Service in the
Iron Church.

14 Jul 1895

The last services in the Iron Church were held in July 1895.



After
1895

Iron churches were adaptable buildings and some are still used today, either as churches or in other ways. This example, at Swineford between Bath and Bristol, is now a nursery, and was photographed recently by a former resident of The Avenue. At Cuddington, the Iron Church is said to have been moved to a new site and used by at least one business, near Worcester Park Station.

Photograph by Andrew Stainer.