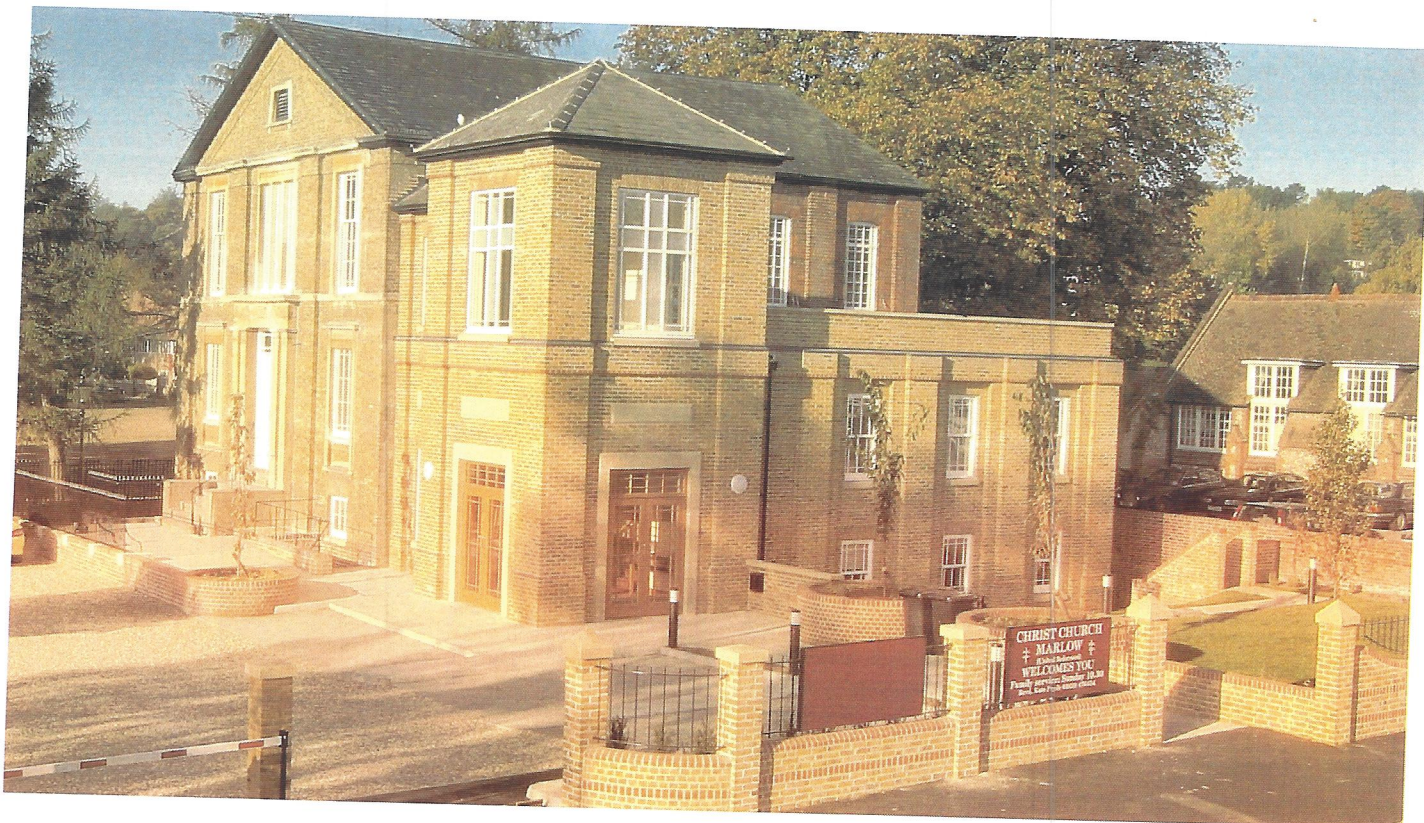
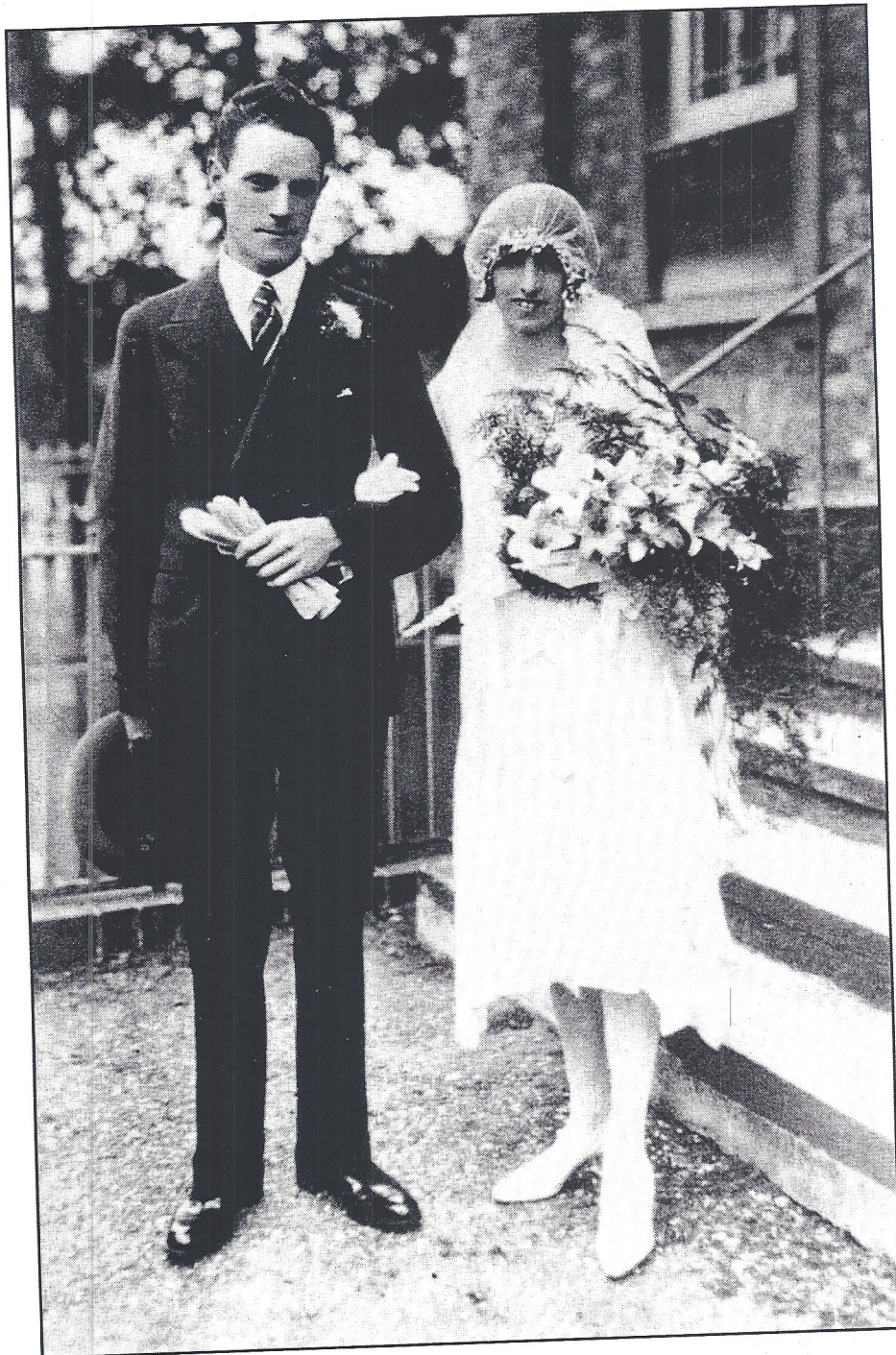


A Portrait of Christ Church 1693-2003



A selection of contributions from members, friends and associates celebrating the re-opening of Christ Church Marlow following redevelopment.





Wedding bells 1927

Standing outside Marlow Congregational Chapel, the happy couple are Alfred William Thomas Oram (known as Bill) and Nellie Elizabeth Morris. Mrs Oram, now in her nineties, was a member of our Church and has attended Christ Church recently.

Thanks to Councillor Maurice Oram for providing this photograph of his parents.



A work well done

Think of a building project that has missed its target date and overrun its budget, and you have the whole world to choose from. Think of one that hasn't and you come up with Christ Church, Marlow. Moreover, those of us who live close by have been delighted by how little fuss and disruption the work has caused. We have watched with fascination as the building has progressed, almost, I am tempted to say, of its own accord. But I do know from experience that ideas don't spring from nowhere, money doesn't raise itself, and building work is not spontaneous, even for the house of God. Enshrined in the construction of this major new facility are large commitments of faith, imagination and hard work. The Elders and congregation, and the contractors too, deserve our warmest congratulations.

I am grateful to the URC for giving me a role, however honorary, in a scheme that will benefit not only the worshippers at Christ Church, but the community as a whole. An enterprise of this kind cannot fail to draw people together – it is perhaps the greatest prize of all. Beginning with the congregation, may it serve to strengthen Christian unity in Marlow, and spread its influence in the wider world.



Anthony Wethered

Anthony Wethered
Chairman
Cornerstone Appeal Marlow
September 2003

The Revd Kate Pryde, newly inducted to Christ Church Marlow, and the Chairman of the Cornerstone Appeal, Mr Anthony Wethered, mark the start of the building works by turning a patch of soil at the ground-breaking ceremony on 18 January 2003.

Foreword

Towards the end of his history of Christ Church, the Revd Arthur Macarthur mentions several people who had prominent roles in Christ Church in the 20th century. Mrs Arnold, for instance, ran the PTA (Pleasant Tuesday Afternoon) for 41 years, and Miss Hilda Coster served as Treasurer, Secretary, and occasionally both, for a similar period, as well as holding an annual tea for the primary children at her home. Mr Cyril Burton presented the auditor's report year by year. And last but not least, Mr Arthur Coventry directed the installation of new boilers, heating systems and lighting, assisted by Mr Roy Isaac, whose daily care of the outworn system ensured the comfort of the congregation for many years.

It is tempting to continue this list. There are many people who have made an impression on the history of Christ Church in recent years. But ... where to start? We have been indeed fortunate in the number of individuals who over the years have given so much of their time and talents in the service of the Church. Ministers, Elders, teachers of our young people, leaders of worship, prayer and Bible study, those who have looked after property or money, those who exercised pastoral and spiritual care, or represented Christ Church on outside bodies, those who drove forward the Cornerstone project, those with the vision, those who handled the details, and many others who have held no office but have nevertheless offered friendship to new members and encouragement to those in office, and contributed energy and imagination to the growth of our fellowship in one way or another – it would be a long list and, inevitably, I would be guilty of sins of omission...

So, instead, I have invited contributions from past and present members. I am very grateful to everyone who responded to my appeal for contributions. I have not edited the contributions into a single story as it would have been invidious to do so. The anecdotes, snippets, vignettes of Christ Church over the years remain the personal reflections of the individual authors. Perhaps the overall result is a little unbalanced. But together they give a picture of the rich tapestry that is life at Christ Church. Perhaps too they encapsulate something of our future aspirations, our shared hope that the promise represented by our new building will be fulfilled.

Acknowledgments

Readers of Arthur Macarthur's history *The Story of Christ Church Quoiting Square Marlow 1693-1986* will notice my unashamed use of Arthur's words at times. I have his kind permission to borrow from his work (with or without quotation) and am greatly in debt to his scholarly research. I would also like to acknowledge use of an article from *The Home Messenger* August 1903, which Arthur supplied me with. Thanks also to Mr Roger Bettridge, County Archivist at the Centre for Bucks Studies in Aylesbury, for help in tracing copyright of photographs, to the *Marlow Free Press* and the *Maidenhead Advertiser* for permission to reproduce their articles, to Doug Clark and Charlie Ashford for technical assistance, and to Simon Blades and team at the Wycombe District Council print unit.

Jean Ashford
December 2003

A portrait of Christ Church Marlow

Contents	Page
A work well done	1
Foreword	2
Contents	3
List of ministers	4
The origins of Christ Church	5
Salem Chapel	8
The late 19th century – business as usual?	12
Land, property and the Morgan family	14
Christ Church between the wars	15
The legacy of the ‘Cong’s’	20
The Chapel by the Square	21
Memories of the Rev Fred Horrox	22
Sunday School in the Sixties	27
The Seventies	29
The road to Cornerstone	32
The Saw Doctor’s	33
Indiana Jones and the demolition danger	37
1st Marlow Girls’ Brigade Company	38
Christ Church 1988-1992	40
Memories of a Church in Quoiting Square	42
Ladies’ Friendship Group	44
Christ Church 1994-2001	46
A word from the Property Convenor	49
Burns Supper 2002	53
Project Cornerstone – a summary	54
New Forum	58
Construction	59
Re-opening and Dedication	60
Christ Church Website	61
Conclusion	62

Ministers at Christ Church Marlow

1693	Meeting of Protestant Dissenters under Samuel Pomfret
1703	John Gidley – House licensed for dissenters to worship
1715-1724	John Benson
1725 - ?	Thomas Pitken or Polken – Church temporarily closed
1770-1776	Samuel Stevens
1777-1785	John Wheeler
1785-1794	Robert Allen
1794-1803	Richard Frome
1806-1825	George Edwards
1825-1863	Thomas Styles – Present Church opened 1 July 1840
1864-1866	Andrew Mearns
1866-1868	John Briggs
1868-1870	James Mountain
1871-1873	W J Roome
1875-1879	D W Evans
1880-1882	William Morton Mather
1882-1883	Alexander Henderson
1884-1892	John Frederick Morgan Glanville
1892-1908	Frederick Tavender, BA, BD
1908-1932	George Henry Jones
1934-1945	Ernest Eldred Marks
1946-1950	Hubert John Haggett
1950-1965	Fred Horrox, MA
1965-1972	Geoffrey Walker
1973-1980	Winston S Reed
1980-1986	Arthur Leitch Macarthur, OBE, MA, MLitt
1988-1992	Maurice J Husselbee, MA
1994-2001	Stanley Owen Jones, MBE, BA
2003-	Kate Pryde – Church re-opened following refurbishment and development 19 October 2003

The origins of Christ Church

Question:

How far back can we trace the origins of Christ Church Marlow?

- ✓ To Henry VIII's break with Rome?
- ✓ To the Act of Uniformity passed at the beginning of the reign of Charles II (1662)?
- ✓ To the repression and persecution suffered by all dissenters (anyone who refused to adopt the state religion, whether catholic or protestant) throughout the Tudor and Stuart periods?
- ✓ To the Act of Toleration passed under William and Mary at the end of the 17th century?
- ✓ To the visit of Samuel Pomfret to Marlow in 1693?
- ✓ To the support of Sir Owen Buckingham, MP for Reading and later (1703) Lord Mayor of London?

(Answer on next page)

Samuel Pomfret's visit to Marlow 1693

(as described by the Rev Thomas Reynolds, writing in 1722):

'Being desired ... to preach at a weekly lecture at Great Marlow, in Buckinghamshire, his coming thither was no sooner known than a great part of the town flocked to hear him. The number was too great for the house to contain them, so that he was forced to preach to them in an open yard. Many were sent away with strong convictions and awakenings. Coming myself into the town a day or two after with Mr Owen Buckingham, afterwards Knight and Lord Mayor of London, one that was then a principal inhabitant of the town ... told me he had preached to them in such a manner as put the poor people into a terrible fright. They that knew his rousing way of preaching, and remember the great wickedness of the place at that time, will neither question nor marvel much at the truth of this account.'

Answer:

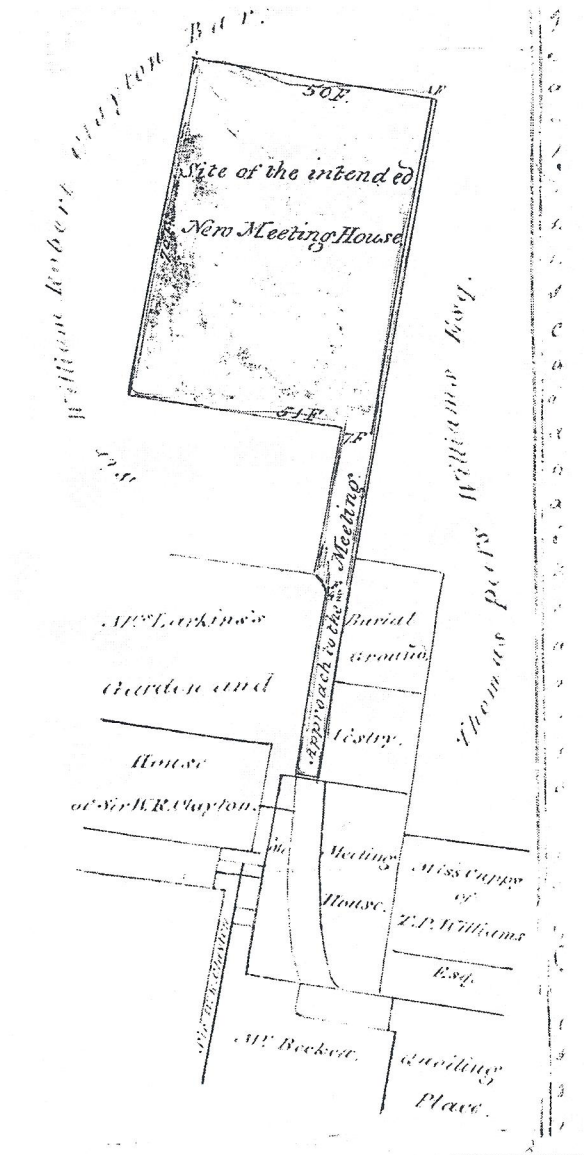
Yes, all six are correct.

All six played their part in the founding of the Congregational Chapel in Marlow. The first three set the scene. The Act of Toleration finally gave Presbyterians and Congregationalists the status of tolerated dissenters. But even before the passing of this Act there is evidence of Protestant dissenters holding occasional meetings in Marlow. In 1676 Marlow is reported to have had 50 such dissenters.

By the 1690s the Dissenters were organising weekly lectures in Marlow, perhaps at the home of Heiron Gregory, who was one of those ejected in 1662 following the Act of Uniformity. The visit by Samuel Pomfret in 1693 drew crowds. He was a rousing preacher who had earlier been imprisoned in Dover Castle for his dissenting views. When he set up his own church in London his preaching was so popular the floor collapsed! Sir Owen Buckingham was sufficiently impressed by the impact of Samuel Pomfret's visit to assist with the foundation of a permanent meeting of Protestant dissenters in Marlow.

Rev Thomas Reynolds described not only Samuel Pomfret's impact on Marlow but also how Sir Owen Buckingham 'was the person that first formed the design and laid the foundation of a meeting of Protestant Dissenters in that place, where there had been none before, took much pains and was at great charge for many years after, to support a godly ministry in it, by which means much good has been done in that town and neighbourhood.'

So, thanks to the weekly lectures, Samuel Pomfret's preaching, and Sir Owen Buckingham's munificence, we can trace our history back at least to 1693. That's why we celebrated our Tercentenary in 1993.



The site of the 1726 meeting house was at the south end of our present site near Quoting Square. Meeting house, vestry and burial ground are all marked on this plan dated 14 May 1839 relating to the building of the 'intended New Meeting House', or Salem Chapel, to the north.

Earliest records – and the building of the first chapel 1726

There are hardly any records from these early years. In the list of Bucks churches in the Evans MSS (1715) the number of hearers at Marlow is given at 250, of whom 41 are 'county voters' (ie. folk of some substance). The minister who served these 250 was John Benson, the grandson of a minister ejected in East Anglia. They may have met at the home of a scholar named John Gidley who moved to Marlow from Oxford and had his house registered as a Dissenting Meeting House in 1703. Arthur Macarthur in his history of Christ Church speculates that John Gidley's house may have stood on the corner of York Road and Cambridge Road, as this piece of land was in the property of the Church in 1932, with no record of when or why it was acquired.

A new chapel was built in 1726 at the south end of our present site near to Quoiting Square. The contract for the building stipulates that the pulpit, with stairs and sounding-board, and the table-pew, should be taken from the former meeting house to be placed in the new building. It does not say where that former meeting house was located.

Benson was succeeded by a minister called Thomas Pitken (or Polken) who it seems unfortunately presided over a period of gradual decay in membership and interest. The doctrine of the Trinity caused problems for the enlightened mind of the 18th century and many churches experienced a decline.

Eventually, the chapel was closed. We don't know exactly when it was closed nor for how long it stood unused and derelict. But it was re-opened in 1770 or 1771 by a small group of enthusiasts under Mr Samuel Stevens.

A new beginning – perhaps the first of several new beginnings for Christ Church?

Covenant of 1777

'We whose names are hereunto subscribed believing that all the ordinances of the benevolent Jesus were designed to answer some useful and important end ... think it our duty if possible to walk in all the Statues and Ordinances of the Redeemer would therefore by voluntary subscription to this instrument bind ourselves to God and to one another to travel thro' this wilderness in a Body and as a Church of Christ, to communicate together at our Lord's Table when stated or occasional opportunities present themselves for that purpose designing also – to attend Church Meetings and exercise Reproof, Exhortation, Sympathy and Forbearance towards one another as occasion may require.'

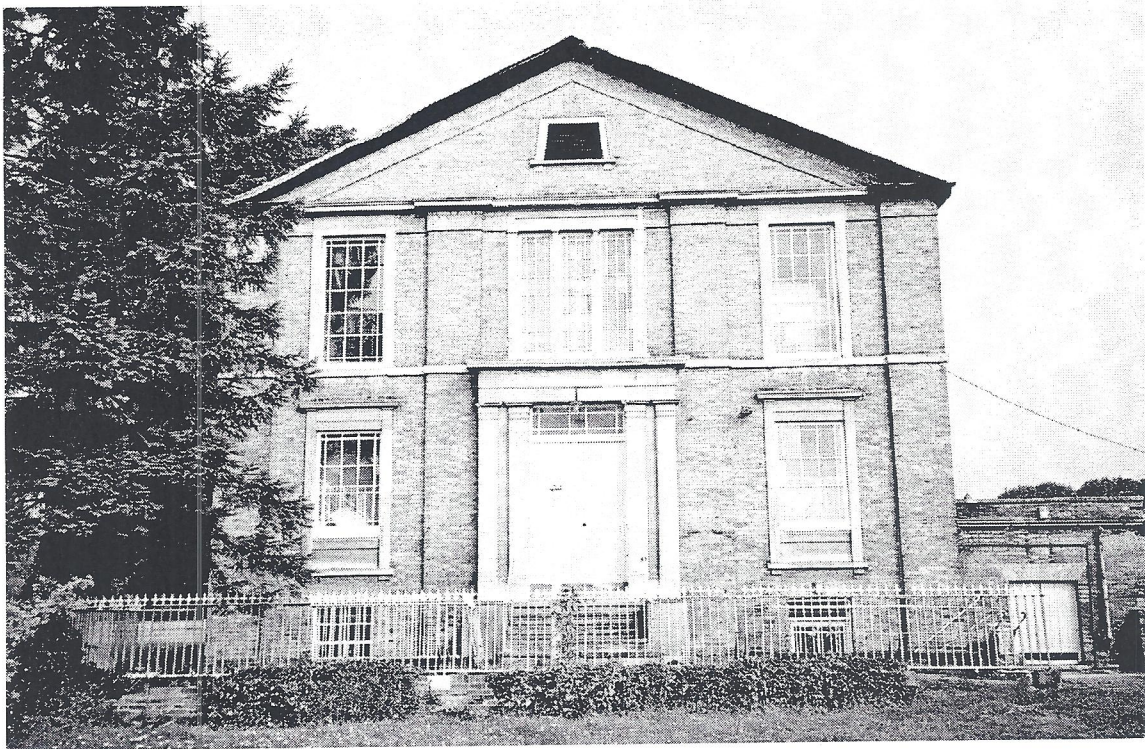
Solemn Agreement, signed by the Revd John Wheeler, his wife, Sarah, and 13 others, dated 1 October 1777. This can be regarded as the original Church covenant.

Salem Chapel

The original Church covenant of 1777 was signed by 15 people who hoped for an increase in numbers. They agreed to receive into Church Fellowship 'persons of either sex who in the judgment of Scripture charity shall be found upon Examination, free from Scandal in their outward common walk, renewed in heart and sound in the Faith.' But sadly there were disagreements over doctrinal matters and membership fell to only nine in 1794. One of the ministers, Richard Frome, was suspected of unorthodoxy.

Things took a turn for the better under George Edwards who was ordained in Marlow in 1806. He was one of the first ordinands from Hackney College. The meeting house was enlarged, and a residence was purchased for the minister. The congregations are stated to have been large, and the activities of the church well organised. A small place of worship was also opened at Bisham, where Mr Edwards preached on Sunday afternoons.

Thomas Styles, successor to Mr Edwards, was a product of Gosport Academy and described as an eloquent and popular preacher. He had a long ministry in Marlow, from 1825 to 1863, and his ministry was marked by the move into our present Church.



The first stone of 'Salem' Chapel was laid on 9 July 1839 and the building was opened on 1 July 1840. Only a little longer than the time that elapsed between our ground-breaking ceremony on 18 January 2003 and the re-opening and dedication of our new building on 19 October 2003.

The Trust Deed vested the Salem Chapel for the worship of 'Protestant Dissenters of the Independent Denomination holding tenets agreeable to the Assemblies Catechism'. This is a reference to a profession of faith drawn up by the Westminster Assembly during the Civil War, which begins with the assertion that the chief end of man is 'to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever'. The Covenant of 1777 had required all new members to make this profession, and here it is reappearing in 1840.

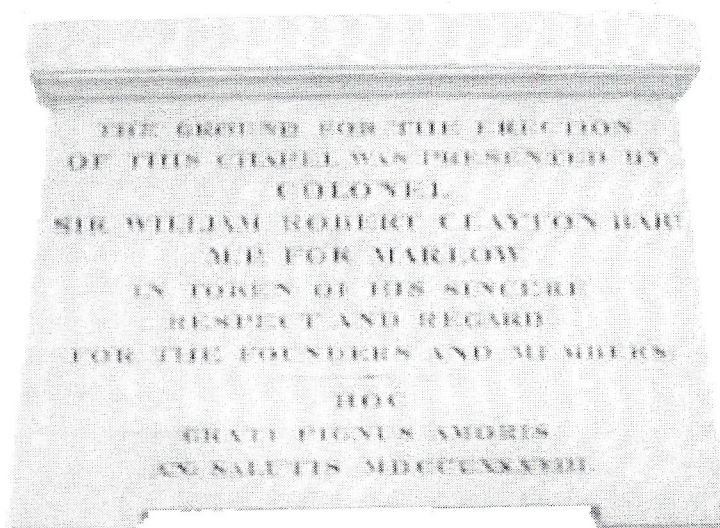
Building – then and now

The state of the chapel built in 1726 must have been giving cause for concern for some time. In 1838 it was thoroughly examined and was found 'in too feeble and dilapidated a condition to justify such an outlay of money as would put the building in substantial repair'. No enlargement was deemed possible and an entirely new chapel would have to be built.

£600 was already promised, and Mr Spicer the Attorney had undertaken to draw up the Conveyance and Trust Deed free of charge, but plans drawn up by the architect James Fenton were estimated to cost £790. So – there were funds to be raised!

A site was selected on the meadow belonging to Sir William Clayton who 'with great liberality and kindness has agreed to give us all we ask for, on two very easy conditions'. These were: to allow him to use the pathway to the chapel in common with the members to give him access to his cottages; and to erect a tablet in the new chapel commemorating the gift.

You can still see the tablet in Christ Church on the wall to the Borlase side. The inscription devised by Sir William's advisers records his esteem for the members at that time:



Various deeds and documents recording sales and acquisitions back to 1714 provide scope for research into ownership of large areas of West Marlow and include the supporting evidence for the good title of the land given by Sir William Clayton.

The church meeting appointed a committee to carry out the work, and a women's committee 'to collect the donations' (!) The proposal to build was made known to tradesmen in the town and Fenton's plans were on display at Mr Groom's, the linen draper's. Two tenders were received and the committee strongly preferred the builder with the higher estimate, Mr Bond. Negotiation followed and Mr Bond got the contract to build the chapel for £1,050. It was designed to seat 500. Mr Bond also got to buy the old chapel for £90!! As in 1726, the builder was instructed to transfer numerous articles from the old building to the new.



**Sir William Clayton Bt as Lt Colonel
Commandant of the 1st or Southern Regiment of
Bucks Yeomanry Cavalry, 1820-1828.**

(Source: *Call to Arms*, Ian FW Beckett, Barracuda Books, 1985.)

Colonel Sir William Clayton's generosity to the Dissenters may not have been entirely disinterested. He was a Whig (Liberal) and contested several elections against the town's then Tory grandees, the Williams family (who were supported also by the Wethereds). In a borough with only a few hundred voters, both parties used all means to round up support. Moreover, the Dissenters' main political demand was the abolition of church rates, a move from which Clayton, as the owner of many properties, stood to benefit personally. For more details see *Great Marlow Parish and People in the 19th Century*, ed. Jean Cook.

James Fenton (1804-1875) – architect

Fenton, born in Reading, established himself in practice in Chelmsford and married the daughter of a wealthy Nonconformist solicitor. He specialised in designing chapels for Nonconformist congregations. Between 1835 and 1846 he produced designs for congregational, independent and baptist chapels including Wingham, Halesworth, Overton, Billericay, Marlow, Lincoln, Ingestone, Chelmsford, Derby, and Wivenhoe. All have the same well-designed fronts. In 1850 Fenton was appointed surveyor to the newly formed Chelmsford Local Board of Health and planned and executed a major water supply and sewerage system for the town.

A minor point of interest is that Fenton was christened at Broad Street Congregational Church, Reading, now a Waterstone's Bookshop but with several Chapel features still in place.

(Source: *Bibliographic Dictionary of British Architects*, H M Colvin, Yale University Press, 1997)

A cost comparison 1840 and 2003

The builder of Salem Chapel was paid £1,050 which in today's prices is equal to approx £51,000. Given that the Cornerstone project cost £800,000 we can safely conclude that it has cost a great deal more to refurbish and extend the church than it originally cost to build. Building cost a lot less in those days! Let us hope Mr Bond, the builder of Salem Chapel, would consider the Cornerstone achievement an enhancement of his original work.

Furthermore, in 1840 the children contributed £1.11s.4d, representing 376 pennies or 1,504 farthings, to the fund-raising effort for Salem Chapel. In today's money this represents approximately £77. 160 years later, what did our children contribute to Cornerstone? ... hours of labour on a balsawood model of the new building, many inventive fund-raising ideas at a succession of Autumn and May Fayres, and a great deal of enthusiasm. Thank you kids!

M

MARLOW NEWS

NEWS IN BRIEF

On song for the festival

MARLOW: Musicians of all ages and standards are invited to take part in this year's Marlow Music Festival.

The event between November 9 and 16 offers the opportunity for experienced, novice, solo and ensemble music makers to perform and compete at a range of levels.

A wider range of non-competitive classes are also on offer for those who have only recently taken up instruments, while more experienced performers can take up a more demanding challenge.

Constructive criticism and advice is available from independent adjudicators at the end of the classes and the festival offers the chance to perform in front of a supportive audience.

Details of this year's festival, including the full syllabus, are available at www.MarlowMusicFestival.co.uk through which entries may be submitted electronically or by calling 01628 484055 for further information.

The closing date for entries is October 1.

Fancy a cuppa?

MARLOW: Organisers hope visitors to a coffee morning next Friday, September 27, will be contributing to the achievement of a record-breaking event. The Methodist Church in Wesley Hall, Spittal Street, is hosting the function as a part of the World's Biggest Coffee Morning, organised by Macmillan Cancer Relief.

The charity aims to attract thousands of people to locations across the country where they can enjoy a cup of coffee in the knowledge that they are making a contribution to cancer care.

Ane Dadds, fundraising manager of the Buckinghamshire branch of Macmillan Cancer Relief, said: "It's a brilliant way to raise money for Macmillan Nurses and people like to get involved because it is so easy."

"Dozen of coffee mornings were held last year raising more than £7,000. Please help us to make it even bigger this year."

Books to boot

MEDHENHAM: A car boot sale will be held at Danesfield School, Rasser Woods, to raise money for books for the school library.

Prices for a pitch are £6 for a car and £8 for a van or people carrier. There are discounts of £1 for people who book in advance. To book a pitch at the event from 10am to 12 noon call Sue Scott on 01628 482640.

Puffin coming

MARLOW: Wycombe District Council has confirmed that work on a puffin crossing to the west of Sir William Borlase's School is to start in the next financial year.

The district council has agreed to finance the crossing which has been called for by town residents for several years.

Plant pull

MARLOW: A plant sale and flag day in the High Street raised more than £250 for the Leekhamill Cate Society.

Plants sold last Tuesday raised £78.92 and a further £158.68 was collected in the street last Friday.

Diane Murray, area secretary for the charity, said: "I would like to thank all those who so generously gave their time and contributions."

Back on stage

MARLOW: The scripts are out for the next production of the Marlow Players who meet for rehearsals every week at The Studio by Liston Hall in the High Street.

The acting roles have been cast but backstage hands are still needed for Haywire, a play by Eric Chappell, which will be coming to the Shelly Theatre from November 21 to 23.

A anyone who is interested in helping out should go along to a rehearsal at 8pm on either Tuesday or Thursday or contact Gloria Kendrick on 01628 481158.

End for the Vets

MARLOW: Remaining members of the High Wycombe and Mid Thames Dunkirk Veterans will be laying up their branch standard on Sunday.

The former army members, aged between 80 and 102-years, will be laying a wreath at the war memorial at 6pm to mark the end of their association.

At 6.30pm, Rev Nick Molony, who was padre for the branch, will be leading a service at Marlow's All Saints' Church in The Causeway.



Vision: How the church will look once it's finished (above) and as it is now (right)



On target to restore old square

Half-a-million in the coffers for facelift to 162-year-old church

CAMPAIGNERS hope Quoting Square, Marlow, will return to its former glory as a recreational spot for residents if their plans for revivifying Christ Church URC are fulfilled.

Three centuries ago, the dilapidated car park off Oxford Road would have been filled with quots enthusiasts who gathered to hurl metal rings, resembling horseshoes, at target pins posted at each end of the pitch.

In houses nearby, about 50 Protestant Dissenters would meet weekly to share their faith - at odds with the government at the time - and listen to speakers who came from far and wide to preach to the religious rebels.

And it is a tribute to the determination of the founding fathers that their descendants are well on the way towards raising the £750,000 necessary to restore the 162-year-old church building.

HELEN USBORNE

STAFF REPORTER

Tenders for the building contract are due in next month and work should begin in the new year to add a foyer, kitchen, disabled access, committee rooms and public hall to the church.

Members of the Cornerstone Appeal committee, who are masterminding the fundraising, hope the construction work will act as a catalyst for the transformation of the whole area, which currently serves as just a car park.

A field of uncut grass stretches in front of the main entrance and needs grow up the side of the dilapidated building which looks more like a warehouse than a place of worship.

How it all began for Christ Church

THE Great Reformation under Henry VIII caused resistance from traditionalists who refused to adapt their faith to that of their King.

During the reign of his successors, Edward VI, Mary Tudor and Elizabeth I, the state religion swung from reformed to traditional Catholic and back to reformed.

Both Catholics and Protestants suffered from persecution during the pendulum swing of religious policy. So when Charles II came to the throne, he introduced the Book of Common Prayer to try to solve the religious rifts. But there was no middle ground for fervent believers and the Dissenters were among rebels who refused to bow down to what they saw as a compromise.

In 1676, 50 brave Protestant Dissenters formed the beginning of what evolved to become Christ Church URC. Weekly lectures took place in houses of members and records say Owen Buckingham, later Lord Mayor of London, came down to Marlow to witness a sermon by Samuel Pomfret, a preacher once imprisoned at Dover Castle for his radical views.

Think of benefits river brings to town

MANY of us are lucky enough to live or work near the river, yet who considers the many issues concerning its use, environmental heritage and future development?

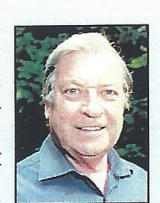
The river is a major factor in the popularity of the Thames Valley region with residents, businesses and visitors - especially tourists.

However, its recreational and commercial use has diminished over many years. Its operation is managed by a small cog in the giant wheel of the Environment Agency while planning and development responsibilities lie with each council bordering the river.

Responsibility for bridges crossing the Thames is shared between councils on either side of the river and other authorities, including central government. One result of this approach has been the delay in beginning much needed maintenance work on Marlow Bridge.

Use of the river for recreational and commercial traffic varies greatly by location and time. Although there are now strategies for developing river use through London, there is no clear plan for the middle

MARLOW MATTERS



Ron Waters

by the Environment Agency and local councils. It is the subject of a conference on Friday, October 4 entitled "The Way Forward - a new Strategic Partnership for the River Thames". For details telephone Mrs Aine Horne on 01491 571476 or email a.horne@btinternet.com. The Marlow Society

David Steele and Ron Waters of the Marlow Society consider the River Thames

Where are the range of boats for hire that once brought visitors to the river in their hundreds for short trips or just to row along one of the beautiful stretches of water that surround Marlow?

welcomes this development and we encourage all interested parties to play a part in ensuring that the river has a bright future. Our River Thames Liaison Group meets regularly and your input can be sent by email to des@rtlq.co.uk or by post to RTLQ, Quarry Lodge, Quarry Wood, Marlow, SL7 1RF.

Advertisement for Capital Windows. Text: "stay warm this winter call the local experts". Features: Document L compliant, FENSA registered company, Trained and experienced installers, Wide range of quality products, 10 year guarantee, Local manufacture, No gimmicks, No pressure. Contact: 01895 232040. Website: www.capitalwindows.co.uk

Advertisement for Toad Hall Garden, Pets and Machinery Centre. Text: "TOAD HALL Garden, Pets and Machinery Centre". Services: FLOWERING: Pansies, Violas, Heathers NOW IN! WALLFLOWERS: Mixed and single colours. 1000's of bulbs from Alliums to Zonatus to choose from for Spring colour. FULLY STOCKED: On EUKANUBA AND IAMS. END OF SEASON CLEARANCE: HONDA GARDEN TRACTORS FROM £1,999. Contact: 01491 Gardens 574615. Website: www.toadhallgardencentre.co.uk

Advertisement for sport. Text: "Keep up to date with the Wags as they take on Sharks, Saracens, Tigers and Saints." Includes a small image of a person and a dog.

Advertisement for Higher Education Courses 2002-3. Text: "Higher Education Courses 2002-3. Call us now for details of places still available." Lists various courses like BA(Hons) degrees, Fine Art Practice, Graphic Design, etc. Contact: 0800 614016. Website: www.amersham.ac.uk

For all the latest news and sport read Midweek on Tuesday

The late 19th century - business as usual?

Unfortunately the last years of Thomas Styles' long ministry were overshadowed by a controversy of a personal nature, as his marriage to his 28 year old cook was frowned on by some of the leading office bearers of the Church. After Styles' retirement in 1863 there followed a succession of seven men who between them served for 20 years, and, as Arthur Macarthur points out, that takes no account of periods of vacancy that occurred during that time.

There is evidence of problems of discipline and a lapse in standards of membership by the 1860s, but a renewal of spiritual energy seems to have occurred, with 26 new members being received in 1867. Special mission services were held in Marlow in 1869 and United Prayer Meetings introduced in 1871. The question arose as to whether the prayer meetings currently held in Chapel should cease in order to let the members support the united meetings. But in the end Chapel meeting night was changed so that members could share in both.

The circumstances of W J Roome's departure in 1873 are unusual. He offered his resignation on the grounds that he was 'much discouraged by want of sympathy, unwillingness on the part of many members of the church to co-operate in its general works and to bear the responsibilities of its services.' Things seem to have been difficult around this period, and when William Morton Mather, the sixth minister after Thomas Styles, died in 1882 aged 67, the congregation decided that they could not support a family man and turned towards the idea of a bachelor student.

Alexander Henderson, a student of New College was called. No stipend was agreed, but he was promised whatever might be in the stipend fund.

Payment by results! The call was supported by 33 members, 19 subscribers and 15 regular attenders. The first recorded payment from the stipend fund was £2.5s.1d. However, by the end of the first year Mr Henderson received £100.

During Mr Henderson's ministry 1882-3, a new classroom was created and

dedicated. The average attendance at morning Sunday School rose to 150, and to 185 in the afternoon. Quite a crowd for the size of the buildings. Mr Henderson must have been keen on music because a singing class was started and he was authorised to buy a Modulation (tuning fork) to help them.

The Pledge of Great Marlow Excelsior Band of Hope

'I, the undersigned, promise by divine assistance to abstain from all intoxicating liquors as a beverage and to discountenance their use in others. Lord, help me for Jesus sake.'

Members of the Band of Hope, established in 1882, took this pledge. Its membership rose to more than a hundred, and amongst early names were Coster, Price, Gill and Burton. Chemical apparatus and a football and posts were among the early purchases. Children were given practical instruction in reading and speaking.

The Band of Hope continued to be active through the inter-war years. Trevor Saint, in his childhood memories (see page 15), recalls the embarrassment felt in the 1930s when the brewery offered the Congregational Church a grant. (Another feature of the inter-war years was a Slate Club with 236 members!)

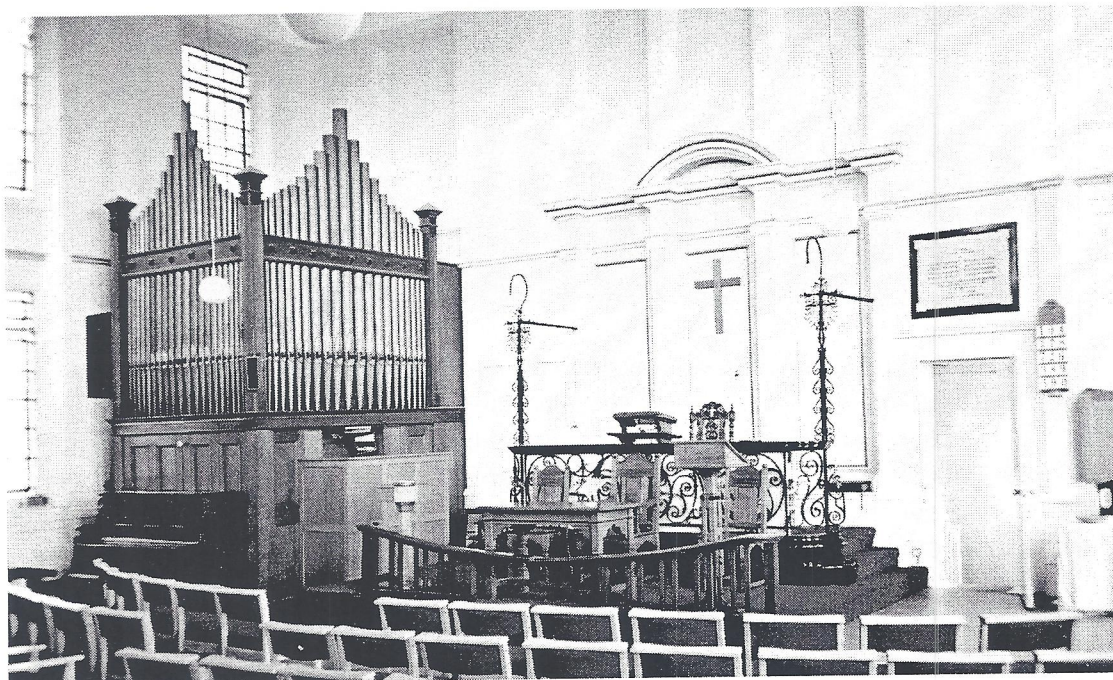
The annual sale

Needlework	£9.7s.2d	Shooting Gallery	10s.2d
Odds and ends	£3.3s.3½d	Magnetic Battery	7s.7d
Refreshments	£3.1s.1½d	Post Office	8s.2d
Fruit and Veg	£1.4s.4d	Fine Art and Museum	4s.6d
Fish Pond	£1.2s.4d	Door	19s.6d

The above table shows the income from the sale in 1893, one of the first to be held. The annual sale or Autumn Fayre as it has been known in recent years, got going during the ministry of Revd Frederick Tavender. In the early years the income was in the region of £20, but it rose to £71 in 1901. More recently the annual sale has been a major fund-raising event for Cornerstone, breaking all records in 2002 with a total of £876 profit.

The Father Willis organ

The idea of installing an organ came on the agenda towards the end of the 19th century. The present instrument was acquired from the classic organ building firm of Willis. It was dedicated on 24 May 1899 when the contributions amounted to £5.18s.1d. The organ itself, now acknowledged to be a splendid example of Father Willis' work, cost £400. A quarter of that sum was given by Miss Patrickson, who later left a legacy fund which assisted in the purchase of property, of which more anon. The organ was wrapped up during the latest building works and has survived unscathed to contribute to worship in the 21st century.

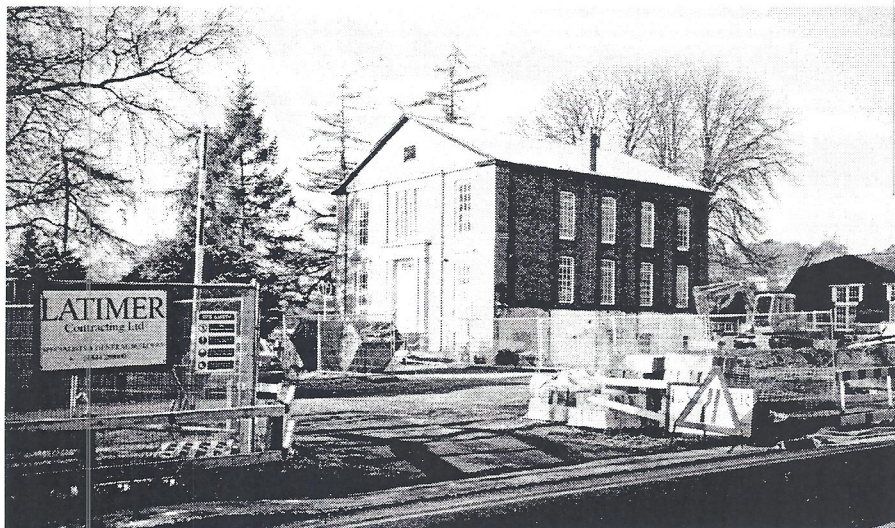


Land, property and the Morgan family

The Morgan family played a great part in the life of our Church. Mr Morgan who lived in the Old Parsonage was a distinguished gentleman who held positions of leadership in the Church over many years. His funeral on 7 April 1903 literally stopped the town. The Home Messenger carried the following account:

It is not within the memory of the oldest inhabitant of Marlow when the town bore a more solemn and sympathetic appearance. Business premises closed from two to four. Every sect and creed was represented at his funeral. The business man, the working man, the nobility and gentry, the vicar and the staff of Borlase School were all present.

W J Morgan continued in his father's footsteps, serving as treasurer of Marlow Congregational Church for 30 years until his retirement in 1932. It was W J Morgan who in 1905 purchased the warehouse fronting onto Oxford Road which subsequently came into the ownership of the Church (see article on the Saw Doctor's, page 33). Together with the Revd G H Jones and Mr J Gray, Mr Morgan also bought several cottages in Hayes Place, Quoiting Square and Oxford Road as they came on the market between 1914 and 1933, many in a dilapidated state, passing the property onto the Church later. It is largely these individual purchases and related transactions which determined the environment in which Christ Church now stands.



According to Arthur Macarthur, at one stage ten or maybe as many as 13 houses were bought by Mr Morgan for £965. He challenged the Church to raise £796 in three years. The difference seems to have been covered by Miss Patrickson's legacy fund. Two years later six houses in Hayes Place were sold, suggesting that the church was unable to raise enough to acquire the whole of Mr Morgan's purchase. The area concerned is now occupied by Platt's Garage.

A piece of land at the junction of York Road and Cambridge Road which had been yielding a rent of £1 per annum had its rent doubled in 1932 and was subsequently sold to the tenant for £125. No record has been discovered of when that land was acquired. Perhaps this was the site of John Gidley's house and of the original chapel replaced in 1726 (see page 7). We will probably never know for certain.

Christ Church between the wars

Childhood memories of the Congregational Chapel, Marlow
– contributed by Trevor Saint

Both my parents, Harry and Gertrude Saint, were members of the Parish Church before the First World War. My father worked with others helping at a small church mission in Dean Street, roughly where the police station is now. Dean Street was then narrow with very old property and lined with many beer houses. Not the best condition for people short of work, very small payment for employment and a general low standard of living. Thus the mission hall was a refuge for poor people where kindness and prayer and help could be given. I don't know the reason for the closure of the mission but, for sure, my father and mother were bitterly disappointed at this happening and left the Parish Church.

First memories of Christ Church

I can't say exactly when my parents started to attend the Congregational Church – probably just before the Great War. Harry was in the army during the war so he would have renewed his attendance about 1919.

My first memories were living in a council house, a number of which were built at the top of Little Marlow Road. They were very good houses for their time and mostly occupied by ex-service men and families. Children born in the early 1920s were just the right age for the next war. I expect I was pushed in a pram to Quoiting Square before I had memories, however I do remember seeing a steam train running behind a beach. This must have been Dawlish or Teignmouth, about 1925. I was sitting with my sister and my mother and there was a lot of talking and singing all around me. Later I noticed a man at the front, higher up than everybody else. Undoubtedly it was the Rev G H Jones. I remember him as a kindly man with a beard and loud voice and a definite presence. Over the years I remember his sermons were lengthy and services were extended well past the usual one hour and 25 minutes.

The expression 'Sunday best' was very important! Even the poorer people looked their best on Sunday. Ladies always had head dress and I worried, as a little boy, how the hat pins went through the heads without causing injury. My family lived on the outskirts of the town and it was a long walk down the Little Marlow Road (narrow and winding), Chapel Street and West Street to Oxford Road. We did this sometimes on two or three occasions on a Sunday. There is no doubt that our diet was bigger than in modern times. Most days we ate breakfast, dinner, tea and supper – all substantial – which kept us walking.

People and social events

Quite a number of the congregation were shopkeepers. Among them were several grocers, furniture purveyors, a jeweller and a large emporium dealing with clothes, haberdashery, furniture etc. They were prominent people in the Chapel. I remember particularly the gentleman who made the announcements on Sunday morning. He had pince-nez glasses which he put on and off and a rose in a silver holder in his lapel. I often wondered if it contained water. One family had a

large amount of property. By what my father said at that time, voting would be LIBERAL.

The congregation was friendly and took part in activities such as socials and outings. For instance, we went on a chara-banc to the seaside several times. The chara-banc had an open top and doors on each side for each row of seats. Setting off at 5.30 am we made ETA about 11.30 am at Eastbourne. Coming home at dusk we sang 'One Man went to Mow' and 'A Long, Long Trail Awinding'.

Growing up

I was generally a happy child but inclined to cry when sad music was played. When I was five years old I started school in Oxford Road, near the Congregational Church. I didn't like school a bit and had an awful time for about six months. I ran away once. During the two years I went there, they had at least two epidemics of diphtheria and the school had to be fumigated. However, I learned the three Rs and Raffia.

My father gave swimming lessons at 6.30 on Sunday mornings (in summer). The bathing place was a long way – over the bridge and down Quarry Wood Road.

As the years went by, I was sent to Borlase School – but I was always unhappy that most of my fellows did not have the advantages that I had, to say nothing of school uniform – a Borlase badge and distinctive cap. I always thought life was harder for some than others.

Music at Church

The choir had about 40 members and my father was choir master. The organ was a Willis, similar to the Parish Church. Mr Clifford Coker was the

organist and travelled from Wycombe by motor bike and side car. He also came for the two services – which was a difficult journey, pre-war. A much more winding road than today, and very steep. He was a cabinet maker in Wycombe and the trade was very unstable around the depression. I expect he had a small fee for his services which was at times a necessary part of his wages. The organ was blown by hand and the blower had to come out to the front during the long sermons. Several times a year the Chapel held a PSA (Pleasant Sunday Afternoon). They were excellent opportunities for musicians (violins etc), recitations and anthems.

Sunday School

At the age of six or seven, I started to go to Sunday School. I could not understand why I had to go to school on Sunday when I did not like it much on weekdays. The Sunday School was nearly as large in numbers as day school. Families sent children on Sunday mornings and afternoons. It was an easy way of getting the children out of the way so that parents could have some peace. I must not be cynical, but a majority of parents did not go to church very often except at special times such as Christmas and Harvest Festival. However a good deal of teaching by Sunday School teachers laid the foundation for years ahead, such as study of the Bible and a moral way of living.

The superintendent was Mr Rupert Batting and deputy Miss Shipton. The children were very fond of Rupert and he had a wonderful way of talking to us. The Sunday School started in the afternoon by singing and prayer and then we went into separate classes. I think some of these classrooms had an odour of damp and dry rot and from time to time the boiler gave off fumes

which were quite overpowering. In this day and age the authorities would be down on the Church, but we all survived. One teacher called Mrs Haycock had lavender perfume all about her. She always had a Sunday School newspaper with puzzles for the children. Mrs Haycock invited some of us to her house, which was in the big chalk pit near the water pumping station. When I was a bit older I was taken over the pump house where they had a large gas engine worked by coke and water producing gas. Mr Haycock showed me how it worked and he allowed me to climb a vertical ladder up to the reservoir. In the chalk pit a gypsy camp with a few caravans was part of the scene.

One of the annual events was the Sunday School 'treat'. In previous days the exciting venues were Burnham Beeches, Nettlebed and California in England. Attendances at Sunday School increased before treats. I suppose the only holidays parents would have were bank holidays. Games and races were the programme of the day. I believe my sister went on the steamer to Windsor. Some of the mothers were anxious for their safe return. 'God be with them!'

The arrival of electricity

Round about the 1930s electricity arrived in Marlow. Householders were given three lights and a plug – to start them going. Probably a couple of years later, the Chapel was going in for the 'light'. My father, the Secretary, had visits from a number of electrical firms. One of them was a nice chap from the High Street, Pat Ryan. Many years later (1940) Pat was killed in a bomb incident near the water works.

The job was carried out by K Hoddinott from Wallingford. The Hoddinotts were regular Methodists

from Marlow. My father was eager to have an organ blower (electric). This item was set aside for several years.

A new minister

The Rev G H Jones was due for retirement about 1933-4 and the normal procedure was to invite ministers over weekends. We took turns entertaining – Sunday lunch and tea. Occasionally I would take the preacher from one venue to another. Eventually the final voting for the new man took place and the Rev E E Marks was chosen, a handsome man and a different kind of preacher. Of course, the judgement of a ten year old boy was very doubtful. The younger minister was able to meet the youth groups.

Singing in the Choir

About this time I began to sing in the choir – treble voiced boys were popular when the gramophone record of the famous music, 'O for the Wings of a Dove' and 'Hear My Prayer' were sung by Earnest Lough. Jim Bowles was a good singer along with Vera Gill and Hilda (Coster). A bit later one, the four of us sang at the afternoon concerts. I reached my peak when singing 'O Valiant Hearts' on Armistice Sunday. They were happy days with lots of singing and good fellowship.

My family moved in 1929 from the council house to quite a big house in Wycombe Road. We still had a long walk to chapel but going along a path by the football ground, the boys school and the recreation ground and it made a nice change. Some time later a bus went regularly to Wycombe, so we put our hands up to stop the bus which, at the time, terminated at the Crown Hotel. On Thursday evenings, choir practice night, we could get the 9 pm bus back home. By then the four of us

were in the choir, father, mother, sister and myself.

Too good to be true! My voice was breaking which was the death sentence for boy choristers. In those days you would be cast out of the sweet singing brigade – there was no place for crackly croakers. Very many years ahead, a boy could probably sing alto or ‘farmers bass’.

Impressions of All Saints

When I was eleven and in my first year at Borlase, the whole school made its way down to All Saints Church for the funeral of Canon Groves, a previous headmaster. I had only been to All Saints probably on Ash Wednesday. Usually the boys school went to Trinity Church. The atmosphere was not what I was used to – a large choir of men and boys dressed in cassocks and surplices. The organ music and choir knocked me for six. I expect the hymns were ‘Now the Labourer’s Task if O’er’, ‘Lead Kindly Light’ and ‘The Dead March’. They were quite morbid in those days! I wondered what it was like to be in such a choir. The memories stayed for a while but it would be six or seven years before I thought of it again.

The organ blower

I was very delighted when my father said they needed an organ blower. Tucked away in a gloomy hole at the back of the organ was a protruding handle shining from many calloused hands and light from a gas jet. I loved the mechanics of the organ and rows of dusty pipes above my head. The blower had to keep his mind on the job otherwise sounds would fade away.

I had a companion in the ‘blower’s hole’. He was a fine musician – a bandsman and had also lost his treble voice. Later we found that we could

sing a bit of bass, so we kept hymn books and with the ‘gloworm’ light managed to pick up the lower notes from the organist playing.

The talk of an electric blower was on the agenda again and the installation took place probably around 1937-38. The church was delighted to have the blower, particularly as it was all but silent, in fact the Diagonate (meeting of Deacons) thought the organist had not switched it on. Of course there were no compensations terms for the ‘ex blowers’. The blowers by this time went back to the choir stalls and tried out their bass voices. Having grown up by this time it was nice to get back with the young girls.

The grant from the brewery

Sometime about 1937-8 the church was thinking about financial problems. I expect that, in the light of improved conditions by the electricity and the organ blower, a committee was set up. They agreed to write to businesses to get donations. The biggest business in Marlow would be Wethered Breweries. However a number of members could not relate with a firm which produced alcohol and the curse of the problems of drink. (The Band of Hope was 100-strong at this time.) This was a difficult one which could hold up the appeal very badly. However the minister had a bright idea. Let us say that Wethereds were manufacturers of mineral water.

Lord Wharton

An event held at Chapel from time to time was the presentation of the ‘Lord Wharton Bibles’. In his will, Lord Wharton said that children would have a Bible at a ceremony on a Sunday afternoon if they could recite seven psalms. I think we only had to recite one psalm and altogether as a group. The presentation took place amidst the music and recitations on a PSA.

The Bibles were given to the children one by one by Miss Shipton, but I did not get one. Maybe I wasn't mouthing the words properly! After a certain amount of blushing, I noticed Miss Shipton disappearing out of the door near the pulpit. She had to go across the rec to York Road. At the end of the concert Trevor Saint had a one off presentation. I asked my father the reason for the problem but he said, 'One day it will be apparent to you' – I am still waiting!

Albert Plumridge

A number of names on a memorial above the door to the lower level were service men killed in the Great War. A gentleman named Mr Plumridge, very popular in the Chapel, had a chest complaint as a result of the war. Sadly, he died and a ceremony was held on a Sunday to see his name added to the memorial. To think that the man had survived the war but succumbed a few years after.

The Cokers

Another worrying thing happened when a message arrived from High Wycombe related to the birth of twins to Mr and Mrs Coker. The mother was desperately ill when medical help was lacking before the war. I knew little or nothing about babies coming into the world. Parents kept mute about such events. However I was fond of the Coker family and I was shocked at the news. When my father came home from work off the Marlow train, he quickly rode off to speak to the deacons and within a period of 24 hours many folk from the Chapel were praying in their homes. Mrs Coker passed the crisis.

I loved going to the Cokers (Mr Clifford Coker was the organist) – perhaps on Saturday afternoons for tea. The big treat was to go up the garden to the 'loo' and behind was an enormous chimney stack – up to the sky – a very common sight in Wycombe. Wycombe in those days had dozens of furniture factories. At certain time of the day hooters were sounded to announce the start or finish of work.

Moving on

The years were rolling by and I was coming up to 17 years. Looking back, I was never made a full member of the Church, for example, none of my friends were allowed to take communion, even by our mid teens – maybe we were not mature enough. The Lord's Supper, as it was called, was for adults only!

There were a number of changes in 1939. Mr Coker resigned from the organ stool and my father resigned from the choir and secretary. Mr Kirby was the new organist. He was Post Master of Marlow. My father became a lay preacher at chapels in the Wycombe area. Soon after the war came – my father joined the Home Guard and they started the Army Cadet Force. My sister joined the Land Army and my mother went sometimes to Trinity Church. In about November 1939 my uncle took me to meet Dr Bath, a rather formidable and taciturn organist at All Saints. I was received into the choir – with no experience of the trappings of the C of E. 60 years later I resigned!

I will cherish my memories of the Congregational Church.

Trevor Saint

Sunday School in the 1920s

In 1929 the Sunday School had 114 girls and 104 boys on the roll. The average attendance was less, but the numbers of old Marlovians who speak of contact with the 'Cong's' of those days shows that a considerable impact was made on the young life of the town. At times the Sunday School met both in the morning and the afternoon. One teacher, Mr Simpson, served for over 70 years. Amongst his long-serving colleagues and successors were Rupert Batting and Mrs Roberts. She was appointed Secretary in 1928 and played a leading part in its life for over half a century. Her reports to the Annual Meeting were obviously a striking feature year by year.

The legacy of the 'Cong's'

Here is an extract from a letter that reminds us of the legacy of the 'Cong's' in Marlow.

... When my sister-in-law sent me a cutting from the local paper I felt I must know more about the Church that was the basis for my faith. As a very small child I was taken to your Church by my mother who had a great faith. After my father returned from the war both my brothers joined us as they became old enough.

I well remember the dark and dreary damp schoolrooms we were allocated after corporate worship in the school hall – especially the toilet we used by walking up the steps, descending more steps and running around the outside of the building to some dark and frightening 'loo'...

I eventually sang in the choir after singing solo at the Anniversary Service held each year. My brother, Tony Harris (married to Kathleen Dorsett) was a regular worshipper at the 'Cong's' as it was affectionately known. I cannot remember if he was an Elder, but he certainly held that office in Hereford URC where he retired to. Sadly, he and his wife died nine years ago, but whenever Tony visited friends in Marlow he always worshipped at the URC.

I am now a member of the C of E because we have always lived in villages with no URC. Personally, I do not mind where I worship – Jesus is the pivot of my faith and He is the 'Cornerstone' of my life. I have many happy memories of life in your Church – taking part in concerts and pantomimes and playing the piano at the PTA!! (Pleasant Tuesday Afternoons)

Both my parents were taken to your Church for their funeral service and I suppose that was the last time I worshipped there – 1960 and 1966. My father, although an agnostic, was a well respected Marlow man, and the Church was full. I would dearly like to see the new venture, but that will not be possible – I am now 89 and visits far from home are not now possible. I do wish you all a great success and will be thinking of you and praying for you all...

*Nancy Lay
October 2003*

The Chapel by the Square

There's a little town which shelters
In a valley by the Thames
For peaceful calm and beauty
Is one of England's gems.

I remember in my boyhood
Long since when I dwelt there
I went to Sabbath worship
In the Chapel by the Square.

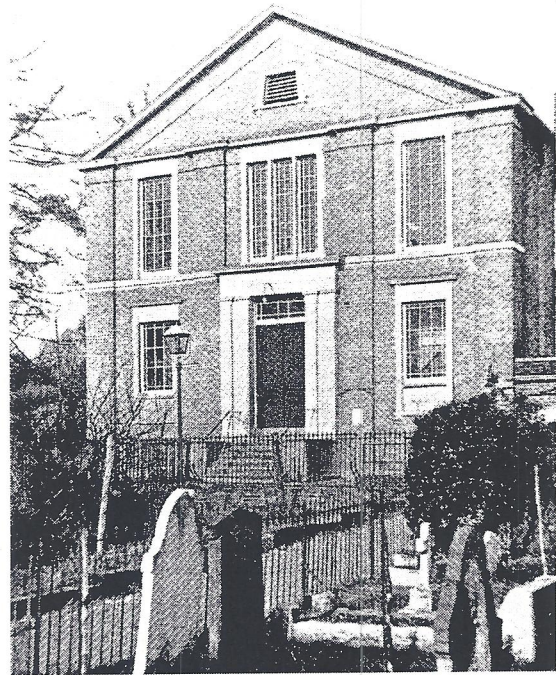
No worldly ostentation
No glittering pomp or pride
Yet all the memories I treasure
Will long with me abide.

Where just a few were gathered
For worship and for prayer
My grateful heart remembers
The Chapel by the Square.

I love my visits homewards
Though alas they are so few
To the valley by the river
In the town that Shelley knew.

The sun streams through the window
Sweet music fills the air
And I hear the call that brings me
To the Chapel by the Square.

H A Harvey
1945



The photo above shows Christ Church in 1939, the railings around the graveyard and the path to the Church are in evidence.

The photo below was taken in 2002.



Memories of the Rev Fred Horrox

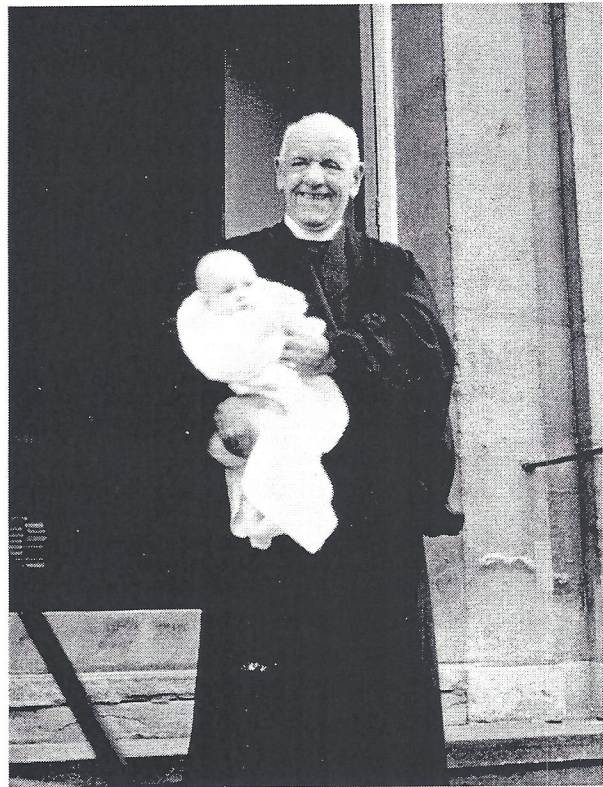
I was just into my teens when in 1951 the Rev Fred Horrox became our pastor at the Marlow Congregational Church. His warm Yorkshire accent and friendly, down-to-earth style came as a contrast to the rather formal style of his predecessor, the Rev Haggett. As a 13-year-old, I found this change of style very welcome and increasingly warmed to our new minister. His friendliness and humour put everyone at ease.

Even to this day I can remember the message of many of his sermons but perhaps my most abiding memory of his time with us was two particular examples of his lovely sense of humour. The first was one day when I met him in Marlow High Street and stopped for a chat. It was brewing day at Marlow's Wethered Brewery and the pungent aroma of brewing beer hung in the air. I said, 'That awful smell is strong today. I hate it!' He looked at me with an expression of mock horror: 'SMELL! SMELL! That's not a smell! That's a PERFUME!' The Rev Fred did enjoy a drink!

The second example was on my wedding day in 1960. After conducting the marriage ceremony he shook hands with my new husband and said, 'Congratulations – you've made a good choice – Margery's one of **our** girls and I've known her for years. She comes with a full guarantee: if she doesn't give complete satisfaction I'll give you your money back!' This became a family joke through the years and many a marital tiff was de-fused by laughter when my husband retorted, 'I'm off to see old Horrox about that refund!'

When many years later we were saddened to hear of the death of the Rev Horrox, that moment too was once again lightened when my husband suddenly smiled and said, 'I'll **never** get that refund now!' I fancied I heard a chuckle!!

Margery Thwaites



The Rev Horrox holding our daughter Beverley Jane at her Christening in October 1963. Note his typical masculine manner of holding the baby – with total disregard for the beauty of her long, heirloom christening gown!!!

A PASTOR WHO WAS EVERYBODY'S FRIEND

THE Rev Frederick Horrox M.A. — or plain "Fred" as he was affectionately known in Marlow — died on February 1, aged 89.

The funeral service, conducted by the Rev Winston Reed, took place at Christ Church, Marlow, on Tuesday. Friends and many local organisations paid their last tribute to one of Marlow's sons, adopted perhaps, but who after 26 years among them endeared himself to all.

He was educated at Bradford Grammar School, Aberdeen University and the United College at Bradford.

LAST SERVICE

Before coming to Marlow's Congregational Church, now Christ Church (United Reformed), he was at Utley, Keighley, Lightcliffe near Halifax, Barchurch, Scarborough, Christchurch, Southsea and Bramhall, Cheshire.

Although he had retired, the Rev Horrox continued to take services in many churches of varying denominations, taking his last service at Sir William Borlase's School speech day in 1974.

As well as carrying out his church duties during the 1914-18 war, he was voluntary orderly at Keighley military hospital.

At Bramhall in the last war he was an officer in the ATC, an ARP warden, and also Chaplain to the Forces. Later, he held important ranks in Masonry and was a member of Marlow Rotary Club.

SPORTSMAN

A keen sportsman, he enjoyed golf and the odd game of billiards. At Southsea he went for a swim every morning before breakfast.

In the arts, he greatly enjoyed singing and, like

Emlyn Williams, he could entertain you with long passages from Dickens from memory, such as the Breach of Promises Trial from "The Pickwick Papers."

DOWN TO EARTH

But it was in the Church that the Rev Horrox commanded outright attention, with his interesting and down-to-earth sermons which were never without a touch of humour.

Finally, he was very popular with the ladies, so much so in fact, that they came from his former churches at Scarborough, Southsea and Bramhall to visit him in Marlow. Wicker basket on arm, accompanied by his wife — his constant companion and pillar of strength (she died in May, 1975) — his progress along the High Street was usually slowed down by the number of stops he had to make to chat to people.

He leaves two daughters, Muriel and Elsie, the latter known as the "head's secretary" to hundreds of boys who have passed through Sir William Borlase's School.

C.A.C.



February 1977

Reproduced with kind permission of the *Maidenhead Advertiser*.

A chat with Miss Elsie Horrox
(from *New Forum*, Jan-Feb 2002)

Q: Elsie, your father was Fred Horrox MA who was Minister at Christ Church from 1951 to 1965. He followed Hubert Haggett and preceded Geoffrey Walker. Arthur Macarthur's history of our Church says that Fred Horrox left many marks on the life of the town as well as on Christ Church itself. Could you tell us about some of these?

A: In the town my father was a keen Rotarian and my mother was a member of the Inner Wheel. For some time my father was a Governor of Great Marlow School and, for many years, he conducted a service in the Chapel of Sir William Borlase's School on their Speech Day. The last service he took was at their Speech Day in 1974, when he was 86. He also took part every year in the service at the War Memorial on Remembrance Day. Our own service on that day was at 11.15 as the majority of the congregation went to the town service first.

Q: Could you tell us about some of your early memories?

A: I was born at Lightcliffe near Halifax. My parents were Yorkshire. Lightcliffe Congregational was my father's second church. In 1922 we moved to Scarborough Bar Church. After 6½ years he was called to Christ Church, Southsea. My main years of schooling were at the Portsmouth High School. In 1936 my father became minister of Bramhall Congregational Church, near Stockport, and in 1951 came to Marlow. At that time I was working as secretary to the professors of History at Manchester University but found I could fill a vacancy as secretary to the professor of Psychology at Reading University, so I decided to come to Marlow with my parents. After 6 years, I became secretary to the headmaster of Sir William Borlase's School, and stayed in that post for the next 27 years.

Q: Where was the Manse when your father was minister in Marlow?

A: The Manse was number 64 Chapel Street. (It is close to the pedestrian crossing.) It now looks very shabby from the outside and I don't know if it is still occupied. It is a large terraced house with the front door opening onto the pavement. It was a house of character and had at one time been a public house. Inside the front door on the right was a room which had been the pub 'parlour'. My father used that room as his study. On the left was a large wooden-panelled walk-in cupboard with shelves which had been the pub bar. That was our larder but we always referred to it as 'the bar'.

At the end of the long hall was a very heavy door which shut the rest of the house off from the pub area. There was a sitting/dining room with a coal fire and a French window to the garden. There was also a large breakfast room with a coke boiler for heating the water and a door into the garden. Beyond that was a scullery and utility area, both with stone floors. We also had a cellar where the coal and coke were stored and there was a cold slab for keeping food cool. (We did not have a fridge, freezer or washing machine in those days.)

The garden was walled and on two levels. The top level had flower beds and a lawn. The flower beds were surrounded by upturned empty wine bottles! The dents in these bottles filled with rain water and attracted many birds. The lower level of the garden was an

orchard with apple trees, raspberries, gooseberries, red and black currants and blackberries. There was no back entrance to the house so bicycles had to be wheeled through the house to the garden shed, and the dustbin had to be carried through the house to the front door every week.

The front door had an old-fashioned pull bell which was a great attraction to children walking past and also late at night to some who had had too much to drink! We enjoyed living in the house for 14 years. It continued as the Manse during the time of the next two ministers.

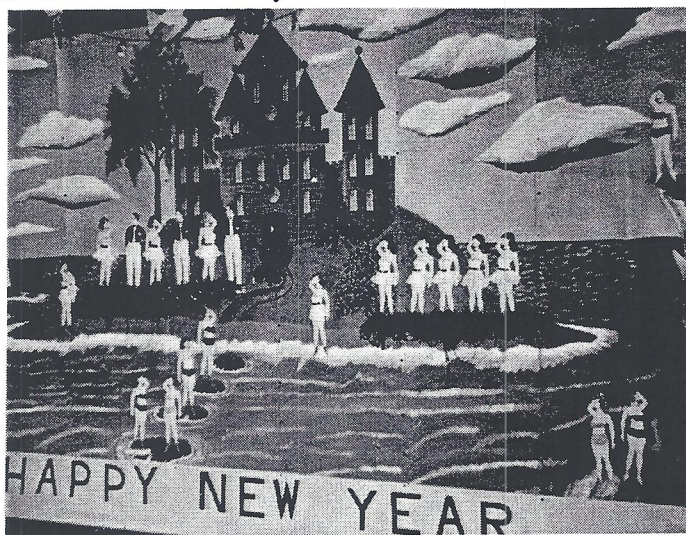
Q: Tell us about Christ Church 1951-65. How did the site differ from the present site?

A: When we came to Marlow in 1951 it was a small town, with a population of around 6000. The entrance to the Church was from a gate in the corner of Quoiting Square. The area which is now the car park was taken up by cottages. There was no car park for the Church, but looking back I cannot think of any members of the congregation who had cars. In later years when a few started coming by car there were always plenty of parking spaces in Quoiting Square. The Church at that time was known as Marlow Congregational Church.

We had two services each Sunday: 11 am and 6.30 pm. There was a good choir which sang at both services. Teenagers were encouraged to join the choir and many of them did so. The Sunday School had its own service at about 10 am. The children came up into the Church for the first hymn, the children's address and their own hymn. Most of the children then went home but those whose parents were there went to sit with their parents and stayed for the rest of the service. The Sunday School also met in the afternoons. Some of the children entered for the annual Wycombe District Scripture exam. There is a picture in Arthur Macarthur's history that shows them with their certificates.

There was an organisation for women called the PTA (Pleasant Tuesday Afternoon). Although a church organisation many of its regular attenders came from other churches in the town. They usually had a speaker and a devotional service. Each year they had a coach trip to the seaside.

There was also a flourishing Youth Club which had many activities – indoors in the winter and outdoors in the summer. Among those who helped as leaders at the Youth Club were Roy and Margaret Isaac and Jack and Mary Johnson. One year the Youth Club volunteered to 'spring clean' the downstairs hall. The young men and boys



Scenery decoration for New Year's Eve social, about late 50s or early 60s. The scenery was painted by Fred Hewitt who was a member of the Church from the early 1920s until his death in 1992. He was also a very keen choir member. He painted a new scene each year on strips of wall-lining paper and then put them up at the back of the stage.

climbed on step ladders and washed down the walls and cleaned the lights. The rest of us got down on our hands and knees and scrubbed the floor. It was a mammoth task but the final result was worth the effort.

The highlight of the church year was the anniversary. This was held about May or June on a Wednesday. There was a service in the afternoon followed by a tea in the hall, and another service in the evening. There was always a visiting preacher, and people from neighbouring Congregational churches came, as did the clergy from other Marlow churches. All Congregational churches in the area had their anniversaries around May and June, always on Wednesdays so the ministers had a busy period attending them all.

Q: How did Christ Church develop during your father's ministry?

A: Mostly on the ecumenical side. The Council of Churches (now Churches Together in Marlow) was formed and united activities encouraged. In 1951 the congregation consisted mainly of people who had lived in Marlow all their lives, but gradually more people came to live in Marlow and some came to the Church. On the whole it was a period of stability rather than of growth.

Q: What would your father have had to say about Cornerstone?



A: I am sure my father would have supported Cornerstone, particularly with regard to improving access for disabled people and improving the facilities for the hall. He would very strongly have disapproved of any alterations to the Church building itself.

Q: What do you believe are the priorities for Christ Church in the 21st century?

A: To look to the future by building on the past. To encourage the young people.

The picture shows the derelict landscape following demolition of cottages in Quoiting Square and Oxford Road in the early 1960s.

Margaret and Roy Isaac

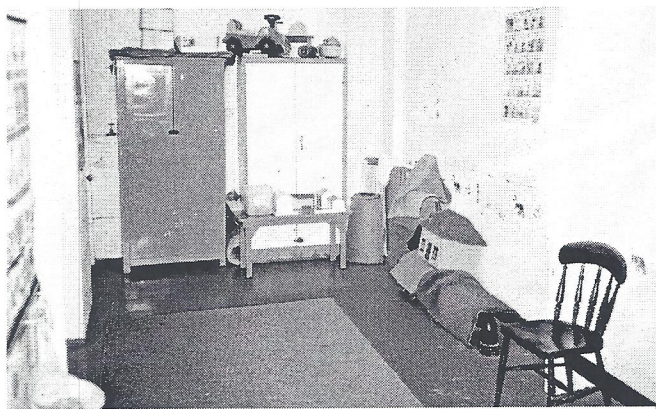
Elsie refers above to Margaret and Roy Isaac's involvement with the Youth Club. Margaret and Roy were married in 1948 in Salem Chapel and lived in one of the four small cottages in Oxford Road, owned by the Church, on what is now the car park. On Margaret's death in February 2000, the Revd Stanley Jones wrote as follows:
'Margaret's connection with Christ Church was lifelong. She was proud of the Congregational tradition and for many years served as a Deacon. On the formation of the URC she became an Elder. On retiring from the Elders' Meeting she was appointed Elder Emerita. To list Margaret's activities in the Church would be a daunting task... Margaret was a woman of prayer.'

Sunday School in the Sixties

My parents, Bob and Stella Williams, and I moved to Marlow in April 1966. What a culture shock was in store for me! I was used to a brand new church building, to a Junior Church of over 100 children who shared the beginning of the main service with the adults and then went out to their classes, and to lots of other activities being church centred. Not so in Marlow Congregational Church! It felt as though I had stepped back a century!

The building had clearly once been gracious but was rather the worse for wear. Instead of what I called a hall there was schoolroom. That was where we met for Sunday School. I remember being a bit of a misfit because I did not go to the main part which met in the afternoons. I only went in the mornings, to a tiny class which met before the 11 o'clock service. In Sunday School we had various teachers and what we did depended on who was teaching. Mrs Roberts was in charge, I think. Then there were Margaret Isaac, Mary Johnson, and sometimes Kathleen Harris, each of whom had children not far from me in age. When it was time for the morning service to start we went upstairs to share the first part, after which we went home. Well that was a problem.

I was not considered old enough to be at home on my own and my parents were still in church. Sometimes I used to stay for the rest of the service. Geoffrey Walker was the minister and he preached long sermons. I once timed one – 29 ½ minutes! When my mother told him this later he said, 'Tell her I'll give her the other 30 secs one day!' I am sorry to say I cannot remember any of what he said!



The damp and dismal crèche room in 2002, not long before demolition.

Frequently my eye would be drawn to stare at the meringue above the organ seat. The organist was Miss Noel who used to travel from High Wycombe to play for us. She invariably wore a white hat with lots of net – and that was all one could see of her above the organ screen! However, Marlow was changing, more houses were being built, new young families were moving in and we had a sudden influx of babies. I was asked if I would help with the newly formed crèche. Great! It kept me occupied while my parents were upstairs and I no longer got bored by long sermons.

These babies of course grew, and the Church took the decision to reorganise its almost extinct Sunday School in order to try to provide better for the young children and their families. From now on everyone would come to the first part of the Sunday service and the Sunday School would move downstairs for their own classes after the children's address. I was just 15 and was asked if I would change jobs and teach the Beginners. I jumped at the chance. I worked closely with Mary Johnson who had the Primary. We met together in the primary room first and I then took my 3 and 4 year olds into the lobby between the primary room and the schoolroom, by the boiler room. I adored it.

For the first year we had no teaching guides and I used to write my own stories for them based on children's TV characters – I especially remember a favourite being the one in which Dougal from *The Magic Roundabout* built a church out of sugar cubes.

When it came to my first Easter, however, something extra special happened. I had thought long and hard about what to do with such small children. In the end I decided to tell them the very basics of the Easter story – not eggs or bunnies, but the Bible version. What they got from it I do not know, but as I shared it with them it suddenly came alive for me. There in that somewhat tatty little room I realised that Jesus Christ had died and was raised for me. I suddenly had a personal faith. Later that day I asked about becoming a Church Member, and I was received into membership in May 1971. That meant I was one of the youngest people in the country to vote, that autumn, regarding the formation of the United Reformed Church.

Two years later I went off to university, leaving home and my Sunday School teaching behind. I have followed two vocations in my life – as a teacher and then as an ordained minister of the United Reformed Church. In many ways both were nurtured by my time living and worshipping in Marlow, and especially by my work in the Sunday School. Little do we know when we ask someone to take something on where it might lead them. It was such a joy that some of those with whom I had worked in Sunday School were present at my ordination in 1989. The church where I was first a member holds a significant place in my story, and in my heart.

Daphne Williams



The Quoting Square Playgroup in its pre-Cornerstone surroundings



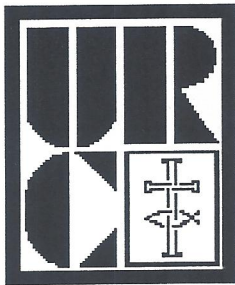
Hats off to Junior Church and the Kool Kids, July 2001.

The Seventies

Christ Church URC Marlow

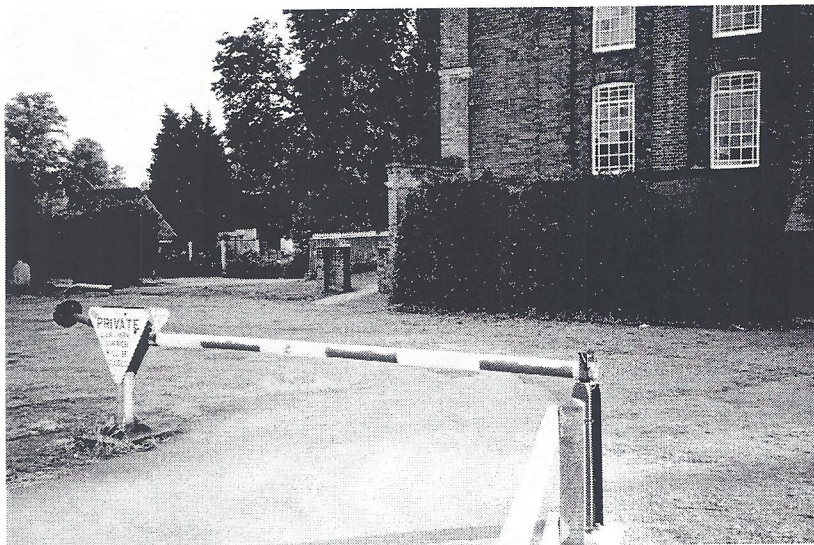
Proposals for the union of Presbyterians and Congregationalists were the subject of national discussion in 1948, ending in a covenant between the two denominations and joint activity all over the country. New discussions were initiated in 1962, and issues of authority and the place of Eldership started to appear on Church Meeting agendas. When the final decision was called for in 1971 a positive answer was sent from Marlow, and in 1972 Salem Chapel or Marlow Congregational Church became part of the United Reformed Church (URC).

The union in 1972 of the Congregational Church in England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England represented the coming together of two elements, both of which have been present in Marlow since the earliest days of the Dissenters' meetings.

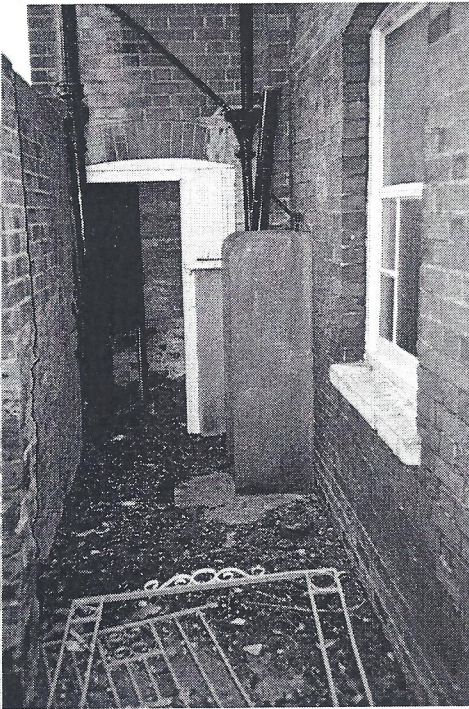
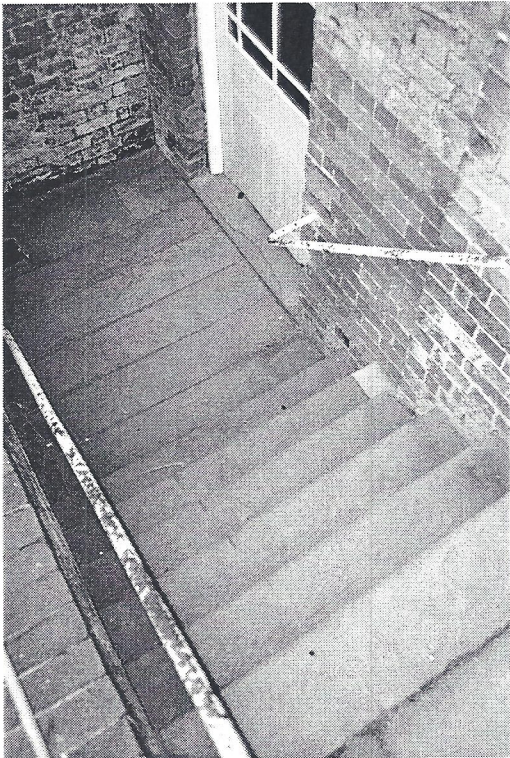
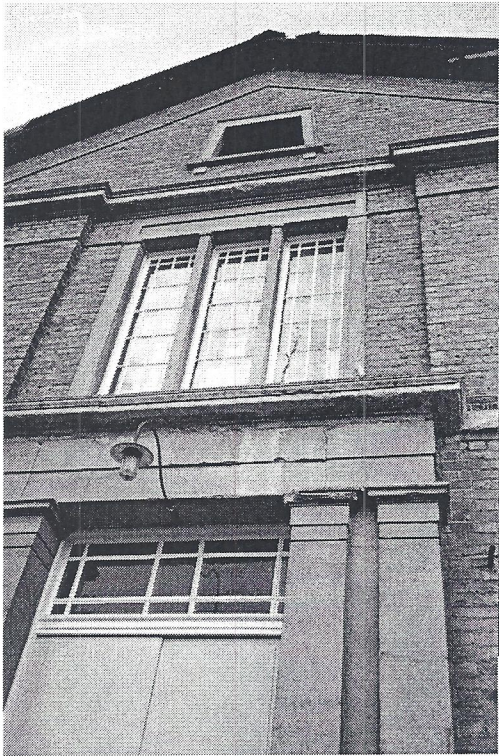


In October 2002 the URC celebrated its 30th anniversary. The URC continues to express its deep commitment to the visible unity of the whole Church. Along with other Reformed churches worldwide, the URC holds to the Trinitarian faith expressed in the historic Christian creeds and finds its supreme authority for faith and conduct in the Word of God in the Bible, discerned under guidance of the Holy Spirit. The URC's structure also expresses its faith in the ministry of all God's people through the system of democratic Councils by which the Church is governed.

Meantime the deterioration of the building was giving increasing cause for concern. A major restoration of the interior of the Church led by Don and Judith Boyt and their son Duncan was completed in December 1976 during the ministry of Revd Winston Reed. But problems persisted and a lasting solution was ever more urgently sought. Later these problems would be summed up as the Four A's: Appearance, Approach, Access and Accommodation. The road to Cornerstone had begun.



A page of problems ...



And now - everyone together please! - to the tune of Uncle Tom Cobley:

Christ Church decided to build a new church
All along, down along, side Oxford Road,
But local town planners done dropped 'em in lurch
With Hilda Coster, Gladys Noel, Dorothy Roberts, William Price,
Dick Burton, Harry Williamson, Owen Green and
Minister Fred Horrox and all, and Minister Fred Horrox and all.

Geoff Walker tried next and then Winston Reed came,
All along, down along, side Oxford Road,
There were further discussions, the result still the same
With Hilda Coster, Margaret Isaac, Mary Johnson, William Price,
Dick Burton, Bob Williams and
Minister Winston S Reed and all, and Minister Winston S Reed and all.

Arthur Macarthur was next in the place,
All along, down along, side Oxford Road,
The plans for our future went on at a pace
With Alun Hughes, Tony Harris, Alan Howarth, Colin Kyte,
Margaret Isaac, Cyril Lowden and
Arthur Macarthur and all, and Arthur Macarthur and all.

Then came the great day when the planners said YES,
All along, down along, side Oxford Road,
Developers promised the money—SUCCESS!
With Alun Hughes, Jim Howie, Alan Howarth, Pam Dadachanji,
Margaret Isaac, Niall Blair, Keith Wood, Cyril Lowden and
Arthur Macarthur and all, and Arthur Macarthur and all.

But the market went bung and the scheme all fell down,
All along, down along, side Oxford Road,
No cash in the bank and no bricks on the ground
With Cyril Lowden, Alun Hughes, Margaret Isaac, Keith Wood,
Don Boyt, Ron Waters and Minister Maurice Husselbee and all, and
Minister Maurice Husselbee and all.

It's been thirty years but we never say die,
All along, down along, side Oxford Road,
Now Cornerstone means that we'll have one more try
With Don Boyt, Ron Waters, John Wendes, Martin Ashford,
Bernard Lax, Libby Beck, Keith Wood, (lots of old ghosts) and
Minister Stanley O Jones and all, and Minister Stanley O Jones and all.

Original author unknown. 'Discovered' May 1998.
Edited and updated.

The road to Cornerstone

Those of you who have read the Revd Arthur Macarthur's excellent *Story of Christ Church 1693 – 1986* will have noticed that the Trustees of the day for Salem Chapel (our old name) were in the practice of purchasing property. In December 1914 they purchased 9 and 11 Quoiting Square. Between then and March 1933 they purchased the cottages known as 15-21 Oxford Road, and 1-9 Hayes Place. During the latter part of that period they sold 1-6 Hayes Place. Also purchased in 1914 was a long low building, more recently known affectionately by Church members as 'the saw doctor's'.



That is how we got the land. What did we try to do with it?

In 1965 the Church contacted the local area Trustees (the Berks, South Bucks & South Oxon Congregational Trust), and some ideas were sought. Nothing materialised until the mid 1970s when a firm of surveyors were asked for their opinion. Again nothing was heard, and in 1979 under the leadership of the Revd Winston Reed, a new group of people within Christ Church formed a Building Committee.

In 1982, during the Ministry of the Revd A L Macarthur, planning permission was granted for the present church building to be turned into offices and a new church and halls to be built in the grounds. This permission carried with it a Section 52 agreement which require a payment of over £21,000 before work could commence because there were insufficient parking spaces. Neither the potential developers nor the Trustees were prepared to put up this payment. The Church certainly did not have the necessary assets for that, and because by August 1986 no payment had been made, the permission was withdrawn.

Back to square one

In 1990 we found another developer and again permission was granted for a similar set of constructions, but this time including a manse to be built on the site and no car parking premium. Unfortunately by this time the bottom was falling out of the development market, our developers became insolvent, and, reluctantly, we did not seek to renew the permission.

A new team

Then in 1998/9 a new team was put together calling itself the Cornerstone committee, basing its name on the biblical text that Jesus Christ is the Cornerstone of the Church (see Matthew 21 v 42; Acts 4 v 11 and 1 Peter 2 vv 6 & 7). A new planning consent was received in 1990 and has now, thanks to very substantial financial help from the Wessex Synod, generous support from our Patrons and Church members, and tremendous fund-raising activities by the congregation, the building is completed and the grounds give the appearance of a well-cared for place of worship.

To all those who helped in any way we send our very grateful thanks.

Cyril Lowden

The Saw Doctor's

In 1905 W J Morgan, Christ Church treasurer, purchased a freehold warehouse or store room fronting on to Oxford Road (Lot 34 – see next page) for the sum of £140. This building came into the ownership of Christ Church in 1914 and in its time served as a school room, a canteen in the war, a drill hall and club room. After the war it was used by the bead company Chelton and by a plastics firm. Its final occupant, however, was Johnson's Saw Service, and during the 70s the building became affectionately known as the Saw Doctor's.

We don't know when it was first erected or what it was first used for, but in Jack Johnson's opinion the building could well have once been a blacksmith's. There was a big fireplace and it had big opening doors on one side and windows onto Oxford Road. The Mayor of Marlow brought Jack the old records one day in Church. A shelved plan for road widening in 1947 would have taken a foot off it!

The building always remained Christ Church property and could not be sub-let by its tenants. It had been vacant for a while before Jack moved in in September 1970 and was surrounded by trees and scrub. You could barely get more than three cars on the site, but gradually over time Jack encroached more on the surrounding area.

It seems a long time since the days of the workshop, Jack says. He started up the business when he was about to be made redundant from the old Greenwich Sawmills in Fieldhouse Lane (now the industrial estate) where he had been employed for 27 years.

In the 70s Jack had three employees, one of whom was a keen photographer. The rent

was low and the business flourished in a haphazard sort of way.

Jack moved out of the workshop on Boxing Day 1980. At that time the redevelopment of Christ Church was due to start within three months. But as we all know that scheme collapsed. The workshop became derelict and vandalised, and eventually had to be demolished. A contractor was brought in when it was realised how dangerous it had become. Jack remembers that the American minister was visiting at the time, and that Paul Inman was seen climbing on the roof removing tiles. The contractors took what they wanted, levelled the ground and created the car park.

Johnson's Saw Service is still in existence but since 1980 located in a workshop attached to the family home in Woodley. Jack sharpens saw, knives and basically you name it he will sharpen it.



BY ORDER OF THE EXECUTRIX
OF THE WILL OF THE LATE
GENERAL OWEN WILLIAMS.

Wednesday, April 12th, 1905.

.. IMPORTANT SALE ..

FREEHOLD PROPERTIES

Marlow, Bucks.

Solicitors:
Messrs. R. S. Taylor, Son & Humbert, : Mr. A. E. Sydney,
4, Field Court, : Moorfields Chambers,
Gray's Inn, W.C. : 95-97, Finsbury Pavement, E.C.

Auctioneers:
Messrs. Humbert & Flint,
11, Serle Street, Lincoln's Inn, W.C.
and Watford, Herts.

MARLOW, BUCKS

The Particulars, Plans and Conditions of Sale
OF
THE VALUABLE

Freehold Properties

- 26 Shops & Business Premises
- 19 Private Residences,
- Four Licensed Houses,
- Freehold Ground Rent,
- Accommodation Land
- 53 Cottages,

Per £2,070 Annum,

Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs.

HUMBERT & FLINT

At the Auctioneers' Hall, Tottenham Court Road, near the Bank of England,
On Wednesday and Thursday, the 12th and 13th of July, 1905

At TWO o'clock precisely, IN 67 LOTS (unless previously disposed of by Private Treaty).
These Particulars, Plans and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from Messrs. R. S. TAYLOR, SON and
HUMBERT, 4, Field Court, Gray's Inn, London, W.C.; Mr. A. E. SYDNEY, Moorfields Chambers, 95 and 97,
Finsbury Pavement, E.C.; Mr. JOHN TUNNICLIFFE, Estate Office, West Street, Watford, Herts.
Messrs. HUMBERT & FLINT, Auctioneers, Land Agents and Surveyors,
11, Serle Street, Lincoln's Inn, W.C.; and Watford, Herts.

LOT 34.

(Coloured Blue on Plan No. 21.)

The Freehold Warehouse or Store Room

Situated on the West Side of and with a good Frontage to

OXFORD ROAD.

And most substantially erected of timber with slated roof, brick supports and boarded floor, its dimensions being
40ft. by 24ft., and forming an excellent Store Room, or could be converted into a Club Room, it having formerly been
used as a School-room, and has a good fireplace and fine large windows, facing Oxford Road.

It is now let to Mr. Wm. Hildes, Corn Dealer, on a Yearly (Midsummer) Tenancy at the Rent of

£7 per annum,

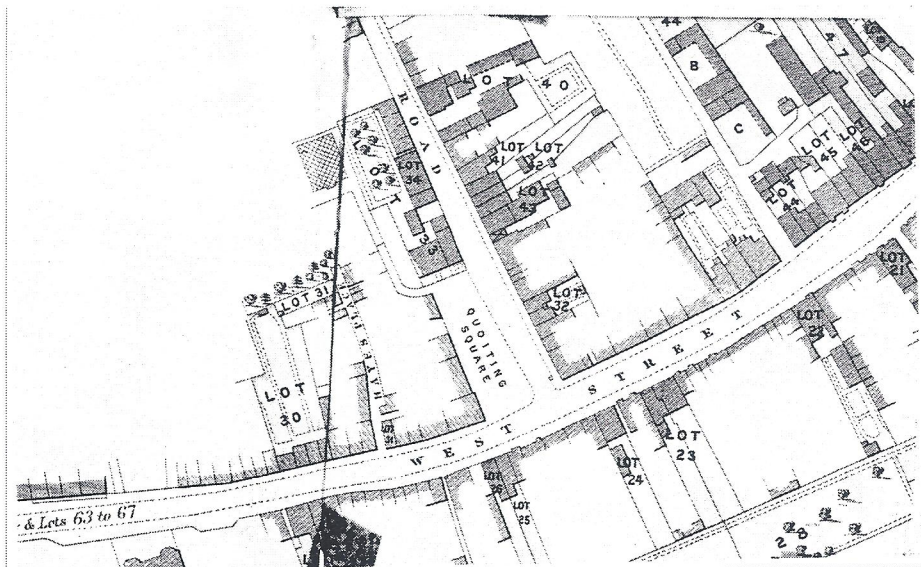
The Tenant paying all Rates and Taxes except Land Tax.

LOT 35.

(Coloured Pink on Plan No. 1.)

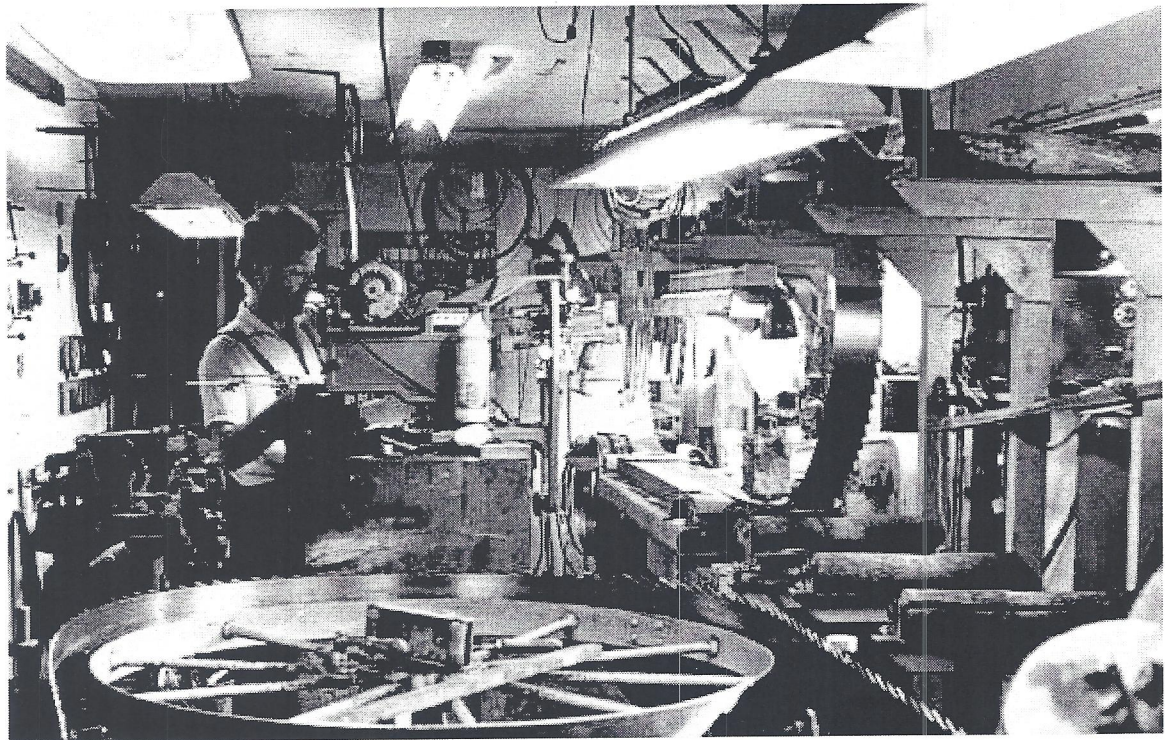
SMALL FREEHOLD PROPERTY

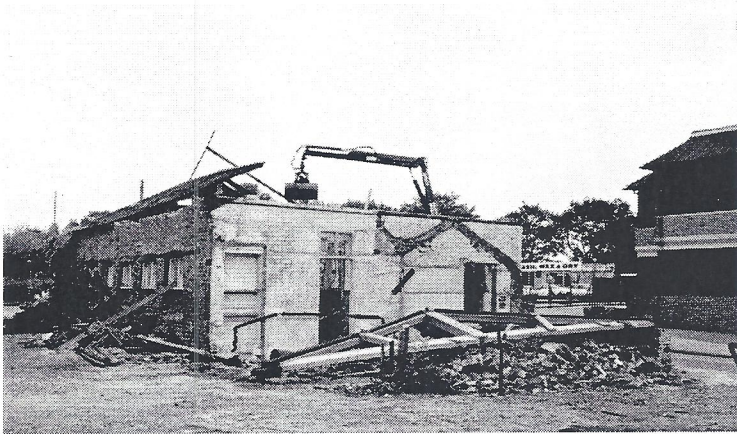
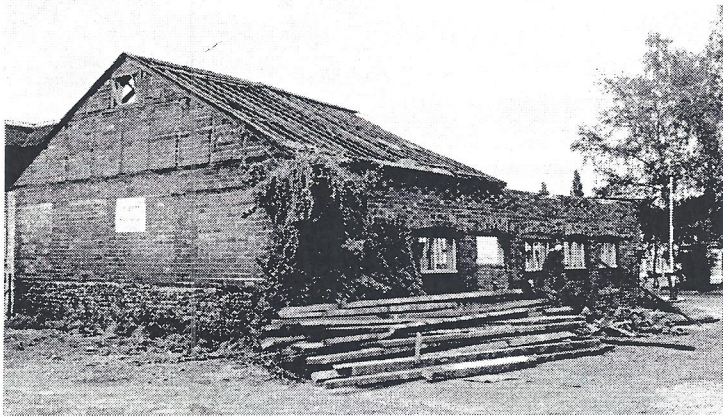
By Mr. W. S. Mace
Documents for
Lot 34
The sum of 1/10.00



The pictures on this page and the next show Jack at work in 1974, the view up Oxford Road from Quoting Square in the 1960s (the Saw Doctor's is just visible), and demolition of the Saw Doctor's in progress in 1982 (demolition took place during 'Gillespie days', when the American minister was visiting Christ Church).

The photos on this page are from the Buckinghamshire County Museum collections: Centre for Bucks Studies, Aylesbury, photo refs phMarlow 186 and 627. The photo of the view from Quoting Square is © The Francis Frith Collection, www.francisfrith.co.uk
The reproduction, transmission, lending or storage in any retrieval system of these images without consent of the copyright holders is prohibited.





Indiana Jones and the demolition danger

Some childhood memories from Paul Inman, born 1973 ...

The annual harvest supper is top of the list. Geoff Dean used to run the auction for all the produce that had been brought in, and the kids (myself included) used to deliver the produce and take the money. Such a sense of responsibility and importance when you're about 8!

I loved Carols by candlelight – on the Sunday evening before Christmas Day. For some reason the dark old pews looked really good decked out with greenery and in candlelight. Other than that the pews were pretty formal and sombre – the candlelight seemed to soften them and the Church was always packed out for this.

We also had an annual trip to the URC at Stoke Row. I can't remember why, or what we did there. It may have been a picnic, or an outing, but they had the most wonderful minister, a guy called Bernard Bax. He was a huge jolly man, as wide as he was tall – a lovely man, but the funniest thing was he had the tiniest moped and I used to look in wonder at how he managed to get on and ride it without falling off. A real character, and I used to really look forward to seeing him.

I did love exploring both the building that used to be Jack Johnson's business (the Saw Doctor's) and the old cottages that were near the Platts end of the land, facing the Church building. They were really run down, and I think demolished before the Saw Doctor's building, which was stood unused for a few years. I remember helping to gut it before the roof and walls were taken down. Now I think of it, all these buildings were absolute deathtraps, but when you're 8 years old, and number

Indiana Jones and James Bond as your heroes, that makes them all the more exciting!

We (probably Catriona and Callum Blair, Phillip and Andrew Wood, James, Amy and Alistair Dadachanji and myself – to name the ones I remember) used to spend loads of time exploring the church – there were loads of hidey holes inside and outside. You could hang on railings and work your way round until you could drop over the wall into the Borlase field. You could also get all the way round walking on the walls, but there is a pretty severe drop into the basement passage that surround the exterior of the Church building on the Borlase side. Some of the walls had glass embedded in the top, and you had to be really careful walking over those!

So, I can't remember actually climbing on the roof of the Saw Doctor's, but if it was climbable and dangerous I am sure I would have been there. I'm just surprised that I didn't suffer more in the way of injury, and I'm sure it wasn't the best thing to do in my Sunday best! ... I had completely forgotten how much fun I had, generally after Church services, exploring. Made all the more fun by the danger I guess! I never knew that it caused concern, but thinking back I can see why it would.

1st Marlow Girls' Brigade Company

As a member of Marlow Methodist Church I had occasionally worshipped in Christ Church but, in 1983 following the formation of the 1st Marlow Girls' Brigade Company, the relationship deepened. From helping, I became a Lieutenant in January 1984 and at the end of that year, when Jessie Hutchinson (founder Captain) moved away, nervously took on the mantle of Captain. There followed ten happy and fulfilled years working with the girls and members of Christ Church.

The Company started with 13 members, numbers rose to a peak in 1988 with 62 regularly attending then, slowly, membership fell and by 1992, when I handed on the Captaincy to Joanne Lawton, it totalled 29. Over the years 175 girls went through membership, some made personal commitments to Christ, some were led to question His relevance to them and hopefully, at least some will think about Him and His teaching at different stages in their lives.

Summing up 1st Marlow GB Company in so few words is virtually impossible. The weekly meetings were worked on a programme of spiritual, physical, educational and service activities with topics ranging from Bible Drama to Writing and Illustrating Prayers; Archery to Skipping; Astronomy to Pillow Lace Making; and Accident Prevention to Service for Others.

At the age of 14, Brigaders were encouraged to enter the Young Leadership Training Course and over the years six attained the rank of Warrant Officer; nine girls entered the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme with two completing to Gold. In 1990 Helen Powell received the Queen's Award – the most prestigious badge attainable in GB.



1st Marlow Girls' Brigade Company parading in the Marlow Carnival Procession, 1984 (before some of the girls had full uniform and before we had a Company Colour).

Though badgework dominated, there were many extracurricular activities. Members produced displays; musicals; visited and sang for the residents of New Court and the Cottage Hospital; entered and won many District, Divisional and National competitions; attended the Annual National Rallies at the Royal Albert Hall; enjoyed a visit by Biddy, a *Blue Peter* guide dog for the blind and money was raised for various charities including Bibles for Czechoslovakia, ARC and Zambia GB.

Over the years we held Company Camps in Buckingham, Milton Keynes, Seasalter, Cheadle, Caroty Wood (Tonbridge) and Great Hucklow. Explorers, those between 5-7 years, were too young to attend Camp so they had outings to Whipsnade Zoo, Windsor Safari Park, swimming and picnics with games by the river.

The Company took part in many parades, including the Good Friday Processions of witness, Marlow Carnival and Remembrance Day, when our band led the processions. The Band also 'opened' Holy Trinity School Fete.

Being an integral part of Christ Church, the Company shared in many activities, Bazaars, Friendship Group Concerts, FURY It's a Knockout at Henley, and leading worship



Christ Church on 27 September 1987

The Company had just arrived for the Harvest Festival Parade Service, following its first outdoor parade with the band. You can just make out the Company Colour which had been bought in 1985 – half the cost generously being met by members of Christ Church.

services. To celebrate the Tercentenary the girls dedicated their craft activity to the Church making and donating a plastic canvas needlepoint nativity scene (girls aged 11-17) and a large banner (those aged 5-10). (*Note: both these items are still in the possession of the Church and are in regular use – ed.*)

Lifelong friendships have been made across the generations between the girls of the Company and members of Christ Church and personally I always found it a joy to work with the Elders.

*Margaret Smith: Captain
1st Marlow Girls' Brigade Company
1983-1993*

A question was raised at a meeting during the interregnum after Winston Reed's departure, chaired by the then Interim Moderator Revd Bernard Bax. The meeting was told that the retiring Moderator of the Federated Free Church Council, Revd Arthur Macarthur, was interested in becoming our minister. The senior Elder, Dick Burton, pronounced that this sounded promising, but 'Can he preach?' That was quickly proved to be an unwarranted concern.

As I tried to focus on recalling the time when I was Secretary of Christ Church, which I think was from 1981 to 1989, I realised that the chief memory was of an underlying sense of frustration. There were joyous moments – the formation of the Girls' Brigade, the revival of the Youth Group, and especially Arthur Macarthur's ministry – but the brick wall against which I banged my head was the lack of progress on the rebuilding front ... it has been lovely to read in *New Forum* of the real advances made in the last few years.

Alun Hughes

Christ Church 1988-1992

At the end of his telling of the Christ Church story, Arthur Macarthur recounted how *'advised by professionals, and, we believe, guided by the Holy Spirit, the church was led to look for more radical solutions and a plan for total redevelopment (of the building and site) was mooted as early as 1960'*. It was hoped that the story Arthur told would appear at the same time as that development was under way.

This, because of difficulties with the proposed developers, did not happen. Though renewed attempts were made to progress the development after 1988, this also did not happen for similar difficulties with developers. Over the years, a considerable debt for professional fees had accumulated and, when the legal adviser asked for the payment of a large part of these fees, this inevitably placed the Church in a very difficult position. This was especially disappointing to Cyril Lowden and all who had carried the responsibility for the development.

However, with the generous help of the Wessex Synod, it was possible to undertake the payment of the debt. At the time, as at present, the support of the wider United Reformed Church was crucial for the survival and progress of Christ Church.

This all raised the question: to what future was the Holy Spirit guiding the church? At the request of the Synod some thought was given to seeking a possible union with the local Methodist Church. There did not appear to be much support among church members for that, neither was there a close enough relationship with the Methodists for it to happen. Instead, a decision was taken to refurbish the worship area of the building, including the removal of the pews and their replacement with chairs.

Most of the work was done voluntarily and involved Don Boyt and his helpers in a great deal of hard and effective work. The result was an attractive and helpful space for worship.

During this period, the minister, Maurice Husselbee, was living in the manse at Bourne End with his wife, Lesley, who was minister of Cores End URC. The manse at Marlow was let, and, for a time, the rent from it helped with the payment of the development debt.

Also at this time, Maurice had use of a room in Marlow Age Concern house. From there he was able to give some ministry to Age Concern, to the Marlow Cottage Hospital, and also to do some marital counselling, some through his contact with the Marlow Pastoral Foundation. On Saturday mornings, a small group of Christians from different churches met for prayer in the house. In this, as in other ways, Maurice appreciated the help and encouragement of Nessie Blair. The Age Concern and Cottage Hospital ministry have a special memory in the visit of Princess Diana who showed a remarkable interest in what was happening.

Another community contact came through the local Air Training Corps of which Maurice was chaplain, probably the first Free Church minister to hold that post.

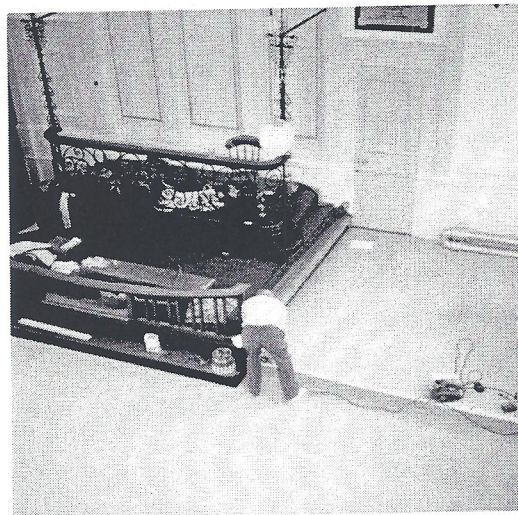
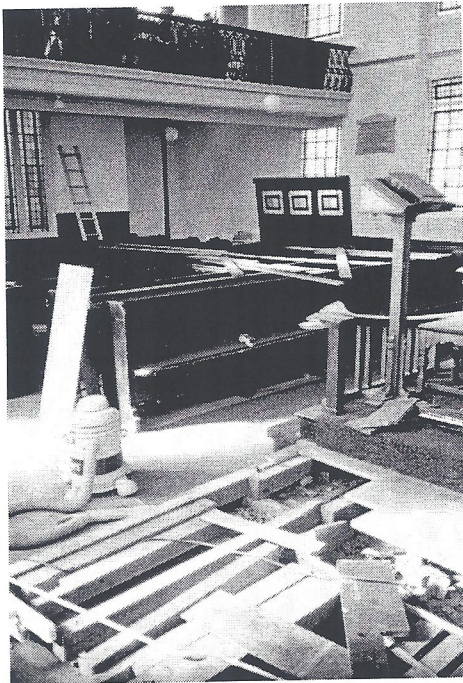
The Girls Brigade Company, meeting on Christ Church premises and involving other churches, was strong and lively. The annual camps were memorable experiences and all owed much to the leader, Margaret Smith, whose husband is now a Methodist minister.

Maurice found it good to share in the life and worship of Christ Church even though it was a difficult period. It may be that the decision to refurbish the

worship area was an important step towards the Cornerstone project. In this new setting may the guidance of the Holy Spirit lead to new life and growth for the church in the new millennium.

We send our very best wishes to everyone at Marlow.

Maurice and Lesley Husselbee



*'Have I got pews for you!'
- new floor and new chairs, 1991*



Memories of a Church in Quoiting Square

In December 1965 we moved to Marlow from St Albans having been members of the Church there (Congregational). We knew there was a Church in Quoiting Square as there was a notice board saying so. A path led to the Church; on the left were three dilapidated cottages and on the right by the road was a building used by a saw doctor (the Johnsons). The site was overgrown except for the path, an area round some gravestones and parking for one car. The front of the Church was attractive but the side was like a Yorkshire woollen mill. In spite of this it still became 'Our Church'.

People make a Church; a few days after moving to Marlow fresh eggs were left on our doorstep, these were from Ivor Johnson, Jack's father. Ivor's daughter was a friend at the St Albans Church.

The Church itself was dark and dingy but fully acceptable to the Deacons and the mainly elderly membership. We transferred our membership, Linda was christened in early 1966, our children went to Sunday School and time moved on.

Things slowly changed, we made room for a few more cars and cleared more of the site; in the Church I even managed to remove the 'modesty curtains' at the end of the choir stall and replace them with wood; yes, we used to have a choir, the ladies with their 'Sunday Hats' in the front row.

A change took place and a few younger members were asked to become Deacons. Major work was undertaken in the car park and a fence put up; a plaque was put in the hall to Ivor Bolton for his leadership in this work. At about the same time Geoff Dean led a team, including many youngsters, in refurbishing the hall, it went from dark and dingy to light and airy.

In 1976 the Elders decided to spend money and redecorate the Church. We closed the Church for three weeks, services were held in the hall. Painting the ceiling with all the pews intact was a

major job; this was carried out primarily by two 15 year old boys. The cost of £200 was thought to be excessive by some Elders.

In due course, Jack Johnson moved out with all his saw equipment and the building was pulled down. A while later the cottages were pulled down thus opening the Church site for all to see. The car park was extended and improved, a reasonable surface was established when contractors, doing work in the town, put down and rolled some of their unwanted hardcore.

In 1991 a few of us were asked to a meeting called by our Minister and Senior District Personnel. A proposal was put forward, and passed (majority vote), that we should pass our Church to the Methodists and we could join them if we wished. The Elders were bypassed by this meeting. I, with many others, did not like this proposal. The Church agreed to stay as a United Reformed Church and do a major refurbishment of the Church itself. The idea was not approved by all, but well over 90 per cent were behind the project.

The major change was the removal of the wooden pews and replacement by comfortable chairs, a new wooden floor and complete redecoration. A dedicated core together with many others worked extremely hard over a three week period to transform the Church. Well over £6,000 was raised for this work which

covered the costs (including 100 new chairs). The armchairs were all donated and dedicated to a particular person.

Changes inside made one feel welcomed to a caring Church, but it still was the same old Church outside. The simple erection of two illuminated crosses inside the Church, the front one seen from the Oxford Road and the side one when leaving the Waitrose car park, indicated a Church. It became a landmark in the area.

I have ignored the numerous attempts to get a new Church over some 25 years. The current extended and refurbished Church is significantly better than any of the previous proposals on offer that I saw.

Don Boyt



One of the party nights at Church, end of the 80s. Featuring (inter alia) Bobbie Ashton (with harp), Pearl White, Sheila Lowden, Gladys and Bob Wright, Margaret and Roy Isaac.



Congratulations on the success of Cornerstone. I'm sure you will all be delighted to get back into your own church again and I look forward to seeing the new building.

However, it's not the church building that matters, is it?

My lasting memories of Christ Church will always be of the friendship that was shown, by everyone to everyone. I realise that it is easier to be concerned for all your fellow worshippers when you have a small church, but I feel that the care and love shown to each member is what made Christ Church special to me. From the first moment when Ron Waters invited me to attend a service I knew that here was the church that I had been looking for even though it was the old building – which brings me back to where I started.

Very best wishes to you all.

Dinah Cantrill



Ladies' Friendship Group

The Ladies Friendship Group was for many years the backbone of Christ Church, organising many social events, Harvest suppers, Easter breakfasts, social evenings, jumble sales and shopping rotas for members unable to get out and about.

We would meet twice a month. An evening meeting with a speaker to which everyone in the Church was invited, and an afternoon meeting in a member's house when a discussion, chat and knitting squares to be made into hospital blankets was the order of the afternoon.

We also made two kneelers for special services and a collage of the Church with views of Marlow which we presented to the Église Réformée in Marly-Le-Roi in May 1990. We had a collection at each meeting and once a year gave a donation to a local charity or provided little extras, eg. a thermal jug for every bedside in the Cottage Hospital. See the article from the *Marlow Free Press* below.

Ever since the main group was disbanded there have been afternoon meetings and the collection from these has bought cutlery for the new Church.

Gladys Wright

Flasks will aid patients



Friendship Group members (left to right): Hazel Wheeler, Marjorie Child, Gladys Wright and Stella Williams

PATIENTS at Marlow Community Hospital were given a batch of new Thermos flasks by generous churchgoers.

Fourteen flasks were donated to the hospital by members of the Friendship Group of Marlow United Reformed Church.

At an informal ceremony last Wednesday, the group presented Sister Dorothy Hood with the flasks which will sit beside patients' beds with cold water or hot drinks

in them. "We are really, really pleased. It means a lot of difference here," said Sister Hood.

"One of the most important things for patients is that they have nice fresh water to drink."

Money for the flasks was came from regular collections at the Friendship Group, which picks a new cause or charity to which to donate its money.

Women stitch tapestry for friends in France

MEMBERS of Christ Church, United Reformed Church at Marlow, have been stitching away since February to create the tapestry that will find its way to Marlow's French twin town, Marly-le-Roi later this month.

The work was completed on Thursday and shows some of Marlow's spectacular features, like the suspension bridge and

parish church spire; the Compleat Angler hotel and Marlow Weir, as well as a view of the United Reformed Church frontage and a local pastoral scene.

There have been comings and goings between the Marlow congregation and its French counterpart which worships at the Eglise Reforme in Marly. A party of the members who worked on the tapestry will go to the French town on May 20 when the com-

pleted symbol of friendship will be officially handed over.

One of the members concerned with the production of the tapestry, Mrs Gladys Wright of Oak Tree Avenue, said there has been a very close affinity between the two congregations over the past seven years.

"We take it in turns to visit each other's towns," she said. "On one of their visits to us they gave us a photograph of their church,

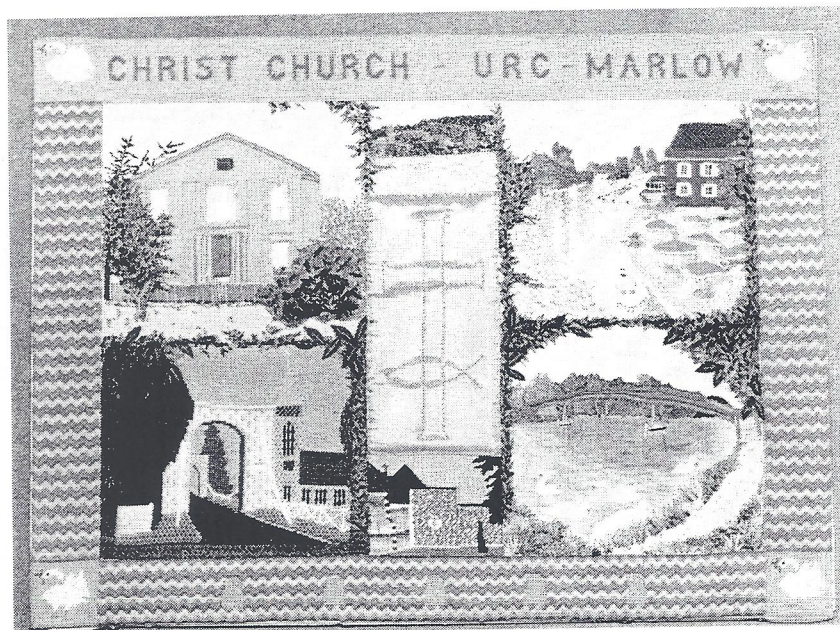
which we have framed and have hanging in our church. This will be our tangible response. We are hoping that the hand-over will come as a complete surprise to them, but it is difficult to keep a secret sometimes when so many people are involved in a project like this."

The tapestry will go on public display tomorrow when the church is holding a coffee morning.



Members of Christ Church, URC, Marlow, with the tapestry they are taking to France: l-r Gladys Wright, Hazel Wheeler, Pam Dadachanji, Marjorie Child, Nessie Blair, Judith Boyt, Susan Payne, Sheila Lowden and Stella Williams.

Articles reproduced with kind permission from the *Marlow Free Press*



Christ Church 1994-2001

The week before I preached 'with a view' at Christ Church, Donald Hilton, the Moderator of the General Assembly, conducted worship. He and I are old friends. He talked to me about Christ Church and gave me some advice about the task that lay ahead. The main needs he saw were:

1. To attract young married couples with children
2. To ensure that their talents and abilities were fully utilised
3. To restructure the youth work
4. To encourage a rethink about the building plans.

On arriving I came to the conclusion that Donald's advice was sound. However, one thing he didn't mention and that was that the church's finances needed urgent attention. The accounts showed a debt of £90,000, though £60,000 of this was in dispute and eventually we were allowed to write it off. However, the £30,000 which remained was a problem, for much of it was loaned at an interest rate of no less than 10 per cent. One Elder said we were talking about Monopoly money! The other thing which Donald did not mention was the fact that our relationship with the wider councils of the Church was less than one would hope for.

I was encouraged to find that in addition to the many fine mature members of the church there were already a number of young families with children attending regularly. On my third Sunday I was surprised to find a young RAF family in church. They had previously been members of my church at RAF Catterick. Within a month two more RAF families came along. Thus we had a cadre of younger families. Young families attract young families. A slow growth began. The young families who had been in the church initially had begun to take an active part in the life of the church, and soon the newer arrivals began to be involved.



'Good luck Stan & Muriel' – the leaving 'do' in January 2001

Initially the Junior Church was very active with excellent teachers, but few children. As the numbers attending church grew so did the Junior Church. Some of the teaching staff changed but those who led made sure that the replacements were of an equally high quality. When I retired I was convinced that we had the best Junior Church in the Reading and Oxford District of the URC.

When I arrived I was told that the Girls' Brigade was ecumenical in nature. This was not quite accurate. There was one Salvationist, two or

three Methodists, but none from the Church of England nor the Catholics. The charismatic Captain was about to leave as her husband was about to be ordained in the Methodist Church. Sadly no adult Captain could be found within the church's membership. However, a young teenager was appointed Captain. She carried out her duties with dedication and enthusiasm but lacked adult helpers. The numbers dropped. Eventually the Elders had to recommend that the Company should be put into 'suspended animation'. While I was disappointed at this, I had long wondered if single sex uniformed organisations were the most suitable form of youth work in the church of today. Then ... along came the Kool Kids ... taking all before them. They take a lot of responsibility for themselves, but there is always at least one adult on hand to offer advice and guidance.

Shortly after arriving I went to see Arthur Macarthur to ask his advice concerning buildings and finance. In his time there had been ambitious and exciting plans for a new church building, converting the present church building into office accommodation, and a new manse ... together with a crock of gold. Sadly, in spite of his energetic and devoted efforts, it was not to be. As Convener of the Buildings Committee in the Northern Province I found that developers were all too ready to make facile promises to churches, but that they seldom delivered. Sadly the time came when the original plans had to be dropped, and a more modest but very imaginative plan agreed. A new approach was made to the Synod and a new relationship established. As a result of this the Synod agreed to support the new plan and to provide half of the cost as a grant. The plan has now come to fruition and you must

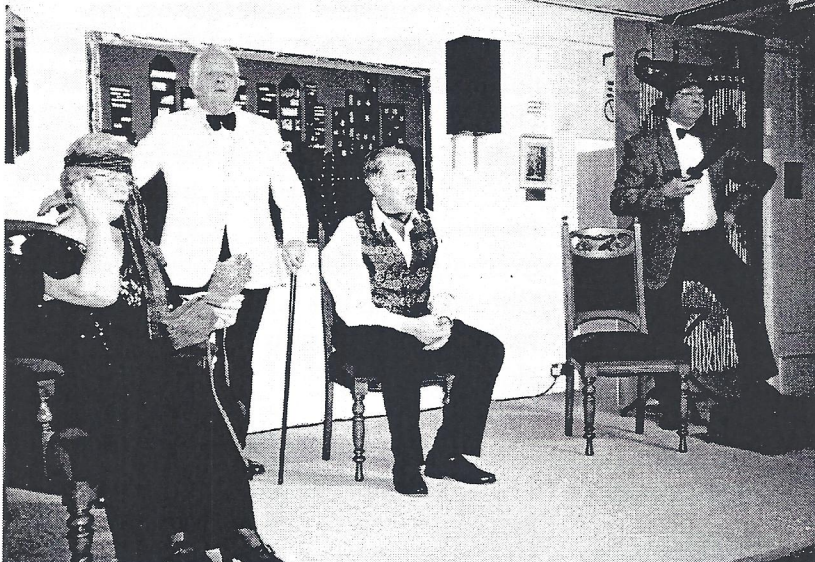
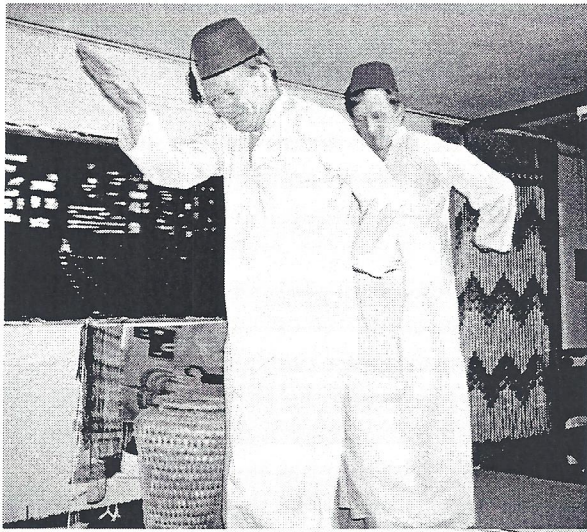
judge the outcome for yourself. Muriel and I are quite thrilled with it.

Over the years that I was at Christ Church there was a gradual but steady growth. I put this down to a great extent to prayer and Bible study. The Bible Study Group though few in number was quite exciting. Some members, with very keen minds, had me searching the commentaries in order to answer their queries. We didn't just read the Bible; we studied it. Some folk tell me that the old style Prayer Meeting has had its day. This may well be so. On the other hand, at least 250 students gather for half an hour of prayer each day at Cambridge during term time. It may be similar at Oxford. Nevertheless I became convinced that it was not the best way for Christ Church. Hence the Prayer Breakfast which again I found exciting. I am delighted to hear that Christ Church has continued to place real emphasis on prayer and Bible study.

Shortly after arriving at Christ Church I was visiting RAF Benson when a helicopter was to make a routine training flight over Marlow. There was a spare seat, and I was able to take it. The pilot hovered over All Saints and said, 'Is that your church Padre?' I replied, 'Not exactly'. The next time such an opportunity presents itself, I shall point to Christ Church and say, 'That was my church!'

Stanley Jones





*Did you say this was a
CHURCH?
20s evening, October
2000*

In his parting letter in *New Forum* January 2001 the Revd Stanley Jones wrote:

‘Over the last seven years we have travelled quite a long hard road together. However, we have always been aware of the presence and protection of God. He is in control; Christ Church belongs to Him. It now seems possible that Cornerstone may become more than a dream ... When Moses stood on the summit of Mount Nebo and looked across the Jordan to the Promised Land, God said, ‘Although you may view the land from a distance, you shall not enter it’. In a way I think I can understand now just how Moses felt on that occasion.

‘Well I remember suggesting to a Church Meeting that a fresh approach should be made to the District Council and Synod concerning our problems. It was Margaret Isaac who made the proposal ... It was carried unanimously. The eventual outcome has been Cornerstone. I shall watch and pray from Nebo and hope that Cornerstone will be as successful as were the Israelites in entering Canaan. Joshua who followed Moses proved to be a fine leader. I hope and pray that your new Minister will possess similar qualities. He or she will have my prayerful support.’

A word from the Property Convenor

I first visited Marlow in 1938 when I went on a river trip with my parents on a Salter steamer from Maidenhead to Wallingford. The next time was in 1957 when I came to inspect the site of our new bungalow. A train from Paddington to Maidenhead, a bus from Maidenhead station to Marlow bridge, a walk across the bridge to re-board the bus in the Causeway and thence to Quoiting Square. This was then as far as the bus went and I can clearly remember that Christ Church was the first building that I noticed as we alighted, as the bus stop was immediately adjacent to the church fence by the bottom end of the graveyard. The concrete base plinth is still there and now accommodates a used car for sale.

In 1958 we occupied our newly built bungalow in Harwood Road. We spent the next few years furnishing our new home, taming the garden and raising the family. I worked in London during this time – away in the morning at 7.30 and home again at 8.30 in the evening. Only weekends available for domestic and town affairs.

About mid 1960, a friend and neighbour told us of his concern that the church Sunday School in Quoiting Square (as he put it) was very short of children and near to closure. We agreed to collect the children around us whose parents were willing and ferry them on a rota basis to Christ Church into the care of the late Margaret Isaac every Sunday.

Paradoxically, I look back on this now somewhat guiltily as we resorted then on Sunday afternoons to what we thought of as the best cup of tea of the week. Revd Geoffrey Walker was then our minister, he was a local teacher, a delightful man whom the children liked. Gradually our two children became more involved with Church and so, inevitably, did we, becoming members in the early 1970s. Our church membership continued with our taking part in what services and activities we could and with our children taking part in a growing and active junior church and attending a Junior Church Club, early evening on Sunday.

The mid 1970s saw the first attempt to restore the interior of the old church. The worship area was then painted in a dark



Church with Silver Birches

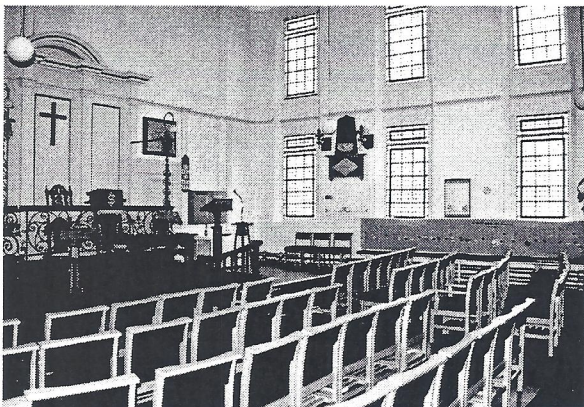
dingy green (some of this can still be seen behind the organ). The task was to brighten it all up and the colours chosen to do this were Wedgwood blue, cream (now the ubiquitous magnolia) with the ironwork black, the sanctuary area having a small amount of gold trim. That colour scheme lasted for many years and has been received with mild but mixed feelings, some finding it very attractive, others describing it as 'like an ice cream parlour'. Certainly it was a great improvement on what was there before.

The Revd Winston Reed was the incumbent minister at the time and participated in the work along with all the other volunteers. The church had fixed wooden pews then and to paint the high ceiling and walls these had to

be removed and high trestle towers had to be erected. I will always remember climbing to the ceiling on those somewhat wobbly towers. I have related many times my experiences of this first church improvement – the precarious climbing to ceiling height, and the extended reaching when up there to cover as much ceiling as possible. I remember one of our painters (no names) climbing to this height to the top of the tower and becoming rigid, unable to move or look down. It was a careful and slow job to get him down.

It was on this occasion that Winston turned down my offer to replicate the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the worship area saying he would be quite content with plain white all over. I made the offer when I came across him sitting amongst a pile of organ tubes, which he had somehow dismantled and which he was trying to polish to a high buff. He was on the first one and there were some 20 odd to go. We managed to persuade him that his intentions were magnificent but the task impossible as our organ tubes are not polishable.

No more improvement projects were attempted until 1991 when Don Boyt led a group of volunteers and one very hard-working community service worker in repainting the church interior walls, laying a new chipboard floor and replacing the old wooden pews with the existing red upholstered chairs. This work was completed, thankfully, without the benefit of planning permission (a nuisance at the best of times), avoiding the unsettling and generally debilitating effects of dealing with



The Church interior 2002

the Local Authority and the Conservation Officer.

In the late 1970s I joined the Church's Development Committee. The form of development that the committee pursued was a self-financing commercial development where some of the site would be turned over to office development, the existing church building converted into offices and a new church and manse provided on the remainder of the site (all with adequate car parking) and also with a capital sum, all to be funded from the projected rental income. Developers came forward in turn with schemes of their own design, each one pulling out before any agreement could be reached. Finally in the late 1980s the last developer withdrew as the property market collapsed and office space available for rental in Marlow reached an all time high.

From this time, a self-financing commercial scheme began to look impossible and we stopped progressing this concept only to be presented with a series of claims from our legal advisers and consultants for the time they had committed to the project. These claims were reduced in negotiation to a sum of around £69,000, our negotiating stance being broadly that most of our advisers had been connected with the project on a 'no development – no fee' basis. The final sum was paid with the aid of a loan from our Wessex Province and the Church's building Committee.

And so, in the late 1980s, the church abandoned commercial developers, appointed architects Brocklehurst & Partners, and with the aid of the successors to Messrs AC Frost, The Prudential Insurance Co put together a new scheme, again for converting the existing church into offices, building new offices, a new church and a manse. This scheme was taken up to planning consent stage with the aid of a further loan and was granted planning permission in the early 1990s.

The permission was never implemented due, I think, to the lack of finance. Several initiatives were suggested. One was to sell the existing manse in Hyde Green and with the proceeds build the new manse within our permitted scheme with enough left over to pay off our debt. Agreement within the Church for this was never reached and the planning permission finally lapsed.

During all this time the church was becoming more and more difficult to keep going. As Property Convenor I assumed the problems of a crumbling and leaky building, an antique heating system with its own leaks from cast iron pipe work through hemp and run lead joints, a garden and graveyard that seemed to get overgrown faster than a rainforest and a car park that competed with the surface of the moon for pot holes and craters. To cope with these problems I was helped by an understanding church membership with the late Roy Isaac specialising in electrical and mechanical problems, Bob Wright taking on carpentry work such as replacing floorboards, and the occasional working party hacking down weeds and cutting grass. But it was a game we could not win and we all knew we were putting money and effort into a bottomless pit.

Revd Stanley Jones joined Christ Church in early 1994. He joined a Church with a worn out building and heavily in debt, although fund raising, giving and other income had enabled us to reduce the outstanding amount to around £35,000. Under Stanley's leadership, ways were sought to deal with our circumstances. In the first instance, to contain our debt, negotiations were opened once again with our District and Province to re-examine the rate of interest we were being charged (at that time a commercial rate of 10%) and to seek a waiver of repayments for five years. Our District officers were supportive but a moratorium of only two years was offered by the Province Finance Committee and the

interest rate at this time was not changed. A moratorium of two years was not enough and persistent approaches to District and Province stressing our inability to provide adequate access into Church for old and disabled people and the problems of the deteriorating building finally resulted in a more sympathetic hearing.

In 1996 a presentation by the Elders to a visiting team from District and Province led to agreement to the funding by Province of a feasibility study to examine the practicability of extending and refurbishing the church. This was subject to Christ Church showing that it could meet all its financial obligations in running the Church and funding the Ministry without dependence on its car parking and other rental income. It was about this time that 'Cornerstone' made its appearance in appealing to all members and adherents to increase giving and fund raising. The response showed our ability when the call came to put our finances on the firm footing required. This enabled a formal application for a feasibility study, which was granted.



Libby Beck shows plans to Michael Hyde of the Marlow Society, November 2000

I joined Martin Ashford and John Wendes to appoint an architect, follow through the study and make recommendations to the Church. Martin agreed to head up this small group and his enthusiastic leadership and a common sense of purpose took us to a feasible design and a realistic estimate of costs. Martin's *Personal Account of the*

Cornerstone Decade 1994-2003, dated October 2003, gives a good account of the Cornerstone project to its completion and our occupation of the building in September 2003.

In parallel with our work was the fund raising which Libby Beck undertook to organise. This she did with a thoroughness and vitality which we know is characteristic of her. The invitation and appointment of sponsors, presentations to local organisations and the Town Council, fund-raising events, the preparation of a project brochure and dealing with the press were all part of the fund raising and awareness effort. Libby also joined the Development Committee to help carry the project through its building stage. This was the point when large bills began to arrive and Keith Wood, our newly appointed Treasurer, also joined us to deal with these and financial matters like VAT and liaison with the Wessex Trust who managed property matters for the Province.

Stanley Jones retired in the beginning of 2001. He had shepherded the Church to a new and exciting chapter in its life and along with our blessing and good wishes for his retirement, the Church presented him with a stone tablet which I think he kept under his bed until it was engraved and mounted in the foyer of the new church where it can now be seen. Stanley's retirement took us into our vacancy period, during which the steady hand and professional experience of our Interim Moderator Revd Andrew Lonsdale, the Minister of Christ Church URC at Henley on Thames, gave us the reassurance and confidence to face all the new challenges of a development project.

Now we occupy our new building and go through the learning process of operating and running

it to help us bring the Lord's work and purposes to the people of our community. In this task we will be led by our new Minister, Revd Kate Pryde and she, I know, is excited by the challenge. During most of my Church membership, I have helped in the efforts to develop the church building and land and at the same time to keep the old church building going on a very limited budget, but I was only a small part of this enterprise. Indeed if it was not for the determination of all our members and friends to keep going and not give up in spite of formidable obstacles, nothing that I could have done would have been of any consequence. I know the church building is not the Church but, in the words of the Revd Arthur Macarthur, a past Provincial Moderator and highly regarded Minister at Christ Church (1980-86): 'It is our most visible presence'.

When looking back through all these events, my thoughts continually return to all those who, in the past, have given wonderful service to maintain the Lord's House here in Marlow, and who are not now with us to see its rebirth.

Ron Waters



The commemorative sign reads 'Christ Church acknowledges its debt to the Cornerstone Committee members who have given so generously of their time, energy and commitment for the completion of the Cornerstone Project. Thanks go to: Martin Ashford, Libby Beck, Ron Waters, John Wendes. 2003'. Don't they look relieved it's all over!

Cornerstone fund raising continues apace – Burns Night January 2002



Project Cornerstone - a summary

At the end of the 1980s the plans to build a new church, financed through commercial development, finally collapsed. The old building was in very poor condition by this time, and was surrounded by a wasteland of rough car parking. Its external appearance was sometimes likened to a derelict Victorian warehouse and the interior was not much better. Christ Church had little to show for years of effort, except a planning consent which it did not have the means to implement.

Worse was to follow. Solicitors and other advisers who had worked on the development project in the expectation of being paid from its proceeds submitted claims against the church, which had to borrow £69,000, mostly from Wessex Province, in order to reach a settlement. 'The debt' was a millstone around the church's neck but Christ Church simply refused to give up. In 1991, inspired and led by one of the Elders, volunteers removed the old pews, decorated the worship area and laid a new floor. Comfortable chairs were bought and most agreed that these were a vast improvement.

1992 was the start of the church's tricentenary but also saw the departure of the Revd Maurice Husselbee. During the vacancy the members continued to chip away at the debt and to make such practical improvements as they could, but the backlog of repairs on the old building exceeded their capabilities.

The arrival of the Revd Stanley Jones at the start of 1994 marked a new beginning. The Revd Jones wrote to the District and Province to request relief from the debt and this led in April 1995 to the first of several visitations to Christ Church. Although the visitors recommended writing off the whole debt, Province granted only a moratorium for a limited period. But discussions continued: about the church's future, about the building, and about disabled access. The old building

had steps both up and down, indeed no part of it was at ground level. Various small-scale schemes for ramps and lifts were considered, but a visitation from property representatives in 1996 encouraged Christ Church to **be bold** in its plans and suggested the possibility of a 'feasibility study' by an architect.

The Elders felt that they needed first to get the church's own finances in order and every member and adherent was invited to a special fundraising service on 13 October 1996. The name 'Cornerstone' was adopted, and it stuck. The appeal succeeded in ensuring that day to day expenses were covered by regular giving. The next stage of Project Cornerstone was a feasibility study funded by the Wessex Province.

The results were shown to a church meeting in July 1998. The general concept included demolition of the woeful lean-to rooms on the Oxford Road side of the church and their replacement with a two-storey extension including a new kitchen, toilets, meeting rooms and – vitally – a lift for access. The cost was estimated at £360,000. The church knew it would have to raise a lot of money itself, but the prospect had been offered of 50% funding from Wessex Province under the guise of 'New Project' funds. All currently available funds had been allocated, but there was to be another tranche of funding for projects to go ahead in 2001-4.

At the start of 1999 the church agreed to push ahead with its plans and to apply for New Project funding. Another landmark had been passed as well: the church balance sheet was back in the black for the first time since 1990, even allowing for the remaining debt which was still on the books. In December 1999 representatives travelled to the Wessex Synod headquarters to pitch for New Project funding. They took with them a balsawood model of the new building made by a group of older children called the Kool Kids. After an agonising wait, word came through that Marlow was one of the projects selected for support. The remaining debt would also finally be written off, **provided** the project went ahead.

50% of the funding was secured, but that still left a big gap. A fundraising team was set up in parallel with the building project and another Cornerstone Sunday in March 2000 achieved around £40,000 in pledges from the congregation. The architects, Daniel Lelliott Krauze (DLK) of Maidenhead, developed the concept of the extension into a design in sympathy with the old building. It was costed at £420,000. In October 2000, Listed Building Consent was obtained but it took until February 2002 to gain full planning consent from Wycombe District Council.

Meanwhile, the Revd Stanley Jones retired at the start of 2001 and was presented with a piece of stone – the new ‘Cornerstone’ – to keep in trust until the building was ready for it. Progress was being made, but the cost was rising. The estimate was £505,000 in July 2001, £681,000 in May 2002 and £750,000 by September, due in part to inflation and in part to a discovery of just how much work had to be done simply to restore the old structure. Including fees, VAT and other costs, the

final bill for the project was around £800,000.

The Revd Andrew Lonsdale was Interim Moderator during Christ Church’s ministerial vacancy and helped to steady everyone’s nerves at this time. A final consultation with the congregation took place in April 2002 and in the same month an Appeal Committee was formed, made up of prominent people in Marlow. By the autumn, tenders were being sought from builders. The church meeting took a last look at the budget figures, a deep breath, and a unanimous decision to go ahead. In December 2002 the bulldozers were on site and on 18 January 2003 the Revd Kate Pryde, newly inducted to Christ Church, together with the Chairman of the Appeal Committee, turned over a carefully-prepared patch of soil to mark the start of the work.

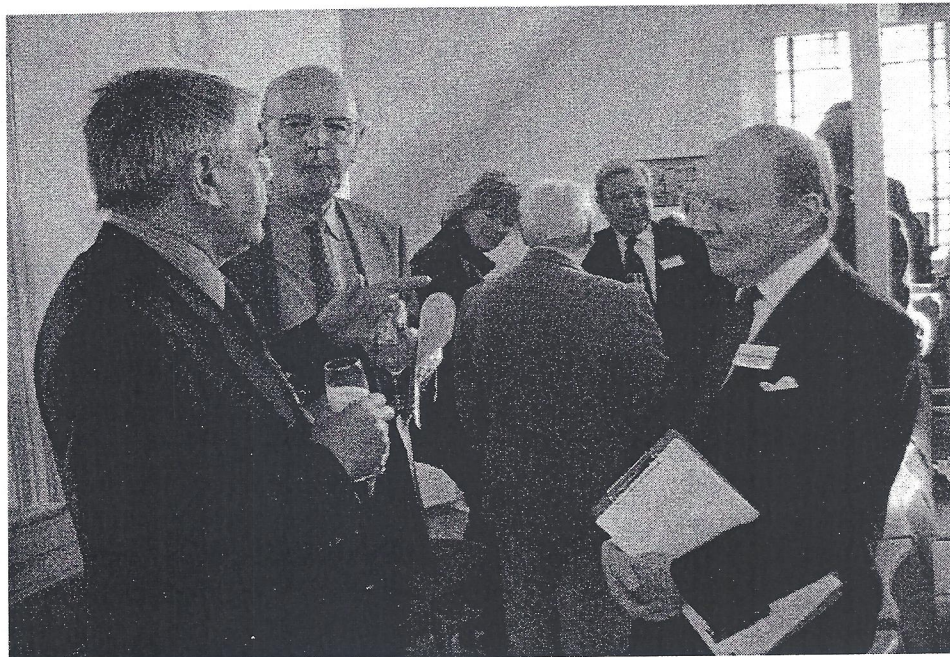
The sun shone that day and it was a sign of things to come. It shone for a fortnight while the roof was off the old building and it shone almost non-stop through the hottest summer on record. The builders, Latimer Contracting of Thame, made good progress on the work. Meanwhile, the congregation had decamped to worship in the chapel of Borlase Grammar School, generously made available by the Headmaster. The hard pews and poor heating were a trial to many but there was always an end in sight.

At the end of September 2003 the keys to a new Christ Church were handed over by the builders. The first service was Harvest Festival on 12 October, and on 19 October 2003 a packed church heard the Moderator of Wessex Synod preside over the formal reopening and dedication of the new building.

Martin Ashford
Cornerstone Project Manager

Press Release

Appeal Launch at Marlow United Reformed Church



Monday April 29, 2002

from left to right: Richard Hunt, Sir Keith Stuart and Anthony Wethered

Marlow United Reformed Church built 1840 is finally due to have a major renovation. A fund raising appeal was launched last Monday bringing several prominent people from within Marlow into the picture. Says Libby Beck, the appeal manager, "We wanted to share our plans with our immediate neighbours, so they would not be surprised once we start building. This is not just a refurbishment of the church but a scheme to incorporate a new hall and two meeting rooms as well as a kitchen and disabled toilets. Many groups and organisations already use our facilities and we feel this project will benefit the whole of Marlow. We invited people to give their endorsement and have asked if they would consider becoming patrons."

Anthony Wethered, Patron and Chairman of the Cornerstone Appeal Committee said he was delighted with the new development, which will bring a significant upgrade to this part of the town.

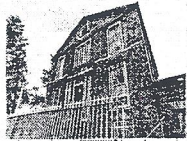
"We have asked that our patrons share their ideas about fund raising with us and promote the project within the town. We are very pleased to have had such a wonderful response from everybody who turned up as we still need to raise £150,000 to finance the project."

The Church is planning to start construction in the autumn with a ground breaking ceremony. Before then we will see more of the congregation as they take to the streets during events such as the Marlow Carnival.

For details of the plans or to make a donation to the Cornerstone Appeal please contact: Libby Beck, Cornerstone Appeal Office, 86 West Street, Marlow, Bucks SL7 2BP.

BEING PLANNED BY MARLOW PEOPLE, FOR MARLOW PEOPLE

Listed building
Built in 1840
Requires attention



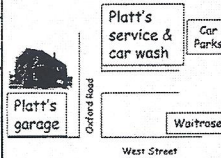
has poor -
Access
Appearance
Amenities

but has one amazingly
Good Attitude!

- OUR OBJECTIVES ARE TO:
- Return Quoting Square to be an attractive landmark in Marlow
- Provide a modern hall with off road parking for community use
- Look after the residents of Marlow with exciting children's activities and playgroup
- Run a Youth Club
- Be a centre of musical excellence, attracting quality musical performers

Cornerstone publicity included fliers like these in use at the May Fayre in 2000

Substantial grant awarded but still need £100,000



Come and see us today in the park.

See our plans
Buy a brick!
Buy a pen!
Make a difference!
Consider a legacy!

Come and join us for Worship on any Sunday at 10:30 am and see how pretty our building is on the INSIDE!

Crèche and Junior Church every Sunday during Morning worship

Contact numbers
Minister
Revd Stanley Jones
Tel 01628 471 736

Secretaries
Martin Beck
01628 620 066

Sheila Blair
01628 474 447



Christ Church Marlow
Making Marlow even better in the new Millennium

From



To



Christ Church Marlow

Project Cornerstone
Summary of Development Proposals



February 2002


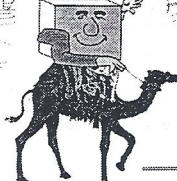
Stop Press!

Christ Church commended by Jack Scruton Heritage Award 2003

The restoration and refurbishment of our Grade II listed church, combined with extensions to improve access to all levels and provide much needed facilities and meeting rooms, received a formal Commendation in November 2003 under the Jack Scruton Heritage Award. This award is part of Wycombe District Council's annual design awards scheme which seeks to recognise high quality design and development within the District. 21 nominations were received in 2003, the winner was the disabled access scheme for Court Garden House, Marlow, with Christ Church receiving the only commendation. The judging panel was impressed by the way the style of the extension with its tower like corner echoes that of the main church.

"Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? ... Yet now take courage ... The latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former"

Christ Church URC, Marlow
New Forum
 July-August 1998

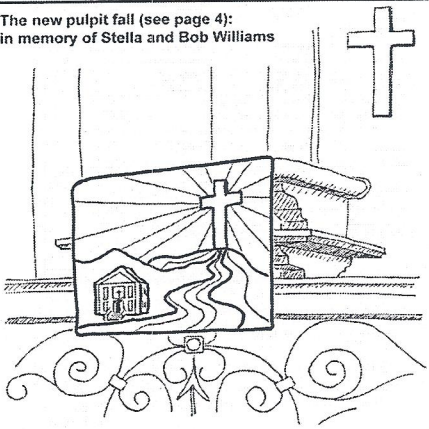



Mr Cornerstone rides back!
 See inside for major news

And I - in righteousness I shall see your face;
 when I awake, I shall be satisfied with seeing your likeness

Christ Church URC, Marlow
New Forum
 July - August 1999

The new pulpit fall (see page 4):
 in memory of Stella and Bob Williams



"And surely I am with you always.
 to the very end of the age."

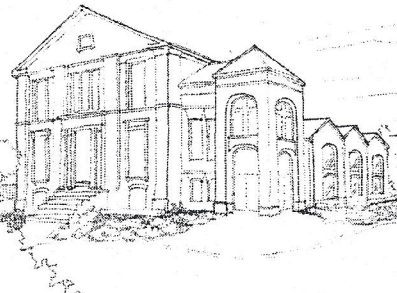
Matthew 26:20

Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory?
 How do you see it now? Yet now take courage...
 Work, for I am with you, says the Lord of hosts

Haggai 2:3-4

Christ Church URC, Marlow
New Forum
 Special Issue - Questionnaire enclosed

What do you think of this?



Christ Church URC, Marlow
New Forum
 November - December 2000

Prepare to Launch!



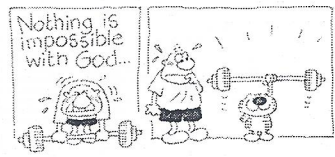
Do we have lift off?
 Mr Cornerstone reaches for the stars
 ... see inside ...

"The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame."

Isaiah 58:11

Christ Church URC, Marlow
New Forum
 September - October 2002

... You will be like a well-watered garden.
 Like a spring whose waters never fail.
 Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
 And will raise up the age-old foundations.
 Isaiah 58:11-12



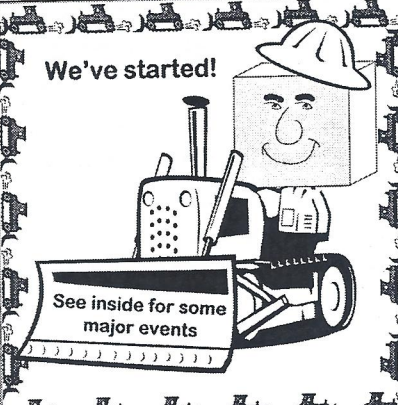
Cornerstone: moving on
 Also inside:
 Lunchtime barbecue
 Marlow Carnival
 Harvest

"O come, Desire of nations, bring all peoples to
 their Saviour King; thou Corner-stone, who makest one,
 complete in us thy work begun".

Rejoice & Sing 125

Christ Church URC, Marlow
New Forum
 January-February 2003

We've started!



See inside for some major events

"Glorify the Lord with me:
 Let us exalt his name together."

Psalms 34:3

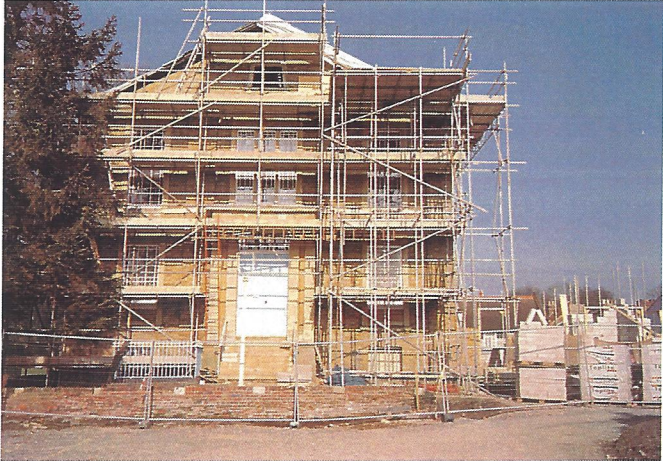
Christ Church URC, Marlow
New Forum
 September - October 2003

Sing a new song to the LORD!

Christ Church
Re-Opening and Dedication
Sunday 19 October



Christ Church transformed: a page of construction ...



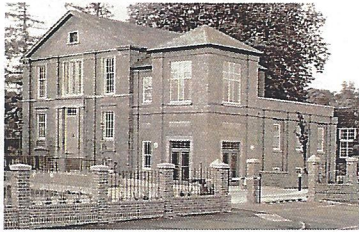
Church celebrates its £800,000 renovations

Christ Church Marlow



A Service of Dedication

19th October 2003



CHURCH goers were delighted after an £800,000 refurbishment scheme was finally completed.

Marlow's United Reformed Church, in Quoting Square, was officially re-opened during a ceremony on Sunday.

Kate Pryde, church minister, said: "I am absolutely delighted with the new facilities at the church - it is hard to express how happy I am with it."

She added some people at the church had been working for 20 years towards its refurbishment.

Wessex Synod moderator, The Rev Adrian Bulley, was there to unveil a plaque at the 163-year-old church and The Rev Stanley Jones preached at a special service.

From the £800,000 rebuilding costs, £400,000 was donated from the Wessex Synod and the other £400,000 was obtained through a loan and fundraising efforts which were masterminded by Libby Beck.

The money has paid for a number of different refurbishments including improvements to the worship area, a new kitchen and office.

A lift has also been installed to assist disabled visitors to reach the worship area because it is above ground floor level.

The main hall has been named the Wessex Hall in recognition of the synod's financial contribution to the renovation work.

The church fundraising group was called the Cornerstone Appeal and money came in from many groups in the town: Marlow Rotary Club, Marlow Town Council and Bucks Historic Churches were among the donors, although there were many other donations from groups and individuals.

Buckinghamshire county councillor Frank Sweatman, now Marlow Mayor, arranged for £1,000 from the council's Community Leader's Fund to go to the project.



Project completed by: Rev Stanley Jones, Rev Kate Pryde, Rev Adrian Bulley and Rev Andrew Lonsdale Pictures supplied



Left: the Choir with (left to right) the Revds Kate Pryde, Stanley Jones, Adrian Bulley, Andrew Lonsdale, and Christ Church Secretary Martin Beck.

Below left to right: Revd Stanley Jones, Mrs Jinx Waters, Mrs Mary Burr, Revds Adrian Bulley and Kate Pryde, Mrs Alex Clark, Revd Andrew Lonsdale, and Martin Beck.



In 2002 Christ Church launched its website, here is the homepage as it looks in November 2003. www.communiGate.co.uk/bucks/christchurchmarlow

[This is Buckinghamshire](#) | [CommuniGate](#) | [Christ Church United Reformed Church Marlow](#)

[Feedback](#)



CONTENTS

[Christ Church Homepage](#)

[Activities and Events](#)

[Families and Children](#)

[Kool Kids](#)

[The Cornerstone Project](#)

[About us and the URC](#)

[How to Find Us](#)

[Together in Prayer](#)

[Guestbook](#)

[Email](#)

Welcome to Christ Church United Reformed Church



Christ Church Marlow is part of the United Reformed Church (URC). Our Minister is the Revd Kate Pryde who lives in Marlow. She can be contacted at the church office on 01628 476454.

We worship at 10.30 am each Sunday, and we also have a range of other events. We are very much a family church and welcome children to our Junior Church and to our Kool Kids meeting (for ages 10 and up) which take place at the same time as our main services. There is also a creche for babies and toddlers.

Our building was an old one, but we have been through a major project to redevelop it and make it a brilliant place for all kinds of activities in the 21st Century. After much planning for this project, which we call "Cornerstone", the building work is now complete and we are back in our fantastic new building. Why not come and see for yourself what Christ Church is like?

Further details on all aspects of our life can be found by clicking on the links to the left. Alternatively, you may like to take a look at our church magazine, "New Forum". Click on the "email" link and send us your details, and we will be happy to post you a copy.

If you wish to contact the Minister via this website, please use the "email" link on the left and your message will be passed on.

Our Cornerstone is complete!

The shining crown of our church.
A new symbol of our congregation,
Of our commitment, our belief,
And our place in the community.
The symbol of God's work—today.
With Him we completed Cornerstone.
With Him we will go on.
Rejoice—Cornerstone is complete!

So many questions unanswered!
What use is a symbol?
Is there a purpose?
What's our next step?
And how can we do it?

Let's turn the symbol into reality,
Let's share the good news!
Let's read more of the Bible
Let's praise Him and pray.

Rejoice—Cornerstone is complete!
And our Christian mission can begin.

Martin Beck
September 2003

Conclusion

Christ Church was built as a Congregational chapel and is now part of the United Reformed Church. Our long involvement with the town of Marlow has been important particularly for our work with young people. The building is used not only by our congregation of around 70 members (with 25 children) but also by many community organisations and a daily pre-school. 300 years of tradition are still alive here!

We have celebrated our re-opening and are settling into our new accommodation. In so doing we are aware of a great debt to our forebears, who prepared the ground for the success of the Cornerstone project and laid the foundation for mission and outreach in the 21st century. Christ Church has had several new beginnings, as this

publication illustrates. It is striking how a number of common themes recur through its history. Concern for fabric and finances predominates, along with anxiety for the future and the prayerful hope for growth in numbers.

The saga recounted in Arthur Macarthur's history and here in this publication is only part of the story of the church in Marlow. The ecumenical movement has made us aware that the various churches of the town are each part of the wider Church. Churches Together in Marlow helps us to discover what that means for common work and witness and mutual support today. In recent years, Christ Church has taken an active part in the Mission to Marlow and in other ecumenical events. We have links with many organisations including Christian Aid.

Buildings are not the Church, but they are its most visible presence. Our building is now over 160 years old and the congregation has faced up to the problem of its future. We now see the result of the Cornerstone redevelopment scheme. With hindsight, the Cornerstone project will probably appear to have been a necessary and almost inevitable step in the history of Christ Church. But for those directly involved, the progress and the outcome of the scheme were anything but inevitable. There were twists and turns to the tale that lurched from the disappointing to the frustrating to the truly astonishing. Who could have predicted in the 1970s that we would get from where we were then to where we are now?

To quote Arthur Macarthur's history, we look back to see whence we came, but we also look forward to see how the new building can remain a place where worship is a real experience, where the springs of Christian life and action are constantly renewed, and where the needs of the community and its young people are met. We thank God for the Cornerstone achievement, and as we look to the future with new confidence, let us continue humbly to seek guidance through prayer in everything we do, both as individuals and as a Church.

Jenny Hello Sheila – good to see you at your new Church last weekend. You URC folk have been very brave and optimistic. What a transformation from the tired-looking place that was there before. You've changed Marlow for the better!

Sheila Well, we had to do something with those old Victorian buildings – we had a basement and an attic with some uneven stairs between and no ground floor. Not much use for the 21st Century.

Jenny You could have closed and sold up like a lot of Churches.

Sheila Not likely! We have a lovely friendly group of members with lively families. Besides, we think there are folk around Marlow who want to believe that life is worth living but find the Faith hard to hold.

Jenny Your new look suggests that you've found something that helps. But I'm puzzled about your name. Christ Church is clear enough but why 'United Reformed'? – sounds a bit like a Reformatory or a synagogue. You're not Unitarian are you?

Sheila No – we believe in Unity! The Churches in England have been talking about Unity at least since 1920. In 1972 Congregationalists and Presbyterians did something about it. There were huge celebrations in Central Hall and Westminster Abbey when they sealed an act of union. We hoped that others would follow, but a Covenant put before all the English Churches in 1980 was turned down. Our name 'United Reformed' is a reminder of our dream that denominationalism will one day become a thing of the past. Or maybe you could say the name is a sign that our understanding of the Christian Gospel, given to us through 400 years of history, has still to be made known.

Jenny What do you mean by that?

Sheila Our English Churches are members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches with over 60 million members worldwide. Some of these Churches are very old. One goes back to 1170 and is the oldest Protestant Church in the world. But others are new Churches. They are the result of brave missionary work and bring their new understanding of the Faith to keep us awake.

Jenny But why 'Reformed'?

Sheila I'm no historian. You may have to find one of those to answer your question properly. But centuries ago people had to think afresh through their faith because of all the new learning that was making them ask new questions about their beliefs. The Congregationalists and Presbyterians made very important contributions to the debate and suffered for it. They talked about themselves as *Ecclesia Reformata* because they tried to get back to the origin of the Church. When things had settled down a bit, some – like the Pilgrim Fathers – tried to make a new world across the Atlantic. Some of them called themselves *Ecclesia Reformanda subverbum Dei* – the Church always being reformed by the Word of God.

Jenny Oh – I see, that's what the URC is! Always being reformed by the Word of God. Goes with your forward-looking image.

Sheila Yes exactly. I think that's where we are, and I hope the new URC will be more than just a nice building. I hope it will be a place where people – especially young people – find a Faith and a sense of direction to match the times.

Jenny Look – the kids are waiting for me – I must go. Perhaps you will see me in those posh buildings some Sunday – or some weekday when you talk about your Faith. It might help me with mine.