
METHODIST BEGINNINGS IN TREWEN 1808-39

John and Charles Wesley preached several times between 1744 and 1751 in the parish churches of Laneast and Tresmeer. Whether as a result of these visits or not, a Methodist society was formed at Tregear by 1785.

In 1808 William and Mary Bettess of Pipers Pool were members of the Tregear Society, and William shortly became a class leader there, but the probability is that his class actually met at his own home at Pipers Pool. Certainly between 1810 and 1815 this class was made into a separate society, known in 1815 as Trewen, and in **1819 as Pipers Pool Society**; William Bettess being the leader throughout.

William Bettess was a shoemaker and also the owner of a little property around the village. His own house was on the main road midway between the present chapel gate and the corner of the lane to Gospenheale. Services and class meetings would be held in this house and perhaps in the other convenient houses and outbuildings nearby. At first the Sunday services were held weekly, morning and evening alternating.

All honour is due to William Bettess for the part he played in the foundation of Methodism at Pipers Pool, but it must be admitted that he was a somewhat unsatisfactory character. He was a local preacher, and in 1817 was disciplined by the circuit preachers meeting, together with James Jago of Tregear "for drinking to excess and abiding at Trewen Fair till a late hour of the night". Their penance was that they were given only a few appointments on the next plan and their names were lowered to the bottom of the list of preachers.

Bettess was in trouble again, in 1823, and in 1824 he and Jago were both removed from the plan for "refusing to defend themselves against the charges of drunkenness". Bettess, now no longer on the plan held no further offices at a Pipers Pool, but he was allowed to continue in membership. His place as class leader had already been taken by William Facy who had been a member of the Tregear society.

The continuance of Methodism at Pipers Pool (for reasons not necessarily connected with William Bettess's behaviour) remains uncertain for a number of years. A Methodist society was formed at Laneast in 1817, and by 1823 a few members of Pipers Pool had been taken, at least provisionally, into it. Methodist organisation at that period favoured this kind of adaptability.

A NEW BEGINNING

In 1825 Pipers Pool was reconstituted as a society in its own right. It was still a small society of six members” William and Mary Bettess, Mary Frayn, Elizabeth Goaman, Elizabeth Stephens and Thomas Adams. Services were held at 6pm on alternate weeks and were conducted by the local preachers. The travelling preachers (the ministers) only came on weekdays to “meet the classes” and to distribute the quarterly membership tickets.

The little society now began to grow, its membership reached a peak of 18 in 1834 and the congregations must have been double that number. A small house was no longer large enough and around 1835 to 1837 services were held at Trenault though whether in a house, barn or temporary chapel we have no means of knowing. The time had come to build a permanent chapel.

EBENEZER CHAPEL 1839-75

The Wesleyans began the development of the present chapel site when they bought a small plot of land on the west side of Gospenheale Lane in 1839. It was 39 feet east to west and 22 feet north to south. It cost £5 and on it the first chapel was built- a plain stone walled building with two large windows, each with 20 small panes of glass, overlooking Robert Lane’s Field which was later to become the burial-ground. These large windows, reaching down from the eaves to within a few feet of the ground appear to have flanked a central doorway which would have been the lintel and the slate inscribed:

WESLEYAN EBENEZER CHAPEL 1839.

This can still be seen as it is on the wall behind the present car park sign and parish noticeboard.

Inside the chapel were several rows of pews providing accommodation for one hundred worshippers. 25 of the sittings were ‘let’ and the remainder, probably backless forms, were ‘free’. The chapel was enlarged in 1854 to provide room for a further 20 seats. During these years, there were on average, 12 members in the society. In 1843 numbers rose from 13 to 22, and in 1857 when it more than doubled from 12 to 26. Evidently a local revival accounted for both increases, but in both cases the gains were quickly lost within the next few following years.

The congregation of course was larger than the membership. In estimating the size of Victorian Cornish Methodist congregation, it is usually safe to multiply the number of members by three, and the official count a Pipers Pool one March Sunday in 1851 confirms the accuracy of that rule of thumb. On that day the stewards reported the morning attendance of 28 and evening attendance of 55.

As in so many chapels in North Cornwall during the Victorian period it was the farmers who were the mainstay of the church. Two of them at a Pipers Pool provided a very special leadership: Thomas Adams and his younger contemporary George Orchard.

THOMAS ADAMS 1789 -1859

Thomas Adams was a leader in the society from its earliest days. Originally a member at Tregear, near his home at Lidcott, he was appointed a class leader at Laneast in 1823, and in 1825 at Pipers Pool. From that year, although his wife Tabitha and their children continued to be associated with Tregear, Thomas himself was on 'permanent loan' to Pipers Pool. Thomas and Tabitha had a gifted family. Two of them mathematicians and astronomers and one a pioneer missionary. Their son John Couch Adams discovered the planet Neptune.

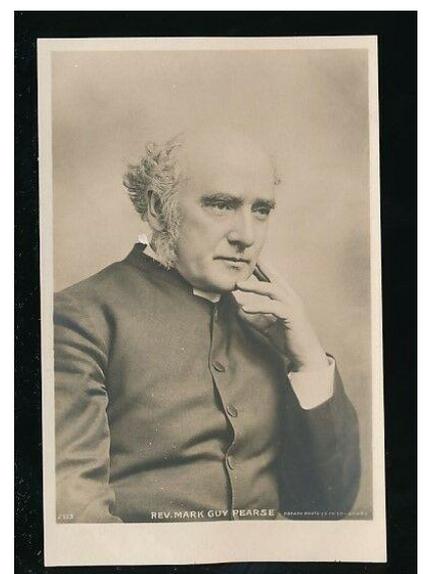
GEORGE ORCHARD 1813-75

George Orchard, who farmed Trethorne in the adjoining parish of St Thomas, was a trustee at Pipers Pool, in 1839, from the age of 26 and for the next two decades he served the society alongside Thomas Adams. He started the Sunday School in 1842. In 1851 he became the Society Steward, and in 1867 the trust treasurer. He was greatly respected and was known for his "straight forward outspokenness, couched in quaint homely language, with occasional telling humour".

1876. THE NEW CHAPEL

The 1839 Chapel was much too small for the mid-Victorian congregations, so George Orchard and his friends decided to build a new one. We are told that they had their difficulties and frustrations though these are not spelt out, but eventually they were able to purchase three strips of land lying between the old chapel and the main road. On this newly acquired land they prepared to build a new chapel with a burial ground around it. Ebenezer chapel was to become the schoolroom.

In 15th July 1875 the foundation stones were laid by Mrs Dingley and Mrs Pethybridge of Launceston and a sermon was preached by the popular Rev. Mark Guy Pearse - a remarkable man – preacher, writer, raconteur, artist, and one of the leading Wesleyan Ministers of his day as well as one of the first bards of the Cornish Gorsedd. Sadly, George Orchard did not live to see the day he had planned for. He died unexpectedly and was buried in a solitary grave on the new site before the wall began to rise.



The new Chapel was opened on Thursday 27th July 1876. The walls made of local stone, with granite plinth coping and corbels. Polyphant stone windows were fitted with leaded lights of cathedral glass. The aisles were laid with Minton tiles.

FIGURE 1. REV. MARK GUY PEARSE

(These granites and tiles are largely intact below the present flooring and staging).

The dedicatory service was conducted by Rev. E.F Hardwick of Devonport. After the service about 150 people sat down to an “excellent repast” in a spacious marquee. The marquee was full and overflowing at teatime and full again for the evening meeting for the church was too small for the occasion! Somewhere in the crowd, busy with his pencil, was a reporter from the Launceston Weekly News. He noted , “the beautiful situation of the new chapel standing on a capacious plot of ground, sloping gradually down to a high road from Launceston to Camelford, affording a charming view of Cornubia’s famed granite ranges, as well as the long stretch of fertile country in which woodland forms a refreshing and pleasant feature”

The cost of the new church was as follows:

Land -----	£80
Contractor -----	£459
Extras -----	£30
Architect and deeds --	£35
Stove, lamps, etc -----	£25
Cost of Stone -----	£70
Total -----	£703

William Orchard at Trethorne with his daughters Mary Emma, Emily, Elizabeth and Alice. Also his second wife Mary Davey.



Whilst most of funds towards the cost of the new church had been raised by generous donations at the time by local people, a debt still remained by the turn of the century and this was not completely paid off until 1913. When the crowd of well-wishers had gone the church settled down to its regular weekly worship and class meetings, its Sunday School and occasional events.

Throughout the years a Sunday School existed and we have the records of attendance going back to 1904. The Sunday School was held on Sunday afternoons, but the highlight of the year was the Sunday School Anniversary which was always held on the first Sunday in June.

Mary Emma Orchard 1869-1945 and husband Daniel Keast 1869-1926 farmed at Bush Park, Pipers Pool.



THE 20TH CENTURY

The chapel had been heated by 2 stoves and lit by oil lamps. These were both replaced in 1957 with the installation of electric heaters

and lighting. These heaters stood the test of time and were only just removed during the current renovations.

In the early 1960's there was much discussion regarding extending the building to provide a kitchen and toilet but when the cost was realised the plans were scaled down and an 'Elsan' chemical toilet was installed in the old chapel's boiler house. The chapel was reopened when the work was completed.

In 1972 the old Ebenezer Chapel was taken down and the men from the chapel laid out the car park. The hardcore being given by Austin Harris one of the Trust members. In 1974 these men helped Fred Sandercock in the major work of building the kitchen and toilet extension. A series of fund raising 'efforts' were organised to raise the funds to be able to do this including a gift day, concerts, a knit-in, waste paper collection, film show and ploughman's lunch to raise the total of £606.17. Mr Sandercock was presented with a gold watch in appreciation of his work as architect and builder.

In May 1976 the Centenary Celebrations were held when Rev. Walker from Plymouth Methodist Central Hall was invited to preach in the afternoon. The Tintagel Male Voice Choir gave a grand concert in the evening.

THE 1980'S AND 1990'S

In the late 1980's the congregation included quite a few young families and so a Methodist Youth Club was formed. There was also a thriving Sunday School and it was said at the time that the chapel had the youngest average aged membership in the whole of the Cornwall Methodist District. By 1997 it was felt that more space was needed in the front of the Church to provide a more flexible worship space, so funds were again raised and work was carried out. The re-opening service was led by the Minister Rev Derek Collins.

Most of this information has been taken from the booklet "Methodism at Pipers Pool 1808-1976", which was compiled and written by Rev. Thomas Shaw assisted by Mrs Sylvia Dawe to commemorate the centenary of the chapel. Please take a look at the booklet for more information on the people who have worshipped here and faithfully maintained the building.