

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SALTERFORTH INGHAMITE CHAPEL



Benjamin Ingham 1712 - 1772

The earliest reference to an Inghamite cause at Salterforth would appear to be a manuscript minutes MMS book, thought to be in Benjamin Ingham's own handwriting, giving the names and locations of Inghamite chapels and their membership in the year 1751. At that time the Salterforth membership was given as 20 men and 24 women. At this time the members meetings and worship would have been held in the open air or in local houses or out buildings.

The first legal deed for the purchase of land for the original chapel and graveyard area is dated 22 October 1754 between the purchaser William Batty (of Newby Cote, Clapham), a faithful follower and helper of Benjamin Ingham, and the seller Robert Jackson (of Wanless in the Forest of Trawden also named as a trustee on the 1754 deed). The deed states "all that piece or parcel of ground called Gateland Croft". The croft then held by "one James Hartley otherwise Watson as farmer or tenant".



The original 1754 chapel, caretaker's cottage and front graveyard.

In 1762 when the Salterforth chapel was set in order i.e. when settled preachers and elders were appointed the membership was about 26. Joseph Edmondson of Earby was elected to be one of the elders.

In 1764 William Batty, who, by now had moved from Clapham to Wheatley Lane Chapel, conveyed the Salterforth property to a number of trustees:-

Joseph Edmondson of Earby – Minister of the Gospel

Samuel Kershaw of Earby – tailor

Thomas Marsden of Newsholme – yeoman

John Barrett of Fiddling Clough (Thornton parish) – yeoman

John Slinger of Winewall – minister of the gospel

Christopher Batty of Thinoaks – Minister of the Gospel

John Hartley from Salterforth – shalloon weaver

James Brown from Salterforth – shoemaker

William Edmondson from Salterforth – weaver

The property now included; “all that structure or building thereon lately erected and now used for a meeting house.....for the publik worship of God.....and all that dwellinghouse.....adjoining to the east end”.

Towards the end of the 18th century, of these early trustees, William Edmondson, named in the 1804 Deed as a Minister of the Gospel had moved to Winewall, and only Joseph Edmondson remained as surviving Elder and Trustee. Having become addicted to drink, he was cut off from the Church, but he held the Deeds and was in possession of the buildings and so he continued to preach as long as he could gather a congregation. Once again the membership was reduced, and the building started to fall into disrepair.

In 1805 Joseph Edmondson (as above) agreed to give up possession of the chapel if he could live in the adjoining house rent free, for life. This was accepted, the building was repaired and services re-started with 8 members and probably with the assistance of other local congregations notably Winewall. The new trustees formed in 1804/5 came from Laneshawbridge, Colne, Blackhow Side, Burnley Lane, Marsden Height and also West Marton. Over the next decade the membership steadily increased and by 1814 it was strong enough for its preachers to help with the chapel at Tosside.

By 1832 the elected trustees at Salterforth came from a wide area which included members from Wheatley Lane, Earby, Colne Edge, Eastburn, Kelbrook, Trawden, these included :-

John Widdop of Salterforth – sawyer

John Ormerod of Barnoldswick – weaver

John Swire of Lothersdale – farmer

Henry Holgate of Boothhouse, Thornton Parish – minister

The above Henry Holgate was apparently a powerful preacher. It is said that he once preached to a congregation of 1000 people in the field adjoining the chapel (where Moor View is today).

Around 1832 the various cottages attached to the chapel were occupied by Henry Marsden, William Hartley, Mary Wilkinson and Henry Bracewell, their work mainly involved worsted weaving. During this time the chapel was lent in trust the sum of £60 for repairs, but the Chapel decided instead to put the money to the relief of the poor and hungry.

In the second half of the 19th century the congregation flourished and produced a good number of lay preachers. In the 1860's several Salterforth men acted as trustees, these included:

Richard Peel the elder and Richard Peel the younger of Spen
Samuel, Abraham and Aaron Whiteoak – all weavers
Joseph King - farmer

Later names in the trustee records reveal close and long-lasting connections with the chapel, which included more Swires, Kings and Greens.

The 1861 Deed refers to members as “the Society of Protestant Dissenters called Inghamites.” The new Trustees had been elected at a meeting “held in the said Chapel on the 25th day of December 1860.” At that time “the dwelling houses at the east end of the chapel now in occupation of James Marsden and Judy Holgate or their under tenants.” The 1861 census shows James Marsden as born in Salterforth 1796 and his occupation as a hand loom cotton weaver. Judith Holgate is shown as born in Bradford 1778 with no occupation.

The 1883 Deed had the 6 (named above) remaining trustees on the list, to which 15 more had been elected to give a total of 21 named trustees, 5 were from Barnoldswick, 4 from Earby, 4 from Colne, 3 from Salterforth, 3 from Nelson and 1 each from Kelbrook and Skipton. Their noted occupations were: Weaver – 10, Overlooker – 2, Twister – 1, Farmer – 3, 1 each – Hawker, Sawyer, Shopkeeper, Solicitor's Clerk, and Yeoman.

By 1917 only two of the 1883 trustees remained and a further 12 were added. Many of these were related as fathers, sons and cousins, 5 off them being from Salterforth.

As time went on the building had become increasingly dilapidated, the main floor and the sloping floor of some of the pews gave way and it was decided to pull it down and rebuild. During the previous years funds for this purpose had been growing slowly. The decision to go ahead was taken in the early 1930's and a building committee was formed. Regular meetings with long discussions and great attention to detail led to the building of the present chapel. The main contractor was Briggs and Duxbury from Barnoldswick, with most of the labour and materials being supplied by local firms and workmen. The stone for the new building came from the village quarry in High Lane. As the new building commenced, a stone-laying ceremony was held on the 18th June 1932 with named stones from Inghamite members as far away as the Fylde coast and Dumfries in Scotland. The first services in the new chapel were held on the 29th and 30th April 1933. From thereon each year, the last Sunday in April was designated as Anniversary Day.



Mr John Swire 1850 – 1933

John Swire of Hague near Kelbrook, preached at both opening services, not only had he been a trustee of the chapel since 1883, but had preached there for 63 years. He was the grandson of John Swire of Lothersdale who was named as a trustee of the chapel in the Deed of 1832.

At these services the lessons were read from Benjamin Ingham's family bible. This was presented to the Salterforth chapel by Judge Theophilus Hastings Ingham of East Marton, grandson of the founder Benjamin Ingham. He has recorded that: "My reverend grandfather and George Whitfield and Wesley all preached there." That is to say at Salterforth.

The Reading Room. The building at the corner of the front graveyard by the Earby road was used before chapel services for the discussion (by the men) of a part of the bible. In earlier times evidence shows it had been a dwelling house, possibly pre-existing the original chapel. During the Crimean War 1854-1856 villagers assembled there one night a week to hear the newspapers read. In later years the room was also used as the collecting point and for the payment of rates for the Skipton Union. Underneath the reading room were stables for the horses of itinerant preachers and any members of the congregation. Most people though, would come to the chapel on foot, like Henry Swire who walked from Lothersdale and carried his children.

The Graveyards. The chapel has graveyards to the back and front of the building. The graveyard to the front adjacent to Earby road is of note because it has double layer of graves. In earlier times when the yard was declared full, local farmers carted earth and covered existing graves deep enough to allow the area to be used again. The 'new' graveyard to the rear of the chapel was opened in 1878 and rapidly filled up. According to records in existence although incomplete, the total number of interments is probably in excess of one thousand. The earliest existing record of a burial is September 1756.



The new 1933 chapel and caretakers cottage shown circa 2009.

After the closure of the chapel it was sold into private ownership. The graveyards have been maintained, and memorial stones that were originally laid flat have been raised in order to protect the inscriptions for the future. Flowering blossom trees have been planted. The upper floor chapel area remains as it was formed in 1933. At the time of going to print it is understood that the lower school room area may be converted to a Chapel of Rest, therefore the religious connection to the building will be continued.

We are indebted to Mrs Madelene Charnley of County Brook and Miss Helen Baxter of Barnoldswick, former members of the Salterforth congregation, for notes and historical information.”