

CHARLES BRIGGS

Charles was born in Whitwick, Leicestershire in 1828

Shortly after becoming a Primitive Methodist minister he became resident minister of Greater Marlow and also oversaw the Primitive Methodist congregation in Maidenhead.

His ministry was not confined to the local area however:

CHAPEL OPENING WESTCOTT BARTON

On Sunday July 20, the Primitive Methodists at Westcott Barton opened a neat little chapel for divine worship, when three excellent sermons were preached - that in the morning by the Rev C. Briggs, from Maidenhead, in the afternoon by Mrs. Hayes, and in the evening by the Rev. H. Hayes, from Witney.

Liberal collections were made at the close of each service. On the following day, Monday, a tea meeting was held in the above chapel, when 133 sat to partake of the cup which cheers but not enebriates.

The above chapel will seat about 130.

(Oxford Chronicle & Reading Gazette 2 August 1851)

Charles shortly left the Primitive Methodist ministry and become an Independent minister. He served in Coleford (Gloucestershire) Leicester and then then became resident minister at the West End chapel, Wellingborough

WIGSTON MAGNA

On Sunday evening last, a sermon on behalf of the London Missionary Society, was preached by Rev. J. Legge, in the Independent chapel of this place. At the close a collection was made in aid of the funds of the above institution.

On the same day, the anniversary sermons were preached in the Primitive Methodist chapel, by C Briggs, and on the following afternoon, there was a tea meeting in the same chapel, which considering the unfavourable state of the weather was well attended. A number of Leicester friends were present, who by their vocal powers and their speeches, contributed much to the pleasure and gratification of the attendants.

(Leicester Mercury 30 April 1859)

Although his stays in Leicester & Wellingborough were fairly brief, they were well appreciated:

PRESENTATION. On the 12th, was presented to the Rev C. Briggs; minister of West-end Chapel, Wellingborough, by the young people of the congregation, "Cobbins' condensed commentary."

We understand that on Mr. Briggs leaving Leicester the pastor and deacons of London-road Chapel presented him with a copy of "Alford's Greek Testament" in 4 vols., and "Simeon's Horeleticae" and also from the poorest of the people amongst whom he laboured, a sum of money.

(Northampton Mercury 21 July 1860)

**Charles married Maria Austin of Stonefield, Oxforshire.
They had two children:- Charles (Jun1854) and Tryphonea (June 1857)**

Maria died (date unknown) and Charles married Eliza Ann Kingdom 15th April 1868

They moved to Bristol

NEW CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL AT KINGSWOOD HILL

On Monday evening the opening of the new Congregational chapel was celebrated by a tea meeting, which was held in the sacred edifice and which was largely attended over 400 persons sitting down to the social repast.

The building has been erected for the use of a body of Christians who, in consequence of a difference of opinion respecting church government, seceded from the congregation worshipping at the Whitfield Tabernacle, and who have, since their secession, been holding devotional services, a room kindly lent for the purpose by a friend, the pulpit being occupied by the Rev Charles Briggs who had accepted an invitation to become pastor of the new church.

It was decided by the secessionists to build a chapel, and a building committee having been formed, an appeal was made to the friends, and it met with a ready response, upwards of £700 in money, labour, or material being soon collected. An eligible site was secured, the owner of the land, Mr. Henry Stone, of Kingswood Hill, letting the friends have it on very advantageous terms, and as speedily as possible the fabric was commenced.

The edifice is a plain, unpretentious but very neat-looking building, constructed of local stone, with freestone dressings, and it is 73ft. long, 48ft wide, and 25ft high. At the west end there is a gallery supported on light iron pillars. It is lighted by eleven windows, four on either side and three at the west end and for evening service there are eight very elegant firelight gas standards in the body of the chapel, a three-light gas bracket on either side of the pulpit, and two five-light gas standards in the gallery. The pulpit a very handsome one. The pews are open, and are made of stained deal, and the building is capable of accommodating from 600 to 700 worshippers.

The cost of the chapel is about £1000 and of that sum, as already stated, £700 has been subscribed, and the remaining £300 has been lent by some gentleman free of interest.

It is intended at some future date to build a home for the minister, and also a schoolroom, but for the present the Sunday school will be held in the chapel.

The masonry has been executed by Mr. J. Bailey, Kingswood-hill; the carpentry by Messrs. Hares, Fudge, and Burchell of Kingswood-hill; the glazing by Mr. Underwood, of Kingswood; the gasfittings and plumbing by Mr. Roberts of Two Mile-hill; and the plastering by Mr. A. Lewis, of Redfield.

(Bristol Mercury 5 December 1868)

Despite being an Independent minister, Charles still involved himself with the Methodist cause

LAYING A MEMORIAL STONE AT KINGSWOOD

Yesterday afternoon the memorial stone of the new Primitive methodist chapel Two-Mile Hill, Kingwood. was laid by Mr Mark Whitwill The chief reason for changing the site of the chapel, which at present is situated a short distance from the new building, is the growth of the Sunday school - the scholars being 300 in number.

The new chapel is 65 feet by 46 and the schoolroom is to occupy a piece of ground behind it. The chapel is built to accommodate 1,000; the estimated cost is £1,000 of which £150 has been collected.

After a short service at the old chapel, the members of the church marched to the new building, singing a hymn on the way. After the Rev. J. Allin (Wesleyan) had engaged in prayer, the Rev. C. Briggs (Independent) read the 84th and 122nd psalms. The Rev G. Dobson, superintendent of the circuit and minister of the chapel, then read a document, of which the following is an extract -

"This house of prayer we erected for the worship of God by the Primitive Methodist Society of Kingswood. In the year of grace 1872.. The society numbers 75 member, the Rev G. Dobson being minister and superintendent of the circuit. . Mr Thomas Phipps, of St George's is the builder.. The present state of the Kingswood circuit is of a healthy tone, having reported to the last conference a net increase of ten members for the year. The Kingwood Society Sunday School as also prosperous, being much too large for the schoolroom; . Several of the classes have to be taught in the chapel"

Mr Dobson said that in the bottle which was to be placed in the cavity beneath the stone were a copy of the Conference minutes, a circuit plan, and a copy of the document which he had read.

The shrine was then raised, and a very neat trowel (manufactured in Sheffield) was handed to Mr Whitwill. With this he laid the mortar and, the stone having been lowered, he gave it three distinct taps with the mallet. and said.- *"I declare this stone laid to the power and glory of God. in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"*. After Mr Whitwill had given expression to a few interesting and terse remarks, wishing prosperity to the building that was about to be erected.

. Mr Dobson said that a number of smaller stones were prepared for the trustees of the chapel. their wives and children, that they might say they laid a stone in the building. These stones were then placed. and the proceedings shortly after brought to a close..

In the evening a tea was held in the old chapel, at which there was a numerous attendance. A public meeting was held after the tea, at which several gentlemen delivered addresses.

(Western Daily Press 2 Oct 1872)

Charles died, aged 50, in 1878

The Late Charles Briggs

Our obituary last week contained the announcement of the death of the Rev C Briggs of Kingswood, nr Bristol at the age of 50 years.

The deceased had been thirty years in the ministry. For five years he preached in connection with the Primitive Methodist body, but afterwards joined the Independents.

. His first charge was at Coleford, in the Forest of Dean but subsequently he laboured at Wellingborough and at Chatteris. . Some fifteen years ago, before his residence in Chatteris, he was engaged in home mission work, and for about twelve months resided in Leicester where he was connected with the Town Mission, and preached in several chapels in the town.

Eventually he removed to Kingswood, where he died on the 6th inst. He was held in the highest esteem in the district, and the funeral service, held in his chapel was attended by the Rev. J. Teague, the vicar of the parish, who conducted the burial service in the church and churchyard, where the deceased was interred on Saturday last. The Vicar also preached the funeral sermon in the parish church on Sunday, the chapel at which the deceased officiated being closed to admit of the congregation attending the church.

Mr. Briggs was brother-in-law of Mr. J. Harrap, of Leicester

(Leicester Chronicle 17 August 1878)

Gloucester and Hereford Congregational Total Abstinence Association

The third anniversary of this body was celebrated yesterday.

Some names will disappear for various reasons from the list of council. Of one, special mention must be made. It is that of the Rev Charles Briggs.

When a whole community followed the remains to the grave, not a few remembered among his other good works his life-long abstinence, and his devotion to the interest of the Association.

(Bristol Mercury Nov 1 1878)