



The History of Carlton Baptist Meeting

Researched and written

by

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Carlton & Chellington Historical Society

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A preliminary note on sources

The primary source for this history is the first Church Minute Book of the Carlton Baptist Meeting. This was commenced in 1691, and the last entry in it was made in about 1854. I have relied on a transcription made by F.W.P. Harris, of which copies are held by Bedfordshire Archives and the Bedfordshire Family History Society. A second Church book exists, but it is not now easily accessible and has not been transcribed. However, the 20th-century pastor Moses Beeby, who until his death in 1954 had charge of that book, used it to compile a handwritten history of Carlton Baptist Meeting up to about 1927. I transcribed [Moses Beeby's history](#) myself, and it is the basis for the later part of the present account. Other minor sources are cited in the text.

Mike Pratt

1. The origin of nonconformity in Carlton

The first known reference to nonconformist worship in Carlton dates from 1672. A record at The National Archives shows that the house of Gideon Fisher of Carlton, Bedfordshire, was licensed for Congregational worship in that year, under the short-lived 1672 Declaration of Indulgence, which was withdrawn less than two years later [1].

In nearby Stevington, a Baptist congregation is said to have been established as early as 1665, although no written records of its activities were kept until 1783. In that year a list of 159 members was recorded, including many from neighbouring Bedfordshire villages such as Carlton and Chellington, and others from further afield in Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire [2].

Congregational, Baptist and other nonconformist churches rejected key aspects of the established church, notably any centralized authority through the hierarchy of bishops and archbishops, ecclesiastical courts and the like. Each congregation was regarded as self-governing in respect of how it selected its pastor or minister, the forms of worship it chose to adopt, and how to deal with internal disciplinary matters. Most of them practised some form of communion, but there were major differences in the matter of baptism. In particular, Congregational churches generally performed infant baptism, much as in the Church of England. Baptist churches, by contrast, usually took the view that new members should be baptized into the church only upon reaching the age of discretion, when they could make a conscious decision on the matter. They were then required to make a statement of their faith in the presence of the congregation before being baptized. Baptism was generally by total immersion, usually in a local river in the early days.

Referring back to the introductory paragraph, it appears that there were sufficiently many dissenters in Carlton in 1672 for the formation of a Congregational church. However, the Fisher family, who provided the premises for its services, seems to have left Carlton some time in the next two decades. Certainly, its members played no part in what subsequently became the Carlton Baptist Meeting, whose origins are described in what follows.

References

- [1] The National Archives, Domestic State Papers, 1672, Notes of licences, &c., p. 238.
- [2] Bedfordshire Archives, Ref. X239/1, First Church Book of the Stevington Baptist Church.

2. The ministry of [John Greenwood](#)

The new Carlton congregation kept a Church Minute Book [1], generally referred to as the first Church Book, which was started in 1691. Entries at this time were apparently made by the minister himself. After some preliminary material, the book states that ‘*The Church of Christ at Carlton began in harvest An: Dom: 1688...*’. Fifty-seven members of the church are listed, starting with John Greenwood ‘*ordained pastor*’, Mary Greenwood his wife, Elizabeth Rennolds and Alis Bithrey.

Greenwood was formally elected pastor on 15th October 1691, though it seems he had been acting in that capacity since 1688. During his ministry the Church Book essentially records his personal narrative of the discordant early life of the nonconformist community in Carlton.

Against the four names listed in the last paragraph there is a note '*These four came out of Steven [Stevington] Church*'. This was an understatement — the First Church Book of the Stevington Baptists records that John Greenwood, his wife and two other 'unruly' members were *expelled* from that congregation, apparently because of a dispute over the practice of baptism. Early in its history, the Stevington congregation had restricted membership to those who had made a confession of faith and been baptized by total immersion, but John Greenwood apparently held obstinately to the view that baptism by 'sprinkling' was an acceptable alternative.

Greenwood was clearly a contentious character. During his ministry at Carlton an internal dispute, presumably over the same issue of baptism, divided the congregation into two factions, one for him (those with Congregationalist leanings) and one violently against him (those favouring the Baptist view). For a while, in fact, there appear to have been two rival nonconformist churches in Carlton. John Greenwood was also involved in a disagreement with the Baptist church at Rothwell in Northamptonshire. The years 1693 and 1694 were particularly turbulent, and several former members of his congregation were '*cut off and delivered up to Satan*'. Towards the end of 1694 the tally of members numbered in the Church Book was down to about forty.

In 1695 it was decided that John Greenwood should attempt a reconciliation with the Baptist church at Stevington, on the grounds that he had never properly been 'dismissed' from that body with their blessing to join the Carlton congregation. A group of 'messengers' from the neighbouring nonconformist churches of Bedford, Goldington, Kimbolton, Newport Pagnell, 'Rowell' [Rothwell], 'Steventon' [Stevington] and 'Welhemborow' [Wellingborough] took the view that his appointment as pastor at Carlton had therefore been invalid. Greenwood was suspended by them until he had settled matters satisfactorily with his former coreligionists at Stevington, and on 4th October 1695 he duly went there with that intention. But the Stevington people were adamant that they had been quite right to expel him from their congregation, and refused to regularize his departure from them, despite the recommendation of the 'messengers', four of whom were actually from Stevington, that they did so. Two days later, having received a report of the proceedings at Stevington, the Carlton members confirmed (presumably with the agreement of the majority of the 'messengers') that John Greenwood was rightly a member of the Carlton congregation and reconfirmed his appointment as pastor, urging him to continue in that office '*without any more trouble and confusion*'. The Church Book from Stevington gives a somewhat dismissive and watered-down account of this dispute, which is much more fully reported (by Greenwood himself) in the Carlton Church Book. The impression is given that the members of the Stevington congregation were happy to be rid of John Greenwood, and what he did at Carlton was no concern of theirs.

Remarkably, in 1695 two marriage ceremonies were performed by the Carlton dissenters. On 28 March '*Tho: Churchman & Eliz: Tandy were lawfully joyned together in holy matrimony*', and on 22 July '*Edward Rennolds & Mary Cole was lawfully joyned together in holy matrimony*'. In the first case there were five witnesses, and in the second six; John Greenwood was a witness at both ceremonies. However, at the time marriages could legally only be performed by a priest of the Church of England or (as a hangover from the Cromwellian era, when a marriage was regarded as a strictly civil contract) by a magistrate. The two unions recorded here were therefore of dubious validity, to say the least.

Early in 1696, about six months after his reconfirmation as pastor at Carlton, John Greenwood abruptly left the village for North Crawley, Bucks., which appears to have been where he had formerly lived. No reason is given in the Church Book, but he may have been in ill health, because he died at his house in North Crawley on 20th January 1699.

References

- [1] First Church Book of the Carlton Baptist Church, original now believed to be held by the Evangelical Library, Bounds Green, London, N11 2UT. Typed transcription made in 1956 by F.W.P. Harris, copies available at Bedfordshire Archives and Bedfordshire Family History Society.

3. The ministry of [Robert Church](#)

Following the departure of John Greenwood there is a gap in the Church Book records until 1702. A new pastor, Robert Church, had by then been appointed, but the Church book contains no details of his ordination.

In fact, like his predecessor, Robert Church had previously been a member of the Baptist church at Stevington [1]. Further details are given in the supplementary information provided concerning him, but the basic facts are as follows:

- He was baptized into the Stevington congregation in 1694, and was given permission by them to preach the Gospel publicly in 1696;
- He was ordained pastor at Carlton in or shortly before 1702;
- He made a return visit to Stevington in 1718 to act as a witness to the ordination as pastor there of John Bowyer, a former member of the Carlton congregation.

At the beginning of Robert Church's ministry a new Church Covenant was adopted. Among other things, this included the items

- *It is agreed upon to sing at the Lord's table, (i.e., at communion services – this was a controversial practice at the time), and*
- *It is agreed upon that infant baptism is not to be counted as a practis [sic] in this Church.*

These statements were preceded by the following rather enigmatic observation: *'It is agreed that if any member have light into the baptizing of belivers that they may have it administred to them but if thay have no light in it to receive them as saints'. This seems to allow for some difference of opinion among the congregation regarding the practice of baptism.* Robert Church was in fact an appeaser, and clearly much more diplomatic than his predecessor as minister. During his pastorship there is no indication of major dissent among the congregation for nearly twenty years, apart from sundry records of individual members being *'cut off from the church'* or *'admonished'* for sundry misdemeanours.

The Church Book contains a long list of members added to the congregation during Robert Church's time. In the 1702 list there were only 17 *'enchurched'* members, which included the pastor himself and two deacons, John Hannah and John Steff. New members continue to be listed until 1710, in which year 20 were added, but after that there is a gap until 1716, and entries cease again after 1720. Mary Church, probably Robert's wife, is present in the 1702 list, and there is a later entry dated 14 May 1719, mentioning "Mallion" Church, perhaps a daughter who had attained the age for baptism and admission to the church.

It is noted that "Jann ye 4 1716/7 William Boyar preached before the Church and was approved on by ye Church and sent out to preach ye gospel", and then "October ye 3d 1718 William Boyar dismissed to Stephen [Stevington] Church." William Bowyer was ordained pastor at Stevington later the same month, and Robert Church was a witness at the ceremony, which seems to show that relations between the Stevington and Carlton congregations were now cordial again after the stormy period of John Greenwood's ministry at Carlton.

Despite this rather sparse record, there is ample evidence of the success of Robert Church's ministry from a rival quarter, that of the established church. During the early 18th century the Bishop of

Lincoln sent out periodical questionnaires to the clergy within his diocese, which at that time included Carlton, enquiring, among other things, about nonconformist worship in their individual parishes [2]. In 1709 Joseph Chaderton, Rector of Carlton cum Chellington, reported that the Carlton Dissenters met *‘every Sunday twice, near 200 in number’*, their teacher being Robert Church, lacemaker. Later, in 1717, he informed his bishop that there were about 60 families in Carlton and 30 in Chellington, in both places *‘near Half of them Dissenters, Independents or Anabaptists’*. In the case of Carlton *‘There is one Publick Meeting-house supposed to contain about three Hundred, generally full twice every Lord’s Day. Taught by Robert Church’*. This was confirmed three years later in 1720 by Chaderton’s successor Benjamin Rogers the diarist, Rector of Carlton and Curate of Chellington, who adopted a rather more sycophantic tone towards his bishop: *‘My Lord, there are about Threescore and fourteen families and about forty of these are dissenting, and for the most part as I am inform’d, Independent, besides two of these are of the Quaker’s Sect’*. Regarding Meeting Houses he wrote *‘Yes my Lord, there is a licens’d Meeting House and but one, where they assemble generally twice every Sunday in a pretty considerable Number. The person that teaches there is named Robert Church, and esteem’d an Independent’*. The established church was rather vague about distinctions between various flavours of nonconformity. Baptists of all kinds were often referred to as “Anabaptists”, and “Independent” was used to cover a wide range of religious opinion. It is not known where the licensed meeting house was at this time, but in view of the numbers it was said to hold it was probably a large barn. It is likely that many of those present in the large congregations reported above were not actually baptized full members of Robert Church’s flock, but were rather people who preferred the nature of the services over those of the established church.

The ministry of Robert Church at Carlton terminated with his death in August 1721. He seems to have been stricken by a sudden illness, since he made his will on the 11th of that month and was buried just three days later.

References

- [1] Bedfordshire Archives, Ref. X239/1, First Church Book of the Stevington Baptist Church.
- [2] Welch, Edwin, *Episcopal Visitations in Bedfordshire 1706 – 1720*, Vol. 81 of the publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, The Bs, 2002.

4. The ministry of [Joseph Dadley](#)

Robert Church was succeeded by Joseph Dadley, after an interregnum of nearly three years. The earliest entry concerning him in the Church Book is as follows: *‘At Our Church Meeting: Held on ye 29th of May 1724 it is agreed by the Members of this Church that Mr Dadly be received as a Member of Christ into our Community. Moreover the Church having approved of his Gifts and qualifications for the work of the Ministry hath solemnly sent out and appointed him to preach the Gosple. It is also agreed by the Members of this Church that he be chosen to Execute and performe the office of a pastor to this Church: and they have Thereby Given him a Call to that Work and he hath accepted of the Call and we have appointed Tuesday the 6th of June to sett him apart for the work...’* Thus he was formally ordained pastor on 6th June 1724 – the pastors of several other Baptist churches, in Newport Pagnell, Oundle, Ridgemont and Rothwell, were invited to the occasion *‘to assist us in y^e work’*. It is clear that the Baptists had good communications over a wide area in the early 18th century.

Then in 1725 there comes the following entry: *‘Dec the 6th 1725. At our Church Meeting Mr Dadly gave up his accounts concerning the Charge of the Building the Meeting and his accounts Being right he Is acquitted from his Charge’*. This sounds as though some building work had been done, either renovation or extension of the existing premises used for worship or possibly the erection of some new building, and that there were suspicions that Mr Dadley had been feathering his own nest from money raised for the work. However, as we have seen, he was found not guilty on this occasion. The building work referred to was certainly not connected with the existing chapel building, which dates

from 1760. As far as is known the members were still meeting at this time in a barn, possibly at Fisher's Farm, though it must have been of considerable size to accommodate the congregations mentioned in the more or less contemporaneous statements by Joseph Chaderton and Benjamin Rogers.

There are no further significant entries in the Carlton Church Book that directly concern the pastorate of Joseph Dadley until we find '*August the 14 1726 came John Pool to Carlton; to preach the first time for Mr Dadly on a sabbath day. The Next time was December 1728: John Pool preached for the church after Mr Joseph Dadly went away.*' Thus Joseph Dadley seems to have quit the ministry at Carlton some time in 1728. There is no suggestion that he formally resigned his position, and no reason is given for his departure.

The name of Joseph Dadley reappears in the Church Book some years later. In November 1737 it is stated that '*at our church meeting was made further s[e]arch of the scandalous behaviour of Joseph Dadly (who was a preacher to this church formerly) but hath been guilty of immodest Actions and carriage towards women at Northampton, Biggleswade, Cambridge, sufficient testimony given to the church of the truth of his sin. After solemn prayer to God upon his own ordinance he passed under the sentence of excommunication.*' This item reinforces the earlier conclusion regarding the efficiency of communication between Baptist congregations in the early 18th century.

Before moving on to the next pastorate, it is worth noting that in September 1721 a system of contributions by church members had been agreed to. In the first instance this may have been intended for paying the expenses of visiting preachers who came to fill the gap. Some people committed to pay what for those days was the large sum of £8 per annum, including three members of the Bithrey family (Thomas, Uriah and Gideon) and John Steff. For some time the Church Book was effectively used as an accounts book, recording commitments and payments. The first page of this section of the book is headed '*Sep: ye: 15: 1721 We whose names are hereunto subscribed do agree to pay the Respective sums hereafter Mentioned for the suport of the Minister and to be paid Quarterly*'. There follows a list of 44 names, with the amounts promised against them ranging from £2 down to 2 shillings. From this point the accounts become very difficult to understand. They contain entries such as the following:

- '*The six girls at John Goodins Given Mr Dadly £4 0s 0d*',
- '*The girls that sit next the six others £2 0s 0d*' (but this amount has been crossed out),
- '*Mr Pearce hath promised sumthing £0 0s 0d*'

Then later we find items such as

- '*Given Mr Dadly when he whent to London with Mrs Dadly £2 10s 0d*'
- '*Lent Mr Dadly five pounds eleven shillings 6 pence*'

These accounts occupy several pages of the Church book, and having commenced in 1721 they cease abruptly in June 1726, when perhaps a separate accounts book was acquired. The minister seems to have been paid roughly £5 per quarter, though the amount varied, possibly depending on how much he was in debit to the church funds. What seems clear, however, is that a few members of the congregation were regularly paying substantial sums to the church, and that the accumulated funds must have handsomely exceeded the minister's stipend and expenses. It seems probable, in fact, that there was a project to build a new meeting house, or of converting existing premises for that purpose. This seems to be confirmed by the 1725 entry quoted earlier concerning Mr Dadley and the '*Building [of] the Meeting*', which seems to imply that this intention was actually being carried out. Where that meeting place was in the 1720s remains a mystery, however.

5. The ministry of [John Pool](#)

Following Joseph Dadley, John Pool came to Carlton in 1729 from the Baptist community at Keysoe. According to the Church book *‘June 1729 bro’ John Steff bro Joseph Hardwick bro Tho: Bithrey Junior these three brethren went to Keyso Church with John Pool for his dismissal from Keyso Church unto Carlton Church’*. Such a ‘dismissal’ was a consent by one congregation for the transfer of one of its members to another – it was what the Stevington Baptists had refused to grant to John Greenwood in the 1690s. John Pool seems to have served a probationary period at Carlton, because he was not formally elected pastor of the Baptist Meeting until about a year later: *‘June the 3 day 1730 John Pool was chosen Pastor by the Church at Carlton with the consent of all the brethren unanimously being present twelve preaching brethren most of them pastors of churches as witnesses of gospel order and the next sabbath they all pertooke of the lords supper together’*.

During John Pool’s ministry of more than twenty years well over 40 new members were received into the church following baptism, a typical entry in the Church book being as follows: *‘April 2 1735 At our church meeting William Wharton, Mrs Rebecah Knight and Elizabeth Smith was received into fellowship with this church’*. There is little evidence of major discord within the congregation during this period, though three people were excommunicated, one for no specified reason, one for being a ‘fornecator’, and one (the previous pastor, Joseph Dadly) for reasons mentioned earlier. A few members were also ‘admonished’ for more minor offences, one of them for *‘contracting debts and taking no regard to pay them’*. All told, John Pool’s pastorship seems to have been a fairly peaceful and prosperous period for the Carlton Baptists.

In 1736, during this ministry, there was an outbreak of smallpox in Carlton, following another smaller outbreak that had been successfully contained. The new cases were attributed by Benjamin Rogers, in his diary [1], to the Baptists: *“This new breaking out of them [i.e., the smallpox] was occasioned, (as they say) by Mrs. Rey’s funeral sermon, Notice of which being given long before it bro[ugh]t a vast Number of People to the Meeting from all Parts to hear it”*. Mrs. Rey was a chapelgoer who had died during the first outbreak, and her funeral at the Baptist Meeting was attended by many people from Olney, where smallpox was endemic at the time.

The final entry in the Church Book concerning John Pool’s ministry is *‘Mr John Pool Minister of the Gospel & Pastor of this Church of Christ Departed this Life April the 5 day 1751. And we as a Church were Left like Sheep without a Shepherd...’*. His death is confirmed by a bald entry in the burial register of St Mary’s, Carlton: *“1751 April 8 Jn Poole”*.

References

- [1] C.D. Linnell (ed.), *The Diary of Benjamin Rogers, rector of Carlton, 1720 – 71*, Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Vol. 30 (1950). Republished (1999) by the Carlton and Chellington Historical Society.

6. The ministry of [Thomas Hull](#)

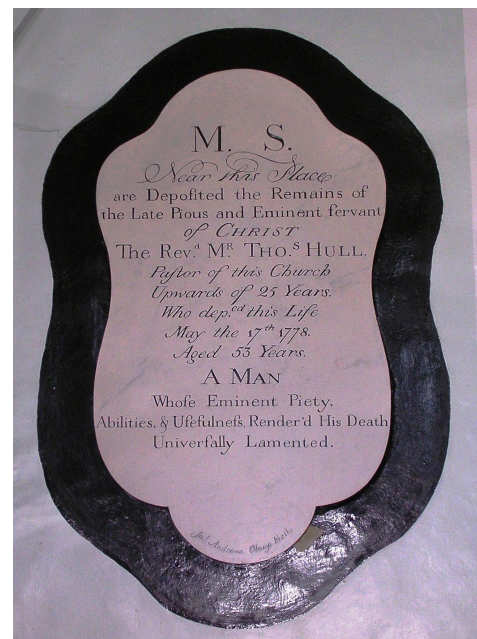
Following the death of John Pool, the senior members of the Carlton Baptists lost no time in making enquiries among other local Baptist churches regarding a possible successor for him. Among the suggestions received was Thomas Hull of Olney, who was asked to come and preach to a small congregation in Carlton on a weekday, which he did on 15th May 1751. He apparently met with approval, and was then invited to preach to a larger congregation on a Sunday, which he did on the following 2nd June. Once again his preaching was approved, and he was now asked to come to Carlton three Sundays in every month, on a supply basis. On 21st July he was asked to officiate at Sunday services for one year, on a probationary basis, to which he agreed. However, as early as September 1751 the church members were able to agree on asking him to come and live at Carlton with his family. He agreed, and moved to Carlton in December 1751 with his wife and young children. After much further prayer and consideration, the Carlton congregation *‘desired Brother Hull*

to get his Dismission from the Church of Christ at Olney and Come and Joyn with us in Fellowship the Church of Christ at Carlton'. In May 1752 he was 'dismissed' from Olney to Carlton, where in July he was appointed a Teaching Elder. Finally, 'After Further Tryal of his Gifts and Prayer to the Lord...' he was promoted to the pastorate, having been ordained on 24th October 1752 'in the presence of several Pastors and Ministers of sister Churches...'. This lengthy process, drawn out over nearly eighteen months, was probably adopted because of Thomas Hull's comparative youth; he was only about 27 when he assumed the pastorate.

After his ordination the Church Book was apparently maintained by Thomas Hull himself. It records a list of members 'received into fellowship' since he came to Carlton. The first such entry was 'Hannah Hull my wife', in November 1752. On 27th November 1765 'Mary Hull my daughter' was admitted, as was 'Elizabeth Hull, Carlton, my daughter' on 3rd April 1768. On 9th May 1775 a further daughter, Hannah, was baptized and received into the church. Members of the church were recorded as coming from the villages of Bozeat, Harrold, Hinwick, Lavendon, Oakley, Odell, Pavenham, Podington, and Turvey, apart from Carlton itself. Many entries confusingly have the note 'dead' against them, but such emendations were obviously added later when the persons concerned passed away. The membership list is interspersed with occasional records of people being appointed to the office of Deacon, dismissed to other churches or excluded for various misdemeanours. The reasons for these falls from grace are not always specified, but those that are include 'that great sin of adultery', 'that great sin of drunkenness', 'for turning his back on Christ people and ways' and 'for neglecting his duty to the Church and a scandalous walk in the world'.

Two particularly significant entries in this list were made on 29th October 1766 – 'John Emery was sent out to preach the Gospel' – and on 27th July 1768 – 'John Emery dismissed to Little Staughton'. According to a History of the Little Staughton Meeting written by H.G. Tibbut [1], John Emery was received into fellowship by the Little Staughton congregation in September 1768 and ordained pastor there the following month. He became highly respected in the Baptist community, and held his pastorate until his death in 1799. John Emery originally became a member of the Carlton Baptists on 2nd October 1765. In the Church Book he was said to come from 'Bonis', which presumably signifies the village of Bolnhurst, which happens to be fairly close to Little Staughton where he ministered for more than thirty years.

It was during Thomas Hull's tenure as pastor in Carlton that the present Meeting building was erected — the date on the front of it is 1760. Rather remarkably, the Church Book contains no mention of the commissioning of the building. The land on which it stands was purchased from John Bithrey for £10. The building was licensed by the Archdeaconry of Bedford for nonconformist worship on 19 July 1760. The document concerned describes it as 'Newly erected building in Carlton Street abutting W on house of John Reynholds & S on house of Thomas Mardling'. Three months earlier a similar licence had been granted for the 'Dwelling house of Thomas Hull of Carlton, minister', perhaps for small gatherings of the faithful in an intimate setting, or perhaps there was an agreement to give up their former place of worship on Midsummer Day and the new building was not ready in time. In both cases the applicants for the licences were William Wharton junior of Carlton, cordwainer, and William Wilshire of Bedford, victualler, who were presumably deacons of the Carlton Baptist Meeting at the time. Copies of the licences are held by Bedfordshire Archives (Refs. ABN 1/1, ABN 2/16



Memorial to Thomas Hull, formerly
in the Carlton Baptist Meeting

and ABN 2/17), but they are transcribed in a book by Edwin Welch [2]. victualler, who were presumably deacons of the Carlton Baptist Meeting at the time. Copies of the licences are held by Bedfordshire Archives (Refs. ABN 1/1, ABN 2/16 and ABN 2/17), but they are transcribed in a book by Edwin Welch [2].

For more information on the 1760 deed, see [CCHS Newsletter March 2014](#) and scroll to page 3.

The meeting house is now a private dwelling, and at the time of writing, its present owner is in possession of the original 1760 parchment deed for the building which, among other things, names the Trustees who were in effect its original owners.

The list of events recorded in the Church Book during Thomas Hull's pastorship is followed, by the entry "*The Rev^d Mr Thos. Hull Minister of Jesus Christ and Pastor of this Church Upwards of 25 Years. Was Translated out of this Church Militant to the Church Triumphant. On Lords-day Evening the 17th Day of May in the Year of our Lord Christ 1778.*" According to a memorial to him formerly inside the Carlton Meeting, he was aged only 53 when he died. He was buried in St Mary's churchyard in Carlton (the Baptists still did not have their own burial ground at this time). The record from the parish burial register is "*20th May 1778: Mr. Tho Hull, dissenting minister.*" Until recently the memorial to Thomas Hull (see the photograph above) was mounted inside the Meeting but it was relocated elsewhere when the chapel was converted to a private dwelling in the 1990s.

References

- [1] H.G. Tibbutt, *Little Staughton Meeting*, Published by Little Staughton Meeting (1951). Available in the Local Studies Department of Bedford Central Library.
- [2] Edwin Welch, *Bedfordshire Chapels and Meeting Houses: Official Registration 1672 – 1901*, Publications of the Bedfordshire Record Society, Vol. 75 (1996).

[RETURN](#)

7. A turbulent interregnum, 1778 - 1787

Following the death of Thomas Hull there followed a period of about 9 years before the first mention of his successor John West. The Church Book contains a lengthy account of the first 3½ years of this period, but after 1782 there is a hiatus of nearly five years during which no entries were made. At first, matters proceeded harmoniously. Various preachers were invited to officiate at services, with a view to finding one at liberty who would be a suitable candidate for the pastorship. Some of these met with little or no approval from the congregation, while others that were more highly thought of refused to take on the pastorship for one reason or another. Two of them objected to the fact that the Church Covenant was '*upon an Open Bottom*', which meant that although the Carlton congregation was orthodox Particular Baptist at the time, members who had not been baptized by total immersion could still take part in communion services after making a confession of faith. It is interesting that, whereas all pastors up to this time had been comparatively local men, the net was now being cast very much wider, as will be seen in what follows.

Some of the aspiring pastors who came to preach at Carlton were:

- Mr. Wykes from Leicester in August 1778 (he did not find favour at the time);
- Mr. Stephens from Bristol (who met with general approbation later the same year but 'Refused coming Amongst us on Account of our Church Covenant being upon an Open Bottom' – he objected to the presence of non-baptized persons at communion services);
- Mr Wilkes came from South Wales to preach on two occasions in February 1779, and of him the Church Book says 'A rank Methodist Indeed Who refused All rule Order or Dicipline in the Church of God. In this Person We Was all Unanimous in refusing and rejecting him for the above reason. And he Left us to our great joy the 21st of Feby. 1779';

- Lawrence Butterworth of Evesham, Wores., initially refused to come to Carlton, citing (like Mr. Stephens above) an objection to the practice of open communion. However, he then made an unexpected visit to Carlton and preached on 26th July 1779 ‘to the General and Universal satisfaction of the Church and Congregation’, though his refusal to consider the pastorship still stood;
- Mr. Hiller from Tewkesbury, Gloucs., came to preach on two Sundays in August 1779 ‘to the General Satisfaction of the Church and Congregation both’, but when the matter of offering him the pastorship for a probationary period was voted upon by the Church members he was rejected. The primary reason for this was that he was ‘*A Sabatarian or Seventh Day Man*’, which is open to interpretation since there are numerous forms of Sabbatarianism, but possibly meant that he regarded Saturday (the seventh day of the week) as a day for relaxation and worship as well as Sunday. Furthermore, he appeared to have some entanglement with a Sabbatarian church in Oxfordshire
- In the meantime, Mr. Butterworth of Evesham had been heard from again – he said he had reconsidered his opinion on the matter of open communion, and was willing to be reconsidered for the pastorship at Carlton, ‘*which Intelligence was received with an Universal Pleasure and delight*’. A proposal to offer him a six month probationary position was passed unanimously. However, he apparently had a large family in Evesham and the spending of six months in Carlton presented practical difficulties for him. Nevertheless, he commuted to and from Carlton to preach several times over the period October 1779 - January 1780. In February of that year the members of the Church were asked whether Mr Butterworth’s probationary period should be extended. Since his first visit to Carlton some of those members had clearly revised their original good opinion of him. Consequently, one of the deacons and about 30 other congregants argued at a church meeting against his continued probation on the grounds that ‘*he did not reduce the Doctrines of the Gospel Low enough for there experience, Whereby there Souls were not Fed*’. It sounds as though Mr Butterworth was a little too highbrow for them.

This last church meeting ended in ‘*An Awfull and dreadfull Confusion... Nothing but a Confused Noise and Clamour was to be heard amongst us. Neither order nor Decency were Attended to. We broke up with Precipitation, and Came to no Conclusion respecting giving Mr. Butterworth any further Call on Approbation*’. The Church Book continues ‘*From this time a Dreadful spirit took Place amongst us, Envy, Bitterness, wrath, anger, Clamour and evil speaking one of Another... Obstnacy and Perversity Prevailed on both sides, Conscience and reason seem’d Intirely to have lost there power*’. The group which supported Mr. Butterworth acted unilaterally in urging him to take up the ministry at Carlton, but he equivocated, though he did consent to preach again three times in Carlton during April and May, after which he returned home. Eventually it was agreed that he be invited to Carlton again, from May to September 1780, in effect giving him another probationary period, but by now he had had enough of Carlton for the time being, and declined the offer. The two factions in the dispute then descended once again into bitter contention.

Eventually a further agreement was reached, that the matter be put to an external arbitrator – and Mr. Butterworth apparently concurred in this decision. The chosen adjudicator was Robert Hall, pastor of the Baptist church at Arnesby, Leics., a highly respected man in the Baptist world – in fact it was he who had recommended Mr. Butterworth in the first place. His advice, received in September 1780, was reportedly ‘*to lay aside all animosity and reflections on each other regarding what is past: and mutually to seek the Lord in order to his sending one in and with whom we might all cordially unite*’. Clearly, the Carlton Baptists had not cordially united over Mr. Butterworth; the implication was that they should renew their search for a generally acceptable pastor. ‘*Thus the Matter of Mr. Butterworth was Ended to the Grief of those who were his real Friends*’.

Mr Wykes (who had first been considered for the pastorship back in 1778) was then invited back to Carlton on probation for six months. He accepted, and returned on 23rd December 1780. Those six months were extended at midsummer 1781, but in November it was found that *‘there Appeared Almost throughout the Whole Church, a Very Great Dissatisfaction with Mr. Wykes Ministrations...’*. Furthermore, *‘our Congregation was greatly upon the decline’*, and he was given notice to leave at the end of January 1782 in a written message which he is said to have received in *‘a Very kind and Courteous Manner’*. Possibly he had by now had enough of the disputatious Carltonians.

Following this very turbulent and divisive period it was acknowledged that a fresh start was needed. It was decided that a new Church Covenant should first be written, defining the beliefs of the church, the manner in which its members should behave towards the church and each other, and the disciplinary measures to be adopted in cases of transgression. The beliefs specified follow Calvinistic principles (a brief explanation of these is given later), and, as previously, open or mixed communion is accepted: *‘We believe, that Water Baptism is an Ordinance of Jesus Christ, And that it ought to be regarded, and Attended to, by all his Followers, Believers only are the proper Subjects, And the Mode Immersion, But as we are in an Imperfect State and Cannot see eye to eye, With respect to the Subjects and Mode, We leave each Other to Act According to the Light We have or may have received, And not make it a bar to Communion’*. At the end of this Covenant there follow two additional clauses, obviously added later, and in the light of experience, by a less well-educated writer:

- *It is Agreed in all Matters of deficolty [difficulty] that may arise in the Church that the lesser number submit to the greater and so fulfil the Law of Christ.*
- *That in any debate that may arise in the Church but one person be allowed to speak at a time and thus candedly attend to the reasonings laid down by each other.*

The new Church Covenant was agreed upon at a church meeting held on 29th January 1782, and those who concurred with its principles all signed or made their marks in the Church Book. They included five Deacons (William Wharton, Mark Tandy, Thomas Mardling, Lewis Wooding, Samuel Luddington), 15 other Brethren and 20 Sisters, making 40 in all. There follows a list of all those former members of the church who had *not* signed, numbering 41 in all, with a qualifying note to say that some of them were known to be unwell and that others lived at some distance from Carlton. At a further church meeting held on 7th April, seven of those 41 *‘Renewed Covenant’* with the church. It was agreed at that meeting that *‘only those that renew Covenant were to Choose a Minister’*. The same day a Mr. Love from London started a probationary period of one month as a prospective pastor, but obviously he did not meet with favour, since nothing more is said of him.

From this time no further entries were made in the Church Book for more than five years; they commence again in September 1787. The only known development in the meantime was that the house in Carlton of deacon William Wharton was licensed by the Archdeaconry of Bedford for nonconformist worship [1].

References

- [1] Edwin Welch, *Bedfordshire Chapels and Meeting Houses: Official Registration 1672 – 1901*, Publications of the Bedfordshire Record Society, Vol. 75 (1996).

8. The ministry of [John West](#)

Eventually, in 1787, a new pastor was found in the person of John West. His advent is made known in the Church Book by the presence of a heading *‘Members Added since the Ordination of John West’*, the date of admission of the first new members being given as 2 September 1787. Nothing is said at this point about his ordination as pastor, or where he came from. Nearly 60 years later, however, one of his successors, George Hall, who became pastor in about 1839, noted that John West came from Soham in Cambs. That seems to be confirmed by a note made at the very end of the Church Book,

under the heading ‘*Members Received by Letter*’, to the effect that Elizabeth West had been ‘dismissed’ from the Church at Soham, Cambridgeshire, to the Church at Carlton on 2nd September 1788. She was probably John West’s wife, or possibly a daughter. As to John West’s ordination, George Hall gives only the year, 1787, and the names of two of the other pastors who participated in the service – Mr Fuller of Kettering and Mr Emery of [Little] Staughton. The latter, as has been seen, was originally a member of the Carlton Baptists during the ministry of Thomas Hull. George Hall’s source for this last information is unknown, but what he states is entirely plausible.

John West remained at Carlton for six years. His ministry is marked in the Church Book by a list of more than twenty new members added to the congregation, and notes on sundry other events. These included the appointment of three new deacons (Mr. [John] Mardling, John Litchfield [of] Turvey and Samuel Coleman [of] Harrold), following the death of Mr. Bond, a former deacon. In December 1790 there occurs the following remarkable entry: ‘*Decmr 2, 1790: William Gilbert of Carlton was restored to the Church after 13 years separation Who was guilty of cutting his Throat 3 times and by a Maricle was cured*’.

Late in 1792 evidence begins to appear that there was dissatisfaction with John West’s Ministry. We find

‘*Nov 92: Love to Jesus Christ and each other is at this time very low and God appears to have forsaken us... O Lord wilt thou not revive us again*’;

‘*May 93: Bro Lewis Tysoe rose up and Charged me with preaching false Doctring and denying Original Sin...*’;

‘*Still a Spirit of Contention exists amongst us... My heart trimbles for the Ark of God – O when will God appear*’, and finally,

‘*Octr 6 [1793]: The Church gave their opinion relative to their pastor and 32 wher dissatisfied and 17 satisfied – as such on Lords day 21 of Octr he resigned his Office*’.

It may be relevant that the Baptist pastor at Soham until shortly before John West came to Carlton was Andrew Fuller, a prominent and controversial figure in Baptist circles who left an impressive legacy of theological literature. Following his pastorship at Soham (1775 – 1782) he presided over what is now the Fuller Baptist Church in Kettering, Northants., until his death in 1815. His fame was international, and he was awarded a Doctorate of Divinity by Brown University, Rhode Island, USA. Andrew Fuller was a proponent of what is called the ‘governmental theory of the atonement’. This is a particular interpretation of God’s motivation for Christ’s death on the cross – I will not go into technical details, which are copiously available on the Internet. However, if John West had been heavily influenced by his previous pastor and was expounding this view of the atonement to his Carlton congregation it could well explain why one of its members accused him of ‘*denying Original Sin*’.

George Hall later reported that on leaving Carlton John West went first to Wantage, Berks., and then to Dublin, where ‘*to a late period of his life*’ he was the principal agent in Ireland of the Baptist Missionary Society.

9. The ministry of [Charles Vorley](#)

John West having resigned, Charles Vorley, a member of the Baptist church at Irthlingborough, was invited to come to Carlton as his replacement. He came on Christmas Day 1793, and apparently served a probationary period of more than two years before being ordained as pastor on 7th June 1796. Other pastors who took part in his ordination service were ‘*Mr Grindon of Sharnbrook, Mr Hall of Rance [Raunds, Northants.] and Mr Emery of Little Staughton*’. Having stated the circumstances of his coming to Carlton and given brief details of his ordination Charles Vorley commences his routine entries in the Church Book in a businesslike manner: ‘*Having now received*

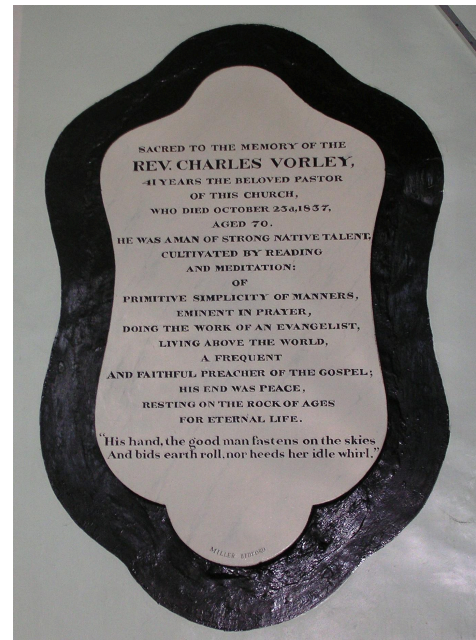
the Church book I shall now put down the names of all that are now members, and others who may be brought in, will add their names & the time of their admission'. This he proceeded,

to do on 13th December 1796, very systematically, listing all those members now living who were added during the incumbency of Mr Pool (2), Mr Hull (29), Mr West (25); together with the members added by himself before the date of his ordination (23), that made 79 in all. More than 140 further members joining the congregation are then recorded, as far as 1834. There follows a further list of disciplinary actions (excommunications, suspensions, readmissions after satisfactory confessions of repentance, etc.). Some members were dismissed to other approved Baptist churches. Two new deacons were appointed, Benjamin Tysoe Jr. in 1818 and Joseph Wooding of Harrold in 1821. In 1807 Mr John Tandy was '*sent forth in the work of the Ministry*', as was Mr William Tandy in 1821. In 1826 the latter and his wife Frances were '*dismis'd to Great Gidding (Hunts.), the time being fixed for Mr Tandy's ordination*' (he was ordained there on 31st May). In 1833 Thomas Robinson Jr. became a member; his wife Frances did likewise the following year. Both were dismissed to Little Staughton in 1836, and Thomas Robinson became co-pastor there with the Rev. James Knight, who was ailing, and who died the following year, leaving Robinson in sole charge. He had a long and successful ministry there lasting 35 years, although during that time he had many personal domestic tragedies [1].

It appears that not everyone appreciated the advent in Carlton of Charles Vorley in 1796 – in the late 1790s and early 1800s there was a spate of baptisms into the Church of England, many of them of adults, and these were presumably of people who disliked some aspects of the new pastor's ministry. Furthermore, in 1825 we find '*William Wheatley declared to be no longer a member with us having left his place and joined the Church of England at Turvey under Mr Richmond*', and then '*Elizabeth Wooding declared to be no longer a member of the church of Christ having acted like William Wheatley*'. The Rev. Legh Richmond, Rector of Turvey 1805 – 1827, was indeed a rival attraction [2]. He was an evangelical preacher who drew large congregations not only from Turvey but from the surrounding villages. He was also famous for having published several religious tracts, the best-known of them entitled '*The Dairyman's Daughter*'.

On the whole, however, Charles Vorley's ministry was apparently a time of peace and prosperity for the Carlton Baptists. He seems to have been a remarkable man. Frances Bithrey, a great-granddaughter of John Bunyan and the widow of wealthy Carlton resident Charles Bithrey, a former trustee of the Carlton Baptist Meeting, was so delighted with her new pastor that she gave him a house to live in (now 38 High Street) [3]. This was a personal gift, and the house was subsequently passed down through Charles Vorley's descendants until about 1950. Consequently, after Vorley's death the Baptist church had to acquire another house for the minister (now 37 High Street), and an entirely new manse was built in the 1870s (now 57 The Causeway).

Charles Vorley was highly respected both in the Bedford area and further afield, and he was often invited to participate in celebratory services of other Baptist congregations. In 1819, for example, he took part in the ordination services for Thomas Tay at the Baptist Meeting in Southill, Beds., whose Church Book records that '*The Services of the day was as follows at half past ten Mr Hawkins of Casoe [Keysoe] Prayed, Mr Middleditch of Biggleswade stated the nature of a Gospel Church and asked the Usual Questions and received the Confession of faith, Mr Vorlay of Calton [Carlton] Offered*



**Memorial to Charles Vorley, formerly
in the Carlton Baptist Meeting**

up the Ordination Prayer; Mr Shenston of London gave the Charge from Deutronomy 31c 23v, Mr Upton of London Preachd to the church from Romans 15c 30v ... a very crowded congregation continued till all the servises of the day were ended. Mr Vorley preached in the evening from 2 chapter of Phillipins the 12th and 13 Verses.’ [4].

Charles Vorley died on 23rd October 1837, and like Thomas Hull he was commemorated by a tablet in the chapel building. This was removed when the meeting house became a private dwelling, and is now believed to be in the possession of one of Vorley’s descendants. There are also headstones for both Charles Vorley and his wife Mary (d. 1854) in the burial ground of Carlton Baptist Meeting, though their inscriptions are now becoming badly weathered.

References

- [1] H.G. Tibbutt, *Little Staughton Meeting*, Published by Little Staughton Meeting (1951). Available in the Local Studies Department of Bedford Central Library.
- [2] G.F.W. Munby and Thomas Wright, *Turvey and Legh Richmond*, Olney: Thomas Wright (2nd ed., 1894).
- [3] John Brown, *John Bunyan (1628 – 1688) – His Life, Times and Work*, Tercentenary Edition, revised by Frank Mott Harrison, The Hulbert Publishing Company Ltd. (1928).
- [4] Bedfordshire Archives, *Transcription of Church Book, 1693 – 1851, of Southill Independent, later Baptist, Church* (1981).

10. The ministry of [George Hall](#)

Following the death of Charles Vorley there was a gap of a year or more before a new pastor was appointed in the person of George Hall. During the intervening time, on 14th April 1838, the Carlton Baptist Meeting was licensed for the solemnization of marriages [1]. This followed the introduction of the civil registration of births, marriages and deaths in September 1837.

At the beginning of his ministry the new pastor George Hall wrote a short homily in the Church Book, followed by a brief history of the Carlton Baptist church based on previous entries in the book. His general message seems to have been that there had been serious schisms in the church in past years, and that members of his flock should bear this in mind in order to avoid them in future. As mentioned earlier, his historical summary included a few details about earlier pastors which are not found elsewhere in the Church Book. In the much more detailed history later written by his successor Moses Beeby (mentioned in the note on sources at the beginning of the present account) there are suggestions that a Second Church Book came into use at about this time. For instance, Moses Beeby says that nothing was written in the Church Book by George Hall after 1845. However, I have found only his initial preamble as described above, which he probably wrote soon after his ordination in 1839. That gives no date for his ordination service, but it notes that he was formerly ‘*Minister of the Church at Newport Pagnell [Bucks.]*’, and that no less than eleven other ministers participated in his ordination services at Carlton

At this point I will start to quote from Moses Beeby’s history, because he had access to the Second Church Book and I do not. Regarding George Hall’s ministry, he writes as follows: “*11 Ministers took part in his ordination services, in the year 1839. The Church agreed to purchase a Minister’s house, situate adjoining the Meeting-House, for which they gave £170, and further outlay was expended to put the house in a good tenantable repair.... There is no further entry in the Church-Book by Mr. Hall after the year 1845. Nothing of much importance seems to have occurred during his stay. He tried to reform some abuses which had crept in, and he exhorted the members to adhere to the ordinances of the Gospel. He endeavoured to proceed on scriptural lines, and maintain Church order as it is revealed in the New Testament.*”

Although Moses Beeby assumed that George Hall had left Carlton in 1845, he was in fact still in office in 1851. This is known from another source, the one and only Ecclesiastical Census of 1851 (taken on 30th March 1851, the same day as the general population census) [2]. This states that George Hall was then the resident minister at Carlton, but that he was absent at the time of the census (the population census confirms that he was then in Northampton). In his absence, the Carlton Baptists' return for the Ecclesiastical Census was furnished by the Assistant Minister, Thomas Corby. The information given for Carlton Baptist Meeting was as follows:

Sittings: 500

General Congregation:

morning 200

afternoon 550

evening 500

Sunday Scholars:

morning 45

afternoon 50

evening 21

Totals: morning 245, afternoon 600, evening 521

To put these figures in context, the population of Carlton was stated at this time to be 432, and the general congregation at the parish church of St Mary (which held morning services only) was given as 150. It is possible that both establishments exaggerated the sizes of their congregations, but the contrast is stark, even taking this into account. The ecclesiastical parishes of Carlton and Chellington were combined in 1769, and no separate return was submitted for St Nicholas, Chellington.

George Hall left Carlton in 1851, and then after an absence of more than 25 years his body was returned to Carlton after his death, to be buried on 15th January 1878 at the Baptist Meeting. He had died in Wollaston on 11th January, aged 75 years. Thus he was born in about 1802. There is a small memorial to him in the burial ground at the Carlton Baptist Meeting. I believe that he married twice, and that both his wives died while he was the minister at Carlton. One or both of them may have been buried at the Meeting, which would provide a motive for returning his body to Carlton for burial. However, there is no memorial to either of the wives, and George Hall's own modest memorial makes no mention of them.

References

- [1] Edwin Welch, *Bedfordshire Chapels and Meeting Houses: Official Registration 1672 – 1901*, Publications of the Bedfordshire Record Society, Vol. 75 (1996).
- [2] D. W. Bushby, *Elementary Education in Bedford 1868 – 1903 & The Ecclesiastical Census, Bedfordshire, March 1851*, Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Vol. 54, (1975).

11. The ministry of [John Evans](#)

George Hall's successor John Evans was called to become the settled Minister at Carlton at a Church meeting held the first Sabbath in Oct 1852, and he agreed to take on the ministry. On Christmas day 1852 he, his wife and daughter were received into the Church, on which occasion "*the right hand of Fellowship was given to each*" by Joseph Wooding, the Senior Deacon. On Christmas day 1853 six persons were baptized, including Eliza and Lydia Ann Abbott, granddaughters of the earlier pastor Charles Vorley, and John Evans' own son Stephen. These were received into the Church on the first

Sabbath in 1854. The foregoing information is found among the last entries in the first Church Book, and Moses Beeby's history provides the additional facts that '*Mr. Evan's Ministry terminated in 1856. Eighteen members were baptized during his Ministry, including himself*'

There are only a few entries in the first Church Book made during John Evans' pastorate. For example, on 31 August 1853 '*It was propos'd by Mr John Evans that Joseph Parker of Chellington ... be appointed to read the hymns in Carlton Baptist Meeting in the room of the Late Joseph Wooding who departed this Life the 10 day of July 1853 ...*'. This proposal was agreed by the members, and Joseph Parker agreed to take on the task. The practice of reading the hymns out loud was necessary because many members of the congregation were illiterate and could not follow the text in the hymnbook.

Another such entry, dated 1 February 1854, is '*Church Meeting held when it was Proposed by Brother John Gostick that attention be paid to a few alterations respecting the Burial Ground belonging to the Meeting when it was agreed that John Gostick be appointed to see to the said Ground and that all applications for Burial be made to our Brother and that he receive the Money for all Burials and pay for the digging of all Graves ... should it be found Needful that two should lay in one grave By the desire of the friends of the Departed that it shall be complied with by paying more for the extra depth ... it was agreed to by the Members present that rules to that effect be drawn Up by Mr Evans and be red at the Next Church Meeting and the said rules with a Book to be in the keeping of our Brother Gostick*'. The book referred to would presumably have contained a record of burials and how much had been paid for them, but unfortunately it has not survived. John Gostick himself is buried at the Baptist Meeting; he died in 1878 at the reputed age of 99.

There follow some accounts apparently relating to communion services held in the period 1854 - 1856. The items include as income '*Money Collected at the Table*' and as disbursements '*Money given to poor Members*' and '*for wine*', the latter being the communion wine. John Evans' ministry was a short one, and it ended in 1856, probably because his health was failing.

12. The ministry of [Edward James Silverton](#)

The next pastor was Edward James Silverton, who assumed the ministry in 1858; he was only about 23 years old at the time. Moses Beeby, in his history of the Carlton Baptist Meeting says that no account is given in the second Church Book either of where he came from or of his ordination at Carlton. It appears that Silverton did not maintain the Church Book himself; that task was performed by a Deacon, and Beeby says '*It is to be regretted sometimes these are incapable men, and minutes are not recorded and much valuable information is unrecorded*'. However, he also says that some of the older members of his own congregation remembered Edward Silverton and knew perfectly well where he came from: '*He was a student of the Metropolitan College, London, and was commonly called one of Spurgeon's students* [see the supplementary information on C.H. Spurgeon, a famous Baptist preacher]. *He possessed much natural force. Evidently he was a man of parts, talent, and gifts. Some who knew him said he was a gracious man...*'.

Moses Beeby states that during Edward Silverton's ministry 59 members were added to the congregation. This was a period of religious revival, and the chapel building (which at that time seated 600 - 700 people) was full to overflowing. It was said that the singing could be heard a mile away. On 4th September 1859 eight members were baptized in the river Great Ouse at Harrold at 8 a.m. before a crowd of some 3000 people. People attended services from neighbouring towns and villages, and some of them still living in the early years of Beeby's own ministry remembered travelling several miles to attend the Sunday morning 7 o'clock prayer meeting. Edward Silverton suggested enlarging the Meeting House, but according to Beeby '*cooler minds thought different*'. It was perhaps those cooler minds that motivated this pastor's eventual departure from Carlton.

During Silverton's ministry an old Sunday school room adjacent to the Meeting House was demolished and a new one built which Beeby found to be '*a pleasing adjunct to the Old Meeting*'. He was probably thinking in terms of the functionality of the extension rather than its architectural merit, however; it is a gaunt Victorian edifice which contrasts badly with the pleasing proportions of the original Georgian building. It was fitted with sliding doors opening into the interior of the '*Old Meeting*', and these could be opened to accommodate extra large congregations. Beeby says that as many as 900 worshippers could be accommodated in this way.

He also writes '*Mr. Silvertons fame began to wane, and no farther entry is made [in the second Church Book] after Dec 4th 1859 when he baptized Mary Ann Foskett in the river at Harrold, and it was very cold*'. He remarks that in spite of this the cold water did her no harm, and she survived to between 80 and 90 years of age. It is not clear what Moses Beeby means about the waning fame of the pastor, but it may well be that, as on several occasions in the past, there was increasing disagreement between the minister and the members of his flock.

In the year 1860 services were held to celebrate the centenary of the building of the Meeting House. Moses Beeby writes that Mr Drawbridge of Rushden preached in the morning to about 600 people, and roughly that number sat down to lunch. In the afternoon John Bloomfield of Westminster, London preached to between 600 or 700 persons, who afterwards partook of tea, and the evening congregation was 1200 when Mr. John Foreman of Marylebone, London, preached in an orchard, since it was impossible to accommodate everyone in the Meeting House. The 1860 volume of *The Earthen Vessel* (a Strict Baptist magazine, first published in 1845) is said to confirm this account of the celebrations, but I have not been able to access it. Beeby goes on to say that Mr. C. H. Spurgeon preached to an equal number on one occasion, and the second Church Book records that 950 cups were hired to provide tea for those present.

It is unclear as to exactly when Edward Silverton left Carlton. According to Moses Beeby the last entry of his ministry in the Church Book was made in 1859. However, he was subsequently found to be still living in Carlton in the 1861 census, occupation 'Baptist Minister', together with his wife, three children and a domestic servant. Furthermore, in the 1881 census for Hackney, London, Silverton appears with a daughter Kate, aged 18, who was born in Carlton. Her birth was registered in the Bedford District, which includes Carlton, in the last quarter of 1862. After he left Carlton some time in 1863 or 1864 Edward Silverton went to Chatteris, Cambs., where it is said he attracted such large congregations that the Chapel had to be enlarged to seat about 800 people. However, his ministry there was a short one, and he soon moved on.

13. The ministry of [William Carpenter](#)

On Dec. 11th 1863 at a church meeting held after the departure of Edward Silverton it was decided that the Lord's supper would be held on the first Lord's day in the month, if a Minister of the same faith and order could be found to officiate, the Church being at that time without a pastor. '*It was also agreed that the Church be considered a Particular Baptist Church, that no one be allowed to join it without being scripturally Baptized by Immersion; also the rules of the Church were read and confirmed (Geo Smith, Deacon)*'. This was a significant change – free or mixed communion had been permitted at Carlton since the formation of its Baptist Church, though there had been bitter feuds over the matter of baptism in John Greenwood's time.

After the ministry of Edward Silverton a period of short pastorates ensued. The next minister was William Carpenter, who came from Dunstable. The incumbency of this pastor was brief, as is also Moses Beeby's account of him: '*At a Church meeting on 15th May 1864, it was agreed upon to invite Mr. Carpenter, Baptist Minister at Dunstable, to the Pastorate of the Church of Jesus Christ at Carlton, Beds. Mr. Carpenter accepted the invitation and commenced his Pastorate on Sep 18th 1864. His stay at Carlton was short, for he resigned the Pastorate April 16th 1865. He went to the Particular Baptist Church at Warboys, Hunts.*'.

14. The ministry of [Richard Bax](#)

On April 1st 1866 a Mr. Crampin entered upon a six months' engagement with a view to being offered the pastorate, the outcome to be decided in three months. At a Church meeting held on June 24th the same year, only a third of the members voted for Mr. Crampin's continuance at Carlton. He was allowed to work out his six months, and *'His labours ended the last Lord's day in Sept. 1866'*.

Next Richard Bax of Meopham, Kent, took on the ministry. His tenure was even shorter than William Carpenter's. Moses Beeby says of him *'At a church meeting on April 21st 1867 it was voted upon with respect to giving Mr. Bax of Meopham, Kent, an invite to the Pastorate, when only 3 voted against it. He was accordingly invited, May 11th 1867. Mr. Bax accepted the Pastorate, and commenced the first Lord's day in June. He was a weak, frail man, an eminent Christian, an affectionate and Powerful Preacher. He resigned his Pastorate on March 1st 1868, which resignation was generally regretted. Mr. Bax went to the Strict Baptist Church, New Street, St. Neots, Hunts., where he ended his labours. He was beloved of all for his works sake'*.

15. The ministry of [James Brittain](#)

Both of the last two pastors only stayed for a matter of months, and Moses Beeby suggests that this is because the church was being gravely mismanaged at the time, all the administrative offices except that of Church Secretary being vested in one man, who gave the minister a pound or so for his services as he felt inclined. Before he left Carlton, Richard Bax is reported to have said that he was not prepared to put up with such treatment.

After the departure of Richard Bax, at a church meeting in June 1868 a *'Mr Baker of Suffolk'* was invited to Carlton for three months on a trial basis, but he left when his engagement terminated. Moses Beeby does not tell us whether that was because he was judged unsatisfactory by the Church members or because he also disliked the prevailing régime. However, Beeby does state that *'This minister was at one time settled at Needingworth, Hunts. He died at Oakington, Cambs.'*

The sequence of pastors continues with James Brittain, who came to Carlton from Watford, Herts. Regarding this minister (whose surname he consistently, but wrongly, gives as Brittian), Moses Beeby says that *'At a Church meeting on January 3rd 1869 it was put to the vote respecting giving Mr. Brittian of Watford, Herts., an invitation to become the Pastor of the Church. When 64 voted for, and no one against him he was written to accordingly. April 4th, Mr. Brittian accepted the Pastorate, and on June 1st 1869 he was ordained Pastor... Pastors Hanskew of Kings Langley, Peet of Sharnbrook and Hale of Blackheath took part in the services. Mr. Brittians Ministry at Carlton was not a long one, but events both material and spiritual took place during his ministry. At a Church meeting held on Lord's day April 18th 1870, it was proposed by William Wills, seconded by Geo. Smith, and unanimously resolved that as the house adjoining the burying ground is not fit for the residence of the new pastor, we shall forthwith commence building a new one on the ground belonging to the Church on the Causeway. Mr. Brittian, Pastor, being connected with the building trade undertook to superintend the work'*.

For more information about the Manse, see [here](#)

'The present Minister's House, now called the Manse, was completed in the year 1872. Three members were added to the Church by Baptism in 1869, and on Sunday April 28th, 1872, 10 more were received into the Church. But on August 1st, 1872 a meeting of the trustees was held, which shows man to be an erring creature, at which facts were disclosed that showed faults on both sides. At this meeting it was agreed by all present that Mr. Brittian should be given six months' notice to quit the Pastorate, in consequence of some untrue statements made by him, in connection with the house just built. As soon as Mr. Brittian received notice, he sent in his resignation wishing to stay until March 1873. But another Church meeting refused this request, and required him to leave the Pastorate within three months of Sep 14th. He left accordingly'. It therefore sounds as though James

Brittain had somehow turned the task of supervising the building of the Manse to his own advantage, and that the congregation was rightly incensed.

16. The ministry of [John Jull](#)

The next pastor, John Jull, was an able and eminent man, but he only stayed in Carlton for a few years. Moses Beeby gives the following account of his appointment and character: *‘On June 22nd 1873 a Church meeting was held, and having heard Mr. John Jull several times the Church desired to ask him to become their Pastor. When it was put to the vote 61 voted for him and no one against it. The Church invited him to become pastor at once. After duly considering and seeking the Lord to direct him Mr. Jull accepted the Pastorate and was ordained Pastor on Sep 16th 1873, when Mr. John Hazelton of London, Mr. Atkinson of Brighton, Mr. Bax of St. Neots, Mr. Bull of Wellingborough, and Mr. Inwards of Irthlingborough took part in the services. The entries in the Church Book shew Mr. Jull to be a man of no mean order. Every thing is done in a workman like way, the Church Meetings minutely entered, date of month and year which is sadly neglected in some pastorates. Mr. Jull’s Ministry was greatly prized by the people who attended Carlton Meeting at that time, and in those days there was a large Congregation. Mr. Jull frequently preached at the Surrey Tabernacle, London, while he was minister at Carlton, and also at Eden Chapel, Cambridge, where he subsequently settled. His ministry was clear, sound, savoury. He was both a preacher and a teacher. The Church was edified through his ministry’.*

During John Jull’s ministry at Carlton some repairs were made to the chapel (as detailed elsewhere in these pages). These were paid for by a bequest from a member who had died, but when the work was complete Mr. Jull decided that an outstanding debt of £40 remaining from the construction of the new Manse, completed in 1872, needed to be paid off as well. He appears to have set about raising the money briskly and efficiently, and also apparently masterminded the scheme for building a wall round the manse in 1878. As will be seen from the subsidiary details of his life, he had experience as a farm manager, and seems to have acquired good administrative and organizational skills from that occupation.

John Jull resigned from the pastorate at Carlton in December 1878, and left early the following year, 24 members having been added to the church during his pastorate. On leaving Carlton he went to the Eden Chapel in Cambridge, and he remained in Cambridge until his death in 1909. He visited Carlton occasionally during his tenure at Cambridge. According to Moses Beeby, *‘He had preached in 163 places of worship and this was widely known and highly esteemed. He died on 22nd September 1909, his funeral service was conducted, according to his wish, by Pastor L. H. Colls of Tring, and he was buried in the Histon Road Cemetery at Cambridge’.*

17. The ministry of [Frederick King](#)

In the year 1881, after Mr. Jull’s resignation, services at the Carlton Baptist Meeting were taken by various visiting ministers, among them Frederick King of Great Gransden, Huntingdonshire. After he had made several visits, the congregation decided to invite him to Carlton for a probationary period, with a view to offering him the pastorship permanently. He agreed to come, and as a result, at a Church Meeting held on 1st January 1882, Mr. King was invited to become pastor. He accepted, and on 20th April he moved into the minister’s house, with his family. On 25th July he was formally ordained pastor, at a service in which several other Baptist ministers took part.

There were good congregations during Frederick King’s ministry, and 37 members were added during his pastorate. However, at the same time, members of the Carlton Baptist Meeting began to move away from the village to find work, thus swelling the Baptist congregations in Bedford, and more particularly those in the industrial towns of Rushden, Wellingborough and Kettering. During his pastorate 30 members of the congregation were lost in this way, leaving a clear increase of just 7.

In 1890 he tendered his resignation from the pastorate at Carlton. He was still in office, however,

when he was invited to preach at Over, Cambs., and set out to travel there on Saturday 26th July 1890. He had left Carlton by the Harrold bus (a horse-drawn bus at this time!), had taken a train from Bedford to St. Ives, and had just alighted from the train there when he complained of a sudden pain and died, presumably of heart failure, before medical help could be summoned.

His body was returned to Carlton on the following Monday, and he was buried at Carlton Baptist Meeting on Wednesday 30th July by John Jull of the Eden Chapel in Cambridge, *‘in the presence of a large assembly of mourning and sympathizing friends’* from many surrounding towns and villages.

On 5th August 1890 there occurred the Chapel Anniversary, at which it had been intended to present a purse of money to Mr. King, subscribed by his friends, as a token of esteem and regard on his leaving Carlton. Moses Beeby says that under the circumstances it was decided to present it to Mrs. King instead. *‘The sum of £11 5s 6d was handed to the bereaved widow who touchingly thanked her dear friends for it’*.

There is a headstone in the chapel graveyard, whose inscription is *‘In loving memory of Mary Ann the beloved wife of Frederick King, Pastor of this church, who entered into rest July 4th 1887, aged 68 years. Also of Frederick King husband of the above who suddenly entered into rest July 26th 1890, aged 65 years’*. There is clearly a problem here, in that Moses Beeby’s account has a purse being given to Mrs. King after her husband’s death, while the headstone says that she died before him. It may have been one of his daughters who received the purse – it seems unlikely that he would have remarried during the three years between Mary Ann’s death and his own.

18. The ministry of [David Flavell](#)

Regarding the next pastor, Moses Beeby writes as follows: *‘The next Pastor was Mr. David Flavell. At a Church meeting on 26th April 1891 it was agreed that Mr. D. Flavell be invited to the Pastorate. 26 members were present, 24 were for him coming, 2 against it. An invitation was sent to Mr. Flavell accordingly, which he accepted. No mention is made in the Church Book where he came from, but as his settlement is not so distant as some, it is remembered that he was Pastor of the Strict Baptist Cause at Swavesey, St. Ives, Hunts. Nothing of much importance appears to have occurred during his pastorate. The former part of his ministry was blessed to the ingathering of some who had hitherto remained outside. While Mr. Flavell was at Carlton, Watts & Rippons Hymn Book was changed for Psalms & Hymns’*.

Twelve members were added during David Flavell’s ministry, but on Jan 12th 1896 a Church meeting was called to discuss whether he should be asked to resign. It therefore seems that he was a rather divisive minister, though Moses Beeby gives no information about the issues that caused the rift in his congregation. The meeting was presided over by John Noble, the Senior Deacon at the time. A ballot was taken, and 17 members voted in favour of Mr Flavell’s staying, 8 voted against, and 3 abstained. Mr. Flavell decided to stay at Carlton, but in consequence some members of the congregation then left, and the pastor subsequently tendered his resignation at a further Church meeting held Nov 1st 1897, which was accepted. David Flavell left Carlton for Colchester, St. Johns Green, on Jan 31st 1898. Moses Beeby says that in the 1920s he was living at Cottenham in Cambridgeshire, and serving as an occasional supply preacher at Carlton.”

19. The ministry of [Alfred Barnabas Hall](#)

Moses Beeby’s account of the ensuing minister’s pastorship (written in about 1925) is as follows: *‘The next choice was made at a Church meeting held June 5th, 1898, when Mr. A. B. Hall was proposed to become the pastor. There were 27 members present; 22 voted for him to come and supply twelve months in view to the pastorate, 2 were against this, and 3 neutral. Mr. Hall was accordingly invited, and on June 19th, 1898, Mr. A. B. Hall of Rochester, Kent, accepted the invitation to come and supply the Church at Carlton, Beds. for twelve months. After the expiration of the twelve months, it was proposed and seconded that Mr. Hall be invited to the Pastorate, and that Mr. & Mrs. Hall have*

their dismissal from the Church at Meopham, Kent, which was honourably given. Some of those who were most for Mr. Hall coming to Carlton soon showed signs of coldness. His pastorate closed March 16th 1903. Three members were added during his five years ministry, one being Mrs. Hall, the other two have left. He has been Pastor over the Church at Little Staughton for some years and is still there, the third minister that has gone from this Church to that’.

This minister, whose full name was Alfred Barnabas Hall, seems not to have been greatly appreciated at Carlton. However, his subsequent pastorate at Little Staughton proved to be a very long and successful one, surviving some difficult periods [1]. He arrived there just after the end of the Boer War, and his ministry endured the two subsequent World Wars. In June 1944 the Baptist Meeting House at Little Staughton was demolished, along with many houses in the village, to make way for the building of a large military airfield. The congregation continued to hold services, however, converting the Sunday School building for the purpose. Alfred Hall died in 1947, still in office, aged 92. His wife Sarah Ann had died many years earlier, in 1918.

[1] H.G. Tibbutt, *Little Staughton Meeting*, Published by Little Staughton Meeting (1951). Available in the Local Studies Department of Bedford Central Library.

20. The ministry of [John Kingston](#)

The next pastor, John Kingston, was the predecessor in office to Moses Beeby, who is rather disparaging of his ministry: *‘On September 24th 1904 a special Church meeting was held for the purpose of giving Mr. John Kingston, of Tottenham, an invitation to the Pastorate, which was put to the vote of the Church and carried. Mr. Kingston accepted the invitation and commenced his Ministry Oct 2nd, 1904. Mr. Kingston’s transfer was from Chadwell Street, London, that Church being under the pastoral care of Mr. E. Mitchell. Mr. Kingston’s welcome meeting was held on Tuesday Nov 22nd 1904. His pastorate continued five years, the Congregation did not increase during his pastorate. Neither did any thing of any importance occur during his stay. Five members were added during his pastorate, besides themselves [presumably Mr and Mrs Kingston are meant], three of them have passed to thier [sic] eternal home and two have left, so that we cannot say the cause prospered during his, or his predecessors pastorates. On April 9th, 1909, Mr. Kingston left a letter at the Church meeting to say his services would terminate on the last Lord’s day in September 1909, after five years of ministeral [sic] labours. His resignation was unanimously accepted. Mr. Kingston went to Leicester where he died some years ago’.*

21. The ministry of [Moses Beeby](#)

There was a gap of four years before the next pastor was appointed. He was Moses Beeby (after whom Beeby Way in Carlton is named). He took on the ministry in 1913 and held it for nearly 40 years, until his death in December 1952. He was previously a member of the Baptist church at Warboys, Hunts.

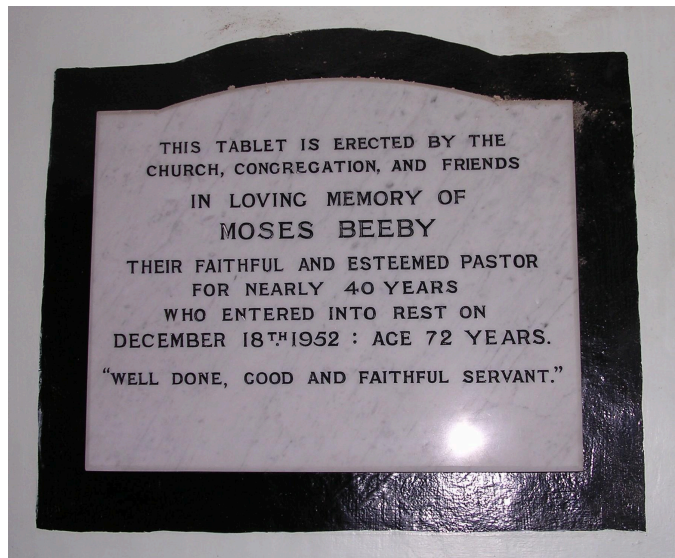
In 1960 a bicentenary celebration was held at Carlton Baptist Meeting to mark the 200th anniversary of the construction of the meeting house in The Causeway in Carlton. This occasion was reported by J.C. Doggett in the *Free Grace Record*, a quarterly publication of the Strict and Particular Baptist Trust Corporation (Vol. 2, No. 3, Summer 1960). According to his account, Moses Beeby *‘succeeded in a most difficult time, through two wars, and in the face of increasing depopulation of the countryside, in keeping the church together and in good heart. A convinced Particular Baptist, he found himself in full accord with the church covenant, which although repeatedly re-affirmed has altered in no essential detail since 1688’*

Moses Beeby’s own account of his ministry tells us that he was initially on probation for three months, on a stipend of 23 shillings per week (£1.15). He was confirmed in the Pastorate in May 1913, and he describes his Recognition Services, which were held on 16th October 1913, after which his stipend was increased to about 30/- per week (£1.50) with the aid of a grant from the Strict and

Particular Baptist Society.

During Moses Beeby's ministry some major renovations were made to the interior of the Carlton Baptist Meeting. These included the replacement of the original high-backed pews, the installation of a new boiler with six radiators and the provision of electric lighting. This work was completed on 18th April 1927, and a report in the magazine *The Christian's Pathway* (probably written by Beeby himself, and appearing in the issue of June 1927) gave the following information: *'On April 21st, 1927, under favourable weather conditions, the re-opening services of Carlton Strict Baptist Meeting were held.... Over 400 people assembled in the afternoon to hear a sermon by Mr. R. Robinson of London... I believe the presence of the Lord was felt. 330 sat down to tea'. There was a further service in the evening of the same day. The funds for this major renovation were raised entirely through voluntary contributions 'from abroad as well as from at home, without the aid of bazaars, Sales of work, Concerts or any such methods of obtaining Money'.*

Moses Beeby is the third and last of the pastors of the Carlton Baptist Meeting to have had a memorial tablet installed inside the building. However, it was removed when the Meeting was converted to a private dwelling, and its whereabouts are currently unknown.



Memorial to Moses Beeby, formerly in the Carlton Baptist Meeting

22. Carlton Baptist Meeting since 1952



The congregation at the service in 1960 commemorating the bicentenary of the opening of the Carlton Baptist Meeting

Having no access to the Second Church Book, I can give no more than a brief summary of events following the death of Moses Beeby in 1952.

The year 1960 brought the bicentenary of the construction and commissioning of the Carlton Baptist Meeting. A service of celebration was held, and while no written account of that event has yet come to hand, the following photograph shows those who attended the service. No new pastor was found until later in the 1960s, when Kenneth Dix took on the ministry, but he only remained for two years.

John Field was then pastor during the period 1973 - 1983. He was followed, after another gap of several years, by Brian Westrep, who was inducted as pastor on 4th April 1987. The year 1988 brought the tercentenary of founding of the Baptist church in Carlton, when another special celebratory service was held, on 1st July. In later years there was a merger with the Grace Baptists at nearby Harrold, who are still active to this day. Services in the Carlton Baptist Meeting were then reduced to one per month. Eventually, however, economics dictated the closure of the Meeting at Carlton, and in the 1990s it was finally sold for conversion to a private dwelling.

It may be possible in future to expand upon the foregoing account of the later years of the Carlton Baptist Meeting, but that will require extensive access to the Second Church Book.

Appendix I: Biographical notes

John Greenwood, pastor 1792 - 1796

There is a series of three documents at Bedfordshire Archives that refer to John Greenwood [1]. They relate to the probate of John Warner, yeoman of Chellington. The first of them contains the phrases *'to wife Mary the House in which Greenwood dwells...'* and *'1½ acres of land at back of Jn. Greenwood's house, in More (Moor?) Field and by Hog Hedge'*. John Greenwood was a witness to this document, which is dated 1688-89. There is a Chellington burial record for John Warner senior, husbandman, dated 23rd March 1688, and another for John Warner, *'oeconomus'*, dated 30th March 1689. This was probably the son of the earlier John Warner, and the person whose estate was referred to in the second document. The second and third documents are concerned with a related conveyance, made in September 1699, by which time John Greenwood had died. It refers to a *'cottage near the Moor in Carlton late in occupation of John Greenwood now Richard Coleson and adjoining pightle containing ¼ acre'*, together with *'½ acre in fields at back of above'*. Thus, during his time in Carlton John Greenwood rented and lived in a house on or near The Moor, the property of John Warner. It may be that this was one of the old houses that still stand in The Moor, and the possibilities could be narrowed down if Moor Field and Hog Hedge could be identified. The First Church Book makes no mention of members by the name of Warner, and it therefore seems that John Greenwood's landlord was not a member of his flock.

The Carlton Church Book notes that when Greenwood left Carlton in 1696 he retired to a house he owned in North Crawley, Bucks., a distance of twelve miles or so. Unfortunately, there are no freely available parish records from that village which might help to pin down his origins. However, Buckinghamshire Archives holds the will of John Greenwood, yeoman, of North Crawley, proved in 1699, and also that of a possible kinsman Ralph Greenwood, similarly described, proved in the same year.

References

[1] Bedfordshire Archives, Lucas Archive, Carlton Deeds, L3/23-25, 1688-99.

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Robert Church, pastor ca. 1702 - 1721

A Robert Church is mentioned in the Stevington Church Book prior to his coming to Carlton 1702. The relevant entries are as follows:

1694: Another Church meeting on the 4th of May, as I count, at which Robert Church of Bowshat [Bozeat, Northants.] and Mary Seward of the same ... spake their experiences ... and were baptized at night by Brother Tayler at Pavenham [in the river Great Ouse], and were admitted members of the Church on the first day.

1695: A Church meeting, April 18th 1695, brother Robert Church preached before the Church, and was approved, and encouraged to go on with his work. (This means that he was granted permission by the Church to preach publicly).

In May 1696 the Stevington congregation held a church meeting in Bozeat, Northants., *'at which 7 persons gave some relation of their experiences concerning their soules..., all of which were baptised in the night following'*. Members present at that meeting were said to include Robert Church, Ruth Church and Margery Church, possibly all belonging to the same family.

1718: October the 21 day, 1718. William Boyer gave himself up to this Church and was ordained the same day, paster. Witnesses: Robert Church, Bengaman Skiner.

These entries concerning Robert Church appear to show that he became a member of the Stevington

Baptist Church in 1694 and was in 1696 given permission to preach publicly. Then in 1702, a Robert Church appears as Pastor at Carlton – there is a very strong likelihood that this was the same person. In the 1718 entry above, he signed as pastor of the Carlton congregation after the ordination service of William Bowyer. The second signatory, Benjamin Skinner, was “pastor of the short-lived Goldington Baptist church”, according to a footnote by H. G. Tibbutt in his transcription of part of the First Church Book of the Stevington Baptist Meeting [1]. However, Tibbutt failed to notice that Robert Church, the other witness, would have been well-known to the Stevington congregation, having previously been a member of it.

A search for the marriage of Robert Church gave not one result but two. The first took place on 31 October 1699, by licence, at St. Sepulchre, Northampton. The groom Robert Church was said to be from ‘Bozeate’, and his bride Mary Greenwood was from ‘North Crowley’ (no county specified). Recalling that Robert Church’s predecessor John Greenwood was from North Crawley, Bucks., that he had died earlier that same year and that his wife’s forename was Mary, it seems likely that Robert Church had married either John Greenwood’s widow or perhaps a daughter of his – the record does not specify the bride’s former marital status. Mary must have died during the ensuing few years, because on 15 January 1712/13 Robert remarried, at St. Mary’s, Wollaston, Northants., his second wife being Hannah Mitchell of Wollaston. This time he gave his place of residence as Carlton. It should be noted that nonconformists had to be married by the Church of England because that was the only way they could obtain a proof of marriage that was legally valid – a copy of a register entry certified by the vicar or rector of the church concerned.

There are two documents at Bedfordshire Archives concerning Robert Church. The first [2] is a mortgage for £20, dated 25 August 1704, apparently providing William Smith of Carlton, gentleman, with the funds to purchase the following property: ‘*Cottage called Grunden's in Carlton, a room adjoining called the Great Buttery with the chambers above and the garrett called the Blind Chamber with the inward walls adjoining the great staircase; close of pasture (1 acre) adjoining, all occupied by Robert Church yeoman and William Smith, abutting the manor house of Carlton south, and Ball's Lane west*’. This is presumably where Robert Church lived during at least part of his tenure in Carlton, but its precise whereabouts is currently a mystery since there were two manor houses in Carlton at the time.

The second document is Robert Church’s will, dated 11 August 1721 [3], in which he describes himself as ‘*of Carlton, ... Minister of the Gospel*’. He owned a ‘*House, Cottage or tenement*’ in Bozeat, which he left to his wife Hannah for her lifetime, together with all his household goods, and thereafter to his son Robert Church Jr. If his son died before his wife leaving no lawful issue then the property went to his nephew James Brown of Wollaston, Northants., son of the testator’s sister Mary Brown. He made his wife Hannah sole executrix. One of the witnesses to the will signed his name W. Smith, and this is probably the ‘*William Smith, gentleman*’ mentioned in the previous document. Robert Church died very shortly after making his will, and he was perforce buried in St. Mary’s churchyard since the Carlton Baptists had no burial ground of their own at this time. Carlton parish records note that he was buried on 14 August 1721, just three days after the date of the will.

Apart from his son Robert Jr., Robert Church had at least one further child, a daughter Ruth who died and was buried at St. Mary’s in 1714. His widow Hannah remarried at St. Mary’s in 1723; her husband was John Fox, a shoemaker from Wellingborough, Northants.

It is not possible to investigate Robert Church’s early history from Bozeat parish records, because the parish registers were destroyed in the Great Fire of Bozeat in 1729 [4]. This started near the church and consumed the vicarage where the registers were kept. Hence there are no extant parish records from Bozeat before 1729, though Bishops Transcripts of some of the earlier records go back as far as 1707.

References

- [1] Tibbutt, H.G., (ed.), *Some Early Nonconformist Church Books*, Vol. 51 of the publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society (1972).
- [2] Bedfordshire Archives, Ref. GA1303, 1704.
- [3] Bedfordshire Archives, Ref. ABP/W1721/25, 1721.
- [4] Marlow, J.H. (Rev.), *The History of Bozeat Village*, J. Stephenson Holt, Northampton, 1936.

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Joseph Dadley, pastor 1724 – ca. 1728

Joseph Dadley married shortly after his ordination. The marriage register for St Mary's, Carlton, contains the entry "24th June 1724 Jos. Dadley, dissenting teacher & Alice Quince, spin[ster], both of Carlton." There are no christening records for any children of this couple, because the Carlton Baptists did not practise infant baptism.

After he left the Carlton Baptist church, Joseph Dadley remained in the neighbourhood, and settled in Harrold. He is in fact mentioned in Benjamin Rogers' diary [1], where the entry for 6th June 1730 states that William Whish, a bankrupt Carlton butcher, came out of jail, and that his creditors were paid from money raised by subscription. Rogers himself subscribed £2 0s. 0d., as did "Joseph Dadley, a dissenting teacher".

Later, there is a burial record from St. Peter, Harrold for him, dated June 2nd 1745, describing him as "Jos. Dadley, of Gamlingay, dissenting teacher." Fifteen years later still comes another burial record, dated 25th July 1760, for "Alice Dadley, widow, of Gamlingay, Cambs." The mention of Gamlingay may indicate Dadley's place of origin, but it certainly shows that he and his wife were not regarded as having legal settlement in Harrold. He probably made a living as an itinerant preacher but did not meet the usual conditions for settlement (e.g., ownership of property, regular employment within the parish). A search of the Gamlingay parish records has revealed no results for the surname Dadley, which seems to have been most common in the Warwickshire area. Neither are there any records at Bedfordshire Archives or The National Archives for Joseph Dadley.

However, Dadley being an uncommon surname in Bedfordshire, it can hardly be a coincidence that another Dadley family was also living in Harrold during the early 1700s. This was Sebastian Dadley, his wife Mary and some of their children, who left more traces in the local records than did Joseph. Firstly, they seem not to have been Baptists – Sebastian and Mary had five children baptized as infants at St Peter's, Harrold, over the period 1729 – 1736. Furthermore, Bedfordshire Archives hold four documents, all dated 1731, witnessed by Sebastian Dadley [2]; in one of those documents he is described as an 'officer of the Excise'. Sebastian died in 1736 and was buried at St Peter's in Harrold. It is almost certain that Joseph and Sebastian Dadley were related, perhaps brothers, but Bedfordshire parish records throw no light on their origins.

References

- [1] C.D. Linnell (ed.), *The Diary of Benjamin Rogers, rector of Carlton, 1720 – 71*, Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Vol. 30 (1950). Republished (1999) by the Carlton and Chellington Historical Society.
- [2] Bedfordshire Archives, Refs. BS768, BS789, X284/7/5 and Z1026/3.

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John Pool, pastor 1730 - 1751

H. G. Tibbutt's brief history of the Keysoe Brook End Baptist church [1] quotes the following entry

from the Church Book there: “*June the 23 Day 1725. Agreed at our church Meeting that brother Pool should exercise his gift as occasion shall offer*”. That is to say that he was given permission by his church to preach publicly, and, as we have seen, John Pool had visited the Baptist church at Carlton to preach more than once, before and immediately after the departure of his predecessor Joseph Dadley. He was eventually ordained minister at Carlton on 3rd June 1730 after a probationary period.

John Pool must already have been married by the time he came to Carlton – by 1742 he had at least one child, a daughter Ann, who was already married herself (see below). His wife Ann, who was probably the mother of this daughter, died in 1733; the corresponding entry in the burial register of St. Mary, Carlton, is “*1733 March 8 Ann w [wife of] Jn Pool.*”

Although little information about him can be gleaned from the Carlton Church Book, John Pool left a will, dated 1742 [2], in which he described himself as “*John Pool of Carleton in the County of Bedford*”, and which gives us some further details of him. In his will he mentions but does not name the ‘*beloved wife*’, whom he made his sole executrix, and he must therefore have remarried after the death of his first wife Ann. His principal legatee was his daughter Ann, who was married to Thomas Smith of Kimbolton; ultimately most of his property went to her. John Pool was clearly a man of private means — he owned significant freehold land and property in Kimbolton and a cottage in Cottenham, Cambs. He also held copyhold lands and tenements in Rushden. His unmarried sister Susannah Pool occupied the Cottenham property, and his married sister Mary Downs lived in London.

It seems very likely that John Pool originated in or near Kimbolton, where most of his property was located. The Keysoe chapel that he belonged to before coming to Carlton was close to Kimbolton, which supports that assumption. Bedfordshire Archives has three documents which refer to John Pool of Kimbolton [3]. In the first two, dated 1689, he is described as a farrier, and in the third, dated 1707 (which also gives his wife’s name as Ann) as a blacksmith. Given the time lapse of 18 years, it is possible that the first two refer to the father of the John Pool referred to in the third, who may well have been the individual destined to become the future pastor at Carlton.

It has not proved possible to find records for either of John Pool’s marriages, but there is a hint in a document dated 1743 at Bedfordshire Archives [4] that his second wife’s forename may have been Mary. The document is a mortgage involving members of the Bithrey family which was prominent in Carlton and its Baptist church at the time, and it was witnessed by John and Mary Pool. Another document in the same repository (Ref. GA596) is the will of a Thomas Bithrey, proved in 1741 [5]. In it, the testator leaves an annuity of 10 shillings per quarter to ‘*my beloved friend John Pool, Minister of the Gospel at Carlton, for the support of the Gospel*’, and £6 by way of a legacy.

References

- [1] H.G. Tibbutt, *Little Staughton Meeting*, Published by Little Staughton Meeting (1951). Available in the Local Studies Department of Bedford Central Library.
- [2] Bedfordshire Archives, Ref. ABP/W1751/37
- [3] Bedfordshire Archives, Refs. WG428, WG429, WG430.
- [4] Bedfordshire Archives, Ref. L3/45
- [5] Bedfordshire Archives, Ref. GA596

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Thomas Hull, pastor 1752 - 1778

From available parish records, a plausible candidate for the future pastor at Carlton was a Thomas Hull who was baptized into the Church of England at Stoke Goldington, Bucks., on 7th August 1727. His parents were George Hull and his wife Anne. If this is the correct identification, then Thomas must have become a nonconformist some time subsequent to his childhood, unless his parents did so

while he was still young. The Carlton Church Book tells us that his wife's forename was Hannah, and there is a Stoke Goldington marriage record for Thomas Hull and Hannah Hiden, dated 17th April 1744. Stoke Goldington is close to Olney, Bucks., which is where Thomas Hull reportedly worshipped before his 'dismissal' to Carlton. Since the family had become Baptists, there are no baptismal records for his children from the established church.

Thomas Hull died in 1778, but his death had been preceded by those of his wife Hannah and his daughter Mary. Hannah died on 25th March 1770 at the age of 47, and this information is taken from a memorial to her which is set into the floor of the Carlton Baptist Meeting. I have found no record of where she is buried. The same memorial also states that daughter Mary died at the age of 28; the date on the stone is worn away, but she was buried in Carlton churchyard on 4th May 1773: the entry in the burial register is "*Mary d[ughter of] Mr Tho Hull, dissenting teacher*". Then, four years after Thomas Hull's death comes the following entry in the Church Book: "*Hannah Allen wife of Geo. Allen daughter of our late Pastor Mr. Hull Departed this life April 19th 1782 The last of Mr. Hull's family*." Hannah had been married on 12th October 1779 in Carlton. Her husband, widower George Allen, was a shoemaker from Harrold. He had become a member of the Baptist Church at Carlton in 1773 "*by a dismissal from the Church meeting in Grafton Street, London*." If daughter Hannah was '*The last of Mr. Hull's family*', this seems to imply that his daughter Elizabeth, who according to the Church Book was admitted to his congregation in 1768, had also died by this time, though I have found no record of her death.

Unfortunately, Thomas Hull does not seem to have left a will which might have revealed further details of his family connections.

Bedfordshire Archives holds only two documents mentioning Thomas Hull [1]. Both are dated 1765, and they tell us nothing further about him except that he lived in one half of a '*messuage in Carlton, occupied by Mr. Thomas Hull and Thomas Gostwick*', which belonged to '*Charles Bithrey of Carlton Fishers, gentleman*', who was one of the Trustees of the Carlton Baptist Meeting.

References

[1] Bedfordshire Archives, Refs. Z187/7 & GA597.

[RETURN](#)

John West, pastor 1787 - 1793

His name being a common one, it has been impossible using standard genealogical sources to pin down the origins of this pastor. However, if he came to Carlton from Soham, Cambs., he may have been born in that general area. Also, as mentioned in the summary of his ministry, it is probable that his wife's name was Elizabeth. There is one marriage record which is plausible for him – or rather, two. Both took place in St Peter's, Chatteris, Hunts., and both apparently involved the same bride and bridegroom, but they took place on successive days, 25th and 26th December 1774. It is possible that the first marriage was judged invalid on some technicality and the ceremony was performed again the next day to correct the problem. In both cases the husband was John West, bachelor, and the wife was the former Elizabeth Sea, spinster. In the first wedding both were said to be of Chatteris and there were two witnesses, one of whom was Abraham Sea, obviously a relative of the bride. In the second wedding, however, John West was said to be of 'Long Orton' and his wife from Chatteris, and in this case there were no witnesses. 'Long Orton' is probably the place now known as Orton Longueville, a suburb on the southern outskirts of Peterborough., while Chatteris lies roughly midway between there and Soham. The identification of the John West of these marriages with the one who came to Carlton is very speculative, but if it is correct he may well have been born in the Peterborough area in about 1750, since most men at that time married in their mid-twenties. If he came from a Baptist family he is unlikely to have been christened in infancy.

John West's subsequent career after he left Carlton has proved hard to follow in any detail. However, recall from my account of his ministry that he was almost certainly influenced in his interpretation of the scriptures by his own former pastor at Soham, the controversial Andrew Fuller with his 'governmental theory of the atonement'. John West's later presence in Wantage, Berks., is confirmed by a book about the fervent anti-Fullerite John Warburton [1] which says that '*In 1821 John Warburton was even further afield at Wantage in Berkshire. The Particular Baptist Church there had become divided under their Pastor John West, and a group of people had separated to meet in a house at Grove, just outside Wantage*'. The members of the separated group had built their own anti-Fullerite chapel, and John Warburton took part in its opening ceremony. Many such schisms were occurring at around that time. This episode seems to show that John West's ministry in Wantage lasted a good deal longer than the six years he spent at Carlton, but that the outcome was a similar disagreement.

In the Carlton Church Book George Hall stated that John West subsequently went to Dublin. The truth of this is evidenced by a note in the *Baptist Magazine* for 1827, p. 152. This gives a list of monthly contributions raised for the Baptist Missionary Society, and the entry reads '*Dublin: Union Missionary Prayer Meeting, by Rev. John West ... £2 0 0*'. In fact the Baptist Missionary Society was actually founded in 1792 in Kettering by Andrew Fuller mentioned above, initially under the less succinct name of the Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen. His former association with its founder may have been instrumental in John West's gaining employment with the Society after he left Wantage.

References

[1] J.R. Broome, *John Warburton: Servant of a Covenant God*, Gospel Standard Trust Publications (republished 1996 – date of original publication not specified).

[RETURN](#)

Charles Vorley, pastor 1796 - 1837

Charles Vorley's age at death, as given on the memorial to him in the chapel building, was 70. He died in October 1837, and so he was probably born in 1767, or possibly late in 1766. He was therefore about 29 when he was ordained as pastor at Carlton.

Vorley's birthplace is unknown, but it was almost certainly in southern Northamptonshire. The first Church Book of the Carlton Baptists states that he was a member of the Baptist congregation at Irthlingborough before he came to Carlton. Little more is known of his early life, apart from the fact that he was a shoemaker by original trade. This information is found in a book published in 1802 [1] (during Vorley's pastorate) by Robert Woodward, the vicar of Harrold at that time. He wrote '*Though some of the dissenting teachers are men of education, yet it is well known that many who take upon themselves to be preachers of the Gospel are uneducated — they are brought up to trades.... The preachers who come to the Meeting Houses.... are of the following occupations: at Carlton, a shoemaker; at Ampthill, a lace buyer; at Sharnbrook, of the persons who pray and expound or officiate in the Meeting House, one is a carpenter, and another a wheelwright*.' He expressed his incomprehension that so many people were leaving the established Church and flocking to the chapels to hear these mere tradesmen preach.

Another important fact concerning Charles Vorley is found in a book about John Bunyan [2], whose author, John Brown, was the minister of the Baptist church at the Bunyan Meeting in Bedford from 1864 to 1903. He notes that John Bunyan's daughter Sarah, by his second wife Elizabeth, married a William Browne at St Cuthbert's in Bedford, in 1686. A grand-daughter of this couple, Frances Browne, born in 1722, married Charles Bithrey, a prosperous Carlton yeoman. She was his second wife. According to John Brown, Charles Bithrey and Frances lived at Fishers Farm in Carlton until Charles died in 1784, and she then continued to live there until her own death in 1803. When

pursuing his research for the book in the late 19th century, it seems that John Brown was actually able to talk to people who remembered Frances Bithrey from their infancy. He says of her *'She was held in great esteem in the parish, and having about her a certain air of old-world respectability, was familiarly known among the villagers as 'Madam' Bithrey. The youngsters of the place, especially, remembered her from the fact that after her husband's death she gave every year, on his birthday, a penny loaf to every child in the village by way of keeping up his memory among them. Judging from an ivory miniature portrait, taken in her eightieth year, she had to the last a vigorous face and blue eyes, with light and meaning in them. She was a zealous friend to the Baptist Church in Carlton, of which she was a member, and to its minister, the Rev. Charles Vorley, to whom she presented a house for his residence, which is still in the possession of his family. She died childless, in 1803.... To Mr. Vorley, her minister, she bequeathed £200 in the Four per Cents., and various articles of furniture, including 'my cedar nest of drawers'. This little cabinet, thus described, had come to her as an heirloom of the family, having been the property of her distinguished ancestor, John Bunyan...'* The house concerned was subsequently owned by Charles Vorley's descendants until about 1950, and the miniature portrait and the nest of drawers are now in the Bunyan Museum in Bedford.

A further interesting fact about Charles Vorley is that he was, in a small way, a literary man, who had obviously received a good education at some time in his life. This is evident from an account of him published in the *Bedfordshire Magazine* [3]. The article's author was F.W.P. Harris, a great-great-grandson of Charles Vorley, whose grandmother gave him two small books written by Vorley. They are of a devotional nature, and may have been primarily intended for use in the chapel Sunday school, where instruction was probably given in the elements of reading and writing. The titles of these books are *The Child's Catechism in Original Verse* (undated) and *The Alphabet of Religion: or Lessons for a Christian's Whole Life* (1836). As Harris says, *"His two small books show him to have been a man of some imagination and ingenuity. Although no doubt produced first and foremost for the use of his flock, they must have circulated more widely. Some of his congregation would be unable to read, and few of them would have been people of advanced education, so it was important to give them ideas and thoughts which could easily be memorised. Like many similar publications of those times these works [now] strike us as curious and quaint in many ways..."*

The Child's Catechism

This book of just sixteen pages contains 45 questions, to which answers are supplied in simple verse. Harris gives three examples:

Q. *My dear child, who made you?*

A. *God, who made the solid earth,
Gave all kinds of creatures birth.
Made the sky, and form'd the sea,
This great Being formed me.*

Q. *Does the law of God require any thing inconsistent with human happiness?*

A. *Equity the law demands,
Rectitude of heart and hands,
Did our lives therewith agree
Happy creatures we should be.*



Frances Bithrey in her 80th year from an Ivory miniature portrait (Photograph taken by the late John Crookall and reproduced by kind permission of Bunyan Meeting Free Church, Bedford)

Q. *Have not the weak strength enough in Christ?*

A. *Yes, in Jesus they shall find,
Strength to conquer foes combin'd,
Strength their duties to perform,
Strength to weather every storm.*

The Alphabet of Religion

Harris says that the *Alphabet of Religion* contains no author's name printed on the title page or elsewhere. However, there is the following handwritten inscription immediately below the title: "*by Charles Vorley, late minister of the Gospel at Carlton, Beds.*" On the flyleaf, in the same handwriting, is an inscription to the effect that the book was given to Charles Vorley's granddaughter, Lydia Ann Abbott, by his widow, Mary Vorley, on April 12th, 1845.

In this book, the author gives twenty-five texts from the Bible, each beginning with a different letter of the alphabet (Vorley was defeated by letter X, which he omitted). Each text is followed by a brief meditation upon its subject. Some examples of the texts are

Ask and it shall be given unto you *Matt. vii, 7*
Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ *Acts xvi, 31*
Neglect not the gift that is in thee *I Tim. iv, 14*
Trust in the Lord at all times *Psalms lxii, 8*
Yield yourselves unto the Lord *II Chron. xxx,*
Zealous of good works *Titus ii, 14*

Vorley's preface states that "*true religion consists in something more than a bare assent of the understanding to certain general truths, however scriptural or orthodox... Religion must be the business of everyday; it must be internal, practical, and permanent*". He points out that in arranging his list of texts alphabetically, he is following the example of the 119th Psalm, which is divided into several parts, each part beginning with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Harris does not quote any of the meditations from *The Alphabet*, but he gives all of Vorley's final "Recapitulation", summarizing the entire work in verse:

Come now, my soul, attentively review
These Scripture lessons, which all tend to shew
That true religion, seated in the heart,
Will yield support and happiness impart,
In youth, in age, and in a dying day,
When earthly joys all fade and flee away.
Spirit Divine, by thee may I be led
My alphabet to learn, from A to Z.

Ask, saith the Lord to his insolvent poor,
Believe, and knock, and wait at mercy's door;
Commit thy way to God; thy all resign,
Delight in him, daily on him recline;
Examine well thy deeds, thy motives too
Fight in the cause of him who died for you;
Humble thyself, lie prostrate in the dust;
Incline thine ear, God's mind with ardour seek;
Glory in him, make him thine only trust;
Judge not, be not severe, be mild, be meek.
Keep guard against thy wretchedness within,

Looking to Christ, who saves from hell and sin.
 Muse on his word, which points the way to heaven;
 Neglect no talent which the Lord has given.
 Observe his statutes, willingly obey;
 Praise him with gratitude from day to day.
 Quench not, do not the Spirit's work annoy;
 Rejoice in Christ, the one great source of joy.
 Stand fast in truth, and in your conduct too,
 Trust in the Lord in all you have to do;
 Use hospitality to friends and foes;
 Vow in the strength of God, and pay thy vows.
 Watch thine own heart, and watch the hand of God,
 Yield to his will, when laid beneath his rod;
 Zealous for him, who bought thee with his blood.

In the conclusion of his article, Harris mentions that he had recently been given a small picture of Vorley (reproduced here). This had a piece of paper stuck to the back of the frame recording that “Mr. John Jenkinson of Kettering preached Vorley's funeral sermon on Oct. 27th, 1837, on the text *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit (Acts vii, 59).*”

Charles Vorley's family and descendants

It was said earlier that Charles Vorley's precise origins remain unknown at present. However, it is known that he had a brother Edward, and thought probable that he had another brother Henry, who was a military man.

Charles was married, and his wife was Mary, née Lovell. Rather more is known about Mary's origins than about Charles'. She survived until 1854, and is therefore recorded in the first two detailed censuses, those of 1841 and 1851. The 1851 census required birthplaces to be given, and from this source we know that Mary Vorley was born in Great Addington, Northants., a village to the north of Rushden. It is possible that Vorley himself also came from Great Addington, because his was a common surname there in the late 18th century.



Depiction of Charles Vorley

Charles and Mary had three children, who were not baptized in infancy, because the Carlton Baptists practised adult baptism. However, their births were recorded in Dr Williams' Library, a resource used by nonconformists for the registration of births to parallel the baptismal records of the established church. Birth records in Dr Williams' Library give not only the parents' names but also those of the maternal grandparents, which in the cases of the Vorley children proved to be William and Mary Lovell. There is a Great Addington parish record for the marriage of this couple in 1771; Mary Lovell's maiden name was Beal. The Lovells apparently moved from Great Addington to Podington, Beds., some time after 1773. Certainly, that is where Charles Vorley was married to Mary Lovell Jr. on Valentine's Day in 1797, although in those days that village was known as “Puddington”. The parish record of their marriage states that Charles was living at that time in Harrold. At this time it was usual for nonconformists to be married according to the rites of the established church, simply because there was no other way of having a marriage sanctified and officially recorded. Mary Vorley is said to have run a chapel Sunday school in her own kitchen from 1807 onwards. The three children

of Charles and Mary Vorley, all born in Carlton, were Patience (b. 1802), Ebenezer (b. 1811) and Eliza (b. 1817).

Descendants of Patience Vorley

Patience Vorley married James Abbott in 1822, in Carlton. He came from Harrold, and was a carpenter and joiner, being listed in that capacity in the 1830 Pigot's Directory for Bedfordshire. Patience and James had four children: William (born ca. 1823), Charles Vorley (ca. 1828), Eliza (ca. 1830) and Lydia Ann (ca. 1832).

Patience died in 1836 aged 33, before either of her parents. She is buried close to them in the burial ground of Carlton Baptist Meeting. Her husband James married again; he and his second wife moved to Northampton, but Patience's children remained in Carlton with her sister Eliza.

Patience's son William Abbot started out in life a carpenter, like his father. He married in about 1852 and spent most of his life in Towcester, Northants. He was also a publican for a couple of decades, at the Nelson's Arms in Towcester High Street. He and his wife had just one child, a daughter, who was named Lydia Ann after William's sister. William's younger brother Charles Vorley Abbott died unmarried in 1851 and is interred in the burial ground at Carlton Baptist Meeting.

As regards the two daughters of Patience Vorley, Eliza Abbott is the ancestor of all those Vorley descendants still living in or near Carlton, while Lydia Ann was the great-grandmother of F.W.P. Harris whose *Bedfordshire Magazine* article about Charles Vorley was quoted earlier. He was at one time the incumbent of Solihull Congregational Church in Warwickshire, and he was the person who, in 1956, transcribed the First Church Book of the Carlton Baptist Meeting.

Eliza and Lydia Ann Abbott married two brothers from the Wells family of Odell, whose father had started a leather-dressing business behind the Mad Dog pub there, which eventually moved to Orchard Lane, Harrold and later became the Dickens leather company. Both weddings took place at the Harrold Congregational chapel, where Eliza married John Wells in 1855 and Lydia Ann married George Wells in 1857. John and Eliza lived in the 'Vorley House' in Carlton, while George and Lydia Ann lived in Harrold where George, being the older of the two Wells sons, had inherited the family leather-dressing business, where John was also employed.

John and Eliza Wells had three daughters, Eliza, Georgina and Agnes. Eliza married and moved to Wellingborough, Northants. Georgina married David Howe from Odell, yet another leather-worker, and after the deaths of her parents she and her husband returned to live in the Vorley House where she had been born, together with Georgina's unmarried sister Agnes. After David Howe's death in 1947, Georgina and Agnes were the last of the Vorley descendants to live there. They both died on the same day in 1950, and the house was then sold out of the family. It is the descendants of David and Georgina Howe who still live in the Carlton area today.

George and Lydia Ann Wells had four children, all daughters, but only the youngest, Susan, married. Her husband was Arthur Smith, a butcher, and he and Susan lived in Daventry, Northants. It must have been Susan Smith who gave her grandson F.W.P. Harris the two little books written by Charles Vorley.

Descendants of Ebenezer Vorley

Ebenezer Vorley was trained at the Royal College of Surgeons, and practised medicine both in Roade, Northants., and later in Carlton. His 1851 census entry (at which time he was apparently living in the "Vorley House" in Carlton High Street) was rather impressive. It reads "Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, London, & Licentiate of Apothecarys Co., General Practitioner". Ebenezer was married twice:

- in 1838, to Jane Sutcliffe Welsh at the Baptist Church in Newbury, Berks, where her father Thomas Welsh was the minister. She tragically died in Roade, Northants., less than two months after the wedding. Jane was born in 1815. Her father had earlier been a student of John Sutcliff of Olney, Bucks (a contemporary of John Newton and William Cowper).

- in 1847, to Elizabeth Walker at St. Peter's, Northampton. She was born in about 1817 at Roade, Northants. None of their four children plays any part in local Carlton history, as far as is known, but there are still descendants who bear the surname Vorley.

Ebenezer died in 1853 aged 42, and is buried in the graveyard of the Carlton Baptist Meeting. His second wife is not buried with him; she probably remarried and went to live elsewhere. His mother Mary Vorley died the following year, leaving the “Vorley House” to her daughter Eliza. Mary’s Will, and also that of her husband Charles, are both to be found at Bedfordshire Archives at Borough Hall [4].

Descendants of Eliza Vorley

In about 1839 Eliza Vorley married Litchfield Northern of Harrold. The 1841 census found them living in Carlton High Street in a household headed by Mary Vorley, his mother-in-law, together with his wife Eliza, and three of Patience’s children, Charles, Eliza and Lydia Ann Abbott — it will be recalled that Patience herself died in 1836 and her husband James remarried and moved away. At this time Litchfield was a tailor and his wife a dressmaker. The two younger girls, Eliza (aged 11) and Lydia Ann (8) were listed as lacemakers. However, Litchfield Northern seems to have been something of a wheeler and dealer. By 1851 he had his own household, and was a ‘*Grocer, draper, tailor, etc.*’. Mary Vorley, now aged 77, was living with him and his wife, though not in the ‘Vorley House’, which was then occupied by Ebenezer and his family. The three Abbott children were still part of the ménage, Charles being employed as a tailor and his two sisters as assistants in the grocery shop. Litchfield was very versatile, and his subsequent occupations during his long life included schoolteacher, publican, wine-merchant’s manager, rent collector, estate agent and auctioneer. Litchfield and Eliza had three children: Mary Vorley Northern, b. ca. 1847 in Carlton, Albert Northern, b. ca. 1849 in Carlton and John Thomas Northern, b. ca. 1859 in Wilden. The daughter never married, and the two sons moved away from Bedfordshire.

References

- [1] Robert Woodward, *The Causes and Pretences for Separation from the Ancient Established Church Considered and Refuted*, Bye and Law, printers, Clerkenwell, London (1802).
- [2] John Brown, *John Bunyan (1628 – 1688) – His Life, Times and Work*, Tercentenary Edition, revised by Frank Mott Harrison, The Hulbert Publishing Company Ltd. (1928).
- [3] F.W.P. Harris, *The Alphabet of Piety*, Bedfordshire Magazine, Vol. 3, No. 17 (1951)
- [4] Bedfordshire Archives, Refs. ABP/W1855/9 and ABP/W1838/14.

[RETURN](#)

George Hall, pastor 1839 – 1851

I had known for many years that the previous pastor, Charles Vorley, had descendants who still lived in the Carlton area, but I was surprised, during a lunchtime conversation in the Carlton Fox, to be told that the person I was speaking to was a descendant of Vorley’s successor, George Hall. This prompted my efforts to flesh out his history, because he had previously been something of an enigma.

I will start by stating what little definite knowledge was available about him. For the period 1841 to 1911, the primary sources of information are the ten-yearly census returns. I have found just two census entries for George Hall, for the years 1841 and 1851. In the first he was living in a house in Chellington whose Head of Household was Mary Eyles, age given as 60; the other occupants were

Hannah France, aged 30 and James Lawrence, aged 12. George Hall's age is illegible, and his occupation may be given as "Bap Minister", but I cannot be sure, because the original record was faintly written in pencil. If this is indeed the right George Hall, there is no sign of a wife living with him. It is possible that he was living as a boarder with Mary Eyles because a house being renovated for his use was not yet ready — there is evidence from the Church Book that a house had been purchased and would be made fit for his use. That house is now No. 37 in Carlton High Street. In the 1851 census, which normally would be expected to provide such useful information as his precise age and his place of birth, George Hall was found as a "Visitor" in the household of John Taylor, a Northampton bookseller. He was doubtless in Northampton on a preaching engagement. His age was given as 50, his marital status as "Widower" and his occupation as "Baptist Minister". Unfortunately, whoever provided the information for this household to the census enumerator did not know George Hall's birthplace, which was left blank, and I suspect that the age given was no more than a guess on the part of the informant. The only earlier record I have found for George Hall, apart from a possible marriage record mentioned below, comes from Bedfordshire Archives [1]. It is a draft will dated 1838, in which one of the executors appointed was '*George Hall of Pavenham, minister of the Gospel*'. This must have been the same person, though why he was 'of Pavenham' in 1838 is another mystery about him.

His name being a common one, it has so far proved impossible to track down this particular George Hall in later censuses without knowledge of his birth year or birthplace. I found a notice in an 1851 issue of the *Baptist Magazine* saying that he had left Carlton to take up a new appointment as Minister at the Zoar Chapel in Ipswich, where '*he had commenced his labours on the second Lord's day in July*'. I sought him in Ipswich in the 1861 census, but he had moved on from there by then. An account of the Carlton Baptist Meeting in its bicentenary year [2] states that George Hall left Carlton to go to Scotland as a chaplain to the army, which, as I will show, may well be true except that he clearly made a detour to Ipswich on his way. However, I could not find him in the 1861 Scottish census either.

There is little further information concerning George Hall from the Church Book of Carlton Baptist Meeting. There is an account of his ordination service in 1839, in which 11 ministers from other Baptist chapels participated, and the statement that before he came to Carlton he was '*Minister of the [Baptist] Church at Newport Pagnell*'. But then in 1878, well over twenty years after he left, it is reported that his body was returned to Carlton for burial in the graveyard of the Baptist Meeting; he had died in Wollaston, Northants., on 11th January of that year and was interred on the 15th. On his memorial it is stated that he served as Minister at Carlton for 14 years; twelve of those years were the ones following his ordination in 1839, but it is possible that he served on a probationary basis for the preceding two years after the death of Charles Vorley in office in 1837. The memorial also gives George Hall's age at death as 75, which, if that figure is accurate, would make his probable year of birth 1802. We are still no nearer to knowing *where* he was born, however. It is very reasonable to ask why it was that George Hall (or perhaps members of his family) chose Carlton for his burial place. It turns out that he did have a family, though many details of it are not easy to ascertain.

I mentioned earlier that in the 1851 census he was found away from home, as a visitor in Northampton. In Carlton, though, three Hall children were listed:

Robert Grey Hall (aged 10, born in Carlton),

William Hine Hall (7, born in London) and

Elizabeth Alderton Hall (5, born in Carlton).

They were sharing a household with Matilda Crouch, aged 24, possibly a babysitter, and Thomas Corby, who was the relief minister in charge of the Carlton Baptist Meeting on the night of the census. The presence of Thomas Corby makes it almost certain that this was the minister's house, and that the

three children were George Hall's. Furthermore, although I was unable to find George himself in the Scottish census for 1861, I found these same three children living at that time in Earl Grey Street, Edinburgh. Robert (now aged 20) was a House Painter, William (17) was a Clerk, and Elizabeth (15) was still at school. This seems to confirm that their father George actually did move to Scotland, though having got there he remained as elusive as ever. Possibly he had travelled overseas somewhere with the army.

Next, I tried to find the mother of the children. No wife was present with George in his 1841 census entry, but he must have been married by that time because Robert's birth was registered in the Bedford District towards the end of 1840. I looked for a marriage record, and the most plausible one was a marriage between a George Hall and a Caroline Foster, which took place in 1838 in Newport Pagnell, where George was a minister before he moved to Carlton. To confirm or disprove that this is the correct marriage would require the purchase of a copy of the marriage certificate. Only about five years later there is another marriage, in 1843 in the Bedford District, between George Hall and Elizabeth Olderton Hine. Her surname clearly accounts for the second forename of George Hall's son William, and her own second forename is identical, give or take a change in one letter, with the second forename of daughter Elizabeth. Clearly, then, George married twice; his first wife must have died soon after she had given birth to Robert in 1840. But the 1851 census shows him as a widower, and his second wife must therefore also have died before then. In fact there is an 1848 death record from the Bedford District for an Elizabeth Hall, and this is probably her. I have found no death record that can be convincingly associated with the first wife, but the registration of deaths was not compulsory at that time.

I will turn now to the children, all three of whom were found in Edinburgh in the 1861 census. I will deal with them in order of increasing age. The youngest, Elizabeth Alderton Hall appeared in Edinburgh in the 1871 census, living by herself and employed as a "Machine worker", but after that no further records of her have emerged.

William Hine Hall was married in Edinburgh in 1863 to Sarah Rosa Pickard. He joined the Army, but for some reason he enlisted under the name of William Wyatt rather than his original name. Details of his subsequent life emerge from a divorce case in which he was involved. In 1874 a soldier named John Arch married Mary Ann McCarthy in Brentford Register Office in Middlesex. He gave his occupation as Private in the 19th Hussars. John Arch was subsequently posted to various places in England and Ireland, and his wife travelled with him. In 1879, in Dublin, Ireland, his wife left him and their two children to live in adultery with William Wyatt, then serving in the Scots Greys with the rank of Sergeant Major. John Arch took the children to live with his mother in Bradford, Yorks. In 1883, by which time he was stationed at the Royal Military College in Sandhurst, Kent, he received a letter from his wife saying that she had remarried (bigamously) to a man surnamed Wood, and giving an address in Dublin. In June 1886 John Arch petitioned for a divorce, which was granted in March 1887 and made absolute six months later; he was also granted custody of his children. Meanwhile "William Wyatt" had retired from military service in September 1881 and returned to live in Edinburgh. The following month John Arch's estranged wife went to Bradford and abducted her two children while their grandmother was out of the house, having presumably entered into a new relationship where they could be supported. In his divorce petition John Arch had attempted to claim £500 damages from 'Sergeant Major Wyatt', but it was too late – 'Wyatt' had died in Edinburgh on 16 February 1885. His Death Certificate gives his real name, and his landlady, who was present at his death, signed an affidavit to the effect that William Wyatt and William Hine Hall were the same person. The cause of death was given as 'Chronic Phthisis', (probably tuberculosis). He was aged only 41, and his retirement from the Army (and the desertion of his paramour) were very likely a result of his failing health. The Death Certificate also states that he was a widower, in which case his wife Sarah must have died in the meantime. It further reveals that he had recently been employed as a 'Mercantile Clerk', was also an army pensioner, and that his father's name was George *Wyatt* Hall.

This last fact may go some way towards explaining his temporary change of surname, but it has not so far helped in pinning down his father's origins.

The eldest of the siblings, half-brother Robert Grey Hall, returned to England, where in the census of 1871 he is listed in Wellingborough, Northants. By this time he was married. He was now 30 years old, and his wife, formerly Hannah Banks Bolton, was 28. He had married her in 1864 in Northampton, but like him she was born in Carlton, where she was baptized in 1842. Robert must have known her from his childhood in the village. As in the previous census he was a House Painter, while she was a Lace-maker. They had two children — in 1871 William B. Hall, born in Northampton, was aged 6, and his brother George, born in Wellingborough, was just nine months old. William died quite young, in 1876, but George survived to adulthood.

Hannah unfortunately died in the early 1870s, aged only about 30. Robert then remarried; his second wife was Sarah Ann Harris, born about 1852 in Keyston, Huntingdonshire. Sarah presented Robert with two further children, David (born 1876 in Far Cotton, just south of Northampton) and Elizabeth (born 1879). It is not clear where Elizabeth was born; she was christened in February 1880 at Little Harrowden, just to the north of Wellingborough, but she died the following month. The death of Robert's father George Hall in 1878 occurred during a period when Robert and his family were living in Wellingborough, close to Wollaston where George died, and it is possible that Robert's family had looked after him during his final years.

By 1891 Robert had returned to his birthplace, Carlton, where he was living in the High Street, with his wife Sarah Ann. He still worked as a house painter. Both his surviving children, George and David, had flown the nest by this time. The situation was unchanged in the 1901 census, and also in that of 1911, when Robert was still working as a self-employed painter at the age of 70. It is not possible to determine which house he and Sarah occupied because houses were not numbered at this time.

He gave his postal address simply as "Carlton, Beds.", and trusted that the postman would know where to find him. However, this census does reveal that he was living in a four-roomed cottage, and from the names of his various neighbours it appears to have been somewhere close to the former Angel Inn.

Robert died in the spring of 1917, at the age of 76. Sarah seems to have outlived him (she was some 9 years younger than Robert), but it is not possible without further information to judge which of many death records for people named Sarah Hall is the one that applies to her.

Now, recall that Robert Grey Hall, son of George Hall the Baptist Pastor, had just two surviving children, both sons, George and David, one by each of his two wives. I will deal first with young George. He became a house painter, like his father. In 1906 he married Minnie Ellen Darlow, and in 1911 he was living in the family of his parents-in-law in Kettering, with his wife and their young daughter Lilian Hilda Hall. In 1912 George Hall upped sticks and emigrated with his family to Canada, where they lived in the Niagara region of Ontario. Here George died in 1952, his wife in 1959 and his daughter Lilian, unmarried as far as I know, in 1978. I have found no indication that George and Minnie had any further children.

I will turn now to Robert Grey Hall's younger son, David. He was living in the family home in 1881, aged 5, but proved difficult to find in the 1891 census. However, there is no doubt that in January 1895, at the age of 18 years and 9 months, he enlisted in the Bedfordshire Regiment of the army, giving his previous occupation as Labourer. He signed up for a short service engagement of '*7 years with the Colours and 5 years in the Reserve, or if the man completes his 7 years' service while beyond the seas then 8 years with the Colours and 4 years in the Reserve*'. He was given the service number 5229. Under this arrangement he would have returned to civilian life in 1902, though liable to be called upon in emergency as a member of the Army Reserve. In fact he extended his term of service,

and spent 12 years (from 1896 to 1908) serving abroad, in British India. In the 1911 census, taken after he returned, he was found living at Kempston Barracks, unmarried at the age of 36, still a member of the Bedfordshire Regiment, and now with the rank of Corporal. On 1st November 1912 David Hall was married. His bride was Kathleen May Young, a Hertfordshire girl, born in 1895 and therefore nearly 20 years younger than her husband. Although David's army records state his religion to be 'C of E', the marriage took place at the Carlton Baptist Meeting, where David's grandfather George Hall had been Pastor more than seventy years earlier. In March 1913 David Hall was discharged from the army at his own request, with the rank of Sergeant and the commendation '*A steady, sober and honest man during 18 years of service*'. The following year saw the outbreak of World War 1, and in August 1914 David re-enlisted in the army. At the age of 38 he signed up '*for a term of one year, unless the War lasts longer than one year*' (in which case he would be retained for the duration). Before the end of 1914 he had been promoted to Company Sergeant Major, a rank he maintained until his discharge in March 1919, by which time the Bedfordshire Regiment in which he had served had been renamed the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment. He spent two periods in France during this term of service. He had been a dispatch rider, and was awarded a pair of silver spurs which he gave to the former army museum at Kempston Barracks. They are possibly now at the Beds. and Herts. Regiment collection at the Wardown House Museum in Luton. David and his wife Kathleen had seven children. The first, David Jr., was born in 1913, soon after his father had been discharged from the army for the first time. Then came Elizabeth (born 1916), Cyril (1919), Dennis and Ivy (twins, 1927), Kathleen (1929), who sadly died aged only 3, and finally Victor (1930).

When David signed up again to fight in WW1 the family was living in a cottage on the Green at Carlton; Kathleen remained there with their children until the end of the war. Some time after David returned they all moved to live at 13 Wood Road, Harrold, where they remained until David's death in 1952 and Kathleen's in 1970. After his military career David eked out his army pension through agricultural work and following the family profession of painting and decorating. Five of the six surviving children of David Hall married and had children. However, three of them, with their families, moved away from Bedfordshire. David Hall Jr. married Dorothy Brown of Felmersham in 1933, and they and their children settled in the north of England. Similarly, Dennis Hall, who married Eileen Poole of Stagsden in 1952, ended up in Cambridge. Their sister Ivy was a GI bride, who married a US airman and went to the USA. Of the children who remained local, Elizabeth Hall, who married twice, eventually lived in the Queen's Park area of Bedford, and Victor Hall, the only one who did not marry, continued to live with his parents until after they both died, then lived on in the same house in Wood Road, Harrold. The one who remained closest to his roots was Cyril Hall. He lived initially in Harrold, working at one of the leather factories. Early in 1939 he married Gwendoline (Gwen) Holvey, a daughter of Frederick Holvey, landlord of the Angel Inn at Carlton. During World War II Cyril served in the Army as a driver, specializing in setting up communications with the front lines of various conflicts. He saw service in North Africa, Syria, Palestine and Italy. During the course of the war his family moved to live at the Angel with Gwen's parents because German bombs were being dropped not far north of Harrold, aimed at the airfields near Thurleigh. After Cyril's war service, the family occupied a newly-built council house, 18 High Street, Carlton. Later they moved to Turvey, where he was employed as a driver for Bailey's transport company.

Frederick Holvey, Gwen's father, seems also to have been a interesting character. He was born in Priston, Somerset, a village near Bath, late in 1880. His father was a blacksmith, who initially had his son trained as a carpenter. Frederick was still living with his parents in the Bath area in 1911, and the following year he married. Unfortunately, the marriage was not a success. He and his wife parted company, and Frederick emigrated to Australia. Here he set up in business as a wheelwright and coffin-maker in a small town about 90 miles inland from Perth, Western Australia, and built himself a bungalow. Once he had established himself there he was followed out to Australia by Annie Spencer, whom he had known in England. She had previously been the matron of a home for wayward girls in Bath. They had two children, Gwen and Gordon, both born in Australia. Annie's sister also went to

Australia; she married into a farming family named Gentle, and consequently there are relatives in Western Australia to this day. However, Frederick and Annie returned to England some time in the 1920s.

By 1924 they were living in Pavenham, where the licensee at the Cock pub was Annie's mother; they lived with her while Frederick built a bungalow nearby, in Mill Lane. By 1933 Frederick had become landlord of the Angel in Carlton, and Electoral Registers from 1935 to 1952 show that he and his wife Annie remained there for about twenty years. During the War he also worked for the firm Whites, in Elstow Road, Bedford, making wings for Mosquito bombers. These were made of wood, and his early training as a carpenter fitted him well for the job. In peacetime, though, Frederick continued to ply his trade as a wheelwright in a barn behind the Angel Inn. He remained living in our neighbourhood for many years after he retired, but he returned to the Bath area towards the end of his life, and died there in 1975.

Cyril Hall and his wife Gwen had five children, of whom three still survive at the time of writing, all living in the Carlton area, and all of them sharing George Hall the 19th-century pastor of the Carlton Baptist Meeting as their great-great-grandfather. My informants for much of the more recent information concerning this family were the late Michael



(Mick) Hall of Turvey and his two sisters, Susan and Gillian, who spent most of their early years in Carlton and attended Carlton Primary School. I am very grateful to them for their help. The photograph here shows their grandfather Frederick Holvey at work in the wheelwright's shop behind the Angel Inn. Among many other recollections, Mick Hall remembered being recruited to pump air for the fire here at his grandfather's forge.

References

- [1] Bedfordshire Archives, Ref. GA2582.
- [2] J.C. Doggett, *Free Grace Record* (a quarterly publication of the Strict and Particular Baptist Trust Corporation), Vol. 2, No. 3, Summer 1960.

**Frederick Holvey working in his wheelwright's shop
behind the Angel Inn**

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John Evans, pastor 1852 - 1856

John Evans is a common name, the record of his ministry in the first Church Book gives very little prior information about him, and this individual could have been hard to track down. Fortunately, I was able to find him and his family by searching for his son Stephen, who is mentioned in the Church book, that being a less common forename. At the time of the 1851 census, shortly before they moved to Carlton, they were living in High Street, Rushden, Northants. John Evans was born in London in about 1804, and he gave his occupation as "Baptist Minister of Elim Chapel". His wife's name was Ann; she was 14 years younger than her husband, and there were eight children living with them, at least two of whom must have resulted from a previous marriage. The birthplaces of the children give some indication of John Evans' movements over the previous few years. He had lived in London until about 1842, then spent a period in Horsham, Sussex, followed by at least three years in High Wycombe, Bucks before moving to Rushden. Moses Beeby notes that John Evans' ministry in Carlton terminated in 1856; the reason was possibly ill health, because he died in 1858 in the Bedford

Registration District. In the 1861 census his widow Ann Evans is found living in Bedford, in Greyfriars Walk, with five children. She and the two eldest children were working in the shoemaking trade.

John Evans had a son by the name of Ebenezer, and rather to my surprise I found him still living in Carlton in 1861. He was living in Fisher's Lodge, working as a shoemaker. He had married Sarah Chambers, a Carlton girl, and at the age of 20 already had a small daughter, Rose, aged 2. Ebenezer and his family seem to have remained in the neighbourhood for the rest of his life, living at various times in Bedford and Rushden.

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Edward James Silverton, pastor 1856 - 1863

To learn more about C H Spurgeon, 'the Prince of Preachers', click [here](#)

Edward James Silverton was born in about 1835 in Gillingham, Kent. His father George Silverton was a waterman, and Edward had several brothers and sisters. By 1851 his family had moved to live in London, and James, aged 16, was employed as a "Confectioner". In 1855 he married Ann Hayes in London, and in 1861 he was living in Carlton High Street, occupation given as "Baptist Minister". He and his wife had three children by this time, and a living-in house servant, 11-year-old Elizabeth Wooding. His movements from then on can be followed from the birthplaces given for his children in the 1861 and subsequent censuses: daughter Ann and son Jesse were born in London in about 1857 and 1859, respectively, daughters Lettice and Kate were born in Carlton in 1861 and 1862, Dora in Chatteris, Cambs. in 1865, Ada in Kennington, Surrey in 1867 and Elsie in Nottingham in 1880. In the 1861, 1871 and 1881 censuses Edward Silverton was a Baptist Minister, but rather to my surprise he appeared in 1891 in a boarding-house in Leeds, Yorks., as a "Patent Medicine Vendor", a profession in which his powers of oratory learned at Spurgeon's Pastors' College in the 1850s probably stood him in good stead.



I thought it worthwhile to look further into this change of career. The first thing I found was that E.J. Silverton had become an author, and had published at least two books. First came *The Humorous Parson*, published in London by Dickinson & Higham (1874). This was followed by *Sermons for the Masses*, published in London by Alabaster and Passmore (1879). However, next I discovered that he had been investigated by Jerome Caminada, a police detective from Manchester, who noticed in about 1877 that advertisements were appearing in various newspapers promoting a medicine developed by the Rev. E.J. Silverton of Nottingham called '*Food of Foods*'. This was claimed to cure all infirmities to which the flesh is heir, in particular deafness. Convinced that this was no more than a quack remedy Caminada engaged in correspondence with Silverton, saying that he suffered from some complaint that he would like cured. Silverton sent him copies of testimonials, offered him a free consultation and said that his treatment would be priced at 27s. 6d, several times the average weekly wage of a labourer at the time. Caminada handed over the results of his investigation to an organization which specialized in exposing fraudulent medical men, with the result that Silverton was apparently dismissed from his ministry in Nottingham and moved his base of operations to London. From here he travelled round the fashionable watering places during the season with his free consultations and expensive remedies for all ills. In 1884 he travelled to Manchester, and Caminada

A SPECIAL VISIT TO MANCHESTER.
R E V. E. J. SILVERTON'S
CURE OF DEAFNESS.

Miss SILVERTON IN ATTENDANCE.

ALL SUFFERERS CAN BE SEEN DAILY at the
MOSLEY HOTEL, PICCADILLY, MANCHESTER,
from January 15th until February 2nd.

Hours from 11 till 1, 3 till 5, and 6-30 till 8 o'clock. The Rev. E. J. Silvertton, of Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, London, cures Deafness, Head Noises, and Discharges from the Ears without the use of instruments, operations, or pain. Wonderful cures! A person cured after 40 years' deafness. A remarkable case of a lady at Lincoln, substantiated by a clergyman. A gentleman after 17 years' deafness cured, and one cured at the age of 90.

Miracles are not performed, but the results witnessed are the effects of Mr. Silvertton's method, and are indisputable. Lady sufferers are specially invited to pay a visit, and all afflicted with deafness should take the opportunity. Consultations free. A charge is made for the remedy only.

visited him in person – Silvertton was now collaborating with a reputed medical man by the name of Mitchinson. He purchased one of Silvertton's remedies and had it analyzed. It was found to contain lentils, wholemeal flour, bran and water. In 1884 he initiated a prosecution against Silvertton and Mitchinson for conspiracy to defraud, but the case (which was reported in the Manchester Guardian on 31st May 1884) was apparently dropped on a technicality, leaving the defendants free to continue their fraudulent activity. This continued until Silvertton's death, which occurred in Croydon, Surrey in May 1895. Earlier that year the advertisement above had been placed in the Manchester newspapers:

This makes clear that Silvertton was by now involving one of his daughters in his venture. Caminada went for a consultation with her, and also sent several of his colleagues, who claimed to be suffering from fictitious complaints. In all cases the consultation was free but the prescribed remedy was very expensive. Caminada concluded that the daughter was as big a fraud as her father.

Perhaps there is a charitable interpretation that can be put on Silvertton's activities. It was said that he personally raised the funds to build a new chapel for his Baptist congregation in Nottingham. I cannot imagine that his books brought him in very much money, and he may have started his quack medicine enterprise as a quicker way of building his finances. Possibly he originally intended to fleece only the rich, who could afford it; he was, after all, based in Nottingham, where Robin Hood was a great fleecer of the rich. But even if that were the case, the activity clearly soon got out of hand and eventually he did his best to extract money from anyone, whether they could afford it or not. At one point, Silvertton claimed to be making £50 per week, which was a very large income in those days. Most of the information about his 'medical' activities comes from the book referenced below [1]. The advertisement shown above and the depiction of Edward Silvertton are both from the same source.

References

[1] Jerome Caminada, *Twenty-Five Years of Detective Life*. Manchester: John Heywood (1895).

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William Carpenter, pastor 1864 - 1865

I found William Carpenter in the 1861 census in Dunstable, before he came to Carlton. He gave his occupation as '*Baptist Minister*', and was living in South Place, apparently next door to the Baptist chapel in Dunstable, with his wife Louisa and their five daughters. He was aged 46 and gave his birthplace as Radstock, Somerset. The first three girls, aged 19, 17 and 13, were all born in

Shoreditch, Middlesex, and the last two, aged 11 and 8, in Dunstable. His wife Louisa was also born in Middlesex. She and William were married in East London in 1839, and all this information gives a picture of William Carpenter's movements over the previous 20 years or so. I have so far been unable to find him in the 1871 census (though I have found his wife and some of their daughters, in the household of one of her sons-in-law, a pawnbroker, in Bethnal Green), but by 1881 he was a widower, living in the West Hampstead area of London, with two of his unmarried daughters and a granddaughter.

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Richard Bax, pastor 1867 - 1868

Richard Bax appears in the 1871 census in St. Neots, aged 36, occupation "Baptist Minister". He was a widower — his wife Susan had died three years previously. He had a son Charles living with him, aged 6, and a housekeeper, Mary Ann Betts, whom he must have taken with him when he left Carlton because she was a daughter of Thomas Betts (1807 - 1888) of Carlton, who has a memorial in the burial ground of the Carlton Baptist Meeting. Richard Bax's career is unusual and can be followed through the censuses. In 1841 he was 7 years old, living with his parents William and Ruth Bax in Newick, Sussex, where he was born. His father was a wheelwright. In 1851 Richard was a "Warehouse Labourer" working in nearby Uckfield, Sussex for a prosperous grocer and draper. In 1856 he married Susan Draper in Suffolk. In 1861 he appears as a grocer in Hitchin, Herts., with his nephew Charles Bax as his assistant. He must have become a Baptist minister some time shortly after that because according to Moses Beeby, he had held a pastorate at Meopham, Kent, before he came to Carlton. His wife died shortly after he moved from Carlton to St. Neots — she was aged only 29. He himself died in St. Neots in 1878, aged 44. He had certainly moved around a good deal during his short lifetime.

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James Brittain, pastor 1869 - 1872

The 1871 census finds James Brittain living in Carlton, profession '*Baptist Minister*', living in the '*Minister's House, Cause Way*'. The Manse cannot have been finished at that time, and so he must have been camping out in it while it was under construction, with his wife Sarah and five children. He gave his age as 32, and so he was born in about 1838; his birthplace was Marylebone, London. The only other census in which I was able to find him was the next one, for 1881. He was then living in Leyton, Essex; his wife had died, and his occupation was now "Carpenter". The Baptists had a very efficient communications network, and one can imagine that, having blotted his copybook in Carlton, James Brittain would have found it hard to obtain another pastorate. Thus it is not surprising to find that he had reverted to his previous occupation, '*connected with the building trade*' as Moses Beeby put it. By 1881 he now had no less than seven children in his family, though the three eldest were employed — Sarah (18) was a dressmaker, William (16) a carpenter and John (15) a photographer.

He had married his wife Sarah in 1862 in Islington, and his first two children were born in East London. The next two were born in Stratford, Essex, in about 1865, and Watford, Herts. in about 1867 — this last tallies with Moses Beeby's statement that James Brittain came to Carlton from Watford. Two further children were born while he and his wife were living in Carlton (Walter Gostic, 1869, and Louisa Emma, 1871) and the last one in Hounslow, Middx., in about 1874. The sequence of birthplaces gives an impression of James Brittain's movements since he left the London area in the early 1860s. The second forename, Gostic, of the son born in Carlton is intriguing — I suspect it was in honour of John Gostick, a deacon and prominent member of the Baptist congregation at Carlton, who died in 1878 aged 99, according to his headstone in the chapel burial ground.

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John Jull, pastor 1873 - 1879

Moses Beeby's account of John Jull provided enough information for me to track down his origins quite easily. He was born in 1833 in Wrotham, Kent (between Sevenoaks and Maidstone), the eldest child of John Jull Sr. and his wife Sophia. He had two younger brothers and four sisters. His father was a farmer, who farmed 100 acres with the aid of 3 men and 2 boys until he died in 1846. However, his widow Sophia held on to the farm, and as John Jr. grew older he took over the running of it. As late as the 1871 census John Jr., aged 37 and unmarried, was still living with his mother, giving his occupation as Farm Manager. In 1874 he married Miriam Fremlin, a farmer's daughter from the nearby village of Ryarsh — by this time he had already been appointed pastor at Carlton. His wife, who was about 14 years younger than he was, was probably a member of his congregation there. The censuses record no children of their marriage. By 1881 he and his wife had already moved to Cambridge, confirming Moses Beeby's account of his career. Like his predecessor Richard Bax, John Jull took a Carlton girl with him as a domestic servant when he left, in this case Jane Eyles. He resigned from the Cambridge pastorate in 1907, two years before his death, because of ill health. In his letter of resignation he stated that he had entered the ministry 47 years previously, which would have been in about 1859. He must therefore have been ordained as a pastor in Kent while still running his mother's farm, before he came to Carlton. After his ordination he was apparently the pastor in Ryarsh near his home, where a Baptist church had existed since 1853.

John Jull's pastorate at Cambridge seems to have been very successful; according to an online history of the Eden Chapel [1], *'his preaching was greatly appreciated, and many testimonies recorded in the church book at this time bear witness to the effectiveness of his ministry'*. He instituted changes to move his congregation away from the Strict Baptist camp, and modernized worship in the Eden chapel by having an organ installed for the first time, changing the hymn book used and altering the pattern of the Sunday services. *'The organ was considered such an innovation that one deacon suggested that the voting for it should be in the same way as for a pastor, i.e., requiring a 75% majority. This suggestion was actually ignored, and the vote carried by a large majority'*. He was also concerned with the welfare of the poor, and instituted 'Coal Fund' to buy coal wholesale to sell to the poor at cost. At this time the Eden Chapel is said to have been characterised by *'a warm and loving community: positive comments are made about the preaching, the quality of fellowship, the atmosphere at regular tea meetings, and especially at baptismal services. One of these, in 1883, involved Mr Jull's baptising 12 people in a river near Cottenham, in front of a crowd of some 2000 people'*.

We can only speculate as to why John Jull moved from Carlton to Cambridge. Maybe it was the attraction of working in a larger community, or possibly he was offered better living conditions there. However, I suspect one factor to have been that his efforts at persuading the Carlton congregation away from their uncompromising Strict and Particular Baptist beliefs had met with little success.

References

[1] <https://eden-cambridge.org/about-us/a-history-of-eden>

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Frederick King, pastor 1881 - 1890

Frederick King was born on 13th June 1825 in Waterbeach, Cambs. His parents were Baptists, and he was not baptized in infancy. However, his birth was registered in 1837, along with the births of two sisters, at Dr Williams' Library, a resource available to nonconformists for that purpose. Some details of his later life emerge from census records; I have found these for 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881. In 1851 he was living in Aldreth in the parish of Haddenham, Cambs., in agreement with Moses Beeby's account of him. He was then aged 25, and married; his wife's forename was Mary Ann, and she was

about five years older than him. He gave his occupation as '*Baptist minister*'. He and his wife had three children, aged 4, 2 and 3 months; the first two were born in Quy and the third at Aldreth. These places are to the north of Cambridge, within a few miles of each other. By 1861 the family had moved to Great Gransden, Hunts., and there were four more children, aged 8, 6, 3 and 4 months, the first three of whom were born in Aldreth and the last one in Great Gransden.

In 1871 the King family was still in Great Gransden. Some of the older children had left home, but there were no new additions to the previous seven; the birthplaces given for those children are broadly consistent with Moses Beeby's account of Frederick King's pastorships over the years. In the 1881 census Frederick King was actually in Carlton, as a '*Visitor*' in the household of an elderly agricultural labourer. This was before he was appointed pastor, and he was no doubt in the village for a preaching engagement.

A few additional details of Frederick King's life were supplied to Moses Beeby by King's predecessor, John Jull. He was born '*of truly Godly parents*' — his father was a deacon of a Baptist church in Waterbeach. The son was baptized into that church at the age of 15 or 16. He entered the ministry, and had been pastor at Aldreth, Cambs., for 9 years and at Great Gransden, Hunts., for 22 years before coming to Carlton. He was said to have preached every Sabbath Day for forty years without missing one through ill health.

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David Flavell, pastor 1891 - 1898

I have only been able to find David Flavell in two censuses. In 1861 he was aged 1, living with his parents James and Mary Ann Flavell in Earith, Hunts. His father, aged 51, was a small farmer, and at this time David was the youngest of eight children living at home. Moses Beeby tells us that before coming to Carlton he was pastor of the Strict Baptist church at Swavesey, near St. Ives, Hunts., but I was unable to find him there in the 1891 census. However, I found him in the 1901 census living in Colchester, which is where Moses Beeby says that he went after he left Carlton. He was married, his wife's forename was Emily, she was born in Holloway, London, and was a year older than he was. They appeared to be childless, and I have been unable to find any record of their marriage. The Strict Baptist Historical Society at Dunstable [1] has a database of pastors, which gives David Flavell's history of pastorates as Swavesey, Hunts., (1884 – 1889), Carlton (1891 – 1897), Colchester St. John's Green, Essex (1898 - 1905) and Saxmundham, Suffolk (1905 – 1909).

References

[1] <https://www.sbhs.org.uk>

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Alfred Barnabas Hall, pastor 1898 - 1903

The origins of Alfred Barnabas Hall are given by the 1901 census, in which he is found in Carlton, occupation '*Baptist Minister*'. He was aged 46, and born in St. Luke's, London. He was married; his wife Sarah Ann, aged 36, was from Norfolk, and they had a daughter, Grace Phoebe, aged 10, who was born in Meopham, Kent. This ties in with Moses Beeby's statement that Mr Hall came to Carlton from Meopham. Curiously, although no detailed address was given for them, this family's census entry came immediately after that of the Rector of Carlton, William Henry Denison, who occupied the Rectory. It appears, then, that in 1901 Mr Hall was living somewhere close to Carlton Rectory, possibly somewhere in The Moor.

We can follow him back through earlier censuses. In 1891 he was living in Meopham, Kent. Their daughter Grace was aged 6 months at the time of this census, and they also had a son Horace, aged 5, who was born in Chatteris, Cambs., which indicates that Alfred and Sarah were probably living there

in about 1885. In fact there is an 1884 record for the marriage of Alfred Barnabas Hall and Sarah Ann Woodward in the former North Witchford District of Cambridgeshire, which included Chatteris.

Earlier still, Alfred Hall is found in 1861, aged 6; his parents were Samuel and Eliza Hall, who were living in Finsbury, Middlesex. His father was a '*Stationer's Assistant*', and nine of his children were living at home, aged from 21 down to 2. Alfred was seventh in that list. There were some interesting occupations among the older children, including '*Vellum sewer*', '*Vellum binder*' and '*Black borderer*'. In 1871 the same family was living in Bethnal Green; Alfred was by now 16 years old and apprenticed as a printer's compositor.

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John Kingston, pastor 1904 - 1909

John Kingston appears in the 1901 census living in Tottenham, Middlesex, in accord with Moses Beeby's information about him. His age was 62, his birthplace Stilton, Hunts., and his occupation '*Baptist Minister*'. He had a wife Elizabeth and several grown-up children in his household. Looking back, he was born in about 1839; his parents were Henry and Catherine Kingston, Henry being a brickmaker. In the 1851 census John's age was given as 12, and he was now also a brickmaker. I have not found him in the 1861 census, but in December of that year he married Elizabeth Golding (the same age as himself, and also born in Stilton) in the Whittlesey district, near Peterborough. In 1871 he is a '*Brick and Tile Contractor employing 17 Men and 3 Boys*', living in Woodston, on the outskirts of Peterborough. At this time he and his wife have five children and three living-in servants, a female general servant and two males, who were probably two of the three '*Boys*' working for his business. By 1881 the family, now including 9 children, was living in Streatham, London. John Kingston was no longer an employer, but was an '*Agent and Manager for Coal Company*'. In 1891 he was in Edmonton, Middlesex, a '*Coal Merchant and Boot Factor*', and in 1901, as we saw above, he had suddenly become a Baptist Minister. It appears that he had been approved to preach the gospel by the Chadwell Street Baptist Church mentioned by Moses Beeby, and that he came to Carlton shortly afterwards. He stayed five years; Moses Beeby tells us that he then went to Leicester, where he died. Sure enough, John Kingston appears in Leicester in the 1911 census, his age given as 72 and his occupation as '*Baptist Minister*'. Further, there is a civil death record from Leicester for a John Kingston who died in 1917 aged 78, and that is almost certainly the same person.

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Moses Beeby pastor 1913 - 1952

Moses Beeby's own origins are easily stated. He was born in about 1880 in Warboys, Hunts. His parents were Henry and Emma Beeby; Henry gave his occupation as "Groom" in the 1881 and 1891 censuses, but in 1901 he was employed as a "Brewer of Beer".

In 1891 and 1901, his son Moses Beeby was employed as a groom. By his own account he became a member of the Baptist Church at Warboys in about 1902. He was married in 1906, to Ann Harvey; they had just one child, a daughter Ruth, born in 1908. In the census of 1911 this

family was found living in Warboys, where Moses Beeby was occupied as a '*Gardener, Jobbing*', but in 1913 he was ordained pastor at Carlton. Ann Beeby, about three years older than her husband, died in 1934, aged 56. Moses Beeby remarried in 1946, his second wife being from Leicester. He died in 1952, and is buried in the burial ground at Carlton Baptist Meeting. His wife and daughter then together left Carlton to live in Leicester.

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Moses Beeby

Appendix II: The Strict and Particular Baptists

Historically, the Particular Baptist tradition came first. The word ‘particular’ relates to the belief of adherents to this flavour of Christianity that Christ died to ensure the salvation, not of all Christians, but rather of a definite number of them who have been chosen for redemption. This belief is alternatively known as ‘limited atonement’, and it forms the third of what are known as the Five Points of Calvinism. Broadly, these state that

1. Mankind is irredeemably sinful, and that it is not in our own power to turn away from sin.
2. God has chosen some (‘the elect’), but not *all* sinners, to be saved from the condemnation we all justly deserve, but not because of any specific merits in those individuals chosen. The grace of God is shown by the fact that He proposes to give salvation to any of us — we are *all* guilty, and all deserve to suffer God’s judgement.
3. Christ died on the cross to atone only for the sins of the elect and to ensure their salvation.
4. When the Gospel is preached, it is effectively an invitation by God to all hearers to come to him for salvation. But the first point states that we do not ourselves have the power to respond to the invitation. However, in the case of those elected for salvation, the Holy Spirit enables them to see their sin and aids them to fight against it. Thus they are not primarily saved by their own efforts, but by those of the Holy Spirit.
5. Once the Holy Spirit has first acted on a member of the elect it then continually urges that person to persevere in fighting sin to the end of his earthly life.

Many scriptural references are cited by Particular Baptists in support of these beliefs.

Particular Baptists are ‘strict’ when they practise ‘restricted communion’. They believe that the privilege of communion should only be available to those adults who have made a confession of faith and subsequently undergone adult baptism as believers by total immersion. By contrast, many other Christian denominations are less restrictive. It may be recalled that some candidates for the pastorate at Carlton refused to accept it because the church was ‘*upon an open bottom*’, i.e., it did not practise restricted communion. However, from 1863, prior to the start of William Carpenter’s ministry, the Carlton Baptists appear to have been strict in this matter.

A note on Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834 - 1892) was a phenomenon of the religious revival in the latter half of the 19th century. Born in Kelvedon, Essex, he underwent a religious conversion in 1850 when a snowstorm forced him to take shelter in a Primitive Methodist chapel while a service was in progress. Later that year he joined the Baptist church at Newmarket, and was baptized in the river Lark at Isleham, a few miles further north. In 1851 he was ordained as pastor of the small Baptist church at Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, where he published his first literary work: a Gospel tract, written in 1853. From the beginning of his ministry, his style and ability were considered to be far above average. During his subsequent career he published no less than 3561 sermons, which have been collected and printed in 63 volumes. C. H. Spurgeon remains highly influential today among certain nonconformist denominations, who sometimes refer to him as "The Prince of Preachers".



The tabernacle which held 5,000 at each Sunday service preached by Spurgeon

In 1853 Spurgeon took up the pastorate at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, then housed in New Park Street Chapel in London. His arrival there led to such large congregations that his services eventually had to be moved to the Royal Surrey Gardens Music Hall, where up to 10,000 people assembled. The Metropolitan Tabernacle still flourishes, but is now based at a large chapel in the Elephant and Castle area. C. H. Spurgeon was pastor of this church for 38 years, during which time he created several related organizations and publications, including the Pastors' College where E. J. Silverton received his training. In 1862, C. H. Spurgeon himself preached in an orchard at Carlton to some 1,200 people, and the Church Book records that 950 cups were hired for tea afterwards!

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