

## Sundial Farmhouse Chapel

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The Chapel today



When it was in Use.



Notes from an address given on November 12th 1936 by the Rev. Reginald A. Loten in Marlborough Road Chapel, Banbury.

My Great Grandfather , William Gardner , was born at Balscote in the year 1796, his father being a yeoman farmer and a member of the Established Church. William Gardner married in 1818 and removed to the village of Horley and it was there through the influence of his wife he attended the services of the Methodists. There were four daughters of the marriage, Mrs Gardner (Burland), Mrs. Buller (Hanwell), Mrs. Ivens ( my Grandmother) the latter was left a widow whilst very young and later married Mr. Benjamin Stacey and Mrs. Timms (Wroxton).

In 1820 William Gardner removed to Wroxton and with his wife attended a small Independent Chapel and the Parish Church, during his early days in Wroxton he was laid aside by severe illness which made him seriously consider his spiritual condition and after much prayer he was "soundly converted". There were a few Methodists in Wroxton as early as 1820 and they were permitted to meet in the courtyard of my great Grandfather's house just behind the old chapel) and if wet were allowed in his kitchen; the old farm house, of course, at that time was thatched.

In 1822 very largely through his efforts and assisted by a friend who contributed £20, the little chapel that has been so long a sacred place, was built partly out of an old barn and stable, it was joined to the farm and because of this the Landlord claimed it as his property and thus the little Methodist chapel was never trust property. Methodists have been allowed to worship there ever since and they were grateful to Trinity College Oxford by whom the farm is owned for their kindness and interest.

That little Chapel – beautiful in its simplicity and simple in its beauty was to our forefathers "Bethel" – the House of God"

The records show that William Gardner was a Class Leader, Society Steward, Sunday School Superintendent and later a Circuit Steward of the Banbury Circuit.

If you examine the front of the book board in the little gallery of the chapel we have just closed you will find two or three "ink wells". I am told that the book board was originally a desk at which the boys and girls and probably older folk were taught to read and write.

## **Historical Notes.**

The gallery and book board referred to here are no longer there but presumed to be along the back wall of the Chapel just under the existing hat pegs. We do not know where the entrance was located but some where around the location of the current up and over door is likely, the stairs to the gallery went up from that corner. One or maybe the only supporting pillar of the gallery is now in the cellar and supports the sitting room floor in the house. The flue pipe from the stove can be seen just to the right of the window overlooking the courtyard.

The Chapel was closed Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> November 1935. The Goodman Chapel was opened Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 1935. It was designed by Architect: J. Mansell Jenkinson A.R.I.B.A. of Sheffield and built by local builders Cherry & Sons of Cropredy for a cost of around £1800.

The Chapel was apparently opened up again to make additional school room for evacuated children from London in the early years of the Second World War when Wroxton School was located on the Green in front of Sundial Farmhouse.

Trinity College Oxford sold the freehold of Sundial Farmhouse including the Chapel in 1961 to Mr. and Mrs Clyde Scott. They fitted the front garage and side door. We bought the property in 1978. The window frames have since been replaced in the original style and the ceiling removed for safety reasons and to carry out remedial work to the slate roof.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the closure was celebrated with a service in the old Chapel in November 1985. Tom Rigg who was born next door in Clematis Cottage took the service and there was a guest preacher, it was an extremely cold day.

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated in 1995 with a service in the courtyard; it was summertime so it is presumed to commemorate the foundation stone laying of the Goodman Chapel July 30<sup>th</sup> 1935.

The plaster work was renovated in March 2005 and the walls decorated as far as possible in the same colour scheme as the little Chapel. The text on the North wall is as original and has not been touched since before 1935.

“Jesus Christ the same today, and yesterday and for ever”

The house has been lived in by a succession of tenant farmers: Hayes, Gardner, Fox, Carpenter, Goodman and Leatherbarrow, some of the descendants of whom are still in the area. Most of the past tenants and members of their families are buried in the Parish Churchyard of All Saints Wroxton.