

The
History
of
HILLCLIFFE
BAPTIST
CHURCH

Stephen Kent

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Chapter One - INTRODUCTION



It is a privilege to be part of a community of Christian believers which has such a long and interesting history as Hillcliffe Baptist Church, Appleton, Warrington. This congregation has praised, worshipped and followed Jesus Christ for nearly four hundred years. During that time, it has experienced persecution, division and tragedy; but also, there has been the constant presence of God's loving grace and the joy of Christian fellowship, as it has travelled onwards towards the New Jerusalem.

It is at the very start of this book that I wish to record my gratitude to those who have contributed. First and foremost, to my wife Wanda for her gracious love and encouragement. Then to members, old and young, especially Joy, Steve, Stuart, John, Anne, Madan Paul, June and Graham. I have tried to present the historical facts as shown in the written evidence and for any errors or exclusions, I apologise.

In this work, I have not included footnotes on each page or references after each fact in the style of an academic thesis. Instead, I have tried to make the text readable in itself as a historical textbook and I have included a bibliography with relevant page numbers for those who are interested in researching where the facts and quotes have come from. With the probability that books will be viewed as rather old-fashioned by future generations, I have also included interesting websites for those wishing to find more background information. I have used the term 'Sunday School' to include Junior Church and I have used the modern spelling of 'Hillcliffe', except in quotes from historical sources. I have tried to keep the distinction between the gathered 'church' and the 'chapel' building to avoid confusion. The Scripture quoted is from the New International Version.

When one starts to think about the lives of the earliest Baptists in Warrington, it is tempting to imagine the romance around those first people who met in each other's houses and in a barn on the site of the present chapel building. But in reality, life for everyone in the early seventeenth century could be very harsh. The persecution of Baptists at that time was intense, and led to many imprisonments and deaths. The great conviction that the church members must have had, to risk these punishments for their faith, is truly inspirational. Even when the worst of the persecution had passed, the Civil War ravaged the country and allowed many religious sects to undermine societal stability. The discrimination against Baptists amounted to fines and imprisonment well into the eighteenth century and the people of Hillcliffe must have been strong in their faith, in order to come through these trials. The Rev. Robert Jones, wrote the following poem, one hundred years ago, which reminds us of the debt which we owe to our former brothers and sisters in Christ at Hillcliffe:-

Our fathers were high-minded men, who firmly kept the faith.
To freedom and to conscience true, in danger and in death.
Their zeal for Christ, their love of truth, made them all shame despise,
Nor should their deeds be e'er forgot; for noble men were they,
Who struggled hard for sacred rights; and bravely won the day.

The church's earliest document is a letter written in 1654, soon after the end of the Civil War, to the Baptist Church in Hexham. Legal documents in the mid-seventeenth century show the transfer of ownership of the church's land, and the accounts from the early eighteenth century give glimpses of the environment at Hillcliffe and the daily lives of the people. There is also a wealth of written material from the nineteenth century about the history of Hillcliffe, with numerous 'historians' recording or elaborating on the historical myths about the origin of the church. In the twentieth century the minutes of church meetings and the new medium of photography, provides a clear view of the life of the church. In the latter half of the twentieth century the history of the church is often within personal memory and I am grateful to many of the church members who have shared their memories and provided valuable artifacts to enhance this work. But of course, there will come a time when this history will seem ancient. One difficulty is to know how much of the early twenty-first century activities at Hillcliffe will be of interest to future generations. The internet information generally available should be a rich source for anyone in the future who is interested in the church of today. They can watch the You Tube online services recorded during the current pandemic lockdown and listen to the sermons on the website, if they wish to understand how we lead our Christian lives today. My hope is that future Hillcliffe church members will enjoy and appreciate their history and I pray that God will continue to bless His church.

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine,
according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in
Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen

Ephesians 3: 20-21

Chapter Two – BEFORE HILLCLIFFE’S RECORDED HISTORY

The name Hillcliffe describes the place on the side of a hill with two peaks- a Clift Hill or Hill Clift. The site on which the Baptist Chapel and burial ground stands is in the area of Appleton, which is called Appleton cum Hull in the ancient texts. It is two miles south of Warrington town centre. It is one Cheshire acre of land which is equivalent to 2.12 standard acres. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acre_\(Cheshire\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acre_(Cheshire))

The history starts with consideration of what defines a Baptist Church. This is open to some discussion, but generally, it is a church which practices adult believers’ baptism by total immersion and which believes in the accountability of each person before God; the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice; salvation through faith alone; and congregational church government under the guidance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptists>

Adult believers’ baptism had been the normal practice in the early church of Christ, but in the 3rd century AD, Cyprian, a bishop in North Africa, promoted infant baptism in the Catholic Church. Those who continued adult believers’ baptism were persecuted as heretics. Tracing the Baptist movement back through groups of Christians such as Lollards, Waldensians, Mennonites <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mennonites> and other groups who practised adult baptism, does not allow a direct continuity between the early church of 1st century AD and the 21st century Baptist Church. The continuity of this one aspect of church practice and belief, does not mean that there is development of one group into another in a direct lineage to the present day. However, this observation has not stopped some American Baptist Churches such as Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Mississippi and Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, trying to trace their history back to the church in Jerusalem over 2000 years ago, through Hillcliffe. They state that ‘Elder Thomas Griffith from Hillcliff Baptist Church organised the Welsh Tract Baptist Church in 1701’, and this church founded a church in Virginia which was the origin of many American churches. <http://www.antiochmbc-tn.com/home/historyofourchurch.html> Other churches claim that Mr H Roller, a member from Hillcliffe, attended the Philadelphia Baptist Association which was founded in 1707. From this Association many Baptist churches in America have their origin. They quote Hillcliffe as a vital link in the chain because of the myth that the church was founded by the Lollards in the fourteenth century and thence a direct link can be traced to the early (1st century AD) church. <https://www.facebook.com/BishopRojac/posts/the-hill-cliffe-baptist-church-of-the-lord-jesus-christ-that-still-exist-until-n/2178497865742455/> There is no evidence from primary sources or Hillcliffe’s archives for any of these claims.

James Kenworthy, in his ‘History of the Baptist Church at Hillcliffe’, published around 1900, tried to trace the church’s origin back to a time before the Reformation, based on some very old gravestones in the burial ground. The validity of this claim is seriously questioned when the evidence is critically examined. The unsubstantiated statement by the great Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon, that Hillcliffe dates back to 1523 may also seem unacceptable when one realises that the Reformation had hardly begun at that date. However, in a sense, there is some justification in this claim. For it was about this time that the belief in the importance of adult believers’ baptism, as opposed to infant ‘sprinkling’, re-emerged in the Christian church.

The Anabaptists in Switzerland

In the early sixteenth century, the Reformation led by Martin Luther in Germany, highlighted the corruption in the Catholic Church and attempted to reform Christian beliefs and practices. However, the Protestant churches were still performing infant baptism and groups like the Waldensians and Lollards, who practised adult believers' baptism were persecuted from all sides. On 17th January 1525, Konrad Grebel and Huldrych Zwingli, two of the leaders of the Reformed movement in Switzerland, held a public debate about baptism. The Zurich city council ruled with Zwingli and decreed that all parents who had not had their children baptised, must do so within a week or face banishment from the city. As a reaction to this, Grebel baptized George Blaurock who then baptised other adult believers, 'as Jesus had commanded'. This marked the start of the Anabaptist movement. Grebel and the young reformers Simon Stumpf and Felix Manz, formulated a complete program of reform, based on their understanding of the New Testament, and in particular the life and teachings of Christ.

The subsequent persecution of the Anabaptists was severe. In 1529 the Second Diet of Spire decreed 'that every Anabaptist of either sex should be put to death by fire, sword, or some other way'. In the German city of Munster, one of the priests, Bernt Rothmann began an Anabaptist movement in 1530 which took control of the city by 1533. Jan Mattys then became leader and led a purge of the 'ungodly' from the city. Munster was then besieged by forces led by Bishop Franz von Waldeck who had the support of both Catholic and Protestant leaders. On 5th April Mattys was killed and John of Leiden took over as leader and organised the city into a military camp. There were stories of him becoming dictatorial and arguing, from Biblical precedent, that polygamy was lawful. According to his enemies, he married 17 wives and eliminated anyone who opposed him. He declared himself the new King David of Zion and sat on a throne in the main square wearing fine regal clothes. However, disease and famine ravaged the city and on 24th July 1535 the city was betrayed and taken by the besieging forces. Approximately 4000 Munsterites were slaughtered. This marked the end of the Anabaptist movement as such, but the name lived on for more than 100 years as a term of abuse against Baptists. Despite this disastrous outcome at Munster, it could be argued that in a spiritual sense, the origin of Hillcliffe Baptist Church is from the Anabaptist movement originating at the events in Zurich in 1525.

The Anabaptists in England

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the civil records known as the *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic* show that, shortly after King Henry VIII separated from the Catholic Church and established his Church of England, he was greatly concerned regarding dissenters in England who were identified as Anabaptists. There is an entry on 25th January 1546 regarding the transportation of German troops into England to assist in the defence against an attack by France. The record refers to a fear of importing Anabaptists into England with these troops.

The records show that ‘Anabaptists’ were plentiful in England at that time, despite Henry having proclaimed ten articles, in 1536, denouncing heretics. These articles singled out ‘the error of the Anabaptists regarding the baptism of children’, for special condemnation. In 1538, Henry appointed a commission that began an inquisition resulting in the burning of four Dutch Anabaptists at Paul's Cross and two at Smithfield. Henry did not consider Anabaptists merely a minor threat to religious life in England; he considered them a significant threat to his newly formed church.

During the reign of Edward VI, there was continuing concern with the presence of ‘Anabaptists’ in the nation. Edward lived less than seven years beyond his coronation (1547-1553), but records again show the State’s desire to deal with Anabaptist dissenters. The Anabaptists and other dissenters were despised by the State and by the appointed leaders of the national church. It is likely that the communities of believers who were later to form the English Baptists were strongly influenced by these Anabaptist groups.

Queen Mary, Henry VIII's eldest daughter, who followed Edward to the throne, sought to restore Catholicism as the state religion of England. It is a matter of public record that many Anabaptists and other dissenters were martyred during her reign.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Protestant_martyrs_of_the_English_Reformation

In the *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, 1560, during the reign of Elizabeth I, there was a proclamation against ‘Anabaptists and others of dangerous and pernicious opinions’, coming into England from abroad. It is not known how many Anabaptists there were in England prior to 1550 but the estimate is that there were fifty thousand by 1573. In the 1620s the movement calling themselves ‘Baptists’ became evident in London. Many of them tried to dissociate themselves from the stigma of being called Anabaptists. However, Hillcliffe’s deeds of 1663 still refers to the church as ‘those people which are commonly called Anabaptists’.

In 1641 the persecuting courts of the High Commission and Star Chamber <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/court-star-chamber-records-1485-1642/> were abolished and the Baptists, who had been forced to conceal their existence, then started to preach their doctrine boldly. However, these beliefs must have been well established amongst groups of worshippers for many years previously. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that Hillcliffe church, as a group of people meeting together for thanksgiving, praise and prayer, who shared the belief in Baptist principles, began many years before the first written evidence in 1654.

Early English Baptists

In the sixteenth century, after the turbulence of the Reformation in England, many Christians demanded reform in the church. The translation of the Bible into English by William Tyndale in 1526 allowed the ordinary person to read the Word of God. Lay people wanted more participation in the running of their church. This resulted in some groups separating from the Church of England. Most of the ‘Separatists’ were frustrated Puritans who had given up hope of reforming the church from within. By 1600, there were already several of these congregations in England. A Puritan minister named John Smyth, led a congregation in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire which was forced to flee to Amsterdam in 1608. There, John Smyth baptised himself by affusion before baptising his friend Thomas Helwys and a group

of others. By this act they broke from the other Separatists to form the first English Baptist church. In February 1610 John Smyth and thirty-one others decided to join the Mennonites in Amsterdam. Thomas Helwys and the rest, chose to form a separate church and in 1612, Helwys decided that it was his duty to return to England and he and a number of others established the first Baptist congregation on English soil at Spitalfields, London. That year he published 'A Short Declaration on the Mystery of Iniquity' which pleaded for religious tolerance. Despite this, he was imprisoned in Newgate Prison, where he died some time before April 1616.

During the seventeenth century the development of the early Baptist churches was quite fluid but there were two main strands, known as General Baptists and Particular Baptists.

The early General Baptists of Spitalfields believed that Jesus died for all people, and that whoever believed in Him would be saved. The Particular Baptists came into existence a generation later. They were deeply influenced by the teaching of John Calvin and believed that Christ died only for a particular group, 'the elect'. It is suggested that the earliest Particular Baptist church was at Southwark in 1616 and is named the JLJ church after its first three pastors, Henry Jacob, John Lathropp and Henry Jessey. From this came the first London Confession of the Seven Particular Baptist Churches in 1644. Ten years later, there is irrefutable evidence that there was a Particular Baptist Church in Warrington and therefore, even if some of the claims about the origin of the church are only myths, Hillcliffe, as the Warrington church became, was one of the earliest Baptist churches in England.

When all the people were being baptised, Jesus was baptised too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Luke 3: 21-22

Chapter Three - EARLY HILLCLIFFE HISTORY

Date of Origin

There is considerable debate about the date when Hillcliffe church was founded. It is probable that the first congregation of Baptists worshipped together in Warrington in the mid seventeenth century and there is evidence of their existence from a letter written to the Baptist church in Hexham in 1654 (Appendix One). However, there is no historical evidence to show how many years before this date the church community first started to meet and pray in each other's houses. Many tantalising statements are in the historical textbooks, such as claims that 'it has been affirmed that Hill Cliffe dipped before 1641'. However, the primary evidence is absent. Some nineteenth century historians attempted to date the origin of the church three centuries earlier. The date often quoted is 1357, based on a gravestone in the burial ground. However, the authenticity of this is seriously questioned, as it predates the Reformation and has the date in Arabic rather than Roman numerals.

The date of origin of 1522, suggested by other historians, again relies on a gravestone inscription. This has been quoted repeatedly (<http://www.ebenezeroldhill.org.uk/history.html>) but there are hints that many of the historians thought the 1522 date unlikely. They pointed out that the church must have been the only Nonconformist chapel in Cheshire to escape demolition after Bishop Sheldon's order in the 1660s that 'Nonconformity must be stamped out at all hazards, and that not one stone should be left upon another of their little temples.' Photographic evidence now shows that the 1522 gravestone was a fraud.

Some writers trace the founding of Hillcliffe to John Wigan, who was Colonel of the Guards in Cromwell's army and prominent in the Baptist church in Manchester. Two of his daughters married men associated with the Warrington Baptists and his name appears as a witness on early Hillcliffe documents. On 10th June 1658, William Morris married Lydia, daughter of John Wigan. His occupation was recorded as 'Clerke' and he was called a gentleman of Grappenhall. His will of December 25th 1662 gives him the degree of Master of Arts and it is suggested that he may have been educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. On 2nd February 1661, he granted a lease of land at Hillcliffe to Peter Daintith who sub-let the land to Peter Clare on 3rd June, 1663. On 23rd September, 1663, John Morris, William's son, granted the following reversion. On the falling of the lives of the three original lessees the ground was to be: 'used and employed and shall continue remayne and bee for the use of a Buriall place for all such person and persons and those people which are commonly called Anabaptists with such other of the Congregationall people way, or persons as shall desire to bury their dead there being in the said Counties of Cheshire and Lancashire, or either of them for ever . . . and concerning the house, housing and building upon the land it was declared that the same be converted to such use and uses as by the said Thomas Millington and William Rowlinson and their heirs should be thought meet for time to time for ever' The trust deed was signed by, among others, John Wigan. (Appendix Two).

Rev. Robert Jones, who was pastor from 1918 to 1924 started a heated debate with a local historian, Arthur Mounfield over the date of Hillcliffe's foundation. (Appendix Three) Rev. Jones stated that 'the church dates back to 1649 and there has been much hear-say about earlier dates'. He writes in his own hand 'An amazing and evil work has no doubt been

perpetrated on several of the gravestones with the intention of making Hill Cliffe to appear more ancient than it is - on one of the stones 1714 has been altered to 1522; on another 1711 to 1311; and on another 1692 to 1622. The evidence ... may prevent those interested, being caught by romancing statements as to the antiquity of Hill Cliffe. But let not this statement lead anyone to overlook the fact that in the latter half of the seventeenth century Baptists suffered persecutions and fines before the Bishop's Court'.

The other extreme view of Hillcliffe's antiquity is Arthur Mounfield's statement that there is no mention of a chapel until after the Toleration Act (1689), when 'on 17th April 1694 they registered a new building at Hillcliffe'. Mounfield cites four historical facts based on an article in the Society of Antiquaries, June 1877. Firstly, that Sir Peter Leycaster's history of Bucklow Hundred of 1666, published in 1673, makes no mention of a chapel in Appleton. However there is documentary evidence of the graveyard in 1663 and most historians accept that there was a chapel/barn used for worship on the present site at that time and that this was enlarged (and registered) in 1694. The fact that the chapel was not mentioned in early texts does not prove that the church did not exist.

Secondly, Mounfield states that there is no record of a licence for Hillcliffe chapel among the Nonconformist chapels in Cheshire in 1672. However, the church in Warrington, with a barn and burial ground at Hillcliffe, may have been registered as being in Lancashire. The diary of Rev. Henry Maurice in 1672 records that he met Thomas Lowe (grave 22) and prayed with William Batho (grave 6), both of whom are buried at Hillcliffe. Maurice also wrote 'I found the Presbyterians & Baptists at Warrington very strange to one another', showing that, although unfriendly to fellow Christians, the Baptists were a recognised congregation in 1672.

Thirdly, Mounfield maintains that the oldest visible gravestone is dated 1676. Today the oldest gravestone visible is dated 1766 and it is not thought appropriate to dig up old stones to examine their dates, although Rev. Jones tried to do this in the early twentieth century. He wrote 'we have probed with a sharp pointed iron rod, to ascertain whether there are gravestones which had been covered over with soil and sod'. Most historians accept that, although not visible today, the earliest gravestone was to Maria Heslop in 1664.

Lastly, Mounfield states that in the book 'Nonconformity in Cheshire', published 1866, the first minister at Hillcliffe was recorded as Francis Turner in 1718. William Urwick in 'Nonconformity in Cheshire' did mention Rev. Francis Turner as pastor but he also stated the tradition that Mr Weyerburton, who died in 1594, was the first pastor.

In conclusion, the evidence of the letter to Hexham proves the existence of the Baptist congregation in Warrington in 1654. In a time of persecution this congregation may have existed without any historical record for many years previously. It is reasonable to accept that this congregation was synonymous with Hillcliffe where the Baptist burial ground was created and a barn was used as a meeting house in 1663.

Myths and Fables

Some of the early Hillcliffe fables quoted by historians are very questionable. For example, Kenworthy put forward the idea that there were martyrs from Hillcliffe in the reign of Queen Mary and he attempted to link Roger Holland, martyred in London in 1558, with the church. For the story of Roger Holland see <https://www.biblestudytools.com/history/foxs-book-of-martyrs/the-story-of-roger-holland.html> Kenworthy maintained that the family gave its name to Upholland. However, Upholland is mentioned in the Doomsday book and it is probable that the family derived its name from the town, and not vice-versa. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Up_Holland

Two of the signatories to the letter of 1654 were named Holland but that was almost a century later, and the probability 'of his (Roger Holland) having been a Hill Cliffe Baptist, perhaps minister there' as Kenworthy declared, is very unlikely.

Some historians created romance about the situation chosen for the early chapel building and burial ground. The idea of a secluded spot which was 'removed from all public roads, enclosed by a dense wood, admirably suited for an illegal conventicle' is clearly fanciful. In fact, Hillcliffe chapel is just over a quarter of a mile from the main road to London, heading south from Warrington and is on the side of a hill with a beautiful view over the Mersey valley towards the Pennines. This position makes it conspicuous rather than hiding it in the depths of the countryside. Another tradition is that the church was situated near the county boundary so that worshippers could cross the Mersey to avoid persecution by the county authorities, 'as a Lancashire writ could not be served in Cheshire, nor a Cheshire writ in Lancashire, the Cheshire Baptists often worshipped at Warrington (Roe Buck Yard Meeting House in Bridge Street) and the Lancashire Baptists at Hill Cliffe' (Kenworthy). However, by the mid-sixteenth century the Stanley family was the most important landowner in Lancashire and Cheshire. The Stanleys held the lieutenancy of Lancashire and Cheshire almost continuously between 1551 and 1640. Although lieutenants initially raised soldiers for the king, they were soon given other important duties, one of which was the enforcement of the royal religious policy. Therefore, there seems to have been no obstacle to the lieutenant arresting Baptists in either Cheshire or Lancashire if he could find them. Later the local authority in religious matters was the Bishop of Chester who held courts within the diocese which fined and excommunicated dissenters. His authority extended to the Ribble valley and therefore there was no boundary at the Mersey that could protect Baptists from persecution.

To establish Hillcliffe's existence before 1620, Kenworthy proposed that Mr Weyerburton, a member of the Warburton family of Arley Hall, was the first minister. Apparently, this was discovered from examining the deeds of the Warburton estate. Some of these deeds are available today (<https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/ffd23f7e-ad80-3f1f-9906-557915c67bef>) but there is no mention of any Baptist connection. In fact, John Warburton (1520-1575) was knighted at the coronation of Queen Mary suggesting that he was acceptable as a Catholic, and the sixteenth century Warburtons were generally married and buried at the Anglican church of St Mary and All Saints, Great Budworth.

(<https://warburton.one-name.net/clandocs/ArleyClan.pdf>) Research into the history of Appleton shows that from the time of the Norman Conquest it was held by Osbern Fitz Tezzon, ancestor of the Boydells of Dodleston. In the reign of Henry III. Appleton, together with its hamlets of Hull (Hillcliffe) and Stockton, was the property of Geoffrey Dutton, from

whom it descended to the Warburtons of Arley. Perhaps this explains the basis of Kenworthy's claim that Mr Weyerburton was the first minister of the church.

Kenworthy then claimed that Mr Dainteth was the next minister, but other than a local family and the name of their farm, existing to the present day, there is no evidence for this. And so we come to Thomas Slater Layland buried in the graveyard 'a minister of the Gospel' on his tombstone dated 1602. One would have thought that historians would have verified and highlighted this fact, but outside Kenworthy it is not mentioned. There is however a record of gravestones to William and Daniel Slater of Leyland in February 1725, which may explain Kenworthy's confusion.

Many of the 'traditions' surrounding Hillcliffe originate from William Stokes who, from 1850 onwards, 'started conjectures which have gradually been accepted as true history'.

Intriguing Remains

There is today a cellar cut into the sandstone measuring about four yards long, three yards wide and two yards deep. The tradition in the church is that this is where worshippers hid from the authorities in the days of Baptist persecution. The idea is intriguing but probably romanticised. The claim that there were escape tunnels from the cellar is highly unlikely. Certainly, no evidence of any tunnels exists today. Likewise, the tradition that there was a trap door from the old oak pulpit into the cellar for the preacher to escape, is also likely to be a myth.

Dipping Brook

Other traditions have more credibility. The tradition that the early church baptised converts in the Lower Walton stream and Dipping Brook (OS Grid Reference SJ627838), which can still be visited, seems likely to be true. The Cheshire Village Memories of 1952 stated that 'Under the roadway known as Cann Lane runs Dipping Brook in which according to some of the older residents, baptismal immersions took place; they point to the fact that large stones used to dam the brook still lie near'.

There is evidence that members of Hillcliffe were baptised at Rhual, near Mold in North Wales in the seventeenth century. This would have required a journey of over thirty miles. In the eighteenth century, when John Thompson was minister, baptisms took place in the River Mersey under the cover of darkness. This shows that it was dangerous to undergo adult believers' baptism and our church ancestors had to suffer considerable hardship to become members at Hillcliffe.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6: 33

Chapter Four- EVANGELISM

All the evidence shows that throughout its history Hillcliffe has had a strong evangelical heart. This has been demonstrated by the numerous churches that Hillcliffe supported in the seventeenth century. This evangelical calling continues in the twenty-first century with its popular Sunday School; its contribution to local Christian initiatives such as Youth for Christ, Active Hope and the Broomfield Youth Project; and its support of the Baptist Missionary Society and other international missionary organisations.

The church ‘plants’ in the seventeenth century included Newton, Warrington and Liverpool in Lancashire; Nantwich, Middlewich, Cherry Lane (Lymm), Brassey Green (Tarpoley), [Great] Warford (Alderley Edge), Knutsford, Bickerton, Milton (Acton Bridge), Kingsley and Chester in Cheshire. One feature of the church at that time is how far people travelled to worship at Hillcliffe despite difficult conditions and natural obstacles. Cheshire Village Memorials reported that ‘Great-great-grandparents of present Appleton villagers once lived at Bold and crossed the Mersey at Moss Side, Moore in their own boat to worship at Hill Cliffe Chapel where Cromwell once attended. When the family at last came to live in Cheshire the boat, which Sunday after Sunday had served so well, was converted into a china cupboard and is still in the hands of the same family’. Many of the ‘plants’ may have been house groups or small village Baptist communities but Liverpool; Little Leigh; [Great] Warford; Nantwich; Brassey Green; Milton and Cherry Lane were numerous enough to build their own chapels. The descendants of the Liverpool; Little Leigh; Nantwich and [Great] Warford churches still worship to this day.



Byrom St Chapel



Little Leigh



Nantwich



[Great] Warford

Liverpool Baptist Church

In the eighteenth century, the Baptist churches of Liverpool looked to Hillcliffe as their mother church. The main evangelist to Liverpool was Daniel Fabius. His parents, Ebenezer, a Dutch immigrant, and Hannah were members at Hillcliffe and are buried there (Graves 18 and 24). Daniel moved to Everton in 1700 at the age of eighteen, and is described in the Municipal Records as “Daniel Fabyus, alias Bean, of Low Hill, Chymist”.

Fabius was given permission to use his house for religious worship. A document in 1700 stated that ‘these are to certify whom it may concern that the House of Daniel Fabius, practizer(sic) in physic, situate in Everton, in the county of Lancashire, now certified to this court for a meeting-place for a congregation of Protestants, dissenting from the Church of England, for exercise of their religious worship, it is by this court recorded as such, pursuant

to an Act of Parliament in that case made and provided. Given under my hand in open court of Quarter Sessions, holden at Manchester 25th of July, 1700’.

Dr Fabius and his sister Hannah built a chapel of wood in their garden and gave the Baptists forever the ‘piece of land adjoining the chapel-field as a burying-place’. The Fabius chapel was built on the site and was still active in 1944. The ‘burying-place’ became The Necropolis Cemetery, opened from 1825 to 1898, and is now Grant Gardens.

<https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/secret-80000-bodies-buried-right-14874917>

In the year 1700, Mr Francis Turner, then pastor of Hillcliffe, came to preach and administer the ordinances at Lowhill. This was a return journey of over forty miles on horseback, the hire of which is recorded in the church accounts as 2s 6d.

Everton was then a rural, sparsely populated district, and Fabius found it necessary to take a house in the centre of Liverpool for the successful practice of his profession. The Town Books in 1710, have this memorandum: “The House at the bottom of James Street, wherein Daniel Fabyus lives is recorded for a meeting house for Protestant Dissenters” On July 3 1714 the church at Hillcliffe agreed that the branch at Liverpool should be considered as a separate church under the ministry of Mr Peter Davenport. The memorandum of agreement was drawn up, probably by Mr Turner (Appendix Four). Francis Turner’s son, John, moved as minister from [Great]Warford to the Liverpool chapel in 1730.

Daniel Fabius died at the age of 37 and was interred in the burial ground at Everton Road on 12th April 1718.

The church then moved to a new building in Byrom Street, Liverpool in 1729 and in 1789 to a larger place in same street. However, the church was not without its conflicts as the following report demonstrates- ‘Having commenced to preach at a very youthful age, a Mr Johnson, after some peripatetic labours, was called from Hillcliffe in 1741 to become the minister of the Byrom Street Baptist Chapel, Liverpool but in consequence of the differences which arose concerning his “views”, a separation took place. His followers erected another chapel for him in 1750, in Stanley St. where he preached until his death’.

The members of Byrom Street Chapel opened their own meeting house on Lime Street in 1803. This was taken down in 1844 by which time they were prosperous enough to move to Myrtle Street. Nothing today remains of Myrtle Street Baptist Chapel, except the statue of Hugh Stowell Brown who began his ministry there as a young and inexperienced pastor in 1847. He became an important figure in Liverpool and his statue remains in Hope Street to this day. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Stowell_Brown

Little Leigh Baptist Church

It is not recorded when Little Leigh became a separate church but a chapel is mentioned there in 1666. The present chapel was built in 1829. The connection to Hillcliffe evidently continued at that time for it was ‘after collecting funds in Liverpool for Little Leigh’s church that Hillcliffe’s pastor, Mr James Bradford died in 1830’. On Sunday 11th October 1840 Little Leigh Baptist Chapel was re-opened after considerable enlargement. On that day ‘two sermons were preached by Rev. A Kenworthy, [pastor at Hillcliffe], and the sum of £20

collected'. The church has continued to worship to this day and they claim that one of their ministers, Rev. Thomas Fownes Smith, was the inspiration for the folk song 'The Farmer's Boy'. Rev. Smith is said to have ministered at Little Leigh for over thirty years.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Leigh

Nantwich Baptist Church

The eighteenth-century historians agreed that Hillcliffe originated the church at Nantwich. The first church building there appears to have been at Barker Street, founded in 1700. It was there that the widow of the great poet John Milton spent the remainder of her days and was buried in 1727. Elizabeth Milton was 'an out-and-out Baptist in principle and practice. From her the champion of religious liberty may have derived some of his inspiration. No writer has more correctly set forth the faith as Baptists hold it, than did the husband of Mrs Milton, member of the Nantwich Baptist Church.' Recently the Nantwich Baptist church joined with the United Reformed church to form Market Street Church. <https://marketstreetchurch.co.uk/>

[Great] Warford Baptist Church

Warford's website claims that it was 'one of the early Baptist Chapels in Cheshire, arising soon after the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1662 (<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp364-370>), though tradition alleges that it was founded originally by some Cromwellian soldiers, some years earlier'. Warford's history states that the members of the Baptist Church at Hillcliffe, 'took a lively interest in the little church at Warford, which, like their own, had arisen in troublesome times; and it was one of the Hillcliffe members, Mr John Rylance, who granted them a lease of part of a field called the Intack, on which were a cottage and barn, on a mere nominal ground rent, for the term of a thousand years, paying two shillings at the feast of the Annunciation'.

Warford also had the tradition that their original meeting house at Norbury House straddled the parish boundary and 'when officials from one area came to break up the illegal assembly, the congregation would quickly disperse to the parish next door until they were gone'

A letter written in 1757, shows that two members of the church at Hillcliffe were transferred to Warford; one of whom, Mr John Taylor, was ordained pastor of the church. The details in Warford's church history are slightly different. There, it is suggested that three members transferred in 1752.(Appendix Five) http://www.warfordhistory.co.uk/?page_id=7

It is clear from Hillcliffe's archives, that Warford was a small congregation dependent on its support, for which it paid a quarterly due. The plaque on the wall imprinted 'No THE 4, 1712', might refer to it being the fourth of Hillcliffe's 'quarters'. Like Hillcliffe's other 'quarters', it would have looked on Hillcliffe as its mother church and the record shows that it received a grant of land; transfer of members and fund-raising from Hillcliffe for a hundred years. There is no record of when it became a separate church.

Milton Baptist Church

Milton Baptist Church was established through the family of Rev. John Swinton whose daughter Elizabeth attended Hillcliffe from her infancy until she became infirm in her nineties. She married William Hough, a farmer and deacon at Hillcliffe and they had ten children. Elizabeth is described in her obituary as ‘a woman of sterling qualities, striking individuality and sternly loyal to the truth’. She was said to ‘have done more than anyone else to keep the fire burning upon the altar through dark and troubled periods in the history of such an ancient church’. The Hough’s descendants farmed near Acton Bridge and established a church at Onston (later Milton) whose chapel was built in 1899. Preachers from Hillcliffe continued to support Milton church, and their last pastor was a deacon from Hillcliffe, who retired in 2012 when the church closed.



Milton



Brassey Green



Cherry Lane

John and Marjorie Newton



Rev. John Newton Celebrates 100 years

Reverend John Newton was born on 19th April 1909 in Bromyard, Herefordshire, the youngest of four children. His father was a carpenter who restored antiques. When John was eight years old, the family moved to Exeter where John attended the St John’s Hospital school. He was involved with youth work at South Street Baptist Church which had strong links with mission in China. After leaving school John worked in a clothes shop.

Unfortunately, John had a serious motorbike accident but during a long convalescence he felt that this was- ‘God’s wake-up call’. He felt called to enlist with the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), who arranged for him to attend Spurgeon’s Bible College in London.

In 1933 he and three fellow students travelled to London Rd Baptist Church in Portsmouth to present a nine-day Evangelistic Campaign. John took Gospel Services and Divine worship but was particularly prominent in leading the Sunday School and running ‘Children’s Happy Hour’ every weekday evening.

During his ministry training he spent the summer holidays running the ‘Sand Services’ on the beach at Ramsgate, part of the National Sunday School Union. It was here that he met Marjorie who later became his wife.

After his training at Spurgeon’s, John was sent out to Shandong in China in 1936 and Marjorie, now his fiancée, joined him the following year. They were married in February 1938.

John taught English, New Testament and Sports at the Christian University of Cheeloo (Tsinan) and during this time he was active in preaching the Gospel in the local villages.

When the Japanese invaded on 8th December 1941 the lives of foreigners in China were changed for ever. Betty Barr, a child in Shanghai at the time, recorded that ‘she and her family were told to assemble at the Columbia Country Club from where the Expats were taken in ten red buses to the camp at Lunghwa’. John and Marjorie were among this group who would spend the next three and a half years at the ‘Lunghwa Civilian Assembly Centre’. This was one of the largest camps in China with approximately 2000 men, women and children internees. A later historian of the period, Greg Lech, emphasised how the captives rose to meet the challenges of survival. They educated the children; organised kitchens and a hospital; and started libraries. John and Marjorie would have been a positive blessing in the camp, with their faith in a loving God. John worked initially in the cook house, in order, he said, that he and Marjorie would always have something to eat! He also worked in the school and organised an Ecumenical Sunday School for the 300 children in the camp.

Betty Barr praised the school which they called the Lunghwa Academy. The internees put on parties; organised lectures; sports; bridge games and entertainments. Of course, there were hardships, especially food and water shortages. John commented that it taught everyone to be frugal. They even had to ration toilet paper. According to John this was called ‘the scroll from the Emperor of Japan’. There were also outbreaks of malaria and other illnesses. However, everyone was given employment; even the children had jobs during the summer months.



Kitchen Staff



Sunday School

The camp commandant, Mr Hayashi, was by all accounts a very humane person with a liking for English people. He had been a diplomat in London and had been interred at the beginning of the war. Therefore, he had some sympathy with the internees’ plight. The camp guards were mainly Koreans and they could be ‘a bit fierce’. There were roll-calls every morning and evening and sometimes even during the night. Betty Barr witnessed an episode when an extra roll-call was announced and the children in one family did not get to the door in time. The guard then struck the father in the face. There were two or three ‘escapes’ from the camp

and when this happened the guards treated those remaining harshly. On one occasion a man was tied to the goal posts on the football pitch and beaten. Everyone then rushed to the scene and a minor riot ensued.

A teenage internee, John Bruce, reported that 'competition for space in the dormitories was tough.' The guards were Japanese ex-consulate police rather than soldiers, and they often curbed rule-breaking with 'a few cracks round the head'.

James Ballard, who was also interred in the camp when he was 13 years old, wrote a novel called 'Empire of the Sun', set in Lunghwa. 'Meals were not a highlight' he wrote. 'Early on we had stew mixed with rice. Some of the meat was from greyhounds from the stadium in Shanghai where they had all been killed. In the last 18 months of the war our rations fell. We sat... pushing what my mother called 'the weevils' to the rim of our plates of congee (rice gruel). My father decided we should eat them as we needed the protein. They were small white slugs and perhaps maggots'. Ballard's novel was made into a film by Steven Spielberg in 1987.

Conditions in the internment camps deteriorated by 1945 'but the Japanese were determined to hold on. With food and fuel almost non-existent, the winter had exhausted the internees' material, physical and mental reserves. Though none doubted an eventual Allied victory, not all were certain they would be alive to see it', wrote Greg Lech.

In early August, Lunghwa internees listening on a hidden radio heard news that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Japan. With Emperor Hirohito's announcement of Japan's surrender, OSS (US Office of Strategic Services) teams flew in to arrange desperately needed supplies and food.

At the end of the war John and Marjorie returned to England, in December 1945. Twelve months later they returned to Sian province but in 1948 civil war broke out in China. As the fighting came closer, John escorted Marjorie, their son David, and other Europeans by train to safety in Chengdu. He then faced a perilous four-day journey back in a Post Office van, and then an army fuel truck. He was asked if he would like to ride in the cab, but chose to travel with everyone else in the back of the truck. Travelling through mountainous country the lorry crashed, killing everyone in the cab and sixteen of the twenty-three passengers. John sustained a broken back and was robbed of all his possessions. By the grace of God, he was rescued by a Mennonite missionary who used a door as a stretcher to convey him to safety. He lay unconscious for a week and was told afterwards that a nurse passing through the mission had given him Penicillin which he believes saved his life. At that time there was a Mennonite mission at Shuanshipu, a district of Tianshui in the mountainous Feng County. After a month's convalescence John made the four-day journey back to Chengdu seated in a deck chair in an open topped jeep.

John and Marjorie returned to England in 1950 after 14 years of mission work in China. In 1951 John and his family, now with a second son Graham, went out to Malaysia to work in the Chinese education department in Alor Star, and then Penang. Being fluent in Chinese, John was able to help the people who had fled the war in China. He also helped to build a church in one village and established a creche for the children of rubber tappers in another. John was the liaison between the Malaysian government and the Christian Churches.

When he and Marjorie returned to England in 1965, he worked for the Bible Society and the YMCA in Wallingford in Oxfordshire and became pastor at Chipping Camden Baptist Church before becoming pastor at Hillcliffe in 1969. He retired in 1976 to Wallingford where he held the post of moderator pastor in the church at Cholsey until 1984 when he and Marjorie returned to Warrington. He celebrated his 100th birthday in 2009.

<https://www.warringtonguardian.co.uk/news/4307423.former-prisoner-of-war-turns-100/>

John had a passion for sports, especially tennis, in his youth. He loved music, especially Graham Kendrick's worship songs. 'I suppose I should say that Amazing Grace by my name-sake, should be my favourite but in fact it is 'I cannot tell why He whom Angels worship' by Dr W Y Fullerton' (No 381 in Baptist Praise and Worship). Dr Fullerton was the man who welcomed John to BMS in 1930. John's role model was William Carey who founded BMS, and translated the Bible into more than 30 different languages, including Chinese.

John wrote 'God has been with me -the great faithful and forgiving Father. This is our God! The Father of us all, who remains faithful and forgiving to all who turn to Him. In all I have done, mistakes were made and, in many ways, I erred, but all was ruled out as I came to God again and again. Every Communion Service was a cleansing, and the faithful God forgave and blessed.

His favourite Bible passage was Galatians 2: 20. 'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me' (New International Version).

Harry and Phyllis Aspinall

In 1962 Harry and Phyllis Aspinall were sent by a local Brethren Church as missionaries to India. They spent the first two years in Southern India learning Hindi but then Harry felt that certain Biblical texts were instructing them to go to the North. They travelled to the Punjab and joined the Brethren Believers' Assembly in Ludhiana. They lived a very humble, simple life with their children, in a small rented house. Harry used a bicycle to get around. They were very active in the work of the Lord, reaching out with the Gospel, through open air preaching and distributing tracts to people who had never heard the Good Word. Harry went out with the local brethren preaching the Gospel in local villages. He was a gifted and faithful man of God. The Lord also used him to teach and preach the word of God in the Assembly. 'He was an instrument in God's hands to spread the gospel of light in the darkness' said his brother in Christ, Madan Paul. The Assembly was able to buy a small piece of land and built a church building called "Bible Bhavan" which stands today to the glory of God. <https://www.biblebhavan.org/> Harry and Phyllis were supported by gifts from Warrington and on one occasion when Phyllis was expecting their first child, she was admitted to hospital as an emergency. Thankfully everything went well with her confinement and when the time came to pay the medical bill, a gift unexpectedly arrived from the Brethren for exactly the sum needed!

When Harry and Phyllis returned to Warrington in November 1972, Harry worked for Scripture Gift Mission, which aimed to publish Bibles and other Christian literature in many languages, throughout the world. They became members of Hillcliffe in 1997 and Harry provided the church with daily devotionals and Christian books. Phyllis was a house-group leader and much-loved member of the church.



Missionary Work in the Punjab, India

Doug and Joy Wood

When Doug retired in 1997 from running the local Christian Book Shop, he and Joy travelled to the Holy Land, initially to guide tour groups. But they were called to work at the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem and spent three months every year for twelve years ministering to pilgrims. The site was purchased in 1895 for £2000 after General Gordon identified 'Skull Hill' which is still recognizable today. Doug explained the significance of the garden in Christ's death and resurrection, and Joy worked in the gift shop and prepared communion for the visitors.



Doug, Joy and friends



Skull Hill



Garden Tomb

Paul and Ruth Roach

Paul's parents had a long attachment to Hillcliffe and he was very involved in the church from a young age. He met Ruth when they were both students in Wolverhampton.

Paul and Ruth answered God's call to go to Afghanistan in 2007. They initially spent time learning the local language and customs. Paul worked as finance director for a Christian charity providing Ophthalmic medical care in the remote villages. Before retiring in 2018 they also spent two years working in Delhi, India.



Missionary work in Afghanistan

Numerous members at Hillcliffe, especially amongst the young people, have worked in the mission field. Becky Pearce, who became a member following baptism in 1989, then studied nursing in Cardiff and went out to Nepal for ten years. Her parents, David and Margaret had been missionaries in the Congo. Another nurse, Alison Yarwood went to Fiji and Rachel Haig, who later became a Baptist minister in Bristol, spent time in El Salvador with BMS. David Newton, a member in 1989, spent many years working in water management in Africa and the Middle East.

Again I apologise to those not mentioned who have worked tirelessly to spread the Gospel abroad. The Lord will recognise them as his good and faithful servants. May countless others be inspired to offer sacrifices in time and energy in the future, to be Christ's evangelists.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Matthew 28: 18-20

Chapter Five – SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Pastors' Timeline as proposed by Kenworthy			New Pastors' Timeline (NK=Not Known)		
Name	Pastorate	Died	Name	Pastorate	Died
Mr Warburton	NK	1594			
Mr. Daintith	NK	NK	No evidence of a pastor prior to 1666		
Thomas Slater Layland	NK	1602			
Thomas Tillam	1645-1650	1674			
Thomas Lowe	1650-1668	1695			
John Evans	1666 or after to 1695	NK	Thomas Lowe	1666 or after-1695	1695

The claim by Kenworthy that Messrs Warburton, Daintith and Layland were pastors at Hillcliffe is very doubtful. The existing deeds from the Warburton family from Arley Hall do not contain any reference to a member of the family being a Baptist pastor. However, there is evidence that the land of Appleton upon which Hillcliffe stands was inherited by the Warburtons, which could explain Mr Kenworthy's claim.

There is a farm close to Hillcliffe called Daintith Farm and Peter Daintith leased the land from William Morris in 1660 and then subleased it to Peter Clare in 1663. It is suggested that a meeting-house was built and the burial ground established around this time.

Although Kenworthy claimed that a gravestone exists to Thomas Slater Layland dated 1602, this has not been identified by any other researcher. What is recorded are gravestones to William and Daniel Slater of Leyland in February 1725. In the seventeenth century the gravestones commonly stated the town where the deceased had lived. This practice suggests, as stated in the deed dated 23rd September 1663, that Hillcliffe burial ground was for all Baptists from the counties of Lancashire and Cheshire. It is unlikely that these people, who lived a considerable distance away, were part of the congregation at Hillcliffe.

Civil War

In 1643, parliamentarian forces under the command of Sir William Brereton advanced from Northwich to launch an attack on Warrington, the Lancashire headquarters of the royalist leader James Stanley, 7th Earl of Derby. Sir William's troops were routed at the "Battle of Stockton Heath". There is a local legend that Red Lane, on which Hillcliffe chapel stands, was named because of the soldiers' blood running down the hillside during the battle. Some historians claim 'that many of the parliamentarian soldiers were buried at Hill Cliffe'.



Oliver Cromwell



Civil War Soldiers



Hexham Abbey

In 1648, during the Second Civil War, Oliver Cromwell visited Lancashire and defeated the Scottish army at the Battle of Winwick. Dr Kendrick, a local historian, states that 'tradition further asserts, and with much probability, when the habits of the great soldier are considered, that Cromwell, during his brief stay in the town, attended worship in the ancient Baptist chapel at Hill Cliffe, and it is further said that one of his soldiers, a common occurrence during the Civil War, occupied the pulpit on the occasion'. This proposed 'royal' visit was romanticised with phrases like- 'The hard, wooden benches and the rush strewn floor were good enough for these soldier Christians. They were fighting the royal army to obtain for the people the liberty to worship God... in the orthodox hip-and thigh fashion, well flavoured with texts ingeniously applied, full of truth and rich in spiritual force, the military pulpit orator poured forth and delivered himself while preaching to the 'Lord Protector' and his Ironsides'. Some authors suggest that it was after the Battle of Winwick that some soldiers were buried at Hillcliffe but no gravestones have been found dated to this time, which is before the burial ground was established.

The question of whether Cromwell himself would have worshipped at Hillcliffe is interesting. Cromwell recorded how exhausted his soldiers were after the Battle of Winwick, such that they could not pursue the Duke of Hamilton's forces who were fleeing south.

https://www.gutenberg.org/files/57268/57268-h/57268-h.htm#Page_164

The battle occurred on a Saturday and Cromwell spent three days sorting out prisoners before rushing north to Scotland. He would undoubtedly have worshipped on the Sunday but his views of the Baptists are confused. He sympathised with all the Separatists and welcomed them into his army, while standing a little apart from every sect. Parliament had just published an ordinance against Baptists. (2nd May 1648) <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp1133-1136>

Tradition maintains that Cromwell stayed in a cottage opposite the Parish Church of St Elphin in Warrington and it seems most likely that he himself would have worshipped in an Anglican church on the day after the battle.

Therefore, whether Cromwell visited Hillcliffe cannot be answered but on the other hand it is very likely that some of his soldiers who were Baptists, would have attended, and the idea of a soldier preaching the sermon is very plausible. The Baptist soldiers at the time were evangelical and they frequently established Baptist churches wherever there was a garrison during the Civil War.

Research into Cromwell's regiments at the Battle of Red Bank, Winwick suggests three possible Baptist soldier chaplains who could have preached at Hillcliffe: Edward Harrison,

Thomas Smallwood and John Spencer. Of course there may have been many others but a brief summary of the Baptist army chaplains is as follows:-

- 1) Edward Harrison from Kent- educated at Jesus College, Cambridge- 'a minister in Colonel Harrison's regiment of horse 1647-1649'.
- 2) Thomas Smallwood from Sproston, Cheshire- educated St Mary's Hall, Oxford- 'in the regiment active in the Second Civil War contesting the advance of the Scots into England. He was a man of great physical strength, who as a chaplain in the army used to lift three pikes at once'.
- 3) John Spencer- Baptist preacher from 1639, 'distinguished himself by his great courage against Hamilton in 1648'. He may be the same Captain Spencer who, with Paul Hobson founded the Baptist church at Crutched Friars, London.

The most likely preacher would have been Thomas Smallwood as he was a local man. However, this is only conjecture. There is a tradition that some of Cromwell's army settled near Hillcliffe and strengthened the local church, especially during the time of persecution following the Restoration. Some historians suggest that Hillcliffe, along with [Great] Warford church, was founded by some of Cromwell's soldiers but none of the names of Cromwell's chaplains appears on the letter written by Hillcliffe in 1654. However, one signatory, William Booth is elsewhere referred to as a sergeant, showing that there was some military presence in the early church.

Thomas Tillam

In contrast with Kenworthy's proposed early pastors, there is good evidence that Thomas Tillam visited the Warrington Baptists in 1653 and probably even earlier. Tillam had travelled as a young man to America where he wrote a poem 'Upon the first sight of New England'. The recording of this famous poem confirms his visit in the year 1638. He then returned to England but there is no evidence that he fought in the Civil War. He was a prolific writer on religious matters in a time of great uncertainty and he also wrote some early church hymns. He appears next in the church of Morgan Llwyd in Wrexham in the late 1640s but left there under a cloud. He then preached at Chester/ Duckenfield. During this period, it is likely that he visited Warrington and it is possible that he met and married his wife, Jane, during this visit. The church treasurer wrote in the accounts in 1775 that 'Mr Tillam preached here in 1648 and Mrs Tillam was a native of this place'. In 1651 he went to Hexham to take up the post of lecturer at the abbey. There, he founded a Baptist church and Jane Tillam was accepted into membership on 21st July 1652. Whitley took this transfer of membership as the earliest irrefutable evidence of Hillcliffe's existence as a church.

The Hexham church records show that Tillam returned to Cheshire on a preaching tour in the summer of 1653 on his way to visit his sponsoring church at Coleman Street, London. This early Particular Baptist Church was led by a famous preacher named Hanserd Knollys https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanserd_Knollys. Although the Warrington Baptists were greatly impressed by Tillam's charismatic preaching, there is no evidence that they appointed him as their pastor. However, the church wrote a letter to Hexham church in June 1654. It seems reasonable to accept that the 'church in Cheshire' referred to by Hexham church, and the Warrington church that wrote to Hexham in 1654, was synonymous with Hillcliffe, because the same name (Millington) occurs as signatories in the Warrington letter and in early Hillcliffe documents.

A transcription of the Warrington letter reads as follows. (original text in Appendix One):

“DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD, OUR HOPE AND JOY,

The choicest graces and spiritual blessings, be multiplied and continually flowing into your souls, from that eternal fountain where refreshing streams of divine consolations have (through grace) been conveying unto us by his eminent (by us entirely affected) servant of Jesus Christ, who we trust, will be instrumental in the hand of our God, whom we serve, to carry on both you and us in our pilgrimage, in a progress of grace, so as, one day, he may present us with exceeding joy, one pure and spotless virgin, before our Redeemer, when he of whom the Lord has made such a blessed use, shall shine as a star in glory.

Precious brethren! That we faint not in this our journey, how necessary is it that our joint interest be mutually improved, at the throne of grace, on each other’s behalf, that in these dangerous declining times, when it is evident our grand adversary, perceiving his tottering kingdom, near a fall, is employing his utmost force and deepest subtlety to delude and draw poor souls from their profession.

We desire to magnify the name of our God, for that refreshment to our spirits, received by your sweet epistle, wherein does appear the steadfastness of your faith in Jesus Christ, in spite of all the malice manifested of your endeavours of your enemy and his instruments, some of whom have been busily employed in these parts, to the saddening of many, yet through mercy, we stand, to the praise, of the glory, of that grace, which we acknowledge our support.

We bless God, for the continual enlargement of your hearts, to the liberty of our dearly beloved brother’s stay with us, though God is pleased to order it now but short.

Brethren, we beseech you, pray for us, that the knowledge of Jesus Christ, may increase among us, that we may come to a more clear approbation of the great mystery ‘God in Christ and Christ in us’ united, and made one with him, by the eternal Spirit. Then shall we perfectly see, the tabernacle of God dwelling with men and have occasion (from such blessed communion) to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, when all doubts and distractions will be passed away; no night or cloud to impose between our souls, and the love of our precious Redeemer. Ah! This would be a precious pledge, or earnest, of that glorious condition, into which we shortly shall be translated, when we have a full enjoyment of him, whom now our souls are thirsting after, in unconceivable and eternal joy.

Peace be to all, with love and faith, from God our father and Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we are entirely your affectionate brethren.”

Will. Booth, Robt Millington, Tho. Holland

Peter Eaton, John Sproson, Chas. Holland,

John Tomleson, Tho. Follings. Ric. Amery

“Warrington June 26th, 1654”

It is generally accepted that ‘he of whom the Lord has made such a blessed use’ referred to Thomas Tillam. It is an interesting conjecture, but less likely, that this letter referred to another evangelist from Hexham, Hugh Heslop, who might have a claim to be Hillcliffe’s

first leader or 'pastor'. However it was customary in those days for a church to request permission, before appointing a member of another church as their pastor, and no such formal request exists in the Hexham archive. In support of Thomas Tillam being the 'dearly beloved brother' is the great impression that his charismatic preaching had on Hillcliffe. There is no mention elsewhere of Heslop's preaching skill. The letter mentions the 'eminent servant' as leading 'you and us in our pilgrimage' which fits with Tillam's role. There is no evidence of Heslop's leadership in the Hexham church except his signature on the letter from Hexham to Sir Thomas Liddell thanking him for supporting Elizabeth Heslop. The Warrington letter referred to 'our dearly beloved brother's stay.... now short' and Tillam's whole trip in the summer of 1653 was less than six weeks, including the time spent in London. Hugh Heslop on the other hand was sent out from Hexham on 23rd August 1653 and was back in Hexham to sign the letter on 11th September 1654. These dates fit in with the date that the Warrington letter was written. This was almost a year after Tillam's short visit. However, Hugh Heslop's name continues to be recorded in the Bishop's court until 1666 showing that he was involved with the Baptists in Cheshire at least until that date. Therefore, it remains unclear which of the Hexham evangelists the Warrington letter refers to, but it is more likely to be Thomas Tillam.

Thomas Tillam had an acrimonious dispute with the leaders of the Baptist church in Newcastle and an embarrassing episode when he was duped by a 'fake Jew'. In 1665 he left the church in Hexham and founded a church in Colchester. He was imprisoned more than once and eventually he persuaded about two hundred followers to move to the Palatinate area of Germany where he set up a Seventh-Day Baptist community. Members of this community may later have migrated as part of the Amish community to North America.

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/bq/17-2_055.pdf

A letter from John Davis of London to Samuel Hubbard in Rhode Island written in 1674 confirms Tillam's death in Germany. It concludes that he did not advance the Seventh-Day Baptist's view but brought it into disrepute. However, Thomas Tillam was a courageous and intriguing figure and even though his doctrinal obstinacy was by no means always wise, he did establish the foundations of the Baptist witness in the North of England. His charismatic personality certainly made a profound impression on the people that came under his influence.

Hugh Heslop

Study of the Hexham Church Letters and the primary material of the Bishop's Court in Chester reveals the name of Hugh Heslop. In view of the links between the church at Hexham and Hillcliffe and the distinctive surname, it is likely that this is the same person in both sources. He was baptised in Tillam's church in Hexham on 15th December 1652 and given a letter of authority to evangelise in the church's name on 23rd August 1653. Although the previous missionaries from Hexham were sent to Scotland, it would not seem unreasonable to suppose that Hugh Heslop was sent from Hexham to lead the church in Cheshire which Thomas Tillam had recently visited.

On 11th September 1654 Elizabeth Heslop was given a letter of commendation from the church in Hexham. If she was the wife or sister of Hugh then she may have come to join him

and evangelise in Cheshire. However, if this happened, her visit was short-lived, as a letter in September 1654, signed among others by Hugh Heslop, to Sir Thomas Liddell, a prominent governor in the North of England, describes Elizabeth's 'day of deep distress' and thanks Liddell's daughter for her help in 'bringing her back'.

Hugh Heslop next appears among the Hillcliffe members arrested and fined in the Bishop's Court, Chester in 1664, 1665, and 1666. He is named first on the lists of those meeting illegally in 1664 and 1665, possibly, because he was leading the meeting. Therefore, Hugh Heslop has a claim to be the first leader or 'pastor' of Hillcliffe. Many of the others arrested with him had family members in the church but there is no record of any deceased people named Heslop having probate granted in Cheshire from 1650 to 1720, suggesting that 'Heslop' was not the name of a local family.

However, the memorial to Maria Heslop is the earliest gravestone in the burial ground that is accepted as authentic by most historians. This is dated February 1664. It raises the possibility that Maria was the wife of Hugh Heslop or the daughter of Hugh and Elizabeth Heslop, the evangelists from Hexham.

Military Origin

It has been suggested that soldiers stayed in the Warrington area after the Battle of Winwick in 1648 to support the early Baptist gathering. James Houlton of Liverpool stated in 1920 that Hillcliffe church was founded in 1663 by Daniel Dunbabin (sic), who was the son-in-law of John Wigan, the founder of the Baptist church in Manchester. The surname 'Dunbabin' is connected with Hillcliffe church right down to the twentieth century. The name of John Wigan does appear as a signatory on early Hillcliffe documents. Also, in the 1663 letter book of Sir Roger Bradshaigh of Haigh Hall Wigan, there is a reference to a 'plot of Independents' including the names of Mr Ditchfield and Sergeant Will Booth, both living in Warrington. These are the names on early Hillcliffe documents and this suggests that there may have been an army background among members of the early church. This was certainly the case in many Baptist churches of the time.

Thomas Lowe

In his diary of 1672, Rev. Henry Maurice records meeting Thomas Lowe. His entry reads 'I ridd away hence to Tarporley, where I found Thomas Lowe at prayer, & afterwards he taught from Luke, 11.13. I found the savour of the knowledge of God manifesting itselfe in this good man's praying & teaching. Blessed be the Lord'. Lowe attended the General Assemblies of Baptists in London in 1689 and 1692 and was described as 'a husband-man of Coppull' (20 miles north of Warrington) who 'often got into trouble with Bradshaigh at Haigh'. He persistently declined to pay fines and returned to his preaching as soon as he was released from prison. He often visited Wrexham to baptise members of the church because the local pastor only baptised infants. He also baptised believers at Rhual near Mold where the baptistry was renovated by Elizabeth Evans and her son Thomas around 1670. Some historians maintain that 'on one occasion Mr Lowe baptised fourteen Hillcliffe people there'.

There is good evidence from his gravestone (grave 22) that Thomas Lowe was definitely Hillcliffe's pastor. Kenworthy's dates are not consistent with the historical record and may be an attempt to create an unbroken timeline. His dates would have Lowe appointed at the age of seventeen, which seems far too young. Douglas, in his History of Northern Baptist Churches, stated that Lowe's pastorate was from 1689 to 1691. He is certainly the first attested pastor at Hillcliffe and the new pastor's timeline would put his appointment sometime after 1666. He died in 1695.

Mr John Evans was proposed as pastor by Kenworthy, seemingly to fill in a gap in his timeline. He was indeed appointed as pastor to Wrexham Baptist Church from 1668 to 1700, but the records do not show that he had any connection with Hillcliffe.

Rowland Hall

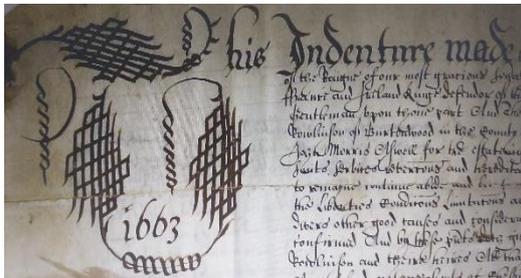
Kenworthy states that Rowland Hall was a cheese-monger, born about 1647, who lived near St Olave's church, Tooley Street, Southwark. He was apparently well regarded, but being a Particular Baptist he was persecuted by the authorities. In April 1683 he sold his house and business and moved with his family to Latchford. This is the written account of their journey. 'It was at a late hour on a Saturday evening in the spring of the year 1683, that the family of Mr Hall, after a long and wearisome journey, arrived at the town of Warrington. On the morning of the next day the family went forth betimes, inclining their steps towards the church (presumably Anglican) to attend to the worship of the Most High God. On the way thither their attention became diverted towards a number of people of serious demeanour, who appeared to be making their way towards some place where prayer was wont to be made. They followed them unobserved at a short distance, and were led out of the town to the wood where the little chapel stood, which they entered immediately after their unknowing conductors. At this time the minister (Mr Francis Turner) was engaged in the service; and when he saw them enter the chapel and judged from their dress that they were from the metropolis, he paused, supposing they might be come as spies upon their liberty and doctrine. The stranger, however, perceiving their embarrassment, waved his hand in token of friendship and good faith, and the worship proceeded. Thus did this worthy and persecuted family find in an obscure situation a people after their own heart, professing Christianity in its simple and genuine character. They felt that the hand of God had led them thither, and resolved to take up their abode in the neighbourhood, being a pleasant rural solitude, such as they had desired as the place of their retirement.'

Mr. Hall bought cheese in Cheshire and transported it via Liverpool to London, from 1684 to 1722. In 1717-8 during the reign of George I, he was appointed Collector of Excise for Warrington and Knutsford. He had many business friends in Liverpool and his daughter married Captain Samuel Hunter, a member of the Baptist church there. He was apparently a friend of Dr Fabius and the ministers in Liverpool and at [Great] Warford.

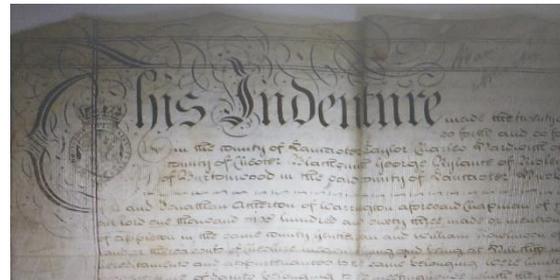
Mr Hall convinced Hillcliffe church of his good faith by his 'steady course of moral conduct; industrious habits; seeking to enter into good and pious society; frugality connected with a wise and cheerful liberality in his dealings towards all men.' He died on 3rd January 1722 aged about 75 and is buried at Hillcliffe as were his wife and son William. (grave 28) The members of Baptist churches at this time were mainly families of farmers, tradesmen and manual workers without any great wealth. It has been shown in a detailed study of Lancashire

Baptists in the mid-nineteenth century by Lea, what great social work the few wealthy members of the churches were able to do for their poorer fellow Christians. Undoubtedly Mr Hall showed similar largesse a century and a half earlier. The church obviously appreciated his good works by including him in its history.

Hillcliffe's Earliest Documents



Indenture 1663 (Appendix Two)



Indenture 1774 (Appendix Six)

On 2nd February 1660 William Morris of Morris Brook, Grappenhall leased the land at Hillcliffe to Peter Daintith of Stockton for the lives of himself, of William, son of William Middleton, and of Mary, sister of Peter Daintith. William Morris was apparently closely associated with the Baptist movement, having married Lydia, the daughter of Colonel John Wigan 'to whom the origin of the Baptists' work in Manchester owed so much'. Another historian, James Houlst of Liverpool, stated in 1920 that Hillcliffe church was founded in 1663 by Daniel Dunbabin, the son-in-law of John Wigan. Certainly the Dunbabin surname has been associated with Hillcliffe right down to the twentieth century.

On 3rd June 1663, Peter Daintith underleased the land to Peter Clare of Hatton, 'for ninety years if the lives named should so long last'.

On 23rd September 1663, a further deed was signed between John Morris, son of William, which 'granted the land, subject to the previous lease, to Thomas Millington of Appleton, gentleman, and William Rowlinson, of Burtonwood, yeoman, and their heirs... On the falling in of the third life, the ground shall be used and employed and shall continue, remain and be for the use of a Burial place for all such person and persons and those people which are commonly called Anabaptists with such other of the Congregational people way, or persons as shall desire to bury their dead there being in the said Counties of Cheshire and Lancashire or either of them for ever. And concerning the house, housing and building upon the land, it was declared that the same was to be converted to such use and uses as by the said Thomas Millington and William Rowlinson and their heirs should be thought meet for time to time for ever'

Thomas Cookson and Richard Middleton were appointed attorneys to seizin and hand over. 'On 23rd September they did take seizin and gave it. Richard Caldwell, personal tenant, then attorned and gave sixpence as token'. John Wigan and Lydia Morris were witnesses to the deed.

It might be thought that these leases show that the founding of Hillcliffe Baptist Church occurred in 1660, but they are merely legal procedures. The documents only prove that in 1663 the meeting-house and the adjoining land were designated for the Baptist community.

This concurs with the earliest authentic gravestone found by Whitley- Maria Heslop Exit: FebR; 1664 (grave 11).

There is an assertion that the church met secretly, sometimes at the premises of Richard Davies in Woolston, just outside Warrington, and sometimes at the barn of William Morris, senior at Hillcliffe on the Cheshire side of the Mersey. John Morris, brother of William, referred in his will of 10th September 1663 to 'my uncle Davies of Woolston and his wife Elizabeth', suggesting close family ties. Richard Davies was one of the executors of William Morris' will in 1662. Little evidence of the meetings would have been publicised at a time, when the 1593 law against conventicles (illegal religious gatherings) was still in force. A new Conventicle Act was passed in 1664, toning down the penalties and therefore it is likely that Baptist communities were then less secretive about their presence.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conventicle#England_under_the_Tudors

Despite this, the Bishop's Court in Chester recorded numerous illegal religious meetings in Warrington, with many of the group being arrested and fined regularly.

On 27th August 1664, the Bishop's Court in Chester recorded 'a Conventicle in the house of Richard Davies in Woolston (Poulton). Hugh Haslop(sic), Warrington, apothecary; John Seddon, Burtonwood, husbandman; Thomas Holland, Budworth, husbandman; Ralph Earlom, webster and John Barrow, Poulton, webster came before the court'.

This did not stop the early church from continuing to meet together. In August 1665, Peter Legh made a raid upon a conventicle in Woolston and 'hurried off the preacher, who denied to give his name'. This unlawful gathering was held in the house of Richard Davies again. The following names were taken- Hugh Haslope(sic), Warrington (apothecary); John Seaden of Burton Wood; John Barrow & Ralph Earlom, both linen websters; Thomas Holland; Thomas Holland's wife; John Sadon and his wife; Margaret Spruse; Elis. Spruse; Jane Murey of Warrington, widow; 'Another woman who I know not'; and 'A small boy whom I know not'.

In the Proceedings of the Bishop's Court Records stored at Abbey Gate, Chester, there is a citation of Anabaptists, 1665, naming James Winterbottom, John Ditchfield, John Morres, An Bent, William Booth, John Ditchfield Junr., Robert Massey, and Samuel Dunbabin.

Cited as Anabaptists in 1666 were James Winterbottom and his wife, John Ditchfield and his wife, Jane Murray, Anna Bent, Hugh Hislop(sic), William Booth, Samuel Dunbabin, William Savory, Thomas Whipham, John Nichols, John Ditchfield Junr., and Robert Marsh.

In 1674 there was a judgement for refusal to pay a 'levy' to repair the Anglican church. John Gibson (fined) 3d; John Winterbottom 4d; John Burrows 3d; Thom. Whitehouse 1s; Wm. Booth 1s; Samuel Dunbabin 4d; Maria Cocker 4d; John Sandiforth 4s; Rich Richardson 8d.

Evidence was presented at the Civil Courts Quarter Sessions, 1675, for 'not coming to Divine Service'. William Booth, John Ditchfield, Maria his wife, Sam^l Dunbabin, Rich^d Richardson were all fined 2s 6d. Rich^d Richardson was said to have been 'previously proceeded against' in the High Court in 1674.

There are certain names that occur repeatedly and although it is conjecture, it is likely that:-

William Booth was a member of the church from 1654 to 1675, signing the letter to Hexham church; being fined as an Anabaptist and for not coming to church, eleven years later.

Thomas Holland signed the letter to Hexham and was fined as an Anabaptist in 1664 and 1665. There is no doubt that many members at Hillcliffe were faithful even through an age of constant persecution.

Hugh Heslop's name appears every year and other names, such as John Seddon and Thomas Holland occur frequently. It is interesting that only men's names are recorded in the first year, but then wives and women's names are included. Some families such as the Ditchfields, are mentioned repeatedly and the unusual surname, Dunbabin, occurs throughout the Hillcliffe history right down to the twentieth century. The records show that meeting for worship and prayer as a Baptist in the seventeenth century was fraught with the danger of fines or even imprisonment. Our predecessors suffered this, so that Hillcliffe Baptist Church could survive, and for that we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

Genesis 17: 7

Chapter Six – EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Pastors' Timeline

c1695 - 1704	Mr John Parker
1704 – 1727	Rev. Francis Turner
1728	Mr Low
1729 – 1739	Mr John Hayes
1748 – 1752	Rev John Macgowan
1752- ?1780	Thomas Wainwright
1780 - 1782	Mr. Alexander Harper
1782 – 1792	Church closed
1792 - 1825	Mr John Thompson

In the eighteenth century the pastors' timeline is less contentious. The date when Mr Parker became pastor is unknown, but there must have been information available to Kenworthy for him to quote Mr Parker's salary of £2 10s (per month) and his gravestone of 1716 (grave 26).

As early as 1680, Rev. Francis Turner preached at Hillcliffe while he was living at Knutsford. In 1704 he was called to the pastorate. His papers in Latin, Greek and Hebrew show 'considerable learning and eminent piety'. He was characterised as 'a man of great ability, of restless zeal, and of extensive usefulness'.

We are very fortunate to have the detailed church accounts from 1703 to 1733 written by Samuel Smith in a beautiful script. These frequently refer to Bro. Turnor and provide a fascinating insight into eighteenth century church life.

In May 1705 the church paid 'charges when Mr Turner's family came to Warrington, 12s. 8¹/₂d and on July ye 2nd, 1705, pd to Bro. Turner, 6: 15: 0' - this was probably his first salary which would have been £7 10s per quarter, or £30 per annum. The accounts show money received regularly as Mr Turner's 'contribution', and frequent expenditure on a horse, usually 2s 6d, to take him to churches as far afield as Nantwich and Liverpool. Therefore, it appears that these congregations paid Hillcliffe for Rev. Turner's services and that he himself did not receive a stipend during most of his pastorate. This confirmed his 'restless zeal and extensive usefulness'.

He came from Llanbrynmair and his gravestone is inscribed 'Francis Turner, late pastor of the church of Christ at Hill-Cliff, died September 16th 1727 aged 73 (grave 29).

A Doxology was amongst Mr Turner's papers: -

O let us praise Thee while we live,
And let us praise Thee when we die,
And praise Thee when we rise again,
And praise Thee to eternity.

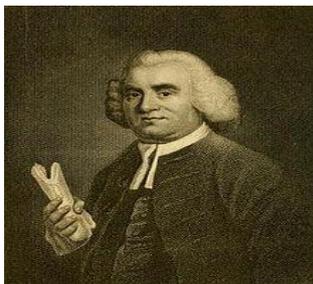
The church extended branches out in every direction, which it designated as ‘quarters’, presumably because subscriptions were paid four times a year on each quarter-day. In return the minister and others went out to the quarters to preach each Sunday and to take services on weekday evenings. The records show that Hillcliffe received subscriptions or contributions from Liverpool, Chester, Bickerton, Nantwich and Newton quarters. There is evidence that a few Baptists from Chester attended ‘a church in the parish of Grappenhall’ in the 1650s, and the burial of Hannah Amery (grave 25) and Samuel Simson of Chester (grave 27) at Hill Cliffe, in 1709 and 1719 respectively, suggests that members may have travelled twenty miles or more in order to attend services. Hillcliffe was seen as the mother church and the graveyard which served Baptist believers from a large catchment area. This would explain the fact that many early gravestones state where the deceased came from (graves 8-10).

A note in the accounts in July and August 1720 shows that various repairs were carried out on the meeting house and it was closed for this period.

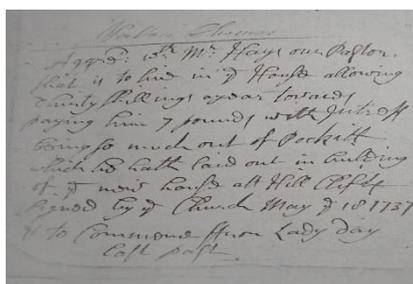
Mr John Hayes ‘though a man of fervent piety was nevertheless vastly inferior to his predecessor in talent, energy and zeal- the numerous and diverse labours were feebly and inefficiently sustained’. The church accounts show that he was paid his ‘quarter contribution’ of £1:10:0. He loaned the church £7 for the building of the new minister’s house in 1735. He apparently resigned in 1739 and died in 1750. He is said to have been interred in the graveyard but no record has been found. There is no indication in the record of who was the pastor for eight years following his retirement. Interestingly there is also a break in the church accounts during this time and then someone with different handwriting recorded the accounts.

On April 28th 1735 the accounts show that the church paid ‘for expenses to ye messengers of ye church to Mr Crosley’s meeting’ (8s 0d). This meeting was probably an open-air celebration for thousands of Baptists in the North of England.

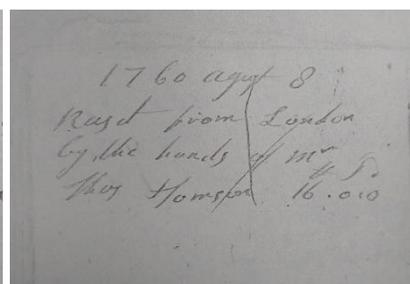
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Crosley



Rev. John Macgowan



Debt to Mr Hayes



Received £16 from London

Rev. John Macgowan was pastor at Hillcliffe in his mid-twenties. There is some dispute about the dates, but most historians disagree with Kenworthy and place him at Hillcliffe in the early 1750s. He was born in Edinburgh on 23rd October 1726 and as a young man joined the rebel army of Bonnie Prince Charlie. He was one of the few to escape with his life after the Battle of Culloden (16th April 1746). Initially a Methodist preacher, he was appointed as pastor at Hillcliffe around 1748. His time as pastor is limited by the record in the church accounts of Thomas Wainwright as pastor in 1752. Macgowan married his first wife, Esther Rigby from St Helens, in 1755 but unfortunately, she died in 1762, shortly after giving birth to their fourth child. Macgowan moved from Hillcliffe to Bridgenorth and eventually, in 1766, to Devonshire Square Church in London. In Thomas Tillam, Hillcliffe can claim an

influential poet and early hymn writer, and in John Macgowan, a celebrated author. Macgowan was not only Hillcliffe's pastor but also a baker in a shop on the north side of Bridge Street, Warrington. There are reminiscences of him leaning out of the door of his shop and always having a 'caustic, controversial' comment.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Macgowan.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/205903624/john-macgowan>

He published 20 volumes under the pseudonym 'The Shaver'. The Dialogue of Devils (first published 1772) and Priestcraft Defended (first published 1768), were the most notable. The latter reached its 21st edition in 1810 and it was only then that the author's name was printed.

<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=OAMPAAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=dialogue+of+devils&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjUzbX33MXqAhV->

[URUIHUW3DqsQ6AEwAXoECAEQAg#v=onepage&q=dialogues%20of%20devils&f=false](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=le9bAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=john+macgowan+the+shaver&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjVuYOO2sXqAhXGYMAKHb5mDmYQ6AEwAAnoECAIQAg#v=onepage&q=john%20macgowan%20the%20shaver&f=false)

<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=le9bAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=john+macgowan+the+shaver&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjVuYOO2sXqAhXGYMAKHb5mDmYQ6AEwAAnoECAIQAg#v=onepage&q=john%20macgowan%20the%20shaver&f=false>

There is some disagreement about the name and dates of the pastor who followed John Macgowan. A comment in the Primitive Church Magazine, 1752, describes the church as being 'in a low state'. At that time the Northern Association consisted of 14 churches with an average of 50 members per church but the suggestion is that Hillcliffe's membership was far below average.

The next pastor proposed by Kenworthy in 1760 is Thomas Wainwright and indeed the letter sent to Warford church in 1757 is signed by Thomas Wainwright (1) as pastor. However, Thomas Wainwright (2) is also a signatory in that letter and their signatures are different (Appendix Five). This raises the question as to whether these two people were father and son. The confusion increases because Thomas Wainwright, the pastor, (1 by his signature) was one of the lead names on the Indenture of 1774 (Appendices Six & Seven) where he is described as a 'tailor' and the document stated that he, and others, should maintain 'the person who shall for the time being be chosen by them pastor'. The grave of Thomas Wainwright, Senior (number 30) of 1772 must be Thomas Wainwright (2). The situation becomes even more opaque because The Baptist Reporter suggests that Samuel Wainwright was pastor for almost forty years between 1739 and 1778. This is certainly incorrect when one considers the well attested pastorate of Rev. John Macgowan.

On 12th December 1755, Mr Peter Swinton was born in the neighbourhood of Hillcliffe. He was an 'excellent man' according to Kenworthy. At the age of thirty, he received Christ as his saviour and was baptised during the night by John Thompson. This emphasises that there was prejudice or even persecution against public baptism by immersion in the mid-eighteenth century despite the Act of Toleration of 1688.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toleration_Act_1688 Peter Swinton was chosen as one of the deacons in 1792 and served for more than fifty years. He was 'steadfast in his adherence to the cause, regular in his attendance on the means of grace, and ever exhibited a peaceful and conciliatory disposition. The prosperity of the church lay near his heart. The prayer meeting was seldom held without seeing his face and hearing his voice. When 88 years of age he regularly attended four services in the house of God on the Sabbath day. He stood by the

church when the floods of opposition were most violent and many deserted it. His last affliction was short.' In his last hours he was heard to say 'I am quite comfortable. God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes'. He died on 20th January 1844 and was buried at Hill Cliffe.'

In 1760 there was a record of a new meeting house or conversion of old buildings in Warrington to serve as a meeting-house, and collections to defray the expense were made in London by Mr Thomas Tomson. The account of this collection is as follows: 'Aug 8th, 1760. Rasd from London by the hands of Mr. Thos. Tomson £16 out of witch (sic) for my journey and what I have laid out at the new meeting house £1 1s; gave Mr. John Blackshaw £1. 10s. 6d; paid the above £14 8s. 6d. to Mr Leigh of London.....being owing about the meeting - house at Warrington.'

The church decided in the mid-eighteenth century that the chapel and burial ground should be the responsibility of trustees. The Deed for the establishment of Trustees of the Meeting House at Hill Cliff was dated 22nd November 1774. This Indenture established a Trust, with Thomas Wainwright, Charles Hardwick, Thomas Hayes, John Hamblet, George Rylance, John Rowlinson, Samuel Hayes and Jonathan Atherton as trustees (Appendices Six & Seven).

In 1780 Alexander Harper was called to be pastor. The letter of invitation was signed by Jonathon Atherton, John Monks and George Rylance. He was in post for more than two years, when the church endeavoured to dismiss him. The cause of his dismissal, according to one writer, was 'owing to his misconduct', and others, to his having 'embraced erroneous doctrine'. Some denounced him as a Socinian. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socinianism> Kenworthy thought that the latter case was most probable. Winks, however, suggested that 'the ardour and zeal of the members had rapidly decreased; that their concern and their efforts for the salvation of those around them, decayed and became so feeble- they had left their first love and were no longer a light of the world'. He defended Mr Harper, whom he felt took on a church 'that was damaged beyond recovery'.

However, Mr Harper refused to hand over the church keys, despite an appeal from Samuel Medley, pastor at the Baptist Chapel in Liverpool and John Hirst, pastor at Ebenezer Particular Baptist Church, Bacup, Lancashire. The church, therefore, reluctantly commenced legal proceedings against him. The case was tried at Chester, and the verdict was in the church's favour, but left them in a very sad financial state. The expenses were so heavy, that to meet them, they sold the furniture belonging to the Warrington Meeting House; and sometime after, 'the Hill Cliff chapel was closed for the regular preaching of the Gospel.' Kenworthy minimises the damage, by stating that 'for over six years no regular preaching took place but that a company of godly women met regularly every Sunday for prayer and praise and so kept the light burning'. This was romanticised into a vision that 'during this time of gloom, the old chapel was never forsaken. A band of ... women met each Sunday in the old vestry to weep and to pray, amid the ruins of former glory, and neither the Lord of the Manor, nor anyone else could turn these prayerful souls from the sacred spot they loved so much'. Unfortunately for those of a romantic disposition, the account by the Baptist Reporter is probably nearer the truth. It stated that 'divine service was discontinued from 1782 at Hill Cliff and the chapel closed'. The length of time that Hillcliffe was closed is disputed. Some authors say that this place of worship was shut up for eleven years. It was even said that it

was 'offered for sale to be appropriated to the objects of trade but this end not effected, it was used as a barn for storing the produce of the fields and it narrowly escaped being sold for the profit of the trustees'. It was claimed that 'the families united to the place prior to the extinction, are now not connected with the Baptist denomination'. There is a tradition that one of the trustees made an offer wishing to stable horses in the sanctuary.

Following his ejection from Hillcliffe, Mr Harper was called to be a preacher in 1778 by the church at Hamsterley. By coincidence this is the church in Northumberland that claims continuity with the church established in Hexham by Thomas Tillam.

<http://hamsterley.thenba.org.uk/>

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2: 8-10

Chapter Seven – NINETEENTH CENTURY

Pastors' Timeline

1792 - 1825 Mr John Thompson

1820 – 1825 Mr John Swinton

1820 – 1830 Mr James Bradford

1831 – 1834 Mr Enoch Lloyd

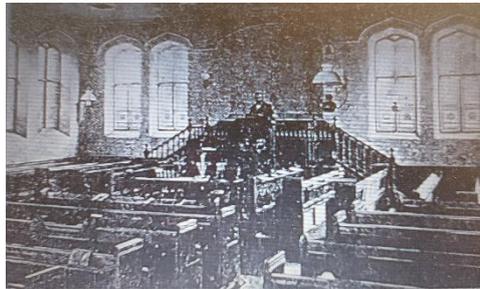
1836 – 1837 Mr William Jones



1839 – 1876 Rev. Abraham Kenworthy

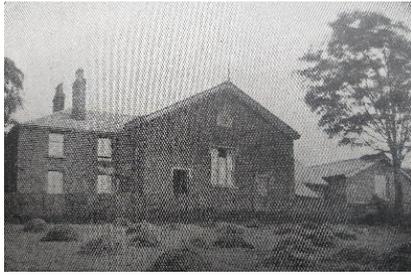
1878 – 1885 Rev. William Pilling

1888 – 1892 Mr Samuel Kenworthy



1893 - 1907 Rev. James Samuel Hughes

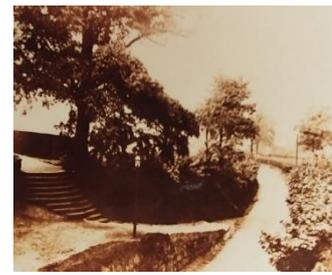
The information available about church life and practice in the nineteenth century increases substantially with the existence of the minutes of meetings and other printed material related to the church. There is also a plethora of historical books, written in the nineteenth century, which allow us to compare the opinions of different historians about the church's history. At the end of the century, Kenworthy's 'History of the Baptist Church at Hillcliffe' provides fascinating facts and speculations. Engravings of the chapel show what the building was thought to have looked like in the eighteenth century and the first photographs of the chapel were taken in 1890.



Hillcliffe Chapel 1890



1905



Red Lane 1906

Mr John Thompson

The continuation or rebirth of the church after its closure in 1782 was due to a godly man from Latchford. Mr John Thompson, of Wash Lane, was a schoolmaster and from the age of thirty he began preaching at Methodist meetings. He became convinced of the importance of believers' baptism and having been baptised himself, he baptised those who professed a belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the trustees at Hillcliffe offered 'to rent the meeting-house to him for fifteen guineas, with interest'. This offer, he gladly accepted and took possession in 1792. Apparently 'so great was the opposition he had to contend with, that he was compelled to baptise his first converts in the River Mersey during the darkness of the night'. There is a suggestion that Mr Thompson and his friends from Latchford joined some individuals who had been members of the extinct church and constituted themselves a church of Christ upon Baptist principles. He was a man of 'uprightness and consistency', and soon gathered a large congregation, so that the place was regularly filled. He preached three times on Sundays, and every week day evening at Hillcliffe and the numerous village meetings around and about. Saturday was his evening off! He continued to perform these duties for a period of more than thirty years until his death in 1825. At that time there were apparently 170-180 members of the church of whom three or four were preachers (Appendices Eight & Nine).

He had the reputation of being 'rigidly just in all his dealings' but when he was over 65 years of age, his 'bodily infirmities rendered him incapable of stated labours' (Appendix Eight). He was joined in 1820 by two co-pastors, John Swinton and James Bradford. John Swinton was father-in-law to James Bradford and they were both farmers at Reddish Hall. They laboured on the farm during the week and preached the Gospel on Sundays. Apparently, they received no pay and paid their own expenses when travelling to the outlying village congregations. John Swinton, whose family founded Milton Baptist Church, died on 13th October 1825 aged 62, just six weeks before John Thompson, on 21st November.

A story is told about Mr Thompson's generosity. In one version he is asked for a donation for the poor and freely gives what he has, saying that he was going to buy a new winter coat but he will make his old coat last another year. The second account places the story at the time of an appeal to equip the volunteer army to fight against Napoleon in 1798, and although 'a peaceable and amicable man, he was deeply stirred' and gave his money to the appeal and made his winter coat last another year.

From 1792 to 1830 it is said that 300-400 persons were baptised at Hillcliffe. Pastors Thompson and Bradford were 'illiterate men, only having received the education of

His obituary (Appendix Eleven), reports that he left a wife and nine children who were 'in great measure unprovided for'. However members of the Bradford family of Redditch Hall were faithful members at Hillcliffe for many generations and I am confident that they were well supported by the church family.

As an historical aside, Kenworthy stated that James Bradford was a descendant of the Bradford family of Reddish Hall, one of whom, Rev. John Bradford was martyred in the reign of Queen Mary in 1555. John Bradford is credited with popularising the phrase 'There but for the Grace of God go I'. I am sure that this sentiment has often been expressed by Hillcliffe church members without realising the possible connection with the church. There is a statue today of John Bradford outside Manchester Town Hall.

<https://www.crichbaptist.org/articles/john-bradford/>

The site of Reddish Hall is at the junction of Cartridge Lane and Broad Lane in Grappenhall. The farm of the same name is opposite. Certainly, the record of the Bradford family of farmers at Reddish Hall exists, but whether they could claim descent from a sixteenth century protestant martyr born in Manchester is unproven. What is evident is that the Bradford family from Reddish Hall were still trustees for Hillcliffe almost a century after James died.

After Mr Bradford died, Hillcliffe entered a state of 'lamentable confusion but at length by prompt, vigorous and scriptural measures, the differences were "composed" and restored the church to a tranquil state'. This comment suggests another turbulent time of division within the church.

Resurrectionists

On the night of 2nd-3rd October 1827 the quiet of Hillcliffe burial ground was violated by resurrectionists who opened the grave of Jane Fairclough and took away her body. She was from Sankey and had been buried on 28th September. The alarm was raised and a search discovered the body at the house of a physician in Warrington. Five people were charged, firstly for unlawfully conspiring to disinter the body, and secondly for having it in their possession knowing it to have been unlawfully disinterred. The body was apparently dug up by 'professional resurrectionists'. In March 1828, three defendants were charged in Liverpool, with conspiracy and unlawfully procuring and receiving a corpse buried in Warrington. They were acquitted, but the remaining two defendants, both medical men, were found guilty of possession. The presiding judge's comment, that "the disinterment of bodies for dissection was an offence liable to punishment", prompted Parliament to establish the 1828 Select Committee on Anatomy, which led to the Anatomy Act of 1832.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrectionists_in_the_United_Kingdom For a Christian and a surgeon, there are conflicts over the dissection of a body after death, but thankfully modern simulation techniques make this unnecessary today.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24590516/>

Mr Enoch Lloyd was the next pastor. He was appointed in 1831, aged fifty-five, and apparently 'his labours were blessed of God'. A Welsh newspaper quoted an acquaintance of his as saying, 'As a friend he is warm, honest and all sincerity; as a minister simply faithful and charming'. He was initially a cabinet maker in Mold, Flintshire. He and his wife Catherine had a son John Ambrose Lloyd who became a famous Welsh hymn writer.

After three years of Mr Lloyd's pastorate, a section of the congregation, who had become followers of William Gadsby (Pastor at Back Lane Chapel in Manchester) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Gadsby), tried unsuccessfully to obtain possession of the chapel. On one occasion Mr William Bate, having preached in the morning, refused to make way for Mr Lloyd to preach in the afternoon. 'Being commanded by the constable in the name of the King, three times to come out of the pulpit and refusing, the officer proceeded up the seven or eight pulpit steps and seized the offender by the heels, dragging him ignominiously from his exulted position to make room for Mr Lloyd to conduct the service'. The result of these struggles was the departure of about thirty members of the church who took with them the church books. The remaining members obtained new books and leaving out the names of the departed ones, constituted themselves a church, entering their names in the new roll. At the beginning of this new church book there was an entry showing by whom the old books had been taken away and a short statement of faith which read:-

'We, the undersigned persons are members of the Baptist Church formed in the chapel at Hillcliffe in the township of Appleton in the County of Cheshire, by an old writing called Anabaptists. Holding the doctrines of personal selection and the final perseverance of the saints as specified in a certain indenture detained in the hands of John Swinton vested in the hands of such trustees as are named therein – dated in the year 1800. Baptised on profession of faith, holding the ordinances of the Church with discipline and congregational order according to the testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Dated Nov. 9th 1834'

Mr Lloyd then resigned and Mr William Jones from Montgomeryshire was minister for about 18 months (1836-8). During his pastorate, apparently 'although the church lived it did not progress. The influence of former differences unhappily prevailed and prevented accessions to their number'.

Gravestone Forgery

During the nineteenth century a number of the gravestones were altered to make the graveyard appear older than it really was. The first alteration was the gravestone of Elizabeth Pycroft (grave 5). The inscription originally read 'dyd Decemb' 22 1714' and this can be verified by the date of her will. However, it was made to read 'dyd Dec 1522 age 14'. The fraud was probably committed sometime after 1819, because at that date the Baptist Magazine stated that 1663 was the earliest date then known of the church's existence. Other alterations were also discovered. In June 1877, J Owen, a contributor to Earwaker's 'Local Gleanings' stated 'I copied a number of the inscriptions at Hill Cliffe cemetery many years ago. The date of Dorothy Jones of Frodsham was then 1699.' (grave 10). This was changed to 1622. The gravestone of Elizabeth Witter (grave 8) was originally dated 1692 but the third figure was altered from 9 to 2.



Gravestone of Elizabeth Witter

The gravestone of her husband John Witter of Netherton (grave 17) records that he died in 1688. It is possible that his wife predeceased him by 66 years but unlikely. The matter is settled if Mounfield's claim to have identified Elizabeth Witter's will of 1692 in the Cheshire archives is correct. This suggests that the forgery took place sometime between 1819 and 1876, probably in the earlier part of that period. The situation, timing and character portraits of the first three pastors of the nineteenth century strongly suggests that they were not involved in the gravestone forgeries. At the end of the century, when James Kenworthy wrote his 'History of the Baptist Church at Hill Cliffe', he was convinced that the altered gravestones were in fact genuine. His father and brother had been pastors for most of the period since 1839. Rev. Abraham Kenworthy convinced Cramp in 1871 to publish that there was a tombstone at Hillcliffe dated 1357 and it is likely that if either of them knew that the gravestones were forgeries, they would have made James aware of this. Therefore the alterations were probably made during the pastorates of Mr. Enoch Lloyd or Mr. William Jones (1831-1837). It seems very unlikely that this happened without the knowledge of the church leaders and therefore Mr Enoch Lloyd or Mr William Jones as pastors; or Richard Ashbrook, Daniel Dean, H. Yates or John Cartwright, as prominent church members at the time, would probably have known of the deception. In 1840, there were exclusions from the church for 'unholy and bad conduct' and the trust deeds show that Edward Bate was a stonemason, presumably at Hillcliffe, in 1854 and he subsequently resigned as a trustee in 1866. It would be fascinating to know whether this related to the gravestone forgery.

It is possible that Rev. Kenworthy discovered the fraud when he became pastor. However, on the other hand, he presumably provided some details for his son, James Kenworthy's 'History', first published in 1882. Kenworthy states that the first edition was 'sent too hastily to press'. However, even in the second edition (undated but written shortly after 1893) he perpetuates the myth based on the gravestone forgery. Therefore Rev. and James Kenworthy were either not aware of the forgeries or they were complicit in their continuation. It is surprising that the Kenworthys were not aware of the damning accusations of forgery, in Earwaker's 'Local Gleanings' which was published in Manchester in 1877.

Rev. Abraham Kenworthy

The church went through a period of disruption in 1838, as a letter written on 15th December by John Hindle, a solicitor from Liverpool, to Richard Ashbrook, demonstrates. The dispute was about possession of the chapel, 'Giving up the chapel to representatives of the church' (Appendix Twelve). The division was evidently resolved because in May 1839 the Rev. Abraham Kenworthy was called as pastor, and hence began a long relationship of the

Kenworthy family with Hillcliffe. Rev. Kenworthy had been a member at Salendine Nook Church, Huddersfield before coming to Hillcliffe. Apparently, when he became pastor, there were 116 members and 100 children in Sunday School, despite the disruption of 1838.

When Rev. Kenworthy first entered upon his duties as pastor, the old chapel was in a dilapidated condition and burdened with debt. But he was obviously enthusiastic about building up the church, at the time when the Baptist denomination was growing strongly in the North-West of England. This growth was due to the increase in the working-class population in the industrial Victorian cities; the social conscience of the Baptist members; and their 'evangelical commitment'. During the period 1834 to 1841 the records of church members were kept with great detail, and discipline was a prominent issue. The records show:-

A man excluded for profligate conduct.

A man, who died at the age of 25 years, was described as 'being a backslider in his last days'. One was excluded for evil language and another for drunkenness.

One woman was said to have kept a disorderly house and to have encouraged sinful practices.

In 1841 the chapel was rebuilt at great expense. The Baptist Magazine had the following account of the re-opening service:- 'On Sunday September 26th 1841, this place of worship was opened after being rebuilt and enlarged. Sermons were preached on the occasion by Messrs. Kenworthy and Macpherson of Salendine Nook. Huddersfield'

<http://www.snbch.org.uk/history-of-the-church/history-of-salendine-nook-church/>

'The congregations were good, the interest excited was great, and the collections liberal. The sum of £33 7s. 6¹/₂^d. was collected. Of late the church has increased; On this ancient church may the smiles of His approbation continually rest, and on the long-neglected county of Chester, in which the Baptists are few and feeble, may the outpourings of His Holy Spirit be graciously felt'. In 1847 a new minister's house was erected. Owing to these improvements and additions, the church was often in financial straits and as a consequence the pastor had to receive, at times, considerably less than his full stipend.

In 1841 the church numbered 120 members and the Sunday School nearly 100 children- five village congregations were also regularly supplied- 'peace and order prevails and the promise of great usefulness is opening before the church'. Unfortunately, disruption entered Hillcliffe again and in 1848 another division took place in the church. Several families left, and formed a new church on May 4th 1851, initially named Bethel Baptist Church. A recent member's grandmother was a 'Wilkinson' and she told her stories about when her family broke away from Hillcliffe. Twelve years later they built Latchford Baptist Chapel which was opened in March 1861. <http://www.latchfordbaptistchurch.co.uk/>. We have now reached a time when family memories come down to the present time. This split was evidently very traumatic for all involved, and the pain lived on in the memory for many years. The evidence shows, however, that church divisions and the building of new Baptist chapels were not uncommon in the mid to late nineteenth century. Thankfully, having gone through a period of sharing pastors in the twentieth century, there is now close fellowship between members of both churches and even a joint house-group of long-standing.

As early as 1865, within its own denomination, the Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Baptist Churches was recognised as the most progressive in the country. It was told by the

Committee of the Baptist Union, at the autumn General Assembly in Liverpool: . . . ‘One fourth of all your churches have been called into being in the past twenty years’. This may have been the stimulus for a Baptist church that was already two hundred years old, to fabricate an even older origin.

In 1838, when the Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Baptist Churches first assembled, there were 30 churches with 2,790 members; in 1887 there were 110 with 17,512 members; and between 1842 and 1887, in the Sunday Schools, the number of teachers rose from 990 to 3,390; the number of pupils from 7,522 to 36,086. If the contemporary data are transferable, which shows that two-thirds of all Baptist congregations are non-members, then taking adults and children together, probably over 15,000 persons were markedly influenced by local Baptist chapels in 1838 and over 80,000 in 1887 (Appendix Thirteen). Perversely the high incidence of divisions within churches that occurred, helped to increase Baptist membership.

The church benevolent societies were a source of security, supporting members with up to £3 (£360 today) per week during times of sickness and £1 (£120 today) per week in old age.

In the mid-nineteenth century most of the first appointed Trustees at Hillcliffe had died, and therefore an ‘Appointment of New Trustees’ was arranged on 19th May 1854 and 12th September 1866 (Appendices Fourteen & Fifteen).

In the nineteenth century the theology of the Particular Baptist Movement was still important to the church leaders. Rev. Kenworthy was prominent in attempts to set up an association of Strict Baptists in 1847 and some of their inaugural meetings were held at Hillcliffe chapel (Appendix Sixteen). This Association does not feature again in Hillcliffe’s history. The General Meeting of the Particular Baptist Denomination had formed in 1812 and this became the Baptist Union in 1873. Its aim was ‘not to superintend or guide the life and work of local churches or to impose anything on their faith and order’, but as a fund-raising body for the Baptist Missionary Society. <https://www.bmsworldmission.org/>

In 1848 tragedy struck when Rev. Kenworthy’s wife died at the age of twenty-nine. She was the daughter of Rev. James Bradford, a former minister, and mother of the author of the ‘History of the Baptist Church at Hill-Cliffe’. On 16th September 1869, Rev. Kenworthy was given a ‘massive gold watch’ inscribed ‘presented to the Rev. Abraham Kenworthy by the congregation and friends connected with Hill Cliffe Chapel for his past 30 years’ services, as a proof of the esteem in which he is held.’

There is a record of disruption within the church on two occasions during Rev. Kenworthy’s pastorate. The first was in the same year as his wife’s death. There was also a division within the church in 1876, the year of his resignation at the age of 64 years. This coincided with the publication of concerns over the ‘gravestone forgery’. He died on 4th March 1892 aged 80 and was buried at Hill Cliffe (grave 34).

On 1st Jan 1878, William Pilling was baptised at Zion Chapel, Bacup, and as a new graduate from Manchester College, he was appointed as pastor to Hillcliffe in December 1878. Apparently, his strength was in pastoral care- ‘in sorrow and trouble he was ever a strong sympathiser’. He laboured at Hillcliffe until 1885 before moving to Great Broughton, Cumberland.

The Church accounts at this time (1878-1889) show some interesting receipts and expenditure per year.

Receipts		Expenditure	
Tea Party	10s 0d	Sunday School Outing	£1 19s 9 ¹ / ₂ d
Collections	£51 18s 0d	Minister's Salary	£90
Pew Rents	£17 12s 0d	Lighting. Lamps. Oil	£3 18s 0d
Christmas Tea	£5 6s 2 ¹ / ₂ d	Minister/ Student's fee	15s 0d
Burial Fees	<£12	Entertaining Minister	6s 0d
Weekly Offering	<£1	Entertaining Student	3s 6d

During the interregnum in 1886 there were two ministers and eleven students from the Northern Baptist College (modern day Luther King House) who preached at Hillcliffe. The ministers were apparently entertained more lavishly than the students.

Mr Hough, a senior deacon, married the daughter of Mr John Swinton, and was one of the yeomanry at Peterloo (16th August 1819), who 'had his helmet driven fast on his head by a brick thrown by one of the crowd'. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peterloo_Massacre.

After Mr Pilling resigned, there followed an inter-regnum of four years until November 1888 when the youngest son of Abraham Kenworthy, Samuel, was appointed pastor. He had been a member of the Baptist Church in Burslem, where he served as deacon and occasional preacher. After four years as pastor at Hillcliffe, at the age of only forty-six, he died. Apparently, for many months he had not enjoyed robust health. On Sunday, 24th July, 1892 he was intensely earnest in his preaching; 'speaking' as one of his hearers said 'as a dying man to dying men'. The same evening, he was seized with paralysis and after lingering in great suffering, he passed away on 3rd August 1892 (grave 35).

In October 1893 Rev. James Samuel Hughes from Earlstown, was appointed as pastor. He had previously retired from Irwell Terrace Church, Bacup. He remained at Hillcliffe until 1907 and during this time Kenworthy finished his 'History' with the affirmation that 'Prosperity is now once more building up the church'.

The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

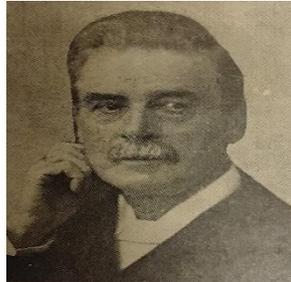
Matthew 25: 40

Chapter Eight – TWENTIETH CENTURY (first half)

Pastors' Timeline

1893 – 1907 Rev. James Samuel Hughes

1911 - 1918 Rev. George Curtis



1918 – 1924 Rev. Robert Jones

1925 Rev. John Francis Matthews

1925 – 1943 Rev. Humphrey Chalmers

1944 – 1952 Rev. Stanley Stanford



Edwardian Dress



World War One



New Pipe Organ 1923

There is very little information about Hillcliffe after the publication of James Kenworthy's 'History' at the beginning of the twentieth century. Of course, church life continued, but the Hillcliffe family would not have realise what terrible conflicts were to come.

World War One

The history of the First World War is vividly told by films and books. Our thoughts have dwelt on the horrors of the conflict during recent memorials of the centenary of the end of the fighting. Many men from Hillcliffe may be buried in the fields of Flanders but the five men who were brought home or who died from their wounds after the conflict ended, and are buried in the graveyard at Hillcliffe, deserve our undying gratitude. They are:-

Thomas Dawson Bramall. Rifleman R/7109. King's Royal Rifle Corps
died 1st March 1917 aged 24 (Grave 2nd part 4.9).

Thomas Rigby Smith. Private 308199 West Riding Regiment
died 1st March 1919 aged 25 (Grave New Ground 5.12).

William Peacock. Sapper 47207 Royal Engineers
died 29th November 1919 aged 29 (Grave New Ground 2.8).

Frank Bell. Gunner 114487 Royal Garrison Artillery
died 30th August 1920 aged 39 (Grave 2nd part 4.9).

Arthur Howard. Able Seaman Mersey Z/7109 Royal Navy volunteer HMS “President”
died 21st April 1921 aged 29 (Grave New Ground 6.4).

P Fletcher (recorded in Church Meeting Minutes) killed in action in Mesopotamia

<https://www.cwgc.org/find/find-war-dead/results/?cemetery=HILLCLIFFE%20BAPTIST%20CEMETERY>



Indenture 1920 (Appendix Seventeen)



Savage Trust 1922 (Appendix Eighteen)

In 1920 the church bought the piece of land to the west of the burial ground from Colonel Charles Lyon for four hundred and forty-one pounds. The deeds show that there were a number of people with surnames attached to Hillcliffe throughout its history who were trustees at that time. These include William Booth, a retired upholsterer; Richard Billington, farmer and William Bradford of Reddish Hall, farmer. It is likely that these were members of families that had maintained attachment to Hillcliffe for over 350 years (Appendix Seventeen).

In 1922 the William Alfred and Priscilla Savage Hill Cliffe Burial Ground Maintenance Trust was set up with the income from an investment of £1000 given to Hillcliffe as long as they ‘clean and put in good order’ the grave of Captain William Alfred Savage who died in 1918 (Appendix Eighteen). Captain Savage died in the last year of the First World War but there is no record of his death in the Forces War Record and he is not included in the War Graves Commission records. Mrs Savage also donated money for the installation of a pipe organ which was inaugurated at an opening service on Sunday 10th February 1926.

As we have seen, some credulous writers believed that a broken fragment of gravestone dated 1357, proved that the church predates the Reformation. Although most historians today are sceptical, many of the quoted historians from the nineteenth century accepted that Hillcliffe originated as a church before 1522. It was on 1st September 1918 that Rev. Robert Jones became pastor. He presented a paper titled ‘The Antiquity of Hillcliffe Baptist Church’, on 11th May 1922, to the Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Baptist Churches meeting at Hillcliffe. (Appendix Nineteen). This stimulated a heated debate in the Warrington Examiner between Rev. Jones and Arthur Mounfield, a local historian, who suggested that this forgery had been made recently. The conclusion from reading through the acrimonious correspondence and imagining the unreported comments from the protagonists; is not so much about the facts of the case, which seem clear cut from the perspective of the twenty-

first century, but there is a lesson for all users of Twitter etc., today, in the last postscript 'Protagonists should meet and try and set right between them, the 'personal references' in any and every controversy'.

At the end of his pastorate, in 1924, Rev. Jones wrote a statement about 'The Antiquity of Hill Cliffe Chapel and Graveyard' in his own hand, to put the record straight. (Appendix Twenty) When he and his wife left Hillcliffe, there was a farewell event with many testimonies to his ability as a pastor. The members of his household were also remembered - 'Mrs Davies, on behalf of the sisterhood, presented a purse to Miss Middleditch' (Mrs Jones' maid). However, despite the family having a ladies-maid, Chapel House had no inside toilet at this time..

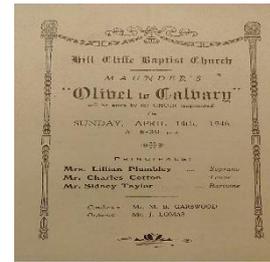
In the twentieth century, one is almost overwhelmed by the minutes of the meetings of the Trustees; the Diaconate; the Church; the Sunday School, the Parents' Association and even the Choir! Many fascinating facts are recorded, but overall, the minutes give an impression of the issues that the church faced and how they dealt with them, together, under Christ's guidance. The celebrations of Jesus' church are frequently recorded. For example, in September 1929 the church minutes included a eulogy to Thomas Grounds, an Honorary Deacon, who worshipped at Hillcliffe for 51 years, 'having rendered loyal and faithful service in the cause of Christ & the Church.... his cheerful personality and self-sacrificing labour could always be in evidence as an inspiration to all, & there will always remain in this corner of God's vineyard, memorials of unstinted devotion to the future wellbeing of all who may become his successors in labour within and without the sanctuary'.

In the first half of the twentieth century there are Sunday School minutes available which record that in 1925 Rev. John Francis Matthews was appointed pastor. Soon afterwards, his family wrote a letter to the Sunday School thanking the teachers for their sympathy, after their sad bereavement. There was discussion about commissioning a portrait of Rev. Matthews but as far as is known, this was never completed.

Even in the early twentieth century a pastor's position was not beyond criticism. There is an entry in the minutes in 1925, reprimanding Rev. Humphrey Chalmers, the next pastor, for taking holiday without notice.

In the early 1920s, the first regular wireless broadcasts began in the UK. Until then people relied on their own talents for entertainment. This is demonstrated by the planning of the 1926 Sunday School Anniversary Service – there were to be 'two child songs, two hymns or sacred songs from the main school. Then solo performances by Mr. Jack Mortimer, failing him Mr. Harry Kay, and finally the choir to be asked to render an anthem'.

In the archives there is sheet music of Haydn's Creation (performed in 1947); Handel's Third Mass (The Imperial); Athalie (1934); Dvorak's At the Foot of the Cross (1904); Cliff College Choruses (1946); Free Church Choir Music 1948 & 1956; Celebration 1970 and Christian Endeavour Centenary 1881-1981. The Diaconate minutes record that in 1946 the church performed the 'Hymn of Praise' and 'Olivet to Calvary'.



In 1930, there was a Recreation Club on the church field. There was 'animated discussion' on the Diaconate, about the players obeying the church rules. (Appendix Twenty-one) Tennis was played in the area to the west of the lychgate and football to the north; 'because of the slope Hillcliffe rarely lost at home!'

The minutes show that on 13th February, 1932, the Diaconate 'proposed that Rev. Dunster be appointed temporary Deputy Chaplain & the secretary be instructed to write to Rev. H. Chalmers to this effect'. On 27th Oct 1935- 'Rev C E Wright be appointed Deputy Chaplain'. It is likely that the chaplains helped the pastor by taking some of the burial services.

World War Two

To those who gave their lives in the Second World War and are buried at Hillcliffe we owe our undying gratitude. They are:-

Joseph Franklin Ellis. Lance Corporal 3654693 South Cheshire Regiment died 13th September 1940, aged 29 (Grave New Part 18.12).

Edgar Cotton. Sergeant (observer) 989012 Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve died 1st March 1942, aged 21 (Grave New Part 20.16).

Eric Johnson. Sergeant (air gunner) 1062598 Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve died 13th March 1942, age unknown (Grave Old Part 8.35).

William Barnes Hayes. Signaller 2387713 Royal Corps of Signals died 29th December 1944, age unknown (Grave New Part 24.3).

R.E.Rustage. Private 14064894 Royal Army Pay Corps died 6th January 1947, age 18 (Grave New Part 17.8).

<https://www.cwgc.org/find/find-war-dead/results/?cemetery=HILLCLIFFE%20BAPTIST%20CEMETERY>

It is evident that two men who joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve (RAFVR) died within two weeks of each other in 1942. The details are not recorded. An RAF historian asked "Why did men join the RAFVR and was all the time, effort and expense devoted to it by the Air Ministry and themselves repaid in the end?" He concluded that men joined for a mixture of reasons. In its early days a big motive must have been the golden opportunity it offered to young men of small means, to learn to fly. Edgar and Eric are not recorded as pilots but Eric was a wireless operator as well as being an air gunner.

People lived through a stressful time as an entry in the minutes of 29th October 1940 shows. Mr Dennett of Hillcliffe asked 'for the Council to supply an Air Raid [Shelter] & to offer land for that purpose'. There is no evidence that the council took up the request and offer.

Food production was vital and in July [1943] 'it was decided to grant a small portion of Ground next to the Caretaker's Fence, to the Church as a vegetable plot; all the work to be done by the young people under instructions by the officers of the Church & school'.

There was also tragedy at home with the death of Rev. Chalmers in 1943.

In November 1943 Rev. Thornton was thanked for his services and asked to continue as deputy. Then in 1944 it is noted that Rev. Stanley W Stanford should 'be appointed Chaplain to officiate at the burials in the Hillcliffe Burial Ground and that he shall be entitled to a Fee of 10/- when officiating & 5/- when his services are not required'. It is not clear when he was appointed as pastor.

In 1944 the Deacons' meeting minutes record the 'very unsatisfactory attendances of the choir members at church services. Attention was called to church rules nos.10 & 11' (Appendix Twenty-one).

In 1945 the deacons proposed that the Baptist Union Corporation Limited become Trustees, which defused tensions between the trustees and the church, over issues such as who had the authority to appoint the pastor. On 25th October 1949 this was enacted in the Charity Commission Subjoined Scheme approval (Appendix Twenty-two). The Baptist Union pointed out in 1981 that the Order of the Scheme is very explicit as to closed membership. This was a remaining principle of the Particular Baptists of the seventeenth century. In those days they would only share communion with 'the elect' who had been baptised by full immersion. Since 1996, the church has had the additional category of associate (non-baptised) member with all the privileges and responsibilities of full membership except the right to vote on constitutional matters and the appointment of a new pastor.

On 23rd April 1947, the Secretary was instructed 'to write to Rev. S. W. Stanford re inconvenience [he caused] in changing times etc. of Funeral after arrangements being made' Rev Stanford continued to chair and sign minutes until 18 June 1952.

At the beginning of 1947, because of an exceptionally harsh winter, there was a 'fuel crisis' and the Deacons 'unanimously agreed to close the church (chapel) for the present and conduct the services in the schoolroom'. Another issue discussed was how to 'increase attendance at Church meetings' and it was agreed that 'each Deacon [was] to visit 12 members with a view to increase not only our Church meeting attendances but also the Sunday Service attendances'.

Come and see what the LORD has done,
He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God".

Psalm 46:8-10

Chapter Nine – TWENTIETH CENTURY (second half)

Pastors' Timeline

1955 – 1958 Rev. Tom Marriott



1960 – 1964 Rev. David Hodges



1965 – 1969 Rev. Brian Payne



1970 – 1976 Rev. John Newton



1976 – 1983 Mr Ernest Clipsham



1984 - 1987 Mr Andrew Mullns



1988 –1995 Mr Jess Greenwood



1996 – 2010 Rev. Bill Eugster



The Twentieth century in general, and the second half in particular, was a time of numerous committee meetings in the church. From May 1952 to July 1958 there was even a committee producing minutes of choir meetings, with a President and Vice-Presidents elected. It is not

surprising that some folk started a mild rebellion. On 2nd July 1963 'Mr J Lomas proposed that the [Deacons'] meeting be arranged to terminate at 10.00 p.m. and not carry on any later. Mr Hodges seconded the motion and it was agreed to unanimously'!

This is a period within the memory of current Hillcliffe members and so some of the comments in this history are hear-say. However, I can verify that it is the memory of honest, reputable folk.

On 13th August 1955 Tom Marriott was appointed pastor. Mr. Marriott was from Australia where, apparently, he had a fiancée. She came over to Warrington and was not impressed (with the weather) and so the relationship ended. Mr. Marriott caused some upset by marrying a girl who had been the fiancée of the senior deacon's grandson.

Rev. David J. Hodges was appointed pastor in 1960. He resigned in 1964 to become pastor at Swindon Church.

The church had a Parents' Association and the minutes of meetings in the 1950s and 60s show that it was responsible for organising the Harvest Festival, Christmas Fair, Sunday School Outing, Nativity Play, Rose Queen and in order to raise money it ran Domino and Beetle Drives. After the Association was disbanded, Hillcliffe Highlights reported that the church would no longer run fund raising events.

Hillcliffe has always supported local Christian organisations and projects, such as Youth For Christ and Active Hope. The church also gave directly to those in need. On 5th Jan 1965 'It was decided to continue to pay Mr Moss [the caretaker] and make a small gift to Mrs Moss for her good work during her husband's illness'.

On 15th August 1965 Rev. Brian A. Payne was inducted as minister. Three years later, on 9th January 1969, a tragedy struck when Rev. Payne was killed in a road traffic accident. He was driving his three wheeled Robin Reliant car, coming back from a pastoral visit to Risley Prison, when the car skidded on the ice and crashed into an Oil Tanker. The whole community was devastated and, at a special memorial service on Monday 13th January, led by the Rev Sidwell from Jesmond Road Baptist Church, Coventry, 'a congregation of about 300 of all denominations attended'.

In a Baptist community the voice (or vote) of one person can have a marked influence. This was demonstrated in September 1969 when Rev. Keenan preached with a view, on Sunday 14th. The congregation in the morning unanimously agreed that Rev. Keenan should be invited to be the next pastor, but at the evening service there was one vote against and one abstention. As Rev. Keenan had had two other approaches, he declined the verbal invitation to become Hillcliffe's next pastor. Two weeks later, the church secretary wrote to 'a young man who had served overseas, inviting him to speak'. This young man, (of 61 years of age) was John Newton, who was subsequently appointed as pastor. His induction took place on the 14th November 1970. He was in post for six years and remained a prominent member at Hillcliffe until his death at the age of 100. Members of his family are still a faithful part of the fellowship to this day.

In November 1969 discussions took place about appointing two pastors to minister jointly for Warrington/Salem; Latchford; and Hillcliffe Baptist Churches. There was a discussion about open membership in 1971, which would have allowed Christians who were not baptised as

adults, to become members at Hillcliffe. The vote for open membership on the 16th February, failed by one vote. In April of that year, Hillcliffe voted to join the Warrington Fellowship of Baptist Churches with Rev. John Newton and Rev. Robert Hughes as pastors.

John Newton's experiences as a missionary are reported elsewhere (see page 14) but it can be recorded here that he brought enthusiasm for evangelism and Sunday School teaching, to Hillcliffe. He organised an area visitation scheme, whereby members visited local residents in the evenings, to spread the Gospel. But even the most enthusiastic minister can find resistance in the church. The minutes record that 'certain members had requested that services end promptly', and in reply 'Rev. Newton undertook to watch times, bearing in mind that a prompt start would assist an earlier finish.'

Hillcliffe functioned in the real world of employment conflicts in the 1970s.

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/eb001235/full/html?skipTracking=true>

In May 1973, Mr G. C. Moss, the long-standing Caretaker and Sexton, who lived in Chapel House, retired and Mr Jim Heavey was appointed. His pay was £15.50 a week, plus Chapel House rent and rates free. However, within a short time 'complaints from some church members [were received] of his attitude to them if they approached him at his home'. In June 1975 inflation was quoted in the minutes at nearly fifty percent. Mr Heavey's stipend came under review and it was decided that there 'might come a time when we should have to do without a sexton or caretaker'. In April 1978 Mr Heavey was given 12 months' notice but Mrs Heavey was to continue as cleaner while they rented Chapel House. In February 1979, Mr and Mrs Ravenscroft moved into Chapel House as sexton and caretaker, but by January 1983 there were problems. 'Two serious errors in digging of wrong graves' were reported in the minutes of the church meeting and 'disrespect [had been] shown to mourners when Colin [Ravenscroft] appeared at the church porch in his working clothes [during a funeral].' But employment relations were difficult in those days and it was not until January 1995 that 'Mr and Mrs Ravenscroft left Chapel House...[and] due to the unkempt state... a firm was asked to clear and clean the property'. Since then Chapel House has been used as meeting rooms and church offices.

National issues, not only relating to employment but also to power strikes, affected the church in the 1970s. An entry in the minutes in January 1974 at the height of the Power Crisis, stated that 'the lights in the church could [only] be used up to 6 hours per week'. During this crisis the question of discontinuing the evening service was raised but not implemented.

<https://www.history.com/topics/1970s/energy-crisis>

In April 1976 Rev. Newton retired and six months later Mr. Ernest Clipsham was appointed.

One of the main national issues at that time was youth unemployment and in October 1977 the Diaconate discussed whether 'the Fellowship [should] have a job creation scheme' (minimum of 12 weeks work for 10 people) to maintain the graveyard. The scheme started, but then petered out and in 1978 part of the field was sold to D. W. Ashall for £4000. It is now owned by Warrington Borough Council (H M Land Registry Entry CH 244317). By January 1980 the fence dividing the grounds was in a dangerous condition and therefore it was removed. A new post and wire fence, backed by quickthorn hedge was proposed but never installed.



Opening of the Link 1984



Outdoor Service 1985



Communion Table 1905

Major building work took place in 1983 when the sanctuary and the school room were joined and a new entrance was created on the south side. All of this renovation was severely tested on 7th June 1983, when a storm caused severe flooding. Water built up in a spoil tip to the west of the chapel and then ran down across a neighbour's field and flooded a house in Lynwood Avenue. The church then had the expense of laying new flood drains to prevent a future disaster.

On 9th June 1984, the church celebrated the opening and dedication of the 'Link'. The eventual cost was £49,000.

Two weeks later, Andrew Mullns, a third-year student at the Northern Baptist College was invited to become student-pastor. He was married to Gwen, and remained at Hillcliffe for three years. After his Service of Ordination on 25th July 1987, he moved to Sandon Road Baptist Church, Stafford.

On 5th March 1988, Rev. Jess Greenwood became pastor. He was initially a member at Doal's Baptist Church in Bacup and had been minister at Olivet Baptist Church in Morecombe. The Minister's stipend at that time was £11,000 (plus free housing and rates). One remembers Rev. Greenwood reciting his sermon from the pulpit at the front of the chapel with the pipe-organ behind. Unfortunately, his wife Winifred died on 5th January 1993. He retired in 1995 and his final sermon was on 23rd July.

In 1992, with eighty-six members in the church, two 'House Groups' were started, with eight to ten regular attenders in each group. Today there are nine groups with about seventy regular attenders. They are the backbone of the church's pastoral care.

One has to admire the ability of the church to achieve these innovations. Church members will appreciate how difficult it can be to make changes. One example at Hillcliffe caused the writing of a letter to the Diaconate in May 1993. 'Disquiet was expressed at the moving of the communion table on some Sundays', and the debate when the pews were replaced by chairs, can only be imagined.

On 31st August 1996 Rev. William (Bill) Eugster began his pastorate. He had trained at Spurgeon's College, London, moving to Zurich, Switzerland to study for a Masters degree in Theology. He was a minister with a great pastoral heart and led the church for fourteen years, as well as working with the Ministerial Recognition Committee of the North-West Baptist Association During this time the members enjoyed Church Weekends Away; country walks; expeditions to Switzerland and Bill co-led a short mission to Tanzania. His sabbatical in 2002, focusing on pastoral care, was spent in the chaplaincy at the Mayo Clinic, USA and

Aintree Hospital, Liverpool. The church released him for short periods to minister in Tamil Nadu, southern India, where he trained pastors for further ministry.

During this time, Hillcliffe continued to respond to international disasters and among many other appeals, the minutes in November 1996 record that 'It was proposed by Mrs Wood that we hold a special appeal for relief in Rwanda'.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rwandan_genocide

Towards the end of the twentieth century there was a detailed record of how the church membership was growing.

Membership	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Active	40	48	58	66	75	84	91	96	103	100
Non active	6	7	5	4	3					
Non resident	4	4	4	4	4					
Baptisms	0	5	6	4	3	5	4	4	2	0

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 2: 41

Chapter Ten – BUILDINGS

The earliest report of Hillcliffe's chapel building is an account in 'Nonconformist chapels in Cheshire 1819-1820'. The report 'states distinctly that the site of the chapel was purchased in 1656 and the building immediately erected. The freehold, which is about 400 yards in depth and 100 yards wide in the broadest part, comprehends altogether the Meeting-house, a dwelling -house, a burial ground (which measures 81 yards by 25, and is occupied with tombs and gravestones) and a large plot of pasture land. The original place of worship was long and narrow, measuring 48 feet by 18, but in 1801 it was widened 12 feet'. An artist's impression of worship at Salendine Nook in 1689 gives a good idea of how Hillcliffe meeting house would have appeared in the seventeenth century.



Worship in a Barn



First Meeting House

Since the first document mentioning the building of a chapel at Hillcliffe, there have been many renovations and extensions. Rev. Abraham Kenworthy asserted that the first chapel in 1663 was built of stone but it is more likely to have been timber-framed 'wattle and daub'. The earliest representation of the chapel also shows chapel house. However, the written documents do not mention the house. The suggestion that 'the upper part of the building was made to appear as an ordinary dwelling house', in the days of Nonconformist persecution, seems to be a romantic fable. Kenworthy states that 'during the pastorate of Mr Hayes a new minister's house was built'. This would set the date at about 1730. Mr Hayes loaned seven pounds towards the cost. An entry in the church accounts states- 'Agreed with Mr Hayes our pastor that he is to live in ye house allowing thirty shillings a year towards paying him seven pounds with interest being so much out of pockitt (sic) which he hath laid out in building of ye new house at Hill Cliffe.' In 1735 the loan was five pounds, recorded as- 'the church on January 6th of that year paid ye use of 5 pounds to Mr Hayes 5s. 0d.'

It is likely that the meeting house initially had a thatched roof. The cost of replacing the thatch is referred to in the church accounts in the early eighteenth century. The first purchase of slates is recorded in the accounts of 1723 and the expense of 3s 6d for white-washing the meeting house is recorded in 1735. A photograph of a seventeenth century meeting house and also the north wall of [Great] Warford church, which was converted from a barn in 1712, give an idea of the architectural stages that Hillcliffe chapel went through. The artist's impression drawn at the end of the nineteenth century is romanticised and lacks any architectural detail.

The church accounts also record the expense of repairing the meeting house [in Warrington] in 1736 and frequent mention of repairs to windows, building of gutters and repairs to walls both in the meeting house and in the graveyard.

Building extensions were mentioned in 1774, but the details were not recorded. Many chapels in the eighteenth century had an internal balcony but there is no mention of this at Hillcliffe. It is unclear when the (old) Sunday School room was added where the new vestry now stands. However, the basic chapel, old Sunday School room and minister's house seem to have comprised Hillcliffe's buildings in the eighteenth century



Seventeenth Century Barn



Eighteenth Century chapel



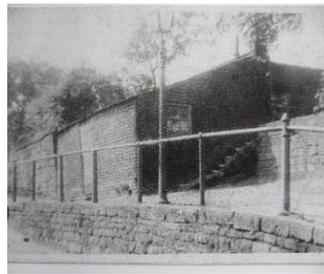
Artist's Impression

In 1800-01 the chapel was extended and there is a list of donations in the church archives which shows that more than forty people donated between 2s 6d and £7 10s 0d. At some time, unspecified, a new Sunday School building was built to the west of the main chapel. Wilks states that the (new) schoolroom, was later taken down and set back a considerable distance of several feet. At the same time an extension for the Sunday School was 'erected on the same side and separated from the chapel by sliding partitions, so that by opening these 80 more persons could find seating accommodation. The cost of 100 guineas was met by private subscriptions and no public appeal was made'.

The Baptist Magazine records that in 1841 the old chapel was enlarged and modernized. This is stated as the date that 'in digging for the foundation, a large baptistry of stone, well cemented, was discovered'. Kenworthy states that the cost was nearly £500, with only the back wall of the previous building remaining.



19th century Chapel



Stables



Original Pulpit

Then in 1847 a new minister's house was erected and in 1885 it was decided to build a larger (new) schoolroom at a cost of £300. The accounts in 1876 show that £62 19s 9d was spent on a 'new building'. This may have been the new school room. At that time £18 10s 10d was also spent on 'repairing house'. Relative costs have changed greatly when one considers that the Rev. Hughes' salary at that time was £99 16s 0d per annum.

In 1893 the records show that 'for some years, the back (south) wall behind the pulpit had been giving way and had become dangerous. This was the only part of the old chapel left standing in 1841 when the previous rebuilding took place'. Apparently when the back wall was taken down and rebuilt, this considerably enlarged the chapel.

It is an interesting ecclesiological phenomenon that a congregation will often welcome a new building or extension but be very resistant to a small change within an existing chapel. This may well have been the case when in the 1890s the straight-back (box) pews, still present in [Great] Warford church, were replaced with modern pitch pine seats (still pews to us) which were finally removed in 2004 and sold for about £1000. Thankfully in the twenty-first century there is the flexibility of comfortable chairs. What a shame that the pulpit, from which so many sermons had been preached was ‘unfit for salvage’.



Box Pews (19th)



Pitch Pine Seats (20th)

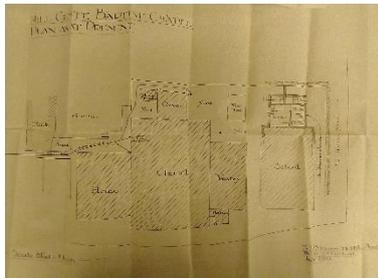


Chairs (21st Century)

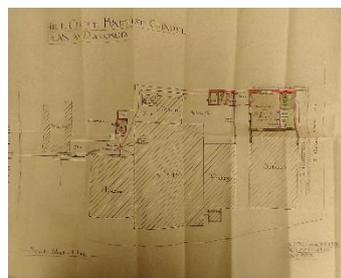
Also, in the 1890s the old schoolroom was rebuilt and converted into a minister’s vestry. The roof was renewed and a new heating apparatus was installed at a total cost of nearly seven hundred pounds.

In 1923 a pipe organ, with the necessary housing, was installed and there were proposals for renovations in 1925. It is interesting to note that Chapel House had an outside toilet across the yard at that time.

Hillcliffe’s Sunday School continued to grow and in 1958/9 it was again necessary to build an extension to the schoolroom.



Building plan 1925



Proposed Renovations

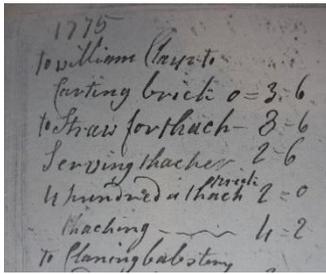


Building plan 1959

Stables

In 1715 the church accounts record that on ‘Aug 20. Received of friends and with what I have given myself towards ye building ye stable 12s 4d’. But it was not until 1718 that ‘16 foot of boards for a door for the stable’ was purchased for 1s 6 1/2d. The cost of ‘bars, nailes (sic) and making’ was 1s 4d and there was an additional cost of 2d for ‘carrying ye stable door to ye meeting house’. The stable had a thatched roof and renewing this was mentioned as an expense until at least 1777. One can imagine the church members riding to Hillcliffe for the Sunday service. Some members travelled from as far afield as Chester. The stables probably remained until 1945, when the church minutes record that ‘the Trustees are to be thanked for

removing the old stable at a cost of £150'. However, there is a postcard showing the stables and it is suggested that the building was dismantled prior to 1931.



Thatching 1775



Memorial



Old Front of the Chapel

It is difficult to appreciate that in 1980 access to the Chapel was on the north side of the building. But when one walks around the outside of the chapel today, one can understand the criticisms from the 1980s. The approach was described as ‘very narrow and congested with steep access’ and criticised as ‘not readily identifiable as a Christian Meeting place’. The car parking in those days was limited to the lower (road) level.

The church meeting minutes describe that the ‘existing kitchen facilities are very poor and kitchen in poor structural condition. Existing toilet facilities are minimal and are extremely poor and badly situated’.

Therefore, it was proposed that ‘the existing kitchen, toilet, vestry and old Sunday School block (where the new vestry now stands) should be demolished. The church and the new Sunday School block should remain. A link block should be built with an entrance into the side of church; the main entrance (should be) into the Link facing southwards- estimated cost £32,500’. Then in 1982 a new access road was constructed to the current carpark and in 1984 the Link was opened at a cost of £40-49,000



Entrance before 1984



School Room 1955



Chapel and old vestry 1980



Arial View 1990



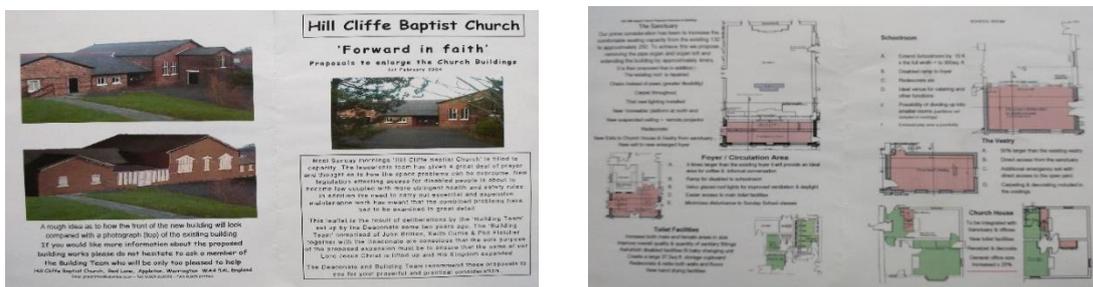
Extension 1991



Outdoor Service 1995

The next development was an extension to the west of the Sunday School Room, in April 1991. The estimated cost of £70-75,000 was again well below the actual cost of £86,700.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century Hillcliffe had the enviable problem of a congregation too large for the chapel. Extra seating was put in the aisles but this was an obvious fire-escape hazard. Therefore, the church embarked on the most recent, major enlargement of the chapel, with removal of the organ and its housing, and extension to the south such that the baptistry which was at the foot of the pulpit steps is now almost in the centre of the sanctuary. The orientation of the chapel was reversed so that the seating now faces north. The cost of this major development was in the region of £300,000 and after a period of many months meeting in Bridgewater High School, the church moved back into the renovated building in 2004. Today the sanctuary measures 60 by 35 feet which is two and a half times the area of the original building of 1650.



New Build 2004

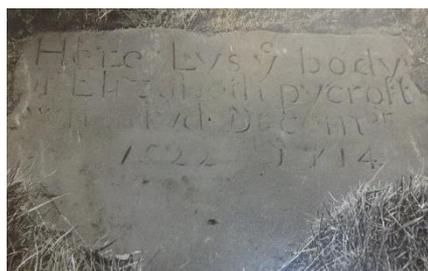


Hillcliffe Today

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

Matthew 7: 24-25

Chapter Eleven – BURIAL GROUND



Elizabeth Pycroft (5)



Elizabeth Witter (8)

The burial ground was initially 84 by 25 yards and the size of the whole site was 400 by 100 yards.

Some Early Gravestone Inscriptions at Hillcliffe (My own numbering in date order)

- 1) 1357
- 2) 1414
- 3) 1523
- 4) 1599

1-4 quoted by Kenworthy but there is no evidence to substantiate the claim.

- 5) HERE LYS Ye BODY
OF ELIZABETH PYCROFT WHO
DIED DECEMBER 6th 1522
The date should be Dec 22 1714

Apparently, Whitley witnessed a former sexton making Dec 22 into 1522

- 6) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF
WILLIAM BATHO OF CHESTER
WHO DIED NOVEMBER 13TH IN YEAR
1584

Quoted by Kenworthy but his will is preserved in Chester dated 1685

- 7) THOMAS SLATER LAYLAND 1602
A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

Quoted by Kenworthy to justify an early seventeenth century pastor, but found nowhere else. However, there are gravestones is to William and Daniel Slater of Leyland (a town in Lancashire).

- 8) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF ELIZABETH WIDOW OF JOHN WITTER OF
NETHERTON WHO WAS INTERRED OCTOBER THE 21 1622

The style of the first 2; the date of John Witter's gravestone; and the will of Elizabeth Witter all strongly suggest that the true date is 1692.

- 9) HERE L[IETH] THE BOD[Y OF KAT]HERINE WIF[E OF WIL]LIAM HA[LL OF NE]WTON W[HO WAS BUR]IED THE [- OF FE]BRUARY. 1[62]3
 A contributor to Earwaker's book states that 'the two middle figures of the date upon the tomb of Katherine Hall appear to have been tampered with and afterwards effaced, but I think it is probable, from the style of lettering, that the year was 1623'. The grave is no longer visible and circumstantial evidence suggests that such an early date is unlikely.
- 10) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF DOROTHY WIFE OF RALPH JONES OF FRODSHAM WHO WAS INTERRED 1622.
 This is no longer visible and the evidence is against such an early date.
- 11) MARIA HESLOP EXIT: FEBR: 1664 -This is accepted as the earliest gravestone.
- 12) JOSHUA SEDDON 1672 – John Seddon is mentioned among the dissenters fined in 1664/5
- 13) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF [Joseph] WITTER SON OF JOHN WITTER INTERRED YE 10 AUG. 1676
- 14) JOHN WITTER DIED THE 10TH AVGVST 1679
- 15) ELIZABETH SEDDON THE WIFE OF JOSHUA SEDDON N(OVEMBER) 1679
- 16) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF THOMAS NAYLOR WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE AUGUST THE 18 ANO DNI 1684 HN SN
- 17) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF JOHN WITTER OF NETHERTON WHO DECEASED FEBRUARY THE SECOND 1688.
- 18) EBENEZER FABIUS, 1691 – the father of Daniel Fabius of Liverpool
- 19) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF SARAH WIFE OF JOHN PYCROFT OF MANCHESTER BURIED THE 7TH OF AUGUST 1691 or 1694
 IN THE 50 or 56 YEARE OF HER AGE
- 20) MARY HOWFORT (HOWORTH) OF LOSTOCK WAS BURIED APRIL 21 1692
- 21) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF DOROTHY JONES OF FRODSHAM WHO WAS INTERRED THE 10 JUNE 1692
- 22) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF THAT FAITHFUL AND EMINENT SERVANT OF CHRIST THOMAS LOWE, PASTOR OF THE BAPTIZED CONGREGA

TION AT WARRINGTON, WHO DIED AT DRAKELEY YE 21 FEBRY, 1695
AND IN THE 62 YEAR OF HIS AGE

23) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF RALPH PYCROFT OF MANCHESTER BURIED
THE 7TH AUGUST 1696 THE 56 YEAR OF HIS AGE

24) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF HANNAH FABIUS WHO DIED JUNE THE 7TH
1702/9 – the mother of Daniel Fabius who founded the Baptist Church in Liverpool

25) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF HANNAH AMERY OF CHESTER
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE 2ND DAY OF DECEMBER 1709

Rev Matthew Henry, a minister in Chester, records in his diary attending her funeral on December 6th as she was his children's schoolmistress. He states that 'she was a very holy, good woman. She was ready in the scriptures and delighted in good discourse' Rev. Henry preached her funeral sermon on Psalm 73.24 "Thou shall guide me with thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory". Hannah Amery's father, according to Rev. Henry, was 'the first to be buried at Hillcliffe', but no date is given. Richard Amery is one of the signatories of the Warrington letter of 1654.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Henry

26) HERE LYETH THE BODY
OF JOHN PARKER, PASTOR,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE,
SEPT. 3RD, 1716.

27) M.S.

SAMUELIS SIMSON
CESTRIENSIS VIRI OBLINDOLIS (OB INDOLIS)
ET MORUM FACILITATEM (FACILITATUM)
OMNIBUS NEC IMMERITO
CHARI CIVIS SPECTATAE FIDEI
MERCATORIS SEDULI ET PROBI
MARITI OLIM DILECTI (DELECTI) ADMODUM
AT NUNC HEU DESIDERATI
CHRISTIANI DENIQUE NON NISI
SUBSELLII, QUI IN CHRISTO PLACIDE
OBDORMIVIT DIE VII MO. MARTII
AD 1719 AETAT SUAE 59
POSUIT MOERENS UXOR, EIUS
EX. PARTE TANTUM SUPERSTES.

In sacred memory of Samuel Simson, a man of Chester, who had natural and good-natured qualities in everyone's opinion and not without cause; to a citizen of grace; of proven faith; an honest merchant and attentive husband; once much-loved but now alas a dearly missed Christian, finally in no way condemned, who fell asleep into Christ's peace on 7th day of

March 1719 in his 59th year, his grieving wife erected this, surviving from that time. (S.E.K. translation)

28) HERE LYETH THE BODY OF MR. ROWLAND HALL OF LACHFORD (sic)
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 3RD OF JANRY (sic) 1722
IN YE 75TH YEAR OF HIS AGE

29) FRANCIS TURNER, LATE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT HILL-
CLIFF DIED SEPTEMBER 16TH 1727 AGED 73
'SOUNDNESS OF FAITH, TRUE LEARNING, LOVE AND FEAR
DWELL IN THAT SOUL' WHOSE DUST IN PEACE LIES HERE

30) SUBTER HOC SAXUM
THOS. WAINWRIGHT, SEN.
AMICUS ILLE NOSTER, STERNERE
SE SOMNUM FACTUM EST ILLE
AUTEM PRAEDICATORIA FUISSE
IN CONGRESSUS BAPTISTUS
PER WARING

Under this stone lies Thos. Wainwright, senior, our friend, who chose this resting place after being praedicatoria (preacher/prophet) in the Baptist congregation, near Warrington. (S.E.K translation). Kenworthy translated praedicatoria as 'minister' to justify including Thomas Wainwright as a pastor at Hillcliffe. He died in 1772. See page 32 for explanation of Thomas Wainwright (1) who was pastor and Thomas Wainwright (2) whose gravestone this must have been.

31) IN MEMORY OF
JOHN SWINTON, OF LOWER WALTON,
LATE PASTOR OF THIS PLACE, WHO DEPARTED
THIS LIFE OCT 13TH 1825, IN THE 65TH YEAR
OF HIS AGE

32) SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REV. JOHN THOMPSON, LATE PASTOR
OF THE BAPTIST CHAPEL OF THIS PLACE,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE, NOV 21ST 1825,
IN THE 79TH YEAR OF HIS AGE.
HE LIVED AND DIED CONFIDING IN THE MERCIES
OF HIS REDEEMER.

33) IN MEMORY OF
JAMES BRADFORD,
THE FAITHFUL AND LABORIOUS PASTOR
OF THIS CHURCH,
WAS ORDAINED OCT. 12TH 1820
AND WAS CALLED TO HIS REST

ON THE 10TH FEBRUARY 1830.
AGED 44 YEARS.
HIS LIFE WAS EXEMPLARY; HIS MINISTRY
USEFUL; HIS DEATH HAPPY.

34) REV. ABRAHAM KENWORTHY
FOR 37 YEARS PASTOR OF
HILL CLIFFE BAPTIST CHURCH,
BORN NOVEMBER 2ND, 1812.
DIED MARCH 4TH, 1892.

35) IN LOVING MEMORY OF
SAMUEL KENWORTHY
THE BELOVED PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH,
WHO FELL ASLEEP IN JESUS,
AUGUST 3RD 1892
AGED 46 YEARS

Some Epitaphs of the Faithful

36) 1711- She lived by faith,
And now is blest
With Christ in everlasting rest.

37) Christ left his radiant throne on high,
Left the bright realms of bliss,
And came on earth to bleed and die;
Was ever love like this?

38) Affliction sore, long time I bore,
Physicians were in vain,
Till God did please, and gave me ease,
And freed me from my pain.

39)
Here the peaceful infants, without
Knowing what vexation means,
Lie still and are at rest. They
Bade adieu to time and terrestrial
Things. Did our new come strangers
Begin to sup the cup of life, but, tasting

The bitterness, turn away their heads,
 And refuse the draught? Was this the
 Cause why the babes only opened
 Their eyes, looked upon the light, and
 Withdrew unto the more inviting
 Voyage, and were no sooner launched than
 They arrived at the haven?

40) Over the grave of a young man accidentally killed :-
 Just as he bloomed, he drooped and fell,
 He had not time to bid his friends farewell,
 Reader, prepare, make no delay,
 God only knows thy dying day.

41) Earliest gravestone currently visible is of Peter Stirrup 1766

42) A tragedy of childbirth on the gravestone

SACRED

To the memory of the Rev James Hemsley
 who departed this life July 19th 1831 aged 43 years
 Ann wife of the Rev James Helmsley of Warrington
 And their infant twins who departed this life April 28th 1818
 in the 36th year of her age

43) Also of note is the gravestone to James and Mary Wilkinson who left Hillcliffe in
 1848 to found the Baptist Church at Latchford.

44) James Kenworthy who wrote A History of the Baptist Church at Hillcliffe c1900



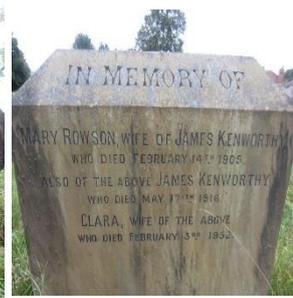
Peter Stirrup 1766
 Earliest visible grave



Rev James Hemsley
 Childbirth tragedy



Wilkinsons
 Of Latchford Baptists

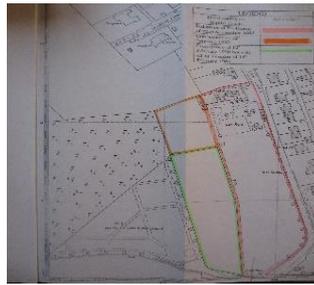


James Kenworthy
 History of Hillcliffe

Hillcliffe Land



Lychgate



Plan



Stone Wall on Red Lane

During the years 1860 to 1870 a stone wall was built to enclose the burial-ground, at cost of several hundred pounds. However, there must have been a wall much earlier as there is a record of the burial-yard wall needing repair as early as February 1721.

In 1920 the area outlined in green and orange on the Plan was purchased from Charles Lyons. Around 1926 the stone wall along Red Lane was erected.

The Lychgate was built in 1926 at a cost of £440. In September 1968 it was damaged by Grogan's, the contractors building the reservoir at the top of the hill. It was recommended that 'the top of lychgate be demolished & new gates installed'. The insurance claim took a long time to complete and the lychgate was only replaced in April 1971.

The church minutes record that in 1973 'it was decided that the kerbs around graves should be removed for ease of grass-cutting'. Some of the kerbs were inscribed and thirty written objections were received.

In 1978 part of the field was sold to D. W. Ashall for £4000. It is now owned by Warrington Borough Council (H M Land Registry Entry CH 244317). Also, in 1978, Mr Smith of Hill Foot farm applied to rent the field.

On 18th February 1985 the land bordered in green on the plan above, was sold.

In 2002, in preparation for the most recent enlargement of the chapel, 'it was accepted by Warrington Borough Council in a discussion on 28th March that the land edged pink and orange now constitutes the curtilage of Hillcliffe. The Green Belt line was anomalous and it should have excluded the Hillcliffe curtilage'.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.

Matthew 28: 5-7

Chapter Twelve – SUNDAY SCHOOL and JUNIOR CHURCH

Unfortunately, there is little information about the dedicated work of the Sunday School that must have taken place at Hillcliffe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There was initially an old schoolroom which was replaced by the vestry and therefore must have been of small size. There is no precise record of when the (new) schoolroom to the west of the chapel was built. The first mention of the (new) schoolroom was in the early nineteenth century, when 'it was taken down and set back a considerable distance of several feet'. There was some contiguity with the chapel as they were separated by a partition which allowed eighty further seats for worshippers. This suggests a schoolroom that could seat up to eighty scholars.

In the years 1823 to 1834, an average of eight children were dedicated at Hillcliffe each year. At that time there were fourteen students in First Class Girls and three Bible, and two Testament classes, suggesting about seventy students in total. In 1838/9 the church had 116 adult members and 100 children attended Sunday School. Of 21 children on one page of the attendance register, every child attended every week for six months. By 1910 the numbers had increased to 126 children, with one teacher to fifteen children and three teachers to forty-five infants. There were forty-two young men attending, who were taught by four teachers. (Appendix Twenty-three)

In 1885 it was decided to build a larger (new) schoolroom at a cost £300. This was a time of 'revival' nationally, especially among the Nonconformist churches. In addition to the evangelistic crusades in the major cities at the end of the nineteenth century, there was a steady increase in the number of members and children.

The Sunday School at Hillcliffe was very active in the twentieth century. The minutes of the meetings give a good idea of the industry, not just through the numbers of teachers and scholars, but through all their activities which are not traditionally associated with Sunday School today. These activities included The Cradle Roll, The Sunday School Female Benevolent Society and numerous charity collections such as door-to-door collections for Dr Barnardo's Campaign in 1931.



Hillcliffe Sunday School 1964



Attendance Stamps

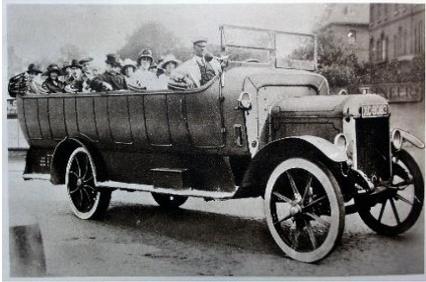


Cradle Roll

A report on the Sunday School Female Benevolent Society (16th January 1827- 1861) shows that this was based on the payment of 2d. per month. The relief amounted to four weeks' pay at 7s. 0d. per week. There was also a funeral allowance of £7.0.0. The Benevolent Society operated in a similar way to a mutual society and it was out of the monthly payments that the relief was paid. In the first half of the twentieth century, Hillcliffe organised a similar Sunday School Sick and Burial Society (1893-1950).

The Minute Book of the Sunday School Annual Meeting from 1st December 1924 to 27th April 1943, shows that there had been a decline in the number of children in the Sunday School after the First World War. In 1924 the average attendance was 30 children and 12 teachers.

One of the great events in the Sunday School year has been the Summer Outing and since the advent of photography this has often been recorded visually. In 1925 a charabanc was hire for a trip to Reddish Hall. Competitive games, entertainment and food were simple but, as many of us remember, the excitement was immense. Other Summer Outings from Hillcliffe were by bus and train to Southport.



Charabanc



Rose Queen



Walking Day

The teachers also had Supper Outing by charabanc to Chester. The Rose Queen was also a special day for the girls. They could also wear their best clothes for Stockton Heath Walking Day, with the possibility of some extra pocket money. However, as the photograph above shows, the weather was always unpredictable. The involvement of Hillcliffe each year in Stockton Heath Walking Day continues to this day. It is an uplifting experience, when crowds of people line the streets to watch the Christian walk of witness.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walking_day

On 24th April 1927 the committee discussed the Sunday School Anniversary day. In the morning there was a children's service; a flower service in the afternoon and an evening service as well. One wonders whether three services on the Anniversary Sunday would be acceptable today.

The Sunday School had its own funds and in May 1927 they decided 'to purchase a chair in memory of Hillcliffe's pastors, to go behind the communion table (£8/10/0) Inscription- To the Glory of God and in Grateful Memory of the Good and faithful ministers who have laboured here. 1927'.

Donations were constantly made to worthy causes such as when, in December 1928, 'It was unanimously decided that the Treasurer send the sum of 2 guineas to the South Wales Miners Distress Fund and to make enquiries regarding Baptist Ministers in the distressed area and report to the teachers with a view to sending one pound to each of these ministers individually.'

http://oro.open.ac.uk/60346/5/Hayes_Redacted_Dissertation%20Final%20Siobhan%20Hayes.pdf

In January 1929, after the Christmas services and festivities were over, a Christmas Tea and Concert was organised, with a silver collection taken for Warrington Infirmary. There was tea at 5pm and a concert at 7pm.



Raikes Medals



Hillcliffe Sunday School 1955

The Summer Treat in 1930 was special because it was the 150th anniversary of the start of the Sunday School movement. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Raikes The Raikes Celebration in Warrington was on the Speedway at Arpley on Sunday 22nd June. <http://www.defunctspeedway.co.uk/warrington.htm> It was proposed that Hillcliffe buy 12 dozen Raikes medals (at 1d each) for sports prizes on Raikes Sunday, 14th September 1930.

Another charity supported by the Sunday School was The Ragged School. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ragged_school Regular collections of toys for Christmas, were made in the 1930s.

The Sunday School had an obligation to keep young people on the right path and on 26th October 1930 there was a Temperance Sunday, following which 'several scholars signed the pledge'. Church members today involved with Warrington Street Pastors might echo this campaign. <https://warringtonstreetpastors.co.uk/>

In March 1935 the committee decided that 'King's Jubilee medals should be purchased for scholars' https://www.ebay.co.uk/b/Silver-Jubilee-George-V-1910-1936-Royal-Medal-Royalty-Collectables/39630/bn_100346451

As war approached for the second time, in May 1938-'we went to Southport & an enjoyable day was spent by young & old scholars & also by the parents which a large number went'.

That year, still ten years before the National Health Service provide medical care free at the point of delivery, 'the Cradle Roll reports were given by Miss Dodd, who emphasised that in 13 years only 2 deaths had occurred' <https://www.chathamsa.org.uk/corps/young-people/cradle-roll/>

Then in September 1939, the reality of a Second World War came to Hillcliffe. 'The Black-out of Windows arrangements left to Mr G Moss. A suggestion forwarded by Mr J Moss to send to men serving in the forces a small book entitled "In the service of the King". Six of these were obtained & it was agreed to give one to the other members who would most probably be called up'. On 5th December 1939- 'Supt. Mr G Moss reported that the school had lost Mr Joe Brocklehurst who was away on M(ilitary) Service, also the secy. Mr G Dooley who was leaving on Dec. 12th for M Service. The hope of the school was that God would take care of our teachers while away from home.'

In 1940/1941 it was reported that 'In view of the war it was decided not to hold a Christmas treat this year'. The Primary School register was 20 girls and 23 boys. Mr G Dunbabin was leaving to join his M(ilitary) forces. In May 1942 'Mrs Wilde reported that Hill Cliffe Sunday School is responsible for the entertainment of servicemen at the [All Services] Club on Wednesday Evening 28/5/42'.

Although there are five World War II servicemen buried at Hillcliffe, there were also tragedies at home. On 11th April 1943, the Sunday School stood in silence as a token of sympathy with Mrs Chalmers & family at the death of the pastor, Rev. H Chalmers.

Scholars took their studies in Sunday School seriously. There were national scripture examinations which required extra tuition, but successful scholars would see their names in the local newspaper.

There have been numerous afternoon and evening clubs for juniors, run by dedicated members. In the early twentieth century Christian Endeavour; Whizz Kids in the 1990s, and Impact and Excite today, are very popular youth groups.

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these".

Matthew 19: 13-14

Chapter Thirteen – SIGNS OF THE TIMES

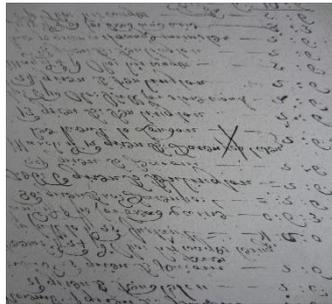
Researching through the Hillcliffe Baptist Church archives, one unearths some startling facts, which emphasise how different life was for our predecessors. Sometimes, however, the surprise is that nothing much changes. Whatever our reaction, the details of our church family's life, over the centuries, gives one cause to pause and think.

Health and Welfare

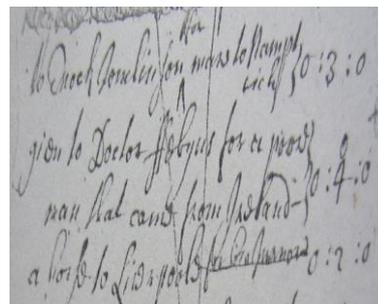
The burial ground records show that in 1802 there were 22 burials -7 adults and 15 children! If one were ever inclined to think that life was better 200 years ago, this fact reminds us of the high child mortality rate in those days. The gravestone of Rev. James Hemsley, a pastor at Salem, who died at the age of forty-three, also records the death of his wife, Ann at the age of thirty-six and their 'infant twins', in 1818. Many of the church members in the nineteenth century seem to have lived to eighty years or more (Appendix Twenty-four) but the problems of general deterioration in mental and physical health with old-age, are ever present and vividly recorded in Appendix Eight (Reminiscence of Rev. John Thompson).



Child Mortality



Charity in Eighteenth Century Accounts



In the absence of not only the NHS but also welfare support, people could find themselves facing destitution. When Hillcliffe's pastor, James Bradford died in 1830, his wife was left with nine children and no income. Members of the Bradford family from Reddish Hall had been faithful members at Hillcliffe for many generations and therefore it is likely that the family were well supported at this difficult time.

Generous Giving

There are numerous entries in the accounts of the early eighteenth century, of money being given to destitute members and others, such as the poor Irishman, looked after by Dr Fabius, in Liverpool. There are numerous entries such as 'gave to a poor man 2s 0d' or 'given Bro. Wm. in his sickness 1s 0d'.

From the nineteenth century, a yearly donation of 10s 0d was made both to the Baptist Union and the Lancashire and Cheshire Home Mission. There were also regular collections for Warrington Infirmary in the days before the National Health Service. In 1827 the Church started a Female Benevolent Society. Initially there were twenty-four ladies who contributed two shillings a month to provide payments in difficult times. In 1893 the Sunday School Sick and Burial Society was formed to provide similar welfare. (Appendix Twenty-five) Today

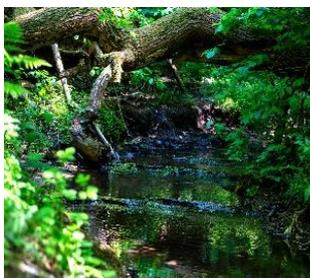
there is a yearly donation of 15% of the Church's General Fund (5% to the Baptist Missionary Society, 5% to Home Mission and 5% to other good causes).

Kenworthy had access to a note from the eighteenth century that 'Mrs Parsons gave to me, Thos. Wainwright, 10 pounds after her death. I am to lay it out as wanted by Mrs. Barbor as I think proper if Mrs. Barbor shall not live to want it, it is to be laid out for the use of the church meeting at hylclift (sic). The above was given me March 3 1760', and later 'The above amount settled and remains due of the legacy left by Mrs. Parsons unexpended £3 14s. 6d.'

Christ will have witnessed many Hillcliffe folk giving their last mite. In our present age of affluence, it is important to remember the self-sacrifice of our predecessors in giving and collecting funds. This is illustrated by the journey that James Bradford made to Liverpool in 1830, to collect funds for the building of a new chapel at Little Leigh. In his case it was not the self-sacrifice of the journey, but the fact that he caught a fatal 'cold', that places the episode in the church's history. An inscription in a nineteenth century Bible at Hillcliffe reads:- **It's not what we gain, but what we give, That measures the worth of the life we live.**

Comforts

Snippets from the old church accounts give some insight into how people's material comforts have improved over the centuries. In 1707 the cash book records 6s. for straw. This is likely to have been to carpet the chapel floor rather than litter the stables. There was obvious joy when the new heating system was installed in the 1890s and cushions were purchased from Messr. Fletcher and Lee at a cost of £25. In those days there was no hot water on tap. A permit was required to draw water, at the cost of one shilling, and the church paid 2s 6d to carry water to fill the baptistry. When the Parents' Association was disbanded in 1965, money held was used to buy an immersion heater for the baptistry. A current member vividly remembers being baptised on a winter's evening in unheated water. But this was better than the seventeenth century, when adults undergoing baptism might well have had a very cold dip in the local river at night.



Dipping Brook



Rhual Baptistry



Baptism Today

Services and Meetings

Baptist services lasted a long time in the seventeenth century. Sometimes there were several sermons, without any music or singing. The oldest record of a Baptist worship service is from 1609, in a letter from Hughe(sic) and Anne Bromhead, who wrote:

The order of the worshippe and government of oure church is . 1. we begynne wth A prayer, after reade some one or two chapters of the Bible gyve the sence thereof, and conferr vpon the same, that done we lay aside oure bookes, and give a solemne prayer- showing that there was an element of house-group study as well as prayer and worship. To keep an eye on the time, an electric clock was put in the chapel by the Parents' Association in 1965. Even more recently there were sometimes mutterings about the length of the services, such as the criticism of John Newton in 1971 (see page 51). It is interesting to note that the Sunday School held three services on their anniversary Sunday, which the children were expected to attend. Whether this would be acceptable today is questionable. If the services could be long, spare a thought for the trustees, deacons and church members who had to sit through lengthy meetings to discuss church issues. Those of us that have been there, can sympathise with Mr. J Lomas when he proposed in the early 1960s, that 'the meeting be arranged to terminate at 10.00 p.m. and not carry on any later'. Mr Hodges seconded the motion and it was agreed to unanimously!

Theology

One Theological issue which caused great fervour in the seventeenth century, but is not appreciated today, is the question of whether Baptists should be 'particular'. The Calvinistic concept of the 'elect' is anathema to almost all Baptists today. Hillcliffe circumvented the Trust Deeds statement that all members must have undergone adult believer's baptism, by creating a category whereby 'associate members' have all the baptised members' rights and responsibilities, except voting for a new pastor and constitutional changes. However, in the eighteenth century a commentator wrote that 'the good people of Hill Cliffe were very particular, and would, I doubt not, carefully eschew everything associated with general redemption, even singing'. Another commentator in the nineteenth century reported that 'the Lancashire Baptists were neither very general or very particular. Sights may be seen and sounds heard in some of their sanctuaries, which would have sorely grieved their ancestors who came down from the Hill Cliffe of Cheshire or the fells of Yorkshire to baptise in the streams of the county'.

Finances

The church's financial reports over the last hundred years contain information about income and expenditure which is too extensive to report in detail. Up until the eighteenth century there was no record of the church's finances, but in times when people's income was very low, wealthy new members to the church, such as Rowland Hall, were written into the church's history because of their rarity. In a congregation without a rich benefactor, charges had to be made, such as the Pew Rents of 1841-1907. (Appendix Twenty-six) These were set at 1s 6d per person, at a time when the church's income for the year was just below £13. The

nineteenth century revival movement increased membership and almost doubled this income over the next thirty years. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_revival

There were ways of increasing income which would seem odd to us today. For example, new members were charged an 'entrance fee' and required to purchase a Church Rule Book for 5s 6d. In 1838 to 1842, ten ladies were fined 2s 6d each for 'not serving steward'. (Appendix Twenty-seven) Maybe this was equivalent to fining the Welcome or Catering Team if they failed to attend!

Youth

The church's attitude towards the children and young people can be gauged by how the Sunday School was organised. Youth clubs and children's group were run by the church throughout the twentieth century and are still very popular today. The 'swinging sixties' was a time of assertiveness by the youth throughout the country and Hillcliffe was not exempt. In May 1964, 'A letter [was] received from the [Youth Club] committee asking permission to raise the number allowed membership and to be allowed to hear a Beat Group once a month'. Two weeks later, 'the matter of the Beat Group was discussed with consideration given to the noise involved - it was decided unanimously that permission would be withheld'.

Other Surprises

One surprising fact that comes out in the early church history is how far apart the members lived. The earliest church members who wrote the letter to Hexham church in 1654 are said to have lived at Reddish; Warrington; Whitley Green; Chester; Liverpool and Weaverham. Many of them would have had to travel considerable distances of up to twenty-five miles to meet and worshiped together. In 1774, the signatories to the Deed of Trustees all lived in areas of Warrington or its immediate surrounding district. However, in the twentieth century, we have the reminiscences of people travelling to church by boat over the Mersey from Bold; a great commitment to fellowship.

Another feature in the early eighteenth century was how far the pastor travelled to conduct services in outlying church plants. One of the main expenses when Rev. Turner was pastor, was the cost of hiring a horse for his peripatetic ministry. 'A horse to Liverpool for Bro. Turnor' (sic) cost 2 shillings' (10 pence).

It is true to say that Hillcliffe tries very hard to live peaceably with everyone, especially its immediate neighbours. One can imagine the anguished discussion in the Diaconate meeting on 25th Oct 1930 when they received a 'petition signed by 49 grave owners that games played on the field adjoining, was causing annoyance. After lengthy discussion it was proposed that the secretary should acknowledge receipt of same but no action be taken other than to ask the officers of the Church to see that all games be played as quietly & reverently as possible'.

Then there is the attitude of the church leadership to social sports. In 1930 there were 'heated discussions' about the conduct of participants of the Recreation Club especially on the tennis courts. The conditions were as follows '1) That nos. 5, 10 and 12 of the Church Rules shall be strictly observed; 2) That only such games shall be played as are approved by the

Deacons; 3) That children are only allowed on the courts when accompanied by a parent or guardian; 4) That on the conclusion of set, should there be players waiting, the players finishing must vacate the court.'

The pastor of course was a man of some standing in the community and it is no surprise that Rev. Jones' wife had a maid-servant in 1920. However, the fact that they had to use an outside toilet across the yard until 1925 puts life in those times into perspective. Then the pastor moved into a manse and a caretaker and his wife lived in Chapel house. They were employed not only to tend the church buildings and graveyard, but also to dig the graves. The problem of dealing with inflation at 50% per year caused a lot of discussion in the Diaconate with the conclusion that there 'might come time when we should have to do without sexton or caretaker'.

But one of the universal characteristics of churches and older Baptist members in particular, is that they do not like change. Surprisingly a new build or renovation may well be acceptable but moving the communion table is not. My tutor at the Northern Baptist College solved this problem by moving the table six inches every week, until it was on the opposite side of the sanctuary and no one complained.

Until the Corona virus pandemic, travel today was swift and easy. But the preachers in past centuries would have had to travel by horse or carriage over rough roads. However, the work was so important that Thomas Tillam made a summer missionary tour of Cheshire in 1653 and numerous pastors from Hillcliffe travelled by horse as far as Liverpool to take a service. Even in the mid-twentieth century a visiting preacher from Widnes needed overnight accommodation when he visited Hillcliffe. Travel may also have been difficult for some of the church members, such as the family who crossed the Mersey each Sunday by boat to come to Hillcliffe. Some of the older gravestones show that Hillcliffe was an important Baptist burial centre for Lancashire and Cheshire. Therefore, let us thank the Lord for all the efforts of these faithful people over three and a half centuries.

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4: 16-18

Chapter Fourteen – TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY



Welcome

Walking Day led by Chris Haig Stuart & Katharine McPhail

And now as we move into our own time, we find the strands of Hillcliffe history connecting with us today. Not only do we see the path behind us but hopefully we see where our present time lies on God's timeline and where our hope will take us in the future. It is well to realise that as we look back at the path laid down by the Baptists community at Hillcliffe, the present-day church is laying the path for those in the future, towards the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God.

There is some difficulty when writing recent history. Members of the church today have their own memories and emotions about events that they were involved in. In the hope that no-one will be uncomfortable with the recording of events, I have only reproduced what is recorded in the church meeting minutes without emphasis or comment.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century Hillcliffe had an enviable problem. Too many people were attending services which created logistical problems, especially from the aspect of fire safety.

In 2002 the church received a substantial donation and therefore discussions began at the church meetings about enlarging the sanctuary and school room and/or increasing the ministry personnel. There was also discussion about creating an eldership and considering a completely new sanctuary building on the playing field area. A questionnaire issued to the members had a poor response (45 replies from 130 members). A building project team set about organising the enlargement of the sanctuary from 132 to 255 seating capacity; 50% increase in the size of the vestry; increasing the length of the school room by 15 feet to create an extra 300 square feet; making the entrance foyer/ circulation area four times larger and creating an entrance from the sanctuary into Chapel House, which underwent internal renovations to provide additional meeting rooms.

In October 2003 Rev. Chris Haig was appointed as part-time pastor with a role in evangelism. He had been inducted as General Secretary of the Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Baptist Churches in 1989. He was part-time pastor for two years. In 2004 Dan Curtis was appointed as Youth and Children's Co-ordinator. He had the vision of the church running a 'Day Camp' for primary school children for a week each summer. This has been very well attended for over twenty years. Dan left in 2007. He founded Active Hope, a Christian charity based in Warrington which aims to provide quality outdoor activities for young people in the area. <http://www.activehope.org/>

John Harper was then employed as Youth Worker. He has been an inspiration to the young people in the church and was involved with the introduction of the Youth Bus in October

2008, which was the basis for the Broomfields Youth Project. "BYP is a Christian youth work charity that supports and signposts young people." It is a multi-award-winning voluntary Christian youth group partnership that seeks to be a signpost and support for young people. It was founded in November 2009 from the 'Youth Bus' initiative and now has its own 'Shack' Youth Centre.

In 2007 Mr Ray Banks was appointed to the ministry team as a part-time associate pastor. He was subsequently supported by the church for ministry training.

To the great sadness of many of the church members, Rev. Bill Eugster resigned in June 2010, to take up an appointment in Glendale Crossing Places, Wooler, Northumberland. At this time there were 133 full and 15 associate members.

Mr Banks resigned in November 2011 following inappropriate behaviour.

<https://www.warringtonguardian.co.uk/news/9419499.appleton-parson-caught-drink-driving/>

In 2012 Mr Stuart McPhail was appointed as pastor and in partnership with his wife Katharine they have ministered over the last eight years. When Stuart and Katharine came to the church, they came as a team, with a very real sense from God of calling to joint and equal ministry together. In January 2018 the church unanimously agreed the new Leadership Team Structure. Stuart and his family spent his sabbatical in 2017, visiting the Uighur people in Northwest China.

Since 2013 the church has benefited from an Annual 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting; Hillcliffe café and a monthly Seniors' Lunch. The church has been part of the Stockton Heath Festival, holding an annual Primary School Gospel Concert and running a Prayer Tent on the festival field. A high point in church events was when John Lennox, Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University, held a 'Question and Answer' event at Hillcliffe on 17th March 2018.

There are many other ministries flourishing among God's people at Hillcliffe. The details are too numerous to list but they include members setting up the Fairtrade stall in Warrington market; ladies running a 'Save the Children' charity shop; establishing 'We are the Church' at the annual Creamfields Festival, and members befriending young men with a prison record trying to make a new start in life.

An example is Peter Hindley's work on the Sycamore Tree, a victim awareness programme that teaches the principles of restorative justice, at H.M. Prison Thorn Cross.

[\(https://prisonfellowship.org.uk/our-work/sycamore-tree/\)](https://prisonfellowship.org.uk/our-work/sycamore-tree/)

Onetime Hillcliffe deacon, John Britton is chairman of the trustees of Warrington Street Pastors who 'seek to calm aggressive behaviour' and minister to young people 'in a non-judgemental way'. (<https://warringtonstreetpastors.co.uk>)

To all those people, equally deserving, but not mentioned, please accept my apologies.



Dan Curtis



John Harper



Peter & Irene Hindley



John Britton



Stephanie Darling



Nick Byles

Current Overseas Mission

Stephanie Darling

Stephanie went out to Africa in 2008 with ‘Serving in Mission’ (SIM) to work in the Evangelical Bible College of Malawi, which trains pastors for the Africa Evangelical Church, the Zambezi Evangelical Church and the Brethren in Christ Church. As a lecturer, Stephanie has taught a variety of different Bible Book Studies; some Doctrine Courses; Christian Counselling and World Religions. In over ten years of service, Stephanie has seen the Lord working behind the scenes, answering prayers, building His church and sending the first Malawian Missionaries out to work in Mozambique.

Nick and Liz Byles

Nick and Liz are currently in Phnom Penn. Cambodia where Nick works for an Information Technology company and Liz is involved with local healthcare.

Local Outreach/ Football

There are many examples of ‘Local Outreach’ that could be included in Hillcliffe’s history but the one that will be used as an example is the church football team. Many years ago, when some of today’s senior members were just lads, the Hillcliffe team played in the local Christian league. Playing on the local school pitches did not give Hillcliffe the advantage of the slope, as when they played on the church field in the early twentieth century. However, they did manage to win the league on more than one occasion.

Since 2009, under John Harpers leadership, the Warrington Ambassadors have been based at Hillcliffe. They have won promotion to the first division of the South Manchester and Cheshire Christian Football League, winning the 6-a-side competition in 2016.

21st Century Worship during 'lockdown'

https://www.hillcliffe.info/Groups/348673/Sunday_9_August.aspx



The first service 'outdoors' after lockdown was on 6th September 2020

<https://www.youtube.com/chanel/UCOBU3hXylQlhuFFplitvqrA/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TndMsometAU>

We have now experienced six months of living through the Covid 19 pandemic and we pray that the Lord will support us and lead us safely through this difficult time.

A 'History' is only a snapshot taken from one particular point in time, but the history of Hillcliffe Baptist Church over the last three hundred and seventy years deserves attention. Consider how many people have given their lives to the Lord in this place, over all those years. From the first small group meeting to worship in William Morris' barn to the powerful witness of Hillcliffe church today. The church pastors form a timeline as a skeleton to the fascinating, sometimes controversial, sometimes inspiring events that have occurred in this place. There have been many great men and women among the church members some of whom like Thomas Tillam or John Newton will be known to posterity but many others whose Christian lives are not recorded, will still be blessed in God's sight. One of the features of twenty-first century Hillcliffe is that it is exciting and full of spiritual energy. But it also has a long and rich history to look back on, which should be an inspiration for the future. As long as the church follows God's Word, there is no need to worry about what is to come.

Over three hundred and seventy years, much Godly and rewarding work has occurred within the church and this has extended out into the local community and to the world overseas. At present it is unclear how the pandemic of 2020 will affect the activities of the church, but Christians know that life is in God's hands and He is always working for the good of those who love Him. As Rev. Robert Jones wrote a hundred years ago, 'God is with us'

"God is with us! God is with us!" So our brave fore-fathers sang
Far across the fields of battle, Loud their hearty war-cry rang
Never once they feared or faltered, Never once they ceased to sing
"God is with us! God is with us! Christ our Lord shall reign as King".
Speed the cross through all the nations, Speed the victories of love
Preach the gospel of salvation, Wheresoever men may move

Make the future in the present, Strong of heart, toil on and sing
“God is with us! God is with us! Christ our Lord shall reign as King”.

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.

Appendix One - Letter written by church at Warrington - 4m (June) 26th 1654

DEARLY BELOVED IN Ye LORD, OUR HOPE AND JOY,

The choicest graces and spiritual blessings, be multiplied and continually flowing into yr souls, from yt eternal fountains where refreshing streams of divine consolations have (through grace) been conveying unto us by his eminent (by us entirely affected) servant of Jes. Christ, who we trust, will be instrumental in ye hand of our God, whom we serve, to carry on both you and us in this our

pilgrimage, in a pgressse of grace, soe as, one day, he may present us with exceeding joy, one pure and spotless virgin, before our Redeemer, when he of whom ye Lord hath made such a blessed use, shall shine as a starre in glory.

Pretious brethren! That we faint not in this our journey, how necessarie is't, yt our joynt interest, be mutually improved, at the throne of grace, in each others behalf, that in these dangerous declining times, when 'tis evident our grand adversary, perceiving his tottering kingdom, near a fall, is employing his utmost force and deepest subtiltye, to delude and draw poore soules from their pfession.

Wee desire, to magnifie the name of our God, for that refreshment to our spirits, received by your sweet epistle, wherein doth appear ye steadfastnesse of your faith in Jes.Chr. mauger all ye malice manifested of your endeavours of your enemie, and his instruments, some of whom have been busily employed in those parts, to the saddening of many, yet through mercy, we stand, to ye praise, of ye glory, of yet grace, which we acknowledge our support.

We bless God, for ye continual enlargement of your hearts, to ye liberty of our dearly beloved brother's stay with us, though God is pleased to order it now but short.

Brethren, we beseech you, pray for us, yet ye knowledge of Jesus Christ, may increase among us, yet we may come to a more cleare approbation of ye great mistery, 'God in Christ and Christ in us' united, and made one with him, by ye eternal Spirit. Then shall we pfectly see, ye tabernacle of God dwelling with men and have occasion (from such blessed communion) to rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, when all doubts and distractions will be passed away; noe night or cloud to imose between our souls, and ye love of our pretious Redeemer. Ah! This would be a pretious pledge, or earnest, of that glorious condition, into which we shortly shall be translated, when wee have a full enjoyment of him, whom now our soules are thirsting after, in unconceivable and eternall joy.

Peace be to all, with love and faith, from God our father and Lord Jes. Chr. In whom wee are entirely your affectionate brethren.

Will. Booth, Robt. Millington, Tho. Holland

Peter Eaton, John Sproson, Chas. Holland,

John Tomleson, Tho. Follings, Ric. Amery

Warrington, 4 m. 26 day, 1654

A number on the clippings suggests that there were two articles before June 3rd: an article between June 10th and July 22nd; and between July 22nd and August 19th. Unfortunately, no record of the missing articles was found in the archives but the existing articles give a clear flavour of the debate.

1) June 3 1922 – THE ANTIQUITY OF HILL CLIFFE CHURCH

Rev. Robert Jones and Contemplated Investigations

The Rev. Robert Jones, writing to the Editor of the "The Examiner" from Hill Cliffe Manse on Wednesday, on the subject of the antiquity of Hill Cliffe Baptist Church, states:-

The very interesting letter in your last issue by Mr. Arthur Mounfield was anticipated by myself, and also by others who have been long connected with Hill Cliffe. I was also acquainted with what Dr. Whitley had written on the subject, and have conversed with and received kind and interesting letters from him privately on the same theme. The aim before us all, I am sure, is to arrive at truth and reality; and that notwithstanding a feeling that comes to one while conversing with good sterling Hill Cliffites that "the wish is father to the thought", in believing, and even affirming, a very high antiquity for the church and graveyard – a wish that sometimes nimbly leaps over many generations, and even centuries, which thus far have not yielded the necessary historical data to confirm such suppositions and affirmations. And here it is right to bear in mind the Welsh proverb, "Y Gwir yn erbyn y byd" (The truth against the whole world.)

As to the small part taken in this matter by myself, permit me to say that again and again I have heard from a number of aged people in our neighbourhood (some connected and some unconnected with Hill Cliffe) that they themselves have seen gravestones in the burial ground bearing dates in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. For instance, only last evening I was introduced to a gentleman, who, while sitting in the graveyard and enjoying the quiet of the evening scene before him, told me that, some twenty years ago, he and his brother accidentally discovered a gravestone which was a spade's depth beneath the grass, bearing the date of "14—" (the two last figures, he could not recall). The letters and figures, he said, were quite distinct. He thought he could approximately indicate the spot where he saw it, and promised me his assistance, along with the sexton, to try and find it. If that stone is rediscovered the name and date can be subjected to the acid test of published records of wills or of death certificate.

As to the uncovering of the gravestone bearing the date of 1622 (of which a photograph is here reproduced), it was found in my presence only two or three days before the date on which I had promised to read a paper (which appeared in your issue for May 20th) on "The Antiquity of Hill Cliffe"; and I was not aware at the time that it had been uncovered, and again buried, many years ago. As to the clearness and consistency of the letters and figures as they now appear on the gravestone, your readers, with the picture of it before them, can judge for themselves.

In regard to Dr. Whitley's assertion: "No one has produced any tradition earlier than 1850 [? misprint for 1650] relating to Hill Cliffe at all," I would say that I have conversed to-day with a lady, a member of Hill Cliffe Church for just over sixty years, who is 88 years of age, of clear mind and memory, and who says she remembers her father, and her grandfather, speaking of Hill Cliffe Chapel. Surely this tradition extends to over seventy-two years from 1850.

It is my purpose to further investigate, along more than one line, this interesting and intricate problem of dates as far as possible; although, owing to absence from home, I shall not be able to do so for a month or two. I shall, however, be glad if any who are interested in the subject and who can add further information or help in the investigation, will be so kind as to communicate either with me personally or to the local Press. All correspondence, published or unpublished, will be preserved

at Hill Cliffe for reference and study by those who succeed us. [no correspondence is in the church archives].

THE RE-DISCOVERED TOMBSTONE

Inscription: " Here lyeth the body of Elizabeth Widow of John Witter of Netherton who was interred October the 21, 1622" (see page 59)

Warrington Examiner June 10th 1922 – THE ANTIQUITY OF HILL CLIFFE GRAVEYARD

Mr. Mounfield's Drastic Proposals. OBLITERATE THE FORGERIES

To the Editor of "The Examiner"

Sir, - Since writing a fortnight ago, I have had opportunity to examine the stone described as the 1622 gravestone. It contains an obvious forgery which consists of the adding of a stroke to the figure 9 to make 1692 into 1622. The figure 2 occurs twice on the stone and the forged 2 may be compared with them. In each of the genuine figures the lower stroke has a broad end and is perfectly made. The forged 2 is not like either of them. The stroke added to the 9 is thin and tails off, nor is it as long as the stroke on the true figures. If the stroke is covered the figure that remains in view is a perfect 9 as that figure was made at the end of the 17th century. A rubbing which I have taken makes this quite clear.

I have already said in your column that there is the evidence of the probate of the woman's will to prove that she died in the year "one thousand six hundred and ninety-two" – cautious legal longhand that cannot be tampered with. As these forged gravestones are being persistently held before the public notice it seems necessary that someone who knows the facts should speak plainly. The burial ground was acquired in 1663. Does anyone believe that there is a stone in the graveyard of earlier date than 1663? I do not think that anyone holds such a belief.

If anyone does, let the stone be indicated. Competent historians will then produce evidence. Of course, they will not quote grandfathers' tales. Their evidence will be offered in the form of title deeds, wills and contemporary documents, of which there is an abundance concerning the people buried at Hill Cliffe. The historian has no use for the fond fancy that leaps nimbly across the centuries and finds its dates in its dreams. He does not accept the guidance of imagination when facts point the other way. And he is liable to explode in wrath (it is the result of his training, and he may be forgiven) when absurdities are offered to the public thinly camouflaged by gossamer inanity and pious fudge.

This is a matter of public interest; it is also a matter that carries with it the honour of a branch of the Christian Church. We must keep carefully within the realm of what we know to be true. Here are the facts.

There was no burial ground at Hill Cliffe until 1663. The stones with earlier dates are forgeries, which have long been an offence to honest folks. They are frauds of the most clumsy and ignorant kind. If such deception had been practiced to obtain money the Public Prosecutor would have stepped in long ago.

Such "early dates" as are visible have been exposed as "shameful forgeries" by the most competent Baptist historian. Such as are not visible we are asked to accept on the evidence of an unnamed somebody who feels sure that he saw something, but does not quite remember what he saw.

Is it publicly honest to parade before the public notice dates which are entirely unsupported by evidence? Nobody has yet said that they believe in them. For twenty-five years they have been quoted with plausible words in the pages of books, magazines and newspapers. They have been denounced by the only people who are competent to give an opinion. And still they are repeated. Nobody believes in them; at least nobody has yet said that they believe in them. And yet comments are used which suggest that they are genuine.

It is a serious matter to repeat falsities as though they were facts. It is an offence against the dead to carve lies upon their gravestones.

I do not wish to write again upon the subject that brings so little happiness, and will try to bring the matter at issue to a definite and final test. Does anyone believe that the gravestones dated earlier than 1663 are anything but clumsy forgeries? If so, which are the genuine dated stones?

A most fitting way to celebrate the antiquity of Hill Cliffe would be to obliterate these forgeries for ever. Before there is jubilation there should surely be sackcloth and ashes to atone for offences against the living and the dead. – Yours, &c., ARTHUR MOUNFIELD

Warrington Examiner July 22nd 1922 THE ANTIQUITY OF HILL CLIFFE CHURCHYARD

To the Editor of "The Examiner"

Sir, - A number of your readers, who are more concerned about the matter than I am, have pressed me to make some reply to the personal attack made by Mr Jones in your issue of June 17th. I have always avoided personal controversy and would gladly do so now. I write at the urgent wish of many who feel the truth is worthwhile for its own sake.

I have regarded the matter of the Hill Cliffe gravestones as of public interest. For me it has no personal references. The puzzle which many people are feeling is that we should be told that everybody hates forgeries, and yet that I am abused for exposing them. Nobody suggests that I have been wrong in any single statement made. I have explained everything and been challenged in nothing. I have had no desire except that the burial-ground should be cleansed from a long-standing dishonour. A dozen years ago, when I made a similar effort, I received angry letters from one of the trustees. This time I received aspersions upon character – a price not many of us care to pay for public service. I did not raise the matter of the forgeries, but as it was raised, I took opportunity to state the facts.

A point which calls for reply is Mr. Jones' complaint that help was not given to him by me in the preparation of his paper on "The Antiquity of Hill Cliffe." If Mr. Jones offers his statement as an account of all that happened my reply will have to be made in a word which no editor would allow. Every help was given to him by Dr. Whitley; everything which has been printed, including notes of my own, were put into his hands. The papers were not given by me, but were given with my knowledge, and Mr. Jones told me he had received them. I explained that I could give no more printed help because there was none to give. I urged him in whatever he wrote to follow Dr. Whitley's guidance and not to add to the "antiquity" folly. I also explained the forgery upon the "1622" stone by saying that the figure 9 had been altered to make a 2. This was before his paper was read. With so much information supplied it is amazing that anyone could have produced a paper so unintelligent.

After the paper had been printed, I wrote to him giving the date of a will at Chester, and a little later explained how the wills could be inspected. At my request our courteous municipal librarian placed before him lists of wills and other books.

There are, therefore, two responsible people who must have been surprised to read the letter from Mr. Jones which you printed. My own feeling cannot be described as surprise. It was different, and will, I fear, be permanent.

On the general subject of helpfulness, it may be permissible to say that I never withheld historical enlightenment from any individual or institution even when I have doubted that the recipients were capable of using it.

A word or two of explanation may be offered. Those who will re-read my articles will find that my attack was upon all who have defended or condoned the forgeries during the past 25 years. Those who think that my description "pious fudge" is too strong should read what has been written. I see nothing wrong with the phrase. If the description is found to describe recent events, the application has been made by those who discovered its appropriateness.

My sentence about antiquarians who had "exploded in wrath" had reference to able men like our own Mr. Beamont, who broke up a forged gravestone with a hammer.

Upon this point there is a curious piece of reasoning in Mr. Jones' letter. From the fact that I condone the explosions of antiquarians of the past he reaches the conclusion that I am a man of "passionate temper."

Another effort at reasoning seems to lead to the conclusion that because everybody detests forgeries and because I have exposed forgeries, therefore I am a "self-constituted public censor of other people's morals." I cannot accept this as a piece of logic. But the whole letter is an example of what can be done without that very desirable piece of mental equipment.

Of course, there is a serious side. Statements are made by Mr. Jones which affect character, and everybody knows what may happen under English law if reflections upon character are publicly made. Perhaps after this reminder a withdrawal may be made. If so, it will be accepted.

May I mention other points? Mr. Jones seems to feel quite sure that he can bury the old gravestones if he wishes to do so. Such an autocratic action does not comment itself to me, but if I had any such plan, I should first write to the National Commissioners which exist to preserve ancient monuments.

Some of his congregation may also have ideas as to what was due to the memory of their spiritual ancestors. This calm proposal to obliterate the memorials of worthy people reads curiously alongside his eulogy of them.

In another paragraph Mr. Jones tells us that he will "pursue the investigation" of the forgeries. Will he tell us what there is to inquire about? I have offered uncontroverted evidence on every point. Why should he write as though some problem remained to be solved? I should like him to say whether he believes that I am right or wrong. A plain "yes" or "no" will do.

The picture of Hill Cliffe Baptists refusing to be cowed by the historian is curious. It can only be understood by supposing that the church is defending forgeries and regards the historian as its natural enemy. I cannot believe this. But if that is not the meaning I should like to know what the meaning is. What is it the church effuses to have? The truth? Surely not. But when have I offered anything else?

Another puzzle is wrapped up in the epithet (though perhaps it is only a stray bit of rhetoric), “self-constituted public censor of his neighbours’ morals.” Morals? If the church had defended forgeries, I should have said something about its morals. But we are assured that everybody hates falsities and that nothing matters except the truth. I do not remember to have mentioned the morals of the Hill Cliffe Baptists. Will Mr. Jones kindly quote the paragraph?

When we have got this little discussion closed, I may set down one or two pleasing things about the church which will leave us all very proud and happy to have had such ancestors.

In the meantime, perhaps Mr. Jones will put his string of adjectives back into the dictionary – “arrogant,” “unfair,” “autocratic,” insinuating,” “passionate,” “purposely-offensive.” I am glad that none of my friends have recognised me under these names.

Historians have no terror for honest folks. They carry dismay to some; it is impossible in the nature of things that they should ever do the Baptists any harm. – Yours, etc., ARTHUR MOUNFIELD

Warrington Examiner August 19th 1922 – THE ANTIQUITY OF HILL CLIFFE CHURCHYARD

To the Editor of “The Examiner.”

Sir, - I have carefully read the letter of Mr. Arthur Mounfield in your last issue, and am convinced that to continue the correspondence can answer no useful purpose.

One correction of statement in regard to an important matter of fact, however, must be made. Mr. Mounfield will, I am quite sure, after a few moments’ recollection, recognise that he has slipped into error when he says that he had “explained the forgery of ‘1622’ stone” to me before I read my paper on this subject at Hill Cliffe on May 11th. It was during the week following that date when Mr. Mounfield had my manuscript in his possession that he made the first suggestion to me about the alteration of 9 into 2. Therefore, the deduction he makes from this mis-statement is, of course, utterly groundless.

Thanking you, Mr. Editor for your courtesy to me through this correspondence. – Yours etc., ROBERT JONES

P.S., August 8th. – Since the above letter was sent to you Mr. Mounfield and I have met; and the personal references in this controversy have been set right between us, including the date named in this letter. – R.J.

Appendix Four – Establishment of Liverpool Baptist Church 1714

July ye 3rd, 1714 Whereas it was then requested at a generall meeting of the Chh. At Hill: Cliff, by our Christian Friends of Liverpoole Quarter, that our Bro. Peter Davenport might be

enstated into the Pastorall Office among them there, and that they should sit down in Chh. Fellowship by themselves (not but that occasionally and as Providence call'd and made way, any of them might sit down at the Lord's Table with us, or we with them).

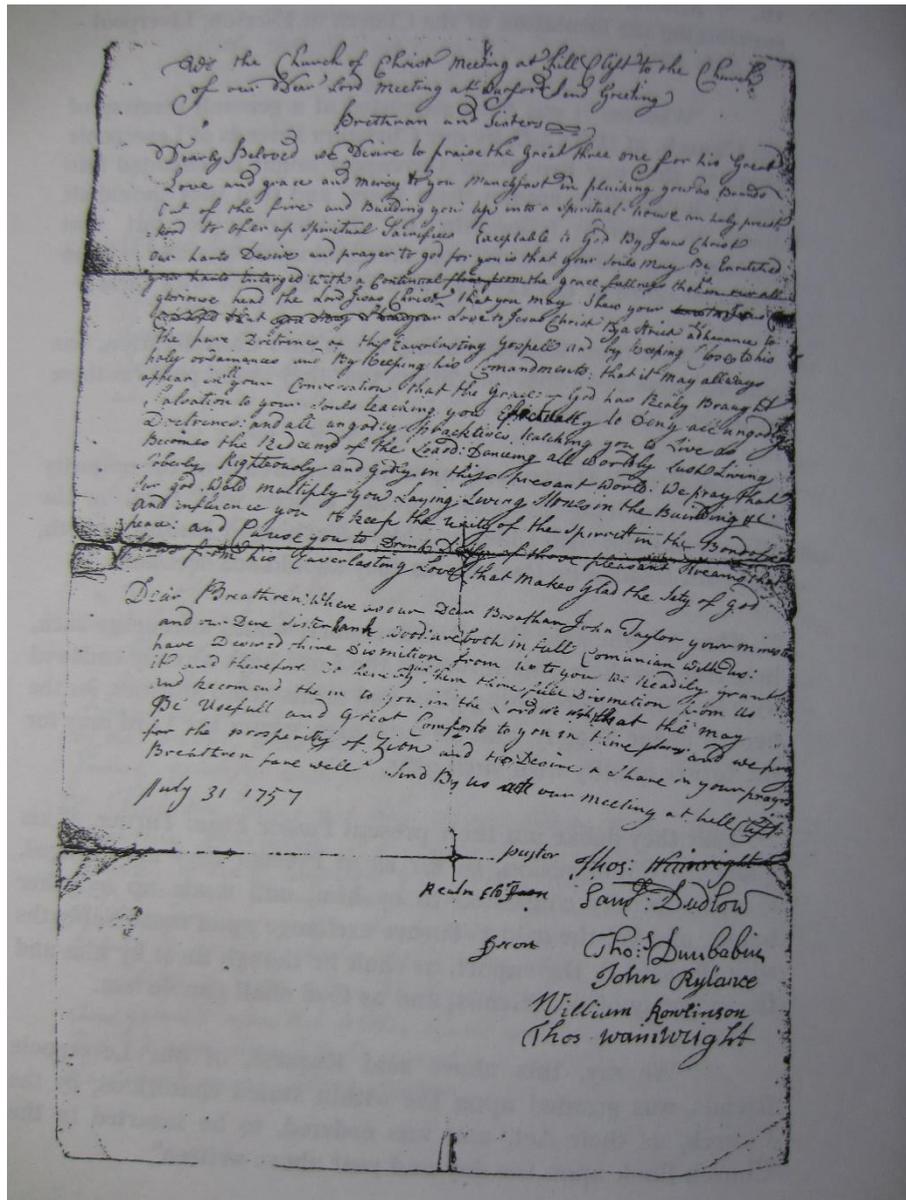
This, their request, being taken into consideration, was granted them upon this condition, that they would performe these their then promises, viz.:

1 That Bro: P. Davenport, upon the Brethren's, or the majority of them, requiring the same, would concur wth. Them in the officing of them with Elder or Elders teaching or ruling, or both, & with Deacon or Deacons, as they shd see occasion'.

2. That he (the sd. Bro P Davenport) would encourage such in exercising their Talent, whom the Lord hath already endued with teaching or preaching gifts and ministerial Abilities, for the benefit of the Society, and such also, whom the Lord may for the future qualify with such gifts.

3. That they debar not their present Pastor Fran: Turner of his quarterly contribution; so far as at Present they are engaged, except cordially consented to by him, and made up by other hands, and yt the sd. F Turner exchange upon some Sabbaths wth. The sd. P Davenport, as shall be thought meet by him and the majority of the friends, and as God shall enable 'em.

We say, this above ch. Request, of our Liverpoole friends, was granted upon the Within stated conditions, by the Chh. As their Act, & was ordered to be inserted in the Church Book upon the day and year above written.



Appendix Five – Letter from Hillcliffe to Warford Church (Transcription)

We, the church of Christ Meeting at hill clift to the church of our Dear Lord Meeting at Warford send greetings

Brethren and Sisters- Dearly beloved we desire to praise the Great three in one for his Great Love and grace and mercy to you manifest in plucking you as brands out of the fire and building you up into a Spiritual house an holy priesthood to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Our hearts desire and prayer to God for you is that your souls may be enriched, your hands enlarged with a continual flow from the grace fullness that is in our all glorious head, the Lord Jesus Christ that you may show your love to Jesus Christ by a strict adherence to the pure doctrines of the everlasting Gospel and by keeping close to his holy ordinances and by keeping his commandments that it may always appear in all your conversation that the Grace of God has really brought Salvation to your souls, teaching you effectually to deny all ungodly doctrines: and all ungodly practices, teaching you to live as becomes the redeemed

of the Lord: denying all worldly lust, living soberly, righteously and Godly in this present world. We pray that our God would multiply you, laying living stones in the building &c: and influence you to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace: and cause you to drink daily of those present streams that flows from his everlasting Love that makes glad the city of God.

Dear Brethren: Where as our dear brother John Taylor your minister and our dear sister Hannah Wood: are both in full communion with us: have desired their dismissal from us to you, we readily grant it and therefore do hereby give them their full dismissal from us and recommend them to you in the Lord we wish that they may be useful and great comforts to you in their places. And we pray for the prosperity of Zion and the desire (we) have in your prayers. Brethren, fare well. Send by us at our meeting at Hill Clift July 31, 1757

(signed) Pastor Thos: Wainwright

Elder Sam^lDudlow

From Thos Dunbabin

John Rylance

William Rowlinson

Thos. Wainwright

Enrolled in Her Majesty's High Court of Chancery the tenth day of May in the year of our Lord 1862 pursuant to the Act of Parliament 24th Victoria Cap 9. - Transcription

THIS INDENTURE made the twenty second day of November the fifteenth year of the reign of our sovereign Lord King George the IIIrd over Great Britain and so forth and so forth and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy four BETWEEN Thomas Wainwright of Warrington in the County of Lancaster Taylor Charles Hardwick of the same place Flaxdresser Thomas Hayes of Warrington aforesaid Husbandman John Hamlet (signed John Hamblets) of Daresbury in the County of Chester Blacksmith George Rylance of Risley in the said County of Lancaster Husbandman John Rowlinson of Warrington aforesaid Victualler and Samuel Hayes of Burtonwood in the said County of Lancaster Husbandman of the one part and Jonathan Atherton of Warrington aforesaid Chapman of the other part WHEREAS by Indenture bearing date on or about the twenty third day of September which was in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and sixty three made or mentioned to be made between John Morris of Grappenhall in the said county of Chester Gentleman on the one part and Thomas Millington of Appleton in the same County Gentleman and William Rowlinson of Burtonwood aforesaid Yeoman of the other part ALL that close field piece and parcel of land containing by estimate one acre of land or thereabouts of Cheshire measure lying and being at Hillcliffe within Appleton aforesaid then or late in the tenure holding or occupation of one Peter Clare with the houses edifices and buildings hereditaments and appurtenances to the same belonging were limited in use to the society or congregation of protestant dissenters called Baptists holding the doctrine of personal election and final perseverance of Saints belonging to the meeting house which they had then erected upon part the said close field or parcel of land. And the said Society walled out and set a part from the said close or field a place for the burial of all such persons being anabaptists within the said Counties of Lancaster and Chester as should desire the same And the said Society have from time to time repaired and rebuilt the said meeting-house and burial place and also the dwelling-house and buildings to the said close field or parcel of land belonging and have had from the date of the said recited Indenture unto the present time the quiet and uninterrupted enjoyment of the said hereditaments and premises AND WHEREAS the said Society or congregation of which the said Thomas Wainwright Charles Hardwick Thomas Hayes John Hamlet George Rylance John Rowlinson Samuel Hayes and Jonathan Atherton are principal or chief for the better and more orderly government of the said meetinghouse and the more beneficial enjoyment of the said hereditaments and premises are minded and desirous that from henceforth the same shall be limited(sic) and conveyed unto and vested in trustees in the manner and upon the trusts hereinafter mentioned expressed and declared NOW THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH that in pursuance of the said intention and for and in consideration of the sum of five shillings of lawful money of Great Britain by the said Jonathan Atherton to the said Thomas Wainwright Charles Hardwick Thomas Hayes John Hamlet George Rylance John Rowlinson and Samuel Hayes in hand at or before the sealing and delivery hereof well and truly paid the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged They the said Thomas Wainwright Charles Hardwick Thomas Hayes John Hamlet George Rylance John Rowlinson and Samuel Hayes HAVE and each and every of them HATH granted bargained sold aliened enfeoffed and conveyed and by these presents DO and each and every of them DOTH grant bargain sell alien enfeoff and convey unto the said Jonathan Atherton his heirs and assigns ALL and singular the messuage or dwellinghouse meetinghouse buildings burying ground close field or parcel of land hereditaments and premises mentioned and comprised in the Indenture hereinbefore in part recited or since erected and built thereupon and which by virtue thereof now vested in the Society or congregation aforesaid with their and every of their appurtenances And the reversion and reversions remainder and remainders yearly and other rents issues and profits of all and singular the said premises And all the estate right title interest use trust

benefit property inheritance term claim and demand whatsoever both at law and in equity of them the said Thomas Wainwright Charles Hardwick Thomas Hayes John Hamlet George Rylance John Rowlinson and Samuel Hayes and every or any of them of into or out of the said premises or any part or parcel thereof TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said dwellinghouse meetinghouse building burying ground land hereditaments and premises mentioned to be hereby granted enfeoffed and conveyed and every part thereof with the appurtenances unto the said Jonathan Atherton his heirs and assigns TO the only proper use and behoof of the said Thomas Wainwright Charles Hardwick Thomas Hayes John Hamlet George Rylance John Rowlinson Samuel Hayes and Jonathan Atherton their heirs and assigns for ever UPON TRUST nevertheless and to the intent and purpose that they the said Thomas Wainwright Charles Hardwick Thomas Hayes John Hamlet George Rylance John Rowlinson Samuel Hayes and Jonathan Atherton their heirs and assigns from time to time and at all times for ever hereafter so long as the laws and statutes of this realm will allow thereof shall and do by with and out of the rents issues and profits of the said dwellinghouse buildings lands hereditaments and premises repair maintain and uphold the aforesaid meetinghouse being part of the hereditaments and premises mentioned to be hereby enfeoffed and conveyed so long as the same will stand and as occasion may require shall and do take down and rebuild the same and ever afterwards keep up in good repair and condition upon the said premises a meetinghouse or house for the service and worship of God sufficient for the society or congregation thereunto belonging as aforesaid if the rents issues and profits of the said hereditaments and premises will so far extend AND shall and do permit and suffer the said or congregation and such other persons holding the doctrine of personal election and final perseverance of saints as shall hereafter come into the said Society or attend the worship of God there, the use and enjoyment of the said meetinghouse now or hereafter to be erected in as full free and ample a manner as they hitherto have or ought to have used and enjoyed the same AND shall and do permit and suffer all and every the society or congregation aforesaid or such of them as shall desire the same, to lay their dead in the burial ground before mentioned AND as for and concerning the residue and remainder of the rents issues and profits of the hereditaments and premises aforesaid UPON TRUST that they the said Thomas Wainwright Charles Hardwick Thomas Hayes John Hamlet George Rylance John Rowlinson Samuel Hayes and Jonathan Atherton their heirs and assigns after discharging the trusts aforesaid and payment and satisfaction of the trouble and expense attending the execution hereof shall and do lay out and employ the same in the maintenance of the person who shall for the time being be chosen by them pastor of the society or congregation aforesaid and to or for no other use trust intent or purpose whatsoever PROVIDED ALWAYS nevertheless and it is hereby declared and agreed that in case it shall at any time happen that there be no further occasion to use and enjoy the said meetinghouse now or hereafter to be erected on the premises as and for a house of worship as aforesaid to be determined by the major part of the trustees for the time being or in case at any time the same cannot be legally used or enjoyed as a meetinghouse as aforesaid then it shall and may be lawfully to and for the said trustees for the time being to sell the said dwellinghouse meetinghouse buildings burying ground and hereditaments and premises mentioned to be hereafter enfeoffed and conveyed and every part and parcel thereof with the appurtenances and the money thereby arising to pay divide and distribute unto and amongst the poor for the time being the said society or congregation of protestant dissenters called Baptists holding the doctrine of personal election and final perseverance of saints belonging to the said meetinghouse in such parts shares and proportions at such time and times and in such manner and form as the said trustees shall in their discretion think fit or to and for such charitable uses as they the said trustees shall in that behalf agree and determine upon AND it is hereby further declared and agreed that when and as soon as the said trustees shall by death be reduced to the number of three the said trustees or the survivors or survivor of them or his heirs shall and will with all convenient speed convey and assure all and singular the said dwellinghouse

meetinghouse buildings burying ground lands hereditaments and premises mentioned to be hereby enfeoffed and conveyed with the appurtenances unto and to the use of themselves the said surviving trustees and five or more other persons whom they or the major part of them shall nominate and appoint to be new trustees their heirs and assigns for ever Upon the trusts and to and for the several intents and purposes hereinbefore mentioned and declared of and concerning the same which said new trustees and all succeeding trustees shall in like manner choose and appoint new trustees from time to time as occasion may require so as always to keep up the number of eight at the least so long as the laws and statutes of this realm shall permit and allow the said meetinghouse to be used and enjoyed as a place of divine worship for the society or congregation aforesaid IN WITNESS etc.

MEMORANDUM On the twenty second day of November one thousand seven hundred and seventy four the within named Thomas Hayes John Rowlinson and Thomas Wainwright entered into and upon the hereditaments and premises within mentioned and had the peaceable and quiet possession and seisen thereof and immediately afterwards delivered the same peaceable and quiet possession and seisen of the said hereditaments and premises unto the within named Jonathan Atherton To hold unto the said Jonathan Atherton his heirs and assigns to the uses within mentioned. In the presence of Ja. Nicholson.

William Beamont, Esq. the first mayor of Warrington, <http://allthingswarrington.net/People/People/williambeamont.html#.XvsPqV-SnIU> wrote of Mr Thompson as follows:- ‘ A house for the minister adjoins the chapel, where, seated in a large square-backed chair with arms, the author saw the then minister, John Thompson, not long before his death in 1825. He was incapacitated from work, and his mind was failing, but his white locks, which time had thinned, his square temples, and the look of intelligence, which thought, age, and work had given him, notwithstanding the feebleness and decay of nature, which had left his faculties in ruin, excited the spectator’s involuntary respect. His speech was nearly gone, and when asked if he could hear, he said, ‘Yes, through mercy, I can hear’. The early years of Mr Thompson were employed in keeping an elementary school, which he opened and carried on for some time at a house in the Wash Lane, Latchford. Here, pursuing a simple mode of life, he followed his useful vocation, which afforded him a scanty livelihood, with no superfluities. He amused his leisure with the cultivation of flowers and the study of Botany, in which he attained some proficiency at a time when the art was less attended to than now. But he loved the Gospel for its own sake, and occupied himself so well in it that he was called in 1792 to accept the pastorate of the Hill Cliffe Chapel, where he had from his youth been a worshipper. In his days the preacher could hardly be said to live off the Gospel, for the pulpit emoluments were small at first, and he did not even occupy the chapel house, so that for some time after he became pastor, he continued his school to help out his scanty means. His charities were his only indulgence, and once, when he was even poorer than usual, being called upon to contribute something on a great public occasion, this was his characteristic answer, ‘well, I have saved money enough to buy me a new coat, but you shall have that, and I will make my old coat serve for another year’ He lived to a good old age; but a few years before the final end came, when, like an oak, he had begun to die at the top, and had become unable to speak much, he retired from the pastorate. In the early part of this suffering state, being called on by the Reverend William Jeff, the curate of Grappenhall, who venerated the old man, and would have been glad to profit by his experience, he told his visitor that he was then too weak to say more than that he was very glad to see him, and that, though he was too feeble to talk, it would greatly rejoice him to hear Mr Jeff speak of Jesus and His great salvation.

Obituary of Mr John Thompson, aged 79, who never married and lived frugally. It was with difficulty he could be induced to partake of a single meal at their (his friends') expense. He would say that "he sought not theirs' but them". Mr John Thompson was born of respectable parents, of the Presbyterian denomination, at Davyhulme in Lancashire in the year 1747. At the age of 10 years he became the subject of serious impressions: for many years he sought salvation by the works of the law, and was a strict pharisee. But by reading the Scriptures, and Hervey's Meditations, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Hervey, it pleased God to instruct him in the way of salvation, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and he was brought to enjoy the liberty of the Gospel. His reputation was unspotted. He was rigidly just in all his dealings; his piety was sincere, ardent, and unaffected; he evidently lived near to God, and maintained great tenderness of conscience, and spirituality of mind; his conversation in every relation in life was becoming the Gospel of Christ. He began to preach when he was about thirty years of age, and was for some years engaged as a local preacher among the Methodists, but his sentiments not according with theirs, he came out from among them; and being convinced of the importance of believers' baptism, he was baptized on a profession of faith in Christ. He became the pastor of the Baptist Church at Hill Cliffe, in the year 1792, where he laboured with considerable success till the year 1820, preaching three times on the Lord's day, and every night in the week, excepting Saturday nights. He introduced the Gospel into many neighbouring places, and baptized about 400 persons on a profession of faith in Christ. His labours were abundant, and eminently successful- his preaching was plain, experimental, and practical- aimed at the conscience, designed to benefit the heart, and influence the life. Under his ministry the church was built up, and the congregation greatly increased. He had many seals added to his ministry, who were his joy here, and who, we have no doubt, will be his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. About five years since his bodily infirmities rendered him incapable of stated labours, and the field of his exertions being extended, Mr John Swinton and Mr James Bradford, were ordained co-pastors with him; and with them he enjoyed the sweetest fellowship and harmony until his death. Mr John Swinton died happy in the Lord, October the 13th 1825, in the 62nd year of his age; and Mr J Thompson departed this life November the 21st, in the 70th year. They were both interred in the Burial-ground at Hill Cliffe; Mr Sayce of Wrexham delivering an address at the interment of each of them. They were lovely in life, and were not divided in their death. Through grace they honoured God with their holy lives, and were enabled to glorify him with their dying behaviour. Their memory is blessed, and their example in health and sickness is worthy the imitation of survivors. May we not be slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises. At the memorial services Mr Lister of Liverpool, preached from Rev. vii, 14; (And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" NIV)

Mr M Fisher of Liverpool, preached from 1Cor.xv. 55-57. (Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. NIV) The congregations were numerous, and appeared to be much impressed with the solemn events. May we die the death of the righteous, may our last end be like theirs!

Appendix Ten – Feoffment 1800

Dated 10th Nov: 1800

Mess^{rs} John Hamblets
and others
to
Mess^{rs} John Thompson
and others

Attested Copy
Seoffment
of a meekinghouse and
other premises in Appleton

This Indenture made the tenth day of November
year of the reign of our Sovereign
George the third and in the
one thousand eight hundred Between John Hamblets
county of Chester Blacksmith George Ryland late of Worsley
Warrington in the County of Lancaster Husbandman and Son
of Warrington aforesaid Chapman of the one part and John
Litchford in the County of Chester Schoolmaster James Swinton
William Hall, William Clare, John Wright, John
Taylor of Litchford aforesaid Yeomen, John Speakman of
Saula, John Mapey and John Brerley of the same place
Swinton, Thomas Taylor, Thomas Yarwood, Peter
Wilkinson, James Wilkinson and Jonathan Ho
the said County of Chester Yeomen, James Cotterel of the
Thomas Oldfield of the same place Shoemaker John

the said County of Chester Shoemaker, Peter Lawson of the same place Yeoman,
John Percival and George Percival of Antebus in the said County of Chester
Yeomen of an other part Whereas the said John Hamblets George Ryland
and Jonathan Asherton are and stand seized of an whole of inheritance or fe
simple of and in the mesuage or dwellinghouse meekinghouse buildings burying
ground close field or parcel of land and hereditaments hereinafter mentioned
in trust for the Society or Congregation of Protestant Dissenters called Baptists
holding the doctrine of personal election and final perseverance of saints belonging
to the said Meekinghouse; and they are desirous of extending the number of
Trustees to all the parties hereinafter named Now this Indenture witnesseth that
in pursuance of such their desire and for and in consideration of the sum of
ten shillings of lawful money of Great Britain by the said John Thompson
James Swinton, George Ryland, William Hall, William Clare, John Wright, John
Taylor of Litchford aforesaid Yeomen, John Speakman of
Saula, John Mapey and John Brerley of the same place
Thomas Taylor, Thomas Yarwood, Peter Taylor, Thomas Wilkinson, James Wil
Jonathan Hughes, James Cotterel, Thomas Oldfield, John Oldfield, John Taylor, John
Hamblets, William Ashbrook, William Cotper, Peter Lawson, John Percival and
George Percival to the said John Hamblets, George Ryland and Jonathan Asherton
hand at or before the sealing and delivery hereof well and truly paid, the receipt wh
is hereby acknowledged, and for other good and valuable causes and considerations
thereunto moving They the said John Hamblets, George Ryland and Jonathan Ash
have and each and every of them hath granted bargained sold aliened enjoyed a
conveyed and by these presents Do and each and every of them Doth grant bargain

sell alien enfeoff and convey unto the said John Thompson James Swinton
George Howard William Hall William Clare John Wright John Lee John Taylor John
Speakman John Mapey John Buckley Peter Swinton Thomas Taylor Thomas Yarwood
Peter Taylor Thomas Wilkinson James Wilkinson Jonathan Hayes James Letherell
Thomas Oldfield John Oldfield John Taylor Joseph Hamblett William Ashbroock
William Cooper Peter Lawson John Percival and George Percival their heirs and
assigns All that and those the messuage or dwellinghouse mashinghouse and build
situate and being at Hillecliff within the parish of Apsal with the burial ground and
close field or parcel of land to the same belonging containing in the whole or
of the large messuage there or thereabouts be the same more or less formerly the
inheritance of John Morris but now of the said John Hamblett George Hyland
and Jonathan Altherton in trust as aforesaid and in the possession of them their
or undertenants And all courts cartilages yards orchards gardens ways water
watercourses liberties easements privileges profits commodities advantages heredit
and appurtenances whatsoever to the said messuage or dwellinghouse mashing
buildings burying ground land and premises lying belonging or in anywise
appertaining or therewith usually held used or enjoyed or accepted reputed
known as part parcel or member thereof And the reversion and reversions
remainder and remainders yearly and other rents issues and profits of a
singular the said premises And all the estate right title interest we to
possession property inheritance claim and demand whatsoever both at law

of them the said John Hamblett George Hyland and Jonathan Altherton
to have and to hold the said premises To have and to hold the said premises
And the reversion and reversions
remainder and remainders yearly and other rents issues and profits of all and
singular the said premises And all the estate right title interest we to
possession property inheritance claim and demand whatsoever both at law and
equity of them the said John Hamblett George Hyland and Jonathan Altherton
and every or any of them of us to or out of the said premises To have and
to hold the said messuage or dwellinghouse mashinghouse buildings burial ground
land and premises mentioned to be hereby enfeoffed and conveyed
and every part thereof with the appurtenances unto the said John Thompson James
Swinton George Howard William Hall William Clare John Wright John Lee John
Taylor John Speakman John Mapey John Buckley Peter Swinton Thomas Taylor
Thomas Yarwood Peter Taylor Thomas Wilkinson James Wilkinson Jonathan Hayes
James Letherell Thomas Oldfield John Oldfield John Taylor Joseph Hamblett William
Ashbroock William Cooper Peter Lawson John Percival and George Percival their
heirs and assigns To the only proper use and behoof of the said John Hamblett
Hyland and Jonathan Altherton and such of them the said John Thompson
Swinton George Howard William Hall William Clare John Wright John Lee
Taylor John Speakman John Mapey John Buckley Peter Swinton Thomas Tay
Thomas Yarwood Peter Taylor Thomas Wilkinson James Wilkinson Jonathan Al
James Letherell Thomas Oldfield John Oldfield Joseph Taylor Joseph Hamblett W
Ashbroock William Cooper Peter Lawson John Percival and George Percival as shall
members of the said Society or Congregation and not have been publicly cut off by the
Society or Congregation for disorderly conduct or holding improper tenks and to their he
and assigns for ever Upon the several trusts and to and for the several intents and pu
and with the like powers for appointing new and additional trustees as mentioned in

set forth in a certain indenture of Troppment bearing date on or about the twenty second day of November one thousand seven hundred and seventy four made or mentioned to be made between Thomas Wainwright of Warrington aforesaid Tailor Charles Standwick of the same place Flaxdropper Thomas Keyes of the same place Husbandman the said John Lambles and George Hylance John Rowlinson of Warrington aforesaid Vicualler and Samuel Keyes of Boltonwood in the said County of Lancaster Husband of the one part and the said Jonathan Atherton of the other part and to for or upon other use trust intent or purpose whatsoever In witness whereof the parties aforesaid have hereunto set and put their hands and seals the day and year first above written
John D. Lambles, George D. Hylance, Jonathan D. Atherton,
Attested and delivered (upon Troppment duty stamped) in the presence of us
Thomas Harris, J. Nicholson

Be it remembered that on the twelfth day of November one thousand eight hundred the within named J^r Atherton entered into and upon the hereditaments and premises within mentioned and had the peaceable and quiet possession and thereof and immediately after delivered the same peaceable and quiet possession again of the said hereditaments and premises unto the within named James J^r To hold to the uses within mentioned In presence of Thomas Pollard

This and the preceding sheet of paper contains a true copy of the original indenture of Troppment having been carefully examined and compared by us nineteenth day of April one thousand eight hundred and forty eight.

Enos Gates }
Richard Gurside } Clerks to Meredith Tine & Marsh Law Stationers Man

Appendix Eleven– Obituary of James Bradford

Rev. James Bradford, Pastor of the Church at Hill Cliffe in Cheshire

The ministry of the late venerable John Thompson, formerly pastor of the church at Hill Cliffe, was blessed to the conversion of Mr James Bradford in the year 1808. In the same year he was baptized, and received into full communion with the church at Hill Cliffe. Sometime after this, his pastor encouraged him to preach in the neighbouring villages, and his humble efforts were crowned with success.

On the 12th of October, 1820, Mr Bradford was ordained co-pastor with Mr John Thompson; and Messrs. Lister and Fisher, of Liverpool, conducted the ordination service, and the aged pastor, Mr John Thompson concluded with prayer. For the last five years, Mr Bradford was the sole pastor of the church, which office he filled with credit and usefulness. He laboured much in the village preaching, and in this department his labours were successful. A few days before his illness he visited Liverpool, to collect for a chapel which he had been the instrument of building (Little Leigh), in a village a few miles from his own residence. He was received with great kindness, he prayed and preached in public, and appeared to be very happy. He was successful in his undertaking, and his interview with the friends at Liverpool will long be remembered with a mournful pleasure. He was an humble Christian, his piety was ardent, and his zeal persevering and disinterested. He received no salary from the church for his ministerial labours.

Mr Bradford was healthy and robust, but he was suddenly cut down in the prime of life, and when bright prospects of usefulness were opening to his view. In the short illness which terminated in his dissolution, he said to one of the members of the church “Cleave close to the Lord in the time of health;” and added, “What could I do now, if I had a guilty conscience, or had my God to seek?” To another friend he remarked. “Precious salvation! Precious salvation!” and then repeated- “Earth is too narrow to express, His worth, His glory, or His grace”. He then addressed some of the members of the church: taking them by the hand, he said “This is a final parting in this world; O live in love one another, cleave close together, and may the peace of God rest on you all!” He then lifted up his hands, and exclaimed “Jesus has broken the barriers of the grave, he has ascended on high, he has led captivity captive, and has received gifts for men, even for the rebellious” He also repeated those lines- “ Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood, Shall never lose its power,”&c.

To one of the members of the church he said, “Trust in nothing less than the blood and righteousness of the precious Redeemer.” He then took leave of his beloved wife and family. Calling his dear partner by her name, he observed, “Thou wilt not grieve, because I am going to heaven” He continued praying, praising, and preaching, for two hours, when after a short pause he said, “O, sweet home at last!” The last words he uttered, to be understood, were- “Jesus, thy blood and righteousness, My beauty are, my glorious dress; Midst flaming worlds, in these array’d, With joy shall I lift up my head.”

Mr Bradford departed this life on 10th February 1830, in the 44th year of his age. He has left a widow and nine children to bemoan his loss, and who are in great measure unprovided for. He was interred at Hill Cliffe on 21st March, when Mr Fisher of Liverpool delivered an address at the grave, to a very numerous and attentive audience. On the following Sabbath, Mr Lister of Liverpool, preached to the bereaved church, and on the Lord’s day, the 21st of

March, a funeral sermon was preached by Mr Fisher, from Heb. Xi.4. "He being dead, yet speaketh" The greatest respect was shewn to the memory of the deceased; hundreds of persons attended who could not gain admittance into the chapel, the service therefore was performed in the open air, in a field adjoining the burying-ground; upwards of 1600 people attended, and notwithstanding the coldness of the weather, the greatest attention was paid, and a deep solemnity appeared to pervade the assembly. "The memory of the just is blessed."

HILL CLIFFE BAPTIST CHURCH
RED LANE + APPLETON + WARRINGTON

Secretary :
J. LOMAS,
5, Cawdor Street,
Stockton Heath,
Warrington.
Tel. Stockton Heath 364

Minister :
Rev. D. J. HODGES, B.A.,
"The Manse,"
26, Whitefield Road,
Stockton Heath,
Warrington.

Treasurer :
E. B. MARSTON,
"Berrington,"
Hill Top Road, Grappenhall,
Warrington.
Tel. Grappenhall, 153

COPY of enclosed letter.

Sir,

I have to inform you that I have been some time ago consulted upon the subject of the Chapel at Hill Cliffe. The deeds relating to the Chapel I have very minutely examined. The nature of the dispute between the parties having the possession of the Chapel and those having the possession of the deeds and most especially the extraordinary circumstances by which the possession of the Chapel was obtained have been fully explained to me, and I have been instructed to file a Bill in Chancery in order to obtain redress for the injured parties - before however I should feel myself justified in so doing I have determined to make an application to you so as to afford you an opportunity of doing voluntarily that which ultimately you will be compelled to do at a considerable cost. Indeed circumstances of a very recent date and to which it is unnecessary that I should more particularly refer to lead me to infer that the period has now arrived when

this application should be made in order that the doctrines specified in the original deeds may be henceforth promulgated in conformity with the intention of the original founder. For this purpose it will be necessary that the possession of the Chapel be given up to Mr. Daniel Dean one of the Deacons and Mr. H. Yates and Mr. John Cartwright 2 members of the Chapel. When that shall have been done it will be their duty to have a Minister appointed who will preach honestly and faithfully those doctrines to which I have already referred as being specified in the deeds and no others. By their so doing a course which they must adopt a Church will be permanently constituted and thenceforth those disturbances

which the Members have disgraced the Church will be I trust prevented and as the numbers of the Trustees are now reduced and others ceased to be Members of the Church and for other reasons it will be necessary that new Trustees should be appointed to carry out these objects I trust you will under the circumstances see the necessity justness and reasonableness of my proposition and prevent me from instituting those proceedings which otherwise I shall adopt. By the 27th instant you will have had time to make up your mind and by that time I anticipate that the possession will have been given up.

Letter addressed
"Mr. Rich^d Ashbrook
at Mr. John Cartwright
Lower Walton
Nr. Warrington.

I am Sir
Your Obt. Servt.
John Hindle
41 Lord St. Liverpool
15 December 1838.

Appendix Thirteen - Lancashire and Cheshire Baptist Churches 1838-1887 from John Lea THE GROWTH OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION IN MID-VICTORIAN LANCASHIRE AND CHESHIRE 1972
<https://www.hslc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/124-7-Lea.pdf>

Date	Churches	Baptisms	Teachers	Scholars	Members
1838	30	277	no datum	no data	2790
1839	33	300	no datum		3038
1840	36	353	no datum		3312
1841	39	270	no datum		2936
1842	38	312	990	7522	3391
1843	37	558	1021	8269	3941
1844	35	550	1056	8505	4352
1845	39	247	1153	9467	4248
1846	39	224	1198	10,092	4272
1847	39	239	1211	10,388	4367
1848	39	290	1184	10,776	4404
1849	39	313	1265	11,276	4510
1850	39	286	1337	12,202	4726
1851	39	243	1292	12,327	4758
1852	44	273	1298	12,209	4984
1853	42	273	1315	11,623	4873
1854	42	222	1311	11,498	4644
1855	44	158	1293	11,617	4741
1856	46	191	1329	12,183	4841
1857	48	292	1437	13022	4967
1858	49	363	1518	13,182	5226

Appendix Fourteen – The Appointment of New Trustees 1854

Dated 19th May 1854

D.

Mess^{rs} James & Thomas Wilkinson
to
Mr Joseph Yarwood & others

copy
Appointment of new Trustees of the Baptist Chapel at Hill Cliff in Stockton within Appletton in the county of Chester and Conveyance of the Trust Estate,

CH'DITY
245
14
PER
8 OCT 1854

This Indenture

made the nineteenth day of May One thousand eight hundred and fifty four BETWEEN JAMES WILKINSON of Lancaster in the County of Lancaster Clogger and THOMAS WILKINSON of Appletton in the County of Chester Shopkeeper of the first part and JOSEPH YARWOOD of Appletton aforesaid Yeoman WILKINSON ASHEROCK of Lever Walton in the said County of Chester laborer JOSEPH BARNER of Hatton in the same County Yeoman JOSEPH WILKINSON of Stockton Heath within Appletton aforesaid Tailor and Draper PETER PERCIAVAL of Daresbury in the said County of Chester Yeoman WILLIAM WILKINSON of Grappenhall in the same County Yeoman JAMES BARNER of Hatton aforesaid Yeoman and EDWARD BATE of Appletton aforesaid Stone Mason of the second part WHEREAS by an Indenture of Peoffment with Memorandum of Divery of Seisin pursuant thereto thereon endorsed dated the twenty third day of September One thousand six hundred and sixty three made between John Morris Gentleman upon the one part and Thomas Millington Gentleman and William Rowlinson Yeoman upon the other part the

Lancaster in the County of Lancaster Clogger and THOMAS WILKINSON of Appletton in the County of Chester Shopkeeper of the first part and JOSEPH YARWOOD of Appletton aforesaid Yeoman WILKINSON ASHEROCK of Lever Walton in the said County of Chester laborer JOSEPH BARNER of Hatton in the same County Yeoman JOSEPH WILKINSON of Stockton Heath within Appletton aforesaid Tailor and Draper PETER PERCIAVAL of Daresbury in the said County of Chester Yeoman WILLIAM WILKINSON of Grappenhall in the same County Yeoman JAMES BARNER of Hatton aforesaid Yeoman and EDWARD BATE of Appletton aforesaid Stone Mason of the second part WHEREAS by an Indenture of Peoffment with a Memorandum of Divery of Seisin pursuant thereto thereon endorsed dated the twenty third day of September One thousand six hundred and sixty three made between John Morris Gentleman upon the one part and Thomas Millington Gentleman and William Rowlinson Yeoman upon the other part the said John Morris for the restating setting establishing and assenting of the premises therein therein mentioned did grant confirm and confirm unto the said Thomas Millington and William Rowlinson and their heirs all that Close field pasture piece and parcel of land containing by estimation one acre of land of Cheshire measure more or less lying and being in stockton in the County of Chester theretofore in the tenure holding or occupation of one Peter Dalmbith of the said Tailor or of his assignee or assignees and then or late in the tenure holding or occupation of Peter Clave or of his assignee or assignees And all houses edifices and premises lying therewith used leased or enjoyed To hold the same with their and every of the

a Memorandum of Divery of Seisin pursuant thereto thereon endorsed dated the twenty third day of September One thousand six hundred and sixty three made between John Morris Gentleman upon the one part and Thomas Millington Gentleman and William Rowlinson Yeoman upon the other part the said John Morris for the restating setting establishing and assenting of the premises therein therein mentioned did grant confirm and confirm unto the said Thomas Millington and William Rowlinson and their heirs all that Close field pasture piece and parcel of land containing by estimation one acre of land of Cheshire measure more or less lying and being in stockton in the County of Chester theretofore in the tenure holding or occupation of one Peter Dalmbith of the said Tailor or of his assignee or assignees and then or late in the tenure holding or occupation of Peter Clave or of his assignee or assignees And all houses edifices and premises lying therewith used leased or enjoyed To hold the same with their and every of the said Thomas Millington and William Rowlinson and their heirs for ever for the several uses behoofe intents and purposes thereafter in the Indenture now in that behalf limited specified and declared and to no other use intent or purpose or that was to wit As to for and concerning the said Close field and parcel of land mentioned That the same should free and after the determination of a certain Lease

1

...therein mentioned which has long since expired be used and employed and should continue to remain and be for the use of a Burial place for all such persons and persons and those people who were commonly called Anabaptists with such other of the Congregational People as or persons as should desire to bury their dead there being in the said condition of the said land and parcel of land the same to be employed and converted to such use and use as by the said Thomas Willington and William Robinson and their heirs and the survivors of them and his heirs should be thought meet from time to time for ever AND WHEREAS by an Indenture of Peoffment with a Memorandum of Divery of Seisin pursuant thereto endorsed thereunto dated the twenty second day of November one thousand seven hundred and seventy four made between Thomas Wainwright Taylor Charles Hardwick Flax Dresser Thomas Hayes Husbandman John Hamblet Blacksmith George Ryland Husbandman John Robinson Victuallier and Samuel Hayes Husbandman of the one part and Jonathan Atherton Chapman of the other part After reciting that by the

dated the twenty second day of November one thousand seven hundred and seventy four made between Thomas Wainwright Taylor Charles Hardwick Flax Dresser Thomas Hayes Husbandman John Hamblet Blacksmith George Ryland Husbandman John Robinson Victuallier and Samuel Hayes Husbandman of the one part and Jonathan Atherton Chapman of the other part After reciting that by the before recited Indenture the hereditaments and premises conveyed thereby had been limited in use to the Society or Congregation of Protestant Dissenters called Baptists holding the doctrine of personal election and final perseverance of Saints belonging to the Meeting House which they had then erected upon part of the said Close field or parcel of land And that the said Society had walled and set out apart from the said close or field a place for the burial of all such persons being Anabaptists within the said Countie of Lancaster and Chester as should desire the same And that the said Society had from time to time repaired and rebuilt the said Meeting house and Burial Place and also the dwellinghouse and buildings to the said close field or parcel of land belonging and had had from the date of the recited Indenture unto the then present time the quiet and uninterrupted enjoyment of the said hereditaments and premises

and reciting that the said Society or Congregation (of which the said Thomas Wainwright Charles Hardwick Thomas Hayes John Hamblet George Ryland John Robinson Samuel Hayes and Jonathan Atherton were principal or chief) for the better or more orderly government of the said Meeting House and the more beneficial enjoyment of the said hereditaments and premises were minded and expressed that therefore the same should be limited and conveyed unto and vested in Trustees in the manner and upon the trusts thereafter mentioned expressed and declared It was witnessed that in pursuance of the said Intention They the said Thomas Wainwright Charles Hardwick Thomas Hayes John Hamblet George Ryland John Robinson and Samuel Hayes Did and every of them did grant bargain sell alien enfeoff and convey unto the said Jonathan Atherton his heirs and assigns All and singular the hereditaments and premises mentioned and comprised in the Indenture thereafter recited (being the hereinbefore recited Indenture of the twenty third day of September one thousand six hundred and sixty three) To hold the same with the appurtenances unto the said Jonathan Atherton his heirs and assigns To the only proper use and behoof of the said Thomas Wainwright Charles Hardwick Thomas Hayes John Hamblet George Ryland John Robinson

assigns All and singular the hereditaments and premises mentioned and comprised in the Indenture thereafter recited (being the hereinbefore recited Indenture of the twenty third day of September one thousand six hundred and sixty three) To hold the same with the appurtenances unto the said Jonathan Atherton his heirs and assigns To the only proper use and behoof of the said Thomas Wainwright Charles Hardwick Thomas Hayes John Hamblet George Ryland John Robinson Samuel Hayes and Jonathan Atherton their heirs and assigns for ever Upon certain trusts in the Indenture now in recital declared and contained And in the Indenture now in recital is contained a declaration that when and so soon as the said trustees should by death be reduced to the number of three the said trustees or the survivors or survivor or his heirs should with all convenient speed convey and assure all and singular the said dwellinghouse meeting house buildings burying ground lands hereditaments and premises thereby enfeoffed and conveyed with the appurtenances unto and to the use of themselves and five or more other persons whom they or the major part of them should nominate and appoint to be new Trustees their heirs and assigns Upon the trusts and to and for the several intents and purposes thereinbefore

mentioned and declared of and concerning the same which said new trustees and all succeeding Trustees should in like manner choose and appoint new Trustees from time to time as occasion might require so as always to keep up the number of eight at the least so long as the laws and statutes of this Realm should permit and allow the said Meeting-house to be used and enjoyed as a place of Divine Worship for the Society or Congregation as aforesaid AND WHEREAS by an Indenture of Peoffment with a Memorandum of Divery of Seisin pursuant thereto endorsed thereunto dated the tenth day of November one thousand eight hundred made between the said John Hamblet George Ryland and Jonathan Atherton of the one part and John Thompson Schoolmaster James Swinton George Howard William Hall William Clark John Wright John Lee and John Taylor Yeoman John Speakman Tailor John Massey and John Brierley Weavers Peter Swinton Thomas Taylor Thomas Yarwood Peter Taylor the said Thomas Wilkinson and James Wilkinson and Jonathan Hughes all therein described as Yeoman James Cottrell Weaver Thomas Oldfield Shoemaker John Oldfield File Cutter John Taylor Miller Joseph Hamblets Blacksmith William Ashbrook Yeoman William

all therein described as Yeoman James Cottrell Weaver Thomas Oldfield Shoemaker John Oldfield File Cutter John Taylor Miller Joseph Hamblets Blacksmith William Ashbrook Yeoman William Cooper Shoemaker and Peter Lawson John Percival and George Percival all therein described as Yeoman of the other part It was witnessed and for the considerations therein mentioned They the said John Hamblets George Ryland and Jonathan Atherton Did and every of them Did grant bargain sell alien enfeoff and convey unto the said John Thompson James Swinton George Howard William Hall William Clark John Wright John Lee John Taylor John Speakman John Massey John Brierley Peter Swinton Thomas Taylor Thomas Yarwood Peter Taylor Thomas Wilkinson James Wilkinson Jonathan Hughes James Cottrell Thomas Oldfield John Oldfield John Taylor Joseph Hamblets William Ashbrook William Cooper Peter Lawson John Percival and George Percival their heirs and assigns All and singular the hereditaments and premises before mentioned To hold the same with the appurtenances unto the said John Thompson James Swinton George Howard William Hall William Clark John Wright John Lee John Taylor John Speakman John Massey John Brierley Peter Swinton

Thomas Taylor Thomas Yarwood Peter Taylor Thomas Wilkinson James Wilkinson Jonathan Bushby
James Cottrell Thomas Oldfield John Oldfield John Taylor Joseph Hamblett William Ashbrook
William Cooper Peter Lawson John Percival and George Percival their heirs and assigns to the
only trustee use and behoof of the said John Hamblett George Holmes and Jonathan Ashbrook
and each of them the said John Thompson James Pelton George Henson William Hall William Thomas
John Wright John Lee John Taylor John Speakman John Massey John Brerley Peter Whitton Thomas
Taylor Thomas Yarwood Peter Taylor Thomas Wilkinson James Wilkinson Jonathan Bushby James
Cottrell Thomas Oldfield John Oldfield John Taylor Joseph Hamblett William Ashbrook William
Cooper Peter Lawson John Percival and George Percival as should continue members of the said
Society or Corporation and not have been publicly put off by the said Society or Corporation
for disorderly conduct or holding improper tenets and to their heirs and assigns for ever
upon the several trusts and to and for the several intents and purposes and with the like
powers for appointing new and additional Trustees as mentioned and set forth in the heretofore
recited Indenture of the twenty second day of November one thousand seven hundred

Society or Corporation and not have been publicly put off by the said Society or Corporation
for disorderly conduct or holding improper tenets and to their heirs and assigns for ever
powers for appointing new and additional Trustees as mentioned and set forth in the heretofore
before recited Indenture of the twenty second day of November one thousand seven hundred and
seventy four AND WHEREAS the said James Wilkinson and Thomas Wilkinson are the only survivors
of the Trustees appointed by the lastly heretofore recited Indenture and they are desirous
said
of appointing the persons parties hereto of the second part to be trustees jointly with themselves
of the hereditaments and premises heretofore referred to and hereinafter mentioned
to be hereby granted and released UNDE THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH that in pursuance of their
desire and for the purposes hereinafter mentioned they the said James Wilkinson and Thomas
Wilkinson DO hereby so far as they lawfully may or can in pursuance of all powers or authorities
then in anywise enabling in this behalf and on the acceptance of the said Joseph Yarwood
Richard Ashbrook Joseph Barber Joseph Wilkinson Peter Percival William Wilkinson James Percival
and Edward Bate testified by their respectively executing these presents NOMINATE COMMISSIONERS

AND APPOINT the said Joseph Yarwood Richard Ashbrook Joseph Barber Joseph Wilkinson Peter
Percival William Wilkinson James Barber and Edward Bate to be Trustees jointly with themselves
the said James Wilkinson and Thomas Wilkinson of the hereditaments and premises heretofore
referred to and hereinafter expressed to be hereby granted and released AND THIS INDENTURE
WITNESSETH that in consideration of the premises and in exercise and execution of all
powers and authorities then in anywise enabling in this behalf THEY the said James Wilkinson
and Thomas Wilkinson according to their several and respective estates and interests in the
premises but not further or otherwise) DO hereby grant and release and also convey and
assure unto the said Joseph Yarwood Richard Ashbrook Joseph Barber Joseph Wilkinson Peter
Percival William Wilkinson James Barber and Edward Bate their heirs and assigns ALL AND
singular the hereditaments and premises mentioned comprised and conveyed by and in the said
recited Indenture of the twenty third day of September one thousand six hundred and sixty
three which in and by the said recited Indenture of the tenth day of November one thousand
eight hundred were comprised and conveyed in manner aforesaid AND all the estate right

similarly the hereditaments and premises mentioned comprised and conveyed by and in the said
recited Indenture of the tenth day of September one thousand six hundred and sixty
three which in and by the said recited Indenture of the tenth day of November one thousand
eight hundred were comprised and conveyed in manner aforesaid AND all the estate right title
interest property claim and demand whatsoever of them the said James Wilkinson and Thomas
Wilkinson and each of them in to and out of the said hereditaments and premises and every
of them and every part thereof respectively TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said hereditaments and
premises with their and every of their rights members and accoutances unto the said Jos
Yarwood Richard Ashbrook Joseph Barber Joseph Wilkinson Peter Percival William Wilkinson
Barber and Edward Bate and their heirs TO THE USE of the said James Wilkinson Thomas
Wilkinson Joseph Yarwood Richard Ashbrook Joseph Barber Joseph Wilkinson Peter Percival
William Wilkinson James Barber and Edward Bate their heirs and assigns for ever UPON AND FOR
SUCH TRUSTS intents and purposes and with under and subject to such powers conditions and
declarations as are limited contained expressed and declared concerning the same hereditaments
A

Appendix Fifteen – The Appointment of New Trustees 1866

Dated 12th September 1866

E.

Mess^{rs} Joseph Wickhamson
and others

to

The Rev^d Wm Kenworthy
and others

Copy/
Appointment
of new Trustees of the Baptist
Chapel at Hill Cliff in Stockton
within Appleton in the county
of Chester and
Conveyance of the
said estate,

24546
OCT 20 1866

This Indenture

made the twelfth day of September one thousand eight hundred and sixty six BETWEEN JOHN WILKINSON of Stockton Bath within Appleton Talbot and other PARTIES PURCHASER of Duresbury Tenants WILLIAM WILKINSON of Grappeshall Tenants JAMES BAKER of Stockton Tenants and THOMAS HUNT of Grappeshall aforesaid (all which places are in the County of Chester) Stomachmen of the one part and THE REV^d ANDREW KENWORTHY of Hill Cliff within Appleton aforesaid Minister of the Baptist Chapel there WILLIAM HUGHES of Higher Walton Farmer THOMAS GOODIER of Appleton aforesaid Shopkeeper WILLIAM JEPSON of Runcorn Shopkeeper THOMAS DOBSON of Lower Walton Farmer RICHARD PAYNEHURST of Appleton aforesaid Farmer WILLIAM RICHARDSON of Runcorn aforesaid Whitesmith JOHN HUNT of Lower Walton aforesaid Railway Laborer JAMES RILEY of Latchford Gardener THOMAS BALTER of Acton Grange Farmer WILLIAM BALTER of Higher Whitley Farmer WILLIAM HUGHES of Grappeshall aforesaid Farmer MATTHEW SHAKESHAFTE of Burslem Farmer JAMES SHAKESHAFTE of Burslem THOMAS HUGHES of Acton aforesaid Farmer THOMAS BALTER of Higher Whitley aforesaid

Baptist Chapel there WILLIAM HUGHES of Higher Walton Farmer THOMAS GOODIER of Appleton aforesaid Shopkeeper WILLIAM JEPSON of Runcorn Shopkeeper THOMAS DOBSON of Lower Walton Farmer RICHARD PAYNEHURST of Appleton aforesaid Farmer WILLIAM RICHARDSON of Runcorn aforesaid Whitesmith JOHN HUNT of Lower Walton aforesaid Railway Laborer JAMES RILEY of Latchford Gardener THOMAS BALTER of Acton Grange Farmer WILLIAM BALTER of Higher Whitley Farmer WILLIAM HUGHES of Grappeshall aforesaid Farmer MATTHEW SHAKESHAFTE of Burslem Farmer JAMES SHAKESHAFTE of Burslem Farmer THOMAS HUGHES of Acton aforesaid Farmer THOMAS BALTER of Higher Whitley aforesaid Farmer WILLIAM HUGHES of Mere Farmer WILLIAM BOOTH of Appleton aforesaid Cabinet Worker JAMES KENWORTHY of Hill Cliff aforesaid Clerk SAMUEL KENWORTHY of Hill Cliff aforesaid Clerk and STEPHEN ROWSON of Grappeshall aforesaid (all which places are in the County of Chester) Farmer of the other part. WHEREAS by Indenture of Feoffment with a Memorandum Liberty of Seisin endorsed dated the twenty third of September One thousand six hundred and sixty three made between John Morris Gentleman upon the one part and Thomas Millington Gentleman and John Rowlinson Yeoman upon the other part the said JOHN MORRIS for the purposes therein mentioned and assuring of the Hereditaments therein mentioned did grant sell off and convey unto the said Thomas Millington and William Rowlinson and their heirs ALL THAT CLOSE FIELD pasture piece and parcel of land containing by estimation one acre of land of Cheshire measure more or less lying and being in Stockton in the said County of Chester therefore

in the tenure holding or occupation of one Peter Dainton of Stockton aforesaid Tailor or of his Assignee or Assignees and then or late in the tenure holding or occupation of one Peter Clare or of his Assignee or Assignees and all houses edifices and buildings unto the said close field pasture and piece and parcel of land and premises lying belonging or thereunto or therewith used leased or enjoyed TO HOLD the same with their appurtenances unto the said Thomas Millington and William Rowlinson and their heirs for ever To and for the several uses intents and purposes therein after in the indenture now in recital in that behalf limited specified and declared and to no other use intent or purpose whatsoever that was to wit AS TO FOR and concerning the said close field and parcel of land before mentioned That the same should from and after the determination of a certain lease therein mentioned which has long since expired be used and employed and should continue remain and be for the use of a Burial place for all person and persons and those people which were commonly called Anabaptists with such other of the Congregational Peoples way or persons as should desire to bury their dead there being in the said Counties of Cheshire and Lancashire or either of them for ever AND of for or concerning the house housing and building standing and being upon the said close and parcel of land the same to be employed and converted to such use and uses as by the said Thomas Millington and

person and persons and those people which were commonly called Anabaptists with such other of the Congregational Peoples way or persons as should desire to bury their dead there being in the said Counties of Cheshire and Lancashire or either of them for ever AND of for or concerning the house housing and building standing and being upon the said close and parcel of land the same to be employed and converted to such use and uses as by the said Thomas Millington and William Rowlinson and their heirs and the survivor of them and his heirs should be thought meet from time to time for ever AND WHEREAS by an Indenture of Feoffment with a Memorandum of Livery of Seisin endorsed dated the twenty second of November One thousand seven hundred and seventy four made between Thomas Wainwright Tailor Charles Hardwick Flax Dresser Thomas Hayes Husbandman John Hamblet Blacksmith George Hylance Husbandman John Rowlinson Victualler and Samuel Verles Husbandman of the one part and Jonathan Atherton Chapman of the other part After reciting that by the hereinbefore recited Indenture the hereditaments and premises conveyed thereby had been limited in use to the Society or Congregation of Protestant Dissenters called Baptists holding the Doctrine of Personal Election and Final Perseverance of Saints belonging to the Meeting House which they had then erected upon part of the said close ^{field} or parcel of land AND that the

and premises thereby enfeoffed and conveyed with the appurtenances unto and to the use of themselves and five or more persons when they or the major part of them should nominate or appoint to be new Trustees their heirs and assigns upon the trusts and to and for the several intents and purposes thereinbefore mentioned and declared of and concerning the same which as from time to time as occasion might require so as always to keep up the number of seats in the said House to be used and enjoyed as a place of Divine Worship for the Society or Congregation aforesaid AND WHEREAS by divers mesne assignments and ultimately by an Indenture dated nineteenth of May One thousand eight hundred and fifty four and made between James Wil Thomas Wilkinson (therein described) of the first part and Joseph Yarwood Richard Ashby Joseph Barber therein described and the said Joseph Wilkinson Peter Percival William W James Barber and Edward Hale of the second part The said parties thereto of the second were appointed to be Trustees jointly with the said James Wilkinson and Thomas Wilkinson hereditaments and premises hereinbefore referred to AND by the same Indenture they James Wilkinson and Thomas Wilkinson (according to their respective estates and interests premises) did grant and release and also convey and assure unto and to the use of parties thereto of the second part their heirs and assigns All and

Thomas Wilkinson (therein described) of the first part and Joseph Yarwood Richard Ashbrook and Joseph Barber therein described and the said Joseph Wilkinson Peter Percival William Wilkinson James Barber and Edward Bate of the second part. The said parties thereto of the second part, were appointed to be Trustees jointly with the said James Wilkinson and Thomas Wilkinson of the hereditaments and premises hereinbefore referred to AND by the same Indenture they the said James Wilkinson and Thomas Wilkinson (according to their respective estates and interests in the premises) did grant and release and also convey and assure unto and to the use of the said parties thereto of the second part their heirs and assigns ALL and singular the hereditaments and premises mentioned comprised and conveyed by and in the hereinbefore recited Indenture of the twenty third of September One thousand six hundred and sixty three and a certain other Indenture therein mentioned dated on or about the tenth of November One thousand eight hundred Upon and for such trusts intents and purposes and with under and subject to such powers conditions and declarations as were limited contained expressed or declared concerning the same hereditaments and premises in and by the hereinbefore recited Indenture of the twenty second day of November One thousand seven hundred and seventy four so far as the nature and circumstances of the case would permit AND WHEREAS the said Joseph Wilkinson Peter Percival William Wilkinson James Barber

CONSTITUTE AND APPOINT the said several persons parties hereto of the latter part to be Trustees in the place or stead of themselves the said several persons parties hereto of the former part of the hereditaments and premises hereinbefore referred to and hereinafter expressed to be hereby granted and released AND THIS INDENTURE FURTHER WITNESSETH that in consideration of the premises and in exercise and execution of all powers and authorities them in anywise enabling in this behalf They the said several persons parties hereto of the former part (according to their several and respective estates and interests in the premises but not further or otherwise) Do and each of them doth hereby Grant and release and also convey and assure unto the said several persons parties hereto of the latter part their heirs and assigns ALL AND SINGULAR the hereditaments and premises mentioned comprised and conveyed by and in the said recited Indenture of the twenty third of September One thousand six hundred and sixty three and which in and by the hereinbefore recited Indenture of the nineteenth of May One thousand eight hundred and fifty four were comprised and conveyed in manner aforesaid And all and singular other the hereditaments (if any) now vested in them the said parties hereto of the former part or any of them upon the Trust aforesaid AND all the estate right title interest property claim and demand whatsoever of them

and Edward Bate the parties hereto of the former part are the only survivors of the Trustees appointed by the lastly hereinbefore recited Indenture and two of them (namely) the said James Barber and Edward Bate have never acted (as they hereby declare) in the execution of any of the aforesaid trusts imposed in them and they are desirous of retiring from the said Office of Trustees and of appointing the said several persons parties hereto of the latter part to be Trustees in the place or stead of themselves the said several persons parties hereto of the former part of the hereditaments and premises hereinbefore referred to and hereinafter expressed to be hereby granted and released NOW THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH that in pursuance of such desire and for the purposes hereinafter mentioned They the said parties hereto of the former part Do and each of them doth hereby so far as they lawfully may or can in pursuance of all powers or authorities them in anywise enabling in this behalf and on the acceptance by the said several persons parties hereto of the latter part testified by their respectively executing these presents NOMINATE CONSTITUTE AND APPOINT the said several persons parties hereto of the latter part to be Trustees in the place or stead of themselves the said several persons parties hereto of the former part of the hereditaments and premises hereinbefore referred to and hereinafter expressed to be hereby granted and released AND THIS INDENTURE FURTHER WITNESSETH that in consideration of the premises and in exercise and execution of all powers and authorities them in anywise enabling in this behalf

the said several persons parties hereto of the former part and every of them in to and out
of the said hereditaments and premises and every of them and every part thereof respectively
TO HAVE and TO HOLD the said hereditaments and premises hereinbefore described and intended
to be hereby granted or otherwise assured with their and every of their right heirs and
appurtenances unto the said several persons parties hereto of the latter part and their heirs
TO THE USE of the said several persons parties hereto of the latter part their heirs and
assigns for ever UPON and for such trusts intents and purposes and with under and subject to
such powers conditions and declarations as are limited contained expressed or declared
concerning the same hereditaments and premises in and by the hereinbefore recited Indenture
of the twenty second day of November One thousand seven hundred and seventy four so far as the
nature and circumstances of the case will permit AND each of them the said several persons &
parties hereto of the former part so far as relates to his own acts and deeds doth hereby for
himself his heirs executors & administrators covenant with the said several persons parties
hereto of the ^{latter} ~~former~~ part their heirs and assigns that they the said several persons parties
hereto of the former part respectively have not made or done or knowingly permitted or suff

parties hereto of the former part so far as relates to his own acts and deeds doth hereby for
himself his heirs executors & administrators covenant with the said several persons parties
hereto of the ^{latter} ~~former~~ part their heirs and assigns that they the said several persons parties
hereto of the former part respectively have not made or done or knowingly permitted or suffered
anything whereby the said hereditaments and premises hereinbefore expressed to be hereby
granted or any of them or any part thereof respectively are is or can be impeached charged
incumbered or affected in title or otherwise howsoever IN WITNESS whereof the said parties
these presents have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first before written

SIGNED SEALED AND DELIVERED by the before	Joseph Wilkinson	(L. S.)
named Joseph Wilkinson Peter Percival	Peter Percival	(L. S.)
William Wilkinson James Barber Edward Bate	William Wilkinson	(L. S.)
William Hough Thomas Goodier William Bradford	James Barber	(L. S.)
Matthew Shakeshaft James Bradford Thomas Hough,	Edward Bate	(L. S.)
and Samuel Kenworthy in the presence of	Abraham Kenworthy	(L. S.)
Wm. Sharp	William Hough	(L. S.)
Soir.	Thomas Goodier	(L. S.)
Warrington		

SIGNED SEALED AND DELIVERED by the before
named Abraham Kenworthy William Jepson
Thomas Dobson Richard Fairhurst William
Richardson John Hunt Thomas Baxter
William Baxter Thomas Baxter William
Hough William Booth James Kenworthy and
Stephen Rowson in the presence of
James Swinton
RUNCORN
Farmer

Signed sealed and delivered by the within
named James Riley in the presence of
William Beamont
Solr.
Warrington

William Jepson (L.S.)
Thomas Dobson (L.S.)
Richard Fairhurst (L.S.)
William Richardson (L.S.)
John Hunt (L.S.)
James Riley (L.S.)
Thomas Baxter (L.S.)
William Baxter (L.S.)
William Bradford (L.S.)
Matthew Shakeshaft (L.S.)
James Bradford (L.S.)
Thomas Hough (L.S.)
Thomas Baxter (L.S.)
William Hough (L.S.)
William Booth (L.S.)

RUNCORN
Farmer

Signed sealed and delivered by the within
named James Riley in the presence of
William Beamont
Solr.
Warrington

James Riley (L.S.)
Thomas Baxter (L.S.)
William Baxter (L.S.)
William Bradford (L.S.)
Matthew Shakeshaft (L.S.)
James Bradford (L.S.)
Thomas Hough (L.S.)
Thomas Baxter (L.S.)
William Hough (L.S.)
William Booth (L.S.)
James Kenworthy (L.S.)
Saml Kenworthy (L.S.)
Stephen Rowson (L.S.)

Appendix Sixteen - meeting of early Strict Baptist Association

FORMULATION OF A NORTHERN BRANCH OF THE STRICT BAPTIST
CONVENTION

Address

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,-We take the liberty of presenting you with the Resolutions, and of soliciting your concurrence and active support. It has long been thought desirable that those Baptists who conscientiously disapprove of what is termed *mixed communion* should have some common centre of intercourse in this part of the kingdom.....

Resolutions – On Monday, July 5th, 1847, a meeting was held at the Baptist School-room, Wilmot Street, Hulme, Manchester- resolutions to the following effect were adopted

5th Resolution:- That a preparatory Meeting be held at Hill-cliffe, near Warrington, on Tuesday, Oct. 19th, 1847, at 2 P.M. for business of the Committee; and in the evening a Public Meeting: the first Annual Meeting on Tuesday in Easter week- the place and time to be fixed at Hill-cliffe

Signed by JOHN DRIVER, Chairman.

as beneficial owner doth hereby grant unto the Purchasers
All that plot piece or parcel of land situate at Appleton in
the said County of Chester and having a frontage to Red
Lane on the south east and a frontage to an intended street
or road forty feet wide on the south west and bounded on
the east side by Mill Hill Gravelyard and on the west
side by an intended street or road thirty six feet wide
including one half in width of each of the said intended
streets or roads forty feet wide and thirty six feet ^{wide} respectively
so far as the same are co-extensive with the said frontage
and western boundary of the said piece of land, all which
premises hereby assumed are delineated in the plan hereto
annexed and are thereon surrounded by a pink verge line
It Hold the same title and to the use of the Purchasers

as beneficial owner doth hereby grant unto the Purchasers
All that plot piece or parcel of land situate at Appleton in
the said County of Chester and having a frontage to Red
Lane on the south east and a frontage to an intended street
or road forty feet wide on the south west and bounded on
the east side by Mill Hill Gravelyard and on the west
side by an intended street or road thirty six feet wide
including one half in width of each of the said intended
streets or roads forty feet wide and thirty six feet ^{wide} respectively
so far as the same are co-extensive with the said frontage
and western boundary of the said piece of land, all which
premises hereby assumed are delineated in the plan hereto
annexed and are thereon surrounded by a pink verge line
It Hold the same title and to the use of the Purchasers

their heirs and assigns And the Vendor doth hereby
covenant with the Purchasers and their assigns that he
the Vendor will duly pay and discharge the said rent
charge of two hundred pounds and will at all times
hereafter keep the Purchasers their heirs executors
administrators and assigns and the hereditaments
intended to be hereby assumed effectually indemnified from
and against the said rent charge and all claims demands
actions proceedings costs expenses and liabilities whatsoever
in or in respect of the same or any part thereof And ~~do~~
the Purchasers do hereby for themselves and their assigns
and to the intent and use as to be first not only themselves
personally but also (so far as practicable) all persons deriving
title under them covenant with the Vendor his heirs and
assigns that they the Purchasers will at all times hereafter
keep the small crescent-shaped piece of land hatched
blue on the said plan hereto annexed (being part of the
said hereditaments heretofore described and hereby assumed
or such substituted land as is hereinafter mentioned open
to the said intended street or road forty feet wide on which
it abuts (or in the case of such substituted land as is
hereinafter mentioned open to the street or road on which it
may or shall abut) and in a neat and proper order and

title under them covenant with the Vendor his heirs and
assigns that they the Purchasers will at all times hereafter
keep the small crescent-shaped piece of land hatched
blue on the said plan hereto annexed (being part of the
said hereditaments heretofore described and hereby assumed
or such substituted land as is hereinafter mentioned open
to the said intended street or road forty feet wide on which
it abuts (or in the case of such substituted land as is
hereinafter mentioned open to the street or road on which it
may or shall abut) and in a neat and proper order and
condition so as to secure a proper entrance and passage for
entrance gates to the remainder of the said hereditaments
heretofore described and hereby assumed as and when the
same hereditaments shall be used as a private yard. Provided
always that if the Purchaser shall at any time hereafter
sell apart a similar and equally suitable piece of land
out of the said hereditaments heretofore described and

titles under them covenant with the Vendor his heirs and assigns that they the Purchasers will at all times hereafter keep the small crescent-shaped piece of land hatched blue on the said plan here annexed (being part of the said hereditaments heretofore described and hereby assured or such substituted land as is hereinafter mentioned open to the said intended street or road forty feet wide on which it abuts (or in the case of such substituted land as is hereinafter mentioned open to the street or road on which it may or shall abut) and in a neat and proper order and condition so as to secure a proper entrance and passage for entrance gates to the remainder of the said hereditaments heretofore described and hereby assured as and when the same hereditaments shall be used as a graveyard. Provided always that if the Purchasers shall at any time hereafter set apart a similar and equally suitable piece of land out of the said hereditaments heretofore described and

hereby assured of the like dimensions to the said piece of land hatched blue as aforesaid then the covenant by the Purchasers lastly heretofore contained shall apply to the said piece of land so substituted for the said piece of land hatched blue as aforesaid in execution of the said last mentioned piece of land and the said covenant so far as it effects or relates to the said last mentioned piece of land shall cease and be void. And the Vendor hereby acknowledges the right of the Purchasers to the production of the documents mentioned in the Schedule hereto (the possession of which is retained by the Vendor) and to delivery of copies thereof. And hereby undertakes for the safe custody of the same documents. And it is hereby certified that the hereditaments hereby effected does not form part of a larger hereditament or of a succession of hereditaments in respect of which the amount or value or the aggregate amount or value of the consideration exceeds five hundred pounds. In witness whereof the said parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first before written. 23

in witness whereof the said parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first before written. 23

The Schedule before referred to

15th October 1559. Reced. Bill under the hands and seals of Elyas Lyon and George Lyon.

6th December 1579. Indenture made between the Right Honorable John Baron Binnmarlisch of the one part and Edward Townshend and Egerton Leigh of the other part.

25th February 1590. Indenture made between the said the Right Honorable John Baron Binnmarlisch and Egerton Leigh of the one part and Edward Lee Townshend of the other part.

Appendix Eighteen – The Savage Trust 1922

Dated 15th June 1922

The William Alfred and
Priscilla Savage Hill Cliffe
Burial Ground Maintenance
Fund,

Trust Deed.

To all to whom these Presents shall come
Priscilla Savage of Zetland
Hill Cliffe Appleton in the County
of Chester Widow and The Baptist Union Corporation
Limited whose registered office is situate at Number 4
Southampton Row in the County of London (hereinafter
called "the said Corporation") send Greeting:-

ADJUDGED
DULY STAMPED
1922

TEN
SHILLINGS

the sum of One thousand pounds invested with and secured
on Bond Number 9823 of the City of Liverpool (hereinafter
called "the said investment") to be transferred into the
name of the said Corporation for the purposes hereinafter
expressed Now these Presents witness and it is
hereby declared and in particular the said Priscilla Savage
doth hereby direct as follows:-

1. The said Corporation shall always be the Trustee for the
administration of the Charity established by these Presents,
2. The said Corporation shall either retain the said investment
or sell the same, or any part thereof, and re-invest the proceeds
thereof in the name of the said Corporation, in any of
the investments permitted by law for the investment of
trust funds (but in no other stocks funds securities or

investments whatsoever) with power from time to time
to change the same, or any of them for others of a like
nature and shall stand possessed of the said investment
or other the investments for the time being representing
the same (all of which are hereinafter included in the)

expression "the trust fund") upon and with, and subject to the trusts powers and provisions hereinafter declared and contained.

3. The said Corporation shall pay the dividends and annual income of the trust fund to or permit the same to be received by the Trustees for the time being of the Hill Cliffe Baptist Church situate at Appleton aforesaid (hereinafter called the said Trustees) or such person or persons as they shall direct while and so long as the said Trustees shall once at least in every year, and otherwise than out of the income of the trust fund clean and put in good order the Vault monument and grave in the Burial Ground situate in Appleton aforesaid wherein or whereunder are deposited the remains of the late

Captain William Alfred Savage the late husband of the said Priscilla Savage late of Appleton, aforesaid who died on the seventh day of July One thousand nine hundred and eighteen and if and so far as the said Vault or monument or grave or the inscription thereon shall be broken, defaced or out of repair or good order amend and restore and if and so far as may be necessary rebuild the same so the intent that the said dividends and annual income shall be applied by the said Trustees in or towards repairing maintaining and keeping in neat and careful order and condition the said Burial Ground and the paths walks walls hedges

gates trees shrubs and ornamental parts lawn grass and grass borders and all other parts of the said Burial Ground or any extension thereof connected with the said Hill Cliffe Baptist Church,

4. If and so soon as the said Trustees shall make default in cleaning putting in good order amending restoring or rebuilding the said Vault and monument and grave as aforesaid the capital and income of the trust fund shall be held by the said Corporation in trust for the Warrington Infirmary and Dispensary for its general purposes.

5. The said Corporation shall not in any case or at any time be bound to enquire as to the state or condition of the said Vault monument and grave but shall be entitled to assume that the same are in good order

unless and until a complaint or notice in writing by or from some responsible person or persons that the same are not in good order shall be given to and received by them -

6. The receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the said Hill Cliffe Baptist Church or of the Treasurer for the time being of the said Warrington Infirmary and Dispensary (as the case may be) shall be a good and sufficient discharge to the said Corporation for all moneys or investments payable or transferable thereto or to the Trustees for the time being thereof under these presents.

7. The name of the Charity established by these presents and of the trust fund shall be "The William Alfred and

Priscilla Savage Hill Cliffe Rural Ground Maintenance Fund".

8. The Corporation may make its usual charges for the administration of the Trust.

In witness whereof the said Priscilla Savage hath hereunto set her hand and seal and the said Corporation have caused their Common Seal to be hereunto affixed this fifth day of June One thousand nine hundred and twenty two.

Signed, sealed and delivered by the said Priscilla Savage in the presence of

Priscilla Savage

W. Brown



Academy Lodge
 Moor Park
 St. George, N. Liverpool.
 Shipping Manager

Tom Sergeant
 72 Express Road, Kibbles
 near Liverpool,
 Liverpool, England

Witnessed under the Common Seal,
 of the Baptist Union Corporation
 Limited in the presence of

THE COMMON SEAL OF THE
 BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN
 AND IRELAND

Samuel Chisholm
Thomas Wood
 24, W. Essex Road

Appendix Nineteen – The Antiquity of Hill Cliffe Baptist Church – Rev Robert Jones 1922

The Antiquity of Hill Cliffe Baptist Church
 by Rev Robert Jones.
 (Read at the meeting of Lancashire & Yorkshire Association of Baptist Churches (Western District) held at Hill Cliffe May 11th 1922.)

We meet today in a spot where, for many generations & for some hundreds of years, men & women of deep conviction & sturdy character have met together to worship God & to honour the Christ. Here, from far distant days, have gathered those who revered the Bible as the Word of God & who love the message given by God to man in His sinless & perfect Son. Here has been raised in strong faith and in unbroken fidelity for centuries the voice of prayer & praise, & the Gospel message has been proclaimed. Today we stand at the salute to those of our fore-fathers in the faith & as we recall their firm trust in God, their signal courage, & their final perseverance. "Hill Cliffe" today, through the devotion & faithfulness of those who have gone before us, is an honoured & fragrant name, well known over a wide district, & known also to those who have an interest in Baptist history & therefore, their land far across the seas.

And it is our purpose & aim, in these quiet times, to perpetuate & advance the cause which they commenced & carried on in the dark & stormy days of persecution.

"Our fathers were high-minded men,
 who firmly kept the faith;
 To freedom & to conscience true,
 In danger & in death
 Their zeal for Christ, their love of truth,
 Made them all shame despise;
 For should their deeds be ever forgot,
 For noble men were they,
 Who struggled hard for sacred right,
 And bravely won the day."

As to the date when the Hill Cliffe originated, there are many and diverse opinions. The oldest document that belongs to it are, alas, lost. The earliest deed now in our possession is dated 1660. The date given for this Church in the Baptist Hand book of Great Britain & Ireland is 1650; in the year book of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Association 1522 is given; while, according to local tradition, & according to a statement made by Mr. James Kenworthy in his book "A History of the Baptist Church at Hill Cliffe," the middle of the fourteenth century is named. He says: "The earliest

evidence of the existence of Hill Cliffe is found on a stone in the burial ground bearing the date of 1357."

By this it will be seen that there is at Hill Cliffe a very interesting historical problem, some, on a minute scale, not unlike that contained in the Pentateuch of the Old Testament. Here is a parallel to the "Samaritan," & the "Elohistic" & the "Priestly" codes. And upon these the confident "higher critics," in the name of Science, affirm their ~~own~~ opinions & even pronounce final judgments.

In an enthusiastic article which appeared in "The Baptist" for Feb'y 12th 1897, written by the Rev. J. S. Hughes, the Minister of Hill Cliffe, it is said: "The most effective witness to the antiquity of Hill Cliffe is found in the graveyard, one stone bearing the date of 1357. This was dug out of the ground during some excavations thirty years ago. It, however, stands alone in its witness of that period. The next to it bears the date of 1523, & another 1590." It is but right to say that in reading this article one feels that there is considerable special pleading for the higher antiquity of Hill Cliffe; & also that the Rev. W. J. Whitley, Secretary of the Baptist Historical Society,

assured me, in a conversation I had with him last ~~Wednesday~~ week, that Mr. Hughes retreated later from the extreme position which he had taken up in that article. And, further, it must be admitted that now no trace can be found, though diligently sought, in the graveyard of a date approaching 1357.

And there is another challenging statement made, which I have not been able thus far to verify, namely, "of valuable testimony was discovered a number of years ago, in examining the deeds of Warburton Estate, Cheshire, proving that an ancestor of the family had been a Minister of Hill Cliffe up to the time of his death in 1594."

When it was decided that we should this year celebrate the antiquity of Hill Cliffe, I cherished the hope that we might be able to take a safe course by adopting the middle date given, which is most plainly visible on a tombstone in the graveyard, namely, 1522. The inscription as at present known reads: Here lies the body of Elizabeth Pyeroff who died December 6, 1522.

But, judge of my predicament when

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in an article on Hill Cliffe. I read in the Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society, (vol. V. No 3. April 1917), that the original inscription on that stone was: "Here lies ye body of Elizabeth Wegeroff who died December 22nd 1714". The writer of that article is Mr. Oliver Knott of Manchester, a former member of the Baptist Historical Society, & Dr. Whitley, a Baptist Minister, adds this note: "The accuracy of that statement" (that Elizabeth Wegeroff died in 1714 not in 1522) "can be verified by seeing her will at Chester, which has been duly catalogued by the Lancashire & Cheshire Record Society." But the last line was first improved into 1522 1714. Now it was copied into printed books without the 1714. And within the last few years it has been very neatly made to read 14th 1522 age 14." It should be added that there is a photograph extant, reproduced in the volume "Baptists in the North of England" p. 57 - which shows the original date, 1714). Dr. Whitley continues: "It could not be very hard to know when the legend started of 1522; it had not arisen in 1819, when an article in the Baptist magazine names 1663 as the earliest date for the Church's existence."

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So with the higher critic. And it must be avowedly admitted that there has been a tampering with some of the dates, - as in the above instance, in which it is evident to all that the figures 1522 do not correspond in style to that of the sixteenth century. There is also to be seen on another tombstone an obvious attempt to make a 7 appear like a 3, & so to turn 1711 to 1311. But, antiquity cannot be created by altering figures on the gravestones of the dead!

On the other hand, be it observed, the higher critics are at times extremely dogmatic, but they are not always infallible. For instance, Dr. Whitley in a letter to the "Warrington Guardian" for May 5th 1907 says: "There is not a particle of evidence that Baptists were heard of before 1651, & there is the greatest improbability that they could have existed before 1648." And again, in a recent letter to the writer of this paper: "There were no Baptists in the world before 1609, & no Anabaptists before 1400." (In early documents extant the Hill Cliffe Baptists are referred to as Anabaptists). And yet further: "There is

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abundant material to show that it is not needful to go back 260 years to get at the very origin of Hill Cliffe.

"No Baptists in the world before 1609." No Baptists at Hill Cliffe before 1648. And yet, in the official handbook of the Baptists in this country there are recorded four Churches before that period, - Bramhall in 1550; Egghorne in Kent, 1550; Spovorth, in Lincolnshire 1599; Bridgewater, in Somerset, 1600.

But let us come back to Hill Cliffe. In this year of the celebration of the antiquity of the Church, we are seeking all possible evidence with the aim of arriving at the most probable date of its origin. In what is considered to be the oldest part of the graveyard, we have probed with a sharp-pointed iron rod, to ascertain whether there were gravestones which had been covered over with soil & sod. A number of such have been found this very week, some about a foot & some deeper below the surface, hidden thus for an unknown period. And our labours of excavation has not been in vain; for on one of these uncovered gravestones is

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the following inscription in clear & complete letters & figures throughout: "Here lieth the body of Elizabeth widow of John Witter of Netherton who was interred October 21 1622." And it should be noted that the lettering throughout is according to the style of that period. Also, this grave is at the centre of the oldest part of the graveyard, suggesting that there were other graves prior to it; while the sexton testifies that frequently when new graves are dug human bones & skulls are discovered. * * *

1622. That is just 300 years ago. Now, it is assumed at all will agree that the assumption is a reasonable one - that a Church existed at Hill Cliffe before its graveyard. And so the question arises: For how long was the Church in existence prior to 1622? It is not possible at present to tell definitely the length of that period; but since the discovery made last Monday by our Trustees myself, we read with added interest the statement in Mr. Kemworth's History that the following inscription was copied from a stone in the burial ground: "Here lieth the body of William Batho of Chester who died November 19th in the year 1584."

1584.

* Here too also! a correction is necessary. After further investigation it has been found that the original date of the stone is 1622. The lettering throughout is according to the style of that period. Also, this grave is at the centre of the oldest part of the graveyard, suggesting that there were other graves prior to it; while the sexton testifies that frequently when new graves are dug human bones & skulls are discovered. * * *

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whether that line is above ground with the inscription obliterated through the action of the weather & frequent tramping upon (as is the case in numerous instances), or is ~~under~~ buried under the soil may yet be ascertained, none can tell.

But, apart from this, we are on the ground of reality, when we affirm that the history of Hill Cliffe dates back to over 300 years; nor can we ~~find~~ trace the period beyond those years at which this ancient church originated. But, in the face of this most recent & authentic witness of the 1622 gravestone we may fairly ask, May not the date given to in the Lancashire & Cheshire Association year Book (1522) prove to be as near the mark as that which appears in the Baptist Handbook (1650)?

Of special interest to us in this Western District of our Association is the fact that in Hill Cliffe burial ground lies buried the Dutch Medical Doctor, Ebenezer Fabius of Liverpool, & also his wife, whose son, Daniel Fabius, licensed a room in their dwelling for worship on July 1700. In 1705 Daniel Fabius put up a little wooden

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meeting house, & Francis Turner, Minister, as Hill Cliffe, went over regularly to conduct worship there. In 1714 the wooden hut was replaced by something more substantial, which was licensed on the 12th July, at the Lancaster Session. Daniel Fabius died four years later, & the earliest dated tombstone at Warrington reads: "In this Dominion Resteth the Body of Daniel Fabius, who departed this life ye 12th April 1718 aged 37." In 1714 the Liverpool portion of the Church was formed into a separate body, under the ministry of Peter Davenport. This first minister of the first Liverpool Baptist Church supported himself as a tobacconist, with a stipulation for interchange with Francis Turner of Hill Cliffe help towards his support.

The records show that at this period Hill Cliffe had its branches in many directions. Contributions were received from various "quarters," such as "Liverpool" quarter, "Chester & Bickerton" "Northwich," "Newton." And, later, there sprung from the same mother

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the churches at Little Leigh, Milton, Latchford, Lynton (Cheshire).

As to the position of the Chapel at Hill Cliffe, it has been said: "Its selection as a place of ~~meeting~~ meeting for Christian worshippers can only be accounted for on the ground that the great object in view was concealment from their persecutors. It would be impossible to have chosen a better place for the purpose. Surrounded as it was until recent times by woods, at a safe distance also from public highways, very near the boundary of the counties of Lancashire & Cheshire, it was as safe a place as could possibly have been found in those dark days of persecution. Whenever the persecuting spirit was strong in Lancashire, then the people would worship at Hill Cliffe, but when the persecuting spirit in Cheshire was the stronger, the people worshipped in Warrington, there being at the earliest time of which there remain any records of the existence of the Hill Cliffe Chapel, a meeting in connection therewith in Warrington, (situate in what was formerly the Roe Buck yard, Bridge Street).

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Also, as a Lancashire writ could not be served in Cheshire, nor a Cheshire writ in Lancashire, the Cheshire Baptists often worshipped in Warrington, & the Lancashire Baptists at Hill Cliffe.

Among the celebrities which Hill Cliffe associates with itself is, first & greatest, Oliver Cromwell. In an account of Cromwell's visit to Lancashire, by Dr. Kendrick, the following appears: "Tradition asserts, - with much probability when the habits of the great soldiers are considered - that Cromwell during his brief stay in the town attended worship in the ancient Baptist Chapel at Hill Cliffe; it is further said that one of his soldiers - a common occurrence during the Civil War - occupied the pulpit on occasion." It is also a local tradition that one of Cromwell's officers is buried in the Hill Cliffe graveyard. Nor should it be overlooked that at Northwich the widow of John Milton (Cromwell's good Foreign Secretary & one of the world's greatest poets) spent her last days, & was there buried. And further, Lewis Carroll, the author of "Alice in Wonderland"

hails from our neighbourhood, born at
Daresbury Vicarage, some 3 or 4 miles
distant, in 1832. A local historian
writes: "As he grew into boyhood, he
increased the radius of his travels, &
reached the pleasant height of Hill
Cliffe. Thenceforward the pretty hill
was his favourite haunt. In the
wild life of the hill he found his paradise.
To watch the rabbits & catch a glimpse
of the fleet fox were his highest
delight, & imagination filled up the
scene with other birds & beasts, until
the hill top seemed with life... Lewis
Carroll never forgot the scenes of his
early life. In a poem which appeared
in 1860 in 'All the Year Round', he
described his memory pictures of Hill
Cliffe:

"I watch the drowsy night expire,
And fancy paints at my desire
Her magic pictures in the fire
And island farm 'mid seas of corn,
Swayed by the wandering breath of morn,
The happy spot where I was born."

In its long history Hill Cliffe,
according to one record, has had
23 ministers. But that number does
not include the company of golly women

114
who, after a regrettable lapse, met
regularly for prayer & praise, when for
over six years no regular preaching
took place at Hill Cliffe (1785-1792).
Referring only to those of far away times
for my subject is 'The Antiquity of
Hill Cliffe', there was Thomas Tillam,
(died in 1650), who was preacher,
Waulglast, & Author; there was Francis
Turner (1704-1727), learned & active,
there was John McEgowan D.D., a
Tutor, who during his pastorate at
Hill Cliffe carried on business as a
bread-baker in Warrington, & there
was John Thompson (1792-1825), who
kept a school in Latchford and
ministered at Hill Cliffe at the same time.
Of the last named it is written that in
the Spring of 1798, when an appeal
was made to equip a Volunteer Army
to go fight against Napoleon Bonaparte,
John Thompson, a peaceful & amiable
man, was deeply stirred. "The funds",
writes the historian, "were raised by public
subscription & never fell beneath the
needs of the corps. Working men denied
themselves of luxuries & the ladies of articles
of dress. Most remarkable of all was

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an outburst of enthusiasm on the part
of the minister at Hill Cliffe Baptist Chapel,
John Thompson, who gave liberally to the
fund & publicly urged his congregation to
do the same. "Brethren", he said on one
occasion, "I had laid aside five pounds
to buy a new suit of clothes, but these
I have shall last another year. I
will give the money to the Volunteers,
& I expect you, too, will give liberally,
& I am now coming out of the pulpit,
& will hold the plate at the door myself!"
Such an example was more eloquent
than words, & the collection exceeded
twenty pounds.

And this, surely, is just the right
spirit for me to tell you of the practical
project to which we at Hill Cliffe have
committed ourselves this year. This I
can best do by reading to you the
following circular letter which was
just reached me from the Printer:

Appendix Twenty— Statement about the History and Antiquity of Hill Cliffe- Robert Jones 1924

The Baptist Church at Hill Cliffe is acknowledged by learned and reliable historians to be one of the oldest of the Baptist Churches in our land, and dates back some two-hundred and seventy-five years, - to the year 1649. This is the earliest date, according to the Rev. Dr. W.T. Whitley, minister at Preston Baptist Church for many years, and secretary of 'The Baptist Historical Society' in this country, which can be claimed for Hill Cliffe.

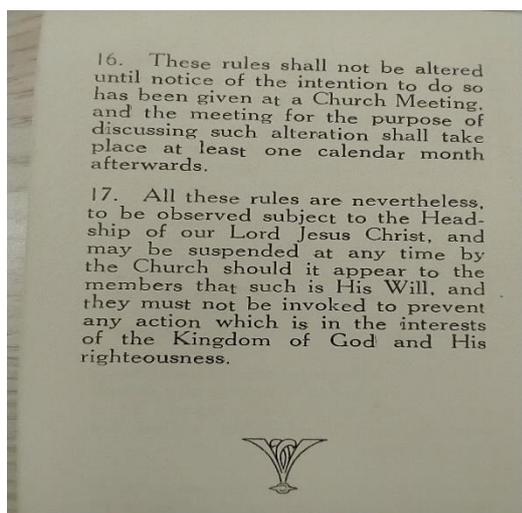
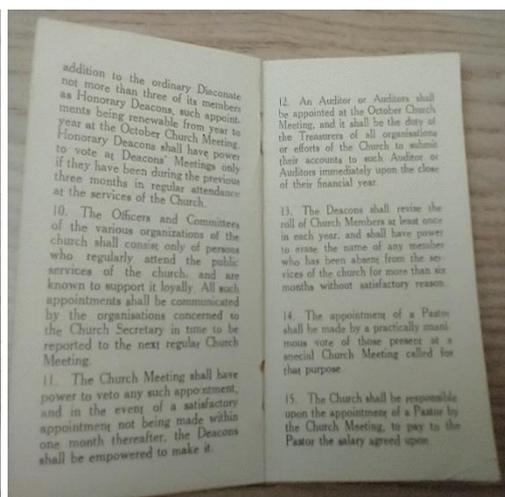
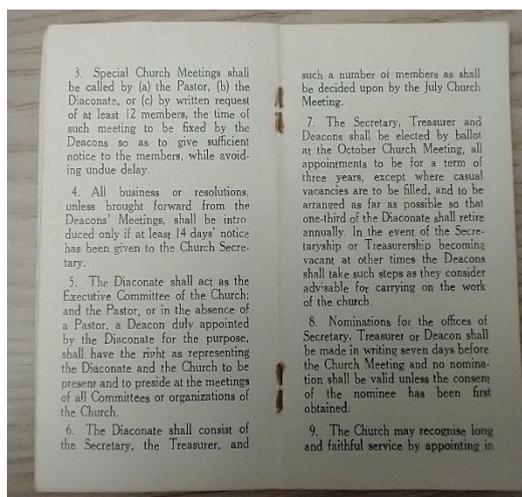
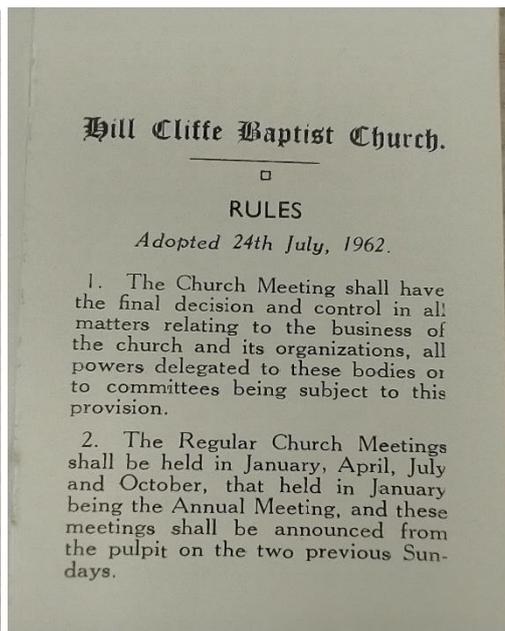
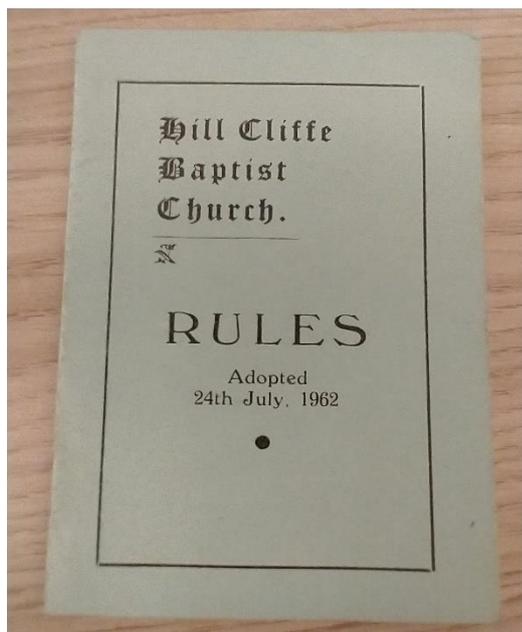
It is necessary in the interest of Truth & Reality to emphasise this authoritative statement made by a leading Baptist, because much 'hear-say' affirmations have been made about dates much earlier; and I myself have been wishful to credit even the earliest dates mentioned, but only on reliable evidence. After the fullest inquiry which I have been able to make, accompanied, alas! with keen rather bitter controversy in the local press, the earliest date which has been often mentioned, 1357, has not a leg to stand on, nor have other dates talked about in fifteenth & sixteenth centuries.

'An amazing and evil work has no doubt been perpetrated on several of the gravestones with the intention of making Hill Cliffe to appear more ancient than it is -on one of the stones 1714 has been altered to 1522; on another 1711 to 1311; and on another 1692 to 1622. The evidence for this in detail I have gathered together & it may be found in the parcel in which this statement is placed. Thus anyone who may in the future be interested in the subject can study the evidence in brief compass, & so escape being caught by romancing statements as to the antiquity of Hill Cliffe. But let not this statement lead any to overlook the fact that in the latter half of the seventeenth century Baptists and Quakers suffered persecutions and fines before the Bishop's Courts,- a narrative of whose experiences may yet be written by some future historian.

I make this statement at the close of my 5¹/₂ years' ministry at Hill Cliffe & sign it this twenty-sixth day of April 1924 – ROBERT JONES

P.S. It is to be regretted that the only date on the front of the Chapel is 1841, which date is given in the Cheshire Directory. That was the time when the chapel was rebuilt. It would be well to put the earliest date possible (1649) at the top of the stone in front of the chapel, & under 1841 to put (Re-built)

Appendix Twenty-one - Church Rules



Sealed 25th October 1949. 3823
49

County—CHESTER.
Place—APPLETON.
Charity—HILL CLIFFE BAPTIST
CHAPEL, etc.

B.
127,151

Stamp £1. *Scheme including appointment of
Trustees and vesting in them.*

CHARITY COMMISSION.

In the matter of the Charity known as the HILL CLIFFE BAPTIST CHAPEL, BURIAL GROUND and TRUST PROPERTY at APPLETON, in the County of CHESTER, regulated by an Indenture of feoffment dated the 22nd November 1774 and comprised in the following instruments or some of them:—

- Indenture of feoffment dated the 23rd September 1663 ;
- The said Indenture of feoffment dated the 22nd November 1774 ;
- Deed Poll dated the 14th May 1895 ;
- Indenture of conveyance dated the 12th February 1920 ;
- Deed Poll dated the 17th December 1922 ; and

In the matter of the Charitable Trusts Acts, 1853 to 1939.

The Board of Charity Commissioners for England and Wales,
upon an application duly made to them, in writing, signed by
RICHARD BILLINGTON, of The Grove, Lower Whitley, Farmer, and
JOSEPH MOSS, of 22 Mitchell Street, Stockton Heath, Market Gardener, both in the County of Chester,
ARTHUR BLACKHURST KENWORTHY, of The Manse, Mills Hill Road, Middleton Junction, in the City of Manchester, Retired Photographer, and
HENRY BROCKLEHURST (since deceased),

“Union” shall mean the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland.

4. The parts of the said property forming a burial ground shall be held by the Trustees upon the subsisting trusts.

SCHEDULE.

The following land situate at Hill Cliffe in the Parish of Appleton in the County of Chester:—

1. Land containing 1 acre or thereabouts and having a frontage on the south-east to Red Lane with the dwelling house meetinghouse and buildings used as a Chapel on part thereof other part thereof forming a burial ground being together the property comprised in the above-mentioned indentures dated the 23rd September 1663 and the 22nd November 1774.
2. A narrow strip of land containing 140 square yards or thereabouts having a frontage of 5 feet 8 inches to Red Lane aforesaid and a breadth at its narrowest part of 2 feet 6 inches or thereabouts and bounded on the north and east by the land numbered 1 above on the west by the land hereinafter described being the property comprised in the above-mentioned deed poll dated the 14th May 1895.
3. Land containing 3 acres 1 rood 5 poles or thereabouts having a frontage on the south east of 130 feet or thereabouts to Red Lane aforesaid and bounded on the east by the land numbered 1 and 2 above being the property comprised in the above-mentioned indenture dated the 12th February 1920 and the above-mentioned deed poll dated the 17th December 1922.

Sealed by Order of the Board this 25th day of October 1949.

SCHEME.

1. The above-mentioned Charity and the endowments thereof consisting of the property specified in the schedule hereto and all other the endowments (if any) of the Charity shall henceforth be administered and managed subject to and in conformity with the provisions of this Scheme by the body corporate called the Baptist Union Corporation Limited who shall be the Trustees of the Charity.

2. The said property shall vest forthwith in the said body corporate for all the estate and interest therein belonging to or held in trust for the Charity.

3. The said property other than the parts thereof forming a burial ground shall be held henceforth by the Trustees upon the trusts and subject to the powers and provisions declared and contained in clauses 4 to 22 (inclusive) of the Scheme of the Charity Commissioners for the regulation of the Charity known as the Carmel English Baptist Chapel at Tre Alaw in the County of Glamorgan (which Scheme is dated the 28th June 1940 and is numbered 2256/40), in the same manner in all respects as if those clauses were repeated herein, but so that the following words wherever they occur in those clauses shall have the following meanings:—

“ Association ” shall mean the Lancashire and Cheshire Association of Baptist Churches.

“ Charity ” shall mean the Charity comprised in this Scheme.

“ Church ” shall mean the Church for the time being assembling for worship in the Chapel of the Charity comprised in this Scheme.

“ Trustees ” shall mean the Trustees of the Charity comprised in this Scheme.

“ Union ” shall mean the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland.

4. The parts of the said property forming a burial ground shall be held by the Trustees upon the subsisting trusts.

SCHEDULE.

The following land situate at Hill Cliffe in the Parish of Appleton in the County of Chester:—

1. Land containing 1 acre or thereabouts and having a frontage on the south-east to Red Lane with the dwelling house meetinghouse and buildings used as a Chapel on part thereof other part thereof forming a burial ground being together the property comprised in the above-mentioned indentures dated the 23rd September 1663 and the 22nd November 1774.
2. A narrow strip of land containing 140 square yards or thereabouts having a frontage of 5 feet 8 inches to Red Lane aforesaid and a breadth at its narrowest part of 2 feet 6 inches or thereabouts and bounded on the north and east by the land numbered 1 above on the west by the land hereinafter described being the property comprised in the above-mentioned deed poll dated the 14th May 1895.
3. Land containing 3 acres 1 rood 5 poles or thereabouts having a frontage on the south east of 130 feet or thereabouts to Red Lane aforesaid and bounded on the east by the land numbered 1 and 2 above being the property comprised in the above-mentioned indenture dated the 12th February 1920 and the above-mentioned deed poll dated the 17th December 1922.

Scaled by Order of the Board this 25th day of October 1949.



M. P. Richard

SECRET

Appendix Twenty-three – Sunday School attendance in 1829 and 1910

1829

Class	Apr 26	May 3	11	18	25	1st	8	15	22	29	June 5	12	19	26	July 3	10	17	24	31	
Clapp girls																				
Ann Yarwood	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Eliz Lane	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Eunice Swinton	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Eliz Hubbard	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ann Lygoc	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Miriam Smith	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sarah Tappan	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mary Bradman	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Eliz Hinckley	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mary Wilkinson	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sarah Lincoln	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ann Chapman	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Er Leather	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ann Johnson	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Date	Name	Residence	Class	Chap	Book
Jan 4 th	Mary Clark	St. John's West	2 nd Bibles	2 nd	Solomon's Song
16 th	Peter Louison	Hill Cliff	3 rd Bibles	4 th	Reveries
23 rd	Mrs. M. Brewster	Stockton Heath	2 nd Bibles	7 th	Job
30 th	Fran ^{cois} Robinson	Stockton	1 st Testament	2 nd	Revelation
Feb 6 th	Ann Yarwood	Latchford	1 st Bibles	10 th	Isiah
	Rich Bradman	D ^o	2 nd Testament	12 th	Romans
13 th	Betty Barker	D ^o	1 st Bibles	23 rd	Job
	Sarah Tolson	St. Walton	2 nd Testament	7 th	Job
20 th	Eliz Cottrell	D ^o	2 nd Bibles	63 rd	Isiah
	Eunice Swinton	St. Walton	1 st Bibles	37 th	Isiah
* 27 th	Rich Bradman	Latchford	2 nd Testament	28 th	Matthew
March 6 th	Mary Taylor	D ^o	1 st Testament	50 th	Palm
	Eliz Taylor	D ^o	2 nd Testament	4 th	Reveries
13 th	Ann Yarwood	D ^o	1 st Bibles	3 rd	1 st Samuel
	Mary Porter	St. Walton	2 nd Bibles	51 st	Palm
20 th	Eliz Cottrell	D ^o	2 nd Bibles	52 nd	Isiah
	Sarah Louison	St. Walton	1 st Bibles	2 nd	Solomon's Song
	Mary Bradman	Latchford	8 th Eding Med case	62 nd	1 st Book
* 27 th	Sarah Tolson	St. Walton	1 st Bibles	5 th	1 st Shep
	Mary Clark	Stockton Heath	2 nd Bibles	115 th	Palm

Appendix Twenty-four – Church Members 1834

1	Peter Whitcomb	1844	Dec 27 th 1844. He was excellent of men
2	Richard Whitcomb	do	Excluded for worldly conduct Sept 1840
3	Peter Wright		Dec 10 th 1850
4	Margaret Wright		Dec April 12 th 1811 aged 83 years - aged woman
5	Samuel Taylor		Died Nov 15 th 1830
6	Sarah Taylor		Died in 1804
7	Thomas Kuster		Died 1839
8	Samuel Pearson		Dec Dec 8 th 1815 aged 79. He was a good man
9	Joseph Crowder		Died Nov 1 st 1845. He walked with a cane
10	John Clark		Died at Littleport 1863 a good man
11	Joseph Garwood		Excluded for worldly conduct Sept 1845
12	William Porter		Died
13	William Fairbank		Died Feb 1858 aged 57 years. A change of mind
14	Mary Wilkinson		Widow July 26 th 1875
15	Maria Whitehead		Died
16	Peter Garwood		Died in Dec 1863
17	Mary Fairbank		Excluded 1845
18	Samuel Whitehead		Died at Littleport 1849
19	Margaret Winton		Died May 27 th 1874 aged 80 years. A very good woman
20	Sarah Bradford		Died April 27 th 1850 aged 80 years. A very good woman
21	Joseph Knowles		Died Nov 5 th 1862 aged 72 years. A most devoted Christian
22	Elizabeth Knowles		Excluded in 1850. A very wicked man
23	Mary Wiles		Died August 11 th 1841 aged 50 years. A good
24	Mary Clark		Died July 19 th 1847 aged 68 years. A happy death
25	Mary Wilkinson		Widow July 26 th 1875
26	Maria Carter		Died Jan 10 th 1846. He died happy & old
27	Peter Goodier		Died June 12 th 1812. A man of piety
28	John Sumner		Died July 11 th 1863 aged 52 yrs.
29	William Stanger		Died Dec 21 st 1853 aged 87 years
30	Peter Hamblt		Died March 2 nd 1850 aged 70 years. A good man
31	Margaret Whitehead		Died March 17 th 1857 aged 60 yrs.
32	Joseph Harvey		Dismissed to Bradford Yorks 1838
33	Eliza Harvey		Died
34	William Hale		Died July 26 th 1852 aged 79 years
35	James Robinson		Died Aug 17 th 1874 aged 85 years

Appendix Twenty-five – Female Benevolent Society and Sunday School Sick and Burial Society

Female
Benevolent
Society Formed
on the 16th Day January
1827 Hill Cliff Sunday
School

Hill Cliffe Sunday School
Sick & Burial Society

President Rev J S Hughes
From 1893 up to 1907
W^m H Bradford Treas
to 1900 W^m J Booth Sec From 1890 to
W^m G Moss As & Sec from 18
Sec from 1899 to 1950
W^m C England Treas from 1900
to 1903

W^m G Moss Treas
From 1903 to 1950

President Rev G Curtis 1912
to 1918
Frank Booth As Sec from 1921
to 1926
L Dooly Sec Sec from 1912

President Rev R Jones
from 1918 to 1920
President from 1920 to 1928
Rev Matthews
President Rev A Chalmer
from 1927 to 1944
President Rev W Sanford
from 1944 to 1954

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