

# RECORD BREAKING CHAPEL

**IF you asked churchgoers in Wigan how many bricks were needed to build their church or chapel, I don't think many could give you an answer. At Jireh Baptist Chapel, Chapel Street, Orrell, we know exactly how many were used, because the original receipts for the materials used in the building of the chapel in 1864 have survived. These receipts provide an interesting window into trade in Wigan in the mid 19th century.**

Although the chapel was built in 1864, the church has its origins over 10 years previously, when we read in the original church book, "Several persons who attended the Church of England became dissatisfied (sic) with the preaching they were accustomed (sic) to hear and for truths sake alone we hope they felt constrained to come out from that Body of professing Christians". At first they met in a house and then

**by Pam Thomas & Christine Berry**

rented a room from March 1849. The National Religious Census of Sunday March 30 1851 has an entry for Pemberton, "Ebenezer School Room, Particular Baptist. Total seats 120. Morning attendance 40, afternoon 60, evening 30." This appears to be the earliest record of the church which later became Jireh Baptist Church. It is interesting to note that right from the earliest days the church had decided where it stood theologically.

By 1851 five of those attending wanted to be baptised as believers and Mr. Vaughn of Liverpool, a well known minister, baptised them on 31 March 1851, but it is not known where. These 5 people formed the first and only Baptist Church in Orrell on Sunday 6 April 1851. The 5 original members were: James Winward, Samuel Grimshaw, George Clough, Henry Pennington and Margaret Pennington. Over the years

several other members were added either by baptism or by transferring from other Baptist Churches.

## **Praying about the matter**

By 1862 it was felt that the hired room was no longer suitable as numbers had increased and because, as the church minutes record, the room was "small, close and badly ventilated, under which there were a brew house and a stable, pigs asses, horses, bad smells, noises and beside we were at the mercy of a publican every three months." The idea of building a chapel had been thought of before but it was not until a church meeting on 6 July 1864 that the church decided to approach Jane Farrimond, the sister of Henry, one of the members, to see if she would give some land for the chapel. The minutes record that Henry Farrimond after praying about the matter went with his brother George to see James Howarth, another member. "He (Henry) says

well James (with quite a pleasant smile on his face and without a doubt on his heart also) we will give the land for the chapel and for a school also as much is required and £30 with it." Immediately they went to measure and look at two other chapels. "We determined to proceed with it at once, got the ground staked out, ordered brick and got a brick setter, William Derbyshire of New Town near Wigan, joiner Aaron Winstanley of Wigan, plumber and glazier Joseph Dean, Pemberton, committee of management Henry Farrimond, William Marsden, William Derbyshire, James Hartley and James Howarth. We went to work like men of business determined to finish ..... in about 9 weeks after staking out the ground the chapel was opened, Trust Deed signed every mite of the money promised paid and we found when we came to balance up at the last that the total cost of the chapel was £302. 11s. 9d. furniture included". A small debt of £68. 19s. 5d. remained.

## **Project was impressive**

The speed of the project was impressive. On 12 August they went to the solicitor Thomas T. Taylor to start drawing up the Title Deeds; the legal work cost £24. 8s. 0d. On 16 August the first load of sand arrived from Thomas Gaskell of Billinge. He delivered regular loads up to 9 September at a total cost of £1. 17s. 6d. Thomas seems to have been illiterate as his bill has his X mark on it. He also gave a donation to the chapel, as did several other suppliers. The next day, 17 August, the first load of lime arrived from Wigan Lime Works, John Stephen and Son. On the bill of £5-15s.-6d., discount was



*Jireh Baptist Chapel c.1940.*

allowed. On 22 August stone arrived from Old Hey Delph, a quarry in the Upholland area. The manager, John Harrison, is listed in the 1869 trade directory as Quarry Master. The exact whereabouts of this quarry is not known and it may have been short lived. Other local firms supplied timber, nails, drain pipes, sewerage pipes, tiles, furniture etc. As shown on the table below:

The chapel was opened on Sunday 23 October by Mr. John Forster of Witham, Essex. The time taken from the first visit to the solicitors to the opening day was ten weeks and two days, no mean feat! As the chapel was being used by a denomination other than the Church of England it had to be registered for worship. This was done nearly a year later on 1 September 1865, and the

new chapel on 13 December 1865. The church book states: "On Lord's Day 10 December Henry Farrimond stated to the church that his Brother George wished to join the church and at close of the afternoon service he came before the church and gave in his experience to their satisfaction when it was agreed that he should be received in among us: and on Wednesday evening

the 13th Mr. Freeman, then of Liverpool baptised him in the presence of a good congregation. [This was the first time that ever the ordinance of Believer's Baptism was administered in this village.] On Lord's Day 7 January 1866 he was received into the church by Mr. T. Clough, then of Leeds, giving the right hand of fellowship on behalf of the church."

### Relatively well off

It has been possible to find out some further details of the Farrimond family but there are still gaps which readers may be able to fill. The Farrimonds seem to have been relatively well off and appear in the 1841 Census as farming land near to the bottom of the present City Road, at Baiting Houses, Kitt Green. This is now the site of the Heinz Factory. In 1851 they were farming 20 acres on the same site. The head of the family in 1841 was Ellen a widow of about 55 years of age. There were two daughters listed, Jane aged 30 and Alice 25, also two sons, Henry and

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Firm	Address	Supplies	Present Site
Leyland & Roper	62 Market Place	Air Bricks	Halifax Bank
George Rick & Co.		Window Sills	
Joseph Dean	Lamberhead Green	Painted & glazed	
Painter & Glazier			
John Fairclough	121 Wallgate	Timber	Part of Office World
Timber Merchant			
Matthew Barton	4 Millgate	Guttering, down spouts, tiles	Old Salvation Army Citadel
Iron Monger			
James Topping		Bricks	
Samuel Liptrot		Roof Tiles	
Patrick Denn(?)	132 Wallgate	All plastering work	M & S Ford(?)
Plasterer			
Wigan Gas Co.	Chapel Lane	Installed gas lights	
A & H Barlow	58/59 Wallgate	Chair, carpet, table	Entrance to Station car park
Cabinet Makers & Upholsterers			
A.A. Winstanley	Wallgate	Chimney pot, sewerage pipes, joinery work	
Joiner Builder			
Wm. Heaton	Upholland	Timber, pine, spruce screws, bolts, hinges	
Woodmerchant			
John Lea & Son	Chapel Lane & Rodney Street	2 barrels of cement	
S.G. Bucknell	2 Standishgate	Cards & posters for opening of chapel	National Westminster Bank
Stationer, Printer	Wigan Subscription Library		

The bricks were invoiced for 1 October and there were 41,000 at 21s. per thousand.

The total bill was:

41,000 bricks @ 21s.	£43-1-0
received on account	£20-0-0
subscription to chapel	£ 2-1-0
	£21-0-0

### Spittoon!

Amongst the necessities for a chapel in the mid 19th century were two ornamental umbrella stands, two door scrapers, a set of fire irons for the stove and a spittoon! The chapel was lit by the latest gas lighting and even had toilets. The pulpit was brought from Rawtenstall by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, which is now the Southport and Manchester line through Wallgate Station. The building would have been very plain inside, and the seating was 9 forms 9ft. 6 ins. long and 11 forms 6ft. 6 ins. long. There was also one form at 4ft. 3 ins. long.

original document still exists. It was signed by Henry Farrimond who described himself as a Trustee and his occupation as a tanner.

The Farrimond family was intimately involved in the chapel for about a century. The land the chapel is built on was provided free by Jane Farrimond and it is because of this it is called Jireh which means Provider. Henry Farrimond became a member on 4 October 1852 by baptism and later a deacon and pastor of the church, although still working at a secular job. Their brother George was the first person to be baptised in the



*Some of the present members of the chapel.*



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George only 15 and 10 years of age respectively and two manservants were employed for the farm work, Thomas Rothwell 25 years and Thomas Rigby 15 years.

Henry and George went into business together as tanners and are listed in the trade directories, 1858-1876, in Upholland and then Tontine. In the 1871 Census, Ellen, aged 86, Henry aged 45 and George aged 40 were living on Clap Lane, Tontine near Sefton Farm, with a servant Betty Hanton 62 years. This road is now Tontine Road. It would appear that they had moved nearer the business. Henry married Elizabeth Williams about 1879. She had joined the Church in 1878 and been baptised by Henry on the first Sunday in October 1878 along with a Margaret Hartley. They seem to have had three children, Ellen, George and Jane. Elizabeth Farrimond lived to the grand old age of 81 and died on 9 March 1927 and was buried in Upholland churchyard.

In the 1881 Trade Directory their business is no longer listed and the Census for that year has the family still living in Clap Lane and consisting of Henry, listed as a farmer of 8 acres and a preacher, Elizabeth, his wife aged 35, Ellen his daughter aged one year and George his brother aged 50 years. The servant Betty Hanton, now 75 years old was still with them. By 1884 Henry was living in Fleet Street, Pemberton where he died on 10 March 1884 of cancer of the lower jaw. George later moved to 30 City Road and died in 1921 aged 81 years.

### Very big influence

Henry had a very big influence on the first 30 years of the chapel. He joined in 1852,

**Wigan**  
1852  
Bought of Matthew Burdett  
Iron & Steel Merchant.  
GENERAL IRONMONGER, COLLIERY & MILL TUNNISHEN.  
Agent for Saw Mill, Timber, Slaggy, &c.

**A.A. WINSTANLEY, DR.**  
The Committee of Jireh Chapel  
1864

1864	To 1 painted chimney pot	2	0
	To 4 feet - 4 in down pipe	2	0
	To 16 feet - 3 in "	4	0
	To 1 Band 9" To 1 Finishing	1	0
		11	0

1864  
TO OLD HEY SELF, DR.  
TRADE IN  
TANBLED, POLISHING BARN, AND SELF MEALE FACED PLAYS.  
LARGON, GRANVESTONES, AND ALL KINDS OF BUILDING STONE.  
1864

1864	To 100 lb of mixed stone	11	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	12	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	13	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	14	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	15	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	16	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	17	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	18	0
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	To 100 lb of mixed stone	93	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	94	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	95	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	96	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	97	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	98	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	99	0
	To 100 lb of mixed stone	100	0

Just three of the many purchase receipts from local tradesmen for the building of Jireh Chapel.

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became a deacon in 1860. After the opening of the chapel he formally welcomed into membership the first two new members. Jane Darbyshire and Mary Ellen Eastham on 16 November 1864, they had previously been baptised elsewhere. He continued to welcome most new members, until his death. By 10 April 1870 he was preaching and the church minutes record “the church warmly sanctions Henry Farrimond’s way and manner of speaking from the word of God desiring that he would enter the pulpit.” Another entry in February 1872 states “It was agreed by the church to ask Brother Henry Farrimond to go into the pulpit to speak there instead of standing before the table believing that his services

are really acceptable.” This would appear to be the beginning of his pastorate, although there is no mention of a special service or any other official recognition of his duties. In 1873 the church tried to give him a gift of 15 sovereigns for his labours, but he declined. In 1874 he baptised Alice Mather and from then on regularly baptised all new members.

### **Seldom left his people**

On his death the church book records “Henry Farrimond died having preached the gospel faithfully in this place for 16 years.” His memory is also recorded in the Gospel Standard Magazine in Memories of Ministers. “During the time of

his ministry, which was about 14 years, it pleased the Lord to make his labours very useful in gathering in many to His Christ. He was a humble, plain man, of very retiring habits and his life was in accordance with his profession. He seldom left his people. He was an experimental preacher: and his gifts having become known, he was invited to London; but this he refused preferring to remain with his own people and amongst the little circle of friends at Pemberton. His heart was much with the people at Southport and so desirous was he to serve them that he preached there his last sermon on the first Lord’s Day in July last year, although at the time he was suffering much and his speech was affected. His text at

the time was Nahum I v.7: “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble: and He knoweth them that trust in Him.”

It must have been a sore trial for a preacher to have cancer of the jaw and not be able to speak properly. Henry was obviously much loved and greatly missed. The story of the founding of Jireh Baptist Church cannot be told without acknowledging his contribution of time, effort, enthusiasm and financial support. I am sure he would be pleased to know that the church he played such a large part in and in which he worked so hard to serve the Lord he loved, is still going strong over a hundred years after his death.