THE RIVER RUNNING BY

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

The purple headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset and the morning,
That brighten up the sky.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell,
How great is God almighty,
Who has made all things well.

‘THE RIVER RUNNING BY’

JOHN WARREN

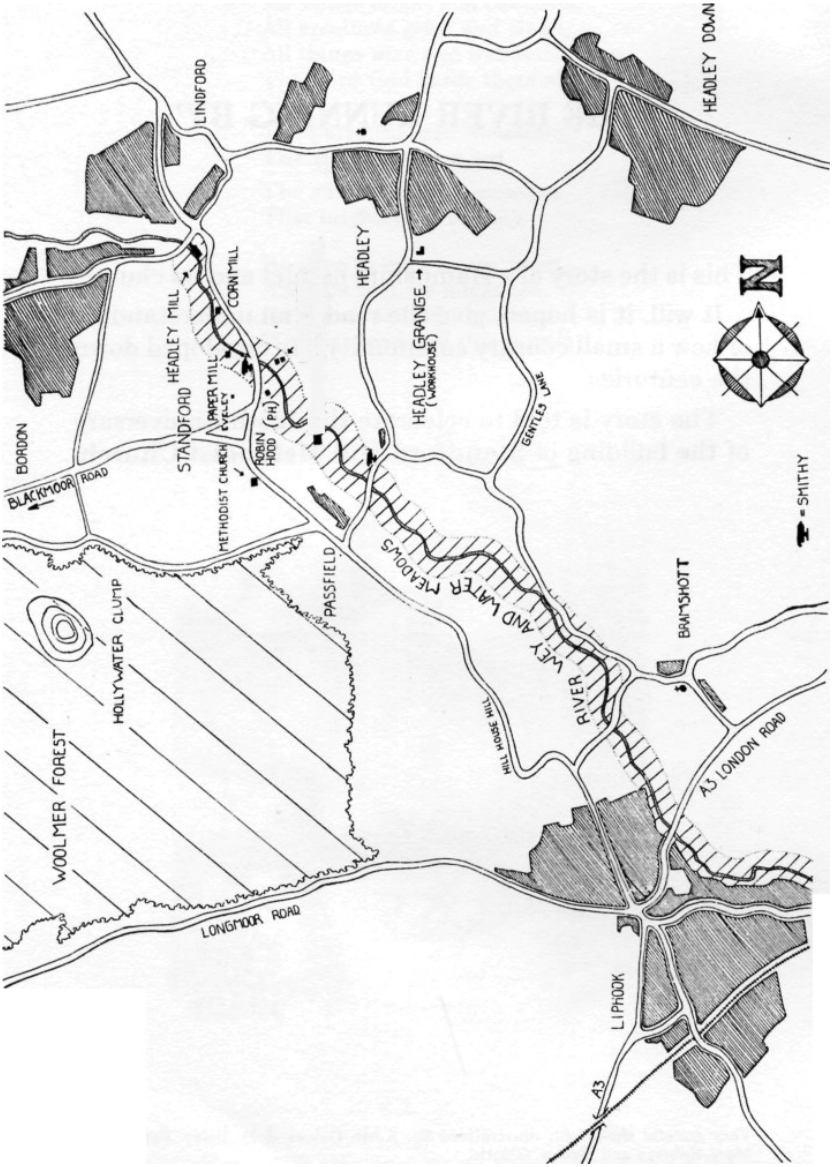
This is the story of a Hampshire hamlet and its church.

It will, it is hoped, give the reader an understanding of how a small country community has developed down the centuries.

The story is told to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the building of **Standford Hill Methodist Church** in 1836.

Very grateful thanks for illustrations by: Kevin Davies, John Ilsley, Pam Kerr, Marc Roberts and Hester Whittle.

This version published in 1986



Standford and surrounding area

How it all Began

10,000 years ago the glaciers of the ice age finally receded from Britain. They left behind a climate and a landscape which, in this corner of Hampshire, has changed very little down the centuries.

As it still does, the river Wey flowed between narrow meadows. The green grass was framed by the darker colours of forest and heath. To the east the river rose from springs on the slopes of Blackdown and Hindhead. On the southern and western horizons stand our 'purple headed mountains' – the sharp lines of the chalk downs which enclose the wooded weald. For at least 5,000 years men have lived by the river in the village we now call Standford. Those earliest ancestors lived by hunting and foraging in the forests. Until quite recent times deer, wild rabbits, hare and game birds were the hunters' quarry. The hunters shared their prey with the wolves which roamed the district. There was turf and wood for fuel and the river provided, as it does today, fish, crayfish, and eels. Flint axes and arrow heads have been found in large numbers not far from Standford. These earliest men camped by the river while they hunted in the summer. They spent their winters in caves and settlements on the higher, drier lands. Eventually they learned to build thatched huts of wattle and daub and settled in riverside hamlets.

2,000 years ago farming came to the valley. It was brought by men who could make and use wheels and metal ploughshares and tools. This enabled them to grow and harvest crops and to keep domestic animals such as geese, and pigs. The grain that was grown could be used to make bread or porridge and be fed to animals when grazing in the forest failed. Life became less of a struggle and there was time for thought. There are several ancient burial barrows in our district, especially the great mound called Hollywater Clump which is only half a mile from Standford; silent witness that men were thinking that life might be a beginning as well as an end.

The Coming of Civilisation

The Romans came to the area and almost certainly used our ford to cross the river. Many local remains prove that they built settlements and roads nearby, especially in the forests of Wolmer and Alice Holt. When the Romans left the Saxons soon came from North West Europe. They settled down, gave names to the villages – in our case, Stane (or Stony) ford, married the local girls, introduced oxen for ploughing and built mills on the river to grind their corn. They also brought Christianity with them.

By the time the Normans conquered England in 1066 the whole country was divided into manors, each with its own Lord. The Normans soon established a system of parishes with their own churches and clergy. In most of the fertile valleys abbeys and monasteries were established, such as Waverley and Shulbrede and the Priory at Blackmoor. However, Standford, with tiny meadows and little agriculture, remained obstinately heathen and lawless. In 1087 the Lord of the Manor (The Bishop of Winchester) fined the inhabitants 12 shillings "for making a nuisance of themselves".

As a local water mill was valued in the Domesday Book at 4/6d this was an enormous fine. Whether it was ever paid is not recorded.

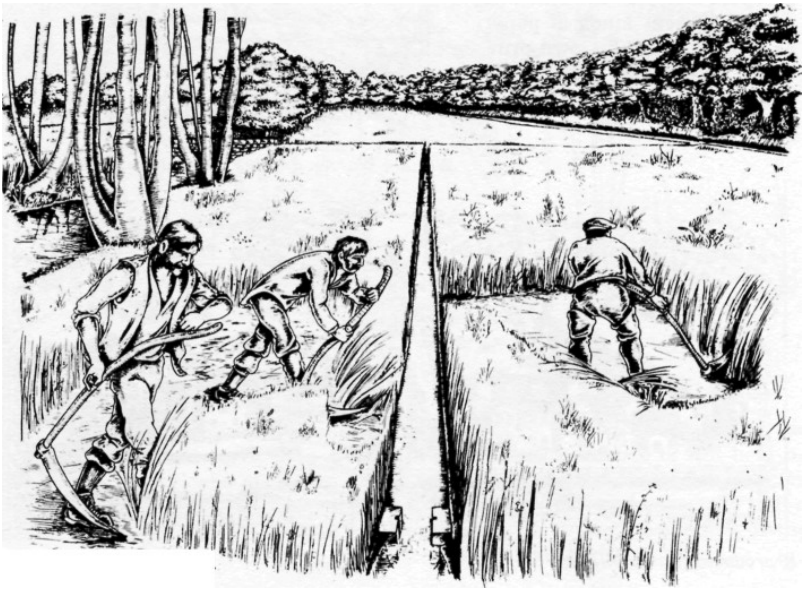
Stoney (Stan) Ford

The River is Set to Work

At about this time a local squire and farmer called Hurlibut built a water mill to grind his corn on the spot where the old mill occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Hersey now stands. From then the history of Standford is largely the story of its water mills. Another corn mill was built much later and by the sixteenth century the iron industry had arrived.

'Sluice' in water meadows

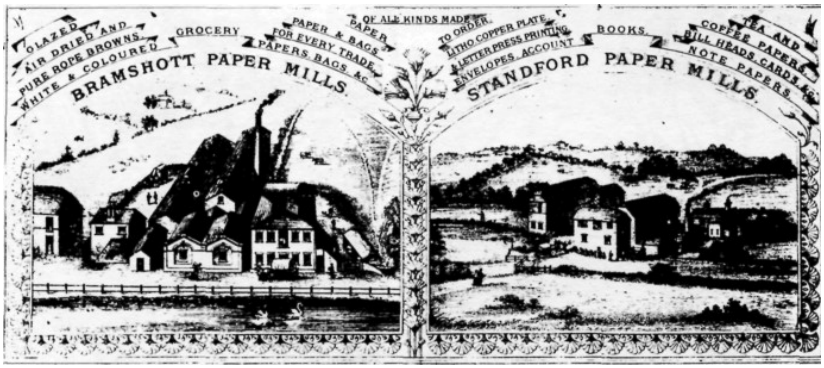
This had become established throughout the Sussex weald and the most westerly 'hammer' of all (the only one in Hampshire) was set up on our river Wey on the site now occupied by Auriol Plastics. A good flow of water was needed to drive the hammer, also plenty of wood for smelting, and ironstone. These were all available locally. It was a noisy, dirty and intensive industry which needed many workers. Wages were low and conditions very poor. Most of the workers lived in forest 'hovels', or in cottages, until recently known as 'the barracks', on Passfield Common. To augment their diet they continued their traditions of poaching in the local forests. The penalties for this were stern: imprisonment, whipping or death for those caught by the keepers who tended the herds of deer in the Royal Forest of Wolmer.



Cutting grass for hay

The iron industry which lasted for about 200 years left many traces. Place names such as Hammer Farm and Cinder Path survive, and clinker and iron stone are often dug up and are to be found in local banks and walls. Eventually the industry moved away to the North where coal for fuel and iron were plentiful. Some of the skilled labour which was no longer needed was used to construct a unique pattern of water meadows. This was a brilliantly engineered system of irrigation along the valley from Haslemere to Frensham, which produced extra crops of hay and grass for the farm animals and for the many horses which used the London to Portsmouth Road. When the iron hammers finally became silent the never failing flow of the river soon attracted another industry and two paper mills were established – one at Passfield and one on the site of Hurlibut's corn mill. In 1815 William Warren who had served his apprenticeship as a paper maker in Plymouth and Bath came from the West country. After working at the paper mill in Stedham, on the Rother near Midhurst he took over the mills in Standford. He prospered and was soon making many different kinds of paper as well as doing his own printing. Eventually the mills employed more than 100 workers.

William Warren and his apprenticeship certificate

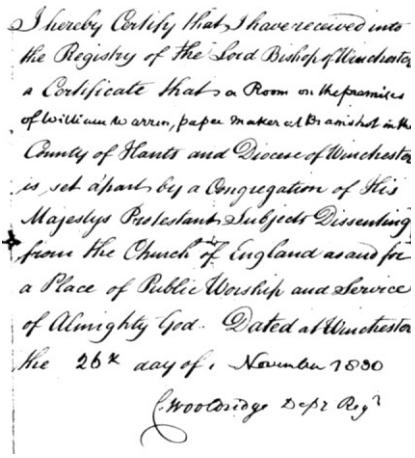


Reproduced from a billhead

The Church comes to Standford

William soon realised that morals, education and living conditions generally were in a bad state. He had come from areas where the Methodist revival had been very active and although he was himself an Anglican he had been much influenced by well-known Methodist paper making families to which he had been apprenticed. He found the local Anglican churches at a very low ebb with absentee parsons and poor standards of worship. Eventually he decided, as a protest, to hold his own services in Blackmoor churchyard. These were successful and next he obtained a licence from the Bishop of Winchester – successor to the one who fined the villagers – to hold services in a room in his mill. This licence is still held by William's family, who also have a long letter from the then rector of Headley complaining about "the intrusion upon the priestly office" and especially that a "seller of shoes" (John Kelsey of Liphook) was being allowed to conduct divine worship. Once more Standford was in trouble with authority!

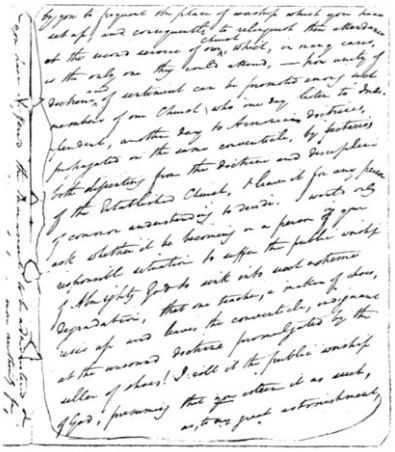
William preaching in Blackmoor Churchyard



I hereby Certify that I have received into the Registry of the Lord Bishop of Winchester a Certificate that a Room in the premises of William Warren, paper maker at Bramshot in the County of Hants and Diocese of Winchester is set apart by a Congregation of His Majestys Protestant Subjects Dissenting from the Church of England as and for a Place of Public Worship and Service of Almighty God. Dated at Winchester the 26th day of November 1830

C Woodridge Depr Regr

Letter from the Bishop of Winchester



Part of the letter from the Rector of Headley

A Village Church

The services were popular and crowded and soon it was decided to build a chapel and school (day and Sunday) on Passfield Common. Where these were is not known, probably near the present day Mill Lane. William Warren hoped to have associated his meeting with the Wesleyan Methodist Church centred on Petersfield: However the Wesleyans thought the distance too great or the people of Passfield and Standford too rough and were not interested. William made contact with the Bible Christian Methodists – these were established in the Portsmouth area and were sending out missionaries to the "heathen and rough populations of the Royal Forests of Bere, Wolmer and Alice Holt". Soon a Bible Christian Circuit with several meeting places was set up and a paid minister was appointed. He lived in Liphook and was paid £14 per annum if single; £30 plus a house if married!

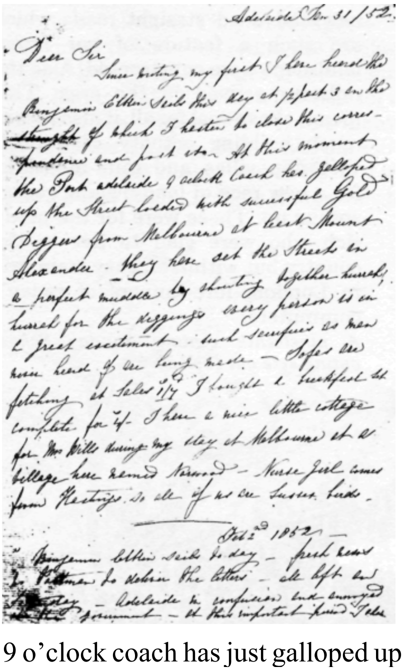
The little wooden chapel on the common – usually known as Bramshott Chapel – lasted for nearly 30 years. During this time there was a dramatic improvement in the morals of the district. This was partly due to improved Poor Laws and partly to the influence of the chapels. Canon Capes, in his well-known book 'Rural Life in Bramshott', says, "the Bible Christians deserve the tribute of an honourable mention for their share in this change". There were fewer illegitimate births, the destitute could go to a workhouse, there was some provision for the sick and a limited education was available for all.

Hard Times

Wages were still very low, however, many jobs being lost due to the invention of threshing and mowing machines. Finally the farm workers rebelled. One of the worst of many acts of violence was the sacking of

Headley Workhouse (now Headley Grange) – the dreaded and hated "wurkus" – a large mob of over 1,000 men and women marched through Standford to Headley. The farm labourers joined by the rough element among the local forest dwellers and travellers (to this day a race apart) showed their opinion of the "powers that be" by mass violence. Many of them were inflamed by drink and were "ready for any mischief". Mr. Curtis, who kept the shop on Standford Green and later the Churchgate Stores in Headley, was hastily sworn in as a special constable and soon had to call on a local magistrate to "read the Riot Act". This meant that the army and the Death Penalty could be invoked. The workhouse was left an empty shell, although the inmates were not harmed.

Many who took part were sentenced to transportation to penal colonies in Australia and Canada. Very few returned after serving their sentences, in fact transportation was often the gateway to a new life and from this time onwards the chapel helped many of the local unemployed to emigrate voluntarily to the colonies. Letters still exist describing the seasickness and other discomforts of the long voyages by sailing ship. They tell, too, of the freedom and wonderful opportunities of colonial life.



Adelaide Jan 31/52

Dear Sir

Since writing my first I have heard the Benjamin Elkin sails this day at present 3 in the ~~thought~~ of which I hasten to close this correspondence and post it. At this moment the Port Adelaide 9 o'clock Coach has galloped up the Street loaded with successful Gold Diggers from Melbourne at least Mount Alexander - they have set the Streets in a perfect muddle by shouting together hurrah, hurrah for the diggings every person is in a great excitement such confusion as never was heard of are being made – Sofas are fetching at sales 1/7 I bought a breakfast set complete for 4/- I have a nice little cottage for Mrs Wills during my stay at Melbourne at a village here named Norwood – Nurse girl comes from Hastings so all of us are Sussex birds –

Feb 2nd 1852 –

Benjamin Elkin sails to day – fresh news to Postman to deliver the letters – all left on [illegible] – Adelaide in confusion and annoyed [illegible] government – at this important period Take

One writer describes the city of Adelaide, empty because almost everyone has gone off to the goldfields. He is about to join the gold rush himself and is confident that he too will soon make his fortune. He also predicts that South Australia will soon become an independent republic! "By the time this reaches you" says this letter "I hope to be at the gold seeking business myself. The Bishop is off, the Doctors are off, shoemakers will not take orders – no men to work. Only drapers are busy – husbands sending money to their wives…. I and my fellow citizens are in a state approaching madness we are so absorbed by the news from the diggings. In 2 months there will not be a shop open in Adelaide, 3,000 have gone in one month". From another letter – "The Port Adelaide 9 o'clock coach has just galloped up the street loaded with successful gold diggers, shouting together Hurrah, Hurrah!"

The emigrants took their Bible Christianity with them. To this day the Methodist Church is very strong in those areas of Australia and Canada where immigrants from N.E. Hants settled. However, the local paper reported the complaint by a Standford Sunday School anniversary speaker that there would soon be no non-smoking, tee-totallers left to emigrate.

"Nowadays", he said, every child he met who could hardly say "goodmorning sir" was puffing at a short pipe as if he drew from it all his strength! This custom of smoking clay pipes (the children picked up the broken ones) may have had some bearing on the terribly high death rate from cancer and consumption (T.B.) in this area during the 19th century. At the time it was usually blamed (with some truth?) on the smoke which hung in the trees from the low chimneys of the squat forest hovels.

Happier days

As the second half of the century began national prosperity improved and there was a marked change in living conditions. The mills were busy, agriculture was now prosperous and much of the common land had been enclosed and given to the farmers. This was the time when the new and dead straight roads which are such a feature of our forest landscape were constructed. Also the railways arrived in the area. This meant cheap coal for all, it also meant much building activity. Red brick Victorian villas and mini-mansions for a new race of land-owning gentry sprang up. These were for the newly rich who were glad to live in the country but within an easy train ride to London, fore-runners of today's commuters.

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

AT THE

Crystal Palace Fete,

On Monday, July 4th, 1870.

On arriving at the Palace, about 11-30, you will have 1½ hour before the Dinner, which I advise you to spend in looking over the inside of the Palace.

Dinner will be served in the SOUTH WING DINING ROOM, near the Kings and Queens Screen, at the south end of the Palace, at ONE O'CLOCK PRECISELY: any one of the waiters or servants will tell you, on enquiry, the way to it.

To enable all to enter the Dining Room at once, you will please get near it, by at least, a quarter to One o'clock.

Nothing but Water will be provided for drinking at Dinner: any other drink can be obtained by applying to the waiters, and paying for it on being supplied.

You will be required to show your Dinner Ticket on entering the Dining Room

LEAVING THE PALACE.

Persons for BENTLEY will have to leave by either the Train that starts at 6-18, or 6-33, which saves the Train for Guildford at Clapham Junction, at 7-10.

The Liphook and Haslemere will leave by either the 7-40, or 7-50 Train, and go by the 8-32 Train from Clapham Junction to Woking, and thence by special Train.

All should get, if possible, to the earliest Train, and so avoid hurry and confusion at the last: and should begin leaving the Palace, at least, half an hour before the departure of the Train.

N. B. If you leave the Palace at all, you will have to pay 1s. for re-entering.

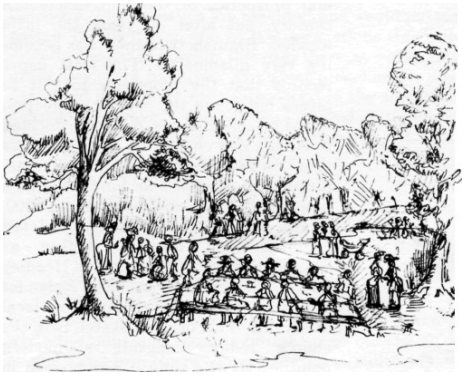
G. WARREN, JUN.

A nineteenth century Sunday School outing sets out

All these changes meant work and higher wages, and even a little leisure. The great annual day off for the local children (and many of their parents) was the Sunday School outing. Instead of a ride in a horse drawn wagon to a nearby beauty spot, it became a train trip to the seaside. On at least one occasion an excursion to Crystal Palace was organised for the mill workers. Tradition has it that the grandmamas who stayed at home were told about the educational exhibitions but not about the bawdy music hall which was one of the attractions!

The Schools

Ever since the middle of the previous century, the newly established Methodist Churches had been urged by John Wesley to set up Sunday Schools. These had proved extraordinarily popular as they represented the first free education ever to be available to many of the poorer members of the community. Very soon there was a demand for wider education and day schools began to spring up. Standford was no exception and in 1833 only two years after the first services at the mill a committee was set up to establish sabbath and day schools in Liphook, Passfield and Lindford. The only difficulty was that children from the poorer families were very badly clothed. They were expected to stay indoors in wet or cold weather and were used to huddling round the smoky peat and wood fires in the damp, earth-floored hovels and cottages of the neighbourhood. Until they went to work (or later) they had to make do with a few rags for clothes and always went barefoot. So, the ladies of the chapels collected as many old clothes as possible and distributed them to the scholars. It was like paradise for the local grubby urchins to go off to school in clean clothes and boots, to a warm stove in winter and to someone who cared about teaching them things they had not even dreamed about.



Sunday School Anniversary

The "Bill of Fare" for 26 May 1854 read as follows!

Adults

½ bushel of Plum Cake
½ bushel of Seed Cake
½ bushel of Rolls
2 dozen Loaves
14 lbs of Butter

Children

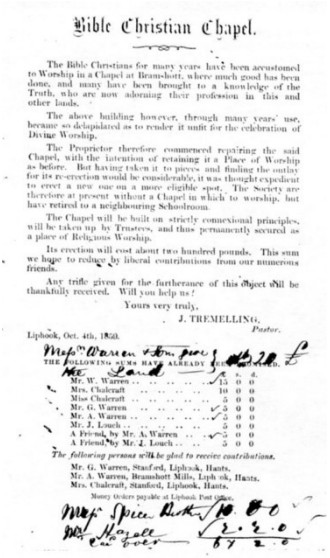
1 bushel of Plum Cake
½ bushel of Raisin Cake
½ bushel of Plain Cake

To make up with bread and butter if wanted.

The schools were an instant success. The minute book, which still exists, records that suitable accommodation was found and teachers (at first governesses, later mainly men) were appointed. The teachers were paid £15 per year and each pupil attending paid 1d (one old penny) per week or 2d (tuppence) if under four years of age. These little ones were a considerable nuisance and often spent the day pinned to the Dame's skirts. The minutes record that slate, books, blackboards and desks were purchased and that regular inspections were carried out. The main subjects were the 'Three R's', but the Bible on Sundays. One inspection records the reasons for 34 absences including "got dirty" – "got dirty and cold" – "had to sit next to his sister" – "did not learn anything".

Homes were visited regularly to canvass for new pupils and check on absentees. In 1845 a minute says that a teacher must "watch the children at prayer to prevent disorder". In 1847 it was said that unless the schoolroom was enlarged by next year the annual anniversary tea would have to be held in the Drying House at the Mill. This event was held every year at Whitsun. After an examination and a special anniversary service, in their own chapel, all the children walked in procession from Liphook and Lindford to Passfield. The reward for all this was games, sports and a scrumptious tea. Increasing numbers obviously continued to be a problem as after September 1st 1854 the children were given buns instead of cake (to avoid mess) and tickets were issued to avoid gatecrashing! By 1873 new legislation for universal education removed the need for church day schools but the Sunday schools continued to flourish and a new school was built in Standford in 1876.

A New Chapel



Bible Christian Chapel.

The Bible Christians for many years have been accustomed to Worship in a Chapel at Bramshott, where much good has been done, and many have been brought to a knowledge of the Truth, who are now adorning their profession in this and other lands.

The above building however, through many years' use, became so delapidated as to render it unfit for the celebration of Divine Worship.

The Proprietor therefore commenced repairing the said Chapel, with the intention of retaining it a Place of Worship as before. But having taken it to pieces and finding the outlay for its re-erection would be considerable, it was thought expedient to erect a new one on a more eligible spot. The Society are therefore at present without a Chapel in which to worship, but have retired to a neighbouring Schoolroom.

The Chapel will be built on strictly connexional principles, will be taken up by Trustees, and thus permanently secured as a place of Religious Worship.

Its erection will cost about two hundred pounds. This sum we hope to reduce by liberal contributions from our numerous friends.

Any trifle given for the furtherance of this object will be thankfully received. Will you help us?

Yours very truly,

J. TREMELLING, *Pastor.*

Liphook, Oct. 4th, 1859.

THE FOLLOWING SUMS HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONTRIBUTED.

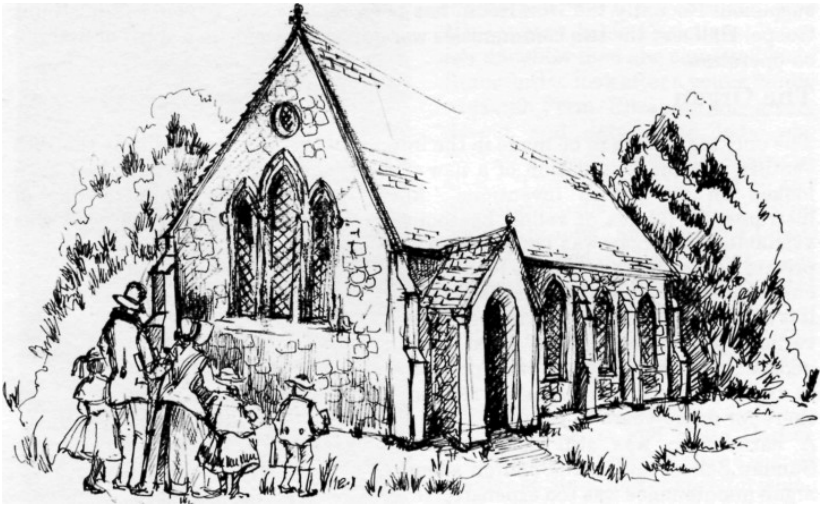
	£	s.	d.
Mr. W. Warren	15	0	0
Mrs. Chalcraft	10	0	0
Miss Chalcraft	5	0	0
Mr. G. Warren	5	0	0
Mr. A. Warren	5	0	0
Mr. J. Louch	5	0	0
A Friend, by Mr. A. Warren	5	0	0
A Friend, by Mr. J. Louch	5	0	0

The following persons will be glad to receive contributions.

Mr. G. Warren, Stanford, Liphook, Hants.
Mr. A. Warren, Bramshott Mills, Liphook, Hants.
Mrs. Chalcraft, Stanford, Liphook, Hants.

Money Orders payable at Liphook Post Office.

A modern painting. By the time it was opened in 1861 the cost had increased to £379 – including chandeliers and a hot air stove!



The "Bible Christian" Chapel

The costs were all paid off by 1862 and the chapel has remained unaltered externally, except for some pebble dash rendering at the southern end. The stonework has weathered to an attractive mellow colour and internally the gothic style has a timeless dignity which has happily absorbed many minor changes over the years. The acoustics are excellent and would put many modern buildings to shame. By its design and by its associations, this little lonely country chapel imparts a sense of worship. It is easy there, as we often sing, to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness". The great preacher Dr. Sangster, when he came to Standford just before his death, stood in the silence and said "these walls are drenched in prayer", and the lines quoted at the opening of the recent 125th Anniversary services seem truly appropriate:

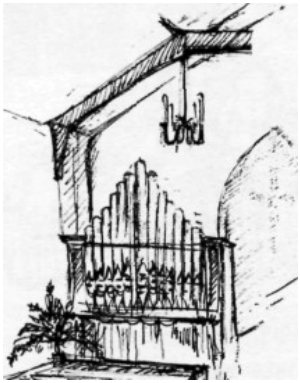
> Enter this door, as if the floor
> within were gold,
> and every wall of jewels,
> all of wealth untold.
> As if a choir in robes of fire,
> were singing here.
> Nor shout, nor rush — but hush,
> for God is near.

Few church records survive from the last century but there is little doubt that while the mills and farming prospered so did the chapel. In fact another new chapel "The Iron Room" (corrugated) was built in the village by Mr. Allen, the squire of Eveley (now Standford Grange). This belonged to the sect known as the Plymouth Brethren. For many years the two chapels were known locally as Allen's church and Warren's church – and viewed each other with some suspicion! Recently the Iron Room has

been replaced by a modern brick-built Gospel Hall and the two communities worship side by side in a spirit of friendly co-operation.

The Organ

The only big change to be made in the interior of the new chapel during the 19th century was the installation of a new pipe organ. Previously organs had been looked on as "popish inventions". Music was provided by a medley of instruments; fiddles or cellos, bassoons or clarinets, depending on what was available. The organ was bought from a private house and is very large for a little chapel. Recently it has been realised that it is unusual and historic as it is one of the earliest pipe organs to be fitted with pedals. So although it is out of proportion to the building it will probably remain there for many years to come.



A harmonium was still used in the Sunday School and in the church when organ maintenance was too expensive. In 1870 a bazaar was organised to pay for a new harmonium. The organiser was Mr. Henry Warren, who was for many years organist, choirmaster and Sunday School Superintendent. The press report of the event says that among the attractions was "a fine art gallery and museum" which included over 40 birds shot locally and preserved by Mr. H. Warren of The Lawn (the present-day offices of Auriol Ltd).

The prize exhibit (now in Haslemere Museum) was a heron with a trout weighing 1lb in its beak! Henry was obviously a better shot than paper maker as sad to say, he later left the district and ended his days as a brewery representative.

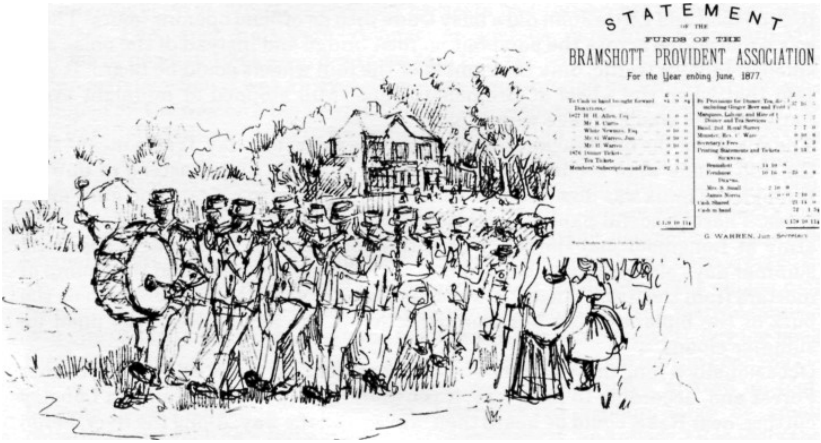
The Tea Pot Club & Feast Day

The great church celebration of the year was the Sunday School Anniversary at Whitsun but another important event was the traditional village feast day in July. This was the annual procession and meal of the Bramshott Provident Society, otherwise known as "The Tea Pot Club", and despite its name always associated with the Passfield and Standford Chapels. The Society was a "Thrift" or "Sick and Dividing" Club set up by Mrs. Elizabeth Chalcraft.

Elizabeth Chalcraft

She came from an old Bramshott family and was much involved with the Liphook Bible Christians. When her daughter died she came to live in Standford to look after a young family at Hatch Farm. Elizabeth was a very devout and determined lady who worried because the annual share out of the Thrift clubs attached to the Standford pubs (The "Robin Hood and Little John" and the "Red Lion") always ended up as orgies. The money paid out was used to buy gin at one old penny a tot, instead of winter clothes for the family. Mrs Chalcraft decided that *her* club should be different.

The Society had branches at Bramshott, Fernhurst and Batts Corner. On the annual feast day after a special service at Standford chapel (for which the minister received ten shillings) all the members marched behind a military band, with banners waving, to a nearby meadow. Here in a large marquee, a lunch and a meat tea and entertainment were provided. The rules stated that no intoxicating drink should be "allowed to be drank" at any meeting, or between ten in the morning and eight in the evening on the annual feast day on pain of expulsion or a fine of five shillings.



A military band leads the 'Teapot Club' to Standford Feast

Also on that day, a white cockade was to be worn on the left side of the hat. There were strict rules for behaviour while sick and it was stated that if any member contract any disease due to profligacy, quarrelling or drunkeness he shall not receive sick pay!

The club continued until about 1910 when Lloyd George's Act introduced Health and Unemployment Insurance for everyone. With the end of the club the annual feast day also went into oblivion until 1978 when a spontaneous desire to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee led to its revival. A celebration that was planned mainly for the children became an opportunity for old and new residents to get to know each other, and renew acquaintance with old friends and neighbours who spend most of their working lives away from the village or busy in home or garden. A village meeting decided to hold the feast annually, near the date of the old Feast Day, and so it has continued with mutual enjoyment and rules which are considerably more relaxed than those of the old "Tea Pot Club"!

19th and 20th Century Standford

At this point perhaps we should try to visualise Standford as it was in the 19th century and, in fact, until the Second World War. Anyone standing on the village green would have viewed a very different scene from that of today. The grass was rough but well grazed by gypsy ponies and cattle. All around was open country, the hedges were neatly laid and large trees were few and far between. Oak and ash were always cut as soon as they were sizeable for ship and house building, and the other locally common trees such as hazel, chestnut, birch and alder were coppiced regularly for posts, hurdles and joinery; and for firewood. Standford Grange could be plainly seen from the green as could the neighbouring farms, and cottages now long fallen down. The mills could be seen in the distance – and heard. The wheelwright and smithy were busy by the river and in the opposite direction was a brickworks in what is now Kiln Field. The Mill pond for Standford Paper Mill almost lapped at the walls of the Red Lion Inn (now Riverside) and by the ford the Robin Hood and Little John did a busy trade with no official opening hours! There was a footbridge across the pond but no road bridge and instead of the noise and smell of today's traffic, only the rumble of the mill wheels could be heard. It was said that when the wheel at Bramshott Paper Mill stopped at midnight every Saturday the whole village woke up!

The silence of the mills meant that Sunday was a peaceful day. It also meant that the mill ponds were scoured free of mud and that the water instead of flowing through the mills was diverted into the water meadows to irrigate and grow extra grass. These peaceful Sabbaths are now just happy memories. The arrival of the army at Longmoor and Bordon, at the time of the Boer War, meant that long summer days always have a background of the rattle of gunfire and the thump of mortars from the firing ranges. Always, too, in later years, there seemed to be the buzz of the biplanes from Farnborough circling the sky between the piled up summer clouds.

Occasionally a long drawn out hoot was heard from the army railway in

Wolmer Forest and, according to local lore, if the puffing of the steam trains in Langley cutting, near Rake, could be heard then rain was on the way. Along the river, heron and kingfisher, snipe and mallard may have been a little more evident than they are today. The otter, now sadly vanished, was still the bane of the fishermen, especially of the local farmer who would be sent out by his wife to "catch some trout for breakfast," or at other seasons, to empty his crayfish or eel traps. In the dusk of fine summer evenings the bats wheeled and squeaked along the river. The nightingales sometimes sang, and one by one the bugle notes of the regiments stationed at Bordon would break into the stillness and die away as they sounded the Last Post and Lights Out.

A bugler at Bordon Camp

Years of Struggle

By the 1890s both chapel and village were finding life more difficult. There had been a succession of bad winters when old diaries record skating on Wolmer Pond by moonlight. Wet summers and bad harvests had caused heavy losses to local farmers. The paper mills were no longer prosperous, in fact the Standford Mill was burnt down in 1890; an eye witness said that the horse-drawn fire engine from Alton arrived when it was all over. It had been summoned by Jimmy Knight who galloped all the way on a horse which dropped dead outside the fire station! When the Passfield Mill was seen to be on fire in 1856 Willie Warren, aged 18, who was having his lunch at the time rushed out, jumped the front gate of the Mill House and also dropped dead!! The Passfield Mill was temporarily closed in 1900, mainly because a contract to supply all the paper for Huntley and Palmers had been lost. Workers moved away to the towns and with the decreased population chapel congregations fell. The fine new Sunday School which had been erected in 1876 and apparently paid for by a benefactor from Haslemere, was closed and converted into cottages. It reverted to the owners of the land (the Warren family) and one can only hope that everyone felt it was a fair arrangement! The log book for those

years had such entries as “average weekly collection for the year 1897 – 6/9¼d”. Other entries remind us that everyone, in those days, arrived on foot, bicycle or horseback and there are footnotes to explain large or small congregations such as – full moon, heavy snow, stormy, no service. Obviously the quality of preaching had its effect on the congregation (as it does today). Not mentioned in the log book is the fact that when one minister (Rev. J. Honey) brought three pretty daughters with him the number of young men attending increased sharply. Neither does the book mention that Rev. J. C. Sweet (no connection with Honey) sometimes brought his daughter with him to Standford. She was soon engaged to one of the Warren family – who had been told by his father to have a look at the girl at the manse! This was during the Great War when one of the log book entries is “few attended the services – many troops billeted in the district.”

The First World War

With war, many changes came to the village. Young men volunteered or were called up, mainly in the Hampshire Regiment and the Yeomanry. Local girls married soldiers and either went away or their husbands eventually settled here. One young Standford man wrote a love letter from the trenches to his very attractive fiancée – unfortunately he put it in the wrong envelope and sent it to a second girlfriend in the village. The letter for girl number two was received by his fiancée. The young hero came home to marry neither girl but someone *far* less desirable!

Passfield Mill (Bramshott Paper Mill) after the First World War

War always brings prosperity to agriculture and it also brought better times to the paper mill. The famous firm of paper makers Portals of Laverstoke, took over the mill to make paper for postal orders – which were legal currency in both world wars. They installed a turbine and new steam

powered machinery. Some of the key workers they brought with them joined the chapel. Also the Payne family who had lived in Liphook came to farm and to live in Standford and Conford. This was the beginning of a new era and for the next 60 years the story of Standford Hill Chapel is dominated by this family. Mr. Payne was a local preacher and his two sons Fred and Charlie are preachers to this day. They have also been circuit and chapel stewards and much, much else besides. Mrs Payne lived to be 104 (still walking to the church when 100 years old) and she and the other ladies of the Payne family have been tireless church workers.

After the Wars

Soon after the 1914-18 war a new school hall was built by volunteers from a converted army hut and the church was completely redecorated and renovated. As the years have gone by it has been gradually improved and made more attractive and pleasant to worship in. The pulpit has been moved from the centre to the side and now has a blue embroidered fall. Carpets have been installed in the same colour. A cross has the central place in the archway behind the communion table. The organ has recently been completely restored and an electric motor has replaced the former manual pump. This pump used to involve a young worshipper in pumping away in view of the congregation but being able to relax with a book behind a curtain during the sermon! New notice boards have been placed inside the building and the porch.

Standford Hill Chapel as it appears today

Outside there is a prominent sign and as well as the well-trimmed lawn and hedges there are a tree and flowers planted by friends in memory of their young daughter. The schoolroom too, although nearing the end of its life has been greatly improved and modernised by the work of several skilled members.

Church Life

During the years between the wars and until quite recently the life of Standford Hill Chapel and of the Liphook Methodist Circuit settled down to a pattern in which the seven – eventually four – little country chapels supported each other in a close knit programme of regular services and Sunday Schools. In addition, special occasions were attended by many of the members of all the churches. This was undoubtedly a happy and dedicated community which for many years maintained a distinctive witness and fought a determined if losing battle against the rising tide of rural depopulation and secularism. The easy availability of transport to town churches and to other forms of recreation and the advent of cinema, radio and T.V. all took their toll.

One by one other chapels closed and the pressure for change built up until in 1974 the Liphook Circuit was amalgamated with the Petersfield and Haslemere Circuit. An active supernumerary (retired) minister is now responsible for Standford and Liphook and a much appreciated magazine, "The Messenger", maintains the links between the churches of the former group. Undoubtedly church life has been strengthened by the wider fellowship and the greater opportunities of the new circuit. The arrival of new families in the area has brought new ideas. The "special" services are now once more crowded with members of the local community – especially the Harvest and Candelight carol services. However some may regret the former hearty Harvest meetings followed by a sale at which the auctioneer sold "cackleberries" (eggs), "love apples" and much other produce to members who were eager to stock their winter larders! Another important innovation is the fellowship meeting which has replaced the old week night service. Meeting fortnightly through the winter in members' homes, it provides an important forum for discussion and argument (often fierce). There is usually a visiting speaker and although basically devotional there are sometimes lighter moments, such as holiday slides, music or reminiscence. This undoubtedly is one of the main strengths of the present day chapel. To celebrate our recent 125th Anniversary over 100 members and friends attended a lunch in Headley Church Centre at which the speaker was the editor of the Methodist Recorder.

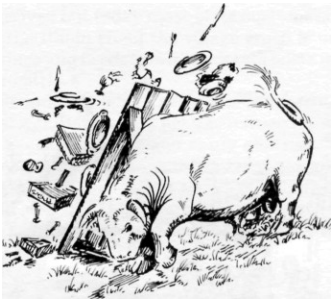
Jumble and Juniors

Two important aspects of Chapel life also disappeared during the post war years. One was the jumble sale, for many years an important method of raising money. These sales certainly involved the local community, often the rougher element! They have been gradually superseded by quieter

affairs such as garden parties. Like waste paper collecting – also once in vogue – jumble sales were very hard work and are unlikely to return except in the form of "car boot sales!" The other disappearance was the Sunday School: For over 130 years nearly all the children in the village attended one of the schools run by the two chapels. Generations have grown up with treasured memories of the influence of dedicated teachers. In the 1960s there were almost no children left in the village and the school finally closed. This was followed by a short lived but successful youth club.

The Boys Brigade camping at Standford

For several years the Fareham (Baptist) Boys Brigade has organised a camp for small B.B. units in the field next to the chapel. For some weeks in the summer the schoolroom is used and services are enlivened by the presence of many young faces!



The chapel is now so attractive that, in recent years it has become a popular venue for marriages. The young couples worship with us for a while before the wedding but then, sadly, are rarely seen again. We remember them and hope their wedding day in Standford leaves many happy memories. One couple will not forget the large Devon bull which joined in happily – and peacefully – while the photos were taken. He was shepherded away by the local farmer to the relief of everyone including the occupants of a police car which had been summoned to the scene!

Lindford

This is probably the place to record that for many years the Sunday School at Lindford – 2 miles away – was staffed from Standford. The chapel there was built in 1870 to replace a shepherd's hut on wheels. For many years it was largely kept going by preachers, teachers and worshippers from Standford. The Women's meeting at Lindford is still run jointly by members of both churches. Over the years Lindford chapel has had an extraordinary history of ups and downs. The efforts of a succession of Missioners, deaconesses and keen laymen often resulted in crowded congregations only to relapse to a faithful few augmented from Standford. Now with a much increased population and its own Parish Council a new era has begun for the village and there is the promise of steady progress in the future.

Village Life

The slow changes in church life took place alongside more drastic changes in the village. From the 1960s onwards nearly every house had a telephone, a T.V. and a bathroom; and parked outside one or even two cars. New houses were built and old ones modernised. This all meant more comfort but it also meant that the villagers looked outside the village for almost every need. Even the sociable village bus which has run regularly through the village for 60 years is now usually empty of passengers.

The village shops have gone, so have the post office, the smithy and the wheelwright. The little bakery at Conford still delivers locally baked bread, but no longer do the pony and cart or the van of the butcher or fishmonger arrive in the village to be greeted by an expectant audience of hungry cats and dogs. The fish and chip van which used to arrive with smoking chimney to supply "chapel suppers" or chips at 2d (tuppence) a poke changed to greengrocery and finally gave up. The old "Iron Room" was used for a while as a workshop. Now both the Gospel Hall and the "pub" are 20th century red brick buildings.

Modern Industry

The mills no longer use the water power of the river, although just down the road in Headley the last working water mill in Hampshire still grinds corn. Standford paper mill, after being a laundry and generating electricity, is now a private house and so is Standford corn mill. The mill at Passfield – formerly Bramshott Paper Mill – has had a more varied recent history. After ceasing to make paper in 1924 it was first a mushroom farm and then a Sainsbury depot (during 1939-45 war). After the war linseed was grown locally (fields full of lovely blue flax flowers!) and processed in the mill to produce the special fibre for cigarette papers which was then scarce. This short lived industry was followed by pitch fibre pipe making. The pipes were made of waste paper, this was pulped and shaped into pipes which were boiled in pitch. It was a noisy, smelly, 24 hour a day process and was not popular locally. Now the iron hammer of 400 years ago has become a plastics factory (Auriol Ltd.) odourless, quiet and much better liked. The factory still provides about 50 valued jobs for local people.

The wartime demands for extra food to be grown meant that every farm in the district had its dairy herd and, at one time, within one mile radius of the village green 9 milking machines could be heard morning and evening. There were several small hand milked herds as well. Now there is just one herd left. The farms have been sold to become private houses with horse paddocks or for market gardening.

The Doctor no longer lives in the village although his son and grand-daughter still do. The days when patients came from far and wide to the Standford surgery are gone. In the 1918 flu epidemic there were so many patients that a neighbouring farmer was called in to help dispense the medicine. He had to fill bottles from two buckets, one of green liquid and one of red, as instructed by the doctor. Perhaps green for the ones who were going to live and red for the others! The pub has survived but today most of its customers come on wheels from far away. In front of the Robin Hood the village green is now closely mown around the children's swings and is edged with concrete posts instead of providing hay crop and grazing for cattle.

One industry which should not be forgotten flourished for many years until the last war. Bargate is a not uncommon sandstone, but in Standford and Passfield it is near the surface and easily quarried. The deep pits with their tramways and steep, cliff like sides made favourite and dangerous playgrounds for the local youngsters and were a source of building materials for most of the old buildings and walls of the district. Shortage of labour for an entirely manual industry brought it to an end during the second world war.

Modern Times

Perhaps the biggest change in village life in recent years is the departure of so many of the large families which have lived and inter-married in the area for generations. Instead new (and smaller) families have moved in and often only stay for a short while. A particular feature of the modern

population is the number of elderly ladies living on their own. This state of affairs caused concern in 1975 when the biggest house in the village – Standford Grange – was converted into a rehabilitation centre for "old lags". These were rather pathetic characters who could not keep out of prison. Some of those who came to live in Standford went away to successful new lives, some did not. They were to become a familiar sight as they walked around the village. They made many contacts, some happy and humorous, some touching, some difficult! In church, pub and many homes friendships were forged and strong links established; but in the end, it all turned rather sour. There were unfortunate incidents and traumas and after ten years another chapter in the long history of Standford came to an end. This marked almost certainly the last of the long procession of characters who have walked our roads and lanes. The gipsy women with perambulators full of flowers, the tramps, the "stop me and buy one" ice cream tricycle slowly "tinging" its way along are all gone. So many characters; like the three brothers who were with us, it seems, only yesterday. One of them with a fine bushy beard quietly wandered around quoting Victorian poetry to anyone he met; he had been crossed in love with a local colonel's daughter so the story went. The second brother tall and lean and clean shaven pushed his old bike through the lanes, always with a bunch of hedgerow flowers drooping on the handlebars. The third brother, wearing a few days growth of stubble and with one tooth to his head, had once proudly driven the steam traction engine from the paper mill as it clanked its way around "drinking" from the local fords. He ended his days pushing his little crippled wife around in a battered old perambulator.

We shall not see the like of them again, the juggernauts and the ceaseless flow of cars have taken over. The cows that used to meander unattended to their pasture and crop the banks as they went now stay behind barbed wire fences. Despite all these changes, all the traffic and so many new ways of life, Standford remains a country village. The river flows on, and this year for the first time in 50 years the salmon have returned from the Atlantic Ocean to spawn in our waters. The commons owned by the National Trust, cannot be spoilt; although, now no longer grazed, they are becoming forests once more. The chapel is still an isolated, rather lonely, slate roofed little building. Orchids bloom in the grass around, when the mower spares them, and there is honeysuckle in the hedges. Morning and evening every Sunday a faithful but varied congregation comes to worship. As we have seen, most of the social activities of our hamlet, as of so many others, have ceased.

Why then does this little church still have life and vigour and what does it offer which has meaning in 1986?

The answer is the ageless message, as relevant today as it ever was. No easy options, just the absolute conviction that God, through the death and new life of His son Jesus, showed us that love conquers all and this verse is our guideline and promise for the future:

Not disobedient to the heavenly vision,
Faithful in all things, seeking not reward;
So following thee may we fulfil our mission,
True to ourselves, our neighbours and our Lord.

APPENDICES

Methodist Preachers

For 250 years on every Sunday, of every year, up to 10,000 Methodist men and women have set out, all over Britain to preach the gospel. Morning and evening, early and late, on foot or horseback, on bicycles or, more recently by car or public transport, they have travelled to preach in small chapels or in the great churches and 'Central Halls' of Methodism. They are all proud to be known as preachers; however, at an early date they were divided into the ordained – or itinerant – ministry and 'local preachers'. John Wesley who, himself always remained an Anglican clergyman, ordained some of his preachers. These ministers gave the sacraments and provided leadership. They lived in a 'Manse' and received a minimal allowance which was found by the local congregations. In recent years, to comply with modern legislation, this has become a stipend. They have a long college training and every 5-7 years they move on to another church or circuit (group of churches). This is usually by invitation but they may be sent anywhere by "Conference" which is the final authority of Methodism.

Local Preachers, on the other hand, receive no pay and continue in their ordinary occupations. They only become fully accredited preachers after a thorough training which includes a "trial sermon" and written examinations. They may then conduct worship in any Methodist church, but in practice they usually work in their own area.

THE METHODIST CHURCH

PETERSFIELD, LIPHOOK & HASLEMERE CIRCUIT

JULY 6th to SEPTEMBER 28th, 1986

		6	13	20	27	3	10
PETERSFIELD H & P	10.30 6.30	Allen Allen S	Collinson Burton	Hann Clamp	Guest S. Flander	Tonkin Guest	Guest S Goodfellow
BORDON Shared Church H & P	10.00 6.00	Burn FS Owen/Walford HC	Dean HC Owen	Owen Stone SP	Walford HC Guest	Owen FS Dean HC	Allen HC Hudson
EAST MEON							
HASLEMERE H & P	10.30 6.30	Smith HC Skinner	Stathers JCA Stathers YS	Smith Smith HC	Stone Clamp	Guest HC Hann	Burton LR
MIDHURST H & P	10.00 6.30	Gee Hinson	Smith HC Smith	Warren FS Knight *	Parker Goodfellow	Collinson Tonkin	Leach Guest HC
LINDFORD M.H.B.	11.00 6.30	Breame Powell	Owen HC Hann *	Goodfellow FS Burgess/Wright SP	Burgess/Leach Tonkin HC	Whitlock Owen	Burgess/Powell Allen
LIPHOOK H & P	11.00 6.30	Stone FS Clamp	Tonkin S Church Centre	Breame LR	Tonkin Hemingway *	Hinson Gee	Tonkin S Whitlock
STANDFORD HILL H & P	11.00 6.30	Flander Smith HC	Leach Lemon *	Payne C Tonkin	Warren FS Hann	Allen FS Allen S	Parker FS Hinson

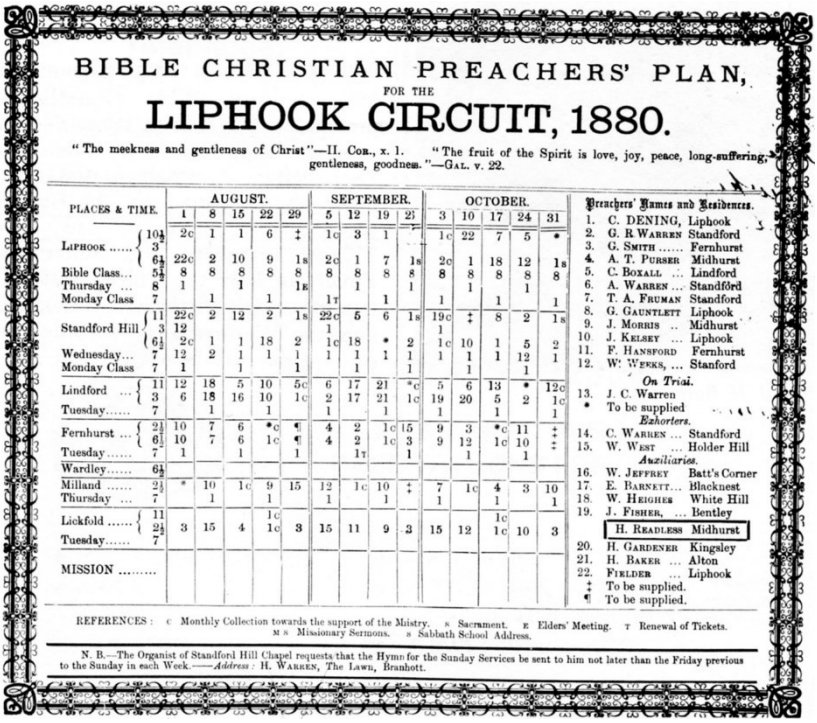
Every quarter, the circuit "Preaching Plan" is scanned eagerly by preachers and congregations alike to see who is 'planned' to take services and where and when!

Methodism could not possibly survive without the dedicated service of its preachers. They must all have a genuine, heartfelt call from God and it is a commitment for life. In the local Petersfield, Liphook and Haslemere Circuit, two preachers from Standford Hill Chapel have just completed 60 years each of continuous and still continuing preaching. This was recently recognised at a Covenant Service; the rarely held and solemn service at which Methodists renew their promises to God.

The Bible Christians

Who were they? At the beginning of the nineteenth century in parts of Devon and Cornwall, an independent sect of Methodists began to make great headway. Their leader was called O'Bryan and they were nicknamed Bryanites or Bible Christians. This was because they walked to church with Bibles in their hands while the Anglicans carried prayer books. They differed from other Methodists as they believed very firmly that laymen should share equally with ordained ministers in church government. This tradition still continues in former Bible Christian Chapels.

The sect soon spread along the South Coast, to the Forest of Dean, the industrial North and London. The chapels were rarely built where they would compete with other denominations and members were proud of their good relations with other free churches and often with local Anglicans.



BIBLE CHRISTIAN PREACHERS' PLAN,
FOR THE
LIPHOOK CIRCUIT, 1880.

"The meekness and gentleness of Christ"—II. Cor., x. 1. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness."—Gal. v. 22.

PLACES & TIME.	AUGUST. 1	8	15	22	29	SEPTEMBER. 5	12	19	21	OCTOBER. 3	10	17	24	31
Liphook	10½	2c	1	1	6	‡	1c	3	1	‡	1c	22	7	5	*
	3														
	6½	22c	2	10	9	1s	2c	1	7	1s	2c	1	18	12	1s
Bible Class	5½	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Thursday	8	1		1		1E		1		1		1		1	
Monday Class	7		1		1		1T		1		1		1		1
Standford Hill	11	22c	2	12	2	1s	22c	5	6	1s	19c	‡	8	2	1s
	3	12					1				1				
	6½	2c	1	1	18	2	1c	18	*	2	1c	10	1	5	2
Wednesday	7	12	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12	1
Monday Class	7	1		1		1		1		1		1		1	
Lindford	11	12	18	5	10	5c	6	17	21	*c	5	6	13	*	12c
	3	6	18	16	10	1c	2	17	21	1c	19	20	5	2	1c
Tuesday	7		1		1		1		1		1		1		1c
Fernhurst	2½	10	7	6	*c	¶	4	2	1c	15	9	3	*c	11	‡
	6½	10	7	6	1c	¶	4	2	1c	3	9	12	1c	10	‡
Tuesday	7	1		1		1		1T		1		1		1	
Wardley	6½														
Milland	2½	*	10	1c	9	15	12	1c	10	‡	7	1c	4	3	10
Thursday	7		1		1		1		1		1		1		1
Lickfold	11				1c								1c		
	2½	3	15	4	1c	3	15	11	9	3	15	12	1c	10	3
Tuesday	7														
MISSION															

Preachers' Names and Residences.

1. C. DENING, Liphook
2. G. R. WARREN Standford
3. G. SMITH ..... Fernhurst
4. A. T. PURSER Midhurst
5. C. BOXALL ... Lindford
6. A. WARREN ... Standford
7. T. A. FRUMAN Standford
8. G. GAUNTLETT Liphook
9. J. MORRIS .. Midhurst
10. J. KELSEY ... Liphook
11. F. HANSFORD Fernhurst
12. W. WEEKS, ... Stanford

On Trial.

13. J. C. Warren
* To be supplied

Exhorters.

14. C. WARREN ... Standford
15. W. WEST ... Holder Hill

Auxiliaries.

16. W. JEFFREY Batt's Corner
17. E. BARNETT... Blacknest
18. W. HEIGHES White Hill
19. J. FISHER, ... Bentley

H. READLESS Midhurst

20. H. GARDENER Kingsley
21. H. BAKER ... Alton
22. FIELDER ... Liphook

‡ To be supplied.
¶ To be supplied.

REFERENCES: c Monthly Collection towards the support of the Ministry. s Sacrament. E Elders' Meeting. T Renewal of Tickets. M S Missionary Sermons. s Sabbath School Address.

N. B.—The Organist of Standford Hill Chapel requests that the Hymn for the Sunday Services be sent to him not later than the Friday previous to the Sunday in each Week.—*Address*: H. WARREN, The Lawn, Branhott.

Liphook Bible Christian Preachers' Plan for the year 1880

What were they like? A favourite text of the early preachers was the verse John 3.16 "God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him shall have eternal life". That remained the Bible Christian theme. O'Bryan and his followers based their

preaching on the works of Thomas à Kempis and John Wesley. Typical contemporary descriptions can be quoted. “They revered the Bible without making it a fetish”. “It was a denomination that invited friendship”. “Friends of all, enemies of none”. “Orthodox, missionary minded, evangelical, disciplined churchmanship with belief in the sacraments and the power of the Holy Spirit”.

Rev JH Batt

A Bible Christian preacher, Rev. J. H. Batt, was described as having a “Quaker-like simplicity about him, without an atom of pretence in manner or speech. He was gifted with a happy sense of humour and had a gift of making friends with young people”.

Amalgamations. Throughout the 19th century, Bible Christianity prospered and sent missionaries all over the Empire and to China. By 1907, when it amalgamated with other churches to form the United Methodist Church, it had over 250,000 members and adherents. Finally in 1932 the United Methodists joined the Primitive Methodists and the Wesleyans to become the present day Methodist Church.