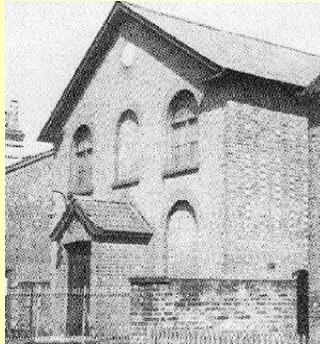


Welcome to -
Rehoboth Baptist Church
New Street, Horsham, West Sussex.



[Back to home page](#)



"REHOBOTH" BAPTIST CHAPEL, NEW STREET, HORSHAM

*A brief history of the chapel spanning one hundred and fifty years from
1834 to 1984.*

An early picture of the
Chapel

INTRODUCTION

This history of Rehoboth Baptist Chapel has been compiled to commemorate the one hundredth and fiftieth Anniversary of the work in 1984.

The church wishes to express its most grateful thanks to Miss Rachel Piggott, who has been instrumental in gathering together the relevant information, using old Church Records, and two earlier Histories (one written by Pastor Clark and the other by Pastor Scott). Gratitude is also expressed to Mr. A. G. Ashdown of the Protestant Alliance and Mr. G. Sayer of the Evangelical Library, London, for their assistance in providing further information.

In May 1834, a meeting was called, at which six were present, and where the following resolution was adopted "That a Particular Baptist Church be formed."

The reasons set forth for this step were embodied in the statement submitted to this small meeting which read as follows: "We, after mature deliberation and prayer to God, do deem it our duty to separate from the Church of which Mr. John Harm is Pastor, for the following reasons, viz:

- Firstly, because we, being Baptists, have no share in the Chapel, although it was understood to be mixed communion and our subscriptions were solicited to defray the

expenses, and repeated assurances given from the pulpit by Mr. Harm 'That this Chapel belongs to everybody and nobody'.

- Secondly, because the title deeds of the Chapel are made out exclusively to the Independents, though to us unknown until very recently, notwithstanding the Chapel was erected in 1814.
- Thirdly, because Mr. Harm, although being a professed Baptist, does not obey the command of Christ given in the last verse of St. Matthew's Gospel, but evades it when his subject leads to it.
- Fourthly, because discipline is not observed in the Church, although a request from a great part of the Church has been made nearly two years past for that purpose
- Fifthly, because of the relaxed state of the Church, while deacons can neglect, and that for nearly a year together, the solemn and delightful privilege of social prayer, and members absent themselves from the Lord's Table for years, and no messengers appointed to ascertain the reason of such conduct.
- Sixthly, because adult Baptism is forbidden to be taught or preached in the Chapel by one of its deacons, although infant sprinkling has been practised very recently by Mr. Irons and the practice defended.
- Seventhly, because the gifts presented at the ordinance of the Lord's Supper are not appropriated to the relief of the poor."

For a short time meetings were held at a farmhouse, occupied by Mr. Stenning, whilst the Chapel was in course of erection. The numbers of those attending the meetings grew, which encouraged them that the blessing of the Lord was on them.

In October 1834, the members composing the Church took possession of the Chapel, for which it was agreed a rent of £10 per annum should be paid. It was felt, however, that an effort should be made to purchase the chapel and the freehold of

the ground, and for this purchase in November 1834, two members were appointed to wait upon Mr. Tugwell, the owner of the Chapel and ground, and obtain the price at which he would be prepared to sell. The result of their interview was as follows:

	£	s	d
The building	175	4	0
37ft frontage	37	0	0
Front wall, fence, etc	19	4	0
TOTAL	231	8	0

It was resolved to purchase the Chapel at the above price, and this was done, the whole account being discharged in 1859, on which occasion the following lines were penned:

Now dearest friends, we all agree,
The debt is paid, and we are free,
The battle fought, the victory won,
A Triune God shall wear the crown.

Now in this house this song we'll sing,
Glory to God, our Christ, our King,
For gifts of grace, and deeds of love,
To draw our hearts and souls above.

Oh, may we all extol His Name,
And sing His love, and spread His fame,
In bringing down that lofty hill,
Which seemed to us impossible.

Now friends we see what God has wrought,
Our minds with solemn awe are fraught,
With grateful hearts we'll praise Him too,
Who set us on, and brought us through.

Loud Hallelujahs let us shout,
From debt and bonds He's brought us out,
Our house is now for ever free,
All glory to the Triune Three.

Come Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,
In all the glory of Thy Word,
With unctious power, with love and dew,
Fill both the pulpit and the pew.

THOMAS HILL
(one of the earliest members of the Chapel)

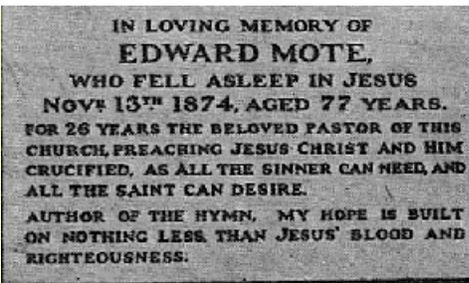
Having been provided with a building of their own, the Church felt that it was the Lord's will for them to seek for a minister who would take the oversight as Pastor. Several men occupied the pulpit, but none stayed very long until the year 1848, when [Edward Mote](#) accepted the Pastorate.



Pastor Mote's preaching was accompanied by Divine Power and considerable blessing rested upon his labours. The Church also adopted the selection of hymns by him. There is now a copy of this hymnbook in a cabinet in the Chapel. He continued as Pastor for 26 years. The record in the Church books regarding his death is as follows: "The beloved Pastor of the Church, Mr. Edward Mote, after an illness of about three months, sweetly fell asleep in Jesus on November 13th, 1874, aged 77 years and nearly 10 months. His dying lips gave utterance to the words:

'Precious blood, precious blood, that makes peace with God'."

To memorialize his services, a tablet has been fixed in the Chapel at the side of the pulpit.



The original tablet fell down and was replaced in 1960 by a new one which included the first two lines of his famous hymn 'My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness'. The remainder of the inscription reads:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
EDWARD MOTE
WHO FELL ASLEEP IN JESUS
NOV 13TH 1874, AGED 77 YEARS
FOR 26 YEARS THE BELOVED PASTOR OF THIS
CHURCH, PREACHING JESUS CHRIST AND HIM
CRUCIFIED, AS ALL THE SINNER CAN NEED,
AND ALL THE SAINT CAN DESIRE.

In November 1974, the Church celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of Pastor Mote's death, when Mr. A. G. Ashdown of the Protestant Alliance came to speak. Pastor Mote's most famous hymn, mentioned on the memorial plaque, was written by Pastor Mote when visiting a dying friend. Originally the hymn read:

Nor earth, nor hell, my soul can move,
I rest upon unchanging love;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' Name.
On Christ, the Solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.
My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
'Midst all the hell I feel within, On His completed work I lean.
When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest upon unchanging grace;
In every rough and stormy gale,

**My anchor holds within the veil.
His oath, His covenant and His blood,
Support me in the sinking flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.
I trust His righteous character,
His counsel, promise and His power;
His honour and His Name's at stake,
To save me from the burning lake.
When I shall launch in worlds unseen,
O may I then be found in Him,
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.**

This hymn is sung in its present form all over the world and has brought great blessing and comfort to many.

After the Home-call of Mr. Mote the church experienced many trials and were confronted with many problems, but there were those who were steadfast, and in answer to earnest prayer the Lord maintained their cause. They were often cast down, but did not fall into despair.

After some years of waiting, the Church invited Mr. Milbourne to the Pastorate. This was in 1882, and he remained for a period of five years.



Wilson Milbourne
1882-1887

His ministry appears to have been particularly successful in the ingathering of young people, and it was during his pastorate that the Sunday School was commenced, and also the Bible Class.

Then there followed another period during which the Church was pastorless. In 1890 Mr. George W. Clark commenced a ministry which lasted until 1901, and was of benefit to the cause.



George W. Clark
1890-1901

The business affairs of the Church had been allowed to become somewhat untidy, and Mr. Clark's business experience and orderly mind proved to be of great value in getting temporal matters conducted in a more concise and methodical way. There is a noticeable improvement in the writing up of the Minutes: it would appear that minutes of Church Meetings of special importance were prepared by the Pastor himself. The ministry of the Word was blessed during this period and a number of persons were added to the Church, although for varying reasons, a good proportion of those added did not remain.

Mr. Clark, after he left, lived in Suffolk, and although he occasionally returned to preach at special meetings at Rehoboth, most of his time was taken up with work connected with the National Strict Baptist Sunday School Association.

Various efforts were made after Mr. Clark's leaving in 1901 to again obtain a settled ministry, but without success, until the year 1918 when Mr. S. H. Boulton agreed to serve the Church as from 1st January 1919. His pastorate terminated at the end of 1922. Mr. Boulton had previously held pastorates at Chelmsford and Brighton, at which latter place he continued to reside after he became Pastor at Rehoboth. For a number of years after the conclusion of his pastorate he supplied the Church periodically on the Lord's Day.



Harry S. Boulton
1819-1922

Following the resignation of Mr. Boulton, the Church had another long period without a pastor, but the pulpit was well supplied by men who earnestly preached the Gospel of the Grace of God, the majority of them coming from London.

The hymn book issued by the Strict and Particular Baptist Society, known as "Gospel Hymms" was adopted by the Church in 1932, and was first used at the ninety-eighth Anniversary held on June 30th of that year. Special services to commemorate the Centenary of the formation of the Church were held on 27th June 1934, when many friends from other causes came to join the praise to God for His goodness throughout the century. The preacher at the afternoon service was Mr. George W. Clark, a former pastor, the public meeting in the evening being presided over by Mr. J. B. Collin (then president of the Strict Baptist Mission). After Mr. Newman of Tadworth had offered prayer, the Secretary, Mr. J. Wells, gave a brief account of the history of the Church. Pastors J. T. Peters (of Guildford), H. S. Boulton (of Brighton) and W. C. Flail (of Tottenham), spoke words of cheer and encouragement to a company which well filled the Chapel. All the addresses set forth the glories of that salvation that is centred in the Person of Jesus Christ the Eternal Son of God, and the blessing resulting from a vital experience of it.

To commemorate the centenary a new table and desk were provided for the Chapel, and the minister's vestry was enlarged and a new carpet laid down.

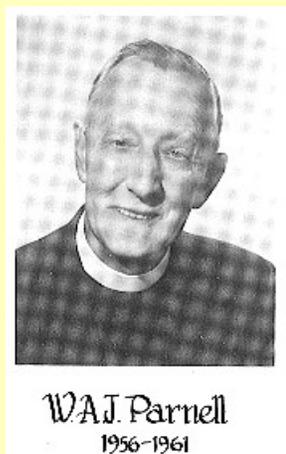
Mr. W. R. Scott was invited to take the pastorate of Rehoboth in 1943. He had occasionally preached at the Church about twenty years earlier, but renewed contact with the fellowship when his youngest son was evacuated to Broadbridge Heath during World War II.



At that time he was pastor at Hambro Road, Streatham. He took up the pastorate, after a Recognition Service at the beginning of January 1944. A house was very quickly found in Warnham Road which appeared suitable for the Pastor and his family, and within a few days the tenancy was signed, although later they moved to a house in Chesworth Lane.

The Church was greatly blessed during the eleven years of Pastor Scott's ministry. He set about seeking out those who used to attend the Chapel and encouraged them to return close to the Lord and the fellowship. The Chapel, strengthened by their return, was also encouraged by a number of new people joining the fellowship. A Thursday afternoon prayer meeting was started, and the Sunday School also grew in numbers. Pastor Scott was greatly missed when he left the pastorate in 1955. He was Called Home in 1961. The Church had the pleasure of welcoming Mrs. Scott back into membership in 1976. until her death in 1979.

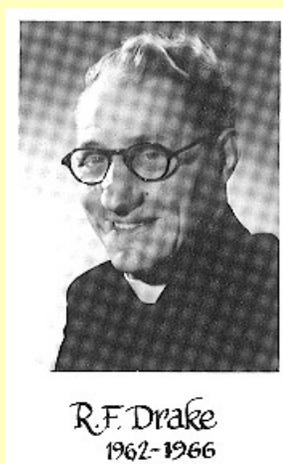
Mr. Parnell took up the part-time pastorate in 1956, but before he commenced his ministry a few changes took place at Rehoboth. In June 1955 the Church joined the National Association of Strict Baptist Churches (N.A.S.B.C.). In October 1955 the members unanimously decided that baptised believers, not members of the N.A.S.B.C., could take communion.



Mr. Parnell had been to preach a number of times at Rehoboth, when the Secretary, Mr. Sam Piggott, felt led by the Lord to consider Mr. Parnell as Pastor, and the Church unanimously agreed. Mr. Parnell, however, was not happy as he did not feel right about becoming the full time Pastor and moving to Horsham. Eventually it was agreed that he would take two Sundays a month and oversee the Chapel as its part-time Pastor, and this he did until 1961. Although Pastor Parnell did not have a Recognition Service, on his second anniversary Dr. Kevan came and spoke. Dr. Kevan had preached his first sermon at the Chapel some years earlier when spotted reading the Bible on a train by a member of Rehoboth.

In 1959 a Fellowship of Youth group was started and went well for a while, but the fellowship was suffering by not having the uniting influence of a Pastor living in Horsham. Mr. Parnell was aware of this and was therefore happy to resign when a more suitable man was available.

Such a man was found in Mr. Drake, who first preached at the Church at a Youth service. These were later held monthly on a Sunday evening. Mr. Drake, who had been Pastor at Leyton for five years, now lived in Guildford where he was a teacher. He wished to continue to teach and therefore felt unable to live in Horsham, but suggested he could be the Pastor and take Sunday and week-night meetings at the Chapel. He and the Church arranged a six-month trial period beginning in January 1962 to see how the arrangement worked. At the end of this time it was agreed that Pastor Drake should continue and under his ministry the Church grew.



The fellowship was very weak when Pastor Drake began his ministry and he felt it was necessary therefore to give a 'frank assessment of the condition of the Church'. At a Church Meeting in February 1962 he noted that the Church was in decline, that the witness of the Chapel was left to a few, and that, in particular, the children's work was in a very serious state. He listed five points which he thought would help improve the situation and the Church set about putting these into practice.

Sadly, though, the Sunday School continued to decline, shutting in 1963. An attempt was made in 1965 to recommence the work by holding a Children's Mission led by evangelist Mr. A. W. Grimsey of Crawley, but with little result. In September 1966 it was laid on the hearts of some to commence a week-night meeting for children entitled 'The Good News Club'. This was held each Friday and attracted up to forty children at times. A meeting called 'The Upper Room' was also started. This was a coffee bar for teenagers, held in the Sunday School room on a Saturday, and attracted a number of 'characters'! Golden Bells hymn books were purchased for use at the youth meetings, at this time.

In 1966 a morning Sunday School was started (previously it had been held in the afternoon), with the children of those worshipping at the Church. To these were added some from the Good News Club.

Pastor Drake felt led to retire in 1966, but the Church had been strengthened under his ministry and had been blessed as they saw the Lord providing for their needs, as He promised. An example in November 1965 was an anonymous donation of £50 which arrived at the same time as a bill for some new heaters, which was higher than had been quoted.

The Farewell Service for Pastor Drake in January 1967 marked the beginning of six years without a pastor, but the work continued. In 1969 the Chapel became officially known as the 'Free Grace Baptist Chapel'. The Sunday School continued with a yearly Christmas party, prizegiving and summer Outing. During this period, amongst the number of visiting preachers, the Church welcomed students from London Bible College.

In 1969 Pastor Pond of Guildford agreed to be Moderator of the Chapel. He encouraged the members to put in hand the redecoration of the Chapel, which they did, gratefully receiving a loan from the Metropolitan Association of Strict Baptist Churches (M.A.S.B.C.). The Church were able to join the M.A.S.B.C. in 1963, having previously been outside the boundaries. Pastor Pond encouraged the Church to continue as he felt that there was a place for their ministry and witness. He urged them to continue to pray and seek for a Pastor.

The Lord answered their prayers in the person of Mr. Frank Mortimer of Tunbridge Wells. The Church Treasurer, Mr. Ben Piggott, had heard Mr. Mortimer preach at 'Meadvale' Chapel, Reigate. The Church at Rehoboth invited him to preach, and then to take the Sunday School prizegiving. In February 1972 he received a unanimous call from the Church to take up the Pastorate. Subsequently he accepted the call, recognizing it to be from the Lord, and quoting the scripture "Now the Lord Himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all." *2 Thessalonians 3 v. 16.*



Frank Mortimer
1972-

A Recognition Service for Pastor Mortimer was held on 28th October 1972. Owing to the large number wishing to attend the meeting, the nearby Baptist Church in Brighton Road very kindly allowed the Church to hold the meeting on their premises.

When Pastor Mortimer came to the Church there were many things that needed to be done, but the Fellowship, under the guidance of their new Pastor, trusted that the Lord would provide the answers. The Church had a debt to pay and it was totally cleared by 31st December 1972.

The next major problems were a house for Pastor and Mrs. Mortimer, and also a different job for Pastor Mortimer which would enable him to live in Horsham. Returning from a weekend away he found a letter from a friend awaiting him, concerning a job at the Paymaster General's Office in Crawley. He applied for the job and was accepted before February was out.

The house followed shortly afterwards, bought with a loan from the M.A.S.B.C. The manse or 'Rehoboth', Orchard Road, was a blessed provision from God. The house needed a number of alterations including the reorganisation of the kitchen to provide a study. The church did not have the money for the work but one Sunday morning there were two letters at the Church, both enclosing cheques for £100; legacies for the Church from people who had had no contact with the fellowship for a number of years. The work was therefore completed. There was also need for a garage for the manse and the money for the building of this was given by Mrs. Sam Piggott, in memory of her late husband, a deacon and secretary of the Church.

The Lord provided in the same way for the Chapel. Pastor and Mrs. Mortimer decided to redecorate the kitchen, and also to obtain some new equipment; sink unit, water heater, carpets, cooker, teapots and urn. All were provided by gifts from friends. In April 1972 it was decided to start Covenant giving. Although the Tax Rebate was not claimed for over two years, the money came just when the bill for redecorating the chapel exterior and renovating the baptistry was due to be paid. The Rebate covered the cost of the work exactly.

The Lord blessed the Church in other ways and the fellowship was strengthened and united. The Children's and Youth work continued including children from three to sixteen years of age. Although the numbers tended to fluctuate, about half the children were from families not in the church. Most of the parents, however, would attend special services and also join the summer Church Outing. The Sunday School and Bible Class have always made a contribution to the Christmas Carol Service and Anniversary and Prizegiving in May, which is much appreciated by the congregation.

A Women's Fellowship Meeting was started by Mrs. Mortimer on January 13th 1976, affiliating with the National Strict Baptist Women's Fellowship at their Annual Rally in March 1976. Mrs. Pond, wife of Pastor C. Pond, was the speaker at the first meeting of the Fellowship. Originally there were only six members, but numbers gradually increased. The meetings have continued and have been a means of blessing to those attending.

Another area where the Church has had opportunity to witness is to two nearby Sheltered Accommodation homes for the elderly. The late Mr. Sam Piggott first contacted Page Court, directly opposite the Chapel, and shortly after his death in 1973 a Carol Service was held there. Later monthly meetings were commenced. A further sheltered home was built and named Piggott Court after the late Church Treasurer, Mr. Ben Piggott, in recognition of his service on the Local Council. The Church prayed for an opening, and because of the connection, the Christian Warden of the Court invited the chapel to hold a monthly service there also. The Lord had once again answered prayer. Regular meetings have been held at both Courts since that time, with the fellowship providing a special tea for the residents early each year.

In October 1975 the Church began to use the new Grace hymnbook. An 'After-Church' Fellowship commenced, taking place once a month, when new hymns and tunes could be learnt, and an opportunity given to sing and learn new choruses. Since the time when the Sunday School room was out of use through redecoration, some choruses are now integrated into the Morning worship before the Sunday School scholars leave for their lessons.

In June 1982 the Sunday School and Bible Class shared in a Children's Mission with those at the Brethren Meeting Hall in Denne Road, Horsham. In 1983 the Church was encouraged when three of the older Bible Class members were baptised.

A Fellowship of Youth group was recommenced in February 1983 led by one of the younger members of the Church, Mr. Andrew Smith. The Fellowship catered for twelve to seventeen year olds. Various activities were organised including bowling, swimming, barbecues, town trails and hikes, with games evenings being held at the Chapel or in homes of members of the congregation. Each evening would close with a word from the Bible and prayer by one of the leaders.

The Fellowship of Youth was progressing well when, in December 1983, Andrew Smith felt the Lord was calling him to work with the Grace Baptist Mission at

Abingdon. It seemed that the group must close again, but the matter was placed before the Lord with the request for a new leader. Provision was made in Mr. Steve Welch, another young member of the Church, who took on the leadership when Andrew left to start work at Abingdon.

Following his retirement earlier this year from his secular employment, Pastor Mortimer has been engaged in redecorating and renovating the interior of the Chapel, assisted from time to time by members of the congregation.

During the years of Pastor Mortimer's ministry the Church has known much blessing, seeing the membership growing and the congregation increasing in number. There have also been those who have been challenged to follow their Lord through the waters of baptism.

So the Church continues its witness in this the 150th Anniversary year, a united fellowship, trusting the Lord, who has provided in so many ways, great and small, throughout the years.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments:

As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Psalm 133