

BURN METHODIST CHAPEL

The following brief history has been created with full acknowledgement to "Burn Methodist Church – Centenary Booklet" researched by Richard Moody and Revd Denys Terry (1995)

In 1813, the first Methodist visitor to the Selby area was, as far as we know, the Rev Charles Wesley, who wrote in his journal in 1743 "God found me more work in Selby."

By the end of the eighteenth century, villages south and east of Burn, along with Snaith were part of the Epworth Circuit, Selby, Wistow and Cawood were part of the York circuit and several villages to the west joined Leeds or Pontefract.

Barlow, Brayton, Thorpe and Burn seem to have been a no-man's land and were not mentioned in Methodist records for another seventy years after Wesley's visit.

In 1812, Selby became head of a Circuit and there are mentions of Burn, by 1813 holding fortnightly services and by 1823 membership had reached double figures. They met in an old thatched cottage on the site of the present chapel.

In 1837 a young carpenter, William Webster, came to live in Burn and meetings were first moved to a barn then to a large kitchen in his house. Soon a one-storey cottage in West Lane was taken and converted into a chapel but by the 1840s there were too many attending for the space available, so Mr Webster gave land at the bottom of his timber yard (on Main Road) and the opening ceremony of a purpose-built chapel was performed by the Rev W Barton in 1846.

By the 1890s, there was a growing feeling that new premises were needed. The original chapel had been built with limited funds, it was small and inconvenient as there was no space for the Sunday School to meet.

In 1894, 300 square yards of land were transferred to the Wesleyan Methodist Trustees for a cost of £25, with a further 200 square yards added for £16 3s 4d later in the year. The stone-laying ceremony took place on 23 August 1894 and the new chapel formally opened for worship on 8 February 1895.

A note on William Webster – the first of the Webster family to live in Burn, he took a leading interest in the building of both chapels. The first (1846) built on the land he donated was demolished early in 1994 together with Websters Woodyard which he founded. The business transferred to a site south of the village where it still operates.

He began as a local preacher about the same time he came to Burn and it was not uncommon for him to walk twenty-six miles to preach on a Sunday. Surviving Burn's 1857 epidemic of typhus or black fever which took his wife, he died in November 1901, aged 90.

Over the years, Burn Chapel has seen attendance grow and wane and has been a focal centre for not only religious worship but also village events – concerts, May Queen parades, Sports Day with races, clay-pigeon shooting, ice-cream carts and fancy dress, the Whit Walks, day trips to the seaside, Bonfire Night and Christmas parties and more.

May 1991 saw the renewal of links with RAF 578 Squadron with a memorial unveiled opposite the Wheatsheaf pub and celebration of the squadron's 50th year in 1994. In 2012, the Royal Canadian Airforce 431 Squadron's 70th anniversary was similarly celebrated first at the chapel, followed by the addition of a second memorial stone.