

Beulah Chapel



As a result of Waterside church deciding to enlarge their activities around the town centre they began at Britannia in 1852 and in 1858 they opened branch chapels at Lee Mill and Water. In 1851 Waterside began a branch Sunday school at Britannia. The first meeting was held in a cottage on Rochdale Road at the bottom of Sutcliffe Street. They later moved into a building which was called "Th'up Steps Chapel" and they remained here for over 30 years. A well known personality who used to occupy the pulpit regularly was Thomas Emmett. He was noted for wearing thick clogs and was noted for saying "If any trouble arises in God's house, the devil always starts in the singing pew".

A body of trustees was appointed in 1875 and these were as follows:

John Barrett, Richard Lonsdale, Jonas Horsfall, John Lee, H Ogden, William Briggs
Thos Nuttall, Samuel Crossley, Abraham Coope, S Jackson.

A chapel keeper was appointed at a wage of no more than 3/6d per week.

Eventually the chapel became too small and it was decided to build a larger place of worship. Building of the new chapel commenced Easter 1884 the corner stone being laid at the end of May 1884 and the chapel opened for worship on 5th March 1885. The total cost of the building was £2, 755-2-2d.

The chapel seated 400 and the school accommodated 450 scholars. Five memorial stones were laid for the new building and in a bottle beneath one stone was placed a record of the opening of the old school in 1851 the number of teachers and scholars at present, the number of books in the library, names of trustees and the circuit plan.

The following is a list of trustees for Beulah 21 March 1884.

William Bridge Britannia Coal Merchant
John Barrett 133 Newchurch Road Out of business
Robert Clegg Dale Bank Bacup Plumber and Glazier
John Edwards Millgate Quarryman
Thomas Smith Tong Mill Furnisher

John Collinge Regent Street Registrar
Thomas Cunliffe Corporation Street Accountant
James Schofield Regent Street Hall Keeper
Robert Cunliffe Daisy Bank Cotton Warper
Edward Harris Britannia Quarryman
Eli Fielden Rochdale Road Boot & Shoe Dealer
Wm Hargreaves Britannia Out of Business.

The first marriage in Beulah took place on Thursday 15 August 1889 and was between Mr John Scott and Miss Alice Woodhead of Providence Bacup. Beulah was hit by a devastating fire in 1892 which left the building completely destroyed at the time of the fire the insurance agents thought the cause to be a gallery beam which had projected into the flue of the heating system though this had baffled them for a time as the beam was covered in a iron plate. Over the following weeks various churches and organisations made donations to Beulah, amounting to £740.00 by 18 Jan 1893 and the Northern Insurance Company made a payment of £1,000. There was a debt outstanding of £1,400 for the old chapel which left the building committee with a balance of £ 340.00 towards the building of a new chapel. By the 17 May 1893 the rebuilding fund had risen to £600.00. In November of the same year new memorial stone were laid but the rebuilding fund was still £ 773.00 short.



There was in fact little damage to the outer walls of the chapel apart from the window frames and some of the decorative carved scroll work which was splintered and disfigured by the tremendous heat as can be seen in the picture above and below taken after the fire. The rebuilding work was well underway by July 1894 under the supervision of a Mr Whittles. The church opening on 24 July 1894 the total cost of rebuilding the chapel was £1,367.15.0d and the Sunday school reopened in October of the same year.