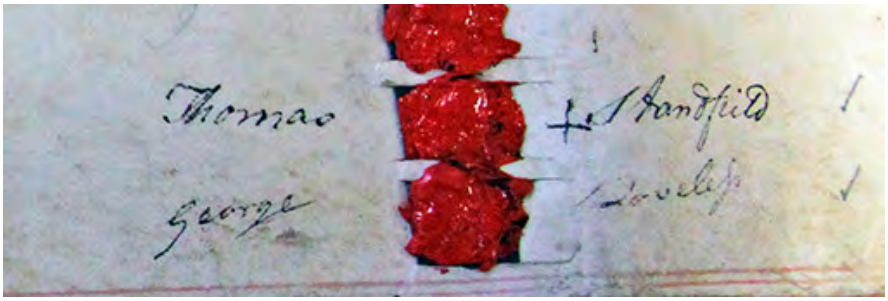
Extract from
A Conservation Statement for the Former Chapel, Tolpuddle
for
the Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust



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Front cover. The former chapel in c.1960, reproduced with the permission of the Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust and the signatures of Thomas Standfield and George Loveless as chapel trustees, DHC, NM-Z/Acc 6079. Reproduced with kind permission of the Dorset History Centre.

Fig.1. Tolpuddle from google earth, the former chapel shown circled in red.

Fig.2. The former chapel shown in context. The house leased with the plot of land on which the chapel was built is to the left (The Martyrs' Cottage), the driveway between the two buildings is built across what was a yard in 1808. Orchard Meadow, now public open space and provided with childrens' play and climbing areas since this aerial was taken, is on the south side of the road, opposite the chapel.

The former Chapel, Tolpuddle, Conservation Report for the Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust: No 1159578

1 - Background

This Conservation Report, grant-aided by English Heritage, was commissioned from Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants by the Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust in January 2015. In February 2015 the Trust (established in 2014) acquired the former chapel, listed Grade 2* and on the national heritage at risk register, in order to implement the charity's objects. These are 'the preservation, maintenance and renovation of the Grade II* former Methodist chapel and its site in Tolpuddle, Dorset, and its historical, architectural and constructional heritage for the benefit of the people of Tolpuddle and of the nation.' There are four Trustees, including the Chairman. Since its inception the Trust has taken advice from Sarah Ball of English Heritage, Buildings at Risk, Josephine Brown, Architectural Heritage Fund, David Chiplen, the West Dorset District Council Conservation Officer, Martin Cooke of Heritage and Leisure, and recommended specialists.

The old chapel, disused since 2005, is on the brink of a new life, with new uses that will bring change to the building and its setting. Prior to purchase, the TOCT had preliminary discussions with West Dorset District Council and English Heritage about how change might best be managed to make the building sustainable. In July 2014, the Trust produced a document, ' Tolpuddle Old Methodist Chapel Renovation Project: Project Viability Report – AHF ref: PVG35' summarising the planning history of the building and the viability of proposed community uses. A condition report on the building by Philip Hughes Associates was commissioned and produced in 2014. However, detailed discussion of the conservation issues had to be delayed until acquisition of the building was certain. The vendor requested complete confidentiality prior to the sale, and public consultation on the Trust's ideas is just beginning.

This report has been written by Jo Cox with contributions to the text from John Thorp, both partners in Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants and from Roger Thorne, Methodist historian. The purpose of this document is to clarify the guiding principles for the future conservation of the chapel, understood as the careful management of its fabric and historic significance in the context of sympathetic new uses. The timing of the document also provides an opportunity to outline the key issues that will need to be debated with the statutory authorities and the Trust's architect. Options identified in this document are options and not proscriptions and the authors understand that, as the Old Chapel project develops, some options will close down and new ones may emerge.

1.1 - Different sorts of Heritage

The site and its setting includes different sorts of heritage: the listed chapel building is used by bats, which are a protected species. Trees that impact on the chapel, one on the land owned by the Trust and others on the neighbouring land to east are within the Tolpuddle Conservation Area.

1.2 - The Structure of this Report

The conservation report is structured under the following headings. The headings were recommended in the brief but have been re-ordered in this document to tailor them to the building:

Understanding
Significance
Conservation and management aims
Risks to and enhancement of significance and associated policies

1.3 - Sources for this Report

The former Methodist chapel at Tolpuddle has been thoroughly researched and the building closely examined in recent years. In 1999 David M Robinson of English Heritage wrote a report on the building and published an article on it in *Architectural History* in 2001. This was the first time that careful research and observation had confirmed that the existing building was, for certain, the former chapel used by at least four out of the six Tolpuddle Martyrs, two of whom were chapel trustees. A 2006 report by Compass Architectural Consultants provided a detailed analysis of the fabric of the building by Philip Brebner incorporating the research by Robinson and a very valuable note by Lloyd N Thomas, Methodist Circuit Archivist. In 2007 Lloyd M Thomas's *God is our Guide: The Tolpuddle Martyrs and their Methodist Roots* was published by the Dorchester Circuit of the Southampton District of the Methodist Church. The Project Viability report produced by the Trust has been noted above. The Philip Hughes condition survey has contributed both to the analysis of the fabric and identified works required, ranked as A: Items requiring urgent action; B: immediate work relating to stabilisation and water penetration; C: other essential works; F: essential further investigation; I: desirable works and improvements.

This document has been prepared with reference to the above as the principal sources. Shortage of time constrained additional research. Keystone is very grateful to Roger Thorne, longstanding chapels historian, for the benefit of his advice, including a visit with him to the chapel, access to sources and his reminder of the golden rule that it is perilous to make any sweeping general statement about Methodism or non-conformist chapels, as every chapel building and society had its own unique character, even if only in its details.

1.4 - Limitations of this Report

The 'understanding' section of this document is focussed on the former chapel and does not rehearse the trial of the Martyrs, thoroughly covered in published sources elsewhere. Constraints on time limited research largely to establishing references to primary sources already investigated by others (particularly Lloyd N Thomas), or transcribing chapel-relevant documents in the Dorset History Centre that might play a part in interpretation. The question of when the old chapel ceased to be a chapel has not been cleared up. It is possible that there are holdings in the Methodist archives in the John Rylands library in Manchester that would answer this, particularly Dorchester circuit plans covering the period 1843-1862. It is also clear from a preliminary and superficial investigation of published and primary sources that further research could do much to better place the former chapel in the context of Dorset's Wesleyan Methodist history and, particularly, to investigate its role in the Methodist networks that were significant to the narrative of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. The old chapel and the people associated with it also offers a window into the history of the manor, parish and village. Perhaps this could be developed over time as a local history project.

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2 - Understanding

2.1 - Tolpuddle: the setting

Tolpuddle is an ancient settlement in the chalk Piddle Valley on the north side of the river, just above the flood plain. The village was enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1794 when one farm and common land was divided into three. The 2nd and 3rd editions of Hutchin's *History & Antiquities of the County of Dorset* incorporate an addition (author unknown) to Hutchins' account of Tolpuddle, praising the Tolpuddle Enclosure Act as exemplary. The arrangements for the tithes, leased to Mr Morton Pitt, then Lord of the Manor, were admired, as was the reservation of land on which 'industrious' village cottagers could keep cows, and the provision of large gardens for the cottages, presumably provided to make up for the loss of access to common land. The cottages were said to be leased on a system that provided the Tolpuddle labourers with an unusual level of security of tenure: 'In a political point of view such a measure is highly advantageous, as it gives the poor cottager a property, and consequently a stake and interest in the prosperity of the country'. Thirty years later, after the depression following the Napoleonic Wars, the instability of grain prices, changes in farming practice, the Captain Swing riots and poor wages, this view of the advantages to the cottager of living in Tolpuddle turned out to be wildly optimistic.

The topography of the village is largely linear, along the former A35 trunk road from Dorchester to Bere Regis but the village in 2015 has a crossroads nucleus to west of centre, just east of the medieval parish church, where the main road is crossed by a N/S road to Weymouth to the south (the B3390) and the hamlet of Milborne St Andrew to north [Fig.1]. The history of the Tolpuddle Martyrs is a recurring theme in the topography of the village. There is a Trades Union Congress Martyrs Museum at the extreme west end of the village associated with a group of houses built in 1934 by the Co-operative Wholesale Society to commemorate the men. The parish church includes the gravestone of one of the labourers, designed by Eric Gill in 1834. An ancient sycamore tree on the small village green is reckoned to be the tree under which the Tolpuddle labourers first met to discuss establishing a union of agricultural labourers. Further east, a roadside cottage just west of the old chapel and once part of the same property, is known as the Martyrs' Cottage. At the east end of the village on the south side there is a Methodist chapel, opened in 1862, to which a memorial arch to the Martyrs was added in 1912.

Tolpuddle was by-passed in 1998 when the A35 was moved north. The population in 2015 is about 300. The village is a Conservation Area and much of the Piddle Valley is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Tolpuddle lies outside the AONB boundary but is clearly visible from parts of it.

The former chapel is sited towards the east end of the historic core of the village, on the north side of the main road, next to and east of the Martyrs' Cottage [Fig.2]. It is a small, freestanding, rectangular gable-ended building aligned N/S, it south end to the road [Fig.3]. It was built in about 1818, following the establishment of a Methodist society in Tolpuddle at least ten years earlier when a house in the village was licensed as a dissenter's meeting house. Two of the Tolpuddle Martyrs were trustees of the chapel and two were local preachers.[1] It is not clear whether the building continued to function as a place of worship right up until 1862, when the new chapel was built, probably not, although the nucleus of a congregation survived in Tolpuddle in 1850 and presumably was still in place in 1862 to justify the new chapel. After disuse as a chapel it was converted, in two main phases, into an agricultural building, the second phase being a conversion into a probable stable. Later it was used as a store for the adjacent building to west, the Martyrs' Cottage. It was empty and boarded up from 2005-2015.

Fig.3. The former chapel in a photograph of c.1960, the Martyrs' Cottage to the left. The curved stone boundary wall projecting from the south west corner has disappeared. Reproduced with permission from the TOCT.

In 1833 agricultural labourers in Tolpuddle established a Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers, a union, for mutual support and to negotiate for better wages. Initiation into the Friendly Society included an oath, swearing new members to secrecy. Six Tolpuddle men involved in an initiation ceremony were sentenced to transportation for seven years at the Lent Assizes in Dorchester in 1834, not, ostensibly, for establishing a union, which was not illegal, but under legislation against swearing an illegal oath, brought in following the naval mutiny at the Nore in 1797. The harshness of their sentence caused a national outcry, public debates about trades unions and prompted the first mass demonstration of trades unionists in London to present a petition asking for them to be pardoned. With the help of sympathisers in high places the six were eventually pardoned in 1837 and returned to England, although all but one later emigrated to Canada. While academics may argue about the impact their trial and sentence had on trades unionism, the six Tolpuddle men are celebrated, nationally and internationally, as pioneers of the movement for workers' rights and trade unionism. The centenary of their trial in 1934, organised mid-Depression by the TUC as a national rallying, prompted publications, commemorative buildings in Tolpuddle (the model houses for agricultural workers) and were the origin of a TUC Martyrs Memorial Museum at Tolpuddle and a popular annual festival based in Tolpuddle. In 1968 the TUC acquired, for a brief period, the old court room in the Shire Hall, Dorchester, where the six were tried, in order to prevent its conversion into offices.

Of the six martyrs, George Loveless and Thomas Standfield, second generation Methodists, were trustees of the former chapel from its outset, and can be assumed to have been closely involved in organising its construction and the funding for this. Although this cannot be

proved, they may have helped to build it. By at least 1829/30 George Loveless and his brother, James, were Methodist local preachers and by 1834 Thomas Standfield was said to preach in the chapel occasionally. His son, John Stanfield, was also a Methodist. Chapel and family connections were intertwined. Thomas Stanfield was married to Dinniah Loveless, the sister of George and James. Of the other two martyrs, James Brine (who later married Thomas Standfield's daughter) is generally considered not to have been a Methodist in 1834, though he converted to Methodism in later life. James Hammett, the only one of the six to live in Tolpuddle after returning from Australia, was probably not a Methodist, although, as Lloyd Thomas points out, he was identified as one in the record of his arrival at Dorchester gaol for the trial in 1834.

At the time of their trial it was suggested by some that the harshness of the labourers' sentence was prompted in part by prejudice against Methodism. One of the potential petty jury members at their trial was dismissed for being a Methodist and likely to be biased. As a correspondent to the radically-inclined *Morning Chronicle*, signing himself 'A Wesleyan', put it:

'Sir, they were truly guilty of one crime- a crime which is, I fear, in the estimation in certain persons in Dorsetshire, of far greater magnitude than any of those to which reference has just been made. In this Protestant country they committed the great crime of reading their Bible - of daring to think for themselves on what they read - of doing more, they became Members of the Wesleyan Methodist Society...'

Much has been written, without achieving a consensus, on the influence, or not, of Methodism on Trades Unionism in the early 19th century.[2] The mass of literature on the Tolpuddle Martyrs, including that in the Martyrs Memorial Museum in Tolpuddle, has not downplayed the importance of the faith of four of the six labourers. Their good character was an important feature of their trial and there was an assumption at the time, and in later analysis, that their sobriety, honesty and reputation for hard work was confirmed by Methodism, particularly in the person of George Loveless, who, before and after the trial, served as the labourers' spokesman and leader. It has been noted that James Hammett, who was probably not a Methodist, was the only one of the group with a previous (and subsequent) criminal record. In the pamphlet, *The Victims of Whiggery,* written by George Loveless and published in 1837 after their pardon, the author is very specific in linking the persecution of the labourers with Methodism and with the Tolpuddle chapel:

'I am from principle, a Dissenter, and by some, in Tolpuddle, it is considered as the sin of witchcraft; nay there is no forgiveness for it in this world or the world to come; the years 1824-5 are not forgotten and many a curious tale might be told of men that were persecuted, banished and not allowed to have employ if they entered the Wesleyan Chapel at Tolpuddle.'

To date, the former Tolpuddle chapel, its condition declining and its interior inaccessible, has not played the full part it deserves in the story of the labourers.

The building also stands, aside from its connection with the Tolpuddle Martyrs, as a very rare, though much altered, example of a purpose-built vernacular rural Methodist chapel. It is evidence of the spread of Methodism in Dorset in the 19th century and, particularly, its spread in agricultural areas. Losses of other similar chapels, Methodist and of other non-conformist denominations, once common, make it a rare surviving representative of the vernacular type of rural chapel. Unusually, it has suffered, not from the layers of improvement and upgrading which apply to most surviving chapels of early origins, but to dis-improvement as a result of conversion and downgrading to agricultural use. This has obscured its primary function as a chapel [Fig.4].

Fig.4. The former Methodist Bible Christian chapel at Winkleigh, Devon, representing the fate of many vernacular chapels lost to downgraded agricultural use, rather than upgrading or rebuilding. Without the pointed arch over the doorway, the stone plaque and local knowledge it would be impossible to identify as a chapel. Like the building at Tolpuddle it has lost its original roof but more drastically, to an agricultural monopitch roof. Photograph by Roger Thorne. The 1710 Friends Meeting House at Come-to-Good in Kea parish in Cornwall is a good example of a well-preserved thatched vernacular building but that represents the 'Old Dissent' of the Quakers and not Wesleyan Methodism or the varieties of non-conformity that originated with Wesleyan Methodism.

2.2 - The Development of Methodist Societies

The establishment of a local Methodist society or group of Members invariably predated the construction of a chapel, as it did at Tolpuddle. Local societies began by meeting in their homes or borrowed or rented premises. Societies provided a structured and 'methodical' system of fellowship including class meetings for prayer, bible study and mutual encouragement, Sunday schools and an opportunity for members to achieve status by taking on an office, for example as a class leader, steward, treasurer, or local preacher. The principle of self-help and commitment was proved by expecting members to pay small but regular contributions. Formal membership was carefully recorded and each quarter members were given a 'class ticket', which was proof of their status as a member in good standing. Membership was active and individuals could be removed for unsuitable behaviour or not attending Class Meetings. This also conveniently excluded undesirables and the mischievous. From the 1740s societies were grouped together in a structure of 'circuits' or groups of societies, which could be physically widespread. There would be a senior Minister or Superintendent and generally other ministers, who between them preached to the societies, maintained a pastoral oversight and attempted to create new societies by preaching, sometimes outdoors. In well-established areas, particularly cities, this system became formalised with substantial chapels but in sparsely populated rural areas the situation was fluid for much longer. Many services were conducted by accredited laymen living in a circuit, who were traditionally known in Methodism as 'Local Preachers' to distinguish them from the 'Travelling Preachers', the ministers. The circuit system devised by Wesley was brilliantly elastic and as the number of societies and chapels grew, the circuits were divided to keep their size at a reasonable level.

2.3 - Early Methodism in Dorset

John Wesley had personal connections with Dorset, his great-grandfather and grandfather both having held livings in the county and his father having been educated in Dorchester. Biggs, in *The Wesleys and the Early Dorset Methodists* notes that he made six visits to Dorset between 1750 and 1766, normally to places where there was already a personal link with existing or nascent Methodist societies. The Isle of Portland was a case in point and, according to Biggs probably the origins of Dorset Methodism, although it faded out within a generation and was revived in the 1790s.[3] Here, in 1746, Wesley's brother, Charles, visited a group of Methodists led by a quarryman, William Nelson, originally from Yorkshire, in 1746. The organisation of stone quarrying on the island was linked not only with a distinctive social culture on Portland and an independent-minded labour force, but also with regular contact with London (where Nelson had worked) and other big cities to which Portland stone was transported and from which quarrymen and masons were drawn. Biggs makes the point that early Methodism in Dorset, as in other counties, tended to begin in urban areas, particularly in seaport towns or in a special case, like Portland, where the labouring classes had more independence from disapproving landlords and employers than in the agricultural areas, where evangelism encountered more obstacles.

Biggs identifies Robert Carr Brackenbury, a Lincolnshire squire and magistrate, as a key figure in a second wave of Dorset Methodism in the 1790s. Brackenbury had met John Wesley in the 1770s and was later given a special roving commission as an itinerant Methodist preacher. He arrived in Weymouth, more or less by chance, in the 1790s, revived the Portland society with an assistant, George Smith and established a chapel at Fortuneswell, built at his own expense. Brackenbury and Smith visited Poole in 1793 and established a chapel there. One of the Trustees of that chapel was George Stickland of Wareham, who, encouraged by Brackenbury, became one of the first local preachers in south east Dorset. Biggs suggests that Brackenbury and Smith may have revived Methodism in the twin towns of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis (where Wesley had preached in the 1770s).

2.4 - Chapel-Building

The motive for a society to adapt an existing building as a chapel, or build a chapel from scratch, was to provide room for growing numbers in a society and for the expanding range of activities. Chapel-building was also a sign that a society was substantial, confident and permanent enough to produce its own public home. In practice a building project usually incurred substantial debt, which could take years or decades to pay off.

Wesley himself produced some interesting and practical advice on the building of chapels although more notice has perhaps been taken of this by 20th century architectural historians than by small rural Methodist societies much later in the early 19th century and it must be understood as applying mostly to town chapels of his day. There were eight main principles, of which no 7 is the most relevant to the former Dorset chapel.

'1. Build all preaching-houses, where the ground will permit, in the octagon form. It is best for the voice, and on many accounts more commodious than any other.
2. Let every octagon house be built after the model of Yarm[outh]; every square house after the model of Bath and Scarborough.
3. Let the roof rise only one-third of its breadth: this is the true proportion.
4. Have doors and windows enough; and let all the windows be sashes opening downward [i.e. not horizontal sliding sashes].
5. Let there be no chinese paling, and no tub pulpit but a square projection with a long seat behind.
6. Let there be no pews and no backs to the seats, which should have aisles on each side, and be parted in the middle, by a rail running all along to divide the men from the women, just as at Bath. [These strictures on seating were unpopular from the outset.]
7. Let all preaching houses be built plain and decent; but not more expensive than is unavoidable: otherwise the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But of so, we must be dependent upon them, yea, and governed by them. And then farewell to the Methodist discipline, if not doctrine, too'.[4]

Just as important to Wesley as the 'plain and decent' architecture and economy of chapels, was the question of securing the function of the building for Wesleyan Methodism. Following difficult experience at the New Room, the Methodist complex at Bristol and the tendency for divisions and splits in Methodism, he wished to ensure that all Methodist chapels should be held by a body of trustees governed by a trust deed tying the building to official Methodism. Without this insurance, a wayward society could part company with Wesleyan doctrine and discipline, excluding established Methodist preachers. In the early 19th century the building and maintenance of chapels was the responsibility of local trustees but the wording on the legal documents usually made it plain that the chapel had to be used to preach doctrine as established by Wesley. In the 1830s these arrangements were clarified by Conference in the provision of a 'Model Deed' for new chapels, a development of documents drafted by Wesley.

In practice, local circumstances dictated location, size and building materials. Trust deeds did not always prevents splits and breakaway groups and there were some unseemly struggles over property. [5] Observation suggests that, in parallel with medieval churches, the design of a vernacular rural chapel was likely to influence another if the resources of the society were similar and the buildings close to one another. Town chapels were different and more likely to be designed by professionals. The location of a chapel was determined by where land for building could be found and where a landowner was willing to donate, lease or sell to the Methodists. There is plenty of evidence that Methodists could sometimes only acquire land for a chapel by going through third parties. Chapels built early in the history of any society were constrained by what funds could be raised and sometimes by the capabilities of members of

the society. Self-build, although later (in 1850) specifically discouraged by Conference, was not uncommon in rural areas. All that was required of the internal plan of the earliest preaching houses was a position from which the preacher could be heard and seating for hearers. As, and if activities expanded, chapels, especially those in towns or large villages could develop into complexes of buildings with Sunday schools, vestries and stables. After a new chapel was built the earlier one was often used as a hall. Early 'Travelling' preachers had been expected to move around their circuit often spending successive nights in a different member's house, which was an imposition on poor families. By 1818 a Travelling Preacher probably did not spend many nights away from home. Later a manse was sometimes located beside a town chapel, two in the case of Frome, but such accommodation was not usual in an early rural setting. [6]

Many chapels, most known now only from documentation, were thoroughly vernacular, built of local materials and probably without detailed measured drawings. The chapel at Drift, in Cornwall is a good example. It was reputedly built by Francis Tremblyn, a farmer and woodsman. It was cob and thatch with a rough slate floor and rough planking for seats. Wheat straw was fixed to the internal walls, presumably as a substitute for plaster. If a society flourished, a chapel of this kind might be upgraded by degrees, or completely rebuilt, perhaps several times, keeping pace with greater architectural ambition through the 19th century [Fig.5]. There is no straightforward chronology from the simple and vernacular to the architecturally ambitious in chapel architecture. A large town chapel, perhaps the third or fourth home of a Methodist society of early origins, could be completed to the designs of a professional architect in an educated Gothic or classical style at the same time as mission work prompted a small and simple vernacular building in a rural area or was undertaken in whatever building could be found [Fig.6]. On the Weymouth Circuit a very grand architect-designed chapel in the Lombardic style was built in Maiden Street in 1867 (destroyed by fire, 2002), while Crossways Chapel, a simple corrugated iron roadside building (closed 2005) was probably put up later.[7] What is now well-understood is the rarity of the pre-1830s vernacular type, like Tolpuddle, lost to improvements or complete replacement before the era of photography if the society flourished or, if a society ebbed away, declined to a farm building and/or dereliction.

The architectural modesty of many Wesleyan Methodist (and chapels of other denominations), compared with the well-funded and elaborate architecture of new 19th century Anglican churches, means that far fewer of them are listed at the higher grades of 2* or 1, which are more likely to generate grant-aid than Grade 2 buildings. Within the Methodist built heritage, this makes the Tolpuddle chapel exceptional as an expression of an unassuming and simple building listed at a high grade.

2.4 - The Tolpuddle Methodist Society

Two families, the Standfields and the Lovelesses were key players in the establishment of the Tolpuddle former chapel, understood as both a society and a building.

In 1810, the Tolpuddle house of Thomas 'Lovelass', almost certainly the father of George and James, was licensed as a Dissenter's meeting house for Methodists at the Quarter Sessions, a local court [Fig.7]. There must have been earlier gatherings of Methodists in Tolpuddle to warrant this. The house was in the Weymouth Circuit: Weymouth had become the head of a circuit in 1805.[8] The licence was issued in the same year that Thomas's wife, born Dinah Stickland, died. The location of this house has not been identified for certain.[9] George Loveless was 13 years old, his brother James was two. The brothers were second generation Methodists and were brought up within a Methodist culture that included attendance at worship, familiarity with the Bible and with religion being a matter of personal commitment to which they were expected to make a personal and articulate witness. As a late 18th century bookseller noted: 'the Methodists do not waste their time in idleness and diversions, they have

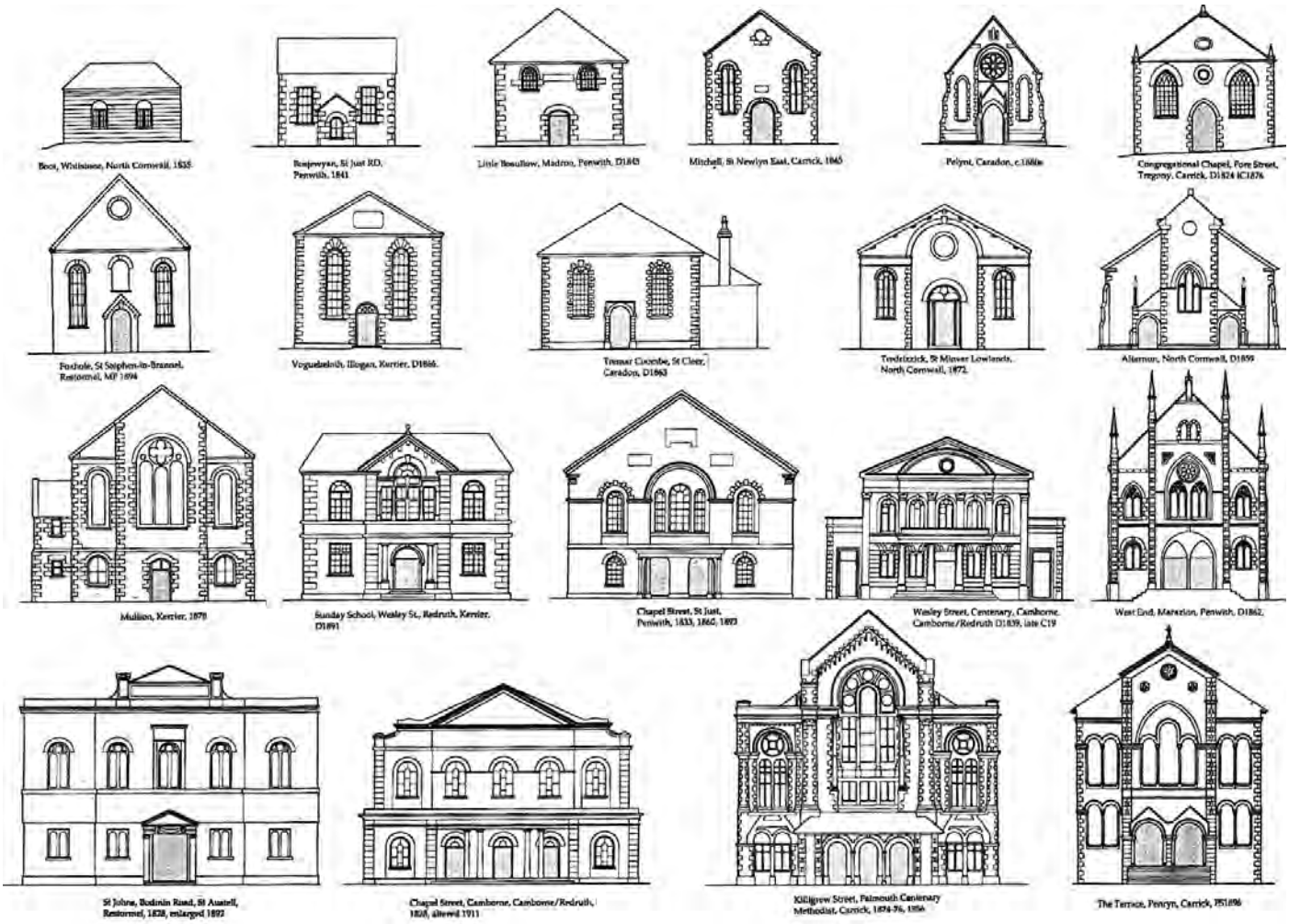
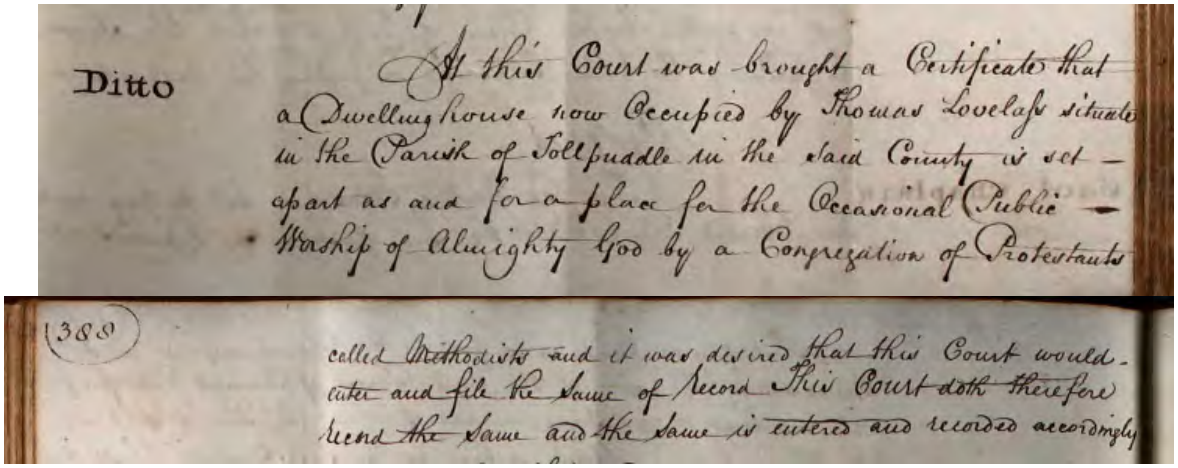


Fig.5. The design of a selection of non-conformist chapels in Cornwall, all drawn to the same scale and showing families of chapel style. The most modest example, in Boot, Whitstone, 1835 (top left), is later than Tolpuddle. Tolpuddle village can boast one as vernacular as Boot, and another, the more sophisticated and polite 1862 chapel, each representing a stage in chapel architecture. Drawn by Rhoops for Keystone and published as Fig.80 in Diversity and Vitalit: The Methodist and Nonconformist Chapels of Cornwall*, published by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, supported by English Heritage, 2001.*

Fig.6. Methodist Bible Christian Mission work in 1906 in Southampton. The word shown preached and sung in a modest, rustic, temporary setting. Roger Thorne.


Ditto

At this Court was brought a Certificate that a Dwelling House now Occupied by Thomas Lovelass situate in the Parish of Tollpuddle in the said County is set apart as and for a place for the Occasional Public Worship of Almighty God by a Congregation of Protestants

1388

called Methodists and it was desired that this Court would enter and file the same of Record This Court doth therefore record the same and the same is entered and recorded accordingly

Fig.7. The entry in the Quarter Sessions recording the licence for George Loveless's cottage to be used for the 'occasional public worship of almighty God by a congregation of Protestants called Methodists...'. The Loveless name is variously written as 'Lovelass', 'Lovelace' in early 19th century documentation, DHC, QSM 1/13, Reproduced with kind permission of the Dorset History Centre

more time to read than others...So that the degree of knowledge between the poor Methodists and the poor in general is very remarkable'. [10]

Two years earlier, in 1808, Robert Standfield, the father of Thomas and grandfather of John, had leased a dwelling house and a one-acre plot behind (perhaps this was one of the 'large gardens' referred to by the commentator on the Tolpuddle enclosure) from William Morton Pitt (1754-1836) of Kingston Maurward, Lord of the Manor of Tolpuddle and MP for Dorset. This was in the same year that the Lordship of the Tolpuddle Manor was sold by Morton Pitt to a Samuel Fripp and others of Bristol. The lease was a 'three-life' lease, a common west country leasing system where property was held for the payment of an annual rent and for the term of three named lives (i.e. until the last surviving named person died), usually with the option (implicit or explicit) of 'buying in' another life as the three named individuals died. Depending on how a three-life was managed, it could provide a long lasting tenancy which was as close to the security of freehold as a tenant could expect.

Morton Pitt was a landlord well-known in Dorset for sympathy for the poor [11] and he has a place later in the story of the Martyrs. As Loveless records, the Tolpuddle labourers asked his advice when trying to negotiate with their employers in 1831-2 and were promised, as they understood, wages equal to others in the district in the presence of the Reverend Warren, the Tolpuddle Anglican minister. Morton Pitt recommended a meeting between the labourers and their employees at the Dorchester Shire Hall before a magistrate. James Frampton, who spear-headed the arrest of the Tolpuddle men in 1834, was the magistrate, and George Loveless represented the labourers. The Reverend Warren denied that any promises had been made and Loveless was told that the magistrate had no power to fix wages. Following this the wages of the Tolpuddle labourers were reduced.

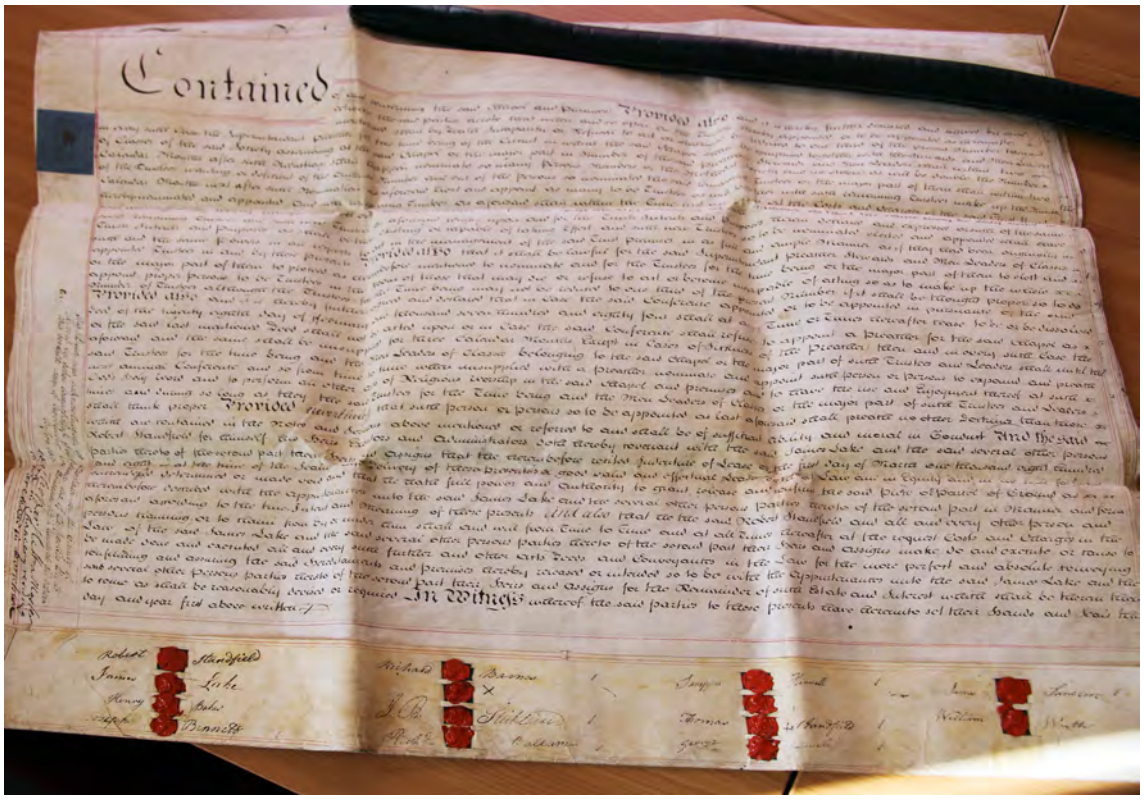
2.5 - Building the Chapel

In his sketch of Dorset Methodism, written in the 1870s, Simon writes of a evangelical push in 'the wasteland' round Puddletown in about 1814. The gospel was preached at Tolpuddle and Milborne St Andrew. Simon also mentions a preacher called Jeremiah Argyle who preached in a cottage at Southdown, presumably Southdown north of Blandford in Tarrant Hinton.[12] Perhaps this evangelical drive was a prompt to the building of the former chapel at Tolpuddle.

By 1818 Robert Standfield was no longer living in Tolpuddle, but in Arne, near Wareham, where he was a tenant farmer. He had let his Tolpuddle house out to Jeremiah Argyle, who seems likely to be the local preacher of the same name mentioned by Simon. Robert Standfield is recorded in that year as one of the main parties to an agreement to sell, for £10, a portion of the Tolpuddle property to James Lake, maltster of Broadmayne and 12 others for the building of a chapel 'for the purposes of preaching and expounding God's Holy Word and for the performance of all other acts of religious worship therein'.[13]

The plot of ground was 40ft from east to west and 30ft from north to south, bounded on the south by the main road, on the north by a field, on the east by the property of William Brine and on the west by Standfield's property, occupied by Jeremiah Argyle.

The agreement is long [Fig.8] and references Wesley's writings. It cites his 1784 document transferring leadership to Conference after his death. The chapel was to be served only by ministers appointed by Conference preaching no other doctrines 'than those which are contained in certain notes upon the testament and the first four volumes of sermons published by the late Reverend John Wesley'. Ministers appointed by Conference could be excluded only if the trustees and a majority of the society considered them not to be adhering to Wesleyan doctrine, immoral in conduct or deficient in ability. Other responsibilities of the Trustees are carefully laid out. They could collect money from those who attended the chapel regularly



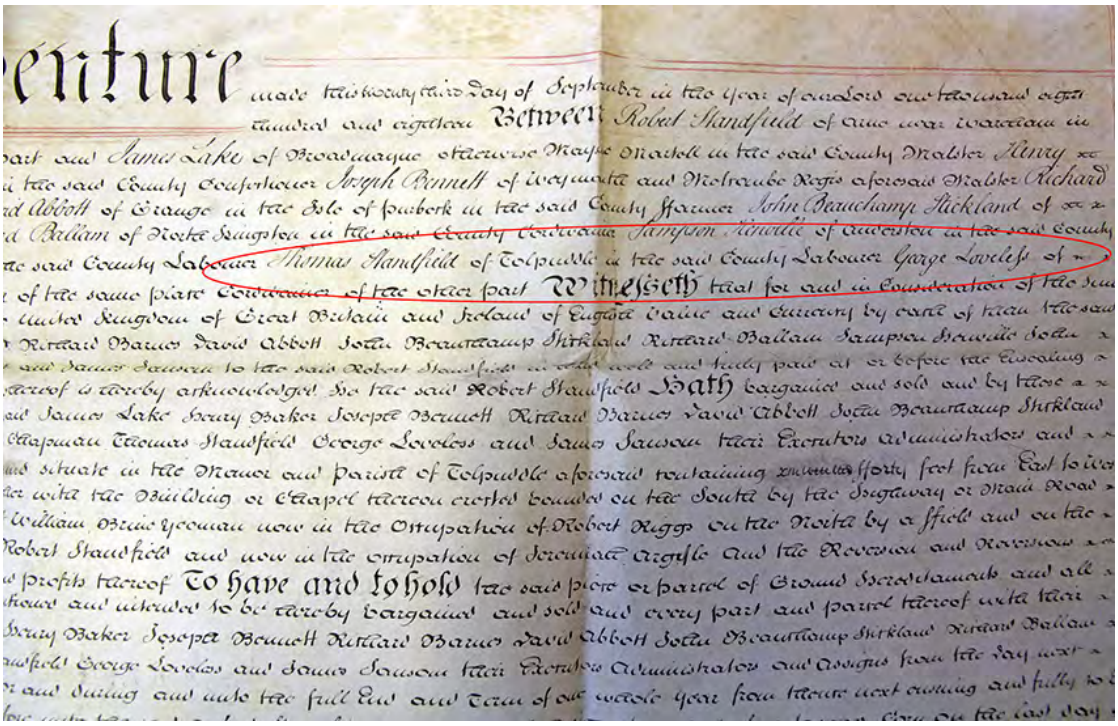


Fig.8. The 1818 indenture for the purchase of the land for £10 from Robert Standfield by the 12 chapel Trustees, for the erection of a chapel, setting out the responsibilities of the Trustees, DHC, NM-Z/Acc 6079. Reproduced with kind permission of the Dorset History Centre.

Fig.9. Thomas Standfield and George Loveless's names as trustees on the 1818 indenture.

including charging rent for the seats or pews. For Anglican churches of the same period, pew rents could be a very useful source of income, but for Methodist chapels it was essential as regular collections at services were far from universal. Special collections, e.g. for Missions or Kingswood School , were announced in advance. [14] The Class Money collected by class leaders or special collections were distinguished from money raised by Trustees for the chapel building. Trustees' money was first to be used to pay off the interest on any money borrowed for the building of the chapel, then to pay off the capital and finally, when the capital was paid off, used for the support of preachers in the circuit. Accounts and vouchers were to be produced at the quarterly circuit meetings.

The document covers the two possible futures for any early Methodist Society. Should the Society be dissolved, the premises could be sold and so long as debts had been cleared, the Trustees were to distribute any surplus 'among such poor persons in the Methodist Society as the Superintendent Preacher of the circuit ...shall think proper and fit'. However, if the chapel or premises were sold because it was thought that a larger or more convenient chapel was necessary, the surplus would be applied to the new chapel, so long as it was held on the same terms as the old. The document includes arrangements for appointing fresh Trustees, should the named trustees die or become incapable. This would be done through a process of nomination and election.

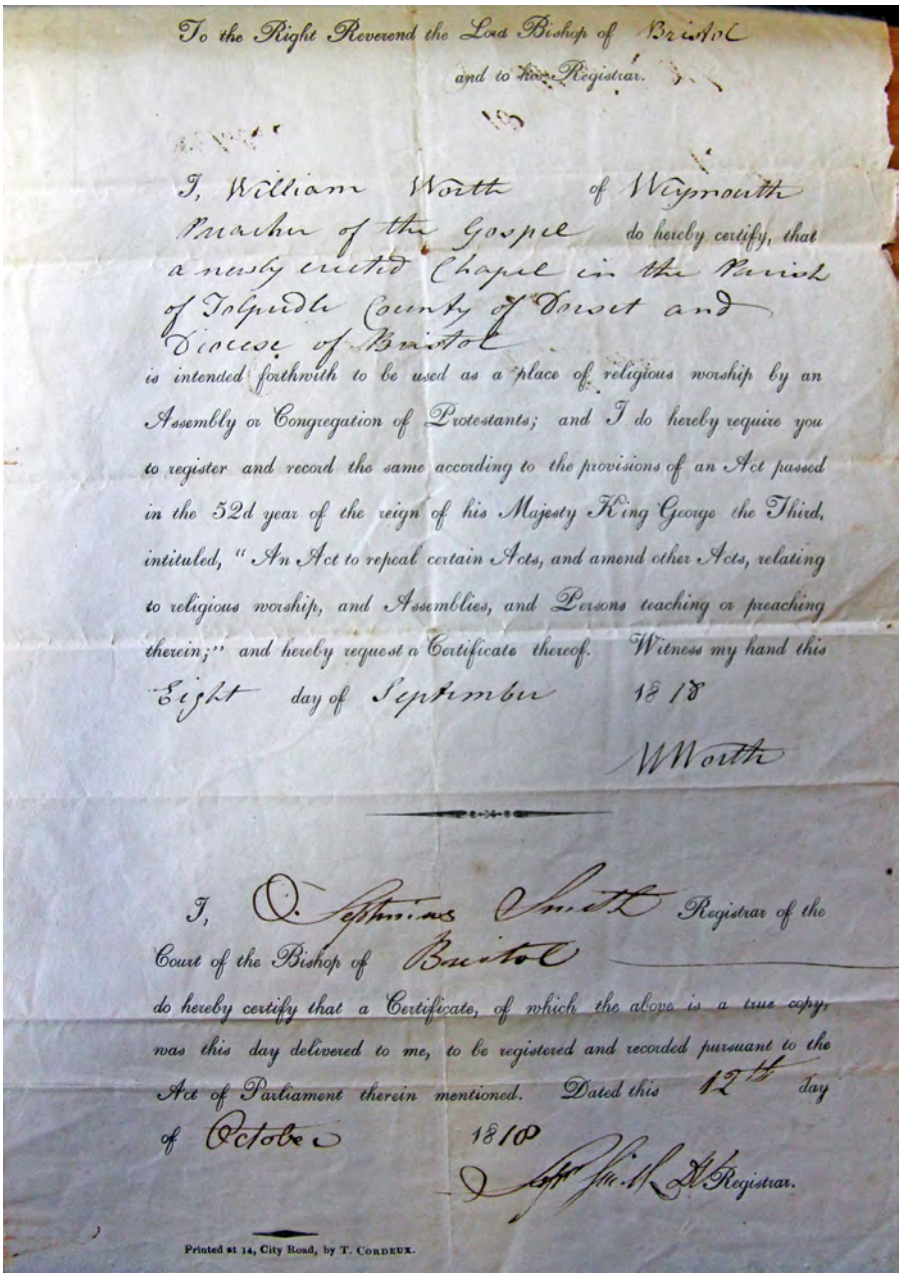
Prospects for the loss or replacement of the chapel were therefore written into the agreement. This reveals an attitude to the building as the appropriate home for the Society for the time being but not, in theory, as a 'precious' building in itself, although for generations of Methodists their chapel has been as familiar as their own home, which causes difficulties when it is proposed to close or alter a building.

One of the named trustees was the Reverend William Worth of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, the superintendant minister of the Weymouth Methodist circuit. Two others were Tolpuddle men later to become Tolpuddle Martyrs: George Loveless (aged 21 at the time) was one and Robert's son, Thomas Standfield, the other [Fig.9]. With John Chapman of Tincleton they stand out as two of the three trustees who described themselves as 'labourers'. The other trustees were in commercial occupations. There were two maltsters: James Lake of Broadmayne and Joseph Bennett of Weymouth; two cordwainers, James Sansom of Tolpuddle and Richard Ballam of North Kingston; a confectioner, Henry Baker of Weymouth; a blacksmith, Richard Barnes of Weymouth; a farmer, David Abbott, of Grange in the Isle of Purbeck; a carpenter, Samson Henville of Anderston and a draper, John Beauchamp Stickland of Wareham. He was the son of John Stickland, the early Methodist preacher in south east Dorset, persuaded into preaching by Wesley's personal friend, Robett Carr Brackenbury.[15] It is not known if he, or his father, was related to Dinah Stickland, the mother of the Loveless brothers. James Lake might be the man of the same name (or his son?) listed as a trustee of the Independent Meeting House in Dorchester in 1797.

All the trustees except two signed the document [see front cover]. The missing signatures are those of the Purbeck farmer, David Abbot and John Chapman, the Tincleton labourer. There are seals where their names should be, but no signatures. Perhaps they were illiterate, but there is no 'mark of ....' as might be expected.

Witnesses to the document were Jeremiah Argyle (Robert Standfield's preacher tenant), Robert White and Charles Bowles, the latter 'as the steward and agent of the lessors of the ground'. He was the steward of Samuel Fripp and others of Bristol who had acquired the lordship of the manor from Morton Pitt in 1808.[16] The signatures of Thomas and G O Bartlett also appear, witnessing Stickland's signature.[17]

It has been noted that the length of time between the date of this agreement - a lease and release, dated 23 and 24th September 1818 - and the opening of the chapel on October 13th of the same year, did not give a realistic period of time for construction. The most likely explanation is that the chapel had already been erected or was nearing completion and the lease and release provided a legal confirmation. The chapel is described as 'newly erected' in a document of 8th September, when the Reverend Worth filled out the registration form for a licence from the Bishop of Bristol [Fig.10].



To the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Bristol
and to his Registrar.

I, William Worth of Weymouth
Preacher of the Gospel do hereby certify, that
a newly erected Chapel in the Parish
of Tolpuddle County of Dorset and
Diocese of Bristol
is intended forthwith to be used as a place of religious worship by an
Assembly or Congregation of Protestants; and I do hereby require you
to register and record the same according to the provisions of an Act passed
in the 52d year of the reign of his Majesty King George the Third,
intituled, "An Act to repeal certain Acts, and amend other Acts, relating
to religious worship, and Assemblies, and Persons teaching or preaching
therein;" and hereby request a Certificate thereof. Witness my hand this
Eight day of September 1818

W Worth

I, Septimus Smith Registrar of the
Court of the Bishop of Bristol
do hereby certify that a Certificate, of which the above is a true copy,
was this day delivered to me, to be registered and recorded pursuant to the
Act of Parliament therein mentioned. Dated this 12th day
of October 1818

Septimus Smith Registrar.

Printed at 14, City Road, by T. Cordeux.

Fig.10. The registration document for the old chapel, stated to be 'newly erected' and dated 8th September 1818, DHC, DHC, NM-Z/Acc 6079. Reproduced with kind permission of the Dorset History Centre.

2.6 - The Fabric
The following is based on one visit to the chapel on 16 February 2015 and another on 27th February. Parts of the building and its setting were obscured by plant growth. The account of the building by Brebner in 2006, including photographs taken then, when the building was more visible and in better condition, and elevations, plans and sections, have proved very useful. The site survey by Keystone was entirely non-invasive, and it is likely that building works will uncover historic information which may refine or even alter the conclusions contained in this report.

Cob and thatch
The former chapel is built of cob on a plinth built of brick and flint. It now has a gabled roof covered with Roman tiles but was described as 'thatched' in a publication of 1870, although it is not clear whether the author is describing the past, or the 1870 present, by which date it had ceased to be a chapel. Loose slates on the walltops show that it had a slate roof at one time [Fig.11]. Given the existing (2015) weatherboarded gables, a half-hipped roof (a favoured vernacular roof form) is highly likely, similar to the roof form and covering of Bere Regis chapel, built 10 years later about 5 miles west of Tolpuddle at a cost of £128 and the next nearest chapel in the Weymouth circuit [Fig.12].

Both cob and thatch are vernacular building materials with which any Dorsetshire farm labourer working in Dorset's cob regions would have been familiar in the early 19th century. We do not know who built the chapel, but it can be said with confidence that those members of the society who were agricultural labourers would almost certainly have had the capacity to construct the walls and cover the roof with thatch. Depending on the nature of the primary roof construction (unknown) they might also have been able to build the roof.

Earth building or cob is a traditional (and ancient) vernacular material in the rural south west, used particularly in areas where good building stone was hard to come by. Provided it is kept dry with a stone plinth and a good overhang at the eaves, it is long-lasting building material: many medieval cob houses survive in the west country. Subsoil with a clay content was mixed with straw, aggregate and water, the mixture trodden by men or animals, to provide a mix that was neither too wet to collapse during construction nor too dry to fail to cohere. The straw content was important, providing connecting fibres across the micro-cracks that occur when cob dries out. Building the mixture into cob walls was not highly skilled relative to masonry or timber-framed walls [Fig.13]. The technique was described in Stevenson's 1815 report on Dorset for the Board of Agriculture:

'There are many mud walled cottages barns etc., in the county, but principally in the district to the east of Dorchester. They are composed of road-scrapings, or other kinds of earth which are a little cohesive and well mixed with a large quantity of chalk and straw'... 'In building walls of this kind it is necessary to lay a foundation of stone, or such hard material as will resist the injurious effect of the wet, as well as the intrusions of vermin. The implement which is principally used is no other than a dung-fork and the walls are generally made 2 feet thick. The first layer, or strata, is built about two and a half feet high all round the foundations of the building, or as far as is convenient; and after the interval of about a week, which is allowed for the first layer to harden and consolidate, another is added and the work proceeds in regular manner, till the whole is completed....Mud walls are generally plastered, to improve their appearance, as well as add to their durability...'[18]

Stevenson went on to note that mud-walled houses tended to crack at the corners and therefore often had to be propped, presumably meaning buttressed: 'which might have been prevented by laying a small quantity of rough wood across the corners...at their first erection'.

Fig.11. A loose slate, one of several (and fragments) found on the walltops of the former chapel in February 2015. Jo Cox.

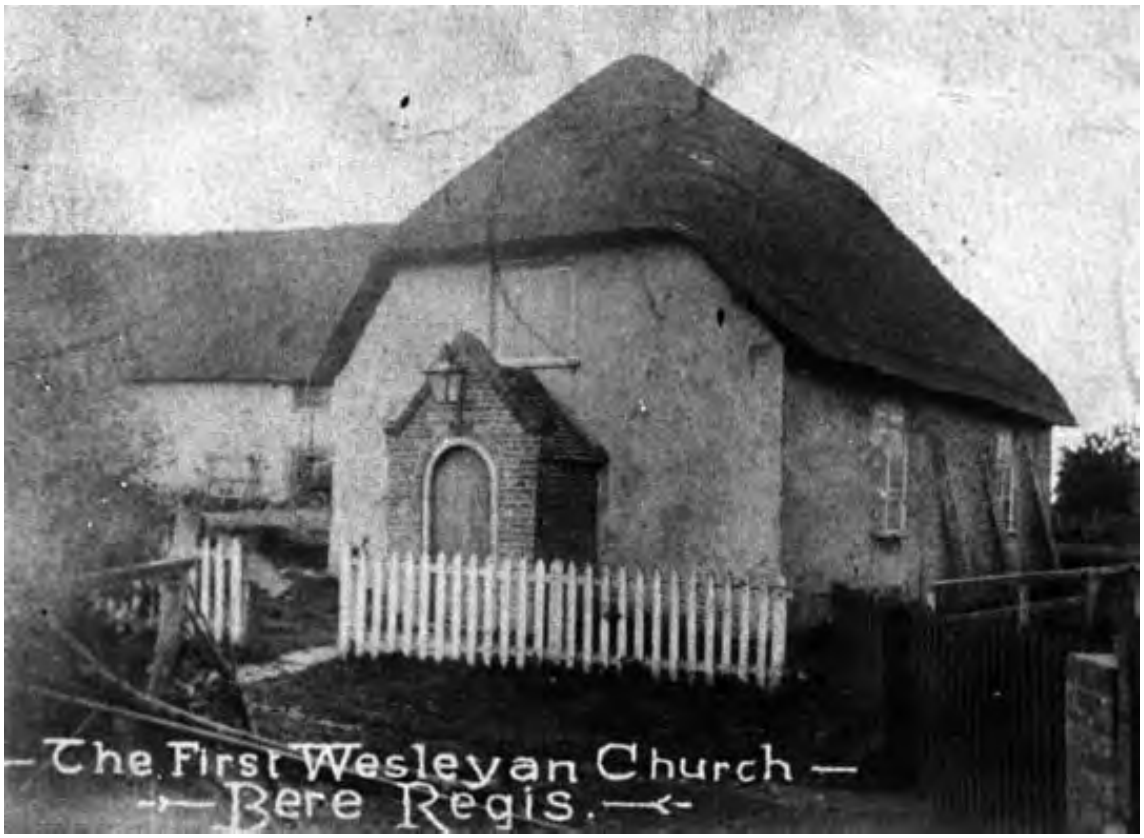


Fig.12. The Wesleyan Methodist chapel at Bere Regis, built in 1828, cost about £120, perhaps modelled on the old chapel at Tolpuddle. The half-hipped thatched roof, stitched at eaves and verges, is probably long-straw, though it is difficult to be sure. Note the simple palings across the front and hurdles to the right. This cob and brick building was pulled down and replaced by an entirely brick building in 1890. Postcard of c.1880, reproduced with kind permission of James, http://www.bereregis.org/About.htm.

Fig.13a. Traditional method of cob construction in lifts, showing mixing, placing material on the wall, compaction by treading and paring back the wall face. Drawing by Larry Keefe from the Devon Historic Buildings Trust leaflet, The Cob Buildings of Devon, 1. History, Building Methods and Conservation, *1992. Permission to reproduce requested.*

Fig.13b. A cob and thatched roadside barn in Tolpuddle. The cob lifts are clearly visible. Jo Cox.

Cob could also be constructed with shuttering, known as the 'rammed earth' method, the shutter boards raised as each layer was rammed down between them. It is not always possible to tell which method has been used, unless the marks of shuttering boards survive or the horizontal lines of the 'lifts' are clearly visible. Shuttering does not have the 'batter' (the technique of walls being thicker at the bottom than the top) that is often seen in the unshuttered system. There is little evidence for shuttered cob in areas of clay sub-soil; a chalk geology is less good for cob and shuttering perhaps more likely, although it was more expensive than raising the walls in lifts (*pers.comm.* Peter Child).

The brick and flint footings of the old chapel probably came from the parish, too. The tithe map shows brick pits. The chapel-phase bricks are clearly hand-made, not machine made, with irregularities and incorporate burnt (blue) headers. Flint is found in association with a chalk geology and although dressing it was a skilled job, the material probably did not have to be brought from far away and the flint used in the footings is very crudely-dressed and not the neat squares that a professional flint-knapper could have provided.

Thatching, too, was a commonplace rural skill in Dorset, mostly using wheat straw, either 'combed', a thatching method confined to the west country in the early 19th century, or longstraw, a method that has largely disappeared in the county. The two thatching methods have a different appearance, longstraw looking 'hairier' and, because of the method of fitting it, stitched down at the eaves and verges. Combed straw does not require stitching. The farming regime in Tolpuddle was balanced between arable and pastoral farming in the early 19th century, although a shift to arable occurred between 1829 and 1843. Straw for roofing, as a by-product of the wheat harvest would have been abundant after threshing. Mechanical threshing powered by horses or steam (which spoiled the straw for combed straw thatching by crushing the stems), were a cause of grievance to labourers and had been introduced into Dorset well before 1818. The early machines involved considerable capital outlay (Stevenson includes a list of those he knew of in the county in 1815) and though their existence in Dorset would have been known to the Tolpuddle agricultural labourers, to date no evidence has been found by Keystone to show that they were used Tolpuddle farms in 1818. Threshing would have been by hand, using a flail. Some straw would have been used for livestock bedding and fodder, but some would have been set aside for roofing.

Most farm labourers would have been capable of processing straw for thatching and putting a temporary, thin thatch on a rick or patching a farm building or house. By 1843, and no doubt before, East Farm at Tolpuddle had a rickyard especially set aside where harvested wheat would have been stored in thatched stacks, perhaps on staddles to keep it rat-free, awaiting threshing. While more durable and thicker thatching was preferable for houses, many modest cottages would have received a thin thatch only, to be patched and re-ridged off a ladder as and when needed. Stevenson refers to the use of very thin thatches on village buildings, especially in places where 'reed is scarce'.[19] Longevity and wholesale and expensive 're-thatching' are preoccupations of those living under thatch in the 21stcentury. Neither were part of the picture in the early 19th century when the skills, labour and materials for constant patching were to hand [Fig.14]. Late 19th century photographs show that the majority of the buildings in Tolpuddle were thatched then, as they would have been earlier. There was one individual only in the Tolpuddle parish in 1795 who gave his occupation as 'thatcher and farmer'. [20]

2.6.1 - Phase One: the Old Chapel

Although the tithe map of 1843 is not wholly reliable, omitting the yard/court to W of the old chapel (unless plot boundaries have changed), comparison with an 1808 map of the manor establishes that there was not an earlier building on the site.

Fig.14. Alderholt Independent Chapel, Cripplestyle, Dorset (collapsed 1976), cob and brick, thatched with combed straw, clearly showing patching. Note the wooden palings used as a boundary. The ceiling rises over the interior end gallery on slender posts, which has what appears to be a music stand for a choir. The side gallery appear to be largely unusable, given the pitch of the ceiling, English Heritage, DT00680, DT00681, Crown copyright. Reproduced with the kind permission of English Heritage.

The former chapel is set slightly back from the main road on ground that slopes up to north. To its north-east there is a steep, almost vertical bank covered in vegetation, rising to about 2m. This may represent cutting back the natural rise in the ground to create a building platform deep enough for the chapel, and could, conceivably have provided some of the material for the cob, but until the bank is examined in detail this remains unknown. The north end is terraced into the hillslope but the ground level has been built up against the north gable wall and there is now flattish ground to north approximately 1.6m above internal floor level. A stone rubble property boundary wall projects north from the north gable end to east of centre, the bank to west revetted with a modern stone wall. To west of the former chapel there is a small area of grass and then a tarmacked drive that gives access to the rear of the Martyrs Cottage and a 20th century house built on the higher ground to north of the chapel. This drive has been created on what was a 'yard' to Thomas Standfield's house (the Martyrs Cottage) in the 1818 documents. To east the ground is flatter with a small yard or court, then a raised bank with trees, one on the chapel property and two beyond its boundary to east.

Richard Lea of English Heritage has produced reconstruction elevational drawings and a plan showing what the Tolpuddle Chapel may have looked like before it was adapted as a farm building [Fig.15]. There is good evidence for the exterior form but the interior plan is imagined on the basis of the size of the chapel and what is known of others. In 2015 its appearance is agricultural [Fig.16].

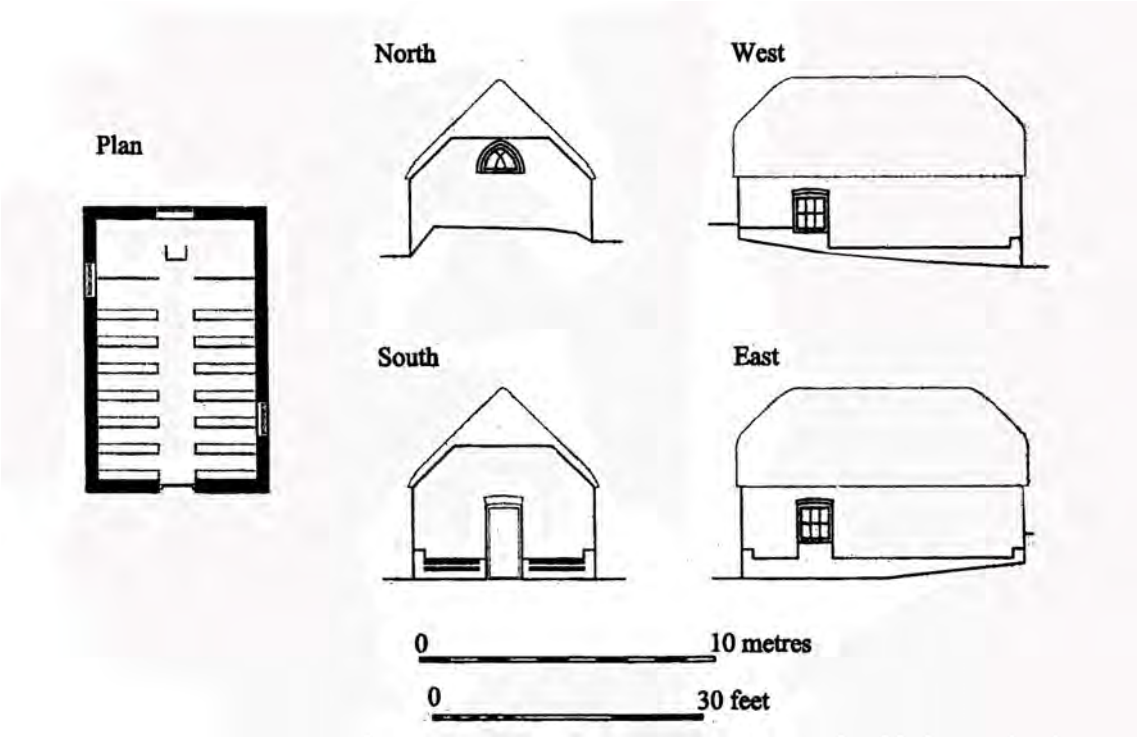


Fig.15. Reconstruction on paper of the old chapel, Tolpuddle, elevations and ground plan, by Richard Lea of English Heritage, showing the chapel thatched with a half-hipped roof. From D Robinson's article in Architectural History, Vol 44. Copyright English Heritage. Reproduced with the kind permission of English Heritage.

Fig.16. The former chapel in February 2015: south front (top); west elevation (below), east elevation (top right) and north end (bottom right). John R L Thorp.

The chapel cob is a pale brown colour. Where the surface has not eroded, the finish seems to have been smoothed. Brebner suggests that this might suggest shuttering, rather than being raised in lifts. Fragments of limewash (visible particularly under the eaves on the east side, south end) show that the cob was given a white limewashed finish at some time. The visible aggregate in the old chapel cob is mostly small, rounded river pebbles, probably from the Piddle and small flints.

The plan is a simple rectangle with evidence for the primary (and only) entrance through the south end, off the main road through the village, the doorway later blocked with brick. That this is an original doorway is proved by the use of queen closer brick to the footings [Fig.17]. Roger Thorne notes that a great deal of cultural weight was attached to chapel doors from which, as understood in folk lore and literature, hymn singing would emerge and perhaps attract an unregenerate passer-by. On this elevation the brick footings are decorated with distinct courses of crudely-dressed flint, creating stripes of material and announcing that this is the 'show front' of the building [Fig.18]. The brick footings rise at the front corners, presumably to provide extra strength where cracking was most likely to occur but also providing a modest decorative element [see Fig. 16c]. Lea's reconstruction drawing shows the brick footings rising at the north-east corner, as they do on the front, but this was obscured by plant growth at the time of the Keystone visit. There are no such footings at the north-west corner, discussed below.

The gables clearly show that there was once a steeper pitch to the roof. Cob has been added below the verges to reduce the pitch [Fig.19]. A steeper pitch in the chapel phase would be consistent with thatching in the primary phase, the steep pitch encouraging swift run-off of the rainwater that rots the ends of the straw and a shallower pitch for a hard roof to ensure that slates or tiles do not slip. It is not known whether or not the chapel had a south end window above the doorway - the evidence has almost completely disappeared when the loft loading door was inserted later, in Phase Three. On the inner face of the loft loading door, the cob walls are shouldered on the top corners. This might suggests a segmental arched opening in the chapel period. The reveals of the cob walls flanking the loft loading door, particularly on the west side are quite neat and flat near the top of the opening. However, if there were a window of this size here it would have been wider than the doorway below.

There is clear evidence of splayed window openings with segmental brick arched heads on both the long sides of the old chapel: their original length can be identified from the row of brick headers at their sills (on the west side one stretcher has been included). Below the sills, panels of primary phase brickwork rise from footings to sill [Fig.20]. The chapel-phase brickwork is different in character from the brick blocking of the windows. The window on the west side is to the north and would have lit the area used by the preacher; the window on the east side is to the south and would have lit the hearers. There is no evidence of how the windows were glazed. They would probably have been one of the most expensive elements of the chapel, perhaps explaining why there are so few of them, probably not 'enough' according to Wesley's 4th principle of chapel-building. Given the long hours worked by agricultural labourers and some services therefore held after dark, artificial light, probably rushlights, must have been used. Beeswax candles were expensive.

A blocked window with a pointed arched head of brick headers is high set in the north gable end wall, plastered and limewashed internally [Fig.21]. This window is highly important to the fabric of the building, representing the only obvious surviving 'chapel' feature. It seems to have been designed not for looking out, but to provide light falling on the presumed position of the preacher, centred at the north end.

Fig.17. The primary doorway in the south end, blocked with brick with a later window introduced into the former opening. John R L Thorp.

Fig.18. Detail of the south front footings, showing modest ornament in the courses of crudely dressed flint. Jo Cox.

Fig.19. Cob added under the north gable end verge on the west side. This has made the roof pitch less steep. John R L Thorp.

Fig.20. The blocked window on the west side, the brick footings rising to create an 'apron' below the sill of headers. Jo Cox.

Fig.21. The blocked north end window, set high in the wall. John R L Thorp.

Enough evidence survives to show that the original builders made good use of the materials to hand to provide the exterior of the chapel with a sense of quality that would have distinguished it from a cottage or farm building, an important consideration for a Methodist congregation of low social status. The flint stripes in the south front footings are one example. The rise in the brickwork of the footings at the front corners, may have had a practical function but set-off against limewashed cob play a decorative role. This is also true of the unusual brick aprons below the windows in the long sides, assuming that these were not limewashed.

The interior

The interior space of the former chapel has been cut in half horizontally by the Phase Three loft floor, which conceals the north end window and required the blocking of the windows on the long walls [Fig.22]. The evidence for original internal finishes is missing or scanty. The loss of the original roof construction means that any evidence of whether this was plastered (and, if so, whether it had a flat ceiling above the north window or was plastered up to the ridge) or was open to the underside of the thatch, has disappeared. Where fragments of wall finish survive below the inserted loft floor, they seem to be limewash directly on to the cob or a very thin lime plaster skim. Brebner notes patches of a dark finish, unlikely to relate to the chapel phase given the Methodist preference for light interiors. A thicker wall plaster is confined to some, but not all, of the walls in the loft and was visible on the loft ceiling in February 2015: the ceiling and thicker plaster considered here probably to be Phase Three. The cobbled flooring is probably Phase Two or Three, as it relates to the agricultural doorway cut in on the east side and to have been sloped for drainage. The chapel floor might have been boarded out (which would not have survived later use for livestock) or perhaps lime ash, or merely earth. As with the treatment of the underside of the original roof, these possibilities range from a very rustic interior (earth floor, underside of thatch exposed) to one with a boarded floor and plastered ceiling. On balance, given the qualities of the exterior, it seems most likely that the interior had a boarded floor and plastered ceiling, but this cannot be proved.

Fig.22. The interior, looking north west towards the west side blocked window. Traces of limewash can be seen on the cob walls.

No evidence for the interior fittings or furnishings was observed by Keystone. Lea's plan of the interior makes the most obvious sense of the likely layout but, in contrast to his representation of the exterior, is not based on any archaeological evidence. He shows the simplest of layouts with seating facing north on either side of a central alley from the south door, some sort of division between the congregation and the minister and a pulpit at the north end, centrally-placed [see Fig.15. The small scale of the building limits layout options, but there are alternatives, e.g. some seats might have been set lengthwise close to the pulpit for those holding offices: class leaders, stewards etc. Photographs of the exterior and interior of the Congregational Ebenezer Chapel at Cripplestyle (collapsed in 1979) shows that it was possible to squeeze a gallery into a chapel not much larger than Tolpuddle [see Fig.14], although no evidence for this was noted in the fabric.

2.7 - The Opening of the Chapel in 1818

The former chapel opened on Tuesday October 13th. No doubt the Loveless and Standfield families were present. The opening prompted what was described as a riot in Tolpuddle, reported in both the *Bath Chronicle* and the *Salisbury Journal,* and picked up and repeated in the London *Morning Chronicle*, the *Manchester Mercury* and a Dublin newspaper. The *Manchester Mercury* report reads:

'Rioting and Persecution - On Tuesday [October 13th] a Methodist chapel was opened in the village of Tolpuddle, in Dorset; and a number of persons accompanied the ministers from Weymouth on the occasion. After evening service, when the ministers and their friends were preparing to return a mob of about 100 persons assembled, and behaved in a most disorderly manner. A Lady belonging to the ministers party, before she could get into her carriage, was pushed down a bank into the road; the horses being frightened by the tumult and noise, the driver was for a considerable time unable to proceed; and the ladies were under the necessity of walking a great distance, exposed to the most brutal insults. The drivers, horses, and carriages were pelted with stones, mud etc ., the windows of the chaise broken and even the side of the chaise was pierced by stone. One Lady who rode by the driver received a severe blow on her head and at Piddletown, two miles from Tolpuddle, the driver received a blow in his neck, which, had it not been for a large neckcloth , would probably have proved fatal-----' (*Bath Chronicle*)

The Reverend Worth, the superintendant minister of the circuit and a trustee of the Tolpuddle Chapel, employed a solicitor and counsel and took four of the rioters to court. [21] The time-scale for prosecution was swift. The accused were indicted at the Quarter Sessions in Bridport on 20th October 1818 and appeared at the Blandford Quarter Sessions in January 1819.[22] The indictment, based on witness statements, records that there were about 50 or more people involved (not the 100 stated in the newspaper account) and they assembled 'in a riotous and tumultuous manner for a long space of time (that is to say) two hours'. The court case was reported in *The Salisbury and Winchester Journal* and opened 'with a very handsome eulogium on the denomination of Christians interested in this trial' by the counsel for the prosecution. A lad who turned out to be under 14 was discharged. The evidence was heard:

'... after a very interesting and appropriate address from the chairman, in which he remarked, that this was the first time within his recollection, that the Wesleyan Methodists had applied to that Court for protection and that it was necessary for him to pass such a sentence in the hearing of that crowded Court, in which, doubtless, there were many that came to hear the issue of this trial, as might deter others from committing similar offences.'

The three remaining who were accused: a carpenter, a blacksmith and a yeoman, were found guilty and given fines of £10 each and were to be committed until these could be paid along with sureties at the enormous cost of £50 for their good behaviour.[23]

2.8 - The Chapel after 1818

After it opened, we have passing reference and assertions of the important part the old chapel played in Tolpuddle and the lives of its members. In George Loveless's words in *Victims of Whiggery*:

'the years 1824-5 are not forgotten and many a curious tale might be told of men that were persecuted, banished and not allowed to have employ if they entered the Wesleyan Chapel at Tolpuddle'.

The 'Wesleyan' correspondent to the *Morning Chronicle* claimed to know the Martyrs and people who could speak, at Tolpuddle:

'of the refusal of a clergyman to take his dead babe into the church, because it had been baptised by a Wesleyan Minister, while there was no Archdeacon to be found to be mediator; of a forgery to keep this very George Loveless from preaching in one of the villages; of direct attempts to starve him out of a village'.

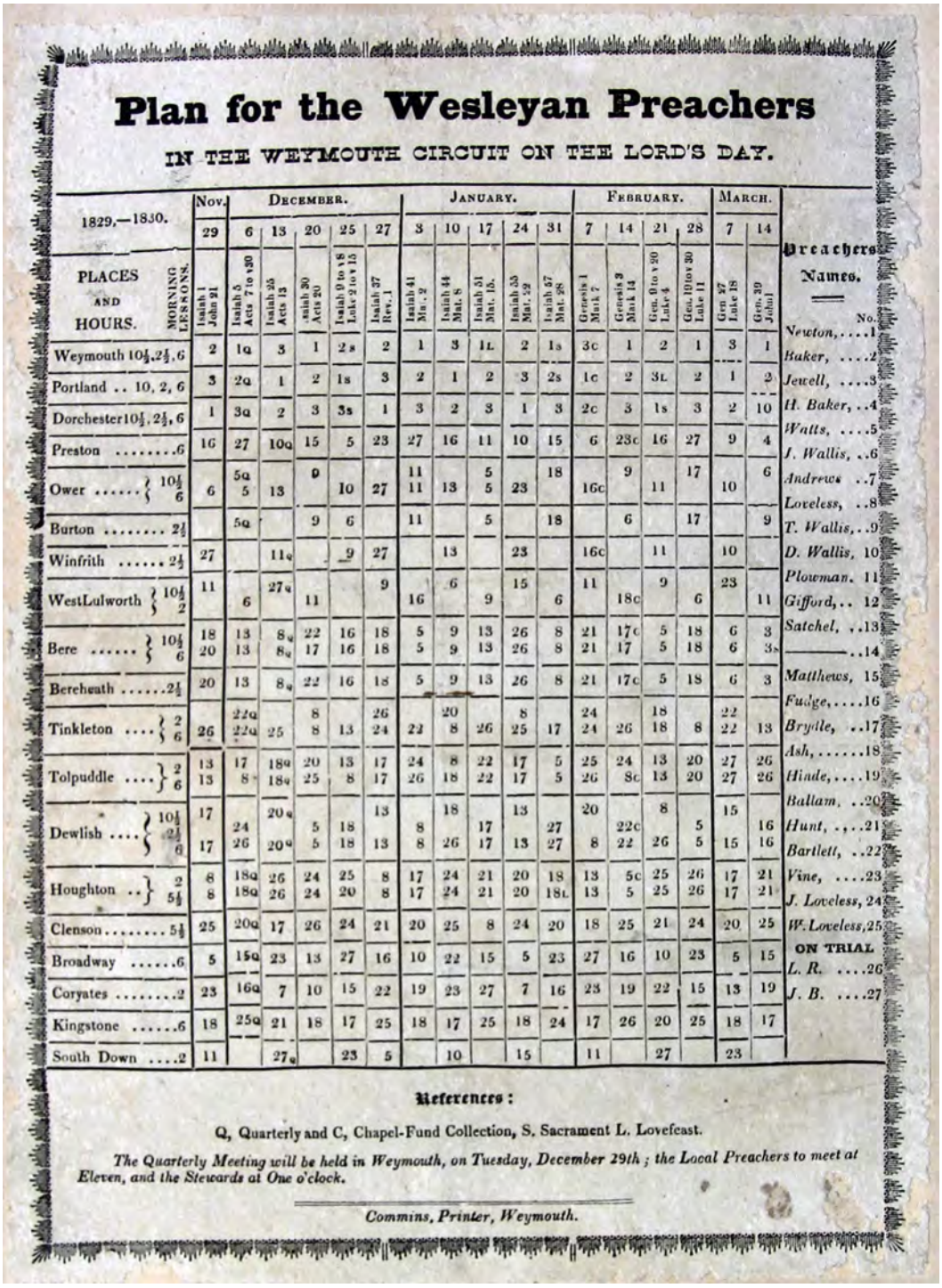
This seems (though the context is not certain, see the time-line) to refer to George Loveless having an infant who died in England. The correspondent's references to the riot at the opening of the chapel were rapidly answered in the same paper referring readers to the report of the trial of the rioters, implying that any persecution and violence had been properly dealt with in court.

By 1829/30 three members of the Loveless family were local preachers in the Weymouth circuit. A Weymouth circuit plan of 1829/30 lists 'Loveless', assumed to be George (as the most senior) and J Loveless and W Loveless, assumed to be James and another brother, William Loveless, born in 1794 and a year younger than George [Fig.23]. Earlier and later circuit plans have not yet been discovered and all three may have been local preachers earlier than this.

John Wesley's initial resistance to the use of local preachers dissolved in the face of the limited number of ordained Anglican ministers available to preach to the growing numbers of societies. As with architecture, he published advice, 'rules for preaching' (in 1749), to assist the transformation of labourers and tradesmen into effective preachers.

'1. Be sure to begin and end at the time appointed.
2. Sing no hymns of your own composing.
3. Endeavour to be serious, weighty, and solemn in your deportment before the congregation.
4. Choose the plainest texts you can.
5. Take care not to ramble from your text, but keep close to it and make out what you undertake.
6. Always suit your subject to the audience.
7. Beware of allegorising or spiritualising too much.
8. Take care of anything awkward or affected, either in your gesture or pronunciation.
9. Tell each other if you observe anything of this kind'.[24]

Behind his advice there is a critique of the lengthy sermons preached in some contemporary Anglican churches while the congregation observed the sand running out in the hourglass that was sometimes attached to the pulpit and hoped it would not be turned round when empty for more. Methodist local preachers were liable to have local accents, very different from the university-educated voices of Anglican ministers. Some local preachers were dramatic and pithy in their sermonising. Simon picks out Jeremiah Argyle, the tenant of Standfield's cottage,



Plan for the Wesleyan Preachers

IN THE WEYMOUTH CIRCUIT ON THE LORD'S DAY.

1829,—1830.	Nov.	December.					January.					February.				March.	
	29	6	13	20	25	27	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	7	14
PLACES AND HOURS. MORNING LESSONS.	Isaiah 1 John 21	Isaiah 5 Acts 7 to v30	Isaiah 35 Acts 13	Isaiah 30 Acts 20	Isaiah 9 to v8 Luke 2 to v 15	Isaiah 37 Rev. 1	Isaiah 41 Mat. 2	Isaiah 44 Mat. 8	Isaiah 51 Mat. 15.	Isaiah 53 Mat. 22	Isaiah 57 Mat. 28	Genesis 1 Mark 7	Genesis 3 Mark 14	Gen. 9 to v 30 Luke 4	Gen. 10 to v 30 Luke 11	Gen. 27 Luke 18	Gen. 39 John 1
Weymouth 10½, 2½, 6	2	1Q	3	1	2S	2	1	3	1L	2	1S	3C	1	2	1	3	1
Portland .. 10, 2, 6	3	2Q	1	2	1S	3	2	1	2	3	2S	1C	2	3L	2	1	2
Dorchester 10½, 2½, 6	1	3Q	2	3	3S	1	3	2	3	1	3	2C	3	1S	3	2	10
Preston 6	16	27	10Q	15	5	23	27	16	11	10	15	6	23C	16	27	9	4
Ower ..... 10½ / 6	6	5Q / 5	13	9	10	27	11 / 11	13	5 / 5	23	18	16C	9	11	17	10	6
Burton 2½		5Q		9	6		11		5		18		6		17		9
Winfrith 2½	27		11Q		9	27		13		23		16C		11		10	
WestLulworth 10½ / 2	11	6	27Q	11		9	16	6	9	15	6	11	18C	9	6	23	11
Bere ..... 10½ / 6	18 / 20	13 / 13	8Q / 8Q	22 / 17	16 / 16	18 / 18	5 / 5	9 / 9	13 / 13	26 / 26	8 / 8	21 / 21	17C / 17	5 / 5	18 / 18	6 / 6	3 / 3S
Bereheath 2½	20	13	8Q	22	16	18	5	9	13	26	8	21	17C	5	18	6	3
Tinkleton .... 2 / 6	26	22Q / 22Q	25	8 / 8	13	26 / 24	22	20 / 8	26	8 / 25	17	24 / 24	26	18 / 18	8	22 / 22	13
Tolpuddle .... 2 / 6	13 / 13	17 / 8	18Q / 18Q	20 / 25	13 / 8	17 / 17	24 / 26	8 / 18	22 / 22	17 / 17	5 / 5	25 / 26	24 / 8C	13 / 13	20 / 20	27 / 27	26 / 26
Dewlish .... 10½ / 2½ / 6	17 / 17	24 / 26	20Q / 20Q	5 / 5	18 / 18	13 / 13	8 / 8	18 / 26	17 / 17	13 / 13	27 / 27	20 / 8	22C / 22	8 / 26	5 / 5	15 / 15	16 / 16
Houghton .. 2 / 5½	8 / 8	18Q / 18Q	26 / 26	24 / 24	25 / 20	8 / 8	17 / 17	24 / 24	21 / 21	20 / 20	18 / 18L	13 / 13	5C / 5	25 / 25	26 / 26	17 / 17	21 / 21
Clenson..... 5½	25	20Q	17	26	24	21	20	25	8	24	20	18	25	21	24	20	25
Broadway 6	5	15Q	23	13	27	16	10	22	15	5	23	27	16	10	23	5	15
Coryates 2	23	16Q	7	10	15	22	19	23	27	7	16	23	19	22	15	13	19
Kingstone 6	18	25Q	21	18	17	25	18	17	25	18	24	17	26	20	25	18	17
South Down 2	11		27Q		23	5		10		15		11		27		23	

Preachers Names.

No.
Newton,....1
Baker, ...2
Jewell, ...3
H. Baker, ..4
Watts, ...5
J. Wallis, ..6
Andrews ..7
Loveless, ..8
T. Wallis,..9
D. Wallis, 10
Plowman. 11
Gifford,.. 12
Satchel, ..13
.....14
Matthews, 15
Fudge,....16
Brydle, ..17
Ash,.....18
Hinde,....19
Ballam, ..20
Hunt, .,..21
Bartlett, ..22
Vine, ...23
J. Loveless, 24
W. Loveless,25
ON TRIAL
L. R. 26
J. B. 27

References:

Q, Quarterly and C, Chapel-Fund Collection, S. Sacrament L. Lovefeast.

The Quarterly Meeting will be held in Weymouth, on Tuesday, December 29th; the Local Preachers to meet at Eleven, and the Stewards at One o'clock.

Commins, Printer, Weymouth.

Fig.23. The Weymouth Circuit Plan for November 1829-March 1830, showing the use of paperwork to manage the circuit. Anyone looking at this would have been able to see who was preaching where and at what time on any given Sunday, where and when there was a local quarterly meeting or chapel-fund collection or the sacrament was provided and, at the bottom, where the quarterly circuit meeting was. George Loveless (as the eldest of the three local preacher brothers, he has no initial in the list) was preaching in the period at Dorchester, Bere, Bere Heath, Tincleton, Tolpuddle, Dewlish, Houghton and Clenson. James preached at Tincleton, Tolpuddle, Dewlish, Houghton, Clenson and Kingstone, DHC, NM 2: S19/MS 1/1. Reproduced with kind permission of the Dorset History Centre.

as a notably quirky preacher. The experience of speaking in public must have contributed to the steadiness of George Loveless, both at the 1834 trial and in the recorded encounters he had in prison and the records of his conversations with officials in Australia.

The evidence of if, how, and when the fabric of the 1818 Tolpuddle chapel was amended between 1818 and its closure has disappeared. Most chapels of its type were upgraded by degrees if funds permitted, especially improvement of seating and other furniture, but the material evidence is missing. There is some evidence that an early internal finish of limewash directly on to the cob walls was later upgraded to a plaster skim. The first post-primary phase of roof construction: the king post trusses (one surviving complete) are interpreted here as dating from the agricultural use of the building and not a chapel improvement.

There was a change to the organisation of the chapel in 1831, when Tolpuddle was taken out of the Weymouth circuit and placed in the newly-formed Dorchester circuit. Simon, writing in 1870, called it 'the mother-chapel of the Dorchester Circuit,[25] rather surprisingly, given its origins in the Weymouth circuit. If the Loveless brothers were still preachers, which seems probable, this would have introduced them to another group of Methodist societies.

In the 1830s the labouring men in Tolpuddle parish sought an increase in wages, which were lower than other parts of the district, and were subsequently reduced. The meeting with Morton Pitt and the Anglican minister in the parish, the Reverend Mr Warren, and the subsequent encounter with James Frampton at the Shire Hall has been referred to above. Their wages were reduced again and George Loveless 'knowing that it was impossible to live honestly on such scanty means' suggested that they should form a Friendly Society. He took advice from a brother in the flax industry in Bridport and in 1833 delegates from the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union from London visited Tolpuddle and advised a gathering of about 40 labourers, on how to set up an Agricultural Labourers Friendly Society.[26] The structure of the Friendly Society with a grand committee of management and local committees, eight officers, 24 general laws and 12 bye-laws would not have seemed strange to the Methodists amongst the labourers, accustomed to the hierarchy of Conference, the circuits and the various Methodist offices. The Secretary of the local branch of the Friendly Society was George Romaine, baptised a Methodist and later, in 1850, a trustee of the Bere Regis chapel in the Weymouth Circuit. The arrest and trial of the Martyrs is too well-known to be repeated here.

It is not known for sure when the old chapel ceased to be used by the Tolpuddle Methodists. A schedule of properties in the manor made in 1829 lists the plot leased by Robert Standfield in 1808 and the lives on which it was held, but does not mention the presence of a chapel [Fig.24]. As Lloyd Thomas points out, key figures had been lost to the Tolpuddle Society when the Martyrs were transported: two, perhaps three preachers and two chapel trustees. Judging from the tithe map of 1843 and the accompanying tithe apportionment, it was still in use then [Fig.25]. The proprietor was given as 'The Wesleyan Soc.', the occupier as 'themselves'. It is not mentioned in the ecclesiastical census of 1851, 'Census Sunday', which sought to record attendance at all places of worship, nationally, but is not always reliable.[27] As Roger Thorne notes it could have been omitted by mistake as some churches and chapels were.[28]

Lloyd Thomas argues that the lease on the former chapel property may have run out in 1844, when one of the two sisters, whose 'lives' were on the original 1808 lease died (Robert Standfield, one of the other lives, had died in 1832). If she was pre-deceased by her sister, the property would then have reverted to the ground landlord. Had the Tolpuddle Society been flourishing and expanding, one might have expected the Methodists to try and 'buy in' another life on the lease.

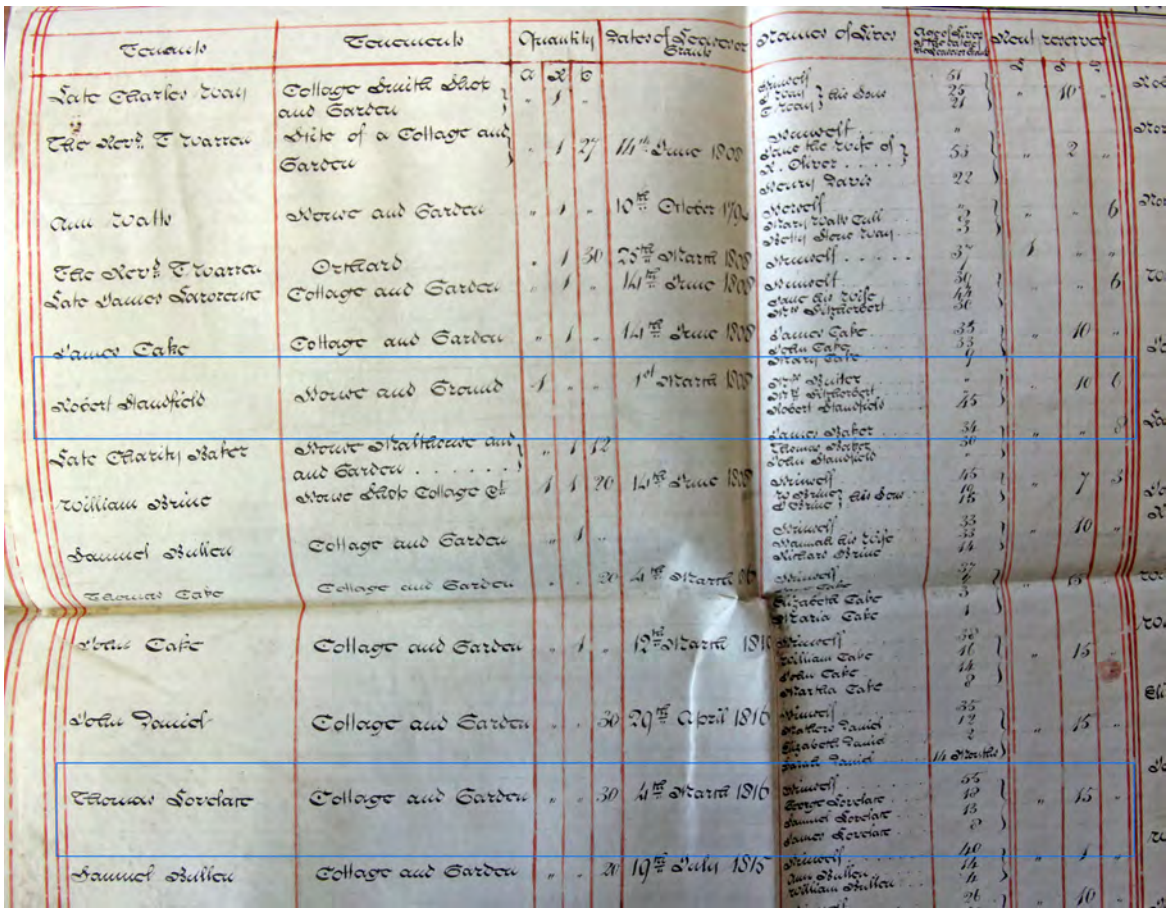


Fig.24. The property on which the chapel was built shown on a schedule of properties in the manor produced in 1829, Blue boxes added by Keystone. This usefully lists the date of the leases and the lives (and their ages at the time of the lease) on which they were held. However, it seems that by 1829 the ages of the two sisters who held the property with Robert Standfield, had been forgotten. There is no mention at all of the chapel as part of the property. Also outlined in blue by Keystone is a property which Thomas Loveless ('Lovelace') leased from 1816 on the lives of his sons, George,Samuel and James, as well as himself. If the lease had been renewed in 1816, this could be the property licensed for worship in 1810, DHC, D/GDD: 1/2. The schedule also records another property in Tolpuddle village leased by Robert Standfield from in 1808. If this Robert is the same man it suggests he was more prosperous than his Martyr son, Thomas and grandson, John, both labourers. By 1818 Robert was a tenant farmer at Wareham. Was this decline in the family fortunes related to the impact of the enclosures? Reproduced with kind permission of the Dorset History Centre.

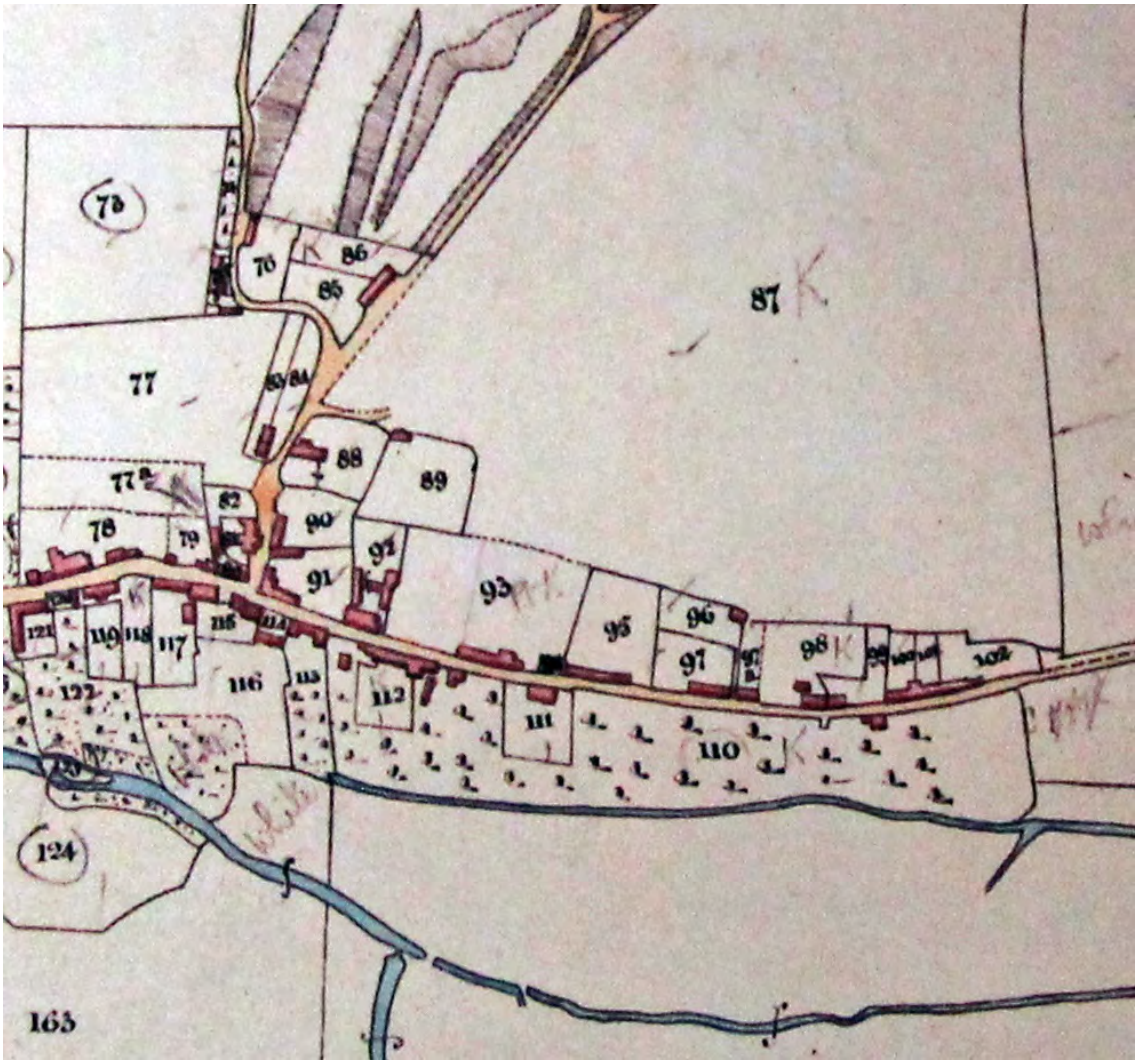


Fig.25. Extract from the Tolpuddle tithe map, 1843. The former chapel is the dark building immediately above the property 111, on the other side of the road. The version of the tithe map reproduced in the report for English Heritage, clearly shows it numbered 94 and the apportionment shows the proprietor as the Wesleyan Methodists, occupied by themselves. The boundaries of the chapel plot are either wrong on the map, or have changed since. The former chapel is shown abutting the east boundary, with no room for the existing yard, clearly shown on the 1902 end edition OS map. The tithe apportionment shows James Brine as the proprietor and occupier of 93 (2 tenements and arable land) and the proprietor of 95, occupied by Henry Daniell and others, consisting of four tenements and a garden, DHC, Tolpuddle tithe map. Reproduced with kind permission of the Dorset History Centre.

If the chapel closed in 1844, it was not the end of the Tolpuddle Methodist congregation. Lloyd Thomas also points out that the Dorchester circuit records establish that there was still a Methodist class of at least 13 members in Tolpuddle in 1850, contributing cash, although not necessarily meeting in the former chapel. An ink annotation on the envelope containing the 1818 documents at the Dorset History Centre states that the lease on the chapel ran out and it reverted to the squire - the date of the annotation is not known, but it seems unlikely to have been made up. The chapel must have been out of use by June 1862, when the new chapel opened, but the fact of its opening means that there must have been a congregation in Tolpuddle ready to use it [Fig.26]. The documents relating to the new chapel do not include any reference to using either funds (as required in the 1818 release) or furnishings from the disposal of the old and the series of land transactions associated with its construction begin the 1840s. On balance, the authors of this report think that the old chapel probably closed before 1851. There may be a parallel with the ebb and flow of Methodism in Stickland. The Stickland Methodists had had to 'struggle with difficulties', abandon their old chapel and been forced to conduct services in a house in Stickland before a new chapel was erected in 1863 (see the time-line for 1863).

2.9 - The Agricultural Phases

Understanding what happened to the building when it ceased to be a chapel is a matter of analysing the evolution of its fabric as there do not appear to be any site-specific documentary records, unsurprising for farm buildings. There are two discernible agricultural phases in the fabric plus some later amendments but it is not possible to assign all the visible interventions to one phase or the other with any degree of certainty and dating the phases is largely a matter of educated guesswork. The interventions may not be absolutely contemporary with the loss of the chapel function: stripped of any furnishings it could have been a useful agricultural roofed space for a period making use of the primary south end doorway and without alterations.

2.9.1 - Phase Two

On the east side, north of the old chapel window, an agricultural doorway has been cut into the wall [Fig.27]. A chase would have been cut in the cob for the wooden lintel and the cob and brick footings cut out below. There is a stone threshold step and, inside the door, a panel of brick flooring. The doorway contains a stout, repaired, ledged stable-type door of vertical planks with bead mouldings, its generous width ideal for livestock [Fig.28]. It is hung off hinges with rounded finials: these could be 19th or 20th century. It is not known whether the south end doorway was blocked when the new doorway was added on the east side, or remained in use as an alternative entrance for a time. The bottom part of the south doorway is blocked neatly with bricks with burnt headers (the upper part of the blocking is later).

The existing roof construction consists of four trusses, the north end truss only complete, the others having been adapted, proving an additional phase after this roof was installed [Fig.29]. The complete truss is a softwood king post and strut truss at the north end of the chapel, with metal fixings, its tie beam sitting on the north end cob wall-top which must have supported the original half-hip rafters. To west and east the tie beam sits on the side walls which were adapted from the chapel phase and provided with a flat top finished with boards to spread the weight of the new trusses. Apart from the north end truss, the other trusses have clearly been adapted to provide headroom when the loft was inserted, proving that they pre-date the loft and that the building continued to be open to the roof in Phase Two. The new roof construction required the loss of the half-hips, the provision of overlapping weatherboarding in the new gables and an amendment to the pitch of the roof, making it shallower than before. Brebner suggested that the king post and strut roof could be a secondary chapel phase. This seems unlikely, given that the north end truss obscures the north end chapel window (if there had been a window over the south door, this would also have been obscured). The trusses are

Fig.26. The architecture of the 1862 chapel, apparently designed by a firm of architect/builders, the Hammetts, contrasts with the more homely design of the old chapel. The exterior front is blocked out in imitation of ashlar masonry; it has symmetrically positioned double-hung sash windows; shaped eaves and verges brackets for a slate roof. The interior is almost complete. It has pitch pine pews with plain ends and the pulpit may be original. The Martyrs arch was added in 1912, the earliest physical monument in the village to the Martyrs. Jo Cox; the photograph of the arch reproduced with permission of TOCT.

Fig.27. Top left. The agricultural doorway cut into the east side of the chapel. Jo Cox.

Fig.28. Top right. The stable door with vertical bead-moulded planks. John R L Thorp.

Fig.29. Below. The roof construction looking north to the complete king post and strut truss through the amended trusses. John R L Thorp.

associated with one set of purlins supported on cleats, a ridgeboard and rafters. The timbers are neatly finished and were probably bought from a carpenter's shop, the mortises ready-cut for erection on site. The king post and strut is a standard truss form commonly found in buildings throughout the 19th century, and cannot be dated on style. Loose slates on the wall-tops, centre-nailed, indicate that there was a slate roof phase preceding the existing Roman tiles [see Fig.10]. Presumably the slate roof was contemporary with the king post and strut trusses. There are many Tolpuddle village roofs of Roman tiles in 2015, but one brick building of an agricultural character (with a half-hipped roof) survives [Fig.30].

The cobbled floor may be associated with this phase or with Phase Three. Two neat rectangular slots cut into stone slabs are evidence of an underfloor drainage system [Fig.31]. The relationship of the loft crossbeams (Phase Three) to the blocking of the long side windows indicates that the windows were not blocked until Phase Three [Fig.32]. There seems no practical reason why the north end window should have ever been blocked, either in this phase or the loft phase, but it was. If it had lost its (presumed) chapel-phase glazing it could have been regarded as a nuisance, letting birds into the building, but the blocking is surprisingly neat.

Fig.30. Top left. A slate -roofed ancillary building in Tolpuddle. Jo Cox

Fig.31. Top right and left. The cobbled floor and brick panel inside the door. One of the drainage slots for the underfloor drain. This would have disposed of the liquids in animal muck, making it easier to collect the solids for spreading on fields. John R L Thorp and Jo Cox.

Phase Two can be interpreted as providing a simple, single-storey animal house, probably associated with an enclosed yard to east, well-lit and ventilated and with a roof form adapted for slate. This would have been less labour-intensive to maintain than thatch. The building presumably belonged to East Farm. The date of the conversion is difficult to assess. None of the interventions is inconsistent with a date in the 1840s, but they could be later in the 19th century.

Fig.32. The blocking of the windows clearly goes with the installation of the loft beams, Phase Three. John R L Thorp.

Fig.33. The Phase Three loft floor and staircase, looking south. John R L Thorp.

2.9.2 - Phase Three

The chapel has an inserted loft-loading door in its south end [see Fig.16a]. The loft loading door, for pitching hay into the loft, is the same width as the blocked south doorway, the two openings separated by internal timber lintels. It is formed by asymmetrical brickwork jambs: why these are asymmetrical and why the opening in the cob is so much wider than the loft loading doorway is not understood. As noted above, there may have been an earlier, wider opening here. This brickwork does not incorporate burnt headers and is of a different character from the brickwork blocking the lower part of the chapel-phase doorway. Below the loft loading door a casement window is interpreted as past Phase Three (see below) but it seems likely that there was an earlier window here in Phase Three, otherwise there would have been no ventilation or light at all on the ground floor except through the Phase Two doorway. Inside, a loft survives, supported on irregular up-ended joists on four stout, plain crossbeams, the beams identified as elm by Brebner [Fig.33]. The loft floor is sawn softwood boards. There is a gap in the floor along the west side to allow fodder stored in the loft to be dropped down to livestock below. Two of the crossbeams each have one end supported in the brick blocking of the chapel long side windows. The neatness of the slots in the brick blocking indicates that the blocking and insertion of the beams are the same date [see Fig.32]. The original window openings would have allowed teo of the crossbeams to be manoeuvred into place. Brebner suggests that the vertical brick panel in the interior in the east wall is probably to fill in a chase cut in the cob when the north end cross beam was lifted into place [Fig.34] without the advantage of a window opening: this is convincing but raises the question of why a similar chase was not needed at the south end. Brebner's suggestion that the neatly-blocked high-set hole in the cob on the west side wall may also have been associated with introducing the crossbeams is more doubtful, given its position, high under the eaves. However, Keystone has not thought of another explanation for this hole and blocking.

The loft is accessed by a timber stair rising to an open hatch in the south-west corner. The stair is slightly too short and may be an element recycled from elsewhere.

The insertion of the loft required amendments to three of the four earlier king post and strut trusses, to provide headroom. The upper part of each kingpost was retained but attached to a high collar and the struts were replaced with sling braces rising at an angle from the top of the inserted floor beams and nailed to the truncated stubs of the tie beams and the faces of the principals just below the level of the new collars [see Fig.29]. The mortises for the former struts are visible in the principal rafters. The south end truss was amended the same way to allow clear space and headroom at the loft loading door.

There is evidence of some holes in the ground level cobbled floor large enough to accommodate sturdy upright timbers close to the west wall. It is worth considering that these might represent sockets for stall partitions for a stable from either the first or second phase of agricultural use. Corresponding holes further east need to be identified for such a hypothesis to be established. Whilst a couple of the west-side holes can be seen others further east may be filled with compacted earth. Several large wrought iron nails survive in the west wall below the loft floor. As Brebner suggests, these probably supported a hay rack.

The loft ceiling is plastered onto battens nailed onto the underside of the rafters. Where it survives (much has been lost) wall plaster in the loft varies from a thick plaster with a lime skim (e.g. on the east wall) to a lime skim directly onto the cob (clear evidence to west of the loft loading door). Plastering agricultural spaces was not uncommon. It helped to keep down dust and restrict rodents and there is no compelling reason why a plastered ceiling in an agricultural building should mean the ceiling was associated with a non- agricultural use. The ceiling and wall plaster includes some incised graffiti, featuring six-petal motifs (commonly known as

Fig.34. Top left. This L-shaped brick panel in the east wall at the north end is plausibly interpreted as filling a chase cut in the cob to manoeuvre the north end cross beam of the loft into place. No evidence was observed for a similar chase for the south end beam. The window openings would have provided the space to hoist the middle beams into place. Jo Cox.

Fig.35. Top right and below. Examples of sigils scratched in the ceiling plaster on the east side and immediately west of the loft loading door. Jo Cox.

daisywheels). These are commonly interpreted as sigils – marks of religious or occult meaning. Such geometric motifs, usually incised multiple circles, are believed to represent charms or talismans with magical significance for those who made them. They are found throughout England dating from the 16th century into the 19th century. By far the most common is the six-petal motif or daisywheel and Keystone has noticed examples on historic buildings from County Durham to Cornwall. Their significance has been recognized by Timothy Easton who is working on a taxonomy of the marks he has found in Suffolk. He has published a short article on his findings, 'Ritual Marks on Historic Buildings' in the Spring 1999 edition of *The Weald and Downland Open Air Museum Magazine*, and he has been in correspondence with Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants in relation to such marks found in west country buildings. According to Easton the great majority of these marks appear to date from the 17th and 18th centuries and some of the motifs can be traced to contemporary books on magic and charms. He argues that they are a protection from witchcraft. Their common association with openings in farmhouses and barns (alongside doorways, windows and fireplaces) certainly imply some kind of charm from more superstitious times. It may be that their power lay in their creation, which might explain why so many appear to be incomplete, and why they are often inscribed over each other, as if renewed at intervals. Brebner's report includes a photograph of a complete example on the east side of the ceiling. This was not noted by Keystone and it may have been lost since 2006: however, partial examples survive on the east side of the ceiling and a complete example on the wall to the west of the loft loading door [Fig.35].

This phase had a radical impact on the interior and show front of the chapel. The insertion of the loft cut the internal space of the chapel in half horizontally and the loft loading door dominated the south, formerly the show front, of the building. It is possible that the Phase Three changes adapted the building for stable use. If so, the building was poorly ventilated for horses, which were considered to need better ventilation than cattle. It is not known whether this phase was associated with changing the roof covering from slate to Roman tiles, or whether that was done separately.

It is difficult to date this phase on the evidence to hand and the functional nature of the alterations: late 19th century or early 20th century seems likely. The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1902 clearly shows what appears to be a narrow projection off the west side of the building in the centre [Fig.36], although this is rendered as if it part of the main building. A row of small holes in the cob are not connected with a lean-to structure [Fig.37] The same map shows what appears to be a narrow yard across the N end of the building and a yard to east.

2.9.3 - After Phase Three

The 2-light casement window in the upper part of the former south doorway has a rough brick jamb on the west side only, the east side is a cut through the cob. The east side is the original side of the chapel doorway, the bricks on the west side are narrowing the doorway opening. Thus the present window is placed off-centre to both the blocking of the south doorway and the loft loading door. The window is placed off-centre to both the blocking of the south doorway and the loft loading door. This is a crudely-made insertion of a window that does not fit the space. It is therefore considered here to be post Phase Three, almost certainly using a recycled casement.

Some re-used bricks are employed in the works associated with the insertion of the existing window but the majority are of a paler red colour than those used in earlier phases (including those below the window). Four more of these are used in the two courses directly above the window where it seems a timber lintel has been replaced on the outside by an iron bar.
The north west corner of the building, exposed on the second visit by Keystone, presents some

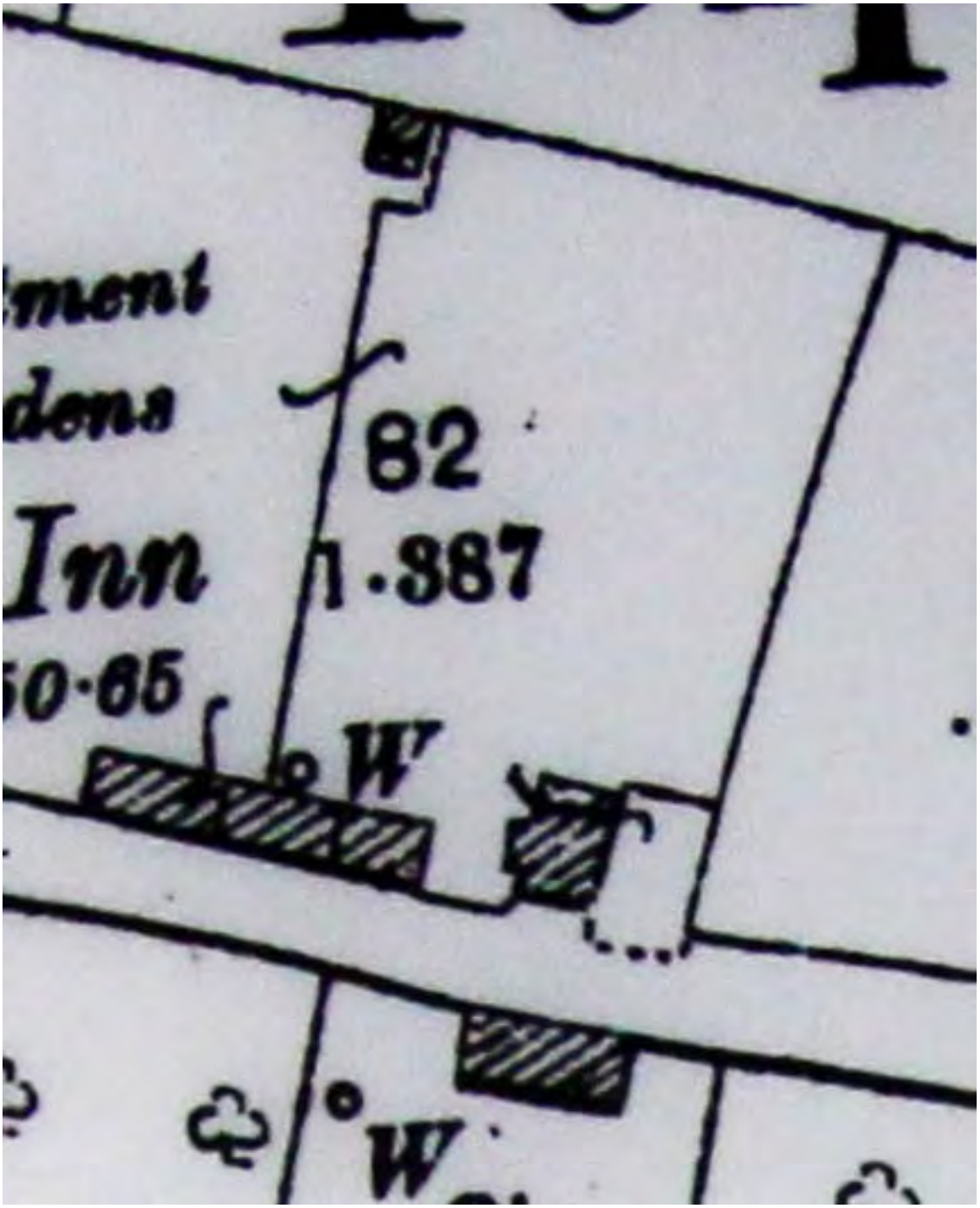


Fig.36. Extract from the 2nd edn. 1902 Ordnance Survey map (the earliest held by the Dorset History Centre). This shows a projection off the west side of the former chapel and a curved boundary wall off the former chapel's south east corner.

problems of interpretation. North of the primary window opening there is a straight joint with the brick window apron and the footings to its north are built of large, pale bricks of a very different character to any other brickwork in the building [Fig.38]. A cement fillet covers the junction at the top with the cob wall, the plane of which is very eroded here. The footings appear to be a repair, but until the earth and vegetation is cleared away at the bottom it is not possible to see whether there is evidence for primary phase footings continuing to the north west corner. A vertical panel of rubble masonry rises in the corner, heavily-cemented, to an exposed beam end, in the cob [Fig.39]. No sign of this timber was seen inside the building, where the cob is very fragile with at least one large hole and cement patching. The timber stub does not appear to be angled across the corner, as Stevenson suggests for strengthening. The best explanation for the evidence is a crude repair, or series of repairs prompted by anxieties that the north-west corner of the building might collapse. The rough brick and cement patch at the upper north corner of the window probably indicates an 'agricultural style' repair to a local collapse in the cob, perhaps rodent damage.

A post card, 1960s? shows the curving stone rubble wall shown on the 1902 OS map in place [Fig.40]

Fig.37. A row of small holes in the cob wall on the west side do not relate to a structure built off the wall but to the removal in 2005 of battens to support plants. There is no obvious physical evidence of the projection shown off the west side on the 1902 OS map (see Fig.36). Jo Cox.

Fig.38. The north end of the west side indicates replacement or new footings in brick between the primary window apron and the north west corner. Jo Cox.

Fig.39. The west side of the north west corner patched up with masonry and with the unexplained stump of a beam exposed. Jo Cox.

Fig.40. A postcard of the old chapel showing the curved boundary wall depicted on the 1902 Ordnance survey map.

3 - Statement of Significance

'The conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle' (*Planning Practice Guidance*, Para 003, revised 6.03.2014).

3.1 - Statutory Controls

Conservation Area

The Chapel is in the Tolpuddle Conservation Area [Fig.37]. Trees in a conservation area are protected if the trunk diameter is greater than 75mm when measured at 1.5m above ground level. Six weeks notice of works to trees of this size needs to be provided to West Dorset District Council.

Protected Species

There is evidence of bat activity in the chapel. In Britain all bat species and their roosts are legally protected, by both domestic and international legislation. The Trust has commissioned a bat survey from a specialist and will take his advice.

Listed Building

The chapel is one of three grade 2* buildings in the Conservation Area, which has 24 listed buildings in all. It is identified as a key listed building in the Conservation Area Appraisal by West Dorset District Council. Grade 2* are particularly important buildings of exceptional interest and of outstanding importance. Listing protects the whole of a building's fabric (inside and outside, front and back, including any extensions made to it), fixtures (objects or items physically attached to a building including, doors, agricultural fittings) and any pre-1948 building or structure within the curtilage (including boundary walls).

Consent is required for demolition of a listed building and any alterations which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. It is necessary for applicants to justify alterations to or demolition of a listed building. This should be done in terms relevant to an understanding of the impact of the proposed works upon the character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

Sensitive repair work does not normally require listed building consent, however it can be difficult to judge the line between a repair and an alteration and advice should always be taken on this from the local conservation officer. A method statement and specification of materials used to carry out a repair job may be requested in advance in order to ensure that works are executed appropriately.

In the opinion of the authors of this conservation report (both former listed building fieldworkers), the high listing grade of the chapel is based on the importance of its historical associations with the six Dorsetshire labourers, who became known as the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Without this association, it would be unlikely to be listed at all, even for its known origins as a rare example of a pre-1830s Methodist chapel, because of the level of later alteration to what was a simple building. This must be why it was omitted from Christopher Stell's *Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in South-West England*, 1991.

3.2 - Material and Historical Value

The envelope of the original building is not complete (roof covering, construction, pitch and form replaced). Its interior space has been cut in half by the inserted loft and although four of its original openings can be confidently identified, and survive, the only one that is obviously chapel-like is the north end window, which cannot be seen from the road. This is not to say that its fabric is unimportant, but that it does not 'speak for itself' as an early 19th century chapel and its public face, its south elevation, is not chapel-like in any way. It does speak for itself as an example of an unassuming detached agricultural building in a village.

Its overriding significance, and one of national interest, is its historical connection with the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Long before the establishment of the Agricultural Friendly Society in Tolpuddle and the subsequent spotlight on the Tolpuddle Martyrs, it can reasonably be assumed that Methodism gave at least four of the labourers, including their natural leader, George Loveless, literacy; acquaintance with self-examination; familiarity with persecution and an understanding of the strength of like-minded, supportive communities. For two of them, preaching was an additional education in the power of words beyond day-to-day conversation. Travelling from chapel to chapel on the Weymouth Circuit and, presumably, after 1831 later on the Dorchester circuit, their circle of acquaintance must have been a good deal wider, and no doubt broader in social class, than the majority of agricultural labourers. Chapel-building and trusteeship for George Loveless and Thomas Standfield gave them important responsibilities within the Tolpuddle Methodist Society and regular contact with the Circuit Superintendent Ministers, including the Reverend William Worth, who was ready and quick to go to court and successfully prosecute some of the 1818 rioters. These chapel-associated experiences give a glimpse into the interior life of individuals who, like any heroes of the past, are always at risk of being represented in simplified form on the public stage.

The former chapel also has historical value within the history of Methodism in Dorset, particularly the pattern of evangelism in the inland agricultural areas. Roger Thorne notes that when Myles *History of the Methodists* was published in 1813, he identified only 14 chapels (meaning buildings, rather than licensed houses) in the whole of Dorset. By 1873 there were 20 chapels in the Dorchester Circuit alone and more than 60 in the county. This represented an explosion in chapel building in a 60-year period and places the old chapel at Tolpuddle early in a period of dramatic Methodist expansion in the county, although it was lost in that period as a functioning chapel building. As has been noted above, comparison with the 1862 chapel, close by on the other side of the road is evidence not only of how some of the architecture of rural Methodism changed in that period, but also of how that architecture reflected a more permanent and public character to Dorset Methodism in the 19th century.

The chapel is also an important part of the local and social history of the village and parish. It offers a way into the lives of its labouring classes and opportunities for better understanding its 19th century history and particularly the relationships of squire, tenant and under-tenant in detail. Was William Morton Pitt, who appears in the labourer's story twice, a key player in the Enclosure Act, supposedly so considerate to 'industrious' cottagers? Given that Susannah Northover gave good character references at the trial for the Martyrs who worked for her, who were the farmers in the parish who George Loveless claimed refused employment to chapel-goers?

3.3 - Aesthetic Value

The building is pleasingly simple and the visibility of its cob walls a reminder of how the local landscape could be transformed into a building material. As indicated above, a close look shows that it had more architectural ambition than appears at first sight, making effective, if low-key use of contrasting local materials and their textures and colours to present an exterior that could be distinguished from a farm building or cottage. These subtle details are rather lost to view as a result of later changes to the building. It is a great pity that we do not know whether or not the building had a chapel-like south end widow over the south door, to match the north end window, which is now the only really obvious sign of its former function.

Inside the simple, single-volume aesthetic of the old chapel phase has been lost, reinforced by the loss of the north end window above the loft floor, obscured by the Phase Two north end truss. This along with the loss of the primary sources of natural lighting, has severely damaged the character that height and the high-set north end window once gave to the interior.

3.4 - Community Value

There is a lively interest in the chapel locally and concern about its poor condition has been longstanding and widespread. Both the TUC and the Methodist church have been involved in previous unsuccessful attempts to buy the building in order to rescue it from dereliction. Lack of access to its interior has been frustrating.

The building is important to the Martyrs Museum. It is well-known to the 10,000 or so visitors who attend the annual summer Martyrs Festival. It is on the route of the festival's parade of banners through the village. The festival is the major annual event in Tolpuddle and generates activity and donations that benefit the Anglican church, the 1862 Methodist chapel and the village hall. The community green space more or less opposite the chapel, brings community events, including various festival events, to its door.

The Museum includes information about the chapel which is an element in the existing village trail (this can be seen on-line) and in the forthcoming audiovisual trail. The audio visual trail has been developed by the South West TUC with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It provides interpretation of the village buildings associated with the Martyrs using short films and other information that can be accessed on mobile phones and tablets. This allows visitors to see dramatic recreations of the key events of the Martyrs' story that would be impossible (and intrusive) with static signage.

Both the old and new chapels and the Martyrs' story are also interpreted in an exhibition at the 1862 Methodist chapel, which includes copies of original documents, e.g. the 1818 licence for the old chapel, signed by the Reverend Worth. The 1912 arch at the 1862 chapel appears to be the earliest physical monument to the Martyrs in the village. A committee had been set up with a view to raising funds for labourers' houses and a scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford, in memory of the Martyrs. Shortage of funds meant that the arch was chosen instead. This is one example of the current commitment of the Methodist community to the Martyrs, another being the publication by Lloyd Thomas on their Methodism, funded by Dorchester Circuit.

In spite of separate campaigns by the TUC and Methodist church to acquire the chapel in the past, there is a sense of great relief that it has now been acquired with plans for conservation and re-use, which should benefit boths. The experience of volunteers running successful events on the community space opposite (which is managed by volunteers apart from grass-cutting) could be extended to help keep the chapel open and provide facilities for events. While the attack on the Anglican church by George Loveless *A Church Shown Up* is not forgotten, in 2008, the vicar, who had felt some ill-will towards the church during the festival, laid a wreath of repentance for the betrayal of the Martyrs and the Tolpuddle labourers by the church and in 2010 the parish church and and Dorchester Methodist Circuit entered into a covenant with services held jointly.

3.5 - Spiritual Significance

As a former place of worship the chapel has historic spiritual significance. The public expression of this would have been centred on the word: read, preached, or sung. Hymns were an important part of early Methodist worship. Looking at the building today, natural lighting of the interior would have been very limited and, at best, hardly sufficient to read from hymn books and the Bible. The availability of individual hymn books to members of the congregation would depend on the local level of literacy and cost but cheaper editions would have had cramped text. The alternatives were singing from memory or that hymns were 'lined out' - a line sung from a hymn book being repeated by the congregation.

Addendum

Additional Research in the Methodist Special Collection, John Rylands Library, Manchester

This was undertaken following the production of the Conservation Statement in the hope that it might establish for certain the date at which the chapel closed. Both the electronic and hard copy indexes were conscientiously searched for any information about the Tolpuddle Chapel. Only one piece of information came to light.

Following a minute at Conference in 1854, all Circuit Superintendent Ministers were required to fill out forms about their circuit chapels for the Wesleyan Methodist Property Division. The form asked for information about date erected; original cost; debt; numbers of trustees (original and in 1855); where trust deeds held; whether they were held on the model deed and an analysis of whether each chapel was in credit or debit for that year. The forms are bound up in two huge volumes, John Rylands, DDpd 88/1,2.

The forms covering Dorset establish that the Dorchester circuit in 1855 was made up of only five chapels: 'Dorchester, Whitechurch; Dewlish; Bere Heath, Kingston'. Tolpuddle (in the Dorchester Circuit from 1831) is not mentioned. The Weymouth circuit had nine chapels, Shaftesbury 15.

All this does is to confirm that Tolpuddle was out of use as a chapel by 1855. This adds some weight to its absence in the religious census of 1851 (which might have been an error, but probably not) and reinforces Lloyd Thomas's view that the lease reverted to the ground landlord, probably in the 1840s. It would be helpful if we could establish the date of death of the second sister on the 1808 lease, Mrs 'Butter' or 'Buiter', just to be clear about when all the leaseholders died (we have the dates of death for the other two). As Lloyd Thomas discovered (but Keystone did not succeed in tracking down the document) there was a Wesleyan Methodist Society in Tolpuddle in the 1850s so it seems most likely that the chapel was abandoned before 1851, perhaps 1843 (on the death of one of the two sisters on the lease) and the Wesleyans reverted to meeting elsewhere in Tolpuddle. There were clearly sufficient numbers by 1862 to merit the building of the new chapel.

Jo Cox
Keystone
20 March 2015

Endnotes

1 The term ‘lay preacher’ is not used by Methodists (*pers.comm*. Roger Thorne).
2 As Roger Thorne points out, although Methodism claims the Martyrs as its own, the conservative leadership of Wesleyan Methodism after Wesley’s death, especially Jabez Bunting (1779-1858) would not support the men as they wanted to disassociate themselves from civil disorder and attacks of God-given authority (*pers.comm.*). The Methodist Dictionary website entry for the Tolpuddle Martyrs states ‘Sadly, there is no evidence that either they or their families received any support from the Wesleyan hierarchy’. E P Thompson, the Marxist historian, accepted that some Methodist preachers spoke out against oppressive working conditions but claimed that Methodist obsession with salvation took the minds of the workers off their grievances, 1963, 355-356,
3 Biggs, 1987, 27.
4 Wesley, Waugh and Mason edn., Vol V, 1835, 235.
5 By 1818 there were a number of offshoots and divisions from the old body of Wesleyan Methodism, including the Primitive Methodists from 1811.
6 *Pers.comm.* Roger Thorne.
7 Photographs of these buildings are held in the DHC in an album of photographs taken by Mr Lionel Lewis, album compiled by Frank A Storey, NM.9 Acc.8952 Box 2.
8 Simon, 1870, 31.
9 Conscientious searching of the Land Tax Assessments under various possible spellings of Loveless’s surname have not identified him in Tolpuddle, either as the proprietor or occupier of property. He may have been a sub-tenant. However he is recorded acquiring (or renewing) a 3-life lease on a cottage and garden in Tolpuddle in 1816 on the lives of George, then aged 18, Samuel, 13 and James, 8 (DHC, D/GDD: 1/2).
10 Burton, 2001, 73, citing James Lackington, a bookseller, writing in 1804, 183-184. Lackington was a remarkably successful book seller, self-publicist and a maverick, initially supporting Methodism then turning against it, then returning to the fold. He built chapels in Taunton, Budleigh Salterton where he retired, and in Gloucestershire.
11 Morton Pitt’s activities as a magistrate, prison reformer, Sunday school promoter and philanthropist, gained him widespread respect. He showed off the rebuilt Dorchester gaol (where the martyrs were kept before and after their trial in 1834) to the King in 1792...he set up a factory for cordage and sailcloth at Purbeck. He was the author of an address to the landed interest on the deficiency of habitations and fuel for the use of the poor (1797). His compassion for the wronged and distressed was a by-word and, as a landlord, he reduced rents to relieve his tenants. Joseph Jekyll described him as arriving at Exeter assizes in 1804 ‘as usual on the outside of the stage coach—with one shirt and a bundle of philanthropy’, www.historyofparliamentonline.org.
12 Simon, 1870, 51.
13 Lease and release, DHC, NM-Z/Acc 6079
14 *Pers. comm.,* Roger Thorne.
15 Biggs, 1987, 32
16 Samuel Fripp and his agent, who may have been a relation and who lived in Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, would be worth some research. Were they Methodist sympathisers?
17 A Thomas Bartlett was the landlord of the preacher, John Stickland, in Wareham in the early 19th century, as the Dorset Land Tax Assessments show. Bartlett is not an uncommon name and this may be a red herring, but might be another thread in the complicated web of sympathisers and would be worth researching.
18 Stevenson, 1815, 85.
19 Stevenson, 1815, 87.
20 Wirdnam, 1989, 17.
21 This was not a unique case. Simon records Brackenbury’s assistant, Smith, taking his persecutors to court, 1870, 23.
22 The indictment was couched in strong language, presumably conventional for anyone accused of rioting. They were accused of ‘unlawfully, wickedly and maliciously’..endeavouring to ‘raise and cre ate insurrection, riots and tumults...with force and arms’.
23 The witnesses were the Reverend William Worth, Robert Phelips [sic], James Riggs, William Eveleigh and George Keats.

24 *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences*, Vol 1 (1744-1798), 1862, 30-31.

25 Simon, 1870, 66.

26 Shortage of time means that the authors of this report, while not doubting this element of the narrative, has not been able to find the primary source that places this meeting in the house occupied by Thomas Standfield. It is not in *The Victims of Whiggery* but it may come from the correspondence between Frampton and Lord Melbourne (not investigated) or George Loveless's statement to the Assistant Police Magistrate in Hobart, Australia, a source extensively used by Joyce Marlow in her *The Tolpuddle Martyrs*, 1974. Thomas is shown as the occupier of his father Robert's, property in the Land Tax Assessments in 1823, 1826; 1827 and 1831. The LTAs come to an end in 1832, the same year that Robert Standfield died. An 1829 schedule of properties in the manor shows that a Robert Standfield leased a second property in Tolpuddle. Perhaps this was a different man, but the Robert who leased the plot on which the chapel was built was, by 1818, a tenant farmer in Arne, Wareham. He was evidently more prosperous than his sons. Was the enclosure act the source of this difference?

27 Robinson, 2001, 277, citing National Archives, Kew, HO 129/275 (Dorchester); which suggests that the chapel has fallen out of use before 1851.

28 Roger Thorne notes that in his edition of the Religious Census returns for Shropshire, 2004, Dr Clive Field lists a substantial number of places for which there is documentary evidence or a strong presumption that worship was being held in 1851 in a church, chapel or meeting. 58 of these were Wesleyan Methodist and surprisingly 11 were Church of England. In Tolpuddle there might have been no service on Census Sunday but this seems unlikely, if there was a congregation, as the Census was well publicised and there were accusations at the time that congregations were artificially inflated by encouraging attendance by threats or inducements.

Appendix One

Tolpuddle chapel timeline

The following is a selection of sources and not comprehensive. It could be added to.

1808 1 March, cited in DHC, NM-Z/Acc 6079
Land leased to Robert Standfield by William Morton Pitt of Kingston Mauward. Messuage and dwelling house with yard garden stables and fuelhouse and a piece of land behind the house containing 1 acre, said premises later part of a tenement called Pope's were then in possession of Robert Standfield. This was a 3-life lease, the other lives being Mary Buiter [Butter?] of Woodbury, Dorset and Ann wife of Samuel Fitzherbert, Chideock. Lloyd Thomas has established that these were sisters, daughters of the Anglican vicar of Milton Abbas.

1810 Quarter Sessions Order Books, Dorset History Centre, QSM 1/13
Dissenters Certificate
'At this court was brought a certificate that a dwelling house now occupied by Thomas Lovelass situate in the parish of Tolpuddle in the said county is set apart as and for the place of the occasional public worship of Almighty God by a congregation of protestants called Methodists and it was desired that this court would enter and file the same of record. This court doth therefore record the same and the same is entered and recorded accordingly.'

1818 DHC, NM-Z/Acc 6079
Indenture for the purchase of land for the purpose of erecting a chapel for use of preachers who are members of the Methodist Conference as established by the late Rev. John Wesley. Trustees included George Loveless and Thomas Standfield. The following are extracts from the document, notes by Keystone in square brackets.

'This Indenture made this twenty-fourth day of September In the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighteen between Robert Standfield of Arne near Wareham in the County of Dorset yeoman of the first part James Lake of Broadmayne otherwise Mayne Martoll in the said county malster [sic] Henry Baker of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis in the said county confectioner Joseph Bennett of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis aforesaid malster [sic] Richard Barns of the same place blacksmith David Abbott of Grange In the Isle of Purbeck In the said county ffarmer John Beauchamp Stickland of Wareham in the said county Draper Richard Ballam of North Kingston in the said County Cordwainer Sampson Henville of Anderston in the said County Carpenter John Chapman of Tindeton in the said County Labourer Thomas Standfield of Tolpuddle in the said county Labourer George Loveless of Tolpuddle aforesaid Labourer and James Sansom of the same place Cordwainer on the one part and William Worth of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis aforesaid preacher of the Gospel one of the number of the Methodist Conference as established by the late Reverend John Wesley of the third part whereas William Morton Pitt of Kingston House In the County of Dorset esquire by this Indenture of lease bearing date March 1st Year of our Lord 1808 for the consideration therein mentioned did devise and grant unto the said Robert Standfield then of Tolpuddle aforesaid Yeoman all that messuage or dwelling house

with the yard garden stable and fuelhouse thereunto adjoining and belonging and also all that close or piece of ground as the same is now inclosed situate behind the said house containing by and measurement one acre or thereabouts and which said premises were late part of a tenement called Popes Whole Place tenement and are situated in the manor and parish of Tolpuddle aforesaid and were then in the possession of the said Robert Standfield or his undertenants and all outhouses waters watercourses and appurtenances thereunto belonging (except as therein is excepted) to hold the same unto the said Robert Standfield his heirs and assigns for and during the natural lives of Mary the wife of James Butler [this appears to be the spelling in this document, the 1829 lease, noted below, clearly has 'Buiter', not Butler] of Woodbury in the County of Dorset, gentleman and the wife of James Fitzherbert of Chideock in the said County of Dorset gentleman and this the said Robert for and during the natural lives and life of the survivors and survivor of them under the yearly rent of 10s 6d and other covenants and agreement therein contained to be paid done and performed'

[The piece of land is described as]

' ..all that piece or parcel of ground situated in the manor and parish of Tolpuddle aforesaid containing forty feet from east to west and thirty feet from north to south together with the building or chapel thereon erected bounded on the south by the highway or main road on the east by a property of William Brine yeoman now in the occupation of Robert Riggs and on the north by a field and on the west by a yard the property of the said Robert Standfield and now in the occupation of Jeremiah Argyle'

[The document explains that the property has been purchased]

'for the purpose of erecting thereon a chapel for the use of the preachers who are and may be members of the Methodist Conference as established by the late Reverend John Wesley and of the society for Methodists in connexion with them'

[upon trust they they and their survivors]

'do and shall permit and suffer such person and persons as shall be appointed at the yearly conference of the people called Methodists to be held at London Bristol Leeds and Manchester or elsewhere as established by a certain deed poll bearing date 23 day of February 1784 under the hand and seal of the late Reverend John Wesley and enrolled in the high court of chancery and no other to have the use and occupation of the said chapel for the purpose of preaching and expounding God's Holy Word and for the performing of all other Acts of Religious Worship therein without any suit or interruption whatsoever of or by the said trustees... provided always that the person or persons so to be appointed by the Conference as aforesaid shall preach no other doctrines than those which are contained in certain notes upon the new testament and the first four volumes of sermons published by the late Reverend John Wesley provided that in case it shall appear to the trustees for the time being or the major part of them or to stewards and leaders of classes in the said Society assembly at the said chapel... that any preacher so to be appointed by the Conference as aforesaid is erroneous or contrary to the notes and sermons therein before mentioned or that he is immoral in conduct or deficient in ability then and in any and every sure case as often as the same shall

happen the said trustees for the time being shall proceed according to the rule in that case provided in the rules of purification in the minutes of the Conference held in the year 1785 and which rules shall regulate all alterations as to times or additions to public worship in the said chapel... they shall from time to time and at all times hereinafter collect... from the several persons who shall from time to time attend public worship at the said chapel such sums of money for the seats or pew rents or by way of contribution or otherwise as to the said trustees for the time being together with the superintendant preacher for the time being of the circuit in which the said chapel shall be occupied or the major part of them shall judge fit and reasonable and do and shall stand possessed of such sums of money and also of all other monies which shall come to their hands ... (except such collections as are at commonly made by the preachers or leaders of classes or by the said Conference or at their special appointment) ...in the first place to pay the interest which shall become due in respect of any gross sum or sums of money which shall be borrowed for the purpose of building the said chapel and other erections belonging thereto'.

[Secondly the Trustees were to pay off the capital of any borrowed sum and after that had been paid in full]

'shall pay and apply such monies as aforesaid or the residue thereof for and towards the support of the preachers for the time being stationed in the Circuit... in such manner as the trustees for the time being and the leaders of classes of the Methodists Society belonging to the said chapel or the major part of them shall think proper and it is thereby agreed that the said several persons parties thereto of the second part and all future trustees of the said chapel and premises shall at the four quarterly meetings of the circuit comprising the said chapel to be held every year produce... or cause to be produced ... to the preachers and all and every other the person and persons assembled at such Quarterly Meetings all and every the Book and Books of account papers and vouchers of the said trustees...relative to the said chapel and premises and the receipts and disbursements relative to the said Trust Estate and premises and ... extracts to be taken therefrom.

...and in case at any time therefore the Society of Methodists usually assembled at the said chapel shall be dissolved or become extinct ... ... as a place of religious worship by them or in case the said trustees and the major part of them for the time being shall be of opinion that a larger or more convenient chapel ... become necessary... they the said trustees ... shall either by public sale or private ... sell the said chapel and premises to any person or persons who shall be willing to become the purchaser or purchasers ... for the best price that can be reasonably obtained and shall execute all such agreements acts, deeds and conveyances as shall be necessary for affording such sale...'

[and it is] 'agreed that the receipts and receipt of the trustees... shall be a legal and sufficient discharge for all sums of money to be produced by such last mentioned sale ... to discharge all the debts which shall be then owing on account by the said chapel and premises and in the next place so apply and distribute the residue or surplus (if any) of the said money among such poor persons in the Methodist Society as the superintendant preacher of the Circuit comprising the said chapel and the trustees ... shall think proper and fit. But in case the said chapel and premises shall have been sold in consequence of a large or more convenient chapel being necessary ... the ... trustees ... shall lay out and apply such residue or surplus towards the purchase or building of another more convenient and suitable chapel'.

[The final text refers to the arrangements for Trustees. This was to be a process of nominating double the number required for an election.]

There is a note in the margin of the document 'this deed was acknowledged at Wareham in the County of Dorset by John Beauchamp Stickland and of the parties thereunto the 7th day of November 1818' signed Thomas Barfleet a Master extra in Chancery.

1818 13 October *The Manchester Mercury*, Tuesday 27.10.1818
A report of the riot when the chapel opened in SW newspapers was picked up by other papers, e.g. the London *Morning Chronicle*, in Dublin and Manchester, below. The wording of the account remains the same.

Rioting and Persecution - On Tuesday [October 13th] a Methodist chapel was opened in the village of Tolpuddle, in Dorset; and a number of persons accompanied the ministers from Weymouth on the occasion. After evening service, when the ministers and their friends were preparing to return a mob of about 100 persons assembled , and behaved in a most disorderly manner. A Lady belonging to the ministers party, before she could get into her carriage, was pushed down a bank into the road; the horses being frightened by the tumult and noise, the driver was for a considerable time unable to proceed; and the ladies were under the necessity of walking a great distance, exposed to the most brutal insults. The drivers, horses, and carriages were pelted with stones, mud etc ., the windows of the chaise broken and even the side of the chaise was pierced by stone. One Lady who rode by the driver received a severe blow on her head and at Piddletown, two miles from Tolpuddle, the driver received a blow in his neck, which , had it not been for a large neckcloth , would probably have proved fatal-----(*Bath Chronicle*)

1818 20 October. Indictment at the Quarter Sessions at Bridport, DHC, 10F/191
[this was to establish whether or not there was a case to answer]

The following were accused of being persons of 'evil, seditious and turbulent dispositions' who 'unlawfully, wickedly and maliciously' endeavoured to 'raise and create insurrection, riots and tumults' at Tolpuddle on 13th October 1818 'with force and arms'. The Methodist chapel is not mentioned. About 50 people were involved and assembled 'in a riotous and tumultuous manner for a long space of time (that is to say) two hours.'
John Bullen, late of Tolpuddle, carpenter
Thomas Way, late of the same parish, blacksmith
Joseph Pearce, late of the same parish, yeoman
Henry Harvey, late of the parish of Burlestone, labourer.

The witnesses were
The Reverend William Worth
Robert Phelips [sic]
James Riggs
William Eveleigh
George Keats

The bill of indictment was signed 'Burnett'.

1819 *The Salisbury and Winchester Journal,* 18.01.1819
Report on the general Quarter Session of the peace at Blandford:

'at the above sessions on Thursday, came on the trial of persons indicted at the last sessions for rioting and persecution, a case which has already been laid before the public. The interest excited by this case appeared in the excessively crowded state of the court during the trial which lasted more than three hours. The case was opened by Mr Williams. After a very handsome eulogium on the denomination of Christians interested in this trial he stated that his client, the Reverend Mr Worth, was not actuated in this prosecution by any feelings of revenge; that consistent with his character as a minister of the gospel of peace he had no objection to come to an accommodation on terms that were reasonable and honourable , and that would secure him, and the people connected with him, from the repetition of such outrages; and that this proposal originated not in himself but in the prosecutor. Mr Glyn, for the defendants, refused to accede to any terms of accommodation which would imply that they were guilty of the offence. Richard Harvey, who was the least offender, and under 14 years of age (which was not known when the indictment was preferred), was discharged by mutual consent. The case was then proved against the other three by the undeviating testimony of six witnesses. Mr Glyn did not call any witnesses for the defendants, nor scarcely attempt to invalidate the testimony of the other witnesses but rested his defence on the difference between the facts proved and the offence charged in the indictment, admitting that there was considerable evidence that the defendants were parties in the riot but not *any* that they incited others to *assemble* in order to riot. The Chairman expressed his opinion that the indictment was properly framed, though indeed the defendants might have been charged with the riot as well as instigating others to riot. The jury returned a verdict of guilty against *all* the three, John Bullen, Francis Pearce, and Thos. Way; and after a very interesting and appropriate address from the chairman, in which he remarked, that this was the first time within his recollection, that the Wesleyan Methodists had applied to that Court for protection and that it was necessary for him to pass such a sentence in the hearing of that crowded Court, in which, doubtless, there were many that came to hear the issue of this trial, as might deter others from committing similar offences. He sentenced them to pay a fine to the King for £10 each and to give security for their good behaviour for one year, each of them for himself in £50 and in two other sureties of £25 each , or one of £50; and to be committed until these fines were paid and the securities given.

We understand that the prosecutor in the above case, and his friends, express their high sense of the ability with which their cause was conducted by their solicitor, Mr G Arden, of Weymouth: and their counsel, Mr Williams: and also their strong feeling of gratitude to all the Magistrates on the bench, and especially to the worthy chairman, T Pickard Esq., for his impartial conduct: and in these expressions of gratitude they are persuaded all the Wesleyan Methodists will cordially unite.

1824 Repeal of the Combination Acts which had made it illegal for working men to organize themselves into societies or combination.

1828 Bere Regis chapel opened.

1829/30 Circuit Plan, DHC, NM 2: S19/MS 1/1
A Weymouth Circuit Plan. Three members of the Loveless family are recorded as preachers: one without an initial (assumed to be George); one with the initial J, assumed to be James and a W Loveless, assumed to be William, a third brother.

1829 Lease for a year between the surviving trusteee of Samuel Fripp Esq., deceased and the Honourable Edward St Johns, DHC, D/GDD: 1/2
This document is of interest for including a schedule of properties in the manor of Tolpuddle, along with a description of when leases were taken out, the names of the 'lives' and, where known, the ages of the lives when the leases began. Thomas Loveless (spelt Lovelace) (who does not appear in the Land Tax Assessments) is listed as the tenant of a cottage and garden, lease dating from 4 March 1816 and held on his life and those of three sons: George, said to be aged 18; Samuel, said to be aged 13, and James, said to be aged 8.

The document also shows that the name of Robert Standfield is given as tenant of a cottage and garden, lease dating from 28 July 1808, held on the lives of William Way, aged 47 at the date of the lease and Robert Way, aged 43 at the date of the lease. His other property is described as a house and garden, I acre, lease dating from 8 March 1808 and held on the lives of Mrs Buiter and Mrs Fitzherbert (their ages are not given) and Robert Standfield, aged 45. There is no mention of the Wesleyan chapel in the schedule.

1831 Tolpuddle chapel brought into the Dorchester circuit.

1833 Meeting in Thomas Standfield's Cottage of Tolpuddle labourers with delegates from the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union

1834 Lent Assizes, Dorchester
Trial of the Tolpuddle men. sentenced to 7 year's transportation.

2nd April *The Morning Chronicle* [*The Morning Chronicle* was a daily London newspaper associated with radical thinking. William Hazlitt contributed and, beginning in 1834, Charles Dickens.]

'The Dorsetshire Labourers
To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.
Sir - That the case of the Dorsetshire labourers should have excited such sympathy, and among all parties have led to such efforts, that the sentence of the law may be mitigated, is highly creditable, not only to the feelings but also to the judgement of Englishmen. If persons in the higher rank of life, and even Members of the Legislature, were ignorant of any law that could thus reach the conduct of these poor men, how much more is it certain that these cottagers sinned in ignorance. This they boldly averred when the sentence was about to be passed on them: and the writer unhesitatingly believes that they spoke the truth.

Several of these poor men have been known to the writer for many years, and though now far distant from them, yet in their distress he is distressed. In reference to those he knows, and especially George Loveless, that for inoffensive conduct, for diligence, for efforts to support themselves and families, and indeed for general good moral character, they will not suffer in comparison with any labourers in any county. The writer laments that, in ignorance of the law, they should have committed themselves by combinations and unlawful oaths. But let the Magistrates in the neighbourhood sat, whether they ever before knew any evil in them - whether they were idle men - neglecters of their work - their families; whether they were poachers - frequenters of beer-shops, or in any way persons of dishonest lives.

Sir, they were truly guilty of one crime - a crime which is, I fear, in the estimation in certain persons in Dorsetshire, of far greater magnitude than any of those to which reference has just been made. In this Protestant country they committed the great crime of reading their Bible - of daring to think for themselves on what they read - of doing more, they became Members of the Wesleyan Methodist Society; a body which now, in the estimation of some great men, is not the most vile in the world. But the climax - the head and the front of their offending was this - George Loveless and one or two more became steady and useful local preachers among the Wesleyan Methodists.

On this account the Lovelesses and others whom I could mention in the villages of Tolpiddle, Dewlish and Piddletown, have long been the subjects of bitter and unrelenting persecution. I have now documents in my possession, which certain persons little suspect, to prove this. To give evidence that I do not write in the dark, I would beg all inquiring persons, who have the opportunity, to refer to the Reverend W Worth, now of Newport, in the Isle of Wight; to a most respectable attorney at Weymouth, who now holds high municipal honour in that town; to Mr Henry Baker, at Weymouth; to Sansom of Tolpiddle, to Brydle at Dewlish; to Cox, at Piddletown. More than one of the above parties could speak of the violence of mobs; of the refusal of a clergyman to take his dead babe into the church, because it had been baptised by a Wesleyan Minister, while there was no Archdeacon to be found to be mediator; of a forgery to keep this very George Loveless from preaching in one of the villages; of direct attempts to starve him out of a village. A copy of a letter is now before me from a very distinguished person in the neighbourhood, which speaks of determined attempts to crush this sectarian spirit; and when mighty men contend with peasants, the latter have need of great care.

That the Learned Judge who presided at the trial of these poor men, however painful to himself the duty, most conscientiously and most righteously administered the law, the writer does not for one moment doubt. As I have no knowledge whatever who the Magistrates were that committed these men, nor do I know the name of one of the Jury by which the verdict was found, I consequently, neither in the preceding or following remarks, can have any reference to the Judge, the Magistrates, or the Jury. But I do venture to assert, that to certain persons in Dorsetshire, neither the verdict nor the sentence gave much pain; that it caused them no tears to know that these Methodist preachers had at length found the desert of their doings, and that the country would be rid of them for at least seven years. Perhaps more than one party may yet learn that zeal, misdirected, not only defeats its own purpose but strongly promotes that which it was designed to destroy.

"Nec semper feriet quodcunqueminabitur areus"

London April, 1834. A WESLEYAN'

6th April
Dorsetshire Labourers taken in irons from Dorchester gaol to Portsmouth and on board the hulk, York.

21 April
March of the London Trades Unions to present a petition protesting the sentence to Lord Melbourne.

1843 Tolpuddle, Tithe map and apportionment, DHC Ref; T/Tol
Map shows the chapel, tithe apportionment and identifies it as 'Methodist Chapel' occupied by 'The Wesleyan Society' and in the ownership of 'Themselves'.

1851 Ecclesiastical Census Returns, National Archives, Kew, HO 129/275 (Dorchester)
The only place of worship listed in Tolpuddle on 'Census Sunday' is the Anglican church.

1862 19 August, Property deed for new Tolpuddle Methodist chapel, DCRO, NM. 2: S19/TS 3/1
The property deed of 19 August 1862 refers to:
'a piece or parcel of Ground formerly part of a Close of Ground called Church Close situated at Tolpuddle in the County of Dorset and heretofore in the Occupation of...William Hammett. And which piece of ground is bounded on the North by the Turnpike Road running from Dorchester to Wimbourne and on the South East and West by other land belonging to the said William Hammett being in depth from North to South sixty three feet and in breadth from East to West twenty eight feet and contains in the whole One hundred and sixty six square yards or thereabouts...'.

William Hammett, together with several other parties, including the Rev. John Allin of Dorchester (superintendent preacher), were intent on building:
'a Chapel or place of religious worship with such appurtenances as may be thought convenient for the use of people called Methodists'.

William Hammett, given in this document as a 'builder', was probably related to the Tolpuddle Martyr, James (d.1891). Following his return to Tolpuddle, James Hammett is known to have taken up work as a building labourer, and was most likely employed by his relations.

1863 *Sherborne Mercury* 29.09.1863
The following is an account of the opening of a new chapel at Stickland, about six miles from Tolpuddle, the year after the existing Tolpuddle chapel was opened and built by Mr Hammett. It is included for the interesting information that the Stickland Methodists had had to 'struggle with difficulties', abandon their old chapel and been forced to conduct services in a house (with a moveable pulpit) before the new chapel was erected. Perhaps Tolpuddle was a parallel case.

'Opening of a New Wesleyan Chapel at Stickland' [Extracts] - opened Wed 23.09.1863.
'The opening of a place for the public worship of God is an event which must always be regarded by the devote mind as one calling forth feelings of gratitude and joy. Happily at the present day it is one of peace. Every man now sits under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, none daring to make him afraid. In the earlier days of Methodism in this village such was not the case; contempt, insult, and derision was the common lot of its professors, and even when this gave way to a more charitable and Christian-like course of conduct, the adherents to this cause for many years had to struggle with difficulties, so that until lately they have been forced to conduct their services at one of the houses of the villagers. A better day has now dawned upon them, and through the munificence of friends, and the munificence of Baron Hambro, who granted them a piece of ground on a lease for 99 years, they have now been able to erect a chapel...The building is of brick, covered with

cement, and slated, and stands on a rising piece of ground not far from the centre of the village.' Seated 180-200, cost £200...'The work has been very creditably done by Mr Hammett of Tolpuddle'...'The friends took tea at 5.00 in a barn, kindly placed at their disposal by Mr Sprake. About 270 were present and the whole passed off most satisfactorily. As the chapel was found too small for the accommodation of the congregation at the evening service, it was decided to hold it in the barn. The old pulpit from the cottage was therefore brought into requisition, and the lamps were suspended from the beams. The barn, however, although holding about 360, was too small, many being unable to obtain admittance'...'Mrs Barfoot ably presided at the harmonium at both services...'

1912 DCRO, NM. 2:S19/M1 1/4
A memorial arch was erected in front of the 1962-63 Tolpuddle chapel, unveiled by the Rt Hon. Arthur Henderson MP.

1976 Andrew McCarthy, with contributions from others, 'Tolpuddle Old Methodists Chapel Renovation Project Viability Report – AHF ref: PVG35'
Tolpuddle Conservation Area was designated in January 1976. It has 24 Listed Building entries, of which only three are listed as Grade II*; this includes the former Methodist Chapel. It is listed as one of the 'Key Listed Buildings' in the village, and itemised as being one of the main causes for concern.
'Detrimental Features'
'Concerns over the future of the former Methodist Chapel, seemingly at risk, with collapsing roof, eroded and failing walls and windows.
The former Methodist Chapel is constructed of cob, a mixture of chalk, mud and straw. Not being particularly weatherproof, cob is often coated with a smooth render or roughcast. The cob can be seen clearly where the render has fallen off, as at the former Methodist Chapel'.

1988 Andrew McCarthy, with contributions from others, 'Tolpuddle Old Methodists Chapel Renovation Project Viability Report – AHF ref: PVG35'
Planning was refused for a restoration project on the grounds that as 'not conducive to the area of conservation' and that there would be access and parking difficulties onto the A35 trunk road which ran through the village. The village has since been by-passed.

2000 Andrew McCarthy, with contributions from others, 'Tolpuddle Old Methodists Chapel Renovation Project Viability Report – AHF ref: PVG35'
In 2000, the South West Secretary of the Trades Union Council (TUC) publicly suggested that something should be done to save the building from further decline. Despite the support of a local county council member nothing came of this.

2005 Andrew McCarthy, with contributions from others, 'Tolpuddle Old Methodists Chapel Renovation Project Viability Report – AHF ref: PVG35'
In 2005 an attempt was made by a local building firm to purchase the building and site with a view to using it as an architect's office. This was opposed by the local district council's conservation officer.

2013 Andrew McCarthy, with contributions from others, 'Tolpuddle Old Methodists Chapel Renovation Project Viability Report – AHF ref: PVG35'
In 2013 he was involved in discussions with representatives of the Methodist Church with a view to a sale for £25,000.

2014 Andrew McCarthy, with contributions from others, 'Tolpuddle Old Methodists Chapel Renovation Project Viability Report – AHF ref: PVG35'
TOCT was established in 2014 for the purpose of securing the ownership of the building and then to progress that to the renovation and appropriate re-use of the building. The organisation was formed by local residents together with a representative of the Methodist Church. A company and charity have been created with the objects of: 'The purchase, renovation, extension, maintenance and general use as a community asset of the former grade II * Methodist Chapel and its site, Tolpuddle, Dorset for the benefit of the people of Tolpuddle and of the Nation'.

Appendix Two

List Descriptions of the former chapel and its 1862 successor.

TOLPUDDLE DORCHESTER ROAD SY 7994 (north side)
15/200 Former Methodist Chapel, to east of Martyrs' Cottages
GV II*

Former Methodist Chapel, now store. 1818 (Local Methodist Society Records); altered. Cob on plinth of brick with some flint; brick dressings; double Roman tile roof. One storey with inserted loft; gable-end to road, 1 x 2 bays. Road- side gable: former central doorway bricked-up and with later window; inserted doorway above with board door; apex of gable weatherboarded; projecting ends of purlins. Rear: bricked-up short pointed-arched window; gable apex weather- boarded. Left return: at left end, bricked-up doorway with segmental header- brick arch. Right return: inserted central stable door; on left a bricked-up segmental header-brick-arched window. Interior: inserted brick and cobble cow- house floor and loft; king-post roof trusses with through purlins supported at trusses by long braces rising from walls and having short ties to feet of principal rafters; roof underdrawn with lath and plaster (mostly collapsed). In state of disrepair at time of inspection. Five of the six Tolpuddle Martyrs were Methodists and it is presumed that they worshipped in this building.

TOLPUDDLE SY 7994 DORCHESTER ROAD (South Side)
15/181 Methodist Chapel, including boundary railings and 26.1.56 memorial gateway - II
Methodist Chapel. Mid-C19, reputedly built in memory of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Plastered walls - front wall marked out in ashlaring. Slate roof with bargeboards and bracketed eaves. At right angles to road. In gable end, flush panel door in round arched opening with solid tympanum. 2 sashes with glazing bars. 2 sashes with glazing bars in side walls. Forecourt enclosed by a low brick wall with stone coping. Iron railings with spearhead tops. Brick corner pier with moulded stone cap. Memorial gateway at front, of ashlar stone. Round arch, under pediment, inscribed "Tolpuddle Martyrs" with history and date of erection 1912. Moulded imposts. Marble panels each side commemorating the Martyrs. Iron gate with vertical rails with spearhead tops. Included for local historic interest.

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Conditions

This report has been prepared for use by the Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust and their professional advisers and not to give assurance to any third party.

The purpose of this report is to give an opinion on the specific matter which was the subject of the request and not to comment on the general condition of the buildings.

Parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed, or otherwise concealed and/or inaccessible have not been inspected.

Acceptance of the report will be deemed to be acceptance of the terms of engagement and limitations.

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