



**Rev. F.B. Meyer B.A.**  
President of the Baptist Union  
who laid the Memorial Stone on  
14th November 1906

# 'New' Hope Baptist Church

centenary booklet  
1908-2008



The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts'

Haggai II:9

The women and the men were baptised separately, the women on Thursday, May 26th and the men on the following Sunday. Further members were added during the course of the Revival. F.T.Arnold in his "One Hundred Years for Christ, Hope Baptist Church Bridgend 1850 – 1950", writes that "the congregations so increased that the building could not accommodate the attendance at the evening services, which were transferred to the town hall." The Sunday School Anniversary was also held in the town hall on the 6th June 1904.

On the 3rd November 1904, outline plans for a new church to be built on the Station Hill site were put to the membership. The first estimate was for £4,000. In February 1905, the Glamorgan Gazette reported as follows, "At a meeting of the building Committee of Hope Chapel, plans prepared by the local architect, Philip J. Thomas for the erection of a new chapel and Sunday School were approved . . . . . a splendid site has been secured on the Dunraven Estate and most generous terms have been obtained." These generous terms had been the result of astute bargaining between Messrs. D.H.Lloyd, Thomas Edwards, the Pastor and Dunraven Estates. The annual rental was agreed at £20.

The report in the Gazette continues, "The new building will consist of two blocks, the chapel and the schoolroom. The chapel is to seat 500 and is cruciform, with transepts and organ chamber. At the back of the chancel are the private retiring rooms for both sexes and the pastor's vestry. Underneath the chapel, with entrances from the lower road, are provided reading rooms for both sexes, lecture hall, recreation room and infant schoolroom. The design is Gothic with traceried windows in the front and the building will be of imposing appearance."

The greatest innovation was the cantilevered balcony in the sanctum itself. This removed the need for supporting pillars and accounts for the chapel's feeling of spaciousness while granting all of the congregation a clear view of the baptistry and the pulpit.

The initial plans were amended by Mr. Philip Thomas and Mr.E.Loveluck and they provided for an increase in the seating capacity. The new plans proposed that the body of the chapel would accommodate 350 people, and the choir would accommodate a further 52 people. The gallery was to hold 290 people. Hope Chapel was therefore built to cater for a congregation of 692 persons. The estimated cost for building the Church (including the Institute underneath the sanctuary) together with the Sunday School schoolroom and the caretaker's cottage was £8,800. The baptistry and pulpit were a gift from Mrs. Sam Llewellyn of Coed Parc. They were given as a memorial to the Reverend Thomas Cole. The baptistry was constructed from white marble slabs, with a raised front of alabaster which carried the inscription "Buried with him by baptism."

## cutting the first sod

On a June morning in 1906 Mr.D.H.Lloyd took Miss Hannah Cole, who was the daughter of the Reverend Thomas Cole, down to the site of the new church to cut the first sod. The Reverend Thomas Cole had been the pastor of the original Hope Chapel for thirty-five years. The cutting was done in the presence of Mr.W.Francis, the building contractor. Miss Cole was presented with a silver

spade inscribed, "To Miss Hannah Cole a souvenir of her cutting the first sod of the new Hope Baptist Church, Bridgend, 15th June 1906."

## laying the foundation stone

The first stone (the foundation stone) was laid by Mrs. W.J.Lewis on Tuesday, July 17th 1906. Mrs. Lewis was affectionately known as "the mother of Hope," and was the oldest member of Hope at the time. The Glamorgan Gazette reported that "a large number assembled . . . to witness the interesting ceremony of laying the first stone." Hope's Pastor, the Reverend J.W.Kettle presided over the ceremony.



*Reverend J.W.Kettle*



*Mrs.W.J.Lewis*

To commemorate the occasion Mrs.Lewis was presented with a silver trowel which was inscribed as follows, "to Mrs.W.J.Lewis on the occasion of her laying the foundation stone at the New Hope Baptist Church Bridgend 17th July 1906."The trowel remains in the safekeeping of the church having been given back by members of her family after her death. Mr. J.Russell Jones, a former deacon and organist at Hope, remembered that he used to sit in the pew in front of her when he was a small boy. There is a bronze tablet commemorating her and her husband's devoted membership of Hope. This is fixed to the wall near where they used to sit. The location of the foundation stone has not been recorded but it is thought that it is most likely to have been placed near the organ, perhaps at the base of one of the arches.



*Commemorative trowel*

laying the foundation stone



*Laying of the foundation stone (17th July, 1906).*

*Photograph © Edwin Miles - M.J. Stokes collection*

## placing the memorial stone

Wednesday November 14th 1906 was another "red letter" day as two important events took place in Bridgend. The Glamorgan Gazette reported it under the heading of, "Baptists' Field Day." Bridgend had been selected as the host venue for the meeting of the Baptist County Associations of Glamorgan and East Carmarthenshire and it had been decided that, as the President of the Baptist Union was to be present, it would be fitting for him to lay the memorial stone.

The morning conference was held in Ruhamah Chapel and was open to other denominations. The President (Reverend F.B.Meyer), assorted dignitaries and a considerable crowd, made up of all ages, gathered at the building site and the dedication service began at 2.45 pm. The reading was from the book of Ezra, Chapter 3 vs. 9 – 13, which records the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, following the return of the Jews from captivity and exile in Babylon.

The key words are found in verse 11 "and all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the House of the Lord was laid." Reverend Meyer then laid the memorial stone in its present position in the then partially constructed chapel. Today it can be seen immediately on entering the church through the main door. In the actual memorial stone there is a cavity and a receptacle which contains a small tube in which are sealed a souvenir of the Association meetings, as well as an account of the laying of the first stone by Mrs.W.J.Lewis.

The dedication service was then held in the English Congregational Church which was so crowded that an overflow meeting was held in Ruhamah Welsh Baptist Chapel. The service commenced with the hymn, "Our God our help in ages past." The Past President of the Baptist Union the Reverend James Owen then read Psalm 84 which begins,

***"How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!"***

At 4pm. the Reverend F.B.Meyer, a renowned preacher, based the dedication sermon on the book of Acts Chapter 3, which tells of the healing of the lame man at the gate "Beautiful" of the temple.

The core message of the sermon was the healing and re-invigorating power of God and the ability for us all to be uplifted in his service. Afterwards tea was served in the Market Hall for 450 persons.

The following is an extract from the Glamorgan Gazette listing some of the prominent people who attended the stone laying ceremony.

Reverend J.W. Kettle (who conducted the service); Mrs.J.W.Kettle; Rev.F.B.Meyer ; Dr.Edwards ; Alderman and Mrs.T.J.Hughes ; Mrs.W.J.Lewis ; Reverends David Evans, J.H.Williams, D.S.Jones, R.Odery, and R.Johns ; Superintendent J.Davis ; Messrs. D.H.Lloyd ; W.H.Huxtable ; T.Edwards ; E.Rich ; J.Chappel F.Gillard ; W.H.Hockings ; L.O.Lloyd (Hope Church Secretary) ; J.H.Jones, V.A.Piercy (both Secretaries of the Sunday School) ; T.H.Phillips (Secretary of the Building Committee) ; P.J.Thomas, (architect). Mr.T.Edwards was responsible for the decorations at the site of the chapel.

## the opening of 'new' Hope

One hundred Years ago at 2.45 pm on Wednesday 26th February, 1908 Mrs. Sam Llewellyn of Coed Parc officially opened the new Hope Chapel. This also marked the beginning of just over two weeks of services, which were held to celebrate this momentous event. The official programme carried a verse from the book of Haggai, Chapter 2 verse 9:

***"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."***

The Reverend J.W. Kettle who had been Hope's minister since 1900 was unable to be present at the opening services because of ill health which had led to his resignation shortly before the opening of the new chapel.

The opening service was conducted in the afternoon by the Reverend James Baillie from Bristol and the scriptural readings were from 1 Kings, Chapter 8 (Dedication of the temple built by King Solomon) and Revelation, Chapter 21 (the vision of the New Jerusalem where God and the Lamb (Christ) are the temple).

**Hope Chapel, Bridgend,**  
Erected and Equipped at a total cost exceeding £8,000.

• **Opening Services** •

**WEDNESDAY, FEB. 26th, 1908.**


*The Opening Ceremony will be performed by:—*  
**MRS. LLEWELLYN, of Coed-parc, at 2.45 p.m.**

*Opening Service at 3 p.m.,*  
**Preacher:—REV. JAMES BAILLIE, Bristol.**

*Evening Service at 7.30 p.m.,*  
**Preacher:—REV. R. GORDON FAIRBAIRN, Reading.**

*Collections at each Service towards the estimated deficit of £2,000 on the Building Fund.*  
TEA WILL BE PROVIDED AT 5 P.M. IN THE LECTURE HALL.

*"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." Haggai II—9.*



**HOPE NEW CHAPEL AND SCHOOLS.**

The evening service was led by the Reverend R. Gordon Fairbairn and the scriptural readings were, Psalm 1V and part of Chapter 21 of St.John's gospel. The sermons were said to have been marked "with great power," and that there "were real and beautiful tokens of the presence and inspiration of the Lord Jesus Christ." Two solos were rendered by Madame Llewellyn Cole, who sang "Like the Hart," and later on, at the evening service, "Abide with me." There was an anthem for each service, "Lift up your heads" and "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." Collections were taken towards helping to eliminate the estimated deficit of £2,000 relating to the Building Fund.

A series of special services continued over the following three weeks. On Thursday 27th February, there was the annual missionary meeting which was addressed by the Reverend J.Stubbs of Patna, India. Then on St.David's Day there was a service for the Sunday School scholars and their parents. Sunday School numbered around 450 scholars, the size of a medium primary school today.

The morning and evening services (11am. and 6.30pm.) were conducted by Dr.Edwards, Principal of the South Wales Baptist College. On Wednesday 4th March, the Superintendent of Dr Barnardo's Mission Church, Mr.Walter Notman, addressed a further meeting. The second Sunday of celebrations was led by Mr.W. M. Brace, MP.

This was followed on the Wednesday with an evening service conducted by the Reverend George Brain who was the Association's Evangelist. Reverend Brain also went on to act as an interim Minister at Hope from March until September 1908.

The Reverend James Owen led the Sunday services on the 15th March, and the series of opening services ended on the 18th March, with the Reverend John Williams, President of (what was then) The Glamorganshire and Carmarthenshire English Baptist Association.

