

Brixham Baptist Church

A brief history



The front of the church in 1895

Brixham Baptist Church was founded in 1799 as a daughter Church of Dartmouth Baptist Church. Thomas Roberts a 19 year old student minister was asked to guide the young flock under the direction of the Minister from Dartmouth. Within a remarkably short time the flock had out grown the

rented meeting room and plans were made to build a church where the current building now stands on the 'Island' in the centre of Brixham. This was achieved by 1801 in spite of fierce opposition to the "Dissenters" from the locals, the Navy Chaplains attached to the British fleet anchored in the bay fending off Napoleon and the established Church. None the less the church continued to grow throughout the 19th century under the direction of Godly pastors and committed members. The building was first renovated in 1858 and then a major refurbishment in 1895 left the building externally largely as it is today. The interior has recently been updated and revitalised.



The church from a sketch dated 1849. The external stair to the gallery can be seen.

The Sunday school has always been a top priority for the church. The present building was completed in 1872 whilst Rev J.P. Carey, the grandson of William Carey, was the minister. Records show the Sunday school in 1900 had 52 teachers and 680 pupils supported by a church membership of 204. Bible classes were a major part of the churches outreach and the youngsters took part in regional competitions right up to the 1950s.



The Sunday school with the church behind.

The annual Sunday school treats were a well looked

forward to event. These were preceded by a parade through the town and onto the treat field. Sports, games and races were followed by "The Tea" served to the pupils by the teachers and an army of helpers.



The Tea Treat in 1921



The Parade along the harbour in 1907.

The 1950s and 60s saw the blossoming of the Youth For Christ movement and enthusiastic teams set out from the church to witness to other churches and at public events. Several young members

went on to Morelands Bible College, then located at Dawlish, for training in the Ministry and are now established Ministers in churches throughout this country and beyond.



The Sunday School teachers in 1960

The Boy's Brigade and Girls Brigade are long established in the church. Although numbers are down from the peaks of earlier times both sections maintain sustainable groups and are greatly appreciated.



■ FUN FOR THE YOUNG: The Rev Phil Marston over looks the Island Club crowd
PHOTO: ANDY WHEATHEAD/ST. MARK'S

The Sunday school has changed with the times and now is established as a fully modern youth ministry. The Sunday school is now Sunday Club with an integrated programme for all age groups. The Island Club, with a membership of around 200 church and non church youngsters meets on Friday evenings to hang out, play games and become aware of what it means to have fun in a Christian environment.