

**The Early History of the
Congregational Church in
Caterham, Surrey
1863–1923**

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Printed for Private Circulation

2019

Written and published by Ray Howgego, 2019,
for the Caterham United Reformed Church,
formerly Caterham Congregational Church.

Re-issued with minor corrections, 2024, 2025.

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Typeset in 10-pt Cambria by the author.

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Preface

This book traces the history of Congregationalism in and around Caterham, Surrey, from its beginnings in 1863 to the jubilee celebrations of 1923. The latter year was chosen for two reasons: firstly because the physical and social structure of the church, along with its buildings and traditions, had largely been established and would change little over the next twenty years; and secondly because the period after 1923 is adequately treated by *A Book of Memories*, edited by John Mathias and published by the Caterham Valley United Reformed Church in 1999. The text of Mathias's spiral-bound book consists mainly of reminiscences by some of the older church members, but it does devote a few pages to the early history of the church, drawing heavily on an earlier publication, Marion Clarke's *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*.

Marion Clarke's 20-page booklet is now exceptionally scarce, with only a single library copy recorded, and that in the Bodleian at Oxford. I am grateful therefore to Lesley Scotford for the loan of what appeared to be the only copy held by a church member. Marion Clarke was the daughter of Thomas and Anne Winter, and granddaughter of Revd Dr James Hoby, the first ordained minister to preach in the church. She was the first woman deacon and she wrote her book to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary May Fair of 1923. Born in 1861, her memory stretched back almost as far as the church's beginnings. However, as useful and as readable as Marion's book might be, it is largely based on memory rather than documentation, with the result that within its pages only ten dates are recorded, while most church members are identified only by their surnames. Sadly, these factors severely limit the usefulness of the book, which at times lacks sequential chronology and fails to distinguish between members of the same, typically large family.

To write a story of the early years that future generations could regard as definitive and devoid of anecdotal error, it was therefore felt necessary to return almost exclusively to the archives, hundreds of pages of which, mostly handwritten, languish in the Surrey History Centre at Woking. The results of this research were compared with and sometimes enhanced by previously printed biographies and articles in local history journals, reports in newspapers and magazines, genealogical website searches, and crucially the recently published biography of John Sulman. Finally, the present author makes no apologies for the copious footnotes, many of which contain interesting snippets of information, as well as citations for readers who one day might wish to take this study to an even greater depth.

Historical background & demography of Caterham Valley

The village of Caterham in Surrey began to take shape shortly after the Norman conquest and developed slowly over the next 700 years. Parts of the ancient church of St Lawrence have been tentatively dated to around 1095, while documentary evidence of enclosure for cottages is found for the twelfth century. Tax returns recorded in the 1330s suggest a population of around fifty to seventy,¹ which would only begin to increase three centuries later.² By 1800 the population numbered around 300, nearly all of whom were concentrated in Caterham-on-the-Hill, or 'Upper Caterham'. Prior to the arrival of the railway in 1856 the only buildings in Caterham Valley were a small lodge at the bottom of Church Hill, a farm at White Knobs run by the Fairall family, and a couple of cottages halfway up Croydon Road in the direction of Wapses Lodge. The railway made Caterham easily accessible from London and the valley became a prime development area, particularly for those wealthy enough to afford one of the many mansions that would spring up over the next twenty years.³

Of the well-heeled that did migrate to Caterham, it seems that an unduly large proportion would happen to be Congregationalists, or would become Congregationalists soon after arrival. One can only guess at the reasons for this, while recognizing that for at least eight years there was nowhere else to worship in Caterham Valley, with the result that those of no particular persuasion might simply choose to take a quiet Sunday morning stroll to the Congregational service just around the corner in favour of having to face the arduous trek up and down Church Hill or Waller Lane. We must also acknowledge that there would be some who would seek to benefit socially or materially from friendship or communion with those who wielded power and influence within the local community, most of whom were already Congregationalists. This sort of nepotism commonly afflicted close-knit nonconformist chapels, added which was the fact that families of Caterham Congregationalists would often intermarry, producing an ever-increasing number of second and third generation churchgoers who were in some way related to each other. This observation will become increasingly obvious to the reader of this booklet.

¹ An estimate based upon the 17 named householder tax payers.

² St Lawrence's Church archives record 82 church members in 1603, and 119 in 1676.

³ For further information on the development of Caterham see, for example: Gwyneth Fookes, ed., *The Bourne Society Village Histories 2: Caterham*, n.p., 1997; Jean Tooke, *Bygone Caterham*, Chichester, 1988.

However, having said that, the popularity of the Caterham Valley Congregational church was in a major part due to the strength of the sermons preached by W. G. Soper, his friends and his ministers, all of whom were approachable, well-loved, and devout but liberal in their outlook. Their inspiration led to the formation of numerous church-based benevolent clubs and societies, the members of which laboured incessantly for the material benefit of the 'distressed poor' — a contribution that could not fail to have been recognised throughout the wider community. Coupled with this was the privilege of belonging to an independent and self-governing church, and the attraction of the numerous events and organisations that surrounded church life, not least the expertly organised and immensely popular Sunday Schools which by the 1890s regularly catered for more than 150 children.⁴

No place to worship

Prior to May 1866, when St Mary's Church, Caterham-on-the-Hill, was consecrated, the spiritual needs of the 800-strong local community were served only by the diminutive church of St Lawrence, which itself had no service on Sunday evenings. The history of Congregationalism in Caterham begins in 1863 when the colonial merchant and entrepreneur **William Garland Soper** (1837–1908)⁵ and his wife Maria took up residence at Beulah, a large house that once stood on Mount Pleasant Road at the upper corner with Farningham Road.⁶ **Maria Soper** (1841–1927) was the third daughter of **George Davis**, a wealthy commission merchant and sometime Soper's business partner, who resided at Sylva House, between Waller Lane and Stafford Road.⁷

As Congregationalists the Sopers and Davises found no convenient place of worship, the nearest dedicated Congregational chapels at that time being the tiny overcrowded mission hall at Bletchingley (see later), or the somewhat larger, 200-seat chapels at Oxted, Reigate and George Street,

⁴ The *Annual Report* for 1892 gives the following average attendance. Sunday morning school: 56; Sunday afternoon school: 113; teachers: 18. More will be said of Sunday Schools later.

⁵ The major documentary source for the life of Soper, used extensively here, is Gwyneth Fookes, *William Garland Soper 1837–1908, Father of Modern Caterham, What the Papers Said*, Bournes Society, n.p., 2009.

⁶ Little is known of Beulah House except that it was a substantial two-storey domestic dwelling, built in 1862 or 1863, with a single chimney and gabled upper windows on all sides. It is found in a photograph accurately dated to 1916, but it was eventually demolished, possibly in connection with the gradient re-alignment of Mount Pleasant Road.

⁷ Sylva House was severely damaged on 24 March 1944 by the same string of incendiary bombs that fell along the woods and partially demolished Caterham Valley Congregational Church. Sylva House was repaired and remained occupied for some years after the war. Only its lodge on Waller Lane survives.

Croydon, all of which were proving barely adequate for the rapidly increasing population.⁸ With no immediate solution to the problem, the only option available to the Caterham congregation was to rent a shed under a large carpenter's shop in Caterham Valley.

The carpenter's shop services, 1863-64

Needless to say, the beginnings of Caterham Congregationalism in a humble carpenter's shop would hold a special place in the hearts of church members for many years to come.⁹ However, the shop's precise location has always been a subject of conflicting anecdotal evidence. It is said that Mrs Soper, every Sunday, had to push the harmonium (which she also played) up and down Mount Pleasant Road, suggesting that the carpenter's shop must have been fairly close at hand. An early account by Garland Soper himself names the carpenter as C. Barnham whose shop was 'near the railway station',¹⁰ while another gives Barnham 'a workshop on Stafford Road, the site of which would be chosen for the first Congregational chapel'.¹¹ The latter statement is wholly incorrect, while the first reflects the fact that the railway station at that time, together with its sidings and sheds, took up the whole of the space now occupied by the Waitrose supermarket and car park.

Other versions of the story, largely guesswork it seems, place the shop in Crescent Road, or to the rear of the Old Surrey Hounds,¹² but it is difficult to reconcile these with the surviving detailed and, one assumes, realistic painting of the shop which clearly shows it on a street corner with a large open frontage.¹³ An entry in the 1861 census return places at the lower end of 'Mount Pleasant' a Mr Charles Barnham, 'carpenter & joiner

⁸ Some of the early history of Congregationalism in Caterham is told in Edward E. Cleal, *The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey*, London, 1908, pp. 152–5.

⁹ An unidentified newspaper clip, outlining the history of the church to 1941, makes this very clear. Surrey History Centre, ref: 4209/3/93/10.

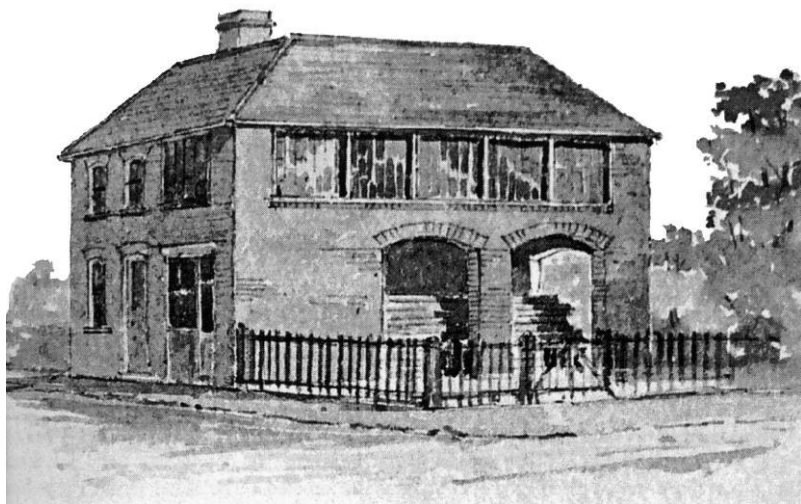
¹⁰ W. G. Soper, 'Historical Account of this Church', Church Records, Surrey History Centre, ref: 2126/1/1. Handwritten.

¹¹ Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, compiled by John Mathias, June 1999, p. 4.

¹² Irene M. Clarke: talk to the Congregational Church Women's Organisation, summary, c.1965. Irene Clarke was the daughter of Marion Clarke (below), granddaughter of Thomas Bradbury Winter, and great-granddaughter of Revd James Hoby.

¹³ The watercolour view of the carpenter's shop, and that of the chapel in Stafford Road, are part of an illuminated address in ornamental binding presented to W. G. Soper in September 1880: Surrey History Centre, ref: 2126/7/1. A watercoloured copy hangs in the vestibule of the United Reformed Church, Caterham Valley, and a good picture is found in Fookes, *William Garland Soper*, p. 7. The reliability of the painting is confirmed by the fact that many of the congregation at that time would have easily remembered the carpenter's shop as it was.

journeyman', born about 1840 in Feltham, Middlesex. He is described at the time as a 'lodger', and living next door is another carpenter, 40-year-old Jessie Rowed, who might have been a partner. Barnham, however, disappears by the time of the 1871 census, and he is absent from the local directories.



The carpenter's shop and attached cottages, now numbers 4 and 6 Croydon Road

Thankfully, the solution is provided in an article written by W. G. Soper in 1906¹⁴ and echoed by Marion Clarke in her 1923 survey of the early years of the church.¹⁵ Both sources are quite specific in placing the carpenter's shop behind what was then, both in 1906 and at Marion's time of writing, the greengrocery of George (later Walter) Sandiford, who ran the business from what is now number 4 Croydon Road. Number 4 and the adjoining number 6 Croydon Road (now Visions) were two of the earliest buildings in Caterham Valley, dating back to the 1850s.¹⁶ Formerly cottages, they were converted to shops at a later date. What is important to appreciate, however, is that Number 2 (now Rawlings opticians), on the

¹⁴ W. G. S[oper], 'Early History', *Caterham Congregational Magazine*, vol. 1, January 1906, p. 3.

¹⁵ Marion Clarke, *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, n.d. [1923], pp. 3–4. Marion Clarke, daughter of Thomas Bradbury Winter, was the first woman deacon. See later for details of the Clarke family.

¹⁶ Margaret Duck, 'Caterham Valley Shops: Nos. 2–4 Croydon Road', *Bourne Society Bulletin*, 154, November 1993, pp. 20–21. Mrs Duck dates nos. 4 and 6 as 'pre-railway', but this is difficult to reconcile with the early pre-railway lithograph which shows the newly built stationmaster's house and Caterham (i.e. Station / Valley) Hotel, but absolutely no cottages.

immediate corner of Croydon Road and Crescent Road, was not added to the rest of the terrace until 1868, at least four years after the date of the painting. This has led to untold confusion in the early accounts of the church, and to make matters worse, in the 1960s Mr Rawling the optician knocked numbers 2 and 4 into a single shop, with the result that number 4 lost its identity.¹⁷

Comparisons of old photographs with the surviving image of the carpenter's shop clearly show that the wall, windows and door facing outwards from the left of the painting correspond to numbers 6 and 4 Croydon Road, and that the fenced area to the front of the building is on the corner of Croydon Road and Crescent Road — that is, the space now occupied by number 2. Numbers 4 and 6 were still at that time domestic dwellings, attached to the rear of which was 'an open shed and over it a large loft used as a carpenter's shop'.¹⁸ It appears that this extension had by 1870 been converted to stables for the use of Mr J. Blashford, a coal merchant who lived at number 6.¹⁹ There being no other building at that time between number 6 and the corner of Mount Pleasant Road, the carpenter's shop would have been directly accessible from the Sopers' house in Mount Pleasant.

Services were held in the carpenter's shop every Sunday at 6.30 pm from 11 October 1863 until 6 March 1864 when family circumstances required the Sopers' temporary removal to Wanstead in Essex. Services were halted for a while until a retired Baptist minister, **Revd Dr James Hoby** (1788–1871), who had settled in Caterham, offered to conduct services in Soper's absence. Revd Hoby was a well known and highly respected figure in the 19th-century Baptist community and had in the 1830s travelled to America to promote Baptist causes and the abolition of slavery, the result of which was his *The Baptists in America* (1836) which remains in print today. His only daughter, **Anne Hoby** (1830–1912) had in June 1852 married the famous marine engineer and future Caterham resident **Thomas Bradbury Winter** (1826–1902). The Winter family had previously resided in Brighton and Denmark Hill.²⁰

¹⁷ During the conversion, the remains of the original south-facing windows of number 4 were clearly evident in the brickwork of what was previously a 10-inch thick outside wall.

¹⁸ W. G. S[oper], 'Early History', *Caterham Congregational Magazine*.

¹⁹ Margaret Duck, 'Caterham Valley Shops: 6 Croydon Road', *Bourne Society Bulletin*, 160, May 1995, pp. 18–20.

²⁰ It is interesting to note that Thomas Winter's first regular employment was with the firm of James Ward Hoby (1823–79), who were engineers and shipbuilders at Renfrew on the Clyde. Genealogical research throws up no obvious family relationship between the two Hobys.

The Broomfield gatherings, 1864–65

Sadly, Thomas Winter suffered the after-effects of malaria contracted on the Continent, which restricted his active involvement in the construction of large ships and forced him to apply his engineering talents to less demanding tasks. In 1864 he moved with his wife and family to Caterham and built Broomfield, a large house in Stanstead Road²¹ where he spent his leisure mostly in the garden. Winter had by now befriended Soper and happened to be a fellow Congregationalist, with the result that from mid-1864 until November 1865 he invited Hoby to conduct Sunday evening services at Broomfield. Chairs were collected from all over the house and placed in the large hall and often down the long kitchen passage, while a small but high mahogany reading desk, carried from the top floor of the house with the help of excited children, functioned as a pulpit. Anne Hoby, an accomplished pianist, led the hymn singing from a grand piano.²²

It is said that although the house was ‘some distance away on the top of the hills, large numbers gathered for worship’. Revd Hoby, described as a ‘white-haired, rosy-cheeked, upright cheery old man’, resided at Broomfield until his death on 20 November 1871. The mahogany reading desk eventually found its way to the present church, where until its disappearance it stood in an obscure corner bearing a brass plaque with the inscription: ‘This table was used by Dr. Hoby as a reading desk when conducting services in the hall at Broomfield, Caterham, in the years 1864–5, before the building of any Free Church in the neighbourhood’.²³

The Stafford Road Congregational Chapel, 1865–75

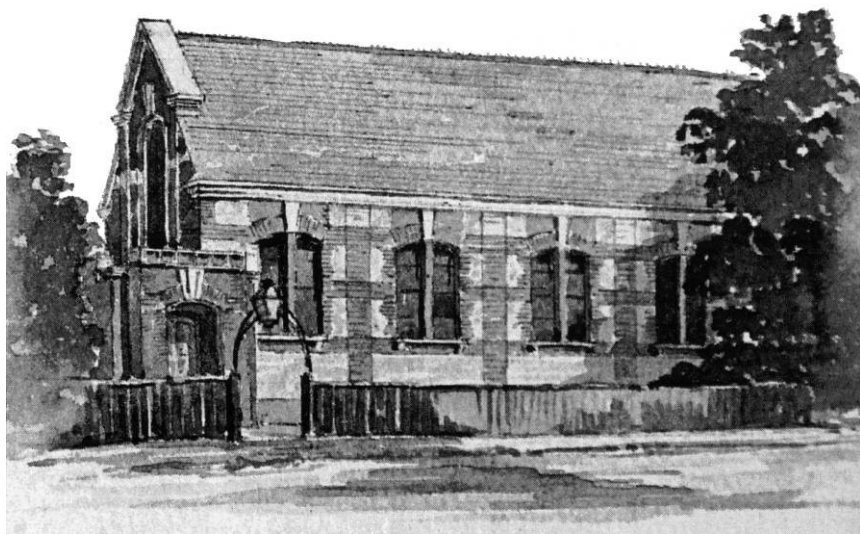
While interim services proceeded at Broomfield, a substantial flint and brick Congregational chapel, capable of accommodating 150 (in some accounts 200) worshipers and costing £1,000, was being erected in Stafford Road, paid for entirely by George Davis, Maria’s father, and subsequently gifted to William Soper. The first service was held there on 26 November 1865, and the chapel remained in use for almost ten years. Soper was invited back to Caterham to minister at of the evening services, which he did for the next three years (1866–8), while Revd Hoby took charge of the morning services,

²¹ Broomfield was situated on the east side of Stanstead Road between Harestone Lane (Pepper Alley) and Beech Grove. Later known as Old Lane House, it was demolished to make way for the Aldercombe Close estate.

²² Irene M. Clarke: talk to the Congregational Church Women’s Organisation. Quoted in Gwyneth Fookes, ‘Thomas Bradbury Winter and his son Frederick Bradbury Winter, of Caterham’, *Local History Records*, 69, November 2011, p. 19.

²³ Marion Clarke, *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, p. 3.

both of them sometimes assisted by visiting ministers. Soper now took up residence with his family at The Priory, a new house built for him on a plot adjacent to Caterham railway station, on the corner of Stafford Road.²⁴



The old Congregational chapel in Stafford Road. Demolished in 2013

The chapel's first baptism, that of Richard Talbot Frazer, son of the hotelier George Frazer, was conducted on 19 August 1866.²⁵ A further 55 would follow over the next nine years. Only two marriage ceremonies would be conducted at the Stafford Road chapel: Reuben Fairall and Arabella Hyde on 27 February 1869, and William Barker and Mary Robson on 2 April 1870. No baptisms or marriage ceremonies had been carried out in the carpenter's shop, and funeral services would always be few and far between, only 35 being recorded across the 37-year period 1876 to 1912, and most of those in 1888–92.

In 1868 the church committee (consisting of W. G. Soper, Joseph Pash, Thomas Bradbury Winter, George Davis, Edwin Reeve and Archibald

²⁴ The Priory remained the Sopers' home until their removal to Harestone around 1880–81. It was then sold to the South East Railway Company and rented to tenants, one of whom was Dr Samuel Davey, a local GP and yet another member of the Congregational Church. The house was demolished in 1929 and replaced with a car salesroom with flats above.

²⁵ Church Records: Surrey History Centre, ref: 2126/1/1. Two undated, possibly earlier baptisms are listed: Christiana Davis (daughter of George Davis) and William John Cooper.

Reid)²⁶ appointed the church's first full-time pastor, **Revd James Branwhite French** (1827/28–1914). Revd French had been born in Hackney and in his mid-twenties had trained as a minister at Cheshunt College. He had served as pastor at Bradford-Lister Hills Chapel (1854–6) and at churches in Richmond and Bayswater. He would become better known as author of the frequently quoted *Walks in Abney Park, with Life-photographs of Ministers whose Names are found there* (London, 1883), which ran to three editions.²⁷ Revd French commenced his ministry on 28 June 1868 and with his wife Mary occupied a house in Godstone Road, later moving to The Garlands (also known as Waller House), a house owned by Soper on Stafford road.²⁸



The Stafford Road Congregational chapel on the 1:2500 OS map, surveyed in 1869. The Garlands (or Waller House) is the house immediately to the north of the chapel.

²⁶ Pash (see below) would leave the area in 1871, and Reid would die in December 1869.

²⁷ James Branwhite French also published *The Cattle Plague Distinguished from a Judgment*, London, [1866?]. The British Library Catalogue also has: James Branwhite French, *Select Phrases in the Canton Dialect*, 3rd edn ed. by J. G. Kerr, Hong Kong, 1889, but this is unlikely to be the same author.

²⁸ The Garlands was a large house, built apparently by W. G. Soper on the railway side of Stafford Road in the late 1860s on land previously owned by the railway. As such it lay immediately adjacent to the Congregational chapel. At some time it accommodated, among others, George Davis (about 1870), Revd James French (1871), William Soper, junior (about 1886), and Dr T. Edward Lindsay, the organist at St Mary's Church (about 1900). In 1932, I. M. Beasley, a firm of lampshade manufacturers, bought the property and remained there for many years. The house was demolished in 1998. See Margaret Duck, 'I. M. Beasley & Co. Ltd', *Bourne Society Bulletin*, 175, February 1999, pp. 20–23.

It was during French's ministry that the church was officially 'formed' on 9 August 1868 with 29 members, and the first official Church Meeting took place on 2 September 1868.²⁹ The names of the original 29 founder members are as follows:

James Branwhite French (pastor)	Edwin Reeve
Mary Ann French (his wife)	Ellen Reeve (his wife)
William Garland Soper	Ellen Reeve (his daughter)
Maria Soper	Eliza Reeve
Thomas Bradbury Winter	M[-----] Reeve
Anne Winter	Archibald Reid
Joseph Allworth Pash	Sarah Uzzel
Naomi Pash	Georgina Hudson
Mary Ann Pash	Mary Anne Coffin
Ellen Pash	Sophia Cooper
Elizabeth Pash	S[----a] Hawker
Henry Pash	Sophia Hussler
Louisa Arnold	Maria Cornell
Eleanor Sarah Arnold	Elizabeth Sawyer
Clarissa Ansell	

It will be immediately apparent that women outnumbered men by more than two to one, a ratio that has remained relatively constant ever since. Little is recorded of other activities in the 'Old Chapel', as it came to be called, although it is known that the wealthy shoe manufacturer **Joseph Pash**,³⁰ his wife Naomi, and their six children were 'great workers in the musical part of the services, in Sunday School, and Mothers' Meetings'.³¹ Revd French resigned on 29 August 1872 and subsequently moved with his wife to Margate, where he is found as a Congregational minister in the 1881 census. In January 1873 he was followed at Caterham by **Revd Robert Davey** (1821–1916?). Born in Needham Market, Suffolk, he was a Homerton student who had held pastorates at Ripley, Olney and Foulmire. He resided with his wife Anne for a few years at the house originally named Melrose, later renamed Annandale, now number 14 Harestone Valley Road and still occupied by a much loved church member.

²⁹ Church Records: Surrey History Centre, ref: 2126/1/1. Most of the names on the handwritten list of founder members have been crossed out, indicating that they had died or moved away. This has resulted in two or three of the names being impossible to read with any certainty.

³⁰ Joseph Allworth Pash (b. 1812) built Woodland House (later The Moyle House) at the top of Tupwood Lane and lived there with his wife and six children in 1865–71, after which the family left Caterham and the house was rented to tenants.

³¹ Marion Clarke, *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, p. 9.

The Caterham Valley church. Proposal, design & foundation

The early 1870s witnessed a considerable growth in the population of Caterham, as people, many of them members of a wealthy upper-middle class, drifted there to escape the noise and pollution of inner London. By 1872 the congregation had expanded so much that the necessity for a 'more commodious chapel' had become obvious.³² Plans for the building were drawn up by a Building Fund Committee chaired by **James Kemp Welch** and including Robert Davey (honorary secretary), Thomas Redgate (treasurer), Thomas Bradbury Winter, and William Garland Soper, with support from wealthy Fleet Street publisher **James Clarke** (1824–88) whose son **James Greville Clarke** (1854–1901) would also become a local benefactor.

Land was purchased in the triangle between Harestone Valley Road and Tupwood New Road (now Harestone Hill),³³ and on 9 June 1874 the foundation stone was laid by William Soper. The ceremony began with the presentation by Thomas Redgate to William Soper of an inscribed silver trowel with an ivory handle. The shape of the building was outlined on the ground, and in a cavity at the foot of what would become the clock tower, Soper placed a few coins of the year, a copy of the day's *Times* and another of the *English Independent*, the order of service, and a number of financial and administrative documents.³⁴ Soper then spread some mortar with his silver trowel, and the foundation stone was gently lowered into place. After tapping it down with a 'most inadequate' mallet, Soper declared in a loud voice that it was 'well and truly laid.'

Five bricks were placed in a single course above the foundation stone, engraved with the initials of children of members of the Building Fund Committee. These were: **WS**: William Soper junior (1861–1940), **JC**: Jessie Clarke (later Mrs Gooding; an aunt of Irene M. Clarke), **MMR**: Margarite Maria Redgate ('Maggie', b. 1861, later Mrs Linder), **MW**: Marion Winter (b. 1861, later Marion Clarke), and **MES**: Maria Eliza Soper (b. 1873, later Mrs Lyon, then Mrs Fraser).³⁵ The inscriptions are still clearly visible today; far more so than those on the foundation stone itself.

³² 'Congregational Church, Caterham', *Congregational Yearbook*, 1875, p. 435.

³³ The land was previously the property of George Henry Drew. Why Soper chose this site is something of a mystery, given that he already owned a more central plot on the corner of Harestone Valley Road and Station Avenue, at that time a nursery garden.

³⁴ 'The New Congregational Church', *The Croydon Observer*, 12 June 1874; reprinted in Fookes, *William Garland Soper*, pp. 10–11.

³⁵ Marion Clarke, *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, p. 5. Mrs Clarke states that the bricks were laid by the children (all except, one assumes, MES, who was still a babe in arms!).

It must be mentioned that, according to church historian Norman Taylor, many in the congregation opposed Soper's role in laying the foundation stone, fearing that the church would be seen to have been built on the proceeds of the labour of poor South African natives, Soper having made his fortune as a merchant in that part of the world.³⁶

The new building was to be designed by **John Sulman** (later Sir John Sulman, 1849–1934),³⁷ prospective son-in-law of **Thomas Joseph Redgate** (1809–90). Redgate, a nouveau riche London provision merchant, director of Redgate & Co., Mansion House, was a friend of Soper and a deacon in the Croydon George Street church. He is said to have cornered the market for cheese, butter, and bacon just before the siege of Paris by the Prussians in 1870, making a great deal of money in the process.³⁸ It was no doubt through Redgate's desire to promote the prospects of his future son-in-law that Sulman got the job. After living much of his married life in Croydon, around 1872 Redgate moved with his wife Sarah (1821–77) and five daughters³⁹ to Caterham where he built Cedar Grange, the large house set back from Tupwood Lane which is now North Downs Hospital. His wife died prematurely five years later.

On Redgate's suggestion, Soper approached Sulman one Saturday evening with a request for draft sketches that he could present to the committee the following Monday. Sulman wrote in his reminiscences:

Of course I said yes, and having had a hint beforehand, was prepared with instruments and paper and immediately set to work, going hard past the stroke of midnight, when I knocked off till 5 a.m. on Monday morning, went up to London by the 8 a.m. train and was back again in time for the Committee in the evening with the sketches complete.⁴⁰

The roofs were to be tiled; the walls built of red brick externally with white gaults internally, and relieved with hard Boxground Bath stone. Ornaments included transept columns of polished Devonshire marble, and an ornate central stained-glass rose window which was a gift from Sulman himself.

³⁶ Norman Taylor to Zeny Edwards (below), personal communication, 21 April 1999.

³⁷ The major source for Sulman's life is: Zeny Edwards, *A Life of Purpose. A Biography of John Sulman*, Haberfield, NSW, 2017. Sulman's association with Caterham is treated quite thoroughly. Primary documentation and research material, including that relating to Sulman's career in England, is held in the State Library of New South Wales, ref. codes 874424, 896881, 442849, and 862278.

³⁸ Zeny Edwards, *A Life of Purpose*, p. 44.

³⁹ The daughters were: Sarah Clark (b.1848), Mary Clark (b.1855), Eleanor H. (b. 1857), Julia Alice (b.1859), and Margarite Maria (b.1861).

⁴⁰ Quoted in Zeny Edwards, *A Life of Purpose*, p. 52.

Other windows were of tinted cathedral quarry glazing, and two doors through the end wall would provide immediate access to the vestries. A cement dado, 5 feet high and intended to be painted, ran all around the church.⁴¹ Close attention was given to the acoustics, and good ventilation was obtained through the boarded roof and by means of a ventilating trough adjustable from the floor of the church.

A massively elaborate Romanesque bell tower, proposed by Sulman as a 'symbol of spiritual aspiration', was later scaled down to the more affordable clock tower which one sees today, and of which Sulman did not entirely approve. The clock itself (see later) would be installed in 1878. As Zeny Edwards would later observe in her definitive work on Sulman: 'the interplay between the verticality of the tower and the horizontality of the body was the distinguishing feature of the Sulman design... It drew features from other architects, reflecting somewhat the ecclesiastical designs of prominent English architects such as William Butterfield and Richard Norman Shaw'.⁴²

The accepted design with its simplified clock tower was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1875, and was printed in *The Building News* on 3 April 1874. For Sulman's intended more elaborate tower, without the clock, one must study his proposal for the Milton-on-Thames Congregational Church, a view of which appears in *The Building News* of 2 January 1874. (That tower was another that never materialised). An interior view of the church appeared after completion in *The Building News* of 5 November 1875, while a scarce Bunce Brothers photograph, dated to around 1900, shows some of the later modifications to the interior, including gas lighting and the richly decorated ceiling.⁴³ (These are illustrated on pages 15 and 17).

The Caterham Valley church. Construction & dedication

Construction of the new church was assigned to Messrs R. H. & R. Roberts of Tollington (Islington) and was completed in precisely ten months. A chamber to the left of the pulpit contained an organ with two manuals, fifteen stops and independent pedal. Built by Henry Jones of 136 Fulham Road, South Kensington, it cost £250 which was generously donated by Mrs Soper. The same organ, despite its severe inadequacies, remained in use until

⁴¹ In addition to Edwards, a description of the interior of the church is given in *The Croydon Chronicle*, 10 April 1875.

⁴² Zeny Edwards, *A Life of Purpose*, pp. 52–3.

⁴³ This photograph, together with a computer enhanced copy by the present author, is in a small display cabinet in the vestibule of Caterham Valley URC.

24 March 1944 when the sanctuary was destroyed by an incendiary bomb.⁴⁴ A temporary replacement for use in Harestone Hall was acquired in 1946 from Grove Chapel, a Congregational church in The Avenue, Stratford, Essex. The organ was rebuilt in 1951 with modifications into the reconstructed sanctuary, and remained there until replaced in 1970 by what became the basis of present instrument.⁴⁵



John Sulman's proposed design for the new Caterham Valley church which was closely followed throughout its construction with the exception of the lecture hall and back rooms which were added in 1877–8. Printed in *The Building News*, 3 April 1874. (Author's collection).

⁴⁴ Details of this tragedy are given in the Appendix to this booklet, pages 49 to 52.

⁴⁵ Barry Williams, *Caterham United Reformed Church Organ*, draft copy; publication pending.

The new church was dedicated to the service of God on 6 April 1875, just two days after Soper had conducted the final service at the chapel in Stafford Road. Sermons were preached in the morning by Revd Dr Parker of City Temple, and in the evening by Revd Dr Joshua C. Harrison. A 'cold collation' was served in a marquee behind the church. Designed to hold 400 worshippers,⁴⁶ the new church had cost £4,080, towards which Soper had contributed £1,500. It had left the congregation with a debt of £1,200, but by the end of the ceremonies, which took place in the marquee following the dedication of the church, a further £1,350 had been promised, of which Soper had contributed £400.⁴⁷ At the beginning of the evening service, the thrilling news was proclaimed that the whole sum had been raised, and 'the congregation rose to sing the Doxology with full hearts'.⁴⁸ Regular services began immediately at 11 am and 7.30 pm on Sunday, with a week-night service every Thursday at 7.30 pm. The first official ceremony, on 15 April 1875, was the marriage of John Sulman to **Sarah Clark Redgate** (1848–88), the eldest of Thomas Redgate's five daughters.

The church was accessed through opposite side gates on Harestone Hill and Harestone Valley Road, and the borders of the triangular plot were planted with conifers. However, the trees grew rapidly and by the early 1900s were beginning to obscure the view of the church and its clock tower. In 1911, so that the prospect of the church would complement that of the Soper Hall, which was at that time in the course of construction, it was decided to fell the trees at the apex of the triangle (those obscuring the view) and construct a vehicular access through wrought iron gates where pedestrians now enter the garden under the 'floral arch'.⁴⁹ Further removal of the conifers, together with the ivy that was steadily making its way up the tower, took place in the late 1920s and early 1930s, leaving only the conifers that presently survive. By the time the renovation of the war-damaged church had taken place in 1951, vehicular and pedestrian access was much the same as it is today.

The church was lit entirely by a number of gas 'candelabras', arranged in line down the centre of the church, which could be lowered from the high ceiling. A full conversion to electric lighting with holophane shades

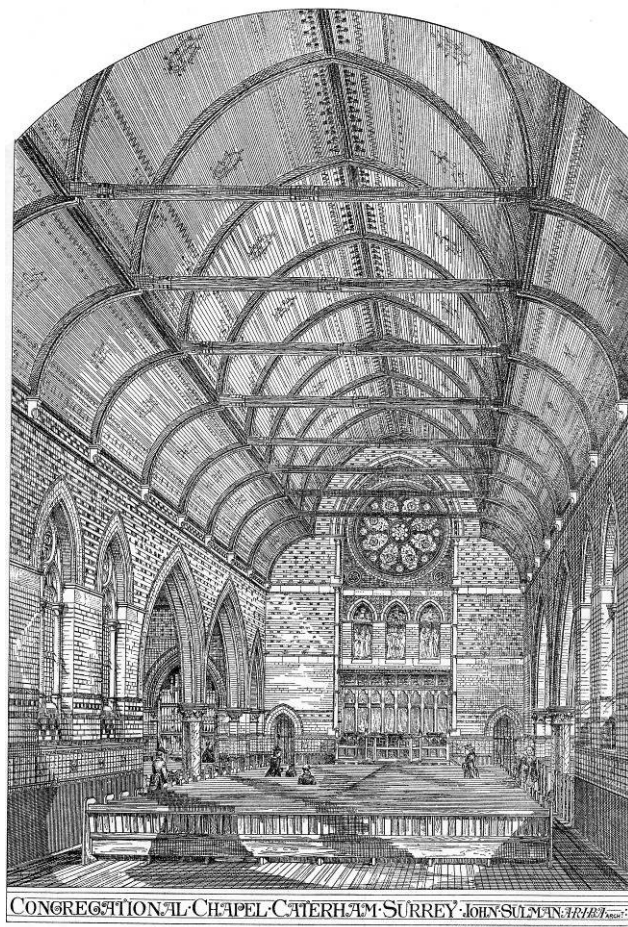
⁴⁶ Careful study of available lists suggests that by mid-1875 no more than 90 worshippers had registered as church members, and some of these had already died or moved away. This number would have been boosted by children and non-members, but 400 would seem a little optimistic.

⁴⁷ *The Croydon Chronicle*, 10 April 1875. Precise figures for the costs of construction projects vary from one report to another, depending on precisely what they include, or exactly how they are presented. See also note 51.

⁴⁸ Marion Clarke, *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, p. 6.

⁴⁹ Tooke, *Bygone Caterham*, caption 112.

was accomplished in 1921 under the direction and at the expense of Mr Herbert Clarke, and a pulpit light was installed at a similar date in memory of Percy Clarke (see page 48). An antiquated system of heating remained in use for many years and was never terribly successful. Members of the congregation unfortunate enough to be forced into sitting under the large windows in the transepts would shiver in the icy down-draught.⁵⁰



The interior of the church immediately after construction. A drawing by John Sulman printed in *The Building News*, 5 November 1875. (Author's collection).

⁵⁰ Marion Clarke, *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, pp. 6–7.

The publisher and wealthy benefactor James Clarke created in one of the back rooms a **Free Library**, through which as many as two or three thousand exchanges of books might pass during the winter season. Initially the exchange of books took place every Saturday evening, presided over by Mr William Borer, the librarian. A church report for 1888 states that the library had 250 books and in that year was open for exchange every Wednesday from 6.30 to 7.30 pm. By 1900 a similar free library had been opened at the Mission Hall in Caterham-on-the-Hill, presided over by Mrs Tomlinson, while Mr Ralph Wright was looking after the Valley library. Both libraries were available to the general public, not just to church members.⁵¹ It appears that the library in the Valley church came to an end in 1914 when its room was taken over by a scout group.

Harestone Hall

In 1876 William Garland Soper was appointed chairman of the Surrey Congregational Union. In March 1877 Revd Davey resigned on account of ill health⁵² and later took charge of a church in Queen Street, Dover. He retired in 1889 and spent his last years in Streatham where he died well into his nineties. He was replaced at Caterham around August 1878 by **Revd James Legge** (1839–1911), a Scotsman, previously of Hanley, who arrived with his wife Esther, three daughters and one son, residing at 2 Grosvenor Villas, Godstone Road, and subsequently at Waller House (Soper's property, also known as The Garlands, in Stafford Road). The couple would subsequently produce another five children, making nine in all. Legge was remembered as an eloquent preacher who 'visited well and endeared himself to all by his gentle, affectionate nature'.⁵³

In the meantime the church committee decided that the time had come to supplement the existing building with an adjoining lecture hall, vestries and classrooms, £1,300 for which had been tentatively set aside in 1873. The foundation stones for the new extension were laid by William Soper on 2 October 1877, and the opening services, preached by Revd J. Baldwin Brown, were held on 4 June 1878. The total cost of the extra buildings had by then escalated to £4,300, of which £2,000 was promised at the opening, the remaining £1,000 to be found later.⁵⁴ The new so-called Lecture Hall, later known as Harestone Hall, would over the years become

⁵¹ *Caterham Congregational Church Report for 1888*, p. 12. Report for 1900, p. 15.

⁵² Davey's resignation speech is in the Surrey History Centre, ref: 1331/4/8.

⁵³ Marion Clarke, *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, p. 10.

⁵⁴ W. G. Soper would later estimate the total cost of the Caterham Valley church to have been £14,277. *Caterham Congregational Magazine*, vol. 1, January 1906, p. 4.

host to countless local clubs and societies, uniformed organisations, and various entertainments. These would include such as the Congregational Literary Society, the Harestone Young Peoples' Club, the Harestone Social Club, and the Caterham Literary Society. It would perform a special role in both world wars, and for seven years would host Sunday services after the wartime bombing of the sanctuary.

During the severe winter of 1879–80 a **soup kitchen** distributed soup to all comers at a rate of one penny per quart. Remarkably, this action generated, by the end of the season, a profit of £6 which was distributed locally for the benefit of the 'distressed poor'.⁵⁵



A rare Bunce Brothers photograph of the interior of the church about the year 1910; digitally enhanced by the author from a badly faded original in the vestibule of Caterham Valley United Reformed Church. The interior would remain virtually unchanged until 1944.

⁵⁵ *Caterham Congregational Church Yearbook* for 1881, p. 23. Bound in a single 12mo volume, printed, with reports for 1879, 1886–89 and 1892–1900. Surrey History Centre, ref: 7444/1/1. No other annual reports were found, so it is uncertain whether they ever existed.

The clock

In 1878 a turret clock with a single bell was finally installed into the tower. Known locally as 'Little Ben' and made by Gillett and Bland of Croydon, it chimed the hour and was much valued by local residents as their major source of timekeeping. In the absence of traffic noise the chimes were audible across the whole of Caterham Valley, and even on the hill. It appears that the installation of the clock was largely financed by Thomas Bradbury Winter, who for the next 24 years would climb the tower to keep the mechanism wound, oiled and adjusted.



The original clock faces were dark grey in colour, with Roman numerals in white. However, following Thomas Winter's death in October 1902, his family decided in his memory to replace the clock faces with light transparent dials that could be illuminated from inside the tower.⁵⁶ It is recalled that **George Risby** (1869–1940),⁵⁷ paternal grandfather of Anne Bailey, was responsible for the installation of the new clock faces, having been hauled up in a cradle supported by scaffolding.⁵⁸ The new faces, with a light grey inner disk and white outer annulus with black Roman numerals, lasted for many decades and happily survived the bombing of 1944. The inner disk was subsequently replaced by one in white, and this arrangement lasted until the night of 27–28 March 2016 when debris blown on a gale-force wind caused severe damage to several of the faces.

These were subsequently replaced at considerable expense.

Thomas Winter's memory was also celebrated by a handsome brass lectern, bought by members of the congregation, which for many years stood beside the organ but was subsequently lent to Caterham School. Two small clocks were installed inside the church in 1912 in memory of his wife.

Inset: A rare pre-1902 photograph of the original clock face; dark grey with white numerals.

⁵⁶ Fookes, 'Thomas Bradbury Winter and his son Frederick Bradbury Winter...', p. 19.

⁵⁷ George Risby was born in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, in 1869, and moved to Whytecliffe Road, Purley around 1889, occupation: bricklayer. He married Emma (née Hewitt, 1874–1951) and resided at 23 Highfield Road, Caterham. He died on 13 December 1940. The couple had three daughters and a son, also named George, born in 1904.

⁵⁸ Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, p. 5.

The bishop (a digression)

There is a local story,⁵⁹ related by **Frederick Bradbury Winter** (Thomas's son), that a certain bishop visiting Caterham asked to be directed to the nearest (Anglican) church but, through some misunderstanding, was pointed towards the Congregational Church with its splendid clock tower. When the bishop eventually arrived at the tiny Anglican Mission Church⁶⁰ which had stood in Clareville Road since 1871, the bishop decided, there and then, that his flock must have something at least as good as the Congregationalists. As a result, the present church of St John's was duly erected and opened in December 1882. The truth of the story is uncertain but plausible, and can only refer to the visit on 23 July 1880 by the Right Revd Dr A. W. Thorold, Bishop of Rochester, the only Anglican bishop known to have set foot in Caterham Valley before 1882.⁶¹ More likely, however, the building of St John's was due to Caterham Valley being created a separate parish.

The Caterham Valley church, 1883–93. Caterham School

Revd James Legge, 'a very good preacher', retained the ministry until September 1883, during the last two years of which he had been co-opted onto the General Committee which oversaw the transfer of the Congregational College to Caterham from its former home in Lewisham.⁶² The Committee also included the wealthy local publisher **James Clarke**, who contributed a low interest loan of £2,000 towards the new school. In addition, **Revd Josiah Viney** (1816–96), retired president and former secretary of the College, would retreat intermittently to the house named Alleyne in Harestone Valley.⁶³ Viney was a deacon, and over the pew which he used to occupy there was a brass tablet recalling his services to the

⁵⁹ This story was first related in print by Frederick Bradbury Winter in an article for *The Caterham Shopping Guide*, 1931. It was reprinted in the *Bourne Society Bulletin*, 191, February 2003. Winter believed it to be true.

⁶⁰ The Anglican Mission Church in Clareville Road, constructed in wood on a brick foundation by a Mr Carruthers, was opened on 3 December 1871 and continued in use until 1882. Much of the original structure was re-used in 1883 for the old St John's School, now the Miller Centre.

⁶¹ Jane Marshall, *A Short History of the Parish Church of St. John the Evangelist, Caterham Valley*, n.d. [1953], p. 10.

⁶² The history of Caterham School is adequately documented in: Hugh Stafford, *A History of Caterham School*, Shrewsbury, 1945; Ernest de C. Blomfield, *A Century at Caterham 1884–1984*, London, 1983; Nigel Watson, *Independent Spirit. Two hundred years of Caterham School*, London, 2011.

⁶³ Viney is known to have occupied Alleyne around 1882, then again in 1889–91, and he was living there at the time of his death on 8 November 1896. The house was owned throughout this period by a Dr Broxholm. In the 1920s and early 1930s Alleyne was used as a boarding house for Caterham School juniors. Now the site of flats named Chiltern Place.

church. It is safe to say that the presence in Caterham of an already thriving Congregational Church, together with an established community of Congregationalists, many of them wealthy, were major factors in the choice of Caterham for the new school.⁶⁴

In September 1883, Revd Legge, who had apparently come to Surrey on account of his health and for sake of its climate, had improved in body sufficiently to move to Headingley Hill Church in Leeds. He remained in Leeds in his retirement and died there on 11 August 1911. He was followed at Caterham in August 1884 by **Revd William Heather** (1855–1936), a young student direct from Cheshunt College, who arrived with his new wife Amy Holt (née Todhunter). Heather, who actually received his ordination in the Caterham Valley church, served for ten years, during which he somehow found time to father five sons, all of them born in Caterham. (Two daughters would arrive later!). Amy took an active part in church life, attending a vast number of meetings and services, and of Revd Heather himself it was said that ‘the fearlessness of his preaching was matched by the manliness of his conduct’.

Revd Heather said farewell to the church at a special function in early October 1894 when he was presented with an illuminated address and a cheque for £125.⁶⁵ The family moved to a church in Beccles, and sometime later emigrated to Whangarei in New Zealand where Amy died in 1928 and William in 1936. It was during Heather’s ministry, in October 1884, that the School for the Sons of Congregational Ministers, having moved from its former home in Lewisham with 101 boys, opened in its purpose-designed building in Harestone Valley Road. Soper became chairman of the board of governors and had been present on 23 October 1883 when Samuel Morley, the school treasurer, laid the foundation stone of the new school.

A wooden gallery was subsequently erected in the church to accommodate the boys of Caterham School, initially accessed by a wooden staircase within the sanctuary but later (about 1900?)⁶⁶ by means of an additional small tower erected to the left of the building. At first the whole school would be seated in and under the gallery, but as the number of staff and pupils grew, the older boys were promoted to the organ transept, and the middle school to the transept on the opposite side.

⁶⁴ Stafford, *History of Caterham School*, pp. 67–9. Harestone Valley was chosen in preference to a site on the hill (now the Old Caterhamians’ sports field). Other considerations were Slough, Finchley, Cheshunt, New Malden and Ewell.

⁶⁵ *The Christian World*, 11 October 1894.

⁶⁶ No precise date for the construction of the small tower was found in the records. It is already present on photographs dating from the early 1900s.

Around the beginning of 1891 W. G. Soper inaugurated the first session of '**Pleasant Sunday Afternoons**': casual non-denominational gatherings of Caterham residents (although sometimes billed as 'men only') at which Soper would lecture on a contemporary question 'affecting the social and spiritual interests of humanity'. The lectures involved such issues as 'Strikes' (February 1891), 'Our Leaders' (October 1891), 'The Jewish Question' (October 1891), 'The Missing Word' (January 1893), and 'Home Rule' (February 1893).⁶⁷

In March 1892 Soper was presented with an illuminated address in a decorative wooden case in appreciation of his work (now in the Surrey History Centre; ref. 2126/7/2). Because this came at the end of the 'fourth session', it appears that there were two sessions per year. It is uncertain for how long they continued, the last advertised being in the spring of 1893, and it was in this year that Mr and Mrs Soper placed mosaic panels on the wall above the pulpit in memory of two grandchildren who died in infancy.⁶⁸

Two significant weddings took place during this period. On 29 September 1892, Percy Clarke, son of James and Hannah Clarke of Beechhanger, Harestone Valley, married Marion Winter, daughter of Thomas Bradbury Winter of Broomfield, Stanstead Road. Marion would in 1923 become the first woman deacon.

On 1 October 1895, Maria Eliza, only daughter of W. G. Soper, married Jeremiah Malcolm Lyon (b.1872), son of Jeremiah Lyon. The ceremony took place in the Caterham Valley church amid 'such excitement and crowds... that the police had their work set to make a passage for the carriages... The honeymoon destination was Hastings via Upper Warlingham Station'.⁶⁹ The couple would subsequently divorce after having three children, and Maria would re-marry.

⁶⁷ Announcements of these lectures routinely appeared in the *Croydon Chronicle*.

⁶⁸ These were William Orme Soper (1885–8) and Violet Beatrice Soper (1889–91), two of the five children of William Soper (junior) and his wife Florence.

⁶⁹ *The Caterham Free Press*, 5 October 1895.



The church seen from Harestone Valley Road. From a postcard of around 1908. The lady with the pram is Mrs Kilby, wife of the owner of the livery stables next door to the railway station.



The rear of the church photographed in 1907. The field in the foreground is now the present author's back garden!

The Caterham Valley church, 1894–1923

Revd Heather was replaced by **Revd Arthur Pringle** (1866–1933), who began his ministry at Caterham on 19 May 1895 and resided at Maulden, 11 Clareville Road, owned by one Charles Duncan Mackinon. On 3 June 1897, in the Caterham Valley church, he married his fiancée Kate (née Street). Pringle, ‘a very striking personality’ whose sermons would fill the church to capacity, remained in Caterham until 1903 when he accepted the ministry at Purley Congregational Church and moved to a house in Russell Hill. He was largely responsible for the replacement of the small Purley chapel with a more substantial building. Pringle, always ambitious, subsequently became chairman of the Congregational Union. It is said that he was an accomplished cricketer who played regularly for the Caterham School team and in 1899 held ‘the highest total of runs and was second in the bowling averages’.⁷⁰

In 1901, during Pringle’s ministry, an assistant minister, **Revd Lancelot Kohry Fletcher** (1868–1956), was appointed for the first time. A student of Lincoln and Mansfield colleges, Fletcher had previously served in Oxford, West Ham, and Bilston, Staffordshire, and had arrived with his wife Mary (née Coulson). While in Caterham the couple had two daughters, Hilary and Gwendoline, and for an interim period, 1903–04, Fletcher was the only minister. He served until 1904 when he was appointed secretary at Tettenhall School in Staffordshire. From there he removed to Broadway in Worcestershire, then to Tunbridge Wells, where Mary died in 1955 and Lancelot in 1956.

In June 1904 **Revd Sydney Milledge** (b.1863) accepted the Caterham pastorate and arrived with his wife Ellen. Born in Holloway, he was a former student of Cheshunt College and subsequently minister at Broadstairs, Bolton, Kelvedon, and since 1899 at Victoria Road, Cambridge. While at Cambridge, Milledge had written and published *Snap Shots from the Study*, a weekly magazine containing simple Gospel messages for boys and girls.⁷¹ He resided at a house named Brooklyn at 150 Croydon Road, Caterham.

Milledge and his wife threw themselves wholeheartedly into the activities of the church, the number of which increased considerably under their guidance. A church magazine, *The Caterham Congregational Magazine*,

⁷⁰ Reminiscences of Arthur Davies-Jones, in Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, p. 44.

⁷¹ This was not his only excursion into the literary world. In 1924 he edited and published *A History of Captain Edward Samuel Underhill of the 8th Loyal North Lancs. Regiment, K.I.A. 12/10/1916*. See also note 62.

crowds.⁷⁶ Soper was buried in Caterham Cemetery, and in his memory his family installed in the Valley church a very prominent coloured window. Other church monuments, all of which were damaged or destroyed by the incendiary bomb which fell on 24 March 1944, were an alabaster tablet given by Mrs Jeremiah Lyon in honour of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (22 June 1897), and a memorial (1916) to Captain Edward Samuel Underhill, the eldest son of Mr and Mrs Underhill who lost his life in World War I.⁷⁷



Revs Heather, Milledge & Pringle photographed in 1904.
(Caterham & District Local History Centre, ref: 1782).

⁷⁶ Soper's grave was restored by public donation after being attacked by vandals. It was ceremoniously re-dedicated on 13 September 2008 by Revd David Flynn.

⁷⁷ A copy of a letter reporting the death of Captain E. S. Underhill is in the Surrey History Centre, ref: 2126/7/5/14. See also note 57. See Appendix 1 for details of the bombing.

Concerns over finance came to a head once again at the Church Meeting on 29 April 1914. The annual receipt for the ongoing financial year was predicted to be £525, leaving a shortfall of £110 which somehow needed to be raised if the church were to survive. Sunday collections had increased by £7 a year, but subscriptions had decreased by £15 or £16. Two Mission Hall concerts had raised £4 8s 2d, and a rummage sale had brought in a further £7 1s 0d, but these amounts would hardly be sufficient. It was hoped that an Exhibition and Choir Concert (together with a good deal of prayer, one assumes) would fill the gap, which they apparently did! ⁷⁸

Sydney Milledge, who is particularly remembered for his good work among the younger members of the church community, resigned in 1915 and became pastor at the Percy Congregational Church in Bath. He was replaced in October 1916 by **Revd Herbert H. Snell**, who served until 1927. Snell arrived at a particularly difficult time because since November 1914 and throughout the war Harestone Hall was used every night, including Sundays, by recruits from the Guard's Depot in Caterham-on-the-Hill, thereby forcing other activities into a dormancy from which many would never recover. Revd Snell is remembered for introducing a more liturgical service, his sermons serious, thoughtful, and studious. It was in 1920–22, during Snell's ministry, that a proposition for the admission of women as deacons was discussed at considerable length.⁷⁹ A favourable decision was eventually reached in February 1923, and in the following May the first woman deacon, **Marion Clarke**, was elected. This reform immediately increased the number of church members eligible for election as deacons from 61 (all men) to 198 (men and women).

To complete the list of ministers beyond the period of this history, we have: Revd A. W. Anderson (1927–36), Revd Charles L. Wilson (1937–41), Revd Lawrence M. Wheeler (1942–55), Revd Stuart B. Jackman (1956–61), Revd Derek N. Richmond (1961–73), Revd Terence Perry (1974–89), Revd David W. Flynn (1991–2011), and Revd Julian Thomas (2014–).⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Church Records. Surrey History Centre, ref: 2126/1/2. Typed insert.

⁷⁹ Women had always been eligible to vote for deacons, but could not stand for election themselves. The office of 'elder' replaced that of 'deacon' after the union of 1972.

⁸⁰ Dates of ministries are taken from: Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, p. 7.



Caterham Congregational Church, from a postcard of 1912 (Author's collection).

Sunday School and Bible Study societies

In Victorian and Edwardian Britain, particularly in close-knit rural communities, it was commonplace for most children to attend Sunday School — either a morning or an afternoon session — and this they appeared to do with considerable enthusiasm. At its peak, the number registered for Sunday School at the Caterham Valley church reached nearly 300, although, thankfully from the teachers' point of view, only half this number would attend regularly. In the Valley church there were two sessions, the first from 10.00 to 10.45 am, after which the older children would be expected to attend the main service, then a second from 3.00 to 4.00 pm.⁸¹ When in the mid-1930s the name 'Sunday School' was dropped in favour of the more

⁸¹ Reminiscences of Miss Daisy Sandiford, in Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, p. 59.

contemporary sounding 'Children's Church', children left the service as they do today and were spared the delights of the sermon.⁸² 'Children's Church' subsequently became 'Junior Church', one assumes because the older members no longer regarded themselves as children.

From an early date William Garland Soper was superintendent of the Sunday School and for many years held a **Young Men's Bible Class** while his wife Maria taught the infants. A **Young Women's Bible Class** appeared at a later date. Soper was followed as superintendent by Mr Rickard,⁸³ who was a member of the Children's Special Service Mission (now the Scripture Union), and then by Alfred Jones, who managed the Sunday School for many years and instituted an annual gathering of former teachers and scholars. This reunion took place every year without fail on the second Thursday in November, and is known to have continued well into the 1920s.⁸⁴

In 1880 the superintendent of Sunday School was Thomas Redgate, assisted by Frederick Bradbury Winter as secretary, and by Mrs Lydia Trotman (wife of the organist) who ran a Bible class for girls. The average attendance was astonishing: 87 for the morning session and 179 in the afternoon. In April 1880 Miss Winter⁸⁵ started a branch of the **Children's Scripture Union** which held weekday evening meetings, then from around 1899 fortnightly meetings which immediately followed gymnasium classes. Around 1900 Revd Arthur Pringle started a **Christian Endeavour** group, together with a **Bible Class** which met fortnightly on Tuesdays at 8.30 and Fridays at 3.15.

From around 1887 and throughout World War I Frederick Bradbury Winter was Sunday School superintendent. He was much loved by the children he taught and on one occasion took them to Caterham Station to see troops from the Guard's Depot leaving for Southampton, where they would embark to join those fighting in the Boer War (1899-1902).⁸⁶ The year 1900 was celebrated by the purchase of a handsome 'Sunday School banner'. However, when in November 1914 Harestone Hall was commandeered for the use of a 'Soldiers Club', Sunday School teaching came to a temporary

⁸² Reminiscences of Norman Taylor, in Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, p. 68.

⁸³ The Rickard family resided at The Mount, Warlingham.

⁸⁴ This section has been compiled almost entirely from Marion Clarke's *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, pp. 12-14. Sadly, Mrs Clarke gives very few Christian names and almost no dates.

⁸⁵ Presumably Annie Elizabeth Winter, daughter of Thomas Winter.

⁸⁶ Reminiscences of Miss Daisy Sandiford, in *A Book of Memories*..

halt.⁸⁷ Winter, however, kept in touch with a few faithful scholars in his home or workshop, and at Beechwood a small class of nine or ten met regularly on Sunday mornings.⁸⁸

When the war was over Miss Pearce⁸⁹ was asked to do what she could to revive the Sunday School. She immediately set forth, searching the highways and byways for children who had nothing to do on a Sunday, and putting together a nucleus of teachers consisting of older girls and alumni from F. B. Winter's wartime class. Over the next two years numbers increased sufficiently for organised groups to be created based on age. By the early 1920s Ernest Charles Bellatti,⁹⁰ a resident of Warlingham and a deacon at the Valley church, had formed a **Junior Graded School**, while Miss Bellatti looked after the Primary Department, and Miss Pearce took the Beginners Class and worked the **Cradle Roll**.

Fund-raising societies (all of them benevolent)

In 1879 a **Sacramental Fund** was initiated by W. G. Soper, obtained from collections made after Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month. This fund was intended for the help of the poor and sick, although sometimes directed towards a specific cause, such as widows and orphans of missionaries. It typically raised around £40 per year and was additional to the so-called **Auxiliary to the London Missionary Society** which collected money annually after a sermon delivered by Revd J. Yonge of Warrington. About 1899 a **Watchers Band**, supervised by Mrs E. Richardson,⁹¹ was created to 'band together in prayer all the friends of the London Missionary Society', and in 1900 the **Children's Missionary Band**, supervised by Revd Arthur Pringle, staged a fund-raising entertainment called 'Boys and Girls of Heathen Lands'.⁹² (This was not in any way musical but had been created to pray as a group for children in remote parts of the world, and to do 'at least one thing a year for the London Missionary Society'.) As though these were not enough, we find around 1900 a **Missionary Working Society** which had

⁸⁷ The soldiers were finally forced out by the church committee in March 1919: Church Records, Surrey History Centre, ref: 2126/1/2.

⁸⁸ Beechwood, located between Harestone Valley Road and Church Hill, was the residence of Percy and Marion Clarke and their two children.

⁸⁹ Miss Pearce was one of three daughters of George Pearce who from 1922 until the 1940s owned the stationery and toy shop at 3 Godstone Road, Caterham, later known as Crafts.

⁹⁰ Ernest Charles Bellatti lived at Clear View, 28 Stuart Road, Warlingham. He ran a furniture business in Upper Norwood.

⁹¹ Mrs Richardson lived for at least 30 years (c.1906–37) at Maulden, 11 Clareville Road, Caterham. Revd Arthur Pringle had lived in the same house in 1895 to 1903 during his ministry.

⁹² *Report for 1900*, pp. 26–7.

sent gifts to a missionary station on Murray Island, New Guinea, and the next year would send gifts to 'the family of a poor minister'.

Other clubs and societies (most of them benevolent)

The **Mothers' Meeting** began around 1865 in the Stafford Road chapel on the initiative of Mrs Maria Soper (wife of William Garland) and Mrs Naomi Pash (wife of the wealthy shoemaker Joseph Pash of Woodland House). Mrs Anne Winter (wife of Thomas) and Mrs Fanny Winter (wife of Frederick) continued the tradition, nearly always aided by the wives of the ministers. Anne Winter also organised similar meetings at the chapel in Caterham-on-the-Hill. These meetings were intended to provide help for the poorer mothers in the local community by selling them blankets and household linen at very much reduced prices. It is interesting that nothing was ever given away to the poor 'for free', and that some sort of payment, however insignificant, was expected. The philosophy behind this will be obvious to the reader.

In the late 1870s the Mothers' Meeting was absorbed into the **Benevolent Society** which also included the **Dorcas Society** and the **Maternity Society**. The Dorcas Society, which met every fourth Tuesday in the Ladies' Room, prepared garments for the poor, which it sold at around a quarter of the cost price on production of a ticket for which the recipient had paid just one shilling. The Maternity Society provided assistance to mothers during confinement. It provided a loan of linen, and gifts of groceries and 'other comforts'.⁹³ In addition to the societies mentioned above, a **Working Guild** operated under Mrs Lillie Doolette⁹⁴ in the 1900s to provide material support (usually in the form of labour or clothing) to poor families. It appears that the Mothers' Meetings ceased around the time of World War I and were never re-established.⁹⁵

The Flower Mission, a tradition which survives to the present day, began in the mid-1880s when Miss Margaret Alexander⁹⁶ laid bunches of flowers on a table in the waiting room of Caterham railway station to be picked up by church ladies who, every Monday afternoon, visited inmates of the Asylum on the Hill. When Margaret left Caterham the tradition was

⁹³ *Yearbook for 1881*, pp. 18–19.

⁹⁴ Mrs Doolette lived at Merlebank (later Alexandra House) in Tupwood Lane, now the site of Alexanders Walk. Her husband, Sir George Philip Doolette (1840–1924), made his money as a pioneer developer of the Western Australian gold mines.

⁹⁵ Marion Clarke, *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, pp. 14–15.

⁹⁶ Margaret Alexander (b. 1852) was the elder daughter of the corn broker Josias Alexander and his wife Jane. The family lived for around 10 years at Brabourne in Harestone Valley Road.

continued under the guidance of Miss Lyon, Miss Scrutton, Miss Aveline Morgan-Thomas,⁹⁷ Mrs Herbert Clarke, and Miss Irene Clarke. Companies of ladies took turns each month to distribute flowers to worthy recipients. The *Yearbook* for 1888 reported that in the previous year 2,000 bunches of flowers had been prepared, the greater number going to the London hospitals. In 1900 the twenty members of the group prepared 2,266 bunches, nearly all of which went to the Murphy Memorial Hall, a Congregational church in New Kent Road. By the 1920s as many as 200 bunches were sent weekly to Whitefield's Central Mission⁹⁸ for distribution among the poorer households of London.



Caterham Congregational Church in the 1920s, no longer concealed by conifers. The ivy was removed around 1925. (From a postcard; author's collection).

⁹⁷ Aveline Morgan-Thomas and her sister Ianthe lived at Hampden Mount, Harestone Hill. Their father was David Morgan-Thomas JP (1840–1915), famous barrister, biblical commentator, and philanthropist.

⁹⁸ Whitefield's Central Mission, at 79 Tottenham Court Road, London, was founded in 1756 by the evangelist George Whitefield. Destroyed in WW2 and rebuilt in 1957, it is now the American International Church.

Self-improvement societies

A **Young Women's Club** was created around 1920 by Mrs McLeod, meeting each Monday evening and performing operettas to packed audiences in Harestone Hall. A **Lad's Club**, formed around 1912 by Mr Crosby and Mr W. Burn, ran for some time until superseded in the 1920s by a **Young Men's Club**, led by Mr McCleod. A **Lad's Bible Class**, which appears to be a quite separate entity created around 1913, met every Sunday at 3 pm at Mr Burn's house at 197 Croydon Road. For younger women a **Girl's Gymnasium** was initiated around 1899 by Miss Beatrice Perry, followed by Miss Ianthe Morgan Thomas. A boy's gymnasium operated briefly before closing due to lack of support,⁹⁹ then re-opened around 1912 under Mr Burn. About the same year we see the formation of a **Service League** under Mr D. W. Vater of 240 Croydon Road. Its purpose remains obscure. About 1900 a **Literary Society** first appeared under the direction of Mr Herbert Clarke, hosting lectures intended for self-improvement. It continued for many years under the guidance of Hugh Stafford, the classics and history master at Caterham School.¹⁰⁰ And with a similar purpose in mind, a **Men's Meeting** was held every Sunday at 3 pm in the old Congregational chapel (Masonic Hall) in Stafford Road. This somewhat more elitist gathering hosted guest speakers and was presided over by Mr A. Cane, of Ashdene in the Croydon Road.

Organists and choir

In the early days of the carpenter's shop and Stafford Road chapel a harmonium was employed, at first played by Mrs Soper, then in the chapel by Mr Alexander C. Trotman. Trotman moved with the rest of the congregation to the Valley church in 1875 where he played the newly installed organ. He was followed by Mr Charles Hunt,¹⁰¹ who remained with the church for many years and was responsible in the autumn of 1887 for creating the first church choir.¹⁰² He immediately recruited fifty members and in several consecutive years the choir performed at the Nonconformist Choir Festival at Crystal Palace, apparently, however, without winning any prizes.

Charles Hunt retired about 1901 and was followed by Mr Welsh, then Mr Edred Weeks (about 1912),¹⁰³ and Mr A. W. Bendle. When in 1916

⁹⁹ *Report for 1900*, p. 24

¹⁰⁰ Hugh Stafford, author of one of the histories of Caterham School, taught there from 1899 to 1937. He was appointed second master in 1910. He was never elected a deacon.

¹⁰¹ Charles Hunt, R.A.M., lived at Meadowbank, in Caterham Valley.

¹⁰² *Yearbook* for 1888, pp. 10–11.

¹⁰³ Edred Weeks lived at Tollington, Beatrice Road, New Oxted.

Bendle departed to serve in the war he was replaced by Eric Harding Thiman (1900–75), a pupil at Caterham School who would achieve international renown as a composer and organist. Thiman left in 1918 but made occasional visits until 1920, then 31 years later returned to give the inaugural recital at the re-dedication of the church following its restoration from bomb damage. In 1921 he was appointed Professor of Harmony at the Royal Academy of Music. Mr Bendle, who had returned unscathed from the war in 1918, served as organist into the 1920s when he was succeeded by J. Vernon Lee (1892–1959), Caterham School teacher of gymnastics and singing, headmaster's secretary (1927–34), first school bursar (1934–9), scout-master, and general organiser. He was for many years one of the chief links between the school and the church.¹⁰⁴

In the meantime the choir, like most other activities, had been largely disbanded during World War I but had re-formed under Vernon Lee, drawing on a few people living in the neighbourhood, and for the first time recruiting about twenty staff and boys from Caterham School. A talented musician, pianist, tenor and entertainer, Lee wrote a hymn tune 'Eastview' which found its way into the 1951 hymn book and has been retained in *Rejoice and Sing* with words by G. W. Briggs.¹⁰⁵

Fund-raising activities. Purchase of a Manse

As has been mentioned before, by the early 1900s the Caterham Valley church was facing severe financial difficulties, many of its wealthy benefactors having died or themselves been hit by hard times. Revd Milledge's 'sit-in' to raise money for the renewal of the church roof has already been described and was typical of the extreme measures required. The first major fund-raising event, a sale of work, took place in 1908 to raise money for heating the 'small hall', and for a piano, and for clearing the deficit in the day to day running of the church. This was followed in 1911 by a 'Competition Fair', again to improve the heating situation, this time in Harestone Hall. In May 1914 an Exhibition of Curios, lent by friends and neighbours, together with an exhibition of paintings, raised from admission charges a considerable sum for general church maintenance. About the same time it was decided, once a year on a selected Sunday at the end of June, to have what was called a 'Giant Collection'. This was intended to defray what

¹⁰⁴ Reminiscences of Arthur Davies-Jones, in Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, p. 43. Vernon Lee started at Caterham School in 1920 and retired in 1939.

¹⁰⁵ 'Now is eternal life, if risen with Christ we stand', number 432 in the 1991 edition.

had become an inevitable annual deficit, which it did very successfully, with the result that it has continued to the present day.¹⁰⁶

The desirability of a permanent residence for ministers had long been a point of discussion, and in 1920 a second 'Competition Fair' raised £200 for a Manse fund. This was further supplemented by an 'American Tea' the following year. Hence, in 1921, when a suitable house came up for sale, the decision was made to purchase it.¹⁰⁷ The remaining debt incurred by this purchase was cleared from the proceeds of an ambitiously organised sixtieth anniversary May Fair in 1923.

Later history of the Stafford Road chapel

The former Congregational Chapel on Stafford Road would remain in the possession of the Soper family until 1913. From 1875 it was used as a drill hall, probably by the 2nd Surrey Rifle Volunteer Corps, and from 1885 it became the Caterham Masonic Lodge (no. 2095), which had been founded on 1 March 1885 and had initially met at Soper's home, The Priory.¹⁰⁸ Soper would subsequently become Worshipful Grand Master (1898) and secretary (1900) of the Caterham lodge. The freemasons often hired it out to other organisations, including Caterham Parish Council (until April 1899), Caterham Urban District Council (from April 1899), and Caterham and Warlingham Urban District Council. During the early 1900s it was used by the Valley Congregational Church as a venue for the Men's Meeting held every Sunday at 3.00 pm. It subsequently served as a parish hall for St John's Church (1913–72), a Royal Artillery Association centre (1972–8), and an engineering workshop and garage for Caterham Cars (1978–2013). It was demolished in October 2013.^{109,110}

¹⁰⁶ Marion Clarke, *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, pp. 15–16.

¹⁰⁷ This statement presents us with something of a mystery because the present manse, at 2 Harestone Hill, was not built until 1924 or (more likely) 1926. No record regarding the purchase of a manse was found in the archives.

¹⁰⁸ F. W. Chamberlain, *The Caterham Lodge, No. 2095*, Library & Museum of Freemasonry, ref: IL03913, 1935.

¹⁰⁹ Raymond Butler, 'No. 6 Stafford Road, Caterham', *Local History Records*, 79, May 2014, pp. 12–19. An excellent history of the Congregational chapel, with photographs, plans, and bibliography of primary sources.

¹¹⁰ Gwyneth Fookes, 'The First Congregational Church in Caterham', *Bourne Society Bulletin*, 185, August 2001, pp. 26–7. Extracted entirely from Cleal's *Story*.

The Caterham-on-the-Hill Congregational chapels

In 1876 a Congregational Mission Hall was established at Townend, Caterham-on-the-Hill, on land purchased on 14 November 1875 by Thomas Redgate on behalf of the trustees of the Caterham Valley church.¹¹¹ The site was a field called Fowlers, now occupied by the house at 3 High Street, and for nearly six years evening services were conducted there mainly by people from the church in the valley.¹¹² In fact it is important to appreciate how closely the 'Mission Hall', as it was always known, was tied to the Valley church, almost as an annex of the latter. It shared ministers, teachers and other facilities with the Valley, and was written up in the Annual Reports. Although it often held its own fund-raising events it did not become truly self-sustaining until forced to do so when money began to run short in the 1910s.

Revd Horace Edward Hall¹¹³ would later recall 'trudging up Waller Lane beside Mr Soper to the Mission Room which then stood close to where now is Mr Vigar's shoeing forge. The Mission Room was nicely filled in spite of rain and darkness outside, and the faces of the audience were soon all brightly interested as Mr Soper spoke the word of God to them'.¹¹⁴ In 1880 Sunday evening services were regularly taken by H. J. Harvey of Hackney College, with occasional visits by T. A. Lawford of Kenley. A Wednesday evening service was held during the winter months by Revd Legge, while William Thompson (below) took a Tuesday evening service for children with a regular attendance of 25.¹¹⁵

In 1882, with the increase in population brought about by the opening of the Guard's Depot (1877) and St Lawrence's Hospital (1874), the church exchanged, free of charge, the land at Townend for the plot on the corner of Westway and Coulsdon Road which it still occupies.¹¹⁶ The original wooden mission hall was re-erected on this site and in 1892 the present brick-built church was erected alongside it. Services were initially conducted by members of the Valley church, or by young ordained ministers in training, some of whom would proceed abroad on missionary work. It was not until around 1910 that more permanent ministers would be appointed. Records

¹¹¹ 'Abstract of a title to land in High Street, Caterham, used as the site for a mission room but later exchanged for land near the Metropolitan Asylum' [1875-82], Surrey History Centre, ref: 2126/6/1.

¹¹² Fookes, ed., *The Bourne Society Village Histories 2: Caterham*, pp. 79-80.

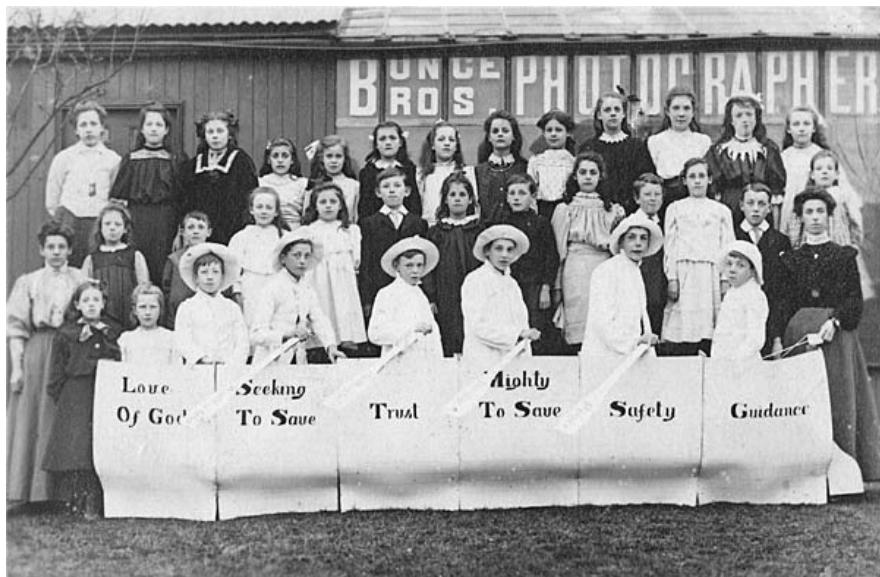
¹¹³ Revd Hall (1854-1938) was headmaster of Caterham School from 1894 to 1910, and was a deacon in the Valley church throughout this period.

¹¹⁴ Obituary edition of *The Congregational Church Magazine*, January 1909.

¹¹⁵ *Caterham Congregational Church Yearbook* for 1881. Surrey History Centre, ref: 7444/1/1.

¹¹⁶ Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, p. 18.

show that in 1892 the Hill Sunday School catered for 111 children taught by nine teachers.¹¹⁷ Many of the children belonged to the Christian Endeavour Society, junior and senior branches of which had been started in 1893 by local builder **William Thompson** (b.1838 in Keelby, Lincolnshire). They enjoyed weekly bible classes, lantern lectures, entertainments and outings,¹¹⁸ and attendance often exceeded that of the Valley church.



Caterham-on-the-Hill Congregational Church, Sunday School 'lifeboat'. Photographed outside the Bunce Brothers original wooden studio on Westway, Caterham, between 1903 and 1906.

A church report for the year 1900 by Mr J. H. Tomlinson, superintendent of the Mission Hall Sunday School, speaks of a thriving Temperance Society, weekly meetings of the Band of Hope, and a recently created Mutual Improvement Society which held lectures, discussions and social gatherings.¹¹⁹ In 1906 we read that the Mission Hall had a thriving

¹¹⁷ Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, p. 19.

¹¹⁸ Pictured in Tooke, *Bygone Caterham*, photo 114. William Thompson established his building and decorating business in the Croydon Road in 1873 and eventually employed 34 men and six boys. An enlightened employer and devout Christian who put his beliefs into practice, he provided generous sickness and funeral benefits through a contributory Shop Club Fund. See also Tooke, photo 30.

¹¹⁹ *Caterham Congregational Church Report for 1900*, p. 12. Surrey History Centre, ref: 7444/1/1.

choir under the leadership of the Westway photographer **George Bunce**,¹²⁰ together with a Mothers' Meeting led by Mrs Winter, a Christian Endeavour group led by Miss Alice Pratt of 6 Milton Cottages, and, like the church in the Valley, a lending library looked after by Mrs Tomlinson. The evangelist at that time was **Frederick J. Chaplin**, who lived at Triplow Cottage in Banstead Road, and the superintendent of the Sunday School was J. R. Edwards, who lived at The Lodge, Beechlands, in Caterham Valley.¹²¹ By the 1920s, after many years effort by the evangelist **Ralph J. Woodward**¹²² and his team of helpers, the chapel had become a pleasant place with electric light and a small organ. It had also become economically self supporting, rather than being dependent on the Valley church which itself was facing financial difficulties.¹²³

The original wooden structure continued to function primarily as a Sunday School Hall until destroyed by enemy action in World War II. A small replacement hall was erected on the site in 1956 courtesy of the West Croydon Congregational Church, and in 1983 a new brick hall was erected to replace it. Known as the Caterham Hill Congregational Church, its members rejected the union of 1972 that created the United Reformed Church. Although affiliated to the Congregational Federation, its more contemporary style of worship suggested a change of name to Caterham Community Church.

Other local or dependent Congregational chapels

Whyteleafe

Congregationalism in Whyteleafe owed its creation to the postmaster, Henry Hodgson, and particularly his wife **Marion Hodgson**, both of whom were members of the Caterham Valley church. About 1885 Marion began a children's Sunday school in a room above the post office which became so popular that adults asked if they too could attend. Numbers soon outgrew the space available, so in 1888 a 'United Free Church' mission in Whyteleafe was opened in Mr Griffith's carpenter's shed, directly opposite the Whyteleafe Tavern where a business park now stands.¹²⁴ Services were taken by ministers and members of the Caterham Hill and Valley churches,

¹²⁰ George & Herbert Bunce normally attended the Coulsdon Road Methodist Church, where Herbert played the organ. Graham Stevens, 'The Bunce Brothers', *LHR*, vol. 58, Feb. 2009, p.26.

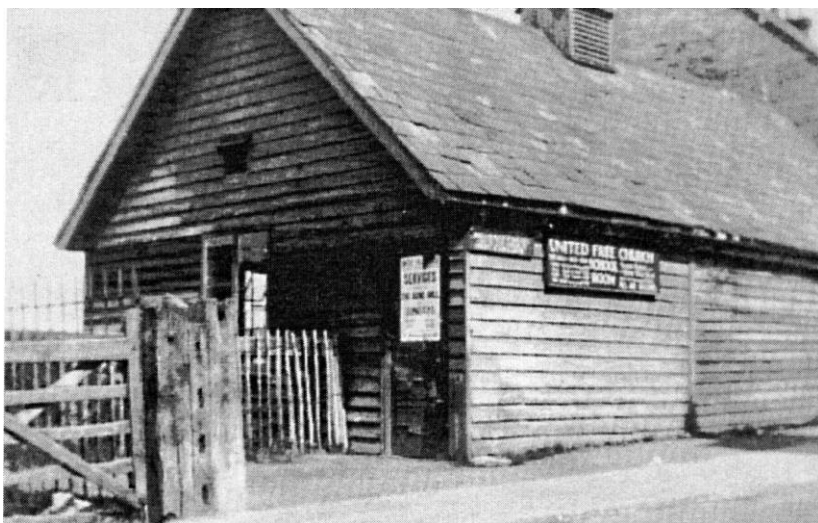
¹²¹ *Caterham Congregational Magazine*, vol. 1, January 1906, p. 8.

¹²² Woodward took over as the evangelist around 1910. He lived at 147 Chaldon Road.

¹²³ Marion Clarke, *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, p. 18.

¹²⁴ The history of the Whyteleafe chapels is found in Gwyneth Fookes & Roger Packham, eds, *Bourne Society Village Histories 9: Whyteleafe*, 2006, pp. 98–101.

including W. Garland Soper.¹²⁵ The last Annual Report to mention the original Whyteleafe mission, dated 1892, suggests it was immensely popular, having 122 children and nine teachers in its Sunday School.¹²⁶



The carpenter's shed originally used by the Whyteleafe Mission, about 1890.

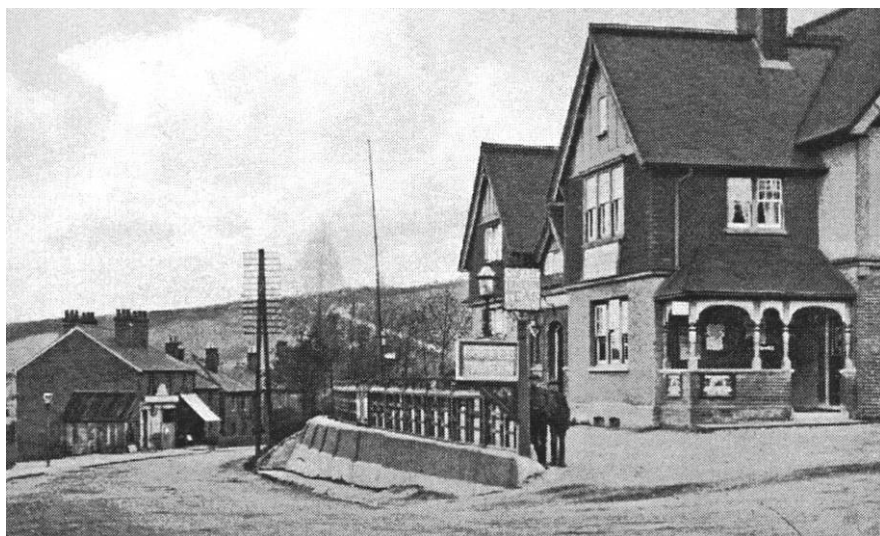
In 1892, **John Newberry** (1838–1928), a Congregationalist recently retired from a successful business in South Africa and living at Maes Mawr in Church Road, purchased land on the north corner of Station Road (now a car park), and built a large house which functioned as a Mission House and Temperance Boarding Hotel. The site, known locally as ‘The Tabernacle’ included a coffee lounge, reading room, gymnasium, and houses for a caretaker and a minister. The first service was held there on 24 April 1892. By November 1893 Newberry had assumed personal command of the mission and had provided a stipend for a minister, **Revd William Woodhouse**, which allowed the chapel to function independently of the Caterham churches. Woodhouse resigned in 1895 and was followed by Mr Springhall (1895–7), Mr Carter (1897–1901), Gerald Couitas (1901–09), T. George Black (1909–12), and Robert Stanley Bradbrook (1914–23).¹²⁷

¹²⁵ From its earliest days it was designated ‘United Free Church’ rather than ‘Congregational’, which might explain its absence from Cleal’s *Story*. However, its founders were Congregationalists, and it was heavily dependent on the Caterham churches for its support.

¹²⁶ Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, p. 19; from Annual Report for 1892 in Surrey History Centre, ref: 7444/1/1.

¹²⁷ Peter R. Skuse, *A History of Whyteleafe*, Bourne Society, 1987, pp. 67–8, 16–18.

The Tabernacle subsequently became non-denominational and on the death of Newberry in 1928 it was willed to the Salvation Army via a Charity Commission trust. The last Free Church service took place in April 1929, after which its members bought a plot of land to the rear of 157 Godstone Road and established what was called the 'Tin Tabernacle'. This burnt down due to a gas leak in 1970 and a new chapel was built on the site. The original Tabernacle was vacated by the Salvation Army on 5 January 1960 and, after standing vacant for several years, was on 6 December 1965 sold to Caterham and Warlingham UDC after the Charity Commission decided that it was the only sensible thing to do. It was demolished in 1966 and the site was turned into a car park. The £11,000 raised by its sale was administered by the Commission for the benefit of the Salvation Army within 15 miles of the site.¹²⁸



The Whyteleafe Mission House and Temperance Boarding Hotel, known as The Tabernacle.
From a postcard, about 1910. (Author's collection).

¹²⁸ Skuse, *A History of Whyteleafe*, p. 68.

South Godstone

Also significant because of its strong connections with the Valley church is the Congregational fellowship which from 1901 met at **The Grange**, a large, eight-bedroom house situated in two acres of ground between South Godstone and Blindley Heath. Originally supplied by students from New College, services became increasingly dependent on members of the Valley church. Norman Taylor recalled taking services there in the 1930s, together with his friend Geoffrey Beck. Subsequently, **Edward O. Beck**, Geoffrey's father, became ordained and shared pastoral responsibility between The Grange and the Caterham Hill church.¹²⁹ However, numbers of attendants dwindled as they grew older, and when The Grange was finally sold to new owners the services ceased and the surviving members transferred to the Valley church.¹³⁰

Bletchingley

The Congregational chapel at Bletchingley is mentioned here due to its proximity, but it had little to do with the Caterham Valley church, being rather more associated with the Oxted and Redhill chapels. The Free Church had been active in Bletchingley since the late eighteenth century, when services were conducted in a farmhouse at Coldharbour by preachers who rode on horseback from London.¹³¹ By 1821 Bletchingley was included in the Oxted district of the Surrey Congregational Union. Congregationalism thrived from the late 1820s onward in a tiny chapel built in 1826 by Mr Charles Thomas Smith of Reigate and located on the east corner of Stychens Lane and High Street. Services were conducted there by Smith after his retirement from Charlwood in 1834, but it is said that the building was so small that many of the congregation were forced to stand outside and peer through the windows.¹³² From 1848 to 1868 services were conducted by Mr W. Potter, a Baptist tailor and draper from Godstone who effectively rented the chapel from Charles Smith. When Potter's ministry finished in 1868 the Bletchingley Chapel became a 'mission' of the Redhill Congregational Church.

Substantial improvements were undertaken during the mid-1870s, including the construction of a porch and the introduction of gas lighting. Charles Thomas Smith died in 1869 and the property passed to his son, Charles Joseph Smith. When Charles Joseph Smith died in 1885 the chapel

¹²⁹ Reminiscences of Norman Taylor, in Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, p. 71.

¹³⁰ Caterham United Reformed Church, *A Book of Memories*, p. 21.

¹³¹ Records of the Bletchingley chapel, Surrey History Centre, ref: 6353/2. I am indebted to Richard Fowler, chairman of the Bletchingley Historical Society, for adding detail to this account.

¹³² Cleal, *The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey*, pp. 432–4.

passed in equal measure to his executors, his wife, son, and brother-in-law. In 1894 the executors sold the chapel for £250 to William Figg and others representing Redhill Congregational Church. Various additions and alterations were then undertaken, including the conversion of two adjacent cottages into a manse.

Before 1896 the Bletchingley chapel was administered entirely by lay preachers, the following names of which are recorded: James Parkins (c.1672), Mr Dubourg (1821), Mr Charles Thomas Smith (1826–48), Mr W. Potter (1848–68), Charles Pook (1868–74), Mr Veals (1874–80), Mr Braby (1880–?), Mr Andrews (?–1886), James Richards (1887–?), Mr Epps (?), Mr Freemantle (?–1896). In 1896 Revd G. S. Martin, from Lowestoft, came as pastor and remained until 1902. He was succeeded by Mr H. J. Barker (1902–05), then Revd J. J. Barber (1905–?) from Ardingly, and Charles Henry Robertson (1919–21).¹³³ The chapel was registered for solemnizing marriages on 19 November 1897, and the last service took place sometime in the 1930s, the congregation having fallen to around a dozen. At the start of World War II the chapel served briefly as an infants school until requisitioned by Canadian and English troops and the WRVS in 1940. In 1948 it served as an antiques showroom, then in 1950 as a builder's store. Local Roman Catholics tried unsuccessfully to acquire it as a place of worship, but in 1961 it was demolished, along with adjacent houses and shops, to allow for road widening. The Manse is all that survives.

Warwick Wold

It should be mentioned here that in 1874, Mr Veals, the evangelist at Bletchingley, conducted open air services in the sparsely populated hamlet of Warwick Wold.¹³⁴ These became so popular that a local cottage was rented, and a flourishing Sunday School of fifty scholars was soon in operation.¹³⁵ The work was continued by Mr Braby, and by 1905 services appear to have moved into an 'iron room' donated by a Mr P. L. Pelly. Intriguingly, it is known that in 1912 a cottage in Warwick Wold was turned into an Anglican mission house known as St Andrew's Church; the first service there being recorded on 6 October 1912.¹³⁶ The building was sold as a private residence in 1975 and survives as a domestic dwelling under the name Chapel Cottage. It is uncertain whether this cottage was the same as that used by Mr Veals.

¹³³ Most of this list is from Cleal, *The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey*, pp. 433–4.

¹³⁴ Announcements of services appear in the *Surrey Mirror*, 29 April 1882 & 4 November 1882. Warwick Wold is a hamlet lying between Chaldon, Merstham and Bletchingley. Now overshadowed by the M25 it is best known for its fish ponds.

¹³⁵ Cleal, *The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey*, pp. 434–5.

¹³⁶ Records of services at St Andrews Church. Surrey History Centre, ref: 3925/1.

Brief biographies of some of those closely associated with the early history of the church

William Garland Soper was born in Plymouth on 8 December 1837, the son of William Soper, a merchant, and his wife Eliza, née Pering. Educated privately, then at a boarding school in St Austell, he later studied at Cheshunt College and in 1858 acquired a first class degree from London University. In 1869 he went into partnership with George Davis (below). Soper's life has been thoroughly documented elsewhere,¹³⁷ and his list of achievements as a resident of Caterham is seemingly endless. He was president of almost every local club and association, he served as a JP, he was first chairman of Caterham UDC, and he was associated with the establishment of Caterham School, the Congregational Church, the pavilion and ambulance station in Queen's Park, and the Caterham Cottage Hospital. For his services to the community he was honoured with numerous awards, but he refused to stand for parliament. He married Maria Davis in 1860 and had two children, William (1861–1940) and Maria Eliza (1873–1952). After suffering for some time with angina, he died of a heart attack on 20 December 1908.



James Hoby (1788–1871) was born in London, the son of George Hoby, a boot maker and deacon at Andrew Gifford's congregation in Eagle Street, London.^{138,139} He trained at Bristol Academy and enjoyed the friendship and counsel of the Baptist historian and theologian Revd Joseph Ivimey. Hoby started out as assistant pastor at Maze Pond, Southwark (1813), then went on to become pastor at Weymouth, at Graham Street, Birmingham (1831–44), and at Twickenham. By 1821 he was on the committee of the Baptist Mission. He subsequently devoted much of his time to fundraising for the support of aged ministers, poorly paid pastors, and churches which had fallen into debt. With Francis Augustus Cox, on behalf of the Baptist Union, he travelled in America in the 1830s to promote Baptist causes and to further

¹³⁷ Fookes, *William Garland Soper*.

¹³⁸ *The Baptist Handbook*, London, 1872.

¹³⁹ Timothy D. Whelan, ed., *Baptist Autographs in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, Macon, GA, 2009, p. 403.

the abolition of slavery, the result of which was *The Baptists in America* (1836), co-written by Hoby and Cox.¹⁴⁰ Hoby served as chairman of the Baptist Union in 1851 and 1854, and wrote biographies of the anti-slavery campaigner and missionary William Knibb¹⁴¹ and the Calcutta missionary William Yates.¹⁴² He spent the last seven years of his life in Caterham, where he died on 20 November 1871.

Thomas Bradbury Winter was born on 25 April 1826 at Rumsey in Hampshire, the eldest son of Thomas Bradbury Winter, a local doctor, and his wife Mary Newnham.^{143,144} After graduating in applied sciences from King's College, London, he was apprenticed to G. & J. Rennie, a firm of marine engineers. He served as manager of the shipbuilding works of Messrs Hoby at Renfrew on the Clyde, then in 1854 came to London to practice as a consulting marine engineer from his office at 28 Moorgate Street. His major achievement came in 1858 when, on a commission from the East India Company, he designed the first successful style of ship capable of navigating the shallow waters of the Indus. This was based on experiments conducted in Europe on the rivers Danube and Rhone, where similar difficulties are experienced. Winter moved with his family to Bloomfield, in Stanstead Road, Caterham in 1864, but failing health restricted his activities to land-based projects, and in 1880 he retired from business.

In 1883, with Arthur Jepson, James Greville Clarke, Alfred Conder, and Thomas Hogben, Thomas Winter established a firm called The Building, Fitting and Furnishing Company Limited 'with the purpose of building, fitting and furnishing temperance public houses and hotels, philanthropic institutions and training homes, mission halls, churches and chapels, including the reconstruction of old buildings only to the orders of its customers, not of speculators'. Capital of £25,000 was raised, with shares issued at £5 each.¹⁴⁵ Thomas died at Caterham on 15 October 1902, leaving a gross estate valued at £10,781. His wife Anne remained at Broomfield in Stanstead Road and survived him by another ten years, dying at Caterham on 4 September 1912. The Winter family included two daughters, Annie

¹⁴⁰ James Hoby & Francis Augustus Cox, *The Baptists in America: A Narrative of the Deputation From the Baptist Union in England to the United States and Canada*, London, 1836; New York, 1836.

¹⁴¹ James Hoby, *Memoir of William Knibb, Son of the Rev. W. Knibb, Missionary*, London, 1839.

¹⁴² James Hoby & William Yates, *Memoir of William Yates, D.D., of Calcutta: With an Abridgement of his Life of W. H. Pearce*, London, 1847.

¹⁴³ 'Thomas Bradbury Winter' [Obituary], *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, vol. 151, 1903; *Caterham Weekly Press & County Post*, 18 October 1902.

¹⁴⁴ Fookes, 'Thomas Bradbury Winter and his son Frederick Bradbury Winter, of Caterham', *Local History Records*, 69, November 2011, pp. 16–19.

¹⁴⁵ *The Evening News* [London], 14 April 1883, p. 3.

Elizabeth (b. 1855) and Marion (b. 1860), and a son, Frederick Bradbury Winter (1859–1941).

Thomas Winter was highly regarded and much loved by the congregation. ‘His was a quiet influence, always kindly, always in his place. He was much amused and highly delighted when he was told at one time that the boys called him “Mother’s Meeting”, because his regular weekly announcements always began with that event “at 2.30 on Monday”’.¹⁴⁶

Frederick Bradbury Winter became a solicitor and held numerous local appointments, including clerk and chairman of the local council, chairman of the General Committee of Caterham School, and chairman of the Committee of Eothen School.^{147,148} He was married on 19 June 1884, in Caterham Valley Congregational Church, to Fanny Mason, daughter of Henry Mason of The Mardens, Tupwood Lane. They had three children, Dorothea Bradbury (b.1886), Arthur Bradbury (b.1888) and Bernard Bradbury (b.1895). From boyhood, Frederick was an ardent Congregationalist, subsequently becoming deacon, superintendent of the Sunday School, and at various times church secretary. He lived from 1884 to 1901 at Faegerfield, a large house in Essendene Road designed by John Sulman, the church architect.¹⁴⁹ He later moved address several times, and close to the time of his death in 1941 he was resident at The Spinney, 14 Colburn Avenue. He died in a nursing home in Letchworth, leaving a gross estate valued at £7,952.

George Davis was born in Southwark in 1806, the son of Nathaniel Davis and his wife Mary. He married Esther (née Adams) in 1825, and by 1852 had established himself as a commission merchant at 4 Railway Place, Fenchurch Street, trading as export merchants with Africa, Australia, and the Middle and Far East. In 1859 Davis, now residing at Heaton Hall, Cheshunt, went into partnership with 22-year-old William Garland Soper, who was at that time boarding in Cheshunt. In the following year, Soper married Davis’s daughter, Maria. From 1863 to 1876 the firm of Davis & Soper traded from 14 Fenchurch Street, and from 1877 to 1881 from 10 King’s Arms Yard, before moving to 54 St Mary Axe in 1882.

Davis & Soper had considerable interests in South Africa, and as early as 1863 had laid down the Cape Town and Green Point Tramway. It was the English agency for Cape Town Municipality and the South African

¹⁴⁶ Marion Clarke, *Sixty Years of Congregationalism in Caterham*, p. 8.

¹⁴⁷ Fookes, ‘Thomas Bradbury Winter...’, pp. 19–22.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Frederick Bradbury Winter’ [Obituary], *Caterham Times*, 1941.

¹⁴⁹ Faegerfield (now Sherwood, 49 Essendene Road) was one of the few private houses designed by Sulman in England (another was Harestone). For Sulman’s drawings see *The Building News*, 10 October 1884.

Milling Company; it pioneered various waterworks and electric lighting industries; and it was active in gold mining.¹⁵⁰ In 1865 Davis effectively retired from business and moved to Sylva House in Caterham. The company continued to trade under the name of Davis & Soper, and on William Garland Soper's death in 1908, the firm was taken over by his son, William Soper (1861–1940). The firm became a limited company in 1915 and later became a subsidiary of Camp Bird Limited, a gold and silver mining company with interests in Colorado. After a long history it finally went into liquidation in 1960.¹⁵¹

John Sulman was born in Greenwich on 29 August 1849 and educated at the Greenwich Proprietary School. After moving with his family to Croydon in 1864, he was articled to Thomas Allom, a London architect. From 1868 he attended classes at the Architectural Association, and at the Royal Academy of Arts, winning the Pugin travelling scholarship in 1871. He was elected an associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1872 (later a fellow in 1883).



Sulman and his wife Sarah.

¹⁵⁰ 'Leading South African Merchants', *The Caterham Free Press*, 10 March 1894.

¹⁵¹ The minutes of Davis & Soper Ltd, African and Middle and Far Eastern export merchants, 1915–60, together with a brief biographical and administrative history of the company since its foundation, are held in the London Metropolitan Archives, ref: CLC/B/036–05.

Sulman married Sarah Clark Redgate on 15 April 1875 and the couple moved to Bromley in Kent. Sulman lectured on applied art and formed the Nineteenth Century Art Society. After travelling through England and western Europe he practised as an architect in London and designed a large number of churches and some private residences, two of which (Harestone and Faegerfield) were in Caterham. John and Sarah had three children: Arthur (1882–1971), Florence E. (1876–1965) and Edith (1877–1907). In 1885 the family moved to Sydney, Australia on account of Sarah's tuberculosis. They settled at Parramatta, but sadly Sarah survived little more than three years and died on 31 December 1888.

Sulman would marry a second time in 1893. His subsequent career in Australia, where he was responsible for numerous prestigious buildings and town plans, is thoroughly documented elsewhere.¹⁵² In addition to his designs for churches and private dwellings, he designed Parramatta Hospital, the Sydney Stock Exchange, the Bank of New South Wales, the Civic Centre buildings in Canberra, plus halls, memorials, hotels, club houses and cathedrals. Appointed Knight Bachelor in 1924, he retired in 1926 but still played a prominent role in the architectural world. He died peacefully in Sydney on 18 August 1934. A Sir John Sulman Prize is awarded annually by the Art Gallery of New South Wales.



Sarah and Thomas Redgate

¹⁵² Zeny Edwards, *A Life of Purpose. A Biography of John Sulman*.

James Clarke (1824–88),¹⁵³ wealthy journalist and publisher, was born in Thorpe Le Soken, Essex, and came to Caterham from Clapham in 1869 with his wife Hannah and sons Percy (b. 1857), Hubert (b. 1863) and James Greville (below). There he purchased for £2,225 the house in Tupwood Lane known as Tupwood, or Tupwood Lodge, now the site of Tupwood Gate Nursing Home. Around 1880 James, Hannah, Hubert and Percy moved to Beechhanger, on Harestone Valley Road, which James had bought from its former resident the land speculator George Henry Drew. Occupancy of Tupwood was then signed over to the older son James Greville Clarke and his wife Alice.

Clarke, who had in 1859 founded the publishing company of James Clarke & Co.,¹⁵⁴ was in 1881–2 co-opted onto the General Committee of the Congregational College which oversaw the removal of the college from Lewisham to Caterham. He was also a member of the Caterham Valley Congregational Church Committee, and is said to have contributed toward the cost of the church's construction. He also created within the Valley church a Free Library, through which two to three thousand books were often exchanged during the winter seasons. He died in 1888 but his wife remained in Beechhanger until 1901 supported by sons Herbert and (until 1892) Percy. The house was subsequently purchased from the Clarke family by Sir Theodore Fry and ultimately became a boarding house for Caterham School.

James Greville Clarke (1854–1901) was born in Dalston on 10 December 1854 and was educated at private schools and at Christ's College, Cambridge. With a particular interest in politics and economics he graduated BA and MA and subsequently joined his father's Fleet Street publishing company. He married Alice (née Gooding) of Witnesham Hall, Suffolk, and about 1880 moved into Tupwood, his parents' former home. After the father's death in 1888 he carried on the firm of James Clarke & Co. together with his brothers Percy and Hubert, and continued editorship of the lucrative *Christian World* magazine inherited from his father.¹⁵⁵ He was also a partner in W. Speight & Son, printers.

¹⁵³ The name Clarke is frequently recorded as Clark, without the trailing e, but this is always an error. The company name has always been imprinted James Clarke & Co. (originally at 13 Fleet Street, E.C.; now 52 Kingston Street, Cambridge).

¹⁵⁴ This company still exists and became a sister imprint of The Lutterworth Press in 1984.

¹⁵⁵ At its peak the highly influential *Christian World* sold over 100,000 copies per week. The company published a vast range of books, including stories and annuals for children, all of them with a Christian message.

In 1888 James inherited ownership of Tupwood, which he rebuilt into the fine Victorian house one sees today.¹⁵⁶ A staunch Congregationalist, he was chairman of the house committee of Caterham School, and he served on the committee of the Liberation Society, and the committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. He became a local benefactor in many ways, but was renowned for his reticence and humility, and his tendency towards self-deprecation in favour of others.¹⁵⁷ He and Alice had three daughters, all born in the 1880s. James Greville Clarke died prematurely on 28 July 1901 at the age of 46.

Percy Clarke was born in 1857 and along with his brothers joined his father's publishing business. He lived with his parents at Beechhanger until 29 September 1892 when he married Marion Winter (born 1861), daughter of Thomas Bradbury Winter. The couple had two children, Irene M. Clarke (born 1893) and Bradbury Percy James Clarke (born November 1896). Percy Clarke served the church for many years as its treasurer and was at some time president of the Caterham Institute.¹⁵⁸ The family lived for many years at Beechwood, a large Victorian house once situated between Harestone Valley Road and Church Hill (replaced by flats named Beechwood about 1965).

¹⁵⁶ Mary Saaler, 'The Story of Tupwood', *Local History Records*, 25, 1986, p. 34. Buildings on this site constantly changed, the earliest being dated at least to the 1730s. Substantial additions and alterations were made by Max Fontheim in 1928, the house at that time being named Tinnivelli.

¹⁵⁷ Gwyneth Fookes, *The 'Big Houses' of Victorian Caterham and their Occupants*, Bourne Society, 2011, pp. 158–60.

¹⁵⁸ The Caterham Institute rented space behind the International Stores at 10 Croydon Road. Accessed from a side entrance, there was a library, reading room and billiard room.

Appendix

The partial destruction of the church by bombing in 1944, and its subsequent reconstruction

While it is appreciated that these events fall well beyond the period treated in this booklet there are two good reasons for describing them here: firstly, to enlighten the reader as to why the present interior of the church looks so radically different to how it was in its earlier years, and secondly to provide a unique opportunity to reproduce the information, not found elsewhere, which is contained in the exceptionally scarce booklet, *Rebuilding Fund Appeal*, printed in October 1947.¹⁵⁹



The destruction caused to the sanctuary and its furnishings by the incendiary bombs.
(Photographed by George & Herbert Bunce and digitally enhanced by the author from the original kept in the vestibule of Caterham United Reformed Church).

¹⁵⁹ *The Congregational Church Caterham Valley Rebuilding Fund Appeal*, October 1947, 12 pages. The present author is grateful to Lesley Scotford for the gift of this document.

About midnight on 24 March 1944, in the course of one of the last German raids on Great Britain by piloted aircraft, a shower of incendiary bombs was released in a north to south direction across Caterham Valley, falling in the woodland alongside Waller Lane, starting a fire in Sylva House, and causing widespread damage to the sanctuary and other parts of the Congregational Church. Dozens of bombs, some of the explosive type, lay burning on the open ground. One of the bombs, blazing in the church aisle, was easily dealt with, but another, most unfortunately lodged in the roof, had to await the attention of the National Fire Service. At the same time Harestone Hall was alight in more than one place, and another bomb was burning on the ground floor of the Manse. Revd Lawrence Wheeler, his wife, son, and two daughters, had taken refuge in the air-raid shelter, not knowing what was happening outside. The progress of the fire in the roof of the Hall was stayed after a section had been destroyed, but the sanctuary was entirely burned out.



An external view of the church, photographed by George and Herbert Bunce shortly after the bombing of 1944.

Harestone Hall was immediately repaired by the local Urban District Council because of its importance as a first-line rest centre in the event of flying-bomb attacks. Damage to the sanctuary was too widespread for repairs to go ahead, so the activities of the church, including its regular services, were transferred to the Hall, which also hosted a Forces Club, open seven evenings a week with billiard tables, dartboards, and entertainments from a grand piano. 250 tubular steel chairs were purchased to seat the existing congregation and were made 'stackable' so that the floor could be rapidly cleared for other purposes. A sliding panel bearing a cross separated the Forces Club furniture, kept in the back premises, from the church services and allowed for easy conversion between the two functions.

Proposals for the reconstruction of the sanctuary had to wait until the end of the war. In 1946 the War Damage Commissioners reached a generous agreement with the Church Committee, by which they agreed to contribute £6,000 for the reinstatement of the church to its previous condition. However, during consultation with Mr Pigott, the architect, it was decided that the time was ripe for major modifications to be carried out to the sanctuary. These included: removal of gallery seating to accommodate the new organ pipes; extension of the west transept to allow increased seating at ground level; installation of a central aisle between pews, and more spacious accommodation for the pulpit, communion table and choir stalls; and an additional vestibule provided by building over the front steps between the two towers. (The Hall and most of the smaller rooms were left as they were until 1999 when substantial alterations were carried out, with the creation of the concourse, kitchen, and other facilities.)

The extra cost, additional to the £6,000 already promised, was estimated at £4,000, to which needed to be added the £1,000 already paid in 1945 for a secondhand organ for the Hall, together with another £1,000 to cover re-installation of the organ in the refurbished sanctuary. Church members were also invited to subscribe to the cost of particular items of furniture, especially by way of a memorial to those whose services were commemorated in the old church. At the same time, however, the church had committed itself to the construction of a bungalow to accommodate a caretaker and his family.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ This bungalow, now no. 33 Harestone Valley Road, was built in 1947-8 on land that had been purchased for the purpose before the war. The outbreak of war placed a temporary halt on the development, and for its duration the land was cultivated by the youth of the church as a 'dig for victory' market garden, growing mainly marrows and potatoes.



The interior of the sanctuary immediately after reconstruction in 1950-51.

An appeal was launched in October 1947, directed towards anybody and everybody who might have an association, past or present, with the church, including old boys of Caterham School. The appeal went better than expected, and by the nominated cut-off date of October 1950 a substantial sum had been raised. In addition to the normal donations, this sum included a transfer of £1,000 from the church's reserve account, a grant from the Reconstruction Fund of the Congregational Union, and an insurance payout of £1,000 for interior furnishings.

Reconstruction and internal redecoration went ahead at a considerable pace and introduced into the sanctuary a feeling of light and air that had been so dreadfully lacking in the old church with its once fashionable decorative brickwork. In fact some might say that the bombing was a blessing in disguise. The opening ceremony and re-dedication took place on 13 January 1951 under the direction of Andrew James, moderator of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, assisted by the minister, Revd Lawrence Wheeler. The service was followed by a recital given by Eric Thiman to inaugurate the extensive rebuilding of the organ.

THE (CATERHAM CONGREGATIONAL)
HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THIS CHURCH.

On occasion of the formation of a Church of the Congregational or Independent order in the Valley of Caterham, Surrey, this statement is placed on record setting forth the successive steps by which that Church came into existence.

In the year 1863 there came to reside at Caterham ^{SW} Mr William Garland Soper and his wife Maria Soper both of them being members of the Independent body. They found no other Nonconformist family residing in or near Caterham, no Nonconformist place of worship of any size within a radius of seven miles; and there being only one small Church of the Establishment, and that in the old village at some distance from the Valley, that without any service on the Lord's day evening, it seemed to Mr Soper who had been in the habit of preaching the Gospel that there was a clear opportunity or a distinct call for him to preach to the people among whom he had come to dwell. Accordingly a large carpenter's shop was engaged in which to conduct Sunday Evening

