

Sunday School.

As a very young boy in Dinton I had to attend Sunday school in the Baptist chapel as both my parents were religious. In fact most of the village children went to Sunday school. The Baptist chapel was within the village next to the bakery (now closed) and so most of us had just a short distance to walk whereas the Church was a very long walk away. The Baptist chapel was therefore well supported by many of the adult villagers. The pastors were the Miller family, Alf and his son Harold who farmed Wootten farm in Dinton and were ably assisted by a Mr. Jackman. Mrs. Brandon played the chapel organ. Sunday school for the children was held in the morning and afternoon and each session lasted about an hour and was all very friendly and at the time I know that I enjoyed going. Bible stories were told and children's hymns were sung. On one occasion I was asked to choose the next hymn and my choice was 'Glorious things to thee are spoken'. At six or seven years old I did not know that the tune for this hymn was the 'Austrian hymn' and was the same tune as the German national anthem. It was explained to us that it might not go down too well in the middle of the war if passers by heard this. After some deliberation good sense prevailed and we sang the hymn. There were not too many passers by in Dinton on a Sunday afternoon!

Each year the Miller family organised the chapel outing for all of us which was usually a day visit to Wicksteed Park near Kettering. Our parents were also invited but the chapel funds only paid for the children. It was a grand day out and for most of us the only day out that we would have away from Dinton each year. We all looked forward to this day which always turned out to be most enjoyable. Also each year the Sunday school would hold its 'Anniversary'. This was a special service held on a Sunday when all the parents and friends would attend. Individual children or children in small groups would sing, give a reading or recite poetry. In general just like a small concert but with a more religious content. It was very popular within the village and all those who took part did so with a great deal of enthusiasm. A prize giving ceremony always took place. The prizes were usually in the form of a Bible, a Prayer book or a suitable book and were awarded to those who had attained a standard in learning set pieces as defined by the pastors.

Wicksteed Park (many years ago.)
(Kindly lent to me by Pamela
Jeffrey(nee Hopgood))



The Miller family as chapel parsons were very dedicated, kind and enthusiastic and this reflected in their child charges and on leaving the village there was no-one to replace them. They had put in a good deal of their time and no doubt their money. On the Miller's retirement the Baptist chapel closed and was eventually sold and was converted into a private dwelling house.

This inscription has been copied from one of my book prizes from Dinton Baptist Chapel. The book is called 'The Way To Heaven For A Sixpence'. I treasure this book mainly because of this inscription which was written by my Mother.

*Gordon Beeton,
from Dinton Baptist
Sunday School
June 1st 1941.*

At school in Dinton religious knowledge (RK) was also taught during the school week. In those days the teaching was only of the Christian faith and other faiths were never discussed. Our religious knowledge was very 'narrow' and limited. There were no other denominations at the school! Dinton School was a Church of England supported school and we received regular visits from the local vicar, the Rev. Drury, whose vicarage was in Cuddington and he was the vicar for both parishes. We were encouraged to join the church choir and some of us did. Now as choirboys we were expected to attend all the church services, usually twice on Sundays. Compared with chapel the church service seemed very long and boring and each week very repetitive and the congregation never seemed to sing with the same gusto as in chapel. This was I'm sure due to the smaller size of the chapel compared to the very large area of the church.

At senior school in Aylesbury RK changed to RE (religious education) but only one short period a week was allocated and was never taken very seriously by the pupils. It was quite often a self study so most of us would use the allotted time to complete our homework for that day! Each morning a short assembly was held for 15 minutes before classes began at 9.00am. This I was told consisted of some prayers, a hymn and a talk by the Headmaster. I never attended these assemblies because the Oxford bus that took us from Dinton did not arrive in Aylesbury until 8-45 am and we then had to walk the mile from Kingsbury Square to Aylesbury Grammar school in Walton Street and we never hurried!

On reaching the age of sixteen I decided that I did not want to be a choirboy or even attend church, which would mean defying my father. Now in those days to be absent from Sunday morning service I knew that my father would also know by lunch time and that he would certainly question me about it. Telling a lie to my father was not an option. So when he asked me 'Had I been to church?' I replied 'No'. I doubt that my older brother and sisters would have got away with it so easily!

Gordon S.Weedon.