

Anniversary Programme

Friday 26th June 2009

Concert by Weston Youth Orchestra

Time 7.30pm

Programme £5.00

Saturday 27th June 2009

Coffee Morning from 10.30am

Come and meet friends

Sunday 28th June 2009

Celebratory Service at 10.30am

Followed by Buffet Lunch

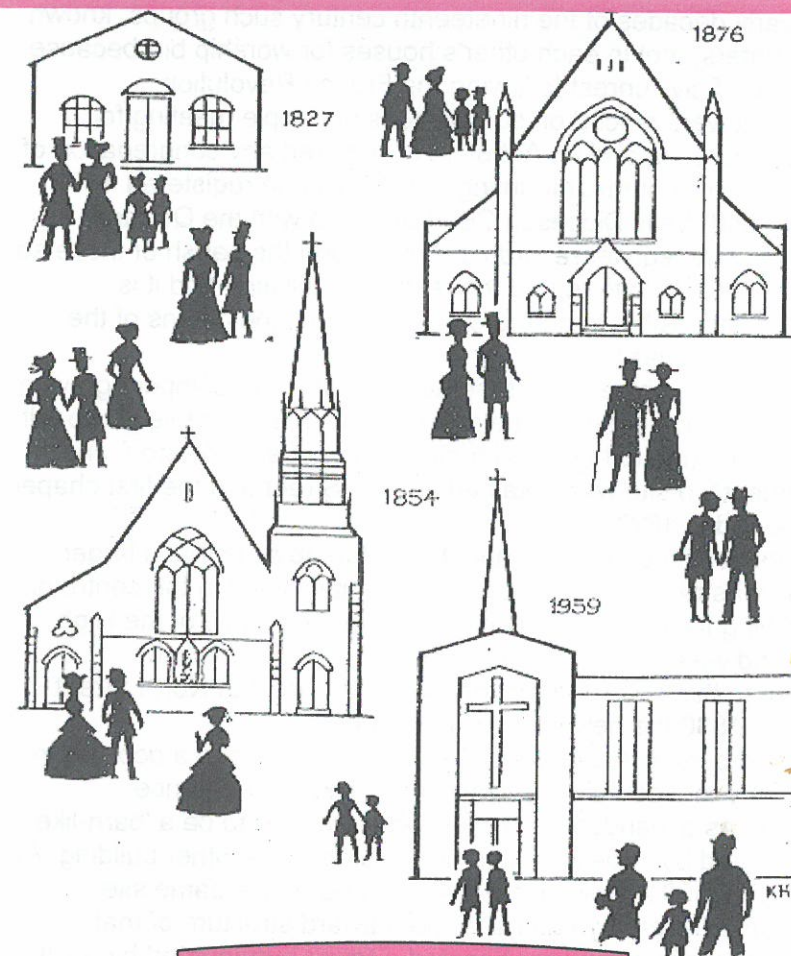
Tea and Cake

Songs of Praise at 4.00pm

2009

Boulevard

United Reformed Church



50th Anniversary
of the Rebuilding
of this Church
1959—2009

A brief History of Boulevards Church Buildings **by Keith Bosworth**

Little is known of the small groups of Congregationalists who were the forebears of the Boulevard United Reformed Church.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century such groups, known as Dissenters, met in each other's houses for worship but because of the fear of civil unrest following the French Revolution restrictions were placed on such groups of people meeting for whatever purpose and an Act of 1814 required any congregation of Protestant Dissenters amounting to twenty to be registered. with the Bath and Wells Diocesan Court and also with the Quarter Sessions. The register records the name and the parish of those so registered, but fails to record the religious affiliation and it is therefore impossible to be more precise about the origins of the church at Boulevard.

What is known, however, is that the number of worshippers grew in step with the population of the town; so much so that this group felt confident enough to build and maintain a chapel in Weston. and consequently a site was obtained in York Street and the first chapel was opened in 1827.

Numbers continued to grow and it became obvious that a larger building was required in a more prominent location in the centre of the growing town. The site chosen was in the middle of the High Street and was more recently the premises of Woolworths. adjacent to the lane running from the High Street to North Street and so in 1830 the new church was opened.

Again numbers increased and Weston itself now had a population of 5,000 by mid-century. The building in High Street, once described as a 'handsome chapel' was now said to be a 'barn-like structure and by 1854 thoughts again turned to another building. At a cost of £2,300 a new church was opened on the same site. Observant passers-by can trace the outward structure of that building which in its heyday boasted a tower surmounted by a gilt cross and an interior with pillars of Purbeck marble.

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The front cover was designed by Ken Poole, Church member 1959—2007

Weston Youth Orchestra

We welcome Weston Youth Orchestra at the beginning of our weekend of celebrations.

The Orchestra celebrates its own 50th Anniversary this year, having been founded by the late Edward Lamb and C. A. Griggs.

Throughout its existence the Orchestra has remained independent, promoted musical excellence and provided a vehicle by which young people can make music in every sense - performing, composing, developing and learning. Throughout its life the members have developed their own individual characters and made life long musical friendships.

The strong affection for the Orchestra felt by former members was amply demonstrated at the 50th Anniversary concert held at The Playhouse in February. Many of them mingled on the stage with the present performers, and some regularly work with today's young players thereby helping to maintain the high standards of musical achievement for which the Orchestra is admired by it's audiences.

Weston Youth Orchestra
Leader—Laura Heathcote
Director Dennis Cole MBE

Programme

Overture to the "Magic Flute"

W. A. Mozart

Concerto for 2 violins

J. S. Bach

Soloists Andrew Barrington
Laura Heathcote

Londonderry Air

Flute Quartet — Flutina

Capriole Suite

Peter Warlock

Nigun

Bloch

Violin — Laura Heathcote

Hoedown

Aaron Copeland

Tannykins Dance

String Trio led by Emma Hanlon

Hungarian Dance No. 5

Brahms

Sonate and Courante

Eccles

Double Bass — James Parfitt

Palladio

Karl Jenkins

Czardas

Monti

Violin — Laura Heathcote

Selection of Harry Potter Themes

Dennis Cole MBE

Dennis was the first leader of WYO and was also a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. His father, Ted, was a much respected violinist and is fondly remembered for his encouragement of young musicians

After studies in London, Dennis returned to Weston to work as a freelance violinist and teacher. In 1966 he was invited to become Director and Conductor of WYO and since then has led his instrumentalists in rehearsal, concerts and tours to Germany, Sweden and Poland. He has also been invited to coach and conduct the music school orchestras of Uppsala (Sweden) and Beilsko-Biala (Poland)

Dennis' other "hobby" is his devotion to Worle Football Club and he is also a Trustee and Chairman of Weston Education Trust

Dennis was awarded the MBE in the 2009 New Year's Honours list, partly in recognition of his work with WYO. He attended an Investiture this week and we congratulate him on this well deserved recognition.

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This Church remained until 1875 when the Boulevard site, then described as 'a field of grass, a cabbage garden' became the location for a further move. By this time the population had increased to about 10,000 but only a small area of the town had been developed and people walked out to see this new area with its new church built at a cost of £8,000. In 1910 two classrooms were built at the side of the church known as the Church Parlour and the Lecture Room and in the 1930's a large hall was added in a space that had been left to the Church for that purpose.

The last pre-war Manual shows the Church had about 500 members and adherents when on the morning of 27 June 1942 a large number of incendiary bombs fell on Boulevard and despite the efforts of wardens, who were on duty in the Church hall along with BBC staff who were operating from the hall "... the church was hopelessly on fire and before long a heap of ruins and the street itself heaped with masonry and mouldering debris".

Help was offered from a number of quarters to allow the Fellowship to continue, but an offer was finally accepted from Boulevard Methodist Church—the structure can still be seen incorporating the estate agents at the junction of Boulevard and Orchard Street.—who agreed to worship elsewhere and allow Boulevard sole use of the premises.

Twelve years of planning and negotiating passed until after alternative sites had been considered and discarded, the foundation stone of an all-purpose hall was laid in 1954 and Boulevard again returned to its home until in June 1959 the newly built Boulevard Congregational Church was dedicated on its former site.

The new Church was much simpler in style; the buttresses were eliminated, the nave windows were formed with plain vertical lights and the whole interior with its two resplendent stained glass windows was designed to give a sense of worship in a simple dignified structure.

Perhaps the wheel has turned full circle from the small chapel in York Street in which Boulevard had its origins.