

The Church

Manchester Road Methodist Chapel

1871- 2001 For many years known as "Gerrards Chapel"

Jonathan Gerrard was a powerful Christian, and his belief in Christianity coupled with his enterprise and determination resulted in the establishment of a Chapel which stands as a monument to him to this very day.

About 1870 property including houses was advertised for sale in the Manchester Guardian on behalf of a Mr Bannerman. Jonathan had not much money and was struggling to build up his business as a joiner and Builder in Long Street Swinton. However he met Mr Bannerman and they agreed terms and by mortgaging the property Jonathan was able to complete the purchase.

Largely through Jonathans determination the Swinton Bar Primitive Methodist Chapel was opened on Saturday January 29th 1871.

On Sunday February 15th 1871 a Sunday School was created. On October 22nd 1881 Jonathan presided over a "Tea & Public meeting" to rejoice over the freedom from debt. The Chapel had raised £600 in eleven years and these funds had been used to improve the church facilities. Jonathan and church members then set about raising funds for a new church.

The new church was opened in the final week of November 1891 at a cost of £1,200 & a new Sunday School was opened on December 10th 1899 at cost £1,730. An infants School was built and opened on August 21st 1907, Sadly Jonathan had died on December 28th 1906.

Over the 35 years of Jonathans association with Manchester Road Methodist Chapel – as it is now known – he was a great source of inspired leadership. Leader overall, Superintendant of the Sunday School and a class leader.

The four-penny notebook

Minutes of the Trustees and Teachers meetings held from 1871 to 1874 were recorded in a small cheap notebook, and the name Jonathan Gerrard is recorded many times requesting him to provide items ranging from, a banner for the Whit Week walks, Bibles & Testaments, a tea for 60 persons and even a lamp at the front door.