

Rev G D Cox – Pastor of Melton Mowbray Baptist Church, 1880 to 1886.

Church Meeting Minutes of 1880 record that the position of Church Pastor became vacant in the month of May. At church meetings in the summer of 1880 various names were proposed as possible appointees including a Mr Evans, a Mr Fisher and a Mr G Smith. Mr Evans was asked to preach one Sunday in June with a view to appointment. However, it seems Mr Evans did not live up to expectations and the position remained open.

Then in two Church Meetings in August the following appears:

Aug 18th 1880 –

Mr Widdowson presided. The meeting was opened with singing and prayer and the minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. Mr Cavan of Leicester having written asking if the Missionary service could be held on the 12th Sept, it was unanimously agreed that it be so. A letter was read from Mr Barnes, Pastor of the Baptist Church, Peterborough asking for a letter of dismissal to his church of Miss Crawley which was authorised. There being a vacancy to the committee through the resignation of Mr Irons, Mr Widdowson proposed Mr Thompson also Mr Hawksworth be appointed on the committee. Passed unanimously. Testimonials having been written for from various ministers and others as to the character of the Rev G D Cox of Sittingbourne as a pastor and preacher with a view to his settlement as pastor of the church. The matter was talked over. Mr Crossier proposed he was asked to become Pastor of the church that he be offered a salary £120 per annum for the present that being all the church could at present raise. Mr Widdowson seconded and it was unanimously carried. The meeting was concluded with prayer.

Aug 30th 1880 –

Mr Widdowson in the chair. The meeting was opened with prayer. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The Secretary read the letter sent to Mr Cox asking his acceptance of the pastorate and his reply accepting the same and in which he asked for the expense of the carriage of his furniture. Mr Collins proposed and Mr Widdowson seconded that this be charged to the church. Passed unanimously. The refixings of the chapel wall and the cleaning of the chapel were then talked over and Mr Collins proposed and Mr Widdowson seconded that the matter be left in the hands of the committee. The meeting was concluded with prayer.

The next meeting was on November 1st 1880 and the minutes record 'Pastor G D Cox in the chair'.

Then, in July 1886, the Church Meeting minutes record the following:

July 26th 1886 –

Mr Thompson presiding. The meeting opened with prayer and song and was specially called to pass a vote of sympathy with regard to Mr Cox in his application and to receive his resignation in consequence of his medical advisors ordering him and his family to Australia. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The following resolution drawn up by Mr Tordale who had shown great interest and kindness to Mr Cox in his illness was proposed by Mr Orton seconded by Mr Clarke and unanimously adopted by the meeting.

This meeting was heard with the deepest regret that in consequence of their state of health the Pastor and Mrs Cox are compelled to leave England for Australia in a short time and hereby expresses its deep sympathy with them in this great affliction and desire to assure Mr Cox of its warm attachment to him as Pastor of the Church and its high appreciation of his faithful and indefatigable labours during the six years of his ministry in this town and earnestly commends him to the guidance and blessing of Almighty God our Heavenly Father.

That inasmuch as this removal to Australia must be attended with great expense which Mr Cox cannot meet without help, the Church heartily recommends his case to every one able to help and appoints the officers of the Church and the following friends connected with other churches in the town as a committee to raise and receive subscriptions for this purpose. With power to add their number

Rev J Toridale	Independent
Rev W Fuller	Wesleyan
Rev T Scrimshaw	Primitive Methodist

The meeting closed with prayer and benediction.

Rev Cox's final meeting with the church was on September 1st 1886. There is a reference to a special service to be held on September 26th and it seems it be Rev Cox's farewell service. A list of significant figures is given as being invited to attend.

The list of Church Members records 'George David Cox' residing in 'Asfordby Road' and who transferred from 'Baptist Church, Sittingbourne, Kent' and who left having 'Emigrated to Australia'. His wife's name is given as 'Mrs Fanny Alice Cox'. There are no dates given in this list just these details.

Finally, a newspaper cutting from The Grantham Journal dated Saturday February 17th, 1917 appears. It records the following:

Melton Mowbray Baptist Church Jubilee Celebrations

The Baptist community at Melton Mowbray have this week celebrated an important event in the history of the church, it being exactly fifty years this month since it's foundation.

A history of the church follows which includes:

..... In October 1880, The Rev D G Cox (*perhaps a misprint*), of Sittingbourne, was elected Pastor, whose ministry was characterised by earnestness and faithfulness. Fifty members were added during Mr Cox's stay, and he began Band of Hope and temperance work in conjunction with the late Mr Thos. Palmer. He also introduced Band of Hope work into many of villages. Acting on medical advice, Mr Cox went to New Zealand, and, upon, his leaving, he was presented with a bag of gold, £129

It is clear that Rev Cox was highly thought of during his time in Melton and the congregation were reluctant to see him leave. According to the internet, the gift of £129 would be about £9600 in todays money. Just for interest, the weekly average wage of an agricultural labourer in 1886 was 13 Shillings and 4 Pence (13/4) with 20 Shillings to a pound.