

Our History: **Bi-Centenary Celebrations: 1813 - 2013**

On the weekend of 15th – 16th June 2013 Polesworth Baptist Church celebrated her foundation in 1813. After starting in the warehouse near the canal the congregation began meeting in Harvey's Barn which was that other side of Fairfields Lane, in the region of Potters Lane and Common Lane. At that time George 111 was King, Jane Austin published "Pride and Prejudice" and there was still 2 years go before Wellington beat Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo.

It was not until 1828, according to Alan Betteridge, that the Church building was erected - there our rumours it was built in 1829 – perhaps it was started in the one year and completed in the next?

Our 2013 Celebrations began with a prayer breakfast on Saturday morning followed by a talk "The story behind the founding of the Baptist Church in Polesworth in the early 19th century", by Margaret Henley, based on her research, in which she introduced us to those who bought and erected the building. The grave stones of some of these founders are still to be seen in the church graveyard today.

Celebrations continued in the afternoon led by many South African friends of the church, inspiring all present with the joyful singing of traditional and modern songs in both English and African languages. Then following a service of celebration led by our then minister, the Rev Steve Wallis, with guest speakers the immediately former minister, Rev Paul Rendle and his wife Hazel.

Sunday started with a service in the style of 1813, including hymns popular at the time and Steve preaching a sermon originally given by Christmas Evens, a famous Welsh Baptist Minister of the early 19th century.

Other links with the past were in worshippers attending in period dress, the fellowship lunch serving popular 1813 food and an opportunity after lunch for children to play games from the times.



The festivities ended with a final service of celebration, led again by the minister. The special guest was another former minister, Rev Peter Norris. Peter who came with his wife Hilary, shared from his time at Polesworth, but also challenged the Church to maintain her witness for Christ for the next 200 years or until He returns.

