

William Reynolds

William Reynolds was born in Trowbridge on May 31st 1848. His father died when he was about five years of age and was brought up by his mother alone. Following his education at the local Grammar School he was placed with a Solicitor but then opted to become a minister and was subsequently trained at the Bristol Baptist College and took charge of the Baptist Church in Paulton, Somerset.

In 1872 he was accepted for the Wesleyan ministry and came straightway to Maidenhead staying for one year. Very little information about his ministry has so far come to light. However in 1899 he was elected to the Board of Wellington School and a newspaper cutting for September 1906 records some more details of his itinerancy:

“Paulton: The Rev William Reynolds succeeds Mr Joseph Crowther, removed to Bodmin. Mr Reynolds dates from 1972, and has previously been in the district, having spent two years at Dursley, three at Trowbridge, three at Wellington and the last three at Shepton Mallet. He has also had a spell of North of England life, having been at Berwick-on-Tweed two years previously to Shepton Mallet, and four years in Scotland at Arbroath and Perth. He has also travelled at North Shields, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Stamford, Holbeach, Brigg and Windsor, his first circuit”

William had married Sarah Anne Gummer in Bristol in 1871 and they subsequently had two children. The first, William Malcolm, was born in Maidenhead (Dec 1872); the second, Donald Frayne, was born at Kirton Lindsay, Lincolnshire (Jun 1875). While at Berwick-on-Tweed he and Sarah adopted Anne Elizabeth Dunlop (born 1878).

In 1908 he had an interesting encounter as recorded on the 29th May:

COMPTON DANDO

VISIT OF AERONAUTS - INTERESTING INCIDENT -

“The balloon ascent made by Mr Griffith Brewer () accompanied by Mr C J Gliddon of Boston U.S.A. on Wednesday in last week from the Bath gassworks, in the “Lotus” was carried out under ideal conditions. At Compton Dando the aeronauts were 600 feet only above the ground. It was about 5. 45 pm., and among a number of interested residents within hail was the Rev. Wm. Reynolds (Wesleyan Minister). The travellers asked if it was too late for tea, and they received in reply a cordial Somerset invitation to come down and see. A gentle descent in a field belonging to Mr Harold H Francis was made with the help of some men who secured the rope and made fast to a post, and the travellers were entertained to tea by Mr Francis and his sister. They ascended again and continuing in a south westerly direction went over Chew Magna and the reservoirs at Blagdon. The incident caused considerable interest among the villagers”.*

(* Griffith Brewer was a pioneer English balloonist and aviator, who made his first balloon flight in 1891. Brewer met Wilbur Wright in Pau, France in 1908 and was the first Englishman to fly as a passenger with Wright. However this was just a practice flight as on the day following (Saturday 30 May), Griffith Brewer again set off in the “Lotus” in the first international balloon race in England set off from the Hurlingham Club and was one of only

two balloons to land on the target at Burchett's Green. The rest landed at various locations scattered all around Windsor and Maidenhead)

**Leaving Paulton (again) in August 1908 his parting text was
"Finally Brethren Farewell" (2 Cor 18 v 11).**

"It was, he said, a case of absolute physical necessity that he had to give up the work of the circuit being unable to fulfill the duties devolving upon him. He should look back with great pleasure to the two years he had spent among them. He could not use a word more meaningful than "Brethren" which should be used in all their relationship and not narrowed down to a very poor meaning"

Sadly during William's next appointment to Haverfordwest his wife Sarah Ann died.

William Reynolds retired from active work in 1911 and settled in Bournemouth in 1913. His health failed in 1921 and after a protracted affliction died on 23 June 1923 aged 75.