

Forest of Dean Methodist Circuits

Taken from: Gloucestershire Archives

Genealogical handlist for Website

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1348>

In 1824 the Oakengates Primitive Methodist circuit of Shropshire sent J. Roles as minister to the Forest of Dean miners. Based at Pillowell in the parish of West Dean, the popularity of the mission quickly resulted in the organisation of a circuit of cottages, which became independent of the Oakengates mission. The first Pillowell circuit chapel was built at Lydbrook in 1828.

By 1862 the Pillowell circuit included the following chapels in Gloucestershire:

CINDERFORD - Cinderford
DEAN, EAST - Blakeney Hill; Coppice Wood
DEAN, WEST - Berry Hill; Ellwood; Lane End; Moseley Green; Pillowell; Viney Hill
LYDBROOK - Lydbrook
LYDNEY - Lydney; The Reddings
MANGOTSFIELD - Downend
NEWLAND - Bream Eaves; Clearwell
NEWNHAM - Broad Oak
RUARDEAN - Ruardean Hill
WOOLASTON - Woolaston

Further expansion of the Pillowell circuit resulted in its splitting into three in c.1869, as follows:

LYDBROOK CIRCUIT - DEAN, WEST - Berry Hill; Coalway Lane End; Edge End; Mile End
LYDBROOK - Lydbrook
LYDNEY - The Reddings

LYDNEY CIRCUIT - DEAN, WEST - Ellwood
LYDNEY - Lydney
NEWLAND - Bream Eaves; Clearwell
WOOLASTON - Woolaston

PILLOWELL CIRCUIT - CINDERFORD - Cinderford (Church Road)
DEAN, EAST - Blakeney Hill
DEAN, WEST - Moseley Green; Oldcroft; Pillowell; Viney Hill

A Wesleyan Ledbury and Forest of Dean circuit also existed by 1850, when it contained the following chapels in Gloucestershire:

ABENHALL - Bilson
BROMSBERROW - Bromsberrow Heath
CINDERFORD - Cinderford; Cinderford Heath
LONGHOPE - May Hill
LYDBROOK - Lydbrook
MITCHELDEAN - Mitcheldean
NEWENT - Newent
NEWLAND - Coleford
NEWNHAM - Newnham
PAUNTLEY - Pool Hill
REDMARLEY - Redmarley
RUARDEAN - Ruardeans Hill
STAUNTON - Staunton

This was called the Ross and Coleford circuit by 1861, and became the Cinderford Wesleyan circuit in c.1878.

A fifth circuit existed by 1837, when it was known as the Forest of Dean Mission. By 1858 it had changed its title to the Forest of Dean Bible Christian circuit, and in 1907 it became the United Methodist circuit. The circuit's membership in 1858 was as follows:

DEAN, EAST - Bailey; Drybrook; Edgehills; Ruspidge, Soudley; Yorkley slade
DEAN, WEST - Clements End Green
MITCHELDEAN - Mitcheldean
NEWLAND - Bream
WOOLASTON - Woolaston; Woolaston Common

In 1934 these five circuits were reduced to two - the Forest of Dean Mission and the Lydney and Pillowell circuit. The member chapels of the Lydney and Pillowell circuit in 1934 were as follows:

CINDERFORD - Cinderford
DEAN, EAST - Blakeney Hill
DEAN, WEST - Ellwood; Moseley Green; Oldcroft, Pillowell; Viney Hill
LYDNEY - Lydney
NEWLAND - Bream; Clearwell
WOOLASTON - Woolaston

In 1938 the Lydney and Pillowell circuit was absorbed into the Forest of Dean Mission, which became the Forest of Dean circuit in 1947. In 1958 it came under the Bristol district.