

ROUNABOUT VERWOOD

PAST and PRESENT



Early 20th century

Three Legged Cross Congregational Church



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Following on from the last issue and still in Three Legged Cross, the origins of the Independent, later Congregational Chapel in this area appear to be on a quarter acre or "rood" plot owned in the 19th century by Samuel Golding or Goulding on the south side of Ringwood Road at the side of his cottage. This property is still known as Chapel Farm and is almost opposite today's chapel, although it was rebuilt after a fire and has been in existence from at least 1847.

According to the 1861 book "*Congregational Churches of Dorset*", a better chapel was needed and was obtained on a leasehold site at a small rental from Lord Shaftsbury. Miss Carter of Ringwood who was also a substantial contributor to the later Verwood Chapel, was the main benefactor, bearing the whole cost of £170 assisted by the congregation who contributed their own time and labour.

Despite the initial difficulties in Three Legged Cross, where the inhabitants reportedly "*preferred to spend their Sundays in drinking and fighting*", the Chapel prospered!

Eventually a larger one was needed and a roadside site was obtained from William Rolles Fryer on easy terms

on the lives of William Hatchard, Stephen Orman and Jesse Stickland. The foundation stone was laid in August 1890 but on 15th August Henry Golding gave a written receipt for £3 to Sam Thorne of the Congregational Building Committee for a quarter acre of his land for the site of the "above chapel" - so it is not clear to whom the land belonged at this stage! Whatever the sequence of events, it is fairly certain that William Fryer opened the chapel on 19th May 1891 and the building cost £360 and was paid for by 1894.

Today, apart from a larger porch and the front window in the gable being filled in, the chapel is much as it was at the turn of the century - even the two trees in the foreground are probably the same two in the early photo, although somewhat larger now.