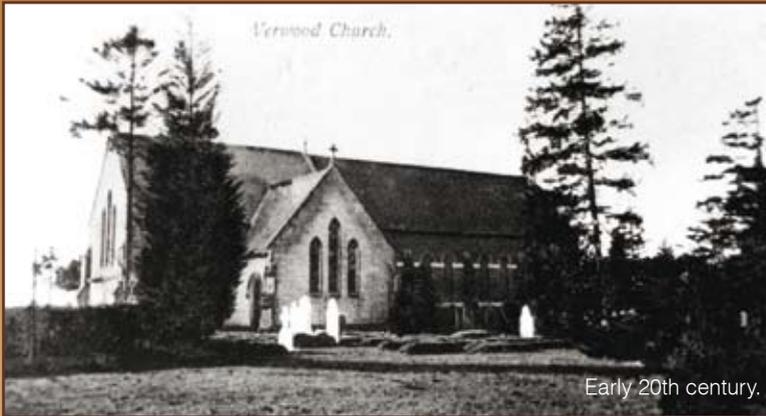


ROUNABOUT VERWOOD

PAST and PRESENT

Verwood Parish Church



For centuries the parishioners of Verwood and parts of Three Legged Cross had to travel between four and seven miles to the mother church of Cranborne to attend worship and for services of baptism, marriage and burial. In 1829 a petition of the 400 villagers called for a Chapel of Ease which was granted with a half acre Chapelyard on the site of what is now St. Michael and All Angels Parish Church. From then on, baptisms and burials could be conducted locally though it was never licensed for marriages. The land was purchased from William Rolls Fryer for the sum of five shillings (25p today!) and an annual rent of one peppercorn. It was reputedly a plain mudwalled building, most probably thatched, with galleries along the north and west sides. It remained as such until a small brick chancel was added in 1870.

In 1886 in preparation as its new status of Parish Church the chapel was totally rebuilt in local brick and decorated with string courses of white Ebblake brick which can be seen as the two white bands of brick in the above photo. The bricks were brought to the site in carts supplied by the Standfield family of Margards Lane.

1887 saw the arrival of the first Vicar, Reverend Claud Brown who was to have a great impact on Verwood

throughout his 30 years of service.

After a succession of vicars the next major change came in 1980 in response to the growing population of Verwood. By the inspiration and dedication of Reverend Anthony Roberts and the congregation of the time, the whole of the body of the church was extended outwards leaving the original area as the central nave. A Meeting Room was added at the west end as an entrance hall and gathering place, replacing an earlier small brick porch.



100 years later the church is almost hidden by foliage in this view but the original 1886 roof line is just about discernible