

CHAPTER 15

Rev. Constance Payne (1967 - 1973)

A new departure occurred with selection of the next minister, for although the first woman minister had been ordained in a Congregational Church in 1917, it had never been suggested until now that Great Chishill might make such an appointment.

However, at the suggestion of the Moderator, an invitation was sent to Rev. Constance Payne, presently minister at Shoreham-on-Sea, to pay a visit to the four churches. This visit took place on 19th March 1967, when two United Services were conducted by Mrs. Payne. The experience was to the liking of all parties, and Mrs. Payne was inducted to the pastorate on 12th July at a Service at Great Chishill.

Mrs. Payne was of average height, a lively disposition, kind and sympathetic, and a good preacher. She showed great concern for the elderly members of the village and was leader of the "Over 60's" group. It so happened that she was the last minister to live in the Great Chishill manse, for the house was let afterwards.

Mrs. Payne was a very independent-minded person and often refused help offered in various areas. As part of an 'Exchange of Pulpits', she not only surprised her Anglican congregation by her presence and conduct of worship, but also because she was able to intone the Service perfectly.

However, Mrs. Payne was not as forceful in Deacons Meetings as might have been wished, and these acquired a reputation for being rather long-winded. Her husband had died before she came to Great Chishill, but she had a son and later became a grandmother.