

CHAPTER 17

Different links, Rev. Ward Murray (1984 - 1988)

Changes in ministers within the Royston Group over a few years caused the District Council to suggest that Great Chishill and Barley Churches might consider joining with Saffron Walden URC instead. This would inevitably have meant severing the links with the other churches of the Royston Group.

At a joint meeting of churches in December 1983 this proposition was considered, and in the following April it was agreed to offer a call to Rev. Ward Murray a minister of the Presbyterian Church in U.S.A., after hearing a tape recording of a Service he had recently conducted.

The Induction Service was held at Saffron Walden URC on 31st August 1984, but the excitement of this call was marred by the knowledge that in March 1984, a resolution had been passed to close Barley Church in view of the small number of members remaining.

It did not prove easy to apportion between the churches the Services which Mr. Murray would conduct, and various combinations were tried but without total satisfaction. The links between the Great Chishill and Saffron Walden churches increased in strength under Mr. Murray's leadership, and further help was given by his wife Ruth who taught a class of older girls.

In August 1988, Mr. Murray resigned in order to return to the U.S.A.