

Gadfield Elm Chapel

Worcestershire, England, UK

Gadfield Elm was the first chapel in England of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was originally built in 1836 by a religious group known as the United Brethren. Through the efforts of Wilford Woodruff, most of the members of this group were baptized into the Church in 1840.

The United Brethren, led by a man named Thomas Knighton, had separated themselves from the Methodists and were seeking further light and knowledge about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Wilford Woodruff recorded that “on the 21st day of March I baptized Elder Thomas Kington (sic). He was superintendent of both preachers and members of the United Brethren. The first thirty days after my arrival in Herefordshire, I had baptized forty-five preachers and one hundred and sixty members of the United Brethren, who put into my hands one chapel and forty-five houses, which were licensed according to law to preach in.”¹

After the conversion of the United Brethren, the Gadfield Elm Chapel, deeded to the Church by John Benbow and Thomas Knighton, was used for several conferences of the Church, at which Brigham Young, then president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke at least once. The Gadfield Elm Chapel became the center of activity for the Church in the area. With the call of the Saints to gather in America, the chapel was subsequently sold to help fund ocean passage of the converts.

Gadfield Elm was privately owned for 150 years before being bought by the Gadfield Elm Trust, a group of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints founded in 1994 to preserve the chapel; it was headed by Wayne Gardner. Local members raised about \$12,000 to purchase the chapel, which had fallen into disrepair. Several individuals in the United Kingdom and the United States contributed to the costs of the complete renovation.



Gadfield Elm, originally built by
the United Brethren
Photo courtesy of Alexander L. Baugh

On April 23, 2000, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and a descendant of William Carter and Ellen Benbow, who joined the Church near Gadfield Elm, dedicated the chapel. President Gordon B. Hinckley accepted the deed to the chapel in 2004 from Dwain Gardner, a representative of Gadfield Elm Trust.²

SOURCES

¹ “News of the Church,” *Ensign*, October 1986, 76.

² “Historic chapel given to LDS,” *Deseret Morning News*, May 27, 2004.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Address:
Pendock, England



Hours of Operation:

Wednesdays: 11:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Fridays and Saturdays: 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Sundays: 2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Phone Number:

01452 840576

Admission:

Free

FURTHER READING

“Gadfield Elm: The Oldest LDS Chapel in Europe,” *Ensign*, October 1986, 76.

“Historic chapel given to LDS,” *Deseret Morning News*, May 27, 2004.