

## The Visit of Bill Hinmers to Guisborough URC.



In September Guisborough Church had a special visitor: Bill Hinmers, who is a direct descendant of our first minister, the Rev William Hinmers (1774 – 1846), and a pastor of the church from 1811 – 1824. Bill, an airline pilot resident in Banbury, Oxfordshire, discovered his connection with the Guisborough Church, through the East Cleveland website, as he was researching his family history in 2008. He is the great, great, great, grandson of the Rev Hinmers.

His ancestor came to Cleveland from Edinburgh in 1806, as an itinerant preacher working on Home Missions. William Hinmers originally had ambitions to be missionary in India – but the expedition failed to happen because of an embargo by the East India Company – and so a number of years later he decided to come to the area. In this he was possibly following the advice of a popular comment of the time: *Why go to foreign parts to convert the heathen when there plenty of heathens here at home?* Five years later with help from others in the town he was instrumental in building the present chapel.

William Hinmers was our minister until 1824, when he resigned to concentrate his work on the churches at Great Ayton and Stokesley. He died in 1846 and his grave can be seen Great Ayton Church Yard.

Bill stayed in Great Ayton, with his aunt Margaret, and was able to tour the area to see points of interest in connection with his ancestor. In Great Ayton the Rev Hinmers former church, now a white coloured private house, can be seen from the bridge from the stone bridge and is flanked by the river Leven. Also, also on the south side of the river are the Old Brewery buildings, which served as a manse for resident ministers during the nineteenth century. But it was in the church yard of All Saints Parish Church that can be seen a most impressive monument to William Hinmers: a fine black polished granite grave stone slab. Later, Bill was able to visit Teesside Archives where he was able to view his ancestor's original marriage certificate for, while in Guisborough, he married Ann Barry the daughter of a local shoemaker in St Nicholas' Parish Church in November 1813.

The final part of his visit was to Guisborough Church. Here Bill and his aunt were presented with a book about the town, a picture of the Market Cross and a file of old documents and photographs of our past and present congregation. A good number of our members were present to say hello to Bill and have a chat - and so it was a most enjoyable time. Bill hopes to be able to attend our Bi-centenary Anniversary Service next year.

Later, in a letter of thanks to the church Bill writes: "..... *My aunt Margaret and I thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your church. We found the reception very hospitable and friendly.....making us feel very welcome.*" And in conclusion Bill made a kind donation of £100 to church funds.

*Ray Tunnicliffe, Guisborough.*