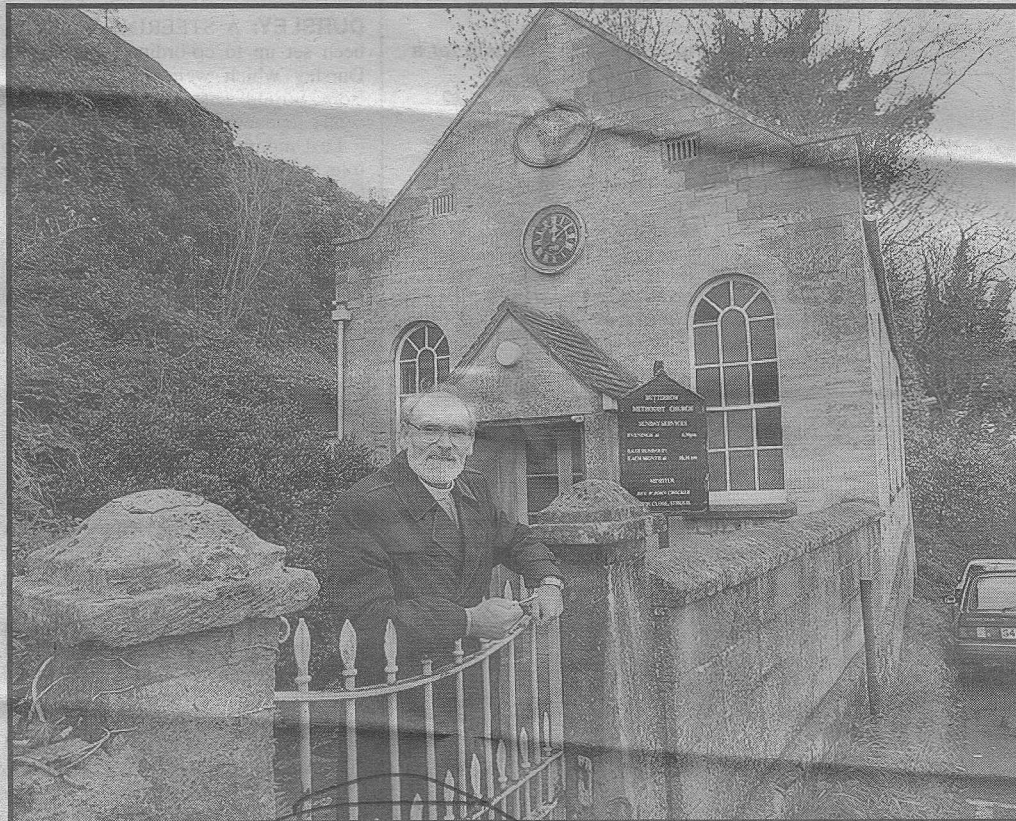


Have YOU got news

Stroud: Methodists to sell building at auction



■ The Rev John Crocker at the Butterrow Chapel which is now up for sale.

Photo: Martin Perry

Last service for chapel

A TINY Methodist chapel in Stroud may be full for the first time in years when worshippers meet this weekend to close it down.

The small hillside Butterrow Chapel, built in 1856, has seen dwindling congregations in modern times and for the past decade the only people to pray there have been from outside the local community.

Now the Methodists have decided to auction off the building and its solitary outside grave and sell the property to the highest bidder.

Stroud and Dursley Methodist circuit superintendent minister, the Reverend John Crocker, said in its 140-year history the Butterrow Chapel had offered regular Sunday services, Sunday School and a women's meeting.

But as the nearby Butterrow shop and pub shut down and the last regular church-goers became housebound or died, the chapel ceased to be the heart of the local community.

"It is now hoped the chapel can be converted for

by Jo Barber

residential purposes," said Mr Crocker.

"The auction is scheduled for December 12."

Proceeds would become the property of the nationwide Methodist Church, while the congregation currently drawn from elsewhere around the Stroud valleys would be welcomed instead at St Alban's in Stroud town centre.

Mr Crocker, whose circuit includes 16 churches and membership of almost 800 people, said three pieces of memorial furniture would also be transferred to St Alban's.

The chapel purchaser will have to make arrangements if they wish to remove the lone tomb of a husband and wife dating from 1888.

On Sunday evening, guests from other local Methodist churches are expected to swell the normal Butterrow congregation of around eight to perhaps 40 or even the maximum 50 people, Mr Crocker added.

➤ See also Grapevine: Page 6.

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