

**KEER, Reverend William Brown (1827-1898)**

The Reverend William Brown Keer was born in Mutford, Suffolk on 2 July 1827 and was baptised in the Lowestoft Wesleyan Chapel two weeks later. Until at least 1851 he lived at home on his father's farm in Mutford but soon afterwards he attended St Bees grammar school near Whitehaven in Cumbria and was ordained as a Wesleyan Methodist priest in 1858. After ordination he was appointed as curate in a Wesleyan chapel in Liverpool but was attacked and beaten by a Catholic mob in the city in June 1858. By 1861 he was living in Cannon Street Road in London and was curate of St Paul's in Whitechapel. Sometime in the 1860s he travelled to India and was appointed the Harbour Chaplain at Bombay where he provided religious services for the crews of visiting ships. At least for some of his time in Bombay he lived on board a ship in the harbour. During his time in India he travelled to Ceylon and Gujarat State on a mission and published an account of his travels in 1869.

He made a lengthy return to England travelling by boat across the Indian Ocean and into the Persian Gulf and then overland through Iraq and Palestine. He published an account of this journey in 1873 and in the following year he produced another publication about his stay in Jerusalem where he celebrated Easter. He must have arrived back in England by 1872 as he commenced his BA at Oxford University on 12 October of that year. In 1877 he sailed to Valparaiso, Chile where he was the British Wesleyan chaplain for a few years and published an account of his voyage in an Oxford journal. By 1881 he had returned to England and had taken up the position of curate in sole charge of the church at Heywood, Wiltshire while living in nearby Westbury. In 1890 he was back in lodgings in Oxford and was awarded an MA in that year after which he remained living in Kingston Road in the city. However, on 20 April 1898 he was admitted as a private patient to the Retreat asylum in Fairford from the Radcliffe Infirmary suffering from a 'cerebral strangulated hernia'. William Brown Keer died in the Retreat on 11 December 1898 and was buried in the churchyard at Fairford.