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## EDITORIAL

This issue is deceptively representative. It focuses on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but it reaches back to the seventeenth century. It is Anglocentric but Wales and Scotland play more than walk-on roles. It is primarily Congregational but it draws from English Presbyterianism and it feeds suggestively into the United Reformed Church. More suggestively yet, it shows how what is apparently peripheral, or more certainly localised, eccentric, or exceptional, is in fact representative. Today's inheritors of the Reformed tradition need to be quite as aware of that as today's supposedly more objective historians. The Dawsons of Aldcliffe, for example, were exceptional in their sustained prosperity but there was not an aspect of contemporary Congregationalism which their lives did not touch or illuminate. Chapel thespians are footnotes at best even in the best chapel histories but Dorchester's Hardy Players shed light on many interconnexions in chapel culture. Theirs is the world which in differing circumstances produced Jerome K. Jerome, Ian McKellen, and the late Mollie Sugden.

It is a pity that Alan Sell's conversations did not touch on such matters; one suspects that they would not have gone too far if they had. Dr. Nuttall was no more representative as a pastor or a scholar than he was as a Congregationalist, yet he could not have been other than a pastor, a scholar and a Congregationalist and these conversations cover at least as broad a span as Aldcliffe's Dawsons or, indeed, the Hardy Players. They, too, explain much.

Geoffrey Nuttall was a minister of the United Reformed Church; Nigel Lemon, Alan Sell and Keith Forecast are United Reformed Church ministers; John Travell is a Congregational minister, and Martin Wellings, whom we welcome as a reviewer, is a Methodist minister.

**Note:** The Baptist Historical Society invites URCHS members to Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church on Saturday 22 May, 2010 for its AGM and a Lecture by Professor Clyde Binfield, "How Free? How New? How Suburban? The Establishment of Dissent in Hampstead Garden Suburb". Please register an interest with the Revd Stephen Copson, 60 Strathmore Avenue, Hitchin SG5 1ST or [stephen.bhs@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:stephen.bhs@dsl.pipex.com)

## MISSIONARIES TO LANCASHIRE AND BEYOND: THE DAWSONS OF ALDCLIFFE

### An Outline Family History

In his funeral address in December 1945 for Mary Philadelphia Dawson of Aldcliffe Hall, Lancaster, T.T. James, the recently-retired Moderator of the Lancashire Congregational Union, spoke of her as “a great friend of overseas missions”.<sup>1</sup> The local newspaper also acknowledged the breadth of her own and her family’s commitment to denominational and other evangelical causes. This might in part illustrate Susan Thorpe’s reminder of the inherent individuality of Congregationalism juxtaposed with the necessary association of members and churches in fostering interest and support for overseas missions.<sup>2</sup> Her stress on the particular involvement in this movement of evangelical women, abroad as well as at home, also finds its parallel among the Dawsons. But “preference of foreign over home missions during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century” fails to match the multi-focussed, almost universal view which characterised the Dawsons’ outward concern, within and beyond church boundaries. Their activity ranged from the earliest days of Lancashire Congregational associationism through aid to local and not so local churches, to the temperance movement both locally and nationally, and to some distinctive and practical aspects of overseas missionary involvement: this all occurred in a period of great social change and of swiftly developing communications and transport.<sup>3</sup>

Mary Philadelphia’s Dissenting forbears reach back in direct line through at least seven generations to the late seventeenth century. Richard Leigh of Burket Moor (*d.* 1721), her five times great-grandfather, built and endowed the Independent Chapel which had been founded in 1696 at Newton-in-Bowland, then in the West Riding of Yorkshire: he was probably the Richard Leigh who had provided hospitality to visiting Quaker preachers, even before the first recorded Meeting of Newton Friends in 1669. Leigh obtained the lease of Aldcliffe after that estate, lying to the immediate south-west of Lancaster, had been confiscated by the Crown in 1716 for helping to maintain the secular

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- 1 *The Lancaster Guardian & Observer*, 28 December 1945. A total of four Mary Dawsons appears in this article: Miss M.P. Dawson is normally written hereafter as Mary Philadelphia or Elphie, as she was known by the family.
  - 2 Susan Thorpe, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in 19th-Century England* (Stanford, CA., 1999), especially ch. 4.
  - 3 The present writer is greatly indebted to Nigel Bousfield Dawson-Hall, Peter Gilchrist and Colin Hall, great-nephews of Mary Philadelphia, for encouragement and help with this paper, including access to family documents; to the staff and facilities of Lancaster Reference Library, especially for permission to quote from documents in their care, and of Dr. Williams’s Library; and to Clyde Binfield who suggested this study of the Dawsons, provided substantial background details of their various family, especially ministerial, links, and commented on an earlier draft.

Roman Catholic clergy. He then committed it to his sons, the survivor Benjamin Leigh in turn bequeathing it to its first resident Dawson. Robert Dawson (c.1712-1769), the elder son of John Dawson, yeoman, of Warton near Carnforth and his wife Agnes, in 1741 married Benjamin Leigh's eldest daughter Isabel: again "by inheritance", he also became a trustee at Newton. In the next generation John Dawson (c.1744-1804), a Lancaster merchant, bought four-fifths of the Aldcliffe estate from the Crown: the remaining share was later purchased by his son from the Riddell family of Northumberland.<sup>4</sup> John's wife Jane was particularly strong in maintaining the Dissenting tradition: she was the daughter of a successful London stationer, George Flower, member and deacon at White's-row, Spitalfields, from whom also descended the notable Stratford-upon-Avon brewing Flowers.

The next three generations of Dawsons produced the family's most prominent Congregational and civic activists. Edward Dawson (1793-1876) was twice married: his first wife, who died after childbirth in 1823, was Anne Wilson, elder daughter of a partner in the Kendal bank of Maude, Wilson & Crewdson, where perhaps all three principals were of Quaker background; the second was Mary, elder daughter of Robert Bousfield, a Congregationalist from Walworth in Surrey though his family came from Ravenstonedale in Westmorland. Their elder son Edward Bousfield Dawson (1830-1916) married Mary Elizabeth Howard at Hanover Chapel, Stockport, where her parents' families, the Howards and Carringtons, were prominent members. An active Lancashire Congregationalism continued in two of his daughters, the eldest and unmarried Mary Philadelphia (1863-1945) who was the last Dawson at Aldcliffe and her youngest sister Constance Isabel (1875-1931). The male line had failed with the death of Alfred Cephas Howard (1867-1902), Edward Bousfield Dawson's second son and a lifelong invalid: the Congregational story itself, however, runs until the mid-twentieth century in Lancaster, and the end of the century elsewhere.

### **Congregationalism in and around Lancaster**

The early history of Dissent in the Lancaster area may now mainly be studied only through secondary sources: many of these however provide some links within the Dawson story.<sup>5</sup> Independency was perhaps first established at

4 *Victoria County History of Lancashire* (London, 1914), viii, 48. Minority portions of Aldcliffe had twice been separated from the main estate. The *VCH* detail about Aldcliffe's consolidation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was supplied by Edward Bousfield Dawson, for whom see below *passim*. Edward Dawson and Edward Bousfield Dawson are hereafter ED and EBD.

5 e.g., G.H. Briggs (comp.), *A History of the Lancaster Baptist Church*, (Centenary Pamphlet 1962); Norman Burgoine, *Forton Congregational Church 1707 [to] 1957* (Anniversary Pamphlet); J. Hay Colligan, *History of Trinity Presbyterian Church Lancaster*, (Penrith, 1909); B. Nightingale, *A History of Lancashire Nonconformity*, (Manchester, 1890 *et seq.*); J.W.A. Price, *200 Years of Congregationalism in Lancaster*, (1972 pamphlet).

Forton, some six miles to the south, although its chapel, dating from 1707, had Presbyterian antecedents: the two Lancaster causes of our story followed in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Meanwhile, Isabel Dawson (c.1715-1781) attended the town's Presbyterian chapel in St. Nicholas Street until its preaching became Arian in the mid-1760s: she then transferred her allegiance to Forton where her husband's funeral sermon would be preached. Nightingale, the historian of Lancashire Nonconformity, relates the romantic tradition of how Isabel went to Forton chapel accompanied by her dog: he also notes the frequency of such stories about older causes.

Mount Street Independent Church dated from about 1770, perhaps a secession from the newly Arian Presbyterians: it was served first by Henry Hunt and then supplied by students from Trevecca from 1773 to 1777. John Dawson aided its purchase of land in 1773; the burial ground was in use from 1776; and the new building was opened by the following year, its minister proscribed from holding Arian, Socinian or Antinomian views. A group of members seceded in 1808 to form a church of Scotch Baptist type, apparently persuaded towards Believers' Baptism by the preaching of the then pastor, Peter Charrier: he however did not join them. Isabel Dawson supported Mount Street Chapel in her later years.<sup>6</sup> Surviving baptismal and burial registers, together with memorial tablets and stones in and around the chapel, mark the passage of this family well into the following century.<sup>7</sup>

Shortly before the centenary of Mount Street, renamed High Street by the mid-nineteenth century, some of its young men commenced mission-preaching in the growing north-east of the town, leading to the formation in 1873 of Centenary Congregational Church. Its foundation as a church distinct from High Street presaged some early and obvious tensions between the two causes, allegedly over the issue of fermented communion wine: Centenary's apologists insisted that the new church was founded not to maintain teetotalism but for growth. It remains most likely that personality differences coupled with those firm principles stood behind the resignations from High Street.<sup>8</sup> Although no Dawsons were founding members, the opening celebrations in November 1873 included speeches by ED and his minister son Robert whilst his grandson Howard (mis-reported as Alfred in one account) was among three small boys who planted trees in the church garden: EBD gave a baptismal font the following month and in late 1877 he, with twenty-six other members, resigned from High Street; he became a Centenary deacon in the following January; and

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6 Robert Bellis, *Aldcliffe*, (1987). Substantial unpaginated typescript volume, hereafter *Bellis 1987*, in the Lancaster Reference Library 8284 (hereafter e.g., LRL 8284).

7 The following and other paragraphs draw greatly on the four *Centenary Congregational Church Minutes Books* (hereafter *Centenary Minutes*) covering the years 1873 to 1964 and to discussion with James Price who facilitated access to these volumes.

8 See *The Lancaster Guardian*, 1 November 1873 for the Committee's statement at opening; and 8 November 1873 for a conflicting letter from Mr. W. Gilchrist, a member of High Street Church.

gave extensive school buildings and lecture room in 1888 as “a token of thankfulness for a great family mercy”.

Various (Edward) Dawson daughters, whether single or widowed, generously supported local funds. Sophia Septima (1842-1932) in particular was committed to Centenary: when the church voted in 1892 that the deacons’ meeting might include “Sisters”, styled deaconesses, she headed the first appointments and in 1926 became the first woman elected for life to the diaconate, later to be joined by Mary Philadelphia. Aunt, niece, and EBD were frequently chosen as church visitors to applicants for membership. Centenary followed a meticulous pattern of recording, enquiring and reporting back before electing candidates to full fellowship: unfortunately, this practice and the annual scrutiny of the Church Roll seem both to have ceased before the final decades of the church’s life, effectively hiding the membership patterns of some later Dawson descendants.

Centenary was by no means a one-family chapel, nor was every Dawson a member there; it did, however, enjoy the continuous support of the Dawsons throughout its existence. Nonetheless, at the Jubilee Celebrations of High Street Sunday School in 1906, EBD as afternoon speaker noted warmly how his seven sisters had all been teachers at the older church.<sup>9</sup> Membership reached a peak of over 500 in 1920, having long overtaken the High Street numbers. But in the twentieth century, the town’s re-development in the inter-war years precipitated a quite early decline for Centenary which closed in October 1964. Today its premises survive as *The Friary*, a restaurant and public house. This would appal the shades of the teetotal Dawsons. High Street remains as part of Trinity URC.

### County Congregationalism

The four most prominent family Congregationalists saw their denominational or evangelical role in local, county and even national terms, their involvement stretching back almost to the founding days of the Lancashire Congregational Union in 1806.<sup>10</sup> The Dawsons’ financial support for this Union found Edward and his wife each donating twenty pounds annually by the 1870s, but he was also one of its early officers: Secretary of the Preston District from 1819 to 1822, specifically designated Assistant for the Lonsdale

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9 Lancaster High Street Sunday Schools, *A Jubilee Celebration. May 20th 1906*, (Souvenir Pamphlet).

10 The Lancaster and Lancashire detail cited in this and subsequent paragraphs follows: B. Nightingale, *op. cit.*, i. *passim*; *Executive Committee of the LCU*, Vol. 6 1913-1932, (Lancashire Record Office, hereafter LRO, CUL. 4/6); *Preston District Minutes of the LCU, 1818-1908*, (LRO, CUPf.16 and 28); *A Statement of Facts concerning the Expulsion of Six Members from the Congregational Church assembling at Cannon Street Chapel, Preston*, (Preston 1870); and *Emmanuel Congregational Church, Carnforth, 1880-1980*, (Centenary Booklet).

Hundred, and subsequently Treasurer from 1831 until his death in 1876. The County Union Annual Meetings then referred to him as “one of its oldest friends and supporters,” whose “long continued and faithful services are gratefully remembered”; the District Minutes noted that “Mr Dawson first took the Chair of this District Meeting at Kirkham on September 28, 1819. This Chair he had occupied at almost every meeting since that date up to the time of his death,” although he invariably asked a minister to open with prayer.

After Edward’s death, his widow maintained the Aldcliffe Hall hospitality to visiting ministers and delegates of the Preston District when meeting at Lancaster, as in 1879: his own memorial was in the continuation by others of his District-wide work and by his elder son in the Union’s work. EBD was successively District Secretary and Treasurer between 1868 and 1891, he then served until 1898 as Treasurer of the County Union: uniquely for the time, he was twice elected Chairman of the Lancashire Congregational Union and his wisdom was sought when the Union felt obliged to investigate unhelpful circumstance in local churches, as at Cannon Street, Preston. A Memorial Minute tabled in 1916 by the County’s Executive Committee, on which EBD sat for four decades, notes, in addition to his various other positions, an “active interest in all the Congregational Churches in Lancashire . . . By personal service and generous gifts he continually encouraged both Ministers and people”. That encouragement extended to other denominations and perhaps accounted for the presence of thirty ministers at his funeral.

Mary Philadelphia’s Congregationally active lifetime saw a widening of the church role of women: specific and limited tasks were assigned; quotas or separate rolls emerged on diaconates; and both local and wider representative positions illustrated a hesitant start towards equal terms. She herself was an executive member of the Lancashire Union’s Women’s Guild of Christian Service: this was obviously gender specific but in successive years she reported to Centenary Church on her attendance at the CUEW meetings in London or elsewhere, and in 1933 she was Chairman of the Preston District.

The breadth of Edward Dawson’s early denominational interest is instructive: for two years he was at Mill Hill School, one of its third annual intake;<sup>11</sup> he served on the Committee of the Blackburn Academy and was for thirty-five years a trustee of the Lancashire Independent College. His name joined those of George Hadfield, John Pye Smith and Joshua Wilson, each offering fifty guineas, on the list of Founders for Thomas Wilson’s 1830 proposals for a “Library and Denominational Home”: this was an attempt to provide for Congregationalism in the light of Unitarian dominance at Dr Williams’s Library and the cross-denominationalism of the London Missionary Society.<sup>12</sup> The Dawsons’ London links, which may have fostered this involvement, are explored later.

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11 E. Hampden-Cook, *The Register of Mill Hill School 1807-1926*, (London, 1926), has provided useful details about various Dawsons and Bousfields.

12 *Congregational Library and Public Rooms: A Prospectus*, (1831).

A lasting concern of the whole family was the County Union's Ministers' Provident Society: ED, a founder-trustee in 1842, "saw to it that each minister of High Street Church, to which he belonged, should be made a member";<sup>13</sup> EBD was Trustee and Treasurer for almost thirty years; Dr. John Harker was Medical Referee from 1883 to 1890, and the Milwaukee-born John William Hall was Financial Secretary in 1910 – sons-in-law respectively of the older and younger Edward Dawsons; and Honorary Life Membership was conferred on two of EBD's daughters, Constance ('Connie') and Mary Philadelphia.

In 1877, EBD had been called to the Chair of the Lancashire Union: thirty years later, when he alone survived in Lancashire from the 1857 Jubilee assembly, this honour was repeated for the Union's Centenary Year. His Chairman's speech showed a breadth and knowledgeable treatment of theological subjects that is instructive in a layman. Some were traditional Nonconformist causes but others were less expected or fashionable.<sup>14</sup> He started with matters of order and organisation: the Union is strength; village causes remain important; the old Itinerancy needs a modern equivalent, perhaps Lay Agency. Then, in matters of belief and ethics, his mainly conservative yet at times controversial stance urged his hearers to avoid the "deadening consequences of the Colenso School of interpretation"; watch now for signs of the end-times; pray for the conversion of the Jews; observe Sunday; and avoid blood in meat: he condemned not only drink but also smoking, especially by ministers. This was a *tour de force* for a man not far short of his eightieth year.

### Local Congregational Activists

It was in the churches around Lancaster, however, that the family's Congregationalism was particularly expressed: and caring support was provided for a range of causes over a wider area. The earliest volume of the Preston District Minutes shows Edward Dawson always anxious for rural progress and outreach. He was also involved in various Special Committees, Deputations, and chapel openings. But organisational and committee work was joined by active evangelisation. In an age of church planting, he with two others was appointed by the 1839 Preston District Meeting "to procure the permanent preaching of the Gospel at Fleetwood"; and later shared in ensuring the provision there of a chapel, free from debt. Kirkby Lonsdale attracted a different involvement, both in its early history, when Edward regularly rode the seventeen miles to conduct Sunday services, and later when family members helped finance the chapel renovations of 1888.

EBD's active local work stretched from the Fylde to Kirkby Lonsdale and from Barrow to south of Preston. As church extension progressed, he showed encouragement by proposing or seconding the request for £50 here or there, his

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13 *Annual Reports of the Lancashire Congregational Ministers' Provident Society*, 1876, (LRO, CUMp8).

14 *Lancashire Congregational Union Year Book* (hereafter LCUYB) 1907, 9-17.



evangelistic concern linked with a realism which had been strengthened by his treasurer roles in District and County Union; he officiated at countless openings or stonelayings; he served as a trustee at Nether Kellet for forty years; a long-term interest throughout the gestation period at Carnforth of first a school building and then chapel was shown in his gifts of land, funds and pulpit.

(Edward) Howard Dawson,<sup>15</sup> elder son of Edward Bousfield Dawson, showed much potential for a not dissimilar evangelistic concern during his sadly curtailed life. Having served his articles with George Dale Oliver of Hetherington & Oliver, the Carlisle architects who had been responsible in 1879 for Centenary Church, he was elected an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1888 and established his own practice in Lancaster. His Congregational associations ranged from education at Mill Hill to designs for churches at Grange-over-Sands (1895) and Carnforth (1897), both in modest late Gothic style, additions to the Centenary Congregational Schools, Lancaster (1888), and alterations to the choir gallery as well as a decorative scheme at Garstang (1889).<sup>16</sup> Although then in London, near St Pancras, he became a founding trustee at Little Asby (1887), an isolated Westmorland hamlet near Kirkby Stephen and some distance from Lancaster: Joseph Jackson, cabinet warehouseman of Shoreditch and Northumberland Park, Tottenham, but with farming origins in the village, had at his death in 1871 bequeathed £2500 from an estate of nearly £20,000 to be used "in establishing an Independent Chapel in Little Asby". Its founding was delayed through much litigation: only in August 1889 was Howard Dawson, then aged twenty-five, able to chair the first meeting of members. The trusteeship and his own membership appear to have been interdependent, the latter's nominal and inactive nature being foreign to both Congregational and Dawson practice: the only further mention of Howard in the Church Meeting Minutes, save for a record of his death when an appreciation of his trusteeship was given, was in February 1892 when his membership was erased for non-participation.<sup>17</sup>

Howard may never have been a member at Centenary, yet for some years he made gifts of the London Missionary Society's *Chronicle* to its congregation. His extensive personal religious activity crossed the denominations: he was General Secretary of the Aldcliffe-lane branch of the Jubilee Town Mission; taught at the Church Sunday School in Warton, Carnforth, where he lived;

15 For E. Howard Dawson (1864-1896), see *The Lancaster Guardian*, January 9 1897; *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, Vol 4, 1897, 229; Antonia Brodie *et al.*, *Directory of British Architects 1834-1914*, (London, 2001), i., 514.

16 I am indebted to helpful discussion with Dr Brenda Fox concerning the Garstang and Forton URCS, and also about John Dawson.

17 For Howard Dawson's involvement at Little Asby, see *Minutes Book of Little Asby Congregational Church 1889-1916*, (Kendal Record Office hereafter KRO, WDFC/C5) and *Deed of Trust for Erection of Chapel 1887* (KRO, WDFC/C5/1). For Little Asby, see *CYB* 1890, 217.

served as treasurer for the local auxiliary of the British & Foreign Bible Society; and, after his Congregational minister-uncle had led the Aldcliffe funeral, was buried according to the Church of England service. His daughter, Catherine Mary Howard ('Howie') Dawson (1894-1975), was the last Dawson: but in her generation, it was left to some Hall cousins to maintain the Congregational tradition.

Mary Philadelphia's personal zeal was evident at Centenary and elsewhere. In 1914 when ministers and delegates were attending the County Union Meetings, Centenary expected that she would lead the Weeknight Service; in 1931 she provided a building on land leased from Lancaster Borough for the Newton Estate Union Church, renamed the Congregational Hall when all responsibility transferred to Centenary; and two years later she gave £100 towards Church Extension on the Scale Hall estate on the Morecambe side of Lancaster, this became Cross Hill Congregational Church. The family's Forton connection was renewed in 1935 when she presided at the chapel's reopening following internal and external building alterations. With her youngest sister Connie (Mrs J.W. Hall from her 1904 marriage), she had in 1929 shared in a more suburban twentieth-century phase of church extension at Penwortham, just south of Preston. The elder sister laid a corner-stone for the new school-chapel in January, the younger opened the building that September. And in 1928, a year among many others when Centenary's deaconesses and deacons' wives were responsible for the church anniversary tea, Mary Philadelphia was a representative English Congregationalist at an international commemoration in the United States of the voyage of the *Mayflower*. Her involvement was never restricted to women's activities: and her generosity was frequently silent as when in 1942 she made a gift to Centenary of £1000 worth of shares, stipulating that this should not be reported to the Church until after her death.

Connie's commitment was first seen in Lancaster on her transfer in 1893 from Crouch End Congregational to Centenary Church. She had been in north London at the West Coombe House School run by the daughters of a Congregational minister, Richard Fletcher. This school had proved attractive to a number of Congregational families but it may well have been the scene of Mary Philadelphia's "trying year at Birklands", a name for the local area, in about 1878.<sup>18</sup> From 1922 to 1934, Constance's five surviving children all progressed to full church membership. The eldest, Eric Edward Dawson Hall (1905-1993), was central to the formation in 1924 of a "Foundationers' Circle" of young descendants of Centenary's earliest activists: it was a younger brother who in 1958 had possession of the Foundationers' Pledge, although the church was not to remain open for the gathering which they had intended would mark its centenary in 1973. Eric's mining profession took him as engineer and then H.M. Inspector to Doncaster, Burnley, where at least one child was baptised at

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18 *Autobiography of M.P. Dawson* (October 1943), a personal typescript of six small pages, hereafter *Dawson 1943*.

Salem Congregational, South Wales, and back to the West Riding: he would later become Eric Edward Dawson Dawson-Hall.<sup>19</sup> When, however, Connie Hall's third son Peter (1911-1996) was a second-day opener at Centenary's major autumn bazaar in 1950, he was the last family member there, active on the diaconate for a decade before the church's closure: he then continued in membership at Sefton Road, Morecambe, until his death. Two of Connie Hall's grandchildren were invited to Sefton Road URC's Centenary celebrations in 2000, marking the earlier involvement of their great-aunt Elphie: she had opened the first school-chapel there in 1902 and laid a foundation stone for its replacement church building of 1928.

It would be wrong to ignore a similar sense of mission felt by other families which at different stages married into the Dawsons. Among the earlier examples was Jane Flower who, at the age of fifteen, was already anticipating a pattern frequent among evangelical women when she recorded "the relationship of her soul with God", a document of 1775 which included a covenant with God. She was well-read in Dissenting, devotional and evangelical authors, including biography, and always sought "the best writers". This aided but did not dominate her written advice to others. Her devotion to reading was not for entertainment but for the "further improvement of her understanding". A long-standing friendship and correspondence with John Newton, who officiated at her wedding in London with John Dawson, dated from about 1779 and emphasises her hopes for the conversion and spiritual growth of others.<sup>20</sup>

The Hanover Chapel, Stockport, ancestry included forbears of Mary Howard, wife of Edward Bousfield Dawson. Her maternal grandfather was the hat manufacturer, William Carrington of Cale Green, whose family were from the Mill Brow with Marple Bridge Independent Chapel; her father was Cephas Howard, cotton spinner of Brinnington Hall. In the 1820s both men were involved in moves to build a chapel on Lancashire Hill, Stockport. This provided a new preaching place for Nathaniel Pugsley who had resigned from Orchard Street, and ensured the town's first Dissenting provision north of the Mersey. These and other Howards were among the founding trustees of the resulting Hanover Chapel, and some were deacons: Carringtons remained active there into the twentieth century. Both families were committed supporters of Stockport's two nondenominational enterprises, the Sunday School and the Town Mission, the latter's foundation in 1851 resulting from the stimulus of that year's religious census; their civic involvement found them on the Town Council and as busy magistrates.

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19 His family's name was changed by Deed Poll in about 1946, an Aldcliffe inheritance requiring the retention of a Dawson surname.

20 This paragraph draws on *A Sermon Delivered at High Street Chapel, Lancaster, occasioned by the Death of Mrs Dawson*, by Edward Parsons, Leeds; and on *The Life and Writings of Mrs Dawson, of Lancaster* (Kirkby Lonsdale, 1828), hereafter *Dawson 1828*. The latter's editor, Rev. Wm. Carus Wilson, gained his information mostly from Mrs Dawson's daughters.

Also outside Lancaster, the theme of chapel extension continued through a different sort of connection. Eleanor (c.1821-1898), second daughter of Edward's first marriage, married an ironmaster, Thomas Cropper Ryley, whose Haigh Foundry Company products included early locomotives for the Liverpool & Manchester, Great Western, and South Devon Railways. Ryley contributed generously to the Lancashire Congregational Union, to the Congregational Church Aid & Home Missionary Society and to such individual causes as Salem, Orrell, which long enjoyed support from Wigan Congregationalism, and latterly to Hawkshead Street, Southport. He was, however, not so much engaged in mission as in the issues of social conscience which reflected his Quaker background and early membership. His family links included the Clarksons, Croppers and Crosfields;<sup>21</sup> his Congregationalism was at St Paul's Wigan and West-end, Southport, when from 1856 he owned property at Birkdale. Ryley espoused some unpopular causes. He was passionately opposed to war, to slavery (where he followed the early crusade of his maternal uncle James Cropper), and to the coercion of the Irish; his activism included the Peace Society and support for Josephine Butler and William-Lloyd Garrison. After her husband's death in 1889, Eleanor Ryley paid for Orrell's new Day and Sunday School building.<sup>22</sup>

Connie's husband, John William Hall (1875-1917), came from a Lancaster family, where his grandfather and a paternal uncle were doctors, each President for two years of the Royal Lancaster Infirmary, and each also Mayor: Hall himself was born in Wisconsin and grew up in British Columbia. The Centenary Church's Minutes report the family's arrivals and dismissals between 1899 and 1911 from or to Congregational churches at Sparta, Wisconsin, and Riverside, California: a family memory recalls a Congregational minister in the USA. John Hall, received from Sparta in May 1899, married in Lancaster in 1904 where his father now practised as a dentist: JWH followed him into the same profession. A stalwart attendee at Centenary, he was also active at the Jubilee Town Mission in Aldcliffe Road where he was Superintendent of the Children's Work. He shared his father-in-law's and his wife's total abstinence allegiance, as a trustee of the Lancaster Total Abstinence Society.

### The Missionary Interest

The distinctive commitment to missionary activity mentioned in 1945 had numerous Dawson precedents. This seems particularly appropriate since an early Lancaster pastor, George Burder, became the Secretary of the London

21 The Quaker Crosfields originated in Lancaster: a related Liverpool branch became prominent Congregationalists, serving the County Union and actively supporting the L.M.S.

22 This paragraph draws on *The Southport Visiter* and the more radical *Southport Guardian* of April 16, 1889 *et seq.*; *The Christian World*, April 25, 1889; and *The Manual of West-End Congregational Church, Southport* (1879-1888), *passim*.

Missionary Society. Jane (Flower) Dawson rejoiced in his “wider Christian usefulness”, however great a loss it was to hearers such as herself at Mount Street Chapel.<sup>23</sup>

The fourth, but second surviving, son of Edward Dawson was Robert, born 1836. The family’s connection to the ministerially prolific Clayton family<sup>24</sup> was shown at Robert’s baptism in Lancaster by the Revd. George Clayton of Walworth, where Mary (Bousfield) Dawson had grown up. Robert followed his elder brother to Mill Hill and University College London; but the call to ministry took him to Cheshunt College and so to ordination for missionary work overseas on 13 September 1859 at High Street Chapel, Lancaster;<sup>25</sup> and finally, after marriage to Sarah Clayton Rawson of Leeds,<sup>26</sup> to Shanghai with the London Missionary Society.<sup>27</sup> There, he quickly showed promise for future work, but was forced by dangerously ill-health to return after eighteen months to England and pastoral work in Devizes from 1863. Here, he successfully overturned the effects of a recent secession to a new Baptist Church by substantially rebuilding the congregation. His deep and primary commitment to evangelistic work, evident in his next two ministries, featured strongly when he announced his resignation from Devizes.<sup>28</sup>

He left to become the pioneer pastor at St Ann’s Well Road, Nottingham (1870-1881), to which John Brown Paton had firmly persuaded him: as he told his people at Devizes, his task at Nottingham was “to undertake the work of a Missionary, not among the Heathen, but among a people almost equally destitute of the means of grace.” The Dawson family background meant that there would be no difficulty about a salary.<sup>29</sup> In the 1880s, he was a member of the Congregational Board of the General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations: and from Nottingham he moved in 1881 to become a General Secretary of the London City Mission, the work which he saw as his major calling. There, Robert Dawson’s influence was both organisational and inspirational and, as it was with the L.M.S., financially generous since he contributed more than his salary to the Mission’s work. He established Quarterly Prayer Meetings and a Special Week of Prayer each January. He introduced the publication of Daily Bible Readings for its

23 *Dawson 1828*, 79 and 111.

24 Robert Dawson’s paternal grandmother, née Jane Flower (1754-1826), was sister to the wife of the Revd John Clayton, senior.

25 *The Lancaster Guardian*, September 17, 1859.

26 Sarah Rawson (c.1831-1916) was the daughter of the Leeds hymn writer George Rawson and great-granddaughter of the Revd. John Clayton, senior.

27 Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895*, (London, 1899), ii., 745.

28 The Minutes of the Special Church Meeting of Devizes Independent Church, 14 January 1870, record this speech in full. I am indebted here to help from Mr. Hugh Burn of Devizes St. Andrew’s (URC/Methodist).

29 Edward Dawson’s estate was valued at approaching £30,000, Robert’s effects at double that sum.

Missionaries; and instituted and conducted Saturday morning addresses to those London workers. He also wrote more than 150 hymns: some of his words were sung at the opening of Centenary Church, Lancaster, and others at his funeral in Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, Lambeth.<sup>30</sup>

Varying degrees of marriage relationship linked three other L.M.S. workers to the Dawsons. John Wooldridge, trained at Hoxton before ministering in Bristol and then one of the first six missionaries to Jamaica in 1834, was married to Lucy, third daughter of John Dawson and Jane Flower: he died in station at Manchester, Jamaica, after six years service, and their only child died at the same time.<sup>31</sup> Dr James Henderson (1830-1865), who superintended the hospital in Shanghai from 1860 until 1865, was brother-in-law to Robert since they both married Rawson sisters: travelling out from England together, the physician was to care for the ailing missionary in China.<sup>32</sup> A near-relationship includes Gladys May Harries, step-daughter to Helen Margaret Dawson (1866-1907) who in 1893 married Henry Harries, formerly minister of Hanover Chapel, Stockport: Gladys served from 1909 with the L.M.S. as a teacher in Nagercoil, South India, to which in 1920 the Revd. Ralph Hubert Eastaff was appointed, formerly clerk to a Luton Straw Hat merchant. Four years later, the schoolteacher married the now-widowed minister-missionary who later became a Theological College Principal.<sup>33</sup>

Some mystery attaches to the fourth daughter of Edward and Mary Dawson, Isabel (1840-1920), who undertook mission work in Madagascar from 1873 to 1877, based in the capital Antananarivo. She is mentioned neither among the ten "Lady Missionaries" who served the L.M.S. there from 1865 nor in the Society's Register of Missionaries: nonetheless, Dr Joseph Mullens, the Society's foreign secretary, when in Lancaster in late 1874, perhaps on deputation, alluded to her "devoting herself to the education and Christian training of the wives of the students in the [L.M.S.] Theological Institution". She seems at the least to have been associated with the Society's work, although her description in a profile of High Street Chapel as "an Honorary Missionary in Madagascar" strongly suggests that her work was the

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30 For Robert Dawson (1836-1906), see J. Sibree, *A Register of Missionaries, Deputations, etc., from 1796 to 1923 of the London Missionary Society*, (London, 1923), 74; *CYB 1907*, 151-2; and *Congregational Hymnary*, (1916), No. 619. This paragraph also draws on *The Christian World*, March 22, 1906; [*Lancaster*] *Guardian*, March 24, 1906; and the April and May 1906 editions of the *London City Mission Magazine*, these latter helpfully provided by the London City Mission.

31 For John Wooldridge (? - 1840), see J. Sibree, *op. cit.*, 34; Lovett *op. cit.*, ii., 376-8 and 742; and Charles Surman Index of Congregational Ministers.

32 J. Sibree, *op. cit.*, 74; Lovett *op. cit.*, ii., 519 and 745; *London City Mission Magazine*, May 1906.

33 For Ralph Hubert Eastaff (1884-1967), see *CYB 1967/8*, 439f.; for Gladys May Harries (1885-1960), see J. Sibree, *op. cit.*, 158. Mary Philadelphia remembered her three Harries step-nieces in her Will.

independent gift of the Dawsons.<sup>34</sup> Her own independence may be seen in that when she returned to Lancaster in her widowhood, it was “to the old chapel” in High Street, whose Minutes, however, make no mention of her missionary work.

Among the most surprising examples of missionary commitment was Mary Philadelphia’s steady search for opportunities abroad, despite serious illness in childhood which required treatment for a major spinal problem: the focus on France and its colonies supposes a fluency in the language.<sup>35</sup> Before her thirtieth year, she had worked with the McAll Mission in Paris; spent several months in London studying the management of Girls’ Clubs at a Training Home for children who were being prepared for emigration to Canada; made an unsuccessful attempt to join Solomon Feingold’s work for Jews in Paris; explored the work of the North African Mission House in East London, again without further progress, having encountered the need to “subscribe to certain religious doctrines which I could not entertain”; and worked for six months in Tulle in the Corrèze, another station supported by the McAll Mission but under Pastor Cremer of the Société Évangélique de France. Her mother’s death in late 1894 terminated this extensive yet often isolated work, for “henceforth my place was ‘at home’”. But this did not prevent her from continuing to serve the missionary enterprise in a further range of roles and societies.

The Dawson family was continually busy at home in the cause of overseas missions. ED, his son EBD and granddaughter Mary Philadelphia were variously active in presiding at or addressing meetings, and in service on the Lancashire Union’s L.M.S. Sub-Committee. For a full century from the 1820s, money was left to the L.M.S. and other evangelical agencies; Mary (Bousfield) Dawson and EBD had a particular concern for the evangelisation of the Jews, the latter believing that the fulfilment of prophecy for the end times necessitated the return of the Jews to Jerusalem; and the pattern of substantial lifetime benefactions made in favour of missionary work was continued in the bequests, and indeed the residuary estate, left from the 1920s to the 1940s by three daughters of Edward Dawson – Sophia Septima Dawson, Isabel Mellor and Lucy Harker – and by his granddaughter Mary Philadelphia. These, who were among the stalwarts of the local Lancaster Auxiliary of the L.M.S., particularly favoured certain other overseas missionary causes: knowledgeably specific gifts were directed, for example, to the British Syrian Mission “for the support of the Meedan School Damascus”, the Zenana Medical Missionary Society, and the Regions Beyond Missionary Union as well as the B.F.B.S. With the L.M.S., they favoured not only the Widows’ Fund and the Medical Branch but also the (as yet unidentified) Mellor Maternity Ward. Connie Hall’s particular interests and activity included the Christian Friends Sailors’

34 *The [Lancaster] Guardian*, October 10, 1874; *The Lancaster Observer*, April 7, 1876 and *The [Lancaster] Guardian*, 8 January 1921; *Lancashire Congregational Year Book* 1932, 66. See also Lovett *op. cit.*, i, 802 and J. Sibree, *op. cit.*

35 This paragraph draws heavily on *Dawson 1943*.

Mission, and the Moravian Missionary Society which had been a beneficiary of her grandfather's charity.

### Finance, Commerce and Agriculture

The provenance of the Dawson wealth combined the good fortune of inheritance with successful business acumen: existing details however remain tantalisingly varied and even contradictory.<sup>36</sup> From quite modest origins, Robert Dawson (*d.*1769) apparently "gained much by marriage". A less straightforward story, however, attends his son. John Dawson had substantial land holdings at Aldcliffe; he is described as a Lancaster Merchant; many of Lancaster's merchant-contemporaries were active directly or indirectly in the triangular slave trade with Africa and the West Indies, but no evidence of Dawson involvement has yet appeared, nor details of the nature of John Dawson's merchant business. John left considerable debts, perhaps through inadequate farm management, unsuccessful speculative trading, or misfortune at sea. It was Edward Dawson, aided by his mother, who established the family finances on a secure footing. He managed the farm rents systematically, took responsibility for his father's remaining debts, placed sound investments in many directions and benefited when his mother and sisters renounced their claims on John's estate. He also inherited the larger part of a substantial estate in the Meanwood district of Leeds, now owned by Leigh relatives without direct descendants: the old relationship was attested by Jane Dawson and a memory of Leighs at Aldcliffe was similarly recalled by a longstanding Lancaster resident. Edward had access to significant funds through his wife Mary (1801-1884). Her father Robert Bousfield, of Favell & Bousfield, clothiers, though from Ravenstonedale, had been involved in commerce and trading in London from 1784. Following the Dawson-Bousfield marriage, he used part of his very substantial fortune to purchase in 1843 the Stodday estates which adjoined Aldcliffe. In the wake of both agricultural and industrial success; at least four twentieth-century Dawson descendants each left estate totalling six figures, the single and childless taking care to provide for their siblings' extensive families and all ensuring that daughters or other relatives in a female line inherited substantially.

The sequence and duration of the family's residence in London remains unclear. Highbury Place had long-term significance, Dawsons having property there at various times between 1812 and 1866: but there is uncertainty about both permanence and continuity, not to mention purpose. Around 1780, this address was home to siblings of Jane Flower, who married John Dawson in 1782; her sister Mary lived at number 29 from her marriage in 1779 to the Revd. John Clayton Snr. until his retirement in 1826; it was named when in 1812 the first of two Dawson daughters became a member at the Weigh House

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36 These two following paragraphs owe much to *Dawson 1828*, *Bellis 1987*, Clyde Binfield and Brenda Fox.



Chapel, and again recorded when Edward's infant granddaughter Helen was baptised at Union Chapel, Islington, by Henry Allon in 1866; meanwhile in 1827 Edward had an address in Devonshire Square. Since the published extracts from Jane Dawson's diary make no mention of northern travel before her marriage, it seems at least likely that she first met her husband in London, perhaps through some connection with the Weigh House Chapel. A strangely disjointed "Furnishings Account", referring to 1765/6 and 1813, may relate only to London: Broad Street, Islington, and Newington are all mentioned. The earlier dates may be those of John Dawson, just of age, whilst the later is certainly of Edward Dawson's time, albeit immediately before his majority.<sup>37</sup> But even if there were only discontinuity of occupation, it still suggests that enterprise, wealth and success occurred in the time of John Dawson as well as his son's, lending weight to the view that either or both had business interests in the capital.

Aldcliffe Hall, which had once sheltered Roman Catholic recusants, was rebuilt in Jacobean style in 1817 by Edward Dawson who, as "one of the most spirited agriculturalists in the country", enclosed most of Aldcliffe Marsh in 1820, greatly increasing the value of his estate; for this action he received the 1821 gold medal of the Royal Society of Arts. But modern developments in industry and communications also attracted Dawson interest. There were shareholdings in canals, shipbuilding, cotton, and railways; support for plans by George Stephenson and John Hague to direct the Scottish railway line on an immense embankment across Morecambe Bay instead of by the successful but severe route over Shap; and directorships in the Lancaster Wagon Works and the Kiveton Park Coal Company. The last may have been something of a family fiefdom, since its founders in 1864 included EBD and a Carrington relative, possibly Samuel Ratcliffe Carrington (1811-1883), his wife's uncle. These venture capitalists chanced considerable sums to sink this pit in the South Yorkshire Coalfield: they and their Dawson descendants reaped the benefit for decades to come, enjoying their inherited capital even after the nationalisation of the coal industry. Later shareholders at Kiveton Park were Howard Dawson and J.W. Hall; a colliery locomotive purchased in 1915 was appropriately named *Aldcliffe*; and the office of Chairman of Directors was held at their deaths by EBD himself and Simon Henry Leeder (1865-1930), formerly tutor to the invalid Alfred Dawson and from 1897 husband to EBD's third daughter, (Lucy) Evelyn Dawson (1872-1961).

Yet the family's successive generations did not neglect their landed connections. ED added substantially to his holdings in and around Aldcliffe and Ashton to the south of Lancaster and in the Carnforth and Warton areas near the family's original home to its north. He also became famous for his collection of trees, which resulted from others' overseas expeditions to seek out new botanical discoveries. EBD, with more than 2,000 acres, was President of

the Lancashire Farmers' Association and his son Howard was President of the Warton District Ploughing and Hedging Association. Both investigated modern construction techniques, the father innovating with domestic and farm concrete buildings, and the son as a founder of the Lancaster Road Rolling Association. Howard's local professional activity also included designs for four police stations, internal alterations at Lancaster Castle, and branches of the Lancaster Banking Company. Had he lived to full professional maturity, Howard's developed style might have made an interesting comparison with that of the outstanding Lancaster architect, Edward Paley, for whom he undertook some contract work.<sup>38</sup>

The Ashton estate was the subject of some correspondence between ED and his father-in-law, Robert Bousfield, who had suggested its purchase in order to benefit his grandchildren. ED's contrary counsel prevailed, recognising "the quantity of unemployed money" then in the hands of many manufacturers: amongst these was James Williamson the future Lord Ashton who eventually purchased the property. The surviving letters of 1845 to 1852 ranged over politics and an election, the harvest, denominational interests, family matters and common property concerns: it may be that each acted as banker or estate steward for the other. The whole is a mixture of the personal and the principled.<sup>39</sup>

### Civic and Philanthropic Roles

The Dawson family was engaged in substantial civic responsibilities across three distinct generations: the following examples are simply illustrative of this voluntary service and in no way exhaustive. ED was Deputy Lieutenant for Lancashire in 1855, and Chairman of the Lancaster Board of Guardians from 1839 to 1875; EBD served as Chairman of Lancaster's Quarter Sessions and J.P. for the County Palatine, Constable of Lancaster Castle from 1908, Chairman of Lancaster's Board of Guardians and Rural District, an Income Tax Commissioner, and Vice-Chairman of the Royal Albert Institution for the Feeble Minded for the seven Northern Counties; Howard Dawson's necessarily briefer list included the role of Chairman of his local Parish Council at Warton, a manager there of its British School and Chairman of a Technical Instruction Committee; and Mary Philadelphia's community involvement included association with Young Farmers' Clubs, the Barnardo's Helpers' League, the Liberal Association and the A.T.S., and as a manager of local schools.

A surviving "Charitable Account" book meticulously records the breadth of ED's denominational and evangelical knowledge and his willingness to use his

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38 For Howard Dawson's architectural work, see James Price, "Edward Howard Dawson, ARIBA, 1864-1896" in *Contrebis, Vol. XXXI 2006-2007*, (2008), 58-64.

39 Six letters, variously dated from 1845 to 1852, from Edward Dawson to Robert Bousfield (LRL, MS.2583-89).

wealth to further national and international mission.<sup>40</sup> Among countless others, regular or specific gifts were made to Moravian Missions, Shanghai Orphans and the London City Mission; in response to chapel appeals from Swansea, Grimshaw Street (Preston), and Walthamstow; and to support Dissenters' schools and ministerial training at Blackheath, Cheshunt and Nottingham. In 1874 he gave away one eighth of his rental income. An example of ED's lack of personal concern was perhaps seen in his instructions that he be buried in a wicker coffin. Twenty years later, the local press would note a similar adherence to the Funeral Reform Association's wish for "earth-to-earth" burials when his daughter in law, Mary (Howard) Dawson, was laid to rest in the grounds of Aldcliffe Park in a papier-mâché coffin.<sup>41</sup> And EBD's legal experience, which included a quarter-century as a Barrister on the Northern Circuit, joined his Christian concern in his activities for the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society.

But perhaps the most distinctly Nonconformist Dawson activity was the prominence of three generations in the temperance movement. ED was amongst the first in Lancaster to follow the new and unpopular doctrine of teetotalism which Joseph Livesey had promulgated in Preston, and he remained a local mainstay for more than forty-five years. His elder son took the pledge after recognising the effects of alcohol on those he saw in court. Both EBD and his brother Robert were Good Templars, the former holding national office in the British Temperance League and Anti-Narcotic Society and the latter a Vice-President of the Congregational Total Abstinence Association. Mary Philadelphia upheld the principle through the Band of Hope Temperance Union and the British Women's Total Abstinence League whilst her sister Connie became in 1929 the President of the British Women's Temperance Association.

### A wider Congregationalism

The family's broad background canvas of educational and devotional pursuits is coloured by an understandably denominational flavour and influence in which Mill Hill forms a significantly unifying thread. Robert Bousfield's business partner, Samuel Favell, was co-founder of the school with Dr John Pye Smith: they shared both denomination and a concern for education. Favell, from Camberwell Congregational Church, was involved in the genesis of the Guildhall Library and the University of London; Bousfield endowed scholarships for Millhillians progressing to University College or to New College; one of these was awarded in 1854 to Robert Dawson.

ED's Congregational upbringing at home and school was repeated for his

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40 Notebook entitled "Charitable Account 1859-1873", with inserted loose sheet for 1874 (LRL, MS.3132). The earlier *Annual Report of the London Hibernian Society, 1829*, notes his subscription: this Society's work was to establish schools and circulate the Holy Scriptures.

41 *Lancaster Times*, December 14, 1894.

own family. A surviving Travel Diary, kept intermittently for four years from 1841 by his daughter Mary, records normal childhood observations: she describes castings seen at the foundry owned by a half-sister's husband, notes a visit to the London Zoological Gardens, and explains being "obliged to have four leeches". Then, precociously for a nine year old, she records that "Mr Eliot preached a very nice sermon at York Street Chapel", that on other Sundays the family went to hear Mr Clayton or to Surrey Chapel, and that one afternoon's journey was "to Mill Hill to bid Edward goodbye"; this was her elder brother.<sup>42</sup>

A stridently Dissenting view of voluntary religion and education is found in ED's comments on the then topical Maynooth Grant, that "the interference of the State with the great concerns of religion is the Work of Satan".<sup>43</sup> He also took a leading part in the Church Rate agitation in the 1850s and had by 1847 concluded a local battle initiated by John Dawson in 1800 over the payment of tithes. With the family's nineteenth-century Congregational commitment built on the firmest of convictions, it is hardly accidental that in summer 1904, EBD was elected to the Committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. On the broader scene, EBD appears as an amateur polymath: a graduate in both Arts and Law from University College, London (although public mention only ever cites the Law Degree), he listed "Scientific Pursuits" as a personal interest and had strong archaeological interests. He and his wife had travelled extensively abroad, in Syria, Palestine and Egypt as well as in Europe.

Dawson daughters not infrequently married Congregational ministers: between Lucy Dawson's 1829 marriage to John Wooldridge and Helen Dawson's in 1893 to Henry Harries lie those of two of Edward Dawson's family. Anne (usually Annie, 1838-1924) married Thomas Slade Jones in 1864. He was then minister at Heywood but his major role was as minister and schoolmaster in Turnham Green, the site and times of the young Vincent van Gogh's mission attempts. Isabel, the returned Madagascan missionary, became the second wife of Dr. Enoch Mellor, denominationally prominent, Chairman of the Union in 1863, and a popular preacher for chapel openings and other special events.<sup>44</sup> Tudur Jones's description of Mellor<sup>45</sup> as having "clarity of mind" and "strong adherence to orthodox doctrine" perhaps accounts for his presence on occasions of celebration, publicity and renewed evangelistic endeavour, such as the opening of Lancaster's Centenary Chapel. Isabel Mellor, widowed after a very short marriage, later supported nondenominational mission work among seamen at Glasson Dock, not least sponsoring its premises, the Haven.

The Ravenstonedale Bousfields' wide denominational visions and activities

42 *Mary Dawson. Journal Book* (Small hand written note book, 1841-45).

43 Letter from Edward Dawson to Robert Bousfield dated 15 July 1852 (LRL, MS.2583).

44 For Enoch Mellor (1823-1881), see *CYB 1882*, 315-8; for Thomas Slade Jones (1829-1883), *CYB 1884*, 306-7.

45 R. Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in England 1662-1962*, (London, 1962).

were similar to those of the Dawsons. Two were members of the Committee of Dissenting Deputies in the 1830s; some were subscribers to Homerton and New Colleges; they also produced Congregational ministers. Mary (Bousfield) Dawson's cousin Robert Chamberlain (1797-1855) served in five pastorates and was obviously in contact with Aldcliffe where ED mentions him in family correspondence;<sup>46</sup> and a Chamberlain son-in-law, William Nicholls (1835-1921), was himself minister at Ravenstonedale from 1869 to 1883. Another Bousfield family link involved Mary's elder sister Ann (1802-1874) who married John Vaizey of Halstead, Essex. One of Mary Philadelphia's childhood memories was of a journey with her parents which included Cambridge and Halstead "where an aunt of my father's, Mrs Vaizey, lived". This was in fact towards the end of the period of that family's denominational significance in a traditionally Dissenting part of Essex, their social and religious activity not unlike that of the Dawsons.

Christian activity of a different kind came through EBD's son-in-law, Simon Leeder, a committed Anglican layman whose funeral attracted seven clergymen. Leeder edited children's magazines and founded with Bishop Winnington-Ingram of London the Girls' Realm Guild of Service. He and his wife travelled extensively in the Arab world, writing from experience about the social and religious habits of desert, university, and city Muslims. His *Veiled Mysteries of Egypt and the Religion of Islam*, a perceptive volume about the interface between Christianity and Islam, was dedicated "To Edward Bousfield Dawson, as a sign of affection and gratitude".<sup>47</sup> It would be instructive to know EBD's response to its sympathetic account of another religion, then a quite innovative approach, and how it compared with his own warmth for the Zionist movement or his 1907 LCU Chairman's Address which longed for Jews to adopt the Christian faith. He hoped also for the removal of the Turks from the Holy Land through the European War in progress at the time of his death. A further but substantial denominational difference also occurred within EBD's lifetime when his granddaughter Howie became a Roman Catholic; a descendant of Aldcliffe now reflected the house's earlier past. Evelyn Leeder, the last of her generation of Dawsons and long an Anglican, remembered in her will her Dawson nieces and nephews, but none of the evangelical agencies previously important to her family.

Active Congregationalism remained in three EBD grandsons, two in Lancashire and the third in Barnet and Liscard (Wallasey): one for a while contemplated the ministry; the two who became deacons retained their denominationalism into the United Reformed Church of the late twentieth century. Continuing Christian commitment in the twenty-first century is now more likely to be Anglican.

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46 Edward Dawson to Robert Bousfield (LRL, MS.2583).

47 London, Eveleigh Nash 1912. For Simon H. Leeder, see *Who Was Who 1929-1940*.

### The Dawson Manner

The everyday manners of Dawson family members cannot now be easily distilled from the objective record of their doings, but hints remain as to the contrasting characteristics of these variously pious, evangelical and organisational Congregationalists.

There are publicly demonstrated instances of genuine human concern. ED, squire and landowner, whose surviving correspondence suggests a mixture of tenderness, passion, and business realism, recorded his "grateful esteem" for an Aldcliffe estate worker James Pedder, "Servant of 26 years standing . . . [who] died rejoicing in the great Salvation of the Gospel". He erected a chapel gravestone in 1847 for this "fellow worshipper at High Street Chapel". Rather differently, Mary Dawson (1832-1919) intriguingly urged Centenary's members in 1906 not to re-elect her sister Sophia Dawson to the diaconate: although apparently not herself in membership, she wrote to the Church Meeting that Sophia's unwillingness ever to decline church requests had been to the detriment of her health through undertaking distant home visits to members when earlier a deaconess. A notice in the *Christian World* described Robert Dawson's cold manner as concealing a warm heart. And whilst there remain no descriptions of EBD's manner and deportment, within living memory there were High Street members who recalled his rigorous treatment of employees and his expectation of extreme deference when met in public in Lancaster; Bellis's account of Aldcliffe has parallel anecdotes from within the village. EBD's non-negotiable teetotalism was well-known; his associated distaste for smoking led a relative to conceal his cigarette case in the shrubbery when visiting Aldcliffe Hall. And some decisions independently undertaken at Centenary coupled with a threatened withdrawal from re-nomination as a deacon over the unofficial reporting of Church Meetings to the press together suggest an imperious nature; he expected unquestioning concurrence within the church community.<sup>48</sup>

The strange episode of EBD's single-handed action when a director of the Eskdale Railway Company, in Cumberland, remains a mystery. From 1911 to 1915, his dealings of leasing and selling the ultimately defunct line were unlikely acts for an experienced lawyer or committed Christian, but can hardly have been undertaken with an intention to defraud. It was the death in 1924 of another creditor which precipitated a court case against EBD's executors.<sup>49</sup>

But whatever the truth of that case, obituary references and funeral tributes speak warmly of EBD's early preparation for public service, and applaud his devotion to the larger interests of the life of town and country; they later note the breadth of social and church activity in which Mary Philadelphia was

48 Sources for this paragraph include *Centenary Minutes*, September 12, 1892; December 31, 1902; and January 3, 1906.

49 See W.J.K. Davies, *The Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway*, (Newton Abbot, 1981, 2nd edition), 39-66 *passim*. The details of the civil case have yet to be located.

involved, linking her with parts of the community socially distant from the inhabitants of an Aldcliffe, or any other, Hall. A full range of Dawson humanity complements the variety of Dawson civic and church positions.

### Reflections

Like so many families of their times, the Dawsons frequently experienced the tragedy of premature deaths. Edward Dawson lost a young first wife and, from each of his marriages, an infant son; a grandson also died in infancy. Mary Philadelphia's two brothers and a sister predeceased their father, whose own sisters Isabel Mellor and Annie Slade Jones lived through long widowhoods. Perhaps this family shadow joined with her more personal physical problems to lie behind T.T. James's remarks about Mary Philadelphia's "courage", mentioned at her funeral which followed less than a year after the death of a nephew.

Susan Thorpe's reference to the prominent and important role of evangelical women is amply borne out by the Dawsons. Their nineteenth-century activity was never limited to often expected supporting tasks while their twentieth-century lay leadership in local church and district frequently equalled that of their male contemporaries. Had they lived in the age when women's ministry became more extensive, they might well have added to the number of the ordained within their family.

This paper has only hinted at the extensive Congregational links of marriage and meeting continuously involving Dawsons across more than two centuries. They encompassed the provinces and the capital, sometimes cross-denominational, with the call to evangelism willingly shared. The incoming stock is as committed as the Lancastrian base, some of it embracing the far wider cousinhood of a broadly unifying Congregationalism rather than a set of isolated independencies. If not often central to what happened in national Congregationalism, the Dawsons were exemplars of Dissent actively involved in civic, agricultural and industrial as well as religious progress.

Yet when the Roman Catholic Catherine 'Howie' Dawson died in Malvern, unmarried, in 1975, another strongly Congregational family had already changed most of its religious spots.

There were contemporaries of the Dawsons in Lancaster whose Congregationalism was also long-standing and committed, including the Brash and Mansergh families: one of the former was appointed by the L.M.S. to China, one of the latter served as Preston District Secretary for over thirty years. But the family from Aldcliffe with so many ministerial and missionary connections, its active committee work and financial generosity locally, regionally and internationally, displayed in its 250-year history a microcosm of English Dissent. Lancashire Independency came to embrace denominational vision, home and foreign missions, within and beyond the age of confident Non-conformist expansion.

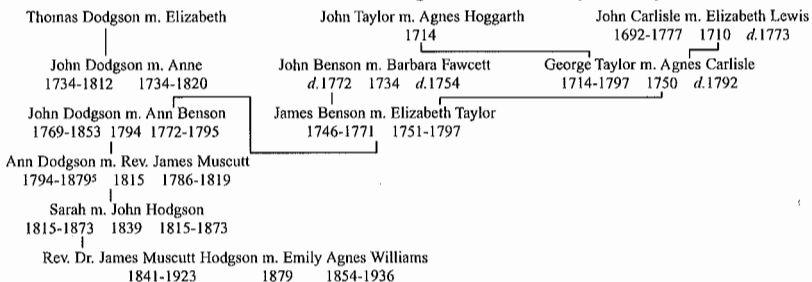
## GEOFFREY NUTTALL IN CONVERSATION

After some years of friendship with the late Geoffrey Nuttall I braced myself and said, "One of these days people will be reading obituaries in which your life and achievements are recorded. But how shall we know what you have thought about it all unless you tell us?" Happily, he warmed to the idea of reflecting upon his pilgrimage, and a series of chronologically-ordered two-hour conversations took place. Since the questions I posed may readily be inferred from the answers given, I have not interrupted the flow of his thoughts with my interjections. Between our meetings he would refresh his memory from his diary, and so involved in the process did he become that on more than one occasion our conversational sessions were followed by letters, received by me the following day, which contained further information on the points we had covered, some of it spilling onto the outside of the envelope flap. What follows are Geoffrey Nuttall's thoughts and reminiscences in his own words, supplemented by quotations from some of the letters I received. He spoke and wrote in the knowledge that future publication was envisaged, and he was more than willing to share his thoughts. There is thus no breach of confidence in what follows. I have supplied the footnotes and the *Postscript*.

### Family, childhood and schooldays

I was born at Colwyn Bay on the 8th of November 1911. I have never thought of myself as a Welshman, but I can read and speak the language, and I have always been interested in Welsh Dissent and Nonconformity. I have written on Walter Cradock, Vavasor Powell and Morgan Llwyd,<sup>1</sup> and also on Howel Harris.<sup>2</sup> I was gratified when the University of Wales conferred its Honorary DD upon me.<sup>3</sup>

You will be interested in the Sedbergh branch of my family:<sup>4</sup>



1 *The Welsh Saints 1640-1660*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1957).

2 *Howel Harris 1714-1773: The Last Enthusiast*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1965).

3 In 1969.

4 I [APFS] was minister there and at Dent from 1959 to 1964.

5 This year of death appears on two of Geoffrey's handwritten family trees. However, it does not accord with his reference to Ann as "living securely at Cockermonth all her ninety-six years." See *The Puritan Spirit. Essays and Addresses*, (London: Epworth Press, 1967), 14.



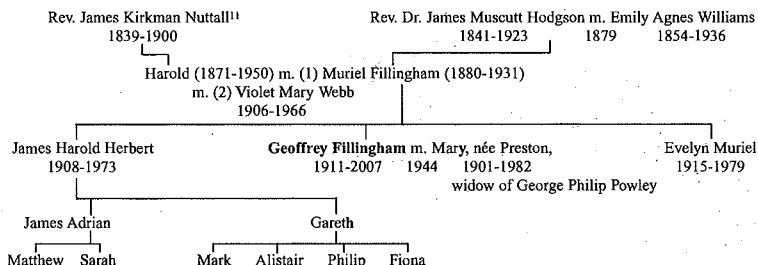
As you can see, the name “Muscutt” appears as the second name of my maternal grandfather, the Reverend Dr. James Muscutt Hodgson, whose grandfather was James Muscutt.<sup>6</sup> Grandfather Hodgson became a Professor at Lancashire Independent College, and then Principal of the Scottish Congregational College.<sup>7</sup>

The minister at Newlands, Lincoln, of my great-grand-parents, was Caleb Scott,<sup>8</sup> who became Principal of L.I.C.<sup>9</sup> They kept up with him, and my grandmother went from Salisbury to stay at the College, where she met J. M. Hodgson, who was on the staff (after a pastorate at Uttoxeter – where perhaps you will take me one day). They were engaged on his 27th birthday, 18.viii.1878, and were married on 6.viii.1879 (a date inscribed, with their initials, in their serviette rings) at Fisherton

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- 6 For Muscutt (1786-1819) see *Evangelical Magazine*, 1819, 410; *Congregational Magazine*, 1822, 277. Trained at Hackney College, he supplied at Darlington before 1811, in which year he went to Ravenstonedale, where he was ordained on 12 June. He left for Cockermouth in 1815, and remained there until his death on 7 August 1819. He was energetic in preaching in surrounding villages but “unhappily the domestic circle did not always afford him those kind and necessary attentions, which are of so much importance to the comfort of the ministerial office.” (CM, 277). Nevertheless, “fervent piety, prudent zeal, and Christian disinterestedness, were happily blended and conspicuously displayed through the whole of his life.” (EM, 410).
- 7 For Hodgson see *The Congregational Year Book* (hereinafter CYB), 1924, 97; W. J. Mander and Alan P. F. Sell, eds, *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century British Philosophers*, (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2002); Alan P. F. Sell, *Philosophy, Dissent and Nonconformity 1689-1920*, (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2004), 197-9 and *passim*; E. Kaye, *For the Work of Ministry. A History of Northern College and its Predecessors*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999). He was born at Cockermouth, graduated MA of Glasgow (1862) and later became DD (Glasgow, 1888) and DSc (Edinburgh, 1882). He trained for the ministry at Lancashire Independent College (1862-6) under the Principalship of Henry Rogers. Following a pastorate at Uttoxeter (1866-75), he taught at his *alma mater* from 1875-94, when he became Principal in Edinburgh (1894-1916). For Henry Rogers (1806-1877) see CYB, 1878, 347-8; *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Philosophers*; ODNB; R. W. Dale, Memoir of Rogers prefixed to the 8th edn of the latter’s *The Superhuman Origin of the Bible*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893); Alan P. F. Sell, *Dissenting Thought and the Life of the Churches. Studies in an English Tradition*, (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1990), chs. 17, 18; idem, *Philosophy, Dissent and Nonconformity*; Elaine Kaye, *For the Work of Ministry*.
- 8 For Scott (1831-1919) see CYB, 1920, 112-113; Joseph Thompson, *Lancashire Independent College 1843-1993*, (Manchester: J. E. Cornish, 1893); Elaine Kaye, *For the Work of Ministry*. He was educated at Silcoates School, trained for the ministry at Airedale College where his father Walter Scott (1779-1858) was Principal; served at Newland, Lincoln (1854-65), and then became Tutor (1865-9) and President (1869-1902) of Lancashire Independent College. He was Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1902. “The centre of all his thought was the Fatherhood of God”, wrote R[obert] M[ackintosh], CYB, 1920, 113. A BA, LLB of London University, he became Hon. DD of St. Andrews in 1890. For Walter Scott see E. Kaye, *op.cit.*; K. W. Wadsworth, *Yorkshire United Independent College*, (London: Independent Press, 1954).
- 9 Lancashire Independent College, in Whalley Range, Manchester.

St. church in Salisbury – the first wedding in the new church (built in part through the munificence of my g.g.f., to whom there was a mural inscription beside the pulpit) replacing the chapel in Endless St., where my g.g.f. was minister after leaving Newark. They spent their honeymoon at Rothwaite, which is why this name is (still!) on the gatepost of their home, 1 Demesne Road, near the College.<sup>10</sup>

This is how I come into the family tree:



Grandfather Hodgson died when I was twelve. I remember him as a sweet and loving gentleman. His wife was quite different. She was the daughter of Charles Williams, maltster, of Salisbury, and when she died A.J. Grieve<sup>12</sup> recalled her as being “upright, downright and forthright.” People who know me for my direct way of speech sometimes think that I got the idea of “truthing it in love” from the Quakers. Actually it came from Grandmother Hodgson. Her grandfather was the Rev. Charles Williams.<sup>13</sup> He was involved with the Religious Tract Society and wrote a number of books. He married a

10 Letter of 1 January 1982.

11 For J. K. Nuttall (1839-1900) see CYB, 1901, 198-9. He was born at Tottington near Bury on 1 December 1839, and trained at Rotherham Academy under the Principalship of F. J. Falding. He served at Bowling Green, Bradford (1865-74), where he was ordained on 22 February 1868; Fawcett Street, Sunderland (1874-84); Grange, Sunderland (1884-91); and Great George Street, Liverpool (1891-1908). For Frederick John Falding (1818-1892) see CYB, 1894, 191-3; K. W. Wadsworth, *Yorkshire United Independent College*; E. Kaye, *For the Work of Ministry*; Alan P. F. Sell, *Philosophy, Dissent and Nonconformity*. He was an alumnus of Rotherham, and a Dr. Williams’s Scholar at Glasgow University, of which he became MA, DD. In 1888, on the union of Rotherham with Airedale College, he became Principal of Yorkshire United Independent College, Bradford, where he remained until his death.

12 For Alexander James Grieve (1874-1952) see CYB, 1953, 508-9; Charles E. Surman [son-in-law], *Alexander James Grieve: A Biographical Sketch*, (Manchester: Lancashire Independent College, 1953); John Taylor and Clyde Binfield, eds, *Who They Were* (hereinafter WTW), (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007). Grieve was President of Lancashire Independent College from 1922-1943.

13 For Williams (1796-1866) see CYB, 1867, 326-7; ODNB. Following pastorates at Newark (1823-33) and Endless Street, Salisbury (1833-35), he became editor of the Religious Tract Society (1835-47) and a prolific author. He retired to Sibbertoft, Northamptonshire, where he gathered a congregation in his house.

Smeeton – the Smeetons were a prominent Leicestershire-Northamptonshire Nonconformist family, and it is from the Smeetons, rather than from the Williamsses that I inherited my strong Nonconformist genes.<sup>14</sup>

Three of my grandparents were lifelong teetotallers – J.M. Hodgson a vehement one; his wife, the maltster's daughter became one. At Cockermonth Congregational church in the 1850s Great-grandfather John Hodgson refused to become a deacon unless alcoholic wine was removed from the Lord's table; so they removed it. My parents, too, were teetotallers, and I was never anything other than a teetotaller.

My father was M.A., M.D. of Edinburgh, and being the son of a Congreg. minister was sometimes to be found in the Hodgsons' home, 50 Craigmillar Park. In 1904 he went back to it when on a visit to Edin., and on 4.iii.1905 became engaged to their daughter, whom he married on 30.vi.1906 at Augustine church. He was a G.P. in Colwyn Bay, which is why the name of the house in Conway Road, earlier (and now again), Erskine House, where I grew up, was Craigmillar.<sup>15</sup>

Among Ray's books I verified from Tissington Tatlow's *Story of the S.C.M.* (1933), p. 903, that my father was Inter-collegiate Sec. in Edinburgh 1897-8, and from Lovett's *History of the LMS* (1899), ii.740, that my grandmother's sister Florence arrived in India in 1895!<sup>16</sup>

My father, a lapsed Freemason, specialized latterly in eyes and x-rays. At the time he had the only x-ray equipment our side of Chester. The large house accommodated not only a surgery and waiting room, but an x-ray room and a developing room. From the age of six I felt that I must be a minister. One day my father asked me if I was going to be an engine driver. I replied, "I've told you before that I'm going to be a minister, so please don't trouble me any more!"

My mother was a great influence on me. She was an MA of Edinburgh. She taught us to play the piano, and we had a pianola too. Sadly, she died aged 50, when I was nineteen and just about to sit for Mods. In 1937, at the age of 66, my father married Vi, a woman exactly half his age. She was the daughter of a manufacturer of notepaper in Hyde, Cheshire. She had trained at St. Thomas's Hospital, London, and was a State Registered Nurse, but she did not practise. She was a faithful Christian, raised an Anglican but became a Congregationalist. She died of cancer in Worthing in 1966.

My brother went to Clifton College and became a chartered accountant with Pilkingtons in St. Helens. For a time he was church secretary at Eccleston

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14 For references to the Smeetons see G.F. Nuttall, *The Puritan Spirit. Essays and Addresses*, 255, 267; and see n. 16 below.

15 Letter of 1 January 1982.

16 Letter of 14 March 1983. The books were those of Raymond Arnold. Florence Williams was prominent in the establishment of the Women's Christian College in Madras. She served in India from 1895 to 1915. See Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945*, (London: OUP, 1954), 76, 622.

Congregational church, but then he turned into a non-churchgoing man of the world. He drowned in the Mediterranean – swimming too soon after a meal – and was cremated in Falmouth.

My sister Evelyn and I were great friends in childhood. I first went to church while we were on holiday at Church Stretton. My Mother thought that if I misbehaved so far away from home the family would not be disgraced. On a later visit I, as a sensitive child, was pleased to sing, “Jesus the children are calling” as a solo – without crying. At home I attended St. John’s Methodist Church, Colwyn Bay, where my father was a circuit steward. We went there because the Congregational minister at Colwyn Bay was too fundamentalist. Evelyn and I played in the grounds – and in the pulpit – of the church. My mother never became a member there. When I was eleven, she took Evelyn and me for another holiday to Church Stretton. At one point I held forth for forty minutes on the Reformation. Mother said, “Write it down.” So I did, and that was my first church history essay. Evelyn went to Wentworth College, Bournemouth. She was much involved in the Girl Guide Movement, and was in charge of the Guiders’ Training Centre at Bentley, near Farnham, and then at Larne, Northern Ireland. She was not a teetotaler. She liked horses and became an Anglican for social and geographical reasons. When our mother died she devoted six years to the care of our father, and when the young step-mother came along her nose was rather put out of joint. Through circumstances she had not had many opportunities to meet people of her own age, and she never married. She died of a tumour in the skull in Liverpool in 1977, and was buried in the parish churchyard at Henllan, near Denbigh. Mary and I kept in touch with her until she died.

While eating my breakfast on this New Year’s morning, I have been reading my piece of ancestor worship in BQ <sup>17</sup> (1979), 184-90.xvii I must say I think it is rather charming! even if one has to keep a clear head to be sure who is exactly who. You will probably think it a bit macabre if I tell you it was drafted in the train going to, and returning from, Liverpool and the hospital where my sister had just died: actually, I found the activity sustaining – I suppose it put bereavement in a larger context, and gave me a sense of life’s continuance.<sup>18</sup>

Two ‘influences’ from those early days did not surface in utterance:–

1. ‘Lala’ my nurse from birth to the age of six, Mary Hayes of Workington, who became on marriage Mary Mesney and called one of her sons Geoffrey after me, and is still alive, aged 90, living with her married daughter at Chatteris. We lost touch after she left me till 1973, when I was 61 (i.e. for 55 years!), but have been in loving and frequent communication since then, and I saw her last in Leamington in July. She remembers my Grandmother Nuttall (*d.*1916) well, as well as my other Grandmother and *her* Mother *d.*1919, and of course both my parents – it is rather remarkable since I am now 70!
2. ‘Lewy’, i.e. Annie Edith Lewis, a native of Leominster, who was in the Post

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17 The Smeeton and Fillinghams are among those discussed in this article.

18 Letter of 1 January 1982.

Office at Colwyn Bay, and was devoted to me (and Evelyn), taking us out for a walk every Sunday afternoon, and writing to me every week while I was away at school. She is not living now.

Both were strong characters and firm Christians.<sup>19</sup>

When I was twelve my mother, Evelyn and I began to attend Rhos-on-Sea Congregational church, where the minister was Arthur A. Bourne.<sup>20</sup> He could pray. He was a confirming rather than an inspiring influence. He gave me a copy of Augustine's *Confessions*. I never went to Sunday School, but learned religion from Mother on Sundays and from hymns around the piano. An early favourite of mine was "O Jesus, I have promised." One day at church a lady gave me a card bearing the words of the hymn, "Still with Thee, O my God," and said she would give me 6d if I learned it. So I did. No ministers really influenced me when I was growing up, though I did hear Sangster when he was in the Conway Circuit;<sup>21</sup> and during my teens I heard R. F. Horton<sup>22</sup> preach at Lyndhurst Road. I read his autobiography whilst at school, and thought him a model minister, honest and earnest. I became a church member at Rhos when I was sixteen.

At the age of nine I was sent to Baswich House School, Weeping Cross, near Stafford. I hated leaving home. My uncle, George Francis Atterbury Osborn, was Headmaster.<sup>23</sup> He was a mathematician, but he taught me Greek, and we used to read *Medea* together. I wanted to go to Cambridge University, where

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19 Letter of 24 September 1982.

20 For Arthur Alfred Bourne (1877-1954) see CYB, 1956, 509-10. He began as a private school teacher in London, and then became lay pastor at Radlett, where he completed the Congregational Union Examinations. He then served at New College Chapel, London, and Hunstanton, arriving in Rhos in 1925. During his time there new premises were built. Ministries in Harpenden and Matlock followed. "Arthur Bourne was a man whose library and whose conversation reflected the culture which he possessed." *Ibid.*, 510.

21 For William Edwin Sangster (1900-1960), subsequently minister at Westminster Central Hall, see John A. Vickers, ed., *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland* (hereinafter DMBI), (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2000).

22 For Robert Forman Horton (1855-1934) see ODNB; WTW; R. F. Horton, *An Autobiography*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1917); A. Peel and J. A. R. Marriott, *Robert Forman Horton*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1937).

23 It would therefore seem that Geoffrey enrolled at the school in the year in which the distinguished scientist, Nevill Francis Mott (1905-1996), for whom see ODNB, left it. According to S. A. H. Bourne and Barbara Donaldson in *The Victoria County History of Staffordshire*, ed. Margaret L. Midgley, (London: OUP for the Institute of Historical Research, 1959), V, 4, Baswich House had been built by Thomas Salt (*d.*1871) [a relative of the antiquarian, William Salt after whom the Willam Salt Library, Stafford, is named]. "It is an irregularly planned mansion of red brick with oriel windows of wood and many small gables, and is a good building of its kind. A single-story picture gallery and a billiard room were added by Thomas's son, Thomas (*d.*1904). The property was in use as a preparatory school before the Second World War. In 1952 it was acquired by the Staffordshire County Council as a Police Motor Training Centre."

my uncle had been a student, but it turned out otherwise. I continued with piano lessons at Baswich House and passed the Lower Division examination. One day one of the teachers, a Roman Catholic, took me into a Roman Catholic church on the way to Stafford, and splashed me with holy water – for luck! My health was never robust. I was easily upset gastrically. At Baswich House I had a rest day every week, which I spent in bed. To date I have been in hospital on seven occasions.

From Baswich House I went on to the Quaker foundation, Bootham School, York.<sup>24</sup> With me I took Albert Goodrich's *A Primer of Congregationalism*. Goodrich himself had given this book to my mother when she was fourteen, and she gave it to me when I was thirteen.<sup>25</sup> I won a scholarship to Bootham, and also the entrance prize, but because I was not a Friend I could not have money, so I received books instead. I hated Bootham, despite the fact that there was no fagging or flogging there. My brother, who had gone to Clifton College, said that I wouldn't have lasted a week there. The Headmaster was Arthur Rowntree, but the teacher who influenced me most was A. Neave Brayshaw. Apart from my family, I was more influenced by Brayshaw and, later by Selbie,<sup>26</sup> than by anyone else. Once a fortnight Brayshaw took boys on visits to old churches, and at Easter-time he organized parties to Normandy. Kenneth Harrison was on one such continental trip. He was the son of the librarian of York Minster. A biochemist, he became a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, then an alcoholic, and then disappeared from view. William Bewley of the Jacobs Biscuits dynasty was also a contemporary of mine at Bootham.

Until Bootham I had never been to a Quaker meeting, but rather took to it while I was there. I also became a pacifist – as much from reading Plato's *Crito* as from reading the Bible. There was a good deal of pacifist propaganda at Bootham. Pacifism taught me not to retaliate when persecuted at school (and I suppose I could seem "pious" and priggish), but I had not yet learned to be forgiving, loving and reconciling – Mary, much later, softened me and taught me to look for the good in people. Bootham taught me not to trust anyone. I spent as much time as I could in the library – and, indeed, was the librarian for

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24 For Bootham School during this period see F. E. Pollard, *Bootham School York 1823-1923*, (London: Dent, 1926).

25 Did this staunch Congregationalist mother think that Goodrich's small volume would protect her son from undue Friend-ly persuasion? For Goodrich (1840-1919) see CYB, 1920, 97-8; William D. McNaughton, *The Scottish Congregational Ministry 1794-1993*, (Glasgow: Congregational Union of Scotland, 1993) though read Hackney for Hoxton. Trained at Hackney College, he served at Braintree (1865-76), Elgin Place, Glasgow (1876-90); and Chorlton Road, Manchester (1890-1912). He was Chairman of the Congregational Union of Scotland in 1885 and of England and Wales in 1904.

26 For William Boothby Selbie (1862-1944), the first student and the second Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford (1909-32) see CYB, 1945, 441; ODNB; WTW; E. Kaye, *Mansfield College, Its Origin, History and Significance*, (Oxford: OUP, 1996). For Geoffrey's memoir of him see, *The Puritan Spirit*, ch. 31, section 1.

a period. The academic bias at Bootham was scientific, not classical. I had five Greek teachers in three years! For the last two years I had only six hours of teaching a week, and this reinforced my status as an autodidact. I matriculated two years before anybody else – very bad psychology! – at fourteen I came top of the matriculating class with distinctions in English, Latin and Greek. At sixteen I went to Oxford for a year's coaching by E. A. Upcott who, as Selbie later recounted, “gnashed his teeth” at the way I had been taught at Bootham – or, rather, not taught.

Towards the end of my schooldays my father went to see Selbie for advice as to where I should go to train for the ministry. Selbie suggested Oxford for Mods and Greats (not history), and then on to Mansfield for ministerial training. Then I had an interview with Selbie. He quizzed me about my dreams.<sup>27</sup> Then he asked, “Are you nervous of people?” to which I replied, “Well, I don't seem to be nervous with you.” I sat the Mansfield entrance exam before going to Balliol College. It included a paper on “The history of Independency.”

### Balliol and Mansfield

During my first year in Oxford I lodged with Mrs. Buchanan Gray, the widow of George Buchanan Gray, who had taught Old Testament at Mansfield.<sup>28</sup> His wife was a cousin of Grandmother Hodgson. When she became ill, I went to live with the Selbies for three weeks.

I had a high opinion of A.D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol.<sup>29</sup> I liked his book, *The Essentials of Democracy*, for its pat on the back for church meetings. I was not at all impressed by the Fellows of Balliol. The only one from whom I derived any benefit was C.G. Stone, tutor in Roman History, who wrote *The Social Contract of the Universe*. He had a terrible stammer. As for his subject, I had no interest in it at all, so I wrote a paper on the Cluniac order during Roman History lectures. I enjoyed Plato and Aristotle, heard Gilbert Murray<sup>30</sup> on Agamemnon, and H.A. Joachim on what became his book, *Logical Studies*.<sup>31</sup> Joachim's son, Joseph, was one of my two great friends at Balliol; the other was Richard Southern.<sup>32</sup> Closest of all, though, was Roy Niblett, who came to do a BLitt. at St. Edmund Hall, and whose roots were in Nonconformity. He held prestigious posts in education, and became Director of the London University Institute of Education.<sup>33</sup> I did not join societies, or go

27 Selbie was by no means alone in being interested in the “new psychology” of those days.

28 For Gray (1865-1922) see CYB, 1923, 107; ODNB; WTW.

29 For Lindsay (1879-1952), philosopher and educationalist, see ODNB.

30 For Murray (1866-1957), classicist, see ODNB.

31 For Joachim (1868-1938), philosopher, see ODNB; Stuart Brown, ed., *Dictionary of Twentieth-Century British Philosophy*, (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005).

32 For Southern (1912-2001), historian, see ODNB.

33 For Niblett (1906-2005) see WTW; *Who Was Who* (hereinafter WWW) 2002-05; obituary in *The Independent*, 31 May 2005.

much to the Oxford Union debates, but I did go for walks with friends, and went to exhibitions at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the National Gallery. I was Student Librarian of the College. Since I was busy with scholarly pursuits other than those on the Mods and Greats syllabi, I got a third for both.<sup>34</sup>

Selbie had retired from Mansfield by the time I arrived there, but I was in regular contact with him. I also knew J. Vernon Bartlet, now retired from Mansfield's Chair of Church History, and I learned much from him.<sup>35</sup> Going to Mansfield was like a cold douche after Balliol. I lodged in homes and was friendly with the children – more so than with my somewhat lightweight, never-set-the-Thames-on-fire Mansfield contemporaries. I found the scholar to be a relatively lonely person at Mansfield. I liked the Bursar, J. Harrison Milnes,<sup>36</sup> and my best student friends were Antony Spalding and Dafydd ap Thomas, who became Professor of Hebrew at Bangor. There was not much devotional life in the College, though Selbie's successor, Nathaniel Micklem, read morning prayers.<sup>37</sup> This stuck in the gullet of a number of students, so they drew up a "Grand Remonstrance" protesting that they had no wish to be trained as priests. Before agreeing to sign the document, I rewrote it. When it was presented to Micklem he recognized my style and was wary of me ever afterwards. I avoided his lectures, and got permission to read Aquinas's *Summa Contra Gentiles* in the original *in lieu* of attendance. I was enrolled for the BD, which involved examinations and a thesis. I protested to Micklem about having to answer a question on W. P. Paterson's book, *The Rule of Faith*. But I passed the exam and then went for a three-week walking holiday with Spalding in Scotland. After one more year at Mansfield I submitted my BD thesis on "Faith and Reason in the Works of Bishop Peacock." I received very little guidance, though I did pay one visit to C.C.J. Webb.<sup>38</sup> The examiners were Claude Jenkins<sup>39</sup> and H.L. Goudge.<sup>40</sup> The thesis was never published, but it formed the basis of an article in the *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*:

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34 Evidently the Oxford degree regulations, unlike those of some other universities, did not contain a clause requiring the possession of a first or an upper second honours degree by those wishing to proceed to further and higher degrees.

35 For Bartlet (1863-1940) see CYB, 1941, 392-3; ODNB; WTW; E. Kaye, *Mansfield College*.

36 For Milnes (1876-1964) see CYB, 1964-65, 444-5.

37 For Micklem (1888-1976) see CYB, 1977, 266; ODNB; WTW; N. Micklem, *The Box and the Puppets*, (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1957); E. Kaye, *Mansfield College*.

38 For Webb (1865-1954), Nolloth Chair of Philosophy of Religion, see ODNB; W. D. Ross, "Clement Charles Julian Webb," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XLI, 1955; James Patrick, *Idealism and Orthodoxy at Oxford, 1901-1955*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985); Alan P. F. Sell, *Philosophical Idealism and Christian Belief*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995, and Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006).

39 For Jenkins (1877-1959), historian and clergyman, see ODNB.

40 For Goudge (1866-1939), see WWW 1929-40.



“Bishop Peacock and the Lollards.”<sup>41</sup> I learned much from Wheeler Robinson, who gave better care and attention to my written work than any other tutor. I discussed my ideas for a book on the Holy Spirit and the Puritans with him.

I liked T.W. Manson<sup>42</sup> and C.J. Cadoux,<sup>43</sup> but felt that Cadoux’s lectures were uninspiring. I greatly appreciated his book, *Catholicism and Christianity* – especially the conclusion. Micklem and Cadoux the pacifist, evangelical modernist, and ardent traditional Congregationalist, were at odds on many things, and I felt that I was harmed by my friendships with Cadoux and Selbie – and also with Albert Peel, another Congregational historian of some intransigence and considerable wit.<sup>44</sup> All of these had reservations about the way in which some seemed to be throwing overboard precious aspects of our heritage in the interests of liturgical reform and ecumenism; and those deemed guilty did not like them for it. I became Peel’s protégé at *The Congregational Quarterly*, and this increased my feeling that I was a marked man. He wanted me to take over the editorship of the *Quarterly* but I declined and continued as reviews editor. I blame Howard Stanley for the death of the *Quarterly*. It had become a well-respected journal, but he withdrew support from it and it died.<sup>45</sup>

At the beginning of my Mansfield course I conducted my first service – at Marston. My text was the verse on my nursery mantelpiece, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” I spoke on the reality, the comfort, and the challenge of the divine presence. At the climax of my sermon the woodwork of the reading desk came away in my hand. No pastoralia was taught at Mansfield. During my time in Oxford I heard guest lectures from Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, William Temple, E.W. Barnes and Charles Raven. Among the books which influenced me were volume two of Troeltsch’s *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*; Anderson Scott’s *Christianity according to St. Paul*; J. Skinner’s *Prophecy and Religion*; and Leyton Richards’s *The Christian’s Attitude to War*. I also enjoyed Silvester Horne’s *A Popular History of the Free Churches*. At the end of my course, on Selbie’s recommendation, I went for a year to Marburg. I went on the Procter Scholarship, and I had also won the Buchanan Prize for Hebrew two years running, with help from Dafydd ap Thomas. Wheeler Robinson said my Hebrew wasn’t

41 See “Bishop Peacock and the Lollard movement,” reprinted in G. F. Nuttall, *The Puritan Spirit*, ch. 4.

42 For Manson (1893-1958), biblical scholar, see ODNB; Donald K. McKim, ed., *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*, (Downers Grove, IL and Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

43 For Cadoux (1883-1947) see CYB, 1948, 489-90; ODNB; WTW; E. Kaye, *C. J. Cadoux: Theologian, Scholar, Pacifist*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988); idem, *Mansfield College*.

44 For Peel (1887-1949) see CYB, 1950, 523-4; ODNB; WTW; Alan Argent, “Albert Peel: the restless labourer,” *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, IV no. 5, October 1989, 319-336.

45 For Stanley (1901-1975) see *Yearbook of the United Reformed Church* (hereinafter URCYB), 1977, 271-2; WTW.

very good, but since there were no other applicants and the money was there, I could have it. I had tea with Rudolf Otto, though he was no longer teaching. I attended lectures by Rudolf Bultmann, and met Theodore Sippell, the great scholar of Puritanism. He gave me a non-partisan view of the Puritans.<sup>46</sup>

### Warminster

Mansfield College had an association with the Congregational church at Warminster, and that is how I got an introduction to it. The church was of long-standing, though there had been a Trinitarian separation from the Presbyterian church in 1719.<sup>47</sup> Warminster had a population of 7,000. It had been a liberal Nonconformist malting town, but by now it had become conservative, Anglican and military. It was a self-important place. The church had 106 members and congregations of about 40 in the morning and 30 at night. Numbers were somewhat swollen by evacuees after the Second World War broke out.

I was ordained on 4th May 1938. Micklem gave the charge to the church, Arthur Bourne gave the charge to me. The provincial moderator was at an ordination elsewhere, so the Rev. Alfred Antrobus,<sup>48</sup> secretary of the Wilts and East Somerset Congregational Union, presided. The Rev. J.L. Buddell,<sup>49</sup> Arthur Bourne's successor at Rhos, also took part. I gave a *proper* declaration of faith and experience. Doddridge's "My gracious Lord, I own Thy right To every service I can pay", was among the hymns sung.

I have remembered that another of the hymns we sang was one which had appealed to me as describing the work to which I was called ever since prep. school days: "We give Thee but Thine own", with the lines:

To God the lost to bring,  
To teach the way of life and peace,  
It is a Christlike thing.<sup>50</sup>

My father and step-mother came to the service, and so did a Smeeton cousin. *The Warminster Journal* reported the event.

Out of my stipend of £250 p.a. I had to pay £75 p.a. rent for the house I lived

46 Rufus Jones, the American Quaker scholar, was among others encouraged by Sippell.

47 The building in Common Close, now shorn of its tall pinnacles, in which Geoffrey Nuttall ministered dates from 1840. See Christopher Stell, *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-Houses in South-West England*, (London: HMSO, 1991), 245. The certificate for the 1840 building was signed on 21 February 1840 and issued on 2 March 1840. That for the original building on the site was signed on 6 January 1720. See J. H. Chandler, ed., *Wiltshire Dissenters' Meeting House Certificates and Registrations 1689-1852*, (Devizes: Wiltshire Record Society, 1985), nos. 228, 1547.

48 For Antrobus (1874-1948) see CYB, 1950, 505.

49 For James Leonard Buddell (1884-1979) see URCYB, 1980, 249-50. He was at Rhos from 1935 to 1947.

50 Letter of 17 December 1982.

in – the church’s manse was let to a retired clergyman. The house had its own tennis court, of which young Congregationalists and Baptists made good use. I had a housekeeper who, with her husband, lived in rent free in return for looking after me. Antony Spalding, Albert Peel and Wilton Rix<sup>51</sup> were among those who visited me; and once a term I went to Oxford. In 1941 Antony Spalding gave me my set of the *Dictionary of National Biography*.<sup>52</sup>

I had Mondays off, read on Tuesdays, and then began to prepare for Sundays.

The list (I *think* made at Warminster) of ‘Writers who have influenced my style and thought’ are (in this order, with the last name *added*):– Church, Donne, Virginia Woolf, Bryce, St. Bernard, Erasmus, Bunyan.

It was very good to have you here, quite apart from any of this stuff arising from our occupation during the last two hours!<sup>53</sup>

I did not enjoy pastoral duties, but I did them faithfully. I visited the housebound once each week. Ever fearful of clericalism and professionalism in the ministry, I did not catechize my members in their homes.<sup>54</sup> I took the liberal line that the first thing was to get to know the people and then you would be able to pray with them when necessary; it didn’t usually work. I was quite good with the uneducated. I could deal with people who had aspirations, or were educated. But if people were devoid of both aspirations and education, I was at a loss. The Vicar of Warminster would not speak to me in the street, but I had the use of the library at St. Boniface [Anglican] Missionary College. I often used to wonder whether I would ever marry, even though I seemed to be regarded as an eligible bachelor. Some thought that I had led another up the garden path – but she was a Methodist, and she married into that fold. There had been an “understanding” with a young lady which I terminated; and a short engagement of two to three months to an Anglican in Bath with whom I got in touch through the Warminster organist. Her father objected to the relationship, so she ended it without seeing me, and subsequently married a clergyman.

I often wondered whether I would be left in Warminster all my days. It was not easy being a pacifist minister in a military town like that. I never preached pacifism, and would only pray for those who had gone to war with a good conscience. But the members knew that I was a pacifist, and they didn’t like it. I gave pastoral care to some soldiers, and wrote to a number of them for some time. Captain Walker, a Scottish Congregationalist, invited me to give four lectures to his platoon, which I did. I was co-secretary of the West Wilts Refugee Service, and of the Free Church ministers’ fraternal. I edited the *Mansfield College Magazine* and wrote reviews and obituaries for it.

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51 For Rix (1881-1958) see CYB, 1960, 435; WTW.

52 These volumes gave Geoffrey endless hours of amusement as he proof read the books, made marginal comments and corrections, and devised numerous lists of names under subject categories.

53 Letter of 29 September 1982.

54 Unlike Richard Baxter, for example.

In the summer of 1942 I visited Wells with a party of soldiers. I fell, and had persistent sciatic pain. In late October I went home to Colwyn Bay in a car provided by the Womens Voluntary Service. Eventually I was seen by Sir Henry Cohen, who diagnosed a slipped disk and advised an operation. The operation was carried out at the Radcliffe Infirmary, and it was completely successful. After a period of convalescence at home I went back to Warminster. After the break of three to four months something was broken on both sides. In April 1943 I was invited to Woodbrooke,<sup>55</sup> and began my work there as a Fellow on 1st October. The Warminster folk gave me a parting gift of £17, with which I bought some of Erasmus's *Letters*.

### Woodbrooke

At Woodbrooke I found a relatively youthful, largely pacifist, vital group embracing eleven nationalities, and I began to live again. My duties as a Fellow were to write, and to act as a student-staff go-between. I was not required to give lectures or to attend them. My honorarium was £250 per annum. During vacations I went home to Colwyn Bay. Whilst at Warminster I had begun my research for *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*. I spent my first three weeks at Woodbrooke going through my notes, and then I wrote the first seven chapters at the rate of one a week. The other Fellow in 1943 was Isabel MacGregor Ross, a descendent of Margaret Fell. My great friend at Woodbrooke was Hugh Doncaster.<sup>56</sup> He had a sensitive, tender conscience, but was morally strong and not at all priggish. He married a Congregationalist – a daughter of E.R. Hughes – and she became a Friend.

It was at Woodbrooke that I met Mary.<sup>57</sup> She grew up in Fleetwood, and was the fifth of six children – three boys and three girls. Members of her family – ships chandlers and ironmongers – had been founders of Fleetwood Congregational Church, but she broke away on leaving for teacher training at Anstey, the specialist physical education college. Before she left, the Fleetwood minister, Leslie Artingstall,<sup>58</sup> had already influenced her towards pacifism. After Anstey she went to Street, Somerset, to teach at Clark's training school. She joined the Quakers in Street, and felt that she had come home. Mary had always felt battered by words in Congregational worship, whereas I had been called to be a minister, and wanted a more Christocentric form of worship than was to be found in modern Quakerism – though the Quakers are an example to us of many Christ-like ways of behaviour and practice.

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55 The Quaker College in Birmingham.

56 For L. Hugh Doncaster (1914-1994) see the obituary by Edward Milligan and Geoffrey F. Nuttall in *The Friend*, 13 January 1995, 52.

57 For an appreciation see Marjorie Nicholls, "Mary Nuttall," *The Friend*, 16 July 1982, 877-8, on my copy of which Geoffrey corrected "Pawley" to "Powley", and the date of their marriage from 1945 to 1944.

58 For Artingstall (1885-1952) see CYB, 1953, 504. He was at Fleetwood from 1916 to 1919.

After Street, Mary went to Englefield Green, where she met George Powley. They married and went to live in Leicester, where Mary taught, and became increasingly active in the Friends Home Service Council. After a time Powley became ill, and spent some time at The Retreat in York, though he was not a Quaker. He became very withdrawn, and his life sadly ended on the railway line at Ewell, near his boyhood home. An open verdict was recorded. George and Mary had no children.

It now became difficult for Mary to continue teaching PT because the subject was so intertwined with OTCs<sup>59</sup> and the like. So she came to Woodbrooke the year before me. She was a warm, outgoing person, who didn't much like the idea of marrying a minister. We did not have an official engagement, but we regarded July 2nd as the day on which we made our pledges to each other. For relaxation I used to knit, but Mary would never help me with that. We enjoyed reading poetry; we read *Murder in the Cathedral*. Whilst at Woodbrooke I was a member of King's Norton Congregational church, whose minister was Ian Ogilvie.<sup>60</sup>

Mary was a member of Stirchley Meeting – a poor and struggling cause – and the question arose as to where we should be married. I said I wouldn't mind being married in a Friends Meeting House provided it were an old seventeenth-century one. So it was that during the summer vacation of 1944 we were married at Colthouse, near Hawkshead.<sup>61</sup> We were married from Isabel Ross's house at Far Sawrey – next door to Beatrix Potter's. We spent our honeymoon at the Borrowdale Hotel – this had been arranged by the Rev. J. B. Clark of Keswick,<sup>62</sup> one of Grandfather Hodgson's former students. Whilst in Borrowdale we met T.W. Manson, who was staying at Rosthwaite.<sup>63</sup>

I was determined to submit my work for the DD as soon as possible and, in January 1945 I succeeded. Claude Jenkins was again one of my examiners; the other was Newton Flew.<sup>64</sup> There was a look of horror on the face of the Regius Professor, Leonard Hodgson,<sup>65</sup> when this young man of 34 carried off the prize. The degree of DD had been opened to Nonconformists in 1920. My

59 Officers Training Corps.

60 Was he, perhaps, known as Ian or is this an uncharacteristic trick of memory? In CYB and W.D. MacNaughton, *The Scottish Congregational Ministry 1794-1993*, 245, he is recorded as Kenneth Gowan Ogilvie. He was at King's Norton 1944-1946.

61 The Meeting House at Colthouse was built in 1688 and registered in the following year. See David M. Butler, *The Quaker Meeting Houses of Britain*, (London: Friends Historical Society, 1999), I, 300-302.

62 James Birkett Clark (1882-1968) served with the LMS, and then at Keswick (1931-1945). See CYB, 1969-70, 429.

63 How difficult it is to escape the saints – even on honeymoon! My wife and I also spent ours in Borrowdale. We walked three miles to church in Keswick on the day after our wedding to find Norman Charlton, Cyril Grant, Kenneth Wadsworth and Glyn Evans, ministers all and their wives beaming at us as we came through the door.

64 For Flew (1886-1962) see DMBI; ODNB.

65 For Hodgson (1889-1969) see ODNB.

Methodist examiner, R. Newton Flew,<sup>66</sup> had been the first to achieve it, and I was the second.

### New College

On returning to Woodbrooke one day after a cycle ride with Hugh Doncaster, I found a message from Sydney Cave, Principal of New College, London,<sup>67</sup> inviting me to an interview to be held at Memorial Hall for the vacant position at his College. It had never occurred to me that I would ever work in London, and I didn't particularly want to go there. But as things turned out London was good to me. It gave me many opportunities of a scholarly kind, and the closeness to Dr. Williams's Library was a boon as far as my work, and my trusteeship there, was concerned. I came to be in touch with three or four canons of Westminster including Abbott and Carpenter; and with Max Warren, the missionary statesman and later sub-dean of Westminster.<sup>68</sup> I gave the Charles Gore Lecture in Westminster Abbey; I belonged to the London Society for Christians and Jews; and to the London Society for the Study of Religion, of which I was both secretary and later president. I was also the Ancient Merchant's Lecturer, and the Drew, Hibbert and F. D. Maurice Lecturer.<sup>69</sup>

But all of this was in the future. In April 1945 I duly met Cave and the London Moderator, Alan Green, who was also Chairman of the New College Governors.<sup>70</sup> I was awarded the position and my duties were to teach Church History, elementary Hebrew and Roman History. My salary was to be £650 per annum, and I would have to find my own house. After the meeting Cave took me to tea in a café, and I learned a little more about the College – it was the one College I knew nothing about. At the time of my appointment the College was still occupied by the Wrens,<sup>71</sup> so my first classes were held above a shop in Finchley Road. Gradually the College was restored to us, and for a time I lectured on bare boards in the Principal's house. Cave was a shy man who kept folk at a distance. Certainly the junior staff members were not regarded as colleagues. I seemed to do any pastoral work that was required. W. A. Davies was there – he was sweet but incompetent.<sup>72</sup> Madoc Davies taught elocution.

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66 Flew graduated DD in 1930 – the first Nonconformist to do so by examination.

67 For Cave (1883-1953) see CYB, 1954, 506-7; ODNB; WTW; Trevor Hart, ed., *Dictionary of Historical Theology*, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000); Ronald Bocking, "Sydney Cave (1883-1953) – Missionary, Principal, Theologian," *JURCHS*, VII no. 1, October 2002, 36-44; Alan P. F. Sell, *Nonconformist Theology in the Twentieth Century*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).

68 For Edward Symes Abbott (1906-1983), Edward Frederick Carpenter (1910-1998) and Max Alexander Cunningham Warren (1904-1977) see ODNB.

69 Among others, for which see Geoffrey Nuttall's entry in *Who's Who*.

70 For Green (1889-1961) see CYB, 1962, 460.

71 Womens Royal Naval Service, founded in 1916.

72 For William Archibald Davies (1879-1966) see CYB, 166-67, 451-2. His entire ministry was in ministerial training, first at Mansfield (1909-1913) (though he is not indexed in E. Kaye, *Mansfield College*), then at New (1913-1946).

A.J.B. Higgins came in 1946 to teach New Testament. He was a good, honest, but unimaginative scholar.<sup>73</sup> He was saturnine of temperament, and used to get angry with the students. His best work is *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament*. He and his wife had met in the Sunday School at Haverfordwest. He was a high church Congregationalist and on leaving New College he became an Anglican.<sup>74</sup>

There was an inrush of students from the forces, and some of these caused Cave considerable distress because of their intransigent conservatism, and I was saddened by this. With one exception I was not greatly troubled by them. I launched a series of preliminary talks on such topics as heaven, with a view to easing them back into the world of thought rather than action. But Cave disapproved, so the series abruptly stopped.

Trevor Davies joined the staff in 1948.<sup>75</sup> He was not a success. He published *Sublimation* in 1947. He was affable enough, but rather superficial. Holding Richmond Hill together was more up his street, and he went off to do that in 1951. He was not replaced. In 1953 Cyril Blackman took the position vacated by Higgins.<sup>76</sup> He had been teaching at Cheshunt, and I had known him at Mansfield. Loveable and absent-minded, he was a respectable second-line New Testament scholar: not so perceptive as Higgins, but a nicer person. After him came the Methodist, Francis Glasson. He had scholarship and honesty (though he could only see what he saw), and was always friendly.<sup>77</sup> The junior tutors were, in succession, Ronald Bocking, Roger Tomes and Roger Scopes.

Cave died of leukaemia in 1953. For such a fussy man, he met his end with great calmness. John Huxtable came in his place. I had known him at Mansfield, but we had not had much contact since.<sup>78</sup> During Huxtable's tenure I was the University of London's Chairman of the Board of Studies in Theology (1957-59) and Dean of the Faculty of Theology from 1960 to 1964. I had been admitted to the Board after three years of lecturing, and following the approval of my publications by about eleven scholars including Abbott, Cave, Clogg and Waterhouse.<sup>79</sup> But Huxtable did not have the academic standing to

73 Trained at Lancashire Independent College, Higgins was a protégé of T. W. Manson. He later earned Manchester's rarely-awarded DD.

74 By this we should understand that Higgins was of the Church Order Group sort. Geoffrey would have regarded himself as a high church Congregationalist in the proper sense of the term, namely, that which asserts the sole Lordship of Christ in his Church, than which there is no higher churchmanship.

75 For J. Trevor Davies (1907-1974) see URCYB, 1975, 293.

76 For E. Cyril Blackman (1908-1989) see URCYB, 1989-90, 192.

77 For Thomas Francis Glasson (1906-1998) see DMBI.

78 Cf. John Huxtable, *As It Seemed to Me*, (London: The United Reformed Church, 1990), 32: "Geoffrey F. Nuttall, who was lecturer in Church History, had been a fellow student with me at Mansfield, where we had taken relatively little notice of one another." For Huxtable (1912-1990) see also URCYB, 1991-92, 229; ODNB; WTW.

79 For F. Bertram Clogg (1884-1955) and Eric Strickland Waterhouse (1879-1964), both of Richmond College, see DMBI.

become a member of the Board. He was invited to attend Board meetings, but was not permitted to speak until some years had elapsed. This placed the College somewhat at a disadvantage. On the other hand Huxtable put us on the map ecclesiastically. I think he had really wanted the secretaryship of the Congregational Union but, much to the surprise, and even distress, of some,<sup>80</sup> Howard Stanley was appointed, and that set Huxtable's ecclesiastical statesmanship back for ten years, until he did achieve his goal in 1964. Among my King's College colleagues were Peter Ackroyd, the Samuel Davidson Professor of Old Testament, Christopher Evans, Dennis Nineham, E.L. Mascall, Geoffrey Parrinder, H.D. Lewis, and Sydney Evans – the Dean of King's College, a politician and academic lightweight.<sup>81</sup> I got on well with all of them – rather surprisingly since I have the reputation of being “difficult”.

E. O. James (1888-1972)<sup>82</sup> was the name I could not remember. He was always friendly, and a strong supporter of (my) devotion to *scholarship*.

W. R. Matthews, also, was always friendly.<sup>83</sup> Once when he came in to join (as one invited *ab extra*, but as a former Dean he hardly counted as *extra*) a Discussion Group which, from its onlie [*sic*] begetter we used to call ‘Nineham's Conversazione’, I said to him ‘Where would you like to sit?’ and he replied ‘I rather thought I would sit by you!’ and I remember walking back with him once from King's to Ludgate Circus on his way to the Deanery. But was never inside that Deanery, as I often was at Westminster, and have been at Winchester, and Salisbury and Exeter, and could yet be at York, for R. D. C. Jasper and I always sat together at the Board of Studies in Theology. . . . I have preached at St. Martin's, incidentally!

Cave used to talk much about security of tenure. He was a professor, I was a recognized teacher of the University. This recognition, said Cave, made for security of tenure, and he kept a close watch on stipends, which had to be within sight of secular rates. Cave had held out the possibility of a professorship in due course, but it never materialized because the College could not afford it. In Huxtable's time the University threw recognized teacher positions to the wind, and the theological colleges became responsible for appointing their staff without any vetting by the University, and for paying them. This was

80 Because Stanley, the Lancashire Moderator, was perceived as being of an aggressive disposition, and, in 1947, he had been vocal in opposition to draft proposals for union with the Presbyterians. For his change of heart see WTW, 215.

81 For Ackroyd (1917-2005) see WWW 2001-05. For Mascall (1905-1993), Anglican theologian, and Lewis (1910-1992), philosopher, see ODNB. For Edward Geoffrey Parrinder (1910-2005), history of religions, see DMBI; WWW 2001-05. For Sydney Evans (1915-1988) see WWW 1981-90.

82 For Edwin Oliver James (1888-1972) see ODNB.

83 For Walter Robert Matthews (1881-1973) see ODNB; W. R. Matthews, *Memories and Meanings*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969); H. P. Owen, *W. R. Matthews: Philosopher and Theologian*, (London: Athlone Press, 1976).



dressed up under the rubric of giving the colleges greater autonomy. But it meant that I lost security of tenure and no further watch was kept on my salary, which remained fairly stationary during Huxtable's ten years. I was doing the work of a professor, and had the repute of a professor, but without the title or the salary of a professor. Charles Duthie,<sup>84</sup> who succeeded Huxtable in 1964 did much more to look after his own and his colleagues' salaries: mine was £2,600 p.a. when I retired in 1977.

I had no desire to move from New College – Mary thought that was a form of pride. When Cadoux died in 1947 Aubrey Vine<sup>85</sup> and I were invited to apply for the vacant Church History post at Mansfield. Neither of us was successful, and Erik Routley was appointed, apparently without interview. But I did apply under some pressure and rather reluctantly for Chairs at King's College, London, Manchester and Cambridge. I was interviewed at King's when C.W. Dugmore was appointed.<sup>86</sup> The others interviewed for the post were J.R.H. Moorman and J.C. Dickinson. Harold Roberts, Principal of Richmond College, spoke against me.<sup>87</sup> In the Manchester contest I was up against the Methodist Gordon Rupp, and he was successful.<sup>88</sup> I had crossed swords with him when he was teaching at Richmond College. He had wanted to pass a student, I to fail him. The independent third examiner agreed with me. After that Rupp never let me examine at Manchester, and when he left there for Cambridge he advised his successor, Basil Hall, never to employ “ferocious” Geoffrey as an examiner. No doubt Rupp is sound enough on the Reformation, but his work leaves something to be desired when he gets onto English soil. My second defeat by Rupp occurred at Cambridge, for which Chair Ullmann and Frend, who left Cambridge for Glasgow, had also applied.<sup>89</sup> My candidature was supported by David Knowles<sup>90</sup> and Norman Sykes. My friend, the American Quaker, Roland Bainton, often wondered whether I would welcome an appointment in the United States, and a more specific offer came from a charming Congregationalist, pacifist, professor in Chicago, whose name escapes me.

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84 For Duthie (1911-1981) see William D. McNaughton, *The Scottish Congregational Ministry*, 202; Alan P.F. Sell, *Hinterland Theology*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2008), ch.11.

85 For Vine (1900-1973) see URCYB, 1973-4, 282-3.

86 For Dugmore (1909-90) see WWW 1981-90.

87 For Roberts (1896-1982) see DMBI.

88 For E. Gordon Rupp (1910-1986) see ODNB; DMBI.

89 For Walter Ullmann (1910-1983) see ODNB; for W.H.C. Frend (1916-2005) see WWW 2001-05. “Defeats” notwithstanding, Geoffrey contributed to Gordon Rupp's *festsschrift*, and *vice versa*. See G.F. Nuttall, “John Horne of Lynn”, in Peter Brooks, ed., *Christian Spirituality. Essays in Honour of Gordon Rupp*, (London: SCM, 1975), ch. 10; Gordon Rupp, “A devotion to rapture in English Puritanism”, in R. Buick Knox, ed., *Reformation, Conformity and Dissent. Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Nuttall*, (London: Epworth Press, 1977), ch. 6.

90 For Michael Clive Knowles [religious name David] (1896-1974) see ODNB.

The name of the charming American who wanted me for Chicago . . . is the Rev. Howard Schomer. I wonder if you ever met him?<sup>91</sup>

But I stayed at New College. I was College Librarian. I devoted a good deal of time to the collection, and was relieved when, following the closure of the College, it proved possible to transfer the books to Dr. Williams's Library. Lovell Cocks preached at the closing service of New College. He was one of the last surviving students of P.T. Forsyth, and could always be relied upon to say something deep, lively and to the point on special occasions.<sup>92</sup>

Very occasionally the denomination invited me to do things. I was a member of the commission which, in the 1960s, prepared *A Short Affirmation of Faith* and the longer *Declaration of Faith*. Others involved included Alec Whitehouse, John Heywood Thomas and Cunliffe-Jones.<sup>93</sup> John Marsh was also on it, but he would never give me the serious attention that the others did. He wasn't grounded in Congregationalism.<sup>94</sup> I preferred the meetings when Howard Stanley wasn't present. He didn't understand what was going on, but liked to throw his weight around. His predecessor, Leslie Cooke, was always more responsive and open.<sup>95</sup>

As I look back it seems to me that I served *under Cave, with Huxtable, and over Duthie*. Although our attitudes to many things differed, I was closest to John Huxtable. I agreed more with Charles Duthie than with the other two, but Charles played his cards close to his chest, and didn't *stand* for things: he was understanding of student difficulties to the point of undue leniency.

Over the years I have examined a number of doctoral candidates, and have been pleased to encourage scholars young and old from various parts of the world. But it saddens me that none of my New College students took my subject to an advanced level. I think that Wilfred Biggs<sup>96</sup> and John Taylor could have done so, but no doubt the claims of the pastorate precluded this. So few New College students joined the Congregational Historical Society. I was President of the Society, and it was I who got the committee established: previously the officers had handled everything. I was also President of the

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91 Letter of 14 March 1983. Schomer was President of Chicago Theological Seminary (1959-66), and a prominent advocate of human and civil rights. He was a friend of Martin Luther King, and marched with him in Selma, Alabama. He died on 28 June 2001, aged 86. I never met him. His papers are at Harvard University.

92 For Harry Francis Lovell Cocks (1894-1983) see URCYB, 1984, 258-9; ODNB; WTW; Alan P. F. Sell, *Commemorations. Studies in Christian Thought and History*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1993 and Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998), ch. 13.

93 For W. A. Whitehouse (1915-2003) see URCYB, 2004, 332; for J. Heywood Thomas see WTW; *Dictionary of Twentieth-Century British Philosophers*; for Hubert Cunliffe-Jones see URCYB, 1991-92, 226-7; WTW; K. W. Wadsworth, *Yorkshire United Independent College*; E. Kaye, *For the Work of Ministry*.

94 For Marsh (1904-1994) see URCYB, 1995, 264-5; WTW; E. Kaye, *Mansfield College*.

95 For Cooke (1908-1967) see CYB, 1967-68, 435; WTW.

96 For Biggs (1918-1997) see URCYB, 1999, 291.

Friends Historical Society, and am President of the Friends of Dr. Williams's Library. I also belonged to *Sub Rosa*, the ministers' luncheon club, and I was Chairman of the General Body of Dissenting Ministers, and of the London Congregational Board (which is older than the London Congregational Union).

### Assessments of others

The now-departed historian I most admired was David Knowles, the historian of monasticism; the one still active whom I most admire is Patrick Collinson. Christopher Brooke and Ullmann do good work, and so does Dickens,<sup>97</sup> but he is a bore. I like Reg Ward, but do not always understand him.<sup>98</sup> I fear I'm prejudiced against Rupert Davies even though he was at Balliol.<sup>99</sup> He is bland and has no great scholarly weight; yet he bursts with self-satisfaction and maintains a wonderfully consistent smugness. George Yule of Aberdeen is a most affectionate soul, but he does very poor work and, intellectually, he's not more than third rate. Pennar Davies and Tudur Jones – than whom two persons could hardly be more different – are longstanding friends in Wales.<sup>100</sup> But my greatest historian friend is Jan Van Den Berg of Leiden, with whom I have collaborated on Doddridge.<sup>101</sup>

Another time we had better look at my 3 ministers at Hampstead Garden Suburb, my 3 London Moderators, and other Congo's.<sup>102</sup>

The first London Moderator I knew was R. J. Evans.<sup>103</sup> He was a dear old thing. He was followed by Alan Green, who interviewed me for the New College post, and with whom I later fell out. I was Chairman of the Hodgson Trust – left in the eighteenth century by Robert Hodgson for the benefit of Calvinist ministers who did not give communion to those who took it on their knees. The trustees had to nominate ministers who were to receive the money. The secretary, A.R. Smart, took £25 p.a. for his services, and Alan Green

97 For A.G. Dickens (1910-2001) see WWW 2001-05.

98 I managed to follow him at Manchester on his enjoyable romp through Modern History from 1485 to 1914; he subsequently went as Professor to Durham.

99 For Davies (1909-1994) see DMBI; ODNB.

100 For William Thomas Pennar Davies (1911-1996) see WTW; G.F. Nuttall, "Pennar Davies (12 November 1911 – 29 December 1996): Complexio Oppositorum," *JURCHS*, V no. 10, June 1997, 574-5. For Robert Tudur Jones (1921-1998) see WTW; Robert Pope, "R. Tudur Jones 1921-1998: Congregational minister, church historian, and Welsh Nationalist," *JURCHS*, VI no. 7, December 2000, 529-541; idem, "A giant of Welsh Protestantism": R. Tudur Jones (1921-1998) and Congregationalism in Wales," *International Congregational Journal*, III no. 1, February 2003, 13-35. For the pair see D. Densil Morgan, "Pelagius and a twentieth-century Augustine: the contrasting visions of Pennar Davies and R. Tudur Jones," *ibid.*, I no. 1, February 2001, 41-54.

101 See *Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) and the Netherlands*, Leiden: Brill, 1987.

102 Letter of 11 March 1983.

103 For Evans (1871-1967) see CYB, 1967-68, 441.

constantly nominated his London men. But Green wasn't on the committee: we just met in his office. So I protested at his behaviour and he never forgave me. He was succeeded by Bill Simpson, a good, simple, deeply pastoral man.<sup>104</sup>

In my London days I was a member of Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church and, on the whole, we were well served by our ministers. Frank Ballard<sup>105</sup> was a good old dog. He married Oman's daughter.<sup>106</sup> He was a strong Free Church Federal Council man, and got me involved in that. He was a good all-round man. He was a presence in the pulpit, and could be rather heavy; the services could last for an hour and a half. Stanley Andrews was my favourite. He wasn't so good as a preacher, but he was an admirable pastor, and so was his wife, Hope. Andrews was a Scot, who returned to Scotland and was "re-ordained" in the Church of Scotland. A very outgoing person. Peter Barraclough is a consistent preacher and leader of worship, no good at pastoral visitation, but excellent at funerals. He always takes the lead and can be over-sensitive when elders and others see things differently.<sup>107</sup>

My longstanding minister friends are the Baptist Raymond Brown,<sup>108</sup> and Ronald Ward, a good preacher and pastor, who has a lively and original mind.<sup>109</sup> And I always liked Norman Goodall.<sup>110</sup> And, of course, there's you. Of my former students I have kept in closest touch with Wilfred Biggs, Ray Arnold<sup>111</sup> and Eric Allen. My present minister, Peter Chave, conducts worship in a dignified manner and preaches thoughtfully and biblically.

### Self-assessment

I came to work on Baxter quite consciously as a counterweight against my special love for the more radical Dissenters. But having come to him, he gradually took possession of me. Doddridge is another central person in my thoughts. Reason and experience must be held together, and this is consistent with New Testament teaching; but Donald Davie goes along the old Enlightenment line and overlooks the experiential element.<sup>112</sup> I was brought up on Doddridge's hymns, and was prodded by F.J. Powicke to read Baxter

104 For William Charles Edward Simpson (1907-2005) see URCYB, 2007, 337.

105 For Ballard (1886-1959) see CYB, 1960, 421-2.

106 For John Wood Oman (1860-1939), Professor (1907-1935) and Principal (1922-1935) of Westminster College, Cambridge, see ODNB; WTW; *Dictionary of Historical Theology*; *Dictionary of Twentieth-Century British Philosophers*; F. G. Healey, *Religion and Reality. The Theology of John Oman*, (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1965); S. Bevans, *John Oman and his Doctrine of God*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1992); Adam Hood, *Oman and Macmurray: Experience and Religious Belief*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

107 For Barraclough (1925-1992) see URCYB, 1994, 265-6.

108 Dr. Brown preached at Geoffrey's funeral service at Bournville on 8 August 2007.

109 For Ward (1917-2006) see URCYB, 2008, 308.

110 For Goodall (1896-1985) see URCYB, 1985-6, 197; ODNB; WTW.

111 For Arnold (1923-2004) see URCYB, 2005, 328.

112 For Davie (1922-1995) see ODNB.

when I was a teenager.<sup>113</sup> I was never drawn to Watts in the same way. I love his hymns, of course, but I think of him as a hypochondriac bachelor. I have no strong sense of his church fellowship, and he was somewhat withdrawn and didn't write many letters. Baxter and Doddridge were great letter writers. In any case, I prefer provincial types to metropolitan, and have spent most of my time with them.

I have never had a book refused, and have never had to hawk my wares around from one publisher to another. I wrote to order when I felt committed to the project, but *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* and *Visible Saints* were my own. The former is the weightier of the two; the latter is not as good. I have not found much to correct in them subsequently. I have rarely been upset by a reviewer. My writings don't usually have a long gestation period: ideas come to me and I follow them up. I think that my best devotional work is *The Holy Spirit and Ourselves*, and that the book on Dante is the best written – though it was extreme audacity on my part to attempt it at all: I am not a scholar of Dante or of Italian. Of all my works, I use my *Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge* most frequently: it is a very good source book, though there are some indexing errors. I don't return to my *Richard Baxter* much, and almost never to *From Uniformity to Unity*. I regard my *Christian Pacifism in History* as a superior pot-boiler. I wanted to show that I was not just a narrow seventeenth-century historian.

I feel that I have given myself to New College and to our tradition, and I am saddened to think that the movement in the denomination is for the most part all the other way. Although my work has been recognized within the scholarly community, and although I am glad to have helped make Puritanism and Dissent “respectable” subjects of academic study, the principles that have motivated me seem to be undervalued by most people in our Church. *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* brought together the Holy Spirit, Puritanism and experience, and you cannot get under the skin of the Puritans unless you keep those three together. My intention was to promote my Congregational convictions through my work, but nowadays my mind often turns to the title of Grandfather Hodgson's pamphlet, *Congregationalism Played Out – Then Cometh the End*. I fear that Congregationalism has folded up; and it's ecumenical claptrap to suppose that it has ‘died in order to live.’ I felt that I was doing my work for Congregationalism and for the Lord, but the denomination has not been a grateful recipient; I have failed, and this is painful. It is just conceivable that there will be a return, but it is not likely to come from the Congregational Federation or the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches.

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL

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113 For F.J. Powicke (1854-1935) see CYB, 1937, 705; WTW; Alan P.F. Sell, *Enlightenment, Ecumenism, Evangel*, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), ch. 1.

### Postscript

My wife and I were in regular contact with Geoffrey Nuttall for some forty years (and how he loved to be teased by Karen), but even after all this time (though others knew him for much longer) it is not easy to sum him up. His was a multi-layered personality. As occasion demanded, his eyes could pierce with righteous indignation, twinkle with merriment and melt with sympathy. He could be generous to a fault, as many scholars, younger and older, discovered when they gravitated towards him, drawn by his willingness to encourage not just verbally but often in the form of reams of careful, referenced, criticism of their work. But he was not a "one track" friend. He showed great interest in Karen's doctoral work even though her field was far removed from his own, he being enamoured of (certain kinds of) hymns but, on his own admission, not well up in music. He took a lively interest in the doings of our children, to whom in their younger days he was Uncle Nuttall; and he was thrilled when our son became a Classical Scholar at Oxford and later moved into Renaissance Studies. He befriended my late mother when she moved to Queen Mother Court, Bournville (never Birmingham!), where he lived for some years, and he was always pleased to have conversations with my brother on his visits there from Finland. He was ever ready to be driven in quest of a Dissenting landmark; he welcomed many friends to his regular holiday haunt at Oberhofen am Thunersee, Switzerland; he would read Greek classics over breakfast, and Dante aloud to his visitors. He loved to speak of the philosophers – H.W.B. Joseph and H.H. Joachim among them – whom he had known in his Oxford days.

It cannot be denied, however – and it is clear from the tenor of some his remarks made in conversation – that he could "go off" people.<sup>114</sup> From some of his former students I have learned that if he came to the view that they were "not up to much" and showed little in their studies, or if they were uncritically ecumenical or biblicist, his patience would be sorely tested. I think that this was the outworking of a deep conviction that his energies had to be devoted to the fulfilment of his high calling to train ministers and stand up for "our people", and if some were disinclined to put heart and soul into this, so be it. On the other hand, if students were "not up to much" academically, but nevertheless strove to improve their grasp of matters intellectual, Geoffrey would spare no pains to help and encourage them.

Once he had made up his mind on an issue, or about a person, it was very difficult to persuade him otherwise. He admitted this as being an aspect of his "awkward squad" persona. When I told him that I was taking soundings concerning the possibility of forming an umbrella organization which would bring denominational historical societies and cognate libraries together with a view

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114 I have used the blue pencil only twice in reporting Geoffrey Nuttall's opinions of others. I did so because in both cases there was another side to the question, and I felt that what he said would be needlessly hurtful to some still living.

to cooperative research and publication, he abruptly pronounced, "It will never work. You'll never get the Strict Baptists and the Unitarians in the same room." But we did, and we do, and no one was more delighted than Geoffrey Nuttall when he saw the Association's conference proceedings, and the first volume to appear of *Protestant Nonconformist Texts*, edited as it is by a Baptist, a Strict Baptist and a Unitarian.

Geoffrey Nuttall felt that John Marsh had erred in his Introduction to *A Book of Public Worship Compiled for the Use of Congregationalists*: "Throughout Dr. Marsh's Introduction (16 pp.) our traditional repudiation of such books is not discussed, while dependence on the Spirit's leadings is not mentioned at all."<sup>115</sup> Behind this remark there lies, I think, both a deep suspicion of the "Genevans" of the Church Order Group, and an even deeper commitment to the art and craft of free prayer (something lifeless, even when grammatical, without the Spirit's prompting) of which he himself was a master. Again, he could find little good to say about Lesslie Newbigin,<sup>116</sup> whom he regarded as a university-SCM Christian with no roots in the local church, who had subsequently become an ecumenical trimmer. Although Newbigin and Nuttall ended on the same ministerial roll and lived in retirement in the same city they never met.<sup>117</sup> By contrast, he rejoiced in his friendship with Ron Webb, the Administrative Officer of the West Midlands Province, whom he regarded as a stalwart, salt-of-the-earth, Christian.

I have mentioned Geoffrey Nuttall's sorrow at the sense of embattlement that Sydney Cave felt in connection with a nest of conservative evangelicals who were at New College in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This played to my pastoral advantage towards the end of Geoffrey's life. On one of our last visits Kären and I found that Geoffrey, now unable to read and lacking mental stimulation, would drift in and out of conversation. During one of his "out" moments I quietly asked, "Wasn't x one of your students?", mentioning the name of a prominent conservative evangelical. Back came Geoffrey with all guns blazing: "The heretic!", he cried, and thus conversation was resumed.

Given his disapproval of the "Genevan" tendency in Congregationalism, and of what he regarded as ecumenism of the uncritical – even disloyal – sort, it is, on the face of it, surprising that I, a member of the old Church Order Group, and one who has worked in ecumenical contexts from the local to the global, should have got off so lightly. I think the answer lies in Nuttall's awareness that my commitment to the visible saints as the locus of the Church catholic, and

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115 Geoffrey's review of *A Book of Public Worship*, in *The Congregational Quarterly*, XXVI no. 4, 1948, 367. Marsh was raised in the Church of England.

116 For Newbigin (1909-1998) see ODNB; URCYB, 1999, 216; WTW; Geoffrey Wainwright, *Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life*, (New York and Oxford: OUP, 2000).

117 Geoffrey wrote a swingeing, exegetically-based, "not-for-publication" review of the report of the international Anglican-Reformed dialogue, *God's Reign and Our Unity*, (London: SPCK and Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1984), the principal drafter of which was Lesslie Newbigin.

my willingness to confront sectarianisms whether catholic or evangelical would enable the voice of “our people” to be heard in those circles. Be that as it may, he was as supportive of my ecumenical activities as he was of my more strictly academic pursuits, and I am greatly indebted to him for this.

Sometimes he would put me on the spot. “What do you make of Daniel Jenkins?”<sup>118</sup> he asked one day. I thought for a moment and replied, “I think he is a very good upmarket theological journalist.” I intended this as a compliment, for Jenkins was a widely read, thoughtful, writer who could, apparently effortlessly and with great skill, communicate theological ideas to a wide readership. “Exactly so!” Geoffrey responded: “he certainly isn’t a scholar like you and me.” Discreetly passing over his observation about myself, I suspect that all who knew him would agree that, incontestably, there was no scholar quite like Geoffrey Nuttall – a judgment which applies equally to his published legacy, his traits, and, above all, to the strength and depth of his ministerial-*cum*-scholarly vocation, from which he would allow nothing to deflect him.

As for my friends, they are not lost;  
The several vessels of Thy fleet,  
Though parted now, by tempests tost,  
Shall safely in the haven meet.

(Richard Baxter)

ALAN P. F. SELL



## THE CASTERBRIDGE CONGREGATIONALISTS

In November, 1908, the members of the Dorchester Debating and Dramatic Society, later to become nationally famous as the Hardy Players, put on the first of their stage adaptations of Thomas Hardy's novels, *The Trumpet Major*. Of the fifteen speaking parts in this production, eight – and these were among the most important characters – were acted by members of the Dorchester Congregational Church.<sup>1</sup> They provided the core of the performers in every one of the fifteen productions put on by the Players from 1908 to 1924, when the Hardy Players were the most famous and successful amateur dramatic company in the country.

In *Far From the Madding Crowd*, which became the second of the plays in 1909, what Hardy called his “crusted characters” meet in the Buck’s Head Inn, where they have a discussion about the differences between “Chapel-folk” and the Church of England.

‘For my part,’ said Coggan, ‘I’m staunch Church of England.’ ‘Ay, and faith, so be I,’ said Mark Clark . . . ‘Chapel-folk be more hand-in-glove with them than we,’ said Joseph thoughtfully. ‘Yes,’ said Coggan, ‘We know very well that if anybody do go to heaven they will. They’ve worked so hard for it, and they deserve to have it, such as ’tis.’<sup>2</sup>

This dialogue must have been greeted with the delighted laughter of recognition by the Dorchester audience, because most of those playing the “crusted characters” were “Chapel-folk” and well-known members of the Congregational Church, as also was the adapter of the novels and director of the plays, A.H. Evans.

Thomas Hardy was always a nostalgically agnostic Anglican, but he knew, and seems to have had some respect for, the local Congregationalists. When Hardy was nine years old he was taken by his mother to Hatfield in Hertfordshire so that she could look after his aunt during her pregnancy. While they were there Hardy was sent to a school run by the local Congregational minister, Thomas Ray.<sup>3</sup> The regime was harsh and Hardy was bullied. When he returned to Dorchester he was sent to the British School in Greyhound Lane run by Isaac Glandfield Last, who had a considerable reputation as a teacher and

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1. The sources for the members of the Players who belonged to the Dorchester Congregational Church are: *The Minutes of the Congregational Mutual Improvement Society 1887-1894* (MCMIS) *The Minutes of the Dorchester Debating Literary and Dramatic Society 1922-1939* (MDDLDS) *The Minutes of the Dorchester Congregational Church*, (MDCC), all in the Dorset History Centre, Dorchester. (DHCD). I have also used the Thomas Hardy Collection in the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, material made available to me by Jo Draper and Chris Chaplin, and the Fare family archives in my possession.
  2. Thomas Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, (London: Marshall Cavendish, 1986), 335f.
  3. Alan Argent, “Thomas Hardy’s Schooling”, *JURCHS*, Vol.5. No.7. October 1995, 416.

scholar.<sup>4</sup> Last had become a member of the Dorchester Congregational Church in 1848. He was made a deacon in 1851 and served the church in this capacity until his death in 1867. He also taught in the Sunday School and audited the church accounts.<sup>5</sup> Last's son became Director of the Science Museum in Kensington and his grandson became Principal of Brasenose College, Oxford.<sup>6</sup> Hardy spent seven years at Last's school, where he learnt Latin and Greek and came to know and appreciate both Shakespeare and the Greek Classics. In July 1856, the sixteen-year-old Hardy began his apprenticeship as an architect in the practice of John Hicks, whose office was at 39 South Street, two months before the foundation stone was laid for the new Congregational Church building almost opposite on the other side of the road. Hardy therefore began his training just as this large and important new building in the town was being erected within sight of Hicks's office window. Watching this building go up so conveniently near must have contributed something of practical value to Hardy's architectural education. And no doubt, Hardy, who was always fascinated by public events, would have watched with considerable interest the procession from the Town Hall for the laying of the foundation stone by the local M.P. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the grandson of the dramatist, whose estate was at the village of Frampton, just a few miles outside the town.<sup>7</sup>

The beginnings of the Hardy Players can be traced back to 1887, when William Gooby became the minister of the Congregational church.<sup>8</sup> In December, less than a month after his induction, Gooby called a meeting to inaugurate the Congregational Mutual Improvement Society. The objects of this society were "the acquisition of knowledge, the discipline of the mind and the strengthening of the religious life." Present at the meeting and among the founder members were several people who were to be involved with the Hardy players; in particular there were Walter Reginald Bawler who later became secretary of the society, and William Watkins, who proposed the society's name and was elected a committee member. He was seconded by Mrs. A.H. Evans. The programme was to consist of lectures and debates as well as readings and recitations from well-known works. One of the most frequent and popular lecturers was a Dorchester schoolmaster, Thomas Middleton Dron, who became a member in 1888 when he gave a lecture on the life of Oliver Cromwell.

In March 1889 the meeting was given over to a selection of readings from Shakespeare chosen by Dron. Then, on 20 January 1890, Dron lectured to the Society on "The Wit and Wisdom of the Dorset Novelist." When Hardy read

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4. *Ibid.*

5. MDCC and membership lists, DCHD Ref. C/M 2/2.

6. Argent, *op. cit.*, 419.

7. W. Densham & J. Ogle, *The Story of the Congregational Churches of Dorset*, (Bournemouth, 1899), 125. The church's architects were Poulton and Woodman of Reading. John Hick is believed to have had oversight of the construction, but no documentary evidence has been found to support this.

8. William Gooby (1838-1926) *CYB.*, 1927, 144.

the report of this in the *Dorset County Chronicle* he immediately wrote an appreciative letter to Dron saying that his performance was "unique to this county."<sup>9</sup> Although public readings and lectures on Hardy's novels had been given in other parts of the country, and also in America, Dron's lecture was the first time this had happened in Dorset, in Hardy's own county and his home town. Dron's lecture, therefore, marks the beginning of that mutual awareness between Hardy and the local townspeople which led to Hardy co-operating with the Dorchester amateurs in producing their stage adaptations of his novels and to them becoming nationally known as the Hardy Players.

In March, 1890, William Gooby resigned the pastorate for health reasons, and in December that year J. McClune Uffen became the minister and president of the society which continued until February 1894. Uffen was both active and successful in promoting contacts with the other churches in Dorchester. When, in 1893, his former church in Nottingham urged him to return to them as their minister the Dorchester church secretary, J.T. Cottman, wrote anxiously to Uffen pleading with him not to leave: "The Church gratefully recognises the important position Nonconformity has attained in the Town during your residence." Uffen remained in Dorchester until 1911.<sup>10</sup>

On 9 October 1896, the *Dorset County Chronicle* reported a proposal to re-establish the Dorchester Debating Society which it said had been in existence some years before. The revised society held its first meeting in November 1896 and McClune Uffen presided over its first Annual General Meeting in October, 1897.<sup>11</sup> Where the Congregational Society had been restricted to members of the church, the new society under Uffen's initiative was open to everyone in the town.

The Dorchester Debating Society began to give dramatic readings of plays by Shakespeare, Sheridan, Goldsmith and others to which the public were invited. A public reading of *Twelfth Night* was given in December, 1905, and then, in March 1906, A.H. Evans produced a series of Shakespeare tableaux at the "annual tea and soiree" at the Congregational Church. The following month the society gave an acting performance of *The Taming of the Shrew* in the Corn Exchange in aid of the Dorset County Hospital. The parts of Petruchio and Katherina were played by Evans and his wife, Laura. Among the cast were several other members of the Congregational Church, including H.A. Martin, E.J. Stevens, and W.J. Fare. Also in the cast was T.H. Tilley, who played Grumio, as well as acting as stage manager, designing the sets, and painting most of the scenery.

The following year, in February 1907, they put on two performances of *Twelfth Night*. This was directed by Evans and the first evening was attended

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9. Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, eds., *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, 7 vols. (Oxford 1978-1988), Vol. 6, 112, 24 January, 1890.
  10. Letter, (11 December 1893) in MDCC, 84. For J. McClune Uffen (1845-1923), *CYB*, 1924, 107. *CYB*, 1912, gives the church membership as 179.
  11. *Dorset County Chronicle*, 7 October 1897.

by Thomas Hardy, whose interest in these activities had been aroused by another member of the Society, Harry Pouncy.<sup>12</sup> In February 1906 Pouncy had given a lecture to the Society on the dialect poetry of the Dorset poet William Barnes assisted by Walter Bawler and Edwin Stevens. Then, in October, he staged an entertainment in the Town Hall which he called "A Dorset Day." This included songs and scenes in dialect and a presentation, "A Few Crusted Characters", with scenery by Tilley. William Watkins, who had left Dorchester and was now the Secretary of the Society of Dorset Men in London, invited them to perform there in 1906 and again in 1907.

In February 1908, the writer, A.M. Broadley was invited to give a lecture on "Napoleon's Threatened Invasion of England." The lecture was enlivened by members of the Society acting a scene from *The Trumpet Major*, which showed the way ordinary people at the time feared Napoleon as a dreadful ogre, who was reputed to eat babies alive. Hardy readily gave his approval and help with this and attended the lecture and the performance which was directed by Evans with Tilley as the stage manager. The success of this occasion prompted Evans to seek Hardy's permission to write and produce a fuller stage version of the novel. Following several visits by Evans to Hardy at Max Gate *The Trumpet Major* was presented in the Corn Exchange on 18 November 1908.<sup>13</sup>

Most of the leading players in this performance had been seen in the Shakespeare plays, and they formed the core group of the future productions of the Hardy Players. They were: H.O. Lock, H.A. Martin, W.R. Bawler, E.J. Stevens, R.C. Barrow, T.H. Tilley, T. Pouncy, and W.J. Fare. In particular, Martin, Barrow, Stevens, and Pouncy appeared in nearly every subsequent play. Evans and his wife acted both in this and the next production of *Far From the Madding Crowd* in 1909, before they left Dorchester in 1910.

Hardy's connections and his reputation as the country's greatest living writer, as well as a natural interest in seeing a dramatised version of one of Hardy's most popular novels, brought famous personalities and London critics hot foot to Dorchester to see the performance, which – considering that this was a company of local amateurs – was taken surprisingly seriously. The *Chronicle* reported:

Never before, not even the days, nearly a century ago, when Edmund Keane wore the buskin in Dorchester, has a Dorchester play-house attracted to itself so much notice from London... on Wednesday night... there were to be observed in the front seats a posse of leading dramatic critics who had come down direct from London for the occasion, and the telegraph messenger stood at the front exit ready to dart off to the Telegraph Office with the critiques, to be wired to Town piping

12. Correspondence between Hardy and Pouncy: *The Collected Letters*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, 247 and 279. Pouncy (1870-1925), was the chief reporter of the *County Chronicle*.

13. Evelyn Evans, *My Father Produced Hardy Plays* (Toucan Press, 1964). See also, Keith Wilson, *Thomas Hardy on Stage* (London: MacMillan, 1995), 57. Alexander Meyrick Broadley, (1847-1916) lawyer and writer. WWW. R.920.

hot from their busily-plying pencils. Seldom in a provincial town, and certainly never before in Dorchester, has such attention been given by the London daily and weekly papers to an amateur local production.<sup>14</sup>

*The Times* gave almost a whole column to its review and two days later even devoted a leading article to the Players:

The acting . . . was not that of the professional, but those characters especially who were not afraid of the local accent and colour, like the miller of Mr. Bawler, the Crippleshaw of Mr. Tilley and the Corporal Tullidge of Mr. T. Pouncy were delightful, and the whole evening was much enjoyed by a large audience.<sup>15</sup>

The leading Hardy Players were among the solid citizens of the town. They were business, trade, and professional people, pillars of the local churches and of the civic and social life of the community. Henry Osmond Lock, for example, was the son of a former mayor and a partner in the firm of Locke Read and Locke, who were Hardy's own solicitors. Among those most actively involved who were members of the Dorchester Congregational church were: A.H. Evans and his wife Laura, H.A. Martin, W.R. Bawler, E.J. Stevens, W.J. Fare, Rex and Ethel Fare, Ethel Major, A. Stanton Hill and William Watkins. The family of Gertrude Bugler (the most famous of the Hardy Players) were also members of the church.

The most important personality among the Hardy Players, without whom they probably would not have existed or have been anything like the success they were, was Alfred Herbert Evans. Keith Wilson, the leading authority on stage performances of Hardy's works, calls the chapter on the Hardy Players in his book *Hardy on Stage*, "The Evans Years."<sup>16</sup> It was Evans who persuaded Hardy to allow him to adapt *The Trumpet Major* for the stage, which he directed. He went on to script and direct *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *The Mellstock Quire*, *The Distracted Preacher*, and *The Woodlanders*, as well as directing *The Three Wayfarers* which had been adapted by Hardy himself.

Evans had become a member of the church in 1898.<sup>17</sup> His father was a well-known chemist in Dorchester and Evans took over the business at 33 High East Street. He was elected a member of the Borough Council in 1899, and in spite of having been fined five shillings for serving strychnine without properly recording the sales, he became a magistrate. Evans and his wife appeared in the first two plays: Evans was Festus Derriman in *The Trumpet Major*, and Gabriel Oak in *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Laura Evans's performance as Bathsheba Everdene won high praise from Thomas Hardy, who wrote to his future wife, Florence Dugdale, that "Mrs. Evans'

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14. DCC 28 November 1908.

15. *The Times*, 19 November 1908.

16. Wilson, *op. cit.*, 51-82.

17. MDCC. *op. cit.*, 9. A.H. Evans (1862-1946).

performance (Bathsheba) . . . gave the real B quite startlingly to me, seeming just like my handsome aunt from whom I drew her."<sup>18</sup>

Another member of the church – or at least, of the Sunday School – who took part in the Hardy plays was the Evans's son, Maurice, who made his first appearance on the stage at the age of eight in the part of Teddy Coggan in *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Maurice Evans went on to establish himself as a leading classical actor, first in London, where, in 1935, he had his own Shakespeare season, playing *Richard the Second* and *Hamlet* along with Olivier, Redgrave and Gielgud at the Old Vic before going to New York where he became the foremost classical actor in America.<sup>19</sup>

Henry Austin Martin was an auctioneer. He was a deacon and church secretary as well as the secretary of the Debating Society. He was also the secretary to the Hardy Players and corresponded regularly with Hardy. As a Hardy Player his most important parts were as Bob Loveday in *The Trumpet Major*, Farmer Boldwood in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, a Magistrate in *The Three Wayfarers*, and Giles Winterborne in *The Woodlanders*.<sup>20</sup>

Walter Reginald Bawler was also the church secretary from 1919 to 1935, and a member of the choir. His brother, A.G. Bawler was the church organist. Walter was a solicitor's clerk and deputy registrar. His father was the deputy governor of the Dorchester prison and later became the minister of the Congregational Church at Corfe Castle. Bawler was one of the most talented, as well as one of the most popular and regular of the Players, taking part in twelve of the productions. After his Miller Loveday in *The Trumpet Major* he received a letter from Hardy himself: "I must congratulate you on your impersonation of the Miller, which in the opinion of good judges was very real and lifelike, also very amusing."<sup>21</sup> Among his other parts were Jan Coggan in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Reuben Dewey in *The Mellstock Quire*, John Upjohn in *The Woodlanders*, Timothy Fairway in *The Return of the Native*, and Farmer Springrove in *A Desperate Remedy*.

Edwin John Stevens became a member of the church in 1892. He was clerk to the Commissioners of Income Tax and Land Tax for the divisions of Dorchester and Cerne. He was the founder secretary of the Dorchester Chamber of Commerce from 1916 to 1924, vice-chairman of the Management Committee of the County Hospital and a director of the Gloucester Hotel Company in Weymouth. As a Hardy Player he was Squire Derriman in *The Trumpet Major*, Dick Dewey in *The Mellstock Quire*, Will Latimer in *The Distracted Preacher*, George Melbury in *The Woodlanders*, Damon Wildev in

18. Millgate, *Collected Letters, op. cit.*, Vol. 4, 58. 18 November 1909.

19. For Maurice Evans (1901-1989) WWW Vol. VIII, 239. Also Audrey Williamson, *Old Vic Drama*, (London, 1948) devotes pages 1-29, to Maurice Evans. He was in charge of the Entertainment Section of the U.S. forces in the Pacific during the Second World War, and later became famous in films and television.

20. Henry Austin Martin, d. 1949.

21. *Collected Letters, op. cit.*, Vol. 4. W.R. Bawler (1862-1940).

*The Return of the Native*, Clerk Crickett in *A Desperate Remedy*, and King Mark in *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall*.

Willfred (he was named after his father and uncle who were William and Frederick) John Fare was a grocer and provisions merchant who came from Bath and started his own business in High West Street in 1894, joining the church with his wife the same year. Among other things he was a founder member and later president of the Chamber of Commerce, and also of the Rotary Club. He was elected to the Borough Council and served as Mayor of Dorchester for two consecutive terms in 1931 and 1932. For the church he was superintendent of the Sunday School, secretary of the Church Committee and chairman of the Finance Committee.

He became of chairman of the Dorset Congregational Association in 1923 and again in 1943, and was made a life member. He played Sergeant Stanner in *The Trumpet Major*, and also appeared in *The Distracted Preacher* and in *Wessex Scenes From The Dynasts*. His son Rex walked on as a child in *The Trumpet Major*. He played a messenger and an official in *Wessex Scenes From the Dynasts* in 1916, before serving as an officer in the army at the end of the First World War. In 1923 he played the romantic lead, Edward Springrove, opposite his sister Ethel in *A Desperate Remedy*. He was Sir Andret in *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall* and Felix Clare in *Tess*. He followed his father into the family business of Fare's Stores, was a magistrate and a member of the County Council, and as a church member was a member of the choir, secretary of the Sunday School and church treasurer for twenty-five years.

Ethel Fare also walked on in *The Trumpet Major*. She attended the Casterbridge School in Cornwall Road, where Gertrude Bugler was also a pupil. Ethel then went to work in Bournemouth, returning to Dorchester in 1917. She was given the part of Cytherea Graye in *A Desperate Remedy* when Gertrude Bugler became unavailable and was a considerable success as Iseult the Whitehanded in *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall*.

Mrs. Ethel Major, who took part in ten of the plays, became a member of the Church in 1901. She was the daughter of a gentlemen's outfitter, and after her husband died she ran a teashop in Cornhill where the Hardy Players often came for meetings and rehearsals. Hardy was so impressed with her performance as the mother of *Tess* that he recommended her to play the part in the professional production in London in 1924.<sup>22</sup> Her brother, William Jameson, was also in the first five productions.

A. Stanton Hill was a talented musician. He gave lantern lectures and provided limelight for tableau and presentations. Described as "a man of varied talents"<sup>23</sup> he led the orchestra for most of the Hardy Players' early productions and took a minor role in *The Trumpet Major*. His wife was also a member of the Mutual Improvement Society from its first meeting. Many of the Players –

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22. *Collected Letters, op. cit.*, Vol. 6, 295, 13 December 1924.

23. *Wilson, op. cit.*, 170.

including Mrs. Hill, Mrs. Major, H.O. Lock, A.S. Hill, and W.R. Bawler – were also members of the Dorchester Vocal Association and the Dorchester Madrigal and Orchestral Society.

If most of the leading Hardy Players were members of the Congregational church, there were of course others from outside the membership who made their own significant contribution to their success. Among these were Reg Barrow, an auctioneer's clerk with Henry Duke and Son, who appeared in nearly every production except *The Return of the Native*, and Tom Pouncy, a local builder, who was also in every production except one. Pouncy impressed Hardy with his performance as Tess's father, and he recommended him as well as Mrs. Major for the professional London production.<sup>24</sup>

Next to A.H. Evans the most important member of the company was Thomas Henry Tilley. The Tilleys were well-known locally. Beginning with bicycle shops they went on to establish garages in Weymouth as well as Dorchester. Tilley's father was a monumental mason and had been Mayor of Dorchester. Harry Tilley carried on the business and became Mayor himself in 1908. (There was some suggestion at the time that the first play should have been *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, which would then have had a real Mayor of Casterbridge in its cast.) Harry Tilley also became a magistrate and was for many years the church warden of Holy Trinity. From the start, as well as acting in the plays he was also the stage manager and designed and built the scenery. For this he made a model theatre which he took to Max Gate so that he and Thomas Hardy could work out the sets and scenery together. The *County Chronicle's* report of *The Trumpet Major* was impressed with Tilley's energy and ability:

Mr. Harry Tilley, besides his considerable labour in looking to properties and in the superintendence of the scene shifting, acted the part of Crippleshaw with a mellow wit, often amounting to unctious, which was quite delightful.<sup>25</sup>

After Evans left Dorchester Tilley took over the productions and went on to adapt and direct *The Return of the Native* in 1920, and *A Desperate Remedy* in 1922, as well as the Mummers' play, *The Play of St. George* in 1923.

One of the most important and interesting personalities in the story of the Casterbridge Congregationalists is William Watkins, remembered still in Dorset as the founder Secretary of the Society of Dorset Men. Watkins was responsible for bringing the Hardy Players to London when he invited them to perform for his Society and so made them known to a much wider audience. William Watkins was loved and respected in Dorset because of his absolute devotion to the county: "To him love for the old county was a passion... he evoked the right to be a man of the county by his intense devotion to it."<sup>26</sup> Watkins was not a Dorset native but Welsh. He had been born in Welshpool in 1863 where his father was the manager of a coal merchant's business. He

24. *Collected Letters, op. cit.*, Vol. 6, 295, 13 December 1924.

25. *Chronicle, op. cit.*, 28 November 1908.

26. *Ibid*, 23 April 1925.



came to Dorchester as a lad and immediately attached himself to the Congregational Church. He taught in the Sunday School and, when he was only seventeen, he formed a Dorchester branch of the Band of Hope and became its secretary. He was a competent musician playing both the piano and the 'cello, and frequently played in concerts at the church. During his time in Dorchester he was employed as a clerk in the office of the solicitors, Symonds and Sons. Henry Symonds was the Town Clerk and Registrar of the County Court. Watkins's abilities must have been quickly recognised, because, in 1895, when he was only thirty-two, Sir Robert Edgecombe, who was Chairman of the Balkis Land Company – a South African exploration company with head offices in London – invited him to become the company secretary. Before he left to take up his new post the editor of the *County Chronicle* suggested to him that he should start a Society for Dorset Men in London. Watkins replied that he did not know London, “so give me time to see how many friends I make there.” He quickly established himself, acquiring directorships of several companies, becoming a leading figure in the City and setting up an office in Canada. He became a Fellow and also President of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and wrote a standard text book on company practice. The Society of Dorset Men was formed in 1904, with Watkins as the secretary and the Dorchester-born surgeon, Sir Frederick Treves, as its first President.<sup>27</sup>

The success of *The Trumpet Major* encouraged Evans to follow it in 1909, with an adaptation of *Far From the Maddening Crowd*, extracts from which had already appeared in the Harry Pouncy presentations and at a “Merrie May Fayre” at Holy Trinity church and, at Watkins's invitation, to the Society of Dorset Men in London. Hardy's description of Bathsheba's house in the novel was based on Waterston Manor, just outside Dorchester, and this was Harry Tilley's model for the sets which he designed and built for the play. Hardy was sufficiently impressed with the accuracy of Tilley's scenery and enthusiastic about the production to write to the architect, Morley Horder, who was then working on the manor, (and was himself the son of a Congregational minister, with a fondness for the stage) to recommend him to go and see the play. In reply to a request from Evans, Hardy had written “I agree with pleasure to your performing FFMC before the Dorset Men in London this autumn”.<sup>28</sup> Thus, *Far From the Maddening Crowd* became the first of the complete Hardy plays to be taken there. In his letter to Morley Horder Hardy not only tells him where the play is to be performed but also that “tickets (if any are left)” could be obtained from Mr. W. Watkins, the Secretary of the Society of Dorset Men in London. The play was presented at the Cripplegate Institute on 24 November, 1909.<sup>29</sup> Bringing the Players to London brought the Dorchester amateurs into the

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27. *Ibid.* For Sir Frederick Treves (1853-1923), ODNB Vol. 55, 347. Best known now as the doctor who befriended the “elephant man”, Joseph Merrick.

28. *Letters, op. cit.*, Vol. 4, 46, 17 September 1909.

29. *Ibid.*, 17, 21 April 1909. For Percy Richard Morley Horder (1870-1944), see ODNB Vol. 28, 105.

full glare of publicity. As the Hardy plays became an annual event, in Dorchester, Weymouth, and London, so the leading players found themselves treated as national celebrities. Their photographs were taken as they arrived at Paddington and appeared in national newspapers, and all the plays were generously reported with detailed criticisms of the performances.

*The Mellstock Quire*, an adaptation of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, was the next production in 1910, and this was followed in 1911 with two one act plays. The first of these, *The Three Wayfarers*, was a stage version made by Hardy himself of one of his short stories. The other play was an adaptation by Evans of *The Distracted Preacher*, a story of Dorset smugglers, to make up the programme. A revised performance of *The Trumpet Major* was put on in 1912, this time in London as well as in Dorchester, at the special request of the Society of Dorset Men as this was the only play which had not been performed there.

The next production, in 1913, was *The Woodlanders*, in which the sixteen-year-old Gertrude Bugler made her first appearance with the Players as Marty South. Harry Tilley, who produced the play, had recognised her exceptional talent when he saw her acting the part of an old servant in a scene from *As You Like It* in a school concert. Thomas Hardy also quickly recognised her qualities, saying that she was just the girl he was thinking of when he created Marty.<sup>30</sup> Gertrude's grandfather, Henry Bugler, was, according to Gertrude's sister, Norrie Woodall, "a staunch Congregationalist and a Deacon" at the Dorchester church, which he had joined in 1869.<sup>31</sup> The Bugler family lived in South Street, on the opposite side of the road to the church, and ran a temperance hotel and restaurant. Gertrude possessed the emotional sensitivity and vulnerability to bring to life Hardy's tragic heroines. *The Woodlanders* was the first of the Hardy plays to have a sad rather than a happy ending, but this revealed Gertrude's talent for expressing emotional distress. Reviewing the play, the *Daily News* reported that "the performance will probably be remembered by most people as a setting for the debut of Miss Gertrude Bugler" and went on to suggest that if the Dorchester players "should . . . ever attempt the grand tragedy of *Tess*", then Gertrude Bugler "might . . . achieve the greatest dramatic triumph the Corn Exchange here has known."<sup>32</sup>

*The Woodlanders* was presented in London at the Cripplegate Institute in December 1913. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 brought an end to the production of a Hardy play as an annual event, although Hardy himself brought the Players together again in 1916 to perform some patriotic *Wessex Scenes From the Dynasts* in order to raise money for the British and Russian Red Cross.<sup>33</sup> Hardy's long dramatic poem had already appeared in a full professional production at the Kingsway Theatre in London which ran for

30. Wilson, *op. cit.*, 79.

31. Norrie Woodhall, *Norrie's Tale*, (Wareham: Lullwood, 2006), 84.

32. *News*, 20 November 1913.

33. *Letters, op. cit.*, Vol. 4, 149, to Edmund Gosse, 15 March 1916.

seventy-one performances in December 1914 and January 1915,<sup>34</sup> so there was no incentive for the Hardy Players to bring their much more modest production to the capital.

The War was diverting attention to more urgent matters. William Watkins was given a commission in the General Service Corps and was stationed at Eastbourne. He directed the resources of his society to give help to all those from Dorset serving in the forces.

The men of Dorset serving in the trenches found they had a sort of unknown father looking after them from London... The wounded Dorsets as they came in found themselves met at the terminal and visited in hospital by other men of Dorset... Every Dorset post office had a notice [saying] that if anyone had relatives coming into London wounded, he or she was to communicate with the Dorset Society and it would see them through.<sup>35</sup>

The Hardy Players came together again in Dorchester to give a revised performance of *The Mellstock Quire* in January and February 1918 with Gertrude Bugler as Fancy Day. The success of this revival prompted the *Chronicle* to suggest that the Players should produce a dramatic version of *The Return of the Native* and this became the next production with Gertrude as Eustacia Vye. Harry Tilley's adaptation was presented in Dorchester in November 1920 and at the Guildhall School of Music in London in January 1921. By this time the novelty of the Hardy plays had worn off and the London critics were becoming much harder to please. Even so, they hailed Gertrude as a bright new star, the *Daily Mirror* even compared her with Ellen Terry and Sarah Bernhardt.<sup>36</sup>

Gertrude, who married in 1921 and was soon expecting a child, was unable to appear in the next production, *A Desperate Remedy* and the part of Cytherea Graye was played instead by Ethel Fare. When it was put on in London at the King's Theatre, Covent Garden, in November, 1922, it was heavily criticised as the least successful of the Hardy plays, although it was a personal success for Ethel Fare whom the *Daily News* hailed as "a brilliant newcomer."<sup>37</sup>

The next production, in 1923, attracted considerable interest since this was not another Hardy novel adapted by amateurs for the stage but an original play written by the master himself. Hardy presented the Players "For the first performance on any stage" with a script in verse which he called *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall*. In doing so he was paying these local amateurs an extraordinary compliment and demonstrating his confidence in their ability to perform to his satisfaction what was an unusual and also difficult work. The play was set in "real time" and took just over an hour. Two

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34. Wilson, *op. cit.*, 83f.

35. *Chronicle, op. cit.*, 25 April 1925.

36. *Daily Mirror*, 19 November 1920.

37. *Daily News*, 16 November 1922.

short plays, *O Jan! O Jan! O Jan!* and the *Mummers Play of St. George* were included to make up the programme.<sup>38</sup>

Hardy had wanted Gertrude Bugler to play the part of the Queen, but she was pregnant once more and again unable to perform, so her part was taken by Katherine Hirst, the wife of a serving army officer from the Dorchester barracks, in her only performance with the Players. Ethel Fare played Iseult the Whitehanded with another occasional player, a local doctor, E.W. Smerdon, in the part of Sir Tristram. Ethel was given special coaching by the celebrated actress, Dame May Whitty (best remembered now as the lady who vanishes in Alfred Hitchcock's famous film, *The Lady Vanishes*).<sup>39</sup> A meeting of the Dramatic Sub-committee agreed that Mrs. Major, who had a small part in the chorus, should be allowed to sell chocolates at the performances.

Such was the interest in the play that the first performance from the Corn Exchange was broadcast by the BBC which had then been in existence for less than a year. Pictures of the play show the large microphone suspended over the performers. This was a huge novelty at the time and since the broadcast was to be "radiated from the Bournemouth station only", the press notice of the event declared "Bournemouth may justly claim some measure of notice as the town from which the great drama will be radiated to the largest audience which has ever listened to a Hardy play."<sup>40</sup>

Although the play itself was accorded a mixed critical reception, its leading actors were given considerable praise. Mrs. Hirst received a complimentary letter from Hardy himself. The *Morning Post* wrote that "The play was extremely well put on and very well acted", praising especially Dr. Smerdon and finding that "Miss Fare . . . is a most attractive Iseult . . . a perfect representation of clinging, distraught and none too trustworthy womanhood."<sup>41</sup> She was further praised by a well-known writer, H.W. Massingham, as being "as near an actress of genius as one can look for in a company of zealous amateurs."<sup>42</sup>

In February 1924 the play was put on in London and again received a great deal of attention. One journalist, who was disappointed with the performance but loved the verse and impressed with Ethel Fare, wrote:

My sympathies were for the first time in my life, entirely with Iseult of the White Hand, who was the only member of the cast to show any real emotion or ability. I went round afterwards to see her, and found a young fair-haired girl who told me she had only acted once since leaving school.<sup>43</sup>

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38. *Letters, op. cit.*, Vol. 4. Hardy's correspondence with the theatre director, Harley Granville Barker, 203, 2 July 1923; his publisher, Frederick MacMillan, 211, 18 September 1923 and 27 October 1923, and H. Child, 231, 11 November 1923.

39. Ethel Fare; unpublished ms., "Some Reminiscences of a Hardy Player" (notes for a talk) in the Fare family archive. For Dame May Whitty (1865-1948), *ODNB*.

40. Unidentified press cutting in Ethel Fare's scrapbook in the Fare collection.

41. *The Morning Post*, 29 November 1923.

42. Unidentified cutting in the Fare collection, *op. cit.* For Henry William Massingham (1860-1924), *ODNB*.

43. Fare Collection.

In August 1924 the Dramatic Sub-committee of the Debating Society met in Mrs. Major's restaurant to plan the programme for 1924 and 1925. Harry Tilley reported that Mr. Hardy had "intimated his willingness to allow the Society to produce the play written by him some thirty years ago, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, but which had never been acted." Tilley had already approached Gertrude Bugler and told her that, unless she played Tess, Hardy would not allow the play to be performed. Hardy also insisted on his right to veto other casting decisions he did not like.<sup>44</sup> This was wise. Some of the original actors who had earlier played romantic leads were now getting too old to be credible, although they were still eager to perform.

When the play was presented in Dorchester in November, 1924, the national interest was greater than ever. According to the *Daily Express*, applications for tickets had "poured in from the furthest north of Scotland, from Ireland, from remote corners of Wales, and from every part of England."<sup>45</sup> Among those who came to see the play were James Barrie, T.E. Lawrence, Siegfried Sassoon, E.M. Forster, Augustus John, and Lewis Casson and his wife, Sybil Thorndike.<sup>46</sup>

The press coverage was considerable and Gertrude Bugler attracted most attention. *The Times* journalist Harold Child declared, "Miss Gertrude Bugler . . . was born to act the part of Tess . . . she is so like the Tess of the book in appearance . . . that . . . she might have sat for the portrait of this imaginary girl before she was born."<sup>47</sup> Hardy was so delighted with her that he gave her a signed copy of the book, in which he wrote "To the Impersonator of Tess." At the end of the final performance the president of the Debating Society presented Gertrude with a bouquet and a card "To Tess, from the Hardy Players."<sup>48</sup>

All the Hardy Players came together for an informal reunion in the Council Chamber. Both Hardy and his wife were there, and also Mr. and Mrs. William Watkins. Albert Cox, who had acted in each play from *The Dynasts* in 1916, and played Jonathan Kail in *Tess*, wrote a poem, "To Our Tess" which was recited by Ethel Fare: "Accept dear Tess, in this your crowning test, The heartfelt praise of Those who love you best."<sup>49</sup>

One of those who saw the play was Frederick Harrison, the manager of the Haymarket Theatre in London's West End, who asked Gertrude if she would like to play Tess in London. On this occasion Hardy's wife persuaded Gertrude not to do so, saying that Hardy, who was then eighty-four years old, would

44. MDDLDS *op. cit.*, 25 August 1924.

45. *Daily Express*, 27 November 1924.

46. *Chronicle*, 4 December 1924. Other sources include *Letters, op. cit.*, interviews and reminiscences of the Players, such as: Fare Archive *op. cit.* Rex Fare, "Memories of the Hardy Players" in *The Dorset Year Book 1981* (The Society of Dorset Men), 13. Gertrude Bugler: interview with Martin Dimery, video 1992.

47. *The Times*, 27 November 1924.

48. *Chronicle*, 4 December 1924.

49. *Ibid.* Poem in Fare Archive, *op. cit.*

want to go and see the play there, and she was afraid for his health. In 1929, the year after Hardy died, Florence Hardy encouraged Gertrude to play Tess in a professional production at the Duke of York's Theatre which ran for sixty performances.<sup>50</sup> The theatre critic W. McQueen Pope described her performance then as "a triumph."<sup>51</sup>

*Tess* was the last of the Hardy plays although the Debating Society continued for another fifteen years. In July, 1924, A.H. Evans wrote to Hardy from London asking permission for the Hornsey Players to put on a Hardy play: "They are more able to give a due rendering of subtle acting than my dear friends the old Hardy Players could ever do." Hardy refused his consent, replying that the original agreement was only for Dorset players to act in Dorset and only for the Society of Dorset Men in London, adding that "The Dialect would be a great difficulty except for Wessex players and a drawback to a London performance." He suggested instead that they should put on a "less local play by some London writer."<sup>52</sup>

There were other Congregationalists who were keen to follow Dorchester in performing the Hardy plays. In December, 1924, Hardy received a letter from the secretary of the Guild of the Congregational Church in King's Lynn asking his permission to put on *Under the Greenwood Tree*. This time Hardy agreed, but insisted that he was not giving the right of publication or for the play to be performed by professionals.<sup>53</sup>

In 1926 eight of the Hardy Players gave a live broadcast from Bournemouth which included excerpts from *The Mellstock Quire* and *The Three Wayfarers*, as well as Dorset Songs and Readings from William Barnes. They also performed "The March Song of the Loyal Volunteers of Burton Bradstock, Dorset, during the Great Terror, 1796 to 1805." Ethel Fare, who took part, received some very complimentary fan mail from listeners who were moved by her beautiful speaking voice.

On 19 April 1925, William Watkins visited his old friend Thomas Hardy at Max Gate. After spending the day with Hardy he returned to the King's Arms in Dorchester where he was staying with his wife. Later that night he died of a heart attack. Tributes to him filled the columns of the *County Chronicle* which also gave considerable space to its report of his funeral at the Congregational Church, which was crowded with friends and representatives of the organizations and businesses with which he had been associated, from Dorset to the City of London and Canada. These included the Commander of the Dorset Regiment, the president and many members of the Society of Dorset Men, and

50. Michael Millgate: *Thomas Hardy, A Biography Revisited*, (Oxford, 2004), 515. G. Bugler, *Personal Recollections of T.H.* (Dorchester, 1964), 9-10. Also 1992 video, *op. cit.*

51. W. MacQueen Pope (1888-1960), Theatre historian and critic. Manager of the Duke of York's Theatre 1927-1929, *ODNB*.

52. DCM Collection: Evans to Hardy, 14 July 1924 and Hardy's reply.

53. DCM *op. cit.*, B.E. Brenner to Hardy, 15 December 1924.

many of the Hardy Players. His coffin was draped with the flag of the Society of Dorset Men which had been used at the funeral of Sir Frederick Treves the previous year. Among those who attended his burial, close to where the ashes of Treves had been interred, were H.A. Martin, the secretary of the Dorchester Debating Society, and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hardy. Martin placed a floral tribute on the grave on behalf of his Society and the Hardy Players bearing a quotation from *The Woodlanders*, "He was a good man, and did good things."

In 1926 the Drama Sub-committee decided not to produce a play but to arrange a dramatic reading in March. At the annual meeting in October 1927 Harry Tilley declined to be re-appointed as stage manager and turned to his other interests of architecture and bird watching. E.J. Stevens, Willfred Fare and H.A. Martin followed one another as presidents of the Debating Society, Ethel Fare was appointed honorary secretary but then in 1930 she married a baker, became Mrs. Lloyd, and moved away from Dorchester.

Willfred Fare and Florence Hardy were made magistrates together on the same day in 1924. Willfred was Mayor of Dorchester when the statue to Thomas Hardy was unveiled at the Top O' Town in 1931 and received it on behalf of the town from Sir James Barrie. He also organised the ceremony for the unveiling of the American monument by Hardy's cottage at Bockhampton. On 4 April, 1936, Mrs. Major, her brother, William Jameson, and Edwin Stevens took part in a BBC broadcast of scenes from *Under the Greenwood Tree*. In June 1940 the Hardy Players marked the centenary of Hardy's birth by laying a wreath on the statue. Harry Tilley died in 1944 and Willfred Fare was appointed an Alderman in his place. Gertrude Bugler died in 1992 and there were long obituaries to her in the national papers. Ethel Fare died in 1998 aged 102.<sup>54</sup>

When the members of the Debating Society met at Mrs. Major's restaurant for the last time, on 31 May, 1939, of the eleven people present, nine had appeared in the Hardy plays. Seven of these, H.A. Martin, E.J. Stevens, W.J. Fare, W.R. Bawler, Mrs. Major, Miss M. Dawes, and Mrs. Lloyd (Ethel Fare), were members of the Congregational Church. Of these, Martin, Stevens, Fare, Bawler and Ethel Fare, together with Henry Lock and Harry Tilley who were also present, had taken part in the very first production of *The Trumpet Major* in 1908.

JOHN TRAVELL

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54. MDDLSD *op. cit.*, Fare Archives, *op. cit.* Wilson, *op. cit.* p.190.

## REVIEWS

***Calvinism and Communion in Victorian England. Studies in Nineteenth-Century Strict-Communion Baptist Ecclesiology.* By Geoffrey R. Breed. Springfield, Missouri: Particular Baptist Press, 2008. Pp. xii + 646. £30.00 post free from the author at 14 Cleave Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 4AY. ISBN 1-888514-29-9.**

Over the years Geoffrey Breed has served scholars and others well by the research materials he has brought to light. Many who have no Baptist ancestors, and perhaps a few who keep quiet about them, have been helped by his booklet, *My Ancestors were Baptists* (4th edn., 2002). Then there is *Particular Baptists in Victorian England* (2003), which tells the story of those strict communion Baptists who united with Arminians in the Baptist Union and supported the Baptist Missionary Society.

In the present substantial volume, beautifully produced and offered by the author at half price, Mr. Breed presents documents illustrative of the tensions-over communion which flared up between Particular and Strict Baptists in the first quarter of Victoria's reign. The backbone of the volume comprises the Minutes of the London Association of Strict Baptist Ministers and Churches, of which Mr. Breed has the only legible copy, and the Minutes of the Ramsgate Chapel Case of 1862. In addition there are Circular Letters of the London Strict Baptist Associations on "The scriptural constitution of the churches of Jesus Christ" (1846), "The privileges and obligations of church membership" (1852), and "Christian experience" (1853); and seven ecclesiological pamphlets on such matters as strict communion, articles of belief and Baptist Associations. To the Ramsgate Minutes are added articles on the case drawn from *The Times*, *The Primitive Church Magazine*, and *The Gospel Herald*. The third of three appendices is entitled, "William Hatcher's conversations with C. H. Spurgeon on the subject of church communion and the Strict Baptists of London." The author is Terry Wolever, who also transcribed the LASBMC Minutes and, with Gary Long, is co-publisher of this collection.

In a nutshell (and some of these saints were hard nuts), supporters of open communion endorsed the argument of Robert Hall (1764-1831), while the strict communionists followed Joseph Kinghorn (1766-1832) and William Norton (1812-1890). The latter urged that to forfeit the belief that the Lord's table was open to baptized believers only was to forfeit the major Baptist distinctive. The case concerning Cavendish Chapel, Ramsgate, was brought by one of its generous benefactors, Mary Spencer. She took the Revd B. C. Etheridge to court, contending that the Trust Deed of 1841 was to be construed as requiring closed communion. The judgment was that the Deed was a Particular Baptist one, and that therefore the church meeting had the right to determine communion practice.

The book opens with Mr. Breed's lucid account of the LASBMC's ten-year history (1846-1855). It is a tale of frequently clear convictions and sometimes



prickly persons. Not all who wished to join the Association were admitted, and some were expelled. Among the latter was Br. Rothery. He had dared to administer communion in the open communion church at Islington. As if this were not enough, he had withheld £3/0/0 from the Association for an extended period. Mr. Breed remarks, "A cynic may be tempted to think that the loss of £3 weighed more heavily with the committee than did the communion question". The problem of duty faith reared its head, and this was a factor in the formation of the London New Association of strict communionists in 1848. None of the internal tensions suffices to explain the demise of the London associations in Breed's view. On the contrary, "The failure of these associations was caused by their limited vision . . . hardly any concern or responsibility for the struggling masses of London was ever shown".

The carefully transcribed Minutes of the LASBMC are a mine of information concerning bye-laws, membership, finances, ministers and activities. The addresses given under the Association's auspices largely concern Calvinistic doctrinal points, though Br. Pepper gave a no doubt spicy lecture on "Priestly assumptions – contrary to the Christian system." It is not recorded how many in the land trembled when the Circular Letter of 20 October 1846 declared that "Ecclesiastical establishments, founded in human policy, sustained by human authority, acknowledging another headship than that of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whatever name distinguished, must eventually be overthrown". And which local church today would not be gingered up if it heeded the injunction in the Third Circular Letter:

A little more contrivance in the head,  
A little less indulgence in the bed,  
A little more devotion in the mind,  
Would quite prevent you being so behind?

D. Griffiths, writing on articles of belief, was eager to observe that those who endorse Chillingworth's slogan, "The Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of protestants", while they thereby renounce the authority of tradition and abjure the "dogmas of popery", do not establish their own orthodoxy.

Enough has been said to whet the appetite for this book which, as well as being a valuable research resource, is more than a little entertaining. Its ease of use is greatly facilitated by the provision of indices of persons, biblical persons, subjects, churches (geographically arranged), and biblical churches; and a number of illustrations and reproductions of some very neat handwriting further enhance the attractiveness of the volume.

It would be an overstatement to say that these Strict Baptists invariably thought theologically; but a number of them thought more theologically about the Lord's Supper in relation to baptism and church membership than some in other traditions, either then or now, and we should be grateful to Geoffrey Breed for bringing them to our attention.

***Journey of a Lifetime.* By John and Norah Morgans. Published privately, and obtainable from the authors, (Panygelynnen, New Chapel, Llanidloes SY18 6LH). printed by Cambrian Printers, Aberystwyth, 2008. Pp. vii + 653. £10.00.**

John Morgans, a retired minister of the United Reformed Church, has kept a diary from the age of twelve to the present day. From that diary he and his wife have compiled a monumental work, giving a vivid picture not only of their ministry but also of Wales and the world from 1940 to the present day.

John is a child of the South Wales valleys and has spent the whole of his ministry within Wales. The record, however, is far from parochial. He trained for the ministry not only in Swansea but also in Mansfield College, Oxford, and Hartford Seminary in the United States. He thus gained an early exposure to situations, cultures and theologies other than his own, and his ministry in Wales has had world-wide and ecumenical dimensions.

There are six chapters in this enormous book, reflecting John's life at school in the Rhondda, at the various colleges where he trained, and his ministries in Llanidloes, Swansea, Penrhys and as Moderator for Wales. Each chapter gives a fascinating insight. The achievements of his ministries come through the text in an understated fashion. And considerable achievements they have been. In Llanidloes he initiated ecumenical house groups with an overtly theological agenda, one or two of which still meet forty years later. In Swansea a brief ministry helped the church at Manselton to move from a nineteenth to a twenty-first-century ethos and mission. As Moderator for Wales he fostered all kinds of new developments took place both within the Synod of the United Reformed Church and ecumenically at a time of rapid change. And at Penrhys, on the mountain-top between the Rhondda Fawr and the Rhondda Fach, he and Norah accomplished what was arguably his most effective ministry, retrieving a fragile ecumenical congregation very close to extinction and helping it to become one of the few success stories among churches in deprived housing estates in the country. During their fifteen years there not only the church but the community came alive and grew in confidence. Both John and Norah were appointed OBE as tangible acknowledgement for this combined ministry. But the true effects are to be seen in the lives, and the life of a community, that were transformed by the Gospel during their time in Penrhys.

Three quarters of this book is taken up with a selection of entries from John's daily diary. He acknowledges that he has written over five million words. The process of selection must have been exacting. Should it have been even more rigorous? The finished product, enlivened by nearly one hundred photographs, is extremely interesting, but it is a labour of love to read through all the entries, and the resulting book requires an act of physical endurance to hold in order to read it. This is a minor criticism of what is an achievement which deserves its place in any library of church and community history.

*Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture: A Congregational Study in Innovation.* By Mathew Guest. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007. Studies in Evangelical History and Thought. Pp. xxvi + 263. ISBN 978-1-84227-440-8.

The church of St Michael-le-Belfry, York, has been an evangelical flagship within and beyond the Church of England for almost half a century. From the appointment of David Watson to the congregation's former home in the then failing parish church of St Cuthbert's in 1965, the church has experienced striking numerical growth, has seen a series of high-profile incumbents and has witnessed a remarkable engagement with several waves of evangelical and charismatic renewal, including the "signs and wonders" ministry of John Wimber and the so-called Toronto Blessing. In the present work Mathew Guest undertakes a study of congregational culture at St Michael-le-Belfry and at its offshoot at St Cuthbert's (a centre of alternative worship now known as "Visions"). He seeks to use these linked but contrasting congregations as a case study of evolving evangelicalism in its relationship to contemporary culture.

Perhaps the greatest strength of this excellent book is its integration of observation, analysis and theory. Mathew Guest is well read in the literature of congregational studies and of the sociology of religion, and he is able to explain the models of Berger, Hunter and Smith clearly and concisely to the non-expert. He also understands the history of evangelicalism, in Great Britain and the United States, and so is able to set the story of St Michael-le-Belfry in its wider context in the unfolding story of this complex phenomenon. Indeed, the first two chapters of this book provide a very helpful summary and critique of recent work on evangelicalism and culture.

Mathew Guest's familiarity with methodology, however, is complemented by thorough fieldwork. Through immersion in the life of the congregations, structured interviews and questionnaires he probes the inner life of the church, the strategies of its leaders and the attitudes of its members. The research techniques are described in detail in the first of two appendices. It may be noted here that Guest is always a respectful and careful observer, and also that the leadership and members of St Michael-le-Belfry and of "Visions" seem to have been both unfailingly generous with their time and very honest in their responses to his enquiries.

So, what are Mathew Guest's conclusions? He charts the evolution of evangelicalism in Great Britain and North America since the 1960s, and notes how waves of renewal have posed challenges for the congregational cohesion of St Michael-le-Belfry. He observes and dissects a leadership strategy which manages diversity and handles a surprising degree of cultural accommodation (fairly open attitudes, for instance, on the fate of the unsaved, on other faiths and on the role of women) by deliberately emphasising unity in its public pronouncements and by concentrating on uncontentious Christian themes while avoiding moral prescription. He analyses the almost post-evangelical ethos of "Visions", a group strikingly different since its inception in the early 1990s in almost every

way from its parent congregation. He portrays an evangelicalism which, while sustaining a traditional conservative rhetoric of cultural separation, is in fact far more sensitive to cultural shifts and far more open to cultural accommodation than might be deduced from the public statements of church leaders.

Guest's observations fit well with the broad interpretation of evangelicalism and its relationship to culture offered by David Bebbington. They also hint at tensions generated by that strand of evangelicalism which fears cultural capitulation and loss of distinctiveness. For students of religion, for historians of evangelicalism and not least for those engaged in pastoral ministry, this is an insightful and important book, well observed, clearly argued and highly accessible.

MARTIN WELLINGS

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Anyone interested in reviewing one of the above volumes should contact the Reviews Editor. Contact details are on the back cover of the *Journal*. (email: r.pope@bangor.ac.uk)