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# Proceedings

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### REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE: WESLEYAN FEMALE PUBLIC MINISTRY IN THE GENERATION AFTER 1791

THE development during the eighteenth century of a female preaching ministry in the Methodist tradition is reasonably well-known. Scholars have documented the activities of women like Mary Fletcher and Sarah Crosby against the background of the gradual, often reluctant, acceptance by John Wesley of their 'extraordinary' call. This is not to say that the challenge posed by this important aspect of early Methodism has been completely answered - a great deal remains to be done if the women of the eighteenth century are to receive the scholarly and even popular attention that their achievements warrant. Mary Fletcher for example, the first woman to receive John Wesley's formal permission to preach has never been the sole subject of an academic study. Her life and ministry was remarkable in its complexity and achievements yet she remains largely unknown outside of specialist circles.

This comparative ignorance of the female contribution to the wider aspects of Methodist spirituality and the public work is even more starkly displayed in the immediate post-Wesley period. In studies of Methodism in the generation after 1791 women tend to slip into the background. The leadership of the Wesleyan movement looked askance at the public ministry of ageing pioneers like Fletcher and Crosby and even more so, at younger women who tried to follow their example. The cold winds of masculine disapproval that were sweeping through the higher reaches of Wesleyan Methodism with regard to a gender that made up the majority of the movement is symbolized by the following response of the 1803 Conference to the question 'Should women be permitted to preach among us?'

We are of opinion that, in general, they ought not. 1. Because a vast majority of our people are opposed to it. 2. Because their preaching does

not at all seem necessary, there being a sufficiency of preachers...But if any woman among us thinks she has an extraordinary call from God to speak in public ( and we are sure it must be an extraordinary call that can authorize it), we are of opinion she should in general address her own sex, and those only. And upon this condition alone should any woman be permitted to preach in any part of our connexion; and when so permitted, it should be under the following regulations - 1. They shall not preach in the circuit where they reside, until they have obtained the approbation of the Superintendent and a Quarterly meeting. 2. Before they go into any other circuit to preach, they shall have a written invitation from the Superintendent of such circuit, and a recommendatory note from the Superintendent of their own circuit.

This pronouncement is often seen as a signature on the death sentence of female public ministry, at least in the Wesleyan tradition, until its gradual re-emergence towards the end of the nineteenth century. However, a close examination of the Conference statement suggests a more complex picture. It is carefully, even delicately phrased; there is no suggestion of a formal ban, but rather close regulation of an activity that many people found objectionable. If Conference was correct in stating that female ministry was unpopular, why did the ministerial leadership not simply bar female preaching in its entirety? Instead, it placed obstacles in the path of its exponents with the hope that they would simply abandon their activities.

There is no doubt that there was genuine antipathy towards preaching women. It was at least debatable whether the practice was scriptural and that particular discussion continues to this day. Female preaching had never been common in England except among eccentric groups like the Quakers, and in more recent times, the Methodists, and it is in this area of potential embarrassment that the key to the Conference action can perhaps be found. In the twelve years since John Wesley died, the movement that he had founded had expanded by dramatic leaps and bounds. Membership in Britain and Ireland in 1791 stood at just over 74,000; by 1803 this figure had risen to almost 121,000 and in 1814 passed the 200,000 mark. Methodism could no longer be dismissed as a mere sect clinging to the coat tails of established Anglicanism. It was instead a dynamic new denomination that had even succeeded in some areas in replacing the Anglicans as the dominant religious presence and was starting to take on the appearance of an alternative establishment.

As the Methodists completed this transition from revival movement to denomination, they quietly shed important aspects of their early identity. Open-air preaching for example had largely died out even before Wesley passed from the scene, while the more charismatic brand of Christianity that had once been so distinctively

Wesleyan was fast losing favour with the national leadership.<sup>1</sup> The revivalist torch was instead passed to non-Wesleyan Methodist offshoots such as the Primitives and the Bible Christians. It is no accident that both of these groups became well-known for employing female preachers at precisely the time that the Wesleyans were restricting their freedom of action. Far from offending public opinion, the ministry of women like Catherine O'Bryan and Elizabeth Smith proved popular and particularly valuable in breaking into new areas. The most likely explanation therefore for the Wesleyan aversion to female preachers after 1800 is that their use was viewed as incompatible with Methodism's new place on the denominational top-table.

The probability that Conference was not acting in response to public opinion has significant implications. There has always been tension between the national leadership and local societies and the several secessions and controversies that plagued Methodism in the first half of the nineteenth century stemmed largely from grassroots reaction against what was seen as ministerial autocracy. The attempt by Conference to suppress female public ministry was not welcome or entirely successful in every area of the country. Many women and their male supporters quietly ignored official disapproval and Conference often quietly ignored their defiance.

This forms the rather shadowy background to the continuation of female ministry in the generation after Wesley. The rest of this paper will discuss a specific number of areas including the activities of the women themselves, the response to their outreach and the significance or otherwise of this much neglected aspect of Methodist studies.

At this juncture it is important to make the point that this paper will not be restricted to preaching as an expression of public ministry. There is no doubting the significance of this aspect, but it is important not to allow one activity to overshadow examination of other areas of the public work. It will be shown that while preaching was certainly the most controversial activity engaged in by women, and the one that was specifically targeted by Conference, other expressions of ministry most notably public prayer, were also regarded with suspicion. This paper will therefore seek to address the wider scope of female ministry during an important transitional period in the evolution of the Wesleyan movement.

There was a very select group of women who do not appear to have been unduly affected by the restrictions imposed in 1803, namely those individuals who had received John Wesley's personal authority to preach. They are not mentioned specifically by Conference but clearly it would have been difficult to limit their freedom of action. The most important of these was Mary Fletcher. Born in 1739 into the wealthy

<sup>1</sup> For example, 'After Wesley's death. . . institutional survival was beginning to take precedence over the unpredictability of grace.' Chilcote *She offered them Christ* (Nashville TN, 1993) p116.

Bosanquet family, Mary had devoted herself to the evangelical cause since her teenage years.<sup>2</sup> In 1763 she founded a Christian community in Leytonstone, displaying at a very early age a capacity for independent action and qualities of leadership.<sup>3</sup> Mary was at the centre of a group of important Methodist women - Sarah Ryan, who seems to have attracted controversy and admiration in equal measure, was a member of the Leytonstone community while Sarah Crosby was a frequent visitor and close friend. Other women like Jane March and Elizabeth Ritchie were not as closely affiliated, but corresponded regularly and appear to have regarded Fletcher as a 'first among equals'.<sup>4</sup>

One of the features of Mary's personal ministry was her deliberate grooming of younger women for positions of spiritual responsibility. One of the earliest of these acolytes was Sarah Lawrence, the niece of Sarah Ryan. She was raised by Fletcher from early childhood and was subjected to a strenuous regime of prayer, self-denial and strict discipline.<sup>5</sup> Lawrence was leading classes and praying in public from a young age and was certainly exhorting, if not preaching.<sup>6</sup> After she died in 1800, her place as Fletcher's live-in companion, and general right-hand woman was taken by Mary Tooth. Like Lawrence, Tooth led classes and bible study groups and she was certainly preaching in public years after the 1803 resolution.<sup>7</sup> Mary Tooth considered that she had been called by God to serve as Fletcher's disciple<sup>8</sup> - she rejected at least two offers of marriage citing her vocation as the reason.<sup>9</sup> After Fletcher died in 1815, Tooth continued her legacy until her own death in 1843 and even tried to find a younger woman who could be trained to take her place.

Mary Fletcher was a source of inspiration for women around the country. Her personal papers and those of Mary Tooth contain correspondence from hundreds of individuals who looked on her as a 'Mother in Israel' and a shining example of what women could achieve. It was not just women either who regarded Fletcher as rather special:

<sup>2</sup> Ms autobiography of Mary Bosanquet (MAM Fl. 23)

<sup>3</sup> [Mary Bosanquet], *Letter of a Gentlewoman to the Rev. John Wesley* (London: Sold at the Foundery, 1764).

<sup>4</sup> See the correspondence of Jane March and Elizabeth Ritchie-Mortimer with Mary Fletcher (MAM Fl.5.2 and MAM Fl. 6.6, MCA.)

<sup>5</sup> Ms account of Sarah Lawrence by Mary Fletcher (MAM Fl.24, MCA). For Fletcher's educational methods, see her *Letter of a Gentlewoman*, pp. 11-13.

<sup>6</sup> For example, 'She began meetings in different places on which numbers attended. Her method was after singing and prayer, to read some life, experience or some awakening author - stopping now and then to explain it and apply it as the Lord gave her utterance', Ms account of Sarah Lawrence, p.372.

<sup>7</sup> Fletcher- Tooth collection, MCA.

<sup>8</sup> John Radford to Mary Tooth, ALS, 27 April 1832, Reference MAM F1.6.2.16, MCA

<sup>9</sup> William Jones to Mary Tooth, ALS, 1 September 1820, Reference MAM F1.4.6C.1, MCA and the correspondence of Benjamin Longmore, Reference MAM F1.4.13.1-4, MCA.

several Wesleyan itinerants owed their conversion to her ministry and many ministers who had contact with her while stationed in Mary's circuit of Madeley, were citing her example in their sermons, years and sometimes decades after her death.<sup>10</sup>

Mary Fletcher posed an insurmountable obstacle for anyone foolish enough to try to impose Conference authority in her vicinity. Not only had she received Wesley's written permission to preach, but she was also the widow of the legendary Anglican evangelical John Fletcher. She had friends in high places - her brother Samuel was a governor of the Bank of England and an advisor to the government on fiscal matters. Of Samuel's sons, one followed in his father's footsteps to become a prominent merchant banker and chairman of the Exchequer Bill Office.<sup>11</sup> Samuel's younger son Sir John Bernard Bosanquet was one of Britain's most senior judges, a Privy Councillor and Standing legal advisor to the East India Company and to the Bank of England.<sup>12</sup> There had been tension between Mary and her family, particularly during her early life, but she was able to rely on her brothers and nephews for financial and legal advice as well as other support.

Mary displayed her own strength of character in several ways - after her husband died in 1785, she obtained the privilege of appointing the curate of the parish.<sup>13</sup> It was her name that was on the title deed of the Madeley Barn Methodist chapel and she nominated the trustees. This meant that preachers spoke there with her sanction, not that of Conference. It would be no exaggeration to say that in the thirty years between 1785 and 1815, Mary Fletcher dominated Methodism and the Church of England in the parish of Madeley, which must be regarded as a unique situation. Needless to say, she admitted no restriction on her personal ministry, preaching and leading religious meetings until a short time before her death.

Despite Mary Fletcher's influence and the strength of her personal position, even she appears to have felt the effects of Conference hostility. After her husband's death, she rarely ventured outside of Madeley and while this was in part at least a product of advancing years and failing health, the much younger Mary Tooth does not appear to have preached outside of Shropshire or the adjacent country of Herefordshire either. It seems that Fletcher deliberately concentrated her efforts on the one place where she could certainly defy the national leadership. Fletcher and Tooth were supported by many of the circuit stewards, local preachers and the society membership: in 1828 after 'official' Methodism began to

<sup>10</sup> For example, John Radford to Mary Tooth, ALS, 27 April 1832, Reference MAM F1.6.2.16, MCA

<sup>11</sup> DNB

<sup>12</sup> DNB

<sup>13</sup> T.Alexander Seed, *John and Mary Fletcher: Typical Methodist Saints* (n.d.), p.109. See also the correspondence of Melville Horne with Mary Fletcher (MAM F1.3.1.3)

chip away at the Madeley stronghold, one of the ministers, Edward Sumner, tried to prevent Tooth from preaching. The local preacher J. Evans and chapel trustee Richard Williams reassured her that Sumner's behaviour would not go unpunished.<sup>14</sup> It is not spelt out how this would be achieved, but it is not difficult to identify ways in which local pressure could be applied. Circuits were responsible for providing ministerial accommodation and for the payment of financial allowances beyond the very bare stipend of £12 per annum.<sup>15</sup> An itinerant who offended local opinion could find that refurbishing the manse or providing additional support for his wife and children was no longer high on the list of priorities. Also, while Conference had ultimate responsibility for allocating stations, societies frequently petitioned for ministers to be retained or replaced.<sup>16</sup>

Ministers sent to Madeley had to walk a fine line between upholding discipline and appeasing local sentiment and this was balanced by Fletcher's own careful handling of the situation. In her relations with Methodism outside of the parish, she was the soul of discretion. Her manuscript sermons show clear signs of being edited for publication, but they are not described as 'sermons' and were never in fact published. In her printed works of the period, her preaching is not referred to and even the letters are circumspect as to the detail of other activities - there is no doubt that she was preaching and encouraging others to do so, but it is rarely spelled out in the documents. This may be seen as a failure of leadership on Mary's part - she was probably the one woman who could have represented a serious challenge to the Wesleyan hierarchy, but she remained publicly silent. It is not known why Mary adopted this stance - one reason was probably her realization that this was a battle she could not win on a national level and such was the bitter in-fighting within Methodism at the time, she would not have wished to add to the turmoil.

There is evidence also that she had a long-term objective in view. Her papers and those of her husband John Fletcher and companion Mary Tooth represent the largest single collection in the Methodist archives, greater in size even than the Wesley holdings. It consists of literally thousands of letters, diaries, spiritual autobiographies and devotional writings. These manuscripts were carefully preserved and in the case of devotional documents, edited over twenty years so that often several versions of the same document survive. The collection spans the period from the 1760s until 1843 and is a remarkable resource, not just for the insight it provides into the Revival in Madeley but for many other places. The impression that is given is that Mary was ensuring that the detail of

<sup>14</sup> J. Evans to Mary Tooth, ALS, 31 July 1828, Reference MAM F1.2.14.4, MCA

<sup>15</sup> A. Kingsley Lloyd, *The Labourer's Hire: The Payment and Deployment of the Early Methodist Preachers (1744-1813)*, (Bunbury: Wesley Historical Society Lecture 34, 1968), pp.14-18.

<sup>16</sup> For example, John Radford to Mary Tooth, ALS, 14 July 1814, Reference MAM F1.6.2.2, MCA



her ministry and that of the men and women with whom she collaborated would be preserved for a future more receptive generation. The very existence of the Fletcher-Tooth papers was in one sense Mary's most potent act of resistance to the male-dominated Methodism of her day.

Other veterans of the eighteenth century also continued their public ministry. Sarah Mallet, also known as Mrs Sarah Boyce travelled with John Wesley during the 1780s but largely vanished from the secondary record after 1791.<sup>17</sup> In fact after her husband's death in 1813 she resumed regular preaching and delivered her last recorded sermon at the beginning of the 1840s.<sup>18</sup> Boyce's particular area of activity was her native East Anglia, but she was also labouring in Wesleyan chapels in London in 1828<sup>19</sup> and Birmingham in 1830.<sup>20</sup> She shared lodgings and a joint ministry with Martha Gregson, the wife and daughter of Anglican ministers.<sup>21</sup> This formidable duo preached in Wesleyan chapels, which must have been done with the acquiescence of the circuit minister despite the fact that female preaching to mixed congregations had been banned since the 1803 Conference, more than a quarter century previously.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, preaching formed only one aspect of the evangelism of women like Boyce and Fletcher. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries public prayer formed an equally significant part of Wesley's ministry of the 'Word'. Extempore prayer in fact lent itself to outbursts of spiritual passion in a way that often exceeded that associated with preaching; it was not confined to any specific text and did not depend on oratorical skill. Prayer was also more conducive to audience participation as the spirit moved both speaker and listener and ecstatic interruptions tended to be more acceptable in a praying than a preaching context. Women in the generation after Wesley appear to have found a particular niche in this area. Ann Cutler earned considerable fame in the North of England as 'Praying Nanny' because of the power of her public prayer and general holiness of life.<sup>22</sup> She visited many circuits with great effect, and was often instrumental in the promotion of revivals, especially the early stirrings of the great Yorkshire outbreak of 1792-1796.<sup>23</sup> Cutler worked in association with the Wesleyan minister William Bramwell, the prime mover of events in Yorkshire. Eye-witness accounts of the revival show that Cutler was not the only woman

<sup>17</sup> David East, "Lightly Esteemed by Men - The Last Years of Sarah Mallet, One of Mr Wesley's Female Preachers," *Methodist History* 42:1 (October 2003): pp58-63.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.59, p.63.

<sup>19</sup> Sarah Boyce to Mary Tooth, ALS, 12 October 1828, Reference MAM F1.1.12.1, MCA

<sup>20</sup> Martha Gregson and Sarah Boyce to Mary Tooth, ALS, 21 September 1830, Reference MAM F1.3. 7.4, MCA

<sup>21</sup> For example, Sarah Boyce to Mary Tooth, ALS, 13 March 1830, Reference MAM F1.1.12.2, MCA

<sup>22</sup> William Bramwell, *A Short Account of the Life and Death of Ann Cutler ...* (Sheffield: Printed for John Smith, 1796).

<sup>23</sup> Bramwell, *Ann Cutler*, pp.19-22.

involved. In the summer of 1795, Miss Rhodes wrote to Mary Fletcher that 'Mrs Eliza Beecroft and I with Ellen Bramwell [wife of William Bramwell] . . . lately spent a fortnight near Ripley beyond Harrogate. We had prayer meetings in some of the villages around that place, every night the Lord was with us and gave us many proofs. . . several found peace and some were brought into fuller liberty. The going out in this way occasionally is what I never thought of doing, but I believe the Lord bids me to it and blesses me in it. . . A dear friend. . . reasoned with me upon the consequences, but I leave these with the Lord.'<sup>24</sup>

Another woman active in Yorkshire at the same time was Elizabeth Dickinson. She was at the centre of a very public and extremely popular local ministry, but her name is barely mentioned in the printed sources.<sup>25</sup> This manuscript account of her remarkable life was sent by Elizabeth Mortimer to Mary Fletcher:

She really was a raw, ignorant girl who lived within a month of her 18th year without God and had little or no concern about spiritual things. About the middle of July 92 she was seized with a complaint which alarmed her. She felt in danger of perishing everlastly, and crying to God for mercy, found her fears removed ... From this time she recovered and on Monday the 21 August. . . feeling an uncommon drowsiness, fell into a state of entire insensibility . . . She did not appear to breathe or her pulse to beat. . . then coming to herself again said that she had been out of the body, and had seen heaven and hell. She told the persons around her, that an angel with a beautiful countenance and raiment white and stunning took her to heaven where she saw the Saviour in glory...He appeared to have a crown upon his head and a palm of victory in his hand and a vesture of gold. The glory that beamed from him was so great, she could not bear to behold it, but he showed her the print of the nails and the place where the soldier pierced his side.

She was then taken to hell and showed the dreadful state of the damned...From this time she believed herself called to publish what she had seen and did on every occasion... Out of curiosity many invited her to come and tell her trance. Thousands often assembled and she spoke to them in the open air. Her constant message was calling sinners to repentance and telling them, if they did not fly to, and know the Saviour, the dreadful place she had seen. . . would be their portion...[she] used to sing, pray and exhort in a manner that has been of real use to many.

<sup>24</sup> Miss Rhodes to Mary Fletcher, ALS, 4th July 1795, Reference MAM F1.6.5.2, MCA

<sup>25</sup> There is short but valuable account of Dickinson's ministry in Zachariah Taft, *Holy Women...* (London: Published for the author, 1825), 2:pp.181-187. This work was in itself extremely rare until a modern reprint by the Methodist Publishing House. Dickinson is also referred to by Paul Chilcote in *She offered them Christ* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), p.112.

Many were much prejudiced against her. The assistant preacher in our circuit refused her a ticket to come to a love feast, but she went evenly on, bearing all the opposition she met with in the spirit of meekness, constantly affirming she dared not hold her tongue but must speak wherever the Lord opened a door. She used to say, the Lord had shown her when he would take her to himself, but I do not hear she ever told anyone when it would be. She really seems to have lived a long time in a short one and though she is thought to have died a martyr to speaking, singing and praying, yet she finished well and few persons, who have not lived quite twelve months in the Kingdom of Grace have been made such a blessing among the unawakened as Elizabeth Dickinson. Numbers have been stirred up by her ( as an instrument) to seek the one thing needful. . Last June she had a bad cold and some fever, but the people about her would have her speak to some thousands assembled to hear her. She complied and the consequence was a high fever ensued which in about a fortnight took her home to God...<sup>26</sup>

In this account, we see why the Wesleyan hierarchy would have felt uncomfortable with these strange females. Dickinson was young, relatively uneducated and had received little formal religious instruction. She relied largely on divine revelation and had even made house calls on the Almighty - a privilege that few Wesleyan ministers could claim. She had no interest in Conference regulations and cared little about male approval of her activities - she does not even appear to have claimed to be a Methodist and because she worked in the open air was not subject to discipline. Her main appeal was to members of the Wesleyan movement and this would have disturbed the ministerial leadership on several levels. Dickinson's ministry was on the one hand a considerable asset, as it drew people into society membership, but on the other it was theologically dangerous. Also this was a time when Britain was at war with revolutionary France and mass public meetings were frowned upon by the secular authorities; this would in itself have raised the fears of the Methodist establishment. The activities of women like Dickinson and Cutler would have done little to moderate the feelings of Wesleyan ministers that women were too emotional and unstable to be trusted with the public work.

Not all women existed on the edge of the movement like Elizabeth Dickinson, or were as discreet as Mary Fletcher. Others tackled the Conference head on, taking the battle into the Wesleyan mainstream. Mary Barritt (1772-1851) was the best known female preacher of her generation. She enjoyed a remarkably successful ministry for over fifty years and even attended Conferences in Leeds and Manchester,

<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Ritchie/Mortimer to Mary Fletcher, ALS, 13 September 1793, Reference MAM F1.6.6.26, MCA.

chiefly to meet itinerants who were sympathetic to her cause.<sup>27</sup> Among the converts made during her preaching tours of the 1790s were the future well-known ministers Thomas Jackson, Robert Newton and Joseph Taylor. In 1827 Mary went so far as to publish an account of her work as an evangelist.<sup>28</sup> This was a woman who saw no reason to hide her light under a bushel, whatever Conference thought.

In 1802 she married the prominent minister Zachariah Taft and he proved an outspoken advocate of Mary's right to preach. The two exercised what amounted to a joint preaching ministry in Zachariah's Canterbury circuit and Mary's first text on stepping into the pulpit could not have been more pointed: "Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on".<sup>29</sup> In the early part of 1803 just months before Conference issued its edict against female preaching, Zachariah published a spirited defence of the practice and this was one of the items that came up for discussion in the assembly of his fellow ministers.<sup>30</sup> Not in the least part discouraged, he followed this up with a number of other works that established him as the principal male champion of female ministry and a thorn in the side of Conference. Zachariah paid a personal price for his audacity. A gifted preacher and capable minister, he had the necessary qualities to aspire to the senior positions in the Wesleyan Church, but he never fulfilled this potential. He missed out on postings to high-profile circuits like Manchester and London City Road - appointments that would have indicated a career on the rise and he was never elected to the Legal Hundred.

There are many questions that remain to be answered with regard to Wesleyan female ministry in the first half of the nineteenth century. For example, we have no idea how prevalent the practice was. Current research indicates that there were specific areas where women made an impact. The most prominent were Shropshire, East Anglia and the border area between Lancashire and Yorkshire; from the 1820s one can add the potteries region of the North Midlands to this list, possibly due to the knock-on effect of Primitive Methodism. There would have been other areas of the country where women were active, but the picture lacks detail. Official Methodist sources are of little value - for example the obituaries of Mary Fletcher<sup>31</sup> and Mary Tooth<sup>32</sup> from the *Methodist Magazine* do not mention their preaching or public prayer and the notices for Mary Taft<sup>33</sup> and Martha Gregson<sup>34</sup> are equally discreet. The death of Sarah Boyce in 1846 was not recorded at all in Methodist media

<sup>27</sup> DNB

<sup>28</sup> Mary Taft, *Memoirs of the life of Mrs Mary Taft formerly Miss Barritt*, 2 vols., (1827).

<sup>29</sup> Chilcote, pp.117 -118

<sup>30</sup> *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, edited by Donald Lewis (1995).

<sup>31</sup> *Methodist Magazine* 1816, pp.157-159.

<sup>32</sup> *Methodist Magazine* 1843, pp.1036-1037.

<sup>33</sup> *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* 1851. p.604.

<sup>34</sup> *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* 1841, pp.326-327

and there was no chapel funeral service. She was instead buried in an Anglican churchyard in an unmarked grave, the last of John Wesley's 'Mothers in Israel'.<sup>35</sup> The information gap can be filled in those instances where the women concerned documented their activities, either in manuscript or printed form, but this results in a frustratingly incomplete picture.

If female ministry was not actively suppressed, it was certainly discouraged and a cloak of official silence thrown over its existence. This can be seen as part of a wider Wesleyan reaction after 1800 against charismatic Christianity.<sup>36</sup> It has already been noted that women were at the forefront of some of the revivals that did take place, working closely with ministers like William Bramwell who retained something of the revivalist impulse. Bramwell was an inspirational preacher whose ministry in Sheffield increased membership by 1,500 in just three years, despite the loss of nearly 1,000 people to the New Connexion. In his public work he placed stress on the workings of the holy spirit and this sometimes manifested itself in ways that did not fit particularly well into a denominational framework that was becoming more rigid with every passing year. He found kindred spirits in women like 'Praying Nan' Cutler, whose biography he published in 1798. Bramwell's ministry was very popular and even had a transatlantic impact, but his aversion to discipline and the more extreme aspects of his own spirituality, such as claiming discernment of spirits made him a suspect figure. Like Taft, he never achieved high office in the Church and was regarded in some quarters as a dangerous radical both in the political and the religious spheres.

It would of course be too much to say that the expansion of Methodism in the early nineteenth century was solely the result of a small band of stalwarts like Bramwell assisted by women working behind the scenes. Wesleyan Methodism in the years between 1791 and 1850 recorded substantial membership increases on virtually an annual basis and much of this can be attributed to ceaseless routine labours by anonymous individuals. There were however some dramatic episodes of revival and these provided an impetus and a foundation for membership consolidation that lasted for years beyond the outbreak itself. Increasingly however, such public fervour was associated more with the Bible Christians and Primitive Methodists than with the church of Mary Fletcher and Sarah Boyce.<sup>37</sup> Instead, the Wesleyans relied on a system in which pastoral and

<sup>35</sup> Easton, *Sarah Mallet*, p.63.

<sup>36</sup> John Kent, 'Wesleyan Methodists to 1849,' *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, ed. A. Raymond George, Gordon Rupp and Rupert Davies (1978), 2: pp.222 and pp.238-239.

<sup>37</sup> The Bible Christians and the Primitive Methodists were the product of genuine religious revivals. . . ' John Kent, *Jabez Bunting: The Last Wesleyan* (1955), p.43.

spiritual authority was firmly placed into the hands of a male ministry<sup>38</sup> in pursuit of rational Christianity and the advancement of sensible, sober faith.<sup>39</sup>

That some of the leading women were out of step with the march of Wesleyan progress is clear. Time does not permit a detailed examination of the spirituality of women like Fletcher and Mary Taft and there were in any case many variations in detail, but some interesting aspects can be highlighted. Visions and dreams figure prominently in the Fletcher-Tooth papers<sup>40</sup> and it is obvious from Mary Fletcher's spiritual autobiography that she was inclined to the mystical from early childhood. At the age of nine, she cut her arm open as part of the quest for divine knowledge<sup>41</sup> and throughout her life she was regarded as expert in the interpretation of supernatural phenomena. Fletcher's last companion, Mary Tooth, also had a reputation for spiritual eccentricity: her obituary in the *Methodist Magazine* remarked on her 'very peculiar' habits and modes of acting and also referred obliquely to the mystical beliefs that she had shared with her long-time mistress.<sup>42</sup>

Fletcher and her circle placed stress on the pursuit of Christian perfection - this had been a central plank of Wesleyan theology from the earliest days but had always been regarded as a dangerous area for the immature and unstable, a category in which many men would have automatically placed the opposite sex. The Wesleyan movement continued in the new century to attest to the doctrine's importance,<sup>43</sup> but very much on the level of personal devotion rather than public worship. One place where the revivalist and perfectionist impulse remained into the nineteenth century was in the writings of the Fletcher circle. Women like Elizabeth Mortimer wrote longingly of outbreaks of enthusiasm<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Kent, *Jabez Bunting*, pp.16-37.

<sup>39</sup> See for example, the following declaration by Jabez Bunting, the principal leader of Wesleyan Methodism in the first half of the 19th century and a vehement opponent of revivalism, describing an Anglican service in London in 1803: 'I have witnessed many extravagancies in the Prayer meetings etc of the persons called Revivalists among us; but I never saw or heard anything there so irreverent, so unscriptural as these proceedings in St Paul's. The clergy of the Establishment have no right throw stones at us for tolerating Ranterism, whilst such things are practised by themselves in their own Cathedrals.' Quoted by Thomas Percival Bunting, *The Life of Dr Bunting*, 2 vols (1859),1:p.186.

<sup>40</sup> For example: Ms account of Sarah Lawrence, pp.368-369, 372-374:

<sup>41</sup> Ms autobiography of Mary Bosanquet, 7-8.

<sup>42</sup> *Methodist Magazine* 1843, pp.1036-1037.

<sup>43</sup> N. P. Goldhawk, 'Early Victorian Age: Spirituality and Worship' *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, ed. A. Raymond George, Gordon Rupp and Rupert Davies (1978), 2: pp.115-116, pp.120-122.

<sup>44</sup> For example: Elizabeth Mortimer to Mary Fletcher, ALS, 17 February 1809, Reference MAM Fl.6.7.27, MCA

-steady expansion and close ministerial supervision was all very well but it was no substitute for the spreading of divine fire.

Insufficient work has been done on grassroots spirituality in the first half of the nineteenth century. It may be the case that women like Boyce, Taft and Ritchie were exceptions to the general rule and that ministers like Jabez Bunting and Edward Sumner were indeed more representative of the wishes and needs of the Wesleyan movement. There was certainly a place for the old style Methodism of open-air meetings and fire-brand preachers - Primitive Methodism used these tools to expand at an astonishing rate reaching a membership of over 100,000 by 1851.<sup>45</sup> During this same period however, the Wesleyans reached even greater heights of influence and numbers, far beyond anything experienced before or since. It would be easy to criticise the attitude of Conference with regard to female ministry and charismatic religion in general, but the success of Wesleyan Methodism was in one sense its own justification and a challenge to the shrinking Church of today.

The story of female ministry in the generation after Wesley is fascinating from a number of perspectives. In the new climate of official disapproval, women continued to preach and pray but as part of a movement that was increasingly underground in nature. In truth, Wesleyan Methodism could have done little to prevent this continuance - all that women had to do to avoid discipline was speak off Methodist premises with the added bonus of attracting larger crowds. The danger of running up against society opinion made the situation even more fraught for ministers who tried to put a stop to the practice. The tactic adopted by the connexional leadership, almost by default, was to try to ignore what was happening but ensure that these women received no publicity or connexional support. This was successful to the extent that it is only in recent years that scholars have started to realise that Wesleyan female preaching did not disappear at the wave of a Conference magic wand.

Examination of female ministry during this period is important also as a measure of denominational evolution in a wider sense. The women who were engaged in the public work appear to have been strongly charismatic in their style. Sarah Boyce for example earned a reputation as someone whose discourses tended very much towards the mystical, while Mary Barritt was described as a 'great favourer of noisy prayer meetings.'<sup>46</sup> Indeed, without exception all of the women mentioned in this paper as conducting public ministry could be described as 'enthusiasts' imbued with a strong vein of perfectionism

<sup>45</sup> Robert Currie, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (1968), p.87.

<sup>46</sup> Sarah Crosby to Mary Fletcher, ALS, 22/25 April 1799, Reference MAM F1.2.5A.14, MCA

that spilled over into their sermons, exhortations and prayers.<sup>47</sup> As the leadership of Wesleyan Methodism moved away from this area, the ministry of women was increasingly marginalized. It is likely that this would have happened in any case, given that female ministry was always controversial but it is valuable as an indication of trends within the Church. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, revivalism came back into fashion as the Wesleyans tried to reclaim lost ground in the inner city and it was at precisely that time that women re-emerged in the Conference - sanctioned public work as deaconesses and 'Sisters of the People'<sup>48</sup> The link in spirit and practice between the immediate post-Wesley generation of female preachers and their successors from the 1880s has yet to be explored.

GARETH LLOYD

(Dr. Gareth Lloyd is the Methodist Church Archivist. This paper was delivered at the WHS/WMHS Conference in York in April 2005 on the theme 'Women in Methodism'.)

<sup>47</sup> For example, Ann Cutler claimed to have received the gift of entire sanctification and 'like other Methodist women of this period, she had the unusual mystical experience of visions of the Trinity perceived in the three separate persons. . . ' DNB.

<sup>48</sup> For example, E. Dorothy Graham, *Saved to Serve: The Story of the Wesley Deaconess Order 1890-1978* (Peterborough: 2002).



## "UPON THIS ROCK"

### The story of the Rev. Philippe Tourgis

'THE Centre Stone' states a plaque on the wall of a building in Rue des Servais, St. John, Jersey. Beneath the plaque is an ordinary-looking flat rock<sup>1</sup>, but with an extraordinary history. Beside it are two granite pillars, bordering the entrance to a farm, and engraved on the pillars is the name of the farm: 'Les Chasses'. A long, winding drive leads to an attractive courtyard, enclosed on three sides by the farm buildings. Towards the end of the eighteenth century Jean Tourgis lived and farmed there, and raised a large family. Three sons are of special significance: Jean junior, born 1789; Philippe, born 1796; and Charles, born 1798.

Methodism had been introduced to the island a few years earlier, but the nearest Chapel was at Les Freres, two miles away. So meetings began to take place in people's homes in the Vingtaines of Herupe and Mont a l'Abbé. A Vingtaine denotes a division of a parish - originally containing about 20 households: Herupe was in the parish of St. John, and Mont a l'Abbé in the parish of St. Helier. In 1812 a Mrs. Vaudin opened her home to the preachers, and, in 1815, Jean Tourgis did likewise.

This influenced his sons, particularly Philippe, by this time a very serious-minded teenager. He would go into the garden behind the house, among the redcurrant and gooseberry bushes, to pray alone because he did not wish to attract attention. He records that one day in the lane which led to his house 'I was filled with the love of the Lord'. His first attempt at praying in public was disappointing. Even his mother, when she heard him, declared 'I won't encourage you any more, you have not much ability'. She must have been his harshest critic, but later she changed her advice. In 1818 with friends including Pierre Lesbirel he began a prayer meeting in the Vingtaine of Augres, in Trinity parish. Pierre together with another local preacher (Joshua Norman) was convinced that Philippe was called to preach, and encouraged him also to become a local preacher. It is said that his easy delivery, as well as his enthusiasm and piety, led to the conversion of four young men who had persecuted him. 'The Lord blessed us there in such a a manner that in a very short time a class meeting was formed and soon a regular sermon was preached'. The Methodist preaching was welcomed with the same enthusiasm in the other two Vingtaines, so that around 1820 a few friends began to speak of building a Chapel to unite the three congregations. There was some delay. One reason was that they were unwilling to upset the Calvinists, who already had a Chapel at Sion.

Another reason was because Philippe Tourgis had entered the ranks of the Methodist ministry. He was given his first appointment - a few

<sup>1</sup> This stone, which is non-local, might be part of La Hogue Brune. It is probably of prehistoric origin and is considered to mark the centre of the island.

months in the neighbouring island of Alderney. In those days Methodist ministers were moved very frequently from one appointment to another, and soon he was ministering in Sark. In the eight months that he was there he rebuilt the Chapel, which had been in ruins, and there was a 'glorious revival' among the people. In August 1822 he was ordained at the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in London, and then sent as a missionary to Normandy in France. There had been a 'Methodist Mission' to France since 1786, and this continued until at least 1882 (two years after the death of Philippe). In that period sixty Methodist missionaries from the Channel Islands ministered in France - in some way repaying the debt owed to French Calvinists who had brought Protestantism to the Islands. (Of course these Methodists were French-speaking). However, their influence and acceptability were affected by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. One of the first of these missionaries was Jean de Quetteville, who had such a distinguished ministry in the Channel Islands, and who preached at the opening service of the first Methodist Church in Alderney.

Another was Amice Ollivier, the first Alderney-born Methodist Minister. When Dr. Adam Clarke had landed surreptitiously in Alderney in 1787, thus bringing Methodism to the island, Amice's father, Jean, had been the Jurat appointed to investigate this 'intruder'. The young boy, Amice, accompanied his father to the service led by Adam Clarke, which must have affected him profoundly. Amice went to France in 1802. On 28 April 1820 French Methodism was officially established, holding its first District Synod in the village of Perriers, under the Presidency of Rev. W. Toase, who had journeyed from Guernsey for that purpose. Apart from the President, the committee consisted of Amice Ollivier, Charles Cook, Henri de Jersey and J. Hawtrej. The last-named, English by birth, had spent a short time in Paris in an abortive attempt to form a Methodist congregation there. Cook was about to begin his first tour in the Midi, which brought about a revival among the original Protestant population of that region. The Wesleyan Methodist Conference of 1821 confirmed this appointment, and two years later he was joined there by Henri de Jersey.

To return to Philippe Tourgis: as already stated, in 1822 he was sent to develop the work in Normandy. In the years of his ministry there, again he moved frequently, ministering in the Bocage, Calvados and La Manche areas, and especially at Caen, Beauville and Cherbourg. He had numerous congregations to visit - they were a long distance apart and the roads were poor, but 'he received great acclaim from the people'.

In August 1825 Philippe returned to Jersey to pay a short visit to his family and friends, and to continue his preaching. Open-air meetings were held on Tourgis land, as he preached from the Centre Stone at the entrance to his brother's farm. 'During the short time that he was amongst us, his ministry was so abundantly blessed that it resulted in a great religious revival such as we had only heard spoken of and not, until now, experienced'. Many of the farm workers would leave the fields and

come to the Centre Stone to hear him. It is likely that the farmers, including his brother, would not have taken kindly to this interruption to the work of their employees. The growth was such that the meeting place was too small for the congregation: many complaints were received from people who, to their regret, were unable to attend because the crowded room was too suffocating. About May 1826 friends of the three societies gathered at the home of M. Vaudin to consider whether it would be advantageous, and to the glory of God, to build a Chapel so that there would be space enough for all who wished to worship together. It was decided to go ahead, and to present this proposal to the Quarterly Meeting at St. John for approval. Meanwhile those present set themselves the task of finding ways to raise the money required.

A satisfactory plot of land on the 'Fief Surville' was purchased, and the Quarterly Meeting gave its blessing. Trustees were appointed including Philippe's youngest brother, Charles, who later was to move to Alderney to farm there. On 12 August 1826 the contract was passed for the purchase of land from Philippe Le Sueur, The foundation stone of Sion Chapel (as it was to be called) was laid on 20 August 1826. It must have been a wonderful moment for young Rev. Philippe Tourgis, as he preached the sermon on that occasion - only a few yards away were the family farm and the Centre Stone, from where his preaching had sown the seeds now being harvested. Between 800 and 1,000 people attended, and the collection amounted to 200 francs and 13 centimes. He took as his text 'The Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it'. (Psalm 132, verse 13).

On 24 June 1827 the Chapel at Sion was opened by Amice Ollivier, Philippe LeSueur, and J. de Putron. The name of Philippe Tourgis was absent. He had been appointed in 1826 'missionary to Paris, where there was no Methodist Chapel or congregation'. Would Philippe be more successful than J. Hawtrey? He began small meetings in French in the Rue Hautville. He worked with all his might, going into the streets and the shops, announcing the meetings and inviting all to come - but at first he only had four or five hearers in the congregation. 'It is in Paris that I have learned to pray and weep' he said. But his prayers, his tears, and his hard work bore fruit. Having 'faced the difficulties of no common order, at first without any apparent success, his labours were afterwards signally owned of God'. It is said that throughout his time in France (eight years in total) he worked with all the enthusiasm of youth and Christian fidelity. Island Methodism had sent, in 'the ardent and eloquent Tourgis, one of its best men'. He proved his remarkable talents during his time in Paris, and there 'he had the success which fulfilled his call to the missionary work in France'.

He eventually succeeded in establishing a congregation in premises which he opened in Rue Bellefond. He gathered his congregation from 'every rank of society', and this included Catholics as well as Protestants. He founded a Methodist cause which 'was the honoured instrument in

the conversion of men of mark, who became leading members of the Evangelical Churches of the French capital', and in the religious world generally. The room in which he preached became quite inadequate; he had to open a second room nearby to hold the bystanders. Windows were opened which looked out into a little garden, where more of his congregation gathered. Many conversions resulted, and the first Church was established on 23 January 1827. One of the members of his Church was Vicontesse d' Arnaud, the wife of a French general, but English by birth. She had been converted under Philippe's preaching, and had taken part in the first class meeting founded by him in the city.

But the ardour and zeal of these years took their toll, and undermined his health. In 1829 the Parisian doctor sent him back to Jersey 'so that he could die close to his parents'. His family gathered around his bed, so close was he to death. However, rest, and the 'nursing of his mother' over the next two years brought him back to health. In 1831 he was nominated to the post of Superintendent Minister in Jersey, exercising a unique ministry in the Islands for another 37 years!

General d' Arnaud was killed when fighting against the insurgents during the revolution of 1830. His widow, the Vicontesse, had been so impressed by the preacher (11 years her junior) that she followed him to Jersey, and they were married in 1834! 'This lady from high Parisian society shared the humble home of a Methodist minister'. Their first home in Jersey was indeed humble, for it was part of the farm buildings of 'Les Chasses' - the wash-house area! She died in 1841, and Philippe married a second time. They had a daughter, Alice, and a son, Philip. His second wife also predeceased him.

His ministry in the Channel Islands was of great benefit to the Methodist Church. He continued to move from island to island ministering for short periods of time in each. He played a large part in the spiritual and also the organic development as Chapels were built and Sunday Schools formed. In addition to the stone-laying at Sion in 1826, by 1868 he had preached at the opening of ten Chapels in Jersey and four in Guernsey! Amice Ollivier also was involved in the opening of further Methodist Chapels in Jersey. What an exciting time it must have been - a contrast to today when we seem to be involved in closing places of worship! 'How uplifting and enheartening to be present at the full blossoming of the gospel'.

Tributes have been paid to him which have emphasised that he was God's agent in revival, bringing so many people to Christian faith. His preaching was neither too profound nor too studious, but a great influence on the masses, 'which he attracted and captivated'. He had the qualities of a popular preacher: ease and clarity of diction. Therefore he was easy to listen to, and his amiability won people's hearts. Many came to him who had need of consolation and counsel.

He 'retired' in 1868, after 48 years of active ministry. During the twelve years left to him he took many services in the Islands, visiting as

often as his strength permitted. His last sermon took place in 1877 - in Alderney, where he had begun his ministry in 1820. 'His last days were marked by the serenity and peacefulness of an evening where the sun was setting, with the prospect of a radiant dawn after a short night'. He died peacefully on 12 May 1880 uttering the words 'I do not merely hope for eternal life, I enjoy full assurance of it. . . this is heaven already begun'. He was in the eighty - fourth year of his age and the sixtieth of his ministry. He was buried in Green Street Cemetery, St. Helier in a grave which also contains his two wives, and his sister.

Only six days after his death, on 18 May 1880, six commemorative stones were laid as the foundation stones for a new Sion Chapel to replace the old. This is situated further along the road from the Centre Stone, the farm and the old Chapel, and is much larger and magnificent. That Philippe was aware of this new venture in faith is certain, for the trustees had decided as early as 31 July 1876 that this new Chapel was necessary. This, then, was another tribute to the work of God, to His faithful people through the generations, and especially to a mighty man of God - Philippe Tourgis.

I have used many sources translated by my wife or myself. It would be cumbersome to give the detailed source of every quote, so I confine myself to listing the books researched.

*Establishment of a Methodist Chapel at Sion*: Pierre Lesbirel (1836)(translated by KG. Corbin 1976)

*L'Histoire du Methodisme Wesleyen*: Francois Guiton (1846)

*Histoire du Methodisme dans Les Iles de la Manche 1784-1884*: Matthieu LeLievre.

Volumes of *Le Magasin Methodiste des Iles de la Manche* include

- (1) June 1880- Funeral of Philippe (pp. 208-212) - new chapel at Sion (212-214)
- (2) Biography of Philippe - January 1881 (pp. 1-12) - February (37-48) - April (109-121) - May (145-156) - July (217-226)

Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference 1880 - Obituaries (p.29);

Issues of the *Jersey Methodist Magazine* include

February and June 1922 - June and September 1926 - September 1932 - October 1933 - April 1937.

ARTHUR MIGNOT

(The Rev. Arthur Mignot was born in Alderney and in retirement lives in the family home on the island. Phillipe Tourgis was his great-grandfather's brother.)

## List of Wesleyan Methodist Chapels in Jersey and Guernsey

at which the REV. PHILIPPE TOURGIS was one of the preachers for either the foundation stone-laying or opening ceremonies.

**Jersey**

1826	20 August	Sion (Saint-Jean)	Foundation stone laid
1832	11 March	Salem (Grouville)	Chapel opened
1832	14 October	Galaad (St.Laurent)	Chapel opened
1833	15 September	Eden (St.Sauveur)	Chapel opened
1838	4 November	La Roque(Grouville)	Chapel opened
1844	14 January	Carmel (Trinite)	Chapel opened
1851	5 January	Saint-Martin	Chapel opened
1861	15 September	Six-Rues (St.Laurent)	Chapel opened
1868	19 August	Saint-Aubin	Chapel opened
1868	30 August	Bethesda (St.Pierre)	Chapel opened

**Guernsey**

1835	22 April	Wesley (St.PierrePort)	Chapel opened
1835	6 September	Torteval	Chapel opened
1838	25 June	St. Samson	Chapel opened
1860	23 December	Le Valle	Chapel opened

**BOOK REVIEW**

*Cardiff's Temples of Faith* by John B. Hilling, Mary Traynor, (Cardiff Civic Society, 2000. pp.80 £8.50 ISBN 0 9540262 0 9.)

Cardiff is essentially the product of nineteenth-century industrialisation and yet the city has its medieval precursor for there are numerous medieval churches still in use, including the restored Llandaff Cathedral. Chapels came with the canal, railways and docks, the latter contributing to a diversity which now includes synagogues, mosques and of which the latest addition is a former lightship. The book is beautifully illustrated by Mary Traynor's atmospheric drawings and where known, architects are given with some originality, being after the particular church's entry in the index. It is perhaps unfortunate that none of the city's present Methodist chapels are illustrated.

There is some minor confusion over Methodist terminology and the unions of 1907 and 1932 - was Trinity, Roath Park, 1897, really so named Trinity to mark the formation of the United Methodists, which was ten years after its opening? In places proof checking has failed to detect some errors. These should not be allowed to detract from a delightful book with broad sweep coverage of the subject.

## MORE INFORMATION ON METHODIST DONATION LISTS

Following my article on these in the recent *Proceedings*<sup>1</sup> a number of friends have provided me with further information. I am very grateful to all of them.

### *Wesleyans*

Brian Beck has recently read a paper on the 1839 Centenary Fund, especially as it affected the Methodist Missionary Society. It is hoped that this can soon be published, as it provides much more information than my brief summary. Richard Ratcliffe has published two pamphlets which refer to the Historic Roll. These are reviewed elsewhere in the *Proceedings*.

The Twentieth Century Fund had several publications which I should have mentioned. There is a 34 page pamphlet, (a copy for example is in the WHS Library) on the Fund subtitled a 'Million Guineas from a Million Methodists.' This was aimed at publicising the Fund and persuading everyone to give. At the end of the money-raising there was a printed report of 300 pages published in 1910. This only deals with totals by individual churches, not individuals. It is of use to the local church historian. Alan Rose however has also discovered in the Manchester City archives in the Altrincham Circuit records (C18/5/5/1/-) several items relating to the Fund. One is the printed Report of the Executive Committee published 1899, another a copy of the 'Supplementary Effort to complete' the 20th Century Fund.' This was when Sir Robert Perks and others, realizing they would never get the Million Guineas at the rate of one guinea per person, asked the wealthy of Wesleyan Methodism to give 100 guineas each. The list, 4 pages long, is of the promises of the 153 Wesleyans who said they would give this sum. Perks hoped for 1000 such donations. It is useful when investigating the wealthy of the church in that period. Perks for example gave not only his 100 guineas but the same amount for each of his wife and his five (named) children. Some donations come from circuits or trusts. The Hincksmans of Lytham gave the largest sum by far, 5000 guineas. There were still wealthy ministers giving, such as W. Hodson Smith of Newquay, Charles H. Kelly and E. J. Brailsford, but in general this is a list of the wealthy laymen of the day: Corys and a Morel of Cardiff, a Runciman of Newcastle join Coles, Corderoys, Vanners, Walters and McArthurs in their accustomed places.

### *Bible Christians*

Roger Thorne tells me there was a similar Twentieth Century fund for the Bible Christians. In October 1898 the magazine had news of 'New Century Fund' to help aged local preachers, chapel building and the training of ministers. By the spring of 1899 they had a motto '100,000 souls and

<sup>1</sup> Vol 55, pp.43-52

100,000 crowns,' a crown being worth 5 shillings(25p). They were well short of the total they wanted to raise (£25,000) with promises of £17,481, but gifts only of £9,014. Large folded sheets were sent out to be signed and returned, with a copy to be kept locally. The one for the Shebbear Circuit, historic mother circuit of the Connexion was preserved and is today in the North Devon Record Office, Barnstaple. Copies of the transcription with index made by Roger Thorne in 2001 (22pp) are available at £1 plus postage from the Record Office.

It is interesting because the circuit was the home of many connexionally significant families like the Thornes and the Vanstones. It had the Connexional ministerial students at Shebbear College and the headmaster Mr Ruddle. There are also examples of gifts being made 'in memory of' former members of the family, deceased by 1900. Fourteen different chapels were listed. Other names which turn up include Kellaway, Braund and Hocking.

#### *United Methodist Free Churches*

The UMFC also held a Twentieth Century Fund. The report, printed in 1905, a copy of which is in the WHS library, says it ended in June 1904. It raised £104,000 of which almost half was for 'local objects.' It gives district totals and main headings for expenditure e.g. £7,500 each for Foreign Missions and Home Missions. The Historic Roll of donors was to be preserved at 'our college at Manchester' presumably Victoria Park. Was it transferred to Hartley after Union?

Alan Rose tells me that the Stockport Central Library holds the records of the ex UMFC Poynton Church. This includes a list of local contributors to this Fund.

JOHN LENTON



## SON TO SOPHIA<sup>1</sup>

SOPHY Hopkey has an inevitable place in any account of John Wesley's Georgia ministry, but once she became Mrs. Williamson and had been turned away from the communion table by her thwarted lover, she quickly disappears from the story. Hardly anything is known about the rest of her life; but some interesting fragments can be learned about her son, Joseph Taylor Williamson, who became a parish priest in London and could therefore easily have encountered his mother's former lover later in the century.

Sophy Hopkey married Wesley's rival, William Williamson, at Purrysburg, South Carolina, on 12 March 1737 and just four months later Wesley's diary recorded the news that she had had a miscarriage. By the time the next child was born, on 13 September 1739, they had moved to Charleston, Wesley was back in England and already beginning to take a lead in what was to become the Methodist movement. Joseph Taylor Williamson was baptized at St. Philip's Church, Charleston on 14 November that year. Following the death of another son in 1742, he grew up an only child. At that point he disappears from our sights until he was entered as a pupil at Westminster School in September 1750, where he became a King's Scholar (like Charles Wesley before him) in 1754. At exactly what point the family had returned from America, or indeed, whether his father accompanied them or remained in Georgia to pursue his claim to certain estates, remains uncertain.

In 1759 Joseph Williamson (the 'Taylor' seems to have been dropped at an early stage) went up to Trinity College, Cambridge. When he took his BA in 1763 he was 8th Wrangler and won the Chancellor's Classical Medal, so he had some claim to scholarship. He proceeded to MA in 1761, was ordained (though when and where the surviving records fail to show) and by August 1764 had a London living, St. Dunstan's in the West, close to Temple Bar, was not a very lucrative living but was in the patronage of a Miss Williamson, presumably a member of the family, and must have been seen as a first rung on the ecclesiastical ladder. But any hopes of preferment Joseph may have had were doomed to disappointment and he continued to hold the living until 1805, within a few years of his death. The parish records make it clear that the church itself was in a poor condition and the parish Vestry was reluctant to find the cost of any repairs. Eventually it was rebuilt in 1830, as part of the road-widening scheme that swept away Temple Bar itself.

Meanwhile, as the parish registers show, Joseph Williamson fulfilled the essential duties of his office, with some help from curates, and resided locally despite the lack of a parsonage, until his health made him withdraw to the village of Edmonton about 1791, leaving the parish in the care of a full-time curate. Another, rather different, aspect of his life may

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed and documented version of this paper, see *Methodist History*, July 1997 Vol. XXXV pp.214-221.

have had a bearing on any deterioration in his health, since he was clearly devoted to 'good living' in the more worldly sense. On 11 November 1769 we find him being elected to the 'Sublime Society of Beef Steaks' in place of Lord Sandwich (for, or by, whom the sandwich was invented). This was a dining club, formed in 1735 by the Covent Garden entrepreneur John Rich, with a membership limited to 24, among whom at various times we find the names of Hogarth, Samuel Johnson and John Wilkes, the radical. When Wilkes became Lord Mayor of London in 1774, he appointed Williamson as his chaplain. He did his best to obtain a better (i.e. more lucrative) living for Williamson, but without success. Such a *persona non grata* was hardly the most propitious ally in such a cause. In the event it was another of the 'Beefsteakers' who in 1805 provided a belated escape route for the vicar of St. Dunstan's in the West. The 11th Duke of Norfolk had abandoned the family's traditional allegiance to Rome, but out of self interest rather than Protestant conviction. A close friend of the Prince Regent, he was notorious for his hard living and heavy drinking, and was a frequent target of James Gillray's pillorying caricatures. Though there were other sides to his character, notably in his patronage of the arts and literature, the Duke was, if anything, even less suitable than Wilkes as a friend of a respectable clergyman. However this may be, he made it possible for Joseph Williamson to spend his closing years at Thakeham, a Sussex village north of the South Downs, where he died less than three years later in November 1807.

Among the many gaps in what can now be known about the career of Joseph Williamson, the most tantalizing is the question of whether he and John Wesley ever met during those years in London, or even knew of their common connection with Sophy Hopkey. Perhaps not, but it remains an intriguing possibility.

JOHN VICKERS

## ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE 2005

The Wesley Historical Society Tea, Annual Meeting and Lecture was held on 27 June 2005 at Teignmouth Methodist Church, Devon. The opening devotions were led by the President, the Rev. Dr. John A. Newton. The Minutes of the 2004 meeting, prepared by Mr John H Lenton due to the absence of the General Secretary through illness were signed as a correct record; the Executive Committee was appointed, with special thanks being recorded to Dr. John A. Vickers, who had acted as Publications Manager for the past year. The meeting, with pleasure, welcomed Mrs Norma Virgoe to this post. As there had been no response to the flyer enclosed with the May issue of *Proceedings* for a Distribution Manager the General Secretary warned that unless an offer was forthcoming the October issue might not be sent out. **[N.B. see flyer relating to this matter enclosed with this issue].**

The usual reports were received with the Treasurer (Mr Nicholas J. Page) in presenting the accounts, (printed on p.127), making special mention of the bequest from Mr Harry Horton, allocated to the Library Appeal, and the gift from a Book Sale at Kidlington Methodist Church. He recommended the subscription rate remain the same **[N .B. again see the flyer enclosed]**. Both Mr Page and the Registrar (the Rev. Donald H. Ryan) reported that membership numbers, now 614, had been affected by the Irish Branch's decision that their members are no long automatically members of our Society - so far 6 have joined.

Sincere appreciation was expressed to Mrs Sheila Himsworth (Conferences Secretary) for the very successful residential conference held at York St John College, from 5-8 April 2005 on the theme of 'Women in Methodism'. Publication of the papers is under discussion. Mrs Himsworth announced that the next residential conference would be held in 2008, probably at Sarum College, Salisbury, with the theme to be decided. Concern was expressed that the papers given at the 2002 conference had not yet been published.

The General Secretary presented reports from (1) the Editor (Mr. E. A. Rose) which stated that Volume 54, running to 262 pages, had been completed in October 2004, the index had been sent out; as the 2005 lecture was being printed separately a flyer would be enclosed with the October issue and he expressed his gratitude to the Reviews Editor (the Rev. Gilbert D. Braithwaite) for obtaining an increasing number of reviews; (2) the Librarian (Mr. John H. Lenton), which gave details of conservation work, and a list of books the Library wished to acquire. Dr Vickers (Assistant Librarian) added that the major reshelving had meant improved access and he expressed thanks to Mrs Himsworth for her expert advice and help; (3) the Marketing Officer (Dr Peter Forsaith), which commented on the absence of the display stand at Conference and that WMHS Publications is now WHS Publications. Mr Thorne explained that not only was the cost of a display stand at the Conference venue very high, but that as it was not open to the public it would have been of limited

value. It was agreed to explore the idea of joining with the Heritage stand for the future. The Local Branches Secretary (Mr. Roger F. S. Thorne), supplied a list of the branches, their officers and publications and commented that the local branches were autonomous and did valuable work. Mr Jeffrey Spittal maintains an index of Branch publications. Dr Graham reported that Mr Ryan was maintaining the WHS web site - [www.wesleyhistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://www.wesleyhistoricalsociety.org.uk) - and that considerable interest was shown in it. All the officers were thanked for their services.

The 2006 annual lecture at the Edinburgh Conference will be given by the Rev Margaret P. Jones on the general theme of 'ministerial training and formation'. The 2005 annual lecture, entitled ' "A warmed heart and a disciplined mind perfectly joined": Sister Dorothy Hincksman Farrar (1899-1987) and the evolution of women's ministry in Methodism entitled "'A warmed heart\_ \_ \_ joined". Sister Dorothy\_ \_ \_ in Methodism', was delivered by Dr John A. Hargreaves.

Ranging widely, Dr Hargreaves set Sister Dorothy's life and ministry in its historical context, illustrating its significance, pointing out the formative influences of family, education, health, conversion and the Wesley Deaconess Order and assessed her contribution to the evolution of women's ministry in British Methodism. Having accepted the challenge to preach she became an inspiring teacher and preacher and an ambassador for Methodism at home and abroad. She was Vice-President of the Methodist Conference (1952-3) and represented Methodism in the Methodist-Anglican Conversations. Sister Dorothy retired in 1962 and, although she regretted the decision to cease recruitment to the Order (1978), she was delighted by its re-opening as the Methodist Diaconal Order (1986), accepting both women and men. The full lecture is available (see flyer enclosed).

E DOROTHY GRAHAM

**WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2004**

The Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2004 were presented to the 2005 Annual Meeting. The following is a summary of the audited accounts. A copy of the full Report and Accounts, including the Auditor's certificate, is available on request from the Treasurer.

**General Income & Expenditure Account: Year to 31 December 2004**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Subscriptions	6,023.46	5,737
Irish Branch	783.75	713
Sales of Publications	770.05	390
Advertisements	166.60	247
Bank and Deposit Interest	524.81	322
Legacy	1,000.00	-
Other Income	<u>1,038.03</u>	<u>504</u>
	<b>£10,306.70</b>	<b>£7,913</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
<i>Proceedings</i> and Distribution	5,144.10	4,938
Other Printing	703.50	176
Library	1,765.43	1,525
Administration	1,004.72	964
Advertising	60.00	168
Other Expenditure	<u>580.13</u>	<u>521</u>
	<b>£9,257.88</b>	<b>£8,292</b>
Excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>£1,048.82</u>	<u>-£379</u>

**Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2003**

<b>ASSETS EMPLOYED</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Investments	225.00	225
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Sundry Debtors	12.80	-
Bank & Deposit Accounts	<u>18,970.20</u>	<u>17,287</u>
	<b>18,983.00</b>	<b>17,287</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITES</b>		
Sundry Creditors	215.39	-
Subscriptions received in advance	<u>7,098.63</u>	<u>7,070</u>
	<b>7,314.02</b>	<b>7,070</b>
Net Current Assets	<u>£11,893.98</u>	<u>£10,442</u>
<b>REPRESENTED BY</b>		
General Fund (unrestricted)	9,507.35	8,459
WHS Publications Account	35.23	-
Conference Fund	1,350.32	504
Library Appeal Fund	<u>1,001.08</u>	<u>1,479</u>
	<b>£11,893.98</b>	<b>£10,442</b>

NICHOLAS PAGE

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Works of John Wesley: Vols. 18-24, Journals and Diaries 1735-1791*), ed. by W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville Abingdon Press, 1988 - 2003 7vols, £31.99 each ISBN 0 687 46221 5 et seq)

Nehemiah Curnock's 8-volume edition of Wesley's *Journal*, published in 1909-16, has long proved a useful tool for students of early Methodism. It is now superseded by this splendid new edition, part of the Bicentennial Edition of Wesley's Works. These volumes contain not only the published Journals, but also the MS Journals and Diaries, apart from the Oxford diaries and memoranda, which are due to be published in Volume 32 of this Edition of the Works. Professor Ward edits the Journals, and Professor Heitzenrater the MS. Journals and Diaries, of which he remarks in his Introduction (Vol. 18, p.299):

...the diaries and manuscript journals are printed in this appendix, one above the other under their corresponding dates; appropriate annotations will be found at the proper place with the published *Journal*.

This collocation of Wesley's autobiographical writings is a major benefit to students. Another advantage is provided by Professor Ward's detailed setting of the Journal in the wider context of European autobiography. He makes illuminating comparisons of Wesley's writings with those of George Fox, J. J. Rousseau, Benjamin Franklin, Edward Gibbon and Goethe, without in any way overlooking significant differences of outlook and purpose. He points out that in continental Pietism, like that of the Moravians, who so influenced Wesley, it was common for autobiography to major on personal experience of salvation and its outworking in daily living. Again, he makes clear that, in controversial periods of religious history, such as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, autobiography could be a means whereby authors defended their life and work against critics and misrepresentation. Certainly, this defensive strain is patent in Wesley, who in the publication of his Journal 1, seeks to rebut charges made against him of misconduct in Georgia; in Journal 2, justifies his rejection of Molther's doctrine of "stillness"; in Journal 3" defends the Methodist movement as the work of God; in Journal 4, expands his criticisms of the Moravians; and in Journal 5, writes against, 'polemical individual' and deplors the Methodists' lack of legal protection against the attacks of the mobs.

Professor Ward's research has also issued in a much more accurate text of the Journal than has hitherto been available; and his scrupulous concentration on the text gives weight to his criticism of Curnock's very different approach:

The fundamental mistake made by Nehemiah Curnock in designing the Standard Edition of the *Journal* was to envisage the task less as editing an historical source (Wesley's text), than of adorning that text with all the materials he could mobilize for a Wesley biography. (Vol. 18, p.99)

This new edition, which identifies many more persons mentioned in the narrative than Curnock was able to do, is a major contribution to Wesley scholarship. It enriches our reading of the *Journal*, whether considered as, in the Editor's words, an eighteenth-century 'travel narrative' or a 'collective biography of the early Methodist movement', as well as a spiritual autobiography. Professor Ward refers to the scholarly work of Robert Lathom and William Matthews in their magisterial 11-volume edition of Pepys's Diary (1970-83), as granting Pepys 'the accolade of superlative editing'. The same may justifiably be said of the work of Professors Ward and Heitzenrater in their editing of Wesley's Journals and Diaries.

JOHN A. NEWTON

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*Church and Chapel in Early Victorian Shropshire: Returns from the 1851 Census of Religious Worship* ed: Clive D. Field. (Shropshire Record Series Vol. 8 2004, Keele. pp.1xiii + 171. £15 (UK) or £20 (elsewhere) inc p & p from Oakfield Road, Copthorne, Shrewsbury SY3 8AA ISBN 0 953602060)

Shropshire was one of the few counties where there were more Primitive Methodists than Wesleyans in 1851, so this publication is both welcome and important, though as with other rural counties, the Church of England remained omnipresent and strongest of the churches, in half the parishes holding a monopoly position. This is Clive Field at work, so the introduction is thorough. So is the editing of the returns: where there were double returns this is noted and the second return edited out of the totals but displayed so that the reader can assess both. Where there were missing returns, and there were a sizeable proportion such as the important St Michael's Madeley, these also are noted and estimates produced for these, a welcome addition. He also notes misfiling, such as the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Wellington being filed under Wellington, Flints, while the Quaker meeting apparently in Wellington, Salop, was the one from Wellington, Somerset. Methodism was particularly a sufferer from the missing returns. Field reckons that though 74 Wesleyan societies had returns, there were 58 meetings missed. The Primitive Methodists fared as badly. Though 158 meetings were recorded, 113 were overlooked. Admittedly the ones omitted were likely to be the smaller places of worship. Thus in the New Connexion Circuit in what is now Telford the chapels were recorded, the society meetings not. If you have studied this local census before, you can now throw away your old notes. It is also thoroughly indexed.

Field is very interesting on several important problems. He deals with enumeration and the accuracy of the numbers given. He assesses whether the reasons for lower attendance were sound, or whether, like Horace Mann, we should regard this as special pleading. His overview of religion in Shropshire in 1851 is fascinating. In Shropshire half as many churches and chapels held three services on Census Day as was the case on average in England and Wales. There were still parishes where Church Methodists went to church in

the morning and chapel in the afternoon (as at Moreton Say) or evening. The Primitive Methodists, strong throughout Shropshire, were particularly evident in the north. The Wesleyans were only strong in the eastern coalfield. The PMs had a higher occupancy rate than the Wesleyans, a lower proportion of chapels, and most had been recently built. Other Methodist groups were small and only of local significance.

There are omissions among the details in his most useful list of societies with no returns, which summarise what is known; for example Glass House Row existed as a Wesleyan Society with 10 members in 1850. *The Bulletin* of the Shropshire Branch of the Wesley Historical Society is not mentioned in his list of works consulted. However, this remains a most useful publication. The list of societies with no returns provides ample scope for future research. His summary of where Shropshire stood in relation to the problems associated with the Religious Census and the general situation of religion in 1851 is masterly. Historians of Shropshire, of Primitive Methodism, of religious practice and of the census all need this work.

JOHN LENTON

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*Philosophy, Dissent and Nonconformity 1689 - 1920* By Alan P. F. Sell. (Cambridge James Clarke and Co. 2004. pp 296. £50. ISBN 0277 679776)

Alan Sell is the indefatigable historian of nonconformity. Here, following his book on Locke, he tackles a subject not previously examined. How, and by whom, was philosophy taught in the Dissenting Academies and the Nonconformist colleges from the Toleration Act of 1689 to 1920? Precise and accurate scholarship is evident but the difficulty is, what Sell admits, the amateurishness of some teaching and the ephemeral nature of some of the writing now long forgotten. Dr Sell does not claim (as Irene Parker did in *Dissenting Academies in England* (1914) that the Academies outdid 'Oxbridge' but shows who the main figures were, including John Taylor, recently written about by G. T. Eddy. He was denounced by both the 'Arminian of the heart', John Wesley, and by the 'Calvinist of the heart', Jonathan Edwards. Isaac Watts wrote *Logic* as well as hymns. Doddridge emerges too with the forgotten Henry Grove and Richard Price, who very much represent the radicals of Nonconformity in the age of Enlightenment. The material on the eighteenth century is presented with great clarity not least the variety of the Academies from the Evangelical Trevecca (1768) and Newton Pagnell (1782) to the much more liberal Warrington Academy where Taylor later taught. Many shared Wesley's views (partly derived from Locke) about not granting full toleration to Roman Catholics, though the Unitarian Priestley was not alone on the more liberal wing.

On the nineteenth century, the detailed information about all the colleges shows the great diversity of Nonconformity, including notable Unitarians such as James Martineau, though again, Sell shows that much teaching was by



men who had to tackle too many subjects. At the end of the century A. M. Fairbairn, Robert Mackintosh and later, John Oman, open up much more scholarly styles with the Universities taking over the teaching of philosophy, the colleges co-operating.

What of Methodism? Dr Sell details all the colleges of the 'many Methodisms' but tends to feature material from such as Thomas Jackson and J. S. Simon who were not philosophers. W. T. Davison is clearly important but recently Thomas Langford, and William Strawson have stressed William Arthur, omitted by Sell. Arthur's *God without Religion* (1886) and *Religion without God* (1887) take on August Comte, J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer, revealing an apologetic and philosophical style which pointed to the future. And surely W. F. Lofthouse's *Ethics and Atonement* (1906) and *Ethics and the Family* (1912) would have been grist to Sell's mill. Lofthouse, like Scott Lidgett, whose degree was in logic and philosophy, was able to range very widely with competence. Methodism was, at last, catching up on its defects in both theology and philosophy.

So a welcome to Alan Sell's latest book. It is authoritative and judicious even if some Methodists have never liked to be called 'Dissenters'! However, the price of £50 is high even by modern standards!

JOHN MUNSEY TURNER

*Forgotten Heroes of Revival. Great men of the 18th century evangelical awakening.* by Tim Shenton. (Leominster, Day One Publications, 2004. pp. 197 £7.99. ISBN 1 903087 70 8 )

It is all too easy to characterise the eighteenth - century revival largely in terms of a very few prominent leaders such as John Wesley and George Whitefield. Some other notable figures have recently achieved scholarly biographies notably Lady Huntingdon, John Newton and John Fletcher. But to understand the variety of early evangelicalism and how it made its impact we need more local studies and more biographies of local and regional evangelists. Tim Shenton's collection of short biographies gives us some good examples of such people. Four of the five are Anglican clergy. George Thomson was one of a cluster of Cornish clergymen, the best-known being Walker of Truro. They preceded the Wesleys though in the end Methodism overshadowed them in the area. James Rouquet was a member of that interesting category of evangelicals of Huguenot descent. Though at first associated with Wesley he distanced himself from him later over the Calvinism issue. But his chief distinction lay in his work for the poor and prisoners in Bristol. David Simpson was the protege of Charles Roe, a leading manufacturer in Macclesfield where he built a church for Simpson when the latter alienated some people including his Bishop. Roe was not pleased when his children joined the Methodists, notably his daughter Hester Ann who married a Methodist preacher and officiated at Wesley's deathbed. Simpson

had warm relationships with evangelicals of all types and indeed was about to leave the Church of England at the time of his death, feeling that that church was betraying the gospel in faith and action. Thomas Pentycross, the least-known of the group, settled as a faithful minister at Wallingford, though he preached also elsewhere. Theologically he is interesting for his vacillations between Calvinism and Arminianism. His final position indeed allowed for the salvation of all but those refusing to come to Christ.

The one Dissenter in the collection is perhaps the most striking of all. This was Captain Jonathan Scott, a former army officer who was uniquely ordained not to a Congregationalist pastorate but as a 'presbyter at large'. He is credited with almost single-handedly founding twenty-two Congregationalist churches in Staffordshire as well as assisting in the creation of others in Shropshire, Cheshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire. Well documented and attractively written, these biographies also suggest subjects for further investigation. We can see the importance of patronage, advice and support from an evangelical network including such figures as Lady Huntingdon, Romaine, Newton and Rowland Hill. The last of these also reminds us of how 'irregular' some of the early evangelical clergy were, including some of those portrayed here. The importance of Calvinism and Arminianism in dividing the revival forces is very evident but it comes as a surprise to find David Simpson being led to study the Bible by Theophilus Lindsey the ex-Anglican Unitarian! Individuality as well as common features help to illustrate the variety of evangelicalism and to explain its influence.

HENRY D. RACK

*O for a thousand tongues: the 1933 Methodist Hymn Book in context*, by Andrew Pratt. (Epworth Press, 2004, xii, 300 pp, £19.99 ISBN 07162 05890)

The 1933 'MHB', an early product of Methodist Union, served the Church for a full half-century and became a much loved feature of weekly worship; so much so that its supersession is still regretted in some circles. Andrew Pratt brings to his study the fresh eye of a member of the younger generation whose ministry has been largely confined to the era of *Hymns and Psalms*. Whether he has done less than justice to a book no longer in widespread use the reader must judge.

Beginning with an account of how the book was conceived to mark and serve the Church that emerged from the Union of 1932, he then examines in some detail the process by which the committee entrusted with its preparation went about its business: Here he was hampered by the unsatisfactory and incomplete sources that have survived, but achieves his goal in spite of this. Of particular interest is the clandestine manner of the hymn book committee's proceedings (contrasting sharply with the wide consultation that produced *Hymns and Psalms*) and the authoritarian chairmanship of Luke Wiseman (though both are, perhaps, insisted on a little too often). The marginalization of Lilian Cox, the only woman on the Committee and herself a hymn-writer,

is noted and treated as symptomatic. With the scales unduly weighted in favour of the Wesleyans, the resulting book is seen as essentially backward-looking, with little awareness of the changes sweeping over the world and the Church in the wake of World War I. Is this to expect rather too much of what was first and foremost a liturgical aid? The legacy of hymn-writing contributed by the other (non-Wesleyan) traditions was, by all accounts, of limited lasting value; while the renaissance in hymn-writing represented by Bayly, Kaan, Dudley-Smith and our own Pratt Green among others, still lay in the future. Some degree of detachment, provided by the passage of time, was no doubt necessary for a reasoned assessment to be made. All the same, I detect here and there a lack of historical discrimination arising from unexamined assumptions of more recent times.

Three chapters then examine the nature of the book and its contents, and particularly the theology of the hymns. This is the section I found least satisfactory, reflecting perhaps my own limited theological expertise. Perversely, I expect writing, on whatever topic, to show lucidity and logical coherence, not always in evidence here. There are sentences whose meaning I still cannot unravel with any degree of confidence. To take one example: Having noted (pp. 138-9) the 'diminution of importance' of the Communion service in pre-Union Methodism, and the fact that 'it was this ... that the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship had been formed to address', the sentence concludes with: 'but its effect on the organisation of the *Methodist Hymn Book* was considerable. 'I am still uncertain about the antecedent of 'its' and wondering, alternatively, whether the closing word should have been 'inconsiderable'.

Drawing back to what for me is firmer ground, I note evidence of somewhat shaky grasp of our history. Most seriously, perhaps, at several points there is some uncertainty about the 'United Methodist Free Church(es)', notably on p.208, where it is the post-1907 United Methodist Church that is intended. And two features of the book as a whole give me cause for concern. In dealing with theological aspects of the hymn book, there is too heavy a dependence on secondary summaries (e.g. volume 3 of the *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* on pp. 105-8) where, on the principle of never citing anyone at second-hand, one would have expected recourse to Burt Pope, Lidgett and other theologians themselves. Finally, the documentation is in places incredibly clumsy, e.g. on p.17 where the '*United Methodist Free Church Hymnal*, Preface, p.1' is cited in full no fewer than six times. How the blame for this should be apportioned between author, academic supervisor and copy editor is difficult to say; but I hope that it does not indicate that in an age of increasing illiteracy those useful friends '*ibid*' and '*idem*' are no longer intelligible among serious readers.

*The Exotic Plant* by Geoffrey and Margaret Stead. (Peterborough, Epworth Press, 2003, pp. xviii, 442. £25.00. ISBN 07162 05734)

This book tries to provide a history of the Moravian Church in Great Britain from 1742 to the present day. Some Moravian readers, especially those interested in the history of their church, will have been somewhat disappointed on first reading, or dipping into, this work. Whilst the notes of the back cover describe the book as the first one on the history of Moravian Church in Great Britain, the fairly extensive bibliography identifies many familiar works written by British authors, Moravian and non-Moravian alike, who have covered various aspects of the church's general history, including the development and history of the church in this country, its liturgies, its educational work, as well as the life and influence of Zinzendorf, and of course, contact with the Wesleys and others. There are some references in the index to the Wesleys, but these mostly relate to passing references to them, with a few relating to hymnody. Sadly there are some pertinent references to unpublished theses that are missing from the bibliography.

Whilst many Moravian readers may have preferred a lighter or more popular narrative history of the church over the last 250 years, perhaps in the style of Hutton, what we are treated to in this book is a dispassionate analysis of the church's history. by two academic historians. In order to set the scene a substantial introduction is used to establish the authors' approach and rationale for the book. The first part covers the historical background of the British Province of the Unity of the Brethren, and the sources and character of the eighteenth-century Continental Brotherhood, based in modern day Germany. The second part starts by examining, at length, the religious and cultural ascendancy in Germany from 1742 - c.1780, before beginning to look at the British scene in some detail.

The third part examines aspects of renewed creativity in the British Provinces in relation to the church's ministry, particularly ministerial training; developments in congregational life since the 1950s, and the church's ecumenical activities and relationships. The final part touches on aspects of what the authors describe as 'Moravianism' - with chapters on Moravian hymnody and liturgies; the use of language and symbolism in the British Province; Moravian educational work; and on the support communication gives to the life of the province. This is then followed by a conclusion and 32 pages of (end)notes. For ease of reference, I would have preferred these to have been either footnotes or endnotes after each chapter. The authors have to be congratulated on producing an informative book, but sadly not everyone will share their perceptions and conclusions.

*Basic Facts about Methodist Records for Family Historians*, by Richard Ratcliffe 2005, pp.16, £2. Published by the Federation of Family History Societies, ISBN 1-860006-185-0 and available from the FFHS at units 15-16, Chesham Industrial Centre, Oram St, Bury, Lancs BL9 6EN

This little booklet has useful hints for genealogists using Methodist records. Ratcliffe summarises Methodist history and organization, explaining why some records exist and not others. It gives useful addresses, such as the WHS library and the Rylands. It majors on the Historic Roll at Westminster Central Hall where the author works, giving useful examples. He does not point out that there are many earlier similar lists (see my article in the last *Proceedings*). He lists useful books such as *Hills Arrangements*, Leary's *Primitive Methodist Ministers*, Beckerlegge's *United Methodist Ministers* the 1933 *Who's Who* and 1934 *Local Preachers' Who's Who*. He should also list here the Methodist *Who's Who* published from 1910 to 1915, (admittedly smaller and with a partly American and world coverage), also *Garlick's Registry* and the 1951 *Free Churches Who's Who*. However, this pamphlet is a boon for the genealogist. He rightly points out the importance of Circuit records, often forgotten even by professional genealogists.

*Basic Facts about the Wesleyan Methodist Historic Roll*, Richard Ratcliffe, pp.16, £2. Published by the Federation of Family History Societies 2005 ISBN 1 860006 187 7 and available from the FFHS at 15-16, Chesham Industrial Centre, Oram St, Bury, Lancs BL9 6EN.

This second booklet, very like the first in style, explains the Twentieth Century Fund and the mechanisms for raising money for it, explaining what the money was raised for (apart from the Central Hall), and has a section on Sir Robert Perks. Most space is spent on the Roll, the index now completed of it and how microfiche copies are now available for the different Districts or Circuits. The master index is at Westminster Central Hall and can be consulted on [www.methodist-central-hall.org.uk/history](http://www.methodist-central-hall.org.uk/history) The book explains how Methodist districts cover different counties and areas. In an appendix of 5 pages it lists circuits in each district- most useful.

It gives examples of entries which are particularly valuable to the genealogist. It needs to be pointed out that entries in the Historic Roll, when covering donations in memory of family members, are not necessarily accurate and need to be checked against other data, preferably belonging to the period when the family member was alive. For example, Matthew Lumb (p13) died in 1847 not 1842.

He should list, however, the printed report of 1910 which gives totals for each circuit. He mentions on page 5 the Supplementary list of donations of 100 guineas and over, but does not say if there are any examples of this list at Central Hall. He should also say there was a separate Fund and Roll in Ireland, though the roll does not seem to have survived. However, this booklet and the Historic Roll are most useful to the historian as well as the genealogist. Reading the entry for the Clegg family (also p13) made me check what had

happened to Richard Clegg, which led to the discovery he had left the ministry.

JOHN LENTON

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*Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1190-1700* by Diarmaid MacCulloch. (Penguin Books, 2004, pp.864 £9.99. ISBN 014 028534 2)

Historians of Methodism owe Diarmaid MacCulloch a debt of gratitude for his ordering of historic books and archives at Wesley College, Bristol during his years as a tutor. Now Professor of Church History at Oxford, his immense scholarship has borne fruit in this magnificent and prizewinning overview of Reformation Europe. It is crammed with facts, balanced and set in content and barbed with characteristic wit - as those who have sat at his feet would expect.

Given his encounter with Methodists, two Wesley misquotes are unfortunate. However, they in no way mar a work which should be required reading for any student of the genesis of Methodism. The contrapuntal themes of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe, with their coda in the Atlantic Isles (a preferable term to 'Britain') are here amply orchestrated. The enquiring mind will here recognise the moments which shaped the how, when and why of Methodism and in its translation to the New World, developing an identity quite distinct from the parent body.

At a price that will break no pocket, this book is a must.

PETER FORSAITH

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*Black Country Chapels* by Ned Williams (Stroud, Sutton publishing, 2004, pp.144 £12.99 ISBN 0- 7509-3990-7)

This excellent photographic collection captures 'chapel life' rooted in a now almost nonexistent industrial past, as chapel closures continue apace. The range includes General Baptist, Wesleyan, New Connexion and Primitive Methodist - but no Free Methodist - as well as Anglican and nondenominational missions with a variety of architectural styles from vernacular, via Classical and Arts & Crafts Gothic to post-war. Chapters are both geographical, such as for Brierley Hill, Cradley Heath and Wolverhampton, as well as thematic, particularly anniversaries, banners and tin tabernacles. The weakness is the accompanying text, which includes histories of some of the chapels. Better editing would have helped and in places the language suggests unfamiliarity with Methodist terminology - altars and elders are not the Methodist norm and was Methodist Union 'reunification'? Further, although some architects are given, surely further

research would have provided more names.

As a photographic record of a rapidly declining chapel life, the book succeeds but the accompanying text fails to do it justice.

D COLIN DEWS

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*Robert Key, coal heaver and evangelist. More People called Methodists no.7* by Norma Virgoe (WHS Publications, 2004) pp.32. [£2.50, cheques payable to the Wesley Historical Society, available from Dr P. Forsaith, The Wesley Centre, Oxford Brookes University, Harcourt Hill Campus, Oxford, OX2 9AT]

The early expansion of Primitive Methodism owed a considerable amount to individuals operating in specific geographical areas. East Anglia was no exception where Robert Key (1805-1876) pioneered the work, especially in mid-Norfolk, and arguably contributed to its political impact where Primitive Methodists, such as Sir George Edwards M.P. (1850-1933), were very active in the 'revolt of the field' and agricultural trade unionism, although this link is not explored in the booklet. The main sources used by Virgoe are the increasingly scarce standard nineteenth-century biographies of Key, contemporary circuit records and newspapers. This booklet is most welcome as a reminder of the struggle and opposition such pioneers as Key had to face in establishing Primitive Methodism and it deserves a wide readership.

D COLIN DEWS

## LOCAL HISTORIES

*0 What Rich Supplies: The story of Newbiggin Chapel in 2003* by Mary Lowes. (40pp) 2004. Copies, £3.50 from the author at Flat 11, Abbeyfield House, Galgate, Barnard Castle, DL12 8BL.

*Beverley Methodism: Historical Sketches* by Eric W. Dykes. (56pp) 2004. Copies, £7.50 post free, from the author at 4 Oak Tree Close, Molescroft, Beverley, HU17 7QL.

*'Beauvale Prims' 1818-1889* by Jack Bronson. (88pp) 2000. Copies, £4.95 plus postage from Moorley's Print and Publishing, 23 Park Road, Ilkeston, Derbys. DE7 5DA

*Methodism in Boothstown [Lancs]* by K. Fairfax. (104pp A4). 2004. Copies £4.50 post free, from Paul Hassall, 183 Greenleach Lane, Worsley, Manchester, M28 2RR.

*Milnthorpe Methodist Church - Beyond the Century* by Peter Gaskins. (12pp) 2004. Copies, £2 post free from the author at 75 St James Drive, Burton in Kendal, Carnforth LA6 1HY.

*Thorner [Leeds] Methodist Church 1754-2004* by Tim Morris. (20pp) 2004. Copies £3 post free from the author at 2 Elmete Walk, Leeds, LS8 2LB.

*Sidwell Street Methodist Church, Exeter 1905-2005* by R.F.S.Thorne (ed).(16pp A4) Copies £1.50 from the editor at 50 Well Oak Park, Exeter, EX2 5BB

*Timsbury [Bath] Methodist Church: A Short History* by Ted Hudson. (18pp ) 2005. Copies £2.50 post free from the author at 11 Southlands Drive, Timsbury, Bath, BA2 OHB.

*Challenged by Change. Highgate Methodist Church, Wortley, Leeds 1855-2005* by D.C. Dews. (24pp) Copies, £1.50 post free from the author at 1 Dragon Drive, Leeds, LS12 4AS

*History of the Salem Church [ex MNC, Cheslyn Hay, Staffs] 1855-2005.* (38pp A4). 2005. Copies, £4.80 post free from Trevor McFarlane, 42 Station Road, Great Wyrley, Walsall WS6 6LQ.

*Living Stones: A History of Methodists in Eccleshall [Staffs]* by D. G. Kirby. 313pp 2003. Copies, £12.50 post free, from Pen Press Publishers Ltd, The Old School, 39 Chesham Road, Brighton, BN2 INB.



## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 1570 PRIMITIVE METHODIST DEACONESSES

In her book *Saved to Serve: the story of the Wesley Deaconess Order 1890-1978* (2002) Dorothy Graham states (p36) that 'there is little information about the Primitive Methodist Deaconesses', although correctly makes the connection between the Rev. James Flanagan (1851-1918), St. George's Hall, Old Kent Road, in the South East London Primitive Methodist Mission, and their Sisters of the Poor. R.W. Russell in his biography *The Life of James Flanagan* (nd) confirms this connection:

Flanagan conceived the idea of a Woman's Settlement and the Church engaged the service of Nurse Blackburn and Sister Louie. Their duties were to visit the sick, minister to the needy, influence children of the streets to attend the Sunday school, hold prayer-meetings in the homes of the people, and protect young women of the neighbourhood from the insidious temptations to which they were exposed. (p.147)

Denis Crane in his biography *James Flanagan* (1907) adds (p.158) that Flanagan 'felt called of God to do for the consecrated womanhood of the Church what the Rev. Joseph Odell's Evangelist home was doing for young men' and also continues with a description of their work.

St. George's Hall was opened 1900 but was badly damaged in the blitz and finally closed in 1962. Were the records of these Sisters of the Poor lost in the blitz? There is, however, a rich source for further research, namely the yearly mission reports from 1900; copies of some of these are to be found in the Englesea Brook Library.

*The Bridge of Compassion: the wonderful story of the South-East London Mission. Annual Report 1929* provides photographs of the then nine mission sisters but more importantly lists all those connected to the mission from 1901. Their name is stated, where they came from, the name by which they were designated, when they entered and when they left the settlement, and where they were now located. The very first was Sister Lucy Blackburn who came from Burnley, became a Sister in December 1901 and left in March 1903; by 1929 she was married. By 1929 sixty-four had served as Sisters of which eighteen had married. Most were still in Britain, of which fifteen still had London connections, but a few had gone abroad to Africa (3), Australia (1) and New Zealand (1), with another in Ireland. That some others were in such places as Bradford (1) and Sheffield (4) may be an indication that they were involved in those towns' missions; some were certainly in rural appointments, such as at Skipton and Watton. Finally, Sister Sarah A Ferguson who came from Acklington, was in the Settlement 1913 to 1915, was serving in the United Methodist Church in 1929.

The Sisters' Settlement, to house ten women was opened in 1914.

D COLIN DEWS

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1571 LOST ART - ARTHUR TREVETHIN NOWELL (1862-1940)

'I suppose I may claim to have painted more Wesleyans, ministerial and lay, than any living artist' So observed A.T. Nowell in an article in the *Methodist Recorder* in December, 1926. 'I began my career as a portrait painter with Charles Garrett, I fancy my fee was five guineas, I remember that the venerable minister gave me several sittings, and that he dozed most of the time'. But is the portrait once in Liverpool still to be found there today?

The Rev. John Nowell had four sons: The Rev. Joseph, Charles (lay preacher associated with Wilmslow), William (who died while at Kingswood School) and Arthur, the youngest, a most accomplished artist. In Methodist circles he was best known as a portraitist but his output included High Art (the vast 'Expulsion of Adam and Eve' from 1897 hangs in The Walker Art Gallery Liverpool) and watercolour landscapes. Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary both sat for him to celebrate new buildings at Methodist Schools.

The life and work of A.T. Nowell is not much documented but of interest and now the subject of research. His association and friendship with Burne-Jones and J. W. Waterhouse, being summoned by George Watts who congratulated him on his work, the time he spent in America in a studio prepared for him high up in the Singer building are all a part of his story. There is a website. A number of those Methodists 'ministerial and lay' are listed. Please check walls, vaults and attics! Any information of any kind would be most welcome, I have received much help but the search goes on.

CHRISTOPHER MOSLEY  
01536 771258  
[www.arthurnowell.com](http://www.arthurnowell.com)

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**Clerihew Corner**

The saintly John William Fletcher was certainly no lecher. He was such a slow tie-the-knotter that Mary quite thought he'd forgot her.

## WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Registrar:** Rev Donald H. Ryan M. Th., 15 Foxlands Drive, Lloyd Hill, Penn,  
Wolverhampton, WV4 5NB. Tel: 01902 335556

### NEW MEMBERS

<b>Mr Maurice R Coleman -</b>	<b>Ludlow</b>
<b>Mrs Lydia Gray BA (Hons) -</b>	<b>Parbold</b>
<b>Mr Donald R Sheane -</b>	<b>Wicklow</b>
<b>Mrs Jennifer Stutt -</b>	<b>Bangor Co Down</b>
<b>Miss Janet Watts -</b>	<b>Flitwick</b>

### DECEASED

<b>Mr William E Oldham -</b>	<b>Burnley</b>
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*The Popular History of Methodism* by John Telford. First published in 1897, Reprinted by professional copier 60 pages, paper back. £3.50 inclu' p/p from Methodist Books, 27 Riverside Close, Kingston upon Thames. KTI 2JG.

METHODIST BOOKS – bought and sold. Please send for lists enclosing SAE to 27 Riverside Close, Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 2JG.