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PRIMITIVE METHODIST CAMP MEETINGS IN SHROPSHIRE

Primitive Methodism began because Hugh Bourne and others wanted to hold camp meetings, as they were seen as the best way for conversion, going back to the 'Primitive Methodism' of Wesley's open air preaching. Little has been written about camp meetings in the nineteenth century. There is even less about their survival, despite decline, not just into the twentieth century, but throughout it. Shropshire was to be a major centre for Primitive Methodism. It was indeed in Shropshire on the Wrekin that Hugh Bourne held his second camp meeting. The first Sunday in May 1808 was chosen, as many local people were using the first non-working day in May to celebrate a pagan festival. A vast number also came to the camp meeting, where they experienced a very different kind of "awakening". Several weeks later Bourne and others were expelled from Wesleyan Methodism and Primitive Methodism began.

The Main Features of Camp Meetings in Shropshire in the Nineteenth Century

Preachers

In 1821, the Tunstall Primitive Methodist circuit sent out the first missionaries to Shropshire. In May 1822 Hugh Bourne came and led a camp meeting on Coalpit Bank close to the Wrekin. Here, 'souls were in distress.. and several were brought into liberty. In the afternoon thousands were present and two preaching stands were occupied'¹. This description suggests that one preacher would lead

¹ John Walford, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Hugh Bourne* (1855), Vol 2, p. 115.

the meetings like a chairperson, and others would assist in preaching and leading the prayers. The total number of preachers varied from one to nine, depending partly on their availability and partly on the size of the area (the usual number was between three and five). For instance, the 1852 preaching plan for the Ludlow circuit shows that Ludlow itself had seven preachers at its camp meeting on 27 June. However, the May and June camp meetings in rural societies in this circuit had four preachers, e.g.: Blackford (20 June) and Hope (13 June)². The preaching stands referred to above were sometimes actual stands built of wood used as pulpits, but often they were just carts, brought so that the preacher was raised up.

Often certain preachers would regularly lead camp meetings at certain sites, because they lived locally, were popular with recognised skills, or because they were one of the travelling preachers of the circuit. Women preachers also had a camp meeting role. Although not necessarily treated as equals, women's skills were recognised and used. For instance, a preacher called Mrs. Cooper preached at a camp meeting at Coton (Prees Green) in 1859³, and an entry in the Bishop's Castle circuit minutes said 'that sister Ellen Bower [should] attend Leamore Common camp meeting' (to preach) in May 1839⁴. This 'novelty.. drew crowds to - [the] meetings', and was an attraction which 'the Primitives were not slow to exploit'⁵.

Hearers

The 'crowds' who came, usually met at the local chapel first to have a procession to the camp ground. An account of the Wrockwardine Wood camp meeting of August 1839 says that 'first, we put all the Sunday scholars in order, processioned about twenty minutes, and then we proceeded to the camp ground'. After lunch, people would return to the site: 'and in the afternoon, this populous country appeared all on a move. The people came crowding in from every quarter, till the congregation soon consisted of about four thousand persons'⁶.

A similar description of an Oswestry camp meeting in May 1841 says that at a quarter-past eight, a large company assembled at the chapel, thence the three processioning companies proceeded to their respective

² Ludlow Branch Preaching Plan: May - June 1852, (Shropshire County Record Office, 3212/12/1/8). (in future SCRO, no. ...).

³ Prees Green Circuit Minutes: 1854 - 1859. Entry dated 13 June 1859 (SCRO, 2775/2).

⁴ Bishop's Castle Circuit Quarterly Meetings Minutes: 1830 - 1841. Entry dated 10 May 1839. (SCRO, 2138/41).

⁵ 'Chosen By God: The Female Travelling Preachers of Early Primitive Methodism'. E. Dorothy Graham. *Proceedings* 49, p. 81.

⁶ 'Extracts from John Moore's Journal' *Primitive Methodist Magazine* (in future PMM), 1842, p. 154 -155.

stations, viz., Beatrice Street, Lly's-Lane, and Pentre-Poeth: thus taking the three primary streets in those parts of the town. The companies met at the Market-Cross, where was held a short service.. then was formed one general procession, which proceeded up Willow Street, to the camp ground, and sang, prayed, and preached, without stopping. ...Those who had a view of the procession from the toll-gate, at the top of Willow Street, say that the street and the high road, were, for nearly an hour, covered with people.⁷

The processions and services were a great attraction, especially at a time when there were few social events and little entertainment. People would have been curious, and often joined the procession. The Oswestry account goes on to say that 'in different parts of the procession, there were singing, praying, and preaching, without one part suffering interruption from another; and all the while the procession was moving'⁸.

Having arrived at the camp meeting, the crowds would gather around the preaching stands, listening to people speak, or pray. Sermons and prayers would be promptly cut short by timekeepers, if they thought people's interest was being lost. The aim of the meeting was to encourage people to turn from their ways, and to accept forgiveness and salvation from Jesus. For instance, at the meeting at Oswestry in May 1841, 'the word preached had good effect; the praying companies were zealous and persevering; several sinners were converted to God and believers were filled with joy and peace'⁹. This account also says that 'some of the praying companies continued praying with mourners, [a word used by the Primitives to describe people who had recognised that they were sinners, but had not yet accepted forgiveness], several of whom found liberty'¹⁰.

Love-feasts

In the early years of Primitive Methodism, 'almost every Camp Meeting.. was followed by a love-feast, which ended up as a praying meeting, the latter harvesting the fruits of conversion which had been sown at the camp meeting and ripened at the love-feast.'¹¹ After the July 1838 camp meeting at Wellington, a love-feast was held at the chapel in the evening. 'The speaking was spiritual and short, and much power rested on us; many tears flowed; and, while

⁷ "An Account of the ... Tunstall District Meeting ... held at Oswestry." Richard Ward *PMM*, 1841, p. 433.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 444.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 444.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 443.

¹¹ Frank Baker. *Methodism and the Love-Feast*, (1957), p. 53.

in prayer at the close, seven or eight souls cried for mercy; one found liberty, and others were comforted, but some went away in distress'¹². This communal meal created an atmosphere of fellowship and spiritual revival. It encouraged and uplifted those already members of the society, and those touched by, or converted at, the camp meeting earlier in the day.

Children

The camp meeting regulations in the *Consolidated Minutes* stated that 'one sermon at the least must.. be preached directly to the children; for they are an important part of our trust'¹³. At the Wrockwardine Wood camp meeting in August 1838, the account says 'several sermons were preached before dinner, one of which was especially to the children'¹⁴. Each year, circuits were required to fill in schedules which included a question about whether they were fulfilling these and other camp meeting regulations. In the Ludlow circuit in 1856, 'proper attention [had] ... been paid to the camp meeting regulations'¹⁵. However, in the Bishop's Castle circuit in 1853 the answer was 'not in every case. In some instances a sermon to children has been omitted'¹⁶. Primitive Methodists recognised the importance of children and believed that salvation was available to all, not just adults.

Social Class

Those who came to the meetings tended to be working class, but from various different occupations and groups. For instance, accounts mention stone masons e.g: Richard Jukes, who later became a Primitive Methodist preacher¹⁷; women e.g: Mary Bennett, who was converted at a camp meeting at Hook Gate near Market Drayton in 1836¹⁸; farmers and farm labourers e.g.: in 1831, at a camp meeting in Knockin Heath near Llanymynech 'there were three thousand people present, among whom... were about forty respectable farmers'¹⁹; and miners e.g: at Oakengates, Wrockwardine Wood and on the Stiperstones in the Minsterley circuit.

¹² "Extracts from John Moore's Journal." *PMM*, 1842, p. 153.

¹³ *General Consolidated Minutes of the Primitive Methodist Connexion* (1849), p. 106.

¹⁴ "Extracts from John Moore's Journal" *PMM*, 1842, p. 153.

¹⁵ Ludlow Circuit Report, 1856, (SCRO, 5766/1/6/14).

¹⁶ Bishop's Castle Circuit Report, 1853, (SCRO, 2138/61).

¹⁷ J Pritchard, *The Poet of the Million or The Life of Rev. R. Jukes*, (1867), p. 17, (in future Jukes).

¹⁸ *PMM* 1872, p. 309.

¹⁹ G. Wedge, *The Llanymynech Circuit of the Methodist Church. 1878 to 1978*, p. 8.

Opposition

At times, opponents came to mock or disturb the meeting. For instance, in 1822 at the camp meeting held at Waterloo near Wem, 'a number of young sparks rode up...and seemed disposed to mock'. Thomas Bateman administered a reproof to them 'taking as his text the words: 'Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on..' every word.. seemed to find its mark.' Some later joined the Primitive Methodists²⁰.

Sites

Camp meetings were used throughout Shropshire, in every town and village, and were usually held in nearby open spaces, for instance, the Quarry in Shrewsbury, Whitcliffe Hill beside Ludlow, the Bull Ring at Oakengates, the Wrekin, Llyncllys Hill at Llanymynech, and the Cinder Hill near Donnington Wood blast furnaces. These sites were used because they were public pieces of land on which such events could legally take place. They would have been well-known to local people, and, as many of them are hills, they would have been seen from a large distance.

Meetings were frequently held beside rural chapels especially those which were away from towns and villages, or on the outskirts. Sometimes they were in the field of a generous local farmer. Often they were sited in places where there was no Primitive Methodist society, with the intention of forming a society as a result. For instance, around 1834, Wrockwardine Wood Circuit 'decided to try what effect would follow from holding a camp meeting' in Edgmond. In consequence, services were held in a house, and a small society was formed²¹. This shows how important camp meetings were in establishing Primitive Methodism in an area.

When they were held

Camp meetings were always held in the summer months in the hope of better weather. If it was wet, the meeting had to take place inside the chapel, so it would no longer be an open-air meeting and would attract fewer people. Sometimes the meetings for each society or chapel were held every year on the same day, for instance the third Sunday in June, or Whitsunday. They were not always held on Sundays. For instance, in the Prees Green circuit in 1847, a camp meeting was held on Whit Tuesday in Darliston, and there was one at Ellerdine Heath in June to be held on 'the second Saturday on the

²⁰ H. B. Kendall, *The History of the Primitive Methodist Church*. Vol 2, (n.d. [1906]), p. 284.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 275.

plan²². Camp meetings were also often held to celebrate special occasions e.g.: Bishop's Castle had a Connexional Jubilee camp meeting in May 1860, to celebrate fifty years since the original meeting²³. They were also planned to coincide with holidays e.g.: at Hinds Heath (Prees Green circuit) there was a meeting on the 'nearest Sunday to Midsummers Day' in 1846²⁴. This was partly because more people would be available to come, and partly because it would be a counter-attraction to unsuitable activities in the area.

Hymns and Music

Singing was a very important part of the meeting, which usually began with one or more hymns²⁵. It was also a main feature of the processions on the way to and from camp meetings, and was used because it moved people. A hymn which was regularly used was 'Hark! the gospel news is sounding'²⁶ written for camp meetings by William Sanders, an early Primitive Methodist preacher. Other hymns sung included 'Christ he sits on Zion's hill', and 'Come, oh come, thou vilest sinner'.

Richard Jukes of Clungunford, was one among others who were attracted to the Primitive Methodists in 1825 when they entered the village singing 'stirring hymns and lively airs'. These hymns had a great effect on the future Primitive Methodist minister, who became a well-known poet²⁷. Hymn singing was sometimes accompanied by various instruments. For instance, in June 1891, a brass band played at the united circuit camp meeting held at Oakengates²⁸. This would have helped the singing and would have uplifted those at the meeting, probably attracting others.

²² Prees Green Circuit Minute Book, 1837 to 1854 (SCRO, 2775/1).

²³ Bishop's Castle Plan, 1860. (SCRO, 2138/69).

²⁴ Prees Green Circuit Minute Book, 1837 to 1854 (SCRO, 2775/1).

²⁵ 'The camp meeting commenced in the usual way, with singing and praying.' "An account of the ... Tunstall District Meeting ... Held at Oswestry" R. Ward, *PMM*, 1841, p. 443.

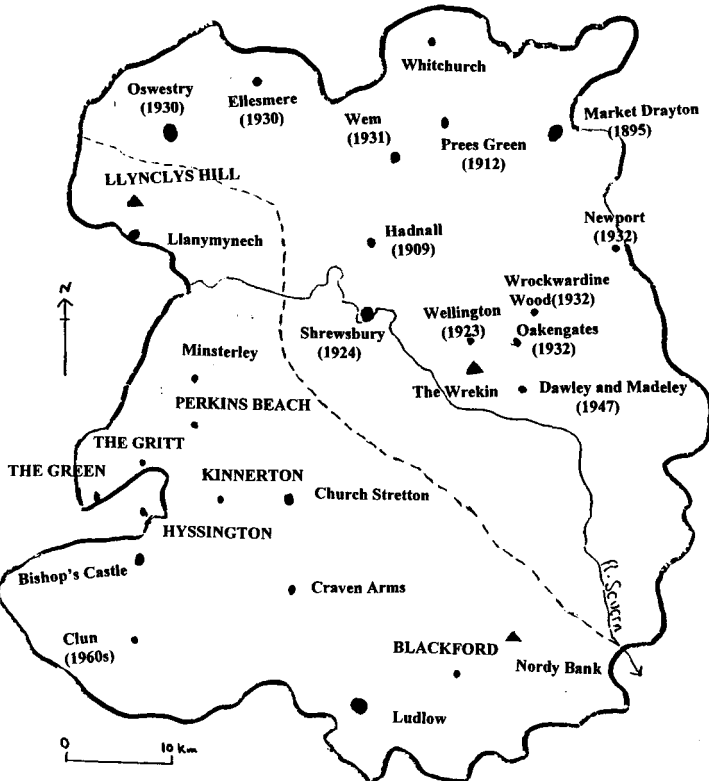
²⁶ 'Hark the gospel news is sounding;/ Christ hath suffered on the tree;
Streams of mercy are abounding;/ Grace for all is rich and free.
Now, poor sinner, now, poor sinner,/ Look to him who died for thee.
O escape to yonder mountain:/ Now begin to watch and pray;
Christ invites you to a fountain,/ Come, and wash your sins away:
Do not tarry, do not tarry,/ Come to Jesus while you may'
Primitive Methodist Hymnal, ed. by G. Booth. (1889) no. 262.

²⁷ Jukes op. cit., p. 5.

²⁸ Oakengates and Wellington P M Circuit Quaterly Meeting Minute Book. 1884 to 1893. (SCRO, 3038/1/3).

II Changes In Shropshire Camp Meetings 1880-1998 and Reasons For Their Decline

Camp Meetings in Shropshire



Key

Primitive Methodist Circuits in 1932 thus..... Wem
 Camp Meeting sites 1998.....BLACKFORD
 Hills where Camp Meetings were held.....▲
 Division between North and centre circuits
 and South and West circuits.....See Map
 Dates are last known date of Camp meetings in the Circuit named.

Declining numbers

By the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, the impetus of Primitive Methodism had begun to wane. The Primitives like other denominations, found their fortunes declining in Shropshire at this time, as agriculture and other industries (e.g: mining) collapsed and large numbers of people left the area looking for work. There was a steady fall in numbers in relation to the population, which led to Methodist Union in 1932.

“United” or “circuit” camp meetings

The first change was that in some rural areas, where only small numbers of people would attend camp meetings, nearby chapels would shut to go to the nearest meeting. This would have increased numbers, helped unite the chapels or societies, and would have eased any problems there may have been over having too few preachers. More often, especially in the later decades of the nineteenth century, meetings would be officially ‘united’ or ‘circuit’ camp meetings. For instance, the 1889 to 1903 Wem Circuit Minute Book records a ‘united camp meeting for Quina Brook and Coton in June’ and ‘that the united camp meeting be held as last year at Hampton Bank, on the most convenient Sunday in August’ 1896²⁹. Oakengates annually had circuit camp meetings in the 1880s and ‘90s, and in 1894 the circuit meeting was merged with Oakengates chapel meeting. This meeting ‘embraced the following societies: Oakengates, Old Park, Coalpit Bank, Snedshill, Beveley, Forge Row, and Mannerley Lane’³⁰. These would take the place of individual chapel meetings, especially in the more urban areas of the county, which shows that by the end of the century, open-air camp meetings were beginning to decline.

Fewer meetings

The second change was that fewer camp meetings were held each summer. But the fact that a smaller number took place also meant that fewer people were reached and converted, producing a spiral of decline. In different areas, camp meetings declined in different ways. For instance, in the Hadnall circuit there were regular camp meetings until 1898, but in the next eight years, only four were held³¹. In 1907 there was a centenary camp meeting. Also recorded in the minutes that year was the intention to ‘approach the Prees Green and Wem circuits regarding holding a joint circuit camp meeting.’ After 1909, there are no more references³² so the meetings died out early in Hadnall.

Plans for the Oswestry circuit are less clear regarding the end of camp meetings. In Oswestry itself, the last record of a meeting is in 1908, and by the time of the next record in 1917³³, they had stopped in the town. However, villages in the circuit such as Morda or Maesbury, tended to hold camp meetings until later in the century. For instance, in Morda a meeting was held annually, until the last in 1921, whereas the Bethesda

²⁹ Wem Circuit Minute Book 1889 to 1903, (SCRO, .2775/14).

³⁰ Oakengates and Wellington P M Circuit Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, 1884 to 1893 (SCRO, .3038/1/30).

³¹ Hadnall P M Circuit Quarterly Meeting minutes, 1889 to 1906. (SCRO, .2045/0/60).

³² Ibid. 1906 to 1923. (SCRO, .2045/61).

³³ Oswestry Circuit Plan, July to September 1908. (SCRO, .4219/4/41).

chapel in Maesbury held meetings up to 1930³⁴. Therefore the rural parts of circuits had camp meetings for longer. This deduction is backed up by the situation in Bishop's Castle and Clun circuit which joined together in the year the three national Methodist Churches united (1932). Camp meetings had been taking place throughout the nineteenth century in the old Bishop's Castle circuit. Several continued after union until the 1960s e.g: Bishop's Castle itself³⁵, but in the villages around, many survived later into the century, and three up to the present day - Mainstone, Green and Old Church Stoke (although only Green is still an open-air meeting).

Geographical distribution

As Bishop's Castle is in the south of the county, this leads to another deduction: that circuits in the north and the centre of Shropshire have tended to give up holding camp meetings much earlier in the century than those in the south and west. For instance, as early as the last few years of the nineteenth century, Wem circuit was holding several united camp meetings each summer, rather than separate chapel meetings, as in previous years. By 1898, the most important of these united meetings was the one on Hampton Bank, uniting Welshampton, Lyneal, Northwood and Bettisfield. This had become the only one by 1914, and continued until 1923³⁶. It is difficult to find reasons for this early decline, as the circuit is relatively rural. However, Wem was perhaps less rural and poor, and more open to influence from nearby towns such as Market Drayton, from which local preachers would have come to the circuit.

The Oakengates and Wellington circuit also fits into the theory. Here, five or six camp meetings continued into the early twentieth century, and although there were none from 1905 to 1907, there was a circuit meeting at Leegomery in 1908, but this was the last³⁷. The South Shropshire circuit (formerly Ludlow) follows a similar pattern. By the twentieth century, only a small number of camp meetings survived, the most important of which was at Nordy Bank. In 1909, the Minute Book recorded that there was a 'spiritual depression in this circuit, and [a] lack of real interest.. resulting in the falling off of attendance'. By 1917, there were fewer camp meetings, with circuit rallies instead.³⁸

³⁴ Ibid. July to September 1921. (SCRO, .4219/4/165).

Ibid. July to September 1930. (SCRO. 4219/4/200).

³⁵ Bishop's Castle and Clun Circuit Plan, April to July 1960. (SCRO, .4942/3/12/105).

³⁶ Wem Primitive Methodist Circuit Minute Book, 1889 to 1903. (SCRO, .2775/14).

Ibid. 1904 to 1912 (SCRO, .2775/15).

Ibid. 1923 to 1940 (SCRO, .2775/17).

³⁷ Oakengates and Wellington Primitive Methodist Circuit Quarterly Meeting Minute Book, 1900 to 1913. (SCRO, .3038/1/8).

³⁸ Peaton Strand Primitive Methodist Circuit Minute Book, 1908 to 1928 (SCRO, .3544/6/2).

Camp meetings after 1950

Throughout Shropshire in general membership declined slowly to the 1960s, followed by a rapid decline to the 1990s. A good example of this is Minsterley Circuit with 290 members in 1900, only dropping to 287 in 1932 and 248 in 1961. But by 1991, the figure had fallen to 162³⁹. It is also a good example because only one Wesleyan chapel joined the circuit after Methodist Union (Pontesbury Hill), so even after 1932, the circuit was still largely ex-Primitive. An important cause of the decline of Primitive Methodism was that the gap between the higher and lower groups in society was decreasing. Primitive Methodism appealed mainly to the lower classes, so as the numbers who fitted into this band fell, those who aspired to be middle-class would not have wanted to be linked to a religious movement of working-class origin.

As the century wore on, developments occurred in those meetings that survived, but they also retained many of the features of meetings in the previous century. There were still processions to many of the camp meetings which were not situated outside the chapel. In the Shropshire South circuit in the 1950s 'the [children].. met for the three mile trek over the hill for the open-air meeting.. on Nordy Bank,..high up on the slopes of the Brown Clee Hill. It was always a pleasure to arrive early.. and watch the people coming up the hill... Large crowds could be seen wending their way up as far as half a mile away'⁴⁰. Before the 1917 meeting at Maesbrook in the Llanymynech circuit, there was a 'Procession of Witness' from the chapel 'to a field in the Wood - five minutes distance'⁴¹. To reach the camp meeting on Llyncllys Hill (the only remaining meeting in the Llanymynech circuit), those attending had to walk up the hill, past people's gardens, so their owners would make sure they were tidy!⁴²

Sites and Seating

These reminiscences show how varied the camp meeting sites were. For instance, Wrockwardine Wood chapel camp meeting was held on the Cinder Hill below the chapel, until the early 1930s⁴³. At Nordy Bank, the meeting was 'held on the top where there was about two acres of flat ground, mostly covered in fern'⁴⁴. 'Since the early 1900s, [the Maesbrook] camp meetings were held in a field adjoining

³⁹ *PM Minutes* 1900 and 1932. *Minutes* 1932. Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District Manuals 1962 and 1992, courtesy of Mrs. M. Swaffield, District Archivist.

⁴⁰ Mr. G. Bytheway, Ludlow Circuit.

⁴¹ Rev. R. Ward Davies, formerly Superintendent, Knighton Circuit.

⁴² Mrs Rogers, Llanymynech Circuit.

⁴³ A member of the Wrockwardine Wood Methodist Church congregation.

⁴⁴ Mr. G. Bytheway.

the chapel, under a very large oak tree (the Gospel oak)⁴⁵. In the Minsterley circuit, those going to the Perkins Beach meeting 'paraded around the village..[to] the camp site' whose location varied between 'Marble Place, Bush Hill, or Black Hill down by the chapel'⁴⁶, (now the site is the school yard).

Seating arrangements depended on each individual site's distance from the chapel. Those situated nearby were able to use seats from inside, e.g.: at Blackford in 1993, pews were taken out to the graveyard where the meeting was conducted⁴⁷. At the Old Church Stoke camp meetings in the Bishop's Castle Circuit, there would be tiers of seats made from bales of hay from a farm, arranged in a nearby garden, or loose seats from the chapel would be taken to a field for the meeting.⁴⁸

Attendance

Most of the people who attended, came from the chapel holding the meeting, or from those nearby, e.g: the afternoon services at Cockshufford and Clee St. Margaret chapels were cancelled, so that the congregation could go to the Nordy Bank camp meetings. In Bishop's Castle, people from Gritt, Hyssington and Stoke would join, but this has only tended to happen recently, as the number of meetings in the circuit has fallen. The camp meeting at Butler's Bank in the Wem and Prees Green Circuit was attended by members of various local villages and chapels, including Moreton Mill, Stanton on Hine Heath, Ellerdine, and Hopton.⁴⁹

People who did not come to church were also likely to come to the meetings. In Bishop's Castle Circuit, such people would come and be 'on the fringe' - standing on the road, looking over the fence and joining in the singing⁵⁰. At Llanymynech Circuit camp meeting (Llyncllys Hill), people did not tend to come from outside the circuit, especially in the early part of the century because of a lack of transport⁵¹. This problem, however, did not seem to bother some people, e.g.: Arthur Taylor (Wrockwardine Wood) remembered his grandfather reminiscing about a camp meeting at the Quarry in Shrewsbury around the turn of the century: he and two friends wanted to go, but there was no train, so they walked. As it was a hot day, they sat down when they got to the meeting, fell asleep, and did not wake up until after the meeting had finished!

⁴⁵ Rev. R. Ward Davies.

⁴⁶ Mrs. Emily Griffiths, Local Preacher, Minsterley Circuit.

⁴⁷ Mr. Ken James, Society Steward, Blackford Chapel.

⁴⁸ Mrs. Emma Powell, Local Preacher, and Rev. Roger Moore, Superintendent, both Bishop's Castle Circuit.

⁴⁹ Mrs. Evans, Isombridge Farm. N. Telford Circuit.

⁵⁰ Mrs. Emma Powell.

⁵¹ Mrs. Rogers.

Preaching stands

As in the nineteenth century, preaching stands would be erected on the site. Different sources describe these in different ways, e.g: Mrs Evans (Isombridge Farm) describes there being farm carts at the Butler's Bank camp meeting in the Wem and Prees Green Circuit. Reminiscences from members of the congregation of Wrockwardine Wood Chapel, say that two haywagons or flatwagons were used (one for the preacher, and the other for the harmonium) at the Old Park camp meetings. Mrs Emily Griffiths also described farm wagons being used as pulpits at Perkins Beach, and that the morning service, with two preachers, was mainly for the Sunday School children.

Music

Music at camp meetings continued to be an important feature of camp meetings in the twentieth century. Often there was no musical accompaniment for the hymn singing, especially in places where the camp ground was some distance from the chapel. For instance, George Bytheway in Ludlow said that as there was no accompaniment for the meeting on Nordy Bank 'someone had to start the singing, and then everyone would join in'. The hymns they sang were usually written by Moody and Sankey, or were Revival Songs. He also described what takes place at the meetings at Blackford, still going on, saying that seats and a small organ are brought out of the chapel and hymns are chosen from the *Methodist Hymn Book* (1933).

At Perkins Beach in 1928, Mr. Corfield, compete with tuning fork, led the singing⁵². On Llyncllys Hill (Llanymynech), 'a very small harmonium was carried' from the chapel, but more recently, members of the nearby Porthywaen Silver Brass Band have accompanied the singing at times, whether the rain has driven them to hold the camp meeting in the Band Hall, or whether it has been on the hill. At The Green Chapel in the Bishop's Castle Circuit, it has been known for a Brass Band or a guitar to be used in recent years, another change. They sang hymns from the *Methodist Hymn Book*, and from the old Primitive Methodist Hymn Book, songs such as 'Blessed Assurance', and others with rousing choruses⁵³. The use of hymn book or hymn sheets are mentioned in people's reminiscences and in Circuit Plans, and that though there were not always enough to go round, many people would know the words, or at least the tune.

⁵² *Shropshire Within Living Memory*. Compiled by Shropshire Federation of Women's Institutes, (1992).

⁵³ Mrs. Emma Powell.

Reasons for continued decline

The decline of camp meetings in Shropshire was caused by many factors. Circuits faced problems, especially chapel debts and tried to raise money rather than evangelise the area. The move to single minister stations i.e.: one minister per circuit, already under way in the nineteenth century, meant that the individual minister had more licence to cease holding the traditional camp meeting if he so wished. Camp meetings were seen as out of date, to be replaced by circuit gatherings, open-air rallies with visiting speakers, or evening meetings inside chapels. As those who were members became older, so the pressure for not having camp meetings became stronger. Camp meetings had to be held with only one preacher. The Superintendent of the Bishop's Castle and Clun Circuit in 1950 explained in the plan that this was because there were so few preachers available.⁵⁴

The Nordy Bank camp meeting ended 'because the older people died, others moved away, and there were other distractions', presumably including the cinema, more transport, and television. The Clew Stanton camp meeting was brought to an end 'in 1958.. by the disapproval of the minister and church officials at that time, as it was thought that churches were cancelling services, and so depriving the churches.. and circuit of their collections'⁵⁵. Bad weather was also a significant factor, especially for older congregations. Some areas had particular factors e.g: the chapel at the Green (Bishop's Castle Circuit), which was on the main road. After the 1950s, the increase in traffic discouraged them from holding the meetings outside, so that the speaker did not have to compete with the noise. Some chapels still officially hold camp meetings, although the service is inside except for one hymn, a symbolic gesture!

With the Primitive Methodists' integration into Methodism in 1932, it was likely that the merger of Wesleyans and Primitives in each circuit would lead to a decline in camp meetings. This hypothesis was confirmed by those circuits that still hold camp meetings - Shropshire South, Minsterley, Bishop's Castle and Clun, and Llanymynech. Nearly all the chapels in each of these circuits are ex-Primitive. Therefore, partly because they were less affected by Wesleyan influences, some of their camp meetings continued up to the present day. However this deduction does not necessarily fit with the other circuits in the county, as a number of the Primitive

⁵⁴ Bishop's Castle and Clun Methodist Circuit plan, July to October 1950, (SCRO, .4942/3/66).

⁵⁵ Mr. G. Bytheway.

circuits gave up holding meetings, before union, e.g: Hadnall stopped in 1909, and the Wem and Prees Green Circuits had stopped holding any other than united meetings by 1920 and 1921 respectively.

Camp meetings today

Shropshire was a stronghold of Primitive Methodism. Brief research into other parts of the country has shown that the changes and decline in Shropshire camp meeting were typical, as camp meetings are also continuing in a number of other rural counties where Primitive Methodism was strong. These camp meetings include Cloud, near Mow Cop, south-east of Congleton in Cheshire, which is the earliest surviving Primitive Methodist Chapel⁵⁶, Old Hutton in Kendal, where a meeting is annually held on a farm, and five in the Sedbergh Circuit in Cumbria, three of which are held in ex-Wesleyan chapels, possibly because these united with Primitive chapels in the same town, but the Wesleyan chapel was the one to survive, and the meetings themselves appear to be more like Chapel Anniversaries in the open air in Sedbergh⁵⁷; camp meetings are also still held near Cirencester in the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire⁵⁸.

Camp meetings were a main reason for the rise of Primitive Methodism, and their survival in some areas confirms their importance, despite Methodist Union and a very different social and economic climate by the end of the twentieth century. These meetings have become less important in Methodism in recent decades and it is therefore surprising that a small number have survived into the late 1990s. Shropshire Camp Meetings are still held at Blackford (Clee Hill) in Shropshire South, Llyncllys Hill in Llanymynech (a Circuit camp meeting where the whole Circuit comes together for Whitsunday), Perkins Beach in the Minsterley Circuit and the Green, Kinnerton, and the Gritt Chapels and at Todleth Farm, near Hyssington, in the Bishop's Castle and Clun Circuit.

ESTHER J. LENTON

(Since this was written Esther Lenton has gained a Degree in Music at Oxford University and is working in publishing. This article is taken from her A-Level History coursework for AEB, June 1994 at New College, Telford, slightly updated.)

⁵⁶ Mr. E. Alan Rose.

⁵⁷ Mr. E. A. Leteve, Cumbria District Archivist.

⁵⁸ The late Mr. Laurie Gage.

CHARLES WESLEY JUNIOR: A PORTRAIT BY JOHN RUSSELL R.A.

The recent acquisition of a picture by John Russell R. A. (1745-1806)¹ of Charles Wesley Junior (1757-1834) as a boy may be said to complete in Methodist hands a group of portraits of Charles Wesley's family painted by Russell in or about 1771, the year the family removed from Bristol to London.



This picture is in oils on canvas, clearly signed and dated 'J. Russell 1771' and possibly in its original frame: young Charles is seated at a keyboard (the perspective of which does not continue satisfactorily through the painting), right hand resting on the keys, left turning the music - as yet the score is unidentified. The composition is carefully and successfully considered: against a plain ground with imperfectly painted drapery (the eye is not permitted to be distracted by other features on the canvas) the boy contrasts gorgeously in his 'Van Dyck' costume which was a popular conceit in mid-eighteenth century portraiture most famous through Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*. Two areas of *peintimenti* suggest that Russell worked hard to pay attention to the detail:

¹ For details of John Russell see my article in *Proceedings*, 47 p 190.

evidently the right hand was originally posed over, not on, the keys, and the head was higher suggesting that the artist had some difficulty with the proportions of head and neck. Examination of the 1777 picture of Charles Junior suggests he was long-necked, and the one likeness of young Sally shows similarly.

It must be admitted that the case for the identity of the sitter of this portrait as Charles Junior is not entirely proven. The picture has been known for some time (though its whereabouts latterly lost; it has been in private ownership in North America - a welcome reversal of the trend for historic items to travel the Atlantic westwards) and generally accepted to be of Charles. But this does not look convincingly like a fourteen year old, and contrasts with the confident pose of the foppish young gentleman portrayed six years later by Russell - again seated at a keyboard. Yet that picture which, with its companion of his brother Samuel Wesley (3), hangs in the Royal Academy of Music nearly opposite Methodist Church House in Marylebone Road shows that Charles had inherited his mother's nose while Samuel's was a Wesley face. The case for it to be young Charles is very strong but more research will hopefully make it complete.

The portrait of Charles Wesley himself (also s/d 1771) has long been at the Mission House/Methodist Church House; a companion painting of Sarah, neither signed nor dated, has hung in the New Room Bristol and can confidently be attributed to Russell - especially given comparison now in style and treatment with that of Charles Junior which also helps date it to this period. The facial likeness in particular is striking.

The painting of young Samuel playing (left-handed) a violin or viola is also generally attributed to Russell and would seem to be nearly contemporary with the move to London, but perhaps a year or two later. When Russell painted him in 1777 he was again wearing (presumably) the suit of court scarlet Telford records² and again with the pipework of an organ in the background. There is another painting of him - the features are unmistakable - in private hands which is attributed to Nathaniel Hone, and which was given to the present owner's forebears in payment for a wine debt!

It would be too much to hope that a picture of young Sally will ever come to light: the only known likeness of her is as a somewhat ungainly young lady in Claxton's *Holy Triumph*, John Wesley's deathbed scene, and where Claxton obtained that image is a mystery, though her long-necked appearance could suggest an early source³. Yet she was closest in many ways to John Russell, and it must be unthinkable that she would not have sat to him. Maybe he made her likeness more sensitively in crayons, at which he excelled, but which have not stood so well the passage of time.

² J. Telford: *Life of Charles Wesley* (1900).

³ See Pointon: *Hanging the Head* Yale (1993) p 44.

Portraits of the Wesley family present a fascinating area for study: one day perhaps the attractive and apparently authentic portraits of Revd. Samuel Wesley and Revd. John Westley (John and Charles' father and grandfather respectively) which were unsold at a Christies auction in 1965 will re-emerge, and we shall have better knowledge of what the Rector of Epworth looked like rather than the curious hatted and sceptred figure from the frontispiece of his *Commentary on Job*, of which the greater curiosity is being by the leading engraver George Vertue.

For Charles Wesley's family, linked intrinsically to the musical, literary and artistic circles of their time, these pictures offer an attractive 'family album' showing them as the sensitive, talented and very human people that they were; and we have a debt of gratitude to the skills of 'Mr Russell' for whom these children in particular must have made such appealing subjects.

PETER FORSAITH

BOOK REVIEWS

The Art of Piety - The Visual Culture of Welsh Nonconformity, by John Harvey (University of Wales Press - Cardiff 1995, pp. 102, £10.95. ISBN 0 7083 1298 5).

The book starts with a quotation from *The Rise and Decline of Welsh Nonconformity* (Viator Cambrensis 1912) which suggests that Nonconformity suppressed the finest element in the Welsh character and disregarded the symbolism of worship. By contrast, John Harvey contends that Welsh Nonconformist art is at least a handmaiden to religion by the use of stained-glass windows, painted unfurled scrolls bearing Biblical texts, colourful Sunday School banners along with church architecture and fittings.

The opening chapter shows the influence of John Calvin on Welsh Nonconformist art. Calvin said that painting and sculpture were gifts from God to be used to God's glory and for man's good. Welsh Calvinistic Nonconformity took much more seriously his instruction that all images, other than the living symbols of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, should be excluded from places of Christian worship. Whilst much of eighteenth and nineteenth century Welsh Nonconformist worship and architecture with the central pulpit and communion table in front would be equally true of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism, Harvey doesn't acknowledge the contribution of non-Calvinistic Nonconformity, especially the influence of the English language churches.

Harvey only gives a passing reference to one of the most conspicuous examples of the Nonconformist art contribution to the street scene, the

chapel building. The architectural style of the outside of the chapel is often outstanding. It is a pity that these examples of Nonconformist art which range in style from the pure line of the small and well cared-for unadorned chapel through many styles including gothic revival, classical revival, twentieth century renaissance, and modern are not highlighted.

We are reminded that Matthew Henry in *A Church in the House: A Sermon concerning Family-Religion* tells his hearers that their homes should be consecrated to God and be employed in his service. This concept of the family worshipping together at the table or by the hearth meant that the home should reflect their faith by being adorned with text-bearing artefacts such as lithographs, earthenware plaques, tapestries and samplers. Staffordshire figurines, busts and prints of famous Welsh preachers such as Christmas Evans, John Elias, the Welsh Wesleyan Methodist minister John Bryan, and John Wesley were to be found in the homes of the faithful. The texts, artefacts and representations of the preachers were a reminder to the occupants and visitors that they should remain loyal to the faith and follow the example and preaching of the ministers. Whilst the growth of religious pottery made at the Llanelli pottery by the Nonconformist immigrants from Staffordshire is noted there is no mention of the Wesley bust they also made. The Swansea pottery, which produced many plaques, plates and crockery with prints of John Wesley as well as pious and moral pictures, is not mentioned.

In the section on 'Art in the Service of Commemoration' we are shown examples of how the Calvinistic Welsh Nonconformists overcame their theological reluctance to have images by erecting statues of the famous chapel and national leaders such as Daniel Rowland, Thomas Charles, and Thomas Charles Edwards. Harvey suggests that they possibly took their lead from the English Methodists who had commissioned and erected the 'Manning' statue of John Wesley around 1830. The Victorian dislike of plainness gave rise to the putting transfer pictures of chapels on crockery. It was a sort of family crest or corporate image. Harvey illustrates this with examples of Welsh chapel crockery and the Primitive Methodist Connexion Centenary plates of 1907 and 1910 although he does not mention the Primitive Methodist plates of 1830. When you go into many Welsh Nonconformists chapels you will find an array of pictures and photographs of ministers and preachers. In the later nineteenth century a composite photograph was produced which contained '74 Famous Men of the Welsh Pulpit'. The Wesleyan Methodists also produced a composite photograph with John Wesley surrounded by sixty-five Welsh Methodist ministers.

There is a very useful chapter on 'Art in the Service of Teaching' in which we are reminded of the use of art in teaching and preaching. The use of illustrated Welsh Bibles, devotional books, merit certificates, paintings and prints in the home and Sunday school are illustrated but

there is no mention of the great contribution of the lending library which was such a feature of many Nonconformist chapels both Calvinist and Wesleyan. John Harvey ends by noting the contribution to art by Welsh Nonconformist artists and concludes that the Nonconformist 'art of piety was made for utility, a means to an end and not an end in itself'. This book is a very valuable contribution to understanding something of Welsh Nonconformity but there is not just one but many cultures and influences that makes Wales what it is. This book is written from a Calvinistic standpoint and does not fully appreciate the distinction and contribution of the non-Calvinistic Nonconformist denominations, both Welsh and English speaking, to the chapel scene, art and culture.

DONALD H RYAN

Modern Methodism in England 1932-1998 by John Munsey Turner (*Exploring Methodism* series Epworth Press, 116pp., 1998, £9.95. ISBN 0 7162 0512 2)

In an earlier historical work (*Conflict and Reconciliation* 1985) John Munsey Turner confessed that its last chapter was existential rather than historical since it dealt with events in which he had been actively involved. On this basis the book under review here might be said to be almost entirely existential since its time-span virtually matches the author's own life so far, and its subject matter has in various ways been familiar to him since childhood. Sharp observation and a retentive memory come to his aid in telling this story, deeply enriched of course by his own mature scholarship. The result is a fine piece of writing, though one which through its contemporaneity is inevitably individual, and to some extent partial.

How does he come at his task? The introduction offers a largely sociological snapshot of twentieth-century Methodist membership and church life and then follow two broad chronological surveys 1932-1950 and 1950-1998 (which might fruitfully be read alongside two chapters in *H.M.C.G.B.* vol. iii (1983) by Mr Turner himself (1900-1932) and Rupert Davies (1932-1980). The author's broad historical survey in the volume under review here ranges from the high hopes of Union in 1932 (soon to be disappointed) to debates on sexuality and the affirmation by Conference in 1993 of the full acceptance of lesbians and gay men in the life of the Church. His touch in these two chapters is deft and admirable, with personal memory and historical insight coming together to throw vivid shafts of light on connexional thinking and grassroots realities. Chapter 4 continues in this vein but with especial emphasis on the impact made on church thinking by war, world politics and movements for social and racial equality.

From here onwards Mr Turner adopts a more ecclesiastical stance

with chapters respectively on the Methodist emphases today (the four 'Alls' with a fifth added), Methodist worship and preaching, ecumenism, young people in the life of the Church, and scholarship. The first of these has a somewhat different style of writing from the rest of the book and may well have originated in a series of sermons. In the other chapters our author shares with us his enthusiasm for hymnody and liturgy (with a good deal of historical background), for ecumenism, for work with the young, and especially for the scholarly writings of Methodist authors. The latter suggests the thought that in retirement, or even in Heaven itself, John Munsey Turner will be happy to have within easy reach a well-filled shelf of books by Gordon Rupp, Kingsley Barrett, Rupert Davies, Newton Flew and Herbert Butterfield, whose names, with quotations from their writing, are generously sprinkled through the pages of this volume.

One is almost tempted to say that, despite Mr Turner's commitment to the mission of the Church in the world, he offers in this volume a somewhat olympian view of the Methodist story in modern times. This is not to say that he does not believe in evangelism, and he includes, in his list of ways in which Methodism can exercise an important continuing role, the unequivocal commitment to mission. But it seems that he has more sympathy with the outreach represented by Donald Soper than (to quote contrasted examples) by Cliff College or the Urban Theology Unit.

Following Barry Tabraham's book on Wesley, John Munsey Turner's book is a stimulating addition to the *Exploring Methodism* series. It is learned, bold, admirably clear, written both from heart and head, and will be read by all who have an intelligent desire to know where Methodism has been heading over the last sixty years and how it might fare in the years to come.

The book follows the standard format of the series - an attractive flexicover, ninety-six pages of text, with a 'boxed' quotation to illuminate the subject matter on almost every page. Each chapter has suggested questions for discussion, and at the end of the book are notes, bibliography, and suggestions for further reading.

GEOFFREY MILBURN

The Scripture Way of Salvation, by Kenneth J. Collins. (Abingdon Press, 1997, \$18.95. ISBN 0 687 00962 6.)

The American renaissance of Wesley studies continues unabated. It has given us a stream of new and varied perspectives on Wesley. This present work is dedicated to Wesley's understanding of the 'way of salvation' which it expounds in fine and delicate detail and distinction, using the sermons, the letters, the minutes of the early Conferences and

the occasional writings in abundance. It represents both an intellectual *tour de force* and a mine of useful information. We have, for example, very clear expositions of the nature of repentance in enquirers seeking pardon and justification and the nature of 'evangelical repentance' characteristic of justified believers. We have an explanation of Wesley's understanding of 'works of mercy' as real means of grace. His emphasis on the importance of the moral law is given prominence. His carefully nuanced theology of 'works' or 'fruits' as 'remotely' necessary to sanctification, in contrast to the direct necessity of faith, is expounded with great clarity and thoroughness.

The title of the book is, of course, taken from one of Wesley's sermons. It indicates the author's concern to present Wesley as a biblical theologian first and foremost. He is clearly suspicious of those who claim that Wesley's theology was primarily experiential. He does, however, allow for the influence of tradition, reason and pastoral experience on his biblical interpretation. One feels that his claim for Wesley as a theologian of the order of salvation is more compellingly argued than his claim for Wesley as a thoroughly biblical theologian. Though there are some fascinating references to particular points of Wesley's exegesis, one feels more attention could have been given to this. There is, I think, a tendency to overlook the way in which traditional interpretations moulded Wesley's thought. Thus, in the very clear initial chapter on grace, creation and the fall of humanity, Wesley's essentially Augustinian presuppositions are clearly recorded without it being admitted that there are other ways, e.g. the Irenaean, of interpreting the biblical evidence.

Collins rightly refers to the ecumenical potential of Wesley's theology. He is right to warn against selective readings of Wesley which can end up presenting him in a distorted way as, for example, a Catholic or a low church evangelical. One feels, however, that he is a little too indulgent to Wesley's presuppositions. I think he is probably right in seeing the emphasis on the gradual in the work of salvation in Wesley's thought as largely relating to the human search for or response to grace, and the emphasis on the instantaneous as relating to Wesley's understanding of the sudden work of grace in the soul. However, I am not sure that we should necessarily continue to tie down the mysterious dialectic of divine grace and human response in quite this way. Collins' interpretation of Wesley is clearly a rather conservative one. His exposition is stimulating and full of insight. Students of Wesley's thought on the order of salvation will find it an invaluable tool, but should be aware of its presuppositions.

SHORTER NOTICES

James Hamilton of Dunbar, Physician and Preacher by M. Batty (WMHS 1998 pp iv, 68, £2.75 post free from 1A School Lane, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7ED)

James Hamilton (1741-1827) was born in Dunbar and followed his father into the medical profession. As a young surgeon's mate in the Navy he was converted to Methodism, becoming a local preacher on his return to Scotland, despite the pressures of the Kirk. After half-a-century in Scotland and four turbulent years in Leeds, he settled in London with his third wife and joined the congregation at City Road, working as a physician until within a few weeks of his death. His career has been painstakingly reconstructed by Dr Batty in this fascinating and varied account, which includes Hamilton's prescription for Mrs James Everett in 1822. The price represents very good value indeed.

Some Lincolnshire Methodists by William Leary. (1998, ppvi, 65. £2.40 post free from the author at 7 Balder Court, Scartho Park, Grimsby, DN33 3RD)

What do Henry Bett, Henry Lunn, Alexander Kilham and Margaret Thatcher's father have in common? All were Lincolnshire Methodists and so find a place in William Leary's gallery of almost a hundred pen portraits which range from Richard Abey the Primitive Methodist itinerant to Hugh Wyatt, five times mayor of Lincoln. But where is Sir Robert Perks?

Miscellany 1 (Chapels Society, 1998, ppiv, 73, illus. Copies £7.00 post free from Joy Rowe, Haughley Grange, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 3QT)

The Chapels Society has marked its tenth year by publishing three contrasting papers. As Clyde Binfield says in his introduction, they 'explore a building, a type and an architect'. The building is Norwich Roman Catholic Cathedral, whose building history is expertly described by Anthony Rossi and the building type is that of the Great Meeting House of Old Dissent magisterially described and dissected by Christopher Stell, but it is N. D. Wilson's survey of William John Hale (1862-1929) the Sheffield architect that will perhaps be of most interest to our readers. Hale was a cradle Wesleyan who designed a number of striking chapels in the Sheffield area. Most notably he was responsible for the final appearance and decoration of the Victoria Hall, Sheffield, opened in 1908. All three papers are generously illustrated and the book as a whole is elegantly printed and presented.

J. Arthur Rank. The Man Behind the Gong by Michael Wakelin (Lion Paperback 1997. pp 248 [7], £6.99)

This is the third biography of Arthur Rank to be published since 1952 but the first to explore his complex relationship with Methodism. His daughter Shelagh apparently burned all his papers when he died; as a result Wakelin has had to rely largely on some fifty interviews and paints a portrait of a man who at heart was a 'curious mixture of dullness and charm, sacred and profane, frugality and extravagance, sociability and seclusion'. A readable biography with many sidelights on twentieth-century Methodism, especially aspects of Home Missions.

Three Colleges. Primitive Methodist Secondary Educational Ventures by E. D. Graham (8th Chapel Aid Lecture, 1998, pp 56. £3.50 post free from Rev Dr S. G. Hatcher, 25 Queens Avenue, Tunstall, ST6 6EE)

The three colleges of the title are Elmfield College, York, Bourne College, Birmingham and the short-lived Ladies College, Clapham, which together made up the extent of Primitive Methodism's public schools. Dr Graham has given us the first connected account of these schools, none of which survived Methodist Union, drawn largely from printed official sources, supplemented with some manuscript material from Bourne College. This is an important and original contribution to our knowledge of Primitive Methodism as it moved into its 'mahogany age'.

E. A. R.

H. B. Kendall's *History of Primitive Methodism* is still the indispensable starting point for many aspects of Primitive Methodist history. The index, however, leaves much to be desired. This has now been partly remedied by the indefatigable William Leary, who has produced an index to lay people in Kendall. Copies are £1.00 each from Mr Leary at 7 Balder Court, Scartho Park, Grimsby, DN33 3RD.

The Index to Volume 51 of *Proceedings* will be issued with the May issue, along with the usual Methodist Bibliography.

NOTES AND QUERIES

1521 THE NEWCASTLE ORPHAN HOUSE PLAQUE

The Orphan House plaque has now been replaced. Like the older one, which was stolen some time ago, it is placed on the front wall of Barratt's shoe shop on Northumberland Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Barratt's shop stands on part of what was the forecourt of the Orphan

House, which stood back from the street. The wording of the plaque (identical to that on the original) is as follows:
 JOHN WESLEY / erected on this site / in 1743 "THE ORPHAN HOUSE"
 / headquarters of / Methodism in / the North.

Above this text are the words 'ORPHAN HOUSE TRUST' and below 'CITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE'. The city authorities actually supplied the plaque but the eventual cost is expected to be borne by the Trust, which receives a modest annual income from the properties now occupying the old Orphan House site. The monies received are normally disbursed to local charities and to the young people's project at Brunswick Methodist Church which is the direct successor to the Orphan House.

The plaque is about twelve inches in diameter and is black with a white edge. Above the main text are three small red castles, the symbol of the city.

Visitors to Newcastle can pursue an interesting Wesley trail which includes the plaque, Brunswick church (1820) a little lower down the street, the Quayside obelisk marking the approximate site of John Wesley's first sermon on Tyneside, St Andrew's church where the Wesleys worshipped (it is the parish church of the Orphan House area) and which has a large gravestone to William Smith and his wife Jane Vazeille, and the Cathedral which also has some associations with early Methodism, including a memorial to John Stephenson who sold Wesley the site on which the Orphan House was built.

G. E. MILBURN

1522 JOHN ATLAY

In reply to Note 1513 - having walked out on John Wesley in August 1788, Atlay became an independent minister for the Dewsbury trustees. He attempted to found his own connexion in the North East and slandered Wesley (*Standard Letters*, viii, pp 138, 202-3). He did not stay long at Dewsbury; he lent one trustee a lot of money and the trustee then went bankrupt (*Letters of John Pawson* I p 77). In 1792 he quarrelled with them (*ibid.* pp 125-6 and 128) but soon returned to London where he seems to have remained until January 1806, when he was said by Pawson to be 'in a dying state' (*ibid.* III, p 132).

JOHN LENTON

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