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Proceedings

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Wesley Historical Society

Editor: E. ALAN ROSE, B.A.

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METHODIST ENTRIES IN THE OXFORD DNB

No member of this society will need to be convinced of the value of the *Dictionary of National Biography*; and few, if any, will not by now have discovered the virtues of its successor, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, published in 2004. The original work was a massive undertaking, worthy of the Victorian age which produced it. Inevitably, however, it had aged with the passage of time, and not even a series of supplementary volumes could disguise its wrinkles. To prepare an entirely revised and updated version called for the bold commitment of financial and intellectual resources. Happily these proved to be forthcoming. Funding from the British Academy, coupled with financial, logistical and academic input by Oxford University Press made the venture possible. The statistics speak for themselves. Sixty large volumes, totalling 60,000 pages and 50,000 biographies by an army of 10,000 contributors bear witness to a formidable achievement by any standards.

The original *Dictionary* was a familiar sight in most libraries of any size but it is a rather different case with its successor. Even quite large public libraries may have cleared their shelves of the older volumes, but without any visible replacement. The reason for this, of course, is that the publishers have kept abreast of media technology by making available an electronic version on the Internet. Its web address is: www.oxforddnb.com. This can be consulted at most public libraries with Internet access, but also at home from a personal computer *via* any public library for which you have a reader's ticket. Individual articles may, if desired, be printed off for more leisurely study and permanent availability. One can only hope that the result has proved financially profitable as well as academically valuable to readers. Of the latter there can be little remaining doubt, four years from publication.

A major advantage of the electronic format is the ability to search the text for names, phrases etc. Another is the ease with which corrections and additions may be made to the text and new entries added as the need arises. This is already an on-going process, overseen by an editorial team at Oxford, with updates three times a year (in January, May and October). As a result, by May 2008 1,600 new biographies had been added to the online version. The result is a great improvement on the supplementary volumes added to the original Dictionary every decade or so. The editorial team welcomes suggestions for additional entries, as well as comments on existing ones. So in this and other ways the online version is under continual revision and expansion.

Among the facilities available in the online version is the ability to search for entries by a variety of categories, including religious affiliation. But this is not quite as useful or straightforward as it might seem. Having, by my own searching, totted up 336 Methodist entries, I was rather taken aback to find that the official list offered me no fewer than 994. Could I possibly have missed so many? In search of an answer I began a trawl through the entries listed under 'Methodist', only to find that they included two categories I had not anticipated: (1) persons whose connection with Methodism was minimal, e.g. by parentage (or even grandparentage) or attendance at a Methodist Sunday School, and (2) others for whom no Methodist connection at all was mentioned, even in passing, in the text.

As my survey progressed, I also noticed that the list of denominations did not include 'Bible Christian', despite the fact that some, though only a few, of the leading figures in that denomination (William O'Bryan, James and Mary Thorne and 'Billy' Bray) *were* included in the Dictionary. My first thought was that the listing had been done electronically. As a result, the Bible Christians turn up among a very miscellaneous list under 'Independent Churches' (which includes Unitarians, Quakers and even, somewhat surprisingly the Anglican cleric, the Rev. W. Awdry!), though some do also get in under the 'Methodist label'.

The confusion was made worse by a failure to distinguish between the Methodist Bible Christians and another, entirely separate, group of the same name, alternatively known as 'Cowherdites' from their founder William Cowherd, who existed ('flourished' would be rather too strong a word) in the Manchester area, but too briefly to 'make it' into the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Cowherd and three of his followers have entries in *ODNB*.

An email enquiry to the editorial staff of the *ODNB* at Oxford received a characteristically prompt and helpful response. Yes, the formidable task of categorising the entries under 'religious affiliation' (and other groupings) had been undertaken by a computerized search but not a search of the text of the Dictionary entries themselves. A decision had

been taken to search, not the 'public face' of the Dictionary, but the data sheets ('profile sheets') provided by contributors for each of their entries. These included some details not mentioned in the text of the entry itself; hence the considerable number of extra Methodist references in the resulting list, including many whose association with Methodism was marginal. ('Ultimately the decision to refer to affiliation in the text was that of the individual author who balanced this information against other considerations when recounting a person's biography.') Failure to distinguish between two entirely different 'Bible Christian' groups was a matter of human error and the necessary correction has already been made.

As an illustration of the limitations of these 'religious affiliation' listings we may take Sir Arthur Newsholme (1857-1943), a pioneer in the field of public health. Although a lifelong Methodist, he is not indexed under that title, but under 'Anglican'. The text of his entry mentions that his father was Patrick Bronte's churchwarden at Haworth, but goes on to say that his widowed mother brought him up 'in a stricter Wesleyan environment' and that 'he attended a Wesleyan Sunday school'. The entry says nothing about his later religious affiliation, although from other sources we know that he and his wife worshipped at Dorset Gardens Wesleyan Church in Brighton, where he served as a trustee and circuit steward. 'Wesleyan', like 'Bible Christian', was, it seems, not recognised as a sub-section of 'Methodist'.

The quality and reliability of the Methodist entries in the Dictionary can be judged by the names of their authors. Veterans in the field of Methodist history include Reg Ward, Henry Rack, John Munsey Turner and David Hempton; and younger scholars no less familiar to members of this society also make their contribution. The rewritten entries on the Wesley brothers by the author of *Reasonable Enthusiast* are an indication of the quality that characterizes the new Dictionary as a whole. It is arguable that Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians and other offshoots of Wesleyanism are less adequately represented than the parent body (or, for that matter, than the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists). But these issues of inclusion or exclusion are a matter for endless debate. For example, James Crawford of the 'Magic Methodists' has his entry, but George Pocock and John Pyer of the Tent Methodists and Adam Averell, a key figure among the Irish Primitive Wesleyans, are missing.

An attempt has clearly been made to redress the masculine bias of the original *DNB*. First and foremost, Susanna Wesley is given an entry denied her in the original *ODNB*, and as 'theological writer and educator', rather than just 'mother of the Wesleys'. Also from the eighteenth century, Lady Maxwell is allowed to join the Countess of

Huntingdon and Lady Glenorchy to form a trio of aristocratic evangelicals. Their humbler contemporaries, Mary Bosanquet, Hester Ann Rogers and Elizabeth Ritchie, now find a place - and in their own right, not simply as wives. In the nineteenth century women preachers come into their own - notably Sarah Kirkland and Elizabeth Bultitude among the Primitive Methodists and Mary Thorne among the Bible Christians. It is good to see Catherine Booth given full honours, not treated merely as an appendage to William Booth: her contribution to the formative years of the Salvation Army went well beyond supporting her formidable and sometimes difficult husband. On the other hand, no entry will be found on Katherine Price Hughes, another power behind the throne. It is arguable that without her the maverick Hugh Price Hughes would have achieved far less before he burned himself out. In any case, she deserved her own entry by her own achievements. And by the late twentieth century women are beginning to receive their due attention.

A wide variety of lay Methodists are given entries, reminding us (if we need to be reminded) that Methodism went well beyond producing such ministerial giants as Bunting, Morley Punshon, Bowman Stephenson and Scott Lidgett, and in the twentieth century the famous London trio of Sangster, Soper and Weatherhead. In the world of science we have the astronomers John Couch Adams and Harold Spencer Jones and the physicist Charles Coulson; among the artists James Smetham and Frank Salisbury; in literature, the 'Georgian' poet John Freeman and Edward J. Thompson, who left the ministry for an academic career and became a prolific author; in sport, the Wimbledon finalist Dorothy Round. More typically Methodist were the industrialists and entrepreneurs, some of whom became household names (Hartley, Boot, Chubb, Rank *et al.*) as well as financial benefactors; political figures, beginning with Thomas Thompson, the first Methodist MP; and trade unionists, notably from the ranks of Primitive Methodism.

This is no more than a random sampling. Readers will readily be able to augment it. As for the 'missing persons', I myself regret that neither 'Lax of Poplar' nor Jimmy Butterworth of Clubland fame have been included. But spotting 'omissions' is too easy a game and best left to each individual user of the Dictionary.

Finally, since the new Dictionary was launched an extra feature has been added: a series of articles on identifiable groups; and this now includes the 'Holy Club', which builds on the work of Richard Heitzenrater to correct some of the misconceptions of the past, as well as the Tolpuddle 'Martyrs'.

Methodist opposition to Britain's proposed cession of The Gambia to France, 1866-76

Missionaries from Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century were not infrequently caught up in the prevailing Victorian enthusiasm to extend the boundaries of the empire. Those from the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society [WMMS], for example, were much involved in the events leading to Britain's annexation of Fiji in 1874.¹ This article examines events in The Gambia in West Africa, where it was proposed to abandon an existing colony by exchanging it for territory with the French, and concludes that all Methodist missionaries did not share the enthusiasm for imperialism that was evident in some of their colleagues.

The present-day republic of The Gambia, which achieved Independence within the Commonwealth in 1965, is a narrow strip of land, never more than twenty-five miles wide, following the course of the River Gambia 200 miles inland from its estuary into the Atlantic Ocean. A trading post since the seventeenth century, it was formally occupied by Britain in 1816, when the colonial governor suggested that the WMMS might extend its mission field into The Gambia. This suggestion was endorsed at the Wesleyan Conference of 1820 and the Revd John Morgan was appointed to begin the new mission.²

Morgan was briefed at Bathurst by the Revd John Baker, an experienced in West African mission en route from Sierra Leone to his next posting in the West Indies. In a memorandum to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, Baker had outlined his views on the future shape of The Gambia mission, based on his own considerable experience of West Africa: the centre of the mission should be St Mary's Island (Bathurst) where a stone mission house should be built with accommodation for a married man and a young single missionary; no missionary should be alone on a mission station; language study should be of prime importance (the Wolof language should be studied as the most potentially useful) and industry (especially agriculture) should be the chief feature of up-country mission stations.³

¹ See John H. Darch, 'Methodist involvement in the British annexation of Fiji, 1874', *Proceedings* 55:5 (2006).

² Findlay, G.G. and Holdsworth W.W., *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, 5 vols (London: 1921-4), iv p.121. While briefly in England in 1820 Governor-in-Chief Charles McCarthy had taken the opportunity to visit the London headquarters of the WMMS in Bishopsgate Street and argued strongly for the Society to initiate a Gambia mission. John M. Gray, *A History of The Gambia* [1940] (London: Frank Cass, 1966), p.311,.

³ Baker to Gen. Secs., WMMS, n.d., quoted in Findlay & Holdsworth, IV, pp.125-26.

Education was, in Martha Frederiks' view, 'the Methodists' most important contribution to Gambian Society'. In fact, much of the mission's work was in the educational sphere, with the clear encouragement of the colonial government.⁴ One twentieth-century authority, H.A. Gailey, even accused the government of abdicating any responsibility for education by simply relying on what the mission could provide.⁵ This, presumably, is an example of what David Hilliard meant, in a rather different context, by the imperial utility of Christian missions'.⁶

On the spiritual level the mission was initially successful in gathering a congregation but thereafter had no spectacular success. In 1836 it registered a membership of 535. Between that date and 1860, when 812 members were recorded, its membership showed an apparent increase of 50%. But this is somewhat misleading being almost certainly accounted for by the beginning of a new mission station by Robert MacBrair at McCarthy's Island in 1836. Indeed, of the 812 members recorded in 1860, 600 were residents of the capital.⁷ In the 1870s, the period of particular interest for this study, the membership of the mission remained virtually static. Indeed the marginal increases and decreases indicate a slight underlying decline.⁸ Nevertheless the Methodists established themselves as the prime European mission in The Gambia.⁹

For individual missionaries, The Gambia was a hard and unhealthy posting. More than one missionary succumbed to the climate shortly after arriving in the territory,¹⁰ and the WMMS archives contain numerous 'sick notes' for missionaries suffering from tropical diseases who needed leave from The Gambia in order to recover their health.¹¹ It

⁴ Martha T. Frederiks, *We have Toiled all Night: Christianity in The Gambia, 1456-2000* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2003), p.200. Col. Ord reported in 1865 that 'an allowance of £100 per annum is made to the Wesleyan mission and the same to the Roman Catholic, in aid of general education...'. See pp 1865 XXVII [170]. By 1870 this had increased to £128.16s. See Revd H.J. Quilter to Acting Gen. Sec. Perks, 13 May 1870. *WMMS Archives*, West Africa Correspondence, Box 295.

⁵ H.A. Gailey, *History of The Gambia* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), p.69.

⁶ David Hilliard, *God's Gentlemen: a history of the Melanesian Mission, 1849-1942* (St Lucia, Queensland: Queensland University Press, 1978), p.134.

⁷ See the *WMMS Annual Reports* for these years.

⁸ *Ibid.* 1870- 705; 1872 -744; 1873- 704; 1874- 639; 1875- 694; 1876- 695; 1877- numbers not given; 1878 - 675.

⁹ See Findlay & Holdsworth, IV pp.118-146.

¹⁰ Tregaskis to Perks, 20 December 1874. *WMMS Archives*, Gambia Correspondence - West Africa Box 295. Sir Arthur Kennedy, Governor of the West African Settlements, referred to the four months' rainy season as the 'funeral season'. Kennedy to Kimberley, 20 July 1870. CO 87/97.

¹¹ See, for example, Thomas Spilsby to ?, 28 December 1872; Thomas Spilsby to ?, 19 September 1873; certificate by Assistant Colonial Surgeon, 16 June 1874. *WMMS Archives*, Gambia Correspondence West Africa Box 295. See also Findlay & Holdsworth, IV, p.139.

was thus not surprising that alongside a native population estimated in 1870 at 8,000 there were no more than forty or fifty Europeans in the whole of the colony.¹²

The Gambia was the smallest of Britain's four West African territories. To Europeans it was an unhealthy place to live and work and it was a financial drain on the Exchequer. When the French suggested an exchange of territories in order to consolidate colonial frontiers the Colonial Office saw much merit in the scheme.

The response of the Wesleyan missionaries to the proposals did not initially show more than a passing interest: they were more concerned with preserving the rights and privileges which had accrued to the mission as the majority Christian community than with campaigning against the exchange proposals. When the news of the negotiations first came to their attention, Henry Quilter, senior missionary in The Gambia, merely expressed his concern about its implications for the educational grant the mission received and Benjamin Tregaskis, chairman of the District, wrote from Freetown of the need to preserve missionary privileges.¹³

The following January, when Tregaskis presided over the Synod of the Gambian mission, the minutes recorded somewhat pompously that 'the ministers in charge of the Wesleyan mission on The Gambia feel a very solemn responsibility resting upon them regarding the proposed transfer of the settlement to the French government'.¹⁴ It stated that as neither the Roman Catholic priests nor the Anglican colonial chaplain could be expected to oppose the exchange, the responsibility to do so rested with the Methodists. The minute continued: 'The Annual Meeting therefore respectfully but earnestly requests the Wesleyan Missionary Committee to use its influence in aid of those measures which have been taken, so laboriously, and at much sacrifice of time and money, in remonstrances to the Colonial Office and in recent Parliamentary movements'.

J.D. Hargreaves suggested that the merchant Thomas Brown may have been behind this request to the WMMS in London. From the WMMS Gambia correspondence file it is clear that Brown was in touch with the missionaries.¹⁵ In fact it would have been surprising if this was not the case as there were only about fifty Europeans in the entire territory. Indeed, the exchange proposals must have been a constant topic of

¹² Population estimate by Administrator Bravo. Bravo to Granville, 13 May 1870. CO 87/96.

¹³ Quilter to Perks, 13 May 1870 *WMMS Archives*. Gambia Correspondence; West Africa Box 295. Tregaskis to WMMS, 11 May 1870, quoted in J.D. Hargreaves, *Prelude to the Partition of West Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1963), p.160.

¹⁴ Gambia Synod Minutes, January 1871. *WMMS Archives*. Gambia Correspondence; West Africa Box 297.

¹⁵ See, for example, Brown to Tregaskis, 19 May 1873. *WMMS Archives*. Gambia Correspondence; West Africa Box 297.

conversation among the white residents of this otherwise sleepy imperial backwater: Of course Brown must have discussed the exchange with the missionaries and in such conversations it is highly unlikely that he would not have tried to win them round to his point of view. The amount of influence, if any, which he was able to exert on the missionaries, remains unknown. The missionary committee in London was not, however, greatly moved by this request, nor by a subsequent appeal by Tregaskis,¹⁶ but merely contented itself with a brief note in the 1871 Annual Report to the effect that:

This settlement has been much agitated during the year by the report of a proposed cession of its Government and territory to France - a measure which has excited the alarm and indignation of all classes and which is specially deprecated by our missionaries.¹⁷

In fact there is no evidence at any point in the controversy over The Gambia exchange proposals that the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in London took any active steps to oppose the transfer. Any opposition that emerged came from individual missionaries in The Gambia or from individual influential Methodists at home.

If, despite their initial disquiet, the missionaries were less than fanatical in their opposition to the exchange proposals and largely contented themselves with the writing of letters and minutes rather than any more vigorous action, this certainly could not be said of the British merchant community in The Gambia where Thomas Brown led a robust opposition.

In a debate in the House of Commons on the British West African Settlements on 9 June 1871, William M'Arthur, in a wide-ranging speech, took the opportunity of stressing 'the importance of relieving the minds of British subjects at The Gambia from the apprehension of their transference to a foreign power'.¹⁸ M'Arthur was a highly influential lay Methodist, and through his membership of the church and his contacts with James Calvert and others played a leading part in the campaign to annex Fiji.¹⁹ Indeed, his evangelical and humanitarian interests and contacts were far wider than just the missionary movement. In order to dampen the agitation, the Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen, replying to M'Arthur, reminded the House that

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Tregaskis to Gen.Secs., WMMS, 3 February 1871.

¹⁷ WMMS *Annual Report* 1871, pp.82-83.

¹⁸ *Hansard*, Third Series, CCVI, cols 1806-1813. See also M'Cullagh, p.137.

¹⁹ M'Arthur, Liberal MP for Lambeth was later Lord Mayor of London and Treasurer of the WMMS. See Thomas M'Cullagh, *Sir William M'Arthur, KCMG, a Biography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1891).

the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War had put an end to discussions with France and 'it was not the intention of the Government to propose any renewal of the negotiations'.²⁰

When, two months later, the French proposed a resumption of negotiations, Colonial Secretary Lord Kimberley rejected this,²¹ and The Gambia exchange project remained a dead letter during his tenure of the Colonial Office. Susan Willmington, the historian of the Aborigines Protection Society, recognised the 'cumulative effect' of opposition to the exchange on Kimberley, and conceded that that Society's 'voice was only one among many which opposed the cession of The Gambia...'.²² The voice of the missionaries cannot be said to have been particularly loud either; this first attempt to exchange The Gambia was foiled largely by commercial interests.

The opposition to the second exchange proposal four years later was somewhat different to that which foiled the first. Whereas those who had protested against the first exchange had the appearance of a group of individuals largely persuaded and briefed by Thomas Brown, the second exchange proposal experienced much more organised opposition. The probable reason for this was the recent success of the campaign for the annexation of Fiji. A network of humanitarians, evangelicals, missionaries and empire enthusiasts had been established. With little additional effort this support was tapped and mobilised for the retention of The Gambia, the parliamentary delay, from July 1875 to February 1876, giving the opposition ample time to prepare and present their campaign.

Did the Wesleyan missionaries figure any more largely in the opposition to the second exchange proposals than they had in the first? Though better organised and with more influential support, opponents of the exchange once again had only marginal support from The Gambia missionaries. Since 1871 there had been a complete change in the ranks of the Wesleyan mission in The Gambia. Tregaskis had left West Africa in 1875 to be replaced as District Chairman by the Revd Charles Knight, who, being new to his post when the second exchange proposal became public knowledge, stayed put in Sierra Leone and gave no indication of any opposition to (or, indeed, support for) the exchange. George Adcock was the senior missionary at Bathurst. He was joined by James Fieldhouse from Sierra Leone after the death of the unfortunate J.W. Bell who survived only two months in The Gambia's unhealthy climate at a

²⁰ *Hansard*, Third Series, CCVI, cols 1814ff. He nevertheless reserved the right to abandon McCarthy's Island in line with the 1865 report.

²¹ Min. by Kimberley on FO to CO, 14 August 1871, and Kimberley to Quin, 15 September 1871. CO 87/101.

²² Susan M.K. Willmington, 'The activities of the Aborigines Protection Society as a pressure group on the formulation of colonial policy, 1868-80', unpublished PhD thesis (Wales: Lampeter, 1973), p.153.

time of much fever and sickness in the colony.²³ During 1875 John Babcock joined them in Bathurst to increase the mission staff in The Gambia and on 29 June 1875 the three missionaries wrote to the WMMS general secretaries in London urging official opposition to the exchange proposals, a plan which would be 'destructive to the commercial, civil and religious privileges of its inhabitants'.²⁴ Indeed, George Adcock went further and was one of only two Europeans who signed a petition against the exchange.²⁵ However, Hargreaves described Adcock as 'unstable'²⁶ and, more telling than the presence of his signature - clearly more of a gesture than a policy - is the absence of those of his colleagues. Were they all really serious about the matter, or were they reacting as they felt it was proper for missionaries to do under the circumstances or, indeed, merely responding to the persuasive lobbying of Thomas Brown?

Except for one possible factor - the presence of W.B. Boyce, on the emergent 'Gambia Committee' - there is no evidence that the WMMS headquarters in London responded any more favourably to the letter from Babcock, Adcock and Fieldhouse in 1875 than they had done to Tregaskis's request in 1871. Yet only the previous year the WMMS had been prepared to expend considerable energy and influence in order to persuade the government to annex the Fiji islands. Despite the absence of any documentary evidence on this lack of interest in The Gambia exchange, the reason for the disparity is not hard to fathom. Fiji was a territory where Methodism had taken root in a remarkable way and which had considerable commercial prospects. The same could not be said for The Gambia. Though a British possession for many years and though Methodism was the majority faith there, The Gambia was never going to be more than a political and commercial backwater, and the work of the missionaries, though tireless and faithful in their efforts, was never likely to have the same effect as it had in Fiji. The missionaries in The Gambia might feel strongly about the matter, but they found it impossible to persuade their headquarters in London to oppose the exchange in anything more than a perfunctory fashion.

The opposition to The Gambia exchange crystallized in the long parliamentary recess of 1875-76 and emerged in January 1876 as the 'Gambia Committee'.²⁷ A prima facie examination of the committee's

²³Tregaskis to Perks, 20 December 1874. *WMMS Archives*, West Africa - Gambia Correspondence, Box 295. See also *WMMS Annual Report for 1875*, p.123.

²⁴*Ibid* for 1876, p.113. Babcock, Adcock and Fieldhouse to WMMS, 29 June 1875. *WMMS Archives*, West Africa - Gambia Correspondence, Box 295.

²⁵Petition from Joshua Richards and 151 others, 7 October 1875, enc. in Officer Administering the Government to Carnarvon, 23 November 1875. pp 1877, LX [C.1827].

²⁶Hargreaves, *Prelude*, p.183.

²⁷For The Gambia Committee see Eldridge, *England's Mission*, pp.161-62; Willmington, pp.159-164.

members would indicate that the missionary movement was well represented since it included William and Alexander M'Arthur, Admiral James Erskine, also a Methodist, W.B. Boyce, shortly to retire as one of the WMMS's general secretaries, and Robert Moffat of the LMS. It would be misleading to put too much weight upon numbers, however. Boyce and Moffat clearly represented the WMMS and LMS respectively, but this was in all probability a token representation. Certainly Boyce and Moffat took part in the deputation to Lord Carnarvon on 1 February 1876 and Boyce and his fellow WMMS general secretary, Dr Morley Punshon, received an unctuous letter of thanks from Thomas Brown and thirty three others in The Gambia.²⁸ Boyce's commitment to opposing the exchange has to be held in question, however, in view of comments made six years earlier. Writing to Dr James Rigg of the WMMS Committee, who had received a communication concerning West Africa from the Foreign Office, Boyce had replied:

I fear the French are on the whole better administrators than we are for colonies like ours in West Africa; [despite their] arbitrary acts. ... the community gains the benefit of having only one master and matters are quickly settled good national government in which the rulers 'bear not the sword in vain' but are 'a terror to evil doers' (Rom.13) is equally an ordinance of God - and in this I think we fail in West Africa.²⁹

The Committee's well coordinated efforts- in the press, lobbying the Colonial Office and in Parliament quickly won the initiative and forced the government on to the back foot. It increasingly found that it was losing the argument and that support was ebbing away. Although he continued to support The Conservative Colonial Secretary, Lord Carnarvon was worn down by the controversy and came to find himself as virtually the only supporter of the project. He accepted defeat gracefully and on 20 March 1876 he rose in the Lords to throw in the towel.

Whether the second exchange project of 1875-76 was as viable as the first is open to dispute. Nevertheless any credit for successfully opposing the project lies with Thomas Brown, F.W. Chesson and William M'Arthur. Brown brought The Gambia's plight to public attention in Britain, Chesson created an organised network of opposition and M'Arthur led the parliamentary challenge. These three played the leading roles in the

²⁸ Thomas Brown *et al.* to Boyce and Punshon, 24 February 1876. *WMMS Archives*, West Africa - Gambia Correspondence, Box 295. Hargreaves describes this document as a 'sanctimonious round robin'. Hargreaves, *Prelude*, p.183. Hargreaves has confused Dr Punshon with his predecessor, Dr Bunting.

²⁹ W.B. Boyce to Dr J.H. Rigg, 17 September 1869. CO 87/98B.

drama of the defeat of The Gambia exchange - the Methodist missionaries merely formed part of the chorus. Steven Maughan's perceptive phrase, 'marginal actors in empire' (regarding the treatment of missionaries by the dominant forms of imperial history), accurately sums up the role of the Methodist missionaries in The Gambia affair.³⁰

What emerges from this case study as far as missionary involvement in imperialism is concerned adds to the view that there were enormous variations in missionary attitudes to the empire. Even the WMMS, often regarded as having a very positive attitude towards imperial expansion, notably in successfully lobbying for the annexation of Fiji, seem to have had little enthusiasm for maintaining British control of The Gambia.

JOHN H. DARCH

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³⁰ Steven Maughan, 'Imperial Christianity? Bishop Montgomery and the Foreign Missions of the Church of England', in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914* (Grand Rapids & Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003) p.34.

Benjamin Rushton. Handloom Weaver and Chartist by John A. Hargreaves. [Friends of Lister Lane Cemetery, Halifax. 4Opp2006.ISBN 0955 421 OOX] £4.50.

Benjamin Rushton was a handloom weaver and a radical agitator who was the mainstay of Halifax Chartism from its beginning in 1838 until his death in 1853. He campaigned for Factory Reform and vigorously opposed the New Poor Law workhouses. In his early years he was a class leader and local preacher in the Methodist New Connexion, but by the 1820s he had become a preacher among the more radical Gospel Pilgrims and subsequently became active in Chartist Sunday Schools and abandoned institutional Christianity. He is an example of how the early working class movements were shaped by Methodism.

John Hargreaves has given us a careful account of Rushton's life and significance and rescued him from an undeserved obscurity. The many illustrations add to the value of this fine study .

E.A.ROSE

Some Further thoughts on the Irish Wesleys and the Wellesley Connection

Much has been written over many years on a possible link between the Irish Wesleys and their English namesakes in the family tree of John and Charles, particularly in its bearing upon the supposed offer of an Irish heirdom to young Charles while he was still a schoolboy at Westminster. The evidence for this proposal is admittedly scant and inconclusive, and probably the best assessment that can be made at present is that while it is unproven, there is no reason why it could not have happened. Dr. Henry Rack's detailed review of the case published recently in the *Proceedings* broadly reaches that same conclusion.¹

The parallel question of the relationship between the two Wesley families also remains unresolved despite the very much greater amount of evidence for it which does exist. There seems, in fact, to have been a concerted determination to dismiss it as a fabrication. Even Dr. Rack, having given us the best evidence yet for it in the form of Sally Wesley's letters to Adam Clarke, still believed that it 'now seems to be exploded.' This is broadly in line with the opinion of Elizabeth Pakenham, Countess of Longford, in whose biography of her kinsman the Duke of Wellington, the idea is said to have been 'demolished.'² The noble lady's disclaimer, however, is so forceful as to arouse some suspicion as to its soundness and the possibility of its being driven by prejudice. For this reason, if no other, it will bear looking at rather more closely.

The crux of the matter would seem to lie with Bartholomew Westley (1596 - 1671) who before his ejection from the Church of England for non-conformity in 1662 was rector of Charmouth with Catherston in Dorset. His mother is stated to have been Elizabeth de Wellesley of Dangan Castle, County Meath, Ireland, the wife of Sir Herbert Westley of Westleigh in Devon, Bartholomew's father. Bartholomew married (in 1619, according to Stevenson)³ Ann Colley, daughter of Henry Colley of Castle Carbery, Co. Kildare, these becoming the parents of John Westley of Winterbourne Whitchurch, the father of Revd. Samuel Wesley - the 't' now being dropped - of Epworth. Richard Green succinctly observed that in Bartholomew, "these two branches of the family were united, his father representing the original stock, and his mother the Wellesley branch of that stock, of which she was descendant."⁴ It actually goes further, for it brings in the Colley family, to which belonged the future Duke of Wellington, whose grandfather Richard Colley was the adoptee chosen

¹ *Proceedings*, Vol.53, pp 117 - 126.

² Elizabeth Pakenham, *Wellington, the Years of the Sword*, (1972) p 7, footnote 3.

³ G.J.Stevenson, *Memorials of the Wesley Family*, London, (1876), p xxi.

⁴ Richard Green, *John Wesley, Evangelist*, London, (1905) p 12.

by Garret Wesley after Charles Wesley's refusal of the offer, thus pointing to the disputed family link between the victor of Waterloo and the founder of Methodism.

It is these Wellesley/Wesley and Wellesley/Colley inter-marriages that Lady Longford dismissed so scornfully, blaming them on G.J. Stevenson's *Memorials of the Wesley family*. "Each part", she claimed, "of this allegedly *double* relationship (itself suspicious and a sign that the Victorians were over-egging the pudding) was a figment of Victorian imagination" and in her view,"no relationship has been established between the Methodist Wesleys and the Duke of Wellington"⁵ despite a contrary statement in the (then) *Dictionary of National Biography*. She cited some Methodist researchers' findings in support of her view.

Blaming Stevenson, however, is not entirely just since he himself explained in the Preface to the book that the family papers he had relied upon in that connection were based on genealogical reseaches carried out by the 2nd. Earl of Mornington, the Duke's father, who died in 1781. Whatever may be the weaknesses of Stevenson's work, which are generally acknowledged to be many, it is surely reasonable to assume that in the area of Irish Wesley/Wellesley family history in particular, the Earl's reseaches would carry authority and would not have been liable to 'over-egging' since, during his lifetime, Arthur Wellesley was but an unknown youth and the motivation for tampering with the evidence would not have existed.

There is, in any case, no reason to impute such intention to Stevenson. Any attempt to link John Wesley with the Wellesleys and the Iron Duke in particular for the sake of any supposed kudos to be gained for Methodism would have been quite unnecessary by 1876, by which time Methodism was strong enough not to need it and Wellington had long since passed off the political scene. He had been in any case out of favour with Whig political sentiment, which nineteenth century Non-conformity then largely represented.

The question has to be asked: if Bartholomew Westley's mother and wife were not Elizabeth de Wellesley and Ann Colley respectively, then who were they? No evidence to disprove their identity or point to alternative candidates has ever been brought forward, leading inevitably to the suspicion that none exists. If that is the case, then it is demonstrable that the great-grandmother of John and Charles Wesley and the grandfather of the Iron Duke were both Colleys from Castle Carbery in Co.Kildare.

The ancestral home of the Wesleys and Wellesleys has always been identified as the little hamlet of Wellesley ('Welswe' in the Domesday Book) about a mile south of Wells, Somerset, off the Glastonbury road.

⁵ Pakenham, *op. cit.* , p 7n.

Westleys abounded in the vicinity of Wells and there are memorials to members of the Westley family in the cloisters of Wells Cathedral. Local burial records contain the names of nine Westleys buried in the cathedral between 1671 and 1791, and another five in St. Cuthbert's church in the city between 1610 and 1719. A medieval charter dating from around 1180 relating to the Wellesley demesne exists in the cathedral archives, which is mentioned by Lady Longford.

Significantly for this discussion, Stevenson also alluded to it in the preface that he wrote to *Memorials of Elizabeth Ann Wesley, The Soldiers' Friend* by her father, the Rev. Samuel Wesley, published in 1887. In this he indicated that the document had been 'recently' discovered and had 'come to light since the publication in 1876 of his *Memorials of the Wesley Family*.'⁶ The last occupant of the estate is said to have been one George Arthur Wesley. What remained of it was sold in 1785 and the old mansion later demolished.

The Marquess of Wellesley (1760 - 1842), the celebrated Governor General of India and the Duke of Wellington's elder brother, had among other titles 'Baron Wellesley of Wellesley, Somersetshire.' Given the common origin of both families in the Wellesley settlement referred to above, consanguinity would seem to follow naturally, so that the need to demonstrate it by inter-marriage, as also the attempt to disprove it, really becomes superfluous.

While it may be only coincidence and is not in any way evidential, it may be worth mentioning as a point of interest that the Wellington Monument erected at the western end of the Blackdown Hills near the Somerset town of Wellington almost overlooks the little village of Westleigh, just over the border in Devon, where old Sir Herbert Westley reputedly lived in Elizabethan times and where, presumably, his son Bartholomew was born. Lady Westley, as we have seen, was - unless proved otherwise - a Wellesley from Dangan Castle. Could it be that the Duke knew well enough where his English roots lay and took his title from the town of Wellington, with which he seems to have had no other connection, for that reason?

If the jury is still out on this question, perhaps they should note that at least three critics of the family link theory gave themselves away by pulling the rug from under their own arguments. The respected Methodist historian, J. S. Simon, for example, having stated categorically, 'The Duke of Wellington was not a Wesley', went on to say, 'he nevertheless had Wellesley blood in his veins, through the female line,' citing frequent inter-marriages between Wellesleys and Colleys as well as with other families.⁷ Again, Thos. F. Lockyer, writing in the W.H.S.

⁶ Samuel Wesley, *Memorials of Elizabeth Ann Wesley*, London, (1887), pp v, vi

⁷ John S. Simon, *John Wesley and the Religious Societies*, London, (1921), p 29.

Proceedings on the 'Genealogy of the Wesley Family', while concluding, 'This name has no possible connection with 'Wellesley' - the resemblance is only superficial,' yet points to 'the (presumably undoubted) relationship between John Wesley and the great duke.'⁸ Perhaps most tellingly of all, however, Lady Longford herself, while so dismissive of the marriage links referred to by Stevenson, yet could assert, 'The Colleys in fact had Wellesley blood.'⁹ The jury has a lot to do, but it is the quality of the evidence that counts in the end.

PETER W. GENTRY

(The Rev Peter Gentry is a retired minister
of the Church of the Nazarene)

⁸ W.H.S. *Proceedings*, i.pp.67 - 69.

⁹ Pakenham, *ibid*.

BOOK REVIEWS

Cornubia's Son: A Life of Mark Guy Pearse by Derek R. Williams (Francis Boutle, London, 2008, pp.388,44 illus. £12.99. ISBN 978 1 903427 35 4)

In the story of Wesleyan Methodism's Forward Movement and its Central Missions it is often forgotten that at the West London Mission, while the Welsh orator, Hugh Price Hughes, would engage with Politics in the afternoons and 'pursue the sinners' in the evening, the day began with the Cornishman Mark Guy Pearse 'edifying the saints' in the morning.

Mark Guy is perhaps best known to an older generation of Methodists familiar with his quaint tales of *Daniel Quorm* or *Simon Jasper* or *The Ship where Christ was Captain* or even *Bridgetstow*. These are but a few of his works, and there can be added many tracts and books of sermons and lectures; yet his true value to Methodism far exceeded his literary output. He was evangelist, popularist, advocate, traveller and pastor, and was considered to be important enough a liturgist to be included in the 1894 Conference Committee charged with revising the Covenant Service (and although Williams seems to have missed that, it is but a small part).

This new biography of Mark Guy reveals the extent of that value. It has been well researched in both the United Kingdom and overseas, where Mark Guy travelled in the cause of advocacy for the West London Mission. It also quarries well from the older biography by Mark Guy's daughter (Mrs. George Unwin), and John Telford (later Connexional Editor and President of the WHS). The story it presents though, is its own, readable and reasonably comprehensive - and if it comes with a little Cornish bias from time to time,

then this reviewer will not object to that. This reviewer also looked for - and found - a little thing: reference to the delightful rapid sketches with which Mark Guy was prone to decorate the flyleaves of his books, and of which this reviewer has several examples in his collection. More usefully, he will acclaim that oft-neglected feature of a reference work - a good index.

The work is mostly narrative. The pattern flows first from family roots in Launceston, Cornwall and his birth at Camborne, through Mark Guy's British ministry - which perhaps had one flaw: the one year he served in Leeds was his only service anywhere north of Bedford. He probably came, like many Cornishmen, to know Bendigo and Ballarat better than Bradford and Barnoldswick. Chapters 11 to 15 take us on his overseas trips, to the USA and Canada, to Australia and New Zealand, to South Africa, India and also the Isle of Man. The description of his reception there perhaps reveals that his reception by the Diaspora Cornish elsewhere owed more to race and reputation than the Manx would allow.

The book lacks though, a fully comprehensive evaluation of Mark Guy Pearse. There is evaluation in the book, but much is dispersed though the volume, and sometimes seems to miss things; the final chapter this reviewer found not answering enough questions. One consequence is that a picture of Mark Guy as a man other than as a Methodist is hard to discern. Perhaps there was little other than the Methodist. That he was a rod-&-line fisherman - of some repute, it seems - gets mention, but occasional other snippets give just not enough.

There is also the unanswered question of the nature of his self-proclaimed Christian Socialism; this reviewer regrets the lack of any deep analysis. The case of a younger friend, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence the suffragette, shows a man willing to exclude people from his association if their views - and political practice - conflicted with his own. His truly socialist contacts he withdrew from. To what extent were Mark Guy's views Socialism rather than some contemporary expressions of Liberalism? Yet he appears to have had no contact either with John Wilson, the Primitive Methodist from Co.Durham, President of the Durham Union of Mineworkers, elected a Lib-Lab MP the year before Mark Guy came to the West London Mission. We know from other sources that Mark Guy was friendly with the Hocking brothers - and possibly too with Salome - but those contacts aren't explored. He was, it seems, a Christian Socialist who came to the self-designation from Christ, as opposed to Rev.Samuel Keeble (mentioned only in passing) who came *via* Marx. The point would have been worth exploring.

This reviewer also noted that although ecumenical contacts are mentioned, especially in Australia, Mark Guy's relationships with other Methodist branches are not explored, except in references to his writings. There, Simon Jasper was a Bible Christian, John Tregenoweth a Primitive Methodist; never is evidence for the source of his knowledge of the ways of

the non- Wesleyans offered.

And there are one or two loose ends. Champness is mentioned as a friend and as one actually more in tune with 'Cornish Revivalism' yet in spite of ample endnotes, Champness glides in and out with no mention of The Joyful News Mission, nor its successor, Cliff College.

But these rather detailed niggles apart, this is a good book and an informative read. It will do, as a Cornishman might say. Anyone interested in social history, in Methodist biography, in the Forward Movement and the ministry of the Central Halls, in late nineteenth-century Cornish Methodism, in Wesleyanism overseas, in the Cornish Diaspora, belongs to buy it - and that's a bit of Mark Guy's west-Cornish as well. And if it raises other questions - and indeed occasionally poses challenges- then it's a 'proper job'.

COLIN C SHORT

Protestant Nonconformist Texts. Volume 1:1550-1700. Edited by R. Tudur Jones with Arthur Long and Rosemary Moore. (Ashgate, 2007 pp.421, £75, ISBN 978-0-7546-3864-3).

This substantial four-volume collection of Nonconformist texts is now complete. Although Methodism naturally only appears in subsequent volumes, what is illustrated here is an essential part of its wider context. This period arguably is the most difficult to deal with, if only because of the overlapping categories and variable definitions of 'Nonconformity', 'Dissent', 'Separatism' and, perhaps most slippery of all, 'Puritanism'. There are, too, difficulties in identifying the early stages of what later became the distinct denominations of Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists. There was a tradition, perhaps still not extinct, for Nonconformists to claim earlier ancestors than the evidence really warranted. (one old Congregationalist history commenced with c .1200!)

The editor of this volume explains that 'Nonconformist' is used 'in a more inclusive way than its history, strictly interpreted, would permit'. Thus Elizabethan 'Separatists' are included, although their contemporaries would not have called them 'Nonconformists'; and along with them are those before 1662 now seen as the precursors of modern Nonconformist denominations. Five stages of Nonconformist development are identified in this period. The main principles of protest emerged in the sixteenth century, followed by growth along with frustration until about 1640. In the third period from 1640 to 1660 both Presbyterians and Independents (Congregationalists) achieved positions of power, while new sects emerged. Persecution after the Restoration of 1660 was followed by the final period of limited toleration

after 1689. It is acknowledged that, given the complexity of Nonconformity and the abundance of sources, a quite different selection of documents would have been possible.

Unlike later volumes, much of this material is arranged chronologically rather than by topics. So, first, 'The Beginnings, 1550-1603' , then 'Perseverance 1604-1642' , 'Facets of Freedom, 1640-1660' , 'Persecution, 1660-1689' . There follow 'Aspects of Nonconformist Experience' , 'A Theological Miscellany', 'Poetry' and 'The Dawn of Toleration' .

A feature of the series has been that a number of the extracts have been very substantial. Here, for example, virtually the whole of the Westminster Confession is printed, though otherwise there is not a great deal on Presbyterianism, which became the most numerous and politically and socially weighty form of Nonconformity. The extraordinary outbreak of new sects in the 1650s is chiefly and generously illustrated from the Quakers and illuminating examples are given of their beliefs and practice. More unexpected are examples of intense , mystical piety in terms of 'spiritual marriage' and 'the heart of Christ' from Thomas Goodwin and 'the presence of Christ' from John Owen. The most prominent selections relate to theology, spirituality and church life and organization. What is absent, compared with later volumes, are illustrations of political and social beliefs and action, important in this period. It would have been helpful to have material on the attempt to create a Presbyterian state church in the 1650s and on the loose Cromwellian 'establishment' which offered a parish ministry accepted by Presbyterians and some Independents, while allowing toleration for some others. (Or were those in this situation to be classed as 'Conformists'?). In the final section the so-called Toleration Act is illustrated, but the general introduction rightly notes the failed attempt at 'comprehension' of Presbyterians within the restored Church of England. For them mere toleration was a defeat.

The texts are introduced with well-referenced information. A general bibliography is supplied and an index of names, though unfortunately not a subject index. Although one can always regret omissions, this volume, along with the rest of the series, offers a major aid to understanding the history and character of Nonconformity. Dr Sell and his team deserve our thanks and congratulations .

HENRY D. RACK

2007; pp.212; PB £7.50 including p&p. ISBN 978-0-9554527-1-0). Copies available from Mrs. S.J. Himsworth, 22 Broadway, Evesham, WR11 1BG.

The title of this publication is taken from that of a conference held at York in 2005, all but three of the papers, which are being published elsewhere, are here now made available. The result is a series of papers on a range of historical 'feminist' issues in Methodism, some of which are on general themes and others more specific to individuals. Janet Kelly takes the role of ministerial wives and Gareth Lloyd, female preaching, both in the context of early Wesleyan Methodism; the contributions of women to the work overseas are covered by Joy Fox, Deborah Gaitskell and John Pritchard; Linda Wilson considers the methodological use of biographical sources. Perhaps it is inevitable that some of the more famous Methodist women re-emerge but there are always new questions to be asked; both Rhonda Carrim and David Frudd look at Mary Bosanquet Fletcher and Hester Ann Rogers is reconsidered by Vicki Tolar Burton. For this reviewer Peter Forsaith's analysis of the implications of the two over-paintings of the portrait of Susanna Wesley is a fresh approach to Methodist history .

✓ The editor is to be congratulated on bringing together a diverse range of papers, complete with footnotes, index and illustrations and making them available to a wider audience. Hopefully they will encourage further research and new questions, such as the part played by women in the Methodist New Connexion, Independent Methodist Church, and United Methodist Free Churches and its constituent parts. At the price, this publication is a bargain and is most recommended.

D.COLIN DEWS

A Story to Tell: 200 years of Methodism in Brighton and Hove by Michael Hickman, (*Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit, 2007*), 148pp. Copies £7.50 + £1.50 p&p, from The Brighton & Hove Methodist Circuit, Stanford Avenue Methodist Church, Stanford Avenue, Brighton, BN1 6FD.

Warmed Hearts: the story of Methodism in Prudhoe and Mickley Square by Audrey Bland, (2007) 194pp. Copies £6 including p&p from The Author, 41 Paddock Wood, Prudhoe, NE42 5B.

Prudhoe, in the Tyne valley, where Methodism was established in 1743 in what was then an agricultural community but soon also with coal pits, is in marked contrast to Anglo-Catholic Brighton, an eighteenth-century 'watering place' symbolised by the extravagance of the Prince Regent's Royal Pavilion, where Methodism was not introduced until as late as 1807.

Wesleyan Methodism in both places was ravaged by the Wesleyan Reformers but whereas in Brighton Free Methodism faded out, it survived in Prudhoe; Brighton also had a Bible Christian presence. Primitive Methodism had an impact in both places but there was uniqueness in Brighton in that there two ministers itinerated a total thirty-six years.

The contrast is not just between the two places but also in the writers' respective approaches. Bland writes chronologically, whereas Hickman, after outlining the development of Methodism in Brighton and Hove, then takes a thematic approach, with such themes as finances, buildings, laity and worship. Both make good use of photographs and ephemera, as well as usefully including maps to illustrate the location of the various Methodist societies.

It would have been helpful to have for Brighton and Hove a tabulation listing each of the chapels and with a brief, summary history, and both histories would have benefited by having a bibliography. Further the reviewer would have appreciated more information on the political allegiance of those active in local politics in Brighton. These, however, are minor criticisms and considerable research has gone into producing these two local histories.

D.COLIN DEWS

Machin Porcelains and Earthenwares... by Bill Thorn and Philip Miller (Castlehills Publishing 2008 179 pages £40 ISBN 978-0-9559104-0-1)

It is not often that business histories tell us any more about the religious connections of their subjects than their denomination, and sometimes we are not even told this. Geoffrey A. Godden in his *Ridgway Porcelains* 1972, revised 1985, reproduced a Memoir of Mr. Job Ridgway covering 13 pages which is basically an account of his spiritual life in the Methodist New Connexion.

Now we have another book from this area which considers the religious side worth mentioning. Pages 11-14 are headed 'Joseph Machin, the Methodist'. Joseph was very active at Swan Bank Wesleyan chapel giving £50 towards the building's extension. There is an illustration of a draft of a letter he wrote in 1816 on behalf of the Trustees and Leaders of the Burslem society, to the President of the Conference for permission to have the sacrament administered by their preachers. The authors have wrongly listed this as 'seeking permission for Swan Bank Chapel to have more control over its sermons' and in another place as 'to have more

independence in its teaching.' His tombstone is illustrated. The book is full of coloured illustrations of the wares and shows a plate, on page 91, painted on the back, with the words 'Presented to the Revd Jno. Bryan for the use of the Methodist Congregation at Epworth by Mr. Joseph Machin of Burslem Staffordshire 1823. The plate is described as being in the Epworth Wesleyan Museum. A family tree is given on page 27. Many of the wares made by the firm were pedestrian but the top quality ones could easily be mistaken for having been made by the much better known factories.

JOHN C.C. PROBERT

Tavistock's Methodist Chapels by Brian W. Giles (Tavistock and District Local History Society, 76pp., 2007. Available from the author at 37 Milton Crescent. Tavistock, PL19 9AL, £6.50 post free)

This is a model local history of Methodism in one small town. It spans 250 years and three branches : Wesleyans, Bible Christians and the Wesleyan Association., and is the fruit of much careful research. There are also two concluding chapters on Sunday School Treats and the Temperance Movement. This booklet is beautifully produced with a wealth of illustrations both in colour and black and white ... altogether a most attractive and informative production. *O si sic omnes!*

E.A.ROSE

NOTES AND QUERIES

1581 WHEN AND WHY DID CIRCUITS BECOME ANNUAL
 APPOINTMENTS?

Methodist historians have long suffered from the fact that there are no annual Minutes printed before 1765. Soon the volume edited by Henry Rack on the Minutes in the Bicentennial edition of John Wesley's Works will collect into one volume not only the Minutes from 1765 but all the known variants and notes which exist for Conferences before 1765.

Having spent some time on the appointments of Wesley's preachers before 1765 it seems to me that many of the appointments to circuits before 1765 are for less than a year, first in 1744 usually only for a month, then for two months in 1747, then by 1752 three to six months. After 1758 most stayed a year, but not all. Take Nicholas Gilbert for example. In 1758 he was stationed

at Norwich but is also found at Colchester which admittedly may have been in the same circuit. However by February 1759 John Wesley's Letters implies Gilbert was in London, though this may be Francis Gilbert. Nicholas was certainly in Bristol from February to May 1759. From May to September 1759 he's back in London. In September 1760 he's at Redruth, saying he may be in Bristol after Christmas!

Gilbert was in Bristol October 1760, while Dyson says he was in the Isle of Wight for the Methodist year 1760-1. He's also in Norwich again in 1760. After this there is no record of him until May 1762 when he's preaching in Bristol. He died of a fever in Bristol in April 1763. He appears to have been in 6 circuits between summer 1758 and Christmas 1760, a period of two and a half years. This is assuming the first London reference is to Francis. It is a period difficult to find evidence and the reason there's sufficient evidence here is that several of Nicholas Gilbert's letters of this period have survived.¹

However after 1765 the stations appear to be usually annual.² It is my contention in this article to suggest that it was this change to annual which prompted Wesley to decide to have the Minutes with the stations for the year printed annually from 1765. With the stations fixed for a year it became worth while to print the Minutes. The number of Methodists interested as well as the number of preachers directly affected was also growing and there would be more demand. The number of preachers itself seems to have leapt from at least 87 in 1764 to at least 102 in 1765, so there were over a hundred travelling preachers for the first time. The demand was assured by the confidence that in general the stations were fixed for a year and not just 6 months or so. Why did he move to this longer period in each circuit by 1765? Undoubtedly the preachers preferred the longer appointments. They wanted to stay in one place and not every 3 or 6 months go to the other end on the country. In addition, by 1765 the preachers were attaining more standing in Methodism. Men like John Jones, Christopher Hopper, Jacob Rowell, John Nelson, and Joseph Cownley had done more than 15 or 20 years and had done much to improve themselves. Younger men like Alexander Mather, John Pawson, Thomas Taylor, George Story, and Thomas Rankin had often higher standards of education and could sustain a preaching ministry in one place for longer .

JOHN LENTON

¹ The best summary on Nicholas Gilbert is Robert Glen "A Tangled Web: The Gilberts of Cornwall and the Gilberts of Antigua" .in PWHS 53 216-225. See also John Wesley Letters 4;51, Dyson Isle of Wight 58, Charles Wesley's Journal 2 182-3, Jolly The Spreading Flame 17, Lorkin W .. Wesleyan Methodism in the City of Norwich (1825) 6, 7, Fletcher /Tooth Letters in MARC vol 4;4/5/6 and Mss letter to CW 1760 DDP 1/33 in Early Preachers Collection.

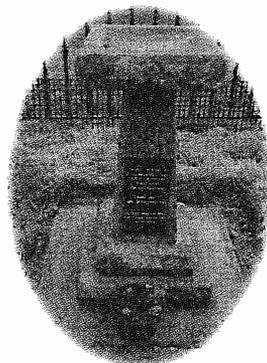
² see Baker in HMGB/i,p232. He seems to suggest that annual interchange was normal by 1758. I want to suggest there were still some exceptions (like Nicholas Gilbert) until 1765.

The Rev. George Bramwell Evens ('Romany' of BBC fame) was minister in the Carlisle Wesleyan Methodist Circuit from 1914 to 1926. His was a very busy and active ministry particularly during the First World War then afterwards overseeing the demolition of the Fisher Street church and the erection of a new Central Hall on its site, being its first minister for three years. Additionally, he wrote a weekly column of 2,000 words for a local newspaper on natural life.

He sought solitude and relaxation pursuing his life-long interest in nature in a number of local places but particularly in the Eden valley when he became friends with the Methodist Potter family, of Old Parks Farm, Glassonby, near Penrith. This friendship lasted over 20 years and he requested that his ashes be scattered on their land.

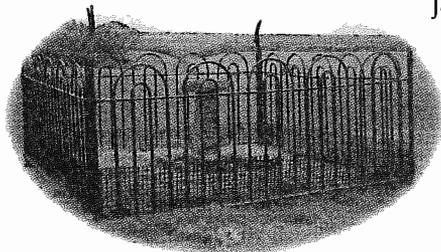
A permanent memorial was erected there, circa 1950, funded by the BBC. It takes the form of a stone birdbath standing 28 inches high enclosed by iron railings. The inscription reads:-

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
 REV G. BRAMWELL EVENS
 - ROMANY OF THE BBC-
 WHOSE ASHES
 ARE SCATTERED HERE
 BORN 1884
 DIED 20 NOVEMBER, 1943
 HE LOVED BIRDS AND TREES
 AND FLOWERS AND THE WIND
 ON THE HEATH



Old Parks Farm has another interesting niche in Methodist history. When the bombing of London started in the Second World War it was decided that some of Methodism's historical treasures be dispersed to safer places. Among those stored at the farm was a painting of

John Wesley. Being too big to manoeuvre upstairs it was kept in the hallway even though the farm doors were never locked!



E. A. LETEVE
 Photographs J. Huggon