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Proceedings

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THE LONG COURTSHIP: METHODIST UNION IN THE WHITBY AREA

Introduction

From the point of view of research into Methodism the twentieth century is under represented in comparison with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is despite the fact that this was a period during which some of its most significant developments took place, including the union of three of Methodism's smaller branches in 1907 to form 'The United Methodist Church' and the Methodist Union itself in 1932 which brought together the Wesleyan Methodists, the Primitive Methodists and the United Methodists as 'The Methodist Church', which is what it remains today. Much of what has been written about the Methodist Union of 1932 concentrates on the 'big picture' with a view of what was happening at the top of the organisation (Davies¹, Kent², Turner³), and although there is reference to the responses at lower levels (district, circuit, chapel) there is not a great deal which is concerned with looking at Union *from below* rather than from above. Yet, as Turner⁴ has pointed out, Methodists 'tend to be *local* rather than *cosmopolitan*'.

This purpose of this article is to consider in outline the process by which Union took place in the Whitby area of what was then the North

¹ Davies, R., *Methodism*, (1963)

² Kent, J., *The Age of Disunity*, (1966)

³ Turner, J.M., Methodism in England 1900-1932, in Davies, R., George, A.R. and Rupp, G. (Eds), *The History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, Vol.3. (1983) pp 309-361

⁴ Turner, J.M., *Modern Methodism in England 1932 -1998*, (Peterborough: 1998), p10

Riding of Yorkshire. In particular, it considers the process that led, after twelve years, from Union itself in 1932 to the amalgamation of the Wesleyan and Primitive circuits to form 'The Whitby Methodist' Circuit in 1944. Unlike in many other localities there was no longer a United Methodist Church⁵ presence in Whitby at the time of Union and so only the Wesleyans and Primitives were involved. The one church that had belonged to the United Methodist Free Church, a denomination that was a constituent of the 1907 union, had ceased to exist in the town before the end of the nineteenth century.

The evidence base

The research upon which this article is based forms part of a larger work in progress and the primary data was drawn principally from records of circuit quarterly meetings, local preachers' meetings, society stewards' meetings, Sunday school teachers' meetings, membership schedules, circuit plans and magazines, as well as local newspaper reports. Also consulted were records of the annual Methodist Conferences and meetings of the relevant District Synods, both before and after the Union of 1932 took place. The survival of local records is patchy and those of the former Wesleyan circuit have survived in greater quantity than those of the former Primitive Methodists. The records are also quite widely dispersed with some remaining in the circuit, some in the North Yorkshire County Record Office, some in the John Rylands archive in Manchester and some at the Borthwick Institute in York. Useful contextual information was also found in the libraries of the Whitby and the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Societies, together with archive material from the Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University. An additional strand of data is that of oral recollections of people with memories, if not of Union itself, of those who were involved and were familiar with its consequences in the area. Given the relatively small number of people remaining this is not a major source of data but it adds considerably to understanding, especially of the years following the amalgamation of the circuits.

The local context

Whitby is situated on the north east coast of Yorkshire at the mouth of the River Esk. It is surrounded in all landward directions by high

⁵ The account book of the Flowergate United Methodist Free Church states that it was 'taken over by the Wesleyans 4th October 1885', becoming the Flowergate Wesleyan Mission Chapel.

moorland which could make travel difficult, especially in winter. The geography and topography had a significance influence on the development of Methodism in the area and on its subsequent operations, especially in relation to preachers reaching their appointments in more isolated communities. Already famous for St. Hilda (614-680), the Synod of Whitby (then 'Streanaeshalch') in 664 AD and the Christian poet Caedmon (d. c. 680), it was visited by John Wesley (1703 -1791) eleven times, the last in 1790, a year before his death, and it is recorded in his Journal⁶ that he was impressed by the people of Whitby:

They despise all ornaments but good works, together with a meek and quiet spirit. I did not see a ruffle, no, nor a fashionable cap, among them; though many of them are in easy circumstances.'

In 1821 Whitby was also evangelised by William Clowes (1780 - 1851), one of the founders of Primitive Methodism and it became a Primitive Methodist circuit in the connexional year 1823-47, although by the twentieth century the Primitives Methodists had considerably fewer places of worship than the Wesleyans, who were more strongly established in the area. The Primitive Methodist circuit was notable in that for a time the itinerant female preacher Mary Porteus (c 1783 -1861) ministered there. Patterson⁸ stated:

'Crowds attended the ministry of Mrs Porteus; and her ability as a preacher, her constant fellowship with God, and her passion for souls contributed largely to the financial and spiritual improvement of the circuit'

Both traditions, therefore, had firm roots in the area and a strong sense of their origins, history and distinct identities.

The 1924 Vote on Union

The roots of union reach back into the nineteenth century and in the years following on from the First World War (1914 -1918) there were moves at national level towards bringing together the remaining

⁶ John Wesley's Journal, Wednesday 16 August 1784. *John Wesley's Journal: as abridged by Nehemiah Curnock*, London: The Epworth Press, 1952 reprint.

⁷ Patterson, W.M., *Northern Primitive Methodism: Rise and Progress of the Circuits in the Old Sunderland District*, (1909)

⁸ *Ibid* p.35

branches of the Methodist family including 'a period of "secret" negotiations'⁹. The Conferences of the three denominations had eventually agreed on a scheme as a basis for union and this was put to their respective circuit quarterly meetings in December 1924 with a vote on the question:

Are you in favour of the Organic Union of the Wesleyan Methodist and the Primitive Methodist and the United Methodist Churches on the basis of the Scheme now submitted?

The first significant indication of the feelings of the two denominations in the area towards the union of Methodism therefore came when the vote was taken on the subject at their respective quarterly meetings. In both of the Whitby circuits restrictions were placed on procedures at the quarterly meetings, in the case of the Wesleyans the vote was taken without discussion and in that of the Primitive Methodists it was resolved that 'each person who desires to do so may speak once and the chairman shall close the discussion'¹⁰. There is no surviving evidence of any local leadership support for union and the Wesleyan circuit magazine, *The Dawn*¹¹, set out the proposals from Conference but with no editorial comment. At the Primitive Methodist quarterly meeting eight people voted for and eight against with one recorded as 'neutral'. The Chair then cast his vote in favour of the scheme making the overall result nine for and eight against. In the case of the Wesleyans the vote was sixteen for union, forty-three against and one 'neutral'¹². The significant thing to emerge is that the Whitby Methodists of both denominations showed considerably less support for union than was the case nationally where the Primitive Methodists vote overall was 71.1% in favour and the Wesleyans 67.1% in favour.¹³

The evidence suggests that the Whitby response was influenced by the fact that both circuits were gaining numbers at the time, were confident in what they were doing, and did not feel the need to come together, quite apart from any differences of doctrine or praxis they may have had. For instance, in October 1926 an article by the superintendent minister in *The Dawn* noted how 'splendidly equipped' Wesleyan Methodism was in the town and of how the Brunswick Church and

⁹ Brake, G.T., *Policy and Politics in British Methodism 1932-1982*, (1984), p 18

¹⁰ Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 9 December, 1924.

¹¹ *The Dawn*, December 1924

¹² *The Dawn*, January 1925

¹³ Currie, R., *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenism*, (1968), p 27

Room were 'the admiration of visitors'¹⁴. In the same period a similar tone was being adopted by the Primitive Methodists when the superintendent minister wrote of the improvements to Fishburn Park church making it 'one of the prettiest and cosiest of churches' and of how 'the organ will greatly enrich the musical part of the services'¹⁵.

By the end of the decade, however, events at national level had moved on with the passing of an enabling act, the Methodist Union Act of 1929, which paved the way towards union. Voting at District Synod level supported this and in September 1932 the three denominations formally came together as one Methodist Church. It is not clear what level of support there was for this within the two Whitby circuits but subsequent events suggest that at this stage neither the former Wesleyan nor the former Primitive Methodists had significantly changed their views since the 1924 vote, despite the effects of the economic depression at the time.

The two Whitby circuits in 1932

As Methodist Union took place the former Whitby Wesleyan circuit contained twelve churches, two of them in the town of Whitby itself, with the most distant at Robin Hood's Bay and Grosmont, both about seven miles away. The Whitby Primitive Methodist circuit contained four churches, two in Whitby, one in the village of Ruswarp at a distance of about a mile and a half and one at the village of Goathland situated five hundred feet above sea level on the edge of the moors about nine and a half miles away. The latter, however, only opened intermittently during the summer season when visitors were staying in the area. At around the time of union three other Primitive Methodist churches were transferred from the Whitby Circuit into the former Wesleyan Danby Circuit. All of these were situated between twelve and sixteen miles from Whitby in the valley of the River Esk where poor road access meant that travelling conditions were difficult, especially in the winter months. In terms of membership the Wesleyan circuit had 561 members and the Primitive circuit 210, of which about 155 were members of the two town churches with most of the remainder at Ruswarp. By way of comparison the two former Wesleyan town churches had, between them, 260 members with the remaining 301 spread around the rest of the circuit.

Upon union, therefore, the nature of the two circuits differed

¹⁴ *The Dawn*, October 1926

¹⁵ Notes on Whitby Primitive Methodist Circuit Plan, October 1923.

considerably. The former Primitives had what they referred to as the three 'home churches', Church Street, Fishburn Park and Ruswarp, and the more distant Goathland, referred to as 'the moorland Bethel'. The former Wesleyans had two town churches, Brunswick and Wesley, and ten widely spread village churches. The town of Whitby itself was divided by the River Esk with the old town nestling below the abbey on the east side and the new town on the west, the latter developing as Whitby became prosperous as a result of the shipping trade in the eighteenth century and as railway interests developed the town as a holiday resort from the mid-nineteenth. The original Wesleyan church had been on the east side but the focus moved to the west side in the early nineteenth century with the building of the first Brunswick Church. The original Wesleyan church then became, in effect, a mission church on the poorer east side, where much of the housing in the yards and 'ghauts' was sub-standard. The main Primitive Methodist church, Church Street, was on the east side and in 1866 a church was also opened on the west side to serve the Fishburn Park area (known locally as 'The Railway'), a district of terrace housing built partly to serve master mariners (one terrace being known as 'Captain's Row') but mainly railway workers, artisans and small tradesmen¹⁶. The surviving records show that the Primitive Methodist membership contained relatively more people who were shop-keepers and artisans than the Wesleyans who had a number of professional and business people among their ranks, including Alderman R.E.Pannett, a solicitor, who gave money to build the lavishly appointed Brunswick Room¹⁷.

United in Separation

Local celebrations in September and October 1932 marked the Union but records of circuit quarterly meetings and society meetings suggest that any early impetus to create one Whitby Circuit was quickly lost if, indeed, it had existed at all. At the final Wesleyan quarterly meeting in June 1932 it was agreed to rename the Wesleyan circuit as 'The Whitby Brunswick Methodist Circuit' and the former Primitives decided to rename the circuit as 'The Church Street Methodist Circuit' at their quarterly meeting in December 1932. From this time onwards they operated almost entirely as separate organisations with their own ministers, local preachers and circuit structures. As had been required of them, a Methodist Local Union Committee had been formed but this had

¹⁶ White, A., 'Victorian Whitby', in Whitworth, A. (Ed), *Aspects of the Yorkshire Coast: Discovering Local History*, (Barnsley: 2000), pp 163 -183

¹⁷ Davies, S., *Whitby's Brunswick Room*, (Whitby: 1962).

concerned itself with such practical matters as how to respond jointly to the request for contributions to the Methodist Commemoration Fund.

In relation to the matter of circuit amalgamation (or 'fusion' as it was often referred to) the minutes record that it was the Brunswick Circuit that took the initiative in calling meetings and in October 1936 the Local Union Committee reported that it had discussed finance, ministerial and other matters. The report of the meeting in the Brunswick quarterly meeting minutes contains the statement 'There appeared to be no obstacle to the fusion of the two circuits say in 1938'¹⁸ but these words had been crossed out by the chairman with 'Stet' added, together with the statement 'but it would probably be desirable to place matters before members'. This suggests considerable sensitivity surrounding the matter and an awareness of opposition. There is no evidence of if and how the matter was placed before members and there was no mention of amalgamation discussions when an offer was made in 1937 by a town councillor, who was a Brunswick Circuit member and local preacher, of a plot of land upon which to build new Methodist premises. This was situated in an area then known as Gallows Close where a council housing estate was being built, later known as Helredale. This was used principally for re-housing people from the crowded and substandard accommodation along the east bank of the River Esk and a concern of both circuits was that Sunday Schools were losing children, which was attributed to movement of families up to the Gallows Close estate a mile or so away¹⁹. There was an exchange of correspondence between the two circuits and a sub-committee set up but meetings were infrequent. The final mention before war broke out was in March 1939 when it was stated 'there was nothing further to report re: Mount Pleasant Scheme'²⁰.

Throughout the nineteen-thirties there is evidence that both circuits were subjected to similar social and economic pressures but these appear to have been felt in different ways. In the Whitby district there was no significant industry and many people had to leave the area to find work. The town council was therefore developing the town as a holiday resort which meant the opening of amusements and attractions, including on Sundays. This was further encouraged by the London and North Eastern Railway which ran summer scenic excursions to the coast, usually on Sundays, when other traffic was lighter on the mainly single

¹⁸ Brunswick Circuit Quarterly Meeting, 10 October, 1936

¹⁹ At the Brunswick Circuit Education and Youth Committee meeting on 14. February 1937 the loss of 55 scholars was attributed 'chiefly to re-housing',

²⁰ Brunswick Circuit Quarterly Meeting, 15 March 1939.

track lines²¹. The Brunswick Circuit quarterly meeting sent objections about these matters to the council and also to the local press, singling out the opening of leisure facilities on Sundays and the advertising and availability of alcoholic drinks. This reflected the increasing concern of Methodism for 'Christian citizenship'²² and posed particular challenges for Methodism in holiday resorts. The Church Street Circuit was particularly concerned that during the summer months a significant number of people did not attend church because they were employed in the holiday trade, a typical comment being:

The summer quarter is difficult, for a large proportion of our people are so busy attending the needs of visitors that they cannot be in their places for Sunday worship.²³

However, the visitors did bring in extra income and some of the chapels benefitted from higher collections which helped them through the winter months. There were also opportunities for evangelism with beach missions and services on the pier but these were mainly conducted through the Free Church Council and there is no evidence of the two Methodist circuits working together specifically as Methodists. The nineteen-thirties ended with the 1939 holiday season which, for Whitby, was the best on record²⁴ but with the coming of war the priorities changed to meet the new reality of austerity and restrictions and it was during this period that moves towards amalgamation were again made.

The circuits are amalgamated

The matter of circuit amalgamation was raised again in December 1939 at the Brunswick quarterly meeting where the superintendent minister recommended the reopening of discussions with the Church Street circuit. At the Church Street December quarterly meeting a week later this proposal was discussed and a committee set up for the purpose. Progress was made and at the March 1940 Brunswick quarterly meeting it was reported that two meetings had been held, one to discuss finance and the other pastoral oversight. Illness had prevented further meetings and it was reported that the Rev. Oliver Hornabrook had suggested in the *Methodist Recorder* that all circuit amalgamation plans should be shelved until after the war. However It was agreed that:

²¹ Hoole, K., *North Eastern Branch Line Termini*, (Oxford: 1985), p 153

²² Turner, J.M., *Methodism in England 1932 -1998*, (Peterborough: 1998), p 14

²³ Notes on Primitive Methodist Plan, October 1934.

²⁴ House, J. W ., 'Whitby as a Resort' in Daysh, G.H.J. (Ed), *A Survey of Whitby and the Surrounding Area*, (Windsor: 1958), pp 145 - 155

'in view of the fact that this scheme presents no difficult problems the conversations would be continued'²⁵

At the March 1940 Church Street quarterly meeting it was proposed that the minister in post should be asked to remain until the question of circuit amalgamation was settled, to which he agreed. However in 1941 he stated that he felt it was now time he retired 'to make place for a younger ministry'²⁶. In fact, the minister who was subsequently appointed was also near the end of his ministry and it is possible that this decision may have been influenced at District level with a view to leaving the way clear for a change of ministers when the circuits finally did amalgamate.

In September 1942 there was a note in the minutes of the Brunswick General Purposes Committee (7 September 1942) that the Chairman of the District should be informed that the Brunswick Circuit was open to resuming conversations with Church street 'whenever the Church Street Circuit is willing' and in 1943 a plan was drawn up which set out details of how the new circuit would be organised. Final decisions to amalgamate were taken by both circuits in 1944 with the amalgamation taking place in September 1944 and two new ministers taking up post.

The factors that led to amalgamation

This, in outline, is how the two circuits moved towards and finally amalgamated. However, the process by which the two circuits were amalgamated is indicative of issues at both national and local level of the forces that kept circuits apart and of those that finally brought them together. In relation to the national picture Davies²⁷ states that after Methodist Union in 1932 there were 1,362 circuits in England, Wales and Scotland and that 115 amalgamations took place before the outbreak of war. However, during the war there were virtually no circuit amalgamations. He also points to:

'the widespread inability to reduce the number of Methodist chapels except very slowly and over a large number of years'²⁸.

In the Whitby area, apart from moving three distant Primitive Methodist churches into the Danby circuit at around the time of Union in 1932, there

²⁵ Brunswick Circuit Quarterly Meeting, 6 March 1940.

²⁶ Church Street Circuit Quarterly Meeting, 18 September 1941.

²⁷ Davies, R., 'Methodism' in R. Davies (Ed), *The Testing of the Churches 1932 -1982*, (1982) p 59

²⁸ *Ibid*, p 36

were no attempts to rationalise premises or pastoral oversight and it was a further twenty years *after* the amalgamation of the circuits in 1944 before any chapels were closed. The evidence suggests that the former Wesleyans took the lead in the moves to amalgamate and that the reluctance to do so was mainly on the part of the former Primitives. Theirs was a much smaller circuit almost entirely based in Whitby and even the village of Ruswarp was really a suburb of the town with a direct footpath connecting the two. They did not have a network of village chapels, other than the seasonal outpost at Goathland and their premises, while good, could not match those of the Wesleyans with their large, well appointed and centrally located Brunswick Church and Brunswick Room. In terms of premises, even in the summer months, Whitby needed only one Methodist church on the west side of the river and one on the east, although there could have been a case for retaining the Fishburn Park chapel on the grounds that it served a discrete neighbourhood.

It would not be true to state there was no cooperation between the two separate circuits and circuit plans show that ministers and some local preachers did take services in each other's pulpits. One informant remembered joint Temperance meetings being held. There was also, no doubt, much informal contact that does not appear in the official records, especially between ministers. However, at an organisational level the circuits operated, in effect, in parallel for twelve years and the process of responding to the opportunity to build new Methodist premises on the expanding council estate is more suggestive of the conduct of 'foreign relations' than 'home affairs'. The minutes of both circuits also shows organisations very much concerned with their own internal affairs and with what Hempton calls 'institutional management'²⁹, for instance, raising money to cover budget deficits, funding manses and finding sufficient preachers to fill all the pulpits each Sunday, rather than organisations intent on evangelism, flexibility and expansion, despite acknowledging the need. Any leadership that might have been provided by ministers was restricted by the fact that the average period for which they remained in the circuits was usually three to four years, yet officials such as Circuit Stewards and Society Stewards often remained in post for many years. If the latter were opposed to the amalgamation of circuits or any rationalisation of provision this put them in a very strong position.

The evidence located so far suggests that circuit amalgamation, when it came, was a result of the changed conditions and priorities of wartime,

²⁹Hempton, D., *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, (New Haven and London: (2005), p 183

falling membership numbers and financial pressures principally, but not exclusively, among the former Primitive Methodists. Their number of members had been falling steadily from a peak of 228 in 1928, to 210 at the time of Union in 1932 and to 135 when the circuits amalgamated in 1944. The former Wesleyans reached a peak of 581 members in 1937 and fell to 531 in 1942 but then started to revive and reached 541 at amalgamation. In the newly created Whitby Methodist Circuit the membership numbers continued to rise until 1951 when a peak of 753 was reached after which they declined steadily. Also, under wartime conditions it was unlikely that a third minister would have been sanctioned for the Church Street Circuit alone, hence the appointment of someone in the final stages of his career who would retire when amalgamation had been achieved. After the war the appointment of a third minister was again considered but lack of money prevented this from taking place. The plan for a Methodist 'centre' to serve the Helredale council estate was also revived but it would have involved the 'centralisation' of provision (i.e. the closure of one of the two chapels) on the east side of the river to release resources. Despite serious moves to make this happen there was also considerable opposition and the plan was abandoned in 1950.

In the event, the churches of the former constituent Whitby Methodist denominations retained their own cultural characteristics for many years after Methodist Union and, indeed, after circuit amalgamation. As Hartley (1983:5) has pointed out:

'It is not so much the working out of top level plans that provides the greatest obstacle, but implementing the plans among the ordinary people³⁰'.

On being asked about Methodist Union and circuit amalgamation a former Primitive Methodist local preacher stated with feeling, 'It was not an amalgamation, it was a takeover!' At the current stage of the research this does correspond with much of the evidence, suggesting that after a long and tentative courtship Miss Prim was finally wedded to strong Mr. Wesley because she had no real alternatives left.

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³⁰Hartley, J.C., 'Methodism in Theory and Practice', in *Wesley Historical Society Yorkshire Branch Journal*, No.42. (1982) pp 2- 5

JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY TERCENTENARY DERBYSHIRE WELL-DRESSINGS

In the the United Kingdom and the developed world we take for granted the constant supply of clean, pure water piped into our homes. But this has not always been the case. In the 1940's and 1950's there were campaigns to have piped water from the mains to the properties in Affetside, an upland village on a Roman Road, which connected Manchester to Ribchester in the West Pennines area of Lancashire. During my childhood I saw women and children collecting water from the village well. In 1955 the Tottington Urban District Council said that it was going to condemn the cottages in Affetside and re-house the people in Tottington. This controversial statement by the council led to renewed campaign get clean pure water piped to the homes in the village. It was not until some twenty years later in 1976 that mains water was laid to the village so that the people were able to turn on the tap in their cottages to enjoy the convenience of having clean running water. My great aunts who lived in Holcombe Brook, at the bottom of Holcombe Hill, in Lancashire had piped water but it came from an unfiltered spring on the Hill and not from the water main.

The present day campaigns to raise money and awareness for the need to have pure clean water in the third world reminds us of how water is central to the health and well being of all humankind. More than 1 billion people do not have access to clean water. Water borne disease kills about 4500 children a day.¹

Our forebears in pagan times had great respect for and venerated the sources of clean water. It is claimed that the avenues leading from stone circles in Britain often lead to water, suggesting that water was venerated.²

The early Christian Church sought to suppress the pagan cult of worshipping water deities. The Second Council of Arles c.452 issued a canon which stated that 'If in the territory of a bishop infidels light torches or venerate trees, fountains, or stones, and he neglects to abolish

¹ www.unicef.org/wes/index_31600.html

² *The Stone Circles of the British Isles* Aubrey Burl. Yale University Press; 1979

this usage, he must know that he is guilty of sacrilege.³ Even though the canon was strongly worded the cult of veneration and worship of the water idols continued and Pope Gregory the Great in a letter to Abbot Mellitus (d 624 and 2nd Archbishop of Canterbury) in 601 says 'Therefore when by God's help you reach our most revered brother, brother Bishop [St] Augustine we wish to Inform him that we have been giving careful thought to the affairs of the English, and have come to the conclusion that the temples of the idols among that people should on no account be destroyed, but the temples themselves are to be aspersed with holy water, altars set up in them, and relics deposited there. For, if those temples are well-built, they must be purified from the worship of demons and dedicated to the service of the true God. In this way, we hope that the people, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may abandon their error and, flocking more readily to their accustomed resorts, may come to know and adore the true God'.⁴

For the Christian Church water has always been recognised as essential to life. The lack of water was a disaster, (Jeremiah 14, Joel 1:20) Water was a sign of God's blessing, (Psalm 23:2, Isaiah 35:6-7, Ezekiel 47:1-11) In the New Testament water is a symbol of eternal life (John 4:14, Rev 7:17.) It is also seen as the sign for the cleansing of sins in the sacrament of Holy Baptism, (Ephesians 5:26, Hebrews 10:22) The Celtic saints of Wales built their cells close to water so that the inquirers of the faith who became converts could be baptised. St Chad's Well which is still visited by pilgrims in Lichfield is where the saint baptised the converts. For Christians in Britain and elsewhere water and wells are places of pilgrimage and healing. One example is St Winefride's Well at Holywell in North Wales. It was to this well that King Henry V made a pilgrimage in 1415 to give thanks to God for his victory at Agincourt. Today some 100,000 pilgrims visit the three wells at Walsingham in Norfolk' many to drink the water.⁵

In the county of Derbyshire (although not exclusively, there is a Well Dressing at Endon in Staffordshire) the celebration of pure clean water and the blessing of wells by a bishops or clergy continues to this day. Possibly the village of Tissington which is north of Ashbourne on the A515, has the longest record for the custom which goes back to c1349. It is thought that the custom was begun as a thanksgiving because the

³ *Sacred Waters* Janet and Colin Bord Granada Publishing Ltd London 1985 p19

⁴ *Bede A History of the English Church and People* Penguin Books 1974 p86.

⁵ *Oxford Dictionary of English Folklore* Jacqueline Simpson and Steve Roud Oxford University Press p386

village was the only one in the region not to have been contaminated by the Black Death in 1348.⁶ This was probably because of the purity of the well water. The dressing and blessing of the wells at Tissington is always held on Ascension Day⁷ and although the custom has occasionally been interrupted caused mainly by the two world wars it was quickly revived when peace returned. In 1794 there is an account of the Tissington well dressing. The well dressing at that time was not as elaborate as it is today. The account reads 'In the village of Tissington it has been a custom, time immemorial, on every Holy Thursday, to decorate the wells with boughs of trees, garlands of tulips and other flowers, placed in various fancied devices; and after prayers for the day at the church, for parson and singers to pray and sing psalms at the wells'.⁸ The custom of Well Dressing is widespread throughout Derbyshire with some villages having at least 5 wells dressed. Many of the villages have a 'children's well' which is designed and dressed by the pupils and staff of the local school.

In most villages the process of creating a Well-Dressing picture takes a similar form. The Well Dressing is a coloured picture made of flower petals. There are often 5 panels. The central panel, which is the largest, can be up to 12 feet, 365 centimetres long by 4 feet, 122 centimetres wide. An artist, often connected to the village, makes a full size drawing of the picture to be displayed by the well. About 10 days before the well is to be dressed shallow trays, which make up the panels, are put in a local stream. After many hours soaking in the stream the trays are taken out of the water and clay, which softened with a solution of water and salt to stop it cracking, is laid in trays. The trays are studded with nails to give the clay a secure foundation. The clay is laid in the tray to about 2 inches 5 centimetres thick and worked to a level smoothed flat surface. The picture, which has already been drawn, is copied onto tracing paper. The tracing paper with the outline of the picture is placed on the clay and its outline is pricked out so that the picture is clear on the damp clay. A team of people start petalling. Thousands of flower petals, which have been arranged in heaps of the same colour and graded into shades, are placed overlapping the one below in much the same way that a skilled worker puts slates on a roof to deflect the rain. Petals and other natural material such as seeds, moss, stones, shells and lambs wool that has been

⁶ *The Cassell Dictionary of Folklore* David Pickering Cassell 1999 p313

⁷ *A Companion to the Folklore & Myths & Customs of Britain* Marc Alexander Sutton Publishing 2000 p312

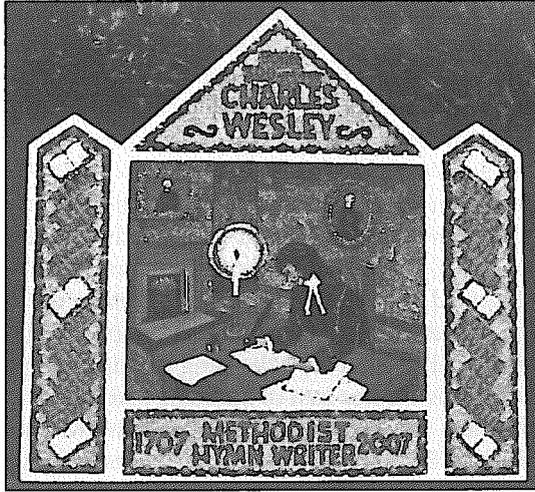
⁸ *The Gentleman's Magazine* May 1794

caught on the field walls and wires are used to create a colourful work of art which is usually a picture surrounded with designs. The creating of a Well Dressing involves most of the people in the village. Once the picture is made and shortly before the Well Blessing day the panels are stood upright and fixed on a supporting frame over or beside the well.

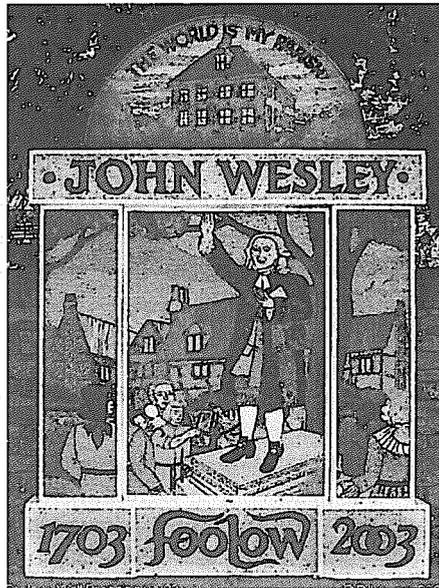
The pictures often have a biblical or religious theme with the text picked out in flower petals or berries beneath the picture. Quite often pictures to celebrate special anniversaries are used. In the year 2000 Tissington celebrated the '2000th Birthday of Jesus' In 2003 Foolow, a village north of the A623 in the Peak District celebrated the tricentenary of John Wesley's birth with a well dressing picture in 8 panels. In 2007 Brackenfield, which is 4 miles east of Matlock, had a Well Dressing made up of five panels by the well outside the Methodist Church commemorating the 300th Anniversary of Charles Wesley's birth.

The 2003 Foolow Well Dressing had a very colourful image of John Wesley standing on a tombstone preaching to a group of villagers. He is standing under a tree with houses and his horse in the background. He is wearing his black riding coat, white cravat and preacher's bands, grey knee breeches, white stockings and black shoes. In his left hand he is holding a Bible and his right hand held high. Above the pictures is picked out in petals JOHN WESLEY and below '1703 Foolow 2003'. In a separate arched panel above the picture of Wesley is a picture of the 'Old Rectory' at Epworth with the words above in a semi circle 'THE WORLD IS MY PARISH.'

On the 2007 Spring Bank holiday weekend - outside the Brackenfield Methodist Church there was a Well Dressing celebrating Charles Wesley's Tricentenary of his birth. The designer was Mrs Patricia Lomas, a member of the church. The central panel is a picture of Charles Wesley sitting at a table in a Georgian style room with a lit fire in a period fireplace and a wooden floor and two portraits in frames on the walls. He has long black hair and is dressed in a black cassock with a white cravat and preaching bands. On the table there are several sheets of white paper with black writing on them, an ink pot and a lighted candle. Charles Wesley is writing using a black-feathered quill. In an apex-shaped panel above Wesley is the inscription on a yellow background.



On the left hand panel are 3 open hymn books. Between the books are the opening lines of two of Charles Wesley's hymns which were published in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739) entitled 'Hymn for Christmas Day' **HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING** and the hymn entitled 'Hymn for Easter-Day, **CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY**. On the right hand panel are three open hymn books with the opening lines of two hymns. The first is from *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742) 'Hymns for Children' **GENTLE JESUS MEEK AND MILD** and **LOVE DIVINE ALL LOVES EXCELLING** from *Hymns for those that seek and those that have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ* (1747).



DONALD H RYAN

(Former Chairman of the North Wales Methodist District/
Wesley Historical Society Registrar)

BOOK REVIEWS

'A Victorian Class Conflict?' *School teaching and the Parson, Priest and Minister, 1837-1902*, by John T. Smith (Sussex Academic Press, 2008, £49.50 hb, pp. viii + 233, ISBN 978 1 84519 295 2)

Following the publication of his monograph on *Methodism and Education, 1849-1902* by the Clarendon Press in 1998 Dr John T. Smith addressed the Wesley Historical Society residential conference at Oxford in 2002 on the subject of 'The Wesleyan Minister and the Wesleyan Elementary School, 1837-1902', which was published in the volume of conference papers, *Vital Piety and Learning*, edited by John Lenton in 2005. The volume under review, much of which has appeared already in various other journal articles, significantly extends his study to include a comparative analysis of the role of the Church of England and Roman Catholic clergy in the development of denominational schools. The book encompasses the period of rapid growth of denominational education after the accession of Queen Victoria to the introduction of the controversial Balfour Education Act of 1902, a year after her death, which provoked a nonconformist revolt at the prospect of 'Rome on the rates', exposing some of the underlying tensions deriving from faith-based education which, then as now, were capable of generating considerable friction within society.

Dr Smith's study is a thoroughly researched and balanced assessment of its subject, drawing on a wide range of ecclesiastical and nonconformist archival sources, HMI reports, newspapers, journals and private papers. It provides ground breaking comparative analysis of the social status and the commitment to the extension of elementary education of Anglican and Roman Catholic clergy and Wesleyan ministers, focusing particularly on their relationship with the emerging teaching profession. It reveals that teachers in the Wesleyan schools were the highest paid, whereas those in the Roman Catholic schools were the lowest paid. It concludes that the provision of denominational education involved greater financial and other sacrifices from the Anglican clergy and Roman Catholic priests even after 1870 when increasing proportions of finance came from government grants than from Wesleyan ministers whose itinerancy meant that day-to-day responsibility was exercised more normally by a dedicated laity, who chose to allow teachers a greater degree of independence. This it is argued was more attuned to a growing sense of professionalism amongst elementary teachers and a diminishing degree of social control particularly by the Anglican clergy.

The extent to which the increasing status of teachers in the late Victorian era, deriving from improved teacher education after 1846, provided the impetus for the emergent class-based politics of the early twentieth century requires a broader analysis extending beyond the terms of reference of this study, though Smith suggests that career antagonisms rather than traditional

class antagonisms were probably as significant in affecting clerical-lay relationships within elementary school classrooms particularly in rural England where many incumbents were frail and elderly. The dramatic decline in the number of Wesleyan elementary schools from a peak of 912 in 1873 to a mere 738 by 1902 when they 'had entered freefall' is attributed to the lack of enthusiasm by Wesleyan ministers for maintaining their own denominational system following the creation of board schools, but itinerancy effectively precluded their active participation in school board elections.

JOHN A. HARGREAVES

Chapel and Swastika: Methodism in the Channel Islands during the German Occupation 1940-1945 by David M. Chapman. 256pp. 2009 £10. ELSP, 16A St John Road, St Helier, Jersey JE2 3LD

This is a superb contribution to the many books on the German occupation of the Channel Islands, June 1940 to May 1945. It is expertly and thoroughly researched. At the end David Chapman lists all his sources: in fact 38 of the total of 256 pages, comprise Appendix; Notes and References; Sources; Bibliography and Index of Names and Subjects!

One comment puzzles me. On page 24, referring to the period before occupation, he states: "Apart from the introduction of conscription for men of military age, life continued much as before." Since the days of King John, islanders were not to be conscripted unless the reigning monarch was in personal danger, so the names of the fallen read out each Remembrance Sunday were volunteers. I have not come across any rescinding of that for the second world war, unless David Chapman is referring to islanders who had evacuated to the mainland, or those who were U.K. born.

As he states: of the many books on the occupation, very little has been written about the role of the Churches during that time, and this book redresses the balance. It is based, he says, primarily on contemporary records, rather than personal reminiscences, as inevitably these become blurred with the passage of time. Co-incidentally, as I began to read the book, I came across a letter from my aunt, dated 28 June 1945. She was in occupied Guernsey throughout the war, while my mother, sister and myself had been evacuated from Alderney to Glasgow. As we read the many pages of her experiences for the first time we had an inkling of what she had had to face. These covered the preceding five years, so her reminiscences were not at all blurred. I had wondered whether some of her information was rumour rather than reality but David's book has confirmed my aunt's comments, for which I am grateful. For instance:

(1) ... the British government failed to inform Germany in time that the islands were de-militarised, "open towns", therefore safeguarding the islands from air raids. The air-raids took place, and people were killed. The islands contacted the British government, which, too late, hurriedly sent that memo - but just in time for the Germans to cancel a second raid due that same night!

(2) Critical commentators condemned the passivity of islanders, suggesting collaboration rather than resistance. Both David and my aunt had the same answer. Collaboration is not the operative word - co-operation is better. The islanders and the Germans had to find some working formula, otherwise community would break down. When my uncle died, and my aunt was living alone, two German officers were billeted on her, and she had no choice in the matter. Was that collaboration? David Chapman mentions, only in a late chapter on Liberation, the young women who formed relationships with German soldiers, and had babies,- more should have been written about this. My middle-aged staid aunt wrote at length, but surprisingly did not condemn them. As far as she was concerned, it was enough that they would have to face the repercussions in the future. She was annoyed but also amused when some folk thought that she was having an affair with the two Germans who were lodging with her!

(3) How did Methodism function during the occupation? I applaud David Chapman as he squares up to Madeleine Bunting! In her book she criticised the Churches for failing to speak out against the occupation forces, painting them as meekly avoiding confrontation. The truth: Churches were warned that anti-German statements from the pulpit would not be tolerated. Speakers would be arrested, and the Churches closed. Already the Salvation Army were banned, along with Scouts, Guides and other uniformed organisations. The main point is "we never closed". Rather than deprive the people of spiritual and social activities the Churches engaged in passive resistance. Sermons were based on events in the Bible comparable with their present experiences, which boosted morale. Germans attended worship - some were spying, hoping to find some excuse to eliminate worship - others came to worship as Christians, so should they be made welcome? The Churches had to ask permission, mainly granted, for putting on plays and concerts as well as services - they provided the only social activities available. For a lengthy period they provided soup-kitchens for the poor and hungry. Tactful, but determined, the Churches were ministering well to the whole community. Even so, three Methodist ministers were deported to Germany. The burden on the remaining clergy was exhausting. Some ministers were also politicians, and one Methodist minister was knighted at the end of the war, for services to the community.

(4) June 1944, D-day. May 1945, V.E. Day. During those 11 months the islands were cut off from England and France - no food supplies etc. able to help the under-nourished, hungry inhabitants. (Liberation came after V.E.

Day). Vegetables unobtainable, so soup kitchens closed. Fuel also scarce. Some Red Cross ships were allowed in towards the end. My aunt spoke of working in twilight, sleeping during the day, to conserve depleted energy. Cuts took a long time to heal. She made soup out of sea-weed. A whole winter without potatoes. Depression, breakdown, and an increasing death-rate.

I notice that David Chapman loves statistics! He presents figures covering the attendance of teachers and children in Sunday School, and the statistics of Church membership. He comments on the many Churches and their seating capacities - far more than necessary. Many of them were built in the 19th century, when a period of rapid growth and revival justified it. (My great-grandfather's brother was a Methodist minister in Normandy, Paris, as well as the four Islands with Methodist Churches. He participated in the opening of 10 Churches in Jersey and 3 in Guernsey! But that fervour and required capacity did not last long.) Like the Churches in mainland Britain, as well as in the Islands, post-war there would have to be many closures.

David Chapman meticulously covers these issues and much more. His researches and resources can be savoured in this excellent book, which I commend. I have many books relating to this period in the Islands. Most I could dispense with, but not *Chapel and Swastika*.

ARTHUR MIGNOT

Religion and Place: Liverpool's historic places of worship. Sarah Brown, Peter de Figueiredo (English Heritage, Swindon, 2008) pp.96 p/b ISBN 978 1 873592 88 5 £7.99

Ian Sellers (revised Donald A. Bullen), *The Methodist Chapels and Preaching Places of Liverpool and District, 1750-1971* (2008) pp56. £3.00 including p&p from the Rev. Dr. D.A. Bullen, 10 Hayles Green, Liverpool, LS25 4SG

English Heritage, in a beautifully illustrated book, continues its thematic series by considering places of worship in Liverpool, a city with a rich religious inheritance reflecting its former eminence as a port and the wealth so generated, but today associated with economic decline. Inevitably Anglican and Catholic churches, the latter measures of the Irish community, dominate but those of immigrant Swedish Protestants and Greek Orthodox as well as synagogues are also recorded. Nevertheless, the writers seem to have no knowledge of the impact of Methodism in the city which is only hinted at in passing and significantly the former Central Hall and Dooley's sculpture at Princess Avenue are disappointingly ignored.

For those wanting a guide to Liverpool Methodism, Donald Bullen has

produced an updated edition of that originally published by the late Rev. Dr. Ian Sellers in 1971. Short potted histories of the various societies are given and the various circuits. If it should go to a further edition perhaps more information could be given regarding the church architects and a challenge would be to add a bibliography.

D. COLIN DEWS

Two Centuries and More, memories of Low Moor Methodist Churches, by Geoff & Mary Twentymen (Eds.):(np., 2009, 68 pp. copies £4.00 post free from the editors 13 St Abbs Fold, Bradford, W. Yorkshire, BD6 1EC)

Oral history is an invaluable tool for the Church historian. This account includes 'a collection of memories, celebrating 'two centuries and more' of Methodism in Low Moor, Bradford. It begins with a brief history of Methodism in that area mentioning Wesley's first visit in 1747 and earlier visits by John Nelson. Unfortunately no reference is made to John Bennet's visits, as early as 1744 and his mention of 'Low Moor' [called 'Wibsey Moor' at that time] in 1747, a fact which implies Bennet's regulation of that society from its beginning. Although small black and white photographs are placed on the cover, it is a pity, especially as the booklet contains sixty-eight pages, illustrations are not provided in the booklet itself. However, despite these omissions, the editors are to be congratulated for meticulously collecting and collating a considerable amount of material from present members, and people associated with, the Methodist Church in Low Moor. Full of humour, information and insight, the booklet provides a useful window into the history of Yorkshire Methodism.

SIMON ROSS VALENTINE

Edward Rogers: a portrait of a Christian citizen by John Pritchard (Wesley Historical Society, Evesham, 2008, pp.32(2) p/b ISBN 978-0-9554527-4-1) £3.50

In 1971 Ted Rogers was the appointed Conference preacher in the Leeds West circuit. He came with a reputation for having a formidable intellect, especially on economic matters, and his sermon on the 'Mathematical God' seems to have fitted this image, although it was lost on the congregation. Born at Fleetwood in 1909, the son of a trawlerman and orphaned when

young, he came into Primitive Methodism *via* his maternal grandmother and its local Sunday school. A Liberal in politics, he went from Manchester University in 1932 to Hartley College. After itinerating for some years, he was appointed the Secretary of the Christian Citizenship Department (subsequently restructured as the Division of Social Responsibility) in 1950, was a director of the *Methodist Recorder* from 1949 and President of the Conference in 1960. Retiring in 1978, he continued to live at Shirley and died in 1997, although this later point is not made fully clear .

This is an excellent, brief biography that gives an insight into the inner workings of Methodism and the disproportional influence and power key people may have. The booklet is provided with an index, footnotes, and a useful bibliography of his writings, which perhaps are a guide to changing social attitudes and issues within the Connexion during his time; works on Communism in the context of the Cold War, giving way to such topics as world poverty.

D. COLIN DEWS

Worsted to Westminster by J . B . Williams (Darcy Press, 2009, pp i v, 322, £8.99. ISBN 97860-9562523-0-2)

Charles Leach was a classic example of upward social mobility -- Victorian style. Born in Halifax in 1847, he was working in the mill at the age of eight, then became a shoemaker until he was accepted for the MNC ministry in 1873, serving in the Sheffield North circuit so that he could attend lectures at Ranmoor College without the expense of residence. His talents developed in Ladywood, Birmingham where he began popular afternoon services and built a growing reputation so that when the MNC Conference appointed him to London he found a more congenial (and lucrative) post as minister of Highbury Congregational Church, Birmingham. Soon he was giving crowded Sunday afternoon lectures in Birmingham Town Hall. A prolific author, he went on to important pastorates in London and Manchester, flirted with the ILP, before winning Colne Valley for the Liberals in the January 1910 election .

His career ended in 1916 when he was removed from the Commons as being of 'unsound mind' - the only MP to lose his seat in this way. He left very few personal papers and J.B.Williams has had to compile this biography of his ancestor almost entirely from printed sources. It reads like a novel and brings to life a remarkable man who had fallen into undeserved obscurity.

E.A.ROSE

Children of Dissent, by Pauline Ashbridge, (Kershaw Publishing, London 2008, pp.vii + 284. ISBN 978-0-9546632-1-6 £8.99)

Most people at some time are curious about their roots. Pauline Ashbridge, born in South Africa's Eastern Cape, traces the lives of three immigrants, sons of a Methodist preacher in Oxfordshire, who arrived in the Cape in the nineteenth century. Why did they leave England and what in their past influenced their lives?

Set mainly in the English south Midlands, *Children of Dissent* tells the story of two Dissenting families from the 17th to 20th centuries. It sheds light on the social, political and economic conditions of the times and the way events impinged on them. Congregationalist Independents, Baptists and Quakers flourished in the villages around Chipping Norton, in spite of persecution from the authorities after the Restoration of the 1660s. Careful research had produced a vivid picture of the strictly constrained lives of the Baptist Somerton family and the Quaker Harris family through six generations, recording their religious principles and the persecution they endured.

Both world and domestic events affected the lives of these families. The disreputable Opium Wars, the Boer War, Apartheid, Emigration, all touched them, as did the Enclosure Acts, Poor Relief, the Toleration Act and Agricultural unrest of the 1870s. Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist churches were established in their area, (often regarded as New Dissenters, a title Wesley would never acknowledge). When Thomas Somerton, descended from Baptist stalwarts, married Benjamina Harris from Quaker stock in 1809, they started a Methodist family, and it was their son James who became a Wesleyan local preacher.

James brought up his seven children in the Christian faith as practised by the followers of John Wesley. As adults they all left the Chipping Norton area where generations of their ancestors had been Dissenters. The flight from the country to the cities continued, as did emigration. During the time of labour unrest of 1872-4, two Somerton boys, Thomas and James decided to emigrate to South Africa, and were joined later by John. They took their Methodism with them.

The final chapter of the book gives a most intriguing account of life in South Africa from the 1870s to the 1970s. The Methodist Church was the first church to train and ordain African ministers, and with the other Churches fought the evil Apartheid laws. Ashbridge comments, 'The strong English-speaking Protestant presence in the Eastern Cape was clearly a significant force. . . . The three sons of a preacher had brought with them to the Cape, it seems, not only their language but also an identity as ordinary, steadfast, conscientious nonconformists, grounded in long-standing Dissenter ways of living.'

Haile, I. *The Next Chapter. Cornish Methodism 1965 - 2005*. 2009. Cornish Methodist Historical Association. Pb, 254pp, illus. ISBN 978-0-9509323-9-2 (£10.50 incl p/p from Rev. Ian Haile, 186, Bodmin Road, Truro. TR1 1RB)

This attractively produced paper-back volume, written, printed and published in Cornwall, is a 'next chapter' of considerable substance. The earlier 'chapters' were written by Tom Shaw, a former WHS General Secretary, in his *A History of Cornish Methodism*, commercially published in 1967. Tom had perforce to whiz through some two centuries of highly individualistic regional Methodist history from the Wesleys to Methodist Union in 145 pages. In this new book Ian looks more leisurely at a mere half century but one of which he has been part and known intimately, having been a minister in two Cornish circuits and later the Chairman. In fact the book is something of an encyclopaedia as chapter by chapter it covers every conceivable aspect of Methodism in one county and Methodist district (not quite co-extensive) and, *sui generis* though the county might be, there are endless parallels with wider events and areas. Obviously it is more interesting to know some of the places and people mentioned but it is written in an accessible way and sets everything in its wider context, both church and community wise. A chapter which rather breaks new ground is 'Dissatisfaction, Disruption and Division' describing in a measured and sympathetic way the various groups that have left Methodism, perpetuating something of a local tradition. The Free Methodists have now established themselves in the county. The very next chapter 'Togetherness' is guardedly optimistic about Anglican-Methodist co-operation.

Altogether a valuable effort, complete with a 17 page double column index and if you believe there is a Methodist 'type' there are lots of photographs of Cornish Methodists to study. Administratively a small part of Devon is in the Cornwall District but a bigger bit of Cornwall is in Plymouth and Exeter, although we lost two circuits some years ago.)

ROGER THORNE

NOTES AND QUERIES

1585 THE "SHARP SHIELD" FOR PRIMITIVE METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOLS

At some point in the early 1900s my grandfather, Richard Sharp, of Winchester, gave a shield to the Salisbury Primitive Methodist District. It was to be awarded to the Sunday School gaining the highest total marks in the annual Connexional Scripture Examination. The Reports of the Alresford Primitive Methodist Orphanage record that in 1917 the children had won the Shield for four years in succession. I have photographs of the children and staff with the Shield. What I do not know, however, is: in what year the Shield was first awarded; which other Sunday Schools won it; and what happened to it after Methodist Union. If any reader of the *proceedings* can shed light on any of these questions, I would be very grateful.

DAVID G. SHARP

1586 HYMNS AND PUNCTUATION

Verse 3 of "The God of Abraham praise" (H&P 452) reads:

The God who reigns on high
The great archangels sing;
And 'Holy, holy, holy,' cry,
'Almighty King.'
Who was and is the same,
And evermore shall be;
Jehovah, Father, great I AM,
We worship thee.

There are two problems with this. The first is that lines 5 and 6 appear to form a sentence without a main verb. The full stop at the end of line 4 should clearly be something lighter.

But this reveals another problem. The last line of this verse includes the only "we" in the whole hymn - even in the earlier 12-verse version. The rest of the hymn consistently uses "I" forms. MHB does not help resolve the problem, since it uses no inverted commas.

The punctuation of the 1877 Wesley's Hymns with Supplement, however, correctly makes it clear that the "we" is not the human but the angelic congregation:

The God who reigns on high
 The great archangels sing;
 And, "Holy, holy, holy," cry,
 "Almighty King !
 Who was and is the same,
 And evermore shall be;
 Jehovah, Father, Great I AM,
 We worship thee."

As Lynne Truss (*Eats, Shoots & Leaves*) has shown, punctuation can change the sense of whole sentences. If *Hymns and Psalms* is ever reprinted, I hope this correction can be made.

PAUL ELLINGWORTH

1587 MINIATURE HYMN BOOKS

I have always assumed that miniature hymn books were something of an affectation for better-off Wesleyan women to carry in their reticules. Their small print would be difficult to read, whether by the light of candles, oil or gas. However I now possess a battered copy of 'Wesley's Hymns' with 769 hymns (about $2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ inches) inscribed 'Ann [Illeg but ? Ubsdell], Rochester, Kent. May 4th 1840'. It has leather covers and the front is blind stamped in an oval cartouche 'Sold at reduced price to Sunday scholars only.' There is no indication of the supplier of the book nor whether the cheap price was a local or national or even a Wesleyan offer. It suggests that children were expected to buy their own books but could they be bought for them by teachers and parents at the reduced price? It also suggests that this was regarded as a cheap edition.

ROGER THORNE

2010 ANNUAL LECTURE, AGM, & SUPPORTING PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 26TH JUNE 2010

**METHODIST CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, LONDON**

MORNING PROGRAMME

10.30am

On arrival Tea and coffee available in the Cafetera/Conservatory

11.00am

A Ministerial welcome

*An introduction to the developing ministry of the
Central Hall, Westminster.*

This will be followed by

*Mr Paul Moynihan, the Central Hall Archivist,
leading a guided tour of the Central Hall.*

12 Noon - Lunch Break

**Lunch may be purchased in the Cafeteria and
consumed in the Conservatory**

AFTERNOON PROGRAMME

12.45pm

**The Annual General Meeting
Chaired by the Rev Dr John A Newton MA**

2.30pm

The Annual Lecture

Chaired by

Rev the Lord Leslie J Griffiths MA

LECTURER

**Rev Robin P Roddie BA
Hon. Archivist of the Wesley Historical Society in Ireland**

SUBJECT

KEEPING THE FAITH: IRELAND'S PRIMITIVE METHODISM

For almost ninety years after John Wesley's death a branch of Methodism in Ireland perpetuated a form of Methodism modelled on Wesley's design for his Connexion. Following Disestablishment in Ireland and the failure of the original Methodist-Anglican 'Conversations', the Primitive Wesleyan Methodists united with the Irish Wesleyans in 1878, but a remnant continued within Anglicanism into the twentieth century.