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A table of contents for the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* can be found here:

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# Proceedings

OF THE

## Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. JOHN C. BOWMER, M.A., B.D., Ph.D.

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Volume XLII

May 1979

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### EDITORIAL

ALL SAINTS' DAY 1978 may have been just another day for many people, and even important events on that day will now be relegated to ancient history, but it will long live in the memories of those who kept it by attending the re-opening services of Wesley's Chapel in London. It will be remembered primarily as a family celebration, when John Wesley's spiritual offspring from all parts of the globe, graciously headed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, gathered to express their joy and thanksgiving for the preservation of what is probably the greatest existing memento of our origins anywhere in the world. Members of our Society were conspicuous by their presence, for it was a truly Wesley Historical occasion. Yet it was not only an act of praise "for all that is past", but a dedication to "all that's to come", and the prayer of every member of our Society must surely be that "Wesley's" will become a centre of evangelism, not slavishly copying the methods of our founder, but proclaiming the same Gospel "once delivered to the saints" expressed and propagated by methods which are relevant and meaningful to this complex yet challenging modern age.

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May we draw readers' attention to the note appearing below the list of Officers of the Society on the inside page of the front cover of these *Proceedings* to the effect that correspondence requiring a reply (manuscripts submitted to the Editor for consideration, for instance) should please be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. Postage, as we all know, is a costly item, and, much as we welcome manuscripts and queries, it is a fact that our Society is put to considerable expense in replying to correspondents.

Co-operation is also sought in the task—a continuing one for the Registrar and the Publishing Manager—of maintaining an up-to-date mailing-list. Overseas members, and lay members in Britain, should please notify changes of address as they occur.

## “THE WATCHMAN” AND “RELIGIOUS POLITICS” IN THE 1830S

THERE were over eighteen thousand periodicals published during the Victorian period, with an average run of about twenty-eight years. Approximately forty per cent were religious, and “subscription to a periodical, almost irrespective of its content matter, served Victorians as a kind of religious self-identification”.<sup>1</sup> The *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* sold about 24,000 copies per month by the 1840s—substantially more than either the *Edinburgh* or the *Quarterly Review*. It was a typical denominational organ, in that the proportion of “timeless” religious articles to news was very high. Its constituent elements were biographies, sermons, missionary notices, book reviews, small articles on general knowledge, obituaries, and some poetry. It was distinctively Wesleyan in its religious orientation—“to seize every opportunity of pleading for the religion of the heart in all its purity, peace, and power”<sup>2</sup>—and, of course, in its references to internal Methodist affairs.

Until 1821, when Jabez Bunting introduced the section “Retrospect of Public Affairs”, the magazine was purely religious. After the lively Conference debate in 1832, when Bunting protested about the content of the “Retrospect” on Irish education, this section of the magazine was omitted for the following two years. Its reappearance in 1835 heralded the initiation of a new and different Methodist publication in the form of a weekly newspaper called *The Watchman*. This enterprise was justified by reference to the recent measure of Parliamentary reform, which conferred the elective franchise on many Methodists, and by the “passion” for change that was so “extensively prevalent”. The new publication was to be “free from party violence”: its function was merely to bring before its readership the most important passing events, “with such suggestions as would lead to a just conception of their character and public bearing”.<sup>3</sup> Even this careful language makes it clear that the newspaper was to be opinionative as well as informative—political if not party-political.

James Wood, a Wesleyan Tory politician from Manchester, wrote to Bunting about the newspaper in March 1834.<sup>4</sup> In Liverpool and Manchester some Methodists had for some time “deeply lamented the evident want of some correct and frequent medium of communication throughout the connexion”. As a result, ten people resolved to begin the new enterprise, although they were obviously hoping to attract wider connexional support. To allay the fears of the Conference, it was proposed to vest the management of the paper in a

<sup>1</sup> P. Scott: “Victorian Religious Periodicals: Fragments that remain”, in Derek Baker (ed.): *Sources, Methods and Materials of Ecclesiastical History* (1975), pp. 325-39.

<sup>2</sup> Editor’s Preface, *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 24th November 1834.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 1835, pp. 153-5, “Christian Retrospect”.

<sup>4</sup> W. R. Ward: *Early Victorian Methodism* (1976), pp. 48-51.

committee consisting of five laymen appointed by the proprietors and five preachers appointed by the Conference, among whom should be the editor of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, one of the tutors of the proposed Theological Institution, and one of the general Missionary Secretaries. Wood made it clear that he wanted the support of the most influential Wesleyan of the day, but Bunting had to tread warily, as he had come under criticism for vigorously supporting Henry Pownall, the Tory candidate for Finsbury,<sup>5</sup> at a time when Joseph Rayner Stephens was being disciplined for radical political activity. Bunting was content to act without official Conference support, since he doubted whether

a promise of encouragement, obtained as it must have been by something like pledges on our part, would not have fettered us too much in our proceedings.<sup>6</sup>

Humphrey Sandwith, a Bridlington surgeon, was chosen to edit the projected newspaper, although it soon became apparent whose views he was reflecting. Soon after the paper started, Bunting wrote to Beecham that

Dr. Sandwith came yesterday. I have laboured hard to impress him with our views as to what kind of leading articles we are now especially wanting.<sup>7</sup>

*The Watchman* made its appearance in January 1835, and its aim was expressed in the opening article:

The paramount duty, therefore, of a religious monitor on political subjects is, in general, that of moderating the effervescence of party feeling on both sides.<sup>8</sup>

A paper which had its origins among the Tories of Liverpool and Manchester, and which was virtually a mouthpiece for Jabez Bunting and the preachers, was unlikely to moderate "party feeling". Non-Methodists understandably made the assumption that *The Watchman* was created to represent "official" Wesleyan opinions. *The Times* stated that a

newspaper, named the *Watchman*, was started yesterday. It is evidently intended to represent the opinions and protect the interests of the Wesleyan Methodists.<sup>9</sup>

Within the Connexion there was considerably less unanimity. Robert Pilter, the superintendent of the Rotherham circuit, wrote to Bunting that "the *Watchman* is over-Toryish for our Rotherham people".<sup>10</sup> John Davis, the superintendent of the Penzance circuit, wrote that

the *Watchman* if I am not very much mistaken is likely by its party politics to cause a great deal of what is unpleasant in this part of the world.<sup>11</sup>

The political climate into which *The Watchman* was born was not very congenial to the Wesleyan Tories. The constitutional

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 76, note 2.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 129, 136-7.

<sup>8</sup> *The Watchman*, 5th January 1835.

<sup>9</sup> *The Times*, 6th January 1835.

<sup>10</sup> Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 182.

revolution of the years 1828-32 had seriously weakened the Protestant Constitution. The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts broke down the Anglican qualification for offices of state and municipalities, Catholic Emancipation enabled Roman Catholics to sit in the legislature, and the Reform Act gave increased political strength to the opponents of the Establishment in England and Ireland. Pressure from Dissent became explicit in a list of six grievances drawn up by the Dissenting Deputies in March 1833.<sup>12</sup> The Wesleys, along with the Quakers, refused to commit themselves to the political programme of organized Dissent.

Daniel O'Connell brought pressure from another angle. He was opposed to church establishments in general and to the Church of Ireland in particular. As the ultimate victor in the campaign for Catholic Emancipation, and as a strong supporter of Irish national education, he was rapidly becoming a thorn in Methodist flesh. His political programme in 1830 was not likely to inspire greater confidence. In addition to repeal of the Union, he was committed to increased Parliamentary reform, the abolition of tithes, and changes in county and municipal government. This programme has been accurately described as "radical, Catholic and nationalist",<sup>13</sup> and it is difficult to conceive of a political philosophy more alien to that of the founders of *The Watchman*.

The nonconformists, utilitarian radicals and Catholic nationalists united for an attack on the established Church, and in particular the Church of Ireland. Their case was a strong one, since the Irish Church maintained four archbishops, eighteen bishops, and about two thousand parish clergy. This "clerical army" ministered to the spiritual needs of 800,000 people—just over one-tenth of the total population. The Irish Church Bill tidied up some of these ecclesiastical extravagances, but the controversial attempt to appropriate Church property for secular purposes was abandoned, if only temporarily. Lord John Russell declared that "the revenues of the Church of Ireland were larger than necessary",<sup>14</sup> and that he would support appropriation even if it meant separation from his political colleagues. The Irish Church question was clearly a long way from a solution.

Into this political climate *The Watchman* brought two fundamental principles. The first was the desire to see Protestantism progress at the expense of Roman Catholicism in Ireland: "It is in Ireland that the battle has, both religiously and politically, to be fought."<sup>15</sup> Secondly, in the great battle against Popery the obvious ally was the established Church, both in England and in Ireland. It had the triple advantage of being at the centre of the political doctrine of the Protestant Constitution, the church of the Methodists'

<sup>12</sup> See B. L. Manning: *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies* (1952), p. 274.

<sup>13</sup> A. Macintyre: *The Liberator* (1965), pp. 14-15.

<sup>14</sup> *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 23, col. 666.

<sup>15</sup> *The Watchman*, 13th January 1836.

founder, and the most wealthy Protestant denomination in Ireland. There could be no better bulwark against encroaching Catholicism :

It is true, that in the spirit of our Founder we have felt it our duty to stem, as far as in us lay, the tide of revolutionary fury, as urged onwards by the Roman Catholics of Ireland and the Dissenters of England, with a view to sweep away our ecclesiastical institutions.<sup>16</sup>

By the mid-1830s the Wesleyan Tories felt that enough had been conceded to Irish Catholics. In an article on the Protestant Association's first anniversary in May 1836, *The Watchman* criticized the simplistic idea that all the current difficulties emanated from two sources—Catholic Emancipation and Grey's reform of the Irish Church. These measures could no longer be resisted, but

the strongest argument which the advocate of Protestantism can urge in resisting the unreasonable demands of Roman Catholics is, that a Protestant government has already yielded all that could be reasonably required.<sup>17</sup>

In the face of further Catholic demands the Wesleyans would be a conservative force.

The fact that not all Wesleyans were committed supporters of the established Church became apparent in the debates surrounding Joseph Rayner Stephens at the 1834 Conference.<sup>18</sup> Wesleyan Methodism, not for the first time, found it difficult to find an identity in the historical English dualism of Church and Dissent. But, if the Conference differed over Methodist relations with the established Church, it was united in its opposition to Roman Catholics; Methodist evangelicalism secured that. Paradoxically, Roman Catholic pressure strengthened the conservatism of the Wesleyan preachers in the 1830s, just as the activities of the Protestant proselytizing societies in Ireland strengthened the educational demands of the Catholic Church in the 1820s. Pressure and conflict pushed the two sides to extremes, and Liberals and moderates had a poor chance of gaining the ascendancy.

If Methodist attitudes to the establishment were ambivalent, the same was true in reverse. The *British Critic*, the *Christian Observer* and *The Record* all carried articles attacking the Methodists,<sup>19</sup> but there were those within the establishment who acknowledged Wesleyan loyalty. The Archbishop of Canterbury, in a speech on the admission of the Dissenters to the Universities, declared that it was unsafe to admit them, because of their desire to subvert the established Church. He singled out the Wesleyans as an exception.<sup>20</sup> In a leading article in *The Times*, the Dissenters were

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, 3rd August 1836.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, 18th May 1836.

<sup>18</sup> See Michael S. Edwards: "The Resignation of Joseph Rayner Stephens", in *Proceedings*, xxxvi, pp. 16-21; also W. R. Ward: *Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850* (1972), pp. 156-9.

<sup>19</sup> See the *British Critic*, 1836, pp. 18-19; the article "On the Enthusiasm of the Wesleyan Methodists", in the *Christian Observer*, 1832, answered in *WM Magazine*, 1833, pp. 32-43, 106-12; also *The Record*, 20th December 1832, article by John Le Poer French, answered in *WM Magazine*, 1833, pp. 186-91.

<sup>20</sup> *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 25, col. 860.

castigated for political action against the established Church; but as for the Wesleyan Protestants, we are happy to consider them in the most substantial points so identified with our own Established Church, that we cannot consider them with the Dissenters.<sup>21</sup>

Apart from some within the established Church who were not prepared to forgive and forget, most political observers saw that the Anglicans had little to fear from the Wesleyan Methodists. This was the background to Disraeli's comic dialogue in *Coningsby*:

"The Wesleyans," said Tadpole, "we never counted on the Wesleyans."

"I am told these Wesleyans are really a very respectable body," said Lord Fitzbooby. "I believe there is no very material difference between their tenets and those of the Establishment. I have never heard of them much till lately. We have too long confounded them with the mass of the Dissenters . . ."<sup>22</sup>

*The Watchman* began its life when Sir Robert Peel was Prime Minister, but within a few months the climate had worsened. On 18th February 1835, the famous meeting of Whigs, Radicals and Irish took place at Lichfield House. Initially the three parties only agreed to vote against Manners Sutton in favour of Abercromby for the Speakership, but the alliance was strengthened by the single-minded desire to remove Peel from office. The two leading figures in this "Lichfield House Compact"—described by *The Watchman* as the "Lichfield House Conspiracy"<sup>23</sup>—were Lord John Russell and Daniel O'Connell. The Methodist antipathy to O'Connell was obvious, Russell was equally a Methodist anti-hero.

Russell's *Memoirs of the Affairs of Europe from the Peace of Utrecht* include an unflattering section on Methodism. He discussed some of the weaknesses of Wesley's theology, and emphasized the transitory nature of Methodism:

It resembled some very powerful drug, which suddenly obtains a reputation in physic, and is renowned for the wonderful cures which it performs; but presently the efficacy of the remedy ceases, and many of the cured either relapse, or fall into some new and incurable disease.<sup>24</sup>

The Methodists had not long to wait for revenge. After the death of George IV in June 1830, Russell contested an election at Bedford, and his opponent published some of Russell's passages on Methodism from the *Memoirs*.<sup>25</sup> A Methodist preacher accused Russell of slander during the campaign,<sup>26</sup> and Jabez Bunting wrote a letter about the election<sup>27</sup>—so high was feeling between Russell and the Wesleyans. Russell lost the election by one vote, and blamed the Methodists for his defeat. The story had a strange sequel, because Robert Newton, travelling incognito, went down to Tavistock to stir up opposition to

<sup>21</sup> *The Times*, 26th November 1836.      <sup>22</sup> *Coningsby*, Book II, chapter 2.

<sup>23</sup> *The Watchman*, 4th January 1840.

<sup>24</sup> J. Russell: *Memoirs* . . . (2 vols., London, 1824-9), ii, p. 584.

<sup>25</sup> J. Prest: *Lord John Russell* (1972), p. 37.

<sup>26</sup> *The Times*, 1st May 1835.

<sup>27</sup> B. Gregory: *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism*, p. 202.

Russell in the family's pocket borough.<sup>28</sup> As a strong supporter of Catholic Emancipation and in favour of expropriating the Irish Church, Russell was second only to O'Connell as the *bête noir* of the Wesleyan Tories, and the Lichfield House Compact was an unfortunate beginning to *The Watchman's* aims of moderation and non-partisan comment.

The Parliamentary session opened badly for the Conservatives when Abercromby defeated Manners Sutton in the contest for the Speakership. Peel bravely fought through some other early defeats, but the crucial issue was to be the Irish Church question. On 27th March 1835, Russell announced his intention of moving

that the House should resolve itself into a Committee, for the purpose of taking into consideration the expediency of applying any of the surplus revenues of the Church of Ireland . . . to the religious and moral instruction of all classes of the community.<sup>29</sup>

Russell had chosen an issue which would unite Whigs, Liberals, Dissenters, and O'Connell's Irish party. *The Watchman* had no difficulty in taking sides:

. . . what other denomination has taken equal pains with the Wesleyan Conference to rid itself of the elements of active hostility to the Established Church? What other denomination has so deeply sympathised with the persecuted Irish branch of it?<sup>30</sup>

Peel suffered defeats on 3rd, 6th, and 7th April, and the following day he resigned, after having been in office for only 120 days. "The fatal appropriation clause" forced Peel to retire "with unsullied reputation and undamaged principles".<sup>31</sup>

With the Whigs back in government, a Church and Tithe bill embodying the principle of appropriation was hastily drawn up. In the committee stage Peel argued that there was no surplus revenue, and then put to the Government two possible courses of action: either to reorganize the revenues of the Irish Church so as to meet its legitimate needs or else to establish Catholicism in Ireland. He stated that the current policy of the Government was "simulated protection, but real hostility".<sup>32</sup> *The Watchman* was delighted with the speech: "his exertions could not be surpassed, if he confessedly acted from the impulse of a desire to atone for past error."<sup>33</sup> Peel's "sin" of granting Catholic Emancipation was being forgotten in his exertions for the Church in the 1830s. The Whig bill passed the Commons with a majority of 37, but it met its inevitable defeat in the Lords. The 1836 Tithe bill met the same fate, but *The Watchman* was upset by the fact that the Whig bills were passing through the Commons on the strength of O'Connell's support.<sup>34</sup>

Another facet of the Government's Irish policy which alarmed the Wesleyans was its desire to reform the municipal corporations. In

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 27, col. 313.

<sup>30</sup> *The Watchman*, 18th November 1835.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, 6th April 1835.

<sup>32</sup> *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 29, col. 821.

<sup>33</sup> *The Watchman*, 29th July 1835.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 1st March 1837.



1833 a Select Committee had been set up to investigate the Irish corporations, and the subsequent report was a scathing attack on the whole system. In 1835 there were over sixty corporate cities and boroughs, and all but one were in Protestant hands. For the most part they were corrupt Protestant oligarchies, and no one doubted that there was need for reform: the debate was over the terms. Russell was increasingly convinced that Ireland should be governed according to the same principles as England and Scotland, regardless of how that affected the Protestant interest.<sup>85</sup> For O'Connell also, Irish municipal reform was the test of whether Ireland was ever to be given equality within the operation of the Union. Michael O'Loghlen, the Irish Solicitor-General, introduced a bill in 1836 to set up a system of popularly-elected corporations based on a £10 franchise in the larger towns and a £5 franchise in the smaller. The measure was reasonable in the abstract, but its practical effect was to abolish the Protestant corporations and replace them with Catholic ones. Peel, and of course *The Watchman*, had to devise possible alternatives. Professor Gash has put it succinctly:

it raised therefore the constant dilemma which dogged all Irish politics: how to apply rational and acceptable reforms to Irish institutions without destroying the Protestant ascendancy.<sup>86</sup>

Peel's solution was to extinguish the Irish corporations rather than to reform them. The comments of *The Watchman* were less sophisticated, and reveal much about Wesleyan attitudes to Ireland:

The whole question, as we think, lies almost within a nutshell. At first sight, the proposition appears very fair and plausible, that the inhabitants of one part of the empire should be permitted to enjoy the same rights and privileges as their fellow-subjects in general; and were the population of Ireland in similar circumstances with the people of England and Scotland, there could not be any question as to whether Ireland should not also have the same municipal institutions. This, however, is far from being the case; and the question, as it appears to us, simply resolves itself into this—whether such a measure of Municipal Reform shall be given to Ireland, as shall strengthen the cause of Popery, and increase its influence in the legislature of the Empire.<sup>87</sup>

O'Connell and Russell had both come to the conclusion that Ireland could no longer be governed on the old principle of preserving the Protestant ascendancy. Of course Russell was not as radical as O'Connell, especially concerning the Irish Church, and he was certainly opposed to repeal. *The Watchman*, on the other hand, gave little thought to the practicalities of Irish politics: Roman Catholicism was wrong *per se*, and therefore no government measure which favoured that religion could be right even if it appeared sensible. What was theologically wrong could never be politically right. With this ultra-conservative attitude in a changing political climate, it was becoming clear in the 1830s that even Peel could not satisfy the Wesleyan Tories. He had let them down—except for Bunting

<sup>85</sup> Prest, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>86</sup> N. Gash: *Sir Robert Peel* (1972), p. 144.

<sup>87</sup> *The Watchman*, 12th April 1837.

—in 1829, and it seemed likely that he would do so again. The mood of the Commons could no longer tolerate policies which belonged more to the eighteenth century.

Events on the political scene had virtually reached a stalemate, with the Whigs unable to get their Irish measures through the House of Lords. This scenario was interrupted in June 1837 by the death of the King and the dissolution of Parliament. The three years of *The Watchman's* existence had been dominated by the Lichfield House Compact and its reverberations in Ireland. The Wesleyan newspaper looked upon the 1837 election as an opportunity to return a Parliament more favourable to the Protestant interest in Ireland. *The Watchman* appealed to the religious electors of Great Britain to stand true to their Protestant principles: "it is for you to decide whether Protestantism shall still be the polar star of our Senators . . .".<sup>38</sup>

The English Wesleyan Tories could always rely on the unanimous support of the Irish Methodists, whose efforts were primarily directed against O'Connell's candidature in Dublin. At a meeting of the enfranchised Wesleyans in Dublin, several resolutions were adopted. They regretted the circumstances which had forced them to abandon their "no politics" tradition, and pledged themselves to support West and Hamilton—the Conservative candidates for Dublin. The Methodists were the toast of the Tory press in the city; the *Dublin Record* hailed them as "sturdy friends of Protestantism and social order".<sup>39</sup> *The Watchman* could not resist holding up the Irish Methodists as an example, because their obvious familiarity with Popery enabled them "better than Englishmen to appreciate its spirit and design".<sup>40</sup> The Methodist missionary crusade in Ireland had helped to develop Wesleyan anti-Catholicism from Wesley to Butterworth, and was now invoked by the Methodist Tories to stir up their English brethren. Coming up to 1829, Bunting, with the assistance of Matthew Tobias, had helped to contain the Irish connexion within the "no politics" rule. Now they were praised for having "broken through their habitual reserve". Ten years earlier the Dublin Methodists would have been heavily censured for their action; but now Catholic pressure, particularly from O'Connell, was modifying Wesleyan political attitudes. However, the efforts of the Dublin Methodists were in vain, and O'Connell was duly elected.

The Wesleyan Tories failed again at Sheffield, where two preachers, Samuel D. Waddy and George B. Macdonald, promoted the candidacy of Mr. Thornely. Thornely was defeated, and the political activities of the two preachers were questioned at the Leeds Conference. Bunting stated that they were wrong "to speak in committees and meetings preparatory to nominations" but "not in having appeared upon the hustings in favour of a party candidate". Bunting had obviously abandoned the "no politics" rule because it

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, 19th July 1837.

<sup>39, 40</sup> Reproduced in *The Watchman*, 19th July 1837.

was no longer to his advantage. This rule up to 1829 was the perfect cloak for Conservatism, but by the mid-1830s it could only operate to the benefit of the Whigs. Faced with this reversal in fortune, Bunting was forced to expound a more sophisticated principle. He stated that a Methodist preacher should have nothing to do with the "machinery" of an election, but that Wesley himself had sanctioned interference in elections.<sup>41</sup> Bunting had a seemingly endless supply of Wesleyan precedents whenever he was in a tight corner!

The prevailing Toryism of a Bunting-dominated Conference and news-organ was not reflected in the votes of the Wesleyan electorate. Except when the "No Popery!" cry was raised fervently, as in Dublin in 1837 and in Manchester in 1839,<sup>42</sup> the Wesleyan electors were more guided by local politics than by the Toryism of the preachers. Two letters to the *Manchester Guardian* in July 1837 by a Wesleyan, albeit a reformer, help to shed light on this voting behaviour.<sup>43</sup> The anonymous writer stated that the majority of Wesleyan preachers did not meddle with politics—it just *seemed* that way because the Tories "talked most and most loudly". He admitted that there was a strong element of anti-Catholicism in Wesleyanism,

derived rather from the contemplation of its [Catholicism's] portraiture as existing in times of universal bigotry and intolerance, than from a candid observation of its modified form . . .

He observed correctly that the Tories hoped that this religious prejudice would array the Wesleyans in opposition to the Whigs because of their Irish policy. He stated that this hope was false because the Methodists—and the Anglicans also, for that matter—must use spiritual rather than political weapons in dealing with Ireland. The Roman Catholic population could not be helped by coercion or discrimination. The author also asserted that the majority of Wesleyans were opposed to church rates and in favour of municipal reform. In the conclusion to the first letter, the writer asked and answered a pertinent question:

. . . if the Methodists are for the most part Liberals, why do they suffer the *Watchman* to go forth as their organ and thus misrepresent them? The answer is simple. That journal is taken by us chiefly on account of the Methodist news it contains from all parts of the world.<sup>44</sup>

These letters were not written by a neutral, but they are certainly worthy of consideration. The Wesleyans were undeniably anti-Catholic, but English Catholicism was very different from its Irish counterpart. It was not numerically strong nor politically threatening outside the great centres of Irish population in Liverpool, Preston, Manchester and London, and the Government's liberal policies in Ireland were irrelevant to most Wesleyans. Take away the need

<sup>41</sup> Gregory, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

<sup>42</sup> See D. A. Gowland: "Political Opinion in Manchester Wesleyanism, 1832-57", in *Proceedings*, xxxvi, pp. 93-104; also Ward, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-4.

<sup>43</sup> They were published as a pamphlet entitled *How will Wesleyan Electors Vote?* (Manchester, 1837, pp. 24).

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p. 14.

for a bulwark against Popery, and why else should the Wesleyans support the established Church? In practice, they too suffered the same disabilities affecting all dissenters. It was nearly fifty years since their founder had died within the pale of the Church of England; a great deal had changed since then. Wesleyan Toryism was based on a filial regard for the Church of England, sympathy for the Irish connexion, a pervading anti-Catholicism, and Jabez Bunting's supremacy in the English Conference. In the regions where Ireland and Catholicism were not particular issues and where the preacher was not a Buntingite, then other political determinants could take over. The *Wesleyan Chronicle* in 1841 produced a table indicating that out of a total of 1,843 Wesleyan voters in the survey, 1,370 voted Liberal.<sup>45</sup> The *Chronicle* was a specifically Liberal Wesleyan newspaper, so its findings are open to query; but whilst the figures may have been exaggerated, there is no reason to believe that they were substantially wrong.

The myth that Church and State Toryism reflected the political attitudes of all Wesleyan Methodists grew up for a variety of reasons. The first was given by the writer of the letters to the *Guardian*. Bunting's talents had raised him to a position of supremacy in the Conference, and "this gentleman, and a few other influential preachers, are avowed admirers of the Peel and Stanley policy". By skilfully citing Wesley as his authority, Bunting tried to place Wesleyan Toryism firmly within the Wesleyan tradition; his task was not particularly difficult, and it was hallowed by Wesley's name. The second reason stems from the extremely cohesive nature of the connexional system and the role played in that system by the preacher.

Wesleyan preachers, deriving corporate authority and a strong sense of group identity from the connexional principle, clearly were in a strong position to influence the development of the movement and the evolution of their own role within it.<sup>46</sup>

This tendency towards "professionalism and institutional order" was more advanced than in the dissenting groups in the 1830s. Consequently one could easily draw the conclusion—and many did—that the political opinions of the Wesleyan Conference and its committees represented the authentic attitudes of British Methodists. This is true of any large organization in which power is deliberately centralized for the purpose of control.

A third factor was the influence of *The Watchman*, which by 1839 was averaging a circulation of 3,700 per publication.<sup>47</sup> Its neo-official status and its wealthy backing ensured a big lead over potential rivals. *The Circular*, *The Lantern*, the *Wesleyan Chronicle* and the *Wesleyan and Christian Record* were all started to give an alternative viewpoint, and they all failed. It was not until 1839,

<sup>45</sup> Quoted by J. R. Vincent: *Pollbooks: How Victorians Voted* (1967), pp. 69-70.

<sup>46</sup> A. D. Gilbert: *Religion and Society in Industrial England, 1740-1914* (1976), p. 151.

<sup>47</sup> Based on the Parliamentary return on stamps.

when the *Wesleyan Times* appeared, that *The Watchman* had a serious rival.<sup>48</sup> *The Watchman* virtually had the field to itself, especially in the 1830s, and Bunting's brush with the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* over Irish national education ensured that it would follow meekly. A fourth factor was the influence of *The Times*, which at the end of 1835 launched a campaign against O'Connell and his party. It was particularly critical of the Government's Irish policy, and as such was taking a line substantially the same as that of *The Watchman*. *The Times* praised the Methodists in its own articles<sup>49</sup> and in reprints from other newspapers;<sup>50</sup> occasionally it published articles from *The Watchman*.<sup>51</sup> This identity of interests with England's leading newspaper could not fail to strengthen the Wesleyan-Tory connexion. Coming up to the Wesleyan centenary the Methodists had become, in the eyes of *The Times*, a "respectable body of Christians".<sup>52</sup>

From hindsight it seems that the Wesleyan Tories were suspending the real interest of Methodism—proclamation of the Gospel—in favour of political action. They did not see it that way. To engage in political opposition to Roman Catholicism did not hinder the Gospel, but rather it helped to keep error in check. *The Watchman*, reporting on the "May Meetings" of 1836, stated that

the political struggle, in which we are engaged, so far from obstructing the cause of Christian missions, seems rather to have given a new impulse to it.<sup>53</sup>

The Methodists had reason for their optimism, because up to the end of the 1830s Methodist membership was expanding more rapidly than was the total population.<sup>54</sup> However, the more politically-orientated Wesleyans were not doing as well as the revivalistic Primitive Methodists. In 1840 the relative numerical strength of Methodism within English society was greater than at any other time; coincidentally this was the period when the Government attempted to tackle the intricate pathways of national education. The Wesleyan leadership was in no mood to accept the Whig proposals of 1839, and by the time the Tories put forward a solution of the problem in 1843 the Church of England was no longer a reliable ally due to the influence of the Oxford Movement.

It is hoped that this analysis may have added another dimension to the understanding of Wesleyan Toryism—its anti-Catholicism. This has not gone unnoticed, but it has gone unexplored, perhaps because of the confusion created by Bunting's advocacy of Catholic Emancipation in 1829. The aim has been to add to—rather than to detract from—previous explanations for the Toryism of the Wesleyan leadership. Bernard Semmel has seen its origins in Wesley's

<sup>48</sup> R. Currie: *Methodism Divided* (1968), p. 67.

<sup>49</sup> *The Times*, 26th November 1836, 14th June 1839, and 20th July 1839.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, 7th November 1835, 3rd August 1837, and 11th November 1838.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, 14th July 1838 and 23rd May 1839.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, 11th November 1838. <sup>53</sup> *The Watchman*, 18th May 1836.

<sup>54</sup> Gilbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-2.

Laudian high churchmanship and non-revolutionary Arminianism.<sup>65</sup> Professor Ward has shown that at the time of the French Revolution the Methodists joined the Anglicans on the side of reaction, whilst the reformers were led by the dissenting intellectual élite—the Unitarians. He has also viewed Wesleyan Toryism within the context of evangelistic strategy. Methodism was growing by leaps and bounds after Wesley's death, yet simultaneously it was losing its spontaneity. The centralized ecclesiastical bureaucracy permitted expansion only on certain terms—ministerial domination and no radicals. The Wesleyan leadership used strong discipline to remove ecclesiastical and social democrats; as a result, the primitive energies of Methodism could only find expression in the seceding groups. Dr. Maldwyn Edwards has portrayed this tension in terms of an overlying Toryism which was always in control and an underlying Liberalism which could only develop by secession.

There were many sides to this overlying Toryism. At the time of the French Revolution the Methodists were keen to demonstrate their loyalty to the Government as a self-defence mechanism. Connexionalism as a form of ecclesiastical government is by nature less democratic than independent dissent, and this fact was accentuated within Methodism by the growing alliance of itinerant ministers and wealthy chapel-trustees. Conference control of Methodist publications, the growth of powerful metropolitan committees, and the strong use of discipline, all combined to convince the non-Methodist world that Wesleyan Methodism was Tory through-and-through. The remarkable personal influence of Jabez Bunting—that enthusiastic Tory who has been justifiably called "the last Wesleyan"—only served to confirm that impression. In that context, pressure from Catholic Ireland helped to solidify Wesleyan conservatism and gave it a distinctively political direction. Ironically, the initial interest of Wesley and his followers in Ireland was evangelistic, not political.

DAVID N. HEMPTON.

[Dr. David N. Hempton is Lecturer in Historical Studies at the College of Ripon and York St. John.]

<sup>65</sup> B. Semmel: *The Methodist Revolution* (1974).

*Weardale Chapels*, by P. A. G. Clack and K. E. Pattinson, is a 96-page cyclostyled account of the Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian chapels in this historic valley of County Durham. An Introduction outlines the history of Nonconformity, mainly Methodism, with a useful comment on the various styles of architecture, from small rectangular to Gothic Revival, as they represented the changing social standing and increasing affluence of the members. The rise and fall of membership is analysed, and the results duly tabulated. Then in the second section of the book each chapel is treated separately and illustrated with some excellent line-drawings and maps. Altogether, this is a fine production. It represents the harvest of part of a survey of buildings in County Durham. Copies, price £1 25p. each, are obtainable from Mr. P. A. G. Clack, Department of Archæology, The University, Durham.

## NEWS FROM OUR BRANCHES

[All dates refer to 1978 unless otherwise stated.]

THE **Bristol** branch met on three occasions: on Saturday, 4th March, at Wesley College, to hear a lecture on "Tom Paine and Methodism" by the Rev. Dr. John A. Newton; on Saturday, 10th June, at South Petherton, for the summer outing; and on Saturday, 11th November, at Victoria Methodist chapel, Clifton, where the Rev. Dr. W. Peter Stephens lectured on Methodism in Europe. At South Petherton, Evensong in the parish church was conducted by the vicar, the Rev. C. Thomas, and following tea in the Methodist schoolroom Mr. John Vickers gave an address on "Thomas Coke: the man". The Rev. Victor Lamont and Mr. Burrows acted as guides to the Rural Communications Centre, the shop, and sites of interest.

*Lectures*: Two (unnumbered) received.

*Secretary*: Rev. Unfrid J. Little, 5, Leyton Villas, Redland, Bristol,

*Membership*: 71.

[BS6 6JF.]

THE **Cornish** branch has played a part, during 1978, in the celebrations of the bicentenary of the birth of William O'Bryan, the Bible Christian founder, at Gunwen on 6th February 1778, by arranging for the erection of slate memorial plaques at the birthplace (by kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Worth) and at the chapel. The plaques were unveiled by Miss Patricia Slade and Mrs. D. M. Moody, who are both direct descendants of O'Bryan. The Rev. Dr. Oliver A. Beckerlegge preached, and lectured on William O'Bryan. An exhibition relating to the interesting O'Bryan family was arranged by the Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Shaw, who, at a later date, led a pilgrimage to two farms, a parish church, and three chapels, all connected with the early years of the founder.

The plaque now over the chapel door at Gunwen is inscribed:

*In Piam Memoriam*

WILLIAM O'BRYAN

BORN AT GUNWEN FARM, FEBRUARY 6TH 1778.

GAVE THE LAND AND HELPED TO BUILD THE FIRST  
CHAPEL ON THIS SITE, C. 1796.

FOUNDED THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AT  
WEEK ST. MARY, 1ST OCTOBER 1815.

DIED AT NEW YORK, JANUARY 8TH 1868.

Since our last report, the branch has held two pilgrimages: one around St. Kew and St. Endellion, where we visited sites dating from the earliest days of Christianity—as well as of Methodism—in Cornwall, and the other (led by Mr. Roger Thorne) in the former mining area around Callington.

Our last lecture was at Truro School, delivered by Mr. John Probert on "The Worship and Devotion of Cornish Methodism".

*Secretary*: Mr. C. J. Tromans, M.A., 17, Knight's Meadow, Carnon Downs, Truro, Cornwall.

THE **Cumbrian** branch held its second Annual General Meeting at Carlisle on Saturday, 30th September, preceded by a lecture. The Rev. Dr. John Bowmer gave a most enjoyable talk on his work as the Methodist Archivist. Three outings were held during the year. In July members and friends visited Epworth Rectory, Wesley Memorial chapel and the parish church. On Saturday, 9th September, a visit to Durham and Beamish Open-Air Museum was arranged; and on the following Saturday, at the invitation of

the North-East branch, there was a joint tour of exploration around Appleby, visiting three Pennine villages and two chapels.

*Journal*: Nos. 3 and 4 received. In addition to the *Journals*, the branch has printed a leaflet, *Methodism in Whitehaven, 1749-1820*, by John Burgess (price 10p.—stamped addressed envelope, please).

*Secretary*: Rev. Ian Sumner, 6, Fairview, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria.

*Membership*: 118.

THE **East Anglian** branch had two meetings during the year. On Saturday, 29th April, at Park Lane, Norwich, the Rev. H. Trevor Hughes (ex-Principal of Westminster College, Oxford) spoke on "The Journal of the Rev. William Crown, 1852 to 1869". William Crown was a Primitive Methodist minister who served for most of his ministry in Norfolk.

On Saturday, 23rd September, at Lowestoft Road, Gorleston, members enjoyed a talk on Wesley pottery given by the Rev. Arthur D. Cummings, who displayed some examples. The occasion afforded an opportunity to see the Wesley pulpit which is kept in this chapel.

*Bulletin*: No. 36 received.

*Secretary*: Miss Monica Place, 2, Mill Hill, Lavenham, Sudbury, Suffolk.

*Membership*: 83.

No meetings of the **Isle of Man** branch have been held.

*Secretary*: Miss A. M. McHardy, Zeerust, Clayhead Road, Baldrine,

Isle of Man.

THE **Lancashire and Cheshire** branch began its year at Glossop in Derbyshire, where, on Saturday, 8th April, Mr. Kenneth Bowden led a tour of the Methodist chapels, past and present, of this Pennine mill-town. The Knutsford area of Cheshire was the scene of the summer outing, which included a Baptist chapel, a Congregational chapel, and a parish church, as well as sites of Methodist interest. At the Annual Meeting, in October, the Rev. Henry D. Rack gave members a new view of early Manchester Methodism; and on Saturday, 2nd December, a party of members and friends was shown over the Connexional Archives at the John Rylands Library, Manchester, where Mr. David Riley was the guide.

*Journal*: Vol. III. Nos. 7 and 8 received.

*Secretary*: Mr. E. A. Rose, B.A., 26, Roe Cross Green, Mottram, Hyde,

*Membership*: 148. [Cheshire, SK14 6LP.

FOR the spring meeting of the **Lincolnshire** branch an "Exhibition of Methodist Artefacts, National and Local" was held, over three days, at our Scotter chapel. Mr. William Leary, the organizer of the Exhibition, spoke briefly at the opening. Local Methodism was represented by circuit plans, dissenting certificates, etc., and items relating to the Primitive Methodist Conference held at Scotter in 1839 were also exhibited.

At the autumn meeting, held at Brigg, the Rev. Dr. Oliver A. Beckerlegge spoke on "The Protestant Methodists".

*Journal*: Vol. III. Part 2 received.

*Secretary*: Mr. H. Jubbs, 3A, Church Road, Upton, Gainsborough, Lincs,

*Membership*: 112. [DN21 5NR.

THE **London and Home Counties** branch met twice in 1978. On Wednesday, 24th May, members shared in a Wesley Day service at St. Martin-within-Ludgate, conducted by the Rev. N. Allen Birtwhistle. The sermon



was preached by the Rev. Dr. Irvonwy Morgan. Preceding the service, a short pilgrimage round the Wesley "sites" was led by the Rev. Douglas A. Wollen.

The Annual General Meeting and autumn meeting were held at Hinde Street on Saturday, 7th October. Mr. John Vickers and the Rev. and Mrs. Alfred Binney lectured on *A City Road Diary*—the fascinating story of the diary of Helen, daughter of the Rev. John McKenny, minister of Wesley's Chapel from 1885 to 1888. The book so titled, edited by the lecturers and published by the World Methodist Historical Society, can be obtained from Mr. Vickers, price £2 50p.

*Bulletin*: No. 17 received.

*Secretary*: Rev. William D. Horton, M.A., 6, The Drive, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3AE.

*Membership*: 74.

ON a bright March day, members of the **North-East** branch assembled in the old Octagon at Yarm to hear the Rev. Dr. A. Skevington Wood speak about the waves of revival which swept through many Wesleyan circuits (especially in the northern counties) in the decade after Wesley's death.

Two memorable summer outings were held—one in June to Epworth, and another in September to the Appleby area, where we were joined by members of the Cumbrian branch.

At the autumn lecture, held at The Avenue, Middlesbrough, the Rev. Benjamin Drewery gave a typically trenchant account of some major issues involved in Methodist Union, 1932. An extra autumn meeting took place in November, when a party of members gathered in St. Oswald's Church, Durham, to hear the vicar (the Rev. Dr. Gordon Roe) speak on John Bacchus Dykes, himself vicar of St. Oswald's from 1862 to 1876 and the composer of many splendid hymn-tunes. A fascinating segment of Victorian church life was opened up by Dr. Roe. Members later adjourned to the vicarage, and were entertained to refreshments in Dykes's music-room, where they joined in singing a hymn to one of his tunes.

The branch was saddened by the death of Professor H. Cecil Pawson towards the end of the year, but grateful for his life of service, not least to our branch, of which he was for many years a vice-president.

*Bulletin*: Nos. 29 and 30 received.

*Secretaries*: Mr. A. P. Champley, B.A., 121, Haydon Close, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2BZ.

Mr. G. E. Milburn, M.A., 8, Ashbrooke Mount, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR2 7SD.

*Membership*: 183.

THE **Plymouth and Exeter** branch held two visits during the year. In February, members supported the O'Bryan bicentenary celebrations at Gunwen in Cornwall, despite long journeys in wintry weather. There were better conditions in September, when, under the leadership of Dr. Glyn Court, a party of members and friends explored an area from the little port of Watchet to the remote hill-country of the Brendons.

*Proceedings*: Vol. IV. No. 4 and Vol. V. No. 1 received.

*Secretary*: Mr. Roger F. S. Thorne, C.Eng., 11, Station Road, Topsham, Exeter, Devon.

*Membership*: 90.

THE **Scottish** branch held two meetings—the first at Wishaw on Wednesday, 3rd May, when Dr. D. A. Gowland gave a talk on “Methodism and the education of the people”. The second meeting was held at Woodlands, Glasgow, on Wednesday, 13th September, when the Chairman of the District (the Rev. H. Haddow Tennent) dealt with certain aspects of the early history of American Methodism.

*Journal* : No. 11 received.

*Secretary* : Dr. D. A. Gowland, Department of Modern History,

*Membership* : 124.

[The University, Dundee, DDI 4HN.

THE first meeting of the **Shropshire** branch was a joint one with the West Midlands branch held at Wolverhampton, when a former President of the Conference, the Rev. Brian S. O’Gorman, gave a history of Wesleyan Methodism from 1920 to 1932 based on his own recollections. The second meeting was held at Church Stretton, when the Rev. Donald H. Ryan exhibited his large collection of Methodist pottery—probably for the last time, as any future exhibitions and talks will need to be done with photographs only. Two features of the meeting were that prayer was led by the Rev. Dr. John T. Wilkinson (who has now completed 60 years in the ministry) and that pleasure was expressed to Mr. John Lenton on the election of his mother as Vice-President of the Conference. The third meeting was held at Market Drayton, when Mr. Christopher Wakeling, an extra-mural lecturer with Keele University, gave a wide-ranging and fascinating illustrated lecture on the architecture of the various Methodist bodies up to 1932.

*Bulletin* : No. 11 received.

*Secretary* (until August 1979) : Rev. R. Ward Davies, B.D., 1, Clive Road, Market Drayton, Salop, TF9 3DJ.

*Membership* : 45.

THE spring meeting of the **West Midlands** branch was held on Saturday, 25th February, at Fallings Park, Wolverhampton, when the Rev. Brian S. O’Gorman gave some fascinating one-man’s memories of the ten years of Methodism prior to Union in 1932. Snowy weather reduced the numbers at the November meeting, addressed by the Rev. Dr. W. Roger Peaden on “The first twenty years of Missions in Rhodesia”.

*Bulletin* : Vol. III. No. 3 received.

*Secretary* : Mrs. E. D. Graham, B.A., B.D., 34, Spiceland Road,

*Membership* : 78.

[Northfield, Birmingham, B31 1NJ.

THE May meeting of the **Yorkshire** branch was held at Wakefield. Members assembled at the Westgate Unitarian chapel, built in 1752. After the speaker for the day, Mr. John Goodchild, the Wakefield District Archivist, had shown members around the chapel and precincts, they moved on to Westgate End Methodist chapel of 1828 to hear a talk on “Nonconformity in Wakefield”.

The Beverley circuit was the venue for the September meeting, and in glorious sunshine members met by the village pond at Bishop Burton before moving into the chapel, where Mr. Edmund R. Fryer introduced the history of Methodism in the village. The eighty members and friends then went into Beverley to the Toll Gavel United church, where Mrs. O. E. Reckitt gave an illustrated talk on “The true architecture of the people: A consideration of Methodist chapels in East Yorkshire”.

Members were involved in the arrangements for the Bradford Conference. In addition to an Exhibition in the Central Library, a service was held on Conference Sunday in the Octagon chapel at Heptonstall, and Mr. E. Alan Rose spoke on "Early Methodism in the Upper Calder Valley".

The branch has published *Methodism at the Grass-roots in the Great Haworth Round*—the 1978 Wesley Historical Society Lecture delivered at Ilkley by Miss Joanna M. G. Dawson.

*Bulletin*: Nos. 32 and 33 received.

*Secretary*: Mr. D. Colin Dews, B.Ed., 4, Lynwood Grove, Leeds,

*Membership*: 192.

[LS12 4AU.

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By the time these notes appear in print, it is likely that an **East Midlands** branch will have been formed. Those interested should write to the Rev. Sidney Y. Richardson, B.A., B.D., 15, Coniston Crescent, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3RQ.

E. A. ROSE.

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## THE ANNUAL LECTURE

in connexion with the London Conference, 1979,

WILL BE DELIVERED IN

**Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London, E.C.1**

**On Monday, 25th June, at 7-30 p.m.,**

BY

**Professor W. R. WARD, M.A., Ph.D.**

(University of Durham).

*Subject*: "THE ORIGINS OF RELIGIOUS REVIVAL: THE INTERNATIONAL SETTING OF EARLY METHODISM".

The chair will be taken by DR. JOHN D. WALSH, M.A.

(Jesus College, Oxford).

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**The Annual Meeting** of the Society will be held, also at City Road, at **5-30 p.m.**

Mr. and Mrs. Rowland C. Swift kindly invite members of the Society to **Tea** in the schoolroom at **4-30 p.m.** It is desirable that all those who intend to be present at the Tea should send their names to the Rev. Ronald C. Gibbins, B.Sc., 49, City Road, London, E.C.1 1AU (Tel. 01-253 2262). Wesley's Chapel is within short walking distance of Moorgate and Old Street Underground stations.

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We gratefully acknowledge having received the following periodicals, some of which come to us on a reciprocal basis with these *Proceedings*.

*The Local Historian*, Vol. 13, Nos. 4 and 5.

*The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, Vol. 54, No. 2, 1977.

*The Baptist Quarterly*, October 1978, January and April 1979.

*The Magazine of the Congregational Historical Circle*, January 1979.

*The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, Vol. 51, No. 124 (November 1978); together with the Fifty-sixth Annual Report of the Institute (1976-7).

*Methodist History*, January 1979.

*Cirplan*, Lent 1979.

## METHODIST ENROLLED DEEDS AT THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

THE value of the Chancery Rolls at the Public Record Office as a source of information about defunct chapels, together with the considerable hazards and frustrations involved in using them, has been set out by John Dunstan in an article for which many readers must have cause to be grateful.<sup>1</sup> This present note is little more than an appendix to that article, based on fairly intensive use of the Chancery Rolls in recent months.

It may be worth emphasizing, in the first place, that the Chancery records are still available in the Round Room at Chancery Lane and are not among the material transferred to the new premises at Kew. (The returns of the 1851 Ecclesiastical Census, on the other hand, unlike the rest of the census material, *are* now at Kew.) The procedures described by Mr. Dunstan still apply. Pressure on the limited space for readers at Chancery Lane has been considerably reduced, but other sources of frustration remain.

In particular, one has to contend with the shortcomings of the index to enrolled deeds published in 1871 as an *Appendix* to the *32nd Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*. This may be, in Mr. Dunstan's phrase, "a monument of assiduity"; but it is also, even for 1871, an example of clumsy and unhelpful indexing. Mr. Dunstan writes of "a kind of alphabetical-chronological order of places and dates", but this is too kind to the procedure that seems to have been followed. The user must not expect to find all the As for any given year (whether regnal or calendar) arranged alphabetically. Clearly the references came to hand in batches of up to a dozen or so and were tossed in as they stood, with no subsequent attempt to rearrange them in strict alphabetical order.

On its own this would be irritating but not disastrous. A further hazard, to which Mr. Dunstan does not refer, lies in the fact that the date under which a deed is listed is the date of its *enrolment*, and may be several—or even many—years later than that of the deed itself. In some cases that I have examined, the deed was enrolled only after an interval of forty years or more—perhaps at the instigation of a solicitor dealing with the renewal of the trust concerned. In others, it would seem, deeds were never enrolled at all. The Primitive Methodists were easily the most lax in fulfilling the requirements of the Act of 9 Geo. II; but not even the Wesleyans were beyond reproach in this respect.

Consequently, the rough chronological listing of the deeds in the 1871 *Appendix* is of rather limited value, and the failure to provide any proper alphabetical sequence becomes correspondingly more regrettable. The user's problem is compounded by other factors mentioned by Mr. Dunstan. Comprehensive gazetteers were already available, but there seems to have been no attempt at consistency or

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceedings*, xxxvii, pp. 151-3.

standardization. Phonetic spellings, misreadings and other variations are numerous, and sometimes seriously hinder the search. (How can one know *a priori* that Rickmansworth will be found in the guise of Kirkmansworth, or Luxillian turn up as Auxillian? And why should St. Minver, alone among the Cornish saints, be deprived of the communion of his (or her) peers by appearing as "Minver, St."?) Furthermore, deeds are sometimes listed under one place-name, sometimes under another. Deeds for successive chapels in the same place may appear under both the name of the parish and the hamlet or township within the parish, with no cross-referencing. So the existence of an entry under one heading is no indication that others may not be found under quite different ones.

As the only solution to these problems for my own immediate purpose, I have extracted from the *Appendix* all Methodist entries, and have carded them in a proper alphabetical sequence with the necessary cross-references. Some problems of identification and location remain, but it is now possible with little effort or delay to check for references under any given place-name in England and Wales up to 1865. The card index has already proved useful to two or three besides myself, and I shall be glad to deal with inquiries from others at any time.

Since title deeds are legal documents which many local historians find difficult to decipher and to interpret, this may be a convenient occasion to mention a booklet which I have found a very useful guide. *How to read Old Title Deeds: XVI-XIX Centuries*, by Julian Cornwall, is published by Pinhorns, and is obtainable from them or from the World Methodist Historical Society (British Section) at 75p. plus 10p. postage. By detailed discussion of a number of examples, the author guides us through the complexities of all the forms of conveyance we are likely to encounter.

The two accounts which follow—the first written up by myself and the second by the Rev. J. Leonard Waddy—relate to deeds which have turned up in the course of compiling the card index. They illustrate the value of the Chancery Rolls as a source of information on early chapels and trusts, but are also of considerable interest in their own right.

### **An early deed from the Salisbury circuit**

THE deed from which the following details are taken was enrolled in the Court of Chancery, and the only known copy is at the Public Record Office.<sup>2</sup> In certain respects it appears to be unique among Methodist chapel deeds, notably in the fact that it deals with the conveyance of as many as four separate properties very widely dispersed throughout central southern England—in Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The circumstances reflected in this unusual document throw considerable light on the origins of Methodism in this part of the country. The detailed summary of the deed itself is followed by a few comments on its significance.

<sup>2</sup> Chancery Rolls: C.54 26 Geo. III. 10. 8. (See the explanation of this system of reference in Dunstan, *loc. cit.*)

**19th January 1786.** Indenture of five parts, between : Edward Hayes of Winchester, Gentleman ; Thomas Coke, Clerk, Doctor of Civil Law of the City Road, London ; William Ingram of the Borough of Corfe Castle, Ironmonger ; Samuel Hawes and John Adcock of Wilton, Clothiers ; and Jasper Winscom of Winchester and others [Wesleyan trustees].

A single body of trustees was appointed for all four properties conveyed by this deed. At that time the Salisbury circuit still included most of Dorset and Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The trustees named were :

Jasper Winscom, Winchester, Haberdasher  
 John Austin, Winchester, Gardener  
 Edward Morey, Winchester, Cork cutter  
 Joseph Webb, Portsea, Gardener  
 Samuel Singer, Portsea, Bricklayer  
 John Crockford, Portsea, Mariner  
 Robert Taylor, Portsea, Mariner  
 John Thomas, Portsea, Shipwright  
 Alexander Barry, Portsmouth, Grocer  
 Nathaniel Gifford Esq., Salisbury  
 William Whitchurch, Salisbury, Gentleman  
 Peter Hall, Newport, IOW, Cabinet maker  
 Thomas Impett, Newport, IOW, Excise Officer  
 Stephen Alley, Newport, IOW, Brazier  
 Thomas Whitewood, Godshill, IOW, Yeoman  
 Joseph Rees, Newport, IOW, Maltster  
 Richard Twynam, Bishop's Stoke, Cordwainer  
 Edward Beves, Stubbington, Wheelwright  
 John Sutton, Wilton, Baker  
 Benjamin Chiverton, Wilton, Butcher  
 William May, Whitchurch, Schoolmaster.

The signature of Benjamin Chiverton is missing from the deed, but that of William Sanger of Salisbury appears although he is not named as a trustee.

The properties were :

1. NEWPORT, IOW: For the sum of 10/-, conveyed by Edward Hayes. A piece of land situate in the Town Lane. East to West, 45 ft. 4 ins. ; North to South at the East End 24 ft. 8 ins., at the West end, 35 ft. 5 ins. Bounded on the West by the Town Lane, on the East by the land of Mrs. Lansey, on the North by the land of Messrs. Lee and Trattle [?] and on the South by the land of Mrs. Rogers ; together with the building used as a chapel . . .

2. PORTSEA, HANTS: Conveyed by Thomas Coke. Large room lately used as a Storehouse but then converted into a place for religious worship on the East side of Bishop's Street in Portsea, with the cellar under the same.

3. CORFE CASTLE, DORSET: Conveyed by William Ingram. House or Building lately fitted up and now made use of as a meeting house situate on the back part or in the yard on the West side of a Messuage called Havellands [Havollands?] Great House situate on the West side of the West Street in the Borough of Corfe Castle . . .

4. WILTON, WILTS: New Built Messuage or Tenement and garden thereunto adjoining and belonging (which said Garden contains four Roods and a half and fifty three square feet of ground and is in length from the Skilling to Thomas Cassey's Garden 39 ft., in breadth against the said Cassey's Garden to Mr. Moody's wall 22 ft., in breadth against the house to Mr. Moody's wall 27 ft., the corner behind the Skilling 13 ft. by 6 foot in front, eight feet against Mr. Moody's, eleven feet against Smith's and 28 feet in length . . . In Wilton in a lane there called Frog Lane or Bell Lane. Late in the occupation of Richard Newby [Derby?] Carpet weaver, afterwards of Richard Smith Carpet weaver, but now converted into and used as a Chapel . . .

The particulars given above lead to the following comments:

1. The most obvious feature illustrated by this document is the vast extent of the "Wiltshire South" or (from 1780) the "Salisbury" circuit, which survived intact until within a year of Wesley's death. Methodism was late arriving in central southern England, and consequently remained thin on the ground both in the predominantly Anglican rural areas and in the handful of towns, where the older Dissent was already entrenched. For fifteen years after his Aldersgate Street experience, Wesley's ever-widening journeys entirely ignored this part of southern England. With the sole exception of Salisbury, where he had family connexions,<sup>3</sup> Wesley neither visited nor preached anywhere in the area until 1753, when he twice passed through Portsmouth and Southampton on his way to and from the Isle of Wight.<sup>4</sup> In the remaining four decades of his life, societies came into existence in the main towns, including Winchester, and very sporadically elsewhere in Dorset and Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight. Salisbury and Portsmouth remained the focal points of the circuit until 1790, when Wesley was persuaded at last to make Portsmouth the head of a separate circuit.<sup>5</sup>

2. It seems unlikely that the members of this trust ever met as a single body, unless initially in order to effect the deed. They came from every part of the circuit except eastern Dorset, where the Methodist societies were still quite recent and isolated. The trustees were of comparatively humble origin and status, though more exalted, of course, than the rank-and-file membership.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless,

<sup>3</sup> His sister Martha had married Westley Hall, who at the time of Wesley's return from Georgia was curate at Fisherton Anger, Salisbury. Wesley visited his mother there in February 1738 and again in June of that year. (*Journal*, i, pp. 441, 483; *Proceedings*, v, pp. 146 ff.)

<sup>4</sup> *Journal*, iv, pp. 74-5, 83.

<sup>5</sup> In a well-known letter to Jasper Winscom, 13th March 1790, Wesley declared himself "in no haste to multiply preachers or to divide circuits". "Most of our circuits," he continued, "are too small rather than too large. I wish we had no circuit with . . . less than four hundred miles' riding in four weeks. . . . If we do not take care we shall all degenerate into milksops." (*Letters*, viii, p. 206.) The Isle of Wight had, in fact, been made into a separate circuit in 1789, only to be merged again into the newly-formed Portsmouth circuit a year later.

<sup>6</sup> Thus most of the members of the first Methodist society in Southampton (formed as a result of visits by Adam Clarke and Wesley in 1787) appear to have been domestic servants, and as such markedly inferior in social status to the congregation of the flourishing Above Bar Independent Chapel with which they had informal connexions. (J. S. Stamp: MS. "History of Methodism in Hampshire", vol. 1 at the Methodist Archives, Manchester.)

their predominantly artisan ranks provide a contrast with the preponderance of unskilled—and often illiterate—labourers on the earliest Primitive Methodist trusts in the next century. Some of these trustees were key men in the establishment of Methodist societies in their localities, and of some we know enough to build up at least a brief biography; but others so far remain little more than names to us. (It should be said that the paucity of information about an individual of that early period is not a reliable guide to his importance in local Methodist history. Jasper Winscom, for instance, carved his own minor niche by virtue of his self-importance, and as a key figure in early Winchester Methodism was to prove very much of a mixed blessing to the society there.)

3. With the exception of the Newport chapel,<sup>7</sup> none of the properties was built as a chapel, but had been adapted or converted from other purposes, as so often happened elsewhere. All the chapels seem to have been in use, presumably on a rented basis, for some time before 1786. The Bishop Street chapel in Portsea (the rapidly-growing suburb to the north of old Portsmouth) had been in use since 1768. It was at first rented from a certain Mr. W. Pike, and was mortgaged property. Thomas Coke presumably assumed ownership in or soon after 1779, in accordance with Wesley's advice that the society should take over the mortgage.<sup>8</sup> Whatever financial outlay had been incurred by Coke would seem to have been written off in 1786.

4. Local tradition locates the earliest Methodist preaching-place at Corfe Castle on the north side of Well Court in West Street, opposite to a flight of steps from which John Wesley himself is said to have preached on his visit to Purbeck in October 1774.<sup>9</sup> The 1786 deed is slightly ambiguous, but in conjunction with more recent deeds probably corroborates the traditional location. (The existence of an Independent chapel on the *western* side of the court from 1815 to 1835 adds a further element of confusion to the picture.)

5. The case of Wilton is a particularly good example of the value of the Chancery Rolls as a source of information about early chapels. Soon after Methodist Union in 1932, the Wesleyan society amalgamated with the Primitive Methodists, and its chapel in North Street was sold. Forty-five years later local recollections of it are already confused and unreliable. But the existence of any earlier Wesleyan chapels is entirely forgotten, and the only evidence I have found for them is in the enrolled deeds. In addition to the 1786 deed quoted above, there is another dating from 1804<sup>10</sup> which describes a chapel built in a street called Kingsbury to replace the 1786 preaching-place. This was sold to a local woolstapler when the North Street chapel was built about 1830, but the ground floor of the building was

<sup>7</sup> J. B. Dyson: *Methodism in the Isle of Wight* (1865) p. 108 quotes a MS. account of the building of the Newport chapel in 1781 by John Mason; but there are several unresolved discrepancies between this and the 1786 deed.

<sup>8</sup> See Henry Smith: *Wesleyan Methodism in Portsmouth* (n.d., c. 1895), pp. 25-6, 33.

<sup>9</sup> *Journal*, vi, p. 41.

<sup>10</sup> Chancery Rolls: C.54 45 Geo. III. 1. 10.



later re-converted for use as a chapel by the Wesleyan Reformers; but again the only surviving evidence for this is a deed dated 12th August 1856 and enrolled in the Court of Chancery later that year.<sup>11</sup> Wilton thus serves as a reminder that oral history is not self-sufficient, nor by any means always reliable when unsupported by other kinds of evidence.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

### The first Methodist meeting-house in Wednesbury

WE know that the first place in Wednesbury where the message of Methodism was proclaimed was in an amphitheatre in the Coalpit-Field. We know too that the first Methodist society in Staffordshire was formed in the house of John Sheldon at Crabbes Mill Farm near Holloway Bank, and we know that a group met for fellowship in the home of John Adams in Darlaston. When John Wesley preached in the open air it was at first in a strange building which he called the Town Hall. The upper part was a hall which rested on arches, with the ground underneath used as a market. Hence it was called also the Market Cross. More and more Wesley used some steps in High Bullen. Horse-riders often used these for mounting, but actually they were the steps of a malthouse where the loading and unloading was done. They formed an admirable pulpit with a wide open space in front, and the wall behind formed a good sounding-board. These are the steps, of course, which are now in the grounds of the latest church, and are looked upon with great veneration. As the society grew, a large room close to the Bell Inn in Church Street was rented until they moved to the first preaching-house in 1760. It is about this building and its trustees that I now write.

In the Public Record Office there is an enormous roll giving an account of three indentures.<sup>12</sup> It is dated 17th November 1794, but refers retrospectively to one of 1749 and one of 1766. We will take them in chronological order. It will be remembered by readers of my book on the riots of 1743-4 that enormous damage was done to the property of Benjamin Constable, to whose memory the book is dedicated. It might have been written that within four weeks of these losses he appeared as a jurymen at the Quarter Sessions and was described as "Gentleman"—a term which had a distinctive meaning in those days. This and the occupations of the first trustees will show how far from the truth it is to believe that the early Methodists were all crude and illiterate men. Unfortunately I had not known of this roll when the book was published, for it gives further interesting information about him, his son, and his grandson.

The indenture of 1749 describes Constable as a maltster. On 30th June of that year he let a piece of ground, 16 by 13 yards,

lying in Monway Fields and abutting on the South upon ground belonging to Thomas Meadow and on the North upon land formerly belonging to the late William Hopkins, for the *sole purpose* [my italics] of erecting

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, C.54 1856.96.3.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, C.54 34 Geo. III. 20. 15 (Part No. 7201).

a suitable and convenient building for the use of the people commonly called Methodist who hold to the doctrines and practices of Mr. Wesley.

Then follow twelve very interesting names :

John Eaton	Edward Slater	Thomas Day
Francis Ward	William Wright	John Adams
Richard Spittle	Daniel Constable	Ralph Yardley
Joseph Spittle	John Griffiths	Jonathan Jones.

Every one of these men had suffered during the riots five years before. The last four are from Darlaston. Thomas Day became one of the first class-leaders there. It was in the house of John Adams that the first Methodist meetings in the neighbourhood took place, and this was the first piece of property belonging to a Methodist to be attacked. Every name in this indenture has a history of proven devotion to Methodism.

Unfortunately the "house", as Wesley called it, was not opened until 1760. Why this delay of eleven years? Two trustees had been accidentally killed, and Benjamin Constable had died very suddenly just a year after he had made this indenture. There are other reasons which might be suggested, but as I cannot prove them, I will not write anything which could be mistaken and quoted for proven fact. Eventually the chapel was opened on this site in Workhouse Lane, later to be known as Meeting Street. Two men who were present—Francis Whitehead (son-in-law of John Griffiths) and William Stokes—lived to see the opening of Springhead, fifty-three years later. On 4th March 1760, Wesley preached at Workhouse Lane, and recorded :

Few congregations exceed this either in number or seriousness. At five in the morning the congregation far exceeded the morning congregation at the Foundery. Indeed, hunger after the word has been from the beginning the distinguishing mark of this people.<sup>18</sup>

Such were the people and such was the building that Francis Asbury came to know when as a young man from West Bromwich his soul was nourished in Wednesbury.

One difficulty seems to have arisen fairly early, affecting the approach of the people to their own chapel. What this was is not easy to guess, but the second indenture shows how Constable's son, Philip, overcame it. In 1766 he gave a further six yards for the construction of a road to the building, so that the members would experience no let or hindrance. No fee of any kind was to be imposed on its users. Here two further names appear—those of Henry Groves, which I have not met elsewhere, and James Jones of Handsworth, a preacher and benefactor of Methodism whose involvement with the riots is fully described in my book. He was a nephew of Jonathan Jones, whose name appears in the 1749 indenture.

Here for thirty-four years the Methodist work in Wednesbury went forward on ground belonging to the Constable family. The largest part of this very large scroll is taken up with the indenture

<sup>18</sup> *Journal*, iv, p. 367.

dated 17th November 1794. In this indenture Philip's son, another Benjamin, gave the land outright to the new trustees on the strict condition that those who were to preach in the chapel must not depart from the doctrines of Wesley as expounded in his four volumes of sermons; also that no service should be held at the same time as those in the parish church, so that the Methodists might attend both. (This William Wright did every Sunday for sixty years.) No practice "invalidating the Church of England" was to be permitted. The preacher must not wear bands or surplice; no baptisms must be administered, nor was the Lord's Supper to be celebrated. Indeed, there was to be no change whatsoever in Mr. Wesley's customs with regard to hymns and extempore prayer. These unequivocal conditions were laid down the year before the Plan of Pacification. There had been widespread dissatisfaction on these very points which came to a head after Wesley's death. The Plan, eventually passed by the Conference of 1795, virtually threw back the whole responsibility of decision upon the societies. Under certain conditions, they could decide for themselves. Constable's conditions made certain of the views of the "Church Party" being observed.

I now give a list of the trustees who were responsible:

Godfrey Ward, Victualler [nephew of Francis Ward]  
 William Wright, Collier  
 Francis Whitehead, Gunlockfiler  
 Thomas Underhill, Gunlockfiler  
 Benjamin Partridge, Nailor, of West Bromwich  
 Thomas Mortimer, Gunmaker, of Fleet Street, London  
 John Whitehead, Lockfiler  
 Edward Slater, Lockforger  
 Edward Cooper, Baker  
 James Alexander, Chapman  
 James Negus, Gunlockmaker  
 Henry Tibbetts, Farmer  
 Michael Peter, Lockfiler.

Nearly all these men were related to the victims of the riot. One newcomer, Michael Peter, lived to be a trustee of the second building, which was opened in 1813.

The remarkable thing about all this is the loyalty to the Church of England by those who had suffered most at the instigation of Edward Egginton. We know that almost immediately there had been an improvement under his successor, Edward Best, who, as Wesley said, was "going on from faith to faith, and growing not in knowledge only, but in love".<sup>14</sup> Best, however, in 1772 wrote a somewhat patronizing and even contemptuous report in his return to the bishop. He "apprehends" that much of the success of the Methodists is due largely to some regularly-ordained clergymen

who hold Methodistical doctrine and take every opportunity of preaching and poisoning the minds of the people in this popular part of the country in every Church where they can gain admittance.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, iv, p. 13.

Was this what he really felt, or was he saying what he thought the bishop would like to hear? It would be of great interest to know who these preachers were. Best died in 1782, and was succeeded by A. B. Haden, who remained as vicar until 1829. In that year the church was thoroughly restored. The new organ was given by Benjamin Wright of Birmingham, a grandson of the first Benjamin Constable. Later, a memorial window appeared in the church to another Constable. Thus, like some other families, this one which had suffered so greatly in the riots showed utmost goodwill and loyalty to the Church whose vicar had begun the storm.

J. LEONARD WADDY.

[The Rev. J. Leonard Waddy was the Wesley Historical Society lecturer in 1970, and the printed version of his lecture, to which he makes reference in the foregoing, is entitled *The Bitter Sacred Cup: The Wednesbury Riots, 1743-44* (price 60p. post free from WMHS Publications, 87, Marshall Avenue, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO21 2TW.)]

### Brief Notices

*The Worship and Devotion of Cornish Methodism*, by John C. C. Probert, is a lengthy study running to 120 pages of single-spaced typing. It will be of immense service to historians and students of Christian worship alike. The Christian Year, Holy Communion, harvest festivals, watchnight services, collections, buildings, Sunday observance, vestments, hymns and choirs and much else besides are all dealt with in amazing detail. Old circuit plans, diaries and church records have been brought into service to form what is a veritable mine of information. Several old plans are reproduced—we hope the Cirplanologists know of their existence! Copies of this book may be obtained, price £3 35p. plus postage, from the author at 1, Penventon Terrace, Redruth, Cornwall.

We have now received volumes 2 and 3 of the *Methodist Union Catalogue: Pre-1976 Imprints*, edited by Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe of Drew University and published by the Scarecrow Press, Inc., 52, Liberty Street, P.O. Box 656, Metuchen, New Jersey, 08840, USA. Volume 2, running from Black to Chautauqua, costs \$22.50, and volume 3, Cheadle Heath to Dixon, \$22.50. This series provides us with a unique guide to Methodist publications, and we look forward to receiving further volumes as they appear.

We are pleased to list a newcomer among "Our Contemporaries" (see foot of page 18), namely the *Magazine* of the newly-formed Congregational Historical Circle. The secretary of this group is Mr. John Bray, Shangri-la, 14, Pillar Crescent, Brixham, Torbay, South Devon, TQ5 8LE, and the annual membership fee is 50p.

Professor W. R. Ward has written on "Scottish Methodism in the age of Jabez Bunting" in *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, volume xx, Part I, pp. 47-63; and the Rev. J. Munsey Turner on "John Wesley, People's Theologian" in *One in Christ*, volume xiv, pp. 328-39. We gratefully acknowledge receiving offprints of both these articles.

From Mr. John Burgess we have received a copy of his Cumbria branch publication *John Wesley in Cumbria* (pp. 24, cyclostyled). Copies, price 50p. plus postage, are obtainable from the Rev. Ian Sumner, 6, Fairview, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria.

## BOOK NOTICES

*A City Road Diary, 1885-1888: The Record of three years in Victorian London*, by Helen G. McKenny, edited by Alfred Binney and John A. Vickers. (WMHS Publications, 87, Marshall Avenue, Bognor Regis, West Sussex: pp. 111, £2 50p. post free.)

*Methodism at the Grass-roots within the Great Haworth Round*, by Joanna M. G. Dawson. (Wesley Historical Society Yorkshire Branch: pp. 24, with 8 illustrations and printed cover. Obtainable from Mr. D. C. Dews, 4, Lynwood Grove, Leeds, LS12 4AU, 25p. plus 10p. postage.)

Mr. John Vickers is to be congratulated on the discovery, joint editing and publication of this attractive and valuable document of Victorian Methodism. The diarist was the young daughter of the Rev. John McKenny, the minister of Wesley's Chapel from 1885 to 1888, and so an occupant of Wesley's House, which at that period was still the manse. Her account of the passing scene, of people, places and events—artless at times and often perceptive—makes her diary an easy-to-read bedtime book, whilst at the same time it contains a wealth of illustrative material for writers on Wesleyan history. More than that, it is valuable for the sidelights that it throws on the religious, social, and, occasionally, the political life of the time. It cries out for quotation on every page, though it lacks a subject-index to provide ready reference. A few quotations may be given, with page-references, to supplement those already used in the *Methodist Recorder* review and the prospectus of the book: Knives and forks unfamiliar to poor children (p. 27), infidel books burned in the chapel furnace (p. 20), the Queen's Jubilee presents on view at St. James's Palace (p. 80), a thieves' abode at Cherry Tree Court (p. 15), the great Socialist riot that everyone has been dreading (p. 44), Dr. Rigg finds it a great strain to preach at Wesley's Chapel (p. 58), Christmas dinner for 750 poor people at Radnor Street (p. 84), Archbishop Benson on horseback (p. 64), Why should I talk to people and try to be agreeable? (p. 7), coal tickets (p. 60), How could I evangelise the mother of 17 children? (p. 14).

Wesley Historical Society members with an antiquarian taste will follow Helen with interest on page after page as she "shows the Relics" in Wesley's House to an unceasing stream of visitors, and not least when "old Mr. Stevenson [the City Road historian] called with a particularly nice gentleman (Mr. Stamp from Spilsby) [George Stampe, who first proposed the founding of the Wesley Historical Society] who had with him several valuable letters of John and Charles Wesley and of their sister, Mehetabel and Thos. Olivers . . ."

The days are long past when our annual lecture was published as a matter of course by the Epworth Press; and some of the lectures delivered in recent years (including our late President's), excellent as they were, are still unpublished. Three have been published by our Society, one by the World Methodist Historical Society, and two privately. For the publication of Miss Dawson's lecture we are indebted to our Yorkshire branch, and we hope that our members will send in their orders for it to Mr. Colin Dews.

The lecture now published is an attractive little book about eighteenth-century Methodism in William Grimshaw's Great Haworth Round, where the foundation of Wesley's Methodism owed as much to Wesley's preachers, particularly John Nelson, as it did to Wesley himself. Methodism in this area was strongly influenced by Benjamin Ingham, the Moravians, and the Quakers—and of course by the dynamic personality of parson Grimshaw

himself. Memories of the early preachers and people, their homes and their chapels, lasted long, and some were committed to writing. Miss Dawson, who is an expert local historian, has made the fullest use of this material and related it to the information she has gleaned about them from other sources, including the excellent Keighley circuit archives. The result is a highly evocative picture of the early dale and moorland Methodists at their work and their prayers; of the forty-six lead-miners who formed the bulk of the society in Nidderdale; of the shepherd of Middlesmoor whose letters tell of his class-meeting and his interest in crops of corn and hay; of the women who washed the farmhouse floor with buttermilk and sanded it in time for preaching, and prepared the lovefeast bread according to locally-approved recipes; and of the seventeenth-century farmhouse which housed first a Quaker and later a Methodist congregation. On the cover is a reproduction of the scroll design of a class-ticket of 1760, in which the text is cleverly replaced by the book's title, and the member's name by that of the author.

THOMAS SHAW.

*Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism*, by John H. S. Kent. (Epworth Press, 1978: pp. 381, £9 50p.)

In recent years there has been a marked tendency in historical studies to focus on the nineteenth century, and this concentration of interest has affected those who are concerned to trace the progress of the Christian Church. In this volume, Professor John Kent presents a fascinating study of revivalism in Victorian England. He writes, as one would expect of him, both with verve and insight and with an ease of style which might tempt the reader to forget the considerable research underlying a survey of this kind.

The emergence of religious revivalism is related to the fact that popular Protestantism was beginning to decline as confidence in the reliability of biblical revelation was undermined by the advance of scientific knowledge. But, in Dr. Kent's judgement, an even more significant factor was the overall process of secularization which had already made its impact on Western culture, and was so radically to reorientate conventional thought during the course of the nineteenth century.

The opening chapters of the book deal with the American revivalist tradition and its influence on English Christianity, more especially in the Primitive Methodist Church. The years between 1857 and 1862 are regarded as crucially transitional, in that the older forms of revivalism—not always distinguished as clearly as they might be from genuine revival—appeared to have spent themselves, and were eventually to be replaced by the new-style American approach associated with Moody and Sankey.

Although extensive attention is paid to the latter, Dr. Kent's briefer treatment of the High Church missions is nevertheless both informative and judicious. He considers that the most inhibiting weakness of the Anglo-Catholic revival lay in its virtually obsessional pre-occupation with the parish structure. A final chapter deals with "Holiness Revivalism" from the Salvation Army to the forerunners of the Keswick Convention. Dr. Kent rightly decides that the latter was not in fact revivalist in character, and that this accounts for its survival into the twentieth century.

Readers of these *Proceedings* will note with particular interest Dr. Kent's comments on John Wesley's account of the revival at Everton, Bedfordshire, in 1759, which he feels fails to recognize the phenomenon of tongue-

speaking. He even wonders whether Wesley himself may have been directly involved, since, according to his *Journal* entry (iv, p. 319), when "the smiles of heaven" came upon "a thin, pale girl", and she began to praise God, he also "laughed with extreme joy", as did his companion, Ebenezer Blackwell.

A few of the author's judgements will not perhaps be found altogether convincing. He seems rather to underestimate the sociological importance of Primitive Methodism, although he does agree that Professor W. R. Ward's comment that Mow Cop "had no political significance" appears to be over-confident (p. 60). Did Jonathan Edwards deliberately "set out to preach his congregation into a state of religious hysteria" (p. 18)? Is Charles Simeon's brand of Anglican Evangelicalism to be dismissed as sterile? And does Dr. Kent fully appreciate the positive contribution of Pietism, not least in the area of practical community concern, when in a recent monograph Ernest Stoeffler can claim that "the beginnings of the social outreach of the Church are in no small part the result of Pietistic impact"?

A. SKEVINGTON WOOD.

*When I was a Child*, by Charles Shaw. (Facsimile reprint, Caliban Books, 13, The Dock, Fittlehampton, Sussex, 1977: pp. viii. 258, £7 50p.)

Charles Shaw (1832-1906) was one of the few Methodist New Connexion ministers to come from a genuine working-class background. His account of his childhood and adolescence in the Staffordshire potteries originally appeared as a series of articles in the *Staffordshire Sentinel* during 1892-3, and was published anonymously in 1903. It has since been quarried at least twice: first by Arnold Bennett to provide the details of Darius Clayhanger's early experiences in the potbank and the workhouse in *Clayhanger* (1910), and more recently by John Burnett, who included extracts in *Useful Toil* (1974)—a collection of autobiographies of working people. Shaw's book was also the subject of a brief article by W. H. Chaloner in *Proceedings*, xl, pp. 51-3.

These vivid—if episodic—recollections provide a many-sided picture of working-class life in the 1830s and '40s—the dame school, the workhouse, a wakes visit to Trentham, unions, strikes, the agitations of 1832 and 1842, and the pattern of work. For the religious historian, there are glimpses of Shaw's neighbour, the Primitive Methodist blacksmith and Chartist, Joseph Capper, and a moving tribute to the influence of the Sunday school on one man's intellectual and religious development. It is notable that Shaw combined a strong political consciousness with a deep religious faith. Margaret Drabble, in a recent study of Bennett, suggests that "through Shaw's tones, Bennett takes on himself a note of biblical denunciation less neutral than usual! . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The original edition did not achieve a wide sale, and has long been difficult to obtain. This reprint, therefore, is welcome. It replaces Robert Spence Watson's original seven-page preface by a 200-word introduction by the publisher. It is a pity that opportunity was not taken to include a longer introduction for modern readers. The passage of seventy-four years has also brought a change in price: this reprint is precisely twenty-five times the price of the original!

E. A. ROSE.

<sup>1</sup> M. Drabble: *Arnold Bennett* (1974), p. 175 (paper-back edition)—where, however, Shaw's Christian name is wrongly given as "William".

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 1317. THE WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION—HOXTON AND ABNEY HOUSE.

The Rev. H. M. Pennant Lewis informs me that there is a mistake in the list of students admitted to Hoxton in 1834 (*Proceedings*, xxxix, p. 107). In the list for the First Year the name "John Owen" should read "William Owen", and the same for the Second Year, 1835. Mr. Lewis says that William Owen and Isaac Jenkins, two Welsh students, were at Hoxton together for two years. This information is contained in the *Life of Isaac Jenkins*.

The Rev. W. Islwyn Morgan says that in the *Memoirs of Henry Wilcox* it is stated that he was admitted to Hoxton in 1836, and that he spent three years there, 1836-8. Henry Wilcox, says Mr. Morgan, was the grandfather of the Rev. Dr. H. Maldwyn Hughes. KENNETH B. GARLICK.

### 1318. "A NOTABLE CENTENARY": IRISH CONNEXIONS.

Irish Methodism has a further significance for the centenary of lay representation in Conference—the subject expounded so clearly by Dr. Bowmer in *Proceedings*, xli, pp. 183-5. The 1878 Irish Conference was actually the *second* occasion for lay representation. Its introduction in 1877, a year earlier than in British Wesleyanism, was connected with and influenced by the movement for Irish Methodist Union, which came about in 1878, and the centenary whereof has recently been celebrated.

Between 1816 and 1878 there were two main Methodist connexions in Ireland, with the same structure of Conference, Districts and circuits. One, the Wesleyan Methodists, assumed the functions of a church, with full administration of the sacraments, and kept a close relationship with British Wesleyan Methodism, with the President of the British Conference presiding also over the Irish Conference—a practice continuing to this day. The other, the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Connexion, came into being to preserve "original Methodism" as a society within the established Church of England and Ireland. Thus there was no administration of sacraments, thus its preachers were strictly "lay", thus there was never the same doctrine of the Pastoral Office as in Britain, and thus their Conference included other lay representatives as well as preachers.

Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1870 created a crisis for the members of the Primitive Wesleyan body. The bulwark of an established Church had gone. Were they in the last resort Methodist or Anglican? Some threw in their lot with the Church of Ireland, and some preachers sought and obtained episcopal ordination. But the majority now felt that their Reception into Full Connexion in Primitive Wesleyanism was as valid as any other ordination. Indeed, despite their origin as a protest against Methodist administration of the sacraments, they were now giving their preachers the title of "Reverend", and after 1870 permission was given for the sacraments to be administered by them.

Discussions for re-union were opened. One of the problems was that of lay representation in Conference. The movement for change in the British Wesleyan Church was of help in the Irish situation. One influential figure was Mr. William McArthur, M.P. (later Sir William, Lord Mayor of London). He was not only one of the first lay representatives to the Irish Conference (chosen by the Committee of the Methodist College, Belfast) in both 1877 and 1878, but he was also a member of the



1878 British Wesleyan Conference at Bradford. It is claimed that he was the only layman in the United Kingdom who was a member of both Conferences—a distinction which he continued to hold to the end of his life. (He died in November 1887.) It is certain that he took a very influential part in the activities that led up to the adoption of lay representation in Conference on both sides of the Irish Sea, and to the bringing about of Methodist Union in Ireland. His biography, *Sir William McArthur*, by Thomas McMullan, was published in London in 1891.

FRED JEFFERY.

[References to the Primitive Wesleyan Methodists under the title "Church Methodists in Ireland" appeared in *Proceedings*, xxxiv, pp. 65, 73-5, 126, 135-40.]

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## WORLD METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOTES

### **British Methodist Archives Centre : Information Dossier**

THE Archives of the British Methodist Church were transferred from London to Manchester in 1977, and are now in the care of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester. Students and scholars wishing to use the collection are invited to send for a dossier of information on the Archives Collection, the John Rylands University Library, travel facilities to Manchester, accommodation available, etc. This has been prepared by the Archives and History Committee of the British Methodist Church in conjunction with the World Methodist Historical Society (British Section). Application may be made either to the Connexional Archivist, Mr. William Leary, c/o Division of Property, Central Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester, M1 1JQ, or to the British Secretary of the WMHS, Mr. John A. Vickers, 87, Marshall Avenue, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO21 2TW. Please enclose 20p. (or in the case of American and other overseas applicants three International Reply coupons) to cover the cost of postage.

### **Residential Conference at Selly Oak, July 1978**

A REPORT of the papers and discussions has now been prepared and sent to all who participated in the Conference. The theme was "Methodist minorities and Methodists in the majority", and contributions covered various localities in the British Isles and also a number of areas elsewhere in the world. Copies of the report are available while supplies last, at 50p. or \$1.50 *post free*, from Mr. John A. Vickers (address as above).

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It is now four years since the last issue of the once-familiar Handbook preceding the Methodist Conference, and this year, as in the last three, its place is taken by a section of the *Methodist Recorder*—in fact a 16-page pull-out Supplement, dated 26th April 1979—devoted to Conference matter, including the usual detailed diary of meetings, ordination services, etc., photographs of London scenes, and biographical sketches. In a year when the President-Designate is the Principal of the Luton Industrial College, whose term of office will see us into the 1980s, there is appropriate emphasis on Methodism "serving the present age" and preparing for even greater ventures in the future, whilst at the same time building on foundations securely laid in former days. Dr. Kenneth Greet contributes a useful "Beginners' Guide to Conference", and in lighter vein, there is Dr. Colin Morris's "Checklist for survival"—with illustrations!