

HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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2011 EDITION

from our GENERAL SECRETARY

Robert Williams

We begin a new quinquennium following the five year cycles of the World Methodist Conference. At the recent conference in Durban, South Africa, about 70 persons participated in the afternoon bus tour of important historic sites in the area. This newsletter includes a letter of thanks from one of those participants who I have known for a number of years in New Jersey. Also, from the meeting, I have included the brief minutes, the treasurer's report, and the report I made to the plenary of the Conference. At that time, Dr. Ulrike Schuler, incoming president brought greetings, and Dr. Beauty Maenzanise spoke of the importance of archiving the records of the churches in Africa. The current list of officers is found on the last page as we continue to work to fill out the positions of vice presidents for some of the regions as called for in the bylaws.

The WMHS has supported regional conferences for many years. In the coming years there is the vision that the WMHS can assist with a meeting in Africa to encourage archiving and undergird a European section of the Society. The email distribution of the *Historical Bulletin* has many advantages. There is no need to collect dues as there are no mailing costs. For those outside the United States, the cost of mailing is virtually prohibitive. Anyone who wants to receive the newsletter simply has to notify me that they wish to be on the email list. Also, some of you are then able to distribute the electronic copy through your network of contacts. We will still email a hard copy for those who request it and then the dues of \$5.00 for one year or \$20.00 for the quinquennium are required. All five year cycle of dues will be concurrent with the World Methodist Conference. So if you want to pay for the five years, you should do it early in the five year cycle.

I believe our network of WMHS interested persons has an important place in world Methodism. Our activities must be limited but together we maintain a witness to the value of heritage for the mission and witness of the church. I hope together we are a force for the well being of the church through the "ministry of memory."

-WMHS-

WORLD METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY REPORT DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

The World Methodist Historical Society is an affiliate body of the World Methodist Council whose purpose is to gather those who are interested in the history of the denominations who trace their roots to the Wesleyan movement of the 18th century. Our largest gathering as a body is during the quinquennial World Methodist Conference. At this Conference an afternoon trip was planned to important Methodist related and other historical sites in the Durban area. It included trips to several area Methodist churches.

The Society encourages and supports regional meetings throughout the world. During the past five years the Society has supported regional conferences in England and in Hungary for continental Europe. Regional leadership should consult with the General Secretary for financial assistance if a convocation or conference is being considered as each regional conference is organized by those in that area.

Other projects that have been supported include assisting with publication costs for books published in Germany, Italy, and England. Support was also provided for the Wesley Works Project and the development of the E-Academy, an on line learning project in Methodist studies for students throughout Europe.

A semi-annual newsletter, *Historical Bulletin*, is sent to all who join the Society. Electronic versions are free but hard copy membership dues are \$5.00 USD per year or \$20.00 USD for five years. Hard copy membership dues should be mailed to the General Secretary, Robert Williams, PO Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940. The *Historical Bulletin* highlights events, resources, and information pertaining to the history of World Methodism. Once again, there are no dues if one chooses to receive the newsletter electronically. An email notice is sent to all who request the newsletter in this way and it is available through the web site of the General Commission on Archives and History.

The WMHS is the grateful recipient of a \$2000 grant each year from the legacy of George Ruck administered through the General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church.

Appreciation is expressed to all who help weave this world-wide network of those who research, publish, and teach the Wesleyan heritage so that the identity and mission of Methodism has roots that nourish it with vision and purpose. As General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, I serve as co-opted staff for the WMHS. Martin Wellings of Great Britain, who is pastor, historian and author has been president for the past five years. Dr. Ulrike Schuler of Germany will serve as president for the next five years while regional vice-presidents are elected for Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, Great Britain/Ireland, and Oceania.

The affiliate relationship of the WMHS with the World Methodist Council is essential. As a small organization with fewer than 200 members, its very survival would be called into question without the relationship with the WMC. It is our hope that it could gain greater visibility, provide more encouragement to historians world wide, and undergird the development of regional work bringing together all those in the Wesleyan tradition. I am personally grateful for this relationship and value the contributions that serving on the Board of Trustees of the Epworth Old Rectory and attending the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies have made in my life.

-Dr. Robert J. Williams

-WMHS-

**WORLD METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
AUGUST 4, 2011
MINUTES OF THE QUINQUENNIAL MEETING
DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA**

1. The General Secretary called the meeting to order and it was agreed that he would preside and prepare the minutes.

2. The treasurer's report was presented by the General Secretary in the absence of the treasurer, Dan Swinson. It is attached.

3. The Nominating Report was distributed but it was not complete for there were vacancies for some of the regional vice-presidents. Also, not all of those currently serving had been contacted or had responded. It was moved, seconded, and passed that:

The General Secretary in consultation with the President of the Society were empowered to complete the nominating report after contacting those who have served and then proceed to other names that have been presented in the order they were presented.

The report as presented in Durban is attached.

4. The General Secretary gave a report on the Historical Bulletin and the encouragement that it be distributed through email.

5. The following resolution was moved, seconded, and passed: Those present and voting at this meeting of the World Methodist Historical Society authorize and grant permission for the General Secretary to take necessary steps to incorporate the Society under the laws of the State of New Jersey, USA. Those to be listed as officers will be the President, General Secretary, Treasurer, and those vice-presidents or at large members necessary to fulfill the legal requirements for incorporation.

6. The meeting was adjourned.

-WMHS-

Dear Rev. Dr. Robert Williams,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior!

I had the honor of being named a World Methodist Council delegate in 2011 and attended my first WMC meeting this summer in Durban, South Africa. While I had many positive experiences in seeing and learning about the global nature of our church, there is one event that stood out above and beyond all the rest. That event was the World Methodist history tour that you lead. As I reflect on my experiences theologically and personally, I am deeply moved to have had the opportunity to learn more and walk in the place where Gandhi set up his printing press and did such powerful work. I am inspired to have seen the established community schools and to have stood in the place where Nelson Mandela cast his apartheid vote. As a local church pastor, the experience of meeting with congregations and learning their history is something that will inspire me and shape me as a clergyman.

As a young adult attending the WMC for the first time I was at times discouraged and frustrated because I did not feel like our Methodist presence was "changing the world" in Durban. However, this history tour showed me first hand some of the extreme levels of poverty and some of the on-the-ground work being done to build up the kingdom. The history tour was the highlight of my WMC experience and I am blessed to have been able to be one of the participants. I sincerely thank you for all of your work putting it together, providing such generous hospitality, and for exposing us to such rich history of the area and of the Methodist family.

With deepest thanks and appreciation,
Rev. Jessica Campbell

-WMHS-

WORLD METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY									
				Treasurer's Report					
				September 1, 2006 - July 31, 2011					
		Fiscal year is August 1 through July 31							
Income		06 - 07	07 - 08	08 - 09	09 - 10	10 - 11	Total	Budget	Proposed
Membership		308.00	255.00	80.00	480.00	130.00	1,253.00	3,000.00	1,000
Ruck Foundation		2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000
Royalties		98.68	0.00				98.68	0.00	0
Transfer - UMDf						5,000.00	5,000.00		3,000
Total		2,406.68	2,255.00	2,080.00	2,480.00	7,130.00	16,351.68	13,000.00	14,000
Expenses		06 - 07	07 - 08	08 - 09	09 - 10	10 - 11	Total	Budget	Proposed
Newsletter		393.53			365.66	141.31	900.50	3,000.00	1,000
Meetings		500.00		500.00		500.00	1,500.00	4,000.00	3,000
World Conference		0.00			3,000.00	4,000.00	7,000.00	5,000.00	5,000
Letterhead/Misc		0.00			55.07		55.07	1,000.00	1,000
Wesley Works Proj.		1,000.00					1,000.00		
Trans. Of CW Bio		500.00					500.00		
Pub of Bk in Italian		0.00	1,000.00				1,000.00		
Gift to British Heritage Cm					1,906.50		1,906.50		
E Academy Meth. Course		0.00	1,500.00				1,500.00		
Book to Sol Jacobs						84.87	84.87		
Postage						82.58	82.58		
Grant for Coke's letters						500.00	500.00		
Grants									4,000
Total		2,393.53	2,500.00	500.00	5,327.23		16,029.52	13,000.00	14,000
Check Book Bal.									
Start of FY		6,050.12	6,063.27	5,818.27	7,398.27	4,551.04			
Check Book Bal 7/31/11		6,372.28							
United Methodist Development Fund		Matures 10/12/14; rate of 3.5%							
Value as of									
12/31/2007		18,515.29							
12/31/2008		19,642.87							
12/31/2009		20,839.10							
12/31/2010		16,956.82							
6/30/2011		17,253.58							

-WMHS-

**NEWS FROM THE WMHS
AUSTRALIAN RESOURCE CENTRE**

Recent months have seen some significant additions to our Library collection, including the eight-volume Nehemiah Curnock edition of the journals and eight-volume John Telford edition of the letters of John Wesley, a large volume of research material on the converted convict and Wesleyan pioneer Edward Eagar, and also some important personal diaries, ephemera, and similar material. The most recent of these include a copy of the journal of Thomas Parker Reeve, a member of the Wesleyan Sustentation and Church Extension (Home Mission) Society here in NSW from its inception in 1859, lay

preacher and antecedent of several Methodist ministers, and also the "register" of his daughter-in-law Miriam (nee Walker) covering the period prior to her marriage when she served in Samoa as governess to the children of Wesleyan missionary Rev. John Samuel Austin and his deceased first wife.

The latter documents, together with the memoir of John Austin, cover a highly significant period in the life of Wesleyan Methodism in New South Wales and of the missions in Samoa over the second half of the 19th century and extend into the life of the Methodist Church of Australasia following the union of 1902.

Following the article in the last issue of the Bulletin on Miss Isabella Leonard, we were delighted to receive additional information concerning Miss Isabella Leonard from Prof. Charles E. Jones, who has researched and published a number of volumes on American Methodism and the various holiness movements. We were also able to purchase a copy of the memoir of Miss Sophia Blackmore, Australian born Methodist Episcopal (ME) missionary in Singapore for over 40 years.

A paper on the life and work of Sophia Blackmore is currently in preparation, based on this and other material received from the Methodist Church Archives in Singapore with the co-operation of Assistant Archivist Ms. Jenny Ng. We have also been given all legal rights in Sophia's memoir as inherited by Mr. Rod Blackmore, OAM, her nearest surviving relative. (The whereabouts of this 200+ page memoir remained unknown for many years despite strict search and enquiry procedures initiated over several years by Rod Blackmore's late father.)

Further information on the influence of ME evangelists and others on individuals and churches in New South Wales continues to emerge, including that of Bishop William "California" Taylor, Miss Isabella Leonard, and also Miss Helen F. Barnes, Field Secretary of the Australasian YWCA from 1911, and formerly of New York. (Miss Barnes was a daughter of Rev. Dr. A. C. Barnes, who completed over 55 years in the ME ministry and preached the jubilee sermon at the Ohio ME Conference in 1912.)

We have continued unsuccessfully to seek information on another ME evangelist, Rev. (*sic*) Rhoda Wertheim, who visited Australia in 1907 and was highly influential in the later formation of the Bethshan Holiness Mission at Wyee in the Hunter region some 65 miles north of Sydney in 1908. An article submitted for the Bulletin includes material on Rhoda Wertheim's Bethshan involvement in addition to that of Rev. Cyril Maitland Elliss, who served the Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in Australia, New Zealand and England before finishing his course in the USA in the Congregational ministry in Albany, Georgia. We hope that we may again receive some assistance from readers in gaining some substantive information concerning Rhoda Wertheim, and also learning something of Maitland Elliss' ministry and life in retirement in the USA. (Mr. Elliss' last known address was 1723 Gillionville Rd., Albany, GA 31701.)

As noted in this article, Rev. C. Maitland Elliss was one of a considerable number of men recruited for Home Mission service in NSW through Revds. Thomas Cook and Samuel Chadwick of Cliff College, England. Research continues on the Cliff College men, with the co-operation of Cliff College Archivist Russ Houghton. We have been unable to date to finalize the transfer to our Library of the extensive collection of personal papers and ephemera of perhaps the best known Cliff College graduate "down under," Rev. Sir Irving Benson of the Melbourne Central Mission, due to lack of space.

In association with the Castlereagh Academy, located on an acre of land adjacent to the site of the original Castlereagh Wesleyan Chapel dedicated in 1817, and closely associated with the beginnings of Wesleyan Methodism in the Colony through Edward Eagar and the conversion of old John Lees, we arranged a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the converted convict Edward Eagar on July 2nd. Academy Chaplain, Rev. Russell Davies, addressed the gathering on the role of Edward Eagar in early Wesleyan work in the Windsor area, including the conversion of John Lees, and Eagar's subsequent involvement in wider aspects of colonial development with the full support and encouragement of Governor Lachlan Macquarie. (See article in Bulletin 37(2) and also an edited version of Russell Davies' presentation in this issue, which addresses certain myths concerning the precise location of John Lees' original chapel.)

We hope that the recently donated research material on Eagar may help finally resolve other outstanding questions surrounding Edward Eagar and his role (based on his involvement from 1811 in itinerant preaching and as a class leader) and also that of the schoolmaster Thomas Bowden, who arrived in 1812, as the pioneer Wesleyans in the colony of NSW.

The historic tensions between the roles of laity and clergy in Wesleyan Methodism inevitably emerge at times when significant celebrations are planned. Although an earlier Conference (dominated by clergy of the Wesleyan tradition) had determined that the major celebrations of the Methodist centenary in Australia should mark the arrival of the first ordained Wesleyan missionary Rev. Samuel Leigh in 1815, Rev. James Carruthers, former 1895 NSW Wesleyan Conference President and editor of the official NSW Conference publication *The Methodist* over the years 1906-1920, took a decidedly different view in January, 1912.

James Carruthers (later Rev. Dr. Carruthers, President of the General Conference of Australasia in 1917,) in his editorial in *The Methodist* of 6 January 1912 expressed the view of many clergy and lay people in particular in asserting that "To date the centenary from the arrival of a minister is to make the Church centre around the ministry, instead of inhering in the membership—a theory very closely associated with the sacerdotalism against which as a Church we vehemently protest. . . ."

Carruthers might well also have appropriately pointed to fractures in the clerically dominated Wesleyan fabric which had occurred years prior to Leigh's departure from England including the establishment of the Methodist New Connexion in 1797 and events leading to the formation of the Primitive Methodist Church in 1811 in England, to the first Bible Christian circuit by October 1815, and also to other splits in 19th century Wesleyan Methodism which eventually led to the evolution of the United Free Methodist Church. Some of these at least arose from the historic tensions noted above.

September, 2011 sees the meeting of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the Australian Capital Territory, to be held this year at the University of Newcastle in the historic Hunter Valley north of Sydney. We are publishing a limited edition 60-page commemorative monograph of 12 papers featuring Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian people and places in the Hunter region to mark this event. We will also, with cooperation from the Uniting Church Historical Society and the Wesley Central Mission in Sydney, be distributing “showbags” at the Synod, including promotional material for our WMHS Resource Centre in Australia and for these cooperating bodies.

-Daryl Lightfoot and Sue Pacey

-WMHS-

**A CONTRIBUTION FROM THE OCEANIA REGION:
METHODISM AND STEPS TO FULL METHODIST
UNION IN NEW ZEALAND
ON FEBRUARY 6, 1913**

The first Methodists in New Zealand were missionaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society founded in the UK in 1814. In New Zealand the Society's work began when Rev. Samuel Leigh arrived at the Bay of Islands in Northland in 1822. He took his first service at the first Wesleyan Mission station on the Whangaroa Harbour, on June 8, 1823. In 1855, the New Zealand Wesleyan Mission came under the jurisdiction of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Conference and became the Australasian Methodist Church in New Zealand.

In 1844, the Primitive Methodists were the second Methodist denomination to set up a mission in New Zealand when Rev. Robert Ward began holding services at New Plymouth in Taranaki amongst newly arrived English settlers. By the end of the nineteenth century the Primitive Methodists had grown to be the second largest Methodist denomination in New Zealand. They were followed by two much smaller Methodist denominations, the United Free Methodist Church which commenced operations at Rangiora in North Canterbury in 1860, and the Bible Christians in Christchurch in 1877.

In 1872, the New Zealand Wesleyans gained semi-autonomy from the Australasian Conference with authority to hold annual New Zealand conferences. The first was held in Christchurch in January-February, 1872.

From this time suggestions for Methodist union in New Zealand began to be raised within the wider context of moves towards evangelical Protestant union between the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, and at the beginning of the twentieth century the influence of growing world Methodist coming together and the Edinburgh Mission-

ary Conference. There had been some fraternal co-operation and social mixing from early times, especially between the smaller Methodist denominations. Cooperation and sharing in the developing campaigns for Women's Suffrage, Prohibition, and the Temperance cause, and also in New Zealand-wide evangelistic campaigns by overseas evangelists, created further opportunities for developing trust and understanding between the Methodist groups.

The formal union of the Australasian Methodist (Wesleyan), United Free Methodist, and Bible Christian churches took place in 1896. The Primitive Methodists held back from joining the union at that time. Their principal difficulties were theological—they allowed stand-alone Lay Presidents of Conference and Synods and held out for greater equality in general between clergy and laity. The Wesleyans, in particular, were dominated almost exclusively by the ordained clergy and did not even have Lay membership of Conference until 1872. The Primitives also allowed women to be members of Quarterly Meetings from an early time, and as members of Conference. Interestingly, these theological differences over stand-alone Lay Presidency of Conference and Lay Superintendency of Synods are still producing major debate in the New Zealand Methodist Conference of today.

Church governance was the other major block to the Primitives uniting with the Methodist united church in 1896. The Primitives had early gained their independence from the English Primitive Methodist Conference and voted to stay out of the 1896 union until the New Zealand Methodist church, gained full independence from the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Conference. This was not finally granted until 1912. With this barrier out of the way, on February 6, 1913, the two churches merged their separate conferences and structures at a formal ceremony in the Wellington Town Hall presided over by the Governor-General of New Zealand and witnessed by the Mayor of Wellington.

This union was not achieved without major opposition within the Primitive Methodist Church. For instance, David Goldie, father of J. F. Goldie the prominent New Zealand portrait painter of the early twentieth century, and a prominent Layman, and Lay President of the Primitive Methodist Conference, was never reconciled to the union, although the Wesleyans compromised to allow in conjunction with ordained Presidents Lay Vice-Presidents of Conference. Nevertheless, within a year commentators were reporting the union a complete success, not the least because the new church saw a major jump in attendance and membership as many nominal Methodists came out of the woodwork to participate in the new union.

At its recent 2011 Conference Te Haahi Weteriana, the Methodist Church of New Zealand, set up steps to plan for a major connexional celebration of the centenary of the 1913 union at its next Conference to be held in Wellington in November, 2013. The Wesley Historical Society of New Zealand, Inc.,

would like to see a re-enactment of the Wellington Town Hall signing of the Deed of Union involving the current Governor-General and Wellington Mayor and the simultaneous processions of the delegates attending the Methodist and Primitive conferences from their respective churches at Taranaki Street and Webb Street to the Wellington Town Hall, either at the time of the 2012 Centenary Conference or on February 6, 2013.

As a history major, holding the degree of MA (1st Class Hons) from the University of Auckland, I am currently researching and writing up a study of how and why the 1913 Methodist Union came about, what were the issues involved, and who were the major promoters and opponents of the union, etc., with an aim to publish this work in time for the 2013 re-enactment.

-Gary Clover, Presbyter
Stoke Methodist Church

-WMHS-

THE CONVICT AND THE COLONIAL CHAPLAIN

(This is an edited version of an address by Rev. Russell Davies of the Castlereagh Academy (NSW) on July 2, 2011, marking the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the converted convict and pioneer Methodist, Edward Eagar.)

This talk should have been called “The forger, the drunk and the colonial chaplain,” because I will be trying to cover three men whose endeavours led to the establishment of the Methodist cause in the Nepean/Hawkesbury area. Unlike the very pious stories of the saints popular among Catholics and Puritans in earlier times, our forebears’ story is told warts and all.

Edward Eagar was born near Killarney, Ireland, in 1787. His parents, wealthy Anglo-Irish landowners, apprenticed him to a solicitor in 1804, and he was subsequently admitted as a solicitor and attorney in Dublin. In 1809, aged 22, he was convicted and sentenced to death in the Cork Assizes for uttering a forged bill, which he himself wrote. Subsequently the sentence was commuted to transportation for life to the colony of NSW.

Edward’s story is dramatically told by a descendant, Kevin Lewis Smith, in his biography *Colonial Litigant Extraordinaire*. He suggests several possible reasons why the sentence was commuted, including interventions by the Bishops of Cork, who prevailed on the Court to spare his life.

It is this circumstance which enables us to celebrate the bicentennial of his arrival in Australia 200 years ago in early July, 1811.

The good Bishops supported Edward’s plea for clemency because while in gaol he had a dramatic conversion experience. Now, as a volunteer with Prison Fellowship Australia, I am aware of many prisoners who profess a life-changing experience and conversion, but whose behaviour makes you quite sceptical about their claim. But I am also aware of some whose encounter with the power of the living God in the midst of their own weakness and helplessness marks a genuine conversion.

Edward obviously convinced the prison chaplain, Rev. Boyle Davies, that his was a genuine conversion, because he sent a lengthy letter of recommendation with Edward to Rev. Samuel Marsden, senior chaplain to the colony of NSW. He wrote, “I think there was as remarkable an instance of divine mercy displayed in him as ever man experienced. Such indeed was the love of God shed abroad in his heart, that if he continues as steadfast as when he left our gaol, I have not the smallest doubt of his being instrumental in proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation in NSW.”

While there are some elements in Edward’s later career which suggest he wasn’t always as steadfast as he might have been, he was certainly instrumental in proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation both in Sydney and in the Hawkesbury.

On July 8, 1811, William Cox left Sydney for Windsor with 17 convicts, of whom Edward was one. On arrival in Windsor he was assigned to Rev. Robert Cartwright, Anglican chaplain to the Hawkesbury District, as a teacher for Cartwright’s five children. He was also given his “Ticket of Leave,” freeing him from the more onerous restrictions on convicts, presumably on Samuel Marsden’s recommendation. In 1813 he was given a conditional pardon, and in 1818 an unconditional pardon. From 1812 onward, he was able to divide his time between a legal practice back in Pitt St, Sydney, and an appointment as Principal of the Government School at Windsor, one of only three in the colony.

There isn’t time in this talk to cover his legal practice. His biography is called *Colonial Litigant Extraordinaire*, and he certainly merits that description. The Eunice Hunter Library has several volumes of material including court cases involving Edward either as prosecutor or defendant, and some of the leading lights of the early colony were involved in legal stouches with him. His prosperous practice was crippled in 1815 when Justice Jeffery Hart Bent ruled that Edward was not eligible to practise in the courts under the new Charter of Justice. This was not due to accusations of sharp practice, although there were some, but because of the determination of the leading free settlers that an emancipist, or former convict, should not be accepted as a lawyer.

He was also an astute businessman, joining up as a partner with Chief Justice Francis Forbes (the first settler in Emu Plains) trying to secure a monopoly on trade with King Pomare II of

Tahiti. When the Bank of NSW was started in 1815, Edward put up one tenth of the capital.

On the charitable front, he helped establish the Sydney Benevolent Institution, the local branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Australian Religious Tract Society, the Society for the Protection and Civilisation of Distressed Islanders of the South Seas, and planned a mission to Aborigines. I have hurried through all those achievements out of sequence, because I want to concentrate on his role as one of the founding fathers of Methodism in NSW.

Edward established the first Methodist Class Meeting in Windsor in late 1811 or early 1812. It would be good to have clear documentation of the date, to know whether it was earlier or later than Thomas Bowden's in Sydney. Either way, we know that on April 3, 1812, the Windsor and Sydney classes met together for a love feast, and this meeting led shortly afterwards to a letter to the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, asking for an ordained Methodist Missionary to be sent out to NSW.

Two definitions: What is a love feast, and what is a class meeting? The love feast was started by the early Methodists in Britain before they were ejected from the Anglican Church. Wesley didn't want to alienate the Anglican hierarchy, and only an ordained minister could preside at the Holy Communion, so they had a sort of lay parallel. In Todmorden, Yorkshire, where I grew up, the love feast was celebrated with fruit cake and orange cordial, which I thought was pretty good. Incidentally, the farmhouse at Todmorden Edge was the location for the very first Methodist Quarterly Meeting!

The class meeting was absolutely central to the success of Methodism in the early colony. Indeed, Rev. Gloster Udy, in his doctoral thesis "Key to Change" argues that the class meeting was the secret to the successful spread of Methodism everywhere. Wesley organised all his followers into groups of six to twelve, called class meetings. They prayed, studied the Bible, supported and challenged each other to the practice of holiness in everyday life. Gloster shows a six step movement to growth in the Christian life: Instruct, Admonish, Exhort, Reprove, Comfort and Confirm. They certainly held each other to high standards, but they also supported each other in doing so.

It's time for a quick look at the arrival of Rev. Samuel Leigh and then the story of John Lees, on whose farm you are now standing—or sitting.

The story is told of how those early lay leaders in NSW wrote to the Methodist Missionary Society, asking them to send out a missionary, along with furniture for a house. They decided to send the Rev. Samuel Leigh to NSW instead of to Montreal, Canada. He arrived by the ship Hebe on August 10, 1815. Apparently their handwriting was not too clear, because Leigh read it as "furniture for a horse," and turned up in Sydney with

a brand new military saddle!

Who was it who conducted him next day to meet the Governor? Edward Eagar!

Governor Macquarie was less than enthusiastic about Leigh's arrival. He was concerned about the mutual hostility between Papists and Protestants (Catholics and Anglicans) and feared that a Wesleyan missionary would further aggravate the situation. He offered Leigh a government position which would be both more comfortable and more lucrative than that of an itinerant preacher. Leigh declined, and after further conversations, Macquarie directed him to the Surveyor General's office to receive a letter affording him every facility in travelling from one township to another.

After visiting and preaching at The Rocks, he turned his attention to the interior. A Sydney resident gave him a letter of introduction to a farmer near Emu Plains. After riding all day, he found the farm. The owner was standing at the front door as Leigh introduced himself and asked if he could preach to his servants. Receiving a blunt refusal, Leigh then asked if his horse could stay in the yard while he slept in the barn. He offered to pay, but there was an immediate rejection.

Samuel Leigh then enquired if the farmer knew of anyone likely to accommodate him for the night. The settler suggested John Lees, a man always reading his Bible. Leigh rode two more miles to reach Lees' house at Bird's Eye Corner.

As Leigh approached the cabin, out came a boy about seven years old. The tired traveller enquired if his father was in, and received a positive reply. Leigh said, "Tell him I am a Wesleyan missionary!" The boy's father appeared, saying, "Come in. We are just going to have family prayers. You are in time to conduct it."

Sitting round the three-legged table, Samuel Leigh opened the bible at Isaiah, Chapter 35. He began to read, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice. . . ." He could get no further—tears began to flow. He was deeply moved. One moment spurned by a fellow countryman, but now accepted and warmly welcomed by a poor farmer.

He read on. "It shall blossom as the rose. . ." but he could not proceed. He was overwhelmed as the inspired words prompted him to visualize the hope and wholeness which God's Spirit could bring to a desolate people in a forsaken part of the world. As the family rose from their knees, John Lees seized the missionary's hand in a vice-like squeeze and said, "We have been praying for three years that God would send us a missionary. We had not heard of your arrival in the colony. Now that you have come, we are glad to see you."

So that introduces you to John Lees, and to his farmhouse which was just across the water directly due east from here.

So who was he? Let's back track for a moment.

John Lees had enlisted as a private in the NSW Rum Corps, and arrived at Port Jackson on the *Ganges* on June 2, 1797. He saw service in Sydney, Windsor and Parramatta. Four years later, on June 12, 1801, Mary Stevens, a convict transported for seven years arrived on the *Earl Cornwallis*. She moved in with John Lees, and their first child, Maria was born on September 7, 1802. Hannah, Richard, John and Mary followed. In 1809, the five children were baptised, and John and Mary married at St. Phillips Church. Mary received her Certificate of Freedom in 1811, and their sixth child, Esther was born in 1812.

Meanwhile, the new Governor, Lachlan Macquarie had toured the Nepean and Hawkesbury in November and December, 1810. He camped on Thomas Jamison's farm, just north of here, then moved on towards Bird's Eye Corner. He wrote in his journal, "We passed through a long extensive chain of farms along the Nepean . . . These are all good farms, good soil and well cultivated, but they are liable to be flooded in general when this river overflows its banks, and consequently the houses of the settlers are very mean and paltry."

He went on, "I quitted my carriage and mounted my horse to view the back line of farms (ie. to the east of Old Castlereagh Road where John Lees' farm was situated) and explored the ground intended to be laid out shortly for a township and place of security and retreat for the settlers inhabiting this part of the country."

On November 30, 1810, Governor Macquarie named the township Castlereagh—along with Wilberforce, Pitt Town, Windsor and Richmond, making up the five Macquarie Towns. On November 28, 2010, we celebrated the bicentennial of that event right here under the sponsorship of the current NSW Governor, Professor Marie Bashir.

Macquarie assumed that the settlers would welcome the chance to move to the higher ground at Castlereagh village, but they didn't. Following the floods of March, 1811, he urged them twice to move to higher ground. Five years later, after more floods, he tried again, but to no avail. That is why Castlereagh has never attained the status of the larger towns, Windsor and Richmond.

Back to John Lees, and the account of a life changing experience as recorded by the Rev. Dr. Gloster Udy. Lees' farm was prospering, but his personal life was not. He was drinking increasingly, and in 1812 suffered the loss of some of his land and most of his stock due to his addiction. Planning debt repayment, he considered selling his last pig.

Coming out of his hut one night to get a log of wood for the fire, he was in the act of picking it up when he grasped a deadly snake which bit him on the wrist. He raced to the Anglican chaplain at Windsor, Rev. Robert Cartwright, and fell faint-

ing to the ground. Some medical aid was obtained, and John Lees' life was set in a new direction. He committed his life to Jesus, the Divine Healer, and remained sober until the tragic last few years of his life. Stricken by paralysis, he was to be bedridden for his last seven years. The doctor prescribed brandy to alleviate his pain, disastrous for one who nowadays would have been classified as an alcoholic.

This intervention at Windsor was how John Lees and Edward Eagar first met, and their lives were to be intertwined from then on. The fact that John Lees identified as a Methodist from that time on, although the Rev. Robert Cartwright who had saved his life was an Anglican, is testimony to the influence of Edward Eagar.

Merle Kavanagh's book documents the yearly meetings in Sydney of the Wesleyan Missionary Society and the generosity with which John Lees supported the cause. Although just a poor farmer, he was one of the most generous benefactors of the Society, and was described locally as "an oasis in a parched and thirsty land."

Sadly, we don't have much documentation of the period between John's conversion and his decision to build a chapel on his land, so dates become to some degree a matter of conjecture. The conventional way of telling the story used to be that John Lees built a weatherboard chapel where the driveway now runs between the present Castlereagh church and the old hall, and that this church was dedicated by Samuel Leigh on October 7, 1817. That is what the plaque in the present church says, and what our present noticeboard (for which I am responsible) implies as well. Sadly, that is not quite right.

Here is how Leigh describes the dedication of the first Wesleyan Chapel in the convict colony (and indeed, first in the Southern Hemisphere!)

"While I stood and beheld a number of carts, laden with persons who were driven to attend the opening of the chapel, I thought of the account given of the American Methodist meetings. The place was well filled with attentive hearers. I preached from Psalm 126:3. 'The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad,' from which I spoke of the great things the Lord had done for us. The people were not willing to leave the place."

At the close of the service, John Lees said, "I have not yet done my duty. Having made some provision for the worship of God, I must now contribute something towards maintaining the ministry of God's Word. I cannot at present give money, but I will give one acre of my best land. I will plough it, sow it, reap it, thresh and sell the produce, and you shall have whatever it brings without any deduction." Samuel Leigh and John Lees then walked over to the road and measured out one acre of land which he formally handed over to the church. Thus Leigh's own account shows that the 1817 chapel was already in existence, yet the one acre site had only just been measured, and it was awaiting ploughing, etc.

**EVANGELIST RHODA WERTHEIM
IN NEW SOUTH WALES 1907 AND THE
BETHSHAN HOLINESS MISSION**

**SOME MINISTERING WOMEN OF THE
M.E. CHURCH OF AMERICA
IN NEW SOUTH WALES
(PART 2)**

In 1818, the Rev. Walter Lawry reported to the London Committee that “a chapel is begun (to be built) at Castlereagh” and describes it as “our second place of divine worship built by John Lees.” In 1820, Leigh reported to the same Committee that John Lees had “built two neat little chapels, (has) given a horse for the use of the circuit, and has frequently furnished the missionary’s table with a supply of food.”

Professor R. Ian Jack from the Department of History, University of Sydney, has thankfully further clarified the situation, which is backed up by Merle Kavanagh’s excellent history of John Lees.

The first chapel was in fact a slab building attached to Lees’ home on the far side of Cranebrook Creek, fronting Carters Lane—now just over the far side of the main lake—and this was the building dedicated on October 7, 1817, while the one on our present site was not built until 1819-1820. Professor Jack’s research unearthed a survey showing the first chapel (built probably in 1815 and dedicated in 1817) attached to or adjacent to Lees’ farmhouse, the second (1819-1820) and third (1847-1848) on our present site. Penrith Lakes Development Corporation advises that they have a marker on the site of John Lees’ farmhouse, and hopefully we can place a historical obelisk to mark this site once quarrying and land remediation finishes. In these days of historical pilgrimages, a walking track from here around the lake to the farmhouse site would be a great way to mark its significance.

The issue of historical dating is further complicated by a photo in the old hall next door. Showing the centenary celebrations on the present site, the banner says “1815–1915” and the celebration was indeed held in 1915. Perhaps they dated the centenary from Samuel Leigh’s arrival in 1815, or his later visit to John Lees which sparked the plan for a church, or the establishment of class meetings in Lees’ home. Perhaps they had documentation which is now lost that showed that first slab church being built in 1815. It is frustrating not to know.

The 150th anniversary was in 1967—yes, we had moved back into the sevens by then. Rev. Alan Walker from Sydney’s Central Methodist Mission led the celebrations, and Deaconess Noreen Towers (now Rev. Noreen Towers) arrived by carriage, dressed in period costume. It is appropriate that Noreen should have been involved. For more than 20 years her ministry was to head up Wesley Mission’s home for homeless men in Darlinghurst—Edward Eagar Lodge!

-WMHS-

In early life Elliot John Rien, later Brother Rien of the Bethshan Holiness Mission located at Wye in the Hunter Region some 65 miles north of Sydney, was exposed to the Lutheran and Brethren teachings of his parents. Subsequently the family joined the Presbyterian Church. Following on the death of his mother young Elliot ran away from home and at age 15 became apprenticed to the confectionary trade in Sydney, necessitating living in the home of his employer for over six years.

His employer’s wife was a staunch Wesleyan, and her influence led to young Elliot Rien’s conversion at a mission at Chippendale at age 18 years. Shortly afterwards, he returned home to Clarendon near Windsor to assist his father, by this time seriously handicapped and in danger of losing his position as the railway Station Master at Clarendon. Here he renewed his association with the Presbyterian Church, walking with his sisters the two miles to Windsor to worship, and on his return conducting a Sunday School in the Clarendon Station waiting room for local children. There followed employment at Hawkesbury Agricultural College, and a move from the Presbyterian to the Methodist Church. This move to Methodism was not on any particular doctrinal grounds, but rather to take up the greater opportunities for lay preaching and teaching offered by the Methodists at this time.

During the 1890s, a group of ladies had launched an industrial venture aimed at employing and otherwise assisting their less fortunate sisters through silk-worm farming, and had purchased “Wirawidar Farm,” a property at Wye. The venture had been placed at serious risk through poor cultivation practices, and Elliot Rien had been recommended to take over the management of the project through his involvement with the Hawkesbury Agricultural College.

Moving to Wye one day after his marriage in February, 1897, Elliot Rien immediately began services in his new home, and agitated unsuccessfully for extension of Methodism from the Gosford Home Mission Station to the south to include Wye. (Eventually Catherine Hill Bay on the coast east of Lake Macquarie was opened as a Methodist Home Mission Station in 1903, and the services took in Wye, with Elliot Rien becoming heavily involved in preaching at the various centers. He was “planned” for no less than 10 services in the May-July quarter of 1904, three of these being at Catherine Hill Bay and Mine Camp and necessitating lengthy journeys on horseback.)

Also during 1903, William Arnott, a noted biscuit maker and prominent Newcastle Methodist, had visited the USA and spent time with the Episcopal Methodists in San Francisco. He wrote enthusiastically of the work being undertaken by these churches to his friend Mr. Isaac Winn, also a businessman and prominent Methodist in Newcastle, who had the letter published in the denominational journal, *The Methodist*. A lady evangelist of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. [sic] Rhoda Wertheim, then visited the district in 1907 and preached nightly in the Union Church at Wyee on the Wesleyan doctrine of Scriptural holiness. Elliot Rien and his wife were among those influenced by this teaching, immediately incorporating it into their own lay ministries. (Mr. and Mrs. Rien later named their youngest daughter after this American preacher of whom we have been unsuccessful in locating additional information, both in NSW and through inquiries in the USA.)

A “holiness convention” was planned for Easter 1908 on the Riens’ property, but the planned speakers did not attend, and the convention therefore proceeded under the ministry of Elliot Rien, with the support of his family and members of the Wood family, their near neighbors and close friends. From these inauspicious circumstances, the Bethshan Holiness Mission was established on May 1, 1908, under a constitution which required that all those associated with the Mission be actively associated with an evangelical mainstream church.

Numbers of preachers from Wyee or otherwise associated with Bethshan over the following years were either en route to the mission fields in northern Australia or overseas, on furlough, or recently retired from active missionary service. During 1932, no less than eight of the eleven resident local preachers on the Toronto Methodist “Plan” were from Wyee, these being Bethshan’s founder Elliot Rien, Elliot Rien, Jr., the brothers Sydney and Charles Thompson (both being former Methodist Home Missionaries), Wallace Hayman (later a missionary with the Aborigines Inland Mission and Presbyterian Home Missionary over the years 1948-1963), Francis Barrington (a missionary on furlough from India) Kevin Moran, and Horace Reid.



Among this group, Sydney Thompson, Wallace Hayman, and Kevin Moran (pictured above L-R at rear in a Bethshan family group photo) shared an additional bond—all three had mar-

ried daughters of the Bethshan founder Elliot John Rien. Sydney Thompson married Ethel Rien in 1922, and Wal Hayman married Claudia Rien in 1931.

In 1930, Kevin Moran married Rhoda Rien, youngest daughter of the Bethshan founder and named after Methodist Episcopal evangelist Rhoda Wertheim. While of Methodist background, Kevin Moran had subsequently entered the Congregational ministry, becoming Chairman of the Congregational Union of NSW in 1967/1968. In retirement Rev. Kevin Moran lived for some time in a cottage on the Bethshan property, which by that time included a retirement living complex. He later moved to England, dying at Mickleton in July, 2008, at 99 years of age, his wife having pre-deceased him.

Wal and Claudia Hayman’s Presbyterian home mission service included two terms in the Hunter region, and a term at Ettalong on the nearby central coast. They retired in April, 1963, also spending their later years in residence at Wyee among family and friends at the Bethshan Mission.

A contemporary during Wal and Claudia (nee Rien) Hayman’s residence in retirement at Bethshan was Rev. Cyril Maitland Elliss, born in England in 1892 or 1893, whose life and ministry was marked by much personal tragedy. God however has His own wonderful ways of restoring his servants through such circumstances, and using them to bless others, as this paper now relates. The ministry of C. Maitland Elliss crossed the “denominational great divide,” with his service to the Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches including several years in the Hunter Valley. One of the authors of this paper thanks God for just one encounter with Rev. C. Maitland Elliss in early life.

In the course of service to these Churches, Maitland Elliss’ ministry covered four countries, including Australia, England, New Zealand, and the USA, where he finished his course in service to the Congregational Church while resident in Albany GA during his retirement years.

A NSW Methodist Home Mission Register entry shows that Mr. Elliss had entered on Home Mission service with the Methodist Church in 1913 after study at Cliff College (Methodist) in England under Rev. Thomas Cook. At this time, the NSW Methodist Conference was heavily dependent on England for ministers and others prepared to serve as Home Missionaries. The February, 1912 Annual Conference had therefore empowered three senior ministers then proceeding to England to secure “a number of young men suitable for employment in our Home Mission work” in addition to up to six “probationers” who had completed their formal studies prior to ordination. Mr. Elliss was one of several young men recruited specifically for home mission service in NSW at this time.

According to this Home Mission Register entry, Mr. Elliss served at Bombala in southern NSW during the years 1913-1914, and at Cootamundra in the Riverina district in 1915.

While details are sketchy it seems that he then briefly served the Presbyterian Home Mission Committee, followed by further service to the Methodist Home Mission Department at Woodenbong in the State's far north from 1916 until 1918. In May, 1918, he was appointed as Presbyterian Home Missionary at Abermain in the Hunter Valley coalfields. These moves across the "denominational great divide" may have been linked to the exigencies and manpower shortages of all Churches during World War I. They also may reflect Elliss' continuing struggle with theological concerns or issues of church polity.

Maitland Elliss' studies at Cliff College had been taken under Principal Thomas Cook, well known evangelist and exponent of "Scriptural holiness" or "Christian perfection" in the Wesleyan tradition, who had himself visited Australia in 1894-1895. Among his tutors was Rev. Samuel Chadwick, resident tutor in Biblical and Theological subjects, and destined to succeed Cook as Principal on the latter's death in late 1912. Cook and Chadwick were both strong exponents of Wesley's views on holiness, referred to by Cook as "perfection in love."

Both Cook and Chadwick, and also Cliff College, had been closely associated with the Methodist Southport Convention from its inception in 1883, and which continues today. In contrasting the original Southport doctrine of "imparted holiness" with the Keswick emphasis on "imputed holiness," Chadwick emphasized that Christian perfection, however labeled, is entirely Scriptural and the sole work of a sovereign God. The available evidence suggests that Elliss himself had espoused the Southport position.

It is pertinent at this point to learn a little more of C. M. Elliss' earliest Home Mission service, a glimpse of which is contained in the report of the Methodist Home Mission and Sustentation Society for the year to March, 1914. Writing of the joys and frustrations encountered on the Bombala Home Mission Station, Mr. Elliss expressed a need for his people there for "a new vision of God." It is probable that this was indicative of Elliss' perception of some tension between his own views and those of at least some of his contemporaries, as this phrase was to be amplified and repeated with considerable emphasis and impact under the leading of the Holy Spirit many years later.

After his service to the Presbyterian Church at Abermain and his marriage in 1920 at nearby Kurri Kurri to Margaret Buchanan Burns Galloway, the next known record concerning Mr. Elliss is found in G. Lindsay Lockley's card index to Congregational ministers in Australia. Following service to the Flinders and Brighton Road Congregational Churches over the years 1920-1922 in Brisbane, and studies at the Queensland Congregational College where he graduated with honors through the recently established United Theological Faculty in that State, he was ordained to the Congregational ministry in Queensland on December 13, 1923. Leaving

Brighton Road, Rev. C. Maitland Elliss then commenced a ministry to the United Congregational Church in Dunedin, New Zealand in September, 1925.

Mr. Elliss apparently returned briefly to Australia at the conclusion of his Dunedin ministry, after which he again travelled to England, where he ministered for some three years to the Elloughten Congregational Church in Yorkshire. At the time of his return to Australia, he recalled this period as one of revival similar to the revivals of the 18th century.

Returning to Australia via Adelaide on Baradine in 1933, Mr. and Mrs. Elliss took up residence at Weston on the Hunter Valley coalfields. Recorded as residing together at Weston in 1934, the couple apparently separated shortly afterwards with Mr. Elliss residing alone at the same Weston address in 1935. Mr. Elliss was subsequently divorced by his wife in 1939.

Throughout the years to 1939, the electoral rolls showed his occupation as "clergyman," but he was apparently engaged in secular employment for much of this time. According to some who knew him during his residence at Weston, he frequently supplied the pulpits of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches in the coalfields throughout this period.

Moving to Newcastle, Mr. Elliss encountered hard times, and electoral rolls show that in 1946 and 1947, Mr. Elliss was resident at the city's Orient Hotel—hard times indeed for a clergyman. He later moved to accommodation at 62 Watt Street, Newcastle, and resided there from 1950-1953.

Rev. Russell Gibson served as minister from 1948-1952 in the Mayfield Methodist Circuit, and also served as Chairman of the Newcastle Methodist District. He thus exercised considerable local influence in the Methodist Church, and was instrumental in re-establishing Rev. C. Maitland Elliss in the work of the ministry.

Finding Mr. Elliss with "no parish or income and barely eking out a living in one cheerless room," Russell Gibson initially gave Mr. Elliss supply work in his own Mayfield pulpit. Here it was that on a stormy night in the early 1950s, Daryl Lightfoot (then aged about 10) was one of a smaller than usual congregation who heard Rev. C. Maitland Elliss preach.

It was here also that Mr. Elliss returned to the need he had expressed some 40 years earlier of Methodists on the Bombala Home Mission Station for "a new vision of God." Small in stature, Mr. Elliss gave the high Mayfield pulpit a resounding thump and called on the Methodists of Mayfield to "get a new vision of the Calvinistic concept of the sovereignty of God." Thus the Spirit of God touched the heart of a young Methodist, and set his feet on a path of study leading many years later to a ministry in church heritage and history—perhaps best reflected in our "roadshow" theme of "shared heritage and shared hope." (See paper titled "An Itinerant Archival Ministry in NSW, Australia" in Bulletin 37(1), 2010).

With the support and encouragement of Rev. Russell Gibson, Maitland Elliss again served the Methodist Church as a Home Missionary from 1954 until 1960 at Spring Hill, Narromine, and Hay in the State's west and south-west until retiring to the Bethshan Holiness Mission at Wyee in 1961. Throughout his residence at Bethshan, Mr. Elliss continued to supply the pulpits of various denominations in the district with great acceptance. A former member of the Mannering Park Methodist Church recalls a children's address when Mr. Elliss told of his ministry in England and an invitation extended to him to visit a well-to-do family in their home, sending "a carriage and pair" for him, the mystified children wondering what strange fruit this might be!

Recently discovered evidence also points to Maitland Elliss' ongoing pastoral concern and care for a minister expelled in 1941 under decidedly dubious circumstances after serving the Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches for 25 years, and for the family following that minister's death in 1961 at Wallsend.

At some time prior to 1961, Mr. Elliss had remarried, his second wife dying during his residence at Bethshan. He later corresponded with a lady named Bessie May (surname unknown) in the USA, who was to become his third wife. Mr. Elliss travelled to the USA in mid 1973, and the couple married. They resided in Albany, Georgia, until Mr. Elliss' death some years later, survived by his wife Bessie May. The eulogy to Rev. Russell Gibson notes that in the USA also, Rev. C. Maitland Elliss, Methodist and Presbyterian Home Missionary in NSW, minister of the Congregational Church, and supply preacher to all three Churches, gave years of valuable service to God. Eternity alone will reveal the spiritual harvest of the ministry of this servant of Christ, and also of the pastoral ministry of Rev. Russell Gibson to a brother minister in a time of deep personal need.

For his part, Maitland Elliss from his life experience would no doubt say a hearty "Amen" to the following verses from the pen of John Greenleaf Whittier, Quaker poet and relative of NSW Presbyterian minister Rev. Dr. W. Scott Whittier:

"Who fathoms the eternal thought –
Who dreams of scheme and plan?
The Lord is God – He needeth not
The poor device of man.

Here in the maddening maze of things,
Though tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed ground my spirit clings –
I know that God is good." (RCH 558)

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Biographical files—Ferguson Memorial Library and Uniting Church Archives.

-Daryl Lightfoot and Sue Pacey

-WMHS-

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND LECTURE 2011

The Annual General Meeting and Lecture were held at the Gladstone Memorial Library at Hawarden, Flintshire on Saturday, June 25, 2011, with many participants taking advantage of the overnight accommodation available at the residential library to view the library and exhibitions. The AGM was preceded by introductory talks by the Rev. Donald H. Ryan offering a perspective on Welsh Methodism in the twentieth century and by Mr. E. Alan Rose exploring the earlier history of Methodism in Cheshire and the Borders. The Rev. Donald H. Ryan also chaired the AGM, which elected Professor Edward Royle to succeed the Rev. Dr. John A. Newton as President of the Wesley Historical Society. In his report the General Secretary, Dr. John A. Hargreaves paid tribute to the retiring President, who had served the society with great distinction for sixteen years, for his wise counsel, inspirational leadership and joyful presence at business meetings, public lectures and residential conferences and Dr. Newton was presented with an equestrian statuette of John Wesley.

The society is fortunate to have been presided over by such a gifted communicator and talented scholar as the Rev. Dr. John Newton. His early interests in Puritanism in the Diocese of York, cultivated by leading Reformation scholar Professor A. G. Dickens, enabled him to write illuminatingly of the Puritan tradition in Methodism in a ground breaking biographical study of Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition in Methodism first published in 1968 and re-issued in a revised second edition in 2002. The publication of the book was complemented by a bibliographical survey published in the Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society in 1969-1970, which also published his Wesley Historical Society Annual Lecture on Susanna's father, the Puritan minister, Dr. Samuel Annesley (1620-1696) in 1985-1986. John Newton's book on Susanna was appropriately dedicated to his wife Rachel, who is well known for her portrayal of Susanna and other Wesley

women through dramatic monologues, and who has been a tower of strength to John throughout his ministry and in his role as President.

John has significantly enhanced our understanding of Methodist heritage through his role as warden of the New Room at Bristol, his chairmanship of the Archives and History Committee and his contribution to the Methodist Church Oral History Project. His recorded interview for the project revealed his firm belief that studying “the history of the church in its different phases” can bring out “how it has faced challenges to its evangelical and missionary life and therefore press us now, in very different circumstances, to try to face the challenges of our own day.” His contribution to Methodist history has been profound and enlightening, encompassing ecumenism, gender, hymnology, mission, spirituality and theology, but he has also ranged more widely in his study of ecclesiastical history. Most notably he has explored the spirituality of the saintly Bishop Edward King, high church Bishop of Lincoln, who was inspired by John Wesley’s mission to the poor. Indeed, his popular classic *The Fruit of the Spirit in the Lives of Great Christians*, the first in a series of reflective aids for preachers, which included Edward King as one of its “great Christian athletes of the Spirit,” enabled him to share with an even wider readership his love of historical biography and its relevance to hermeneutics and the Christian journey. Moreover, King’s association with his native Lincolnshire reinforced John Newton’s interest in regions and localities as distinctive expressions of mission and spirituality, which also informed his oversight of the New Room at Bristol and his belief that regional historical societies linked with the Wesley Historical Society are crucial “to the effectiveness of the historical witness of the society itself.” He has served the society with great distinction, a deep spirituality, an engaging humility and an irrepressible sense of humour and will continue to serve the society in the role of President Emeritus.

Thanks were also expressed to Dr. Dorothy Graham, on relinquishing her role as Assistant Librarian and to Mrs. Norma Virgoe, who is succeeded as Publications Editor by Professor David Jeremy. Other officers were re-elected, their reports accepted and the society’s accounts approved, with an increase in subscription of £2.00 agreed for 2012. The Rev. Dr. David Hart was thanked for organizing a successful residential conference in May at Launde Abbey on the theme of Memorializing and Remembering: Life Stories in Methodism, which brought together a wide variety of participants. The editors of the society’s Proceedings, David Ceri Jones and Ronald Aitchison and the members of the editorial board, especially the Rev. Donald Ryan, were congratulated on the re-design of the Proceedings and the Annual Bibliography of Methodist Literature. Members who had died during the year were remembered, including the distinguished ecclesiastical historian Professor W. R. Ward and reports were received from representatives of the Regional Historical Societies present including members of the recently founded Wesley Historical Society (Wales).

The Annual Lecture was chaired by Dr. Lionel Madden formerly of the National Library of Wales who introduced the speaker, Dr. Eryn White, Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Aberystwyth, in both English and Welsh. In her lecture entitled “Wesley, Whitefield and Wales,” Dr. White observed that by the time of the Religious Census of 1851, Calvinistic Methodism had become the largest Nonconformist denomination in Wales, with Wesleyan Methodism in fourth place after the Welsh Independents and the Baptists. She explained that both John Wesley and George Whitefield had links with the leaders of Welsh Methodism in the early years of the Evangelical Revival and that both visited the country on several occasions. However, while Wesley, on the occasion of his first visit, had commented that Wales was “ripe for the gospel,” Wesleyan Methodism struggled to reap the harvest of the Revival and Dr. White examined how the Calvinistic and Wesleyan groups competed in Wales and why it was the Calvinistic Methodists who proved most influential.

The Rev. Dr. John Newton, President Emeritus of the Wesley Historical Society led the devotions which including the singing of William Williams’ “Guide Me O thou Great Jehovah” and Charles Wesley’s “Love Divine All Love’s Excelling” to rousing Welsh tunes, raising the rafters of the chapel at the Gladstone Memorial Library. Next year’s Annual General Meeting will be held at The New Room Bristol on Saturday, June 30, 2012, and will be preceded by guided tours of The New Room and Charles Wesley’s house. The Annual Lecture, chaired by Dr. Gary Best, Warden of the New Room will be delivered by Professor John Wolffe, of the Open University on the subject of “Past and Present: Taking the Long View of Methodist and Anglican History” which will compare Methodist and Anglican church growth in the earlier nineteenth century and later twentieth century. For further details please contact the General Secretary, Dr. John A. Hargreaves, 7 Haugh Shaw Road, Halifax [johnahargreaves@blueyonder.co.uk].

-John A. Hargreaves

-WMHS-

**WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE
SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2012
THE NEW ROOM
“JOHN WESLEY’S CHAPEL”
36 THE HORSEFAIR, BRISTOL. BS1 3JE**

The Annual Lecture and AGM of the Wesley Historical Society for 2012 will be held at The New Room of “John Wesley’s Chapel,” situated in the heart of Bristol with its rich associations with Methodist heritage on Saturday, June 30. The Annual Lecture will be given by Professor John Wolffe of the Open University, on the subject of

“Past and Present: Taking the Long View of Methodist and Anglican History” which will compare Methodist and Anglican church growth and decline in the earlier nineteenth century and later twentieth century.

Professor John Wolffe is the author of *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1825-1860* (1991), *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945* (1994), *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (2000) and *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (2007) and has also edited the *Yorkshire Returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship*.

The lecture will be chaired by Dr. Gary Best, Warden of The New Room, former Head of Kingswood School and biographer of Charles Wesley. As in recent years there will be a supporting programme of stimulating activities in the morning which are open to anyone who is interested in finding out more about Methodist history, so why not invite your family and friends and enjoy a full day’s exploration of Methodism’s fascinating and inspirational history.

We are grateful to the Rev. A. Ward Jones chairman of the trustees of the New Room for inviting us to hold our Annual Meeting and Lecture at this historic venue and to David Worthington for advising on practical arrangements for the day. John Wesley arrived in Bristol on March 31, 1739, encouraged by George Whitefield and famously “submitted to be more vile” by engaging in open-air preaching proclaiming in the highways the “glad tidings of salvation.”

Opened in 1739, The New Room was the first Methodist building in the world. Enlarged in 1748, it is now both a place of worship and centre for Methodist Heritage and a treasure house of documents, artefacts and publications illustrating Methodist history.

On arrival, tea and coffee and refreshments will be available for purchase from 10:15 am at the New Room. At 10:30 am there will be a guided tour of the New Room with its historic collections by a member of the stewarding team. At 11:15 am there will be the opportunity to join a guided tour of the Georgian townhouse in nearby Charles Street, which was the former home of Charles Wesley, his wife, Sally and their children from 1766-1771, for which there will be a charge of £5.00. At 12:15 pm there will be a short break of 45 minutes for lunch (participants may consume their own packed lunches at the New Room or purchase refreshments from a wide

choice of outlets in the vicinity). The society’s AGM will commence promptly at 1:00 pm and conclude no later than 2:15 pm. The Annual Lecture will begin at 2:30 pm to conclude no later than 4:00 pm. The customary offering will be taken at the Annual Lecture to cover expenses.

The best websites for refreshments and accommodation in the Bristol area are www.broadmeadbristol.co.uk and www.visitbristol.co.uk respectively. Further details of the meeting will be available on the Wesley Historical Society website [www.wesleyhistoricalsociety.org.uk] and of the venue on the New Room website [www.new-roombristol.org.uk].

It would be helpful if advanced notice of attendance, particularly for the morning programme, could be given to Dr. John A. Hargreaves, 7 Haugh Shaw Road, Halifax. HX1 3AH (Tel. 01422 250780; E-mail: johnahargreaves@blueyonder.co.uk) to whom any further enquiries should be addressed.

Membership of the Wesley Historical Society is open to anyone interested in Methodist history. The modest annual subscription rate of £14.00 for the Wesley Historical Society entitles members to receive annually three issues of the Society’s recently re-designed journal, the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* and enjoy the facilities of the Society’s Library. Membership enquiries should be directed to the Registrar, the Rev. Donald H. Ryan, 15 Foxlands Drive, Lloyds Hill, Penn, Wolverhampton, WV4 5NB (Tel. 01902 335556).

There is also an extensive network of regional societies linked with the Wesley Historical Society offering their own additional programmes of activities and publications at a small extra charge (for details of local branches contact Professor Michael F. Collins, 38, Trueway Drive, Shephed, Loughborough, LE12 9DU).

The Annual Meeting and Lecture in 2013 will be held at Epworth on Saturday, June 29, when the lecturer will be the Rev. Margaret Jones and when visitors will have the opportunity to discover more about the birthplace of both John and Charles Wesley and Alexander Kilham, founder of the Methodist New Connexion (contact the General Secretary, Dr. John A. Hargreaves for further details).

Future annual lecturers will include Professor Michael Hughes (2014) and the Rev. Dr. Stephen Hatcher (2015).

-John A. Hargreaves

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