



Woodend Methodist Church

.. Beginning ..

Early in 1858 Messrs Thomas Ayers, William Gibbs, and Charles Skevington together with their wives and families, left England for the Canterbury settlement in the good ship "Zealandia" then making her maiden voyage out. Of the rigours of the journey little need be said, except that Samuel's future wife who came out in the first and last passage of the "Clontaff", was the only surviving child when the ship berthed in Lyttelton. Nevertheless, "Zealandia" made Lyttelton on the 21st September, 1858, and continued in this service until 1870 at least. On landing, this little party tramped over the Port Hills and made straight for their relatives in Gibbs Town, later called Woodend.

At this time the country was in its native state. High flax and raupo stood everywhere and through each hollow flowed running water. There was also a thousand acres of standing native bush composed mostly of red, white and black pine, but with a few total as and an odd maire in it which extended from the North Road, or track as it was then called, through Tuahiwi and across to the Cam Church Bush. At this time the settlers were buying this land by the acre, and when the timber had been felled and the

land occupied, the stumps were dug out and sold as firewood. It was from Gibbs' Town's situation at the end of the Maori Bush that it was later called Woodend, that name first appearing on the 1858 survey map of Mr. Dobson Canterbury's Chief Surveyor. Under this gentleman Messrs. Ayers, Gibbs and Skevington found employment in the construction of the Rangiora Road and later on the North Road from the Styx to the Weka Pass, first opened up for transport by another Methodist, the late James Ashworth of "Harleston", Sefton.



SOD HOUSE

The Sod House where the first Methodist Services were held in Woodend.

In those days Woodend was teeming with rugged life and many stories are told of incidents that threatened to ruin the infant settlement. In January 1858 and again in September 1859 fires broke out and raged through the bush threatening the lives of scores of axeman and sawyers and even in the village water had to be thrown on the roofs of houses to ensure their safety. Then one night, early in the sixties, all was tense as the settlers provided themselves with arms. A native attack was expected to synchronise with the North Island risings. Fortunately, through the friendliness of Isaiah Chief at Kaiapoia, the scare came to nothing. Then there was the outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia among the cattle, when hundreds of infected beasts were cordoned off and shot by mounted police in spite of the farmers' indignation meetings held at Mr Panckhursts' hotel. And then there was the stream of hard living harvesters passing from the city to the great estates further north or the smaller holdings nearer at hand, who were noted for their heavy drinking during the harvesting and threshing seasons. This was at a somewhat later date, when the evil was countered with a Band of Hope of 126 young members.

Such was the sort of life to which these settlers came. There was neither Church nor school in the village. The Church they were instrumental in founding. The School they helped prosper.

Methodism in Canterbury in 1859

Canterbury Methodism goes back some years before this later company of pilgrims arrived in Lyttelton. In 1844 the Rev. Charles Creed, pioneer missionary among the Southern Maoris had visited the Peninsula, but little was done. That was the first Methodist contact with this area. It was not until 1854 that the first Methodist Church was built in the Province. This was the first High Street chapel which was later replaced. On the 4th March, 1855 the first Lyttelton Church was opened. This also, had to be replaced. Together with these Churches, preaching places had been opened at Kaiapoi, Papanui, Rangiora and Riccarton,, and that was the extent of Methodism in Canterbury. Yet the cause was compact and full of promise for in 1856 we find Rev. John Aldred, Superintendent of the Canterbury Circuit, writing to the Rev. G. Osborn:

"You will be glad to know that our good work here is progressing. The close of this year finds us in a better state in every respect than we were in at its beginning. Our receipts have increased considerably. Our numbers of hearers and scholars have also increased and so have our Church members. Looking at the very great and well known peculiarities of the place as a church settlement we have very much to encourage. This Province is extensive, so much so that I cannot without aid work it efficiently. We have not the shadow of an accredited Local Preacher in the Province, and our long continued cry is still the same, let us have another man."

To this gentleman Messrs. Gibbs, Ayers and Skevington handed their Removal Notes when they arrived at Lyttelton. But the contact did not end there. After the day's hard road making or timber felling these Methodists tramped in to Kaiapoi to attend the nearest class meeting, and from there the request was made that services should be held at Gibbs' Town. The first service was conducted in the summer of 1858-9 by Rev. W. Rowse of Lyttelton in the late Mr James Gibb's house, the remains of which are still to be seen several hundred yards up the North Road on the property of Mr D. Hewitt. The only other thing that the late Mr Samuel Ayers could remember about this service was the first hymn, "Awake our souls, away our fears".

After the first Circuit Plan was printed services were regularly held in Mr James Gibb's house, Messrs. Sharplin and Hall being the most frequent preachers and the Revs. Aldred and Rowse paying occasional visits. Yet it was a good service. The walls of this Bethel were sods; the pews rough hewn bush timbers; the singing led by young Samuel's true tenor voice cultivated as a choir boy in Turvey Cathedral, while at the end of the room sang iron kettles in a fire place large enough to hold an ox. Here the

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preacher expounded the way of the Lord Jesus, and the Lord was pleased to own their efforts as the following story will tell.

[COPY OF ORIGINAL]

Wesleyan Church, Canterbury.
PREACHERS' PLAN, 1859.
"But ye people Christ crucified" - 1 Cor. II. 2.

PLACES.	TIME.	APRIL.				MAY.				JUNE.				JULY.				PREACHERS.				
		10	17	24	31	1	8	15	22	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21					
Woodend	10	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1. ALBERT.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2. BOWEN.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3. FISHER.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4. BAKER.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5. SHERRILL.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6. THOMSON.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7. CURRIE.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8. BURNETT.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9. LEWIS.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10. QUARTERLY Old Meeting.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11. M. Landon's Meeting.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12. Prayer Meeting.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13. F. M. Meeting.
Windsor	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	14. Prayer Meeting.

The Preachers are assigned to their respective places as shown in this plan.
The Minutes are assigned to the respective places.

A facsimile copy of the first Wesleyan Methodist Plan of the Canterbury Circuit 1859.

The Building of the Churches

For a time services continued to be held in Mr James Gibbs' house, but when the first school was built, worship was transferred there. Even so, a building used as day school, Sunday School, dwelling, and Church v/as hardly suitable for the conduct of public worship. Thus in 18G1 the Rev. James Buller took the names of the first Woodend Wesleyan Methodist Church Trustees, who, recorded in the front of the Minute Book commencing 1869, were:—

Thomas Wilson, Robert Atkinson, Thomas Ayers, Charles Skevington, William Gibbs, Arthur Gibbs, Thomas J. Turner, Thomas Veysey, and Richard Meredith.

Unfortunately the first Trust Minute Book of the Church is lost and anything like a full account of the erection of this Church is impossible. However we know that the Provincial Government subsidised the building pound for pound and that the Church was opened free from debt amid general rejoicing. This was the fourth cause established and the sixth Church opened, in Canterbury.

In this building the congregation continued to meet until it became obvious that some sort of enlargement was necessary. At a Trust meeting held on October 2nd, 1876, this move was initiated but not without some small difference of opinion.

"Moved by Mr Skevington, seconded by Mr A. Gibbs that the present building be lengthened 23 feet."

—Lost.

"Moved as an amendment by Mr Salkeld, seconded by Mr Marshall that the present building be lengthened 26 feet." —Carried.



THE OLD CHURCH

The Old Church opened in 1864 by Rev. James Buller, President of the Australasian Methodist Conference.

The secretary records:—

These extensions were carried out by Mr. Salkeld for the sum of £189, and the re-opening services were conducted on the 15th and 22nd April, 1877, the Rev. J. S. Smalley preaching on the first, and Rev. Wm. Cannell preaching on the second, Sunday. Many Churches in Canterbury passed through a similar phase of life in the 'seventies and 'eighties of last century. These two decades are the most vigorous in the building of Canterbury Methodism.

After the extension of the building, Church life consolidated and attention was directed towards other needs—effecting improvements, maintaining the cemetery, building a parsonage, and striving for Circuit status.

The parsonage site was purchased in 1880 on the initiative of the late Mr James Little. Early in April, 1889, the plans of a neat and substantial seven roomed house were accepted, the whole undertaking costing £380. £196 were raised by subscription and application was made to the Church Building and Loan Fund. It was soon realised that it would cost another £40 to furnish the house, but under Mrs Murray the Woodend and Waikuku ladies set to work on sewing meetings with "characteristic energy", and the task was soon completed.

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The cemetery also needed constant attention. There was the worry of keeping a caretaker and sexton, of formulating its rules, and tactfully deciding delicate matters in a Christian spirit. Thus we read:—

"Mrs — made application to the Trustees for to sell her five plots of ground for graves in the cemetery. She has already paid one shilling per year for twenty years for each grave. After consideration the meeting decided to let her have them at one shilling per grave."

There are several things of interest in the cemetery; among them being that some of the headstones were actually made in England and brought out with the emigrants. And just inside the entrance gate on the left hand side is the stone of Robt. Atkinson, first schoolmaster, Sunday School teacher, Trustee, and Local Preacher. The stone tells the rigours of the journey out. It was in those days also that the Circuit Steward was paid 12/- for attending funerals!



THE PRESENT CHURCH opened in 1911.

It was not until 1894 that locks and handles were put on the Church and School doors! There was no need, the folk were pursuing "Scriptural holiness". Yet there were mishaps. In 1887 both the Episcopalian and Methodist Church windows were broken by ruffians and the Trust saw fit to add another two pounds to that offered by Church of England officials to anyone "who would give information leading to the conviction of the party or parties who broke the Church windows."

Then in 1900 the shingle roof was replaced by an iron one, but it was soon evident that through the ravages of dry rot the building was unsafe. In 1906 it was decided to

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build and aim to complete the work in two years. A subscription list was opened shortly afterwards, and in the following autumn the ladies added £71/5/- to the fund. In 1908 another bazaar added £112/14/6. And in 1910 a third bazaar was opened by the Mayor of Kaiapoi, Mr. J. H. Blackwell. By this means another £120 was raised. Truly a noble piece of work by the ladies. Yet the men did their share too. On November 18th, 1911, a goodly number of men and teams carted shingle from the property of Mr S. Gibbs and sand from the Aghley and thus saved 4/- per yard on the shingle and 4/6 per yard on the sand. Similarly on December 9th, 16,000 bricks were carted from Kaiapoi by the same willing helpers. In this way 24,000 bricks were carted and 15/- per thousand saved.

Thus the building of the Church was provided for. The actual Architects were England Bros. and the Contractors Messrs. Wadey and Efford. Great was the rejoicing on May 18th, 1911, when the Church was open by Mr G. H. Blackwell and all filled in joining in a service of thanksgiving to Almighty God who through His people had wrought such things.

Looking back now, one sees that this was really the first step in a long term building programme. The Sunday School, twin of the Church, has outlived its partner by 37 years and now exists in a general state of decrepitude. That must be rectified to accommodate more suitably our youth work. And still later, a new parsonage will be necessary. But that is to dip into the future. As the story shows, the past was rapid in its development. The broad outlines of the work are visible. But like so many other places in the Dominion we are in transit from Mission to Church, and much rebuilding will have to be done. We know however, that the work of the Kingdom will not lack for means, as the people will not lack for enthusiasm as the need becomes apparent.

The Extension of the Circuit

(Based on the notes left by the late Rev. M. A. Rugby Pratt, F.R.Hist.S.)

At first Woodend appeared under the name Gibbs' Town as a preaching place on the Canterbury Plan, and this continued until 1868 when Kaiapoia became a separate Circuit with the Rev. J. B. Richardson as Superintendent. In 1869, Rev W. H. Peck was appointed second minister to the Circuit to assist in the Woodend area. By 1874 the work in the Circuit had developed so rapidly that division was again felt to be necessary and the Rev. Henry Bull was appointed to the newly formed Rangiora Circuit comprising Rangiora, Woodend, Southbrook, Waikuku, Mandeville Plains, Raithby, Ashley Downs, West Eyreton and Cust. Quite an extensive Circuit without Kaiapoia! Even so, the work continued developing, and in 1875, Rev. P. W. Fairclough was appointed Probationer to the Rangiora Circuit. Three years later Amberley was constituted a Home Mission station.

1881 saw the Rangiora Circuit divided with Woodend as the head station of a new Circuit composed of Woodend, Waikuku and Sefton. Rev. S. J. Garlick was minister. But the cause was not quite ready for this elevation in status. As a result there was a continuous cry for a redistribution of Circuit boundaries, and the complaint was not "we have too little to keep going on," but "You have too much, and your minister's labours are too scattered to be effective".

By 1886, Woodend and the Amberley Home Mission Station had been re-incorporated into the Kaiapoia Circuit, and the second minister, Rev. J. T. Pinfold, resided at Amberley. This arrangement was not satisfactory either. After three years of disappointment, Woodend again separated from the Kaiapoia Circuit, this time seeking help from alliance with Amberley, then in a thriving state of health. Rev. D. J. Murray was appointed minister, but again the experiment in independence failed, for in 1896 Woodend reverted to Rangiora and so continued until 1926. By this time Sefton had grown considerably, and the Woodend-Sefton Circuit was formed. So it remains today.

Tales about the early Ministers and Local Preachers

In the early days Methodist ministers were easily recognised, so I am told, by the fact that they always sat in the centre of the buggy seat to wear out both tyres together!

REV. JOHN ALDRED.

Round about the 'eighties Mr Aldred acquired some little wealth through land matters, and was thus able to purchase a beautiful coach of some sort, and employ a coachman. One day he flashed past the hospital corner immaculately dressed in top hat etc. One man standing on the corner remarked "Who was that gentleman just gone past"? "That was the minister . . . the Methodist minister". "Not Rev. Aldred", queried the other. "Yes, Mr. Aldred" was the reassuring reply. "Then you had better write to the Methodists at home and tell them to cut down their grants, as the ministers are doing too well on it." !!

MR JACK SHARPLIN.

"Mr Sharplin was noted for being so full of his message. On one occasion he took off his coat so that he could have more freedom to drive home his words with heavy and continual thumps on the Bible.

His ardour was not confined to preaching. On one occasion he walked from West Oxford to attend a Church tea in Woodend. The walk had sharpened his appetite, and when asked to carve two fowls one found its way on to his plate and the other was divided among the rest of the guests. Both fowls disappeared in record time."

REV. JOHN DELLOW.

Often when Mr Dellow returned from services in Amberley in cold sou' west and frosty weather his beard would be a mass of icicles when he reached home.

REV. P. W. FAIRCLOUGH.

Mr Fairclough boarded with the late Mr James Little and his passion for astronomy soon became known in the village. This was too much for some of the lads. One night the village wag arranged for young Martin to put up his kite with a small lantern attached to the tail. When all was set, Turner called on Mr Fairclough to enquire what the new star might be. Much to his delight, Fairclough gave the correct astronomical name and supplied full details into the bargain!

MR JAMES LITTLE.

It's not a story, but a record. Mr Little was famous for his harrows. In the heavy harrow section, open to all comers, he secured first prize on twenty nine occasions,

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having to be content with second place in 1875. In the light harrows he won the first prize twenty seven times, taking second prizes in 1877, 1878, and 1879.

In horse shoes he also took first prize twenty seven times, playing second fiddle in 1876, 1883, and 1884. He was a Local Preacher of "Christian Perfection". !

The Methodist Denominational School

Prior to 1874 there was no such thing as "free secular and compulsory" education in New Zealand. Rather, this important aspect of communal and national life was left very largely to the Churches to organise. Much encouragement was given by the Provincial Councils, but no effort was made to start schools.

Shortly after the Sunday School was opened in 1861, Mr Robert Atkinson arrived in Woodend with a burning desire to open a school. In Rangiora, schools first began in private cottages, but in Woodend the only suitable building to be found was a slab barn with a calico roof and an earth floor. This barn was lent by the late Mr Geo Gibbs, and the first school in Woodend began.

All children attending the school paid 1/- per week or 2/6 for three, for their tuition in the "three R's". About this time anyone owning a house with a chimney had to pay £1 per annum towards school expenses. In this way schools were established and chimneys regarded as luxuries.

The barn was soon found unsuitable for school purposes, and Mr Thomas Wilson began a movement for the erection of a building to serve a fourfold purpose, viz. to act as a day school, Sabbath School, place of Divine worship, and house for Mr Atkinson.

Mr Thomas Ayers gave a section, Mr Thomas Ball gave the bricks, timber was readily available in the bush, and the community supplied the labour. Thus the first school building in Woodend, a Methodist Denominational School, 24 feet by 12 feet, was erected. Later this building was enlarged by the addition of a lean-to 24 feet by 6, and did duty until the Methodist Church was built in 1864, when the third school (now serving as a Sunday School) was built.

As the school grew, it received grants from the Provincial Government. In addition, inspectors and gymnastic instructors were sent out to help along with, or keep an eye on, the work. So that closer supervision should be kept of these schools the Provincial Government instituted the system of School Committees, of which the first Chairman was Rev. James Buller who stood high in the esteem of Canterbury College for his learning.

From what can be gathered it seems that close supervision was at times needed. In the Trust Minutes of 1872, appears the following resolution:—

"That the School Master is requested to be stricter with the children, and see that they do not damage the property."

Of the curriculum, discipline and staffing of this school Mr H. Gillman has written in his School Diamond Jubilee Booklet. It needs no repeating. But a word must be added

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of those who worked to keep the school going. This is contained in a "Christian Observer" report of 1st November, 1870.

"On Tuesday, October 25th, a tea meeting in aid of the Wesleyan day school at Woodend, took place. Tables were provided and presided over by lady members of the Committee; and there was a numerous number of visitors. After tea, the Rev. R. S. Bunn, delivered a lecture on the "Backwoods of America" which was amusing and instructive. Votes of thanks were given to the chair, and Mrs Price who presided on the harmonium, and to the ladies who provided tea, and the lecturer."



Methodist Denominal School Pupils attending the Woodend School Diamond Jubilee 1934. Names from left to right: Mr W. H. Walton, Mr S Ayers, Mrs C. Ferryman and Mrs F. H. Corlett.

In 1874 the Methodist Denominational School was closed and the Board School opened, but let us not forget that these people stood for a religious education as well as scholastic attainment.

The Religious Life of Woodend Methodism

The opening of the first Methodist Church in Woodend was a red-letter day for Methodists, and well it might for the place was opened free of debt. But of that day only a few details remain. The Rev. James Buller who formed the Trust, conducted the opening services. His text was Psalm 84: 4. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee". In the evening Mr Garrick, a solicitor, conducted the worship, and preached about the apostle Paul.

Many sacred memories of great days for the Kingdom may have been recorded had someone but collected them. But they sleep with their owners and we are left with fragments gleaned from scattered sources. However, there seem to have been three times of great quickening in the work here. Of the first only the bare outlines are recorded by Mr Samuel Ayers as follows:—

"Soon after the Church was opened Rev. W. Lee and G. S. Harper, 1865, came out from England and a great revival broke out under their ministry. The church was filled nearly every night in the week with enquirers, and from that time became an important centre of influence for good".

The second might be called the "Great Revival", which occurred in 1881 during Rev. S. J. Garlick's ministry. After special meetings of preparation several ministers were asked to speak on different nights. Those taking part in the services marched up and down the village street carrying their banner and inviting people to attend the services. This happened every night for a week or so. The crowds gathered all right, and many found peace in Christ.

What were the results of this effort? Sixty people professed faith in Christ, 45 were attending young converts prayer meetings, band meetings were instituted, and cottage prayer meetings were begun "to employ the young converts to the advantage of themselves and others", and the Church membership of 37 was more than doubled.

There were other results also. At least one Local Preacher was found in the person of Mr John Howell, who unfortunately died a little later at the early age of 22. And, in 1882, largely through the efforts of the Bible and Mutual Improvement Class, a beautiful silver communion service consisting of two goblets, two plates, a jug and cabinet was "Presented to the Trustees of the Woodend Wesleyan Church, in Grateful Remembrance of the Special Services of 1881, by those who Benefitted, March 1882".

The presentation was made by Mr C. S. Howard, (grandfather of Sir Howard Kippenberger), then just leaving the Woodend School to take up his appointment at Richmond. He had not only been schoolmaster, but also a Local Preacher of fifteen

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years standing in the District. So, after he had made this presentation he himself was presented with a purse of sovereigns as a mark of appreciation and esteem.



COMMUNION SERVICE
The Communion Service presented to the Trustees of the Church commemorating the "Great Revival" of 1881.

The third quickening of the work took place in the time of the Rev. John Dellow, 1895. For some time the membership had been fluctuating between 35 and 40, when there was a sudden increase, and this Minute appears in the Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting dated October 11th, 1895:

"That this meeting wishes to place on record its heartfelt thanks to the Great Head of the Church, for the manifestation of His Power, as witnessed recently in this Circuit."

The following Quarter 56 members-in-full were recorded, 17 Catechumens, and 3 Communicants. And that season set a new level of membership in the Church which continued at or around that level until the 1920's.

The Class Meeting

Woodend has seen its great days of spiritual quickening in Revivals, but the work of spiritual consolidation has always been done in the "class meeting", by means of which Scriptural holiness has most quickly spread. It was to one of these meetings that Messrs. Ayers, Gibbs and Skevington tramped to Kaiapoi every week after the day's work. This was in 1859. But so far as I can ascertain the first class meetings were not held in Woodend until 1875.

In April of that year Rev. P. W. Fairclough was appointed second minister to the Rangiora Circuit to work the Woodend area.

By July of that year the first class had met. Its members were Eliza Stevens, Martha Farrar, Rebecca Ayers, Mary Wooding, Selina Norton, Mary Sandeison, M. J. Ranby and Mary Corrigan. The first men's class dates from 1877, but men's classes met prior to that date as the page is headed, "Both classes again united". Of men's classes prior to this date there is no record. At this time there were 24 on the class roll, three being Local Preachers.

The meetings were held at different times. Sometimes on a Monday, but usually on Tuesday evenings. In 1878 a meeting was dropped because it fell on Christmas Eve! Sometimes it clashed with a tea meeting at Rangiora, or with the Home Mission deputation. Sometimes it was stopped simply because it rained! The ministers were very zealous for class to be attended regularly, and it is interesting to note the resignations which came over the Rev. Luxford after pressing for class members to attend during harvest. "During the harvest months it is impossible to have class-meetings. People will not leave their work", he protests. In another place he more graciously says, "Harvest months . . . members unable to meet".

At this time it was also customary for the class leader to note in the Remarks column how the member was progressing. The notes are instructive. Such as the following occur. "Regular attendant. Good Christian". "Never meets. Once ran well". "Never meets, but good Christian". "Good Christian, regular". "True Christian, irregular". "Peculiar man". "Once bid fair".

A penny a week was the first contribution expected of Methodists towards the work of the Church, but in Woodend there seems to have been no fixed amount. Provision was also made for the "Yearly Collection; or, Worn-out Ministers' Fund". Perhaps in those days ministers were of tougher constitution and never wore out. Or perhaps they preferred to die in harness as did Revs. Wm. Ellis and Jno. Dellow in Woodend. However it be, this collection was never taken.

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After about twenty years functioning the class meeting went into a rapid decline. In Vol. 1, page 17 of the "New Zealand Methodist" we read that non-attendance at class was discussed in its bearing upon membership.

"Instead of insisting on the legal question means should be adopted to promote an appetite for this means of grace, and this would be best accomplished by seeking to raise the spiritual tone of the Churches. Therefore special services were to be arranged for in August if preparation meetings of Church workers were such as to warrant them".

This was just two years after the "Great Revival" of 1881! For a few years more these meetings continued to be held, but the last class met, so far as can be gathered from remaining records in December, 1890. Its place was taken in part by the Bible, and Mutual Improvement Class.

The Sunday School

While the Sunday School began with only six members, its later growth was rapid and its influence widespread. Apart from the Church of England Sunday School, and a desultory attempt by the Salvation Army in the 'eighties to begin Youth Work, there has been no other Sunday School in the village. Hence there has been but little competition in the matter.

The school started in 1861 under the leadership of the late Mr Thomas Wilson of Waikuku. With him on the staff were associated the late Mr Samuel Ayers, and the late Mr Robert Atkinson. Not until 1905 did Mr Wilson relinquish this work which was very dear to his heart. There are still a number of folk living who can well remember the old gentleman walking up and down the school floor during class time, his "fez" cap on his head, his ear trumpet in hand, using his years and prestige to help keep control.

Unfortunately no records exist before 1899, but we know that in his time the school reached its zenith. In that year there were 11 teachers on the staff. In 1901 there were 65 scholars and the average attendance was 52. In 1904 the roll number increased to 89 with an average attendance of 61, with 12 teachers on the staff. In addition to this there was a branch school at Waikuku with 22 on the roll and an average attendance of 16.

In 1906 Mr E. C. Pateman assumed the Superintendancy and continued in that office until 1931. Thus he completed 25 years as Superintendent and 53 as a Sunday School teacher. Having to retire through failing health, Mr Pateman was elected an honorary member of the staff. Truly Woodend was blessed in its first two" Superintendents!

In reading over the minutes of the Teachers meetings one cannot help gaining the impression that the broad lines of Sunday School development were well and truly laid. Each year a sum of money ranging from £3 to £7/10/- was set aside for "prizes and libraries". In this way an excellent Sunday School library of 1,000 volumes at least was built up. This was used considerably by the local scholars, and old volumes were exchanged with the Rangiora School and others. It is to be regretted that this practice has been dropped in recent years.

The first Sunday in every month was observed as Missionary Sunday when a special offering for Missions was taken. In later years the scholars ran a Missionary bazaar, and in this way helped the work along.

It was largely due to the Sunday School teachers that the Trust was prevailed upon to purchase the old Church vestry for £12 to extend the School. The School guaranteed half the cost.

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Twice in the history of the school have decision days been held. In May 1905 between 30 and 40 children "professed to decide for Christ", and in 1913 over 20 children returned decision cards to their teachers.

In the course of the years several innovations have been made. In 1911 it was decided to form the 1st Girls' Class into a Bible Class! In 1914, the Cradle Roll began, and birthday cards sent out to the children. And in November 1923, "It was decided to have holidays as had been the case in the past two or three years".

By 1917 decline had set in. In September the average attendance was returned as thirty. The library was forgotten so far as upkeep was concerned. And in 1929 the Waikuku School was abandoned.

Following Mr Pateman's retirement there has been a succession of Superintendents in the persons of Mr H. Robertshaw, Miss E. Burnet, and Mrs J. H. Hall. The present Superintendent is Mr A. Adams with Misses Ailsa Quinn and Adrienne Robinson assisting. The present roll now numbers 23 pupils, and the work is being well done by this willing band of workers.

Mention should also be made of the long service rendered by Mrs Geo. Little in the training of the children for Anniversaries. And Anniversaries recall picnics, and picnics the Tea meetings and ail-the other activities connected with Sunday School life which need catering for. A catering list of 1908 shows the scale on which things were done.

1 small ham	8 doz. cream horns	36 doz. assorted pastry
4 doz. queen cakes	3 doz. sponge cakes	10 sandwich loaves
4 doz. sultana buns	10 lb. butter	8 lb. currant cake
¼ lb. mustard	9 lb. sponge rolls	6 lb. sugar
12 lb. sponge sandwiches	2 doz. Scones	(F. Benjes, H. Hawkins, Mr Ballinger)

Let us pray that such catering will again be necessary for a Sunday School Tea Meeting!

The Mutual Improvement Society

On May 6th, 1881, there was formed the "Woodend Wesleyan Bible and Mutual Improvement Class", and records of its activities exist for four years. This Class was formed by Rev. S. J. Garlick, and its first officers were; President: Mr C. S. Howard, Secretary: Mr J. H. Salkeld, Treasurer: Mr E. C. Pateman.

The aim of the Class was set forth in its name, viz. to study the Bible, and to help improve one another spiritually, culturally, and socially. Thus the first hour was devoted to Bible study led by the minister, and the second hour and a half to the giving of papers, recitations, and readings together with criticisms of the rendering of them. Some of these criticisms make interesting reading today. The first Annual Report reads:—

"Mr Claud Pateman led the way with one (paper) on 'theatre going' which, though short, was very good. This shortness may be attributed to its being the first, still Bro. Pateman greatly improved as the one he read on 'Saul' was both better and longer. Mr John Howell wrote two, the one on 'Horse Racing' in which he gave several very satisfactory reasons why it should be stopped. The other on 'Erasmus' was very interesting. Mr. Alfred Catchpole wrote one on 'David'—very fair.

Mr J. H. Salkeld wrote one on 'Dreams', being greatly pulled to pieces."

The Minutes also record frank criticism of the minister. "On April 14th Rev. S. J. Garlick read and spoke at great length on evangelistic services, not very interesting".

However, that does not mean to say that this band of youngish people were not interested in evangelism. They were. It was largely through their efforts that the subscription list was opened for the purchase of the Sacramental Service commemorating the "Great Revival" of 1881. Further, these young folk gave every fourth meeting night to "Praise, Prayer, and Experience" at which it was not uncommon for at least a dozen to give their testimony of Christ's influence upon them.

These meetings also found practical expression in service. It conducted prayer meetings before the Sunday evening service, formed a Christian Workers' Society, held cottage prayer meetings, and conducted a Bible Class on Sunday afternoons. How many a minister would love such a group today!

Shortly after its inception this Class lost four of its leaders. Mr C. S. Howard removed to Christchurch, Rev. S. J. Garlick to the Hutt, Mr George went to Papanui, and Mr John Howell was called to higher service. When the influence of these men was withdrawn the movement lost much of its vitality but even when the records cease, it still had a membership of thirty.

Parts of His Ways – Woodend Methodist Church by W.A.Chambers

From a distance of over 50 years it is difficult to evaluate the results of such a Class. But tribute is paid to such work by the fact that in 1924 a somewhat similar group was begun by Mr Foote, and our present Bible Class has been pleased to adopt some of its ideas. Never since however, has the Young Peoples' work assumed such proportions.

And so To-day

The story thus unfolded is but a part of much more that could be related. And much more will never be told by mortal lips. Such as has been written is but part of His ways in the life of our Church. And we of the present, who at this time look back, cherish these ancient things in our hearts. We crave the same love for God as these had. But we look to the present task that needs attending to in Sunday School and Bible Class, in Choir and Guild and Trust, and in all these things seek to prove worthy stewards of every good gift which has been bestowed upon us.

A LIST OF MINISTERS AND THE TERM OF THEIR APPOINTMENTS.

P. W. Fairclough (1875)	A. Ashcroft (1906-08)
J. A. Luxford (1876-77)	J. H. Haslam (1909-12)
H. Ellis (1878-79) died in Woodend.	J. R. Clark (1913-16) F. Greenwood (1917)
S. J. Garlick (1880-82)	C. B. Jordon (1918-20)
L. Hudson (1883-85)	C. A. Foston (1921-22)
J. T. Pinfold (1886-88) resided at Amberley.	F. E. Foot (1923-24) home Missionary.
D. J. Murray (1889-90)	W.P. Cuming (1925-27)
C. H. Standage (1891-93)	J. R. Nelson (1928-30)
J. Dellow (1894-97) died in Woodend.	H. Ford (1931-35) W.B. Neal (1936-38)
T. A. Joughin (1901-05) Supply for few months.	J. H. Hall (1939-46) W. J. Enticott (1947)
T. N. Griffin (1898-1900)	W. A. Chambers (1948)
T. A. Joughin (1901-05)	

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