

## REMEMBER THE PRIMITIVE METHODISTS

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*A Paper to celebrate 150 years of Primitive Methodist ethos and influence in New Zealand. Adapted from Annual address to Wesley Historical Society (NZ) November 1994.*

How two men became a community of two hundred and twenty-two thousand souls is one of the romances of modern religious history.<sup>1</sup> The word romance is also used in connection with the Primitive Methodists in two book titles recording their history: *The Romance of Primitive Methodism* and *The Romance of Primitive Methodist Sunday Schools*.<sup>2</sup> The word used in their context means a "narrative in prose dealing with heroes and their deeds".<sup>3</sup> However, in reading history we sometimes apply the other meaning of the word "romance". We must take care that we do not accept "fanciful and exaggerated accounts"! Whichever the meaning, we have available remarkable stories of the process commenced by Hugh Bourne and William Clowes, the founding heroes of the Primitive Methodists. This Church functioned in England from 1807 until 1932: the years between Mow Cop Camp Meeting until full Union with Wesleyans in the United Kingdom in 1932. The New Zealand segment of the story is of the arrival of Primitive Methodist ordained missionary Robert Ward, from Norfolk to Taranaki in September 1844, then briefly the denominational history in New Zealand until the Union in 1913. Wesleyans were already by then in union with the Bible Christians and United Free New Zealand Connexions. This 1913 Union was consummated at Wellington to create the Methodist Church of New Zealand, which simultaneously broke the previous link with the Wesleyan Australasian Church.



Hugh Bourne 1773-1852

Hugh Bourne has been called the Moses or law-giver of what became the Primitive Methodist Movement and William Clowes became its evangelist. Both were Wesleyan

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<sup>1</sup> *The Evolution of Primitive Methodism* Robert F Wearmouth in Proceedings of Wesley Historical Society, (UK) Part 6, 1950 p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> *The Romance of Primitive Methodism* Joseph Ritson, Primitive Methodist Publishing House 1909. *The Romance of Our Sunday Schools* Samuel Henshaw, Morse Lecture 1910.

<sup>3</sup> *Macmillan Contemporary Dictionary* 1979

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

officials, one a Class leader and the other a local preacher. They were expelled because of "irregular" evangelism. Both Bourne and Clowes were firm believers in the theology of John Wesley and admirers of Wesley's character and labours. They were mighty in prayer and strong in faith. "They walked until they were footsore and lived on next to nothing ... they were missionaries to pagan England." They were not "sheep stealers" - never seeking to take their flock from Wesleyan Methodist or other churches.

John Petty in his Primitive Methodist history takes the genealogy of Hugh Bourne back to the arrival of the Normans into the area now Staffordshire.<sup>4</sup> By the early 18th century the Bournes were of humble stock. Hugh's father Joseph was a small farmer, wheelwright and timber dealer but reputed to have been a man of violent temper and some dissolute habits, although also believed to have been a zealous Churchman (i.e. member of the Church of England). Ellen, mother of Hugh, is described as "an estimable woman" whose third son Hugh, her fifth child, was born at Fordhays, Stratford-on-Trent in 1772. As a young adult Hugh removed to Bemersley near Norton-on-the-Moor where he joined the Methodist Society (Wesleyan) just three or four miles from Tunstall. His mother and brother James had also become Dissenters "of the Wesleyan persuasion". In 1800 Bourne began his own business buying oak timber at Dales Green, which is between Harriseahead and the great landmark outcrop called Mow Cop. Often in this area, he undertook some woodworking requirement at Stonetough Colliery.

The place named Mow Cop is known to have sometime been written as Mole Cop. A dictionary check shows one meaning of mole as in breakwater or pier, being from Latin word "moles" meaning "a mass". [The Hancock family of Stratford came to New Zealand from near Mow Cop and pronounced Mow to rhyme with cow.] Mow Cop is a rock mass and great rough craggy outcrop, running north and south between the counties of Staffordshire and Cheshire with part in both counties. Mow Cop is 1012 feet above sea level. Harriseahead, now a Primitive Methodist history and pilgrimage centre, is about half a mile east of the high point of Mow Cop and four miles from Tunstall and from Burslem. In the late 1700's this was the home of a rough people described as "of uncultured manners and of unlovely moral character". Hugh had been converted by his reading. By 1790 he had decided between Quakers and Methodists. He had converted one of his cousins by "gossiping the gospel" and gradually began preaching, with authority of Burslem Wesleyan Circuit. He was described as a leader and a law giver and he was to draft the Primitive Methodist Deeds. Although self-reliant, he was as a preacher shy, bashful, diffident, and afraid: at his first preaching he was unable to look at his audience, covering his face with his

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<sup>4</sup> *The History of Primitive Methodist Connexion*, from its Origin to Conference 1860. John Petty. New Revised, enlarged Edition: James Macpherson 1880.

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

left hand and peeping out between his fingers. Yet this man became a great evangelist of the Cross - a minister tramping up to 40 miles to fulfil engagements; he experienced weariness, fatigue and exhaustion but found spiritual and physical renewal in Christian fellowship and fervent evangelism.

The other Primitive Methodist pioneer and recognised co-founder, William Clowes, was born at Burslem in 1770 the son of Samuel and Ann. His mother was a daughter of Aaron Wedgwood, one of the first English makers of chinaware. The Clowes and Wedgwood families had held faithfully to their Church of England heritage. William became a strong physical man with mental powers to match. At ten



William Clowes 1780-1851

years of age he was working with his uncle Joshua Wedgwood in pottery manufacture. His early spiritual development was influenced by Nancy Wood who had held prayer meetings for children at Burslem. However, with no supporting friend or congregation there, William had slipped into a dissipated life of drinking, gambling and fighting.

When he completed his apprenticeship he took up work in a pottery at Hull. One night he was forced by the Press Gang onto a man o' war. His employer gained his release. A frightened William made a fast return to Tunstall where at an 1805 Prayer meeting he was convinced that "God would save him; that God was saving him and that God had saved him ... and it was so".

Clowes was so calm about this experience that persons present doubted his conversion. The change created was striking and apparent to all and enough to prove the genuine reformation of his life. A writer has described him as having been "potter, pugilist, dancer, singer, blasphemer, drunkard and refugee from the press-gang". This much-changed William met again in Wesleyan Class meeting under class leader James Steele. Steele was also, within a few years, to become a pillar of the Primitive Methodist Society.

Clowes became a Class Leader; still holding that office in Tunstall Circuit when he handed his class list to the minister for the formal June 1810 Quarterly Meeting and public "calling of the names". He realised that his own name as Class Leader was quite deliberately not read out. Next night at Leaders' meeting he asked why his Ticket was withheld and his name omitted as Class Leader. His name had already been removed from the preaching plan. These disciplines had been enforced because he had attended a Camp Meeting. To gain reinstatement his Circuit required his promise not to attend Camp Meetings again. He declared that he could not conscientiously make

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

such a promise. He was then told that he "was no longer with them [and that] the matter was settled": a virtual ex-communication from the Tunstall Wesleyan Society. William Clowes did nothing to cause a split in this Society although several of his class, who were especially attached to him, refused to be separated from him in spiritual fellowship and service. These Wesleyans began meeting in Joseph Smith's kitchen, which was already a licensed meeting house, but which Hugh Bourne had stipulated should not become the nucleus of a separated Society.

### CAMP MEETINGS

What were these Camp Meetings all about and why so feared by the Wesleyan Societies?

By 1807 stirring accounts of American Methodist Camp meetings were appearing in the English Methodist magazines. These meetings had commenced early in the 1800's and were so called from the people attending who encamped in fields or woods, "in tents generally pitched in the form of a crescent and in the centre an elevated stand for the preachers and around [were] rows of planks for the people to sit on while they heard the Word". They continued through the night with lamps hung in treetops and up to 4000 people listening.

Reverend Joshua Marsden,<sup>5</sup> a Wesleyan minister, reported a Nova Scotia Camp Meeting experience, to which he added "I should have observed that a female or two is generally left in each tent to prepare materials for dinner which is always cold meats, pies, tarts and tea - the use of ardent spirits being forbidden".

Marsden reported how the singing, praying and preaching continued. "During whatever part of the night you wake, the wilderness is vocal with praise" and farther that "not less than one hundred people were awakened and converted to God". He gave his personal testimony of the experience of preaching at a Camp Meeting: "I myself preached and exhorted and was carried along with a freedom and fullness both of emotion and language quite unusual; and yet I had no friendly view of Camp Meetings until I attended them". Another report makes it apparent that many of the American Camp Meeting speakers were preaching anti-slavery and it is considered likely that some were openly expressing republican views.

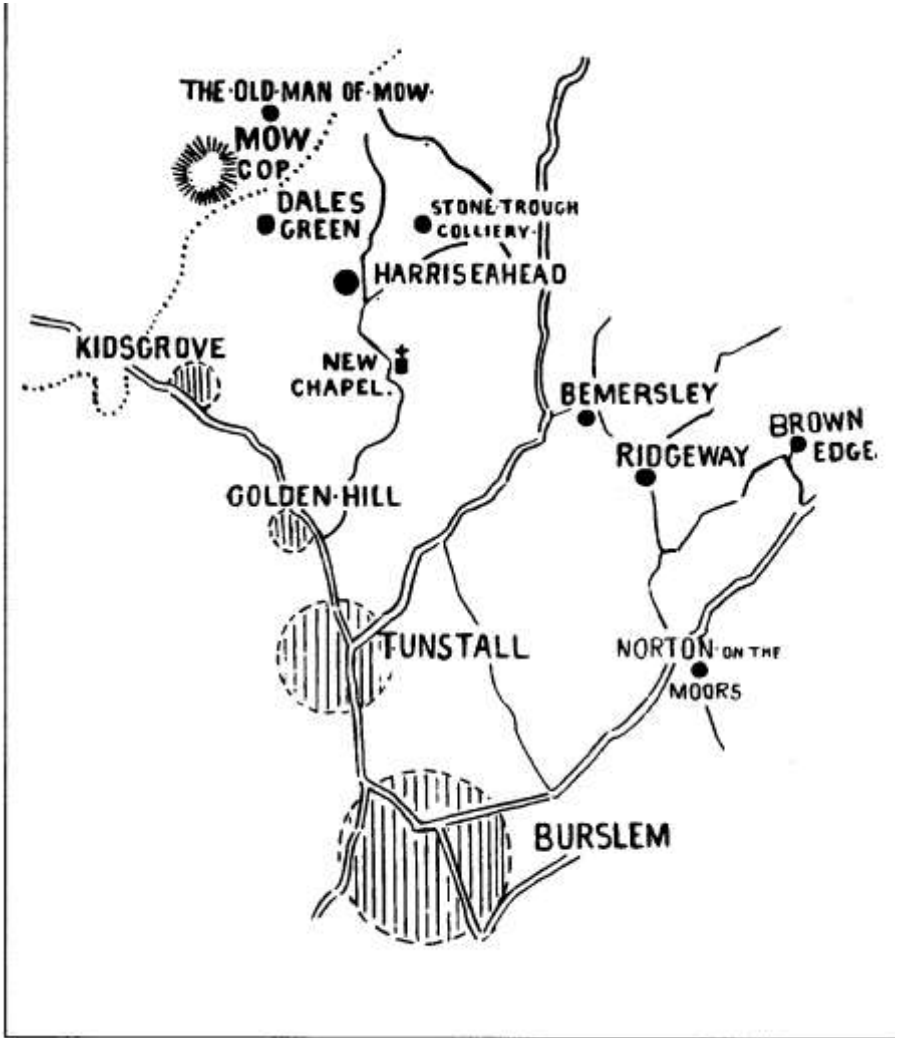
Lorenzo Dow an American preacher was in England in 1807. Clowes heard him preach at Burslem, this American described as "Crazy Dow, asthmatic, epileptic and stooped". William was obviously impressed for he walked nine miles next morning to hear Dow again - arriving at Sam for the first service. Bourne, who had heard Dow preach at Harriseahead a day earlier, was also impressed and planned for a Camp

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<sup>5</sup> In his *Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick etc* and given by Hugh Bourne in his *History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion*.

**Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong**

Meeting at Norton arranged to compete with the annual parish "revel" or celebration, on August 23. He then found that his Harriseahead Class had hoped for a camp meeting. Realising that the preacher appointed for the May 31 1807 service was an advocate for Camp Meetings they agreed that a Camp Meeting be held on the Cheshire side of Mow and in the field.



Map of Mow Cop and surrounding villages.

## **Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong**

John Petty and James Macpherson<sup>5</sup> tell the story of that day, further reduced and paraphrased for this paper.

They report this first Camp Meeting as "great and glorious", far exceeding the expectation of its friends, both as to number of attendants and the effects it produced. The day began unfavourably rainy. Despite this Clowes was at the hill about six a.m. and joined friends singing under a wall.

They prayed; one, Peter Bradbury preached; then a man from Macclesfield followed. As large crowds gathered Taylor of Tunstall suggested that a flag be made and hoisted as a guide to where the services were being held. Edward Anderson of Kilham Yorks unfurled a cloth flag and it became the centre point of attraction. Bourne addressed the crowd, giving his testimony and exhorting. Other preaching locations were manned by an un-named Irishman and Edward Anderson. At the height of the day there were four preaching places on the hill. The preaching ceasing about eight in the evening.

Bourne, as reported by Petty, concludes his description of Mow Cop that day saying that "it was a day spent in the active service of God; a Sabbath in which Jesus Christ made glad the hearts of his saints and sent his arrows to the hearts of sinners."

This first English camp meeting was to prove the power and usefulness of Bourne, Clowes and others. Their influence spread far and wide until another meeting was announced for Mow Cop in July and for Norton in August. Bourne wrote a tract of regulations for camp meetings, for the ground had to be licensed under the Toleration Act, and also decorum had to be assured by the sufficient supply of stands and seats with tents to "defend the people in inclement weather". They must have coals, candles, lanterns to light camp at night, provision to supply all distant comers during the Sabbath and were to defray expenses by public collections.

But many followers of John Wesley, that reluctant field preacher who became an advocate and pattern for outdoor preaching, were now the respectable preachers of Burslem and Macclesfield circuits. They issued handbills disclaiming all connection with the enterprise of Clowes and Bourne and their Camp Meetings. Bourne obtained permission of a freeholder to occupy land on Mow then walked to Lichfield, some 40 miles, to procure the licence. The Registrar refused to issue this unless there was a building on the preaching ground; so Bourne "erected a considerable wooden tabernacle" together with some tents and thus validated and obtained the licence.

He went also to Quarter Sessions at Stafford to procure a licence for himself as a Protestant Dissenting Minister. Magistrate Sparrow is said to have reported to the Home Secretary that 15 potters had sought licences as Methodist preachers. Bourne was licensed to go ahead with a Mow Cop meeting. Great numbers attended this July 19 1807 meeting on Mow Hill.

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

"The little cloud increases still  
Which first arose upon Mow Hill."

Shortly after, the Methodist Conference debated the subject and "seeing signs of irregularity and fanaticism" gave judgement that "even supposing such meetings to be allowed in America, they are highly improper in England, and likely to be productive of considerable mischief; and we disclaim all connection with them." This decision of the Methodist Conference was later described as the result of "a battle between order and ardour"! The Conference judgement caused many Methodist Societies to stand aloof from the Norton Camp Meeting.

However, the Bourne brothers Hugh and James, with William Clowes, continued holding Camp meetings during 1808 until, without prior notice, Hugh Bourne was expelled from the Methodist Society at Burslem.

A relative of Bourne, Joseph Slater, wanted preaching in his village of Standley. He arranged for a person "known as Mrs D. - who later fell from grace", to preach to this Society often members who were not members of any other church community. These ten were to become the first Primitive Methodist Class -officially dating from March 1810.

Joseph and Mary Slater  
Elizabeth Baker  
Susannah and Sarah Rowcroft  
Ralph and Mary Goodwin  
Samuel Simcox  
Thomas Redfern and  
Isaac Belford.

A Mrs Dunnell is also named. If this is "Mrs D.' - the preacheress", she had been used by the Tunstall superintendent as a counter-attraction to the Camp meeting but by the following March found the chapel closed also to her. Had she perhaps gained too much popularity in Tunstall? By this time the Wesleyan Conference was as much opposed to female preaching as to Camp meetings.

The exclusion of the lady caused great offence and Joseph Smith and James Steele invited her to the Smith "kitchen meetings" where Mrs Dunnell with James Crawfoot on Friday evenings occupied "the famous pulpit extemporised out of a chest of drawers". For some unknown reason neither Clowes nor Bourne "preached the kitchen" at this time. Joseph Smith finally intimated that they would preach there. From that kitchen meeting place their labours were extended to other localities. Clowes's friend Nixon, and his brother-in-law Woodnough, shared the cost and began to pay Clowes five shillings a week. This his wife accepted as "sufficient" and Clowes became an itinerant preacher. He and James Crawfoot worked together in mission around Warrington.

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

Crawfoot was one of those Methodists who had lived in Delamere Forest and who had been given the name Magic Methodists. Crawfoot was certainly a mystic. Both Bourne and Clowes revered him. The Bourne brothers, during one winter, had paid this "old man of the forest" ten shillings a week as a travelling evangelist. So he became the first "travelling"<sup>6</sup> preacher of the Primitive Methodist Connexion.

James Steel of Tunstall who for 12 years had been in charge of Wesleyan Methodist Sunday schools had been inviting preachers to the Smith kitchen class meeting. He too was required to cease work within his local Methodist Society. John Boden then lent a large room at Tunstall which had been a store for earthenware. In 1811 in this meeting place the first Primitive Methodist Sunday school began and services followed. Another place was found and four "Tunstall style" houses were formed into one space "sixteen yards long and eighteen yards wide and galleried". This is now believed to have been specifically for use as a school and for teaching, not as chapel. Of some interest is the report that by 1818 the Wesleyans of Tunstall cooperated with the Primitives and allowed the use of their chapel for Sunday School sermons. Hugh Bourne also had been active in Sunday Schools before Mow Cop. From as early as 1802 he had, at his own cost, been superintendent of a Sunday school at Harriseahead.

The first Primitive Methodist Class Meeting for children was commenced at Tunstall on Easter Sunday 1830 by Rev. J Hallam.

On February 13 1812 a meeting was held to make the first quarterly preaching Plan. Here the need of a name for the embryo society was acknowledged. Ritson records that "they naturally decided to express a fact by means of a name, by spelling the word primitive with a capital P as Primitive, so they headed the Plan - *A Plan of the Preachers in the Society of the Primitive Methodists*."<sup>7</sup> This first plan named 23 preachers with 34 preaching places in Staffordshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Lancashire. None of these was a locality where the Wesleyans also preached. So the Chapel deeds and legal documents prepared by Bourne were registered in the High Court of Chancery by the name Primitive Methodist, a Connexion which grew, often by the witness of the Travelling Women Preachers,<sup>8</sup> from Staffordshire into the Lower

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<sup>6</sup> Travelling preacher - men or women appointed to Stations and the subsequent record of their time in ministry as in "has travelled five years". Not a comment meaning that they moved about but identified those who had been local preachers within their Society now appointed by Conference and "pledged" to a Circuit.

<sup>7</sup> Primitive - John Petty defends the name "Primitive" - "let us seek to preserve the life and fervour of apostolic Christianity; to maintain plain, pointed and energetic preaching; ... to diffuse the savour of Jesus' name to the utmost possible extent. Thus shall we be in spirit and practice primitive Christians as well as Primitive Methodists." Petty & Macpherson p.51.

<sup>8</sup> Dr Dorothy Graham, Secretary W.H.S. (UK). *Chosen by God* - A List of the Female Travelling Preachers of Early Primitive Methodism W.H.S. Publishing Office, Cheshire 1989. In 1993 she addressed the World Methodist Historical Society and W.H.S. (UK) Conference at Cambridge on this subject under title *Chosen by God*.



## **Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong**

Trent Valley to York East Riding, north into Durham and south through Lincolnshire to Norfolk. The adherents were those "won from the world" and not out of the Wesleyan Methodist Societies. The Primitive Methodist Societies sought more democratic government and encouraged the service of women, a practice which had declined in Wesleyan Methodism. The women were used as itinerant preachers who seem to have moved almost daily from village to village.

The Wesleyans had vacillated about accepting women as preachers. Even John Wesley himself appears to have been both for and against women preachers. In 1780 he was not prepared to sanction women preachers, sending a message to Grimsby: "I desire Mr Peacock put a stop to the preaching of women in his Circuit. If it were suffered it would grow, and we know not where it would end". However, by 1786 he does allow Sarah Mallet authority to preach "by order of Mr Wesley and the Conference". It may be that it was his own authority and Conference's which he was protecting. In 1802 the Wesleyan Conference passed a resolution maintaining it was "contrary to Scripture and prudence that women should preach or exhort in public".

For a number of years the Primitive Methodist women were not under authority. They were not officially appointed to Stations until 1820. An Elizabeth Allen is known to have been a local preacher from age 21. She itinerated for ten years and was one of the open-air preaching women who served with great success.

The early years of the Primitive revival were remarkable also for women's freedom. Like the Quakers, the Primitive Methodists had no room for barriers of gender although their women preachers were told they must be "models of plainness in dress".

## **PRIMITIVE METHODISTS AS REFORMERS AND ADVOCATES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

How did actions of Primitive Methodists in England affect Australia and New Zealand?

The historian E P Thompson writes of the Ranter or Tent Methodists and other religious revivalists.<sup>9</sup> He uses the term "disequilibrium" and comments upon a perceived impermanence of the Wesleyan conversion experience. He postulates their rising graphs as misleading and judges them to be revivalist pulsations or oscillations between periods of hope and despair of the people. After 1795 the poor were again in another "valley of humiliation". Thompson believed that when hope revived the religious revivalism was set aside and in this sense saw the great Methodist recruitment of 1790-1830 to be the "chiliasm of despair" - despair grasping for the millenium, with any message that offered hope being acceptable to the people. He

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<sup>9</sup> *The Making of the English Working Class* E P Thompson  
Wesley Historical Society (NZ) Publication #63 Journal 1996

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

points to the new wave of Revival 1811-12 and political revival 1816-17. At this time the Primitives had "broken through" into Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. On Whitsunday 1816 more than 12,000 were "claimed" at a Camp Meeting at Nottingham Forest. The movement had now moved from the potteries to the mining districts of central England.

A woman, Sarah Kirkland, is credited with the opening of Nottingham and even farther afield into Lincolnshire.

William Cobbett, journalist, traveller, reformer and working class radical, who campaigned for social and parliamentary reform, attacked what he called "The Conclave of the Methodists": Jabez Bunting and others [who in 1820 were setting about the mission planning which was to send Samuel Leigh to New Zealand]. Cobbett claimed that these Wesleyans were training their sons at Kingswood School in Bristol to become excisemen and clerks and officers of various sorts while pious and disinterested local Wesleyan preachers were "kept down" by the "haughty obliarchy of Conference". In 1820 he claimed that Methodists all over the United Kingdom should hear the local preachers and, if the Wesleyan Conference shut them out of the chapels, they ought to hear them at their own houses, follow them into barns or under trees. Presumably, by this advice, Cobbett was openly commending the Camp Meetings and the growing Primitive Methodist movement. John Benton, who "using a Lorenzo Dow hymn book" when missioning Derbyshire villages, was mocked as a Ranter.<sup>10</sup>

Other men and women called "Ranters" preached and sang with fervour the "gospel of forgiveness". Their energy was extraordinary but squire and parson were quick to equate this energy with the Luddite and Swing movements of the 1820's and 1830's. They saw the Primitives working in the same "miserable zones of petty and archaic industries", among the unemployed, the "despairing and defeated" and they saw political activists.

Were any of the Primitive Methodists officially Luddites and Chartists? Luddites had originated among hosiers of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicester about 1811 when hand workers found themselves displaced by new machinery and had banded together to wreck the machines. Soon meetings of working men were also being held among woollen-cloth workers of Yorkshire and Lancashire. Savage penalties were applied in efforts to break up these groups, of which some Primitive Methodist preachers were perceived as leaders. They were certainly concerned with the conditions affecting their adherents who were mainly from the very poor. It is likely that the more vocal of the outdoor preachers were also leaders seeking redress for their

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<sup>10</sup> Ranter - meaning "to rave" or "to speak extravagantly or loudly". A loud and declamatory style.

## **Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong**

unemployed state. Luddite riots continued until about 1818. Primitive Methodists Clowes and Bourne, their work often done among "men of rebellious temper", did much to restrain lawless spirits and deepened their sense of social injustice. They counselled action yet without violence. They prayed and loved men into the Kingdom. Maldwyn Edwards, an historian, proposes the theory that the Methodist trade unionists and Chartists were active in the call for parliamentary reform and for some social justice initiatives but believed that few were the initiators.

Rather they were the devoted speakers and organisers who carried with them the confidence of their communities forged through their teaching, exhorting and preaching as Primitive Methodists.

Chartism was an English movement of the late 1830's which called for political reform. Chartists claimed the right of universal male suffrage, annual parliaments, vote by ballot, payment of members of parliament and abolition of the property qualification of members of parliament. Twenty-four Chartists were killed in a full-scale rising in November 1839.

However, both Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists had been preached a gospel religion which worked against violence and helped to develop moral qualities with sober aspirations. This moderation distinguished the labour movement in England from the more aggressive movements in Europe. Leslie Church agrees with Edwards and says that: "In the first half of the 19th Century the Methodist people, and, at one period, the Primitive Methodists in particular, fired by the new vision, struck hard at the causes of social evils, and the men who acted most decisively were men who had learned to speak and to pray in the little societies and class meetings founded by their fathers a generation before".<sup>11</sup>

There were several Chartist leaders; the vigorous Irishman Fergus Edward O'Connor bom in Cork and a Comishman William Lovett bom at Penzance in 1800 are two who are recorded as prominent leaders. The Cornish self-educated ropemaker was a leader of the National Union of Working Classes. Their structure was modelled on the plan of the Methodist Connexion. It was Lovett who in 1838 drafted and articulated the six points of the Charter and has been described as the greatest radical secretary of the working classes.

While held in Warwick gaol Lovett, with fellow prisoner John Collins, wrote Chartism - a New Organisation of the People. Collins, from a Wesleyan background, was a radical who fought for Museums to be open on Sundays, and brought about a reform which stopped the opening of letters by the Post Office. He had refused to accept service in the Militia. There is no proof that he was a member of either the Wesleyan or Primitive churches but he obviously had knowledge of their orderly

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<sup>11</sup> *More about the Early Methodist People* Leslie F Church Epworth Press 1949. Ch.5 p. 184.

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

organisational methods. There is no doubt that Primitive Methodists were working for the male franchise and for other action for social justice.

We do have some brief evidence of Hugh Bourne as a temperance reformer. At the 1827 Primitive Conference it was moved that it should be a duty of trustees of chapels to provide wine for the use of preachers. (Was this a pick-me-up after those tiring journeys on foot?) Delegates agreed and were strongly in favour. Bourne however made a long, powerful speech against this idea as outrageous. The debate was adjourned but at six o'clock next morning Conference resumed and Bourne sprang up with impassioned reasoning which won his case: an early Primitive Methodist decision which placed the denomination in the vanguard calling for Temperance reform.

One Chartist Primitive we know something about was John Skevington, believed to be a first cousin to John Skevington of the Wesleyan Mission in New Zealand. John the Primitive had as father Joseph a lace manufacturer, while the New Zealand-based John, who died in High Street Chapel Auckland in 1845, was son of Samuel a framework knitter. Both are recorded as having been boy preachers and our New Zealand John is reported to have been placed on a communion table at age 12 so that he might be seen when preaching.

The Chartist Skevington asserted that "a man could not be a Christian and not a Chartist, save through ignorance". This John Skevington fell out of favour with Hugh Bourne who called him a "speeching radical".

Another Primitive Methodist Chartist was Joseph Capper an 1807 Mow Cop convert who had soon become a local preacher. Maldwyn Edwards tells the story of this man.<sup>12</sup> For John Capper there was no holiness but social holiness. He was both an evangelist and a social reformer who in 1832 worked for the election of a Radical parliamentary candidate who in the event was beaten by Tory candidates. Capper's disgust with the electoral system made him ready to support the wider demands of the Chartists. He believed that deliverance was to come through a reform of the political process. The Chartist aims and claims seem moderate now when all, except one, have long been conceded by the British parliament. But in 1832 the claims had a subversive revolutionary ring and John Capper had bitter enemies. He preached to a large crowd at Tunstall market place. His text "To your tents, O Israel" was a rousing oration on the need to fight for desired liberties; shortly after there was a riot in Handley; although Capper had no sympathy for the "physical force" Chartists, he was gaoled for six months. When the case was reheard he was condemned to two years in Stafford gaol. Many Chartists were banished to Australia, while others served prison terms in

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<sup>12</sup> Maldwyn Edwards in *The Methodist Recorder* October 1950  
Wesley Historical Society (NZ) Publication #63 Journal 1996

England. Other similar events were to lead to the founding of Primitive Methodist presence and work in New Zealand.

## **THE FOUNDING OF THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CONNEXION IN NEW ZEALAND**

Despite the growth of Primitive Methodism in England it was some 20 years before the County of Norfolk was missioned. Among early converts was a youth of 15, Robert Ward.<sup>13</sup> One of the first results of his awakened heart was an awakened mind. His education had been limited but he had formed habits of reading as had Hugh and James Bourne and John Wesley before them. Robert Ward was to retain this habit all his life. The Primitive Methodist Connexion had, under the Bourne brothers, commenced a Book Room from which many tracts and a Primitive Methodist church newspaper were sent out carrying their own message to the people.

Sharing in prayer and class meetings with sympathetic persons in his Church Society had enhanced Robert Ward's natural gifts and he was soon placed on the preaching plan. By age 17 he was an "exhorter" and he was called to the ministry in 1835 when he was 19. From then until 1844 he was in the English work. He "travelled" four years always within the Primitive Methodist Norwich District for all his seven appointments until 1844.

In 1839 he married Emily Brundell. Her strong devotion to both her husband and the Kingdom of Heaven carried her willingly to New Zealand when the call to foreign missionary enterprise was heard and answered. At Conference 1844, the first which Ward had attended, a foreign mission was initiated. As his son wrote in an obituary tribute, "in the fervour of his ministry, he offered for the work". It was in Beverley, Yorkshire, that Primitive Methodist member Matthew Denton had urged that "missionary subjects be brought before our children; missionary addresses delivered to them; a Juvenile Missionary Association be formed and Juvenile Missionary meetings be held". James Gamer had already in 1843 preached missionary sermons to scholars at Preston and Churchtown, believed to be the first missionary-type sermons to Primitive Methodist Sunday School children. They provoked interest and secured gifts. (This was much the same method used by Wesleyan Samuel Leigh as he gathered gifts in England in 1819 for the Wesleyan Missionary Society New Zealand Mission. It was also the method used by our own Methodist Overseas Missionary Department in the 1920's and 1930's, to claim the interest and gifts of children in New Zealand Methodist Sunday Schools for the work among children in the Solomon Islands mission.)

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Ward was born Sporle Norfolk 1816 - died 1876 Wellington, New Zealand, buried Bolton Street Cemetery.

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

In England the suggestion was made that Sunday School teachers too should each raise the sum of one shilling during the year.<sup>14</sup>

It had already been decided to send Joseph Long and John Wilson to South Australia. They were booked to leave in June 1844. At an exciting missionary meeting at Old Cramlington Colliery in Northumberland William Harland had proposed sending a missionary to New Zealand.<sup>15</sup> The proposal was affirmed then and there. Immediately a collection was taken.

The resolution was "sent abroad" by the superintendent of North Shields Station and Thomas Hall of Cramlington Sunday School "took the heart of many teachers", so that very quickly, the appointee Robert Ward, his wife Emily and their three children, Robert, Martha and John were on the vessel Raymond. By May 3 1844 they were bound for New Zealand six weeks before Long and Wilson departed for South Australia. Robert Ward's New Zealand Mission was to be supported entirely by gifts gathered from Sunday School teachers in England. The South Australian Mission was to be regarded as a Sunday School Children's Mission.

The Rev. Robert Ward was the first Primitive Methodist missionary sent out south of the equator. The fourth child of Emily and Robert was born seven days out from Gravesend and named Elizabeth Raymond Ward. Seven more children were born in New Zealand. The Ward sons Harland and Garner were named for Primitive Methodist ministers in England and three sons became ordained ministers.<sup>16</sup> So Primitive Methodism in its official ministerial form came to New Zealand and Robert Ward appropriately offered his first Sunday service out of doors on September 1 1844: standing on a chair placed on Hautoki Bridge near Henui, New Plymouth, Taranaki. From that first day interest gained momentum as a small group of Bible Christians

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<sup>14</sup> The wage of an agricultural labourer in 1830 was 8 shillings a week.

<sup>15</sup> During 1994 the writer had correspondence with a local historian in Cramlington. Yvonne dark tells that Cramlington is now a "New Town" where there were small mining communities - West Cramlington, High Pit, Klondyke, Lamb Pit, Shank House, Nelson Village, and East Hartford. Much of this area was demolished in the early 1960s to make place for the "new town" and "much of the local history went with it". She and others are attempting to reclaim information of the past. The Primitive Methodist Sunday School - the teachers and their support of Robert Ward to New Zealand - is a link of much interest.

<sup>16</sup> The three Ward sons in ordained ministry were Charles, Josiah and Frederick. Charles (1846-1935) was President of the P.M. Conference 1907 and for some years Editor of the *N.Z. Primitive Methodist*. Josiah (1948-1926), although President of the P.M. Church in 1882, became a Wesleyan probationer in 1885. Frederick (1847-1934) resigned from Ministry. He became a journalist and editor of *Sydney Daily Times*. There is a large Ward family Memorial at Bolton Street Cemetery, Wellington. Ivan Ward, 5b Marina Grove, New Plymouth is the Ward family historian.

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

joined him in worship and evangelism. The Bible Christians had already been meeting in New Plymouth and had their own chapel house but no ordained minister.<sup>17</sup>

Very soon there was a Sunday School treat held at R.'s barn. Robert Ward's diary records "we treated them with buns and tea, they recited their pieces in the open air... the children were blessed and dismissed and a hundred people partook of a good tea". At a public meeting Mr Gledhill presided - "a gentleman who had exerted himself in Sunday school work at Halifax England". Ward very soon commenced a day school for Maori children - the only one in New Plymouth.



**First primitive Church; demolished  
1906.**

- *The Weekly Press.*

Two years after Ward's first service the Rev. Henry Green and his wife Ann arrived and served at New Plymouth for eight months. During this time Ward was able to test his directive to set up a Primitive Methodist Maori Mission. He visited Omata, Waiwakaiho, Hua, and other pah until he had a "circuit" of 11 pah within ten miles of Henui.

## THE WORK IN WELLINGTON

He was also able to visit Wellington during 1847. Here the visit was marked by interdenominational hospitality. Ward in his diary entries commented on the welcome he received from the Wesleyans, Watkin and Ironside. This proved the same in every settlement - the welcome from Primitive Methodist members, the lay-men and - women immigrant settlers who were there before the ordained churchman. At Wellington, one of these lay members was R Kibblewhite from Brinkworth Circuit (Wiltshire) who with A W Masters became a local preacher.

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<sup>17</sup> Bible Christians grew from the zeal of a Wesleyan layman, William O'Bryan, who began freelance preaching in North Devon ignoring the restraints of the Wesleyan Society. In 1815 he founded societies of people in many parts of Devon and Cornwall. They became known as "Bible Christians". They had a Conference by 1819 and a Bible Christian Missionary Society was formed in 1821. Rev. L R M Gilmore wrote the W.H.S. (NZ) Proceeding -Vol. 5 No. 3 1947 *The Bible Christian Church in New Zealand*. He reports the New Plymouth group beginning with the arrival of Bible Christian member and local preacher, Mr Henry Gilbert, on the *William Bryan* in March 1841. Wesleyan missionary Rev. Charles Creed invited Gilbert to conduct a service on the Sunday after Gilbert's arrival. A very small group began the Bible Christian cause and erected a meeting house on a site given by Mr Veale. Mr Richard Rundle was appointed to communicate with the Bible Christian Conference and ask for a Travelling Preacher for New Zealand. A Rev. Kent offered for New Zealand but the arrangement was cancelled after the New Plymouth Bible Christians had listened to Robert Ward's September 1844 preaching at Hautoki Bridge. The Bible Christian cause as a New Zealand Mission was not official until 1877. Henry Gilbert served the Primitive Methodist Church until his death in 1889.

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong



**The old Primitive Methodist Church,  
New Plymouth, demolished prior to 1907.**



**The Primitive Methodist Church,  
New Plymouth in 1907.**

Both later moved to the Wairarapa.

The work in Wellington having been assessed and approved by Ward, the Rev. Henry and Ann Goodwin Green were soon posted to the work there. Mrs Ann Green had been a travelling woman preacher of Primitive Methodism. She had done most of her "travelling" within the Brinkworth Circuit. In Wellington she commenced one of the first girls' schools.<sup>18</sup>

George MacMorran, writing of early Wellington schools, suggests that "the only girls' school approaching a secondary school in character appears to have been that of Mrs H Green, wife of the Primitive Methodist minister"<sup>19</sup> and in a chronological listing for 1847 records Mrs H Green with a High School for Young Ladies.

"Mrs Green conducted a school for girls, for a number of years, first in Ingestre Street and later in Sydney Street. She was a capable teacher with more than a local reputation. Senior girls of all denominations attended. Her services as a teacher were much appreciated by the community generally. She used to take her pupils by easy

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<sup>18</sup> *Young New Zealand*; a history of the early contact ... and the establishment of a national system of education for both races. Arthur Gordon Butchers. Dunedin, Coulls Somerville Wilkie Ltd, 1929.

<sup>19</sup> *Some schools and schoolmasters of early Wellington* with an account of the provision made for education in later times. George MacMorran Wellington, S. & W. Mackay, 1900.



Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

stages through Johnson's Dictionary, the words of which had to be spelt and the meanings given".

**WELLINGTON MISSION  
PRIMITIVE METHODIST PREACHER'S PLAN  
1855.**

*" Press all things; hold fast that which is good."*

Places and Times.	JULY.				AUGUST.				SEPTEMBER.					Preacher's Names.	
	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30		
Wellington.	11	1	1a	2	1	1	4	1	1c	1	7	1	5	1	1. Green
"	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1c	1	1	1	1	1	
" Tuesday.	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1r	1	1	1	1	1	1	2. Kibbicwise
River Hill	11	7	4	1a	7	2	7	4	7	5c	4	3	4	6	3. Green
" "	23	2	1	1	7	4	1	1r	4	5c	1	2	1	6	4. Clement
" Thursday	7		1		1		1		1		1		1		5. Taylor
Towai Flat.	5	1	0	5		1c	0	5	1	4c		1		7	6. Pilcher
" Thursday	7	1		1a		1		1r		1		1		1	7. Masters
Stokes' Valley.	11		7		4		1		2c		1		1		Exhorter on Trial.
" "	23		7		4		2		2c		4		7		8. Mitchell
" Wednesday.	7		1		1		1		1r		1		1		Prayer Leader.
Town Belt.	7	1		1		1		1	1r		1		1		9. Towner

- Acknowledgement to Mrs Lucy Murray

Ann Green continued the school in Sydney Street until 1853 or later. When for any reason her husband was unable to conduct the service on Sunday "she hesitated not to take the pulpit. The boys laughed on such occasions at what they considered the oddity of the proceedings, but there was no ground for carping at the quality of the sermon delivered" although, as Macmorran comments "I believe the boys felt chagrined at what they considered its inordinate length". Ann Goodwin Green may well have been the first woman, of any denomination, to preach in New Zealand.

In an early reference to the history of Wellington Primitive Methodist Station it is noted that in the early 1850's several Yorkshire families arrived and joined the Primitive Methodists. These Yorkshire families made James Mitchell's Polhill Gully home their meeting place. A weatherboard church had been built after the 1848 earthquake and lasted until 1858 when it was replaced by another which lasted another decade.

## **Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong**

James Mitchell was still an active Sunday School teacher when already 70 years of age. The same member was a Society door steward when more than 85 years old. The New Zealand Primitive Methodist newspaper, in the Mitchell obituary, describes the Sydney Street Church as "constructed of clay, supported by rough-hewn timber, a class of architecture known as 'slab and dab'." This primitive structure was wrecked by earthquake in 1848. Mitchell's 1908 obituary also tells a succinct story of pioneering near Wellington. The obituary writer comments that James was a fine illustration of "the spirit of old Simeon whose interest in life was in seeing the Kingdom of God prosper".

## **PRIMITIVE METHODIST WORK BEGINS IN AUCKLAND**

The Auckland story of the Primitive Methodists is similar to Wellington's in its beginnings. "Father" John Harris, a Primitive from Coopers Garden, London, wrote from Auckland asking Ward to come to Auckland where several Primitive Methodist laymen were already settled. John Harris may have been in New Zealand from as early as 1836 and is reputed to have worked for a Mission in the Bay of Islands. The church he had come from in Coopers Garden was a building well tucked away. Dissenters thought it best to keep their places of worship out of sight. Historian William Yarrow describes it as "the quaintest of chapels".<sup>20</sup> John Harris and Robert Ward may have already been known to each other for London had been within the Primitive Methodist Norfolk District. The Auckland Story is the subject of the article by Rev. Donald Phillipps in this Journal.

## **PREACHERS AND WOMEN PREACHERS**

The third Primitive Methodist appointment to New Zealand was of Rev. Charles Waters and his wife Ruth. They arrived in 1864. Both were well received and their labours much appreciated. They worked three years in Wellington then removed to Taranaki in 1868. Mrs Waters was an earnest, logical and instructive preacher and a real heroine of Christian work. She is reported as having preached thoughtful and heart-stirring discourses. Guy and Potter<sup>21</sup> do not deal in their 1893 history with the turmoil in New Plymouth during 1868 or may not have known about two interesting letters of that period. One is written by a Robert Ward and the other by Thomas Humphries. The context of these letters makes it clear that they were from Robert Ward Jnr and his brother-in-law, both already young married men. This correspondence must however have caused great disquiet for the Waterses and within the New Plymouth Primitive Methodist Station. Robert Ward's letter of March 16 1868 directed to the Sunday School superintendent at Queen Street New Plymouth

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<sup>20</sup> *The History of Primitive Methodism in London*. William Yarrow.

<sup>21</sup> Jubilee Memorial Volume, or *Fifty Years of Primitive Methodism in New Zealand*. James Guy and William S Potter P.M. Book Depot Wellington 1893

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

was about what he terms "a subject of unpleasantness", that of women preaching about which a decision was to be made at the next Quarterly meeting. He wrote: "If Mrs Waters is planned to preach in the Province I shall have to tender my resignation as member of the Chapel and Teacher in the Sunday school - the fact is I have never been in favour of it". Humphries wrote to the Quarterly Board that "in consequence of the Quarterly meeting having sanctioned Mrs Waters's preaching in this station (a course which I feel fully assured will do great harm to the cause here); with feelings of sorrow I have to resign various offices ... Class leader, Prayer leader, Secretary of Missionary Fund, secretary to the Mission Steward and Joint Superintendent and Treasurer of the Sabbath School... and also my membership".

We have not researched the New Plymouth Station minutes but can only guess at the distress such resignations would cause. We do know that Rev Robert Ward would have met one of the honoured women preachers of Primitive Methodism for she worked in East Anglia from the 1930's and would therefore almost certainly have been known to Ward. However, she may not have commended herself or other women preachers to his favour. Elizabeth Bultitude, born Norfolk 1809, converted 1826, became a Primitive Methodist member in 1829. By June 1832 she was appointed a travelling preacher to work in East Anglia. She had a round, rubicund face and wore a poke bonnet and offered odd ejaculatory prayers with fervent repetitions. She had a strange manner in regard to men, "not allowing any man to speak to her in chapel in her own pew - she would request him to go into the next seat". It may be that Robert Ward Jnr had not been brought up to accept or honour women preachers.

Mrs Waters in Auckland was one of the strong influences on the life of William S Potter who was to become the special Agent for the 1893 Church preparing for Celebration of 50 New Zealand years and co-author with James Guy of the book *Fifty Years of Primitive Methodism in New Zealand*. This book gives a most readable history of the Primitive Methodist Stations and is rich in warm tributes to both the ordained ministers and the lay officers and members, both men and women. William Smith Potter had come to New Zealand in 1858 as a boy and was active in the youth work at the Primitive Methodist Auckland I Station. He was converted in 1870 and as already a Primitive Methodist member took a trip to England in 1872 at age 20 years. On the homeward journey Potter made a greater commitment to serve God and the Church in any way he possibly could. The path to the fulfilment of the promise came when Mrs Waters asked him to speak in the Sunday School. He declined - whereupon Mrs Waters said "Oh if we cannot look to our young men to undertake the work and become our preachers, what are we to do?" Because of Mrs Waters's words, and by the influence of Rev Tinsley and Mr Goldie, the young William Potter was gradually led into other useful spheres in Auckland until 1876 when he answered the call to the ministry.

## **Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong**

During these years the Primitive Methodist Church was totally under authority of the United Kingdom Conference and was largely financed from there until 1870. During the decade 1861-1871 Auckland alone received over £1250 from England. In 1871 the first New Zealand District Meeting was held and thereafter from February 1 1873 met as the New Zealand Conference. At these Conferences the representation was one "travelling preacher" and two laymen from each Station. At the 1893 Conference two women were present, Mrs Kerr and Mrs Maynard, representing Auckland I and Auckland II Stations.

In July 1871 Rev. Charles Waters had published the first Connexional periodical for New Zealand. The New Zealand Primitive Methodist Messenger lived only five months.

Rev. and Mrs Waters were later appointed to Sydney where after some years he was in charge of the Connexional Bookroom there.

The Ward pattern of Primitive Methodist growth continued in other parts of New Zealand. Visits were made by Primitive ministers throughout New Zealand during the 1850's and 1860's as they tried to service the needs of Primitive Methodist settler adherents who lived in places where they had no access to worship within their own denomination.

## **EFFECTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN ENGLAND**

It was events of the 1870's in England which caused the entry to New Zealand of substantial numbers of English Primitive Methodists. Many were from families disenfranchised in England. They had lost their jobs because they were members of the Agricultural Workers' Unions or followers of the leader Joseph Arch.

In *The Farthest Promised Land*, Professor Rollo Arnold<sup>22</sup> recounts the story of Arch and the Revolt in the Field and in widely researched evidences from English census and passenger lists reports effects in New Zealand. Arnold writes that "the quiet work of schools, chapels, reading rooms and circulatory libraries had brought the day when newspaper reports and printed propaganda was a potent force in arousing and organising the village labourer". The growth of village non-conformity in itself was an expression of protest against the existing social order and had been quietly finding and training leaders for the Revolt by giving the labourers experience in mutual action as they claimed better wages and conditions of work. To Joseph Arch is attributed an ironic grace:

"O Heavenly Father bless us and keep us all alive  
There are ten of us for dinner and food for only five".

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<sup>22</sup> *The Farthest Promised Land*: English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s. Rollo Arnold Victoria University Press with Price Milburn Wellington 1981.

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

There were many hungry villagers in 1871-72. Whole villages were hungry. There were serious divisions in congregations.

In Laceby, Lincolnshire, a Wesleyan congregation of conflicting sympathies was torn apart when the farm labourer Revolt in the Field became active in their area. In 1874 two farming patriarchs of Laceby - Francis Sowerby and William Coates -joined 26 other landowners in a resolution that they would all dispense with any of their labourers who became members of the Agricultural Workers' Union. Both Sowerby and Coates were Wesleyan class leaders in Laceby circuit. At the same time Henry Tomlinson, a Laceby Sunday School teacher, had become secretary of Laceby's Labour League. Tomlinson's father John had worked for Sowerby for 40 years but was dismissed when he joined the union branch and with three others was never re-employed. Henry Tomlinson came to New Zealand in 1874 by the Geraldine Paget to Lyttelton.

In May 1874 John H White became a New Zealand Government local emigration agent and began recruiting in Laceby. He openly supported and expressed sympathy with the Union men. John White was a Lincolnshire man converted when aged 14 who in the 1880's was a local preacher in the Wesleyan Grimsby Circuit and a Sunday School Superintendent. His 1870's emigration activities had made him very unpopular with Lincolnshire farmers and some leading local Wesleyans. As a result he received no further appointments as a local preacher in any of the three largest chapels in Laceby Circuit. White never spoke for the Agricultural Union strike policy but made no secret that he had sympathy with their objectives.

So how does this Wesleyan get into a presentation about New Zealand and Primitive Methodism? Many of his recruits for New Zealand were Primitive Methodists and many were to settle in Canterbury and in Taranaki.<sup>23</sup>

One of the early Primitive church members who came to New Zealand in the 1870's was Michael Cook. He had been a foreman for several years on Francis Sowerby's farm. He was recruited at, and soon departing from, Laceby/Aylesby on the vessel Carisbrook Castle in 1874 for New Zealand. Here he was to settle at Waihi Bush near Geraldine, buying just one acre of land and soon freeholding it. He built himself a comfortable house and planted a vegetable garden. By April 1875 he was able to buy more acres, had a pig and sty, hens and a henhouse, had built a dairy and bought a cow. To earn cash he had done fencing and well digging but later entered into steady employment as a steam-engine driver at a sawmill earning wages - then eight or nine shillings a day. He had probably come from a wage of 18 shillings a week in England.

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<sup>23</sup> John H White with his wife and some of his family came to New Zealand in 1893. After some time in business in New Plymouth he accepted, in 1895, a call to work for the Wesleyan church in the (Taranaki) Coast Mission. (See W.H.S. Proceedings Vol 18, No 3 *John H White and The Coast Mission - The Story of a Pioneer Home Missionary* by H R Wright.)

## Remember the Primitive Methodists by Verva Mossong

He wrote home to the Union newspaper telling his pleasure that Primitive Methodists were conducting services in a local schoolroom and sometimes in his house. With an immigrant party leaving May 1875 on the vessel *Halcione* for Taranaki, to settle at Inglewood, came a Primitive Methodist lay preacher John Borman from Nettleton, with his wife Frances. Rollo Arnold records that John Borman and a George Mumby went from the New Plymouth immigration barracks to chapel on their first Sunday in Taranaki in September 1875. They were welcomed by name from the pulpit and Borman was engaged to undertake a lay preaching appointment out in the country that afternoon. Another Primitive Methodist was Francis Lacey with wife Sarah and six children. By 1900 Francis was a baker at Stratford serving on the Town Board and a trustee of the Primitive Methodist church. He too had first engaged himself in contracting and was able to buy a small farm. He was a local preacher for the Primitive church for over 30 years.

It is from the Stratford Station segment of Rev. W T Blight's record of the Primitive Methodist Church in New Zealand 1893-1912, the period following Guy and Potter's Fifty Years, and up to Union, that we know that at least one event celebrated Union in a particularly appropriate manner: "A service was held on the top of Mt. Egmont at which there were 12 persons present".<sup>24</sup> Stratford members, and perhaps some other Taranaki Primitive Methodists, were celebrating their heritage of meeting outdoors and also celebrating 50 years of their witness in New Zealand.

## THE UNION

In New Zealand it was the Primitive Conference representation of one minister and two laymen which was not acceptable to Wesleyans when the 1896 Union discussions were expected to lead to Union of all the four Methodist branches. Bible Christians and United Free Methodists joined in the 1896 Union with the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australasia. However, 15 years later, when in 1911 and 1912 further Union discussions were held with the Primitive Methodists, there was great harmony within the Joint Committee and the final vote was 1477 Primitive Methodist members saying "yes" with 260 against Union- while Wesleyans in 119 Circuits voted 1,358 for Union with only 11 votes against The official link of New Zealand Wesleyans as part of The Wesleyan Church of Australasia was severed by the 1913 final Union which now included the Primitive Methodists. The Methodist Church of New Zealand was formally incorporated and technically there were no more Wesleyans or Primitive

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<sup>24</sup> *Primitive Methodist Church in New Zealand 1893-1912*. Manuscript. W T Blight -re-typed by Frank Paine for Methodist Archive Christchurch in 1993 with copies available from P O Box 931, Christchurch. An important record of the Primitive Methodist Church from 1893, the year in which Revs Guy and Potter wrote their book, to the year 1913 in which the Primitive Methodists and Wesleyan Methodists united. Blight's material was drawn almost entirely from the monthly magazine *The Primitive Methodist*.

Methodists in New Zealand. In this new Church the Vice-President was to be a layman Both Conferences met in Wellington in February 1913. On Sunday February 13 a crowded Camp Meeting was held in the Basin Reserve and was addressed by both civic and religious leaders.

## Declaration of Union

Between *The Methodist Church of New Zealand*  
— and —  
*The Primitive Methodist Connexion in New Zealand* —

**Whereas** at the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of New Zealand held on the 14th day of February in the Dominion of New Zealand the said day of February one thousand nine hundred and thirteen it has been resolved and agreed that the Methodist Church of New Zealand unite with the Primitive Methodist Connexion as more fully hereinafter set forth and approved by the Annual Conference and General Assembly of the said Church and approved by the members of the said Primitive Methodist Connexion in New Zealand and duly consented to by the Annual Conference of the Primitive Methodist Connexion as printed copy whereof certified sheets were also published on the printed minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of New Zealand in the Dominion of New Zealand on the 14th day of February in the month of February one thousand nine hundred and thirteen. **And whereas** at the Annual Conference of the Primitive Methodist Connexion in New Zealand also held on the 14th day of February one thousand nine hundred and thirteen it has also been resolved and agreed that the Primitive Methodist Connexion in New Zealand unite with the Methodist Church of New Zealand upon the same and conditions set forth and embodied in and incorporated with the said Basis of Union.

**And whereas** it has been agreed by and between the said Churches that such Union as aforesaid shall take effect on and from the said 14th day of February one thousand nine hundred and thirteen. **And whereas** it is advisable that these purposes should be executed for the purpose of continuing the said Basis of Union as aforesaid. **Now therefore** it is hereby agreed and declared that the Methodist Church of New Zealand and the Primitive Methodist Connexion in New Zealand shall enter into one Christian Union as one Church under the name of 'The Methodist Church of New Zealand' with Amicable Links between Churches and equal rights upon the same and conditions set forth and embodied in and incorporated with the Basis of Union aforesaid. **And further** that the said Union shall take effect on and from the said 14th day of February one thousand nine hundred and thirteen.

**Signed** for and on behalf of the said Churches this 14th day of February one thousand nine hundred and thirteen.

**Signed** on behalf of the Methodist Church of New Zealand by the Reverend —  
Reverend Lewis Randall the Reverend Charles Percy Lewis Secretary —  
the Reverend William Henry the Reverend the Reverend William Walter Superintendent  
of the Methodist Home Missions and James Helen Parker and on behalf of the  
Primitive Methodist Connexion by the Reverend the Reverend Charles Henry Lake A. C. the Reverend  
the Reverend Charles Chapman David the Reverend the Reverend George Thomas both  
the Reverend and Charles Emmanuel Chalmers Secretary of the Primitive Methodist  
Home Missions —  
in the presence of

*Liverpool*  
W. J. Maasey  
H. Youngman  
W. Morley  
John Downhill  
40 NW 2nd Ave.  
St. Holland

*Samuel Massey*  
C. H. Hare  
Angus  
William Gillies  
J. P. H. H.  
Charles M. G. G.  
C. Howard  
A. H. H. H.  
W. E. Robinson

## THE PRIMITIVE ETHIC WOVEN INTO THE METHODIST CHURCH OF NEW ZEALAND

W Bardsley Brash mMethodism points out that the Primitive beginnings sprang from the claims of evangelism and the struggle between the evangelists and those in the Wesleyan Societies appointed to maintain orderly Circuits "The disturbances were not because of a decay of life but through an excess of it"<sup>25</sup>

Another Methodist historian J Munsey Turner in his essay Primitive Methodism from Mow Cop to Peake's 'Commentary', says that "Primitive Methodism produced the sober, hard-working and thrifty 'labour aristocrat' who would fight indeed for his place in the sun but who would be conciliator rather than a revolutionary; a Primitive Methodist would be opposed to a working class 'ne'er do well' as he would to the hardline Marxist".<sup>26</sup>

Our own Rev. W T Blight describes the Primitives as "a younger branch of Methodism, the same doctrine, but more democratic in polity and generally more in touch with the liberal and agressive spirit of the age".

The elements added to Methodism in New Zealand were the claims for evangelism and for social justice; the attitudes of the sober hard-working labour-aristocrat settler; people who were conciliators rather than revolutionaries but still claiming the rights of representation for both men and women in the church courts. They adopted a doctrine in touch with a liberal spirit suited to both their new country and new century.

"They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the Word with signs following".

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<sup>25</sup> *Methodism* W Bardsley Brash Methuen London 1928.

<sup>26</sup> *Primitive Methodism from Mow Cop to Peake s "Commentary "*. 1807-1932 John Munsey Turner. Essays to commemorate 175th Anniversary of beginnings of Primitive Methodism May 1982 W.H.S. Yorkshire Branch Occasional Paper No. 4 Leeds.