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## FOREWORD

The Contents page of this, the Wesley Historical Society's 1998 Journal, is evidence of the wide ranging scope of our continual overview of material that not only surfaces from the past but is topical at the present moment.

We feature a mind bending dissertation by a progressive thinker in our midst. Rev. Dr David Bell, who challenges readers to closely examine the inter-relationship of religion and science in a manner that may not as yet have been seriously attempted by most.

From Rev. Jack Penman come the experiences and philosophy of a retired presbyter during his years of training and subsequent ministry expressed in conjunction with his observations of Methodist culture.

A recent event, the 175th year Celebration at Kaeo, presented the opportunity to outline the events of the early years and render an account of the major Methodist figures of that period, painstakingly researched by Verna Mossong. What is, hopefully, the first article in a series about Methodist cemeteries covers the Hurdon Cemetery at Henui near New Plymouth. Continuation of the series hinges on the supply of sufficient material and its presentation in readable form.

We include references to the fine example of the type of diary kept in the 19th century which has come to light in the form of Eliza White's album recently returned to New Zealand. We are also glad to publish a review by Nancy P Carter of Allan Davidson's book about the life and work of the Tongan missionary, Semesi Nau.

May I record my thanks to all who submitted articles and photographs or assisted in other ways in the preparation of this Journal.

*Bernie Le Heron  
September 1998*

## CHANGING MAPS OF THE UNIVERSE

by Rev. Dr David Bell

*Rev. Dr David Bell (BA BD MTh PhD) is currently the Superintendent at East Coast Bays Methodist Parish. He has served at Ashhurst-Bunnythorpe-Pohangina and Marton, as well as at Timaru and Temuka over the last 18 years. He has taught mathematics and history at secondary and tertiary levels, and sees all education as being a drawing together of personality and moral character more than anything else. Sometimes a controversial figure in both Church and the wider community, Dr Bell holds deep convictions about the nature of universe and human experience of the Gospel. Realising that the Methodist Church has lost credibility even to its own constituency over the last decade, he actively campaigns for better ways of working, thinking, and co-operating.*



Rev. Dr. David Bell

May I begin by thanking the Wesley Historical Society for the opportunity to give tonight's presentation. There have been some fine lectures that added much to our understanding of the history of the Gospel and the Church in the South Pacific generally. Particularly, the history of missions, the interaction of cultures, the Treaty of Waitangi, and the social histories of the colonial period have been important to the Methodist Church in the last few decades.

I feel very honoured to have been asked, also a little surprised. Against such a backdrop of social history, my subject, "Geometers, Darwinists and Theologians: Changing Maps of the Universe in the Methodist Church", moves in a quite different direction. It is what is loosely called intellectual history. Don't let that put you off. It is not difficult. It is the history of an idea in mathematics, and how that idea has fared at the hands of the Church. It is a history that began to be written down some two and a half thousand years ago and continues today. Out of this, I hope to reveal some hidden histories within Methodism, and also draw a few small conclusions about the present state of the Church.

So, bearing that background in mind, here is the topic pared to the bone. The idea I want to talk about is parallel lines. A history of parallel lines does not sound very exciting. Yet, how people have understood parallel lines illustrates one of the most fundamental and powerful organising concepts of how we map the universe. It is a source of great fascination to me both personally and professionally.

Our map of the universe is in truth the quest to understand the real nature of the universe. How did it originate, how did life appear, and what is its purpose? These are fundamental questions, and if anything is sure, it is that the Book of Genesis is a fruitful starting point. But, alas for the fundamentalists, it is not the only starting point, nor is it the end point, the final word. Tonight I put to you the case for the geometers. For this I hope shall be made clear. If there is one thing that a proper study of parallel lines can do, it is force us to look at the world around us as if it mattered. And if it matters, then enchantment follows. Enchantment which sweeps you off your feet, opening the heart to a capacity for awe, reverence and imagination. Such as is evoked on looking at nature, whether as far as to the far horizon on a clear day, or into the unimaginable reaches of the sky at night. This is the neglected theology of Protestantism, with its peculiar world view of revelation. This is natural theology as revealed by geometry.

## PYTHAGORUS' GEOMETRY

The best place to begin is with the word geometry. The meaning of this word can be found by splitting it into its two components which mean earth and measurement. Geometry literally meant measuring the earth, and it was a branch of learning that developed in the ancient kingdoms of Babylon, Egypt and Greece. Almost everyone has heard of the name of Pythagorus, who lived around 600 BCE. The thermo on right angled triangles  $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$  is taught to virtually every school student. It is salutary to learn that about a thousand years before Pythagorus, around 1600 BCE, around the time Moses was given the Ten Commandments on Mt Sinai or Horeb, amid clouds and thunder and other portentous events, we find Pythagorean triangles in the literature, as it were. We find it in the literature upon which the Ten Commandments and associated laws were predicated. You will recall that a similar holiness code had been promulgated by Hammurabi, the Babylonian 'Lawgiver' a few hundred years before Moses. As the Code of Hammurabi makes clear, the Babylonians were well acquainted with Pythagorean triangles. Besides the basic (3,4,5) triplet, the Code gives long lists of other combinations, such as (5,12,13) including (65,72,97) and (119,120,169).<sup>1</sup> This is extraordinary computation, given that calculation really only became straightforward with the development of Indo-Arabic numerals in the eleventh century CE. The Jewish Scriptures speak of "plundering the Egyptians", but in the spread of mathematics the Egyptians plundered the Babylonians, while the Israelites discovered their God as a God in the desert. Already the one story of all, the universe, was dividing itself out in the various myths and paradigms.

To return to Pythagorus, he learnt the mysteries of triangles on visits to both Babylon and Egypt. Little is known about what he proved, probably not the famous theorem, but he saw something of his God in nature, and it was not quite the God of the desert.

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Robert Osserman, *Poetry Of The Universe, A Mathematical Exploration Of The Cosmos*, London, 1996, Phoenix, p. 4.

So powerful was his conviction that there is mysterious rationality in nature, and he was so filled with possibilities, that he was moved to declare "everything is number".

In the history of thought, intellectual awareness, insatiable curiosity that draws him on to the unknown, Pythagorus ranks as an Abraham. He is the great archetypal guide - he draws a picture of an enchanted universe, a universe where all is number, but number is mysterious, magical, musical, mystical, ethereal.

It was not the stuff of science and mathematics today. But it was to produce extraordinary hard data results as well. From Pythagorus the Greeks began to reason with mathematics in a way that made for exquisite measurement through fine reasoning. Eratosthenes produced a figure for the circumference of the earth. This was around 250 BCE. He measured it to be 250,000 stadia or 25,000 miles. The advanced technology to achieve this was twofold. (a) a simple measuring stick called agnomon; and (b) the forerunner of the modern surveyor, a bemetastistes, who was trained to walk in equal length paces. Simple technology, astonishing result. The modern value for the polar circumference of the earth is 24,819 miles. An error of some 200 miles. Not bad. Not only this, but the Greek geometers produced both theoretical and practical results, extraordinary maps of the universe.

By the time of Euclid, around 300 BCE, the most significant map of the universe was that of a central hidden fire, at the heart of the universe. This was surrounded by ten orbiting planets including the earth, the moon and the sun, along with the other five known planets of the time, and the general sphere of the stars. But that adds up to only nine. The other was a mysterious planet called the antikthon or 'counter-earth', always invisible, always hidden from view on the other side of the central fire, providing stability and balance to the earth's orbit. The distance from the earth to the moon and the sun had been measured, but the results were not as spectacular, for the simple reason the technology, the gnomon, was not sufficiently advanced.

## **EUCLID'S FIVE AXIOMS**

Euclid was the inheritor of an ever increasing treasure house of geometrical ideas. His genius was to organise the body of knowledge systematically, rigorously, setting down his postulates, stating his theorems, discovering the proofs thereof, refining them to produce mathematical elegance and beauty. Euclid's great work is a collection of thirteen books called the Elements. Euclid's Elements. This is a name and a book and a concept to be conjured with, on a par with the Bible. On a par with Plato's Republic, on a par with the greatest books of the Western canon, including Shakespeare. Euclid's Elements are perhaps even more deeply embedded in the Western consciousness, and indeed now in world consciousness, than the Bible. As Robert Osserman says in his delightful little book Poetry of the Universe, Euclid's work made a "deep impact on the psyche of the Western world" because it "gradually evolved into a basic

component of a standard education - a piece of intellectual equipment that every young student-was expected to wrestle with and internalise".<sup>2</sup>

Down twenty-three centuries of huge and profound change of every conceivable kind, it is surely significant that there has never been a single flaw exposed in the proofs. The methodology has no mistakes. And herein emerges one of those strange paradoxes of life lived within the context of the Christian Church. For nearly the first fifteen hundred years of its existence, the Church against all reason, embraced a competing cosmology. This rival picture of the universe had, at its centre, the earth. It was not even a spherical earth. And instead of a spherical earth, it had that strange medieval map of a huge flat plate undergirded by Hades and arched-over by the heavens. This is fitting pictures into the Biblical picture, for there is no doubt that what is implied in the Bible is closer to this than the best of the Greek ideas. Couple this with two other concepts, (a) the Biblical imagery of the eschaton or end-times, where a new heaven and a new earth would be created; and (b) the Augustinian development of original sin, and you have a map of the universe which is thoroughly anthropocentric, and from which there is no escape but by an external figure of salvation. This is familiar territory to us all.

In the meantime, we need to explore a little further another familiar map of the universe, the very congenial one based on Euclid's geometry. The Elements are grounded on five extremely basic hypotheses, or starting points, which seem to make a great deal of common sense. They are:

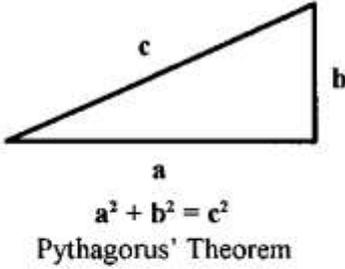
1. a straight line segment can be drawn joining any two points;
2. any straight line segment can be extended indefinitely in a straight line;
3. given any straight line segment, a circle can be drawn having the segment as radius and one point as centre;
4. all right angles are congruent;
5. if two lines are drawn which intersect a third in such a way that the sum of the inner angles on one side is less than two right angles, then the two lines must intersect each other on that side if extended far enough.

[For illustration please see overpage.]

An alternative way of describing the content of the fifth axiom is to say parallel lines do not intersect. And that is the essence of this lecture. The fifth axiom, in all its glory, has produced a bondage of the religious mind, dare I say it, without parallel.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6



Euclid: Axiom 5



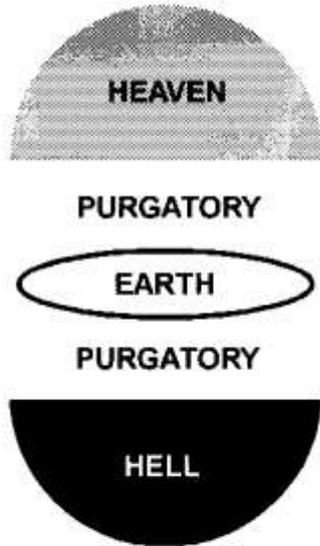
Euclid: Axiom 1



Euclid: Axiom 2



Euclid: Axiom 3



The Medieval Understanding of the "Universe"



Euclid: Axiom 4



The 19<sup>th</sup> century French scientist is so preoccupied with his diagram in the sand that he is oblivious to the attractions of the woman on the swing.

## BRENT'S GEOMETRY

It is a long way from ancient Greece to a meeting in Dunedin in March 1870. But the common element that binds them is Euclid's axioms. It was an ordinary meeting of the Otago Institute, some of the best scientific and theological minds in New Zealand at that time gathered to listen to a few papers and the presentations and to do the ordinary business of the Institute. Who could have foreseen the stormy controversy that was to arise that night, and the repercussions it would have on individuals, one in particular, and on institutions, in the Church, in the courts, and beyond? Who could have foreseen that discussion of the axioms would happen in one form or another for the next thirty-one years?

The unfortunate man, against whom the furies were unleashed that night, was the mathematics teacher at Otago Boys High School, Mr D Brent. Being keen on mathematics and science generally, Brent was a member of the Otago Institute, a branch of the New Zealand Institute, the colony's new governing scientific body. You may not realise how varied the scientific community was at that time, how busy it had to be, and what commitments they had. The colonial population was increasing rapidly, and there were land surveys urgently required, geological surveys particularly for mineral wealth, practical problems of farming and agriculture had to be solved, and new flora and fauna to be studied and classified, the pre-European history of Maori, economics anthropology, astronomy, literature, along with an enormous range of other subjects were within its agendas. There were over thirty affiliated branches of the Institute, producing hundreds of papers every year. On rare occasions, the discussions and debates of ordinary business went beyond botany and geology and matters scientific into the realm of theology. When the New Zealand Institute eventually became the Royal Society of New Zealand, its scope had narrowed considerably.<sup>3</sup>

However, Brent came unstuck when he stood before Otago Institute to deliver a short address on Euclidean geometry. He could not have realised the power of the fifth axiom not only in the clerical mind, but also the minds of laity in whom Euclid resonated deeply.

This is one of the hidden histories of Methodism and Presbyterianism in this country. Hidden not because of the shame, but hidden because of a mind-set. It is all to do with changing pictures of the universe, changing maps of the creation, and denial of the heart and denial of what faith is, what is constituted by faith, and what is constituted by the human mind.

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<sup>3</sup> David Bell, "The Impact Of Nineteenth Century Science And Biblical Criticism On Expressions Of Faith And Theology, With Especial Reference To The Anglican, Methodist And Presbyterian Churches Of New Zealand", Ph.D. Thesis, Dunedin, University of Otago, 1992, Table A, p. 264.

## THE MEETING OF THE OTAGO INSTITUTE

Let us eavesdrop on the conversation at that interesting meeting, which is fully minuted in the Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute, (hereafter TPNZI).<sup>4</sup>

As mentioned, the scientific talent of Otago was present, as they listened to the presentations and papers, did the ordinary business of a branch meeting, and debated their way through a full agenda. Many of these were active church-goers. The research of John Stenhouse has clearly shown the extensive links and interests between Institute members and various denominations.<sup>5</sup> There were also influential clerics present, including the Rev. Dr D M Stuart, the ever-alert minister of Knox Church.

Brent introduced his new methods of teaching geometry at Otago Boys High School. This method was not strictly Euclidean. For Brent was aware that in 1826 two European mathematicians had challenged the so called fifth axiom. They were Farkas Bolyai and Nicolai Lobachevski. Independently they arrived at the conclusion there was something odd about the fifth axiom. What if, they said, what if we replaced it with a different axiom, namely, what if you had the axiom saying you can draw more than one such line, or no such line?

If we replace the fifth axiom, do we arrive at an internally consistent, logically provable geometry? Stretching language to its analogical limits, will it still be Euclidean in its faithfulness although non-Euclidean in its content? The answer was yes.

I consider this to be perhaps the single most important change after the rediscovery that the earth moves around the sun. From this replacement of the fifth axiom the total picture we have of the universe would be forever changed. But not in 1826. In 1826 only a handful of people across Europe knew what Bolyai and Lobachevsky were proposing, and the question never arose as to the real-world applicability of this strange new geometry. By that I do mean the real world in which we live and move and have our being, and in which we live our faith, our hopes, our loves, and become children of the living God. No. No one at all thought this new geometry was connected with the real world.

Twenty or so years on, further thought was given to Euclid's axioms. This time the mathematician Georg Bernhard Riemann challenged the second axiom. This axiom is the one that says that a straight line is infinite in one or two directions. Suppose, said Riemann that a straight line cannot be extended infinitely, in either direction. What

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<sup>4</sup> *TPNZI*, Vol. 3, p. 59

<sup>5</sup> 'John Stenhouse, 'The Battle Between Science and Religion Over Evolution in Nineteenth Century New Zealand'', Ph.D. thesis, Palmerston North, Massey University, 1984.

happens to the geometry then? Will it be internally consistent? Again the answer was yes.

And again this did not impinge at all on the scientific world let alone the religious world. It was not a real-world issue. Just the silly, idle speculations of a few elitists. The world stage was not yet set for the emotional, economic, scientific, technological impact of these idle flights of fancy. The world of pure mathematics has always disdained real-world applicability. But somehow the Pythagorean truth will out - "all is number". Between these two challenges to the second and fifth of Euclid's axioms, like a pincer movement the march of an army of ideas now began. So that in colonial New Zealand, as far removed from the cultured, rarefied European and British centres of science and theology as is possible to imagine, Mr Brent the mathematics master, said to the learned minds of the Otago Institute there are certain objections to Euclid. The atmosphere of the Institute meeting undoubtedly chilled. He went on to outline his objections to Euclid's assumptions or axioms. Brent stated his objection to the fifth axiom, noting that Euclid's treatment of parallel lines was in effect idiosyncratic, that is, not in keeping with the first four.

## THE REACTION

Brent's little paper was read to deaf, uncomprehending ears. He was not able to convince any but two members of the Institute that there was any substance to this new geometry. Mr Hawthorne, another teacher at the school, soon to be the headmaster, argued that the abandonment of Euclid would be introducing too much of the 'sensuous' method into the educational system. It was, thundered Hawthorne, "calculated to produce very serious injury". There was little help for Brent. Gillies and Eccles alone took his part, but others took umbrage, including the founder of Dunedin's colony, William Cargill, as well as the Rev. Dr Stuart. Stuart said, "An acute reasoner might find flaws in Euclid's definitions, but the results were marvellous, and the fact that all our geometry had grown out of Euclid's plane geometry was one reason why we should revere him." What Stuart meant by 'revere' was that Euclid's geometry fitted the mental picture of the universe he had constructed. An infinite universe created by an infinite God, that went on unending. Hawthorne meantime had declared that any tampering with the axioms involved 'mental impossibilities' and he deplored the abandonment of Euclid.

Well, there we might have expected the matter to rest. But so strong was the grip of Euclidean geometry in the minds of Brent's enemies of the evening, that later on questions about his suitability as a teacher began to arise in the community. For being aware and for communicating his awareness of what had now flared into fiery debate of significance among the mathematical community on both sides of the Atlantic, this poor Pacific Island emigre found himself the subject of ridicule. It was for him no laughing matter. By 1873 the Provincial Council of Otago conducted an enquiry into the standards of teaching in mathematics and classics at Otago Boys High School.

Hawthorne was now Rector. It had been brought to his attention that there was a general impression in the community that the mathematics department was in an unsatisfactory state. Hawthorne and Brent were examined at the Bar of the Council. Meantime Hawthorne had done his own investigation and found that Brent was an able mathematician but had, in Hawthorne's opinion, badly neglected the study of Euclid. In a history of Otago Boys it was suggested that Mr Brent had a long and happy career - the darker years are conveniently glossed over. Suffice it to say, he survived to teach non-Euclidean geometries decades and decades before this became more acceptable in the New Zealand education system.

The extent of the ill-feeling at that meeting cannot be overstated. For not only Euclid, but the Bible itself had been under sustained and relentless pressure in Dunedin at that time, brought about by the subject of evolution. A R Fitchett, the most able Wesleyan minister of the time, took a leading role in promoting evolution and ipso facto the inadequacies of the Biblical maps of the universe. It was in his second spell in Dunedin 1873-6 that he finally left an unsympathetic Methodist Church, publicly on the grounds that he could no longer tolerate further shifts in stationing, but equally smarting under the attacks of those who wished to journey in faith only by out-dated maps.<sup>6</sup>

Evolution was in the air. Newspapers in New Zealand, just as Australia, America, Britain, Europe, were filled with correspondence all to do with a changing picture of the universe. Adam and Eve as historic characters were on the way out. They had not yet arrived as mythological representative archetypal figures. This was a transition that the Victorian religious mind was unable to cope with easily. But the history of the evolution controversies have clouded the real significance of the history of the new geometries. Not only that but the great pioneering work in medicine and psychology had also been over-shadowed by the Darwinian controversies.

When you think about it, the vast majority of Victorian hymns and liturgies were based upon a Euclidean universe. That is a universe which goes on forever. Is infinite like Euclid's straight line. And that is how virtually everyone continues today to see it. But it is wrong, it is a false picture and it generates an inadequate image. Just as evolution displaces a literal Adam and Eve, but they literally do not go away but transform as the archetypes, Eve - mother of all living, Adam - the Hebrew word for man, and Adamah - the Hebraic feminine of Adam, meaning the good mother earth, now the mythic picture is powerful as a myth, not as scientific account. Just so with Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometries. The universe does not go on forever, in both directions. It has a beginning. It will have an end. It is, in scientific, cosmological terms, a particularity.

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<sup>6</sup> David Bell, Ph.D. Thesis, chapter 4.

In picture form, the universe is like a Moebius twist - a curved space time continuum. The psychology of seeing produces an image out there -but that act of seeing is, in truth, entirely the creation of the visual cortex at the back of the brain. The New Zealand Institute debates on the whole range of Darwinism, including psychology, are rich veins in the history of science. And one of the most delightful vignettes is on the subject of 'Coloured Hearing', presented to the Wellington branch in August 1907. Coloured hearing implies the unique ability for certain sounds to evoke certain colour responses. It has its origin in Pythagorean mysteries.

But our subject is parallel lines, and what was begun in Dunedin did not end either scientifically, or in the political sense, or indeed as far as the Church was concerned for a long time to come. Brent's foray was followed by papers in full over the next two decades. When I say paper, I mean wonderful, rich, detailed papers. Leading figures in the Institute engaged in a bitter polemic over the nature of space, and human perception of it.

Although not quite part of this debate, the Anglican clergyman Rev. Robert Kidd was perhaps the most able logician and philosopher of science in New Zealand at that time. In 1874 he produced three substantial papers on science, probability and proofs by induction, almost certainly drawing on his background friendship with the Rev. William Whewell and Bishop Whately, two of the leading logicians in England.<sup>7</sup> Kidd had arrived in Auckland in 1863 and had probably not found it so easy to gain a job as a philosopher of science, so he tutored at the Anglican and Methodist schools. He started his own school, was the first headmaster of Auckland College and Grammar School and eventually was appointed registrar of the University College of Auckland. I particularly mention Kidd to correct some poor history in our Methodist folklore. Principal Eric Hames, drawing on the reflections of one of his predecessors, William Laws, wrote of theological training at that time that it was "beneath contempt".<sup>8</sup> Hames goes on to write that there was a visiting tutor to help with "secular subjects". It was better than nothing, is the judgement of Laws and Hames.

## FRANKLAND'S CONTRIBUTION

The 'secular subjects' are of course mathematical and scientific, the essence of natural theology. Such is the state of the religious mind bound in particular images that it cannot conceive there may be more to the life of the soul than meets the eye. Consider this. In 1876 F W Frankland, a commercial actuary who published in the London Mathematical Society and the American Mathematical Society took up where Brent had left off. Frankland was in no doubt about the significance of the fifth axiom.

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<sup>7</sup> *TPNZI*, Vol. 7.

<sup>8</sup> *E W Hames, From Grafton To Three Kings To Paerata, New Zealand, Wesley Historical Society, 1982, p. 9*

Among the most remarkable speculations of the present century is the speculation that the axioms of geometry may be only approximately true, and that the actual properties of space may be somewhat different from those which we are in the habit of ascribing to it. It was Lobatchewsky (sic) who first worked out the conception of a space in which some of the ordinary laws of geometry should no longer hold good. Among the axioms which lie at the foundation of the Euclidean scheme he assumed all to be true except the one which relates to parallel lines.<sup>9</sup>

Now we come I think to what is a most remarkable observation. Frankland was able to see the physical implications of a map of the universe if the fifth axiom was altered. He concluded that the universe could well be of finite extent. Along with the English mathematician W K Clifford, he concluded that he found "relief from the dreary infinities of homaloidal space". In other words, the universe does not stretch out to infinities in either direction. It is not an accurate map nor a pleasant one, to assume like Euclid, that it did. In papers which followed, Frankland went on to elaborate a theory of mind and matter and the universe which was predicated upon that wonderful Pythagorean mystery 'all is number'. This theory of the mind which holds that individual perception maps the universe, and how it draws its maps, was based on speculation about the nature of human consciousness and its relation to the geometry of the universe. He called it "Mind-Stuff."<sup>10</sup> Its equivalent today is the strong anthropic principle, which states that there is a very strong correlation between the map-makers and the territory. That is, how we picture the universe and the way the universe is, must eventually converge. But in Frankland's time the best we can say is that in New Zealand, as indeed in Australia, Great Britain, Canada, and America, the ground was being laid for entirely new perceptual maps. An evolving universe. An evolving God. The subject of how God evolves was prefigured by Samuel Butler in the upper reaches of the Rangitata River, at Erewhon Station, before Bergson, before de Chardin. The map of physics and the map of how we measure the earth, the geometers map, was changing. And the changes were gathering momentum.

This is measured not by acceptance alone, but also by reaction on the part of the uninformed. This reaction was as swift and furious as it had been for Brent. The debate was conducted throughout the branch Institutes for eight years until Frankland could write a vindication. Typical of his opponents was William Skey, an analyst with Geological Survey. Skey called it an "illegitimate" development. Far from wanting a finite universe Skey considered it very appealing to contemplate an infinite one. The finite universe was "stultifying".

The question of how minds appear in a finite universe was the basic question, and how minds appear in other minds. Evolution was pressing in one direction. Geometry in another. The Bible and the religious traditions were in retreat. But Euclid had secular

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<sup>9</sup> *TPNZI*, Vol. 9, p. 272.

<sup>10</sup> *TPNZI*, Vol. 12.

as well as Church defenders. G Hogben who was to be appointed Inspector General of Schools, a Fellow of the Royal Geological Society, took up the cudgels against Frankland. He could not countenance a finite universe, such a phrase was meaningless.<sup>11</sup> He said that "One can only gaze in wonder at those superior human beings who roamed at large in space of the (n+1)th degree, while we poor mortals had to be content with three dimensions." It did not occur to Hogben that at the very least he also lived in a dimension of time. And so the members of the Institute and the ordinary members of society engaged in debate about the nature of the universe. The same troubling questions always crop up: how, when, why was it created? What is the purpose of life in it?

It is perhaps the last contribution to the New Zealand Institute on this topic that has an element of surprise in it. This paper was "Some Observations on the Fourth Dimension", read to the Hawkes Bay branch in 1901, by a clergyman, the Rev. Herbert W Williams. Here the worm turned full circle, back to the Euclidean axioms. Williams' theological curiosity had been aroused by the question whether two bodies could occupy the same space if the universe was more than three dimensional.

I am so delighted by it. This is the old problem of the medieval schoolmen, so taunted by the humanists and the Reformers. You will recall that Erasmus and Luther could not countenance how minds as acute as Thomas Aquinas could debate how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. It was a taunt and a rebuke. But Aquinas and the schoolmen were really debating the same issue that now worried the Rev. Williams. What is possible in multi-dimensional space-time. Hogben's three dimensional universe was too small for Williams, but he did not have answers.

## **EINSTEIN**

In a curious way, the Rev. Williams was right to have the last word on the Euclidean axioms and the subject of parallel lines. The debate had apparently run its course. The clergy no longer wrote about and debated scientific matters to anywhere near the same extent thirty years previous. The laity likewise appear to have run out of steam. Yet around those years at the turn of the century a young German working in the Swiss patent office began a remarkable investigation. He began a thought experiment that started while riding on a tram to work one day. He began to think what it would be like to ride on a beam of light. What would the world, the universe, look like to ride upon light itself? Thus was the origin of Albert Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity. But it would be some years before he found the mathematics, the geometry upon which the physics could rest. It was the non-Euclidean geometry of Bolyai, Lobachevsky and Reimann: the second and the fifth axiom of Euclid changed.

Chance favours the prepared mind. Even as far away as Brent in the Dunedin of 1870, the soil of the universal expression of mind was being tilled. But confirmation of

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<sup>11</sup> *TPNZI*, Vol. 19, p. 510.

Relativity had to wait until 1919 for experimental verification. For in that year a very rare grazing occultation of the sun, the planet Mercury and a particular star occurred - and only then was technology sufficiently advanced to make the measurement. Geometers measure the earth, indeed.

But the power of Euclid on the western psyche was no longer acknowledged implicitly or explicitly by the Methodist Church. Nor was the significance of non-Euclidean geometry. As far as I have been able to ascertain, there were no debates, no dialogues on the new map of the universe. The Methodist and Presbyterian Churches together seemed no longer to use or have a love for natural theology. As the new physics emerged, particularly relativity and quantum physics in the late twenties, so the chill influence of Barth and revelational theology began to hold sway. Revealed truth may be congenial to the Church, but it is not an adequate tool for mapping the lines of the universe.

Even before then, the vanquishing of Euclid as a common universe of discourse, a reliance on helpful reasoning, had become unimportant. I suspect it happened because of the increasing reliance on the Theological Colleges to train clergy, at the expense of its most powerful thinkers who were in life situations in Circuits.

## **FAIRCLOUGH**

For example, just to backtrack in time briefly, A R Fitchett handed on his great love of science in general, and biology in particular, to Paul W Fairclough, who was to become a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. He did this because he trained Fairclough directly, not only tutoring him "in the initial exercises in Greek and Latin" but also "a good deal of algebra to cubic equations and the first six books of Euclid."<sup>12</sup> When Fitchett and Habens examined their candidate for Newington College in Sydney they found he was very good at parsing, provided accurate literal translations, had mastered Euclidean geometry but was inclined to make elementary mathematical mistakes.

When he was a senior minister Fairclough communicated the same love of science to younger ministers, including J T Pinfold. He lent Pinfold a book by which "light might be obtained on the first chapter of Genesis". This was achieved, and was a worthy aim, but as Pinfold observed, Fairclough also drew out from him "a great love for science", particularly geology.<sup>13</sup> But Methodists and Presbyterian clergy who were inspired by the natural world, the universe and its maps, found the maps of their hearts circumscribed by the Church, at the turn of the century. The Christian Outlook of 16 March 1895 declared that it was a waste of time to keep some students "toiling away at mathematics". The writer's opinion was that it would be of no use to them whatsoever in their labours of ministry. This is another of the hidden histories of our

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<sup>12</sup> *Ne|v Zealand Wesleyan*, 30 November 1872.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 12 May 1917.

Church. When the 'labours of ministry' are conceived in narrow, ecclesial terms, then the fruits of ministry are likely to be small and stunted. For it was never intended to make mathematicians or geometers of every minister, but it was intended to demonstrate how they might reason for themselves.

A perusal of member lists of the New Zealand Institute shows that the proportion of clergy steadily declined from its inception. A perusal of the scientific interests of Methodist clergy similarly reveals a decreasing number with any scientific training. The universe of discourse for the Methodist Church of New Zealand was more and more confined to its own peculiar ecclesiology, and less and less embraced an enchanted universe and enchanting human beings. Over the last century Methodism in New Zealand had become a Church of intellectual mediocrity, and held this up as a pragmatic virtue. It didn't even offer healthy, pagan delights of the eye!

There are many contentious issues that this Conference must embrace in searching debate: issues of Biblical interpretation, traditions, the relation of the Church to human rights legislation, issues relating to power and authority. I suppose it could all be summed up by saying that there is in the Methodist Church a repository of memories, a treasure-house of old maps of the universe. It is to our benefit and enrichment to pull them out and remember how the universe was when lines could be infinitely parallel.

Having done that, the best map to navigate by is the most accurate and up-to-date one. If the Church is only a repository of ancient maps of the universe, then in truth it is a museum, and we must expect only the occasional visitor and a few enthusiastic custodians.

But I do not believe that past mediocrity and reliance on old maps necessarily dooms us to a dismal future. Rather, some have confused the value and function of old maps, and tried to make them serve as contemporary.

## **HOW THE UNIVERSE IS**

May I conclude by charting how I feel in my heart of hearts how the universe is, and God in it. The universe is clearly evolving, and what we can know of God evolves with us. From the big-bang fifteen billion years ago, to the wonders of the non-Euclidean space-time continuum, to the collapse of the wave function into quantum particularity, to the mysteries of biological life and consciousness, we live in a universe in which the ordinary oscillates into the extraordinary, into the miraculous, and back again. My own sense of being enchanted with it all, particularly the mysteries of the human heart, means that I cannot navigate my life solely by obscure aspects of ancient Holiness codes devised for purposes which are no longer clear. But I can worship the God of the desert who called Abraham, and the Father of Jesus Christ, and the archetypal earth-mother, the feminine side of God within me, introduced to me in the writings of Carl Jung now many years ago. But most of all, the God to whom I pray, whom I love, who in my wildest dreams cares for me, this God

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has always come to me in the wonderful spectacle of the night sky through the changing seasons. I think Abraham felt it, and Jesus too. But I do not encounter this God in a Church dedicated to medieval maps of the universe. Over a long time in the Methodist Church, I do not see many colleagues interested in such a God. I can say with some certainty that the modern-day Connexion has charted its own dogmas and doctrines, which far from being inclusive have been rigid and exclusive of this kind of primal religious experience. I sense from my studies in the history of theology and science that numerous Christian people felt the same about the nineteenth century Church as it turned away from the natural world, its true joys, beauties and desires, its profound lessons. Whether New Zealand Methodism survives or not seems much less important to me than that the enchantment of God in nature is all around us. Without this, the world itself will die, and all God's children with it. This is much more important work than preserving the mediocre.

Let William Blake have the second to last word:

"But to the eye of the man of Imagination  
Nature is Imagination itself.  
As a man is, so he sees."

In this way I suggest that the mystery of our own consciousness, our hearts and our minds, will be the key by which we unlock the mystery of the universe. And the more we enter the mysterious universe the deeper we will see into ourselves, and finally into God. This is the Church's real mission in the 3rd millennium.

## FROM WHERE I'M STANDING

**An address delivered by the Rev. John A Penman BA at the Wesley Day dinner held on 24 May 1998.**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Jack Penman was born in Ashburton in 1924, started work aged 14 in a stock and station agency and spent four years in the RNZAF during World War 11.*

*He studied in Trinity College, 1949-51, also at the Graduate School of the WCC Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, 1963; his B.A. is in History.*

*Parish appointments were in Dunedin Central Mission, Cashmere-Somerfield, Ponsonby, Takapuna, Taranaki Street, Wellington and Pitt Street, Auckland.*

*Concurrent with the above, as applicable, was service as Assistant Superintendent of the Home and Maori Mission Department, Executive Officer of the Stewardship Department, Chairman of Wellington District, President of the Methodist Conference (1977), Chairman of the Theological Council, and Acting Principal of Trinity College (1987-88).*

*Jack and his wife Daphne have two sons in Australia, two daughters in New Zealand and three grandchildren.*

### **EDITOR'S NOTE:**

This address was not designed for publication. It was prepared in response to a request for "an after dinner speech". The prospect of filling the time slot with a succession of jokes and humorous anecdotes did not appeal to Jack Penman so he set about incorporating serious material into it.

The result is a well researched first hand account of selected facets of Trinity College history, not without humour, leavened with penetrating observations about customs, attitudes, and the culture of the Methodist Church in New Zealand.

The Wesley Historical Society recognised the significance of this paper as a contribution to a greater general appreciation of the leading part played by Trinity College during the formative years of the ministries of its students, and to the theological understanding of the Methodist Church's presbyters and lay members.

Hence its presence in this Journal.

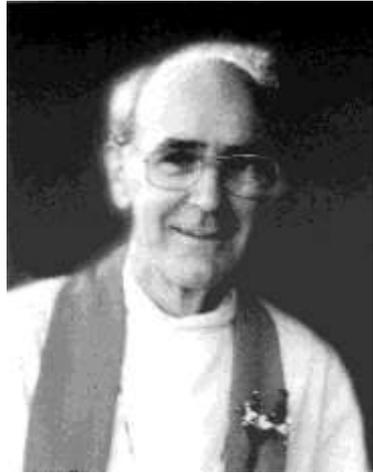
*B S Le Heron*

## 1. THE PARTNERSHIP

On this occasion we acknowledge the significance of St John's and Trinity Methodist coming together on one site in accordance with the Lund Principle whereby we do together all except that which conscience precludes.

Dr J J Lewis (in a letter I have) writes of the spirit in planning the joint venture - cordiality, mutual trust and enthusiasm. Writing in 1985, 12 years after the move, he further writes of the positives:

"The ecumenical atmosphere of training. Increased stimulus with greater numbers of staff and range of study options and methods. Increased opportunities for lay involvement as private or extra mural students. Wider multiracial and cultural experience. Benefit from a larger range of visiting lecturers.



Rev John A (Jack) Penman

Listening to that you could wonder if there were any negatives. The answer is yes, quite strong tensions at times which with goodwill and grace became growing points. It could also encourage speculation that, for instance, 50 years ago I had a deprived existence as a theological student. Not so.

My experience was a mid point in the life of Trinity College, Grafton.

In my second year I wrote an article to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the opening of Trinity in 1929. It was printed in the Methodist Times with articles from W T Blight, former tutor and then Connexional Editor; W E Hames, then Principal; Dr Ranston his predecessor; also Dr Laws, the first Principal and the force behind the building of the new College.

I have also drawn out of my files the address that Mr Hames gave to the TCOB Association in the early '60s - comparing the morale of the ministry at that time with 40 years previously when he was a student in the '20s.

I acknowledge these sources in preparation.

## 2. THE COMMUNITY

We had an enforced celibacy. I was 25, the upper age limit for entry to the College at that time, just engaged and with the prospect of waiting a minimum of six years for permission to marry. The exceptions were older men whose vocation had been

interrupted or postponed by World War II. They had access to the College by means of student pastorships, which was the only support available.

Students' financial support amounted to a quarterage of £8.0.0. I was fortunate in having a Government rehabilitation grant (which enabled me to put the quarterage back into the pool) and a benefactor from my local church who sent me a cheque each year for books - on condition that I did not tell his wife!

Between 1949 and 1957 there were 25-30 divinity students plus University hostel men to keep us honest and our feet on the ground. Relations with other hostels and colleges were largely through raids - O'Rorke and Baptist hostels.

We had experiences, such as being woken in the early hours of the morning by the neighing of a horse in the quadrangle. I can well remember that Sunday morning, leading a huge draught horse down the middle of Grafton Road to the Domain Pound - cheered on by students at every window in the College.

There were plenty of pranks, such as delivering people in coffins or laundry baskets to the nurses' home around the corner or to the Baptist College. David Besant was tarred and feathered because he dared to get engaged while in College. We roomed together, single rooms were available only in the third year. Close friendships formed that continued lifelong. For most of us, with little academic training, it was a time of single minded study, very early mornings and very late nights.

We did everything together as a community, including all meals, the same lectures - each year's intake lived on the same floor.

Sport on Saturday afternoon was changed from the traditional rugby to hockey - quite a victory for us. Worship on Sunday was in our own chapel at 8.00 am and at 11.00 am. The evening was usually Pitt Street or St Davids with Bower Black.

Extensive changes have occurred in allowances - families - housing -independence - resources are much greater, for instance the library. Add to these the factors listed in J J Lewis' comments on the period 1973-85 in our opening paragraph.

### **3. THE COMMUNITY OF LEARNING**

Changes were vast in the realm of theological education. E W Hames noted that 50 of the ministry in the '20s had never been near a college, and the rest were inadequately trained.

Recognition of the need for theological training developed slowly. That is what Dr Ranston was working on. "When we reopened in 1919 our courses of teaching were the result of most careful consideration of courses elsewhere and our own special needs in the Dominion. The main emphasis was to be laid upon that knowledge of the contents, interpretation and theology of the Bible so necessary for a church which is fundamentally evangelical." Writing in the '40s he could say "There have been times

during the past 29 years when criticisms have been made of the 'modernism' of the staff, though fewer today than formerly. I have been dubbed a 'devil's advocate' and even a 'Jesuit in disguise'. True, our teaching has been and is progressive and abreast of sound critical investigation but it has ever been also true to the great Christian essentials. As I think of teachers besides myself- Laws, Blight, Hames and Williams - there was and is ever the stress upon the one great all embracing theme which gives the New Testament its unity and coherence, the story of God's grace."

He goes on to say "if there are still Methodists who are suspicious of the influence of Trinity, and they must be very few today, I would say they are misinformed. To all I say, talk the College up." He then appealed to parents and young women and men to consider the Church as a vocation.

E W Hames had some strong things to say about Methodists and theology. He said it was brought home to him when talking one day with Luke Jenkins who let it slip to him in Dunedin that he rather despised Methodists theologically. Mr Hames went on to say we are hardly a church yet - yes, in the New Testament sense but not quite grown up yet. "People think that I'm teaching to have fussy services and all that sort of thing. Far away from it, theologically based, liturgically intelligent, that kind of thing is what I aim for. Standards are too low in scholarship, generally speaking.

"We must give up pretending from good and evangelical motives that it doesn't matter if one is dull (because he's a good chap and has a good heart and means well). Of course in the eyes of Christ a good heart and a faithful discipleship stands right at the top of honour - but it does not necessarily fit to lead the church. The idea that intelligence doesn't count is unmitigated damnable rot."

Think of the change!

E W Hames introduced us to our heritage - taught us to worship - gave us links to our roots in the Anglican tradition. Like a Christian suddenly discovering the Jewish tradition and having eyes opened to accept parents in the faith.

And we were quietly introduced to Varsity study. As students showed they could cope with their ten or so subjects in the first year we were encouraged to take two subjects at Varsity in addition. To me that was a whole new world (now almost a matter of course) into the degree stream - and hopefully ever-challenging liturgical patterns.

I read again last week the autobiography of Harvey Emerson Fosdick -born 24 May - of Riverside Church preaching fame and target of strong fundamentalist attacks, "From my youth my struggle has been to be both an intelligent modern and a serious Christian."

Looking back now of course one can see clearly the tragic fact of it all being mono-cultural. I had come from mid Canterbury. The closest I had come to Maori was

passing the marae at Temuka, up on the right hand side of the main road as we went to Timaru. There was always a somewhat mystical air about it but we never explored.



Morning tea in the quadrangle at Trinity College. L to R: Ray Le Couteur, Jack Penman, Graham Buxton (hostel), Ian Reid, Arthur Mead, Fred Baker, Loyal Gibson, John Osborne.



Dismissal Service 1951.

Back row L to R: Arthur Mead, David Besant, Ian Reid, Charles Raynor, Harry Shaw, Alan Handyside, Les George.

Front row L. To R.: Syd Spindler, Jack Penman, Dr D O Williams, Loyal Gibson, Harry Toothill.

Rua Rakena and Lane Tauroa were in College while I was there. This was seen as equalising opportunity and enriching the Maori Mission. No special lectures, no orientation, nor from my circle any excitement that here in our midst were people able to open doors on a whole new approach and spirituality.

Years later, on a visitation by W E Donnelly and Connexional Secretary W R Laws, it was written, "We found few students are interested in Maori studies and this matter was discussed with the Principal." Now the church is committed to a bi-cultural journey and the honouring of a verbal commitment has implications the full extent of which have yet to be explored at depth. Meantime we can rejoice in the commitment to learn, to listen, to understand and be equipped for meaningful dialogue with our partner.

#### **4. WHAT OF MINISTERIAL FORMATION?**

I cannot remember the term being used during my college days. I remember clearly the expectations placed on us to gain experience in a circuit. Vacation supplies, short and long, weekend appointments and frequent Sunday services around the city and suburbs.

My first supply was at Russell - a Home Missionary appointment. The HM was due to take a baptism at the Williams Memorial Church in Paihia. I had to stand in for him and took the baptism.

On return to college the principal had a quiet word with me. Two things. Firstly, he had a letter from the Vicar to the effect that the earth (at least around Russell) was darkened for one hour that Sunday afternoon. Secondly, I would be wise not to rely on Home Missionaries for theological exactitude nor as a model for churchmanship.

In addition, Dr Williams was pioneering work in pastoral theology in the country. He was teaching counselling (it was the heyday of Carl Rogers) as an avenue for expressing unconditional love and acceptance.

Seward Hiltner came to the College from the USA and his books were eagerly devoured. There flowed from all that the establishment by Dr Williams of the Inter Church Counselling Centre, and many of us cut our teeth in that environment.

There were Missions each year when Dr Williams would take the third years and in a preaching mission devote considerable time to individual churches. Further on there was the whole emphasis on group work, and experiments with a modern counterpart of the class meeting were held all around the Auckland district.

College was then followed by three years on probation with continuing studies through the examination committee and the circuit oversight of the Superintendent, who could be quite exacting in demands - as well as University work.

Thirty years later the World Council of Churches sponsored an international consultation on ministerial formation which claimed there were five ingredients to formation:

- intellectual resourcefulness
- sensitivity to real human problems
- acquisition of appropriate skills
- exemplary spirituality
- commitment to congregations and people.

The question was phrased: "Does the focus on ministerial formation overcome traditional dichotomies which bedevil theological education between:

- academic and practical
- tradition and situation
- elitism and servanthood?"

It was then stated that the focus had shifted and must now be on the goal of theological education more than on content, for until we are clear about goals we can never be sure about content.

Compare the current planning for Field Education. It is more systematic, more varied, there is greater depth and better supervision. The structure is there but I am not sure about what outcomes are sought. For a decade or two we have been defining the aim and then finding many barriers in the way of implementing the implications - and this at every level right from the time of accepting candidates for ordination.

## **WHAT OF THE CONTEXT?**

Reading back over Mr Hames' notes. He constantly referred to the Church having difficulty in facing the demise decades previously of the evangelical revival and its methods. He spoke of the early liberal optimism being knocked by the World Wars dealing a dose of reality and showing what was in humankind.

I came into College following four years in the Services during World War II. The Church was absolutely decimated of a whole generation of young people. Of those who returned most left the Church. Yet in the community there was a mood of co-operation that had enabled survival. It followed the experience of being raised through the depression years and the messianic mood that heralded the new Labour Government of the mid '30s with the welfare state.

I tried to keep abreast of creative thinking through the World Council of Churches, having a comprehensive subscription to all their publications. In terms of the context let me hint through the lens of the WCC at what has happened since:

(a) The Church had its CIA (but not sinister) Commission on International Affairs. Leading figures were Dr Frederick Nolde and Secretary Visser 't Hooft involved in

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history making. They were international brokers and travelled country to country, peacemaking.

- (b) The global Layman's Movement - lay Academies and Institutes. Typical books were Salty Christians, God's Frozen People etc.
- (c) The Division of Interchurch Aid Refugee and World Service.
- (d) The Humanum Studies - what it means to be human.
- (e) The Programme to Combat Racism.
- (f) The Decade of Solidarity with Women - feminist studies.
- (g) JPIC (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation).

Consider the breadth and depth of that input.

With these continuing studies there is a widening alienation from civil authority, and subtle (as well as not-so-subtle) changes that make the mood today somewhat sinister.

Tim Costello writes of society and points to the:

- shift from community to individual
- shift from co-operation to competition
- shift from values to economics
- shift from common good to the user pays society.

Dr Clive Pearson, in a recent review of some of Allan Davidson's outstanding writings, was stimulated by Allan's work to say that we should be debating the nature of the Church and its relation to society, and the possibility of a theologically educated ministry directed towards the civil society.

Which puts the current flurries in Methodism into perspective, and on this Wesley Day we should take more seriously Wesley's saying, "the world is my parish". Not the Church-the World!

That is probably behind the Review Team's recommendation that "every student should make a lifelong study of some subject of non-theological nature eg Science, Literature, History."

A reminder of Fosdick's struggle to be both an intelligent modern and a serious Christian. I hope it is still our struggle.

## CELEBRATION IN KAEO

*This historical outline of the first seven weeks of the establishment of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission in New Zealand was compiled by Verna Mossong.*

KAEO KERIKERI UNION PARISH (Methodist-Presbyterian) held a special service at Kaeo at midday on 14 June 1998 to commemorate the 175th Anniversary of the settlement at Kaeo led by Rev. Samuel Leigh and Wm White, the first Methodist 'parish' in New Zealand - made possible by the personal support of Rev. Samuel Marsden and others of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) (Church of England, already in New Zealand from 1813).

MAY/JUNE 1823 dates-

May 16: "Irascible and tireless (Rev.) William White arrived at the Bay of Islands, ... his first report notes the warmth of the reception of CMS, Rev. John Butler and others."

May 26: Vessel St Michael leaves Rangihoua/Oihi, Bay of Islands to check Whangarei (again) as a suitable Wesleyan Mission site. Has full settlement party on board.

June 2: Meeting on the St M. Captain Beveridge chairing (and five local chiefs?) observe Whangarei has few permanent Maori settlements and decide for Whangaroa.

June 6: Rev. Samuel Leigh and Rev. William White check a selected site up harbour, one boundary that of road made by Dromedary when taking kauri spars in 1819.

June 8: Church Service on the St Michael when Rev. Sami Leigh preaches from 1 Sam 1: 7.12 "Then Samuel took a stone and set it up ...".

June 10: Rev. William White and the CMS lay-helpers George Hall and James Shepherd stayed on the 'selection' and set up a rough shed on sodden ground - they put two hen coops together and made their beds on them. A house of raupo and a large tent with plank flooring were erected. The tent was damaged by seawater and mildew and leaked badly. Rev. Leigh put a big cask on its side and slept in it to avoid the leaks.

June 15: The first European service at this place, which they named WESLEYDALE, was held on this first Wesleyan Mission site in New Zealand.

June 21: The two wives came up to the site. Mrs Catherine Leigh, who had been with her husband living in a barn and cared for by Mr George and Mrs Dinah Hall at Oihi for a year and a half (as also from June 1822 were the Methodist laymen workers Luke Wade and James Stack). The other wife was Mrs Harriet Shepherd with her 18 month old son. Her second son Isaac was born at Kaeo on 26 July. Mrs Beveridge, wife of the ship captain, came up to Kaeo to see the chosen site.

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June 29: The first Maori church service was conducted at the home of Te Puhi, one of the three brother chiefs of this Maori settlement, close to the place where the Boyd had been plundered in 1809. James Shepherd of the CMS, fluent in Maori language, preached, sang and prayed "despite some considerable ridicule".



**President Verna Mossong with Rev. Pat Bowden (C of E),  
author of *The Years Before Waitangi*, 1987.)**

When in August Rev. Nathaniel Turner and John Hobbs arrived Rev. and Mrs Leigh left Whangaroa and returned to Sydney.

This Mission settlement lasted until 10 January 1827 when it became obvious that they were in a situation between Maori tribal groups. Their mission work could not continue and lives were in danger. The party retired over the twenty miles of track to

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the Bay of Islands. Part way there they met a Maori party led by Patuone who showed them goodwill and protected them from the war party. Two Maori escorted them to safety, once again into the care of the CMS at Kerikeri and Marsden's Vale. The WHS missionaries returned to Sydney.

The first Wesleyan Mission initiative had failed but was to rise again at Mangungu, on the Hokianga, beginning again in late October 1827 when the ordained Rev. John Hobbs, now married, with his wife Jane and others returned to New Zealand.



**Memoria cairn at left, Mt. Puhoe on right, town of Kaero centre.**



**L to R: The Shapcotts at Kaero: Matthew (grandson), Vivien (daughter-in-law), Alexander (grandson), Rev. Len Shapcott (Minister at Kaero 1947-51).**



Kaeo Methodist Church after a severe storm. Matthew Shapcott on right.



## THE STORY OF WESLEYDALE

by *Verna Mossong*

On Sunday 14 June 1998 at Kaero, Whangaroa, a large gathering of Maori and Pakeha celebrated 175 years since the Wesleyan (Methodist) Missionaries occupied a site which they called "Wesleydale". (A smaller group representing the Northern Synod, unable to attend on Sunday, had met around the memorial cairn on the previous Wednesday.)

From June 1823 to January 1827 there were comings and goings from the Mission, which had commenced there with the approval of three chiefly Maori brothers, Te Puhi, Te Aara and Nga Huruhuru and under the authority of Rev. Samuel Leigh as (briefly) head of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in New Zealand and the South Seas.

The Europeans who lived there, low on the hillside which then overlooked a wider and deeper harbour estuary and the Maori pa on Pohue, came and went. Their story has been well documented in several Wesley Historical Society publications, such as George Laurenson's *Te Hahi Weteriana*; Dr C H Laws in *Toil and Adversity in Whangaroa*; Tom Spooner's *Brother John* (Hobbs); Dr J M R Owens, *Wesleyan Missionaries in NZ before 1840*. There have been others - publishers and authors - such as T M I Williment, her wonderful *John Hobbs 1800-1883*.

However, the one family who were there from August 1823 until the retreat in early 1827 have not been well recorded nor effectively memorialised. The site was marked in 1922 with the building by Northland Maori, with Rev. Mr Seamer's co-operation, of a cairn made with Whangaroa Harbour large stones. This celebrated one hundred years of Wesleyan Mission to New Zealand.



Rev. John Hobbs

For the 150 years of Wesleyan Methodist work in New Zealand there was Laurenson's *Te Hahi* which includes events at Kaero. Portraits of the two Maori brothers Te Ara (George) and Te Puhi were copied through the energies of Rev. Voyce and presented to be hung in Kaero Church. These were placed in the church together with a portrait of Rev. Samuel Leigh. A plaque there names the Europeans of the Wesleyan Mission from 1822, while another lists the Maori Missioners of the Wesleyan Church.

Sister Rita Snowden and a friend later visited

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the church and noted the lack of tribute to the women. She subsequently wrote the booklet *The Ladies of Wesleydale* (WHS) and in her Vice-Presidential year gifted a font to the Kaeo Church which was dedicated to the memory of the mission women. There is still no visual naming of the women.

The women who lived there, however briefly, were Catherine (nee Bull, the widow Clowes) who had married Samuel Leigh in 1820. The Leighs spent only the first three months of the New Zealand mission there, in a watery world such as visitors had to contend with in June 1998! Catherine was housed first in a leaking tent and had to wear her husband's greatcoat and boots much of the time to keep dry and warm. For the previous eighteen months the Leighs had lived at Oihi, her home a barn on the CMS Mission station. They had all their meals provided by lay-workers, William and Dinah Hall. There were also two Wesleyan lay-workers James Stack and Luke Wade who spent several weeks at Oihi before William White, then a single man, arrived with the goods and chattels which were the fabric for building a Whangaroa mission.

Another CMS lay worker, James Shepherd with his wife Harriet and their first child, came up Whangaroa Harbour to assist the settling in and here in July their second son James Nelson Shepherd was born in an upper room of the newly erected 'pre-fab' house. When the WMS people had been assisted and were set up with necessary accommodation the Shepherds were called back to their CMS tasks. The wife of Captain Beveridge of the vessel St Michael came up harbour for a brief visit.

In August on the Brampton with a number of CMS reinforcements, came the Rev. Nathaniel Turner and his wife Anne (Sargent), with a six months old daughter Ann, born in Tasmania, also the man who had probably the longest continuing influence within the Wesleyan Mission – John Hobbs - engaged formally as a mechanic to the Mission. He was a practical worker and quick to learn Maori, almost certainly initially from Shepherd.

With them another 'woman', the fourteen year old Betsy who came as the 'nurse girl'. She was to be two years at Kaeo. Anne Sargent Turner may then have had three pleasant days with Catherine Leigh for they were both Staffordshire women. Just three days for it was decided that Samuel Leigh's deteriorated condition made a return to Sydney urgent. Leigh survived. It was Catherine who was to die in New South Wales from an infection contracted when working with the sick at Parramatta in May 1831.

There is a book. *The Pioneer Missionary Life of the Rev. N Turner*, written by a son. Rev. Josiah G Turner, published 1872. In this there are several references to the courage and initiative of his mother Anne while at 'Wesleydale' but there are very few comments about his mother as a person.

One quote from another source suggests that on the journey out from England to Tasmania "she never knew when sea sickness ended and morning sickness began". The almost permanent morning sickness probably continued for years! Their second

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child Thomas was born at Kaeo on 29 March 1824 with assistance from Mrs Fairburn. Their third child, Nathaniel Bailey born at Kerikeri May 1825, died at Kaeo when almost a year old. His father wrote, "a dear interesting boy". He was buried at Kaeo. A miscarriage is recorded December 1825 and John Sargent Turner was born in December 1826 at Whangaroa and baptised at Paihia in January 1827. (He was to become a member of the Queensland Legislature.)

There were to be another eleven children besides two sons stillborn. Only one son is known to have lived in New Zealand. Charles Wesley Turner, born in Tasmania in 1834, was a banker and came to set up a Bank of New South Wales branch at Christchurch in 1860. His wife Emily died in 1881. C W Turner died in 1906 and the burials are in Papanui Anglican Church yard.

Following further missionary movements to Tonga, and Hobart, the Turner family were back in New Zealand ten years later with seven children. Two more daughters were born at Mangungu, Hokianga between 1836-1840. Nathaniel Turner died at Brisbane in 1864 aged 71 years. His widow lived on into old age and died in October 1893 in Kew, Victoria at the home of a daughter when aged 96 years. An obituary claims that "there will be no lack of descendants to keep this early missionary and remarkable woman alive". The number other living descendants exceeded one hundred: ten children, seventy grandchildren and thirty-three great grandchildren.

To read a succinct record of the departure from Kaeo and retreat to the Bay of Islands on 10 January 1827 find a copy of Mrs Williment's John *Hobbs (1800-1883)* Chapter 8 - Suspended Mission. The gathering of personal treasures, the care for the children with the youngest Turner five weeks old; Anne Turner - "excellent and courageous Sister Turner" says Hobbs, who insisted that the mission party kept walking. Their unexpected meeting and help from Patuone; the two Maori, Te Wharerahi and Ngahuruhuru, escorting them to the 'crossroad' tracks to Hokianga or Bay of Islands; the meeting with the CMS missionaries - ever their supporting friends - to arrive safely at Kerikeri by nightfall. In the bay awaited the vessel *Sisters*, which on 20 January left with the Wesleyan party for New South Wales.

Many years later Nathaniel Turner at Auckland (1853) recorded a meeting with Patuone the day he landed. Turner saluted Patuone as "our Kai Wakaoro" (Preserver).

May Methodists in New Zealand keep alive the story of Kaeo and of Anne Turner, one of the 'Ladies of Wesleydale', and of their commitment to Mission which brought many of them again to New Zealand for the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

## THE WONDERFUL WOMAN OF WESLEYDALE

Mrs Anne (Sargent) Turner

Dec. 4, 1893

THE AUSTRALASIAN METHODIST MISSIONARY REVIEW

### The Late Mrs. N. Turner

In our last issue we published a short notice of the late Mrs Turner. With the portrait which we now publish we reprint from *The Spectator* "A Daughter's Tribute," by Mrs Harcourt:— "My dear mother was a native of Staffordshire; she was born at Ipstones on July 17, 1798. For 75 years she was a loyal Methodist, meeting regularly in class until four months since, when "age and feebleness extreme" prevented her attendance.

Her parents, Mr and Mrs John Sargent, were good people, they reared their children in the fear of God. At about eighteen years old she was confirmed, and much impressed by the service. Two of her uncles, William and Thomas Sargent, were zealous local preachers. By them she was made acquainted with the Methodists. She soon saw her need of a change of heart. She sought the Lord with many tears, and at one memorable week night service found Him to the joy of her soul. She hastened home and told her brother, with whom she was living. He rather damped her ardour by, "saying, "Take care you don't want pardon again."

What effect this warning had upon her we don't know. One thing is known, for she said so very lately in class, through all the changes of life she had never



wilfully forsaken God, or lost a sweet sense of His favour. "The light of His countenance" ever shone upon her. No sooner had she tasted that "the Lord is good" than her affections went out to her whole family in earnest desire for their salvation. Very soon the whole family was converted, and became members of society.

In 1822 she was married, and came out with my father to this unknown land. Their destination was New Zealand. The natives, however, were so

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unsettled, at war among themselves, that the Local Missionary

Committee judged it prudent that they should wait some time in the colonies. While thus waiting my mother worked hard among the prisoner women in the factory in Hobart and in Sydney. When things were quieter in New Zealand, the missionary party proceeded to their appointment. For three or four years they worked among surroundings which read like romance, till they were driven out by the natives with the loss of everything but life. After a short rest in Sydney they proceeded to Tonga to reinforce the Missions there. At Nukuolofa they had the happiness of seeing Christianity commenced. Mrs Turner was present at the baptism of the first six converts, and had the joy of making the bread for the first love feast ever held in the Friendly Islands.

Curiously, the day of her death, October 10th, was the anniversary of that event.

It would take too much space to trace my mother's career as the wife of an earnest Methodist preacher. In Hobart, Launceston, Sydney, and Brisbane she was truly his "help-meet," and when twenty-nine years ago she came a widow to Victoria, and made her home among her children, she continued to work as she was able. She excelled in every relation in life. As wife, mother, mistress, she was a pattern. She was devout. Whilst living with us we marked her earnestness in prayer. Remaining long on her knees, and when too feeble to kneel she would ask to be let sit awhile in her chair while she prayed for her children. Her habit of retiring for prayer was marked by the native girls living in the house at New Zealand. They would say to each other, "Hush! mother is at prayer."

"Her children rise up and call her blessed." Some of them have proceeded her to heaven, others are following. May we all meet "an unbroken family in heaven!"

## REV. NATHANIEL TURNER

*by Verna Mossong*



Rev. Nathaniel Turner

Nathaniel Turner was baptised 10 March 1793 at Wybunbury, Cheshire, England, one of eight children of Thomas Turner and Elizabeth Johnson (married at Wybunbury 1784), small farmers, members of the Church of England; (father, mother and a sister all died about 1802). Nathaniel was brought up on the Estate of Sir Robert Hill 'of the Hough'. At some time he lived at Blakenhall with Mr Thomas Salmon. Pre-mission he was described as 'farmer'. At a March 1820 Quarterly Meeting Turner was nominated for "home missionary service" which he undertook in South Cheshire. On the last Sunday of April 1820 he preached on the green at Audlem. He was ordained on 23 January 1822 (with William White).

On 10 January 1822 at Stoke on Trent Parish Church he was married to Anne Sargent (born 1798 Ipstones/Etruria Staffs., baptised 11 November 1798 Ipstones), daughter of John Sargent of Ipstones a farmer, her mother believed to be Ann (Bloor) married 19 June 1796. (There were William and Thomas Sargent "zealous local preachers").

On 15 February 1822 they were aboard the vessel *Deverin* for Hobart, Australia. They arrived in July. In March 1823 their first child Ann was born at Hobart, Van Diemen's Land. Turner was to be appointed again to Hobart when he was invalided from Tonga. He has been described as the "emergency man of Australian Methodism".

Their first arrival to New Zealand was on *Brampton* with Rev. Marsden on his fourth visit to New Zealand. During the Whangaroa years they, as Rev. Samuel and Mrs Leigh before them, were often totally dependent upon the Church Missionary Society missionaries both before the settlement at Kaeo; during March to June in 1825 when

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their second son Nathaniel Bailey Turner was born there in early May; and again as they retreated from Kaeo to Kerikeri and returned to Sydney.

Their Mission in Tonga 1828-1830 is described in detail in the works of Findlay & Holdsworth - Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society History volumes.

From Tonga they were for some time in Sydney where the six week voyage from Tonga to New South Wales had been particularly difficult for Mrs Turner in her eighth pregnancy. A child was born in Sydney and died there. "His dust rests in the same tomb with that of Mrs Leigh."

The appointment had arrived and delayed until Mrs Turner could travel, again to Hobart in late 1831 which they had left ten years before. He was in charge four years there, then followed another appointment to the New Zealand Mission once again.

They returned to New Zealand in 1835 and stayed until 1839 at Mungungu on the Hokianga. They brought a family tutor, James Buller. Later two eldest sons, Thomas and John Sargent, were students at Henry Williams' school in Kerikeri.

Nathaniel Turner died in Brisbane in 1864 aged 71 and Ann Sargent Turner died aged 95 at Kew, Victoria, in the home of a son-in-law. Rev. J Harcourt.

Mrs Turner had at least sixteen pregnancies, she had miscarried at least one and three had been stillborn or died in early infancy. John Sargent Turner was the infant being carried away from Whangaroa in 1827; "a frail daughter Jeannie was at her mother's deathbed". Her last child was born in her 46th year.

### **The Children of Nathaniel and Anne (Sargent) Turner**

*Ann Sargent* born Hobart 3 March 1823

*Thomas* born Kaeo, Whangaroa 29 March 1824 lived Hobart 1850s died while on coastal vessel on way to Sydney, January 1854.

*Nathaniel Bailey* born at CMS Mission at Kerikeri, Bay of Islands 3 May 1825 died 16 April 1826 buried Kaeo.

Miscarriage reference December 1825.

*John Sargent* born 3 December 1826, Whangaroa, baptised at Paihia (CMS) 14 January 1827. (Became a member of the Queensland Legislature.)

*Martha* born 31 August 1828, Tonga (named as at her mother's deathbed 1893).

**Nathaniel** "new born male, died" 11 October 1829, Tonga.

An infant child, August 1831 "his dust rests in the same tomb as that of Mrs Leigh" at Sydney, NSW.

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*Josiah George* born 14 September 1832, Hobart, baptised 17 October, became a Wesleyan minister, wrote book on his father's life. Almost certainly he was married in 1859 to Sarah (Owen) Maitland.

*Charles Wesley* born 5 April 1834, Hobart, became a shipowner Canterbury, NZ. (NZ Shipping Company.) Died 25 October 1906. Photo in Bott's *The Sailing Ships of NZ Shipping Co* and Canterbury volume *Cyclopedia of NZ*. Married a daughter of L Iredale.

*Mary Emma Bloor* born 20 July 1835, Hobart. Her maternal grandmother's maiden name Ann Bloor.

*Sarah Eliza Hopkins* born 20 November 1836 Hokianga, NZ "named in affectionate memory of a dear Hobartown friend". Baptised by Rev. Whiteley. Married in 1859 to Henry Jordan of Moreton Bay, Brisbane. (Their daughter Mary Emma Jordan born 6 September 1860.)

*Hannah Jane* born 1 December 1839 Hokianga, baptised 6 December 1839 by John Hobbs.

*Louise Elizabeth 'Lizzie'* born 16 August 1840, Hobart. Married 1864.

*Nathaniel Bailey* still born.

*Edwin James* bom 24 April 1844 (registered 30 April 1844), Launceston.

## THOMAS SKINNER, CATECHIST

*by Veda McKay and Verna Mossong*

*In Journal 1989 there was an article about the New Zealand Wesleyan Mission's catechist William Jenkins and his later travel to England with a Maori party in 1863. In Journal 1994 the story of Susannah Miller -was told. Her husband was catechist Frederick Miller appointed 1843/4 to Whakatumutumu overlooking the Mokau River. This article is about Thomas Skinner, another catechist. All were unordained teachers and ministers to Maori people and posted to the most isolated places. Much of this article was prepared by the late Mrs Veda McKay, a great-granddaughter of Thomas and Hannah (Taylor) Skinner.*

Thomas Skinner, son of John Mugridge Skinner and Lucy (Farenden), was born at Hastings, Sussex on 14 February 1821 and baptised in Croft Congregational Church. He had a sister Ann who was to marry Rev. George Kerry who became a Baptist Missionary to India.

Thomas Skinner is first identified in New Zealand when he is said to have been at the helm of the vessel Hannah on 24 November 1840. It is recorded to have foundered on the rocks at the mouth of Kawhia Harbour. Aged nineteen, and frightened the family tradition says, he vowed to serve the Lord if he and passengers were saved ... his passengers were Rev. Samuel and Mrs Ironsides and Rev. Thomas and Mrs Buddle with their infant daughter. They presumably had some influence upon the subsequent life of Thomas Skinner.

It is suggested that he already had a good understanding of the Maori language.

He was living in the home of Rev. William Woon at the South Taranaki Mission at Waimate by early June 1846 when Woon "preached in English to a small company of six or seven including Mr Thomas Skinner". In 1847 Woon again recorded preaching to a small group which included Mr Skinner. Again Woon in January 1848 reports that "Mr Skinner is to supply in Mr Hough's place at Patea". Skinner was there for a few months but the July 1848 Auckland District meeting decided that Mr Skinner was to go to open up a Mission at Taupo. The Patea people did not want him to leave them for he had been able to help many who had been sick and had been much liked and trusted.

Taupo it was to be. Skinner walked north to the Wanganui River then up river by canoe, having visited Rev. William Kirk on the way ... up river to Motuapuhi at Lake Rotoaira. In a letter to Rev. Whiteley, his supervisor, he wrote from The Komaka, (a place name or a name he had given to his house). The location, difficult now to identify, is on the shore of the lake at Motuapuhi. There are a few words about Skinner and Wesleyan Mission in Barbara Cooper's 1989 book *The Remotest Interior - Taupo*. She relates "all his clothes, supplies, furniture, doors and windows for a cottage he had to build, had to be carried from the coast at Mokau" ... and "the teacher

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paid £1.13.6d for a small house to be built and 16/- (shillings) for a cookhouse to be put up. A shed was erected for a small herd of goats. The animals had been brought in from the coast by three men, each of whom had been paid 2/6d for the journey".

She also identifies Motu-O-Puhi as "Peninsula in Lake". Some other details may be gleaned from an Alexander Turnbull Library Ms SKI 1849-1856, *A Skinner Journal*, in very close writing with careful details of temperatures and weather but the first entry is dated November 1849, well into a second year there.

In March 1849 Skinner had been host to Rev. Richard Taylor of the CMS who pitched a tent beside the lake to stay a night or two. They walked to a spring and caught hinanga and later had a fine meal with potatoes from Skinner's garden. They talked easily despite Taylor's message that the CMS was unhappy that the Wesleyans had come so far south. The Catholic mission was very close and very busy and Richard Taylor was unsettled by the Catholic bell ringing at the same time as the Wesleyan's.

There was a wonderful sunset on 13 November 1849 and it is to describe this that Skinner apparently began his personal record in a partly used exercise book as his Journal.

When Rev. Mr Brown of the Church Mission (Tauranga) arrived at the Pa in November 1849 Skinner invited him to the Wesleyan Mission house. The invitation was refused and Brown "alluded to the encroachment or intrusion of the Wesleyans at Taupo" ... "a consummate pokonoa" he said. Skinner was told not to preach in any of the Church Mission churches. However, Brown did meet Skinner next morning and shared breakfast.

Skinner explained that the Wesleyans had waited and then sent him to Taupo because no CMS missionary had been sent there. Brown defended the CMS delay. One reason was apparently that they believed that "a European might not endure the climate range of temperatures, the dampness of vapours and atmosphere". Skinner reports his preaching to the "people from Umurua and Pukawa". He wrote, "the Spirit assisting I spoke with freedom and I trusted not in vain". On the next day, Sunday 18 November, he had services followed by morning school where a hundred scholars "repeated and memorised the first and second chapter of... Catechism". There was an afternoon school which he divided into five classes. He took divine service in the evening. On Monday he wrote, "the Taupo people are still here". He took morning school when the fourth chapter of the second Catechism was repeated. However, he does question them and proves "that some few retain what they have been taught". Not only Bible learning but a new morality was difficult for the Maori and teaching it was difficult for Skinner.

Later in the week Skinner felt it necessary to reprove a young man who, although already received into the Church "has fallen into sin with a woman ... had resisted her

importunities ... until his own corrupt nature and her entreaties ... and sinned against God.

By December there was an influenza epidemic. "A most distressing malady ... the mission station is converted into a hospital and my time fully taken up ... preparing and administering medicine and food ... six seriously ill to attend."

He was missing his Maori helper. "I am very anxious to know what is become of my lad Raniera, he has been due for the last two weeks."

Mid-December Skinner left for Tuhua and "walked over more ground in that day than he had done since he came to Taupo and with less fatigue than hitherto..."

He went to Rerenga but the people had left for Otamakahi. He followed them and found his helper Raniera had arrived with mail from Mr Whiteley. This carried the message of his re-appointment to Ngamotu, Taranaki, together with the 'melancholy intelligence' of the death of Mrs Susannah Turton. "Thus another of my much esteemed friends is removed ... leaving a vacancy which many will feel ... and, next perhaps to her husband and her relative, none more keenly than myself."

The people at Rotoaira were distressed when Skinner's removal was made known. He was expected to be replaced by another catechist, Mr William Jenkins, but this placement was not again used by the Wesleyan Mission. Skinner arrived in New Plymouth on 5 January 1850.

He began work at the Grey Institute property and in the general description refers to Miss T and Miss W who by 1850 were assistant teachers at Grey Institute. Miss Hannah Taylor of London and her friend Miss Maria Waterman had arrived by the vessel *Kelso* on 20 October 1841 "under engagement to Mr Faithfull" - a solicitor with wife and three small sons. Thomas Skinner married Hannah Taylor on 6 May 1851 at Waimate in South Taranaki, the celebrant Rev. William Woon. It was from this time that Thomas and Hannah lived for some two years at the Grey Institute at New Plymouth. Their first two children were born there - John Henry in 1852 and Lucy Chiffinch in 1854. Skinner's own Journal written during the Grey Institute years records what was a double responsibility as he appears to have been in charge of both the school and the farm. His Journal records his effort to find the students and tell them the folly of leaving the school. He had another section apparently to record the Industrial Department - the control of the outdoor workers. In 1856 there was another move for the Skinner family - to 'Beechamdale' Aotea. Here Hannah Eliza was born in 1856 and Thomas Benjamin born May 1858 died in early September while his father was away on Mission business. By 1859 when Margaret Sarah was born they had a neat commodious schoolhouse with 24 scholars. They had three acres of potatoes and four acres of corn also a bull and ox and sheep with lambs. In 1861 and still at Aotea, Sophia Ann was born but now the scholars are less respectful. In 1863 mid-year

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Martha Farenden was born. Thomas Skinner was now in ill health and the family record tells of a retreat from Aotea to Onehunga.

On 12 December 1863 they were reported as passengers on the coastal vessel *Kiwi*, Mr and Mrs Skinner and six children for Hokianga. Skinner's appointment was to Te Poinga, Waima Hokianga and there Thomas William Farenden Skinner was born in 1865.\* His father, the catechist, Thomas Skinner, died on 30 October 1866 and was buried near the Mission house. A posthumous child, George Kerry, was born in November.

The widowed Hannah Skinner, with eight children – the oldest 14 years, and a baby, stayed on at Te Poinga fortunate only in that she had some 'private means'.

A Wesleyan minister became a marriage broker on behalf of widowed Joseph Hare of Kaeo. Hannah said "no" but Joseph visited her and finally she agreed to the marriage which took place on 17 June 1868. With her children now ranging from a 16 year old to the youngest about 18 months she moved into Hare's very large house at Kaeo. It needed to be large for Hare already had eleven children aged from 22 years to 2 years old.

The story does not stop there for Hannah and Joseph Hare became parents of five more children. Hannah's childbearing years covered 1852-1878. She was aged 48 at the time of the last birth.

Hannah (Taylor/Skinner) Hare died at Kaeo on 22 January 1898.

\* We have seen evidence that T.W.F. Skinner lived, married and had many children. One of these, a son, became Hon. Clarence Farringdon SKINNER, born in Melbourne in 1900, married and had two sons. He was Member of Parliament for Buller and later for Motueka Electorate. He served in the Middle East and was awarded the Military Cross. Best known as 'Jerry' Skinner he was, after the War, appointed to Cabinet. He became Minister of Rehabilitation and Lands and also had other Ministerial appointments. C.E. 'Jerry' Skinner, grandson of the Wesleyan Catechist, died in 1962.

## PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION TO A CEMETERY SERIES

*by Verna Mossong*

In 1994 Wesley Historical Society representatives shared, at New Plymouth, celebrations to mark the 150th year since the formal commencement there of the ministry in New Zealand of Primitive Methodism led by Rev. Robert and Mrs Emily Ward.

This 1994 event was centred on Fitzroy Methodist Church on its Henui site. It is here that the photograph of Rev. M Dine and Mr Ivan Ward at the stone cross memorial was taken and used in WHS (NZ) Journal 1996.

On the north of the church built in 1904 (the cause there had been closed from 1882), almost propped up by the church wall were three tombstones which someone suggested had been moved from another site. As a member of New Zealand Society of Genealogists Inc when I reached home I looked up NZSG Cemetery Records catalogue and the published microfiche of cemeteries and the tombstone texts. There was one page recording the Fitzroy Methodist Church tombstones of Mary Grace Barriball died 1861 aged 18; Sarah Robertson and her nine day old son Henry Brougham Robertson who both died in 1864; while the middle stone memorialised Jane Crozier who had died in 1864 aged 22 years.



Memorial stones of Richard Ching and Elizabeth Pearer Ching; John Harris Ching and his wife Emma Jellyman Ching/Simmonds when in Stoke Methodist Churchyard.

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In March 1997 a driveway was to be made on this side of the church as preparation to making a car park planned for the rear of the building. Two skeletons were unexpectedly unearthed and major investigations followed. By December 1997 the church authorities, with help of local historians and genealogists, had identified forty-two burials at this Henui Primitive Methodist Burial Ground, all believed to have been interred between 1847 and 1871.



**Stoke Methodist (1915) Church.**

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Later, in 1998 when talking with a contact in Taranaki, who was seeking for and giving me information about Marsh families as co-lateral to my Nelson based Limmer forebears, I was told that both Mrs Sarah Robertson and Jane Crozier were born Marsh and therefore had Limmer family links.

Since late in 1997 the Methodist Church authorities, together with the New Zealand Society of Genealogists' Taranaki Branch, have been seeking the descendants of the exhumed persons and it is now expected that most will be re-interred at Hurdon, another Primitive Methodist burial ground.

This example, together with the even more personally meaningful tombstones and details of Stoke Wesleyan Burial Ground from which many of my forebears were exhumed in 1976, is the impetus toward which I now ask support. The Stoke Wesleyan Church yard burials remains were re-interred in Seaview Cemetery at Stoke. A plaque was placed on the door of the Church. The church site and buildings have been used as a library and public park but my latest information is that the Church was about to be removed.

I suggest that it would be appropriate to run a series of articles in WHS (NZ) Journals during the next few years or prepare a 'stand alone' publication. These would establish a published record of those buried in these 'lost' burial grounds and cemeteries, insofar as lack of Methodist Burial Registers and Plot plans will allow.

## **HENUI/FITZROY PRIMITIVE METHODIST BURIAL GROUND**

Names identified in 1997

BAINBRIDGE E and W	MATTHEWS S
BARRIBALL M G	MOGGRIDGE W
BUCKLAND J W	McKECHNIE E M
CLIME E and J	NELSON C / H / R D
COAD A and infant	NORTHCOTT F / J / V S
CROZIER Jane (nee Marsh)	OLD E / J / J
DEVENISH M	ROBERTSON Henry Brougham / Sarah A (Marsh)
HARRIS JG	ROGERS M
HARRISON E	SCANDLYN E
HOOD E A and M W	STOCKMAN E H / H C / M A J
HUNTS JAMES J J and R W	WARD R (a son of Rev. Ward)
MARSH C E / John / Mary	
MARTIN H	

## HURDON CEMETERY, NEW PLYMOUTH

Number J02.16: microfiche sheet number 00134 in New Zealand Society of Genealogists Inc *New Zealand Cemetery Records*.



Hurdon Cemetery site September 1994 at the time of the Primitive Methodist 150th Anniversary.

*Photo: Ivan Whyte*

The introduction identifies the Hurdon Cemetery as in Tukapa Street in New Plymouth. The governing authority is the chartered accountancy firm Bush and Worsley of New Plymouth. When the transcribing was done in 1982 there were still plots for use by families who owned them.

This half acre site was given to the Primitive Methodist Church in 1852 by Peter Eliot and J Dingle, each giving a quarter acre section. Guy and Potter in *Primitive Methodism in New Zealand*, at page 67 tell us that a small church was erected at Hurdon in 1853, which was replaced by a larger structure five years afterwards. The opening sermons were preached on New Year's Day, 1859. The services held in this church were not of a permanent character and although vigorous attempts were made to sustain them, they were eventually discontinued, partly owing to the population changes. The introduction to the cemetery reports that the church "built in 1860" was removed to Inglewood.

From Guy and Potter p. 72 of *Primitive Methodism in New Zealand*.

"During the latter part of Mr Dumbell's ministry the settlement of Inglewood, about twelve miles from New Plymouth, was missioned, and the church was

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removed from Hurdon to that township. After some years of varied fortune the services were discontinued and the church was ultimately sold to the Wesleyans.

"The removal of the church from Hurdon was a grief to some of the people who had assisted in its erection, especially those who had relatives buried in the little graveyard in which it stood. It is only right to say that the church had been closed for some years, and it was thought that it would be useful at Inglewood."

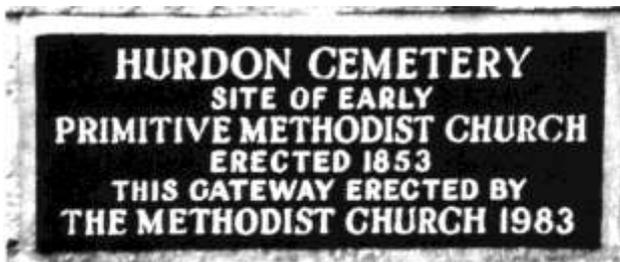
Note: Rev. John Dumbell arrived in Taranaki in January 1871 from England; departed for Wellington in March 1877.

The first burial is believed to be that of an unknown soldier interred about 1860.

The tombstones still able to be read and naming early deaths now appear to be those for Hawke families. Joseph died 1875 aged 66; also Mary 1895. Three names are given for deaths in 1861. Petsy [sic] aged 19; Frances aged 15; James aged 11. On the same stone another Joseph died 1865 aged 32 and William 1867 aged 23.

Another Hawke memorial stone records John died 1916 aged 73, his wife Matilda 1935 aged 85 and children: Joseph 1870 aged 5 months; Joseph 1889 aged 6 years; Norman 1889 at 14 months; Lewis 1889 aged 11 years and Ambrose 1897 aged 22. The final record on the stone: Clara Jane Hawke died 1950 aged 79 years.

The Looney family with several plots memorialise a son John, died 1860 aged 2 years. The Cowling family also lost a John who died 1864 aged 3 years.



Plaque at the entrance to the Hurdon Cemetery.

*Photo: Ivan Whyte.*

## ELIZA WHITE'S AUTOGRAPH ALBUM

*by Verna Mossong*

Early in 1996 Mrs Cynthia Aked visited New Zealand and, on behalf of her mother Ruth Watson (nee White), presented to the Kinder Librarian, Mrs Judith Bright, at Trinity/St Johns Theological College, an autograph album probably called in Victorian terms an Everyday Book, owned by Eliza White. Cynthia is a great-great-granddaughter of William (1794-1875) and Eliza (Leigh) White (1809-1883)... of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in New Zealand.

The first dated album entry was made during 1837 when the White family was visiting England. It continues with verses, poems, and prose entries from friends and relatives in England. As well as personal tributes to Eliza it contains, in later Auckland years, a virtual Roll Call of Wesleyan and Church Missionary Society missionaries; particularly the Wesleyans who were passing through Auckland upon various journeys to and from Sydney to the Fiji and Tongan missions. David Hazelwood of Fiji writes his tribute to Eliza's care of his "Sarah and Mary Ann". On this page Eliza herself writes a footnote: "The owner of this album owes far more to the prayers of Rev. D Hazelwood and other good men than ever she can repay or feel enough of thankfulness for."

One of the illustrations in the book is drawn by Sarah Orriss, dated 6 January 1838, and certainly the most historically interesting and intriguing of the items. It is a pen drawing of Mangungu Mission station in the Hokianga. There is no historical evidence that Sarah Orriss was ever in New Zealand. There is some evidence that she was a daughter of a Baptist minister and probably a girlhood friend of Eliza. It seems probable that either Eliza or William White drew a sketch of Mangungu and this was skilfully enhanced by Sarah. There is a June 1838 entry in the album from William Orriss of Somersham, near St Ives Northamptonshire. He prefaces it, "written in the form of an imagined soliloquy of Mrs White when about to leave her native shores for a distant land".

(Eliza White had first left England as a bride in 1829 and lived at Mangungu until 1837. The Whites returned to New Zealand and lived at the Mata or at Rawene until 1846 when she lived in Vincent Street, Auckland.)

Murray Gittos, the White family genealogist and historian, arranged for an enlarged and framed copy of the drawing of the Mission site. This was presented by Mrs Aked to Mrs Margaret Exton, the Historic places Trust Curator at Mangungu, Hokianga.

The entries are not in chronological order. At page three Rev. Walter Lawry writes at Auckland, 10 April 1848:

"This book has been well fingered, and its owner has seen affliction, and knows well that the high road to our final and happy home is 'up through much

tribulation'; I too have learnt this lesson after many a tear and sigh, but not one too many, as we shall see when the 'Books are opened'."



**Mrs Cynthia Aked (right) presents Eliza White's album to Mrs Judith Bright, Kinder Librarian. With them is Mr Murray Gittos, genealogist and historian.**



**Mrs Cynthia Aked (left) presents the Mission Site drawing to Mrs Margaret Exton, Historic Places Trust Curator at Mangungu.**

*Photos: Verna Mossong*

## BOOK REVIEW

### **SEMISI NAU: THE STORY OF MY LIFE A TONGAN MISSIONARY AT ONTONG JAVA** *by Allan K Davidson*

It is a sign of growth when people realise that it was not just people of one race or culture who were responsible for the introduction and spread of civilisation and Christianity to the Pacific - and indeed to other parts of the world. It must be recognised that evangelism was often carried out by indigenous people moving from one island to another, taking with them the Lotu (or Gospel) as they had received it. Frequently because there were similarities in language and culture, as well as similar skin colour, the message was more readily received. This story of Semisi Nau, a Tongan who had survived the religious divisions and authoritarianism in his own country, exemplifies that. After schooling in Tonga and banishment to Fiji he felt compelled by God to respond to the call for Missionaries to go to the Solomon Islands. He became a Wesleyan Minister serving first in his own islands and then going to Solomons in 1905.

At that stage Ontong Java, a Polynesian atoll about 250 kilometres north of Santa Ysabel, was under British control. Although it had been visited by traders and Government offices there had been no contact with Christianity. It was seen by the pioneer missionaries of the Methodist Church, already established at Roviana on New Georgia, as a wonderful field for evangelism. Semisi Nau was chosen to attempt this work. Together with a Samoan Missionary, Pologo, he was taken to this isolated group where the heathen chief made it clear that he wanted no contact with the Lotu.

The two men lived for 97 days on a small open boat anchored in the lagoon before they were allowed to land and begin teaching. Semisi attributed their survival to God's intervention, seen through the willingness of one of the islanders to risk his life by defying the ruling<sup>5</sup> of the chief and heathen priests and give them food and drink.

The story of this brave man and his wife, Matalita, told in his own words, though translated from the original Roviana language of the Solomons, is a record worthy of any missionary venture. In the introductory pages Allan Davidson gives a comprehensive background of historical events from Tonga to Solomon Islands which is interesting reading in its own right. The depth of research and care evidenced by the end notes and Bibliography makes this both scholarly and interesting reading.

The account of Semisi Nau's introduction to the 'white man's country and culture on his first visit to Australia has passages of deep insight. And that insight continues through all that follows.

As one who knows a little of other South Sea Islands Missionaries and the places in the Solomons where they worked I found this book both satisfying and informative.

It is significant that at present there are many Pacific Islanders involved in research about their own people who went from their own culture to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to other places. Allan Davidson's book is a good starting point and well worth reading by anyone interested in people who, at some cost, commit their lives to the service of others.

*Nancy P Carter*