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A Society within the Methodist Church of New Zealand

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Foreword

The major theme in this issue of our Journal is recognition of the status of women in the ministry and the fostering of our understanding of women's application to its demands.

Initially, the admission of women to the Methodist ministry was hesitant, even grudging, but as time went on they proved their worth by means of dedicated disciplined service and exercise of leadership in areas beyond their traditional roles.

Susan Thompson's observant account of the experiences of women in training exposes the limitations imposed by prevailing paternalistic attitudes evident in the practice of ministerial education in those times.

Things have changed, as demonstrated by such writings as hers, and its commendation by John Salmon.

Barbara Miller and Jill Richards chose to trace personal experiences and reactions in their 'Spiritual Journeys', thus providing evidence of resolute commitment to service as opportunity presented, and growing confidence and effectiveness in their field of activity.

The 'Little Bethel' article is a useful contribution to local history in Auckland. Such articles are an ongoing feature of our Journals. But for Helen Laurenson's painstaking fact finding the Epsom Chapel and most of its associations would have disappeared without trace.

Alwyn Owen's 'Passionfruit Sunday' is a delightful 'as I remember' of a former era. I am grateful to N.Z. Memories for provision of the pictures.

My thanks go to all our contributors and others who have worked to make possible once again the publication of our Journal.

Bernie Le Heron

INTRODUCTION TO SUSAN THOMPSON'S WESLEY DINNER ADDRESS

John Salmon

Dr Susan Thompson's "As Good as a Woman" was first presented as the address for Trinity Methodist Theological College's Annual Wesley Dinner in 2002. On that occasion it was very warmly received as exploring a topic of ongoing interest and importance in theological education. Her final challenge, that more needs to be done to ensure that women are able to participate in and contribute to theological education and ministry practice in effective and relevant ways, evoked an instant response! (Although that doesn't mean much has changed yet, of course...)

Susan has a way of shaping and presenting historical material that makes it clear and interesting for a general audience. Her material is always well-researched and accurate, yet manages to carry a lively contemporary message in settings where 'history' might normally be regarded as dry and boring. That is the case with this piece. Susan attends to an area often overlooked and identifies issues and trends in that area in terms of stories about people who were involved. This makes her overview of the place of women in Trinity College both lively and to the point.

In putting together this address/article, Susan has drawn on research for her PhD. Her thesis, *Knowledge and Vital Piety: Methodist Ministry Education in New Zealand from the 1840s to 1988*, contributes significantly to Methodist history in this country. We look forward to its publication, and appreciate this 'anticipatory taste'.

Trinity College began annual Wesley Dinners in 1995. It was sparked by members of the College community reflecting on the Methodist presence in the joint activity with Anglicans on the St Johns-Trinity site at Meadowbank. For years the Anglican part of the partnership had celebrated its origins with a Selwyn Dinner, honouring Bishop Selwyn as the founder of St Johns College. What was a Methodist parallel?

Out of this discussion was shaped an annual Dinner, with invited guests from the wider church, and including ecumenical partners, designed to emphasise the role and contribution of Methodism in that context. The Dinner was to be held on Wesley Day (24 May) and to include worship and reflection that recalled John Wesley's experience "about a quarter before nine" on that date in 1738. At each Dinner there was to be an address on a topic of interest to Methodists, drawing on scholarship related to the Wesleys and to Methodist history. The first address was given by Rev. Terry Wall on Hugh Price Hughes.

The Wesley Dinner continues to be held at Meadowbank each May. Susan's address represents very well the intentions and emphases of that occasion in the life of Trinity College.

BEING 'AS GOOD AS A WOMAN': WOMEN AT TRINITY METHODIST THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Wesley Lecture 2002

Rev. Dr Susan Thompson

I've called this evening's address "Being 'As Good as a Woman': Women at II Trinity Methodist Theological College". The title is taken from a letter written by Jill Richards in 1981 to the Trinity College Council in which she reflected on areas of concern for women in ordained ministry. Jill suggested that it was still the case that many women were "tolerated rather than valued as ministers of the Gospel". She called for the College to engage in more discussion on the special role of women in ordained work to challenge "the idea that a woman minister has to be 'as good as a man' rather than as good as a woman."¹ Her comments, I think, point to the struggle that women in ministry training have had to be accepted on their own terms as women, rather than as honorary men. They also reflect the failure of the College to recognise or even consider that women might have particular training needs and a distinctive style of ministry.



Rev. Dr. Susan Thompson

¹ Jill Richards to Trevor [Bennett], 8 September 1981, TCC Correspondence 1980-1997, Folder One, TC, Met 081/2/5.
Wesley Historical Society (NZ) Publication #79

For most of its history, women played a vital but limited role in the life of the Methodist Theological College. They worked long hard hours as domestic staff, and performed hidden tasks of encouragement and support as the wives of faculty members. Paying tribute to his wife Mary, in 1963, a former principal, Eric Hames, remarked that she had "done more for [the] College over a [quarter of a] century than anybody knows except myself."² Until the 1950s Trinity's student body was mostly made up of young single men, and the College had the atmosphere of a boys' boarding school. The students took part in all sorts of stunts and pranks, throwing water bombs, emptying rooms of furniture in the middle of the night, and undergoing various rites of initiation into Trinity's "Misogynist Club". The inevitable result of young men letting off steam, such activities created a climate that wasn't easy for women to break into.

The first women to attend lectures at Trinity were a Presbyterian, Iris Arthur, and an Anglican from Sydney, Nancy King, who both took papers as private students in the 1930s.³ Just why the College decided to allow the pair into its classes is a bit of a mystery; it was another twenty years before the Conference agreed to accept women candidates for training. Unfortunately no records have been found relating to the women's interaction with Trinity's other students or its lecturers. The author, Elsie Locke, was friendly with Iris Arthur during this period, and described her as "no solemn angel, but pretty and vivacious" and also quite sincere in her intention to one day enter the ministry.⁴

In 1954 Phyllis Guthardt became the first Methodist woman to train at Trinity as a candidate for ministry, and her experiences were typical of those met with by many women who enter a male-dominated sphere of employment. From her arrival at the College, she was urged to keep a low profile and not to complain so that "in no time [she] would 'become [like] a piece of furniture around the place.'" She wasn't allowed to live on site or to study alongside her male colleagues in the main library. Like many women who followed her, Guthardt felt an intense pressure to succeed and justify the Church's confidence in her, and responded by consistently gaining top academic marks for her year. There was no acknowledgement in any of her training that her ministry might be different from that of men and, lacking women role models, she was left to learn for herself the joys and difficulties of being "a young single woman trying to provide proper ministerial care for her parish [while] meet[ing] the expectations of so many."⁵

² [Eric Hames], "Ceremony of conferring Fellowship of Trinity College", 12 August 1963, Hames Lectures, TC, Met 071/3/1.

³ Arthur took New Testament papers at Trinity in 1930 and 1931. King attended the College's senior Greek class in 1936.

⁴ Elsie Locke, *Student at the Gates*, Christchurch, Whitcoulls, 1981, pp.36, 38.

⁵ Phyllis Guthardt, "Forty Up and Going Strong" (unpublished manuscript), 17 November 1993, pp.3, 5.

Guthardt made her own place at Trinity through the strength of her personality and the quality of her work, but did as she was told and tended not to question the assumption that, as a woman, she should simply fit into the College's masculine environment, developing a style of ministry imitating that of male clergy. This lack of questioning was common among many very early women trainees. The struggle to be accepted and treated like any other student for ministry was so great and so all-consuming that it prevented them from giving voice to any sense that their ministry might be distinctive or require special training. Once Guthardt began to feel her work was accepted within the Church, she became far less biddable and more outspoken.

It wasn't until the 1970s that the presence of women at Trinity began to change and challenge the College and its training. The coming together of the Methodist and Anglican theological institutions on one site at Meadowbank in 1973 significantly increased the number of women within the College community. The presence of women, both as students and as the wives or partners of students, challenged the single-male boarding school ethos that had dominated both institutions. The participation of families in worship and weekly community meals tempered what one trainee described as the 'blokey booky' atmosphere of the college. Women brought a new creativity to College events, organising social gatherings and giving them a sense of the unexpected.⁶

In the 1970s some College women were influenced by the growth of the movement for women's liberation which took place in New Zealand from the late 1960s. A concern for women's issues within the College was initially focussed on the role of the wives of ministry students. In the early 1970s many had their own careers and wanted to be seen as people in their own right, not just as the minister's wife. There was discussion about the impact of ministry training upon the family lives of students and calls for the greater participation of women and children within the College community. In the 1970s wives were given permission to attend lectures and the first attempts were made to set up a College creche.

Women students also developed a greater awareness of their needs and political interests. For some, consciousness of gender issues increased through reading the works of feminist theologians like Mary Daly, and through joining together in groups to reflect upon their experiences as women in a male-dominated church and society. There were some heated debates about inclusive language. Protests ranged from that of a male student who, in one class, held up a notice saying "Language" whenever the lecturer used exclusive terms, to the action of an anonymous group which broke into the chapel one night and, with the help of a bottle of Twink, made some unauthorised changes to the Anglican Communion service.⁷ Such activities may seem rather

⁶ Trinity College Oral History (TCOH), Tony Stroobant, 4 October 1999.

⁷ Lynne Frith, interview with the author, 6 May 1992, SJC, Kin 042/1/3; and A.K. Davidson, *Selwyn's Legacy: The College of St John the Evangelist Te Waimate and Wesley Historical Society (NZ) Publication #79*

extreme, but they reflect the strong feelings many people had in the 1970s about issues of justice and equality.

While women students began to challenge the College on a number of fronts, the training they received continued to do little to prepare them for the kind of ministry they might have. As one Methodist woman student from the 1970s said, women hoped and feared but didn't really know what it would be like in the parish. If anything, this woman believed her time in training taught her patterns of coping which were actually unhelpful and didn't serve her well in ministry. Feeling, like Guthardt, that she had to prove herself by doing better than her male colleagues, she learnt to project a 'super-woman image', which she later found prevented her from being able to put her own needs first.⁸

In the 1980s a significant number of women students found a more flexible alternative to college training in Methodism's new home setting programme. Often limited in their ability to relocate to Auckland by family commitments, many women appreciated the non-residential nature of the new scheme. A contextual model, the home setting programme gave students a more active role in their own learning process. In the years between 1980 and 1988, nearly half the students preparing for the presbyterate in the home setting were women, compared to only a quarter of Trinity's residential trainees.⁹ The programme drew in a number of older women who had considerable leadership experience both in the church and the community, and women like Anne Thomas and Eileen Shamy developed creative pioneering ministries. However, home setting training had its drawbacks, most notably a difficulty in maintaining academic standards which opened it to the charge of training a second-class ministry.

Within the College at Meadowbank, the presence of women contributed to faculty and curriculum changes in the 1980s and reflected a greater recognition of women's training needs. Both the Methodist and Anglican colleges appointed their first full-time women lecturers in 1985. Enid Bennett, Trinity's new theology lecturer, provided women preparing for ordination with a valuable role model. A feminist, she also tried to share a woman's perspective in her teaching, and both she and the Anglican lecturer, Janet Crawford, helped to stimulate interest within the College in feminist theology. The first papers on gender issues were being taught at Meadowbank by the end of the decade. Looking back on training in the 1980s, one Methodist woman student of the period noted an increased confidence among Methodist women about their future ministries. They were aware, she said, of a "high level of support" from

Auckland, 1843-1992, A History, Auckland, The College of St John the Evangelist, 1993, p.270.

⁸ Frith, interview with the author, 6 May 1992, SJC, Kin 042/1/3.

⁹ See S.J. Thompson, *Knowledge and Vital Piety: Methodist Ministry Education in New Zealand From the 1840s to 1988*, PhD, University of Auckland, 2002, p.348.

the College Council and felt the struggle had been done for them by the women who had gone before.¹⁰

While these developments were all important, the question remains as to whether such confidence was well placed. Writing in 1982, the American scholar, Barbara Wheeler, identified a similar outlook among women in American seminaries, but expressed concern that students were confident because they hadn't heard or didn't believe how hard it still was for women in ordained work. Women who hadn't encountered a lot of opposition to their interest in ministry tended to assume that equal access to candidacy also meant equal opportunities. Wheeler argued that in America "a pattern of consistent discrimination" against women was still widespread, and was evident in areas like salary levels and appointments.¹¹ Surveys on the experience of ordained women in the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in New Zealand have revealed similar patterns of discrimination and resistance to the ministry of women.¹² In the 1980s the Methodist College did little to help women students face such issues. A question that women may need to keep asking is whether that situation has substantially changed today.

Methodist women training for ordained ministry in the 1990s and beyond had it far easier than the pioneers of the 1950s, but some issues have remained the same. There is still a need for women students to be adequately prepared to face the particular joys and difficulties of being women in ministry. And, more opportunities are still required for women to explore the uniqueness of their ministries, ministries that are measured not in terms of whether they're as good as those of men, but whether they're as creative, inspiring and fulfilling as those of women.

¹⁰ TCOH, Mary Caygill, 21 December 1999.

¹¹ B.G. Wheeler, "Accountability to Women in Theological Seminaries", *Ministerial Formation*, October 1981, pp. 12-14.

¹² See Guthardt, "Forty Up", pp. 10-11; and Vivienne Adair, *Women of the Burning Bush: The Report of a Survey of Women Ministers in the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand after 25 Years of Ordination*, Wellington, Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1991, pp.33-38, 43-63.

BARBARA MILLER : My Spiritual Journey

Rev. Barbara Miller

This is not a Theological treatise, just a sharing of my personal spiritual journey and a very few of many influences that have become part of that journey.

I belong in a walking group. Sometimes we go right into the forests where the walking can be a challenge. The track we have taken may lead to an unbridged stream; it looks daunting, but there is a firmly anchored wire rope.



Rev. Barbara Miller

After some hesitation I grasp the rope and work my way over, eyes on the boulders. Thinking of my spiritual journey, I find I can think of Christ as my strong wire rope, securely there as I have moved through the events of my life. I have held on to that rope; sometimes the grasp may have relaxed, but thankfully I have held on. And so I give thanks to the Lord of the past, the present and the future.

My parents farmed at Ramarama, depression years, but with hard work they built their home and developed a well organised dairy farm. It was a good home life for their five children. My parents were really partners in their work, and their personal faith was just a part of their lives. We all attended the little Interdenominational Church at Ramarama. In the morning the family were there for the service and in the afternoon it was back to Sunday School. A significant step in my personal spiritual journey came when I was about eight. For some reason I was the only one in the family at the Service. It was a Methodist Communion, usually the children went out, but that day I decided to stay in and see what was under the white cloth! Rev. Roy Coombridge spoke about Communion and then said, "This is for all those who love Jesus." I knew

that I loved Jesus because Jesus loved me, so quite confidently I went forward and received communion.

This experience has influenced my attitude to children and Communion. I feel the Church underestimates a child's understanding of the basics of the Christian faith. What is important is what a child believes at that time in their life; faith is a growing experience.

I attended Ramarama primary school, about 35 children, and then on to Pukekohe High School. It was at High School that I was greatly influenced by the Crusader group there, and through that to a deeper commitment of my life to Christ and to serve him. Our family moved to my father's home area in 1947; we went to a farm at Mullet Point, near Martins Bay. For a number of years I worked on the farm and enjoyed it, also during that time I completed a commercial art course and did some work locally.

At this time in my late teens there were some challenges that were part of my spiritual journey. I commenced the Crusader Group in Warkworth High and continued to lead that for about six years. Bible Class camps were important, especially for young people in a rural community, and these camps helped greatly in strengthening my faith. At this time a friend and I started a Girl's Brigade company in Warkworth.

After a Bible Class Camp I was encouraged by Rev. Reg Day to join a Mission Band that had started in the Circuit. The Mission Band provided a place of good training, the experience of preparing services, and overcoming my nervousness when standing in front of a congregation was good preparation for the future. Of that group four went into the Methodist ministry and the others continued to be active in their churches. Soon I was studying in the Local Preachers course, Theology, Homiletics, N.T., and in 1955 I was accredited as a Local Preacher.

Realising my need for further training I went to Bible Training Institute in 1958-59. There I spent two wonderful years, the studies sent me searching and thinking about why and what I believed, the sharing with other denominations was enriching and life-long friendships were made. The only other Methodist students there with me were Leslie Boseto and Sam Kuku of the Solomon Islands, Leslie now a Bishop of the United Church. During my second year in B.T.I. I had, rather reluctantly, gone to the Methodist Maori Mission Centre in Airedale Street; it was my first real contact with Maori life. Sister Nicholls was the deaconess there and she soon had me out to meet Maori families. At that time my friends were being accepted for Missions in P.N.G, Africa, India, but where was I going? I prayed that by the end of July I would have some idea, and on 31st July I received a letter from Rev. George Laurenson of the Methodist Home and Maori Mission. He wrote asking me if I would be interested in going to Dargaville and the Northern Wairoa district as a Deaconess supply in the Maori work. I knew very little about the work of a deaconess and it was certainly not what I had expected to be doing... but the Lord's word to me seemed to be, "This is the way, walk in it".

And so I went to Dargaville ... I went to minister to the Maori people! What a great deal I had to learn, my personal spiritual journey was about to be greatly enriched! How lovingly and with what understanding and care the people there ministered to me, a young Pakeha woman who knew so little about Maori life, so little about their faith. I was so blessed to have the guidance and friendship of Rev. Eru Te Tuhi and his wife Adelaide. For the first few weeks Rev. Eru travelled with me to every part of the Circuit, and along the way shared some precious things, the understanding the Maori had of God, and into that understanding came the Christian faith, and behind that their spirituality, so faith in Christ was able to be part of their deep understanding of God. It was important too for me to know something of the Ratana faith as there were many Ratana families in that area to minister to. At Pouto I stayed in the home of a Minita a iwi and his wife, and was greatly helped by their friendship and willingness to share.

The work of a deaconess had great variety, pastoral care of families, Te Roopu Wahine, Sunday School and youth groups, Bible Study, Sunday Services and preaching, and always miles and miles of travelling, safe travelling - some of the roads were awful.

Two years on at Dargaville I was sent to Christchurch for Deaconess training, and then it was back to share again with the Northern Wairoa people.

One day I returned to find a telegram. It simply said, "Appointed to Hokianga, B. Chrystall" so I knew I was on the move! I went to Taheke and to work in the South Hokianga region of the Tai Tokerau circuit. I soon got to know the people in that predominantly Maori area; this was helped by attending all events at the local Marae, glad and sad! That was the place to meet people and share with them, laugh and cry. My dear Hokianga kuia took me under their tuition for Maori language ... they were so patient! In Hokianga I came to understand more of what is meant by Maori theology, how Maori came to their understanding of God in their lives. I also got to understand more about myself! A friend and support to me was Sister Atawhai George, and she would congratulate me on being 'Maori', but then came the day when I wanted to acknowledge that I was Barbara and a Pakeha. I explained this to Atawhai and she understood, in fact I think she had really been pushing me to that point! I knew then that what was important was for me to be a Pakeha with an understanding of Maori. I also see that as an important part of my spiritual journey.

While in Hokianga I was given the opportunity to take a social workers course at Tirimoana, Porirua. That was a help as I was involved in quite a few situations where I needed a bit more expertise.

I loved the Hokianga, the people, being part of the Maori community life, and I appreciated the beautiful harbour and the rugged hills that encircle the valleys.

After nine good years it was time to move on, and I went to Rohe Potae, based at Otorohanga. I enjoyed the different life there, the forestry-milling settlements such as Barryville, though I was appalled when I first saw the devastation after a huge native

forest area was felled. I went out to Taharoa, where N.Z. Steel were taking out the rich black iron sand. From a tiny Maori settlement it had grown to about 80 families, of many different nationalities. Fortunately the industry did employ a large number of Maori men and women. It was interesting to watch what happened in that situation; Taharoa was isolated in that it was then about an hour and a half from a town. There were a good few pastoral needs there, and I got to know the families quite well. After just 3 years in Rohe Potae, I moved to Auckland as I needed to be closer to help with the care of my father. I had always hoped I wouldn't be sent to the city, but when the time came I felt that it was the right place. The area I worked in was Kelston, Henderson, Glen Eden, Mt Albert, Orakei, Helensville and Rewiti.

Wherever I went I kept meeting up with people I had been with in the other appointments; it was a continuing of earlier good relationships and being with families. As I had to adjust to city life so I could understand some of their problems. In Tamaki Circuit the Youth Work was important. I especially enjoyed the Rangitahi group that met at my place for a meal then Bible Study and lots of singing and music. Just as well my neighbour was an understanding Methodist! It has been encouraging to see young people from that group continue on with a deep commitment to Te Haahi Weteriana. Very significant in my own spiritual journey was the Bi-Cultural Journey. By 1983 I was the only non-Maori with Taha Maori. Then came the power sharing seminar at Whakatuora. It was difficult for Pakeha as it was for Maori. I felt very torn by feelings and loyalties and earlier understandings; it was a time of searching, honesty and hope.

My long service leave came soon after that, at the right time! In going overseas a priority for me was to search my family roots in Scotland and in Wales. In Scotland I found the house and farm where the family had lived for generations, and where great grandparents left from in 1859 to come to New Zealand. I walked on the land and felt the 'presence' of my forebears. I came home from the three months feeling very whole and also very conscious of God's presence as I had travelled, mostly on my own. My spiritual journey was on track! I will always be thankful for the Deaconess Order, for there was support, encouragement and wonderful friendship. However, there were questions and uncertainty that we really struggled with in trying to find our identity within the Church. Where did we belong? Were we Lay or Ordained? Most of us had been Dedicated by the Church and then later Ordained as deaconesses by the Church. Like many others I felt uncertain about my place in the wider Church (not Taha Maori). When in 1979 the Church decided that deaconesses could if they wished be Ordained as Presbyters I was very ready for that and felt that at last, by this, my ministry was put in order. The Ordination made little difference to the work I was required to do but it made a difference to me.

The Methodist Church has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. While I have been open to different emphasis, I know that at heart there is leaning to the evangelical. There are times when I have been disappointed and frustrated by the actions of the Church, but still I have a great love for the Methodist Church.

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And so onto another change in my life. In 1988 and after 10 years in the Tamaki Circuit I knew it was time to move on. I bought a home in Snells Beach, always a favourite place of mine, having holidayed there in my childhood. There I opened my home to be a place of Rest and Relaxation for women who needed time out from difficult situations. It was simply a supportive ministry to women, and I was available for them to share with. I continued this for 4-5 years.

Life continues with much of interest, from involvement in the Parish, to local groups such as Craft, Gardening and of course the walking groups. I see these as being part of my spiritual journey. It is important to be with people, to have contacts, there are always people in need and this is very evident at times of death or difficult family situations. I give thanks that sometimes I am the person there for them to share with.

Perhaps I haven't said very much about my 'spiritual journey' but for me this is what it is all about, living my life with Christ and being led by the Holy Spirit.

JILL RICHARDS : My Spiritual Journey

Rev. Jill Richards

Introduction

When Jill Richards moved from England to New Zealand in 1961, England's loss was New Zealand's gain. Jill has served the church (and in particular the Methodist Church) admirably over many years. In the late 70s she offered herself for non-stipendiary ministry and was ordained in 1981. Her background of community work has been a significant dimension of her ministry in Glen Innes Co-operating Parish, in Onehunga, Epsom and the Auckland Methodist Mission. For six years she was Regional Superintendent for the central area of the Auckland District and showed great care of the clergy in the area as well as the lay people. She was asked to share her spiritual journey with the Synod and this is what she contributed.

- M. Dine

The first occasion on which I remember 'God' being named was in the garden of a house in North London, when I was about four years old. The family was moving in, and my grandmother kept me amused with showing me how snap-dragons opened their 'mouths'; I asked, "Who made the flowers?" The reply 'God' was completely satisfactory, and I thought, "What a good idea to make the world so interesting and beautiful."



Rev. Jill Richards

My sister and I did not attend church or Sunday school, both our parents having had enough themselves as children it appears, though one of my mother's many songs was *Jesus bids us shine*. My father's family were Church of England and I was duly baptised at three months of age in the local church. My mother's side of the family

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were Methodist, and my grandmother would remind me that I was a 6th generation Methodist, the story being that a great great grandmother had been 'patted on the head' (or baptised?) by John Wesley himself. How true this is I don't know.

My religious upbringing was spasmodic ... grandma took me to church on the rare occasions of her visits to us ... and I can remember being really embarrassed at the first school I attended when everyone else recited the Lord's Prayer and I did not know it. As I was also told I was 'stupid' on my first day it is not surprising that I never liked school!

At about seven years of age I had my first and only 'revelation'. I had been very ill indeed with pneumonia following measles, and had it not been for 'M and B', one of the very first antibiotics available at the time, I would not be here to tell the tale. It was during World War two, streets in London were blacked out to deceive the enemy aircraft, and my father sat by me night after night, curtains tight shut, trying to will me back to health.

Sometime during the illness I had a dream ... I suppose I had been wondering about the meaning of life or such, and in the dream ... I had the answer... it made good sense "Of course" I thought to myself, woke up ... and could not remember the details at all! However, it gave me the assurance that "all would be well and all manner of things will be well".

I attended a girls grammar school for my secondary education, a school near Golders Green where half the girls were of the Jewish faith, indeed a number of them went to Israel to form kibbutzim as soon as they could. Many of their parents had fled the holocaust, and so we learned a lot about persecution and the importance they placed on the practice of their faith. Those of us who were nominally Christian were challenged by their questions to us. On the steep walk to school from the bus stop there was a wayside chapel proclaiming, "Perfect love casteth out fear". I wanted to be free from fear, as I was very shy and lacked self confidence.

When I was in the fourth form I was introduced to the local Methodist Church youth group by a younger girl I had been asked to take under my wing when she started as a third former. Being very shy, I went along rather than finding a good excuse to say "No", and found myself being given a task straightaway ... this led on to carol singing, then the choir, and Sunday school teaching ... I had to be one step ahead of my class! Manor Drive Methodist Church had a flourishing congregation, with lots of young families. Morning and evening worship, Sunday school in the afternoon, youth group and Bible class on Saturdays, plus Sunday School preparation class, choir practice, Guild and so on. My father was rather dubious about all this 'chapel' stuff ... but there was a great warmth and encouragement from everyone in the church 'family' (and we had class meetings too) and a feeling of belonging. In my early twenties, when I was working in a large hospital in north London, I was one of two reps to a 'Youth' Conference, and had another experience of God's presence ... a sense of connectedness with all life and being.

But I certainly was not ready for commitment! In our circuit we had a really 'old style' evangelist who stood in the pulpit, his preaching bands and black gown in wild disarray as he urged us to come forward and commit our young lives to Christ.... Some did. No way was I going to hand over my life, just as I was tasting the freedom of adulthood ..., thank you very much!

While I was working at the hospital I met John, the New Zealand doctor who was to become my husband. On our first date I mentioned my early education at a convent school ... and that was nearly the end of our relationship, as John's family were against 'mixed marriages'! Fortunately we were displaying a poster in our front window advertising a performance at the Methodist Church of *Messiah* that Easter. So that was sorted out. We were married later in the year and came to live in Auckland.

My father-in-law was very impressed that the Dominion Road minister called to see them at Milton Road before we had even arrived! And then at Mission Bay, as we moved in to temporary accommodation near John's practice, George Trebiico was there to assure us of the church's warm welcome.

I must pay tribute to the Women's Fellowship, or rather the 'Fireside' group there that looked after me so well in those first difficult years of a strange country. John's many duties, no answer phones, cell phones or pagers in general practice medicine in those days ... the phone must always be answered by a real person, and we found regular church attendance very difficult as John was 'on call' for three weekends out of four. Leonie Verry introduced me to the writings of Michel Quoist and I took a correspondence course in biblical studies (and got an A!) and attended a Bible study group with my preschoolers!

The church union movement was very strong, and Ted Grounds, by now the minister at Mission Bay, asked me to go on an ecumenical panel, and I got involved with several interchurch activities, led the bible class when Owen Woodfield came, and then started another phase of my journey.

I had been a play centre supervisor in Freemans Bay in the days when it was a slum (1969-70) and had come face to face with women and children in circumstances which I thought did not exist in New Zealand... So when the city council set up the first Citizens Advice Bureau, I was in on the training course and one of the first workers in the Glen Innes bureau in 1972. Conditions in Glen Innes were no better than in Freemans Bay, and I was soon encouraged to do follow-up family work, run school holiday programmes and help run the fledgling community centre.

Here I can really see the hand of God operating through the community advisor, Ian Shirley, who pushed me to do things I would never have thought possible ... including a two-nights-a-week for two years, community studies course. This exposed me to the thinking and language of social development and community work, and to a lot of people, including Mary Astley-Ford, Warren Lindberg, Gavin Rennie, Bruce Hucker and Sam Sefuiva ... everything in my way of life was challenged. About this time I

transferred my membership to St Mary's, Glen Innes Co-operating Parish, and after a period 'in the desert' when I knew a discontent but no answer from God for a while, found myself one of the first home setting non stipendiary candidates for the Methodist ministry. Accepted after a roller coaster late application, rushed through with special meetings to hurry things along (wouldn't happen today!) and a nightmare of an assessment weekend, with Dave Mullan and others' tidy minds blown by the onset of several determined women, including Lots Clarke and Audrey Dickinson ... we knew we were called ... the church had yet to find out what it would mean!

I had a wonderful time at College ... living so close and working part time as a community volunteer in Glen Innes ... the lectures and practical working out of theology interacted and excited me every day. Keith Rowe was principal, and the late J.J. Lewis gave his last year of Old Testament lectures. We selected the topics and areas in which we felt deficient and skipped over others which had been covered in previous training or experience. My intention, and acceptance as a candidate, was for community ministry ... so my sacramental and preaching studies were not a priority, until, early in my second year, expecting the course to be five years, Keith Rowe asked me one day what I would think of being ordained that November! Selwyn Dawson was minister at Glen Innes, his health was a concern, and the church needed a presbyter who would not strain the budget. It would not happen these days, but ready or not I was ordained at Durham Street that year, 1981. On the day of my induction at St Mary's I took the funeral of a Highway 61 gang member. I will never forget the look on the undertaker's face as we drove to the Otahuhu Cemetery, accompanied by hundreds of leatherclad bikies, nor their tears. And a year later they were back for the unveiling.

Many times I asked God what she was about, as I stood at the back of the church on a Sunday morning What words can I offer, what strength and encouragement for these people gathered in hope, ... no answer, except perhaps an echo of my thoughts (you led me here "I led you here and will give you what is needed").

And so it has been for me to this day ... never really my choice, only glimpses of the next step on the way. From Glen Innes to the Mission, from Mission to Onehunga and back, community outreach, pastoral care, enabling and listening. Inspiration from so many people, frequently from those with least in material terms. Sometimes from those wonderful fathers and mothers in God, often from committed lay people, friends and colleagues, books and poems, music, creation, family.

So, where am I now ... more sure about the bases of faith, open to new ways of being and thinking, open to being mistaken and making mistakes, certain that 'being' is more important than 'doing'... and that life is precious ... whether it is that of a grandchild with every advantage, a young person with everything stacked against them, or an elderly person with dementia and her caregivers, those of all faiths and of none.

At a retreat, just before I knew my call was inescapable, these words leapt out of the page for me. And from time to time I test my practice against them. Words of Jesus:

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*Chosen to bring good news to the poor,
freedom for prisoners sight for the blind,
liberation for those who suffer.*

And I ask ... am I good news?

And this poem: *LITTLE GIDDING* part v - T. S. Eliot

*With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this calling
we shall not cease from exploration
and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, remembered gate
when the last of earth left to discover
is that which was the beginning;
at the source of the longest river
the voice of the hidden waterfall
and the children in the apple-tree
not known, because not looked for
but heard, half heard, in the stillness
between two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now, always –
a condition of complete simplicity
(costing not less than everything)
and all shall be well
and all manner of thing shall be well
when the tongues of the flame are in-folded
into the crowned knot of fire
and the fire and the rose are one.*

A 'LITTLE BETHEL IN EPSOM, AUCKLAND'¹³

Helen B. Laurenson MA

In 2002, the Epsom & Eden District Historical Society began to research the history of Epsom, Auckland, with the intention of publishing the story of that suburb from its earliest times. Mount Eden, a former borough, already had two histories, but Epsom's affairs were managed by a Road Board until it was amalgamated with Auckland City in 1917. No comprehensive history of the suburb had ever been written.



Helen B. Laurenson MA

Since the project was to be a group effort under editor Dr Graham Bush, and churches are an important part of a district's history, it seemed appropriate that a Methodist member of the team should provide the narrative of that denomination's heritage in Epsom. At the time of its 90th anniversary in 2001, former resident of the district, and lifelong Methodist, Frank Paine, had written a short history of the Epsom Methodist Church at Greenwood's Comer, which opened in 1911. There was, however, little information about a very early Wesleyan presence in the district, other than that offered by the Rev. William Morley in his *History of Methodism in New Zealand*, published in 1900, which stated:

In June 1847 ...a class meeting was started at Epsom. In that locality were a few Devon and Cornish families, and shortly afterwards a little church was built there for their accommodation. It was an unpretentious structure, but for

¹³ **Genesis 28:16-19.**

*about eighteen years was found to be a Bethel indeed. As the people were supposed to be otherwise provided for, it was sold in about 1865.*¹⁴

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Rev. William Morley's brief description of one of the earliest places where Pakeha Wesleyans gathered for worship in the isthmus of Tamaki-Makau-Rau, had already become an historical narrative - a little tale about a 'little church' - with a clear beginning, a pleasing note of scriptural rhetoric, and a neat, but somewhat tentative ending. The passing of three decades had already begun to blur recollection of the story. A hundred years later, this Wesleyan Chapel presented a mystery that needed to be explored if a fuller history of a Methodist presence before 1911 was to be included in any meta-narrative of the Epsom district.

In 1841, a noteworthy year for Methodist history in Auckland, there were few Wesleyans among the almost two thousand Europeans in the town. There was already, however, a significant Wesleyan Maori presence in the Epsom district. Chief Te Rangitaahua Ngamuka whose baptismal name was Epiha Putini, (named after the Rev. Jabez Bunting), was a loyal Weteriana who lived at Pehiakura on the Manukau Peninsula where, by 1842, he had built a large raupo chapel. He, together with his hapu, also spent time tending their gardens on the slopes of Maungakiekie, later to be also known as One Tree Hill.¹⁵ It is recorded that Rev. James Buller had a congregation of eighty at Maungakiekie, in the district of Epsom, on at least the first Sunday morning, 19 September 1841, during his important visit to the newly designated capital city of Auckland, from the mission station at Tangiteroria.¹⁶

According to 1842 Auckland Police Census records for Europeans, there were fifty-eight who gave their denomination as 'Wesleyan'. Some of those pioneer colonists, including Captain James Stone, John A Langford, and Florence Gardiner, had initially met for worship in a saw-mill at Mechanics Bay.¹⁷ This was one of the places where Buller was recorded as preaching in the afternoon of Sunday 19 and 26 September and again on 3 October 1841, during his brief but significant stay in the town. The growing congregation moved to a raupo building in Princes Street, and finally, the first chapel in High Street was opened in 1843.

In that same year there were seventy-six Wesleyans listed in the Police Census for Auckland. In August 1844, when the number had increased to eighty-two, the baptism of James, son of James and Jenet [Janet] Miller of Epsom, by the Rev. Thomas Buddle, was recorded among the names on the first page of the High Street Wesleyan

¹⁴ William Morley, *The History of Methodism in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1900, p.202.

¹⁵ Doug Burt, 'West Franklin Looks Both Ways', *WHS(NZ) Journal*, 1999, Proceeding No. 69, p.27, notes that the chapel was 'spacious' (about 40 ft by 32 ft) and lofty '.

¹⁶ The place where morning worship was held on 26 September 1841 was the only one not recorded in James Buller's *Preaching Plan*. It was possibly also at Maungakiekie.

¹⁷ 'Captain' was a given name, 'Langford' has been perpetuated as 'Langsford' in many secondary sources, 'Florence', was male, named after the Italian city.

Chapel Baptismal Register. James Miller, an engineer, and his family were not, however, registered in the Police Census for Epsom in 1844, when four members of the Osborne family were the first European Wesleyans recorded as living in that district. From details of the Census entry for Joseph Osborne, a farmer, living in a raupo house in Epsom with three others, it would appear that those four Wesleyans were in fact, himself, his wife and two little girls, the latter both between the ages of two and seven years.¹⁸ According to the handwritten Census lists Alexander 'Mair', a 'farm servant' with a family of seven, including five young children, had also settled in a raupo house in Epsom in 1843, but their denominational affiliation was given as Church of Scotland. Alexander Muir, his wife Mary Stewart Muir and their children had arrived in Auckland with other Scottish settlers, including James and Janet Miller (nee Laurie), in the *Duchess of Argyle* on 9 October 1842.¹⁹ By 1845, however, Alexander Muir and his family, who had by then increased to nine, were recorded among twenty-eight of the settlers in Epsom who recorded their denomination as 'Wesleyan'.²⁰

In that same year there was a considerable increase in the number of European Wesleyans settling in Auckland, with two hundred and sixty-eight listed in the Police Census, and Wesleyan activities in the colonial township and surrounding districts centred on the High Street Chapel. As well as the Muirs and the Osbornes, Wesleyans listed in Epsom included the Barrs and the Bycrofts. Those who had chosen to settle in the relative isolation of this district between the townships of Onehunga and Auckland farmed fertile, but stony, volcanic soil stretching on either side of the road which linked the Manukau and Waitemata Harbours.²¹ This winding and rutted thoroughfare, little more than a pathway, most of it muddy in winter and dusty in summer, carried an increasing volume of horse-drawn and foot traffic. Despite its difficulties, it was already an important route of communication between the two ports, but travel to the heart of Auckland for attendance at worship or meetings involved long journeys from rural Epsom, about four miles out of town.

From existing records it would seem that Wesleyans in Epsom were not the first to recognise the need to build a place of worship in that district, for in September 1846 St Andrew's Church had been opened. Research would indicate that the small building

¹⁸ The following year only three persons are recorded as living in the raupo house. Apart from his wife there is only one female who is between the age of seven and fourteen. There is no entry in the column for 'Deaths'.

¹⁹ The spelling of 'Stewart', as given in the genealogical history is now being revised and may well be 'Stuart'.

²⁰ The entry in the Police Census is spelt 'Muire'.

²¹ William Swainson, in his *Auckland, the Capital of New Zealand, and the Country Adjacent: Including Some Account of the Gold Discovery in New Zealand*, published in London in 1853, wrote confidently on p.36, "One half of the road across the isthmus, from Auckland to Onehunga, has been Macadamized, and the remaining half is good during the greater part of the year". Other accounts of the road are less sanguine.

that served as Epsom's first Anglican church for over twenty years was probably prefabricated at St John's College and transported in sections across country to its new site in what was known as School, and later, St Andrew's Road.²² In 1996, St Andrew's parishioners celebrated 150 years of "Christian worship, learning and witness" on this same site in Epsom.²³

The Wesleyans, however, were soon to establish a cause in the area. By June 1847 a class meeting with six members had already begun in Epsom under the leadership of Thomas Somerville, who was among the early trustees of the High Street Chapel. Born in 1823, Thomas Somerville had arrived in Sydney in 1840, travelling to New Zealand in 1841.²⁴ His modest crop of wheat, 210 bushels, grown in Remuera in 1844, and recorded in the year's Police Census under 'Produce, Stock etc' was to indicate the nature of his future business interests.

Emma Kitchen, Thomas' future wife, and her mother Elizabeth, a dressmaker, had arrived in Auckland from Sydney on the Sophia Pate on 13 July 1841. This ship was wrecked a few weeks later at the entrance to the Kaipara Harbour, with all but one of the passengers losing their lives. One of the prime reasons for Rev, James Buller's significant journey from Tangiteroria, after burying the dead and making thorough inquiries, was in order to ensure that the Captain and crew were brought to justice for pillaging cargo and the personal effects of the passengers.

Thomas Somerville and Emma Kitchen together with Mrs Elizabeth Kitchen were among the first Sunday School teachers at the Auckland Wesleyan Sunday Schools, instituted on 8 October 1843 at the High Street Chapel. When their first child, Elizabeth Susan, was born in February 1847, Thomas and Emma gave their address as Eden Grove, on property in Mt Eden, probably leased from Rev Walter Lawry who had married them on 14 May 1846. William Mason's house 'Eden Grove' on farmland, bounded by Mt Eden and Penrhyn Roads, had been destroyed by fire on 6 December 1845.²⁵ He sold his extensive holdings in this area in May 1846, and it would seem that Rev. Walter Lawry was the purchaser for in the early 1850s the whole of the farm previously owned by Mason was under Lawry's name.²⁶

²² Rory Sweetman, *Spire on the Hill: A History of St Andrew's Church in the Epsom Community*, Auckland, 1996, p.25.

²³ Sweetman, p. 7.

²⁴ Thomas Somerville is not to be confused with Archibald Somerville, an Irishman, who was also born in 1823, and emigrated from Ireland to Australia in March 1850. There has been no evidence so far of their being related. Both were active in the Wesleyan Church in Auckland.

²⁵ John Stacpoole, *William Mason: The First New Zealand Architect*, Auckland, 1971, p. 51.

²⁶ Hugh Oliver, *Land Ownership and Subdivision in Mount Eden 1840-1930*, Auckland 1982, pp. 4, 8.

In 1846 Messrs Somerville and Cooper were appointed to conduct strangers to seats in the High Street Chapel. Emma's mother, Elizabeth Kitchen, rented three places in a pew at High Street from 1848; from 1851, Thomas appears to have taken over this arrangement, and later, from 1854, increasing the number of 'sittings' to six. The family grew with the addition of George in 1849, Charlotte in 1856 and John in 1859. Thomas James, born in 1854, died aged 15 months or 25 May 1855.²⁷ In the 1854 Electoral Roll, Thomas Somerville was listed as a corn merchant, leasing land in the 'Northern Estate' of Auckland for grain growing but actually living in the City of Auckland. In that year he also appears on a list of 'Burgesses of Auckland' and was standing for election as a member of the Auckland City Council. By 1856 he was selling corn from premises on the west side of Queen Street, almost opposite those of Archibald Somerville, a grocer and also a Wesleyan. Throughout these years Thomas Somerville was actively involved with the Wesleyan Chapel in Epsom.

In the Rev. Walter Lawry's *Auckland Circuit Book*, Epsom first appeared in Quarterly records for 28 June 1847, with a significant Quarterly Collection amounting to £6.19.4, six members, and class and ticket money of 11/-. This would indicate that the group were probably meeting together by the beginning of April 1847 and it is possible that work may have already begun on the Chapel. By the end of the next Quarter, 22 September 1847, Thomas Somerville still had six members in his class, but after that initial effort Epsom's Quarterly Collections were not recorded for some years. According to Rev. E W Hames, the Quarterly Collections were for the Circuit Fund.²⁸ Class and ticket money, in relation to membership, provided an indication of the congregation's strength and went towards the cost of supporting ministry in the Circuit. Although initially there was no mention of others leading class meetings apart from Thomas Somerville, membership of the little Epsom community of faith steadily increased. By September 1850 Somerville had nineteen class members, with one 'on trial', and class and ticket money had increased to £6.16.0.

Although the date when the group of settlers did open their small chapel on the northern side of Derby Street, which was at times known as Watties Lane, Albert Road and currently, Alba Road, still remains unclear, research has established where it was built. This was on land presently occupied by street numbers 29 and 31 Alba Road. The portion of farmland on which this Wesleyan chapel was situated was a section which had been purchased at auction for £31.1.3 on 1 September 1841 by George Graham, a government employee and works engineer, whose denomination, as

²⁷ There may have been other children. These names, apart from Thomas James, are listed in the High Street Baptismal Register. His death notice appears in the Southern Cross, 29 May 1855.

²⁸ E W Hames, *100 Years in Pitt Street: Centenary History of the Pitt Street Methodist Church, Auckland, Auckland, 1966, p.10.*

recorded in the Police Census, was Church of England.²⁹ Until the 1970s his small cottage, which also served as Epsom's first store, stood nearby on the corner of Alba Road and The Drive. George Graham was not recorded in the Police Census as living in Epsom, for he owned other properties in the township of Auckland and the cottage he owned was let to George Wood and his family. Although George Graham's denomination was recorded as Church of England, he nevertheless took a role in Wesleyan affairs. At times his address was given in Queen Street or at the Albert Barracks, close to the High Street Chapel. A George Graham was appointed Treasurer of the Committee when the revised Dudley Wesleyan Sunday School Rules were adopted on 26 April 1844 - a meeting in the High Street Chapel at which Thomas Somerville was also among the ten men present.

The modest Wesleyan building was erected on George Graham's farmland at a date before mid 1850, for the wedding of John and Isabella Barr is recorded as taking place in the Chapel in June 1850. A Preaching Plan for the first Quarter of 1851, dating from 19 January and ending in April, had Epsom services at 1 lam and 2.30pm on each Sunday. Preachers included the Revs Buddle, Fletcher, and Reid, with laymen Messrs Gardiner, Culpan, Elliott, Russell, Gittos and Jackson.³⁰ At both Epsom and Onehunga a collection was taken at one service during the quarter for 'Local Preachers' Horse Hire'.



Rev. Thomas Buddle in 1866 – Photo: Morley p273

²⁹ Lot 47, Section 29, comprising eight acres, three roods and 20 perches were advertised in the *Government Gazette* by notices dated 24th June, 1841.

³⁰ 'Plan of the Wesleyan Preachers for the Auckland Circuit, 1851', Trinity College Archives, Kinder Library, Auckland.

PLAN OF THE WESLEYAN PREACHERS FOR THE AUCKLAND CIRCUIT 1851.

* Ye a little while the light is with you.

* He that hath my word in him speak my word.

PLACES	Time	JANUARY			FEBRUARY			MARCH			APRIL			PREACHERS
		1 st	15 th	31 st	1 st	15 th	28 th	1 st	15 th	31 st	1 st	15 th	30 th	
Auckland, New Chapel	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	J. WRYA M. COLE W. PITCHER G. TAIT S. GRASSMAN S. REED T. COLLIER S. A. WORTH S. BERRY T. BROWN T. GYRON W. JENNINGS
" Sunday School	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
" West Chapel	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
" Wesleyan	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Essex	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Kawau	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Oranga	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Okaiwi	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Howick	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Foreman's Bay	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Eden	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	

NATIVE SERVICES

NATIVE PREACHERS

PLACES	Time	1 st	15 th	31 st	1 st	15 th	31 st	1 st	15 th	31 st	1 st	15 th	31 st	PREACHERS
Auckland	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19 Samuel Ngarewa
" School	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	14. E. Baglemon
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13. T. Davis
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12. J. Oates
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17. James Maitland
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	18. Samuel Dyer
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19. Philip J.
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	20. Tait
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	21. W. Barton
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	22. Morgan
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	23. Farnsworth
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	24. Madrak
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	25. Deen
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	26. Dyer
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	27. J. A. Rogers
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	28. Harbison
" "	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	29. Mark

REFERENCES

C.—Circuit Collection. S. M.—Society Meeting. T.—Tribunal of Taku. B.—Baptism.
 Q.—Quarterly Collection. Q. M.—Quarterly Meeting—April 1, at 2, p.m.—Local Preachers' Meeting at 6. A. H.—Collection for—Laws P. H.—Preachers' Home Plan.

Wesleyan Preaching Plan 1851 Photo: Trinity College Archives, Kinder Library, Auckland



Looking west from One Tree Hill across Eden/Epsom to Mt Albert, 1905. Onslow Ave at right, Epsom Hall is visible at extreme right on Manukau Rd, opposite Onslow Ave.

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On Monday 17 February 1851 Alexander and Mary Muir's daughter Isabella married Robert Coxhead in the Epsom Wesleyan Chapel.³¹ It is thought that Robert Coxhead had travelled to New Zealand on the *Jane Gifford*, sister ship of the *Duchess of Argyle*, which arrived in Auckland at the same time. There are records of the marriages of John Robertson to Mary Crowther in the Chapel on 17 June 1851, with the Rev. Thomas Buddle officiating both at this wedding and at the marriage of William Kemp and Sarah Spikeman in December of that same year. By the end of 1851, membership figures for Thomas Somerville's class meeting were a steady sixteen, with one 'on trial'. In a letter of 9 October 1851, Rev. Thomas Buddle wrote that apart from High Street, "we have two small chapels in the country, one on the midst of a rural population at Epsom where we have good attendances and a small class ...". If Buddle regarded about sixteen members as 'a small class' then attendances at worship may have been filling the little building. By the Preaching Plan for 1852, Epsom's services had been brought forward by half-an-hour to half-past ten and two o'clock. On 14 April 1853 when the marriage of William Bailey Baker and Elizabeth Harriet Green took place in the Epsom Chapel, with the Rev. Joseph H Fletcher officiating, Thomas

³¹ Genealogical records supplied by Frank Paine, whose maternal great grand-parents were Robert and Isabella. Robert Coxhead came from Wiltshire and was reported to have worked in copper mines in New Zealand before marrying.

ORIGINAL REGISTER.

1857, Marriage solemnized at *Epsom*, in the Parish of *Wotton*, in the County of *Surrey* 1857

No.	When Married.	Names and Surnames.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	After Name or Name.	Consent by whom given, or Judge's Order.
66	1551	<i>John Robertson</i> <i>Mary Crowther</i>	20 14	<i>Single</i> <i>Single</i>	<i>Tradesman</i> <i>Domestic</i>	<i>Orchard</i> <i>Home</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>Father</i>

Married in the Wesleyan Chapel at *Epsom* aforesaid, after Banns, by me, *Thomas Buddle* Wesleyan Minister.

This Marriage was solemnized between us { *John Robertson* } in the presence of us { *William Phipps*
 { *Mary Crowther* } { *James* }

We, and , do hereby severally, solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare, that on the day of , in the year , or thereabout, at , we, the said and , intermarried with each other, and that we have had issue of the said marriage children, and no more, namely:—

(Signed) {

Marriage Certificate John Robertson to Mary Crowther

ORIGINAL REGISTER.

1857, Marriage solemnized at *Epsom*, in the Parish of *Wotton*, in the County of *Surrey* 1857

No.	When Married.	Names and Surnames.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	After Name or Name.	Consent by whom given, or Judge's Order.
74	1552 1551	<i>William Kemp</i> <i>Sarah Spikeman</i>	21 17	<i>Single</i> <i>Single</i>	<i>Tradesman</i> <i>Domestic</i>	<i>Orchard</i> <i>Home</i>	<i>James</i>	<i>Father</i>

Married in the Wesleyan Chapel at *Epsom* aforesaid, after Banns, by me, *Thomas Buddle* Wesleyan Minister.

This Marriage was solemnized between us { *William Kemp* } in the presence of us { *George Humphreys*
 { *Sarah Spikeman* } { *Mary Ann Kemp* }

We, and , do hereby severally, solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare, that on the day of , in the year , or thereabout, at , we, the said and , intermarried with each other, and that we have had issue of the said marriage children, and no more, namely:—

(Signed) {

Marriage Certificate William Kemp to Sarah Spikeman

Somerville had fourteen in his class meeting.³² Wesleyan weddings in the district, however, did not always take place in the Chapel. On 4 May 1853, the Rev. Thomas Buddle officiated at the marriage of William John Young to Jane Runciman in the Runciman's house in Epsom Road.

³² This marriage is also recorded in the *New Zealander*, 20 April 1853.
 Wesleyan Historical Society (NZ) Publication #79

By August 1854 when Epsom was listed on the Preaching Plan for Sunday services morning and afternoon, which would not have required any form of artificial lighting in the little chapel, Onehunga Wesleyans were holding a service every second Sunday evening, as well as a morning and afternoon service each Sabbath.³³ On Monday 25

ORIGINAL REGISTER.

1854, Marriages solemnized at *Epsom*, in the Parish of *St. Andrew's*, in the County of *Eden* 1854

No.	When Married.	Names and Surnames.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	After Dinner or License.	Consent by whom given, or Judge's Order.
91	April 10 1854	William Bailey } Elizabeth Harriet Green }	25 24	Soldier Spinster	Farmer	Auckland Auckland	License	By consent of Parents

Married in the Wesleyan Chapel at *Epsom* after ~~License~~ ^{License} by me, *Joseph Thomas Hobbs*, Wesleyan Minister.

This Marriage was solemnized between us *William Bailey Baker* in the presence of us *James Green*
Elizabeth Harriet Green and *Maria Baker*

We, *William Bailey Baker* and *Elizabeth Harriet Green*, do hereby severally, solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare that on the *10* day of *April*, in the year *1854*, or thereabout, at *Epsom*, we, the said *William Bailey Baker* and *Elizabeth Harriet Green*, intermarried with each other, and that we have had issue of the said marriage children, and no more, namely:—

(Signed) {

Marriage Certificate William Bailey Baker to Elizabeth Harriet Green

ORIGINAL REGISTER.

1854, Marriages solemnized at *Epsom Road*, in the Parish of *St. Andrew's*, in the County of *Eden* 1854

No.	When Married.	Names and Surnames.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	After Dinner or License.	Consent by whom given, or Judge's Order.
93	May 14 1854	William John Young } Jane Runciman }	22 32	Butcher Spinster	Farmer	Auckland Epsom Road	License	Parents

Married in the Wesleyan Chapel at *Epsom Road* after ~~License~~ ^{License} by me, *Thomas Briddle*, Wesleyan Minister.

This Marriage was solemnized between us *William John Young* in the presence of us *J. C. Edwards*
Jane Runciman and *James Runciman*

We, *William John Young* and *Jane Runciman*, do hereby severally, solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare that on the *14* day of *May*, in the year *1854*, or thereabout, at *Epsom Road*, we, the said *William John Young* and *Jane Runciman*, intermarried with each other, and that we have had issue of the said marriage children, and no more, namely:—

(Signed) {

Marriage Certificate William John Young to Jane Runciman

³³ 'Plan of the Wesleyan Preachers for the Auckland Circuit, 1854', in Frank Paine, 'Summon up remembrance of things past': Epsom Methodist Church 1911-2001, Auckland, 2001, p.[2].

September 1854, at the Auckland Quarterly Meeting held in the Vestry Room at the High Street Chapel, Thomas Somerville instigated the move to form an Auckland Circuit which would include Epsom, and a separate Onehunga or Manukau Circuit centred at the port of Onehunga. Quarterly Collections for Epsom, as well as class and ticket money, again appeared in the records for that meeting in September 1854. Indeed class and ticket contributions were the subject of some discussion at the following Auckland Quarterly Meeting in December 1854 when it was moved that at least an average of 6d per week be given by the members of each class.³⁴ Class membership at Epsom fluctuated, reaching twenty in March 1855, a year during which Thomas Somerville was recorded as regularly attending meetings of the High Street Chapel Trustees, and then dropping to nine, with eight 'removed' in September 1855.³⁵ Despite the reduction in numbers, the Quarterly Collection of £11.2.5. recorded in that month was the highest ever, but class and ticket money were down to £3.14.6.



Rev. Joseph Fletcher and Mrs. Fletcher Photo: Morley p275

In the Preaching Plan for the Quarter beginning October 1855 and ending in January 1856, Epsom still had two services on a Sunday, with the Rev. Fletcher leading

³⁴ Joanne Robinson, *Werrington to Waiuku: A History of the Barriballs of Waiuku*, Auckland, 1997, p.22 quotes an 1852 letter written by Ann Barriball, in which butter was 1/6 per pound, cheese, 1/-, beef and mutton from 5d to 6d a pound, pork 4d, bacon and hams, 8d per pound, and eggs 1d per dozen. By 1856, according to the *Bateman New Zealand Encyclopedia*, 2nd edn, Auckland, 1987, p.614, the price of lamb and mutton was still around 6d per pound, and sugar 5d per pound, salt 2d per pound and rice 3d a pound.

³⁵ In 1853, Thomas and Archibald Somerville are both listed as Trustees, with T Somerville regularly attending meetings of Trustees of High Street Chapel through 1855. A Somerville continued, but T Somerville's name does not appear after the end of 1855.

worship on the afternoon of Christmas Day.³⁶ The last recording of Thomas Somerville's name as the Epsom class leader was in the minutes of the Quarterly Meeting in June 1856. By September, class leader 'Bro.' Boon, probably Alfred Boon, a Wesleyan builder of Three Kings, had taken over, and he continued in this role for a year.

In June 1857, 'Bro.' Barriball assumed leadership of a group of by then only four members, with two 'on trial'. Class and ticket money was 17/- and the Quarterly Collection 10/-.³⁷ Wesleyans Charles and Ann Barriball and their three children had travelled from North Tammerton in Cornwall and arrived in Auckland on the *Duke of Westminster*, 1 April 1843. Following their arrival in Auckland, they attended the High Street Chapel. Joanne Robinson, in her family history *Werrington to Waiuku: A History of the Barriballs of Waiuku*, states that by 1845 Charles and Ann had moved to property named Eden Grove, in Mt Eden, leasing a block of land from the Rev. Walter Lawry, and six more children were born between that year and March 1856.³⁸ It is thought that the younger members of the family may have been baptized at the Epsom Chapel.³⁹ The Preaching Plan for the first Quarter of 1851 allocates the afternoon service on the first Sunday in each month to the sacrament of Baptism.



Mrs. Ann and Mr. Charles Barriball
Photo: *History of the Barriballs of Waiuku*

³⁶ 'Plan of the Wesleyan Preachers in the Auckland and Manukau Circuits, 1855', Trinity College Archives, Kinder Library, Auckland.

³⁷ Barriball's name is spelt variously as 'Baribebe, Barribell, Barraball, Barrabal, and Bariball'.

³⁸ Although Robinson states that the Barriballs leased land from Lawry at 'Eden Grove' in 1845, John Stacpoole, *William Mason: the First New Zealand Architect*, Auckland, 1971, p.47, writes that Rev. Walter Lawry bought Mason's mill in 1847 and held the property for five years and on pp.51-2 states that in May 1846 Mason's farm had been sold, [presumably to Rev. Walter Lawry].

³⁹ Robinson, p.24.

On 15 July 1856 just four months after Charles and Ann Barriball's youngest son was born, the Rev. Joseph Fletcher officiated at the marriage of their eldest son, John, to Delia Bridget Fewry, who had arrived in New Zealand from Ireland, via Australia, earlier in that same year. Delia had been baptized into the Roman Catholic faith, and the wedding ceremony was held at the home of the bridegroom's parents in Eden Grove, rather than in the Chapel. By June 1857, John would have been almost twenty-one years of age.⁴⁰ We do not know whether 'Bro. Barriball' was in fact Charles or John, but under the leadership of either the Epsom class meeting was strengthened, with nine members recorded in December 1857 and March 1858. Twenty-one-year-old farmer, Thomas McQuoid, who had lived for six years in Epsom, and seventeen-year-old Augusta Bryant, daughter of Augusta Ann O'Brien Bryant, who had been only four months in Epsom, obtained an 'Intention to Marry Certificate' dated 22 August 1858 for the Wesleyan Church Epsom. By December 1858, however, class membership had dropped to six and steadily declined thereafter until in December 1859 there were only three, with class and ticket money of 15/- and a Quarterly Collection of 18/-. After that date there was no class leader's name recorded. On 30 May 1856 Charles Barriball had taken up land at Waiuku by Crown Grant; it is not known how long it took to clear the property and build a home for the family, but by 1860 the Barriballs were no longer involved in the Epsom Chapel, since they were supporting the growth of the Wesleyan cause at Waiuku.

A Preaching Plan for the Quarter from December 1860 to February 1861, showed that the Epsom Chapel was holding only one service on a Sunday morning at 11 am, and this pattern continued through 1861 until at least October 1864.⁴¹ In that year local preachers led the services at Epsom, with several travelling from Auckland, and Messrs Street from Parnell, Wrigley from Newmarket, and Redfern from as far away as The Whau. At services on 24 August 1864 it can be observed that most congregations in the Auckland Circuit were having a collection "for Worn-out Ministers and Ministers' Widows".

The Epsom Chapel congregation too, seemed to be 'worn-out', for no class and ticket money or Quarterly Collections were recorded in the Circuit Book by 1867, and Epsom dropped off the list of Preaching Places in that invaluable record. On 21 October 1868, Rev. James Buller officiated at the marriage of Francis Lawry to Sarah Davies, daughter of inn-keeper John Davies, in the Prince Albert Hotel on the corner of the street in which the chapel was situated, with William Gardner, a farmer, serving as one of the witnesses. The nearby chapel was not used. By 1869-1870 'Epsom' still

⁴⁰ Charles and Ann were married on 31 March 1836. John's date of birth is not known but he was christened on 21 August 1836, Robinson, pp.12, 38.

⁴¹ 'Wesleyan Preachers' Plan for the Auckland Circuit, 1860-61'; 'Wesleyan Methodist Church, Auckland, Preachers' Plan 1861'; 'Wesleyan Methodist Preachers' Plan for the Auckland Circuit, 1863'; 'Wesleyan Methodist Preachers' Plan for the Auckland Circuit, 1864', Trinity College Archives, Kinder Library, Auckland.

appeared on the printed Preaching Plan, but with no worship leaders appointed - each Sunday's slot was blank. No longer were preachers and congregation regularly making their way to the Epsom Chapel on Sunday mornings, no longer were services held or hymns sung, infants baptized or weddings solemnized in this 'little Bethel'.⁴²

In the Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting, held in Pitt Street Church on Monday 27 September 1869 and chaired by the Rev. Buller, Bro. French proposed that the permission of the Conference be asked to sell the Epsom Chapel. Bro. Edson seconded the proposal, and it was carried. Permission was duly sought and the Australasian Wesleyan Conference 'sanctioned' the sale of the property in 1870.

The Superintendent reported to the September Quarterly Meeting in 1871, that the Epsom Chapel had been sold. The Wesleyans of Epsom no longer met together in their own district, and could not therefore claim the same continuous presence of witness in that community as the Anglicans at St Andrews. A silence descended upon the little Wesleyan Chapel for some time, and for forty years there was to be no Wesleyan or Methodist Church in Epsom.

In listening to that silence, several possible reasons, including that of 'situation', as given by the Australasian Wesleyan Conference, can be offered in an attempt to account for the decision not to continue to maintain a Wesleyan place of worship in Epsom at that time.

The site of the Chapel, which was down a side road, off the main route between Onehunga and Auckland, was not particularly commanding. The small building would not have been very obvious even to passers-by who might have broken their journey at the variously named Epsom, Prince Albert, or later, Gwynne's Hotel, which from the 1840s stood on the southern corner of the street where it joined the Onehunga Road. St Andrew's Anglican Church, although not on the main road either, was nevertheless sited on another important thoroughfare, and was, as the title of its history *The Spire on the Hill* suggests, more clearly visible in the neighbourhood.

The justification for the sale, given by the Australasian Wesleyan Conference, was "in order to build in a better situation" and a warning against impulsive moves to erect further chapels was given by that Conference.⁴³ On the same page, immediately after "Sale of Property" follows a Resolution that:

In order to prevent rash and premature undertakings in Chapel Building, which must prove a source of embarrassment to the Connexion, and be

⁴² 'Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church: the Preachers' Plan of Appointment, the Circuit of Auckland, N.Z.I 869-70', Trinity College Archives, Kinder Library, Auckland.

⁴³ Other property recommended by the respective District Meetings in Bathurst, Goulburn, and in South Australia, together with two acres of land at Spring Grove in Nelson, New Zealand and "the unoccupied portion of the Stuart-street frontage, adjoining the Dunedin Parsonage" were also sanctioned for sale.

*oppressive to our Circuits, it is enacted as a Standing Order, to be applied to all Chapel Building Committees, that no Chapel shall be erected unless there is reasonable expectation that two-thirds of the entire cost will be raised by Subscriptions, including the collections at the opening Services; but the Conference strongly urges that wherever it is practicable, all the Chapels be erected free from debt.*⁴⁴

It is apparent that finance was an important factor in any question of rebuilding in a 'better situation'. Church building in Auckland had continued during preceding years, with Pamell (1856) and Kingsland, originally known as The Whau (1853), among the churches that had been erected. In 1866, not only did the new large Pitt Street Church with its tremendous burden of debt provide an alternative to the High Street Church and one that was closer to the then residential area of Auckland, but also in that same year a sizeable Wesleyan Church at Grafton was opened. It has been noted that some of the families who had attended the Epsom Chapel joined with the latter congregation.⁴⁵

Epsom was predominantly a sparsely-settled farming district until the turn of the century. "Land [in Epsom] is rapidly increasing in demand and price" wrote the Secretary of the Epsom School Committee in 1896, as farm paddocks were carved up into two-acre allotments.⁴⁶ The isolation of living in a rural hinterland in the mid-nineteenth century was difficult for many settlers who missed the crowded streets and social interaction of harbour-side Auckland. Some moved back to the city, but for those who stayed in Epsom, as well as affording contact with a larger group of like-minded Wesleyans, the site of the new Church near the corner of Grafton and Carlton Gore Roads would have been considerably closer than any other.

Other former members of the Epsom Chapel congregation journeyed too. In his obituary it was recorded that Thomas Somerville, whose commitment and faithful service were so significant in the history of the Epsom Chapel, moved to Tauranga in about 1873:

... where he has since lived, serving his church faithfully as a circuit steward, Sunday School Superintendent, and often acting as representative to District Meeting and Conference. Of a retiring, kindly disposition, he was in full sympathy with all efforts to win the young for Christ. His last testimony at a Christian Endeavour consecration meeting came as a crowning benediction upon the large number of young people present. He said 'I cannot say I have the joy spoken of by so many this evening, but I can say that I have peace —

⁴⁴ 'Minutes of the Australasian Wesleyan Conference', 1870, p.41.

⁴⁵ Hames, *100 Years in Pitt Street*, p. 18.

⁴⁶ W E Browne to Secretary of the Auckland Education Board, 19 September, 1896, Epsom Normal School Site File, YCBD A688, 5346, 1/273/, National Archives, Auckland. Wesley Historical Society (NZ) Publication #79

*calm, smooth-flowing as a river'. He exhorted them to stand firm in the faith and to be always abounding in the work of the Lord ...*⁴⁷

Thomas died in September 1893. There is also a grave in the Tauranga Methodist cemetery for Emma Somerville whose death is recorded on 5 April 1901 aged 77 years. As with so many women who ministered to those about them, who guided their children in the faith, and supported their husbands as they assumed roles of leadership in Church affairs, we can find out little about her from Church or civic records. She remains a silent strength, sustaining Thomas Somerville's efforts to establish and maintain the work at Epsom.

By 1867 Thomas Somerville had been living in Hobson Street, Auckland, and appears in the electoral roll at that address until 1872-73. Although the sturdy brick building still stands today, there are no membership records of the Hobson Street Wesleyan Church, which was opened in 1859 on the corner of Pitt and Hobson Streets; nor are there any early membership records for Pitt Street Church.⁴⁸ Thomas Somerville's name does not appear in the 'Pitt Street Register of Seat Holders' for the Quarter ending December 1866, nor in payments for seats at Pitt Street Church from October 1866 until 1875, by which time he would have been living in Tauranga.⁴⁹ E W Hames notes that in 1855 "a suburban outpost was attempted at Hobson Street, a pilot scheme for the Pitt Street Church that followed".⁵⁰ Thomas Somerville may have directed his commitment and energies to this nearby cause.⁵¹

Times were hard in Auckland in the mid 1860s. The shift of the capital from Auckland to Wellington in 1865 led to the removal of the associated body of state servants together with their spending power. The ending of the war in the Waikato meant that the lucrative contracts for army supplies were no longer being negotiated. James Buller commented that "hundreds of houses" in Auckland were vacated "through the return of settlers to their farms" after the hostilities ceased.⁵² These were among the factors that led to economic depression and unemployment in the town. Russell Stone wrote that "the discovery of gold at the Thames in 1867 saved Auckland, cleared the soup kitchens of the unemployed and conferred prosperity on the whole of the North

⁴⁷ Wm A S [probably Rev. William A Sinclair], 'Obituary: Thos Somerville', *New Zealand Methodist*, 21 October 1893, pp.7-8.

⁴⁸ Hames, *100 years in Pitt Street*, p. 11.

⁴⁹ 'Pitt Street Register of Seat Holders: Quarter ending 31/12/1866. Seat payments 5/10/1866 - 30/9/1875', *Methodist Archives*, Auckland.

⁵⁰ Hames, *100 years in Pitt Street*, p. 17.

⁵¹ Hames, *100 years in Pitt Street*, p. 18, notes that T Somervill [sic] was among the Circuit Stewards "in the sixties".

⁵² James Buller, *Forty Years in New Zealand: Including a Personal narrative, an Account of Maoridom, and of the Christianization and Colonization of the Country*, London, 1878, p. 123

Island".⁵³ Times continued tight, however, and the Wesleyans in the Auckland Circuit felt the constraints of supporting three ministers through those difficult years. The minutes of a meeting of the Wesley College Trustees in the Vestry of the High Street Chapel in July 1865 refer to the current "depression of trade", and the "numerous applications", mostly unsuitable, for a vacant teaching post at the school. In 1866 the minutes of the Trustees continue to note the "existing commercial depression", while by 17 April 1867 it was stated that "the continued depression in numbers of pupils and in fees" is linked to "the long continued depression to which the public have been subjected". In 1868 the school was closed. Conference in 1869 recorded that Three Kings Native Institution had also been closed. In 1871, the same year in which the Epsom Chapel was sold, the Wesley College Trustees held a special meeting to address the need to "raise funds for the assistance of the heavily burdened Trusts in this Circuit".

The closure and sale of the Epsom Wesleyan Chapel, as for some of the other buildings, sold or leased with typical Wesleyan pragmatism, was, however, not the end of its story. The small building passed through the hands of several owners until the land on which it stood was purchased by farmer William Gardner, a Presbyterian, in 1878. Under his ownership this chapel again was restored to its role as a 'little Bethel', this time providing a place for Presbyterian worship in Epsom. It was used for evening services and for a Sunday morning 'Sabbath School' by those who were later to build the Epsom Presbyterian Church in Gardner Road. The fact that it had originally been a Wesleyan building was acknowledged by both Onehunga Presbyterian Church and Gardner Road Presbyterian Church in their histories.⁵⁴

*Epsom was in the parish and the Rev. Geo Brown opened a Sunday School and took Evening Service in a disused Wesleyan Chapel in what is now Alba Road, for about two years after he resigned in 1880. From 1887 this mission cause was under St Luke's Session, but was returned to Onehunga's care again in 1892 ...*⁵⁵

When the new Epsom Public Hall in Manukau Road was opened on another section of William Gardner's property, 'Emerald Hill' on Thursday, 7 June 1881, the Presbyterians continued to worship in the little chapel down in Derby Street. Nearly a year later a notice appeared in the *New Zealand Herald*:

A meeting of those persons who are desirous for the continuation of the religious services in the Epsom Chapel was held on Thursday 9th March. The Rev. Mr. Bruce of Onehunga, occupied the chair, and introduced the business

⁵³ R C J Stone, 'Auckland Business and Businessmen in the 1880s', a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History, University of Auckland, 1969, p. 10.

⁵⁴ Jim Millar, 'Early Days of Presbyterianism in Epsom', *Prospect: The Journal of the Epsom & Eden District Historical Society Inc.*, Vol.1, 2002, p.6.

⁵⁵ *History of the Onehunga Presbyterian Church 1860-1935, Jubilee Souvenir.*

*of the meeting which related more especially to a question of finance. In the course of his remarks he stated that Epsom and Ellerslie had been placed under the control and management of himself and the Rev. Mr. Monro, of Remuera ... The Rev. Mr. Monro also addressed the meeting, urging the people to organize a committee of management, whose duty it would be to see what could be obtained in the Epsom district. Accordingly Messrs. Ballantine, Crawford, Cochrane, Boden, and Gardner were elected. The committee met after the public meeting had closed, when Mr. Gardner was elected chairman, and Mr. John Cochrane secretary and treasurer. About £9 or £10 per annum was guaranteed by the committee and it is hoped that the people will liberally respond to the invitation of the committee so that the necessary funds to carry on the work will be available.*⁵⁶

At the Annual Meeting of the Epsom Mutual Improvement Society held in the Epsom Public Hall on Friday, 25 August 1882, it was resolved to move the little Wesleyan chapel, generously given by William Gardner, the Chairman of the Society, to be re-erected at the rear of the Hall as a reading-room.⁵⁷ No time was lost, for on the following Monday 28 August, tenders were called for shifting the Chapel from Derby Street.⁵⁸ The Hall became a centre for district social, religious and sporting activities, and evening services were held there by the Presbyterians as local support for the building of a church strengthened.⁵⁹

For about ten years from 1890 the One Tree Hill Road Board held their meetings in the little Library Room of the Epsom Hall.⁶⁰ In an article contributed to the first issue of the *Journal of the Auckland Historical Society* in 1962 Ella Greenwood, a long-time resident of the district, related that the library, a detached building at the back of the hall, was used for a number of years as a schoolroom by the Misses Kate and Martha Courtney, who conducted a girls' school. An advertisement for their establishment appeared in the *New Zealand Herald* on 2 April 1883.⁶¹ This use of the erstwhile chapel for a school is interesting in the light of an existing undated Wesleyan "Auckland School Report" written sometime between 1858 and March 1862 by the Rev. Isaac Harding who recorded that "At Epsom, we have also begun a school which numbers about 20 children".⁶² This may well have been in the Wesleyan Chapel on its original site.

⁵⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 27 March 1882, p.2.

⁵⁷ *Weekly News*, 2 September, 1882.

⁵⁸ *New Zealand Herald*, 28 August 1882, p.1.

⁵⁹ Millar, 'Early Days of Presbyterianism in Epsom', p.7.

⁶⁰ 'One Tree Hill Road Board Minute Book 1883-1895', Auckland City Archives, Agency OTH Series 100, Box 1.

⁶¹ *New Zealand Herald*, 2 April 1883, p.1.

⁶² This school is likely to have been held in the Epsom Chapel since the other schools he refers to are William Singer's, in premises which still adjoined the High Street (Auckland) Wesley Historical Society (NZ) Publication #79

On 1 November 1920 the title of the land, including the Hall and presumably the seventy-five year old Chapel, was transferred from The Epsom Hall Association to William R Boon. At that time Edwin G Boon is listed as operating a grocery store in the adjacent block of shops which still stand on the northern side of the former Hall site, and William R Boon was a building contractor based in Whakatane.⁶³ By 1944, the block of flats currently numbered 530-536 Manukau Road had appeared where the Epsom Hall had formerly occupied pride of place. No records have been traced which tell the story of what fate befell the Hall, let alone the library/school room at the back, the former Wesleyan Chapel, which had indeed served so many in the community of Epsom. The long and profound silence which descended upon the latter's very existence has been lifted, but the question still remains of whether the small aged building was demolished, or whether perhaps, it, too, travelled on to become a 'little Bethel' yet again.



Rev. Isaac Harding *Photo: Morley p472.*

Chapel, before that school moved to Pamell, Freeman's Bay (where services were started in 1860), and Whao Road.

⁶³ On the Certificate of Title in 1920 William Roderick Boon's occupation is stated as a "Grocer". His relationship to Edward G Boon is not known. William Boon onsold the land to Joanna Dickson in 1922, and subsequently the land changed ownership several times. Wesley Historical Society (NZ) Publication #79

PASSIONFRUIT SUNDAYS

Alwyn Owen



A while ago, I asked my wife to make some gingerbread. With passionfruit icing. "I don't think I've ever seen gingerbread with passionfruit icing," she said. "What made you ask that?"

So I told her. I told her how, in the days of my childhood - those days of endless summer - it was a weekly treat to return home from Sunday School and be handed a slice of gingerbread, with passionfruit icing. Perhaps my mother saw it as recompense for scrubbing us unhealthily clean and sending us out in clothes we wouldn't have been seen dead in during the week, or perhaps it was simply a stop-gap before the ritual of Sunday's hot mid-day dinner. Whatever, it was nostalgia that prompted my

request, and it's not surprising that in my mind, memories of Sunday School are linked to the heady fragrance of gingerbread and passionfruit.

That and the scent of jonquils and arum lilies, because I can never remember the church without them. Lilies below the huge, ornately-scripted "Have Faith in God" that stood out in bold red against the green of the east wall. Jonquils on the asthmatic harmonium, where they nodded to the rhythmic pumping of the foot-bellows.

"All Things Bright and Beautiful"; "What a Friend we Have in Jesus" - ecstatic confirmation from the jonquils. Heaven, I felt, must be rather like this. Flowers, and lots of singing, and maybe even the same smells - arum lilies and jonquils, with the barely-perceptible sub-scent of hymn books and dust.

It was a Methodist church, and we were nominally Anglicans, but our ecumenism was merely a matter of convenience; it was a mile from our home to the Methodist church, and nearly two miles to the Anglican. Methodism won hands down. My mother was thinking of our young legs of course, but she never discovered that my brother Huw and I always deliberately left home early and detoured to Sunday School via the town wharf, which took us a good mile out of our way. We might just as well have been Anglicans from scratch.



The Methodist Church, Whangarei

[Courtesy Auckland City Libraries (NZ)]

The wharf was a wonderful place. We'd watch ungodly youngsters catching sprats, which seemed much more fun than listening to stories about Jesus, and there was the heady tang of salt water and mangrove flats, and maybe the Claymore would be tied up alongside; waiting to load butter the next morning for the Auckland market; or maybe one of the scows - Seagull perhaps - would be comfortably scratching herself against the piles, her open belly full of sand or shingle. And at the far end of the wharf were the Whangarei Timber Company's yards, with the sweet smell of timber - and good honest kauri, most of it. It was easy to get carried away at the timber yard; easy to forget the passage of time as we played on the timber trolley that ran on rails the length of the yard. Then, suddenly aware of our responsibilities to Methodism, we would puff our way up the steep length of Dent Street, or "Fire Brigade Hill", and round the corner to Bank Street and the Methodist Church. I can remember praying silently on that hurried trek up Fire Brigade Hill; praying that we wouldn't be late for Sunday School. But usually we were, and on those occasions I always felt that God had rather let us down. There we were, logged up in our fancy gear and doing the decent thing by learning all about Him, and He couldn't even be bothered listening when we needed His help. Somehow, it didn't seem fair.

If I close my eyes more than sixty years roll back, and I can see the room where we "Indies" gathered as clearly as I viewed it in my childhood.

Its match-lined walls were covered with Bible illustrations - Jesus, with a multi-racial group of children surrounding him: Jesus on the shore of Gallilee, calling fisherman Peter to join him; Pharaoh's daughter finding Moses in the bullrushes; Jesus walking on the water; the young Samuel in the temple... There was a table and chair for the teacher, and a dozen or so small chairs for us children, and we sat and listened to Bible stories and sang "Wide, Wide as the Ocean," and then a child was selected to do the rounds with the collection plate, and we all sang:

*See the pennies dropping,
Hear them as they fall:
They are all for Jesus;
He shall have them all.*

It was never made clear to us exactly why Jesus wanted our pennies, or what he did with them when he got them; that was just one more puzzle in this rather curious Sunday morning ritual. But in return for them we were each given a card bearing a scaled-down version of one of the pictures on the wall and a Bible text. We never bothered to save them. In the days when cigarette-cards were appearing in series like "Racing Cars of Today" and "A History of Flight", Moses didn't stand any chance at all.

Later, we were given instead small brass medallions, and these were an instant success. Half-a-dozen of them pinned to the breast made one a sort of junior version of Herman Goering - rather dashing, we thought, and just the thing for our wilder games around the neighbourhood. They became a recognised article of barter, and the

fact that they came in a variety of shapes added to their desirability. It was possible, for instance, to get quite a fair approximation of a sheriff's star, or the Victoria Cross. It didn't worry us unduly that instead of "For Valour" the medallion carried the inscription "God is Love", or that a sheriff's star was a good deal larger, and made of silver. We looked at things in broad outline, and didn't worry too much about finer details.

The medallions became our little perk, but even without them, Sunday School wasn't too bad. Looking back, there was, I think, a shortage of protein in our theological diet; we were fed on a slightly mushy pudding of sweetness and light, and the only really interesting parts of the Bible - the begetting and the gorier passages - were hardly ever offered to us, and then only in bowdlerised form. It was a pleasant contrast to look through Dad's illustrated Bible at home, where the thoroughly imaginative art work in the Book of Revelation was as good as anything in the 'Star Wars' of a couple of generations later.

Still, if the Word was tempered, it carried few obligations. You weren't expected to do much at Sunday School, except behave - though one incredible year I did manage to memorise the whole of the 23rd Psalm. And towards the end of the year the Faithful, the Good Stewards, received their just reward in not one, but two separate functions.

First, there was the Sunday School Anniversary, a solemn affair we practised at for a couple of months. The whole Sunday School combined in a choir of some fifty or sixty voices; Laurie Wordsworth and his father brought their violins to reinforce our bronchial harmonium; the boys wore white shirts and dark shorts; the girls were dressed in their best white summer frocks; and it was more like Heaven than ever:

*Where like stars his children crowned
All in white shall sit around.*

And after the hymns, the prize-giving. I kept one of the prizes for many years - it was a book, entitled "The Boy Hunters of Kentucky". Not, you will note, a religious title - thank Heaven, there was none of that nonsense. The inscription on the fly-leaf stated quite simply that it was presented to Alwyn Owen, of the Whangarei Methodist Sunday School. Full stop. It wasn't a first prize or a second prize or a prize for anything in particular. In point of fact, everybody received a prize. It was political correctness ahead of its time, and a thoroughly pleasant way of handling the situation.

A week or two after the Anniversary we had the Concert and Break-up, and that was a vastly different basket of fishes. That was Entertainment capital E. The programme consisted mainly of short plays, invariably written by the late Frank Reed, a noted Dumas scholar.

I made my theatrical debut in a play about Robin Hood. My heart had been set on the title role, which I was positive I could fill with distinction and elan, but the producer, our class teacher (I still hold her memory in warmest affection) decided I would more suitably fit the part of the evil Sheriff of Nottingham. So there I was in the wings,

ready to swagger out on cue. A friendly push from the producer, and I was on stage, gazing out on a sea effaces - and the evil Sheriff of Nottingham, terror of all the townfolk and implacable foe of Robin Hood, stood mute and miserable, and blushed crimson. It broke the drama of the moment, and effectively destroyed any thoughts of a stage career. My only consolation at this late date is that Robin Hood must have given a similarly undistinguished performance ... I can't even remember who played the part, and I'm sure that had he made a respectable job of it, sheer jealousy would have kept his name alive.

A year later, I suffered even worse embarrassment.

A singing teacher arrived in Whangarei, with the resounding name J Carrington Welby, and J Carrington Welby undertook to form a proper Sunday School choir. More to the point, he offered free tuition to a selected boy and girl. I wanted that tuition, and by shameless greasing, I got it. But who was the selected girl? It was Shirley Stokes - and I was passionately in love with Shirley Stokes. In a very pure way, you understand, with nothing at all physical in it; I worshipped her from afar. Not too much afar of course. Ten feet was about an ideal distance for worshipping; closer range would have produced heart palpitations. Can you remember what it was like to be twelve years old, and in love?

At the Sunday School Anniversary that year the pair of us were expected to sing a solo each, and then combine in a duet. So I piped my way through "The Lord is Mindful", from Mendelssohn's "St Paul", and Shirley sang ... no, I'm afraid I can't remember what Shirley sang. But then came our duet. It should have been a soaring love duet - Puccini, perhaps. Instead, it was a cheery little piece of political incorrectness that went:

*Rastus was a dusky stevedore
On the old Mississippi Shore:
Didn 't own a thing but the clothes he wore,
And his old banjo...*

... and rehearsing and singing that, with the divine Shirley within touching distance, was the most embarrassing, traumatic and terrifying episode of my young life up to that point.

In compensation for such embarrassments, there was the great event of the Sunday School year - the annual picnic, and if ever proof were needed that God was a Methodist that was it, because we travelled to the picnic site by train. A train, mark you! None of the other denominations could compete with that. One Saturday morning in late February we'd board the train and chug out of the station with much puffing and hissing and tooting from the engine; we'd rattle our way across the bridge at Limbumers Creek, and on round the sweeping curve beyond Kioreroa, following the line of the harbour. A mile short of Portland the train would stop; we'd scramble out and make our way down the gentle slope that was our picnic ground. There were pine

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trees for shade, the shallow water was sun-warmed and infinitely inviting and we ran and played and swam and gazed at the impossibly long Portland wharf, where funny little locomotives trundled along its length, taking the cement out to the waiting ships. "They call those engines "Farting Fannies"" elder brother Huw told me confidentially - after making sure nobody was close enough to overhear such disgusting un-Sunday School language.

Oh yes, those picnics were really something ... the wood smoke and the sea-tang; the water like silk against the skin; the lolly-scramble that invariably ended the day's activity, the sleep-inducing clickety-clack of the rails as we made our way home ... they are among my warmest memories.

And so are my recollections of our teachers. I suspect that their attitudes influenced me rather more than the sentimental religion that was peddled to youngsters in those days. Different days. Simpler, less complicated days, and our Sunday School teachers were simple, uncomplicated people in the best sense of the words - caring, compassionate and gentle people.

They could have been right of course, in the William Blake simplicity of their teaching. Heaven might be as they pictured it. If so - and in the wildly improbable event of my reaching there, I might see rows of shining white Sunday School children, gently shepherded by their teachers. But none of those teachers would dream of saying "I told you so!" They would welcome me with kindness and a medallion shaped like a sheriff's star, and they would let me march around with the collection plate.

And afterwards, we 'd all eat gingerbread.

With passionfruit icing.

[Courtesy of New Zealand Memories, Issue 42, June/July 2003]

OBITUARY

Rev. GORDON CORNWELL

Born 3 September 1922

Died Auckland Hospital 17 May 2004 - 82 years

Eulogy delivered by Rev. Stan Goudge at Mt Albert Methodist Church, 20 May 2004.

Celebrant: Rev. Elizabeth Hopner.



Rev. Gordon Cornwall and his wife, Irene. Photo: Pauline Cornwall

Love and greetings to the Cornwell family, Irene, Ruth, Neil, Graham and Pauline, your spouses, children, grandchildren - peace be with you.

My name is Stan Goudge, I am, like Gordon Cornwall a retired Methodist Minister and this is our home church, where we are well served by Elizabeth Hopner, Gordon's loved Pastor and friend.

It is a great honour to be asked to speak at this celebration of the life of Gordon. This is a celebration, a thanksgiving for a man who lived life passionately and to the full; savouring the experiences that came his way, sometimes fighting against great odds and never giving up. A devoted Christian, a great servant of the Methodist Church, son, brother, lover, husband, father, grandfather and friend.

You were a great story teller Gordon, with all the details that made your stories live, and it is a challenge for me to do your story justice,

My connection with Gordon and Irene Cornwell goes back to the 1940s to Masterton and my boyhood during the 2nd World war, for my parents were close friends of Irene's parents the Shoemiths and I heard about Gordon Cornwall, a soldier engineer, who was helping to build military camps in the Wairarapa in the 1940s. Chaplain Harry Kings took Gordon around to the Shoemith house where he met Irene, her brothers and sister who befriended a homesick soldier.

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Because Gordon was not old enough for the army to send him overseas, he enrolled in the Navy, and the Navy sent him to fight in Europe. Irene came up to Auckland with her mother to see him off, and Gordon knew then that she was the one.

In England he was posted as Engineer on a motor torpedo boat operating in the English Channel. It was a new boat, on its first voyage, with engineer Gordon in charge of the twin Rolls Royce engines when an enemy bomb hit the bridge, wiped out the officers, and sank the boat. Gordon found himself in the sea with 16 of the 26-man crew, the only officer alive and he was wounded.

It is typical of Gordon that he kept in touch with those survivors down the years, until he was the last one left.

After he recovered from his wounds, the Navy decided his war was over and prepared to send him back to New Zealand. But Cornwell spoke up. "I thought there was a shortage of engineers" he said, and he volunteered for more service. He was posted to the Fleet Air Arm and sent to Quorn, to the University there, for a two year degree course in aeronautical engineering. He learnt to fly; he was a natural and on the third day of his training was given his wings. When he graduated as Officer Engineer he was posted to a special unit as a Test Pilot. The damaged planes, mostly Spitfires were sent to the engineering works nearby to be repaired, reconditioned, and if operational returned to the Royal Air Force. Someone had to fly them, to test them, to see if they were safe to fly, and Gordon Cornwell did that dangerous task for two years. In that time he saw 28 of his fellow officers and friends killed in plane crashes. He himself survived 16 crashes, and years after he still had nightmares dreaming that his parachute was caught again around the tail of the plane and he had to get free before it crashed into the sea. One memorable prang was into a farmers field of green wheat. The propeller scything through the green wheat like a motor mower covered the plane in green grass, and when Gordon emerged he too was covered - the abominable green man.

Gordon was a war hero, one of the knights of God.

Irene was finished nursing training in Masterton when Gordon came out of the Navy in 1946 a 24 year old veteran, and he popped the question. And she said -"Yes!" Gordon and Irene have had a life long love affair, never going to sleep without a kiss and a 'God bless.'

Gordon had long felt the call to the mission field and entered Trinity Theological College to train for the Ministry. The Methodist Church also gave them permission to marry and the deed was done by a good man. Yes! George Goodman in the Masterton Methodist Church 56 years ago.

There followed a second year of study at Trinity College for Gordon and the newly weds lived in a flat in Robbins Comer, Onehunga, while Irene was a Plunket nurse. Then the appointment to the Solomon Islands. Rev. A H Scriven stationed them at

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Buka in Bougainville, and for 15 years they served their Lord and Master there together at Buka.

The Cornwell Team. Irene; Wife and mother but also Nurse, teacher, and spiritual leader. Gordon; Husband, father, Pastor, teacher, preacher, house builder, boat builder, and engineer in charge of the Methodist Mission Fleet. It was a time of rebuilding both the mission work and the mission stations following the war with the Japanese. It was busy, exhausting and exhilarating days. Gordon survived several bad storms at sea, on one occasion with the boat alive with the flames of St Elmo's fire. He was a good sailor, cool, calm and level headed and he always returned safely, although once he ran a boat up on a reef!

Ruth was born at Bougainville, and the twins Graeme and Neil, and Pauline. So the four kids are really all Solomon Islanders, or Bougainvillians, or is it Bukamanians?

The link with the Solomons is underlined by the request in the death notice in the *NZ Herald*. "Cut flowers preferred and donations to the Methodist Mission for Bougainville."

In 1963 the Cornwell family returned to New Zealand and Gordon served as Methodist Minister in Circuits at Okato in Taranaki, Kaikohe in Northland, and at Dominion Rd, Auckland. Gordon was a faithful Pastor, a diligent visitor and a practical parson.

When Gordon was Minister at Dominion Rd in 1975, he had serious heart trouble and it affected his voice, Gordon got his voice back, following his second heart operation, but Irene says sometimes she remembers those quiet days! Gordon superannuated from the Methodist Ministry in 1977 on the grounds of ill health, and has been a loved and respected member of this Church for the past 27 years.

When his health improved he took up work as technical manager at the Auckland University School of Architecture under Professor Harold Marshall. It was exciting, stimulating and pioneering work in acoustics where his engineering and practical skills were given full rein. He enjoyed working with Harold, and said that the Acoustics Laboratory is in some way his memorial.

In latter years Gordon has been busy with odd preaching, (make that occasional preaching), pastoral concerns, (how he loved people and there was always folk to help), woodworking projects, gardening, (he was a great gardener), stamps (he had a great stamp collection, and raised many thousands of dollars from used stamps for the Women's Fellowship with that Friday group). And then there was - bowls. Now this bowls, is it a sport or an addiction? The Cornwells have spent many happy hours at Rocky Nook in the comradeship of the bowling fraternity.

For 15 years this couple lived at Rangeview Rd. There followed the move to 4/ 40 Richardson Rd, which was Gordon's final home.

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I would like to pay a tribute to the courage, the fortitude and the faith of Gordon Cornwell in the face of much pain and weakness. Over the last 30 years he has suffered much but always cheerful, and hopefully, with Christian grace and dignity. He has cheated death on many occasions, during the war, in the Islands, and in hospital.

There have been hard days, tough days, illness, bereavement, disappointment, loss, financial hardship, but he has always soldiered, no, he sailed on. His faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and his desire to serve Him through others has been the driving force of his life. Having put his hand to the plough long since, he has never turned back.

Gordon I admire you, you have been a good man, you have set a fine example, you have left a goodly heritage, you have fought a good fight, you have kept the faith.

Depart in peace.

OBITUARY

MICHAEL KING



Michael King
From What I Believe...
Compiled by Allan Thomson
[GP Publications Ltd. Wellington 1993.]
Photo: Robert Cross

The death of Michael King, so soon after his *Penguin History of New Zealand* had achieved such a notable success, occasioned an extraordinary outpouring of grief for a relatively unknown public figure. Yet Michael King is a figure to respect, and those interested in the religious history of New Zealand should feel this particularly.

Michael King's own field had originally been Maori history, and his work on Tainui notably his marvellous account of Te Puea and his later biography of Whina Cooper showed his deep sensitivity to issues in Maori history, particularly in the Waikato. Sharp debate over his role as broker of Maori history led some Maori critics to accuse him of breaching tapu, for example in his *Maori: a Photographic and Social History* (1983). It was an odd accusation but it stung him deeply and in *Being Pakeha* (1985) he played an important role in helping create a sense of identity for European New Zealanders. King had only ever been on the fringes of academia and now moved outside it. His biographical work continued and the best of these works were literary histories. His marvellous accounts of Janet Frame and Frank Sargeson were among his

finest work, again suggesting ways in which the New Zealand cultural experience could be explored and celebrated. But he did return to Maori topics in his powerful and evocative book *Moriori: a People Rediscovered* (1989).

Michael's Catholicism was held comparatively lightly, but he knew when to make appropriate recognition of his forbears, and while his history of the Catholic Church. *Gods Farthest Outpost* was not his best book, it combined confident analysis of Maori sources with a great deal of reminiscence of his upbringing in Porirua. In an essay in *What I Believe* (ed. Allan Thomson, GP Publications, 1993) he indicated that he was no longer a theist in the traditional sense, but certainly retained a deep sense of spirituality. So in his *Penguin History of New Zealand* there is more recognition of the role of religion than is usual in such works, but he is unfamiliar with Protestant forms of spirituality, and his account of the Anglican and Wesleyan missionaries is inadequate and somewhat inaccurate (he says that the early CMS missionaries Hall and King were dismissed for offences; Mangungu he names Mangunu, and says the strongest concentration of Wesleyan converts was in the Waikato). He curiously ranks Pompallier as far more notable than Selwyn: a very odd judgement indeed. Moreover, Methodism hardly exits beyond its Maori presence. He didn't know much about Methodist history, more's the pity. Yet the story of Michael King is one which touched a very high level of public interest; perhaps due to the sudden succession of the huge success of the Penguin History and his untimely death.

I always liked Michael. I think everyone who knew him, did. He was genuine in his friendships and respect for the work of others; he worked as an artist and he sponsored broad programmes on public history. His autobiographical fragments, *Hidden Places: A Memoir in Journalism* (1992) and *Tread Softly for you Tread on my Life* (2001) were whimsical but they did convey a person who felt the significance of the history he was writing. He nearly died of cancer in 2003 and was unable to be at the book launch of the Penguin History, but was recovering and was on his way to a conference on Pompallier and the French influence in New Zealand when he and his wife met with the dreadful accident that brought their lives to an end. It did not end his contribution; his books will go on inspiring people in the history of this country.

- Dr Peter Lineham
Massey University, Albany

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

METHODISTS and a QUESTIONING FAITH Proceeding 78, 2003

On page 15 in David Bell's article *Garlands Ghosts* he refers to Revs. J B Richardson and John Armitage being drowned when they were returning from the General Conference in Adelaide. They were actually on their way to the Conference, and two laymen, Messrs E Connell and E Mitchell. The Rev. Joseph Waterhouse of the Victoria and Tasmania Conference, who had been visiting New Zealand, was also drowned, so five General Conference representatives lost their lives.

Two other representatives, Revs. William Lee and W J Williams, should have been on board but they missed the boat connection in Wellington due to their trap being blown off the road crossing the Rimutaka Range. No doubt they thought it was a tragedy at the time but they were no doubt relieved when they heard of the fate that could have been theirs if they had been on the *Tararua*.

- *Fred Baker*

Journal 2003 : ERRATA

As explained in the March Newsletter:

On page 41 the caption for the picture of the Robert Ward memorial stated "Jack Penman" instead of "Mervyn Dine". In response to our apology both gentlemen were gracious about our mistake. Indeed, Jack Penman offered to proof-read for us and we have already benefited from his assistance in this regard. We are indebted to Ivan Ward for alerting us to the above error.

Also, on page 52, Rev. Stephen Zema (not Zermor)

Additionally:

1. On pages 31 and 46, 'Gilmour' should be 'Gilmore'.
2. The pulpit Bible illustration on page 37 should have been included in Bill Thomas's article on *Free Methodism*, not the *Forgotten Prims* article.
3. The church depicted on page 41 is located on Donald McLean St (referred to as Don McLean).

Sorry for any confusion!

Wesley Historical Society : MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New Members this year

Elani & Ilaijia Drodrolagi (North Shore)
Stuart Park (Northland Historical Society)
Rev. Tony Stroobant (Blockhouse Bay)
Rev. Siosifa Pole (Mt Roskill)
Rev. Robyn Allen Goudge (Devonport)
Dr Barbara Peddie (St Albans)

Died during the year

Maida Chambers (widow of Rev. Wes Chambers, our former President)
Allan Bellamy (Tauranga)
WH (Bill) Burnell (Glenfield)
Gwen Petch (Hamilton)
Mark Venables (Epsom)
CG Conway (Hamilton)
Rev. John Hamlin (Palmerston North)
Rev. Dr Jim Udy (Australia)

CONTRIBUTIONS SOUGHT

We welcome information that is connected in any way with the history of Methodism in New Zealand.

This may be:

An article based on a thesis produced for a university degree.

Family history.

Disposal or subsequent use of church buildings.

Information gleaned from inscriptions on gravestones.

Eulogies delivered at funerals.

Handbooks or commemorative publications.

Items in local newspapers.

Follow-up articles in our Journal.

Please submit direct to the Editor or any member of the Publications Committee (see pages 2-3).

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ANNIVERSARIES FOR 2005

1855 150th Anniversaries

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 18 January | First Australasian Methodist Conference - Sydney |
| 4 March | Lyttelton Church opened |

1905 100th Anniversaries (Centenaries)

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 5 February | Momington Church (Dunedin) opened |
| 1 March | Johnsonville Church (Wellington) opened |
| 27 September | North-East Valley Church (Dunedin) stonelaying |
| 9 November | Hawera Church stonelaying. |

ANNIVERSARIES FOR 2006

1856 150th Anniversaries

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 18 June | Nelson second Church opened |
| 1 October | Where? New Chapel opened, replacing stone Chapel |

1906 100th Anniversaries (Centenaries)

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 16 January | Island Bay stonelaying |
| 14 February | Reefton Church stonelaying |
| 21 February | Hastings YMCA Hall opened |
| 4 March | North-East Valley Church opened |
| 13 April | Hawera new Church opened |
| 29 April | Waimataitai Church opened |
| 12 May | St Kilda Church stonelaying |
| 27 May | Western Spit second Church opened |
| 22 July | Reefton new Church opened |
| 2 September | Balclutha Church reopened after alterations |
| 13 September | Whangarei new Church opened |
| 16 September | Kaitoke Wanganui Church opened |
| 23 September | St Kilda new Church opened |
| 3 October | Rotorua Church stonelaying |
| II November | Mahakipawa Church opened |
| 16 December | Rotorua Church opened. |