“Hands Across the Century”

In commemoration of the Centenary of the first known Wesleyan Methodist Church service to be conducted at Taita, Lower Hutt

1848 1948

Issued to mark the celebrations held at Taita, Lower Hutt, New Zealand, from 26th September to 3rd October, 1948.
THE HUTT VALLEY 1848

(Compiled from old records)

[Map of the Hutt Valley with various locations and historical notes, including references to early settlers and events such as the Battle of Tukaha-te-kapu about 1860.]

Tory's passengers
Landed here 22-9-39

[Signature: L.Nell]
EARLY TAITA

The name “Taita” means a piece of wood lodged in the bed of a river, a snag, and is pronounced correctly with the second “a” lengthened, hence Tytar, not Tyta, with a - short second syllable. This correct pronunciation would account for the pakeha mis-spelling and mis-pronounciation Taitai, still so named by many of the older folk.

After the original Hutt River settlement of Britannia had dispersed, and the people settled at Thorndon (Pipitea Point), Aglionby and Richmond, the task of opening up the hinterland was undertaken in earnest. The road reached as far as Taita in 1843, Stokes Valley in December 1843, Upper Flutt in August 1844, and the Wairarap in 1847. Native troubles developed in the district, there being a Taita Stockade near Mr. Thomas Mason’s original house, and near what was then the southern boundary of Taita, Boulcott’s Farm Stockade, where the famous battle took place in 1846. Taita then was merely a clearing in the bush some few miles from Hutt. In 1845 an Anglican church was built there, a church which is still in use to-day.

Louis E. Ward, in Early Wellington, states:

“Taita is approached by the Hutt-Wairarapa road. A tragedy occurred there in 1847. Mr. George Drake, a sawyer, was burnt to death in a house belonging to Samuel Burnet about a mile and a half from Hughes’ public house, which stood almost opposite the Anglican Church, at the Taita. Dr. Taylor was on the scene shortly after the fatality occurred.”
The area surrounding the present Methodist Church is interesting. Cemetery Road was originally James’s Lane, and on the southern corner stood Mr. James’s blacksmith shop. A stream at one time crossed the road at Mabey Road junction, and this was spanned by a bridge in 1845. This bridge was known as Waiwhetu bridge, as flood waters from the creek flowed in the direction of Waiwhetu. On the section between the church site and Cemetery Road stood Renall’s Mill, driven by a water-wheel, begun by Mr. Job Mabey in 1849, and completed the following year with the help of Mr. A. W. Renall, who operated the mill. It was badly damaged by the earthquake of 1855, but restored, only to be rendered useless by the great flood of 1858. Mr. W. Cleland’s store, founded in 1861, was further south near Park Avenue. The old Taita School, north of the church, dates from 1861. Pikes, a name appearing in the baptismal register, lived opposite Taita School.

To-day, Taita is the northern end of the Hutt Valley, but it must be realised that until as late as 1940 all that area north of Naenae Lane, and now re-named Brees Street, was Taita. It is this area that our Taita Church has catered for during the past century.

The Coming of the Wesleyans

In November, 1839, at the request of the Rev. J. H. Bumby, who with the Rev. John Hobbs had earlier in the year established the Wesleyan Maori Mission in Wellington, the Rev. James Buller set out from Kaipara on his epic journey to Port Nicholson. He reached Port Nicholson on 20th January, and the next day visited the native mission at Te Aro pa. On 22nd January he met the British settlers who had arrived in the Aurora and landed on Petone beach that day. On the following Sunday, 26th January, 1840, he conducted divine service on the Aurora, about 180 people being present, the ship being anchored between Somes Island and the beach, about half a mile from the shore.
## WELLINGTON CIRCUIT, WESLEYAN PREACHERS' PLAN.
### DECEMBER QUARTER, 1848.

"Holding fast the faithful word."—Titus i. 9.

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**Preachers:**
- 1 J. Watkin
- 2 S. Ironside
- 3 C. Hant
- 4 T. Cayley
- 5 J. Bradshaw
- 6 R. Nankivell
- 7 J. H. Nash
- 8 J. J. Loe
- 9 C. Hinchcliffe
- 10 L.
- 11 W.

**Exhorters and Prize Leaders:**
- 12 Udy
- 13 Evans
- 14 Wilkinson
- 15 Gall
- 16 Candy and Tucker

**Note:**
- Quarterly Fast, December 29.
- Quarterly Meeting, December 27, at Agiltonby.
- N.B.—The Stewards will be careful to have the various Sacraments, Collections, &c., announced on the previous Sabbath.
Among the early settlers were several Wesleyan families from Cornwall, who built their houses side by side in the new Britannia settlement. These houses came to be known as “Cornish Row,” until they were destroyed by fire on 25th May, 1840, and when it was decided to change the site of the town. In December, 1840, the Rev. Aldred took up his work at Port Nicholson, the first circuit in New Zealand to be organised as a European cause. Meantime Mr. Charles Hunt and others kept the fires burning at Aglionby, and by October, 1848, regular services were being held at Taita.

The First Known Services at Taita

The earliest record of Wesleyan Methodist services at Taita is a Wellington Circuit, Wesleyan Preachers’ Plan, for the December Quarter, 1848. The plan is headed with the text, “Holding fast the faithful word.” Services were held three times on Sundays and also on Wednesdays at Wellington, and Aglionby, the latter place being the forerunner of the Hutt Church; also at Porirua Road, Thorndon, Karore (now Karori), Wainuiomata and Taita. A scripture reading was assigned to every morning service. The services at Taita were held at 3pm, presumably in private houses, until a chapel was opened in 1850.

The plan also announced that the Quarterly Meeting was to be held at Aglionby on December 27th, and the quarterly fast on December 29th. From the plan it appears that no minister was able to come to Taita during the quarter, all the above preachers being locals except Messrs. Gell, Wilkinson, Udy and Evans, who are described as Exhorters and Prayer leaders. It seems quite evident that regular Wesleyan services were a feature of Taita before October, 1848, the services being supplied by locals from Wellington and Aglionby.

The preachers’ plan for the March, 1849, quarter, was as follows:—

- 7th January, 1849: A. Masters.
- 14th January, 1849: Thomas Cayley.
- 4th February, 1849: H. Udy.
- 11th February, 1849: A. Masters.
- 18th February, 1849: H. Udy.
- 18th March, 1849: J. Bradshaw.

In the Wellington Circuit quarterly meeting of December, 1853, “Taitai” is first mentioned with Mr. Jones as society steward and Mr. David Hughey as chapel steward. David Hughey is mentioned as society steward in March, 1863.
THE EARTHQUAKE OF 1848

The earthquake of October, 1848, had an indirect bearing on the early history of Taita Methodism in that the cause was tragically deprived of one of its preachers.

On the evening of Monday, 16th October, 1848, Wellington was visited by a severe earthquake and another more severe the following day, destroying the brick Wesleyan Methodist Church in Manners Street which had been opened in December, 1844. Writing of the event the Rev. Samuel Ironside records:

“The Tuesday afternoon class was meeting in the mission house, all secure, as they thought, in a room within fifteen feet of our large chapel, which had been previously injured, and the east wall of which was vibrating over their heads in a most fearful manner. Through God’s mercy it remained standing, though perilous to the passenger. I was never so impressed with the Almighty power of God as when standing in the streets and beholding the large heavy brick buildings toppling over in every direction.”

Barrack-Sergeant Lovell, who had for many years been a local preacher and class leader, was walking past the stores of which he had charge, with two of his little children playing about him, when the earthquake came, and they were buried in the ruins of the walls from both sides of the street. They were immediately dug out, but one child had been killed, and the father and the other child were so badly injured they died later. The preachers’ plan shows Mr. Lovell as planned to take a service at Taita just two days previously. (Shown as J. Lovel on plan.)

HENRY AND MARY JONES

Henry Jones, settler, was born in Northamptonshire, England, in 1811, and arrived with his wife, Mary, and four children on 1st May, 1842, on the London, 700 tons, from Gravesend. He first settled in Wadestown, and then in Karori, where the first record of Methodism is the baptism of their daughter May by the Rev. Samuel Ironside. Mr. Jones held cottage services which were greatly appreciated by the settlers of Karori at that time. Mr. and Mrs. Jones then moved to the Hutt Valley, and there is a record of the baptism of their daughter Charlotte on 23rd January, 1853, by Rev. J. Aldred. The Jones are described as of Aglionby, but Mr. Jones in 1853 represented “Taitai” as society steward at the Wellington Quarterly Meeting. In 1856 they moved to the Wairarapa and continued with a splendid record in the service of the Church.

CHARLES HUNT.

On 7th March, 1840, the Adelaide arrived and brought a Wesleyan lay preacher, who with others commenced holding services for adults and children in private houses along the banks of the Hutt River at Britannia. When that settlement dispersed later in the year Mr. Hunt, to whom a memorial tablet is erected in the Hutt Church, moved up the Hutt River and settled near where the Hutt Bridge is now situated.
Mr. Hunt was a native of Sussex and aged 53 when he landed in New Zealand. Converted when 21 through the efforts of some pious militiamen, he began to preach some four years later. For 30 years he was a prominent figure in Hutt Valley and Wellington Wesleyan Methodism, a wise class leader, a capable choirmaster, an excellent preacher, and a faithful sick visitor. He rendered unstinting service. To him goes the credit of being the founder of the Hutt Sunday School in 1840 (First Britannia, then Aglionby, then Hutt), and of being a member of the first Wellington Circuit Quarterly meeting in September, 1842.

It was as a local preacher that we are particularly interested in him at the Taita Church. The plan for the December quarter, 1848, shows Mr. Hunt as senior local preacher of the circuit, and he was planned at Taita five times in six months. During the quarter (fourteen weeks) referred to he was planned as follows:—

Wellington: Twice on Sunday afternoons.
Aglionby: Once on Sunday Mornings.
          Twice on Sunday afternoons.
          Twice on Sunday evenings.
          Once on Wednesday evenings.
Thorndon: Twice on Sunday evenings.
Taita: Thrice on Sunday afternoons. –

This was no mean accomplishment for a man living at Aglionby and taking an active part in all church affairs, trustee, class leader, office-bearer and local preacher. He would be over 60 years of age at the time. He died on 13th February, 1871, at the age of 83, and was buried in the old Wesleyan Cemetery at the west end of the old Hutt Bridge near the scene of his loved activities. –

ROBERT T. ROBINSON.

Dr. W. Morley says that, like Charles Hunt, Mr. Robinson was an eighteenth century born man. He was a preacher at sixteen and came to New Zealand among the first arrivals. He is stated to have been a preacher for 44 years. He had a voice of great sweetness and clearness, and was always a most acceptable pulpit supply. Dr. Morley further states that “Father” Robinson was regarded as perpetual curate of Taita Church. In September, 1867, he was society steward. He is mis-named R. L. Robinson among the list of Sunday School superintendents in the centenary souvenir and official history of the Lower Hutt Sunday School. Morley publishes his photograph in the History of Methodism.

DAVID HUGHEY.

David Hughey is designated chapel steward in 1853 and society steward in 1863. Dr. Morley states that at the Taita Church the large family of Hugheys always provided a good nucleus of a congregation, and as the daughters married, their husbands also became members.
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Wesleyan Maori Mission

The Wesleyan Maori Mission did not confine its activities solely to Te Aro, and in Pinfold’s Centenary Index of Methodist Ministers is recorded:—

Hutt Maori: 1873-1884, Heteraka Warihi.

More interesting, however, are the entries in the Wellington Circuit baptismal register relating to Maoris in Taita:—

Rawini: Native adult (Hake).
Wiremu Tipeni: Native adult (Kuiti).
Rawinia: Native adult (Rana).
Baptised 23/1/1853 by John Aldred.

Ko Peneamine: Mohi and Riperata Wiari, born 13/2/57. (Baptised 19/2/57 by Jonathan Innes.)

Ko Rohana: Pirimona and Rutu Tematau, born 16/1/57.
Baptised 24/2/57 by Jonathan Innes.

Hamuera: Ngaupakeroa, aged 30.
Baptised 5/4/57 by James Buller.

Ko Apea: Hoani and Oriwia Peruka, born 24/2/57.
Baptised 10/3/57 by J. Innes.

The gradual adoption of Maori-ized European names is evidenced by these baptisms, for instance, Wiremu (William), Peneamine (Benjamin), Hamuera (Samuel), and Hoani (John).

The Taita Church Property

The earliest reference to a church building (a chapel) is to be found in the diary of the Rev. John Aldred. For this information, and for the following extracts from the diary, the writer is indebted to Mr. Charles S. Freeman, of Wellington, who is a prominent member of the Wesley Historical Society. According to the diary the chapel at Taita was opened on 14th April, 1850, by the Rev. J. Inglis. Mr. Inglis was a Presbyterian Minister stationed at Wellington. Mr. Aldred was minister at the Hutt from 1850 to 1853. The other extracts relating to Taita Church are:—

April 4th, 1850: Preached Taita, afternoon.

April 25th, 1850: Taita. Meeting.

May 28th, 1850: Taita. Good congregation.

July 14th, 1850: Taita, afternoon.
May 21st, 1860: Mr. C. Luxford drove us over to the Hutt. I preached in the evening. The cause of God does not seem to have made much progress at the Taita, not in so good a state as when we left. (Mr. Aldred left in 1853 to return in 1860 to the Hutt for two more years.) The natives are in a much worse state. They nearly all have become fond of drink.

April 9th, 1861: Yesterday at Taita Tea meeting.

April 23rd, 1861: Visited on my way to Taita the Jacksons, Preble, White, Bennet, D. Hughey, and Robinson.

April 27th, 1861: Marriage at the Taita. Mr. Plimmer’s.

May 21st, 1861: At Taita. Called on D. Hughey’s. Tea at his mother’s.

August 13th, 1861: At the Taita last night. Again no service. Otago goldfields excitement (It is interesting to note that Hutt Trust meetings lapsed through want of a quorum during the Otago goldfields excitement.)
October 1st, 1861: At the Taita, Three children baptised at Mrs. Mabey’s.

October 13th, 1861: Taita. Meeting of Chapel Committee.

December 17th, 1861: Taita. Tickets.

February 26th, 1862: Stations received. Am down for Wellington. I trust that the appointment is from God.

April 21st, 1862: Mr. Crump arrived on the 15th; opened Taita new chapel on the 18th. We had a tea meeting. The prettiest little country chapel that I have seen in the province.

May 5th, 1862: Yesterday at Hutt and Taita. Sir G. Grey’s arrival.

May 25th, 1862: Sabbath. Taita and natives morning and afternoon. Mr. Woodward took the service for me at Taita in the evening. (Note: Mr. Woodward was the founder of the Terrace Congregational Church.)

Where the old building opened in 1850 was situated is not certain, but there is a belief in the district that the original church (chapel) was on the south-west corner of the junction of Mabey Road and High Street. Be that as it may, the present building was definitely opened 18th April, 1862, as stated by Mr. Aldred, as evidenced by the following advertisement which appeared in the Wellington Independent on 15th April, and April 18th, 1862:—

OPENING OF THE NEW WESLEYAN CHURCH. TAITA.

On Friday next, the 18th instant, the above Church will be opened for public worship. The Rev. John Crump will preach in the morning at 11 o’clock. In the afternoon at 4 o’clock there will be held a PUBLIC TEA MEETING, after which several members will address the meeting.

April 14th, 1862.

It is a pity that a research into the local newspapers of the time has not revealed an account of the tea-meeting. The property was leased to the Wesleyans by Mr. Thomas Mason, who was a Quaker, but in 1885 he refused a renewal of the lease, but provided that the building could stand on his property and be used as a church during his lifetime.

The following, taken from the Wellington Almanac of 1868, showing the set-out of Taita, indicates the position of the building quite clearly:—

East side of High Street—
W. Cleland, storekeeper.
Peter Bruce, farmer.
J. Roberts, blacksmith.
D. Cooper, settler.
Wesleyan Chapel.
The names and whereabouts of the trustees of the lease sent to Rev. W. Morley in 1885 are of interest.

Trustees of Lease—
Robert Robinson, now in Wellington.
Wilbam Hughey, now in Manawatu.
David Hughey, now in Manawatu.
George Hedges, to Manawatu 1875.
John Roberts, now Manawatu.
David McHardie, Rangitikei.

In 1877 repairs were carried out to the roof of the building. The section is described as Part Section 52, Hutt, containing 20.8 perches, and later passed to Mr. T. (Sir Thomas) Wilford. In 6th April, 1904, the Rev. J. H. Haslam reported to the Quarterly Meeting that Mr. Wilford had not definitely decided whether to make an absolute gift of the site, or grant a 999 years’ lease. In October the matter was still not decided. A trust was registered in 1911, and the section transferred to the trustees on 21st December, 1911, for a consideration of five shillings, from Elizabeth Catherine Wilford, wife of Dr. Wilford and mother of Sir Thomas Wilford. In 1928 during the ministry of the Rev. C. H. Olds, it was decided to double the size of the building, and move the building from the north to the south of the section. Here is Mr. Olds’ description of the event:—

“Adequate and suitable accommodation was urgently needed, and it was decided to double the size of the church with partitions for more effective youth work. To make provision for the best use of the section in future years, we decided to shift the building to the side of the section, and so make room for a new church when the time should be ripe.

A willing band of workers assisted in the job, with Mr. W. Hall in charge. The old church had developed a strange hump in the centre of the floor, as if the front and rear piles had sunk, while the centre ones had remained firm. When the work of removal had commenced, however, and the old piles were to be dug out, the spade went clean through them, showing that though outwardly sound, they were really rotten through. (Are human supporters of the church ever like that?) Then it was discovered that for years the church had been resting on a huge totara stump, the secret of the hump! To clear this stump, the building had to be jacked up much higher than had been expected. However, the job was done and well done; enabling our youth work to be carried out with greater comfort and efficiency.”
Among the trustees from 1928 to 1933 were Messrs. B. H. Frethey (secretary), C. Mullan, D. Keall and R. August. The last meeting was held on 17th May, 1933, after which the property was taken over by the Hutt Trust, which had administered it since. With the planning of the State Housing Scheme the trust has acquired a section of equal size at the rear of the original. This will allow for church, school, and if necessary a parsonage in the future. In this centennial year the building has been renovated throughout, and presents a clean attractive appearance for the event.

Many of the older identities regret that the appearance of the original building has been destroyed. The original chapel of 1862 had the pointed windows of typical ecclesiastical design, and we are lead to believe that Mr. Aldred’s comment that it was the prettiest little chapel in the province is no exaggeration. But we cannot live in the past. The church had to be doubled in size, and even now plans are afoot for its further enlargement.

**Primitive Methodism In Taita**

Before proceeding with the history of the Wesleyan Church beyond the year 1862, when a church building was opened, let us divert our attention to the history of Primitive Methodism in the district.

One of the most remarkable growths out of the Methodist revival was the Primitive Methodist Church, founded as late as 1812, but in just over thirty years sending missionaries into antipodean climes. The Rev. Robert Ward landed in New Plymouth in 1844, and in 1847 founded the Sydney Street Primitive Methodist Church, where the Rev. Henry Green laboured as minister from 1847 to 1857. During his ministry he
erected churches at Wellington, Tawa Flat, Hutt and Stokes Valley. The Hutt building was on the west side of High Street, south of the V.I.C. corner.

Miss Areta M. Ward has supplied the writer with the following extracts from the journal of the Rev. Robert Ward, her great grandfather:—

September 29th, 1868: I went to the Hutt, visited the people up as far as Taita. Preached in Mrs. Chew’s house.

November 26th, 1868: Went to the Hutt. Rode about a good deal. Preached to ten persons in the chapel.

November —, 1868: Rode to the Hutt. Visited three families, then rode to Mr. Judd’s. Called on Mr. Clement’s family, then went to Mrs. Chew’s where I preached to about a dozen persons.

December 20th, 1868: Preached at Stokes Valley chapel to 23 persons. After dinner started for Lower Hutt, calling at Mr. Clement’s and Mrs. Chew’s.

April 28th, 1870: I rode up to the Hutt in the forenoon. In the afternoon went to Taita, baptised a child, back again to Lower Hutt, where I preached in the evening to about 25 persons. (Note: This child was Charles Henry, son of Reuben King, farmer.)

July 16th, 1870: Went to the Taita, and at Mr. Clement’s house married Mr. John Sunnex to Mary Ann Thomas.

The residences of Mr. Clement and Mrs. Chew were in the vicinity of Park Avenue, and would in those days be regarded as well within Taita. The following entries relating to Taita are gleaned from the Sydney Street Primitive Methodist register:—

Phillips: Mary Ann, daughter of George and Ann Eliza Phillips (maiden name Hughey), born 11/7/53, baptised 27/1/54 by Henry Green.

Clement: Henry Samuel, son of John Clement, labourer, and Sarah Augusta Clement, maiden name Hopton; born 10/1/54, baptised 7/2/54, by Henry Green.

Clement: Robert Hopton, son of John and Sarah Augusta Clement, born 4/6/55, baptised 8/7/55 by Henry Green.

Clement: Alfred Green, son of John and Sarah Augusta Clement born 13/3/57, baptised 15/4/57 by Joshua Smith.

Clement: Mary Emma, daughter of John and Sarah Augusta Clement, born 20/10/58, baptised 30/11/58 by Joshua Smith.

Clement: Charlotte Hannah, daughter of John and Sarah Augusta Clement, baptised 12/8/60 by Joshua Smith.
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Clement: Frank Benjamin, son of John and Sarah Augusta Clement, baptised 1/10/69 by Robert Ward.


Schultze: Edith Adeline, daughter of Charles William Schulte, carpenter, baptised 7/7/70 by Robert Ward.

Clement: Ruth Waters, daughter of John and Sarah Clement, of Stokes Valley, baptised 9/11/71 by W. J. Dean.

Boulcott: Mary, daughter of Almon and Eliza Lavinia Boulcott, of Taita, farmer, baptised 7/11/72 by W. J. Dean.


The Primitive Methodists did not own any property in Taita, and the only known services were at the residences of Mr. Clement and Mrs. Chew. The nearest building was the one near the V.I.C. corner. There was a chapel at Sydney Street, Petone, where the Rev. Ralph J. Liddell was minister 1905-6, and the Rev. Basil Metson 1907-8. Mr. Metson is now retired and living at Rangiora.

Famous Local Preacher

JOHN CLEMENT.

The Lord has wrought great glory by them, through his great power from the beginning.

A history of Methodism in the Hutt Valley cannot omit a resume of the story of the greatest of the local preachers who served the Primitive Methodist Church, and whose labours were availed of and valued by the Wesleyan Methodist body, and indeed others, the late Mr. John Clement.

John Clement was born at Hungerford, Berkshire, England, on 4th September, 1824, was received into the fellowship of the Primitive Methodist Church in 1837, having commenced preaching at the age of 14. In 1847 he joined the 56th Regiment of the Queen’s Forces and owing to the Maori Wars came with the Forces to New Zealand.

He was placed on the Sydney Street Primitive Methodist preaching plan in March, 1849. After obtaining his discharge from the forces he married Miss Sarah Augusta Hopton on 21st June, 1852. The marriage certificates describes the bridegroom as a widower, aged 27, a labourer by occupation, and the bride as a spinster aged 16. Very early marriages of young ladies were the rule in our colonial history. The officiating
minister was the Rev. Henry Green, famous as minister of Sydney Street Church from 1847 to 1857, and this marriage was the second entry in the register. The parties were “married in the Primitive Methodist Chapel according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Primitive Methodist Society by License.” The true copy was certified by Henry Green “in pursuance of the Registration Ordinance Section 8 No. 9,” reminiscent of the days before New Zealand was granted self-government. The witnesses were Robert Hopton, Mary Emma Hopton, Bartholomew Hayden and Lavinia Hopton.

Glowing tributes to Mr. Clement’s work are contained in “Jubilee Memorial Volume or Fifty Years of Primitive Methodism in New Zealand,” in these words: “The war, which brought so much ruin to many of the settlers in the North Island, brought to our Church a valued worker in the person of Mr. John Clement, a soldier of the old 56th Regiment, who came to New Zealand credentialled as a Primitive Methodist local
preacher and was put on the plan at the March Quarterly Meeting of 1849. He shortly
afterwards obtained his discharge, and settled in the country. On the attainment of his
fiftieth year as a local preacher of the Connexion, the Quarterly meeting of his Station,
held on December 3rd, 1888, recorded the following minute upon its journal:

‘That this meeting desires to place on record the high appreciation entertained for
Bro. J. Clement, its senior member, and to offer to him brotherly and Christian
congratulations on the jubilee year of his services as a local preacher. In the
discharge of the duties of the sacred office he has set a noble example of
faithfulness to his appointments—having, it is believed, never missed a single
appointment—and to his consistent and blameless Christian character; and prays
that he may long be spared to continue in the Master’s service.’ At a social tea,
held in connection with his jubilee, in the Webb Street Church, Bro. Clement was
presented with an address and a purse of thirty sovereigns. Our brother’s fame is in
all the Churches, and several Wesleyan friends requested permission to attend and
take part in the celebration. The only charge we ever knew brought against Mr.
Clement appears in the terms of a unique minute, of September 25th, 1855:

“That Bro. J. Clement be forgiven this time for long preaching, having
promised to do better for the future; but that he suffer for the next offence
according to rule.”

Speaking of the history of the Sydney Street Church, the same publication states that
between the departure of the Rev. Joshua Smith and the arrival of the Rev. Charles
Waters in 1864, there was an interval of seven months during which the Sabbath
services were chiefly conducted by James Gordon and John Clement. At a much later
date Mr. Smith wrote as follows:

“Brethren who were in sympathetic harmony with me during my term of service—
Clement, Taylor, Masters, Gordon, Mitchell, Francis, Ellison, Ordish, Ridding and
a number of devoted women who helped us in our work of faith and 1nhir of
love.”

Mr. Clement lived another twenty-five years after his jubilee. He would always travel
on foot, and it is said that over a period of 40 years he conducted on the average
sixteen services a quarter. Tawa Flat, Whiteman’s Valley. Stokes Valley, Wainui-o-
Mata were scenes of his labours. He stood well over six feet in height, and is
described as a powerfully-built man of exceedingly fine character. One time when
enraged as a farm labourer in the Masterton district he was set down to preach in
Wellington. He failed to catch his horse and his employer told him he had best give up
the idea of going to Wellington. But Mr. Clement was made of sterner stuff and he set
out on foot reaching Wellington in the early hours of Sunday morning. He preached
three times that day and then returned to the Wairarapa.

When the Methodist Church of New Zealand was formed in 1913, uniting the
Wesleyan and Primitive bodies, the name of John Clement was added to the list of
members of the Taita Church. The Hutt Quarterly Meeting of 10th July, 1913, passed
the following gracious resolution: “It was decided that the name of John Clement should stand first on the list of local preachers owing to his being the senior local preacher in the ex-Primitive Methodist Church.”

The old warrior of the faith passed on to his reward on 30th October, 1914, and was buried in the Taita Anglican Cemetery with his wife and a daughter who had predeceased him. The funeral took place on a Sunday, and the cortege was a long one, there being present very many old settlers who desired to pay their last tributes. Famous preachers conducted the last rites. The service at the house was taken by the Rev. John Dumbell, aged 84 years, and the Rev. John Dawson, the Hon. C. M. Luke (later Sir Charles M. Luke) took the opportunity of paying tribute to the work of Mr. Clement for the church and among his fellow-men. The service at the graveside was conducted by the Rev. William Beckett, of the Hutt Church (now retired and resident in Melbourne), and the Rev. John J. Lewis, of Petone.

Mr. Clement had just turned 90 years of age and was an active local preacher right up to the end, even walking from Park Avenue to Wellington to take services. He preached for three-quarters of a century without ceasing and at the time of his passing was survived by a family of ten, 39 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren. The Rev. R. F. Clement now minister of the Taita Church, is a great-grandson of John Clement, through Robert Hopton Clement, and a great-great-grandson of Robert Hopton.
From 1872 to 1877

With the separation of the Hutt from the Wellington Grrmt in 1872 and the holding of the first Quarterly meeting on 2nd July 1872, the records of the past become a little clearer. Not that the past is bathed in mythology and superstition of impossible supernatural attributes of wonder-working pioneers and apostles of the faith. We know that these pioneers were men and women with the very infirmities of life that attend us to-day. Their problems were merely placed in a different setting, and their achievements are a source of inspiration to the present generation. Not even has tradition surrounded them, and no attempt is here being made to apotheosize them they served their day and generation well, and we are expected to do the same. We may smile at oddities found in minute books, but we must expect future generations to treat us in exactly the same way. In our Church to-day we have a Ministers’ Supernumerary Fund: prior to that it was the Aged Ministers’ Fund, but in the earliest Hutt Circuit minute book it is referred to as the “Worn-out Ministers’ Fund.”

A few notes concerning the period prior to 1872 have been compiled from the Wellington Circuit minute book. In March, 1863, the Taita membership was 16. and in September, 1864, it was 13 when the Hutt membership was only 48. In June, 1867, it had fallen to 7, and one on trial. In June, 1865, there is an interesting entry in the financial statement, “Collection. Male and female, £2 16s.” About this time every Quarter showed an expense item for horse-hire paid to Mr. Robinson.

The circuit minutes of 29th Tune, 1875, read: “Special reference was made to the cause at Taita which is of so peculiar a nature. Generally the congregation being good, but the membership is reduced to one person. And there is no one there to act as steward for us or to take an interest in matters. The meeting deemed it advisable that when convenient two preachers, or a preacher and a prayer leader, should go in company on the Sunday evening.” Then in June, 1877, during the ministry of the Rev. W. G. Thomas, it was reported that the congregations and finances had improved, and it was decided to solicit donations to repair the chapel. Increased pastoral care was also recommended. But in July, 1879, it was recommended that services be organised at Taita and Stokes Valley.

In October, 1881, the Quarterly meeting decided “That the chairman (Rev. W. Cannell) and Mr. Damant attend to the proper conduct of the Taita Church.” In January, 1883, there were no members (Hutt 34, Wainui 4, Horokiwi 3, Whitemans 2). On 4th July, 1883, Petone was placed on the plan, and the Sunday School at Taita described as reopened with 30 children. This was during the Rev. S. J. Garlick’s first ministry. In December, 1886, there were six teachers, six classes, 60 scholars with an attendance of 40 in the Sunday School. In 1887 Mr. R. Southee was appointed Society Steward, yet there were no members. In this year it was reported that the building was used for Sunday School purposes only. In July it was decided to discontinue services, the teachers meeting to make arrangements for monthly addresses.
The membership variations at Taita during the period 1872 to the discontinuance of services in 1887 reveals that the church catered for all church people in the vicinity, and not merely the Wesleyan Methodists. The membership returns during this period of “good” congregations are as follows:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June, 1872</td>
<td>2 (4 removals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 1873</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 1876</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1878</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 1879</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collections during 1872 and 1873 averaged 35s, with 1 Os per quarter class meeting subscriptions. No collections are mentioned after December, 1878. It is not clear what services were held between this date and 1887.

Sunday School Activities, 1887-1903

This period of sixteen years must be regarded as a Sunday School period. It seems clear that the present Sunday School has an unbroken record as far back as 1883 except possibly for a short period in the early twenties of this century. The fragmentary statistics in our possession are as follows:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Scholars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October, 1889</td>
<td>5 teachers</td>
<td>56 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892-1893</td>
<td>5 teachers</td>
<td>60 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March, 1898</td>
<td>4 teachers</td>
<td>33 scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October, 1901</td>
<td>4 teachers</td>
<td>50 scholars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. R. Mellow was Sunday School Superintendent until about 1890, when he was succeeded by Mr. A. Williamson until 1899. Among the teachers were Miss Kate Archer, Miss Marjory Pierce, Miss Edith Mellow, Miss Hattie Pinny (Mrs. Mitchell), Miss Clara Pinny (Mrs. Yerex), and Miss Laura Pinny (Mrs. Beaglehole). Mr. Mellow left the district for Taranaki in the early nineties, but during his superintendency annual picnics were held at Mr. Knight’s property, “Penrose,” when Mr. Mellow conveyed the scholars to the picnic in his big brake. For much of this information I am indebted to Mrs. Margaret Price (nee Ross) of Hataitai, and Miss I. Williamson, of Lower Hutt.

The membership of Taita Church during this period was nil, but in 1895 a Mr. Alexander was mentioned as society steward. In January, 1901, it was decided to commence 6 o’clock services, and collections are mentioned for two quarters. Collections are again mentioned in 1903.

From 1903 to 1928

Now came another of the “new beginnings” which have been a feature of Taita Church during the century, associated this time with the name of Mr. F. J. Field. The building was again in need of renovation, and new seats were urgently required. As
usual, the folk rallied to the lead that was given, and responded generously to the appeal for funds. The seats, of strong and substantial construction, were made by a Petone local preacher, Mr. F. A. Dillon, and are still in use.

Mr. Field served faithfully as Sunday School Superintendent for over twelve years, a record for this office in Taita Church. Although he moved in 1909 with his wife and daughter to Lowry Bay, the family still maintained their association with Taita, usually attending the morning service and the Sunday School in the afternoon. World War I. threw an extra strain upon him through scarcity of labour to help him on his farm, and this Christian warrior was compelled for health reasons to resign in 1915. The June Quarterly Meeting of that year records the hearty vote of thanks of a grateful people to Mr. and Mrs. F. I. Field for service to the church at Taita. Mr. Field was never robust, and his service to the Church is the more remarkable on that account. During this period the Taita Methodist Church was a “Church of the Community.” Many local residents attended the services regularly and assisted in every way, although few of them actually held membership in the Methodist Church. Throughout this quarter-century the membership was never less than 13, and for most of the period little more than half that number. The roll of the Sunday School was always relatively large.

One of the most acceptable local preachers of the area during the early years of the new century was Mr. J. T. Nott, M.A., who conducted both services on one Sunday in each month. Almost all the services were conducted by local preachers, there being few ministerial appointments.

Until his removal to Lower Hutt in 1920, Mr. James Stonehouse was a tower of strength at Taita. He conducted the Post Office Store adjacent to the Church, and was an active local preacher throughout the Circuit, being elected to the office of Circuit Steward while still a resident of Taita.

The name of Mr. Robert August is another that is highly- honoured in Taita. In 1903 he brought his wife and family to live in Mabey Road, near to where the Taita Public Hall now stands. His proximity to the Church and his consecrated loyalty to the service of his God made him one of the most devoted members of the Church until his death in 1942. For most of this period he was Society Steward of the Church, and after the removal of Mr. J. Stonehouse to Lower Hutt in 1920 Mr. August was the only Society Steward at Taita for some years. The family tradition is maintained by his younger daughter, Mrs. J. Searle.

Two services were held each Sunday until 1920, when, coincidental with the removal of Mr. Stonehouse to Lower Hutt, the evenirir service was discontinued until the appointment of a second minister to the Circuit in 1928.

Services almost lapsed during the winter of 1923, when the Quarterly Meeting appointed a Committee to go fully into the matter of the services there, with power to act. At the October Quarterly Meeting of that year it was reported that, there was
“little or no improvement in attendance. The Mission Band was going there once a month, and services were held there each Sunday morning with disappointing results.” Early in 1924 it was reported that attendance at services were still far from satisfactory, and “matters were left in the hands of Rev. Rowe and Mr. J. Stonehouse to deal with.” The April report showed that repairs to Taita Church had been effected, and the ‘Circuit accepted liability for payment. The sequel follows as an “item of interest” listed on the Preaching Plan of December, 1924: “Taita Methodism is showing signs of renewed life, and local preachers are requested to ‘fan the flame’.”

In 1926 Mr. B. H. Frethey assumed the Superintendency of the Sunday School, and formed the first Young Worshippers’ League in the Circuit. “The Taita Sunday School meets on Sunday mornings, and the children remain to the morning service and then retire. Will the preachers please bear this in mind?” reads a note on the Preaching Plan. This was a flourishing period in the Sunday School’s history. With over fifty children on the roll the church building was found to be inadequate for special occasions, and Sunday School Anniversary Services were held in the Taita Public Hall.

Evidently the local preachers did their work well, and the Taita residents gave increased loyalty to the work of the Church during these years. A spirit of buoyancy prevailed. The outlook of the Church encouraged extension. The enthusiasm that found expression in the working-bee that moved the Church to the side of the section in March, 1928, was indicative of yet another “new beginning” in the life of the Church. Thus did the folk of Taita and Lower Huff Methodism prepare to welcome the minister appointed by the Conference to work as ‘second agent” in the Lower Hutt
From 1928 to 1948

“After earnest and careful consideration, the Quarterly Meeting decided by a hearty and unanimous vote, to ask Conference for the appointment of a Probationer this year to take the oversight of Waiwhetu and Taita,” runs the report of the meeting held in January, 1928. “The scheme will involve the renovation of the Taita Church and the installation of electric light there, so that the next two months will be busy ones indeed.”

Three months later the report is made: “Rev. R. Dudley, our newly-appointed Second Minister, has taken up his work in the Circuit, and we commend him to the prayerful sympathy and practical support of all our people. We are fortunate in securing the services of a young man of such scholastic, social, and preaching gifts. . . . The work at Taita is full of promise. Largely by the enthusiastic labours of working bees, the Church has been removed to the side of the section, painted, an extension with folding doors erected, and the electric light installed. The improvements provide much needed facilities for Sunday School and social work.”

At this point the name of Mr. W. A. Mullan was added to that of Mr. Robert August as Society Steward, and subsequent reports tell of increased activity and spiritual vigour. Services were “exceptionally well attended,” and the loyalty of the folk in coming regularly to the services in all kinds of weather along country roads is commented upon. Youth work made progress: There was a vigorous Young Worshippers’ League in 1930, and a large Sunday School with over 60 scholars on the roll. During this period the Taita Methodist Sunday School was the only one in the immediate vicinity, and was widely supported throughout the district.

The following years tell of varying fortunes for the cause at Taita, with always a group of folk conspicuous for their loyalty and devotion to the Kingdom of God. Reports tell of the continued loyalty of members to the ‘week-night meeting, with good attendances in the worst of weather. The progress of the work during this period is described by one of the ministers in terms of the words Columbus wrote in his diary, when far from land. “We sailed on.” Special landmarks are few, and the Church “pushed on steadily in hopes of a fuller and richer church life.” The usual special services were held. Sunday School Anniversary Services were always worthy of note, while harvest and flower services were the success that is typical of Taita, where flowers and produce abound.

Mr. W. A. Mullan succeeded Mr. B. H. Frethey as Sunday School Superintendent in 1936. His resignation from this position in 1938 upon his transfer to Waiwhetu terminated a connection with Taita during which he held most of the offices in the Church life.
For much of its history, at least during the second half of the century, the work of the Sunday School has been continued with the help of teachers from other parts of the Circuit, both from Lower Hutt and from Waiwhetu. There were, of course, local residents who rendered conspicuous service. Miss Peggy Burgess was teacher and S.S. secretary from 1926 to 1931, when she was succeeded by Miss Beryl Pemberton, who held this office until her marriage took her to Canada in 1936. Misses Dulcie and Joyce Futter (now Mrs. Pownall) and Miss Bessie Hewer were active in youth work for some years, and on her resignation from the teaching staff in 1943 Miss Dulcie Futter had completed over twelve years of service in the Sunday School.

In 1941 the Sunday School reached its highest, with over 60 children on the roll and a good average attendance. The early years of World War II. were particularly difficult from a staffing point of view, and in 1940 and ‘41 a good deal of help was given by teachers from other parts of the Circuit.

Under the present Superintendency of Mr. E. A. Millard the School is staffed entirely by Taita residents, most of whom were themselves scholars in the Sunday School only a few years ago. The tone and conduct of the School is good. The recent opening of other denominational Sunday Schools in the vicinity has had its effect on the roll strength, and the prevailing epidemic has adversely affected the work during this Centennial year.

It is regretted that it was not possible to compile a record of Church organists during the century. Records leave something to be desired in this respect, but there were many who performed this important service in the Church life. Mr. D. Keall has served the Taita Church for about sixteen years as organist, and is still active in this position. Prior to his entering the Armed Forces in 1942 Mr. Stanley Wyper was assistant organist for five years, in addition to his office of Church Treasurer. After a long and faithful period of service Mrs. J. Searle felt obliged to resign from the position of organist for health reasons, and her place has been taken by Mrs. B. McConnell.

**Church Extension**

It is certain that this Taita Church will be an important unit in the future development of Methodism in the Hutt Valley, and could well be the strong centre from which further extension may move.

1. **Rata Street.**—On the corner where Fleet Street will join Rata Street, and in an area where considerable development will follow in the near future, it is hoped to establish a Methodist Sunday School and Church.

2. **Molesworth Street.**—At the northern end of the “New Taita” area, the Methodist Church has been allocated for purchase two sections near the northern extremity of Reynolds Street.
3. Taita Union Parish.—Within this “New Taita” area and about one mile from our Taita Methodist Church there is in progress an experiment in Church Union that is of considerable significance to the three Church denominations concerned, viz., Presbyterian, Congregational, and Methodist. Commenced as a co-operative Sunday School in 1946 by Sister E. Allan ‘(Presbyterian Deaconess) and Rev. R. F. Clement, the Taita Union Parish was established under the pastoral care of Rev. Ian Dixon, M.A., and Sister Allan at a Foundation Service on 11th May, 1947.

Functioning under the direction of a Committee of Oversight composed of representatives from the three co-operating Churches and from the Taita Union Parish itself, the experiment is proving to be a successful and most interesting one. It is hoped to proceed soon with the erection of a Church Hall.

Salute the Ladies

*Always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

—1 Cor., 15, 58.

With the coming of a second minister to the circuit in 1928 to serve Taita and Waiwhetu, opportunity was taken to place the work of the womenfolk of the Taita church on a proper basis. Thus was formed the Ladies’ Social Guild, and whilst the history of the organisation extends over a little less than two years, the work accomplished in this short time is worthy of permanent record.

The Rev. Raymond Dudley presided at the first meeting on 23rd May, 1928. There were eight present, namely, Mesdames Roots, Breach, Sparks, Rule, Wilson, Mullan and Hill, and Mr. C. Jones. Among the activities of the Guild a bazaar was organised, netting £50, a Christmas tree for the children, and in all £70 was raised for trust funds. The office-bearers were:

- President: 1928 to 1930, Mrs. J. M. Wilson.
- Treasurer: 1928 to 1929: Mrs. Roots.
- Secretary: 1928 to 1930: Mr. C. Jones.

The Guild then lapsed in February, 1930, as the secretary had left the district, and the president was instructed to hold the books until such time as a new secretary was appointed.

The next effort to form a Guild was not until over a decade had passed, when the Rev. H. C. Dixin presided over a meeting on 11th September, 1940. By this time the Government housing policy in the Hutt Valley was under way, and there was a perceptible buoyancy in church affairs, in spite of war years. A Ladies’ Guild was formed and organised along orthodox lines with regular monthly meetings and the usual Guild activities. This Guild is now an established part of the church.
organisation, and should develop into a powerful influence in our church life. The officers to date have been:

**Presidents:**
- 1940-1942: Rev. H. C. Dixon.
- 1942-1943: Mrs. N. Keall.
- 1948- Mrs. H. Sole.

**Secretaries:**
- 1940-1941: Mrs. Stevens.
- 1941-1943: Mrs. J. Searle.
- 1943- Mrs. C. L. Millard.

**PERSONAL**

An outstanding record of long and faithful service gladly rendered is that of Mrs. E. Breach, a record which was acknowledged in 1942 by her friends in the Church. During 1946 Mr. and Mrs. Breach received the congratulations of all upon the occasion of their Diamond Jubilee, since when Mr. Breach has passed on.

One of the most highly-respected members of the Church is Mrs. J. Mabey, whose association with Taita Methodism has been longer than anyone else of whom we know. She came to Taita as a bride from Te Marua in 1899, and joined the Methodist Church about four years later. This makes her association with the Church to be about 45 years, and Mrs. Mabey’s contribution to the spiritual life and fellowship of the Church is incalculable.

**The Ministry**

The appointment of a second married minister to the Circuit in 1942 was an occasion almost as significant as the appointment of a Probationer was in 1928. In Rev. Wesley Long and his wife the church at Taita found a consecrated and devoted couple, who served the Church well for four difficult years during the latter years of World War II. It was with a deep sense of personal loss that the people of Taita heard the tragic news of his illness and death so soon after his leaving the Lower Hutt circuit, and also of gratitude for the memory of his gracious ministry.

Rev. Long was succeeded in 1946 by Rev. R. F. Clement, the present minister, who came to this Circuit on his discharge from chaplaincy duties with the R.N.Z.A.F. In 1946 Rev. R. P. Keall assumed the duties of Supernumerary Supply Minister to the Circuit, and has discharged his office most acceptably since that time, while Rev. J. L. Mitchell is the present Superintendent Minister of Lower Hutt Circuit.
The Centennial Year

As a result of a number of working bees which have been held, the Church building has a very attractive appearance indeed. As on other occasions during the century, a renewed interest in the work of the Church has expressed itself tangibly in the renovation of the buildings and grounds. The responsibility for the renewal of the interior furnishings has been accepted by the Guild, the members of which have been busy during the past few months with planning for the Centennial Banquet.

Celebrations were held as follows:—

Sunday, 26th Sept.: Sunday School Anniversary—
   11 a.m., Rev. R. F. Clement.
   7 p.m., Rev. W. E. A. Carr.

Saturday, 2nd Oct.: Banquet 6 p.m.,
   Social 7.30 p.m.
   Featuring “Pageant of the Century,” “Cigam,” the Magician.

Sunday, 3rd Oct.: Church Anniversary—
   11 a.m.: Rev. R. F. Clement.
   7.45 p.m.: Service of Remembrance, conducted by Rev. E. T. Olds, President of the Methodist Church of N.Z.
“And What Shall I More Say?”

“For the time would fail me to tell of Mrs. Blees, Mrs. Hewer, the Breen family, Mrs. W. Fraser (now Mrs. Revnolds), Mr. and Mrs. A. S. Field, Mrs. I. Wilson, Mrs. de Clifford, the Matthews family, Mr. and Mrs. Rothera, Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, the Millard family, Mrs. Akhurst, and Miss Fowler, Mr. C. Westbury, the Keall family, Mr. and Mrs. Pemberton, of the numerous Sunday School teachers and local preachers, who in distant and more recent years, through faith in God and love to their Lord Jesus Christ, have loyally played their part in the extension of His Kingdom in the Taita Methodist Church.

And others ……..

Since 1940 there has been increasing realisation of the urgent need for extending the facilities available, and schemes have been propounded for building extension. The commencement of the second century of Methodist Church activity in Taita is a point from which we must look to the future, as well as to the past. There is evident in the Church fellowship a healthy spirit of expectancy and a dedicated loyalty to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Church and His Kingdom, that augurs well for the next hundred years.

This, this is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend;
Whose love is as great as His power,
And neither knows measure nor end.
‘Tis Jesus, the first and the last,  
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;  
We’ll praise Him for all that is past,  
And trust Him for all that’s to come.

Taita Methodist Church Officers  
OCTOBER, 1948.

Congregational Rep. to Quarterly Meeting: Mrs. A. S. Field.
Envelope Stewards: Secretary, Miss D. Futter. Treasurer, Miss M. Fowler.
Organists: Mrs. B. McConnell and Mr. D. S. Keall. Assistant, - Mrs. J. Searle.
Missions Secretary: Mrs. D. S. Keall.
Leaders’ Meeting Secretary: Mrs. J. M. Wilson.
Church Flowers: Mrs. A. Akhurst.

Ladies’ Guild: President, Mrs. H. Sole. Secretary, Mrs. C. L. Millard. Treasurer, Mrs. A. S. Field.


Secretary Centennial Roll Secretary: Mrs. J. M. Wilson.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

- 1890 R. Mellow.
1890-1899 Williamson.
1903-1915 F. J. Field.
1915— H. B. Graves (3mths.)
1917— James Stonehouse.
1936-1938 W. A. Mullan.
1940-1942 Rev. H. C. Dixon.
1942-1944 E. G. Pearce (act.)
1944 to date Eric A. Millard.

SOCIETY STEWARDS

1853 H. Jones.
1863 David Hughey.
1887 R. Southee.
1895 Mr. Alexander.
1905-1907 F. J. Field.
1915 D. Auld.
1915-1920 James Stonehouse.
1918-1930 R. August.
1930, 33-36 C. Mullan.
1933-1936 C. Mullan.
1930-1 938 D. Keall.
1933 to date A. S. Field.
1937-1945 D. Carter.
1938-1941 Mrs. Millard.
1933-1936 F. Clarke.
1941-1943 E. G. Pearce.
1945 to date Mrs. Breach.
1937- Stan Wyper.
1948 to date J. Rothera.
1948 to date B. McConnell.
1948 to date W. A. Marten.
Taita Baptismal Register

The following are the entries relating to Taita in the Wellington Circuit Wesleyan Baptismal Register from 1840 until about the time that the Hutt became a separate circuit in 1872:—

Jones: Charlotte, daughter of Henry and Mary Jones, of Aglionby, born 16/12/52, baptised 23/1/53 by John Aldred.


Phillips: Sarah Jane, daughter of George and Ann Eliza Phillips, settler, born 13/11/57, baptised 6/12/57, by J. Buller. (Note: In the Primitive Methodist Register appears another daughter of these parents in 1854. Mrs. Phillips’ maiden name was Hughey.)


King: Eliza Jane, daughter of Reuben and Mary King, born 24/9/58, baptised 19/4/59 by J. Innes. (Note: In the Primitive Methodist Register another son of Reuben King, Charles Henry, was baptised in 1870).


Hughey: Robert Ambrose Port, son of David and Eliza Hughey, settler, born 6/7/59, baptised 27/7/59 by J. Innes.


Harris: James, son of James and Mary Ann Harris, farmer, born 11/1/61, baptised 1/10/61 by John Aldred.

Phillips: Catherine, daughter of George and Ann Eliza Phillips, born 12/7/61, baptised 13/10/61 by John Aldred.

Roberts, Mary Ann, daughter of John and Jane Roberts, blacksmith, born 17/2/62, baptised 26/3/62 by John Aldred.

Burnett, Arbuthenot, son of George and Mary Burnett, farmer, born 24/3/63, baptised 12/4/63 by John Crump.

Hands Across the Century – Taita Methodist Church Centenary 1948


Hughey: David William Campbell, son of David and Eliza Hughey, storekeeper, born 28/1/64, baptised 13/3/64 by John Crump.

Hedges: George Henry, son of George and Sarah Hedges, basketmaker, born 8/1/64, baptised 13/3/64 by John Crump.

Mabey: David, son of Anna Mabey. (Father’s name not given but described as labourer), born 19/2/64, baptised 28/3/64 by John Crump.

Hedges: of George and Sarah Hedges, basketmaker, by W. J. Watkin.

Pike: — of John and Elizabeth Pike, labourer, by W. J. Watkin.

(Note: The above three entries are obviously incomplete.)


Burnett: Annie Evenline, daughter of George and Mary Burnett, born 6/10/67, baptised 1/12/67 by W. Kirk.

Harris: Anne, daughter of James and Mary Jane Harris, farmer, born 15/10/66, baptised 25/6/67 by W. Morley.


Burnett: Margaret, daughter of George and Mary Burnett, farmer, born 3/12/70, baptised 24/1/71 by G. S. Harper.

Benge: Edward John, son of Edward and Sarah Elizabeth Benge, labourer, born 24/12/70, baptised 29/1/71 by G.S. Harper.


Pike: John Ernest, son of John and Elizabeth Pike, farmer, born 6/10/71, baptised 16/1/72 by G. S. Harper.


Evitts: Henrietta Ellen, daughter of William and Martha Evitts, labourer, born 29/3/74, baptised 19/5/74 by W. Morley.
The Ministerial Succession

The following is the succession of superintendent ministers of the Wellington Central (Wesleyan) Circuit from the appointment of the Rev. John Aldred in 1840 to 1872, when the Hutt became a separate circuit:—

1840-1 842—John Aldred.
1843 —George Buttle.
1843 —Gideon Smales.
1844-1 855—James Watkin.
1 855-1860—James Buller.
1860-1 862—John Warren.
1862-1 864—John Aldred.
1864-1 867—Isaac Harding.
1867-1870—William Kirk.
1870-1872—Thomas Buddle.

The Rev. John Aldred was transferred to the Nelson district early in 1842, and the Rev. G. Buttle ministered from January to May, 1843. His name does not appear in the Centenary Index compiled by Dr. Pinfold. The Rev. G. Smales ministered from May to December. The Rev. John Aldred’s first ministry was as a young probationer and it was not until 1844 that he was ordained by Revs. Walter Lawry and Thomas Buddle. When he was stationed as first minister at the Hutt ten years later, he would be an experienced clergyman compared with his youthful but effective appointment as pioneer missionary to Wellington.

The following is the succession of ministers stationed at the Hutt prior to 1872:—

1850-1853—John Aidred.
1854-1855—Charles Creed.
1856-1860—Jonathan Innes.
1860-1862—John Aldred.
1862-1 864—John Crump.
1864-1867—William J. Watkin.
1867-1868—William Morley.
1868-1870—C. W. Rigg.
1870-1872—George S. Harper.

The Rev. J. Innes was definitely appointed in 1856 and not 1859 as shown in the Centenary of Wesley Church, but his ministry was completed in 1860 (not 1861), when the Rev. J. Aldred spent a second term at the Hutt from 1860 to 1862, when he again became superintendent of the Wellington Central Circuit. Mr. Aldred conducted a baptism at Taita in 1860. It was the Rev. John Crump who opened the Taita Church on 18th April, 1862. In 1872 the Rev. G. S. Harper became first superintendent minister of the Hutt Circuit.
The succession of ministers stationed at the Hutt since it became a separate circuit in 1872 is:

1873-1876—John B. Richardson.
1876-1879—William George Thomas.
1879-1880—John S. Rishworth.
1880-1883—William Cannell.
1883-1886—Samuel J. Garlick.
1886-1889—Daniel J. Murray.
1889-1892—William J. Watkin.
(President of Conference 1889).
1892-1893—Thomas N. Griffen.
1896-1900—Joseph H. Gray.
1900-1904—W. B. Marten.
1903—Jonathan H. Haslam (supply).
1904-1908—Samuel J. Garlick (2).
1908-1911—B. F. Rothwell.
1911-1914—Barton H. Ginger.
1914-1917—William Beckett.
1917-1920—Daniel J. Murray (2).
1920-1927—William Rowe.
1927-1930—Charles H. Olds.
1930-1936—Harold A. Sharp.
1936-1940—Harold T. Peat.
1940-1945—Frederick J. Parker.
1945 to date—John L. Mitchell.
1948 (May to July)—Harold A. Sharp (Supply).

SECOND MINISTERS.

PETONE.

1901-1902—E. Percy Blamires.
1905-1906—Albert B. Chappell, M.A.

WAIWHETU AND TAITA

1928-1929—Raymond Dudley.
1929-1930—N. Gutry.
1930-1931—Arthur Harding (Supply).
1931-1935—David O. Williams.
Hands Across the Century – Taita Methodist Church Centenary 1948

1937-1 938—Robert Thornley.
1938-1940—John Silvester.
1940-1942—Haddon C. Dixon.
1946 to date—Robert F. Clement.

THIRD MINISTERS

1946 to date—Robert Purcell Keall.

DEACONESS


HUTT MAORI.

1873-1884—Heteraka Warihi.

To many the above will be merely a list of names; to others evidence of God’s grace handed down “from generation to generation.” Though the Methodist Church does not hold the doctrine of Apostolic Succession in the sense that it is held by the brethren in the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Eastern Orthodox faiths, it nevertheless does preach an Apostolic Succession of faith. “In the providence of God the Methodist Church, which cherishes its place in the One Universal Church, was raised up to emphasise the truth of universal redemption by Christ the personal experience of salvation by faith assured to the believer by the witness of the Holy Spirit; and the possibility and privilege of a Christian life made perfect in love.” The Methodist Church holds the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us. and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; ho for the joy that was set before H...” (Hebrews).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Taita Methodist Church wishes to take this opportunity of expressing its thanks to all who, by supplying records and information, have assisted in the compilation of this brochure; and especially to Mr. W. Greenwood. who did the major part of the work, and-to Rev. R. F. Clement. Thanks are due also to Messrs. L. Hall and C J. Freeman, and to the block-makers and printers for a good Job well done.

Publications Committee: Messrs. E. A. Millard and B. McConnell, and Rev. R. F. Clement
The Wayside Shrine

The pilgrim, on his homeward journey bound
Looks, ling’ring, where the morning sunbeams shine
On that green pasture, where his soul has found
Deep peace and solace at a wayside shrine.

There, sojourning within that House of God,
Sweet fellowship with kindred hearts he knew;
There found the comfort of His staff and rod,
There heav’nly manna strengthening him anew.

There sang the praise of God with happy voice;
There felt the Unseen Presence at his side,
Who bade him in his journeying, ‘Rejoice,’
For I, Who am the Way, will be thy guide.”

And, ere he leaves that place of hallowed days,
Where, in his passing, he had found sweet rest,
He leaves upon the shrine a gift, and prays
That following pilgrims also might be blest.

The above was written many years ago by the late Mr. I. W. Nelson, a local preacher
on the Greymouth circuit. The Taita Church has always been essentially a church of
the local preachers. Local preachers have always served the Taita Church well, and the
Taita Church has always served young locals by providing an excellent training
ground for them. Preachers come and go, and many have occupied the Taita pulpit
whose names are forgotten.

The same applied to the congregation. Taita church has been a wayside shrine to
hundreds who have lived in the district for only a few years. Like Melchizedec, they
have come, others have been blessed by their presence, and they have gone again into
oblivion. Such has been the history of the Taita Church—a wayside shrine for
travellers.

If, as a pilgrim through this life you have passed this way, and worshipped at this
shine, you are invited to offer a loving gift for the work of God in this place; and to
pray that following pilgrims also might he blest?