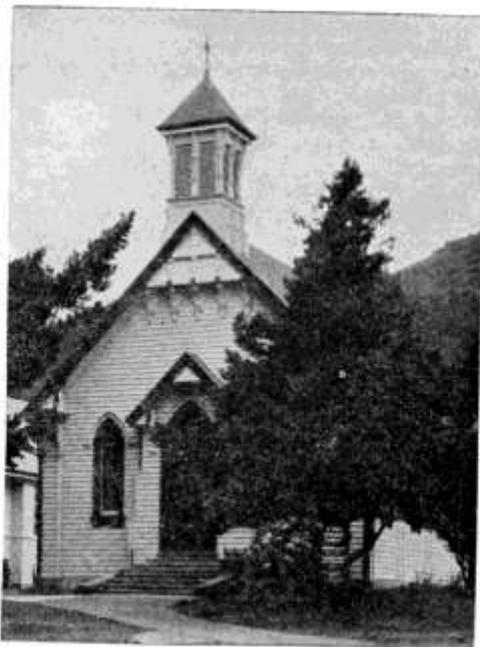


A Brief Record of the History of the  
Te Aroha Methodist Church  
and Circuit  
1881—1956



**I**N your pride of Jubilee year the whole District joins and offers its congratulations upon the attainment both in years and service. You will unite with Samuel in his declaration of faith "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" and look forward to the future with assurance that the same God, ever willing to aid and bless the labours of His servants, will be among you in grace, in power and in redemptive activity.

Be proud of your heritage.

Aim even higher for the future,

And trust in the Lord.

God bless you all,

WM. R. FRANCIS,

District Chairman.

## A Foreword

IT is both an honour and a joy to write this foreword; a joy enhanced by my personal acquaintance with so many of the devoted men and women who served the Church during the twenty-one years prior to my arrival in the Te Aroha district in 1902. The fifty-four years close association with our Methodist work since then, enables me, with some of you, to look back with thankfulness and also forward with hope. We should be more than ever a people of faith and hope and of a good courage, for, despite the hardships and the struggle for a living in those early decades, men and women both ministerial and lay toiled hard and gave sacrificially to ensure and maintain the Christian witness and worship, both in the town and rural areas.

Goldmining, though mainly responsible for the birth of Te Aroha, proved uneconomical, but by 1902, a new golden era for the district, and indeed for the whole Dominion, opened up. The invention of marine refrigeration and the cream separator gave the settlers a new vision, resulting in much closer settlement, and the rise of a prosperous co-operative dairying industry surpassing man's most sanguine hopes.

We give thanks to God for the inspiring memories of devoted men and women who, despite the urgent claims of land development and of transport and drainage problems were determined to put first things first. At Te Aroha itself a keen band of workers laid the foundations of Church life and over the years the work has been consolidated, churches built, Sunday School and parsonage buildings erected. In the country areas services were held first in private homes at Waitoa, Te Aroha West, Eastport and Springdale until Schools and Churches could be built. Population increased so rapidly that by 1914 the Upper Thames Circuit, which until then included Morrinsville, Paeroa, Waihi, Matamata and Putaruru, having Te Aroha as its administrative centre, was divided into six separate Circuits.

These achievements challenge us to face the problems peculiar to our day. The advent of the motor car, good roads, modern electric conveniences in homes, factories and on farms, also the radio, the cinema and soon television are all very disturbing factors, but should eventually serve to enrich rather than to impoverish Church life.

Conspicuous in these present days is the world-wide movement towards Church Union. That it is a work of the Holy Spirit there can be little doubt. God is calling His Church, now so unhappily divided, to be reconciled to Him and to each other; maybe, in order that the nations of the world might also find reconciliation and peace in the rich fellowship of the Christian Faith and Brotherly Love.

We hope the record in this little Brochure of our 75th Jubilee and of the humble yet faithful Christian service during these 75 years of Methodist work and worship will be a challenge to all who read it, and we hope, an incentive to maintain the rich heritage handed down to us.

CHAS. F. HORN.

## Strong Blow The Winds

TE AROHA township, nestling under the mountain of its name, has been noted, over the years, for its strong winds. One of the early identities of Te Aroha Methodism, Mrs Stockwell (nee Mabel Hirst) writing of the early days in "the old Church" records—

"On more than one occasion during Te Aroha's noted "gales" the building creaked and groaned in an alarming fashion, much to the distress of Mr Shepherd Allen, and I have known him to stop preaching and enquire whether it was safe to continue the service."

In reference to the present church building she writes—

"We were very interested in the erection of the present building and were justly proud of it though rather perturbed when, during a terrific gale, the iron was blown off the roof within twelve months of its completion. And well do I remember my father and others, procuring tarpaulins and fixing them on the roof should the rain follow and damage the interior."

A minute in the records of May 3rd, 1900, indicates the need for a building "specially strong to resist violent winds."

But, if the winds of nature have caused some concern and inconvenience to residents over the years, there are other winds—the winds of God's Holy Spirit—that have brought rich blessing to this corner of His Kingdom.

In the early days Te Aroha and district came within the bounds of the Thames Methodist Circuit. The Rev. William Morley in his work "*The History of Methodism in New Zealand*" tells us

"the discovery of gold in the locality brought it into prominence." So fabulously rich was the strike that (he continues) "one can easily understand how, from Australia and from all parts of the Colony, miners poured in, anxious to share in the spoil. Houses and stores were taken down in Auckland and re-erected on the field. Among the first comers were quite a number of Church members. These brought their religion with them, and from their tents and huts the voice of praise and prayer ascended to Heaven."

After a few years the "gold fever" in the Thames area subsided and prospectors looked further afield for the precious metal. Attention was turned to Te Aroha where it was felt there would be found, literally, a mountain of gold. Companies were formed to work reefs at Waiorongomai and a tent mining camp was established at Te Aroha. From a letter of greeting sent by the Rev. J. T. Pinfold for the 50th Church

## Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956

Anniversary celebrations in 1931 we have the following authentic record of the beginnings of Wesleyan Methodism in this centre.

"I was the first Christian minister to have preached in the town, and, consequently, have no small interest in its welfare. Te Aroha was proclaimed a gold-field on 25th November, 1880. I was sent there by our Synod (Auckland) a few days later and arrived on the 16th December. Well do I remember my arrival at your town. We had been on the river in the little steamer from early morning, when we left Thames, until it had become dusk. All at once, as we turned one of the bends, the Te Aroha mountain appeared having tents largely covering it, through the canvas of which candles were seen shining brightly. It was a fairy scene. But I was not used to sleeping in a tent; so Mr O'Halloran gave me the privilege of dosing down under his publican's counter for the night. The only other structure was the Warden's Office; and it was from the door of this that, on the 19th December, 1880, our first religious service was held. I preached to about one hundred men who stood around in the open air. The collection taken was 30/-. Mr Warden H. Kenrick and his Mining Registrar were both exceedingly kind, and the Lipsey family were generous, so it was not long before we had obtained a good site for a prospective church—on part of which your church now stands. Within a month of arrival I had preached at Paeroa, Waitoa, Piako and Matamata. To these places, at first, I usually walked. To this day I have keen recollections of the dust with which I was covered on the road to Morrinsville; and of the weariness I sometimes felt after walking from dawn of day until 12 o'clock noon negotiating the distance between Matamata and Te Aroha."

In this manner the Upper Thames Circuit was established. It was a Circuit of exceptional size for "it embraced all the territory between Netherton, Waihi and Mamaku Bush." The earliest records of the "Circuit Schedule Book" were made in 1881 and the membership returns for the whole Circuit were eight—Te Aroha 3, Paeroa 3, Waihou Farm 2. We admire the courage and zeal of those early Methodists who (with a membership of three) decided to build a centre of worship and of witness to their faith in that which is "more precious than gold." The first meeting of the Church Building Committee was held in Te Aroha on July 1st, 1881. Those present were: Rev. J. T. Pinfold (Chairman), Messrs J. Lavery, J. F. Cocks, D. J. Frazier and N. R. Cox.

It was agreed "That a new church be built upon the site given by Mr Lipsey." Of the tenders submitted that of Messrs Bright and Jones for £77/10/- was accepted. Extras and insurance brought the cost up to £80/5/- of which amount £65/10/- was raised, leaving a debit balance of £14/15/-" It was encouraging to the few to receive generous financial help from outside the Circuit. Donations from Thames, Cambridge, Hamilton and Auckland were evidence of a keen desire on the part of fellow Methodists to see the work of God established in this locality. The church was built and officially

## **Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956**

opened on August 7th, 1881, the Rev. H. Bull being the preacher. The building, when opened, was unlined, but this work was completed in the following year at an additional cost of £22/10/6. Being the only church in Te Aroha at that time it served as a centre of worship for the community. A choir was formed which donated the first harmonium (cost £12) to the church. In 1882 permission was granted to both the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches "to use the building when not required for our own services." The Trustees also sanctioned the use of the church "for an Anglican Con-confirmation service to be conducted by His Lordship the Bishop." During the week the church was used for the purpose of a day-school "at a charge of 5/- per week," and for social activities associated with the life of the church.



**The early Methodist Church built 1881.**



**The enlarged church.**

**This was enlarged in 1891 when the church was lengthened at the front and the porch was rebuilt. .**

Those concerned with records will be interested to learn that the first baptism in the Circuit was at Piako on February 6th, 1881 when the Rev. J. T. Pinfold baptised Charlotte Matilda and Sarah Ann Stanley. The first baptism in the Te Aroha Church was that of Harriet Isabella McLean by the Rev. H. Bull on November 13th, 1881. The first baptism in the present church was that of Evelyn Maude Sherlock on February 17th, 1901 by the Rev. S. Griffith. Although the church was opened in 1881 the first wedding in the church was not solemnised until April 1897 when Miss Frances Maingay was married to the Rev. William J. Elliott by the Rev. Samuel Lawry. It would seem that the custom of those earlier days was for a wedding in the home, for of the first one hundred weddings in the Circuit only nine were solemnised in the church. Today, a wedding in the home is the exception.

That the ministry of those early days was beset with difficulty and discouragement can be well understood when, from contemporary records, we learn that morally Waiorongomai with Te Aroha was considered the worst of the gold mining centres. It

## Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956

was through the influence of the Church and of those interested in the temperance movement that God wrought miracles of grace. Truly the winds of His converting power prevailed. Hardened drinkers signed the pledge and many, renowned for their depravity, were won for Christ. The "little church on the hill" became a centre of inspiration and spiritual blessing.

Unfortunately there is no adequate record available to give a complete list of those ardent lay men and women who were active in this initial work for God and His Church when the church was first built. It would be unwise, however, not to mention those who are known to have been associated with the work either in preaching, choir or Sunday School work, or as Trustees or stewards. Henry Buttle, George Devey, M. Bemrose, T. Bellamy, J. Lavery, William Tetley, W. Hetherington, S. L. Hirst, Miss Maingay, Mrs Blencoe, Miss Hetherington and others. As the work of the church grew so were added to the families of the above the Sherlock's, the Stanley's the Lawn's, the Shepherd Allen's, and the James'. That the winds of God's Spirit continued to fan the flame of Christian zeal is supported by the word of one who arrived in 1894 from English Methodism. She visited the little wooden church of unimposing exterior and sat with the worshippers in the sparsely furnished building "wondering what she had come to." Their fervour in prayer, their zest in singing, their "amen" and "hallelujah" to mark approval of the preacher's word assured her that here were "true Methodists." 'Twas here she found a spiritual home.

For the first three years the superintendent minister of the Upper Thames Circuit was resident in Paeroa, but in 1884 the Rev. T. J. Wills was appointed to be stationed at Te Aroha, and during the term of Rev. John Law (1890-1892) a parsonage was purchased to make continuing provision for a married minister. When the lease expired in 1904 it was decided to sell the old parsonage and build on the present site (part of the section given by Mr Lipsey). An all kauri, nine roomed dwelling was erected at a total cost of £683/3/6. This is still the ministers residence and, on wet days particularly, the lady of the parsonage has been glad of a large passage and spacious rooms.

Though the returns from gold did not reach expectations, a settled population remained in Te Aroha owing to the development of



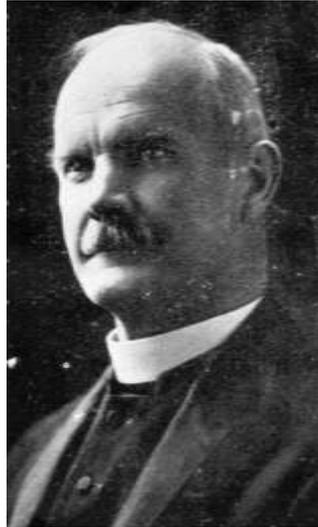
Te Aroha Church built 1900

## Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956

surrounding farm land and the emergence of Te Aroha, with its thermal waters, as a tourist centre. Expanding congregations and the urgent need for Sunday School facilities made the building of a new church a necessity. The Rev. Samuel Griffith was an inspiration to his people and encouraged them to build for the future. The result was the present substantial structure to meet the needs of a congregation of upwards of 200. The foundation stone was laid by Mrs W. Shepherd Allen and the church was officially opened on Thursday, December 13, 1900. The Dedicatory Service was conducted by Rev. H. R. Dewsbury who, with the Rev. Arthur Mitchell, preached at the services of worship on the Sunday following.



**Rev. H. R. Dewsbury**



**Rev Arthur Mitchell**

The total cost of £817 was met by the people with but a small loan outstanding with the Church Building and Loan Fund. Over the years the restful, worshipful atmosphere of the church and the faithful preaching of God's Word by ministers and lay-preachers have combined to exercise a gracious influence upon many lives. As one person remarked "It was in the Te Aroha Church that I made the great decision for Christ, and there that I first learned the privilege and joy of service.'

In 1931 the first half century was reached and the occasion marked by special services on Sunday, June 21st, and a Jubilee Concert in the Parish Hall on the Wednesday. The minister of the church, Rev. A. H. Fowles, conducted the morning service (to which civic authorities and public bodies etc., were invited) and in the evening the Rev. Dr. C. H. Laws, B.A., D.D., was the preacher. On the Sunday afternoon a Bible Class Rally was held in Wesley Hall with Dr. Laws as the speaker.



Rev Dr C H Laws BA DD

In 1932 another change took place—the erection of a new Sunday School Hall. It was a sorrow to see the original church removed which had served first as a church and then as Sunday School and with its demolition a link with the past was severed. There was, however, joy in the hearts of all that a fitting memorial to the first half-century of Methodism in Te Aroha should take its place. The new hall was opened, most fittingly, by Mr Charles Rayner, one who was for many years Sunday School Superintendent and an ardent worker in the life of the Church.

So we look back and trace briefly a record of gradual but definite expansion over the years. In the earliest days, 75 years ago, the Upper Thames Circuit covering a wide area and with but eight members was served by one minister. By the turn of the century churches had been built in a number of centres and additional ministers stationed at Paeroa and Waihi—the Superintendent being resident at Te Aroha. In 1909 Paeroa and Waihi became separate Circuits. By the year 1916 Morrinsville was able to take the same step, and later Matamata (including Putaruru) was constituted a Circuit. Today (1956) the earlier Upper Thames Circuit is divided into six Circuits with six ministers in active work and a total membership of 834; thirteen churches and nineteen other preaching places. The present membership of the Te Aroha Circuit is 204.

We thank God for all past favours and every evidence of His presence with, and benediction upon those who have placed them-selves at His disposal. Through them He has made manifest His desire to impart new life and power to those who seek Him in their need. May the winds of His Spirit blow with fresh power upon our own and

## Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956

succeeding generations that the cause of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, may prosper and His Church be established in strength.

**EXPLANATION.**—In compiling this brochure it has been difficult to get accurate information in all cases. It will be understood that any errors or omissions are not intentional. Owing to limitation of space references to many loyal workers, especially members in the country preaching places, have had to be omitted. We express regret and apologies.



Te Aroha Methodist Church Property showing Parsonage, Sunday School Hall and Church

## 75th Anniversary

### TE AROHA CELEBRATION

Early in September our Circuit celebrated its 75th anniversary. On the Saturday evening over two-hundred-and fifty people sat down to a Jubilee Banquet in Wesley Hall. The Rev. J. Churchill, present minister, presided, and welcomed all present. Many past members had come from afar to share in the anniversary celebrations.

Toasts covering the life and witness of the Church, past and present, were honoured, and hymns suitable to the theme of the toasts were sung to honour those to whom tribute was paid. The two-tier cake, made and decorated by Mrs W. North, was cut by Mrs E. Pilkington who has held continuous membership with our Te Aroha Church for over sixty years.

Jubilee Sunday, September 9th, was an occasion of glad thanksgiving and a day of re-dedication of ourselves to Christ our Lord, and to the service of His Kingdom. The church was more than filled in the morning and provision was made for the relay of the service to Wesley Hall. The Rev. L. A. Brooks (minister in Te Aroha 1939-1944) conducted the service. The Church has not "had it," he said, but the Church "has IT"—the message of God which alone can save the world.

In the afternoon the Rev. W. R. Francis, Chairman of the District, brought a message to youth under the heading "It's All Yours" the past, as a heritage from pioneers of early Methodism; the present, as an opportunity for spiritual development; the future—to shape under God's hand for truth and righteousness.

Seating was fully taxed for the evening worship. Early in the service a number of hymns of Methodism were sung and the added opportunity to lift the voice in praise was fully appreciated by the congregation. The Rev. Athol Penn (minister from 1945-1950) in his address paid tribute to those of earlier years who laboured so faithfully to establish the work of the Church in Te Aroha and district and challenged all present to keep burning, in this generation, the fires of spiritual faith and zeal.

On the Monday afternoon there was a happy, informal gathering when older members, visitors and friends were received at afternoon tea. Mr W. A. Clark, Circuit Steward, extended a welcome on behalf of the Circuit. Sprays and posies were presented to a number of folk, and opportunity was given for all to chat over past days and experiences.

For the closing function of the Jubilee, the Sacred Concert and Cantata, the church was again well filled and soloists and choir were encouraged by an attentive audience. Under the capable baton of our guest conductor, Mr A. Allison, the choir excelled in the Cantata by Caleb Simper—"The Rolling Seasons."



## TRUSTEES OF THE TE AROHA CHURCH

The history of our Church property in Te Aroha is, largely, a record of the zealous work of loyal trustees. The raising of finance for church buildings and for maintenance of buildings and property has fallen upon the Trust. They would be the first to acknowledge the generous help of the Ladies' Guild, Circuit officials and of the people, but the responsibility has rested on their shoulders. The journal of Trust meetings is a record of careful and prayerful consideration of the many problems, large and small that have been part of church development. It is a record of vision and of faith; a record of sacrificial service and of ready co-operation in the work of God. Much of the essential work of maintenance has been done by members of the Trust personally. Unfortunately there is no full record of those who have held office as secretary and treasurer. The following is a list of Trustees as they have been appointed to office. (Date when ceased to be Trustees not recorded):—

1883—W. Wilkinson, G. Ripley, F. J. Cocks, W. Johnson, J. Allen, J. Gribble.

1890—J. Lavery, J. Roberts, J. James, S. L. Hirst, W. Hetherington, A. Farmer, H. Buttle;

1906—T. Stanley, F. Hubbard, H. Styles, A. Laybourn, T. Eager.

1910 (?)—C. Rayner, E. Hepworth, G. Sherlock, H. J. Hirst, T. Ashby, F. J. Eastwood, A. Bell.

1912—J. A. Clothier, W. Gray, H. G. Hirst, F. Paltridge, G. Stewart, G. Hansen, J. Wood, H. Ward.

1921—R. Dixon, J. Lusby, A. Routley, W. Herbert, A. C. Williams, T. Hannah, P. O. Pilkington, W. E. Smith, R. Peterson, W. A. Clark, A. Peterson, C. A. Grainger, J. B. Styles.

1929—R. E. Eastwood, H. Carwardine, R. G. Trebilco, P. Trebilco, A. Zeigler, F. E. Callaghan.

1937—W. Doll, A. Stuck, J. Ward, I. H. Forbes, E. R. Sherlock, H. Watson, Ron D. Eastwood.

1939—L. Bailey, H. L. Mills, R. Jenkins, A. Davey, G. E. Callaghan,

1954—S. Hills.

1956—R. Roberts, A. Gillon, G. Davies, J. W. Eastwood.

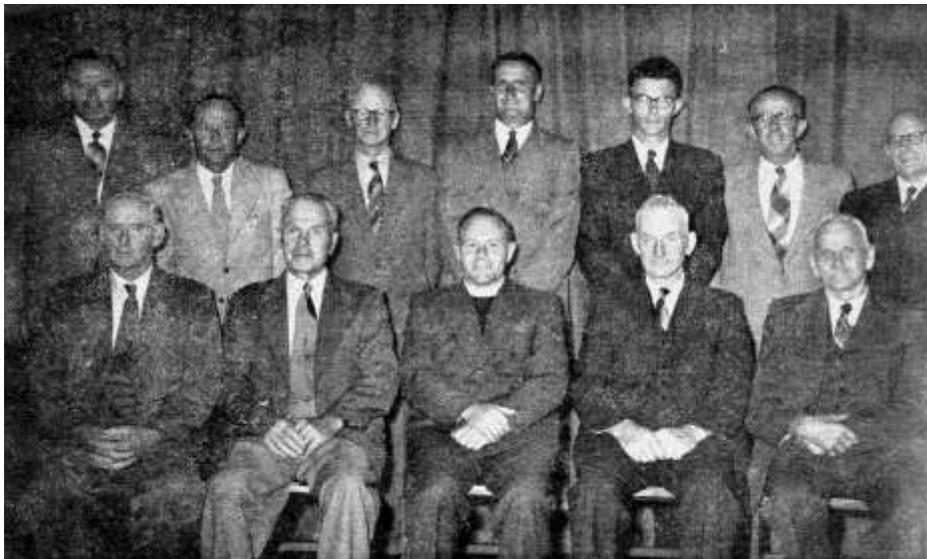
### Present Trust:

W. A. Clark (secretary), G. E. Callaghan (treasurer), A. Zeigler, R. D. Eastwood, L. Bailey, R. Jenkins, A. Davey, S. Hills, A. Gillon, G. Davies, R. Roberts, J. W. Eastwood.

## Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956

### THANKS:

The Trustees of the Church take this opportunity to express their appreciation of the many who have rendered faithful service to the Te Aroha Church, and whose names do not appear in this record. Sacramental and Flower Stewards, Society Stewards, caretakers and cleaners, voluntary helpers and all who, over the years, have contributed sacrificially to the maintenance of church properties.



#### Present Trustees:

(Standing) G. Davies, G.E.Callaghan, L.Bailey, R.Jenkins, J.Eastwood, R.Roberts, S.Hill  
(Sitting) A.Davey, W.A.Clark, J.Churchill (Minister) R.Eastwood, A.Ziegler  
(Absent) A.Gillon

## The Ministry of the Church

OVER seventy-five years of Christian ministry the Methodist Church of the Upper Thames (later Te Aroha) Circuit has been well served by a varied ministry. Each man has made a special contribution to the life and witness of the Church according to his particular ability. Some have excelled as preachers, some as pastors, some as administrators in church affairs. Paul's message of God's power to use the varied gifts of His servants (Ephesians 4/11-12) has been fully exemplified in those appointed to superintend here. In the main wise leadership has been given, the Word of God faithfully preached, and spiritual oversight given to the people. Of the twenty-five ministers who have served there are those who have been honoured of the Church by election to Presidential office. Others have rendered service to the Connexion as Chairman or Secretary of the South Auckland District while at Te Aroha. While a full list is not available mention should be made of those who, during their ministry, attained the Presidency:—

Rev. S. Lawry, President of the Methodist Church of Australasia in New Zealand, 1904. First President of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, 1913.

Rev. S. Henderson, President of the Primitive Methodist Church of New Zealand, 1904.

Rev. P. R. Paris, President of Methodist Church in New Zealand, 1938, and

Rev. J. H. Odell was President in 1949.



**Rev. P. R. Paris**



**Rev. W. T. Blight**

In addition the Rev. W. J. Elliott, who was married in Te Aroha, was President in 1928; while Rev. F. Copeland and Rev. W. T. Blight, who were members of our

## Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956

church here before entering the ministry, became President in 1937 and 1946 respectively.

Tribute should be paid to two of the brethren who received the call to higher service during their term here. Rev. A. J. Reed died in 1912 and was buried in the Te Aroha Cemetery.

Rev. J. Dukes died in 1919 and was buried at Manurewa, Auckland.

Their names are honoured by memorial tablets in the church.



Rev. J. T. Pinfold, First Superintendant Minister



Rev. F. Copeland

## LIST OF MINISTERS APPOINTED TO TE AROHA

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1880-One wanted, Upper Thames.                       | 1907-1908- Dukes, Upper Thames,<br>Te Aroha.        |
| 1881-J. T. Pinfold, Upper Thames.                    | 1909-1912- A. J. Reed, Upper Thames,<br>Te Aroha.   |
| 1882-J. T. Pinfold, Upper Thames                     | 1912-1913- G. B. Hinton, Upper Thames,<br>Te Aroha. |
| 1883-G. F. Marshall, Upper Thames.                   | 1913-1915- P. R. Paris, Upper Thames,<br>Te Aroha.  |
| 1884-1885- T. J. Willis, Upper Thames,<br>Te Aroha.  | 1916-1919- T. Dukes, Te Aroha.                      |
| 1886- Oliver Dean, Upper Thames,<br>Te Aroha.        | 1920-1922- A. Hopper, Te Aroha.                     |
| 1887-1889- S. Lawry, Upper Thames,<br>Te Aroha       | 1923-1928- S. Henderson, Te Aroha.                  |
| 1890-1892-John Law, Upper Thames,<br>Te Aroha.       | 1929-1930- H. J. Odell, Te Aroha.                   |
| 1893-1895- T. J. Joughin, Upper Thames,<br>Te Aroha. | 1931- A. H. Fowles, Te Aroha.                       |
|  | 1932-1934- W. J. Oxbrow, Te Aroha.                  |

## Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956

1896-1900- S. Griffith, Upper Thames, Te Aroha.	1935-1938- C. B. Taylor, Te Aroha.
1901-1903- C. Abernethy, Upper Thames, Te Aroha.	1939-1944- L. A. G. Brooks, Te Aroha.
1904-1906- J. Blight, Upper -Thames, Te Aroha.	1945- A. Blakemore, Te Aroha.
	1946-1950- A. R. Penn, Te Aroha.
	1961-1955—N. W. Olds, Te Aroha.
	1956 – J. Churchill, (present Minister).

## Partners in Service

Associated with the ministers in the task of preaching the Good News there has been a willing band of laymen. It was only by their zealous and sacrificial service that the numerous preaching appointments were fulfilled and expansion work made possible. In 1886 with one minister in the Circuit, there were thirteen preaching places on the plan. Some were monthly mid-week services taken by the minister but frequently five or six local preachers were required in order to fill the Sunday appointments. At the turn of the century there were twenty-five preaching places in the Upper Thames Circuit and even with three ministers in the area it was still necessary to use from seven to ten local preachers each Sunday. Multiply this number by almost every country Circuit in New Zealand Methodism and we can appreciate, in some measure, how great is the debt of the Church to these devoted laymen. Early Methodism here owed much to the ready help given by such men as M. Bemrose, W. Johnson, W. S. Allen, A. Best, and the three sons of Mr Shepherd Allen—J. C., S. S., and R. C. Allen. Some of those who shared the responsibility and privilege of preaching in the large Upper Thames Circuit continue to serve in the separate Circuits. Of those best known we mention Mr P. Rushton, Morrinsville; Mr J. B. Beeche, Waihi; Mr C. F. Horn and Mr W. A. Clark of the Te Aroha Circuit. All have given over forty years as fully accredited local preachers and have maintained their witness in the one area over that period.

A memorial tablet in the Te Aroha Church to the memory of Mr W. S. Allen has this inscription—"He was devotedly attached to the Methodist Church and a faithful and efficient local preacher in the

Upper Thames Circuit." Many others would be worthy of such tribute for through the witness of their preaching souls have been won for Christ, the wayward reprov'd, the faithful strengthened and the young encouraged in the Christian life.

It has been difficult to compile a record and apologies are made for any omissions. The following list includes those who preached in the Upper Thames Circuit up to 1916 and in the Te Aroha Circuit up to 1956.

Messrs Burton, Ashwin, W. Tetley, A. Tetley, H. Buttle, A. Laybourne, D. Whitburn, Bellamy, W. B. Beach, W. Johnson, M. Bemrose, A. Johnson, W. S. Allen, J. C.

## **Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956**

Allen, S. S. Allen, R. C. Allen, A. Best, T. E. Corkill, C. C. Mayes, W. Tuck, Lawn snr, A. Roach, A. Lusby, W. Williams, H. Gilman, Hamilton, W. Dillicar, P. Williams, C. Roberts, Kerr, J. B. Beeche, F. C. Hills, G. Devey, G. Stewart, F. Paltridge, W. H. Herbert, A. J. Leach, F. J. Eastwood, C. F. Spooner, J. Evans, R. Evans, A. Dixon, C. F. Horn, J. A. Clothier, W. A. Clark, M. Edgar, R. S. McDonald, P. Rushton, C. Rayner, P. Trebilco, R. Trebilco, J. Keightley, G. Harris., C. Trebilco, C. Keightley, Eric Eastwood, L. O. Keightley, I. Forbes, R. Old, N. Hight, M. Mehrtens.

## **LADIES' GUILD**

Where would the Church be without the ladies? This is an oft quoted phrase. This Circuit, like most, owes a great debt to those faithful workers who through bazaars and other functions have helped both Trust and Circuit with the financial needs. Minutes like the following appear in the Trust Minute Book:—

"Moved that the ladies be asked to make arrangements for the Church Anniversary Soiree."

"That we tender to the Ladies' Guild our heartiest thanks for the efforts put forth on behalf of the parsonage and for the £50 . . . for the liquidation of the long standing debt on the parsonage." (1902).

At the recent Jubilee all arrangements for the Banquet were left in the hands of the Guild, and all present were appreciative of their contribution to the success of the 75th Anniversary celebrations.

Present records of Guild activity only take us back to 1922, but we can be sure that the wives of prominent officials from 1881 onward were closely associated with Guild activities. It would appear that it was usual for the wife of the resident minister to be president of the Guild. Exceptions have been Mrs A. Stuck, Mrs R. Eastwood, Mrs G. Davies. Those who have served as secretary since 1922 are Mesdames Dukes, Allen, Sherlock, G. Callaghan and H. Lawn; while the office of treasurer has been filled by Mesdames C. Rayner, A. Cague, Willis, A. Zeigler, R. Hazelton.

Associated with the Guild was the Methodist War Relief Committee. Parcels of food and knitted wear were sent to servicemen overseas during 1939-45 and to the aged and needy of Great Britain both during and after the war. This important piece of Patriotic service was under the direction of Mrs Ron Eastwood.

## **Senior Circuit Officials**

## **Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956**

The essence of Church life is fellowship and co-operation. The minister, so often thought of as the head of a Circuit, would be largely ineffective in the work of administration without the help and guidance of the Circuit Stewards. In this the Upper Thames and Te Aroha Circuit has been well served by capable and consecrated laymen. They have been both friends and counsellors to the respective ministers, and the ministers themselves would be first to pay tribute to the loyal and devoted service of senior officials over the years. The office has been equitably shared by men carrying the confidence of ministers and people. Some have rendered unbroken service over a period of years, others have made their contribution to the Church life over shorter periods. Mr J. Lavery of Te Aroha, and William Tetley of Paeroa were the first appointments, Mr Tetley held almost continuous office from 1881 to 1901. He was succeeded by Mr Alfred Tetley who continued until 1908. There were a number of co-stewards with the Tetleys, but Mr J. C. Allen shared the responsibility from 1897 to 1906. Over the period from 1910 to 1956 eight men have shared the privilege and responsibilities of this office—as far as can be ascertained from all sources of information. Special mention should be made of Mr C. F. Horn who, as minister's friend and member's representative held office for a period of over thirty-years. In addition Mr J. A. Clothier, despite ill-health, served an almost unbroken term from 1915 to 1935. Mr C. Rayner shared the work from 1910 to 1921, and Mr W. A. Clark, who succeeded Mr Clothier, has held continuous office from 1936 to the present time. Mr T. Qualtrough filled the office for a period of nine years and Mr P. Oand A. Cague served for a short period. Mr L. O. Keightley is at present co-steward with Mr Clark.

Within the Te Aroha Circuit those who have carried the weight as senior officials have also been actively engaged in other spheres of Christian work—Local Preachers, Sunday School Teachers, Trustees etc.—and we thank God for their wide and effective influence for good in Church and community.

The following have held office over the years:—J. Lavery, William Tetley, J. Phillips snr, H. Buttle, C. A. White, W. Hetherington, J. J. Calderwood. H. R. Bell, W. S. Allen, J. C. Allen, Alfred Tetley, F. C. Brown, C. Rayner, C. F. Horn, J. A. Clothier, P. Trebilco, A. Cague, W. A. Clark, T. Qualtrough and L. O. Keightley.

### **FIRESIDE CLUB:**

During this year, 1956, a Fireside Club was commenced to meet the need of younger married and other ladies in the Circuit. The first president is Mrs John Eastwood; secretary, Mrs Alex Davey; treasurer, Mrs L. E. Mathew.

## **Local Body Service**

## Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956

It may be appropriate to include in this record the service rendered to the community by members of the local Trust, past and present, and some others.

Mr S. L. Hirst (decd.), served as Councillor 1898-1902, and as Mayor for two months, 1902.

Mr G. Sherlock (decd.), served as Councillor 1901-1903.

Mr Chas. Rayner (decd.), served as Councillor 1915-1917.

Mr T. Stanley (decd.), served as Mayor 1916-1918.

Mr J. A. Clothier (decd.), served as Councillor 1919-1921.

Mr W. E. Smith (decd.), served as Councillor 1927-1941.

Mr W. T. Dale (decd.), served as Councillor 1933-1947.

Mr J. E. Wild (decd.), served as Councillor 1941-1942.

Mr W. A. Clark, served as Councillor 1938-1947, and as Mayor 1947- 1953.

Mr Clark has also served on the Piako County Council and on the Thames Valley Power Board, and is Chairman of the Te Aroha Sports Domain Board.

Mr S. W. Hills has just been elected to serve a term of three years on the Borough Council.

Mr P. O. Pilkington (decd.), was for many years Borough Foreman and served the community as Superintendent of the Te Aroha Fire Brigade.

Mr A. Gillon has been President of the Thames Valley A., P. and H. Association for nine years, and is also President of the Te Aroha Rugby Union.

Mr R. D. Eastwood who is on the staff of the Piako County Council, is President of the Te Aroha 5000 Club, and one of the Executive of the Amateur Athletic Association.

Miss G. M. Herbert, though not a member of the Trust, has been an active worker in the church for 25 years, and is now serving a second term on the Council.

Within the Circuit three Justices of the Peace are members of our Church—Mr W. A. Clark, Miss G. Herbert and Mr W. G. Horn.

Thus we see that members of the Church are conscious of their responsibility to the Community.



Rev. C. T. J. Luxton

## Youth Work

## **SUNDAY SCHOOLS**

The Church in its ministry is aware of the tremendous opportunities for instruction of the young in Christian truth. It is in this field of service that the seed is sown, and though response is often slow and the work full of discouragement, it is a vital work and yields a rich harvest. The Sunday School was established in Te Aroha as soon as the Church was built, and the message of Christ was proclaimed to the children. That it was more than a Methodist Sunday School is clear from the records. Where, in 1883, there were eight members attached to the Church there were 85 children in the Sunday School. In addition, Waiorongomai, which was flourishing, had nearly 100 children on the roll. The Church has been well served by teachers who have rendered sacrificial service in this department. Unfortunately, up to 1898 there was no record kept of Superintendents and secretaries, but a brief reference in Trust records indicates that Mr S. L. Hirst and Mrs E. Blencoe were ardent workers in the Sunday School. When the new Church was opened in 1900 the old church became the Sunday School, and in 1932 was replaced by the present Wesley Hall. Within that period long terms of service were rendered by Mr A. Laybourne and Mr C. Rayner as Superintendents. Mr W. North, as teacher and Superintendent has had long association with the Sunday School, while Mrs R. Eastwood has been in charge of the Beginners Department for a number of years. As far as available information makes a record possible the following have held office as Superintendent:—

S. L. Hirst, H. R. Bell, C. F. Spooner, A. Laybourne, F. Hubbard, A. Williams, C. Rayner, I. H. Forbes, H. Watson, W. North, C. Eastwood.

The officials of the Church would place on record their appreciation of the faithful service of teachers and all others associated with the Sunday School over the years.

## **CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR AND BIBLE CLASS.**

In these spheres the record of the life of the Church indicates that in Christian Endeavour and Bible Class young people have been faced with the challenge of Christ and brought to a point of decision. The earlier C.E. combined young men and young women and included a wide range, but the emphasis on participation in the meeting prepared many for other work in the Church—local preachers, Sunday School teachers, Guild office bearers, etc. Leadership of the C.E. was given by the Superintendent minister. In 1914 a Young Women's Bible Class was formed under the leadership of Miss G. Herbert. At approximately the same time a Y.M.B.C. was established under the minister's super-vision, and up to 1939 the senior youth work was carried on in this way. War problems placed a restriction on young men's B.C. work, but the young women of our Church owe a great debt to Miss Herbert's leadership and friendship in Christian life. At present the B.C. work is divided—

## Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956

Junior-Intermediate under the leadership 'of Mr S. Hills and Intermediate-Senior led by the minister.

Easter Camps have played an important part in the life of our young people and on a number of occasions Camps have been held in our Church buildings.

From the youth work of the Circuit some of our members have moved on into the full service of the Church, both in the New Zealand ministry and in mission work overseas. For six years Miss Muriel Stewart was in the Solomon Islands as a nursing sister, and the Rev. C. T. J. Luxton served as a missionary in the same area for 12 years. Recently the record of fifty years mission work there was published in his book "*Isles of Solomon.*" (Copies still available). The Rev. Cliff Keightley (with his wife) was the first New Zealand Methodist missionary to take up work in the new field in the New Guinea High-lands. He, his wife and family are in the Tari Valley. In addition Sister Edith James is in charge of the medical work at Tari, and supervises the training of girls for hospital work.

In the full ministry of the Church in New Zealand we have the following:—Rev. L. G. Hanna (Epsom), Rev. Fursdon (Baptist Church), Rev. G. Trebilco (Warkworth), Rev. D. Trebilco (Wairoa), Rev. G. Gilbert (Mt. Roskill), Rev. Eric Eastwood (Western Southland). Rev. W. Mills and Sister "Rona" Keightley rendered valuable service to the Church but have had to discontinue full time work.



Sister Muriel Stewart



Sister Edith James

## WOMEN'S MISSIONARY AUXILIARY

## Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956

The vitality of a Church can often be gauged by its mission interest. If that is true then in the Te Aroha Circuit we have a live Church. (This may give cause for serious reflection). There are three Auxiliaries within the Circuit and an active interest is main-tained in mission work both Home and Overseas. Apart from financial assistance contribution is made by gifts of clothing, toys, books, medical supplies, stationery, food, materials, etc. From the three Auxiliaries (Te Aroha, Eastport Road and Springdale) over £300 has been contributed during the past year. With the usual Circuit giving to Home and Overseas Missions added the total is over £500—or £10 per week from the Circuit as a whole.

Officials of the Auxiliaries since their inception have been:—

**Te Aroha** (1921)—Presidents: Mesdames Perkins, C. Rayner, Stewart, P. Trebilco, Robert Eastwood, A. Zeigler, A. Penn, Ron. Eastwood, N. Olds, J. Churchill. Secretaries: Mesdames A. Eastwood, N. Stewart, Miss M. Stewart, Mesdames A. Zeigler, W. North, R. Hazelton, G. Davies, J. Nicol. Treasurer: Mesdames P. Pilkington, E. Nicol, Mc-Donald, G. Callaghan; Roberts, W. North.

**Eastport Road** (1939)—Presidents: Mesdames Readhead, T. Qualtrough, W. Horn, R. Wagstaff, E. Palliser, J. R. Horn. Secretaries: Mesdames W. Horn, J. Nicol, E. Palliser, J. R. Horn, R. Wagstaff. Treasurers: Mesdames ,C. F. Horn, T. Qualtrough, N. Eastwood, Miss D. Qualtrough.

**Springdale** (1939) Combined Presbyterian-Methodist.—Presidents: Mesdames Burgess, R. Coombe, F. Johansen, M. M. Mehrtens, H. Old. Secretaries: Mesdames Wells, F. Johansen, B. Johansen, E. C. Bailey. G. Wilton, I. Bridgeman. Treasurers: Mesdames White, Barnett, Shepherd, G. Harris, L. Keightley. I. Bridgeman.



Sister "Rona" Keightley



Rev. Cliff Keightley

**"Come Let Us Sing Unto The Lord."**

## Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956

For over two-hundred years our Methodist Church has stressed the importance of music in worship. Wherever Methodism has been established the note of praise and of Christian joy has been heard. When our Te Aroha Church was built a choir was formed under the leadership of Mr S. L. Hirst, with Miss Maingay as organist. Special tribute must be paid to Mr Hirst for twenty years of service as choir-master, and to Mr C. Rayner whose leadership extended over a period of twenty-five years. In addition Mrs Ron Eastwood has given over twenty years service as organist and for a period held the dual position as organist and choir-mistress. Apart from the strong lead given to congregational singing Sunday by Sunday, the choir has enriched the worship with selected music for special services and occasions.

That the Te Aroha Choir work was of a high standard can be gauged by the fact that in 1923, under Mr Rayner's baton, they won two trophies—The Thames Valley Choir Anthem Contest, and the Hamilton Challenge Shield for the Male Voices of Methodist Choirs. Both shields (though not now competed for) are still in the choir vestry.

A choir, however, without the support of a good instrument and organist would be largely ineffective. The music of the organ voluntaries, carefully selected, has undoubtedly helped to contribute to the atmosphere of worship that seems to live within the church and we express our gratitude to the many who have helped in this way. There have been five organs to give a lead in the music of the church. The first was given by the choir in 1882, and the second purchased in 1891. When the present church was built a new instrument was provided at a cost of £26/10/-. When the need for another instrument became urgent the choir, Church and Trust were most appreciative of the gift of an organ from Mrs C. Rayner as a memorial to her parents. In 1940 the present Everett electric organ and chimes was installed. It was the gift of Mr J. Tarlton in memory of Miss Sill. A beautiful organ, of full pipe tone, it is one of which any church could be humbly proud. With Mrs Rayner's approval the organ given by her was transferred to the Eastport Road Church and dedicated to the memory of Mrs G. Horn who, with her husband, was a foundation member of the work there.

On special occasions it has been possible to augment the choir with help from other parts of the Circuit. For the Jubilee celebrations a choir of over thirty voices led the singing and added to the joy and inspiration of a notable occasion.

The following is a list of organists and choir-leaders over the years:—

**Organists:** Misses Maingay, Hirst, Spooner, Stanley, C. Herbert, Clothier, M. Smith, I. Sherlock, Page, E. Henderson, Wilson, Mr C. Walton, Miss Higgs, Mrs Ron Eastwood (1936—still senior organist), Misses E. Shannon, M. Clark, W. Shannon, E. Gleeson, B. Billing, N. Bovett, C. Edmonds, Mrs M. Caldwell, Mr J. Toms, M. Cornelius, M. Holst.

## **Te Aroha Methodist Church and Circuit 1881-1956**

**Choir-leaders:** Messrs S. L. Hirst, G. Sherlock, C. Rayner, W. Mills, A. Buchan, H. Cook, Mrs R. Eastwood, Mr O. Allison, Revs, N. Olds and J. Churchill.

### **COUNTRY PREACHING PLACES**

For record purposes we make a brief reference to other preaching places within the Circuit, and would acknowledge the loyalty and co-operation of those who have sustained the witness of the Church. Some of our most faithful workers have been quietly effective in ensuring a continuing work for Christ in these centres. They have also taken a keen and practical interest in the life of the whole Circuit and in the wider influence of the Church.

**Eastport Road**—Services in homes until present church built in 1910. Vestry added in 1917. Sunday School commenced in home of Mr J. Neeves in 1904. Sunday School Hall built in 1941. Extension added in 1956. Present Trustees: Messrs C. F. Horn, G. W. Horn, J. R. Horn, R. Wagstaff, T. Qualtrough, W. Cox, A. R. Horn, A. Thomas.

**Springdale**—Services commenced 1915. Church opened June 1929. Cost £710. S.S. extension 1942. Sunday School commenced 1915. Interdenominational Sunday School now held in Church and Sunday School Hall. Bible Class under joint Methodist-Presbyterian leaderships Present Trustees: Messrs G. H. Mundell; L. Keightley, D. P. Malcolm, J. N. Donaldson, F. Keightley, G. Roberts, H. Wilton, A. R. Moore, A. Fielder.

**Te Aroha West**—Came on to the preaching plan in 1882. Services held in various homes, then in school and later in hall. In 1922 the Church was built at a cost of £699. Sunday School combined with Waiorongomai until 1896. Continued as Methodist Sunday School until 1942. Since then has been conducted as an undenominational School. Interdenominational Bible Class under leadership of Mr M. Mehrtens. Present Trustees: Messrs J. Bowring, G. W. Scott, A. Gillon, A. Watkin, A. Peatson, R. Peatson, W. M. Ferguson, E. Bowring, N. Harvey, R. Gillon, M. Mehrtens, W. J. Walsh, N. Forder.

**Hungahunga**—Services commenced 1915. Held in School until Public Hall was built in 1955. Interdenominational Sunday School.

## Church Officers 1956

### MINISTER:

REV. J. CHURCHILL 30 Church Street, Phone 139

### PREACHERS:

C. F. Horn, Eastport Road. On Trial: L. Keightley.  
W. A. Clark, Te Aroha. M. Mehrtens  
R. Old. N. Hight

### CIRCUIT OFFICERS:

Circuit Stewards: Messrs W. A. Clark and L. Keightley  
Circuit H.M. Secretary Mr S Hills  
Circuit P.M. Secretary Mrs T. Qualtrough  
Circuit Agent Methodist Times Miss C. Saunders  
Circuit Orphanage Secretary Mrs W. Horn  
Circuit Youth Secretary Mr J. Eastwood

### SOCIETY STEWARDS

Te Aroha A. Ziegler, A. Davey, W. North, L. Bailey,  
S. Hills, T. Boyd  
Minister's Steward R. Jenkins  
Te Aroha West A. Watkins, J. Bowring  
Eastport Road G. M. W. Horn, G.W. Horn  
Minister's Steward C. Horn  
Springdale G. H. Mundell, L. Keightley  
Hungahunga C. Brooke

### SACRAMENTAL STEWARDS

Te Aroha Mrs North, Misses Saunders  
Eastport Road Mrs C. Horn  
Springdale Mrs H. Bridgeman

### MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIVES

Te Aroha Mesdames Cornelius and Hazelton  
Eastport Road Mr R. Horn  
Springdale Mrs H. Old  
Hungahunga Mr C. Brooke

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDANTS**

Te Aroha	Mr C. Eastwood
Eastport Road	Mr C F. Horn
Springdale	Mrs L. Keightley

(Te Aroha S.S. Teachers' Meeting, 4th Monday)

## **ORGANISTS:**

Te Aroha	Mrs R. Eastwood, Miss N. Bovett, Mrs O. Caldwell, Mr J. Toms
Eastport Road	Mrs T. Qualtrough, Mr C. Horn
Springdale	Mr R. Old
Te Aroha West	Mr A. Watkin

## **JUBILEE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

Rev. J. Churchill, Mr W. A. Clark, Mrs G. Davies, Mrs R. Eastwood, Mrs G. Callaghan, Mrs J. Eastwood, Miss N. Bovett (Secretary).