

THE METHODIST CHURCH  
KESWICK AND COCKERMOUTH CIRCUIT

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*“Watchers  
of a Beacon”*

THE STORY OF  
THE KESWICK AND COCKERMOUTH METHODIST CIRCUIT

A CENTENARY SOUVENIR  
1854 - 1954

By

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## FOREWORD.

After reading this interesting Centenary Souvenir so aptly called "Watchers of a Beacon." my eyes lighted upon a book on my shelves. bearing the title "The Methodist Heritage."

Mr. Griffin whose collegueship for three years I valued so greatly, has put us all in his debt for the trouble he has taken in bringing to light. and putting on record. the story of Methodism in this corner of Cumberland. We are, indeed, proud of our Methodist heritage, and I am sure this account of the past hundred and more years will inspire us to follow in the footsteps of our fathers. who, for the love of Jesus. spent themselves in the service of His Church.

We look back with a deep sense of indebtedness. We also look around today, and see local preachers, office-bearers and workers among the young and old, who are bearing their witness and serving their Lord with deep devotion. I would also add that we have our saints as well-men and women whose lives radiate the spirit of Christ.

So we look to the future with hope and confidence as we go forward into another century of Methodist worship and fellowship.

Keswick.

E. Grieves Smith.

## PREFACE

There is the story of the little girl who decided to give her mother, as a birthday present. a new copy of the Bible. Her gift once purchased. she wrote inside the front cover: "To Dear Mother. from Betty." It then occurred to her that this statement looked somewhat barren; something more seemed to be called for. So she rummaged among her father's books. and soon found some words which appeared to fill the bill perfectly: and, underneath her own inscription, she added: "With the author's compliments!"

I trust that no-one will falsely assume that I am the author of what follows in these pages. A well-known writer (it may have been the late William Temple) once said: "It is idle to quote acknowledgments where nothing is original." That states my case perfectly. I have only now to record my real indebtedness to my former "Super"-(he Rev. E. Grieves Smith. to whom I already owe so much-for his further kindness in writing the Foreword to this booklet.

Passed on to you in these pages is information I have gleaned from various sources; I have tried to present it more in the form of a continuing story than a mere tabulation of facts and figures. Omissions and slight inaccuracies. I fear, there are bound to be, though I have done my best. with the space, time and material available, to be as comprehensive and correct as possible.

Professor E. Gordon Rupp has said: "Not all Christian men are called to write, or to read history, but all of us are called to make history." It is the writer's sincere hope that the men and women who read this short history will find from it inspiration and incentive to go forth and. with dedicated lives, write further chapters themselves to the glory of God.

Hove, Sussex. Ernest W. Griffin.

## Ministers of the Keswick and Cockermouth Circuit with Year of their Appointment.

### KESWICK

1854 Joseph R. Cleminson.  
1856 William Unsworth.  
1858 Jabez Iredale.  
1859 Francis Hewitt.  
1860 Abel Wood.  
1861 Richard Crookall.  
1862 William Pritchard.  
1863 George Brimacombe.  
1864 John Meek.  
1865 Henry Marchbank.  
1867 Patrick Pizey.  
1870 Thomas Hargreaves.  
1871 John Raine.  
1872 John W. Woodliffe.  
1873 George Parker.  
1874 Crawshaw Hargreaves.  
1876 Gregory Renton.  
1877 John Toft.  
1878 Thomas Hitchon.  
1879 Waiter T. Baker.  
1882 Enoch Green.  
1884 Thomas Arrowsmith.  
1887 W. Wigley Haughton.  
1890 J. Whitehead Clegg.  
1892 Walter Hudson.  
1895 James Rogers.  
1896 W. H. Oliver Lake.  
1899 Richard H. Colwell, Ph.B.  
1900 Harold Crook.  
1901 Thomas E. Freeman.  
1903 Robert W. Davidson, B.D.  
1906 E. J. Bennett Richards.  
1909 Thomas A. Lindsay.  
1910 Cecil Burrow.  
1912 R. Martin Pope. M.A.  
1918 Woodman Treleaven. M.A.  
1919 Smith T. Parr.  
1922 William J. Hartley.  
1928 Seth Swithenbank.  
1934 Arthur Rudman.  
1936 Woodman Treleaven, M.A.  
1941 Albert H. Creed.  
1946 Joseph Coombs.  
1950 E. Grieves Smith.

### COCKERMOUTH

1854 Robert Brown.  
1855 John Locke.  
1857 William Parker.  
1860 Jabez Ingham.  
1863 Thomas S. Raby.  
1865 Charles B. Ritchie.  
1866 William J. Bullivant.  
1867 Thomas Brighthouse.  
1870 George H. Chambers.  
1871 William Satchell.  
1873 Thomas M. Rodham.  
1876 Joseph Crowther.  
1878 John Greenwood.  
1881 William Watson.  
1884 Charles Bingant.  
1887 Arthur Brigg.  
1890 John W. Henderson.  
1893 Hilderic Friend.  
1896 R. Watson Butterworth.  
1899 Alex F. Fogwell.  
1902 William G. White.  
1906 Edward Thistlethwaite.  
1909 William Sharples.  
1912 John W. Mountford.  
1914 Walter Bradshaw.  
1917 William Grieve.  
1920 W. Angelo Helm.  
1923 W. Hartley Totty.  
1926 W. Talbot Ellams.  
1929 Philip R. P. Rice.  
1932 Arthur Rudman.  
1934 D. Taylor Clarke. B.A.  
1937 Wilbert Walton.  
1940 John W. Brough.  
1945 G. Murray Beard.  
1949 Ernest W. Griffin.  
1953 Arthur Candeland, M.A.

**Ministers of the Cockermonth Primitive Methodist Circuit  
with Year of their Appointment.**

1893	John G. Bowran.	1912	William H. Maxwell.
1896	Charles Humble.	1914	Alfred J. Bull.
1899	Colin C. Goodall.	1923	George R. Bell.
1902	John Forster.	1927	Roland Hind. B.A.
1906	Joseph Hawkins.	1932	Frank C. Wilson.
1909	Joseph Burton.	1933	Henry W. Marsh

**Supernumerary Ministers who, this century, have resided in and  
served the Keswick and Cockermonth Circuit with Year of Arrival.**

1878	Thomas M. Rodham.	1941	William J. Hartley.
1902	Joseph Todhunter.	1946	Leonard L. Price. B.D.
1923	William Nightingale.	1947	Daniel Kedward.
1933	Richard W. Watson.	1949	Arthur Sanderson.
1937	Harry M. Hull.	1952	Ernest P. Picken.
1940	Henry Fytche.	1952	Frederic A. Tomlinson.

**Lay Pastors who have served in the Circuit.**

1903	Walter Standley.	1922	Walter Pollard.
1905	John H. Clucas.	1950	Paul Snell.

## "WATCHERS OF A BEACON "

### PART I

1751 - 1854.

### "THE BEACON IS LIT."

The Gospel according to the Methodists came to Cumberland in the late 1740s. the focal point being Whitehaven. John Wesley first visited that town in 1749. and declared himself pleased both with the response to the Methodist preaching. and the progress of the little society which had been formed there. although. at the same time, he did lament the apparent lack of real depth in the Christian experience of the members. At the close of this visit. Wesley travelled eastward, and appears to have spent a night in Keswick; but neither then, nor at any other time. as far as we know, did he actually preach in the "*Metropolis of Lakeland*."

Eighteen months after this first visit, John Wesley again visited Whitehaven, and from thence, on Wednesday. 17th April 1751, he arrived for the first time on the soil of Cockermouth. Braving a keen, north-easterly wind, he stood on some steps at the end of the market-house, and proclaimed "*The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*" to his audience-some of whom had followed him from Clifton. John Wesley differs from Queen Elizabeth the First before him. and from sundry authors and poets after him. in the fact that no plaques adorn the walls of the majority of houses in which he spent the night! So although he must have spent the night in Cockermouth several times during the course of his eighteen or nineteen visits. we have no record of where or with whom he stayed. However. on this first occasion, Wesley was abroad at a very early hour the next morning, and at five o'clock he preached again to "*a large and serious congregation*" the descendants of whom, nowadays. doubtless prefer to hear the Gospel at six in the evening!

The following year, Wesley coupled a visit to Lorton with a further visit to Cockermouth. preaching at both places. Among his congregation in the Vale of Lorton were the vicars both of Lorton and the neighbouring parish-"*that they might hear his preaching and judge for themselves*." Wesley. however, found a different type of congregation in the Castle-yard at Cockermouth, of whom he declares, somewhat archly -"*they behaved with decency, none interrupting nor making any noise*." A year later, he found "*well-nigh all the inhabitants of the town*" waiting to hear his preaching.

On Whit-Sunday, 1757. Wesley was again in Cockermouth. "*I began without delay*," he writes. "*and cried to a listening multitude--'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.'*" The word had free course; even the gentry seemed desirous to drink of the living water." In the same year. Wesley had stationed two of his preachers - Matthew Lowes and John Murlin - at Whitehaven; and these two were often, no doubt, in Cockermouth and the surrounding district, preaching in the open air. Two years later, Wesley revisited the district: "*I rode over to Lorton, a little village at the foot of a high mountain. Many came from a considerable distance, and I believe, did not repent of their labour: for they found God to be a God both of the hills and valleys - and nowhere more present than in the mountains of Cumberland*." When he preached at Cockermouth. shortly afterwards, he comments : "*At six. I preached at the end of the market-house. High and low, rich and poor attended; and by far the greater part of the audience seemed to be conscious that God was there*."

Two years later again, Wesley records in his "Journal": "*I preached, about five, at Cockermouth, on the steps of the market-house. Even the genteel hearers were decent; many of the rest seemed deeply affected. The people of the town have never been uncivil: surely they will not always be unfruitful.*" That prayer of Wesley's was soon to be answered, for two years later - in 1763 - we have a record of the first Methodist society to be established in the town. It consisted of nineteen members, as follows: the leader was William Wilson, a shopkeeper; then there was Mary Wilson, his wife. and Mary, his daughter; James Wilson, a tailor, Mary - his wife, and Jane - his daughter; Thomas Hadson, married, a weaver; Mary Bushby, married; Joshua Jackson, widower, a cordwainer; Ann Fisher, unmarried; Sarah Fisher, unmarried, a baker; Elizabeth Stephenson. unmarried, a washer; Ann Laniate. unmarried; Elizabeth Rase, a widow; Mary Longwood, unmarried, a shopkeeper; Elizabeth Allison, unmarried, a baker; Mary Fryer, married; Jonathan Rogers, widower, a weaver; and Thomas Smithson, married, a weaver.

At that time, the small Cockermouth society was included in the famous "Haworth Round" one of whose earliest Superintendents was the well known William Grimshaw, B.A., vicar of Haworth, and one of Wesley's earliest colleagues and greatest friends. He was a man of great devotion and evangelical zeal. And - withal - a strict disciplinarian. William Grimshaw could find no excuse for absenteeism from worship; if his members stayed away from Church, he would go and hold a service, and preach in front of their homes. On more than one occasion, he is reputed to have seized a whip, and then marched round his parish, gathering in the idle and the Sabbath-breakers. and driving them in front of him to the Church! Another minister of the Hawarth Circuit was John Allay, who - in person - brought Mr. Wesley again to Cockermouth in 1767. both gentlemen doubtless using this occasion to examine the members of the infant society in the town. It is possible - but not certain - that there was also, by this time, a small Methodist society at both Keswick and Lorton - but exact records have, unfortunately, been hidden from view by the gathering mists of antiquity. Also in 1767, the superintendency of the Haworth Circuit passed to Robert Costerdine, a man noted for his energetic and essentially practical nature.

Wesley paid two further visits to Cockermouth in the year 1768; on both occasions he remarks upon the bad weather! On his first visit he found it impossible to preach - "*the town being in an uproar through the election for members of Parliament.*" Cockermouth evidently took its politics very seriously in those days. Three days later, Wesley tried again, and this time he was able to preach, although the rain drove him from the open air into the market-house itself. In 1769, Whitehaven was taken out of the Haworth Round and made the head of a circuit of its own. We talk much of the extent of Methodism's rural circuits today, but let it be noted that the Whitehaven Circuit, at its inception, embraced Workington, Maryport, Carlisle, Cockermouth, Penrith, Kendal. Ulverston and the Isle of Man! The Superintendent was Joseph Guilford, and John Wittam was his assistant.

Six more visits to Cockermouth were paid by John Wesley between the years 1770 and 1777, while the preachers stationed in the Whitehaven Circuit during those years included Thomas Wride - a man of parts, whose gifts ranged from the prescribing of herbal remedies to clock mending, and even the invention of a primitive alarm-clock by an ingenious arrangement of fire-irons! Other preachers in the circuit included John Mason, William Linnell, John Fenwick. Robert Empringham and Richard Seed. The membership of the circuit revealed an increase worthy of note; in seven years it had risen from a little over one hundred to nearly seven hundred.

On the occasion of his visit to Cockermouth in 1780, Wesley writes: *"At eight I preached in the Town Hall, but to the poor only; the rich could not rise so soon"*! Returning to Cockermouth the following year, he says: *"I had a design to preach at noon in the Town Hall at Cockermouth, but, Mr Lothian offering me his meeting-house, which was far more convenient, I willingly accepted his offer. By this means I had a much more numerous audience-most of whom behaved well"*! The said Mr Lothian was the minister of the old Independent (Congregational) Chapel in Main Street, and his friendly invitation to Mr Wesley was an early prelude to the happy associations in worship and fellowship which are now existing and growing between the two denominations in the town.

Wesley's penultimate visit to the town in 1784, was characterised by *"some of the heaviest rain he had seen in Europe"*. His last visit to Cockermouth was on Whit-Monday, 1788-when he was eighty-five years old. He preached from the text, *"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,"* and he writes in his "Journal": *"About eight I began preaching in the market-house at Cockermouth. I was surprised to find several of those that are called 'the best of the town' there: and they were one and all serious and attentive; so we had a solemn parting"*. Less than three years later the happy warrior was dead. It must be remarked that Cockermouth was, indeed, highly favoured in receiving so many visits from our venerable founder; and, despite his occasionally ironic comments, John Wesley certainly received far better treatment in Cumberland than he did in some of the towns in the midlands and the south, where he was often mobbed and made the centre of rioting and disorder.

A new phase of the Cockermouth story began in 1796. In that year a Cockermouth cooper called George Robinson bought some old malkilns in the street known as Sand Went (now High Sand Lane). He knocked down the derelict buildings. and built a meeting house, which he sold to the Board of Trustees of the local Methodist society for £70. The trustees of whom there were nine-were as follows: George Robinson. cooper; Matthew Smith. gentleman; Isaac Brown, grocer; George Bowe, hatter; James Wilson, tailor and staymaker; John Brockbank, farmer; Robert Dickinson, Iron-works writer; James Sykes, staymaker: and Stephen Wilson, cabinet-maker. The High Sand Lane Chapel, built in 1797, is today extremely well-preserved, and is used. under its new name - the Victoria Gospel Hall - as the meeting-place of the local society of the Plymouth Brethren.

Now while the Cockermouth Methodist Society in the Whitehaven Circuit was prospering and flourishing at the end of the eighteenth century, there was an active and growing society also in Keswick. Originally in the Barnard Castle Circuit, in the year 1803 the Keswick society was divorced from that circuit and handed over to the Brough Circuit. That union, however. lasted only three years. and then Keswick was ceded from Brough to the Penrith Circuit. During these early years, the leading influence in the society appears to have been one Robert Gate. a local preacher who hailed from Penrith; it is quite probable that services were held in his house, or-as some say-in some small cottages opposite the Crosthwaite Parish Church Room, prior to the building of the first Methodist Chapel in Keswick - an event which took place in the year 1814. This Chapel was situated in a small yard, behind a grocer's shop, in Main Street; its erection cost £331 10s - a vast sum of money in those days. Who were the first trustees, we know not; but seat-holders in the Chapel during its first years were Jacob Banks (class leader), John Birkett, Robert Coupland, John Ashton, William Hodgson. John Tickell, Joseph Carson, Dinah Grisdale and Mary Walker - some of whose descendants are doubtless still in Keswick.

In the year 1818, the Keswick society - the members of which must by this time have been feeling that they were "unwanted children"- was transferred from Penrith to the Wigton Circuit, wherein it was destined to remain for a stabilising period of thirty-six years. The Cockermouth society, at this period, was progressing well-despite the effort of one local preacher, who shall be nameless, but who preached at a Watch-night Service for over an hour and a half on the text "*The King's business requireth haste*"! Nor was enthusiasm confined solely to doing good works within the neighbourhood, for the Revs. Henry Anderson and Robert Ramm, presiding over the second annual Overseas Missionary Anniversary of the Cockermouth section, in the year 1822. were able to announce that a total of £51-10-6 had been collected from societies in the section to help finance Methodist missionary work in North America. France and Gibraltar, in the infant missionary stations in India, and among the "*barbarous inhabitants*" of New Zealand! It is interesting to note, from these records, that there were by now Methodist societies at Little Clifton, Eaglesfield, Greysouthen, Lorton, Mockerkin, Southwaite and Pardshaw-the last-named evidently proving the most venturesome of all, for, by the following year, a tiny chapel had been erected at Pardshaw - the first country preaching-place to be built in the present circuit. It was built on ground given by Mrs. Ann Wood, of Pardshaw Hall, six of whose children died between the ages of 20 and 24, but whose surviving son and grand-daughters gave life-long service to Methodism in Pardshaw. Joseph Bushby, Joseph Wilson, Richard Bowman and Robert Bewsher are names also to be associated with the very early days of Pardshaw Methodism. In 1823, the trust of the Cockermouth Chapel was renewed, the new trustees being John Richardson, common brewer; Tyson Rigg, molecatcher; William Todhunter, painter and glazier; William Armstrong, weaver; George Hodgson, tailor; Peter Thompson, bricklayer; Joseph Thompson, clock and watch-maker; Joseph Bushby, gentleman; and Richard Bowman, shoemaker.

By 1830, the Methodist work and witness in Cumberland was rapidly increasing in momentum. More class leaders were appointed at Keswick to shepherd the growing flock; these included Margaret Banks (wife of Jacob Banks, previously named), William Hodgson, Robert Coupland, and Featherstonehaugh Alexander. At Cockermouth, the Revs. William Tranter, Thomas Kemshall. and William Levell. who had come over to attend the tenth sectional Overseas Missionary Anniversary, reported with joy an increase of over £40 on the total for 1822. William Tranter, the Superintendent at Whitehaven, eventually became one of the most famous and long-lived among Methodist ministers; he died at the age of 101, after 76 years. in the ministry. A copy of the Whitehaven Circuit Plan for the year 1830 adds Brigham and Dearham to the places. mentioned above, which then formed part of the Cockermouth section of the circuit.

It was at this time that a further spark of light appeared alongside the original Methodist beacon which had been already lit-a spark which kindled a fresh flame of fire destined to burn long and vigorously separate, and yet an integral part of the light of that earlier beacon before the two fires finally merged into one blaze. Around the year 1830, Cockermouth received a visit from three Primitive Methodist ministers stationed in Carlisle; their visit took the form of a great camp meeting held on Papcastle Common, near Belle Vue - while in the evening. there was a lovefeast held at the Old Theatre at the Sun Barn in the town. The witness of Primitive Methodism had begun in Cockermouth. The following year. Hugh Bourne - one of the co-founders of Primitive Methodism passed through the town, declaring himself charmed with the surrounding scenery; there is. however, no record of his having preached in the town.



In the early 1830s, the Primitive Methodists established a small society in Cockermouth, renting a bare room in St. Helen's Street for the holding of services. One enthusiastic member walked the thirteen miles from Keswick carrying a heavy corner-cupboard on his back, to make a pulpit for the preacher. The Primitive Methodist enthusiasm spread to Keswick and the Rev R. Lyon, a Primitive Methodist minister stationed at Whitehaven, paid several visits to Keswick. and attempted to start a society there; it appears. however, that from the point of view of permanence he was unsuccessful.

Meanwhile the Wesleyan Methodist societies in the district were growing apace. In the Cockermouth area, there was an active society at Eaglesfield in the early 1830s. Services were held in the largest of a number of weaving shops standing near a ruinous ivy-covered cottage-somewhat inaptly nicknamed 'Paradise -standing by the roadside at the south end of the village. One preacher noted that the stairs up to this room were so rickety that they had to be propped up for safety. Sunday School classes were held also, and they were divided up among the several rooms of the weaving shops. Special services, anniversaries, etc. had to be held in the barn of a neighbouring farm, rented by Mr. and Mrs. Ballantyne White - enthusiastic helpers in the work. There is also a tradition, in Eaglesfield, of Methodist services being held in one of the several smithies then established in the village, but this cannot be ascertained now. At Dearham, a great "character" and local preacher-Tyson Rigg, the mole-catcher-had been holding services in his house for some years prior to the building of the first chapel in 1833. Other Methodist worthies at Dearham in those days were William Irving and three "Josephs" - Kirkbride, Iredale and Ostle. 1833 also saw the building and opening of the little chapel at Greysouthen, which was completed at a cost of £161. A well-known local preacher in the circuit during that time was Atkinson Steele, whose family have given such signal service to the cause of Methodism in West Cumberland from that day to this. Atkinson Steele came on to full plan in 1831: he then lived at Workington, and would walk regularly the twelve miles from his home to Lorton, or the fifteen miles from Workington to Mawbray, to take services-and then walk home again the same evening. Those were the days when even a Horse-Hire Fund was an unheard-of novelty.

In the Keswick area, Methodism made its appearance in Braithwaite in the mid-1830s, introduced by Mr. Furnace, a very zealous layman. A copy of "The Lord's Day Plan" of the Wigton Circuit, dated 1835, also shows fortnightly services planned at Applethwaite and at Briery Hill. At this time, however, the Keswick society was severely shaken by the Warrenite agitation which was fermenting throughout Methodism. and which resulted in yet another off-shoot from the parent stem. On one particular Sunday there was such tension during the service at Keswick that the minister-the Rev. Philip Hardcastle, Superintendent of the Wigton Circuit - had to leave the pulpit to take up the collection himself -the stewards having apparently, "gone on strike" for the day!

Mention of some of the ministers who were serving Keswick and Cockermouth in those days is perhaps apposite at this point. Neither town, it seems, had a resident minister until the year 1835. when Conference stationed junior ministers of the Wigton and Whitehaven Circuits, respectively, to take up residence in the two towns. Appointed to Keswick was the Rev. Edmund B. Warters, a young man of sterling qualities. Once a month, he had to preach in the circuit Chapel at Wigton; he would set out on foot. on the Saturday, to meet his Superintendent-the Rev. Robert Morton - who would be journeying to Keswick on a donkey; when they met, Mr. Warters rode the donkey back to Wigton, while Mr. Morton proceeded on foot to Keswick. The same thing happened in reverse on the return

journey on the Monday. One Superintendent of the Wigton Circuit, who had a flair for doggerel, described the journey between Wigton and Keswick in the following terms:

*The road was impassable.  
Not even jackassable:  
And all who would travel it  
Must turn out and gravel it!*

James Kendall seems to have been the first young minister to live in Cockermouth; he was followed by Francis Ward, who made a determined move at the Quarterly Meeting to procure a circuit pony for the use of the ministers. He was thwarted. however. by our old friend, Tyson Rigg of Dearham, who bitterly opposed the idea, and said: "*I love my neighbour as myself; I walk to my appointments. and I should like my neighbour to walk to his!*"! Two other ministers who worked in Cockermouth during the late 1830s were William Baddeley and Matthew Salt. Superintendents at Whitehaven included Thomas Catterick - "*a big man. always dressed in black*": Abraham Watmough-a 'High-Churchman' among Methodists. who objected to the singing of 'frolicsome tunes' in our Chapels: William Ash-"a big man with a little name": and Robert Harrison-"an amiable character, who always had a word or an answer for every occasion"! In 1839, two more societies made their first appearance in the area. A small society had been formed at Bassenthwaite, numbering two believers and one "on trial." Another small society had arisen in the Embleton valley. This latter group met in the kitchen of Byersteds Farm, under the leadership of Mr. Joseph Mossop. and. later. Mr. Daniel Sanderson who afterwards entered the ministry and served as a missionary in India for twenty-seven years. and then as Governor of Richmond College for a further twenty-three years. In 1840. services were held in a cottage at Eskin, Wythop, the home of Mr. Daniel Mandale, despite the threat of one belligerent inhabitant of the hamlet to shoot any Methodist preacher who came to take a service - a threat, fortunately, never carried out.

The year 1840 also saw readjustments in both the Wesleyan and the Primitive Methodist circuits. The Primitive Methodists of Cockermouth, who were then meeting in a little room at Vinegar Hill. near Cocker Bridge, found themselves ceded from Carlisle to the Whitehaven Circuit - the latter having just been separated from Hull, and made the head of a circuit of its own. Also transferred at this time were the Primitive Methodist societies at Keswick. Broughton. Deanscales and Dovenby The origin, decline and fall of the two last-named societies are altogether wrapped in obscurity; the little societies at Keswick and Broughton appear to have lapsed, shortly afterwards, for the space of some ten years. Meanwhile at Great Broughton. the Wesleyan society was going ahead: services were held first at Trough House, then at Rock House: and in one of these services, Mr. John Gribbins - a man destined to play a leading role in Broughton Methodism for many years - was converted. In the same year, a Wesleyan Chapel was built at Lorton - the home of the veteran local preacher. Peter Robinson, whose life was a burning and a shining light in the Vale of Lorton for fifty years. Under the Superintendency of the Rev. John Talbot. Workington was split off from the Whitehaven Wesleyan Circuit. and made the head of a circuit which included Maryport and all the Churches of the Cockermouth section. Under this new arrangement. both ministers were to live in Workington. so Cockermouth was again bereft of a resident minister.

The year 1841 saw the building and opening of the Market Street Chapel in Cockermouth. This was a triumph of faith. energy and generosity on the part of one man in particular, among many in general

John Rigg, brother of the famous Tyson. The whole society, preceded by the ministers, marched in procession from High Sand Lane to Market Street. where the opening services were conducted by the Rev. Joseph Beaumont. M.D. - one of very few Methodist ministers ever to become also Doctor of Medicine, and thus able to tend both the souls and bodies of his people. In this year. preaching places at Applethwaite and Scarness appeared for the first time on the Wigton Circuit Plan, while a society had also sprung up at Wallthwaite, between Keswick and Penrith. In 1842, or thereabouts, the official designation of the Wigton Circuit was altered to read "Wigton and Keswick," and the Rev. James Harris, the junior minister, who received the princely stipend of £40 per annum, lodged with Mr. Robert Coupland, a pencil manufacturer. Meanwhile. in Cockermouth, the old Wesleyan Chapel in High Sand Lane had now been rented by the Primitive Methodists, who paid the sum of £10 a year for the privilege - this amount later being reduced to £5.

In 1843, a society suddenly appeared at Scales, absorbing the infant Wallthwaite society, and the members - on the crest of a wave of high enthusiasm - immediately set about building a Chapel; the building was completed and opened the same year, at a cost of £100. The first trustees were Joseph Gordon, Thomas Herd, Jacob Hewitson, Robert Coupland Featherstonehaugh Alexander, William Hodgson, Thomas Graves, William Benson, Matthias Mumberson, James Cowan, William Hunter and Simeon Graves. Soon after this. the preaching services at Scarness. which had been held in a farmhouse belonging to Stephen Graves. were moved to Robert Briscoe's house in Bassenthwaite village. The society at Lorton was progressing well, and Mr. and Mrs. John Jennings and John Huntington, together with Peter Robinson, were leading lights in the society, Class leaders included Robert McDowell and his sister, Mrs. Clark; local preachers in membership with the society included Messrs. Grainger and Minnican, both of whom would frequently spend whole nights in prayer for Lorton, and who also practised the declining custom of fasting. Robert Minnican once found himself in the Market Street pulpit at Cockermouth - a somewhat unusual occurrence; but, being in no sense overawed by the solemnity of the occasion, he said, plainly, to his hearers: "*You may be used to wheaten-bread here, but this morning you must put up with barley-bread*"! Another local preacher who was frequently in the Cockermouth pulpit at this period was John Talbot a Cockermouth schoolmaster. and father of the Rev. John Talbot-Superintendent of the Workington Circuit from 1840 to 1842. His best sermon was given from the Market Street pulpit; he was an eloquent preacher. normally needing no notes. but on this occasion. contrary to his usual custom. the sermon was elaborately prepared and carefully written out in full. He held his manuscript up, and read the whole sermon from beginning to end. so that his audience might hear every word perfectly. His subject was the character of St. Paul, and his reading was continuous - except for one break in the middle, when he lifted up his eyes from his notes. and said : "*Bless you, friends: if this sermon doesn't do your souls good. it does mine*"!

Meanwhile. out at Pardshaw, the work was prospering; the flock was well shepherded by Richard Bowman (who afterwards moved to Cockermouth). Joseph Bailey. Mrs. Wood, of Pardshaw Hall, and Mr. and Mrs. Shilton, of Branthwaite. At Eaglesfield, a Chapel was built and opened in 1845. It was very much a local effort - stone being given from an adjoining building which was being taken down; local farmers helped by carting materials to and from the scene of operations, and many members of the society gave voluntary help to the building work after their ordinary day's labour was done. Some of those who helped were the Misses Grave. John Wright. John Fox (joiner). John Fox (shoemaker). Joshua and An" Gibson and their sons. Ballantyne White and his wife. Joseph Robinson

and Henry Dallon - the last-named also rendering service, when the Chapel was in use, by striking up the note for the hymns on his pitch-pipe!

In the following year, a Wesleyan Chapel was built at Great Broughton - chiefly, it seems, through the efforts of the brothers John and Tyson Rigg. A great worker in the Broughton society at that time was Alexander Shepherd, who later met a tragic death in the limestone quarry at Brigham. Mr. Joseph B. Thornburn, of Papcastle, though a member of the Cockermouth society. also did much pioneering and canvassing for Christ and Methodism in Great Broughton. The 1846 "Midsummer Tea" of the Keswick society was notable for the fact that the two "guest" preachers for the day-the Revs. W. Morley Punshon. of Whitehaven. and Thomas M'Cullagh, of Workington - were both destined to become Presidents of the Conference. and two of Methodism's "giants" of the last century. In 1847, Grange makes its first appearance on the circuit returns-showing two members of society, and two more "on trial." Services were held in the kitchen of Mr. Thomas Threlkeld's house- and they continued to be held regularly on his property for nearly fifty years, until a Chapel was built. In 1848, a room at "The Hill." Bassenthwaite. was registered for public worship by Jonathan Slater, on behalf of the local Wesleyan society. In the same year, a new preaching place at Newlands was established - but it did not remain for long. and was soon removed. Also that year, a young man from Dearham was placed on the preachers' list, and for over fifty years afterwards. William Cameron gave unstinted service to his Church and Circuit - as local preacher, steward and class leader. In 1850. the Braithwaite society moved from their meeting place at the house of John Bailiff. Lane Foot, to their new Chapel completed at a cost of £70. The trustees of the new building were James Postlethwaite, Joseph Hodgson, Joseph Spark, John Lancaster, Matthias Mumberson, John Telford, William Postlethwaite, Matthew Lee, Joseph Robinson, William Jeffery and John Todd. At about this time too a small society was formed at Sunderland. and services were held in a farmhouse in the village.

We turn now to look back over the 1840s for a brief mention of some of the ministers who laboured in the district. Timothy R. Moxson was the junior minister in Keswick in 1844; Robert Raworth in 1845; and Joseph Hirst ministered in 1846. In 1848 and 1849. the junior ministers - William Williams and John Elam - for some reason were removed to Wigton - but Thomas H. Hill. in 1850 was stationed back in Keswick being followed, in turn, by James Chalmers. M.A. and Rupert Chawner. Superintendents of the Workington Circuit included Joseph Jackson - *"a good man, but handicapped by being a heavy drinker"*; Moses Rayner of whom a biographer declared: *"He was humble, meek. forbearing, merciful, peaceable. fatherly, brotherly, sympathetic. helpful, humane, candid, good-tempered, true, honest, just, pure, lovely: he bore all things. believed all things, hoped all things. endured all things; was gentle, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."* From that description, one feels it may safely be assumed that Moses Rayner was a good man! Then there was John Haigh -" rather stern and unapproachable": James Lemmon -*"a cheery personality, but without either gifts or vigour"*; and also Hugh Johnson - but of him apparently the biographers have nothing to report. Junior ministers were, in succession, Michael Johnson, Thomas H, Walsh, Thomas M'Cullagh, John Parsons, William L, Horton and Edward Baylis. Of the last-named, it is recorded that he remained a bachelor all his life, and *"if you had seen how far he reached his hand out to shake hands with a lady-you wouldn't have been surprised"*! Mr. Baylis. however ministered at Cockermouth in 1849-50 at a time when severe cholera was raging; there were many deaths and - a fact probably not unconnected - a great increase in both the number of, and

attendance at, prayer meetings. Edward Baylis was a very devout man. often spending the whole of Saturday in prayer for Sunday - refusing even to have a letter sent in to him.

Meanwhile, the Primitive Methodists were letting no grass grow under their feet. In 1851, the society in Cockermouth finally bought the High Sand Lane Chapel from the Wesleyans; a slightly vernacular entry in the Trust account book of the Wesleyan society shows the sum of £95 being received from the sale of the old Chapel to "The Ranters." The first Primitive Methodist trustees of the Chapel were Thomas Littleton, farmer; John Bolton, threadmaker; Joseph Blacklock, hairdresser; William Fisher, weaver; Henry T. Frazer, threadmaker; Richard Clucas, hatter; John Ritson, painter; William Murray, miller; and John Clark, dyer. The Superintendent of the Primitive Methodist Circuit, who lived at Whitehaven, was a notable character named Joseph Spoor, who had the distinction of being as bald as a coot. One day, at an open-air meeting, a wag called out, "If thoo'll let ma shy coins at thee shiny pate, I'll pitch silver at tha' "!" Mr. Spoor readily consented, thus assuring himself of a good collection! It was probably Mr. Spoor who started-or re-started-the holding of Primitive Methodist services in Little Broughton, between the years 1850 and 1852. Meetings were held in the houses of Robin Iredale. John Oglethorpe and Lancaster Todd. At a class-meeting in the house of the last-named, in 1852. a youth called John Snaith was soundly converted, afterwards joining the society. He later became a Primitive Methodist minister, the first of a long line of ministers and workers in Methodism-one of his grandsons being the Rev. Dr. Norman H. Snaith, M.A., of Wesley College. Headingley, Leeds-one of the foremost Hebraic and Old Testament scholars of the present day. A hired local preacher-or lay agent-named Joseph Jobling did good work in helping to establish Primitive Methodism at Little Broughton: and he was also instrumental in establishing a Primitive Methodist society in Keswick in the mid-1850s. He secured a room over a stable in Head's Lane, Keswick. and carefully gathered and nurtured there a growing society, despite vehement interruptions from the gentleman who used the stable below the meeting-room, and who-perhaps not unnaturally-objeced strongly to Mr. Jobling's custom of emphasising points in his sermons by repeated stamping of the feet!

And now our story reaches a climax. The Rev. Robert Brown, junior minister of the Workington Wesleyan Circuit, was stationed in Cockermouth in 1852. He was much exercised, both in mind and feet, by the great distances involved in travelling over the wide circuits of West Cumberland: and he it was who eventually devised, and submitted to Synod, a plan involving the re-organisation of Methodism in the district. Under his plan. Workington ceased to be a circuit on its own. and was rejoined to Whitehaven; Cockermouth became a circuit, together with Keswick; and Maryport was joined to the Wigton Circuit, in place of Keswick. This plan was adopted by the Synod and the Conference of 1854. Thus, the Cockermouth and Keswick Circuit was born in August of that year, and the beacon was now at full blaze.

**PART 11.**  
**1854 -1954,**  
**"THE BEACON BLAZES,"**

The first Superintendent of the Cockermonth and Keswick Circuit was very appropriately the Rev. Robert Brown who had been the prime mover in bringing the circuit into being. His house in Cockermonth was the last on the left-hand side of Horsman Street. and his stipend was £80 a year. The second minister, who resided in Keswick. was the Rev. Joseph R. Cleminson, who received a stipend of £50 per annum. The first circuit stewards were Messrs. W. Thornburn and Anthony Furnace, and the circuit membership was 191. Prominent among the workers at Keswick at the time were F. Alexander, John Hewitson. Joseph Hutchinson and Joseph Spark; at Cockermonth there were the Thornburns the Todhunters Robinson Plummer and good Richard Bowman. Mr. Bowman, it seems, made a regular habit of having an apple lying on his table which he would sell to visitors for a penny in aid of the missionary box - afterwards begging the apple back again to do further service!

The second Superintendent was John Locke, on whom the biographer's verdict is that he was a stirring sort of man but not above average as a preacher. He had, however, a vigorous and energetic wife! Mr. Locke published a book on theology, and it went through ten editions - chiefly on account of his good wife pushing the sales right and left! The Rev. William Unsworth was stationed in Keswick in 1856 when a great flood swept through, and submerged. the whole Vale of Keswick. It was caused by a heavy fall of snow, a sudden thaw, and then pouring rain; its effect was to make all the trees look like thorn bushes and completely suspend all traffic between Keswick and Cockermonth. During Mr. Unsworth's ministry at Keswick, Jacob Holliday of Braithwaite was converted during a fellowship meeting. He went back to Braithwaite and embarked straightway upon forty and five years' devoted service of his Master. He occupied every office his Church had to offer and his work was of inestimable value in pioneering the cause of Methodism at Braithwaite in company with two stalwart colleagues, Joseph Coats and William Hill. At this period, the thoughts of the leaders of the Keswick society were turning towards the acquisition of a site for a new Chapel. The old Chapel in the yard was, no doubt, the abode of angels, but, at the same time. it was a remarkably difficult spot in which ordinary mortals could meet and be comfortable. It was hard to find, and - when found-hard to enter without risking damage to life or limb due - among other things - to the loose boulders with which the entry was paved. Furthermore. just behind the Chapel, was an old tallow candle-maker's shop and the persistent fragrance emanating therefrom was a seriously disturbing element in the weeknight meetings. A few more years had yet to roll by. however, before a new Chapel appeared.

The work was progressing well throughout the circuit-from Greysouthen, where the membership had reached the astronomical figure of 40 - to Scales, where Joseph Herd and Jacob Allison were tending the flock well. The farm-house kitchen services at Grange were by now well established, and at Brigham - in the Cockermonth section - a small chapel was built and opened in 1856. The following year, an organ was installed and dedicated in the Market Street Chapel, Cockermonth, the guest preacher for the occasion being the famous Dr. W. Morley Punshon, already growing into a Methodist "giant" of the nineteenth century. In 1858, the fortnightly services at Applethwaite were

discontinued - partly due to the removal to Keswick of Mrs. William Hodgson who had been the mainstay of the little cause, and partly due, it seems, to the dubious practice of allowing the meeting-room to be used by another denomination - in this case, the Baptists- on alternate Sundays. As the minister in charge at the time remarked: "*I do not think this arrangement answered well: two farmers on one farm is not likely to suit both parties: to whom does the produce belong?*" At any rate, the Methodists vacated the hamlet as a preaching-place, and have not since returned. In 1859. Mr. Thomas Threlkeld, of Grange, built and promised to maintain. at his own cost, a separate room in the village wherein the Methodist society could worship until it were possible to build a Chapel. In 1860, the small Chapel at Dearham was enlarged, and - as at first - Tyson Rigg was almost solely responsible for the collecting of funds.

In 1861. three new preaching places appeared on the circuit Plan Dovenby, Redmain and Legburthwaite none of them alas destined to permanency. In the same year, Bassenthwaite disappeared from the Plan owing to the fact that the Primitive Methodists had become established in the village and had begun to build a Chapel; whereupon the Wesleyans rightly thinking that there was neither need nor room for both discontinued their meetings and joined with the Primitive Methodists, helping them substantially to raise the money needed for the new Chapel. In 1862, the Primitive Methodist societies in Cockermouth and district were transferred from Whitehaven to the Maryport Circuit. In the Cockermouth and Keswick Wesleyan Circuit however, there was dissent, that year, among the local preachers - some of whom objected to the name of a certain brother being retained on the circuit Plan after he had bought premises in Cockermouth for the making and selling of alcoholic liquor. There was heated controversy over the matter in the local preachers' meeting, and. in the end, several preachers tendered their resignations. Another Chapel was added to the circuit list that year. when the tiny society at Sunderland accepted the free gift of' a site from Sir Wilfred Lawson, and built a Chapel for worship, clearing all debts before it was opened. In this work, the Mumberson family, of 1scl Old Park. played a prominent part.

October 18th, 1863, was a great day for Keswick Methodists. In that year, the new Church - costing £1,205 - was opened and dedicatory sermons were preached by the Rev. Thomas M'Cullagh. The day was wet and unpleasant. but so great was the contrast between the old and the new premises, that the weather was completely forgotten . No longer would intending worshippers run the risk of colliding with the antiquated pump or fall over the various tubs barrels, etc. in the dark passage leading down to the old Chapel in the yard; the new building in Southey Street was easy of access and comfortable in proportions. The original trustees of the new Chapel were Anthony Furnace. Henry Cattle (through whose energies and enthusiasm, chiefly, the new building had arisen, John Tweddle, John Johnston, Joseph Spark. Mark Hodgson, William Keenlside, William Lupton, George G. Boulton, Thomas Threlkeld and Joseph Straughton. In the same year, a Chapel arose also at Embleton, and it was no longer necessary to use the home of Mr. Jonathan Grainger, at East House, for worship. The site for this Chapel was given by Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Mandale, and local friends who greatly helped on the work of building were Messrs. R. Pattinson, E. Thompson, J. Coulson, G. Armstrong and J. Wigham, so that the total cost of the building was only £127. Unfortunately, the foundations were laid over a hidden spring of water, and it was not many years before the building betrayed rents. cracks and bulges in abundance, and there was no alternative but complete rebuilding.

In 1864, a saintly local preacher from Dearham, William Blackburn, passed to a Higher Circuit at the early age of 47. Ministers changed with some frequency at both Keswick and Cockermouth in the 1860s, but in 1867, the Rev. Patrick Pizey was appointed to Keswick. and was the first young minister ever to remain for three years in the town. In the same year, the Rev. Thomas Brighthouse was appointed to Cockermouth as Superintendent. He came after a disappointment, for he had been invited to a much bigger circuit-but the stationing committee had directed him to Cockermouth. On his first Sunday evening at Market Street he said: "*I have come to this circuit unexpectedly; you did not choose me: I did not choose you; but I have resolved to remain with you three years if all essential requirements be favourable.*" They were. and he did! He was greatly loved as a Christian gentleman, and a living illustration of the fruits of the Spirit. He was an intimate friend of the Superintendent of the Maryport Primitive Methodist Circuit the Rev. Adam Dodds. They were often together at meetings in Cockermouth. and an unbiased observer once remarked that in business meetings any bitterness was immediately dispelled by the kindly words of Mr. Brighthouse and the tears of Mr. Dodds. Also, in 1867 there seems to have been a resident Primitive Methodist minister in Cockermouth - the Rev. Thomas Wigham; unfortunately, he died in the town that year, in only the seventh year of his ministry. and was laid to rest in Cockermouth cemetery.

The flame of Primitive Methodism in the district continued to burn brightly. and the year 1869 saw two Chapels built and dedicated to the glory of God. At Little Broughton, the dedicatory sermon was preached by the Rev. William Graham. who had been converted as a lad, seventeen years previously in the class meeting held at Lancaster Todd's house. At Keswick, the Tithebarn Street Chapel was built chiefly under the direction of the afore-mentioned lay agent, Joseph Jobling: members of the society at that time included Mr. Black (class leader). Tom Knowle. James Ferguson, William Robinson, William Park, Israel Hazelbrough. Cozen Watson, William Elliott, James Culling, George Telford and Henry Birkbeck.

In 1871. the debt still remaining on the Market Street Chapel in Cockermouth was finally cleared through the generosity of Mr. Joseph B. Thornburn. The Rev. Thomas M. Rodham Superintendent of the circuit from 1873 to 1876 was greatly loved: he afterwards returned to Cockermouth as a supernumerary died in 1900 and was interred at Cockermouth cemetery. In 1870. the services at Legburthwaite were discontinued. never to be resumed. In 1876, the Braithwaite Chapel was completely rebuilt at a cost of £250, and re-opened free of debt. 1876 was also a year when "revival" was in the air. Under the ministry of the Rev. Gregory Renton, the Wesleyans in Keswick received numerous converts some of whom later became prominent workers in the Chapel. In Cockermouth, the Primitive Methodists under the ministry of the Rev. Matthew Johnson, were also tasting the joys of revival and the High Sand Lane Chapel was filled with converts; the official records state that "souls were saved, night after night, for several months."

In the mid 1870s the Keswick Sunday School Building scheme was launched, and the whole of the £400 needed was raised by the time the building was completed-a most commendable effort. In 1877, the Market Street Chapel at Cockermouth was completely renovated, and a new heating system installed. In 1879. Wesleyan services were recommenced, monthly, in Bassenthwaite - the place of assembly being the home of Mr. William Mandale at Dyke Nook Farm. In these days of schedules, statements and reports in abundance it is with a shock of incredulity, or a wistful sigh (according to temperament). that we learn that the June Quarterly Meeting in 1879 had "no business to record." It was, however. at about this time that the Fern Bank manse was built. and



taken over by the circuit as the Superintendent's abode. Also, around this period, the Pardshaw Chapel underwent renovation and a much-needed porch was erected to keep out the keen east wind which sometimes threatened to blow the preacher out of the pulpit. In 1881. Robert McDowell, one of the stalwarts of the Lorton society, died, and left a sum of money for the maintenance of a Home Mission minister within four miles of Lorton. Unfortunately. the money was badly invested. and the tiny interest on the residue. being totally inadequate for the original purpose. is now paid into the circuit account each year.

In 1882. the Wesleyan society at Bassenthwaite took over the Chapel from the Primitive Methodists. who had been passing through the doldrums. and £75 was the figure agreed upon as the purchase price. A successful mission was conducted at the Market Street Chapel. Cocker-mouth by the Rev. John Gawthrop. At Brigham. the expanding society had found the 1856 Chapel quite inadequate and had built a new and larger one adjoining the old at a cost of £700. The new premises were opened and dedicated by the Rev. Thomas M'Cullagh on May 9th 1883. At Great Broughton also the old Chapel had proved too small for the work so a new Chapel and Sunday School were built on a close of land near to the old site. It was rumoured that the new buildings were erected on what was once the old Broughton Cockpit. During these years, circuit stewards included Richard Hogarth, Reuben Mumberson, Robert Mandale, P, Thompson and R, Henderson, of Keswick, together with Josiah Raine, Henry Fisher and Joseph Kerr, of Cocker-mouth. Local preachers in the circuit included Atkinson Steele, W, Tomlinson, Robinson Plummer, John Alcock, J, Abbott, W, Ostle, A, Grainger, R, G, Askins 2nd G, Heckles. In 1884, services were commenced in the village of Threlkeld, in cottages owned by Mrs, Greenwood, and later in property belonging to Isaac Todhunter. The Christian Workers' Band opened a mission-room in the village two years later. and granted the use of the room to the Wesleyans on alternate Sundays. This arrangement has continued down the years. and is still in force at the present time. [1954]

Meanwhile, the Primitive Methodists in Cocker-mouth had been looking for larger premises and eventually found them in the National Schools in New Street. These they purchased for £410 and then spent another £400 converting them into a Chapel. The Rev. Thomas Guttery, Chairman of the Sunderland District opened and dedicated the new Chapel in the presence of a great congregation on April 23rd 1885. The first trustees were John Clark, mill over-looker: J. T. Campbell. mill over-looker: Thomas Hetherington. tailor; Thomas Thursby tanner: John E. Metcalf, railway clerk: Thomas H. Fletcher, tinsmith; George Ritson, coal agent: William Grave, mill over-looker: Walter Scott, warehouseman: John Hinde, labourer: George Warwick, printer: Thomas M. Wilson, printer: Robert Hurd, labourer: William Rook, tailor; Robert Johnston, labourer: and Henry Williamson, engineman. The minister of the society was the Rev. Ralph Shields. It is notable that the chairman at the Opening Meeting was Mr. John Clark. who had been for over forty years a member of the society, and had also been one of the original trustees when the Primitive Methodists took over the High Sand Lane Chapel from the Wesleyans. For thirty-five years he had rendered outstanding service to the cause as Sunday School Superintendent. In the same month of that year. a great character passed to his reward - Tyson Rigg of Dearham. In the annals of Dearham Methodism, and - we think in the Lamb's Book of Life, his name will stand for ever.

In 1887. alterations were put in hand at the Eaglesfield Chapel; the old high-backed pews were removed and-with the installation of the more roomy and comfortable seats now in use-privacy was sacrificed for convenience. The following year the present large Chapel at Dearham was opened and

dedicated by the Rev. Thomas Brighthouse. Renovations costing £40 were carried out to the Chapel at Scales in 1890 the whole cost being met by subscriptions. In this year the Rev. Atthul' Brigg Superintendent at Cockermouth died-after a short illness-to the great grief of the entire circuit to which he had verily been a true father in God. He was succeeded by the Rev. John W. Henderson - the Rev. John W. Colwell having acted as 'supply' during the intervening months.

In 1893. the Cockermouth Primitive Methodist Society. which had prospered under the successive ministries of the Revs. Robert B. H. Hanley and Matthew T. Pickering, was detached from the Maryport Circuit and made the head Church of a circuit of its own - the other societies in the circuit being at Keswick, Dearham, Broughton Moor, Little Broughton and Blindcrake. The Superintendent who lived at Cockermouth was the Rev. John G. Bowran who afterwards rose to be the President of the Primitive Methodist Conference, and who became well known as a writer under the pen-name of "Ramsay Guthrie." At Blindcrake, a small Primitive Methodist Society had been in existence for a few years, and in 1894 two small dwelling-houses in the village were converted into a Chapel. at a cost of £120, and the faithful members have met regularly in this Chapel ever since. Also in 1894 a Chapel was at last erected by the patient and persevering society at Grange. It cost just over £300. and was opened on July 12th, the dedicatory sermon being preached by the Rev. E. J. B. Kirtlan who later became well-known as the Rev. Dr. E. J. B. Kirtlan, B.A. a great "character" among Wesleyan ministers, and a predecessor of the present writer, at Hove.

The circuit steward of the Cockermouth and Keswick Circuit in 1895 was Mr. J. W. Lupton-who had already served the circuit for ten years as a local preacher-and who was well set on a life-time of faithful service to Methodism in the area. At the time of writing, Mr. Lupton is living hale and hearty in his mid-eighties-in retirement at Barnstaple. Devon. The present writer-acknowledging gratefully the help afforded by the historical writings of Mr. Lupton, and the late Mr. Robin Plummer, in the compilation of this booklet-wishes Mr. Lupton every continued blessing as he proceeds steadily towards his "century."

In the mid-1890s, concern was being felt in some quarters over the wide boundaries of the circuit and one or two committees were called, at the request of the Quarterly Meeting, to consider the division of the circuit. At one time, there was a proposal that the whole Cockermouth section should amalgamate with Maryport; at another, there was a suggestion that the Dearham society should be ceded to the Maryport Circuit; at yet another, it was mooted that Ullock should be transferred to the circuit from Workington. All these proposals, however, came to naught at the time and the suggestions were dropped.

Meanwhile, the work was proceeding steadily. In 1898, an organ was installed in the tiny Chapel at Sunderland with Miss Bewsher assuming the duties of organist. This arrangement was much to the liking of the local preachers, some of whom told almost libellous stories of the singing accomplishments of the congregation! A new harmonium was installed in the Keswick Church during the same year; the circuit seemed to be becoming suddenly music-conscious. Also in 1898, new ground was broken at Threlkeld Quarry, and in May of that year, services were commenced in the new Day School, kindly loaned to the circuit for the purpose by the directors of the Quarry. A Sunday School was also begun, under the joint superintendency of Messrs. John Morley and John Stuart of Keswick.

It may be of interest to note some of the prime workers in the various societies at the close of the nineteenth century. At Cockermouth, among others, the names of Tunstall, Drummond, Sealby, Kennon, Pape, Youdale, Clulow, Patrickson, Fisher, Robinson, Cawley, Eilbeck, Fletcher, Steele and Smaile were well in the limelight, whilst great sorrow was felt at the passing of three great stalwarts in the year 1900- Atkinson Steele -after seventy years' magnificent service as a local preacher, Mrs. Palmer Robinson and Josiah Raine. At Greysouthen, Miss Carruthers, Messrs.

R. Hindmoor, Joseph Renney, W. Stephenson and J. M. Tweddle were the leading workers. At Brigham, Messrs. A. Kennard, S. Messenger and J. Thompson mainly carried the standard; Great Broughton was blessed by the labours of Messrs. J. and T. Gribbins, T. Gardner, J. Webster, R. Beattie, George Irving, C. Watson and Henry Henderson. Messrs. Jennings and Gill were indefatigable workers at Lorton; Embleton elders included the names of Bewsher, Gould, Allinson, Newbold, Gibson, Charters. Martin, Wilkinson. Mandale and Sharp; at Eaglesfield, Messrs. J. W. Rothery. W. Bell, Matthew Fox. Charles Fox. John M. Fox, and Jonathon Huddart kept the torch blazing; at Pardshaw. Messrs. Lacklinson. Greenup and Radley. together with the Misses Wood, rendered signal service; in the Sunderland society. the names of Thirlwall, Bewsher, Hetherington and Maughan were prominent. Famous names at Keswick. at this time, were those of R. Henderson, R. Mumberson, P. Atkinson, W. Richardson, R. Hogarth, J. Iredale, J. W. Lupton, W. P. Mandale, J. Morley, J. Sewell, W. Spark and P. Thompson. At Braithwaite, the work prospered under the care of Messrs. Jacob and William Holliday, with the assistance of Messrs. Pattinson, Abbott and Lobb. At Grange, the leaders were John Gill, Charles Hill, George Mounsey, John Robinson, Joseph Thompson, Nicholas Woodend and Miss Threlkeld. The new venture at Threlkeld Quarry brought Messrs. J. Jordan, W. J. Love, S. Alderson, J. Rea and Mr. and Mrs. Noon into the circuit limelight, while at Bassenthwaite, well-known Methodist names were Watson, Harding, Strong, Davidson, Graham, Raven, Thompson, Corfield, Laidlaw, Satterthwaite, Irving, Kinnear, Brough and Jackson.

The membership returns of the circuit, as at December 31st, 1900, are of interest; they were as follows :-Cockermouth, 103; Dearham, 29; Greysouthen, 2; Brigham, 7; Great Broughton, 22; Lorton, 4; Embleton, 8; Eaglesfield, 12; Pardshaw, 11; Sunderland, 4; Keswick. 90; Braithwaite, 19; Grange, 27; Threlkeld Quarry, 14; Bassenthwaite, 4. It will be seen from these figures that Greysouthen had fallen into very low waters, and in October, 1901, a circuit mission was commenced in the village, headed by Messrs. W. B. Goodman and Joseph Tunstall. This mission at once produced results, and new members were soon added to the society. It will also be seen that Scales does not figure at all in the circuit returns for the simple reason that for some months the congregations at the Chapel had consisted entirely of bare, wooden benches. While this state of affairs may have been quite welcome to, say, local preachers on trial, who need thus have had no fears of criticism of their eloquent discourses, it was, nevertheless, rightly considered to be a challenge to the circuit, and in March, 1901, a determined effort, headed by preachers from Keswick, was made to get the society on its feet again; this attempt, though brave. unfortunately produced no lasting results possibly because of the progress being made nearby at Threlkeld Quarry. Here, in October, 1902, the memorial stone-laying of the Chapel took place, the building being completed and opened in 1903, at a total cost of £1,050, the dedicatory sermon being preached by the Rev. John J. Brown. Chairman of the District. In the same month, the Society at Embleton transferred their services to a temporary meeting-place at the farm-house of Mr. Lobb. Netherscale, while the old Chapel was pulled down. and a new one built on the same site at a cost of £450. The builder was Mr. John Gibson, who remained in life-long membership at the Chapel he had built, dying-full of faith and years-in 1950.

Extensive renovations had also been carried out, in 1902, to the little Chapel at Greysouthen, including the re-seating of the entire building, and the replacement of the old pulpit by a new rostrum and communion rail. Circuit stewards, during this period, included J. Morley and P. Atkinson, of Keswick, together with Noble Patrickson and W. H. Youdale, of Cockermouth. When the Superintendent of the Cockermouth and Keswick Circuit-the Rev. William G. White-was taken ill soon after his advent to the circuit in 1902, and was unable to work for nearly twelve months, the Rev. E. J. Bennett Richards, a pre-collegiate, was sent to act as his supply. After his college course, Mr. Richards returned to the circuit, and ministered at Keswick between 1906 and 1909. In 1908, the Primitive Methodists at Little Broughton carried out alterations to the Chapel property, and built a Sunday School on to the existing premises. A leading light in the society at this time was Mr. Jack Byers, who went on to give a lifetime of faithful service to the Chapel he loved. In 1909, the Southey Street Church at Keswick was enlarged and remodelled, a generous subscriber to the cost being Sir John S. Randles, M.P. In 1910, after many years of deliberation, the Dearham society was transferred to the Maryport Circuit where it has remained ever since. This was the first large link in the chain to be broken. and with this transfer. an association with the old circuit which had lasted for eighty years came to an end. A further link was to be severed, with the final closure and sale of the little Chapel at Scales -an event which took place during the Great War, the same procedure being followed, some twenty years later, at Sunderland.

The Cockermouth society, however, had an eye to the future even in time of war - like Jeremiah at Anathoth. The members negotiated for. and finally bought, a site in Lorton Street in the year 1914, with the intention of building a new Church - a project that had, perforce. to be postponed for several years.

The Rev. W. Woodman Treleaven had been invited to the circuit as Superintendent in 1918, but he died shortly before he could take up the appointment, and Conference designated his son-the Rev. Woodman Treleaven. M.A. to fill the vacancy for one year; Mr. Treleaven, despite his short stay was not forgotten in the circuit, and he returned as Superintendent in 1936. Circuit stewards, in 1918, were Mr. J. H. Fawcett. Cockermouth. and Mr. J. W. Lupton, Keswick-the latter serving in this capacity for the second time. In 1925, when Mr. Mossop Fox and Sir John Randles were circuit stewards. Conference granted permission for the sale of the still-unused Lorton Street site at Cockermouth. Happily, this power was not used. and with the advent to Cockermouth of the Rev. W. Talbot Ellams in 1920, plans were speeded up for the building of a new Church. In 1928. when the circuit stewards were Mr. T. Sealby. Cockermouth. and Miss Sarah Potts, M.A., Keswick, the Rev. Seth Swithenbank took over the Superintendency and with his coming the designation of the circuit was inverted to read "Keswick and Cockermouth."

The stonelaying of the new Lorton Street Church at Cockermouth took place in 1931, and on April 26th, 1932, the Church was opened and dedicated by the President of the Wesleyan Conference the Rev. Dr. C. Ryder Smith, B.A. The great rejoicings of that day had but one cloud the fact that one of the prime movers and most energetic workers for the new Church-Mr. F. J. Pape had passed away very suddenly some few weeks previously. The whole premises cost something in the region of £7,000. In the following year. the old Market Street Chapel was sold to the Urban District Council for £325, and it now fulfils the distinguished role of Town Hall. At the end of the 1930s. the little Chapel at Lorton which had been struggling for many a year finally closed its doors for public worship and except for a few months in the summer of 1949 it has remained closed ever since. But there were

other building ventures. however. during the 1930s, including the erection of new schoolrooms at Bassenthwaite, Eaglesfield and Pardshaw.

Inspired by the spirit of reunion conversations at all levels took place between representatives of the Keswick and Cockermouth Wesleyan Circuit and the Cockermouth Primitive Methodist Circuit, during the mid-1930s, with a view to official amalgamation. These negotiations came to a successful conclusion when, in September, 1937, the fusion of the two circuits took place, and the two Methodist beacons at last became merged into one. The circuit however was divided at first, into three definite sections as regards both financial and pastoral organisation: the Keswick section was under the charge of the Superintendent the Rev. Woodman Treleaven, M.A the Lorton Street section was under the charge of the Rev. Wilbert Walton and the New Street section came under the care of an active Supernumerary the Rev. Harry M Hull.

This arrangement lasted throughout the war without alteration save in the personnel of the ministerial staff But the Rev. Joseph Coombs who was both Superintendent of the circuit and Chairman of the District from 1946 to 1950, paved the way for a complete amalgamation of the sections within the circuit and during the ministries of the Rev. E. Grieves Smith and the present writer this reorganisation was brought about. In 1950, the Cockermouth section became one single unit, and for two years a lay pastor assisted the minister in exercising pastoral over-sight. In that year, the Dearham ex-Primitive Methodist Society was transferred to the Maryport Circuit, being followed, in 1951, by the Broughton Moor society. The year 1953 saw the problem of redundancy in the villages of Great and Little Broughton solved temporarily and, be it hoped, permanently by the fusion of the ex-Wesleyan and ex-Primitive Methodist societies in those villages, the two societies meeting together for worship in each Chapel alternately. In the same year, the New Street ex-Primitive Methodist Church in Cockermouth, after a long and honourable history, closed down, and those members who were willing to do so, joined the Lorton Street society. Having thus put its own house in good, internal order, as far as is at present possible, the circuit may surely face the future with confidence and with faith.

It is impossible to close this section without paying tribute to certain stalwarts who are still serving the circuit, after many years, and whose faithfulness shall surely merit the promised reward of the Crown of Life. First among local preachers of the Keswick and Cockermouth Circuit is Mr Tweddle Stephenson, who has rendered forty-five years' uninterrupted service in the pulpits of the circuit, and who has worked devotedly as Sunday School Superintendent and Class Leader at Great Broughton for more years, probably, than he cares to remember. Mr W. H. Thompson, J.P., and Mr T. J. Forsyth-the latter now giving excellent service as circuit steward-have also an unbroken record of service, as local preachers, down the years. From the old Primitive Methodist Circuit, veteran preachers include Messrs Fred T. Henderson, Richard Lindsay, Fred Askew, Robert T. Metcalf and Joseph W. Carter. Among stewards, those who have, over the years, more than satisfied Paul's requirement that "a man be found faithful" are Mr. T. H. Pearson, of Southey Street Church, Keswick, who has served for over thirty years as society steward, and has also served for a term as circuit steward; Mr. Robert T. Metcalf, of Tithebarn Street Church, who has undoubtedly done more for his Master in that society than any other living man; Miss Mounsey of Grange, the Misses Lamb of Threlkeld Quarry, and Mrs. Clark of Bassenthwaite ladies who have done "a man's Job" for their societies through the years. At Lorton Street, one cannot overlook the names of Messrs. Tom Sealby, John T. Gill and George Nelson, among a host of others, who for more than thirty years have fought

the good fight and kept the faith. And what shall I more say? For the time will fail me if I tell of the Corjetts and the Carruthers of the former New Street society, the Byers and Hendersons of Little Broughton, the Misses Law and Mr. Hetherington of Blindcrake, the Tiffins and the Gibsons of Embleton, and Mrs. W. Mossop of Pardshaw - all of whom, through faith, from weakness were made strong, and waxed mighty in fighting the good fight. Apart from stewards, there are, indeed, many others - far too many to mention individually whose loyalty and love throughout the years have been at the same time the mainstay and the inspiration of the circuit.

Finally, the circuit has a record of young men sent into the ministry of which it may justifiably be proud-both as regards the number and the calibre of its candidates. Included among these are John Relph, Daniel Sanderson, William Graham, John Snaith, Mayson Penn, William S. Tomlinson, Robert Mandale, John Hannah, J. Johnston Roe, John R. Reid and Alan Whittle - all of whom may be regarded as "old boys" of the circuit.

May there yet be many more who, ***having lit their torch of faith from this Methodist beacon among the Cumbrian mountains, shall go forth to hold it high*** as ministers of the Church at home and overseas.

## **PART III**

**1954 - ?**

### **"HEAT OR LIGHT!"**

The title of this booklet was given with purpose aforethought. The task of a beacon is to radiate not heat but light. We may disregard here its post-sixteenth century use as a warning of danger or a sign of celebration, but dwell upon its earlier function, in this country, as a direction indicator on peak, castle ramparts or harbour wall. Watchers of a beacon would not, therefore, gather round it in order to warm themselves at the fire - but would observe its light from afar as a guide through the darkness of the night.

The flames of the Spirit which brought this circuit into being were not kindled in order that men should gather into a circle round the fire as a mutual admiration society: they were lit so that the light of God's eternal truth in the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ might shine forth as a beacon in the darkness around. to guide travellers on their pilgrimage through the world.

It has been pleasant and, I hope. profitable to look back. But our faces must now be turned towards the future with the firm resolve that we shall be not unworthy of those who have gone before us in the faith; for "they, without us shall not be made perfect."

Here may be recalled the story of that very brave woman Gladys Aylward who, after being rejected as a missionary candidate by austere and somewhat remote committees, still felt the urge of the Spirit to do work for God in lands overseas. Feeling frustrated, and very concerned as to what God would have her do, and yet being convinced that in some way He would make the path plain, she picked up her Bible, and-opening it at random - happened upon the story of Nehemiah. She read how Jerusalem had needed him - and he went. Then she heard a Voice -"Is Nehemiah's God your God?" "Yes," she answered. "Then do as Nehemiah did," said the Voice. "But I'm not Nehemiah," she said. "No," said the Voice. "but I am still God!"

And He is still God today! The God of John Wesley and Robert Gate, Richard Bowman and Moses Rayner, Joseph Thornburn and Thomas Threlkeld, Jacob Holliday and John Clark-and all the others in the Methodist story told in these pages - their God is still our God! And if we can be true to the spirit, the principles and the loyalties of those who have gone before us and put our trust also in Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever-we may surely claim, in John Wesley's words, that "the best is yet to be!"

May the light of this Methodist beacon among the fells and vales of Cumberland ever burn more brightly, and may it thus be the means of leading countless more travellers home to God!

"We are watchers of a beacon whose light must never die,

We are guardians of an altar that shows Thee ever nigh:

We are children of Thy freemen who sleep beneath the sod:

For the might of Thine arm we bless Thee, our God. our father's God."

(M.H.B. 715). (Charles Silvester Horne).

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Peter Nicholson February 2013