

**West Lane Methodist Church**  
KEIGHLEY

**Diamond Jubilee**  
**CELEBRATIONS**

**Programme of Arrangements**

AND

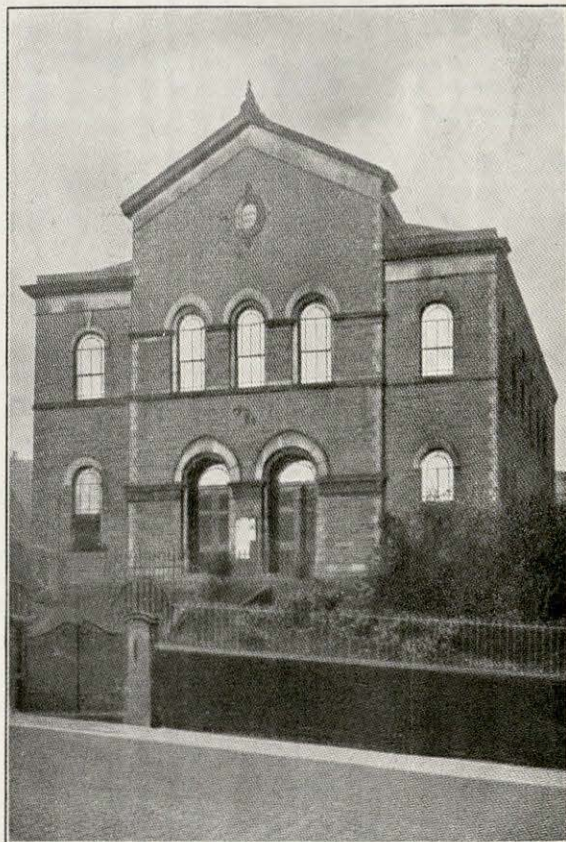
**'Sidelights on Sixty Years'**

A Historical Miscellany  
relating to  
West Lane Methodist Church

Compiled by Rev. FRANK BAKER, B.A., B.D.



PRICE - ONE SHILLING



West Lane Methodist Church, Keighley.

# SIDE-LIGHTS ON SIXTY YEARS

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Being contributions to the History  
of the West Lane Methodist  
Church, Keighley

Compiled from  
original records by

Rev. Frank Baker, B.A., B.D.

as a Souvenir Handbook of the  
Diamond Jubilee of the  
Opening of the Church

●

SIXTY YEARS  
ON  
SIDE-LIGHTS

Being a record of the history  
of the Wesleyan Methodist  
Church, Keighley

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## Preface.

**E**LEVEN years ago, in connection with the Jubilee of the Stone-laying of our West Lane Methodist Church, Mr. Walter Feather compiled and published a "Fifty Years' History of the West Lane Primitive Methodist Church, Keighley." It gives some of the chief land-marks of that history, such as full details, from the "Keighley News," for the Stone-laying ceremony (pp. 6-11) and the Opening ceremony (pp. 11-13). There also are to be found descriptions of the building of the New School, 1901-2 (pp. 18-20), and various efforts to clear debt. In fact one might roughly sum up its subject-matter (in no derogatory sense) as "Buildings and Bazaars."

The present "Sidelights on Sixty Years" sets out with a different purpose. It reveals glimpses of ordinary people and everyday events through the years, and takes us behind the scenes to watch the rehearsals for what was to be played on the stage of history. It does not endeavour to give a complete and balanced history of the Church, but sketches of the kind of thing that happened from year to year.

At the same time, an attempt has been made to give outlines of the history of various departments of the Church, and complete lists of the more important Officials. In order to do this, over 500 documents of one kind and another have been examined, as well as all the minute-books that are preserved of the Quarterly Meeting, Circuit Committee, Trustees' Meeting, Leaders' Meeting, and Finance Committee.

Yet complete accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Because a number of the necessary documents are missing, or obscure, in some cases the writer has had to depend upon human memory, always a little uncertain in its workings. It may be, therefore, that there are omissions in the lists of Local Preachers, Class Leaders, or Sunday School Superintendents. If omissions there are, we are confident that they will be few, and we hope that they will be forgiven. All the offices which any particular worker has held are not necessarily included in a notice of that worker, but a glance at the Index will give any other references to him.

The labour entailed in compiling this handbook is dedicated to the workers past and present at the West Lane Church, in the hope that it will revive happy memories and inspire to a prosperous future.

FRANK BAKER.

## Early Days.

In tradition, at any rate, the district around West Lane has contacts with very early Primitive Methodist history. It is said that Sarah Kirkland, the first woman to be a Primitive Methodist travelling preacher, preached in the locality of West Lane. Mr. Arthur Walbank tells of an old official who believed that it was in a nearby field, if not on the site of the present Church—but there is no certainty as to the exact whereabouts.

Until 1870 the neighbourhood around the top of West Lane had no regular means of public worship, so cottage meetings were started. The Keighley Primitive Methodist "Plan" for April to July, 1870, shows that meetings were being held on alternate Thursday evenings at 7-30 at "New Town," conducted by the ministers, Rev. John Milner and Rev. A. C. Hall, in turn. (The four names which have been successively used for the West Lane society are "New Town," "Keighley," "Mount Street," and "West Lane.") On that same plan are two special announcements relating to "New Town" :—

### "TEA MEETINGS.

"... New Town, April 18th. Public Meeting with Selections of Sacred Music after Tea.

### CAMP MEETING

to commence at One p.m., and conclude with a lovefeast, New Town, June 5, addressed by Nos. 18, 23, 31, 27."

The small wooden Chapel built in that year in "Back West Turkey Street" was registered for worship on January 20th, 1871, as No. 19970, by Rev. John Milner, the minister in charge. It is stated in the Certificate issued, that

"The Primitive Methodist Chapel situated at Back West Turkey Street, Keighley . . . is intended to be used, as heretofore, and will accordingly be forthwith used as a Place of Meeting for Religious Worship by a Congregation or Assembly of persons calling themselves Primitive Methodists."

Even official documents of those early days are full of interest, on account of their quaintness as well as their historical value. The early Circuit Schedules, for instance, make searching enquiry into the minister's character, asking such questions as "Does he smoke tobacco?", "Is he peaceable?", "Does he preach long sermons?" In the 1876 Schedules these queries were greatly modified.

A few extracts from the Circuit Committee and Quarterly Meeting minutes of the period 1873-9 will convey something of the history of the Primitive Methodist Church at Newtown in those days :

"That New Town Camp Meeting be held at New Town in the morning, at Holy Croft in the afternoon, and Lovefeast at New Town in the evening." (1873, July 31st).

"That New Town Sabbath services be in the morning at 10-30 a.m., and in the evening at 5-30. And the Work night service be on the Monday night if agreeable to the Society." (1873, September 13th).

"That there be a Circuit Committee planned once a month at New Town on the Preaching night." (1873, September 13th).

"That E. Moore's name come off the plan she being dead, and that her death be improved in the New Town Chapel." (1874, March 16th).

"That sanction be given to enlarge New Town Chapel and also request Dist. Building Com. for same." (1875, March 13th).

"That we request the sanction of Dist. Build. Com. for the purchase of land at Keighley." (1876, December 9th).

"That we sanction the holding of a Social Tea at Keighley at Christmas and also Christmas singing and begging for the extinction of Chapel Debt and a new Chapel." (1877, December 8th).

"That the following be the order of the Camp-Meeting services at Mount St. next Sunday—viz., in the morning short sermons at Calversyke Hill, Poplar Terrace, and top of Turkey St.—the afternoon meeting to be held in Bro. Martin's field, the friends to assemble at Chapel at 1-30." (1878, July 8th).

"That we ask the Conference to record their thanks to His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, K.G., for the gift of Land of the value of £250 for a Chapel at Keighley. (1879, June 7th).

"That the following be the arrangements for Mount St. Camp Meeting, viz., Meet at Gladstone St. in the morning at 10 and deliver short sermon—anr. sermon top of Moss St. and anr. near Appleby's house. In the afternoon meet at Chapel at 1-30, walk up to Calversyke Hill, without singing, one preach there, then two preach opposite new Chapel." (This was for Sunday, August 10th—the minute is dated July 21st, 1879).

This section on the days before 1880 can best be concluded by a complete reprint of the first attempted "history" of the West Lane cause. It is contained in a begging letter circulated while the present Church was in course of erection, and the copy from which this is reprinted is probably unique.

### Primitive Methodism

In NEWTOWN and WEST LANE, on the West side  
of the town of Keighley.

"At the commencement of the year 1870 this part of our town, with a numerous population, had neither Chapel nor Church, nor any means of public worship, nor any Sunday School even, nearer than the National School.

"During the summer of the year above-named, the Primitive Methodists of Keighley visited the neighbourhood

and commenced a Sunday School and preaching Service in a cottage in the midst of the population, and by the end of the year, their efforts being attended with success, they were obliged to seek more accommodation. Their means being small and the necessity urgent, they built a Wood Chapel to be used also for Sunday School. The size of the structure was 13 yards by 8 yards at a cost, including land, of £465, and in the year 1875 this was found to be too small for the increasing school and congregation, and the friends made another effort and added five yards to the length of the building, at a cost of £135, and in the year 1878 the enlarged building was again found to be too small. The friends then felt obliged to seek to have a permanent building, and hence they have taken steps to build the Chapel, now in course of erection in West Lane, which they hope will not only be an ornament to the town, but a very great blessing. Scores of persons in the neighbourhood have been savingly converted by God's blessing, and we trust hundreds more will be brought into the same happy condition by means of the enlarged accommodation. The New Chapel is constructed to seat comfortably 800 persons, and on urgent occasions will hold from 1,000 to 1,200 persons. The estimated cost, including land, is £3,000. It is intended to place the present wood building at the rear of the new Chapel, to be used for the Sunday School as far as it will answer the purpose. At the beginning of the present year the school contained 240 scholars and 55 teachers.

"In raising money for this important object they have done what they could, and they are still doing what they can. The society and congregation are composed chiefly of the working class. They hope to raise, among themselves (including the result of their efforts hitherto) the sum of £800.

"They earnestly hope the Christian gentlemen and friends of the town and neighbourhood will assist us in this important work, which is for the benefit of present and future generations.

"May the blessing of Heaven be upon both the givers to, and the promoters of, this enterprise for Christ !

J. BROWN, Treasurer,  
Greengate, Keighley.

J. AYRTON, Secretary,  
Gladstone Place, Keighley.

Keighley, Oct. 1st, 1879.

P.S.—To the Reader. Persons properly authorised, will wait upon you in the course of a few days, when your kind assistance will be thankfully received."

## Through the Years.

In this section an attempt is made to represent the varied characters and events of the last sixty years. This is done chiefly by extracts from official documents of one kind and another. These extracts range from the trivial to the important, the humorous to the solemn, in an effort to give at least a glimpse of the various aspects of the many-sided activity of the West Lane Church during this period. They do not pretend to give a complete picture. The author has selected what he thinks will prove both of interest and of historical value, and his alone is the responsibility for any omissions. Many important events and people have undoubtedly been left out. Sometimes this is because the documents which would have given the requisite information are missing—there are huge gaps in the records of the Trustees' and Leaders' Meetings. At other times the reason is that items of a similar nature have been recorded in another place. It is inevitable, of course, that the earlier years should have the largest share of space, but each of the past sixty years has its portion, however small. In the later years obituaries are all too frequent—an index to the dwindling numbers and declining fortunes of the Church, for these were men hard to replace.

### 1880.

On February 28th, a certificate was issued—(No. 24953)—registering the West Lane Chapel as “a Place of Meeting for Religious Worship by a Congregation or Assembly of persons calling themselves Primitive Methodists.”

\* \* \* \*

On March 3rd began the Opening Services for the new chapel. The following is a reprint from the large poster which advertised them. It has been kindly presented to the Church by Mr. Robert Smith, and will be on display at the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

“Opening of the Primitive Methodist NEW CHAPEL, West Lane, Keighley.

“The Public are respectfully informed that Services in connection with the above will (D.V.) be held as follows, viz. :

“On Wednesday, March 3rd, 1880, the Rev. George Lamb, of Hull, will Preach the First Sermon in the New Chapel; and on Thursday Evening, March 4th, Mr. Lamb will deliver a Lecture on ‘Wycliffe, The Morning Star Of The Reformation.’ The Chair will be occupied by B. S. Brigg, Esq. On the above two Evenings Mr. J. Winterbottom, Haworth, will preside at the Organ, and on the latter Evening will give an Organ Recital previous to the Lecture.

On Sunday, March 7th, the Rev. Jos. Wood, M.A., of Leeds (Secretary of the Connexional Sunday School Union), will preach Morning and Evening; and the Rev. T. Newell, President of the

Conference, will Preach in the Afternoon. Mr. Handel Parker, Shipley, will preside at the Organ.

“On Sunday, March 14th, the Rev. C. Rumfitt, of Heckmond-wike, will Preach Morning and Evening, and the Rev. J. Ayrton in the Afternoon. Mr. E. Laycock, Oakworth, will preside at the Organ.

“On Sunday, March 21st, the Rev. G. H. Beeley, of Shipley, will preach Morning and Evening, and the Rev. John Milner, of Castleford, in the Afternoon. Miss Weatherhead, Silsden, will preside at the Organ.

“On Monday, March 22nd, the Rev. J. Milner will deliver a Lecture on ‘Aesop, The Slave and Fabulist.’ The Chair to be taken by Mr. John Howell. Mr. W. Driver, Keighley, will preside at the Organ. The Sunday Services to commence at 10-30, 2-30, and 6 o'clock; and the Week Evening Services and Lectures at 7 o'clock.

“On Easter Monday, March 29th, a Public Tea will be provided at 4-30. Tickets, 1s. each, may be obtained at the Door. Afterwards, a Public Meeting will be held in which the following Ministers and Gentlemen are expected to take part—viz. : Revs. J. Jobling, Silsden, J. Hedley, Harrogate, J. Bootland, Leeds, J. Milner, J. F. Parrish, Silsden, C. Rumfitt, M. Sullivan, Bingley, W. J. Kirkland, Skipton, G. Barnley, A. B. Morris, and J. Ayrton; Messrs. C. Crabtree, Bingley, R. Rundle, Shipley, and others. Chair to be taken at 6-30, by William Town, Esq., of Yew Bank, Mr. W. Driver will preside at the Organ.

“A Collection will be taken on each occasion in Aid of the Building Fund.

“A. Appleyard, Printer by Pneumatic Power, Bookbinder and Paper Merchant, Cook Lane Printing Works, Keighley.”

\* \* \* \*

On August 16th the Circuit Committee resolved “That Bros. Ayrton and Martin conduct a service improving the death of Bro. Parker at West Lane Chapel on Sunday evening, Sep. 5.” Such funeral sermons were then the rule, rather than the exception, as now.

\* \* \* \*

A Trustees' Meeting on October 30th passed the following resolutions :—

“3. That the best thanks of this Meeting be presented to Bro. Ayrton for the ready assistance rendered throughout the course of the business of erecting the New Chapel—and also for the neat manner in which he has entered up the ‘accounts’ in Treasurer’s and Secretary’s new Books.

“4. That the best thanks of this Meeting be presented to Bro. John Brown for his various and efficient services as Treasurer and otherwise during the course of the New Chapel Enterprise.

“5. That the best thanks of the Meeting be given to Bro. Binns for his efficient services as Clerk of Works at New Chapel.”

In September "Organ Opening Services" were appointed for West Lane, Rev. J. Macpherson being the preacher invited. In following years "Organ Anniversaries" were held in the same month.

\* \* \* \*

December 31st of this year was a very busy evening at West Lane Chapel. To start with there was the "Yearly Trustees' Meeting," at which one resolution was "That we thankfully receive the loan of £150 by Bro. J. Howells **free of interest**," which was to be handed over to Mrs. Lambert as part repayment of the mortgage which had been taken out. Following this was a watch-night service. Even this was not enough, for next came an "All-night meeting," continuing until 5 a.m., conducted by John Martin and William Moore, five minutes being allowed at the end of each hour for people to enter or leave the meeting. What a test of endurance!

1881.

On February 8th the Trustees resolved

"1. That we get Chapel licensed for Solemnizing Marriages therein.

"2. That the **Bible** to be given be to the first couple married in the Chapel and a Hymn-Book be given to the couple married second."

The Chapel was duly registered, on March 8th.

\* \* \* \*

The founders of our West Lane Church took a lot of satisfying. Already they were looking round for more worlds to conquer, and on July 4th the trustees agreed "That Bro. John Brown and Mr. Ayrton see Mr. Laycock, agent to the Duke of Devonshire, to ask him about an additional piece of land for a school."

1882.

On Easter Monday a "Tea-Meeting" was held, when Thomas Wiggan was given his usual task of "making the tea"—he was a grocer in Mount Street. The West Lane Mission Band conducted the evening meeting.

\* \* \* \*

In May the Synod of the Bradford and Halifax District was held for the first—but not the last—time in our Church. From the very beginning a shadow was cast over the proceedings, however, for news had just come through that Lord Frederick Charles Cavendish, second son of the Duke of Devonshire, had been assassinated in Phoenix Park, Dublin, by members of a secret political society. He was M.P. for the West Riding, and had just

been made Chief Secretary for Ireland. His father had been very generous to West Lane, and the family was popular in the neighbourhood, so that the Synod's expressions of sympathy were by no means formal.

\* \* \* \*

The 1880's were not always gentle, and boys were certainly boys in those days. On June 13th the Trustees resolved "That £1 reward be offered to anyone who will inform the Trustees of West Lane P.M. Chapel who has broken the Front Windows." Fate soon singled out the culprits, for a meeting six days later has the minute, "That the three lads be charged 7s. 6d. for Damages done to the windows of the Chapel."

\* \* \* \*

The old wooden chapel had been placed on the land at the back of the Church, but it was not really large enough to accommodate all the scholars, so the Church was used. In wintry weather it was a damp business crossing over between the two buildings, especially for the many children of those days who hadn't suitable shoes or clothes. Accordingly, on October 2nd, the trustees decided "That Bro. Wm. Moore and John Brown get an estimate for the covering in of the passage from the school to the Chapel and report the same to the Trustees." Some months later the job was completed, at a cost of £7 15s. 0d.

1883.

Those boys again! In January the trustees had to resolve "That Bros. Thomas Hobson and John Brown see the superintendent of the Police about Boys annoying the meetings on a Thursday night and Sunday night."

\* \* \* \*

Sunday School Anniversaries in these days were often held in the open-air—this was so with our own Mount Street Sunday School. But the possession of a fine building made it possible to accommodate almost as large a crowd of people as were accustomed to gather on such occasions in the open air. So the trustees agreed "That we lend Chapel on Sunday Night, July 15th, 1883, if it is wet, to Braithwaite friends to hold their Sunday School Anniversary."

1884.

The land that was not yet needed by the trustees was let out as allotments, a small source of income recorded in the Trust Schedules for some years. It brought difficulties in its train, however, and on April 24th the trustees resolved "That the Chapel



Keeper be requested to tell all sub-tenants gardeners not to take anything out of the gardens on a Sunday, also not to allow anyone to go into the gardens any other way (but) through the gates." In 1887 the trustees had to go a step farther, deciding "That Bro. F. Moore be appointed to get boards made and painted with notice on, cautioning trespassers on the chapel grounds and property."

\* \* \* \*

Rev. Jonathan Ayrton had rendered great service to the Church during the years of the erection of the new building. Conference had allowed his remaining for a fourth year to see the work through, and he was to have another three years at West Lane later on. He had decided views on some subjects. A letter in his scholarly handwriting, which has accidentally been preserved, is dated "Horbury, 12th November, 1884," and is written to John Brown, one of the pillars of the West Lane Church. He speaks of being in Mr. Dalton's Circuit, where he had met a man after his own heart, who proclaimed "Keep politics and the devil out of the Church!" "Yes, thought I," adds Mr. Ayrton, "let her sing and watch and pray and she will then be filled with some better things." The West Lane Church did not take this advice literally, for around the close of the last century many were the resolutions on public affairs that were sent to various M.P.s.

\* \* \* \*

### 1885.

On September 21st the Quarterly Meeting decided "That we give our sanction to the announcement that the late Mr. S. Johnson's funeral sermon will be repeated at West Lane Chapel on some early Sabbath evening." The preacher is not stated, but it seems to have been a good sermon! Mr. Walbank says that Thomas Ramsden often described deathbed scenes in his fervent appeals to the younger generation, but we do not know whether or not he was the preacher in this case. He was a devoted local preacher, and it was his zeal in refusing to miss an appointment, even though ill, that led to his contracting pneumonia, from which he died a few days later. This was in 1897.

\* \* \* \*

The founder of the "National Children's Home and Orphanage" is renowned for that wonderful institution. Here is another testimony to his humanitarianism. The Circuit Committee resolved on November 2nd "That we ask for 2 dozen placards, for exhibition at our Circuit Chapels, as prepared by Dr. Bowman Stephenson, cautioning young women and their parents against the dangers of large towns."

A tea on Christmas Day was a feature of the early years of West Lane Church. Thomas Wiggan usually did the catering. In 1885 he had an additional task—or dare we accuse a Trustees' Meeting minute-book of unconscious humour! The minute reads

"1. That Bro. T. Wiggan provide the tea on Christmas Day for as many as last year.

"2. That the Trustees' wives wait on at the trays and Bro. Wiggan look after them." (1)

### 1886.

Although the words "Camp Meetings" are very familiar, the actual details which they entailed are not so clear in many people's minds. The following quotation from the minutes of a Circuit Committee held on August 9th, shows the routine arrangements which were involved:

"Resolved.

"1. That the following be the morning route for Camp Meeting, West Lane, next Sunday. Meet at Chapel at 9-30—then procession to Poplar Terrace and one brother preach there—thence to Turkey St. top and one brother preach there—thence to Holy Croft and another brother preach at the top of Bengal St. Afternoon meet at 1-30 at Belgrave Road and procession to Camp ground, and at 5-30 meet at Skipton Road end and procession to Chapel.

"2. That Bros. Brown and W. Moore see Messrs. Smith & Paget for loan of field for the Camp Meeting.

"3. That Bro. Wiggan ask W. Morley to find Waggon and carry forms. . .

"5. That Bro. Wiggan select a number of hymns for use at the Camp Meeting processions next Sunday.

"5. (*sic*) That Bros. Wiggan and C. B. Smith act as preceptors at Camp Meeting."

For the benefit of the uninitiated it may be mentioned that the waggon was for use as a platform for the preachers.

### 1887.

The land for the New School was secured at last, and the Circuit Committee which met on May 23rd, recorded "That Conference be asked to record its thanks to the Duke of Devonshire, K.G., for selling at half-price land at West Lane for New Schools."

\* \* \* \*

In September of this year Frederick Moore, Society Steward for many years, was "relieved on the ground of growing infirmities," and a letter of thanks was sent to him from the Quarterly Meeting. In 1890 he passed away.

Two extracts from the Trustees' Meeting minute-book—without comment ! "That the Young Women have the school on Thursday night, November 10th, 1887, for a social gathering on conditions that they behave themselves." "That Mr. Feather, the chapel-keeper, be allowed to keep hens in the chapel ground."

## 1888.

The Circuit Schedules record that "Benjamin Emmott, Local Preacher of Oldfield, voluntarily severed himself by continuous non-attendance at class and constant attendance at 'Public House'."

\* \* \* \*

The Quarterly Meeting of March 3rd recommended the second minister, a probationer, for the Full List, on the grounds of "1. His attention to the general duties of the ministry. 2. His ability in preaching. 3. His urbanity of manner."

\* \* \* \*

On June 2nd the Quarterly Meeting agreed "That the prayer meeting at West Lane be altered from 7 to 8-45 a.m." This change does not seem to have been popular, however, for on September 1st a minute reads : "That the Sunday Morning Prayer Meeting at Keighley be at 7 a.m."

\* \* \* \*

The ladies get to work ! On December 10th the Trustees agreed that "the following resolutions of a ladies' meeting held December 10th, 1888, be confirmed.

- "1. That we have a sewing committee.
- "2. That the following suggestions be adopted.  
It shall be called the ladies' sewing committee. Its object :  
To raise money for the reduction of debt on the chapel and to build New Sunday Schools.  
There shall be a treasurer and secretary.  
The books shall be made up to the 20th of December in each year, and the balance shall be handed over to the chapel treasurer.  
Means for raising money—Sewing meetings, tea parties, and Sales of work.
- "3. That Mrs. Potts be treasurer.
- "4. That Mrs. John Howells be secretary."

## 1889.

For two years the West Lane people had been preparing to wipe off the debt by a supreme effort. This took place in the 1889 four-days' Bazaar (for which see Mr. Feather's "Fifty Years' History," pp. 16-7). The Circuit schedules reveal a church of 163

members, with a congregation of 500, and a debt of £1,105. Against that are items that show a nett raising of £941 during the year, and a total of £1,001 16s. 0d. cash in hand. The next year's schedules proclaim the debt extinguished.

## 1890.

The Trustees were jubilant this year. On April 14th they resolved : "That J. Brown, W. Moore, and J. Robinson be a committee to draw up a report to the papers that the chapel debt is cleared." And at the Annual Meeting, on December 29th, a minute reads "That we accord our sincere thanks to Almighty God for the position we are in at present, the property clear of debt, with a balance of £44 17s. 3½d. in hand."

\* \* \* \*

On March 8th the Quarterly Meeting agreed "That we recommend Mr. Arthur Roff for the Ministry, subject to the usual examination." Arthur Roff had become a member at West Lane in 1881, and Mr. Arthur Walbank speaks of him very highly : "My Prince Charming ! Here was the Preacher ! He fairly carried all before him. The preaching mind; the attractive presentation; a warm and genial personality; a boiling enthusiasm. Even the Scholars in the Sunday School eagerly looked for and listened very attentively to all he had to say." Nothing came of his recommendation for the ministry, however, and in 1893 he removed to the Bradford 1st Circuit.

## 1891.

Circuit Finances have always been in an uncertain state of health, here, as in most circuits, and from time to time new allocations have had to be made. On December 5th, 1891, a Circuit Finance Committee was formed for that purpose, meeting for the first time on February 6th, 1892. The allocations were on a combined basis of membership and ability to pay. West Lane was credited with the most wealth, for her allocation was £24 17s. 3d. per quarter, on a basis of 3s. 3d. for each member. Other allocations varied from 2s. 3d. to 3s. per member, Haworth paying £22 7s. 0d. (3s. per member), Oakworth £16 1s. 0d. (3s. per member), and Cross Roads £3 7s. 6d. (2s. 3d. per member).

## 1892.

The Circuit Schedules for this year contain the following item :

"Our congregations have increased, our finances are prosperous, and we have had a good number of conversions in our public services, and in our Sabbath Schools. But there is a growing tendency to stay away from the Class Meetings, and to neglect payments. Owing to this and removals a large number have been discontinued, and so, to our great pain, we are compelled to report a decrease of 23 members."

The Quarterly Meeting, on June 4th, resolved "That a Local Preachers' Mutual Aid Association be formed for the purpose of assisting Local Preachers in sickness and poverty." The Committee of eight which was formed to run it included two from West Lane, Joseph Craven and William Moore. Moore was appointed treasurer, and J. J. Clough secretary. In September the rules were confirmed, viz., that the annual subscription should be 5s. and that the allowances should be 5s. per week. In later years the West Lane Circuit L.P.M.A. joined with others to form the Keighley and District L.P.M.A., of which Charles Kitchen was for some time the secretary.

## 1893.

In rummaging through masses of dusty papers in an old cupboard at the church, the writer came across many interesting things. One of these was a set of tune-leaflets printed for the use of the choir in 1893, in an old-fashioned kind of musical notation that looks strange to modern eyes. The tunes are enclosed in a neat red cover, on which is printed "Primitive Methodist Chapel, West Lane, Keighley. **Old Tunes to Old Hymns, in the Old Style**, sung by the Choir, on Sunday, November 19th, 1893. Conductor—H. Ainsworth. Organist—J. Ickringill. Opening Hymn 237; Tune 1104." Two of these tunes, "Gospel Trumpet" and "Cardiff," it is hoped to sing during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

\* \* \* \*

The Oakworth Road Mission Hall had been taken under the wing of West Lane Church, and was given all the assistance that seemed necessary. On March 23rd the trustees agreed "That Holy Croft Mission have the use of the Chapel on June 4th for their Anniversary Services if needed." And on November 16th, the minute reads, "That Oakworth Road Mission have the use of seats, tables, crockery, etc., required for a tea to be held in Holy Croft Board School at the opening of the New Mission Chapel, Oakworth Road, December 5th, 1893." So a new venture was launched, made possible by the generosity of Mr. James Ickringill, a member and trustee of West Lane for many years. With the opening of the Mission Hall a large number of members and scholars who lived in that neighbourhood were transferred from West Lane to the Mission Hall.

## 1894.

On January 1st, 1894, the trustees appointed the following officers :

John Brown, Treasurer.  
John Robinson, Secretary.  
Jas. Ickringill, Choir Steward.

John Robinson and Thos. Thoseby, Seat Stewards.  
John Brown, Chapel Steward.  
John Middleton, Representative to Quarterly Meeting.  
John Robinson be the News Correspondent for the Trust."

It was also agreed "That Wm. Moore and John Brown with the Seat Stewards be a committee to have full powers to deal with the arrears of Seat rents in the event of any cases arising needing special action." In those days seat rents were a very important source of income, and a few occasions are recorded where more than gentle persuasion was needed to induce someone to pay up their arrears.

\* \* \* \*

Decorating and additions to the organ had been in progress, and the re-opening on January 21st was attended with some ceremony. On January 19th the trustees resolved "That the bellman be sent round to announce the re-opening Services for Sunday and Mr. Ickringill engage him."

\* \* \* \*

On March 13th, the President of Conference, Rev. J. Stephenson, preached at West Lane, and spoke at a Public Meeting in the evening—and, of course, there was a Public Tea sandwiched in between !

\* \* \* \*

In 1894 died Robert Kingsborough, a member of the Mount Street Society since its beginning, and an assistant Class Leader for some years. For about thirty years he had served as a Local Preacher. He was an Irishman, from Belfast, a man of deep piety and fervent evangelism.

## 1895.

There was apparently some danger of the two approaches to the Church becoming a thoroughfare, so on May 20th the trustees resolved "That the Chapel Steward see to having a notice put up at the door of the footpath leading from Devonshire Street West warning the public that it is a private road."

\* \* \* \*

On September 2nd the trustees agreed "That the School be lent to the West Lane P.M. Cricket Club." The privilege of using the wooden school-building for a tea and concert was first accorded to the Cricket Club in November, 1892, so that one assumes that 1892 was the Club's first season. The Club flourished well on into the present century, though it gradually became less closely attached to the West Lane Church.

1896.

The Leaders' Meeting, on January 12th, showed that they did not altogether eschew political subjects. They agreed "That we accept the subject, 'Labour : Its Situation, Aspirations, Powers and Duties,' for J. Wilson, M.P.'s lecture on February 25th."

\* \* \* \*

In December the Quarterly Meeting confirmed a suggestion of the West Lane Leaders by agreeing "That the Monday night preaching at West Lane be given up, and a Christian Endeavour Society Meeting held in its place."

\* \* \* \*

The Sunday School has for many years been accustomed to print special leaflets for the Anniversary Services, in foolscap octavo, about 4 in. by 6 in. One of the first of these is preserved, dated 1896, and printed by "Feather Bros., Printers, 39, Cavendish Street, Keighley"—a very early example of the close association between the West Lane Church and the Feathers. On May 10th, in this year, Rev. J. Stephenson, of Nottingham, was the preacher at the two services, which began at 2-30 and 6-0. The leaflet adds : "On Monday, May 11th, Rev. J. Stephenson will deliver his Popular Lecture entitled—'Shams and Shoddy in Life and Character.'"

1897.

Keighley has always been a stronghold of Temperance Reform, and the West Lane Church was a keen supporter of the movement. On December 4th, the Quarterly Meeting passed the following :—"That a resolution on the Liquor Traffic—condemning it as ruinous to the Commonwealth and as degrading to the moral life of the people and prejudicial to their social and religious welfare, be signed and forwarded to the M.P. for the Keighley Division and to Sir Wilfrid Lawson."

\* \* \* \*

At the same meeting which passed the above resolution a quite different matter was brought forward—the formation of a "Musical Union of Primitive Methodist Choirs in Keighley, Bingley, and Silsden." The idea was taken up, and in March, 1899, the Quarterly Meeting recorded "That we receive with pleasure the first year's Report of the 'Choir Union' and rejoice in the splendid success of the Festival. . ." Probably the "Festival" referred to was the one held at Crystal Palace for the "Nonconformist Choir Union" in 1898, copies of the "Book of Music" for that Festival and the following one being stored in the Choir Vestry at West Lane. In December, 1899, the Quarterly Meeting agreed "That

a note appear on the plan calling attention to the Social of the Primitive Methodist Choir Union to be held in Keighley Temperance Hall on February 17th."

1898.

This year died Thomas Wiggan, a wonderful Christian, and what is known as a "character." He was full of evangelical zeal and fervour, and was never so happy as when conducting prayer meetings or Camp Meetings. In fact, Mr. Walbank says that he got quite a name for the way which he acquired of walking backwards in front of a Camp Meeting procession, conducting with his umbrella. He was persistent in inviting people in the street to seek salvation, and loud in his "Hallelujahs" when conversions took place in the Chapel. A glance at the "Index" to this Handbook will show the various official positions which he held, and faithfully discharged. His brother was of a similar type, and when he came to conduct a Revival at West Lane, earned for himself the name of "Weeping Wiggan."

\* \* \* \*

The Leaders' Meeting, a little reluctantly, one feels, agreed in September : "That the Young People arranging the Harvest Festival be allowed to have a Social after the Fruit Banquet, but we request them to close not later than 10 o'clock." These "Young People" were, as is pointed out elsewhere, the first generation of Christian Endeavourers.

\* \* \* \*

Sankey's Hymns were all very well for the early days, but the Primitive Methodist Book Room was trying to combine the best of them with more modern hymns, and in 1895 a new "Primitive Methodist Mission Hymnal" was issued to replace the older "Revival Hymn Book." The West Lane Leaders, in December, 1898, agreed "That Mr. Parrish be authorised to get 3 dozen Revival Hymn Books for the Classes." Although the old title is used, it is almost certainly the 1895 edition that is intended, several copies of which are still to be found at the church.

1899.

On March 4th the Leaders' Meeting resolved "That we appoint Bro. Stirk and Ferguson to form a Mission Band for the West Lane Society." These two brethren were again associated together in 1901, when they were appointed Leader and Assistant Leader respectively. Both were Local Preachers. Joseph Stirk served for some years as Assistant Society Steward, and a special minute of thanks to him was recorded in June, 1906, when it was known that he was going to America in 1907. Stephen Ferguson, still one of our Trustees, left the town in 1926, and his evangelical preaching was greatly missed.

## 1900.

During this year the property question was once more engaging the minds of the West Lane officials. For one thing, it was felt desirable to form a new trust for the Church, even though one had been taken out as recently at 1892. The Trustees and Leaders nominated, and the Quarterly Meeting drew up the request in legal form, showing that five trustees had died, five wished to resign, and ten were willing to continue. The deed appointing the new Trust is dated September 1st.

The other question was that of a New School. On March 3rd the Quarterly Meeting agreed "That the West Lane Society have also permission to take necessary steps re the proposed new school." This was followed up on December 1st by the resolution "That we sanction the erection of new schools at West Lane, and that the President and Secretary sign all necessary documents." The new school was built and opened 1901-2, and full accounts will be found in Mr. Feather's "History of Fifty Years," pp. 18-20.

## 1901.

More political excitement was in store for the "Nonconformist Conscience," and on June 2nd, 1901, the Quarterly Meeting resolved: "That a strongly worded resolution re the Education Bill now before Parliament, signed by the President and Secretary, be sent to the Duke of Devonshire, Sir John Gorst, Sir C. Bannerman, and J. Briggs, Esq., M.P."

\* \* \* \*

During the September Quarter this year, John Howells died. He was accepted as a member during the first year of the new church building, and as a society steward he always tried to encourage young preachers, especially those who seemed at all nervous.

## 1902.

In May of this year, by invitation of the Alice Street Circuit, West Lane shared in the arrangements for the District Meeting, and the District Meeting Christian Endeavour Rally is mentioned elsewhere.

\* \* \* \*

The only supernumerary minister who has ever resided in the West Lane Circuit was Rev. John Freshney Parrish. His retirement was not for long, however, and in March of this year the Quarterly Meeting sorrowfully recorded his services to the Church as a whole, and to Keighley in particular. He had been in the ministry for forty-two years, the last ten of them being spent in Keighley, and the last five in the West Lane Circuit.

Once more the Quarterly Meeting took up arms against the Education Bill, and petitions were sought from each Society, to be sent on to the Marquis of Salisbury, Mr. A. J. Balfour, M.P., Sir John Gorst, M.P., Sir Henry C. Bannerman, M.P., and Mr. John Briggs, M.P.

## 1903.

On May 15th died the "grand old man" of the West Lane Church, John Brown, and was buried in Keighley Cemetery. Minutes of the various official meetings record his devoted service, his 51 years as a local preacher, his 32 years as a Class Leader (in which position he was succeeded by Henry Garner Bennett), his 32 years as a Sunday School worker, and his trusteeship since the purchase of the first land in Mount Street. The Quarterly Meeting characterised him as "Abundant in labour, consistent in character, humble and childlike in spirit."

He also, like his one-time Assistant Leader, Thomas Wiggan, was a "character." This was a case of "two of a trade" getting on well together, for Wiggan was a grocer, and Brown a grocer and tea-blender, going round the Circuit with his pack of tea on his back. What would one not give to be able to reconstruct some of their Class-meetings! John Brown did not like young men to use long words, and once when Rev. Peter McPhail was preaching, and referring frequently to "pessimists," brother John could stand it no longer, and cried out "Will the preacher kindly tell us what he means by a pessimist?"

\* \* \* \*

During the September quarter, another of the original members of the Mount Street church passed away, Joseph Craven. He was an egg and yeast merchant, who for many years carried on business in Damside. He travelled the country places gathering up eggs from the farmers, and selling them yeast in exchange. A man of decided convictions and strong character, he went far towards overcoming his deficiencies of education, and upheld the office of Circuit Steward with dignity for five years. He also rendered good service as Local Preacher, Class Leader, and Society Steward, as well as being a Sunday School worker.

## 1904.

On March 5th of this year the Quarterly Meeting of the West Lane Circuit showed itself alive to international problems, and ready to denounce any form of exploitation. Minute 37 of that meeting reads: "That this Quarterly Meeting, in the strongest and most solemn terms, protests against the importation of Chinese labour into the Transvaal—(1) as an incalculable injury to the

Chinese themselves, (2) a foul stain upon the fair fame of Great Britain as a Christian nation; (3) an insult to British labour, and (4) an outrage on the people of South Africa, whose wishes are being overridden in the interests of a few mine-owners. It calls for a reversal of this disastrous and dishonourable policy." This resolution was sent to the Prime Minister, Sir H. Campbell Bannerman, Mr. J. Brigg, and Hon. Alfred Lyttelton, the Colonial Secretary.

\* \* \* \*

A Society Meeting held in June, appointed that "five persons be put in to stand at the doors of the Chapel to welcome strangers; viz. Mr. Crossland, Mr. Emmott, Mr. Morley, Mr. Middleton, and Mr. Stirk." It also moved "That a Visiting Committee be put in."

#### 1905.

The Leaders' Meeting held on August 6th, agreed "That we do not have a Camp Meeting this Quarter owing to the visit of General Booth to this town." In March of the same year, they had agreed to let the Salvation Army collect outside the West Lane Church on a Sunday evening, a request which had been previously refused.

#### 1906.

William Moore, a member since the Mount Street days, Local Preacher, Class Leader, Sunday School Superintendent, and at the time serving a second period as Circuit Steward, was this year elected as a representative to the Primitive Methodist Conference. A blacksmith by trade, his workmanship is still to be seen in various railings and gates all over the West Riding. In all his official duties he showed both business acumen, loyalty, and kindness.

\* \* \* \*

The December Quarterly Meeting passed the following minute:—"That we congratulate Master G. Jackson on his winning the first prize in the Dis. in the Scholars' Examinations, and that we also congratulate Mr. W. Crossland on the successful manner in which he coached the children for examination." This bright boy was to become Rev. George Jackson, while William Crossland, after a short term as Society Steward at West Lane, emigrated to America.

#### 1907.

The minutes of the Leaders' Meetings in this year seem to breathe more of a modern atmosphere. On February 7th is the first written record of a "Faith Tea"—an institution with which

the writer has become very familiar during his few months at the West Lane Church! In April it was agreed to have a "Jumble Sale," the arrangements to be left with the Society Stewards.

\* \* \* \*

The March Quarterly Meeting shows the impact of the Primitive Methodist Centenary celebrations. It was resolved: "That we join the proposed united Centenary Camp Meeting with the Keighley I Ct., and that we close the chapels on the Camp Meeting day." (For many years the Class-tickets bore the reminder "First Camp Meeting held May 31st, 1807. First Class Formed March, 1810".)

#### 1908.

At the beginning of this year, William Morley took up his first—and only—office, that of Society Steward. He succeeded William Stokes, an unassuming but loyal supporter of our church for many years, and now Trust Secretary. Like his predecessor, William Morley was not a "public man," but he did a tremendous amount of good, by just being himself. Mr. Walbank says, "Can I forget the laughing countenance of William Morley? He pretended to be my sternest critic. Out of a very full heart he gave me the best of good counsel in my youth. How he drank in the Word, and revelled in the songs of the Sanctuary! It was good to be near him. He was frank, but always sympathetic." His son Walter was a trustee until his death while still a young man. His wife we now look upon at West Lane as our "grand old lady," and many are the expressions of sympathy which she receives now that she is lying at the Keighley Hospital with a broken leg. We pray for her a speedy and successful recovery.

#### 1909.

The Sunday School Anniversary of 1909 was attended with greater excitement than usual, for on the previous Saturday the old wooden school, which had formerly been the Mount Street Chapel, caught fire. It was connected up with the present Chapel by a covered passage, so that not only was the wooden building burnt to the ground, but the Chapel was in a dreadful state. But the motto for the Sunday was "Business as usual!"—or, "Almost as usual!" The details may be found in Mr. Feather's "Fifty Years History," pp. 21-2.

\* \* \* \*

During the December Quarter died Thomas Thoseby, the first Circuit Steward to be appointed by the Keighley II Quarterly Meeting, Local Preacher, Assistant Class Leader, and a Trustee

since the early days. He was a commercial traveller, and his sermons were up-to-date and to the point. His brother William became a minister, and in his travels came as close as the Bingley Circuit.

## 1910.

Since 1907, the Primitive Methodist Centenary Year, there had been great activity on behalf of the Centenary Fund. On June 4th, the Quarterly Meeting recorded : "That the report of the Centenary Society be received, and we note with pleasure that the following societies have sent their full portion to the Central Fund. . . ." Seven societies out of the nine in the Circuit are named, including West Lane, Oakworth Road, and Morton Banks.

\* \* \* \*

On December 17th died Thomas Hobson, one of the original trustees of the West Lane Church. He and his wife, Jane, were well-known and respected figures, keeping the hosier's shop in Church Street, a real Primitive Methodist business, founded about 1800. Mr. Robert Smith, another West Lane Trustee, Local Preacher and Class Leader, was employed by Thomas Hobson, and later succeeded to the business.

Two other stalwarts, also named Thomas, died during this year—Thomas Dawson and Thomas Bennett. Thomas Dawson was one of the first Circuit Stewards, and alternated with Frederick Moore as Society Steward during the Mount Street days. He had also been a Trustee since the beginning.

Thomas Bennett was the brother of Henry Garner Bennett, and served for a short time as a Local Preacher on our plan, although he was advanced in years when he came to us from Sheffield. While at Sheffield he had taken in as a lodger a lad from Belper, for whom he found a job and a place in the church. This lad became the one known to Methodists as "Thomas Jackson of Whitechapel."

## 1911.

The Circuit Schedules for 1911 reported a decrease of 24 members. The minister who prepared the schedule, Rev. Nathaniel Brown, was doing good work for the Circuit, having been asked to stay a fourth year for special attention to West Lane, and Conference was being asked to allow him to remain a fifth year for the same purpose. He wrote, "As at least a partial explanation of our membership decrease, we may mention :—

1. The enormous time and energy necessarily given to financial matters.

2. A growing difficulty in securing members as per our present constitution, viz. class attending and class-money paying members.

3. A real slackness and indifference among an appreciable proportion of our people."

\* \* \* \*

Welcoming "the new minister" was always a state occasion. In 1911 a new second minister, Rev. John J. Harrison, arrived. (The date 1910 given in the "Fifty Years History" is incorrect.) A West Lane Leaders' Meeting on May 30th, arranged the following "speakers at the Meeting :—Mr. W. Feather (Choir), Miss Schofield (B. of Hope), Mr. F. Gresswell (C.E.), Mr. Stokes (School), Mr. D. Wilson (Church), Mr. R. Smith (Trustees), A. Cousin (Leader), Mrs. Meanwell (Helpful Hour.)"

\* \* \* \*

The same Leaders' Meeting which arranged the Reception saw to the details of a "Camp Meeting. August 11th, 1912. Meet 9 a.m. Prayer Meeting. 9-30 to 10-30, Open-air Service. 10-30, Service in Chapel. Afternoon Service in Field at 2-30. Lovefeast (Lovefeast is crossed out, probably as sounding old-fashioned, and instead is written) Evangelistic Service at 6-30."

## 1912.

In this year the Circuit of nine churches was divided into the West Lane Circuit (four churches), and the Haworth and Oakworth Circuit (five churches), a division which had been suggested in 1906 and deferred, but was now carried through, on a practically unanimous vote, with real concord. The West Lane Circuit kept one minister, twelve Local Preachers, and 212 members, while the Haworth and Oakworth Circuit had one minister, five Local Preachers, and 208 members. An agreement was made that the Local Preachers, at any rate, should give their services equally to both Circuits.

A quotation from the Circuit Schedules gives some idea of the reasons for this division. "'Tis a wise and necessary step. The proposal was originally made in the interests of the West Lane Society. Here we have a fine property and a splendid opportunity, but a cause slowly dwindling. The officials are strongly of opinion that a larger measure of concentration is imperative if the church is to see a turn of the tide." It was felt that sectionalising was not completely satisfactory for this purpose, and accordingly, with the permission of Conference, the division took place.

On September 23rd, a "Finance Committee" was formed for the West Lane Church, and fifty cards printed giving "Proposed Rules for Finance and Management Committee." These "Rules" are given below.

1.—OBJECTS.

The objects of the Committee are the unification and disbursement of the funds of the various departments of the church represented on the Committee, and the most efficient working of every part of the Church's activity.

2.—COMPOSITION.

The Committee shall be composed of four representatives appointed by the leaders, four appointed by the church, four appointed by the trustees, four appointed by the school, and the minister ex-officio. The representatives to be appointed by the departments annually. Seven to form a quorum.

3.—OFFICERS.

The officers of the Committee shall be a President, Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, and they shall be appointed annually, but the Treasurer and Secretary shall not hold office for more than three years consecutively.

4.—FINANCIAL SECRETARY.

Each department shall appoint a financial secretary, whose duty shall be to receive the monies of his department, and pay the sums to the treasurer as early as possible after receiving it.

5.—BANKING ACCOUNT.

An account shall be opened with the London City and Midland Bank, in the names of the Minister, the Secretary, and Treasurer. Monies shall be paid into the bank, and accounts over 10s. paid by cheque. Any two of the three to sign cheques.

6.—No expenditure shall be incurred by any department without the sanction of the Committee, and all bills must be submitted to and sanctioned by the Committee before payment is made.

7.—The meetings of the Committee shall be held monthly by the sanction of the Station Quarterly Meeting, and planned on the Circuit plan, but a special meeting may be called by the minister and secretary, or by four members, through the secretary; the notice for a special meeting shall set forth the special business for which the meeting is being called.

8.—A register of attendances shall be kept, and any member failing to attend three consecutive monthly meetings of the Committee shall cease to be a member, and the department he represents shall be asked to fill his place.

9.—The meeting shall be called by circular, three clear days notice to be given.

10.—The accounts shall be audited every 12 months.

President—HENRY TAYLOR.  
Vice-President—T. WHITAKER.  
Treasurer—W. DAWSON.  
Secretary—T. NEWHILL."

This Finance Committee functioned for five years, during which minutes and accounts were kept, and the register of attendance at the front of the minute-book shows that Rule 8 was not enforced too rigidly.

1913.

One of the resolutions passed by the "Finance Committee," which seemed to look after many things besides finance, was the following, on February 16th, 1913 :—"That Mr. W. Feather and Mr. W. Dawson record the attendances at the Morning and Evening services." Another, more of a financial nature, on May 28th, was in discussing the arrangements for a Garden Party at Mr. Thompson Hey's :—"That 1,000 handbills be got and that the offer of Mr. W. Feather to print 300 admission tickets without cost be accepted with thanks." This Garden Party raised £9 2s. 8d.

1914.

During the summer of 1914 one Camp Meeting and weekly Open-air Services were held. The Circuit Schedules reported : "The Station is prosperous. A general improvement is seen in many of our institutions. The Sunday Schools are adopting modern methods, young people have been converted, and our members are growing more hopeful."

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A rather more prosaic minute, passed by the Finance Committee on October 5th, reads : "That Mr. Dewhurst and Mr. Harrison be thanked from this meeting for new notice boards making and painting." This is not quoted as an unusual item, but as one example only, out of the hundreds of similar pieces of service rendered by the "rank and file" of the church, with particular trades or talents to place at the church's disposal.

1915.

There are several items of interest in the official records for this year.

In a communication to the Skipton Circuit, explaining Keighley's inability to take the District Meeting, the Circuit Committee, on January 27th, gave some idea of the war-work that was going on in Keighley. "Notice has been given to this town to expect its share of soldiers; Sunday Schools have been commandeered for hospitals; Day Schools have been selected to house soldiers, and Sunday Schools for the work of Day Schools. Keighley is doing much relief work, and many of our workers are giving their time and strength to it."



In June the Leaders' Meeting agreed to start the Envelope scheme. Similar schemes had been brought before the churches previously. In December, 1890, the Quarterly Meeting had recommended "That the matter of systematic giving be brought before the officials of each society by the Ministers, and that they be urged to secure and distribute the circulars on the subject prepared by the Book Room." And in September, 1898, it had resolved "That the Letter on the matter of Systematic Giving Association be received."

\* \* \* \*

On August 30th, the Leaders decided "That we have a Monthly Message distributed in the district, and Mr. Gresswell will get adv. to meet cost of printing 1,000 each month."

\* \* \* \*

"That we advertise the 'At-Homes' in the tram cars." (Finance Committee, November 18th.)

\* \* \* \*

The November 18th Finance Committee also recorded two gifts to the church. One minute explains itself—"That Mr. Bolton write Mrs. H. Smith and family thanking them for the gift of a complete individual communion service." The other minute reads—"That in regard to the gift of £500 from anonymous person, Mr. Bolton draw up a proper statement for publication in the local papers, and that Mr. Cousin give the particulars to the 'Keighley News'." This anonymous gift completed the work of clearing off the debt.

#### 1916.

As during this present year of 1940, in 1916 the Church services suffered somewhat from the "Black-out." On February 23rd, the Leaders' Meeting agreed "That the Evening Service commence at 5-30 because of the lighting restrictions." Later on, during the winter of 1916, morning and afternoon services only were held. Another repercussion of the war is seen in a minute of the Finance Committee for June 28th—"That Mr. J. G. Shackleton be appointed Sec. for War Savings Association at our Church and School."

#### 1917.

During the war years there were several strong prohibition moves made by the Church and Circuit, including the following resolution passed by the 1917 June Quarterly Meeting. "That we urge upon the Government the necessity of prohibiting the manu-

facture and sale of alcoholic drink during the war. Letters to be sent to Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Bonar Law, and Sir Swire Smith."

#### 1918.

The Leaders' Meeting which met on March 4th, 1918, moved "That we present Mr. and Mrs. Robert Smith with an Illuminated Address (framed), and that Rev. R. Bolton and Messrs. A. H. Davison and A. Cousin arrange the address and purchase same." Mr. Smith was leaving the town after many years' service to the Church as Local Preacher, Trustee, Class Leader, and Sunday School worker. "As a Local Preacher," says Mr. Walbank, "he fired my ambitions to preach, and his visits to the other places in the Circuit were always welcomed and looked for." Mr. Smith returned to Keighley after some years, and until last year was able to attend West Lane regularly, but failing health has kept him away recently.

#### 1919.

On November 20th died Henry Garner Bennett, aged 79. The December Quarterly Meeting gave an obituary notice, showing that he was a Local Preacher for 60 years, and for over 40 years a Class-Leader—he succeeded John Brown in that office at West Lane, but it was by no means his first experience of that form of service. He also occupied the positions of Circuit Steward and Society Steward, and in 1887 was a delegate from the District to the Scarborough P.M. Conference. Mr. Walbank says that Henry Garner Bennett's chief enthusiasm was for the work of preaching, to which he brought strong convictions, deep Bible knowledge, and a mind abreast of the times. He was "one of a long chain of ministers and laymen who were famous pulpit stars, William and John Bennett especially. Then on his maternal side were the Garners, of real Primitive Methodist fame."

#### 1920.

The number of losses seems to grow rapidly during this period in the history of our church. This year were lost Fred Gresswell, by removal, and Frederick Day and Thomas Charles Crossland, by death.

The Quarterly Meeting of June 1st recorded its thanks to Fred Gresswell for his loyal and efficient services as Local Preacher, Sunday School Teacher, and Quarterly Meeting Secretary. In September his name was moved to the list of "Helpers" on the plan. We are very glad to say that it is still there, at the head of that list; Mr. Gresswell comes over from Cross Hills to help us, and to renew old acquaintances, practically every quarter.

On November 28th died Frederick Day, aged 77. He had served over fifty years, as Local Preacher, Class Leader, Sunday School worker, and Trustee. Another grocer, like his comrades John Brown and Thomas Wiggan, he was a man of great geniality, and his sermons were refreshing because of their homely nature.

T. C. Crossland has left behind a happy memory through his work in the Sunday School, and as an Assistant Society Steward for nine years. Since 1911, also, he had been a Trustee. He died on December 17th.

## 1921.

In May, 1921, the District Meeting was held at West Lane, and in connection with this the two following minutes passed by the Quarterly Meeting of May 31st are of interest :—"That we record our thanks to Mr. Thompson Whitaker for his service as delegate to Dist. Mtg. and most heartily congratulate him on his election as Vice-Chairman of District Meeting and as delegate to Conference at the head of the poll." Another honour which had just been conferred on Mr. Whitaker had been mentioned previously—a month or two earlier he had become "Councillor T. Whitaker."

The Quarterly Meeting also brings out the very unusual combination of offices held by the minister at the time, Rev. Tyler Tyers—"That we record our hearty appreciation of the excellent service rendered by our minister, Rev. T. Tyers, in connection with the District Synod. We think especially of the enormity of it, as he discharged the duties of the threefold position of G.C.D., Dist. Sec., and the minister responsible for entertaining the District Meeting."

## 1922.

This year, on March 14th, died William Moore, aged 80, another of the original Trustees, with a record of over fifty years' service as Local Preacher, Circuit Steward, Society Steward, Class Leader, and Sunday School worker. (See also under 1906.)

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The December Quarterly Meeting recorded the regretful acceptance of Mr. Arthur Cousin's resignation as the West Lane Society Steward, and passed a special minute of thanks to him—"We desire to place on record our high appreciation of his many years' faithful service in that office, and to assure him of our gratitude and affectionate regard." Mr. Cousin, we are glad to say, is still with us, rendering loyal and valued service in the various departments of church activity.

The same December Quarterly Meeting passed the following resolution—"Scheme for Methodist Union. That we approve the scheme as it stands. (Members present 13. Voting for 10, against 3.)"

## 1923.

In September, 1923, Mr. Cousin's successor as Senior Society Steward, Mr. John G. Shackleton, had to resign his position on account of leaving the town. The Quarterly Meeting recorded his long and devoted service to West Lane. He is still one of our Trustees.

## 1924.

The Rev. J. T. Barkby had served the Circuit as a Probationer, from 1883-6. He was now the President-designate of the Primitive Methodist Church, and wrote offering his services. The June Quarterly Meeting recorded "That we gratefully accept the offer of the President-designate, Rev. J. T. Barkby, to visit this and the Haworth and Oakworth Circuits during his Presidential Year, on December 21st and 22nd. . . ."

\* \* \* \*

On August 24th died James Ickringill. He was a well-known and well-loved character in the West Riding, and had had the honour of being present at the Ecumenical Conference at Toronto, together with Rev. Isaiah Potts. The sketch of his life by Mr. A. Almond reveals a great business man, and a great Christian, with real drive and initiative. Although the building of the Mission Hall in Oakworth Road inevitably deprived West Lane of his valued services, he was a Trustee until his death. His sons, Jerry and Willie, were for some time organists.

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On December 1st, the Quarterly Meeting showed a different attitude to the revised scheme for Methodist Union, 9 being against it, 8 in favour of it, and 2 neutral.

## 1925.

1925 was the year of a great Bazaar, which was chiefly intended to pay for the many repairs and renovations that were necessary. The Trust Schedules show that during the year £1,510 was raised by special efforts of one kind and another! This included £1,154 9s. 5d. as the gross proceeds of the Bazaar. The expenditure of £1,379 1s. 9d. during the year included the installation of electricity.

## 1926.

In the Circuit Schedules for this year occurs the sentence—"Open-air services have fallen into disuse in this Circuit." The decline of the "Camp Meetings" had been gradual. At first they were modified, as "Open-air services," such as were held in various parts of the town in 1917 and the following years. In 1920 the Schedules record, "We have held open-air services at West Lane, but are not able to estimate the results. At the other places the practice has fallen into disuse." In 1921 the report is "Very few open-air services have been held. Such as we have held have been successful." In 1925, however, the attempt to maintain the practice was felt to be unavailing—"We have held a number of open-air services, the results of which were disappointing." And in 1926 was acknowledged the fact that, speaking generally, the day of the Camp Meeting was past.

## 1927.

The June Quarterly Meeting suggested "That an effort on Circuit Rally lines be arranged for the month of December, 1927," and in September this was definitely arranged for Sunday, October 25th, at West Lane, with a long list of names of possible speakers. The arrangements were left in the hands of Rev. E. J. Hancox, and Messrs. Walbank, Davison, and Allan Waterhouse.

## 1928.

On September 5th, 1927, the Quarterly Meeting had moved—"That the letter on the subject of Women's Missionary Auxiliary be received." This letter bore fruit in 1928, for the first item on the Minutes of the December 3rd meeting is "Resolved that we sanction and report on the plan for the formation of a Ladies' Missionary Auxiliary." This useful work is still carried on, a meeting being held once a month at each of the three Churches in turn.

## 1929.

This was celebrated as the year of Jubilee, it being 50 years since the Foundation Stones were laid for the New Chapel. In connection with it Mr. Walter Feather prepared and printed 500 copies of the "Fifty Years History of West Lane Primitive Methodist Church," to which reference has been made.

Many other items were printed this year, including a Blotter, giving the following details of services :—

"Primitive Methodist Church,  
West Lane and Devonshire Street West,  
Keighley.

Rev. E. J. Hancox.

## Services.

Sunday : 10-30 a.m. and 6 p.m.

School 9-45 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Men's Class 2 p.m.

Wednesday—C.E. 7-30 p.m.

Friday—Junior C.E. 6-45 p.m.

## Special Events :—

WEST LANE JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS.

Saturday, March 23rd, to Sunday, March 31st, 1929.

Saturday—Re-union of Old Scholars, Members and Adherents.

SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY, May 12th.

Preacher : Rev. F. H. Edwards, Cleethorpes."

\* \* \* \*

This year was saddened by the death of three well-known members, William Dawson, James Walton, and Walter Morley. William Dawson rendered very useful service in the Choir and Sunday School, besides being an acceptable Local Preacher and Trust Secretary for many years. James Walton had been the first boy to enter the wooden school in Mount Street, for the key of which John Brown had sent him. His presence in the congregation was greatly missed by preachers and listeners. Walter Morley was still a young man, and his death was a great blow. His daughters are still worshippers and workers with us.

\* \* \* \*

In June of this year, Mr. Thomas Bennett resigned his position as Society Steward, and the thanks of the Leaders' Meeting were recorded to him. The son of Thomas Bennett before mentioned, he has served the church loyally for many years, though he has never felt able to do public work such as his father and uncle did. For many years, however, he has rendered quiet but painstaking service to the church as Treasurer of the Trust.

## 1930.

On July 11th, the Trustees agreed to let the Young People have the use of the Schoolroom to play badminton two nights of the week from 7 until 10, and the proposed rules were confirmed

by a meeting held on September 24th. One of the membership cards of this first season is before the writer, and shows that the President was Mr. A. Cousin, a position which he still occupies, and the Secretary Mr. N. W. Davison. The Secretary at present is Miss Marie Dixon, well-known as one of the best women badminton players in Keighley, and better known to the friends of West Lane as one of our most loyal and cheerful workers. During this present season the Badminton Club has been successful in winning, for the first time, the "Keighley News" Trophy, for obtaining the leading position in the Second Division.

## 1931.

At the March Quarterly Meeting, testimony was paid to the life and services of Charles Kitchen, for over 50 years a Local Preacher, who had served as a Lay Pastor at Oakworth Road Mission for 10 of those years. He was associated with West Lane Church for some time, and many remember his preaching visits with gratitude. For many years he acted as Secretary to the Workpeople's Collection Committee for the Victoria Hospital.

\* \* \* \*

In May of this year the Synod was held at Alice Street, and West Lane joined in the arrangements. Mr. Lambert Waterhouse, of Morton Banks, had the honour of being elected as a delegate to Conference.

\* \* \* \*

The Trustees' Meeting held on July 6th, "Moved that our Minister write a letter to Mr. Arthur Davison, thanking him for his past services rendered to the Church and Sunday School." Mr. Davison had also served as Local Preacher and Circuit Steward. The following testimony to him comes from Mr. Arthur Walbank:—"His daily work as an attendant in the Victoria Hospital gave him special opportunities for speaking a word in season to the sufferers. There he is spoken of yet as a ministering angel. In 1932 he left us for Buckingham in search of better health, but it was not long ere we heard that he had passed on."

\* \* \* \*

On October 9th died Walter Feather, a Trustee of West Lane, and a valued Local Preacher. A number of references to him will be found in this handbook. He was a very fine preacher, with a cultivated mind and a confident manner. We are glad to know of the interest which remaining members of the family still have in our West Lane Church.

## 1933.

The December Quarterly Meeting passed the following minute:—"That we record with regret that the West Lane Church has not been able to pay its allocation to this Quarterly Meeting. . . We desire to express to the Home Missions Committee, when it has the future of West Lane Church before it for consideration, that in our opinion the Circuit cannot continue on its present lines, and urge that the serious position of the Circuit receives its careful consideration." Following up this minute, in the following April, the position was outlined to the Home Missions Committee, showing how for some years the Circuit had been trying to forestall a very serious situation, with West Lane borrowing £250 on the property in 1929, and another £250 in 1932, in order to pay its allocation to the Quarterly Meeting. At last, however, it was felt that something must be done. The Home Missions Committee suggested that the Circuit should ask for a Probationer instead of a Full List Minister. A compromise was arranged, however, by which a Full List Minister for whom a house was not provided, should be stationed on the Circuit, which should be responsible for finding only a Probationer's stipend. In September, 1935, the first minister under this new arrangement was stationed here, and the position remains the same.

## 1934.

The West Lane Circuit Plan commencing April 15th has the following announcement on the back:—

"PLEASE NOTE !

WEST LANE MEN'S CLASS.

Sunday, April 15th, at 2-15 p.m.,

GREAT BROTHERHOOD RALLY.

Speaker : Mr. Frank Darwin (Skipton).

Chairman : His Worship the Mayor  
(Councillor Ernest Whalley, J.P.)

All Men Welcome."

\* \* \* \*

On November 30th the Quarterly Meeting met, and passed the following minute:—"That the application re the Proposed Forward Movement Scheme at West Lane be approved and that a copy of it be attached to the Quarterly Meeting Minute Book for future reference." This scheme provided for the employment of a Deaconess at West Lane and a thorough adaptation of the Church and School to fulfil the purposes of a Mission Hall, in view of the increasing population of the neighbourhood. But, as has been

pointed out, the financial position of the Church was already very precarious, and this meant an estimated expenditure of well over £1,000, so that it cannot be wondered that it was not proceeded with.

## 1935.

The September Quarterly Meeting resolved "That the Trustees of the West Lane Church be asked to approach the Methodist Chapel Aid Association Limited with the request that for the time being repayments of the principal of the Loan on the Manse be waived." In view of the hazardous financial situation of the Church this request was kindly agreed to. We hope that this necessity will soon be a thing of the past.

## 1936.

Talk of Methodist Union in Keighley had been in the air for some time, though nothing had come of it; but friendly co-operation continued. In September, the Quarterly Meeting decided "That our minister arrange to see the Superintendent Minister of the Temple Street Circuit with regard to the holding of a joint meeting, with the Cavendish Street Circuit, the Alice Street Circuit, and our own Circuit, in connection with the Methodist Church Youth and Christian Citizenship Movement."

\* \* \* \*

The Plan for the winter quarter shows two interesting items. On Wednesday, November 4th, at West Lane, there was a Religious Sound Film Service at 7-30 p.m. And on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday, December 15th, 16th and 19th, an Operetta was given, entitled "Ali Baba."

## 1937.

In the Spring of this year, from February 19th until March 8th, there was a special visit of some Cliff College Evangelists. Some of the choruses which were then taught are still remembered.

## 1938.

An extract from the Notice Book for this year will recall a busy time to the minds of some friends. It was in the announcements for 27th March, and reads:—"Will all the friends please attend the School **each night this week** to assist in the decoration of the rooms and the making of general preparations for the Bazaar. Ladies are requested to bring scissors, needle, and white thread."

## 1939.

Many re-arrangements were made, consequent on the declaration of war. It was agreed to close the church building for the winter, and to hold services in the schoolroom, which was blacked-out for the purpose, with a small expenditure of money, but a large expenditure of energy! After some discussion, a church meeting agreed to continue the evening services, but to start them at 5-30 instead of 6 o'clock.

## 1940.

In January of this year died Emma Hudson, formerly Emma Binns, whose father had been one of the earliest Circuit Stewards, Trustees, and Class Leaders. In her early days she was a great worker at the church, and was a member of one of the Mission Bands.

\* \* \* \*

Another Jubilee is celebrated this year by Alderman Thompson Whitaker, our Senior Circuit Steward. It is 50 years since he was placed on the Teachers' Roll at the West Lane Sunday School. A fine record! He has served the Church and Circuit in many other ways, also, as Band of Hope Speaker, Bazaar Secretary, and Choir-master. He has been the delegate to many District Meetings, and in 1921 had the honour of being elected as a Conference Representative. We wish for him and Mrs. Whitaker many more years of service.

## Circuit Stewards.

In the old days the Quarterly Meeting was a test of wisdom, patience, and stamina. Protracted or adjourned sessions were the rule, with meetings of the Circuit Committee to fill up the gaps. The record for an agenda goes to the March Quarterly Meeting, 1883, which had forty items to discuss—and which settled them all! Occasionally there were stormy passages, of course, our forefathers seemingly being men of stronger passions and stronger convictions than ourselves.

Under such conditions the position of Circuit Steward was even more of a responsibility than it is to-day, and five or six years was the limit of a man's endurance (except for Thomas Wiggan, who somehow survived eight years' service), until in 1904 it was decided to appoint a Junior Circuit Steward to share the strain. Even so, one has to come to our present Circuit Stewards for a long-service record.

An interesting feature of the list of Circuit Stewards which is appended, is that until 1904 they were all West Lane men. For the sake of completeness, the list covers all the Circuit Stewards from the commencement of the Circuit. (**Those who attended West Lane are marked with an asterisk.**)

When the separation from the Keighley First Circuit occurred, in 1873, a General Circuit Meeting was called, on July 26th. This elected John Brown as Circuit Steward until the orthodox Quarterly Meeting could be held in September.

1873 (June)	... *John Brown.
1873 (September)	... *Thomas Thoseby.
1874 (March)	... *John Howells.
1875 (March)	... *Thomas Dawson.
1878 (March)	... *Benjamin Binns.
1880 (June)	... *William Moore.
1885 (June)	... *John Brown.
1887 (June)	... *Thomas Wiggan.
1895 (June)	... *Joseph Craven.
1900 (June)	... *Henry Garner Bennett.

	Senior.	Junior.
1904 (March)	... Charles Kitchen.	John Lambert.
1904 (December)	... " "	John Heaton.
1905 (June)	... *William Moore.	" "
1909 (March)	... " "	Oliver G. Betts.
1909 (December)	... John Smith.	*William Moore.
1911 (September)	... " "	Lambert Waterhouse.

With the division of the Circuit in 1912, John Smith remained the Circuit Steward of the Haworth and Oakworth Circuit, while Lambert Waterhouse became the Senior Steward of West Lane Circuit, a Junior not being appointed until the following Quarterly Meeting.

## Society Stewards

1912 (June)	... Lambert Waterhouse.	
1912 (September)	... " "	*Thompson Whitaker.
1916 (September)	... *Thompson Whitaker.	Arthur Walbank.
1921 (September)	... Arthur Walbank.	*William Dawson.
1929 (December)	... *Arthur H. Davison.	Isaac Scott.
1931 (September)	... Arthur Walbank.	*Thompson Whitaker.
1932 (December)	... *Thompson Whitaker.	Arthur Walbank.

Five of these Circuit Stewards have had the honour of being elected as delegates to the Primitive Methodist Conference, viz :

\*Henry Garner Bennett (1887).  
 \*William Moore (1906).  
 \*Thompson Whitaker (1921).  
 Arthur Walbank (1929).  
 Lambert Waterhouse (1931).

## Society Stewards.

Although some of the necessary documents are missing, and others are very obscure, it is possible by piecing together evidence from various sources to give a fairly complete list of those who have served the West Lane Church as Society Stewards.

	Senior.	Junior.
1873 (September)	... Frederick Moore.	None.
1874 (March)	... Thomas Dawson.	" "
1875 (March)	... Frederick Moore.	" "
1876 (March)	... Thomas Dawson.	" "
1877 (March)	... Frederick Moore.	" "
1879 (June)	... " "	Thomas Gill.
1879 (December)	... " "	Thomas Robinson.
1880 (March)	... " "	Thomas Gill.
1883 (March)	... " "	John Howells.
1887 (September)	... Joseph Craven (?).	" "
1895 (September)	... John Howells.	None (?).
1896 (March)	... " "	John Middleton.
1897 (September)	... Henry Garner Bennett	Smith Hird.
1897 (December)	... Smith Hird.	None (?).
1899 (June)	... " "	Henry Phillip Price.
1901 (December)	... " "	Arthur Pickles.
1903 (March)	... Arthur Pickles.	Joseph Stirk.
1906 (June)	... " "	None.
1906 (December)	... William Stokes.	William Crossland.
1907 (June)	... " "	Arthur Pickles.
1907 (December)	... William Morley.	" "
1909 (June)	... Arthur Cousin.	" "
1911	... " "	T. C. Crossland.
1920 (December)	... " "	J. G. Shackleton.
1922 (December)	... J. G. Shackleton.	None.
1923 (September)	... Thomas Bennett.	Smith Hanson.
1924 (September)	... " "	Harry Charnley.
1929 (June)	... Norman W. Davison.	" "
1933 (March)	... " "	Harry Moore.
1935 (June)	... Harry Moore.	None.
1936 (December)	... Harold W. Smith.	" "

## Ministers.

The first Quarterly Meeting of the West Lane Circuit to have its minutes entered in the official book, instead of the former make-shift minute-book (still preserved), was on March 13th, 1875. Minute 31 of this meeting reads: "That New-Town be considered henceforth the head of the Circuit and be raised to the top of the plan under the name of Keighley (Mount St.)." From that time to this the West Lane Church has had the chief pastoral oversight of a minister living as near as possible. For a few years the house in Gladstone Place continued to be used—it was rented at 6/- per week. But in 1875 the Circuit Stewards were looking round for a suitable manse, and on June 11th, 1877, the Quarterly Meeting officially resolved "That the preacher live at New-Town." It was not, however, until June, 1890, that the manse in 3, Belgrave Road, was taken at £22 per annum, ready for the new minister's arrival. This was within easy reach of West Lane, as was also 25, Devonshire Street, rented from 1904-7, 13, Cliffe Street (1907-12), and the present manse, 91, Devonshire Street, rented from 1912-1926, and then bought.

The following is a list of all the ministers who have laboured in the West Lane Circuit from its commencement. The "second" ministers resided either at Oakworth or Haworth, and their names cease, of course, with the formation of the Haworth and Oakworth Circuit in 1912.

### Second Ministers.

1873	Crispin Hirst.	
1874	Charles Rumfitt.	
1877	Jonathan Ayrton.	
1881	Joseph Nock.	
1883	William Jackson.	Joseph Thomas Barkby.
1885	Jonathan Ayrton.	" " "
1886	" " "	James Dodd Jackson.
1887	" " "	Peter McPhail.
1888	Isaiah Potts.	" " "
1890	Thomas Henry Richards.	John Phillips.
1892	*Joseph Reavley.	" " "
1894	" " "	Robert E. Wheeler.
1895	John Freshney Parrish.	" " "
1896	" " "	George Bicheno.
1899	" " "	Ernest Warburton.
	(assisted in illness by *Harry Moore Hull).	" " "
1900	George Newton.	" " "
1901	" " "	*Francis Edward Thistlethwaite.
1903	*William Fidoe.	" " "
1904	" " "	Thomas Tempest.
1907	Nathaniel Brown.	Herbert W. Shirtcliffe.
1911	" " "	John J. Harrison.
1912	*Henry Taylor.	" " "
1915	*Richard Bolton.	" " "
1919	Tyler Tyers.	" " "

## Local Preachers

- 1926 \*Enoch James Hancox.
- 1929 \*John Robert Quine.
- 1933 \*Arthur Wood.
- 1935 \*John Kirkby.
- 1938 \*John Wallace.
- 1939 \*Frank Baker, B.A., B.D.

(The names marked with an asterisk are still to be found in the Minutes of Conference, the last five, with the exception of Rev. Arthur Wood, being in active service.)

A number of ministers have also entered the ministry from this Circuit. The March Quarterly Meeting of 1892 recorded

"That Bro. B. Moore, having passed his examination in a most satisfactory manner, be cordially recommended as a Candidate for the Ministry."

Benjamin Moore passed the Connexional Examiners, and entered the Manchester College that July. The Rev. George Jackson, who as a young man was continually being congratulated by the Quarterly Meeting on his examination successes, also left this Circuit, much to the loss of the Braithwaite cause, though to the gain of greater Methodism. He entered Hartley College in 1913. Rev. William Briggs, who entered Hartley College from this Circuit in 1922, was one of Mr. James Ickringill's "Good Lads' Brigade," and a letter from him to "Mr. James," which mentions his desire of entering the ministry, is to be found on pages 46-8 of "The Biography of James Ickringill," by A. Almond.

In addition to the above, it must be remembered that the Rev. G. Gilbert Gresswell, B.A., had his training as a local preacher in our Circuit, though the family's moving to Cross Hills meant that he actually entered the ministry from there.

## Local Preachers.

In the early days of the West Lane Circuit there was a constant stream of young men—and women—trying their hand at helping qualified local preachers, being given a note of authority to preach themselves, and then becoming fully qualified local preachers. That stream has died down to a trickle, but we trust that it will not dwindle away altogether. There were different standards of book-learning in those early days, and it was a thing of great distinction for a young man to succeed in a Connexional Examination. But true heart-knowledge of God was usually present, making them men of power if not always of intellect.

In 1874 there were 20 Local Preachers attached to the Circuit, which had risen to 28 by the time the West Lane Chapel was opened. In 1890 this number rose still further to 32, from that time gradually decreasing until in 1923 there were only 10,

Strangely enough, the division of the Circuit in 1912 did not bring about a serious drop, or if it did, new enrolments almost made up for the loss. Since 1923 the position has become very difficult. In 1924 there were nine, in 1925 seven, in 1926 five, in 1927 four, until in 1931 only one local preacher was left, Mr. Arthur Walbank. The position has remained thus ever since, and the Circuit depends upon the services of local preachers from other Circuits for a large number of its appointments.

Mr. Arthur Walbank has kindly prepared a list of the local preachers who have worshipped at West Lane, with a brief character-sketch of most of them. The list is appended below (the names are in alphabetical order), and the biographical details have been worked into various parts of the handbook.

Henry Garner Bennett.  
Thomas Bennett.  
Fred Bradley.  
Paul Bradshaw.  
John Brown.  
Joseph Craven.  
Arthur H. Davison.  
Watson Dawson.  
William Dawson.  
Frederick Day.  
Mary Jane Dixon.  
Robert Edmondson.  
Walter Feather.  
Stephen Ferguson.  
Fred Gresswell.  
Walter Hammond.  
George Haw.  
John David Howells.

Robert Kingsborough.  
Charles Kitchen.  
William C. Lucas.  
John Martin.  
C. C. Mitchell.  
James Thomas Moore.  
William Moore.  
Thomas Ramsden.  
John Robinson.  
Arthur Roff.  
Charles Bannister Smith.  
Robert Smith.  
Joseph Stirk.  
Thomas Thoseby.  
William Thoseby.  
Isaac Wells.  
Thomas Wiggan.

There remains one who, though not a member of West Lane Church, is a familiar and loved figure there—Arthur Walbank. To his record and character one feels that a special tribute must be paid, and this is a suitable place. He comes of a long line of preachers. One of three Nathaniel Walbanks who have been Methodist preachers was a farmer-preacher who used to accompany John Wesley with a horn lantern across the moors. The square wooden lantern, with 3 in. by 3 in. horn panels in three sides, and a candle-stick inside, was used by the clergy going to Haworth Church during last century, but may now have been destroyed. Four generations of Walbanks have been Primitive Methodist preachers. Arthur Walbank himself has been preaching almost 50 years, delivering about 7,000 sermons! With his uncle, John Heaton, and his grandfather, Isaac Heaton, nearly 150 years' preaching has been accomplished.

In 1891, Arthur Walbank went with his grandfather to an appointment to read the hymns and lessons. He was encouraged to offer a few remarks on the lesson, which were received with kind words, handshakes, and even a kiss from one of the "mothers in

Israel." That was the beginning of his preaching career. As was fairly usual in those days, he took part in services for some years without receiving official authority, but on September 7th, 1895, the Quarterly Meeting minutes record "That Arthur Walbank have a note to accompany Bro. John Heaton to his appointments." Followed examinations, first by W. Moore, J. Craven, J. J. Clough and the ministers, and then by J. Craven, T. Wiggan, H. G. Bennett and the ministers, until on December 5th, 1896, it was agreed "That Bro. A. Walbank be raised On Trial." A Trial Sermon at Haworth proved satisfactory, and on June 5th, 1897, he came "on full plan." From that time he has travelled far and wide on preaching appointments, as well as serving his own Church and Circuit in various capacities. The success of the Jubilee Thanksgiving Fund owed much to his secretaryship; he has served (so far!) twenty-one years as Circuit Steward; and in 1929 he was elected as a representative to the Tunstall Conference. May he add many more years to his records of service!

## Class Leaders.

For many the years the Class Leaders of the Methodist Church were as important for its spiritual life as the Local Preachers—if not more so, because of their more intimate contact with the members. In 1874, there were two classes attached to the Mount Street Chapel, the first being led by John Brown and Thomas Wiggan, and the second by Paul Bradshaw and John Martin. A little later a third was added, led by William Moore, and including the minister among its numbers. The 1877 Roll Book adds a few interesting details to the bare record of names. Brown's class "Meets on Tuesday nights at James Crowther's house," Bradshaw's "Meets on Wednesday nights at Chapel," and No. 3 "Meets on Wednesday nights at C. Ruffitt's house"—i.e. the Manse.

In 1878 the number of Classes increased to six, and a year later to seven, the seventh being led by Hannah Bannister, the first woman Class Leader of the Circuit. In 1881 there was also a Catechumen Class of about fifty members, led by Thomas Robinson and Thomas Crossland. After a time the same number of classes was not felt to be necessary, and the number of Class Leaders accordingly decreased. Below is an attempt to give the names of those who have served as Leaders or Assistant Leaders, although there will almost certainly be some omissions, as a few Roll Books are missing.



Hannah Bannister.  
Henry Garner Bennett.  
Benjamin Binns.  
Paul Bradshaw.  
John Brown.  
Harold Chew.  
James Craven.  
Joseph Craven.  
Thomas Crossland.  
Arthur H. Davison.  
John Davy.  
John Dawson.  
Thomas Dawson.  
Watson Dawson.  
Frederick Day.  
Elizabeth Driver.  
Walter Feather.  
Stephen Ferguson.  
Alfred W. Gee.  
Martha Gee.  
Jack Gordon.  
Fred G. Gresswell.  
Emma Hammond.  
Walter Hammond.  
George Haw.  
Thomas Hobson.  
Benjamin Holmes.  
Annice Hutchinson.

Emma Hutchinson.  
Charles Ivers.  
Robert Kingsborough.  
Charles Kitchen.  
John Martin.  
Ruth Meanwell.  
John W. Mitchell.  
William Moore.  
Miss Nanse.  
James Parker.  
Arthur Pickles.  
Margaret Pickles.  
John Robinson.  
Thomas Robinson.  
Simeon Scatchard.  
John G. Shackleton.  
Annie Simpson.  
Charles Bannister Smith.  
Mary Smith.  
Robert Smith.  
John Stephenson.  
Joseph Stirk.  
John Watson.  
Ivy Whitaker.  
Thompson Whitaker.  
Mary A. Wiggan.  
Thomas Wiggan.

## Mission Bands.

In addition to supplying local preachers, West Lane gave full support to the various Mission Bands which arose from time to time. In June, 1881, it was agreed "that permission be given for the Mission Bands to practise singing on Friday evenings in West Lane School Room." A new Mission Band was added to the Circuit plan in March, 1882, to be planned as "B," the Quarterly Meeting agreeing that John Martin, who in 1883 emigrated to Australia, should be kept free from appointments in order to superintend its activities. In June, 1883, however, the "West Lane Mission Band" was taken off the plan. In 1899 another Mission Band was started at West Lane, under the leadership of Stephen Ferguson and Joseph Stirk. It included, among others, Arthur Pickles, Emma Ridding (later Mrs. Hutchinson), and Emma Binns (later Mrs. Hudson). Others who took part in Mission Band work were Samuel Bayliss, Sarah Ann Foster, Mary Ann and Sarah Greenwood, and Benjamin Holmes.

These Mission Bands were sometimes popularly called "Hallelujah Bands," and various stories are told of the lengths to which their religious fervour carried them. One story (for whose authenticity we cannot vouch!) relates to Jane Thoseby, who, with her husband, Thomas Thoseby, was a member of one of the earlier

Mission Bands. On the way to Morton Banks the members had been talking about the power of faith. In a moment of enthusiasm Jane Thoseby exclaimed that she had as much faith as Peter, and that she could walk on the water across the canal. When they arrived at the canal bridge she made the attempt—but it was a rather damp Jane Thoseby who joined in the gospel hymns that night!

## Rank and File.

One would like to record the names of all those who by their presence and their prayers made the West Lane Church a living force, though not holding any official position. The task is impossible. But a few of these shall be singled out, and first of all the hosts, who can make such a difference to a preacher's frame of mind. At the end of the Leaders' Meeting Minute Book covering the period 1895-1911, is the following:

Homes for Country Preachers.	
Thomas Hobson.	xx
Wm. Moore.	xxx
Thomas Thoseby.	xxx
Thompson Whitaker.	xx
Smith Emmott.	xx
Wm. Morley.	xx
H. G. Bennett.	xx

That list, with its pencilled crosses showing when the host had had his turn at entertaining the preacher, speaks for itself. But it does not by any means exhaust the numbers of those who were ready to welcome the preacher into their homes.

Mr. Arthur Walbank tells of these and of others such as Thomas Dawson, Thomas Robinson, John Bowker, James Appleby, Charles Andrassy, the Stokes, the Waltons, the Whitakers, all of whom, and many more, were a source of inspiration to the preacher both in the home and at church. He characterises John Howells, a Society Steward for several years, as one who was a great encourager of young preachers, especially the nervous ones—what a fine work! He tells also of a wild, wet day when he went for dinner with Sam Mattock, and had still to go on to Morton Banks for the afternoon and evening services. "Get summat into thi!" said Sam, "It'll keep t'rain an' cowl art!"

This section can best be closed in the words of Mr. Walbank. He says: "I think with very deep gratitude of those whom we call the 'Rank and File.' We have a flair for grouping these wonderful people together, yet they each counted one, each joined in the songs of the sanctuary. They gave, I believe, liberally to the

collections. They formed a large part of the processions that marched up High Street on a Sunday night singing lustily 'Hark the Gospel News is Sounding!' or 'Turn to the Lord and seek Salvation!' with many others of like swing. Arrived at the Chapel a Prayer Meeting would be in progress, and they would join in, until the place was filled with spiritual fire and power, and invariably there would follow conversions. They revelled in the Lovefeasts—I have seen three or four on their feet at once, all eager to tell of the good things that God had done for them. In face of these things no preacher could be indifferent. No! He fell into the stride, and was swept off his feet as by a great tornado. Self was gone. His face shone, though he knew it not."

## Membership.

The Circuit Schedule for March, 1874, records—"231 Members were handed over to this Station last July." Of these, 46 belonged to West Lane, a number which by December, 1874, had sunk to 26, chiefly on account of disputes over the division of the Circuit. The membership rose rapidly year by year—44, 56, 70, 119. In March, 1880, the Mount Street Society reported 113 Full Members, and 13 on Trial. The June Quarterly Meeting recorded—"West Lane (late Mount Street)" as having 119 Full, and 7 On Trial. By the end of 1881 this number had risen to 214, decreasing in 1882 to 188, in 1883 to 174, and then decreasing more gradually, with fluctuations, until the present time, when the membership has been hovering for some years around the 100 mark.

The estimated numbers of the evening congregation rose from 100 in 1873 to 200 in 1879, with a jump to 500 when the New Chapel was opened in 1880. This estimated figure was returned as 500 or 550 until 1894, when declining numbers were acknowledged, and 390 was substituted. In 1905 the figure became 300, whilst from 1908 until 1933, when a new type of Schedule was introduced, it was returned as 200. These figures are, of course, estimates, and almost certainly, in some cases, over-estimates. As confirmation of this may be quoted the day of the record collection of £1 7s. 7½d. in 1877, when "77," probably the numbers in the congregation, was pencilled on the collection journal by the Society Steward—the estimated number of the **ordinary** congregation at the time was being returned as 100.

In 1873 the Mount Street Chapel was reported to have 40 sittings, and 170 free seats. The New Chapel had 650 sittings which were rentable, and 200 free seats. The population of the neighbourhood was reported in 1880 to be 2,000. In 1890 this was altered to 3,000, in 1892 it became "near 4,000," in 1893 4,600, in 1896 5,000, in 1897 6,000, in 1898 7,000. In recent years the

population has been increased still further by the building of the Guard House Estate. From these figures it can be seen that a wide field of service has been open to the West Lane Church, a challenge as well as an opportunity.

The loss of members, and the increasing financial struggle, has been a serious hindrance to the work of the Church. In the first years of the New Chapel the Roll Books show a constant stream of emigration to Australia and America. Among those who went out to Australia were Paul Bradshaw and Mitchell Waddington, who helped to construct Sydney Harbour, James and Robert Kitching, and John Martin. Paul Bradshaw and John Martin were of the old school of Local Preachers, robust and forceful in their evangelism. Many were the times when John Martin would get so warmed up to his subject that off would come his coat, and up would go the sleeves of his red plaid shirt!

't must not be thought, of course, that all losses in numbers were necessarily losses in spiritual power. From time to time there was a spring-cleaning of the membership roll. A Quarterly Meeting minute of September 11th, 1875, makes this revision sound like the workings of the Spanish Inquisition:—"That sanction be given to the dismemberment of those (whose names presented) for non-attendance at class." Such periodical revisions have continued to the present day, often resulting in a sad depletion of figures on paper, but sometimes adding to the actual spiritual strength of the Church.

## Sunday School.

The early days of the Sunday School, like those of the Church, were full of romance—a rented cottage, a wooden school-chapel building, enlarged by stages as the school grew in numbers—and lastly the fine school building erected in 1901-2.

A printed label pasted on the front of the earliest attendance register reads—"Primitive Methodist Sunday School, New Town, Scholars' Roll Book." It commences on January 25th, 1874, and the first name in the "Select Boys" Class is that of David Martin, and the first in the "First Bible Boys" that of James Walton, who shows himself to have been a very regular attender.

The lists of all the scholars who attended the Sunday School in 1874 have been carefully perused, and from them the writer has selected the following names. These children are representatives of families which, to the writer's knowledge, were associated with the Church in later years. An interesting feature is that there are very few of the families of those who have held official positions in the Church whose names are not represented in this list:

Ackroyd	Dixon	Judson	Stables
Antrum	Driver	Kitchen	Sugden
Bailey	Edmondson	Lambert	Tillotson
Bancroft	Emmott	Lund	Waddington
Batty	Exley	Martin	Walbank
Binns	Feather	Mitchell	Walker
Bowker	Gill	Moore	Walton
Bowler	Greenwood	Newton	Waterhouse
Bradshaw	Hall	Northrop	Watson
Brown	Happy	Ridding	Whitaker
Butterfield	Haw	Robinson	Wiggan
Carr	Heaton	Roth (later Roff)	Wilkinson
Clark	Hirst	Scatchard	Wills
Crowther	Holmes	Shackleton	Wilson
Dawson	Howells	Smith	
Denby	Hudson	Spencer	

These families were all to make a definite contribution to the history and helpfulness of the Church. It is interesting to think of the children gathering in that small wooden hut, which was to be twice enlarged on account of their growing numbers, and to realise that their youthful pranks and problems were the heralds of a fine work to be performed by them, and by their children, and by their children's children.

The titles given above to two of the Sunday School classes may sound very strange to people used to "Top class," "Second class," "Mr. So-an-so's class," or such-like names. The system of naming classes in the old days was descriptive of the work that was done in them, and it must be remembered that in many cases the first necessity was to teach the scholars to **read**. The children started in the "A. B. C. Class," from that being promoted to the "A. B. Class"—apparently the title assumes that they have by then learnt at least **part** of the alphabet. Then came the "2nd Reading Made Easy" or "2nd Reading Easy" Class, and after that the "First Reading Made Easy Class." Being able to read, their attention was turned to the stories of Jesus, and they went through the 3rd, 2nd, and First "Testament Class," the numbers of classes depending on the numbers of scholars and teachers. Then followed the 2nd and First "Bible Classes," from which they achieved the height of the "Select Boys" or "Select Girls."

Records of attendance were regularly kept, and first prizes were awarded only to those who had gained 100 marks—the Anniversary Sunday didn't count, as they were all pretty sure to be there then! Yet the Bayliss family commonly took nine first prizes home! Those were the days of large families, of course—and of poverty. Regular Sunday School visitors were appointed, who entered the details of their findings, in duplicate, in the visitation books provided, one slip being torn off for the use of the School Secretary. An example of one of these visitations may be quoted. The words in bolder type are printed, the first four lines

being filled in by the School Secretary, and the reason for absence and following details by the Visitor—usually in pencil:—

October 27th, 1878.

No. 112. 2nd Testament Class.

James Wm. Wilson, 89, Turkey Street.

**Absent on 7 Sundays & 2 halves.**

**on account of wanting clothes.**

**Hopes to come better in the future.**

**Father attends** Nowhere.

**Mother** ,, ,,

**Brothers** ,, ,,

**1 Sisters** ,, Mount Street.

**Visitor** T. and J. Dawson and J. Parker.

The reasons given for absence were what we should expect. Chiefly the reason was lack of suitable shoes or clothes; then came "neglect" and sickness—there seemed to be a strange number of cripples; other reasons given were "absent unknown to parents," and "parents not getting up in time"—reasons not confined to the last century!

The children had, of course, to remain for the chapel service as well as the Sunday School session. If they wanted to go home, a written note from their parents had to be taken to the superintendent.

The Sunday School Anniversary was the great day. In the Mount Street days a platform was erected on a piece of land, flanked by a wall, at the opposite side of the street, and seats were carried out on the Sunday morning. On one occasion this platform rocked, and then sank slightly at one end. The shrill screams were soon followed by a laugh, however, as fortunately no-one was injured. For the purpose of giving both children and mothers a treat, arrangements were made for the children to go out to tea, in parties of four or five. Lists were compiled for this purpose, some of which—for the 1890's—still survive. The children didn't necessarily get a better tea than they would have done at home, but it certainly added to the excitement of Anniversary Day! For a long time, also, children and adults collected before the Anniversary, and this went a long way towards realising those bumper collections of over £100 which were raised during the 1880's.

A question which occurred on the Sunday School Schedules for many years in the last century enquired if the Sunday School provided a library. With teaching to read as one of the main functions of the Sunday School, and Public Libraries a mere shadow of what they are to-day, this is easily understandable. The West Lane Sunday School was not deficient in providing these services. A few books are still preserved, with a label pasted on the fly-leaf which reads:—

"PRIMITIVE METHODIST  
SUNDAY SCHOOL  
LIBRARY,  
New Town, Keighley.

No..... Allowed 15 days.

Any person keeping a book longer than the time specified, shall forfeit One Halfpenny per week until returned.

Also, if any person lose, deface, write in, or in any other way materially injure a book, such person shall replace it with a new one, or make a sufficient compensation, as the Committee may decide."

A few years later this label was replaced by a new one, re-set in a different type, substituting "West Lane" for "New Town," and "14" for "15," but otherwise much the same.

In 1873 the Sunday School returns show that there were 49 Teachers and 166 Scholars. These numbers were depleted by the litigation following on the division of the Circuit, but in 1877 there were 48 teachers (30 of whom were men!), with an average attendance of 20 both morning and afternoon, and 234 scholars, with an average attendance of 125 in the morning, and 246 in the afternoon. In this year Mount Street joined the Connexional Sunday School Union, the only Church in the Circuit to do so for some time.

By 1879 there were 59 teachers and 250 scholars, and at the end of 1880 62 teachers (59 of whom were church members), 353 scholars, and an average attendance in the morning of 230, and in the afternoon of 290! The figures for this year were never surpassed, and one realises that they must have been due to the great interest created in the neighbourhood by the erection of the New Chapel. The following year the numbers on the books remained about the same, but the average attendances had fallen off considerably.

In 1901 there were 36 teachers, and 206 scholars, the morning attendance being 74, and the afternoon 124. With the erection of the new School these figures jumped to 40 teachers, 284 scholars, and attendances of 180 and 220. The school continued to hold the majority of these scholars, although the numbers declined gradually from this time, in common with Sunday Schools all over the country. In 1926 they sank to 40 teachers and 136 scholars, with attendances of 51 and 73. There was then a slight rally, followed by a continuous decrease, due partly to workers being lost. This last year, however, has seen a promising increase.

On March 6th, 1880, the following officers of the Sunday School were approved by the Quarterly Meeting: Benjamin Binns and William Moore, Superintendents; William Moore, Treasurer;

Thomas Gill, Secretary; William Moore, Charles Ivers, and Thomas Gill, representatives to the Circuit Sunday School Council; Thomas Thoseby and John Walbank, Visitors.

Since that time, many scores of workers have rendered useful service, and it is impossible for us to record all their names. The following is a fairly complete list, however, of those who have served as Superintendents of the Sunday School.

Benjamin Binns.	Thomas Hobson.
John Brown.	Abraham Howells.
Joseph Craven.	John Howells.
T. C. Crossland.	William Moore.
Arthur H. Davison.	Thomas Ramsden.
William Dawson.	John Robinson.
Frederick Day.	Thomas Robinson.
Elizabeth Driver.	C. B. Smith.
Smith Emmott.	Thomas Wiggan.

Since the School was graded, during the last War, the General Superintendent has been Alderman Thompson Whitaker.

## Band of Hope.

The Circuit Schedules giving the returns of the numbers in Band of Hope Societies do not begin until 1899, during which year it was reported that there were 134 Juvenile Abstainers at West Lane, and 100 Adult Abstainers. (The membership at the time was 118, and there were 248 scholars enrolled in the Sunday School). But the contact of the Band of Hope Movement with the church goes back much farther than that, in fact to the beginnings in Mount Street. The Circuit Committee, on November 3rd, 1873, agreed to let the Band of Hope Movement have an entertainment and collection on December 24th at "Newtown," as the preaching place was then called.

When the West Lane Church was first opened, in March, 1880, the Quarterly Meeting approved the following Committee for the West Lane Band of Hope:—"B. Binns (Pres.), J. Dawson (Treasurer), G. Smith (Sec.), W. Moore, C. Ivers, C. Sinfield and T. Hobson."

In March, 1892, the Quarterly Meeting congratulated the West Lane Band of Hope on an increase of twenty members, and by 1900 the number had risen to 140. It hovered around this figure until 1918, when the figure 209 was returned. The next year's schedule made it clear, however, that this was the number of scholars in a Sunday School session when Temperance teaching was given, and that the actual number on the Juvenile Abstainers' Roll had dropped to 76. It seems that from this time no actual Band of Hope Meeting has been held, although the numbers of

Juvenile Abstainers are still returned; of late years the figure has been 55.

The number of adult abstainers rose to the peak of 160 during 1909-12, but returns were discontinued altogether in 1914. Of recent years, however, the Adult Abstainers' Roll has been revived, the number at present returned being 33.

## Christian Endeavour.

A West Lane Leaders' Meeting on June 5th, 1896, resolved : "That Mr. Parrish get the regulations concerning Christian Endeavour Societies, and report to another meeting."

The minister having obtained these particulars, on December 4th, 1896, the Leaders decided

"That we establish a Christian Endeavour Society, to be held every Monday evening instead of the present fortnightly preaching service.

"That Messrs. Parrish and Bicheno be the Leaders of the Christian Endeavour Class, with Mrs. Pickles and Miss Nanse as Ast. Leaders."

From that day to this the Endeavour has done good work at West Lane. From almost the beginning the Endeavourers were asked to look after decorating the gallery for the Harvest Festival Services. They have organised numerous efforts, both for spiritual and financial purposes, with great success. And, as in other churches, the Endeavour Society has been a training-ground for useful speakers.

In 1902, when the District Meeting was held at West Lane, a District Meeting Rally for Endeavourers was advertised, some of the bills being still preserved—by accident! A complete timetable was printed, starting at 4-30 with a Public Tea, and closing at 8-30 with the Benediction. There were forty-four responses, as well as four addresses, so that one wonders whether the Benediction was pronounced at 8-30! The type of response was apportioned to each Society in advance, according to the following scheme :—

"Kindly note that the letters bracketed by the side of each number, indicate the character of the Response to be given; e.g.

(a) Sing, (b) Read, (c) Two minutes address, (d) Brief Prayer, (e) Secretary Responds for Society, (f) Solo, (g) Duet."

A District Christian Endeavour Convention was also held at West Lane quite soon afterwards, in October, 1904.

To come to more recent days, a specimen of the activity of the Christian Endeavour may be seen by an extract from the back of a 1934 Plan :—

"On Sunday Evening, April 22nd, at 8 p.m., at West Lane Schoolroom, the devotional representation of "The Conqueror" by Young Ladies of the Christian Endeavour. An interesting and inspiring religious play! **All are invited.**"

In 1899, when the first Christian Endeavour Schedule was returned, there were 40 active members, and 8 associate members. The numbers dropped to 31 active and no associate in 1908, and then increased to 60 in 1915. This figure was about maintained, on paper at any rate, until 1933, when a drop from 55 to 20 was recorded. This was partly due to a revision of the rolls, and partly also, it seems, to the fact that the Junior Endeavourers had for some time been included in the Senior numbers, which practice was discontinued. The strength of the Christian Endeavour remains about the same to this day.

In 1904 a Junior Endeavour was commenced, with 6 members. Its numbers fluctuated very greatly, but never exceeded 31. In 1925 there was a drop of 18 to 10. The reason given was that the children were lost by suspending meetings during Bazaar preparations. "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear!" In 1933 the Junior Society fell through, "owing to lack of suitable helpers."

## Choir and Organists.

The West Lane Choir had its beginnings in the old wooden chapel in Mount Street. It was a mixed choir of about eight, of whom one was Miss Emma Binns (later Mrs. Hudson). The organist of those days is still with us—Miss Emma Walbank.

After services had commenced at West Lane, the choir proved a great asset. It was continually being asked to give Services of Song, such as "Her Benny" (1881), and "Lost in the Wildwoods" (1886). Sometimes repeat performances had to be given, as is shown by the Trustees' Minute Book for December 6th, 1880 :

- "1. That the 'Service of Song' rendered on the 27th ult. be repeated on Sunday afternoon next to commence at 2 o'clock.
2. That we have 500 small handbills printed announcing the same, and that a collection be taken in aid of the Trust Fund."

The charges for the original performance of this "Service of Song" on Saturday, November 27th, are interesting. If anyone came to the tea (price 8d.), they could hear the musical service for nothing. If they came to the "Service of Song" only, they could sit in the body of the chapel for 2d., but if they wished to go into the gallery the charge was 3d.!

Another minute of December 6th, 1880, throws light on the ordinary services of that day :

"That Bro. Ayrton be desired to purchase a suitable copy of Sankey's Hymn Book for use in the pulpit."

Sankey's was still in regular use at the end of last century, and the old choir copies had become tattered and torn, so that on September 2nd, 1895, the trustees resolved :

"That 30 Sankey's Books be got for the Choir and they give a Song Service to raise money to pay for same."

It will be noticed that the choir had grown in numbers since the early days, thirty copies now being required. They were of great help to the church, and the trustees did their best to encourage them, in spite of the occasional differences that inevitably arose. It was to obviate such misunderstandings that in 1890 the trustees drew up a list of rules. It begins :

"The central authority shall be the trustees. The agent of the trustees shall be the choir-steward, in whose hands all matters connected with the choir and organ shall be placed."

Then follow eight rules regarding the organist, including these provisions :

"He shall have liberty to practice on the organ with three music pupils. Sanction must be obtained from the Choir Steward if more pupils are desired.

"No one but the Organist shall have liberty to practice on the organ with pupils, except members of the church or congregation should wish for any member of their family so to practice. In such a case the permission of the Choir Steward must be obtained; and if granted, a fee of 1/- shall be paid for every lesson during the day and 1/6 per lesson when gas is required."

The regulations for the choir cover similar ground to the eight rules for the organist. They conclude :

"The members of the choir shall in all cases where practicable, be Members of the Church. When not members they must be persons of strictly moral character, and must be approved of by the choir steward.

"The members of the Choir must meet the Organist and Choirmaster, at an appointed time, once a week for practice.

All new members shall be required to sing from music."

The last ruling is sure to delight the heart of any choirmaster who reads these words !

The following is an attempt at a complete chronological list of those who have been officially appointed as organist or choirmaster. It is impossible now to obtain full information about all those named, so no dates are given. The names of those who have had two terms of service are placed according to their first appointment, even if it was only for a short time.

#### Organists.

Miss Emma Walbank.  
Charles Bannister Smith.  
Jeremiah and Willie Ickringill.  
Arthur Ratcliffe.  
Miss Edith Garnett (**Organist and Choirmistress**).  
Hayden Rusby.  
Walter Stokes.  
Harold Lambert.  
Ernest Southwart.  
Leslie Mills.  
Wilfrid S. Barker.  
Mrs. Freda Greenwood.  
Harry Hopwood.

#### Choirmasters.

Robinson Wild.  
George Haw.  
Hiram Ainsworth.  
Walter Shackleton.  
Frank Ogden.  
Amos Dewhirst.  
Thompson Whitaker.  
Wilfrid S. Barker.  
Robert Taylor.

## Trustees.

#### Appointed 24th March, 1879.

John Brown, Grocer, Greengate.  
Benjamin Binns, Furniture Dealer, Sun Street.  
Thomas Hobson, Hosier, Church Street.  
Thomas Wiggan, Grocer, Mount Street.  
Thomas Thoseby, Mechanic, Mornington Street.  
Frederick Moore, Tea Dealer, Burlington Street.  
Frederick Day, Grocer, Knowle Park.  
John Martin, Stone Merchant.  
William Moore, Blacksmith, Gladstone Street.  
Joseph Craven, Spinning Overlooker, Orleans Street.  
Thomas Dawson, Warehouseman, Chapel Lane.  
Thomas Gill, Grocer's Assistant, Parker Street.  
John Walbank, Mechanic, Portland Place.  
James Kitching, Quarryman, Orleans Street.  
Isaac Ackroyd, Mechanic, Burlington Street.  
John Stephenson, File Grinder, Bengal Street.  
Thomas Robinson, Overlooker, North Beck Mill.

#### Appointed 20th December, 1892.

**Continuing :** John Brown, Thomas Hobson, Thomas Robinson, William Moore (Malsis Road), Thomas Wiggan (Grocer, West Turkey Street), Thomas Dawson (Russell Street), Thomas Thoseby, Frederick Day (Chandos Street).

#### New :

James Ickringill, Manufacturer, Oakworth Road.  
Charles Bannister Smith, Mechanic, Rose Mount Terrace.  
John Robinson, Overlooker, North Beck Mills.  
Arthur Clayton, Grocer, South Street.

Christopher Hird, Builder, Granville Street.  
 John Davy, Merchant, Devonshire Street.  
 Jesse Brown, Grocer, Greengate.  
 Arthur Roff, Store Manager, Ingrow.  
 John Middleton, Woolsorter, Temple Street.  
 Smith Emmott, Mechanic, Endfield Street.  
 John Thomas Haw, Woolsorter, Third Avenue.  
 Fred Bradley, Mechanic, Third Avenue.

#### Appointed 1st September, 1900.

**Continuing :** John Brown (Retired Grocer, Granville Street), Thomas Hobson (Granville Street), William Moore, Frederick Day, James Ickringill, John Robinson (Mill Foreman, Mill House, Denholme), Christopher Hird, Jesse Brown, John Middleton (Eshton Terrace), Smith Emmott (Devonshire Street West).

#### New :

Robert Smith, Shop Assistant, Hope Place.  
 Walter Feather, Printer, Endfield Street.  
 William Dawson, Grocer, Unity Street.  
 Francis Ogden, Mechanic, Portland Place.  
 Thompson Whitaker, Polisher, Princess Street.  
 James Thomas Moore, Mechanic, Havelock Terrace.  
 Joseph Henry Driver, Joiner, Regent Place.  
 John Garner Bennett, Joiner, Mornington Street.  
 Henry Phillip Price, Clothier, Ashleigh Street.  
 William Ramsden, Cabinet Maker, Padget Street.

#### Appointed 3rd June, 1911. (Those marked with an asterisk \* have died since 1911).

**Continuing :** \*William Moore, William Ramsden, \*Walter Feather, John Robinson, \*John Middleton, \*James Ickringill, \*Frederick Day, Thompson Whitaker, Robert Smith, \*William Dawson.

#### New :

Arthur Pickles, Moulder, Wardman Street.  
 Arthur H. Davison, Van Man, Drewry Road.  
 William Stokes, Mechanic, Martin Street.  
 \*Thomas Crossland, Moulder, Devonshire Street West.  
 Richard Mawson, Cabinet Maker, Fell Lane.  
 Stephen C. Ferguson, Shopkeeper, Lawkholme Lane.  
 \*Thomas Newhill, Roller Coverer, Brigg Street.  
 \*Walter Morley, Contractor, Devonshire Street.  
 Thomas Bennett, Co-op. Assistant Manager, Flasby Street.  
 John G. Shackleton, Works Manager, Gordon Street.

## Finance.

A Church with such fine buildings might well be expected to have had a few wealthy people attached to it in the old days. Such does not appear to have been the case. Two old collection-receipt-books are preserved, covering the years 1876-1892, as well as the ordinary Collection Journals, from 1903 to the present date. A careful examination of the early books brings surprising results, which clearly confirm that those who builded our society and

church were rough working men, with little financial standing. The first day's collection noted was for December 17th, 1876—12s. 3d. In June, 1877, the collection 4s. 7½d. was recorded, followed a week or two later, on August 5th, by a record amount, £1 7s. 7½d. That this was an exciting event is shown by the fact that pencilled in on the receipt is the number "77," probably giving the numbers in the congregation on this occasion. From then until the end of the year there was a slight upward trend, the average being 10s., with a few at the end topping the £1 mark.

The "Fire and Light Collection" on January 20th, 1878, realised 16s. On June 9th the collection, 7s. 1½d. was described as "Free will offerings for a New Chapel." This is the first mention of such collections, which soon became frequent. Usually they were additional to the ordinary collections, which still averaged about 10s., though there were big fluctuations. Another record was created on February 23rd, 1879—"Collections for New Chapel," £1 19s. 0d. On November 16th the collections were 2s. 6d., with an extra 2s. for the New Chapel. During 1880, for the first time, the ordinary collections sank very low indeed, while the money reserved for the New Chapel enjoyed a corresponding increase. This discrepancy first occurred on July 18th, and continued so into 1881, when for a time only "Chapel" collections were recorded. When the new book starts, however, in 1882, the separate collections for the Building Fund appear to have been dropped as a regular practice, the ordinary collections being appropriated for that Fund unless specially announced as being for the Circuit.

During the 1880's the collections sank very low indeed. On October 1st, 1882, the collection was 10d., and on November 26th, 2d. ! It could not sink much lower, but it did its best, for on April 8th, 1883, the collection was 1½d. ! The great majority of the collections from 1882-1889 were somewhere around 2s. There were outstanding exceptions, however, notably at the Love-feasts and Sacrament Services. On these occasions, which occurred about two or three times each quarter, the collection might be anything from 10s. to £3. On January 2nd, 1881, for instance, the following collections are recorded, the "£ : s. d." being printed, of course, and the other details added underneath in writing :—

	£	:	1s.	10d.
Chapel	...	:	6s.	10½d.
		:	7s.	9½d.
Love	...	2	:	4s. 2½d.
			:	12s. 0d.

On August 24th, 1881, the ordinary collection was 4s. 1½d., and the Love-feast collection £3 19s. 4d. !

From 1890-1892 only odd collections were recorded in this book, which was presumably for the use of the Society Steward, Frederick Moore, whose signature occurs in it several times. There were five collections recorded in the book for 1890, ranging from 1s. to £1 1s. 8½d., three for 1891, and one only for 1892. The meaning of this is uncertain.

Such is the record of the early days. Added to this, of course, must be the moneys derived from pew rents. For many years pew rents were an important source of income, bringing in £50 and more a year. The practice has largely fallen into disuse, however. In a cupboard of the Church are hundreds of unused "Seat-Holder's Cards," with a Notice on the back which reads :—

"The Quarter's seat-rent is always to be paid in advance. Every Seat-holder will be considered a tenant until he or she gives three months' notice to the Steward or Secretary.

"Seat-holders to bring or send this card when they pay their seat rent."

It is quite clear, however, that the Church was not overrun with millionaires ! No, these were men and women with little in their pockets, but with determination in their minds, and fire in their hearts. They set out to do a big job, and they did it. Trying to live up to the standard thus created, our immediate predecessors made great sacrifices, but modern conditions, and the loss of members by death and removals, made the task very hard indeed. The story of the Church is largely one of struggle against debt.

The original premises in Mount Street cost £466, on which there was a total debt of £190 when they were finished. In 1877 this debt was wiped off. But proceedings were already on foot to contract a new one ! In 1879-1880 the present Chapel was built, at a cost of £4,150, the total debt when the building was finished being £2,125. In 1887, while this debt stood at £1,225, £520 5s. 0½d. was spent in purchasing land for the school buildings. In 1890 it was reported that the Church was once more free from debt. Gradually a balance in hand was built up, out of which, from time to time, large sums were spent on repairs and decorations. Then, in 1902, £1,750 was borrowed towards the cost of the new school, which, together with odd repairs, cost the trustees £2,897 13s. 10d. In 1903 £500 was paid off this debt, and various sums in the following years, including £602 in 1910 as a result of that year's Bazaar, and the final £353 in 1915, made possible by an anonymous donor of £500. A balance in hand was maintained. By the splendid efforts of 1925, when £1,510 was raised during the year, necessary decorations and alterations were carried out without incurring a debt. But in 1929 £250 had to be borrowed to meet Circuit liabilities, a debt which has since increased to £450. This it is hoped to clear very soon.

From the early days, as can be understood from the above facts, the Church found some difficulty in paying its dues to the Quarterly Meeting. This was made worse by the increases made necessary by various factors, including the higher cost of living, and the consequent raising of the minister's stipend. These stipend increases were fast and furious during the war years, and, while regarded as absolutely necessary, made the burden almost too heavy to be borne. The purchase of the Manse in 1926 increased these difficulties, for a loan had to be taken out, and the interest to be met. Yet the Church loyally struggled on until the position became desperate, in 1934-5. Since then we have almost held our own, but we are hoping that a great effort in this next year or two will enable us to clear off all outstanding debt, and set us on our feet again. The Church is sufficiently strong to maintain itself, and the opportunities for service in the neighbourhood are good, but the burden of debt seriously impedes our progress. May that burden soon be "rolled away" !

## Giving for others.

One of the signs of a living church is its giving for the needs of others. Judged by this standard the West Lane Church proves its spiritual health. In spite of grave financial problems money was somehow raised for outside causes. Less than a year after the new church was opened, and while the debt was still a problem, a collection was taken up for a distressed London circuit. In 1897 £1 10s. 0d. and a collection were sent to the "Indian Famine Fund." During the war years special efforts were made to help the troops, such as retiring collections for the Primitive Methodist Hut in military camps, and retiring collections every month (from 1916) to send parcels to our soldiers. It was also during the war years that the regular collections for the Keighley Hospital began, and it was only in 1935 that the trustees felt it imperative to discontinue the annual contribution of £2 10s. 0d. to the Hospital because of our grave financial position. On May 22nd, 1914, it was moved : "That we take a Retiring Collection on behalf of the 'Blind,' to get books for them to read." In 1928 a collection was taken for the relief of distressed miners.

The above are a few examples of how the West Lane Church has tried to help others from time to time—not by any means a complete record ! But, of course, the chief channel of our giving for the sake of others is through Missionary Work. In this the Church has played a loyal and sacrificial part. Fluctuations there have unavoidably been, but a good average of contributions has been maintained.



A month after the new church was opened, a special "Juvenile Meeting" was held, the proceeds of which, £1 14s. 4d., were for the "Africa Fund." The adult Missionary Anniversary had been held in February, raising £11 8s. 4d. The following year this contribution leapt to £17 10s. 6d., and for the next eight years the figures hovered between £15 and £18, after which a gradual decline set in, the figure sinking as low as £6 2s. 2d. in the year 1905-6. These low figures for the General Missionary Fund, however, were to some extent redeemed by special gifts to the "Africa Fund," the "New Africa Fund," and the scheme for the liquidation of the missionary debt.

From the year 1905-6 the contributions increased steadily for a number of years. In 1912-13 the November "first round" at West Lane brought in £9. This was augmented two months later by a contribution of £8 3s. 0d. from the Young Ladies' Class! During the war years successful efforts were made to increase interest in the missionary cause. More boxes were issued, and the figures rose suddenly from £9 to £13 19s. 7d., and increased steadily until in 1916-17 they topped the £20 mark. This high level was not maintained, but until 1930 an average of over £16 was raised. The £20 figure was again reached in 1920-1, while in 1922-3 the record of £22 17s. 11d. was achieved. Even this result is dwarfed, however, if one includes the contributions to the "African Jubilee Thanksgiving Fund" in 1919-20, which amounted to £25 12s. 3d. Added to the £16 12s. 10d. raised in the ordinary way, this made a grand total for the financial year of £42 5s. 1d., for a church with about 100 members! Since 1930 the financial position of the members who remained brought an unavoidable decrease in missionary contributions, which of recent years have been about £10. Even this, however, is an average of over 2/- a member. During the last sixty years West Lane has raised over £850 for the missionary cause. (This includes, of course, both Overseas and Home Missions.)

During the same period the circuit as a whole has raised over £2,400 for Missions. The amount has varied with the varying number of churches in the circuit, although when the circuit was halved in 1912 the missionary moneys only dropped from £40 15s. 6d. to £26 19s. 4d. Another fact worthy of record is that when the circuit was reduced to its present constituency of three churches, in 1914-15, an **increase** was registered on the previous year. This increase was sustained until, in 1922-3, the record figure of £50 3s. 10d. was reached. Since then the amount has fallen to an average of £30.

The record for raisings by individual churches in the circuit goes to the Oakworth Road Mission. In 1907-8 a great missionary drive resulted in 35 missionary boxes being utilised, bringing in £24 12s. 7d., and making with the collections a total of £29. Even

this was surpassed in the following year, by the record figure of £30 8s. 3d. This was a supreme effort, but owing to a difference with the Mission House on missionary policy, it was not maintained. Only once again, in 1925-6, did Oakworth Road reach anything like the same figure, when they raised £27 0s. 6d. In 1919-20, however, the £19 4s. 9d. which they raised in the ordinary way was supplemented by £123 18s. 8d. raised for the "Africa Jubilee Fund," a total of £143 3s. 5d. Leaving aside Mr. James Ickringill's donation of £100, this exceeds the total West Lane figure for that year by about £1.

This "African Jubilee Thanksgiving Fund," in 1919-20, caused great missionary activity in the circuit. For it concerts were organised, toffee was made and sold, special public meetings and services were arranged, and donations were solicited. The donations ranged from Mr. James Ickringill's £100 to "A boy's gift" of 3d.! The total amount brought in was the magnificent one of £173 18s. 4d. This made a total of £214 8s. 4d. raised for the mission funds in that particular year—a wonderful result for three struggling churches, with a membership of just over 200.

## To-day.

In spite of difficulties, one cannot but feel that the Church to-day is **alive**. The loyal few work well together, and there is great hope for the future. The Sunday School has reported an increase in scholars, a Ladies' Welcome Hour has been started, nearly 30 turning up in spite of bad weather and illness, the Choir is keen about its valued work, and a campaign is on foot to look up old members—and new ones. In spite of the necessary emphasis in this handbook on the Past, we are not dwelling in that Past, but working on, and praying on, to a bright Future.

A bird's eye view of our present activities and chief officials is given below.

SUNDAY SERVICES, 10-30 and 5-30 (for the time being).

Society Steward : Mr. Harold W. Smith.

Envelope Secretary : Mr. A. Cousin.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SESSIONS, 9-45 and 2-0.

General Superintendent : Alderman Thompson Whitaker.

General Secretary : Mr. T. R. Dawson.

Leaders :

Inter. and Junior—Miss A. Hutchinson, Mr. and Mrs. J. Hornby.

Primary—Misses Marie Dixon and Dorothy Chew.

Beginners—Miss Maude Midgley.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR, Thursdays, at 7-15 p.m.

President : Mrs. M. Gee.

Vice-President : Miss Annice Hutchinson.

Secretary : Miss Marie Dixon.

LADIES' WELCOME HOUR, Tuesdays, at 2-45 p.m.

President : Mrs. F. Baker.

Vice-Presidents : Mrs. M. Gee and Mrs. H. W. Smith.

Secretary : Miss Dorothy Chew.

CHOIR REHEARSALS on Thursdays, at 8-0 p.m.

Choirmaster : Mr. Robert Taylor.

Organist : Mr. Harry Hopwood.

BADMINTON CLUB, plays on Tuesdays and Fridays, 7-10 p.m.

President : Mr. A. Cousin.

Secretary : Miss Marie Dixon.

\* \* \* \*

Missionary Secretary : Mrs. H. W. Smith.

J.M.A. Secretaries : Misses Marie Dixon and Dorothy Chew.

\* \* \* \*

Property Steward and Trust Treasurer : Mr. T. Bennett.

Trust Secretary : Mr. W. Stokes.

To anyone who reads these words and is unattached to any Place of Worship, a hearty invitation is extended to join with us in **any** of the above meetings.

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**KEIGHLEY**

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QUOTATIONS (Continued).

The Kingdom of God has no barriers to shut out those who wish to enter into its treasury.

Mrs. T. Bennett.

The only way to have a friend is to be one.

Mr. T. Bennett.

Good Health and Good Sense are two of life's greatest blessings.

Mrs. S. E. Wadsworth.

**Happiness Pie.** Mix the flour of cheerfulness with the same proportion of kindness. Flavour this with willingness and a good pinch of sympathy. These ingredients should be well mixed with plenty of good taste. Keep smiling whilst you stir, and season with a song.

Mr. F. Ogden.

It doesn't matter if your net be broken,  
 Or if the spade you use be old and bent,  
 If you just land your fish and dig your garden,  
 God is content.

Mr. N. W. Davison, Norwich.

It is not easy—  
 To apologise for a wrong,  
 To begin all over again,  
 To forgive and forget,  
 To control a bad temper,  
 To keep a high standard,  
 To remember that the sun will shine;  
 But it is worth while.

Mrs. N. W. Davison, Norwich.

What I says is—"Never put up your umbrella till it rains!" (Mrs. Wiggs.)

Mrs. Cousin.

If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, Sir, should keep his friendship in constant repair. (Johnson.)

Mr. A. Cousin.

Spirit of Peace, the world is sighing,  
 Weary of fear, of distrust, and hate,  
 Bring us the calm of thy love undying!  
 Spirit of Peace, for **Thee** we wait,  
 For Peace we work and wait!

Rev. Frank Baker.

Remember the tea kettle—though up to its neck in hot water, it continues to sing.

Mrs. Nellie Baker.