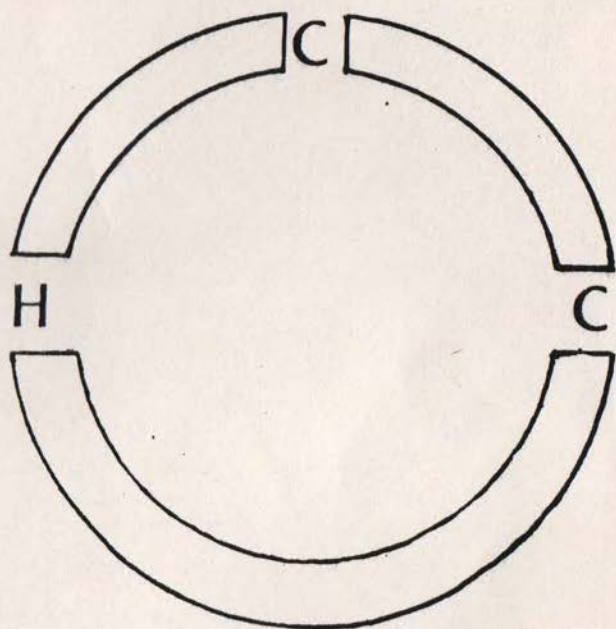




*The
Congregational History Circle Magazine*

VOL. I. - No. 9. DECEMBER 1982

THE CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY CIRCLE

Secretary
Mr. R. J. Bray,
14 Pillar Crescent,
Brixham,
Devon. TQ5. 8LE.
Tel: Brixham 4771.

Membership Secretary
Mr. R. Travell,
17 Reddons Road,
Beckenham,
Kent. BR3. 1LY.
Tel: 01-778-4651.

Treasurer:

Mr. D. Morrell,
66 Golden Park Avenue,
Torquay,
Devon. TQ2. 8LS.
Tel: Torquay 311324.

Vol.1. No.9. December 1982

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EDITORIAL

Ecumania. Our nearest relations in the denominational sense are being asked to celebrate the first decade of the emergence of the United Reformed Church this year. This request leads one to ask why celebrate a merger which has brought so much embarrassment not to mention disenchantment in so short a period, to so many?

Ecumania, the malady above mentioned is one that has troubled the Jewish world since the fall of Babel, followed later by the centralizing influence of King Josiah. Attacks of the malady appeared early in the Apostolic Age after the dispute between Peter and Paul. Ecumania has sometimes

taken on a military guise, as in the days of Constantine the Great who sought to unite Christendom at the point of the sword. It had however a very serious setback at the Protestant Reformation when the significance of the New Learning and the publication of the Scriptures in the vernacular, in the language of the people, proved so strong an antidote. In Britain and in Europe the results were startling and an attempt was made to provide an answer to the antidote in the counter reformation.

The antidote proved most effective after the Reformation, when several churches ranging from Anabaptists to Romanists succeeded in gaining the support of their several governments in state approval. At the second Reformation when Independency appeared in the 16th and 17th century, the malady retreated into the shadows of the cloister and ultramontaniam. The malady sustained further blows with the emergence of John Wesley and the Evangelical Awakening of the 18th century. John Wesley who was descended from sturdy nonconformist stock provided an urgent and most effective antidote, proving again that diversity can be the handmaiden of progress and service.

The Malady scarcely emerged again during the long period of Missionary enterprise from the end of the 18th to the beginning of the 20th centuries. After the first World War the malignancy appeared once more, when some church leaders meeting at Edinburgh were contaminated with a severe attack of what was later diagnosed and described as Ecumania. The virus was strong enough to survive many attempts to clear it out of the body ecclesiastical. The virus spread to Free and State Churches alike, but was confined in the main to the Protestant Churches of Britain.

Parallel with this outbreak was the new fever known as Conferencitis, related to committeeitis a fever which had been evident during the Commonwealth of all periods. This was diagnosed as the last resort of all decrepit movements. This new phase of the disease was made necessary, it was urged by the pressure of business, as well as the opposition of many Churches to what was then described as autocratic and episcopal and even papal influences.

The Malady and its accompanying symptoms penetrated deeply into the Congregational body with what can only be described as with paralysing effect. That Church body lost most of its desire to live, it muttered frequently of its rapid demise, and in that condition it turned in upon itself and many of its leaders uttered a death wish. By the 60's writes Cecil Northcote in the Observer of 21st November 1965, "A plan for the formation of a United Free Church of England is now being considered by 2500 Congregational Churches and 300 Presbyterian Churches.... The Headquarters of both Churches strongly backing the scheme."

The late Rev.Reginald W .Cleaves in 'Congregationalism 1960-76' wrote after quoting the above, "Much publicity of this kind in the secular and religious press stimulated the popular mind for 'unity' and set any opponents to particular schemes in a totally false catagory of those who were 'against unity', 'unwilling for any change', 'rooted in the past but without growth into the future', 'diehards' etc. All these cliches were detrimental to the work of those who sought and desired 'unity' but not at any price,who desired change and growth but not 'change for its own sake' or'growth of false concepts'.

To continue on this serious line let me quote some words uttered by Dr Harry Butman president of the International Congregational Fellowship and successor of the old ICC in its Conference at Bangor in 1981. Dr Butman in a scholarly address outlined the experiences of American Congregationalists in the 50s when after the ecumenical experiment many Congregationalists moved away to form another Union. He adds,"in November 1955,men and women from Churches which refused to surrender their autonomy and independence gathered at Detroit to create the National Association of Congregational Churches". And commenting on our British experiences writes, "'In England in 1960, the pressures of organisational ecumenicity again set in motion the ... forces of ecclesiastical freedom. The several meetings in London in 1972 resulted in the foundation of Congregational Federation of Continuing Congregational Churches." He adds,"the fight for spiritual and ecclesiastical freedom is not a thing of shallow chronology unrooted in history..We are gathered here in Wales, a very citadel of Independency, to renew our alleigance to the Congregationa cause, a notable example of freedom in Christ,and to reach out around the world to join hands with those of like heart and mind." Quoting the Chislehurst Declaration of 1975 drawn up by those who wished to continue the valuable contact of International Congregationalism Dr Butman read, "Although we extol in the family the wholeness and the completeness of such gathered local church,as our distinctive and cherished witness, we do not narrowly deny the liberty of other Church orders or esteem them to be ways of darkness. The lamps are many the light is one.."

Ten years have passed and where it was thought we should have One Church of the Presbyterians and the Congregation- alists,we now have Four different communions. The URC,and CF as well as the EFCC and the Unaligned Congregational Churches continue their work separately. But it is not a

time for resentment or repentance for decisions made in 1972. Yet we can not but comment on the passing of the 'covenant' in the URC Assembly by only just two thirds majority and the 'Alternative response' group in the U.R.C. The following is a summary of the responses of the churches to this question and also the General Assembly:

Response of Individual Churches	Number of churches	Total Member- ship in group	% of total Membership of URC
Voting for	419)		
Generally for but did not vote	16)	52076	35.35
Voting against	396)		
Generally against but did not vote	24)	41873	28.42
Churches indecisive or not responding	1081	53388	36.23
Total	1936	147337	100.00

Voting at National Assembly:

	Number of votes	% of those voting	% of total
Voting for	434	68.89	68.56
Voting against	196	31.11	30.96
Abstentions	3	0	0.48

Notes:

- (i) The voting of churches was advisory, the National Assembly's decision is final and binding.
- (ii) The minimum vote required by the National Assembly was 66.67%
- (iii) The U.R.C. has therefore accepted the covenant for Unity.

These figures show that after the merger of 1972 and the many problems created by that merger, a sense of frustration settled on all the participants within and without that scheme. Ten years later in 1982 out of the 1936 URC Churches, 1081 were indecisive or did not reply to the question of the Covenanting scheme and of the remaining 855, 419 were definitely for and 396 definitely against. After examination of these figures along with those at the URC Assembly, a great change will be seen to have taken place in the thinking of Churches & Ministers alike on the

question of Church Union. And the examination will show also the part played by the "Alternative Response" group when 400 odd ministers and representatives rejected the scheme at the Assembly vote. No one could have forecast such a result knowing the propensity evident for so long in these quarters of both Ex-Presbyterian and Ex-Congregational elements in the United Reformed Church. The shadow of 1972 fell heavily on the scene in 1982. The result within the URC could have been a further split with the consequent injury to the total witness of the Christian Church. The decision of the Synod of the Church of England to reject the Covenanting scheme, came as a relief to many.

By way of footnote to all this. The Churches Council for Covenanting met after the voting took place and in spite of the Chairman urging further meetings, decided to disband.

The decision came at last to the great relief of many. Historians will have much to say of the way Christians were led into such tortuous ways in search of 'union' which resulted in even greater disunity in the past decade. There will be no welcome for the cynics among them. The work and witness of the Christian Church in Britain has sustained great loss through these years spent in the wilderness. Of the leaders, history will decide whether they were worthy stewards in the house of God? Of the lay members it can honestly be said that they thought this was the true way of God in which they were being led. The great question remains 'Has the Good Lord a future for his people?' The Christian will know that the answer lies in our readiness to seek again His will and in our discovering the truth that the future may after all lie in our re-discovering the value of the 'hidden treasure' which we denigrated so much, not being prepared to think that a mere 'gathered Church' had any value in the 20th Century. The historian will look at these and many other aspects of life during this decade just passed, and ponder over the event of 1972 and those of 1982 when a halt was called to the 'great obsession' of the 20th Century.

Trevor Watts

FROM THE SECRETARY

We have again come to the end of a busy year and as I look back I am encouraged in the way that the name and objects of the Congregational History Circle is gradually becoming known and this is particularly being reflected in the number of organisations etc. which are now notifying the Circle of events which may be of interest to Circle members. It is my hope that by the next issue it may be possible to start a "Dates For Your Diary" Column on a regular basis and with this in mind I would invite Churches and organisations who

might read this to send in details of their special events i.e. centenaries etc. for possible inclusion in this column next time. One of the objects of this magazine is to provide an information service for its members and readers in a compact and easily accessible form as well as a channel for learning and interest and it is hoped therefore that Churches, organisations and individual will send in details of events they know about.

During the last year I have also noted a very definite upsurge in the interest in Congregational History and Heritage and this is particularly encouraging. This is particularly shown in a number of ways namely the holding of the E.F.C.C. Studies Conference at the Westminster Chapel London again this year in April which includes a number of Historical items; The Survey by the North West Area of the Congregational Federation into the history of its Churches (the results of which I await with considerable interest); and the decision by Union Chapel, Islington, London not to demolish their premises as originally planned but instead to try and restore them to their former glory with a practical purpose must all be pointers to this long may this rekindling of the flame continue. One would hope that it may be a hopeful sign for the future.

Membership of the Circle continues to grow steadily and I am pleased to report that membership now stands at British Isles Members 127; Associations and Colleges 46; Overseas Members 46. During the early part of 1983 the Circle will be stepping up its publicity in various magazines and publications and by other means and it is hoped that the Circle will grow from strength to strength during 1983.

Finally, may I wish everyone who reads this magazine a very Happy Christmas and New Year and hope and trust that you will continue to support us in what we are trying to achieve during 1983.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CIRCLE, FRIDAY
13th MAY, 1983: SHEFFIELD, YORKSHIRE.

Plans are well in hand for this event although not all the details have as yet been finalised. Full details will be forwarded to members and readers as soon as this is finally arranged. It is proposed that the weekend will include a conducted tour of items of Congregational and General Church interest in the Sheffield area on the Friday afternoon and then in the evening the Annual General Meeting of the Circle will be held at which amongst other items on the Agenda for discussion will be a new Constitution for the Circle. It is anticipated that the evening

meeting will commence at about 7.30p.m. On the Saturday Members and Friends will be free to attend the Annual Assembly of the Congregational Federation to be held at the Victoria Halls, Sheffield on Saturday 14th May, 1983 and then to return home as and when they wish.

In connection with this weekend the Circle is hoping to arrange accommodation in the Sheffield area for those attending and extensive enquiries are going on at present to secure suitable accommodation at a reasonable price for those who might require it. One possibility is the Sheffield Y.M.C.A. who have indicated that they would be willing to accommodate both men and women at their extensive premises in Bromhall Road, Sheffield at a charge of £7.00 per night per person for a single study bedroom to include, Bed, Breakfast and VAT. A limited amount of dormitory accommodation could be made available also for persons bringing their own sleeping bags and the charge for this would be £3.00 per night. In addition there is a restaurant in the building and evening meals can be provided on the premises for a minimum charge of £1.50 per person. A room could be made available for our Annual General Meeting and during the break in the A.G.M. Teas, Coffee and Light Refreshments could be made available. Also for those requiring a little better accommodation, a list of Hotels and Guest Houses in the Sheffield area have been forwarded to me and if anyone interested could contact me letting me know of the type of accommodation required and for how long I will endeavour to supply details.

Once full details of the meeting and other matters have been finalised it is hoped to contact all members and readers with full details and an application form similar to last years will be included. If you are interested in booking accommodation in the area please contact me as soon as possible.

The Secretary

FROM THE TREASURER

As we come to the end of another successful year I must report that as agreed by the Annual General Meeting of the Circle held in Swansea in May 1982 our subscription charges for 1983 will have to be increased. Last year we were fortunate to be able to keep our subscriptions the same but with increased printing and postage charges and a need for the Circle to reduce its reliance on the very generous and appreciated grants by a number of organisations to the magazine which to date have enabled us to keep costs

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down whilst still continually improving the magazine by going over from the duplicated format to a printed one, this will mean that this year (1983) we shall have to increase our membership subscription to £1.25 for British Isles Members and £1.75 for Overseas Members. The previous reductions for D.A.P's and Students will remain (details on request). It is sincerely hoped that this will not discourage anyone from renewing their membership in 1983, as this still represents excellent value when other similar magazines are taken into account, and that you will return the renewal form enclosed with this issue at the very earliest to myself.

When renewing your membership may I also suggest that you might consider recommending the Magazine to a friend or close acquaintance in the hope that they might consider joining as well. Better still, why not give them membership of the Circle for a year as a Christmas, New Year or birthday present.

May I wish all members of the Circle a very happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and hope as we go into 1983 that the Circle will grow and increase its activities. Much has been achieved during 1982 and hopefully even more can be achieved during 1983. To do this however, we need your support so we trust that you will renew your membership for 1983.

D.Morrell.

THE MEMORIAL HALL AND CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY, LONDON.

The move of the Congregational Library to become a part of Dr. Williams Library, although housed in a separate annexe, is now complete. At the Memorial Hall site in Fleet Lane the Halls have I believed now ceased to be used and are being converted into Office accommodation. It is understood that only a small trustees office now remains at the site.

To commemorate the ejection of nearly 2,000 Non-conformist ministers on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662 an event of special significance to Congregationalists a special service was held on Saturday 21st August 1982 at the Memorial Hall site, arranged by the 1662 Society, The Congregational Historical Circle and the Congregational Federation.

The first event took place around the commemorative stone in the forecourt of the Congregational Memorial Hall in Fleet Lane in the City of London. The Hall was built on the site of Fleet Prison where the separatist martyrs Barrow and Greenwood were kept in captivity prior to their execution at Tyburn. A brief act of worship preceded the

laying of a posy of flowers on the stone.

There followed a service at the City Temple, Holborn Viaduct - the only Free church in the City of London. In his address, Rev. Alan Argent (the Chaplain of the 1662 Society) asked the congregation to remember not just the ejected ministers and the Separatist Martyrs but also the Anglican clergymen who were thrown out of their livings during the Civil War and who, together with their families suffered much hardship.

Yet the emphasis must not be on commemorating the Church's divisions but on giving thanks for the present understanding and real concern for spiritual unity between the denominations.

It is proposed by the three groups to arrange similar services on the nearest Saturday to St. Bartholomew's Day every year. (In 1983 this would be on either Saturday 21st or 27th August). The secretary unfortunately this year only received details of the proposed arrangements whilst he was on holiday in the Isle of Man so was unable to notify Circle Members in time on this occasion but hopefully this will run a little more smoothly in 1983. More details of what is proposed in 1983 will appear in the May issue.

----- John Bray.

FROM THE POSTBAG

I. Details have now reached me of the 1983 "Congregational Studies Conference" to be arranged at the Westminster Chapel, Buckingham Gate, London by the E.F.C.C. on Saturday 9th April, 1982 and these look most interesting. Chaired by the Rev. Derek Swann, B.A., B.D. the meeting will commence at 11.00 a.m. with a talk by Mr. Michael Boland (London) on Oliver Cromwell. At 12.30 p.m. the meeting will break for Dinner which can be obtained on the premises if required at a charge of £2.00 to include a hot meal and a cup of tea or coffee then the conference will commence again at 1.30 p.m. with a talk by the Rev. Neville Rees (Morrison) on "The Prayer Life of the Church". At 3.00 p.m. there will be a break for tea or coffee at 5 pence per cup followed at 3.30 p.m. by a talk by Rev. Hefin Elias (Cardiff) on 'P.T. Forsyth Prophet of the 20th Century'. It is expected that the Conference will close about 5.00 p.m. Each lecture will be followed by discussion and after the conference the lectures will be duplicated and the three can be obtained from the Secretary of the Conference. The cost for the Conference is £2.00 per person. Application forms and full details of the Conference can be obtained from the Secretary (Mr. P. Collins), 4 Reddons Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 1LZ.

2. With regard to Union Chapel, Islington, London, I am pleased to report that on Sunday 13th June 1982, the Church Meeting unanimously made the decision to withdraw the redevelopment scheme which would have resulted in the possible demolition of the present Church Building (The last Free Church Cathedral in England?) and to commit itself to the gradual restoration of the existing buildings.

On Tuesday 5th October the "Friends of Union Chapel" was constituted at a well attended meeting and already has some 80 members. The objects of the "Friends" are:-

(a) To secure the preservation, maintenance and improvement of the Chapel fabric for the benefit of the local community and the Nation.

(b) To stimulate and widen interest in and the use of the Chapel Buildings by both the National and Local Communities.

(c) To generate funds for the Chapels restoration and upkeep.

The Friends will work in close contact with the fellowship at Union Chapel, (The Secretary and Treasurer of the "Friends" are Union Chapel Deacons.

An architect has been appointed to start a survey and to apply for a grant towards initial repairs and a fund will be launched when figures are known.

Membership of "The Friends" is open to all and full details can be obtained from Mrs. R. Forster, 13 Sydney Road, Wanstead, London E11 2JW. Telephone 01-530-2332. The cost of membership is £1.00. We will keep you informed of developments in future issues.

3. The Council for British Archaeology Working Party on Non Conformist Places of Worship is planning a One Day Visit to Bristol on Saturday 7th May 1982 to look at Non-Conformist architecture in the City which Circle Members are very welcome to join if they wish. The proposed programme is as follows:-

10 a.m. Meet at St. Nicholas Church Museum (by Bristol Bridge) and 10 minutes walk from Temple Meads Railway Station.

10.40 a.m. Walk around Central Bristol visiting, amongst others, the Unitarian Chapel, Lewins Mead; Wesley's New Room, Broadmead and the Friends Meeting, Quakers Friars.

12. Noon Lunch (can be laid on if required)

1 p.m. Coach to visit Whitfield Tabernacle, Kingswood; The Unitarian Chapel, Frenchay; The Friends Meeting, Frenchay Watley's End and Claverham.

5.30 p.m. Coach returns to Temple Meads Railway Station and meeting ends.

Full details and costs can be obtained by writing to: Mr. Dawson, City Museum and Art Gallery, Queens Road, Bristol, BS8 1RL (Tel. 299771). Alternative or additional suggestions for possible visits during this day are also invited by Mr. Dawson when writing.

4. Erik Routley died in his sleep without warning on 8th October 1982, some three weeks before his 65th birthday. He was at the time on a lecture tour in Nashville, Tennessee, and would have shortly returned to Princeton for the new semester at Westminster Choir College where he was Professor of Church Music. The shock of his passing will certainly spread worldwide. He must certainly be remembered for his work as General Secretary of the committee which put together "Congregational Praise" and for his work in editing "The Congregational Praise Companion" and in providing extensive notes for this on the history of the hymns and their tunes.

Until he went to Princeton in 1975 church music was simply the spare time hobby of a Bury pastor then university then pastor again. By the time he was 25 he had compiled his own hymnary: the contents of which were constantly modified, the outline of this provided the scenario of his contribution to, and the evaluation of, the many actual collections with which he was associated. Not until his latest commission from the Reformed Church in America did he get a free enough hand to make him feel that something like his ideal was at last seeing the light of day. He was an excellent pianist, organist, composer and arranger.

Church History and theology were his twin subjects but he was also Chaplain and Lecturer at Mansfield College; Chaplain to the student Congregational society; editor of the Congregational Monthly and editor of the Bulletin of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland; Chairman of the U.R.C. Doctrine and Worship Committee and President of the Congregational Church in England and Wales (1970-71)

His wit and enthusiasm in conversation, on the platform or in print will be sadly missed.

5. Information is sought on the life and ministry of John Henry Jowett, a minister at Carrs Lane Congregational Church (now U.R.C.) between 1895-1911. Anyone who can provide any information on his preaching or on impressions of his preaching is invited to contact Mr. M. Dean Register, c/o First Baptist Church, 21 Iolita Street, Franklin, N.C. 28734, U.S.A. who is writing a dissertation through the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

6. One of our members Rev.Neville Jarrett (Scunthorpe Congregational Church) is keen to obtain a copy of R.W. Dales "History of Congregationalism" to replace a copy mislaid from his library and also seeks information on any books which might give the history of Congregationalism in Lincolnshire. If you have any information which might help him in his searches, please contact him at 63,Vicarage Gardens, Scunthorpe, South Humberside, DN15. 7BB.(Telephone: Scunthorpe 349751).

7. Ide, Congregational Church, Near Exeter hold their One Hundreth Anniversary celebrations on 23rd/24th April, 1983.On 23rd April '83 there will be an afternoon meeting commencing at 4.00p.m. introduced by Mr.George Stooke(S.W. Area of Cong.Fed) and followed by greetings from Ide Community leaders 5.00p.m. - Tea for all in the Memorial Hall, Ide, 6.30p.m. - Ide Cong.Church, Community Hymn singing 7.00p.m. - Evening Rally with Rev.Ronald Bending (pastor) presiding. Guest speaker, Rev.John Travell. Sunday Service 24th April at 11.00a.m.(family) and 6.30pm.

In preparation for this event the organ has been replaced, the interior of the church has had a face lift and the lighting of the Church renewed. Money for this was raised by an initial highly successful fete held on a "pocket handkerchief" of a cottage front garden in the village last year, special donations and other fund raising activities. Also a choir has been formed - some members originally not being able to read music - but they are rapidly gaining in ability and confidence. A special programme of events will be published nearer the date.

Any History Circle member who finds themselves in the area before the event or on the weekend of the event will be most welcome. Contact Mrs.E.J.Chadwick, 20 Fore Street, Ide, Exeter, Devon. EX2 9RQ. Tel:Exeter 78797 for full details.

8. Chulmleigh Congregational Church, Mid-Devon are due to hold their 350th Anniversary Celebrations in July 1983 (Sat.9th and Sunday 10th July 1983). This is the second oldest Free Church in England and Oliver Cromwell is believed to have preached from the pulpit there. Full Details from Mrs.G.K.Drew, 16 Langley Gardens,Chulmleigh N.Devon.

9. Torcross Congregational Church, Nr.Kingsbridge,Devon celebrates its actual centenary in July 1983 which it hopes to celebrate with a Flower Festival, a previous one created considerable television and radio interest and will hold special events throughout the year, including a special Mothering Sunday Service. If you have not visited this area of the West Country, rich in history in itself, why not come along for this. For full details, contact Mr.D.Hine, "Sunnydene", Loddiswell, Kingsbridge,

Devon.

10. Students and Researchers are asked to note that the archives of Silcoates School, Wakefield, Yorkshire (founded for Congregational Ministers and sons etc) are deposited with West Yorkshire County Archives, Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

11. The Cromwell Association will be again holding its open air service on Saturday 3rd September 1983 which is both the Anniversary of Cromwells death and of his two great victories at Dunbar and Worcester, at 3.00p.m. at the Cromwell Statue outside the Houses of Parliament. Full details from Miss Platt, B.A., Combe Lodge, Ringley Park Avenue, Reigate, Surrey.

12. The N.W. Area of the Cong. Fed. is at present carrying out a very interesting survey of its Churches and their history. Questionnaires have been sent out asking 20 questions on the history of each church. Questions asked include, Foundation date/year; what was the first church, where was the first proper building built and is it still there; details of the register of various ministers; people of any importance connected with the Church and questions on its records etc. The final replies will be compiled and I will await the result with interest.

13. The Warwick University is holding a Religion and Society Workshop between Thursday 7th July 1983 and Saturday 9th July 1983 and although a lot of the subjects will not be of direct interest there is quite a lot of general interest. Contact Religion and Society History Workshop, Centre for the Study of Social History, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AC. Fee for full workshop £12. Unwaged £9.

14. The Congregational Federation has now made available an interesting slide presentation entitled "Where 2 or 3 - A History of Congregationalism." This interesting presentation with sound commentary lasts about 25 minutes and consists of some 52 slides in all. This is the presentation that was previewed at the I.C.F. Conference at Bangor but has now been improved and a sound commentary added. For full details contact Mr. Colin Price, "Redholt" Mainworth Wood, Road, Ingrow, Keighley, West Yorkshire

15. The South Devon Group Committee of the Congregational Federation is planning a further Open Air Service at the site of Ford Congregational Church, Near Kingsbridge, Devon on Saturday 16th July 1983, commencing at 5.00p.m. with a picnic tea and a service at 6.00p.m. For full details contact the Congregational Historical Circle Secretary.

16. Sadly the current issue of the Department of the Environment Historic Buildings Bureau "Quarterly list of Buildings which are for Sale or to be Let" lists three

former Congregational Churches which were then U.R.C. and which are now for Sale. These are as follows:-

- (i) The former Howard Congregational Church, Mill Street, Bedford, Built in 1774 and enlarged in 1849.
- (ii) Upper Independent Congregational Chapel, High Street, Rickmondwike, Near Dewsbury, West Yorkshire. Built 1890. Price, excluding pews, organ etc., £30,000.
- (iii) Park United Reformed Church, Hopwood Lane, Halifax W.Yorks. (formerly the Congregational Church) Late 19th Century. It is hoped to include details of these in a later issue.

17. The Secretary of the Castle Cary Congregational Church, Somerset has contacted me with the following information. The Church closed in 1980 I believe and the organ, seating and other effects sold by auction in November 1981. The Manse has been sold but the Chapel Building and Caretakers Cottage still remain. The building is now in the hands of the Congregational Federation Limited and the Circle is in the process of arranging for the Records and Minute Books to be lodged at the County Archives.

18. The Secretary's attendance at the recent U.R.C. Summer School at Trefecca College, Nr. Talgarth, Near Brecon, Wales revealed an interesting little known place of historical interest. The College is now the Lay-Training Centre for the Presbyterian Church of Wales and of course was founded by the Countess of Huntingdon in connection with Howell Harris. There is an interesting museum which is open to the public on occasions. Should you visit the area it is well worth a visit. All enquiries to The Warden. Three Booklets are produced in English with counterparts in Welsh as follows giving details of the College and Museum as follows:-

- * 1) There was a man sent ... by Mrs.M.Bickerstaff MA,BD. Cost 25 pence per copy.
- 2) The Howell Harris Museum . by Olwen Davies (Hon Curator) cost 15 pence per copy.
- * 3) Trevecca(1706-1964) ... by Gareth Davies MA,

cost 50pence per copy.

Prices do not include postage. Those marked * include photographs and are well produced. It is hoped to include more details of Trefecca in a later issue.

19. It is reported in October 1982 Edition of the U.R.C. History Society Journal that one of their members has deposited two volumes of photographs with the West Yorkshire Record Office at Wakefield. They illustrate twenty-three churches, all of them formerly Congregational, in the

Huddersfield and Halifax District of the Yorkshire Province of the U.R.C. Eight of them are now closed. It also says that "No district can afford to take its chapel interiors, exteriors or fittings for granted and that it is hoped that Mr. Allenrons example will be followed elsewhere". Food for thought in our own denomination perhaps". John Bray.

20. The Bi-Centenary Celebrations 1782-1982 of the King St., Congregational Church, Newcastle-under-Lyme, were held during October. The Rev. J. Richard Langdon M.A., a former member, the Rev. Norman Cave M.A., a former minister and the Rev. John Hall B.D. a former member took part. The final service was conducted by the Rev. John Travell B.D., M.Th. President of the Congregational Federation, with the Mayor and Mayoress of Newcastle in attendance. The Church was founded as were many others in the County through the labourer of Jonathan Scott an itinerant soldier and evangelist. A Service conducted by the Pastor, the Rev. Norman Sedgeman was broadcast on Radio Stoke.

T. Watts

THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT CUCKFIELD, SUSSEX (Part 1)

Background Note:

The British & Foreign Schools Society for the promotion of voluntary elementary education owed its origin principally to the work of the Quaker pioneer in elementary education - Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838). Lancaster opened in 1798 his free school in Borough Road, London, and with generous support from the Friends many more schools were opened. Lancaster's pamphlet Improvements in Education, 1803, had considerable influence on the growing number of people who were deeply anxious about the need for elementary education particularly in the urban areas.

Lancaster and his supporters were insistent that public education should be non-denominational and they rejected the prevailing Anglican view that it should be on a denominational basis. But not all Anglicans were in favour of the denominational basis and some gave valuable support to Lancaster and helped in the foundation in 1808 of the "Royal Lancasterian Society". It was in 1810 that this Society was transformed into the British and Foreign Schools Society.

(The Anglican National Schools Society was set up in 1811)

Congregationalists took an active part in the work of the British and Foreign Schools Society and a good many

Congregational Churches sponsored voluntary schools within the Society's system. But so did other Protestant Dissenters and the role of the Congregationalists should not be overstated. The work of the Society was valuable indeed but in terms of the numbers of pupils the role of the National Schools Society was far greater. The problems over the differences between the Anglicans and Protestant Dissenters on public education and the role of the State are touched on below in the history of the Cuckfield British School.

PART I

The large contribution made to popular education by English Dissent is well-recognised and much has been written about it. But there is a special fascination about the work of the individual schools set up and maintained by the efforts of local churches. This paper is concerned with the case of the British School which was set up in 1852 by the Cuckfield Congregational Church. An important part of the records has survived because it formed in turn part of the Church's own records and thus was not transferred in 1902 to the new management when the School became a part of the County system under the Education Act, 1902. But even these records were lost to sight until 1979 when the Cuckfield URC closed (the Church premises including the large School Room built in 1868-69 have since been sold for commercial use).

The Cuckfield British School came into being largely because of the strong and capable leadership given to the Congregational Church by the Rev. Albert Foyster who was called to it in 1850. He had been trained at the Newport Pagnell College and he was energetic and public-spirited a good example of the new generation of Congregational ministers. The Cuckfield Church had much declined in strength in the years before Mr. Foyster was called but his pastoral gifts and vigorous ministry quickly helped to transform the position with a large increase in the active membership. The Sunday School became so large that a new Schoolroom had to be built for it by the end of 1851.

It was at the Opening Ceremony for this that Mr. Foyster spoke about: "the subject of a New Day School, urging its importance, and insisting upon the practicability of such a thing."

This was indeed a bold initiative by the young minister but happily the Church responded to the challenge with enthusiasm. Church Meeting appointed a Special Committee to plan the project. This was a Committee unlike so many

modern committees because it made swift and decisive progress! By January 9th 1852 the Committee had issued in printed form the "Prospectus of a New Day School, Cuckfield, Sussex" together with a first List of Subscribers who had contributed already £14 - a significant sum in 1852.

There was in Cuckfield the National School (the old Free Grammar School had been merged in 1844 with the National Primary School). The attendance there was around 140 with rather more boys than girls in school. The population of Cuckfield parish - a very extensive one at that time - had risen quite sharply between 1831 and 1841 but it had fallen back to just under 3,200 by the Census 1851. The proportion of children in the parish attending the National School was thus modest indeed and there was concern about this situation as indeed the Prospectus made clear:-

"It is granted, there are several schools already existing, conducted by private individuals who are highly respected in the town: there is also the National School, which is the only public school in the place. But neither of these meets the needs of the people in general: the former are too expensive for poor parents, the latter is too exclusive in its character."

We have here a vivid insight into the educational situation of an essentially rural area in the mid nineteenth century before the State had taken the first steps towards a system of free public education. The exclusive character of the National School lay, of course, in its insistence on the teaching of the Anglican Catechism and in its direction by the Anglican clergy. And there were by this time a fair number of Anglicans in the parish who were strongly in favour of non-sectarian public education and some of them were among the first subscribers to the new school.

Though there is in the Prospectus a touch of that Victorian ethos about "Self Help", it shows that the Committee were very far from being hard-faced, or a hard-spirited group:

"The Committee by no means contemplate making this entirely a Charity School, being perfectly convinced that the education offered will be far better appreciated if paid for. At the same time, it is their intention to fix upon a sum so modest, to be paid weekly by the children, as to enable the poorest families in the neighbourhood to avail themselves of the benefit."

The scheme outlined proposed the appointment of:

"an efficient Female Teacher, accustomed to exercise proper discipline with children, and also to impart the elements of a sound English education."

The comments on an age-limit for the school are so revealing about the realities of the contemporary social and economic scene:

"They propose to open the School to Girls, and to Boys under ten years of age; being well aware that in this neighbourhood there are few Boys at School over that age, expecting the children of parents who are able to send them to a more expensive School."

The Prospectus was emphatic about the non-sectarian basis of the education to be offered:

"Religion will not be excluded from the School, but no religious creed will be taught, the Bible will be the text-book of religion, and will be read daily."

Church Meeting quickly approved this scheme and authorised an approach to the British and Foreign Schools Society for advice about the appointment of a qualified teacher. The Society's reply concentrated on the aspect of the salary needed for the post:

"It would be necessary for the Local Committee to guarantee from one source or another 16 shillings a week or £40 a year to a Teacher. On these terms (which are the least that any qualified person will accept) we shall be able to supply you without difficulty."

Today, this sum of £40 a year reads like a mistake but in 1852 it was a living salary for a single person. Indeed as late as 1885 the Cuckfield British School was, paying its Senior Teacher only £60 a year and her Assistant only £36. The Management Committee agreed to raise £40 a year and the teacher was appointed almost immediately: the School was opened on 9th February 1852 and this was a mere two months or so since the minister had proposed swift action to this end.

From the start the number of children involved was substantial. The names of 50 children were registered in the week before the opening and 46 actually attended during the first week. This response fully justified the conviction of Mr. Foyster that Cuckfield badly needed another public day school. The entrance age had been set

at 5 years, but if a younger child had an older brother or sister in the School, then the younger child was allowed to attend also. This followed the practice already adopted by the Cuckfield National School - only a very few years ago, one of its former pupils recalled:

"I was 3 years old when my eldest sister first took me to the School."

The Management Committee appointed by Church Meeting took a very close interest in the life and work of the School, but its chief pre-occupation always was with the problems of raising sufficient money by voluntary contribution to enable the School to continue: in our own jargon, the British School was almost invariably 'under-financed' and this was to cause grave difficulties later on. The immediate oversight of the teaching and discipline was given to a Visiting Committee of 14 ladies of the Congregational Church and two of them visited the School each week. The School grew rapidly and by the start of the new school year in September 1852 the register had on it 94 children - the highest weekly attendance during the summer had been only 61. Apart from the effects of the then prevailing high incidence of sickness including many infectious diseases, the schools had to cope with the problem of many of the older children being kept at home: the older girls to help in the house and in looking after the little ones and the older boys were needed in the fields particularly during the period of harvest. For example, at the Management Committee's meeting in July 1857 it was resolved that:

"The School close for the Midsummer Holidays upon 31st July and re-open upon the 31st August: but if the Harvest be not then completed an additional week to be added."

It is evident that in many ways the Management Committee was ahead of the times in its sympathetic understanding of the children and in its determination to do all it could to help the poorest families to keep their children in School. In March 1853, the Committee adopted the system of sponsored free places:

"All subscribers of £1 per annum shall have the privilege of giving presentations to poorer children in the rate of one place for every ten shillings subscribed above that sum."

From time to time also the Committee waived arrears of the parents' weekly contributions with expressions of hope that this would encourage more regular payments in future.

The Ladies' Committee worked hard to raise money to provide free materials for needlework to the girls from the poorer families - the importance of needlework in the life of poor families at this time could hardly be exaggerated.

In the latter 1850's the School's annual income was only about £55 to £60 and this had to cover the teachers salary of £40 and supplies of paper, books, fuel, cleaning and repairs (including the windows broken by the boys at play). The parents of the 60 or so children in regular attendance contributed about £16 a year only. The unfortunate Miss Hordle who had taken charge of the School in 1853 asked informally for a salary increase in 1859 but all she received was "a present of £2.00".

Part II

In 1855 the growing national debate about public education had its echoes in Cuckfield. The British and Foreign Schools Society was arranging for one of its members to visit Sussex to take soundings about attitudes to possible State aid for the voluntary schools. The Cuckfield Management Committee had an earnest discussion of this issue before replying to the Society. It should be noted here that the only direct aid by the State to public education was the annual grant of £20,000 for capital expenditure on schools maintained by the voluntary societies. The Management Committee resolved:

"That the Committee will have great pleasure in Mr. Baxter's paying a visit to the School during his tour through the County of Sussex: at the same time remarking that the School at Cuckfield, while it is conducted upon the system of the British and Foreign Schools Society, repudiates all Government aid to education."

At first glance, this must seem an odd conclusion to be reached by the Management Committee of a School which was struggling always to make ends meet. But the great majority of Congregationalists were so opposed to the use of public funds to support "sectarian" schools that they preferred to forgo aid for their own schools and thus to frustrate the attempts by the Church of England to obtain State aid for its own National Schools. It was this continuing conflict which, together with the clear inability of the voluntary school societies to provide a great many more school places for a rapidly growing population, led finally to the first Education Act in 1870.

This was a particularly interesting development in the life of the Cuckfield School in November 1854 when Mr. J. F. Fearson (son of a former Vicar of Cuckfield and a generous subscriber to the British School) gave an additional £5 to be used "as rewards to the children." Five pounds was indeed a substantial sum in 1854. The Management Committee spent a lot of time over the preparation of a scheme for awarding School Prizes before resolving:

- "1. That Tea and Cake be given to the Children on the day the prizes are to be distributed.
2. That First and Second Prizes be distributed to Girls for Attendance, Good Conduct, Scripture Knowledge, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Needlework.
3. That First and Second Prizes be distributed to Boys for Attendance, Good Conduct, Scripture Knowledge, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Dictation.
4. That it be decided by the end of November to what Children prizes shall be given and that the Ladies arrange as to the prizes to be given."

It is much to the credit of the Committee that they decided to keep back a small sum to be used for "small presents to such as might not be entitled to any prize." This was a refreshingly thoughtful attitude at a time when society as a whole was pre-occupied with the successful and had little time for the "losers." These small presents were in the form of books but sadly the Minutes did not record the titles.

The Report on the Examinations and School Tea held on 26th April 1860 provides a most vivid glimpse of Victorian school life:

"The Children took Tea together at 5 o'clock (there were 57 present) and were afterwards examined in the Chapel. The following was the order of proceeding:

Geography of England: Sing: Hurrah for England
Read a Lesson : " : Wild Wood Flowers
Questions, Sacred
Geography : " : The Better Land
Questions on Popery : " : The Martyrs
Read English History: " : God Save the Queen

The children acquitted themselves very creditably, and Miss Hordle was deservedly commended for her success in teaching them."

There were often many of these compliments for Miss Hordle but her salary remained at the same £40 after some seven years' service. In 1861 the Management Committee noted that:

"The state of the funds had not allowed of a gratuity being paid to the Teacher."

Another dozen years were to pass before Miss Hordle finally rebelled against such treatment. The Cuckfield Committee was indeed hard up against financial constraints, but it was the dedication of women teachers like Miss Hordle which so often enabled British Schools to continue to provide public education "on the cheap."

One is left wondering just what was covered by the examination of these young children by "Questions on Popery". This strikes a strong sectarian note today but there was widespread and very strong feeling among Protestants about the dangers of a Roman Catholic revival and Sussex had felt the heavy hand of the Marian persecution. Memories were long in Sussex—indeed, these were almost literally rekindled year by year at the great Bonfire Night parades in Lewes past the Martyrs Memorial. (nor has the writer yet forgotten the occasion of his lecture on "1662-1662" to the Sussex Congregational Union when a very aged lady shot at him the question: "Will not the Martyrs' fires burn again in Sussex if Britain signs the Treaty of Rome?").

By 1861 there had been a most significant change in the character of the School in terms of the age pattern of the children. The British and Foreign Schools Society's Inspector commented:

"The sacred and secular knowledge of the children together with their attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic are for their ages very creditable."

He amplified this by stating that a very large and increasing proportion of the children were "very young". This change dominated the Inspector's Report for 1864:

A great change has gradually come over this School during the last seven years. More than two-thirds of the children are now of the Infant age, and it is in all respects desirable to adapt the system of education to the altered circumstances. The Reading, Writing and Arithmetic and general intelligence of the comparatively few older children present was very creditable to their Teacher."

The Management Committee spent much time on this part of the 1864 Report and its members put forward a variety of reasons for this striking change-unfortunately the Minutes did not specify these-

"but it was doubted if they accounted for it fully, and the desire was expressed that the Committee should give the subject serious consideration."

The upshot of this further consideration was not recorded. During the years in question economic conditions in rural areas such as Cuckfield parish were difficult indeed and it is possible that many parents could not afford to lose even the tiny additions to family incomes from setting their older children to whatever work was available for them. Certainly, there is nothing whatever to suggest that any child was ever turned away from the Cuckfield School because the parents had failed to pay over the weekly 'Pence'.

The changed age-pattern of the School did not prevent it from continuing to play a large and valuable role in education. Nor had support for the School in the Congregational Church diminished. The Church itself had to face the heavy commitment for rebuilding the Chapel and in 1866 the minister, the Rev. Joseph Stuchberry, urged Church Meeting to make the building of a new School Room its first priority. He pointed out that this would enable the Church to use the new and larger School Room for its services during the rebuilding of the Chapel itself. In April 1867 a small group of senior members of the Church met to discuss fund-raising. Several of these men were leading figures in the life of Cuckfield and wealthy. Three of them - Messrs. Knott, Payne and Pratt - each promised £250 and others promised sums of from £10 to £50. In terms of the purchasing power of money in 1867 these sums of £250 were huge indeed.

With such a flying start it was possible to begin building work in 1868 and the new School Room was completed by February 1869 at a cost of £700. The architects were Searle and Son of London and the newspaper account of its opening noted that: "The School is generally admired." Its Gothic touches would have been very much to the architectural taste of the times. This was a great occasion for the Congregational Church, for the British School and for the local community and the celebrations were on a characteristically large scale and spread over a week. On the evening of Monday 8 February 1869 a Public Meeting was held:

"when notwithstanding the weather was very unfavourable, a large company met together to rejoice in the completion of the undertaking, and to welcome among them their esteemed Chairman, Charles Reade, Esq., M.P."

There was no Flower Club in those days but the School Room did not lack for decoration:

"The Room was tastefully decorated with evergreens and mottoes, amongst the latter of which we noted, in addition to the loyal one at the head of the Room, 'God Save the Queen', the following:

Education, the Best Fortune.

Education, England's Glory.

Forward.

Upward and Onward.

Light Everywhere, Darkness Nowhere."

After more than a century of free public education it is all too easy for us to smile indulgently at this array of high-minded Victorian slogans. The last of these "Light Everywhere, Darkness Nowhere" was typical indeed of the growing enthusiasm for popular education and of the high hopes for national progress by this means. It reminds one irresistibly of the comment which Conan Doyle put into the mouth of Sherlock Holmes not so many years later: as Holmes and Watson were in a train passing by Clapham Junction their conversation was:

"Holmes: Look at those big, isolated clumps of buildings rising up above the slates, like brick islands in a lead-coloured sea.

Watson: The Board Schools.

Holmes: Lighthouses, my boy! Beacons of the future! Capsules with hundred of bright little seeds in each, out of which will spring the wiser, better England of the future."

The Special Report about the condition of the School presented to the Public Meeting stressed that in its seventeen years it had given education to some 400 children "with an outlay of over £800"- some £2 a child! The population of Cuckfield parish had increased substantially between 1852 and 1869 (from 3,200 at the 1851 Census to 4,400 at the 1871 Census) and the role of the Cuckfield British School had been of the greatest importance in helping to meet a large part of the growing educational needs of the community.

To be continued in Next Issue.

N. Caplan, M.A.-----

KOREA'S FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR

by Dr.E.M.Rosser

Today in Korea there is a strong Evangelical Church. Practically all the missionary work has been carried out by missionaries from America. However, the first missionary and martyr in Korea was the Rev. Robert Jermain Thomas, 1840-1866, a Welshman, who sailed for the Far East in July 1863.

He was the son of the Rev. Robert Thomas, Minister of Hanover Congregational Church, Llanover, near Abergavenny, Gwent, 1847-1884. He was born at Rhayader, Radnorshire, on 7th September, 1840.

He was three years at Llandovery College, where he studied Latin, Greek and French. He then spent a year as Assistant Master at a school in Northamptonshire, kept by a Congregational Minister, from whence he matriculated at London University. Following this, he studied for five years at New College, London, where he graduated B.A., and was the outstanding student of his year.

He preached his first sermon in his father's church at Hanover, on the text 'Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, today and for ever'. (Heb. 13:8). He was ordained at Hanover Congregational Church on 4th June, 1863, to become a missionary under the L.M.S. and was appointed to China. He and his wife sailed for Shanghai in July 1863 and landed in December. His path was directed from China to Korea in tragic circumstances. Three months after his arrival in China his wife died after a premature confinement.

He became interested in Korea through meeting some Koreans in China. He also had some differences with the London Missionary Society at this time. He wanted to attempt to enter Korea with the Christian Gospel, but the Mission Board would not agree.

In 1865, he went to Chefoo, where he met two Catholic Koreans in the home of the Rev. A. Williamson, of the National Bible Society of Scotland. Thomas decided to go to Korea as a Colporteur of the Society; the Rev. A. Williamson supplied Scriptures, Tracts and Expenses. They sailed in a Chinese Junk and arrived in Korea in September 1865 and remained until December, before returning to China. During this time, Thomas had learnt something of the language and decided upon the suitability of Korea as a Mission-field for the Christian Gospel.

Previous to this date, French Roman Catholic Missionaries had entered Korea in disguise. When they were discovered there was a terrible slaughter of them and their converts by the Koreans, when 19,000 lost their lives. As a result, the French High Admiral prepared to attack the Country. As

there was no other European in China who knew anything of the Korean language, Thomas was prevailed upon to join the expedition as an Interpreter. Thomas travelled from Peking to Chefoo to join the French Fleet. Thomas was anxious to return to Korea and as the Fleet had not reached Chefoo, he decided to travel on the ill-fated American Trading Schooner, 'The General Sherman'. This boat arrived off the West Coast of Korea in August 1866. The Koreans wanted no further Western interference, so the crew met a hostile coastguard who would not allow trading contacts. 'The General Sherman', nevertheless, proceeded to sail up the Taitong River to P'yongyang. Thomas threw Scripture portions ashore at Kang-suh-po-san. The son of a Korean who became a Christian, testified to his father having received one of these. Further up the River, two Catholics attempted to take some melons out of the ship. They were arrested and duly executed.

At Sook-Syum, Preston, the owner of the ship, went ashore and with his Chinese Interpreter, met the Governor of P'yongyang and the Commander of the Garrison. The Commander and three of his men went out to visit the 'General Sherman'. The ship's crew asked to see his Insignia of Office, given to him by the King of Korea and they then refused to return it. The four Koreans were forced into one of the ship's lifeboats and taken up the River. The Koreans offered a large reward for the rescue of their Countrymen. A Korean, named Pak Choon Kwum, rowed out to the lifeboat which was having difficulties in rapids. The Korean prisoners attempted to jump into the rowing boat. Two of them were drowned but the Commander and the remaining Korean managed to escape in P'yongyang. Hostilities continued, firing from the ship, lasting intermittently, for two weeks during which time twenty were killed and many wounded. The West Coast of Korea has huge tidal levels. One day, as the River receded, the General Sherman was stuck on the mud banks. The enraged Koreans determined to burn the boat and sent down the River a large boat loaded with burning pine branches on 3rd September, 1866. The crew and passengers, which numbered 24 (19 Malay and Chinese and five others) jumped into the water to escape and were killed as they waded ashore. Thomas and a Mr. Hogarth were British, the owner of the ship, the Master and the Mate, were Americans.

Thomas, after he waded ashore, offered his slayer a Bible, which he refused at first. Thomas then knelt down to pray before he was killed. The man who killed him took the Bible home. His Nephew later graduated in the Union Christian

College in P'yongyang and helped in Bible translation work. A 12 year old boy, in the crowd received three copies of the Scriptures Thomas distributed on the shore. Fearing to keep the books, he gave them to a soldier who tore out the leaves and papered the inside of his home with them. Through reading these Scriptures, some Koreans became Christians.

From such beginnings, the Gospel has spread in Korea, into a strong Evangelical Church. On May 8th, 1927, a thousand Korean Christians assembled for a Memorial Service to the Rev. R.J. Thomas, on the Island of Sook-syon, where it is believed he was buried. The same year, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church appointed a Committee of One from each Presbytery to erect a Thomas Memorial Church at P'yongyang. By 1932, \$1,860 had been collected. The Church was dedicated and opened in September 1933, in the presence of the Members of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea. They were then meeting in P'yongyang, which since the truce in 1952, is the Capital of Communist North Korea, where as far as we know, no Churches are allowed.

The name of the Rev. R.J. Thomas and the story of his heroic action in taking the Christian Gospel to Korea (under such tragic circumstances) is well known in that land today.

I have visited the Church from which he came at Llanover, where there is a photograph of him, and a stone commemorating his pioneer mission work. (There are also some interesting original letters).

Dr. S.E. Moffett, whose parents were pioneer missionaries in Korea, recently addressed the Anglo-Korean Society in London and gave us the sad news that the Thomas Memorial Church has now been destroyed.

E.M. Rosser

Addendum

For further sources see the great number of L.M.S. Documents at Livingstone House, now removed to the School of Oriental Studies at the London University. Also Hanes Eglwys Annibynol Cymru Vol. 1. 35-7, and Vol. 5 5. 17. Also Histories of the London Missionary Society etc. (Ed.)

Guyana Congregational Union 1883-1983

In April 1983 the Guyana Congregational Union celebrates its centenary. What a wealth of human endeavour and Divine inspiration, heartbreak and joy lies behind that statement!

Guyana is on the northern coast of South America. Its tropical forests reach down to a narrow coastal strip of land reclaimed from the sea where more of the people live. Roughly they are half of African and half of Indian descent. The Africans were taken there, against their will, by white men, to work the sugar plantations. The Indians were cheap replacement labour when slavery was abolished. Guiana, means 'land of waters'. It has been a land of tears.

Congregationalism began in Guyana when a Dutch planter, Hermanus Post, asked the London Missionary Society to send a missionary to look after the spiritual needs of the Africans on his plantation. Because of the wonderful work of John Wray, the missionary who was sent, the first churches for the ordinary people of Guyana were Congregational Churches. In those days, negroes were forbidden to gather for any purpose other than work, either before sunrise or after sunset. The 'gathered church' of that generation were often a group under a palm tree studying a fragment of the Gospel by the light of a lantern. The negro spiritual 'steal away to Jesus' sums up a historical fact.

In a book written in 1848 I came across this comment, "When Hermanus Post began to teach some of his house slaves to read, he was called an incendiary, a firebrand, a revolutionist and other hard names". As he died in 1809 it shows that he had made some beginnings in education before this date. That classes were being held by 1812 is evident from the efforts of plantation owners to prevent people from attending. The Rev. John Davies rented a house in Georgetown and by 1815 a school was flourishing and a Congregational Church was built there. There are a number of schools with Congregational foundation which have functioned continuously for one hundred and thirty years or more and one, at New Amsterdam, which dates back as far as 1836. Congregationalists laid the foundations of education in Guyana. There is a record that by 1830 there were 19,405 in day schools, Sunday Schools and evening classes. From 1834 Congregationalists sent schoolmasters as well as missionaries. In 1842 the first minister of African descent was ordained in the Congregational Church at Lodge village, near Georgetown.

The opposition of Planters and the Authorities was the greatest frustration to the Christian leaders of the early days. In 1823 the Rev. John Smith was falsely accused of causing a rebellion of the slaves, was condemned to be hanged and died of TB in a Georgetown prison. During his last days he was compelled by the authorities to pay

the cost of his trial. He had to write a bill payable by the London Missionary Society. It was one of the last things he wrote. Years later someone made the exciting discovery that in the corner of the cheque in small letters was written the text 2. Corinthians 4., 8.9. The message had reached England - 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.' When the facts became known there was a great outcry in Parliament and the campaign that ensued brought to an end slavery in the British Empire. Loyal Congregationalists of Georgetown built a church in his memory. It bears his name to this day.

By 1883 Congregational Churches had been established throughout the coastal towns and villages. Gradually a local ministry developed. Feeling the need for mutual assistance the British Guyana Congregational Union was formed. Its existence over the years has been the means of encouragement for many a group of isolated Congregationalists and at times its national outlook has lead to effective action where local leadership alone would have been ineffective.

At a later stage the work of the LMS was taken over by the Congregational Missionary Society and great work was done by Congregational ministers who went out to serve groups of Churches in difficult circumstances. Health considerations meant that few stayed for lengthy periods. Several died there. Meanwhile the local leadership was growing and many young men, called to the ministry, came to England to be ordained and returned to serve the churches from which they had emerged. Now that it is no longer a British colony considerable changes have taken place and all the ministers are of African descent. Government departments are less sympathetic to the Christian cause than during the CMS years and the administration of the schools changed. Today there are 37 churches with some 7000 members. They are served by only five ministers !

Over the years the Congregational Churches of Guyana have produced many of its leading citizens. By way of illustration one church alone (Smith Church Georgetown) at one period included in its membership leading lawyers and a judge, several head-teachers including the Principals of the two chief High Schools, two West Indies Test cricketers, the chief medical officer at the largest hospital, the Deputy chief of the Education Department, a leading broadcaster who later became Education Minister, leading civil servants and the football team which reached the Cup Final. (The minister, who played in the team did not allow the Final to be played because it was

scheduled for a Sunday)

There is great hardship in Guyana today. Foods and goods which we take for granted in this country are in short supply or unobtainable. Incomes are low and unemployment high. With great courage a handful of leaders seek to serve the Congregational churches which, over the years, have developed at great cost. As the centenary of the Congregational Union of Guyana approaches we salute their courage and patience and pray that in the days ahead God's Hand will be seen at work.

* I was minister of Smith Church during the period referred to above, Deputy Chairman of the Congregational Union and would have been Chairman had not ill-health necessitated my return, broadcast regularly each month and was the denominational representative on major national committees.

George Musgrave
(C.H.S. Missionary 1951-4)
(in Guyana.)

REVIEWS

1. The work of revising and printing the supplementary Catalogue of the Congregational Library goes on apace. Part II appeared in the Spring of 1982 (obtainable price £5.00 from the Congregational Federation, The Congregational Centre, 4 Castle Gate, Nottingham, NG1 7AS; Tel: Nottingham (0602) 413801). The introductory note reads, "This is a continuation of the Interim Catalogues begun with Part I in 1981 and it is now expected that Part III, which it is hoped will be available by the end of the year (82) will be the last part. We trust that this will supply a long felt need especially as the Library moves to its new home as part of Dr. Williams Library in London.

These words of the Rev. Elsie Chamberlain indicate the part played by the Congregational Federation in its publication of the Catalogue. The late Bernard Honess and the Rev. Charles E. Surman have prepared the initial lists consisting of approximately 20,000 books for Vol III (1910-1970) of the Congregational Catalogue. It was the wish of the Memorial Hall Trust and Mr. John Wilcox in particular, that this immense amount of labour in the preparation of a supplementary Catalogue should not be wasted and so it was decided in 1980 to finalise and publish their work. For further details of the work undertaken see the Congregational Historical Circle Magazine No.7. December 1981 pp 25-6. Part II covers the letters (Ga-Ny). The Library is now housed under the hospitable and respected roof of the Dr. Williams Library at 14, Gordon Square, off Tottenham Court Road, London, W.C.1.

2. The Congregational Way, Apostolic legacy, Ministry, Unity, Freedom. by Harold Hodgkins M.A., Published by the Congregational Federation at the Congregational Centre, 4 Castle Gate, Nottingham and printed by the John Penry Press, Price £5.00 postage 80p extra.

The 180 pages of this book marks the first decade of the Congregational Federation's existence. There are 15 chapters and each one is a compact yet comprehensive survey of the salient heights of Christian and Congregational doctrine. In her forward the Rev. Elsie D. Chamberlain writes "This book achieves magnificently what it set out to do...."

2. Michael R. Watts Volume "The Dissenters" with subtitles "From the Reformation to the French Revolution" is published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, price £15.(1978).

The preface claims to be the first substantial history of English and Welsh Dissent to appear for more than sixty years! The chapter titles alone inspire and kindle one's interest. "The Lords people of the willing sort : The Genesis of Dissent, 1532-1640". "When Women Preach and Cobblers Pray" : "The Liberation of Dissent 1641-1662". "No Cross No Crown" : The Persecution of Dissent, 1660-1689". These opening chapters lead on to others dealing with the Toleration of Dissent 1690-1730, entitled "A Plain called Ease; The Way to heaven - The Revival of Dissent 1740-1791. Appendices are added on the John Evans list with number and distribution of Dissenters in the early eighteenth century. A Bibliography and Index. Volume two is yet to appear. Michael R. Watts has done Free-churchmanship a great service. In every way which one is capable of judging, it is a work of supreme worth, to be set alongside the great Congregational and Free Church Histories, and has that desirable quality of being absorbing and readable. The author is on the staff of Nottingham University. The price need not frighten anyone, after all, for what are lending libraries for ?

I. Watts.

The Non-conformist Conscience, Chapel and Politics 1870-1914 by D.W.Bebbington "Analyses the political impact of the Nonconformists at the peak of their strength. Publishers George Allen Unwin 1982, 192pp Hardback £10.00.

The English Connection by Bryan W. Ball, published by James Clarke and Co., £7.50, 1981, 247pp. A very interesting if unusual work in that it is an attempt at a learned apology for Seventh Day Adventism. Unusual in that in place of scripture references - though they are present - reference and long quotations are made to and

taken from the leading Puritan preachers of the 16th and 17th Century. It equates Puritanism with separatism, and glosses over Freechurchmanship, but then it is a horse from an unusual stable.

T.Watts.

Centenary Booklets

The Lingdale URC and ex-Congregational Church founded 1880-1 (year books differ) has published a booklet to mark the centenary. It is the story of pioneer church settlement when there was a rapid increase in the growth of this iron mining area of Yorkshire. The contents include messages from former ministers with brief accounts of very varied incidents and events.

T.W.Ashley-Smith.

The History of Wycliffe by B.F.Mitchell 1981, 48pp, £1.75 from Wycliffe Congregational Church, Sheffield or Mr.D.A.Crooker, 56 Carter Knowle Road, Sheffield. It is an informative and pleasantly written and produced history of the work beginning as a Sunday School in 1859, leading to the foundation of the Church in 1873. The Church evidently benefited by the demolition in 1977 of its big 1877. Chapel and extensive somewhat later, school premises. The site was required by the Corporation, who funded the attractive modern premises nearby. Pastors have included those of the Rev. Walter Lenwood, B.A., LL.B., (1889-1905) whose son and daughter, Frank and Norah, gave notable service with the L.M.S., which is here chronicled, together with Frank's theological wanderings: of the Rev. T.T.James, M.A.; (1907-13) later chairman of the C.C.E.W. and of the present pastor Mr.J.A.Clarke, since 1963. There is a slight confusion in the account of the hymn books used, but the story of the Church, named, presumably after the great translator and reformer but no doubt also from the Christian names of an early benefactor, Wycliffe Wilson, is told with a wealth of interesting detail by the former Church Secretary.

W.Ashley-Smith

N.B.Reference to Sheffield reminds us that this fine city will be the venue for the Congregational Assembly in 1983 when Dr.Bill Ashley-Smith will succeed Rev.John Travell as Chairman of the Congregational Federation.

FROM OUR CONTEMPORARIES

THE UNITARIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society Vol.XVII No.4 April 1982. This edition contains articles on "The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland; Its Heritage and Ethos", a continuing list of the Unitarian Congregations

in Great Britain and where their records are located, 'Unitarian Ministers as Schoolmasters 1780-1850; some notes by John Seed and an Index for the Transactions.

THE BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. XXIX No. 5 January 1982. This edition contains an "In Memoriam to Henry Jewson, and articles on "Teaching Prophet: The Life and Continuing Influence of Theodore Henry Robinson by Peirce Matheney Jr, Henry Danvers, his wife and the "Heavenly Line" by Geoffrey F. Nuttal and How Relative Should Theology Be? by Robert Ellis.

The Baptist Quarterly Vol. XXIX No. 6 April 1982. This edition contains articles on "The Servant is not greater than his Master": The Anabaptists and the suffering church by A.F. Kreider; The Elizabethan Familists: a separate group as perceived by their contemporaries by J.W. Martin.

The Baptist Quarterly, Vol. XXIX No. 7 July 1982. This edition contains articles on "Anabaptists Theologies in Childhood and Education (I) The repudiation of Infant Baptism by D.F. Tennant; The General Baptist Church, Netherton, Dudley by C.S. Hall; and Spurgeon and the Baptist Missionary Society by Brian Stanley.

The Baptist Quarterly Vol. XXXIX No. 8 October 1982. This edition contains two articles of considerable interest to Congregationalists. Dr. Patricia Rooke, writing under the title 'Evangelical Missionary Rivalry in the British West Indies - Religious altruism and Economic Reality; gives a depressing account of competition and mutual recrimination between Missionary Societies in Jamaica in the years following slave emancipation in 1834. The BMS's rivals were the Wesleyan and Church Missionary Societies as well as the L.M.S., but the latter provides most material for the writer. Other articles include those by D.F. Tennant in his series of 'Anabaptist Theologies of Childhood and Education "Baptists, Bishops and the Sacerdotal Ministry" by Clinton Bennett and "Baptists in the Twentieth Century" a report on the B.H.S. Summer School 1982.

J.A. Smith.

THE WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Proceedings of Vol. XLIII September 1981. This issue contains articles on "Women and Early Methodism"; the Methodist Archives, some recent accessions; a bibliography of Methodist Historical Literature, 1979; and on the John Wesley's Conversion Place Memorial.

Proceedings of Vol. XLIII December 1981 contains articles on The Methodist Class Meeting: The significance of its decline by William W. Dean; A Methodist Family: Ministerial

Succession and Inter-marriage by Harold K.Moulton and
John Wesley's Third London Chapel by John A.Vickers.

Proceedings of Vo.XLIII May 1982 contains articles on
The Origins of Primitive Wesleyan Methodism in Ireland by
R.Alan Kerr; A Bibliography Methodist Historical Literature,
1980 - by Clive D.Field; Hymns on the Lord's Supper by
C.N.R. Wallwork and the Manuscript collection at Wesley
College, Bristol, a Handlist by Diarmaid MacCulloch.

THE CROMWELL ASSOCIATION

"The Cromwelliana 1981-82". This contains articles on
Cromwells Political Settlement by John Pardoe, M.A.;
Standards of the Ironsides 1642-1647 by Barry Denton; Oliver
Cromwell as Leader by Miss G.M.Marston; The English Civil War
Novel by J.L.Atkins; King Oliver by Dr.John Morrill and
Oliver Cromwell, Man and Movie by Dr.Ivan Roots. J.Bray.

THE UNION OF WELSH INDEPENDENTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY -

'Y Cofiadur' - May 1982. Y Cofiadur Journal of the Union of
Welsh Independents Historical Society issue No.46 May 1981
contains the Annual Lecture delivered at Machynlleth in 1979
by Geraint Tudur on "Gwir Ffrewyll y Methodistiaid".
Dr. G. F. Nuttall, reproduces the replies of Edmund Jones,
Pontypool to the 20 questions of John Eyre's inquiry into
the "State of Religion in Monmouthshire". The document in
English is dated 13 May 1793, the year of 'the Old Prophets'
death. The issue also contains a Bibliographical list
relating to the U.W.I. Churches in Wales under the several
counties, prepared by the Editor the Rev.Dafydd Wyn Wiliam,
Llwyn Llinos, Bodedern, Holyhead, Gwynedd.
Also Cofiadur No.47 1982 contains a conclusion of Dr.G.F.
Nuttall's article dealing with the 'state of Religion in
Gwent' at the end of the 18th century. The Annual Lecture
delivered at Llandovery during the Assembly of the Union of
Welsh Independents, by Professor Glanmor Williams of the
University of Wales, entitled "Crefydd dan gysgod erledigaeth:
Anghydfurfwyr De-Odwyrain Cymru, 1660-1688". "Religion
under the shadow of persecution: the Nonconformists of South
Wales, 1660-1688. Price 50p postage extra.
Also from the Rev.Dafydd Wyn Wiliam (address above) Y Casglwr
an inovation that could be best translated the Connoisseur
or Collector, containing an unusual variety of articles on
Art, rare books, etc. relating to Welsh Church biography etc.
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THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON'S CONNEXION AND SIERRA LEONE MISSION

"Voice" Issue No.278 January-March 1982 contains news from Sierra Leone as well as news of many of their Churches.

"Voice" Issue No.279 April-June 1982 contains a report on a visit of Mr.Kenneth Stone, a Trustee of the Connexion, to Sierra Leone; details of the Connexions 200th Anniversary celebrations at Tunbridge Wells; News of the Churches and a profile of the Connexions new President Mr.Douglas G. Staplehurst,F.C.A.

"Voice" Issue No.280 July-September 1982 contains news from Sierra Leone as well as news of many of their Churches.

"Voice" Issue No.281 October-December 1982 contains an interesting resume on the "Scripture Union" as well as the sad news that both Mr.Quinton D'eath for many years Secretary of the Connexion and Rev.David Beckley, Editor of "The Voice" are standing down from their current positions to be replaced by Mr.Douglas Staplehurst as President and Mr.Dick Warlow as temporary editor. We wish those who have retired well, and those who have taken on the new tasks, Gods Blessing.

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY

Vol.2.No.9. May 1982 of The Journal of, contains articles on "James Hamilton and English Presbyterianism by R.Buick Knox,M.A.,Ph.D.,D.D., and a considerable number of book reviews.

Vol.2.No.10 October 1982 of The Journal of, contains articles on "Some Eighteenth Century Welsh Hymnwriters" by Pennar Davies, B.Litt.,Ph.D: Henry Barrowe's "A True Description"1589, a copy found at Cheshunt College by Stephen C.Orchard,M.A.,Ph.D: Peter Sterry, the millennium and Oliver Cromwell by Nabil I. Matar, M.A.,Ph.D; George Gilberts Preaching Diary for 1784 and 1785 by Neil S.Caplan, M.A.,M.Litt and Thomas Gasquoine and the Origins of the Leicester Conference by Mark D.Johnson,B.A.,Ph.D. John Bray.

THE OPENING OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CENTRE,CASTLE GATE,NOTTINGHAM

A capacity Congregation was present for the Official Opening on September 11th by Mrs.Dilys Cleaves.Present were the Sheriff of Nottingham the Rev.John Pennington and Mrs.Pennington. The President of the Congregational Federation the Rev.John Travell,B.D.,M.Th.,was in the Chair.

Others taking part were the Rev.R.J.McKelvey,D.Phil., Principal of the Congregational College,Manchester who led the Bible Study in the morning session. After Luncheon the afternoon session began with a full congregation for the Historic and Official Opening. Taking part were Mr.Fred Riceman for the Memorial Hall Trust,Mr.L.Lloyd Smith the Architect,Leslie Morrison and Anna Ward who led in the Devotions, The Rev.Henry D.Gray who spoke on behalf of the Congregationalists of the U.S.A,The Rev.Elsie D.Chamberlain, B.D.,delivered a challenging address and Musical items were

rendered by the Ashland Quartet and the Long Stratton Choir, Mr. Gordon Forster was at the Organ. Messages of Good Wishes were received from Lady Stansgate, the President Emeritus and the Rev. Ransom Dow, M.A..

The Official Opening was performed by Mrs. Cleaves and Mr. John Wilcox spoke of future plans. The Congregational Historical Circle was represented by a small stand near the very interesting Exhibition of Photographs, Documents and Drawings, including a bust of Cromwell and other items which will now be preserved at the Centre. A Commemorative Mug was for sale which incorporated an artists impression of the Centre, price £1.50. Christmas Cards with the same picture are available from the Centre as well as Notelets packs, obtainable from the Centre, postage extra.

The centre will in addition to being the Headquarters of the Congregational Federation, be furnished with committee rooms, as well as ample conference facilities, a library and it is hoped some accommodation for use for residential conferences and study sessions.

T. Watts.

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(Continued from Page 15)

21) Mrs J.B. Chambers (New Zealand) writes to give us news of our churches 'down under' as follows:-

(a) The Three Kings Congregational Church in Auckland has recently celebrated its 75th Anniversary and has produced a booklet on its history to commemorate this. A copy has been forwarded to the Circle for which we are most grateful.

(b) The Congregational Union in New Zealand celebrates its 100 th Anniversary in October 1983 and its 100th year 1983/84. Rev. Chambers has been asked to write a history to commemorate this and is in the initial stages of research at present. It is hoped to publish it in time for the 1984 New Zealand Congregational Union Assembly. It is obviously too soon to know what the cost will be but Rev. Chambers would be interested to hear from anyone who might be interested in purchasing a copy on publication as this would give them some idea of the

number to print. If you would be interested in obtaining a copy when published drop a line to Rev.J.Chambers, P.O.Box 2047, Raumati Beach, New Zealand.

22) Circle Members living in London may be interested in the programme of the 1662 Society for the next few months as follows:-

January 10th 1983:- Faulty fire engines, sea coal & penitents Life in the City Churches during the Civil War and Interregnum. Speaker Rev.A.Argent, B.Sc. Venue: St.Andrews by-the-wardrole, Queen Victoria Street, London EC4.

February 7th 1983-"Virgils Prophecy of a Saviour"
Speaker Jasper Griffin, Balliol College, Oxford.
Venue-City Temple, Holborn Viaduct, EX1.

Tuesday 8th March 1983- Dialogue on Baptism
Speakers:Rev.E.Chamberlain (Cong.Fed) and Rev.B.D.Black,
(Head of Mission Dept. Baptist Union) at Westminster Chapel,
Buckingham Gate, SW1.

All meetings commence at 7.30 p.m., Cold Supper, Tea and Coffee will be served from 7.00 p.m. For full details telephone 274-5541. All welcome.

23) We are sorry to hear that Rev.Charles Surman has now formerly resigned his post as Archivist for the West Midlands Province of the URC and that this has been accepted by their Assembly subject to a replacement being found! The URC West Midlands Archives are situated at Spear Street URC Church, Leamington Spa and at Rev.Surman's home. He apparently is not retiring however and has accepted a number of provincial dates to lecture up and down the country. Part 111 of the Cong.Fed. Memorial Hall Congregational Library Catalogue is now with the printer and could be available in January 1983.

24) It has come to light that a colourful leaflet was produced for the Philip Doddridge Festival services approximately two years ago giving brief details of Philip Doddridge D.D. (1702-51) and it is hoped to reproduce some of the details from this in a future issue of the magazine. The actual leaflet was published by the Doddridge and Commercial Street URC Churches (Northampton) and if you would like a copy of the leaflet contact Mr.A.E.Wyatt, 1, Branksome Avenue, Northampton, encl.a s.a.e. and 5p to cover the cost of leaflet.

The Congregational History Circle

The Circle was founded in 1978 to encourage an interest in all forms of Congregational History. It holds an Annual General Meeting in May every year and these meetings are generally held in different parts of the country. Plans are in hand to link a study weekend to this each year and we are actively working on plans to regionalise our activities. We are steadily building up our archives with material being received from a number of countries of the world. We were actively represented and involved with the International Congregational Fellowship Conference held at Bangor, North Wales in July 1981 and have fought to keep the Memorial Hall and the associated Congregational Library in London and in this we have achieved an acceptable compromise. The Congregational History Circle is accepted by all three branches of the Continuing Congregational Churches and two of these are represented on its Committee. Circle Members receive a magazine in May and December each year. The Annual Subscription for 1983 will be for U.K. Members £1 - 25 and for Overseas Members £1 - 75 for the year. Subscriptions are due on January 1st each year.

The Congregational History Circle Magazine

Editor: Rev. Trevor Watts, 16 Shelton Road, Shrewsbury, Salop. Backnumbers (Issues of Editions 1 - 8 available) contact the Secretary. Published twice yearly by the Congregational History Circle to record the History of all branches of Congregationalism at home and abroad. Our intention is to produce a balanced interesting publication and the editor welcomes original articles, drawings and photographs for possible publication. Articles should preferably be typed. The Editor appreciates a stamped addressed envelope if a reply is required. A complete range of back numbers is available from the address above.

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