

HARRY HOPKINSON

Harry Hopkinson was a Yorkshire lad born in Ripponden the son of John Hopkinson, a stone mason, on 24 May 1861. He entered the Wesleyan ministry in 1888, married Rosetta Eliza Olley in Fulham in 1892 and came to Maidenhead in 1894 where their only child Ida Rose was born in September 1896.

Few records of his early ministerial circuits can be found but for one while here in the

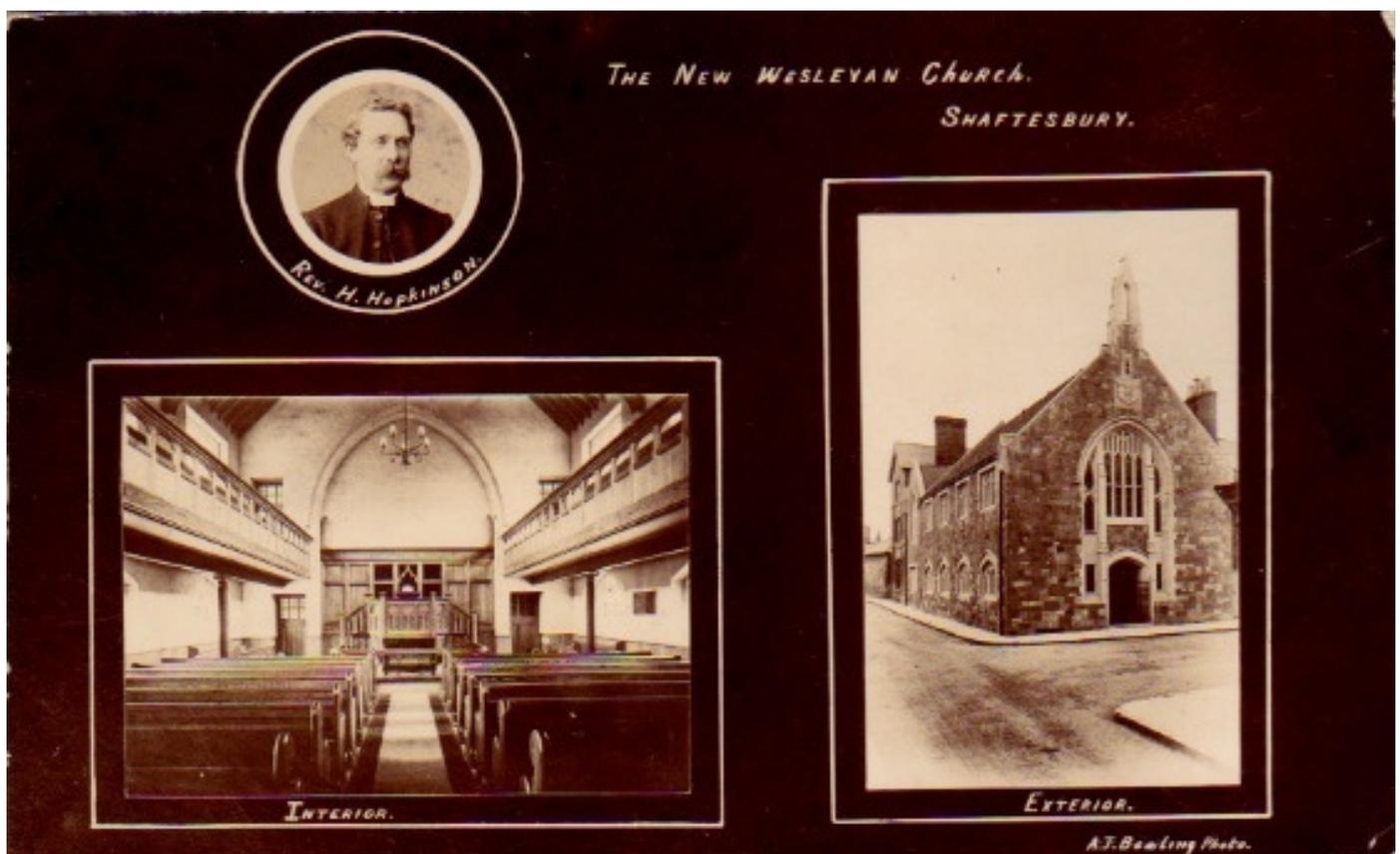
SLOUGH WESLEYAN CHAPEL.

"The Wesleyan Chapel presented a festive appearance on Sunday last, on the occasion of the Chapel Anniversary and Harvest Thanksgiving, and the band of decorators under Mrs. Seymour's direction were very much complimented on the pretty and effective way in which the floral decorations were carried out. Sermons appropriate to the occasion were preached by the Rev. Harry Hopkinson, of Maidenhead, who in the morning delivered a very suitable discourse based on Job xxi., 15, ." What is the Almighty that we should serve Him; and what profit shall we have if we pray to Him?". The preacher showed how the idea of gain dated from the fall and that it had obtained such a hold on man that the value of religion was in the time of Job and is today calculated by the profit it will give. To the question "What profit shall we have if we serve Him?" the preacher replied that men profit very often temporarily, always physically, spiritually, and eternally.

In the evening Mr. Hopkinson preached to a large and attentive congregation on the Harvest Certain. He took as his text "He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of harvest" (Jeremiah v. 24), and dealt with the national and spiritual aspects of harvest". (Slough, Eton & Windsor Observer 12 October 1895)

Harry and his family left Maidenhead in August 1897.

Between 1905 and 1908 he was minister at Bell Street Wesleyan Chapel in Shaftesbury where the old chapel was pulled down and replaced by another (see postcard below). The Church remains largely as built to this day but for recent renovations to the main entrance:



In 1904 Harry received a great welcome (with undertones !) as the new Superintendent of the Dover circuit:

NEW WESLEYAN MINISTER WELCOMED

“At a meeting held in the Wesley Hall on Wednesday evening, a hearty welcome was given to the new Superintendent the Rev H Hopkinson, formerly of Andover, and Mrs and Miss Hopkinson.

Mr E.C. Patmore (Senior Circuit Steward) who presided, said that it was fifty years ago that the Folkestone Circuit was divided from Dover, and some of them knew what excellent work had been accomplished in Dover during that period in connection with their Methodist Church. They had met that evening to give to their new Superintendent, the Rev Harry Hopkinson, and his wife and daughter a very hearty welcome to their Circuit. (Applause)

Mt Ellis (Junior Circuit Steward), also gave a welcome to Mr, Mrs and Miss Hopkinson especially on behalf of the Wesley Hall friends and those from the neighboring villages. He asked the Dover Wesleyan Methodists to loyally support their new Superintendent, and make a greater advancement in the spiritual life of the people in the district.

The Rev A. Clay Lynwood said that they had felt much regret at the departure of a most genial and esteemed Superintendent whom they unitedly wished every happiness and success in his new sphere of labour. He also wished to offer a cordial welcome to Mr Gregory’s successor, his wife and daughter, and to the esteemed wife of their minister Mr Martin. Mr Lynwood also referred to the present European War, and applied the idea of subordinating various considerations to present a solid front to the enemy, to their Church life - that they should unite, not only to establish the success of their Circuit, but to achieve the greater aim of the establishment of Christ’s Kingdom in their midst. He did not suggest that they had any differences in th the Circuit but thought they were most united..

The Rev J.H. Martin, on behalf of Snargate Street Wesleyan Church also offered a hearty welcome to Mr, Mrs and Miss Hopkinson and expressed his thanks for the reference to his own wife.

The Rev H Hopkinson, who was received with “Kentish Fire”, in response, said that he trusted that they would all join hands and hearts in God’s service in connection with the Wesleyan Methodist Church, which was progressing, and not, as some people alleged, dying out.

The new minister will preach at the Sunday School Anniversary at the Wesley hall on Sunday.

(Dover Express)

While at Dover he was privileged to entertain the Scottish contralto Madam Strathearn who travelled extensively around the British Isles giving concerts:

MADAME STRATHEARN AT DOVER.

“The well known Scottish contralto, Madame Jessie Strathearni, A.R.A.M on Wednesday paid a visit to Dover, and sang to, and addressed, two gatherings at the Wesley Hall, Folkestone Road, with the object of raising money for the Trust Funds of that building.

In introducing her to the afternoon audience, the Rev. H. Hopkinson said that he once heard their visitor say that before she died she hoped that she would sing in all the Methodist Chapels in the country. It was at the time remarked that she probabiy did not know there were about 8,000 of them. but though she had, however, sung in very nearly half of them, this was her first visit to Dover, and they were very pleased to welcome her.

Madame Strathearn, in the afternoon. contributed “He shall feed His flocks”, “Abide with me”, “The Rosary” etc. In the evening she sang almost exclusively patriotic songs, including her new one of her own composition - “The Women of England” - a fine piece of music.

She has a splendid voice, and those who did not hear her on Wednesday missed a decided treat. Madame Strathearn gave an address both in the afternoon and in the evening.

Since the War, she has given a large number of entertainments to the troops, in which she sings. plays and recites, always concluding with a little Gospel temperance address”

At a public recognition service at the Salvation Army Hall for the purpose of welcoming the new local leaders Adjutant and Mrs Waters from Canterbury by the local Free Church ministers:-

The Rev H. Hopkinson, Wesleyan Superintendent Minister at Dover, in welcoming Adj and Mrs Waters, referred with pleasure to the prominent part the Salvation Army gave to women in its work, and, referring to what good women had done for God and humanity, the speaker instanced that of Harriet Beecher Stowe in the cause of freedom from slavery, and of Florence Nightingale, the splendid forerunner, in spite of great opposition, of those whom today were being acclaimed for the work they were doing for the wounded and dying. Though women had not yet the rights of citizenship, he felt that after this terrible war they would not have to ask twice for them in view of the splendid work they were doing; they would exert their influence for good and remove many evils that men had tolerated too long.

(Dover Express 14 July 1916)

When Harry left Dover in August 1916 his work there was greatly appreciated:

LYDDEN.

THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL.—The August "Dover Free Churchman" speaks of the regret as to the departure of the Dover Superintendent and Wesleyan minister, the Rev. H. Hopkinson, which is felt by Lydden Wesleyans, who did "great work in seeing the erection of the new chapel an accomplished fact. It is not too much to say that if Mr. Hopkinson had not come to the Circuit when he did, Lydden would still have been without its new chapel. He entered heartily into the scheme from the first, and lost no time in getting to work. He has seen some £450 raised for the new building while he has been with us, and of this amount he has personally solicited more than half, and chiefly from friends and sources outside the Circuit. The Lydden friends will ever remember with gratitude the faithful service of their Superintendent Minister, and the beautiful building in which they worship will often remind them of his sojourn amongst them. The total cost of the new chapel is £778; the amount raised is £589, leaving a debt of £189."

Dover Express Friday 11 August 1916

In 1918 Harry became Superintendent minister at Gwennap in Cornwall a prestigious place in the history of Methodism.

(In the 18th and early 19th centuries Gwennap parish was the richest copper mining district in Cornwall, and was called the "richest square mile in the Old World"

Gwennap Pit is a location where John Wesley preached 18 times between 1762 and 1789. The pit was caused by mining subsidence in the mid-18th century. After Wesley's death the local people turned the pit into a regular circular shape with turf seats viz):



Harry's obituary in the Methodist Minutes of Conference said of him:

"He had an evangelistic fervour and sought at all times to claim a verdict for his Master. In 1924, he became a Supernumary and resided in the Salisbury (Church Street) Circuit, where he continued to conduct services until the week before his death. He was strong in body, mind and spirit, and at eighty six could still cycle to his appointments."

**Harry died at his home in Salisbury on Friday 13 May 1949.
He predeceased his wife Rosetta who died in 1959 at the age of 94**