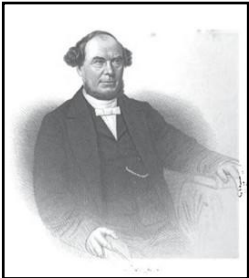
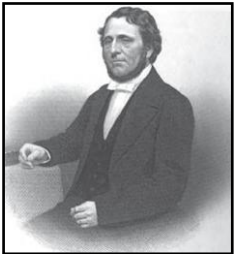
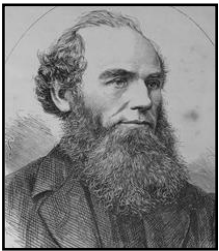
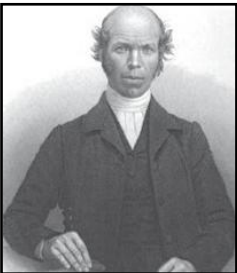
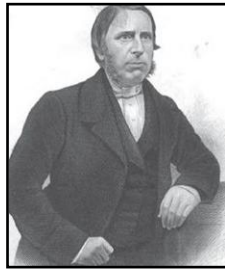


Basingstoke's Primitive Methodist Ministers: 1851-1940

Basingstoke's Primitive Methodist church and circuit (from 1932 Sarum Hill, following the Methodist Re-union) was served by a wide variety of superintendent ministers. To complement the information contained in the general history of Primitive Methodism in Basingstoke, the table below provides, wherever possible, images of these ministers and a short extract from their obituary or an alternative source to some insights into their approach to ministry.

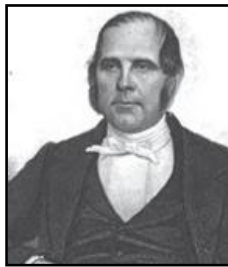
Years	Minister	Comments
1851-1854	seeking photo George Lee	
1854-1856	 William Brewer	Brewer took a lively concern in the spiritual welfare of the Connexion. He was a thorough believer in the doctrine of a present salvation at every service. He wanted souls converted at every meeting.
1856-1859	 Edmund Rawlings	Rawlings was 'a man of no dazzling gifts, but one who was full of the "milk of human kindness," while undistinguished by commanding powers, or brilliant attainments, there were unmistakably present these qualities which more than compensated for the absence of these, and without which great gifts are more repelling than attractive.'
1857-1859	 John Hill	A poet, artist and scholar, Hill shrank from public recognition and preferred to labour in remote country districts. While his obituary records that he was a faithful minister, a diligent pastor, a true friend, had a passion for soul saving and his spiritual children are all over the south of England.
1859-1861	 George Betts	Betts' obituary records that: 'His natural disposition being meek and gentle, he was imposed upon by unreasonable men; but he met all in the spirit of his Master. Indeed few have equalled him, perhaps none excelled the deceased in close, holy living, and calm Christian confidence in the atonement; and though in the pulpit he was not what some call brilliant, yet he was invariably sound, and often successful in winning souls to God.'

1861-
1863



Thomas Jackson

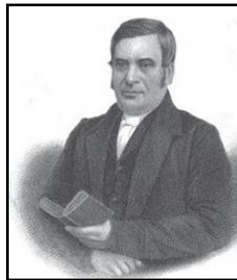
1863 -
1867



George Wallis

Wallis' obituary records that as a young minister in Hampshire during the 1830s 'he was subjected to brutal treatment from infuriated mobs for no other offence than that of preaching of the gospel. He lived however to see the hostility shown in this infant community, entirely cease, while the devoted labours of himself and his colleagues have been so blessed that the Primitive Methodist chapels and preaching places in the county are probably more numerous than of any other Nonconformist body.'

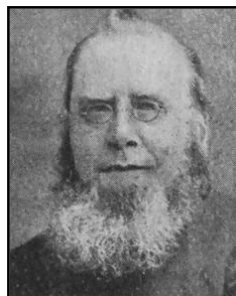
1867-
1869



George Price

Price's obituary records that he was a strict disciplinarian; ... a leader from the front. He took his pastoral work seriously often visiting 10-30 families each day. George observed Fridays as a fasting day and day for spiritual exercises.

1868-
1870
and
1883-
1886



Charles Portnell

Portnell's ministry ... was one of hard work, but he delighted in it. He was a good pastor, visiting thirty to forty families per week, and seldom left without prayer. His preaching was plain, but forceful, and hearers were interested and helped by the quaint manner in which his thoughts were expressed.

1870-
1873



Henry Green

Between 1846 and 1861, Green spent nearly 15 years ministering in New Zealand and Australia. Basingstoke was his penultimate posting.

1869-
1873



Henry Yeates

Yeates' obituary records that: 'He was especially gifted to stir and edify a congregation. He had a commanding presence, a rich deep voice, robust health, mental alertness and facility of expression, combined to produce a personality of no mean order'.

1873-
1876



Daniel Harding

In Harding's obituary, Rev. William Rowe observed that: 'Though not one of the most brilliant of men, Daniel Harding was a laborious, plodding and successful labourer, and the Church wants more of such.'

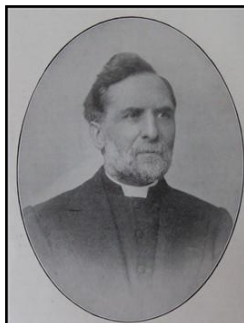
1876-
1880



Thomas Kench

His obituary records that Kench was 'hopeful and joyous in nature, he was deeply pious and had unbounded confidence in God. His piety was of a quite character, but was healthy, vigorous and manly, growing with his growth and expanding with his improvement in knowledge and advancement in years. His discourses were instructive, evangelical, practical and edifying, acting most effectively on the understanding and conscience of the hearers.' Moreover, his business ability was of a high order. In superintending his circuits he was sound in judgement, wise in counsel, conciliatory in spirit and pure in intention.

1879-
1883



Mark Trevethick

Trevethick aimed to be a successful preacher of the Gospel. His great work was the building up of the Church and the salvation of men. As a preacher he was evangelical and expository rather than argumentative. His discourses were well thought out and revealed careful preparation.

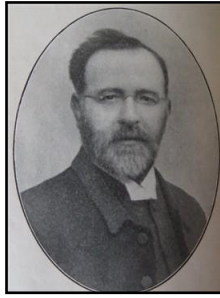
1883-
1886

see above

see above

Charles Portnell

1886-
1889



Thomas Whitehead

Whitehead's obituary records that he was a model circuit minister, and never sought district office or honour, though he could not altogether escape it. He was an able and powerful preacher, and his sermons always gave evidence of thorough preparation. He gave practical and clear expositions, occasional flashes of humour, and impassioned evangelical appeals. He always aimed at strengthening the spiritual life of the churches, and converting the unsaved. However, he did not leave other work undone. Few ministers did more in reducing debts and building new churches and schools.

1889-
1892



George Hunter

Hunter was a splendid visitor, and a true friend and practical helper in cases of distress. In the pulpit he was earnest, simple, practical and good. He aimed not at display. He preached not to please the ear and tickle the fancy, but to touch the heart and reach the soul. His sole ambition was to save souls.

1892-
1894



Richard Evans

Evans' obituary records that he served his church acceptably and successfully, being a painstaking and plodding minister of religion. He was a diligent pastor, ever welcome in the homes of the people who loved and trusted him. He believed ministers should know their people in their homes.

1894-
1897

seeking photo

John H Harradine

At the church anniversary in 1895, Harradine 'delivered an able speech on the need for holy living. They were here to do good. How could they most effectually accomplish it? The secret of the Apostle's success lay not in their learning or their eloquence. If it had they would have signally failed. The secret lay in the fact that they glorified God by a life of Christ-like action.' (*Hants and Berks Gazette*, 25 May 1895).

1897-
1898

seeking photo

Samuel Ainsworth

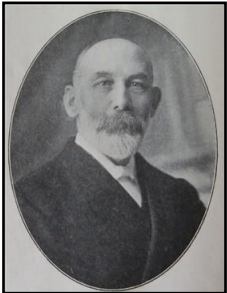
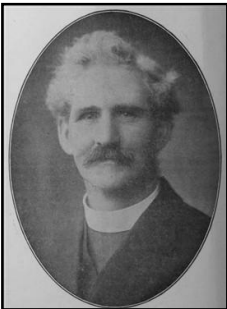
In his farewell address after only twelve months, Ainsworth said 'he believed they had had a happy and successful year ... he had many precious friends in the Circuit ... His last words to them were - Take care of your spiritual life.' (*Hants and Berks Gazette*, 16 July 1898)

1898-
1904



Joseph Beal

Beal's preaching style was clear, intelligent and evangelical. His supreme aim was the salvation of his hearers, and the improvement of the churches entrusted to his care. The general impression of his congregation was that he improved as a preacher the more frequently they heard him. In his six years at Basingstoke he preached over four hundred and fifty sermons and retained his reputation for freshness. Here he also superintended the erection of the magnificent new church on Sarum Hill.

1904- 1908	seeking photo Jonas Holroyd	On his arrival in Basingstoke, Holroyd stated that ‘he was their minister, their servant in the Lord, and was here to teach them what the Lord had taught him.’ (<i>Hants and Berks Gazette</i> , 30 July 1904)
1908- 1913	 John Jones	Jones was gifted with a voice such as few men possess, he could be heard by deaf people in his congregation, and was a favourite preacher at district camp-meetings and open-air services. As a preacher he kept to the evangelical aspect of the Connexion’s work and was an earnest soul-winner.
1913- 1916	seeking photo William G Rutherford	At his public recognition, Rutherford ‘showed that he possessed a spirit of cheerfulness and humour.’ In explaining how he acquired his Christian names he mentioned that he was ‘a delicate baby, and when the minister, who was a bigoted radical, called to christen him, his parents had not decided what to call him, and before his mother could say anything different, and before his father – a bigoted Nonconformist Tory, yet one of the best men he ever knew could protest, the minister had christened him William Gladstone.’ He went on to say that, with their cooperation he believed ‘this Church would be a mighty force.’ (<i>Hants and Berks Gazette</i> , 26 July 1913)
1916- 1921	seeking photo Frank Hull	At his recognition service, Hull ‘gave an address conspicuous for its earnestness and sincerity, and made an excellent impression’. (<i>Hants and Berks Gazette</i> , 29 July 1916)
1921- 1924	seeking photo Frank C Davidson	On being officially welcomed, Davidson explained that ‘he was an ardent believer in church fellowship, friendliness and federation, and he was an ardent supporter of Methodist union as a step towards the larger federation of the churches’. In referring to the high temperature, he went to express the hope ‘that the spiritual temperature would ... keep high and rise higher, for they needed warmth of heart if they were to have spiritual life and power.’ (<i>Hants and Berks Gazette</i> , 23 July 1921),
1924- 1928	 Thomas Sandford	Sandford’s obituary records that he was a faithful pastor and also a gifted and effective preacher. He read widely, and with originality of mind he stimulated and enriched his hearers by his exposition of the Scriptures and his proclamation of the great themes of the Christian faith. With evangelical passion he always sought to bring men back to his Lord. He was a keen fisherman and gardener, and revelled in the beauty and wonder of God’s creation. His personality was ‘good and gay’ and brought joy and light into the lives of those amongst whom he lived and laboured.

1928-
1932



Ezra Ramm

At Ramm's farewell gathering, the Minister of Immanuel Church described him 'as a man sent from God, as a preacher fearless and true, a man among men. For four years he has moved through the lives of men, women and children in Basingstoke, leaving love and laughter along his way. To serve the people through this church as the channel of communication has been his absorbing purpose, and to this end neither time, nor strength, nor any resource at his command have been spared.' (*Hants and Berks Gazette*, 8 July 1932 – also source of photo)

1932-
1937

seeking photo

William Briggs

'During his five years' ministry in the Basingstoke Circuit, Mr Briggs, by his constant and zealous attention to all matters appertaining to the welfare of his church, both spiritual and material, has won the deepest affection and esteem of the congregations of all the churches which the Circuit embraces. In all his labours he has had the loyal and devoted assistance of his wife ...' (*Hants and Berks Gazette*, 27 August 1937)

1937-
1940



Harold W Pope

Pope's obituary records that: 'He is remembered for his lively and vigorous preaching, his great administrative ability and above all for his faithful care of his people. His pastoral gifts were many and were exercised with such warmth and sympathy, that people in trouble, both within and outside the church, found him a tower of strength.'

Source: Unless otherwise indicated, the images and much of the text are taken from the My Primitive Methodist Ancestors website <http://www.myprimativemethodists.org.uk/> Thanks are due to Geoff Dickinson for all his work on compiling the information on the 'Primitive Methodist Ministers' pages.

Note: To some extent, this is work in progress, and any if anyone can supply one or more of the missing photographs, please get in touch.

Roger Ottewill
October 2018

rogerottewill@btinternet.com