

1st Holywood Presbyterian Church

Presbyterian Women



CELEBRATING 120 YEARS
of support for Missionary Work
by the women of the Congregation

November 2009



Presbyterian Women is a Christ centred organisation. In the logo above the circle around the cross represents women whose lives are centred on the lord Jesus Christ.

Presbyterian Women encourages women to become disciples of Christ and

Aims to highlight the need for

Love and Unity

Obedience to God

Christian Living and Spiritual Maturity

Service using gifts, time and money

Local and Global Mission

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN AT 1st HOLYWOOD

2009 marks 120 years of support and interest among the women of the congregation for Christian work initially overseas and then also at home. In the Annual Report of **1889** the Session comment *“on their pleasure in the **Formation of the Auxiliary of the Zenana Mission by the Ladies of the Congregation** which they had every reason to believe would be crowned with success and which they warmly commend to the sympathy of all ladies, young and old in the congregation.”*

This work has changed in format over the years but always the meetings, held weekly, fortnightly or monthly, have emphasised the need of our missionaries for the involvement of the people at home in prayer, personal contact by letter and email and gifts either in money or articles of clothing as were sewn and knitted during the early years.

The name of the group has also changed over the years. In the early years of the 20th century it became the **Ladies Missionary Society or Womens Missionary Society**. A **Girls Auxiliary** was formed in the Congregation in about 1922. This was to encourage girls from the age of nine to become interested in the work of mission in the church. *(Several members of the PW can remember their early days in the GA)*

In 1943 there was another change to **Women’s Missionary Association (WMA)**. **In 1955** the first **church service of the WMA** was held in 1st Holywood and there has been an **Annual Service** ever since.

As the **WMA** in 1st Holywood met in the afternoons in **1966** it was decided to form a **Young Wives Group (YWG)** for the ever increasing numbers of young families joining the congregation.

In 1971 the **WMA** became the **Presbyterian Womens Association (PWA)** incorporating the **WMA, the Women’s Home Mission and the YWG**. The YWG were now under the auspices of the PWA and had similar Aims and Objectives.

Now we are **Presbyterian Women** and continue the work started in 1888. In 2008 our **PW** raised over £4000 for Christian and charitable work.

This History of the work of the Women in the congregation has been put together using the information contained in the Church's Annual Reports. It helps us to understand the birth and development from the end of the 19th century until the 'Presbyterian Women' of today.

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**1888**

*In the Session's report for 1888 the beginning of this work was reported -*  
The Session cannot conclude this Report without expressing their pleasure at the formation of an Auxiliary to the Zenana Mission by the ladies of the congregation, which they have every reason to believe will be crowned with success, and which they warmly commend to the sympathy of all the ladies, young and old, in the Congregation.

*In the Committee's report of that year we find*

**'ZENANA MISSION'**

An Auxiliary of the Zenana Mission has been formed, and the use of a room for its meetings gladly given.

~~~~~  
1889

ZENANA MISSION

President - Mrs Halliday, the Manse, Secretary - Miss Hunter, Burnleigh

SESSION REPORT

The Session are greatly gratified at the success of the Zenana Auxiliary started early last year and they sincerely trust that all the ladies of the congregation will lend a hand to ensure its continued and increased prosperity.

In that report there is also the following -

REPORT OF LADIES AUXILIARY OF THE ZENANA MISSION

In submitting our first Report to the Congregation, we would ask them to remember that our Society is only in its infancy. In November 1888, some of the members of our church thought it advisable to start a Zenana Auxiliary, so from that time until the end of May a few of us met fortnightly to work, with the result that at our first sale, held on 31st May 1889, we realised the sum of £20. We started this winter in October and our only regret is that so few of our congregation have seen their way to join us. We still meet every second Monday

at six o'clock, and we earnestly hope that more of the female members of the Church will join us and give a helping hand. It is not yet too late for them to begin. We commend our Mission to the sympathy and prayers of all our Congregation, and we would trust that each one of us is working in the spirit of her who said, "*She hath done what she could*".

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1890

### **SESSION REPORT**

'The Session are pleased to report that the Zenana Auxiliary, so auspiciously commenced two years ago, continues to receive such hearty sympathy, and they trust that all the ladies of the Congregation, without exception, will give it their warm co-operation.'

### **REPORT OF LADIES' AUXILIARY TO ZENANA MISSION.**

In presenting our second report, we have pleasure in showing steady progress. The amount realized by our sale of work was £32 and the attendance on that occasion very large. Our best thanks are due to the men of the Gordon Highlanders, whose entertainment was highly appreciated by the visitors to the sale. It was our privilege to have a pleasant tea meeting for these men before they left Belfast, at the close of which they asked to be permitted to return the compliment by giving a concert, which was well attended and most enjoyable.

We would wish to bring before the women of our Congregation how particularly this work is theirs. The customs and religion of India prevent women from hearing the gospel from men, and it is only through women visiting them in their Zenanas or homes they can learn to know Jesus. All the money, therefore, raised by the Zenana Auxiliaries is devoted to sending Christian women to teach their less favoured sisters in India.

Our Working party meets every alternate Monday evening, during the winter, at six o'clock, and we give a warm invitation to those from our congregation who have not yet joined our meetings to join us.

We are always happy to get work for sale from those who find it inconvenient to be present on Monday evenings.

We also beg to thank all who helped us by their presence at the Sale, or otherwise, and trust to have our annual meeting in the spring as largely patronised as ever.

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The following interesting memorandum on Foreign Missions has been supplied by the Moderator of the General Assembly :

FOREIGN MISSION.

There are eight Missionaries in India at the beginning of 1891, or counting Missionaries' Wives and Zenana Missionaries, there is in India a Mission party of twenty, (and 4 others at home on furlough, &c.) There are about 100 native Christian workers, and every year there are from 100 to 150 baptisms of adults and infants. Two new churches were built last year. There are about 3,300 children in our schools. The number connected with our native Church is about 2,000, of whom about 400 are communicants. In China, we have five missionaries, (two of them medical) ; but for the sudden and early removal of Rev. J. H. Fitzsimons, we should have six, and counting Missionaries' wives, and Zenana Missionaries in China, or on the way to it, our Mission party in China numbers fourteen. There are nearly twenty native Christian agents. Many interesting conversions have been recorded during the year in the Missionary Herald, and the large cities of Moukden, Kwanchengtzu, and Jin-Jow are now occupied by our Mission. The work in China is full of hope.

ZENANA MISSION.

There are ten Agents, seven in India, and three in China. Of the former one is at home at present, and of the latter two are on their way out. There are twenty-one girls' schools in India under the care of the Mission, with more than 1,100 scholars ; there are thirty-three native Christian teachers and several Bible women; twenty-one native houses are regularly visited and the women taught; and more than 15,000 visits were paid to our Dispensary last year. In China, Miss Nicholson, up till now our only lady Missionary, has begun to go out among the villages, and gathering the women round her to explain to them the Gospel; she finds this work most encouraging.

In 1890 £32 was raised by the Zenana Auxiliary.

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1891

**ZENANA MISSION.**

Our third report still shows steady progress. At our Sale last year we realised £34 3s Od. Our best thanks are due to the members of the Y.M.C.A. Gymnasium, who gave us their services so willingly at that Sale.

Our meetings have been going on as usual this winter every alternate Monday, and we hope (D.V.) to hold our Sale the first week in May.

There is still room for many more of the women of our Church to join us at these sewing meetings. Those who cannot come we hope will send us their contributions of work as formerly. We tender our best thanks to those who so kindly helped us last year, and we trust that this year our Sale will be as great a success as formerly.

**In 1891 £34 was raised by the Zenana Auxiliary.**

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1897



In 1897 **Sara McWilliams**, a member of the congregation, left for Missionary work in China. At this stage she appears to have been supported by the Sunday School as a clock presented to her in 1897 is inscribed '*Presented to Miss Sarah McWilliams on her appointment to the mission work in China as a token of the*



esteem of her fellow teachers. 1st Holywood Sabbath School. Feby.1897

She was a missionary teacher who worked in Manchuria in NE China on the borders of Russia and Korea from 1897-1935.

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1900

**By 1900 meetings of the Zenana Mission Auxiliary were being held weekly and the Annual Report states**

'The Ladies are pleased to report a greater success for the year ending with the Sale on 1st May,1900 than for any previous year. Though the good work suffered somewhat by the resignation of some members who had for years taken a warm interest in it and by the unavoidable absence of others, those who remained, assisted by a few new Members, including Mrs. Erskine, who

was appointed Treasurer, entered heartily into the matter, with the result that £50 was enabled to be sent to the Zenana Mission Treasurer.

It is desired to impress on Female Members of the Congregation, old and young, the great need of lending their aid to this most worthy cause. By giving work or produce or money as they see best, and by attending the Annual Sale, everyone can help more or less to make the result successful. Nor should it be forgotten that this work is not to promote the interests of our own Congregation, but is specially to benefit those poor women in India and in China who are hemmed in by such barriers as make it well nigh impossible for them to hear the Gospel otherwise than by this Mission's agents, who not only minister to their souls' needs, but to their bodily wants also.'

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In the Report of 1903 the Zenana Auxiliary had changed its name to 'Ladies Missionary Society' but the work appears to be the same.

1919

LADIES MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The meetings of above Association were held fortnightly during the winter - months. At the final meeting on the 7th April, tea was provided by the Committee in order to give a more hearty welcome to Miss McWilliams, who, at the urgent request of Mrs. Macaulay, had promised (if health permitted) to be with us on that occasion, to tell of her people in China and her work on their behalf. The meeting was quite informal ; questions were asked by those who listened intelligently, and Miss McWilliams answered and explained very satisfactorily. The time slipped past too quickly, and many wished that the hour might have been prolonged.

The Sale was arranged for 16th and 17th April, and the services of Mrs. H. R. Scott, of Surat, were requisitioned for the opening ceremony. The address on that occasion was couched in the most beautiful poetic language we had ever heard from that platform, and formed a suitable and appropriate medium for the lofty- ideas and high conceptions which animate Missionaries in their life of self-sacrifice. The old, old theme of " Spreading the Gospel," appeared in a new setting, and received a more personal interpretation, as it was represented by Mrs. Scott, who has for many years, in conjunction with her husband, been engaged in that great work in India.

The hall presented a gay appearance, the tasteful arrangement of bunting and flags, in close proximity to the trellis-work fronts of the stalls, the bright and various hued articles exhibited for sale, and the little tea tables with their snowy cloths and vases of flowers, combined to form a pleasing and attractive picture.

Everything for sale was the very best of its kind that could be procured at a reasonable rate, and consequently the contents of the cash boxes swelled rapidly as the visitors passed from stall to stall. Some of the stalls were "sold out" the first evening, and at the end of the second evening scarcely anything remained. On both evenings the hall was well filled, and competitions followed each other in rapid succession.

As every one knows the Sale was a great success financially, placing this year's result £20 in advance of the last two years. The best thanks of the Association are given to all who helped to make the Sale such a success, and as there must be no backward movement in the future, will every helper take the advice of the Secretary, and begin a piece of work at once for 1920. £100 was given to Zenana and other missions.

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**1932**

***The Report of 1932 shows further changes in the format of meetings***

The work of our Society goes on year by year with little if any change. We meet once a week generally from late Autumn till early Spring.

Last year we tried having our meetings in the afternoon, hoping that more members of the congregation might be free to attend, but this year we returned to the former arrangement of meeting at 8 o'clock, as the meetings had not increased in size, and many of our older members were greatly hurried to get ready for the afternoon meeting at 4 o'clock.

The Missionary Prayer Circle is the only afternoon meeting, it is held on the second Thursday of each month at 4 o'clock, and prayers of supplication or thankfulness-as the case maybe are presented on behalf of missionaries and their centres.



*This picture of the LMA in 1932 shows members enjoying a break from their knitting of garments to be sent to China*

**Back Row** Mrs J Musgrave, Mrs H Rice, Mrs H Shannon, Mrs Weir  
**Middle** Mrs S Neil, Mrs Walker (nee Musgrave), Mrs Henry  
**Front** Mrs J Thompson, Miss Anderson Mrs E J Shannon  
 Hilda Rice

At the Weekly Work Meetings we have many letters read from missionaries on the Field, telling of their work : sometimes a story of triumph and sometimes of failure, but always trusting the love of the Divine Father.

Owing to removal from the district we lost several workers this year, but we are thankful to record that as many others came to supply their places.

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1935

The Ladies' Missionary Association met regularly during the usual period from October to end of March. It was a great pleasure to see some of our friends, who have been Church members for a number of years, joining the working party during the past session and attending almost every week.

The meetings are usually very interesting and enjoyable, and after the opening prayer, any news from missionaries either at work, or on furlough is talked of, and if there are letters from the Field, or from the Home Corresponding Secretary they are read and listened to very attentively.

From the missionaries' letters we find out the type of garment most urgently required, and in trying to fulfil requests we are kept busy, not only during the hour for meeting, but also in our homes. Sometimes the request is for little first garments knitted with fine wool to be used in hospitals, other times it may be little cotton garments made of coloured material with floral design for children able to run around and play with little friends.

During the past session we did more work for China than India. All these garments were taken to the Mission Office to be forwarded at the earliest opportunity to their destination.

The third Thursday of each month is described as "Prayer Circle Day." On that day needlework is not done, we just meet for prayer and to return thanks to Almighty God for prayers answered and for blessings received. At that meeting we also ask the Divine Father to remember specially some who have requested to be named at that time.

The final effort each year is a Sale of Work, cakes, farm produce, sweets, jam and soap, etc., most of which finds ready purchasers. The result of this Sale in cash goes to Mission Office to help make up salary of a missionary. The Sale was opened this year by Mrs. Lewis, missionary on furlough to the Jungle Tribes, and Rev. John Kyle, B.A., presided. The net result of Sale was £64 17s. 9d. part of which goes to India, China and Qua Iboe in West Africa.

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**1937**

The usual weekly meetings of the Association for needlework, prayer and talk of how we could best help missionaries, covered a small part of the Autumn, all of Winter and wound up as usual with a Sale of Work, cakes, eggs and many food stuffs that are capable of storing till required.

The weekly meetings were unusually bright and attractive, and a spirit of real friendliness was apparent among the members at each meeting. The members were more regular in attendance than usual and seemed to compete with each other over the quantity of work completed from week to week.

The Sale was opened by Mrs. Clarke MacDermott who is well known over the Church for her keen interest in mission work. At the close of her address a little child came to the front of the platform and presented her with a box of daintily embroidered handkerchiefs.

The result of the Sale was the best for ten years, and that gave great satisfaction to all workers because this is the Jubilee of Mission Work in First Holywood. This result was due in great measure to efforts made by some stallholders before the Sale, also to the help given by Mr. Shirra a member of the congregation who trained a special choir and gave a concert entitled "A nicht wi'Burns," The amount raised by this effort was £7 1s. which was all handed over to the Sale.

The Mission boxes from many homes of our Church produced £19 10s. 6d, which also helped. An innovation suggested by Mrs. Kyle was also a help. The idea was to invite people to attend the Sale on the strength of invitation cards, without payment of admission. This was taken advantage of by a much greater number than usually patronise a Sale. One other item cannot be overlooked namely the work of Girl Guides who under the direction of Miss Boyd produced great quantities of flowers and sold them in the hall for the benefit of the Sale. The choir stall had the highest returns for the sale, followed very closely by the Young Peoples' under the direction of Mrs. Musgrave. The Refreshment Table did great business, teas, etc., being demanded till after 8 o'clock which was quite unprecedented.

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1938

LADIES MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION

The members of the Women's Association for Foreign Missions are united in their desire to express to Mrs. Kyle and family their most sincere sympathy in the loss they have sustained through the removal of Rev. J. Kyle to higher service.

They also thank Mrs. Kyle for the help and advice she gave at the weekly meetings from which she was seldom if ever absent.

The working party of the Association held their first meeting on October 27th, and continued meeting weekly till March 23rd, 1939. The numbers that assembled each week did not vary much and everyone was interested in the work, and also in the news we had at intervals from the mission field.

At the beginning of a meeting we bowed our heads to ask a blessing and also to give thanks for many blessings we had received unasked, after which each one had a cup of tea and a few biscuits. For tea and biscuits each one, except the lady who provided the food, gave 2d. which was always kept for a stall at the Sale of Work, and following this item of expenditure, another 1d. was tabled by each one for the Qua Ibo Leper Camp. These items seem trivial, yet the teas produced £12 0s. 4d. and the lepers benefited by £10s. 10d. After tea the needlework was opened, and each person worked on her own particular piece. It is wonderful how many little first garments of fine wool were produced, also operation stockings made of coarser wool and fully 36 inches long. Little suits of fine cotton made to pattern of knickers and blouse, and in addition to that calico skirts and aprons for nurses got attention. One lady knit a cover for a hot water bottle too, another did large woollen scarves for China.

Our activities did not cease with mission garments, we knew just how very depleted the kitchen department of our church was, so after consultations and private talks sufficient money was raised to provide hundreds of cups, saucers, cream jugs, teaspoons, bread knives, tea trays, wash basin, mops, tea towels, and vases for floral decorations. All of these necessities have been produced without any charge to the congregation.

The Sale of Work was held on Tuesday; 4th April. There were not so many people at the opening ceremony which was in the hands of Rev. Robert Russell, but all seemed bright and glad to meet again.

The Choir Stall again stood by itself, a long piece ahead of the Young People's which came as a good second. The Girl Guides brought brightness and sweet scents from the lovely flowers they had gathered and brought to sell.

The Mission Boxes produced £19 12s 4d. which is 1s. 10d more than last year.

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**By 1943 the name had changed to WOMEN'S MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION.**

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1948

The weekly meetings of the W.M.A., held during the Autumn and Winter months, were very well attended. We were pleased to welcome some new members. Our missionary boxes, when opened, proved very satisfactory, yielding the sum of 154. Altogether, from boxes and other efforts, we received £165 3s. Twenty-five pounds of this was given to us per Mrs. Pettigrew from Creighton's Green, for which we are very grateful, and we were also able to give £100 to endow a bed in memory of Miss S. M. Anderson in Borsad Hospital. She, for over 40 years, carried on the work of the W.M.A. We feel that this will be a lasting memorial to one whose heart was in the work for missions; and whose hand was ever ready to give.

We will be very glad to meet and welcome new members who could join in our pleasant hour on Thursday afternoons.

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**1954**

**Death of Miss McWilliams**

The death of Miss McWilliams meant a great personal loss. She was an old and valued friend of our WMA. For 37 years she was a missionary in Manchuria, and she took an active and practical interest in the quietest way possible. We honour the memory of one who has gone to reap a rich reward.

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1955

First WMA Service was reported. This was to be become an Annual Service.

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**WMA Outing to Portrush in 1964**

*Mildred Johnston, Mrs Orwin (Mae Hanna), Mary Robinson, Rita Kennedy,  
Maud Early, Lily Chambers*

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1965-6

A Young Wives Group was formed as the afternoon meetings of the WMA were not held at a convenient time for the many young wives who were now part of the congregation.

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**1971**

**The WMA became the PWA embracing the home and overseas work of the church and also the work of the Young Women's Groups.** Money raising for the PWA involved mainly an Annual Coffee Party and Mission Boxes. At one time it is recorded that over 100 Mission Boxes were held by the Congregation.

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1975

The Young Wives Group became Young Women's Group. A very successful Recipe Book was produced that year which raised over £500.

1976

With the encouragement of the President Mrs Eileen Clarke the PWA became involved in Summer catering entertaining groups from other churches.£684 raised



1977

Catering money raised £1115 money going to Church Interior Fund and PWA central funds.



1979

The PWA celebrated 90th birthday. The special Birthday cake was cut by the President, Mrs Eileen Clarke, and former President Mrs Houston.



1980

An evening meeting was held once a month and the **Annual Church Service was a joint service with YWG.**



1983

Over £1900 was raised by catering by the members of the PWA. Mission Boxes and donations to be divided between Missionary projects at home and overseas and our own congregation. The Young Women's Group started a Wednesday morning Bible Study and discussion with crèche.



1989

The year 1989 was a memorable one for the PWA branch as they celebrated their Centenary.

The following account was written by the President Mrs Eileen Clarke for the Church News.

Thursday 16th November proved 1989 to be a memorable evening for a large gathering of members, former members and guests of the P.W.A., a long planned for evening to celebrate our Centenary.

After opening devotions, greetings and good wishes, a short history of the beginnings of the Presbyterian Women's Association interested all, as it highlighted little incidents in our own branch down through the years, paying tribute to the faithful work carried on by those who have gone before us. This was followed by the cutting of a beautiful centenary cake which was baked by one of our own members. A delicious fork supper was enjoyed by all allowing time for chat and fellowship.

To round off the evening the "Bannside Singers" from Coleraine under the leadership of Miss Roberta Scott delighted us with their musical programme - just the right mix of sacred and secular music interspersed with recitations and stories. This prompted such remarks as people left the hall - *"We could have listened to that for another hour"* and *"What a wonderful Male Voice Choir"*, and to crown it all, *"It was the best night's crack I've had in a long time!"*,



To mark the occasion, an American oak reading lectern was presented by the members for use at our meetings.

A vote of thanks and the benediction brought the evening to a close.

On Sunday, 19th November our Service of Thanksgiving took place with the special speaker Dr Godfrey Brown who encouraged us *"to forget the things which are behind, and press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"*.

We pray that as we go forward in the Lord's strength, we may continue to prayerfully and Financially support those who are called to take the good news of the Gospel, by word and deed, to the world.

Eileen Clarke

1991

During this year the PWA and YWG had some joint meetings.



1992

The YWG Wednesday morning group was opened to all women in the congregation and continued joint meetings with the PWA.



1993

The Wednesday morning meeting increased to fortnightly.



1995



Eleanor Drysdale was appointed to be a deaconess In the congregation and her work was much appreciated by the women of the PWA.



1998

For various reasons the YWG decided not to continue over 30 years after it had started. *(Many of the present PW members were originally YWG members).* As part of the closing they were able to distribute over £4000 to various aspects of Christian work including £1600 to PCI for YWG projects, £500 to 1st Hollywood, and over £500 to PWA centrally.



1999

PWA celebrated 110 years of operating as a work supporting missionary efforts in 1st Hollywood. Jean Shields wrote a play entitled '*Sensible Women*'. Members raised over £2000 for Christian work at home and overseas compared to the £20 raised in 1889.



2006



With Joe and Janet Campbell going to Nepal with PCI as missionaries in 2006 1st Hollywood PWA had a special link with the Missionary work of the church.

That year almost £1600 was raised by Mission Boxes

*Over the years the name has changed from **Zenana Mission Auxiliary, Ladies Missionary Society, Womens Missionary Association, Presbyterian Women's Association and now Presbyterian Women.** Support is now given both to work at home and overseas. The Working Party idea of the Zenana Mission Auxiliary has changed but money is still raised by our Missionary Boxes which in 2008 raised £1,124 and also £3253 through catering for various functions and donations. Money is distributed now not only to the Presbyterian Church but also to other Christian Organisations.*

PORTRAITS OF TWO PWA MEMBERS

One of the joys of rural life in the 1930's was that of knowing all ones neighbours. Walking or cycling to school, we saw them out in the fields day after day, ploughing, sowing, reaping, patiently guiding those great big shire horses, up and down, rig by rig, or ambling along behind a herd of contented cows relieved by the morning milking. The women, in their floral tie-back overalls would be pegging out their washing ever so neatly on the clothes-line, or surrounded by stropky quarrelsome hens all diving for food from sturdy galvanised buckets. But it was at the bus stop or inside the bus, that most contacts were made. You could sit on the front seat and hear all the local news, recognising every voice.



It was returning from school on the afternoon bus that I first experienced the kindness of my friend Mary. I was frantically searching all my pockets, feeling a slow warm flush rising from my neck and covering my face. Above me, his huge peaked cap almost in my eyes, towered the conductor,

quietly menacing. Mary slipped a penny into his outstretched hand, and all was well! Though only a few years older than myself she knew how to relieve a little girl's embarrassment at the cost of a penny. Of course I already knew her and her family. We were all Mission Hall folk and sang the same hymns Sunday by Sunday.

But it was many years later when we were both married with grown up children that Mary invited me to join the PWA and so began a friendship that lasted for many years. Week by week we travelled together, and I helped to carry her little basket of home-baked goodies and bottles of milk, for, being married to Robert Perry, a prominent dairy farmer, she supplied milk for every church event that required it. Being brought up in the Methodist tradition, Mary was the 'friend of all, and enemy of none', and where there was sickness or bereavement, Mary could be seen with her little covered basket containing sandwiches, cakes and many other thoughtful items prepared by caring hands. I well remember a cold December day, returning from a family funeral, and finding a supply of soup and sandwiches, prepared and neatly packaged, outside my door. It didn't need a signature. It bore the touch of Mary's loving heart and practical hands. Her devotion to her family, her church, and her neighbours was well known. She preached no sermons, but quietly lived her creed without any fanfares of publicity, 'Your basket and your kneading trough shall be blessed' we read from the book of Deuteronomy and it was from such simple objects that Mary's light shone through.



When Mary and I arrived at PWA meetings we always 'kept a place' for Madge, who lived for most of her life on the next farm to Mary, at Crawford's Corner, as we called it, in honour of Madge's family. She had an older sister and brother, and they farmed there happily for many years under the watchful eye of their mother, affectionately called 'Mor'. Their kitchen was dominated by a big black-leaded range, its steel work gleaming from the effects of hard rubbing with emery paper. How it shone, its flickering flames competing with the soft glow of lamplight. In it Madge cooked and baked to her heart's content – even a world war did not restrict her style, and no-one could make a two ounce ration of margarine and sugar stretch so far as she.

Madge could have wished for nothing better than to have ended her days there, but, sadly, she was at the end of the family line, and the farm passed into other hands. Big girls don't cry, but Madge's lip was trembling when, passing her gate on the way from work I saw her dig up her beautiful front garden to make way for house renovations. With characteristic kindness she passed on to me as many plants as I could carry home. I was doubly burdened, physically by the sheer weight of rose bushes and trailing poppy plants, but more so by the sight of Madge preparing to leave behind all she held dear.

Soon my garden was made anew by Madge's generosity, but she herself did not transplant so easily and it was many years before she put down roots in her little cottage at Seahill. Happily, there was a fine plot of ground attached, and Madge worked from dawn to dusk, recreating the beauty and colour she had left behind. Her electric cooker produced scones as light as ever, and tea in front of her cheery coal fire was a delight. Madge's creativity had won through, and produced '*beauty for ashes*'.

There could have been no greater contrast than that between these two ladies. Mary, petite, even in her elegant high-heeled shoes, was at the centre of a large and growing family, each having a very special place in her heart, while Madge towering above us in her sturdy brogues, was the last in her line, symbolic of the decline of the small family farm. Yet both shared that quality of neighbourliness and kindness – true country virtues - living in a right relationship with God and their fellow men, quiet and self-effacing, yet leaving behind a legacy of sharing and caring.

Autumn winds are already beating against the windows of my little house. The last of the petals are falling from Madge's rose bush, but roses will always bloom again, and tower above the thorns, and spring will see the return of the poppies with their perennial message of peace after conflict. As for me, memory with gentle fingers will turn the page of life's scrapbook, allowing me to revisit the past, of firelight and lamp light, of penny fares on buses, of guest teas and Daffodil suppers, and things held dear by Mary, Madge and many more who shared their faith and their values and continue to live in the hearts of their friends.

Jean Shields

MEMORIES OF WMA IN THE 1960'S

When I came to Hollywood in 1963 (as a blushing bride) I joined the WMA which met at that time fortnightly on Thursdays from 3.00 - 4.00pm. Lily Chambers, Peggy McCracken, Rita Kennedy and I would meet at the end of Ballymenoch Rd and always seemed to have to rush down Croft Rd to be at church for 3.00 o'clock. After entering the old church halls by the entrance on the Bangor side we went up a narrow staircase to the Upper Room where a good crowd had already gathered. Mrs Houston presided at the meetings and quite often Mrs Fellowes would lead in prayer and Peggy's aunt Maude would play the piano as we sang our opening praise. Mrs McCormick (wife of Colonel McCormick) would be there with Mrs Magowan, Miss Wilson - a former missionary in China, Mrs McClure, Mary Perry, Ena and Ivy Cunningham. A cup of tea and a biscuit was always an important part of the meeting which had to be carried up the narrow staircase from the kitchen.

I was probably the youngest by quite a few years but it was good to be there and I soon got to know the ladies and began to learn much about the missionary work of the Presbyterian Church. I also remember the summer outing to Portrush in 1964 and sitting on the steps of the Arcadia restaurant and paddling with Mildred Johnstone in the cold waters of the Atlantic! The Missionary boxes were an important way of raising money to send to Church House as well as the Coffee Party and jumble sale.

When our eldest son was born in February 1965 I began to see the problems of trying to attend the WMA with a young baby but he did come to some meetings and either stayed in his pram at the bottom of the stairs or came up to be admired by the ladies.

In the summer of 1966 several young wives in the congregation got together to consider forming a group for the younger women. We visited several homes and were encouraged by the response and so a Young Wives Group was formed with Mrs Houston as our President and a Chairman from the group. It is good to see many of the former Young Wives (which later became Young Women's Group) now members of the Presbyterian Women of 1st Hollywood today.

Mary Robinson
First Chairman, Young Wives Group

1st HOLYWOOD PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The ladies of the PW owe a debt of gratitude to many past members and past presidents over the years. My first memories are of Mrs Eileen Clarke and how well she organised the running of the group and the catering we did for many P.W.A.'s - as it was called then. We entertained many branches from far and wide. Mary Perry and Kathleen McCall were important to the catering for between them they could cook and carve a turkey to within an inch of its life. Many of us younger members were in awe of their skills. and of course not forgetting the many ladies with their skills at baking of pavlova, tray bakes, apple tarts etc. This allowed us as a branch to give very generously to mission at home and abroad.

Mrs McQuoid for many years was our treasurer and how precise she was in her well kept books. Over the years we have had many members who have used their gifts and talents to make the branch a success in all the work they did for the glory of the Lord.

The encouragement over the years PW members have given me personally has helped me to grow in faith and I been able to do many things for the wider Church because of their encouragement and I feel the Church at large would be poorer indeed, were it not for many members of PW who contribute so much in the background in hard work and their often sacrificial giving.

We hope the PW will continue for another 120 years with God's richest blessing
Margaret Clarke
Past President

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1st Holywood Presbyterian Church

Presbyterian   
Women

**CELEBRATING 120 YEARS**  
of support for Missionary Work  
by the women of the Congregation

November 2009

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