

CHAPTER 5

Joseph John Hodson and his family

Joseph John Hodson was born on October 13th 1878 (Thorne 9c747 Dec) the first son of Joseph John Hodson, known in the family as 'Old JJ', and the first of eleven children born between 1878 and 1900. Of these three boys and two girls died in infancy. Old JJ was a farmer at Fishlake in Doncaster. It would appear that JJ served in the Primitive Methodist ministry for three years, but had to give it up due to rheumatic fever.

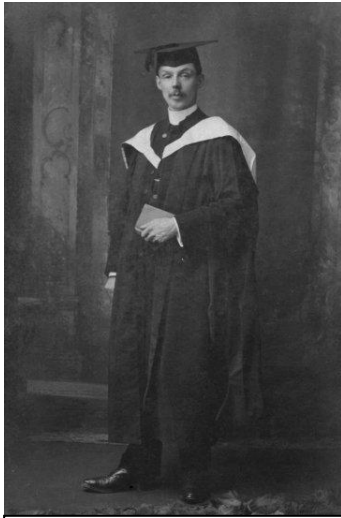
John Joseph was obviously of academic ability from an early age, and attended Thorne Grammar School which had been founded for the education of boys by William Brooke in 1705. The Brooke's Trust School premises on King Street, Thorne, were erected in 1863 and catered for day boys and boarders. It is these premises that John Joseph must have attended. What was he hoping to be? It seems from what was an obvious interview with Joseph John that was reported in the Birmingham News when he later took up a new appointment at Sparkhill, Birmingham, that at this stage of life he was inclined towards journalism and indeed at the age of 16 years had joined the staff of a local paper. However he was aiming high and was attracted towards House of Commons reporting. It was to further this ambition that he entered Durham University.

At the age of 18 years, Joseph John joined St Cuthbert's College, Durham University. Originally known as St Cuthbert's Society, it was formed in 1888 chiefly for mature students and was non-residential. In the early days degree courses were only available to members of the



A photograph of the crew after they had won the Graduates Cup, Epiphany Term, 1898. The trophy and cups can be seen on the table. The original one awarded to Joseph John can be seen on the right. Joseph John himself is most likely to be the third from the left, sitting on the table. He looks strikingly younger than the others.

established Church, however this was countermanded by the Universities Tests Act 1871 which allowed Primitive Methodist Joseph John to enter. The Primitive Methodist Church was a major offshoot of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, which finally came back together in 1932.



Photograph of Joseph John in his Durham University degree hood and gown.

The results of Durham University's first year exams in Arts were published on January 24th and appeared in The Daily News of 25th January 1898. Joseph John's was one of 10 names that had satisfied the examiners, but he had not obtained a scholarship for the second year. No announcement of his final graduation has been found.

In 1893 the college formed its own Boat Club which was one of the most prestigious of all Durham's collegiate clubs. It must have been through this that Joseph John developed an interest in rowing, and was part of the crew that won the Graduates Cup awarded by the Durham University Boat Club in the Epiphany Term of 1898. In that year, after two years study, he graduated with a BA in Arts, and

three years later became MA.

It appears that Joseph John had become a Primitive Methodist Local Preacher (that group of lay preachers who conducted non-Eucharistic services in many of Methodist's scattered churches) whilst he was still at Fishlake.



The Primitive Methodist College, Manchester where Joseph John trained for the ministry.



The Newhaven Primitive Methodist Church where Joseph John served his probation in 1901.

Having graduated from Durham he was encouraged by a Rev James Keightley to undertake a two year theological course at Manchester College (after 1906 called Hartley College) and to enter the Primitive Methodist Ministry. In 1901 at the age of 23, he was sent to Sussex, to the Eastbourne Circuit for his period of probation, where he was pastor of the Newhaven Primitive Methodist Church.

In 1903 Joseph John moved to the Pembroke Dock Methodist Circuit to complete his probation. This covered several stations throughout the southern part of Pembrokeshire. In his history of the Primitive Methodist Church here David Howell writes 'Throughout the whole history of the Primitive Methodist Mission in south Pembrokeshire ... the overriding problem faced by all the societies was poverty'. Many members were colliers and their living was affected acutely by slumps in the trade, such that 'each little 'cause' was constantly hard pressed to raise sufficient funds to pay its way in the Station'. At the worst times families had to survive on 15s a week or less. The Pembroke Dock station was always a difficult one due to the wretched condition of the chapel premises, therefore the turnover of ministers was high. Joseph John only stayed two years but it must have offered him a very steep learning curve. In November 1904 Christian Endeavour Convention was held at Pembroke Dock at which Joseph John addressed a well attended meeting chaired by the President of the Convention. He took as his subject 'The world's need for youthful discipleship'.

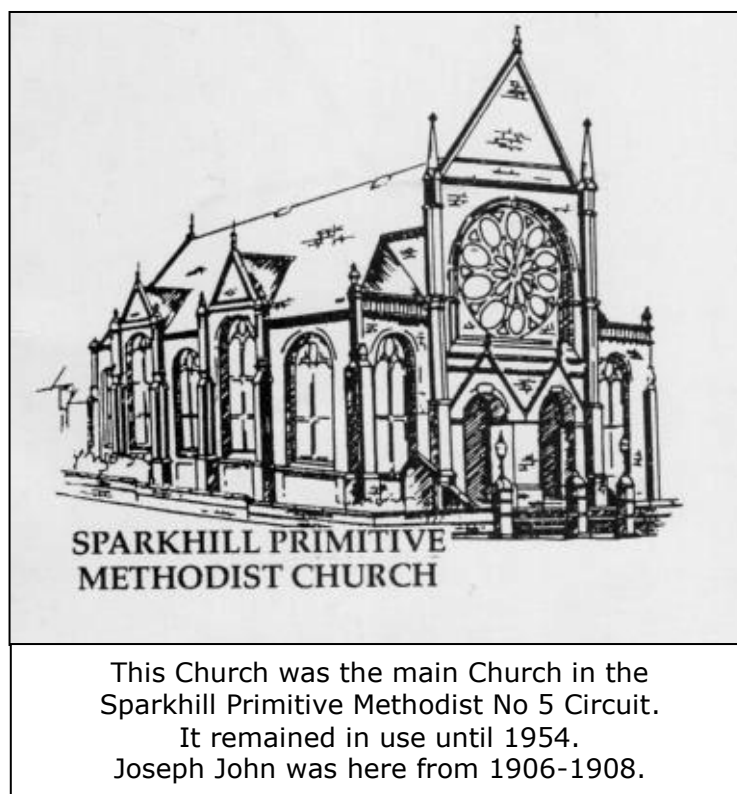
From here in 1905 Joseph John was sent to the Hasbury & Halesowen Circuit where by coincidence he was to be 28 years later when he performed the marriage ceremony for his eldest daughter Marjorie to a young Optician from Withernsea, East Yorkshire. The Hasbury Primitive Methodists represented the lower class community, as distinct from the upper class which were served by the Church of England. The former was instrumental in setting up a Co-operative Society in the later 19th century and it was still active into the 20th century. The vast majority of both men and women were employed in iron manufacture and working, for example nail and chain making. This was heavy dirty badly paid work. It was whilst here that Joseph John was 'received into the full ranks of the ministry'. He was made superintendent minister of the circuit.

It would seem that Joseph John met his wife-to-be Alice Grantham whilst he was at Manchester College. Alice was daughter of Thomas Grantham, a railway servant, of 6 Pembroke Street, Langworthy Road, Seedley, Manchester. They were married on 13th September 1905, at St John's Wesleyan Chapel, Landworthy Road, Pendleton. The service was taken by William Lansdell



Drawing of a youthful 27 year old Joseph John about to start his ministry at Sparkhill, Birmingham.

Wardle and William Arthur Hind, and the witnesses were Charles Thomas Hodson and Phoebe Stanley. It is probable that they returned to the Hasbury & Halesowen Circuit expecting to remain for the usual 3 year period of ministry, however that was not to be. Instead, in 1906 Joseph John was called to fill a gap of two years at Sparkhill, in the Birmingham 5 Circuit. He was only 27 years old but



1905. Marriage solemnized at *St John's Wesleyan Chapel Langworthy Road West Poreotton* in the District of *Salford* in the County of *Salford and Lancashire*

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
1	<i>Thirteenth 1905</i>	<i>Joseph John Hodson</i>	<i>26 years</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Primitive Methodist Minister</i>	<i>Highfield Villas Hasbury Halesowen</i>	<i>Joseph John Hodson</i>	<i>Farmer</i>
	<i>1905</i>	<i>Alice Grantham</i>	<i>25 years</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>6 Parkside Street Langworthy Road Salford</i>	<i>Thomas Grantham</i>	<i>Railway Servant</i>

Married in the *Wesleyan Chapel* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Wesleyan Methodists* by *Antiphony*

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *Joseph John Hodson* and *Alice Grantham* In the Presence of us, *Charles Thomas Hodson* and *Phoebe Stanley* And in the Presence of *William Lancelott Wardle* and *William Arthur Hind* Authorized Persons by *the said chapel*

Marriage register entry for Joseph John Hodson and Alice Grantham in 1905.

had already gained a creditable reputation as a preacher such that the

Certificate of Baptism,
Administered with Water, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

In the Parish of *Sparkhill* in the County of *Worcester* in the year *1907*

When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents' Names.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
<i>1907 Dec 3rd</i>	<i>Alice Marjorie Josephine</i>	<i>Joseph John</i>	<i>Hodson</i>	<i>61 Stratford Road</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Concurrence J. Hodson</i>
<i>1906 Dec 2nd</i>		<i>Alice</i>				

The above is a true Copy from the PRIMITIVE METHODIST Register Book of Baptisms at *Sparkhill* in *B'ham* Circuit.

Witness my hand this *13th* day of *August* *1907* *Joseph J. Hodson* Primitive Methodist Minister.

Alice Marjorie Josephine's Baptismal Certificate signed by her father Joseph John.

Birmingham News published an extensive summary of his address at both the morning welcome service and evening service on 8th July 1906. After the latter, there was an open air meeting on Stratford Road where he spoke again. It was whilst in Birmingham that the first child was born to Alice and Joseph John on 24th December 1906; a

girl who was called Alice after her mother – Alice Marjorie Josephine. In 1908 the family moved on to the Bristol 5 Circuit where Kathleen Joan was born at Fishponds, Gloucester on September 7th 1908 (6a162 Bristol Dec 1908).

The family only stayed here for one year before moving on to the Rhondda in 1909. Here they lived at Bourne House, 1 Bry-namlwg, Tonypany, Glamorgan. He



Tonypany residents standing outside the now boarded shops after the events of the 8 November

Glamorgan. He must have been there at the time of the Tonypany Riots of 1910 and 1911 (also called the Rhondda Riots). These were a series of violent confrontations between coal miners and police at various locations in the Rhondda

coalmines of the Cambrian Combine, a business network of mining companies formed to regulate prices and wages in south Wales. The term "Tonypany riot" initially applied to specific events on the evening of Tuesday 8 November 1910, when strikers, impassioned by extended hand-to-hand fighting with the police smashed windows of businesses in the town. Home Secretary Winston Churchill's decision to allow troops to be sent to the area to re-inforce the police, caused considerable ill feeling. In response to these riots Joseph John helped found the South Wales Mission.

It was there that Alice gave birth firstly to another daughter Roma Augusta on November 17th 1909 (11a757 Pontypridd 1909 Dec). It may be that it was realised very soon after her birth that Roma was not totally normal – it is probable that she failed to gain the developmental milestones as would have been expected. There are no photographs that include Roma though there were a number of family photographs over the years with all the other children. It was a time, of course, when abnormal children would be hidden away, but it is sad to think that Joseph John subscribed to that attitude. Perhaps that is also why, though money was short, they employed a servant, in 2011 the nineteen year old Daisy Passingham.

On 7th March 1912 Alice gave birth to their first son, named Joseph John after his father through he always used the name John (11a 1314 Pontypridd 1912 June). In the same year on 19th July 1911 Joseph John's father (Old JJ) died at Fishlake, at the age of 65, and was buried there four days later. It is reasonable to speculate that this would hit Joseph John hard. Not only was he the eldest son of a family of eight sons (though only five survived to adulthood) and three daughters, bearing his

The image shows the front of a membership application form for the Primitive Methodist Itinerant Preachers' Friendly Society. The form is titled 'Primitive Methodist Itinerant Preachers' FRIENDLY SOCIETY.' and 'THE APPLICATION OF'. It is for 'FULL MEMBERSHIP.' and is dated 'March 6 1911'. The applicant's name is 'Joseph John' and the station is 'Fishlake'. The form includes instructions for candidates, such as reading Rule XXVIII and Rule XXXIII, and supplying all names and dates. It also mentions that the Medical Certificate on page 9 must be filled in and signed by a duly qualified member of the Medical Profession.

Front of Joseph John's application made on March 6 1911 for membership of the Friendly Society run by the Primitive Methodist Church.

father's name, but he would know how much his father had scrimped and saved to give his sons a good education. His ambition had been that all of them would enter the Primitive Methodist Ministry.

Also in March 1911 Joseph John took out full membership of the Primitive Methodist Itinerant Preachers' Friendly Society. Prior to the Welfare State, Friendly Societies were often the only way a working person had to receive help in times of ill health, or old age. It could be that with three children Joseph John was feeling the need to make some financial arrangement that would not leave his family destitute if he became ill. His application does indicate a definitely positive frame of mind. He states that his health was 'never better'

and 'very good, improving in every way' and that 'I have no reason to doubt but every reason to believe in the soundness of my constitution'.

In 1913 with war looming the family moved to Yeovil, Somerset, where their second son Eric Alfred was born on 19th February 1914 (5c618 Yeovil 1914 June). Yeovil had a population of around 11,000. It had had a flourishing leather and glove making industry since the Middle Ages and this was still a major employer. It must have seemed to Joseph John to be a different world from his experience in the Rhondda. There are three items from the Western Gazette and one from the Western Daily Press which give some insight into the more public side of his ministry at Yeovil.

Western Gazette Friday 9th Jan 1914 - Yeovil

The New Year's gathering of the members of the Adult Schools, Bible Classes, and other denominations in the town took place on Sunday afternoon and proved a success. A procession was formed in the station yard and, headed by the Salvation Army Band, marched to the Town Hall which was well filled. His worship the Mayor (Mr Buchanan) presided, supported among others by Colonel Marsh, the Revs R Newell (Congregational), W G Butt (Baptist), and J J Hodson (Primitive Methodist). Mr Petter having read the Scripture lesson, the Mayor said he was pleased to preside over such a large gathering. As Chairman of the local magistrates he was much struck by the influence such a gathering had, and also the useful work the classes had done and were doing for the good of the community. Rev J J Hodson also gave an address, his subject being 'The Sovereignty of Great Ideas'. Notwithstanding the large attendance, the collection did not meet the expenses, and the Mayor kindly decided to make up the deficit.

Western Gazette Friday 10th July 1914 - Yeovil

Sunday School Treats

The children attending the combined South Street and Newtown Primitive Methodist Churches were given their annual treat on Saturday when, favoured with fine weather, a very enjoyable time was spent. Assembling at South Street at 2.30, in charge of the Superintendent (Mr Ridge), Rev J J Hodson (Pastor), and teachers, they marched to a field at Pen Mill, where swings and other amusements had been located. Subsequently tea was provided for the youngsters, followed by a public repast for adults, after which the usual games etc were enjoyed until about 9.30. The Primitive Methodist Circuit Brass Band was in attendance.

Western Daily Press Wednesday 1st December 1915

Primitive Methodist Church, Staple Hill

The annual anniversary services were held on Sunday, and the special preacher for the day was Rev J J Hodson MA of Yeovil, a very old friend of the society. Admirable sermons were preached to good congregations, and were very much appreciated.

On Monday evening a public meeting was held under the presidency of Mr W Hill of Downend. The musical programme was arranged by Madam Maude Eaves, and capitally executed by her pupils. A brief address was given by Rev J J Hodson, and altogether a very enjoyable evening was spent by members and friends. The effort was a financial success.

Western Gazette Friday 21st April 1916 - Yeovil

Bible Class Anniversary

Members of the Pen Mill Bible Class held their anniversary on Sunday. The Rev J J Hodson preached in the morning and the Rev Mr Hannam in the evening. In the afternoon there was a gathering of the representatives of all the Nonconformist Churches in the town.

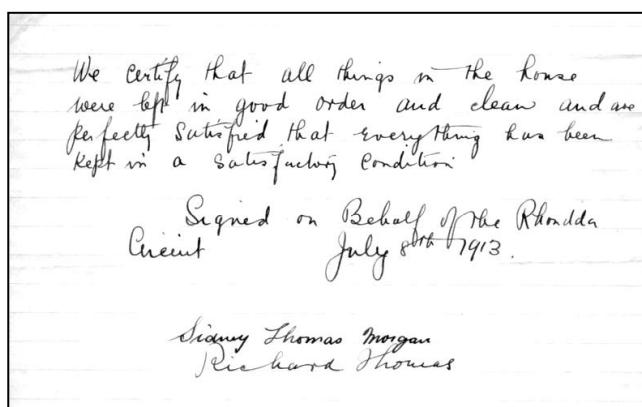
In 1916 Joseph John was sent to serve at Prees Green Camp in Shropshire, living in Wem. During this time the fourth daughter Enid Rosemary was born in 1918 (6a919

Wem 1919 March). The WW1 camp was built on Prees Heath and consisted of a multitude of wooden huts joined by muddy inadequate roadways. It opened in 1915 and was home to several battalions of the Training



A postcard of Prees Camp which was produced for soldiers use, so that they could send a card home and it would reassure family that their conditions were good. The pictures show a clean and smart camp which must have been somewhat far from the real truth.

Reserve. In that year 30,000 men practiced trench warfare before passing on to the frontlines in France. As casualties from the war mounted, a military hospital was established which grew to 609 beds in a rabbit-warren of huts. Many were very badly injured and would die here. Later the camp was used as a dispersal base for returning troops disembarking at Liverpool for demobilisation – one of the largest demobilisation camps in Britain. It was here then where the cost of the war in numbers injured and in the smallness of the



Note certifying that everything in the manse was left in satisfactory condition when the Hodson family left the Rhondda manse.

numbers returning from France was seen most keenly. It was a period that had a profound effect on Joseph John, perhaps exacerbating his tendency to periods of depression.

In 1920 the family came to the East Riding of Yorkshire where they would spend 13 of probably the happiest years of Joseph John's ministry. Even so, the constant moving on every two or three years must have taken its toll on both himself and his family.

Mansees were supposed to be furnished but the quality of that furniture varied greatly, yet at the end of each stay there was

an inspection to make sure that everything was in good order. There was also a form to be completed and presented to the next Circuit to confirm that the minister's performance was satisfactory.

This began in the Hull Sixth Circuit based at the Williamson Street Chapel. In 1921 Joseph John attended the Hull District Synod of the Primitive Methodist Church which was held at Bridlington (reported in the Hull Daily Mail, Saturday April 30th 1921). A reception by the Mayor, Alderman E Lambert, was held in the Oriental Lounge. Speaking of Christian unity, he asked was there ever a time when it was more necessary than today. In the evening a public service was held in the Quay Primitive

Methodist Church. However, the stationing of Primitive Methodist ministers was reported a month later in the Hull Daily Mail of Tuesday May 3rd 1921. There Joseph John appears to have been transferred to the Hull Fourth Circuit, based at Thornton Street, with William Piggot DD as superintendent.

We know little of his ministry there, but it seems that Joseph John was invited to speak at a variety of meetings, some of which were reported in the Hull Daily Mail. In 1921 during February he gave a lecture at Swanland Primitive Methodist Chapel entitled 'The Monk that moved the Word' and the same month he was reported as taking part in Hull City Mission's 18th annual meeting at the Royal Institution. In May 1922 he was in Keyingham, in June he took part in the North Ferriby Whitsuntide Anniversary, and in August he addressed a camp meeting of the Primitive Methodist Chapel Christian Endeavour held at Nafferton, which was followed by a public tea in the schoolroom.

On 23rd August 1921 the family were living in Hull when the R38/ZR2 airship, at that time the world's largest airship, suffered a catastrophic structural failure and crashed on to the mud banks in the Humber. This happened at 5.17pm ending with a enormous fireball seen for miles

PRIMITIVE METHODIST CONNEXION.

Answers to the following Questions must be given in connection with the credential furnished to a Travelling Preacher on his removal from one Station to another.

Q. 1.—Have the numbers of Members entered in the Roll Books and Station Account Book been duly examined, and properly signed by the Quarterly Meeting?

Ans. Yes

Q. 2.—Have all the other Station's Books been made up, and officially signed according to Rule?

Ans. Yes

Q. 3.—What is the increase or decrease in the number of Members in your Station from March to June last?

Ans. No increase or decrease

Q. 4.—If married, has the house he occupied been properly cleaned, and have the furniture and other household goods been left in good condition, clean, and orderly?

Ans. Left in excellent condition

To the Fourth Station.

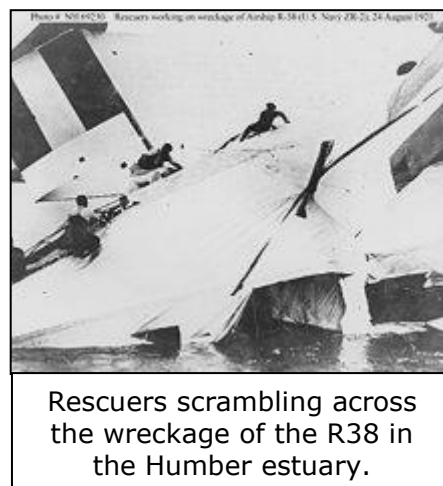
DEAN BASTREKEN.

The bearer of this Credential, whose name is Joseph John
has been a regular Travelling Preacher with us in this the Rhondda
Station up to the date hereof. As far as we know, his removing to your Station is regular and orderly, and we know of no charge or complaint in existence against him.

Signed on behalf of the Quarterly Meeting, this 2nd
day of June 1921

Joseph J. John Chairman.
W. H. Farmer Secretary.

Form confirming the satisfactory nature of Joseph John's ministry at the Rhondda.



around. Marjorie recalled going to the Corporation Pier to join the large crowd that gathered to watch the desperate attempts at rescue, though in the end there were only 5 survivors from the 49 on board.

In June 1923 the Primitive Methodist Church published the stationing arrangements for the Hull and District. Joseph John was to leave Hull and move to Driffield where he would be sharing ministry with Harry Aldridge and Samuel J Hall. The family must have packed their belongings yet again – did they ever get tired of this routine. By now Marjorie was 16, Joan 14, Roma 13, John 11, Eric 9, and Enid 5, and though it must have become second nature, there must have been painful farewells, and the anxiety over the unknown. Marjorie certainly felt that much of the responsibility for sorting out her siblings fell on her shoulders.

Primitve Methodist Connerxon.			DRIFFIELD CIRCUIT.		
Rev. H. ALDRIDGE, Book Steward.			Rev. S. J. HALL, S. B. Committee Secretary.		
Rev. J. J. HODSON, M.A. Circuit Secretary.			1922.		
Mr. W. G. HIVER and Mr. J. REED, Circuit Stewards.					
PLACES AND TIMES.		OCTOBER		NOVEMBER	
Worship the Lord.		1	8	15	22
DRIFFIELD	10.1	3	2	1	100
Thursday	7.1	3	2	1	100
Friday C.E.	7.1	3	2	1	100
Hand Mfg. Sat.	7.1	3	2	1	100
NAIERTON	10.1	3	2	1	100
Thursday	7.1	3	2	1	100
Friday C.E.	7.1	3	2	1	100
KIRKURN	10.1	3	2	1	100
Monday	7.1	3	2	1	100
HUTTON	10.1	3	2	1	100
Wednesday	7.1	3	2	1	100
BIRWICK	10.1	3	2	1	100
Monday	7.1	3	2	1	100
CRANSWICK	10.1	3	2	1	100
Monday	7.1	3	2	1	100
FRODINGHAM	10.1	3	2	1	100
Wednesday	7.1	3	2	1	100
BEEFORD	10.1	3	2	1	100
Wednesday	7.1	3	2	1	100
BAINTON	10.1	3	2	1	100
Tuesday	7.1	3	2	1	100
NORTH DALTON	10.1	3	2	1	100

Part of the 1922 October to December issue of the Driffield Circuit Preaching Plan.

Driffield, or Great Driffield as it was known officially, was a pleasant market town often referred to as the capital of the Yorkshire Wolds. It had been a self-contained community which for centuries had catered for the needs of agriculture, with a cattle market and many small manufacturing firms; the production of linseed and cotton cake for cattle being a speciality. The early 20th century however saw the disappearance of a number of local industries, their products now being supplied from outside. In addition WWI reduced the population and brought about a decline in available skilled labour. The Primitive Methodist Chapel on George Street, described as 'a large and handsome edifice of brick and freestone dressings in the Norman style', had been erected in 1873. At the turn of the century the Circuit was described by the Methodist Connexion as one of the widest and numerically strongest in the country, with 1082 members spread over 34 places of worship.



A photograph of the Sunday School at the Drifffield Primitive Methodist Church in the early 1920s, perhaps just before Joseph John arrived.

There were 28 chapels on the 1922 Circuit Plan, of which 17 had at least two services each Sunday, and all with a mid-week meeting. There was a monthly Friday service at the Workhouse. There were three ministers, Joseph John being Circuit Secretary, and 67 lay preachers plus 2 on trial (in training), 4 exhorters, 2 prayer leaders, and 27 helpers. Organising the Plan must have been an enormous undertaking. The next Quarterly Meeting of the Circuit would be

at Driffieldon Friday December 1st at 2.30pm, with Tea at 5.00pm followed by a discussion about the Methodist Union Proposals at 6pm prompt.

Virtually nothing is known about Joseph John's ministry here but the plan contains a note about pastoral visitation, 'Will our friends kindly notify any case of sickness among our Congregation to the ministers, Leaders, or Society Stewards, in order that such persons may be visited ... and inform the Ministers of any case which needs special visitation'. An photograph from the early 1920s shows that there was a thriving Sunday School at the Drifffield chapel, and Joseph John must have been involved with it. In May Joseph John



Drifffield's market place, the centre of this Yorkshire Dales community.

attended the Hull and District Synod which was at Filey. On the first evening addresses were given by Revs L Robinson and J J Hodson 'and the large audience very emphatically endorsed their remarks on many occasions.

In June 1926, the Hull Daily Mail reported its stationing arrangements for the Primitive Methodist Church, which had come to the Hull and District Synod. Joseph John was to move to the Patrington Circuit, where he would serve with H Dunn Wilson and F Ash. Though this was referred to as the Patrington Circuit this was a historic anomaly representing the situation in the last century when Patrington was a thriving town whilst Withernsea was a tiny fishing village.

Joseph John was in fact going to the Hull Road Primitive Methodist Church in Withernsea where the family would live next door to the Church, 12 Hull Road. Joseph John took his first service at Withernsea on Sunday 18th July 1926.

Hull Road Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in 1879. It would seat 444 people and in its heyday around the end of the century with visitors coming

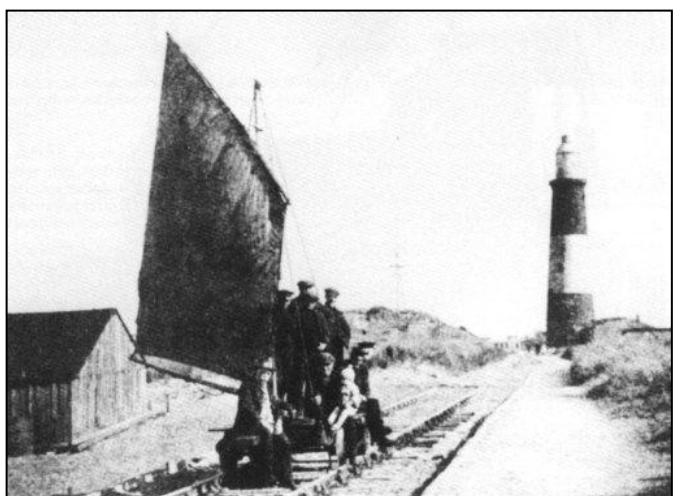


Helpers at the Spring Bazaar photographed outside the chapel with Joseph John on the far left of the front row and his wife Alice fourth on the left of that row. Second on the right was Rev H Dunn Wilson who was the minister at Patrington.

from Hull for a summer day by the sea the chapel could be full. After WWI the trustees embarked upon a bold scheme to extend and improve the premises. The building work began early in 1922 and was complete by Easter. The chapel was still without a schoolroom so no sooner had the previous work been completed they launched a scheme for a schoolroom to

be added on the back of the chapel. This too was completed rapidly, though in the process local loans had been taken out which demanded repayment. In 1926 with the arrival of Joseph John the financial situation was taken in hand and a system of regular giving was introduced.

Joseph John would take Sunday services at a number of small village chapels that were within an arc from 10 miles north of Withernsea round to Keyingham and Sunk Island (the reclaimed land on the north bank of the Humber). He would walk to most chapels, setting off early in the morning to arrive just before morning service. He would be given



The Spurn Sail Bogie which covered the 4 miles from Kilnsea to the end of Spurn Head. Joseph John used this when he was taking a service at Spurn. The Spurn lighthouse is seen in the distance.

dinner before heading off again for an afternoon service. After an early tea he would be on again for a third service before heading back to Withernsea. It must have seemed quite a luxury to have a service at Withernsea. The circuit was of course shared with a second minister based at Patrington.

Joseph John's duties included taking services on Spurn Head whose isolated community on the far end of the spit comprised the Lightkeepers, the Lifeboatmen, and the staff at the Signal Station with their families. There was a single row of cottages, tiny school, and the Lifeboat Inn. Transport from Kilnsea was by means of a railway, the lines of which had been laid during a period of construction work on the Head during the late 19th century. With the disappearance of the steam engines, passengers were transported by a Sail Bogie. The four wheel bogie supported a small timber platform on which passengers could sit. The whole was surmounted by a mast and sail about 12 feet high. With an appropriate breeze the bogie could get up a good speed but if the wind was too strong the whole contraption was liable to upset. When Joseph John had to take a service at Spurn he would use this form of transport though it generally only worked one way, so he would walk the other.

In March 1927 The Withernsea Primitive Methodist Church held a two day Bazaar to raise £250 towards clearing a £550 debt. The schoolroom was gaily decorated with a variety of stalls. Joseph John and Alice were there. The opening was supported by a crowd of visitors from the surrounding area and was chaired by a Mrs Cooper from Hull. In her opening remarks she commented on the large number of men present, 'She always thought the gentlemen got off very easily. If any money was to be raised they said "Let's have a Bazaar" and having got the ladies together that ended their work.' This was greeted with laughter. Joseph John in his address said that whether they preached the gospel or placed a stitch in some fabric, if they did it with the right motive there would come to them a great "Well done". He thanked everyone who had taken part. The opening raised £45 towards the funds required. Mrs Hodson was the Bazaar president and the secretarial work was done by Miss L Limon. Several female members of the Hodson family helped on stalls. There is no mention of a Scott presence. A similar two day Bazaar was held in 1928 when the schoolroom was decorated and Joseph John and Alice took their respective places in the programme.

The 'Withernsea Gossip' column of the Hull Daily Mail of April 22nd of the same year reported 'Councillor Carlill brought forward a suggestion made by the Minister of the Primitive Methodist Church, the Rev J J Hodson, to have community singing on the Pier steps on Sunday evenings during the summer time.' The matter was left as it was thought this could interfere with the

entertainment in the Floral Hall and also the Church Army services on the beach.

During the early part of 1928 the family suffered a bereavement with the death of Roma Augusta. She was just 19 years old, but her mental development had not been completely normally and it seems likely she would probably never have been able to lead an independent life. The entry registering Roma's death records that she died of a) acute cardiac dilatation,

REGISTRATION DISTRICT					BEVERLEY				
1928 DEATH in the Sub-district of Beverley					in the County of York (E.R.).				
Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
80	19th January 1928 East Riding Mental Hospital Walkington	Roma Augusta Hodson	Female	19 years	Daughter of Joseph John Hodson Minister Beverley	(a) Acute Cardiac Dilatation (b) Acute Bronchitis (c) Subacute parenchymatous nephritis 14 days Certified by T M Davies MD No post mortem was necessary	Joseph John Hodson The Manor Hull Road Withernsea	19th January 1928	Herbert Moffatt Registrar

Register entry for the death of Roma Augusta Hodson in 1928.

immediate, b) acute bronchitis, 6 days, c) subacute parenchymatous nephritis, 14 days, certified by T M Davies MD; no post mortem was necessary. At the time of her death Roma was resident in the East Riding Mental Hospital Walkington, so the death was registered at Beverley. This institution was Broadgate Hospital, previously the East Riding Lunatic Asylum. It would be reasonable to believe that as Roma had grown older she had become more and more difficult to look after at home.

When the Primitive Methodist Synod Hull District met for its May meeting at Selby in 1927 its business was in Joseph John's hands as he was the General Committee Delegate. The Daily Mail reported that it was well attended and the business dealt with efficiently. Joseph John was also elected Ministerial Delegate to the Conference (the national body that had responsibility for all Primitive Methodist activity in Britain). In contrast in October Joseph John was addressing a Thanksgiving Service at the tiny village of Elsternwick.

In April 1929 the Chapel had a weekend celebrating the Christian Endeavour Society. Joseph John did not take the Sunday services, they were taken by Mr Grice Batty and Councillor H Carlill. He was present at the Tuesday rally when as resident minister he led the roll-call. At the Hull District Synod in April 1929 the main subject was the unity of the Methodist Church in the light of the forthcoming uniting of various Methodist denominations into one Methodist Church. Joseph John was elected President. A report in the Hull Daily Mail said

'The Local Primitive Methodists were proud to have their minister, the Rev J J Hodson MA selected as president of the District Synod. The reverend gentleman has been very popular during his three years in the Withernsea circuit, which terminates in July, when he goes to Ripon.' This was a fitting testimony to his time in Withernsea.

It was of course during this time that Joseph John's eldest daughter began a friendship with John Frank Scott which would eventually lead to their wedding. It would appear that John Frank became a visitor at 12 Hull Road where he listened to the learned conversation of his minister.

It was in 1929 that Joseph John's long time friend and ministerial colleague Rev Lawrence Robinson wrote a profile of him which appeared in the Aldersgate Magazine. He refers to Joseph John's time at Prees Heath Camp, 'Some of his best work was done during the war years, when he exerted a fine influence amongst the soldiers stationed at Prees Green'. He continued, 'He is essentially a student and a scholar, with unremitting diligence keeping himself abreast of developments of theology and criticism. A real lover of books, there is only room for the best upon his shelves, and he has the courage to dispense with the volume that becomes outdated, or that reveals its mediocrity. The fashioning of sermons is an unceasing and beloved task. Into the preparation of them he puts all his resources, and they ever repay the hardest listening. He delves deeply and enshrines the finest fruit of his thought in every pulpit effort. With him the week-night service is a call for the masterpiece. He can investigate a passage with scholarly thoroughness and mastery and yet illuminate it with the homeliest of illustrations and the most familiar analogies. Though the sermon is rich with earnest study, it is the message that stands central and dominant through all.

As a circuit minister he is forceful in counsel, decisive in judgement, a good visitor and capable in organisation. Those who know him best have discovered within, a heart of pure gold. His nature is sincere and affectionate, particularly towards young men who are seeking that equipment of learning and of the Spirit that will enable them to become worthy servants of the Kingdom. Throughout his ministry it has been his supreme joy to gather together such groups of young men and guide them into the heart of the Word. It is perhaps here that he is seen at his best, shepherding them with loving interest, freely offering them the treasures of his heart and erudition.' Though the language is excessive, it does point to the central themes that drove Joseph John's ministry, and also hints that without the facility to follow those themes Joseph John's life would become unfulfilled and thankless.

The Hodson family must have taken the move to Ripon in its stride, such events were so much a part of their lives. Did Marjorie, now 23 years old, move or did she remain in Withernsea? Whilst the suspicion would be that she did stay, the important part she played in looking after the other children may have prevented it, though they were all now getting older, and the responsibility of Roma had gone. It is known that Marjorie worked for some years in the Hull Telephone Exchange, a job she very much enjoyed and which produced a group of girl friends whose friendship lasted many years.

Ripon is a old North Yorkshire market town though technically a city due to its ancient cathedral. Historically its wealth was from sheep. The Primitive Methodist manse at Ripon was 26 College Road. The Ripon Circuit was comparatively small with 7 Chapels in total – Ripon 108 members, Kirby Malzeard 6 members, Masham 18 members, Winksley 15 members, Marton 12 members, Roecliffe 7 members and Colsterdale 4 members. Joseph John was the only minister but he was assisted by Pastor David Holwell based at Masham. There were 7 Local Preachers but a long list of ‘auxiliaries’ from other Circuits who helped. The Circuit finances for the third quarter of 1930 showed an income from the Chapels of £77.6.10d plus a Circuit Effort that raised £14.10.6d, total £91.17.4d and an expenditure of £91.1.0d. this may not have seemed particularly encouraging, but Joseph John’s report of the Condition and Prospects of the Station in December 1930 was quite upbeat. ‘We are glad to report that this quarter has been a very encouraging one. Weeknight services have been well sustained apart from a few weeks at the end of September, and Sunday Services have been fairly well attended. The Harvest Festivals all round were a great success, far better than anticipated.’

Ministers’ responsibilities were wide-ranging, as the following will show. In April 1930 Joseph John found himself having to look after an insurance claim arising from a breakdown of the boiler heating system at the Masham Chapel for which he had responsibility. All Primitive Methodist chapels would have been insured with the Primitive Methodist Insurance Company Limited, for which the local Minister was the agent. Joseph John would therefore have had to deal with the negotiations. The system was a high pressure system of boiler and furnace under the floor in the schoolroom so failure of the system meant that the boiler had to be renewed and the furnace rebuilt. The insurance

PRIMITIVE METHODIST	
Preachers' Plan.	
RIPON CIRCUIT.	
From October to December, 1930.	
Ministers :—	
REV. J. J. HODSON, M.A.,	26, College Road, Ripon.
PASTOR DAVID W. HOLWELL	Masham
Circuit Stewards :	
Mr. R. B. WHITS	36, Magdalen's Road, Ripon
Mr. F. Anderson	Littlethorpe, Ripon
Circuit Secretary :	
Mr. T. Prest	Queen Street, Ripon
Circuit Auditor :	
Mr. G. T. Wise	33, Princess Road, Ripon
Society Stewards :	
Ripon	Mr. T. Prest
Assistants—Messrs. E. Bland and G. T. Wise.	
Kirby Malzeard	Mrs. Lobley and Mr. W. Richardson
Masham	Mr. P. Mallaby and Mr. G. Shaw
Winksley	Mr. Greenwood and Mr. H. Walker
Marton-cum-Grafton	Mr. G. Kirby and Mrs. G. Kirby
Roecliffe	Mrs. Proctor
Colsterdale	Miss Mallaby
Special Notices.	
The next Quarterly Meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 3rd, at Ripon, 5-30 p.m.	
PRICE TWOPENCE.	
B. Ackrill, Ltd. (B. B. Hill), 36a, Market Place Ripon.	

The Ripon Circuit Preachers' Plan from 1930.

company were not impressed by the application claiming that 'damage in all probability was caused through the apparatus being fired when the pipes were frozen with the intense cold, and this caused the pipes to burst. This damage is not covered by our fire policy'. In separate letter the insurance value was itemised as chapel £1750, the schoolroom £350, two cottages £250, a stable

Quakerage. £4. 19. 8. to Rev. J. J. Hodson.
less. 1. 3. 6. Insurance
... 1. 13. 6. to salary. ✓

Stanley's Cottage.
1 Bedroom & landing.
1 Partry & Scullery combined.
1 living Room.
& usual outhouses, coalhouse, washhouse etc.

Length - Quaker's Remace.
Length. 17 ft. Coalhouse etc. 10 ft. ± 2 ft.
Width - 17 ft. 5 ins.

Notice to Stanley for 1 room & cottage. by Rev. J. J. Hodson. ✓
Collections from end of March to March inclusive

Joseph John's hand written notes relating to the sale of the cottage at Masham.

£100, and finally the piano and harmonium £50. The upshot of this sad story was that in January 1931 the Trustees of the Masham Chapel applied for permission to sell one of the cottages so as to turn the other into a more adequate schoolroom, and to

fund work resulting from the boiler problem. They also took out a loan for £30 from the Chapel Aid Association to be repaid at a rate of £2 per month. The responsibility of selling the cottage fell to Joseph John of course.

Another side of Joseph John's job is shown by documents relating to a Crestone Baking Competition which he organised as part of the chapel's 1929 Bazaar. The conditions are interesting: a cash payment of £2 if a minimum of 100 cakes are submitted, or £1 if 50 cakes are submitted; entrance fee 3d or 6d for each competitor; cakes to be sold at 1 shilling; must use 9½ packets of Crestona Chocolate Cake Mix. Prises were, 1st ½doz stainless desert knives and forks, 2nd ½doz stainless tea knives, 3rd 1 Hegagon Entrée Dish. Crestona supplied certificates and there were displayed by the Ripon Co-operative Society, presumably in their shop. The result was a cheque from Crestona for £1 towards the Bazaar funds.

CRESTONA LIMITED
 Telegrams "CRESTONA LEEDS"
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 Makers of Food Products of Guaranteed Purity.
 4 GOLD MEDALS
 Directors: W. S. CARTWRIGHT, J. F. STONEY, E. A. LAMBERT
 Conway Road, Harehills, Leeds.
 13th. December, 1929.

OUR REF. WBC/NGG.
 YOUR REF.

The Rev. J. J. Hodson,
 26. College Road,
 RIPON.

Dear Sir,

Re Crestona Baking Competition.

We thank you for your letter enclosing judge's certificate and 50. Chocolate Cake Wrappers in connection with the above.

We now have pleasure in enclosing cheque value £1.0.0. which is the amount due in accordance with our conditions, as a contribution to your Bazaar Funds.

Yours faithfully,
 Pro CRESTONA LTD.
 WBC.
 Managing Director.

ENCLOSURE

Letter to Joseph John from Crestona. He was arranging a cake competition for the Chapel bazaar.

Finally there is the strange case of B Waterhouse, deceased, or his disappearing will. The first of three existing letters from Benjamin Waterhouse to a Mrs Proctor, Society Steward at the Roecliffe Primitive Methodist Chapel was dated March 31st 1930. In it Mr Waterhouse declares that he is making his will and would wish to bequeath a sum of money to that Chapel. In a second letter dated April 2nd 1930, Mr Waterhouse acknowledged a reply and restated the advice of the solicitor that the matter be raised with the minister (obviously Joseph John) and with the Circuit Steward. A third letter dated 22nd April 1930 written to Joseph John himself Says 'I signed my will on April 17th and left a sum of £100 free of duty to be spent on the Roecliffe Primitive Methodist Chapel'. This was put in trust with trustees Joseph John and Mr Thomas Prest, Circuit Secretary of the Ripon Circuit.

There follows a letter to Joseph John from Moody and Co, solicitors, dated 5th May 1932 which states 'In April 1930 we made a Will for the above gentleman (Benjamin Waterhouse), under which money was left in trust for certain Non-conformist charities, and you were mentioned in the Will in connection therewith. Mr Waterhouse took away the Will from our office in the following August, without giving any reason, and we have not made another Will for him. Mr Waterhouse died about a month ago, and the Will cannot now be found, and we shall be much obliged if you will inform us whether he entrusted it with you for safe keeping, as his relatives think it possible he might have done this.' It appears that Joseph John responded negatively and therefore the solicitor obtained the opinion of Counsel, M B Durley Grazebrook of 5 Pump Court, Temple EC4. The Counsel stated 'I am of the opinion that on the facts now laid before me, as the Will of the 17th April 1930 was last in the possession of the deceased, and as it was not found at his death, the presumption of law arises that it was destroyed by the deceased with the intention of revoking it. This opinion is strengthened by the fact that the deceased stated his intention of altering his Will ...Therefore I do not advise that the draft Will should be propounded.' Joseph John therefore received a letter from the solicitor to the effect that '... we now propose to obtain a Grant of Letters of Administration as it is considered that the deceased died intestate. It is not known if the Chapel at Roecliffe did receive any money from Benjamin Waterhouse's estate.

Joseph John was on very good terms with the Bishop of Ripon, Edward Arthur Burroughs (Arthur Ripon). It is known that he was the first non-conformist minister to preach in the Cathedral. A personal letter from the Bishop to Joseph John exists, dated April 28th 1931. It was written in response to an invitation, presumably instigated by Joseph John, to the Bishop to attend the Primitive Methodist Synod. Unfortunately this was impossible as the Bishop was going to be away, but he was therefore sending a Canon Inchey to

represent him, with his good wishes. This was a period just prior to Methodist Union when the Primitive and Wesleyan branches of the Methodist Church and several small ones were to unite as a single Methodist Church in England. It was therefore being discussed at many Synod meetings across the country. Was Joseph John hoping that this would lead on to union between Methodists and the Church of England. Burroughs spoke warmly about that wider union in his letter whilst being cautious about its possibility. In the light of later events it may be that Joseph John had already become drawn to the Church of England.

It was at Ripon, on 1930, that we find the first hint of Joseph John's deteriorating health. In January he had written to Rev Jacob Walton, General Secretary of the Primitive Methodist Church, asking about the procedure in the light of his indisposition. Rev Walton responded 'I am very sorry to hear that you are so poorly', and told him to obtain a medical certificate stating that he was unfit for work. What happened then is not known but Joseph John went on in 1921 to move to the Halesowen and Hasbury Circuit which he had been in previously in 1905.

In January 1933 Joseph John received another letter from Rev Jacob Walton, this time as Financial Secretary, Methodist (PM) Funds, of the newly formed Methodist Church based at 1 Central Buildings, Westminster. Joseph John had informed him of his desire to superannuate at the end of the present connexional year. That would bring Joseph John's ministry to an end. It seems likely that arrangements were already in hand for the marriage of daughter Marjorie to John Frank in September of the same year. Or was it hurriedly arranged in the light of Joseph John's impending retirement. The wedding would take place on September 16th, at a service taken by Joseph John at Hasbury Methodist Church. This must have been one of the last things that he did.

A Methodist Quarterly Guide for the Blackheath and Langley Green Circuit has in its list of 'Auxiliaries' the name Mr J J Hodson – not even an MA. He was to take morning and evening services on 15th October 1933. No longer styled 'Rev', was this his final farewell, his last appearance on the Methodist Plan.

In November 1934 a letter to Joseph John from the Bishop of Worcester, Arthur Perowne indicated that he had been making overtures to the Bishop about the possibility of him joining the Church of England. The letter is businesslike and lacking in sympathy. 'I am afraid that I can hold out very little hope of Ordination in this Diocese. We have recently had very greatest difficulty in placing the men who have been trained with help from our Diocesan Funds ... In your case your age is against you.' He concludes 'I am

sorry to write so very unfavourable, but it is no use raising false expectations'. This peremptory rebuff must have hit Joseph John hard.

A letter from Rev F H Benson, Chairman of the Birmingham District on 27th March delivered Joseph John a fairly strong rebuke. It read 'I was very sorry indeed to receive a copy of Dr McQueen's letter, and to learn that it is being widely distributed. I cannot but fear that such a letter may do great harm to the cause of God in Halesowen. If it should become known to the laymen of the Circuit I am afraid its effect would be to create party spirit which would of course be most prejudicial to the work. I know how keen has been your disappointment but you and I both believe and preach that we should put the Kingdom first. I would beg you therefore to do all in your power to prevent anything like agitation. I am writing by this post to Dr McQueen.'

On March 30th 1935, Joseph John received a statement from his doctor, James Milroy McQueen, MA, BSc, MB ChB, DPH. 'This is to certify that for the last two and a half years I have been the medical adviser to Rev J J Hodson MA ... During that period he had been a repeated sufferer from Neuritis and Insomnia. In damp and cold weather there has been the further complication of Bronchitis. Accordingly I have advised him in the paramount interest of his health, mental and bodily, at the close of his Ministry to this Circuit to seek rest through superannuation.' What Dr McQueen had said that had caused Rev Benson such anxiety is unknown. Were there other issues relating to Joseph John's health that Rev Benson did not wish to be mentioned?

There are a series of letters from the Primitive Methodist Itinerant Preachers' Friendly Society and the Methodist Church in 1935 discussion the amount that Joseph John would receive from them. From the former there was an allowance of £40 for furnishing a house – Ministers did not have their own furniture. For his 30 years in the Society he would receive £21/5/-, paid on the 21st of December, March, June and September, at a quarterly rate of £5/6/3d. From the Aged Minister's Fund he would get 34/40 of £90. He would also receive a pension for the Primitive Methodist Church.

On the 23rd July 1935, the Primitive Methodist Itinerant Preachers' Friendly Society at its Annual Assembly in Bristol received tributes to the Ministers who were Superannuating that year. Amongst them was Joseph John. He received the formal letter from Methodist Conference dated 2nd August 1935 wishing Joseph John well in his retirement, 'It is our earnest hope that you will find the new conditions bring you many compensations.'

A letter from a Rev Benson Perkins dated 16th September 1935, referred to a cordial relationship between Joseph John and himself whilst they were both in

Birmingham. It suggested that Joseph John had enquired of Rev Benson, now Superintendent of Sheffield Methodist Mission based at the Victoria Hall, about the possibility of his being associated with that mission, but the letter does not confirm that this ever happened.

On 4th October 1935 there was another letter from Rev Jacob Walton which reiterates the allowances Joseph John was entitled to for his 34 years of ministry. What is interesting is that it was addressed c/o Mrs Frank Scott, Jeweller, Queen Street, Withernsea. It appears that Rev Walton must have written to Quinton (presumably 28 Gower Road, Quinton, the house that Joseph John and Alice, together with Eric and Enid would eventually live in) but had the letter returned because he requested that Joseph John inform the 'postal authorities to redirect your letters to your temporary address). How long Joseph John stayed in Withernsea is not known.

There is no further documentary evidence of what Joseph John did, but it was said by Marjorie that he gained employment as a teacher, but that he found this unrewarding, the school students not having the interest that he had been used to finding in his churches.

The final events of Joseph John's life were swift and sudden. The first report appeared in the Nottingham Evening Post on Thursday January 28th, 'The body of the Rev J J Hodson, a retired Methodist Minister, aged 57, of Halesowen, Worcestershire, was found yesterday (25th January 1937), in a field on the outskirts of the town, with a gunshot in the head.'

The inquest was reported in the Western Morning News and Daily Gazette on January 30th 1937. 'At the Halesowen inquest yesterday a verdict of "Suicide while temporarily insane" was recorded by the Deputy Coroner, Mr F G Payne. Mrs Alice Hodson stated that her husband was of nervous disposition. He had never threatened to take his life. She thought he was upset at giving up his ministry at Halesowen. On Monday he went for a walk and did not return. Dr McQueen said that Mr Hodson's memory began to fail, his powers of concentration were lacking, and he complained of sleeplessness. His condition grew worse after he retired. Impulsive insanity might arise as a temporary condition. Further evidence was given that Mr Hodson had been shot through the mouth. His revolver was found lying on his chest. The inquest was also reported briefly in the Hull Daily Mail with the final paragraph 'Many people will remember that Mr Hodson was stationed at Hull in 1919, and then went to Driffild in 1922. In 1926 he moved to Patrington. When in Hull he was chairman of the Synod.' Obviously he was remembered.

There is a sad postscript to his death recorded by Geoffrey Hodson in his 1999 family history of the Hodsons. He wrote:

'As a boy of 9, I remember the news breaking at Fishlake ... It caused a domestic crisis in my home: my Dad blamed my Mother for his brother's death! That's how I remember it. You see Uncle Joseph John had been to our house a little while before. My childhood memory of my mother's retelling puts it at a week before, but it may have been longer. I was there, sitting on the arm of my Dad's chair nearly the whole time, maybe three hours, one Sunday evening, listening to my Dad and his brother talking. I remember them being concerned as to where my mother was. I was wanting my supper and thinking it odd that my mother was not there to give Uncle Joseph some supper as well. My Dad said she'd probably gone to her mother's on the Bank (Grandma Walker). In the end Uncle Joseph decided to go. I never knew where he was staying, maybe at his sister's at Stainforth, my Aunt Clara's. My Mother returned shortly afterwards and there was a bit of a fuss. The next thing we heard he had shot himself. And a bigger fuss, all of which I didn't understand at the time.

Years later, my mother told me more about that fateful Sunday. She had known that Joseph John was coming and why. She hadn't gone out to her mother's at all. In her phrase she had 'kept out of sight', hiding in an outside lavatory. She sat on 'the throne' and listened through a partly opened cupboard which occupied the wall between herself and them. Uncle Joseph John had come to borrow a hundred pounds. She was not going to lend it to him. She said his IOU was worthless. There was no possibility of him being able to pay it back: in poor health and retirement, with the mere pittance of a Primitive Methodist pension and trying to educate his family at university. She had lent money before to his mother and been refused repayment 'by the family' when she died. My mother's money came from a legacy from Sarah Elizabeth Godfrey, a blind elderly relative of her Dad, to whom she had been sent as 'maid/companion' at the age of 13. She was having to use it 'to keep things going' as farming was very poor and my dad had no money. She often told me how, in the early days of marriage, the Hodson family seemed to think her bit of 'ready money' should go into the family pool. My mother's brother Billy warned her against it. 'You'll lose every penny if you're not careful.' No doubt it was a hangover from the days when a wife's money and property became her husband's on marriage, though the law had been changed in the 1880s to allow a wife to retain it. As late as the 1980s Ernest, another of my Dad's brothers kept reminding her of this; 'If you marry me' he would say jokingly, 'your land will be mine.' (a reference to a small group of fields she managed to buy in the thirties when prices were rock bottom and there were no bidders). She was not going to lend Joseph John that one hundred pounds.

I clearly remember my Dad saying, 'If you'd lent him the money, my brother would still be alive.' Two of Joseph John's children, Eric and Enid, have

told me there were 'other reasons besides money for his suicide' and I have left it at that. A sad end to a great career as a Primitive Methodist Minister.'

The only other possible issue was the relationship between Joseph John and his wife Alice. Marjorie has said that one of the reasons she was left to look after her brothers and sisters was that Alice liked to be out and about dressed up as she felt the wife of the Minister should be. She also had a temper and would have shouting matches with Joseph John when she didn't get her own way. On one occasion she threw his Durham MA certificate into the fire as a way of getting back at him. When Joseph John left the ministry she lost that status as well and may have blamed him. It seemed perhaps strange that Joseph John went to stay with Marjorie in Withernsea after his retirement – Alice may have been with him but probably not, and returning a letter to Rev Walton was perhaps not out of character. After his death all the remaining papers and his books were put in the loft at 29th Gower road where they remained until the house was cleared following Enid's death in 2006.

It was also in 1935, at the age of 17, that their head-strong daughter Enid, very much against her parent's wishes, took a job with TI Tube Products at Oldbury. She would have been living with her parents, but would never have imagined that she would work for the same firm all her working life, and that she would live in the same house until her death in 2006. In the years following Joseph John's death Alice became ill with Pernicious Anaemia. This was at a time when there was no effective treatment and she became bed-ridden. Enid and Eric, neither of whom married, cared for her until her death on 12 January 1962 aged 82 years.

Following Joseph John's death, a number of obituaries appeared. All of them expressed appreciation for a person of outstanding ability as a preacher and interpreter of Scripture. He could gather round himself young men with eager and questioning minds, encouraging them with his own deep faith to take their own steps forward in faith. His was also a caring ministry and he was always available to anyone who needed pastoral help. When in the end ill health removed him from the theatre of all that activity and service to his God, he was bereft and life ceased to have meaning. It was a tragic end to for a person who had given so much.