

THOMAS HENRY CADDY

Thomas Henry Caddy was born in the town of Porthleven, Cornwall the son of William, a Butcher, and Eliza Caddy on December 13th 1875. He trained at Richmond College and entered the Wesleyan ministry in 1899.

He married Olive Maud Barrett in June 1907. They had two boys Cyril, born Yeovil June 1908, and Ralph, born in Hartley Witney in June 1912. Olive Maud died in March 1929. After a full and interesting career he came, recently widowed, to fill the superintendency post in the Windsor and Maidenhead Circuit in 1931.

His ministry in Maidenhead was notable for his firm but simple faith, his fervent eloquence in his propagation of Christian ethics and his dauntless open air preaching. It was said of him at his funeral that *“Through a period of conflict and change and in face of all the criticism of scripture he dared to look the worst in the face and believe in the best”*. Two outstanding events in his Maidenhead ministry were the opening of the Slough Central Hall and the opening of a new church at Woodlands Park.

At the outset of his ministry he went directly into the mission field and spent over six years there - five in Spanish Honduras and a year in British Honduras. On his return he spent time in Yeovil, Sandhurst, Nottingham, Plymouth, Basingstoke, Sheffield and Reading. At Sandhurst he was free church chaplain to Broadmoor Asylum and in Plymouth he acted in a similar capacity at Plymouth prison.

He was firm in his teetotal convictions as for example was witnessed in 1908 when he spoke in support of the Licensing Bill:

“Opponents to the Bill, he said, were trying to frighten them and they had been even branded as dishonest, fanatics and hypocrites. It was the charge of dishonesty that lead him to a study of the Bill. and if he had found an element of dishonesty about it he would have opposed it tooth and nail. But because he believed it to be honest, he was there to support it. (Applause)

The measure did not aim at suppressing drinking but the suppression of excessive facilities for drinking. When people talked about robbing the poor man of his beer it was all moonshine, humbug and lying. It did not aim at the brewer, the publican, or anyone who might have a particular interest in brewery shares; it did not aim at ruining the brewer, but aimed at the restoration to the State of its ancient right - the unfettered control of the liquor trade. (Applause,)

Referring to the employment of barmaids, he said they were not questioning their character but the character of the environment in which they got their living. The bar was no place for young women, and if publicans wanted them, let them send their own daughters there. (Applause.)”

While in Plymouth he featured in the Library Lecture series for 1918/19 giving two lectures:

“TAGORE - The poet knight of India” and “With Camera and Note Book in Central America”

He was also passionate about stimulating the interest of children in books through the availability of such in Public Libraries. The flavour of his interest can be gained from an article in the Childrens' Newspaper (C.N.) for April 1920:

C.N. CHUMS

NEW MOVEMENT FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

A Basingstoke experiment for making Good Citizens

THE CIRCLE OF THE MAGIC CARPET

All the educated world knows that C.N. is widely used in the day schools of the United Kingdom; now an admirer has devised an excellent way of using it for Sunday Schools.

From the Rev. T. H. Caddy, the popular Wesleyan Minister of Basingstoke, we have received an extremely interesting and carefully planned scheme by which, using the C.N. as a helper, he is trying to come into close touch with the children of his congregation and neighbourhood. We are sure he will be glad for us to describe his ingenious plan.

Mr Caddy has felt that the wide range of subjects, instructive, stimulating, and amusing, introduced into the C.N. must arouse the interest of all intelligent young people and may well form a bond of friendship and helpfulness between any children who can be grouped together.

His wife, Olive Margaret Caddy, died during his tenure in Plymouth in June 1929

Another newspaper article published in the Western Morning News in December 1930 gives another interesting insight into Thomas's interests while at Plymouth:

A SOCIETY OF HERETICS

SIX CHURCHMEN OF PLYMOUTH

All-night debates on religious matters

A "secret society" or private discussion group, in Plymouth, limited to six members, and called "The Heretics", which is now non-existent, but included at one-time Dr Perowne, now Bishop of Bradford, was revealed yesterday by Rev T Wilkinson-Riddle, pastor of George-Street baptist Church who is the only remaining "heretic" in Plymouth, in the course of an address to St Andrew's Parish Church, Plymouth, Church of England's Men's Society in Prysten House.

Their discussions and deliberations were at times so intense as to last until nearly four o'clock in the morning declared Mr Riddle.

Initially, said Mr Riddle, the members of the Society consisted of Dr Perowne who was then Archdeacon of Plymouth; Prebendary J P Baker of Charles who now holds a living in Liverpool; Father W.H.Sharp of All Saints Church, Plymouth; and for non-conformists: Rev E.W. Coltman now at Croydon; Rev T.H. Caddy at Basingstoke, but then at Wesley Chapel; and himself.

When Thomas Caddy died on 7th January 1935, the Newspaper report said:

“By the death of the Rev T.H. Caddy, Whitney House, Laburnham Road, Maidenhead, Methodism in Berkshire and in Maidenhead has lost a stalwart minister. He was obliged to go to bed with a chill during Christmas, but his condition became serious on Monday, when he collapsed. He was conveyed speedily to the Maidenhead Hospital where he passed away about 10.00 p.m. at the age of 59.”