

GEORGE WILLIAM OLVER

George William Olver was born March 1863 in Scarborough, the son of George William Olver and grandson of Henry Vyvyan Olver both very respected and highly influential Wesleyan Methodist ministers

A Monday in July 1887 was a red letter day both for George and his father:

“A service was held in thr City road Chapel on Monday for the ordination of Mr G.W. Olver who is leaving for the Santhali mission, India and Mr A.A. Bestall, missionary to Burmah. The service was taken part in by Rev G.W.Olver, father of one of the missionaries, and Rev E.E. Jenkins”.

George was to spend the next 28 years in the mission field in India and he very quickly established his base there;

“After travelling for many months and living in tents, G W Olver decided to make Sarnga in Bankura (a principally tribal area) the centre of his operations, and the church in Sarenga was founded in 1888. The missionary ministers were especially concerned with the lack of education and medical facilities in and around Sarenga. People were dying without treatment during epidemics of cholera, snallpox, and typhoid. Through the Methodist Missionary Society in London, arrangements were made to build a hospital in the region “

George eventually became Chairman of the Bengal Methodist

In 1899 George married Lilian.

Three children were born to George and Lily on the Indian continent:-

**George Cordon (1900);
Lilian Mercy Corden (1902), and
Frances Corden (1904).**

However on 14 April 1908 George, Lily and family arrived in England and left the three children to lodge with George’s three unmarried sisters - Jane, Annie and Edith in Greenwich.

George and Lily returned to India later in October that year and until they eventually came home seven years later had to endure the hard missionary life separated from their children.

George and Lily returned from India in 1915:

“Mr G W Olver, who has served the Missionary Society for 23 years in India, in one of the high places of the field, comes home, and is now appointed as second minister in the London (Bayswater) Circuit, free from the cares of superintendency” (Birmingham Post 26 July 1915)

While in Bayswater, George made a great and lasting impression:

“Gilbert Thomas came to know G.W. Olver as a prison chaplain while imprisoned in Wormwood Scrubbs as a conscientious objector in World War I.

‘During my pre-hospital weeks I had attended his services, and had gained the impression of an unusual devout and sincere man, saved from conventional pietism by an alert, enquiring and independent mind, eagerly responsive to ideas and to every kind of human interest. His preaching at once soothed and stimulated, and I admired the thoroughness and tact with which he seized the opportunities of helpfulness open to him... Olver's visits laid the foundation of an abiding friendship, rewarding me through a quarter-century with a sustained correspondence, at once thoughtful and lively’ ”

Gilbert Thomas Autobiography (1946) pp.160-61

George was appointed Superintendent of the Windsor Circuit from 1919 until 1922

After leaving Maidenhead, George was appointed Chairman of the Scarborough District in 1924 and later Superintendent of the Grimsby circuit in 1927 where Lily died in March 1929. George then became a supernumery minister in the Wigan circuit from 1929 to 1938.

George was still very active in retirement:

METHODIST UNION

“Two notable gatherings have been held in the Wigan district in furthering the spirit of union. The first took the form of a meeting of the Local Preachers of the Wigan and Chorley circuits of the three denominations. The second gathering held on August 31st, took the form of an open-air Methodist rally on the spacious Wigan market square. Over a thousand persons were present, and the community singing to well known tunes was hearty and vigorous. Rev G.W. Olver, Wigan Wesleyan superintendent took the chair and prayer was offered by Mr T. Goulding, Primitive Methodist.”

(The United Methodist Magazine September 4th 1930)

George William Olver died on the 30 May 1942 aged 79 years

A memorial to him was unveiled in the Aspull (Wigan Road) Methodist Church on 25th October 1942

George William Olver

Died 30 May 1942

former superintendent minister at Standishgate Methodist Church