

JOHN HAYHURST WILKINSON

John Hayhurst Wilkinson was born at Low Moor, Clitheroe in 1849. Aged 14 he left school to work in the Low Moor's large cotton spinning mills where he subsequently rose to be head cashier.

He married Mary Nicholls of Marazion, Cornwall in June 1876 the daughter of the Rev Samuel Nicholls, Wesleyan minister and, although married, was accepted as a candidate for the ministry (only granted in exceptional circumstances to married men) the following year.

At 27 years of age, and although largely self-educated through his studies at home, he passed his final examinations with first class honours.

He was to spend a significant part of his early ministry in the Maidenhead area his first appointment was to Reading, his third to Maidenhead and after a time in Harrogate back to Henley on Thames.

John and Mary had five children, two sons and three daughters, the eldest of whom, Charles Henry, was born in Maidenhead in 1878.

One newspaper account states:

"He was a very popular and eloquent preacher whose sermons gave evidence of very beautiful thought and were clothed in exquisite language"

His obituary said of him:

"His was a quiet and reflective disposition; he loved his study, though not a recluse; the sorrowing and needy had a warm place in his sympathies, and he had a tender feeling for struggling youth. He possessed a brotherly spirit, and was always accessible. He was pre-eminently a preacher. The ministry of the word was his special joy, and his sermons were expressed in simple but dignified language, and relieved and enriched by frequent illustrations".

Prior to his death, he somewhat stressed. Two days before his brother in Liverpool had been taken rather seriously ill, and after visiting him John was considerably distressed. On the day of his death John had attended a Quarterly Meeting but had missed the train home necessitating a late night walk arriving at home at 11.p.m. And sitting down fatigued he died of a heart attack within a very few minutes.

He died on 5th March 1903 in Barnoldswick Manse