

Memoirs of William Rowe Primitive Methodist Preacher  
1817-1880 [ref DDX562/1]

‘Until I was 15 years of age I never heard a non-conformist preach. About two miles away the Wesleyans had a little Chapel badly attended, the two or three principal men, members and office bearers were not much respected. We now lived at Hallowood farm, Willaston , Great Neston. There were no religious services in the village, and it seemed as if no one cared for our souls. The whole parish needed Christian missionaries and there was a wonderful moral revolution through the labours of the Primitive Methodists. I well remember their first service in Willaston. On a beautiful summer evening, a local preacher with a few of both sexes came a few miles and in the open town green opened his commission. Their singing, lively and earnest was very attracting. The good man’s prayer astonished me. He knelt on the bare earth, shut his eyes and turned his face to ward heaven. He prayed with a loud voice with much feeling, though behaved rudely. His preaching made a favourable impression. He announced someone else would be there on the next sabbath evening.

A widow lately come to the village who knew something of the Primitive Methodists elsewhere opened her large farmhouse kitchen for their use, It was accepted and filled with an attentive congregation. That widow Mrs Tickle finished well and I believe her three sons and two daughters have followed her to her heavenly home.

In that farmhouse kitchen many were converted. To many of us it was the house of God and the gate of heaven. I got converted, that God intended me to be a Primitive Methodist preacher I have never doubted that. Some say young men are generally too fast..... Some excused me saying I was converted in a hurry and have been in a hurry ever since. I think for the next eleven Sundays I preached once or oftener but the circuit quarterly meeting flatly feared to put me on the local preacher’s plan. I did not know anyone intended to propose me for the plan. I heard a year or two after they hesitated fearing I was too hot to endure long. A brother asked for my character before conversion

and the meeting concluded that likely I should be as active for God as I had been for the devil. And they placed me with a good old man [Thomas Longford] to advise and to take care of me.

[he was too ill to do this]

I worked hard as a local preacher and as the plan makers knew I could ride to my appointments, they used me freely and for long distances in our large circuit.

[ A circuit is a group of Methodist Churches and in the 1830's Willaston was part of the Chester circuit which included churches as in Tattenhall, Hawarden and Northrop as well as the Wirral ]