

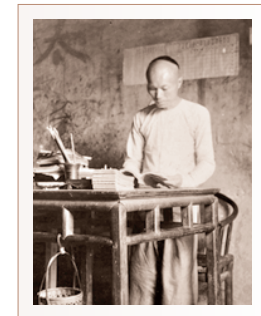


Guide to the Archive
of the OVERSEAS MISSION of the
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of ENGLAND
(the ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN MISSION)

BACKGROUND HISTORY

ORGANISATIONAL HISTORY

One of the first acts of the newly-established Presbyterian Church in England (PCE) in 1844 was to set up a Foreign Missions Committee (FMC) to “institute foreign missions in connection with this Church as speedily as possible.”¹ China was chosen as the first mission field for the English Presbyterian Mission (EPM), due in part to the interest in China engendered by the Opium Wars and to the fact that the Free Church of Scotland, with whom the PCE was in alliance, was not in a position in that time to extend its missionary work to China. Many English Presbyterian missionaries came in fact from Scotland. The first missionary, William Chalmers Burns (1815-1868), who hailed from the Scottish borders, was appointed to China in 1847. In 1878 the Women’s Missionary Association (WMA) was founded, following the sending of the Church’s first single woman missionary, Catherine Maria Ricketts (1841-1907), to Swatow [Shantou] in present-day Guangdong province. The WMA functioned as an independent unit within the overall



A country school teacher in the Hakka-speaking region of south-east China, c.1900s

Ref: PCE/FMC Hakka Photographs, box 1, file 3

framework of the Presbyterian Church of England² until 1925, when a union between the FMC and the WMA was ratified. The WMA became part of the FMC and women were given equal representation with men on the FMC Executive while retaining a home organisation with certain responsibilities, notably fundraising and training. In 1950 the Foreign Missions Committee changed its name to the Overseas Missions Committee (OMC). Since 1947 the OMC and the London Missionary Society, the missionary arm of Congregational churches in England and Wales had been exploring the possibility of unifying

¹ Edward Band, *Working His Purpose Out: the history of the English Presbyterian Mission 1847-1947*, London, 1948, p. 2.

² In 1876 the Presbyterian Church in England became the Presbyterian Church of England when the PCE and the English Synod of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland united.

FRONT COVER PICTURE:

Photograph taken to mark the thirtieth anniversary, in 1907, of the ordination in the Presbyterian Church of Revd Tan Soan-leng at Quanzhou. The Prefect of the city is shown (centre, front row) as well as subordinate mandarins, missionaries and local clergy

Ref: PCE/FMC South Fujian Photographs, box 2, file 3

their missionary work: and following the merger of the Presbyterian Church of England and the Congregational Church in England and Wales to form the United Reformed Church in 1972 missionary work of both organisations became the responsibility of the Council for World Mission.

THE MISSION FIELDS OF THE ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN MISSION (EPM)

The main missionary work of the English Presbyterian Mission was in China; the first mission was founded at Amoy [Xiamen] in South Fukien [Fujian] in 1850. Later, missions were established at Swatow [Shantou], East Guangdong and in the inland Hakka-speaking area. Work began in Formosa [Taiwan] in 1865. Presbyterian missions were also founded in Singapore and Malaysia, and at Rajshahi in Bengal. A salient feature of English Presbyterian Mission work was a concern to establish self-supporting and self-propagating churches as soon as was feasible. To this end theological education was introduced early to develop a well-trained ministry while the use of Romanized scripts in vernacular teaching encouraged the growth of bible-reading church congregations. The Mission ran in addition to primary schools a number of secondary educational establishments including the Anglo-Chinese School at Amoy [Xiamen] and Westminster College at Chuan-chow [Quanzhou]. Medical missionaries founded hospitals at a number of centres including an important hospital at Swatow [Shantou], which was at the centre of mission work in that area. Along with other missionary societies the work of EPM was greatly hampered by civil unrest and political demonstrations in the 1920s and by the war against Japan in the 1930s and 1940s. The mission withdrew from mainland China between 1949 and 1952 while continuing missionary work in Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia and Rajshahi, in present-day Bangladesh.

SOUTH FUJIAN/AMOY

The first English Presbyterian (EP) missionary, William Burns, together with James Young, a medical missionary, moved to Amoy [Xiamen] in South Fukien [Fujian] in 1850. Two other missions, the American (Dutch) Reformed Mission and the London Missionary Society were already at work in the area but the three societies were to work closely



together throughout the next hundred years. A mission at Chuan-chow [Quanzhou] began in 1877 with other mission stations opening up at Chang-pu [Zhangpu] in 1889 and Yung-chun [Yongchun] in 1893. The first synod of the Presbyterian Church in China met at Amoy in 1894. In May 1938 the Japanese who had been at war with China since 1937, took control of Amoy Island. Many missionaries in South Fujian were interned following the outbreak of war between Japan and the West. EP missions at Chuan-chow and Wuking-fu [Wujian] in the Hakka-speaking area continued but operated under immense difficulties. Following the defeat of the Japanese in 1945 mission work was recommenced, but by 1951 all EP missionaries had withdrawn.

SWATOW/LINGTUNG

Burns became convinced of the importance of Swatow [Shantou] in East Guangdong as a centre for missionary work in 1856, in advance of its being opened up to foreign trade in 1860. In 1863 medical missionary work began in the area with the arrival of Dr William Gauld who founded first a dispensary, and then the Swatow Mission Hospital to serve the needs of people in Swatow and the surrounding villages. A significant number of local Christians attributed the cause of their conversion to their hospital experience. A Swatow Presbytery was established in 1881 with thirteen Chinese elders and six missionaries.

The first single woman missionary to be appointed by the PCE, Catherine Maria Ricketts, arrived at Swatow in 1878 where she developed work among girls and women. Increasingly, the responsibilities of the Swatow Mission Council devolved onto the Lingtung Synod, combining the Swatow and Hakka Presbyteries, which had come into being at the formation of the Church of Christ in China in 1927. Japanese attacks on Swatow began in 1937 and in 1939 it fell to them, although part of the district remained unoccupied. Soon after the attacks on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, all missionaries in the Japanese-occupied areas were interned. EP missionaries returned to the area late in 1945 where they joined in the work of reconstruction. Withdrawal of missionaries began in 1949, with the last EP missionary leaving in 1952.

Four old girls of the English Presbyterian Girls' School at Swatow [Shantou], taken sixty years after the school opened, 1933



Ref: PCE/FMC, Lingtung/Swatow Photographs, box 2, file 10

HAKKA

An English Presbyterian mission to the Hakka-speaking people living in the mountainous region of south-western Fujian province began in 1871. The area seemed both promising and attractive. The main mission station was established at Wuking-fu [Wujing] with another, in 1902, at Sam-ho-pa in mid-Hakka. By 1911 the Hakka church had approximately two thousand members with five Chinese pastors and thirty-eight preachers. Mission institutions at Wuking-fu consisted of a hospital, schools for boys and girls and a theological college. In 1925 troops in the neighbourhood attacked the missionaries at Wuking-fu who managed to escape to Swatow. For three years the Hakka church survived without missionary support despite the presence of warring forces of nationalists and Communists. Missionaries returned in 1928. With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war Hakka found itself in "free" China and missionaries were able to continue their work throughout the war years. The area, while relatively peaceful, experienced some instability as well as huge rises in the cost of living and, in 1943-1944, famine conditions. Missionaries from Wuking-fu were among the last to leave China in 1951 to 1952, following the call to withdraw.



Miss Liu, Chinese Bible Woman, from the Hakka-speaking region of south-east China, c.1900s

Ref: PCE/FMC Hakka Photographs, box 1, file 3

FORMOSA/TAIWAN

The attraction of establishing a mission in Taiwan was that the great majority of the population of perhaps three million were Chinese speakers from South Fujian where English Presbyterian missionaries had been at work since 1850. EP missionaries surveyed the area in the early 1860s and recommended the establishment of a mission in the southern half of the island. The first English Presbyterian church was opened at Tainan in 1865. The Canadian Presbyterian Mission in the north was begun in 1871. The early years of the EP mission were troubled by violent demonstrations against missionaries, Christians and their property and the mission in the capital had to be abandoned for a while. But by 1874 there were 26 mission stations in southern Formosa with a membership of 949 and Sunday attendances of 1900.

From 1877 the headquarters of English Presbyterian work was in Tainan where an important theological college was established. There were also schools for boys and girls and an expanded hospital.

In 1895 Formosa was ceded to Japan and after crushing initial resistance the Japanese remained in control of the island for the fifty years until the end of the Second World War. Despite the erection of Shinto shrines in most Formosan cities Japanese rule was not at first unfavourable to the presence of Christian missionaries. However, a certain amount of adjustment to new conditions was necessary. With the growth of elementary schools to teach Japanese to the island's children, English Presbyterians concentrated on developing Sunday Schools where the Bible in the Formosan Romanized edition was used. They also sought to safeguard the Christian character of their own schools. With a shortage of mission staff during and after the First World War there was a greater emphasis on the indigenous church. The growth of anti-British propaganda from the mid-1930s led to a reduction of EP staff in Formosa, and missionaries finally withdrew in 1940.

Both Canadian and English Presbyterian missionaries returned to Formosa after the War. In 1947 a United Conference of the two missions was formed and a united Presbyterian Church in Taiwan followed in 1955. There was a considerable influx of mainland Chinese, many of them Christian, into Formosa, particularly following the evacuation of the Kuomintang Government under Chiang Kai-shek in 1949. The regime was authoritarian and the churches were not comfortable with the fact that some members of their congregations were also paid agents of the Government. A growth area in the post-war years was evangelisation amongst the aboriginal peoples of Formosa in which EP missionaries were closely involved. Other developments in the post-war years included the expansion of the Tainan Theological College under the Rev Dr Shoki Coe, the rebuilding of the hospital at Shoka and a "Double-the-Church movement" intended to double the number of churches by the time of the Church's centenary in 1965. This was more than achieved. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan continues to be the largest Protestant church in the island.



*Postcard showing village scene with Formosan aboriginal woman weaving.
Before 1936*

Ref: PCE/FMC Taiwan Photographs, box 4, file 28

SINGAPORE/MALAYSIA

For many years there was only one EP missionary working in this area, John Bethune Cook, who was appointed to Singapore in 1881. When he retired in 1925 there were still only two missionaries, one male and one female. In 1931 the Foreign Missions Committee decided to strengthen the missionary team in Singapore by transferring two missionaries from China. By 1936 there were 19 congregations with a total membership of 1,362. Educational work also expanded. Further missionary recruits arrived in 1937 and in 1941. At the time of the fall of Singapore there were six EP missionaries, two men and four women. Of these the two men and one woman survived but the other three, Ann Livingstone, Margaret Dryburgh and Sabine Mackintosh, died in Japanese camps.

After the war schools were re-opened and Presbyterians, Anglicans and Methodists united in 1948 to found Trinity Theological College, Singapore. The departure of missionaries from China meant that many were available for missionary service elsewhere and the Synod of the Church of Malaya invited a number to serve in Singapore and Malaya. These included not just Presbyterians but also missionaries from the London Missionary Society, the Society of Friends and the Reformed Church of America. Subsequently, the work of these three missions was co-ordinated through the Joint Malaya Group. During the period of guerrilla warfare in the 1950s the Government moved people into “new villages” and several missionaries were involved in Christian work in these villages. In 1957 the federation of Malaya became independent. Singapore followed in 1959.

RAJSHAHI/BANGLADESH

In 1862, an English Presbyterian mission was established at Rampur Boalia in the district of Rajshahi, Bengal, India (now Bangladesh). The mission was started by Rev. Behari Lal Singh whose services were lent by the Free Church of Scotland's mission in Calcutta. The first English Presbyterian missionary, Dr Donald Morison arrived three years after Lal Singh's death in 1878. Medical and educational work was attempted, with limited successes, and the mission was both understaffed and often in danger of being closed down. In the period after the partition of India in 1947, the mission increased its staffing and developed a

hospital, a nursing school and a girls' high school. Work was also carried out among the Santal tribal people. The civil war between East and West Pakistan, which led to the establishment of Bangladesh in the 1960s, affected the mission field in a number of ways. The existing church belongs to the Rajshahi deanery of the Church of Bangladesh.

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION

Although the wives of EP missionaries had played a vital role in education and mission work amongst women and girls, the recognition that full-time women missionaries were required to dedicate themselves to educational work, supervising schools and training teachers, led to the establishment of the Women's Missionary Association (WMA) in 1878. Catherine Maria Ricketts, a financially independent young woman, was appointed as the first single woman missionary, to Swatow, China.



Catherine Ricketts, first missionary of the Women's Missionary Association. Miss Ricketts served in China from 1878 to her death in 1907. Cabinet photograph, Edmund Wheeler, Brighton, c.1902

The first President of the WMA was Mrs Hugh Matheson, the wife of the Convenor of the Foreign Missions Committee. By 1880 forty two WMA branches had been formed and in May 1879, the first issue of the WMA periodical *Our Sisters in Other lands: a record of mission work among women* was published. The WMA functioned as an independent unit within the overall framework of the Presbyterian Church of England until 1925, when a union between the Foreign Missions Committee and the Women's Missionary Association was ratified.

*Ref: PCE/FMC
Lingtung/Swatow
Photographs,
box 1, file 2*

THE RECORDS

The missionary records of the United Reformed Church, formerly the Presbyterian Church of England remained in the custody of the church until they were transferred to the School of Oriental and African Studies in 1982. Further deposits were made in 1988, 1992, 2000 and 2003.

On February 9th 1945 the Presbyterian Church offices in London were struck by a V2 rocket, killing a number of Church officers including the Secretary of the Foreign Missions Committee, and destroying many nineteenth and early twentieth-century records. The surviving records are arranged in two groups: the records of the Foreign/Overseas Missions Committee (FMC) and those of the Women's Missionary Association (WMA). (Following the union between the FMC and the WMA in 1925 many records relating to the work of women missionaries can be found in the FMC group of records.) Within these two groups they are arranged in geographical divisions representing the different mission fields. Materials relating to China as a whole have been placed in a separate division as are the records, comprising, minutes, correspondence, financial papers, individual and subject files, printed materials and photographs of the Home Committees. The main record series relating to the six mission fields comprise correspondence and minutes of the mission councils, reports on mission work, subject files, files of correspondence and papers relating to individual missionaries and others, miscellaneous and printed materials and photographs.

305 boxes

FOREIGN/OVERSEAS MISSIONS COMMITTEE (FMC/OMC)

HOME

Committee Minutes: 1899-1972

General correspondence and reports: 1892-1972

Deputational records: 1946 - 1974

Finance papers: 1855-1973

Individual files, chiefly relating to Presbyterian missionaries and officers: 1847-1974

S.W. Carruthers papers: 1890-1931

Subject files on the Conference of British Missionary Societies, English Presbyteries, Fellowship of Youth Missionary Committee, Inter-Church Relations Department, Joint Malaya/Malaysia Group, King's Missionary Band, Medical Missionary Association, other churches and missionary societies, Pollock Memorial Missionary Trust, Scottish auxiliary, Selly Oak Colleges, United Aid to China Fund, Welfare of Youth Committee, Westminster Students Missionary Society, Women's Jewish Missionary Association, World Church and Mission of the United Reformed Church papers

Printed materials - appeals, bulletins, circulars, memorials, pamphlets, reports: 1850-1960

Photographs, individual and group portraits: 1860-1950

OVERSEAS

China (general)

Correspondence with the Church of Christ in China and related papers: 1928-1950

Correspondence with the National Christian Council of China and related papers: 1925-1950

Papers and correspondence concerning educational policy in China: 1925-1927

Correspondence and papers re the political situation in China: 1927-1929

Correspondence and papers concerning medical mission work in China: 1924-1949

Printed materials: various

Photographs, individual and group photographs, lantern slides, mission buildings, views: c.1870-1950

South Fujian/Amoy [Xiamen]

Amoy/South Fujian Mission Council minutes: 1880-1905, 1912-1916, 1922-1951

Amoy/South Fujian Mission correspondence: 1863-1951

Reports on mission work: 1898-1949

Correspondence with the South Fujian Synod: 1945-1951

Individual missionary files: correspondence and papers: 1848-1973

Miscellaneous and printed materials, dictionaries, hymn books, magazines, maps: 1870-1951

Photographs, individual and group portraits, mission buildings, general views: c.1880-1948

Swatow [Shantou]/Lingtung/East Guangdong

Swatow/Lingtung Mission Council minutes: 1903-1951

Swatow/Lingtung Mission correspondence: 1876-1952

Reports on mission work, including hospital reports: 1903-1948

Correspondence with the Lingtung Synod: 1949-1951

Individual missionary files, correspondence and papers: 1858-1969

Printed materials, annual reports, hymn books, maps, vernacular materials: 1866-1946

Photographs: individual and group portraits, Swatow and Sua-bue views, Swatow earthquake damage, Swatow hospital: c.1880-1956

Hakka

Hakka Council minutes: 1914-1944

Hakka Mission Council minutes: 1901-1944

Hakka Mission correspondence: 1882-1941

Reports on mission work: c.1880s-1943

Individual missionary files, correspondence and papers: 1880-1950

Photographs, individual and group portraits, buildings, general views: 1880-1950

Formosa/Taiwan

Formosa/South Formosa Mission Council: minutes: 1908-1959

English Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Formosa, minutes: 1959-1968

Mission Council of the Presbyterian Church of Formosa, minutes: 1960-1969

United Conference of Formosan Mission Councils, minutes: 1950-1959

Formosa/Taiwan mission correspondence: 1879-1900, 1920-1973

Formosa Consultative Committee, correspondence and papers: 1961-1973

Correspondence with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Formosa: 1951-1969

Personnel Committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Formosa, correspondence and papers: 1958-1968

Subject files on centenary celebrations, floods, friction with Women's Missionary Association missionaries, girls' education, Kaohsiung incident, missionary evacuation from Formosa, mountain work, political situation, Tainan Theological College

Reports on mission work: 1872-1973 (some gaps)

Individual files, correspondence and papers: 1871-1986

Printed materials, maps, pamphlets, reports, vernacular materials: 1869-1956

Photographs, individual and group portraits, buildings, general views, post cards: 1875-1968

Malaysia/Singapore

Singapore Mission Council, minutes: 1901-1941

Malaya Mission Council minutes: 1850-1968

Singapore/Malaya Mission correspondence: 1931-1942, 1946-1968

Joint Malaya Group Missionaries' Committee, minutes and papers: 1968-1971

Malaya Synod of Chinese Christian Church, correspondence with: 1946-1968

Individual missionary files, correspondence and papers: 1883-1973

Reports on mission work: 1903-1906, 1930-1971

Subject files on the history of the Presbyterian Church in Malaya, mission work in Johore, political and economic conditions, schools in Singapore, the Prinsep Street Church Congregation

Miscellaneous and printed materials, government documents, magazines, pamphlets, reports: 1852-1986

Photographs, individual and group portraits, buildings, views: 1880-1960

Rajshahi/Bangladesh

Rajshahi (Rampore Boalia) Mission Council, minutes: 1907-1966 (some gaps)

Rajshahi (Rampore Boalia) Mission correspondence: 1859-1968

Reports on mission work: 1863-1971 (some gaps)

Individual missionary files: correspondence and papers: 1883-1972

Subject files on friction in the Rajshahi mission, East Pakistan emergency, Rajshahi Mission hospital, hostels, homes and schools in Rajshahi, integration of church and mission, relations with other missions

Miscellaneous and printed materials, documents, maps, pamphlets, press cuttings, reports: 1863-1936

Photographs, portraits, local scenes: 1888-1954

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION (WMA)

HOME

Minutes: 1878-1972

Administrative files 1903-1957

Officers' correspondence: 1962-1974

Women's Presbyterian Committees, minutes and papers: 1949-1966
Girls' Auxiliary of the Women's Missionary Association, minutes, papers, photographs: 1903-1945
Papers re interned missionaries: 1926-1945
Relations with the Foreign Missions Committee, correspondence and papers: 1903-1934
Papers on mission buildings: 1921-1941
Historical documents, notes & jubilee materials: 1878-1972
Papers relating to Catherine Maria Ricketts: 1878-1907
Printed materials: annual reports, maps, pamphlets, periodicals: 1878-1971

OVERSEAS

South Fujian/Amoy [Xiamen]

Committee/Council minutes: 1903-1925
Correspondence with WMA in London: 1920-1951
Mission buildings, plans, notes and correspondence: c.1885-1931

Swatow [Shantou]/Lingtung/East Guangdong and Hakka

Council minutes: 1904-1951
Correspondence with WMA in London: 1920-1949
Mission buildings: plans, notes and correspondence: 1889-1937

Formosa/Taiwan

Council minutes: 1917-1925
Correspondence chiefly with WMA in London: 1915-1964
Mission buildings: plans, notes and correspondence: 1919-1955

Malaysia/Singapore

Correspondence and minutes: 1923-1958
Plan of mission stations in Malaya and notes, with lists of pastors and bible women: 1931

Rajshahi/Bangladesh

Correspondence and minutes: 1920-1954
Mission buildings, plans, notes and correspondence: c.1911-1932

RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

Edward Band, *Working His Purpose Out: the history of the English Presbyterian Mission 1847-1947* (London, 1948)
Reginald Fenn, *Working God's Purpose Out 1947-1972* (London, 1997)
George Hood, *Pilgrims in Mission: Celebrating 150 years of the English Presbyterian Mission* (Alnwick, 1998)
George Hood, *Mission accomplished? : the English Presbyterian Mission in Lingtung, South China : a study of the interplay between Mission methods and their historical context*, (Frankfurt am Main; New York, 1986)

RELEVANT PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS ELSEWHERE

George A. Hood, missionary of the Presbyterian Church of England in China and Malaysia: papers 1948-1980
Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, University of Edinburgh
Dr. James Laidlaw Maxwell and his son Dr. James Preston Maxwell, medical missionaries of the Presbyterian Church of England in Taiwan and China: papers c.1851- 1959
Special Collections Department, Main Library, University of Birmingham
Dr Lewis Paton, medical missionary of the Presbyterian Church of England in China: album of missionary work in China 1889-1907
Royal Commonwealth Society Collection, University of Cambridge Library.
Alan Macleod missionary of the Presbyterian Church of England in Rajshahi Mission in Bengal [Bangladesh]: papers 1937-1984
Henry Martyn Library, University of Cambridge
The archive of the Presbyterian Church of England, now the United Reformed Church, is held by the United Reformed Church History Society at Westminster College, Cambridge.

◆ Rosemary Seton, 2009

Access to the ARCHIVE *of the* OVERSEAS MISSION
of the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH *of* ENGLAND
(the ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN MISSION)

The archive is available for consultation in the Special Collections Reading Room of SOAS Library. For access arrangements and opening hours, please contact us (details below).

The SOAS Archive Catalogue, which includes a catalogue to the archive of the Overseas Mission of the Presbyterian Church of England (The English Presbyterian Mission), is available online at <http://lib.soas.ac.uk>

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