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16 Enfield Road
WAINUIOMATA

Tuesday 24 September 1985

Dear Chris and John

This is another long splurge so get yourselves a cuppa, put another log on the fire for John and make sure he has a good book in hand while you devote yourself to this lot. I do hope he is home okay and that things are settling down well at your place.

Sorry I've been so long in coming back to you - a matter of when it was convenient to go over to Lower Hutt to pick up the photo copies. Anyway, here they are! I hope it was alright to copy the picture of Richard as well as that of Janet. Unfortunately they didn't take the frame off Richard's portrait. I did check it but it was quite firmly attached, unlike Janet's which fell apart before I got to the copier.

Its lovely weather down here and for the last week I have spent each afternoon out in our wilderness, ie what we hope one day will be our garden. Very rewarding, but of course it plays bobbsy-di with my typing. Am still putting in my day for research though. Last week I spent Thursday going over the Minute Books and Receipt Book for the Coast Road Methodist Church, 1900 - 1966. Unfortunately the previous records are said to have been destroyed by fire, though its only word of mouth, I can't find anything in writing to confirm it. However, I thought you might be interested in a few snippets I copied last week:

From the Receipt Book-

No 15A 10 September 1919

Received from J Burrow, re exors Mrs Collier, Sexton's fee £1-1

Remember that we (I) have worked out that Mrs Elizabeth Collier was an older daughter of William Wakeham and Elizabeth nee Prouse. As a widow she sold the land she had inherited through her Mother (Prouse land) to James Burrow around 1907 and I found that she was in Wellington when she later acknowledged receipt of money she lent James. Seems that she must have thought a bit of him to make him an executor. Now that I have a rough date I will try and find out more about her death and perhaps her Will. Also, because James Burrow has paid the Sexton's fee, it would seem fairly certain that Elizabeth Collier is buried in the Cemetery, though she definitely doesn't appear on the 1973 Transcription. However, that isn't surprising as the 1973 Transcription was compiled by people who did not have links with the Valley Pioneers, but who were acting on behalf of more recent Trustees. HOWEVER, I have just been on the phone to John Drummond Wood of Palmerston North, a grandson of James Jackson Wood. John's father was JJ Wood's youngest son, John Oddy Wood (Known as Oddy or JO Wood) and JO Wood holds a copy of a Cemetery Plan drawn up by his father 'about the time of the war', with him tagging alongside holding the tapemeasure. JO Wood died early 1950's, and the Plan obviously disappeared into his papers and was not retrieved until his widow died in early 1980's, at which time it came into JO Wood's hands. I have seen this plan and

it differs greatly from the 1973 version, which is only to be expected when you consider the inherent knowledge JD Wood would have been armed with when he approached his transcription task.

JD Wood remembers quite clearly an Uncle telling him that he was going to dig a grave in a previously unmarked quarter, and discovered a grave already there - possibly the Crowthers (Mary's parents) as their grave is unmarked despite there being four interred. No doubt lack of finance in that quarter. I note that JJ Wood has paid the Sexton on behalf of Miss Crowther on 22 April 1911 - though whether that was for John Crowther, who died in 1909, or for his widow Nancy (nee Wood) who died 18 December 1911, is unclear. Which would you suppose?

Also I note that there is no receipt for the purchase of a plot for any of the Crowthers, although this could well be explained by John having purchased a family plot when his two daughters died in infancy circa 1870's. The Receipt book starts 1907 - wouldn't it be fascinating to be able to see the prior receipt book? If there was one. The Minute Book starts 1900 but the Receipt book starts 1907 which makes me wonder whether perhaps there wasn't a receipt book prior to 1907 and that things were perhaps handled very casually? I note that there were only five Trustee Meetings between 24 July 1900 and 30 March 1910 - and none between 9 December 1902 and 30 March 1910. Did things run too smoothly to necessitate Trustee meetings? According to JD Wood, not so in the 1940's - there was a lot of talk on the Burdan side but very little work done and his father got himself elected more or less as grounds caretaker to see that things actually got done. This is confirmed by the Minutes and JD Wood obviously contributed a lot of time and effort. After his death it was agreed at a Trustee Meeting that his plot be offered (free) to his wife, along with an adjacent one for herself. Sadly Ada Wood is not buried alongside her husband, but is out of the Valley completely. However, I digress.

I have just leaned very heavily on JD Wood re a copy of his Father's Cemetery Plan and I am looking forward very keenly to receiving same in due course. It doesn't show everyone of course, but does give a lot more info than we have at present.

Moving on in the Receipt Book: On 6 August 1930 there is a receipt for the purchase of an Allotment for the late John Prouse, £1-1. Also a record of a like amount being paid out to the Sexton, one F Prouse (a descendant of William Prouse who drowned in the Otaki River and Harriet nee Collis).

Then on 2 January 1935 there is a receipt for £3-3 issued to a Mr W Prouse of 26 Clifton Terrace, Wgtn for 3 Plots north of and immediately adjoining Mr and Mrs John Prouses' grave.

The purchaser in this case would be son William John Prouse but there is no record of Mrs Helena Prouse being interred alongside husband John, yet obviously she was, and her name appears on the Headstone. As you will realise, the Receipt Book is not infallible.

Now, onto the Minute Book: Nothing startling except a lot of talk about how the maintenance of the Church is to be financed and agreed that Mrs Burrow be paid £1 per annum to scrub and wash the

floor once a year and sweep it once a fortnight (24 July 1900). James Burrow wasn't married at that time so the Mrs Burrow was most likely his mother.

On 25 November 1902 it was agreed that various names be removed from the list of Church Trustees, including F Crowther (John's brother, long since left the Valley for Opunake); Mr Charles Collis, deceased (the first marriage performed in the Wesleyan Chapel was for one of his daughter's); Mr John Wood (died 1866) and, more importantly, Mr Johnson. I wonder whether this is the Mr William Thomas Johnson who married Ada Jane Bulliman at the home of his grandfather William Wakeham on 15 June 1838 - or perhaps even his father, unknown man, who presumably married one of the Wakeham girls some time around 1864. What say you?

8 September 1931

...decided to draw up a plan and a Register of the Cemetery and form paths. Rev BJ James to write to the Comm Secretary enquiring on which side of the road the plan of the WOM Church property is shown and also to write to Dr Faulke re his enquiry re the Church site...

subsequent informal meetings were held re the Church site and correspondence received from Dr Faulke. It was decided to accept the offer of Mr Noel Rouse LLB to act for the Trustees free of charge. Mr Rouse at a later date reporting that he had carefully examined all the plans and surveys at the Lands office bearing on the Church site and was of the opinion that a survey must be made and a plan made. He thought the cost would be about £5...

13 November 1932 ... it was reported that a plan of the Cemetery showing the names of the various graves had been made... it was further resolved that Mr N Rouse LLB be instructed to proceed with getting the Church site surveyed and the Deed for same drawn up. It is the desire of the Trustees that the survey include all the land that is at present recognised as the Church property and that Dr Faulke be consulted in regard thereto...

Note: Dr Faulke owned the land all around the Church, including that on which the Church stood, but an arrangement was made whereby Dr Faulke accepted the land held by the Trustees over the road from the Church, in exchange for the Church property itself. Very agreeable.

All this relates to the matter of the Prouse land I wrote about in my last letter. Richard Sen building the Church and not actually bequeathing that parcel of land to the Church, but instead a block over the road - perhaps he never considered the likelihood of someone trying to claim ownership of the land on which the Church stood - or perhaps he thought the land would stay in the family, as bequeathed, and such a situation would never arise? One can't tell though perhaps more information will come to hand as I plough on.

13 May 1958

... Moved Rev Brown Seconded MJ Burdan
"a) that the cemetery be closed except for burial of pioneer Methodists but the burial Committee has authority to consider special application from other families...

19 April 1966

Prouse Grave: Repairs required to this grave estimated to cost £5 over and above £20 grant from Internal Affairs towards the cost of an ex-serviceman's grave. Agreed to accept plan as submitted by Internal Affairs and that Trustees offer to contribute £7-10 towards cost of repairs...

This would be the Grave of William E Prouse, grandson of William Prouse who drowned in the Otaki River and who served in WWI and was injured

20 February 1968

Moved that the Prouse Committee be asked if two of their members could attend the next Meeting of the Trustees to discuss finance and the future for the Coast Road Church.

29 July 1969

Estate of Enid Marion Prouse

An amount of \$3,000 had been left to the Church, but two nieces of the late Mrs Prouse are contesting the Will. The late Mrs Prouse's husband was a great grandson of the Richard Prouse who built the Coast Road Church. Trust decided to engage a solicitor but agreed that the nieces had a valid claim.

27 October 1970

... advised that by compromising and settling out of court Trustees would get about \$1000 from Enid Marion Prouse Estate.

5 April 1972

... Agreed "that the Trust now approve the necessary renovation and repairs of the Coast Road Church". As a first step tenders to be called for repiling and buttressing.

This was the beginning of the Church being let to the WDM Arts Society who have rented and maintained ever since.

Well, what do you think of that lot. And who was Enid Marion Prouse married to?

I've just skimmed through this in an effort to proofread. Its now 11.30 and almost time to pick Brett up from morning kindy - I've been on this letter for nearly two hours - imagine if I were trying to write it by hand.

Hope it doesn't take you as long to struggle through and comprehend this lot. Lots of Love to you both and looking forward to hearing some of your ideas and suggestions re this and my last letter - when you have time.

With Best Wishes

Vicky Alexander

PS: Jessie Prouse does look as though she was a pretty thing,
doesn't she?

Wichy