

Rev. Harry Haigh

(1st August 1881 – 11th August 1967)

Harry Haigh was born on the 1st August 1881, the eldest son of Featherstone and Sarah Haigh who were a stalwart family in the Newport Wallingfen Chapel, East Yorkshire.*

He attended the Newport Board School and lived in Newport until he gained a position as a shipping clerk with Goole Steam Shipping Company. While in Goole he was a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and was accepted for a place on the local Preacher's Plan when he was 18 years of age.



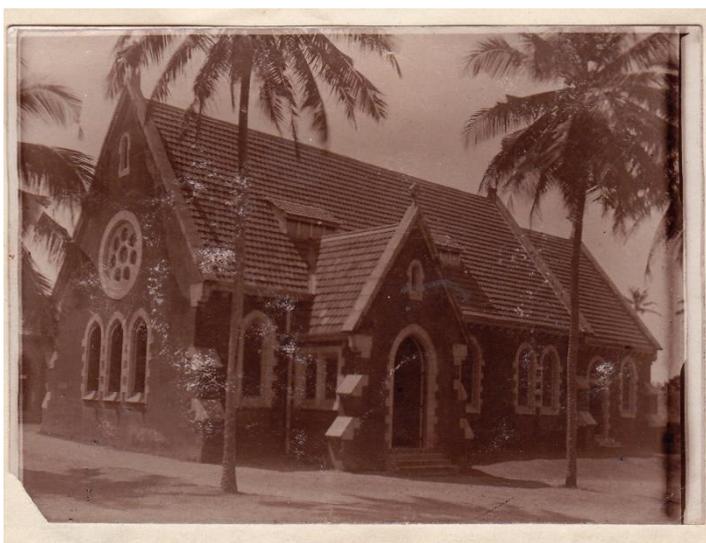
(An embroidered banner hanging in the Booth Ferry Road Chapel, Goole dated 1902 shows members of the church's signatures embroidered, including that of Harry Haigh.)

After successfully passing the necessary exams Harry was accepted by the 1903 Conference and sent for a year's work at Teignmouth in South Devon.

He entered Didsbury College, Manchester in 1904 where he studied for 3 years.

His missionary work began when he sailed on Friday 4th October 1907 on the S.S. Oroya bound for Colombo, Ceylon. He was stationed initially in Matara where he learned to speak Sinhalese and it is noted he became very proficient at giving sermons in that language.

Then, following a short time at Wellawatte, Colombo, he moved to Kandy to become pastor of the Kandy Circuit for the next 3 years.



While there his future wife, Mary Elizabeth Blanchard set sail on the S.S. India on the 12th August 1910 from Tilbury docks. She arrived in Colombo on 3rd September and the couple were married on 5th September 1910 in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Kollupitiya, Colombo. The couple returned to Kandy where they continued with missionary work.

(The Wesleyan Methodist Church, Kollupitiya, Colombo in 1910)

In March of 1913 The Colombo City Mission was inaugurated with a proposal to have two European Missionaries who would be devoted to the evangelistic work, one among the Tamils and the other among the Sinhalese. Because of his excellent knowledge of Sinhalese Rev. Harry Haigh was appointed to be one of those missionaries and worked tirelessly among the Sinhalese communities often preaching outdoors to large groups.



(Photo of Rev. Harry Haigh along with others hanging in The Colombo City Mission, Ceylon/Sri Lanka)

Whilst in Ceylon the Haighs had two children Doris, born in 1912 in Kandy and Arthur in 1914 in Colombo.

After 3 Years working in Colombo the family returned to England on 10th April 1915. Rev. Haigh had a furlough year working in various circuits in the Yorkshire and Cumbria area. The family increased with the birth of twin girls, Phyllis and Winifred on 30th January 1916.

He did however return alone to Ceylon for a second term of service in June 1916 until January 1919 when he finally returned to England to recover from T.B.

His work continued with service in North Cornwall, Exeter, Sheffield and Salisbury, Manchester, Leigh and Northwich. After 45 years he retired to Newport but continued to be active in the Howden circuit.

Harry died on 11th August 1967 at Moorland House Methodist Home, Hathersage, having given a full life of service and dedication to the ministry of which his family is justly proud.

*details taken from 'Newport Wesleyans and their Chapel 1789-2009 by Dorothy Woodhall, Janet Glen, Pam Atkins.