

HOL

A Collection of Letters of Missionaries from around the world by Christina Sybil Holmes of Liverpool

27 items, 1958-1995

Presented by Mrs D.W. Fellows, November 1994-early 1995

**Apparently catalogued by Revd. Graham Kings, Director of Henry Martyn Centre,
April 2000. New introduction added by Philip Saunders, CCCW Archivist, May
2017**

Regrettably barely any information survives from the time of acquisition of these papers and one is left with inferring what one can from the papers themselves. The first two letters in the collection, to a Mrs Payne of Liverpool (Wavertree area), widely spaced in 1958 and 1974, are both from Taiwan *from* Miss Holmes, the second specifically from the Christian Hospital, Changhua, and imply she had worked for a long period as a nurse in Taiwan. The second speaks of a new colleague 'who trained also at the Royal Liverpool' [Hospital] and using her lay preacher's study to take a service as the minister of the local church had just moved to Japan. These appear to have been retrieved from the addressee after Miss Holmes' return to the United Kingdom. The remaining letters are to Miss Holmes and though many are circular 'prayer letters' or Christmas newsletters, appear to have been deliberately preserved as a record of her friends' activities. Eight of these, 1983-94 (HOL 1/3-10) are to her from former associates in Taiwan. One letter (HOL 3/3) is from 'Margaret', apparently a former nurse colleague at Chunghua, and another, from 'Harriet and Walter' (albeit duplicated) refers collegiately to 'Old China friends' (HOL 3/4). A hand-written letter from Kate Madeley enquires 'How are things at Earle Road?', presumably a reference to her church, either the former substantial Presbyterian/URC church (in 2015 the Al-Ghazali Centre) or Congregational/URC (in 2017 closed and for sale), either of which would fit with working for the Presbyterian hospital in Taiwan.

Miss Holmes' letters are signed 'Sybil' and some letters (e.g. HOL 4/4-6) from evidently close friends are addressed to her by this name. Others are addressed to her as Christina, which she may have used more in her professional life or more deferentially to 'Miss Holmes'. A picture gradually emerges of a committed Christian of nonconformist background in a poor central area of Liverpool, who trained at her local hospital and spent a good part of her life nursing and training nurses in Taiwan, and who

was well-remembered by her friends there and worldwide after her return to a slightly more suburban part of her home town.

After I wrote this I found the following obituary online at:

<http://www.laijohn.com/archives/pm/Holmes,C/obituaries/TCNOB.htm>

[translated here from the Chinese]

Taiwan Church News. Occasional Bulletin, V.11, no.5 July / August 1994, p.12

Christina Sybil Holmes , a former missionary sent by the Overseas Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England , now part of CWM, died at home on July 30th. She had died in sleep.

Christina Holmes came to Taiwan in November of 1950 and left in July of 1976. She had served at the Changhua Christian Hospital as Nursing Superintendent for 25 years, until she retired at the age of 63 in 1976. Afterwards she had volunteered at local nursing homes in England. During herself of service at Changhua Christian the hospital from a handful of beds and three doctors to around 250 beds and 50 doctors. (Today, the hospital has around 1100 beds and a few hundred doctors.)

MS. Holmes' funeral service was held Wednesday, August 10th at Earle Road United Reformed Church, Liverpool, England. Letters of condolences may be sent to Mrs D. Fellows, (her sister, with whom she once lived in the last year of her life) at 62 Rudston Road, Liverpool, L16 4PH. May God bestow peace on the family.

The arrangement here is geographical:

HOL 1 Far East [wholly Taiwan], both from and to Miss Holmes

HOL 2 Papua New Guinea

HOL 3 America

HOL 4 Africa

HOL 1 Far East

HOL 1/1-2 Two letters from C.S. Holmes from Taiwan:-

1/1 To 'Lucy' [Mrs J.H.Payne] and family. Printed, with illustrations of patients and staff in the hospital (2 pages) 28 October 1958

1/2 To 'Lucy', Mrs J.H.Payne, from Christian Hospital, Chunghua,. Typed airletter. 15 February 1974

HOL 1/3-7 Letters to C.S. Holmes from Mrs Ruth and the Rev. Chun-Ming Kao, Presbyterian Church, Taiwan. Typed

1/3 Christmas 1983 (1 page)

1/4 3 September 1984 (1 page)

1/5 Christmas 1988 (2 pages)

1/6 Christmas 1990 (2 pages)

1/7 Christmas 1991 (2 pages)

HOL 1/8-10 Letters to C.S. Holmes from 'Jay', Chunghua, Taiwan

Typed and hand written

1/8 3 December 1992 (2 pages)

1/9 7 July 1993 (2 pages)

1/10 18 July 1994 (2 pages)

HOL 2 Papua New Guinea

HOL 2/1-2 Two circular letters from the Rev. David Vincent, Rarongo Theological College, Rabaul, Papua New Guinea.

Printed

2/1 Newsletter No. 23, November 1993 (2 pages)

2/2 Newsletter No.25, January 1995 (2 pages)

HOL 3 The Americas

Minnie Lee to 'Friends around the World' from Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Typed

3/1 November 1992 (2 pages)

3/2 November 1993 (2 pages)

'Margaret' to 'Friends' from Belen,

3/3 Christmas, 1990. Typed

Individual letter to Christina on the back

'Harriet and Walter' to Christina,

3/4 Saratoga Springs, New York, Christmas 1992 (2 pages)

HOL 4 Africa

HOL 4/1-3 Three prayer letters from Edna Staple, Bas Zaire, typed on Baptist Missionary Society note paper

4/1 September 1988 (2 pages, incomplete)

4/2 November 1988 (2 pages)

4/3 April 1989 (2 pages)

HOL 4/4-6 Three letters from 'Joyce', Harare, Zimbabwe. Duplicated, with manuscript additions, to 'Sybil'.

4/4 19 February 1986 (2 pages)

4/5 14 February 1987 (2 pages)

4/6 19 November 1992 (2 pages)

HOL 4/7-8 Two Letters from Kate Madeley, Senegal

4/7 16 March 1993 . Hand-written airletter (2 pages)

4/8 1993. Printed (1 page)

HOL 4/9-10 Two letters from the Whitehorn Family, Guinea Bissau

4/9 November 1993. Hand-written (1 page)

4/10 April 1994. Typed (2 pages)

HOL 4/11 Letter from Elen Edwards, Ambavahadimitafo [Madagascar],

4/11 March 1994 (2 pages)