

Rev. Harold Dymond Peel

Harold Dymond Peel was born in Wilmslow, Cheshire in 1885. After studying at Emmanuel College, Cambridge and Wells Theological College, he was ordained and worked in northern churches such as York and Whitby.



In 1913 he followed two of his fellow Wells graduates, (F.H.Campion and C.H.S Matthews) to Australia where he joined them in the **Bush Brotherhood** they had established some years earlier. This was a group of young Anglican priests who brought the sacraments of the Church to remote farmers, their families and staff in the out-back of early Australia. Travel was by horse or horse and cart, often sleeping in the bush under the stars, and conducting services in sitting rooms or wool sheds with the sacraments served on a portable communion set he carried with him. Brother Dym, as he was known, set up a new area based on Dubbo, NSW. When, in later years the brotherhood bought a car he continued to ride his horse. "You can't swim a car across a flooded river" he said.



'Brother Dym' setting out on a tour of his parish.

He was persuaded in later years to write some memoirs and these are held by the family. The story of the Bush Brotherhood is written by JWS Tomlin and a copy can be found in Sarum Theological College Reference Library.

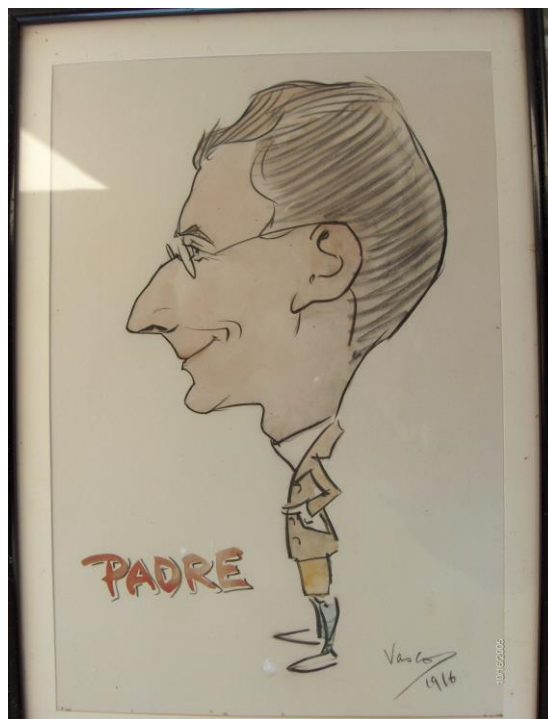
When, in 1915, many of his farmers and young men volunteered to fight for England in the Great War he felt he should join them so he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces and came, with his Battalion, to Hurdcott Camp, Fovant and was there when the map of Australia was cut into Compton Down.



On Leaving Australia



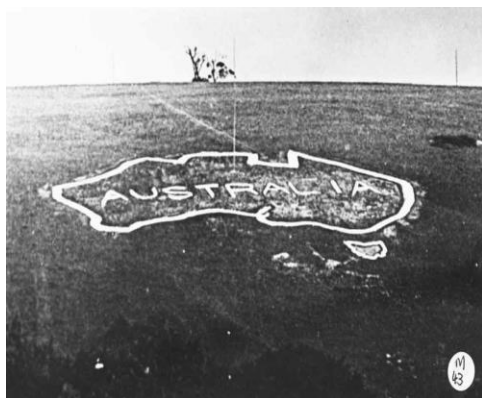
With two friends in France



Cartoon by Vasco during his time in Hurdcott Camp

He survived the fighting in France and Belgium, returning to Australia where he served a further 6 years with the Brotherhood. On his return to England he chose to settle and work in Barford St Martin, South Wilts, a parish he had grown to know during his stay at Hurdcott. Here he met and married Enid Horton, a talented artist, illustrator of children's books but working at that time as a craft teacher to the blind.

After 12 years in Atherton, near Manchester, the family returned to the County he had grown to love. He became Rector at Donhead St Mary in South Wilts eventually becoming Rural Dean of Tisbury. He is remembered in the Parish for many reasons but mainly because he again refused the offer of a car. "I cannot stop and talk to my people if I am rushing past in a car" he said. He continued to cover his extensive, rural parish on his 'iron horse' (bicycle) until his retirement in 1956. In 1953 he was to have dedicated the new Australian flag in Compton Chamberlayne Church before it was raised on the new flagpole in the centre of the restored carving of the map of Australia at Hurdcott, 5 miles east of Fovant, which was the HQ for the Southern Command of the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War. Sadly, he could not attend due to ill health. He died in 1968 and is buried in the Churchyard by the Church he served to the end.



*Map of Australia cut in the chalk
at Hurdcott*

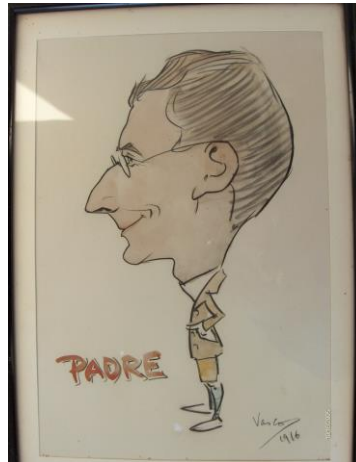


*HDP as the people of Donhead
knew him*



*His grave at Donhead
St Mary*

This cartoon was drawn in Hurdcott Camp in 1916 by Louis Vasco. His father was from Portugal and an accomplished artist, who emigrated to Melbourne in 1885. Louis studied art at the National Gallery of Victoria but decided to enlist as an engineer when he joined the AIF. However, he soon realized he could not relinquish all his art and drew many cartoons of his companions and watercolours of the French countryside. A minor spinal injury forced his return to England where he died of Septicemia in 1918.



Many grateful thanks to HDP's family for their generous help in the researching of this life. His daughters Noel-Mary Ward and Judy Allum and his son.

MABEL DYMOND PEEL



Mabel was Harold's older sister (born 1879) and she played an important part of her own in WW1. Although she was never in Fovant she is included here due to her relationship to Harold.

She gained her MA in Modern Languages from Manchester University and taught in a private school until WW1 broke out. She volunteered, and her skills with languages was soon recognised so she was moved to the Intelligence Dept, War Office in London. In 1917 she was sent to France where she continued her work decoding intercepted German messages. From 1925 till 1935 she lived in Rouen, France where she was employed as the manager of the British Legion.

On her return to England she settled in Welling Garden City where she died in 1938 aged 58.

*With thanks to Tina Pittock, Curator Royal Signals Museum, for bringing this interesting lady to my attention. And to the web site "Lives of the First World War"
M. McKenzie 2021*