

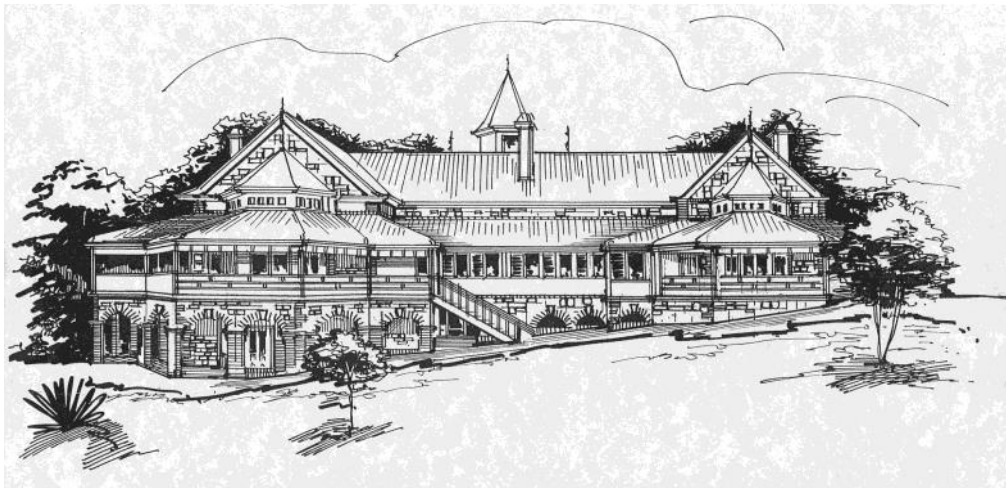


Historical Society

of the Uniting Church
in South Australia

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NEWSLETTER
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AN INVITATION

to the unveiling of a History Marker at 20 King William Road, Wayville,
on Sunday, 25th May, 2008 at 3 p.m. by the Moderator, the Rev Rod Dyson
and Principal Emeritus, the Rev Dr Charles Biggs,
recognising 70 years of theological education on the site.

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EDITORIAL

Last year I noticed two crime mystery stories both included on their dust covers the line, "The past is a shallow grave". The books were by different authors and had different titles, but this cryptic line appeared on both.

It is a line that brings all sorts of things to mind. It questions whether the past is ever over and done with, to be laid to rest and forgotten. It suggests that, when we least expect it, the past comes back to haunt us or re-invigorate some matter that was thought to have been finally settled. Whatever its links with mystery stories, it is an apt line when we find ourselves continually struggling with welfare issues in our Society. Liquor consumption and gambling are regular targets for reform. Yet, it seems, there is never any finality. An historical reminder of this is included in this newsletter.

The South Australian UCA Historical Society is planning a number of events for 2008. Information of these events is included. Please spread the word around.

Kevin Secomb
Editor

CONGRATULATIONS!

Heartiest congratulations to two of the members of our Historical Society.

✳ **Rev Bill Edwards** was awarded a PhD from Flinders University History Department in November 2007. He will officially receive the degree in April this year.

The thesis topic is **Moravian Aboriginal Missions in Australia**. A few years ago, the Historical Society was given a preview in a lecture entitled *Moravian Aboriginal Missions in Australia 1850-1919*. Copies of this lecture are still available from the History Centre for \$4.00.

Congratulations also to Historical Society Council member,

✳ **Rev Dean Eland**, who was awarded a Doctorate in Ministry Studies through the Melbourne College of Divinity at the end of last year.

His thesis topic is "The Sunshine Story: changing identity in a pluralistic society". A copy of this thesis is in the Adelaide Theological Library, Brooklyn Park.

History Tour of the South Coast
Anzac Weekend Saturday April 26th 2008

This history tour is an introduction to the story of Uniting Church congregations on the popular and growing South Coast of SA. The tour will include short talks and visits to several significant sites in Victor Harbor, Port Elliott and Goolwa.

The tour will begin with morning tea at 10.30am in the hall (1869) of the Newland Memorial Church, Victoria St, Victor Harbor. Local representatives will share their story, conduct a tour of the "third church" a distinctive in-the-round 1927 building and introduce members to their collection of memorabilia.

We will then proceed by car to the Tabernacle site (first building 1850) which is now a reserve and contains grave stones and memorials which commemorate early pioneers. We will then travel to Yilki Church, (Jefferis Memorial 1919) in Giles Street Encounter Bay. As we return to Victor we will note the Fountain Inn which became the home of the Jefferis family in 1894.

A light lunch will be served in the Newland Hall at 1.00pm and about 1.45 the tour will travel to Port Elliott via Adare (acquired and rebuilt in 1891 by the Cudmore family and bought by the Methodist church in 1954). At Port Elliott we will call in at the Hotham Memorial Church (original chapel 1853, new church 1863 and present building opened in 1901) in the main street, 44 North Tce and meet representatives of this congregation.

After hearing something of the story of the early years of this congregation the tour will conclude at Goolwa UC in Collingwood Street.

There will be no charge for this tour or for the meal and those taking part are encouraged to become members of the Society.

To register for this tour and for further information contact the

UC History Centre

44a East Ave Black Forest SA 5035

on Wednesday from 1.00pm to 4.00pm phone 8297 8472

or e-mail to the History Centre Team at ucsahist@chariot.net.au

See also the web site at <http://historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au>

Some background reading..

Yilki: A Place by the Sea, John Cameron. 1979.

Paving the Way: A Romance of the Australian Bush, Simpson Newland. 1912

Ridgeway William Newland: Pioneer Pastor of the South, Joyce Branson. 1989.

A Band of Pioneers; A History of the Congregational Churches along the South Coast of South Australia 1839 to 1977. John Cameron. 1977.

Victor Harbor: From Pioneer Port to Seaside Resort, Michael Page. 1987.

BOOK REVIEWS

Parkin's Passion:
A History of the Parkin Congregational Mission 1882 – 2007
Brian Lewis Jones OAM, (Adelaide, MediaCom, 2007)



To commemorate the 125th Anniversary of the establishment of the Mission the book was launched after a service of worship, on Sunday 16th September 2007, at Pilgrim Church, Adelaide, SA.

Brian Jones, the current President of the Governors of Parkin Mission, has held that position since 1977. He was first appointed a Governor in 1968.

Parkin's Passion not only tells the story of William Parkin's gift to the Congregational Church, but gives a view of the colony of South Australia during his lifetime.

William Parkin arrived in SA in the ship *Recovery* in 1839 accompanied by his wife and brother. His family in England conducted a drapery business, and after trying his hand at farming at Willunga, William established a drapery business in Hindley Street, later moving to Rundle Street. Parkin's store occupied a portion of the area which now comprises the Myer Centre.

In 1850, Parkin retired from business, leased his premises, and built a new home at Plympton. In retirement he held a number of company directorships and served as a member of the Legislative Council, 1866-1877.

Parkin was fairly typical of many of the heads of prominent dissenting families in South Australia, being a man of forthright views, extremely frugal, and convinced of his duty to both society and the church. He had a firm belief that those who prospered had a duty to share their prosperity with the church.

It had been Parkin's intention to leave his property to his nephew, but in 1882 he shared his thoughts with friends.

"W.P. gave an outline of his history and told us about his nephew whom he hoped to make heir to his property, but seeing the course he was going, he told plainly that as God had given him whatever wealth he had, and to be used for His own purposes, he would not let it go to the Devil's purposes which could be the case if he left it to his nephew. So he was going to carry out a scheme for setting a number of Missionaries at work in the country beyond places where Churches existed..." (p 24)

Parkin established two trust funds:

1. The Parkin Trust in 1872 for the training of Congregational Ministers. The trust established Parkin College at Kent Town in 1910, and now contributes to Parkin-Wesley College at Brooklyn Park.
2. The Parkin Congregational Mission of South Australia in 1882 to provide annuities of five pounds each to twenty poor God-fearing widows and to pay the stipends of missionaries in the less settled districts of South Australia.

Parkin's original gifts amounted to about 40,000 pounds (20,000 pounds each to the Trust and the Mission). The value in current money would be about \$4.5 million. The current value of the investments is now approximately \$25 million (Trust \$5 million, Mission \$20 million).

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In 2007, income from these two funds will provide Parkin-Wesley College with a grant of \$250,000 and \$1 million to the SA Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia for the purposes of the Church's Mission.

As well as providing history of Parkin's life and activities, Brian Jones researched the areas that received ministry as a result of Parkin's gift, eg areas such as:- Renmark, South Eastern Desert (Bordertown, Keith), Swan Reach, Loxton, Kangaroo Island, Mantung, Fowler's Bay.

In 1926 with the expansion of the suburbs around Adelaide, assistance was provided to places – Grovone (Morphettville Park), South Payneham, Colonel Light Gardens. The introduction of Chaplaincies in the 1960s were also supported by the Mission.

Parkin's Passion has a special place in the history of the Congregational Churches in South Australia. The Church acknowledges Brian Jones' research and presentation has also been a "passion" for him as well.

Whilst the story is about William Parkin's life and gifts it is also a tribute to those who had provided ministry to people in outlying parts of the State. Likewise it is a tribute to the Governors of the Mission, who have caused Parkin's gift to prosper. That gift will enable the work to continue for many years in the future.

The Parkin Mission Governors have generously provided a copy of *Parkin's Passion* to every congregation in South Australia. Individuals wishing to obtain a copy can either contact:-

The Secretary, Parkin Mission of SA Inc, Level 2/212 Pirie Street, Adelaide, SA, 5000,
or

The UCA History Centre, 44a East Avenue, Black Forest, SA, 5035.

Enquiries: 8297 8472. or e-mail ucsahist@chariot.net.au

Reviewer: James D Everett,
Parkin Mission Secretary
1980 – 1985

***Pioneering Para Plains:
Early Stories and Primitive Methodism at Burton and Bolivar
Curnow, Edwin A, (Adelaide, Published privately, 2007)***

As the author states in his Introduction, "Here we have a collection of stories and details that like the pieces of a jigsaw fit into a larger picture". This is confirmed by well-known South Australian author Max Fatchen in his Foreword to the book. He tells how this record has evoked vivid memories of his early life as a boy growing up in a similar community nearby.

Descendants of the families described in the book will cherish this record of a bygone era. Others will also find it informative as it describes the way the church was the social centre for many small rural communities for approximately one hundred years of South Australian history. It was a role that Primitive Methodism undertook from about the 1850s, when chapels were used for worship, primary education and social gatherings.

The Rev Ted Curnow has brought together all sorts of information that enables the picture of life in the pioneering days of one such rural community to emerge.

Copies of the book (\$40, plus \$10 postage/packaging) are available from the History Centre (phone: 8297 8472), or email ucsahist@chariot.net.au

THE PAST IS A LONELY GRAVE

In Newcastle, NSW, the battle lines have recently been drawn in the struggle to shorten local hotel hours. At present they may stay open until 5 am. Reformers, concerned about the incidence of drunkenness and unruly behaviour, especially among young revellers, are campaigning for closing hotel doors at midnight.

This situation reminds us of the historic battle for "Six o'Clock Closing". This took place in 1915, with the Rev Joseph Coles Kirby as the leader of the reformers. He had been minister of the Port Adelaide Congregational Church, 1880-1908, and at the age of 78 years was living in retirement at the time.

The Rev Edward Kiek, Principal of Parkin College wrote in his biography of Kirby the following account of how the reform was implemented.

The idea of this reform was born in prayer: to him the cause was from the beginning God's cause. Under the impulse of a strong "Concern", as our Quaker friends would say, he drew up a petition to Parliament for a referendum on the subject of the earlier closing of liquor-bars. The Women's Christian Temperance Union helped in canvassing for signatures. The petition was duly presented to the Legislature, only to be received with scorn and derision. But the laughter of the liquor party turned to alarm when it became evident that public opinion was being really stirred by Kirby's bold challenge. All the non-episcopal churches supported the petition: even the Anglican Church, while not prepared to advocate such a drastic reduction of hours as Kirby wanted, was definitely in favour of earlier closing. Both the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the South Australian Temperance Alliance did splendid service in the struggle that ensued. But the brunt of the battle in the Press and on the Platform was borne by Kirby. Major (now Colonel) T.H.Smeaton exerted himself nobly in the House of Assembly – a place where Temperance advocacy is never an easy or a popular "line". The first petition for a referendum was followed by others. At last, in 1914, the necessary "enabling resolution" passed the Legislature. The campaign that followed was terrific. Kirby surpassed himself in the vigour of his exertions and in the passion of his pleading. A mighty demonstration took place in the Botanic Park, Adelaide, on March 16, 1915: Kirby was the chief orator. When the resolution was put, "Hands up for Six o'Clock", the forest of hands looked most impressive. Behind the outstretched hands were determined hearts. It was in vain that all the powers of Satan were mobilized against the reformers. On March 27, 1915, the poll was taken: to the astonishment of many people "Six o'clock" was victorious by 100,418 votes out of 176,537. Many "moderate drinkers" undoubtedly cast in their lot with the much-abused "wowsers": probably the Great War, with its revelations of the depredations and degradations of the liquor traffic, helped to move public opinion. On March 27, 1916, the new law came into operation. It is now ten years since that date, and it is safe to say that a new referendum on the same subject would yield an even more overwhelming result. South Australia will never go back on "Six o'Clock".

On the night when the new law came into operation a monster demonstration was held in the Exhibition Building, at which the victory was fittingly celebrated. The heroes of the struggle – the Rev. J.C.Kirby and Major Smeaton, M.P. – were each presented with a framed memento of the "Hands up for Six o'Clock" meeting above referred to. Other noble workers might well have claimed a share in the honours of that evening, notably Lady Holder, Commonwealth President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Mrs. E.W.Nicholls, J.P., State President of the same organization, and Miss George, the energetic and skilful State Secretary. But all would agree that Kirby was the greatest hero of that famous fight.¹

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This legislation was overturned during the Dunstan era of Government in September, 1967. On the 28th of that month, Premier Don Dunstan raised a glass of beer at the Challa Gardens Hotel in the Labor heartland suburb of West Croydon to celebrate

the end of the "Six o'Clock Swill" for S.A. hotels. It was widely reported the crowd sang "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" as Mr. Dunstan sipped the first legal beer after 6 pm.²

This brief retelling of history provides another meaning for "The past is a shallow grave". While Kiek in 1927 wrote confidently "South Australia will never go back on 'Six o'clock'," he was to be proved mistaken in another era.

Joseph Kirby died in 1924, but the monument to his reforming zeal is the headstone over his grave proudly displaying a clock-face, with the hands at six o'clock.

¹ E.S.Kiek, *An Apostle in Australia*, (London, Independent Press, 1927), pp.207-209.

² Chantelle Kroehn. "It was 40 years ago next week" *City Messenger* 15/09/07 at the Challa Gardens Hotel.

NOVEMBER LECTURE 2007

The 2007 November lecture was presented by Rev Frank Measday, his topic being "Chaplaincy in Woomera: January 1968 – December 1974. Woomera is a very unusual town. It was deliberately situated in a remote area, deemed suitable for weapons testing. The town itself was ruled according to armed forces security requirements, so Frank refers to his ministry there as chaplaincy. During his seven years in Woomera, Frank had many unusual experiences that he recounts in memoir form. At the same time he identified a number of aspects about the Woomera experience that provide valuable insights for anyone else who may serve in similar remote area situations. For example:

- handling the issue of impermanence.
- the difficulties associated with "one company towns".
- the impact of sudden rises and falls in population.

These issues and others are dealt with in this lecture. No doubt further mining booms will require remote area ministry in the future.

The lecture was certainly not as dry as outback dust, and in written form it is equally enjoyable. Copies are available through the History Centre (\$5, plus postage/packing). Phone 8297 8472 or email ucsahist@chariot.net.au

HISTORY WEEK CELEBRATIONS

During South Australia's annual History Week, 18-25 May, 2008, the UCA Historical Society is sponsoring two events.

- On Wednesday 21 May, there will be an Open Day at the History Centre, 44a
- On Sunday 25th May. Unveiling of Wesley College Marker at Christ Church, 20 King William Road, Wayville, 3 pm. A brief act of worship will be held in the church, followed by the unveiling in the grounds by the Moderator, Rev Rod Dyson and principal Emeritus Rev Dr Charles Biggs.

This will be a great opportunity for the reunion of many former residents, students, and staff of Wesley and Parkin-Wesley Colleges.

Spread the word!

From the Secretary's Desk

It is pleasing to report to our readers the variety of ways that the Historical Society with the History Centre is serving the Synod.

- This year the Constitution of the Society was drafted into Synod By-laws for the Society to become an Agency of the Synod. This will enable a greater support from the Synod for the work of the Society. It will also provide Insurance cover for the volunteers working at the History Centre. The Council of the Society remains the sole administrator with power to make changes to the By-laws for which the approval of the Synod is sought.
- In May a Hymn Fest was conducted to celebrate the tri-centenary of the birth of Charles Wesley. A number of congregations sought the materials used in the Hymn Fest for their local celebrations.
- A sub-committee of the Council has arranged for a History Marker to be placed in the grounds of what was the Parkin-Wesley College. The unveiling of this is planned for Sunday 25 May 2008, at 3 pm. Advertising will give detail of the final arrangements.
- A Policy for Grants is being drafted. This will make available, for those meeting the criteria, financial support for research, writing and publishing of local church histories, and for other history projects.
- In September a History Workshop was conducted for members of congregations preparing their local church histories. The Workshop introduces participants to resources, where they can be found, and then writing for publication. Notice will be given of a further such Workshop to be conducted this year.
- As it was the 125th celebration of the founding of Parkin Mission, it was the theme for the Open Day during the SA History Week, 2007. The Open Day this year will be Wednesday 21 May when the Centre is open from 10am until 4pm. The theme being "Theological Education". Place it in your diary and we will be pleased to see you on that day.
- The History Centre is a member of the SA Religious Archives Group. This provides opportunity to share in a fellowship across the churches and to see and learn from each other what is being done with the Religious Records and Archives in South Australia.
- Included in the annual program of the society is the conduct of a History Walk/Tour, and Lecture. A tour of the Chapels and Chapel sites on the Gawler Plains was conducted in May.
- Following the AGM in November Rev'd Frank Measday gave a very interesting Lecture on his experience as Chaplain at Woomera. The Society's Lectures are printed and available from the Centre at a modest cost.
- The Society's Web page provides information on the activities of the Society and a list of the Society's Publications. Web page address:
<http://historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au/>

I appeal to all churches to check that their records of ten years and more are handed into the Synod Office—especially those churches which are closing. It is essential that records are gathered together and left at the Synod Office. Unfortunately there are too many occasions when Baptism information is requested that the Baptismal Register cannot be found and this has been for information as late as the 1980s.

We are always pleased to receive your requests for church history information and at the same time any memorabilia you may feel to be of historic interest. These will need to be accompanied by information that tells of their significance.

George Potter
Secretary.