

THE UNITING CHURCH IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



**NEWSLETTER**

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**NEXT LECTURE**

The next Historical Society Lecture will be given at 8 p.m. on

Friday, 11 April, at Westbourne Park Church,  
Sussex Tce., Westbourne Park.

The speaker will be the Rev George Potter, secretary of the Historical Society. Mr Potter will deal with the influence of Methodist Orders, such as the Order of Knights and Methodist Girls Comradeship in the life of the Church in this state.

In the 1930s both the orders had an enormous appeal to thousands of young people. Many of those in these orders are now "ripe" in years. We hope that some of them will attend Mr Potter's lecture and have their memories stirred by what he has to say.



## CAPTAIN ROBERT C. MORGAN AND HIS SHIPS

*Walter J. Stafford*

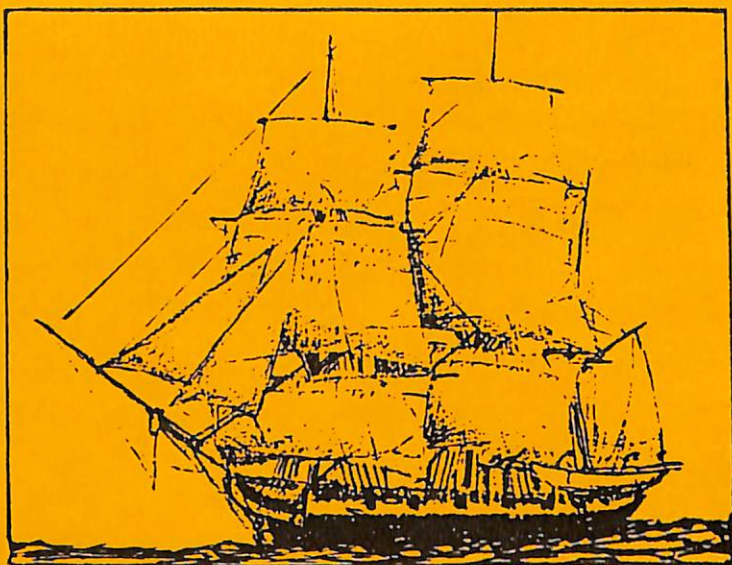
The first "colonists" of the settlement to be established in South Australia arrived at Kangaroo Island on the "Duke of York" on the evening of July 26, 1846 and officially landed on the following morning.

The ship was built in 1817 as brig (two masted) in Devonshire by the Bideford Company as a post office "pacquet" (packet) designed to carry mail speedily between Falmouth in Cornwall and New York and Jamaica. One voyage, Falmouth to New York, took 24 days!

In 1834 another mast was added by the Angas Company as a barque to serve as a whaler and transferred the following year to the South Australia Company and again altered to carry 36 people (13 passengers and 23 crew) to the new colony. Some were listed as "superior class" and others as "labouring class".

They sailed on February 24, 1836, but had to return twice for repairs, finally departing on April 17.

So many of them were Methodists that it was described as a "floating Circuit".



Captain Robert C. Morgan was in charge. He was described as "a pious man" and conducted services each morning and evening during the voyage.

Records show that one of the crew did not like him because he "was not allowed to swear". There was also trouble among some of them over "liquor drinking".

Morgan's journal reads: "In the evening we held a prayer meeting. Read the 24th chapter of Acts. Four prayed. Sang several hymns and found it good: almost in sight of our home".

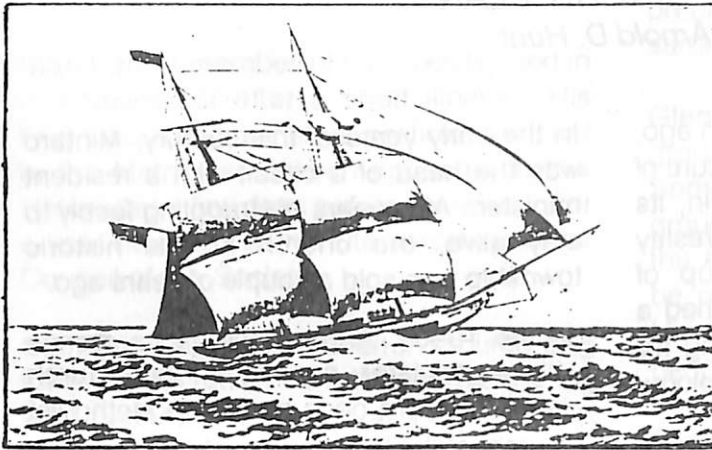
The first act of the pioneer settlers on landing near Kingscote next morning was to hold a service of thanksgiving and to seek God's blessing on them in this strange new land.

The "Duke of York" sailed away on September 20 on an unsuccessful whaling expedition to Hobart, Feejee (*sic*), Nauru.

It was wrecked on a sandbank off Port Curtis, 500 kms north of Brisbane, on August 14, 1837. All 37 persons on board were saved.

Captain Morgan returned to England and continued his career, as one of the finest navigators of his day, as Captain of the "Camden" from April 11, 1838. This was a London Missionary Society ship (Congregational) to South Sea Islands.





With Morgan in November 1839 was John Williams who for 22 years had been taking the Gospel to the inhabitants of South Sea Islands. They had just been to Raratonga with one of the most precious cargoes the "Camden" had ever carried - five thousand New Testaments printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society for these people.

Having delivered them, and stayed for a while, Williams sailed with

Morgan in the "Camden" for the Hebrides (Vanuatu). These were the islands Williams had dreamed about for years - the wildest shores in the Pacific. Once they were captured for Christ, he would push on for the shores of cannibal New Guinea.

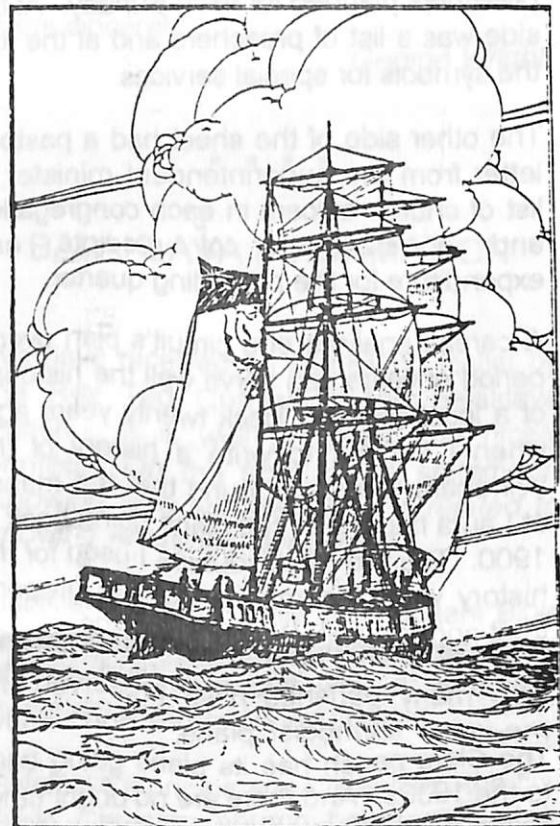
At Erromanga, a party went ashore. Captain Morgan followed in another boat. Williams had gone along a brook when he was attacked. Hurrying back he slipped on a pebble, fell and was killed.

While trying to retrieve Williams' body, Morgan was also attacked and knowing that he had no hope of doing so returned to the ship and sailed to Sydney.

He returned to England. The "Camden" was replaced by a new ship, obtained with money raised by young people in that country who raised \$12,000.

It was named the "John Williams" The flag flying from the mast carried doves of peace.

It was launched in March, 1844 and, with Captain Morgan at the helm, took up the continuation of taking the Gospel to the "islands of the South Seas", the first of others that were also to bear the name "John Williams".



*The John Williams*

After fifteen years with the London Missionary Society, Morgan retired to Australia. He died at St. Kilda in Victoria in 1864. In May of the same year, the "John Williams I" was wrecked on Danger Island near Raratonga. Other carrying the honoured name were to follow her over the ensuing years.

Words from Psalm 107:23 are true of Morgan, Williams and others like them:

***"They go down to the sea in ships to do business in great waters,  
see the works of the Lord, his wonders in the deep."***

## THE CIRCUIT PLAN

*Arnold D. Hunt*

The circuit plan was, until a generation ago, universal in Methodism. It is still a feature of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, its origin going back to the days of Wesley himself. A few years ago a group of Methodist historians in England formed a society for the study of Plans, coining for their subject of study the term Cirplanology.

The Methodist Circuit Plan in Australia followed a general pattern. It was printed on both sides and was folded in four parts. Opened out, the central part contained the Plan itself, a list of churches with the preachers planned for each Sunday. At the side was a list of preachers and at the foot the symbols for special services.

The other side of the sheet had a pastoral letter from the superintendent minister, a list of church officers in each congregation and a statement of receipts and expenditure for the preceding quarter.

A careful analysis of a circuit's plan over a period of years can serve well the historian of a local church. Back twenty years ago, when I set out to write a history of the Wirrabara Church, I found that the manse at Laura had the circuit plans going back to 1900. The two main sources I used for the history were the minutes of the property trust and this collection of old plans.

How many parishes have preserved the pre-union Methodist plans, I don't know. The Clare parish has its plans going back to the 1930s. And there are no doubt other collections lying in church cupboards.

This article is prompted by the fact that Bob Jarman, a member of the Society, has passed on to us a number of old plans from the Auburn and Mintaro circuit. Most of them date from the 1940s.

A study of the plans produces some depressing reflections on the decline of the church in rural South Australia in the past fifty years.

In the early years of this century, Mintaro was the head of a circuit with a resident minister. After years of struggling feebly to stay alive, the church in this historic township was sold a couple of years ago.

In the 1950s, Auburn still had a manse with a minister serving a four-church circuit. Auburn once had three Methodist Churches; the Wesleyan building was sold after the 1900 union to the Roman Catholics.

The present church, built in 1861, is probably the best of the old Bible Christian churches still in use. Auburn was down to one service a Sunday in 1954; now it has one a fortnight, with the minister coming from Riverton.

Fifty years ago, before the advent of modern stewardship campaigns, it was a day of small things as far as circuit finances were concerned. A circuit was dependent on collections, the odd donation or wedding fee and above all the income each year from a fete. It was the last that often balanced the books.

The collections for February to April 1946 in the Auburn and Mintaro circuit came to (in round terms) 57 pounds. The minister's stipend was 69 pounds. It was 30 pounds from a fete that "saved the day". The income from individual churches was so low that it is not surprising that, a few years later, Auburn ceased to have a minister.

The minister's letter on the 1946 plan mentions two weddings at Auburn in 1946, probably of returned servicemen. It concludes with "God Save the King", an appellation that dates it in the past.

To conclude: plans are an important historical source. The Society will be glad to receive into its archives any old plans that members care to send to it.

## STAN PARR

Stan Parr, a member of the Society, died in mid-November after a short illness. His final article on a series of politicians related to the Methodist Church appeared in this Newsletter a few days before his death. For a year he acted as minute secretary to the Council of the Society.

Stan grew up in the Alberton Church and following his return from the war he and his wife became members at Brighton and Seacliff.

For some years, he was in charge of Hansard at Parliament House and so acquired a considerable knowledge of South Australian political history. Stan won a number of awards for his speed and fluency as a shorthand writer.

After his retirement, Stan served the church in a number of honorary positions. The Society is grateful for his service and extends its condolences to Mrs Parr and the family.

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

It was good to read the late Stan Parr's article re Sir Glen Pearson in our Newsletter. I thought I would respond to this with one or two thoughts which you may care to publish.

I was Glen Pearson's minister during my appointment in the Cummins Circuit, 1954-58. He was a loyal and active member of the Yeelanna Church, a local preacher and a member of the quarterly meeting. Indeed some quarterly meetings were held in his home at Cockaleechee. He generously supported the work of the church.

On being appointed Minister of Agriculture, Glen requested that he be free from preaching appointments for a 'quarter'

At the end of the quarter he resumed his preaching commitments and continued the same throughout my time in the circuit.

Glen also led a Sunday Young Adults group which preceded the service. Sometimes he would have to leave after the group meeting concluded in order to catch the Adelaide-bound plane so that he would be ready for parliamentary commitments. His influence on the lives of these young people cannot be overestimated.

It was good to read the late Mr Parr's summary of Sir Glen's parliamentary achievements. For him faith and action were truly linked. I count it a privilege to have known him and worked with him.

Yours sincerely,

George Wright.

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## BALAKLAVA INFORMATION

We have received an interesting leaflet by the Rev Ted Curnow of the Balaklava Parish. It is well prepared and nicely printed. On the front is the statement: *Knowing who we are today is related to knowing where we came from!*

Balaklava was originally an important Bible Christian centre. It began as an extension of the Auburn circuit with a chapel in existence at Hoyleton in 1859.

Balaklava's origins are a little later, the first Bible Christian church being opened in 1871. Other buildings in the district followed. In 1897 the circuit had 206 members, 8 chapels, 15 local preachers and 267 children in Sunday school.

The leaflet is an adequate summary of the growth of the church on the Wakefield plans. It reflects a great deal of work on old records, and we are pleased to commend the idea to other parishes.



## CLARENDON'S 150 YEARS

The township of Clarendon celebrated its sesquicentenary in October 1996 and we were pleased to join the very large congregation in the Uniting Church.

A hundred years or so ago, Clarendon was a lively Methodist centre. As the historical summary given to the congregation at the service makes clear, the first Methodist services were held in 1846, the year in which the town was founded.

The first service was held under a tree, the record mentioning the presence of a group of aborigines.

The first church, Wesleyan, was built on a hill, known as Mount Zion, overlooking the town. The church was sold later and has for many years been a private residence.

A new Wesleyan church (the present building) in the Main Street was opened in 1875.

Earlier in 1853, a Bible Christian church was opened. This was closed after Methodist Union in 1900 and the building is now an historic hall in the Main Street.

The service last October was imaginatively planned to recapture something of the atmosphere of the church fifty to sixty years ago. Old hymns were sung and a notice sheet from the 1940s was read.

In the Sunday school segment, the congregation sang "Tell me the stories of Jesus". This part of the service concluded with the congregation singing, probably for the last time, "Hear the pennies dropping"!

The service was well-planned and those attending were reminded of the church as it was in a past age.

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## NEW PUBLICATION

The Society has published the text of the Gordon Rowe Memorial Lecture given in the Pilgrim Church Lounge on 15 November 1996 by Dr Niel Gunson. Dr Gunson is at present Visiting Fellow in Pacific History at the Australian National University in Canberra.

The title of the lecture is "Ecumenism by Default" and is a study of the contribution of the London Missionary Society (Congregational) to the wider church in the Pacific.

Congregationalism made a notable contribution in the early years of the last century to the evangelisation of parts of the Pacific. As any visitor to Samoa

soon learns, it is still a major church in that island area.

It contributed greatly to the number of ecumenical developments in recent years, notably to the Church of South India, which was formed in 1947.

The lecture will be of particular interest to those with a Congregational heritage and to those with a general interest in Pacific history.

It is available from the Uniting Church Historical Society, 19 Malvern Avenue, Malvern 5061. Price \$3, includes postage.

## ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Pilgrim Church on 15 November 1996. the following were elected as members of the Council for 1997:

President:	Rev T Ron Hayward	Vice-President:	Rev Walter Stafford
Secretary:	Rev George Potter	Treasurer:	Rev George Wright
	Editor:		Dr Arnold Hunt
Members:	Val Canty, Brian Jones, David Shield, Colin Watson		
Co-opted:	Rev Keith Batt, Gaye Brown, Rev Don Haydon, Rev Gerald Hodges, Nancy Mitchell, Rev Ruth Threapleton		



### SILAS K. HOCKING

*There may be some older members who remember the novels of Silas K. Hocking, a Cornish Methodist. Along with Joseph Hocking, much more anti-Catholic, his novels were still read in the 1930s. The following is an extract from a Cornish paper.*

*Michael Dorey*

I suspect there are few libraries out of Cornwall which still have books by Silas K. Hocking on their shelves. Yet this prolific author and preacher was once one of the most famous men in the land; at the height of his career, the best-selling English novelist.

Silas was born in a modest cottage on Terras Moor outside St. Stephen in Brannel, near St. Austell, on 24 March 1850. His father James was part owner of a tin mine and his mother, Elizabeth Kitto, came from one of Cornwall's oldest families.

Silas originally studied to become a mine surveyor but his altruistic outlook and beliefs persuaded him to apply to join the

United Methodist Free Church, into which he was accepted as a candidate in 1869 and ordained in 1870.

He held pastorates in Pontypool, Spalding, Liverpool and Manchester before going to Duke Street in Southport in 1883, a position he held until his resignation from the church in 1896.

For a young, married minister, life was not easy financially and so Silas began to use his talent and 'urge to scribble', although at first monetary success was slow in coming.

The fame but not the fortune came with *Her Benny*, a tale for children about the streets of Liverpool. It was a huge

(Subscription form overleaf)

success, being translated into many languages, and it sold over a million copies worldwide.

Yet Silas did not profit for, in a moment of need, he had sold the copyright for only 20 pounds: a salutary story for any budding writer!

Nevertheless it launched his literary career. When it proved impossible for him to agree with the church on a compromise about his future role, he did not suffer any hardship or indignity.

He did not willingly leave his ministry, but the rules prepared for his continued work for the church were impossible for him to follow. Already he was beginning to realise that many of his youthful beliefs were being undermined by new church thinking. This was not the last time that his trusting nature and somewhat naive view of life was to bring him sorrow and disappointment.

He threw himself into a whirlwind of lectures - still to capacity audiences - writing and Liberal politics, contesting Aylesbury in 1906 and Coventry in 1910.

He had previously been a candidate for

Camborne, but had to pull out because of his attitude to the Boer War. He was totally against British involvement and was even accused of being 'pro Boer'. This was not true, of course, but it brought an abrupt end to his lecture tours and such was the real danger of physical attacks on him that he was given police protection.

In 1909 he visited Germany with the Delegation of Churches and while there, Admiral Von Tirpitz told him plausibly and with sincerity why Germany would never commit an act of aggression. Subsequent events really distressed Hocking, who had truly believed the Admiral.

The war hurt Silas badly. In his own words, it had vulgarised the people and lowered moral standards throughout the country - a view he was to maintain until his death in 1935.

Throughout his life, Silas held the view that the youth of the country would "come up trumps" and would maintain the standards by which he strove so hard to live.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

As this is the first issue for 1997, we give a reminder to those whose subscriptions are due. Current rates are: \$20 for 3 years      \$14 for 2 years      \$10 for one year

Subscriptions should be sent to the Treasurer, Rev George Wright, 26 Kyeema Avenue, Cumberland Park 5041. Detach and post:

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I wish to subscribe to the Historical Society Newsletter for .....year(s) and

enclose \$.....

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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