

THE UNITING CHURCH IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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NEWSLETTER

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HISTORY WALK

Our spring walk this year will be on Sunday afternoon, 28 September. The focus will be on the old Methodist cemetery in Smith Street, Walkerville.

At 2.30 meet at Smith St Cemetery. Smith Street runs north from Walkerville Terrace.

Leader : Arnold Hunt.

Contributions from Bill Lyne, Mona Hunt, Val Canty, Don Pearce and Brian Jones.

At 3.45 p.m. share in afternoon tea in Walkerville Church (opposite cemetery). All welcome. Enquiries to Arnold Hunt

CAMPBELLTOWN CELEBRATES

by
Jim Everett

The preaching plan of the Adelaide Wesleyan Methodist Circuit for the months of May, June and July 1847 showed 28 preaching places as far south as Willunga and north to Burra Burra Mine.

One of the places shown is "Darley", which was the name of an early settlement now part of the modern suburb of Paradise. This gathering of people for regular worship services was the nucleus of the fellowship which was later to form the Campbelltown Wesleyan Methodist Church. The time of service at Darley was 3.00 p.m.

Early Services

The exact meeting place of the early congregation is not known, but it is likely that they could have met in the Travellers' Rest Inn, conducted by the Crowle family who were active in the Campbelltown Church for many years.

Services continued in borrowed accommodation and on a preaching plan dated 1855, the time of service at Campbelltown had moved to 6.00 p.m.

Chapel

As the population of the area grew, it was decided to build a chapel. In 1857, Mr James Crowle gave a piece of land 66ft. x 85ft. in Chapel Street, Campbelltown and on 14th April, 1857, the original Trustees were appointed.

The Chapel was 18ft. x 30ft. and cost £175 (\$350) to build. At the time of the opening the membership of the Adelaide Circuit was 640, with two ordained ministers and 24 local preachers.

The Chapel was opened for public worship on 11th April, 1858, with the preachers for the day being the Revs. William Ingram (Superintendent Minister

of the Adelaide South Circuit) and C.J. Baird. On the next day a tea meeting followed by a public meeting was held. Subscriptions and collections toward the Chapel amounted to £160 (\$320), leaving the new church with a debt of only £15 (\$30).

The original building was constructed of concrete with brick quoins and, from a photograph taken in 1930 prior to demolition, it would seem that additions were made to the original building to create an L-shaped structure.

For the next 50 years this building provided accommodation for the various activities including Sunday School but by the end of this time it became evident that a new church with additional accommodation was needed.

New Building

The Trustees purchased the present site on the Lower North East Road in 1900 for £100 (\$200) and commenced planning and fundraising for a new building

By 1906, plans for a church with internal dimensions of 52ft x 33ft were completed, the architect being Mr John A. Tillett of Adelaide.

On Saturday, 19th January, 1907, the Foundation Stone of the new church was laid by Mr Jonah Hobbs of Lochiel Park. The structure took four months to complete and was opened for public worship on Saturday, 28th May, 1907, with the preacher for the occasion being Rev. William Jeffries (Minister of the Kent Town Church).

The contractor for the building was Mr Lewis of Prospect. The old church in Chapel Street continued to serve as the meeting place for the Sunday School until 1912, when the present Hall was built.

This took about six months to complete and was formally opened on Saturday, 28th September, 1912. On completion of the new Hall, the original church in Chapel Street was sold to Mr A.J. Stock, who used it as a paint shop related to his blacksmith and machinery business.

Additions

Further additions to both the church and hall were made in 1924-5, when the vestries and meeting room at the back of the main hall were completed. The present manse was erected on an adjoining block in 1922.

Prior to the building of the manse the ministers appointed to Campbelltown lived in a rented house in Hill Street. The first minister appointed to serve the area was Rev. W.O. Harris, in 1914.

In 1955, the subdivision of the market gardens into suburban building blocks commenced and continued throughout the next two decades. This changed the character of the area from rural/gardening to closely settled suburbia. The influx of new people and young children affected the church. In 1960, to accommodate the Sunday School and other activities, a new hall, kitchen and foyer were added to the 1912 structure.

Increase in membership

By 1960, the membership had increased to 239, whereas over the previous four decades it had been around 140.

The continual growth of the area saw the need to widen the Lower North East Road and in 1975 seven foot of land was

purchased from the front of the property. To overcome traffic noise and to provide additional space, a porch area was added to the church in 1977. At the time of the addition, the sanctuary area was reordered.

Present Parish

Campbelltown has been part of several circuits during its lifetime, with a close relationship existing with the Payneham Road Methodist Church.

On the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977, the Torrens Valley Parish, consisting of Campbelltown, Athelstone and Dernancourt, was formed with ministers appointed to Campbelltown and Athelstone. In latter years this parish has been split into three separate parishes.

During the decades 1960-80, Campbelltown was a busy and active church with large attendances at all aspects of church life and special emphasis on strong youth activities. By the mid 1980's, due to a change in population, the numbers declined but with the first change in ownership of housing built in the 1960's the number of children/young people is now on the increase.

It has been a long journey from that first gathering at Darley in 1947, then situated in a sparsely populated rural community, to the suburban congregation of today.

Let us celebrate the 150 years of worship with thanksgiving!

NEW PUBLICATION

There was a very good attendance at Westbourne Park in March for the Society's lecture given by the secretary, Rev George Potter. He took as his subject the original, growth and decline of the two Methodist Orders - the Order of Knights and the Methodist Girls' Comradeship.

Beginning in New South Wales during the

first World War, the OKs spread throughout Methodism, as did the Girls' Comradeship. They reached their height in the late 1930s. Both were to be seriously affected by the war.

In their heyday there is no doubt that the two orders were the most successful youth

movements in the history of Australian Methodism.

Today both orders seem rather bizarre organisations. The OK was a blend of the ideas of chivalry in the legends of King Arthur and his knights and Christian idealism. It had an initiation ceremony, a ritual, regalia for different degrees, password and 'grip'. Yet it is indisputable that both orders were very influential. There are many senior members of the church today who attribute the beginning

of their journey in Christian discipleship to these orders.

Mr Potter has done an excellent job in analysing and describing these movements. This is probably the most thorough account of a feature of Australian Methodism that has been written.

The publication is available from the U.C. Historical Society, 19 Malvern Avenue, Malvern 5061 at the low price of \$1 (add a \$1 for postage).

MORCHARD'S 120 YEARS

Morchard is a small town near Orroroo. It is of some interest to Methodist historians for two reasons.

The town is named after Morchard Bishop in Devon, the birthplace of the Rev James Way, the first superintendent of the Bible Christian mission in South Australia. The churchyard has a number of graves of members of the Way family.

James was converted in the local chapel (the preacher being a woman), became a minister and, in 1850, migrated to South Australia. His more eminent son, Samuel Way, was responsible for the naming of the town.

'Bishop' in the Devonshire name is a legacy of the days when the parish was a fief of the Bishop of Exeter.

The other matter of historical interest is that Abner Toop, the progenitor of the Toops that followed, was a pioneer settler who began conducting Methodist services. Abner Toop's story is a good illustration of how Methodism came to be planted in many rural areas of the state.

Morchard celebrated a few months ago 120 years of Christian witness. A feature of this was an address by Mr Bill Toop, a great-great-grandson of Abner. We give here an edited version of his address.

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Migration

In 1851 Abner Toop married Jane Langdon in London and the following year, they sailed for Australia on the "Sea Park" together with 250 fellow migrants. Throughout the long, arduous, six month journey, over 30 babies were born, but the only child who survived was Abner and Jane's son, George. During the journey, Abner prayed to God, making the promise that should the family be delivered safely to Australia, Abner would try his best to be a good Christian and do all he could to serve God.

Settlement of Area

In 1865, the Surveyor General of South Australia, George Woodroffe Goyder, mapped his demarcation line between grazing and farming land. Pastoral Lease No. 80 was 320 square miles in size and included Appila, Wepowie, Morchard and Coomooroo. This lease formed part of Mr Price Maurice's holding known as Pekina Run and in 1864 was carrying 50,000 sheep, 130 cattle and 70 horses.

The effect of Goyder's Line was that large areas of pastoral leases were now deemed suitable for cereal cropping and

a number of leases was resumed by the Government and sold to settlers. Lease No. 80 was resumed in 1871 and offered under a Credit Arrangement System.

Credit conditions required a 10% deposit, a further 10% after three years and completion of payment at the end of six years. Settlers were required to reside on their land for at least nine months in every year, cultivate not less than 20% of their holding and to erect fences. A typical price at this time was £1 per acre plus, if applicable, the value of any improvements made during the term of the pastoral lease, for example, a well or a fence.

Early years

In 1876, Abner Toop purchased two Sections in the Hundred of Pekina and then moved his family from Kangarilla. Abner and Jane, together with their children Mary 18, William 16, Jane 14, Eliza 12, Emily 10, Edie 5 and Annie 3, travelled north with all of their possessions on a bullock wagon with eight bullocks, a bullock dray with four bullocks and two milking cows.

It took several hard months for them to get to their new home and when they got there, they found it was three miles to the closest water at Willowie Springs. They built their first house of split native pines and mud, and the roof was thatched with porcupine.

During the first year they cleared and sowed 40 acres of wheat only to have it wiped out by kangaroos. The next year they guarded the crop day and night to keep the 'roos off and, in addition, dug a 66ft well.

Using two bullock teams, Abner and his son, William, took the year's crop of 40 bags of wheat through Horrocks Pass to Port Augusta. They had difficulty in selling their wheat in Port Augusta until Abner found an old friend who was a captain of a ship that was in port at the

time. The captain bought their crop and paid them £1 per bag with the promise that, if he made a profit in England, he would pay them more when he saw them again.

The next year they cleared more land and grew more wheat, taking it again to Port Augusta but this time they sold it to a newly built flour mill. After selling the wheat they saw a ship in port. It was the same ship from the year before and their captain friend was delighted to see them. He told them he had done very well out of the wheat and paid them another £40.

Just for comparison with today's wheat prices, I have calculated that the 10 shillings per bushel that Abner received for his first crop equals \$36.75 per tonne. I would suggest that the current price of wheat is very cheap relative to the price 120 years ago.

With his windfall, Abner bought a horse and cart, making him one of the first settlers in the area to have a horse. Until this time they either walked to Pekina to the nearest general store or travelled the seven miles to Morchard to attend church using the bullock dray.

Early Services

As a part of his promise made to God during the voyage of Australia, Abner started to conduct services at Mrs J. McDougall's farm house, one mile south-east of Morchard, on the third Sunday in November, 1876. Services were also held at the McLennan and Piggott homesteads. Abner continued preaching every Sunday afternoon until Conference sent a minister to take over.

After a short period, services were shifted to the men's hut at the boiling down station. Abner continued to preach, sometimes riding a horse nearly 80 miles, and assisting the minister until the time of his death.

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Church buildings

Following the survey of the Hundred of Coomooroo in 1875 to 1877, an auction of approximately 69 allotments in the township of Morchard was held. On 13th September, 1877, Abner purchased Allotment No. 45 upon which was built the original Methodist church in 1879.

The church was built of stone and great celebrations for its opening were planned. However, some pranksters had told the builder that if he hadn't received payment by the time the first service was held, he would not be able to claim payment. The builder therefore locked the doors to the church on the day of its opening and the parishioners had to hold their service once again at the men's hut.

Perhaps the contractor should not have been paid for his work anyway, as the building only stood for four years before rebuilding was necessary. The church was then built on the same location using the existing footings and roof.

A new church, that is the one [in present use], was built and opened by Rev. J. Dingle on 28th September, 1924, and the old church was then utilised as a Sunday School.

Death

Abner Toop died on 27th March, 1882, and his family was left in a difficult position financially - fairly normal for farmers. The Public Trustee took over and called for a sale of all their possessions. The sale was advertised to start at 2 o'clock sharp and everything was for absolute sale to the highest bidder.

At this point the community rallied behind the Toop family and at the start of the sale only four people were present. The Public Trustee said there were not enough buyers to start the sale

but all four men asserted that they were genuine buyers and would be bidding, and the local lawyer said to start the sale.

It was, of course, very necessary for Abner's son, William, to retain all the few possessions they owned to enable them to keep farming - so as each item was auctioned, William's friends would bid a small amount. William would then bid and there being two bids and no more, the items had to be knocked down.

After the sale was over, a crowd of people arrived and no doubt celebrated the local community's victory over bureaucracy. Despite no longer living in this area, I am very aware of the strong sense of community spirit still in existence today.

William Toop

William and his family worked hard to pay off the large debt against the land. Jane and Eliza started a dressmaking business in Orroroo and were later joined by Annie. Their business survived for 61 years and the three were staunch members of their local church for all their lives, with Jane teaching Sunday School.

When the last of them [Annie] died, she left all the assets of Miss Toop's dressmakers business to the Orroroo community and it was divided between the Orroroo Methodist Church, Baptist Church, Orroroo Hospital and foreign missions.

William was a church steward and trustee and a loyal churchworker for all of his life. He helped in the building of the church at Orroroo and laid one of the foundation stones.

He was also active in other community areas, serving as a district councillor for nearly 20 years, a member of the military forces and a Justice of the Peace. When William sold Willapunga in 1919, he and his wife, Eliza Jane, moved to Orroroo where they lived until his death in 1936.

KIMBA MEMORY

Rev William Curry, now ninety-six, is our oldest minister - and very alert for his age. He migrated from Seaham Harbour in County Durham at the end of 1921. He was a local preacher of the Primitive Methodist Church which merged with other branches of British Methodism in 1932.

A fortnight after his arrival, he was sent as a Home Missionary to Darke Peak on Eyre Peninsula. This must have been a very exacting appointment for a young man from the north of England.

In 1922 the chairman of the Methodist district of Eyre Peninsula (Rev W. O. Harris) arranged for the ministers of the the District to gather at Kimba to build a church.

They quarried the stone, in a nearby paddock, transported it in a big dray drawn by draught horses and then built the church. Mr Curry (as Miss Lorna Harris also) has given the Society some photos taken during the erection of the building.

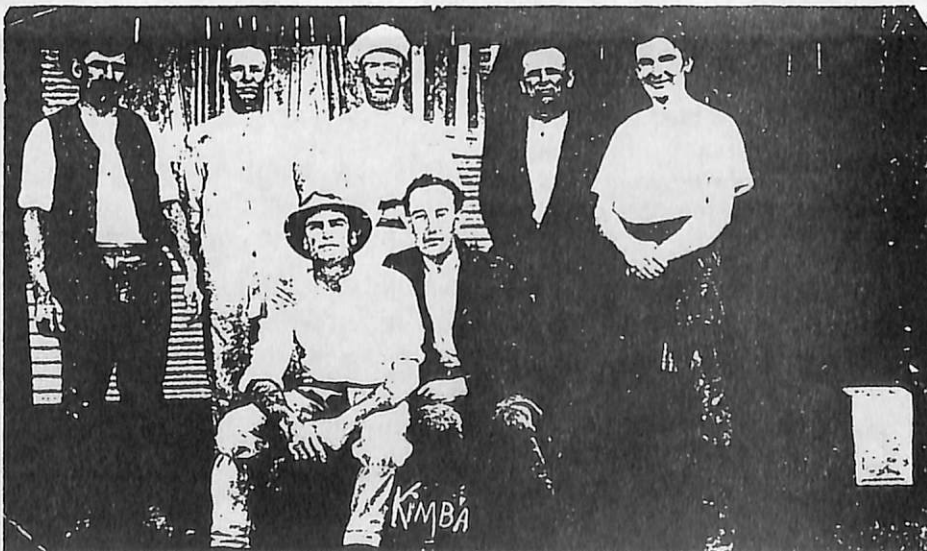
We reproduce the photo here. Those taking part were (standing left to right) Revs W. O. Harris, O. Hancock, J. C.

Barrett, J. E. E. Tregilgas, A. D. McCutcheon. Seated are T. Ofler and W. Curry. Mr Curry is the only one who survives.

The church was in use until 1990, when it was replaced by a new building.

Mr Curry has also passed on to the archives of the society a 1922 issue of the 'Eyre Peninsula Methodist'. This twenty-page publication came out each quarter and was sold for five shillings. It contains the quarterly plans of 10 Methodist circuits together with church news, devotional articles and a number of advertisements that no doubt helped to keep the price down. Some of the circuits - Port Neill, Darke Peak, Penong - have long since disappeared with perhaps one or two churches surviving as part of a nearby parish.

The story of Methodism on Eyre Peninsula and the West Coast seventy years ago has an epic quality. Roads were bad, crops were uncertain, transport was difficult, churches were few, congregations small and finance short. Many young ministers stayed only a year. But the church was planted and in many places it survives to the present.



ENFIELD SERVICE

An interesting service with an historical touch was held on Sunday 9 March at the Enfield Memorial Park. Its purpose was to commemorate the first burial in the cemetery on 9 March 1947. The deceased was a man of 31, Albert Goodenough, the undertaker was Charles Berry and the minister, the Rev Edgar T. Pryor, who had married the couple five years earlier and was at the time the Methodist representative on the Cemetery Board.

About fifty people gathered by the grave for the service in March. The central figure was the widow of the deceased, now Mrs Hannah Hughes who, as a young woman, had responded to Charles Berry's suggestion that Enfield should be the place for her husband's interment. Also present were several members of the families of Charles Berry and Edgar Pryor.

The minister for Housing and Urban Development, Mr Stephen Baker, unveiled a plaque at the gravesite and referred to the fact that Enfield, based on an American model, was the first lawn cemetery to be developed in Australia. In 1947 the site was little more than an empty paddock. In fifty years it has been transformed into a garden cemetery.

On the Sunday in 1947 (an unusual day for a funeral) some enterprising photographer took a photograph of the funeral. This, enlarged and framed, was presented to Mrs Hughes.

ORROROO PLANS

Our article on old circuit plans in the last issue produced two old quarterly plans from the Orroroo Methodist circuit. They were sent to us by Mrs J. Ellery of Orroroo, a life member of the society.

The plans are from 1922 and 1924 when the minister in the first year was the Rev E.H. Woollacott, followed by his successor, the Rev A.M. Trengove.

A study of these plans of seventy years ago gives further confirmation of the decline of the church in many parts of rural South Australia. In 1922 the circuit had six churches or preaching places - Orroroo, Morchard,

Walloway Plains, Coomaroo (once a quarter), Rye (every fortnight) and Peak Vale. There were two services a Sunday at Orroroo and the circuit had eight local preachers. The circuit obviously ran on a deficit. At the beginning of August 1922 this was £11; three months later it was £31.

The church is still being maintained in Orroroo with a joint Uniting-Baptist congregation. The pastor is a part-time local layman.

The plans have been deposited in our archives. The editor will be pleased to receive other old plans from readers.

THE MARION WESLEYAN CHAPEL

The Marion church has produced a 59-page book of reminiscences of the old church in Township Road. The chapel, as it was originally called, was built by the Wesleyans in 1862 as part of the Pirie Street circuit. It was small, serving what was then a rural township, and remained in use until 1966 when a new church for an expanding congregation was built.

This chapel was restored in 1988 and, as a heritage building, its future is secure. It is one of the oldest Methodist buildings in the state still in use, being used mainly for weddings and for small church meetings of various kinds.

What Elaine and Arthur Beales and Margaret Pill have done in this publication is to collect reminiscences of what it was like to be a Methodist in the days of the old church. There are many touches of the past - the roster of lads to pump the bellows for the organ, the annual fundraising strawberry fetes and the Sunday School anniversaries.

The book contains a number of old photographs and reproductions of old foundation stones and memorial tablets.

It would be a good idea if other churches were to do what Marion has done. With the passage of time and the ravages of death, much of the past will be lost forever. The contributions from many of the older members of the church mean that Marion now has an interesting record of church life in the past.