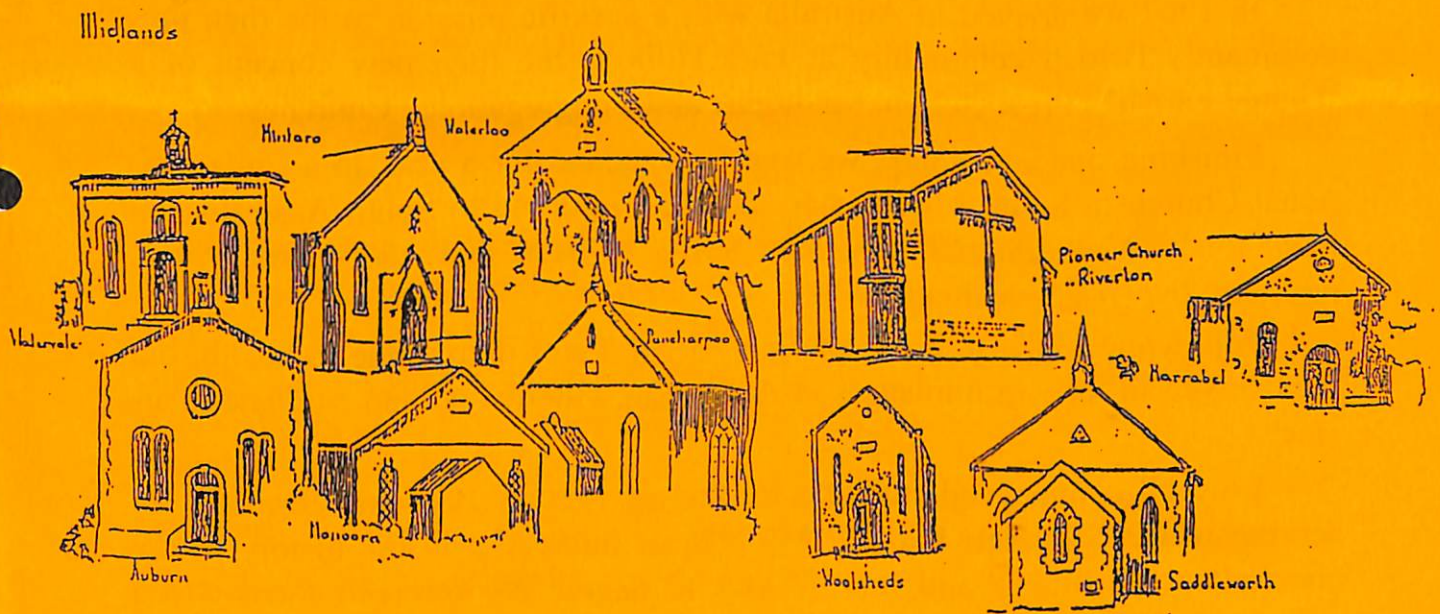


The Historical Society
 Uniting Church in Australia
 SA SYNOD



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Contents:

Introduction of New Editor

Churches of the Midlands Parish (pt.1)

Springfield Cemetery Church and Marrabel Church

Hymns we have lost

Forthcoming events

Serial: Part One

"A Sunday School teacher to her pupils" (1846) *Courtesy, David Shields*

Other interesting Trips and Events

Rosemary Shearer

Grace Philbey

Rev Dr Arnold Hunt

Rev George Potter

The Historical Society of SA

To introduce our new Editor, Rev'd Ruth Threapleton:

My husband, Rev'd Peter Threapleton, and I left England in 1960 for New Zealand under the Commonwealth Missionary Society, to minister in the Congregational Church at Timaru, in the South Island.

In 1967 we arrived in Australia with a specific mission to the then predominantly British community at Para Hills in the then new concept of a 'United Parish' - Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches.

Finishing our term there, we went to England for a year, to a Congregational Church in South Manchester, and then returned to South Australia 'on loan' to the Methodist Church, ministering in Berri and Ascot Park, where mid-term the UCA eventuated.

Following ministry in the Marion Parish, Peter retired due to health, but then served in interim ministries at Ardrossan, Goodwood and Midlands Parishes.

I myself commenced studying for the ministry in 1990 and currently am serving in the Midlands Parish. My area of interest is in the history of the church and its liturgy and for my second degree my research focussed on "*Eucharistic Theology in a Rural Uniting Church*".

The following contributions offer you an interesting overview of the history of the Midlands Parish, in which I work, perhaps evoking memories for some of you and even the claiming of distant relatives.

It would be good to hear from any who would like to enter into correspondence on this, *or any topics* that are addressed by the society which raise any matters of interest or queries for you. These letters could be published for a wider response.



'THE MORAVIAN ABORIGINAL MISSIONS 1850-1917'

A lecture to be given by

The Rev. Bill Edwards, B.A., B.Ed.

Bill served in the Ernabella, Mowanjum, Pitjantjatjara (Fregon), and the Pitjantjatjara Regional Parish Missions for the years 1958 - 1980. He lectured in Aboriginal Studies at the University of South Australia until recently, when he retired.

The lecture - to be held Friday, 9 April 1999 in Church of the Trinity, 318 Goodwood Road, Clarence Park - will be preceded by the Annual General Meeting of the Historical Society at 7.30 p.m. Members, please note.

METHODISM IN THE MIDLANDS PARISH

The history of Methodism in this district is really the story of two well-known branches of Methodism – the Wesleyans and the Bible Christian Connexion, including churches on the outer perimeter of the Parish which were either one of the aforementioned or Primitive Methodist.

The Bible Christian Church began its work in Riverton in 1855, when an acre of ground on which to build a chapel was donated by the founder of this town – James Masters. A humble building was erected and used continuously by the worshippers until 1872, when the new church was erected on the south west corner of the block of land situated at No. 6 Torrens Road.

The first meeting to consider the new building was held in 1871, when the Rev. R.O. Brandt presided and the following gentlemen were elected to the Committee to consider the building: Messrs George Gurner, T.M. Ashton, Peter McMartin, Thomas Gordon, Joshua Darby and James Stacey. The Committee became the first Trustees with Mr John Cooper joining the Committee in late 1871.

Messrs Hoare, Gray and Goodridge won the contract and the building, measuring 42 feet x 28 feet was duly opened on February 18, 1872. This building was used for a number of years as a day school and among those who rented it for that purpose were Mr J. Prior and Miss Quartley. The 'Friendly Societies' - The Good Templars and The Band of Good Hope also hired this building for their regular meetings.

It has not been established when the first resident Minister came to Riverton but records indicate that the Rev Richard Otto Brandt, who died in 1873, was the first pastor of the Circuit whilst Marriage Certificates held at the History Centre indicate that the Rev John Thorne officiated at several marriages at the Bible Christian Chapel in 1873, being followed by the Rev J. Collings.

In 1881, the Trustees decided to erect a new Chapel and Manse which were officially opened in 1882, the transept having been added following the amalgamation in 1900. This building was sold in 1963 to the congregation of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia and is now known as St Matthew's Lutheran Church.

The first Wesleyan Chapel in this district opened at Macaw Creek in 1857 and came under the Kapunda Circuit. It was well attended for many years until the people of that faith built a church at Riverton and, with

improved transport, many of the pioneers from Macaw Creek settlement chose to travel to Riverton to attend Sunday worship.

Eventually the little church was closed and in 1900, when amalgamation took place, the stone from the Macaw Creek church was transported and used to erect the kitchen and school rooms at the rear of the Riverton church. The only tangible remnant of the first Wesleyan church is the original tablet bearing the letters **WC 1857** which was retained and now stands outside the Pioneer Uniting Church.

As early as **1858**, Wesleyan pioneers gathered to discuss the possibility of erecting a chapel at **Woolsheds Flat**. Donations amounting to £50 were received at the inaugural meeting when Mr James Kemp donated a block of land for the purpose of building a Wesleyan Church. Men of the faith carted, by bullock drays, 100 loads of stone quarried from a nearby rocky outcrop. The front steps of the little church on the hill were of Mintaro slate and today are still in pristine condition.

In 1866 the Stewards built a Sunday School which, until the school at Rhynie was erected, was also used as a Day School for the many children whose parents had taken up land near the River Wakefield.

The first lighting in the church came from candles placed in hoops which hung from the ceiling. Later these were replaced with elegant gas lamps.

Pleasant Sunday afternoons were always well attended when members of the Riverton Choir rendered many well-known anthems and the male quartet was always a crowd pleaser. Although regular services have ceased, many of the locals gather annually for a Carols by Candlelight Service.

The Woolsheds Flat Church was officially closed in 1972 and at the last service the congregation sang with heart and voice, as did their forebears, "Oh Come to the Church in the Wildwood". The Cemetery which surrounds the church is still in use and more recently a Niche Wall has been erected by several devoted descendants of those early pioneers.

From original Minute Books and financial records it has been ascertained that the Wesleyan Church at **Rhynie** opened on July 29, **1866** on land donated by Mr William of "The Hermitage". The building was also used as a Day School with 23 pupils enrolled. When the church closed in 1957, various pieces of furniture were moved to the new church in Riverton, whilst the building was sold and is now a private residence. *(To be continued)*

Rosemary Shearer

SPRINGFIELD CEMETRY CHURCH 1850

Prior to the establishment of the church, it is thought that a small gathering existed which culminated in the building of a church. Land was donated or sold by William Rollings (the writer's maternal great grandfather) on 7 January 1856 to the Bible Christian Connexion and received by the Superintendent Minister, James Rowe of Kooringa (the old name for Burra); a token payment of ten pounds was given. There is no local record of the incumbent minister when the church was first opened but William Fursman was the first recorded minister in 1856. However, an anniversary was held in 1865. It is assumed the church was probably opened in 1864.

The church was constructed of stone with a thatched roof. A porch was constructed on the eastern side of the building and had swinging doors. The church, which was still in use in the late 1890s, held about a hundred people. Following the services, the worshippers would have high tea with Mr and Mrs Harold Shepherd Rowett, who lived opposite, and who also participated in the services although they were Anglican.

The first burial in the Springfield Cemetery was James McDougall on 25 February 1856, aged 47 years; Thomas William Rowlings conducted the service. The first wedding in the chapel was solemnised on 22 May 1882. The church was demolished in approximately 1910 but the cemetery remains and is still in use. The congregation then joined with the Wesleyan Church at Marrabel.

MARRABEL METHODIST CHURCH

An 'elegant' site of land was kindly given by Mr Penny to the Bible Christian Connexion for the erection of a place of worship at Marrabel, on the road from Kapunda to Saddleworth and Waterloo. The trustees met and decided to build a chapel, sixteen foot high, twenty three feet wide and thirty feet long. Building commenced and the church was opened on 17 November 1867 and was dedicated in 1868.

A Sunday school existed, which appears to have fluctuated but it can be traced back to 1886 (and evidence of it found in 1928 and the 1950's), and local Anglican children have also attended over the years.

The early tradition of the church was Bible Christian and it was in the Kapunda Circuit. It is recorded that the Marrabel Church became Wesleyan in approximately 1890, when it was incorporated into the Kapunda Circuit, because the Bible Christians were unable to keep going due to lack of funds.

In 1960 the church was transferred into the adjacent Methodist Circuit and is now part of the Midlands Parish of the Uniting Church. The church continues to hold services every three months, celebrating its Centenary on 19 November 1967. Many of the folk who had past connections with this church returned to the celebration and renewed old friendships.

Grace Philbey

THE HYMNS WE HAVE LOST

Historians of the future writing about church life in the latter decades of the twentieth century may well include a paragraph or two on the disappearance in most places of the evening service. And with that disappearance has gone the evening hymn, as an expression of Christian devotion.

A generation or so ago, the evening service, rather than that of the morning, was the better attended of the Sunday services, especially by younger people, in many non-Anglican churches. The service often had one or more evening hymns. The words or phrases, as a result of frequent usage, became part of the vocabulary of Christian devotion. This is no longer so and there must be many younger people in our churches who are strangers to the language of evening devotion.

In the 1933 edition of the Methodist Hymn Book (MHB), there are twenty evening hymns. Some of these were not sung very often but many enjoyed constant and widespread popularity. Several of these hymns also appear in the Australian Hymn Book (AHB) but their close connection with the evening hymn means that they are inappropriate for morning worship. They remain in the AHB largely unsung, except on rare occasions.

One hymn associated with evening is *Abide with me, fast falls the eventide* (MHB 948; AHB 502). This hymn by Henry Francis Lyte is not about the approach of the night but about the approach of death. The 'change and decay' of which Lyte writes, is the impending dissolution of life, the sombre tune fitting the sombre subject matter. It is puzzling as to when, and how, the hymn became popular with English soccer crowds.

I refer in what follows to five hymns that we have lost. The first for Sunday evening is

*The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended
The darkness falls at thy behest.* (MHB 667; AHB 388)

This has some memorable lines, not least those that express the universality of the church's worship on Sunday:

*The sun that bids us rest is waking
Our brethren 'neath the western sky,
And hour by hour fresh lips are making
Thy wondrous doings heard on high.*

The AHB change of 'brethren' to 'friends' adds little to this wonderful sentiment.

A very popular hymn years ago was *Glory to Thee, my God, this night* (MHB 943; AHB 468). It is a hymn of thanksgiving 'for all the blessings of the light'. Many millions have expressed their faith in Providence in the lines:

*Keep me, O keep me, king of kings
Beneath Thine own almighty wings.*

The third hymn that we used to sing was:

*Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou art near* (MHB 942)

It was written by John Keble, one of the leaders of the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Church of England, who wrote many hymns for the Christian Year. One of his best known, a couple of generations ago, was *The voice that breathed o'er Eden*. This fell into disfavour and it is no longer in modern hymn books. Keble's wedding hymn is rich in theological imagery and some would feel its disappearance is to be regretted.

The fourth evening hymn which was a means of grace to many is:

*Now the day is over
Night is drawing nigh
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.* (MHB 944, omitted in AHB)

Most of the well-loved hymns that we have now lost were written in the nineteenth century. Their background was the Victorian Sabbath when, for many people, the church was the centre of their lives. The hymns reflect the peace and quiet of a Sunday that is gone. With football, cricket, tennis and a host of other activities, the Sunday culture is utterly different from that which had its natural end in the evening service.

The final hymn to which I refer is MHB 947. Fifty years ago, the first verse of this was subsequently sung after the benediction at the evening service.

*Ere I sleep, for every favour
This day showed
By my God,
I will bless my Saviour.*

It was a fitting close to the service. And no doubt for many they were the words they pondered as they sought to be covered by the soft mantle of sleep.

Arnold D. Hunt

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ September History Walk
- ◆ November Lecture : "The History of Tertiary Chaplaincy in S.A."
 - ◆ Burra Bible Christian Chapel, 150 years Celebration,
Sunday 5 December 1999
 - ◆ Signing of the Methodist Deed of Union, Centenary
Sunday 26 March 2000

Details of the above events will be published when the planning is finalised.

**A letter from a Sunday School Teacher
To her Scholars**

Harrogate, July 26 1846

My dear Girls,

I dare say, some of you will be surprised, yet at the same time, I flatter myself, glad to hear from me. These few lines which I now send, will, I hope, prove to you, that you are not forgotten by your absent teacher.

When I left home, I can assure you, I had no intention of being so long away else I would not have left you without a parting farewell. I am glad, however, that my place has been efficiently supplied, which makes me feel much more comfortable than I otherwise should have done.

You have not been left to (..... illegible) but have had, I trust, the gospel faithfully proclaimed to you, have been shown your state by nature as sinners in the sight of God, and invited and urged to flee for refuge to the sinners only hope, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World.

O remember, my dear girls, that by whomsoever these truths are proclaimed, our responsibilities are the same; as is also necessity of making a right use of those precious privileges we so richly enjoy. It is my earnest prayer and desire that the instructions which have been imparted to you in my absence may ^(?not) rise up in judgement against you to condemn you, but that they may prove "the savour of life unto life to all". Let us never forget those solemn words of Christ "Unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required".

Sarah A Pullan.

(The letter is too long to reproduce in one edition; but will be continued. Who Sarah was is unclear. The note-book came from the deceased estate of Mrs. M.B. Purdie. It had been in the possession of the Burnell family emigrating on the 'Florentia', arriving 20/6/1849. Ed.)

History in the Making

This is a special year for the Historical Society of South Australia for it is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary. To celebrate this special year, reflections over this time and recollections of personalities and events will be given. Speakers are either professional historians, students or dedicated amateurs. Field trips are a part of the programme and bookstalls available at meetings. Enquiries: President, Dr Robert Nichol (08) 8297 9844. Patricia Sumerling 8362 8262.