

The Historical Society  
of the  
Uniting Church in Australia  
South Australian Synod

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*Season's Greetings to you all*

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**The First Report of the  
Holyeton Sabbath School  
Dec. 3rd 1871 - June 8th 1873**

The teachers of this School have much pleasure in presenting to you this first report. Previous to the opening of this School, the children in this neighbourhood spent their Sabbath in play, and the only remedy for such a growing evil was to collect them together for instruction (this [*sic*] bring them beyond their reach) and having obtained permission, to hold the school in this Building, it was deemed advisable to so commence operations.

This was preceded by Divine worship in a few months. We began with 26 scholars, and now we have about seventy names on the Roll, with an average attendance of 50.

The children have repeated 4431 verses of Scripture and 415 Hymns, besides which many of them have learned nearly the whole of the First Catechism.

This gives us encouragement, especially so on account of the School being wholly dependent on 2 Teachers for most of the time. We very much regret that a few manifest that interest in the School which its importance demands. Often we have solicited help, but regret being so unsuccessful.

This we regard as one cause of our not making that progress as we have wished, because it is utterly impossible for 2 persons to attend to, or properly instruct as many as they should be.

We are thankful for those growing young friends that have rendered occasional help, and pray that the Holy Spirit may so impress them with the importance of being taught of God (ere they can urge the claim of Christ upon the children) that they may be enabled to "seek Him" who has promised to be found of them who search for Him with the whole heart.

We trust that if spared to enter upon another years labours, it may be with a firm dedication in all to do what they can, to help forward so noble a cause as

**THE HOYLETON SABBATH SCHOOL**



Introduction: *Rev'd Harry Lambert served as a probationer for three years, as a married man with two children (on a single man's stipend) at Port Germein and Hawker, and was ordained on March 8th 1922. His first appointment was Goolwa, followed by Cleve, Modbury, Karoonda, Kadina and Wallaroo Mines, Stirling, Quorn, Pinnaroo, Crystal Brook, Magill and Salisbury circuits. He was Chairman of the District from 1938-41 and also 1944.*

*Some of his close friends were Rev'd W.J. Shapley (who is thought to have supported him as a candidate for the ministry), his son George Shapley, Rev'd W.A. Dunn, Darcy Dickson, R.H. (Bob) Davidson, Gordon Rowe, Rex Steadman, Bert Holmes, Glen Clarke, Jack Davis and Bellamy Shipley. Others whom he held in high regard, although several years younger than he, were Rev'd Maurice Wilmshurst, Clem Christopher, Rodger Brown, Doug Telfer and Ivon Wardle.*

***Memories of the  
Karoonda and Murraylands Mission  
and their first minister,  
Rev'd Harry Lambert, 1929-32  
By Beryl Everett (nee Lambert)  
Crystal Brook, S.A.***

In February 1929, the Methodist Conference called and appointed my father, Rev'd Harry Lambert, as Superintendent of the "Karoonda and Murraylands Mission", an area of 2,500 square miles, with 23 preaching places. Some of these had been built as churches, while in some places the local school room or the local hall was used. The latter often – very often – showing signs of the previous night's entertainment and far removed from the usual decorum of a church prepared for worship!

My father was the first married minister to be stationed in Karoonda, and as there was no manse, he had to "batch" in a room attached to the back of the church. This meant that my mother, my older sister Dulcie and I, had to live in Adelaide with my grandmother (my brother Keith, in

his mid-teens, had already started work in a bank in the city). I was nearly six years old at this time and my sister eight years older.

After some time, my father was able to rent a house on a farm at Wynarka, belonging to Rev'd Ivon Wardle's parents, which enabled us to live there until the manse was completed. Some years ago, this house was demolished as it was too small, having only one bedroom (six by eight feet) and so a new residence was built.

Besides Karoonda, services were conducted at Copeville, Yurgo, Wynarka, Marama, Kulkami, Lowaldie, Borrika, Sandalwoo, Halidon, Mindarie, Wanbi, Alawoona, Malpas, Paruna, Meribah, Taplan and Noora (not far from Loxton).

Each Sunday my father conducted three services. Once a quarter, however, he would leave home at 6.30 a.m., go as far as Taplan and Noora and take four services with Holy Communion at each place, with quite often a baptism or two along the way! On these trips, he would be 110 miles away from home at the close of his fourth and last service, and would not arrive back home at Karoonda until 1 a.m. on the Monday morning.

I remember one occasion when a 'phone call came for my father at 6 am. on the Monday morning following such a Sunday, from someone on a farm several miles away, for him to pick up someone who was ill and take them to the Murray Bridge Hospital. This was after only five hours in bed following an exhausting day and meant a round trip of over 100 miles.

There were very few sealed roads in those days, mainly sand "snake" tracks, obvious on the way up in the morning but if the wind blew during the day the track would be drifted over on the return journey. My mother also went on some on these trips. Sometimes my father was able to let his tyres down when he came to deep sand, drive through, and then pump them up again with an old hand style pump! He always carried a shovel, bags and rugs, and would get out of the car, put them down over the sand to get a grip on them. This process was repeated as many times as was necessary to gain firmer ground (occasionally they would even have to put their coats down as well!). My mother would push at the back of the car while father pushed from the side and steered at the same time. One trip it took them an hour to shovel out three quarters of a mile!

One morning they set off from home, prepared to battle their way through the sand again, to go to the morning service at Malpas, with af-

ternoon and evening services scheduled at Paruna and Alawoona. However, when they got closer to the area, they saw a man with a lantern, waving his arms for them to stop. He told them he had cut the fence wires so they could drive through his paddocks and avoid the sand. Needless to say, my father was very grateful. Even if the local folk were not church people, they were always on the look out for the minister going through and would lend a hand.

On another occasion, when they arrived at the church, my father discovered his Bible and sermon notes were missing. The only conclusion they came to was that somehow it had fallen out when they had to push the car through the sand. So while the service was underway, my mother drove the car back some miles and found the Bible lying on the track; she then turned around and got back to the church just as the service ended!

One thing I remember very clearly were the Harvest Thanksgiving services during the Great Depression (1929-1932). The inside of the Karoonda Church was decorated with all manner of provisions and goods from the home garden and the farms, whilst the choir sang "Praise the Lord of Jerusalem". Mr Guthleben, one of the choir members, who originally came from the border of France and Germany, would sing lustily "the walleys (valleys) stand so thick with corn". Even after seventy years I can remember listening intently for those words that were repeated several times during the anthem! They were very generous and grateful people, always giving God the thanks and the glory.

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*Rev'd Harry Lambert in his study (note map)*



One of the memories I have is of the large map mounted on his study wall that my father drew of the area, all to scale on brown paper, with all the preaching places, settlements and farms in red ink, along with their connecting tracks and roads. He kept the map for many years, as in later circuits he was often asked to speak about his experiences at Karoonda.

Some of the loyal family names I remember from the Karoonda area were the Elliot, Aitken, Walker, Adams and Guthlebel families and the Wardles, Rowllins, Blacker and Hendersons at Wynarka.

Each year in our time, there was a probationer stationed at Alawoona, namely Tom Simpson, David 'Jock' Annear and Erwin Vogt, who all later became ordained ministers.

It was not an easy time, but my father did it, feeling that the Lord whom he loved and served had called him to this ministry. Little wonder that in later years he suffered from a severe spinal problem that the specialists attributed to the severe travelling conditions of that era.

Rev'd Erwin Vogt gave the Tribute at my father's funeral in January 1971 and said:

*He was my first Superintendent, when I went to Alawoona in 1931. The wisdom of his counsel and the open hospitality of the Lambert home at Karoonda encouraged my growing admiration of this dedicated and effective country parson.*

*He taught me many things about disciplines and procedures of the Church which had been overlooked in the college classroom. His people loved him. This will be the tribute from the circuits where he served – he met men easily. The people of the Murray Mallee admired him as he drove his "Overland" from town through the snarling fourteen miles of sand from Yurgo to Marama on the Peebinga line.*

Beryl Everett, September 2000

*"Well done, thou good and faithful servant." - Ed.*

## JOHN WESLEY'S CHAPEL - THE NEW ROOM

*The oldest Methodist chapel in the world*

On a recent visit to England (in September 2000), I went again to visit *The New Room*, John Wesley's church and preaching rooms where he and his first ministers met together. The chapel, of course, is unchanged but the whole enterprise now has a new manager who is 'marketing' the place very well.

It is now the venue of school trips (and not just Methodist schoolchildren) and there is a great deal of written material and work available for projects. The souvenir trade in china, pictures, key-rings and biro pens is flourishing well with the addition of many items to the well-known ones of a few years back and a collection of new publications on Methodism.

Some things, however, never change. While some of this is old news for some readers, a description follows for those of you who have never been.

On May 9 1739, John Wesley bought a piece of land in the Horsefair at Bristol, where he planned to build a room as a meeting place for two of his religious societies. On Sunday June 3 (that same year), they met for the first time in the new building which was also used as a dispensary and schoolroom for the poor. In 1748, two hundred and thirty pounds was given in a couple of days to pay for the room to be enlarged and so in October 1748 the enlarged building was licensed for public worship.

The Chapel is interesting. It has a 'lantern window' which John Wesley designed so that an incredible amount of natural light comes into the church providing spotlight on the preacher as well. Thus the building needed fewer windows and therefore had a lower bill for window tax.

The original table at which both Wesley's celebrated Holy Communion is still there and behind it the 'double-decker' pulpit – the lower half used for reading the Bible and leading worship and the top section for preaching, so that the preacher could escape if attacked by the mob! Early preachers were often set upon violently (they often preached against slavery) and so there is no access to the pulpit from the floor of the building. However, access is from the stairs from both sides of the gallery: on one side, the stairs leading directly to the adjacent preaching rooms are called 'Mr Wesley's stairs'.

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John Wesley's clock, which he presented to the church (conveniently placed so the preacher could see it as well), still ticks away. In the body of the church are pews which were added in Victorian times to replace the original forms, which seated approximately 1,000 people. (You can get more people on a form than a pew!) However, in the gallery upstairs, the original backless forms are still in use. The Snetzler organ in the gallery dates to 1761 and was obtained in 'recent' times for there was no organ present in Wesley's day.

The New Room contains The Living Room, John Wesley's Room and bedroom, and the rooms of Charles Wesley, Francis Asbury, Adam Clarke, John Fletcher, each with particular items of interest.

Next time you are in England, go to Bristol!

*Ruth Threapleton*



## **News and Forthcoming Events**

**History Picnic:** In November, the first History Picnic gathering was held in Elder Park. The event was organised by the Historical Society of South Australia and brought together the many groups in South Australia who are devoted to preserving the history of our state and culture. Apart from the many local community and council groups, there were the others like Victoria Society and the Police Association.

Our Uniting Church Historical Society was the only religious body represented on that occasion. The display which members of the society had prepared included brochures and lectures, along with pictorial information on prominent 19th and 20th century politicians who were also well known church people (representing the three denominations – Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian) - Barr Smith, Colton, Holder, Parkin, Way. The display created considerable interest.

**History Walk:** The first history walk for 2001 will be held on **Saturday, 24 March at West Terrace Cemetery.** We will meet at the gates at 2 p.m.

**Gordon Rowe Memorial Lecture:** This biennial lecture will be given at **Westbourne Park Church** (27 Sussex Tce, Hawthorn) on **Monday, 23 April 2001 at 8 p.m.** The lecturer will be Mr Kelvin Hastie (who is also an organist) from Sydney, who will talk on Hymnody in the Australian context. Place this date in your diary now!...and let others in your congregation know about it.