



Uniting History SA May 2018

Guest Editor: Rev. Dr Brian Chalmers

Preserve our past and create a better future

The Uniting Church South Australia Historical Society (UCSAHS) seeks to promote interest in and to assist in the preservation of Uniting Church history. The aims of the Society include:

- Promote the collection, preservation and exhibition of historical documents and records;
- Preserve and store the artefacts and documents which are not required by the Synod to be lodged at the State Library of South Australia;
- Promote the study and discussion of the history of the Uniting Church particularly in South Australia and of the three churches existing prior to union in 1977;
- Publish historical articles and lectures;
- Share historical information through lectures, workshops, etc.

The Uniting Church heritage in South Australia is a significant asset, which requires careful management of historically relevant records. Church records tell us much about our history and how we can understand our collective past.

In the Old Testament there is much material written to preserve the memory of historical events as early Israel was established in covenant with Yahweh. In particular, the prophets and Deuteronomy often look back to the exodus as the not to be forgotten event signifying the power and grace of Yahweh. Israel's election was only to be found in the unmerited favour of Yahweh who acted in historical events.

Concern for the preservation of the historical record is highlighted in Deuteronomy chapter 32.7: 'Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past'. This concern for historical remembrance continued into the New Testament, especially with Luke and Paul's writings. The experience of God's people thus

resides in a common experience as handed down by those who participated in it.

A significant Christian belief, of importance in this context, is that time is linear. History has a beginning; it will one day come to fulfilment. As church officials plan for the future, the 'voices' of the past can play an important role. The heritage of the Uniting Church and its antecedent denominations has often been marginalised. And yet it is significant in its extent and reach well beyond the traditional boundaries of local churches. Hospitals, aged care, education, welfare and housing, among others, have all benefited from the work of the church in the past as well as the present. More work needs to be done in collecting, preserving, accessing and interpreting the historical record for present and future generations.

The conventional wisdom about historical memory is often stated in George Santayana's celebrated phrase, 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it'.¹ Contemporary thought would suggest that this is a widely held view. What is debatable is whether historical memory is a moral imperative or a moral option. Nevertheless, the records entrusted to local churches, church institutions and agencies form the very foundation of our heritage.

The Historical Society through its history centre provides a focal point for assembling elements of the church's heritage. The recent appointment of a Historical Records Officer by the society is a new and important initiative in furthering the work of records management at the centre as well as liaising with congregations. The appointment is a step forward to further the priorities of the history centre and goals of the UCSAHS. In this way, it is hoped that such work will 'create a better future'.

¹ George Santayana (1863-1952). Known as philosopher, essayist, poet and novelist.

Rev. Dr Brian Chalmers

The UCA History Centre

Open Wednesdays 1 - 4pm

44A East Ave
Black Forest

Website:

historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/UCAHistoricalSocietySA

CORRESPONDENCE:

E: ucsahist@chariot.net.au

Post: UCA Historical Society

44A East Ave, Black Forest, SA, 5035

Phone: 08 8297 8472

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Judith Raftery (President)

David Houston (Vice President)

Val Canty (Treasurer)

Doug Hosking (Secretary)

Glenys Edwards (Minute Secretary)

Jonathan Barker

Gaye Brown

Brian Chalmers

Lindsay Faulkner

Bill Harris

Barbara Hayes

Ken Hayes

Don Hopgood

Norah Norris

You can receive this newsletter via email. Send your email address to admin@historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au and we will send you our up-to-date news and other items of interest.

Membership of the Society

Individual—1 year	\$20
Individual—5 years	\$80
Individual—Life	\$250
Congregational—Life	\$250

Contact the Centre for more information.

Introducing...

Rosemary Hocking

The Historical Records Officer



After a lengthy period of consideration and debate, the Historical Society has established a new paid position: Historical Records Officer. This is a significant step towards strengthening our ongoing capacity to manage and develop the society's valuable historical and archival collection. We see it as an important strategy that builds on the fine work done over many years by our volunteer History Centre Managers, Gaye Brown and Val Canty, and that forms part of our sustainability and succession planning. After a formal process of advertisement and interview, we are delighted to announce that we have employed Rosemary Hocking to the position. Rosemary will be working for up to 15 hours per week, and while much of her time will be spent at the History Centre, especially during the initial period of settling in, her brief also includes liaison work with congregations which are seeking guidance on how best to preserve their own records and to promote interest in and reflection on history at the local level. Some of you will know Rosemary, who has already begun work at our History Centre, from her most recent work role as Librarian of the Adelaide Theological Library. She brings a wealth of skill and professional experience to the new position of Historical Records Officer, and we look forward to what she will contribute to what we all, as History Centre volunteers and members of the Historical Society, can contribute to the promotion of Uniting Church History in South Australia.

Welcome Rosemary.

Rosemary in her own words...

I was Librarian of the Adelaide Theological Library from 2006-2017, arriving there after working with the SA Education Department central cataloguing agency for all schools, followed by 16 years with the District Court Library, and a short stint developing web content for a law firm. I am looking forward to working with everyone at the History Centre in helping to collect and maintain the records and memorabilia of the Uniting Church, and promoting the work of the Historical Society with the Church and public of South Australia.

Primitive Methodism in South Australia



The March meeting (pictured left) focused on the Primitive Methodist Church which began in the English Midlands at the beginning of the 19th Century. At its core, out of doors evangelism, preaching to the working class poor.

Its South Australian origins began in Light Square when, one Sunday afternoon in July 1840, two Primitive Methodists began to preach. That evening, a gathering of six decided to form a Primitive Methodist Church. By the time of Methodist Union in 1900, 109 chapels had been built across the state, mostly by the farming and mining communities with a few in

the suburbs. The most significant building, and one which is still in use, is the Wellington Square church, long since decommissioned.

There is a substantial collection of formal Primitive Methodist material in the History Centre. Under the expert knowledge and guidance of Val Canty and David Hilliard, Rosemary Mitchell is compiling the Primitive Methodist history. What is missing is the informal—letters, diaries, minutes, family anecdotes, where “Prims” lived and worked etc.

Do you have any of this information? Would you like share this with others in the UCSA Historical Society? We’d love to hear from you and Rosemary Mitchell would be especially pleased!

Contact us here at the History Centre if you can help (contact details on page 2).

Uniting Church National History Society Updates

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Uniting Church National History Society (UCNHS) will be held on Saturday 7 July, 2018 at 5:00pm at Box Hill Uniting Church.

Members of the UCSAHS who will be at Assembly are encouraged to attend this event.

We are hoping that those who can’t be there in person will be able to attend online (details on how to connect will be published on our Web and Facebook pages when they become available).

Inaugural Public Lecture

Horizons of Religious History

Professor Stewart Gill

Master of Queen’s College, University of Melbourne

Box Hill Uniting Church
Saturday 7 July, 2018—6:00pm
(immediately following the AGM)

Professor Stewart Gill was appointed the eighth Master of Queen’s College in 2016. He is founder and director



of the Emmanuel Centre for the Study of Science, Religion and Society, and an Adjunct Professor in the University of Queensland’s School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, and a Senior Fellow at the University of Melbourne. He previously held positions as Warden of Ridley College and Deputy Warden of Trinity College. Scottish by birth, Professor Gill graduated with an honours Master’s degree from the University of Edinburgh. He continued his studies in Canada, earning a Master of Arts from the University of Toronto and a PhD from the University of Guelph. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, London. Stewart’s published historical studies span Canada, Scotland and Australia. As such he is well situated to provide a state of play address on the ‘Horizons of Religious History’ in this perfect prelude to the 15th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia held at the nearby Box Hill Town Hall.

Light Refreshments will be served after the lecture.

A Sunday Evening Service at Pirie Street Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1894

David Hilliard

During the 1890s Adelaide had a weekly paper called *Quiz and the Lantern*, founded in 1889. It provided a lively alternative to the city's two main newspapers of the period, the *Register* and the *Advertiser*, offering a mixture of local news, political and social gossip, reports on theatrical productions and sporting events, cartoons, and witty comment on current issues.

The founding editor of *Quiz* was Henry (Harry) Congreve Evans. His father was a Baptist minister, Ephraim Evans (who died when Henry was only a year old) and his mother was Matilda Jane Evans, a teacher and popular evangelical novelist who wrote under the name of Maud Jeanne Franc. Henry as a child had attended North Adelaide Baptist Church but in adulthood he was a religious sceptic. He usually spent his Sunday mornings, he joked, in the open air, perhaps with a book: a member of 'the great Church of Nature'.

In September 1894 Harry Evans (alias 'Quiz') inaugurated a weekly series called 'Round the Churches', during which, over the next fourteen months, he visited fifty-nine churches in Adelaide and its suburbs and wrote a critical account of what he saw and heard. The pen, 'Quiz' announced, 'may be handled by a sceptic but it will not be employed maliciously'. However, his frank observations certainly upset many of the clergymen he reviewed, and some prominent ministers felt quite aggrieved after 'Quiz's' treatment. Despite their waspish tone, these articles tell us quite a lot about worship and preaching in Adelaide in the 1890s.

Here is the first article in this series, an account of a Sunday evening service at Pirie Street Church in September 1894.¹

THE REVEREND JOSEPH BERRY AT PIRIE STREET WESLEYAN CHURCH

The Pirie Street Church was full on Sunday night. Mostly women and children. At a rough guess they outnumbered the men by about three to one. QUIZ counted several batches with this result. Out of 1500 people there were perhaps 400 men and youths. The general bearing of the congregation was of respectful interest. They sang fairly lustily, and they listened attentively, only one epidemic of coughing occurring during the service. And they were all well dressed. They had all probably had pudding for dinner.

The Rev. Joseph Berry is a big man – physically. He has a comfortable girth, on which he occasionally rests his clasped hands. His face is round, and judging by present appearances there will be no thatch on the top of the head a year hence. However, there is compensation in the luxuriant and neatly trimmed brown beard and moustache. Some bald-headed men look dignified. Mr Berry will not belong to that class. His poll will be very,

very shiny, and the small boys in the congregation will watch the flies settling on the skating rink in the summer months.

The eyes peer at you through, under, or above spectacles. They survey the 'house' as the preacher leans comfortably back in his chair in the pulpit, and he thereupon reminds the irreverent of a theatrical manager glancing through the stage peephole and assessing the value of his patrons. Mr Berry looks like a man who takes life easily. Though seemingly past middle age, his forehead is comparatively free from lines. He doesn't appear the sort of man who ever went short of a dinner, or who ever had to worry about a bill due at the beginning of the month. No; he has always been able to pay his way, and he has not had to take thought of the morrow. He may have a liver; but he scarcely looks dyspeptic. Perhaps his daily shaking up on his tricycle keeps his inner apparatus in good order.

Intellectual? Well, it is hard to say. The forehead is high and broad, but an idiot is sometimes similarly endowed. Not that Joseph Berry is an idiot. Oh, dear, no. He is a man of intelligence and education, and he strikes one as being a personage who is on exceedingly good terms with himself and his Creator. But QUIZ is anticipating.

Mr Berry is giving out the opening hymn. The voice strikes you unpleasantly. It is pitched in a high key, and is kept there. There is strong nasal twang – almost Yankee – discernible. This is more marked in the reading of the Scriptures. Like many other parsons, especially Wesleyans, Mr Berry is most monotonous in his reading. There are apparently at this time only two inflexions in his voice, an upper and downward one. In American style the voice is raised at the end of a sentence. This is irritating. And it should be so easy to read the Scriptures well!

More Americanisms are noticed as the announcements for the week are made. He says 'Haf a Crown' and 'Te-use-day'. You expect him to 'guess and calculate' after a while, or to ask your con-sider-a-tion, but in this you are disappointed.

The sermon promises to be interesting, because it opens with a reference to the recent Science Congress in England, but science is soon dismissed, and orthodoxy

Did you know?

Did you know that *The Australian Christian Commonwealth* can be accessed online?

Go to <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/title/1166#> and you will find editions from 1901 to 1940

reigns. The preacher has very full notes, and these are placed on a reading stand. Sometimes he comes to the front of the pulpit and then forgets what he wants to say, and dodges back to the stand-up to pick up his thoughts. You observe that he speaks of science with the first 'e' left out, and that he says 'our century, especially the last 25 years, *have* witnessed wonderful triumphs in biology'. He states in a high voice that men speak of three certainties, 'the certainty of a chemical test, the certainty of the tax-gatherer's call, and the certainty of death, but,' and here he leans over the pulpit, and speaking in an impressive half-tone, adds, 'there is greater certainty than these – the certainty of God'.

My Berry is not an orator. His gestures are as little varied as the tones of his voice. His arms are long, and he saws the air with them. Sometimes he extends them, palm downwards, as though he were bestowing a benediction. At others he thrusts them out with palms upwards, as though he were trying to catch manna in the wilderness. Another action is one of beckoning, and is suggestive of a man with delirium tremens endeavouring to grab things. He occasionally thumps the railing of the pulpit – pretty hard, too. But he doesn't rely on gesture. He makes his effects by adopting a persuasive and confidential tone, and in that way he finishes his sermon. Of close reasoning there is none. The Bible is his *ipse dixit*, and he would swallow Jonah and the whale as comfortably as a cup of strong tea.

Of elocutionary tricks he has few. His matter is simple, homely, not at all rhetorical, rather milk for babes than food for strong men. Mr Berry seems in earnest, but he is so self-contained, so apparently conscious of his own intellectual superiority that he never, like some of the Revivalist clergy, stirs up any audience to the verge of hysteria. He is not incapable of emotion, but he find would it hard to transmit it. Above all he shouldn't quote poetry. He sings it like a schoolboy! The choir singing is good, and an excellent theatrical effect is produced, as, after the dismissing prayer, the preacher throws himself on his knees, and with the choir and congregation sings in a half voice two verses of 'Abba Father'. All you felt necessary after that was a tableau with plenty of limelight!

My Berry is scarcely a 'political parson', and he doesn't impress you as being a man who could write a successful comedy.

There are two great points in Joseph Berry's favour – he doesn't rant and he doesn't snuffle.

Joseph Berry, occupying one of Adelaide's most prestigious pulpits, may well have felt peeved by this astringent account of his appearance, his mannerisms and his sermon. A year later he may have felt happier. At the end of his series, having attended almost sixty services and hearing many mediocre sermons, 'Quiz' was more inclined to look favourably on Pirie Street Church and its minister. Pirie Street was by far the best attended of all the churches he had visited in Adelaide, and he

placed Berry among the best four of all the preachers he had heard.²



Rev. Joseph Berry
(Photo source:
Australian Christian
Commonwealth—19
July 1907

Joseph Berry was an influential figure in South Australian Methodism.³ His work, wrote his colleague, the Rev. Brian Wibberley, 'was pre-eminently that of the preacher. The pulpit was his throne, his life, his central and inspiring force.' Born in 1846 into a working-class family in Preston, Lancashire, Berry was converted as a young man and began preaching. He was accepted by the British Wesleyan Conference as a candidate for the ministry and in 1866 was sent to New Zealand where he ministered in many different places. In Auckland in 1870 he married Agnes Osborn. They had fourteen children. In 1885 Berry was President of the New Zealand Wesleyan

Conference. In 1893 he transferred to the South Australia Conference and was minister of Pirie Street Church in 1893–1896. The church 'was soon taxed to its utmost seating capacity to accommodate the throngs of eager listeners'. This was followed by appointments to Kent Town, Archer Street and finally Glenelg. By this time his health was deteriorating and in 1902 he was compelled to retire from active ministry. At Pirie Street he was one of the instigators in 1894 of the District Trained Nursing Society which developed into the Royal District Nursing Society. In 1897 he was President of the South Australia Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and in 1896–1901 he was editor of the denominational weekly paper. After a long illness he died on 9 July 1907 and was buried in Payneham Cemetery.

¹ *Quiz and the Lantern*, 27 September 1894, p. 8

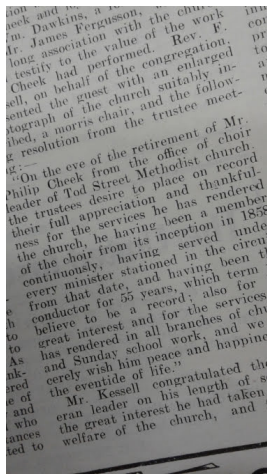
² *Quiz and the Lantern*, 21 November 1895, p. 8

³ A full obituary by the Rev. Brian Wibberley is in *Australian Christian Commonwealth*, 19 July 1907, pp.4-5. See also the tribute in the *Minutes of the South Australia Annual Conference*, 1908, pp62-63.

[Editor's note: The full obituary can be accessed at <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/213585749/23943539>]



Cuttings and Clippings News from the papers



From 'The Australian Christian Commonwealth' - 5 April 1918...

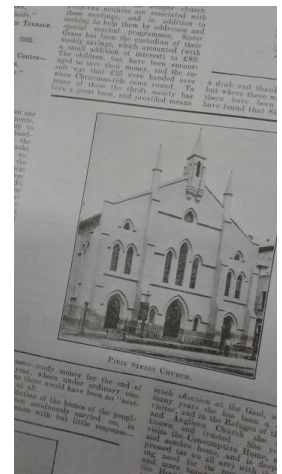
A special news article honouring the retiring choir leader at Tod Street Methodist Church (now Gawler Uniting Church)

Mr Phillip Cheek had been the conductor of the church choir for 55 years (and a member of the choir for 5 years before that as well). He was honoured and thanked for his long service to music in the church.

The article also speaks of other very long term members of the choir and those involved in music at the church, as well as the legacy they leave.

Changes in the printing and photography processes see the addition of more and more photographs in the old newspapers from the early days of the 20th century. The text dense pages with an occasional line drawing are giving way to more space with photos.

This photo of the Pirie Street Methodist Church (which no longer exists) is from *The Australian Christian Commonwealth* - 19 April 1918 and is part of the Home Missions report for that edition.



You're invited:

Annual General Meeting
and
Lecture: Evangelistic Trends within South Australian Methodism 1838-1939—a comparative analysis

Sunday 17 June, 2:30—4:00pm
Rosefield Uniting Church, 2 Carlton Street, Highgate

The Annual General Meeting of the Uniting Church SA Historical Society is your chance to get involved in the work of the society.

Current financial members of the Society can nominate, or be nominated for the various offices and general council.

Following the meeting, Rev. Dr Brian Chalmers will talk about the *Evangelistic Trends within South Australian Methodism 1838-1939—a comparative analysis*

Have you united with the Uniting Church from somewhere else?

Judith Raftery is planning some research on why, since 1977, significant numbers of people (including herself!) have joined the Uniting Church from backgrounds other than Methodist, Congregationalist or Presbyterian. She is keen to interview UCA members or Members-in-Association who fall into this category and would be delighted if you would contact her on 8359 2048 or at judith.raftery@gmail.com to hear more about her project and to arrange a time to talk.

Did you know...?

May 24 is remembered (and was celebrated) as Wesley Day—the day when John Wesley wrote in his journal that “I felt my heart strangely warmed” and is remembered as the day the Methodist movement began.

In Adelaide, in 1948, a musical festival was held at the Adelaide Town Hall to celebrate this occasion (advertisement from *The South Australian Methodist*, 7 May 1948)



You can read more about Wesley Day (also known as Aldersgate Day) at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aldersgate_Day

John Wesley's journal can be found at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal>

In our collection...

We have many interesting things in the collection including minute books from churches and associations connected to churches.

The photos here come from the 1916 minute book of the Moonta Methodist C.U Tennis Club. There are a few pages of minutes, all beautifully written and people mentioned quite formally by name (no first names only as we often use today). A little further into the book, we come to a surprise—knitting and crochet patterns! It looks like someone wanted some paper to write some patterns down and used the paper they had available to them—the tennis club minute book! There are patterns for knitted lace edges, gloves and socks for soldiers, “fancy socks”,...

And at the back of the book, there is some transcribed poetry.

All in all, it is an interesting mix and glimpse into life 100 years ago.

Did you know...?

The first letter of the Uniting Church South Australia Historical Society was sent to members in January 1978.

The Introduction to the Newsletter gave this information to members:

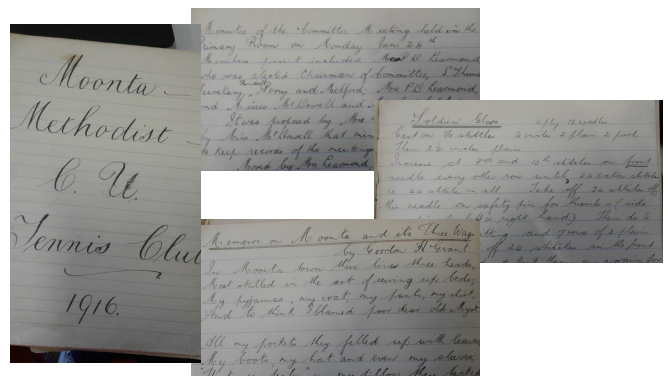
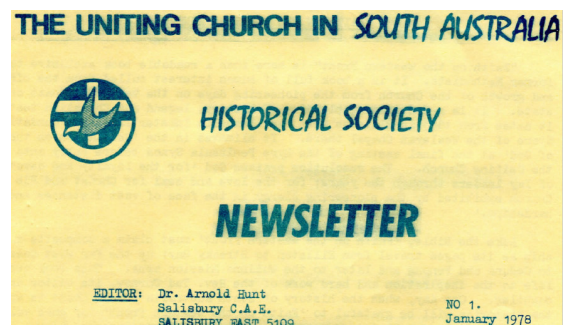
This is the first issue of the newsletter which will be sent out each quarter to members of the Society...

Members are invited to contribute items of historical interest, especially those dealing with such occasions as the centenary of a local church....

The Society is the successor to S.A. Methodist Historical Society and most of the present membership are ex-Methodists. It is hoped that former members of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches will join the Society and make their contribution to our understanding of the heritage of the Uniting Church.

The Editor for this first (and many subsequent issues) was Dr Arnold Hunt.

Membership fees in 1978 were \$4.00 for Annual Membership and \$50 for Life Membership



2018 Events

The remaining two meetings for 2018 will be on:

- **Sunday 17 June**
- **Sunday 21 October**



On these days, beginning at 2.30pm, we will be holding our public events, and look forward to a big turnout of members and others interested in South Australian church history.

Please note that the 17 June meeting will be our AGM.

17 June:

Annual General Meeting, followed by special lecture.

Rev. Dr Brian Chalmers, 'Evangelistic Trends within South Australian Methodism 1838-1939: a comparative analysis'.

Rosefield Uniting Church, 2 Carlton Street, Highgate

28 October:

The history of the involvement of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities with the Uniting Church in SA.

Led by a team from the UCSAHS Council.

Payneham Uniting Church, 341-343 Payneham Road, Marden

If you have ideas about topics for our meetings, or are engaged in history projects that warrant a wider audience, please let us know. We are always looking for ways to involve more of our membership in Historical Society activities, and to plan events that resonate with your interests.

Looking Back...

The Inaugural Lecture of the S.A Methodist Historical Society was delivered in the Maughan Church Library on 19th September, 1951.

The Lecture was given by Rev. Gordon Rowe, and his topic was *Methodism on the Copper Mines of Yorke Peninsula, SA.*

Using various sources including newspaper reports, minutes and letters, Rev. Rowe shared the development of churches and communities around the mining boom in and around Wallaroo, Moonta and Kadina in the mid to late 1800s.

It included detailed descriptions of the 'pine and pug' churches that were being built, often before ministers had been appointed, as well as the building of more substantial timber and later stone churches.

The growth of the mining communities was echoed in the growth of the church communities. As Rev. Rowe shared: "The result was that before 1875 there were 14 Methodist churches in the Moonta district—three in the heart of Moonta Mines, three at East Moonta, three at Yelta, three at Cross Roads, and two in the Moonta township; seven in the Kadina district, three at Wallaroo Mines, one at Pittenween, and three in the Kadina township and three at Port Wallaroo—making a total of 23 churches, providing among them seating accommodation for about 9,000 people"

The proceedings of Rev. Rowe's lecture can be found at the History Centre.

Methodism on the Copper Mines of Yorke Peninsula, S.A.

BY REV. GORDON ROWE



The Inaugural Lecture of the S.A. Methodist Historical Society, delivered in the Maughan Church Library, Adelaide, on 19th September, 1951.