



# Uniting History SA December 2024

Editor: David Houston

## The 170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the arrival of an influential Woman Evangelist Ann Roberts, together with her husband, Rev. James Roberts: Early Bible Christian Methodist Missionaries



Photo source: *Adelaide Advertiser*, 10 May 1895  
(<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article34509686>)

[In this article the **Rev. Edwin (Ted) Curnow** weaves together the story of Ann Roberts (née White) and her husband, the Rev. James Roberts, who arrived in South Australia on 5 February 1855. James was a significant early preacher, pastor and leader in the formation of early Bible Christian Methodist Circuits

in early South Australia. While Ted focuses on his contribution, he keeps reminding us of the importance of James's wife, Ann, to the ministry. It helps if we remember that the ministry of 'evangelist' was a designated ministry within the Bible Christian tradition and open to women. They were appointed by the Conference as preaching colleagues to Ministers in Circuit Appointments; such was the case with Ann to her husband James.

Ann's story has also been told by Leanne Davis in her Master's Thesis—*South Australian Colonial Methodist Women*—written in 2020, and included in our [June 2022 Newsletter](#).  
Editor's Note]

**The birth of Bible Christian Methodism** took place among the neglected farm labourers and poverty-stricken people on the Cornwall—Devon border in 1815. What they lacked in material resources was offset with an energy and extraordinary vision for mission. Within 35 years they were at work in South Australia.

Rev. James Way and Rev. James Rowe had pioneered the work of the movement in South Australia from their arrival in 1850. The discovery of gold in Victoria brought disruption, but the opportunities and demand for more missionary ministers was overwhelming. With some urgency it was decided to send Rev. James Roberts, his wife Ann and Rev. Thomas Keen, his wife Sarah, as soon as possible to the colony to reinforce the fledgling work.

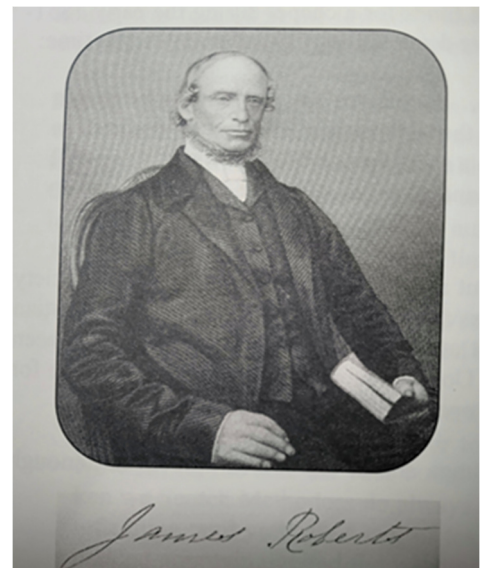
**Rev. James Roberts was born in Redruth in**

December 1810. At the age of 17 years his name appeared on the local preaching plan. He entered the ministry in 1832 and married Alice Reed of Hicks Mill, Cornwall. Sadly, Roberts' life was to be marked by a series of losses and before being appointed to Penzance in

1851 he had lost his wife and child. During his stay in Penzance James Roberts married the person the Conference had appointed to assist him in ministry, Miss Ann White.

Although female preachers had been condemned by the formal church of that time, the reverse was true of the Bible Christians. In fact, it has been said that without early women evangelists the Bible Christian movement would not have survived and Ann White was no exception in this respect. Ann was one of the early itinerant

(continued page 3)



### The History Centre

The Centre at 44a East Avenue, Black Forest, is open on Wednesday afternoons, 1:00pm to 4:00pm.

Volunteers continue to serve the church and the wider community by providing advice and assistance for those involved in researching church, local and family history.

The centre welcomes volunteers to help manage the large and growing collection of documents, memorabilia, books and records of churches and agencies.

(Other contact details can be found on page 2.)

## The UCA History Centre

Open Wednesdays 1 - 4pm

44A East Ave  
Black Forest

Website:

[historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au](http://historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au)

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/UCAHistoricalSocietySA](http://www.facebook.com/UCAHistoricalSocietySA)

### CORRESPONDENCE:

E: [manager@ucsahistory.org.au](mailto:manager@ucsahistory.org.au)

Post: UCA Historical Society

44A East Ave, Black Forest, SA, 5035

Phone: 08 8297 8472

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dean Eland (President)

[president@ucsahistory.org.au](mailto:president@ucsahistory.org.au)

David Houston (Vice President)

Leanne Davis (Secretary)

[secretary@ucsahistory.org.au](mailto:secretary@ucsahistory.org.au)

Robert Backhouse (Treasurer)

[treasurer@ucsahistory.org.au](mailto:treasurer@ucsahistory.org.au)

Gaye Brown

Pat Button

Val Canty

Darryl Dyson

Judy Eland

Rosemary Hocking

Don Hopgood

You can receive this newsletter via email. Send your email address to [office@ucsahistory.org.au](mailto:office@ucsahistory.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—1 year	\$30
Congregational—Life	\$250

Contact the Centre for more information.

## From the President...

### A Great Cloud of Witnesses

Along with many other voluntary groups, the UCA has found 2024 to have been another challenging year. Yet we have many reasons to be thankful. Looking back and reflecting at the end of the year we are reminded that we have many accounts about those who witnessed, served and have walked the pilgrim way. Inspiration for the present and hope for the future arrive when we discover again what others have shared and given as servants and prophets in their day.

Looking for inspiration I had a recent discussion with David Houston and Leanne Davis, editors and contributors to our quarterly newsletter, and was encouraged to read again editions I have kept. My first editions are dated 1983 and this suggests that our newsletters have been published for well over 40 years.

While I do not have a biographical index of the newsletter content there are many stories and accounts about South Australians who discovered creative ways to share the gospel in word and deed. Several articles caught my attention and I was prompted to remember those I met and others who shaped and initiated new perspectives of ministry and mission. You will have your own list and for me I would name...Peter Mathews, Winifred and Principal Kiek, Ken Leaver, Betty Smith, Bill Satch, L C Parkin and Dr Bill Salter. And then there are those whose lives are recorded in history and include... Dr Charles Duguid, William Torr, Hugh Gilmore, David Unaipon, George Taplin, G F Angas, Charles and Alice Todd, J C Kirby, John J Barclay and Thomas Q Stow.

The UC SA Historical Society is committed to ensuring a safe home for records and documents that provide insights about those who have gone before and have made us what we are as a church today.

We are also responding to the changing scene by being facilitators, innovators and enablers as we support and work with other groups including congregations, Synod archive staff, the UCA Assembly Historical Society, SA Church History Network, Genealogy SA and History Trust SA. We are privileged indeed to share with these groups new insights about our past and the way history informs the current reality we now face.

We are also aiming to expand our communication services including the 365-day event calendar on Facebook and website. All this would not be possible without council members, volunteers and staff who are on site on a Wednesday. Thank you.

The Historical Society is about to undertake a major upgrade of the history centre at East Ave Black Forest. Again we are thankful and reminded that these improvements are possible because of the generous 2001 bequest of Colin Watson. Colin was an Unley pharmacist, local history enthusiast and member of the former Parkside West Methodist church.

*“Study the past if you would define the future.”* Confucius.

Rev. Dr Dean Eland  
December 2024



evangelists connected with the movement and her name only disappeared from the English Conference minutes when she married James and was “appointed by resolution of the Conference to be the permanent and preaching colleague to James Roberts”. James and Ann White by this time were both experienced ministers. Between them they had served a total of 34 years in public ministry and they were well suited to the work in Australia.

**Ann White, born on the Isle of Wight, entered ministry** with the Bible Christian Connexion in 1833 and over 20 years she became a well-known popular preacher in the circuits she travelled throughout England. On the day of leaving the Penzance Circuit, James had written in his diary, “*The friends hung about us weeping, it was with difficulty we tore ourselves from them. While memory retains her seat, I shall never forget the kindness of the dear friends in Penzance circuit.*” (which included St Ives)

After a Valedictory Service, on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1854, James Roberts, Ann and their two boys, with Rev. Thomas Keen and his wife Sarah, set sail on the high seas in the ship ‘Fortitude’ bound for South Australia. We can only imagine the felt emotion as James wrote his account, “*Tears ran down our cheeks as we said farewell to the land of our birth and our dear friends we were leaving behind.*” [i] As we reflect on this sort of personal abandonment and the implicit trust involved in radical discipleship, it is difficult to avoid being confronted with the mediocrity of much of the church today.

While leaving England was difficult, the journey itself would also present challenges. The Captain made it clear that while James and Thomas could preach, Church of England prayers must be read from the Prayer Book every day. James and Thomas had no idea how to find suitable prayers so they found a teacher going to Hobart and arranged for him to read prayers before they preached. On at least one occasion Ann also found herself preaching to a large crowd during the voyage. It was not all straightforward, however. There were some passengers who were unhappy about being a captive congregation and at times they made their protest by using excessive noise, music and dancing during services. James usually preached while Ann courageously moved among the opposition threatening to report them to the captain.

**On 5<sup>th</sup> February 1855 the new ministers arrived in Adelaide.** It was a scorching hot day and the city had been without rain for 15 months. The party was met by the Superintendent of the Australian District, Rev. James Way. Next day Missionary Services were conducted at the Bowden Chapel near Adelaide. Ann preached in the freshness of that morning and James in the evening. Two days later the Roberts family and their luggage was loaded onto Rev. James Way’s spring cart. Passing monstrous gum trees, lumbering drays and singing magpies they set out for their first station at Willunga. Willunga was 48 kms (29 miles) south of Adelaide, a new chapel was in the process of being built but the circuit was extensive reaching across the rugged Australian bush to Port Elliot and Yankalilla another 40 kms (25 miles) south.

It was early in the following year of 1856 that in the open air Ann Roberts mounted a bullock wagon in the small country town of Yankalilla to be probably the first female

preacher in Australia. On 18<sup>th</sup> May 1856, two weeks after Rev. Charles Lee’s arrival, at the opening of the Yankalilla chapel, James Roberts preached two sermons and Lee preached from Isaiah, “*I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.*” [ii]

**Over the years Ann continued her bold preaching** alongside other notable Bible Christian women preachers like Serena Thorne. Anniversary services were always popular and at the Young St Church in Adelaide on 26-27<sup>th</sup> August 1860, hundreds were attracted by the novelty of a woman preacher and scores of people ended up standing around the building to hear Ann preach. [iii]

After three years at Willunga James and Ann moved to Kapunda, the mining area north of Adelaide. This was followed by Gawler and Mt Torrens. James went on to be a close friend of the pioneering Superintendent James Way and when Way returned to the United Kingdom in 1864/5 on a Jubilee deputation James assumed the role of Superintendent of the District. Sadly, it was during a second period of stationing at Kapunda in 1865 that James was deeply affected by the death of his two children who were in the prime of life. It was in June 1867, a few days before the Sunday School Anniversary that his surviving son, James Charles Roberts, died of typhus. James Charles’ brother, Richard, had also died of typhus the previous year. He had been converted under his father’s ministry some nine years earlier at Willunga. A few years later in March of 1871 James conducted the marriage of two renowned identities and past students of Shebbear College in Devon, Rev. Octavius Lake and Serena Thorne.

James and Ann went on to have a long distinguished ministry in South Australia and at the celebration of his Jubilee on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 1873, James Roberts was aptly described as an earnest, kind-hearted, hoary-headed veteran of the cause. At the same celebration the son of the Rev. James Way, who by then had risen to the office of Chief Justice of South Australia to become Sir Samuel Way, remarked that the previous 50 years had been a most important period in the history of Christianity and that when Roberts had entered ministry in 1832 South Australia was not known by name.

(continued page 4)

## Membership

A membership year runs from January to December, and is open to individuals or congregations and organisations. For those with annual membership, renewal for 2025 due. Membership fees for 2025 are:

### Individual:

- 1 year \$20.00  
(new members joining after 30 June \$10.00)
- 5 years \$80.00
- Life Membership \$250.00

### Congregation/Organisation:

- 1 year \$30.00
- Life Membership \$250.00



(from page 3)

Roberts' ministerial life had been divided into a period in England and a period in South Australia. Referring to the loss of his first wife and then his sons in South Australia, Way said Roberts had had a shadow cast over each portion of his ministry by bereavement and these had had a great influence on his life and made his ministry essentially a ministry of consolation. "Some men were so much sought after that they flashed like meteors across the circuit and others were so much loved that their people would not let them go. Mr Roberts had been one of the men who had not been allowed to move about much. He had only had four circuits since he had been in the colony, and he had been a second time in two circuits and a third time in one, and his labours had been attended with the greatest success.

*Bowden should consider themselves highly privileged in having two such people (his wife) amongst them."* [iv]

James Roberts had begun his ministry with the founder of the movement, William O'Bryan. Roberts was described as a man of unaffected piety who left a record of useful service and of blameless living. He superannuated in 1869/70 to settle in the suburb of Bowden but for 16 years he continued to preach in the Bowden chapel, the 'Mother Chapel' of the Bible Christians in South Australia. It was said that "he took but a timid part in ecclesiastical discussion" and that his theology was, "according to the scheme taught by the founders of the denomination," and the "convulsions of modern thought never disturbed the serenity of his belief." [v] James remained active to the end but it must have been an emotional occasion and a seeming end of an era when James Roberts preached the following Sunday after the death of his old friend Rev. James Way. During the 1884 revival at Bowden he attended every meeting and it was said he could still preach, sing, pray and weep for souls. In fact, a new class of young men and boys was committed to his care as a result of the revival and he preached again at the laying of the foundation stone for the West Hindmarsh church in 1885 before his death on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1886.

At the earlier Jubilee celebration Ann Roberts (née White) had been described as a standing proof of the success of female preaching, although at the time many soundly condemned female preaching. Sir Samuel Way made the point that she had probably been the first woman to preach in Australia and in South Australia. As a woman evangelist her name was classed with the heroic and self-sacrificing women who largely contributed to the success and early survival of the Methodist Bible Christian movement. In a comment that we need to reflect upon today amid gender equality issues it was said, "the Connexion had been most useful and successful when it had the greatest number of female preachers."

Ann died in her 90<sup>th</sup> year. She had been connected to the Bible Christian church for 75 years and at the time was the oldest Bible Christian person in England and the Australian colonies. She continued to preach into her 80s and on her birthday was presented with an outline of her years of service. [vi]

*Following the Christmas of 1854 in a letter to his friends Rev. James Roberts had written, "How mysterious are the ways of Divine Providence." In September 2011,*

*touched by that same providence and mystery Rev. Ted (E. A.) Curnow and his wife accepted the privilege of sharing in worship and preaching at the small*

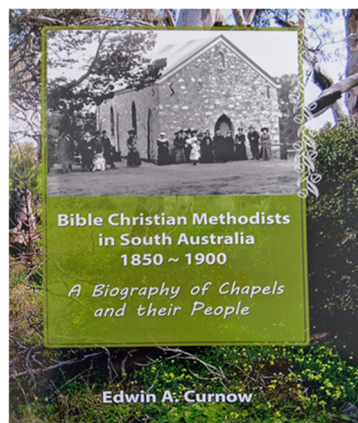


**Peter Street Bible Christian Chapel tucked away in the narrow streets of St Ives.** Together they recalled the saints who had gone before and the rich history of the St Ives chapel. That morning as they met around the Lord's Table the past and present came together as they shared the connection between the Roberts family, the St Ives people and the mission to South Australia. Ted suggested that it was because of the faithfulness of their missionary minister Rev. James Roberts many years before that his great-great-grandfather who had emigrated in 1848 was able to attend the Elim Bible Christian Chapel on the Gawler Plains in South Australia. *How wonderful and mysterious are the ways of God.* [vii]

**Rev. Edwin A (Ted) Curnow.**

Endnotes:

- [i] *Bible Christian Magazine*, Missionary Chronicle, August, 1855, p320.
- [ii] *Bible Christian Magazine* December 1857, p474.
- [iii] *Bible Christian Magazine* 1860, p121.
- [iv] *Bible Christian Magazine*, South Australian Report 1882 p324-330. *SA Advertiser*, 1<sup>st</sup> April 1882. *Bible Christian Magazine* 1887, Conference Rec. p9. FW Bourne, *The Bible Christians: their origin and history, 1815-1900*, Tentmaker Pub. Staffs., UK, 2004 [1905], Ch.32.
- [v] *SA Advertiser*, 8<sup>th</sup> April 1882, p34, Robert's 'Jubilee'.
- [vi] *SA Bible Christian Magazine* 1895, p404. *SA Advertiser*, Adelaide, 8<sup>th</sup> May 1895. AD.Hunt, *This Side of Heaven, A History of Methodism in South Australia*, Lutheran Pub House, 1985 p129. *SA Bible Christian Magazine Monthly* 1895, 'Women in Ministry'. p405
- [vii] Edwin A Curnow, *Bible Christian Methodists in South Australia 1850-1900, A Biography of Chapels and their People*, Uniting Church Historical Society SA, 2015, p103, pp472-473, pp504-505, pp528, pp582, p603.



**[Editor's Note: Copies of Bible Christian Methodists in South Australia 1850-1900 - a Biography of Chapels and their People are available from the Uniting Church History Centre. Ordained in the Methodist Church in 1975, Ted Curnow is a UCA Minister who has served in South Australia and Victoria and now lives on the Mornington**

**Peninsula, Victoria.]**

## Whyalla Methodist Church—13 Barter Street (Part 2)



MOONGI METHODIST CHURCH HALL—1940

[Photography courtesy of Uniting Church SA Historical Society]

It was when trawling through hundreds of Methodist Home Mission Department negatives that I recognised similarities between the building in this photo and that photo of the Whyalla church that appeared in the previous article. My intention was to identify as many locations and subjects appearing in the otherwise unidentified photos as I could, and as the South Australian administrative district included Broken Hill and also the former territorial area of Central Australia ... it was a vast region. Only when I was able to identify the building in its Whyalla location from several other photos with the same bleak, barren, panoramic background did the real search begin.

Trove, the National Library of Australia's online research portal, consumes the majority of my investigative effort. Combined with access to SAILIS, the SA Integrated Land Information System, Google, a local library and even social media, it is possible to piece together the stories and dates that unite these two photographs.

For some time prior to 1930 the Methodists of the Hundred of Buckleboo had been worshipping in a shed! There are newspaper articles describing the structure as *"the bag church"*. With a roof of corrugated iron, the walls were curtains of washed Wallaroo and Mount Lyell fertiliser bags sewn together and hung on fencing wire. *"Kerosene and petrol cases acted as pews on Sunday, and as dress circle, stalls or gallery for concerts. A literary society also held a meeting every fortnight. Country folk think distance no object, and some drove ten miles to this centre of entertainment. Sometimes supper was provided, plates of dainties which could easily grace a shop window in the city would be spread on the tables. Hot water for tea or coffee was boiled in kerosene tins over a big fire, the wood being brought from the nearby scrub."*

On 24 August 1932, a group of members and adherents of this Methodist 'church', accompanied by the President of the Methodist Conference (Rev. S. Carroll Myers), the Superintendent of Home Missions (Rev. W. O. Harris), and the circuit minister (Rev. O. Noske), visited the site that had been purchased for the erection of a Methodist hall. In September 1932 Rev. S. Carroll

Myers stated that it was hoped to replace *"the bag church"* with a modest building within two to three months. In early October he announced that the opening of the new Moongi Methodist Hall would be held on 9 November 1932.

On 22 December 1933, little over a year later, an article appeared in the Australian Christian Commonwealth under the heading *Home and Inland Missions*:

*"... Mention must here be made of the meeting place at Buckleboo, which was a shed, the walls of which were composed of washed super-bags. Doubtless many readers will remember seeing the photograph of this bag church in past issues of this paper. The Buckleboo folk have, however, moved on, and now they worship God in a fine church hall, opened just a year ago by the beloved minister who first conducted service in the bag church, the Rev. F. C. Greig. This is no longer known as Buckleboo, but rejoices (?) in the name of Moongi, which is the name of the township in the Hundred of Buckleboo. Part of the township is surveyed, and two buildings are erected: our church hall and the State school, both fronting on to the well-known Harris Terrace. ..."* [Search as I might, I have not been able to find the photographs referred to.] Over the course of its life at Moongi, the hall fulfilled the requirements of Church, Sunday-School, and community centre. It was the venue of meetings, concerts, weddings, sports gatherings, etc. and it was used regularly by the Moongi Mutual Improvement Society.

Sadly the railway never reached Moongi, and the township that was-once, never saw more than the two buildings. Perhaps the final word should come from a local newspaper, the **Kimba Dispatch** on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1941:

*"Church News.*

*Owing to people migrating from the district it was decided to dispense with the usual church service at the Moongi Church. This little outback church, which at once could boast of being the centre of a future farming area, is now on the outskirts of civilisation and is far from being a centre any longer. So as the Moongi congregation will not be without a service the March Quarterly Meeting decided to give the Home Missioner authority to see what could be done in that district and also Pinkawillinie South, and to make suitable arrangements. The outcome of which is that services will be held in the Pinkawillinie South Public School at 2 p.m. and Buckleboo Parish Hall at 3.30 p.m. every three weeks commencing from May 4<sup>th</sup>."*

That "fine church hall" is pictured above. The remnants of *"the bag church"* can be seen to the rear of the corrugated iron building. In 2022 some of the posts and rails still exist (albeit now lying on the ground) as do the concrete blocks the building once stood upon.

On 18 June 1981 the Governor of South Australia, Keith Seaman, made the proclamation: *1. I declare that the Town of Moongi shall cease to exist. 2. I declare that all roads in the former town of Moongi, declared by me to cease to exist as aforesaid, shall be closed with the*



(from page 5)

*exception of that road Harris Terrace.* All that now remains of the township is that one dirt street, perhaps aptly as a memorial to W. O. Harris and the Methodist Home and Inland Missions.

### **Meanwhile ... Australia was at war.**

BHP had been mining iron ore at nearby Iron Knob (30 miles away) since 1900, and there had been a rail line joining the two towns since 1901, but a lack of any drinkable water had restricted growth. The few years immediately before WWII saw a steady increase in activity within Whyalla. BHP increased production of steel using a new blast-furnace, and commenced shipbuilding nearby. By 1938 the town had a population of 400. The social well-being of the community had been catered for by a large iron-clad civic hall which was shared by various denominations for services on Sundays. There had been a Presbyterian presence in Hummock Hill (the name for Whyalla before 1916) with visits by ministers from Port Pirie since the early 1900s, and in 1919 there was reported a Presbyterian Sunday School picnic being attended by 80 children. This may well have been the entire population of children!

This pre-war increase in production resulted in unprecedented growth for the town of Whyalla. The various churches also tried to meet the needs of the growing community. The Methodists acquired land from BHP on Donaldson Terrace (through to Cudmore Terrace) in early March 1938. By the end of the month the foundation stone had been laid for a new church. It was opened on 25 July that year. At the same time work got underway for a manse on the land at the rear of the church. The construction of houses struggled to keep-up with the huge influx of workers. Something of a shanty town was growing to the west of the settlement ... families squatting on their own land, waiting for tradesmen, waiting for materials.

Land! That was about the only thing there was plenty of. Surveys, services, and infrastructure all took time to create, and had trouble meeting the demand. From a population of 400 in 1938, huddled around the base of Hummock Hill on land almost entirely owned by BHP, the town grew to more than 5000 by 1943. 1940 witnessed the completion of the Morgan-Whyalla lifeline, an engineering works that saw the end of carting water by barge from Port Pirie. BHP enlarged the power-plant to ensure the minimal needs (of those days) for domestic electricity.

No sooner had the new church been opened in July 1938 than the congregation had out-grown it! The attendance numbers were so great that some Sunday-School groups were relegated to a shed in nearby Lockhart Street.



A new church within the rapidly growing western side of the township was needed to alleviate the overcrowding. When new land became available, the Methodist Church was successful in securing three adjoining allotments – from Peters Street along the southern side of Barter Street.

It was announced in the newspapers in November 1941 that “*a new stone building, of a size sufficient to meet the needs of the future*” would be commenced shortly.

But when a planning application was lodged to build a new church building, the wartime austerity measures restricted the supply of building materials and the plans had to be put on hold. A far cry from the Donaldson Terrace experience of only three years earlier! It must have been very frustrating for the Church administrators. They knew the job that had to be done and they had risen to meet the challenge. They had the land, they had access to the funds, and all that was lacking was official approval. The austerity measures were of course nationwide. The Commonwealth Government’s cry was “*recycle, recycle, recycle*”. Limitations were placed on the size and construction of dwellings as well as churches. 110 m<sup>2</sup> limit, only 4 rooms, stone preferred over brick, minimal use of concrete, and a galvanised iron roof was about the only steel available.

Again an application was made to the Department of War Organisation of Industry for a permit to build a combined church and hall and again it was **refused**. As a building was needed urgently, the Home Mission

(continued page 7)

## ***Building Renovations Update***

In our last newsletter, we reported that the tender process had commenced for our building renovations. This process has been completed and a builder has been chosen.

Work will begin on the renovations on 3 February, 2025, and it is estimated it will take six to eight weeks. During this time, the Centre will remain closed until further notice. (We will not be reopening in early February as is our usual practice.)

Updates on the building progress and reopening times will be provided on our webpage and Facebook page. We will be monitoring our email during this time. If you need to get in touch with us during the building time, please contact us via email. (See Page 2 for email address details.)

(from page 6)

Department resolved in February 1942, to obtain an existing wood and iron building which was standing, largely unused, in the Kimba district.

And that is how the Moongi Methodist Church came to be in Barter Street, Whyalla. The building was dismantled and transported. When it was re-erected in Whyalla a 12-foot long section was added in the centre. This can be seen in the photograph that appeared in Part 1 of the story. Finally, in March 1944, permission was given to build ... but to the value of only £2,500. Plans and specifications were prepared, and, after further negotiation, the permit was amended to enable them to build to an agreed contract price of £3,260.



The Uniting Church in Australia Whyalla Playford  
15 Barter Street, Whyalla Playford, SA, 5600.

On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November 1944 the President of Conference, Rev. E.T. Prior, unveiled the foundation stone for the new Methodist Church. Five months later the new church was opened.

[The 'Moongi' building was eventually demolished and replaced with permanent buildings. The earlier Methodist Church in Donaldson Terrace was sold

in July 1974, and is now a private residence.]

All in all – a story about an early venture in Christian mission that would have an inspirational connection with another place.

**Peter Wenham**

## ***SA's History Festival 2025*** ***Don't Miss Out or Leave it Too Late***

At a recent workshop members of four congregations shared insights about their involvement in SA's 2024 history festival. The festival is one of SA's most creative and informative public events and includes hundreds of events and publicity outlets including the History Trust's website and thousands of free booklets. <https://festival.history.sa.gov.au/>

The following key points will assist you plan and register for the May festival in 2025:

- Work on your registration application and budget well before the deadline. Basic registration online form includes name or title of the event, a 50-word description and contact details. Decide if you can afford additional items including photos or other features.
- In naming the event make it clear what will be the focus and schedule. Choose from a number of possibilities.
- Explore the meaning and interpretation of the 2025 theme, "Decisions". Are there events and personalities who have made a difference, been turning points and achievements?
- Focus and possibilities for events include: **Art**, stained glass windows, portraits, pictures, paintings and photos; **Architecture**, reading a building, its features, style, significance of location and street presence, dates, fittings, organ, memorabilia, wall plaques, war memorials, place making and any nearby cemetery; **Cultural identity legacy** and association with nearby places including Town Hall or Institute; Ways of life, language etc.; **Drama and storytelling** using biographical info about former and founding members, their connection with social history and contribution to community memory; **Still a church?** what we now do here: host, serve and connect with the community. Allow time for questions or walking on site.
- Check on and maybe avoid annual calendar dates in May including Mother's Day. Catering and afternoon teas are important and allow time for visitors to meet and greet.
- **Possibilities for promotion** include brochures, posters, tickets and something novel by drawing on historical images. Invite your local State MP or mayor to open the event.
- **Collaborate** with other groups in the region, including local libraries, schools, agencies and historical societies. Maybe a connection to National Trust, choir, band, or the SA Organ music society. <https://organmusicsociety.org.au/> or the many cultural associations in South Australia (e.g. <https://cornishsa.org.au/>)
- **Connect with other** UC churches in the region by negotiating themes, dates that do not overlap. (Example. UC churches in the eastern region include several state heritage listed buildings: Kent Town, Clayton Wesley, Campbelltown, Gartrell, Morialta and the UC Korean congregation.)
- Enquire about other nearby events when your date or topic is chosen. The SA Church History Network event on Saturday afternoon 2.00pm to 4.30pm 17 May will be a panel discussion on the topic,

(continued page 8)

# 2025 Calendar of Events



## Monday 3 February, 2025

Work on the building renovations begins. The History Centre will remain closed during these renovations (expected to take six to eight weeks).

## Saturday 17 May, 2025

The SA Church History Network will be holding a half-day forum, starting at 2:00pm, at the Church of the Trinity (318 Goodwood Road, Clarence Park). The forum topic will be: *Christian Churches and Social Welfare in South Australia c. 1990-2025: interrogating the last thirty-five years.*

## Sunday 22 June, 2025

Open Day at the History Centre (44a East Avenue, Black Forest), from 2:00pm to 4:00pm. Come and see the renovated centre.

## Sunday 29 June, 2025

Our AGM will be held at Clayton Wesley Uniting Church (280 Portrush Rd, Beulah Park) and will begin at 2:30pm, and there will be a guest speaker. Speaker details are still being confirmed. Stay tuned to future newsletters, our webpage, our Facebook page, and email messages for details once they are confirmed.

## September, 2025

Date and time: To be confirmed

Planning is underway with the SA region of the United Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) for an all-day visit to Raukkan and the Coorong on a Saturday.

## 3-5 October, 2025

The UCA National History Society's Biennial Conference will be held in Canberra on this weekend (the October long weekend). The theme of the conference is "*The Church as a Prophetic Voice: in the past, now and in the future.*"

Information about the National Society can be found at <https://uniting.church/uca-national-history-society>

(from page 7)

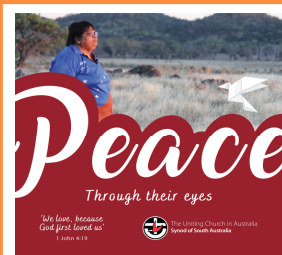
"Christian Churches and Social Welfare in SA c.1990-2025." UCA Church of the Trinity 318 Goodwood Rd Clarence Park.

- Include and send information to SA UCA Synod outlets including first edition of *New Times* for 2025, Synod weekly online newsletter, presbytery events, UCSAHS web site, Facebook and our March newsletter, UCLT Brooklyn Park, Fellowship and Mission support newsletter. Collaborate with SA's Church History Network and other denominational history groups.

We have an annual grants program to help congregations tell their story. Contact us at the History Centre for more information on the grant program and other resources we can help with. (Contact details are on Page 2.)

**STOP PRESS:** Information about the 2025 SA History Festival is now out. Early-bird registration deadline is 12 January, 2025 (\$47.50). Print deadline for basic wording is 9 February, 2025 (\$57.50). Image is extra (\$135). Word limits (including spaces): 75 characters for title, and 350 characters for the event.

Check out the SA History Trust website for helpful information (see page 7).



*The Committee and History Centre Volunteers and Staff wish you a very blessed Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.*