

‘Preserve, Promote, & Publish our Heritage’

A 30 Year History of The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland

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Formation and Background

The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland (BHSQ), now known as Baptist Heritage Queensland (BHQ), was established as a voluntary society operating within the Baptist denomination in Queensland at a meeting at Windsor Road Baptist Church on 1 May, 1984. Rev. Owen Gregory was the first secretary, and the first chairman was Rev. Dr David Parker. Membership was open to individuals, families and churches/organisations with the funds raised from the fees being the main source of the Society's operating expenses. The slogan, 'Preserve, Promote, Publish our Heritage', adopted from 1996, aptly sums up the aims and functions of the organisation.

Pre-cursors

More than 20 years earlier, there had been another initiative to care for Baptist historical interests in Queensland. In 1961 the Baptist Union appointed a committee, known as 'The Baptist Historical Society' as an official part of its structure. Principal T.C. Warriner, MA, BD, was the first convenor, but in 1963 Rev. John E. White, MA, assumed the position, which he held until 1979. Mr Bob Bavinton, LLB, held it for the remainder of the Committee's period of active existence. Others who were long-time members of this committee were Revs., E.G. Gibson, A.M. Hooker, G.W. Martin, S.W. Nickerson, F.J.C. Stone, J.C. Ward, H.E. West, and Messrs J.H. Allsop, J. Keilly, R.H. Maw, R.J. Morris and J. Pryce-Davies.

Although this committee had a twenty year life span, it was not very active, to say the least. It took two years before it was listed in the Baptist Union Year Book, and then another five years before it brought a report. Even then the reports said it had not met in the previous year, or had met only once, or that planning was underway. There are some letters in the files from the General Secretary, Rev. FJC Stone, BA, who was conscious of the importance of historical work, which 'encouraged' the committee to be more active, but evidently there was little response to these approaches. The Baptist Theological College did offer to provide storage for historical records.

It seemed that that Committee mainly saw itself as responding to directives from the Baptist Union, rather than taking initiatives of its own; those possible projects that it did discuss were not actioned. One such remit was the celebration of the centenary of the formation of the Baptist Union, due in 1977. However, not long after adopting this project, it became clear that celebrations would need to be quite large, so planning was moved to a new centenary committee created especially for the purpose by the Union. On the literary side, Rev. J.E. White was commissioned to write the official history of the Baptist Union which was to be published in conjunction with the Centenary. But the committee had little to do with that because once work got underway, it became the author's personal responsibility. By the time the book, *A Fellowship of Service*, was published at the end of 1977, the committee had stopped meeting.

There had also been earlier interest at a national level. In 1950, the Baptist Union of Australia established the Australian Baptist Historical Society as one of its boards. The Society had its own official crest, and cost 5 shillings to join; a gift of 10 guineas brought life membership. The Society put out a magazine called *Churinga* (aboriginal for tradition) for a few years, but then both Society and magazine ceased to exist. Vice-Presidents were appointed by the state Unions, but interestingly, there never was one listed for Queensland!

Some historical work had been done many years before. The official records of the Union, although not organised into an effective archival collection, had been preserved quite well (with only a couple of major omissions.) (See separate 30 year history of Baptist Church Archives Qld for more information.) There had also been some earlier historical publications. The most significant of these was a 135 page, copiously illustrated, book produced at the time of the jubilee of Baptist work in 1905. It consisted of the Proceedings of the extensive celebrations and a 10,000 word history of the denomination and the 28 churches that existed up to that time. This had been edited for publication by Rev. Wm Higlett, using a manuscript more than three times as long written by Edmund Gregory, the Government Printer and leading Baptist layman.

The earliest histories were the fourth annual report of the Wharf Street church issued in 1859, and a series of articles by one of the early pastors, Rev. Wm Moore, published in 1886. Moore's work consisted of personal reflections and memories; another early personal, but controversial, account was written by layman, Joshua Jenyns, who participated in some of the most spectacular developments of church expansion by division. Mr Higlett also included a short account of Queensland Baptist life in his booklet published in association with the

formation of the Baptist Union of Australia in 1926. The centenary of Baptists in Queensland in 1955 was low key and no historical work was produced. (Some of these documents are reproduced in 'Remember all the Way! A Century of Baptist Heritage' published by BHSQ in 1996.)

Formation

So there was a need for a body to foster historical interest, research, publication and preservation of materials. This sort of effort had been happening effectively elsewhere in Australia, especially in New South Wales where a historical society with a voluntary membership had developed an enviable record of service since 1974. Then there were the highly successful groups overseas, especially the Baptist Historical Society in UK (founded 1906) and the American Baptist Historical Society in USA (founded 1853).

So at the 1983 Assembly, following on from discussion with various people stretching over the previous year, Dr David Parker, who had research interests covering Queensland Baptist history, proposed the formation of a society in Queensland on lines similar to those followed in NSW. (One document, dated 1969, actually proposed a very similar function for the old committee, but it was not acted upon at that time.) Dr Parker was appointed convenor of the existing historical committee by the Assembly, and it was given the brief to investigate the proposal. Administratively, it would be recognized as an 'Associated Fellowship' of the Baptist Union of Queensland.

The committee endorsed the idea of forming a Society along the lines of the NSW Society, and steps were taken for its formation on 1 May, 1984 with the blessing of the Baptist Union. None of the existing committee members continued their involvement, except for Rev. John White who acted as an unofficial patron until his death in 1993. It was also proposed that another committee (possibly the existing one) would be responsible for the Archives of the Baptist Union which were then in a process of being organised. However no action was ever taken on this idea, and a little later, Dr Parker, who had begun working with the archival material in late 1982, was appointed Archives Officer (see also separate history of the Archives).

The aims and objects of Baptist Historical Society of Queensland were listed as:

- 1. To encourage research into the history of Baptists, especially those in Queensland.*
- 2. To encourage the preservation of important Baptist records.*
- 3. To encourage the collating and recording of Baptist history.*
- 4. To foster interest in Baptist history at the local church level.*
- 5. To assist research students at schools, colleges and universities.*
- 6. To publish articles and historical information*
- 7. To be alert to church jubilees, centenaries and other significant anniversaries for Baptists and where possible, assist in the provision of relevant historical details.*
- 8. To promote care of buildings and sites of historical interest to Baptists.*

The Constitution and these aims were modelled on the successful BHS of NSW but there was one major difference – in NSW, the BHS itself took on the role of gathering historical material and creating an Archives, but in Queensland, it was decided that the Archives were the responsibility of the Baptist Union itself. However, the Queensland society would be supportive of Archives in a practical and advisory sense. A close relationship was developed which has continued throughout.

The meeting at Windsor Road church to form the Society featured Rev. John White, who had written the centenary history, as the main speaker. The General Superintendent, Rev. Brian Jenkins, brought greetings from the Baptist Union, while Rev. Dr David Parker screened an audio-visual, 'Exploring Baptist Brisbane' highlighting important sites around the city.

The second meeting was held at South Brisbane Church on 16 July 1984 with the theme, 'Preparing a local church history.' Speakers included Rev. Larry Holt who had recently written the host church's history, Rev. John Ward ('Printing and publishing your church's history') and Dr David Parker ('Why write your church's history'); other contributors were Mr Dick Scanlan of Laidley, who shared his local church and family history experiences, and Mr Alan Miles (by tape) who had recently issued a history of the Rosalie church.

The initial plan for the Society's operation was to hold several public meetings each year, publish a journal as a channel for research and information, and generally promote historical awareness and activity in whatever ways opened up. Initial support was encouraging. The first issue of the 'Baptist Historical Society of Queensland Newsletter' appeared in September 1984. Membership, which cost only \$5 per annum, reached 20 within the first year.

However the initial interest was short lived, and already by late 1985 it seemed that the society would go out of existence. At this point, several key people responded with a long term commitment which ensured the survival of the group, even if ambitions were now a little more restrained. Mrs Ellen Chataway took over the secretarial post, and her husband, Rev. Vince Chataway, cared for the finances.

Activities

Newsletter

The first two newsletters were produced on a typewriter, photocopied in A4 size and stapled. From No. 3, July 1985, a word processor was used but the same photocopied production continued, settling down to three issues of eight pages per year, with Dr David Parker as editor. Later on, better software and photocopying machines improved the production; this was especially the case with photographs as screening gave way to digital techniques. The name was changed to *Queensland Baptist Forum* in 1995, and by the end of 2012, 86 issues, extending to 729 pages, had been produced, all of which had been digitised.

Over the years, the journal contained a variety of articles – including news about local Baptist historical events of interest to members and other readers; information and reports about BHSQ events, including notes of lectures and talks, and annual reports; book reviews; and articles providing guidance on doing history and caring for church records. Some articles were reproduced from historic material previously appearing in the *Queensland Baptist*, especially two interesting series on churches and early pastors. Many of the articles were the result of the research of members and friends, some of which later appeared in BHSQ books.

The journal is included in BHSQ membership, but complimentary copies were also sent to Baptist Historical Societies in other states and some local institutions and libraries. A summary of the contents of each issue is posted on the BHSQ website and the entire run is available for purchase in PDF format.

Events

Several public gatherings were held in the first year or so, but this ambitious program soon settled down to three meetings for planning and discussion of historical work, and one public presentation each year. The planning meetings were held on Saturday afternoons in the hope that this timing would enable busy people to attend. They were held at the Archives, or a church or in a private home until after the opening of the Archives at Mitchelton which became the regular meeting place.

The public gatherings, sometimes called the 'Annual Festival of Baptist Heritage', was usually organised to link in with some popular theme or interest group at a local church. The two most successful were a celebration of the anniversary of the publication of pioneer Baptist missionary, William Carey's book, 'The Enquiry', and a celebration of German Baptist Heritage. The Carey event held May 20, 1992, also marking the bi-centenary of the Baptist Missionary Society, filled Windsor Road Baptist Church to capacity even though the weather was atrocious and the State of Origin was on nearby! Its huge success was due in large measure to the state Department of Mission enthusing its people to mark such important events, and also to the quality of the lecture by Dr Ken Manley of Whitley College, Melbourne, Australian foremost Baptist historian. For the German Baptist celebration, hundreds of people came to Laidley on 5 July 1986 for a very well laden fellowship meal, *Liebefest*, followed by a musical and concert program at the town hall, accompanied by many displays of maps, photographs and other memorabilia. It was a worthy celebration of an important and unique strand of Baptist life in Queensland, and tribute to those representing the participating churches who organised it.

Not all of these public events were so successful – in fact the one held in August 1985 at Taringa Baptist Church focusing on the work of Queensland's first missionary, Martha Plested, was a complete failure, as was an open day in 1993 to mark the re-establishment of the Archives in new premises. However, most achieved their aims

and they covered a wide range of topics. Some were linked to events such as the heritage listing of City Tabernacle church (1984), the history of Windsor Road (1985), a family (such as the Brooks-Hiron family at Toowong, 1998) or an activity such as Baptist camping (Greenslopes, 1991). A workshop on family history was held at Albion in 1994; others topics included CH Spurgeon (1988), the Baptist Theological College (1989), Clifford House (Community Services) (1990), and the architecture of Baptist church buildings (1987). In some cases, the event focused on the launching of a book, such as biographies of Rev. James Voller (1997), and Rev. AH Brooks (1998).

The last of the Festivals of Baptist Heritage was held at Centenary church in 2002 to celebrate the extensive church planting ministry of Jireh Church. After this, the focus turned to sales tables and presentations at the Annual Assembly, usually linked to a book launching.

Archives Support

Even though the BHSQ did not aim at creating its own Archives, it worked in closely with the Baptist Church Archives Queensland (BCAQ). The Archives exist to collect, preserve and manage the historical records and to deal with basic enquiries, while the Historical Society takes on the larger role of research, promotion and publishing.

In the early period, when BCAQ was still being organised, some of the BHSQ meetings were workshop sessions to providing practical help. Since 2005, when the Archives were set up at the QB Centre, Gaythorne, and a regular team of volunteers established, the need for practical assistance has lessened. The Archives staff, however, value the support, interest and advice of the BHSQ.

Other Interests

The aims of the BHSQ were intentionally designed to be wide, in the hope that the Society could offer support to whatever interests appeared within the scope of Baptist work in Queensland and beyond. One of these areas of interest, Baptist cemeteries, was a speciality of Eric and Rosemary Kopittke who have taken a leading role in the Society. The German Baptist churches at Vernor, Mt Walker/Coleville, Tarampa, Minden, Kalbar and Boonah as well as the church at Highfields are the only ones in Queensland to have operated their own cemeteries. The Society has taken an interest in the welfare and physical state of these cemeteries, and Eric and Rosemary have transcribed and published their Monumental Inscriptions. Eric and Rosemary Kopittke also have vast experience, knowledge and contacts in Family History which they have made available to the Society through seminars, publication, research and assistance in answering queries. Another particular interest they have is 19th century German immigration, which has been a source of considerable help for the work of BHSQ.

Local Baptist Church history is another area that BHSQ has fostered. One of its first projects was to provide guidance on how churches could manage, research and present their history. This advice took the form of several Guide Sheets, a day long seminar and a session at an Assembly, as well as answering numerous enquiries and helping to care for church records in the Archives. BHSQ people have attended some local church historical events, although many churches do not mark these events very well or notify the BHSQ about them.

Membership

When BHSQ was established in 1984, it was set up as a membership-based organisation, in contrast with the previous group which was a functional committee appointed by the Baptist Union. A vigorous effort was made to promote membership, but it was not anticipated that a large number of people would join. The main aim was to be a place where those interested in Baptist history could meet, share their work and find outlets for publication. Over the years, many of its members have been deeply involved in this kind of work, while also, in some cases, maintaining other interests as well. As often as possible, information about church celebrations is featured in *Forum*.

The work of Eric and Rosemary Kopittke in family history and German immigration has already been mentioned. In addition, Rev. Melvin C Williams not only published several Baptist historical studies for the BHSQ, but was also an award-winning numismatist with an interest in medals and communion tokens; the latter interests revealed themselves in research he carried out on Baptist Sunday School examination awards and communion practices at Jireh and other churches. Richard Scanlan, OAM, of Laidley wrote several pieces about his local church, its aged

care facility and some of its people as well as working in the wider areas of German Baptist life and German family history. Les J Ball completed a PhD in Queensland Baptist history, while Peter Whitehead wrote the history of Gordon Park church and Dr Ken Smith did extensive research on the work of the Queensland Baptist Social Questions Committee. Rev. John Lane wrote on Baptists in the South Burnett and completed a loving biography of his father, Rev. Sam Lane.

Changes at 10 years

After ten years of activity, Dr David Parker handed the leadership of BHSQ to Dr Les Ball, lecturer at the Baptist Theological College of Queensland who had recently completed the first PhD in Queensland Baptist studies at the University of Queensland; Les assumed leadership at the 1984 annual meeting. The next year, Mrs Ellen Chataway also relinquished her role as Secretary after ten valuable years in the post; Dr Pat Godman, a former missionary, who had recently completed his doctoral studies at the University of Queensland, took over this role.

19th Century records preserved

Les Ball's research had covered 19th century Baptist life in considerable detail, which gave him a first-rate insight into the churches of that period, and especially, the value of the documents belonging to these churches and the Baptist Union. Concerned for their preservation and access, he suggested that these ought to be microfilmed. So after a successful application to Baplink, the Baptist Union's financial arm, for a grant of \$1200, work began in 1996. Over the course of the following years, and with assistance of another grant, the Minutes and membership rolls of the major 19th century churches up to about 1920 were all filmed and produced as microfiche. In addition, the Minutes of the Baptist Union Assemblies and Executive meetings were also covered. This collection, along with the microfiches of the 'Queensland Freeman/Baptist' which had been done by John Oxley Library in the mid-1980s, proved to be a valuable asset. They were digitally scanned in 2012 making them even more useful.

Another new venture in the mid-1990s was the book publication program. Dr Les Ball initiated this development which resulted in a decision to produce modestly priced books on topics of interest for the average reader. The advent of computerised desktop publishing processes meant that it was feasible to produce books in smaller quantities; assistance was gained from Church Archivists' Society based in Toowoomba which had considerable experience already in this avenue of publishing.

The Annual Meeting held 6 Nov 1993 made the decision to establish a new fund and to begin work on the first publication. It would be a 40 page informational booklet called 'Baptists in Queensland' which would cover the history, beliefs and practical aspects of church life, suitable for new members, students and others needing basic information about Baptist life in the state. Dr Ball wrote the chapter on Baptist history with a focus on the Queensland story, Dr Stan Nickerson, Principal of the Baptist Theological College, wrote the chapter on Baptist beliefs, and the section of the operation and activity of local churches was penned by veteran pastor, Rev. Norm Weston. Overall editing and preparation of many side-boxes and illustrations and other attractive features was carried out by Dr David Parker.

Funds were needed for the venture which were raised by special appeal. Preparation went smoothly, and the book was launched at the National Baptist Family Convention held at Griffith University on 6 Jan 1994 by Mr Ollwyn Abbott, Secretary of the Baptist Union of Australia. It cost \$2.50 and sales were brisk; a reprint was soon required. This volume remained popular for new membership classes and as an introduction to Baptist life. A new 'Millennium' edition was produced in 2000, which sold out completely at the Assembly where it was launched, requiring another reprint immediately. It was completely revised and issued in an attractive colour cover in 2013 with sponsorship by the Baptist Union of Queensland which distributed copies to all churches.

Leadership Changes

After three years, Dr Les Ball found that he was unable to continue as President due to pressure of work in his role as Academic Dean of the Queensland Baptist College of Ministries (formerly Baptist Theological College of Queensland). So at the 1997 annual meeting, Eric Kopittke, BSc, BA, DipEd, a secondary Physics and Maths teacher, was appointed to replace him. Dr Ball made another significant contribution to the Society in 2005 when he wrote the 19th century section of the sesquicentenary history of Baptists in Queensland. He also contributed

to the centenary history of the Theological College published in 2004 and wrote the sesquicentenary history of the City Tabernacle Baptist Church in 2005.

There had also been a change in secretary. Dr Pat Godman transferred to Canberra in 1996 and Rev. Rod Benson was acting secretary for a short time. At the 1996 Annual Meeting, Dr Ken Smith, who taught Maths at the University of Queensland and had been active in a number of Baptist Union committees including Social Questions and the Department of Theological Studies, took over the position. Ken had already published some of his findings on the history of Social Questions in the BHSQ newsletter, and Eric and his wife Rosemary had several publications in their areas of Family History and German immigration. Rosemary Kopittke, BSc, BA, was also appointed to the role of Publications Officer. Eric, Rosemary and Ken have remained in these roles since. Rev. Keith Applegate made a significant contribution not only by assisting with one of the publications and carrying out some basic research while visiting England, but also by placing some of his office facilities at the disposal of the Society during the 1990s.

1997 was also the year when the Society gained a web page. For convenience, it was attached to Dr David Parker's personal site and carried details of activities and publications. It has continued to be expanded over the years and now has links from the Queensland Baptists website. A major website was also established as part of the Heritage Display at the Baptist World Alliance Congress held in Melbourne in January 2000; this is also linked and has extensive information on Queensland as well as the other Australian states.

Publications

The publication program begun with the successful launch of 'Baptists in Queensland' in 1994 expanded rapidly. The next book was a collection of cameos of Baptist men in 19th century Queensland written by Rev. Melvin C. Williams, MA, BD, BSc, published in 1995, followed in the same year by a guide on Baptist family history by Eric and Rosemary Kopittke which was used at the basis of a workshop on this topic. In 1997, David Parker's biography of Rev. James Voller, known as 'The Father of Queensland Baptists', was launched at the Taringa Baptist Church, a church established largely by the work of Mr Voller; this church was also celebrating its anniversary and Eric Kopittke's history was published at the same time.

Next Rev. Melvin Williams wrote the history of Mission to Queensland, the church planting arm of the Baptist Union which was published in 1998. In the same year, the life of one time Home Mission Superintendent, Rev. AH Brooks was celebrated at Toowong church by the family and BHSQ. The biography, 'Vision and Courage', authored by Rev. John Brooks and published by BHSQ, was launched at this event. Dr Stan W Nickerson, Principal of Queensland Baptist College of Ministries, had been working on personal material and other sources dealing with the first successful pastor of Wharf Street Baptist Church for several years; BHSQ agreed to publish his biography of Rev. Benjamin Gilmore Wilson in 1999, under the title, 'Queensland Baptist Founding Father.'

Mr Richard Scanlan completed his research on the Marburg church and the Tarampa church (formerly the first of the German Baptist Churches, Vernor). BHSQ published his two books in 2000. In the meantime, the family of Rev. William Higlett approached BHSQ about compiling his biography. Mr Higlett had served at Toowoomba in the 1880s and then Albion before moving to NSW; he was also deeply involved in Baptist Union work in both states. His extensive and detailed diaries, scrapbooks and photograph collection had been lodged with the John Oxley Library in 1984, so the resources were easily accessible. His biography, 'A True Pastor', was launched in Brisbane and Toowoomba in 2002 with financial assistance from the family.

This collection of books formed the 'Baptist Historical Series', totalling 13 titles by 2002. Most of them were printed by Toowoomba Education Centre which was experienced in low run, economy priced books of this kind – most of them sold for under \$10 each. At first, TEC carried out most of the layout and graphics work, but as desktop publishing software for PCs improved, BHSQ took over more of this role, making the publications even more affordable.

Another series of publications was also established using a simple photocopy 'print on demand' process. These were more specialised with lower number of sales anticipated. They formed the series, 'Documents of Queensland Baptist History.' The first was a transcript of Edmund Gregory's initial draft of the 1905 Jubilee history, published in 1995 as 'The Gregory History of Queensland Baptists.' The second was a transcript of Joshua

Jenyns' personal reflections on early Queensland Baptist history, which appeared in 1996. The third was a collection of otherwise unpublished documents from the first century of Baptist life, issued in 1996 as 'Remember all the way'; documents included letters connected with the call of BG Wilson to Wharf Street church, William Moore's early history, the text of the 1905 Jubilee history and some short historical outlines from the 1920s to 1940s.

Other publications in 1997 were two volumes of Monumental Inscriptions from the German Baptist Cemeteries produced by Eric and Rosemary Kopittke; they were available in both print on demand format and in microfiche for the family history market. Another specialised publication was a compilation by Rev. Keith Applegate and Dr David Parker of information about the Baptist archives, historical societies and other institutions around Australia, with bibliographies and listings of Baptist periodicals in Australian libraries. This 'National Guide to Australian Baptist Resources and Services' was first published in 1995, revised in 1998 and again in 2012; it also went on-line in 1999 and updated in 2013.

This large number of publications was supplemented by the earlier two volume history of Baptist camping in Queensland written by Mrs Joan Maxwell under commission of the Camping Ministries department of the Baptist Union (1991 and 1993), and Rev. John White's history of Baptists up to 1997, 'A Fellowship of Service.' BHSQ members and friends also published some of their own work, including Rev. John Lane, Mr Peter Whitehead (on Gordon Park church) and Laurie Wolter (Kalbar Church).

Mr R W (Bill) Hughes, who had become part of the Archives team in 2008, used his excellent research and writing skills to add to the BHSQ publications. He had already written about the Canberra church of which he had been a member for many years. In 2009, he also published a biography of the distinguished Baptist minister and Chaplain, Rev. Harold George Hackworthy, which became a part of the BHSQ catalogue. Turning his attention to Queensland interests, Bill produced a number of monographs which focused on little known features of Baptist life. These included the history of the Senior Girls Missionary Union, Deagon Mission Church, and especially the Edward Street Church, formed in 1864, and developments within the Wharf Street church. He also contributed sections to other BHSQ publications at the time, especially the Central Queensland project, and wrote the centenary history of the Warwick church in 2012, and the history of City Tabernacle's women's hostel, Willara House in 2013, both under assignment.

A specialist topic was tackled with the launch in 2009 of the small volume, 'Women who made a Difference.' Ever since Rev. M Williams' book, 'Cameos of Baptist Men' had appeared, the question of the role of women in Queensland Baptist life had arisen. The problem was that information about women in the 19th century was often difficult to find. Eventually, it was decided to cover the entire period and short biographies of 24 women who had made a significant contribution to the church locally and elsewhere were compiled. The project was launched at Clayfield Baptist Church in September 2007 by Miss Rosalind Gooden, a veteran Baptist missionary who was researching the role of women in the early life of the Australian Baptist Mission; she was supported by Mrs Lorraine Walker, the first and only female President of the Baptist Union of Queensland. The 80 page book was launched at a function at Brookfield Village on 2 May 2009, by Ruth Elvery, wife of the President of the Baptist Union and daughter of one of the subjects in the book.

Together with other books to be mentioned later, BHSQ has produced 23 publications, some of which are also available in e-pub format on-line. Editing and for most of the later ones, formatting and layout has been done in-house, without the benefit of qualified graphics designers. Some have sold well, including the German church histories, 'Baptists in Queensland' and the Higlett book, but there has been a disappointing response to others. The Society has never been able to attract expert help with marketing of its books and has relied on promotion through Baptist Union publications, Assemblies and the society's webpage, as well as word of mouth.

Celebrations

United Evangelical Church

The BHSQ was occupied in the late 1990s and into the new century with a series of significant celebrations. The first of these was 150th anniversary of the arrival of the three migrant ships organised by Dr John Dunmore Lang – the *Fortitude*, *Chaseley* and *Lima*. Many of the passengers on these ships were Baptists, and they with other

devout evangelical Christians made a strong positive contribution to Queensland's public and church life. Rev. Charles Stewart, the chaplain on the first of the ships, *Fortitude*, was a Baptist and he became the minister of the United Evangelical Church (UEC) which was formed by the Baptist, Congregational and some of the Presbyterians upon arrival. This church was the forerunner of these three denominations. As such, its crucial role had been warmly acknowledged since but there had not been much detailed knowledge of its life or of the contribution of its minister, who was in fact, the first Baptist minister in Queensland. (Mr and Mrs James Swan, proprietor of the Moreton Bay Courier, were the first known Baptists, arriving in 1846.)

In the late 1990s, it was decided to approach the other denominations to arrange a celebration marking the sesqui-centenary of the arrival of the Lang ships. Dr David Parker also began to research the story of the UEC and Rev. Charles Stewart. The celebration was held on 1 May 1999 consisting of a dinner and commemorative service at Ann Street Presbyterian Church. Dr Parker's research uncovered fascinating details about the important ministry of Charles Stewart and others connected with the church. This information was published in a detailed study, 'Strange Bedfellows: Rev. Charles Stewart Brisbane's First Baptist Minister and the United Evangelical Church' (1998). A shorter version of this story was also published as 'Fortitude', and included one of the presentations at the celebration focusing on the vision of Rev. Dr J D Lang for Moreton Bay. An offshoot of the research on the UEC was a more information about the founder of the Ipswich Baptist church, Rev. Thomas Deacon and his son, William; this story was published in print on demand format.

Part of the UEC celebration was the erection of a plaque on the site of the church in William Street to mark the 148th anniversary of its opening 13 April 1851, timed to the same date and hour. Another plaque was erected at the site of the first German Baptist Church at Vernor in 2004, thanks to the energetic work of Mr RA Scanlan, OAM, who researched the site and made arrangements for the provision of the plaque itself. Marking of historic sites was part of the aims of the BHSQ, but so far no other plaques have been erected, although extensive work has been done in locating and recording other sites, such as the Edward Street Church in Brisbane and many sites in Rockhampton and other places around the state.

Queensland Baptist College

Another significant celebration was the centenary of the founding of the Queensland Baptist College which took place in 2004, although the BHSQ was not directly involved. A history was produced by Dr Les Ball and Dr Stan Nickerson.

Baptists in Queensland

The most significant year for celebrations was 2005 which marked sesqui-centenary of the first Baptist church, now known as the City Tabernacle. This church held its own celebrations and Dr Les Ball a member of the church, wrote its history for the occasion. However, as this was also beginning of Baptist work in the colony, it was appropriate for the whole denomination to mark the occasion. In response to a request from the Baptist Union for ideas on projects which could be supported by a special sesqui-centenary fund, BHSQ suggested a Baptist Studies Centre or scholarships for theological students from non-European background or for those wanting to work amongst marginalised groups. However, there was no progress on these ideas but the Baptist Union arranged some celebrations of the event. The BHSQ decided that its project would be the publication of a new history. The previous one, 'A Fellowship of Service', had been published almost 30 years previously and marked the centenary of the formation of the Union (then known as the Baptist Association).

Work began early and the project was divided into three sections – the 19th century, the 20th century up to the end of World War II and the current period. Dr Les Ball, the acknowledged authority on the first period, agreed to work on that section, Dr Stan Nickerson put his PhD research on the college to good effect with the second section; Dr David Parker wrote the final section, as well as being general editor. A grant of \$2000 was obtained from Baplink and work on the 200 page book proceeded. It was the largest of the BHSQ books to date and the first with a full colour cover; there were dozens of black and white illustrations and many feature pages with additional information. Titled, 'Pressing on with the Gospel', it was launched at the Convention on 2 September 2005 by Mrs Gwen Milne, President of the Baptist Union of Australia (her late husband had launched the first BHSQ book in 1994). The book was well received, but sales were very disappointing.

Other churches – Ipswich, Rockhampton

With 2005 marking the beginning of Baptist work in Queensland, the next stage was the celebration of the origins of the churches which began in the years following. The next was Ipswich; BHSQ participated in the launch of its history, written by long time member, Dr Les Sands and descendant of one of the Lang ship's pioneers. Jireh (Gipps St, Fortitude Valley) was the next church but it ceased to operate in 1978, so the next one due for a 150th celebration was Rockhampton, in 2012. The Baptist Union held its annual convention there to mark the occasion. BHSQ decided to publish a history of all the churches which had existed over the years in Rockhampton, and to cover the entire central Queensland region extending south to Gladstone and Boyne Island and west to Longreach. This 200 page book, 'Something more than Gold' (No 17 in the Baptist Historical Series, the latest), also with an attractive colour cover, and many photographs and maps, was launched at the 2012 Convention. Once again, sales were not up to expectations. The next church to reach 150 years of life is Annerley, which commenced in 1865 as the Fairfield Baptist Church, a project of the Grimes family who lived in the area and later associated with the Vulture Street South Brisbane church (now Church@TheGabba).

Current Programs

Over its thirty year history to date, BHQ has handled hundreds of enquiries and embarked on a wide range of projects. In serving the denomination in this way, it has benefitted from its dedicated membership, some of whom have maintained their support for most of the years of the Society's history; some worked in the background, while others have been faithful in providing financial and moral support. Sadly some of the most active have died, including Rev. V Chataway, BD; Rev. M C Williams, BSc, BD, MA; Dick Scanlan, OAM, and his wife Doris; and D.J. Adam, MBE. Others have ceased active involvement due to age or have moved away.

Sales of books have sometimes been encouraging with 'Baptists in Queensland' the best of all, and volumes on the German churches of Tarampa and Marburg, 'Women who made a Difference' and the Higlett biography also being strong sellers; others have been disappointing, failing to pay their way.

The Society has also benefitted from some outside financial support. Baplink's assistance for microfilming of records in the 1990s provided significant encouragement, while its help with the sesqui-centenary history was also important. One member also made a generous donation which enabled the Central Queensland history to appear. With its full establishment as an integral part of the Baptist Union of Queensland administration after the move to Gaythorne in 2005, some of the most important funding and organisational arrangements of the Baptist Church Archives were assured. Similarly, with the development of a small but enthusiastic team of volunteers working in the Archives, regular queries and projects can be handled effectively and promptly, thus cementing the link between BHQ and the Archives.

Membership of BHQ has not been large, never exceeding about 20 active members (although there were more on the mailing list), but as Rev. John E White stated at the beginning, the aim should not be large numbers but dedicated members. Nevertheless, as the generations move on, there is an urgent need for renewal if the challenges of the future are to be met and the charter of the Society is to be fulfilled. Without any marketing expertise available to the Society, promotion of its work has not been easy. It has mainly been restricted to internal avenues like the 'Queensland Baptist' magazine and official mail-outs. Displays and sales tables, with occasional book launches at the annual assemblies or conventions, provided some good contacts, but now that these events do not attract the attendance or interest they once enjoyed, this valuable opportunity for meeting church members and leaders has practically vanished. Good responses are often obtained from the regular column in the 'qb magazine'.

One initiative taken in 2004 to maintain the relevance of the Society was to adopt a new 'trading name' – 'Baptist Heritage Queensland.' Then in 2006, an essay competition was established in conjunction with the biennial Baptist History course at Malyon College; the student submitting the essay judged by the course lecturer to be the best is awarded a sum of \$100, some books from the BHQ list and complimentary membership for a year. So far the following were the winners – Darren Clark, Faith Giovas, Anne Klose, and Matthew Littlefield and Tim Lucas (joint). Their essays have been published in Forum.

Significant changes are also taking place in the heritage and historical records environment which present further challenges for historical societies and Archives. One of these is the need for more record keeping because of

governmental legislation, or the need to manage risk in the context of legal responsibilities. The most challenging, however, is the transition to digital records. Thanks to good links with Archive Digital Books, BHQ has taken substantial steps in this process. For example, starting from 2005, it has digitised large runs of the 'Queensland Baptist' magazine and the Baptist Union of Queensland Yearbooks, with plans to bring these collections right up to date. Minutes, previously microfilmed, have also been digitised, while strong efforts have been undertaken through the Baptist Archives to acquire digital versions of many other records and publications, and also to establish a full digital archival system for current Baptist Union of Queensland records such as emails, minutes and reports; the official Baptist Union promotional publication, 'qb magazine', has been archived in digital form since 2006. The BHQ Guide Sheets have been expanded to cover relevant aspects of digital archiving.

BHQ has also continued to assist some churches with their historical projects. These consist mainly of anniversary celebrations which may call for information, documents or photographs for displays and sometimes assistance with writing and publishing a history. However, there has not been as much development in this area as anticipated. Some years earlier there had been a small but noticeable trend for churches to seek assistance with historical aspects of their church when undergoing a consultancy with the Baptist Union team; unfortunately, some of the histories produced in that context were superficial and hasty, and there has been little if any follow on since.

BHQ however has continued to take the initiative by preparing regional histories. The notion for these was one result of the sequi-centenary history when it was not possible to cover individual churches or areas, mainly due to lack of researchers and resources. The Central Queensland project, published in 2012, was the first of these; it is expected to be followed later by a book on the Darling Downs and south west Queensland region. Earlier projects which fall into this category include the coverage of the German Churches carried out in 1986, and Rev. John Lane's work on the South Burnett churches in 2004 (both being published in 'QB Forum'). Rev. M William's 'Mission to Queensland' (published 1998) covers a large number of churches covered by this ministry.

BHQ has also benefitted from its links with other similar bodies, made much easier with the advent of electronic communications. The digitisation project extended in 2013 to include the 'Australian Baptist' which ran from 1913 to 1991. In 1997 efforts were begun by BHQ to have this national Australian newspaper microfilmed by seeking the cooperation of the Baptist Historical Societies in the other states. This was a particularly important project for Queensland because of serious gaps in the state newspaper (1913-23 when it was not published, and 1931-51 where copies are missing) and because there were no copies of the 'Australian Baptist' in Queensland earlier than about 1960. However, before this project was even started, microfilming took place by the Mitchell Library in Sydney, but the cost of buying the product was prohibitive. In 2013, successful efforts were made to gain the support of other states and work began on digitally scanning the paper instead. The project was taken on by Archive Digital Books Australia, based in South Australia, of which Rosemary Kopittke was the Queensland representative. The first batch was available by the end of the year and initial use showed its great potential.

Links between the states have also been important. There is regular contact between societies when seeking operational advice, or information in response to queries or research projects; one of the early Guide Sheets, 'Your local church history' (1990) was a joint publication of 4 state Societies. There was also significant contact when Whitley College, Melbourne sponsored a conference of interested people in 1998 in connection with the development of its library. Planning also began at this gathering for a combined presentation and display at the BWA Congress held in Melbourne, January 2000. Again, BHQ took the initiative for Archivists from all of the states to gather in Melbourne in November 2013 as part of the normal meeting of national Baptist leaders. Dr David Parker's membership of the BWA Heritage and Identity Commission also provided contact with a wide range of overseas people and organisation and opened the way for involvement in such important events as the 400th anniversary of Baptist witness in 2009 and the Centenary of the Baptist World Alliance in 2005.

The Vision

With such great transitions taking place in Baptist life in Queensland as well as in the broader church world, there is an increasing need for an understanding of the path which Baptists have taken. There are many important issues to study, and documents and information to be collected. So BHQ stands ready at this point in its history to maintain its traditional aim of preserving, promoting and publishing our heritage.

Appendix

Officers

- President: Rev. Dr David Parker, 1984-94; Dr Les Ball, 1994-97; Mr Eric Kopittke, 1997- EK
- Secretary/Treasurer: Rev. Owen Gregory, 1984-1985
- Secretary: Mrs E Chataway, 1985-1995; Dr Pat Godman, 1995; Pastor Rod Benson, 1996; Dr Ken Smith, 1996-2005
- Treasurer: Rev. Vince Chataway, 1985-2005
- Secretary/Treasurer: Dr Ken Smith, 2005-
- Publications Officer: Rosemary Kopittle, 1997-

Publications List

Baptist Historical Series

- 1 1994, 2000, 2013 Parker ed Baptists in Queensland - a Guide to their Life and Faith, David Parker (ed.) (2000) 52pp ISBN 0 9578214 2 5 (Baptist Historical Series No. 1) 2nd Edition - Enlarged, Updated and Revised
- 2 1995 Williams Cameos of Baptist Men in 19th Century Queensland, Mel Williams (1995) 62 pp ISBN 0 646 23181 2 (Baptist Historical Series No. 2)
- 3 1995 Kopittke So, Your Ancestor was a Baptist in Queensland! Eric and Rosemary Kopittke (1995) 34pp ISBN 0 646 24767 0 (Baptist Historical Series No. 3)
- 4 1997 Parker James Voller: Pioneer Baptist Minister of Australia by David Parker (1997) 60 pages ISBN 0646339907 (Baptist Historical Series No. 4)
- 5 1998 Williams Mission to Queensland 1981-1996: a Baptist experiment in church planting, Melvin Williams (1998) 58p ISBN 0-9586622-4-X (Baptist Historical Series No. 5)
- 6 1998 Brooks Vision and Courage: Rev. A.H. Brooks & his Family Heritage, John Brooks (1998) 36 pp ISBN 0-9586622-5-8 (Baptist Historical Series No. 6)
- 7 1998 Parker Strange Bedfellows: Rev. Charles Stewart Brisbane's First Baptist Minister and the United Evangelical Church, 2nd Edition. David Parker (1998) 80pp ISBN 0-9586622-6-6 (Baptist Historical Series No. 7)
- 8 1998 Parker Thomas and William Deacon: General Baptists in Queensland, David Parker (1998) 28pp ISBN 0-9586622-7-4 (Baptist Historical Series No. 8)
- 9 1999 Nickerson Rev. B.G. Wilson Queensland Baptist Founding Father, Stan W. Nickerson (1999) 115pp ISBN 0-9586622-8-2 (Baptist Historical Series No. 9)
- 10 1999 Parker Fortitude: Dr Lang's Vision for Queensland and the United Evangelical Church, David Parker & Angus Edmonds (1999) 52pp ISBN 0-9586622-9-0 (Baptist Historical Series No. 10)
- 11 2000 Scanlan & Parker Tarampa Baptist Church, Richard Scanlan and David Parker (2000) 40pp ISBN 0 9578214 0 9 (Baptist Historical Series No 11)
- 12 2000 Scanlan & Parker Marburg Baptist Church, Richard Scanlan and David Parker (2000) 40pp ISBN 0 9578214 1 7 (Baptist Historical Series No 12)
- 13 2002 Parker 'A True Pastor' The Life and Ministry of William Higlett, David Parker (2002) 188pp ISBN 0 9578214 3 3 (Baptist Historical Series No. 13)
- 14 2005 Parker and ed Pressing on with the Gospel: the story of Baptists in Queensland 1855-2005 (2005) edited by David Parker, with Les Ball and Stan Nickerson (Baptist Historical Series No 14) ISBN 0 9578214 4 1
- 15 2009 Hughes HACK: A Biography of the Life and Work of Rev. Harold George Hackworthy MC MA 1891-1953, R. W. (Bill) Hughes (2009), 122 pp. Baptist Historical Series No 15
- 16 2009 Parker and ed Women who Made a Difference, Celebrating the contribution of 24 Queensland Baptist women to church, community and mission. David Parker (editor), 2009. 76 pp. Baptist Historical Series No 16
- 17 2012 Parker ed, Something more than Gold - Baptists in Central Queensland 1862-2012 edited by David Parker 192 pp (Baptist Historical Series No 17)

Documents of Queensland Baptist History

- 1 1995 Parker ed The Gregory History of Queensland Baptists, David Parker (ed.) (1995) ISBN 0 646 25647 5 (Documents of Queensland Baptist History No. 1)
- 2 1996 Parker ed The Joshua Jenyns History of the Baptist Church in Brisbane, David Parker (ed.) (1996) 36pp ISBN 0 9586622 0 7 (Documents of Queensland Baptist History No. 2)
- 3 1996 Parker ed Remember all the Way: a Century of Baptist History in Queensland, David Parker (ed.) (1996) 50pp ISBN 0 9586622 2 3 (Documents of Queensland Baptist History No. 3)

Other

- 1991, 1993 Christian Camping - Baptist Camping in Qld, Joan Maxwell (2 vols) (1991, 1993) 94 + 115 pp ISBN 0 9596078 3 8; 0 9596078 4 6
- 1997 Coleyville, Engelsburg (Kalbar), Boonah & Highfields Baptist Cemeteries (Qld) Monumental Inscriptions, Rosemary and Eric Kopittke (1997) 92 pages ISBN 0 9586622 3 1 (Fiche contains extra material)
- 1977 A Fellowship of Service, J.E. White (official history of Baptist Union of Qld, 1977) 256pp
- 1996 Minden, Tarampa and Vernor Baptist Cemeteries (Qld) Monumental Inscriptions, Rosemary & Eric Kopittke (1996) 46 pp ISBN 0 9586622 1 5
- 1995, 1998, 2012 The National Guide to Australian Baptist Historical Resources and Services, David Parker and Keith Applegate (eds) (3rd edition - updated and enlarged 2012) 32pp ISBN 0 646 24932 0

Monographs

All by R W Bill Hughes:

1. A History of Biloela District Baptist Church
2. A History of Gladstone Baptist Church 1966-2011
3. A History of Gracemere Baptist Fellowship 1991-2011
4. A History of the Mount Morgan Baptist Church 1899-2000
5. A History of the Queensland Baptist Senior Girls' Missionary Union 1924-1991
6. The Deagon Mission Church 1918-1993
7. The Edward Street Baptist Church

Digital Publications

Available from www.lulu.com (search by author)

1. A Plucky People: Baptists in Rockhampton, Queensland: 1862-2012 by David Parker
2. Fortitude: Rev. Charles Stewart and the United Evangelical Church by David Parker
3. 'Strange Bedfellows' by David Parker
4. The Lure of Gold: Baptists in Central Queensland, 1862-2012 by David Parker

Guide Sheets

(available on request)

1. A Guide to Digital Archiving
2. Archiving Emails – a 12 Point Guide
3. Church Archives Register – Historical Details and Records
4. Digitising Church Records
5. Managing Church Records – A Guide
6. The Baptist Church Archives, Qld - A guide
7. Your Local Church History