

Baptist Historical Society of Queensland

Newsletter

No. 19 August 1991

Free to Members

Others - \$2

Membership: Individual \$6 p.a. Family \$10 p.a. Corporate \$20 p.a.

PRESIDENT: Rev. Dr David Parker, 17 Disraeli St, Indooroopilly, 4068 Phone 878 3178

SECRETARY: Mrs Ellen Chataway, 11 Bunda St, Slacks Creek. 4127 Phone 208 2639

First Book Launch for BHSQ at Annual Presentation

The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland made history for itself on Monday 12th August, 1991 when it sponsored its first book launch at the Annual Presentation. The President of the Baptist Union, Rev Norman Weston, officially launched the first volume of the history of Baptist camping in Queensland, *Christian Camping - The Call of Christ*. What was probably a record crowd of around sixty people attended and heard the author, Joan Maxwell of Toowoomba, recall her experiences in researching and writing the book and also give her impressions of camping. (See inside for her address)

Others who featured at the meeting included some early campers, Rev. Ralph Hodgson and Mrs Olga Hemmings (Hart) and Mrs Christina Durrant (Smith). Rev. John Knights, who directed many camps during his term as Youth Director (1947-1953) also participated in a panel, as did two men involved with the administration of camping in the past and also at present, Mr Bob Bavinton and Mr Phil Fox. Some of their observations are also included in this issue of the *BHSQ Newsletter*.

Copies of the history were on sale at the meeting, and can be obtained from the Baptist Book Shop or direct from the author at a cost of \$6 plus postage.

Coming Events

Annual Meeting of BHSQ. Saturday 2nd November 1991 2 to 4pm at Baptist Union Archives, 225 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley (please enter Baptist Union headquarters by rear door off Alfred and Esther Sts). All members and interested friends are warmly invited to be present. (Afternoon tea)

Preview for 1992

1992 will be the bi-centenary of the publication of William Carey's *Enquiry* which led to the establishment of the Baptist Missionary Society in the same year. We are planning a special celebration to mark the occasion. Details will be released as they come to hand.

In this issue

<i>Camping - the Writer's Perspective - Joan Maxwell</i>	<i>page 2</i>
<i>Memories of an Early Camper - Rev. Ralph Hodgson</i>	<i>page 4</i>
<i>Insights of a Director - Rev. John Knights</i>	<i>page 5</i>
<i>When a Padre is not a Padre - Rev. Mel Williams</i>	<i>page 6</i>
<i>Adopt a Plot; Petrie Terrace Church</i>	<i>page 7</i>

Baptist Camping in Queensland - The Writer's Perspective

by Joan Maxwell

Tonight, it is gratifying for me to see the culmination of eighteen months work. God has worked many miracles in that time and I praise him for them. Early in my research I realized that the work ahead of me was far beyond my experience and capabilities. God comforted me with his Word, "Faithful is he that calleth you. He also will do it." (1 Thess 5:24) I clung to that promise as I recognized this as God's work, not mine and he has seen it to completion. "To God be the glory, great things he has done!"

I faced a number of problems, but found God's answers to them all. First there was the lack of records. There are no written records for the first twenty years. Camping first began when Mr Lethem held trips on Moreton Bay at Easter time from 1929. They became so popular that the boats were becoming seriously overcrowded. So after two years, they felt they would have to find a way of holding camps on land. To find information about this time, we found two men in particular who were a tremendous help, Mr Freeman James and Mr Robert Pike.

With the absence of written records, I was not sure where to start. So I began by writing about 200 letters to people I thought may be able to help. I received about twenty or thirty replies. Then I realized I was not going to get far that way, so I began personal interviews with original campers. It was a difficult job for them to remember accurately after a period of thirty to sixty years. Most of the detail in the first two chapters was given by original campers, especially Messrs Freeman James and Robert Pike. Rev. Dr Neville Kirkwood and Mr Bob Bavinton were also a great help.

One thing this research has taught me is to keep records and to date them! For example, there were minutes without any dates, list of names for possible leaders but no indication if they actually served or not; minutes were often in the form of extremely brief notes which were meaningless to those not at the meeting itself.

A final difficulty arose from the fact I was using a computer to type up the manuscript, but I was a complete novice when it came to computers. When I encountered difficulties, I called in an "expert" but that only resulted in loosing all the work up to that point and having to start all over again. But when it was nearing completion and the manuscript needed a professional lay-out, I did not know what to do at all and there was no one to turn to for help. But then in answer to prayer, I thought of a solution, which proved to be correct.

Impressions of Baptist Camping

I believe Baptist camping has been one of the greatest avenues used by God for training our young people in leadership and challenging them to full time service. There are several points about this:

1. First the dedication of Mr Lethem and Mr Roy Kirkwood. Mr Lethem was a bachelor who began the ministry at Currumbin in 1931. He worked at a bank, but felt his real calling was for the Kingdom of God. His burden was to win young men to Christ and challenge them to train for the ministry. After the first camp, he realized he could not do the work alone, so he called Mr and Mrs Roy Kirkwood from the City Tabernacle to help him for the second year and they gave most of their free time and all holidays for nine years to assist Mr Lethem in establishing the camping programme. I call that dedication! It is no wonder that our camps got off on such a sound footing and kept on with such inspiration.

Mr Lethem actively sought out young men and invited them to attend camps and assisted with fees if necessary. He certainly put his treasure where his heart was!

2. There was much fun and hilarity at camp, but that was balanced with meaningful and challenging Bible teaching. I believe that message was so readily accepted by the campers because they witnessed real devotion and love in the lives of the leaders.

The early campers also provided a witness to the world with regular open air evangelistic meetings.

The fun, the Bible teaching and the witness to the world formed a balanced programme and training for young converts.

3. Camping also strengthened denominational unity. Most of the young men attending these early camps before 1947 came from Baptist Churches, so a denominational loyalty was awakened and a sense of unity was created. Today's camps major on reaching those outside and much of the denominational emphasis is lost.

4. Then camping united the youth together. Country and city youth were welded together in a common bond of fellowship and understanding as they began to recognize themselves as part of a wider Baptist family. Many country young people felt cut off and isolated from what went on in the city. They often lived a long distance from their churches. So the opportunity to meet others at the camps was a tremendous experience for them.

5. The camping programme provided a congenial base to develop sound Christian friendships. Many happy marriages eventuated from friendships formed at camps.

6. I was impressed how many 9-13 year olds responded to the Gospel and went on to serve the Lord. This age is most responsive and open to the Gospel, and it is a real harvest field.

7. Campers who were converted at camps often returned as hut leaders or for leadership training courses. Some returned as chaplains or padres. Many of our church and denominational leaders gained their leadership training from camps they attended as young people. Quite a few went on to full time service at home or on the mission field.

All these stories are included in Volume One along with the story of the setting up of the Magnetic Island Youth Centre. This project was a faithful yet struggling work which met many challenges until its closure in 1977.

One thing that impressed me about all the camp sites was that most of them faced the same struggles -

- a) lack of finance to develop the site and run the programmes they planned.
- b) lack of people prepared to train for leadership, and be committed to it.
- c) lack of support from many of the local churches which did not see camping as part of the local church programme.
- d) lack of prayer support, without which our human efforts are inadequate.

It was Baptist Union policy that each site become totally responsible for its own programmes and development. They all had to be financially independent. This was quite an undertaking, particularly for the smaller centres.

Today, camping has changed from the original programmes that were run. Their scope has widened to reach out to unsaved children and adults in the community. But the challenge is the same as it was sixty years ago - to bring God's message of hope to a lost world.

Today we see incidents of suicide increasing. Unemployment, drug dependence and homelessness are but some of the signs of a society and generation that have lost hope.

Youth of today need a challenge. They need to be taught that God loves them and has a purpose for each one of them. They need to know God needs young people of courage and commitment to take his message of hope to others. This is the future challenge of the camping ministry.

If we don't take up the challenge, the world will soon convince our young people that pleasure and selfish living are all that matter!

We thank God for sixty years of fruitful camping ministry and trust him for wisdom to meet the challenges of the future.

Baptist Camping in Queensland - Memories of an early camper

by Rev. Ralph W. Hodgson

Baptist camping in Queensland arose out of the vision and enterprise of one man - Mr Ken Lethem. He was a member of the City Tabernacle Baptist Church and lived in Clayfield not far from where some of my formative years were spent. Mr Lethem never married and therefore had no family on whom he could lavish his affection. He lived with and cared for his ageing mother, but he had a deep concern for boys and young men.

Ken established a strong bond with young men at the City Tabernacle, and from this relationship, he extended his involvements to the provision of a camp site and the development of the camping ministry at Currumbin.

The situation was delightful, with the Currumbin Creek meandering below as it made its way to the sea, and a magnificent view of the coastline that swept north to Burleigh Heads. But the site had its problems - there was virtually no level ground and most of the property varied from steep to very steep! However, buildings were gradually erected, including a hall and several huts, and ultimately an ablutions block.

For a considerable time, there was no road access. I was one of the lads who helped carry baggage, sacks of potatoes and sugar, firewood and all the other necessities up the steep and mostly unmade paths. The one shower was simple contraption under the tank-stand, and clearly visible from the kitchen window! Female cooks had to be warned when the shower was to be used by men and boys. Some of the campers slept on canvass bags filled with straw laid out on the hall floor. Toilet arrangements were grossly inadequate and decidedly primitive.

My introduction to camping came in my early teen years, when Ken Lethem befriended me and welcomed me into his home. He took me on "prospect" visits to the homes of other lads and sponsored me to the camps. Later I became a hut leader at a school boys' camp and in later years was involved in leadership.

In spite of the physical limitations of the camp, the spirit was excellent. Ken Lethem was ably supported by the camp leader, Mr Roy Kirkwood and his wife, by the various padres and by other helpers. There were times of great fun - debates on the most unlikely topics, socials which were occasions of great hilarity, cricket on the beach and table tennis in the hall, swimming in the creek or surfing in the ocean and so on.

There were other more serious times such as morning devotions conducted by the padre, usually on the open verandah of the hall; hut devotions conducted by the leaders; and lots of informal discussions centering around the gospel and its implications.

These campers were initially confined to young men. Then schoolboys' camps were introduced. Later girls' camps were started, and finally after World War II, mixed camps were begun.

What were the benefits of these camps? Looking back, I see them as threefold:

First, there was the promotion of fellowship. Young people were able to mix with other young people, not only from their own church, but from other churches as well. I personally formed friendships at these camps that have lasted and matured through the years.

Then there was social interaction. The great benefit of the social activities as camp was that they were part of the total activities of a Christian camp. That artificial line by which we tend to separate the "social" from the "spiritual" became blurred and often disappeared altogether. Christian living was seen as relating to the whole person, and to a person's total activity.

Finally, spiritual fruit. Many young folk made their first commitment to Christ in a camp. Others were built up in their faith. There were some precious moments. I shall never forget one New Year's Eve after World War II when I shared in leadership of a young men's camp. We built a great bonfire,

cont. on page 6

Baptist Camping in Queensland - Insights of a Director

by Rev. John Knights

A dictionary definition of a camp is a "a group of tents, caravans or other temporary shelters in one place. A site where soldiers are housed in structures originally intended to be temporary."

Camping as we understand it in terms of the title of this article has come through a cycle of change.

It began very much like the dictionary definition. An opportunity to get away from the every day surroundings into the open with temporary and often very basic equipment. The first "camp" held at Maroochydore by the Nambour church was in two tents with a tarpaulin slung between the two for meal times. A small tank was the water supply, cooking done on an open fire. All the activities were outdoor.

Baptist "camping" at a denominational level in Queensland began with a group of young men going on fishing trips on the initiative of Ken Lethem.

Later, camping moved indoors and guest houses, showground pavilions and other public facilities were used for accommodation. This continued far beyond the advent of permanent camping facilities like those at Currumbin.

The Currumbin facilities, while being in advance of the time, nevertheless in many ways retained some of the earlier characteristics of camping. There were no bathing facilities except a primitive enclosure, outside earth closet toilets were used and as there was no entrance road, all supplies had to be carried up hand of hand - including even wood for cooking. There was no refrigeration and cooking was done on a wood stove until an oil burner was introduced.

With the advent of greater prosperity, the approach to facilities and comforts changed, and Currumbin was "upgraded" later to merge into the Mapleton-type accommodation. In 1953, I was in America at a Baptist facility where the accommodation ranged from the camp site and caravan park level through motel style to that of a first class hotel! We in Queensland took a while to catch up, but we too have come the full cycle.

In more recent times, there has been a revival of the more rugged type of camping, especially for young people. Adventure camping and ranch-type accommodation attract young people who want to get away from the sophistication of civilization!

Camping was a means to many ends. It could be just a time of good fun and fellowship -- recreation. It was also a tool for teaching, discipleship and evangelism. Many of our Baptist leaders of today had an encounter with Christ, received basic training and even found their life partner at "camp".

In recent times, state education authorities have recognized the possibilities of camping and have hired denominational properties for the purpose. This has become one of the major uses of our properties, putting them to use almost all the year round and providing much necessary finance for maintenance and development.

Properties such as Mapleton have now become centres for conferences, seminars and the like. Camping has become an industry and organizations have sprung up worldwide providing information, services and bringing together those who are professionals in camp philosophy and techniques.

Whatever the future brings, it is important that the church keeps the priorities of its commission. We need to remember that God has given mission as the motivation and direction of all our planning.

When a Padre is not a Padre!

by Rev. Melvin C. Williams

The *Military Heritage Exhibition* was held in the Queensland Exhibition grounds 24 March - 27 April 1991. I came across an exhibit near the entrance which intrigued me as I read it. The framed exhibit read:

THE REV. ROBERT KERR, OF THE BAPTIST
CHURCH, KELVIN VILLA, KELVIN GROVE

Reverend Kerr served in the South African or Second Boer War as a civilian of what was believed to be called the 'Special Chaplains' Auxiliary'. These personnel catered to special problems of the rank and file of Empire Forces, and though clothed and fed by the Army, had no military rank, being known as 'Mister'. Robert Kerr had worked with the Gorbals Cross Mission in Glasgow. After the War, he migrated to Queensland.

In the display were three items:

1. A photograph of Robert Kerr and two other members of the organization, Messrs J.A. Garnock and Hamilton Crosbie.
2. His Queen's South African medal inscribed 'Mr R. Kerr, S.C.A.'
3. A certificate issued in the name of the Governor-General of Australia, Sir Ronald Crawford Munro Ferguson, appointing the Rev. Robert Kerr as a Chaplain (4th Class) in the Defence Force from the first day of March, 1915.

One can presume that there were Church of England chaplains during the Boer Wars, but it would appear that Protestants, Non-Conformists and presumably Roman Catholics had not quite made it by the turn of the century. So we have in the Rev. Robert Kerr one who officially was not a padre, but in practice, was.

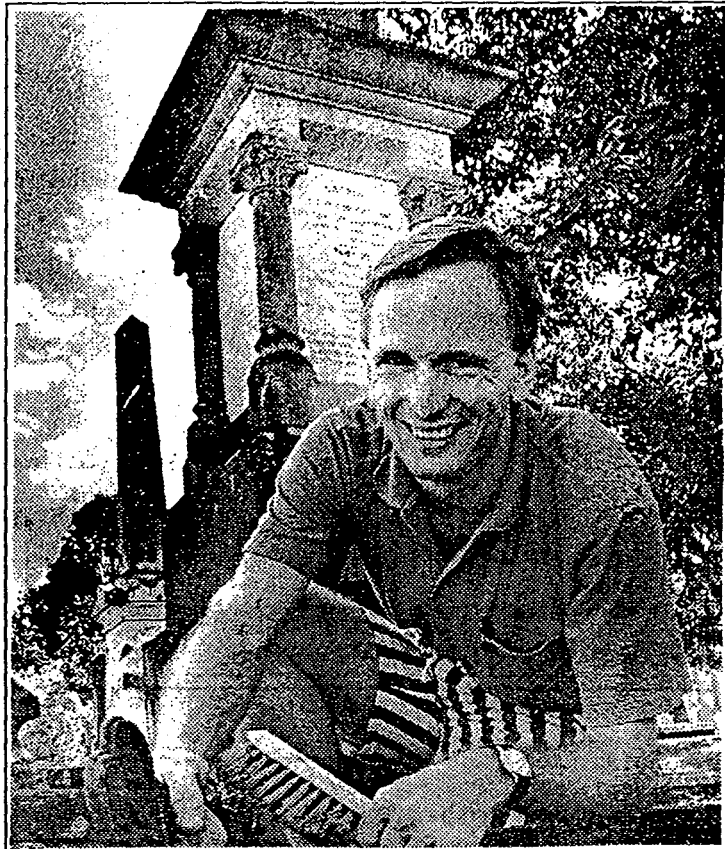
The Chaplains' Department within the Australian Army was thoroughly organized in 1913 with four denominations (Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian) represented. In spite of vigorous protest, smaller denominations were not included. Each denomination appointed a Chaplain-General who would arrange all administrative matters. However, when the Great War, as it was known then, broke out, ministers from smaller denominations offered for chaplaincy in great numbers and were included. The designation 'Other Protestant Denominations' (OPD) came into being, Baptist, Church of Christ and Congregational being grouped together.

Rev. Robert Kerr, then minister at Toowong, was appointed chaplain for the Brisbane district in 1915, but had to resign in 1916 due to ill-health. So in spite of finally gaining his recognition, he did not serve overseas. He served at Toowong church from 1914-1923, and then moved to Albion where he died in office in 1931.

A Camper's View (cont. from page 4)

and at midnight we lit it as others sprang to life on every promontory along the coast. As the fire started to die down, we joined in a wonderful time of prayer before retiring to bed with thankful hearts and renewed dedication.

Out of these camps have come leaders in their churches and in wider areas of Christian service. Some have become leaders in the Baptist denomination and others have continued to give valued support to the wider extension of our camping ministry throughout the state.



BHSQ Member Adopts a Plot

BHSQ member Pat O'Leary and his wife Joanne featured in the April 5 issue of the Courier Mail when they adopted the grave of Rev. William Whale at Toowong Cemetery. The scheme encourages interested people to volunteer to care for graves in the cemetery and at the same time honour pioneers of the community. Pat wrote a dissertation on the life of Mr Whale and presented some of his findings to a BHSQ meeting in 1988 (see *BHSQ Newsletter*, No 10, September 1988).

The Department of Mission of the Baptist Union of Queensland is currently promoting the opportunity of adopting the grave of the pioneer Baptist missionary, Martha Plested, which is also in Toowong Cemetery.

Petrie Terrace Ceases Ministry after 121 Years

Petrie Terrace Church has ceased ministry after a life 121 years. According to the centenary booklet, the minute of 30th May, 1870 setting up the church read, Resolved - *That brother Moore be invited to take the oversight of the Church -- That we observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper for the first time on Sunday 5th June -- That on that occasion we give each other the right hand of fellowship and sign the roll.*

As early as 1867, Mr Grimes and Mr Moore, members of the first Baptist Church in Queensland, had commenced a Sunday School and Band of Hope in the area. In 1869, the first building was erected on land donated by Mr Moore. The cost of the building which was opened in 1869 was just over one hundred pounds. A more adequate building was opened in 1895. Mr Moore became the pastor and continued his ministry until 1886. On his retirement he continued to be a member of the church and later served an interim pastorate, giving eighteen years of service in total.

The first baptisms took place on September 14, 1870 in the Jireh church, but Petrie Terrace's baptistry was used just a year later. By 1874 the original membership of five had grown to fifty two., including forebears of the Hancox family. The early years of the church were characterised by a dynamic outreach programme, including effective visitation evangelism and the planting of a daughter church which became Rosalie Church (constituted 1912)

Later pastors included Rev T.U. Symons who became Home Missions Superintendent, and Rev J.T. Malyon, first principal of the Theological College. Rev R.E. Jarrott, Director of Evangelism for the Baptist Union was also pastor, 1945-8. Rev. G.W. Peck was pastor 1950-55. Petrie Terrace was one of only three churches which initiated the Baptist Union in 1877.

Publications of Interest

From the Baptist Historical Society

BHSQ Newsletter - published three times per year - free to members - \$2 posted

Your Local Church History - four page guide to preserving and presenting church or organizational history - free

Inventory of Historical Records - a sheet to manage and record the historical records of a church or organization in an orderly manner and to inform church and denominational officers.

The Baptist Archives - A Guide - to be available soon

From the Baptist Union of Queensland

Baptist Union Handbook - details of Union officers and committees, ministers and churches - published annually since 1907 - since 1977, reports to the Annual Assembly have been printed separately

A Fellowship of Service - official history of the Baptist Union of Queensland, by Rev. John E. White, published in the centenary year of the Union, 1977 (250p)

Queensland Baptist - monthly news-magazine distributed freely to all churches

From the Church Archivists' Society, PO Box 756 Toowoomba 4350

The Small Archives' Companion - easy-to-read authority and manual for all aspects of managing a collection of historical records in a church, school or other similar institution - \$17.50 posted (263p)

Register of Church Archives - listing of church archives in Australia - \$14.50 posted (289p)

Make your Mark on History!

Would you like to make your mark on history? If so, call up the secretary right away! The BHSQ has many historical projects that need assistance.

For example, we have a **Prominent Persons File** listing names and basic personal and professional details of Baptist who have occupied prominent places in our community. We need to extend this to include more names. Then we have our **Ministers File** listing the pastorates of ministers together with details of their training, ordination etc. We need researchers to locate and compile this data. We would like to search out more records and sources of information to have on hand. Requests for information on churches and families are frequently received, but often it is not possible to respond helpfully because of a shortage of experienced assistance.

You could make a difference. People are becoming more conscious of history, so the time is right to expand! Your contribution could be vital the discovery, preservation or writing of Baptist history in Queensland.

BHSQ Membership

I/We wish to join the Baptist Historical Society of Queensland and support its programme. Enclosed is our 1991 subscription: \$6 personal \$10 family \$20 churches and other groups

NAME..... CHURCH:.....

ADDRESS:..... POSTCODE.....