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# The Queensland Baptist Forum

The Journal of the Baptist Historical Society of Queensland

(formerly: Baptist Historical Society of Qld Newsletter)

No. 56 Dec 2003

## 150+/150+ We've a Story to Tell!

The new sesqui-centenary history project was launched at the 2003 Baptist Convention with a 15 minute Power Point presentation at the main business session. To be published in 2005, the new book will update the last history by Rev J. E. White which was published in 1977. The book will be written by Dr Stan Nickerson, Dr Les Ball, Dr David Parker (editor) and others. Launching of the book is scheduled for the sesqui-centenary celebrations in August 2005 when the first church, now known as City Tabernacle Baptist Church, will be marking the occasion with a comprehensive series of events. The Baptist Union of Queensland is also planning to share in commemorations of the beginning of Baptist witness in this state.

To make the new book an adequate and up to date record, we are appealing to churches and Baptists in Queensland to help by supplying documents, photographs, statistics, personal and family information, leads and contacts, as well as prayer, funding, and assistance with the design and production of the book. Assistance is also invited for interviewing, researching and compiling of data as well promotion and distribution of the book.

In particular we need **special assistance in two specific parts** of the project. First of all, we need people in all areas of the state to develop profiles of Baptist life in the *different geographical areas of the state* so that an adequate picture can be presented.

Then we need help to prepare similar profiles about nature and development of *various specific types of ministry* such as evangelism, Sunday Schools and women's work.

A printed information sheet with more details is available upon request. The details are also found on the web site <<http://home.pacific.net.au/~dparker/qbhist.htm>> Those interested in participating in these two specific parts of the project are asked to contact Dr Parker directly (3878 3178 [dparker@pacific.net.au](mailto:dparker@pacific.net.au)).

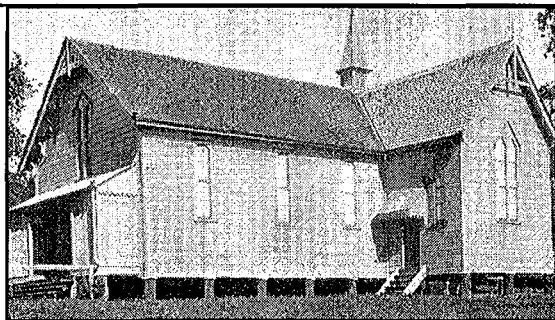
<p><b>The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland</b> (est. 1984)</p> <p><b>Membership (2003)</b> Individual \$10 p.a. Family \$15 p.a. Corporate \$20 p.a.</p> <p><i>Qld Baptist Forum</i> 3 issues p.a. Free to Members Others \$2 each posted</p> <p><b>President:</b> Mr Eric W. Kopittke 98 Yallambee Rd., Jindalee 4074 Phone 3376 4339 <b>Secretary:</b> Dr Ken G. Smith, 110 White St, Graceville 4075 Phone 3379 6117</p> <p><a href="http://www.pacific.net.au/~dparker/forum.html">www.pacific.net.au/~dparker/forum.html</a> <a href="http://www.pacific.net.au/~dparker/order.html">www.pacific.net.au/~dparker/order.html</a></p> <p><b>BWA Baptist Heritage &amp; Identity Commission:</b> <a href="http://www.bwa-baptist-heritage.org">www.bwa-baptist-heritage.org</a></p>	<p><b>CONTENTS</b></p> <p><b>Qld Baptist Forum No 56 Dec 2003</b></p> <p>150+/150+ Launched p 1</p> <p>Early Queensland Baptist Churches No 11 Toowong p 2</p> <p>BHSQ Annual Report 2003 p 3</p> <p>The Carey Letters p 4</p> <p>William Richer by James W. Gibson p 8</p>
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## Early Baptist Churches in Queensland No 11

### TOOWONG BAPTIST CHURCH

Reproduced from *The Queensland Baptist* Sept 1901 p 119

We continue the reproduction of a series of articles on early Baptist churches in Queensland which appeared in *The Queensland Baptist*. These articles present some interesting details of the churches and buildings. One of the features of the original series was a photograph of the church with each article. Recent pictures of these churches will also be shown where available.



#### TOOWONG BAPTIST CHURCH.

THE Baptist Church at Toowong is very closely identified with its present pastor, Rev. W. Richer. It was about the year 1875 that the first Nonconformist service in Toowong was held in the house of Mr. Richer. These cottage services were carried on successfully for some time until a Primitive Methodist Church

was built immediately opposite the house. Early

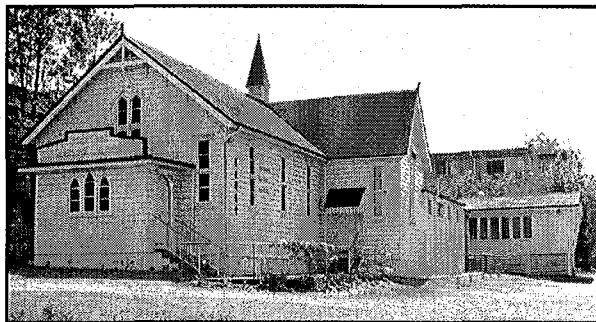
in 1880 the building of a Baptist Church was seriously considered, and after some time the present site was purchased, and Mr. Richer, who was then following the occupation of contractor, designed and erected the building. The total cost of land, fencing, building, and furniture, was £250, of which, at the date of opening, £125 was left as a mortgage. The church, as originally built, was 30 feet long by 24 feet wide, and was opened on 4th September, 1881.

By June, 1884, the building had become too small, and an enlargement was decided upon. Mr. Richer was again the architect, and the extension was completed and formally opened in October of that year. At the same time the church was incorporated under the Friendly Societies' Act, and the incorporated church became the owner of the property.

As it now stands the church will accommodate about 150 persons, and we are glad to know that recently additional seats have been required for the numbers attending. The total cost has been £700, and there is a debt of £250. With the exception of an interval from April, 1894, till December, 1896, when the pulpit was occupied by Revs. H. Cairns and A. G. Weller, the church has been under the pastoral care of its founder, Rev. W. Richer, who for several years rendered that service without charge.

Toowong is, no doubt, destined to be an important suburb of Brisbane, and we believe a great future is before the Baptist Church there.

W. HIGLETT.



**Editor's Note:** The hope expressed in last line of the above report certainly materialised, with the Toowong church in later years exercising a solid witness in the area and sending out many to serve elsewhere. After some low periods, and talk of merging with Taring Church in the 1970s, the arrival of Rev. Cecil Ip in 1977 provided the church with a new lease of life which has now resulted in it becoming a strong centre of Chinese witness.

The building and land have not changed much—the entry porch being the most noticeable difference. An extension was made at the rear in 1919 for Sunday School purpose, and further additions and renovations, including new seating, took place about twenty years later. A new wing was added to the hall around 1960 which included a kitchen. Today, it is a well used and cared for facility which is the based for a vigorous ministry.

See our feature article elsewhere in this issue for a full live of Mr Richer, so closely identified with the early life of the church.

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# **Baptist Historical Society of Queensland**

## **19th Annual Report**

*25 October, 2003*

2003 has seen continued interest in our history by people in Baptist churches throughout Queensland. Membership of the Society has increased slightly, and we look forward to further interest, as more and more people realise the importance of discovering and remembering our Baptist heritage. There is, however, a need to inspire more of our young people to take an interest in our historical roots, as one way of minimising the pressure to follow the latest fads in church life and worship.

Officers elected at the Annual meeting in November, 2002 were: President: Mr Eric Kopitke; Secretary, Dr Ken Smith; Treasurer: Rev. Vince Chataway.

There has been continued demand for our publications throughout the year. The book by David Parker on the life and ministry of William Higlett, Secretary of the Union in the late 19th and early 20th century, launched at the Annual Convention in 2002, has proved to be popular, indicating the interest people have in pastors who have faithfully served in the past.

This has been a fairly quiet year for the Society as our efforts have been aimed at the Sesquicentenary of the first Baptist Church in Queensland to be celebrated in 2005. David Parker has been appointed as editor of a book about our Baptist heritage to be published then. We are grateful to BAPLinK for a grant of \$2,000 towards expenses involved in research and initial work towards the book. Plans for celebrations for the Sesquicentenary are well advanced, and further information will be publicised closer to the dates.

Earlier this year David Parker met with a number of retired Baptist ministers to collect some oral histories about their experiences. This is a new venture for the Society, and it is hoped that other items of oral history may be collected before they pass from living memories.

It was decided that it would be impractical to have our usual display at the Annual Convention this year, but a segment was allocated during the business day for a PowerPoint presentation about the Sesquicentenary. It is hoped to have a larger display in 2004 and an even more significant one during the Sesquicentenary year.

The list of our publications now totals 20. There are still many areas in which a consolidated work would be helpful, and it is hoped that as we approach the 150th anniversary of the opening of the first Baptist church in Queensland, more people will be encouraged to look to our heritage and unearth the many treasures which may be lying around and previously unappreciated. We need to continue to impress on people the importance of keeping accurate records of events, so that in the future people will be able to look back and be encouraged by our successes, as well as giving thought to reasons for any lack of success.

As we move forward into a new year, we look forward to continuing the work of recording and analysing our history, so that, aware of what has gone on in the past, we may take note of our errors, and preserve and remember the good things, to the glory of our Lord.

Ken Smith, **Secretary**

**Dates for meetings in 2004—6 March, 5 June, 6 Nov (AGM).**

A date for an annual presentation is under discussion

Please note: **Membership fees** for 2004 are now due. The rate is unchanged (see front page)

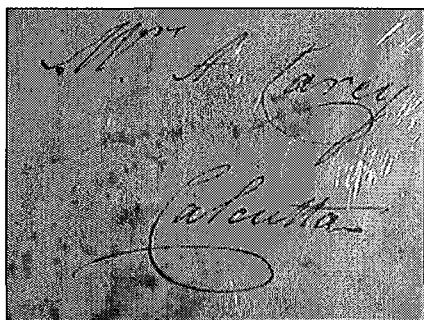
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## The Carey Letters—the local connection

By David Parker

A few months ago, Jacqui Lainchbury, of Moore Park Baptist Church, contacted the Baptist Historical Society of Queensland about some letters in the possession of a family living nearby and known to her. They were requesting help in identifying the letters. Upon inspection, the letters turned out to date from the early 1800s and were associated closely with the famous Baptist pioneer missionary, William Carey. The family who now own the letters are direct descendants of Carey through his son Jonathon (1796-1874).

There are three letters and they have been professionally conserved, but they are hard to read in their entirety. One dated 26 May 1831 is very brief and is a short greeting from William Carey to his daughter-in-law Anna. It reads:



Dear Anna

*Through divine goodness I am now perfectly recovered. Your mother suffers from the heat. I hope you, Jonathon, the children and Lucy are all well.*

*Is Lucy's marriage fixed for the 8<sup>th</sup> of June? I intend to be with you on that occasion, but am not certain about the day*

Your affectionate Father,  
W Carey

Another longer one, which is quite badly damaged, is dated 27 August 1815 and is addressed, 'My dear Hanna'. It contains some spiritual counsel, and news about the family and church life.

The third letter is addressed to 'Mrs Jonathon Carey' (the same lady as the first) in Calcutta and is written from Oxford in 1825. It deals mostly with the report of meeting held 29 Nov 1825 to set up the 'Oxford Ladies Association' to aid the 'Bengal Christian School Society.'

The letters have come down through the Buttfeld family which has interesting Baptist connections, and complicated relationships to the Careys.

**Sarah Buttfeld** (1820-91) was the 3rd child of **William Buttfeld** (1793-1817) and his wife **Elizabeth** (nee Parker). William was a printer who moved around England a lot, and eventually ended up in Jersey in the Channel Islands apparently to escape trouble over his printing activities. For a period they lived in the Hemel Hempsted area, north-west of London, and were associated with the Boxmoor Particular Baptist Church. They had a total of 10 children. William was known as a man of great Christian character and was a respected member and leader, even though his wife was quite the opposite due to a drinking problem. Sarah was a member of this church but in 1850 transferred to London's Bloomsbury church.

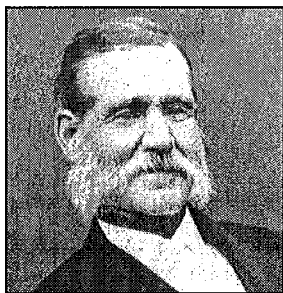
The Carey connection begins in 1843 when Sarah was 23. She married **Jonathon Carey**, then a widower aged 47 years.

Jonathon, a solicitor, was the seventh son of William Carey and was born in India. He had first married **Anna**, the daughter of Baptist minister, Samuel **Pearce**, and close friend of William Carey. They had met in India where Anna worked at the Serampore Girls' School. Their marriage in 1824 united two great Baptist families, and there were three surviving children, Anna Louisa, Jonathon Pearce, and William Hopkins (who later became minister of Parramatta Baptist Church, NSW, before his premature death at the age of 23 years). This is the Anna or Mrs Jonathon Carey of the letters.



Sarah Buttfeld Carey 1820-91

However, Anna died in 1832, and the three children returned to the Boxmoor area in England. In the fellowship of the Baptist church, they came in contact with the **Buttfields** – there were two families each with a young man and a young woman about the same age. Not surprising, two of them were attracted to each other, and in 1844 Anna Louisa (aged 18) married **John Parker Buttfield** (aged 22), the fourth child of William and Elizabeth.



John Parker Buttfield  
1822-85

But the complicating factor was that Anna Louisa's widowed *father* Jonathon was also looking for marriage again and found a bride in Anna Louisa's *sister-in-law*, **Sarah Buttfield**. As the Buttfield family history states, 'This created a most confusing set of relationships. Was Jonathon Carey John Buttfield's father-in-law or his brother-in-law? Sarah Carey became Anna's sister-in-law and step-mother' (*A Family Named Buttfield*, by Judy Peters and Cynthia Waddle, 1991, p. 45).

Whatever the relationships, John and Anna set out on an amazing life together. Three weeks after their marriage, they sailed for British Honduras to serve with the Baptist mission. However, John's work as a printer was cut short due to differences of doctrine with the other resident missionary, and so three years later, the Buttfields returned to England, now with two children. After only a few months, they were on their way again – this time to South Australia.

They arrived in Dec 1848 with three children, but they themselves were only aged 26 and 22. John first of all became the first paid minister of the Salem Baptist Church, Gumeracha. It was to be a stormy settlement, and led to many further movements as John doggedly continued to serve in different parts of the colony. He bought land and became deeply involved in the communities where he lived, doing his best to preach and meet the needs of the people. His story is briefly told in the official history of the Baptists in South Australia.

The couple had eleven children, and on 1 July 1862, when the youngest was only 3 ½ months old, Anna died at the age of 36. Her grave stones in the grounds of Eley Chapel in the Munno Para district, read,

*Anna Louisa Buttfield, beloved wife of John Parker Buttfield,  
the first minister of the adjoining place of worship.  
Grand-daughter of the late Rev. Dr. William Carey  
of the Serampore Mission, Calcutta*

Her husband John, who was minister of the church 1852-64, remarried six years later, after he had moved on to start a church in Port Lincoln. This marriage produced a further eight children! The small church was unable to support him, so in 1865 he became Sub-Protector of Aborigines in the far north, living at the mining town of Blinman. He was also appointed a magistrate. The rest of his life, which ended on 14 July 1885, was a remarkable story of public humanitarian service and commitment in remote areas, and devoted support of his large family.

With such a large number of children, the descendants are numerous, and scattered over many parts of the country – especially South and Western Australia. However, the second child of John's first marriage was **Emilie Anna**, who was born 1 May 1847 in British Honduras. She married **Edmund Harvey** in 1868 near Port Lincoln, South Australia. Their grand-daughter, **Susan Elizabeth**, is Jacqui Lainchbury's friend, who showed us the Carey letters! These letters are now with the Buttfield family in Western Australia.

John and Anna's fifth child was **Felix Montgomery Buttfield**. One of his grandsons was **David Buttfield** who for 16 years prior to his death in 2002 was Chairman of BaptistCare in Western Australia. A new facility has been named after him, the David Buttfield Centre.

It is interesting to have this contact with a direct descendant of William Carey and to be able to publish this brief report about the letters.

#### Sources:

*A Family Named Buttfield*, by Judy Peters and Cynthia Waddle, 1991

*Our First Hundred Years—The Baptist Church in South Australia*, by H. Escourt Hughes, 1937

## William Richer Baptist minister – Toowong pioneer

*by James W. Gibson*

*The author of this article is related by marriage to the descendants of the subject, William Richer, and has prepared this account as part of his family history research. A fully documented copy of the article is in the Baptist Church Archives, Queensland. We thank Mr Gibson for making his valuable work available to us. The second part will appear in our next issue.*



In the latter half of the 19th century, the name William Richer was synonymous with the Baptist Church in the emerging Brisbane suburb of Toowong. William Richer, a young English immigrant in 1869, himself recently converted to a deep Christian faith, was to become the founder of the Baptist community in Toowong, and serve as pastor of the church which he built – physically as well as spiritually – for over 30 years.

William Richer was born in Ardleigh, near Colchester, Essex, England in 1848, the son of Edmund Richer a coach builder, and Mary Ann Merchant. As a young man he came under the influence of William Booth and his wife, Christian missionaries in London. William Booth had been a Methodist minister but withdrew from the church in 1861 to dedicate his life to work among the poor. In 1865 he and his wife began evangelistic work in London. They held open-air meetings ministering to the poor in the East End of the city. They organised their converts into a mission band which developed into the organisation that in 1878 became known as the Salvation Army.

Their influence on William Richer was profound and was to be a feature of his life thereafter. He credited Mrs Booth with his Christian conversion at Croydon, in the south of London, in 1869. He would then have been 20 or 21 years of age. That year was very significant for William Richer. On 15 August 1869, in Croydon the place of his conversion, he married Sarah Williams and just a fortnight later, on the 29th of August, they sailed for Queensland aboard *Light Brigade*.

The voyage of the *Light Brigade* was one in a long line of immigrant voyages that were designed to bolster the population and, specifically, the labour force of the infant colony of Queensland in the first decade of its life. As a requirement of a contract between the Queensland Government and the Black Ball shipping line, the *Light Brigade*, like many of her kind before and after, was engaged to bring immigrants to Brisbane. Among her complement of 362 passengers, in a second cabin, were William Richer and his bride of a fortnight, Sarah.

*Light Brigade* was a square rigged timber sailing clipper ship of 1244 tons under the command of Captain Henry Evans. She left Gravesend on the 29th of August 1869 for a non-stop passage that took her across the Atlantic close to the South American continent, then south-east to pass south of Cape of Good Hope into the area of the Roaring Forties. She passed south of Tasmania without making landfall, then north up the Australian east coast, by-passing Sydney, bound for Moreton Bay. She rounded Cape Moreton and made anchorage in the Bay off-shore from the mouth of the Brisbane River on the 13th December 1869, after three and a half months at sea. William and Sarah, together with the other passengers, were ferried up-river by paddle steamer and disembarked in Brisbane town to face the challenge of a new life in an alien land with upside-down seasons, just ten days before Christmas.

It had been a favourable passage although sorely tested by gales south of Australia which *blew with the violence of a hurricane.* Fortunately they *lost no spars, but during the whole of this gale the decks were completely under water, and the ship rolling, labouring and straining fearfully.* A female passenger died of natural causes on the way out and four babies were born. A crewman died in a tragic accident while in port.

During the voyage, the Richers became friends with another immigrant family, Paul and Sarah Maggs and their three children; Kate aged 10, Adelaide 6, and Paul a toddler aged three. Their names are to be found in consecutive entries on *Light Brigade's* passenger lists. William Richer and Paul Maggs both declared their occupations to be *carpenter*, although in the case of Paul Maggs it was a fabrication. He was in fact a bookbinder and printer! The friendship was to survive the years and resulted in the marriage of William Richer's granddaughter to Paul Maggs' grandson 55 years later. Following their arrival in Brisbane, William Richer found work around the town, presumably as a carpenter, and Paul Maggs applied himself to his real occupation.

True to his Christian conviction, William lost no time in allying himself with the church in Brisbane, where he joined the Baptist congregation of Jireh Chapel. Within a short time he presented himself for training for the ministry under the incumbent pastor, Mr John Kingsford, and commenced lay preaching at the church.

Jireh Baptist Church was the second Baptist church established in Brisbane. It was located in Gipps Street, Fortitude Valley, on the northern side between Ann Street and Wickham Street, and opposite the future site of the proposed Holy Name Roman Catholic cathedral, only the foundations and crypt of which were ever built.

The Jireh congregation was formed out of the Wharf Street Baptist Church, (opened 1859), by members who withdrew on theological grounds. Jireh was formed and met initially in the School of Arts building in Queen Street. Moves were taken to procure a building of their own and ultimately the new Jireh Baptist Church was completed in December 1862. It accommodated about 300 people and had a school building attached. The total cost was about £2000. The *Brisbane Courier* reported:

*The opening services were held in the Particular Baptist Church, Fortitude Valley, which is called 'Jireh Chapel', yesterday morning and evening. [7 Dec 1862] The services were conducted by Rev John Bunyan McCure. . . . The building which is of brick with a shingled roof is a very neat edifice and will be out of the contractor's hands in a few days, it being completed with the exception of some details of minor importance.*

*The opening and recognition services took place on Wednesday last [10 Dec 1862] in the Jireh Chapel, Fortitude Valley, which belongs to the congregation of Particular Baptists under the pastoral charge of Mr John Kingsford. The building is about 62 feet long by about 30 feet wide, of brick on a stone foundation, with a shingle roof. The fittings internally are of pine with the exception of the seats which are of cedar. It is a very neat and substantial structure and reflects great credit on the contractor, Mr T Price.*

Within twelve months of arriving in Brisbane, Sarah Richer gave birth to their first child, a son, on 18 August 1870. He was named Alfred Hemsley. In the following years while still living in the town area of Brisbane, three more children were born; Lillian Pringle 12 August 1871, Charles Edmund 2 August 1873 and Frederick William 23 October 1874.

In 1875, William and Sarah and their three children went to live in the emerging 'sylvan' suburb of Toowong. It was recalled that

*in 1875 a Baptist pioneer aged 28 years, a member of Jireh Baptist Church, was to be seen wending his way from Brisbane on a bush road alongside our river, with his goods and chattels, towards a new suburb called Toowong, with his eldest boy of five years holding on to a rope with the family cow of those days, a nanny goat. This pioneer duly arrived at his selection in the bush, that was an allotment of land on the corner of Sherwood Road and Church Street [now Jephson Street] below the bakery where he had already erected a small cottage.'*

*The influence of William and Mrs Booth on William Richer was profound and was to be a feature of William Richer's life*

This small cottage, the home of William Richer, was used as the venue for prayer meetings and Bible study, the forerunner of the Toowong Baptist Church. Through these efforts he is recognised as being the instigator of the Baptist cause in Toowong.

By this time he had apparently developed his background in carpentry to the point of becoming a builder, presumably taking responsibility for the whole process of the construction of buildings, and he employed his building and architectural skills in the service of the church. He is credited with having built the Primitive Methodist Church at Toowong in 1876, at which time he would have been aged 28.

William Richer acquired land in what became St Osyth Street, Toowong, on the 9th of June 1879, when certificate of title CT 353/228 was issued in his name for subdivision 21 of portion 243, Parish of Enoggera, an area of 3 roods 28.5 perches. Portion 243 had originally been one of 55 lots in Brisbane's *south western environs* that had been released to the public at an auction sale held at the Police Office on 19th April 1859 when Brisbane was still part of New South Wales. It had been bought by John Connel Laycock of Sydney at the upset price of £2 per acre. He paid £30/10/- for his investment in the 15 acre 1 rood block, which was only one of nine that he bought that day. Twenty years later it passed to William Richer. What William paid for it is not known. The Richer allotment ran north-south with a frontage of 188 links to Sylvan Road (then Cemetery Road) and a frontage of 502 links to St Osyth Street – which may not have been named then. It was here that he planned a more commodious house for himself and his family. It would seem reasonable to suppose that William started work on his new house at the earliest opportunity and that he and his wife and children took up residence late in 1879 or early in 1880.

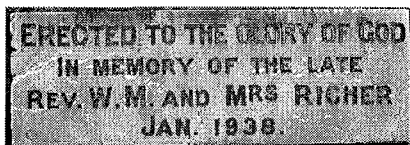
The Richer family grew, in the process of which William and Sarah, like so many others, experienced the agony of infant death, not once but three times.

Charles Edmund died on 28 August 1875, at age two; Harry James was born on 9 April 1876, but died in May 1877 aged 13 months; Albert Victor was born on 23 August 1877; Ernest Frank was born on 18 May 1879, but died on 21 March 1881, at 22 months; Hugh Reginald was born 1 February 1882; Rosa Edith was born on 13 July 1883. Six of nine children survived. In the end, only three children would live beyond their early twenties. Of the infant deaths, that of Ernest Frank was particularly tragic. According to the pages of the *Queenslander*;

*A sad accident occurred at Toowong on Monday last [21 March 1881] which resulted in the death of a fine little boy, the youngest child of Mr W Richer, builder. It appears that some alterations were being made in Mr Richer's house and a part of the gable had been taken out bodily, and fixed against a neighbouring tree. Beneath this tree Mr Richer's children were at play, and by some means – probably owing to the pressure of a puff of wind – the gable fell, crushing a little fellow two years of age. When taken out the child was found to be quite dead.*

On 3 July 1879, William's ship-board friend, Paul Maggs died in Kedron aged 42, leaving his widow Sarah Catherine and five children: Kate aged 20 and newly married, Adelaide 16, Paul not quite 13, Amy 7, and Alfred just 4. Yet the relationship between the families survived through the following generation. A daughter of Alfred Richer was destined to marry the son of Alfred Maggs!

William Richer continued to practise as a builder and building surveyor in Brisbane, and in 1881 was sufficiently well known and regarded to be elected to the Toowong Shire Council. In February 1881 the first municipal election for Toowong was held. It was reputed to be one of the most keenly contested of the many elections chronicled in the history of the town. As a result of the election the following nine members were elected: A C Gregory (later Sir Augustus Gregory), F Shaw, T E White, Thomas Mathewson, John William Todd, S W Jones, Charles Patterson, W Richer and Henry Sleath. At the head of the poll, Mr Charles Patterson with 213 votes became mayor of Toowong.



Memorial plaque at Toowong

In his capacity as a Toowong shire councillor it is quite possible that William Richer influenced the naming of the street that bounded the eastern alignment of his new property – Osyth or St Osyth. St Osyth was the name of a small coastal village in Essex, very close to where he had been born. It is also remarkably coincidental that the name of nearby Croydon Street reflects the name of the place where he married Sarah and where he experienced his conversion to Christianity! Booth Street, too, sounds suspiciously as though William Richer may have had a hand in commemorating the name of the person at whose hands he experienced his conversion. Richer would have been in an ideal situation to promote these names for new streets.

*(to be continued)*