

FILE

The Queensland Baptist Forum

The Journal of the Baptist Historical Society of Queensland

(formerly: Baptist Historical Society of Qld Newsletter)

No. 58 Aug 2004

News and Notes

“Baptist Heritage—Queensland”

At the last meeting of the BHSQ, it was decided to begin using a new name for our work—Baptist Heritage—Queensland. The official name of the Society has not changed, but it is hoped this new identification will give us more impact.

The Sesqui-Centenary—1855-2005.

Work is continuing strongly on the new history book to mark the 150th anniversary of Baptist work in Queensland to be celebrated next year, 2005. Research is continuing and the text of the book is in the process of being written. We are grateful for the interest being shown by many churches and Baptist people as Dr David Parker has been visiting churches and people around Queensland to gather information and ideas from them, with good support from the Baptist Union of Queensland officers. Some people have volunteered documents, information and assistance (while others have been invited to assist!). Decisions are yet to be made about the exact format of the book and some of the practicalities of the project. We expect to have an opportunity to present an update on progress as the 2004 Convention, and that there will also be a major focus during the 2005 Convention when the book itself is launched. The first church, City Tabernacle, is well advanced with its celebration plans. More assistance is welcome.

Baptist World Alliance Heritage & Identity Commission—2004 Annual meeting, Seoul Korea

This year there was good focus on Australia with two papers delivered. Dr Geoff Pound, Principal of Whitley College, Melbourne, spoke on the life and ministry of F.W. Boreham (1871-1959) who had a high profile pastoral and public ministry in New Zealand, Tasmania and Melbourne and was well known through his books around the world. Dr David Parker presented some findings from his research on Baptists in Queensland since World War II. Other papers were on Indian Baptists in South Africa and Baptists in North East India. For more information, go to <http://www.bwa-baptist-heritage.org/seoul.htm>

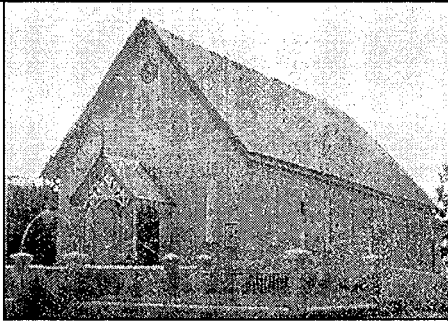
<p>The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland (est. 1984)</p> <p>Membership (2004) Individual \$10 p.a. Family \$15 p.a. Corporate \$20 p.a.</p> <p><i>Qld Baptist Forum</i> 3 issues p.a. Free to Members Others \$2 each posted</p> <p>President: Mr Eric W. Kopittke 98 Yallambee Rd., Jindalee 4074 Phone 3376 4339 Secretary: Dr Ken G. Smith, 110 White St, Graceville 4075 Phone 3379 6117</p> <p>www.pacific.net.au/~dparker/forum.html www.pacific.net.au/~dparker/order.html</p> <p>BWA Baptist Heritage & Identity Commission: www.bwa-baptist-heritage.org</p>	<p>CONTENTS</p> <p>Qld Baptist Forum No 58 Aug 2004</p> <p>News and Notes p 1</p> <p>Early Queensland Baptist Churches No 13 - Vulture St (South Brisbane) p 2</p> <p>William Richer by James W. Gibson (Part 2) p 3</p> <p>Baptist Work in the South Burnett by John Lane (Part 1) p 6</p>
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Early Baptist Churches in Queensland No 13

Vulture Street Baptist Church

Reproduced from *The Queensland Baptist* Jan 1902 p 7

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.



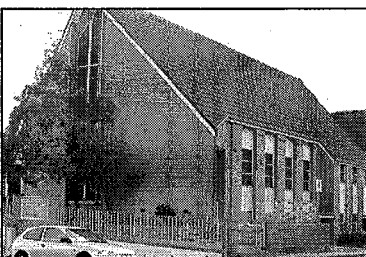
THIS church was formed about 1874 by a few Baptists who, while not uniting in fellowship with the Congregational and Presbyterian churches, had up till that time worshipped with them, but who desired that their children should grow up under Baptist teaching and influence. The first members met in the Mechanics' Institute and signed their names under the constitution which had previously been adopted.

Many of the original members have since passed to the fellowship of the Church triumphant, but some still remain, while the memory of those passed away is kept alive in the number of their descendants now in active membership. For some time the Lord's Day services were held in the hall abovementioned, but afterwards the present church was built on the specification of the late Mr. Benjamin Brooks, one of the members. The church was indebted to the Rev. E. Hooker for the regular conduct of the service until the arrival of a minister, for the selection of whom the church had enlisted the kind offices of the Rev. Dr. Angus. Considerable delay and disappointment were experienced, as the gentleman recommended by the doctor—a young man recently left the College—had gone to South Australia, and a letter posted to the address given failed to reach him, and was returned by the post-office as "left; address unknown."

Subsequently, the Rev. L. Davis, recommended by Dr. Angus, was called to the pastorate of the church. After a short period without a pastor, the Rev. W. Poole, who had been up to Brisbane on a visit, and had supplied the pulpit during that time, received an unanimous call to the pastorate, and commenced his labors in June, 1880. The history of the church since that time has been one of unbroken harmony, the pastor being held in great love and esteem by all the members, and, indeed by the community around. The increasing congregations soon necessitated an enlargement of the building to its present size, the seating accommodation being from 300 to 350.

The church suffered considerably by removals consequent upon the financial troubles of 1893, but is now recovering, and has recently reduced the mortgage by £50, and erected a brick retaining-wall and iron railings at a cost of about £100, which has been paid for, and which has materially improved the appearance of the building. It is hoped that efforts now in progress will result in the extinction of the debt during the present financial year.

The building is very conveniently situated, being easily accessible to a large and increasingly-populous district, furnishing ample material for the consecrated labors of a large staff of Sunday school teachers. Altogether, the outlook is very promising, as it may be expected that, as in the past, the accessions to the church have largely been from the Sunday school, so those who are now being taught may, many of them, yield themselves to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ in connection with the church. The accommodation for the school is very straitened, and as soon as the efforts mentioned have been completed, the enlargement of the building to give room for the increasing Sunday school will call for the energy of the members.

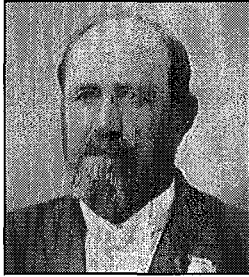


Note: Vulture Street, or South Brisbane, Church has enjoyed a long series of distinguished ministries (including W. Poole, 1880-1910; W. Bell, 1910-31; T.C. Warriner, 1937-40; J.E. White, 1948-52; R.E. Jarrott, 1952-60; N.W. Mergard, 1961-77) and has planted several outstations. The Wm Poole Memorial Hall was erected in 1922 and the church extensively rebuilt and enhanced 1962-71. The existing property is now about to be comprehensively redeveloped in a major multi-million dollar project recently adopted by the members.

William Richer Baptist minister - Builder and Architect - Toowong pioneer (Part 2)

by James W. Gibson

The author of this (slightly edited) 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 first part of this article appeared in Qld Baptist Forum No 56 Dec 2003.



William Richer's affiliation continued with Jireh Baptist, as did his leadership of the community of Baptists in his local area through the house meetings. The work at Toowong was progressed with vigour, and pressures mounted for a formal place of worship utilising the leadership of William Richer not only in the role of pastor, but as designer and builder as well. The Baptist Jubilee publication records:

The Toowong Church owes its initiation to its present [1905] pastor. Mr Richer was then in business and a member of Jireh, when from cottage meetings sprang the desire for a church in the locality. This took effect in May 1881; land was purchased and a small building erected. Mr Richer ministered to the congregation without salary for many years.'

The original building was of timber, 30 feet long by 24 feet wide with 14 feet 6 inch high walls. A steeply pitched roof was covered with shingles and carried on hammerbeam trusses exposed internally. The ceiling was lined with pine boards following the roof line. Across the front entry wall facing Jephson Street was an open verandah featuring lattice screen panels and a lean-to roof giving the entry 'a cool and graceful appearance.' The church was designed and constructed by its pastor, William Richer. The official opening service was held on Sunday 4 September 1881.

Within three and a half years the church was too small and William Richer was authorised to make the necessary alterations. A second, adjoining, allotment of land was purchased to provide for the enlargement. Presumably the work consisted of an extension to the length of the building and the addition of the transepts. The work was completed and the church reopened in 1884. The total cost is recorded as £700 with an incurred debt of £250. At the same time the church was incorporated under the Friendly Societies Act and the incorporated church became the property owner.

In January 1883, business interests – and perhaps church building responsibilities? – caused William Richer to resign his position on the Toowong Shire Council. At this time, as well as handling the extension to Toowong, he is credited with the design and construction of the Baptist Church at Albion, which opened in 1883. He was also then on the Improvement Committee of the Toowong Institute. William had been a foundation councillor serving a term of not quite two years. A number of foundation councillors have since been honoured in the naming of suburban streets, William Richer among them.

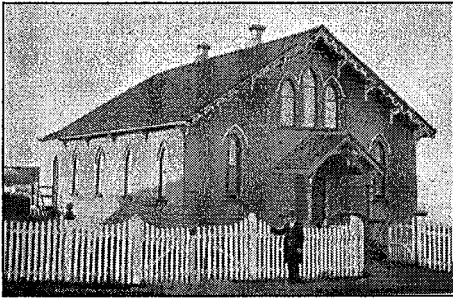
By 1883 when their last child was born, Sarah Richer then aged 35, had given birth to nine children. Three had died in infancy, three others were to die by their early 20s, leaving only three to survive to mature adulthood: Alfred Hemsley, b 1870 married Laura Hill 1893; Lillian Pringle, b 1871 married John George McLean 1892; Charles Edmund, b 1873 d 1875 aged 2; Frederick William, b 1874 d 1896 aged 22; Harry James, b 1876 d 1877 aged 1; Albert Victor, b 1877 d 1901 aged 23; Ernest Frank, b 1879 d 1881 aged 2; Hugh Reginald, b 1882 d 1895 aged 13; Rosa Edith, b 1883 d 1942 aged 58, did not marry.

At some time not yet determined, William Richer's brother Frederick, came from Colchester Essex to settle in Brisbane. Frederick Richer married Mary Eliza Hancock, the second daughter of Justinian Hancock of Barnstaple, Devon, at the home of his brother William, in St Osyth Street on 6 April 1885. In 1884 William subdivided his property into two allotments and sold, or transferred, the second to his brother. However, it seems that Frederick and Mary never lived on the land next to his brother and sister-in-law.

In 1885, while still in the role of pastor to the Toowong Baptist congregation, William Richer returned to England. Whatever the purpose of the visit, William was back in Toowong at the end of the year to be welcomed at a tea and public meeting held on Tuesday 8 December 1885. The meeting also celebrated the anniversary of the Toowong chapel. In speaking about his trip, Mr Richer was reported to have 'dwelt at some length on the growing proportions of the Salvation Army, and on the moral effect which this body was exercising on the community in England. He criticised somewhat severely the Anglican form of worship as celebrated

in the old country, which, in his opinion, in many cases was as diametrically opposed to the teachings and doctrines of the New Testament as are the services of Pagans and Mohammedans.'

While still maintaining his part-time pastoral and lay preaching responsibilities at the Toowong Baptist Church, William Richer's professional career took a new direction. In 1887 he won a tender to provide property valuations for the Toowong Shire Council. And in the following year, he entered into partnership with 34 year-old architect, Mark Taylor, bringing his skills as a builder into an architectural practice. Their new business was announced in the public notices of the *Brisbane Courier* on 1 May 1888. For the next three years the partnership was maintained as Taylor & Richer, Architects and Building Surveyors, during which time a variety of work was undertaken, among which were houses, shops and Divisional Board offices at Cleveland Road, Logan Road, Milton, Carina and Wynnum. Of special interest were the erection of the (Baptist?) church, Fairfield and the removal of the Baptist Church, Fortesque Street, Spring Hill to Nundah both in 1889.



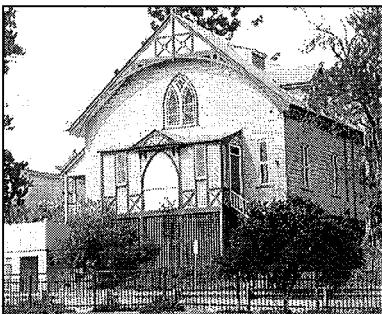
**Former Fortesque St Church
at Nundah**

During this period, in 1888, at age 40, William Richer was recognised by his colleagues within the Baptist fraternity in his appointment to the office of President of the Baptist Association of Queensland. He obviously had won the respect and confidence of his Baptist peers and demonstrated the ability to balance the demands of a commercial career with the committed vocation of a Christian layman.

On the 4th of June 1890, William Richer took out a mortgage over his property for the sum of £700. The loan was repayable on or by the 20th May 1893. But it seems that William did not have the capacity to pay. What happened that caused William Richer to lose his lovely home in St Osyth Street is not known. It was two years after he had gone into partnership with architect Mark Taylor and he may have needed capital to inject into the firm.

However, a year later the partnership of Taylor and Richer was dissolved and William Richer set up his own architectural practice. An advertisement in the *Brisbane Courier* in 1893 promoted Richer's sole practice: *'Wm Richer, Architect, Toowong will undertake reconstruction of buildings with all possible despatch.'* The devastating floods of early that year had left a trail of destruction that called for much remedial construction work. William Richer's career as a sole practitioner architect was pursued until about the turn of the century. Work attributed to him included the erection of the Petrie Terrace Baptist Church in Hale Street and other domestic projects. It seems that he relinquished his architectural career about 1903 to devote himself full-time to the work of the church.

He had been apparently incapacitated by a *'prolonged illness'* in the mid-1890s. It appears to have necessitated his resignation from his pastorate at Toowong from April 1894 to December 1896, leaving a vacancy to be filled for the time being by Rev H Cairns and A G Weller. By the end of the year, however, he was able to resume and he was again requested to take up the pastorate which he did, receiving *'but a small salary to compensate for the time devoted to the work of the church.'* His second term in the pastorate at Toowong lasted until 1911, a further 15 years. By then he was 63 years old and had been continuously engaged as the pastor of the Toowong church for 30 years except for that brief period when he had been ill. And he had been leading the *'cottage meetings'* for six years before that.



**Petrie Terrace Baptist Church
Hale Street (now a dwelling)**

His full-time work with the church, probably a factor in his retirement from architectural practice, included a term as Secretary of the Baptist Association of Queensland in 1903-06, and a second term as President, a truly unique distinction, in 1907-08. Also, in these later years, he fulfilled various pastoral roles on behalf of the Baptist Church of Queensland, including chaplaincy positions with the Goodna Asylum, Brisbane City Mission, St Helena Mission, at Dunwich, and other hospitals. He was also a member of the Board of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, and a member of the British-Israel Truth Society.

It appears to have been about the time when he temporarily relinquished the pastorate at the Toowong church, from mid-1894 to the end of 1896, that he moved from his home in St Osyth Street and took up residence in what was then Riverview Terrace, but has since become Penrose Street. The circumstances of the move remain unclear but no doubt flow from the loss of his home to the mortgagees. In 1895 he would have been aged 47, and apparently still practising as an architect. His two eldest children,

Alfred and Lillian were now married, so four children were likely to have still been living at home. But the tragedy of family death was not very far away; Hugh was to die in November of that year, and Frederick at the end of the next year 1896. Even Albert was to die within six years, in 1901. The family was destined to be decimated by death, six of their nine children lost before their time.

In the postal directories from 1910, William Richer's name is identified as 'Rev' (the reverend), seeming to imply that he had achieved the status of a fully ordained minister from that time as distinct from the role of lay pastor that he had held until then. William Richer is numbered with others, J Kingsford, W Moore, T Leitch, J B Sneyd, and C Kruger, as being men whose ordination was conferred by the church without the prerequisite of a formal course of study. It was a recognition that *'in the early days of establishment, the work of laymen was of utmost importance.'* Men such as these *'were selected by the churches under the leading of the Lord of the Church, appointed to lead the congregation or help form the church, and eventually assumed the title and status of otherwise ordained ministers.'*

William Richer retired from the Toowong Baptist Church in 1911. As it is recorded, *'In March 1911, the pastor intimated that he would be leaving for England in June and tendered his resignation as pastor of the church after 30 years service, except for a brief period as previously mentioned. The resignation was accepted with great regret . . .'* He was now 63 and no doubt felt the need to retire. Rosa aged 28 and unmarried, may still have been living at home, but there would have been little else to prevent him and Sarah returning home to England for a nostalgic visit.

But William Richer had not yet finished his service at Toowong. Although a new minister had been called to replace him in June 1912, the new ministry was short-lived due to illness and Rev William Richer was requested to take up the ministry again. So the ministry was continued by him in his retirement for two years until March 1914 when he again tendered his resignation for an overseas trip, this time to visit Scotland. In May 1914, Rev Robert Kerr became the minister of the congregation.

On 5 April 1924, at the age of 75 or 76, Rev William Richer, minister within the Baptist Union of Queensland officiated at the marriage of Florence (Flo) Richer, his granddaughter, and Alfred Eric Maggs, grandson of the Paul Maggs who had been his ship-board companion 55 years previously.

Seven months later, on 28 November 1924, William Richer died, aged 76. His funeral service was held in the Baptist Tabernacle in Brisbane on the following day and he was buried in the Toowong Cemetery. A marble plaque on the wall of the Toowong Baptist Church commemorates his life and service to the church. It reads:

*He being dead yet speaketh
In loving memory of Rev William Richer
Foundation pastor of this church
Who faithfully served it for over 30 years.
Called home 28th November 1924, aged 76
Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord
They rest from their labours and their works do follow them
This tablet was erected by those to whom he was endeared for his
Christian ministry and genial kindness*

Sarah Richer survived William by 13 years, continuing to live on at Riverview Terrace until the time of her death on 15 February 1937. According to her obituary, she had *retained an active interest in church affairs at the City Baptist Tabernacle* until only three years before her death at the age of 92. She too was buried in the Toowong Cemetery.

Of their children, Alfred Hemsley Richer, married to Laura Hill in 1893, maintained an active role within the Toowong Baptist Church and in positions of responsibility within the Baptist Union. He is also recorded as being vice chairman of the Sunday School department of the Baptist Association of Queensland in 1923. Like his father he held the office of President of the Baptist Union twice; in 1919-20 and in 1933-34. For many years he was associated with the Brisbane City Mission, and held the presidency for seven years. He was also involved in community affairs. In many ways his life paralleled that of his father. By trade he was a builder and is remembered as having built numbers of houses in the Sandgate area; he was an elected alderman of the Toowong Town Council for many years and Mayor for two years, 1914-16; and he was an active Baptist layman throughout his life.

Baptist Work in the South Burnett

By John Lane

Rev Dr John Lane, pastor of Wondai Baptist Church has prepared a detailed overview of the birth and development of Baptist churches in the South Burnett area of Queensland as background for the 150th anniversary history of Baptists in Queensland. This is the first part of his interesting and valuable article.

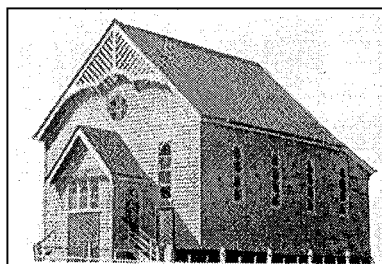
We may survey the progress of the Baptist cause in the South Burnett region in five distinct phases:

PHASE 1 – NANANGO

We deal here with the first attempt to establish a Baptist witness in Nanango, which takes us back as far as the year 1890 with the arrival of Rev. T.U. Symonds. Almost fifty years had elapsed since the first white settlers took up holdings in the district, with the timber-getting industry yet to realize its full potential. Of interest to Baptists is that William Albert Wilson, the son of Rev. Benjamin Gilmore Wilson, in 1878 married Annie Clapperton the widow of the owner of Nanango and Tarong station runs. Wilson was influential in the development of Tarong, living there until his and Annie's retirement from station life and removal to Sandgate in 1898. It may be Wilson who is referred to in a history of Nanango Shire as "W. Wilson, a Baptist minister from Brisbane", who arrived in May 1864 to hold services and to urge the setting up of Sunday Schools with a view to a daily school being formed. While it may be too bold a claim to trace, as this record does, the Baptist Church's history back to his coming, no doubt his presence in the Nanango district played a part in the pioneering of the Baptist cause, with Mr. Symonds settling there and commencing services of worship. Symonds was encouraged in his labours, with Mr John Richardson soon professing conversion to Christ and confessing his faith in Believers' Baptism. The work spread further north to Coolabunia where a church building was erected, and definite results were registered. A further extension of the Nanango work occurred further to the south at Blackbutt, where a cottage meeting was commenced.

The work continued for some four years. However, when the development of the surrounding district entered into a period of arrest, the Baptist cause along with others was allowed to languish, with Mr. Symonds being moved to another area.

PHASE 2 – WONDAL



Wondai Baptist Church

In October of 2003 Wondai celebrated its centenary, with Wondai Baptist Church having entered the final decade of its first 100 years of witness in the town. Early in the district's development several families with Baptist sympathies took advantage of the opening up of land at Wondai, Mondure, Proston and Speedwell for closer settlement. They brought with them a vision for the establishment of Christian work. These families included the Hornes, Daveys, Thornes, Coulsons, Johannessens and McAlisters who moved to the area from the south of the State, and who joined with others in the formation of the Chelmsford United Protestant Church.

In 1907 Mr. F. H. Jones with his family moved from Brisbane to Wondai, where he began a modest tool shop beside his home. Despite a fire in the town in 1912 his business went from strength to strength, until in a short space of time he owned the town's sawmill and joinery, as well as conducting the local undertaking company for some years. With the arrival from England of Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Clark and family in January 1911, along with Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Perkins and family also from England, a nucleus of Baptists including the Jones family began to evaluate the possibilities of establishing a Baptist cause in Wondai.

The Clarks had been met at Brisbane wharf by Rev. T.U. Symonds, who was by this time the Home Mission Superintendent of the Baptist Union of Queensland. In June of that same year Mr. Symonds travelled to Wondai to discuss the commencement of a Baptist work there. On Sunday June 20 he conducted the first Baptist services in the old School of Arts in Bramston Street. This beginning was followed by a service at Mondure on July 30, revealing the outward-looking nature of the work which persisted in the years to come. The Home

Mission Committee, on receiving a report of the meetings held in June, resolved to establish a Baptist Church. Their choice of a pioneer Minister was Pastor (later Rev.) Ralph Sayce who was later to render distinguished service to Queensland Baptists as General Secretary of the Union.

Mr. Sayce was later requested by the Wondai Church to record the commencement of the work at Wondai from his side of the story. The following is the result, in a letter dated November 3, 1935:

Following several visits to the Wondai district by the Rev. T.U. Symonds, and conferences with the local friends, of whom the Jones and Clark families may be specially mentioned, the Home Mission Committee of the Baptist Union (then Association) of Queensland decided to establish work at Wondai. The choice of Leader fell upon Pastor R. Sayce, then Second Minister in the Beaudesert district, and, on the 22nd July, 1911, the Revs. J. Mursell, A.T.S., and T.U. Symonds visited Beaudesert, and placed before Mr. Sayce the proposal that he should go to Wondai. At that time the Beaudesert work was doing well. Some fourteen centres of activity were being maintained, and prospects were excellent. In these circumstances Mr. Sayce hesitated to move, until he was given the assurance that another man would immediately be sent to carry on work in conjunction with the Rev. A.E. Forbes, who was then in charge.

August 12th was Mr. Sayce's last Sunday in Beaudesert. On the following night he was farewelled, and on Tuesday morning he left with his horse, by train for Brisbane, en route to Wondai.

Tuesday night was spent at the home of the Rev. T.U. Symonds, Paddington, and on Wednesday morning the overland journey to Wondai was commenced. Lunch was enjoyed at the home of the Rev. E. Barnett, Nundah, and the first stage of the journey concluded on reaching the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jensen, Wamuran, where Wednesday night was spent. Resuming the journey on Thursday morning, Woodford, Kilcoy, and other places were passed through, and the night spent at the home of Mr. O. Hawkins, between Kilcoy and Moore.

On Friday, Colinton, Moore, Taromeo were passed through, and Nanango reached. The last stage – from Nanango to Wondai was easily covered on Saturday. Mr. W.H. Clark had sat on a fence by the roadside for some considerable time, and finally had left his post, or rather, rail, just before the new preacher arrived. The new comer, stopping in front of Mr. Warby's store proceeded to enquire the way to his place of abode, and soon found that he was addressing one of the Baptist company – the future Mrs. W.H. Clark. Passing on to the home of Mr. and Mrs. G. Muller, he made that his place of abode for the whole period of his stay in Wondai.

The first Services were held in the School of Arts (?) (Why it bore that name was not apparent, since neither in appearance nor use, could it be associated with the Artistic) on Sunday, 19th August, 1911. At the opening Service the congregation numbered 12. On the stage and floor of the building were the marks of the previous night's boxing match, and there was little about the meeting place to give anything in the way of inspiration. From that small beginning the work grew. In a few weeks services were commenced at Chelmsford, Greenview, Murgon Scrub, Speedwell, Kinleymore, and later at Leafdale, and Abbeywood.



Rev Ralph Sayce (centre) helping erect Wondai Baptist Church

From August 1911 to September 1912 the Wondai Services continued to be held in the School of Arts, but all the time preparations were made for something better. The present church site was secured, and steps taken to erect a building, and prepare for the formation of the Church. Finally, as the result of generous giving, and hard working by the zealous band of local workers, the church was created, and, in the month of September 1912, just about 13 months after the commencing of the work the Church was formed, and the Building opened, by the then President of the Union – Rev. E. Barnett.

Mr. Sayce concluded his Pastorate on the last day of March 1914, and removed to Clayfield, near Brisbane.

Speedwell

The outstation at Speedwell deserves special mention, as the work begun there continues today from the town of Proston. The name of the district encapsulates the English origin of the early settlers in two ways: 1. Like the Pilgrim Fathers who sailed to America in the "Mayflower" and "Speedwell", they, too, were seeking a new life and witness, and 2. They recalled a small, blue flower that grew wild in their English countryside. The Perkins family had intended to settle at Bairnsdale, in Victoria, but through the persuasions of a Migration Officer who boarded their ship, they came to the only British Migration Centre in Queensland, an area some 40

miles in a northerly direction from Wondai, and took up a selection of land. Thus the district of Speedwell came into being.

Once established there, these hardy pioneers lost no time in organizing church services, and most Sunday evenings met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. R.W. Potter, where the first Sunday school was also conducted. By this time a Deacon of the Wondai Church, Mr. Perkins set his sights on the erection of a permanent structure for church purposes at Speedwell, and so donated one acre of land as the site. An appeal for funds was successful, and a timber building measuring 20 feet by 20 feet took shape at the cost of 100 pounds, with stipulation given for its use by any recognised Protestant minister for the conduct of services. It was officially opened and dedicated to the Lord's work on April 16, 1916, with Rev. R. Sayce officiating. Extensions to the building were opened on June 16, 1946. In 1967 this building was relocated to Proston, which was by that time the centre of a settled population.

It is worthy of note that two young men of the Potter family during the days of the witness at Speedwell went on to render great service in Christian service for the Methodist Church. The names of Revs. S.Y. and E.E. Potter are held in high regard, the latter being well known for his great contribution to Bible College work.

Another work commenced from Wondai, but which later lapsed, was at Durong, some 75 kilometres from the centre. The first services were held at the home of Mrs. McAllister Snr., and were later moved to the Durong School. Denominational support for Wondai Church in this outreach was very encouraging, resulting in a decision made to erect a church building. This was facilitated by a gift of land from Mr Harry Horne, and a building 26 feet by 20 feet in dimension was constructed, being opened on June 4, 1934 for use not only by Baptists, but also by Methodists, Lutherans and the Salvation Army. The Gospel Wagon manned by Baptist Union Evangelist Rev. A.J. Maxwell Howard (1946-49) visited Durong to the great appreciation of the local Christians. Mr (later Rev.) Alex Brown also conducted a mission at Durong, at which Mr Douglas McAllister responded to the missionary call, subsequently serving the Lord in Brazil.

Wondai's pastor at this time of the opening of the Durong church building was Rev. E.V. Keith, during whose pastorate (1932-1938) it was noted that the area served by the Wondai Church was the largest Baptist circuit in Queensland. Other areas not yet mentioned here where a witness of some kind was given included Basin, Charlestown, Wooroolin, Home Creek, Cushnie, Tingoorra, Stalworth, Cooyar, Tarong, Lawson (now called Brigooda), and Stonelands. Bible Studies are still conducted from Wondai at the two last-named centres. (Other centres covered at earlier times will be mentioned in considering the Murgon Church's ministry).

Ministers of Wondai Baptist Church following the pioneering ministry of Pastor R. Sayce were Rev. H. Page (1914-15), with a short ministry by Mr S. Glassop (1915) terminated through ill-health. Rev. W. Shaw served from 1915 to 1916, Rev. B.H. Longfield from 1916 to 1918, and Rev. Gray A. Parker from 1918 to 1920. Ministries of brief duration continued for the next ten years with Rev. P.R. Currell (1921-23), Pastors H.H. Simpson (1924-25), C.W. Noble (1925-27) and E.G. Bulgin (1927-28). Rev. C.W. Noble returned for a further two years, after which a pastorless period extended until 1932, when, as earlier noted, Rev. E.V. Keith began his yeoman service. Later in his ministry he was assisted by Pastor (later Rev.) J.T. Probert, who married a local girl Miss Marjory Clark and who served again at a later period as Honorary Pastor (1963-64). Rev. W.K. Holmans served from 1939 to 1945 during the difficult and demanding war years, and was followed by Rev. R.Y. McAllister, a Murgon businessman in Hardware who served in an honorary capacity until the arrival of Rev. S. Roy Jensen in 1949. During the McAllister years the Wondai manse was constructed, and is still in use today, with Mr and Mrs Jensen the first occupants.

With the work now at its zenith, the next decade witnessed further consolidation. Rev. Benjamin Hohnke succeeded Mr Jensen in 1953, playing an important role in the construction of the Sunday School Hall in one day (September 17, 1955). On Mr Hohnke's departure in 1956, Rev. R.T. Wakeling took up the work for three years until 1959. The following year Rev. P.J. Evans assumed the pastorate, serving until 1964. Of interest is the fact that he had entered the ministry in 1925 from Wondai Church, serving in those early years as Church Secretary. His secular work at that time had been as a sawmiller in the employ of F.H. Jones since his arrival from England in 1922. He was succeeded in the pastorate by Rev. R.C. Bickerton (1965-69), during whose ministry the church building at Speedwell was moved into Proston. More building work took place at Wondai, with extensions made to the church hall in the final year of the ministry of Rev M.V. Steer (1969-1971). Pastor R.D. Quilliam served from 1972 to 1974, followed by Rev. N.H.J. Suffolk who exercised a ministry of some length (1975-81). Pastor K.J. Brennan served briefly from 1982 to 1983. Rev. R.M. Niebling ministered from 1985 until ill-health cut short his ministry in 1987. The Church's longest ministry was that of Pastor B.R. Morgan, who served from 1990 until early 2002. Rev. Dr J.H. Lane took up the ministry in 2002. Though the membership has declined from its peak of earlier days, the work still shows much potential, with many contacts made through its varied activities.

(To be continued)