

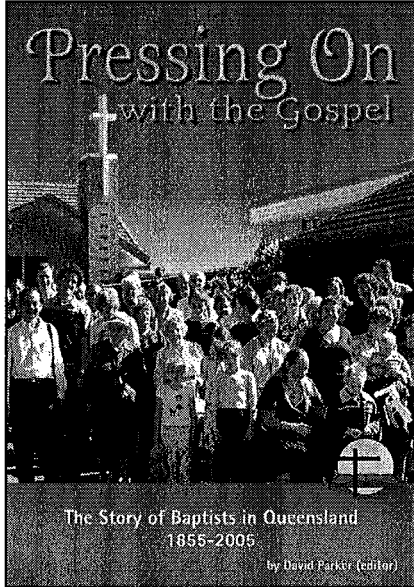
The Queensland Baptist Forum

The Journal of the Baptist Heritage Queensland

(formerly: Baptist Historical Society of Qld Newsletter)

No. 60 Aug 2005

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Pressing on with the Gospel

The story of Baptists in Queensland 1855-2005

by

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CONTENTS

Qld Baptist Forum No 60 Aug 2005

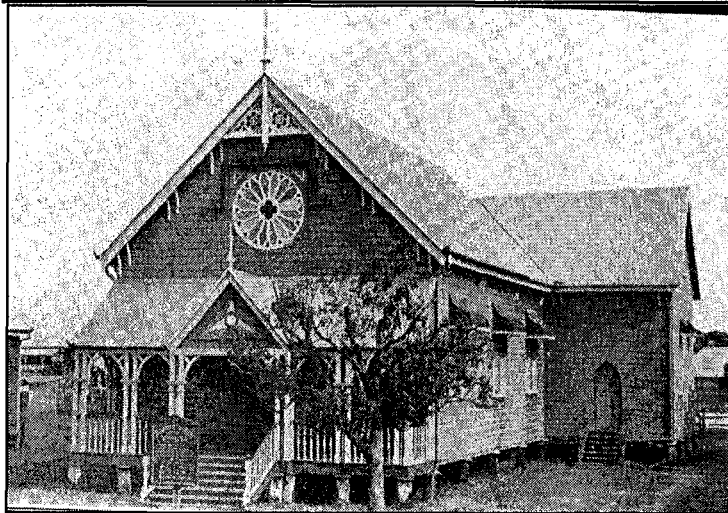
Pressing on with the Gospel	p 1
Early Queensland Baptist Churches No 15 - Maryborough	p 2
Aboriginal Ministry in Queensland By David Parker	p 3
The Lad from Spring Hill—Rev Ted Smith By Marie Lines	p 5

Early Baptist Churches in Queensland—No 15

Maryborough Baptist Church

Reproduced from *The Queensland Baptist* April 1902 p 49-50

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.



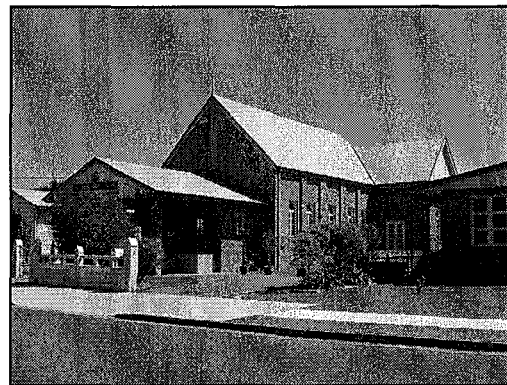
Our illustration this month is the Baptist Church, Maryborough, as recently altered and enlarged. The photograph is an exceedingly good one and the building shows to great advantage. The front portion of the building was erected in the middle of the year 1885, from plans and specifications supplied by Mr. R. Gailey, architect, and cost £442. This portion is 40 feet by 28 feet, and will accommodate about 200 people when fully seated. There is a large ornamental rose-window in the front, which lends an attractive appearance

to the building. In addition there are side windows in Gothic style, eight of which open top and bottom, giving good light and ventilation.

The back portion of the building is new, and is in the form of transepts in accordance with the original design. But although thus connected with the main building the back wall of the latter is still standing and divides the old from the new. The idea is to use the new building for Sunday school purposes, as the rapid and increasing growth of the school necessitated enlargement. This now gives a splendid school hall 54 feet by 20 feet, well-lighted and ventilated, which is a most serviceable addition to the property. The cost is £239. The tender was let in September, and the building opened in December of last year, giving general satisfaction. It should also be stated that there are two vestries at the back of the new building, and a detached infant class room.

The church also possesses a Manse, which was erected quite recently, and is now occupied by the pastor and family. It contains seven rooms and is surrounded by an airy verandah, stands high, and is situated on the church ground to the right of the church building.

The present pastor of the church, as is generally known, is Rev Charles Boyall, who last year was President of the Baptist Association of Queensland. Mr Boyall is surrounded by a band of earnest Christian workers, and has seen considerable spiritual and material progress during his ministry in Maryborough. With the increased facilities for carrying on the good work supplied by the recent alterations, still better work may be anticipated in the future, and that such may be realised we are sure all our friends will fervently pray.



Aboriginal Ministry in Queensland

by David Parker

This is one of the feature pages from the new history of Baptists in Queensland, Pressing on with the Gospel. There are nearly a dozen of these throughout the book focusing on special topics which have been important for Baptist witness during the 150 years since it was established in 1855. Others include multicultural ministry, Baptists and Politics and Migration.

The failure of the Gossner Mission to the Aborigines of Moreton Bay was an ominous sign for the future. In the years after the establishment of Baptist churches, there was usually only incidental contact with individual Aborigines. The same was true for the South Sea islanders (Kanakas) who were brought to Queensland from the 1860s as indentured labourers to work under harsh conditions on the sugar and cotton plantations.

By the end of the 19th century, the government had set up Reserves in many parts of the state into which Aborigines were forcibly removed for their "protection" (legislation controlling Aborigines was in force until the early 1970s). Baptist churches in the vicinity of Reserves at places like Cherbourg and Woorabinda were not generally involved in any on-going organised ministry to the residents. Instead, they left this work to the specialist groups like the Aborigines Inland Mission (AIM), which did however involve many individual Baptists. For example, Wes Caddy spent 35 yrs with the AIM in various parts of Australia, and then became a pastor in Queensland; others, including lay people, with experience in Aboriginal work included E Brainwood, E Buckley, M Munro, J Leitch, R Stewart, K Bowen, S Mollenhauer, and A Rosser.

However, in the late 1920s following work by the AIM at Palm Island (which had an infamous reputation as a place where troublesome Aborigines were often sent) about 75 people were converted and baptised. A report to the Baptist Assembly said that in association with the Townsville church, they had been formed into what was "so far as we know, the only Aborigines Baptist Church in Australia". At about the same time there were also baptisms reported at Murgon, and an active outreach at Urangan, while some ministry occurred later at Charters Towers and North Rockhampton.

The situation was similar for Kanakas, where, for example, in the Bundaberg area, the Queensland Kanaka Mission was active; Arthur Eustace worked here in the 1890s before moving to Clayfield church. The Bundaberg West (Millbank) church (formed 1986) has its roots in the Kanaka community associated with the Payne Street Baptist Mission, which may extend back to the early 1900s; through the ministries of people like Mr Joe Teare and Rev JH Bird, former missionary and pioneer pastor of Bundaberg, earlier work was consolidated during the late 1940s with a Sunday School and regular services. Many descendants of Kanakas are involved in the Bowen church, formed in the late 1970s. Mackay is another centre of importance.

Australian Baptist work amongst Aborigines, which began at the government station of Yuendumu, Northern Territory in 1947, concentrated on central Australia, and did not extend to Queensland until much later, and then only in a minor way.

As late as 1974, when aboriginal issues were becoming prominent in the community at large, research by Ed Kingston found almost no involvement by Baptist churches—there were only five members in the entire state who were Aborigines. He found that cultural attitudes, not geographical remoteness, were the main factors causing this, so he urged the Union to make bold moves (as it was doing in other areas of ministry at the time), to meet the challenges of welfare, education, training, and issues of social policy. A few years later, the Baptist Social Justice group did take up Aboriginal concerns, generating some discussion; but it faded out soon enough.

By the 1960s concern was growing amongst some Queensland Baptists about the lack of active ministry. Signs of hope occurred in 1964 when Graham Paulson, formerly of Fingal NSW and with an AIM background, enrolled for study at the college, funded by the Federal Home Mission. In 1968, he was the first Aboriginal Baptist to be ordained in Australia. He was commissioned for work with the Federal Home Mission at Hooker Creek, Northern Territory, commencing in 1969. This was the beginning of a

long and varied ministry to his own people. In 1970, with his wife Iris (from Cherbourg), he became the first resident missionary in nearby Wave Hill, and he was accepted as one who "thinks like we do." Within a few months, this led to a remarkable spiritual breakthrough. By then the Aboriginal land rights movement had begun with the big "walk off" from Wave Hill in 1966; the leader, Vincent Lingiari, OAM, became a member of the Baptist Church in 1972. The land rights movement was beginning to make a wide impact across the nation, and caused considerable unrest through the 1970s.

In Queensland, serious consideration was now being given to aboriginal ministry. In 1975, Joseph Kirk was appointed as a student-worker to develop an Aboriginal church, but this initiative did not survive. At the same time, Ed Kingston was beginning a ten year ministry at Yuendumu. Others who served included Barry and Lois Downes and Ken and Gwen Steer. The ABMS took Aboriginal work over from the Federal Home Mission in 1978, and in 1981 supported the Mount Isa church in its ministry to the Aboriginal people in the north-west of the state with the appointment of missionaries, Rev & Mrs Malcolm Murdoch. In 1989, an aboriginal pastor, Norm Terrick worked at the church for a four year period.

It was recognized that cultural and social differences made it difficult to integrate Aboriginal work into the existing churches, and for several years it was not clear how best to proceed. A review by the Baptist Union in 1980 recommended against starting up any separate Baptist ministry, but endorsed cooperation with existing Aboriginal groups and their leaders, such as "Aunty Jean" Phillips; it also encouraged churches to take up any opportunities they had to assist Aboriginal ministries in their own area, including making buildings available.



Aboriginal Fellowship at Urangan around 1929.
Rev CE Martin rear left and Rev B Hewison
Home Mission Supt front right (photo: J Sands)

church planting, training and evangelistic work. When the main ministry focus of AIBCA was moved to the states, and a Queensland section established in 1994, it was regarded as a sign of "a broader commitment" by the Baptist Union to ministry with Aboriginal people. The adoption of a statement of reconciliation by the Assembly in 1997 was a similar sign, but there was little follow through, and AIBCA soon disappeared. In 1999 Sharon Martin was appointed a Coordinator of Ethnic and Aboriginal Ministries.

Graham Paulson was elected as Queensland Union's first Aboriginal President for 2003-04. By now Aboriginal ministry was floundering through shortage of personnel and lack of financial support, even though in the previous decade there had been an increase of more than 60% in the number of people of indigenous origin in the state; this brought the figure to more than 110,000, or 3.1% of the population, constituting 27.5% of the total in the country. Paulson's presidential address reflected the frustrations of this difficult work, and, thirty years after Ed Kingston's solidly based appeal, made a fervent plea for the support of the denomination in tackling it.

Prepared in consultation with Rev Graham & Iris Paulson

Finally, in 1987, when the Paulsons returned to Queensland, the Murri Evangelical Baptist Church was set up at Dinmore, in conjunction with the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship and with the support of the Baptist Union and the encouragement of its leaders. The expectation was that a network of such churches would be formed, complete with leadership training and various practical services. Over the next few years, centres were established on the north side, at Wynnum and other places, but with only fluctuating success. During these years several Aboriginal men were in training, but no more were ordained in Queensland.

In 1992, the Aboriginal and Islander Baptist Council of Australia (AIBCA) was set up under the leadership of Graham Paulson, with assistance by Rev Peter Archer seconded from the ABMS, as an indigenous organisation to foster its own

The Lad from Spring Hill

By Marie Lines

It was during the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Tabernacle that I heard about a young man whose life had been changed through his contact with the City Tabernacle Baptist Church. There is little written about the life of A.E. Smith. I thought I would piece together the story of "the lad from Spring Hill" as an encouragement to see, during this 150th anniversary, that many stories could be told. This is but one of them. Gwen, his deceased daughter, was a personal friend of mine and her 3 children, A.E. Smith's grandchildren, still are. One of them, Ross, trained at the Queensland Baptist College of Ministries and is now ministering at Tully Baptist. I had no idea in 1990 of the connection between A.E. Smith and Gwen

Marie E. Lines. Adelaide.

Our story starts in England in the town of Reading in Berkshire, when on the 8th September 1898 at 34 Filey Road, a beautiful boy, Albert Edwin, was born to Emma Louisa and Edwin Smith. Edwin was a telephone wiresman by trade. By the time they decided to immigrate to Australia in 1913 the family consisted of four children; Albert Edwin, being the third, was 14 years old when they arrived. Throughout his life he was known and written about as Ted, A.E. Smith or Rev. A.E. Smith. The family was nominated by Catherine Worman, of 192 Wharf Street, Brisbane, a personal friend. They journeyed on the passenger ship "The Perthshire" of 5,877 tons, arriving in Brisbane on the 29th May 1913, having set out in March. The Captain was C.J.M. Thompson. On arrival they lived at 72 Rogers Street, Spring Hill in a teacher's cottage belonging to the Central School. This school was established in 1875 and is one of Brisbane's oldest. Edwin found work as a wiresman, his trade in England. Nothing is known of where Ted worked after he arrived in Brisbane, until 1919 when he pastored with the Baptist Home Missions.

Spring Hill was the name given to this part of Brisbane but earlier the aboriginal people had called it Woomboonygoroo. Springs were a feature of this hilly area where the Turbal Aboriginal people lived. There was a camp at Victoria Park near to Boundary Street. They were not permitted to proceed any nearer to the city. Spring Hill was originally forested with gum, wattle and dense bush. The bushland formed a backdrop to the developing settlement. Spring Hollow was the original name near to Rogers Street where the Smiths settled. Spring Hill had an early landmark in the convict-built windmill constructed on Windmill Hill; the convict settlement was near to the Brisbane River. The City Tabernacle is not far from this well known tourist attraction. After its completion in 1890 it too would have been a landmark. The building of multi-storied buildings has overshadowed these once prominent landmarks and the view of them from the City

CITY TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH

The lower parts of Spring Hill came to be occupied by 'workers dwellings'. It was to these homes that Ethel Hiron, known as Sister Ethel, a deaconess from the Tabernacle, visited. Ethel, a great-aunt of Mrs. Ruth Elferson, was energetic, but also prim and proper. Miss Hiron had trained at a College in St. Kilda, Melbourne, for four years to be equipped for service as a deaconess. She was the first deaconess at the City Tabernacle, appointed in 1911 during Rev. Mursell's ministry, on a salary of £50 per year. Her visiting of the Spring Hill area, as well as Woolowin, West End, Paddington and Red Hill, was amazing. She visited over 1000 homes each year. Sister Ethel wrote in the Tabernacle yearbook (1914-1915) "that in every home there is a welcome. In most of the homes literature is left and an invitation to come to Church and the various meetings held".

These meetings included the Mothers' Meeting and the Lily Band where the young women of the area could come for fellowship and attend classes in plain sewing, fancywork and elocution. Women from the Tabernacle helped tutor these classes, but Sister Ethel said that she was sorry to report the helpers did not come as regularly as "one would wish".

It would have been on one of these visits to Spring Hill that she encountered the Smith family. Ted, having decided not to go to the Church of England services any more, was invited to the City Tabernacle

Sunday School. Here he felt welcomed and was placed in a class with six others his age; his teacher being Mr. Kenneth Lethem. Ted writes of this time:

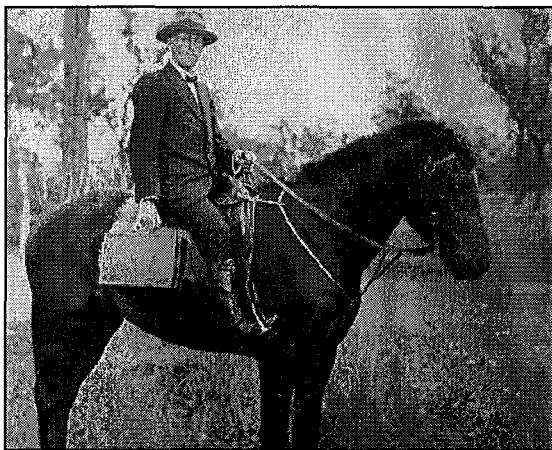
Mr. Lethem was a man of deep spirituality to whom I owe more than I can ever hope to repay. Under his earnest teaching and the influence of his noble character I was led to feel a need of a Saviour, and I gave my heart to Christ, and from that time there has been a new power in my life, which has enabled me to conquer sin, and given me a joy I had never known before. I joined the class for Baptism which was held by the late Archibald G. Brown, of London, who was then on a visit to Brisbane and was baptized by him on 25th July and became a member on the 18th August 1915.

There were a number of visiting preachers to the Tabernacle during the interim period before Rev. W.G. Pope commenced his ministry; Archibald G. Brown was one of them. There were two young men from Ted's class who went into the ministry in Queensland, and they were most probably William Kirby Holmans Jnr. and Albert Chisholm. They later both went on to work in Queensland Baptist Community Services. The 1915-1916 Year Book notes that they were baptized along with Ted.

The Rev. William George Pope was called to the ministry of the City Tabernacle in 1916 and served until 1926. He was a vigorous, versatile man who had many years of missionary experience among the Muslim people before coming to Australia. He was Chairman of the Home Missions Board for a number of years and, no doubt, his influence on Ted's life was great.

Martha Plested was the first woman from Queensland to go to East Bengal in 1885. She spoke, on furlough, at the Tabernacle in 1910 to a congregation of 800 and maybe her story had an influence on him in later years, as A.E. Smith became the first Queensland male to go to out with the Baptist Foreign Mission Society.

Mr. Lethem was a member of the Baptist Young Men's Fellowship that met weekly at the City Tabernacle. Although he was much older, he had a compulsion to win young men to the Lord and encouraged them to train for ministry. Mr. Lethem was a banker, a bachelor, and commenced the adventurous "Easter Bay Trips" to Moreton Bay. The young men nicknamed him "The Admiral" and that title remained with him until his death. He provided the land for the campsite at Currumbin., as well as making generous donations.. These were the early days of Baptist Camping in Queensland.



Rev AE (Ted) Smith on Home Mission duties

All of these influences were no doubt instrumental in leading Ted to apply for service with the Australian Board of Baptist Foreign Mission. He wrote:

In 1919 Rev. Palmer representing the Congo Mission preached at the Tabernacle and at the close of the service he made a powerful appeal to the young men and women of the congregation to consecrate their lives to the service of Christ for the extension of His Kingdom on Foreign shores. In the prayer that followed I felt the call of God to offer myself for that service and in spirit I answered 'What will you have me do?' I read of the needs of India, of the work being accomplished there and of the desperate need for more workers in our own

Foreign Mission Field of East Bengal, and though I felt utterly inadequate to fill any gap in India, I resolved to offer myself for this field.

BAPTIST HOME MISSIONS

The records show that Ted initially studied at the Queensland Baptist College when in 1920 he passed the Entrance exam and consequently passed at least some subjects in 1921. Part of his training also involved serving churches as a pastor. In 1919 he was at the Newmarket (now Grange) church for six months and is remembered with esteem. The Tabernacle had an interest in the church as Mr. Bush gave a

gift of the land to the City Tabernacle where he was a member. It was handed over to the Home Mission Committee and permission was granted to build the church that still stands today.

At the beginning of 1921 Ted Smith went to Murgon as a Home Missionary where he replaced Pastor E Davison. Ted was their second pastor and rode a horse to many of the outlying areas. He was there for 16 months. The work was growing and the little flock yearned for a building of their own in which to worship. Land was secured in a central position and a building 25' x 18' was opened for the cost of £243. In gratitude for obtaining the contract the builder donated one guinea back towards the cost."

BAPTIST COLLEGE OF VICTORIA

In March 1922 Ted left Queensland to train at the Baptist College of Victoria. This was made possible through the generosity of Mr. Ken Lethem, his mentor and Sunday School teacher at the City Tabernacle. Mr. Lethem continued his financial help in the way of gifts when Ted was in India.

He lived at the college property at 29 Errol Street, North Melbourne, the same place his son-in-law, Alex Fairbank, would live while also studying for the ministry many years later. Ted trained as a Foreign Mission student along with Rev. E.E. Watson, Rev. B.A. Rogers, Rev. W.G. Crofts and Rev. C.D. Baldwin. It is interesting to note that the book on the life of Rev. A.H. Brooks records that in 1923, Rev. Brooks left Brisbane for Melbourne (to attend the Baptist College of Victoria) in the company of A.E. (Ted) Smith, another Queenslanders who was beginning his second year as a student at the College.

Ted was a life long friend of the Rev. A.H. Brooks and his wife. He was the father of Ruth Elfverson and Pastor John Brooks. Ruth recalls an occasion in the early 1950s when Ted visited their home with his father, Edwin, when Sister Ethel was also there. This was special as they had not seen one another for many years. Ted was on deputation at the time. , This visit must have been a short time before the death of Ted's father, Edwin, in 1953.

There is a pamphlet of Rev. A.E. Smith's extensive deputation work when for two months he took meetings all over Queensland. The front of the brochure tells the story as it says: "Our Own Man. A Thrilling story. Illustrated by Moving Pictures."

While in College, Ted preached around the churches in Victoria and on a visit to Newport Church was invited to the home of the Lofts family where he met Ruth who was 16. Ted was 24. They fell in love. Mr. Lofts was a foundation member of Altona Baptist. Mrs. Lofts was pleased Ted was a minister, but appalled to know he was interested in going to India. Ruth had studied elocution and passed examinations. She used this training throughout her life and was an excellent public speaker. She trained many people over the years to help improve their speaking skills

When he had finished his course in Melbourne, A.E. Smith returned to Queensland where he was ordained in the City Tabernacle, at the Assembly Meetings in 1925, by Rev. W.G. Pope, his own minister. One can imagine his feelings on that night; to be ordained in the church that meant so much to him. Not long afterwards, the valedictory service was held in Collins Street Baptist Church, Melbourne, where all the lights were put out and candles lit as a symbol of Ted and Ern Watson going as 'lights' to India.

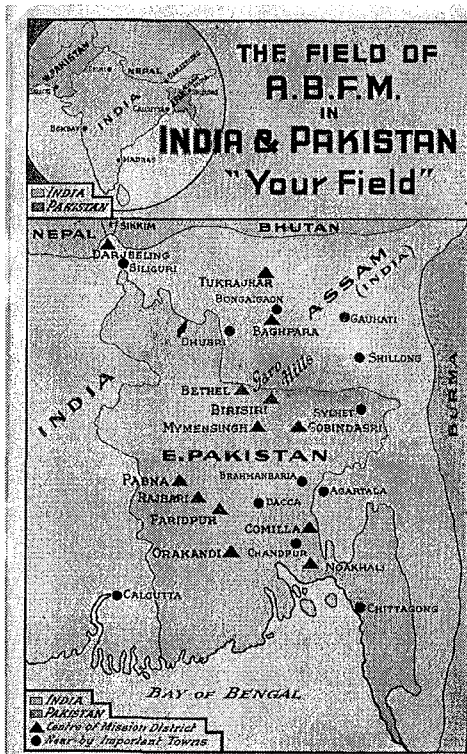
MISSIONARY SERVICE

Ted arrived in India in 1925, and over the next 24 years worked at Rajbari, Faridpur, Orakandi, Serajunge, Mymensingh, Pabna and Comilla. Gwen, their daughter, wrote:-

Ruth finally joined him in 1928, aged 21 and took her wedding dress and wedding cake packed in trunks and sailed for Bombay to marry my missionary father. She was crazily in love with him and continued to be so for the 52 years they were married (1928-1980).

Ruth's welcome to Faridpur was one she never forgot. Arriving to see the Mission house on one side and the big new church on the other, a crowd of boys dropped small home made bombs (crackers) on the ground around her. A little girl named 'Miya' handed her a beautiful bunch of flowers. The welcome included songs, recitations and dialogues; all kinds of things to make them laugh. Everyone teased Mr. Smith a great deal about bringing home a Memsahib; for a marriage in India was an occasion for great feasting and fun.

They were married during the Annual Missionary Convention at the New Zealand Station, Brah-



The Indian field where Ted Smith served

manaria. There were sixty missionaries and guests at this happy event. They were married by the Rev. W.G. Crofts, with Mary Lord and E.W. Grigg, a missionary from the New Zealand station, as bridesmaid and best man. One can imagine the mixture of emotions: joy on their wedding day, and yet she and Ted would have been conscious of their family and friends back in Australia. It is so interesting to note that her bridesmaid, Mary Lord, became Mrs. W.G. Pope, the second wife of Rev. W.G. Pope who was Ted's beloved pastor during his time at the City Tabernacle.

A.E. Smith spent the years 1925-1932 on the field, returning because of the world depression and the difficulty of sending money to India. They arrived in Australia in April 1932 and six weeks later started an interim ministry at Ipswich Baptist, along with extensive deputation. It is recorded in the book "The Ipswich Baptists" by John E. White that "the Rev. A.E. Smith undertook a full range of service. For health reasons he had to retire after six months".

A lovely little baby girl, Gwenneth Joan, was born in April 1933 and soon after they returned to East Bengal where an exodus of senior pioneering missionaries made the workload very heavy. Barry George, another beautiful baby, was born on 29th November 1938 at the Gauhatti American Mission Hospital. He was dedicated on Christmas Day.

(to be continued)

Missing Issue of Forum

Baptist Heritage Queensland apologises for the absence of the first issue of this newsletter, Queensland Baptist Forum, for 2005. There was a lot going on at that time, and so it was decided to skip one issue. For one thing, the Baptist Archives Queensland were being relocated to the new building at Mitchelton. This involved packing the entire collection ready for the removalist—there were well over 400 boxes of material to go. Of course, once it was moved, then it had to be un-packed! That task is underway. Thankfully, it seems that nothing was lost or damaged in the process.



The Queensland Baptist Archives at Mitchelton ready for unpacking!

The new Archives room is larger and more pleasant than previously, allowing, when finally set up, more scope for storage, processing and working.

The other big task on at the same time was the new history book. It has been finished in time for printing and launching the 2005 Convention. (See page one for details of the book and launching and <http://home.pacific.net.au/~dparker/qbhist.htm>)

This will be the third full-scale history—the first was in 1905 when Wm Higlett edited Edmund Gregory's Jubilee Record volume. Then in 1977 Rev John White produced A Fellowship of Service to mark the centenary of the formation of the Baptist Union of Queensland. There was no special publication for the centenary of Baptist work in 1955, although the City Tabernacle put out a souvenir book. Thanks is expressed to dozens of people who helped with information, ideas, photographs and other documents, especially for the section dealing with the period since 1945. Earlier periods have plenty of documentary sources but a much was learned by oral history about more recent times.