

Baptist The Recorder

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of New South Wales

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NEXT MEETING
Thursday 4 May 2000
at 7.30 pm
in the
Morling Chapel, Eastwood

Speaker: *Mr Michael Petras*
Topic: *One Hundred Years of Christianity in Australia*

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Baptist Historical Society
Minutes of General Meeting

3 February 2000

The meeting was opened in prayer by the Chairman, Rev E R Rogers who welcomed those in attendance.

Apologies: Owen Nanelli, Neil Cowling, Gerry Ball, Gwen Pope.

Confirmation of Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held 4 November 1999 were confirmed as a correct record.

Future Meetings: The Chairman outlined the program for future meetings:

2000

- 4 May One Hundred Years of Christianity in Australia — Mr Michael Petras
- 3 August This is my Story — Rev Edward Archer
- 2 November A J Waldock — Rev Roy Henson

2001

- 1 February Foresters, Formation and Foresight in the Forest — Mrs Janice Prior
- 3 May Annual Lecture — Dr Ken Manley
- 2 August Gospel Wagons and the history of their use in Australia — Robert Armstrong

REPORTS

1. The Treasurer's report is printed separately.
2. The Archivist reported on his activities at the recent BWA Conference and moved that the Society donate \$200 to the heritage section. This was carried.

SANKEYS SONGS AND THEIR STORIES

The program for the evening was 'Sankey's Songs and their Stories', with congregational participation.

Song Leader:	Bruce King	Pianist:	Gwen Archer
Organist:	Graham Price	Narrator:	Edward Archer

The songs for the evening were:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. The Glory Song | 8. Hallelujah! What a Saviour |
| 2. Moment by Moment | 9. Hiding in Thee |
| 3. Consecration | 10. I Need Thee Every Hour |
| 4. Near the Cross | 11. At the Cross! |
| 5. Peace! Be Still! | 12. Evening Hymn |
| 6. God Holds the Key | 13. Benediction |
| 7. Will Your Anchor Hold? | |

CLOSING

The Chairman acknowledged the fine work of all participants and closed the evening with prayer and benediction.



**Baptist Historical Society of NSW
Financial Statement for the Period
11 October 1999 to 3 February 2000**

<i>Income</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	
	General Fund	
Balance B/F 11 October 1999	4110.50	Membership Subscription
		AHS
Subscriptions	90.00	70.00
Interest BIF	<u>50.48</u>	M Chavura Thesis on
		Calvanism
		55.00
		Postage Recorders
		37.50
		Balance C/F 3 Feb 2000
		<u>4088.48</u>
	<u>\$4250.98</u>	<u>\$4250.98</u>
	Publications Fund	
Balance B/F 11 October 1999	2882.86	
Book Sales	65.90	
Interest BIF	<u>77.89</u>	Balance C/F 3 Feb 2000
(Year to 31 Dec 1999, added to capital)		<u>3026.65</u>
	<u>\$3026.65</u>	<u>\$3026.65</u>
	Essay Competition Fund	
Balance B/F 11 October 1999	<u>48.96</u>	Balance C/F 3 Feb 2000
		<u>48.96</u>
	Summary of Balances	
General Fund	4088.48	Held as follows:
Publications Fund	3026.65	NAB Current Account
Essay Competition Fund	<u>48.96</u>	3055.59
		BIF Deposits
		<u>4108.50</u>
	<u>\$7164.09</u>	<u>\$7164.09</u>



The NSW Baptist Historical Society

A BRIEF HISTORY OF

“TARINGA”,

58 THE AVENUE, GRANVILLE,
FORMERLY

THE BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF NSW.

Compiled by Ron Robb, Society Archivist

January 2000



The house at 58 The Avenue, Granville, NSW, was at one time the first Residential Theological College for the Baptist Denomination in NSW.

Pre-History

Although NSW, and in particular—Sydney, was the foundation area for the Baptist denomination in Australia, it was somewhat slower than Victoria in establishing a formal and permanent theological college. Starting in 1871, various attempts were made to establish a proper program of training for ministers but most of these faded. Up to the early part of the 20th Century wealthier churches could afford to recruit trained and ordained men from England (and in one notable case, America) and some were trained in the Victorian Baptist College (now Whitley College). Others were sent to the “Camden” Congregational Union College and also to the St Andrew’s Presbyterian College. A panel known as “The Education Committee” functioned for a while and men studied under its supervision in a variety of ways.

Eventually, in 1916, under the principalship of the Rev Alexander Gordon, a College came into being. The Harris Street Baptist Church (now non-existent) made rooms available *pro-tem* and some subjects were taken at the nearby Sydney University. Gordon resigned in 1921 and one of the lecturers, the Rev George H. Morling, was appointed Acting Principal. In 1922 the appointment was made permanent and

in that same year the College moved to the Petersham Church which had better facilities and space; it still exists. Morling thus began one of the most significant contributions in the history of NSW Baptist advancement; it was a contribution that was to last into the 1960s and culminated in the eponymously named College now situated next to the Macquarie University at Eastwood.

A Home At Last

The need for a proper, independently situated and residential college became a pressing concern for the Baptist Union, which was still small at the time and funds for such a venture were quite out of the question. But divine providence was about to intervene. Mr and Mrs Luke Bullock were wealthy pastoralists in the Central West of the state and in membership at the Wellington Church - which was then, as it is now, a solid supporter of the Union. They owned a large, commodious house in Granville and offered it to the Union as a College at a virtual “peppercorn” rent.

Later, the Bullocks gave the edifice to the Union as an outright gift. A commemorative plaque expressing appreciation to the Bullocks was affixed in the College and that plate is today mounted on the South West (far end) wall of the Morling College Dining Room. Descendants of the Bullock family are still in the Wellington district.

Construction and Early Ownership

The house at 58 The Avnue, Granville, was built by a prominent Annandale builder of the day, William Thackray, who then took-up residence. Thackray built the Granville St Mark's Church and Granville Railway Station. He began construction at 58 The Avenue in April 1883 and completed the project in 1884. There is some evidence that the home was designed by the famous Architecht William Blacket (of St Andrews Cathedral and Sydney University Great Hall fame) but no firm confirmation of this has yet been established. The property was subsequently owned by a succession of people, including a Parramatta Policeman, the Ritchie family - a prominent wagon-making firm, the Bullocks, the Baptist Union. In the late 1930s a Doctor operated the place as a "maternity" hospital (with strong anecdotal evidence that some of its purposes were somewhat shady).



Eventually, Mr Ron Sarina (the "King of Warragamba"), a colourful Lower Blue Mountains character, operated the place as a boarding house, though in fact it became a doss-house which was slowly stripped of all its grand fittings to support a drug culture. It was referred-to by local cabbies as "The Horror House". The original coach house and grooms' quarters slowly deteriorated and finally the place degenerated into a ruin. At one stage during the early 1990s the Parramatta Council demanded that it be demolished.

The Morling Family

In 1926, due to the munificence of the Bullocks as already described earlier, the property became the first residential college of the Baptist Union of NSW under the principalship

of the Rev. G.H. Morling. The Morling family (which included at that time some four children) took-up part of the house while some students lived-in and others found lodgings in nearby homes. The place thus became the first real Baptist Theological College of NSW and during this period the fifth and final member of the Morling family, Trevor Rees, was born. It was not an easy existence; there were now five children, all of whom were crowded into two bedrooms while their parents occupied one other. In the early stages some of the children were actually sleeping on an open verandah until College finances were able to afford a canvas blind to stay any rain and wind. Moreover, the children were expected to maintain a quiet lifestyle since lecture rooms were literally adjacent.

Trevor Morling would be six years old when the family moved from Granville and was ultimately to achieve national fame as a member of the Federal Court of Australia under Chief Justice Sir Nigel Bowen. Mr Justice Morling especially came to prominence as the Commissioner for the notorious Lindy Chamberlain case where his re-investigation ultimately eventuated in her release from prison and the original findings against her being severely castigated. He also later featured in the landmark "Sidestream Smoking" case.

Departure From Granville

In 1934 the College moved to 40 Charlotte St, Ashfield, and was to remain there until 1961. The site is now the "Pittwood" Presbyterian Home for the Aged but none of the original buildings remain. The next, and present, location was and still is at Eastwood and the official nomination of "Morling College" was adopted.

Restoration

In the early 1990s, Mr Greg and Mrs Margaret Wulff acquired the property, recognising its potential but somewhat daunted by the task with which they were confronted. Their first contact with the Baptists was when the then Principal of Morling College (by then at Eastwood), the Rev. Dr Victor Eldridge, asked for their co-operation in staging a fund raising "fun run" for the College. Thereafter the NSW Baptist Historical Society began to take an

interest in the restoration project and in 1993 made its first official visit; it has been keeping a watching brief since.

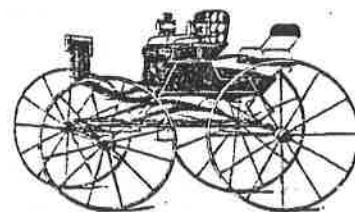
The Wulffs began restoration, happily with a determination to try to adhere as near as possible to original standards. No little difficulty was experienced with the Parramatta Council who still considered that the house was fit only for demolition. In 1993 the Baptist Union Executive Committee advised the Council of its interest in the project and its importance to the Baptist denomination. It was noted in the correspondence that Mr Justice Morling had been born there. Such support for the Wulffs appeared to have some effect.

Recently, Mr Alan and Mrs Nellie Gould offered a price for the home and the Wulffs agreed to hand-over the project. The Goulds came to realise that they had taken-on a project of Gothic proportions but also realised that the only worthy line to follow was that of professional standards and an ethos which was fully sympathetic to the era in which the house was built. There were a few positives for both the Wulffs and the Goulds: although most of the marble fireplaces and Victorian fittings had long since been turned into collateral for drugs and the like the basic solid sandstone structure survived, as did the slate roofing and most of the ornate ceilings. One lucky survivor was the huge bi-fold door between the main drawing room and the dining room. It had been covered in cheap lime-based whitewash type paint and not recognised for what it was so escaped vandalism. During renovation it was discovered that the huge doors were in fact Australian Red Cedar and these have now been fully restored. Their value now would be numbered in many thousands of dollars.

The Goulds have managed to locate more Red Cedar to restore some other parts of the home to its former glory while vintage light fittings, tiles, carpets, furniture, plumbing fittings, etc which are sympathetic the Victorian era have been located. The original courtyard had degenerated into an ugly, overgrown space but this has been covered-in as a huge atrium of a cathedral-like aspect and is now the main family recreation area. One sacrifice here has been that the original household fresh water well has been covered over and this is to some extent a pity since Urban Archæologists aver

that old wells are superb time capsules. However, both the Wulffs and the Goulds found that the excavation required Herculean effort and was moreover somewhat dangerous since the original brick lining is now in a poor state.

Another sad demise was the original coach house and grooms' quarters. A fire destroyed most of it some years ago and the remainder is but a few bricks piled one on another. The Goulds are hoping to eventually restore it and will be helped by a Baptist Historical Society photo taken in 1993 when some of the walls were still standing. In this coach house two 1930s theological students named Prior and Starr had their lodgings.



Names of Significance

During the 1993 Society visit two of the original students were in the party: Revs. Alan Prior and Frank Starr. Other students still living at that time were Revs John Ridden (then in Perth), Sam Lane (then in Brisbane), Fred "China" Smith (then in Gosford) and Bill Rein (then in Canberra). All have now passed on to a better mansion but before they shook-off the mortal coils they had provided plenteous memoirs and photos from their Granville days. These will appear in due course in a more detailed history currently in preparation.

The last living Granville student was the Rev. Sam Lane who died in September 1999. His son, the Rev. John Lane, recently retired as the Dungog Baptist Pastor and has presented the Baptist Archives with some of his Father's mementos. The last direct living links with the Granville College are now Mr Justice Trevor

Morling and his older brother Mr Gordon Morling, a retired Nurseyman from the Lower Blue Mountains. Both are still active in Baptist life and both revisited their old home on a Society visit in December 1999.

A Restored Glory

The Baptists of NSW are fortunate that the Granville property has been literally snatched from the jaws of the demolisher's bulldozer. Alan Prior in his *Some Fell on Good Ground* commented on the growth and development of the Union during the 1920s through to the early 60s and remarked: "The contribution made by the College during Principal Morling's term is without doubt the most influential factor in Baptist witness in this state during that period". There are still a few older Ministers and Laypeople who would strongly endorse that statement. The home at 58 The Avenue, Granville, is a worthy reminder of that heritage and we should be grateful that it has been so magnificently restored and is once again a place of gracious living.

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