

# **YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW**

**A History of the Burnie Baptist Church 1899-1999**

**Laurence F. Rowston**

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on the occasion of the Centenary  
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## Foreword

On the occasion when we celebrate our Centenary as a church, I would like to highlight a verse from Psalm 100, which I believe is very fitting. The psalmist says in Psalm 100 verse 5 "For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations." How much we have to give thanks for as God's people for His faithfulness and goodness over a hundred years and of all the generations that that has covered in the life of the Burnie Baptist Church. God has used many different people, some of whom have been recorded in this book, and all the others who have contributed behind the scenes, to extend His kingdom in this community and to build up God's people in this place.

As we look back with thanks, we also look to the present and the future, recognising that our Centenary Theme, "Yesterday, today, and tomorrow", reminds us that as God has been at work in days gone by, He is also at work in the present in and through the people of the Burnie Baptist Church and that He has many more blessings in store for the Burnie Baptist Church as we seek to follow His leading into the future. My prayer is that in another hundred years time, if the Lord has not returned, the Burnie Baptist Church will be still be going from strength to strength under the direction of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and that we bring our praise and gratitude to this day!

May God receive all the glory and honour in and through our Centenary celebrations and may this occasion lead each of us to reaffirm our commitment to and love for Him!

Rev David Sterrey Pastor of the Burnie Baptist Church during the Centenary Year

## Preface

The one hundred years of the Burnie Baptist Church is a story of optimism. This optimism was most evident at the beginning. It was encapsulated in the words, "We feel we have no need to speak of the growing importance of our township (of Burnie) and district and of the splendid scope for Christian work." It is seen in the erection of a new church in 1925. It is evident in the many dynamic ministries before and after this event, ministries which are spoken of throughout these pages. The people of the Burnie Baptist Church know that it is Christ's Church and they know that the optimist can serve Him in it far better than the pessimist can. Like the great Baptist missionary, William Carey, the members and adherents of the Burnie Baptist Church "expect great things from God".

The Burnie Church has also a creditable record for serving its community and the people of Tasmania, the later most forcibly through the Baptist Union of Churches. It is a church which has given a high level of service in whatever area it has chosen, and it continues to do so even today.

Two sparse histories of this Church have been produced and this present one has incorporated much of what has been previously written, but adds considerably more. It had to be produced in a very limited time span so there are areas, such as the erection of the first church, which have not received adequate research and treatment. More emphasis could also have been given to those who have served in a less conspicuous way. Even so, I trust that this short work will recall earlier memories and encourage greater Christian endeavour.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to those who have assisted me in this absorbing task, especially to Pauline Wells who co-ordinated the project and gathered together so much of the

recent history; to the Baptist historical societies in Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria; to past ministers who submitted their biographies; to the late Wesley Bligh for his account of the life of Pastor Harry Wood as found in "Altars of the Mountains"; to Ian Joyce, Marie Cornish and Hazel Garratt of the Burnie Church who checked the many facts and names; and to Graham Clements, immediate Past President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania, who advised and proofread the final work.

This book is dedicated to the memory of the late Ronald Soundy, Life Member of the Baptist Union of Tasmania and former Lord Mayor of the City of Hobart, who encouraged me in 1983 to research and write Tasmanian Baptist history.

It is my prayer that this work will put a new song of faith on the lips of those who have been or remain associated with this Church, that it will renew the optimism of grace within their hearts and minds.  
Laurence F. Rowston

## CHAPTER 1

Early Burnie At the turn of the Centenary, the population of Burnie stood at about 1600 people. Situated on the coast at Emu Bay, and overlooking Bass Strait, the town enjoyed magnificent coastal scenery, with Table Cape on the horizon. It had the appearance of a popular summer resort, and for many it was this, but in fact it was the principal port on the North-West Coast with nine metres of water at the pier head.

The land around Burnie was once heavily timbered but now most of it was cleared away. There were two predominant influences at Burnie: the Van Diemen's Land Co. and Captain William Jones.

In 1828 the settlement on the shores of Emu Bay was established by the VDL Co. to serve its vast inland pastoral holdings of Hampshire Hills and Surrey Hills. The port settlement, later named Burnie, originally consisted of a small jetty, store, saw pits and a few cottages. The Company's main inland settlements, with indentured servants and assigned convicts, had larger populations.

However, the sheep grazing venture south of Emu Bay proved a failure and by the mid-1830s Burnie, Surrey Hills and Hampshire Hills were virtually abandoned and the Company concentrated its activities at Circular Head and Wool-north. The Company began leasing and selling blocks in the town area and heavily forested land for farming in the 1850s and Burnie made some progress. However, until the discovery of the West Coast mineral deposits in the 1870s and the subsequent railway connection to the Port of Burnie for the mines, the town had a population of only a few hundred. By the turn of the century it had climbed to about 1,600 in the town and country areas.

Captain Jones was also the life and soul of Burnie. His interests included stores, farms, butter and bacon factories, mining and shipping. His butter and cheese

factory and the bacon factory, were both situated at Cooee Creek, about three kilometres from Burnie. Just above the bacon factory was a large sawmill, worked by Captain Jones. Not far away was his aerated waters factory and brick factory. On the other side of Burnie at Wivenhoe was Camp's brewery. In 1901 the railway line was extended from Ulverstone to Burnie.

There were four churches in Burnie in 1899: the Church of England, a Gospel Hall, the Roman Catholic and the Methodist. The Roman Catholics ran a convent school. At the time the roads were not sealed and there was plenty of mud in the wet weather as the many bullock teams churned up the soft surface.

### Baptist Beginnings

In 1898 the Revs. J. E. Walton, J W Eddy and Geo. Wainwright came to Burnie to seek out Baptists in connection with the formation of a Baptist Church and to conduct services for some weeks. Following this, in May 1899, a requisition was signed by over thirty people in Burnie and sent to the Baptist Union headquarters in Launceston requesting that a Baptist work open in the town and asking that the Union promise financial support.

The requisition read: "The undersigned either holding Baptist principles and practices, or else favourable to them, have been impressed with the necessity and importance of establishing a Church in connection with the Baptist Union of Tasmania at Burnie." "We do not feel able to call a Pastor on our own responsibility, but if the Union can assist us in the establishment of a Church and in the selection and support of a Pastor, we pledge ourselves to do all in our power to carry on the Lord's work according to our faith and order in Burnie and its district.

"We here give a list of annual contributions already promised for this

project, and we believe that after a cause is started, many others will come with us and help us.

We feel we have no need to speak of the growing importance of our Township and district and the splendid scope for Christian work.

"We earnestly hope and pray that a favourable answer will be given to our request."

The signatories were: Mr. and Mrs. H. Hills, Mr. H. Payne, Mrs. and Mrs. C.M. Soule, Mrs. and Mrs. P. Clingeleffer, Mrs. and Mrs. E.A. Joyce, Mrs. and Mrs. A. Tumbull Senior, Mrs. and Mrs. F. Parsons, F. Parsons, H. Parsons, Mrs. and Mrs. Daniel Smith, H. M. Roberts, Mrs. C. Payne, Mrs. and Mrs. F.C. Wills. Clara J. Wills, E. Greensmith, Charles Eric Wills, Thomas Kenner and Mrs. Kenner and Mr. J. Hays.

It was the unanimous decision of the signatories that the Rev. Harry Wood be appointed as the pioneer pastor. The requests were granted by the Baptist Union.

### **Rev. Harry Wood, 1899-1900**

Wood was born at Brighton, England, on 16 March 1854. He came from Anglican stock but his religious affiliation was tenuous. A member of a large family, at an early age he was obliged to go to work to augment the family income.

At sixteen years of age he suffered a serious illness. Because of this "a horror of great darkness fell upon him" and he was led to think seriously about his spiritual condition. Upon his recovery he attended a gospel meeting and yielded his life to Christ. As a consequence he became deeply concerned about the condition of other boys and young men in his neighbourhood and commenced a "lads' meeting" at the bedside of a crippled friend. There, with an audience of three, he began his first public work for Christ. The attendance grew so that his mother's

kitchen was made the next meeting room, and a little later a larger venue was used to accommodate the increasing numbers.

The meeting proved such a boon to the neighbourhood that it won the support of ministers and business men. Adults began to seek him out. He was soon devoting all his time to it.

He was urged to begin training for the Wesleyan ministry but his study of the subject of baptism resulted in his baptism by immersion in the Bond Street Chapel, Brighton. He soon entered Spurgeon's College. There, this frail young man, with a shock of bright red hair, was often the centre of good-humoured fun amongst his fellow students. They would gather round him and playfully "warm" their hands over his head. He had the rare distinction of taking the place of the Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon in the pulpit of the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

While in College he became a member of the Evangelisation Society. But his frail physique would not stand the strain of study and missions, and he was ordered by a doctor to go "the colonies".

He decided to go to New Zealand. Spurgeon commended him to "the hearty confidence of all my brethren in New Zealand, and elsewhere, as a young man of great promise, from whom, in God's hands, I expect great things."

Harry Wood served for twelve months in the pastorate of Thames, New Zealand. The climate proved unsuitable and he moved to Saddleworth, South Australia. The work there revived under his ministry but again the strain proved too much. In the spring of the year 1879, he gladly accepted the invitation from Thomas Spurgeon, son of the Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, to recuperate in Tasmania. This contact with Tasmania was the beginning of his fruitful ministry on the island.

In September 1879 he assisted Rev. Thomas Spurgeon at the opening of an

outpost at Blackwood Creek. His first charge was at Deloraine commencing in March 1881.

On a further visit to England to complete his college course at Spurgeon's College, he was ordained by the Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon. However, he declined to be called "Reverend". He worked with the Rev J.S. Harrison in a Gospel Mission at the Great Assembly Hall, East London, up to the time of his marriage to Elizabeth Childs on 26 September 1882. They sailed for Australia a fortnight after their wedding, making for Melbourne and the Church at Williamstown. In August 1883 he was called to the pastorate of the Longford Church, Tasmania. Further pastorates in Tasmania followed at the Launceston Tabernacle, Sheffield with its outstations, Deloraine and Latrobe.

His heart problem had returned. "It was at this time," he wrote, "the heart weakness, from which I have suffered so long began to shew serious symptoms." Wood's doctor urged him not to accept the Burnie appointment but the call became irresistible to him. "It was," he says, "a big undertaking for a weak man but I felt that it was the Lord's will that I should go."

Wood sent their furniture on before them the day before they left Latrobe. The weather was fine and there was no covering for the wagon. But before the furniture had reached its destination, heavy rain fell, and when the family arrived they found their bedding and belongings saturated. Some of the goods were completely spoiled. It was an expensive move. Friends kindly entertained them until they could settle into their new home.

There was even greater difficulty in securing a house at Burnie than there had been at Sheffield and Latrobe. The only available house was a rough four-roomed, plain, scrim-lined shell of a cottage at the far end of South Burnie. It was too small for a family of six people.

Wood encountered much opposition to his ministry from other denominations. "The minister of one church," wrote Wood, "had special meetings to fortify and warn his people against our coming to Burnie." Animated discussions took place and controversies were continued for months—in the public press on the subject of baptism. At the height of the controversy he received a visit from a minister of another denomination, who, with evident distress, urged him to stop the controversy as it was emptying his church.

The Town Hall was hired for Sunday services. It was a spacious two-storey building. On the ground floor there was a large room for public meetings which could accommodate about 500 people. On the upper floor were the municipal offices and the library.

Week-night meetings were held in a rented building that had once been used by the Primitive Methodists. Large congregations were attracted to the Baptist services. But the Town Hall was inconvenient in many ways, the greatest inconvenience being the baptistry, which was a heavy sheet iron-lined wooden structure. It had to be taken to the front of the stage, filled by buckets, and then emptied and taken to the rear of the hall after each baptism. At the first baptismal service thirteen men and one woman were immersed. "It was the first baptism witnessed in Burnie," said Wood. Six months after Wood had commenced the work, on 17 December 1899, the Church was constituted with forty-three persons being received into membership.

### **Purchase of Land**

After eighteen months, ill health compelled Wood to terminate his work. By now the Church had sixty members and a site for a church building. Thanks to the efforts of Wood, Mary Ann Gibson of Perth, now a widow, had been led to further

assist the Baptist Union with a gift of 500 pounds for the purchase of a large allotment in Mount Street, which had originally been bought from the VDL Co. by the Rouse brothers, John, Edward, George and Albert, in 1875.

Over their lifetimes, Mary Ann, the niece of the Rev. Henry Dowling, together with her husband, William, and their son, William Gibson Junior, spent approximately 40,000 pounds upon Tasmanian Baptist churches, Sunday schools, and dwellings, the provisions of ministers and various funds and trusts.

In November 1900, Wood moved on to Longford; the same month the Baptist Union met for the first time at Burnie for its half yearly Assembly.

#### **Edward Albert Joyce**

A Sunday School was soon commenced by Edward Albert Joyce and it grew rapidly. Joyce became the Church's secretary upon its inauguration and remained in the position until 1944. He was elected a member of the original diaconate in 1899, an office which he held until his death on 2 February 1947.

He was born in Launceston where he served his apprenticeship as a jeweller and settled in Burnie in 1893 where he opened a jeweller's business in Wilson Street. Morning family worship was a feature of his family's life in "Wyona", their stately home in High Street. It is recorded that he was a person of a very helpful, kindly disposition, always keeping himself in the background, and was only with great difficulty persuaded to speak in public. He was secretary of the Burnie Sick and Benevolent Fund for many years. When the Burnie Park was acquired by the Burnie Council, he presented to the municipality the entrance gates to the park. He was twice married. His first wife was Fanny Clarke of Launceston. In 1907 he married Emily Pitt of Hobart. He was forever giving to the Church and,

although at times the gifts came from an "anonymous donor", it was obvious from whom they came. It was related that during the depression of the thirties, a gang of about forty men was employed on the sewerage in his street. It was cold and wet and on two successive days he sent out hot tea, scones and cakes for the whole gang. He was for many years a member of the Council of the Baptist Union of Tasmania.

#### **Henry T. Dowling**

Bowling was Superintendent of the Sunday School for thirty-three years and for a greater part of that time, choir-master. He and his wife were foundation members of the Church. By the time of his death in December 1931, he was one of Burnie's oldest and most respected residents. The Rev. E.B. Woods said at the time that if he ever left the choosing of the hymns to Dowling, Dowling would confine himself almost entirely to hymns which spoke of Christ's atoning sacrifice. "As I gazed on that rugged manly face in its last earthly sleep," said Woods, "I almost felt tempted to cry out, 'There goes the last of the Puritans of Burnie!' For indeed there was in him a real strain of Puritan simplicity and sternness, yet there was no Puritanic sourness of disposition, nothing of a harsh critical spirit in his judgement of those who differed from him. His was a wonderful blend of Christian wholeheartedness and devotion, with an almost melting tenderness, which won for him the love and esteem of hundreds of children through the well-nigh one third of a century that he had been the Sunday School Superintendent."

hi the fly-leaf of his well-worn Bible, Dowling told of how he, in 1896, at the age of thirty-five years, accepted Christ at the Memorial Church, Launceston, then under Piercey. Prior to this, he acknowledged that he had been a rough, ungodly man. He always ended his prayers at the prayer meetings with the petition that, at

the end of the days of those gathered there, they might "see His face without regrets".

### **Rev. Thomas Vigis, 1901-1902**

Vigis was welcomed to the Church on 14 February 1901. He had previously been at the Rockhampton Baptist Church. He was born in Plumstead, Kent, England, in 1862. In 1886 he came to South Australia for health reasons. He had been working as an evangelist in London slums in association with Dr. Bamardo and the Rev. Charles Spurgeon. His next Australian home was in N.S.W. but he soon went to Queensland, where for twelve months he had charge of the Lanefield Congregational Church. Then he joined the Baptists and held the successive pastorates of the Ipswich, Charters Towers and Rockhampton Baptist Churches. While at Rockhampton he married Ann Jacobs.

At the Annual Assemblies of the Baptist Union of Tasmania he would always speak on Home Mission work. Together with the Rev. James Blaikie of Hobart, he was involved in the opening of a Home Mission hall in the west coast mining town of Zeehan on 22 June 1901. Provision was also made for a manse in the town.

In Burnie, the two semi-detached cottages on the church site were demolished to make way for the erection of a church and manse. The brick manse was built for 420 pounds and the wooden church building for 500 pounds. The church building was opened on 5 May 1901. Because of his good knowledge of building construction, Vigis was a great help in the erection of the new structures. He also designed the church seats. Vigis had been invited to the pastorate for twelve months and stayed only for that time, transferring to Fenwick Street Baptist Church, Geelong. From Victoria he moved to the Laura Baptist Church, South Australia, in 1905. There he became vitally interested and active in Baptist Union work and served in their churches until his death in 1936. At the time

of his death, he was the Superintendent of the West End Mission.

### **Rev. Samuel Harrison, 1902-1904.**

Harrison was born in Bradford, England, in 1861 and was brought up among the Primitive Methodists. He arrived in Australia in 1883, and after a time of secular employment, he entered the Primitive Methodist ministry, in 1896 he became a Baptist after hearing an address on Baptist principles. His subsequent study of the New Testament convinced him that in respect to baptism, the Baptists were correct. In Burnie he exercised a very powerful ministry. He was an expository preacher of some note, "a keen, logical thinker and a forceful evangelist". Burnie was his second pastorate in the Baptist churches. His first Baptist church was in Ashfield, N.S.W. The church membership, which stood at fifty-nine when he arrived, grew during his time. In 1903 Harrison was engaged in controversy through the columns of the local paper, the "Burnie Times", defending the right of Baptists to evangelise. He also set out to explain why Baptists baptise the way they do.

By 1903 the Burnie Church had commenced services at Wynyard, Stowport and Penguin. Later Devonport Baptist Church assisted with the services at Penguin and Burnie assisted with the work Devonport had begun at Ulverstone.

Harrison resigned on 11 February 1904 because of ill-health and transferred to the Dulich Hill Baptist Church, N.S.W. A number of other N.S.W. pastorates followed and one at the Reed Memorial Church in Launceston (1913-1916 - now the Launceston Memorial Baptist Church). He died in 1936 during his pastorate at the Harris Street Baptist Church, Sydney.

### **Rev. J. T. Piercey, 1904-1906**

The evangelistic Piercey came to Burnie from the Reed Memorial Church, Launceston, and commenced on 9 October 1904. He was a very forceful, evangelistic

preacher, but resigned in 1906 to go into full-time evangelistic work. Records show that in 1912 Piercey was working for the Victorian Evangelisation Society.

#### **Rev. Peter W. Cairns, 1906-1910**

Cairns came from South Yarra Baptist Church, Melbourne, and was welcomed on 4 My 1906. He was born in Glasgow on 20 April 1852 and grew up in the Congregational Church, hi 1873, when a storeman, he married Jemima Struthus. They emigrated to North Queensland in 1883 and lived at Ingham for five years where he worked as a minister of religion.

Money matters were much in mind in 1906. The Church inaugurated a system by which it was "intended to pelt the Church Debt to death with penny subscriptions!"

While at Burnie in 1909, Cairns became embroiled in a charge of plagiarism in respect to one of his sermons. The matter had followed from his days at South Yarra and it had affected the confidence in him of his fellow ministers in Victoria and elsewhere where he had ministered. After some considerable correspondence, the matter was finally resolved in his favour.

In 1907 the Burnie membership was seventy-nine and increased by ten in the next twelve months. There were 145 scholars in the Sunday school.

In 1909 the Church proposed a notice of motion protesting "against the Devon-port Church resorting to questionable means in raising money for God's work." But Devonport was not the only Church seen at fault so the final motion contained these words, "We would earnestly urge the deacons of the Churches connected with our Union to advocate straight out giving".

Cairns left to go to the Claremont and Leederville Baptist Churches, W.A., and was president of the W.A. churches in 1913/1914. In 1915 he conducted a brief interim pastorate at Devonport. For the next ten years he worked in Victoria, first

at Hamilton (1916-1920) and then at Wangaratta (1922-1926). During his pastorate at Hamilton, his son Andrew, upon winning a lottery in Queensland with a prize of 5000 pounds (less 700 pounds tax), bought his father a boot shop, "The Co-Operative Boot Supply", in Grey Street, Hamilton. Andrew, an organist, now accompanied his father's singing during the services in Hamilton. Cairns died on 30 November 1929.

#### **Assistant George Craike 1909**

Young Craike came from the Hobart Baptist Tabernacle, manifesting notable preaching gifts. He was known as the "boy preacher". He had co-pastored the Reed Memorial Baptist Church in Launceston for two years before going to Spurgeon's College, London, for training (1905-09). m Burnie in 1909 he was assistant for only a short period prior to his return to England to minister to the Zion Baptist Chapel, Chesham, Bucks. There followed three ministries in Australia: at Devonport (1912-15), Clifton Hill, Victoria (1915-19) and Petersham, NSW (1919-29). A series of sermons, preached in 1928, was embodied in a book called People at "Wit's End Corner". Unhappily he was himself overcome by inordinate anxiety and died in 1929.

#### **Rev. Oswald R. Linden, 1910-1911**

Linden of Albert Park, Melbourne, was called only for twelve months, but had been supplying the pulpit for some months prior to the call. Linden was born on 10 November 1883 and grew up in the Albert Park Baptist Church. He came to Christian faith through a mission conducted by the Rev. J.H. Goble. Linden then became a regular lay preacher. About 1898 he was in charge of a mission at Charters Towers Baptist Church in Queensland. Following this, for twelve months, he was assistant Pastor of the Lilydale Church in Victoria. Training at the Victorian Baptist Theological College took place between

1906 and 1909; then followed the Burnie work.

In 1910, the then President of the Baptist Union, the Rev. F.W. Boreham, gave a number of public lectures in Burnie.

Linden accepted a call to the Elsternwick Baptist Church in 1911. A pastorate at Warracknabeal followed before he joined the Imperial Forces in World War I. He died in 1934.

#### **Rev. Charles. Palmer, 1911-1914**

The next pastor was English born, the Rev. Charles Palmer, an evangelist and singer, who came from the Latrobe Church. Thirty years earlier Palmer was assisting at the Kerang Baptist Church in northern Victoria and from 1883 to 1885 he was stationed by the Victorian Baptist Home Mission Committee at nearby Boort and Koroit, conducting services in homes. During his time in Northern Victoria, Palmer was regarded as enthusiastic, warm-hearted and likeable. A few years later he was the second minister of a new work in Footscray which was conducted in the newly erected Blue Ribbon Hall of 1887. In 1890, while he was still pastor of the Footscray work, the present site of the Paisley Street Baptist Church was purchased and a church erected. He subsequently resigned from the Baptists and joined the Salvation Army. He obviously had a change of mind, because he is found back at Footscray prior to his call to the Latrobe Church in 1905. While at Latrobe he was President of the Baptist Union.

In 1911 the original Burnie pulpit was given to the Penguin Baptist Church. Two years later the gas plant for the church lighting was sold and electricity installed. A United Patriotic service was held in the Burnie Theatre in 1914.

By 1914 relationships had become strained between Palmer and a number of the deacons and farewell services were conducted on 15 March. Palmer had

resigned to take up a church position in Melbourne.

In Burnie he had visited every house in the town and was a "fearless fighter" for the temperance cause. Palmer was a worker, but throughout his ministerial service there was a pattern to his work. He enjoyed relatively short stints with waning enthusiasm settling in as time went on. Then came the desire to go elsewhere.

Dr. Thomas Porter of N.S.W. served as interim prior to the pastorate of Robert McCullough.

#### **Rev. Robert McCullough, 1915-1918**

McCullough came from the Coramandel Valley and Mitcham Churches in S.A. He had been the founding minister of both the Longford (for four years) and Hobart (ten years) Churches. During his first stay in Tasmania, he was twice chosen President and was editor of the Daystar, a monthly Baptist paper.

McCullough was born in 1853 at the village of Randalstown, on the banks of the Maine River, County Antrim, Ireland. His father was a farmer on the Shanes Castle Estates and descended from the old yeomanry of Ulster. In his early days, Robert saw not a little of the faction fights between the Orangemen and the Ribbonmen.

After passing through the classes of the Anglican school in the neighbourhood, he entered the Old Bleach Irish Linen Company at an early age. Acting as time-keeper, he had at first to be at the office from 6 a.m. till 6 p.m., and he lived more than two miles away. From the beginning, he was next to the employers, two thorough gentlemen, the sons of Quakers. In addition to the books of the head office, he was in daily contact with all parts of 'the works' and his prospects were very bright. When, some years after, Robert left his employment to enter upon his theological studies, his employers presented him with a gold watch to mark their esteem.

Robert was brought up in the Anglican communion, and had the Bishop's hands laid upon his head in confirmation. The first time he heard of Baptists was when Grattan Guinness and his wife visited the North of Ireland holding evangelistic services. The Baptists were then disrespectfully called "Dippers" and it was whispered among the lads of the neighbourhood, with many a mysterious and significant look and gesture, that these strange people, the Dippers, had in their churches a hole in the floor full of water, into which people went down and were dipped. Sometime after this, there came a stranger, and asked if he could stay one night at McCullough's farm house. He was made welcome. It was soon discovered that he was one of those dreaded "Dippers".

A real live "Dipper" in the house! He was asked why they baptized people by immersing them, and he told them that they tried to follow Jesus, and that He was immersed in the Jordan. The answer may not be the best for a Baptist to give, but it made a deep and lasting impression upon the boy. When, at the age of nineteen, he was awakened at some revival meetings, he was led to look into the question of baptism anew. He found from the New Testament that the despised "Dippers" were right, and felt that it was his duty to cast in his lot with them. He joined the little Baptist Church gathering about five miles from his native town from which he had to walk each Sunday. The severing from the Anglican Church, the church of his fathers, to which he was much attached, did not come easily.

At the Baptist meeting he began "exhorting" as was the custom with the Irish Baptists. He was led on to conduct services and, notwithstanding his busy life, he preached almost every week in various districts. His spare time was given to study under the direction of his pastor, the Rev. W.S. Eccles. Friends for some time urged him to devote himself to the

ministry. At last, feeling a call to the ministry, he gave up business after nine years and entered Spurgeon's College. It was his full intention to give his life to Ireland, but lung disease was threatening, and the call to minister in the Antipodes came as his studies at the college drew to a close.

In 1915 the Burnie Church conveyed its deepest sympathy to the Pastor and his wife, Eva, upon the loss of their son "who died while bravely fighting for his King and Country."

In these years public entertainment followed the harvest Festival. On one occasion the pastor was asked to give "his humorous lecture" From Burnie he returned to S.A., to the pastorates of the Grange Baptist Church (1918-1924), Seaton Park (1920-1925) and Mount Barker (1924 to 1932). He died in South Australia on 13 October 1931.

#### **Rev. F. A. Leeder, 1918-1922**

Leeder came from the Baptist Church at Devonport in 1918. He had resigned from Devonport because "he felt that he was making no headway".

Leeder was born in 1870 and trained for the Christian ministry at the Dunoon Bible Training Institute in Glasgow. He commenced his ministry in Australia in 1908 at the Taringa Baptist Church in Queensland. His next charge was the Warwick Church before he took the Devonport position.

In May 1919 the Church officially welcomed home the returned soldiers from the Great War.

It was recorded that at Burnie, Leeder exercised "a very fruitful ministry", and left for Yarraville on 31 January 1922. Subsequent pastorates were at Ballarat, East and West Preston. He is remembered as an outstanding pastor. He died on 17 December 1953.

## CHAPTER 2

### Rev. Edward B. Woods, 1922-1932

Woods, affectionately known as "Daddy Woods", was inducted on 11 June 1922. He had previously been at Gummeracha and Kenton Valley, S.A. With his arrival a new chapter opened in the history of the Church.

Woods was born in 1861. He trained for the ministry at Regent's Park College, graduating with a B.D. and a B.A. from London University. He commenced his first ministry at Stalham, aged twenty-four. He then followed this with ministries at Manchester (1893-1896) and Leicester (1897-1902). He first married Janet Vynne of Swaffam and they had seven children. One, Harold, became an Anzac. Six years after Janet's death, he married Henrietta Adams in 1901. After another break down in health, he became school master at the College Latin in Neuchatel, Switzerland. A ministry followed at Whyte's Causeway Church, Kirkcaldy (1905-1913). He was associated with the Free Church Movement. Prior to World War I, he was minister of Cinnamon Gardens Church at Colombo, Ceylon. In 1918 the family came to Australia but the French mail ship on which they were travelling was wrecked not far from Singapore. He supplied short term pastorates at Flinders Street, North Adelaide and Petersham, Sydney. From 1920 he was at Gumeracha, SA.

He was President of the Tasmanian Baptist Union, Union Secretary and Superintendent of the Home Missions for a number of years. Locally, he was chairman of the Burnie Tourist and Progress Association and secretary of the Emu Bay Sick and Benevolent Society.

In 1924, under the inspiration, of Woods, a day for conference and study for ministers in Launceston, which had been initiated many years earlier by the Rev.

Robert McCullough, was developed into an annual retreat and the Summer School of Theology. Later the practice was followed by visiting country centres so that some of the smaller churches would be encouraged by the visit of ministers from all parts of the State.

He represented the State on the occasion of the Brisbane Tabernacle Jubilee in 1927. He visited Toronto in the same capacity in 1928. He was away four months, during which time the Rev. George Wainwright and Major Roberts-Thomson (the latter the father of Church members John and Edward Roberts-Thomson) occupied the pulpit.

### A New Church

Shortly after Wood's arrival, the vestries of the church were extended to make room for the Sunday School. Later, the wooden piles on which the church was supported were found to be decayed, and it was ascertained that it would be costly to replace them.

Woods suggested that though be given to the erection of a new brick Church. At the time 200 pounds was owned on the property, and a new church seemed out of the question.

However, owing to generous giving, the debt was wiped off. It was then decided that when 500 pounds was raised or promised, a new building would be justified. In addition to finance, there were other difficulties to contend with. The heavy wooden building had to be moved from the street to the rear of the site. This was done by two huge tractors, logs being used as skids. It was a fine feat and crowds came to watch it. This work was supervised by Jim Baylis who had a good band of helpers. The old church was remodelled to form vestries, school hall, kindergarten room and kitchen.

The balance of the money had to be raised, and several Church members acted as guarantors at the bank for the 1,000

pounds which was needed. All the 1,400 pounds needed was raised by straight out giving. Members of the Women's Progressive Union greatly assisted with collection books. Harry Dowling made a large cardboard clock-face which showed the progress of the fund raising.

The foundation stone of the church was laid on 1 August 1925 by Joshua T. Soundy of Hobart, President of the Baptist Union. The new church, capable of accommodating 350 or more people, opened on 12 December 1925. It was built almost entirely by men of the

Church: Henry Dowling as general overseer, Fred Parsons in charge of the carpentering and Jim Baylis and Ray Haslock in charge of the brick work. It was completed at a cost of 1675 pounds. Seventeen years later the debt incurred was completely wiped out.

#### **Call to Christian Full-Time Service**

During Wood's time three members of the Church offered themselves for full time Christian endeavour.

Roland Bewsher, son of foundation member and a deacon, Mr. A. M. Bewsher, entered the Borneo Evangelistic Mission in 1932. There he translated the Gospel of Mark into Bisaiyah language.

Aubrey Parsons joined the China Inland Mission for missionary service.

#### **Edward Roberts-Thomson**

In 1932, Edward Roberts-Thomson, a member of Church, "entered the Baptist College, Melbourne! This was preceded by a three-month period with the Tasmanian Baptist Home Mission in Smithton. Roberts-Thomson was born in April 1909 in Worthing, England. His father, Major Roberts-Thomson was an officer of the Royal Horse Artillery who fought in the Boer War, in India, and, during the First World War, at Gallipoli and on the Western Front. The family returned to England from India in 1909 to seek medical help for

one of their sons, and was advised to move permanently to the warmer climate of Tasmania. Edward was raised on the rich farmlands of Table Cape, just out of Wynyard. The family had been Anglican, but his father changed to the local Open Brethren Assembly. Later Edward became associated with the Burnie Church. He married Gwen Joyce, a daughter of the Edward and Fanny Joyce.

Following college, he spent two years at the Hamilton Baptist Church in Victoria. Two years later he left for England to study at Bristol Baptist College where he gained his B.A., to which he later added a B.D. Through the War years he pastored the Hobart Baptist Church, until 1949. A call to the Brunswick Baptist Church followed. In 1953 Roberts-Thomson took up the position of Principal of the New Zealand Baptist Theological College in Auckland. He soon began six years of extra study and research on a thesis for his Doctorate of Divinity. In

1961 he commenced as Principal of the Baptist Theological College in New South Wales. After three years he resigned and joined the Presbyterians.

#### **John Roberts-Thomson**

Later, Edward's brother, John Roberts-Thomson, also joined the Church. John was bom at Kasauli, India, in 1905. Educated at the Launceston Church Grammar School, John worked first on his father's farm, taught in the local Sunday School, taught himself Greek and conducted services as opportunities arose. At the age of twenty-one, he entered the Bible Training Institute of New Zealand and graduated in 1928. For the next six years he was engaged in interdenominational evangelistic work in Tasmania. In 1934, he entered the Baptist Theological College in Victoria and graduated in 1936. He was awarded the LTh. He also gained more than sufficient subject passes to gain the London University B.D., but "owing to

communication difficulties due to the war, he was not awarded this degree."

Roberts-Thomson served in two churches before going to Newstead in August 1946. From 1937 to 1941 he was the minister at Devonport Baptist, and from 1941 to 1946 was at Semaphore in South Australia. During the earlier of these ministries, he married Lillian Haines of Devonport. He died on 20 April 1994.

### **Tragedy**

A very tragic happening took place on Easter Sunday, 1936, when a tidal wave struck the steam ship Nairana as it passed through the notorious Port Phillip Bay rip on its way to Melbourne, resulting in the deaths of three members of the Parsons family who were washed overboard. Fred Parsons was a deacon of the Church. His wife, Mrs. Parsons was described in the Church minutes as "a mother in Israel", and daughter Jean had just finished her four-year nursing course. Their deaths cast a gloom over the whole town.

On 12 June 1932 Woods relinquished the pastorate and moved to S.A. But he and his wife were not long out of the State. They returned in May 1934 for three years at the Sandy Bay Church. He died on 2 August 1957.

### **Rev. Frank Potter, 1932-1939**

Potter and his wife, Louisa, came from Katanning, W.A. Potter was inducted into the Burnie Church on November 1932. Born in 1884, he first found his feet as a Baptist pastor within the Baptist Churches of Western Australia. He began with their Home Mission and studied for ordination while riding hundreds of kilometers on horseback across vast distances of the State in which he would give twenty years of "loyal and successful service", live a "godly life and be earnest in his preaching".

In Burnie he sought to involve himself with the young people. He was to be seen

at the hockey ground in South Burnie every Saturday afternoon, shouting encouragement to the Baptist team. His interest in the team was intense as he strode up and down the sidelines, complete with collar and tie! One New Year's Day a trip to St. Valentines Peak was arranged. As usual Potter was a member of the party. The day was hot, and Potter, as usual, was dressed in collar and tie. He arrived at Trig Point panting, but still wearing his collar and tie!

It was during his stay in Burnie that the communion table and chairs were purchased by subscription.

Farewell services took place on 22 March 1939. He had been called to a church in Victoria, In 1930 he was made President of the Baptist Union of Western Australia. During his time in Tasmania he was Secretary of the Foreign Missionary Committee. He retired from active ministry in 1957 and died in Victoria in June 1962.

### **Baptist Men's Hockey Club**

The club was formed when men's hockey first started in Burnie, and competed with the North West Coast Hockey Association. It went into retirement during the World War n. It held the premiership of the Association for five years, namely 1935, 1936, 1937, 1947 and 1948. The patron of the club was Stan Edward Joyce.

### **Rev. Frederick Clifton Aldis, 1939-1943**

Aldis came from Prospect. S.A. commencing on 4 June 1939. He was born in Horley, Surrey, England on 7 April 1903. His parents were members of the local Baptist Church, his father being a deacon. In 1912 the family migrated to West-em Australia and settled in Northam. In 1921 he preached his first sermon. He was employed as a clerk in a shipping line in Fremantle, but in 1925, as a student pastor, he had charge of his first church. In 1934 Aldis accepted a call from the

Peake Circuit of Australia and in the same year accepted another from the Prospect and Broadview Churches. Soon he was set aside to promote the "Centenary Forward" movement of the South Australian Baptist Union, which set to gain support for further development. He was also involved in the Home Mission and the General Committee of the Union.

Within six months of his arrival in Burnie, war was declared and this deprived the Burnie Church of its young men by enlistment into the Forces. A Young Men's Bible class of fourteen members was depleted often young men. The Men's Hockey team was disbanded. The war years meant "strain by day and complete darkness by night".

Aldis was able to secure the rights to broadcast on 7BU the Church's Sunday morning service every six weeks. It reached northern Tasmania and southern Victoria.

When the Secretary of the Tasmanian Baptist Union, the Rev. J Slater, enlisted as an army chaplain at the start of the war, the Secretary's task fell to Aldis. When he relinquished the Secretary's position two years later, he accepted the position of Home Mission Superintendent until 1944. This task, which he took over from the Rev. A.C. Prior, suited him because he was within easy distance of most of the Home Mission districts.

With the declaration of war came the duties of an air observation unit, established by the Royal Australian Air Force. As second in command, Aldis was responsible for the manning of the watch posts high on the hills overlooking Burnie and the sea twenty-four hours a day for four and one half years; one hundred civilians manned that post.

He endeared himself to outlying families. One particular family remembers him riding his old black bicycle to Stowport, 10

km from the manse and up the long, steep, winding Stowport Hill!

In 1941 he married Jean Robinson; they had first met in secondary school. She was now a three certificated nurse and left her job as matron of a large hospital in WA for Burnie. In Burnie she trained young women in first aid and nursing for the Emergency Hospital Station.

In a complete blackout, with two tangible reminders of his stay in Tasmania – a wife and their two month old son – Aldis left Burnie on 23 April 1944 for Alberton Baptist Church in SA. In S.A. he took up the position of Home Mission Superintendent in the Baptist churches of that State.

#### **Rev. Thomas Churchward Kelly, 1945**

Returned missionary, Thomas Churchward Kelly occupied the pulpit for six months in 1945 as interim Pastor.

Churchward Kelly, born Thomas Kelly on 5 September 1884 in Strathfield, N.S.W., was converted under the inspiration of the Rev. C.J. Tinsley in 1902. He immediately began preparing for the Home Mission ministry by preaching and engaging in open air work. He was accepted by the Home Mission in 1908 and sent to Pinecliff, N.S.W., a farming district with many outstations. He then moved on to Liverpool, a tough district where his working class background stood him in good stead. In 1910 he commenced his studies at the Baptist College of Victoria. Several years were spent at Lithgow, NSW, and he married Stella Mary Churchward in March 1914 and adopted Stella's name. Stella, who had a distinguished university career, had been a member of the staff at the Presbyterian Ladies' College, Croydon, N.S.W. The following year they were accepted by Tasmanian Baptists as their missionary representatives to work at Tasmania's station at Serajganj, East Bengal. They gave strenuous missionary service until 1943. In 1944 they came to live in Tasmania where Thomas accepted

the joint pastorate of Perth and Longford. He initiated negotiations so that Scone, the home of William Gibson Junior, would be acquired as a "Home for Incurables". Scone was renamed the "Eskleigh Home".

Thomas became President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania in 1945 and Stella became President of the Baptist Women's Auxiliary.

Following the interim pastorate at Burnie, Thomas became secretary to the board of Eskleigh. From 1947 until his death he worked for the Presbyterian Home Mission, attending to the circuits of Mowbray, Scottsdale, West Tamar, Hagley and Deloraine. Stella would often play the organ at the services.

### **Stanley Edward Joyce**

In 1944 Stanley Edward Joyce, the son of Edward Albert Joyce, became Church secretary. By the time of his death on 10 April 1989, he had been an active member of the Church for seventy-nine years and Church secretary for twenty-two years, from 1944 to 1965. He was made a Life Deacon of the Church. He was President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania in 1956/57, and a treasurer of the Home Mission Department.

After completing school in Burnie, Joyce joined the family business at the age of seventeen. He joined the 91st Infantry Battalion in 1912, rising to the rank of lieutenant in 1915, and was on active service overseas with the 51st Battalion till 1919. After numerous promotions, on his return to Burnie, Joyce was appointed commanding officer of 12th Battalion in 1936. He joined the RSL in 1919 and served till 1946 in the posts of president, secretary and treasurer.

His loyalty to the Church was mirrored in his strong and active interest in the well-being of the Burnie community. He was instrumental in establishing the Burnie Chamber of Commerce and he was its second president in 1935. He was a Burnie

councillor from 1938 to 1942, serving as warden for two years. He served another term as councillor from 1948 till 1951, and served the same period with the Burnie Marine Board. He was a chairman the Coastal Advisory Board for Equity Trustees, a charter member of the Burnie Rotary Club and a member of the Masonic Lodge. He was also a president of the Burnie High School Parents and Friends' Association, secretary of the Burnie Tourist Association and Life member of the North-West Fisheries' Association.

He married Olive Burleigh in 1920 and, following her death, after forty-one years of marriage, he married Irene Graves,

### **The Baptist Women's Fellowship**

In 1906, the women of the Church banded together to form "The Women's Progressive Union", meeting twice a month. The women visited the sick and acted as deaconesses. They sent numerous parcels to the A.B.M.S. work in India, and in various ways, supplied the needs of the church. Mrs. F B. Wallis, a great enthusiast in the cause of missions, was President from its inception until 1945. Mrs. Emily Joyce was treasurer for about thirty-five years, and Mrs. T. Tucker was secretary for twenty-five years hi time the name was changed to "The Baptist Women's Auxiliary" and has since become Baptist Women's Fellowship. Apart from their work in the church they helped many other organisations within the community, such as the Blind and Deaf Society, the Bible Society, Cancer Support, They also took a keen interest in Miranbeena and Umina Park, hi the wider Baptist family within the State, they faithfully supported St. Ann's Rest Home in Hobart until the building of Karingal in Devonport.

One of their number, Mrs. Hazel Gar-ratt was State Secretary of the B.W.F. from 1966 to 1976, while Mrs. Irene Joyce was treasurer for some years. Others served on the State B.W.F. executive for many

years, while others again served as State B.W.F missionary conveners.

Missions have always held a special place in their hearts and parcels were regularly packed and sent to Baptist missionaries in Zambia, Bangladesh, Thailand, Papua New Guinea and Man Jaya,

This group still functions to this day helping out at local fairs as well as the large Karingal Fair. The group meets twice monthly, and is a very valuable part of the life of Burnie Baptist Church, through a ministry of prayer, and giving financial assistance of close to \$1,000 annually to many areas of the Lord's work.

### **Senior Girls' Missionary Union**

This Union was begun about 1932 by Mrs. Lila Ormerod and Mrs. Greenhill. The object was to encourage a missionary spirit. During Stella Churchward Kelly's stay, the Union was revived. The girls were supportive in various causes, two of which were the Baptist Missionary work in Pakistan, where they sponsored a young girl, and a work at Cape Barren Island, under Miss Hudson.

### **Rev. Ernest Clive Smith, 1945-1953**

Smith's ministry at Burnie commenced in July 1945. Wartime blackouts were still in force. Smith, his wife Edna and Edna's sister, were met at 7am on the cold and dark Burnie wharf by Stanley Edward Joyce, manning a torch. He gave them a loving welcome to his home.

Smith was born on 22 May 1913 in Lismore, NSW. His early years were spent in Channon, NSW, where his father was school master. During his secondary years at Lismore High School, he boarded with an aunt and uncle, committed members of the Salvation Army, and it was through them that he became a Christian, in 1932 he returned home and found casual employment. His sign writing efforts endured on the Mt. George "Blue Ribbon" bakery for fifty years. Soon, working as a

council clerk at Lismore, he felt the call to Christian ministry within the Baptist Union of NSW. In 1937 he served a probationary year at Taree with the Home Mission before he went to the Baptist College at Ashfield in Sydney. During his four years in college he served the North Campsie, Randwick and Cabramatta Churches and was ordained on 10 December 1940.

He soon married Edna Andrews and became the first full-time pastor of the Randwick Church.

In Tasmania Smith was the liaison officer between the Tasmanian and Victorian Baptist Home Mission Departments. He was President of the Union in 1949/1950 and Deputy Home Mission Superintendent to the Victorian, the Rev. J.G. Manning. Smith was the first minister at the Church to own a car.

Smith's ministry at Burnie was very fruitful. Years later Edna confessed that "no ministry could have been more joyful and gratifying." All the auxiliaries proceeded in very good heart - the prayer meeting, the Sunday school, the Baptist Women's Auxiliary, the Men's Society, the Senior, Intermediate and Junior Christian Endeavour societies, the choir, the Senior Girl's Missionary Union and the Hockey Club, in the last of which Smith was an active participant. There was much support from the stalwarts such as the Joyce, Dowling and Hays families. Other faithful members were a constant encouragement. In 1948, the first manse baby in forty-eight years arrived. Two others soon followed.

The radio ministry continued once a month on 7BU and Smith often conducted "The Epilogue" and the "Thought for the Day".

Smith continued his fruitful ministry until March 1953, when he left to take up a pastorate at the Aberdeen Street Baptist Church in Geelong.

Smith's subsequent ministries were at North Balwyn, Mooroolbark and Orange, NSW. In his retirement he had nine interim

ministries. He died while serving as an associate pastor of Surrey Hills Baptist Church, Melbourne, on 2 November 1986.

During his ministry, four of the young people dedicated their lives to full-time service. They were Ruth Joyce, daughter of the Church Secretary, and Joan Filleul.

They trained at the Victorian Baptist Training Institute for the work of deaconesses. Ruth later married David Aldridge and Joan married the Rev. Graham Wade after he had completed his studies at the Victorian Baptist College. Margaret Stitz, who trained at Bethesda Hospital in order to go to China as a missionary; and David Aldridge, were the other two to give full-time service.

### **David and Ruth Aldridge**

The Rev. David and Ruth Aldridge were the first Tasmanians to serve with the A.B.M.S. They sailed for Papua New Guinea on 10 December 1952 where they were appointed to the newly-opened station of Telefomin in the mountains of the Western Highlands near the border of Irian Jaya.

David had been accepted for ministerial training in 1948 and completed his training at the Baptist College of Victoria. He had grown up in a family which had attended first the Methodist and then the Presbyterian Church. After War World n, David accepted a position in the engineering department of Associated Pulp and Paper Mill at Burnie and he began attending the Burnie Baptist Church. There he met Ruth, the younger daughter of Stanley and Olive Joyce. At the Victorian Baptist Training Institute Ruth too commenced studies. David was ordained in 1952 just after their marriage. They both had become Tasmanian Baptist missionary candidates two years earlier having felt led to the new work in PNG.

At Telefomin the Aldridges conducted a primary school for thirty village and station children and ran a thriving trade store selling tinned foods, basic tools and

implements to the stone-aged people. From there they continued to serve in the Central Highlands, but this time among the Enga tribes which comprised one of the largest language groups in the region. Stationed at Lumis on the plateau to the south of Baiyer, David trained local preacher-teachers and commissioned them into leadership" positions. He was also involved in the administration of the village primary schools. Further he worked in linguistics, both in recording the Enga language and in translation. At the same time he took undergraduate studies with the University of Queensland and later graduated Bachelor of Arts. Their second term was spent at the Baiyer River station. Early in this time David prepared the way for the formation of the church in the Baiyer Valley. This eventuated in 1957. Once the church was formed, David's main task lay in conducting a pastors' training school. He also worked with others on a translation of the Gospel of Mark into the Enga language.

In 1958, at the end of their second term, a call came from the Newstead Church. Knowing that fields in New Guinea had a full quota of missionaries and there being no shortage of applicants, they returned to Tasmania. He then commenced a continuous ministry of over thirty years among Tasmanian Baptist churches. During his pastorate of the Ulverstone Church, which began in 1965, Ruth became ill. Subsequently, after a long illness, she died. Some years later David married Margaret Packham. David's last pastorate was at the Somerset Church.

### **Montello Baptist Church**

The Burnie Church now became much occupied with expansion, with the years 1948 to 1953 seeing the establishment of work at Montello. A 500 pound legacy left by Edward Albert Joyce for church building purposes, was directed to the project.

In 1947, a block of land in Mace Street, Montello, had been purchased and a Sunday School started in Richard Goninon's garage, in the same year it was decided to build a hall in Mace Street and Max Powning drew up plans for a building, to be completed in two stages. Max Smith was the builder and he was helped by men from the Burnie Church. On 23 October 1948, the first section was opened and the Sunday School had thirty-three pupils. Then in 1949, a Baptist Women's Auxiliary branch was formed.

Evening services started in 1950. In June 1950, the Burnie Church authorised the completion of the hall and on 1 December, Aldridge became the first pastor. In 1951 morning services commenced.

Aldridge was succeeded by Murray Ling in July 1951, the Burnie Church subsidising his salary. He left at the end of year and Graeme Wade followed in April 1952. In 1953 a manse was purchased and Rev. Max Brewer was inducted to the Pastorate in August of that year. The Burnie Church was still subsidising the pastor's salary. Montello was constituted a Church on 26 July 1953 with a membership of fourteen, eleven of whom transferred from the Burnie Church. A manse was provided by the Burnie Church. But by now the small hall was no longer adequate for the Sunday School with its 140 pupils, in 1954 the work came under the Home Mission. In 1957 the foundation stone for a church was laid and the building was opened 15 March 1958 by the Rev. J.G. Manning, who was overseeing Tasmania as Home Mission Superintendent. Altogether the Burnie Church spent approximately 5,000 pounds to establish the Montello Church.

### **Somerset Baptist Church**

The Somerset venture followed. In 1951, the Burnie Church helped with the purchase of a block of land on the corner of Simpson and Arthur Streets in Somerset for the purpose of establishing a Home Mission work. A Fellowship was formed,

meeting in the Memorial Hall. In 1954 the Fellowship requested that it come under the supervision of the Burnie Church and Rev. Max Brewer was appointed Moderator. A committee consisting of Max Kingston, Trevor Brain and Ray Hays was formed to guide and direct the development of the work. Congregations were by now averaging eighty in the morning and between twenty-five and fifty in the evening. By 1955, the Building Fund stood at 500 pounds. In 1955 the first Sunday School anniversary was celebrated, with Ernest Greeney the first Sunday School Superintendent. By the following year, the Sunday School had grown to 105 pupils with fifteen teachers.

The foundation stone of a brick hall was laid on 15 February 1958 and the building was opened and dedicated in August of that year at a cost 1600 pounds. On 22 February 1959, the Somerset Fellowship was constituted a church.

Yolla and Somerset formed a joint pastorate early in 1962. In 1970 new manse was erected at Somerset.

### **The Christian Endeavour Societies**

The first Christian Endeavour Society was formed about 1904. In 1924, Mrs. Vaudeau and her daughter, Mary, started a Junior Christian Endeavour Society. Soon there were Senior, Intermediate and Junior Societies, all flourishing.

In 1955 there was a combined enrolment in the three Societies of fifty-one. By 1964 the Young People's Society was in recess, but the Intermediate and Junior Societies continued until 1970 when they were disbanded. In 1976 a Junior Society was reformed. Later a Junior Young People's Society was reformed.

### **Sunday School**

Sunday School work continued from the foundation of the Church under Edward Albert Joyce. Then in 1944 his grandson, Ian E. Joyce, became General

Superintendent, a position he was to hold for the next twenty-five years. Bob H. Toller then took over for four years. For many years Hedley Clarke was the Secretary of the School, but later he became the Statistician when the All Age School was introduced. His son Brian took his place.

In July 1959 the School changed from an afternoon time and started meeting at 9.45 a.m., and in the following month the Rev. Alan Neate arrived to inaugurate the All Age School. By 1960 there was a total enrolment of 305 in the All Age School and this figure continued fairly steadily during the sixties, with, for example the Adult Women Sunday School Class having grown in attendance from twenty a week to over 100. But by 1971 the figure had fallen to 197 and there was a reported loss of interest in the seventeen to thirty age group. From 1974 a bus was provided for children in the Acton area.

The Sunday School Anniversaries have always been a feature of the School's work. In 1981 the enrolment in Sunday school stood at 141 students with an average attendance of 60. This was before the introduction of Sunday Sport and many other forms of Sunday activities outside the church.

In 1986 the Sunday School was first held at the same times the morning services.

### **Murray Ling**

In July 1951, Murray Ling was appointed Associate Pastor, to be located at Montello. Following studies at the Baptist College of N.S.W., he was stationed at the Yolla Baptist Church in 1956 and ordained there on 18 January 1957. From 1958 to 1962 he ministered at the Perth-Longford Churches. From there, he and his wife, Helen, found rich fellowship with different groups and other denominations. Twice they served as relief missionaries for the A.B.M.S. Murray served as superintendent on three aboriginal settlements, for the

Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration, worked with handicapped persons and special groups and finally became a marriage counsellor. God's providence had very much touched their lives. On the Tasman Bridge over the Derwent in Hobart, on the night of 5 January 1975, a span of the bridge fell and Ling managed to stop his car just short of the resulting gap. It had also been most evident for Murray in a childhood accident involving a train in which he lost an arm, but not his life. Murray died in 1998.

### **Youth Activities**

In 1954, a Young Worshippers League was formed, and continued for a few years. The following year Alan Docker started a boys' club with thirty members.

A Daily Vacation Bible School was held in 1962 and there were fourteen decisions for Christ. These Daily Vacation Bible Schools continued each year until 1968.

In 1972 a Boys' Brigade Company was formed under the Captaincy of Trevor Levett. Upon his arrival in Burnie, Vic Perry was appointed Captain of the Boys' Brigade and under his influence the Brigade grew to two sections. He remained in this position for twenty-two years and endeared himself to the boys as well as his fellow leaders. The Brigade is still functioning well, gaining in numbers due to the variety of activities offered.

For a number of years the youth work, apart from Brigades, declined. Today the Church has a quite large youth contingent and many and varied activities are held under the leadership of Mrs. Maryse Gay. Close fellowship has developed amongst the youth and several of their numbers are part of the Church band which regularly plays at worship services.

In 1977 a Girls' Brigade Company was formed under Mrs Terry Garratt. The first united Church Parade was held in May 1978. The Brigade is still very active to this

day, under the Captaincy of Mrs, Leah Cowen.

### **Rev. A. F. Wright, 1953-1958**

After an interim ministry by Rev. S A. McDonald, the Rev. A.F. Wright was welcomed to the Church, on 9 August 1953. He had come from the Sunshine Baptist Church in Melbourne. Wright was born in Melbourne on 6 June 1922 and he attended the Kew Baptist Church until he was eighteen, under the ministry of Rev. J.E. Newnham. In 1940, with war declared, he was called up for the army, but later enlisted in the R.A.A.F. and rose to the rank of Flight Lieutenant serving in the Pacific area.

While at the Bairnsdale R.A.A.F. station as a staff pilot training navigators over Bass Strait, he helped to start a Christian fellowship. One day in the chapel on the station, through a verse from the scriptures, he knew he was being called to the ministry.

He immediately wrote both to his father, by then a retired businessman, and who in his retirement years had been pastoring in a number of Victorian country churches, and to the Rev. Wesley Bligh, who was then the secretary of the Council of the Baptist College of Victoria. Bligh informed him that the best preparation he could do for post-war ministerial training was to study New Testament Greek. This he did carrying his Greek New Testament and books with him for the remaining two years of the war, even while ferrying Catalina flying boats across the Pacific. He was discharged on 12 March 1946 and on the next day entered the Baptist College of Victoria. There he was officially welcomed, with seven other ex-servicemen,, and his father, who was then the President of the Baptist Union of Victoria. He was trained at the Baptist College of Victoria gaining an LTh. and B.A. Degree at Melbourne University. Ordained in 1949, he accepted the Home Mission post at Sunshine.

During Wright's ministry at Burnie, films were shown at regular intervals after the evening services on the beach and in the Town Hall.

In 1957 a Mission was held with the Rev. Dr. Harry Orr, Rev. William Dunlap and Miss Corrie ten Boom as missionaries. The following year Wright left to take up a post as chaplain at Carey Baptist Grammar School, Melbourne.

## Chapter 3

### Rev. Gordon Merry, 1958-1964

April 1958 saw the arrival of the Rev. Gordon Merry, M.S.W., B.A. (hons), Dip. Soc.Stud., L.Th., and his family and this was the beginning of a number of years of great spiritual growth. At the end of his time, in six weeks in 1964, there were eleven baptisms. From 1958 to 1964 the membership grew from 125 to 170. Over Merry's time there were fifty-five baptisms. Assisting the growth of the period was the introduction of the All-Age Sunday School, and the Billy Graham Mission to Sydney in 1961 taken on relay through land-line and shown at the theatre and Town Hall. The membership had risen to 145 one year after his arrival! "Such successes as occurred were entirely due to God's goodness and to a superb group of lay people who understood the notion of the 'Priesthood of All Believers', and offered themselves without reserve to the Lord to give expression to this," said Merry many years later.

Merry conducted fifty-one weddings over the six and one half years. One of the reasons for the high number was the bells that called the Baptists to worship. On one occasion whilst the Church was having its service broadcast through 7BU, the fire alarm in the town sounded. As the fire engine came ever closer it became evident the fire was somewhere behind the pulpit as men were heard rushing down the pathway alongside the church. Merry had to go on preaching for the usual time as the service was on air. The fire was in the Sunday School building and was soon under control.

Apart from his effective ministry in the Burnie Church and community, Merry made a significant contribution to Baptist work statewide. This had been particularly so in the work of Christian Education, through several years of notable service as secretary of the Department, and in the establishment of the camping centre at

Araluen. He also made a valuable contribution on the Council and several other committees of the Union.

Merry born at Mordialloc, Victoria, on 11 June 1922, was greatly influenced in his childhood by a godly grandmother. He attended Sunday School at Gardiner Gospel Hall, and, on moving to the country, attended a Congregational Church which had been pastored by a relative who served there for thirty years as a volunteer preacher.

The call to ministry occurred during war service in New Guinea and Pacific islands whilst with the R.A.A.F. He applied for theological training at the Baptist College of Victoria after returning at the war's end.

During the pastorate of Merry, the Diamond Jubilee was celebrated from 5 to 13 September 1959, with the Rev. John Morley, M.A., Dip.Ed., as the guest speaker. The new Christian Education Block and additions were dedicated. The week concluded with a missionary weekend conducted by the Rev J. D. Williams.

A Deeper Life Mission was held in 1964. In that year too, the Burnie Churches combined to observe Holy Week.

Merry left in 1965, returning to Victoria to pastor the Elsternwick Church.

### Sister Heather Hunt

Sister Hunt worked with the Home Mission Department and served the Church in December 1964 and January 1965. She had arrived in Tasmania about the end of October 1964 having been seconded to the Baptist Union of Tasmania for a period of five years by the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. She came from the Claremont Baptist Church, Shewsbury, working on a new housing estate on the outskirts of the town. Her contact with Tasmania was the Rev. Matthew Francis, a minister of that church until he came to

Tasmania. After her time with the Bumie and Montello Churches, she took up the task of pioneering the Abbotsfield (Claremont, Tasmania) work early in March 1965. Her service there continued until July 1969, when she left to return to England.

The retired Baptist minister, the Rev. S. A. McDonald, again conducted an interim ministry at Burnie prior to the arrival of the Rev. John Edwards. McDonald grew up in N.S.W. and became a graduate of the Victorian Baptist Theological College in 1912. For a time he was Secretary to the Carey Baptist Grammar School. Later he took up the positions of Secretary and Superintendent of the Sydney City Mission. Two of his pastorates in Victoria were at Ballarat (Dawson Street) and Elsternwick.

### **Araluen Camp Site**

In 1959 a camp site of approximately six acres, spanning Wilson's Creek at Detention, was purchased and vested in the Baptist Union of Tasmania. Stanley Edward Joyce was the prime mover in this new venture with the backing of Merry and the Burnie Church. The following year a further ten acres of adjoining land was secured on lease from the Crown. The freehold of this land was obtained in 1975.

In 1960 two wooden railway carriages were bought and placed on the site; these could sleep forty. Meanwhile, Max Powning drew up plans for the development of the site.

Two years later 900 pounds had been spent on buildings on the site. In 1965, a shower block and another two bunkhouses were erected. The Recreation Hall, built with the aid of a \$14,000 loan from the Baptist Union Duncan Trust, was opened by Merry in November 1976. At the beginning of 1978, caretakers David and Elizabeth Walker were appointed and this necessitated the modernisation of the old cottage.

Development has continued ever since and today a very dedicated committee functions under the Chairmanship of the Rev. Jim Winkley, Pastor of Wynyard Baptist. The Camp now has four cabins with bunk style accommodation, a shower and toilet block, four three-bedroom carpeted units, each fully self-contained with televisions, the recreation hall and the caretaker's cottage. Development of the site is still taking place.

### **B.W.F. Evening Group**

This group, later to be known as Ladies' Evening Fellowship, commenced in 1950 under the leadership of Edna Smith and was a place where young marrieds could enjoy a time of fellowship, hear various speakers and be made aware of the work of the Church. It was intended that it should fill the need of those who were unable to attend the afternoon group.

Over the years the members gave help with button days, fairs and church catering while donations were given to B.W.F. State Objectives, Camp Araluen and special causes as they occurred. A missionary family was adopted regularly by the women and parcels were sent and birthdays remembered. Letters were also written to the missionary families, in 1993 a women's evening fellowship was recommenced after several years in recess and is functioning well as an outreach group.

### **The Choir**

Bert Filleul retired as choir master in 1973 after serving in this capacity for twenty-five years. He was succeeded by Mrs. Helen Jones, who was assisted by Alan Ward and Tom Ivory.

A number of special musical items and cantatas have been performed by the choir over the years and in 1978 they took part in the Bumie Sesqui-Centenary by rendering the Cantata, "The Resurrection", in the Civic Theatre.

The present choir leader is Gordon Braggaton. Mrs. Marie Cornish has been a consistent member of the choir for the past sixty-eight years!

Mrs. Elsie Trethewey remained as organist until 1965, having served a total of fifty-seven years. The assistant organist, the late Kev. Garratt, succeeded her and served until his death in 1988, with Mrs. G. Reeve as assistant organist, hi 1989 Ken Clezy became organist. He has taken time out from this position this year to serve in the Middle East, in the medical field.

### **Rev. John Edwards, 1965-1971**

Edwards, L.Th., Dip. R.E., Cert Bus Stud (PR), FPRIA, came from the Carlton Baptist Church in NSW and was inducted on 3 October 1965. Edwards was bom in N.S.W. on 22 October 1932 into a family where father was unemployed for seven years of the Depression. As a child he first attended the Campsie Baptist Church and then the North Auburn Baptist Church where, in time he would serve as a deacon, Sunday School teacher and organist. He matriculated in 1949 at the Parramatta High School, and then worked with the NSW Public Service Board until the end of 1953.

In 1954 he entered the Baptist Theological College at Ashfield and graduated dux in 1957, having completed the L.Th. and Dip. R.E. Student pastorates followed at the Concorde West and Kempsey Baptist Churches and he was ordained in 1958. From 1960, until the move to Burnie, he served at the Carlton Baptist Church and lectured at the Baptist Theological College when the College was relocated to Eastwood.

During his time at Burnie, the Savage River Community Church was founded. Members of the Burnie Ministers' Fraternal met with a representative of the Savage River Company. He indicated that the company would help provide a place for worship if the Fraternal would agree to a community

church. When the members agreed to this, he told them the company would refurbish a building at no cost to the Fraternal but the Fraternal would have to buy the building. The asking price was \$2! So Edwards took a two dollar note from his wallet and gave it to him. Technically, Edwards still owns the church!

Coupled with this, Ian E Joyce and Lloyd Campbell commenced a Sunday school at Savage River, travelling there each Sunday. The Church supplied the literature. The Rev. Samuel Bath, then pastor of the Somerset Church, made weekly visits to take scripture in the school.

Highlights of Edwards' time were the visits of Dr. Ernest Payne in 1969 and Dr. George Beasley Murray in 1970. The Church was packed with members from all denominations on both occasions.

Edwards, along with the Rev. Peter Stockman, were the Tasmanian Baptist religious broadcasters on the ABC. Edwards also served as a member of the Union Council, Secretary to the Department of Christian Education and the chairman of the Committee for Ministerial Training. He was president of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal.

From 16 to 24 August 1969, seventy years of Baptist work in Burnie was marked by ten days of special meetings. The Rev. Clive Smith and his wife Edna returned to Bumie for the occasion with Smith as the guest speaker. All the organisations arranged special events during the week and Edna addressed a women's rally. The choir performed the Cantata "Sound of Singing" On the closing Sunday, the Rev. Merlyn Holly of Collins Street Baptist Church, Melbourne, conducted the services.

Edwards left in January 1971 to become Public Relations manager for the Community Welfare Foundation (formerly Melbourne City Mission). From 1991 to 1994 he was Public Relations and Marketing Manager at Christ Church

Grammar School, South Yarra. He retired in 1997.

For five months 1972 the Rev. Don L. Johnson conducted an interim pastorate.

### **Rev. Norris Brook, 1971-1976**

On 14 November 1971 Brook was welcomed from the East Lindfield Baptist Church, Sydney. Brook was born in Blackpool, Lancashire, England, in 1933. As a child he attended the Anglican Sunday school but it was in Cubs and Boy Scouts that his understanding of God developed. During High School in Huddersfield, Yorkshire, he joined the youth group of the Primrose Hill Baptist Church, but church services meant little to him.

The family emigrated to Australia and settled in Clempton Park, N.S.W. All the members of his family, including himself, found employment in a textile mill in Sydney. Brook attended the local Baptist Church and came to Christian faith. Two years later the sense of call to the Christian ministry became evident in his life. A year later he entered the N.S.W. Baptist Theological College. A number of student pastorates followed. His first appointment after graduation was at Cobar developing the Far West Mission which Wilbur Fletcher had pioneered. Subsequent pastorates were at Yagoona and East Lindfield.

His years with the Burnie Church saw a number of changes in the life of the Church. Evening services during the winter months were held at 5 p.m. Family Services were started and Hospitality Sundays held, when families were encouraged to invite another family to a meal. Home fellowship groups for Bible Study were commenced.

Project 75 saw a renewed interest in the needy.

Two women were appointed to the Diaconate, Mrs. Julie Kingston and Mrs. Edna Tiddy. This was the first time women had been so appointed.

Elders were also appointed, namely Ian E. Joyce, Kev Garratt and Bob Toller.

In 1974 a week of celebrations was organised for the 75th Church Anniversary with the Rev. Vic Eldridge of Sydney as the guest speaker.

The men met as a group until 1974, when dwindling numbers forced the society into recess. During the time it operated it provided a time of fellowship for men of the Church and the members were active in working bees and in doing odd jobs around the church and for elderly church members. Needy families and charitable and missionary causes also received help from the offering made each month.

Occasional outdoor morning services were tried in the mid 70's and they have later become a regular annual feature of our summer programme. Venues have been the Oldina and Natone Pine Plantations, and more recently the Pioneer Park at Riana.

In November 1976, Brook returned to Sydney where he became part-time pastor of the Turramurra Church.

### **The Organ**

The pipe organ was bought for about 100 pounds and installed in 1926. After many years of faithful service, it was felt that the organ needed rebuilding as the original tracker action was becoming noisy and the wind chest was not functioning properly. An organ fund was established and the sum needed was soon subscribed. The Church was indebted to Harold and Margaret Tattersall for their generosity.

On the day that the organ was rededicated, 29 September 1974, a plaque in memory of Margaret's father, Stanley Edward Joyce, was attached to the instrument.

### **Rev. Dudley Noel Barker, 1977-1979**

Barker was inducted on 6 March 1977. He was born in 1922 at Rockdale NSW and educated at the Sydney Technical High School at Paddington, attending the Carlton Baptist Church. He gained employment in

retail industry. He was converted at Hurstville Baptist Church in 1938 and entered Sydney Bible Training Institute four years later. From 1940 to 1947, he was honorary worker of the Sydney City Mission and the Sydney Evangelistic Crusade. From 1943 to 1958 he was a member of the Worldwide Evangelisation Crusade, WEC, and during this time spent eight years as a missionary in the Indo-Tibetan border region becoming chairman of the Tibetan Fellowship of India. Barker married Lorraine Glasby, a sister of the Rev. Rex Glasby, in India in 1952. Three of their children were born in India in Himalayan hospitals.

Upon returning to Australia in 1958, he engaged in various pastorates in NSW, entering the N.S.W. Baptist Theological College in 1965. Upon leaving College he worked on the Council and with various committees of the NSW Baptist Union, served on the ASMS Board and Central Committee and engaged in Industrial and Corrective Services chaplaincies including one at Sydney's Long Bay Gaol.

Member Andrew Rays attended the First Asian Baptist Congress in Hyderabad, India, in January 1979 as the Church's delegate. To that end a number of fund raising efforts were held. Barker also attended the Conference.

Barker vacated the pastorate in May 1979 to become Tasmanian Representative for the Bible Society of Australia for four years. Short term and interim pastorates followed at Narrandera, Woonoona and Campsie in N.S.W. From 1989 to 1994 he was engaged in Bible teaching and pastoral training in Fiji. Barker and his wife, Lorraine, are presently members of the Gynea Baptist Church in Sydney.

A sad feature has been the decline in Church membership from a high of 170 in 1964 to a low of 90 in 1999. This is due to a severe roll revision, to give a true record. Further many families moved away from Burnie due to employment circumstances,

particularly with the reduction in the workforce of the Paper Mill and the closure of the Tioxide factory, or just to be nearer their families. It is part of the characteristic of Burnie, that, because of a lack of tertiary educational facilities, many of the young people are forced to other areas to continue their education. This also means that only a few return for employment opportunities. Hopefully, with the introduction of the first University campus at Burnie, this may not be so prevalent. Of course statistics do not give a true reflection of the church family - there are quite a few regular attenders who, for their own reasons, do not come forward for baptism.

A church camp was held in 1980. This was so successful it was decided to make it an annual event. It has continued to this day and has become a very important part of church life, being a good opportunity for getting to know new folk. Speakers have been many and varied.

In 1980 the Rev. Stuart Avery and his wife, Janet, of Christchurch, New Zealand, conducted a week long "Living Proof Crusade" at the Church.

Rev. Fred Lloyd conducted an interim pastorate from March to end of May 1980 while the Church sought a new pastor.

Hilda Beaven became deaconess of the Church from June 1980 until February the following year. Beaven's work was very beneficial, especially among women living alone. She also conducted services at the Marrawah Baptist Church.

### **Property Development, 1950-1979**

A lot of changes to the property have taken place over the years, in 1955 the Church decided to purchase the property next to the then manse (now Dowling House), together with the house and shops for 7,000 pounds. In 1959 land at the rear became available and was purchased for 2,200 pounds to increase car parking facilities.

To accommodate the All Age Sunday School, a new block comprising a nursery, kindergarten and toilets was built in 1959. The following year a new manse at 3 Aileen Crescent was purchased for 7,000 pounds and the old manse was used for Sunday School. The old manse was renamed Dowling House. An office was also established in Dowling House.

It was agreed in 1963 to develop the site north of the church, the revenue from the development to finance the project. Three shops and four flats were built at 55 Mount Street. They were ready for occupancy in August 1967.

Meanwhile, it had been decided to sell the manse in Aileen Crescent as it had proved unsuitable and in 1966 two blocks at the corner of Thorne Street and Churchill Avenue, Upper Burnie, were purchased for the price of one from a Church member for the erection of a new manse.

In 1974, a building committee suggested that plans be drawn up for converting the existing hall for use by Brigades and building a new nursery and kindergarten block. The old block was to be converted into a small hall. The Church received a setback when the plans were rejected by the City Council. The plans were then changed to include the building of a new hall on the site of the present one, with a kitchen and vestry adjoining, a new kitchen and toilets on the back of Dowling House and a new foyer and entrance hall to the Church. At the same time the old kitchen at Dowling House would be converted into a Pastor's vestry, access to that and the Church office could be from the new Church porch. The existing nursery/kinder block was to remain.

The new buildings were opened in June 1976, the total cost being \$110,000. John Taylor acted as Clerk of Works during the re-building. The other members of the building committee were Tom Ivory, Winstan B. Joyce, Kev Garratt and Trevor Levett.

In 1994 the hall floor was found to be rotting, so this was replaced with a concrete slab covered with special carpet.

Over the years a number of outside organisations - the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Alcoholics Anonymous (for some thirty years), C.W.A. Hellyer Coral & Drama Group, Good Neighbour Council, Abbeyfield, Bonsai Club, Quilting Club, Coastal Family Day Care Playgroup, the Blind and Deaf Society, the Bible Society and GROW - have used our premises and a number of them are continuing to do so.

### **The Interior of the Church**

As one looks around the sanctuary today, certain objects stand out. The Blackwood communion table is a memorial to two stalwarts of the Church: Henry Dowling and Francis B. Wallis. The latter was actively associated with the Church from 1903 until 1933. He was a deacon and Sunday School teacher.

The memorial tablet in the Church is to the memory of Mr. A. M. Bewsher (1900-1938) who was a deacon, choirmaster and Sunday School teacher.

The memorial window is in memory of Edward Albert Joyce.

A suite of pulpit chairs is also in memory of Henry T. Dowling.

The illuminated cross was installed above the pulpit in 1980 as a gift of a former member, Eileen Nicholas. The same year the memorial wall in the foyer was commenced to acknowledge gifts by past members.

Testimonials hung in the foyer of the church in August 1989 are written on the lives and witness of two former life deacons, Kelvie (Kev) Garratt and Stanley Edward Joyce.

The pulpit area has been changed to a full width platform to achieve a much more versatile area. Recently the floor of the church, choir vestry and foyers has been completely covered with matching Burgundy carpet.

Four years ago the church purchased a bus to be used by the Sunday School and Youth Group. This has been so well used that it has just been replaced with a more reliable and modern bus.

### **Rev. Dennis Brennan, 1981-1987**

Brennan was inducted into the pastorate on 15 March 1981. He had recently graduated from the N.S.W. Baptist College and gained B.Th. and Dip.Min. Brennan was raised in Queensland. After completing his B.Sc. at the University of Queensland, he and his wife Gay came to Hobart and there he gained a Dip. Ed. He subsequently taught at Cosgrove High School, joining the Hobart Baptist Church. While teaching he spent many extra hours counselling his students individually. The education authorities discouraged this aspect of his work, which Brennan had found very satisfying. So, with the encouragement of his pastor, the Rev. Rex Glasby, with whom he worked as a youth leader, he became aware of God's call to the ministry and was accepted as a candidate for the Tasmanian ministry. In 1981, after his four years of study at college, and after pastoral experience in Sydney, he was ordained and inducted to the pastorate at Burnie on 14 March.

During his time in Burnie, he served the Tasmanian Baptist Union on its Council and Pastoral Committee, and conducted an Industrial Chaplaincy at the Lactos Cheese Factory. On 7 February 1987, he was inducted into the pastorate of the Kew Baptist Church, Melbourne.

The Church was involved in the 1980 Bill Newman Crusade. Not long after the "One Step Forward" program, a programme introducing the small group ministry, was introduced.

In 1981 services at Umina Park Home for the Aged were commenced.

Harvest Thanksgiving took on a different form in 1982 with folk being asked to

bring something pertaining to their employment or hobbies.

During this time the Church sponsored its young deacon, Gavin Richardson, to attend the Baptist World Youth Congress in Argentina.

A Government Department sponsored Family Day Care Scheme commenced at the church on April 1986, after much planning and years of waiting. Church members learnt of this development on television on New Year's Day and with the stipulation that the Scheme be operational on 1st April, some very fast work had to be done!

1987 and 1989 saw the Church take part in two Partnership Missions with Southern Baptists from Texas. Later that year it was involved in Mission Tasmania with evangelist Brian Willersdorf.

### **Ian E. Joyce**

In February 1984, Ian Joyce, the son of Stanley Edward Joyce, was inducted as part-time Associate Pastor, a position he faithfully filled for the next ten years. In 1983 year he had been made a Life Deacon in response to the years of committed service he had given to Christ through this Church. In 1994 Ian and his wife Faye left for Broken Hill where Faye had accepted the position of Director of Life-line with Ian later being appointed Pastor of Broken Hill Baptist Church. They returned after four years.

### **Rev. David Aldridge, 1987-1990**

Aldridge was welcomed back in February 1987 for a part-time ministry while the Pastoral Search Committee sought a new pastor. He came from the Montello Baptist Church. Aldridge pastored full-time at the Burnie Church in 1989 and 1990.

### **Rev. Ian Carmichael, 1990-1996**

Ilan Carmichael was inducted into the pastorate of the Burnie Church on 3 February 1990. Born in Victoria in 1952, Carmichael grew up on a farm. Through

the example of his Christian family he made his own stand at seventeen and joined the Presbyterian Church. Following education in a country high school, he attended Melbourne University where he studied science, physics and mathematics. For five years he taught at University High School. While with the Presbyterian Church in Melbourne, Carmichaels became involved with their mission to homeless men. As well as being on the committee, he was also a relieving missionary.

Things began to happen when he undertook a four year Bachelor of Theology course at Ridley College; he felt God calling him into the ministry. At College he met his wife Lena. He became convicted about believer baptism, subsequently was baptised at the Brunswick Baptist Church in 1982. After candidating for ministry with the Baptist Union of Victoria, he completed two years of study at Whitley College. He was then called to the Footscray Baptist Church where he was ordained.

While at Footscray, Ian was part of a project called Compuskill, set up by the Westgate Baptist Church to provide unemployed people with the opportunity to learn computer skills. During that year Ian was also engaged with the local Baptist work of the area for the conception of an application to train the unemployed in hospitality skills.

#### **Rev. Chris Aulich**

In January 1994, the Rev. Chris Aulich, B.A., became a part-time Associate Pastor of the Burnie Church for two years. He had pastored the Sheffield Baptist Church from 1985 to 1987 and from there went to Thailand with the A.B.M.S., working under the auspices of the Thailand Baptist Missionary Fellowship.

Based in Bangkok, Chris and his wife, Lee-Anne, became involved with the Tanontake Baptist Church. In 1989 they began work in the Wontong Slum, an outer

suburb of Bangkok. They also conducted a prison ministry with Lee-Anne commencing a half-way house for female inmates as they were released. Chris was involved in a number of projects run jointly by the church and the Wontong Slum Council. They continued to work in Bangkok until their return to Australia and resignation from the A.B.M.S. late in 1993.

While at Burnie, Aulich led a group from the Church on a Missions Awareness trip to Thailand. Subsequent to his Burnie appointment, Aulich served at Sassafras. He is now pastor of the Cairns Baptist Church in Queensland.

During this time the Burnie Baptist church office was opened five mornings per week to become the "open door" of the church to the community. Mrs. Pauline Wells has been the office secretary for fifteen years.

In 1996 a group catering for men and women of the Church fifty years old and older began meeting for fun, fellowship and friendship. "Prime Timers" as they call themselves, is also an outreach ministry and usually meet on a twice monthly basis.

#### **Rev. David Sterrey, 1998-**

Sterrey, who came from the Ulverstone Baptist Church, was inducted on 15 March 1998. Born in Melbourne, he is the son of missionary parents and thus spent the first twelve years of his life in Irian Jaya returning to Melbourne for secondary school. There he attended the

Mentone Baptist Church. At Melbourne University he gained a Bachelor of Science Degree and then worked in the actuarial profession (financial mathematician) for several years. It was during his time at University that he sensed the Lord calling him to full-time service and in 1991, along with his then fiancée, Michelle, he began studies at the Bible College of Victoria. Serving overseas on the mission field was uppermost in their minds, but over time the Lord redirected

Before Sterrey's arrival, the manse was given a complete refurbishment. One drawback of the manse was its huge lawn areas, both back and front, because of the double block. Work was undertaken to reduce the maintenance by installing concrete kerbing, laying mulch, and planting low maintenance plants and shrubs. A patterned concrete play area was installed and a large gazebo was built in the middle of the back lawn area. This has now been used on many occasions as a barbecue entertainment area.

The church has agreed to sponsor two folk to attend Congress 2000 in Melbourne in January 2000 at a cost of \$4,000 to the church. Our visitors will be folk from Assam and the Philippines and we hope they can spend time with us at the conclusion of Congress. The church has recently taken up the challenge to undertake for a third person, a woman

from Zimbabwe, who desperately wants to attend, but is having trouble raising finance.

This year the Church has seen four Church members go overseas, two to the Middle East to work in the medical field, and two to Papua New Guinea to work with M.A.F.

A group named "Emerge", catering for the young adults, has commenced also this year and aims to help participants with their spiritual growth and development, particularly in the area of leadership.

A new purpose statement also has been accepted -

Burnie Baptist Church:

Bringing people to Christ,

Building people up in Christ,

Communicating Christ's love to people.