



The Queensland Baptist Forum

The Journal of Baptist Heritage Queensland

No. 101 December 2018

7th Heritage Essay Prize Presentation



The 7th Heritage Essay Prize was presented at the Annual meeting of the Baptist Heritage Qld held on October 27. The picture shows BHQ President Eric Kopittke congratulating the winner, Greg Beaumont. The prize includes a cheque, BHQ books and a year's membership in BHQ. Greg has been serving as an intern at City North Baptist Church and says that he is a keen history buff. His essay was published in full in the previous issue. In the background of the photo is a new Archives banner recently provided by QB Marketing.

Please see the back page of this issue for the annual BHQ report and some items from the annual Archives report. Meeting dates for next year are set down below.

Archives Expo

On Oct 19-20, the Baptist Church Archives Qld held an open day so that participants in a family history conference being held at the QB Centre could learn about our work and ask questions about their families. The Expo was also opened to members of the QB staff and churches.



There were displays of material, explanatory posters about the work of the Archives and volunteers on hand to guide visitors and discuss their interests. BHQ books were also on sale.

There was strong support for the Expo from participants in the seminar but attendance by QB staff and churches was disappointing.

BHQ Meetings 2019: 23 Feb; 15 June; 26 Oct (AGM) 2pm @The Baptist Archives

<p>Baptist Heritage Queensland (est. 1984)</p> <p>Membership (2019)</p> <p>Individual \$10 pa Family \$15 pa Corporate \$20 pa</p> <p><i>Qld Baptist Forum 3 issues pa</i></p> <p>Free to Members Others \$2 each posted</p> <p>President: Mr Eric W. Kopittke 98 Yallambee Rd., Jindalee 4074 Ph 3376 4339 kopittke@tpg.com.au</p> <p>Secretary: Bill Hughes, 7 Dalziel St., Nundah 4012 Ph 3256 8897 Mob 0409 915 685 roslynbill@bigpond.com</p> <p>Website: http://dparker.net.au/bhsq.htm Archives contact: archives@qb.org.au Ph 3354 5642</p>	<p>CONTENTS</p> <p><i>Qld Baptist Forum</i> No 101 December 2018</p> <table><tbody><tr><td>News and Notes—Essay Prize Presentation</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Chas Sankey Fraser: optometrist and Baptist by Eric Kopittke</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Allora Baptist Church 1950-70 by David Parker</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>BHQ Annual Reports 2018</td><td>8</td></tr></tbody></table>	News and Notes—Essay Prize Presentation	1	Chas Sankey Fraser: optometrist and Baptist by Eric Kopittke	2	Allora Baptist Church 1950-70 by David Parker	6	BHQ Annual Reports 2018	8
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Charles Sankey Fraser: Optometrist and Baptist

Compiled by Eric Kopittke from information from Charles' granddaughter Mrs Joyce Kelly and other sources

Many will have heard of the optometrist Chas Sankey Fraser and the Queensland company which continues to trade under his name, but his involvement in the Baptist denomination might be less well known.

Charles Sankey Fraser was born in Brisbane on 16 April 1877, the eldest of eight children born to Thomas William Fraser and Charlotte Elizabeth nee Sankey who were married 31 May 1876 in the Wesleyan Church, South Brisbane. Charlotte had migrated with her parents and siblings aboard the *Royal Dane* which left London on 18 August 1871 and arrived Moreton Bay on 2 December 1871. Thomas William was Clerk of Petty Sessions and later Under Sheriff and Registrar of the Supreme Court of Queensland. He held that position until his death on 4 December 1891 when only 40 years old. He was born in Brisbane on 13 June 1851, the son of William Fraser and Elizabeth nee Wilson.

Charles was raised in the Church of England. He excelled at school, winning a scholarship, one of only twenty granted in Queensland, to the Brisbane Boys' Grammar School. After two years, on the death of his father, he was obliged to leave school to help support his mother, two brothers and five sisters. He was apprenticed to his uncle, James Richard Sankey of the firm of Flavelle, Roberts and Sankey – gem merchants, lapidaries, opticians, manufacturing jewellers and makers of surveying instruments – at that time the oldest firm of jewellers in Australia. He served his cadetship with the firm, winning rapid promotion. Charles was assigned the job of travelling to Lightning Ridge and Quilpie to buy opals directly from the miners at which he was most successful.

Travel abroad

There was a perception overseas that Australian jewels were too hard and expensive to cut and polish, but the result delivered jewels with the highest shine and colour. International expositions were seen to provide the chance to showcase the local jewellery and gemstones. Charles was selected to take a case full of polished Australian jewels and Australian designed and made jewellery to the British Exposition of 1899 and the Paris Expo of 1902. He was to promote the beauty of such gems and to sell at high prices.

The Brisbane Courier of Saturday 25 February 1899 reported that a dinner had been held at Eschenhagen's Café the previous evening to farewell Charles on the eve

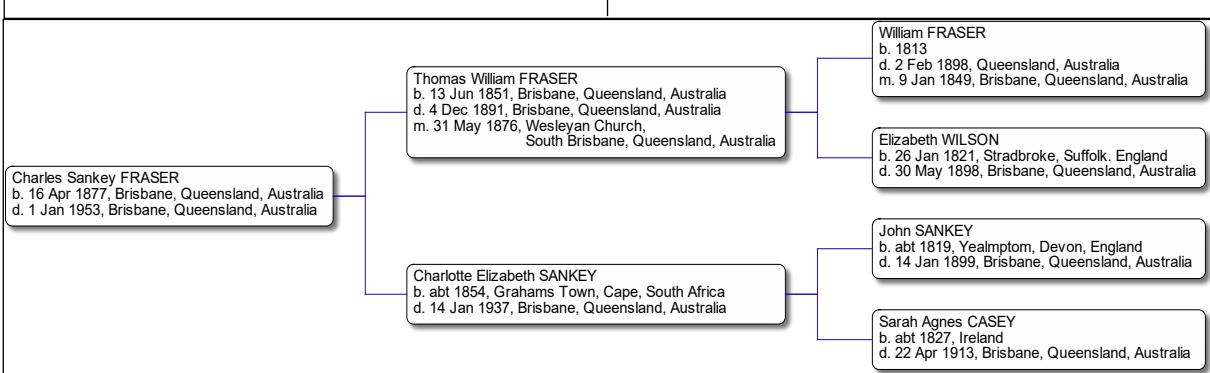
of his departure for London. His uncle James Sankey, the managing director of the firm, was quoted as saying:

Mr. Fraser was a Brisbane boy of whom all Brisbane might be proud—that he had been most successful as a student at State school, Grammar School and Technical College; he had been equally successful in business, and he trusted his success would still go with him now in [representing] the firm in the greatest market of the world.

His extended stay in England was to afford him opportunities of gaining useful commercial and other experiences of use to himself and the firm. In *The Brisbane Courier* of Friday 19 May 1899 it was reported that Charles had arrived safely in London on 11 April and his preparations for the exhibition were well in hand and would be ready for its opening. This proved to be a life-changing trip in more ways than one.

While in England, Charles studied for a prestigious London Gemmology exam. He was the first person to ever achieve 100% in the exam that included both a written and practical component requiring that gems be distinguished from one another (especially when the colours were not traditional to that gem) and to detect those that were artificial. Charles sat for and passed brilliantly the examinations of the Worshipful Guild of Spectacle Makers and of the British Optical Association. He was made a Fellow of the Guild and a Freeman of the City of London. As part of the ceremony he received a sword that he used ceremonially during World War I. Charles was also made a Fellow of the British Optical Association.

His paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Fraser nee Wilson, had a niece who was living in the Marylebone district of London, so it was natural that young Charles should visit his cousin once removed and her family while in London for the exposition. While his grandmother had been born at Stradbrooke, Suffolk on 26 January 1821 (according to an entry in the birth register of the Baptist Meeting there), her niece Annetta Lettice Harris nee Wilson was born in 1844 with her birth being registered in the Marylebone district during the April-June quarter. She had married Charles Centurier Harris, an egg merchant, in 1864 and they had nine daughters and two sons. The Harris family attended the Mount Zion Strict Baptist Chapel and young Charles arranged to meet them there after church. Charles was welcomed into the Harris family with their two sons and four unmarried daughters. Despite their strong, strict religious beliefs he found them to be full of fun and were



always easy to get on with. In 1901 he became engaged to their daughter, Florence Myrtle who was born in 1874 in the Marylebone district of London. Through the influence of Florence and the others of her family, Charles was baptised and became a church member.

It must be mentioned that the term 'Strict' referred to those Baptist churches that practiced 'restricted communion'. Most Baptist churches invite 'all who love the Lord Jesus Christ' to take the bread and wine at the Lord's Table. Strict Baptists believe that this privilege should be offered only to those who have been baptised by immersion as believers.

Return to Brisbane and more travel

Charles returned to Brisbane with his new qualifications, and Flavelle, Roberts and Sankey began actively promoting his newly acquired skills and qualifications with advertisements in the Brisbane newspapers such as this from *The Telegraph* of 25 April 1902. Much was made of Charles being the most highly trained and credentialled optician in the State of Queensland!

Charles inherited a strong sense of pride in his Country and the British Empire from his family. His father was born in Brisbane in 1851 and was a senior public servant. His maternal grandfather John Sankey was a retired military man who had seen service in several parts of the Empire and was recorded in the 1871 census at Wolstanton, Staffordshire as a Chelsea Pensioner. His funeral notice (*The Brisbane Courier*, 18 January 1899) described him as "late Sergeant-major of 12th Regt. Foot, for many years Chief Clerk and Storekeeper, Queensland Defence Force". As a young man Charles joined the Queensland Volunteer Rifles as had his uncle James Sankey before him. The organisation worked with young men of good character and physique; training them in physical exercise, drill and shooting. Charles and James both rose through the ranks and by 1903 both had attained the rank of Captain. James was later to rise to the rank of Major.

In 1904 Charles returned to London and married Florence in her family church, the Mount Zion Strict Baptist Church, Hill Street, Marylebone on 22 September. They honeymooned in England's New Forest after which he brought his bride back to Brisbane. Here they raised three sons, all born in Brisbane: Claude Charles b. 25 Aug 1905, Raymond Alex Sankey b. 13 Mar 1908, and Ian Harris b. 2 Apr 1913.

Back in Brisbane, the couple and their growing family resided at Hawthorne Cottage, Edmonstone Street, South Brisbane. By 1907, they had moved to "Roscrea", Harcourt St., Teneriffe, and attended the Jireh Baptist Church, Gipps Street, Fortitude Valley. Jireh was another Strict Baptist Church in contrast to the majority of Baptist churches in Queensland which were more General in outlook. The Church minutes from the meeting of 24 July 1907 record "Mr & Mrs Fraser having requested that their transfer be sent for from the Zion Hill Baptist Church London. It was unanimously [agreed] that the secretary be instructed to accede to the request." Four months later (27 November 1907) it was recorded "A letter was received from the Zion Hill Baptist Church, London, transferring Bro. & Sis. to our communion. The letter was couched in very complimentary terms." Apparently Mount Zion was also known as Zion Hill.

Now formally accepted into the membership of Jireh, Charles threw himself into a number of church activities. The *Queensland Baptist* of 1 February 1908 mentioned him as the Secretary of the Sunday Institute, that of 1 June 1908 recorded him as the secretary of the new Young People's Institute and that of 1 October 1908 as the secretary and vice-president elect of the Sunday School Institute. The *Queensland Baptist* of 1 November 1908 reported "Mr Fraser's paper on Sunday October 4th, proved a very enjoyable study, setting forth the gems of the Bible, the uses to which they were put in the adornment of the Tabernacle and Temple, as also in the dress of the High Priest. The paper was illustrated by means of charts and real gems."

Charles WILSON
& Lettice BORRETT

Charles WILSON
b. abt 1817, Stradbroke, Suffolk, England
chr. 29 Jun 1817, Stradbroke, Suffolk, England
& Jemima SMITHERS
b. abt 1805, Deal, Kent, England
chr. 26 May 1805, Deal, Kent, England
m. abt Dec 1841, Marylebone district, London, England

Elizabeth WILSON
b. 26 Jan 1821, Stradbroke, Suffolk, England
d. 30 May 1898, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
& William FRASER
b. 1813
d. 2 Feb 1898, Queensland, Australia
m. 9 Jan 1849, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Annetta Lettice WILSON
b. abt Jul 1844, Marylebone, Middlesex, England
& Charles Centurier HARRIS
b. 1843, Marylebone, Middlesex, England
m. 1864, Marylebone, Middlesex, England

Thomas William FRASER
b. 13 Jun 1851, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
d. 4 Dec 1891, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
& Charlotte Elizabeth SANKEY
b. abt 1854, Grahams Town, Cape, South Africa
d. 14 Jan 1937, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
m. 31 May 1876, Wesleyan Church, South Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Florence Myrtle HARRIS
b. 1874, Marylebone district, London, England
d. 6 Dec 1955, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Charles Sankey FRASER
b. 16 Apr 1877, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
d. 1 Jan 1953, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

He did not neglect his business and professional responsibilities. As the first qualified optometrist in Queensland and now with his own business: Frasers Limited, Opticians and Jewellers, Charles was instrumental in the foundation in 1908 of the Institute of Ophthalmic Opticians of Queensland. Later, when Membership Certificates were issued, Certificate No. 1 was allocated to him.



Charles and Florence Sankey Fraser

and the Queensland Baptist Yearbooks recorded him in that position as Capt. C. S. Fraser until 1923. Charles clearly was dedicated and enthusiastic about Sunday School. His son, Claude, described how his father, Charles, "gathered happy children along the way to Sunday School." Claude would have loved the opportunity to hold his father's hand and to experience more 'togetherness' with him but when he was young, others beat him to the prized position. Charles "would gather scores of children and have them, hand in hand hymn singing their way along ... They all loved Sunday School."

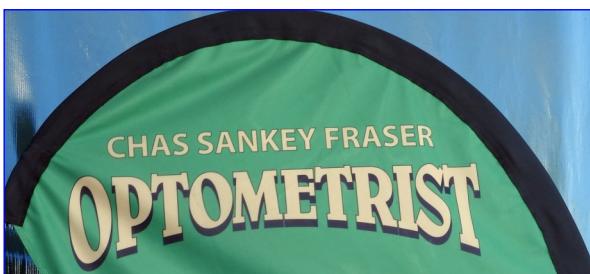
With the outbreak of WW1 Charles volunteered for service but was rejected due to his slight lameness from the injury to his leg when he had fallen from his difficult horse when a boy. Because of his proven organising ability he was, instead, put in charge of the Queensland Medical Corps, commissioned as Captain and appointed Staff Officer for Reinforcements.

His sons, who loved him dearly, deplored the fact he was busy in so many things that he had less time to devote to them than they would have liked. Following WW1 he made time to take his wife and sons, two teenaged and one younger, camping at Cedar Creek at the base of Mt Glorious, and at many seaside places - to their great delight!

In 1923, Charles visited Europe again, taking a selection of opals for display at the Wembley Empire Exhibition in London, and going on to Jena in Thuringia, Germany where he attended a special course in Light & Sight at the University and established a valuable connection there with the world-famous Zeiss Optical Works. He brought back the latest instruments for use in his business in his attempt to serve his clients to the best of his ability.

Another change of residence occurred around 1911 when the family moved to "Cromehurst", Rode Road, Nundah. Sometime following the move they began to attend the Nundah Baptist Church and their membership was transferred there from Jireh on 5 May 1918. Charles became the Sunday School Superintendent

About this time Charles disposed of his jewellery interests and practised thereafter as the Optical House of Chas Sankey Fraser. Over a period of time he opened three branches in Brisbane and one in Toowoomba, staffed by up to twelve highly qualified optometrists as well as a considerable support staff, and sending optometrists on periodic visits to country centres for the convenience of more distant clients. Having spent some time himself in remote areas, he realised that the tyranny of distance and poor roads precluded proper eye care for so many people in rural and remote communities. These branches increased the size of Charles' business, but like his father before him, he felt a strong obligation to help those less well off or with special needs. In his visits to remote communities where there was often little 'new blood', Charles became aware of the link between inbreeding and certain eye deficiencies, and, despite his own marriage to his second cousin, was determined that his own children and grandchildren should not marry relatives.



Baptist life

The *Queensland Baptist* of 15 February 1924 mentioned the World Sunday School Convention to be held in Glasgow during June that year and that the Australian delegates would include "...Mr. Charles Sankey Fraser, the honoured superintendent of Nundah Baptist Memorial Graded Sunday School, and Mrs. Fraser..." After their return to Brisbane, Charles spoke about his time at the Convention in the most glowing of terms, describing it as one of the richest spiritual experiences of his life.

The 1926 Commonwealth Electoral Roll recorded the address of Charles and Florence as "Beauforth", Main and Hill Street, Wooloowin; the 1928 roll recorded their residence as Moggill Ferry Road, Moggill via Riverview; while the 1934 roll recorded them living at "Beaufort", Sisley Street, St Lucia. The move to St Lucia was their last. The closest Baptist church to St Lucia was at Taringa. Quite unusually for a Baptist church in Queensland at the time, Taringa was an open membership church, having commenced in 1889 as a Baptist Mission open to all. The church was formally constituted in 1897 as the Taringa Union Baptist Church. Although Believers' Baptism by immersion was endorsed as the only form of baptism, membership was open to any professing believer.

After the sudden death of its long serving pastor, Rev. John H. Latimer, on 30 March 1938, the retired Rev. Alfred George Weller became interim minister. He had been the minister at the Nundah church during the time that the Frasers had been there, and served Taringa until his death on 21 February 1939.

After much discussion and prayer, Taringa issued a call to Rev. Hilton White of Orange, N.S.W. In his reply to the call, Mr White set out two conditions essential to his consideration of the call. These were the dropping completely of the word Union from the name of the church, and that only baptised believers were to be

PERFECT SIGHT ADJUSTMENT.



The most highly qualified Opticians in the State are
Flavelle, Roberts, & Sankey, Limited,
QUEEN STREET. (Established 1858.)

Operator, Mr. C. S. Fraser, Fellow of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers of London (the first Australian Optician to take this degree); also holds Diploma in Visual and Applied Optics from Northampton Institute, London, Diploma of the British Optical Association, and Freedom of the City of London.

GREATEST SKILL AND LOWEST PRICES IN THE CITY.

probably not a coincidence then that they had waited until this time to seek membership at Taringa. Nundah church recorded the transfer of their membership to Taringa in June 1939.

During the ministry of Mr White, several members had the vision of commencing a work in the Saint Lucia area. The suggestion appears to have first come from Charles Sankey Fraser who offered in May 1940 to lease the St. Lucia Progress Hall for 5/- a week for about 3 years. Several deacons visited the area and were not impressed with the Progress Hall, preferring instead to purchase a piece of land on the hill in the vicinity of Central Avenue. It was recorded that "a friend" donated £65 toward the purchase of a suitable site, or if the purchase was not proceeded with, toward the development of Sunday School work.

After Mr White accepted a call to Launceston, Rev. W. A. McKay, accepted the call to Taringa and was welcomed to the Church on Wednesday, 29th May 1946. The Church Secretary reported on the 1st May 1946, that with the completion of Mr White's ministry, the Church had reverted to a Union Baptist Church as originally formed, and he suggested that the word Union again be used on stationery and the name board at the front of the church. This did not please everyone, and at the July Deacons' Meeting a letter of objection was received from Mr C. Sankey Fraser.

Given the passion that Charles had for the work of the Sunday School in earlier days, it is no surprise that his name occurred in connection with the work at St Lucia. In 1948 he reported that the Progress Hall at St Lucia could be hired for 15/- per day. The Sunday School was commenced with joint input from Toowong Baptist Church and ran for a number of years.

Charles and Florence were not just 'Sunday Christians'. His granddaughter Joyce Kelly remembers:

Every morning, without fuss, when breakfast items had been cleared from a long mahogany table with maroon velvet tablecloth, all present drew their chairs into a circle near the windows with sun shining in during the winter months. We were joined by Elsie Wagner, a lovely, cheery woman of 'Church of England' faith who was cook and housekeeper. Grandpa then held a daily morning ceremony that was very personal to me, as, no doubt, to everyone present. In his fine clear voice,

admitted to membership in the church during his ministry. The church voted unanimously to extend the call to Mr White under these conditions and his ministry at Taringa began on 19th March 1939. With the Frasers' background in a Strict Baptist Church, it is

he read a selected chapter from the Bible, followed by prayer. It was a very lovely heartfelt ceremony!

Retirement

As age caught up with him, Charles began to give up some of his activities. Ownership of 'The Optical House of Chas. Sankey Fraser' was transferred to members of his staff and the name is still in use in 2018, displayed proudly by the present owners reflecting the reputation for expertise and integrity established over the years by Charles Sankey Fraser!

In Christian work, too, he retired as a Baptist representative on the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society as announced in the *Queensland Baptist* of 15 Sep 1951.

Charles Sankey Fraser died at his residence at St Lucia, Brisbane, 1st January 1953, aged 75. He was buried in the Dutton Park or South Brisbane Cemetery near the graves of his parents and paternal grandparents. The *Brisbane Telegraph* of Thursday 1 January 1953, page 20 reported his passing:

City optical identity dies

Mr. Charles Sankey Fraser, city optometrist, died at his home in Sisley Street, St. Lucia, early today after an illness of six weeks, aged 75. Born in South Brisbane he attended the Brisbane Grammar School. He studied optics in England for four years, and for his distinction in studies was awarded the Freedom of the City of London. He returned to Brisbane, and for a time was managing director of Flavelle, Roberts and Sankey, optical house and jewellers. Just before the First World War, in which he served, he established the Optical House of Charles Sankey Fraser. He retired a few years ago.

Mr. Fraser was closely connected with church missions and worked for the Baptist Church.

He is survived by his widow and three sons, Claude, a Maryborough building contractor, Ray, a Melbourne optometrist, and Ian, a Toowoomba electrical engineer.

The *Courier-Mail* Friday 2 January 1953, p 3 said:
C. Sankey Fraser dead

Brisbane optometrist Mr. Charles Sankey Fraser, 75, died early yesterday at his home in Sisley Street, St Lucia. Mr. Fraser held the Freedom of the City of London, awarded for brilliant studies in optics. He had practised optometry in Brisbane since 1899. In 1912 he established the well-known 'Optical House of Charles Sankey Fraser.' Mr. Fraser was a prominent member of the Baptist Church. For many years he was deacon of Taringa Church and was also Sunday School superintendent and leader of the Young Men's Bible class. A director of several Brisbane businesses, he left a widow and three sons. His funeral will leave the Peel Street funeral chapel for the South Brisbane Cemetery, after service beginning at 3.45 p.m. to-day.

The following words summarise his life,

"A fine Christian gentleman, Charles had the gift of making enduring friendships and was mourned by his family, staff and hosts of friends. Throughout his life he was active in the Baptist Church in Queensland, serving as a Deacon and Sunday School Superintendent in several congregations."

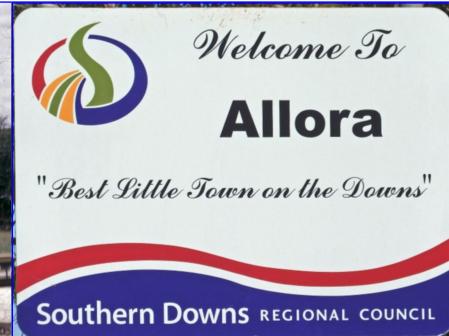
Allora Baptist Church—the little church that could!

By David Parker

This is a further episode in the BHQ project on the history of Baptist witness on the Darling Downs, sourced from church records, family history and the 1911 history of Warwick Baptist Church.



Allora Baptist Church , 1958



Current Town Welcome Sign

Best little town on the Downs

Allora, known as ‘the best little town on the Darling Downs’, is 26 km by road north of Warwick on the New England Highway toward Toowoomba. With a population under 1000, it contains many historic buildings and is the centre of a rich agricultural district. The town sits on the Dalrymple Creek from which it probably derives its name—in a local Aboriginal language, ‘gnallorah’ means ‘swampy place’.

Alan Cunningham was the first European to see the area during his 1827 expedition. In July 1840 the Goomburra pastoral run was established by Ernest Elphinstone Dalrymple, but it was soon taken over by Patrick Leslie. Settlement of the town area began in the 1840s and it became an official outpost of the then NSW government.

Upon separation, further development occurred, and a municipality was declared in 1869. The town was a stopover on the main route to and from Toowoomba, but hopes of further growth were doomed when in 1867 the Southern Railway bypassed Allora; thirty years later a branch line was constructed, remaining in place until 1993.

Nevertheless, by the early 1900s, the town was quite prosperous with hotels, banks, a school a town hall and various businesses. The daughter of one bank manager became famous as the author of the Mary Poppins books. Wesleyan, Methodist and Anglican churches had been in operation since the 1860s

Baptist Beginnings

There were several Baptist families living in the area surrounding Allora who attended the Warwick Baptist Church. Some meetings were held in their homes in the mid-1930s during the ministry of Rev W Doull (1931-39). During the war period, Rev E Edwards (1940-46) encouraged the work, but it was Rev R G (Dick) Walker (1946-53) who took the most positive action. He enthusiastically supported the ministry of the Gospel Waggon when it moved around the district and also encouraged further home meetings in Allora, and in other centres.

The first regular services were commenced by the Gospel Waggon in January 1947, which continued

fortnightly, using a home and then later, the Protestant Hall.

The work was promising, so on 3 June 1947, the Warwick Church decided to accept responsibility for erecting a church building. Also by mid-year, a Baptist Christian Endeavour Society had been established. The first communion service was conducted in October 1947. A further boost came late in 1947 when a large family moved into the area, insisting that they would only allow their children to attend a Baptist Sunday School. Evangelistic work by the Baptist Flying Squad in 1949 was a further impetus.

It took some time for the building project to eventuate. A block of land was acquired in Herbert Street, in what Rev Dick Walker described as the ‘dress circle of Allora’. At first it was intended to erect a stone church using material from a church building on the historic East Talgai homestead, west of the town.

After a successful tender for the stone, it was found that the soil was unsuitable for this type of construction. So the stone was sold, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that it was used for extensions to St Mark’s Church of England in Warwick, or that it was passed on to the Presbyterian Church; it is also suggested it was used in the foundations of a dam on the Condamine river.

The original Talgai purchase had also included the timber frame of the church, so this was used instead for the Baptist building. Many hours of dedicated voluntary labour came to a climax on 19 August 1950 when the building was officially opened by the President of the Baptist Union, Mr C G Sweetman before an overflow crowd. A report in the *Warwick Daily News* (23/8/1950) described the 48’ x 24’ church as ‘one of the most attractive of the new buildings’ in Allora.

Valued at £2000, it was constructed of wood and fibro, painted cream with green trim, and with oak panelling and furniture on the interior. One of the most notable features of the structure was the large leadlight window in the porch facing the street with the words, Allora Baptist Church, which it was said, ‘gives a most picturesque touch’ when the building was lit at night. There was also a prominent sign announcing, ‘Jesus saves!’ A mission by Gospel Waggon was conducted in

association with the opening. At the evening service on the next day, Sunday August 20, the church was constituted with eleven members, some of whom transferred from Warwick. An adjoining cottage was also obtained at the same, later to be used as a manse.

Soon regular activities were commenced, including a Sunday school and ladies work. The membership increased to 16 in the first year. There were youth conventions based at the showgrounds conducted by the Baptist Union Youth Department. The church was an active member of the Downs and Lockyer District Baptist Association with meetings held at the site on various occasions from 1952.

A Pastor

The Warwick church provided pastoral leadership initially, but efforts were made to obtain a minister through the Home Mission. Success was achieved when it was announced that with the assistance of the British Baptist Commonwealth and Colonial Society, a man would be sent from London. This society had a long history of providing financial support for church planting in the state.

The new pastor, John Walker, was a Scot from near Glasgow, who came from a coal and steel industry background. John was in his late 30s, married to Sarah and with two children, George, 7 and Ruth, 3. John and Sarah had met at Glasgow Bible Training Institute where they trained in the late 1930s. During the war, John served as a RAF wireless operator in North Africa and Sarah trained as a nurse. After the war, they worked as wardens of a Bible college in England and pastored a Nazarene church, but soon moved to the inner north of London and took up duty with the London City Mission for a period of five years.

The Walker family travelled on the *Cameronia* and arrived in Queensland, via Perth, late in 1952. A welcome function took place on 14 November, with those taking part including the President of the Baptist Union of Queensland, Rev Max Howard, the Home Mission Superintendent, Rev A H Brooks, Rev R G Walker of Warwick Baptist Church, and representatives of other churches in Allora. An induction service followed on 16 November.

It was testing assignment for John Walker and his young family, freshly arrived in the country, working with a small church in a remote locality and without any form of transport. The Home Mission salary was low, and he also had to include regular college studies in his responsibilities. The family lived in makeshift accommodation until the manse next door was finally readied for use in 1955. Nevertheless, his previous ministry with the London City Mission, although in a totally different setting, provided him with valuable experience to cope. The family were supported strongly by the generosity and hospitality of the local people, making their pastorate a happy one.

Now with a settled pastor, the church developed its activities. In August, 1953 a new 24' x 30' Sunday School Hall, built by volunteers at a cost of £500 (although valued at twice that figure) was erected at the back of the church. Rev E Edwards, who had been instrumental in some of the earliest activity in the district, performed the opening before an overflow crowd. He also preached to large congregations at the church anniversary services held the same weekend, where the *Australian Baptist* reported that 'Pastor J

Walker is maintaining a splendid ministry and the work is in excellent heart.'

John Walker, who was known for his thoughtful preaching, dedicated pastoral work and careful organising ability, served the church until the end of 1956. The Home Mission then moved him to Petrie Terrace (where his city mission background was a great help) and after that, Gympie. He was ordained in 1958. In 1962 he transferred to South Australia where, leading two churches, he died in 1968. His second son John, born at Allora, also became a Baptist minister.

After the end of John Walker's pastorate, the Home Mission was hard pressed to find someone to transfer to Allora, but was finally able to move an experienced pastor, Rev H L McIntyre, from Lanefield/Marburg. He took up duties at Allora in early 1957, and immediately began looking for ways to develop the church. He was concerned about other rural areas but there was not much practical scope for that kind of expansion. His tenure was short, being moved away to Lakes Creek in mid-1958, to the great disappointment of the Allora church.

However, Mr Ian Richardson, another student pastor was sent to replace him from the beginning of 1959. He remained at Allora for only two years and was moved to Stanthorpe. He was the last full time pastor of the church, because by now, the church was struggling.

From the mid-1950s there was steady decline from the maximum membership in the mid-20s. There had been several removals from the district as Allora suffered the same loss of population that many other rural districts had done. For some years, it was a case of 'hanging on' and 'hoping for a new influx' of people, as Pastor Walker had once put it—but that was not to be. The Warwick church took back responsibility for Allora from 1961, with services and other activities and membership gradually diminishing.

One bright spot during this period was the baptism of local resident, Tom Hoey, who soon trained for missionary service and spent a long period of distinguished work in Papua New Guinea with Unevangelised Fields Mission (UFM, later APCM and now incorporated in Pioneers)

End of an era

By 1970, there was only one remaining member, Mrs J Gouldson who was living near Warwick, and one non-member family in the town. There were no prospects for improvement, so the church was closed. The manse had already been sold in 1968. The church building and contents were sold to the Rosewood Baptist Church for \$900 where it was re-opened in 5 June 1971 as its main worship centre. The land was sold in 1971 for \$250.

So the organised Baptist presence in 'the best little town on the Darling Downs' came to an end after only twenty years. For much of the time, it was a vibrant church, exercising a fruitful ministry in the town and district. However, the sacrifice and dedicated work of its pastors and members were not enough to overcome the difficulties presented by a low population. Although at first it was considered far enough away from the mother church of Warwick to be sustainable, changes in transportation and other aspects of life soon made it unviable.

The building which had seen only one wedding and one funeral, however, continued to serve a useful purpose at its new home.

BHQ Annual Report October 2018

At the AGM in October 2017 the following appointments were made: Eric Kopittke (President), Bill Hughes (Secretary), Hope Colegrave (Treasurer) and Rosemary Kopittke (Publications Officer).

BHQ's finances remain in a healthy position. Further details are contained in the Treasurer's report.

Further work on BHQ's Heritage Plaque Project' is continuing. Historical plaques have been installed on the City Tabernacle, Windsor Road and the Toowong churches. The next plaque will be unveiled at the North East Baptist Church at Nundah. Negotiations are currently under way to settle the wording to be used on the plaque.

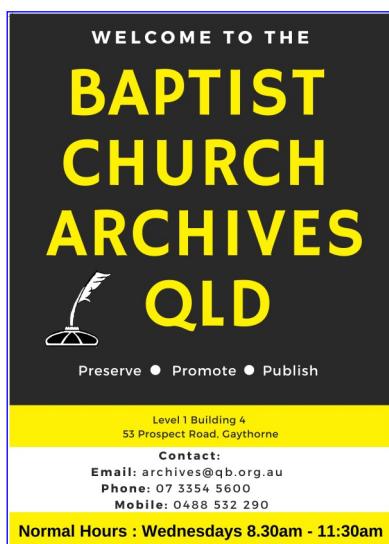
The BHQ Essay Competition on Baptist history and principles is run in conjunction with Malyon College and awarded every second year. The 2018 winner was Greg Beaumont from the City North church. The President, Eric Kopittke, will present the prize, which is a cheque for \$100, a selection of books published by BHQ and one year's honorary membership of BHQ.

For a number of years BHQ maintained a presence at the Annual Conventions through manning a display table of literature and photographs. This year BHQ publications were on display at the Assembly in Cairns and a small number of sales were achieved.

The BHQ publication *Queensland Baptist Forum* has again been produced three times per year. The *Forum* goes to those on our membership list and others. It contains a variety of interesting articles, mainly on historical subjects, but also covers other matters such as Baptist principles. Digital copies of *Forum* are available in the Archives.

Bill Hughes, Secretary

Some Highlights from the Archives Annual Report



This year has seen a steady stream of enquiries from the QB office, churches and individuals. Some have been easy to answer, but others have proved more difficult or impossible due to the nature of our records. Accessions of records has been smaller than usual, but the annual transfer of key QB records took place smoothly, and for the first time involved it included digital records. There have been a few special donations of books and personal/family records. The Archives Manual has been updated to version 6.0.

We have made good use of the Archives Annex this year, especially as a work space. The summer period showed that humidity and heat are still a problem, so the area can only be used at present for storage of non-critical items.

It has been pleasing to record a number of contacts with churches during the year, relating to scanning and care of their records, writing of their histories, and transfer of records to the Archives. Not all of these contacts have followed through in the way we would have liked. However, these and other contacts underline the concern we have for local church records, including especially digital records, and makes us want to be much more proactive in working with churches, time and staff permitting.

We have enlarged our range of Guide Sheets which are primarily designed to help churches and individuals with their own historical work, and to explain the operation of the Archives - see <http://www.dparker.net.au/barc-sheets.htm>

As ever the team has made a splendid contribution—and this year it has been particularly important! Anne Cameron has worked on the church listings files, church dates, church histories, and the historical record in particular, as well as looking after binding of minutes and many other tasks. Bill Hughes has added many more photographs to the digital collection – now in excess of 1400. He has also kept the bio-database up to date and written some papers and compiled other research projects.

With the help of new volunteers, two new projects have begun—harvesting historical information from QB church websites, and the creation of a master database of churches and pastors.

On Oct 19-20 we held an Expo in conjunction with an Unlock the Past family history event at the QB Centre. We also extended this to provide an opportunity for QB staff and churches to visit the Archives and learn about our operations. There was a good response from the UTP family history conference, but little interest by QB..

The enlargement of our digital archive (stored locally and on the cloud) is a key concern. This is a big and specialised task and we need extra dedicated assistance to achieve this. The best solution for now is to recruit a suitably qualified and interested volunteer.

The Darling Downs project has been quiet through the year, but the final chapters are now well advanced (Stanthorpe and Warwick with Freestone and Allora).

Our regular columns in the *qb magazine* seem to be well appreciated—to judge by occasional enthusiastic feedback received.

David Parker, Archivist and the team, Bill Hughes and Anne Cameron