

A History of the Baptist Church Archives, Queensland

By David Parker ©

Part 1 1982-2012

The Archives is Born

The end of 2012 marks 30 years since work began on organising the historical records of the Baptist Union of Queensland. Rev Dr David Parker had worked with these records originally in 1979 in the course of his doctoral research and found them to be in a good state, but completely unorganised and only accessible by special arrangement with the Baptist Union office. So in December 1982, he volunteered his services to put them in order. On his initial contact, the records were in a cupboard in the ceiling of the BUQ offices which were then located in rented premises in The Wool Exchange Building, 69 Eagle St, Brisbane (now the site of Riparian Plaza and 111 Eagle St). In 1982, the BUQ had just moved to its own building at 225 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley; the records were in a strong room in the basement (primarily used as the printing workshop).

The most important items in the collection were the BUQ Minute books comprising the Executive, Council and Assemblies from the establishment of the Baptist Union (then Association) in 1877, and the key committees and departments; there were also the denominational Yearbooks from 1907 when they first appeared and sundry bundles of correspondence and other records. These were all more or less complete, and much of it was professionally bound into strong volumes. However the denominational newspaper, *The Queensland Baptist* (from 1881-88 known as *The Queensland Freeman*) had a 25 year gap up to 1951 (and it was not published 1913-22). Another significant gap was in the Minutes of the Home Mission around World War I. One other serious gap was *The Australian Baptist*, the national newspaper published since 1913, of which there were only odd issues. (Efforts in the late 1980s to obtain a full run from its office in NSW were unsuccessful, as did the hope of getting a microfilm version when it was done by the State Library of NSW—on account of the high cost involved.)

There was a good collection of photographs, many loose but some in attractive albums; a lot were unidentified. There were also many 35 mm colour slides of churches, people and events which had mostly come from the collections of the Home Mission Superintendents and the BUQ General Secretary.

There were some records of local churches but the churches themselves held the bulk of their own records, especially the first churches to be formed in Queensland - City Tabernacle (originally known as Wharf St), Ipswich and Jireh (in Fortitude Valley). The oldest items in the BUQ Archives were, however, documents from early days of Wharf Street. There were no records relating to the first two Baptist ministers in Brisbane, Rev Charles Stewart and Rev Charles Smith, although there were some relating to the third minister, Rev BG Wilson. However, extensive research on these three pastors in later years discovered documents and information in other locations sufficient to record their stories in some detail.

Archives space and access was always a problem with the basement location, and there was no office equipment such as photocopiers, phones or working facilities available. However, Dr Parker with the occasional assistance of members of the Baptist Historical Society of Queensland (established in 1984), listed the contents and began developing the operation of the Archives according to standard (albeit simplified) archival procedures.

A set of rules for accessioning, indexing and use of the Archives was developed. However, on-going

efforts to get the Baptist Union to set up a proper system of archiving its recent and new records were unsuccessful. Membership in the locally based Church Archivists' Society and access to its expertise and publications greatly assisted in the development of the Archives. There were gradual additions to the collection, and modest use by BUQ personnel, students, church and family history researchers. Dr Parker's position as Honorary Archivist was made official in 1987 when it was became part of the Annual BUQ appointments.

Relocation to 518 Brunswick St

In 1991 the BUQ announced it was going to relocate to larger premises at 518 Brunswick St, New Farm. The Executive Secretary, Lloyd Woodrow, indicated that he was keen to have adequate space and facilities for the Archives in the new building, including a display area. However, the initial proposal for the location of the Archives was again in the basement of the building where the print shop would operate. An inspection of the proposed area immediately revealed that it was subject to damp, noise and poor access, making it unacceptable.

It was anticipated that the move by the BUQ to the new building would take place in November 1991 so the BHSQ members made preparations to help pack the archival material. However, the purchase of the building was delayed, and the move did not take place until March 1992. BUQ staff carried out the boxing of the material, and it was placed in storage on the vacant 2nd floor of the new building. Dr Parker was able to sort the material into rough categories so that it could be used under difficult conditions by those who needed special access, including Dr Ken Manley of Melbourne working on his definitive history of Australian Baptists.

Fitting out of the new building took place over subsequent months and in mid-1992, it was announced that the second floor was to become the main BUQ office. The Archives material needed to be moved, and space was found on the 3rd floor where it was placed in storage once more, with access still only available to the most needy cases. It was expected that further fitting out and letting of the building would be finalised in succeeding months, allowing for the permanent organisation of the Archives. This process was also much delayed and by May 1993, the situation of the Archives had become critical. Access by researchers was limited, the material was in danger of physical damage due to the poor storage conditions; its security was also at risk, with cases of unauthorised use being noted.

Temporary Archives

With the situation so serious, an urgent appeal was made by the Archivist to the BUQ, resulting in extra space being made available on a pro-tem basis in the area where the material had been stored, together with desks, filing cabinets and very limited shelving. During June 1993, the Archivist, again with some help, began sorting, re-boxing and indexing the material which was contained in about 160 large archival boxes. The BHSQ organised an Open Day for 11 September 1993 during the annual BUQ Assembly to mark the reestablishment of the Archives. It was a disappointment that, apart from BHSQ members, there were no other visitors for this event! However, the Archives were again ready for use in adequate, if spartan conditions, and there was the expectation still that better facilities would be available when letting arrangements for the building were fully finalised.

In the ensuing period of time, additional space and shelving was obtained. A spacious reading room was part of the arrangement, at least until it was required by the BUQ for commercial purposes. An electronic catalogue for the Archives using a small privately-owned laptop computer was developed, and the protocols enhanced and more accessions took place. Although the facilities were much better than had ever been available before, there was no copying, phone or computer access but help was offered by the missionary organisation, Interserve, also on the same level, thanks to the interest and support of its director, Rev Keith Applegate.

Collection Developments and Policy

There were also additions to the collection. Some of the new material included records of early churches; some were closing and so mostly their records were obtained, but some continuing churches transferred unwanted records, say, their first 100 years, in the interests of better preservation. Early churches were also covered by one of the activities of the BHSQ when it obtained a Baplink grant to microfilm records (minutes and roll books) up to about 1920. This supplemented the microfilms of *The Queensland Freeman/Baptist* which had been done much earlier by the State Library of Queensland. The other major group of accessions were more Minutes of the Baptist Union and its various departments. There were still no formalised archiving procedure within the Baptist Union administration, but the most important records were being safely archived. Most of the backlog of departmental records was made up during this time.

Local church histories were also added as they became available, although this was largely on an ad hoc basis as churches did not always pass on copies of their publications. One of the most useful additions to the indexes was a simplified listing of all major articles in *The Queensland Baptist* (totalling almost 7,000), which proved to be of enormous help in locating information. It was only superseded when searchable electronic scans were made years later.

The collection policy focused on the denominational records with an effort made to ensure that all relevant material from the top level of the Baptist Union was transferred to the Archives in a timely fashion. Furthermore, an attempt was made to fill any gaps in the collection, and to ensure that records of the various BUQ departments were also placed in the Archives. There was no intention of duplicating the holdings of the theological college library in general Baptist heritage areas, or to collect inter-state or Australian denominational records. Also the larger departments of the BUQ with staff and offices of their own were expected to look after their own records.

It was agreed that local churches records would not be actively sought out of consideration for the principle of the independence of the local church, but also because of the restricted space available in the Archives and the voluntary nature of its operation. Local church material was received only if the church was going out of operation, or if the church was not able to care for the material properly. Questions of ultimate ownership of such material were not completely resolved at the time.

The weakest section of the Archives was personal information about ministers, church leaders and members, where the only worthwhile sources (apart from their official files) related to those who were particularly prominent and therefore warranted a biographical record when they took up or concluded a position or an obituary at their death. Birth, death, burial and marriage records were virtually non-existent.

Good contact was maintained with other local church archives and with Baptist archives in other states. Through his membership in the Baptist World Alliance Heritage Commission, Dr Parker was also able to maintain contact with people and institutions overseas. One member (and later chair) of BHSQ with his wife, Eric and Rosemary Kopittke, were well known experts in the field of family history with specialisation in the German migration; this was particularly helpful to Queensland Baptist work with its unique heritage of German Baptist life.

The Baptist Archives was able to concentrate on the care of denominational and other church records and in providing information and access to documents as required for administrative, legal, historical and family reasons. It was not caught up in matters which often plagued other similar bodies related to indigenous mission stations and children in church orphanages due to the absence of these activities from Queensland Baptist history. Increasing concerns of privacy matters within the Australian community did not have much impact on the Baptist Archives. However one issue that began to appear was the handling of digital records, but no special action was taken during this period.

Back to the Basement

The operation of the Archives on the 3rd floor level of 518 Brunswick Street gradually became a stable and efficient service, even if the conditions were not ideal, and space was fast becoming a problem again. However, the area was in a section of the building let to tenants and its future was therefore always dependant on commercial considerations. A sudden end to this phase of operation occurred late in 1997 when the administration decided to put the 3rd floor to other uses. This meant another move for the Archives. The place selected was the originally proposed location, the basement, but it would need extensive modification to overcome the problems it had as a site for the Archives. During the work, the Archives were closed for an extended period - from December 1997 to May 1998 - during which the records were again in storage, where they were inaccessible and under considerable risk to their physical condition and security.

One of the welcome additions in the new location was a large compactus, comprising 15 bays, each containing 7 shelves. This provided considerable extra space for the material, but the old boxes were now so badly damaged that they had to be replaced. This meant re-boxing all of the material into smaller boxes suitable for the compactus shelving, and re-indexing of the entire collection. The whole process was slow which meant that the Archives were once again closed for an extended period to all but the most pressing of cases.

Although there was more shelf space than before, the room was far smaller, and there was minimal space for desks and tables. Worst of all, there was a very large air-conditioning fan in one corner; it could not be controlled, and it drowned the room in a continual stream of noise. Access to the room was uninviting at best, and it was remote from the main office and any copier or other support; there were no facilities anywhere near. The new room was reasonably useful for storage of the records, but was completely unsatisfactory for patrons and visitors, and even for the Archivist's regular work. This meant that as much of the Archivist's activities, especially responding to queries, was carried on off-site, and also increasing reliance was placed on digital files and indexes.

Nevertheless, the process of re-boxing, and re-indexing continued over the next year; usage was sluggish and there were additional accessions to the collection. One reason for the slowdown in accessions was that there had been extensive changes to the organisational structure of the Baptist Union which reduced drastically the number of departments and consequently, the number of records being created and ultimately needing to be archived. The end result of this process of change, which took place over many years, resulted in most of the business being channelled through the central executive (or Board) and administrative arms of the BUQ, and the creation of semi-independent charter groups (the college, camping and community services) which were able to care for their own records. The microfilming project was resumed as funds and time again became available, resulting in the filming of most of the records up to about 1920 from the denomination and the earliest churches.

The re-boxing of the material had been barely completed when a potentially serious threat arose. In the early morning hours of 16 March 1999 vandals set a fire in the electrical equipment area adjacent to the Archives. There was no direct damage from flames, but soot and smoke permeated the room which caused extensive problems for the archival material. A State Library conservator was called and recommended professional cleaning of the entire collection! This process was took four weeks and was covered by insurance.

Continuing efforts to upgrade the archiving protocols across the BUQ organisation did not meet with any practical success but there was good personal support from the Executive Secretary, Lloyd Woodrow, and Office Manager, Nigel Patterson. Even the attention given to the importance of the denomination's heritage by the highly influential Triennial Review, reporting in 2000, did not result in any increased interest in or support for the Archives. It was hoped that the forthcoming sesqui-centenary of Baptist witness in the state to be celebrated in 2005 might see greater interest.

Another move – Gaythorne

After less than 10 years at the New Farm site, the Baptist Union administration began looking around for a larger building to accommodate its growth. An important part of the plan, first mooted late in 2002, was to bring all the main operations of the Baptist Union (including the theological college) together on the same site. This was a promising development for the Archives, with the hope of much improved facilities and much closer relationships with other elements of the Baptist Union. As far back as 1969, at an early meeting of the original BUQ historical committee, the college offered to store the denominational historical records, but that offer was not taken up at the time; there were to be no developments at the new site either.

The new site was the former campus of the Australian Catholic University at 53 Prospect Road, Gaythorne. There were four buildings on the property, and the initial proposal for the Archives made in mid-2003 was on the top level of Building 2. Despite earlier indications, the floor space was actually slightly less than at the New Farm facility (down from 41 to 39 sq metres); furthermore, it was square and therefore not able to take the compactus as it was, even if the floor was considered strong enough. More seriously, the room was on the north east corner of the building with two sides full of windows, meaning that heat and light—the great enemies of documents—would be a huge problem, even with air-conditioning and blinds. Being on the top floor with complicated access from the building's entrance was also a disadvantage.

It was expected that the relocation would take place around 2003, but once again there were extensive delays. In the meantime, another much better location was made available. It was on the lowest level of Building 4, with easy access to the outside. It was an L-shaped room, measuring 11.5 x 7.3 metres, giving a floor space of 56 sq m; although one section had a large pillar in the middle, there was plenty of room to fit the compactus intact, and room for other storage units. There was also room for tables providing plenty of working space. The room was set up with the compactus, open shelving and storage cupboards, four filing cabinets, two stationery cupboards, a double sized table, a computer stand, and a reception desk.

Delays meant that the move from the old site did not take place until early June 2005. This had been an extremely busy time leading up to the publication of the new 150th anniversary history of the Baptist work in Queensland, *Pressing on with the Gospel*, which required a great deal of work by the Archivist and others. The relocation involved more than 425 boxes of material, packed by the Archivist, some BHSQ members and with the last minute assistance of some BUQ staff. The initial unpacking was completed quickly, but it took about nine months to set up completely in the new location. During the time of packing and relocation, limited Archival services were maintained.

The collection was augmented at the time and over the period following with quite a lot of additional material as various items were 'discovered' by BUQ departments. One item of particular interest was the first Minute book of the Clifford House Aged Persons' Home committee dating from the late 1940s; that organisation had since grown to become the very large Queensland Baptist Care. However, some items that had found their way to the Archives in the move were extraneous and removed. There were also other additions to the collection which were part of the normal activities of the Archives. One of these was a fully searchable scanned version of *The Queensland Freeman* on CD-ROM, by arrangement with Archive CD Books, South Australia. Later, extensive runs of *The Queensland Baptist* and the BUQ Yearbooks were also added, making this one of the most useful additions to the Archives, and the commencement of its digital archival program.

Enhanced Operation

In its new location, the Archives were better equipped than ever before. There was now a phone, and a computer, (the initial basic unit replaced after a short time), with connections to the BUQ network and the internet. A simple photocopier made its appearance (it too was replaced with a better one in due course). The single air-conditioning unit (also replaced eventually) was supplemented with an extra unit to provide

a more effective operation. However, in the summer of 2008-09, a serious problem arose with humidity resulting in the infestation of mould. A de-humidifier was installed to control the problem, and later a consultant was brought in to inspect the facility. The report indicated that the room was basically satisfactory but advised relocating the de-humidifier to improve its impact, resulting in much better control of the problem.

There was a steady flow of accessions from both the denominational offices and also from the churches and other sources. In particular, important Minutes and other records were accessioned, requiring some additional storage in the form of filing and stationery cabinets. In 2011, an anonymous donor presented the Archives with an elegant glass fronted display cabinet for some of the earliest records as well as the most recently bound volumes. Interesting items still occasionally appeared – including a World War I Honour Board from Jireh which had been rescued from a woodworker's shop, and some missionary documents which had survived the fire at that church after it had closed.

The continual problem of developing a set of archiving protocols for the Baptist Union looked like being resolved in 2007, but the process was suddenly terminated due to staff changes. The matter was raised again by the Archives in 2010, which led to the in-principle approval by the Queensland Baptists Board, and the authorisation of an audit of archiving procedures throughout the denominational organisation. This was carried out late in 2011 and revealed a mixed situation, where some departments and groups were coping satisfactorily but others were struggling. The most important trend however was the rapid move to digital records, including minutes and reports and especially correspondence in the form of emails. There appeared to be no standard approach to archiving this material, some of which seemed to be in danger of being lost or at least, being inaccessible; management of these records was problematic. The recommendation then was to develop a full digital archives plan.

The Archives' own indexes had been digital from the beginning, and it had already been accumulating a considerable body of digital material in the form of images, papers and reports, books, and data. Using advice and information from many sources, the Archives began to organise its material into a mature Digital Archive. An interesting development at the same time was an approach by one of the churches to fully digitise its own records, most of the early ones having been stored in the Archives for many years.

The work of the Archives in its fourth home, at Gaythorne, was also greatly enhanced by the addition of regular volunteer staff. In 2008 Mr R W (Bill) Hughes, formerly of Canberra, retired to Brisbane and immediately offered his services. With a legal background, he soon organised the extensive photographic collection and then went on to begin collecting a full dossier of historical data about churches on the north side of Brisbane. His research and writing skills, already evidenced by books he had produced, found a good outlet in a series of projects on lesser known churches in Brisbane including the elusive Edward Street Church from the 1860s and the Deagon Mission Church. When Baptist Heritage Qld began its project on the history of Baptists in Central Queensland, he researched several of the churches from that area and produced separate monographs on some of them. Other projects have also included a history of the Senior Girls' Missionary Union in Queensland and a biography of Rev William Moore, one of the earliest pioneers. An important bonus from these projects is the establishment of biographical database aimed at containing basic details of Queensland Baptist people, which soon grew to over 700 entries, and expanding continuously.

Another welcome addition to the team was Miss Anne Cameron, formerly of NSW, who had spent many years working in a senior position in the office of the Baptist Union of NSW. She brought wide experience of denominational life and the ability to research and assemble data. Her projects have included the updating of the details of Queensland churches, Presidents and appointees of the Baptist Assembly, as well as numerous other tasks.

The Vision after 30 Years

The new site also brought more contact with various arms of the BUQ located at Gaythorne, and more awareness of its activities. Regular publication by the QB magazine of news items from the Archives increased its profile amongst the churches, with some readers saying that the Archives page was the most interesting section of all! There was a steady stream of enquiries, sometimes from surprising sources. A stall at the annual Conventions, and an occasional presentation in the form of a book launch or other announcement also helped to keep the work of the Archives and Baptist Heritage Qld before the denomination. There was often encouraging feedback, but as the Archives turned 30, there was still much work to be done in collecting, caring for and sharing the historical records of Baptist in Queensland and promoting the importance of records and their management and use.

Part 2 2012- 2021

Introduction

With the Archives at the 30 year mark in 2012, the activities and services were well set up to provide, manage and make available the records of the Baptist denomination in Queensland over the following years.

The Archives at work

Facilities

The physical premises at the QB Centre 53 Prospect Road Gaythorne, first established in 2005 when the Baptist Union moved to this site, were housed in the Building 4, the largest on the property. It was well located on the ground floor at the end of a corridor off the main entrance to the building and near the lift providing access to the main Baptist Union offices in the adjacent building. It was an L-shaped room with a floor space of 59 sq m with adequate space for the 15 bay compactus (200 metres of shelf space) in which the general files and other documents were housed. There were also several filing, stationery and display cabinets for secure storage of some of the key documents, along with plenty of space for desks and work areas. The display cases were expanded in 2013 with the installation of two additional units given in memory of long-time Archives supporter, Rev M. C. Williams, MA, BD, one used for a small library of reference books and the other for various physical artefacts.

The activities of the Archives were serviced by a computer and copier/printer connected to the main Baptist Union network and with internet access. The room was airconditioned and dehumidified continuously, keeping it at the optimum level of 20C and 50% RH, although it had taken some effort to get to this situation.

There was space for considerable growth in holdings, but another adjacent room which was used for storage of other Baptist Union documents was always considered as an obvious area for expansion of the Archives if it ever became available. That possibility presented itself in 2016 when there was a wholesale re-configuration of Baptist Union offices due to the departure of a major tenant from the QB Centre. This business had occupied a considerable amount of space (including one whole building) and to find a replacement which could take over its space without any significant change was an unlikely prospect. So the alternative became a necessity – changing the Baptist Union offices around so that the vacant spaces could be rented more easily. The Archives was taken into this scenario, and at first was offered space in another building. This was not an attractive proposition and so the offer was declined.

Further planning led to the Archives being left at its existing location, but it was offered the adjacent space which was not needed any longer for its original purpose. The offer was very quickly accepted. It was an area of 44 sq metres and consisted of one small room (which became a second computer room) and

a larger space ideal for storage, work, and meetings. A connecting door was cut into the wall dividing it from original Archives area making the new arrangement extremely convenient. A considerable amount of furniture from the departing tenant also became available to the Archives, including large tables, benches, filing cabinets, stationery cabinets, chairs and a white board, all of which were ideal in fitting out the new Annex and improving the existing arrangements. The main drawback to the new space was that it was not climate controlled. It shared an air-con system with a meeting room next door which was mainly controlled from that other room. In 2017, BHQ bought a new improved dehumidifier for the main Archives area and the old one was moved to the Annex. This helped a little, but it was clear that the Annex could not be used for storage of critical material. However, with its large desk area it was a great benefit as a work and meeting room, and for general storage.

Team

The Archives was served by a dedicated team consisting of Miss Anne Cameron and Mr R W (Bill) Hughes, who had been working effectively over the previous few years. They had developed their own particular projects and specialities, while Dr David Parker managed the overall operation of the Archives including acquisitions, responding to queries and relationships with the churches and the Baptist Union.

Anne Cameron

With many years' experience in a senior position in the Baptist Union of NSW office before her retirement, Anne Cameron was an expert at dealing with documents and denominational processes. One of her regular tasks at the Archives was preparing the annual batch of Baptist Union minutes (Board, Administrative Services Group, Ministerial Services, and QB magazine etc) for binding. This involved working through the papers generated during the particular year to remove staples, putting them in the correct order and labelling. Another of her most useful projects was the development of series of Finding Aids which required detailed checking of the holdings of particular groups (such as the Theological College or Mission to Queensland) and preparing lists showing what documents were held, along with the dates and locations. These Aids were invaluable whenever research into these groups was required. A similar project involved listings of the documents held in the Archives relating to local churches.

Another useful project was to continuously update the Historical Record. This was a document commenced several years earlier when the historical details about the Baptist Union and its appointees was no longer published in the Baptist Union Yearbook. The absence of this material diminished the value of that publication and it soon became merely a directory of contact details of churches, pastors and Baptist Union offices, rather than the Yearbook that it had been since it began publication in 1907. A companion listing also managed by Anne was the Churches' Record showing the dates of formation/closure, locations, names and other useful information about churches. This information too had been dropped from the Yearbook, making the compilation of a separate document a virtual necessity. It was a complex task due to the rapid formation and closure, mergers, relocations, and changes of names of churches. These were increasingly common occurrences making the compilation of the list difficult, a problem exacerbated by the difficulty of obtaining correct and timely data. Statistical data relating to the churches which had also been previously published in the Yearbook was another regular acquisition of the Archives and that was processed in a major spreadsheet by David Parker.

RW (Bill) Hughes

Bill Hughes, as "Principal Researcher" devoted his efforts in a number of areas, especially working on particular historical projects. Some of these had developed from his earlier participation in the history of Baptist work in Central Queensland which was published at the time of the sesquicentenary of the Rockhampton Baptist Church in 2012. Some of these histories were produced a small stand-alone books. A major project was a biography of Rev William Moore, a pioneer of Baptist work in Brisbane who arrived in the colony in 1855, a short time before the establishment of the first church. He was a layman at the time, following his trade of market-gardening, but soon involved himself in a number of church

developments becoming in time a recognized pastor. The biography, “The Gardener: Pastor William Moore 1826-1906” was published by the author in 2015 as an e-book and as an attractive printed volume. An interesting development of this story in 2019 was the donation by the family of a valuable silver platter which had been a farewell gift to Moore from the Petrie Terrace church (see photo). There was also a development of Bill’s earlier research on the little-known Fortescue Street Baptist churches when in 2017 a parchment containing its constitution and members list of the Fortescue Street church was discovered in the Baptist Union office. A photograph showing the earlier Edward Street church was also published in 2015. Other publications, under assignment, were a history of the City Tabernacle’s organ and choir and its hostel, Willara House.

One of Bill’s most important projects was the digitisation of the Archives photographic collection, a long project taking place over many years. With valuable guidance from a seminar on the topic of photo digitisation arranged by a local unit of the ASA in March 2015, policies were developed for the project and work started in that same year. It was decided to produce a high quality file for each photograph along with a comprehensive index entry containing a full description of the size, condition, subject, origins and other relevant information. The master photographs and index would be filed on the Archives’ computer system. The idea was that once the scanning was completed, there would not normally be any reason to touch the physical photographs again, so they were stored away securely. Opportunity was also taken to cull the collection so that only the important and relevant items were retained.

Equipment

Equipment for on-going Archives’ activities was gradually improved and extended. For example, the photograph digitisation program was made possible through the purchase in 2014 of a high quality A3 size book scanner with associated software, funded by BHSQ. A second computer was installed in the Archives in 2015 so there was now a dedicated digitisation work-station enabling the project to progress steadily.

One of the further benefits of the departure of the major QB Centre tenant (which resulted in the addition of the Annex to the Archives) was the acquisition in 2016 of one of their photo/copier machines which was no longer needed by that business. It replaced an aging machine which had been originally discarded by another Baptist Union office and in use at the Archives for 5 years. The “new” unit only needed minimal maintenance for it to be ready. One advantage gained by this machine was the addition of colour copying and printing. Although old, the machine lasted a few years until it was replaced in early 2019 by yet another refurbished unit.

Another addition (2016) was a good quality camera and copy stand (the latter provided by BHQ) with lighting for use in scanning large size documents not able to be handled on the existing equipment. However, glare in the images from the lighting was difficult to eliminate so a better solution was needed. This was achieved when the attention of the Archives was drawn to another product in 2018. Known as the CZUR Smart Book Scanner ET16 Plus, this elegantly designed digital machine with clever software came as a self-contained unit consisting of base board, scanner and stand with effective built-in lighting and all the necessary software. It produced excellent results with a simple, flexible operating system, although the size of the objects to be scanned was still somewhat limited. Once again, BHQ provided the funding to acquire one of these which was soon producing good results.

Main operations

The main operations of the Archives had by now become quite extensive and complex. A comprehensive and detailed Archives Manual was developed (and regularly updated) to describe its activities and policies.

The top priority was material from the Baptist Union offices. This was now reduced in extent compared with earlier days when there were numerous denominational departments and committees in operation, all

generating their own records. It was now mainly concentrated on the records of the two top bodies, the Board and the Administrative Services Group. Ministerial Services also produced a volume of material. Larger units like Malyon College, QCCC and Carinity, which tended to create large volumes of records and had sizeable numbers of staff and their own separate office premises, were expected to maintain their own records, although key developments in their activities were usually reflected in the top-level records. There were also papers from annual assembly (known as the QB Convention) and the regular publications, the QB Directory, the bi-monthly Queensland Baptist magazine and the weekly news-sheets, Network News and GSUD.

An audit of record creation and archiving practices across the denomination carried out by the Archivist in 2012 revealed a generally satisfactory situation, but pointed to many areas where improvement was needed. In subsequent years, efforts were made to work towards rectifying issues, especially critical in some cases, and setting up protocols for ongoing management of records.

By now, records were all born-digital although in key instances, such as Board, and ASG, printed copies were also made for the record. Gradually a system was developed by the Archives in conjunction with the various officers, to transfer both paper and digital records to the Archives for management. In addition, a proactive approach was taken which endeavoured to discover and obtain digital files from earlier periods, as well as other miscellaneous records, such as publications, special committee reports and promotional material. The earliest electronic Baptist Union minutes dated to 1991, while other publications were generally from about 2000.

Processing of paper records was easily carried out using standard practices, but it was also clear that digitisation of selected items in this material would be a distinct advantage. Already, the Archives had begun digitising some of its records. A start had been made with the Queensland Baptist magazine which began publication in 1881. An arrangement was made with the Adelaide-based firm, Archive Digital Books Australia, which eventually saw all of the issues up to 1991 digitised (and searchable) which proved to be significant boon to research. There followed also digitisation of the Annual Yearbooks (from 1907) and after 1877, both the Yearbook (later Directory) and Annual Reports. Later the gaps between these projects and born-digital records were filled, which, with the regular accession of newly issued items, gave a complete and on-going coverage. This left the matter of scanning existing historic paper records.

A general policy was adopted of gradually digitising key paper records, especially the top level minutes of Executive, Council and Assembly (in their various names) dating from 1877. It was the hope that other Baptist Union records especially those relating to churches and pastors and key older committees such as Home Missions and the College, could be covered as well. There was no budget for this plan, so it was a matter of taking whatever opportunities presented themselves to carry out the task.

The rapid accession of many digital records created the necessity of devising a system for managing them. From mid-2012 onwards, considerable effort was expended in searching out suitable electronic record management and archiving systems. Many of these were investigated but the cost factor and the skill level for operation of them were prohibitive. In late 2015 a decision was made to install Redmap5 Cloud. Although this system was not designed primarily for archival purposes, it was economical and could be adapted to suit the purpose. It allowed for documents to be ingested into the system as they were created, saving the need for a separate digitisation process, and allowing the Archives direct access, with various levels of access to preserve integrity. Any newly digitised documents could also be easily introduced into the system.

Upon installation, it was configured to cover most of the departments of the Baptist Union with the idea that it would be gradually introduced across the whole organisation over a period of time. However, only the Archives took advantage of this system and so its potential was never realised, and nor was the opportunity taken to digitise and ingest into the system the existing historic paper records of the Baptist Union office.

To keep track of the many other digital records held elsewhere on the Archives server, a simple database index was devised while awaiting the development of a more comprehensive system and the full implementation of Redmap5 Cloud.

Meanwhile the Archives was making a start on digitising earlier records of Assembly and Executive. These were mostly in hand-writing (at least the earliest batches) so they could not be made searchable. However, to have digital copies would at least serve the purpose of providing a back-up version of the otherwise sole paper copies and also to have PDF copies would make usage of these documents easier – they could be used on any computer rather than requiring a researcher to spend long hours working through the paper originals at the Archives.

In earlier years, about the first 50 years of Baptist Union records had been microfilmed. These were now digitised by a Melbourne-based commercial firm at Baptist Union expense in 2012. Then using the CZUR scanner, paper records from the 1920s began to be scanned, the later ones of which were typescript allowing them to be searchable.

So by about the end of 2019, first 60 years of Baptist Union records and the last 30 years had been digitised (or were available as born-digital files), indexed, and available for research. In addition, all of the Yearbooks, Assembly Reports and QB magazines were available in digital form. To supplement the gaps in the Queensland Baptist magazine, the Australian Baptist (1913-1991) and the National Baptist (1988-2002) were also available. Careful arrangements were made for adequate back-up copies of these files.

As well as this, it was the policy to search out digital versions of any reports and publications which came to the notice of the Archives. This resulted in the acquisition of many items, some of them only available in digital form and scavenged from sometimes out of date computers and servers. All of this added valuable data to the growing Digital Archive. Furthermore, during 2020, an indication was received that further Baptist Union paper and freshly digitised files would become available.

The ultimate aim was to have all the key records available in digital form to provide security in case of any kind of damage to the paper records, for ease of searching records and for convenience in sharing them. Protocols for the management, handling and access of these documents (as well as the traditional paper records) were under continual review with the intention of developing suitable and manageable systems.

Many of the records were not suitable for publication on any kind of web platform, as was the case with many other digital repositories. It was clear that consideration would need to be given in due course to making public documents such as the Queensland Baptist magazine available on-line. In the meantime, researchers were advised that some of these materials were already available commercially.

A major consideration was developing relations with Baptist Union and church personnel so that the system worked smoothly and effectively in capturing all relevant documents and transferring them in a timely fashion to the Archives. There were few local church records to be considered but it was a clear policy that this area would need to be explored more intentionally in the future due to the rapid transition of churches to digital records and, in many cases, the consequent neglect of their historic paper documents.

Archives basis and promotion

Since the commencement of the Archives in the 1980s, it had operated on a consensus basis, with the common understanding that any organisation such as the BUQ and its member churches would retain and manage its records in an orderly fashion. Up until 1980, it was commonly accepted as an unwritten rule that the BUQ General Secretary would have overall responsibility for the records. When the Archives was commenced as a separate entity, the top-level denominational committee (Council, and then Executive Committee and later the Board) named the Archives Officer as part of its set of annual appointments on the (assumed) recommendation of the General Secretary.

By 2012 it was clear that this ought to be formalised and at the suggestion of the Archivist, a new By-

Law (Number 22 – changed to Number 23 in 2020) was introduced clarifying the role of the Archives as part of the Baptist Union and also making it clear that records of defunct churches should also be housed in the Archives. It was stated that active local churches were to be responsible for their own records although the BUQ Archives could also accept them for safe storage. Over the years a number of mainly older churches did lodge their early records (say, their first 100 years) with the Archives.

From time to time, explanatory notices were issued through the denominational mailing system to inform churches of these arrangements. Also there were ad hoc efforts to inform denominational staff as well. One such occasion was at the relocation of the BUQ offices to Gaythorne when some of the departments, in preparing for the move, decided to transfer records, some newly discovered, to the Archives. Another similar occasion was the re-organisation of the office spaces in 2016. In each case, a few interesting and valuable documents were unearthed and transferred to the Archives.

Occasional articles had been published in the Queensland Baptist magazine over the years, covering both Archives and Historical Society activities. In time this grew into a regular page (with photographs) prepared for each issue by the Archives. Over following years a large range of topics was covered and many readers of the magazine reported that the Archives page was the first item they read! Topics covered current research projects such as a history of churches on the Darling Downs and the Baptist Union, Archives activities such as displays, photograph scanning and new services, or items from the collection.

Another avenue for making the Archives activity known to the denomination was a display at the annual assembly, usually shared with the BHSQ, and a place in the program when there was a new initiative such as a book launch. These displays were quite effective at first, and sometimes generated considerable interest and beneficial personal contacts. However as the Assembly program became shortened and the venue reduced in size, there was increasingly less space and opportunity available for an effective display. So the displays were discontinued from 2015. Alternate means to promote the work of the Archives were sought, but with only very limited success.

One particularly effective venture took place in May 2014 to mark the 30th anniversary of the formation of the BHSQ. It was an open day at the Archives, held on a Saturday. The program consisted of a seminar with a number of senior Baptist personnel sharing historical reflections, and an inspection of the specially mounted displays at the Archives. Later, the BUQ Marketing department produced a banner for use on such occasions as well as logo and poster (photo).

Another open day was held in 2018 in association with an outside body which was conducting a 2-day seminar at the QB Centre. There was considerable interest from patrons of that event but an invitation for Baptist Union staff and churches to Archives met with nil response.

The BUQ website included a page devoted to the Archives, featuring a basic outline of services and operations, with links to the BHSQ website where a major section presented more detailed information. Of particular interest was a page containing a number of Guide Sheets on Archives operations which had been prepared by Archives' staff. Some related to the Baptist Archives while others were focused on local church archives and in particular the preparation of church histories. This section was a convenient source to which enquirers seeking advice could be pointed.

Relations with churches

While the Archives was primarily the repository for the records of the Baptist Union and it operated within the Baptist Union administration, it contained many records from elsewhere. Some of the most important of those were the records of churches, including those of defunct churches and mainly earlier records of older functioning churches. Frequent requests were received from churches seeking advice on how to handle their current and historical records, especially as digital records became more common. In contrast with some other state Baptist Archives, it was not the policy of the Archives to encourage the transfer of church records for reasons of polity and also because the Archives was only a volunteer

operation with limited capacity. However, as time progressed, it was becoming more evident that local churches were not able to handle their traditional paper records well, and were struggling to develop a decent system for the now almost ubiquitous digital records. Many queries were received from churches seeking advice on handling paper and digital records, but few ever took matters any further with the Archives. There was clearly a need for serious development in this area to prevent the wholesale loss of records. The general transition to digital records meant that the physical space in the Archives had not been used as much as anticipated, leaving plenty of room for local church records. The Redmap5 system also provided unlimited space for digital records which were becoming more common at the local church level, including both born digital and digitised paper records.

Queries and services

As well as making satisfactory arrangements for the collection and management of Baptist denominational and local church records, the Archives was also busy with sharing the information it contained. There was a regular stream of queries from Baptist Union officials, usually focusing on details of past administrative decisions, policy and staffing matters, along with financial and property matters. Enquiries seeking personal information about prominent Baptists for a tribute at their funeral were matters of urgency.

One important area which came to focus from 2017 was the process and results of previous denominational reviews, which were needed for the latest major review taking place at the time. Sometimes queries came with legal implications, such as when, in 2019, the Baptist Union joined the federal government's National Redress Scheme for victims of institutional sexual abuse. This led to an increase of enquiries, but while the numbers were small, the situation highlighted the inadequacies of much local church record keeping. Privacy of personal details was also a consideration in some enquiries, as was the level of access permitted to official records. A few students also made use of the Archives for academic projects.

Local churches also turned to the Archives for information, especially when a significant anniversary was being held. While extensive collections of records did not exist for most churches, there was usually quite a lot to be found in the denominational records, especially in the case of former Home Mission churches. These queries could involve the Archives staff in a lot of extra work. Families also sought help, but the amount of information available was limited. Exceptions occurred in the cases of people who had been prominent in Baptist Union circles and had attracted many reports during their lifetimes. Sometimes people from other denominations sought baptismal information not realising that infant baptism was not practiced, and in any case, records of "believer's" baptisms were practically non-existent. One such query was surprisingly answered when it was discovered that the long since defunct church in question had kept a weekly service register which covered the right dates and did include a specific reference to the infant dedication of the child – this is the only such register in the Archives, a rarity among Baptists, but of course common practice in other denominations.

Occasionally queries were received from the general public. One person wanted details about Baptist church buildings for a proposed coffee-table book (which never eventuated). Perhaps the strangest of all was a query from a film maker wanting photographs of the distinctive dress of Baptists in the 1930s! The Archives was always pleased that people sought information from its collection of documents but the volunteer day-a-week staffing arrangements created problems when the queries turned out to be complex, detailed and extensive.

Relations with other states and other Archives

Compared with earlier times when there was an active Church Archivists' Society operating in Queensland, there were by now very few contacts with local denominational archives. One brief exception occurred in 2013 when the Churches of Christ sought advice when setting up their new facility nearby. .

But it was a different situation with interstate Baptist Archives, Historical Societies and researchers. Advice on archiving, information about queries and results of research were often shared on an ad hoc personal basis, indicating the value of these relationships. This led to an important new development in 2013. For years, staff of various state Baptist Unions had been meeting regularly under the banner of the Baptist Union of Australia (later Australian Baptist Ministries ABM) with considerable benefit to the work of evangelism, church planting, youth, theological education, and denominational administration. Dr David Parker raised with the Baptist Union of Queensland the possibility of the Archivists meeting in the same manner. The idea was endorsed by ABM and the first meeting was held on 19-20 November 2013 at Collins Street Baptist Church, Melbourne with 6 attending from all states except NT.

The gathering was called the “National Australian Baptist Archivists’ Conference” (NABAC). ABM provided funds to cover over-night accommodation and hire of the meeting venue while other expenses were covered by the states. There was immediate appreciation of the value of meeting face to face which enabled sharing information about Archives’ operations, discussion of common problems, working out strategies for future development and gaining practical insights through excursions to local Archives and lectures from experts in the field. The annual meetings also enhanced the value and frequency of informal contacts through the year.

Variations in archival standards, practice and procedures across the country and at Union and local church levels were immediately apparent, especially in the digital area. Therefore the first effort of the new meeting was to draw up a set of Protocols which set out common objectives and standards applicable to all levels of Australian Baptist life. These were presented to state administrators and adopted in 2014. Later, at the suggestion of ABM a promotional leaflet was produced for wide distribution across the country. Efforts to have the Australian Baptist newspaper digitised which had begun earlier were also quickly advanced and the project was soon under way. More than enough funds for this project had been raised from the various states, so further national Baptist publications were added to the project, resulting in a complete coverage. With Dr David Parker as convenor, NABAC continued to meet in Melbourne in November each year with evident benefits registered in several states. In 2017 Mr Bill Hughes took over as the Queensland representative and the Archivist of Western Australia became Convenor.

Big changes - 2019-2020

During 2019 and into 2020, after several years of steady development and productive activity, several developments occurred which seriously disturbed the work of the Archives, threatening the momentum that had built up over nearly 40 years of operation.

IT troubles

First of all, mid-2019 there were sudden and unwelcome changes to IT arrangements when the Baptist Union switched from a local server-based system to the Microsoft Cloud. The Archives was not notified in advance of this change and so without any forewarning or training, found the new arrangement surprising and confusing. It was soon apparent that, despite the supposed advantages of the new system, it was not at all suitable for the common procedures and requirements of the Archives. The existing main computer with very small storage was unable to cope and soon became inoperable, emphasising calls for its upgrade or replacement which had first been made a couple of years earlier. A further coincidental problem arose with the new copier/printer. This matter proved in the end to be very simple to solve, but it took several months to identify.

Then it was noticed that humidity and temperature readings in main Archives room were suddenly unstable, after years of successful management. Review of the conditions and advice from experts did little to solve this issue which threatened the safety of the paper records, the earliest of which went back more than 160 years.

Staffing

Also during 2019, Bill Hughes advised that after 12 years of service he would not be continuing after

the end of the year in his volunteer role on a regular basis, although he hoped to be available for work on specific research projects. By now he had digitised the entire photographic collection amounting to about 1750 items, and updated to the Bio-Database to include about 1100 entries. He also advised that he would not be available for re-election to the position of secretary of Baptist Heritage Qld, which he had occupied for 5 years.

Dr David Parker also advised that he would be stepping down from the role of Archivist, after nearly 40 years in the post. He said that he would be available to help orient his replacement, and continue to assist on an ad hoc basis. Anne Cameron, completing 10 years, indicated that she was happy to continue on in her role, circumstances permitting.

These impending staffing changes were notified to the Baptist Union on 9 October 2019, with a recommendation that the operations of the Archives now indicated that the replacement Archivist should be a part-time paid position of about 2 days a week, with ability to respond to important matters outside those hours. (Two days was approximately the amount of time given by the volunteers.) This advice was received by the Director of QB Services and the Director of Administration who appeared to be sympathetic to the recommendations as presented. Filling of the position of Archivist was a Board responsibility and it was anticipated that action could easily be taken in time for new arrangements to be in place at the beginning of the following year.

However, there was no action before the usual Christmas closure of the Archives, leaving the existing staff uncertain about arrangements for the new year. There was no further action over the holiday period, despite queries to the Board and administration, which meant that David Parker and Anne Cameron were left in a difficult situation regarding reopening. Eventually they decided to open a week later than usual and to provide restricted services until the Board acted to fill the position of Archivist. By now, it was clear that the recommendation about a part-time paid position had been rejected, and that another volunteer was being sought.

The Board identified Dr Pam Condie, OAM, as a possible candidate. She had recently completed Doctor Ministry studies through Malyon Theological College and had made extensive use of the Archives for her research, a co-supervisor of which was Dr David Parker. Dr Condie was interested but definitely not available to take up any such position for several months. Because of the confusion and uncertainty surrounding the position, and for fear that the rhythm of the Archives' services and operations built up over many years would be lost, Dr Parker retracted his resignation until an appointment of a replacement had been made. Finally, it was decided that Dr Condie would accept the position and take up duties from 1 October 2020 and that Dr Parker would continue in the position until that time. However, not even that arrangement stood.

Dr Condie had recently completed 8 years as Board member of the Baptist Union, and was a long-time leader in her various local churches – especially in Girls' Brigade including extensive service in senior positions with the state organisation. She had earlier served in the WRAAF and had been a board member and chair of MAF Australia.

The Denominational Review

Another significant development taking place at the time was the re-structuring of the Baptist Union of Queensland organisation and a rather extensive change of personnel. Regular reviews of the operation of the Baptist Union had been stipulated in its constitution, but they had been neglected for some years. Eventually, an extensive review process was begun in 2017, with the results being adopted at the Assembly of 2019. The review called for significant changes to the Baptist Union organisation, including changes to many of the positions which meant that many staff left the organisation, to be replaced by new people in newly created positions (although there were some transfers of existing staff to new positions). The changes began in mid-2019 and continued over following months, not being complete until the end of 2020. There were many ancillary staff changes (redundancies and new appointments) as well, including

clerical office staff with whom the Archives often worked mostly closely.

All these structural and personnel changes had two major consequences for the Archives – the first was that the lines of accountability (including day by day activities) and personnel responsible for various functions changed, with lots of accompanying uncertainty. The second was that the old system for the creation of documents and the transfer of relevant ones to the Archives was disturbed, meaning that the Archives would have to learn about the new systems and adjust its procedures accordingly. It would also have to re-train office and administrative staff regarding Archiving protocols and the newly devised arrangements.

Another consequence was that there were some new entities created and changes to others. These new and adjusted organisations would need to be brought into the system of archiving protocols. A further side effect was the enormous number of documents produced as part of the review and the subsequent implementation of its findings. All of these would need to be carefully tracked and processed.

Covid-19

2019 was a busy period, and as the year drew to an end, it was understood that changes were not over, and there were many uncertainties. As 2020 dawned some of those uncertainties were managed, at least in a pro tem fashion. However, before the year had progressed beyond its first quarter, another totally unexpected set of circumstances severely impacted its operations and work, as it did the whole of the Baptist denomination and the community.

The appearance overseas of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) early in the year did not immediately impact Australia but by the end of March, it had struck the country, resulting in many restrictions being imposed by the government. These affected churches and the Baptist Union, including the Baptist Archives which had to close its operations on 18 March 2020. There followed a long period of varied restrictions to the movement of people, operation of workplaces and church services, commuting and travel arrangements, and even daily life such as shopping, sport and family contacts. Most churches had to curtail and cancel ordinary activities involving physical presence at church properties, including services, weddings, funerals and other functions. Services were transferred to the internet with some kind of streaming or recorded videos. The Baptist Union issued many notices concerning rules for the operation of churches as required by the government. It also set up various on-line seminars and, on a continuing basis, provided numerous other resources to guide pastors and leaders on how to conduct the affairs of the churches under the health orders operating at particular times. Some Baptist Union operations were affected severely by these restrictions, including Carinity, the aged care department, and especially QCCC, the camping division. There were health procedures imposed and various limits on visitors to aged care facilities; camping operations were immediately shut down completely and did not resume for several months. The additional swathe of documents circulated from the Baptist Union about Covid-19 conditions, coupled with the existing regular issues, all of which were electronic, put further pressure on the Archives to develop an effective system for managing digital records. It was not until the third quarter of the year that some of these restrictions began to be eased gradually, and some degree of normality began to return.

The Archives staff were able to continue some services from home using electronic resources and communications but the Archives itself was not staffed until May 2020. It was not open to the public until November 2020, when it came under the Covid-safe regime of the Baptist Union offices. There was no NABAC meeting in 2020.

Queensland Baptist Magazine

One of the immediate effects of the Covid-19 situation was the cessation of the publication of the print version of the Queensland Baptist – with no physical church services being held, its main means of circulation disappeared in an instant! Instead, some content was made available on-line via its Facebook page and the Baptist Union website. This development was of serious concern to the Archives for two reasons. The first was that the Archives and BHQ were deprived of their best means of publicity. The

Archives' pages in each issue had become an important means of communicating with the general Baptist membership in the state about archival and historical matters, but the electronic version which replaced it was flakey to say the least. However, one Archives article that did appear on it described Baptist reactions to the 1919 Influenza epidemic in Queensland, some of which were rather surprising in the light of the experience with Covid-19 a century later.

The second reason was that ever since its inception in 1881, the Queensland Baptist had been a vital record of denominational activity and thinking, although there were a couple of long gaps (1914-1921 when it was not published, and 1931-1951 where copies are missing), and since about 2000, its newsworthiness had diminished significantly as it became a promotional magazine rather than a newspaper. With past copies of the magazine readily available in the Archives to researchers (either in paper or electronically), the Queensland Baptist had been one of the most used and fruitful sources of historical information. With the cancellation of the magazine and uncertainty about its future, the Archives feared for the future when such a resource would not be available. It was learned late in 2020 that a decision had still not been made about the future of a publication, but it was revealed that the editor would be on reduced hours in 2021.

Also during the latter part of the year, it was announced that the two regular electronic newsletters issued by the Baptist Union, Network News (an email) from the Director of Administration, and QB Services Rundown (previously GSUD and DOS RunDown) (emailed in web format) from the Director of QB Services would be modified and streamlined. These two publications were important to the Archives because, with the change of the QB magazine over the years to a glossy promotional publication, they were usually the only source of up to date news and information about Baptist Union appointments, decisions and events. Accessing and managing these publications was an important role of the Archives, although processing them was always complex. The first issue of the new streamlined communication medium, QB Hub, appeared in December 2020. It was web-based, making it difficult to archive but a separate PDF version was promised for archival purposes.

New era

As the Covid-19 situation continued throughout the year, the closure of the Archives gave the opportunity for the outgoing Archivist to assist Dr Pam Condie learn about the operation of the Archives, especially by working through the Archives Manual. Dr Condie's situation also changed and she was ready to take on the new position earlier than had been originally anticipated. Dr Parker concluded on 30 June and transferred responsibility to Dr Condie. A farewell function was held at the Baptist Union centre on 24 June 2020 under Covid-safe conditions attended by members of BHQ, the Archives staff and some members of the Baptist Union Board and administration.

Under new leadership, the Archives was well placed to tackle the future, although it was considered a missed opportunity not to make this a paid appointment. Bill Hughes began attending again regularly to work on various historical projects. A new computer was installed, although the transfer of IT services associated with the changeover of leadership was complex and confusing. One of the biggest issues was setting up protocols for archiving with all of the new structures and appointees – and making sure that nothing was lost as experienced and knowledgeable Baptist Union staff disappeared. Dr Parker continued to provide support and to work on a back-log of projects. For the time being, he took responsibility for digital archiving.