

The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland

(Baptist Heritage Qld)

A History 1984-2021

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Formation and background

The Baptist Historical Society of Queensland (BHSQ), now known as Baptist Heritage Queensland (BHQ), was established as a voluntary society operating within the Baptist denomination in Queensland at a meeting at Windsor Road Baptist Church on 1 May 1984. Rev Owen Gregory was the first secretary, and the first chairman was Rev Dr David Parker. Membership was open to individuals, families and churches/organisations with the funds raised from the fees being the main source of the Society's operating expenses. The slogan, 'Preserve, Promote, Publish our Heritage', adopted from 1996, aptly sums up the aims and functions of the organisation.

Precursors

More than 20 years earlier, there had been another initiative to care for Baptist historical interests in Queensland. In 1961 the Baptist Union appointed a committee, known as 'The Baptist Historical Society' as an official part of its structure. Principal TC Warriner, MA, BD, was the first convenor, but in 1963 Rev John E White, MA, assumed the position, which he held until 1979. Mr Bob Bavinton, LLB, held it for the remainder of the Committee's period of active existence. Others who were long-time members of this committee were Revs Dr EG Gibson, AM Hooker, GW Martin, SW Nickerson, FJC Stone, JC Ward, HE West, and Messrs JH Allsop, J Keilly, RH Maw, RJ Morris and J Pryce-Davies.

Although this committee had a 20-year life span, it was not very active, to say the least. It took two years before it was listed in the Baptist Union Year Book, and then another five years before it brought a report. Even then the report said that it had not met in the previous year, or had met only once, or that planning was under way. There are some letters in the files from the General Secretary, Rev FJC Stone, who was conscious of the importance of historical work, which 'encouraged' the committee to be more active, but evidently there was little response to these approaches. The Baptist Theological College did offer to provide storage for historical records.

It seemed that that Committee mainly saw itself as responding to directives from the Baptist Union, rather than taking initiatives of its own; those possible projects that it did discuss were not actioned. One such remit was the celebration of the centenary of the formation of the Baptist Union, due in 1977. However, not long after adopting this project, it became clear that celebrations would need to be quite large, so planning was moved to a new centenary committee created especially for the purpose by the Union. On the literary side, Rev JE White was commissioned to write the official history of the Baptist Union which was to be published in conjunction with the centenary. But the committee had little to do with that because once work got under way, it became the author's personal responsibility. By the time the book, *A Fellowship of Service*, was published at the end of 1977, the committee had stopped meeting.

There had also been earlier interest at a national level. In 1950, the Baptist Union of Australia established the Australian Baptist Historical Society as one of its boards. The Society had its own official crest, (see page 8) and cost five shillings to join; a gift of 10 guineas bought life membership. The Society put out a magazine called *Churinga* (Aboriginal for tradition) for a few years, but then both Society and magazine ceased to exist. Vice-Presidents were appointed by the State Unions, but interestingly, there never was one listed for Queensland!

Some historical work had been done many years before. The official records of the Union, although not organised into an effective archival collection, had been preserved quite well (with only a couple of major omissions). (See *separate 30-year history of Baptist Church Archives Qld for more information.*) There had also been some earlier historical publications. The most significant of these was a 135-page, copiously illustrated, book produced at the time of the jubilee of Baptist work in 1905. It consisted of the proceedings of the extensive celebrations and a 10,000-word history of the denomination and the 28 churches that existed up to that time. This had been edited for publication by Rev Wm Higlett, using a manuscript more than three times as long written by Edmund Gregory, the Government Printer and leading Baptist layman.

The earliest histories were the fourth annual report of the Wharf Street church issued in 1859, and a series of articles by one of the early pastors, Rev Wm Moore, published in 1886. Moore's work consisted of personal reflections and

memories; another early personal, but controversial, account was written by layman, Joshua Jenyns, who participated in some of the most spectacular developments of church expansion by division. Mr Higglett also included a short account of Queensland Baptist life in his booklet published in association with the formation of the Baptist Union of Australia in 1926. The centenary of Baptists in Queensland in 1955 was low key and no historical work was produced. (Some of these documents are reproduced in *Remember all the Way! A Century of Baptist Heritage* published by BHSQ in 1996.)

Formation

So there was a need for a body to foster historical interest, research, publication and preservation of materials. This sort of effort had been happening effectively elsewhere in Australia, especially in New South Wales, where a historical society with a voluntary membership had developed an enviable record of service since 1974. Then there were the highly successful groups overseas, especially the Baptist Historical Society in UK (founded 1906) and the American Baptist Historical Society in USA (founded 1853).

So at the 1983 Queensland Baptist Assembly, following discussion with various officials and other interested people stretching over the previous year, Dr David Parker, who had research interests covering Queensland Baptist history, proposed the formation of a society in Queensland on lines similar to those followed in NSW. (One document, dated 1969, actually proposed a very similar function for the old committee, but it was not acted upon at that time.) Dr Parker was appointed convenor of the existing historical committee, and it was given the brief to investigate the proposal. Administratively, it would be recognised as an 'Associated Fellowship' of the Baptist Union of Queensland.

The committee endorsed the idea of forming a Society along the lines of the NSW Society, and steps were taken for its formation on 1 May 1984 with the blessing of the Baptist Union. None of the existing committee members continued their involvement, except for Rev John White who acted as an unofficial patron until his death in 1993. It was also proposed that another committee (possibly the existing one) would be responsible for the Archives of the Baptist Union which were then in a process of being organised. However, no action was ever taken on this idea, and a little later, Dr Parker, who had begun working with the archival material in late 1982, was appointed Archives Officer (*for details, see separate history of the Archives*).

The aims and objects of Baptist Historical Society of Queensland were:

1. *To encourage research into the history of Baptists, especially those in Queensland*
2. *To encourage the preservation of important Baptist records*
3. *To encourage the collating and recording of Baptist history*
4. *To foster interest in Baptist history at the local church level*
5. *To assist research students at schools, colleges and universities*
6. *To publish articles and historical information*
7. *To be alert to church jubilees, centenaries and other significant anniversaries for Baptists and where possible, assist in the provision of relevant historical details*
8. *To promote care of buildings and sites of historical interest to Baptists.*

The Constitution and these aims were modelled on the successful BHS of NSW but there was one major difference – in NSW, the BHS itself took on the role of gathering historical material and creating an Archives, but in Queensland, it was decided that the Archives were the responsibility of the Baptist Union itself. However, the Queensland Society would be supportive of Archives in a practical and advisory sense. A close relationship was developed which has continued throughout.

The meeting at Windsor Road Church to form the Society featured Rev John White, who had written the centenary history, as the main speaker. The General Superintendent, Rev Brian Jenkins, brought greetings from the Baptist Union, while Rev Dr David Parker screened an audio-visual, 'Exploring Baptist Brisbane' highlighting important sites around the city.

The second meeting was held at South Brisbane Church on 16 July 1984 with the theme, 'Preparing a local church history'. Speakers included Rev Larry Holt who had recently written the host church's history, Rev John Ward ('Printing and publishing your church's history') and Dr David Parker ('Why write your church's history'); other contributors were Mr Dick Scanlan of Laidley, who shared his local church and family history experiences, and Mr Alan Miles (by tape) who had recently issued a history of the Rosalie church.

The initial plan for the Society's operation was to hold several public meetings each year, publish a journal as a channel for research and information, and generally promote historical awareness and activity in whatever ways opened up. Initial support was encouraging. The first issue of the 'Baptist Historical Society of Queensland Newsletter' appeared in September 1984. Membership, which cost only \$5 per annum, reached 20 within the first year.

However, the initial interest was short lived, and already by late 1985 it seemed that the society would go out of existence. At this point, several key people responded with a long-term commitment which ensured the survival of the group, even if ambitions were now a little more restrained. Mrs Ellen Chataway took over the secretarial post, and her husband, Rev Vince Chataway, cared for the finances.

Activities

Newsletter

The first two newsletters were produced on a typewriter, photocopied in A4 size and stapled. From No. 3, July 1985, a word processor was used but the same photocopy production continued, settling down to three issues of eight pages per year, with Dr David Parker as editor. Later on, better software and photocopying machines improved the production; this was especially the case with photographs as screening gave way to digital techniques. The name was changed to *Queensland Baptist Forum* in 1995, and by the end of 2013, 86 issues, extending to 729 pages, had been produced, all of which had been digitised.

Over the years, the journal contained a variety of articles, including news about local Baptist historical events; information and reports about BHSQ events, including notes of lectures and talks, and annual reports; book reviews; and articles providing guidance on doing history and caring for church records. Some articles were reproduced from historic material previously appearing in the *Queensland Baptist*, especially two interesting series on churches and early pastors. Many of the articles were the result of the research of members and friends, some of which later appeared in BHSQ books.

The journal is included as part of BHSQ membership, but complimentary copies were also sent to Baptist Historical Societies in other states and some local institutions and libraries. A summary of the contents of each issue is posted on the BHSQ website and the entire run is available for purchase in PDF format.

Events

Several public gatherings were held in the first year or so, but this ambitious program soon settled down to three meetings for planning and discussion of historical work, and one public presentation each year. The planning meetings were held on Saturday afternoons in the hope that this timing would enable busy people to attend. They were held at the Archives, or at a church or in a private home, until after the opening of the Archives at Gaythorne in 2005 which then became the regular meeting place.

The public gatherings, sometimes called the 'Annual Festivals of Baptist Heritage', were usually organised to link in with some popular theme or interest group at a local church. The two most successful were a celebration of the anniversary of the publication of the book by pioneer Baptist missionary, William Carey, 'The Enquiry', and a celebration of German Baptist Heritage. The Carey event held on 20 May 1992, also marking the bi-centenary of the Baptist Missionary Society, filled Windsor Road Baptist Church to capacity even though the weather was atrocious and the State of Origin was on nearby! Its huge success was due in large measure to the state Department of Mission enthusing its people to mark such important events, and also to the quality of the lecture by Dr Ken Manley of Whitley College, Melbourne, Australia's foremost Baptist historian. For the German Baptist celebration, hundreds of people came to Laidley on 5 July 1986 for a very well laden fellowship meal, *Liebefest*, followed by a musical and concert program at the Town Hall, accompanied by many displays of maps, photographs and other memorabilia. It was a worthy celebration of an important and unique strand of Baptist life in Queensland, and a tribute to those representing the participating churches who organised it.

Not all of these public events were so successful – in fact the one held in August 1985 at Taringa Baptist Church focusing on the work of Queensland's first missionary, Martha Plested, was a complete failure, as was an open day in 1993 to mark the re-establishment of the Archives in its new premises. However, most achieved their aims and they covered a wide range of topics. Some were linked to events such as the heritage listing of City Tabernacle church (1984), the history of Windsor Road (1985); or to a family (such as the Brooks-Hiron family at Toowong, 1998), or an activity such as Baptist camping (Greenslopes, 1991). A workshop on family history was held at Albion in 1994; other topics included CH Spurgeon (1988), the Baptist Theological College (1989), Clifford House (Community Services) (1990), and the architecture of Baptist church buildings (1987). In some cases, the event focused on the launching of a book, such as biographies of Rev James Voller (1997), and Rev AH Brooks (1998).

The last of the Festivals of Baptist Heritage was held at Centenary church in 2002 to celebrate the extensive church planting ministry of Jireh Church. After this, the focus turned to sales tables and presentations at the Annual Assembly, sometimes linked to a book launching.

Archives support

Even though the BHSQ did not aim at creating its own Archives, it worked in closely with the Baptist Church Archives Queensland (BCAQ). The Archives exists to collect, preserve and manage the historical records and to deal with basic enquiries, while the Historical Society takes on the larger role of research, promotion and publishing.

In the early period, when BCAQ was still being organised, some of the BHSQ meetings were workshop sessions to provide practical help. Since 2005, when the Archives were set up at the QB Centre, Gaythorne, and a regular team of volunteers established, the need for practical assistance has lessened. The Archives staff, however, value the support, interest and advice of the BHSQ.

Other interests

The aims of the BHSQ were intentionally designed to be wide, in the hope that the Society could offer support to whatever interests appeared within the scope of Baptist work in Queensland and beyond. One of these areas of interest, Baptist cemeteries, was a speciality of Eric and Rosemary Kopittke who have taken a leading role in the Society. The German Baptist churches at Vernor, Mt Walker/Coleyville, Tarampa, Minden, Kalbar and Boonah as well as the church at Highfields are the only ones in Queensland to have operated their own cemeteries. The Society has taken an interest in the welfare and physical state of these cemeteries, and Eric and Rosemary have transcribed and published their Monumental Inscriptions. They also have vast experience, knowledge and contacts in Family History which they have made available to the Society through seminars, publication, research and assistance in answering queries. Another particular interest they have is 19th century German immigration, which has been a source of considerable help for the work of BHSQ.

Local Baptist Church history is another area that BHSQ has fostered. One of its first projects was to provide guidance on how churches could manage, research and present their history. This advice took the form of several Guide Sheets, a day-long seminar and a session at an Assembly, as well as answering numerous enquiries and helping to care for church records in the Archives. BHSQ people have attended some local church historical events, although many churches do not mark these events very well or notify the BHSQ about them.

Membership

When BHSQ was established in 1984, it was set up as a membership-based organisation, in contrast to the previous group which was a functional committee appointed by the Baptist Union. A vigorous effort was made to promote membership, but it was not anticipated that a large number of people would join. The main aim was to be a place where those interested in Baptist history could meet, share their work and find outlets for publication. Over the years, many of its members have been deeply involved in this kind of work, while also, in some cases, maintaining other interests. As often as possible, information about church celebrations is featured in *Forum*.

The work of Eric and Rosemary Kopittke in family history and German immigration has already been mentioned. In addition, Rev Melvin C Williams not only published several Baptist historical studies for the BHSQ, but was also an award-winning numismatist with an interest in medals and communion tokens; the latter interests revealed themselves in research he carried out on Baptist Sunday School examination awards and communion practices at Jireh and other churches. Richard Scanlan, OAM, of Laidley wrote several pieces about his local church, its aged care facility and some of its people as well as working in the wider areas of German Baptist life and German family history. Les J Ball completed a PhD in Queensland Baptist history, while Peter Whitehead wrote the history of Gordon Park church and Dr Ken Smith did extensive research on the work of the Queensland Baptist Social Questions Committee. Rev John Lane wrote on Baptists in the South Burnett and completed a loving biography of his father, Rev Sam Lane.

Changes at 10 years

After 10 years of activity, Dr David Parker handed the leadership of BHSQ to Dr Les Ball, lecturer at the Baptist Theological College of Queensland who had recently completed the first PhD in Queensland Baptist studies at the University of Queensland; Les assumed leadership at the 1984 annual meeting. The next year, Mrs Ellen Chataway also relinquished her role as Secretary after 10 valuable years in the post; Dr Pat Godman, a former missionary, who had recently completed his doctoral studies at the University of Queensland, took over this role.

19th century records preserved

Les Ball's research had covered 19th century Baptist life in considerable detail, which gave him a first-rate insight into the churches of that period, and especially the value of the documents belonging to these churches and the Baptist Union. Concerned for their preservation and access, he suggested that these ought to be microfilmed. So after a successful application to Baplink, the Baptist Union's financial arm, for a grant of \$1200, work began in 1996. Over the course of the following years, and with assistance of another grant, the Minutes and membership rolls of the major 19th century churches up to about 1920 were all filmed and produced as microfiche. In addition, the Minutes of the Baptist Union Assemblies and Executive meetings were also covered. This collection, along with the microfiches of the 'Queensland Freeman/Baptist' which had been done by John Oxley Library in the mid-1980s, proved to be a valuable asset. They were digitally scanned in 2012 making them even more useful.

Another new venture in the mid-1990s was the book publication program. Dr Les Ball initiated this development which resulted in a decision to produce modestly priced books on topics of interest for the average reader. The advent of computerised desktop publishing processes meant that it was feasible to produce books in smaller quantities; assistance was gained from Church Archivists' Society based in Toowoomba which had considerable experience already in this avenue of publishing.

The Annual Meeting held 6 November 1993 made the decision to establish a new fund and to begin work on the first publication. It would be a 40-page informational booklet called *Baptists in Queensland* which would cover the history, beliefs and practical aspects of church life, suitable for new members, students and others needing basic information about Baptist life in the State. Dr Ball wrote the chapter on Baptist history with a focus on the Queensland

story; Dr Stan Nickerson, Principal of the Baptist Theological College, wrote the chapter on Baptist beliefs; and the section on the operation and activity of local churches was penned by veteran pastor, Rev Norm Weston. Overall editing and preparation of many side-boxes and illustrations and other attractive features was carried out by Dr David Parker.

Funds were needed for the venture which were raised by special appeal. Preparation went smoothly, and the book was launched at the National Baptist Family Convention held at Griffith University on 6 January 1994 by Mr Ollwyn Abbott, Secretary of the Baptist Union of Australia. It cost \$2.50 and sales were brisk; a reprint was soon required. This volume remained popular for new membership classes and as an introduction to Baptist life. A new 'Millennium' edition was produced in 2000, which sold out completely at the Assembly where it was launched, requiring another reprint immediately. It was completely revised and issued in an attractive colour cover in 2013 with sponsorship by the Baptist Union of Queensland which distributed copies to all churches.

Leadership changes

After three years, Dr Les Ball found that he was unable to continue as President due to pressure of work in his role as Academic Dean of the Queensland Baptist College of Ministries (formerly Baptist Theological College of Queensland). So at the 1997 annual meeting, Eric Kopittke, BSc, BA, DipEd, a secondary Physics and Maths teacher, was appointed to replace him. Dr Ball made another significant contribution to the Society in 2005 when he wrote the 19th century section of the sesquicentenary history of Baptists in Queensland. He also contributed to the centenary history of the Theological College published in 2004 and wrote the sesquicentenary history of the City Tabernacle Baptist Church in 2005.

There had also been a change in secretary. Dr Pat Godman transferred to Canberra in 1996 and Rev Rod Benson was acting secretary for a short time. At the 1996 Annual Meeting, Dr Ken Smith, who taught Maths at the University of Queensland and had been active in a number of Baptist Union committees including Social Questions and the Department of Theological Studies, took over the position. Ken had already published some of his findings on the history of Social Questions in the BHSQ newsletter, and Eric Kopittke and his wife Rosemary had several publications in their areas of Family History and German immigration. Rosemary Kopittke, BSc, BA, was also appointed to the role of Publications Officer. Eric, Rosemary and Ken have remained in these roles since. Rev Keith Applegate made a significant contribution not only by assisting with one of the publications and carrying out some basic research while visiting England, but also by placing some of his office facilities at the disposal of the Society during the 1990s.

Web site

1997 was also the year when the Society gained a web page. For convenience, it was attached to Dr David Parker's personal site and carried details of activities and publications. It has continued to be expanded over the years and now has links from the Queensland Baptists website. A major website was also established as part of the Heritage Display at the Baptist World Alliance Congress held in Melbourne in January 2000; this is also linked to the main website, and has extensive information on Queensland as well as the other Australian States.

Publications

The publication program begun with the successful launch of *Baptists in Queensland* in 1994 expanded rapidly. The next book was a collection of cameos of Baptist men in 19th century Queensland written by Rev Melvin C Williams, MA, BD, BSc, published in 1995, followed in the same year by a guide on Baptist family history by Eric and Rosemary Kopittke which was used at the basis of a workshop on this topic. In 1997, David Parker's biography of Rev James Voller, known as 'The father of Queensland Baptists', was launched at the Taringa Baptist Church, a church established largely by the work of Mr Voller; this church was also celebrating its anniversary and Eric Kopittke's history was published at the same time.

Next Rev Melvin Williams wrote the history of Mission to Queensland, the church planting arm of the Baptist Union which was published in 1998. In the same year, the life of one-time Home Mission Superintendent, Rev AH Brooks was celebrated at Toowong church by the family and BHSQ. The biography, *Vision and Courage*, authored by Rev John Brooks and published by BHSQ, was launched at this event. Dr Stan W Nickerson, Principal of Queensland Baptist College of Ministries, had been working on personal material and other sources dealing with the first successful pastor of Wharf Street Baptist Church for several years; BHSQ agreed to publish his biography of Rev Benjamin Gilmore Wilson in 1999, under the title, *Queensland Baptist Founding Father*.

Mr Richard Scanlan completed his research on the Marburg church and the Tarampa church (formerly the first of the German Baptist Churches, Vernor). BHSQ published his two books in 2000. In the meantime, the family of Rev William Higlett approached BHSQ about compiling his biography. Mr Higlett had served at Toowoomba in the 1880s and then Albion before moving to NSW; he was also deeply involved in Baptist Union work in both States. His extensive and detailed diaries, scrapbooks and photograph collection had been lodged with the John Oxley Library in 1984, so the resources were easily accessible. His biography, *A True Pastor*, was launched in Brisbane and Toowoomba in 2002 with financial assistance from the family.

This collection of books formed the 'Baptist Historical Series', totalling 13 titles by 2002. Most of them were printed by Toowoomba Education Centre (TEC) which was experienced in low run, economy priced books of this kind

– most of them sold for under \$10 each. At first, TEC carried out most of the layout and graphics work, but as desktop publishing software for PCs improved, BHSQ took over more of this role, making the publications even more affordable.

Another series of publications was also established using a simple photocopy ‘print on demand’ process. These were more specialised with a lower number of sales anticipated. They formed the series, ‘Documents of Queensland Baptist History’. The first was a transcript of Edmund Gregory’s initial draft of the 1905 Jubilee history, published in 1995 as *The Gregory History of Queensland Baptists*. The second was a transcript of Joshua Jenyns’s personal reflections on early Queensland Baptist history, which appeared in 1996. The third was a collection of otherwise unpublished documents from the first century of Baptist life in Queensland, issued in 1996 as *Remember all the way*; documents included letters connected with the call of BG Wilson to Wharf Street church, William Moore’s early history, the text of the 1905 Jubilee history and some short historical outlines from the 1920s to 1940s.

Other publications in 1997 were two volumes of Monumental Inscriptions from the German Baptist Cemeteries produced by Eric and Rosemary Kopittke; they were available in both print on demand format and in microfiche for the family history market. Another specialised publication was a compilation by Rev Keith Applegate and Dr David Parker of information about Baptist archives, historical societies and other institutions around Australia, with bibliographies and listings of Baptist periodicals in Australian libraries. This *National Guide to Australian Baptist Resources and Services* was first published in 1995, revised in 1998 and again in 2012; it also went on-line in 1999 and updated in 2013.

This large number of publications was supplemented by the earlier two-volume history of Baptist camping in Queensland written by Mrs Joan Maxwell under commission of the Camping Ministries department of the Baptist Union (1991 and 1993), and Rev John White’s history of Baptists up to 1997, *A Fellowship of Service*. BHSQ members and friends also published some of their own work, including Rev John Lane, Mr Peter Whitehead (on Gordon Park church) and Laurie Wolter (Kalbar Church).

Mr RW (Bill) Hughes, who had become part of the Archives team in 2008, used his excellent research and writing skills to add to the BHSQ publications. He had already written about the Canberra church of which he had been a member for many years. In 2009, he also published a biography of the distinguished Baptist minister and Chaplain, Rev Harold George Hackworthy, which became a part of the BHSQ catalogue. Turning his attention to Queensland interests, Bill produced a number of monographs which focused on little known features of Baptist life. These included the history of the Senior Girls’ Missionary Union, Deagon Mission Church, and especially the Edward Street Church, formed in 1864, and developments within the Wharf Street church. He also contributed sections to other BHSQ publications at the time, especially the Central Queensland project, and wrote the centenary history of the Warwick church in 2012, and the history of City Tabernacle’s women’s hostel, Willara House, in 2013, both under assignment.

A specialist topic was tackled with the launch in 2009 of the small volume, *Women who made a Difference*. Ever since Rev M Williams’s book, *Cameos of Baptist Men* had appeared, the question of the role of women in Queensland Baptist life had arisen. The problem was that information about women in the 19th century was often difficult to find. Eventually, it was decided to cover the entire period and short biographies of 24 women who had made a significant contribution to the church locally and elsewhere were compiled. The project was launched at Clayfield Baptist Church in September 2007 by Miss Rosalind Gooden, a veteran Baptist missionary who was researching the role of women in the early life of the Australian Baptist Mission; she was supported by Mrs Lorraine Walker, the first and only female President of the Baptist Union of Queensland. The 80-page book was launched at a function at Brookfield Village on 2 May 2009, by Ruth Elvery, wife of the President of the Baptist Union and daughter of one of the subjects in the book.

Together with other books to be mentioned later, BHSQ has produced 23 publications, some of which are also available in e-pub format on-line. Editing and for most of the later ones, formatting and layout has been done in-house, without the benefit of qualified graphics designers. Some have sold well, including the German church histories, Baptists in Queensland and the Higlett book, but there has been a disappointing response to others. The Society has never been able to attract expert help with marketing of its books and has relied on promotion through Baptist Union publications, Assemblies and the Society’s webpage, as well as word of mouth.

Celebrations

United Evangelical Church

The BHSQ was occupied in the late 1990s and into the new century with a series of significant celebrations. The first of these was 150th anniversary of the arrival of the three migrant ships organised by Dr John Dunmore Lang – the *Fortitude*, *Chaseley* and *Lima*. Many of the passengers on these ships were Baptists, and they with other devout evangelical Christians made a strong positive contribution to Queensland’s public and church life. Rev Charles Stewart, the chaplain on the first of the ships, *Fortitude*, was a Baptist and he became the minister of the United Evangelical Church (UEC) which was formed by the Baptist, Congregational and some of the Presbyterians upon arrival. This church was the forerunner of these three denominations. As such, its crucial role had been warmly acknowledged but there had not been much detailed knowledge of its life or of the contribution of its minister, who was in fact, the first Baptist minister in Queensland. (Mr and Mrs James Swan, proprietor of the *Moreton Bay Courier*, were the first known Baptists, arriving in 1846.)

In the late 1990s, it was decided to approach the other denominations to arrange a celebration marking the sesquicentenary of the arrival of the Lang ships. Dr David Parker also began to research the story of the UEC and Rev Charles Stewart. The celebration was held on 1 May 1999 consisting of a dinner and commemorative service at Ann Street Presbyterian Church. Dr Parker's research uncovered fascinating details about the important ministry of Charles Stewart and others connected with the church. This information was published in a detailed study, *Strange Bedfellows: Rev. Charles Stewart Brisbane's First Baptist Minister and the United Evangelical Church* (1998). A shorter version of this story was also published as *Fortitude*, and included one of the presentations at the celebration focusing on the vision of Rev Dr J D Lang for Moreton Bay. An offshoot of the research on the UEC was more information about the founder of the Ipswich Baptist church, Rev Thomas Deacon and his son, William; this story was published in 'print on demand' format.

Part of the UEC celebration was the erection of a plaque on the site of the church in William Street to mark the 148th anniversary of its opening 13 April 1851, timed to the same date and hour. Another plaque was erected at the site of the first German Baptist Church at Vernor in 2004, thanks to the energetic work of Mr RA Scanlan, OAM, who researched the site and made arrangements for the provision of the plaque itself. Marking of historic sites was part of the aims of the BHSQ, but so far no other plaques have been erected, although extensive work has been done in locating and recording other sites, such as the Edward Street Church in Brisbane and many sites in Rockhampton and other places around the State.

Queensland Baptist College

Another significant celebration was the centenary of the founding of the Queensland Baptist College which took place in 2004, although the BHSQ was not directly involved. A history was produced by Dr Les Ball and Dr Stan Nickerson.

Baptists in Queensland

The most significant year for celebrations was 2005 which marked the sesquicentenary of the first Baptist church, now known as the City Tabernacle. This church held its own celebrations and Dr Les Ball, a member of the church, wrote its history for the occasion. However, as this was also beginning of Baptist work in the Colony, it was appropriate for the whole denomination to mark the occasion. In response to a request from the Baptist Union for ideas on projects which could be supported by a special sesquicentenary fund, BHSQ suggested a Baptist Studies Centre or scholarships for theological students from non-European backgrounds or for those wanting to work amongst marginalised groups. There was no progress on these ideas, but the Baptist Union arranged some celebrations of the event. The BHSQ decided that its project would be the publication of a new history. The previous one, *A Fellowship of Service*, had been published almost 30 years previously and marked the centenary of the formation of the Union (then known as the Baptist Association).

Work began early and the project was divided into three sections – the 19th century, the 20th century up to the end of World War II, and the current period. Dr Les Ball, the acknowledged authority on the first period, agreed to work on that section, Dr Stan Nickerson put his PhD research on the College to good effect with the second section; Dr David Parker wrote the final section, as well as being general editor. A grant of \$2000 was obtained from Baplink and work on the 200-page book proceeded. It was the largest of the BHSQ books to date and the first with a full colour cover; there were dozens of black and white illustrations and many feature pages with additional information. Titled, *Pressing on with the Gospel*, it was launched at the Convention on 2 September 2005 by Mrs Gwen Milne, President of the Baptist Union of Australia (her late husband had launched the first BHSQ book in 1994). The book was well received, but sales were very disappointing.

Other churches – Ipswich, Rockhampton

With 2005 marking the beginning of Baptist work in Queensland, the next stage was the celebration of the origins of the churches which began in the years following. The next was Ipswich; BHSQ participated in the launch of its history, written by long time member, Dr Les Sands and descendant of one of the Lang ships' pioneers. Jireh (Gipps St, Fortitude Valley) was the next church but it ceased to operate in 1978, so the next one due for a 150th celebration was Rockhampton, in 2012. The Baptist Union held its annual convention there to mark the occasion. BHSQ decided to publish a history of all the churches that had existed over the years in Rockhampton, and to cover the entire central Queensland region extending south to Gladstone and Boyne Island and west to Longreach. This 200-page book, *Something more than Gold* (No 17 in the Baptist Historical Series, the latest), also with an attractive colour cover, and many photographs and maps, was launched at the 2012 Convention. Once again, sales were not up to expectations. The next church to reach 150 years of life is Annerley, which commenced in 1865 as the Fairfield Baptist Church, a project of the Grimes family who lived in the area and later associated with the Vulture Street South Brisbane church (now Church@TheGabba).

Current programs

Over its 30-year history to date, BHSQ has handled hundreds of enquiries and embarked on a wide range of projects. In serving the denomination in this way, it has benefitted from its dedicated membership, some of whom have

maintained their support for most of the years of the Society's history; some worked in the background, while others have been faithful in providing financial and moral support. Sadly some of the most active have died, including Rev V Chataway, BD; Rev M C Williams, BSc, BD, MA; Dick Scanlan, OAM, and his wife Doris; and DJ Adam, MBE. Others have ceased active involvement due to age, or have moved away.

Sales of books have sometimes been encouraging with *Baptists in Queensland* the best of all, and volumes on the German churches of Tarampa and Marburg, *Women who made a Difference* and the Higlett biography also being strong sellers; others have been disappointing, failing to pay their way.

The Society has also benefitted from some outside financial support. Baplink's assistance for microfilming of records in the 1990s provided significant encouragement, while its help with the sesquicentenary history was also important. One member also made a generous donation which enabled the Central Queensland history to appear. With its full establishment as an integral part of the Baptist Union of Queensland administration after the move to Gaythorne in 2005, some of the most important funding and organisational arrangements of the Baptist Church Archives were assured. Similarly, with the development of a small but enthusiastic team of volunteers working in the Archives, regular queries and projects can be handled effectively and promptly, thus cementing the link between BHQ and the Archives.

Membership of BHQ has not been large, never exceeding about 20 active members (although there were more on the mailing list), but as Rev John E White stated at the beginning, the aim should not be large numbers but dedicated members. Nevertheless, as the generations move on, there is an urgent need for renewal if the challenges of the future are to be met and the charter of the Society is to be fulfilled. Without any marketing expertise available to the Society, promotion of its work has not been easy. It has mainly been restricted to internal avenues such as the *Queensland Baptist* magazine and official mail-outs. Displays and sales tables, with occasional book launches at the annual Assemblies or Conventions, provided some good contacts, but now that these events do not attract the attendance or interest they once enjoyed, this valuable opportunity for meeting church members and leaders has practically vanished. Good responses are often obtained from the regular column in the 'qb magazine'.

One initiative taken in 2004 to maintain the relevance of the Society was to adopt a new 'trading name' – 'Baptist Heritage Queensland'. Then in 2006, an essay competition was established in conjunction with the biennial Baptist History course at Malyon College; the student submitting the essay judged by the course lecturer to be the best is awarded a sum of \$100, some books from the BHQ list and complimentary membership for a year. So far the following were the winners: Darren Clark, Faith Giovas, Anne Klose, and Matthew Littlefield and Tim Lucas (joint). Their essays have been published in *Forum*.

Significant changes are also taking place in the heritage and historical records environment which present further challenges for historical societies and Archives. One of these is the need for more record keeping because of governmental legislation, or the need to manage risk in the context of legal responsibilities. The most challenging, however, is the transition to digital records. Thanks to good links with Archive Digital Books, BHQ has taken substantial steps in this process. For example, starting from 2005, it has digitised large runs of the *Queensland Baptist* magazine and the Baptist Union of Queensland Yearbooks, with plans to bring these collections right up to date. Minutes, previously microfilmed, have also been digitised, while strong efforts have been undertaken through the Baptist Archives to acquire digital versions of many other records and publications, and also to establish a full digital archival system for current Baptist Union of Queensland records such as emails, minutes and reports; the official Baptist Union promotional publication, 'qb magazine', has been archived in digital form since 2006. The BHQ Guide Sheets have been expanded to cover relevant aspects of digital archiving.

BHQ has also continued to assist some churches with their historical projects. These consist mainly of anniversary celebrations which may call for information, documents or photographs for displays and sometimes assistance with writing and publishing a history. However, there has not been as much development in this area as anticipated. Some years earlier there had been a small but noticeable trend for churches to seek assistance with historical aspects of their church when undergoing a consultancy with the Baptist Union team; unfortunately, some of the histories produced in that context were superficial and hasty, and there has been little if any follow on since.

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work began on digitally scanning the paper instead. The project was taken on by Archive Digital Books Australia, based in South Australia, of which Rosemary Kopittke was the Queensland representative. The first batch was available by the end of the year and initial use showed its great potential.

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The vision

With such great transitions taking place in Baptist life in Queensland as well as in the broader church world, there is an increasing need for an understanding of the path that Baptists have taken. There are many important issues to study, and documents and information to be collected. So BHQ stands ready at this point in its history to maintain its traditional aim of preserving, promoting and publishing our heritage.

On-line

1997 was also the year when the Society gained a web page. For convenience, it was attached to Dr David Parker's personal site and carried details of activities and publications. It has continued to be expanded over the years and now has links from the Queensland Baptists website. A major website was also established as part of the Heritage Display at the Baptist World Alliance Congress held in Melbourne in January 2000; this is also linked to the main website, and has extensive information on Queensland as well as the other Australian States.

Publications

The publication program begun with the successful launch of *Baptists in Queensland* in 1994 expanded rapidly. The next book was a collection of cameos of Baptist men in 19th century Queensland written by Rev Melvin C Williams, MA, BD, BSc, published in 1995, followed in the same year by a guide on Baptist family history by Eric and Rosemary Kopittke which was used at the basis of a workshop on this topic. In 1997, David Parker's biography of Rev James Voller, known as 'The father of Queensland Baptists', was launched at the Taringa Baptist Church, a church established largely by the work of Mr Voller; this church was also celebrating its anniversary and Eric Kopittke's history was published at the same time.

Next Rev Melvin Williams wrote the history of Mission to Queensland, the church planting arm of the Baptist Union, which was published in 1998. In the same year, the life of one-time Home Mission Superintendent, Rev AH Brooks was celebrated at Toowong church by the family and BHSQ. The biography, *Vision and Courage*, authored by Rev John Brooks and published by BHSQ, was launched at this event. Dr Stan W Nickerson, Principal of Queensland Baptist College of Ministries, had been working on personal material and other sources dealing with the first successful pastor of Wharf Street Baptist Church for several years; BHSQ agreed to publish his biography of Rev Benjamin Gilmore Wilson in 1999, under the title, *Queensland Baptist Founding Father*.

Mr Richard Scanlan completed his research on the Marburg church and the Tarampa church (formerly the first of the German Baptist Churches, Vernor). BHSQ published his two books in 2000. In the meantime, the family of Rev William Higlett approached BHSQ about compiling his biography. Mr Higlett had served at Toowoomba in the 1880s and then Albion before moving to NSW; he was also deeply involved in Baptist Union work in both States. His extensive and detailed diaries, scrapbooks and photograph collection had been lodged with the John Oxley Library in 1984, so the resources were easily accessible. His biography, *A True Pastor*, was launched in Brisbane and Toowoomba in 2002 with financial assistance from the family.

This collection of books formed the 'Baptist Historical Series', totalling 13 titles by 2002. Most of them were printed by Toowoomba Education Centre (TEC) which was experienced in low run, economy priced books of this kind – most of them sold for under \$10 each. At first, TEC carried out most of the layout and graphics work, but as desktop publishing software for PCs improved, BHSQ took over more of this role, making the publications even more affordable.

Another series of publications was also established using a simple photocopy 'print on demand' process. These were more specialised with a lower number of sales anticipated. They formed the series, 'Documents of Queensland Baptist History'. The first was a transcript of Edmund Gregory's initial draft of the 1905 Jubilee history, published in 1995 as *The Gregory History of Queensland Baptists*. The second was a transcript of Joshua Jenyns's personal reflections on early Queensland Baptist history, which appeared in 1996. The third was a collection of otherwise unpublished documents from the first century of Baptist life in Queensland, issued in 1996 as *Remember all the way*; documents

included letters connected with the call of BG Wilson to Wharf Street church, William Moore's early history, the text of the 1905 Jubilee history and some short historical outlines from the 1920s to 1940s.

Other publications in 1997 were two volumes of Monumental Inscriptions from the German Baptist Cemeteries produced by Eric and Rosemary Kopittke; they were available in both print on demand format and in microfiche for the family history market. Another specialised publication was a compilation by Rev Keith Applegate and Dr David Parker of information about Baptist archives, historical societies and other institutions around Australia, with bibliographies and listings of Baptist periodicals in Australian libraries. This *National Guide to Australian Baptist Resources and Services* was first published in 1995, revised in 1998 and again in 2012; it also went on-line in 1999 and updated in 2013.

This large number of publications was supplemented by the earlier two-volume history of Baptist camping in Queensland written by Mrs Joan Maxwell under commission of the Camping Ministries department of the Baptist Union (1991 and 1993), and Rev John White's history of Baptists up to 1997, *A Fellowship of Service*. BHSQ members and friends also published some of their own work, including Rev John Lane, Mr Peter Whitehead (on Gordon Park church) and Laurie Wolter (Kalbar Church).

Mr RW (Bill) Hughes, who had become part of the Archives team in 2008, used his excellent research and writing skills to add to the BHSQ publications. He had already written about the Canberra church of which he had been a member for many years. In 2009, he also published a biography of the distinguished Baptist minister and Chaplain, Rev Harold George Hackworthy, which became a part of the BHSQ catalogue. Turning his attention to Queensland interests, Bill produced a number of monographs which focused on little known features of Baptist life. These included the history of the Senior Girls' Missionary Union, Deagon Mission Church, and especially the Edward Street Church, formed in 1864, and developments within the Wharf Street church. He also contributed sections to other BHSQ publications at the time, especially the Central Queensland project, and wrote the centenary history of the Warwick church in 2012, and the history of City Tabernacle's women's hostel, Willara House, in 2013, both under assignment.

A specialist topic was tackled with the launch in 2009 of the small volume, *Women who made a Difference*. Ever since Rev M Williams's book, *Cameos of Baptist Men* had appeared, the question of the role of women in Queensland Baptist life had arisen. The problem was that information about women in the 19th century was often difficult to find. Eventually, it was decided to cover the entire period and short biographies of 24 women who had made a significant contribution to the church locally and elsewhere were compiled. The project was launched at Clayfield Baptist Church in September 2007 by Miss Rosalind Gooden, a veteran Baptist missionary who was researching the role of women in the early life of the Australian Baptist Mission; she was supported by Mrs Lorraine Walker, the first and only female President of the Baptist Union of Queensland. The 80-page book was launched at a function at Brookfield Village on 2 May 2009, by Ruth Elvery, wife of the President of the Baptist Union and daughter of one of the subjects in the book.

Together with other books to be mentioned later, BHSQ has produced 23 publications, some of which are also available in e-pub format on-line. Editing and for most of the later ones, formatting and layout has been done in-house, without the benefit of qualified graphics designers. Some have sold well, including the German church histories, *Baptists in Queensland* and the Higlett book, but there has been a disappointing response to others. The Society has never been able to attract expert help with marketing of its books and has relied on promotion through Baptist Union publications, Assemblies and the Society's webpage, as well as word of mouth.

Celebrations

United Evangelical Church

The BHSQ was occupied in the late 1990s and into the new century with a series of significant celebrations. The first of these was 150th anniversary of the arrival of the three migrant ships organised by Dr John Dunmore Lang – the *Fortitude*, *Chaseley* and *Lima*. Many of the passengers on these ships were Baptists, and they with other devout evangelical Christians made a strong positive contribution to Queensland's public and church life. Rev Charles Stewart, the chaplain on the first of the ships, *Fortitude*, was a Baptist and he became the minister of the United Evangelical Church (UEC) which was formed by the Baptist, Congregational and some of the Presbyterians upon arrival. This church was the forerunner of these three denominations. As such, its crucial role had been warmly acknowledged but there had not been much detailed knowledge of its life or of the contribution of its minister, who was in fact, the first Baptist minister in Queensland. (Mr and Mrs James Swan, proprietor of the *Moreton Bay Courier*, were the first known Baptists, arriving in 1846.)

In the late 1990s, it was decided to approach the other denominations to arrange a celebration marking the sesquicentenary of the arrival of the Lang ships. Dr David Parker also began to research the story of the UEC and Rev Charles Stewart. The celebration was held on 1 May 1999 consisting of a dinner and commemorative service at Ann Street Presbyterian Church. Dr Parker's research uncovered fascinating details about the important ministry of Charles Stewart and others connected with the church. This information was published in a detailed study, *Strange Bedfellows: Rev. Charles Stewart Brisbane's First Baptist Minister and the United Evangelical Church* (1998). A shorter version of this story was also published as *Fortitude*, and included one of the presentations at the celebration focusing on the vision of Rev Dr J D Lang for Moreton Bay. An offshoot of the research on the UEC was more information about the

founder of the Ipswich Baptist church, Rev Thomas Deacon and his son, William; this story was published in 'print on demand' format.

Part of the UEC celebration was the erection of a plaque on the site of the church in William Street to mark the 148th anniversary of its opening 13 April 1851, timed to the same date and hour. Another plaque was erected at the site of the first German Baptist Church at Vernor in 2004, thanks to the energetic work of Mr RA Scanlan, OAM, who researched the site and made arrangements for the provision of the plaque itself. Marking of historic sites was part of the aims of the BHSQ, but so far no other plaques have been erected, although extensive work has been done in locating and recording other sites, such as the Edward Street Church in Brisbane and many sites in Rockhampton and other places around the State.

Queensland Baptist College

Another significant celebration was the centenary of the founding of the Queensland Baptist College which took place in 2004, although the BHSQ was not directly involved. A history was produced by Dr Les Ball and Dr Stan Nickerson.

Baptists in Queensland

The most significant year for celebrations was 2005 which marked the sesquicentenary of the first Baptist church, now known as the City Tabernacle. This church held its own celebrations and Dr Les Ball, a member of the church, wrote its history for the occasion. However, as this was also beginning of Baptist work in the Colony, it was appropriate for the whole denomination to mark the occasion. In response to a request from the Baptist Union for ideas on projects which could be supported by a special sesquicentenary fund, BHSQ suggested a Baptist Studies Centre or scholarships for theological students from non-European backgrounds or for those wanting to work amongst marginalised groups. There was no progress on these ideas, but the Baptist Union arranged some celebrations of the event. The BHSQ decided that its project would be the publication of a new history. The previous one, *A Fellowship of Service*, had been published almost 30 years previously and marked the centenary of the formation of the Union (then known as the Baptist Association).

Work began early and the project was divided into three sections – the 19th century, the 20th century up to the end of World War II, and the current period. Dr Les Ball, the acknowledged authority on the first period, agreed to work on that section, Dr Stan Nickerson put his PhD research on the College to good effect with the second section; Dr David Parker wrote the final section, as well as being general editor. A grant of \$2000 was obtained from Baplink and work on the 200-page book proceeded. It was the largest of the BHSQ books to date and the first with a full colour cover; there were dozens of black and white illustrations and many feature pages with additional information. Titled, *Pressing on with the Gospel*, it was launched at the Convention on 2 September 2005 by Mrs Gwen Milne, President of the Baptist Union of Australia (her late husband had launched the first BHSQ book in 1994). The book was well received, but sales were very disappointing.

Other churches – Ipswich, Rockhampton

With 2005 marking the beginning of Baptist work in Queensland, the next stage was the celebration of the origins of the churches which began in the years following. The next was Ipswich; BHSQ participated in the launch of its history, written by long-time member, Dr Les Sands and descendant of one of the Lang ships' pioneers. Jireh (Gipps St, Fortitude Valley) was the next church but it ceased to operate in 1978, so the next one due for a 150th celebration was Rockhampton, in 2012. The Baptist Union held its annual convention there to mark the occasion. BHSQ decided to publish a history of all the churches that had existed over the years in Rockhampton, and to cover the entire central Queensland region extending south to Gladstone and Boyne Island and west to Longreach. This 200-page book, *Something more than Gold* (No 17 in the Baptist Historical Series, the latest), also with an attractive colour cover, and many photographs and maps, was launched at the 2012 Convention. Once again, sales were not up to expectations. The next church to reach 150 years of life is Annerley, which commenced in 1865 as the Fairfield Baptist Church, a project of the Grimes family who lived in the area and later associated with the Vulture Street South Brisbane church (now Church@TheGabba).

Current programs

Over its 30-year history to date, BHQ has handled hundreds of enquiries and embarked on a wide range of projects. In serving the denomination in this way, it has benefitted from its dedicated membership, some of whom have maintained their support for most of the years of the Society's history; some worked in the background, while others have been faithful in providing financial and moral support. Sadly some of the most active have died, including Rev V Chataway, BD; Rev M C Williams, BSc, BD, MA; Dick Scanlan, OAM, and his wife Doris; and DJ Adam, MBE. Others have ceased active involvement due to age, or have moved away.

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30th Anniversary

The 30th anniversary of BHQ was celebrated in style with a function on 31 May 2014 at the QB Centre, featuring a panel of speakers, Archives' displays and a cake! The event was titled 'Tracks, Trends, Trophies' and the panel consisted of a range of senior Baptists sharing their reflections on various aspects of Baptist life. The speakers were Mrs Ruth Elvery, Mrs Lorraine Walker, Rev Peter Bernas and Rev Dr Stan Nickerson. The displays included a hand-corrected CH Spurgeon sermon manuscript, a copy of the first available report of the Wharf St Baptist Church and a colourful illuminated address in honour of an early pastor at Sandgate church. Digital records and photographs also featured in the display.

Attendance was encouraging and there was some positive response from the event resulting in increased interest in the work of BHQ which gave some momentum as the organisation moved into the next stage of its history.

Organisational life

As the Society moved into the next phase of its life, it was led by Eric Kopittke as chair and Dr Ken Smith as secretary/treasurer, but Ken's contribution was to conclude all too soon. On the very day he was re-elected again at the annual meeting in November 2014, he was taken ill. He passed away on 4 March 2015. He had been an enthusiastic supporter of the work and had contributed in many ways to its activities. Dr Anne Klose, who had recently gained her PhD from the University of Queensland in the area of Baptist studies, was appointed secretary but relinquished the post after a year. Mr Bill Hughes, who had retired to Brisbane from Canberra a few years earlier and was a valuable member of the Archives team, took on the role. Meanwhile, the treasurer's position had been taken in February 2015 by Miss Hope Colegrove. Her dedicated and meticulous approach soon brought the financial aspects of BHQ into good shape. The funds that had been accumulated from book sales, membership fees and other contributions were well managed and were put to good use over the years.

Another loss to the Society took place on 3 Feb 2015 with the death of Mrs Ellen Chataway. She had been an enthusiastic supporter of the work, stepping forward at a crucial time to take on the role of secretary, which she undertook with dedication and efficiency. Her late husband, Rev Vince Chataway, had been treasurer and also a keen member.

Later other losses were Mrs Mavis O'Neill on 21 Nov 2016 and Rev John Lane on 17 Jan 2019. Lance Hogg was a generous benefactor of the Society, and he ended his long and useful life on 25 Oct 2016.

Supporting the Archives

However, BHQ activities continued to develop. One of the best features was its on-going support of the Archives. This was a great encouragement to the Archivist, David Parker, who could always count on the interest of members in operations as reports were given at each meeting about recent and current enquiries and acquisitions. But there was more than moral support – BHQ contributed some useful pieces of equipment to the Archives. The first of these was a large flat-bed book scanner, costing around \$2000. This was purchased and installed in 2015 and allowed Bill Hughes to begin the major task of digitising the Archives photograph collection. Over coming years, he processed more than 1700 items, creating large digital images and indexing them in detail.

Another item purchased in 2016 was a professional copy stand so that the top-quality Canon EOS camera owned by the Archives could be used to digitise photographs and other items that were too large for the flat-bed scanner. This was an investment of around \$1000.

In 2018 these contributions were followed up by a CZUR book scanner (around \$700) that enabled the easy scanning and processing of minute books. It was an elegant piece of equipment and with fully integrated software which enabled a large number of the early Baptist Union Assembly, Executive and Council minutes to be digitised.

Finally, in 2019 an Epson flat-bed slide and film scanner was added to the line of donations (\$850). This enabled high resolution bulk scanning of the many 35 mm slides that had been deposited with the Archives, many of them from the period of the Queensland Baptist Home Mission showing church building and pastors.

The nexus between the Society and the Archives was a valuable one and was maintained strongly over the years—the role of the Archives was focused on the collecting and managing documents while that of the Society on research, analysis and publication.

Publications

One of the main aims of BHQ from its inception had been the publication of materials and information relating Baptist history and life in Queensland. Its slogan, dating from 1996, summed it up: ‘Preserve, Promote, Publish our Heritage’ and continued to be the guiding vision.

The prime on-going means for this was the newsletter, *QB Forum*, issued 3 times each year. It was a simple xeroxed A4 production of 4 sheets (8 pages) and contained articles as well as news about BHQ. Production quality had improved from the earliest days as computer software and photocopying technology advanced. It began to be produced and circulated digitally from about 2016 (requiring a new pricing system) but the paper version was retained for sharing with other societies and for legal deposit—although the latter went digital from 2017. From mid-2019, colour printing was possible due to the upgrading of the Archives photocopier. A total of well over 900 pages has now been published.

One particular series of *Forum* articles had the promise of contributing greatly to recording of Queensland Baptist life. It was titled, ‘All the Way’ and featured the reflections of senior and retired leading Baptists, pastors and lay-people. They were encouraged to set down their thoughts and memories on their own spiritual lives and ministry within the context of Queensland Baptist life (and wider) in papers of around 5,000 words. The series was styled on a successful practice of the NSW Baptist Historical Society which featured biographies of leading people at its regular meetings, later printed in their newsletter. However, response was disappointing, with only 6 widely diverse contributions appearing, before the series was brought to a close in 2021.

One of the ways in which *QB Forum* publication was intended to assist newer scholars was to publish the semi-annual Essay competition winner. From 2006, BHQ had cooperated with the Baptist theological college in offering a prize for the best essay produced in the course on Baptist history and principles taught at the college. As well as monetary prize (\$100) and copies of BHQ publications, the essay was to be published in *QB Forum* as a way of promoting the subject matter and given the winning student a voice. A total of 7 prizes were issued, as follows: 2006 Darren Clark, 2008 Faith Giovas, 2010 Anne Klose, 2012 Matt Littlefield and Tim Lucas (equal), 2014 Neil Parker, 2016 Dean Sandham, 2018 Greg Beaumont. After this, changes were made in the way the college taught the subject and it was no longer convenient to offer an essay prize. About the same time, it was learned that the BHS of Victoria was setting up a stand-alone essay competition in that state, and BHQ gave some consideration to following the same practice, although no action was taken.

Other articles in *QB Forum* covered a wide range of topics including a number focusing on the centenary of World War I (including church honour boards), the interesting Baptist optometrist, Charles Sankey Fraser, and in the midst of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, an account of how Baptists in Queensland responded to the 1919 flu epidemic. A new website created in 2021 includes the full text of earlier issues of *Forum* open for general reading.

The other main avenue of publication of Baptist history was through books. The earlier high rate of book publication slowed considerably and only 2 have been issued in recent times. The first was ‘Baptists in the Never Never’ a history of the formation of Baptist witness in various places on the Darling Downs. The title was taken from a remark of Rev William Higlett when he began as pastor at Toowoomba in 1882. He reported to his friends in England that his church, only 1 of 10 in the state, was the farthest from the coast, making it ‘the vanguard of the Baptist towards the interior.’ He said that westward for over 2000 miles extends the vast ‘never, never’ country without any Baptist church. This book was published in print-on-demand format (A4 photocopied with photos) but it had taken many years to compile. There had been difficulty in obtaining information and access to documents of many of the 13 churches featured in it, and promised assistance with information often failed to appear. Some of the chapters appeared in preliminary or reduced form in *QB Forum*, but the full publication was released in 2020 at the outset of the Covid-19 crisis, which limited its circulation greatly. It was Number 18 in the Baptist Historical Series.

The second book was a continuation of the 2-volume history of Baptist camping in Queensland that had first been written by Mrs Joan Maxwell in the early 1990s. The following 30 years had seen many highly significant changes to Baptist camping and so it was important that the story be recorded. The camping ministry, QCCC, was very supportive of the project and paid for the printing of the 80-page professionally printed book with a full colour graphically-designed cover. It was released at the 2021 QB Convention Business Day.

Another earlier publication that could be updated was Rev Mel Williams’ study of Mission to Queensland. It was issued in 1998, but after this there were important changes to the work of that organisation. Plans were in hand to update the story. This project was near completion by the end of 2021.

Bill Hughes continued his prolific researching and writing efforts in 2015 with a biography of pioneer pastor Rev William Moore. The result of in-depth research including work with a UK-based researcher and photographs from Moore’s original church, the book titled ‘“The Gardener” Pastor William Moore 1826-1906’. it was available in an attractive hard copy version and as an e-book. At the same time, Bill had also produced a history of the City Tabernacle organ and choir and often made valuable contributions to the pages of *QB Forum* with other articles. He was also engaged in an in-depth study of the Queensland Baptist Home Mission.

An interesting development occurred following Bill's research on Wm Moore. In 2019 he was approached by the family who were enquiring whether the Archives or BHQ would be interested in the valuable silver plate that had been presented to Moore when he concluded his (first) pastorate at Petrie Terrace in 1886. The family had retained it ever since but were now willing to offer it to the Baptists. The offer was gladly accepted and the plate was put on display in the Archives.

Historical Plaque Project

Earlier plans to develop a Historical Plaque Project gained considerable traction when the first plaque was placed at Toowong, the oldest existing Baptist church building still in use, on 3 July 2017. A second was installed at the City Tabernacle on 7 May 2017. Windsor Road church was next on 13 August 2017 and finally at North-East Baptist Church on 26 Oct 2020. This last example was different from the others because it represented three different buildings—the first being the former Fortescue Street church (Spring Hill) which had been relocated to Nundah as its first building in 1889 and was still standing next door (under commercial use). Then it commemorated the Queensland Baptist (War) Memorial Church which had been erected in 1923 and used until 1999; the current church was opened on the same site in 2003, under the church's new name, North- East Baptist.

A final plaque in this series related to the site of the first Baptist church building in Brisbane, 38 Wharf Street (the original location of what is now called City Tabernacle Baptist Church). This site is now occupied by a high-rise student accommodation facility. Its owners were pleased to grant permission for the placing the plaque to mark the erection of the church in 1859. The plaque was dedicated at a short ceremony on 25 May, 2021. This brought the total number of plaques organised by the Society to 7, with some other churches throughout the states also marked in some way. A special section of the BHQ website, added during 2021, is devoted to the plaque project.

The Society, or in some cases the churches concerned, provided funding for the plaques. Approaches to both the Baptist Union and to the Brisbane City Council for assistance had proved unsuccessful. There are other early church sites which could also be marked in this way, conditions pending, including Jireh in Gipps Street, South Brisbane in Vulture Street, Petrie Terrace in Judge Street, and Edward Street, opposite Central Station.

Promotion

Promotion of the activities and interests of BHQ was always an important aspect of its work, but it was often difficult to carry out. The main channels were the annual assemblies of the Baptist Union where people could be contacted directly, and through the pages of the QB magazine. Early on, the Assemblies provided good opportunities for displays of material and personal contact, but that situation changed when the assemblies were shortened and reduced to a single day. The only remaining avenue was through promotional material distributed in the delegates' bags but without a large budget to produce glossy brochures, this was not so effective, and in any case, the personal touch was lost. For one or two years an encouraging number of books were sold on the official book-table, but the effort was not sustained long. However, the stock of books did gradually thin out, except for the large numbers of the Pressing on with the Gospel and Something more than Gold which were still available (as well as many copies of the 1977 history, A Fellowship of Service, as well!)

The QB magazine offered a page or two of space each issue, so a combined Archives and BHQ contribution was arranged. These covered news items and also featured articles on a wide range of subjects, along with attractive photographs. There was little actual response from readers, but from incidental comments, it was always very positive—'I always turn to that page first!' was common. However, this medium was lost when the publication of the print version of the magazine was suspended in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Opportunities were taken to publish material on the electronic version of the magazine and its Facebook pages, but these were not well organised and there appeared to be little public exposure.

The other main channel was the BHQ/Archives webpage which came into operation in 2014. This was hosted on a private website (of the Archivist) and was shared, with some sections covering BHQ and some featuring the Archives. There were also links to this site from the official Baptist Union website as well. There was occasional feedback from visitors to the pages which made them seem worthwhile. However, it was not totally satisfactory to have the site shared on a personal page so in 2020 it was decided to use a BHQ domain name and to host a site dedicated to just BHQ and Archives. A new position of webmaster was created, ably filled by Ian McQuay.

BHQ Activities

The Society was always anxious to promote and engage with churches and Baptist people on historical matters. A couple of special occasions made this possible. One was on the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Johannes Georg Schneider in Queensland, who was probably the first evangelist amongst the German Baptist people west of Ipswich. He had died suddenly in 1878 and was buried in a lonely grave in a paddock at Merryvale, south-west of Rosewood. In 1970 the local Baptists, led by Rev RJ Paulsen, had worked with the local historical society to restore the grave and place a large cross on it. Now years later it was in need of repair again and also the family had begun meeting annually. Dr David Parker was invited to lead a service of re-dedication of the restored grave at the site on 8 August 2015. It was a largely attended event of deep significance many.

Another event focused on the German Baptists was a bus-tour organised by the City Tabernacle Seniors group on 6 Sept 2017. Dr David Parker provided a commentary as the tour passed through most of the key centres of German Baptist life, stopping for meals and meeting the local people at two locations—Gatton and Boonah.

The Future

The need for many more people to join task of recording, analysing and publishing QB history continued, and there were plenty of issues that needed attention. It is clear that BHQ will need to adapt to changing circumstances and develop more effective ways of engaging with the constituency so that those with interests and abilities may join in taking up the tasks of historical work.

Changes in the life of BHQ continued. David Parker had been involved as an active member of the Baptist World Alliance Heritage and Identity Commission since the 1990s, but relinquished his position there in 2018. He also stepped down in December 2019 as the Archivist. After some months of uncertainty about this position, the QB Board finally appointed Dr Pam Condie, OAM to the position, which she took up from 1 July 2020. A fitting farewell function was held at the QB Centre on 24 June 2020 (in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic) at which thanks to him for his almost 40 years of work were expressed by members of BHQ and the Baptist Union. Dr Condie was ‘officially’ installed ready to take over the work.

This development marked a slight change in the balance between the Society and the Archives—a new appointment after such a long period, coinciding roughly as it did with major changes in the structure and personnel of the Baptist Union, emphasised the fact that the Archives was officially a part of the Baptist Union, while the Society was a separate organisation. For the first time in 2021 the Archives submitted the annual report to the Baptist Union Business day. In early 2021 there were also changes to regulations governing the operation of Baplink, the Society’s bankers, which also highlighted the legal status of the BHQ and the nature of its operation as a voluntary membership-based organisation, not a ‘committee’ of the Baptist Union. This situation is still unresolved. The changes to the BHQ and Archives website was another indication of this changing emphasis. BHQ continued to focus on its role as fostering research and publication of Baptist historical matters.

In 2020, Bill Hughes also concluded as BHQ Secretary, being replaced on a temporary basis by Dr David Parker as acting secretary. Eric Kopittke continued his much-valued role as Chairman, as did Hope Colegrove as Treasurer. Membership was not growing with some older members ceasing to be active and others who had been only loosely connected for many years cutting their ties

A potentially difficult period occurred in 2020 when the country was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. Church life was crippled for several weeks while measures were taken to control the virus and handle those who were affected by it. The Archives also closed down, but meetings of the Society which were well spaced out continued under Covid-safe arrangements. However, with church life largely on hold, the print version of the QB magazine suspended, and the annual Assembly delayed, promotion and publicity about Society activities was limited. The effects of Covid-19 and the repercussions continued well into the following year and it was still unclear how church life would re-establish itself in the wake of the pandemic.

Another potentially serious issue arose in 2021 when Baplink advised BHQ that under current law, it could no longer hold the Society’s operational account unless BHQ came under the Baptist Union. The solution offered by the QB Board for BHQ to become a ‘service group’ involved BHQ becoming virtually a committee of the Baptist Union which would be contrary to BHQ’s long-standing nature as voluntary society, which was considered completely unsatisfactory. When this was pointed out to the QB Board, it was agreed to cancel the ‘Service Group’ categorisation, and to seek legal approval for ‘Affiliate’ instead.

The work of the Society continued as best it could under the circumstances. Dr David Parker concluded his editorship of *QB Forum* at the end of 2021. Recruitment of new members, promoting its activities, and offering its services and resources to interested people were all a greater challenge than they had been over the previous 37 years.