

Chapter 17

**THE HIGHTON METHODIST  
CHURCH AID GUILD 1925 – 1955**

On 4 September 1925, a meeting of the Highton Methodist Church ladies decided to form the Highton Methodist Church Aid Guild – although it was generally referred to as the ‘Ladies’ Church Aid’ or simply ‘Church Aid’ in the minute books.

The following women were foundation members and office bearers.

- Mrs F Morriss (President)
- Mrs Harrison (Vice President)
- Mrs Horwood (Vice President)
- Mrs E E Tippett (Secretary)
- Miss Lawry (Treasurer)
- Miss Morriss (Organist)
- Mrs N Allan
- Mrs Dann
- Mrs Grayling
- Miss Harrison
- Mrs Jasper
- Mrs A Johns
- Mrs Johns Snr.
- Miss Johnson
- Mrs Johnson
- Miss Lane
- Mrs Lawry
- Mrs Lomas
- Mrs McDonald
- Mrs H Morriss
- Mrs Taylor
- Miss Tippett
- Mrs A Wall
- Mrs N Wall
- Mrs Watmuff

The first meeting took place on 16 September 1925 and was followed by fortnightly meetings, which commenced at 3 p.m. and closed punctually at 5 p.m. The membership fee was three pence per meeting. Two members would provide afternoon tea in turn, consisting of plain tea, scones, bread and butter, and cake –

one kind only. Meetings were held in the hall (Sunday School), and were to open with a hymn and a prayer.

The ladies worked hard to help raise funds for the Church Trust. They ran bazaars, concerts, fetes, social evenings, coffee suppers and sale of gift evenings. They also purchased material to be taken home and sewn into items for sale. Parcels were packed for missions, with articles of clothing sometimes having to be mended first. Arranging the church flowers on a Sunday was another of their responsibilities. When the Lane Memorial Hall was built in 1926, they provided the furnishings and selected the colour scheme. They also raised money for the ‘piano fund’.

Members arranged catering for the annual Church and Sunday School anniversaries, as well as for their own yearly anniversary. For a number of years they were responsible for decorating the church for the annual Harvest Thanksgiving, and for providing supper at the ‘sale of gifts’ evening. The gifts were those items of produce brought to the Harvest Thanksgiving.

The Ladies’ Church Aid was of great support to the Church Trust after the tornado of 1926.

Unfortunately, there are no minute books available from 15 September 1926 to September 1931, so the *Geelong Methodist Journal* is the only source of information available for those years.

Apart from helping their own church, Ladies’ Church Aid supported City Missions each year, with donations of cash, as well as packed parcels. Some of those missions mentioned were in Fitzroy, Collingwood, Carlton and later North and South Melbourne. Travellers’ Aid was another recipient of a yearly donation, as were Overseas Missions and

the British and Foreign Bible Society. The Geelong City Mission was also supported.

When a caretaker was not employed, the Ladies' Church Aid would clean the church and Sunday School, and once had to remind the trustees that the front gate and notice board needed painting.

In 1927, a table was given to the church inscribed as 'A Gift of the Ladies' Church Aid'. (See Gifts and Memorials).

In 1931, office bearers for the Ladies' Church Aid guild were as follows.

- Mrs H Harrison (President)
- Mrs Allan (Vice President)
- Mrs Tippett (Vice President)
- Miss L Cargeeg (Secretary)
- Miss V Harrison (Secretary)
- Miss E Lawry (Treasurer)
- Mrs R J Leigh (Press Correspondent)
- Mrs Lomas (Organist)

That same year, the ladies celebrated their sixth anniversary with a birthday tea in the school hall. A social was enjoyed after the tea, with all families connected to the church and Sunday school receiving a type-written invitation and a little sachet (or sock) to put their gift in for the 'piano fund'. This was received at the door and amounted to £6.9.0.

In 1932, the Ladies' Church Aid congratulated Mr and Mrs John (Jack) Harrison on the occasion of their Golden Wedding anniversary.

The following article was found in the *Fete Chronicle*, the publication of the Newtown Methodist Pastorate Fete Committee, printed on 18 July 1932.

**"A most enjoyable time was spent on Wednesday 29 June when the Highton congregation gathered together in the**

**local hall for the purpose of celebrating the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Mr and Mrs J Harrison.**

**The gathering was presided over by the Rev. T H Indian who expressed the general regret that illness prevented the presence of the Rev. Bruce McConchie. Mr Indian referred to the kindness he had received at the hands of Mr And Mrs Harrison and congratulated them on attaining such an anniversary.**

**Mr R J Leigh conveyed warmest greetings on behalf of the Trustees and Messrs E Rankin and N McDonald on behalf of the Sunday School. Mrs Tippett spoke on behalf of the Ladies' Church Aid.**

**Mr W N Tippett, on behalf of the Church, presented Mr And Mrs Harrison with two easy chairs as tangible evidence of the esteem in which they were held.**

**In rising to respond Mr Harrison expressed his appreciation of all that had been said and of the gift that accompanied the good wishes.**

**There was a romantic flavour about the wedding cake as the top decorations had been saved by Mrs Harrison from her marriage day, surely a unique distinction for such fragile wares."**

The following article gives a descriptive observation of how the close-knit Highton congregation made their own entertainment. Reprinted from the *Fete Chronicle*, 28 August 1932.

**"On Wednesday evening 17 August the Highton Church Aid celebrated their 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by a tea for the members followed by a social, the**

entire celebrations being marked by a particularly happy spirit throughout. Mrs J W Harrison, President, and the ladies are to be congratulated on the appearance of the tables, which crowned by the birthday cake, proved most satisfactory to both eye and palate with the profusions of flowers and variety of dishes. Miss Leigh, of Ceres with Mrs J W Leigh and Miss Edith Leigh, the latter being welcomed as future residents of Highton, were present by special invitation, and a gracious act gave great pleasure to an absent member, when three ladies rose from the table to take flowers and dainties to the bedside of Mrs R J Leigh. Church members assembled towards 8 o'clock when under the chairmanship of Mr W N Tippett an enjoyable evening went gaily forward with games and items, those taking part being Misses Verna Dickens, Elsie Taylor, Mr D Watmuff, piano solos; Messrs J T Tippett, R J Leigh, recitations; Misses E Allan, D Catterall, M N Taylor, songs. Messrs. L Woodard for the Endeavour and J W Harrison for the Trustees proffered congratulations on the unselfish and loyal support continually demonstrated by the Ladies' Church Aid. The latest work for which the ladies are responsible is the installation of electric light in the kindergarten. This will provide a great convenience and not only the Trustees but all who have occasion to use the room will have cause to be grateful to the ladies for their continued practical sympathy and help."

The remaining debt on the piano fund was finally paid off on 30 November 1932.

At a meeting in June 1934 the members decided to give donations instead of holding their annual fete. In September

of that year, Mrs J Harrison resigned as President of the Ladies' Church Aid. She had held the position for eight years before resigning due to ill health. The following office bearers were elected in September.

- Mrs W Tippett (President)
- Mrs R J Leigh (Vice President & Press Correspondent)
- Mrs N McDonald (Vice President)
- Mrs J W Leigh (Secretary)
- Miss E Lawry (Treasurer)
- Mrs Lomas (Pianist)
- Mrs C Taylor (Pianist)

In 1935, Mr M Cargeeg in memory of the late Miss L Cargeeg, a former member, made a donation to the Ladies' Church Aid which enabled the guild to purchase two pedestals of Manchurian Oak, as well as a pair of large brass vases with the donation, all of which were dedicated in the Highton Methodist Church in September of that year (see Gifts and Memorials).

The following article is reprinted courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser*, from 21 September 1935.

**"On Sunday morning, 22<sup>nd</sup> inst, a dedicatory service was held at which gifts, comprising two pedestals of Manchurian oak to harmonise with the church fittings and a pair of large brass vases, were accepted by the pastor, Rev. S Humphrey, on behalf of the Trustees, and dedicated to the glory of God.**

**The gifts were presented by the Ladies' Church Aid in memory of the late Miss Laura Cargeeg, whose life of unselfish service and kindly thought inspired a response of warm affection from all with whom she worked and worshipped.**

The Rev. S Humphrey, in dedicating the pedestals, said that according to some authorities the Ionic pillar was symbolic of strength and beauty. It was designed proportionately as the representation of the most beautiful Grecian lady. It was most fitting that these memorial pedestals should be in this form. They would serve as a reminder of the beautiful life of Laura Cargeeg, whose devotion to the work of God in the Church has been an example to all. He was glad to dedicate them to the glory of God, and in sacred memory of Laura Cargeeg, and thanked the Ladies' Aid for the beautiful gifts on behalf of the Trustees of the church."

The birthday celebration in September 1935 was of a different format; in that it was the first year the Ladies' Church Aid invited members of neighbouring guilds to join them at a social held in the school room.

The following article is reprinted from *the Geelong Methodist Journal*, September 1935.

**"An innovation in the manner of celebrating the anniversary of the Methodist Church Aid proved most successful on Wednesday afternoon, when, instead of the customary tea, members of various guilds were invited to a social in the school room.**

**Stalls displaying a variety of gifts and farm produce, proved very popular, and sales were gratifyingly brisk.**

**A daintily decorated birthday cake took pride of place until it was cut by Mrs Lawry, the oldest member, after which it was sampled and sold in slices to augment the funds. The meeting opened with a hymn and a prayer.**

**Expressions of goodwill and congratulations were voiced by the representatives of the following guilds, who responded to the roll called by Mrs Harrison. St. John's Noble Street, Pakington Street, Ashby, Ceres, Grovedale, Moriac, Belmont, Herne Hill, and Newtown. The chair was occupied by Mrs Humphrey, who then called upon the President (Mrs Tippett) to speak, in which she extended a warm welcome to all and expressed the regret of the meeting that Mrs J W Leigh was prevented from attending through sickness.**

**The Treasurer's report was read by Miss Lawry, and Mrs R J Leigh disclosed a satisfactory balance-sheet and a year of good work in service outside organizations, and in reducing church debt.**

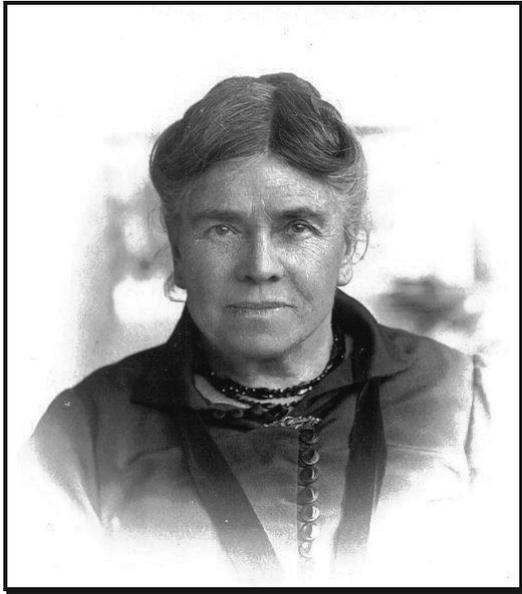
**A programme of musical and elocutionary items was contributed by Misses Jenkins and E Taylor, Mesdames Toi, Foggo and Curtiss. Afternoon tea followed, and after Mrs Humphrey had proffered the thanks of the gathering to the artists the meeting closed with singing the Doxology."**

There were discussions at a meeting in 1936 regarding the correct name of the guild. It was decided to leave the name as 'Methodist Church Aid Society' although this name never appeared in the minute books, and the guild continued to be referred to as the 'Ladies' Church Aid'.

At a meeting in April 1937, the Ladies' Church Aid resolved to make a concerted effort to help the Church Trust pay off the Building and Loan fund, a debt incurred as a result of the destruction caused by the tornado of 1926. They did this in their usual way with concerts, coffee suppers, bazaars and stalls.

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At a meeting on 1 December 1937, Ladies' Church Aid members observed a minute of silence in memory of a much loved past president, Mrs Harriet Ellen Harrison, who passed away on 9 November 1937.



*Above: Mrs Harriet Ellen Harrison (nee Johns). Photo provided courtesy of Mrs F Lomas.*

Also in 1937, the Ladies' Church Aid bought new Methodist hymn books (printed in 1933, the year of Methodist Union in England), for use in the Highton Church. The old hymn books were donated to the Moriac Rail Church.

In 1938 the Ladies' Church Aid donated a table to the church in memory of Mrs Harriet Harrison. The inscription reads: 'The Ladies' Church Aid, in memory of Harriet Ellen Harrison, their president for many years' (see Gifts and Memorials).

On 14 September 1938 a special meeting was called to make arrangements for the catering of the Thanksgiving Service to be held that evening, when the debt of the church was finally cleared after the tornado of 1926. The hall was arranged and decorated.

Birthday anniversaries of the Ladies' Church Aid were now being celebrated by inviting other guilds to participate. These included Noble Street, Pakington Street, Ashby, Herne Hill, Ceres, Moriac, Newtown, Belmont and South Geelong.

Minute books are missing from September 1938 to February 1945.

The following article was found in *The Geelong Methodist Journal* in 1942.

**"Highton has rendered special aid to the 'Padres' Auxiliary' and association of Methodist ladies which has meant a great deal to the Chaplains serving overseas. A new opportunity has arisen because of the coming to Highton of men of the military forces. Our people are making the soldiers welcome at the services and are providing refreshments at the close. Contact is being maintained with the men overseas, and all who leave for service are being presented with a New Testament."**

On 6 June 1945, the meeting decided to support the shire's effort for 'bombed out' people of Europe. Haberdashery articles and soap were sent. A social was also held, to raise funds for a camp to be run for children from 'congested areas'.

The minute books mention a Thanksgiving Service for Peace to be catered for. In September 1945, a donation was sent to the Methodist Babies' Home, and another social was run for the 'Food for Britain Appeal', resulting in food parcels being sent to Britain. Rugs were made for mission relief parcels.

The following office bearers were elected in 1946.

- Mrs N McDonald (President)
- Mrs R L Johns (Vice President)

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- Mrs R J Leigh (Vice President & Press Correspondent)
- Mrs W N Tippett (Secretary)
- Miss E Lawry (Treasurer)
- Mrs S E Adams (Pianist)

Food parcels were still being sent to Britain in 1947 and proceeds of a social were sent to the 'Peace Memorial Home' for children at Cheltenham.

In 1949 it was noted that Ladies' Church Aid members were hesitant to accept other guild birthday invitations because of the polio epidemic. Payment was made for the Women's Christian Temperance Union paper, *White Signal*.

The ladies catered for a wedding in March 1950, and on 6 September that year they celebrated their own 25<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary. On 4 March 1951, the members decided to devote an afternoon to polishing church furniture. A gift afternoon was held with the proceeds given to the 'Baxter House Appeal'. Meetings continued, always with a small gift stall at each meeting. The ladies helped with the 'Parsonage Maintenance Fund'. Mrs A Johns made posies for members' birthdays. Hospital visiting took place, and sympathy letters were sent to bereaved members. Mrs R J Leigh went to the Methodist Conference for some years, and always reported back to the meeting.

On 23 July 1952, the minute book records that tins of dripping were sent to missions. In later years, the annual anniversary afternoons included invitations to the Salvation Home League, CWA, Mother's Club and Progress Ladies Auxiliary.

On 26 November 1952 it was decided to host an afternoon for former members, to be held on 15 March the following year, to commemorate the Highton Methodist Church Centenary.

A working bee was held for the members to polish and varnish the church and Sunday School fixtures in March 1953.

The meeting on 8 March 1953 organised details for the coming Centenary celebrations. Planning included the arranging of flowers and catering for the Saturday afternoon, as well as welcoming back former members. This was also done for the Centenary services. Suppers were laid out in the kindergarten room (Lane Memorial Hall), and suppers for the President, ministers and wives were set up in the school room.

On 15 March 1953 visitors were welcomed back to the meeting, and after several items it was 'open to anyone wishing to speak'. Mrs Johnson and Mrs Tippett spoke of the early days of the Ladies' Church Aid. Their names appear on the foundation members' list. Each visitor was presented with a bunch of lavender.

A letter from the Church Trust was received on 27 May 1953, thanking the ladies for all the work and help given during the Church's Centenary celebrations. An appeal for handicapped children was supported at that meeting.

Meetings in the years 1953 and 1954 continued in a similar vein and included fundraising, catering for anniversaries, Christmas celebrations at the end of the year, and always the donations to the Church Trust, missions and worthwhile projects.

The following article is reprinted courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser*, from 26 October 1954.

**"The 29<sup>th</sup> report was read by the Secretary, Mrs N McDonald, and showed that nine boxes of goods had been sent to four church missions for winter and Christmas appeals, as well**

as money, and that church trust funds, home and overseas mission, travellers aid, Bible Societies and the Geelong Hospital were also helped.

Mrs R W Leigh, in her Treasurer's report gave details of the year's transactions which left a bank credit of £6. All office-bearers were re-elected with the addition of Mrs W Allan as pianist.

Mrs Gallacher presided over the ordinary meeting which followed. It was agreed to work at the carpeting on October 27, after a sale of gifts.

A tea for Sunday School scholars on 2 November, after the anniversary was discussed, and arrangements to cater for children and parents are to be the same as on previous occasions."



*Above: Mrs R J Leigh, a tireless member of the Ladies' Church Aid from 1928 to 1955.*

On 9 March 1955 there was a special occasion to farewell Mrs R J Leigh, who had joined The Ladies' Church Aid in 1928. Over the years she had held the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, organist and press correspondent, as well as attending the Methodist Conference for some years.

### **Ladies' Church Aid Office Bearers & Members**

#### **1934**

- Mrs W. Tippett (President)
- Mrs McDonald (Vice President)
- Mrs R J Leigh (Vice President & press correspondent)
- Mrs J W Leigh (Secretary)
- Miss E Lawry (Treasurer)
- Mrs Allan
- Miss L Cargeeg
- Mrs H Harrison
- Miss V Harrison
- Mrs Humphrey
- Mrs Jasper
- Mrs A Johns
- Mrs L Johns
- Mrs Johnson
- Miss Johnson
- Miss M Lane
- Mrs Lawry
- Mrs Lomas
- Mrs H Morriss
- Mrs C Taylor
- Mrs Taylor
- Miss Tippett

#### **1938**

- Mrs R J Leigh (President)
- Mrs M Lane (Vice President)
- Mrs J W Leigh (Vice President)
- Miss V Harrison (Secretary)
- Miss E Lawry (Treasurer)
- Mrs Adams
- Mrs Allan
- Mrs Hands
- Mrs Harrison
- Mrs A Johns

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- Mrs L Johns
- Mrs Lawry
- Miss E Leigh
- Mrs Lomas
- Mrs McDonald
- Mrs Morriss
- Mrs Philp
- Mrs W Tippett
- Miss Tippett
- Mrs Woodard

### 1946

- Mrs. N. McDonald (President)
- Mrs L Johns (Vice President)
- Mrs R J Leigh (Vice President)
- Mrs W Tippett (Secretary)
- Miss E Lawry (Treasurer)
- Mrs S Adams
- Miss A Anderson
- Mrs Angus
- Mrs Bradshaw
- Mrs Craemer
- Mrs C Dawson
- Mrs A Hands
- Mrs A Johns
- Miss M Lane
- Mrs Lawry
- Mrs Ron Leigh
- Mrs A McDonald
- Mrs Morriss
- Mrs G Palmer
- Mrs Smith
- Miss Tippett
- Mrs White

### 1950

- Mrs Adams (President)
- Mrs A Johns (Vice President)
- Mrs L Johns (Vice President)
- Mrs N McDonald (Secretary)
- Mrs White (Treasurer)
- Mrs Allan
- Mrs Blyth
- Mrs Collins
- Mrs Dawson
- Mrs Goodwin
- Mrs S Harrison

- Mrs Hill
- Mrs Knowles
- Miss Lane
- Miss Lawry
- Mrs R J Leigh
- Mrs Ron Leigh
- Mrs Murray
- Mrs Palmer
- Mrs Pescott
- Mrs Smith
- Mrs N Smith
- Mrs R Smith
- Mrs Taylor

### 1954

- Mrs Gallacher (President)
- Mrs Adams (Vice President)
- Mrs L Johns (Vice President)
- Mrs N McDonald (Secretary)
- Mrs R W Leigh (Treasurer)
- Mrs Allan
- Mrs Collins
- Mrs Dawson
- Mrs Gillett
- Mrs Hill
- Mrs A Johns
- Miss Lane
- Miss Lawry
- Mrs R J Leigh
- Mrs Murray
- Mrs Pescott
- Mrs E Smith
- Mrs N Smith
- Mrs R Smith
- Mrs Taylor
- Mrs White

Chapter 18

**YOUNG PEOPLES' SOCIETY  
FOR CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR  
1894-1949**

The Young Peoples' Society for Christian Endeavour survived for more than fifty years in Highton although only two minute books, covering the years 1894-1904, have been found in the archives. The *Geelong Methodist Journal* and the minute books are the primary sources of information about Highton's Christian Endeavour.

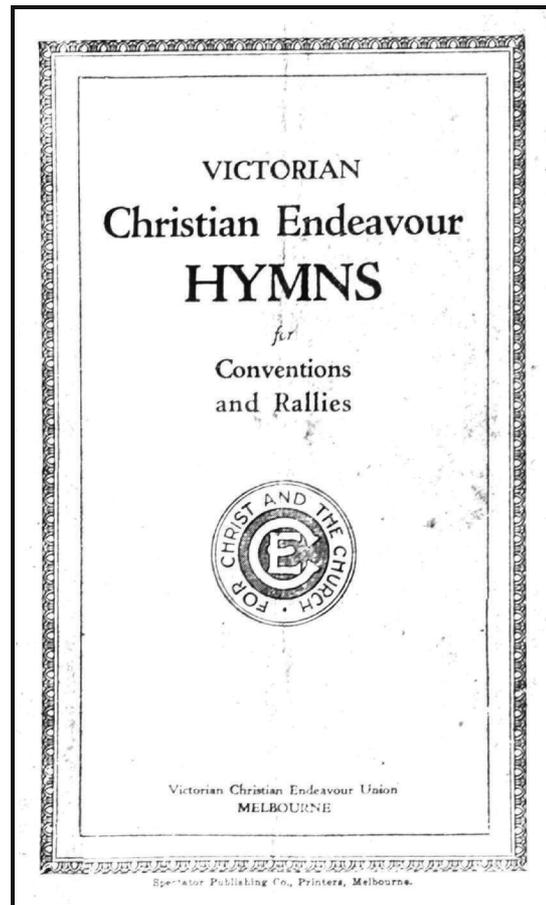
Members were nominated to the society and meetings were held fortnightly. Office bearers were elected for six months, and a syllabus was drawn up with leaders being elected for each meeting. In 1900, the following people were office bearers and committee members of Christian Endeavour.

- Miss E L Smith (Convenor)
- Mr S Johnson (President)
- Mr Robert Lane (Vice President)
- Miss A Mawson (Secretary)
- Miss E Smith (Treasurer)
- Miss Camm (Organist)
- Mr G Hobbs
- Mr R Lane
- Miss Smith

There was a different motto adopted every six months, and the motto from January to June of 1900 was 'Stand Fast in the Lord'. The following are examples of the six-month syllabus. Note: CM stands for Consecration Meetings.

- CM '*Work Everyone Can Do*' - Mr S. Johnson
- '*How To Make Home Happy*' - Miss A Mawson
- '*Worldly Ambitions*' - Miss Lily Mawson
- CM '*Responsibilities and Dangers of Young Christians*' - Mr R Lane

- CM '*Private Prayer, How, When and Where*' - Mr Lane
- '*Fear Nots of the Bible*' - Miss L Wall
- CM '*Ins. Of II Chapter of Ephesians*' - Mr W Challis
- '*Influence*' - Mr S. Johnson
- Social Evening; '*My Favourite Text*' - Miss Ellis
- CM. '*Wisdom*' - Miss Mawson
- '*The Drink Problem*' - Mr Lane



*Above: The front cover of the Victorian Christian Endeavour Hymns for Conventions and Rallies.*

The minute books show that social gatherings were held with other Christian Endeavour societies. For example on 6 March 1900, the Pakington Street Primitive Methodist Christian Endeavour Society came for the evening and several members of 'The Christian Path' read papers. Highton members also attended

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rallies and Ashby Wesleyan Church was mentioned on 20 March 1900 as one venue where ‘addresses, hymns, duets and solos were given’. Booklets for private study were obtained from the NSW Christian Endeavour Union at one shilling per dozen. Other forms of entertainment included lantern slide evenings, ‘an enjoyable hour with the phonograph’, as well as concerts and suppers being arranged. Proceeds from these events were given to the church and Sunday school. Members also decorated the church for Harvest Thanksgiving and put flowers in the church for the Sunday services.

At a meeting on 2 August 1900, it was proposed that Christian Endeavour buy a clock for the church, which was duly presented to the Trustees of the church at a meeting on 17 September 1900, and Mr Harrison ‘returned thanks on behalf of the Trustees in a few well chosen remarks’. This clock was placed on the south wall of the church and, remarkably, remained ‘in situ’ after the tornado of 1926.

Christian Endeavour members formed five committees.

- **The Lookout Committee**, which encouraged all new Christians to join the ranks of the Highton Young Peoples’ Society of Christian Endeavour.
- **The Prayer Committee** arranged prayer meetings, prepared the meeting room by lighting up the church and arranging the hymn books and bibles.
- **The Sunshine and Flower Committee** had special duties to visit the sick, taking flowers with an appropriate scripture text attached. They also arranged flower vases for Sunday school and Christian Endeavour meetings. Later they visited the Geelong Hospital.

- **The Social Committee** arranged social evenings for the congregation.
- **The Sunday School Committee** followed up children who had been absent from class.

Consecration Meetings were taken by one of the committees, while all committees were expected to make a report of their activities.

Christian Endeavour marked each anniversary with celebrations, and at one meeting it was proposed ‘That the secretary write to other societies for greetings to be brought to the Christian Endeavour anniversary to be held on 12 September 1900’.

Bible readings and study played a major part of each evening and members had to do earnest home study in order to present papers to the meeting.

The following is an extract of the sixth annual report given by Miss Annie Mawson, the Secretary of the Young Peoples’ Society for Christian Endeavour in September 1900.

“Mr Chairman and Christian friends,  
We present to you tonight our 6<sup>th</sup> annual report in a spirit of thankfulness to Christ who has kept our little band of soldiers in the faith. Those who gave their hearts to God last year have continued to grow in grace and abound in love to our Saviour.

We have remembered the words of James “Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, for if any be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in the glass”, (James 1. 22 & 23) and in remembering have sought to do all that came to our hand. We have left much undone that we could have done for the Masters’ glory and we pray daily we may become more fitted day by day to follow

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in His footsteps, that His hand may raise us and point the way He would have us go and we pray also that He may give us the knowledge and the power to bring peace to the hearts of the afflicted and to cheer the weary hours of the sick.

We are a very little band but I am glad of the opportunity to say that this same little band is of the right sort for they are always ready and cheerful to do whatever work is desired of them”.

The report noted that there were eight active members, eleven associated members and five honorary members. During the year other groups, mainly the South Geelong Christian Endeavour and the Pakington Street Primitive Methodist Christian Endeavour, visited Highton.

On 16 October 1900 a meeting was held at the Congregational School Hall. One of the topics discussed was the need to form a committee called ‘United Evangelical Campaign’ but it is unclear as to what this was, and if it ever became an ongoing cause.

Financial help was given to the Victorian Christian Endeavour Union in the form of individual donations.

On 17 April 1901, the meeting took place in the form of a ‘Letter Night’ and correspondence was read from the following Christian Endeavour Societies of Geelong: Ashby Wesleyan Christian Endeavour, Bond Street Primitive Methodist Christian Endeavour, Drysdale Wesleyan Christian Endeavour, Chilwell Wesleyan Christian Endeavour, Newtown Wesleyan Christian Endeavour, Pakington Street Primitive Methodist Christian Endeavour, South Geelong Wesleyan Christian Endeavour and Pakington Street United Methodist Christian Endeavour. There was also a letter from Mr Onions, Secretary of Naracoorte Christian Endeavour in South

Australia. Mr Onions later came to Highton to visit the Christian Endeavour on 9 April 1902.

An Easter offering was made to the Ladies’ Auxiliary for Foreign Missions. A later meeting dealt with the ‘Pledge’ and all voted for total abstinence, believing that ‘What is never used can never be abused’.

The 1901 annual report of the Highton Young Peoples’ Christian Endeavour mentioned that they had visited two other Christian Endeavour meetings during the year, namely the Fenwick Street Baptist Christian Endeavour and Bond Street Primitive Christian Endeavour.

Meetings continued fortnightly. Collections were taken up for the Victorian Christian Endeavour Union and Foreign Missions. Mr Thompson presented a communion table and flower basket to the Trustees of the church on behalf of the members of the Christian Endeavour. This bequest was financed by donations from members and by ‘going round the district selling photos of local and foreign interest’. It is assumed that these gifts were destroyed by the 1926 tornado.

In 1901, there were ten active members, as well as six associate and six honorary members. Thirteen of these were church members and nine were Sunday School teachers.

The following is an extract from the annual report given by Miss Annie Mawson in 1902.

“Our members have shown by their lives and work in God’s service that they have laid hold firmly of the opening words of our beautiful pledge ‘Trusting in the Lord Jesus for Strength!’ and it has not been denied us individually and has been vouchsafed us as a band ... One visit has

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been paid us by the Yarra Street Methodist Christian Endeavour ... Two visits have been paid by our Society to Newtown Christian Endeavour and Pakington Street United Primitive Methodist Christian Endeavour ...

During the year a Praying Band has been formed whose duties are as follows: (There are 12 members of this band). Requests for prayer are handed to the secretary and a list is given to each member who pledge themselves to spend one night a week in private prayer for these requests and we know that God is blessing our efforts and we thank Him for the glorious privilege of prayer, that His children are permitted to enjoy. Our society was represented at the Christian Endeavour Convention held last year in Ballarat and our delegate gave a 'Convention Echo' meeting, which was well attended ...

At the rally held 14 May 1902, Mr F Martin represented Highton and spoke on 'Fellowship with Christ's people'.

The members on the roll are as follows: Active 7, associate 5, honorary 5."

There was also mention made in this report that the Christian Endeavour was feeling the loss of a number of members who had moved from the district.

At the Christian Endeavour anniversary held on 24 September 1902, greetings by the following Societies were read: Aberdeen Street, Bond Street, Congregational and Noble Street. Greetings were also sent by the following Societies: Fenwick Street, Germantown, Newtown, South Geelong and Yarra Street.

During the meeting Mr Joyce, on behalf of the members of the Christian Endeavour presented the Trustees of the church with a pair of collection plates.

Mr Camm returned thanks on behalf of the Trustees.

Office bearers for the first six months of 1903 were as follows.

- Mr R Lane (President)
- Mr W Challis (Vice President)
- Miss A Mawson (Secretary)
- Miss E Smith (Treasurer)
- Miss Camm (Organist)

The following article is an extract from the ninth annual report of Highton Methodist Church Christian Endeavour, held in September 1903.

"The Secretary expressed disappointment at more people not "throwing in their lot" with the little society, although membership had marginally increased. The members roll was as follows; Active 8, associate 6, honorary 7. Three committees were still in existence.

- **Look-out & Prayer Committee.** Looking up the absentees, lighting up our meetings, arranging bibles and hymn books and inducing fresh members to join.
- **The Sunshine Committee.** They have zealously performed their work. Flowers have been taken to the sick and appropriate texts handed in, letters of condolence have been written to those who have been bereaved of their dear ones, flowers have been placed in the Church and Sunday school every Sunday and also at our Endeavour meetings.
- **The Sunday School Committee.** Duties are to visit the absentees and this has been done more regularly of late.

The members of our Praying Band have still kept true to the pledge they made, viz that we would set apart one night in the week to pray for requests.

Annie Mawson, Secretary."



*Above: Highton Methodist Church Young Peoples' Christian Endeavour, 1906.*  
**Back Row L-R:** Lily Wall, Percy Horwood, Fred Bedggood, Norman Wall, Frank Horwood & Ernest Burgess.  
**Middle Row L-R:** Gertie Camm, Ted Rankin, Ted Horwood, George Hobbs, Dora Camm & Addie Hyde.  
**Front Row L-R:** Annie Mawson, Randal Lane, Mary Lane, Robert Lane, Hilda Camm, Walter Challis & Stella Hartshorn.

The tenth annual report written on 24 August 1904, by the Secretary, Annie Mawson, was very similar to the previous year's statement, with members on the roll increasing by one. Nothing more can be found of the Christian Endeavour until 1910, when another photo was found in the Highton Church archives. Unfortunately, some of the names of the people in this photo are unknown. In the absence of minute books it can be assumed that the Christian Endeavour continued in much the same vein. When the *Geelong Methodist Journal* commenced publication in 1919, it contained information about Christian Endeavour. For example the April/July 1921 edition of the *Geelong Methodist Journal* stated that the Christian Endeavour 'was doing

well' and in April/July 1923 the journal reported as follows.

**“A very happy re-union of past and present members of the Highton Christian Endeavour Society was held on Wednesday, 20 December. It also took the form of a Complimentary Social to the Acting-President, Mr W Challis. For the past 20 years Mr Challis had been going out from Geelong on Wednesday nights, and working in the interests of the Highton young people. There was a fine attendance, which was presided over by the Rev. L Tait. Solos were pleasingly rendered by Mrs E Rankin and Miss Sunderland, and a recitation by Mr Albert Smith.**



*Above: Highton Methodist Church Young Peoples' Christian Endeavour, 1910.  
Back Row L-R: Will Rankin, Norm Wall, Oliver Lane & Les Rankin.  
Third Row L-R: Unknown, unknown, unknown, Walter Challis, Gladys Morriss,  
unknown, unknown, Win Johns, unknown.  
Second Row L-R: Frank Howard, unknown, Fred Bedggood, Annie Mawson, Ted  
Horwood, Mary Lane, George Hobbs.  
Front Row L-R: Lily Wall, Kitty Buckley, unknown, Ruby Horwood.*

The occasion was taken to show the appreciation of the members of the work done in a quiet and effective way by the Secretary, Miss Isa McGregor. The Chairman, on their behalf, presented Miss McGregor with a handsome leather suit case, and spoke in appreciative terms of her work. He was suitably supported by Messrs Bedggood, E Rankin, Johnston and Burgess. Mr Challis responded, expressing his great surprise and gratitude. Supper brought a happy function to a close.”

The following statement was printed in the July/September 1924 edition of the *Geelong Methodist Journal*.

“The Christian Endeavour of Highton is one of the live institutions of our church there, thanks largely to the splendid faithful work put in by Mr Walter Challis, who for many years has gone out to Highton on Wednesday nights, to guide the young people attending the Christian Endeavour.”

In 1924, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Christian Endeavour was celebrated with a concert and coffee supper. There were thirteen active members and seven associates at that time. The Secretary, Miss Isa McGregor presented a good report of the work done by the three committees: Lookout, Sunshine and Missionary.

## Steadfast Through Change

In the April/June 1926 edition of the *Geelong Methodist Journal*, the following article appeared.

**“Miss Isa McGregor (Secretary of Christian Endeavour) entered for an examination under the auspices of the Victorian Christian Endeavour Union. She passed with honours.”**

Later in 1926, the *Geelong Methodist Journal* reported the following.

**“The Christian Endeavour Society holds its weekly meetings and is in a very prosperous condition. The spiritual tone of the meeting is an inspiration and the members are doing real practical work.”**

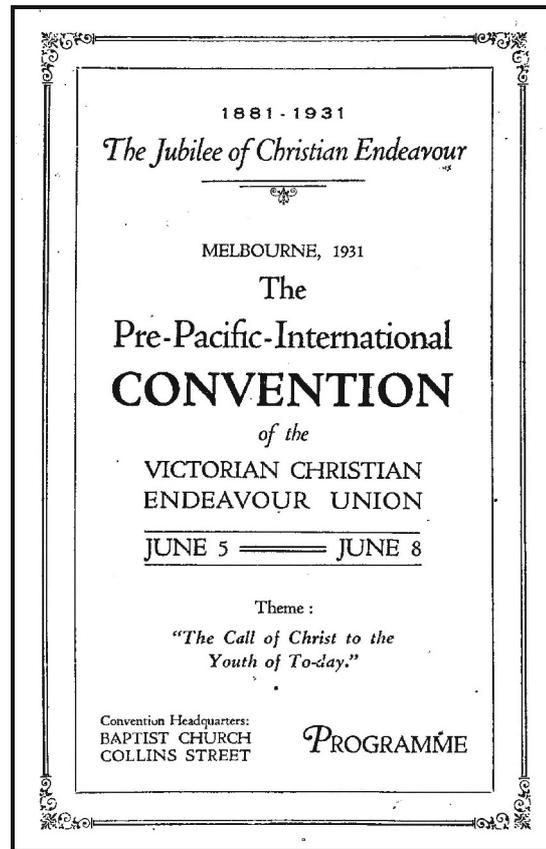
Miss Isa McGregor, who had been Secretary of the Christian Endeavour, married Mr Stan Smith on 1 September 1928. A presentation of a silver tea pot was made by Mr Walter Challis, at a kitchen tea for her. She left the district after her marriage.

In 1937, the Christian Endeavour donated a pulpit hymn book to the church.

The Christian Endeavour was still meeting weekly in 1939, and while writing about the group, the *Geelong Methodist Journal* also made mention of Miss Vera Harrison marrying Mr Norman McDonald ‘recently’, so it could be assumed they were members of the Christian Endeavour at that time. They later became great benefactors to the church.

By 1941 membership had fallen to seven regular members but the Christian Endeavour Society celebrated its 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September 1942, and an article in the *Geelong Methodist Journal* stated, “though numbers are few, grace abounds and the power of prayer is

proved”. In 1945, the Christian Endeavour met on a monthly basis ‘at the home of Mrs Lawry, whose infirmities confine her to the house, but do not prevent her from enjoying singing hymns’. It was later reported that “Christian Endeavour members deeply regret the illness of Mr Walter Challis, which has compelled him to withdraw from all Geelong activities”. As a result of his illness, Mr Walter Challis passed away on 5 May 1949.



*Above:* A brochure found in the Highton Church archives shows that Melbourne hosted the Pre-Pacific-International Convention of the Victorian Christian Endeavour Union in June 1931.

The following two articles are reprinted courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser* in May 1949.

**“CHALLIS. — On 5 May, at his residence, Yendon, Richard Walter, loved son of the late Jonas and Hepsy**

## Steadfast Through Change

**Challis, loving brother of Emily (dec.) James, Jane (Mrs Hamlin), Hepsy (Mrs Murnane), George, Charles, Edwin, Martha (Mrs Badenhope. dec.) Robert, Nash, Bernard, and Betsy (Mrs J Spruce); aged 72 years.**

The last known report of the Christian Endeavour was in 1949, and stated that they now met for an hour of Christian Fellowship, led by Mrs N McDonald at her home.

**At the Methodist Church on Sunday evening the Rev. A Bligh made reference to the death of Mr Walter Challis, which occurred at Yendon last week. The late Mr Challis had been a most active member of the church and had regularly attended the Christian Endeavour Society meetings for 50 years. He retired from the staff of Bright and Hitchcocks two years ago, and has since lived with his people at Yendon.”**

Numbers had dwindled in the Christian Endeavour and the following article was found in the August/October 1949 edition of the *Geelong Methodist Journal*.

**“The Leaders’ Meeting decided to widen the Christian Endeavour appeal for six months in an attempt to attract more to this helpful fellowship. Meetings will be held monthly in the Church from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m., and Rev. A Bligh will be in charge. It was also considered that the church should provide opportunity for activity and training for our young people and appointed Mr H J Tippett as organiser.”**

Unfortunately Mr Tippett could not fulfil this appointment, as an article in a copy of the *Geelong Methodist Journal* November/January 1949-1950 edition stated the following.

**‘The Highton Church suffered a great loss in the death by accident of Harold John Tippett, acting Superintendent of the Sunday School’.**

Chapter 19

**THE HIGHTON METHODIST  
SUNDAY SCHOOL 1900 – 1956**

Due to lack of records very little is known about the early history of the Sunday School. Until 1902 it was a Wesleyan Sunday School, but with the union of Methodist Churches in Australia that year, it became a Methodist Sunday School. Minute books for the first twenty years are missing, but four attendance roll books have been found and they provide some information for the period before 1922.

Mr Robert Lane Sr. was Superintendent of the Sunday School, for many years in the late-1800s and in the early-1900s.

Sunday School classes were held in the Sunday School Hall, (the room at the back of the church), at 3 p.m. on Sunday afternoons. In early days this was one large room, and it was not divided until 1985.

The Golden Jubilee of the Sunday School was held in October 1906 and to mark the occasion a photo of all officers and teachers was taken on 14 October 1906.

**Teachers and officers for 1906.**

- Fred Bedggood
- Dora Camm
- Mr P S Capstick
- Jack Harrison
- Beacher Hartshorn
- Ted Horwood
- Phillip Hoskin
- Addie Hyde
- Randal Lane
- Mr Robert Lane Sr.
- Emma Smith
- Ted Rankin

In May 1907, there were eight teachers in charge of up to sixty-seven scholars.

Mr P S Capstick was superintendent from 1907 until February 1909.



*Above: Mr Robert Lane's desk. Note the bell situated on top of the desk was used to get the attention of the children. This desk can be found in the former church building behind the present St. Luke's Uniting Church in Highton. Photo provided courtesy of Mr Hedley Smith.*

In February 1909, Mr Robert Lane Sr. temporarily resumed his old position as Superintendent of the Sunday School before handing over to Mr Fred Bedggood in 1910 with Mr Les Rankin and Mr F J Horwood as Secretaries. Miss Francis was in charge of the Bible Class. Mrs H Morriss and Miss Thwaites' names appeared in the attendance book. Decision Sunday on 11 July 1909, recorded that Messrs F Horwood, E Horwood, N Wall and F Bedggood delivered testimonies. Other teachers' mentioned for that year were Mr Milbourne, Mr Johnson and Miss E Lawry.



*Above: Highton Methodist Church Sunday School officers and teachers. Photo taken at the Golden Jubilee of the Sunday School on 14 October 1906.*

*Standing L to R: Ted Horwood, Addie Hyde, Emma Smith, Mr Robert Lane Sr., Dora Camm and Ted Rankin\* see note.*

*Seated on Chairs L to R: Beacher Hartshorn, Mr P S Capstick and Phillip Hoskin.*

*Seated on the Ground L to R: Jack Harrison, Fred Bedggood and Randal Lane*

*Note: \* For thirteen years Edward Walter Rankin attended Newtown Methodist Church in the morning, then cycled to Highton as Superintendent of the Sunday School. His first wife Louisa Johns was organist at the church. She died in 1906, and he married Adelaide Hyde in 1909 (pictured above).*

Children looked forward to yearly anniversaries in October and practiced singing their hymns diligently for the event, which was held in the Sunday School Hall. Prizes were distributed to scholars 'for merit during the year' and the kindergarten children each received a prize. For the 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sunday school, a grand tea was held in the Highton Recreation Hall on Saturday 4 November 1911.



*Above: The 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Grand Tea ticket, 1911, printed by H Thacker.*

## Steadfast Through Change



*Above: Highton Methodist Church Sunday School teachers and officers in 1913.  
Standing L – R: Mrs Rankin?, Will Rankin, unknown, Robert Lane Snr, Mrs Allen?,  
Unknown, unknown, unknown.  
Seated L – R: Unknown, Ruby Horwood? Fred Bedggood, Win Johns? Ted Horwood.*

There were eight teachers in 1911, and the average attendance of scholars at the Sunday School was in the 40s, but numbers increased to fifty-eight in 1912. Mr L Rankin and Mrs Allen were added to the teachers list in 1913.

By 1914, Mr J A Milbourne was Superintendent and Mr N F Lawry was Secretary. Scholars ranged from thirty-one to fifty-six per week, with seven teachers.

In 1915, the number of scholars had dropped to forty-four. In July of that year, the Secretary Mr N F Lawry was presented with a pocket book from the scholars and teachers as he was leaving 'at his country's call' to enlist in the armed forces. Miss G Morriss became a teacher in that same year.

The minister at West Geelong, Rev. T H Indian, took the Sunday School Anniversary services in 1915 and the Rev. McBride gave several instructive addresses to the scholars that year. Miss D Johns, Miss Vera Harrison and Miss E Peters appeared on the teachers list in 1916. Scholar numbers were down that year until December when they rose to forty-three, with eight teachers. Mr D Pescott conducted the Sunday School's singing for the Diamond Jubilee Anniversary in October 1916.

The following report of the Diamond Jubilee is reprinted courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser*, October 1916.

**“The Diamond Jubilee of the Highton Methodist Sunday School passed off under ideal weather conditions on Sunday and Monday. Large**

**gatherings attended the three services on Sunday. The Revs. Frederick, Williams and McBride conducted the services. The Rev. H Williams addressed himself particularly to the children at 3 o'clock. The singing of the children, assisted by a good number of old scholars, under the leadership of Mr D Pescott, was greatly appreciated by the older folk. They sang the hymns that had been used for the jubilee 10 years ago. Miss Winnie Johns, the Sunday School organist presided at the organ. On Monday evening the tea and public meeting were the most successful for many years. The following ladies presided at the tables: Mrs F Morriss and the Misses M, L and N Kennedy, Mrs Johns and Mrs Taylor, Mrs and Miss Johnston, Mrs H and Miss Morriss, Misses W and D Johns, Mrs E Horwood and Miss V Harrison, Mrs W Lawry and Misses Lawry and Peters. Mr E Rankin, an old scholar, presided at the public meeting. The secretary's report disclosed the fact that the school, as far as numbers are concerned, is on the decline. Several apologies and donations were received from old scholars. Addresses were delivered by the Revs. H Williams and McBride; recitations by Miss McBride and Mr Johnstone; solos by Mr D Pescott, Miss Hartshorn and Mr Johnstone. Votes of thanks to all concerned were moved by Mr J A Milbourne and Mr T Horwood. Several bright anthems by the children and the singing of the National Anthem concluded the diamond jubilee."**

Miss N Kennedy was the Secretary of the Sunday School in 1916, but she resigned at the end of that year and Miss E Peters was appointed to the position. In December of that year, Mr McMurdie became Superintendent of the Sunday School.

Misses Dorothy Johns and E Hughes were mentioned as teachers in 1917, as was Miss L McGregor in 1918. By 1920, Mr E Rankin was Superintendent, a position he held for 13 ½ years. Scholar numbers rose to forty-eight with seven teachers.

There was a considerable drop in attendances in August 1924, due to the influenza and whooping cough epidemic.

In 1925, new scholar names were mentioned for the first time, and this was continued until the end of the attendance book.

#### **New scholars for 1925.**

- Len Dawson
- Don Duncan
- George Duncan
- Jack Duncan
- Peggy Duncan
- Laurie Harrison
- Lindsay Harrison
- Dave Hill
- Hugh Hill
- Nancy Laycock
- Norma Wall

On 3 March 1925, the Sunday School scholars, teachers and officers were saddened by the news of their former Superintendent's death, Mr Robert Lane senior. Mr Lane had been a much-loved supporter of the Sunday School for many years.

On 23 August 1925, the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour and the Sunday School donated a framed portrait of Mr Robert Lane Sr. to be hung in the hall in his memory.

The 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sunday School was held on 25 October 1925, and was the last one to be held in the Sunday School Hall before it was destroyed by a tornado in 1926.

## Steadfast Through Change

The following coverage of the 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary was found in the *Geelong Methodist Journal*, 1926 January/March edition.

**“The Sunday School Anniversary was held on 25 October, and was most successful. The services were conducted by the Revs. L Smith, W T Hiatt and J Nall. Special Hymns were sung by the scholars, under the baton of Mr Geo. Deans, who had efficiently trained them. The tea meeting was held on the Wednesday, and though the day was intensely hot and dusty, about 150 sat down to tea. The Superintendent, Mr E Rankin, presided at the public meeting. Recitations and solos were given by the scholars, and an address by the Rev. W T Hiatt and the Chairman. During the evening reference was made to the splendid service rendered by Mr Geo. Deans in training the children, and the assistance given by Mrs Deans, and the chairman, on behalf of the school, presented them with an oxydised copper vase as a slight token of grateful appreciation.”**

### **New scholars in 1926.**

- Alf Ayres
- Isabel Ayres
- Rachael Marshall
- Rebecca Marshall.

### **Scholars who left the district in 1926.**

- Ethel Allan
- Alf Ayres
- Isabel Ayres
- Lindsay Dew

The tornado that destroyed the church and parts of Highton on 22 July 1926, was barely mentioned in the minute book but fortunately the Lane Memorial Hall Kindergarten was almost finished, so it could be assumed that Sunday School classes were held there, as were the church services. The Lane Memorial Hall was opened on 14 August 1926.

The Sunday School was rebuilt and ready for the anniversary celebrations in October 1927. As a gift to the church after the tornado, the Sunday School paid for 12 new chairs to be used by the choir. Messrs E Rankin, W Tippett, T Horwood and Miss H Morriss each donated a new chair for the kindergarten class, and tables and extra chairs were also purchased. Mr E Rankin loaned an organ to the kindergarten until a piano could be purchased.

### **New scholars in 1927.**

- Ray Horwood
- Betty Johns
- Gladys White

The following article comes from the *Geelong Methodist Journal*, 1928 February/April edition.

**“Mr And Mrs Davies, through their daughter, presented a large framed photo of the late Robert Lane, for many years the Superintendent of the Sunday School. This beautiful gift was received on behalf of the Sunday School by Mr E Rankin, the present Superintendent.”** (See gifts & Memorials)

It was never stated in the minute book, but it could be assumed that the previously mentioned photo of Mr Lane, donated in August 1925 by the Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavour and the Sunday School, was destroyed in the tornado.

### **New scholars in 1928.**

- Dorothy Boyson
- Noel Boyson
- Reg Boyson
- David Butcher
- Audrey Dawson
- Virginia Dickins
- Edna French
- Ernie French

## Steadfast Through Change

- Len French
- Vic Hornsey
- Myrtle Lacey
- Nora Lawry
- Everard Potts
- Leo Potts
- Estelle Sunderland

### New scholars in 1929.

- Dave Butcher
- Mavis Grayling
- Sylvia Grayling
- Jean Millar
- Isabel White

There were twenty-two families on the church roll in 1929, which included sixty-four Sunday School scholars with twelve teachers and officers. Miss E Lawry became Superintendent of the Junior Christian Endeavour in 1930.

The Sunday School's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary was held on 25 October 1931. Revs. F Apted, A L Sherlock and R B McConchie respectively, conducted the morning, afternoon and evening services.

The following article appeared in the *Geelong Methodist Journal*, from January/April 1932.

“Highton’s great day during the past quarter was the Sunday School anniversary. Children sang well, preachers were in good form and the congregations were exultant.

The tea meeting was of Highton excellence, and

the public meeting presided over by Mr E Rankin, the SS Superintendent, was a happy gathering. Mr Deans, as usual, conducted the singing, and altogether the anniversary was a happy time.”

Miss M Taylor became Superintendent of the Junior Christian Endeavour in 1931. Congratulations were extended to Florrie Lomas, Jack Gillingham and Frank Tippet for their success in writing winning essays on the topic of Empire Day.

*Below: The old balance sheet found in the archives of St. Lukes, showed that the Sunday School donated generous amounts to worthy causes.*

Expenditure 1929-30		£	s.	d.
Anderson Bros			6	8
Bon Accord		1	1	0
H. V. Richardson		1	4	2
H. C. Tippet			4	1
E. J. Deller			8	6
Bland & Son			8	0
John Purdie		2	0	4
W. J. Griffiths		1	4	4
W. J. Griffiths			3	2
W. J. Griffiths			9	6
John Purdie		4	18	0
J. Purdie			5	6
Donation Band Hope			10	0
Young Peoples Depart <sup>mt</sup>			10	0
Geelong Hospital			10	0
Foreign Missions		5	0	0
Home Missions		5	0	0
Protestant Orphanage		2	10	0
Livingstone Home		2	1	0
Church Trust		10	0	0
		£	38	14 6

## Steadfast Through Change

### Officers in 1931.

- Mr E Rankin (Superintendent)
- Mr N McDonald (Secretary)
- Treasurer: Mr W Johns (Treasurer)
- Mr D Watmuff (Assistant Secretary & Librarian)
- Mr W N Tippet (auditor)
- Miss H Moriss (Superintendent of the Kindergarten Department)

### Teachers in 1931.

- Miss I Baum
  - Miss K Fletcher
  - Miss V Harrison
  - Miss E Lawry
  - Miss L McGregor
  - Mr L Woodard
- Miss Melva Landry resigned that year.

In 1933, Rev. J K Arnold was welcomed. Miss L McGregor resigned as teacher. On 1 November that year, Mr E Rankin resigned as Superintendent after 13 and one half years in the position. Mr W N Tippet was elected to the position.

The Sunday School role showed there were twenty-five male and twenty-five female students, with an average attendance of thirty-five. Florrie Lomas was again successful in winning first prize in a State School essay competition on Empire Day.

### New scholars in 1933.

- Tom Green
- Arthur Grey
- Alf Johnson
- Rod Nicholson
- June Scott
- Robert Scott
- Wynne Sinclair

### Teachers in 1933.

- Miss I Baum
- Miss K Fletcher
- Miss V Harrison
- Miss E Lawry
- Miss M Taylor

- Mr L Woodard

The Junior Christian Endeavour ceased in 1934, as members were too few. Miss M Taylor resigned as a teacher. That year also saw Mr R J Leigh welcomed as a representative of the Leaders' Meeting. A Young Worshippers League was formed. Responsive reading was started in church services and children's classes were provided with a book of Psalms.

### New scholars in 1934.

- William Baum
- Max Davison
- John Cross
- Rex Hornsey
- Vic Hornsey

### New teachers in 1934.

- Mr Lindsay Nelson
- Mr L Hair.

### New scholars in 1935.

- Bruce Harrison
- Laurie Harrison
- Enid Pegg
- Flora Pegg
- George Pegg
- Joy Pegg
- Loris Pegg
- Alex Raw

### New teacher in 1935.

- Mrs R J Leigh.

In 1935, school numbers were down to an average of 36 weekly students and Mrs R J Leigh was appointed a teacher of the Young Ladies Class. Mrs M Baum resigned as a teacher, and the Sunday School was saddened by the death of Mrs S Adams, a former teacher.

The year 1936 marked the Centenary of Victorian Sunday Schools, and the scholars were given a souvenir booklet to commemorate the service conducted by Rev. Joseph Orton on Batman's Hill, on 24 March 1836. To mark the occasion there was a Centenary Picnic held at Portarlington on 8 February 1936. Mr N

Harding conveyed people to the picnic in his 1928 Chevrolet truck. That year the Sunday School had two picnics with the usual annual event held at Torquay on 25 January 1936. Ray Horwood, Edgar Taylor and Len Lomas all won races and received prizes.

Young Worshipers League scholars were required to attend at least 45 Sunday services in the year before they could receive a certificate of merit.

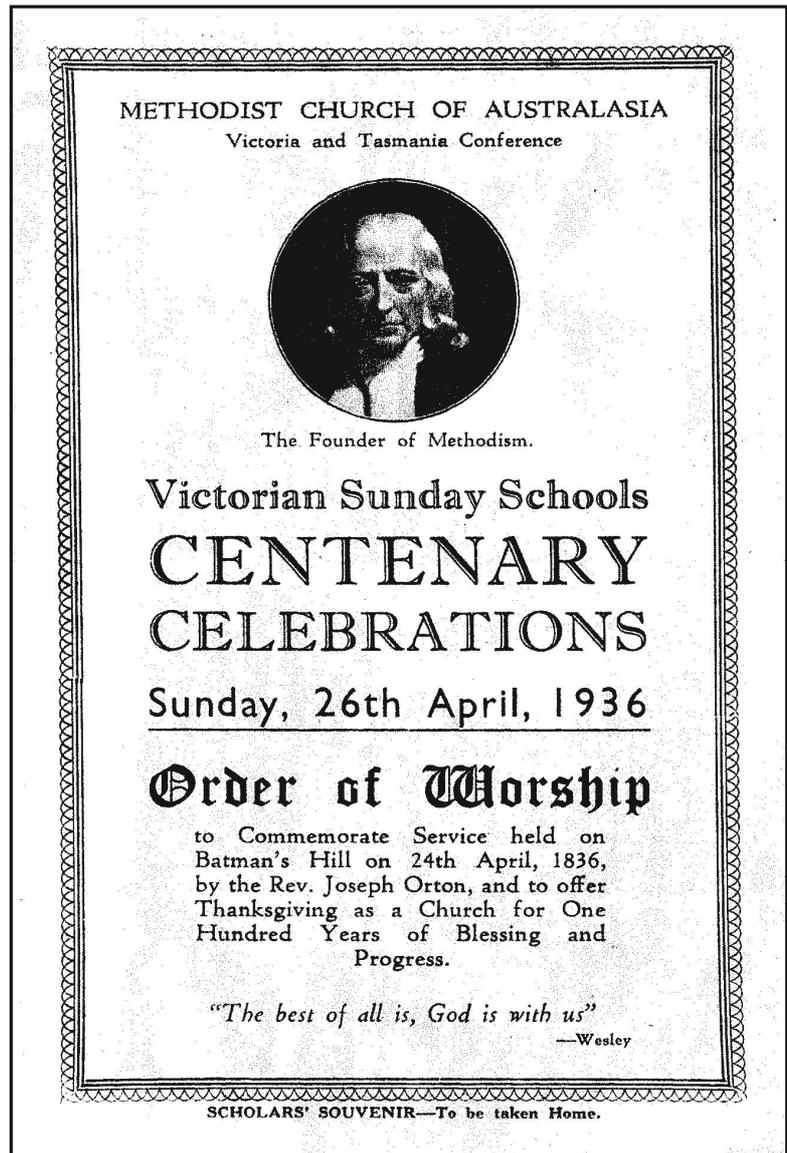
**New scholars in 1936.**

- Bruce Grey
- Edna Harding
- Dorothy Hartwick
- Eileen Johns
- Geoffrey Johns
- Lindsay King
- Gordon Lawry
- Lindsay Lawry
- Arthur Manly
- Douglas Wall

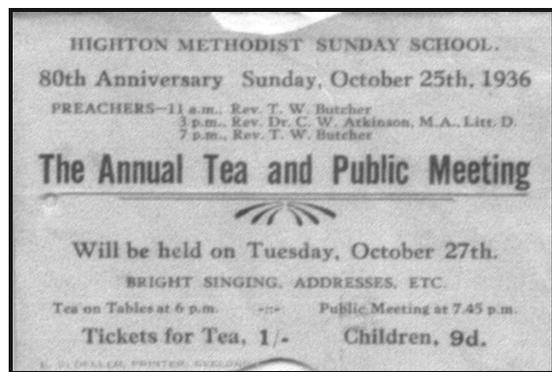
**Teachers in 1936.**

- Miss I Baum
- Miss H Baum
- Mr L Hair
- Miss V Harrison
- Miss E Lawry
- Mrs R J Leigh
- Mr D Watmuff

The 80<sup>th</sup> Sunday School Anniversary was held on 25 October 1936 and the Rev. T W Butcher preached at the morning and evening services, Rev. Dr C W Atkinson took the afternoon service. A tea and public meeting was held in the schoolroom. Mr W N Tippet, the Sunday School Superintendent, reported in the minute book later 'It had been very successful and many old scholars and friends were present. Attendances and collections were a record'.



*Above: The front cover of the Centenary of Victorian Sunday Schools Scholars' Souvenir Booklet.*



*Above: A ticket printed for the Sunday School 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tea and Public Meeting.*



*Above: The Highton Sunday School Teachers and Officers, 1936.*

**Standing in the Back Row L-R:** Ida Baum, H Jack Tippett, Mrs R J Leigh, Dennis Watmuff, W Johns, Hilda Baum, Roly J Leigh, Margaret White

**Centre Row L-R:** Rev. Stanely Humphrey, Vera Harrison, Kath Wall, W N Tippett (Superintendent), Elsie Lawry, Edith Leigh, Norman McDonald

**Front Row L-R:** Florrie Lomas, Isabel White. Missing from the photo Mr L Hair.

*Note that on behalf of an anonymous donor, the Rev S Humphrey presented the Sunday School with this photograph of teachers and officers who held positions at the anniversary.*

**New scholars in 1937.**

- Jim Gwyther
- Joan Gwyther
- Murhyl Gwyther
- Tom Harding
- Heather Sinclair
- Shirely Sinclair
- Betty White
- Jessie White
- Lindsay White
- Margaret White
- Peggy White
- Walter Woodruff

Dorothy and Marcelle Nelson were taken off the scholars roll.

Scholars signing the Temperance Pledge in 1937 were the following.

- Dale Hill
- Roland Hill
- Ross Hill
- Hugh Indian
- Rod Nicholson
- Walter Woodruff

Mr L Hair was elected Superintendent of the Sunday School in 1938 following the resignation of Mr W N Tippett. Funds were made available in 1938 to redecorate the Lane Memorial Hall (kindergarten) and in 1939 the Sunday School itself was redecorated. There were 61 scholars on the roll in 1939.



*Above: An example of a Temperance Pledge*

**Teachers in 1939.**

- Mrs Adams
- Miss A Anderson
- Miss H. Baum
- Miss M. Birt
- Miss V Harrison
- Mrs R J Leigh
- Miss B White
- Mr D Watmuff
- Miss A Anderson
- Miss N Angus
- Miss J Gwyther
- Mr L Hair
- Mrs R J Leigh
- Mr H J Tippett

There was a marked decrease of scholars in 1940, falling to only thirty-two in December 1942, with six teachers.

In 1941 permission was granted from the Church Trustees to put a platform in the church and hold the Sunday School Anniversary there that year.

The Sunday School staff and scholars were saddened to hear of the death of former superintendent Mr Edwin (Ted) Rankin in 1944.

**Teachers in 1944.**

- Mrs Adams

Mr L Hair resigned as Sunday School Superintendent in 1945, and Mr H J Tippett became Acting Superintendent until his untimely death occurred in 1950.

The following report of the Sunday Schools 89<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1945 was found in the *Geelong Methodist Journal*.

**“Though the date of the Sunday School Anniversary was held a few weeks later than customary, the attendance was almost as great. The Revs. A R Wilson and H M Knuckey officiated in the morning and evening and Mr L Bandt brought his flannel-graph to illustrate his address in the afternoon. Both on Sunday and at the Tuesday public meeting the singing was led by an**

## Steadfast Through Change

augmented scholars' choir, items being given by kindergarten, junior and intermediate grades, and duets by Mr and Mrs S Adams with Miss Anderson. A tea was served for the scholars before the meeting, being almost up to pre-war quality. In the unavoidable absence of the Superintendent, Mr L Hair, Mr McDonald, a past Secretary, presided at the meeting. Mrs S Hill and Mr L Johns, Secretary and Treasurer respectively, presented reports which were very satisfactory. Mrs S Adams received a gift in appreciation of her service of five years as Superintendent of the Kindergarten, from which office she recently resigned. Rev. H M Knuckey presented prizes for highest marks in class work and special memory work; these latter being won by Eileen Johns, Margaret Angus, Marie Harrison and Geoffrey Johns.

On 4 August 1946, the Sunday School teachers and scholars had the pleasure of attending the 'Sunday School of the Air' broadcast over the Geelong radio station, 3GL. The Sunday Schools' 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was held in October and November of that year."

The following report was found in the church archives.

"The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of the Highton Methodist Sunday School were held on the last Sunday of October and the first Sunday of November 1946.

The first Sunday was known as Old Scholars Day, when a number of old scholars occupied the Sunday School platform. Preachers were 11 a.m. Rev. T W Butcher (a former minister) and 7 p.m. Rev. H M Knuckey (present minister). The organist and pianist for the day were Mr D Watmuff and Miss E Leigh, both of whom served the school in former years. Mr G Deans conducted the choir and in

the evening an anthem was sung by the old scholars.

Lessons were read in the morning by Mr F Bedgood and in the evening by Mr Laurie Harrison.

In the afternoon a Thanksgiving Service was held in the church. Cr L T Woodard acted as chairman and among the families previously connected with the school, Mr L Hair, Mr S A Johnston, Mr T Wall, Mr Lawry and Mr R Rankin spoke of their associations. The three services were well attended and an enjoyable day spent in the memories of the past.



*Above: Mr Leigh Hair. Photo provided courtesy of Ms H Lyons.*

The second Sunday observed the present scholars day when the Director of the Methodist Young Peoples Department had charge of the morning and evening services (Rev. G Gallagher) and Rev. H M Knuckey the afternoon service.

The scholars' choir, augmented for the services, were led by Mr G Merritt and Mrs Merritt and Mrs Lindsay Harrison were pianist and organist respectively.

## Steadfast Through Change

Scholars took part in the services by reading lessons and group singing of several of the hymns taken from the *Hymns of Praise* series, which the school had been using for some years.

The scholars' tea was held during the week and followed by a programme in the school hall when the Tableau 'Our Sunday School at Work' was presented. At the conclusion, supper was served by the ladies in the kinder hall."

The officers at this time were:

- Mr H J Tippett (Acting Superintendent)
- Miss N Angus (Kindergarten Superintendent)
- Mrs S P Hill (Secretary)
- Mr R L Johns (Treasurer)
- Mr S Adams, Mr N McDonald (Auditors)
- (Teachers) Miss J Gwyther, Miss N Johns, Mrs R J Leigh, Mrs H J Tippett'.



*Above: A ticket to a Concert and Coffee Supper of the Highton Methodist Church*

At the end of 1946 a piano fund was set up to buy a piano for the kindergarten (Lane Memorial Hall), and Max Dawson was appointed co-ordinator of the Young Worshipers' League.

Mr George Deans, who conducted the children's singing at anniversary

celebrations for many years, died in 1947 and sympathy was extended to Mrs Deans, who was often the accompanist at these anniversaries. Also, Mr George Merritt was appointed conductor for the 1947 anniversary singing. There was a special concert in aid of the piano fund that year, and a religious film was shown.

Staffing shortages were mentioned in 1948 and Sunday School lessons were shortened.

Mr W N Tippett, a former Superintendent, died in 1949.

The following article is reprinted courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser*, from 2 August 1949.

**"The death occurred at his home at Highton yesterday of Mr William N. Tippett. Mr. Tippett had lived at Highton for 25 years, where he conducted the store and Post Office. He was a native of Eaglehawk, and in his earlier years was an engine driver by occupation. After leaving Eaglehawk he worked in Western Australia for a period, and then returned as engine driver at the flour mill at Charlton. He had a life-long association with the Methodist Church, and also was actively associated with the Highton Progress Association, and other movements in the district. He is survived by his widow and one son (Mr Jack Tippett). Another son (Frank) was drowned in the early years of the second world war when, as a member of the Royal Australian Air Force, he attempted to rescue civilians in floods at Bundaberg (Queensland). The funeral will leave the Highton Methodist Church for the Highton Cemetery at 3:30 p.m. today. The funeral arrangements are in the hands of F H Tucker and Son, Geelong West."**

Scholar numbers were beginning to decline in 1949. Mr H Jack Tippett, the Acting Superintendent and son of Mr W N Tippett was electrocuted and killed in an accident on 23 October, two months after his father died.

The following article is printed courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 October 1949.

**“TRAGEDY AT HIGHTON  
Man Electrocuted  
Shock From Electric Air Pump**

**Harold John Tippett, aged 38 years, of Belfast Street, Newtown, received a fatal electric shock yesterday.**

**He was at his mother’s home at Highton. About 2:45 p.m. an aunt went to switch off an electric air pump in the shed near the house. She received a light shock of electricity and called out. Tippett rushed to her assistance and apparently received a full charge of electricity. He was taken by ambulance to the Geelong Hospital and placed in a respirator, but died within an hour.**

**Officers of the State Electricity Commission found that there was a fault in the electrical installation to the house, which in turn was electrifying an air line to the air compressor. The power supplied was 230 volts.**

**Tippet was the surviving son of the late Mr W N Tippett and Mrs Tippett. He and his father, who died less than two months ago, had conducted a grocery shop at Highton for many years. Tippett was Superintendent of the Methodist Sunday School at Highton, and was closely identified with all activities in that district. He is survived by a widow. An inquest opened later by Mr D R Madders, JP, and adjourned to a date to be fixed.**

**All activities in connection with the Sunday School anniversary, including a prize-giving night, tomorrow, have been cancelled.**

**The funeral will leave the Highton Methodist Church at 2.30 p.m. tomorrow for the Eastern Cemetery.”**

Mrs R J Leigh agreed to take on the role until a new Superintendent could be found. In 1950, Mrs R J Leigh became too ill to continue and Mr S Adams was appointed Sunday School Superintendent.

A report of the 95<sup>th</sup> Sunday School Anniversary was entered in the Minute Book and reads as follows: “The Sunday School Anniversary was held on 28 October 1951. There was special singing by the scholar’ choir at the three services which were well attended. The preachers were, in the morning Mr Ralph Williams, in the afternoon Mr Lew Bandt and the Rev. A Bligh in the evening.

On Tuesday 30 October a tea and social evening was held which was well attended by the scholars, parents and friends. Guests for the evening were the Rev. and Mrs Muxworthy of the Church of England and Mr and Mrs G Merritt of Ceres.

Mr Ian Allan gave the Secretary’s report and Mr S Adams the Superintendent’s report and thanked all those who had helped during the year. The opportunity was taken to welcome the new Secretary (Mr D Smith) and pianist (Mr L Ward) for the ensuing year. Mr Adams also read the Treasurer’s report, which was compiled by Mr L Johns.

Beverley Ford presented a bouquet of flowers to Mrs Merritt as a token of appreciation for the work put in by Mr and Mrs Merritt training the scholars’ choir for many years.

## Steadfast Through Change

At a tea meeting after the Sunday School anniversary in 1951, in memory of her husband, the late Acting Superintendent Mr H Jack Tippett, Mrs B Tippett presented bibles to each scholar, and awarded a Dux Prize for Sunday School work and church attendance". John Harrison won this prize.

The following officers were elected at the 1951 Annual Sunday school meeting.

- Mr S Adams (Superintendent)
- Miss M Harrison (Cradle Roll Superintendent and Kindergarten Superintendent)
- Mr L Ward (YWL Superintendent)
- Miss E Johns (Kindergarten Superintendent)
- Mr D Smith (Secretary)
- Mr L Johns (Treasurer)
- Mr N McDonald (Auditor)
- Mr W Allan (Auditor)
- Mr L Ward (pianist)

Mr Ian Allan was appointed as teacher that year, and Miss Isobel White was nominated as a teacher on trial for three months.

The Sunday School received a letter from the Church Trust in 1952, asking for a representative to be elected to the Committee for the Church Centenary in April 1953. Miss Marion Leigh was duly elected. The Sunday School gave the Dux Prize for scholars in 1952. Flowers were placed on the graves of five former Sunday School Superintendents: Messrs R Lane, F Bedggood, E Rankin, W N Tippett and H J Tippett. This was done once only for all five men, before reverting to annually putting flowers on Mr H J Tippett's grave.

In 1953, attendances to Sunday School were slowly increasing, and mention was made in the minute book of Highton's expansion with young families coming into the district.

In 1954, Miss Isobel White and Miss Marion Leigh resigned as teachers, and Miss Beryl Knowles was appointed as a new teacher. Anniversary services were conducted by Mr Lew Bandt in the morning, Rev. C Gallagher in the afternoon and Rev. K Wise in the evening.

The following article covering the 98<sup>th</sup> anniversary was found in the *Geelong Advertiser* on 5 November 1954.

**"The 98<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Methodist Sunday School was celebrated on Sunday last, with three special services led by Mr L Bandt, the Rev. C Gallagher, and Mr K Wise. All services were well attended, and the singing of the combined choir, led by Mr G T Merritt, was an added feature. Mrs Merritt was the pianist, and Miss E Johns the organist.**

**The celebrations were continued on Tuesday evening, when a tea for scholars and parents was held in the Sunday School, which was followed by the usual meeting for distribution of prizes. The Rev. C Gallagher presided, and after the singing of a hymn and prayer the chairman welcomed visitors and friends and briefly addressed the gathering, stressing the duty of parents to do their part in the home. In this way they could assist the officers and teachers who carry on the work of the Sunday School.**

**The following awards won during the year were then presented. Dux of the kindergarten class: David Lewis (prize, the gift of the Superintendent). Junior class: Alan Leigh, 1; Heather White, 2 Intermediate class: Barbara Leigh, 1; Graham White 2. Senior class: Betty White and Pam Murray, equal 1; Nat White 2.**

**Prizes were also given to all members of the Sunday school and Kindergarten classes by the Chairman. A satisfactory report by the Secretary was read, and the treasurer's report showed the school was in a good financial position.**

**Heather White presented Mrs G T Merritt with a sheaf of flowers in acknowledgment of Mr and Mrs Merritt's services as accompanist and conductor respectively of the combined choir during the celebrations. Both Mr and Mrs Merritt responded and expressed their pleasure in being able to assist in the musical portion of the anniversary.**

**Mr N McDonald moved a vote of thanks to the preachers who conducted the services on Sunday, and the Superintendent of the school (Mr S Adams) extended a comprehensive vote of thanks to the ladies who provided the tea, the teachers and officers, and all who had assisted to make the celebrations such a success."**

Miss Eileen Johns resigned as a teacher in 1955. Miss Betty White and Miss Pam Murray were appointed as new teachers.

The 99<sup>th</sup> anniversary services took place on 30 October 1955. These were conducted by Mr K. Wise in the morning, Rev. C C Chaston in the afternoon, and Rev. C Gallagher in the evening. The usual tea meeting was held on 1 November 1955, when Rev. C Gallagher distributed prizes.

Mention was again made of the growth in population at Highton, leading to an increase in Sunday School numbers.

### **Centenary Anniversary**

In 1956, the Highton Methodist Sunday School celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> year

milestone. The minister that year was Rev. C Gallagher.

The following article is the Annual Report of that year given by the Secretary Mr Don Smith.

**"Our Centenary was celebrated on Sunday, 28 October 1956 when the 3 services were ably conducted by the Rev. Chas. Gallagher in the morning, and a former minister the Rev. R J Philp in the afternoon and evening. Attendance records were established at all these services.**

**It was observed by many friends and visitors that the fine singing of the Scholar's Choir was admirably suited to the occasion and reflected much credit on the efforts of their leader Mr Wes. Marshman.**

**To mark the occasion of the Centenary, an Old Scholars Re-Union Tea was held on Saturday evening the 27 October when the opportunity was taken for many old members and friends to come together to renew acquaintances and memories. It was indeed an occasion both for them and the present young generation to remember.**

**The following Tuesday evening, 30 October was the occasion of the Annual Prize Giving, and the Annual Reports – and a most enjoyable evening ensued.**

**Our next social get-together was on the night of 20 December when our Xmas party again proved a great success and a most happy evening was had by young and old alike.**

**Our first outing together in the New Year was on Australia Day when our Annual Picnic to Torquay was celebrated. The weather was**

**particularly kind to us, and many friends and parents availed themselves of the opportunity to be with us, the result being that a grand time was had by all.**

**We are very pleased to record and welcome to the teaching staff – Mr Neil McDonald and Miss Barbara Leigh – and we eagerly look forward to a long and happy association with them in their work with us at Highton, work which must continue to grow with the ever-increasing population.**

**Our Scholars Role continues to rise steadily and it is gratifying to us to see attendances being maintained at a higher level than for many years.**

**We are especially pleased and thankful for the continued ministry and guidance of our minister and are sincerely appreciative of his efforts on our behalf – may he continue in health and strength to foster a true and sincere Christian spirit in us all”**

#### **Anniversaries**

The annual Sunday School anniversaries were the highlight of each year. During the 57 years from 1900 to 1956, several conductors trained children in their singing. Mr D Pescott was one of the conductors, mentioned for the Diamond Jubilee in October 1916 and Miss Winnie Johns was the organist. Mr G Deans was mentioned from 1923 up to 1946 and his wife was often the accompanist. Mr G T Merritt commenced in 1946 and his wife Freda was sometimes the accompanist. They were mentioned up until 1955. Mr Wes. Marshman, was mentioned for the Sunday School Centenary in 1956 and Mrs Betty Hill was the pianist.

Sunday School Hymnals, together with ‘*Hymns of Praise*’, ‘*Songs of Praise*’, and

‘*Joyful Voice*’ books, were all used for the singing.

A platform was built in the Sunday School hall for the children to stand on to sing, and in 1941 permission was granted from the Church Trust for it to be put into the church itself, and the anniversary was held there.

A tea and public meeting was held in the week following the anniversary, and prizes for merit awarded, usually first and second prizes with consolation prizes being given. The kindergarten children all received a prize. The Ladies’ Aid catered for these evenings.

The following article was printed in the *Geelong Advertiser*, 31 October 1952.

**“To conclude the 96<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Methodist Sunday School the Ladies’ Church Aid arranged a tea prior to the public meeting on Tuesday night. Parents of scholars and Cradle Roll children, and friends of the school, were entertained as lavishly as the children, and the attendance was very satisfactory. After the tea, Mr Leigh Ward led an enjoyable sing-song at the piano, and the anniversary choir gave items. The Rev. A Bligh distributed class prizes, and the superintendent’s memory work prizes. Reports were read by Mr Don Smith, the Secretary, and by Mr S Adams for the Treasurer, Mr L Johns. Pam Murray presented Mrs G T Merritt with a sheaf of flowers in acknowledgment of her and Mr Merritt’s services as accompanist and conductor respectively of the choir during the celebrations. The superintendent, Mr Adams, thanked all workers and helpers, particularly members of the Church Aid, who also provided supper.”**

### **Annual Christmas Tree Celebrations**

A Christmas tree, Father Christmas and gift giving provided happy occasions. Ice cream was greatly appreciated in early days.

The following article is reprinted courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser*, 18 December 1952.

**“At the Methodist Sunday School the Christmas tree party began with a programme of short films, which included an interesting documentary in colour. Carols were sung, and the young people displayed a model of the manger scene, which they had made and illuminated themselves. This crib is to be set up in the church through the Christmas celebrations.**

**The arrival of Father Christmas, who distributed gifts from the beautifully decorated tree, was followed by an ice-cream supper.**

**A collection was taken on behalf of the children in the Methodist Homes, and the superintendent (Mr S Adams) thanked all who helped.”**

### **Dedication Days, Temperance Days & Decision Days**

These were annual occurrences.

### **Donations**

The Sunday School gave to Missions, Bethany, and Cheltenham homes regularly, and to other causes as they arose. Concerts and coffee suppers were organized to raise money for these causes.

### **Kindergarten Memories**

Many former scholars still remember the little dark-skinned man who took their

pennies and put them in his mouth at collection time. It was a quaint ornament popular in its day, and used for people to put spare change towards missions.



*Above: Photo of the little man who collected the pennies at collection time. Photo provided courtesy of Mrs Jean Williams*

Also remembered was the little cane chair where the ‘birthday girl or boy’ would sit for that Sunday.

### **Picnics**

Annual picnics on Foundation Day (Australia Day) were held at Torquay, Barwon Heads or Portarlington. In early days people were taken out in horse-drawn vehicles (drags). In 1936 Mr N Harding took Sunday School children on board his 1928 Chevrolet truck, with sides fitted on the tray. Later Mr F Baum of Fyansford supplied his truck, driven by his son Tom. In later years buses were hired and more people used their own cars.

There was a special picnic held on 8 February 1936 at Portarlington, to commemorate the Centenary of Victorian Sunday Schools. This was in addition to the usual Foundation Day event.

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The following article is reprinted courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser*, 28 January 1953.

**“The Methodist Sunday School held its annual picnic at Torquay. Picnic lunch and tea were provided. As usual, the water was great a attraction, and**

**cricket on the sand, a treasure hunt and peanut scramble were enjoyed.”**

### **Pleasant Sunday Afternoons**

These were held annually to raise funds for the Protestant Orphanage.

### Sunday School Office Bearers

<b>Year</b>	<b>Superintendent</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
1903-1905	Mr Robert Lane Sr.	Beacher Hartshorn	unknown
1907-1909	Mr P S Capstick	unknown	unknown
1909	Mr Robert Lane Sr.	unknown	unknown
1910-1913	Mr Fred Bedggood	unknown	Mr Les Rankin & Mr F J Horwood
1914-1916	Mr J A Milbourne	unknown	Mr N Lawry (Resigned 1915)
1916	Mr McMurdie	unknown	Miss N Kennedy
1917	Mr McMurdie	unknown	Miss E Peters
1918	Mr McMurdie	unknown	Mr Keith Johns
1920	Mr E Rankin	Mr W Johns	Mr R Morriss
1923	Mr E Rankin	Mr W Johns	Mr H Taylor
1925	Mr E Rankin	Mr W Johns	Mr N McDonald
1933	Mr W N Tippet	Mr W Johns	Mr N McDonald
1937	Mr W N Tippet	Mr H J Tippet	Mr J Baum
1938	Mr L Hair	Miss R Baum	Mr H J Tippet
1942	Mr L Hair	Mrs R Koop	Mr H J Tippet
1943	Mr L Hair	Mr Ron Angus	Mr H J Tippet
1944	Mr L Hair	Mr L Johns	Mrs A Hill
1946	Mr H J Tippet (acting)	Mr L Johns	Mrs A Hill
1947	Mr H J Tippet (acting)	Miss M Leigh	Mr M Dawson
1948	Mr H J Tippet (acting)	Mr L Johns	Miss M Leigh
1949	Mrs R J Leigh	Mr L Johns	Mr Ian Allan
1950	Mr S Adams	Mr L Johns	Mr Ian Allan
1951-1957	Mr S Adams	Mr L Johns	Mr Don Smith

<b>Year</b>	<b>Kindergarten Superintendent</b>	<b>Auditors</b>
1922	unknown.	T Horwood & F Morris
1923	unknown.	T Horwood & F Morris
1924	unknown.	T Horwood & F Morris
1925	unknown.	T Horwood & F Morris
1926	Miss H Morriss	T Horwood & F Morris
1927	Miss H Morriss	T Horwood & W N Tippet
1928	Miss H Morriss	T Horwood & W N Tippet
1929	Miss H Morriss	T Horwood & W N Tippet
1930-1931	Miss H Morriss	T Horwood & W N Tippet
1932	Miss H Morriss	L Woodard & W N Tippet
1933	Miss H Morriss	L Woodard & W N Tippet

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1934	Miss H Morriss	L Woodard & W N Tippet
1935	Miss K Allan	L Woodard & Mr R J Leigh
1936	Miss E Leigh	R J Leigh & L Hair
1937-1940	Miss E Leigh	R J Leigh & W Johns
1941-1942	Miss E Leigh	R J Leigh & N McDonald
1943-1945	Mrs Adams	R J Leigh & N McDonald
1946-1947	Miss N Angus	N McDonald & Mr. S Adams
1948	Miss V Johns	N McDonald & Mr S Adams

<b>Year</b>	<b>Kindergarten Superintendent</b>	<b>Auditors</b>
1949- 1951	Miss E Johns & Miss M Harrison	N McDonald & Mr S Adams
1952	Miss E Johns & Miss M Harrison	N McDonald & Mr W Allan
1953-1957	Miss E Johns & Miss M Harrison	N McDonald & Mr S Adams

<b>Year</b>	<b>Organists / Pianists</b>
1922	Miss Isa McGregor
1923	Miss N Wall & Miss M Allen
1924	Miss O Johns
1925	Miss M Allen
1926	Miss H Morriss
1927	Miss L McGregor
1928	Master Dennis Watmuff
1929	Miss Vera Dickens
1930-1931	Miss Mavis Landry
1932	Miss V. Dickens
1933	Mr D Watmuff, Miss Elsie Taylor (assistant)
1934-1935	Mr D Watmuff with Miss E Taylor & Miss K Wall (assistants)
1936	Mr D Watmuff with Miss K Wall & Miss F Lomas (assistants)
1937-1940	Miss F Lomas, Mr L Harrison (assistant)
1941- 1943	Mr L Harrison & Miss B Johns (assistant)
1944-1945	Misses Joyce & Edith Leigh
1946-1947	Miss Eileen Johns
1948	Unknown
1949	Unknown
1950-1951	Miss B Waller
1952-1957	Mr L Ward

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Chapter 20

**POST WORLD WAR II,  
THE 1953 CHURCH CENTENARY  
TO 1956**

When World War II ended in 1945 it allowed people to take up their lives again. Servicemen came home from the war, goods and services gradually became more plentiful, young people married and needed homes and land was cheaper on the outskirts of Geelong than in its centre. Highton, once described as a little like an English countryside village, slowly began to populate as subdivisions occurred. John Pescott in his book *South Barwon 1857-1985* commented the following.

**“Few residents of old Highton could have envisaged the tremendous development that was to take place in the forty years that followed the second world war. Statistics regularly showed Highton to be one of the fastest growing areas.”**

It is interesting to note that in the four years from 1945 to 1949, the Highton Methodist Church almost doubled in size, growing from 16 families, with a collection of 8/6 per week, to 30 families bringing in a collection of 31/- per week.

The Rev. J T Duggleby was farewelled in 1945, and on 12 July of that year, the Rev. H M Knuckey was welcomed to the Trust meeting as minister of the Noble Street Pastorate.

Miss E Leigh resigned as church organist, and an appreciation was entered in the Trust minute book: “that this meeting of the Trustees of the Highton Methodist Church places on record the services of Miss Edith Leigh as church organist for the past eleven years and regret the circumstances which compel her to relinquish the position but

sincerely thanked her for her work as organist and pianist for vocalists”. Mrs S Adams was then appointed church organist. Miss E Lawry was unable to continue as caretaker of the church and Mrs Eric Harrison was appointed.

Mr Oliver Lane regularly cut back the trees in the memorial drive and Mr G Palmer was employed to trim the cypress hedge leading from the church down to the Harrison Memorial Gate in Barrabool Road. This hedge grew to a great height, as shown in the following photo taken in May 1949.



*Above: Guests at Mary & Len Dawson's wedding, May 1949.*

*L-R: Miss Ivy Woods, Miss Violet Boardman, Mrs Joyce Barfoot, Miss Evelyne Gowland & Miss Eve Boardman. Photo provided courtesy of Mary Dawson.*

The following letter was found in the church archives, from August 1948.

“The present day revolution in relation to financial matters, has touched the Church, as everything else. Increasing costs of living have necessitated a review of Ministers' Stipends, and many other items of expenditure.

All of the Churches in our Circuit, have given the matter careful consideration, and the unanimous decision has been an allocated amount as each Church's quota towards a financially stable Circuit. To

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this end our members and adherents are being circulated, with an appeal to associate themselves with our Envelope System of contributing to the weekly Church Collections.

It is NOT a request for an increased weekly contribution, but for the systematising of it. If one's financial circumstances warrant their contributing only the smallest sum, only such is asked. But it is asked that the contribution be systematised, and the Envelope System is the avenue by which this can most successfully and conveniently be done.

To each one, willing to subscribe to our System, a small envelope for each Sunday in the Quarter, will be issued. If the person should be absent from Church during the Quarter, the envelopes for the absent Sundays are to be put in, when next at Church. At the end of the Quarter, the subscriber will be issued a Statement, showing Debit, Credit or Balance. The matter will be a strictly confidential one, between the Subscriber and one Church Officer only.

Will you please give this matter your prayerful thought, and then indicate your reply on the foot-note, detach same, and place in a closed envelope, which will be called for by one of our stewards within the next few days.

Yours sincerely,"

This notice was given to all church members as finances became strained. It was signed by the Rev. K M Knuckey and later the Rev. A Bligh.

In 1948, Mr F Purnell made a personal inspection of the church and Sunday School and in a detailed statement to the Trust he drew attention to work needing urgent attention. He also offered to supervise the work in an honorary capacity. Mr C Casey dug the

foundations of the south east corner of the Sunday School so it could be underpinned at the bottom of the buttress. He did not charge for his work which enabled a bricklayer to complete the job.

Overseas and Home Mission representatives were mentioned in the minutes as visitors to the church in 1948. There was also a presentation of pottery to Miss Norma Angus to express thanks for her leadership of the kindergarten. She was to marry Mr Noel Harrison.

The Rev. A Bligh chaired the Trust meeting on 3 May 1949 and was welcomed to his first meeting.

### Mr W N Tippett

In August 1949, the church was saddened to learn of the death of one of its former Trustees, Church Steward, Sunday School teacher and Superintendent, Mr W N Tippett.

The following notice is printed courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser*, 5 August 1949.

**“The death of Mr W N Tippett at his home on Monday last has removed one who took a keen interest in many of the activities of the district. He rendered years of service on the State School committee, was president of the Tennis Club for a term, a member of the Progress Association for 25 years, and a member of the district servicemen’s committee. Foremost, in his life was his loyalty to the Methodist Church, in which he was one of the most regular worshippers and generous supporters. For many years he held offices of Trustee, Church Steward, Sunday School teacher, and Superintendent, and was also a member of the choir till ill-health prevented him from carrying on this**

work. After the church was wrecked in the tornado 23 years ago he rendered valuable service as one of three on the re-building committee. The church was crowded on Tuesday afternoon, when a most impressive service was held prior to the funeral leaving for the Highton cemetery. The service was in charge of the Rev. A Bligh, and the Revs. C K Daws and A W Guy, both close personal friends of Mr Tippett, and bore eloquent testimony to the influence of his Christian Life. Favourite hymns of the deceased were sung. Mr D Watmuff was the organist. There was a large gathering at the graveside, where the three ministers again officiated. Many wreaths from various organizations, relatives and friends were placed on the grave. Mr Tippett leaves a widow and one son (Mr H J Tippett), to whom sympathy is extended. The funeral arrangements were carried out by F H Tucker and Son.”

#### Mr H J Tippett

Two months later, in October 1949, the church received news of a further tragedy in the Tippett family, when Mr H J Tippett was accidentally electrocuted. He was a Sunday School teacher for some years and acting superintendent. The Sunday School for some years after his death placed a floral wreath on his gravestone annually as a mark of great respect.

The following article is printed courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser* from 27 October 1949.

**“The fatal accident to Mr H J Tippett has removed one who will be greatly missed by all sections of the community. Born at Charlton in 1916, he came with his parents to live at Highton 25 years ago. He was**

**educated at the local State School and subsequently at the Geelong High School. On leaving school he entered business with his father (the late Mr W N Tippett) and conducted the local store and Post Office. He was associated with various organizations in the district, and took a leading part in the Progress Association, especially in carrying out arrangements for fetes and gymkhanas. He also held the office of secretary of the Highton Rural Fire Brigade. As a leader in social events his services were much in demand outside the confines of the district, especially at the Ashby Methodist Church, where he gave willingly of his time to help with the social activities. He was Past Knight Commander of the Senior Court of the Order of Knights at that church. He was an active member of the local Methodist Church, and served in the Sunday School – first as secretary, then as teacher and acting Superintendent. At the funeral at the Eastern Cemetery, the coffin was carried by Messrs. Max and John Dunstan (brother-in-law), Viv Trewartha and Ron Tippet (cousins), Geoff Johns (representing Young People’s Group), and Roland Hill (a former employee). A large number of wreaths were sent from church and public organizations, relatives and friends. F H Tucker and Son conducted the funeral arrangements.”**

On 18 December 1949 Mr R L Johns accepted the position of a Trustee of the Barrabool Hills Cemetery. This Methodist vacancy on the Trust was caused by the death of Mr F W Bedggood, a former Sunday School Superintendent.

At a Trust meeting on the 24 April 1951, a minute’s silence was observed for three Trust members who had passed away. They were Mr O Lane, Mr J Baum and

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Mr T Horwood. Mr Horwood had held the position of Trust Secretary from 1918 to 1931.

In November 1951, Miss Irma Horwood presented to the church a framed coloured print of a window in Wesley Chapel, London (see Gifts & Memorials).

The Secretary of the Trust, Mr R J Leigh, was asked to prepare an early history of the church for its coming centenary.

A letter from the circuit stewards was read outlining a resolution of the previous quarterly meeting. "The main resolution was that each Church Trust in each Pastorate appoint personnel of a Committee to undertake to see to keeping parsonages in repair and the furnishings. No committee to expend a sum of more than £10 without the consent of Circuit Stewards". Mr and Mrs A Johns were nominated to be representatives to the committee from Highton.

Miss Edie Lawry was given a presentation by the church and thanked for her contribution to the church over some years. She married Mr Hobbs.

In March 1952, a new tank was bought for the kindergarten (Lane Memorial Hall) and the lamp stand that stood for some years outside the church was sold to Mr Collins for £6.

Mr D Nelson trimmed the hedges of the church in 1952.

### **The Church Centenary Committee**

At a Trust meeting on 25 March 1952, there was a discussion regarding the coming church centenary, and the Secretary, Mr R J Leigh, was asked to give what information he had on when and where the church actually came into

being. The past decade anniversaries were always held in the years ending with a four, but Mr Leigh stated that according to Irving S Benson's book *A Century of Methodism*, Methodist services had actually been held as early as 1853, in the homes of Mr Windmill in Valley Road and Mr Balding in Roslyn Road. Mr R J Leigh then went on to say that this was also recorded in the *Geelong Advertiser* and substantiated by Mr J H Bottrell in his *Early History of Highton*, where it was stated that the first little brick church was opened in March 1855.

Mr R J Leigh wrote in the minutes: "On the forgoing information it was beyond doubt that Methodist Services began in Highton in 1853 so by 1953 the Methodist Church had witnessed for 100 years". Accordingly, it was moved by Mr L Johns and seconded by Mr S Adams that Highton celebrate the church centenary on the 12 April 1953.

Mr A Johns moved and Mr G Palmer seconded, 'that we as a Trust agree to the formation of a Centenary Committee and that all matters pertaining to the Centenary celebrations be arranged by this committee – the committee to comprise all Church Trustees and representatives from the Ladies' Church Aid, Sunday School, Leader's meeting and Congregational representatives'. Further to this motion it was agreed the committee be comprised of all trust members, three members from the Ladies' Church Aid and one member each from Leaders, Sunday school and congregation. Mr H J Leigh also said it may be possible to have 3GL broadcast one of the services and this was left for him to organize.

On 11 June 1952, the Church Trust and the Ladies' Aid each gave donations to assist with the formation of a Sunday School at Bell Post Hill

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The following people were present at the first centenary committee meeting.

- Mrs S Adams (Leader)
- Mr S E Adams (Trustee)
- Mrs W Allan (Ladies' Church Aid)
- Rev. A Bligh (Chairman)
- Mr L C Dawson (Trustee)
- Mr A M Johns (Trustee)
- Mr R L Johns (Trustee)
- Miss E Lawry (Congregation)
- Miss M Leigh (Sunday School)
- Mr R J Leigh (Trustee)
- Mr G T Palmer (Trustee)
- Mr N McDonald (Trustee)
- Mrs S N McDonald (Ladies' Church Aid)

There was an apology from Mrs A Johns who was the third Ladies' Church Aid representative. The Chairman after welcoming the committee and outlining the object of the meeting said he hoped 'that in all deliberations they should recapture the faith of the founders of the church and give thanks to God for 100 years of blessing'

Mr R J Leigh was appointed Secretary of the Committee and Mr L Dawson and Mr G Palmer were appointed Assistant Secretaries. It was decided to hold a reunion social on Saturday the 11 April 1953, followed by morning and evening services on Sunday 12 April, at which the Rev. T H Indian was the preacher. A pleasant Sunday afternoon was held at 3 p.m. with the Rev. A Bligh presiding and Mr Allan McDonald MHR giving the address.

At the second Centenary Committee meeting, the secretary stated that the Geelong radio station 3GL had written to say they would broadcast the morning service for a fee of £2.2.0, subject to an agreement with the church whose service would normally have been broadcast on that date. The committee also agreed to

hold a further service on the Tuesday evening, 14 April 1953, and invited the President of Conference. The service was to be held in the church followed by a reception in the Sunday School and followed by supper.

Mr and Mrs N McDonald and Miss Lawry were given the job of 'ascertaining the names of former worshippers or their descendants'.

At a Trust meeting on 3 September 1952, it was reported that a parsonage upkeep meeting had been held, at which Highton Church representatives had attended, 'Noble Street again expressing their appreciation of Highton folks efforts to raise £16'.

The Highton Methodist Church had supported the setting up of a Sunday School at Bell Post Hill, and later joined a deputation of churches that waited on the Council of Morongo Girls' School, who agreed that a building could to be placed on Morongo land at a small rental.

Maintenance of the Highton Church buildings was undertaken with a new rainwater tank connected to the Lane Memorial Hall and new spouting put on the east side of that building. Cracks that appeared in the church walls were attended to, kalsomining was applied, the outside doors were re-painted. Weeds were sprayed in the church grounds and a general 'clean up' was done. The Church Trust then decided that £200 would be raised for church renovations and improvements. This amount was later increased to £500.

At the third meeting of the Centenary Committee, the secretary, Mr R J Leigh, was asked to draft a brochure for approval at the next meeting. It was to include a 'photo of the church, first Trustees, succeeding Trustees through

## Steadfast Through Change

the years, the present Trustees, a short write-up of the early history and a programme of the Centenary celebrations with names of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer’.

Mr F C Purnell from Geelong inspected the church walls and recommended that the cracks be cut out and kalsomine be applied as high as the transom. He also stated that in his opinion an agricultural drain was needed on the west and north sides of the church to keep water away from the foundations. Mr C P Hornsby met with the Trustees to give an estimate of the cost and particulars of work to be carried out.

The Trust then discussed what improvements were needed, and all favoured the idea of a new or improved kitchen as a centenary effort. This was moved by Mr A Johns and seconded by Mr S Adams. Mr Knowles of Knowles Bros., Barrabool Road was asked to estimate the cost of the project. It was also decided to remove one of the cypress trees at the north end of the east row of the memorial drive to allow cars better access to the church.

The fourth Centenary Committee meeting was held on 18 November 1952. It was moved by Mr N McDonald and seconded by Mr C F Palmer that a new kitchen be built, ‘as our centenary additional improvement’. Mr Knowles had inspected the kitchen, and estimated that to pull down and rebuild it with cement bricks with some free labour would cost approximately £185 but it would be several more years before the work was completed.

The committee for the President’s reception on 14 April 1953 considered speakers. Collections were to be taken up at each service on the Sunday and the Thanksgiving service on the Tuesday night, but all others were to be free. The

Secretary submitted a quote and design of the centenary brochure from J C Brownhill & Sons, printers, and it was decided by the centenary committee to procure not less than 200 copies. A proposal was also agreed upon to buy a visitors book for signatures of those attending the centenary celebrations.

A suggestion that the Ladies’ Church Aid hold an afternoon gathering during the celebrations was to be further investigated.

A letter was read to the committee from Mrs R J Leigh about preserving the groups of historical photos in the Sunday School, and expressing her willingness to bear some of the cost and assist in carrying out the work, if approved by the committee. The committee moved a vote of thanks to Mrs R J Leigh and accepted her kind offer.

At the fifth Centenary Committee meeting held on 19 February 1953, it was considered that the number of brochures ordered for the celebrations was inadequate and that 400 should now be ordered.

Mr G T Merritt of Ceres was welcomed to the meeting and asked to conduct the choir for the celebrations. He said it would be an honour to do so, and a discussion took place as to whether it would be a good idea to have former members and some other songs to augment the choir numbers.

Because of the number of people expected to join the centenary celebrations, it was decided to have amplifiers fixed in the Sunday School hall. Mr Bond of Ashby carried out this work.

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*Above: Outside the redecorated church, January 1953.*

*L – R: Alwyn John’s back, Sid Adams, Ian Allan & Don Smith.*

*On the Steps: Eileen Johns, Margaret White & Lyla White.*

*Middle: Mrs. Hilda Dawson, Nellie Allan, Isabell White, Laurie Johns, Norman McDonald & either Betty White or Marie Harrison.*

*Front: Vera McDonald & Isabel Adams flanking Miss Elsie Dawson. Note the overhanging leaves of the old Moreton Bay Fig that stood outside the church doorway. It had to be taken out at a later date because its roots were causing damage to the church foundations. Also in the background can be seen bare hills where the suburb of Wandana Heights is now.*

A sixth Centenary Committee meeting was held on 23 March 1953 and general finalising of the celebration programmes were discussed. Mr Lindsay Nelson offered to bring two loads of gravel to put on the path in front of the church door and this was accepted.

Mr Ron Leigh was asked to assist the committee to trim the Memorial Avenue of trees with his electric hedge clippers.

Hymn books for the centenary services were borrowed from Mt. Moriac and Ceres churches. A platform was erected in the Sunday School Hall for the Saturday night social, and the Progress Association loaned seats and crockery for the expected crowd.

At a Trustee meeting held on 11 March 1953, Mr G T Palmer advised the Secretary he could not paint the kindergarten (Lane Memorial Hall) before the centenary, so it was decided to get a quote from Mr Hall and Mr Hornsey.

The Ladies’ Church Aid offered to polish the church furnishings and varnish the dado in the Sunday School Hall.

### **Highton Methodist Church Centenary Celebrations**

Mr R J Leigh, the Secretary of the Centenary Committee and also Trust Secretary, gave the following account of the Centenary celebrations in his annual report.

## Steadfast Through Change – Part 2

'The Centenary of Methodism in Highton was celebrated in April 1954. Early in 1952 the officers met and a committee formed to arrange details with the Rev. A Bligh chairman.

The committee consisted of all the Trustees, Mesdames N McDonald, W Allan & A Johns for Church Aid, Miss Lawry congregation, Mrs S Adams Leaders, Miss M Leigh Sunday School, Mr N McDonald was appointed Treasurer, Mr R J Leigh Secretary and Messrs G F Palmer and L Dawson Assistant Sec – Mr G T Merritt of Ceres was invited to conduct the choir. In preparation for the celebrations Mr D Nelson trimmed the hedges, Mr L Nelson supplied 15 yards of gravel for paths, the young folk of the Sunday School painted the front fence, the historical photos in Sunday School were re-arranged, and the trustees had the buildings renovated and kindergarten hall painted while the ladies polished the furnishings.

The Secretary and his daughter Marion compiled a Centenary brochure.

A Communion service held on Easter Sunday morning 5 April conducted by Rev. A Bligh was a fitting start for the celebrations. On the following Saturday evening 11 April a re-union Social evening was held and a supper served at the close. The Rev. A Bligh presided and the oldest member of the Trust and Senior Steward, Mr R J Leigh welcomed all present. During the evening greetings were spoken by many who had come back for the occasion and songs were given by Mrs S Adams, recitations by Mr A Smith and community singing led by Mr Merritt. On the Sunday following morning and evening services were conducted by the Rev. T H Indian. Large congregations attended and amplifiers had been placed in the Sunday School so that the overflow from the church could hear the services. The

morning service was broadcast by 3 GL. Faithful messages were delivered and the preacher urged all to support the 'Mission to the Nation' and strive to recapture the spirit of those who laid the foundations of Methodism in Highton. At this service the choir sang the Anthem "I will feed my flock".

The PSA was an event unique in the history of the church when a memorable and fitting address on 'Remembrance' was delivered by Mr Allan McDonald MHR, which received well merited applause from the large audience. A Chairman's chair, given by the Harrison family in memory of the late John Harrison was also dedicated at this service by Rev. A Bligh and Rev. T H Indian paid a tribute to the life and work of Mr Harrison.

The soloists at the PSA were Mr Ron Gowty and Miss Madge Stephens with Mr D Watmuff accompanying at the piano.

Mrs R J Leigh was the organist at the evening service and the choir sang "Te Deum". The crowning event was the Thanksgiving service on Tuesday night 14 April conducted by the Rev. A Bligh and the President of the Conference the Rev. H Clarnette. In his sermon Mr Clarnette said there was a tendency to take the heritage of the past too much for granted. In facing the question of What Are We To Do? The church at Highton is opportunely connected with a church, which in its Mission to the Nation is trying to establish the Kingdom of God among men. Following the service a President's Reception was held in the Sunday school when greetings were given by the Rev. N Kemp, Sec. of Conference, Rev. S J Muxworthy of St. Johns Church, Cr F R Newbury Shire President, Mr R McKenzie Progress Association & Circuit Steward Mr Alan Cooke. Mr Stan Walter accompanied by

Mrs Merritt at the piano contributed songs during the evening. Mr N McDonald moved and Mr S Adams seconded a vote of thanks to all who had contributed to the success of the celebrations. After the vote of thanks Mr McDonald announced that the Thank-offering and donations received amounted to £400 and as an expression of gratitude the audience rose and sang the Doxology. Subsequently supper was served by the ladies.

The singing of the augmented choir at all the services was a special feature of the celebrations, which reflected credit on the conductor Mr G Merritt. Those taking part in the choir were Mesdames G Merritt, A Johns, L White, W Leigh, N McDonald, H Dawson, S Wall, S Adams, Misses J & M White, D Hatherall, H Leigh & E Johns. Messrs Wm. & Geoff Hill, K Johns, W Leigh, Reg Hoe, Stan Wall, L Dawson, S. Adams & Les Gill.

Socially and financially the celebrations left nothing to be desired. We are indebted to all for their gifts and to the ladies whose help contributed in no small measure to the success of the celebrations. To assess the spiritual results we can only leave to Him who has been the inspiration of the men & women of the past and pray that in the coming days it will be shown in the life of the church with lives dedicated to more consecrated service'.

The following report of the centenary celebrations is reprinted courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser*, 17 April 1953.

#### **“SUCCESSFUL SERVICES MARK HIGHTON CHURCH CENTENARY**

**In the closing service of the centenary celebration of the Highton Methodist Church, new history was added to the church's records in that it was honored by a visit from the President**

**of the Conference, the Rev. H Clarnette.**

**After the service, which like all other services in connection with the celebrations was largely attended, a reception was tendered the President in the school hall.**

**The minister of the church, the Rev. A Bligh presided, and on behalf of the Trust and officials extended a welcome to all who were present to do honor to the President.**

**Various interests were represented by those who welcomed the Rev. Mr Clarnette wishing him a happy and fruitful term of office.**

**All speakers made reference to the centenary of the church and the contribution it has made through the years for the welfare of the district. Those who so expressed themselves were the Rev. A N Kemp (Secretary to the Conference), the Rev. S J Muxworthy for St. John's Church of England, and the Anglican Communion.**

**Mr Muxworthy said that as a resident minister in the district he was very pleased to be associated with his Methodist friends to share with them their joy of long service and to honor the head of their church. Their past record of achievements was a tribute to loyal Christians, and he was sure that the present generation, conscious of the heritage left them, would add to the tradition of their forefathers.**

**Cr F R Newberry, the President of the South Barwon Shire, extending a welcome on behalf of the Shire, referred to the influence of the church in all walks of life lifting them to a high level of living and service.**

A President of the local Progress Association, Mr Roy McKenzie, said he appreciated the honor conferred upon the association in being connected with the welcome and thanked the church officers for their evidence of assisting the association in its aims for district progress by the state of their well kept property.

Mr Allan Cooke, Circuit Steward, spoke on behalf of the Geelong West Circuit.

The President in acknowledging the welcome, thanked all for their expression of goodwill to him. One hundred years of service was a long period he said, but when done to the Glory of God, and in the interests of their fellowmen, time did not count. He congratulated the church officers on the beautiful layout and condition of the church and property. He was captivated with its environments and considered people worshipping under such natural beauty could not but feel they were very near to God. He wished for them continued success in their undertakings.

Mr S Walter accompanied by Mrs Merritt contributed songs during the evening. Shoulder sprays of flowers were presented by the Ladies' Aid to Mrs Clarnette and Mrs Kemp.

Mr N McDonald and Mr S Adams voiced the appreciation of the church to all who had contributed to the success of the celebrations. Mention was made of the secretarial duties performed by Mr R J Leigh and the excellent contribution of Mr G T Merritt as choirmaster and musical director.

Mr McDonald announced that the thank offerings received during the celebrations amounted to £400.

As an expression of gratitude the assembly rose and sang the Doxology. Supper provided by the ladies was served at the conclusion of the evening. This gathering was the last of the public services arranged in connection with the celebrations and officials expressed their pleasure at the success which attended all their arrangements. From the inaugural communion and re-dedication service conducted by the Rev. A Bligh and followed on by those conducted by the Rev. T H Indian and Mr Allan McDonald, MHR, and the President of the Conference a wonderful spirit of loyalty and devotion had been in evidence. Many former members and residents returned for this happy event and they were loud in their praise of all arrangements, especially with the reunion function which afforded them the privilege and joys of renewing friendships and the exchange of happy reminiscences. Greetings were received from Nigeria, Canberra, Donald, Ararat, Pyramid Hill, Kyalla West, Horsham, Benalla, Shepparton, Mt. Evelyn, Beeac, Winchelsea and many Melbourne suburbs.

Historical records past and present giving the outstanding events in the life of the church and a list of past and present Trustees and officials was contained in a neatly prepared souvenir booklet. Reference to many of the former splendid men whose names appear in the souvenir were often reverently and gratefully mentioned in the services and tribute paid to their Christian influence.

The present minister, officials, and members of the church commence the second century thankful for the past record and achievements and with the inspired assurance, 'The best is yet to be'."

## Steadfast Through Change – Part 2

At a Trust meeting on 29 April 1953, Mr R J Leigh was re-elected Secretary and Mr N McDonald Treasurer. The organists at the church asked the Trust for permission to move the organ to the back of the choir and this was agreed to.

At the final meeting of the Centenary Committee it was decided that five letters of thanks be sent, to the Progress Association for the loan of the crockery, chairs and forms, to the church ladies for polishing the church furnishings and varnishing the Sunday School dado and to the young people of the Sunday School for painting the white rails in the front fence. Also to Mr Gwyther for donating flowers to decorate the church, and Mr Allan McDonald MHR, for his inspiring address at the PSA

Consideration was then given as to how to express thanks to the conductor of the choir, Mr G Merritt, the organists and visiting helpers in the choir. It was subsequently decided to hold a social evening at a date to be arranged when they would be officially be thanked and a presentation would be made to Mr G Merritt. It was left to Mr R J Leigh and Mrs N McDonald to arrange this social.

It was also decided that a letter conveying greetings be sent to Pakington Street Church for their Centenary.

The centenary committee then disbanded and all unfinished business pertaining to the centenary was passed to the Trustees to finalize.

The social to be organised to thank choir members, organists and the conductor, Mr G Merritt, was cancelled 'due to everyone being unable to agree on a suitable date'. Instead it was decided to invite Mr and Mrs Merritt to 'Carramar', the home of Mr and Mrs R J Leigh, together with the Trustees and their wives and members of the Centenary

Committee. The date was set for 24 July 1953 and the Rev. A Bligh made the presentation of a pottery vase to the Merritts. The evening 'passed pleasantly with lantern slides shown by Miss Edith Leigh and another item of interest was the recording of part of the centenary morning service'. Supper concluded the evening.

Mrs R J Leigh reported to the Trust at a meeting on 29 July 1953 that in connection of the historic photos being re-adjusted in new frames, Mr J Arthur of Ryrie Street was the only person who could carry out this work. To contain costs she suggested Mr Arthur use the old glass in the frames but he preferred to use a new uniform quality. He also advised against having all names written on the photographs as being too costly. Regarding the photo of Mr Robert Lane, she said he had done nothing to alter that one as there was a similar one hanging in the Memorial Hall, and was under the impression that the original enlargement was presented to the Sunday School when all grades from kindergarten to the oldest had met in the one room. Regarding the Lane photo, the Trust voted to leave it in its present position (in the Sunday School room).

A working bee was organised to dig a drain on the west side of the church as advised by Mr F C Purnell to drain water off the foundations. Spouting was to be renewed on the west side of the church.

The matter of rebuilding the kitchen with concrete blocks, as suggested on 10 November 1952 as a 'Centenary additional improvement' was again considered. It was decided to ask Mr Gordon Williams to obtain a plan. It was also resolved by the Trust that an electric stove replace the old wood copper.

Mr N McDonald was thanked for his effort in locating addresses of former

worshippers so they could be invited to the centenary.

There was mention at the Trust meeting of the Chairman's chair, given by the Harrison family in memory of their father, Mr J W Harrison. Mr Harrison was a Trustee for 45 years, Church Steward for 41 years and Church Treasurer for 40 years. The Rev. T H Indian paid a fitting tribute to Mr Harrison's life and years of service and the Rev. A Bligh received and dedicated the gift at the centenary PAA on 12 April 1953.

Rev. Bligh preached his last sermon at Highton on 22 March 1954, and the Rev. C Gallagher occupied the chair at the Trust meeting held on 2 June 1954. The building of a new kitchen was discussed and a plan from Mr George Williams was placed on the table for perusal. An estimate of £1,000 far exceeded the cost that the Trust was willing to pay and it was decided to meet with the architect to discuss a more modified plan without furnishings. This was done but the estimated cost was still too high. It was then suggested that members meet with Mr L Hair and get a quote for building a new kitchen of cement bricks. Mr Hair considered it would cost £1,000 as the price for the building was £300 per square and he was not in a position to do it. The Trust members asked Mr Doolin, a public works builder to inspect the kitchen to see if it could be improved.

### **Mr & Mrs R J Leigh**

At a Trust meeting on 29 January 1955, a letter was read from Mr and Mrs R J Leigh stating that owing to leaving the district they tendered their resignations as Secretary and evening organist respectively. It was moved by L Johns, seconded by N McDonald that a resolution be placed on the minute book in appreciation of services given. Rev

Gallagher was to prepare this resolution assisted by Mr N McDonald.



*Above: Mr R J Leigh*

Discussion then took place as to who would be the new Secretary and no one present was willing to do so. It was moved that Mr R J Leigh 'carry on until the annual meeting'. Mr R J Leigh agreed to do so. Mrs R J Leigh's resignation was accepted and a resolution be prepared and placed on the minutes for their services rendered. The following is a copy of the resolution.

"This Trust places on record its appreciation of the services of Mr R J Leigh to the Highton Church over a period of 29 years. For almost the whole of this time he has been a member of the Trust and for the last 24 years its faithful Secretary. During this long period he has served his Divine Master and this Church with zealous devotion and unremitting attention to all his duties. For a considerable time he was also a Church Steward, another position which he filled with distinction. The friendliness of his home and his constant concern for the good of this Church coupled with his tenacity purpose made him an officer

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who will be very greatly missed. We thank him for all that he has done and wish him well in his new home.

The Trust also records its appreciation of the services of Mrs Leigh who for the past four years has acted as evening organist and in that capacity has made a real contribution to the worship side of the Church.

Confirmed  
Charles Gallagher  
Mar. 30<sup>th</sup> 1955”

Mention must be made here in a general way of the immense effort both Mr and Mrs R J Leigh put towards the Highton Methodist Church and the Highton community.

They purchased their property ‘Corowa’ in March 1926 and moved into the residence just two weeks before the tornado of 22 July 1926 struck. This caused some damage to trees and chimneys of the property.



*Above: ‘Carramar’, home of Mr and Mrs R J Leigh, where church meetings were often held. Photos provided courtesy of Mr Jim Heard, Wonwondah.*

They renamed their residence ‘Carramar’ (meaning shade of trees) and the street in Highton where the home stood is named Carramar Court.



*Above: Mr R J Leigh standing in the driveway of ‘Carramar’ among the trees he replanted following the tornado.*

Mr Rowland James Leigh held the following positions in the 29 years he was in Highton.

- Member of the rebuilding committee of the Highton Methodist Church after the tornado.
- Trust Secretary for 24 years.
- Secretary of the Leaders’ Meeting.
- Church Steward.
- Representative to quarterly meetings and synod.
- Representative to conference.
- Auditor of Sunday School books.
- Driver for preachers.
- Secretary of the Centenary Committee and compiled the Centenary souvenir Booklet with his daughter Marion.
- Secretary of the Barrabool Hills Cemetery Trust
- Secretary of the Highton Progress Association.

One trustee, Mr Syd Adams, once referred to Mr Leigh as “that grand old Methodist warhorse”.

Mrs Fannie Pannell Linda Leigh held the following positions.

- Local preacher.
- Sunday School Teacher & Superintendent for a short time.

- Organist, also a violinist at concerts.
- Representative to quarterly meeting and synod.
- Representative to Conference (first woman from the circuit).
- President of the Women's World Day of Prayer Committee.
- President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.
- Member of the League of Nation's Peace Group.
- Leader of Young Peoples' Class and Young Women's Missionary Movement (YWMM).
- Held every office in the Ladies' Church Aid (Guild) Society.
- Secretary of the Barrabool Hills Cemetery Trust



*Above: The Leigh family.*

*L to R: Joyce, Mrs Leigh and Mr R J Leigh, Marion & Mr R C Evans.*

*Mr Evans, a godfather to Mrs Leigh, visited the Leigh's and worshipped at the Highton Methodist Church. He donated two electric radiators to the church in 1939.*

The following article is reprinted courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser*, 29 January 1955.

#### **“SALE OF WELL-KNOWN HIGHTON PROPERTY**

**One of the best known Highton properties Carramar (meaning shade of trees) has been sold. The vendor was Mr R J Leigh and the purchaser was Mr Bryan Scott Inglis.**

**The eight roomed house, which is on five acres of land, was built by the late Mr William Higgins approximately 70 years ago.**

**It was purchased by Mr Leigh in March 1926 and he went into residence two weeks before the tornado swept through the district on July 22 1926.**

**The tornado uprooted a row of trees on the Thornhill Road side of the property, considerably damaged many of the other trees, and wrecked chimneys. Mr Leigh undertook an extensive replanting programme and there is now a prolific growth of a wide variety of trees on the property. He also made improvements to the house including the erection of a large sun room overlooking the Barwon valley. Mr Leigh has purchased a property in Merton Grove, Manifold Heights.”**

The following article is reprinted courtesy of the *Geelong Advertiser*, 1 March 1955.

**“The Highton Methodist Church annual thanksgiving services on Sunday were largely attended. Mr John Howes conducted the morning service and the evening service Rev. C Gallagher was the preacher. Mr Merritt was the soloist at the evening service and organists were Mrs Merritt and Miss E Johns.**

**At the conclusion of the evening service a farewell was tendered to Mr and Mrs Rowland Leigh and their daughters Joyce and Marion.**

**Mr Gallagher spoke of the good service rendered to the Methodist Church by the Leigh family and made the presentation on behalf of the congregation. Mr W McDonald spoke on behalf of the Trustees, of whom Mr Leigh had been Secretary for 24 years. Reference to the outstanding work of Mr Leigh in the church was made by Mr N McDonald, who spoke of the executive positions held by Mr Leigh during his work with the Highton Methodist Church. Mr McDonald also made reference to the sterling work done in the church by Mrs Leigh, who had served by being a Superintendent of the Sunday School and as a local preacher. She had the distinction of being the first lady to represent the circuit at conference. The help of Misses Marion and Joyce Leigh was also referred to by Mr McDonald, particularly their work in the Sunday school and as active church members.**

**The Rev. Laphorne, on behalf of the congregation, supported Mr McDonald's remarks.**

**Mr Leigh, in response, said that he was sorry to leave the Highton Methodist Church and its activities. It gave him great pleasure to know his work had been appreciated. Similar remarks were made by Mrs Leigh and her two daughters. After singing the hymn, "This Is the God We Adore", which was Mrs Leigh's choice, supper was served."**

At the Trust meeting on 30 March 1955, it was stated that Mrs S Adams consented to becoming the church organist if others 'could be induced to take a turn occasionally'.

A letter was received from Mr Neil Camm enclosing a cheque for £20 "for

the Highton Methodist Church Trust in memory of his parents, the late Chester and Edith Camm". He suggested that if the Trust had any "special works to do" the money could be put to the best possible use in "that corner of God's vineyard which his mother and father loved". The Trust decided to bank the money and later 'use it in a way that would serve as a fitting memory to his parents'.

The sum of £9 was allocated by the Trust for a special appeal to the Parsonage Upkeep Fund.

Improvements to the kitchen were again discussed at a meeting of the Trust on 22 June 1955. Mr E Pescott had inspected the building and he considered it would be better to remove the old building and re-build one of wood which he estimated would cost between £700 to £800 provided the Trust carried out such works as painting by voluntary labour. He was asked to prepare a plan.

The Trust members also agreed to remove the row of memorial avenue trees on the north east side because trimming them had become too much for the men.

After 45 years association with the Highton Methodist Church, Miss E Lawry left Highton, and as a gesture of appreciation from the Trust for her services to the church a gift was presented to her.

The next Trust meeting on 27 July 1955 was held in Mr R J Leigh's home. A presentation was to be made to Miss E Johns who tendered her resignation as a church organist prior to her forthcoming marriage.

Mr E Pescott's plan for a new kitchen was submitted and accepted on the motion of Mr McDonald and seconded

by Mr L Johns. Building was to proceed as soon as possible after the church building authorities had approved the plan.

It was moved by Mr R J Leigh and seconded by Mr N Smith that Messrs L Johns, N McDonald and E Pescott be appointed a building committee and that they arrange the removal of the old building and the disposal of same.

This was the last motion ever made by Mr R J Leigh who had been in ill health for some time. He passed away on 16 December 1955 and at the next Trust meeting on 1 February 1956, members observed a minute's silence in respect of the late Mr R J Leigh.

At the meeting Mr N McDonald gave a report on the official opening of the new kitchen, which occurred on 1 November 1955.

Mr And Mrs A Johns who had been the Highton representatives on the Parsonage Committee for some years declined re-election and Mr I Allan and Mr and Mrs E Pescott were elected.

It is noted that there was never any mention in the Trust minute book of the person who became Secretary following Mr R J Leigh's death, but older members of the church today are sure it was Mr A Rex Smith.

Chapter 21

**GIFTS & MEMORIALS 1900-1956**

Between the years 1900 to 1956, the Highton Methodist Church received a number of gifts and memorials; especially after the disastrous tornado destroyed the building in 1926. The following is a list of known donations.

**1900** The Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavour donated a wall clock. This clock survived the tornado in 1926.

**1901** Mr Thompson presented a communion table and flower basket on behalf of the Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavour. These did not survive the tornado.

**1902** The Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavour donated a pair of collection plates on 24 September. This gift presumed lost in the tornado.

**1906** Miss A Mawson gave a communion set with individual glasses.

**1925** On 23 August, the Young Peoples' Society Of Christian Endeavour presented a framed photo of Mr Robert Lane, Senior, which was also presumed lost in the tornado.

**1927** After the tornado, money was raised for the rebuilding fund with individual donations, as well as by means of contributions from other churches across the State of Victoria. Among the non-monetary gifts were the following.

Coping stone was given by St. John's Church of England, Highton and a supply of building stone was donated by Cr S H McCann and Mrs F V Leigh. Mr E Huggett donated the sand and Mr C Casey gave gravel. Mr R G Ebbott

voluntarily did the work of rebuilding and repairing organ. The carpets and pulpit were donated Mrs J E Leckie, in memory of her parents, Mr and Mrs J P Best.



*Above: The pulpit donated by Mrs J E Leckie. Photo provided courtesy of Mr Hedley Smith.*

The pulpit has the following two inscription plates, but note that there is an error in the bottom larger plaque, as by 1927, the church was not Wesleyan, as all Methodist churches had united in 1902.

THE GIFT OF  
MRS. J. E. LECKIE  
IN MEMORY OF HER PARENTS  
**Mr. and Mrs. J. P. BEST**  
1927

This is the front panel of the pulpit installed in the Highton Wesleyan Church in 1927 following the tornado damage in 1926. The pulpit was removed in 1970.

The Sunday School committee donated twelve choir chairs. A pulpit bible was the gift of 'a friend', the pulpit hymn book was donated by Mrs J A Milbourne and a pulpit Seat was given by Mr R C Thear. The Senior Young Peoples' Society of Christian Endeavour also presented a collection plate, whilst the Junior Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour presented the hymn board.

**1927** The Ladies' Church Aid donated a table, which now stands in the foyer of the new church.



*Above: The table donated by the Ladies' Church Aid in 1927. Photo provided courtesy of Mr Hedley Smith.*

The inscription on the plaque as is follows.

THE GIFT OF  
THE LADIES' OF THE CHURCH AID  
1927

**1928** On the 18 April, a memorial brass tablet was erected on the east wall of the 'old' church in memory of Charles Ireson and his wife Eliza. It is interesting to note that in 1873, Charles Ireson was lessee of the Kardinia tollgate situated on the corner of Barrabool Road and Boundary (Scenic) Road.

IN LOVING MEMORY  
OF  
**CHARLES IRESON**  
And his wife **ELIZA**  
Died Nov 24 1880 and Nov 5 1894  
ERECTED BY  
DAUGHTERS AND SON-IN-LAW  
H. DANIEL, A.M. & JOHN HANCOCK  
ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR GOLDEN WEDDING  
18-4-28



*Above: The Ireson memorial tablet. Photo provided courtesy of Mr Hedley Smith.*

Also given in 1928, was another framed photo of Mr Robert Lane Senior. The gift of Mr and Mrs L Davies, presented

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through their daughter, although the daughter's name was never mentioned. This photo hangs above the following brass plaque in memory of Mr Lane, and is situated on the north wall of the Lane Memorial Hall .



**Above & Below:** The photo and wording on the plaque of Mr Robert Lane.

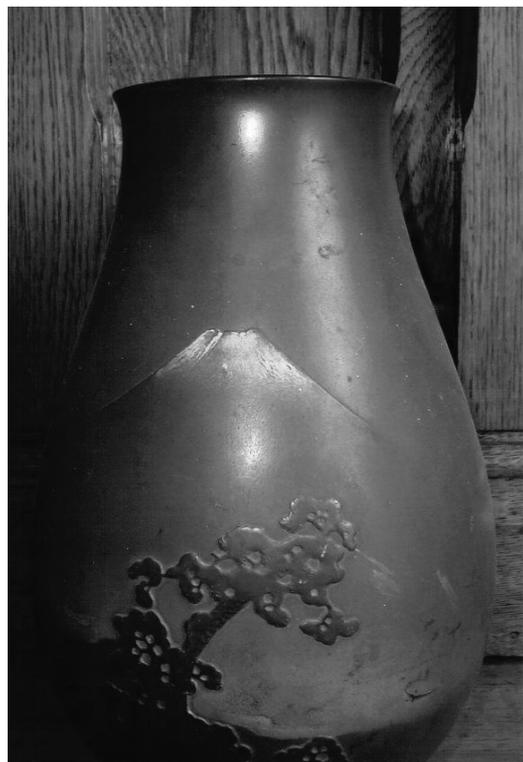
ERECTED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
**ROBT. LANE**  
For many years superintendent  
Of the Sunday School

**1936** A pair of Manchurian oak Ionic pedestals and two brass vases were purchased in memory of the late Miss L Cargeeg.

Note that Mr Cargeeg gave a cheque to the Ladies' Aid and they chose the items. There is no inscription on the items and only one pedestal and one vase are now to be found in the old church.



***Above & Below:** One of the Manchurian oak pedestals and brass vases that were donated in 1936. Photos provided courtesy of Mrs Jean Williams.*



## Steadfast Through Change

**1937** A new pulpit hymn book was given by the Christian Endeavour Society, in addition to an anonymous donation of a new hymn book with music for the organ.

**1938** A new front fence of concrete posts and chain wire were erected from a legacy of Mrs A Lawry. In addition, a wrought iron front gate and balustrade was erected in memory of the late Mrs J Harrison, given by the Harrison family (see photos in the chapter on the Depression & WW II Years).

The Ladies' Church Aid, in memory of Harriet Harrison, also gave a table and it is now situated in the foyer of the "new" church and has the following inscription.

The Ladies' Church Aid  
IN MEMORY OF  
**HARRIET ELLEN HARRISON**  
Their President For Many Years



*Above: The table presented in memory of Mrs. Harriet Harrison. Photo provided courtesy of Mr. Hedley Smith.*

**1939** Mr Bert Evans donated two electric radiators. The following article explaining why Mr. Evans gave the radiators was found in the archives.

'Gift of two electric radiators of latest design of 1000 watts and the cost of installing same from the late Mr Evans who was always noted for his kindness and thought of others and although not a member of the Methodist church he so appreciated the kindness shown by the people of this church when he visited the district and worshipped here and in his last days visits from the members of the Christian Endeavour so touched him that he felt he would like to add some comfort to his friends when they meet for worship during the winter months.

The gift was really a way of showing Mr Evans' appreciation'.

**1948** The Rankin family donated a small brass cross in memory of Mr E W Rankin.

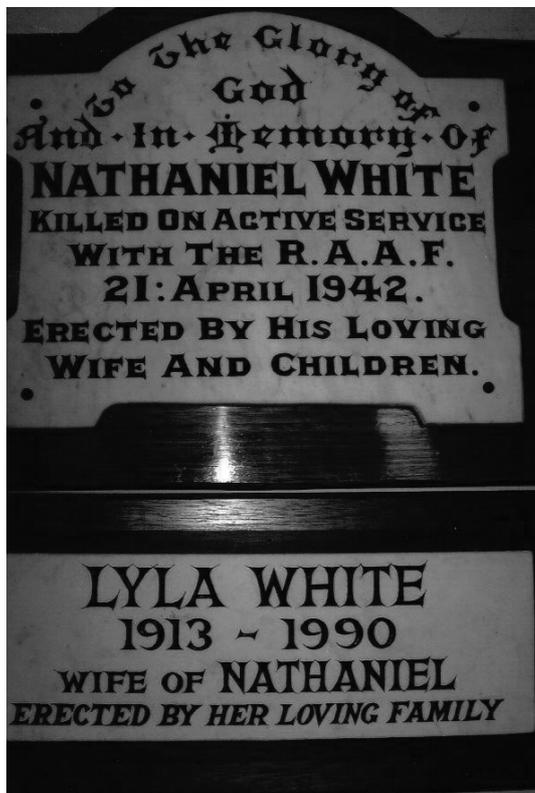


*Above: The cross that was donated in memory of Mr E W Rankin. Photo provided courtesy of Christine Smith*

The inscription on the cross reads as follows.

To the Glory of God And in Memory Of  
Mr. E. W. Rankin  
Gift of the Rankin Family 1948.

1949 On 16 October, a tablet was unveiled on the west wall of the 'old' church in memory of Nathaniel White RAAF, given by his wife and family. A marble tablet to the memory of Mrs White was added in 1990.



*Above: The memorial plaques in memory of Nathaniel & Lyla White. Photo provided courtesy of Mr. Hedley Smith.*

1951 A framed print of a window in Wesley's Chapel, London, given by Miss Irma Howard.



*Above: The copy of 'Spiritual Power' which was presented to the Highton Methodist Church by Miss Irma V. Horwood in November 1951. Photo provided courtesy of Mrs Jean Williams.*

It has the following inscription, and is situated in the foyer of the 'old' church.

PRESENTED TO  
THE HIGHTON METHODIST CHURCH  
By  
MISS IRMA V. HOWARD

The inscription underneath the framed print reads as follows.

**SPIRITUAL POWER**

Memorial Window by FRANK O. SALISBURY in Wesley's Chapel, city Road, London.

Given by FRED J. CATO of Melbourne, Australia to commemorate the sending of Methodist Missionaries to Australia in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and the blessings flowing there-from to the national and home life of the Dominion.

TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
IN MEMORY OF  
**JOHN HARRISON**  
THE GIFT OF HIS FAMILY  
APRIL 12<sup>th</sup> 1953

**1953** The Harrison family donated a Chairman's chair, in memory of the late Mr John Harrison. The chair was dedicated at the Centenary PSA.

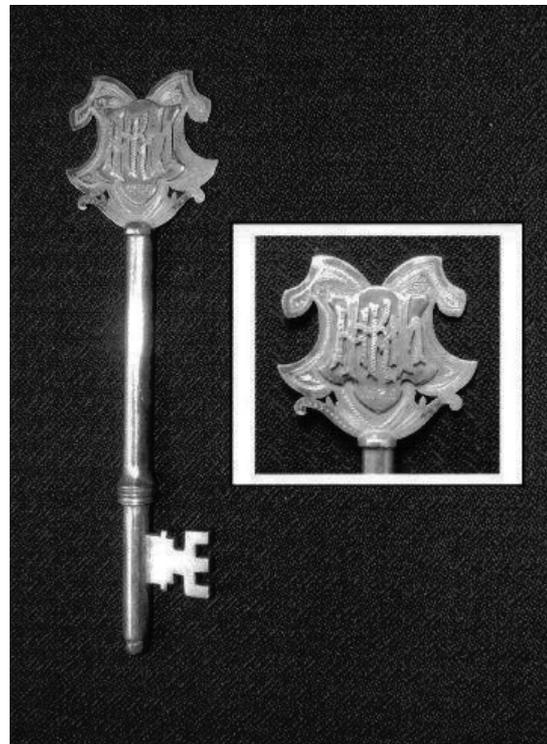
**1955** In memory of his parents, the late Chester and Edith Camm, Mr Neil Camm presented a cheque for £20 to the Church Trust. As the trust was in the process of raising money for a new kitchen as a centenary effort, it decided to use this donation for that cause.

The Highton Methodist Church itself made two presentations in the time period from 1990 to 1956.

The first was in the form of a key, presented to Miss Mary Lane at the opening of the Lane Memorial Hall. She was a daughter of the late Robert Lane and performed the opening of the hall.



*Above: The Chairman's Chair. Photo provided courtesy of Mrs Jean Williams.*



*Above: The Lane Memorial Key. Photo provided courtesy of Mrs Kay Preston.*

The chair has the following inscription.

## Steadfast Through Change

The following inscription is engraved on the key reverse side of the key.

PRESENTED TO MISS LANE  
AT THE OPENING OF THE  
ROBERT LANE MEMORIAL  
KINDERGARTEN HALL, HIGHTON  
14-8-26  
\*\*\*  
Hammerton Stg. Silver

Both gifts were later donated back to the church and are situated in the Fellowship Room of the 'new' church.

The second presentation was an elaborate sweet set given to Colonel F C Purnell, who acted as honorary architect to the rebuilding committee after the tornado in 1926.



*Above: The fruit set given to Colonel F C Purnell 1926. Photo provided courtesy of Mrs Jean Williams.*

The following is engraved on the bowl of the large compote.

SWEET SET PRESENTED TO  
**COL. F. C. PURNELL**  
FOR HIS DESIGN TO THE CHURCH  
AFTER THE 1926 TORNADO

## Steadfast Through Change

Chapter 22

**KNOWN MINISTERS, LAY  
PREACHERS, STEWARDS &  
PASTORATES OF THE HIGHTON  
METHODIST CHURCH 1900 – 1956**

From 1871 until the 1960's, the Highton Methodist Church was in the Geelong West Circuit, this circuit having separated from the Yarra Circuit in 1871.

Unfortunately, early records until 1920 are lost, but from 1921 to 1952 the '*Geelong Methodist Journal*' which was a journal of the Geelong Methodist churches, produced quarterly by Henry Thacker, Pty. Ltd., Printers, Geelong, revealed that although Highton was mentioned in Preaching plans as being under Noble Street pastorate, it was not mentioned in any pastorate notices until April 1925.

There was no resident minister for the Highton Methodist Church until 1960. Over the years the church came under different pastorates.

**Pastorates**

In 1925, the Geelong West Circuit was divided into sections for purposes of pastoral oversight as follows: -

- Rev. L Tait – Noble St., Bond St.
- Rev. W T Hiatt – Newtown, Herne Hill, Highton
- Rev. G T Doherty – Pakington St., Lara
- Rev. G B Campbell, L Th. – Ashby, North Geelong, Lovely Banks
- Mr George Sargant – Moriac, Ceres, Moriac Rail, Paraparap

The following are some of the pastorates that the Highton Methodist was under.

- 1921 - Noble Street. Rev. L Tait

- 1925 – Newtown, Rev. W T Hiatt
- 1934 – Mt Moriac, Rev. S Humphrey
- 1939 – Pakington Street, Rev. J Philp
- 1940 – Noble Street, Rev. J T Duggleby until 1945, then Rev. H M Knuckey
- 1949 – Noble Street, Rev. A Bligh
- 1954 – Noble Street, Rev. C Gallagher'

At the State Library of Victoria, the following notice was found in the 1937 August/ October edition of the *Geelong Methodist Journal*.

- Rev. B R Toi – Noble Street and Herne Hill
- Rev. J Penna – Pakington Street
- Rev. S C Blainey – Newtown, Lara & Lovely Banks
- Rev. S Humphrey – Mount Moriac, Moriac Rail, Ceres & Highton
- Pastor J H Hoare – Ashby & North Geelong

**Ministers**

The following ministers served the Highton Methodist Church from 1900 to 1956.

- 1899 Rev. J Haslam
- 1901 Rev. R W Thompson
- 1905 Rev. S Adamson
- 1908 Rev. R Kelly
- 1911 Rev. J P McCann
- 1914 Rev. J McBride
- 1918 Rev. F J Watsford
- 1921 Rev. L Tait
- 1922 Rev. W T Hiatt
- 1926 Rev. T W Butcher
- 1930 Rev. R B McConchie
- 1933 Rev. J K Arnold
- 1934 Rev. S Humphrey
- 1938 Rev. R J Philp

## Steadfast Through Change

- 1939 Rev. C Gallacher
- 1940 Rev. J T Duggleby
- 1945 Rev. H M Knuckey
- 1949 Rev. A Bligh
- 1954 Rev. C Gallacher

### Lay Preachers

The Highton Methodist Church relied heavily on lay preachers in the early years to fill the pulpit for two services each Sunday.

The following information was received in 1981 from Mr George F G Dean, the Hon. Secretary of the Lay Preachers' Association of the Uniting Church. It sets out the role of the Lay Preacher, and lists some of those who graced the early Highton and Ceres Methodist pulpits.

'Ambassadors for the Lord Jesus Christ in Highton and Ceres...

Over many years Divine Worship Services were conducted, not only by ordained ministers and home missionaries within the Methodist church, but by local preachers (as they were then classified). These consecrated souls, men and women answered the call to preach and proclaim the Gospel, and present Jesus Christ to the congregations at Highton and Ceres, truly Ambassadors for their lord.

Irrespective of the type of weather conditions, they travelled long distances outside their own circuit, per bicycle, horseback, buggy, jinker and some even walked, until the advent of the motor car.

Their services were greatly appreciated and very rewarding, and the fellowship over lunch at several homes was a rich experience for both hosts and guest alike, and lingered long in the memories of all concerned.

I would like to mention some of the Lay Preachers who graced the Highton and Ceres pulpits.

Firstly we have the doyen of Lady Local Preachers who graced the Highton-Ceres Pastorate, Mrs F Pannell Leigh, whose messages were most inspiring and uplifting. Others were Messrs T S Tippet, J S Tinney, H V Holdsworth, F H Bawden, G H Hobson, A K Hillis, A G Lester, A Rawlings, A Gilbert, Mrs Florence Salt, Sydney Falla, Keith Wise, Dr Hedley Millikan, Stanley Illingworth, Mrs Emilie Fletcher, myself and others

On occasions when the Local Preachers' Association of Victoria and Tasmania Annual Councils were held in Geelong, preachers from other parts of the state were also guest preachers at Highton and Ceres, including Mr H P Head (former State President), Mr C W Jones (Tasmania) and Miss P Wilkinson. We give thanks to God for his servants'.

**Note:** Many of the Lay Preachers served for over 50 years, including George Dean (56 years).

An interesting article, which was found and believed to have been printed in '*Church and Nation*' in 1981, reads as follows.

### **'Long Service Noted for Sixteen Barwon Preachers**

**A rally of Barwon ministers, and lay preachers and spouses drew 60 people to the Ocean Grove Uniting Church recently.**

**The gathering, organized by the Geelong branch of the Lay Preachers Association, featured the Rev. Hamish Christie-Johnson, who spoke of 'Evangelism in the Community'.**

## Steadfast Through Change

**Former moderator, the Rev. Jock Lavender, presented a number of lay preachers with long service certificates for 20 or more years preaching service.**

**Recipients included: - Mr George Dean (56 years); Mrs Margaret Williams (53 years); Mr Gordon Bennetts (53 years); Mr Allan Krygger (51 years); Mr Arthur Pearson (52 years); Mrs Florence Salt (50 years); Mrs Emilie Fletcher (50 years); Mr Sydney Falla (44 years); Mr Keith Wise (43 years); Dr Hedley Millikan (36 years); Mr Stanley Illingworth (35 years); Mrs Rex Walker (34 years); Mr Joseph Redding (32 years); Mr Maxwell Thompson (30 years); and Mr Maxwell Smith (26 years)."**

### **Trustees**

#### **Appointed 1899**

- J Harrison, until his death in 1944
- P Hoskin, termination date unknown
- Robert Lane, until his death in 1925
- L C Mountjoy, resigned 1918

#### **Appointed in 1901**

- John Samuel Camm, termination date unknown

#### **Appointed in 1910**

- William Lawry, termination date unknown
- James Albert Milbourne, resigned 1949

#### **Appointed in 1918**

- Thomas Horwood, until his death in 1951
- William Martin Johns, until his death in 1939
- Frederick Morriss, resigned 1927
- Andrew Wall, until his death in 1933

#### **Appointed in 1925**

- David Allan, until his death in 1940
- Ferdinand Johann Godfried Baum, until his death in 1951
- William Nicholas Tippet, until his death in 1949

#### **Appointed in 1927**

- Rowland James Leigh\*\*, resigned 1955 and died in December 1955

#### **Appointed in 1933**

- Oliver Phillip Lane, until his death in 1951
- John Walter Leigh, until his death in 1937
- Percy Jacob Lomas \*\*
- Clarence Gordon Taylor, termination date unknown

#### **Appointed in 1937**

- Norman McDonald\*\*

#### **Appointed in 1938**

- Sidney Ernest Adams\*\*
- Edgar Norman Harding, resigned 1949

#### **Appointed in 1940**

- Alwyn Martin Johns\*\*

#### **Appointed in 1943**

- Robert Laurence Johns\*\*

#### **Appointed in 1951**

- Leonard Charles Dawson\*\*

#### **Appointed in 1952**

- George Frederick Palmer\*\*

#### **Appointed in 1955 (March)**

- Ian Allan
- A Rex Smith
- Neville Keith Smith
- Edward Pescott

\*\* Still in office in 1955

#### **Secretary of Trust 1900-1956**

- Unknown until 1918
- 1918-1931 Mr T Horwood
- 1931-1955 Mr R J Leigh
- 1955 - Mr A Rex Smith

#### **Treasurer of Trust 1900-1956**

- 1899-1939 Mr J Harrison
- 1939- Mr N McDonald

### Church Stewards

The following people are known Church Stewards.

- Mr S Adams
- Mr I llan
- Mr John Harrison
- Mr R L Johns
- Mr Robert Lane
- Mr Randal Lane
- Mr R J Leigh
- Mr T Horwood
- Mr N McDonald
- Mr W N Tippett

The following article is from the *Methodist Spectator*, dated 25 January 1950, which was circulated to all Methodist Churches in Victoria.

### “Ordaining Stewards

**Dr T Otto Nall of Chicago, says this pertinent thing:**

**‘Any person who becomes an officer in the Church of God has assumed a responsibility more sacred than that which inheres in any other official duty known to man. Yet there is scarcely a church in the land which had not been embarrassed by the casual and unthinking way in which some such officers have discharged their duty. But before we blame the layman for his carelessness, let us take stock of the unimpressive way in which the average church official is selected and the hit-and-run method by which he is inducted into office. Only rarely does he take up his official duties amid an atmosphere befitting the holy task to which he is committed’.**”

### Known Communion Stewards

- Mr Ian Allan

- Miss V Harrison (Mrs N McDonald)
- Miss E. Lawry
- Miss Marion Leigh

### Known Bell Ringers

- Mr John Harrison
- Mr Will Johns
- Mr W Rankin
- Mr Harold Taylor

### Known Church Caretakers

- Mr S Adams (ground maintenance)
- Miss V Harrison
- Mrs Eric Harrison
- Mr Harold Hobbs
- Mrs Hobbs
- Mr O Lane (cut back memorial drive trees)
- Miss E Lawry
- Mr J McKenzie (ground maintenance)
- Mr D Nelson & Mr G Palmer (trimmed Cyprus hedge)
- Miss Taylor
- The Highton Rural Bush Fire Brigade burnt long grass around the church yard after 1944. (The brigade was only formed in 1944.)
- The Ladies’ Church Aid helped with cleaning and maintaining the church and its interior fixtures when necessary, as did the Christian Endeavour.
- The men of the Trust also held working bees when necessary to maintain the grounds.

### Known Organists

- Unknown until 1919
- 1919 Miss Johns
- 1920 Miss Gladys Morriss
- 1923 Miss Allan with Miss Wall & Miss H. Morris as assistants

## Steadfast Through Change

- 1930 Miss Ethel Allan, assistant organist
  - 1934 Miss Edith Leigh, for 11 years
  - 1935 Miss Isobel Anderson, Miss E Taylor & Miss F Lomas, assistant organists
  - 1937 Miss F Lomas
  - 1940 Miss Betty Johns
  - 1943 Mrs S Adams
  - 1944 Mrs N Lawry
  - 1945 Mrs S Adams
  - 1949 Mrs R J Leigh
  - 1950 Miss Eileen Johns
  - 1952 Mr A Wilby
  - 1953 Mr D Watmuff
  - 1955 Mrs R J Leigh, evening services & Mr Wes Marshman for several years
  - 1956 Mrs S Adams
- Mr S Johnson
  - Mrs B Lamb
  - Miss Lane
  - Mr N Lawry
  - Mrs P Lomas
  - Mr E Rankin
  - Mrs E Rankin
  - Mrs L Rankin
  - Miss Taylor

The conductor was unnamed but it could be presumed to be Mr G Merritt. Mrs N Lawry was organist.

### Evening Service

- Mrs S Adams
- Miss A Anderson
- Miss N Angus
- Mr R Evans
- Mr T Goodall
- Mrs T Goodall
- Miss M Gwyther
- Mr G Harrison
- Mr S Howard
- Miss M Jacka
- Miss B Johns
- Miss V Johns
- Mr G Merritt
- Mrs G Merritt
- Miss M Mountjoy
- Miss M Nelson
- Mr T Tippett
- Mr S Wall

Mrs R J Leigh was the conductor. The organist is unknown.

### Choir

At church services, the choir sat in the north west corner facing the congregation. They added greatly to the singing of the hymns and in rendering the anthems. It is impossible to give accurate names of all choir members over the years 1900 to 1956, and indeed they were seldom mentioned individually in minute books. Some newspaper reports have done so, for example in the *Geelong Advertiser* report of the Church Centenary in 1953. In the trust minute book there is made mention of all choir members at the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Highton Methodist Church in 1944, and is of interest because the choir was augmented by former church choir members. The following were mentioned.

### Morning Service

- Mrs B Anderson
- Mrs J N Anderson
- Mr F Bedggood
- Mrs C Dawson
- Mr S Howard

## Steadfast Through Change