

# *A Century of Service*

*Walker Street Methodist Church  
North Sydney*



**1865 - 1965**



## *Ministers 1866 - 1965*

St. Leonards first appeared in the list of stations in 1866.

For four years it formed part of the York Street Circuit, or Sydney North Circuit as it was then known, three ministers being appointed each year, the last mentioned in each year residing at St. Leonards. The area for which he was responsible extended from Milson's Point to Pittwater; this, of course, entailed long distances to be covered by foot, on horseback or by buggy.

1866 — Revs. Daniel J. Draper, William Kelynack, William Bourne.

1867 — Revs. William Kelynack, William Clarke, Robert Lamb.

1868 — Revs. Henry H. Gaud, William Clarke, Robert Lamb.

1869 — Revs. Henry H. Gaud, William Clarke, Samuel B. Rigby.

In 1870 St. Leonards was constituted an independent circuit, and the Superintendent was directed to change once each month with the minister of the York Street Circuit.

At this point of time, September 1870, St. Leonards reported 1 probationer, 3 local preachers, 5 class leaders, 90 members, 8 members on trial, 4 Sabbath schools, 28 Sabbath school teachers, 210 scholars, 2 day schools, 2 day school teachers, 74 scholars and 500 attendants at worship at 3 chapels and 2 other preaching places.

The circuit consisted of St. Leonards, Lane Cove (now Pymble), South Colah (now Normanhurst), Willoughby (now Chatswood South), and Pittwater.

The Superintendents from that year to the present are:—

1870-71 Rev. Frederick W. Ward

1872-73 Rev. Edward J. Rodd

1874-76 Rev. James G. Middleton

1877-79 Rev. Charles Stead

1880-81 Rev. Frank Firth

1882-84 Rev. James E. Carruthers

1885-87 Rev. William H. George

**In 1887 Manly became a separate circuit; Willoughby and Gordon circuit was formed in 1888.**

1888-89 Rev. Edward J. Rodd

1890-91 Rev. W. Halse Rogers

1892-94 Rev. Joseph Beale

1895-97 Rev. James A. Nolan

1898-1900 Rev. George Lane

**In 1899 Mosman became a separate circuit.**

1901-03 Rev. Joseph Spence

1904-06 Rev. W. Halse Rogers

1907-09 Rev. W. Woolls Rutledge

1910-13 Rev. Benjamin Dinning

1914-15 Rev. Frederick Colwell

1916-17 Rev. James Colwell

1918-19 Rev. Joseph Walker

1920 Rev. Arthur H. Johnstone

1921 Rev. Archibald Graham

**In 1922 Crow's Nest became a separate circuit.**

1922 Rev. Claude L. Connor

1923-26 Rev. J. Sweetnam Thomas

1927-29 Rev. Albert E. Townsend

1930-33 Rev. William R. Poole

1934-37 Rev. W. Waite Roger

1938-42 Rev. Archibald Collins

1943-47 Rev. Ewart T. Chapman

1948-50 Rev. Kay Mason

1951-54 Rev. John H. Sorrell

1955 Rev. Milford E. Southwell

1956-59 Rev. Jack G. Leonard

1960-63 Revs. Gloster S. Udy,

Bernarr H. Stevens

1964 Revs. Gloster S. Udy,

Kenyon L. McDowell

**In 1965 Crow's Nest and North Sydney were amalgamated.**

1965 Rev. N. Lynford Smith

Rev. Roy W. Hubbard

The most recent statistics show the growth of 95 years: the one circuit of 1870 has become 12 circuits with 18 ministers, 1 probationer, 23 supernumeraries, 2 deaconesses, 2 other agents, 134 local preachers, 5,427 church members, 48 Sunday schools, 769 Sunday school teachers, 4,577 scholars and 6,796 attendants at worship at 50 churches and 2 other preaching places, together with 52 school buildings and 19 parsonages.

The most obvious changes in church life in that time, besides growth, are the complete eclipse of the members' class, and the very big reduction of the number at Public Worship in comparison with the Church Membership.

# *A Century of Service*

1865 - 1965



*Walker Street Methodist Church  
North Sydney*





*The Rev. Roy W. Hubbard*



*The Rev. Noel Thomas*

## FOREWORD

On behalf of the Trustees and members of Walker Street, I would like to express thanks to the qualified and dedicated member of the Church who has prepared the history in this booklet in spite of difficulties, and who prefers to remain anonymous.

Last year's fire at the Lyceum has so disorganised the records of the Methodist Historical Society, that many valuable records were not available. These include records found in a bottle under the foundation stone of the old Walker Street Church.

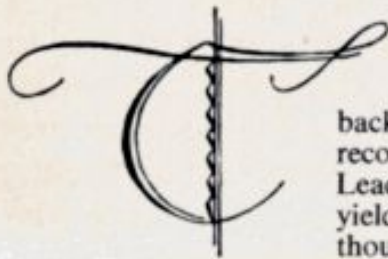
We would like to thank all who have given assistance, particularly Mrs. R. W. Short, Research Secretary of the Methodist Historical Society, the Rev. R. M. E. Glover and the staff of the Property Department, and the Trustees of the Mitchell Library for the use of valuable maps, books and original manuscripts in their possession.

R. W. HUBBARD



## A CENTURY OF SERVICE

### *In the Beginning*



THE STORY of both North Shore and of North Shore Methodism in its early days forms a mosaic whose shining little pebbles blend in with a muted background. But the pebbles are there for the search — records of Local Preachers' Meetings, Quarterly and Leaders' and Trust and Property records, and circuit plans yield their treasures, and we know they are authentic, though alas! for some periods non-existent. Another problem is the various names that were used for one locality; for instance, our church has been known as North Shore, St. Leonards, Walker St. and North Sydney; also, names applied in the early days to one area now refer to quite a different one.

The earliest grants of land on the north side were not on the water front, but as "farms" in the present Willoughby-Lane Cove area. To reach them the usual route was to row from Dawes Point to Gore Bay and up a creek to a point near the present Crow's Nest—thence by a track, the first road on the northern side.

Then in 1804, James Milson was granted an area on the harbour side, land which he, as an agriculturist at heart, at first rejected as mere rock, unable to grow anything. This land included the area later given by him for a Wesleyan Chapel.

In 1817 we find Billie Blue established at Northampton Farm, which included Blue's Point, to check the smugglers and absconding convicts who were troubling the Governor. About that time, a road was "hacked through dense bush" from Blue's Point northwards.

Settlement did not follow quickly, for in 1838-40, when Sir Thomas Mitchell was laying out St. Leonards or North Shore, there were only a few isolated huts here. All of these areas came to form part of what became known as St. Leonards Circuit.

The first record of Methodist interest comes briefly in October, 1842, when services were to be held at 3 p.m. Then in 1848 when the population was officially 412, we find North Shore to be placed on the plan of York Street, "if Bro. Pickering can find a suitable place."

In April, 1851, services, commenced in January, were held at 6.30, and Bro. Walsh, an experienced leader in the circuit, established a class meeting at 4 p.m. on Sundays. Class moneys for the first quarter amounted to 5/8 and for the next 1/2. Evidently little interest was taken in the venture, as in September that same year North Shore services were "to be discontinued for the present." We find Brother Walsh leading a class at Prince Street (The Rocks area) in 1852.



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Late in 1855 it was decided that North Shore should be established on a regular basis, and a committee was appointed to find a place for regular worship. Evidently something was done, as in 1857 and 58 there are records of collections from the meetings, but the picture is not clear.



*Mr. W. H. McKeown*

One of the most devoted pioneers of Methodism in the whole North Sydney (St. Leonards) circuit was Mr. W. H. McKeown, whose interest is manifested at Lane Cove (now Pymble), South Colah (now Normanhurst) and North Shore. In 1859 he was recognised as an accredited Local Preacher after many years as a Class Leader.

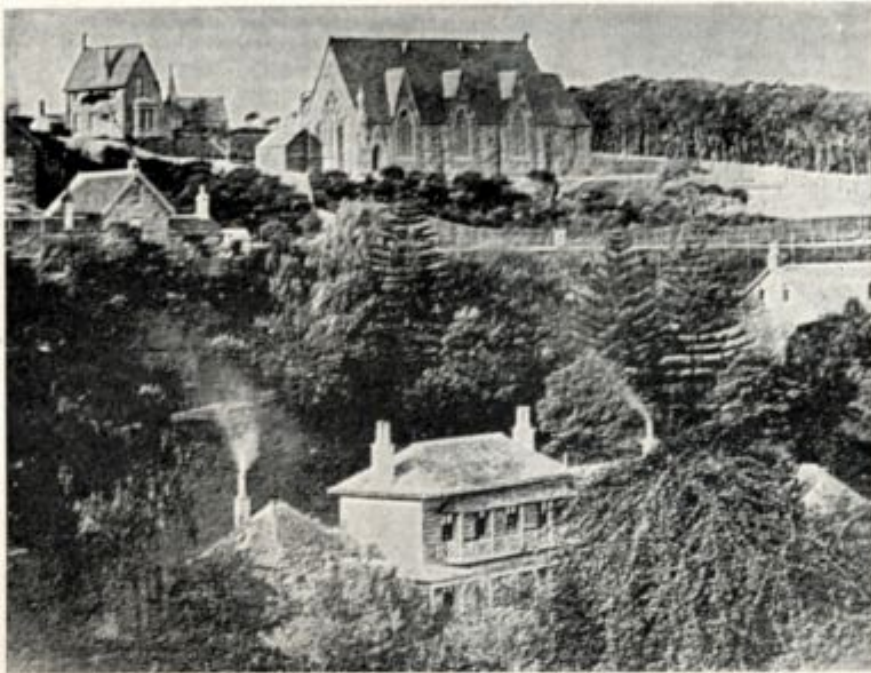
In 1858-59, Sydney Directory gives the names of 125 prominent residents and business people living at North Shore; but the Methodists were still in difficulties, for in June 1859, as no suitable place was available, services were again discontinued. On 1st July, the Quarterly Meeting formed a committee to find a site, which they did, buying a cottage for £500, £350 of which was in hand. So far, it has not been possible to find the exact site, or what eventually happened to this cottage. In September, 1859, it was decided to hold services in the cottage at 11 and 7 each Sunday.

Church matters were apparently slow to pick up, as for March quarter, 1860, collections amounted to 8/- and the following quarter nil. From then on, however, for several years, there are regular records of collections, when in the June Quarter, 1862, the total income amounted to £9.4.6, and a continuing class had been formed. A detailed account of collections may be of interest. Tickets, £1.1.6; class money, £3.6.6; collections, £3.7.0; marriage fees, £2.10.0 in the September quarter, 1864.

It might be well at this point to digress from Church history to try to catch a glimpse of the locality the Church was trying to serve. We read of the beauty of Lavender (Hulk) Bay, with a waterfall "rushing down through dense bush"; of a constantly running creek, Rainbow Creek, at the intersection of Walker and Mount Streets, very difficult to cross in bad weather, and almost always forcing pedestrians to take off their boots, which ran through "a thickly wooded and picturesque area" to Careening Cove; of people walking through "thick bush" from Mosman and Neutral Bay (then consisting of eight houses) to obtain supplies, and at times becoming "hopelessly lost"; of an orchard at the corner of Miller and Hill Streets; no postal deliveries; no newspapers till 1871.



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*The surroundings of the Walker Street Church (upper left) in 1872,  
Christ Church, Lavender Bay in the foreground. Note the bush.  
Photo a gift from the late Rev. Dr. F. Cash.*

This may give us a little truer perspective of the difficulties of the Church in these times. We find in 1862 a tea meeting being arranged to pay interest on the debt on the cottage and "to promote the work of God in that locality, and, further, that prayer meetings generally ought to be better attended by the Church Officers". Later in that year we find the officials seeking a third minister to reside at St. Leonards (North Shore). The next January, 10/- per week was offered for use of the School of Arts at the site of the present Police Station, as a preaching place; presumably the cottage was not meeting the need, as hoped.

In July 1863, a deputation was arranged to wait on Mr. James Milson in connection with the land he had promised for a Chapel; and the same men were also to take steps towards the establishment of a school. The deputation was successful, and the deed of gift for the land bears the date of December 29, 1863. A condition Mr. Milson imposed was that the Church bell should be rung every Sunday. We are looking forward to having with us at the centenary celebrations one of his direct descendants.

The final step before the building of the Old Walker Street Church appears to have been a further request for a third minister for the St. Leonards area of York Street Circuit to reside at North Shore — a single minister to receive £20 per quarter, with an allowance of 25/- weekly for board.



## A CENTURY OF SERVICE



*Mr. James Milson*

From a picture by courtesy  
of North Sydney Municipal  
Council.

It was not till 1866 that St. Leonards appeared in the list of stations, when it still formed part of the York Street Circuit; but, from then on, it did have its resident minister, as may be seen by the list of ministers in this brochure.

### First Steps

As the foregoing notes will make clear, there were many attempts, some successful, some of short duration and little effect, to establish Methodism in the North Sydney area, before "Walker Street", as it is affectionately known to so many, became a reality. And, though some of the records even after that time are missing, it is possible from 1864, when the foundations were laid at what is now the northern approach to the Harbour Bridge, near North Sydney Station, to form a reasonably clear picture of the developments that have led to this centenary of "Walker Street", and to the circumstances of the Crow's Nest-North Sydney Circuit, as constituted this year.

The records of this hundred years make absorbing reading, and, despite the many problems, show God's guiding hand throughout.

Numbers have never been very great. The nineteen twenties reached the peak of 175 full members in the circuit; the next decade brought a drop to just below 100, followed during the next ten years by a gradual increase. Since 1950, there has been a steady decline until, in 1964, the figures drop to 80, many of whom, by reason of age, are not able to attend services.

Finances, too, have always presented a problem. One wonders at times how our forefathers had the courage to press on — but press on they did, with some remarkable results, as the story unfolds.

The reason for these apparently disappointing figures is not far to seek. Over fifty years ago, and again and again since then, the records tell, in the very words we hear today, that there has been, throughout, a constant movement — people coming and going; young folk marrying and moving farther afield to establish their homes.

### The Old Church — 1865

In spite of all these difficulties, the story is one of faith and courage. Herein we find again the Biblical story repeated: "By faith Abraham obeyed the call to go out to a land destined for himself and his heirs without knowing where



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he was to go. For he was looking forward to the city with firm foundations whose architect and builder is God."

The foundation stone, then, of what is often called the "Old Walker Street Church" was laid by the Rev. William Taylor of California, on Wednesday, 17th August, 1864, and it was completed the following year, when the same gentleman preached the opening sermon on 18th May, 1865. On Sunday, 21st May, the preachers were Rev. B. Chapman, Rev. W. Curnow, and Rev. W. Kelynack; while at the tea and public meeting the next day, Mr. John Caldwell took the chair.



*The old Church in its final form. In use 1865-1931.*



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The total cost of the building is unknown though permission had been given by the Quarterly Meeting in October, 1863, "for the erection of a chapel to accommodate not more than 200 on the ground floor at a cost not exceeding £1,000". At the opening ceremony £186 was collected.

Records of Trustee Meetings for the next ten years are not available, but it is obvious that financially they were difficult times. Congregations, however, were growing; and, even in these very early days, the energy and liberality of the people were in evidence; for, in 1878, after a special effort, the trustees were able to announce that the debt had been wiped out. Again and again, throughout the story of the circuit, courageous and far-sighted men and women have been raised up at critical times to make advances possible, when difficulties seemed insurmountable.

### Enlarged Church

Soon, the growth of the congregation called for accommodation for an additional 150, and we find the Trustees accepting the tender of Eaton Bros. for £925. No time was lost, and in March, 1883, the foundation stone for the enlargement was laid by Mrs. Schofield, Rev. J. E. Carruthers being the minister at that time.

In the same year the Trustees authorised the acquisition of land in steep little Hill Street, not far from the Church, for a school hall. The foundation stone was laid on 19th May, Mrs. James Forsyth officiating. Eaton Bros. were again the builders, at a cost of £945. Surely a great venture of faith for a small community! The hall was immediately let to the Justice Department for £60 per annum.

The enlarged Church was re-opened on 29th July, 1883, with three services, with a re-union the next evening, and a tea meeting on the Tuesday.

Again, the Church folk set to work to raise the necessary money; for instance, the next year they cleared £327.7.6 by a bazaar and wild flower show — no mean feat when one considers the value of the pound at that time. Then, in 1886, a new organ costing £205 was installed and alterations made to the rostrum for £64. Soon after followed the re-roofing of the Church, and renovations generally to the organ.

### Years of Advance

The eighteen eighties were undoubtedly among the most progressive periods in the North Sydney area. In all directions sites were being sought where effective work could be established for the Kingdom of God. These, for instance, included Greenwich, the Berry estate, Gore Hill — right through to Pittwater.

In present circumstances, of great significance to Walker Street, was the building of the Church in Holterman Street, Crow's Nest — on land given by David Berry — another remarkable venture of faith, since the tender accepted



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was for £745, when less than £20 was actually in hand. The foundations were again laid by Mrs. Schofield, and the official opening on 21st November, 1886, was followed the next year by the opening of a Sunday School.



*Hill Street Hall, in use 1883-1916.*

### Central Hall

Two other major building projects were carried out in the circuit in 1913; one, a very far reaching stage in the development of Walker Street Church. The need had long been felt for a building to bring Church and Sunday School into closer touch; and, to achieve this the Trustees had in 1892 applied to Conference for permission to sell the Church. The following year, tenders were called for the purchase of the Church property, and efforts were made to interest

the Masonic Lodge in it. Long negotiations followed, and in September, 1913, the Masonic Hall was offered to the Trustees for £2,100, which offer was finally accepted. Re-roofing, renovations and repairs cost another £300. The official opening of the hall, to be called "Central Hall", took place on Sunday, 22nd February, 1914, Rev. H. Wheen and Rev. W. G. Taylor being the preachers.

In the meantime, other discussions had been taking place about the need for another Church in the North Sydney Circuit (since 1902 no longer called "St. Leonards Circuit"). Near Suspension Bridge was the area concerned, and in 1913 the present site in Bellevue Street, Cammeray, was bought for £240, and it was finally decided to accept an estimate of £350 for the present timber and fibro structure. The total cost was eventually £487. The foundation stone was laid on 1st August, 1914, by Rev. F. Colwell, President of the Conference and Superintendent of the Circuit.

### Consolidation — Life and Work

These valuable properties having been acquired, they were then kept in order by careful supervision, business acumen and loving thought; and, above all, by personal self-sacrificing service and liberal giving. Through the whole story of the century, right up to the present, this has been one of the outstanding keynotes,



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and one of the most heartening. Trust records repeatedly give proof of most careful oversight of property — guttering, re-roofing, floorboards, borer in the organ, loose hand rail or broken fence — repairs large and small that called for, and received, prompt and thorough attention; very often all the work done voluntarily, or with payment only for expert over-sight, and quite often even the materials donated.

### Ever-Ready Helpers

Important as the buildings in the circuit are, however, we fully realise that it is the people who **are** the Church; it is through His servants that God works, and it is by His inspiration that the younger people of the Church are fitted for their place in the community. While the mention of names is often invidious, since it is easy to miss some of the most dedicated but unassuming folk, certain names crop up again and again — such names as McKeown, Forsyth, Simpson, Bridekirk, Nancarrow, Cleland, Abercrombie, Small, Winn, Arey, Davis, Foster, Hughes, Lane, Macourt, Roberts, Clarke, Sanday, Devitt, Harpur, Needham, Lee and Broadhouse — and will, I am sure, be accepted by everyone at Walker Street as indispensable in a list of helpers in various aspects of the life of the Church. Similar long lists could readily be compiled for the other Churches of the Circuit.

Thus the influence of Walker Street has largely come through the Sunday Schools, the Juvenile Missionary Societies, the Choirs, the Youth Clubs, the Ladies' Church Aids, and the Men's Brotherhoods, as well as from the Trustees and Stewards.



*The Central Hall. In use 1914-1931.*

No one will ever be able to measure the results that have come to the young people and to the communities that have developed from Walker Street.

Little wonder, then, that at the Jubilee Quarterly Meeting of Walker Street Church the members should pass the resolution: "This Quarterly Meeting expresses its devout thankfulness to Almighty God for blessings vouchsafed to its ministers and people during that period (50 years) and humbly trusts for a continuance of our Heavenly Father's richest blessing in future years."



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### 1915-1965

Thus comes 1915 — opening of a half century of rapid change, of new ways of life, of reversals of ideas and ideals, with new problems, and still some of the old ones, but intensified by the rush and bustle of the new and violent era ushered in by warfare. "Old Walker Street", no longer standing "amidst tall growing timber and bush in a picturesque situation — far removed from either dwellings or business places" now found traffic ever encroaching, and increasingly frequent removals from her numbers.

But life within the Church still remained active, and Holterman Street and Bellevue Street were also lively and progressive Churches, with a cause at Bay Road shortly to be established. Hill Street school was leased to the Justice Department and was later used as a school and finally was sold in 1916; while Central Hall was for several years leased to the Education Department.

This period up to about 1930 stands out as one of the most fruitful and progressive times for both Walker Street and Bellevue Street. True, there was the perennial shortage of funds, but the activities and self help of the youth groups, in particular, helped to overcome many of the problems as well as to foster goodwill and happy fellowship of the best kind.

### Young Peoples' Club

The following report of the Walker Street Young Peoples' Club, written by Mr. A. B. Cleland, one of the foundation members of the Club, goes to show, in some detail, the great service Walker Street has given not only to its own people, but to the community at large.

"The N.S.M.Y.P.C. was formed in 1918 and operated continuously as a club for young people until 1929. Meetings were held weekly, and attendances were usually good.

"It was essentially a young peoples' organisation, operated for and by the young people of the Church and the meetings had a literary, debating and educational background. Meetings were conducted by the young people themselves, who prepared and delivered the matter on the subjects chosen by the Programme Committee. This gave official status to a considerable body of members who were responsible for seeing that the function entrusted to them was efficiently performed.

"The success of the Club was due to the energy and co-operation of a large number of its members, and it had a considerable impact on the life, work and organisation of the Church. During the years, the active members grew older, married, and in most cases moved from North Sydney — so that it eventually ceased to function in 1929. Many of the members still belonging at that time formed the nucleus of the organisation which for some four or five years, produced plays under the charge of Mr. Elwood Arey.



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*Four ladies who were active members when the old Church was standing.  
From left to right—  
Mrs. M. L. Small, Mrs. N. F. Davis, Miss Y. M. B. Lee, Miss R. M. Winter.*

"As members moved away to other districts they took with them the ideas and organisation of the Club, and many clubs on similar lines were organised throughout the state. In addition to very successful debating teams, the Club gave practice to members in preparing and replying to toasts at their annual Mock Banquets; this quickly developed, and for many years was the accepted method of holding annual meetings of O.K's and other youth groups. A tennis club grew out of this organisation, and this Club is still in existence, with some of its original members having completed 47 years. Mr. A. Abercrombie was mainly responsible for the many happy rowing picnics for Club members and friends of the Church.

"Members of the Club contributed largely to the Church activities. Early in 1920 they organised a function to raise the cost of putting electricity into the Old Church; and succeeded in raising the whole amount. A special appeal was organised in 1921 for £400 for repairs to the organ and the roof. They also assisted at bazaars held to raise money for various purposes, and took a considerable interest and part in the Eisteddfods which were organised by Mr. & Mrs. C. Clark and were carried on for at least eight years from 1933, at some of which amounts of over £90 were raised."

Similar activities and self-helpfulness were evident throughout this period at Bellevue Street, where again not only their own church but the circuit generally benefited by the labours of young and old. These clubs not only kept the young people of both churches busy and happy in a wholesome and helpful atmosphere; but the frequent interchange of members, and joint activities of various kinds built up a circuit spirit of great value, as was exemplified also in joint bazaars, concerts and other activities in which young and old worked together.



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### **Diamond Jubilee**

In 1925, Diamond Jubilee celebrations were held at Walker Street, the invitation to which recalled that that Church had been "the spiritual home of many people and the birthplace of many souls", and rejoiced in "the inspiration and blessing that had been received within its precincts."

The old-time tea-meeting was held in the Central Hall, while on the following day Rev. C. J. Prescott, M.A., D.D., and Rev. H. Wheen, President of the Conference, preached.

### **Signs of Change**

In 1929 came the first mention of resumption of the Walker Street lands for approaches to the Harbour Bridge. The Trustees naturally felt very real regret at the thought of the passing of their deeply loved church. For 66 years it had stood at the junction of Blue, Walker and Junction Streets, and had upheld the highest traditions of Methodism; and many honoured names had been associated with it.

But this regret was tempered by a certain sense of relief, for the situation was becoming untenable. Increase of traffic, the change in the character of a suburb no longer wholly residential, and the demolition of many homes which had accentuated the tempo of removal from the locality had all contributed to making the work of the Trustees more difficult, so that the information that the Main Roads Board was resuming the site meant relief to those in responsibility.

It was not, however, till the end of 1930 that negotiations were completed, compensation of £8,000 being granted. Further anxious deliberations as to the new site followed.

### **The New Church**

As early as 1892 the aim of the Trustees had been, as previously mentioned, to locate church and school under one roof. Since it appeared that the chief area of work for the church lay to the south of McLaren Street, it was finally decided to demolish the front half of the Central Hall and build the church there. Messrs. Girvan were the successful tenderers, their price being £3,900. With certain modifications, the final cost, including new seating accommodation, carpets, curtains, and the removal and renovation of the organ was £4,300. Building began at the end of January, 1931, and the last service was held in the old Church on 28th June, 1931.

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Among those present at the public tea meeting, on the day before this final service, were a Mrs. Montgomery, whose name was the first on the old Sunday School roll, and Sir Earle Page, a former scholar. Mr. J. K. Small was in the chair, and the Secretary of Conference, Rev. E. Coplin Thomas led in prayer, while the addresses were given by Revs. J. E. Carruthers, D.D., H. Jones and S. C. Roberts. Mr. E. Foster, Senior Circuit Steward moved a vote of thanks to all who had helped. On Sunday, the preachers were Revs. J. Walker, F. H. McGowan and S. Bostock Jones.

A pleasing feature of the day's services was the spirit of unity shown; in the afternoon the children from Bellevue Street and from the Congregational Sunday Schools were present, and in the evening the Ministers of the Church of



*Mr. James K. Small,  
Sunday School Superintendent, 1902-1923;  
Trustee, 1911-1934.*



*Mr. Edgar Foster,  
Trustee 1913 to present  
Circuit Steward 1927-1939.*

England, the Presbyterian and the Congregational Churches attended. Mrs. Bennett, the first baby baptised in the old church was also present. The music, under the direction of the Arey family, was one of the pleasing features.

On Saturday, 4th July, 1931, the new Church was dedicated by the President, Rev. J. W. Burton, M.A. The address was given by the Master of Wesley College, Rev. L. E. Bennett, M.A., B.D., who spoke on the House of God, as a House of Worship, of Vision and of Quiet.

At the Anniversary Meeting on 6th July, Mr. Bridekirk, Secretary of the Trust, presented a report of the whole project, and pointed out that the financial position of the Church was much improved, all liabilities having been discharged, and the surplus of the resump-



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tion money invested. The Trustees offered special thanks to Rev. W. R. Poole, and expressed the hope that the people of the locality would now take a more active interest in the work of the Church.

At a later date, the Trustees acceded to the request of the Bellevue Street Church that the pulpit and rostrum of the Old Church should be handed over to them.

### New Parsonage

The next property move came with the sale of the old parsonage. This had been built in 1879, costing £1,666, on land bought for £200 in 1877. For a long time it had not proved satisfactory, and in 1939 it was recommended that it be sold. A study of the records of that period reveal signs of the great care taken



*The old Parsonage in 1915. The Rev. F. Colwell is at the gate.  
This building was in use 1880-1939. It still stands at 153 Walker Street.*



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by the Trustees in their search for the most suitable site or building. Finally, a purchase of some of Dr. Bligh's land at the top of Walker Street was approved, and the present attractive residence erected.

### A Period of Problems

From 1929 onwards, the general financial stringency made itself felt very seriously in Church as well as in other avenues of life. Added to this, the number of members showed a definite and continuous falling off. The exodus of young people over a long period was showing clearly in the drop in the number of marriages. Whereas in the twenties, there were well over 20 every year, the numbers went down till from 1959 on, there have never been more than four in any year. Baptisms naturally follow a similar pattern.

This sounds very discouraging, and in many ways, it is. But there is another side to the story. Who can estimate the value of the Christian training given to the families of the young people who themselves had learned at Walker Street, before going farther afield, the value and the duty of Christian service and leadership in their own homes, and in the community in which they had settled? Many of them have undoubtedly put into practice some of the helpful methods of people like Mrs. Greenlees, for instance, who did so much to hold together the young folk during the disturbed years of the Second World War — such people's influence still continues to spread.

Various methods of dealing with the financial problems were tried during these difficult years. Eisteddfods helped for a time; envelope systems, thanksgiving boxes, fetes, concerts — the whole gamut; but, despite the sacrificial efforts of the members, the Trustees and Officers had trying and anxious times.

Suggestions of amalgamation and redistribution of circuits came in for frequent discussion. In 1922 Crow's Nest, became a separate circuit (and in 1926 Bay Road Church was linked with it), while Walker Street and Bellevue Street then constituted North Sydney Circuit.

In 1932 a suggestion was made that Bellevue Street and Crow's Nest should form one circuit, while Walker Street should be attached to Central Methodist Mission, with a resident minister at North Sydney. In 1941 there was talk of asking the Home Mission Department for a young man to help at Bellevue Street, and the same year a re-amalgamation of Crow's Nest and North Sydney was mooted, the two to be worked as a mission; also the possibility again of Crow's Nest and Bellevue Street working together, with Walker Street linked with Mosman. None of these suggestions proved acceptable.

Then in 1955, a motion was brought forward that North Sydney should be released of the responsibility of having an ordained minister. During this troubled



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time, it had proved necessary to ask assistance from the Home Mission Department, and quarterly grants were made as needed, at times reaching £70.



*The new Parsonage. In use 1940-1965.*

one year they raised £74 by a fete for Overseas Missions. Also a live Bible Study Group began to meet weekly, and continued until 1964, when the members engaged, instead, for a time, in a visitation effort to try to meet some of the many people, in high-density buildings, who have no Church affiliations.

Moreover, active interest has been displayed in the affairs of the Church at large. Effective studies of the Social Service Department, of the Children's Homes, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, of Home and Overseas Mission Work, right up to such current projects as the Wayside Chapel at King's Cross have taken place from time to time, resulting in much interest for members and considerable practical help for these causes. It is perhaps worth mentioning that, in the 1964 report on Overseas Missions for Sydney North District, the average giving from North Sydney was 59/6 per head, very much the highest for the District, and comparing well with the 21/- New South Wales average per member.

### Another New Venture

But it had become obvious that even with Home Mission Dept. grants, North Sydney could not carry on alone; and, in 1959, a proposal was made that

Meanwhile the normal work of the Church life went on. An active Men's Brotherhood was working in 1931; later it was revived in 1945. In 1946 a Young People's Fellowship was established, but because of lack of numbers, most of the youth organisations including Order of Knights and Methodist Girls' Comradeship, which had commenced in 1922, lapsed by 1955.

However, the following year, "Your Club" was established, and a branch of Rays (for school-age girls) began what proved to be an active and happy body;



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the Young People's Department should establish a Bible College here, using some of the ample facilities of the Central Hall, with the object of fitting young people for active Christian work, not necessarily in the ministry although 19 have gone from here to Leigh College, four have gone into the Deaconess Order and one to Overseas Missions. The Director of the Y.P.D. was to be Superintendent of the Circuit, and his assistant to live in Walker Street parsonage, and divide his time between the pastoral care of the circuit and the Y.P.D.

A new and badly needed kitchen was built in the Hall, and temporary quarters established upstairs for the men students, while the girls resided at Gordon Hostel. Later, the Methodist Church purchased a hostel, in Berry Street, for young men, and the Bible College students now reside there, but still use Central Hall also.

The coming of these young people meant a most welcome influx of young life into the church, particularly in the evening service. A Methodist Youth Fellowship was also established, and a Couple's Club developed. An invaluable aspect of this venture has been the happy working together with young people of many nationalities — Fijians, Papuans, Tongans, Indians, Chinese from Hong Kong and Malaya, Aborigines. One of the young men from Hong Kong has recently become a Church Steward, and is a most helpful member of the Church.

A Stewardship Campaign in 1960 resulted in a considerable improvement in our finances, but there is still need for great care in this field. However, we were able in 1964 to end the year with a credit balance of £141, despite still decreasing numbers. Old friends have passed on; and others, by reason of declining health, are not able to attend services; though, by pastoral and lay visitation, they are kept in touch with the Church. The purchase of a bus, in an effort to help Sunday School and Church attendance did not achieve the results hoped for.

### Amalgamation of Circuits

So, with the decision of Conference to end the joint working of the Bible College and the Circuit, an old suggestion was revived; and a commission appointed to consider the feasibility of amalgamating North Sydney and Crow's Nest Circuits, since they were suffering similar difficulties. The commission has had a number of meetings where the problems peculiar to this area have been thoroughly canvassed, with the hope of finding out what type of ministry will best serve the community.

The Chairman of the District, ministers from some of the near-by circuits, the Home Mission, Young People's and Property Departments, and the ministers and officials of the circuits concerned have given very earnest consideration to the whole matter; have studied maps to show where Churches, Methodist and others, are situated; and graphs which show clearly the social problems of the area, with its loss of homes and the growth of commercial buildings and high density dwellings; the disproportion of older people and especially of women, and



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*William Shum*



the rapid shifting of population, increased by resumption for the Warringah Highway.

After studying the report of the Commission, Conference decided that the two circuits should be amalgamated, with two ordained ministers; and, if necessary, with some financial assistance from the Home Mission Department. This was implemented in January, 1965. Meantime, the commission is to continue, to advise from time to time as to the nature of the ministry which will be most helpful. It was also decided that

the Bible College shall remain, for the present, at North Sydney, but under the direction of the Department of Christian Education, not of the minister of the circuit.

No immediate disposal of property is to take place, though it is recognised that changes of sites may later prove advisable. The ministry is to be of an experimental nature; one of the ministers appointed to devote himself chiefly to pastoral work, as conditions dictate; the other to concentrate on experimental work, especially among the young. The hope is that the great number of unchurched folk in the area should be drawn within the influence and orbit of the church, which may have to change its methods to meet the needs as they are disclosed.

One promising project has just been completed; a series of weekly mid-day Lenten services, planned especially for people in the nearby commercial establishments. These have led to a request from some of those attending, that this service should be continued, not end with the Lenten season.

Unfortunately, just at this point, the Standing Committee of Conference found it necessary to remove the Superintendent of the Circuit, Rev. Lynford Smith to fill a need elsewhere. Consequently, Rev. R. W. Hubbard, B.A., B.D., and Rev. N. Thomas, L.Th., Dip.R.E., have to suffer the disadvantage of introducing a new policy among people whom they do not yet know, and in a district whose special problems they have yet to find out. They may rest assured, however, that all the help and goodwill which the combined circuit can offer will be at their service, and all will pray for God's blessing on their



## A CENTURY OF SERVICE

work. As these two young men take up their tasks here, it may encourage them to remember that these circuits have, all through the century under review, owed much to the young people living in them.

### What of The Future?

So, these circuits seem to have come full circle. In 1922, it seemed wiser to divide; now, in 1965, they start out again with the old pioneering tradition of finding what the need is, where it is, and how best to meet it.

Let us hope that we may all meet it with the same courage and resourcefulness, the same devotion and faith and singleness of purpose of those "knights of old" who rode forth

*"By noble deeds and action bold  
To fight for God and right,"*

always remembering that

*"Still, still the vision glows,  
Still calls the voice divine."*

May we all answer that call, and with God's help thus fulfil His purposes in this century-old cause of Walker Street, and in this circuit of Crow's Nest-North Sydney.

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### CHURCH OFFICERS — 1965

*Ministers:* Rev. R. W. Hubbard, B.A., B.D.; Rev. N. Thomas, L.Th., Dip.R.E.

*Circuit Stewards:* Mr. J. D. M. McKinnon, J.P.; Mr. J. K. Ferguson.

*Church Stewards:* Messrs. E. Foster, J. D. Drysdale, E. J. Davis, F. K. Small, W. Shum.

*Communion Stewards:* Misses B. R. Oakes and Y. M. B. Lee.

*Organist:* Mrs. D. C. Hughes.

*Ladies' Church Aid — President:* Mrs. A. W. Mankey;

*Secretary:* Mrs. M. L. Small;

*W.A.O.M. Secretary:* Miss C. R. Buckley.

*Sunday School — Superintendent:* Mr. D. A. Deall;

*Secretary:* Miss S. A. Colless.

### TRUSTEES — 1st May, 1965

Edgar Foster

Alfred Barclay Cleland

George Lane Small

Frederick Kirk Small

Edward James Davis

Maxwell Talmage Norris

Sydney Horsburgh Bridekirk

Kenneth Ian Tulk

John Arthur Broadhouse

John Douglas Drysdale

Robert Leslie Pattenden



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## CENTENARY PROGRAMME

SUNDAY — 30th MAY, 1965

- 9.45 a.m. DIVINE SERVICE — Rev. R. W. Hubbard.  
Kindergarten Item.  
Soloist — Mr. Harold Dews.  
Organist — Mrs. D. C. Hughes.
- 2.45 p.m. CEREMONY AT SITE OF OLD WALKER STREET CHURCH,  
PACIFIC HIGHWAY, NORTH SYDNEY.  
President of Conference — Rev. EDMUND T. WALKER.  
PROCESSION TO THE PRESENT CHURCH.
- 3.15 p.m. PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOON — Wollstonecraft Male Choir.  
Address — Rev. EDMUND T. WALKER, President of Conference.  
Organist — Mrs. W. Pinkney.
- 5 p.m. CENTENARY TEA.  
EXHIBITION OF OLD PHOTOS, etc., in Kindergarten Room upstairs.
- 7.15 p.m. EVENING THANKSGIVING SERVICE — Guest Preacher —  
Rev. EDMUND T. WALKER, President of Conference.  
Anthems — Past Choir Members.  
Conductor — Mr. C. Massey,  
Organist — Mrs. D. C. Hughes,  
Soloist — Mrs. Norma Norris.  
“Just for Today” — Soloist — Mrs. Florence Bridekirk.
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