

## The Uniting Church

Ken James

The roots of the Uniting Church in Tarooma date back to 1902 when Mr George James invited the Methodist Church to conduct regular services in the newly erected Public Hall.

George James was an outspoken exponent of Christianity and total abstinence, which was not always accepted in the spirit in which it was delivered. One Tarooma resident, who was the constant subject of George's attention, decided that he had had enough, and to practically demonstrate his displeasure, arranged for a quantity of liquor to be delivered to George's house, "Kendalville". The large horse-drawn dray, loaded with barrels, drew up conspicuously in front of the house while vigorous discussions took place. The outcome of this exercise is not precisely known but can very well be imagined.

Details on the activities of the Methodist Church between the years 1902 and 1920 are sparse, but it is certain that George James would have played a very active part in ensuring its continuity. He also had the support of his family and, in particular, his

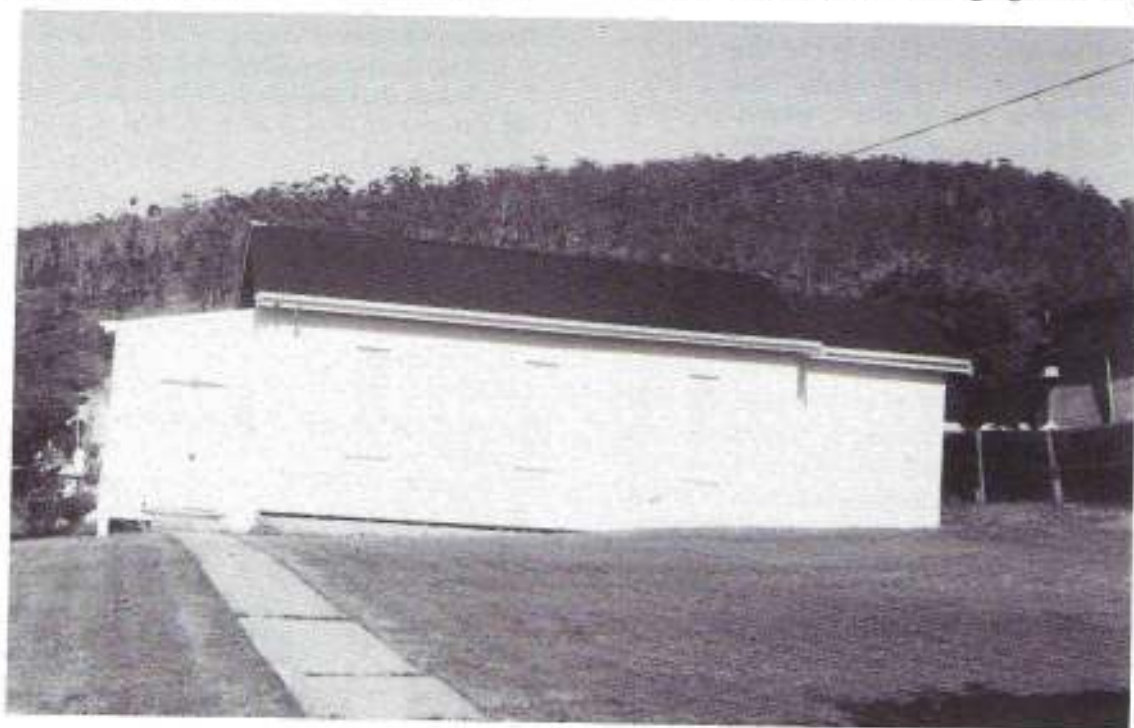
son Roy, who from the age of ten years played the organ. Roy later took care of financial and general week-to-week arrangements for the church until his death in 1936.

In approximately 1920 the Church of England commenced regular services at Tarooma and these were held in conjunction with the Methodist congregation on alternate weeks. Both Methodist and Church of England congregations supported each service. This joint arrangement continued most successfully until about 1950.

In 1948 the Presbyterian Church decided to extend its oversight to Tarooma and to this end it purchased a disused Church of England building situated at Grey in the Fingal/Avoca/Cullenswood Parish for £110 and re-erected it on a site at 1 Tarooma Crescent, donated by the Watkins family.

In 1950 the Methodist congregation negotiated the purchase of a block of land at 136 Channel Highway. This block was subsequently disposed of in favour of a larger block on the opposite side of the highway.

Because the Methodist and Presbyterian congregations were small in numbers, in 1954 the then Presbyterian Minister, Rev. C.Y. Reid, invited the Methodist congregation to join



*The first Presbyterian Church building erected at number 1 Tarooma Crescent in 1948.*

PHOTO AMY ACTON.

them. Under the guidance of the Methodist Minister, Rev. Shotten, this invitation was accepted, which resulted in services being conducted by each church on alternate weeks. The combined congregations became known as the Tarooma United Congregation.

The next step towards unity was the active participation of the Congregational Church with the Methodist and Presbyterian congregations in Tarooma. It was then decided that oversight would be for a three year term by each denomination. This very amicable association continued until 1977, when the three denominations: Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational, were formally united as the Uniting Church of Australia.

In 1980 the Methodist property on the Channel Highway was sold. In the same year the new Uniting Church was erected on the original Presbyterian site at 1 Tarooma Crescent. This building was subsequently dedicated on Sunday the 22nd February 1981 by the then Moderator in Tasmania of the Uniting Church of Australia, Rev. M. Stansall.

Because the new building was designed to accommodate all activities associated with the

church the old Presbyterian Church became redundant and was demolished in 1985,

#### List of Ministers and Lay-Preachers

The Methodist Ministers and Lay-preachers who led worship at Tarooma in the Old Public Hall were:

1902-1954:

Ministers: Reverends F. Angus, G. Arthur, M. Bennett, T. Byard, D. Brimacombe, K. Bennett, D. Clarnette, Cook, B. Crisp, A. Chancellor, N. Elliott, O. Furness, C. Gribble, G. Goldsmith, W. Hayles, V. Heazlewood, Johnston, H. Keck, D. Lewis, R. Little, A. Milligan, I. Maggs, McRae, Northey, W. Peck, Potter, F. Richards, Smith, Vercoe, F.S. Williams, J.F. Williams, R. Williams, Wall, F.A. Woods, C. Walklate and H. Worrell (1902)

Lay-preachers: Messrs. Acres, Burns, C. Benjafield, J.R. Brown, C. Barnard, K. Bott, C. Barwick, Clayshaw, V. Cooper, H. Cooper, W. Clarnette, S. Darling, P. Denney, Denholm, L. Escott, T. Freer, R. Fairhall, J. Fullarton, F. Griggs, C. Grace,



*The Uniting Church, Tarooma Crescent, 1986.*

PHOTO ANDREW LORD.



## Churches

E. Goninon, R. Hazell, W. Eyles, R. Imms, D. Johns, Lloyd, F. Miller, McKay, Morris, Morgan, McLennan, Mapley, W. Morgan, J. Mott, Powell, Rule, A.C. Robinson, Spotswood, Shoobridge, H. Solomon, Wishart and R. Wallace; Mesdames Kean, Mason and Pierce.

### 1954-1977:

This era covers the transition period from solely Methodist oversight to that embracing the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, and the subsequent formal uniting of the three denominations throughout Australia. It also covers the change of the place of worship from the Old Public Hall to the Presbyterian Church at 1 Tarroona Crescent.

Methodist Ministers; Reverends L. Bluff, R. Collis, N. Derbyshire, W. Griffiths, M. Howard, R. Imms, R. Lukies, N. Roberts, K. Shuey and H. Shotton.

Presbyterian Ministers: Reverends C.Y. Reid, G. Leicester and A. Stubbs.

Congregational Ministers: Reverends K. Blackwell, M. Lamont and H. Ralph.

Lay-preachers: W. Dixon, A. Kilner, S.F. Morton and C. Overton.

### 1977-1986:

Uniting Church Ministers: Reverends R. Imms, F. Morris, G. Macdougald and M. Stansall.

Lay-preachers; Messrs. B. Davis, S. Gammon, R. Humphries, N. Marsh, H. Muller, G. Pullen, B. Smith, P. Stanway, R. Warren and G. Wiseman; Mesdames E. Diers, A. Mills and M. Ransley.

Because of incomplete records it is regrettable that some names may have been omitted.

#### Acknowledgements

Rev. K. Blackwell, Mr R. Chappell, Rev. R.J. Imms, Miss J. James, and Mr C.F. James.

#### References

1. Methodist Church of Australasia, Victoria and Tasmanian Conference: Index of circuits and appointment, 1902-1970, compiled by Rev. L. B. Eldridge.
2. Rent and Collection records, Tarroona churches, 1931-1952.
3. K. James, private notes.
4. F.R. Chappell, private notes.



George James, 1889 - 1928.

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