



Friends of the Auburn Tower Newsletter

Volume 11, Issue 1 Spring/Summer 2016

Then and Now ...

At their meeting on 2 April 1928, following the visit of a boys choir from Tupou College in Tonga, led by their Principal, the Rev Dr A H Wood, the Trustees of the then Auburn Methodist Church resolved unanimously to place on record a minute recording "the success of the visit and the spiritual and social benefits that the visit had engendered". The Chairman (the Rev Harry Keck) "was requested to send a telegram on the day of their departure from our shores wishing God-speed on their return to their native land".

The Minute reads:

It is desired to specially record the visit of the Tongan Choir, under the leadership of the Rev A H Wood, which must long remain as one of the notable events in the history of the Auburn Church.

During their stay of three weeks, they were domiciled in our [Sunday] school buildings, and by their gentlemanly bearing and exemplary Christian conduct endeared themselves to us all. Collectively they presented to the Community an unanswerable argument for foreign mission work. Crowded audiences greeted them wherever they appeared on the concert platform, and their wonderful singing aroused unbounded enthusiasm.

On Sunday March 4th [1928], they took part in both services in the Church, which were so crowded that quite a number were unable to gain admittance, and even the [Sunday] school hall proved too small to accommodate the overflow from the evening service.

The Trustees and church officers entertained the Choir at a farewell tea which was an enjoyable function and greatly appreciated by all present. Farewell words were spoken with deep emotions, the boys leaving us with the happiest memories of their association with the Auburn Church and its people.

One of those boys was Sione Latu I, then aged 24. His sons Alipeti (Albert) and Sanitesi also attended Tupou College. They later emigrated to Australia, where Albert married Ruth Arthur, sister of Daphne. After initial training as a youth worker, Albert found his vocation as a massage therapist, and many people, from ballet dancers to Hawthorn footballers, owe their fitness to his skilful and caring attention.

Tupou College was founded by the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia in 1866, and is this year celebrating its 150th Anniversary. Albert Latu, together with the Rev Dr D'Arcy Wood (son of Dr A H Wood), the Rev Siupeli Taliai (principal 1970-79), the Rev Feke Kamitoni (Canterbury UC), and other old boys, returned to Tonga for the anniversary.

D'Arcy Wood writes

There is a long and close association between Tonga's Tupou College and Australia. Having founded Newington College in Sydney (a Methodist boys' school, now one of the leading private schools in NSW) Rev Dr Egan Moulton went on to found Tupou College in 1866. That College has had three locations, first in the capital Nuku'alofa, then in Nafualu (where Rev Dr Harold Wood was principal 1924-37) and presently in Toloa, where it shares a boundary with the international airport. Rev Howard Secomb of East Kew was principal at the Toloa campus 1951-63. The College now has about 1,000 boys, nearly all of them boarders. The association with Newington College goes from strength to strength, as

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Inside this Newsletter:

<i>Then and Now</i>	1
<i>Vale Kevin Hughes</i>	2
<i>Vale Val Bowman</i>	2
<i>New Website launched</i>	3
<i>AGM 2016</i>	3
<i>Friends' Event Programme</i>	3
<i>Renewals</i>	3

Then and Now continued

Newington largely funded a new administration and computer centre at Toloa. At the 150th anniversary celebrations, in June this year, more than 100 Newington boys, plus teachers and Council members, attended. The final event of the celebrations was a splendid concert by the Tupou and Newington students. (Due to a change of schedule, my wife Janet and I missed the concert, but the reports were glowing.)

The 150th anniversary overlapped with the Annual Conference of the Free Wesleyan Church. This Conference is more than a deliberative and decision making event: it involves many church members and visitors each year. The Conference's Communion Service was also a recognition of the 150th anniversary of the College. A congregation of over 1,000 filled the Centenary Church in central Nuku'alofa. The Tongans love the Hallelujah chorus from "Messiah", so naturally this was sung. Other elements reminiscent of Annual Methodist Conferences in Australia, such as the Te Deum of Jackson, were evident. The service was followed by a lavish feast in the grounds of the church.



Ko 'Ene 'Afiu King Tupou VI
The King of Tonga preaching at the Anniversary Service

The next day the celebrations switched to the College campus, with the opening of the new building and the launch of a history of the College. The history is a handsome volume of 500 pages, containing hundreds of photos and other illustrations. The writing was a combined effort of Rev Siupeli Taliai (the first Tongan to serve as principal) and his wife Helen, Rev Dr Geoffrey



Tupou College Band leads the Anniversary March

Cummins and his wife Anne, and the current principal Rev 'Alifeleti 'Atiola and his wife 'Aioema. Dr Cummins had earlier written his doctoral thesis on the life and work of Dr Moulton. Another great asset in the writing of the book was the phenomenal memory of Mr Taliai. Several others contributed archival research.

The music at this event, by brass band and choir, was of a very high standard. The anniversary celebrations will live long in the memories of those who attended, some making the trip from the USA and New Zealand as well as Australia. Loyalty to the College is strong, with "old boys' associations" in several cities. Graduates have occupied leading positions in Church and Government, one of Howard Secomb's students, Akilisi Pohiva, being the current Prime Minister. The future also looks bright, with rising academic standards and a strong support base.

Vale Kevin Hughes

Friends were saddened to learn of the death of member Kevin Hughes in August 2015. Kevin had become increasingly frail after the death of his wife Margaret in 2012, and had moved into a nursing home in Yarrbat Avenue Balwyn, with his dog Leia (replacing Angus). Kevin was a regular supporter of our Friends' concerts and open days, and could often be seen, with his canine companion, at the cash desk at the foot of the Tower.

It was with much pleasure that we learnt recently of a generous bequest to Auburn Uniting Church by Kevin in memory of Margaret. The bequest, to be called "The Kevin Hughes and Margaret Ann Findlay Hughes Bequest" is earmarked for the restoration of the church interior. As it would be premature to carry out any internal restoration work until roof and drainage problems have been rectified, the Church Council has invested the funds until such time as weatherproofing works have been completed.

Vale Val Bowman

We are sorry to report that Valis (Val) Bowman, a founding member of the Friends, died on 22 August, aged 93. Wendy and Alan Chuck attended her burial at Springvale Botanical Cemetery on 29 August. The service was conducted, at Val's request, by the Rev Warren Clarnette.

Born Valis Bassani in Venice, Italy, Val emigrated to Australia with her family when she was just 11. After the War she married Herbert Bowman, ex-RAN, who died in 1995. They have two daughters, Diane and Lesley, principal of Lesley Kehoe Gallery. Val attended Auburn Methodist (later Uniting) Church from the 1950s until shortly before her death. She was a strong supporter of the Friends and our activities, and will be greatly missed.

New Website Launched

The Friends Committee is delighted to announce that our new website is up and running, at www.auburntowerfriends.org.au. There are a few wrinkles to be ironed out, and suggestions for additional items are welcome. Members are invited to submit photos of or from the Tower to include in the gallery.

Annual General Meeting 2016

Please keep the date free: this year's AGM will be held on Monday 24 October at 8.00pm. Formal notice of meeting will follow. An election will be held for all committee positions, and younger members especially are warmly invited to stand for election.

Friends' Event Programme

Saturday 22 October: Tower Open Day 10am – 4pm. Climb the Tower, or enjoy ground-level stalls, with books, bric-a-brac, barbecue and craft on sale. Volunteers will be needed to staff the Tower and stalls – please watch out for a circular in October. If you have books or small, saleable items to donate, please contact Pat Rogerson on 9818 6368 to arrange delivery or collection.

Monday 24 October: AGM and guest speaker, 8pm in the Eileen Pawsey Room. After the AGM (which shouldn't take more than 20 minutes), we will enjoy a presentation by Helen Weston, Chair, Working Heritage (formerly The Mint Inc), on the subject of adaptive reuse of redundant government buildings in Victoria. The night will conclude with supper.

Renewal time

Members will have received their renewals letters due 30 June 2016. If you have not yet renewed, please forward payment to Executive Officer, PO Box 583, Hawthorn BC 3122.



Membership Renewal/Application 1 July 2016 - 30 June 2017

If you are already a member, please encourage more people to join. Membership applications to:

Executive Officer, PO Box 583, Hawthorn BC, 3122.

I/We wish to become a member of the Friends of the Auburn Tower inc; support the purposes of the Association; and agree to comply with its Rules apply in the category of:

Individual Adult	\$32
Concession (under 18, over 60, concession card)	\$20
Family (two or more people at the same address)	\$48
Corporate membership	\$200

and enclose cheque payable to "Friends of the Auburn Tower Inc" for \$_____ or alternatively by Direct Debit:

Bank: Westpac Account Name: Friends of the Auburn Tower

BSB: 033-050 Account Number: 25-7374 (please quote your name on the transfer)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Address/Email: * _____

* By giving my/our email address above, I/we consent to receiving notices and newsletters by this means of transmission.

Membership is open to all who have an interest in this inspiring Hawthorn landmark, built in 1889. Members will receive a newsletter, reduced admission to concerts and talks, and free admission to the Tower.