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**KING'S GROVE
BAPTIST CHAPEL**

A.D. 1875-1975

FROM THE PASTOR

One hundred years is a long time and it is wonderfully pleasing to look back over the years and be able to say that the Lord has surely done great things for us which make us glad, and, in our hearts, we who are here now give thanks to Him for all that He has done in and through this church. (Psalm 86. 10-12).

The Church faces a great task: it is a spiritual task that is made necessary because "out there" in the world there are people who are lost. We have received the Lord's Commission to go to them, wherever they are, with the message of the redeeming love and grace of Jesus Christ that, by the Lord of our message, they may experience newness of life. (Gal. 2:20).

The saving grace of God in Christ is ours to tell and to live. We must make it clear that all hope of eternal life that people may have thought of by any other means than by Jesus Christ is vain. He, and only He, can save from sin; its penalty and its power, and He can be reached only by faith following repentance of sin. (Eph. 2:8).

This is how it is. We must tell it how it is — and people must hear it how it is because there is no other way unto eternal life and entry into the Kingdom of Heaven (John 14:6).

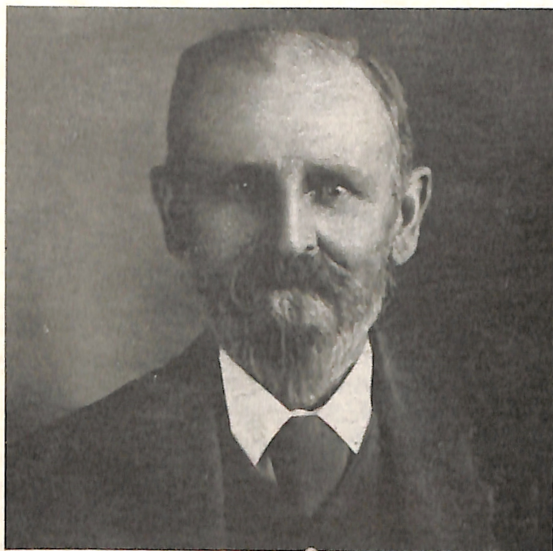
So let us now go forward into a new year, and a new century, and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ which is — Romans 1:16 — "The power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes . . . for in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith: as it is written, 'He who through faith becomes righteous shall live'."

KINGSGROVE BAPTIST CHURCH — (1875-1975-?)

EVER GOING FORWARD BY THE GRACE THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN US
IN JESUS CHRIST THE LORD — OUR SAVIOUR.



The King's Grove Baptist Chapel, 1875.



Chas. A. Howard was born at St. Albans Hertfordshire England in 1846 — was brought to Sydney the following year by his parents on a voyage lasting six months. They settled in Canterbury, and in 1865 when Chas Howard married he and his wife settled on a block of ground at Kingsgrove on which the original church and the present one form a part.

He was a timber getter by trade and at this time Kingsgrove was almost dense virgin bush.

1869 — Converted and baptized at Newtown Church by Rev. G. Shepherd — the first baptized believer residing between the two rivers (Cook's and George's).

The same year he started a Sunday School in an empty house which he kept going with some interruption for a number of years.

Chas. A. Howard — One of the first 9 Aldermen elected to Hurstville Inaugural Council when first formed 1887.

Alderman Bexley Council from first elected Council in 1900 continuously till 1917.

Mayor of Bexley 3 times. 1906-1907-1911.

BRIEF HISTORY

KINGSGROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

1875-1975

1869	Services commenced in home of Mr. C. Howard.
1875	Church erected on land donated by Mr. C. Howard.
1886	Mission started at Kogarah and land purchased at Rockdale.
1893	Land given and work commenced at Carlton.
1905	Arncliffe Church commenced.
1907	Land purchased at Bexley.
1933	New Church building Fund commenced.
1947	Crusader Youth Groups founded and organised by J. Austin.
1953	New Church erected and opened on 20th February, 1954.
1959	Manse purchased. (Wolli Street).
1963	Erection of Christian Education Centre.
1965	Demolition of original Church. Datestone was set in tower wall of existing Church.
1967	New Manse purchased. (Laycock Street).





Mr. William H. Howard *(Son of Founder)*

from childhood was very earnest and faithful in the work of the church and ably carried on his father's work after he died.

His whole life, until his death at the age of 96 in 1963, was given to God and His Church at Kingsgrove.

Organist for 75 years.

Cabinetmaker by trade, made all the pews in the new Church completing the last one at the age of 90.

In 1952 donated further 40ft of land alongside old church on which to build new church which was opened 20th February, 1954. Truly this Church owes much to father and son who pioneered the work in difficult times and kept the witness alive for future generations to build upon.

Mr. W. H. Howard resigned as Church Treasurer on 90th birthday.

KINGSGROVE BAPTIST CHAPEL

1875-1975

Kingsgrove was a parcel of land granted by Governor King to Hannah Laycock in early 1800's — comprising much of land from Wolli Creek to about Croydon Road. It adjoined Sylvester's Farm on other side of Wolli Creek.

In sub-division — Mr Howard acquired a farm lot bounded about where Golf House now stands — and Smithson's bought the adjoining lot where they cultivated a large orchard which only disappeared to make way for Golf Links.

The old Baptist Chapel of Kingsgrove was the first of its kind within the St. George District, and largely owed its origin to the painstaking and enthusiastic efforts of the late Charles Howard.

This gentleman followed the occupation of a wood-cutter at Gannon's Forest, an out-back neighbourhood of Kingsgrove, which is now-a-days known as Hurstville. Strangely enough Charles Howard was a member of the Wesleyan Church, and held services in that faith during 1868 at his residence, located near the Golf Club House adjacent to Stoney Creek Road. During 1874 he was instrumental in opening a Sunday School in a nearby un-occupied cottage, and in the same year he took the important step of being baptized into the Baptist Church at Newtown.

Charles Howard then gave portion of his own land at Kingsgrove for the purpose of building a

Baptist Chapel. This neat building, of sand-stock brick, was opened for worship on September 12, 1875, the foundation stone, which has now been placed in the wall of tower of the new Church, was laid, with due ceremony, on the Queen's Birthday, May 24th, 1875. The cost of the materials amounted to the precise sum of £184/1/2d., and it is worthy to mention that voluntary labour was responsible for the erection of the church.

Stoney Creek Road was originally a private road from Forest Road and little more than a track — no street lights.

Evening services could only be held on moonlight nights.

Also weather played a big part for in heavy rains the roads became impassable as creeks flooded roads.

In 1880's a lay preacher Mr. Lewis J. Brown walked from Marrickville to conduct services and Mr. A. J. Hillier walked from Lakemba early in 1900's.

This tiny church has been aptly described as the "LITTLE MOTHER" of churches of the Baptist faith in St. George, and its members, from time to time, were directly responsible for the formation of other Baptist Causes in the surrounding

suburbs. In 1888 a mission was held at Kogarah, where the then Oddfellows Hall, located at the south-western corner of the intersection of Regent Street with Rocky Point Road, was rented for Sunday worship. Incidentally this hall is still in existence, although it is now adapted for use as a factory. In 1886, also, land was purchased in Lauff Street, Rockdale, and two years later a chapel was built on this site and opened on April 11th 1888.

In 1891 the first minister, the Reverend C. Boyall, was appointed as Joint Pastor of the Baptist Churches located at Marrickville, Kingsgrove, and Rockdale. Two years later a block of land, situated at the corner of Durham Street, and Willison Road, at Carlton, was donated and later a chapel was built on this site. Then, in 1905, the Oddfellows Hall at Arncliffe was rented by the Kingsgrove church authorities for a period of six months, thus giving the worshippers time to organise their own affairs. The foundation stone for the Baptist Church at Bexley, situated at the corner of Forest Road and Kingsland Road, was laid on July 4th. 1914, the first services being held on September 12th of the same year. With this background of expansion, and Christian effort, it is not surprising that the "LITTLE MOTHER" church, at Kingsgrove, is held in such sentimental regard.

The **Only Church** in Kingsgrove for 50 years. It is interesting to note that the original chapel at Kingsgrove accommodated about eighty people, the centre aisle dividing rows of Cedar pews,

which each seated four persons. These pews, together with the rostrum, were donated by the Newtown Chapel. The original minute book, covering the activities of the Chapel at Kingsgrove, is still extant, and is being kept up-to-date. This is a most wonderful record of endeavour, and reads like a book, detailing each and every important act, or event, which has taken place in the life of the little church.

Charles Howard retained an active interest in the preaching of the Gospel at Kingsgrove and the needs of the rostrum were also supplied by various lay preachers. Then came a succession of students for the ministry who, in the course of their studies, had the oversight of the church at periods varying up to two years.

The Reverend John Parker, who had previously held the pastorate for the year 1919, returned to fulfill the duties of pastor at Kingsgrove, in a more or less honorary capacity, as from about 1934.

1875 to about 1930 Kingsgrove was very sparsely populated. However with the advent of the railway to Kingsgrove and beyond there came a burst of building activity.

In early 1930's — Church and Sunday School expanded because of new homes and twice in this decade the hall at rear of Church was extended to cope with growing numbers. Then 1939-45 war years intervened but in late 1940's it became imperative to either extend the existing buildings greatly or build a new Church.

Many schemes were considered but eventually,



Mr. W. H. Howard, Rev. John Parker, Mr. F. E. Austin,
Mr. H. E. Ricketts (*standing*). 1935

(largely due to generosity of Mr. W. H. Howard giving the Church a further 40' frontage of land next to Church) it was decided to erect a large new Church.

Financially it seemed almost beyond capacity of members to accomplish — but faith and courage were strong and with a united effort it became a reality in 1954.

By about 1960 it became evident that the old Church and hall were still too small to cope with growing activities of Sunday School Crusader groups, which were commenced and organised by Mr. J. Austin for 25 years.

At this time Rev. J. Edmondstone was called as the Church's first fully ordained Minister.

The determination of the Deacons and members to go ahead with a new large Christian Education Centre was fostered and directed by the Pastor.

So with a will to work the whole Church got behind the project and it was built and completed (mostly by voluntary labour) in 1963.

Many members and non-members worked diligently for months giving time and effort freely.

Truly a great achievement.

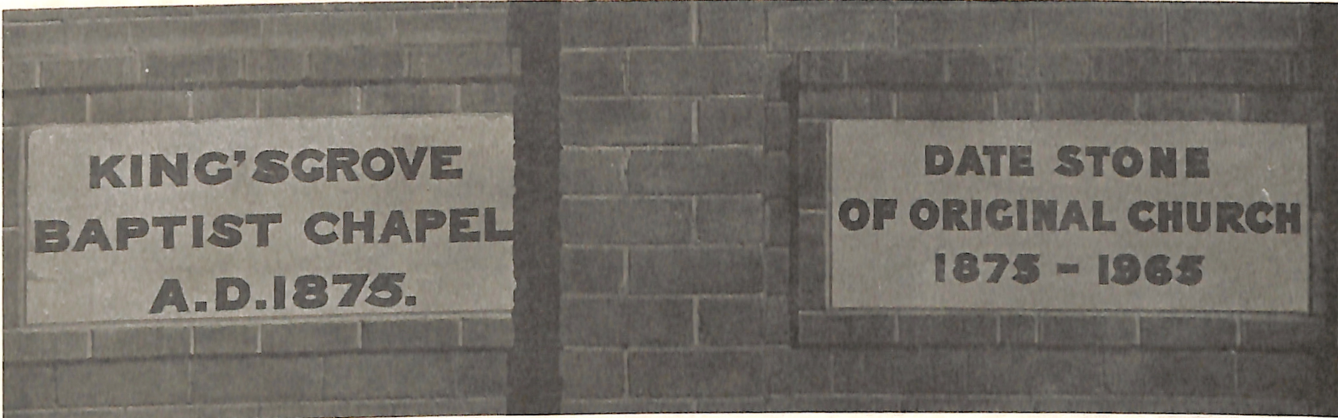
1965 old Church demolished after attempts to preserve same by Church National Trust and Rockdale Council. Nine foot driveway from front gates to C.E.C. completed and grounds cleared for parking area.

It is unfortunate that the original historic chapel had to be demolished. The constant acts of local vandalism made this extreme course necessary.

The windows were constantly being broken, the premises entered, and the interior furnishings wilfully damaged. On one occasion a fire was lit inside the premises and had burnt a large hole in the flooring before it was discovered.

The continuance of vandalistic acts resulted in the Deacons of the church deciding, much against





**KING'S GROVE
BAPTIST CHAPEL
A.D. 1875.**

**DATE STONE
OF ORIGINAL CHURCH
1875 - 1965**

their will, to have the ancient edifice demolished. Before so doing they sought the interest of the National Trust in the preservation of the building, as being of historic value. Also the St. George Historical Society and the Rockdale Municipal Council were approached but nothing eventuated from these sources owing to a lack of finance, although they all expressed their interest in the matter.

The St. George Historical Society recommended that the Date, or Foundation Stone of the old chapel should be recovered and inserted in the

fabric of the new church. At a meeting of the Deacons and the Committee of the St. George Historical Society it was decided to locate the Date Stone on the eastern side of the new church tower, facing the site of the old chapel.

The Date Stone is unique in being, perhaps, the only existing example where-on the name Kingsgrove is depicted in separate wording.

The explanatory stone at the side has been obtained from the rear portion of the original Date Stone, which was suitably sawn off and inscribed.



B. GREEN, H. NUNN, C. SUMMERFIELD (*Life Deacon*), D. NOSWORTHY (*Sec.*), C. LEEK, Rev. G. WHELAN (*Pastor*), J. AUSTIN, E. AUSTIN (*Life Deacon*), B. STOCKS, J. WHITLEY (*Treasurer*), J. GREEN.

In 1958 a letter with trowel used at Foundation Stone Laying 1875 was found in house purchased by a Mr. Jones and handed to Deacons for preservation.

At this time there was a thriving Sunday School (up to about 200). Young people's work was very active for many years with many conversions and baptisms.

Some of our young people became ministers and missionaries namely:—

John Olley — (Hong Kong, Geoff Waugh — (New Guinea), Bruce Macready, Joyce Williams — (India 1949-54).

Held open-air Sunday Schools and open-air Meetings in Kingsgrove shopping Centre for years. 1967 — Rev. W. A. Purdy was called and in same year old manse was sold and a new larger manse bought in Laycock Street.

During last few years, probably due in large measure to inflated property values — our young people as they married have had to leave the district for distant areas to obtain home sites at a figure they could afford.

Hence our members have dropped considerably and the present is a time for re-adjustment to change.

However we look forward to the future with confidence in our Great God and in our own planned effort as directed by His Spirit.

PASTORS

Rev. John Parker (Honorary)	....	....	1934-1937
Pastor R. Mogensen	....	....	1938-1939
Pastor P. N. Simmons	....	....	1940-1941
Pastor J. W. Cook	..	....	1942-1943
Pastor H. G. Pfeffer	....	....	1944-1945
Pastor R. Pope	....	....	1946-1947
Pastor A. Logan	....	....	1948-1949
Pastor D. Duff-Forbes	....	....	1950-1952
Pastor L. D. Fischer	....	....	1953-1955
Pastor R. G. Hansard	....	....	1956-1957
Pastor V. Eldridge	..	....	1958-1960
Rev. J. H. Edmondstone	....	....	1961-1966
Rev. W. A. Purdy	....	....	1967-1973
Pastor N. Eckersley	....	....	1974-
Rev. G. Whelan	....	....	1975-

