



First Church at Letterewe about 1885



Present Church and Hall about 1968

THE CENTENARY OF THE DAVIS MEMORIAL CHURCH IN WAUCHOPE OPENED ON 29th AUGUST 1918

Held Saturday 1st September 2018 at 1pm



Image taken in 2010 showing the memorial notice board.

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA
HASTINGS RIVER CONGREGATION**

CENTENARY OF DAVIS MEMORIAL CHURCH

41 Campbell Street, Wauchope, NSW.

Opened 29th August 1918.

The various functions that have been held at the Church:

1918

Church opening

1968

Church Jubilee

2018

Church Centenary

CHURCH HISTORY IN THE HASTINGS

The early settlers in the region brought with them deep rooted religious backgrounds and a great debt is owed to them for establishing churches as soon as possible. In the early days travel by horse or walking was necessary, as there were few roads and few bridges across the rivers. Fairly large distances separated worship centres.

The first church was built at "Letterewe" in 1871 and the first settled minister was Rev. John Davis [1854-1897] who ministered there between 1879 and 1897, until he was accidentally killed, followed by a long vacancy. **It is his memory that provides the title for the second church of which this Centenary celebrates.**

Alexander Bain exchanged the land at 'Letterewe' for 3 acres in the growing town of Wauchope in 1913 and on this land 'The Davis Memorial Church' was erected and opened on August 29 1918, at 41 Campbell Street.

As stated in the foreword in the separate congregation Centenary book published in 1979, "Our Centenary must be a time of reaffirmation of our spiritual condition as a congregation of Christ's Church, and resolution to stand fast, and hold the traditions which we have been taught from the Word of God, praying to, and trusting in our Saviour to establish us in every good word and work" – (2 Thes. 2 v 15-17).

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It is planned to place a copy of this brochure for download on the above site.

Thanks are given for the supply of images and data to WDHS, Gazette, and others.

A data disc containing the book, images, and articles, can be mailed for the cost of about \$5.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA (Free Presbyterian)

The work of the PCEA on the Hastings arose in the early 1850's. Alexander Bain (1810-1892) and his family moved to the Hastings in 1852. When Alexander Bain arrived on the Hastings there were only a few other white families. He maintained family worship in his home and open air services were under the giant fig tree from about 1862. Services were also held in Alexander Bain's new barn until the Letterewe church was built in 1871. The Lindsay family came in 1860 and purchased the 'Huntingdon' estate of 1552 acres. A third prominent family arrived in 1863. This was the Andrews family from Northern Ireland. Extensive information can be found in the 40 page book about the centenary of Worship, published in 1979.



The first Church at Letterewe built 1871 beside the manse, courtesy Historical Society.

Rev Malcolm Campbell Ramsay was inducted as the second minister in the new church on September 8 1921, which ended a long vacancy.

Rev Joseph Albert Harman a resident of the district, became the third minister inducted on February 10 1938.

Rev Alan Leslie Tripovich became the fourth minister inducted on 23 February 1968. He retired in Wauchope on 30th June 2010.

Rev David John Kerridge became the fifth minister in 2010. He was called to the Northern Rivers congregation in 2016.

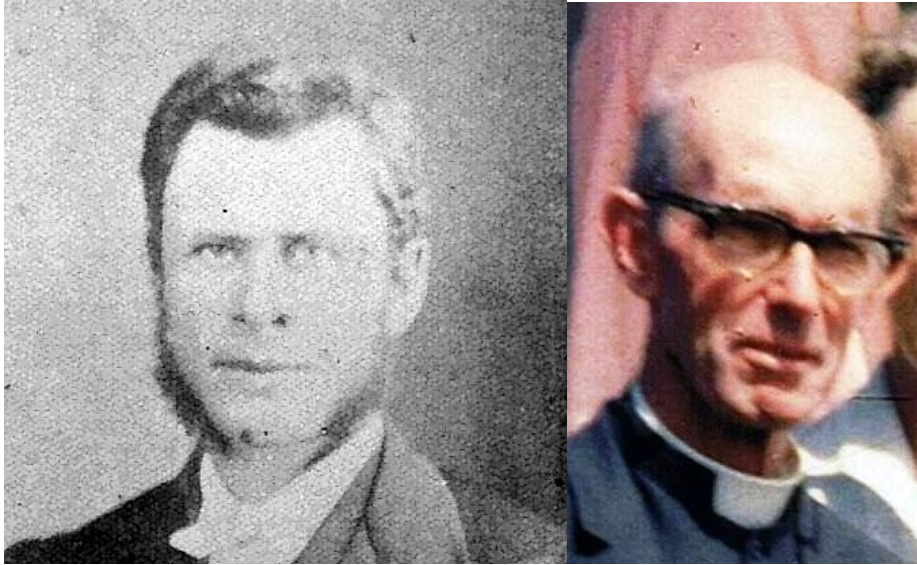
Rev John Forbes of The Free Church Scotland accepted a call in 2017 to become the **sixth minister**, and immigration applications are at present lodged.

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE OPENING DAY 29th August 1918. [also page 5]

Rev S P Stewart of Tinonee spoke and gave some background. Worship continued in the Letterewe Church during the long vacancy with various men giving supply until the land was donated in Wauchope in 1913. The congregation for quite some time had desired a church of their own in Wauchope. Services had been held in the Methodist Church, and at a congregation meeting on March 1916 it was decided to build and from then, money was subscribed which allowed the new church to be opened, in 1918, debt free and with a credit balance.

Present were many ministers from local, Port Macquarie, and elsewhere, who spoke. Included was Rev I L Graham of Hamilton Victoria, who came from a local family.

THE MINISTERS 1879-2018



FIRST MINISTER – John Davis 1879-1897

2nd MINISTER – Malcolm C Ramsay 1921-1937



3rd Minister – J A Harman 1938-1967 4th Minister – A L Tripovich 1968-2010



5th MINISTER – David J Kerridge 2010-2016

6th MINISTER – John Forbes 2018-

OPENING OF THE WAUCHOPE PCEA CHURCH 1918

The **Davis Memorial Church** building was erected in memory of Reverend John Davis, the first Presbyterian minister at "Letterewe" in 1879.

Reverend John Davis (1854-1897) was accidentally killed at the rear of the manse at "Letterewe" by a falling tree branch on November 25 1897 at age 43. Alexander Bain exchanged the land at 'Letterewe' in 1913 for 3 acres in the growing town of Wauchope and there the '**Davis Memorial Church**' was erected and opened on August 29 1918, at 41 Campbell Street. A memorial tablet to Reverend Davis was unveiled in the church on the 27th July 1940.

Thursday, 29th August 1918, was a memorable day for the Free Presbyterian Church people of the Hastings district, being the day on which their new church at Wauchope (a brick building of pleasing appearance and capable of seating comfortably about 150 persons) was opened. The Rev I L Graham, addressing the gathering, said he would have been pleased to attend this opening under any circumstances but was doubly pleased because the church was opened free from debt, and because it was associated with the name of the late Rev. J. Davis, who by his life and work had done so much for the Free Church cause in the district.

The Port Macquarie News and Hastings River Advocate (NSW), 7 September 1918.

There was a large and representative gathering of Free Kirkers, with a few friends, at the service to unveil a memorial tablet in the Davis Memorial Church, Wauchope, at 11 a.m. on Saturday last. As will be noted, Rev. Davis was a Free Presbyterian Minister who was called to labour in this district, and met an untimely death at 'Letterewe.'

The tablet is of white marble, on a black base, inscribed : 'In Memoriam. Rev. John Davis, who faithfully ministered to the Hastings and Macleay Free Church Congregations for 21 years. Accidentally killed at 'Letterewe' on November 25, 1897. Beloved by all. 'Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust.'

The Port Macquarie News and Hastings River Advocate (NSW), 3rd August 1940.



Opening of Free Church at 41 Campbell Street on 29th August 1918.

OPENING OF THE "ALEXANDER BAIN MEMORIAL HALL" 1955

A large and representative gathering of the Hastings River Congregation met in the Davis Memorial Church at Wauchope on 17th May 1955, at 7.30 p.m. for to the opening of the new church hall. Rev. L L Graham, having been invited by the Session to perform the opening ceremony, conducted a short service and gave an appropriate address from Exodus 36, v. 7, emphasising the liberality of the Israel in that they gave more than enough for the building of the tabernacle. Mr. Graham also spoke highly of the life and character of the late Alexander Bain, and he was happy that the new hall was to be a memorial to him.

At the conclusion of the service, Rev. J. A. Harman handed Mr. Graham the key of the new hall and requested him to proceed to the hall and officially open the building. This Mr. Graham did, naming it as the "Alexander Bain Memorial Hall." Immediately following the official opening the visitors and congregation were entertained to a delightful supper provided by the ladies of the congregation.

Rev. J. A. Harman, occupying the chair, read a list of apologies, which included one from the family of the late Rev. John Davis. The chairman said that it was indeed a happy occasion when the hall was officially open. He felt sure that it would fill a long felt need in the congregation, and prove of great benefit, especially to the young people. Mr. Harman said that he believed that God's hand had been shown throughout the building operations, and instanced how material came providentially to hand just when it was required. The people had given liberally, including some outside of the congregation, and the congregation was left with a debt of only £400. The cost of the hall was greatly reduced by the voluntary labour, and in this respect men, women and children gave valuable assistance.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP LISTS

The first available membership list prior to 1966 gave a total membership of 135 persons, The first attested list of 1966 gave 105 members. These excluded children and adherents.

The lists showed that members lived in Wauchope, Port Macquarie, Huntingdon, Kindee, Forbes River, Rollands Plains, Innes, Comboyne, Birdwood, Korie Island, Byabarra, Pappinbarra, and Beechwood. As is the present case, there were more females than males.

OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE CONGREGATION

First Manse 1922, Kindee Church opened 1939, Port Macquarie Hall opened 1963, New Manse 2012.



Rev. J A Harman and congregation after 1938, source unknown.

JUBILEE 50th Celebration 1968 as in the Hastings Gazette



Free Presbyterian Church on Saturday 20th September 1968, source Historical Society.

Notes from the Hastings Gazette article 1968

On Saturday 20th September 1968 at 11 am, Free Presbyterians gathered at 41 Campbell Street Wauchope, to celebrate the Jubilee opening, 50 years ago, of the Davis Memorial Church. The name honours the memory of the first settled minister of the Church in this district.

Before the coming of Rev John Davis, occasional services were conducted in the area, at first in Alexander Bain's barn at Letterewe. He had a church erected at Letterewe which was opened on 16th July 1871. Rev John Davis was inducted as minister on 3rd February 1879. At that time roads were non existent and nearly all travel was done by horse.

After his early death in 1897, the congregation was vacant for 24 years, due to the scarcity of ministers. As detailed in the text for the official opening in 1918, a substantial brick building was designed and built. Although the church was opened on 29th August 1918, it was not until 8th September 1918 that the second minister Rev Malcolm C Ramsay came.

Others who have been associated with the Davis Memorial Church are:
Rev J Campbell Andrews, Rev Dudley G Trotter, Dr Helen Ramsay [medical missionary in India], Mr Hugh Varnes, and Rev Alan M Harman.

ARCHIVAL PHOTO ALBUM



Rev JA Harman and wife Jessie at rear with visitors 1963, source unknown.

Rev Alan M Harman with his wife Mairi on right.

Rev Stewart N Ramsay and wife Trix to left of Alan and Mairi.

Rev MC Ramsay and wife Helen in front, ? Eva Kearns ? in centre.



Congregation after morning service 2012, source David Kerridge, Minister.



After morning service 2017 with supply minister Rev John Forbes, while on holidays in Australia with family, source Shirley Hamilton.



Synod Delegates [Ministers and Elders] at Wauchope Church May 2014, source Alex Steel.

**There are other earlier Synod photos framed in the Hall, together with other enlarged framed photos and material on display.
Original wide photo split into two parts as below.**



Morning Service at Wauchope about 1995, RHS, source Wendy Smith.



Morning Service at Wauchope about 1995, LHS, source Wendy Smith.



Synod Missions evening inside Wauchope Church, May 2014, source David Kerridge.



Rev I L Graham and Martha



Rev A L Tripovich and Sybil



Rev John Forbes and Mary



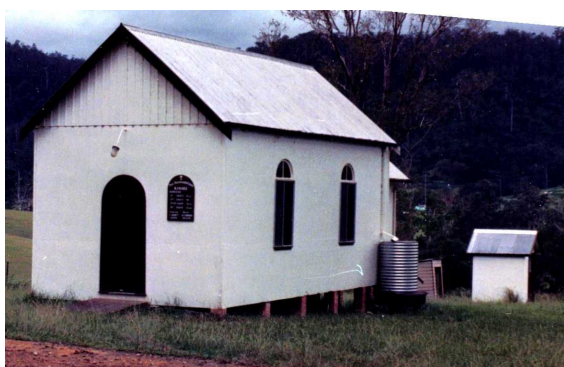
Rev M C Ramsay and Helen



Rev John Davis



Mary Davis



Kindee Church 1998



Port Macquarie Hall 1998



Rev J C Andrews and Ruby 1943 JA Harman and Jessie at farm DJ Kerridge and Mandy 2007



Rev Joseph A Harman and wife Jessie courtesy Alan Harman

