

Chapter 4

Post War Years

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There are only two records of meetings in the period between the wars. The first of these was from an Annual General Meeting in 1922. The names of the congregation are beginning to change from those recorded immediately after the War. Mr & Mrs. H.P. Somerset and Mr. R.D. Soden and Miss Soden are still present. The Secretary from 1917, Mr. M.L. Jones is also there for the last time and the Reverend Mervyn Henderson has attended. Mrs. Winton is a new-comer and Mr. R. Somerset had returned from military service to become an office bearer of the Church.

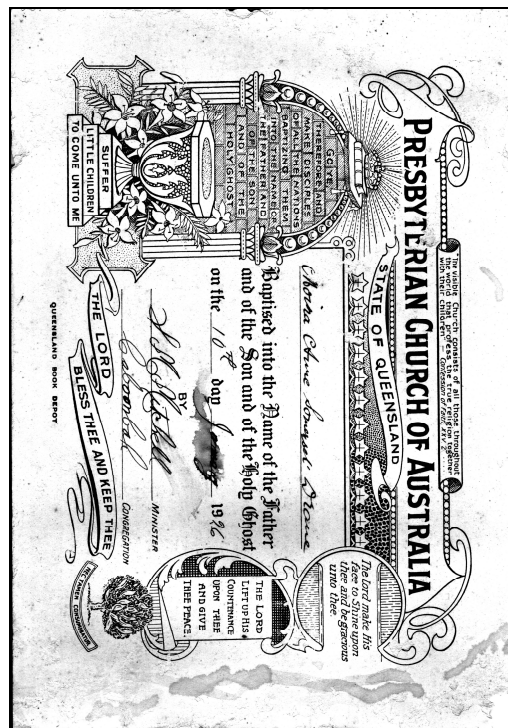
At the Annual General Meeting, 1922, the long serving Secretary Mr. M.L. Jones resigned. From the remaining records he was to be the last Head Teacher of Mt. Beppo School to serve as an office bearer of the Caboonbah Church, although William Eckford Lawrie, and Reginald Walter Carlyon both attended meetings of the church community in preparation for the Golden Jubilee. Mr. Rollo Somerset was elected Secretary in 1922. The Treasurer since 1914, Mr. R.D. Soden, also resigned and Mr. H.P. Somerset took over this position.

The only business conducted at this meeting was to cancel a cheque No. A83155 drawn on Q. N. Bank in favour of Reverend M. Henderson that was thought to be destroyed in a recent fire in Esk and to issue a replacement.

There was no further discussion about declining numbers at services nor was the stipend a concern, and it appears that the Caboonbah Church flourished in the prosperity of peacetime. Toogoolawah was thriving, the Nestle's factory was providing

employment and the Depression of the 1930s was yet to trouble this rural community.

In 1926 Moira Ann Somerset Drane, grand daughter of Mr. & Mrs. H.P. Somerset, was christened in the Caboonbah Church on 10th May.



By 1934 the congregation had increased significantly. H.P. Somerset was still in the Chair and he had been joined by his two married sons, Hereward & Rollo, and their wives and his married daughter Mrs. Drane. The Soden family also attended and they were joined by Mr. & Mrs. E.A. Barrett, Mr. & Mrs. C. Ferris, Mr. & Mrs. J. A. Turnor, Mr. & Mrs. G. Kenman, Mr. F. Knight and Mr. & Mrs. Helmholz.

The office bearers elected at the Annual General Meeting, now called a "Meeting of Members of Caboonbah Church & Cemetery" on 24th June, 1934 were H.P. Somerset (President),

R.D. Soden (Hon. Treasurer) and R. Somerset (Hon. Secretary).

The first motion is rather odd, in that it was moved C. Ferris, seconded H. Somerset that “Church & Cemetery combine”. This was carried and there is no background to the motion. It appears from later correspondence that the Cemetery was in some way under threat, perhaps from neighbours fencing part of it off for their own purposes, and the congregation was concerned about their legal rights to the cemetery land. A committee was formed consisting of the office bearers and Messrs F. Knight, J.A. Turnor and G. Kenman, but their goal was not specified.

The Secretary was also instructed to “write to Real Property Office re-position of Church & Cemetery & obtain information regarding same, sending particulars of Cemetery.” It was further moved “that Mr. Young be approached re-acting as Hon. Solicitor, to the Church & Cemetery & if accepted request him to attend to above particulars – required amendment.”

It is interesting to note that there had been no recorded burials in the Caboonbah Cemetery since 1918 when the Reverend Henderson had buried Angus & Jessie McPherson there.ⁱ Four months after this meeting Mrs. W.K.A. Dumke was interred in the Caboonbah Cemetery. She may have been ill for some time and expressed a wish to be buried there and this may have raised doubts about whether this was hallowed ground or private land.

Mr. C. Kenman came to the area with his family in 1932 when he was 14. It was his father, Mr. G. Kenman who had served on a committee of the Church in 1934. His son remembers

his father telling a story about holding meetings in the Church at night while his father was Chairman of the Committee and Mr. Val Drane was Secretary. The meetings were called for 8 p.m. and Mr. Drane’s lantern could regularly be seen bobbing across the paddocks at least 15 minutes late.

In 1975, while she was writing the history of the Church, Mrs. E. Drane wrote to the Caboonbah Church committee asking for “details of records kept since Mrs. Waite (late) and my late husband handed over to Charlie Heath and Bobby Soden”. There is no other mention anywhere of Mrs. Waite serving on the church committee, and Mr. Heath is not recorded as a committee member until 1952.

Mrs. Drane’s daughter Mrs. Rose Wilson provides gentle memories of these times.

Among my most treasured memories are those of eighty years ago when, as a teenager, I could walk from “Booran” (my parents’ home) to Caboonbah Church to prepare it for the monthly service conducted by Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian ministers from Toogoolawah.

Each service was attended by Somerset, Drane, Waite, Soden, Kenman and several special families enjoying the purpose of the Caboonbah Undenominational Church, a much appreciated gift from my grandparents Henry Plantagenet and Katharine Rose Somerset.

I enjoyed making and maintaining the alter linen, arranging flowers in ribbon glass vases, dusting and preparation of the Church.

My father mowed the grass and helped working bees maintain the grounds and grave sites. He was also Treasurer of the Committee for some time.

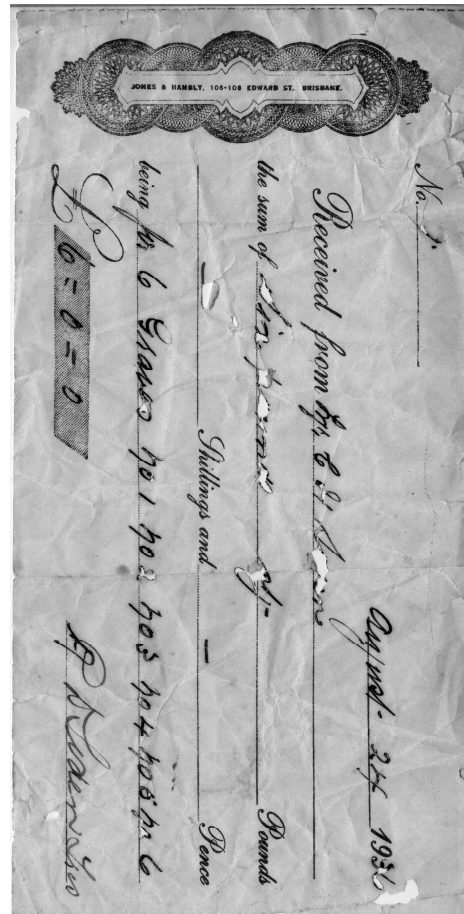
I am indebted to my ancestors for their enormous contribution to my upbringing, Faith and the "Lessons of my Youth" for which I thank God daily."

Her mother, Mrs. E. Drane, who wrote the history of the Caboonbah Church, mentions only that "(We) lived at Booran, adjoining the Church grounds, so we were able to keep the Church grounds tidy. My husband was on the committee, as were my brothers."ⁱⁱⁱ The other committee members at that time were clearly more punctual and their names are now lost to posterity.

Sadly the little cemetery at the Caboonbah Church was well used in the years leading up to World War II. Katherine Rose Somerset, who had designed the church, was buried there in February 1935 and her son Captain Rollo Somerset followed almost exactly 12 months later. Less than two months after that the long-time Chair of the Caboonbah Church committee, H.P. Somerset, was buried in April 1936.

In 1936 the Treasurer's brother, Charlie Soden, paid £6/0/0 to reserve 6 burial plots for his family (see above). His receipt for this transaction is somewhat damaged, but appears to be receipt No. 1.

In May 1937, Charlie Soden, one of the original Trustees of the Caboonbah Church, was laid to rest in one of these plots and in 1937 Betty Wait was also buried at the Caboonbah cemetery.



The small community would barely have had time to recover from these changes before the dark days of World War II engulfed the nation. There are no further records except christenings, weddings and burials for the Caboonbah Church until 1949.

One such marriage recorded in 1949 was that of Les Langton, later to become Treasurer of the Caboonbah Church Committee and Ruth Soden, daughter of R.D. Soden whose family had been intimately involved with the building and development of the Caboonbah Church since its inception. The baptismal font was donated in memory of her grandparents Robert Dawson & Mary Francis Soden who died in 1905 and 1910 respectively.



Mr. & Mrs. Les Langton on their wedding day, 7th May, 1949

By 1949 prosperity had returned to the district and the Caboonbah Church was approaching its Golden Jubilee in 1955.

Caboonbah Church was the only non-denominational church left in the Brisbane Valley and, in a world that had changed forever, the church offered its growing congregation stability and peace in a troubled world.

ⁱ Cemetery Records, Caboonbah Church (see Appendix 1)

ⁱⁱ “Snippets From My Youth” by Rose Wilson prepared for this publication

ⁱⁱⁱ The History of Caboonbah Undenominational Church 1905-1975 by Ealhsith Anne Matilda Drane, p3