



## Milestones

- 1819** Bethel Union founded in London on 12 November.  
See [History](#).
- 1822** The 'Sydney Bethel Union Society' (as it was known initially) was formed on 23 December on the initiative of Rev. William Cowper, an Anglican Chaplain of the Colony of New South Wales (later Archdeacon of Sydney) to provide 'religious and secular instruction and social recreation to seamen of all nations visiting the port of Sydney.' Initially religious services were held on ships in port and some proposals emerged to acquire a vessel to serve as a floating permanent church. A few weeks earlier - on 17 November a church service had been held on board the brig *Lynx* and 100 seamen heard Rev. Erskine, a Wesleyan minister, preach on the topic *Prepare to Meet Thy God*. The Bethel Flag, having a blue background with the word BETHEL superimposed in white with a Star of Hope in one corner and a dove with olive branch in the other, flew from the ship's masthead. NSW's population was estimated at 29,680.
- 1831** *Sophia Jane*, the first steamship to operate in Australian waters, commences operating a Sydney-Newcastle service.
- 1832** Formal government of the Presbyterian Church commences with the establishment of the Presbytery of NSW.
- 1834** The Committee of the Sydney Bethel Union came to the view that investment in 'floating chapels' was not an appropriate strategy. Representations were therefore made to the NSW Governor, Major-General Sir Richard Bourke asking him to approve a

grant of land so that a Chapel could be constructed. The land sought was close to Sydney Cove 'at the Northern extremity of George and Pitt Streets' (at that time Pitt Street terminated at a point South of what was known until about the 1860s as 'Semi-Circular Quay') However, the Governor responded by offering a site at the corner of Erskine and Lime Streets in Darling Harbour. In spite of requests that the Governor agree to a site that would be closer to where ships berthed, the Committee was obliged in November 1836 to accept the Erskine Street site. But the Sydney Bethel Union then entered a period of relative inactivity and its work languished and the building of a Church on the Erskine Street site was not destined to commence until 1844.

**1835** In England, John Ashley, an Anglican clergyman, was motivated to visit ships he had seen lying at anchor off the Welsh coast. This inspired him to commence a full time ministry to seamen in the Bristol Channel region, buying a small vessel in which he installed a chapel below decks. His initiative soon led to similar Anglican ministries in other ports and provided the initial impetus which eventually led to the founding in 1858 of the single international body known as the Missions to Seamen to serve seafarers. (See also note under 1858). Chaplains of the Mission also from time to time called for improvements in shipboard conditions for seamen.

**1836** William Grant Broughton was enthroned as Bishop of Australia. Census taken in NSW indicates population of 77,096 including 27,831 convicts.

**1839** Contemporary newspapers reported that few services had been held by the Sydney Bethel Union since 1836.

A Sailors' Home was opened in Sydney in September by interests unconnected with the Sydney Bethel

Union. In its first year of operations it accommodated 400 seamen. However, the venture failed in 1841.

- 1841** Rev. Matthew T. Adam appointed as Chaplain to Seamen in Sydney on the initiative of Rev. John Dunmore Lang, who had consulted the American Seamen's Friend Society (ASFS) about selecting a suitable candidate. Adam was a Presbyterian minister, formerly employed by the London Missionary Society in India but at the time of appointment to Sydney was stationed in New York. ASFS encouraged Adam to 'co-operate at once with the Sydney Bethel Union'. He conducted his first shipboard service on board the barque *Huntress* in February 1841 but at the same time he strongly advocated the building of a shore-based place of worship.
- 1842** Sydney incorporated as a city. Melbourne incorporated as a town. Crown granted land in Erskine Street, Sydney as the site for the building of a Mariners' Church.
- 1844** Against a background of economic depression and drought, the (first) Mariners' Church was erected on the Erskine Street site. It was opened on 24 August 1844 and the first service held the following day. The church cost £390 to build and fit out. However, attendance at services was disappointingly low, possibly because the church was located away from the main wharf areas. A Sunday School was opened, an indication that the congregation also included nearby residents.
- 1845** Rev. Matthew T. Adam, resigned and was succeeded in March by Rev. Lancelot E. Threlkeld, a Congregational Minister who had previously established Aboriginal missions in regional New South Wales, the first being at Lake Macquarie,

North of Sydney in 1825. His annual stipend was £150 which was increased in 1847 to £200.

- 1847** An active Chaplain Threlkeld visited 263 ships this year. The diocese of Australia was divided into four: Sydney which gave continuity to William Broughton's episcopate, with Melbourne, Newcastle and Adelaide being the other three.
- 1851** Given the location disadvantages of the Erskine Street Church, moves commenced to petition NSW Governor Sir Charles Fitzroy to provide a site on the South-Eastern side of Semi Circular Quay and to the West of Macquarie Street sufficiently large enough to build a Mariners' Church, a Sailors' Home and accommodation for the Chaplain. Meantime, in terms of the Sydney Bethel Union Trustees' Act, 1851 (NSW) the site of the original Mariners' Church in Erskine Street was sold, realising £3,450. The legislation also empowered the Trustees to apply the proceeds of the sale to purchase land for a new Mariners' Church and associated buildings, such land being vested in the Trustees of the Bethel Union.

In the event the East Circular Quay site that was (and officially granted on 16 January 1852) could only accommodate a Mariners' Church and for that and other reasons was unsatisfactory. These factors, also the impact of rapidly escalating building and labour costs following the discovery of gold, led to a decision not to proceed with construction estimated to cost £12,000 and as a consequence a temporary church was operated on the site for six years.

- 1855** Steam railway services, owned by the NSW Government, commenced between Sydney and Parramatta.
- 1856** Under the Mariners Church Act, 1856 (NSW) the Circular Quay site was surrendered and the Trustees authorised to accept the grant of a more appropriate site between George Street (North) and Circular

Quay for a new Mariners' Church. The foundation stone was laid by NSW Governor Sir William Denison on 19 March. Construction to the design of architect John Bibb commenced, using sandstone ashlar with a slate roof.

**1857** Construction temporarily suspended owing to financial difficulties. An interesting industrial relations sidelight at this time was that the Stonemasons' Union, whose members worked on the site, secured the agreement of the Bethel Union Trustees to reduce daily working hours from 12 to eight. This was reportedly the first construction site in Sydney where stonemasons enjoyed this benefit. The design of the building provided meeting space for up to 600 people and also allowed for future expansion. Sailing vessel *Dunbar* wrecked near Sydney Heads with loss of 121 lives.

**1858** First telephone line in NSW opened between Sydney GPO and South Head at the harbour entrance.

Mission to Seamen (now known as Mission to Seafarers) founded in England, its flag being a 'flying angel' inspired by a verse from the Bible: *Then I saw an angel flying in mid-heaven, with and eternal gospel to proclaim to those on earth, to every nation and tribe, language and people.* (Revelations 14:6). Early work of the ministry concentrated on ship visits and the holding of services on board, but later developed into the provision of shore-based 'club' type facilities such as reading rooms used by seamen when on shore leave.

**1859** Mariners' Church with Threlkeld as its Chaplain was opened on 27 February at 100 George Street (North) close to the Western shoreline of Circular Quay (Sydney Cove). This is where European settlement of Australia commenced in 1788 following the arrival of the First Fleet. The building is seen by NSW

heritage authorities as being of high architectural and historical importance. The final cost was estimated to be £6,000. Attendances at services were disappointingly low and some attributed this to the Chaplain Threlkeld's advancing age and his inappropriate style of ministry. In addition to the support of the Anglican Church, clergy from the Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational and Baptist Churches preached in the Mariners' Church and it was thus ecumenical in character being representative of the Christian church as a whole.

An early policy dispute developed between the Trustees and Threlkeld, who had been strongly opposed the incorporation of accommodation for seamen within the Mariners' Church complex. A provisional committee was appointed, the majority of whose members were also members of the Sydney Bethel Union, *'to establish a Sailors' Home in Sydney .... in which seamen, while on shore, could have comfortable accommodation, be brought under moral and religious influence and be encouraged in sober and thrifty habits.'*) In April the Committee approved a draft Constitution. Further attempts were made at subsequent meetings of the Sydney Bethel Union to persuade Threlkeld to accept a Sailors' Home within the Mariners' Church complex. It is recorded that at one of these meetings - held on 7 October - the debate was so keen that it was thought to have contributed to the death of Threlkeld three days later. The earlier resolution of the Committee to seek a separate site was reaffirmed.

**1860** A site on Western side of Circular Quay previously used by the Water Police was designated by the NSW Government for the Sydney Sailors' Home.

Gold was discovered in NSW at Lambing Flat, near where the town of Young now stands.

- 1861** First horse-drawn trams operate in Sydney.
- 1862** Presbyterian Rev John Reid appointed as Chaplain. At that time (1862-1863), 970 vessels entered the port of Sydney carrying a total of 19,550 seamen. The number of lay ministers was increased to meet the need for an increasing number of ship visits. Attendance at services improved and the first Annual Sailors' Service, forerunner of Sydney's Annual Seafarers' Service was arranged by a Ladies' Committee. Social activities for crews of visiting ships were introduced. The Bethel Union's debt on Mariners' Church was discharged.
- 1863** The Sydney Sailors' Home at 106 George Street (North) was dedicated on 16 July. Architects were Weaver & Kemp who produced a four-storey design said to be similar to that of the Royal Brunswick Maritime Establishment in London built some years earlier. Its location in the context of proximity to the wharf areas of the port and to the Mariners' Church, a short distance to the North on the same street, was seen as a benefit to the Home and the Mariners' Church alike. The adjacent Cadman's Cottage, formerly occupied by the Water Police, served from 1865 until 1926 as accommodation for the Superintendent of the Sydney Sailors' Home.
- 1867** The Chaplain, Rev John Reid died in office.
- 1868** HRH Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh - the second son of Queen Victoria - made the first visit to Australia by a member of the British Royal Family. While in Sydney, the Prince attended a picnic on March 12 arranged by the Sydney Sailors' Home at Clontarf Beach during which he survived an assassination attempt by an Irish Australian, Henry James O'Farrell. The Prince received a gunshot wound in the back. O'Farrell was tried, convicted and later hanged.
- 1871** Rev Thomas Gainford, a Congregational minister, was appointed Chaplain at an annual stipend of

£150 was the same as that accepted by Chaplain Threlkeld when appointed to the position in 1845. Initially attendances at services were low, presumably to some degree because of the inter-regnum between Chaplains. However, Chaplain Gainford quickly built up the congregation and refurbished the Church with new seating and a more inviting ambience.

The Corporation of the City of Sydney connected reticulated water to the Mariners' Church building

**1873** Excavations beneath the Mariners' Church building created space for a hall and other facilities.

This enabled regular meetings of the Lodge of Good Templars to be held on the premises. Its 500 members were committed to total abstinence from intoxicating liquor and Chaplain Gainford believed this would provide a beneficial moral influence at the Mission.

**1874** A residence in George Street North, opposite Mariners' Church was purchased as a home for the Chaplain, Rev Thomas Gainford, at a cost of £1,200 and named *Bethel House*.

**1877** The Chaplain also developed plans for enlarging the capacity of Mariners' Church, but plans were shelved in the wake of widespread industrial turmoil that resulted in many leaving Sydney resulting in declining congregations. Seamen visits also declined following a reduction in the number of ship visiting Sydney, also the decreasing use by ships of Circular Quay in favour of wharf facilities established in Darling Harbour to the West of Circular Quay.

**1881** John Shearston, a Church of England layman was appointed as the first full-time Church of England missionary to work with both Naval and merchant ship personnel in the port of Sydney. He had been doing the work informally since 1872, visiting ships,

counselling seamen and inviting them to his home and this led to the foundation of the Church of England Seamen's Mission at Miller's Point, located quite close to the Mariners' Church.

- 1883** This year 2,437 ships visited Sydney with crews totalling approximately 50,000 men
- 1886** To ease financial problems, *Bethel House* was sold and a house in nearby Lower Fort Street rented as a residence for the Chaplain.
- 1887** Population of NSW passes one million mark.
- 1888** The Bethel Social Club was established and opened in February by Lord Brassey (1836-1918) who had served as a Member of the House of Commons from 1868, also as Secretary to the Admiralty from 1884, being created Lord Brassey in 1886. Later he served as Governor of Victoria, from 1895-1900.
- 1889** Ministry to naval personnel visiting Sydney was further developed with the building of Royal Naval House at 32 Grosvenor Street which runs to the West off George Street, near Bridge Street. John Shearston was invited to take charge of Royal Naval House, a position he accepted. He then resigned from the Church of England Seamen's Mission at Miller's Point although he retained an active interest in its work.
- 1890** National Maritime Strike begins on 16 August when officers and crews walk off ships in Sydney. Wharf labourers join strike three days later.
- 1891** A Baptist minister, Rev John Bennett Anderson appointed Chaplain of Mariners' Church.
- 1892** Mr James R Fairfax (a grandson of the founder of the *Sydney Morning Herald*) appointed Chairman of Trustees, Sydney Bethel Union.

Chaplain reports that Sunday service attendances are 'improving'.

Meeting of the Sydney Bethel Union Committee on 5 September receives report from Mr John Gainford, Treasurer, that for some time income had fallen below expenditure. A sub-committee was formed to investigate and report.

**1893** Reflecting the developing trend for collaboration with others working in the same field, the Annual Report of Sydney Bethel Union for year ended 31 December proclaimed its aims to '*afford an opportunity for Christians of all denominations to unite and co-operate with each other in the endeavour to afford religious instruction to Seamen of all nations visiting the Port of Sydney.*' Except for an item in the Accounts recording income from 'Sailors' Concerts', a comment on the availability of reading rooms, a library, games and postal services and a passing comment in the Chaplain's report, little or no reference appears to be made in the report to social activities arranged for visiting seamen although these had been commenced in 1862. Chaplain Anderson reported that he had visited over 1,000 ships in Sydney during the year. He also foreshadowed his impending resignation, citing pressure of work.

Letter tabled at Sydney Bethel Union Committee meeting on 9 January from Lifeboat Lodge No. 9 responding to written request from the Committee the previous month for information on 'dancing at entertainments in the Lodge Room'. Chaplain advised the meeting that '*he would attend to the matter as the whole trouble complained of was the result of a mistake*'.

Reported that in calendar year 1893, for the ports of Sydney and Newcastle there had been a total of 5,830 ship movements (arrivals and

departures) (4,658 steam and 1,172 sail). On an assumption that each vessel arrived and departed representing two 'movements' this indicates that about 2,915 ships (or an average of 56 ships per week) visited the two ports that year, with a large proportion of them coming to Sydney rather than to Newcastle. Also recorded that 76,975 seamen had come to the port of Sydney and this figure **excluded** naval personnel and crews of coastal vessels.

**1894** Special committee meeting of the Sydney Bethel Union held on 12 March to consider finances.

Written report indicated that as an average of the three previous years, expenses had amounted to £723 while receipts had amounted to £410. The economies decided immediately were to reduce the Chaplain's salary and rent from £430 per year to £300 and the wages of the caretaker from £78 per year to £52. Other economies were also left for examination by a 'Way and Means' sub-committee. The Finance Committee then reported on 30 April and recommended that 'collection plates be passed from pew to pew in the Church on Sundays and that a weekly offering fund be formed'. A further meeting held on 12 September reduced the wages of the caretaker to five shillings per week, but with right of residence in Bethel Cottage. That same meeting noted that a 'year to date' financial report showed a debit balance of £ 815/18/- and a summary of assets and liabilities showing a deficit of £935/13/4 which included a bank overdraft of £834. It was then resolved to write to the 'Merchants of the City' seeking their active interest in the affairs of the Sydney Bethel Union' but the Committee at its meeting on 8 October decided that '*in the present state of the finances and work generally of the Institution it would be unwise to make special efforts in the way indicated until a change has been made in the office of Chaplain*'. Notice was given of a

special meeting on 12 October to rescind an earlier decision on 5 September to extend the appointment of Chaplain Anderson for a further six months but at that special meeting resolved that 'matters be allowed to remain status quo.'

**1895** The annual meeting of the Sydney Bethel Union was held on 26 February. The Committee in its report noted that the Sydney Bethel Union ranked second in the sailors' institutes of the world, behind the British and Foreign Sailors' Society, London.

Committee meeting on 1 April resolved to renew the appointment of the Chaplain for a further three months at the rate of £250 per annum, £62/10/- per month and that if at the end of that time the institution was not self-supporting the position was to be again reviewed

On 9 May Chaplain Anderson submitted his resignation. to take effect on 30 September 1895 which was accepted by the Committee on 20 May, resolving that he be given the option of an earlier departure date but with all entitlements to the end of September still being paid to him. There was some acrimony between Anderson and the Trustees as to his entitlements. There was a further development on 12 July when it was noted by the Committee that the Chaplain had publicly announced his intention to stand as a candidate in the Division of Lang in the NSW Parliament. Accordingly it was resolved that his retirement as Chaplain would take effect from the Sunday preceding the election.

George Stanley Littlejohn, Alfred William Meeks and John Gainford appointed Trustees in succession to Sir George Allen, Thomas Barker and Francis Mitchell.

Committee meeting on 21 October, not having appointed a new Chaplain resolved to enter into discussions with the Committee and Chaplain of the Church of England Mission to Seamen.

The Church of England Mission to Seamen in Miller's Point became a Branch of the Missions to Seamen, England who in turn appointed Rev Thomas Henry Distin-Morgan, an experienced chaplain as 'Chaplain-Superintendent' who took charge of work formerly undertaken by lay-missioners. Op amenities at the Missions to Seamen, Sydney which needed to be '*attractive socially and provide educational methods as well as Spiritual instruction*'. A Captains' and Officers' Room was envisaged along with a gymnasium, offices and expanded toilet facilities.

On 16 December, Mr James R Fairfax advised the Committee that after these discussions it was apparent that unification of the work of the Church of England Mission to Seamen and the Sydney Bethel Union was 'not only possible but desirable' in the interests of the sailors visiting Sydney.

The outcome was an agreement under which the Missions to Seamen took a three-year renewable lease of the Mariners' Church from the Sydney Bethel Union for a nominal rental of £1 per annum. The property was renamed as the Missions to Seamen, Sydney.

The longstanding practice of the Sydney Bethel Union in appointing clergymen from various denominations to preach in the Mariners' Chapel was preserved in the lease, which also confirmed the entitlement of the Union to be represented on the Committee of the Missions to Seamen, Sydney. It was also stipulated that the Chaplain was to be a Church of England clergyman. During the currency of the lease, Committee of the new organisation

resolved to erect a cottage for the caretaker and the Sydney Bethel Union agreed to contribute £100 to the cost involved which was £275. However the Committee of the Missions to Seamen Sydney suggested that if the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union renewed the three-year lease on Mariners' Church when it expired in 1898, the cottage would become the property of the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union, provided that should the land and church buildings be resumed by the Government the money that the Committee had expended on the cottage should be refunded to them by the Trustees, the refund not to exceed £170.

Rev Thomas Henry Distin-Morgan was appointed Chaplain of the Missions to Seamen, Sydney - the newly merged entity.

Drought conditions develop in NSW, Queensland and South Australia lasting in some areas until 1903.

**1898** Lease of the Mariners' Church building to the Missions to Seamen, Sydney was renewed for five years. Chaplain Distin-Morgan recorded that in the current year attendances at services was 3,260, reading room 24,828, concerts 24,025 and picnic 253 - total 56,366. Ship visits totalled 3,418, hospital visits 950 and 164 temperance pledges taken.

Mr James R Fairfax, Trustee, knighted.

**1900** This year 3,468 visits were paid to ships in port, about 60,000 seamen visited the Missions to Seamen, Sydney with 7,260 attending services. Twice weekly concerts were staged with a total of 17,185 attending 106 performances. This reflected the wisdom of the amalgamation of the activities of the Sydney Bethel Union's Mariners' Church with the Church of England Mission to Seamen five years previously.

The Public Works Department of the NSW Government effective 29 December 1900 resumed the Mariners' Church and buildings, under the *Darling Harbour Wharves Resumption Act, 1900*.

**1901** Commonwealth of Australia proclaimed on 1 January. Population of Australia was 3.824 million.

**1902** On 29 August the Public Works Department indicated in a letter to the Trustees that the Department did not intend to charge the Trustees any rent for the resumed premises covering the period from date of resumption to the date of payment of the compensation for resumption, the rent thus foregone being regarded as equal to the interest to which the Sydney Bethel Union that otherwise would have been payable to the Sydney Bethel Union for the period from the date of the resumption to the date the compensation was eventually paid. The Trustees assented to these arrangements on 30 January 1902.

**1905** By Proclamation in the Government Gazette on 16 June the Mariners' Church was withdrawn from the Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners and re-vested in the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union. The latter confirmed in writing on 26 June that they agreed to hand over the property in exchange for the resumption money.

The Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union resolved on 7 December to renew for three years from 1 January 2006 the lease on Mariners' Church held by the Missions to Seamen Sydney on condition that 'the Missions to Seamen *'will put the buildings in repair and undertake to keep them so.*

The Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union agree to a proposal from the Public Works Department that

they relinquish 938 sq.ft of the property on the George Street North frontage in exchange for 1,127 sq.ft on the Circular Quay frontage. The land relinquished on the George Street frontage facilitated the construction by the Government of a Coroner's Court and a Morgue.

**1906** The additional land acquired by the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union under the 1905 agreement with the Public Works Department enabled consideration to be given by the Trustees to expanding the facilities offered by the Mariners' Church. Chaplain Distin-Morgan had agitated for expansion of facilities and Amenities at the Missions to Seamen, Sydney which needed to be '*attractive socially and provide educational methods as well as Spiritual instruction*'. A Captains' and Officers' Room was envisaged along with a gymnasium, offices and expanded toilet facilities.

On 30 September, the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union formally offered a 14 years' extension of the lease of the property to the Missions to Seamen Sydney subject to the latter undertaking to spend not less than £2,000 on mutually agreed permanent improvements to the building with a contribution of £100 to be made by the Trustees from Trust funds.

**1907** The Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union are informed that the legal advisers to the Missions to Seamen Sydney were of opinion that there were some perceived procedural irregularities in the resumption of the land by the Public Works Department in 1905, also that the exchange of land in 1905 had never been confirmed by then Government in occupying the land on the George Street frontage the Government had encroached by three feet on to the Mariners' Church property. Resolved that a joint approach by the Sydney Bethel Union and the Missions to Seamen Sydney would be made to the NSW Attorney-General seeking action

by legislation to regularise these matters. This legislation was known as the *Sydney Bethel Union Extension Act, 1908*.

On 26 November it was reported to the Trustees that drafting of the legislation was proceeding and the intention was that it should be introduced by the Hon A W Meeks MLC who was a Trustee of the Sydney Bethel Union.

At the same meeting it was noted that the Missions to Seamen Sydney had asked the Trustees to effect repairs to the roof of Mariners' Church but that a reply had been sent indicating this matter was the responsibility of the Missions to Seamen Sydney.

It was further recorded that the Trustees had been asked to attend a meeting of the Sydney Missions to Seamen apparently called to discuss the resignation of Chaplain Distin-Morgan.

**1908** Meeting of Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union on 21 February was advised that a letter had been written to the British & Foreign Sailors' Society, London on 26 November 1907 asking whether, if requested, the Society '*would take up the work amongst Sailors in Sydney.*' A reply had been received from the Society agreeing in principle to the proposal. Resolved to call a meeting of representatives of shipping companies in Sydney to gauge support for such a move.

The weekly program of the Missions to Seamen Sydney included two or three services each Sunday, an evening activities program now included music and games on Mondays and Wednesdays with occasional first aid instruction, concerts on Tuesdays and Thursdays with billiards and bagatelle tournaments on Fridays. The premises were open daily from 10.00am to 11.00pm daily and a coffee bar was available.

The Governor of NSW from 1902-1909 was Admiral Sir Harry Rawson. In a speech to the Sydney Chamber of Commerce he called attention to the limited facilities then available for merchant seamen at both the Missions to Seamen, Sydney and the Sydney Sailors' Home. This was the impetus for a fund-raising campaign to expand the facilities of the Mission.

**1909** The Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union, responding to a request from the Chairman of the Rawson Memorial Fund, resolves to enter into a building contract for the extensions to the Missions to Seamen Sydney utilising funds raised totalling nearly £6,000 that included a grant of £1,000 from the NSW Government. It was further agreed that the name 'Rawson Institute for Seamen' would be inscribed prominently on the building.

**1910** Visits to the Mission by seamen totalled 49,000.

The Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union, who included Sir James Fairfax (see note under 1895), signed a contract on 14 February with Maston & Yates, builders for completion of extensions within 24 weeks. Value of the contract, including architect's fees was £5,880.

The Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union at a meeting on 9 May noted that construction work was proceeding. The work involved significant alterations to the property including the addition of an extra storey. A commemorative stone was laid by Governor Rawson. The original chapel was converted into a recreation hall, a new chapel (accommodating about 200) and a vestry were provided in the new upper storey, along with administrative offices, a library and an Officers' Room with some accommodation cubicles. On the ground floor, a gymnasium, smoking room and other facilities were incorporated.

On 6 September, the Trustees discussed a draft of a lease to be signed by the Missions to Seamen Sydney, resolving that the lessee should be required to effect and pay for fire insurance cover on the property, also that enquiries should be made of the architects as to whether they had located the original foundation stone of the old building, also that the architects should be asked to allow for the insertion on the outside walls of an inscribed marble tablet, the wording for which the Trustees would supply. It was later decided also that a brass tablet inscribed with the names of all those who had served as Chaplain would be installed in a prominent place in the building.

First reference in minutes of Trustees meetings to Rev Allan Franklin Pain as Chaplain of the Missions to Seamen, Sydney.

The extensions to the building were officially opened by Lord Chelmsford, Governor of NSW on 21 December.

**1911** On 5 April, a meeting of the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union asked the Secretary to obtain a report from the architects and from the now-called Rawson Institute for Seamen of the state of the building with reference to '*alleged minor defects.*'

It was also resolved that the Chaplain be reminded that the various Protestant Religious bodies other than Anglican be encouraged to conduct entire services in the church as opposed to merely preaching at those services. On 2 August however the Trustees themselves assumed the responsibility for arranging for non-Anglican ministers to take services.

On 7 December the Trustees allocated £200 for remodelling of the existing cottage at the North-East corner of the land for occupation by the Chaplain.

**1913** Visits to the Mission by seamen totalled 61,000 reflecting the benefits of the 1910 developments in its facilities. These figures were to decline during World War I.

**1917** Francis William Hixson appointed as a Trustee in succession to John Gainford, deceased.

**1918** Sir Walter Davidson appointed Governor of NSW on 18 February.

First direct wireless message sent between UK and Australia transmitted from Wales by Guglielmo Marconi received at Wahroonga in Sydney on 18 September.

**1919** Sir James Fairfax, Chairman of Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union died on 28 March.

**1921** Charles McAlister Campbell Shannon appointed as a Trustee in succession to Sir James Fairfax, deceased.

First reference in minutes of Trustees meetings to Rev H C Leplastrier as Chaplain of the Rawson Institute.

**1922** Meeting of Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union on 2 June notes that the Rawson Institute has arranged insurance cover on the building for £10,000. Trustees also take steps to assure themselves that the Missions are maintaining the property in accordance with the lease.

**1923** By Crown Grant, title to the land on which it stood was granted to the Sydney Sailors' Home, by then registered as a company under the *Companies Act*, the land having some three years earlier been gazetted as the dedicated site for the Home.

Mr Shannon, Trustee, visited the Rawson Institute and found the buildings, etc. in 'sound order.'

Under the auspices of the Governor, Sir Walter Davidson and Lady Davidson a public appeal for funds for the development of the Rawson Institute raised £4,360. This Fund was known as 'The Dame Margaret Davidson Fund for the Rawson Institute for Seamen.'

Captain F H C Brownlow appointed as a Trustee in succession to George Stanley Littlejohn, deceased. Captain Brownlow was at the time Hon Secretary of the Rawson Institute for Seamen. This was possibly the first occasion on which an officer of the Institute had become a Trustee of the Sydney Bethel Union.

**1925** Australia's population passes six million mark.

**1926** The Rawson Institute sought approval of the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union to approve proposed extensions to the Institute to relocate the Chapel from the first floor to the ground floor on the Eastern side of the building overlooking Circular Quay. The existing first floor space would then be converted for the use of the increasing number of apprentice and junior officers then visiting the Institute. The facilities of the Concert Hall were enhanced by the addition of a motion picture projection room. The Trustees approved the changes and indicated that an approach was being made to the Dame Margaret Davidson Fund for financial support for the extensions.

About the same time extensions to the Sydney Sailors' Home to the design of architects Spain & Cosh were completed, comprising an L-shaped structure along the George Street and Northern sides of the existing building. The expanded accommodation included a residence for the Superintendent who was then able to vacate Cadman's Cottage, which from then until the late 1950s was used to accommodate an overflow of demand for sailors' accommodation. Other

structural change involved the removal of the gabled roof of the original building, the whole roof of the extended building was then made flat, behind parapets.

**1928** The Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union at a meeting on 9 August are advised that the Dame Margaret Davidson Fund's trustees had approved a grant of funds to cover the cost of the extensions proposed in 1926 and which had virtually been completed. Subsequently the Chapel was consecrated at a special service conducted by Archbishop J.C. Wright. The additions were named the 'Dame Margaret Davidson Wing.'

**1931** A meeting of the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union approved plans for further extensions proposed for the Circular Quay (East) side of Rawson Institute for Seamen. The work was estimated to cost about £2,500 to be financed by the Dame Margaret Davidson Fund for £1,700 and the balance to be raised by the Missions to Seamen, thus imposing no financial burden on the Sydney Bethel Union. The changes involved removal of the existing cottage and the construction of a residence for the Chaplain, also a garage. It was further resolved that the four years remaining on the existing lease to the Missions to Seamen (being the Rawson Institute) would be cancelled and a new lease would be granted for 25 years to run to 1 January 1961 instead of the 50 years sought by the lessee. The lesser period was the maximum provided under the 1908 legislation.

Captain F H C Brownlow, a Trustee of the Sydney Bethel Union, died on 1 June.

On 12 November the Trustees resolved to seek an Act of Parliament to recognise the ceding by the Missions to Seamen of a portion of the site on the Eastern boundary in return for recognition of the

nine inches encroachment on the Southern boundary. This legislation was enacted three years later as the Sydney Bethel Union Enabling Act.

Mr William Aberdein Mackay appointed as a Trustee in succession to Captain F H C Brownlow deceased. Mr Mackay was a senior partner in Macdonald, Hamilton & Co., then agents for the P&O Steam Navigation Company of London (P&O). Mr Archibald Lewis Blythe appointed Trustee.

**1932** Sydney Harbour Bridge opened on 19 March.

**1933** Mr John Hubert Fraser Fairfax appointed as a Trustee in succession to Sir Alfred Meeks (deceased.) Mr Mackay was a senior partner in Macdonald, Hamilton & Co., then agents for the P&O Steam Navigation Company of London (P&O).

**1937** As at 31 May, the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union were Mr W A Mackay, Mr F W Hixson, Mr C M C Shannon and Mr J H F Fairfax.

The printed annual report of the 'Missions to Seamen at the Rawson Institute, Sydney' for the year ended 31 May reported that 1,622 visits had been paid to ships, approximately 51,000 seamen had visited the Institute and 498 seamen had been visited in hospital. There had been 383 services conducted. Expenditure exceeded receipts by £500. No reference to the Sydney Bethel Union could be found in the document.

On 9 August the Sydney Bethel Union granted a lease of the 100 George Street (North) property to the Rawson Institute (later known as the Sydney Missions to Seamen) on a rent-free basis with the proviso that all related expenses including insurance must be met by the lessees. Value of the property was estimated to be £30,000.

**1940** No meetings of the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union appear to have been held in 1938 or 1939 although informal consultations between Trustees may have occurred.

A meeting held on 27 May 1940 noted the condition of the Missions to Seamen building was found to be in good order.

**1948** Lt-General Sir Leslie Morshead (Orient Line), Major-General A C Fewtrell and Mr G R Rickards (P&O) in succession to Mr J H Fairfax, Mr W A Mackay and Mr A L Blythe, all resigned.

**1952** Mr HJR Clayton and Mr WD Donaldson (Shaw Savill) appointed as Trustees in succession to Mr CMC Shannon and Major-General AC Fewtrell, deceased.

**1957** No meetings of the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union appear to have been held in the years 1941-1956 inclusive although informal consultations between Trustees may have occurred inasmuch as the Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees held on 18 November 1957 confirmed the Minutes of the meeting that had been held more than 17 years previously - on 27 May 1940. However on 6 March 1943, the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union wrote to Mr E A Eva, Chairman of the Sydney Mission to Seamen, referring to an earlier discussion between the two specifically in regard to costs of insuring the 100 George Street (North) property. The discussion included a proposal that on the grounds that because the Mission was meeting the insurance policy premiums, the Mission - rather than the Sydney Bethel Union - should be the beneficiary of any claims paid out on the policy. The Bethel Union letter reaffirmed that under its Trust it would not be able to agree to the request because to do so could be construed as compromising its ownership of the property. At the same time, the letter indicated that a special donation of £75 would be

made, noting that this amount in fact would cover the cost of the insurance premium. Letter also noted that the '*whole of the assets of the Trust have been employed to the benefit of the Sydney Mission to Seamen*' and also noted the Trustees' conviction that the Mission was '*carrying out admirably the main objective of the Trust.*'

Sydney Missions to Seamen recommended to Sydney Bethel Union that, as a revenue generating measure, space on the property be leased out for a neon-illuminated commercial advertising sign, potentially yielding about £1,000 per year. Legal opinion was then sought by the Mission and this was to the effect that erection of a sign of the kind proposed was prohibited by the terms of the lease but that the Lessors (Bethel Union) could vary the conditions to an extent that would permit the sign to be erected. In the event the Trustees decided not to proceed and the matter lapsed.

Chaplain of the Sydney Missions to Seamen reports to the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union that in the calendar years 1954-1956 clergymen from Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Baptist churches had on a monthly rotation preached at the Mission.

At a meeting on 22 November, the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union resolved to participate in a meeting between the Missions to Seamen Sydney and the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund to learn of proposals to utilise the resources of both organisations for the benefit of merchant seamen visiting the port of Sydney.

**1958** Insurance policy in the name of the Sydney Bethel Union taken out on the 100 George Street (North) property values it at £75,000. Premium of £107/10/-. The policy for the preceding year providing coverage for 'fire, aircraft, riots and

strikes', valued the property at £40,000. The escalation of the value reflects the views of the Trustees that the cover should be on the basis of 'replacement, reinstatement and extra costs' as opposed to previous cover that had been by 'indemnity policies'. The Sydney Mission to Seamen was also reminded that the policies should show the Sydney Bethel Union as the owner of the building and that the Mission was not entitled to have the policies drawn in its name jointly with the Bethel Union.

Mr J D Bates (Orient Line) appointed Trustee in succession to Sir Leslie Morshead, resigned.

**1959** Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union on 1 October noted progress in the discussions between the Missions to Seamen Sydney and the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund authorised at their meeting on 22 November 1957 and formally resolved to support the implementation of plans drawn up by Norman McPherson, architect, for the further development of the Sydney Missions to Seamen premises in George Street North.

Australia's population passes 10 million mark.

**1961** The Trustees met on 29 March and noted advice from the NSW Minister for Local Government to the effect that a major redevelopment of The Rocks area of Sydney was in contemplation. 'The Rocks' area includes the land on the Western side of Circular Quay and embraces the buildings located on either side of George Street North. Inasmuch therefore as the Government's plans could impact on the Missions to Seamen Sydney premises it was resolved to accept the Government's advice to defer consideration of development plans for the property.

**1962** Mr Rupert G Sherlock appointed Secretary of the Sydney Bethel Union on 28 May.

Meeting of Trustees on the same day noted no apparent progress in the Government's plans for redevelopment of The Rocks area and it was decided to consider lobbying the Government to ensure that the plans for enhancement of the Missions to Seamen Sydney building would be protected.

Trustees further noted that the lease of the property given by the Sydney Bethel Union to the Missions to Seamen Sydney had actually expired on 31 December 1960 and it was resolved the Secretary and Mr Hector Clayton, a Trustee, would pursue the matter.

**1967** Meeting of Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union held on 7 September appoints Mr Rodney F Sinden as Secretary in succession to the late Mr Rupert G Sherlock whose death had occurred in the intervening five years since the last meeting of Trustees had been held on 28 May 1962.

A new proposal for alternative premises for the Missions to Seamen Sydney emerged when it was reported by Mr W D Donaldson, a Trustee, that the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund was considering redeveloping its property at 182-186 George Street, Sydney so as to make it suitable for occupation by the Missions to Seamen Sydney. It was noted that some initial reservations about the site raised by the Missions had been resolved. It was believed the time had arrived to approach the Government with a proposal to relinquish the site in return for compensation and that the funds thus generated may be able to be applied to development of the 182-186 George Street site. A sub-committee was formed to negotiate with the authorities on these matters.

**1968** Mr Hector Clayton, Trustee, knighted.

The NSW Government passed the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority Act. The Authority's role was to oversee the rehabilitation and development of the Western side of Circular Quay, known locally as The Rocks Area.

**1970** The land on which the Sydney Sailors' Home (not the Missions to Seamen Sydney) was resumed by the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority and duly notified in the Government Gazette on 18 December. The Council of the Sydney Sailors' Home then commenced negotiations with the Authority seeking compensation for the resumption, but agreement could not be reached on the amount and the Council then resorted to legal action.

Mr G R Rickards, Chairman of Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union, died. He was succeeded as Chairman by Mr W D Donaldson.

Ven. Archdeacon Clive Andrew Goodwin appointed as a Trustee in succession to Mr George Reginald Rickards (deceased).

**1971** Trustees noted at a meeting held on 5 May that their claim in respect of the resumption of their building at 100 George Street North, occupied by the Missions to Seamen Sydney amounting to \$2.5 million and a further \$50,000 claim for compensation had been submitted to the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority and acknowledged.

A further meeting on 11 August recorded that the Trustees in a letter dated 6 July sent on their behalf by Clayton Utz to the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority, had confirmed their wish to remain in occupation of the property at 100 George Street North. This apparently indicated that the 1967 proposal to develop facilities for visiting seamen at 182-186 George Street, Sydney in conjunction with

the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund, owners of the property had lapsed.

**1972** Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union at a meeting on 18 December reported that the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority had made a formal offer of \$1.9 million in response to the Trustees original claim of \$2.55 million. Trustees resolved to accept the lower figure.

**1973** Mr W D Donaldson retired as a Trustee.

**1974** In anticipation of the Missions to Seamen Sydney vacating the building at 100 George Street North property, a building at 11-15 Macquarie Place, Sydney (immediately to the South of the Circular Quay ferry wharves) was actually purchased on behalf of the Sydney Bethel Union by the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund at a cost of \$1.3 million because at the time the former had not received the compensation payment from the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority for the resumption of the property at 100 George Street North.

**1975** Transfer of the Macquarie Place property (see 1974) from the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund to the Sydney Bethel Union at a cost of \$1.3 million was formalised on 17 March.

Mr John Harington Burrough Cowper appointed a Trustee of Sydney Bethel Union in succession to Sir Hector Clayton (deceased).

1976 Mr. Neville Pixley , Trustee of the Sydney Bethel Union , Knighted.

Discussions commenced with the Sydney Missions to Seamen-in anticipation of its move to the newly acquired Macquarie Place premises purchased for its use by the Sydney Bethel Union in the project. Noted that some financial support could be anticipated from the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund . It had

been agreed that the Sydney Bethel Union as the owner of the property would be responsible for the ongoing costs of maintenance and upkeep of the building in such areas as repairs, lifts, air conditioning , fire prevention equipment, insurance (covering building and plant , public liability and burglary) and rental of the telephone system. For its part, the Missions to Seamen would meet such running costs as electricity, cleaning and Council rates. Questions relating to the financial responsibility for payment of the wages of staff proposed to be employed was left for further discussion. Ultimately it was decided that the Sydney Bethel Union would contribute \$200 per week towards these staff costs.

Lengthy negotiations on the terms of a lease of the Macquarie Place premises by the Missions to Seamen commenced with the lease for a period of 25 years not being finalised until 1981.

In June the Trustees foreshadowed an official opening of the building by the Governor of NSW, Sir Roden Cutler, V.C. at a ceremony which took place on 19 April 1977. The building was dedicated by The Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev'd Sir Marcus Loane.

Sydney Bethel Union at a meeting on 14 November accepted responsibility for payment to the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund of the rent on two dwellings they owned at Greenwich and Glebe then being occupied by chaplains of the Missions to Seamen.

The heavy financial commitments placed on the Sydney Bethel Union arising from the Macquarie Place property acquisition necessitated the liquidation of some of its investments.

An invitation from the Missions to Seamen to the Sydney Bethel Union to nominate a representative to sit on the former's Port Committee was declined with thanks.

- 1980** Mr Rodney F Sinden, Secretary to the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union died on 1 September and was succeeded by Mr John A Pringle.
- 1981** Ven. Archdeacon C A Goodwin, Chairman of Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union died on 1 July. Trustee Sir John Bates was appointed as Chairman.
- 1982** Mr Clive Benson Goodwin and Rt Rev Arthur John Dain appointed Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union to replace the late Ven Archdeacon C A Goodwin and Sir John Bates, retired.

Trustees agree to make an ex-gratia payment to the Sydney Missions to Seamen to offset an operating loss of \$34,000 in calendar year 1981.

What appear to be the first references to the Macquarie Street property as 'Flying Angel House' are made.

- 1983** At a meeting of Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union held on 17 August, a letter was tabled from L J Hooker Limited, real estate agents and developers, asking whether the Trustees would consider selling the Macquarie Place property. Trustees asked for a meeting with Hookers seeking further information. This meeting was held on 12 October when a representative of Hookers advised that they were acting on behalf of Schroder Darling, a merchant bank. A subsequent offer of \$3.15 million on basis of possession was rejected by the Trustees. A further offer of \$4.1 million was made by Hookers and also declined, with the explanation that it was constrained in terms of the lease held by the Missions to Seamen.

**1984** The Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union on 23 February resolve to commission a report on the likely future needs of the Missions to Seamen Sydney from Malcolm Longstaff & Associates. This report, tendered in early May, essentially recommended that the Mission should be relocated to an area closer to where visiting vessels berthed and also that shipping facilities at Botany Bay which were likely to expand in the future, should be kept in mind when the Missions' future operational plans were under consideration. The Trustees resolved to defer any action until they were in a position to judge for how long they could continue to fund Flying Angel House in its then current state.

On 7 March, the Trustees considered a letter received from Canon James Whild, Chairman of the Mission to Seamen Sydney expressing concern as to the future viability of operations at Flying Angel House.

In July, the Trustees wrote to Canon James Whild, Chairman of the Mission to Seamen Sydney asking whether in the deterioration of the financial situation of the Sydney Bethel Union Trust, adequate services to visiting seamen could be provided if the operations of the Mission were confined to two floors of Flying Angel House and also foreshadowing the discontinuance of all subsidies paid to the Mission effective 31 December 1984. Canon Whild responded in writing on 27 August indicating the view that the present site is the best location for it to carry out its work. Services could be reduced to two floors provided the garage and entrance facilities remained in the hands of the Mission. However it would entail cessation of all commercial activities in the building which produced a total of \$100,000 annually and that reduction in activities could be contemplated only if the Sydney Bethel Union was prepared to provide additional funding to cover the shortfall on an 'indexed' basis to cover

rising costs. A meeting with Canon Whild was fixed for 26 September but meanwhile the Secretary was asked to ascertain from L J Hooker Limited whether, if the building was sold, the Sydney Bethel Union could retain the naming rights. No record of this meeting was located but at a meeting on 29 November, noting three further expressions of interest in the property, reference is made to a decision by the Trustees to 'retain ownership of the building' and to conduct a feasibility study on the contraction of the Mission's operations to two floors and the relinquishing of all its commercial activities on the site.

An offer dated 7 November of \$5.5million was received from L J Hooker Limited on behalf of Amstal Developments and Trustees had initiated discussions with the Senior Chaplain of the Mission to discuss possible alternative sites if a move from Macquarie Place was to occur.

**1985** No satisfactory response having been forthcoming from the Board of the Missions to Seamen Sydney regarding possible sites to which the Mission could be relocated, the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union on 13 June resolved that they may be obliged to convert Flying Angel House to Strata Title. Trustees further decided to discuss with L J Hooker Limited if their client would be prepared to make a fresh offer for the property on the basis that the Sydney Bethel Union be granted Strata title to any two floors.

On 12 July the Trustees resolved to purchase the property known as 243-245 Sussex Street, Sydney for \$1.25 million subject to exchange of contracts for the sale of Flying Angel House and an architects' report on the scope of upgrading work required on the Sussex Street property and any regulatory restraints on the change of use of the premises. The secretary was also authorised to negotiate with L J

Hooker Limited on the sale of Flying Angel House with vacant possession. On 19 July, the Trustees formally resolved to sign and exchange contracts for purchase by the Sydney Bethel Union of 243-245 Sussex Street, Sydney from Chagon Developments Pty Ltd. Purchase price was \$1.25 million, with settlement on 30 September and vacant possession being granted by the vendor no later than 31 January 1986.

Rt Rev A J Dain appointed Deputy Chairman on 19 July.

On 2 August, Trustees considered three offers received from L J Hooker Limited on behalf of their clients and resolved to accept an offer of \$5.3 million for Flying Angel House. Notwithstanding, it was resolved at a meeting on 28 August that the property would be disposed of at auction to be held on 26 September.

On 30 October, Mr William Macquarie Cowper was appointed Trustee in succession to Mr J H B Cowper, retired.

Meanwhile on 5 December, Trustees are notified that its 243-245 Sussex Street was to be resumed by the Darling Harbour Authority

**1986** In January the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union at the request of the Missions to Seamen, had inspected a block of land located at the junction of Union, Edward and Pymont Bridge Road, Pymont with a view to purchase by the Union as a site for a new Mariners' Church. This was subject to checks being made by Clayton Utz, solicitors that the land in question was outside the jurisdiction of the Darling Harbour Authority. Later resolved to abandon the proposal on grounds that the charter of the Sydney Bethel Union did not permit it to engage in property development.

In January the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union at the request of the Missions to Seamen, had inspected a block of land located at the junction of Union, Edward and Pyrmont Bridge Road, Pyrmont with a view to purchase by the Union as a site for a new Mariners' Church. This was subject to checks being made by Clayton Utz, solicitors that the land in question was outside the jurisdiction of the Darling Harbour Authority. Later resolved to abandon the proposal on grounds that the charter of the Sydney Bethel Union did not permit it to engage in property development.

At a meeting on 26 February, the Trustees resolved to enter into negotiations with the Copeland Group to purchase three units in a development at 61 Union Street, Pyrmont: two units were intended for the use of the Missions to Seamen Sydney and the third as an investment by the Union.

Meanwhile the Trustees gave approval for the temporary occupation by the Missions to Seamen Sydney of space in the Carla Zampatti Building at 439-441 Kent Street, Sydney. On 18 March, the Sydney City Council approved a Development Application for alterations to the Building to render it suitable for the operations of the Missions to Seamen Sydney.

At the same meeting the Trustees approved a donation of \$10,000 to the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund Limited to assist with restoration of the Merchant Navy and Allied War Services Association Cemetery in the Sydney suburb of Rookwood. Shortly afterwards the Trustees agreed to transfer a further \$50,000 to the Merchant Navy War Memorial Fund Limited for investment by them, the income thereby produced to be used for continued maintenance of the Cemetery.

On 23 May, the Trustees noted disappointment in the offer of \$50,000 from the Darling Harbour Authority representing costs incurred specifically on the relocation of the Mission from Macquarie Place.

On this date, Mr John Grant Denton and Mr Peter Corsar Anderson were appointed as Trustees following the retirements respectively of Sir Neville Pixley (Chairman) and Rt Rev A J Dain. Mr Denton was elected as Chairman and Mr Clive Goodwin was elected Deputy Chairman.

On 18 June, the Trustees met with representatives of the Missions to Seamen Sydney. The Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union advised they wish to proceed with negotiations with the Copeland Group to acquire the three units at 61 Union Street, Pyrmont, but on a 'strata title' basis. They further reiterated the decision that the proposed purchase by the Union of the Design Centre at 51 Murray Street, Pyrmont would be a suitable home for the Missions to Seamen Sydney. The representatives of the Mission having retired from the meeting the Trustees resolved to participate at an auction of the design Centre on 19 June. A bid of \$1.8 million was successful and work was commenced by consultants on plans to convert the property for use by the Missions to Seamen Sydney and the preparation of a Development Application. Work also commenced on finding lessees for the portion of the building not required by the Missions to Seamen.

**1987** Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union met on 9 April and considered a letter from the Board of the Missions to Seamen Sydney apparently querying the suitability of the Murray Street site for the Missions' purposes. The Trustees replied reiterating their conviction as being 'an ideal location.'

**1988** On 9 May, the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union considered a letter dated 29 April received from the Missions to Seamen Sydney suggesting that

consideration be given to purchasing the British Ex-Servicemen's Club at 541 Kent Street for the use of the Missions. The Trustees response was that the Missions had two options - either to move to the Murray Street Pyrmont property after March 1989 or the Missions if it desired a central city location, to identify suitable rental property in that area.

In November, the Missions to Seamen then proposed to the Trustees that they consider leasing a building at 396 Kent Street for use by the Mission for its operations - the proposal was declined by the Trustees as freehold as opposed to rented premises was the preferred option.

On 2 November the Trustees purchased for investment purposes an industrial property located at 79 Gow Street in the Sydney suburb of Petersham.

**1990** On 15 March the Trustees were advised by the Missions to Seamen Sydney that the auction of a building at 486 Kent Street, Sydney was imminent and recommending the Sydney Bethel Union acquire the property for the use of the Mission. However on 30 November 1990 the Trustees resolved to submit a tender to the NSW Government to acquire a property at 320-324 Sussex Street, Sydney \$2.35 million with settlement to take place on 28 February 1991 and to lease the premises to the Missions to Seamen Sydney. It was expected that space in the building not required by the Mission would be leased out. It was also decided to seek tenants for the space now available in the Murray Street, Pyrmont building arising from the decision to locate the Missions to Seamen Sydney elsewhere.

**1991** The Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union expressed concern at the rising costs of operating the Missions to Seamen Sydney and indicated the then current

level of funding of the Mission by the Trust could not be sustained.

**1993** After completion of the necessary alterations to render it suitable for the operations, The Missions to Seamen Sydney's new premises named Flying Angel House at 320-332 Sussex Street, Sydney officially opened by the Governor of NSW, Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair AC RAN (Rtd) on 20 June.

An approach to the Trustees of The Sydney Bethel Union by the Chaplain of the Missions to Seamen at Port Kembla, NSW South of Sydney was declined as being outside the Trust's charter.

**1995** Mr Graham Lightfoot appointed a Trustee replacing Mr W M Cowper, retired.

**1998** Mr Stan Moriarty succeeded Mr John Pringle as Secretary to the Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union on 5 February.

**1999** Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union in February held an informal meeting with the Chairman and Senior Chaplain of the Mission to Seamen NSW and board members of the Sydney Sailors' Home to discuss possible funding by the Sydney Sailors' Home of some of the Missions' activities.

**2000** Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, world President of the Missions to Seamen, visited the Mission's premises in Sydney.

Trustees of the Sydney Bethel Union resolved on 12 September to seek legal assistance in drafting an updated constitution.

**2002** The name of the Mission to Seamen worldwide was changed to 'Mission to Seafarers'.

*The Sydney Bethel Union Extension Amendment Act 2002* was enacted by Parliament, thereby enabling

the Trust to extend its support for seafarers' charitable interests beyond the port of Sydney.

A one-off grant was approved for the Mission to Seafarers at Newcastle NSW.

Mr J G Denton retired as Chairman of Trustees on 17 September and was replaced by Mr Peter Lovell. Mr L G Lightfoot was elected as Chairman.

**2003** Mr P C Anderson, Trustee, died in office on 29 December.

Appointment of professional financial advisers.

**2004** Mr David L P Field appointed a Trustee in succession to the late Mr P C Anderson.

Sydney Bethel Union sells its property at 51-53 Murray Street, Pyrmont NSW with proceeds added to the Union's investment portfolio.

The Trustees on 28 September resolved to make an initial annual grant to the Mission to Seafarers at Port Kembla, such payment being consistent with the Trustees' expanded discretion under the 2002 legislation to pursue its aims beyond the port of Sydney.

At the same meeting, the Trustees noted that the Australian Mariners Welfare Society (formerly the Sydney Sailors' Home) was now in position to provide financial assistance on a needs basis to assist missions around the Australian coast.

In December, the Trustees approved an increase to the annual grant to the Mission to Seafarers, Sydney to assist in contributing to the costs faced by the Mission in establishing a presence at the new Sydney Seafarers' Centre at Port Botany.

Discussions were held with St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney and the Mission to Seafarers, Sydney with a view to the Cathedral being granted 'ad hoc' complimentary use until the end of the year of the presently unused space on the upper floor of Flying Angel House.

Advice was received from the Australian Taxation Office confirming that The Sydney Bethel Union is deemed a charitable institution and was entitled to endorsement for the tax concessions of income tax exemption and GST concessions and in a subsequent letter from the ATO it was confirmed that these concessions applied from 1 July 2000 and 1 July 2005 respectively.

**2005** A grant was made to Mission to Seafarers, Newcastle.

Advice was received from the Office of State Revenue advising that The Sydney Bethel Union was exempt from land tax in terms of Section 10(1)(d) of the Land Tax Management Act.

**2006** The Sydney Bethel Union sells its investment property at 79 Gow Street Padstow NSW with proceeds added to the Union's investment portfolio.

On 17 November, a special grant was made to the Mission to Seafarers, Newcastle to relieve budgetary stress.

Some difficulties reported earlier by the Mission to Seafarers in accessing vessels to minister to ships' crews because of heightened port security restrictions have been largely overcome.

Noted the decline in financial support from shipping companies, partly because of recent mergers of some international shipping interests.

**2007** A Special Purpose Grant Scheme was established to cater for one-off projects that were seen to be consistent with the objectives of The Sydney Bethel Union.

Trustees committed to a substantial increase in the annual grant to the Mission to Seafarers, Port Kembla, recognising the anticipated increase in shipping activity in the port.

**2008** The Trustees were contacted by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) who were seeking the recovery of the stained glass windows formerly located in the Mariners Church at 100 George Street which had been built in 1859 and which it was proposed now be returned to that location. These windows were currently in the Mariners' Chapel at Flying Angel House and were a significant feature of the Chapel. Discussions with SHFA were continuing.

On 11 March the Trustees received a report on the current operations of the Mission to Seafarers, Newcastle. The report was considered in light of changes currently occurring in the shipping industry generally. The Trustees were of the view that there was a need for a bus service that could take seafarers to a compact, redeveloped Newcastle Mission near the town centre equipped with a chapel, bank of computers, telephone booths, shops, reading area and a few club-like facilities.

**2009** The Sydney Bethel Union received the inaugural Seafarer Welfare Award presented at the 14th Annual Lloyd's List DCN Australian Shipping and Transport Awards.

**2010** The Trustees' meeting on 16 March identified its possible options in regard to the future of Flying Angel House in Sussex Street, Sydney as it was apparent that it contained more space than was required for current Mission to Seafarers operations. Moreover, the building was becoming increasingly expensive to maintain. These available options

included selling the property, renting out the unused upper floor or converting the property to strata title status and then selling that floor. It was resolved to seek professional advice in evaluating each of these alternatives. At a meeting of Trustees on 30 September, APP Corporation, the consultants retained to advise them in this regard, were given a formal briefing as to the guidance Trustees were seeking.

The Trustees approved an increase in the grant to the Mission to Seafarers at Port Kembla to assist with funding the eventual appointment of a full-time chaplain at the station.

On 14 December the Trustees approved a grant to assist the Mission to Seafarers in establishing a presence in the NSW South coast port of Eden.

At this meeting the Trustees received a comprehensive report from the consultants engaged to advise them regarding the various options for the future management of Flying Angel House in Sussex Street, Sydney. At that stage it appeared the most advantageous course of action would be to sell the property.

**2011** After a meeting held on 17 February, the Trustees met with the Senior Chaplain and other representatives of the Mission to Seafarers, Sydney to consider all available options in regard to the future of the Mission's Sussex Street, Sydney premises. Subsequently, it was formally resolved by the Trustees to dispose of the property, initially calling for 'expressions of interest' from potential buyers.

The Mission to Seafarers, Sydney received the Seafarer Welfare Award presented at the 16th Annual Lloyd's List DCN Australian Shipping and Transport Awards.

On 18 October and after full consultation with the Mission to Seafarers' the Sussex Street Sydney premises were sold. The building being leased back until June 2012 while a more compact property was found.

**2012** New premises for the Mission to Seafarers Sydney at Bond Store 2, 24 Hickson Road Walsh Bay were purchased on 30 April by the Sydney Bethel Union. A major refit of these premises was completed in December.

Mr Graham Lightfoot, chairman of The Sydney Bethel Union, was appointed a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia on 11 June.

**2013** On 21 July a hallowing service was held for the Mission to Seafarers Newcastle refurbished premises at Hannell Street, Wickham. The ground floor of the premises had previously been leased to a school, but it was decided not to renew the lease and move the mission's activities down stairs. With assistance of volunteers, local trades people and a new ceiling funded by The Sydney Bethel Union the downstairs area was transformed to a functional seafarers' centre with computer facilities, games area and shop.

The Mission to Seafarers Sydney's new premises at 24 Hickson Road Walsh Bay was officially opened on 25 September by Her Excellency the Governor of NSW, Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO.

Mr. David LP Field resigned as a trustee.

**2014** Mr Llew C Russell AM appointed a trustee  
Mr L Graham Lightfoot resigned as Chairman.  
Mr Clive B Goodwin appointed Chairman  
Mr Peter HT Lovell appointed Deputy Chairman

**2018** On 14/11/2018 an amendment to the Sydney Bethel Union Extension Act 1908 received assent that

replaced the existing Trustees with a corporate Trustee being Sydney Bethel Union Pty Ltd (ACN 617 974 688). The retiring Trustees are the Directors of the new Company.

**2019** On 21/11/2019 Mr David P Parmeter was appointed a Director of the Sydney Bethel Union Pty Ltd