

The Next Step



Canberra Aboriginal Church

Canberra Christian Fellowship
(in the Methodist Tradition)



A Little Bit of History

John Gale came to the Queanbeyan district as a Methodist probationary minister. Although he didn't stay in full time ministry, he was very active as a lay preacher in the Methodist Church and also the Presbyterian Church. He was also prominent in community affairs. He founded the Golden Age newspaper, now known as the Queanbeyan Age, was a N.S.W. parliamentarian and became known as 'the father of Canberra' due to his enthusiastic and persistent promotion of this region for the site of Australia's capital.

MR. JOHN GALE. [his obituary from THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, TUESDAY, JULY 16, 1929.]

Veteran Journalist's Death.

QUEANBEYAN, Monday.

Mr. John Gale died this morning, in his 99th year. He had been ill for the past three weeks with acute bronchitis.

Mr Gale was the oldest journalist in Australia. He founded the "Queanbeyan Age" in 1860.

Mr Gale was widely known as a journalist, a public man, a churchman, a Freemason and as "the father of Canberra." Until a few months ago he was actively engaged in attending to his numerous interests including those of district Coroner and local magistrate. Lately, however, his sight had failed and he was compulsorily idle. Mr Gale claimed to be "the oldest working journalist in the world."

Born in Newport, Monmouthshire, in 1830, Mr. Gale was being trained as a compositor, and was acting as a reporter for his local newspaper before he was 17 years old. For several years he was engaged in Press work but later studied for the Methodist ministry. He arrived in Sydney in 1854, and went shortly afterwards to Yass as a probationer Methodist minister. He spent three years working for the Church in that district. He became tutor to the family of Mr. Steel Caldwell, of Moonbucca Station, in the Bland district. Mr. Gale remained at Moonbucca for some years.

MEMORIES OF THE SOUTH.

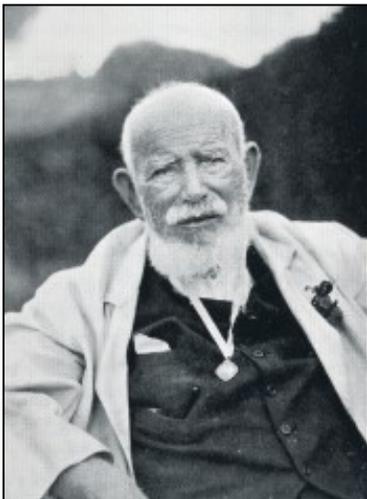
In those days there were many aborigines scattered throughout the country. On one occasion when the south and south-west tribes had declared war on the comparatively wild Bogan blackfellows, on the ground that they were "too saucy," Mr. Gale saw 300 warriors in full war paint, march across the Bland Plains to attack the Bogan men.

The region was a sportsman's paradise abounding in fish and game of all sorts - emus, pelicans, black duck, teal, tree-goose, bronzewing pigeons, bustards, and kangaroos.

A friend and associate of Mr. Gale's was the manager of the Bland station, Ben Hall - then a law-abiding and generally respected man. Hall came into conflict with the police, and was subjected to such persecution that his home was broken up, his wife driven away, and he himself became a notorious bushranger. In Mr. Gale's opinion, Hall was not naturally a criminal - he was driven to crime

Travelling across country to Goulburn in a bullock-dray, with his wife and two children, about 1858, Mr. Gale camped at Lambing Flat, on the spot that is now the centre of the town of Young. The only moving things that Mr. Gale saw there were half a dozen kangaroos, 7ft high, which came up fearlessly to examine this invader of their sanctuary.

While he was at Yass, Mr. Gale visited the tiny settlements of Queanbeyan and Collector (an Anglicised form of Kaligda). One day he was helped by a squatter named Young to cross the Molonglo River, then in flood, and he rode on to the top of a hill. There, under a giant kurrajong, he gazed in delight over a magnificent panorama, and exclaimed, "What a site for a city!" Sixty-three years later Mr. Gale was present to see the Prince of Wales, on that identical spot, under the same kurrajong, set one of the foundation-stones of the city of Canberra.



QUEANBEYAN IN 1860.

When, in 1860, printing office equipment arrived in Sydney for Mr Gale, he decided to start a newspaper in Queanbeyan. With his plant, and his wife and three children, he took train for Campbelltown. The freight rate was £35 a ton. Thence the machines were conveyed in drays, for which the freight rate was £100 a ton. They left Campbelltown in the middle of July, and reached Queanbeyan, a journey of 150 miles, at the end of August. The "Golden Age" commenced publication in September, 1860. The printing office was a shanty. The paper was popular immediately, and gained a large circulation. There was plenty of business, and in his first year Mr. Gale made £1000. Then came competition from a new journal at Cooma; the Government land sale advertisements dwindled; the Post Office suddenly decided to charge one penny each on postage on all newspapers. Some country journals ceased publication; Mr. Gale's survived. His newspaper business to-day is conducted by his grandchildren

Mr. Gale, throughout his life, was an in-defatigable worker for the public good, and held many public positions. In 1888 he was elected member for Murrumbidgee, but did not contest the seat again. During the time he was a member of Parliament, Mr. Gale founded a newspaper at Manly. He published a volume of poems before leaving England, and said he was glad when he put the ocean between him and it, yet among the wreckage of the Dunbar at South Head, a copy of the little volume was washed ashore and duly found him out.

He took a keen interest in the history of the south and south-west, and most of his writings deal with that subject. His book on the history of Canberra will have a permanent place in Australian literature. He fought hard for the establishment there of the Federal Capital. It has been said that his pamphlet, "Dalgety or Can-berra," turned the scale in favour of the latter place some 25 years ago

Mr. Gale wrote a most interesting pamphlet about Lake George, that mysterious sheet of water near Queanbeyan, which comes and goes. To-day it is a great lake; but thrice since Mr. Gale saw it first in the 'fifties, it has been an extensive pastoral plain, abounding in herbage. When Sir John Robertson passed his famous Land Act of 1861, the free selectors settled in numbers on this rich flat. Then the lake returned, and the settlers were driven out. By 1875 it was deep, 18 miles long and seven miles wide. In 1902 it was dry again. By 1925 the water had returned. Mr Gale was a close friend of the Rev Robert Cartwright, who was the first white man to see this lake, about 1812, and who afterwards lived at Collector

Mr Gale was a notable figure among the delegates at the State conference of the Methodist Church for 67 consecutive years. For more than 70 years he was a lay preacher

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For many years Mr Gale represented the "Herald" at Queanbeyan. He was presented to the Duke of York during the visit of his Royal Highness to Canberra in 1927.

In 1922 Mr Gale remarried

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/16548228>

John Gale combined service to his God and to the community of which he was a part throughout his long life and many and varied activities. He now stands (in bronze) in Queanbeyan at the corner of Farrer Place & Lowe Street.

Prayer Points

Please pray

- for Aboriginal communities all over Australia.
- for Aboriginal pastors across the country.
- for Bible translators working to make the Bible available to Aboriginal people in their own language.
- for each other.



and give thanks for the Canberra Aboriginal Church virtual gatherings using ZOOM for around 40 minutes each Sunday from 5pm. - A time of fellowship, worship and delving into God's Word.

The Canberra Aboriginal Church currently intends resuming normal physical gatherings for worship services at Lyons on the 1st Sunday of September.

Chaplains

Please pray that as coronavirus restrictions are gradually lifted, the chaplains we particularly support will be able to follow the new paths You have set before them. - Mr. Owen Chadwick - Universities chaplaincy, Rev. Bob Prior - Racecourse chaplaincy, Rev. Paul Tabulutu - N.S.W. / A.C.T. Fijian churches



Devotional material



Prayer

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Bible Reading



Fellowship by Phone

Canberra Christian Fellowship and Canberra Aboriginal Church - Worship Services are currently SUSPENDED.

Palindromes (words or sentences that are the same read forwards and backwards) were being discussed in class. I asked the question "What is the first thing Adam said to Eve?"

I was expecting the answer "Madam, I'm Adam," but one student had a better reply:
"Wow."