

Church Matters

Keeping a link with the Sydney congregation



Living and Sharing the Gospel

June 2016

Gerard Haanstra 1928 – 2016

The funeral for long-time Sydney member **Gerard Haanstra** was held on May 2nd.

Born in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in 1928, Gerard's early years were molded by the Great Depression and the Second World War, in particular the hazards of living in an occupied country. At the age of 17 he was rounded up and sent to Germany to work with the crews cleaning up after bombing raids.

As a young single man he travelled extensively through Europe and Scandinavia, his favourite destination being Vienna. His love for travel never left him; he was still travelling into his 80's.

In 1952, while working for the Dutch Postal Service, he met and married Johanna. With their young family of three, they made the momentous decision in 1961 to move to Australia, where they spent 5 years in a migrant hostel in Matraville awaiting an opportunity to purchase their own home.

With his love of all things Dutch, Gerard joined the Dutch Club in Sydney where his detailed work of cataloguing was greatly appreciated.



Gerard was an avid reader and a great pursuer of knowledge. He never stopped seeking to understand what was going on around him and was aware of debates and controversies on many issues. He had a love of history and an ability to absorb and retain details. He had a challenging mind and loved a good discussion. He never hesitated to put forward his opinions, yet he wasn't intimidated by looking into opposing ideas.

Always his quest for knowledge was grounded on his love of the Bible and his deep faith in God.

His involvement with the church began in 1966 after hearing broadcasts of the "Radio Church of God." For the next five decades Gerard walked faithfully with God as an active member of our church community which benefited from his beautiful singing voice and his love of classical music.

As his mind and body began to fail, Gerard was sustained by his hope of the resurrection, knowing that hidden within him was the life of Christ renewing him into the likeness of his Saviour.

Gerard is survived by his wife, **Johanna**, children **Bob**, **Edith** and **Linda**, 4 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

Theo Okai wrote:

Buduburam

Thank you very much for the continued support for our refugee brethren at Buduburam GCI. Concerning vocational support, apart from one new member who will start a yet-to-be determined skill-based training this year, the current 8 trainees will conclude this year 2016.

We are in the process of assessing what equipment support package would be required for four ladies who are studying bakery and beauty care (2 per vocation) to enable them become self-employed after they conclude this year.

This will be sponsored early next year.

As per estimates, support required this year for the eight remaining trainees is about AUS \$2,000.

Sydney has sent this in May.

I have included pictures of the children's hall project which is now roofed.

Following the assessment of outstanding works required to complete the project, it is estimated that an amount of about GHS13,000 (Ghana local) or AUS \$4,600 would complete all remaining works. The outstanding works are Floor Screeding, Tiling, Plastering, Painting, Windows and associated burglar-proof Doors, Electrical Wiring and Fixtures.

We will budget for this in next year's budget.



Mick Piper Retires

Long term Wollongong church member **Mick Piper** retired recently.

Mick started work as an apprentice Fitter and Turner at the Port Kembla Steelworks in December 1971 just 1 month before his 16th birthday. The apprenticeship training program was excellent with the whole first year spent in their training centre with 120 other 1st year apprentices. The other 3 years of his apprenticeship were in different sections of the steelworks which gave Mick a wide variety of skills. This was a time when apprentices were really trained which is not as common today.



Mick wrote:

"At 18 I was put onto shift work which opened the opportunity to allow me to surf and work in my garage which was a great passion in my life.

I left the steelworks in 1978 to work with my former Foreman in his newly acquired Hire Business. I then later returned to my trade at an engineering shop that did work on the ships that came into Port Kembla harbour. I mainly worked the machine shop and was given the position of Leading Hand until I left and starting working at Tallawarra Power Station on Lake Illawarra and remained there for 9 years till the state shut it down in 1989.

At the Power Station I was firstly employed as a Power Station Maintenance Fitter and later furthered my training as an Instrument and Control Fitter. It was there that I first started reading the Plain Truth which led me into the church which was life changing from my ungentlemanly ways which was typical of the working life in heavy industry.

What stood out mostly to my work colleagues beside my P's & Q's was now I would not work any overtime on the Saturday shifts which was very unusual for me. A few close friends knew why.

When Tallawarra closed down I got a job with an engineering company that specialised in pumps and rotating equipment. After 1 month there I asked the Manager for time off to attend the Feast. He thought it sounded a bit weird and was worried I was just going to another job. His words were "you are coming back, aren't you?" I assured him yes. I then worked there for 15 years and formed many good friendships with them learning about the person I really was 'besides my strange beliefs' and had respect from the guys I worked with. At times they would speak up to defend me when someone else tried to put me down over my beliefs or moral issues that would arise in conversations.

It was at times tough work especially on-site and working in the mines. I was later promoted to Leading Hand."

The respect for Mick as a worker was shown in 2004 when his Supervisor and he were approached to work for another Pump Engineering company called Weir Services which had just started in Wollongong. They started with this company in the same roles of Supervisor and Leading Hand.

Mick then worked there for 11 years until 2015 when he retired in June. The quality of Mick's relationships is shown by how his supervisor and himself had been working together for 26 years as a team and still remain good friends. All the team at Weir gave Mick a great send off with generous gifts and begged him to stay. The manager stated that they will never fulfil the role with a trades person who is a good all-rounder as trained in Mick's time many years ago.

Mick said: "I really enjoyed my career that I chose and see it as a blessing of all the things that have been learnt along the way but now I am even more blessed with being able to spend extra time at home in my workshop and being with my family."

We congratulate you Mick for being a genuine hard working man who in an authentic way allowed Christ's light to shine in his working life and relationships.

Nepal

June is the dry weather period in which **Deben Sam** takes his mobile Bible school to remote villages. Sydney has sent \$3,000 to sponsor this.

Budget

All our budgeted monies for 2016-7 have been done. There were some reallocations due to changes in needs but the total amount budgeted is the same.

Preliminary planning for 2016-7 looks very promising, with the area very generous in supporting overseas mission. Thank you.

Service

June 11th Services in Wollongong and Sydney will be cancelled

June 12th will be a combined Pentecost service at 2.30 pm at South Strathfield school.