Sixtieth Session of the South England Conference
6-9 September, The Great Hall, Exeter University

Reporters: Sam Davis, Mary Barrett, Sharon Pugh, Wharanin Jan-graph, Victor Hulbert and David Marshall
Photographers: Leslie Hill, Stuart West and Victor Hulbert

Left: Someone spoke from the platform of Aaron and Joshua holding up the hands of Moses. Here Pastor Lockham and Earl Ramharacksingh hold up the hands of Pastor Sam Davis, the newly elected SEC president. Above: Ken Burton chats to fellow delegates who are enjoying the sunshine between sessions. Below left: The GC’s pastor Pardon Mwansa provided the spiritual food for the session. Below: The hilly campus of Exeter University provided delegates with excellent opportunities for exercise.
Luther compared the human heart to a cow byre at the end of winter. ‘What can we do with all that filth?’ he demanded.

This was his prescription for the stinking cow byre. Turn the Elbe into it. [In place of Elbe read Trent or Severn, if it helps.] The flood will sweep away all the pollution. Not only our enemy’s leaven bucket, the whole system of sin and hatred will be swept away. The great river of living water that can wash away all sin and uncleanness and bring with it new life.

Grace is not just grace in the function, like a mighty river washing away the filth. Grace is grace in the presentation.

Grace is message. Grace is also behaviour.

For the last half of the nineteenth century the British scene was dominated by two great political rivals: Gladstone and Disraeli. An attractive woman sat next to each man at dinner on consecutive evenings. When asked to compare her experience of the two men, she revealed that she preferred Disraeli at the beginning of dinner after sitting with Mr Gladstone, I thought he was the cleverest man in England, but after sitting next to Mr Disraeli, I thought I was the cleverest woman.

Gladstone was always ‘on message’. But, on that occasion at least, Disraeli was the one who won because he was gracious.

The grace of Jesus was not just in what he said, but in how he said it. Yes, he was in the business of making cow byres come out smelling of roses. But he never lost sight of the fact that what he was really dealing with was people. Beneath and around the cow byre condition of the person was - the condition of hostile history. In addition she would have expected him to turn away from her purely because she was a woman.

The Sychar woman was in for a surprise. ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.’

The woman pointed out that Jesus had no bucket, that the well was deep and, further to that, if ‘living water’ was to be on offer, did he think he could do better than ‘our father Jacob’?

Jesus arrived in the heat of midday and the Sychar woman was in for a surprise. ‘What is going on here? How am I going to make sure that God is not squeezed out by the pressures to advance my career, make money and get on the property ladder?’

Pastor McIlvaine, father of three children says, ‘If you listen to young people, the Newbold Board of College understands, under the pressures of X level study and degrees, many students find it difficult to step back and think about their futures. So we are delighted that Newbold has developed a variety of well-structured years out alongside their degree programmes. As church leaders, we want to support young people in this consultancy role. That’s why, for the year called, The Newbold Experience, we have put in place an office of financial advice to students from the Trans-European Division.’

The GC Health Ministries team: (left to right) Pastor Stoy Proctor (Assoc.Dir); Dr Allan Hewitson (Dir); Pastor Willis; Dr Kathleen Karnafi (Assoc.Dir); Dr Piet Loosex (Assoc.Dir); and Patricia Cullen (Sec). Photo: Andy Sheen.
A second speaker, from Reading Whitley, supported the idea of someone at the Conference who was specifically responsible for seeing through the acquisition of church properties. Humphrey Walters accepted that best practice had not always been followed in church property acquisitions, but said that that argument did not warrant a whole new department.

When another speaker from Reading Whitley spoke for the amendment, it became clear that there was a local grievance. The Reading Whitley congregation had been trying to acquire their own church. Subsequent experience had taught them that it was necessary to have someone at Conference level who could assist in the acquisition of a suitable building and ease the pressure on the Conference treasurer.

Finally the main motion (containing the original list of budgets) was carried by a majority.

Two other Portuguese-speaking congregations in London were accepted into the sisterhood of churches in the South England Conference (North-West London Portuguese and East London Portuguese).

Recommendations Committee At 4.30 discussion began on the composition of the Recommendations Committee. It was clear that local churches had been requested to submit names for the Recommendations Committee prior to the Session. Protracted and noisy discussion ensued for some twenty minutes in the auditorium. In the course of the discussion there were long queues from the floor to speak to the Conference Executive secretary.

Finally, at 4.50, order was restored, and the names of the 149 nominees to comprise the Recommendations Committee were read out by Pastor Lockham. There was good-natured applause from the delegation for his good-natured attempts at the pronunciation of difficult African names.

As the main delegation broke for the evening meal the Recommendations Committee began work on the composition of the various standing committees of the Session. Nominating, Licences and Credentials, Plans and Constitution (the latter committee to serve for the complete quadrennium).

Opening Session – Thursday afternoon

Steve Thomas was concerned about the SEC’s church building programme

“A low-key affair with most of the delegates in attendance. He said that this was to be a time of reflection, decision-making and prayer. Prayer, he emphasized, was a priority.

Pastor Walters stressed that we were facing many new opportunities for presenting the Gospel message. It was a time of growing concern occasioned by global warming, climate change, recent flooding and turmoil in the Middle East. Shootings and stab- bings had become regular occurrences in the cities where many of us lived. Against that background, he said, ‘Our sufficiency is in Christ.’

The opening prayer was given by Pastor Aristotle Vontzalidis. Pastor Paul Lockham reminded us of our civic responsibilities by introducing the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Marcel Tules.

Councillor Tules had delegates laughing and applauding when he said, ‘I have discovered that you are a people who do not smoke or drink. If you could convert the people of Exeter to that way of life it would certainly make my life a lot easier!’

Greetings to the delegates were extended by Exeter’s resident minister, Pastor Berthe De Nysschen. Pastor Lockham reminded us of our civic responsibilities by introducing the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Marcel Tules.

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The President's Report

As with the majority of Conference sessions in the last twenty years, the President's Report took the form of a highly-professional video presentation. The President’s Report provides an overview of the work of all the departments during the quadrennium, highlighting the strategies of the administration, the president highlighted the work of each department of the Conference, and by the provision of special seminars and practice in the areas of soul-winning and church growth.

Executive Committee for forthcoming quadrennium

Part of the Nominating Committee’s report was the appointment of the SEC Executive for the forthcoming quadrennium.
Friday morning's Business Session
by David Marshall

W

ho would have thought that, after a summer featuring flood and tempest, the best of the weather was waiting for our September Session?

The best of the summer was saved for the Adventists and the TUC, said the reporter at Hope Hall. And, in the course of Thursday afternoon's session, I was wondering if some of the TUC delegates had turned up at our session!

The battle to keep spiritual values and mission alive in our business session was won, thanks to the fine worships of Pardon Mwansa and some excellent contributions on Friday and Sabbath from, among others, the Holfords.

Secretary's Report
Friday morning began with Paul Lockham's report from the Secretariat. The youthful eight-times grandfather was in good humour and on form. It was, however, a reminder that one of our number had fallen in the preceding quinquennium, including the man elected to do his job just four years ago—Pastor Gilbert Dias—a valued member of the SEC Executive, headman of Maurice Brooks.

The quinquennium had seen unprecedented membership growth: there had been 2,258 baptisms and 264 additions by profession of faith. Out of a total SEC population of circa 30 million souls, 18,075 were Seventh-day Adventists. However, the ratio of Adventists to the general population was radically different from area to area. It was a fact that Adventists the most in the major cities. Pastor Lockham's pie chart demonstrated that 69% of the SEC membership lived in Greater London. The quinquennium had seen the opening of 70 new churches.

The delegation gave Pastor Lockham an easy time of it, and his report was voted after minimal discussion.

Treasurer's Report
Treasurer Earl Ramharacksingh, the graduate of a distinguished university, was waiting for our September Session?

The battle to keep spiritual values and mission alive in our business session was won, thanks to the fine worships of Pardon Mwansa and some excellent contributions on Friday and Sabbath from, among others, the Holfords.

The new president then spoke. A questioner from the New Life (Green Road) wanted to know how reserve funds were held. The treasurer said that they were in interest-bearing accounts yielding between 5% and 6%.

A questioner from the New Life congregation stated that they had been given eight weeks to leave their premises. Could the treasurer, therefore, be more specific about the SEC's policy towards the acquisition of new buildings?

Mr Ramharacksingh explained that the available resources were pooled. The SEC had ‘accepted criteria’ in relation to which each case for a new building was measured. Among the criteria he mentioned were ‘length of time’ and ‘involvement in evangelisation’.

Another questioner stressed the importance of a special “harvest offering” to assist with church building and argued that £10,000 had been raised elsewhere by that means.

Debate then centred on the president. A questioner alleged that £20 million was reserved in such a fund. Victor Pilmoor, the BUC treasurer, corrected him. £13 million was invested; but £32 million was needed. He stressed that retired pastors were not ‘a dead loss’ to ministry but that most were active. He spoke of the constraints of law and church policy which governed the funds set aside for pensions.

Discussion then reverted to the vexed question of church buildings. It was stated from the floor that a large proportion of Conference funds should be devoted to church building. The session chairman accepted that the delegation wanted an overhaul of the church building programme.

At 11am the Treasurer’s Report was voted and Pastor Eric Lowe, chair of the Recommendations Committee, introduced the names of those to serve on the Plans, Licences and Credentials and Constitution Committees.

Friday Afternoon Session
A change of President
by Mary Barrett

Reports on Friday afternoon
The report on Friday afternoon began at 2.15 with Pastor Aris Vontzalides giving thanks to those who had supported him in his role as Church Growth director. He affirmed that Church Growth was a department that was responsible for formulating strategies for growth and that the bulk of its work was devoted to church planting. He asserted that our Church emerged as a result of church planting and expressed the belief that the work would be completed in this way.

Several questions were taken from the floor. Marc Rassell from Bodmin queried how many doctrines candidates had to accept in order to be baptised. Pastor Vontzalides replied, ‘We are here to raise fully fledged Seventh-day Adventists and so it is important to teach the full 28 fundamentals to those seeking baptism.’ In response to a question concerning ethnic groups, Pastor Vontzalides said, ‘We should encourage those of various ethnic groups to learn the language of this country so that they can reach out to those in our local communities.’ When asked about the apparent lack of evangelistic programmes to be conducted in the provinces, Pastor Vontzalides confirmed that the SEC wanted to do all that they could to evangelise the provinces more effectively.

New President
The questions were then suspended at 2.40 as Pastors Don Mcfarlane and Ashwin Somasundaram came with a report from the Nominating Committee. It was announced that Pastor Sam Davis, a man with a wealth of experience, had been nominated as President of the SEC. Pastor Davis has currently serving as pastor of the Holloway and Muswell Hill churches and has served in administration before, as well as serving as a pastor in South Africa. Pastor Mcfarlane then paid tribute to the outgoing president, Humphrey Walters, by saying, ‘It has been a privilege to work with him for several years.’ He described Pastor Walters as a man of stature, who loves the mission of the Church. He had no doubt that his skills would be used in the Church for many years to come. He concluded that the entire conference was indebted to Pastor Walters and his wife, Ava. for their leadership. It was with much warmth that Humphrey Walters then received a standing ovation.

The new president then spoke. With humour and humility, he explained that it was ‘with mixed emotions’ that he took up his new position as he and Pastor Walters were ‘old friends’ and it was Pastor Walters who had encouraged him to train for the ministry so many years before. Using Pastor Walters for his leadership, he asked for God to be with Humphrey and his wife, Ava.
Friday Evening by Mary Barrett

Friday Evening

The Peace of God

I was good to walk into the Great Hall at the beginning of Sabbath to hear soothing music and watch scenes of nature displayed on a screen. It helped us to forget about the busyness of the day's business and to focus our minds on God.

The vespers service was brought to us by Karen and Bernie Holford, accompanist Richard DeLisser, and the Church Choir. The worship leader, who paid tribute to the many volunteer carousers.

The hard work that Karen and Bernie have put into making their department effective was empha-
sised by the fact that each person who had a question for them pre-
ceded it with a word of affirmation and praise. Questions that were
asked included a query as to whether there should be a Singles
Ministry, whether we were going to support the elderly, and what
were the problems that people were needing
counselling with – so that the Church could continue to be a blessing.
Karen and Bernie responded by saying that there was a growing case
for a Singles Ministry, that the prob-
lems experienced by our Church members were in support for the elderly, and
that marriage and divorce within church families were the paramount needs of those who attended the counselling sessions.

Ministerial Association

The passing of a great man who had helped to shape the lives of many of our children was a sore point. Elsie's energy, enthusiasm
and commitment to the programme was an inspiration to all.

The Peace of God

by Mary Barrett

The whole evening was conc-
cluded by Richard DeLisser, paying
tribute to the late Pastor Dalbert
Elias, who was 'God's Champion' in sharing God. Also mentioned
was the late Pastor Mike Stickland and
his dedication in outreach work.
Sabbath Morning Highlights

By Sharon Platt-McDonald

Sabbath school

W
ing into the Great Hall on Sabbath morning, one could sense the presence of the Holy Spirit. A stirring song service was conducted by Pastor Lee, SEC Music director, accompanied on the piano by Cathy Anthony Boldeau.

In his welcome, Dr Richard Belzian challenged the congregants to reaffirm their commitment to ministry. Stella Jeffrey presented the Scripture reading from Psalm 51, which set the backdrop for the morning’s discussion. The service was further enhanced by Paul Lee who presented special music in the prayer song, “Give me Jesus.”

The lesson study was delivered in an interactive and engaging format which brought much audience participation. The visuals provided focus for the group discussions and made possible time for reflection and self-analysis. Using key points from the week’s theme, Pastor Paul Clee, TED Field Secretary, highlighted the story of David and Bathsheba and the parallels for our Christian journey as we contemplated the impact of sin, the importance of accountability, the need for repentance, and the power of forgiveness and God’s love.

An exciting message spiritedly presented in which the work of church plants was highlighted.

Divine Service

As we moved into the second service, it was clear that this Sabbath school would be one which would long be remembered.

The introit, “Create in me a clean heart,” was sung by the London Adventist Chorale under the direction of Neil Burton.

A vibrant welcome and introduction of the platform party was also given by Pastor Humphrey Walters, outgoing president. He thanked God for the privilege of serving and the blessings of sharing in the great commission. BUC president, Pastor Don McFarlane, in thanking him for his outstanding service and focused leadership on church mission over the past term, led the congregants in a rapturous applause. A lengthy standing ovation followed as we reflected on the contribution that Pastor Walters had made during his term of office.

Pastor Don McFarlane introduced the newly elected officers and their spouses who were seated on the platform. When introducing the newly elected president Pastor Sam Davis, Pastor McFarlane stated that he was a man of integrity, vision and a passion for service and requested our prayers and support for his leadership in the days ahead.

In his presidential speech Pastor Davis alluded to this being a special weekend, as his and wife Rowena were celebrating 25 years of marriage and, therefore, they had other plans which he stated had now been “foiled” by the new appointment.

“I am walking on the task that he has set before me,” he asserted, “I cannot say like Moses, I cannot speak, I cannot say like the child, I cannot say like Jonathon, I am running away. However, like Solomon, I can say, ‘Lord give me a wise and understanding heart.’ He then went on to affirm, ‘God has laid his hands on us, we are available to his service. I pray for patience, tolerance, as we move forward in the next few years … we pledge ourselves to serve you and by the grace of God to take this church forwards and upwards. Pray for us God guides us into the future.’

The Filipino International Chorale gave an excellent rendition of ‘The King’ and with a graceful motion of the lips, Pastor Mwansa opened the meeting with the introduction of the platform party.

Having inspired the delegates through the session with powerful presentations of God’s words, Dr Mwansa, General Vice-president of the General Conference spoke with conviction under the caption where ‘Now is the hour, the God of Elijah’.

In his introduction Dr Mwansa stated that he regarded speaking to the people of God as ‘the highest honour’.

In his address he posed the question: ‘How do you send out the light and witness to a world that is hostile to Christianity?’ Reflecting on the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, he examined 2 Kings 2:1-24 and recounted the impact of ministry when God’s power is behind it. He declared, “It is an insult to the Lord for men and women to think that they can do kingdom work in human power.” Then expanding on verse 9, he admonished us, like Elisha, to ask for a double portion of the Holy Spirit to rest on our lives. He concluded with a dramatic reading of the singing of the hymn ‘Lord I hear of showers of blessing’.

Ordnation Service

By Jon Gendle

You can’t miss it,” said one pastor to another. He wasn’t talking about the prominence of the Great pumpkin, or the importance of accountability, but about what was happening inside. Why would hundreds of people sit down to eat a healthy, tasty, encourages to give, be a steward of offerings, and be a part of God’s people who prayerfully and thoughtfully plan to give, while they have food on their plates? Pastor Mwansa was speaking, and it wasn’t just the ordinands who were being called to something special, but their wives and families as well.

In his presidential speech Pastor Mwansa highlighted major facets of evangelism in the modern church, such as the ‘Tell the world’ strategy, promoting evangelism to the big cities of the world and the use of modern media for spreading the Gospel, such as the Hope TV channel which is available globally, 24/7.

In his response, and on behalf of his fellow ordinands and their wives, Pastor David Riley’s message was one of thanks.

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Steve Roberts and his wife, Louise were brought to the platform by Pastor Hamilton Williams. To much mirth, Pastor Williams recalled the many times that his instructions to his junior pastor were questioned, but assured that this denoted a strong leader. He also noted Louise’s strength of character and spoke with sincere heart of the privilege afforded him by his role today.

The beautiful harmony of the special music of Tessera preceded the sermon by Pastor Alan Hodges, BUC Ministerial Association secretary. Pastor Hodges emphasised that we are ‘living in important days, in dangerous days, so what do you say to ordinands?’ The answer lay in 2 Timothy 4:2. ‘Preach the word!’ Referring repeatedly to Paul’s counsel to Timothy, Pastor Hodges called the ordinands to commit their lives every day to the Lord Jesus Christ and for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some practical advice was given: ‘Don’t seek arguments; don’t ride hobby-horses; defend the truth; and respond in love.’

The many ordained ministers on the platform gathered around on bended knees, with hands stretched towards heaven and a wave of confidence before them, as the inner circle laid hands on the ordinands. GC Vice-President, Pastor Mwansa, in praying for the ordinands, asked for the blessing of God to be extended to them.

Pastor Cecil Perry read the charge to the ordinands, and with a deep conviction gave his weighty statement, he affirmed, “You are now invested with the title was communicated in the solemn charge which Pastor Perry unpeeled in fine detail as he spoke of their future duties.

Sabbath Evening Programme

By Jon Gendle

Many were intrigued by the theme, but few would have guessed that they would be given an opportunity to put a GC Vice-president on the spot. Nevertheless that is exactly what happened on Sabbath evening. GC Vice-president, Pastor Mwansa, introduced the topic ‘Adventist Today’ by revealing something of the work of the General Conference and the current state of the world Church. He spoke of a weeklong review which took place annually every January, involving some of the highest levels in the GC and its Divisions. The pertinent question was always: ‘How are we growing as a Church, knowing that our mission is to bring people to Christ to try and build a kingdom of God?’ He reminded us that the world Church is administered through 13 regional or ‘level’ Divisions. Two of those are growing ‘incredibly fast’. Over 600 people every day are baptised by the Inter-American and South America Divisions. Other than the trans-European Division and Euro-Africa Division, the ‘fringe of the scale’, with 11-15 baptisms daily. The highest concentration of Baptisms is to be found in the Indian-Guatemala Division. While tithe and offerings continue to grow worldwide, it is notable that the North American Division contributes more than 60% of the income of the world Church.

Pastor Mwansa highlighted major facets of evangelism in the modern church, such as the ‘Tell the world’ strategy, promoting evangelism to the big cities of the world and the use of modern media for spreading the Gospel, such as the Hope TV channel which is available globally, 24/7.

Pastor Mwansa opened the evening to questions from the floor. Many questions followed, touching on the areas previously raised and additional topics such as the use of ‘hot potatoes’ – such as music styles and the ordination of women. He reminded the audience that the ordination of women was a matter of the nature of the question. Pastor Mwansa comfortably responded with an obvious depth of knowledge and an ease which often belied the difficulties suggested by the subject matter. He informed us of one group which had been approved by the GC and applied to issues worldwide. Regional issues are addressed.

Pastor Mwansa gives the ordination prayer
Sunday Morning Session
by Victor Hulbert

W e came for a business meet-

ing but received a spiritual

blessing. This Sunday morning,

a young man said, ‘This

service spoke of his experi-

cence. ‘This was the first Session

that I have ever been to. At

first I was shocked at all the

business that took place. But

then suddenly I was

adored in white toppers black

trousers. Their singing showed

great range, with the piano being

played with gusto. The audience

responded to the music with

exhilaration, but with the

audience waiting for the end of

the service, they often tended to

tune out. Yet, one could feel the

special spiritual dimension to the

sound penetrating every corner of

the hall. Then suddenly it was

bound, as if it were impossible for

such a beautiful interpretation

ever to emanate from an instrument

as strange as this. But nevertheless

here it was for all to see and hear –

and one had to be there to appreci-

ate the ‘wow’ factor inherent in the

effect this young man’s playing had

on the audience. From the

conclusion, members of the Choral

and the audience stood in

admiration, then went down into the

auditorium to create an inspir-

ing and memorable finale. Pastor

Pardon Mwansa offered the clos-

ing benediction.

Sunday Afternoon
Standing Committee Reports
by Karen Holford

B y Sunday afternoon all of the Business and

Assessments reports had been

presented and voted. The distant calls invited

some delegates to employ

the good work on the house we

have done so far’. He gave special

thanks to his predecessor, Japhet De

Olivera, who accepted a call to

serve at the Centre for Youth.

Music. Anderson at Universities

latter part of the business of the

Session. Pastor Ashwin Somasundaram

presented the report from the

Women’s Ministries director,

Malika Bediako as the part-time

SEC Women’s Ministries director.

The elected members of the

Executive Committee were chosen for their

diversity and their represen-

tation across the SEC. The members also

included the Administrative Council of

the South England Conference as well as
departmental leaders and pastors. The names are as follows:

Women’s Ministries

In his presentation, he assured his audience that various proposals and

recommendations for the business of the following day had been

identified during the Thursday evening break-out groups, as well as

other needs that had been reported prior to the Session, or that had

arisen from the proceedings of the Session. As there was insufficient

time on Friday to discuss all of the items in detail, it was decided that they

be passed, with a few minor amend-

m ents, to the incoming Standing Com-

mittee, for their consideration and implementation.

Closing Ceremony In the closing

session Pastor Claude Lombard expressed the gratitude of everyone present
to the delegates, the fami-

lies from whom they had been part-

ed, past and present departmental

directors, administrators, pastors

and support staff, as well as thanks to the SEC and BUC Executive

Committee members, and the BUC

and TED directors, who had attended to offer support, wisdom, prayers and

encouragement during the

Session. Pastor Sam Dawid offered the final

to encourage delegates to

remember their calling to be like

salt in their communities. He spoke of the

love in our society and the need for

Christians to make a difference in the

world through the gospel. He sang for

the final time, glow-sticks were passed to each delegate, the

blinds were lowered and the gathering

ended. An invitation was given to activate the glow-sticks with a gentle snap. The words

were blended into pale mauve radiance as the verses were sung, and rods of glory shone beforehand in the darkness of the auditorium to

create an inspir-

ing and memorable finale. Pastor

Malicka Nawanso offered the closing

benediction.

One young man, only nineteen,

spoke of his experience. This was

the first time I have spoken and

heard of it before.

Philips, – Area 6d

Kevin Sterling – Area 7

Jean Gittens – Area 8

Pastor Paul Tomkins – President

Pastor Paul Lockham – Secretary

Earl Ramharacksingh – Treasurer

Pastor Colin Stewart – Youth Director

Pastor Peter Venkat – Area 1

Pastor Beatrice Wada – Area 4

Pastor Richard Wada – Area 5

Pastor Doreen Brown – Area 6

Pastor Alfred Wanson – Area 7

Pastor Hyacinth Walker – Area 8

Mrs Cathy Boldeau stated that people

had a wrong concept: ‘Stewardship is about lifestyle and your relationship with God.’ Her pro-

gramme, therefore, revolved around the balance found in the total com-

mitment of Romans 12:1-2.

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Smith Centre Opening

by Anita Kelman

The Newbold College year had a fresh start with the opening of a new learning space in Salisbury Hall. The room was named in honour of the late Dr Walter I. Smith who was Newbold College Principal from 1954 to 1956. The entire project was funded by the donation from the Smith Catalano family, the Newbold Council and alumni and friends of Newbold College.

Dr Smith dedicated his life to Christian education and one of his famous sayings was that ‘education is the only thing students will pay for and not take.’ Before arriving at Newbold, Dr Smith was President of Walla Walla College and Pacific Union College. He also spent time working in the General Conference education department.

There had been discussion earlier in the decade about the need for a purpose-built building to hold class rooms. Dr Smith was present when the College Board approved the plans for constructing Salisbury Hall and helped to push the project forward. The building was completed in 1957 after Dr Smith had returned to Walla Walla. Newbold College is celebrating the 50th anniversary of Salisbury Hall during September 2007.

The Smith Centre is situated on the first floor of Salisbury Hall. It is described as a modern classroom equipped with state of the art features including a remote controlled screen, surround sound system, and interactive white board. All the furniture is on wheels, allowing easy mobility.

Newbold College Principal, Dr David Penner, said, ‘There is excitement about the new learning space. It is a bright and open area with the ability to draw the blinds and dim the lights when needed. The audio speakers around the room give it a feel of a concert hall. There has been a mad rush by lecturers to sign up to use the Smith Centre.’

Dr Smith’s granddaughter, Patti Catalano and her husband Richard, traveled from California for the momentous occasion. Other guests included staff members who worked alongside Dr Smith.

Former music teacher Roy Scarr described Dr Smith as ‘a quiet man who was pleasant to work with. He had a calming influence and his presence at Newbold helped to create a settled period in the college’s history.’ He smiled as he recalled the night that Dr Smith revealed the ‘secret’ plan for building Salisbury Hall.

‘I never dreamed that I would be here at Newbold in a room that honours my grandfather. I know he would have thought this room was perfect. It is a joy to walk in here and see everything working. I am excited about the students who will benefit.’

Newbold Church pastor, Patrick Johnson prayed on behalf of the students who will use the new room, saying that there is an incredible potential for learning and expanding their knowledge in a way that will help them understand God.

Two portraits, one of Dr Smith and the other of 1955 staff members, were unveiled by Patti and Richard Catalano and will be displayed at the entrance to the Smith Centre.

Newbold College is now looking forward to the future. New projects planned are the refurbishment of the homiletics room in Murdoch Hall and the upgrading of accommodation in Keough House, the men’s hall of residence and family housing units in Woodlands.