

Chapter 13

THE DAUGHTER CHURCH OF ST WILFRID TORRENS PARK

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

The following history of the Church of St Wilfrid, Torrens Park (Fig 13-1) has been researched and written by Peter Geytenbeek, a parishioner of nearly forty-years standing (Fig. 13-2). He worships at both Churches and has served as a Lay Reader since 1967. In 1980 Peter was the first person to be licenced as a Lay Assistant in the Parish of Mitcham, and in 2000 was licenced by the Archbishop as a Lay Preacher. For over thirty years Peter has regularly conducted services at the Julia Farr Centre, Fullarton.

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ON 31st December 1920 Archdeacon Clampett resigned the cure of the Church of St Columba at Hawthorn. For twenty-two years he had worked to build up this daughter church of St Michael's and now he felt it could stand on its own feet: it was well supported, had achieved parochial status and needed its own full-time priest. But although he was sixty years of age he was not about to retire to a quieter life at St Michael's. At the time of the Patronal Festival in September 1921 he wrote in the *Mitcham Parish Messenger* of the need to build a new church on the plains to service the rapidly expanding suburbs of Torrens Park, Lower Mitcham, Clapham and West Mitcham (the area of Torrens Park south of Blythewood Road). He noted:

... the whole Parish has greatly changed. The overland rail to Melbourne has come, and passing through Lower Mitcham and Clapham, has drawn as though by a magnet, a large number of houses and dwellers near its course. If only our predecessors could have foreseen, St Michael's, I venture to believe, would not have been built at Upper Mitcham, where development has been relatively slow. Commanding and picturesque as its situation is, one has to admit it is away on the hill top from the life of the people, and a somewhat steep climb for those, who from the lower levels, seek its ministrations.

The train line through Mitcham to Aldgate opened in 1883 and by 1908 the section between Mile End and Mitcham had been duplicated. In April 1919 the double line reached Eden Hills providing a frequent two-way service through the district. Late in October 1917 the western half of the great 'Torrens Park Estate' was subdivided and some 159 allotments were offered at auction. The War was still being fought in France and sales were slow and it was not until late 1918 that all the allotments were taken up. The building activity that had begun in the area was accentuated as servicemen returned and the need for new houses increased.

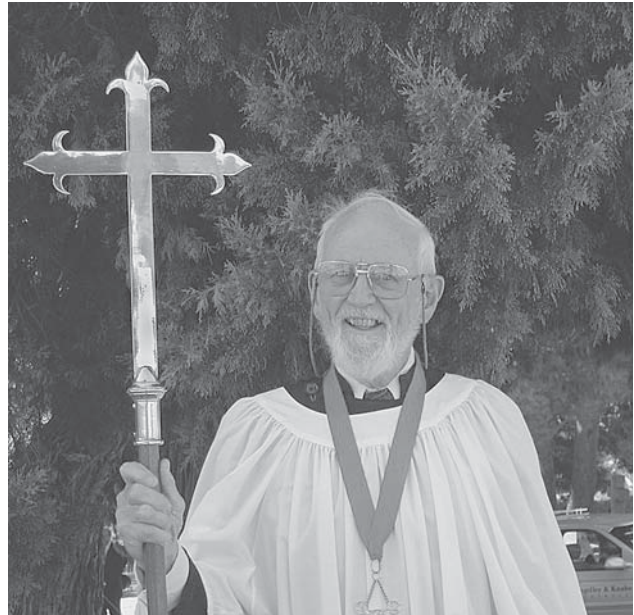


Fig. 13-2 Peter Geytenbeek, Th.A. (Pamela Oborn, 2002)

The population within the Mitcham Council area was increasing dramatically. Listed as 5,035 in 1911, by 1921 it had almost doubled to 9,194 and by 1933 had grown to 16,766. This last figure excluded those living in the developing 'Garden City' of Colonel Light Gardens where extensive building commenced in 1922.

A NEW CHURCH FOR A DEVELOPING AREA

Few families could afford motor cars so churches and other facilities had to be either within walking distance or accessible by public transport. In August 1924 Archdeacon Clampett advised that, at his request, the Bishop's Home Mission Society (B.H.M.S.) had purchased an allotment of land for the sum of £212 at the corner of Fife Avenue and the New Main Road (Belair Road) as the site for a new church. The land – Lot 87 of the 'Torrens Park Estate' subdivision – was purchased from Mr J.H. Gillespie in the name of the B.H.M.S. which provided a sizable loan. The block had a frontage of 62 feet (18.9 m) to the New Main Road and was well located on a slight bend being very visible to travellers proceeding north. It was adjacent to the railroad crossing leading to Wattlebury Road which led west into a major part of the area the new church was intended to serve.¹

During March 1925 the Archdeacon conducted a house-to-house canvass of the western part of the Parish and called a meeting on 27th August of all those interested in forming

a church at Torrens Park. Some fifty families pledged their financial support for the project, and with their £50, plus £130 from four long-time supporters of St Michael's, only £32 was outstanding on the B.H.M.S. loan.

At a meeting held on Thursday, 5th November 1925 the Archdeacon complimented Mrs Ethel Cleverdon for her efforts in the collection of funds, and it was noted that the proceeds from a Strawberry Fête had enabled the loan for the block of land to be cleared. As a result a decision was made formally to initiate moves for the building of the new church. A 'Torrens Park Church Building Fund' was set up with E.W. Keatch as Secretary-Treasurer.

While the Archdeacon was on leave in 1926 his locum, Reverend King William Pobjoy, held 8 a.m. Holy Communion services once a fortnight in the St Michael's Day School Hall at the corner of Princes Road and East Parade. This was to encourage more people from the western end of the Parish to attend church. The collection from these services went to the new church Building Fund which, by July 1927, held £237. By then the first signs of the Great Depression, which was to affect the world for the next decade, had begun to take effect. While the need for a new church was recognised, Parish finances were stretched to the limit and fundraising slowed down. By mid-1931 less than £3 per month was coming in from the regular contributors to the Fund. Despite the difficult conditions the need for a new church was urgent. There had been a large increase in the number of young people involved in worship and other Parish activities. In 1930 an average of 110 children attended the Sunday School held in the Hall on Princes Road, while almost forty regularly went to the Bible Class.

In September 1931 – a decade after the issue was first raised – the Rector, in an effort to revitalise the scheme, re-iterated the reasons why he believed a new church was needed in the western areas of the Parish. He wrote in the *Mitcham Parish Messenger*:

The situation of St Michael's from the picturesque point of view is ideal, but from the point of view of accessibility and convenience it was a mistake to select a hill site. Hills ever seem to grow steeper... When St Michael's was built there was no Lower Mitcham. The railway line to Melbourne, which now passes through Lower Mitcham, was not laid or even contemplated. Mitcham was a snug village of the southern foothills, and none could foresee how it was going to develop. It has developed, and all in a direction away from the church. The parish priest of Mitcham will always have the error of position against him; and this too – that in Australia, walking, as a health-giving exercise, has been well nigh abandoned... For many, notwithstanding all difficulties of ascent and accessibility, St Michael's is their spiritual home. Many love it and its services.

In this revealing statement the Archdeacon was speaking right from the heart. Although he had a horse and trap, and later a Ford Model 'T', he preferred to walk. Thus for many years, after an early service at St Michael's he walked to Hawthorn, conducted a service at St Columba's and then walked the two miles back to St Michael's. From the Mitcham Council Chamber to St Michael's Church

there is an elevation of 158 feet (48.2 m). No wonder he could write with feeling of the "difficulties of ascent" and that "Hills ever seem to grow steeper"!

In spite of the worsening economic conditions plans for a daughter church at Torrens Park continued. A group of ladies formed the 'Torrens Park Church Social Committee' with Mrs Day as President and Mesdames Cleverdon and Turner as joint Secretaries-cum-Treasurers. They organised the women of the Parish and held door-to-door appeals, Bazaars, concerts, Strawberry Fêtes and Euchre afternoons. By 6th July 1933 the Building Fund stood at £556 17s 11d and a Building Committee was appointed comprising Messrs D.G. Mudie (Chairman), C.H. Nelson (Secretary), A.J. Edwards, L.S. Doolette and K.M. Cornish. Church Office agreed to a loan of £500 (at 4% interest) and the Leigh Trust donated £50 making a grand total of £1,106 17s 11d available.

It was agreed to ask Mr Dean W. Berry, an Adelaide architect, to prepare plans.

The Architect, Philosophy, Plans & Action

During 1927 Dean Berry had spent time in southern England and was fascinated by the granite-walled churches of Devon and Cornwall. He made sketches and measured drawings of many between Penzance and Lands End. Those churches often featured three 'naves' – the side ones being separated from the main by arcades of columns and arches. The church he designed for Torrens Park had one nave only with a central alleyway. One end projected to form the sanctuary and the other the porch (Fig. 13-3). Rather than granite walls, heavy oak beams and a thick slate roof, available materials and finance suggested double-brick walls, light timber trusses and light-weight tiles. The ceiling, also based on the Cornish style, was described by the architect as being "a covered wagon type of structure" known as a 'wagon roof'. Internally the bricks were given a fine white-sand render which was then marked and grooved. On the northern side a door led into a small wooden vestry some eight-feet (2.4 m) square and on the south-west corner the main entrance was through a brick porch, also eight-feet square. The whole effect was of a Gothic Revival building measuring some fifty-eight feet by twenty feet (17.7 m by 6.1 m) with a warm homely atmosphere – one that the average churchgoer would identify as being Church of England.²

The scarcity of work for builders in 1933 can be measured by the fact that twenty-two tenders were submitted. The accuracy of the tendering was shown with the highest price being only £135 more than the lowest tender. The successful tenderer, Tom Leonard, was known to the architect as a very reliable builder. He was not an Anglican but belonged to an obscure non-conformist church and was reported to live on honey and lemon juice! After discussions his original price of £1,095 was increased to £1,150 to cover the temporary wooden vestry and a west window similar in design to the side windows. The tender was accepted in November 1933 and building commenced immediately.

On Saturday, 9th December the foundation stone – donated by Dean Berry – was laid by the Bishop of Adelaide, the Right Reverend Dr A. Nutter Thomas. To

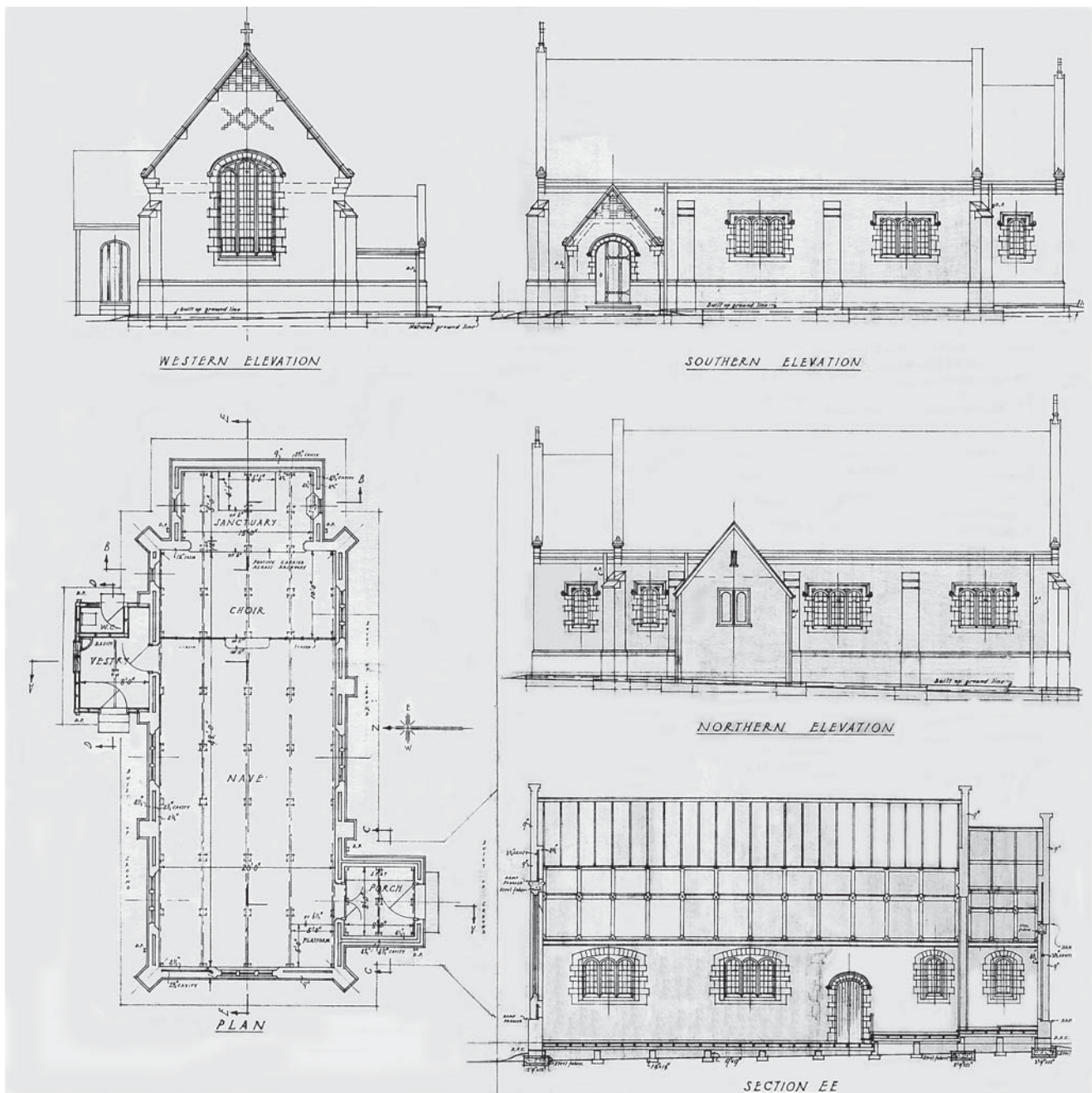


Fig. 13-3 Plans for the proposed Anglican Church at Torrens Park prepared by the architect, Dean W. Berry, in August 1933. (MPA)

record the event a glass container was placed at the back of the foundation stone containing a copy of that day's *Advertiser*, a list of names of the Building Committee and a financial statement showing the progress made to that date in financing the building.

Long-time parishioner, Gerald Storer, who later served as a sidesman and member of Council, recalls the laying of the foundation stone:

I was only four years old at the time. Two things I can still 'see'. One was the tall wooden poles of the scaffolding, each anchored in a forty-four-gallon drum filled with concrete. I can also 'see' the white gowns of the officiating clergymen which were billowing in a strong wind and to me looked like the huge sails of a ship.

Whilst the church was being built, some 100 yards (91 m) further north along the New Main Road, the Mitcham Council was having its Council Chamber erected and their architect was also Mr Berry. He no doubt kept a good eye on both buildings as they rose on their foundations. Both were completed in good time, the much larger Council building being occupied on 9th June 1934 – a month after the church.

While the cost of the church building was £1,150 it is interesting to note that the essential furniture was not included in the builder's quote. For an additional cost of £105 10s 6d the following items were supplied by A. Fairclough: altar and reredos (£11 10s 6d), Communion rails (£4 5s 0d), lectern (£7 5s 0d) and seating (£82 1s 0d). In addition the electrical installations by E.H. Jones cost £15 17s 6d.

The dedication ceremony of the Church of St Wilfrid, Torrens Park (Figs 13-4 and 13-5) was performed on the Eve of Ascension Day, 9th May 1934, by the Dean of Adelaide, the Very Reverend G.H. Jose, in the presence of seven visiting clergymen. He handed the licence to the incumbent, Archdeacon A.W. Clampett, who was then in his seventy-fourth year.

Who was Saint Wilfrid?

In naming the new church after St Wilfrid, the Parish honoured a practical, energetic, yet visionary theologian who did much to further the Christian faith.

Fig. 13-4 *St Wilfrid's as it appeared in the 1940s.*
(Courtesy John Pearman)



Born in Northumbria in AD 634, Wilfrid furthered his educational and religious needs in Rome. It was there that he decided his mission in life should be to develop a keenness of mind and to preach the Gospel to all nations. He chose to do the latter by conducting apostolic missions to Friesland and Sussex.

Wilfrid was particularly adept in practical matters. His work in raising finances, the acquisition of land and the building of stone churches and monasteries was achieved with energy and determination. His greatest achievements were the Minsters of York and Ripon and the church of Hexham.

Life was not all plain sailing for Wilfrid. A man given to speaking his mind, he became the object of jealousy by Church and Crown. Despite the controversies, he contributed much to the Church in England. It was through his efforts that the Roman dating of Easter was accepted by Synod at the Council of Whitby in AD 664. The introduction of the Roman rite, which became the norm in English worship instead of the old Celtic form, was the singular work of Wilfrid. A man of grandiose ideals and imaginative vision, a bishop of fortitude and persistence, St Wilfrid deserves greater recognition.

The colourful memorial window now on the northern wall of the Torrens Park church ably captures three phases of St Wilfrid's life: founder, preacher and evangelist (Fig. 13-6). The window was created by Adelaide artist, Cedar Prest, and donated by Mrs Jean Lashmar in 1981 in memory of her husband, Fred. A retired farmer from Kangaroo Island and a regular worshipper at St Wilfrid's, Fred Lashmar was one of those quiet supporters found in many parishes who, when asked, could 'help' the Parish Treasurer. He did this in 1967 with a short-term loan of \$1,450 to discharge the Church's liability to the Bank of New South Wales.

Fig. 13-5 *Interior of St Wilfrid's c.1937 decorated with sheaves of wheat for the Harvest Festival.* (Roger Correll)





Fig. 13-6 The three-light stained-glass window in memory of Fred Lashmar was installed in 1981. Designed and executed by Cedar Prest, it depicts St Wilfrid as the founder of churches, as a preacher and baptising the Saxons. (MPA)

THE CLAMPETT ERA: 1934–1939

At 10.30 a.m. on 10th May 1934, the day following the dedication of St Wilfrid's Church, Archdeacon Clampett conducted the first service in the new building with thirty-two persons receiving Communion. On that same day Evening Prayer was taken by the catechist, Mr H. Norman. Ten days later, on Whitsunday, Geoffrey Sinclair Heithersay, at the early age of eighteen days, was given the honour of being the first child to be baptised by Archdeacon Clampett in St Wilfrid's. The font, a gift from St Bartholomew's, Norwood, was a bronze fitting with a sliding lid which was not easily moved: at times it was thought to threaten the child being baptised! Nevertheless it served its purpose for many years and was not replaced until 1959.

In the first year eleven children were baptised including four from the family of George and Florence Tilley, a name long associated with Mitcham. Not to be outdone, in June of the following year, the five children of George and Ellen Palmer were baptised on the same day. Not only was the need for the Church being well proven, but the influx of young families was reflected in the baptism of forty-four children in the first five years of St Wilfrid's history.

On Sunday, 5th August 1934 Archdeacon Clampett dedicated a sterling silver paten and chalice, the skilful

work of Morton Kenwick of the firm of Fidler and Kenwick in Grenfell Street. These sacred vessels, given by Miss Annie Kenwick of Torrens Park in memory of her parents, could be counted as the first of many fine gifts from parishioners. She was an older sister of Mrs Ethel Cleverdon, who raised funds to purchase the site for St Wilfrid's, and of Mrs Beatrice Doolette whose husband was a member of the Building Committee.

The first wedding at St Wilfrid's was that of Rothwell James Halstead and Nancy Hilda Halstead on 30th August 1934. He was a 60-year-old widower, who was the Postmaster at Belair, and she was a 53-year-old spinster from Fullarton Estate.

The Building Committee became the nucleus of the Parochial Council with D.G. Mudie, the Minister's Warden, and C.H. Nelson, the People's Warden, holding those positions for the next six years. Messrs Baker, Cleverdon, Cornish, Johns and Turner completed the Council. The Auditors were C.G. Colebatch and a person long to be associated with St Wilfrid's, namely, J.O. Whicker.

It was agreed that pew seats would be free (though this was not the case at the time at St Michael's) and a Weekly Free-Will Offering (W.F.O.) envelope system was immediately introduced. A Sanctuary Guild was formed and kneelers purchased. Initially the Archdeacon received expenses only, with his stipend being met in part by a contribution from the B.H.M.S. He was assisted by a catechist. The organist, Mr Tudor, received an honorarium of £5 5s 0d, while the cleaner was paid 5 shillings per week. In January 1935 Mr Tudor moved to play the organ at St Michael's and his replacement, Mr W. Pritchard, began a long association with the St Wilfrid's harmonium which he played for the next nineteen years.

Income remained steady, averaging £234 for the first six years with average expenses of £233 indicating how difficult a time all were having in the 1930s during the Great Depression.

In 1937 three extra pews were purchased suggesting that numbers at worship were increasing. The statistic which best measures the number attending a church is the annual acts of communion (shown on the graph in Figure 13-7). Figures for St Wilfrid's for the first five years were 850; 1,011; 1,064; 966 and 1,057 suggesting the Church was meeting the needs of a stable community. In the following five years the figures were 1,527; 2,380; 2,188; 2,178 and 2,081. These show a considerable

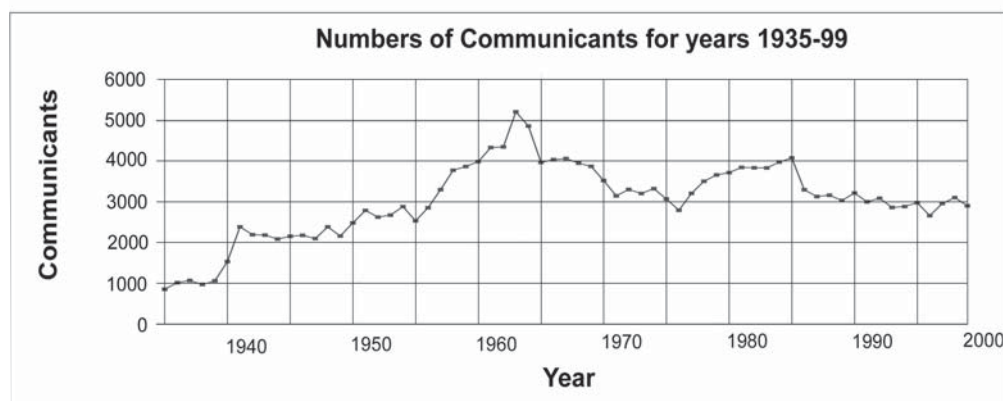


Fig. 13-7
The total annual acts of Communion over a sixty-year period show they reached a peak in the early 1960s.
(Peter Geytenbeek, 1999)

increase which coincided with the outbreak of the Second World War at the end of 1939. Perhaps the declaration of war brought many to renew their earlier association with regular worship. The presence of a new and younger Rector and the extension of housing in the 'Torrens Park Estate' must also have contributed to the rapid increase in numbers at St Wilfrid's.

Archdeacon Clampett held his last service at St Wilfrid's on Sunday, 25th June 1939 at 11a.m. with fifty-three communicants present. After a five-month interregnum his successor, Reverend R.H. Pearman, was inducted on 15th November – just ten weeks after the outbreak of the Second World War.

Early Catechists & Lay Readers

For many years both Morning Prayer and the evening services at St Wilfrid's were maintained through the presence in the Parish of catechists, and by a long-serving group of Lay Readers.

Until he resigned the cure of St Columba's in 1920, Archdeacon Clampett had had a succession of curates and assistant priests to help him in the administration of the large Parish. Then, in spite of his age, he managed alone until St Wilfrid's opened in 1934, from which time a series of catechists assisted in the Parish until after the Second World War. They were generally young men in training for the priesthood who served a parish for two years at the same time as they were in training at St Barnabas Theological College, then situated in North Adelaide.

The first was Harry Norman, followed by Roger Correll and David Wilson. These three young men worked widely in the Parish under Clampett. Roger recalls that he began his duties at St Wilfrid's in March of 1936. In that year he attended Sunday morning service at the Cathedral and then rode his bicycle to Torrens Park where he took the service of Morning Prayer at 11 a.m. In the following year he was responsible for the 11 a.m. service and Evensong at 7 p.m. After Morning Prayer he often rode his bike to the Rectory at Mitcham where he had lunch with the Clampetts. On other Sundays he remembers lunching with the Mudies or the Nelsons who lived close to St Wilfrid's. In his second year he was involved with afternoon meetings in the Hall of the Church of England Boys' Society (C.E.B.S.). He then had an evening meal with one of the Parish families and took Evening Prayer at 7 p.m. At that service he frequently paused, while preaching, as the Melbourne express passed noisily on its journey to the Hills! As a student he was obliged to present his sermons to his fellow students at the College and they were encouraged to ask questions and to criticise, which they often did in no small measure. Parishioners at St Wilfrid's heard sermons well prepared and rehearsed! His day was completed when he had ridden back to North Adelaide. He took his last service at St Wilfrid's on 30th January 1938, was ordained on 5th February and went to Mount Gambier to assist Archdeacon J.W. Clarke.

Lionel E. Renfrey, the fourth young catechist, served the Parish for three years spanning the final Clampett years and the arrival of Reginald Pearman. He became a priest in the Diocese of Adelaide and subsequently ended his career as Assistant Bishop. During 1941 and 1942 Reginald H.

Pettit served as catechist, and in the following two years he returned on occasions as a deacon and in 1944 as a visiting ordained priest.

Without doubt the provision of regular services, and in particular Evensong, over a very long period depended on the devoted work of two Lay Readers, G. Dempster (Dem) Mudie and James O. Whicker. Other Lay Readers who assisted at St Wilfrid's in the early years included E.R. (Ted) Smith, L.N. Allen, Lorris Venn, Nicol Robins, Peter Roper (later Reverend Peter Roper) and Jim Whicker's son, Ken.

PEARMAN ERA: 1939–1962

As a returned soldier from the First World War the new Rector, Reverend Reginald Henry Pearman, was well aware of the problems that lay ahead with the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. These included his secondment to the Army as a Chaplain, a lack of young men available as clerical assistants and, in consequence, an inability to give full time to his new and expanding Parish. During the War years he spent one month in every quarter in camp at Woodside.

In spite of the huge disruption the War caused in their lives, the parishioners of St Wilfrid's continued to support their new Church. The Council, with the assistance of a ladies' committee convened by Mrs Day, planned a most successful fête which was held at the Mitcham Institute on 28th October 1939. Next year the oversight of the W.F.O. system passed into the hands of J.R. Baker, and from twenty-six contributors in that year numbers increased steadily to seventy-three in 1952 when he relinquished the post. In 1940 the Council requested a Grant in Aid from B.H.M.S. and the following year, with the increased funding, decided to pay half of the Parish costs of the Rector's stipend and car allowance, rates and taxes on the Rectory and on the Parish Hall. By dint of hard work and perseverance the St Wilfrid's congregation was able to eliminate the Church debt by January 1942 and, with the building debt free, plans were quickly put in hand for its consecration.

On the afternoon of Sunday, 1st February 1942 the Church of St Wilfrid at Torrens Park was consecrated by the Bishop of Adelaide, the Right Reverend B.P. Robin in the presence of the Rector, his predecessor Archdeacon Clampett and four other church dignitaries. A large marquee erected east of the building held those unable to find space in the Church, and Ainslie Gaunt set up a microphone and an amplifier so all could hear the service.

Meanwhile the choir, which had been in recess, was reformed under the leadership of E. Russell Stuart. They sang from near the organ which was moved to the rear of the building for a trial period in 1944 but was soon repositioned at the front again.

At the Easter Vestry in 1944 the young Church was congratulated for contributing almost 25% of its total income to Mission work abroad and in Australia. Much credit must go to the women's groups which often enabled the Parish to meet its annual quotas in these areas. In April 1945 St Wilfrid's Parish Council agreed that a larger vestry was essential and a 'New Vestry Fund' was established.

Post-War Expansion

With the ending of the War in August 1945 the years following saw a huge upsurge in Parish activities. Whilst most of these related to the Parish as a whole, the majority of the younger families worshipped at St Wilfrid's. From their ranks came many of the teachers who assisted in the Sunday School and with Religious Instruction in State schools, as well as the leaders of the various youth and sporting groups. Older parishioners supported the Mothers' Union and the Church of England Men's Society. Details of all these activities can be found in Chapters 15 and 16.

Growing numbers in the post-war years made for extra work and put a great deal of pressure on the Rector. In 1946 he had the assistance of a young catechist, Gordon Hewitson, who worked equally in the two ends of the Parish. He frequently asked for a curate or assistant priest, but neither manpower nor sufficient funds were available.

Of the 130 communicant members at St Wilfrid's only forty used the well-established W.F.O. system. In an act of faith in February 1948 the Church Council at St Wilfrid's agreed to meet the annual stipend for a deaconess to work in the western areas of the Parish. To meet her annual stipend of £150 all members of St Wilfrid's who did not belong to the W.F.O. system were asked to join. The response enabled Deaconess Mildred Kathleen Magarey to work for the next six years in the Parish. Deaconess Magarey had obtained her Licentiate in Theology in 1926, had worked in a number of parishes and spent time as a M.U. Worker in the Diocese of Bunbury in Western Australia. She lived in Ashbourne Avenue, Kingswood, with her two sisters Kathleen and Helen and worked tirelessly in the new housing areas in the western end of the Parish. Amongst these young families she found many children who had not been baptised. As a consequence the Baptismal Register indicates that eighty-three children were baptised in the six-year term she worked in the Parish.

During the seven years of the Second World War forty baptisms were recorded at St Wilfrid's but in the decade following the War (1946–55) the sizable total was 136. Many of these were the children of ex-servicemen and formed part of a group that became known as the Baby Boomers. In the following decade, 1956–65, the numbers baptised declined somewhat to 102, a total which still reflected the youthful age of many in the congregation at Torrens Park.

Although a Mothers' Union branch had operated in the Parish for over fifty years, many young mothers found it difficult to attend their daytime meetings. To overcome this problem a Fellowship of Marriage (F.O.M.) branch, which met at night, was formed in 1949 (see page 245). Prime movers included St Wilfrid's parishioners Mrs Margaret Sanders, Mrs May Calder and Mrs B. Gafter. Together with others they worked tirelessly for years providing friendship and help for a large group of young mothers, many of whom became the solid core of the future congregation. Not only did they welcome them at meetings, but they also arranged for home help to be given in times of sickness – especially to mothers with disadvantaged children. Their activities saw the Rector

note in 1951 that there had been a marked increase in adult confirmees as people were led to the Church by the care and friendship they found amongst the F.O.M. members.

About this time the Rector decided to start a Children's Choir at St Wilfrid's. Cathryn Fardon (née Dibben), who was in Grade 7 at the time, recalled:

... [he] gathered up some of his R.I. Class from Mitcham Primary School. Lorna Clarke, Ron Williams and I were there. My sister Gwen made veils for the girls to wear. I remember practising but have no recollection of actually singing in a service. The veils came in handy for Confirmations. Every year on Trinity Sunday I remember how Mr Pearman used to put his mouth when he sang "Holy, Holy, Holy".

The regular support of a committed congregation saw the Church Council in a sound financial position early in 1952 when St Wilfrid's Financial Statement showed an income of £744 and expenditure of £591. The New Vestry Fund stood at £285. In August 1954 John Dibben suggested that monies in this Fund could be better invested in a Government Loan. There were to be many more occasions when this astute accountant would recommend how the Church might handle its monies to return a better rate of interest!

Magarey Memorial Font

In 1954 Deaconess Magarey resigned. By then she was seriously ill and her resignation was submitted to Vestry by her sisters. Sincere appreciation for her continuous work in the Parish was expressed, for not only had she visited many homes and been instrumental in encouraging the baptism of young children, but she had also kept the Rector informed of any sickness. She had been a member of the Church Council and secretary for the Ladies Guild and Sewing Circle.

Mildred Magarey died in 1958 aged sixty-five. At a special service held at 3.30 p.m. on Sunday, 9th August 1959 Leanne Bowman was the first child to be baptised in a new font commemorating the work of Deaconess Magarey (Fig. 13-8). This octagonal wooden font, given by her sisters, bears a plaque on the upright which reads:

TO THE GLORY OF GOD
AND
IN MEMORY OF
MILDRED KATHLEEN MAGAREY
DEACONESS
ASSISTANT IN THIS CHURCH
1948 – 1954
DIED 1958

The font is fitted with a silver bowl on the rim of which are inscribed the words "PRESENTED BY CONFIRMEES MARCH 17th 1898". It is known that Bishop Harmer conducted a Confirmation service at St Bartholomew's Church, Norwood, on 17th March 1898 indicating that this bowl was part of the original gift to St Wilfrid's in 1934 (see page 209) and that it had been incorporated into the new memorial font.

Fig. 13-8
The font is a memorial to Deaconess Mildred Magarey. In the background is the wooden tract case presented by Mrs Roper in memory of her parents, Reverend Frederick William Samwell and Marion Watson Samwell. (Pamela Oborn, 2002)



There seems to be some mystery surrounding the whereabouts of the rest of the old iron font. In his Annual Report in 1957 the Rector had stated “that the Church required a new and better font”, and in July the Council had resolved “that the present font be returned to St Bartholomew’s, Norwood, from whence it came”. In March 1958 the Rector advised that St Bartholomew’s did not require the font and that its disposal was to be held in abeyance “for the time being”. In a report soon after he noted that “the new font is a marked improvement on the old iron contraption which was never very satisfactory and which of recent months I have not used”. The sliding lid must still have been troublesome! The resolution of 1958 for its “disposal to be held in abeyance” appears to have been well accepted, for it was not until September 1961 that the Parish Council agreed for the font – and their old organ – to be donated to St Mary’s Mission, Alice Springs. In October it was reported that a letter of thanks had been received from St Mary’s but there is no further mention of the font being moved to Alice Springs. In 1976 – some fifteen years later – a note in the Minute Book suggested that the font, “originally presented by St Bartholomew’s”, had been given to A.H.M.S. and was believed to be at Tintinara!

Organs & Organists

The ‘old organ’ mentioned above was in fact the harmonium acquired when the Church opened. For nineteen years it had been played by Mr W.H. Pritchard who retired in 1954 through ill-health. Mrs Mudie, Mrs Dibben, Mrs Baxendale, Mrs Hogben and Miss Helen Magarey all contributed as organists on a voluntary basis until 1956 when Mrs N. Haskard accepted the paid position. She played for both morning and evening services.

In 1959 a new Sanders Amplified Harmonium was purchased at a cost of £875. While it was definitely not a pipe organ, and needed some early attention, it proved to be a big improvement on its predecessor. The old harmonium needed good leg power to pump the pedals and keep the air pressure at a satisfactory level. The new machine had its own vacuum-cleaner motor and operated well for the next



Fig. 13-9 *Organist Neil Patterson (right) seated at the Baldwin electronic organ. Behind him are choristers Heather Cooper, Joan Horner, Cathy Gerner, Betty Stewart, Colin Bungey and Brian Gerner. (Cicely Bungey, 1999)*

twenty years. A minor problem with the Sanders organ was that it could not be played ‘moderately’. Indeed, one year, Council requested that the organ *not* be played during the administration of the sacred elements during the Communion service. As with all amplified instruments the Sanders would sometimes ‘receive’ a message from outside the Church: on one occasion Evensong was interrupted by some unholy comments from the lips of a passing taxi driver!

From 1966 Reg Verrall played the organ until his departure from the Parish in 1978 when Neil Patterson commenced playing. In 1980 Neil was instrumental in having installed, at a cost of \$3,150, a new Baldwin electronic organ which has been in service, with him playing, to the present day. For many years the relief organist has been Alan Retallack who has also served on the Parish Council for many years as member, Warden and Treasurer.

The organs at St Wilfrid’s have been movable and have been tried in a number of positions. After a few years at the front of the Church the old harmonium was moved to the back again in 1948 with a re-arrangement of the front pews. Currently the Baldwin organ is situated adjacent to the pulpit with the choir stalls close by (Fig. 13-9).

Purchase of the St Wilfrid’s Parish House

At one stage the Council had considered whether new land should be sought in the Springbank area as the site for another daughter church in the rapidly-developing western areas of the Parish. In October 1959 the Wardens agreed to inspect the house in Fife Avenue immediately east of the Church with a view to acquiring it as a future curatage, or even as a rectory should the Parish ever be divided into two. They were looking ahead to the time when they hoped they would have a second priest in the Parish – one whom they would probably have to support. The matter moved to a head in 1961 when the house immediately north of St Wilfrid’s, No.2 Belair Road, became available (Fig. 13-10). After some rapid negotiations it was purchased in February 1962 for £3,800. A bank loan of £2,250 was arranged with Messrs Dibben, Hollinsworth, Whicker, Howie, Henshall

and Lashmar acting as Guarantors, and three members of the Council (Messrs Nelson, Howie and Mitchard) as Trustees. After some necessary renovations the house was let for £26 per calendar month and for many years the rent was channelled into a special fund. Subsequently, in 1964 after amendments to the Certificate of Title, the eastern fence of No.2 Belair Road was relocated to allow for a fifty-five foot (16.8 m) extension to be made to the car park at the eastern end of the Church.

Several years earlier, in 1956, brick walls had been erected on the western and southern boundaries of the block by V. Lindenthal for a total cost of £308 and the grounds surfaced. In 1960 a number of suitable shrubs were planted.

End of the Pearman Era

Late in 1960 a sanctuary lamp was given by Reverend Ian Stuart in memory of his mother, Doris Ida Stuart. A Credence table, the gift of Mr Sawley and members of the Sanctuary Guild, in memory of his wife Mrs Madge Ellen Sawley, was dedicated on 10th December 1961. These items added to the expanding list of furnishings in St Wilfrid's. At this time the purchase of a new organ was also being planned.

In 1961 Reverend Reginald Pearman gave notice that he would be retiring at the end of March 1962. During more than twenty-two years he had overseen many developments at both ends of the Parish of Mitcham and had coped remarkably with two congregations sharing a Hall that was not well sited for either. Structural problems at St Michael's Church, which were exacerbated by the earthquake in 1954, and an aging rectory on Fullarton Road required finance that was not easily found. Further, he had had virtually no clerical assistance as both congregations struggled to maintain their buildings and meet Diocesan and Mission quotas. The two groups had operated under different Trust Deeds and there were, from time to time, differences in their stated goals and objectives (see page 102).

During the period 1939 to 1962 he regularly conducted two services at St Wilfrid's each Sunday, although one Evensong service per month was taken by a Lay Reader.

Fig. 13-10 *St Wilfrid's Parish House, 2 Belair Road, Torrens Park, was purchased in 1961 for use as a future curatage or rectory. For twelve years it was leased to private tenants before being sold in 1974. (Pamela Oborn, 2002)*



A mid-week service was held for most of his incumbency and, for brief periods, a second one. He conducted his last Communion service as Rector at St Wilfrid's on 6th May 1962 with seventy-one communicants – a reflection of the support he had received from the congregation over so many years.

A memorial window to Reginald Henry Pearman and his wife, Winifred, was placed in the south wall of St Michael's in March 1981 (see page 195). Many St Wilfrid's parishioners remembered him with gratitude and contributed to the window fund.

MacDONALD ERA: 1962–1976

When Reverend James Younger MacDonald took his first service at St Wilfrid's on 13th May 1962 plans were already well in hand for the extension of the Church building.

As early as April 1945, when Reginald Pearman had been only six years in the Parish, the Council had agreed on the need to accumulate funds for a new vestry in view of anticipated post-war expansion in the district. In July 1946, Dean W. Berry & Gilbert, Architects and Structural Engineers, submitted three schemes with preliminary sketches but the matter was not pursued further. A decade later, in May 1956, the Rector suggested that serious thought be given to the replacement of the small wooden vestry “with some additions by building on to the back of the church in such a way that we would have a very large room capable of being divided if necessary by folding or sliding doors”. Then again, in 1957, he had asked them to give some thought to “the enlarging of St Wilfrid's Church, vestry and porch, the building of a hall and the financing of these schemes”.

New Sanctuary & Vestries Built

It was to be another two years before Vestry gave the Wardens power to obtain architectural advice with regard to providing a larger vestry, a baptistry with font and increased seating capacity. Their report was received in October 1959 and the Council visited St David's Church at Burnside to inspect the additions made there. Although the 1960 Easter Vestry approved the plans submitted by Council member, Mr F. S. Heithersay, problems of finance, an ‘Every Member Canvass’ and conflicting needs for priestly assistance saw the matter of extensions deferred in September of that year. Two months later the Finance Warden and John Dibben were asked to confer on ways of raising the necessary finance.

A bank loan was negotiated and, with a source of finance guaranteed, the firm of Kenneth Milne, Boehm, Bulbeck & Partners was asked to proceed with plans and specifications, with Mr F. Paul Bulbeck being the consulting partner. In 1962 the tender of Saint Contractors Ltd for £5,060 was accepted, with an additional expense of £1,061 for ventilation, pews and carpeting. As on an earlier occasion six members of the Parish, Messrs Nelson, Henshall, Dibben, Hollinsworth, Whicker and Howe were Guarantors for the five-year loan of £4,000 at 8% interest. The success of the project reflected the tireless and efficient oversight of the whole exercise by the Priest's Warden, Mr Hollinsworth.

Fig. 13-11
Interior view of
St Wilfrid's showing the
extended sanctuary and
tapestry kneelers.
(MPA)



Fig. 13-12
St Wilfrid's as it now
appears with
added vestries.
The brick wall
was built in 1956.



The alterations involved the extension of the building by some twelve feet (3.7 m) to provide a sanctuary elevated above the existing nave (Fig. 13-11). These areas are now separated by an archway sited where the original east wall stood. On the southern side of the new sanctuary are two conjoined vestries, the priest's opening off the sanctuary and the choir's vestry from the nave (Fig. 13-12). It is not surprising that twenty years later Dean Berry (the original architect) should have commented kindly, but firmly, that he felt "the addition looks clumsy, at any rate from the outside".³

At 9.30 a.m. on Sunday, 2nd September 1962 Bishop T.T. Reed dedicated the new chancel, sanctuary, vestries and a sanctuary lamp at a special service in the presence of the new Rector, James MacDonald, his predecessor Reverend Reginald Pearman and some 190 parishioners. For the occasion the choir, led by Frank Westhorp, wore robes for the first time. The Sanctuary Guild, with the guidance of Mrs A.E. Roper, had prepared four albs, amices and two sets of coloured apparel especially for the service. Mrs Roper donated two altar candlesticks and two sanctuary pedestals, having earlier given a wooden tract case in memory of her parents, Reverend Frederick William Samwell and Marion Watson Samwell. This case now stands at the rear entrance and holds the prayer books (seen in Figure 13-8).

Mrs Roper was Sacristan at St Wilfrid's from 1956 to 1970 and set a wonderful standard in the care of vestments, sacramental vessels and procedures in the priest's vestry. After the building of the new vestries she reported: "The architect's conception of the plan for storage fittings which the Wardens allowed me to submit, far exceeded my expectations and it is a pleasure to us all to work there." Her demanding standards were maintained by her able successor, Mrs Joan Horner.

The enlarged building was put to the test for nine weeks from late July 1963 when St Michael's was closed for restoration and the whole Parish worshipped at St Wilfrid's.

The 'big event' of 1963 was the St Wilfrid's Church Fair held on 19th October. It was advertised as running "from 10 a.m. to exhaustion" and so it must have done, for the net proceeds were £1,399, a sum which greatly reduced the overdraft for the building extensions.

Following the arrival of the new Rector in 1962 a new magazine, the *Mitcham Parish Herald*, was distributed quarterly from September 1963. The editor, David Cain, and his assistant, Trevor Barr, were both parishioners at St Wilfrid's. Outreach in the following year saw boys from the Glandore Home taken to Church each month.

The workload for a single priest was high and in 1964 Council sought approval to obtain priestly assistance at Communion services. As a result Reverend R.G. Opie helped for some months during 1965. The Rector was indeed pleased in 1967 when a retired priest, Canon Ernst Auricht, came to live in the Parish and was appointed as his assistant. Canon Auricht later acted as locum tenens when James MacDonald took long service leave in the first half of 1970.

In 1965 Ruth Westhorp became the first female member of the Church Council, which was subsequently well-served by a number of women including two young parishioners, Judi Remilton and Diana Bungey, who were both in their early twenties at the time.

Further Memorials & Bequests

In March of 1964 the Parish learned of the death of Miss Helen Olive Magarey, sister of Deaconess Mildred and a long-time supporter and assistant organist at St Wilfrid's. She also taught music, was a member of several Parish groups and left a generous bequest of £200. A proposal to erect a tower and bell at St Wilfrid's as a suitable memorial was warmly debated at a Special Vestry the following year, but ultimately the bequest was placed in the Church of England Endowment Society for the "benefit of the Priest in Charge, St Wilfrid's, Torrens Park".

Mrs Amy Rose Williamson also died in 1964. She had lived with Mrs Florence Bowden in Fife Avenue immediately opposite the Church. Amy Williamson had in earlier years been Sacristan, a needle-worker for Missions, one who visited many sick persons and a welcomer at the Church. A bread box for the Sacrament was dedicated to her memory in 1965.

The extended Church was being well furnished. Two sanctuary chairs were donated by Mrs McNichol in memory of her husband, and a chancel chair and organist's music rack were given by the organist, Mrs N. Haskard, in lieu of her salary. A prayer desk was also donated in 1964 by Jim Whicker in memory of his parents. Several years later, in February 1971, an aumbry on the north wall of the sanctuary was blessed. This was donated by Jim's wife, Doreen Whicker, and her family in memory of her sister, Muriel McKay, and her parents, Charles and Frieda Searcy.

Steady Growth

Financial matters were a feature of 1965 with a 'Direct Giving Programme' run in early March under the chairmanship of Gordon George, an active and well-respected member of Council. His son, Ian, is now Archbishop of the Province of South Australia. A Debutante Ball held in April 1965 at the Wonderland Ballroom provided much-needed funds for Missions.

The sharing of Parish expenses, which had been a hot topic for many years, flared again through lack of consultation between the two sets of Wardens. Much attention was given to maintenance of the Church, the adjacent Parish House and the Hall. Approval was granted to amend Synod Trust Property Ordinance, a decision that would allow a parish to use such property as security when seeking a loan. This removed the need to have parishioners guarantee loans. On occasions this had created problems when, in much later years, the property had to be disposed of and it was found that all the Trustees had died! In another amendment made by Synod in 1966, St Wilfrid's Model Trust Deed was altered to give full voting rights to young people eighteen years and over who were Church members. This forward move was instigated and successfully presented at Synod by James A. Nelson who believed that many active young members drifted away from the Church because they felt they were unable to participate in its management as they had no voting rights.

Church buildings from time to time attract vandals and in May 1967 St Wilfrid's suffered with damage to carpet and furnishings. Over the years the west window occasionally attracted stone throwers and small glass panels had to be replaced. In November 1987 fifteen stones were hurled

with great force through panes of all the windows on the southern and western sides of the Church. This problem was reduced by installing strong perspex covers. Sadly, churches that traditionally had always remained open, had to be locked between services. Other unwanted visitors included swarms of bees which were eliminated by the judicious use of insecticides and by flywire covers over the ventilators.

Both Councils came together and appointed the Church Advisory Services to conduct a combined canvass in November 1967 (see page 303). The appointment of Canon Ernst Auricht, who commenced part-time duties as an assistant priest on 1st October, suggests all were confident a new programme would provide the funds required. It was a very successful campaign which did much to draw the two ends of the Parish together – although differing needs still caused a few problems between the 'mother' and 'daughter' Church Councils! In March 1968, as a consequence of the improved finances, a catechist, Peter Riley, was also appointed.

The year 1969 was a sad one at St Wilfrid's with the deaths of two parishioners, Gordon F. George and G. Dempster Mudie, both long-term supporters and office-bearers. Dem was a founder of St Wilfrid's, Chairman in 1933 of the Building Committee, Chairman of the inaugural Council in 1934, a member of that Council for twenty-three years, Priest's Warden 1934 to 1939 and People's Warden in 1956. He also served as a Lay Reader from 1935 to 1967.

For the next few years matters at St Wilfrid's were mostly concerned with the maintenance of property. A major decision at the 1972 Annual Easter Vestry certainly benefited the whole Parish when it requested Synod to apply the 1971 Trust Property Act and the Model Trust Deed of 1969 to Church property (see page 298). St Michael's also adopted a new Trust Deed making it possible for the two Councils to contribute members to a legitimate Central Council. As a consequence forward planning and operations became much easier. A Mission Fête in November yielding \$1,072, provided funds for Hall maintenance, painting and Mission giving.

In July 1972 Council heard of a bequest from the estate of Mrs Hewitt of \$500. This gift was dependent on the sale of her property and was not received until 1999.

Frank Westthorp and family left the district in 1973 and the choir and Council were much diminished by their going. He had been choirmaster for more than ten years and had greatly aided the Evensong services. His wife, Ruth, and two children were also in the choir.

The major event in 1974 was the sale of the house adjacent to St Wilfrid's. When purchased in 1961 it was seen as a long-term investment and had been rented to private tenants. Over twelve years excess of receipts over expenditure was \$1,700. In addition the original mortgage of \$4,500 had been reduced to \$2,396. The building required underpinning of the northern wall, and due to over-flow water some walls had cracked and considerable redecorating and painting was needed. With these costs in mind, after being passed in at auction, the property was sold privately for \$16,000 and the proceeds earmarked for the support of a future assistant.

During 1976 St Wilfrid's suffered another loss with the death of Jim Whicker. There was scarcely a post he had not filled in his thirty-two-year association with the Church, and his determination to support the western end of the Parish at all times had ensured its steady development. In August 1955 Jim had resigned from all posts at St Wilfrid's, as well as from his position as Mayor of Mitcham, due to ill-health. However he recovered to be a member of Parish Council again from 1969 to 1973, and in 1970 took on the task of W.F.O. Secretary. In October 1970 he had convened a Special Thanksgiving Day with Reverend Lance Shilton as guest preacher. Jim and his wife, Doreen, led a Special Appeal to all parishioners to support the W.F.O. system. As a Lay Reader Jim continued to take Evensong services intermittently until the end of December 1973. His estate left a legacy of \$500 and Doreen presented a brass ewer in his memory.

In May 1976 Reverend James Younger MacDonald advised Vestry that he would retire at the end of August. He had been Rector for fourteen years and had overseen the Parish and maintained services despite minimum help. During his incumbency the two ends of the Parish had been drawn together, and this augured well for the years ahead and for the priest to be appointed.

The Parish was aware that finances were strained, that the Parish Hall was an increasing liability, that young people needed a younger and sympathetic priest and that numbers were in decline. The period of two months between the departure of James MacDonald and the arrival of his replacement was adequately filled by Canon Auricht.

CHEESMAN ERA: 1976–2001

When Reverend Andrew Walford Cheesman took his first service at St Wilfrid's on 7th November 1976 all present looked forward to an exciting period. The Patronage Committee had recommended him as a wise choice: he was a 'local', having been educated at St Peter's College (where he had later taught) but had trained for the ministry in England. He was young, had a young family and had been very active at his former parish of St Wilfrid's, Tea Tree Gully.

Early on he stressed that the Parish had to be united and he enthusiastically endorsed the plan to re-employ the Methodist Department of Promotion for a 'Planned Giving Programme' which took place the following year. At the first meeting of the Parochial Council in November he advised that at the next meeting all would be asked to reconsider the time of Church services. After considerable discussion, and in accord with a resolution of St Michael's Council, it was resolved that one only family service be held in the Parish on the first Sunday in the month at 9.30 a.m. The first, held at St Wilfrid's in March, was followed by a 'cup of tea' with some two hundred parishioners reported to have attended. At the Annual Easter Vestry he emphasised the need for Parish unity, the Eucharist as the central source of worship, consideration of a new prayer book and the future training of a curate as soon as possible.

In May 1977 the Wardens of the two Councils met and considered the conditions under which both ends of the Parish would merge their activities and operate financially with a central bank account to be controlled by the Central Council. These conditions were put to a Special Vestry of St Wilfrid's on 4th September by the architect of the scheme, John Dibben, and approved subject to the Vestry of St Michael's passing similar resolutions. This they did. It was also agreed that the 'Planned Giving Programme' would not spell out separate needs for each Church, but rather the needs of the Parish as a whole. Under the chairmanship of Peter Geytenbeek it was a most successful canvass (see page 303).

The first Joint Council meeting was held on 13th December 1977 when matters such as the sale of the Hall and the erection of an alternative meeting site, housing for a curate and the investment of 'surplus' funds were debated on a Parish basis. The following year Fr Andrew was able to report on regular morning services being held at 8 a.m. at St Wilfrid's and 10 a.m. at St Michael's, a successful 'Planned Giving Programme' and the arrival of a young curate, David Lunniss. He also spoke of the need to consider "a small adjunct to our Parish building on the site at St Michael's, a place where we can meet, where instruction and social activities can occur in close proximity to the major worship centre of our Parish".

At a combined Special Vestry meeting on 1st April 1979 three very important decisions were made: approval was given for the building of a Parish Centre on a site adjacent to the Church of St Michael, the Wardens were requested to mortgage or sell the land on Princes Road on which the Hall stood, and St Wilfrid's Vestry endorsed these moves as being "in the best interests of the whole Parish".

It would have been too much to hope that all of these changes would suit all the parishioners at St Wilfrid's. For more than twenty years they had had a family service each Sunday at 9.30 a.m. and the earlier time of 8 a.m. did not suit all. The introduction of a new prayer book, *An Australian Prayer Book* (A.A.P.B.), in lieu of the *Book of Common Prayer* was welcomed by many – though not by all. Use of different forms of service from the new book became acceptable and numbers at worship increased steadily over the following five years. A few expressed concern that they might "lose their voice" – in two ways of speaking! This did not occur. Firstly, both Vestries met together, but voted separately when appropriate. Secondly, the question of a sung Eucharist at St Wilfrid's was discussed but, as there were so few members in the choir at the time, this proved to be impractical. However hymns were introduced into the otherwise 'said' service of Holy Communion.

In general terms, many people continued to worship only at St Wilfrid's. After all it was 'their church' for which they had worked and contributed. For some it was near their homes and they had always walked to services and wished to continue the practice. Many parishioners, however, accepted the need to demonstrate the new-found unity and began to worship in both churches. Following the opening in November 1980 of the new Hall in the grounds of St Michael's, groups such as the Sunday School, Mothers' Union and Guild saw St Michael's as the central church of the Parish.

In certain outlying parishes during the 1960s approval had been given for a lay person to assist the priest at Christmas and Easter, but this concession did not become common in Adelaide until the 1970s. The first Licenced Lay Assistant, Peter Geytenbeek, was appointed to the Parish of Mitcham in 1980. Subsequently, other regular communicant members were, with the approval of all members of the Vestries, similarly appointed. During the 1990s the Parish had as many as ten persons registered to assist the priest.

When, in February 1984, the estate of the late Florence Bowden released \$4,250 for 'Mission' work at St Wilfrid's, the money was placed with the 'St Wilfrid's House Account' and the interest earmarked for the salary of an appointed curate. One of those curates, Reverend Stephen Clark and his wife, Susan, gave a fine Crucifix as a thank-offering to the Parish in 1984. It can be seen over the priest's stall.

The Tapestry Kneelers

Although the Rector described St Wilfrid's as 'a chapel of ease' it remained the centre of worship for many and its members continued to contribute strongly to the life and work of the Parish. Never was this better shown than in 1983 when St Wilfrid's Sanctuary Guild planned and produced four large tapestry kneelers, with a total length of 18 feet 4 inches (5.6 m), for the Communion step. They were done in cross-stitch on linen, with many colours and a fine central cross. The background fishnet pattern perpetuates the link with the great work of St Wilfrid as a 'fisher of men'. Twenty-one women under the guidance of Elizabeth Mackinnon and Joan Horner worked on a tight roster for three-and-a-half hours once a week for six months, then twice a week for three months to finish the kneelers in time for the 50th Jubilee of St Wilfrid's Church (Fig. 13-13). The work involved an estimated one-and-a-half-million stitches and a material cost of \$600. The kneelers were blessed on 11th December 1983 by Bishop Lionel Renfrey, one-time catechist at St Wilfrid's.

Three more kneelers were worked and first used on 25th March 1984 at the time of a Parish Mission (see page 126). They were blessed by the Missioner, The Right Reverend Robert M. Hardy, Bishop of Maidstone, England. Soon afterwards a new gold carpet was laid, and in 1992 the furnishings were added to when a new handrail was installed. This enabled older parishioners to move safely up the steps to the chancel.

Still later, for the Diamond Jubilee observed on 9th October 1994, two additional fishnet pattern kneelers were placed in the sanctuary (Fig. 13-14). Also blessed at that time was the much-appreciated padded seating in the pews. This was the gift of Mrs Ivy Henshall, a long time worshipper and supporter of St Wilfrid's.

What of the Future?

In April 1987 parishioners at both ends of the Parish were surprised to receive a document setting out the difficult financial position the Church was in due, in large part, to



Fig. 13-14 Archbishop Ian George blessing the new kneelers and cushions during St Wilfrid's Patronal Festival in October 1994. Fr Andrew Cheesman and Malcolm Derwas are assisting. (Cicely Bungey)



Fig. 13-13
The 'Sew and Sews', members of the St Wilfrid's Guild, working on the tapestry kneelers for the Communion step in 1983. (L. to R) Ann Retallack, Mary Thomas, Joan Horner, Marge Puckridge, Vi Baker, Linda Jones, May Calder (MPA)

[The finished kneelers can be seen in Figure 13-11.]

the escalation of interest rates. The rate of 18.5% on the Hall building loan required an interest payment of \$11,000 per year – without repaying any of the indebtedness! The Central Council saw only two options: to eliminate the indebtedness by a Special Appeal, or to recognise that all Parish services could be held at St Michael's. The latter would create a significant capital sum "which could be used to repay all indebtedness". The thought that St Wilfrid's might be sold to clear the debt on the new Hall resulted in a special meeting of St Wilfrid's people who found the second option a long way from their wishes! In due course a combined meeting, held on 27th April 1987, led to the launching of a Special Building Appeal which was so successful that the debt on the Hall was cleared in little more than a year.

During the year 2000 the neighbouring parish of All Saints at Colonel Light Gardens was having trouble with declining numbers and discussions took place to consider options available to assist both congregations. Many St Wilfrid's parishioners were apprehensive of the outcome, but the matter has not been pursued.

* * *

One can describe in detail the Church building, its furnishings and memorials; one can list the office bearers and the people who carried out special tasks, but a Church is the sum of all its members. Any history must also acknowledge the large body of parishioners who have served quietly and faithfully without recognition or reward.

Mention has been made of the catechists who assisted at St Wilfrid's during its early years. In more recent times, under Fr Andrew Cheesman, David Patterson served for fourteen months in 1989 and 1990, and Mark Clayton for 21 months between 1997 and 1999. During his twenty-five-year incumbency he also trained eleven curates who gave much assistance throughout the Parish. Likewise, the dedicated work begun by the early Lay Readers has been carried on by Jim Nelson (1955–71), Trevor Barr (1967–77), Frank Westhorp (1971–73) and Peter Geytenbeek (1967–2001). Women have been amongst the ranks of those who have served the priest in the sanctuary, as have many of the youth of the Parish.

The Church has been blessed by many who have cleaned the silverware and polished the brass, and the flower arrangements at St Wilfrid's have always to be admired. One can list the organists, but what of the loyal choristers like Betty Stewart with her strong soprano voice who sang in the choir for nearly thirty years? Betty, (seen in Figure 13-9) with her two blue eyes was a great supporter of the Sturt football team, and for more than ten years she walked from her home in Kingswood to the Julia Farr Centre at Fullarton as a hospital visitor.

In the 1980s great emphasis was laid on making people feel welcome and all Church members were encouraged to wear a nametag. With bold, readable print these nametags were prepared for many years by Heather Geytenbeek for the whole Parish.

The grounds of the Church have been well maintained by many willing hands, and the garden areas developed by



Fig. 13-15 The Palm tree growing in the front garden of St Wilfrid's. It was grown from a seed planted by Joan Horner. Note the original wooden priest's vestry which can be seen on the left. (MPA)

Fig. 13-16
Don and
Joan Horner
photographed
on Australia
Day, 1993, when
Joan received
her O.A.M. for
services to the
community and
netball. (MPA)



Joan and Don Horner, John Dibben and Colin Bungey. A highlight of their work occurred on 5th August 1998 when, from a tree planted many years before, some of the leaves were used for the first time to make the palm crosses for both Churches for Palm Sunday (Fig. 13-15).

Over a long period many women worked in the Primary schools taking Religious Instruction classes. In more recent years the Christian message has been presented at Christmas and Easter by a small band, led by Jennifer Henshall, which has worked with the chaplains in State schools. These chaplains have been funded by the local churches through the Schools Ministry Group. Jennifer also became a long-time organiser with the Inter-Church Council.

Many others worked regularly for a range of charities, none more devotedly than Janet Cameron on behalf of Anglicare. Joan and Don Horner (Fig. 13-16) were parishioners for more than four decades, and for many years they organised the White Elephant Stall at the annual fund-raising day at 'All Hallows', the Anglican Nursing Home at Westbourne Park.

Some members served on committees associated with Lindisfarne School (see page 270) or on the Mothers' Union Central Council; others took part as Synod representatives or served on Diocesan Council.

The friendly atmosphere at St Wilfrid's (Fig. 13-17) is summed up by Ann Dasborough, a parishioner and sanctuary worker, who also served as a member of the Parish Council for many years:

In 1956 I began attending St Wilfrid's church, Reverend Reginald Pearman being the priest at the time. I did not know anybody so in the 'old Anglican tradition' I scuttled off home as soon as the service was over – no Welcomers in those days! Eventually I began to go to such events as Vestry Meetings: these were held at night and there were often heated arguments. We had some very fiery Wardens!

Gradually a more open and friendly atmosphere was generated among clergy and parishioners, breaking down the English reserve inherited from the 'Old Country'. Then women began attending Church without hats – shocking! There were happy occasions in the old Hall on Princes Road – Shrove Tuesday pancake nights were fun. The old Hall had a small, inconvenient kitchen and was not very spacious, but nobody seemed to mind. Then the big new (and controversial at the time!) Hall was built up at St Michael's and has been well used.

To me St Wilfrid's has been, and still is, a comfortable, friendly and homely little church, with a reputation for looking beautiful when decorated for special festivals.

At the end of the year 2001 St Wilfrid's Church at Torrens Park is still open for service every Sunday at 7.45 a.m. and is providing a mid-week service. The early hour enables the clergy to return to St Michael's for the two morning services at the mother Church – one of which caters for young families with children of Sunday School age. When, for a period of eight months, the early service was transferred to St Michael's all of the faithful supporters worshipped up there. It was not a popular move, and when the early service was re-instated at Torrens Park they continued to witness their faith by regular attendance.

The Church and its accompanying sign as always stand on a slight bend of the main Belair Road. Both are clearly visible to passing motorists and to any train traveller looking from their window. All can see that, in these more mercenary days, there still is a church open for worship and persons living out their Christian beliefs.

St Wilfrid, that much-travelled and often-criticised evangelist, a man of fortitude and persistence, would surely approve.



Fig. 13-17 Members of the congregation share fellowship over a cup of tea served from a table at the back of the Church following the morning service in St Wilfrid's in December 1992. (Cicely Bungey)



Fig. 14-1 *The Parsonage c.1869. The entrance gates built about this period remained a feature of the property. (MPA)*

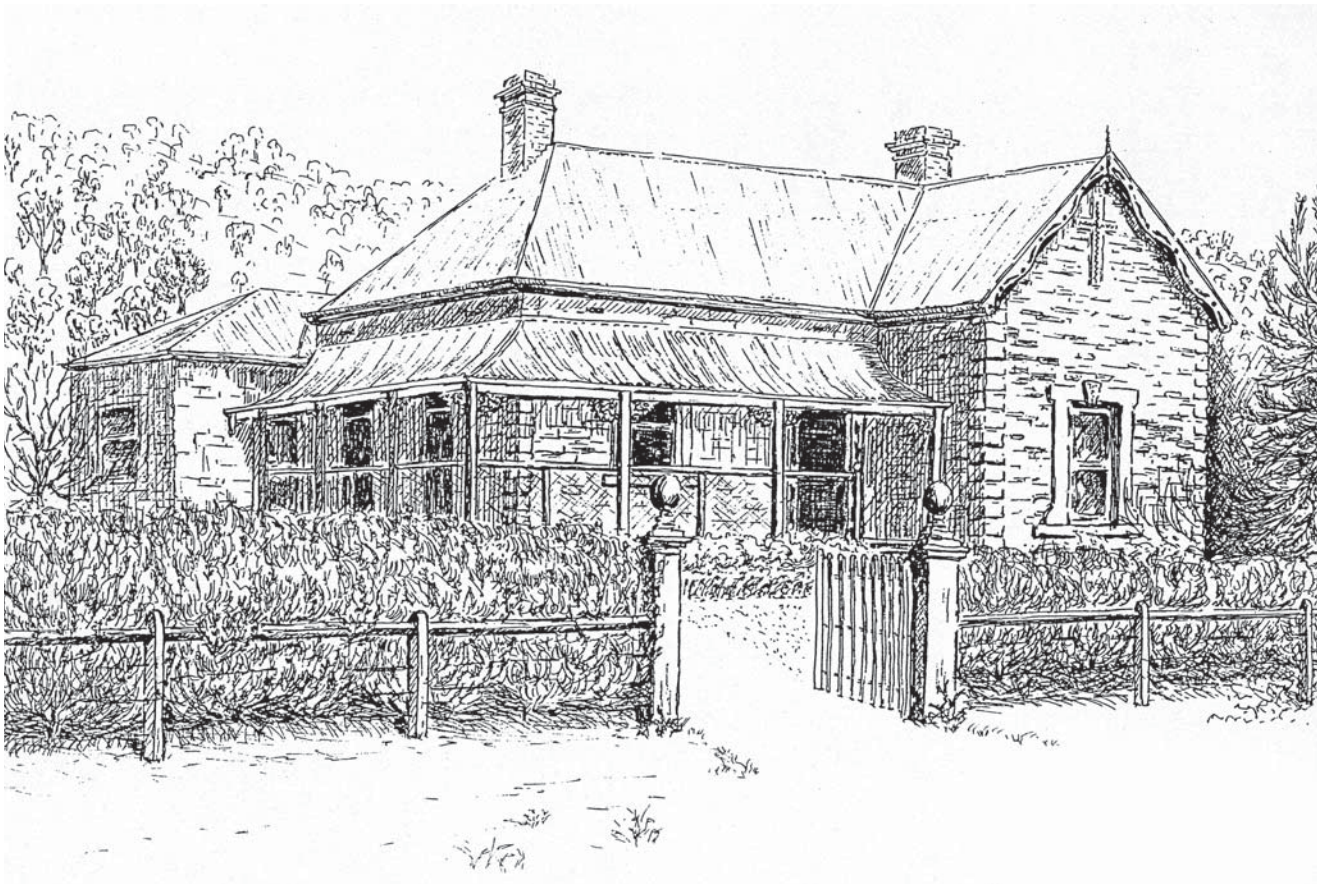


Fig. 14-2 *The Parsonage as it would have appeared after 1881 showing the villa-style addition at the front of the house. (Pamela Oborn, 1977)*