

Chapter 16

THE PARISH FAMILY (Part 2):

OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE

JUST as we are all called to be ‘deacons’ in the context of social Outreach, so too those who teach our children are called to be ‘catechists’ – literally, “one who instructs orally”. It is indeed a God-given gift to be able to inspire and instil in young people a love of God and the work of his Church.

Included in this area of Parish life is the work done over the decades in the Sunday School and various youth groups; the Parish Day Schools, Religious Instruction in our State schools and, in more recent times, chaplaincy through the Schools’ Ministry Group of the Inter-Church Council.

SUNDAY SCHOOL (SS)

[Jennifer Henshall has kindly done a précis of SS activities up until the late 1950s. The information is based on extracts from Minute Books and various Parish magazines, plus her own recollections.]

Sunday School during the Colonial Era (1852–1893)

The first record of a SS is of eighteen children attending classes held by the first incumbent, Reverend Edward Burnett, about 1853 in the cottage he used as a parsonage. It was a four-roomed stone building overlooking the ford on Muggs Hill Road. In 1869, after the arrival of Reverend Henry Read (the fourth incumbent), we read: “A Schoolroom is urgently needed. The Sunday School children now meeting in the Church lose that reverence for it as the ‘house of God’ which is prejudicial to their mental and religious culture.”

Reverend Frederick Samwell, a dynamic young man, arrived in 1888 and the following year there were fourteen teachers and 172 students in the SS, which was still meeting in the Church. With the opening in July 1890 of the St Michael’s Day School Hall (on the corner of Princes Road and East Parade), the SS classes were held in the new building. They were amalgamated with a SS which the Misses Thornber had been operating at Lower Mitcham for nearly seven years. The Day School used the building on weekdays (see page 42).

On 13th December 1891 the Second Annual Gathering of Teachers of the Church of England Sunday School Union was held at Mitcham:

We had the honour of receiving 150 workers, who on Sundays, at what time selfish folk prefer to doze, go forth to teach Christ to His little ones ... the mere sight of a great number of Christians, for the most part personally unknown to each other, and yet actively engaged in the same glorious work, is an inspiration to more earnest effort.

Children’s Flower Service

For many decades one of the charming traditions associated with Spring was the annual Children’s Flower Service. Presumably this was started by Reverend Frederick Samwell, for in October 1890 it was noted that: “A special Service has been drawn up by the incumbent for the occasion, and in its printed form is being utilised by the North Adelaide, Norwood, Gawler, Unley and other Churches.” The Service was held at 3 p.m. in St Michael’s, after which the children’s bouquets and posies were delivered to The Home for Incurables (now the Julia Farr Centre).

Over the years there were frequent references to the Children’s Flower Service. The last one was held at Michaelmas 1963.

Sunday School during the Clappett Era (1893–1939)

In spite of the many changes in social attitudes during the forty-six years of Clappett’s incumbency, a child’s attendance at SS was an entrenched tradition in most Parish families. Although numbers remained well over a hundred for the first decade, they never came near to the 172 students and fourteen teachers recorded by Samwell in 1889. There was an alarming drop in numbers – down to eighty-eight – in the years leading up to the First World War; then a resurgence throughout the War years as the population sought solace and guidance in the face of the mounting death toll on the battlefields of France.

In October 1900, at a special afternoon service, Bishop Harmer officiated at the dedication of the ‘Children’s Window’ situated on the northern wall of St Michael’s. It depicts Christ as a boy in the Temple, and was a gift from the children of the SS. For nearly three years they subscribed about threepence a month towards the cost of £25 (see page 193).

Undoubtedly the big event of the year for every SS child was the annual picnic. These were invariably held at Brighton Beach in early December, and began with a short service in St Michael’s during which the hymn “Do no sinful action” was sung! The hour’s trip to the seaside was made in a convoy of horse-drawn ‘drags’ led by Archdeacon Clappett singing at the top of his voice. His daughter Mollie (Mrs Bowen) remembered them well, and has provided the delightful anecdotes which can be found on pages 56 and 57.

In 1927 the SS appears to have been losing numbers, and the afternoon classes were changed to mornings because “the present unsatisfactory attendance demanded some change. Sunday afternoons are now invaded by motor cars; the tram or train outings to the beaches and the hills are attractive to young and old”.

By 1931 things had obviously improved with 115 pupils – exclusive of the Bible Class which numbered between thirty and forty. An afternoon Bible Class (see Fig. 5-15) was held in St Michael's Hall at 3 p.m. each Sunday: "The attendance is good, and the practice of getting members of the class to write and read short papers, and to read selected portions of the Scripture aloud is proving to be interesting and instructive." In July a special SS Festival Service was held and "young people nearly filled the Church". Ted Smith, who was in his late teens at that time, recalled:

We had a large young people's group for Bible Class, many of whom attended Church three times a day. We met on Sunday afternoons in the Hall for our own service; then we were up at St Michael's in full force on Sunday night, and the Church would be upwards of three-quarters full for a full Choral Evensong.

Sunday School during the Pearman Era (1939–1962)

The Second World War broke out within weeks of the arrival of Reverend Reginald Pearman as the new Rector of St Michael's and St Wilfrid's. As more and more of the young men of the congregation enlisted, the running of the SS and Bible Class was left in the hands of members of the Young People's Fellowship (YPF). The Superintendent in Clampett's last year was Mr Wheeler, who was followed by Keith Harlow, and then by Ainslie Gaunt after Keith's War service and death.

During the early 1940s the SS was flourishing with members of the YPF as teachers in both Senior and Junior sections. In 1942 when "a record figure of 117 boys and girls" was reached, twelve of the fourteen teachers were members of the YPF. Margaret Carter was in charge of the Kindergarten until her marriage to Fred Sanders.

In 1945 plans were made to re-organise the SS on the lines of 'Soldiers of the Cross':

This system does away with classes as such and is based on the method of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. The children are grouped in 'patrols' under 'leaders' and 'seconds'. For the time being the leaders will be the present teachers. The prize system is abolished. Marks are awarded not to individuals but to the 'patrol', but in the 'patrol' each member can 'work' for certain 'badges'. To obtain these 'badges' there is a certain amount of learning – as set out – and each member of the 'patrol' has to pass a 'test' in that particular badge work.

To cater for the population explosion after the War as thousands of returned servicemen married and had children, many larger properties were subdivided and hundreds of new houses constructed. During February 1948, in an effort to make contact with all these new families, the St Wilfrid's Parish Council accepted the responsibility for paying the stipend of Deaconess Mildred Magarey, on condition that her work was confined to the western areas of the Parish. In the course of her visiting she found a number of Church of England parents who did not like to send their tiny children to the SS at St Michael's Hall because they had to cross a railway line and very busy main road. (It must be

remembered that the majority of families did not own motor cars, and had to rely on public transport.) With the help of Maree Stuart, Deaconess Magarey began a SS class in the Masonic Lodge building in Wattle Avenue, Lower Mitcham.

Because of the large number of children enrolled in the SS at this time, a decision was made to buy a block of land opposite the Hall for proposed further expansion. This failed to eventuate, and the land was later sold (see page 234). In May 1949 the Senior SS was being conducted in St Wilfrid's Church at 9.30 a.m. by Mr G. Dempster Mudie. It was in the form of a study group in an effort to prevent "boys and girls of High School age or over from drifting away".

May 1950 was a time of re-organisation. The service times at both churches were re-arranged: the principal morning services were 8 a.m. at St Michael's, 9.30 a.m. at St Wilfrid's, and 11 a.m. Matins at St Michael's. The SS classes seemed to change several times, but by May 1951 all 150 children in all departments were meeting at 11 a.m. each Sunday – the kindergarten and primary divisions at the Hall, and the upper classes at St Wilfrid's. By 1953 the St Wilfrid's group was back at the Hall. That year the kindergarten lost three long-serving teachers, and Col Edwards, together with members of the Fellowship of Marriage, offered to take over the kindergarten. My sister, Cathryn Fardon (née Dibben) and I, together with Wanda Williams began teaching during this time.

My main memories include the strong smell of gas in the old Hall kitchen where I taught; the wrapping of simnel cake and the making of posies for the wonderful Flower Services at St Michael's. Wanda, who did the Commission to Teach course with us, continued teaching for forty-one years – both in the old Hall and the new one.

Ainslie Gaunt resigned as superintendent of the Senior SS in 1955. In his report to Vestry, the Rector noted that there were 140 on the roll and eighteen teachers. New teachers in the Senior School included Helen Magarey (sister of Deaconess Mildred) and Stuart Mudie (son of Dempster). The older children were organised into two sections, with Stuart running a Companionship Class for 12 to 15 year olds. As well as the various classes being taught in the Hall, a pre-school SS was held by Margaret Sanders (née Carter) in her home in Wattlebury Road, Lower Mitcham.

[Jennifer Henshall]

Memories of the 1950s

[Contributed by Cathryn Fardon, née Dibben]

I was asked to be Superintendent of the Junior Sunday School in 1956 when I was training to be an Infant Teacher. Like most helpers in the SS in the 1950s I was recruited from the Confirmation Class and had been playing the piano and teaching for three years.

Junior SS began at 9.30 a.m. with a simple worship service, split into small classes according to age for the story and expression work, and then we came together again for closing prayers. I remember having parents there for a Christmas Mime and also I recall a visit from Miss Dawn Dridan of the State and Sunday Schools Department. She was favourably impressed with our little SS.

One of my memories is of a group of us painting the Kindergarten chairs, and someone who shall remain nameless, stacking them when the seats were still tacky! We had the use of the whole Hall (Fig. 16-1) because the older children met at 11 a.m. It was an odd set-up with the SS between Churches, quite divorced from the worshipping congregation. We teachers used to ride our bikes up to St Michael's once a month to worship together at the Sung Eucharist.

In those days, the State and Sunday Schools Department gave lots of help to SS teachers with meetings held on Sunday afternoons at parishes like Prospect and Walkerville where there would be Demonstration Classes and Displays of Teaching Aids. Then there were the 'Commission to Teach' Classes for RI and SS Teachers. Miss Betty Teasdale conducted a Course for us at Mitcham, and after a written Exam we were all presented with our 'Commission to Teach' Certificates at the Cathedral.

[Cathryn Fardon]

Companionship Group

During the late 1950s there was a very active Young People's Fellowship (YPF) group operating in the Parish (see page 277). But, as is so often the case, many of the newly-confirmed were 'lost' because they were a bit young to join the YPF, yet considered themselves too old for SS. In an effort to overcome this problem Stuart Mudie formed a Companionship Group to cater more for their needs. Of the eighty-three children in the Upper SS, twenty-four were in the Companionship Class. Writing in the *Parish Messenger* in June 1960 Stuart warned the parents that:

It must be realised that the Companionship work is something new in the Sunday School curriculum, and is designed for children of the ages 12 to 15. There is NO,

I repeat NO substitute for it in the life of the Church, and nothing like it before has been experienced by you, the parents. After Confirmation most of the Companions leave the group: last year we started with twenty-eight but finished with four. This is very disappointing to me, and a matter of grave concern to the Rector and myself.

If our Sunday School were part of the ordinary system of our State's education programme these children would be compelled to attend. Do you realise that a large number of our teachers in Sunday Schools give up to three nights a week to study lectures and preparation of their work? The dire need of the Companionship Group is an Assistant Leader. The group this year has two classes going at the same time. Whilst I must attend to one, the second goes without leadership. This is a very serious matter, and needs the urgent attention of the Parish...

Ideally, he suggested, the first stage should be for children to attend SS, then attend Companionship Group for a two-year course followed by Confirmation instruction, then another year of instruction with the Companionship Group before going on to Youth Fellowship.

In a letter written in 1999, Stuart recalls that Companionship was a three-year course which allowed the students to work at their own pace through a system of questions and answers:

... like a series of projects. It taught the Faith through the teachings of Christ and the Apostles and their missionary work; the History of the Church; the form and structure of the many services in the Book of Common Prayer; the plan of a church; the vestments and so much more, so that it was an excellent foundation for Confirmation.

If only a similar comprehensive course could be used with young people today, I am sure we would have a greater adherence to the Faith and the Church.

Fig. 16-1 Junior Sunday School in the old Parish Hall, 1958. Note the segregation of the sexes! (MPA)



Fig. 16-2
Gordon and
Pam Hervey.
(MPA)



Sunday School during the MacDonald Era (1962–1976)

Vic Barrell, who had been superintendent of the Upper SS for many years, resigned in 1962 and his place was taken by Denis Tucker. At that time the children were divided into three groups: Juniors aged 3–6 years meeting at 9.30 a.m.; Seniors aged 7–13 at 11 a.m. and the Companionship Group aged 13 and over also at 11 a.m. On the first Sunday in the month the older children joined their parents for a Family Service.

By 1963 there were only about seventy children in the SS compared with 140 in 1956. Matters were exacerbated by the loss of six teachers at the start of 1964. In 1966 Peter Trezise, who had been “superintendent for nearly eight years” of the Junior SS, needed “three reliable teachers and a pianist”. The following year Gordon Hervey (Fig. 16-2), a Secondary School teacher, agreed to assist. He had recently arrived in the Parish from Whyalla where he had had some involvement with SS. Gordon recalls:

This was the start of my ten-year stint as Superintendent. Teachers in those early days were Heather Cooper, Myrith



Fig. 16-3 Sunday School Frolic in the old Parish Hall, 1969. Nurses were popular. (Courtesy Barbara Nelson)

Barr, Cicely Bungey, Wanda Williams, Barbara Nelson and my wife Pam (when our children were old enough to attend). We held monthly preparation meetings at our home and aimed to prepare outlines for the following weeks until our next meeting. Wanda would usually come straight from Civil Defence [State Emergency Service] looking as if she were about to go into full-scale combat! She always taught Grade 2, and tended to recycle her lessons year by year, but always had practical activities for kiddies to do.

Vestry meetings in those days were held mid-week in the old Hall and were miniscule affairs, with Wardens and a faithful few in attendance. I would prepare a report from the Sunday School and say, with a sly grin, how idyllic it was to be the only male person on the staff – an onion in the petunia patch! My point was (and still would be) that all too few men take on the task of Sunday School teaching.

Figures 16-3 and 16-4 show some of the Sunday School children enjoying a fancy-dress party in the old Hall in 1969, and taking part in the annual Nativity Play in 1971.

Fig. 16-4
The 1971 Parish
Carol service.
A cast of twenty-four
Sunday School children
presented the Nativity Play
which was produced by
Meg Nicholls and
Ionie Brennan.
Three CEBS leaders
provided the narration.
(MPA)



Sunday School during the Cheesman Era (1976–2001)

The 1960s and 1970s were difficult years, epitomised by changes in society's moral standards and attitudes to authority. It was a period of 'youth revolution' and a breakdown in parental authority, with an emphasis on personal liberation. Not only did the numbers in the SS plummet, but also in other Parish groups. By 1973 both the YPF and the Girls' Society were in recess, and the CEBS (Church of England Boys' Society) was battling to survive. These problems were not confined to the Parish of Mitcham, but were widespread throughout the Diocese.

Just as Stuart Mudie had done in 1960, Gordon Hervey could see that there was a need for something to be done for the teen group. In 1977 he decided to relinquish his role as Superintendent of the SS and concentrate his efforts in helping to re-establish a Youth Group. Cynthia Kennedy, who had begun teaching in 1974 and often shared a class with Ann Retallack, agreed to take over the role of Superintendent of the SS. She recalls that during 1977 she usually cleaned up and prepared the old Hall on Saturdays with the help of her family:

It was difficult to make it cheerful and welcoming. I remember getting the parents to paint the little chairs. Family services were on the 1st Sunday of the month alternating between St Michael's, and 9.30 a.m. at St Wilfrid's. Later in the year, the time was changed to 10 a.m. It was Fr Andrew who suggested that the SS meet in the Rectory from 1978. I thought it was a good idea, because it meant that the SS children and the teachers would not be isolated from the rest of the Parish.

In February 1978 it was announced that the SS would meet in the Rectory, where a garage had been transformed into a pleasant meeting room, and that the children would "always worship in conjunction with the 10 a.m. Parish Eucharist". The age range was to be restricted to children between the ages of 4 and 8 years, and those between 9 and 11 years (pre-confirmation) would always worship in the Church at 10 a.m. under the care and guidance of Carol Dibben. Cynthia continued to teach until the end of 1979. She recalls that Juliette Groves taught during 1978, and that Gordon Hervey and Ted Smith supplied the SS with bookshelves and display boards:

There were 15 children in the SS at the start of 1979. The teachers who helped me were Wanda Williams, Julie Lorraine and Diana Walter. Neil Patterson sometimes played the piano. The room was sometimes overcrowded, but the basic activities of songs, prayers, stories and simple crafts were in the programme each week.

At the start of the school year in 1980 it was announced that: "Due to lack of teachers and shortage of storage space, the SS is temporarily in abeyance. Meanwhile children are encouraged to attend 10 a.m. worship with their parents."

New Parish Hall Opened

On 30th November 1980 the new Parish Hall within the grounds of St Michael's was opened. For the past year there had been no SS, and for several years prior to that the

Parish had been able to cater for only a limited age range because of inadequate facilities. In a long article published in the *Herald* prior to the opening of the Hall, Gordon Hervey noted that the new facilities would "open up new possibilities for youth work". At that time the Mitcham Anglican Youth Group (MAYG), begun by Gordon Hervey, had been operating for about five years, and it was evident that some of the senior members were in a position to 'run their own show'. Gordon felt the huge age range was a problem: the needs and interests of the 11 to 14-year olds were very different from those of the 15 to 20-year olds! He suggested that there was a need to cater for three age groups: SS for those 4 to 10 years; Junior Youth Fellowship (JYF) for 11 to 14 years, and a Senior Youth Group for those 15 and over. [The activities of MAYG are discussed on page 278.]

Meetings were arranged in February 1981 for potential leaders and helpers to confer with Dorothy Thorpe, Director of the Anglican Board of Christian Education (ABCE), for help with syllabus preparation and teacher training. In March the SS re-opened under the leadership of Audrey Fuhrer (and later Carol Dibben), and the JYF under Gordon Hervey and Jim Dunkley. Both groups met in the Hall at 9.45 a.m. Gordon recalls that there were "twelve regular attendees on the roll", and that the JYF met in the Committee Room of the Hall:

Our relatively informal sessions were based on course material from the ABCE Intermediate Level. We joined the St Michael's Eucharist around the time of the 'Greeting of Peace' in an attempt to establish the habit of regular Church attendance without unduly stretching the attention span of the 11 to 14 year olds.

In addition to these instruction/discussion sessions we arranged a series of activities – about one per month during 1981 – including a hike through National Park, bike rides to Waterfall Gully and to the far end of the Brownhill Creek Valley, and a visit to the Constitutional Museum.

Re-organisations & Reviews

By the start of the 1984 school year both Gordon Hervey and Jim Dunkley had 'retired' and the JYF went into abeyance, and it was not until February 1985 that the Rector was able to announce that a Junior Youth Group (JYG) was "off and running":

The group is based around the needs and expectations of 10 to 13 year olds – an 'in between' group which is sometimes forgotten in our church-based activities. The aim of the group is simply to have fun and do a bit of learning, all in line with traditional Christian values of family, service and fellowship. The program involves regular weekend activities (hiking, video evenings, ice-skating, orienteering etc.) as well as regular weekly instruction. The instructional cycle will run on Sunday mornings and will be taught or otherwise convened by a group of eight volunteers under the direction of Gordon Hervey. Although the group will be co-ordinated by one person, the activity basis will be a co-operative contribution. Parents of children will take turns at organizing activities and mustering the various resources...

At the same time it was noted that the SS was 'back in business' but on a new footing: "It will be taught by a group under the leadership of Deb Hepworth." It was felt that there were advantages for both children and adults: the work load did not fall on one person, the children experienced a variety of styles and the teachers were not precluded from attending Communion.

A great loss was suffered in April 1985 with the sudden death of Carol Dibben (see Fig. 8-11). Announcing this in the *Pew Bulletin*, Fr Andrew wrote: "By grace she transformed her disability into a sacrament of strength and was able to bring courage and joy to others... Through her remarkable Sunday School lessons, each one a symbol of her care, Carol demonstrated the power of love."

A year later a replacement was being sought for Deb Hepworth, the 'Convenor' of the SS. A 'Youth Review Day', held in August 1986, was attended by a large group of adults and children to discuss issues connected with Youth Ministry. Four groups were formed to "hammer out a plan of action": Youth Group, SS, Children in Worship, and Children in the Congregation. This led to the appointment of Ondine Goscombe as Convenor of the SS. Ondine was in the final year of her Teaching Diploma, and helped out at Lindisfarne, the Parish School, one day a week (see page 270): "She will be introducing a new format and new resources, so we can look forward to a new lease of life as the first fruits of our Youth Review Day."

Ondine, who was Convenor during 1986 and 1987, recalls that: "Mrs Vi Grant, an elderly parishioner, and Wanda (The Wonderful) Williams also taught at this time. There were between six and ten regular children and a few occasional ones each week." After the story and activity they went into Church. The front two rows of pews were set aside for the children, who knelt at the altar rail while their teachers received Communion. About this time a creche area was set up in the back corner for the very young children.

More 'Consultation Days' and further changes took place over the next few years, and in February 1990 Pam Hervey was thanked for "the splendid spell of relief work in the Sunday School". A committee, headed by Mark Stevens, had approached a number of others and invited them to help with teaching over short-term spans. As a result seven volunteers responded to the request.

Sunday School in the 1990s

[Contributed by Meg Nicholls]

An era came to an end in December 1993 (Fig. 16-5) when it was announced that: "With the coming Sunday School recess Miss Wanda Williams will leave the group she has served so faithfully for more than forty years." With the retirement of Wanda the staff was reduced to two teenage girls, Rebecca Lowe and Holly Runnegar. Both were full of enthusiasm and ideas, and Rebecca was training as a school teacher, but they needed someone with experience to help them with a sense of direction. At this point Fr Andrew asked me to become the Co-ordinator of the Sunday School, with the full support of our assistant curate, Fr Roger Dyer.

This heralded the beginning of an extraordinary resurgence in SS, with other young people, male and



Fig. 16-5 Cast of the 1993 Nativity Play. Wanda Williams is on the left next to Michael Wilkinson, the Sunday School pianist. Rebecca Lowe is standing at the centre back and Holly Runnegar on the right. (MPA)

female, recruited to help. All were literally bursting with energy and good ideas for teaching the Gospel to children. Each Thursday afternoon or evening we all met with Fr Roger for a vigorous and enlightening exposition of the week's Gospel. Then would follow the planning session: how to tell the story, what activities would be used to consolidate the lesson, and which songs and music to accompany them.

On Sunday morning either Fr Roger or Fr Andrew joined us to start SS with a brief worship session and to tell the story. They would then return to the Church service and the young people took over. At first the few children were together, but as numbers grew one or two teachers each took a small group with activities to suit the ages.

A monthly news-sheet was created, with drawings and prayers from the children, news of forthcoming events, and other matters of note. Meetings were held about every six months to share with parents and ask for their input. The children themselves were enthusiastic, and began to bring friends. We still had the problem of commitment, as very few families attended every week, there being so many pressures from the world of school and sport even at this young age. But as one parent said, this was where their children were taught about their faith, and being together as a family was something that rarely happened in other spheres of their lives.

This period extended through the curacy of Fr Keith Dalby, and during his time a once-a-month Family Service, at 9 a.m., was instituted. But then of course young adults grow and study and move away to their vocations, so we lost Rebecca to her first teaching post, and then others. We did gain the help of two young mothers, and with Holly Runnegar they continued on. When Mark Clayton was catechist he was able to spend more time in SS with the teachers, Holly, Carol Fairchild and Judy White, so I was able to take a back seat.

With the advent of Fr Lyndon Sulzberger as curate it was the Family Service which had a burst of renewal and energy, and in the year 2000 Ruth Butler was employed by the Parish as a Family Worker for ten hours per week to plan and help present the weekly Family Service.



Fig. 16-6 Fr Brian Smith handing out plates of carrots to a group of intrigued children during a Family Service. (Ruth Butler)

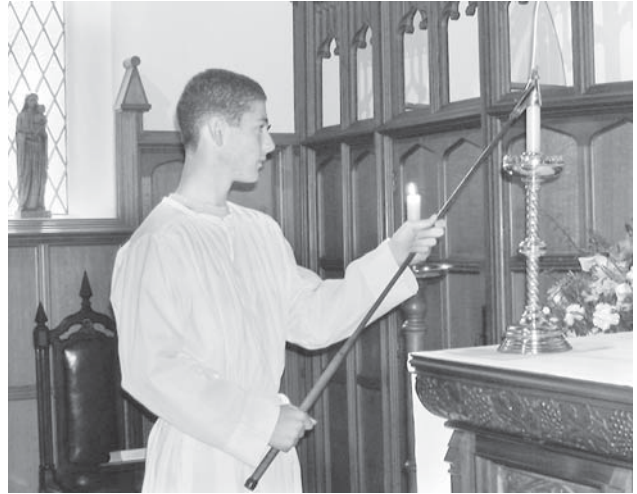


Fig. 16-7 Taliesin Evans serving during the Eucharist which is held monthly as part of the Family Service. (Pamela Oborn, 2002)



Fig. 16-8 Hamish Beer (centre, holding the microphone) leading the prayers during a Family Service watched by his parents, Andrew and Christine, and sisters Anna and baby Stephanie. (Ruth Butler)



Fig. 16-9 Shane and Lisa Daly and their family on the Terrace following the popular 'Christingle' service. The children are holding oranges which they have decorated – a special feature of 'Christingle'. (Ruth Butler)

SS is in abeyance at the moment, however a core of families showing considerable commitment is keeping the Family Service a vibrant and growing area. The children are encouraged to participate in the Service by serving at the altar, reading prayers and lessons, bringing the bread and wine to the sanctuary and taking up the collection (Figs 16-6 to 16-9).

[Meg Nicholls]

* * *

ST MICHAEL'S DAY SCHOOL (1889 to 1954)

The old building at the corner of Princes Road and East Parade at Kingswood, which most parishioners remember as the Old Parish Hall, was built as a Parish Day School in 1890 and operated as such for nearly sixty years.

One of the first to mention the need for a Day School in the Parish was Reverend Henry Read, a former Inspector of Schools in the West Indies, but nothing was done until

the arrival of Reverend Frederick Samwell in 1888. A Diocesan Board of Education had recently been set up to establish and assist Church schools, and Samwell was keen to take advantage of this. In March 1889 he rented a cottage in Welbourne Street where he opened the St Michael's Day School with "a handful of students". He expressed that hope that by the end of the year "it will show very satisfactory results for the work done, both in the departments of religious and secular knowledge". At the 1890 Easter Vestry he was able to report that:

There are now 70 children on the roll, and from the Inspector's report, very satisfactory progress has been made. The thanks of all are due to Mrs Westover for having taken up the work at an inadequate salary, and continued it single-handed for a time. She now has the assistance of Miss Myra Fiveash.

A School Building Fund had been formed, and by 10th April 1890 enough money was in hand to lay the

foundation stone of a schoolroom on land acquired on the corner of Princes Road and East Parade (see page 228). Four months later it was ready for occupation and was opened with great fanfare on Wednesday, 30th July 1890 (see Fig. 3-13).

A Trust Deed was drawn up which made provision for a School Committee to be appointed. This was to comprise the incumbent, Wardens and three persons to be elected annually at the Vestry. The duties of the Committee were to receive fees from the Head Teacher, to pay salaries and rent, and generally to manage the financial part of the concern “without interfering with the details of teaching”.

The Clampett Era (1893–1939)

The Day School continued to flourish throughout the long incumbency of Albert Clampett (Fig. 16-10). His daughter, Mrs Mollie Bowen (born 1896) said that the School had some “quite famous people” go through it: “Hugh Cairns [Sir Hugh William Bell Cairns, 1896-1952] one of the best brain surgeons in the world, was a student there, and my father arranged for him to get a scholarship from St Michael’s to attend Pulteney Grammar.”

Another long-time parishioner who remembered the Day School well was Miss Florence Wood who was born in 1903. Writing in the *Herald* is August 1982, she recalled:

When I was 7 years old, I began my school days at the old Mitcham School near the Railway Station, until 1912 when I became a scholar at St Michael’s Day School under Miss May Holmes as Head Teacher. I stayed there until 1916, when my Father went to World War 1... I later took a course under the Diocesan Board of Education under Canon Docker and became a teacher at St Michael’s Day School for four years.

Florence Wood was in charge of the Kindergarten from about 1921, and by the end of the following year it became essential to “extend the Junior class rooms”. When the Day School was built provision had been made to add further rooms on both the northern and southern sides of the main hall, and in November 1922 tenders were called to make additions along the southern side (see Fig. 14-10). When opened at the start of the next school year they were said to be “a great boon to the young children and their teachers during the hot weather” because of the “additional porch, which by folding doors may be added to the class room”.

In March 1922 the Rector announced that “a War trophy in the shape of a gun has been allotted to St Michael’s Day School by the Public Service Commissioners Department”. It was mounted in the grounds and unveiled on Sunday, 7th May.

Miss Holmes resigned early in 1924 after ten years. Her successor was Miss Lily White who had been an assistant at the School in the early 1900s. The Rector noted that since then she had been Head Teacher of Croydon Church School, and assistant at St Augustine’s, Unley: “Miss White is known to us, and I am confident will maintain the best traditions of our School.”

Another former parishioner, Judy Wall (née Frearson) who attended the School between 1935 and 1938, remembers Miss White as a slight woman with grey hair



Fig. 16-10 *St Michael’s Day School students and teachers c.1900. Note that most of the girls are wearing white pinafores and the boys hats or caps. (Courtesy the Warhurst Family)*

aged in her fifties or sixties. She taught Grades 2 to 7, whilst the Kindergarten and Grade 1 children were in the hands of Miss Mary Puckridge.

At the start of the school day the children lined up outside on the asphalt, then filed into the Hall singing a special ‘marching-in’ song. If neither the Rector nor his curate was present, Miss White (who was an excellent pianist) presided over opening prayers and hymns from the piano. The children were expected to know the Catechism and Beatitudes well before it came time for Confirmation. Once a year they competed against teams from other Church of England Schools at a Sports Day held on the University Oval. This was preceded by a service in the Cathedral.

Although not compulsory, the children were “encouraged” to wear brown and gold uniforms. This did not apply to the little girls from The Orphan Home (later renamed Farr House) who wore thick navy-blue dresses with pale blue collars. They frequently appeared wearing caps because their hair had been shaven to get rid of ‘nits’. Their lunch consisted of bread-and-dripping sandwiches.¹

Lunches were eaten in an iron shelter shed on the eastern side of the grounds near an old pepper tree. The shed was erected in 1929, the money having been raised at a fête organised by the parents.

In 1928 there were 112 children on the roll, “the highest number on record in the history of the School”, but within three years the number had dropped to seventy. By then the Great Depression was at its height and there was “much unemployment and distress”. In 1930 the mothers banded together to form the Day School Mothers’ Club to “interest the mothers in the general welfare of the School and to organise in helping with the many needs”.

The Pearman Era (1939–1954)

During the long and difficult years of the Second World War the women of the Parish took over many of the chores previously done by their menfolk. Writing in the *Parish Messenger* in 1942 the Rector, Reverend Reginald Pearman, described the Day School Mothers’ Club as a “splendid and willing group of workers”:

When I tell you that during recent years the Day School Mothers' Club has put a new jarrah floor in the Hall at a cost of £90, bitumenized the yard around the building at a cost of £30, helped Day School funds to pay teachers' salaries, besides various minor repairs, etc., plus raising something like £50 for the Schools' Patriotic Fund and Prisoners of War Fund, you will realize that this Parish is really indebted to this splendid body of women.

The money was raised through dances, fêtes, bridge afternoons and the annual Children's Frolic. At the end of each year a concert was held in the Hall, the finale always being *Rule Britannia*. As all the costumes were made by the mothers, Miss White is said to have found it "difficult" to find roles for the girls from The Orphan Home!

At the end of 1947 it was announced that both Miss White and her assistant Mrs E.M. Grigg were retiring for family and health reasons. By then Miss White had been Head Teacher for some twenty-three years:

... Miss Lily White is an 'institution'! Her record has been one of success and faithful service, and many of her scholars have won scholarships which have gained them entry to the best schools and colleges in this State ... her work will go on bearing fruit in the lives of those whom she taught, as they continue to build on the foundations which she has so sincerely and faithfully laid.

In the Christmas 1947 edition of the *Parish Messenger*, the Rector advised that unless two trained teachers were secured before February, the Day School would not be able to re-open. That this position had arisen when the School was flourishing, and when there were children waiting to enter, was "a further source of deep concern, but when State schools and the Education Department cannot get enough teachers, there seems little room for optimism as far as a church school is concerned". Frequent advertising for teachers brought little response and St Michael's Day School closed at the end of 1947 (Fig. 16-11).

It re-opened in February 1949 for pre-school children only aged from 3 to 5 years, and was known as St Michael's Nursery Day School. Mrs Grigg, who had "recovered from the illness which forced her resignation", was the teacher in charge. At first the numbers were strictly limited, but within two years over sixty pre-school children were enrolled and an extra assistant had to be engaged.

Lot 51 Princes Road Purchased

Although the forced closure through lack of staff "seemed to be the end of the Primary School" in late 1947, the Rector had other plans: he bought a block of land across the road from the Day School with a view to building a new school!

For years he had "seen the need for a true church day school – something between the State school and the more expensive college". To build up such a "worthy church school" he would need a "more worthy and up-to-date building". Just before Christmas, "at the moment when it seemed that St Michael's Church Day School would have to close after fifty-eight years", a block of land – one of the few remaining blocks in the centre of the Parish – became available "at a reasonable price". With £100 in hand from a previous legacy, hurried consultations were held between the Wardens and the finance committee of B.H.M.S., as a result of which a loan was secured for the balance of the purchase price to be repaid over five years. This was Lot 51 on the southern side of Princes Road, part of the original subdivision of the 'Torrens Park Estate' (see Fig. 14-15).

Explaining the situation, the Rector said:

Whether the new block of land will be used for a proper church day school or to centralize parish life in the future by building one central church – remains to be seen, but I personally thank God that our present church officers are men both of faith and vision, who in spite of handicaps and difficulties of finance, staff, and two separate church buildings are able to grasp opportunities and decide to "go forward" – in faith.



Fig. 16-11

*End of an era:
the last group of Primary
School students to attend St
Michael's Day School before
it closed at the end of 1947.*

*(Courtesy
Jennifer Henshall)*

In his report to the 1954 Vestry, the Rector stated that: “The conduct of the Nursery Day School had recently not been satisfactory and he had decided to discontinue this as a parish activity.” Some equipment was given to the Mitcham Community Kindergarten and the rest put up for sale. The 1953/54 *Year Book* lists the school as having sixty-one pre-school students.

Lot 51 remained vacant as it had been considered as a site for an extra tennis court or as a possible venue for a new rectory. It was exchanged for Lot 52 in 1955 and sold later that year.

Another thirty years were to pass before Pearman’s grand dream of a “proper church day school” became a reality. When it did eventuate, it was not within the Parish of Mitcham, but adjoined St Augustine’s Church at Unley. It was called Lindisfarne.

LINDISFARNE ANGLICAN PARISH SCHOOL (1984–1998)

[Researched and written by Heather Cooper, Fig. 16-12]

The name of the school was taken from that of the monastery of Lindisfarne, a seat of learning founded in AD 635 on Holy Isle off the coast of Northumbria. In the early days of Christian Mission in Britain, it was a place of both education and missionary function from whence the Christian message was sent out into the wider world.

The motto, “*Ecce ego misse me*” – “Here I am send me” – indicated the school’s commitment to the personal ministry of each individual. It was a wonderful ideal.

The Challenge & Response

Lindisfarne Anglican Parish School was opened in February 1984 as a joint venture by the parishes of Unley and Mitcham. It was established in response to recommendations of the working party appointed by Archbishop Keith Rayner in 1982. This group challenged the Anglican Churches in South Australia to act to ensure that all parents had access to affordable Christian schooling. This would be through a network of low-fee, co-educational primary schools, established by Anglican parishes under the overall supervision of an Anglican Schools’ Education Commission.

Mitcham Parish responded by calling a meeting on 1st October 1982 for all interested in forming such a Parish

school. Michael Hewitson, Chairman of the Archbishop’s working party, explained to the forty-five attendees how such a school could be financed without resort to Parish funds. He addressed the practicalities, emphasising that the school must be open to all, but part of a system, and could begin with as few as ten pupils.

Both enthusiasm and caution were expressed, so a steering committee was formed under the leadership of Jonathan Wells, QC, a Mitcham parishioner, who stated: “The idea of a parish school is as exciting as it is controversial. Let us not miss the opportunity to explore fully and courageously this most vital of Christian challenges.”

During 1983 great courage and energy were indeed required. Invitations were issued to neighbouring parishes, seeking their possible support or interest, as it was considered a joint venture would have greater viability.

Various sites were investigated, including the old Mitcham Primary School site on Belair Road. Farr House, one-time home for young orphan girls, and located near St Michael’s, had long been connected to the Parish’s pastoral responsibilities and was also considered, as was the old St Augustine’s Parish School site next to that church.

The search for a Principal and suitable staff was set in motion, assuming that a school would indeed be formed, provided the number of pupils could be enrolled for 1984.

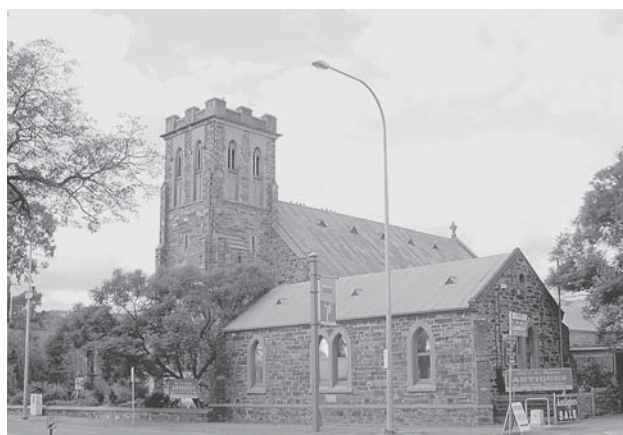
A Special Vestry of Mitcham Parish was called on 11th September 1983, at which Jonathan Wells presented a report of the work of the Steering Committee. As a result, it was resolved that an Anglican Parish Primary School, to be called Lindisfarne, be established jointly with the Parish of Unley. A proviso of this resolution was that Mitcham would not be responsible for any financial support. It would provide spiritual and practical assistance, chaplaincy shared with Unley, representation on the School Council and encouragement to parishioners to enrol their children at the School. Subsequently, Unley Parish Council resolved to join the venture and the St Augustine’s site was chosen (Fig. 16-13).

Registration of Lindisfarne was granted by the State Non-Government Schools’ Registration Board on 25th October 1983. Application was made to the Commonwealth Schools’ Commission for recurrent per capita grants in 1984. When news of approval for these grants arrived just before Christmas, the Committee was galvanised into action so that all would be ready for the start of the school year in 1984.

Fig. 16-12
Lindisfarne
Councillor,
Heather Cooper.
(MPA)



Fig. 16-13
Lindisfarne
School in the
grounds of
St Augustine’s,
Unley, now used
as an antique
gallery. (MPA)



The newly-formed School Council, in accordance with its Constitution, elected Jonathan Wells, Q.C., as its founding Chairman. His knowledge and enthusiasm, wisdom and patience were to be hallmarks of his long and loyal service to Lindisfarne. Together with the generosity of his time, talent and money, his steadfast belief in the idea of a parish school remained unshaken.

Fr Andrew Cheesman was elected Deputy Chairman and due to Jonathan's work commitments, was often in the chair. Andrew's devotion to Lindisfarne was tremendous and his association with the school continued throughout its entire existence. Another major contributor was well-known educator, Dr Denise Chapman, a long-term councillor of St Augustine's, as well as a worshipper at Mitcham. In addition of course, were many Council representatives and individuals who gave support to this venture. When Mitcham Parish Netball Club went into recess, \$300 was given to the founding School as a boost to physical education equipment – a nice gesture.

A Small Beginning

On 19th January 1984 the School became an incorporated association, and at its meeting two days later appointed Miss Jillian Dodd as the first Principal, on secondment from the Education Department. On her recommendation, the Council appointed Steven Blanden as a part-time teacher.

Throughout January members of Council, parents and supporters worked feverishly to prepare the premises for its opening. A very encouraging Open Day was held on Saturday, 4th February and again on the following Tuesday. Lindisfarne opened with six children. Another joined soon after, two more in Trinity term and another five in Michaelmas. The little Parish School was on its way! It was dedicated by Archbishop Keith Rayner on 6th March 1984.

The old bluestone buildings in the grounds of St Augustine's, Unley, were no strangers to educational activities. As early as 1897, a Parish Day School had existed. From 1955 to its closure in 1958, it was named St Augustine's Grammar School. Later a pre-school kindergarten provided for a need in the community, hence the tradition of Outreach was reborn. The location of Lindisfarne, however, was to be a continual source of debate, with fears expressed about its limitation. Throughout its entire tenancy, there were mixed relationships with its 'landlord', the Unley Parish Council, with conflicts of interest making it difficult on numerous occasions.

The focus of Lindisfarne was 'Educating for Life'. The Principal, Jillian Dodd, stated in a publication, *The First Two Years*: "School can provide children with the opportunity to experience God's love in their lives rather than to merely learn about Christianity." Her work in creating a loving, caring family environment at Lindisfarne is widely acknowledged and indeed set the ethos for the school which was to be its hallmark (Fig. 16-14).

The first teacher, Steve Blanden wrote that he was surprised to find that only two children were actually from the parishes and remarked that this feature presented a challenge, as there were many different parental

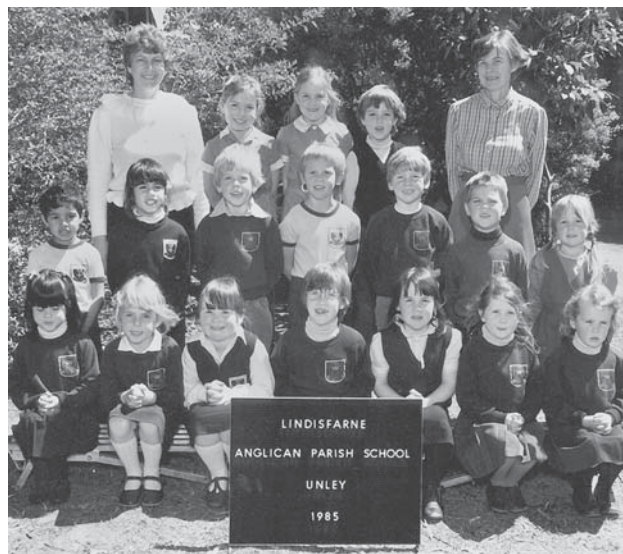


Fig. 16-14 Lindisfarne students and teachers in 1985. The first headmistress, Jillian Dodd, is on the left and Yvonne Myers on the right. (Courtesy Yvonne Myers)

expectations of a 'Christian Education'. Later, more students from the parishes did enrol, among them Rita Reason's grandchild and a boy holding a Choir Scholarship awarded by St Michael's (see page 292).

Fr Stuart Smith, then Rector of St Augustine's, believed the school was giving the opportunity "to create a little Christian nurturing community – a kind of cradle of Christianity in children's lives".

Yvonne Myers, a Mitcham parishioner, worked as a volunteer in the classrooms and commented: "The spirit of the Good Samaritan, the very essence of Jesus' teaching, is flourishing in the Lindisfarne environment."

Our curate at that time, Fr Mark Thomas, worked with the children, as did subsequent curates, and believed the School was achieving its aim. As always, Fr Andrew gave his support, prayerfully and practically.

Steady Growth

Barbara Neilson was appointed Principal in 1986 when Jill Dodd returned to the Education Department. Barbara embraced the challenge of 'growing' the school and was assisted by excellent staff, especially Ondine Goscombe of Mitcham Parish who was appointed in 1987. Ondine was a new graduate, already loved by the pupils, having spent time during her training with them at Lindisfarne. A dedicated parent group supplemented the staff's efforts. The School introduced extended care, allowing pupils to enjoy before and after school activities, popular with parents who travelled to and from work in the City. This was a labour of love, not without its toll on Barbara and the hard-working teachers.

Lindisfarne had established a reputation as a very caring school, prepared to design experiences and programmes for students with particular needs. Methods of teaching included small-group work, cross-age tutoring, composite classes and individual progression. Many parents and students themselves give testimony to the flexibility and initiative which these methods developed.

Drama and music played a large part in the curriculum, which included Spanish and computing, while imaginative use of community facilities supplemented the restriction of the site. With Barbara at the helm, the School grew to seventy students in 1992, with a projected seventy-six in 1993 – a major achievement indeed.

With Archbishop Ian George's leadership, the School Council had negotiated a future at the Unley site and so proceeded with the building of a sorely-needed toilet block (Adelaide's own *clochmerle!*). A Commonwealth grant of \$25,000 had to be matched, so a 'Buy-a-Brick Fund' appeal was launched.

When the long-awaited opening arrived it was celebrated in grand style with an Art Show, fun, food and festivities. This event in May 1993 marked in many ways the 'coming-of-age' of Lindisfarne. A beautiful stained-glass window of the School crest was made and donated by parent John Wark to mark the occasion.

After the retirement due to ill health of Fr Donald Cornelius, Rector of St Augustine's, Fr Max Bowers arrived from Swan Hill, and assurances of continued affordable rent were given.

The Review, Ongoing Concerns & Closure

In accordance with common practice after ten years, a review of the school's progress and programmes was set up, with Mr Viv Evers of the University of S.A. appointed as an independent reviewer. Associated with him was Dr Tony Shinkfield, former Head of S.P.S.C. Dr Denise Chapman was elected as a representative of the School Council on this panel.

Recommendations from the review indicated areas of concern, mainly related to the cramped quarters of the site and the precarious state of the finances. Difficulties had escalated with Unley Parish Council which was itself in need of income. Synod undertook the responsibility of covering the large overdraft, and personal generosity 'kept the ship afloat'. The work of Fr Andrew as a facilitator was immensely valued, as was the contribution of Dr Denise Chapman. It was a most worrying period, and throughout it all the Principal, Barbara Neilson, battled bravely and tirelessly, striving to uphold the School's well-founded reputation for Christian caring.

In 1998, just prior to the start of the new school year, Mrs Neilson resigned due to ill health. Her giant contribution to Lindisfarne had been such that many of the school's families felt it couldn't survive without her and enrolments fell dramatically.

Mercifully, Mrs Dorothy Pargeter, Principal of St John's Grammar School at Belair, agreed to the pleas of Fr Andrew and undertook the caretaker role at short notice. Lindisfarne therefore continued to operate, but under the management of St John's. Throughout the year it was a very precarious situation, and despite some valiant efforts, the future looked grim. An administrator was appointed and finally confirmed on 7th December 1998 that Lindisfarne would close on the last day of the school year. Every effort was made to provide suitable placements for the existing pupils – a caring environment to the end.

In thanking Fr Andrew Cheesman for his monumental effort, Archbishop Ian George acknowledged the major

part Andrew had played throughout the entire life of Lindisfarne.

This ended a brave little episode in the history of Anglican schooling. Yet many Christian seeds had been sown. With God's grace, these will bear fruit in the future. "Nothing ventured, nothing gained!"

[Heather Cooper]

* * *

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN STATE SCHOOLS

[Compiled by Jennifer Henshall, Fig. 16-15]

If for no other reason, Albert Wyndham Clappett will long be remembered for his fight to allow Religious Instruction (RI) to be taught in State schools. This was a subject dear to his heart throughout his long incumbency of over forty-six years at Mitcham, and it is ironical that the battle was finally won in 1941 – two years after his retirement!

As early as 1896 Clappett was urging women to be involved in Religious Instruction in local State schools. Speaking to a meeting of the Mothers' Union he noted that "since 1875 the Bible has been excluded from our State schools and every endeavour must be made to reverse the Government's stand on this important matter".²

A 'Religious Instruction in State Schools League' was established in 1902. This was superseded in 1911 by another known as the 'Scriptural Instruction in State Schools League' which sought to persuade the Government to grant a referendum to amend the secular system. In 1914 Clappett formed a women's auxiliary committee, which, together with members of the Church of England Men's Society, was asked to canvass the district seeking support: "Members of our League by the thousand we must have. This national question must occupy us during the year of grace 1914."

The First World War broke out within weeks, followed by the Great Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, and it was not until 1941 – in the middle of the Second World War – that the State Government eventually passed a Bill providing for RI in State schools. Each parish had to provide its own teachers, and with his time already split between his duties as a parish priest and his duty as an Army chaplain, Reverend Reginald Pearman, Clappett's successor, suddenly found that "four mornings of the week are now taken up in visiting various schools and colleges..."

By 1957 the Rector and his band of helpers were taking classes at Mitcham Primary, Mitcham Infant, Unley High, Urrbrae Agricultural High and Highgate Primary. In his report to the 1958 Vestry he noted that these classes averaged forty students and lessons were given "to over 600 boys and girls who claim to be Church of England". This was double the number of students in 1951, and many women in the Parish assisted the Rector in this work over the years. It was always a challenge, and in 1965 he stated that although he had ten teachers, he could use another six.

In 1972 weekly RI programs were stopped in all State schools, and the following year a new Act of Parliament was passed granting churches access to schools for half

an hour per child per term! In 1978 the local churches combined to provide this service under a sub-committee of the existing Ministers' Fraternal.

School Chaplaincies

The Education Department had given permission for the establishment of chaplaincy services within secondary schools in September 1986, and in primary schools from July 1998. Under the S.A. Heads of Churches direction in 1996 there were sixty-five chaplains making daily contact with 42,000 of the 180,000 students in State schools.

The first chaplain appointed by the Central Mitcham Ministers' Fraternal to Urrbrae Agricultural High School was Bryan Sellars who served there for six years from 1991 to 1996. He was followed by Reverend Peter Bean, who finished at the end of 2001. Lisa Elliott has been appointed to take his place in 2002.

A chaplain was appointed by our Fraternal to serve at Unley High in 1992, but the Unley Ministers' Fraternal agreed to take full financial and pastoral responsibility for this chaplain.

Mitcham Girls' High, after a trial period in 1993, agreed to the appointment of a chaplain in 1994. Unfortunately, for various personal reasons, the first three chaplains were only in the position for a short time. The present – and fifth – chaplain is Melinda Cousins who commenced in 1999.

Westbourne Park Primary appointed Lisa Graham as its first chaplain in 2001.

The Heads of Churches Schools' Ministry Group assists in the selection and training of chaplains, but they are financially funded by the local churches. However, both secondary schools in this area are so pleased with the work of their chaplains that they have provided funding for extra hours. Members of the Mitcham Anglican Parish have enthusiastically supported this Outreach from the beginning.

In the early 1990s plans were made for State School Religious Instruction (now called Schools' Ministry) to be transferred from the responsibility of the Ministers' Fraternal to the Central Mitcham Inter-Church Council. A Schools' Ministry Team, which includes members of this Parish, plans and presents lessons and seminars to Mitcham and Westbourne Park Primary schools. In the mid-1990s this Team consisted of between fourteen and twenty members from the surrounding churches: today that number has been reduced to four or six!

Central Mitcham Inter-Church Council

Established in October 1991, the Council consisted of clergy and two lay representatives of the following seven churches: Westbourne Park Uniting; Hawthorn Anglican, Uniting and Church of Christ; Mitcham Anglican and Uniting, and Kingswood Catholic. It was formed so that lay people would be more active in organising the funding of State School Ministry and in providing leadership in ecumenical Outreach activities.

The Council has since organised annual ecumenical worship services, Lenten studies, World Day of Prayer services and other activities. Since 1994 they have also worked with the Mitcham Council in providing a Christian message at the annual 'Carols by the Creek'.



Fig. 16-15 Jennifer Henshall and her brother John Dikken. Both served as Lay Representatives on the Central Mitcham Inter-Church Council which is responsible for appointing chaplains and the Schools' Ministry Team teaching in State schools within the Mitcham area. (Courtesy Ruth Dikken)

Fr Andrew Cheesman was the inaugural chairman. The executive initially changed each year so that each parish in turn shared the leadership. However, in 2001 John Dikken (Fig. 16-15) from our Parish is chairman, secretary and treasurer, and there is a question mark over the Council's future unless there is more participation in leadership from the other members.

At the 1992 meeting Reverend Ian Gaskill resigned from the sub-committee which had been providing ministry to the local primary and secondary schools, and was thanked for his work over the last eight years. At that time lay people from most of the local churches, including Mitcham Anglican, had been involved. The Reverend Rob Stone took over the organising of this group, which is now known as the Schools' Ministry Team. Since that time I have been co-ordinator. The aim is to provide a Christian ministry to the children of Mitcham and Westbourne Park Primary schools, and to Mitcham Girls' High and Urrbrae Agricultural High.

[Jennifer Henshall]

* * *

PLAYGROUP (since 1980)

[Contributed by Wanda McDougall, seen in Fig. 16-16]

This arm of St Michael's had its beginnings soon after Fr Andrew, Mary and their four small children arrived in the Parish. Mary had appreciated the presence of a Playgroup whilst in their previous Parish of Tea Tree Gully. It was thought Mitcham Parish could benefit similarly. The seed was sown towards the end of 1979, and in 1980 an invitation was extended to all mothers with pre-schoolers (not necessarily Church families) who were welcome to attend an informal session. Raelene Evans was the foundation member and first Leader (her third child was a small baby) and from this time a small group met regularly. In February 1981 Sue Wilson from the S.A. Playgroup Association was asked to speak to the Group and to help with its setting up. It was then officially registered with the Association.

By this time the new Hall had been completed and the Group met weekly there to chat and share problems whilst the children played. Many of the first toys were given by Mary and Raelene, and these grew as parishioners added to the supply. Whether ‘tips’ on feeding and food problems, toilet training, or just chatting together about the latest news, it was an opportunity for the mothers to share – and life becomes more bearable when one finds that others experience the same troubles!

After some years the first cupboard donated by the Cheesman family started to bulge. Jim Gunn used his woodworking and craftsmanship skills to install new shelves, did some renovating and came to the rescue by repairing broken toys. In 2000 – perhaps an anniversary celebration after twenty years? – it was decided a second cupboard was needed. Ben Oborn kindly converted and partially re-built a second-hand cupboard which had been purchased. With the *Alpha* courses in operation in these latter years, space in the Hall was at a premium and the Playgroup appreciated this extra storage.

Children were enjoying painting, Play-dough, bats and balls, as well as bike riding and dolls etc. Some ‘Fischer Price’ educational toys were acquired when Leanne Hough (the Playgroup Leader) applied to the Mitcham Council and was allocated a Community Grant for their purchase.

Each year the faces change as kiddies graduate to pre-school and school, but there seems always to be a baby or two coming on in the Group, and so Life’s cycle continues. There have been many worthy Leaders – Gill Steele-Scott, Carol Fairchild and Joy Clayton to mention a few – who have willingly organised and taken responsibility for the running of the Playgroup. The clergy supported the mothers and children by unlocking the Hall, turning on the heaters in winter and stopping for a chat when time permitted. Fr Lyndon will always be remembered for his role as Father Christmas during his years in the Parish! Mothers’ Union members have also played their part by serving Morning Tea and responding to the families each week (Fig. 16-16).

Playgroups are a learning centre as well as fun. Mitcham Playgroup over the past twenty years has played its part in its role of helping to build better family life among the community.

[Wanda McDougall]

PARISH GROUPS FOR GIRLS

Throughout the Colonial era and beyond, society’s morals dictated that a young man and a young lady should not so much as speak together unless a chaperone was present. The same general rule applied to teenage boys and girls, and for this reason all the early Parish youth groups were segregated into all-male or all-female activities. Even in Sunday School the children were divided into boys’ classes and girls’ classes. In fact it is not until the 1930s that there is any mention of ‘young people’s groups’ as such.

Girls Friendly Society (GFS)

The Girls’ Friendly Society was founded in 1875 and a branch established in South Australia in 1876. The object of the Society was: “To encourage purity of life, dutifulness to parents, faithfulness to employers, prayer and mutual help among young women and girls.”

Early Parish records are scant and the first reference found was to an admission service being held in August 1898. Twelve months later it was noted that there were twenty-nine members and seven associates, and that they met in the Rectory on alternate Thursday evenings. Their chief activity seems to have been sewing, with a parcel of work being sent to the Melanesian Mission.

By 1902 there were over fifty members, the group being managed by Mrs Alice Clampett (wife of the Rector) with assistance from the Misses Waite, Love and Rymill – all daughters of the local gentry! These same young ladies were still assisting in 1911 when it was announced that: “A ‘candidates class’ has been formed in connection with the Girls’ Friendly Society. It promises to be a great success, and is open to little girls from 9 to 14 years of age.”

It was the GFS who, through sales of work and Strawberry Fêtes, raised the money to buy the reredos behind the altar at St Michael’s (see page 185) and also the American ‘Estey’ harmonium or organ. The latter was used in the old Parish Hall until the building was sold in 1979, and now resides in the corner behind the choir stalls at St Michael’s (see Fig. 17-16).

As well as a GFS ‘candidates class’, girls were presented with another option in 1911:

Fig. 16-16
Members of the Mothers’ Union helping to entertain the Playgroup at their Christmas break-up in 1999. (Wanda McDougall on left.) (MPA)



On alternate Saturdays the little girls are being encouraged to join 'Heralds of the King', the juvenile department of our Missionary Association. At present we have 37 'Heralds' who, as well as learning about the work of the Church in the Mission field, will be taught to use their fingers in making garments for it.

Although the object of this group (part of Australian Board of Missions) was "To train boys and girls of the Church to realize the privilege of missionary work, and thankfully to take their share in it", it seems boys were not included at Mitcham! In 1924 the group was meeting at The Orphan Home, and the Rector cordially invited young people to join this little band of workers: "It offers an opportunity which young girls should be glad of, and I hope many will attend the next meeting at The Home."

Girl Guides

The Rector made sure that the hearts, minds and hands of his young flock were kept busy. In June 1921 he announced:

The Girl Guides movement is comparatively new to us, and we are gradually learning more about it. It is not a distinctively religious organisation, but its whole structure rests on religion as a foundation. It seeks to make girls good citizens and so good members of society... We shall watch developments with much interest and, knowing it to be a good thing, will gladly commend it.

A branch of the Girls Guides was started on 10th September 1921, with members meeting in St Michael's Day School Hall every alternate Saturday at 2.30 p.m. By 1924 Clappett had started a second group which met at The Orphan Home each Wednesday evening: "I am now anxious that this branch should enlarge its work and bring in girls not resident at The Home ...we hope to hold many of the meetings in our own Hall, and will do so if other girls join up."

At Michaelmas in 1924 the St Michael's Girl Guides Company made its first appearance in the Church during Evensong: "They lined the main aisle as clergy and choir went to their places. The flag was presented by a Guide from St Augustine's and placed in the sanctuary..."

Junior Girls Fellowship & Girls' Society

During the 1960s several groups for girls were formed by Mrs Margaret Sanders. The first, a 'Junior Girls Fellowship', described as "a new venture for girls between the ages of 10 and 15 years", grew out of the enthusiasm engendered by the 'Toronto Follow-up' (see page 111). It began in July 1965, and in February 1968 a 'Girls' Society' for the 8 to 14 age group was inaugurated with a membership of thirty-three. By 1973 it was noted that both the Youth Fellowship and Girls' Society were "in recess".

PARISH GROUPS FOR BOYS

Whilst Mrs Clappett and the genteel young ladies from 'The Big Houses' kept the girls of the Parish occupied, the

boys were equally well catered for by the Rector and his curates.

Lads' Guild & Brigade

In April 1901 it was noted that Mr Huston, the curate, had formed a youths' club known as the 'Lads' Guild'. For boys from the age of thirteen it was to include:

...those connected with either of the churches or Sunday Schools [St Columba's was a daughter church], and also those who have drifted away both from school and church and are at present 'unattached'... The objects aimed at will include reverence for sacred things, and due observance of Sunday. The means used will be fortnightly meetings when matters literary, scientific, and social will be discussed, addresses given, papers read, debates held, and elocution taught. A feature will be some simple science chats aided by a lantern [early type of 'slide show']. This class may be of much help and pleasure to many youths, and may yet become the parent of a parish cricket-football-chess-draft-field club and boys' brigade.

There are no further references to the Lad's Guild after July 1902, but in August 1903 the Rector advised that he had been asked to form a Church Lads' Brigade. Like the Lads' Guild it was for boys thirteen and over; but unlike the Guild, the Brigade was run on military lines, with each member supplied with a cap, haversack, belt and rifle. The brigades from the various parishes generally joined together at Christmas time to go into camp.

The object was the advancement of Christ's Kingdom "amongst lads of all classes, the promotion of reverence, discipline, self-respect, and all that tends to true manliness". Clappett described this stirring ideal as "the cure for some of the evils of the day".

Boy Scouts

If the girls could have their own St Michael's Girl Guides branch, why not a Boy Scouts troop for the lads? In July 1917 a "Church Parade of the Mitcham Boy Scouts" was held in St Michael's. Just when this was formed is unclear, for in 1924 there is a note in the *Parish Messenger* calling a meeting "to form a troop of the Boy Scouts ... to be known as the '2nd Mitcham Troop - St Michael's'". The 1st Troop is at Scotch College." Figure 16-17 shows the Troop camping in Kersbrook Forest in the 1920s.



Fig. 16-17
The Boy Scouts '2nd Mitcham Troop - St Michael's' camping in Kersbrook Forest in the 1920s.
(Courtesy Bill Goodes)

Church of England Boys' Society (CEBS)

There were many similarities between the Scouts and CEBS in that the boys wore uniforms and worked to complete Proficiency Badges. These were set out in handbooks appropriate to their age levels: Pages, Esquires and Knights. The CEBS motto was "All in One", and it had been formed "to fill a gap in the Christian Education of boys and youths ... mixing Christian teaching with physical activities in association with boys within the Parish and the Diocese". It aimed to give its members a broad knowledge of physical, social and mental activities in a spiritual atmosphere.

When the Mitcham Branch began in 1959 it was in the "capable hands of Mr A. Beagley, who had previous experience with CEBS in Victoria", and the following year Ralph Mitchard and Peter McNicol, having successfully completed the 1960 Leadership Training Course, received their 'Warrants of Leadership' at the Annual Cathedral Service. The Branch had a membership of thirty-six, with the younger boys meeting on Saturday mornings and the older ones on Monday evenings.

The year 1963 was an important one during which many celebrations were held to mark fifty years of CEBS in Australia. Congratulations were extended to Ron McNicol, John Ali and Ross Lee "who gained their certificates from the St John's Ambulance Brigade, in the Rescue and Public Service Section of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, in which all three boys gained very good passes". Ron McNicol also gained his 'Knight of the Star Badge', the first awarded in the branch. In the Report to Vestry it was noted that:

Knights and Pages groups steadily increasing, but the Esquires, boys of 11–14 years, received a severe set-back at the beginning of the academic year, as most of the boys started high school. However, the meeting time was altered from Monday nights to Friday nights and the numbers are slowly increasing again.

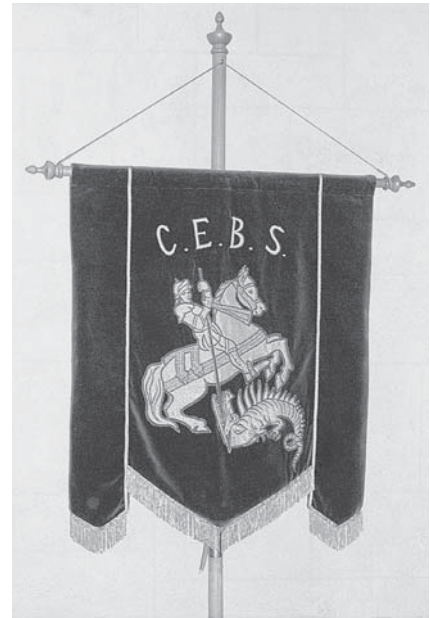
In an effort to raise £120 to enable some members of the group to attend the First CEBS National Jubilee Camp to be held in Sydney in January 1964, the boys conducted a 'car wash' each Saturday morning in the grounds of the old Parish Hall. Over the years these became regular features of their fund-raising activities.

Following a membership drive during 1965 it was noted there were now twenty-six juniors in the group, and by 1968 a grand total of fifty-three boys were members of Mitcham CEBS. In the 1970s things started to deteriorate, and by 1974 parents were advised that:

CEBS are desperately short of leaders due to fact that John Morrison was transferred in his employment leaving only Allan Lee and Rodney Ali to carry on the full group. Decided to hold the Esquires with Allan Lee as leader in the Parish, but the older groups would amalgamate with Hawthorn and Colonel Light Gardens branches who at the moment have the same difficulty with staff.

At the start of 1976 members were advised that "until leaders are available it is not possible to give a starting date for this year". A team of at least three senior boys was

Fig. 16-18
The CEBS
banner, now in
St Wilfrid's
Church.
(Pamela Oborn,
2002)



required who would "meet regularly and plan programmes with the help of a young adult resource guide". By April they were 'back in business' thanks to Timothy Oborn, Michael Brennan and David Retallack "who have teamed together to help get CEBS on the move".

Over the years the boys took part in a variety of activities including regular Church Parades, the Annual Diocesan Service at the Cathedral, and an annual camp (usually at Kyeema). There were the car washes and 'working bees' at the old Hall; beach picnics, film and bowling evenings, table tennis, fathers-and-sons cricket matches and bike rides. Speakers came from St John's, the C.I.B. and Customs Department; and there were visits to Thebarton Police Barracks, Police Headquarters and the Fire Brigade Headquarters. The CEBS equipment was stored in a small room on the southern side of the stage in the old Hall.

Many Parish families assisted in the running of CEBS. Names which kept re-appearing in reports included Ralph Mitchard, Peter and Ron McNicol, Chris Russack, Rod Horner and the Ali family.

A banner donated to the Mitcham CEBS Branch in 1963 has been 'laid-up' in St Wilfrid's Church (Fig. 16-18).

* * *

A VARIETY OF PARISH YOUTH GROUPS

Over the past sixty years various groups have been formed in an effort to involve young people in Parish affairs and to retain their interest. As has been noted on page 263, the age at which most were 'lost' was during the early teenage years following Confirmation. They considered themselves too old for SS, yet they were too young to participate in many of the activities arranged for members of senior youth groups. Some of these groups, such as Stuart Mudie's Companionship Group, have already been mentioned.

The Pearman Era (1939–1962)

In May 1940 it was noted that there was a Young People's Club (YPC) that met on Saturday evenings to play sports,

hold debates, community singing and to hear guest speakers. They also held a monthly Church Parade. The following November the Rector announced that a Youth Fellowship, designed to meet the needs of those who had left school, had been inaugurated. The Young People's Fellowship (YPF) met fortnightly on Sunday afternoons in St Michael's for worship, an address and discussions. After several months probation the Rector announced: "I propose this year to definitely link ourselves up with the diocesan youth movement, called the Fellowship of Christ the King."

Both the YPC and YPF were strongly supported during the 1940s and early 1950s. As previously mentioned, during the War years up to twelve of the fourteen SS teachers were members of the YPF. Once the War was over, a conscious effort was made to integrate the returning servicemen back into 'normal' life, and numerous social and sporting activities were organised. As well as their fortnightly Sunday afternoon meetings in St Michael's, the YPF held a dance in the Hall on the first Saturday of each month.

About this time a Junior Young People's Fellowship (JF) was formed for which the Rector needed "a churchman to volunteer to lead and instruct the boys", having already had an offer "from one of our churchwomen who will take the girls". They also held their monthly 'socials', and the Rector noted it was "a joy and tremendous encouragement to see how the members of the senior Fellowship turn out to run the evening for, and to help, the Junior Fellowship".

Life was not all 'froth and bubble', and during the latter part of 1948 six young men – all members of the YPF – were tried out as Lay Readers. They worked in teams of three taking services at St Michael's: one taking the service, one the lessons and the other reading a sermon.

In 1950 Margaret and Fred Sanders agreed to supervise the JF, which met in their home. At Christmas they went carol singing around the Parish in trucks provided by Fred. The Sanders continued as group leaders of the JF until August 1955 when it went into recess. Much of their time and energy then went into developing a girls' basketball team and strengthening the junior tennis teams.

Youth Fellowship Re-formed

By the mid-1950s many of the enthusiastic YPF members who had been leaders in the 1940s had married and moved out of the district. Jennifer Henshall (née Dibben) recalls that when her older sister Gwen and brother John were in their teens, there was a very active YPF, and as a child she used to help them prepare the Hall floor for dancing and attend some of their games evenings. However, much to her disappointment, by the time she was in High School her friends "were attending churches with strong youth fellowships, while ours was almost non-existent".

On 16th December 1956 a meeting of young people and parents was held in the Hall and, as a result, Jim Nelson, Vic Barrell and Mrs Tommy Lyon offered to oversee the formation of a new Fellowship Group. Jennifer Dibben was elected Assistant Leader which was "the senior office open to the young people at present – a fitting tribute to the enthusiasm and devotion of a family who have worked for the re-forming of the Fellowship". There were a number

of sub-leaders, each of whom was given several members of the Parish for which he or she was responsible. Full membership was open to all members of the Parish, and associate membership for non-communicant members of a minimum age of 13 years or who were attending a secondary school. Jennifer recalls:

Jim Nelson encouraged a couple of boys who had just moved into the district to attend – John and David Henshall. John and I were elected on to the first committee, and at our first committee meeting the following year our mutual attraction really began. We planned dances, hikes, studies and a camp that first year; and several of the girls were 'presented' at the Parish Debutante Ball held on 1st May 1957. Meetings were held monthly in the Hall at 4.45 p.m. followed by tea and games, finishing in time to attend Evensong.

At Festal Evensong at St Wilfrid's on 10th February 1957 the Rector made a presentation to Ron Williams "on behalf of the young people and other friends". Ron entered St John's Theological College, Morpeth, N.S.W., to study for the ministry. [Now Bishop Ronald Williams, he has been the Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Brisbane since 1993.]

The first weekend camp was held at Kuitpo Forest at the end of August 1957, and the Reverend Jim MacDonald (then Rector of St Paul's Church, Pulteney Street) led the study, *Fire in the Church*. The following year the camp was at Victor Harbor, and then for several years at 'Glenbarr', Strathalbyn.

Jennifer recalls that when she left the district in 1957, John Henshall took over the running of the Fellowship, and that they both continued in it until their marriage at St Michael's in 1961. They attended their last camp in 1962 as 'camp mother and father'!

The Fellowship joined in activities organised by the diocesan youth movement called Young Anglican Fellowship (YAF). John Henshall was Vice-President in 1959 and President in 1960.

The MacDonald Era (1962–1976)

In 1963 there were two fellowship groups: the Young Anglican Fellowship (YAF) for young people aged fifteen or over, with full membership for those confirmed; and the Junior YAF for those attending secondary school and who were under the age of fifteen. Mr Jim Nelson was responsible to the Rector for the leadership of both groups.

The senior group met once a month on a Sunday afternoon for a short devotion followed by a business meeting, then discussions, debates, talks and some form of indoor games, tea and Evensong at one of the Churches. A social Committee arranged barbecues, beach picnics, dances, hikes and inter-fellowship activities. An annual camp and study conference over the holiday weekend in January was held at 'Glenbarr'.

The junior group meetings, under the leadership of Harold Radbone, followed a similar format, but it was designed for the younger age group. Very little is recorded about their activities.

In 1964 ‘get-togethers’ were organised by the Southern District Fellowships, the highlight being an Ecumenical Meeting held in February attended by 170 young people. They came from Methodist Churches in Mitcham and Malvern, the Hawthorn Presbyterian Church, St Columba’s and our own Parish.

By mid-1965 things were not quite so rosy, and the year was described as one of “frustration and disappointment mainly due to lack of support by members and not knowing what people wanted”. However, a ‘Coffee Lounge’ known as the ‘Pink Elephant’ held after Evensong twice a month was a great success. A Men’s Basketball team – the St Michael’s Dragons – was formed, described as “a very bold and courageous move considering attendances at YAF meetings!” In 1967 there is mention of a YAF newsletter called YAF-YAK being produced by Peter Westhorpe, who was also involved in organising a Revue, *Guess What?*, in the Parish Hall.

Over the next few years the group struggled on, and by 1968 the number of members had fallen from twenty-three to twelve. Conflicts arose with the St Michael’s Parish Council over a social that had been held in the Hall in 1971:

General thoughts were that it was not an entire success. Council then discussed their personal views on the recent ‘Rock Evensong’ presented in the Cathedral. Many varied and different opinions were aired, but generally speaking most members thought that the rock style of Church worship was going a little on the wild side.

In the Annual Reports to Vestry in 1974, it was noted that the “Youth Fellowship was in recess”.

The Cheesman Era (1976–2001)

For twenty-five years Gordon Hervey (see Fig. 16-2) was at the hub of youth activities in the Parish, including ten years as Superintendent of the SS, and running both junior and senior youth groups. He has recorded some of the events that took place during his leadership of the youth group between 1977 and 1981.

Fig. 16-19

Members of MAYG organised a pancake party for young and old members of the Parish family in the old Parish Hall on Shrove Tuesday, 1979. They raised \$200 for mentally retarded children. (Neil Patterson)



Mitcham Anglican Youth Group (MAYG)

[Contributed by Gordon Hervey]

In early 1977 I held a meeting of young teenagers from within the Parish and planned a series of activities. The aim was to promote Christian Fellowship through these activities and to develop leadership amongst the youth of the Parish by involving them in planning the activities (Fig. 16-19). We did not spend large amounts of time drawing up constitutions etc., but rather, put our energy into drawing young people into the worshipping community of the Church via a wholesome and interesting range of activities.

One of these first meetings took the form of a BBQ/tennis/games afternoon on the tennis courts alongside the old Parish Hall. At this meeting we realised we would need a bank account, and after a brief ‘brain storm’ we coined the name MAYG – Mitcham Anglican Youth Group – and the youth group under this name continued for approximately the next eight years.

Activities during this time included a fundraising film and supper evening. The Hall was packed with young people, parents and friends who had flocked to see *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. The agency from which we hired the film almost ‘let us down’, because when I went to collect it they said that it hadn’t returned from Pt Augusta. After some argument they supplied us with an 8 mm version together with an 8 mm projector. The system was stretched to the limit in our Parish Hall with so many people in attendance! However, the goodwill of all made for an enjoyable and successful evening.

A youth evensong arranged by our first curate, Fr David Lunniss, was held in St Michael’s beneath a huge parachute which hovered over the southern nave. Someone was heard to comment: “St Michael’s will never be the same after this!”

Carol Singing

For at least eight years we went carol singing on Christmas Eve from the back of a truck. John Evins provided the truck for several years, and then Bob Hill-Ling for several. On some of these evenings Rosemary Hill-Ling played

her violin to give the singers a lead. Neil Patterson and Denis Nettleton, on different occasions, played the little harmonium which had to be strapped to the cabin section of the truck. On each of these evenings our youth group numbers swelled markedly as young people ‘came out of the woodwork’ to participate in the carol singing. We covered an area of 3 to 4 km radius and stopped to sing a bracket of carols at various nursing homes and elderly parishioners’ homes.

We would always face a dilemma: if we started too early it was still daylight and we lost the candlelit atmosphere; if we started too late the aged people in the nursing homes were all asleep. We would compromise by quietly singing *Silent Night* as we got off the truck and walked through the corridors of the homes. We made a point of stopping at ‘Sunset Lodge’, partly because some of our parishioners were there, but also because they would usually offer us cool drinks and something to eat!

Parish & Youth Group Camps

In early April 1978 approximately thirty-five members of our Parish joined with others from the Parishes of Burnside and Walkerville at the Lutheran campsite at Clarendon to share two days of fellowship. The term ‘generation gap’ held little significance for us – the age range was from four years (Daniel Bennett) through to seventy years (Doreen Whicker) – we all regarded ourselves as ‘children of God’ and young at heart!

In June 1978 Fr David Lunniss and I took about twenty-five young teenagers from Mitcham to a campsite called ‘Sundew’ near Hackham (Fig. 16-20). The campsite was named after the small carnivorous plant which grew in abundance in the vicinity. There was a rudimentary meeting hall with basic kitchen and ablution facilities. Sleeping accommodation was in tents – given the time of year, the late evenings and early mornings were bracing to say the least! An outdoor service near Sunset Rock, hikes, basic cooking on a roster system, and eating cornflakes from mugs (we discovered after we arrived that there were no bowls) were memorable features of the weekend.

Early in 1979 MAYG held an overnight ‘Woolshed Camp’ on the property of Don and Bev Woods at Harrogate. On another occasion a weekend camp was held on Dame

Nancy Buttfeld’s property at Houghton. Memorable activities during that weekend were: Fr Andrew celebrating Holy Communion for us under the wing of the DC3 plane (Fig. 16-21) which was parked outside; archery, hiking, orienteering and camp-cooking. Sleeping – at least that was what the young people were supposed to do – was either in the DC3, or in some weather-beaten railway carriages also parked on-site.

In early May 1979 we attended a camp at ‘Currawong’ near Salt Creek on the Coorong. The camp was on the property of Mr Bob Hawkes whose policy was to preserve tracts of natural bushland with its flora and fauna in harmony with his farming enterprise. The theme of this camp was *Creation & Recreation*. A select few slept in the Hawke’s home, while others found spots in the woolshed amongst hay bales, in their cars, or under the stars. James McDougall *et al* travelled down half-a-day earlier than the main contingent to prepare a roast using meat from the buffalo slaughtered by Bob Hawkes for our use during the weekend. Some of the memorable activities of that weekend were: Holy Communion celebrated on an altar of hay bales with a cross constructed from branches; clinging onto two battered Landrovers – thirty at a time – and crossing the Coorong at its shallow region; an eyeball confrontation with a buffalo (David Bradley’s idea of fun); stories, tours of the farm, rich fellowship, a glass of port late at night for some of the adults, and the sights and sounds of the bush.

In June 1980 our curate Fr Frank Kernot and I took forty MAYG members (including ten from Farr House,



Fig. 16-21 (above)
MAYG camp at Houghton.
Note the DC3 in the background.
(Courtesy Andrew Cheesman)



Fig. 16-20 (left)
MAYG camp at ‘Sundew’
in June 1978.
(Courtesy Andrew Cheesman)

and three visitors from Walkerville) on a camp amongst pine trees at Hindmarsh Island. Fr Frank's young boys couldn't understand why he 'chose' to spend his birthday going off on such a venture! Memorable activities were: sleeping (?) under canvas; paddling canoes and hiking; morning and evening prayers and scripture in a camp setting, and swimming for some (were they pushed, or did they enter the water voluntarily?). Fr Frank assisted with another camp in May 1981 when forty young people (plus five from a fledgling group from Semaphore) camped at 'Glenbarr' at Strathalbyn (see Fig. 8-8).

Other MAYG Activities

Amongst the many and varied activities during those early days of MAYG were fundraising car washes held within the grounds of St Michael's. One of these raised funds for the Diocese of Carpentaria. Some of the youth group attended 8 a.m. Holy Communion in order to be free to do the washing during the service at St Michael's. Most people were charged \$2, but Mr McCarthy's large black Rolls Royce cost him \$4: it took three times as long to wash this as to do 'normal' cars!

In June 1979 thirty-five MAYG members with assistance from adult parishioners – including Professor Max Brennan and his wife Ionie, and Sir Allan Callaghan and Doreen – covered the whole of Lower Mitcham in the Austcare Doorknock. Over \$630 was raised! In 1980 MAYG took some children whose parents were in prison to the zoo, and in April 1981 organised a Saturday evening fundraiser film night for Community Aid Abroad Aboriginal Health Unit. This was held in the new Parish Hall, which was crowded, and \$450 was raised.

[Gordon Hervey]

New Responsibilities

In 1980 one of the MAYG members, Diana Bungey, was elected as the youngest-ever member of Parish Council (Fig. 16-22). She was only twenty-one! Over the next few years other MAYG members served on Parish Council, including Judi Remilton and James McDougall. They were also very active in diocesan affairs as James reported in the August 1981 edition of the *Herald*:

At the recent elections for the Young Anglican Fellowship, the diocesan body of the youth groups of which MAYG is a member, Judi Remilton was elected Secretary; Sandy Mackinnon, Editor of Young Anglican; and James McDougall, Leadership Officer. These same people, plus Diana Bungey, will be reps at the Anglican Youth Conference on 2nd August. Diana will move a motion "that this Conference should express to the Archbishop its support for the increased involvement of females in those activities performed by lay persons in the ceremonies of the Church".

Over 100 people attended the Conference, and Diana's motion was passed. Other topics discussed included youth representation on parish councils – "in which field it appears Mitcham is one of the most progressive" – support for youth groups, Confirmation and admission to Holy Communion, church music and its appeal (or lack

Fig. 16-22
Diana Bungey,
B.Sc, following
her graduation
in 1980.
(Courtesy
Cicely Bungey)



of) to youth, lack of post-confirmation education and the appointments of a full-time youth worker.

In November 1981 they were "absolutely knocked-out" by the numbers who attended a Youth Service in St Michael's – *Dreamtime-Springtime/Creation-Re-creation* – attended by over 150 from as far afield as Magill, Broadview, Walkerville and Burnside. They also played an integral part in the weekend retreat for Confirmation candidates, and, on a different note, saved the Parish \$160 by digging a trench 10 metres long and one metre deep to take the plumbing for extensions to the Rectory bathroom.

At the beginning of 1984 members of MAYG were "congratulated on their leadership role in diocesan affairs", but as is so often the case, as the leaders completed their tertiary education and took-up jobs in the country areas or Interstate, the group lost momentum and folded. An attempt was made by Jerome van der Linden in February 1985 to form a Senior Youth Group for the 14 to 18-year age group; and in 1989 it was announced that there had been a "Senior Youth Revival" and that a new group had held a most successful BBQ at which "food, film and fellowship were the main ingredients". It was convened by Les Dixon, son of Fr Ken Dixon, a retired priest then assisting in the Parish. This revival seems to have emanated from the 'Partnership-in Mission' Consultation Day (see page 132).

The Youth Group received quite a boost with the arrival in 1991 of Roger Dyer and his family. Over a four-year span Roger served as catechist, deacon and assistant priest in the Parish, and his four children, together with the Cheesman children and Les and Cathy Dixon, provided a core group to lead the youth. One outcome was the formation of SMOSS – 'St Michael's Outreach Service at Six' – in October 1994, when "a dozen or so younger people joined together to show the Parish just how we should worship, with some good old-fashioned rock and roll". Within a month SMOSS had achieved a band and a vision for Outreach (see Fig. 8-17). It aimed at providing a more relaxed and informal atmosphere in which to worship, and to reach-out to others in the community.

Most of the group have now left the parish to pursue careers elsewhere. At present (January 2002), apart from an occasional Contemporary Youth Service held in conjunction with the Parish of Colonel Light Gardens, there is no Youth Group in the Anglican Parish of Mitcham.