

Chapter 2

THE COLONIAL INCUMBENTS: 1852–1878

DURING the first forty years of its existence there were no less than eight ministers who held the position of incumbent of St Michael's. By contrast, between 1893 and 2001 there were to be only four men who had the Cure of the Parish of Mitcham, and by then the term 'rector' was favoured in place of 'incumbent'.

The Minute Book gives no indication as to what type of men these incumbents were; neither their strengths nor weaknesses, nor their impact on the lives of their parishioners. There is no mention of their wives and children; in fact no mention of 'parish family life' as we know it today. The minutes of Vestry meetings held during those first forty years were brief and formal, recording who were present, the passing of accounts and the election of officers. Occasionally there are indications of prolonged debates over contentious matters, but these are confined to the wording of motions and who proposed and seconded them.

The fact that the early incumbents were also responsible for the Cure of souls at Glen Osmond, and in the Belair, Blackwood and Coromandel Valley areas, is seldom mentioned. Often this meant visiting on foot, as even the ownership of a horse, let alone a horse and trap, was somewhat of a luxury.

Such is the brevity of the early minutes that there is no mention of the fact that the first incumbent, Edward Burnett, served as the 'Farrell' Canon of Adelaide from 1854 to 1856, nor, more importantly, that he resigned the Living of Mitcham through ill health early in 1856 and died at sea of consumption in June on his way home to England. Not one word of his passing! He appears to have arrived in the Colony, via Melbourne, on a ship called

the *Asia* on 13th January 1852, but what he did between then and the opening of St Michael's nine months later is not known.

What follows is a precis of the matters recorded in the Minute Book, interspersed with snippets of letters written by our 'Colonial Cousin' which attempt to 'put some flesh' on the characters and various events taking place, not only within the Village, but also in the wider sphere of the Diocese and the Colony of South Australia. Appendix 2 lists the names of the colonial Vestrymen mentioned in the Minute Book.

THE INCUMBENCY OF EDWARD HAYDON BURNETT (1852–1856)

The first entry in the Minute Book is brief, recording the fact that:

This Church was opened for Divine Service on Sunday Octr 17 1852. Being still unfinished, neither ceiled nor plastered, with temporary doors & calico windows, & only chairs & forms as seats, the consecration was deferred. Prayers were read by the first Incumbent Minister the Reverend Edw. H. Burnett, M.A. & a sermon preached by the Lord Bishop of Adelaide.

The first business meeting was held later that month to elect Wardens, arrange to have some pews made, and to fix the amount of rent payable per year by the seat-holders. The only meetings held during 1853 and 1854 were the Annual Easter Vestries when Wardens and representatives to the Diocesan Assembly were elected and accounts passed. Only seat-holders were eligible to vote. A brief note from the 1854 Vestry concerning a "...fence round the Ch. of England portion of the Mitcham Cemetery" at least records that a parish cemetery had been opened.

Our 'Colonial Cousin's' letters fill in some of the missing details about life in the Parish of Mitcham.

* * *

Mitcham Village 22nd October 1852

My very dear Cousin,

At last, after four long years, the first service in our very own Parish Church of St Michael was held last Sunday, the 17th October. We had all hoped it would have been ready for Michaelmas, but sadly that was not to be. In spite of a flurry of activity the building is still far from finished, with unplastered walls, and the wood-shingle roof exposed through lack of ceiling timbers [Fig. 2-1].

Fig. 2-1 *St Michael's Church c.1853 by unknown artist. (MPA)*



In fact, the notice in Saturday's *Observer* described it as "having been temporarily prepared"! The window openings are covered with oiled calico (which is quite usual here) and we have to sit on planks supported by a few borrowed seats. In spite of this the Bishop decided it was in a sufficiently forward state to permit of its being used for Divine Service.¹

After so many setbacks and problems it was a wondrously joyous occasion! Once again His Excellency the Governor, Sir Henry Fox Young and Lady Young were present for the 11 a.m. service, and the large congregation filled the Church to overflowing. As I inferred in an earlier letter, the Reverend Edward Haydon Burnett, M.A., is indeed our first incumbent. Although we have not heard him preach yet, he seems to be an admirable choice. He read the prayers, and the sermon was preached by the Lord Bishop of Adelaide.²

I think I mentioned before that the Reverend Edward and Reverend Arthur Burnett are brothers: Edward is the older, being born in 1820 and Arthur the following year. Like you, they are also from Surrey, being the sons of Joseph Burnett who lives in that beautiful old town of Guildford. Edward was at Merton College, Oxford, where he obtained his B.A. in 1841 and took his M.A. in 1845. By contrast, Arthur is a Cambridge man and gained his B.A. at St John's College. Both these young men served in the Diocese of Salisbury before coming out to South Australia. Edward was ordained deacon on 25th September 1842 and priest on 9th July 1843.³

At the first business meeting of the congregation Sheriff Charles Newenham and Mr Henry Taylor consented to act as Churchwardens. Also present were Messrs John Grainger, Arthur Blyth, Thomas Mugg, Erasmus Gower and Henry W. Parker.

Hopefully we will not have to accommodate these horrid planks for too long. Young William Mugg, a son of our carpenter-turned-schoolmaster, has been authorized to make some seats commencing with those already ordered and paid for by the seat-holders themselves. Others will be added as funds allow. No doubt Thomas will be assisting him...

Mitcham Village ***17th October 1853***

... This being the first anniversary of the opening of St Michael's, I thought I would fill you in on events of the past year.

Reverend Edward Burnett has settled into colonial village life very well. Prior to his arrival our friends Messrs Bartley and Newenham made arrangements for him to rent the cottage built by Canon Wm Woodcock near the western end of the Village, which, I understand he has since purchased for £200.⁴ It is a four-roomed stone building set in over two acres of land overlooking the ford on the Mugg's Hill-road [Fig. 2-2]. He has been holding Sunday School classes in this tiny Parsonage and at present has about eighteen children attending. Each has been supplied with a bible at a cost of one shilling each. No doubt this has dramatically reduced the number of students in Pastor Finlayson's Sunday School in the Union Chapel!



Fig. 2-2 *Burnett's Parsonage. Originally a four-roomed stone cottage overlooking the ford on Muggs Hill Road, it was demolished in 1964 and the house at 10 Lochness Avenue now occupies the site. (Courtesy Harry Ash)*

I am a little worried about Mr Burnett's health. He missed the Easter Vestry meeting being "absent through illness", and to my mind he wears that unmistakable air of one who suffers from consumption. I sincerely hope I am wrong, but I do suspect that his acceptance of a Living in South Australia was perhaps due more to a recommendation by his physician than by the Bishop of Salisbury!

In spite of his bouts of illness our incumbent has been busy baptising, marrying and burying members of his flock. The first baptism took place on 9th November, followed ten days later by Mr Henry Taylor's three sons and the young son of Henry and Hannah Fyffe. Hannah is Mr Thomas Mugg's youngest daughter and Mr Henry Fyffe is our local storekeeper and postmaster. He is now one of our Churchwardens, the other being Mr William Bartley. The first marriage in St Michael's took place on Christmas Day, the parties being Mr William Rashleigh and Miss Elizabeth Scott. Our Chief Justice, Charles Cooper, and the Sheriff's daughter, Miss Emily Newenham, were to have married in early January, but according to Mrs Elizabeth Bayley the bride "became nervous and did not". They have since tied-the-knot, the ceremony taking place on 9th July 1853. There was a very distinguished gathering present, and Mr Wm Bartley (who married Judge Cooper's sister, Sarah Ann, a year ago) acted as best man.⁵

As well as having a building in which to worship, we also have a Church of England cemetery in which to bury our dead. To describe it as 'the Parish cemetery' would perhaps give an erroneous impression as it is considerably removed from the Church Acre being on a steep hillside across the far side of the valley on the southern boundary of the Village. Two acres of 'Waste Lands of the Crown' have been set aside for the burial of adherents of our faith, and an adjoining two acres for Dissenters. Sadly we have already had three burials in our portion, the first being dear Mary Oldham who was only thirty-two years of age. The family recently moved to the district and her husband Nathaniel is taking a leading role in Vestry affairs.

Our verger, Mr James Bragg, a man of about fifty years, is, like our schoolmaster Mr Thomas Mugg, a trained carpenter who has found it necessary to diversify

his talents in this new land. This is proving very useful in attending to small jobs around the Church, and he has already made some alterations to the pew rails and forms.

Considering that the Mitcham Parish has such wealthy and influential patrons, I fail to see why we have taken so long to reach this stage when other communities have managed so speedily to build and occupy their churches, pay off their debts and have the buildings consecrated! What we would have done without Mr John Grainger I shudder to think. He and Sheriff Charles Newenham comprised the 'Building Committee', and I suspect that Mr Grainger paid the contractors in cash out of his own pocket as the need arose. I am told that of the £836 collected in subscriptions before the opening of the building, he gave £418 – half the total amount collected – and was also responsible for persuading many of his mining associates to contribute. No doubt much of this has come from the profits of his mine, the Wheal Grainger, in a valley behind Brown Hill. Many people have taken up shares, and so far three lodes have been discovered containing bismuth, lead and silver of a character surpassing any of the lead mines on this side of the hills.⁶

I am enclosing a list of subscribers to the Building Fund [Appendix 3].

We are indeed becoming a most civilized society here in Mitcham. Not only do we now have a beautiful church in which to worship, a cemetery in which to bury our dead, a post office and a growing number of shops and businesses providing most of our everyday requirements, but we now have a District Council of Mitcham.

It all began last February when a meeting was held in the Schoolroom for the purpose of considering the best means of improving and finishing the road into Adelaide. Due to the heavy traffic of bullock teams pulling loads of stone from our hillside quarries, the roads are generally in an impassable state during the winter months. The meeting was numerously attended and Sheriff Newenham was in the chair. Mr Alexander Elder, a Member of the Legislative Council, reminded the gathering that a Bill to create District Councils had been passed at the end of 1852 and that they should consider establishing one for Mitcham and its neighbourhood, rather than trying to raise funds for temporary repairs to the roads. After much discussion it was unanimously decided to form a District Council, and a committee was formed to prepare the necessary Petition to the Governor. The Governor put his seal to it on 10th May in this year of our Lord, 1853. So now we will go down in history as being the first district in the Colony to form a local governing body outside of the City of Adelaide!⁷

One of the loudest voices at the above meetings was that of Mr Robert Richard Torrens, a querulous and arrogant Irishman. Unfortunately we shall be seeing a lot more of him next year as he is building a great mansion adjoining the western boundary of the Village which he is to call 'Torrens Park'.

New Year's Eve 1854

... The celebrations this year at Christmas were greatly enhanced by some fine music. Thanks must go to Mr

William Bartley who generously lent the money to purchase an organ. The organist, Mr J.S. Green, is to receive a salary of £5 per quarter, so we expect glorious music in the future.

There have been many changes here during the past year. Sheriff Charles Newenham retired from public affairs earlier in the year and he and his wife are returning to England to enjoy a well-earned retirement in Bath. I think the death of their son, Reverend George Newenham in February last year has had a deep impact on their lives. Still in his early thirties, and one day short of his first wedding anniversary to Lucy, he died on board S.S. *Sydney Packet* at Moreton Bay in Queensland. George had been the incumbent of Blakiston and Mount Barker Parish since 1849.⁸ At the Easter Vestry, Charles Newenham handed the accounts over to Mr Nathaniel Oldham, who is well qualified to act as parish treasurer. Mr Henry Taylor is once again the Minister's Warden and Capt. Arthur H. Freeling, R.E., represents the seat-holders. Arthur is a Captain in the Corps of Royal Engineers and is our Surveyor-General and Colonial Engineer. He is a man of most amiable disposition and much respected, not only for his kindness and affability, but also for his great capacity for administration.⁹

There has just been a great tragedy in the Village. Robert Thornber, the man who provided the land on which St Michael's stands, is dead. Although aware of the effects of his excessive drinking – presumably because of financial problems – we were aghast to learn that he swallowed a full bottle of laudanum. His poor wife, in a desperate effort, administered a strong emetic but was unable to save his life.¹⁰

The other important news relates to the shock resignation of Mr John Grainger as a Member of the Legislative Council and his subsequent departure from the Colony.¹¹ Apparently he sailed from The Port on 9th November aboard S.S. *Norna*. It was totally unexpected and I can only assume that important family matters have required his removal from South Australia. His lovely home, 'Gable Ends', has been purchased by another parishioner, Mr W. Wilkins Blyth. He and his brother, Mr Arthur Blyth, are ironmongers in Town where they trade under the name Blyth Bros in Hindley-street. Their neighbour Mr William Easter has also left the Parish (temporarily, he says) and leased his house which is just across the road from the Church [Fig. 2-3].

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Between 10th April and 23rd September 1855 four meetings of the Vestry were held. These were necessary to consider a draft constitution upon which the *Fundamental Provisions and Regulations* of the Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide were to be based. Each of the twenty-six congregations in the Colony was asked to either adopt or suggest amendments to every clause as it saw fit. The same meticulous scrutiny was also applied to a draft Trust Deed. By October 1855 a 'consensual compact' had been negotiated and signed by representatives of each parish, and the Synod of the United Church of England and Ireland within the Diocese of Adelaide was formally constituted.

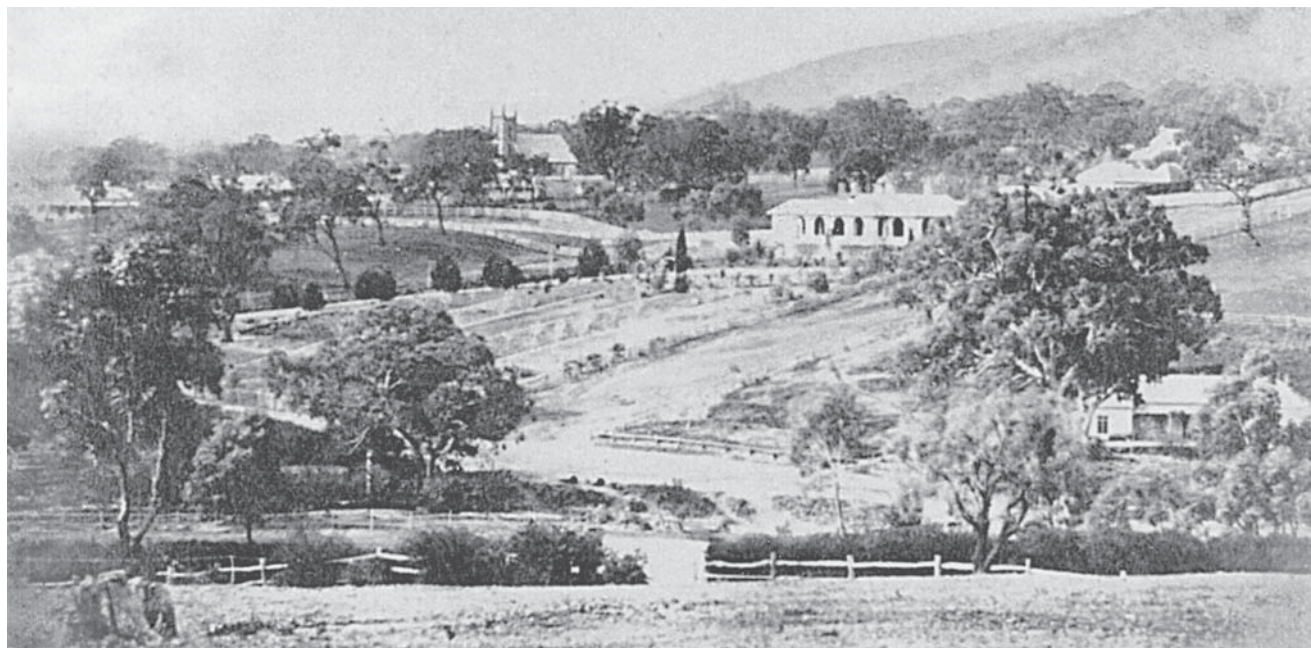


Fig. 2-3 Upper Mitcham in the 1860s. Taken from the hillside below the Cemetery looking NE across Brownhill Creek. The tower of St Michael's is clearly visible, as is the arched verandah of Arthur Blyth's stately home 'The Hall' (now called 'Rusthall') set in an extensive garden. Behind 'The Hall' are the houses once occupied by William Easter and John Grainger. Grainger sold his house, 'Gable Ends', to W. Wilkins Blyth, brother of Arthur. It still stands at 27 Carrick Hill Drive. Stone to build St Michael's is believed to have come from Grainger's quarry on Lot 99 which is a little to the right of the house in the foreground. The two large buildings to the left of the Church were probably 'Bloomfield', home of Leonard Thrupp, and George Stevens' house which was later used as a Catholic Female Refuge. (MLHC)

In essence this meant that it was to be a federation of self-governing congregations, unconnected with the State, the affairs of each parish being governed by a Trust Deed. A 'Model Trust Deed' was eventually adopted by Synod in 1858.¹²

* * *

10th October 1855

... For many months past the gentlemen of the Parish have been wrestling clause by clause with the intricacies of a draft proposal for a constitution for the Diocese. How lucky we are to have the fine legal mind of Mr William Bartley in the Parish to explain it all. Another parishioner who was most helpful during the discussions was Mr Arthur Blyth. He is now Chairman of the Mitcham District Council.

Mr Burnett's health continues to be a source of concern and Mr Henry Taylor has had to chair some meetings because our incumbent has frequently been indisposed. Apparently the Parsonage purchased by Mr Burnett for £200 soon after his arrival in Mitcham proved to be unsuitable. It was eventually sold in July to a draper named James Smith for £500.¹³ For some time now Mr Burnett has been renting another house in the Village, originally taken up by Messrs Bartley and Newenham, and last night a meeting was called to clarify the position regarding its rental. There seems to have been some confusion over this, and it has now been agreed that the sum of £70 p.a. which, until now, has been paid out of the Stipend Fund, must be met from another source.

The late Mr Robert Thornber's wife, Catherine Maria, now runs a small school from her home. She is ably assisted by her nineteen-year-old daughter (also named Catherine) who has an excellent rapport with little ones and is a very competent tutor. There are six other children in the family, the youngest being only four, and I hear that they are to move to Mr Whistler's Village of Unley where the ladies plan to open a school in the next few weeks.¹⁴

Since St Michael's was built three years ago there has been a steady increase in the population of Mitcham Village, and, thankfully, more shops and tradesmen to service our needs. We now have another carpenter, Mr Nisbett, who is a very well-read man with a particular love of Scottish literature. He is a favourite with the young people of the Village who flock to Mr Henry Taylor's Inn to hear him read passages from Burns in his delightful Ayrshire accent.¹⁵

Another popular Scotchman is Mr James Gardiner (from Glasgow) whose general store on the corner of Albert and High-street is such a boon to us all. I was recalling the other day an incident that occurred soon after the shop was opened. Like most of the male population, Mr Gardiner departed for the goldfields in Victoria leaving his poor wife to cope as best she could. Undaunted, one of the first things she acquired was, not groceries or draperies, but a great crate of fine crockery. We all helped unpack the precious wares and set them upon the shelves where they were much admired. Then followed agitated letters from the goldfields pointing out that the shelves had only been put up temporarily, and had not yet been fixed properly: it was feared that the valuable

crockery was in grave danger! He need not have worried as all the crockery sold quickly and has been replaced many times over since then, and the shelves are still intact.¹⁶

Another testament to the great hope and enthusiasm we women share in this pioneer settlement, has been the start of a passenger conveyance into Town. Unless one is rich enough to own a pony and trap, or is lucky enough to get the occasional lift in a bullock dray, it is a five-mile walk. A Mrs Francis began the service, but it has now been taken up by Mrs Phillis Kinsman who has been twice widowed and has a large family to support. Her strong, heavy spring cart seating seven passengers makes the journey three times a week. We have only deal boards (no backs to them) covered with a piece of carpet to sit upon, and have to share the vehicle with bags of flour, pollard and other sundry items which hang from the tail board. She also has the mail contract to deliver sacks of letters – including yours, dear Cousin – to Mr Henry Fyffe’s post office...¹⁷

* * *

Within a few months Edward Haydon Burnett was dead. He died of ‘consumption at sea on his way to England’ on 26th June 1856. As mentioned earlier there is no reference to his death in the official Vestry minutes, the only record of his passing being a white marble tablet in the Church ‘erected by his sorrowing parishioners’ (Fig. 2-4). A search of shipping records reveals that Edward sailed from Adelaide aboard the *Victoria Regina* on 26th February 1856. He was accompanied by his brother, Reverend Arthur Burnett, who had also retired because of ill health, and Arthur’s wife. After the long voyage of four months he must have been almost Home when he died! A courteous and gentle man, he was deeply loved by his people and spoken of with affectionate regard for many years.

THE INCUMBENCY OF RICHARD WILLIAM NEEDHAM (1858–1863)

The last time Edward Burnett’s signature appears in both the Baptismal Register and Banns Book is on the 9th December 1855, and in the Marriage Register three days later. When the Annual Easter Vestry meeting was held on 26th March 1856 there was no mention of his illness or that he had sailed for England – in fact, no mention of the man at all! Henry Taylor was in the chair. When it came to the election of Churchwardens, William Bartley “requested on behalf of the Bishop that Mr H. Taylor would continue to act as Minister’s Churchwarden which he consented to do”. Arthur Blyth was elected as Churchwarden for the congregation. Apart from the usual election of other office bearers, no other business was transacted. An adjourned meeting presided over by the Lord Bishop was held several weeks later to pass the accounts for payment. Again, no mention of Edward Burnett’s departure.

There is no record of any Annual Easter Vestry during 1857, and by the time one was held on 6th April 1858 Reverend Richard William Needham was in the chair. He

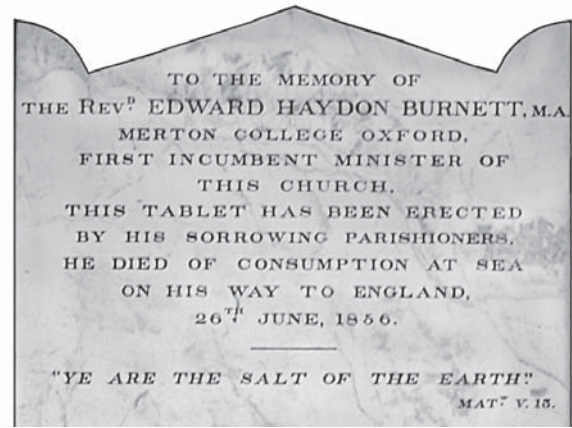


Fig. 2-4
Burnett
Memorial Tablet.
(MPA)



Fig. 2-5
Reverend
Richard William
Needham.
(MPA)

had arrived in the Colony on 24th April 1857 aboard the *White Swan* from Melbourne, but just when he came to Mitcham is not clear. Although Diocesan records show that he was licensed as Priest of St Michael’s Church, District of Mitcham, on 11th January 1858, his name appears in the Baptismal Register for the first time some six months earlier on 18th July 1857.

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28th January 1858

... Some good news: after a very long wait our new incumbent was formally inducted about two weeks ago. Reverend Richard William Needham is from the south of England, having been born at Tamerton Folliott in Devon [Fig. 2-5]. He was ordained deacon in 1836 in Exeter, and priest a year later. He and his wife Martha are both about fifty years old, and they have four children: Henry is twenty, Frederick eighteen, Mary sixteen and young Richard is thirteen.¹⁸

It has, in fact, been a busy few weeks in our Village: on the 12th January the ‘Mitcham Library and Mutual Improvement Society’ was established. The opening ceremony, which took place in the Schoolroom on the Village Green, resembled a Vestry meeting at St Michael’s, most of the committee members being parishioners. As I have mentioned in the past, Mr Henry Taylor’s Inn has been the centre for cultural life in Mitcham for the past eight years, and the decision to form the new Society arose from meetings held at his Brownhill Creek Inn during May last year. They already have seventy-six subscribers, and on the opening night 187 books were available for loan. I think they plan to join the South Australian Institute Movement in the near future, in which case they will then be known as the Mitcham Institute Association.¹⁹

The conveyance run by Mrs Phillis Kinsman was involved in a dreadful accident several months ago that resulted in the death of our organist’s young wife, Mrs Sarah Ann Green. She died from the effects of a collision of the Mitcham mail-cart in Angas-street and her passing has been deeply lamented by all at St Michael’s. Sadly she leaves behind a ten-month-old baby...²⁰

29th November 1859

... You will be pleased to hear that Reverend Richard Needham is now well established in the district. In fact the family is living across the road from the Church on the eastern side of the Mitcham-road in a large bluestone house of about eleven rooms [Fig. 2-6]. It was formerly owned by a Mr Cornish who offered it to the Parish last August. After several weeks deliberation as to the advisability of building a parsonage on the Church Acre or not, it was considered desirable to purchase Mr Cornish’s house and two of the ten acres he originally offered. I understand it cost £600. This has necessitated a circular being sent to seat-holders seeking subscriptions to a Building Fund to make up the deficiency.

Fig. 2-6 *The Parsonage c.1869. For nearly a century, from 1859 to 1958, it was home to the incumbents of St Michael’s. Much altered over the years, it stood on two acres of land on the eastern side of Fullarton Road (now called Carrick Hill Drive). The only sign of its passing is in the name of a street, Rectory Walk, once a laneway separating the Rectory from the grounds of ‘Strathspey’, now Mercedes College. Home units now occupy this site. (MPA)*



Another matter of some note in the life of the Parish has been the Bishop’s offer to surrender his Trusteeship of the land and building. This was acceded to and our new Trustees are Messrs Arthur Blyth, Richard Hicks, Alfred Hardy, James Lewis and Henry Taylor. You will note that Mr Wm Bartley’s name is not mentioned: he has sold ‘Delamere’ and is living on the South-terrace in Adelaide. We were all surprised to hear that he has given up his private practice as a lawyer and, on the recommendation of Mr Torrens, has accepted the appointment of senior solicitor in the Lands Titles Office to implement the *Real Property Act*. He will have his hands full there, as we have been told that the whole Act has many flaws in it...²¹

3rd April 1861

... It would seem that the Lord’s work is increasing in many directions lately. In fact we have two new chapels within the Village. Although he is a Presbyterian minister, Reverend Ralph Drummond has executed a document called a ‘Nomination of Trust’ and appointed six trustees who have erected a Bible Christian Chapel in the NE corner of his land which he has made available to them. It is, in fact, less than 100 yards from the Union Chapel & Schoolroom on the Village Green where the group has been meeting for many years.²²

Another small group that previously met in the Union Chapel has also built a separate place of worship in Albert-street. Although they adhere to the practice of baptism by total immersion, they do not call themselves ‘Baptists’ but prefer to be known as ‘members of the Church of Christ meeting in the Mitcham Christian Chapel’. Of course Pastor Playford is sympathetic to their cause, and they have also asked Pastor Wm Finlayson and a Pastor Jacob Abbott to ‘exercise a watchful care over them in the Lord’.²³

The Church of England has not been tardy with its building activities either. At yesterday’s Easter Vestry the Wardens were asked to ascertain the cost of covering the roof of the Church with galvanized-iron sheeting. This practical – though some would say ugly – material has been available in the Colony for some time now, and it would certainly help overcome the never-ending problems of water seepage through the wood shingles.

There are also moves afoot to build in the Belair Township. Mr Needham, like Reverend Edward Burnett before him, has oversight of a vast area in the Hills behind Mitcham Village stretching through to Coromandel Valley and beyond. Scattered groups have been holding prayer meetings in each other’s homes and occasionally making the effort to attend the monthly Communion service at St Michael’s. Now, a good Christian gentleman by the name of Mr Gustav Ludewigs has made over some land adjoining his store at Belair to a body of five men (including Mr Needham) as the site of a schoolhouse. I hear that it is only a one-roomed stone-and-pug building, and that Mrs Maria Ludewigs has some sixteen pupils on her roll. She is enthusiastically supported by Mr Needham who will be assisting with the teaching as well as holding regular Church services. Since August 1859 Mr Needham has also been licensed to officiate as a priest in the Schoolroom at Glen Osmond...²⁴

The suggestion made in April 1861 that the roof should be covered with galvanized iron was the catalyst which led to years of indecision and arguments over, not just the roof, but whether the Church should be enlarged and, if so, what form that should take. The following August the original architect, William Weir, submitted plans for enlargement by the addition of choir, transepts, chancel and vestry, the estimated cost being from £550 to £600. But it would seem that these plans did not meet with the full acceptance of the Vestry, and the matter of repairs to the roof and any enlargement of the building was left unresolved. The question of enlargement was not raised again until 1863 when the plans of another architect, Edmund Wright, were under discussion. In the midst of all this Mr Needham tendered his resignation.

* * *

26th May 1863

... It does not seem possible that nearly two years have passed since the grand plans for the enlargement of the Church were first announced with, might I say, a great deal of fanfare and enthusiasm. Well, we still have a leaky wood-shingle roof and there is absolutely no sign of any building activity! Now we hear that Mr Weir's delightful plans have been abandoned in favour of new ones prepared by a Mr Edmund Wright. He is in partnership with Mr Edward J. Woods, both of whom are regarded as excellent architects. In fact Mr Wright has won a design competition to build the Adelaide Town Hall, the foundation stone for which was laid three weeks ago. In April he was requested to obtain tenders to enlarge St Michael's "without delay", but yesterday they decided to postpone the matter until the end of August and to have the present shingle roof repaired.

Mr and Mrs Torrens left the Colony last December and George Bartleet, who has taken the lease of 'Torrens Park House' for a year, is a regular worshipper at St Michael's...²⁵

6th September 1863

... About a week ago a meeting was called at which a letter from Mr Needham was read tendering his resignation: he is to take up the position of incumbent of the Mount Gambier parish within two months. This, of course, was a great shock, but he did suggest a suitable replacement, the Reverend W.B. Andrews, who is at present at Blakiston in the Mount Barker district. He has since been approached to grant the Wardens a personal interview and to inspect the Parsonage. My friends and I are hoping that his wife will accompany him so that we may inspect the lady!

* * *

Following Reverend Richard Needham's departure for Mount Gambier there was no resident clergyman in charge of the Parish for several months. At a meeting held during the interregnum – when it became obvious that certain alterations should be made to the Parsonage before the new incumbent arrived – Henry Taylor, Arthur Blyth, George

Bartleet, Leonard Thrupp and William Miller formed themselves (plus Richard Hicks, who was not present) into a 'Building Committee for the Church & Parsonage'. On the 19th September 1863 they accepted Mr William Bunday's tender and announced that alterations to the Church would be "proceeded with at once".

* * *

28th December 1863

... At present the churchyard is littered with piles of stone and planks of wood. Services have to be held amongst all the dust and debris associated with the enlargement of the Church which began in late September. A new nave has been constructed on the southern side of the original building making the Church almost square in shape – about 50 feet by 55 feet I am told. To do this they had to take down the old south wall, erect arches in its place, and then raise the south wall again 23 feet further out [Fig. 2-7]. This new part is to have a large window at the western end rather than in the east. Throughout all this we have been without a resident clergyman (Mr Needham having departed about the same time as the building work began), so it has been in the hands of the 'Building Committee'.

I was reading in the paper recently that there have been many instances of lengthy delays in the building industry through want of men, with masons, bricklayers and labourers always in requisition. We are lucky to have in Mitcham many skilled tradesmen including Mr John Boorman (a wheelwright who sings in our choir and has a fine voice), Mr Thomas Edge (a plumber and painter), three masons (Messrs Joseph Hague, Richard Shugg and John Yeoman) and of course Mr Heritage (the stonemason who cut all the stone to build the Church). There are also several carpenters including Mr Robert Nisbett our Scotchman who likes to quote Robbie Burns.²⁶

It is truly amazing when one looks around at all this building activity to realize that the Colony is still so young. This came to mind because today happens to be the 27th anniversary of the proclamation of the Province

Fig. 2-7 *St Michael's Church c.1869. The new south nave (right) designed by Edmund Wright features a large three-light western window. Note the flight of steps leading up to the front door and the old post-and-rail fence. (MPA)*



of South Australia and the arrival of our first Governor. The only signs of habitation then were a few native huts made of grass and tree branches. I noted that the latest Treasury figures (to the end of 1862) showed that the population of the Colony was 125,489, and that we now have nearly three million sheep and over 262,000 acres under wheat crop. If all this can be achieved in one generation, just think of the limitless prospects for the future of this country that we now regard as Home!²⁷

THE INCUMBENCY OF WILLIAM BUCKTON ANDREWS (1863–1868)

It has been said that the decision taken by the six gentlemen of the Building Committee to enlarge the Church has been “regretted by subsequent generations”. For in electing to adopt Wright’s plan for “the addition of a nave on the south side of the original one” instead of accepting the plans of the Church’s original architect, William Weir, St Michael’s is said to have “forfeited its claim to be one of the structurally handsome churches in the Diocese”.²⁸ It also left the parishioners with a huge debt. How to clear this debt was virtually the only subject discussed at Vestry meetings over the five-year incumbency of William Buckton Andrews (Fig. 2-8).

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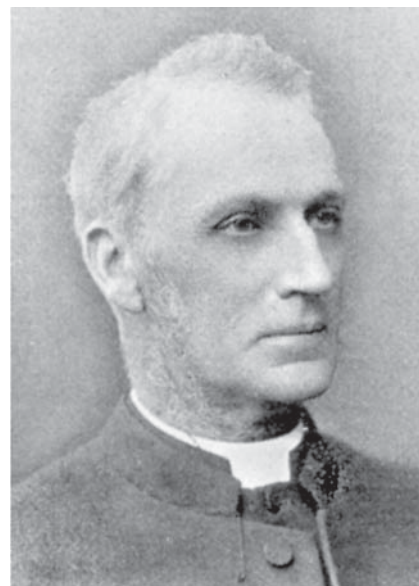
26th February 1864

My dear Cousin,

The past week has been excessively busy with the consecration of the new south nave of the Church and the induction of our new incumbent.²⁹ As promised, I can now furnish you with a full report about the family. His name is William Buckton Andrews and his wife’s name is Barbara. They are both thirty-four years old, have been married for six years and have four children under the age of five (William is nearly five, Emma three-and-a-half, Alice just turned two and baby John Dugald is six months old). This is the first time we have had such a young family in the Parsonage so it has been necessary to make some alterations to accommodate them.³⁰

The Reverend William Andrews hails from Epping where his father is an attorney. He was born on 24th November 1829 and educated at Radley Hall, near Oxford. He studied theology before coming to Adelaide in late 1854. The Bishop licensed him as a catechist at Woodside on 16th January 1855, and a deacon on 29th June that same year when he entered upon the curacy of Balhannah and Woodside in the Adelaide Hills. After his ordination as a priest on 25th July 1856 he was appointed first missionary to the South East District of the Colony, which included the far-flung settlements of Penola, Mount Gambier (where our Mr Needham is now serving) and Robetown. Whilst there he met and married Miss Barbara Smith, a delightful Scottish lassie originally from Ben Nevis, who was then living on Coomon Station in the neighbouring Colony of Victoria. Soon afterwards he was invited to become incumbent of Blakiston, where they have been these past six years.³¹

Fig. 2-8
Reverend William
Buckton Andrews.
(MPA)



He is a very gentle person with a gracious, dignified figure. Friends in Mount Barker say that his “beautiful serene face is a mirror of the beautiful soul within”. However, they warn that he has lightning flashes of severity, and can be quite stern when the occasion demands.³²

In spite of his young age, Mr Andrews is already regarded highly amongst the clergy, particularly those of an evangelical bent. I think he will enjoy the company and mental stimulation of discussions with our Dissenting ministers Playford and Drummond. Of course he has an excellent rapport with his Warden, Henry Taylor who, no doubt, will soon have him involved with the Mitcham Institute Association.

Now I must tell you of the moving events associated with the consecration of the south nave of the Church. The correspondent from the *Register* reported the event thus:³³

The consecration of the enlargement of St Michael’s Church, Mitcham, took place on Sunday, February 21... The Lord Bishop, on entering the Church, received from the incumbent (the Rev. W. B. Andrews) the usual petition praying him to consecrate the building, after which, followed by the minister and office-bearers, he walked down the aisle from east to west and back again from west to east. The usual formula specified by the Rubric was then gone through, the lessons being read by the rev. incumbent. The dedicatory service concluded, His Lordship preached an appropriate extempore discourse from the words ‘Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit’, alluding to the opening of the enlarged place of worship as a most promising indication of the progress which the cause had made in the neighbourhood since he had had the honour of laying the foundation-stone of the old building. In the evening the Rev. Mr Andrews preached a most excellent sermon from the words ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world’. The rev. gentleman was listened to with rapt attention... The congregations on both occasions were good, and collections were made on behalf of the building fund.

17th October 1864

... On this, the twelfth anniversary of the first service held in St Michael's, I thought I would tell you of recent events in our Parish life. The construction of the south nave may well be complete, but the work of paying for it certainly is not! It is quite obvious that hopes of financing so large an extension – just eleven years after the original Church was built – was far beyond our present capacity. Although a Building Fund subscription list had been operating for quite some time before work began, the Building Committee seemed quite taken aback to find there was a deficit of about £300 at the time of the consecration. I was really quite amused when Captain George Hall jumped to his feet and thundered that “the debt be paid off immediately”. Just how he thought this could be achieved “immediately” I do not know, but Messrs Arthur Blyth and George Bartleet undertook to prepare a paper and to get signatures to raise the money. Several weeks later at the Easter Vestry they had to report that “their efforts to raise the £300 for removing debt...had failed”. Mr Richard Hicks accordingly undertook “to see some gentlemen” with a view to obtaining as much cash as possible, and if this should fail to join with Messrs Blyth and Bartleet in procuring a loan – which they had to do. Now I hear they have had to renew the loan in order to pay the builder, and that the three gentlemen between them have most generously paid the interest due on that loan and also offered to pay the architect's fee of £39 16s 0d.

Apparently there is also a deficiency in the Stipend Fund and an appeal has been made to seat-holders to contribute more each quarter. An evening offertory collection has also been initiated and James Bragg, as verger and pew-opener, has been told to “hold the plate at the door” at the close of the service. This seems a trifle intimidating to me, but few choose to ignore his searching gaze.

We also have been asked to dip into our pockets for a Melanesian Mission, and for a new appeal started in July by the Bishop whereby an annual sermon is to be preached and a collection made for a ‘Clergy Widow and Orphan Fund’. One hopes this will not be called upon too often, but I am sure it is comforting to know it exists as in many cases the widows' immediate families reside thousands of miles away in Britain.

Since 9th August last Mr Arthur Blyth – the Honourable Arthur Blyth – has been Premier of South Australia. He is the second of our Vestrymen to be elected to that high office: Mr R. R. Torrens was Premier in 1857, albeit for a whole twenty-nine days...

26th April 1867

... One suddenly realizes that the years are rapidly passing when the second generation of well-known families take their place in the public arena. This was brought home last Tuesday night when Mr Henry Taylor's sons, whom we first knew as young children, attended the Easter Vestry. Also present were several newcomers to the area including Mr Charles J. Webb (a school teacher, who is also our new organist and has offered to audit the Church accounts), Mr Robert Thorpe

(who is planning to open a butcher shop on Taylor's-road) and Mr R. B. Andrews. The latter, Richard Bullock Andrews, is a highly-regarded lawyer and just happens to be the older brother (by six years) of our incumbent!

Late last year the Parish finances touched a low-water mark with a large debt still outstanding on the south nave and Mr Andrew's stipend falling well short of the guaranteed amount. In fact, at a meeting held in November, it was suggested that it would be desirable that the Cure of Glen Osmond should be united with that of St Michael's in order to ensure an adequate stipend. As so few people were present to make such an important decision, they decided to adjourn the meeting for eleven days. During that time Mr George Bartleet and others seem to have ‘taken the hat around’ and reduced the Stipend Fund debt from £61 15s 1d to £36 15s 1d which amount was subscribed at the meeting. Since then there has been no further discussion about Glen Osmond, and the accounts presented the other night showed, for the first time in many years, a small credit balance.

It is not as though we have a want of expertise in financial and legal matters in this Parish. In a recent issue of the *Church Chronicle* I noted that the Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Church of England Endowment Society lists Mr Wm Bartley as Chairman, Mr Neville Blyth as Deputy-Chairman, Mr Nathaniel Oldham as Secretary and Mr Leonard Thrupp as Auditor – all with strong ties to Mitcham. I also noted that the Standing Committee of Synod includes Reverend W.B. Andrews, Messrs John Williams, M.P., Alfred Spence, Neville Blyth and Charles B. Young. Sounds more like a Vestry meeting at St Michael's!

We were all saddened to hear that Reverend Richard Needham died at the Mount Gambier Parsonage on 3rd December. It was at one time hoped that he might rally from the paralytic attack which seized him early in the year, but that was not to be. He was only fifty-eight years old. An obituary in the *Church Chronicle* noted that although he had been settled in Mount Gambier for only three years, he had become deeply and universally loved. On the day of his funeral “every place of business was closed, and there seemed to be a general flowing out of the population to unite in one last act of reverence for his memory. This feeling extended beyond his own congregation”.³⁴

* * *

On the 3rd October 1868 the Reverend William Andrews penned a note to his Wardens, Nathaniel Oldham and William Bacon Carter, tendering his resignation. He had been nominated to the incumbency of Christ Church, Mount Gambier and wished to take up the appointment at the end of that year. His letters leave one wondering whether his time at Mitcham had perhaps been a disappointment, for he wrote that his acceptance of the new parish was “a determination which I think under all circumstances you will perceive to be right & justifiable”; and went on to describe the past five years as being ones of “interest & hope”. Hardly a glowing testimonial!

Fig. 2-9
Reverend
Henry Read.
(MPA)



THE INCUMBENCY OF HENRY READ (1869–1878)

The Reverend William Andrews' letter of resignation caused a flurry of meetings. In accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deed they had to elect three communicant members of the congregation who were to act in conjunction with the Wardens and Trustees as an Election Committee to appoint a new minister. Amongst the various problems encountered was the fact that Henry Taylor was the only one of the five Trustees to attend the meeting: Richard Hicks was dead, the Hon. Arthur Blyth, M.P., was "out of the Colony" having taken his wife to England in the hope of restoring her health, James Lewis (the Postmaster General) sent an apology, but expressed his "willingness to concur with the wishes of those with whom the appointment rested". Nothing was heard from the fifth Trustee, Alfred Hardy.

By 26th October a decision had been reached. On the suggestion of William Bartley (who had recently returned to the Parish after a long absence) a letter was sent to the Reverend Henry Read, M.A., at Trinity Parsonage, Lyndoch Valley, inviting him to accept the incumbency of Mitcham. The letter, written by the Minister's Warden, Nathaniel Oldham from his home 'Woodside House' near Mitcham (now the site of Urrbrae Agricultural High School) informed Mr Read that "... the present emoluments derivable from this incumbency are only £250 per annum from the Pew Rents and the Offertory Collections, £40 yearly from the Endowment, with a comfortable Parsonage situated close to the Church".

On 9th November Henry Read accepted the offer, saying "it will be my earnest and humble endeavour so to labour amongst you as to merit your esteem & to win your affection".

During the nine-and-a-half-year period of Henry Read's incumbency of St Michael's there were to be many changes, not only within the Parish, but also throughout the Colony – particularly in the field of education. One of these was the passing of the *Education Act of 1875* that compelled all children between the ages of seven and thirteen who lived within two miles of a school to attend classes. Henry Read and some of his parishioners were to become deeply involved in aspects of higher education.

There was also a change in the name of the whole Church communion in the Colony: in 1871 it was shortened from 'The United Church of England and Ireland' to 'The Church of England'.

* * *

9th April 1869

My dearest Cousin,

Our new minister, Reverend Henry Read, has been with us for two months now and seems full of enthusiasm with many plans and hopes for the Parish [Fig. 2-9]. He and his wife, Elizabeth, have two sons and a daughter.

He was born in 1832 in Manchester and attended the Grammar School there before going on to Huddersfield College and then to St John's College, Cambridge, where he was three times an 'exhibitioner' and seven times a 'prizeman' in addition to receiving other honours. He also seems to have pursued some medical studies there. His father (now an Anglican clergyman) was formerly a tobacco manufacturer, which may have influenced Henry's decision to go to South America. Soon after taking his B.A. degree in 1855 he sailed for Guyana where he was ordained deacon on 3rd June. That is where, in 1859, he met and married Miss Elizabeth Lawrence whose family (originally from the south of Wales) was stationed in New Amsterdam, a port town in British Guyana. He initially went to the capital, a port called Georgetown in the Demerara region, to take up the appointment of Classical Tutor at Bishop's College, also serving as assistant curate at St Philip's Church. He took an M.A. degree at Cambridge in 1859, then served as the S.P.G. Missionary at All Saints, Berbice, until 1861. From there he went to the West Indies where he spent two years as assistant curate at St Mary's Church in Antigua, before being appointed 'Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, West Indies', serving in connection with the Colonial Office under Lord Stanley. As a consequence of failing health after serving for so many years in such a hot, steamy climate, Mr and Mrs Read returned to England in 1866.³⁵ He has been in South Australia since May 1867 having been appointed by Bishop Short to the incumbency of a large country area a little north of Adelaide which includes Holy Trinity Church at Lyndoch, St Peter's at Williamstown and St Thomas's at Pewsey Vale – all of which were established in 1861.³⁶

After the Reverend William Andrews and his young family departed it was found necessary to make quite a few repairs to the Parsonage. In fact the house and its enclosure was described as being "... in such a dilapidated state that was painful to observe, and which, as the Clergyman's residence, set a bad example to the whole of the Village". Mr Read felt this point so keenly that he effected the improvements out of his own pocket by obtaining the Bishop's approval to secure a loan of £100 upon an Assignment of his Endowment money for the ensuing three years. Before his arrival he had been promised £30 for this purpose, but the Vestry was so embarrassed over the issue that they have formed a committee to raise the money to reimburse him through subscriptions to a 'Parsonage Repairs Fund'.

There always seems to be some new appeal for money. Mr Nathaniel Oldham's excellent Warden's financial statement detailed lists of subscribers to an 'Organ Fund', 'Stipend Fund', 'Carriage Shed Building Fund', 'Plastering Church Fund' and a 'Choir Alterations Fund'! The carriage shed is finished (and filled each Sunday), the new portion of the Church has been plastered (apparently increasing the hearing power) and the Choir alterations have greatly improved the interior appearance of the Church (and the choristers their singing and chanting).

Now that he is back in the Parish, Mr Wm Bartley is once again taking a leading role in discussions. At the Vestry he pointed out the desirability of placing the Tables of the Commandments, Creed and Lord's Prayer over the Communion Table (as is customary) and putting jalousie windows in the tower of the Church. He also proposed that we discontinue the use of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (regarded by some as being high-church) and that it be replaced by the old book, *Hall's Collection*. However, this was not a popular suggestion, and our new minister, in a democratic move, asked all the seat-holders to indicate their preference by signing their names under one or the other heading last Sunday. It was an overwhelming endorsement of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

Having a teacher as incumbent, it is no great surprise to learn that he feels a schoolroom is urgently needed. He is of the opinion that 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". A schoolroom would also be available for a Day School, and for many other "useful parish purposes". The other item most self-evidently required is a vestry room where the minister may change his clothes (at present this is a curtained-off corner of the Church). Comments have also been made about the

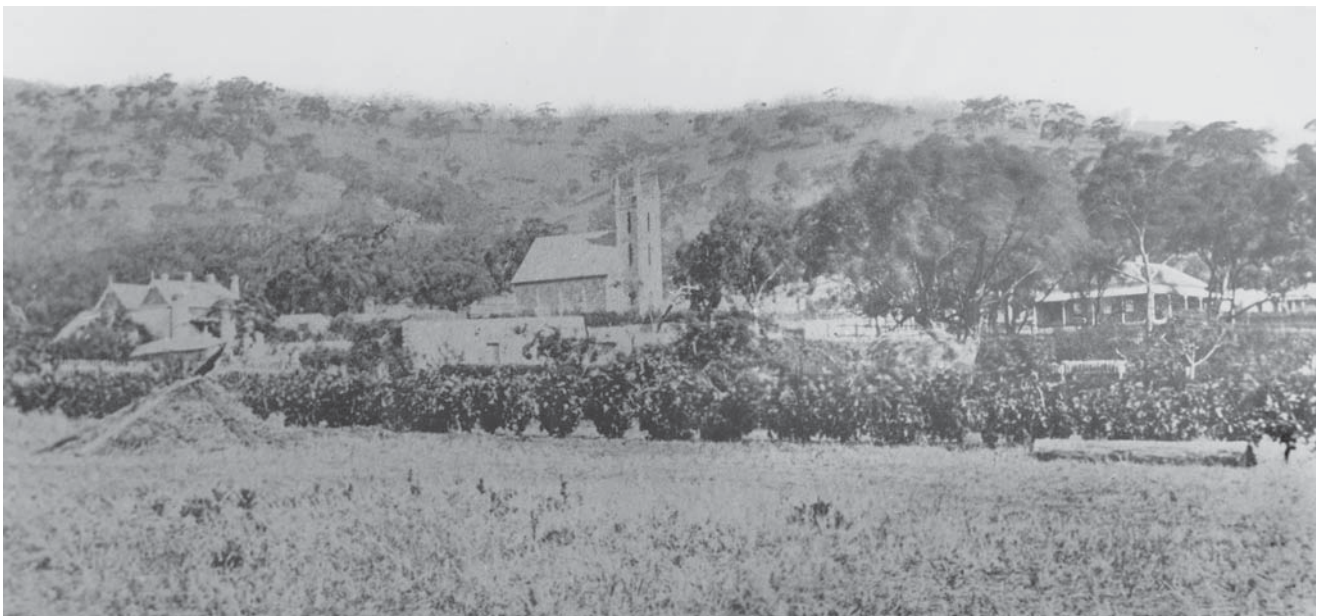
present "neglected and poverty-stricken appearance of the Church enclosure", with a suggestion that footpaths should be properly defined, and that "each member of the congregation should plant one tree or shrub with their own hands". I suppose all these worthwhile suggestions will ultimately mean the setting-up of more subscription lists to raise the necessary funds! I think our Reverend Mr Read is going to keep us on our toes...

31st October 1869

... A most unusual sight occurred this afternoon: a religious procession went down St Michael's-road. "What", you may ask, "is remarkable in that?" Only the fact that it was not a Church of England procession passing its own gate, but a Roman Catholic one! The foundation stone of a church has been laid on a small allotment on the NW corner of St Michael's-road and Taylors-road. I understand that a Mr George Stevens, who lives opposite St Michael's [Fig. 2-10], has made available the land on his northern boundary for the church, which is to be dedicated to the Virgin Mary under the title of 'Our Lady of Dolours'. It was a very festive occasion, with two omnibuses crowded with visitors coming from Town. They all met at Mr Stevens' house where the procession formed before marching to the site for the ceremony. Fancy having two churches in such a small street!³⁷

Of much more importance was the laying of the foundation stone of our Church of England Cathedral some four months ago. Bishop Short had always assumed that his Cathedral would be built in Victoria Square in the centre of Adelaide Town on a 'Cathedral Acre' granted by the Governor. However, in 1855 a court case initiated by the Dissenters resulted in the Supreme Court rejecting the Bishop's claim. Mr William Bartley acted as his

Fig. 2-10 Upper Mitcham c.1860s. A very early photo, it appears to have been taken before the southern nave was added to St Michael's in 1863. The twin-gabled house on the left is 'Bloomfield', home of Leonard Thrupp (see Fig. 2-13). Note the vines in the foreground which would have been on George Stevens' land. The house on the far right was probably William Easter's home which was situated on the south of Church Road. (MLHC, Blum Collection)



Counsel before their mutual friend His Honour Mr Justice Charles Cooper! Since then a prominent site at North Adelaide has been acquired. As the Cathedral is to be dedicated to St Peter it was appropriate that the ceremony should be held on his feast day, 29th June. Bishop Short commissioned your eminent British architect Mr William Butterfield to design the Cathedral, but some disputes arose leading to the plans being purchased for £200 and modified to suit our local conditions. You will be interested to know that the work has been placed in the hands of Mr Edward J. Woods, a partner of Mr Edmund Wright the architect who designed our southern nave. Their architectural firm of Wright, Woods and Hamilton also designed Our Lady of Dolours!³⁸

A Church of England building is at present under construction in the Village of Unley. Amongst the instigators of the project back in 1862 were our two present Wardens, Messrs Nathaniel Oldham and W. Bacon Carter (who is the Lands Department Registrar). Mr Oldham chaired the first meeting and is one of the five Trustees of the new Church (another is Mr Neville Blyth, brother of the Hon. Arthur and Mr Wilkins Blyth). The foundation stone was laid by the Governor's wife, Lady Edith Fergusson, on 14th August. Mr David Deans, the contractor, says he hopes to have the building complete within six months.³⁹

17th October 1870

... Whereas my letter a year ago dealt mainly with churches under construction, this one is about schools. In fact the two overlap, because Our Lady of Dolours (which opened on the 1st of May) also serves as a schoolroom for the Sisters of St Joseph. This order was founded four years ago by Mother Mary MacKillop and Father Tenison Woods to educate the children of poor families. They now have about forty schools and charitable institutions throughout South Australia. As well as the school at Mitcham, the Sisters have been renting Mr George Stevens' former house across the road from St Michael's, where they have been running a Catholic Female Refuge since last April. Needless to say many of our friends were appalled at the prospect of having twenty or so former prisoners and prostitutes living in our midst! In order to be self-supporting they take in washing and do needlework at very reasonable prices, which I suppose is some slight advantage.⁴⁰

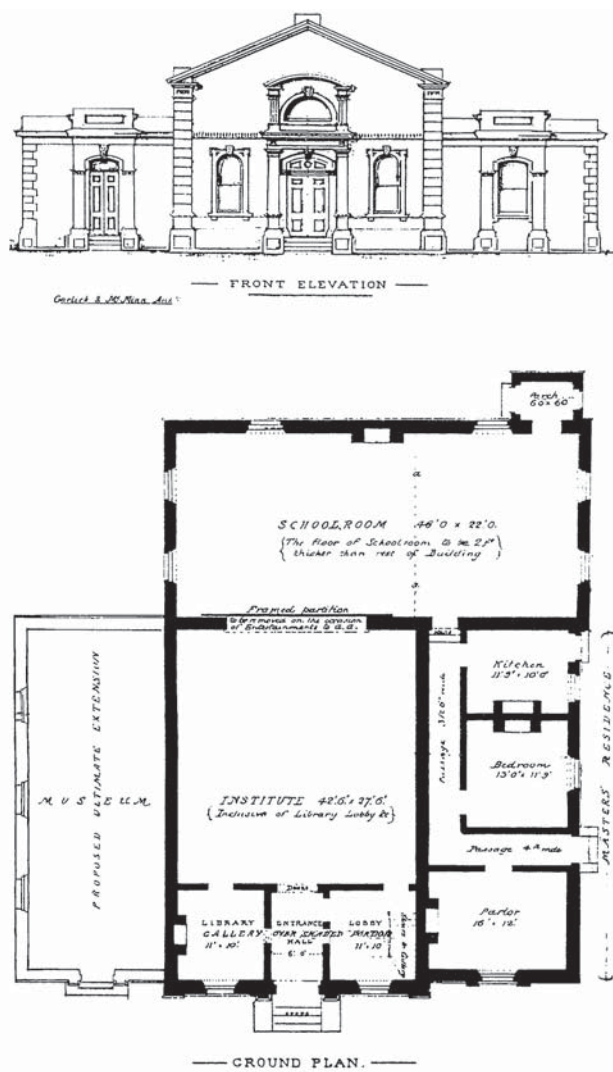
But the main reason I write is to tell you about the opening of our Mitcham Village Institute and School. You will recall from my past letters that the old Union Chapel on the Village Green has, for many years, been used as Chapel, Schoolroom and meeting place for the Mitcham Institute Association. On 26th July last year Reverend Henry Read and Mr Leonard Thrupp attended as a deputation from Mitcham to seek support from the Central Board of Education for the erection of a new District Schoolhouse that would also be available for Institute purposes. At a meeting convened on 13th August the Chairman, Mr Thrupp, informed the meeting that he, in company with the Reverend Henry Read, "had waited on the Board of Education, and ascertained they would throw no obstacle in the way of an Institute being

united with the school building so long as the purposes of education were paramount and no disputes occurred". Of course our incumbent, having served as 'Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, West Indies', was an ideal choice to lead such a delegation and to negotiate with the Central Board of Education!⁴¹

The Building Committee inspected several eligible sites before selecting an allotment offered by Pastor William Finlayson adjacent to the NW corner of the Village. A new road has recently been opened linking this site with the Torrens Arms Hotel and Mr John Prince's 'Parkfields' store on the Unley-road at Lower Mitcham. It runs diagonally through Mr Prince's land (roughly parallel to the course of the Brownhill Creek) before skirting the northern boundary of the 'Torrens Park Estate' as far as the Village.

A plan submitted by Messrs Garlick and McMinn, architects, was chosen and the very handsome edifice constructed by our local builder and Vestryman, David Deans [Fig. 2-11].

Fig. 2-11 *Mitcham Institute and Schoolroom. Elevation and ground plan drawn in 1869 by the architectural firm of Garlick and McMinn for a building to house the Mitcham Institute Association and the Mitcham School. (MLHC)*



At the gala opening last Monday evening the proceedings were diversified by music and recitations. One could be forgiven for thinking it was a Church Vestry meeting with Reverend Henry Read, Messrs Leonard Thrupp (who is his Warden), William Easterher (as Chairman of the District Council) and Charles J. Webb all seated on the podium. Mr Webb, our organist, is the Headmaster of the Mitcham School and hopes to move his pupils into their spacious new premises on 31st October. He and his wife, Miranda, will live in the residence in the East Wing of the building. Their marriage at St Michael's in March last year was the first one conducted by Reverend Henry Read after his arrival in Mitcham.⁴²

The Church at Unley was opened on Sunday, 20th February and dedicated to St Augustine of Canterbury. Reverend Henry Read and Reverend William Mudie of St Saviour's at Glen Osmond were both on the Building Committee and have offered their services in an honorary capacity for the first two years to enable the Church to stabilize its financial affairs. They will conduct services on alternate Sundays in the afternoons, with Lay Readers taking the morning services. The Church, built in the Gothic style, has a very pretty appearance. The present erection is intended as the nave of a larger edifice of which the chancel will be built when the needs of the neighbourhood render it desirable. It was designed by Mr R.G. Thomas who is one of the Wardens of St Augustine's.⁴³

12th April 1871

... At last night's Easter Vestry it was thought desirable to work towards the building of a clergyman's vestry, and already we have £10 in hand being the proceeds from a very pleasant concert held recently. It seems to me that an inordinate amount of money has been spent on repairs to the Parsonage: some £251 over the past two years! In an effort to overcome these large outlays it was suggested that the Wardens should inspect the premises annually and set aside an amount each year for regular upkeep.

In order to supplement his income, and to 'keep his hand in', Mr Read is at present a temporary Assistant Master at St Peter's College. Teaching is a great joy to him and he longs for the day when we can have our own Day School in the Parish...⁴⁴

1st January 1873

... We are all very relieved about the recent removal of the Female Refuge from St Michael's-road. It proved to be too far from Town for most people to support the laundry, so in November they transferred it to a site in Norwood. The nuns, of course, are still teaching in their little school on the corner of the street.

I am now able to make the journey into Town by means of a comfortable coach. A Mr Thomas Newey, who has been running an omnibus service for several years, recently built commodious stables on the corner opposite the Edinburgh Hotel in High-street. The service runs seven times a day and terminates at the Southern Cross Hotel in Adelaide. How very convenient for the gentlemen of the Village to have a hotel at either end of the line in which to await the next conveyance!



Fig. 2-12 Priest's vestry, designed by E.J. Woods, built during 1872. (Pamela Oborn, 2002)

Having spent a year discussing it and raising subscriptions, we at last have a clergyman's vestry nearing completion [Fig. 2-12]. The architect is Mr Edward J. Woods, a partner in the firm of Wright, Woods and Hamilton. It was Mr Edmund Wright who designed our south nave. The firm is also supervising the building of the Cathedral.

For many years the incumbent of St Michael's has also been responsible for ministering to the scattered groups of Church of England folk living in the Hills. In the past this has included holding services in a little Baptist Chapel at Belair, plus weekly services at 'Craigburn' the home of Mr and Mrs George Gooch. On 21st December last the foundation stone of St John's Church of England in Coromandel Valley was laid by Mrs Gooch's sister, Miss Olive Richmond. As I have said many times before, ours is a very tightly-knit society with many inter-marriages between the leading families. In this case both Mrs Gooch and Miss Richmond are sisters of Sophia, wife of Capt. W.W. Hughes, the owner of 'Torrens Park House'.

But the most startling news concerns Capt. Hughes and his great philanthropy in the field of education. All of Adelaide is agog, for he has offered £20,000! Twenty thousand pounds: can you imagine that? And here we were thinking that his donations of £5 and £10 to various St Michael's appeals were generous! The original offer was made last February to a group of gentlemen collecting subscriptions for the Union College. This College was established by the Baptist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches to provide young men with an education beyond school level and to train those desirous of devoting themselves to the work of the Christian Ministry. Capt. Hughes's offer was so far beyond their expectations that they began to think that it would be better used to found a University. In September a meeting chaired by Bishop Short unanimously made the decision to proceed with plans for a University, and a few days later a 'University Association' was formed with Capt. Hughes as President and the Bishop as Vice-President. The indenture providing the endowment was duly signed on Christmas Eve, whereby Capt. Hughes agreed to provide the salaries for two Professors of his

choosing. It was the men he appointed which came as the biggest shock of all. They are to be the Reverend Henry Read, M.A., as Professor of Classics and of Comparative Philology and Literature; and the Reverend John Davidson, M.A., (a Presbyterian) as Professor of English Language and Literature and of Mental and Moral Philosophy!⁴⁵ Both are tutors at the Union College. It will be some time before any lectures start so 'Professor' Henry Read continues on as incumbent of the Parish of Mitcham.

Sunday, 18th May 1873

... There has been much dismay in the Parish concerning Mr Read and his appointment to the proposed University. Some members – both lay and clerical – on the University Association strongly oppose the appointments made by Capt. Hughes. They have called into question Mr Read's qualifications and ability to hold a professorial appointment, and have called upon him to resign. This he steadfastly refuses to do – unless requested to do so by Capt. Hughes himself!

The whole matter has been most upsetting for the congregation of St Michael's. The Wardens have made public an Address signed by 169 parishioners conveying our sincere sympathy to Mr Read and testifying to our continuing support for him. The Address and Mr Read's reply were printed in the Public Notices of the *Register* on Friday.⁴⁶

This unfortunate affair could not have happened at a worse time. Last Sunday the new Church of St John at Coromandel Valley was opened and dedicated at 11 a.m. by Bishop Short – who of course is one of the chief instigators of the proposed University. Much to everyone's embarrassment Henry Read was absent owing to his "not being able to supply his own pulpit at Mitcham"! This meant that His Lordship was alone at the morning service and Holy Communion. Mr Read will be Priest-in-Charge, with some help from Reverend Wm Mudie at Glen Osmond. A number of our St Michael's Vestrymen, as well as Mr Read, have been involved in the planning of the new Church: Mr Alfred Spence, Judge Andrews and Major Ferguson are all guarantors of the Building Fund.⁴⁷

23rd October 1873

... Mr Leonard Thrupp and his wife, Anne, have decided to leave Mitcham. They have given St Michael's the first option of purchasing their lovely home, 'Bloomfield', which adjoins the northern boundary of the Church Acre [Fig. 2-13]. A Special Vestry meeting was called last night to consider the propriety of purchasing it as a parsonage, but after being discussed fully it was decided unanimously that it should not be purchased. The reasons given were twofold: it would be difficult to sell the old Parsonage and it was undesirable to incur so heavy a debt as £1,600, the price named.

Fig. 2-13 'Bloomfield' c.1869. It was the home of Leonard Thrupp and his family from 1857 to 1873. St Michael's refused his offer to buy it as a Rectory. It was later sold to Col Francis Downes. (MLHC)



30th June 1876

... It is exactly seven years since the foundation stone of our Cathedral Church was laid, and although it is still under construction the Bishop was able to hold his first service in the unfinished building today. It will be quite some time before regular services can be held, because as yet there is no floor – only the natural unlevelled ground – and the building is far from weatherproof.⁴⁸

The University of Adelaide also took its first tentative steps in March by starting lectures in rented rooms in the Town. At the time an Act to Incorporate and Endow the University was introduced into the Parliament back in October 1874, there were those who opposed the appointments made by Hughes. They said the degrees would “not be worth the paper they were written upon” under the Professors “who had been foisted upon them”, and that it would be better for the £20,000 to be returned to Capt. Hughes “rather than imperil the University”. As you can imagine, Reverend Professor Henry Read was not pleased at having his good name called into question! Once the Act was passed Mr Thomas Elder came forward with another £20,000, with no strings attached, the University being free to use the money as it sees fit for other degrees such as Medicine, Law, Science and Music. Another Mitcham parishioner, the Hon. Arthur Blyth (at present holding the position of Chief Secretary of the Province) is one of the twenty members of the University Council. The Bishop is Vice-Chancellor of our new University.

Like Hughes, Thomas Elder is also a Scotchman and a Presbyterian, and both have been generous to St Michael’s. Now, a third member of the group involved in the huge Wallaroo and Moonta mines is living in Mitcham. Mr Robert Barr Smith purchased ‘Torrens Park’ from Capt. Hughes about eighteen months ago. He and Mr Thomas Elder are partners in the firm of Elder, Smith & Co. Mrs Joanna Barr Smith is Mr Elder’s youngest sister. Like the others, they too are Presbyterians by upbringing, but often attend services at St Andrew’s Church of England at Walkerville where the incumbent, Archdeacon Dove, is a friend of theirs. Soon after her arrival at ‘Torrens Park’, Mrs Barr Smith subscribed £5 towards liquidating the Parish debt which is, hopefully, a good omen for St Michael’s. Over the past three years there has been a steady drop in both pew rents (from £315 to £260) and offertory (£113 to £87) occasioned by the removal of several rich families from the neighbourhood...

4th April 1877

... We are all most alarmed to learn that St Michael’s might fall down around our ears! At last night’s Easter Vestry parishioners were advised that “the Church walls have seriously cracked from settlement of the foundation”. This led to a lengthy discussion as to whether the Church should be repaired or a new and handsome one should be erected. In case the latter course was adopted, two of the gentlemen present immediately promised £250 each towards the probable cost of about £4,000. The matter has been deferred to be reconsidered at a meeting a month hence.

At the moment the Parish finances seem to be satisfactory, to the point where there is talk of purchasing a new organ. The Vestry determined that Mrs Read (our incumbent’s wife), who is currently in England, should be requested to take steps to procure a suitable instrument. A subscription list was opened forthwith with a promised donation of twenty guineas from the Hon. Joseph Fisher who was attending his first Vestry at St Michael’s.

We have a new family living in the district, a Mr Peter Waite and his wife, Matilda, with several young children. They have just moved into ‘Urrbrae’, a large property on the corner of the Mitcham-road and Glenelg-road. Mr Waite is a partner with Mr Thomas Elder on several huge pastoral properties in the north of the Colony, where the family has lived for many years on one called ‘Paratoo’. By all accounts they are very wealthy. Like many other Scotch people, they are Presbyterians, but will be worshipping at our Church because there are so few Presbyterian edifices in the Colony.⁴⁹

Sunday, 19th May 1878

... During the past year there has been much talk about repairs to the Church. A month after announcing that the building should be demolished the scheme was abandoned as there seemed little hope of building a new Church. Mr James Manton, who is a civil engineer and surveyor, offered to look into the problem and presented a carefully-prepared estimate and statement of needful repairs and alterations that might be carried out for £184. The architect Mr Woods, meanwhile re-stated that the wall was unsafe and might be taken down and rebuilt for £250. Tenders were called, and that of Mr David Deans was accepted conditionally – it being resolved that unless it should be found absolutely necessary, the roof should not be removed. The new organ is coming on the ship *Argonaut* which is due about 10th June. It is to be placed against the Eastern wall, which means that some of the pews will need to be altered. The total cost of all this work is estimated to be about £500, and of this some £200 was promised on the spot. In an effort to raise extra money an evening offertory is to be established.

Our ‘Professor’ seems to have boundless energy. As well as being incumbent of Mitcham and assisting with neighbouring parishes, he spends about eleven hours a week lecturing at the University where he has twice been elected Dean of the Professorial Board. He speaks fluent French, Italian and Spanish, and last year he published a book called *Modern Pronunciation of Latin and Greek as Adopted in Universities of Melbourne and Adelaide*. Mrs Read is still in England...⁵⁰

* * *

On the very day that the above letter was written, events were unfolding in Adelaide which were to shake Parish life at St Michael’s to its very core.

On 28th May 1878 parishioners were summoned to a Special Vestrymeeting presided over by the Vicar-General of the Diocese, Dean Alexander Russell. He informed the astonished assembly that the Reverend Henry Read, M.A., had “resigned the incumbency of the Church on the 24th

inst” and that the Cure was “now vacant”. No details or explanations were ever recorded in the Vestry Minute Book. The whole matter may well have remained shrouded in mystery had not our ‘Colonial Cousin’ been privy to certain confidential matters known to only a handful of Mitcham residents at that time.⁵¹ Another resident who had inside knowledge was Robert Barr Smith, who wrote to his brother-in-law in Scotland saying: “We are much scandalised by the Mitcham pastor turning out to be a black sheep in all possible evil ways”.⁵²

* * *

Tuesday, 4th June 1878

My dear Elizabeth,

I scarcely know how to begin this letter. Last Tuesday Dean Russell (acting in his capacity as Vicar-General) called a Special Vestry Meeting at St Michael’s to inform us that Reverend Henry Read had resigned. He was unwilling to go into detail but expressed great and deep regret at “an indiscretion” and “unhappy circumstances” which had led to the resignation.

That was a week ago. I am now in possession of all of the facts and must say at the outset that it is only through the tact and mediation of Dean Russell that a great scandal has been avoided for the Church of England in this Diocese. It all started on Sunday, 19th May. A country clergyman who was staying at the Earl of Zetland Hotel in Flinders-street, Adelaide, told Dean Russell that statements had been made by the landlady, a Mrs Badman, that were prejudicial to the character of Mr Read. Thinking it a case of unfounded scandal, the Dean asked for particulars in order that he might advise Mr Read to take such steps as were necessary for his own protection. According to Mrs Badman’s statement he had, at various times, come to the hotel with ladies, one at a time, none of whom was his wife. On each occasion he had retired with the lady to a private sitting-room upstairs. He had so conducted himself as to cause the landlady to suspect that he had come there for an immoral purpose, and to alarm her for the reputation of her house.

The matter came to a head about the 5th of April when Mr Read asked for some wine for the young lady with him before proceeding upstairs as usual. When informed of this, Mrs Badman – her suspicions being already excited – hastily dressed and came to the door of the sitting-room which was closed, but not locked. As she approached the door she could hear sounds of kissing. On entering she found the girl on the sofa, her hair streaming loose, while Mr Read sat with his arms round her still animatedly kissing her. Upon being indignantly challenged, and the name of the lady demanded, Mr Read began to express his sorrow, whilst the girl refused to give her name. Eventually, on being threatened that they would both be given in charge to the Police, she stated her name was Ingelwood and that she lived with her father in Norwood. Mr Read stood silent whilst she said this, which later proved to be a falsehood.

Some time after this Mrs Badman mentioned the circumstances to one of our Vestrymen, Mr George Prince, who is in the habit of dining at the hotel. Her

language was so threatening that he sent a message to our incumbent intimating that it would be necessary for him to make his peace with the landlady as quickly as possible. Mr Read was not prepared to do this, and asked Mr Prince to mediate on his behalf, alleging that “her memory might even have suffered from such an incident in her house”. Then, to add insult to injury, Mr Read authorised him to say that he was “ready to make compensation in money”. Can you image that – a clergyman trying to bribe someone to be quiet! Mr Prince subsequently arranged that Mr Read should accompany him and make his own apologies, which he did; but as Mr Prince was about to withdraw, Mrs B. insisted he remain. Then, much to his embarrassment, she denounced Read as unfit to be a clergyman and to preach against adultery by others. He did not repel this implied accusation, instead, renewed his expressions of sorrow and entreated that the thing might be buried in oblivion!

Dean Russell, having been acquainted with these facts, and having verified them with Mr George Prince, then asked Mr Read to see him ‘on Church business’ on Wednesday, 22nd May at 10 a.m. When confronted with the accusation of being found with the girl in a compromising situation, he denied it strenuously, saying he had “met the girl and seeing her to be ill, took her to the hotel and got wine for her”. He admitted only that he had kissed her and denied the graver allegation. As no formal charge had been brought against Read, Dean Russell had to admit that, as Vicar-General, he did not have anything proved on which he could act, no doubt leading the accused to sigh a great sigh of relief! This was short-lived when the full contents of Mrs Badman’s statement were read out to Read, particularly as Dean Russell then went on to say that he was also aware of the fact that “no fewer than three persons of the other sex had been at her house with him” and that, as a result of this, he would have to consult the Chapter. It might also be necessary to “communicate the allegations to his principal parishioners”. Mr Read is said to have blanched at this revelation! He then offered to resign, the resignation to take effect six months thence, if the Vicar General would refrain from telling the Chapter and his parishioners. This, the Dean was willing to do “provided no new circumstances arose, and no formal charge was preferred”.

And there the matter might have ended, with only Dean Russell and Mr George Prince being aware of the circumstances leading to Mr Read’s planned announcement that he “intended to resign the Cure in six month’s time”. But then the bombshell fell: on the following day – 23rd May – the true identity of the girl who was with him at the hotel was revealed. It was a Miss M----, one of his own parishioners! On being informed of the circumstances, her father, Mr Charles M---- (one of our Vestrymen) went to see Dean Russell the following morning. He said he had, for some time, been uneasy at the intimacy between his daughter and Mr Read and, having watched them when they were together, had cautioned the girl as to her conduct. He was so incensed that he had come to obtain the necessary information as to the form in which he should prefer

a charge against Mr Read of ‘Conduct unbecoming a clergyman’ according to the Provisions of the Diocese, in that he had “enticed his daughter into a public hotel with the intention of corrupting her”. This form would have to be countersigned by two communicating members of the Parish.

Shortly after this Mr Read went to see Dean Russell and, on learning of Mr M-----’s visit and the charges to be brought against him, immediately wrote his resignation and forwarded his Licence to the Registrar of the Diocese. This meant that when Mr M----- returned next day with the form duly signed, the Vicar-General was unable to receive it because Mr Read had ceased to be a clergyman of the Diocese of Adelaide. Consequently his authority over him had ceased as he had been removed from the jurisdiction of the Bishop.

I might just say here that the parents of the girl are fine people who have been staunch members of the Parish since the mid-sixties. I feel so sorry for them! They have two sons and four or five daughters – one of whom has been on the committee raising money to pay for the new organ!

Saturday, 29th June 1878

Further to my letter of the 4th inst, I now have to report that Henry Read has also been forced to resign his Professorial Chair. Fortunately, the details leading to his resignation from the Cure of Mitcham have not been

made public – although they were the catalyst for his being asked to leave the University. As far as the public is aware, the problems were associated with the University Calendar, the setting of exam papers and the minimal number of hours some professors devote to their classes.⁵³

Members of the Parish have been much saddened by all these events, particularly the effect it has had on Mrs Elizabeth Read and her children. As she is shortly to leave the Colony, a committee of ladies invited her to meet with them last Thursday at the beautiful home of the Hon. Joseph Fisher at Fullarton, where we presented her with a purse of 150 sovereigns made on behalf of the ladies of the congregation and a few other friends. Goodness knows what the future holds for the poor lady. This was our way of saying thank you for her self-denying efforts in the interests of the Church made over the nine-and-a-half years of her residence in Mitcham. By willing devotion among the sick and poor, the Sunday School and choir, she has secured to herself lasting remembrances of esteem and affection among all classes of the community among whom she has laboured.⁵⁴

Yesterday the whole of their household furniture and effects were sold at auction. One expects to be offered bulky items like wardrobes, cupboards and beds at these auctions; but it was particularly heartbreaking to see treasured smaller possessions such as paintings, lustres and hand-painted vases being sold to the highest bidder. It was the final indignity.⁵⁵



Fig. 3-1 Reverend J. Francis Hocter. (MPA)

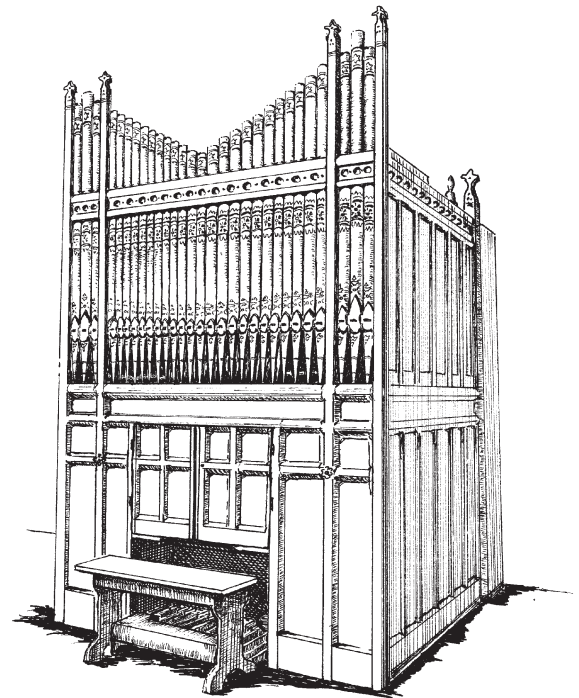


Fig. 3-2 The organ, made by J.C. Bishop and Son, London, was installed in 1878 (Pamela Oborn, 1977)

Fig. 3-3 The Mitcham Hotel, c.1885. Henry Taylor's former single-storey Brownhill Creek Inn was converted to two storeys in 1879 by John Wark. The architect was James Cunningham. On the right is the entrance to the Mitcham Tea and Coffee Garden. (MLHC)

