

Chapter 7

THE MacDONALD ERA: 1962-1976

THE 'Swinging 60s' and 'Sexy 70s': what memories spring to mind. Making the newspaper headlines were events such as the assassination of JFK, putting a man on the moon, the introduction of decimal currency on 14 February 1966, the *Voyager* disaster, the arrival in Australia of The Beatles, the disappearance at sea of Prime Minister Harold Holt, demonstrations against the Vietnam War, Cyclone Tracy and the dismissal of Gough Whitlam.

The first office computers were introduced – not the familiar PC's of today, but large cumbersome items about the size of a refrigerator. Although these led to great discoveries in the field of technology, the greatest changes were in society's moral standards and attitudes to authority. These had been challenged in the 1920s during the 'Flapper era', but never openly flaunted as they were in the late 1960s and 1970s. It was a period of youth revolution and a breakdown in parental authority with an emphasis on personal liberation.

Following the introduction of the contraceptive pill in 1961, the fear of unwanted pregnancies decreased. In its place arose a willingness to experiment with drugs, particularly marijuana. Films, plays and music advocated the hippy lifestyle of 'free love', 'flower power' and smoking 'pot'. It was a time to live in communes and become self-sufficient, living off the land, making your own pottery and tie-dyeing your clothes.

In South Australia the defeat of the Playford Liberal Government in 1965 ushered in a period of instability leading several years later to the 'Dunstan Decade' – a time of radical change and internal confrontation. It has also been described as "a decade in which Australia struggled to find its personality and individuality".¹

As the Church of England in Australia battled to come to grips with these changing lifestyles, it also began to question its own social policies. This led to the Adelaide Synod setting up a Select Committee on Racism and

another dealing with Social Questions. It also saw the rise of the Ecumenical Movement, the Australian Council of Churches, Church and Life Movement and the Charismatic Movement.

This, then, is the background against which Reverend James Younger MacDonald, Th.L., A.A.S.A (Fig. 7-1) led his fourteen-year ministry in Mitcham. Of course very little of these changes in attitudes filtered through to the official Parish minutes, so it behoves our 'Correspondent' to fill in the gaps.

* * *

20th August 1962

Dear Lizzie,

Our new Rector, Reverend Jim MacDonald, was instituted on Friday, 11th May. Bishop Reed was interstate at the time, so the ceremony was conducted by his commissary, Archdeacon M.C.W. Gooden, assisted by the Rector of Fullarton (Reverend A.R. Thrush) and nine other priests.

Although Jim was born in Dublin in 1911 he grew up in Southampton and attended Edward the Confessor's Grammar School. He toyed with the idea of becoming a mariner like his father, or doing medicine, but in the end did neither and followed his brother Neil to Australia. This was at the start of the Great Depression and the brothers batched in 'digs' at St Peter's, doing whatever odd jobs they could find. Jelly sandwiches were the highlight of their day! The rest of the family also emigrated to South Australia, arriving in 1929. During these years Jim attended night school and obtained his accountancy degree which stood him in good stead. He was appointed accountant for the Cellulose Mill, then under construction at Millicent, where he remained for some years. Although he had trained in the Citizens Military Force prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, Jim was not accepted into the Army due to bad eyesight. His brother, Neil, died as a prisoner-of-war on the infamous Burma Railway.

After the War Jim entered St Barnabas' Theological College and whilst studying served as a catechist at Kilburn. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1948 and served his curacy under Canon Bulbeck at Christ Church, North Adelaide. That same year he married Rebecca Mallyon in St Jude's Church at Brighton. Her father, William Kingsnorth Mallyon, who was born in 1850, remarried quite late in life and Rebecca is the youngest child of that second union. Not only was he a highly respected bank manager at Port Pirie, Mr Mallyon was also a self-taught architect whose drafting skills were much sought after. Between 1881 and 1912 he designed some thirty country churches, and these practical



Fig. 7-1
*Reverend
James Younger
MacDonald.
(Courtesy
Pamela Oborn)*

buildings can be found throughout much of the Mid-North and outback South Australia. The nearest one to Adelaide is St Wilfrid's at Tea Tree Gully.²

Jim's first posting in 1949 was as Mission Chaplain (later Priest-in-Charge) of the Pinnaroo Mission where the young marrieds lived in fairly basic accommodation. According to Rebecca the mercury often rose to 110 degrees outside, but felt considerably more than that in the kitchen where all the cooking had to be done on a wood stove. However, prize-winning fruit cakes were baked in that oven. On a typical Sunday morning the priest was expected to travel some 100 miles or so, mainly over sheep tracks! In 1951 they moved to St John's, Mount Pleasant, which included the Mannum Mission, then on to St Stephen's at Willunga from 1954 to 1957. Until recently Jim was Rector of St Paul's in Pulteney Street. He has also been serving as a chaplain at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and at the Adelaide Goal, as well as for the Adelaide University Anglican Society.

In Rebecca we have the ideal rector's wife: a very caring, gentle soul with a warm personality and a beautiful smile. She is a good listener, softly spoken and very active in all spheres of Parish life. They have three children: Mary, who is twelve, is a student at Walford Church of England Girls' Grammar School on Unley Road; Bill is nine and is at Pulteney Grammar School in the City and dear little Paul is only four.

After living in the centre of a busy, noisy city for the past five years, Rebecca is revelling in the beauty and quietness of Mitcham. There is room for the children to run, play and climb trees; no traffic and no overshadowing buildings – just space, “with the dome of blue sky stretching overhead and the brilliant sunsets silhouetting the Church at the end of the day”. She also appreciates living in a newly-built Rectory with all its modern facilities – such a change after the rather dour old bluestone Rectory attached to St Paul's.³

The other Parish news concerns the additions to St Wilfrid's. Work began on enlarging the sanctuary and chancel areas and adding new vestries during the interregnum. It was originally hoped that all would be in readiness by the end of May, but the date for the dedication has now been set for Sunday, 2nd September at the 9.30 a.m. service...

* * *

For the first eighteen months of his incumbency at Mitcham much of Reverend James MacDonald's time – and that of his elected Church officers – was spent in negotiating and overseeing building activities. Work on the additions to St Wilfrid's was well advanced when he arrived in mid-May, but the same could not be said about the restoration of St Michael's. In fact they were no nearer to a solution than they had been four years before!

In October a new architect, Mr S. Chinnery, was requested to give an opinion on the probable life of the building after completion of repairs to the north wall and roof and to provide an estimate of costs. When the Advisory Committee met in February 1963 he reported that “the fabric of the building was in such a state of decadence

that extensive repairs to it were considered not warranted”. He advised that only two builders were prepared to do any work at all on the structure, and then only on a ‘charge up’ basis. One of these, M.L. Bailey & Co., which had been authorised to start work on 14th May 1962, had already delivered some materials to the site. Mr Chinnery was requested to arrange for their removal and to forward a certified account for the work already carried out by Mr Bailey, together with one for his own services to date, as “the previous arrangements were to be terminated”.

The work was eventually tackled by two dedicated Anglicans – one an architect the other a builder – who were prepared to give of their time and talents to do all that was possible with the limited funds available. It was Ted Smith who suggested that Mr J.D. Cheesman, from the architectural firm of Cheesman, Doley, Brabham and Neighbour, be approached for his advice as to whether or not the Church building should be repaired. Ted recalled that Mr Cheesman called in his friend, Mr Alec Bissland, “a very conscientious and skilled building contractor”, and that between them they looked at it and said: “It is impossible to give a quotation for this work, but with the money you've got, we think we can do quite a deal to restore the Church.” Mr Cheesman reported their findings to the Building Committee on 6th June 1963 and it was unanimously decided that they be appointed to carry out the renovations. Work was to commence forthwith.⁴

[A full account of the restoration of St Michael's is given in Chapter 11.]

* * *

16th September 1963

... At last! After years of procrastination and false starts the restoration of St Michael's is nearing completion. External work started on 2nd July and the last service was held in the Church on the 21st. For the past nine weeks services have been transferred to St Wilfrid's and, God willing, we will be able to return to our beloved building next Sunday. Plans are underway to hold a grand Thanksgiving Service on 3rd November. It is now six years since the south nave was restored and, come next March, it will be a decade since the earthquake struck!

It was an inspirational choice to get Mr Alec Bissland, a builder and contractor, to do the work under the supervision of Mr Jack Cheesman who is a highly-regarded architect. Through their untiring efforts the repairs were carried out meticulously, but at minimal cost. Both are committed Christians and Anglicans and the work was done without professional charges. Even so the actual repairs cost twice as much as was estimated. We required a large overdraft from the Bank, and Alec Bissland was one of the sixteen people who offered to act as guarantors! You may be interested to know that one of Mr Cheesman's sons, Andrew, is a priest. He trained for the ministry in England and at present is an assistant curate at St Aidan's in the Diocese of Manchester, but plans to return to South Australia next year.

I am enclosing a copy of our new parish magazine called the *Mitcham Parish Herald* [Fig.7-2]. Unlike previous magazines that have been written by the various



Fig. 7-2 First edition of the Mitcham Parish Herald published in September 1963, with drawings by Rod Horner. (MPA)

Rectors, the format and production of this one is in the hands of an editorial committee. It comprises David Cain (editor) and Trevor Barr from St Wilfrid's, and Madeleine Benton and Jim Horwood representing St Michael's. As well as being a newsletter it is to be an educational publication with articles on faith and worship, the seasons of the Church's year, the history of the Church of England and of the Parish. Trevor Barr is to be responsible for these.

Writing in the first edition the Rector said it comes "from the potential within the fellowship of both congregations". It is the work of people who desire its publication "in order to extend the sharing in fellowship to all folk, so that we may grow in wider fellowship and activity of God and one another". The notes on each of the groups provide a good overview of Parish life as it is today. We have a very active Mothers' Union (M.U.), Fellowship of Marriage (F.O.M.), Bible Study Group, Church of England Boys' Society (C.E.B.S.), Young Anglican Fellowship (Y.A.F.) and a Junior Anglican Fellowship for those under the age of fifteen. There is also a Tennis Club comprising four junior and two senior teams (the eldest member being twenty-one). The Church of England Men's Society (C.E.M.S.) went into recess last year (the average attendance was only five people) and it has been reformed by David Cain and Trevor Barr as a Men's Fellowship Group.

There has been quite a lot of building activity in the district in recent years. Although there have been supermarkets in Australia since the 1950s, the nearest we came to having one in Mitcham was Mr Doug Gregory's



Fig. 7-3 The new Methodist (now Uniting) Church on Princes Road, Mitcham, opened in June 1963. (Pamela Oborn, 2002)

'Wayside Stores' – a deli and grocery store on the corner of Albert and High Streets. This old corner shop has catered to the needs of the Village for over a century. Now we have a new 'Mitcham Shopping Centre' at Torrens Park on Belair Road between the Torrens Arms Hotel and the Council Chamber. Last year a very modern Woolworth's Supermarket and eight lock-up shops opened and this year another sixteen shops, set around two covered pedestrian malls, have been added.⁵

We are not the only church in the area doing construction work: our Methodist brethren have built a very modern A-shaped building on Princes Road [Fig.7-3]. The last service was held in the old Wesleyan Methodist Church on the morning of the 16th June and in the afternoon the new building was opened. The old 1882 bluestone church will now be used as a hall.⁶

5th March 1964

... We are privileged to have had in our midst these past four months the former Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Geoffrey, Lord Fisher of Lambeth and Lady Fisher [Fig.7-4]. Their son, Charles, is Headmaster of Scotch College and they have been staying with the family over the long summer holidays. They arrived in time to participate in our wonderful Restoration Thanksgiving Service at St Michael's on 3rd November. His Grace officiated at all four services that day. The main event was an early Festal Evensong at 3 o'clock attended by over four hundred people.

I gather from Rebecca MacDonald that His Grace (who has been assisting each Sunday) usually joins the family in the Rectory kitchen for a breakfast of toast and boiled eggs between the services. He often rings the Rectory and says cheerfully: "Rector, it is your curate calling. What is the plan for Sunday?" He has a marvellous rapport with every generation.⁷ We came to know Lady Fisher especially through the M.U. She is a concerned person with a merry sense of humour and is very much admired. But she made it quite clear: "I may be Lady Fisher, the wife of the Archbishop, but please remember that I am just myself."



Fig. 7-4 Lord and Lady Fisher outside the Headmaster's residence at Scotch College following the baptism of their grandson, Andrew Fisher, on 29th December 1963 at St Michael's. The baby is being held by his godmother, Mrs Tommy Lyon. In the background is the godfather, Colin Butler. (Courtesy Tommy Lyon)

His Grace and Lady Fisher have been most generous, giving unstintingly of their time and energies – a “quiet family holiday” they called it! In appreciation everyone chipped in to buy them a farewell present – an electric blanket – which should be a warm reminder of their visit to sunny South Australia. They are returning to take up their parish work in Dorset, not far from the historic town of Sherborne.

One of the important events Lord Fisher performed whilst here was the laying of the foundation stone on 1st December of the new St Barnabas' Theological College at Belair.

An excellent Nativity Tableau was held on the Sunday evening before Christmas. Although staged in the grounds of St Michael's, it was a combined effort of both congregations and was offered as an act of praise and thanksgiving. Held under spotlights, it consisted of five acts, in mime, with narrations from the scriptures depicting the events surrounding the birth of Our Lord. Each scene was linked to the others by hymns and carols in which the singing was led by the combined choirs of both Churches. The superb production was in the hands of Myrith Barr who has had long experience with the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of S.A. The scenery and lighting were by Rodney Horner and Ainslie Gaunt.

Following this success Myrith hopes to start a Parish Drama Club and is calling a meeting next week to discuss its formation. Not only is it proposed to produce plays, but also lectures on make-up, lighting and various other aspects of this art, which, hopefully, will appeal to all age groups. She is also involved in a steering committee arranging a Parish Debutante Ball at the Wonderland Ballroom on 15th April.

The somewhat frosty relationship that has existed for many years between the two ends of the Parish is thawing. Since Reverend Reg Pearman disbanded the former Joint Central Council in 1959 all formal communications have had to be negotiated by the Wardens. Now, with a new incumbent and with many of the ‘old guard’ gone, it has been proposed – at the instigation of St Michael's – that a meeting be held “to discuss matters of mutual interest to the Parish as a whole”. It is good to see new, younger parishioners accepting the responsibilities of office bearers.

20th April 1965

... Last November St Michael's conducted a ‘New Pledge Canvass’ with the aid of the Department of Promotion from the Diocese of Sydney. St Wilfrid's parishioners opted not to join in and instead conducted their own under the chairmanship of Mr Gordon George who lives in Ayr Avenue. His son, Ian, worked as a lawyer in Adelaide before deciding to study for the ministry in America.

Once again the thorny issue of clerical assistance has arisen. Apart from normal expenditure, St Wilfrid's is aiming to provide for an assistant in four years time. They stress that this aim was mentioned in the combined Parish canvass more than six years ago – yet it still has not been possible to fulfil it! Because the recent St Michael's canvass fell short of its target for the next three years, we feel unable to guarantee half-stipend for an assistant curate in four years time. A part-time retired priest was suggested, but many feel they are not normally active enough to shoulder the activity required.

Unfortunately there have been several other ‘gripes’. The Rectory sewer had to be relaid to overcome trouble caused by tree roots. The Wardens went ahead with the work, completely overlooking the fact that this expense would be shared by St Wilfrid's. They also authorised Alec Bissland to paint the Rectory, then found out that St Wilfrid's was not satisfied with the price. Oh dear, will this bickering never end?

There have also been some problems at the Parish Hall, with complaints of excessive noise outside on the courts whilst meetings are underway inside; also for holding a bottle-and-paper drive on a Sunday. According to Ted Smith there was a “very unhappy meeting with members of the Tennis Club who adopted an aggressive attitude, attempting to justify what the Wardens regarded as ill-considered and unco-operative conduct”.

His Grace the (present) Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr A.M. Ramsay, paid a visit to Adelaide from 27th to 30th March and we attended a memorable service at the Cathedral at 11 a.m. on the Sunday. I suppose Mitcham parishioners feel a bit blasé about Archbishops of Canterbury having had one as “our curate” for four months last summer!

I noted in the February edition of the *Mitcham Parish Herald* that this year we have no less than twenty-two men in training for the Sacred Ministry: eleven in the new St Barnabas' College, six at St Michael's House, four at St Mark's College and one doing private study. This is indeed good news, but it does mean an extra drain on the limited funds available from the Diocesan Ordination Candidates Fund which will have to be supplemented in one way or another...

* * *

In August 1963 the Third Anglican Congress was held in Toronto, Canada. It was attended by delegates from almost every diocese in the Anglican Communion. The first Congress had been held in 1908 in London and the second in 1954 in Minneapolis, USA. Unlike Lambeth Conferences – held about every ten years since 1867 – for bishops only, the Congresses were open to clergy and laity.

Delegates from the Diocese of Adelaide were Bishop Reed, Lionel Renfrey and the Synod Solicitor, Gordon Bleby.

In 1867 the concept of an 'Anglican Communion' held little meaning for most people as the churches within it were linked by ties of race, language and political institutions. The vast majority of Anglicans were white, spoke English and (with the exception of members of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America) lived within the British Empire. By 1963 the situation was radically different: the British Empire no longer existed, many Anglicans belonged to races whose cultures were totally alien to the European tradition and God was worshipped in the tongues of Africa and Asia as well as in English. People had become more consciously 'Anglican', more aware that they were members of a world-wide Communion.⁸

The Congress reflected a general world-wide wave of optimism that had been building since the end of the Second World War. This optimism, and the enthusiasm it engendered, flowed on into ordinary parish life as the representatives went back to their dioceses and reported on the events. People who knew the Adelaide delegates were said to be "astounded by the creative change in their personalities", even describing it as a "conversion experience"! With them came two phrases which remain Anglican reference points to the Toronto Congress: 'Interdependence in the Body of Christ' and 'The Church which lives to itself will die by itself'.

Previously the Anglican Church had been described as "fiercely hierarchical, patronizingly ecumenical and passionately obsessed with differences in churchmanship". It encouraged dependence – rather than inter-dependence – the 'Father knows best' syndrome. It was always easier to have someone in authority to blame, rather than to accept responsibility for one's own actions. After Toronto everything in the Church began to come under review. Those organisations that could not, or would not, change began to wither; while those that had absorbed some of the Toronto principles grew and flourished. One group in Mitcham that did not survive was the C.E.M.S. By contrast the M.U. adopted the new ideas enthusiastically by updating its service book (several times) and changing its rules to accept single women and divorcees as members. Building and Stewardship campaigns, which had had some growth prior to the Congress, were enhanced. In later years it was reported that in ten years the human and financial resources of the Anglican Church increased fivefold.⁹

As a follow-up to the Toronto Congress individual dioceses conducted missions and study groups to explore the findings of the Congress as set out in a book called *Frontier Mission*. Having attended the Southern Suburbs 'Toronto Advance Conference' held in July 1964, representatives from Mitcham set about enrolling families to participate in 'Intercession and Bible Study' through a series of fact sheets published weekly from 1 September to 30 November. The second phase of the 'Toronto Advance' programme involved small groups gathering in private homes and halls during Lent 1965. They used a book called *Parish Action* specially prepared by the Primate's Committee for the Australian Church. Writing in the *Adelaide Church Guardian* in January, Bishop Reed said:

The coming year promises to be an important one in the life of the Diocese... By discussion, reading and prayer we will try, week by week, to discover the extent to which we as individuals and our local Church as a worshipping community, are responding to the Mission of the Church. In June and July we will deal with the basic questions which our Lenten work will raise... Don't stand aside and criticise your Church and its officers, but join a discussion group and speak your mind there and work for better things...

The programme in Mitcham was launched on Ash Wednesday when the Synod Solicitor, Gordon Bleby, who had been a lay delegate at Toronto, was guest speaker at a combined meeting held in the Hall. Writing of the coming event in the *Mitcham Parish Herald* in March 1965, the Rector said: "Never before in the history of the Church in Australia had there been an Australia-wide (or world-wide) call to every individual Church member, and others, to meet together, discuss, and to be active in the Mission of the Church."

In the Parish about fifty people attended these weekly Lenten sessions from which came "excellent ideas about what we can do to keep our outlook wide and modern". These were forwarded to a Diocesan committee which compiled a study book based on reports from all the parishes. This book, *Parish Reaction*, formed the basis for further discussions held during Lent 1966.

At the same time as Mitcham parishioners were learning 'what it meant to be an Anglican in the modern world', they were also being introduced to the concept of the Ecumenical Movement. On Wednesday, 1st September 1965 Mitcham hosted a gathering of parishioners from the neighbouring Roman Catholic, Methodist and Baptist congregations. Their respective clerics led a panel discussion on the question of Church Unity, seeking how they could co-operate on a parish and individual level. This was followed in February 1966 by a Combined Churches' Survey. It was conducted by twenty churches, from all Christian denominations, in an area stretching from Cross Road to Springbank Road and from Goodwood Road east to the Hills. This massive undertaking was convened by the Mitcham Methodist Church. It involved leaving a circular in letter boxes one weekend, then personally visiting each residence the following weekend. St Michael's allotted area covered Netherby and Springfield, whilst St Wilfrid's team visited all the homes in Torrens Park north of Blythewood Road.

This canvass was a precursor to meetings of the 'Church and Life Movement' held during June and July 1966 organised by the Australian Council of Churches. It was aimed at involving every local congregation throughout Australia from the Church of England, Methodist, Presbyterian, Churches of Christ, Baptist, Congregational, Salvation Army, Society of Friends and the Greek Orthodox Church. Home meetings of small groups of people of all denominations (and none) were held to study and discuss the relevance of the Christian faith to daily life.

These meetings complemented the 'Toronto Advance' sessions. Writing in the *Mitcham Parish Herald* in February 1966, the Rector said:

We are certainly living in a generation of the most rapid changes in human history, and we in our Church Mission should know where and how we are going. The Toronto follow-up meetings of Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence are one of the ways to this end, as also is the Church and Life Movement.

* * *

Young South Australians were certainly a generation living through a period of rapid change. It dawned when 'Beatlemania' hit Adelaide in June 1964. Barber shops were deserted as collar-length hair became the rage. The next year there was a revolution in women's fashions following the appearance of English model, Jean Shrimpton, in a mini-skirt at Flemington Races. Beach inspectors battled to enforce rules against skimpy bikinis.

The Playford Era, which had begun in 1938, came to an end on 10th March 1965 when the first Labour government in twenty-six years was elected to office. The aging new leader, Frank Walsh, retired after only twenty-six months in office and was replaced by his Attorney-General, a young lawyer named Don Dunstan. With Labour came radical political and social changes. The first woman judge in Australia, Roma Mitchell, Q.C., was appointed to the bench of the South Australian Supreme Court in 1965. The following year the first women were sworn in for jury duty. In September 1967 Tom Playford's long-standing prohibition on drinking in bars after 6 p.m. – the infamous 'six o'clock swill' – ended when liquor trading hours were extended to 10 p.m. The year 1967 is also remembered as marking a turning point in attitudes to Aboriginal rights: 92% of Australians voted in a referendum to outlaw discrimination and allow them to be counted in the census.¹⁰

There was one event, however, that the citizens of Mitcham and every other resident of Australia had to participate in whether they wanted to or not: the change to decimal currency on 14th February 1966!

In 1955 Parliament had amended the Town Planning Act to make provision for the preparation of a plan to indicate how the metropolitan area of Adelaide should develop in the future. It was to be a wide-ranging report taking into account all social, economic and political factors. A Town Planning Committee was set up to prepare the 'Metropolitan Development Plan' which was submitted to the Parliament in 1962. Mr J.D. Cheesman, the architect who supervised the restoration of St Michael's, was a member of that Committee. A more detailed study of the traffic and transport needs was begun by the Highways Department which proposed various amendments to the Plan in 1968. This was called the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study – the M.A.T.S. Plan – which had the citizens of Adelaide shaking their heads in sheer disbelief.

The concept proposed a series of four- and six-lane highways, some of them elevated, with interchanges throughout the suburbs. One of these would have been within a stone's-throw of St Michael's! Although the M.A.T.S. Plan had no legal status, hundreds of properties along the routes of the proposed highways were purchased by the Highways Department over the ensuing years,

including many within Mitcham Village. The M.A.T.S. Plan was eventually scrapped, but parcels of land acquired for the planned freeways were still being sold off – very quietly – by the Department into the late 1990s.¹¹

* * *

30th October 1967

Dear Liz,

... Another Parish canvass conducted by Church Advisory Services is underway. St Wilfrid's is joining with St Michael's in a combined Christian Development Programme to visit over five hundred families. The Director arrived on 8th October.

The really good news is that we now – at long last – have some clerical assistance in the Parish. In June it was reported that Canon Ernst Auricht would be retiring from the Parish of Croydon after twenty-seven years and coming to live in this area [see Fig. 7-10]. He was offered the job of assistant priest and took his first service on 13th August. He and Mrs Auricht are a delightful couple and they have already won the hearts of us all. Their son, Dr Clive Auricht, is one of our local medicos at the Sturt Clinic on Belair Road.

A number of men from the Parish recently attended a meeting of the Southern District Ecumenical Men's Fellowship held at St Columba's. This Fellowship was established in 1963 and is open to men of the various Christian denominations in the Southern Suburbs. It meets three or four times a year with the aim of closer co-operation between the Churches. Unity is the ultimate goal...

14th November 1968

... The Parish, like so many of us, received a letter yesterday outlining the possible effects the M.A.T.S. Plan will have on our lives. The enclosed map showing proposed property acquisitions, will give you some idea of the scope of the monstrosity [Fig. 7-5]. This particular freeway (one of many) is planned to go through the centre of Urrbrae Agricultural High School, through Lower Netherby, then along High Street in the centre of the Mitcham Village. It then becomes a huge elevated six-lane freeway sweeping up the Brownhill Creek Valley to Crafers. To make matters worse, there is to be an elaborate interchange about fifty feet up in the air at the bottom of Hoggs Road. This will give access to a four-lane highway, the Foothills Expressway, snaking around the foothills to South Road to provide a link between the southern industrial areas and Crafers. The one consolation is that the concept is so outrageous that it may never go ahead. Needless to say, the whole Mitcham community is up in arms!

About a year ago the Rector outlined a scheme whereby students from St Barnabas' College could be used as catechists to do part-time work in the Parish. As a result we had a young man called Peter Riley working with Jim and Canon Auricht from mid-March until late October. A 'stipend' of \$4 per week was paid by St Michael's to Church Office and another \$3 per week car allowance paid by St Wilfrid's.

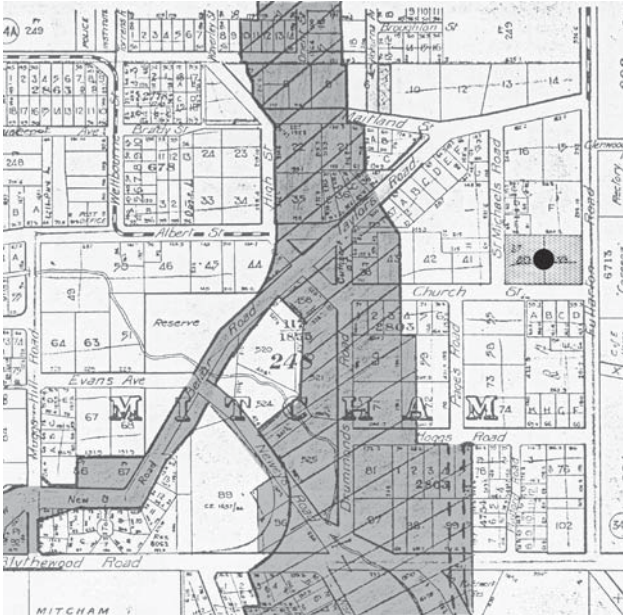


Fig. 7-5 Proposed property acquisitions in the Mitcham area for the Hills Freeway. (Report on the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study, June 1968)

How quickly things change: the Y.A.F., which has been so active for the past decade, has this year declined in membership from twenty-three to twelve. On the other hand activities for the younger groups have increased: there are now fifty-three in C.E.B.S. and thirty-three in the Girls' Society. The latter was inaugurated by Margaret Sanders last February...

19th October 1969

... Earlier this year we were blessed with a return visit by Lord and Lady Fisher who arrived at Easter. Whilst here Lord Fisher participated in Lionel Renfrey's consecration on 1st May as the second Assistant Bishop of Adelaide. Jim MacDonald acted as Lord Fisher's Chaplain for that very special occasion. I enclose a photograph of Lady Fisher and Rebecca MacDonald judging a children's fancy dress parade in the Parish Hall [Fig. 7-6].



Fig. 7-6 Lady Fisher (far right) and Rebecca MacDonald during the judging of a children's fancy dress parade in the old Parish Hall in 1969. (Courtesy Barbara Nelson)

Last year two sanctuary pedestals were donated by Alec Bissland in memory of his wife, Irma. We now have two new chairs in the sanctuary. There is quite a saga attached to them. In July 1965 St Michael's received notification of a bequest of \$125 from the estate of the late Franklin Gill. It was to be used for a memorial to Samuel Selby:

... who was my great-grandfather and at the time of his being Keeper of the Toll House at Glen Osmond was a subscriber to the Building Fund of the said Church and that the balance of this my bequest shall be added to the General Synodal Endowment of the said Church as a further memorial to the said Samuel Selby.

Out of interest I looked back through the old records and found that Samuel Selby had subscribed £1 10s 0d to the Building Fund about 1850 [see Appendix 3]. That would have been quite a substantial amount of money for a toll-gate keeper to give. He and his wife, Mary Ann Sharpe, had four children born between 1841 and 1849. Samuel died in June 1888 at age of 90 years. What a fine gesture for someone to give a memorial in memory of his great-grandfather!

As a result of the bequest the Wardens were looking at the possibility of obtaining a chair for the sanctuary and in mid-1967 asked Jack Cheesman to design something suitable. This he did, but for some reason it ended up in the vestry as a gift from Alec Bissland! Another two years passed, then in August this year the Rector presented two chairs to a meeting of the Advisory Council and it was agreed that they be purchased from Antique Galleries at \$39 each. Meanwhile a bequest had been received from the estate of a Miss Mary Kirkhouse Jenkins, with the result that one of the chairs was dedicated in memory of Samuel Selby and the other in memory of Miss Jenkins. Once the cost of \$39 has been deducted from each of the respective bequests, the balance will be paid into St Michael's Synodal Endowment Fund.

At the Annual Vestry last year it was agreed to accept Church Office's suggestion to bulk all separate Trusts into one pool for joint investment and so get a higher

rate of interest. At that stage St Michael's held \$5,516 in Diocesan Trust Funds, the result of generous past bequests from the Price, Culross and Wilkinson families. The interest received from these funds is paid to the Rector of St Michael's as a supplement to his stipend.

The Rector has just informed us that he will be on long service leave next year and that he and Rebecca will be Overseas from 5th February to 15th July 1970. Canon Auricht has agreed to be locum tenens...

3rd October 1971

... Last Thursday the ladies of the Parish organised a most successful Art Exhibition and Craft Fair in the Hall. Fifty artists were involved, and from a selection of over one hundred paintings we sold thirty-six. The craft work was excellent and included some very nice pottery bowls, plates and mugs made by young Paul MacDonald [Fig. 7-7].

Whilst Paul is showing considerable talent as a potter, his sister, Mary, is an accomplished violinist. She was one of the musicians who entertained us during the winter months in a delightful series of Sunday afternoon music recitals in St Michael's.

With the three MacDonald children all studying, the Rector found it necessary to convert the garage into an additional bedroom. As a consequence a new carport has been built. Mitcham Council agreed to construct a new drive-in entrance from Church Road so that existing trees and shrubs around the Rectory could be saved.

St Wilfrid's lost one of their 'founding fathers' in February with the death of Dempster Mudie. He will certainly be missed...

* * *

After a brief return to a Liberal Government under Steele Hall in South Australia during 1968-9, the 'Dunstan Decade' was ushered in on 2 June 1970. It coincided with a period of radical change and internal confrontation with the community deeply divided over the drafting of conscripts to fight in the Vietnam War. This led to serious riots and bloody demonstrations in every capital city – even in staid old Adelaide, where a moratorium march in July 1971 resulted in one of the largest confrontations ever witnessed in this city between demonstrators and police.¹²

It was also a time of unprecedented social change. The period was frequently referred to as 'libertarian' by church groups who denounced the new laws regulating sexual behaviour as 'moral permissiveness'. Abortion was legalised, capital punishment abolished, drinking and gambling laws relaxed and the voting age reduced from twenty-one to eighteen years. Feminism took root, younger women gave up wearing hats, gloves and stockings to Church – much to the indignation of the older members of congregation! Following trends set by Premier Don Dunstan men's clothing also underwent a transformation. In summer the traditional double-breasted wool business suits gave way to comfortable, light-weight safari suits; while white shirts were replaced by poloneck skivvies in winter. Men grew sideburns, wore flares and stumbled around in platform shoes.¹³



Fig. 7-7 Paul MacDonald working on a pottery wheel at the Rotary Fair on Mitcham Reserve in March 1976. He was one of a team of craftsmen demonstrating their skills on the Mitcham Village Art & Crafts Association stall. (Pamela Oborn)

These changing life-styles received scant acknowledgement in formal Church minutes for this period. In fact only two references – both of minor importance – have been found in the minutes of St Michael's Advisory Committee meetings. In the first instance a letter (presumably of complaint) was discussed at a meeting held in September 1971. It referred to a Youth Fellowship Social held in the Hall:

General thoughts were that the Social was not an entire success. The 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.

This 'wild' Rock Evensong, organised by the Y.A.F., had been a huge success attended by more than three thousand casually-dressed young people. The *Adelaide Church Guardian* noted that: "never before ... have so many people crowded into the Cathedral."¹⁴

The second reference, a month later, was to a press report on the Melbourne Synod which had recently debated the issue of homosexuality. Members once again disagreed in principle to the various clauses that were discussed at the Synod, "but generally agreed that the Church of England was now starting to show more interest in matters outside of spiritual teaching". Indeed, considerable debate had ensued at the Adelaide Synod concerning resolutions put forward by its new 'Select Committee on Racism', leading to the establishment of a 'Social Questions Committee'.

During 1971 Reverend Lance Shilton, Rector of Holy Trinity Church on North Terrace, had formed a Moral Action Committee in an attempt to prevent the play *Oh! Calcutta!* from being staged. He was the acknowledged leader of the Evangelical Movement in South Australia and also played a leading role in 1973 in founding the Festival of Light, an Australia-wide organisation promoting Christian standards in all aspects of family life and the law.¹⁵

In 1973 the ecclesiastical Province of South Australia came into being. With the Diocese of Willochra having been in existence since 1915, and following the controversial formation of the Diocese of the Murray in 1969, South Australia achieved the minimum number of dioceses required to found a province within the Australian Church. Adelaide thus became a metropolitan see, similar in status to other mainland capital cities. Its bishop, Thomas Thornton Reed, became the first Archbishop of Adelaide.¹⁶

* * *

During 1972 important changes were made to the Trust Deeds under which both St Michael's and St Wilfrid's operated. Problems had arisen in 1959 when it was pointed out that the Joint Parish Central Council had no legal foundation because St Michael's still operated under the 1858 Church of England Succession Act, whereas St Wilfrid's came under the 1927 Model Trust Deed. At the 1972 Easter Vestries both Churches voted to "seek the benefit of the new Church of England Trust Property Act of 1971 and the Synod Trust Deed of 1969". Under these new rules all existing Church properties would automatically be vested in Synod and all existing Trusts and Trust Deeds revoked. Four properties were involved: the Church Acre containing St Michael's and the Rectory, the Parish Hall, St Wilfrid's and the adjoining St Wilfrid's Church House. The Hall presented major difficulties as the original Trustees had been dead for decades. In the intervening years documents and Titles had been mislaid. It was an ongoing saga – pursued with great diligence by Ted Smith – which took years to unravel.

* * *

16th September 1972

... The Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide has instigated some far-reaching changes in an effort to overcome problems associated with various churches operating under different Trust Deeds. St Michael's and St Wilfrid's was a case-in-point! Now that we are all controlled by the same rules the Rector has announced that the Joint Parish Council will be reformed on 19th October. Hopefully this will lead to full co-operation between both ends of the Parish and put an end to the "them-and-us" mentality that was rife during Reverend Reg Pearman's incumbency.

After battling for years to get permission to teach Religious Instruction in State schools, then battling for thirty years to find enough people to teach it, Synod has just announced that R.I. will cease at the end of this year. They say it is only temporary "until a satisfactory arrangement can be made with denominational Heads of Churches and the Minister of Education". In reality the whole system has virtually ground to a halt since the S.A. Methodist Conference withdrew from the programme in 1968. Indeed, concerns have been expressed that there is an active drive by anti-Christian forces in our community to undermine and denigrate the Christian training of our young people. Poor Archdeacon Clampett must be turning in his grave at the mere possibility of R.I. closing down!

Has your parish been involved in the movement called 'Action for World Development'? It has had quite a mixed reaction here. Representatives from various churches in the district met in our Hall last February to form a Regional Council. Don Sidey and Harold Thomas attended on behalf of the St Michael's Council. When they reported back to the other members Don said he was "not personally satisfied with the overall theme and did not wish to be further associated with the movement". Harold "did not wish to continue as a Church of England representative". Various thoughts and political overtones were widely and openly expressed by those present. Some thought it was a sinister communist plot, which led to Colin Fryar stating that: "If the Church of England in this Parish was involved in the 'Action for World Development' he would have to resign as a member of the Church Council". He did and asked that his resignation be recorded in the minutes. In July about 200,000 people throughout Australia, both Christian and otherwise, held four weekly group meetings in private homes. They included twenty-four people from our Parish: the Rector, twenty-one from St Wilfrid's and two from St Michael's.

Amy Gamlen died on 14th April and the congregation has contributed to buy a silver Bread Box as a memorial to this dear lady. She was sacristan, chorister and a faithful and devoted communicant member of St Michael's for at least thirty-five years. We shall all miss Gam, particularly when it comes to Patronal Festival time as her floral arrangements are legend.

Once again we have been enjoying a series of delightful Winter Musical Afternoons arranged by Fred Finlay, and were pleased to welcome back the Cappellean Singers and students from the Elder Conservatorium who also entertained us last year.

We certainly live in a rapidly-changing world: Scotch College is now co-educational! The first girls – about 145 of them – were admitted in February. I wonder what the upright Presbyterian gentlemen who founded the school would think of today's students: the boys (and their teachers) with shoulder-length hair, the girls wearing skirts above their knees?

If that shocked them, then I think the sight of the Premier of our State appearing in the hallowed Parliamentary Chamber wearing skimpy pink shorts would be enough to give them heart attacks. Ever one to shock, Don Dunstan appointed the noted scientist Sir Mark Oliphant as State Governor last December. Not only is he the first South Australian-born Governor, but he is also the first civilian to be appointed to that post. In the past Governors have always been chosen for their distinguished careers in one of the armed services...

10th February 1973

... I am sending you a copy of our Parish Recipe Book called *Mitcham Morsels*. It was launched at our Craft Mission Fair and Christmas Market held in the Hall on 16th November. Unfortunately the Rector and some of the gentlemen had limited the run to 500 copies, all of which had been pre-sold before the day! It was a case of taking orders at the Fair and arranging to print a further 500 copies in the New Year.

The original idea for the recipe book came from Rebecca MacDonald who leads the Mission Craft Guild. It had to be produced as cheaply as possible and was a real team effort. The recipes were contributed by dozens of parishioners, the stencils for the 188-page book typed by Grace MacDonald, then run off on the Parish Gestetner by Meg Nicholls and Ionie Brennan. Grace is the Rector's sister. She lives in Torrens Park and looks after their brother, Stan.¹⁷

One disappointing aspect this year has been the decline in the number of young people attending meetings. Both the Y.A.F. and Girls' Society are in recess and the C.E.B.S. is in need of new leaders if it is to continue. I fear this trend is not confined to our Parish, but is widespread throughout the Diocese and beyond. Particularly worrying is the drop in the number of children attending Sunday Schools...

26th May 1974

... There have been many changes in the Village over the past few years. A year ago the Baptist Church in Albert Street knocked down the 1908 porch and replaced it with a bland Besser brick frontage. At least it is a sandstone-coloured material to match the original building, unlike the hideous grey Besser brick monstrosity that Mitcham Council built in 1966 in front of the elegant old Village Institute [Fig.7-8]. Following the opening of the Mitcham Shopping Centre in 1962 Doug Gregory found it increasingly difficult to make his 'Wayside Stores' supermarket pay. Last June he sold out to the nearby Edinburgh Hotel. They have long-range plans to use the land for a bottle department as part of a large modern hotel/motel complex occupying the whole western side of that section of High Street. This will involve demolishing the wonderful old pub built in 1869. The possible loss of this important piece of Mitcham's heritage has upset a lot of people, particularly Tricia Cosh who is busy organising a petition to try and save it

However, nothing will happen to 'The Ed' for several years and the 'Wayside Store' has been leased to a new organisation called the Mitcham Village Art & Crafts Association Incorporated [Fig.7-9]. On 1st March the old corner store opened as a community art and craft

Fig. 7-8 Mitcham Institute, 1986. The unsympathetic 'modern' addition made by Mitcham Council in 1966 contained a small entrance foyer and toilets. They were demolished in August 1993 during the restoration of the building. (Pamela Oborn)



Fig. 7-9 The Mitcham Village Art & Crafts Centre opened in March 1974 in this old building on the corner of Albert and High Streets. Formerly known as the 'Wayside Stores', it had served the community as a corner shop for 120 years. Following an arson attack in 1991 it was rebuilt and now houses the Edinburgh Cellars. (Pamela Oborn)

centre. The aims of the Association are twofold: to preserve and maintain the character of Mitcham Village (laid out in 1840) and to establish Mitcham Village as a centre of excellence for the arts and crafts. With so many of our colonial buildings – both large and small – being demolished in the present headlong rush to 'modernize' everything, we now find ourselves leading a campaign to protect the heritage of this area.

Many of our parishioners are involved, either teaching art or crafts, selling their wares, working on committees or as volunteers rostered to run the shop. One of our keenest supporters is Archdeacon Clampett's daughter, Mrs Mollie Bowen, who is nearing eighty. She mans the Gallery sales desk every Tuesday and loves telling people about 'old Mitcham' and the early days of St Michael's ...

2nd October 1974

... The parishioners of St Wilfrid's have just held a Special Vestry Meeting to confirm the decision taken on 17th September to sell their adjoining Church House. When purchased in 1962 it was expected to be used as a residence for an assistant curate or, should the Parish divide, as a Rectory. These things have not come to pass and, although they have tenants in it providing sufficient income to cover expenses, it will require major repairs in the near future – hence they have decided to quit whilst they are in front.

Problems associated with R.I. were discussed again this year at Synod. It was felt that it is developing along lines which are "insufficient in Christian emphasis". Sadly, the thought was expressed that we are now a Christian minority community in an otherwise pagan community!

28th June 1975

... 'Tommy' Reed, retired last year and we now have a new archbishop. He is Dr Keith Rayner, the former Bishop of Wangaratta in Victoria. He was enthroned last night in a very moving ceremony at the Cathedral.

Six months after Cyclone Tracy virtually obliterated the city in the early hours of Christmas morning the people of Darwin are still trying to pick up the threads of

their lives. Over 20,000 residents were evacuated, many of them being flown direct to Adelaide in Army Hercules transport planes. After a gruelling flight sitting in rows on the floor of the planes, they were met by teams of volunteers from Red Cross, Salvation Army and other groups who provided accommodation, food and clothing. One of our parishioners, Rita Reason, works for Red Cross and was at the forefront of the massive operation rostering volunteers. A Darwin Relief Appeal was launched in the Parish on 5th January.¹⁸

One of our Parish families, Ian and Pam Marshall and their children, lived through Cyclone Tracy. Ian had been working as an ABC radio announcer in Darwin at the time and they were due to return to Adelaide after Christmas. Pam said that all the possessions they could salvage were packed into one battered suitcase. They were amongst the lucky ones: they had their own home to come back to in Torrens Park.¹⁹

18th June 1976

... At the Annual Vestry Jim MacDonald announced his intention to retire. Later, writing in the *Mitcham Parish Herald*, he said:

Mr dear Friends,

You will have heard by now that my time as Rector is drawing to a close and that I will resign as Rector of Mitcham as from the 31st August 1976. My retirement will be from full-time Parish Ministry, but I hope to be of service with part-time work. To this end the Archbishop is providing me with a General Licence to Officiate.

This is therefore my last letter to you in the 'Herald', and I wish to express my Thank You to you all for your support and encouragement to Rebecca, myself and family during our ministry together in this Parish. We have enjoyed living and worshipping and doing God's work with you. There are many occasions for special thanksgiving and we shall have happy memories of you ...

The Church of God is bigger than men; and this Church goes on, please God, though its rectors and members change.

May God Bless us all. The Lord be with you always.

Your Rector and friend,

James Y. MacDonald.

Canon Ernst Auricht, who has been assisting in the Parish, will be our locum tenens during the interregnum [Fig. 7-10]. On 21st December last he celebrated the Jubilee of his ordination to the diaconate at a special service in St Michael's attended by the archbishop, Dr Keith Rayner.

Fred Finlay has also announced that he will retire as organist and choirmaster at the end of the year. He and Jim have been a great team. Both men have been with us since the early 1960s. Fred will be remembered for the wonderful series of Winter Sunday Afternoon Musical Recitals which we have enjoyed for the past five or so years. They gave an added richness to the musical experience in St Michael's.

We have just heard that Douglas Bertram Crisp, a former Warden and devoted member of St Michael's



Fig. 7-10

Canon Ernst Oswald Auricht. Following his retirement from full-time ministry in 1967 he served as an honorary assistant priest in the Parish of Mitcham for nearly seventeen years. (MPA)

congregation for many years, died yesterday. He and his wife, Dorothy, recently provided an endowment of \$1,000 with the interest from the investment to be applied towards the upkeep of the fabric and appointments of St Michael's Church. We also received a similar amount from Mrs M.S. Stokes as an endowment in memory of her daughter, Pamela Wheatley Page...

1st October 1976

... Well, the MacDonald family have vacated the Rectory and it is now being repaired and repainted ready for the arrival of our new Rector, Reverend Andrew Cheesman, who will arrive in early November.

The Farewell Dinner for the MacDonalds was held on Sunday, 15th August in the huge Hall at Unley High School. We hope to see them often as they have only moved to Coromandel Valley where they have their retirement house. I understand that Jim will be assisting in the Blackwood Parish.

Canon Auricht wrote a letter to the *Mitcham Parish Herald* in which he said:

On 1st September the Archbishop admitted me as a locum tenens of the Parish; the term is to last until 5th November – the day on which your new Rector will be inducted. It is both a pleasure and an honour for me to be asked to do this. Mrs Auricht and I have now lived amongst you for over nine years, and we feel very much at home in the Parish. Rector Cheesman has intimated that he would greatly welcome my assistance, and I am very happy to do this while I continue to be blessed with good health ...

* * *

The scene was now set for the arrival of Andrew Walford Cheesman who was to become the second-longest serving incumbent of St Michael's Church since its doors opened in 1852.



Fig. 8-1 Reverend Canon Andrew Walford Cheesman. (MPA)