

had built a wooden chapel on a block of land in the bush donated by William Ruse; this building, enlarged in 1866, became the home of both the Chesterville and Beaumaris groups.

The preachers were usually members of the congregation but others came from Melbourne, a long journey in those days. An American evangelist, H.G. Earl, conducted a mission there.

From the beginning the two groups had seen the necessity for religious instruction for their children and had established Bible (Sunday) Schools.

Going to church for these people, most of whom were farmers or market gardeners, in the 1860's was a different matter from what it is today. Many, after rising early to milk a herd of cows walked through the bush along such sandy tracks as there were; some rode horses; most families went in horse-drawn carts or buggies. Those who lived in the north and east of the district began to wish for a more central situation for their chapel and in 1875 the congregation decided to hold the Sunday evening service in the Mechanics' Institute on Point Nepean Road (demolished in 1960 to make way for the Cheltenham Hall). Three years later they took an important step: the purchase of a block of land in Chesterville Road where a brick chapel with a central front porch was erected in 1878. John Brough was the architect, his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Charles Brough, laid the foundation stone, and John Evans of Ballarat was the builder. The cost was £805 (\$1610); of this only £300 (\$600) was borrowed and within a year £100 (\$200) was repaid. The bricks were made in Chapel Road, Moorabbin; the sand was carted from Latrobe Street, Cheltenham. Members of the church supplied free the cartage and other labour. The church bore the title, "Christian Chapel. 1878" (We wish that more buildings in Moorabbin had been dated.)

In December of the same year the chapel was opened with great enthusiasm; there were morning and evening services attended by 400 people; the following day there was a tea to which 500 sat down in the Mechanics' Institute, followed by a public meeting. ("Tea meetings" were an important feature in the life of non-conformist churches for many years.)

For some years from its beginning the church was known as the "Disciples of Christ"; this title and that of "Christians" were used by the American Church of Christ which had some influence on both the English and Australian branches. When the Old Cheltenham Cemetery was established in 1865 its four acres were divided into sections to be used by different religious denominations. Five-eighths of an acre was allowed to "Disciples and Baptists"; (these two churches were often linked together because of their belief in the baptism by total immersion.) In Cheltenham the word has gradually fallen out of use, as has the custom of calling members "brothers" or "sisters". The ceremony of total immersion as a condition of church membership is not now insisted on.

Until recently the date of the beginning of the church was taken to be 1857. However a document, dated 1860, recently discovered by Mr. Ron White, a student at the College of the Bible, Glen Iris (the institution where candidates for the ministry receive their training) refers to "the seventh annual business meeting" of the church; this means that it really began in 1853.