



1867

EIGHTIETH CELEBRATION
OF THE PATRONAL FESTIVAL



St. Matthew's Church
CHELTENHAM



COMMEMORATION OF THE
DEDICATION

1947



N. Hawley.
45 Tregent St.
Cheltenham

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH
Cheltenham



Eightieth Celebration of the
Patronal Festival
and Commemoration of the Dedication
1867 - 1947





Rev. Reginald McCoy, Th.L.

1867 - 1947



THE HISTORY OF ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH begins, of course, with the laying of the foundation stone in 1867, and the nave of the present church was opened on Sunday, 14th April in that year, the preachers for the day being Rev. S. Taylor and Rev. Canon Perks. It is not unlikely that the dedication followed the form used one hundred years ago by the first Bishop of Australia (The Right Reverend William Grant Broughton): "Set apart for the preaching of *the right Catholic Faith*, which we believe and confess; in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

When we come to the history of the parish, however, it is quite a different matter. We are able to give neither the actual day, nor even the actual year, when the first service was held in the area which now constitutes St. Matthew's Parish.

We have no record telling of the occasion when the church life of our fathers in this parish first expressed itself in the public services of the Book of Common Prayer, although we do know that such services were held in church buildings some 94 to 95 years ago. Public worship began apparently in the period immediately following the year 1850, and we have a picture of the Spring Grove Church (actually a school) taken in 1854, and in this building services were regularly held, the actual site of this building being probably commemorated by the name "Church Road," running between Weatherall Road and Balcombe Road, the builder being a Mr. W. Francis, who later became a member of St. Matthew's building committee.

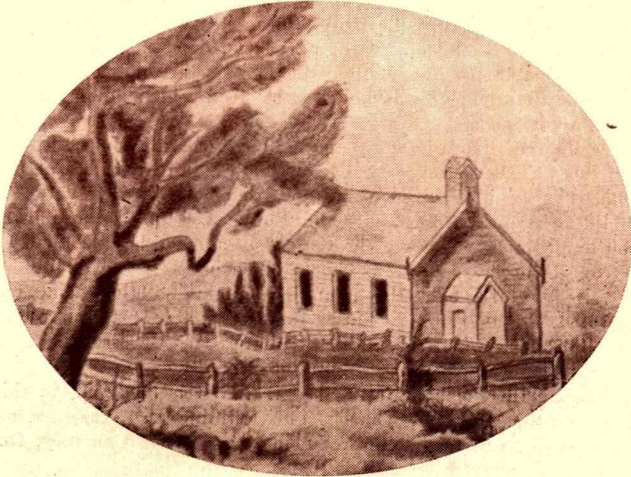
There was another such building in Silver Street, the land, in this case, still being the property of the Church. This building also was used on week days as a school, its first schoolmaster being Mr. T. W. Courtney, father of Mr. W. W. Courtney, who is still with us.

The history of this parish is bound up with that of St. Andrew's, Brighton, St. Matthew's being the child of St. Andrew's. The original parish was bounded on the west by the sea shore at Brighton, and followed the bay frontage all the way to Carrum. Its eastern boundary was formed by Boundary Road, and extended as far as Springvale, with North Road forming its northern boundary. When St. Matthew's became an independent parish, the western boundary was drawn at Hampton Street, but otherwise the vicar of St. Matthew's was required to minister to the souls of all people within the area defined above.

The development of St. Matthew's, like that of the Mother Church at Brighton, was aided considerably by the activities of Mr. Henry Dendy, who obtained from the British Government a crown special survey of the land bounded on the west by the high-water mark of the Bay, and extending eastwards within the boundaries formed by North and South Roads. One of the

clauses conditioning his title required him to settle twelve yeomen farmers on his land. One of these twelve men (who afterwards became superintendent of St. Matthew's Sunday School) being Mr. John Booker, and his son, as a boy of eight, remembered that he held that position in the years 1868 and 1869, but was unable to say whether he was the first superintendent. This son (Mr. Charles E. Booker) himself held the position of superintendent for 28 years, retiring only in 1926. Mr. Neil Booker (at present on our staff) is a grand-nephew of Mr. John Booker, and his children represent the fifth generation of Bookers to be linked with St. Matthew's.

It was Mr. Dendy who gave the name of Brighton to the town which grew up at the western end of his property, and who called his house "Moorabbin," after his father's property in England. It was he who gave, by trust deed, nine acres of land in Brighton for the benefit of the Church in Moorabbin, and it was discovered, after St. Matthew's was constituted a separate parish in 1867, that St. Andrew's was debarred by the trust deed from establishing a legal title to the land thus given until the Vicar of St. Matthew's had called a special Vestry meeting which most graciously renounced all claim to their share in the family inheritance.



The Spring Grove Church (1854)

FIRST MEETINGS

The minutes of a meeting held on 18th September, 1862, show that the following were elected to the Church committee: Messrs. H. G. Freame, R. Goldstone, Frederick Plumridge, and B. Buckley. The building committee, elected in 1865, consisted of Messrs. J. M. Smith, W. Francis, H. Comport, T. Tilley and F. Plumridge.

The Church is supposed to owe its dedication (St. Matthew's) to the fact that Matthew was the second name of Mr. J. M. Smith, who is reported to have contributed munificently to the building fund.

The meeting on 18th September, 1862, appointed a sub-committee to assist the Vicar (The Rev. Samuel Taylor, M.A., of St. Andrew's, Brighton) in selecting a site for the proposed church, and the choice of the land (the present site) was approved at a meeting held on 9th May, 1865.

VICARS, HELPERS, BENEFACTORS

The first Vicar of the new parish of St. Matthew's (The Rev. William Singleton, M.A.) was appointed in 1867, and the first committee appointed after the erection of the new church consisted of Messrs. Attenborough, Booker, Ethridge, Wells, Mundy, F. Plumridge, and H. Plumridge.

Unfortunately, no records have been found of meetings held between 8th February, 1865, and 17th April, 1867, so that we do not know what St. Matthew's cost to erect, nor how or by whom the money was raised.

At a meeting in April, 1867, Mr. Buckley stated that Mr. and Miss Attenborough had presented the church with pieces of oak furniture, consisting of communion table, two chairs, and lectern. The sanctuary chairs and the lectern referred to in the above minutes are the ones still in use, and even the table, although it has found a lower place in the porch.

The first priest who served this parish was the Rev. Samuel Taylor, M.A., of St. Andrew's, Brighton, one of his most distinguished assistants being the Rev. J. H. Gregory, who apparently left this district in 1859.

In the interregnum, after the sudden death of the first Vicar, services were conducted by such men as Canon Gason (then a lay-reader), Rev. J. Barley Sharp, Rev. H. E. Potter, and Rev. J. F. Stretch, M.A., (afterwards Bishop of Newcastle).

The second Vicar, Rev. Henry Plow Kane, was appointed in 1877, and he was succeeded by Rev. Alfred Caffin, 1877 to 1902.

The fourth Vicar was Rev. T. E. Moorhouse, 1902 to 1912, who was succeeded by Rev. Cassian Crotty, 1912 to 1917.

The Rev. C. C. Macmichael was Vicar from 1917 to 1919, and was succeeded by the Rev. A. J. Thompson (seventh Vicar), from 1920 to 1922; the eighth Vicar was the Rev. H. T. Fowler (1922 to 1926), followed by the Rev. R. North (1926 to 1929). The Rev. A. J. Whyte became the tenth Vicar (1929 to 1937), the eleventh being the Rev. C. B. Cotes (1937 to 1942). The Rev. R. McCoy, the present Vicar, and the twelfth in the line of succession, came to the parish in 1942.



St. Matthew's Church today

LIST OF VICARS SINCE 1867

Rev. William Singleton, M.A.	1867 to 1873
Rev. Henry Plow Kane	1877 to 1887
Rev. Alfred Caffin	1887 to 1902
Rev. T. E. Moorhouse	1902 to 1912
Rev. Cassian Crotty	1912 to 1917
Rev. C. C. Macmichael	1917 to 1919
Rev. A. J. Thompson	1920 to 1922
Rev. H. J. Fowler, B.A.	1922 to 1926
Rev. R. North	1926 to 1929
Rev. A. J. Whyte	1929 to 1937
Rev. C. B. Cotes	1937 to 1942
Rev. Reginald McCoy, Th.L.	1942

NOTABLE EVENTS IN OUR PARISH HISTORY

1850 to 1854. — The school in Spring Grove was erected some time between these years.

1859. — We have in actual use a silver chalice, with an inscription showing that it was presented to Rev. J. H. Gregory by the residents of Cheltenham and district on 26th March, 1859, as a token of their appreciation of his apostolic labours for the Church of God in this area; also a set of clinical communion vessels, presented at the same time, and returned to us from England by his daughter after her father's death. This distinguished priest is better known as the inspirer and builder of All Saints' Church, St. Kilda, which was built to a design of his own choosing.

1865. — Site chosen for present church.

1867. — Nave of present church erected, dedicated, and opened for public worship; the first Vicar, the Rev. William Singleton, being also appointed in this year.

1873. — The first Vicar died suddenly, whilst conducting divine service.

1877 to 1887. — In 1879 the first part of the parish hall was built, but it has been enlarged twice since that time.

1887 to 1902. — The present Vicarage was erected during the incumbency of the Rev. Alfred Caffin, and the parish hall enlarged.

1902 to 1912. — The chancel was added to the church, under the leadership of the Rev. T. E. Moorhouse, and the parish hall was again enlarged. It is interesting to note that the work of this Vicar still lives on in the persons of his descendants: a son of his, and a grandson, in the sacred ministry, still carry on the family tradition of service to the Church of God.

1912 to 1917. — The Kindergarten was erected in 1916, to the memory of Miss Sweetnam, who had served for many years as a devoted teacher in the Sunday School. In the next year, the Rev. Cassian Crotty left the parish, but we rejoice in the honours by which the Melbourne Diocese subsequently showed its appreciation of his services.

1920 to 1922. — The latter year was saddened by the resignation of the Rev. A. J. Thompson, who departed (with his wife) to undertake a glorious and fruitful ministry in New Guinea. There his services have been rewarded with titles and dignities befitting his gifts, qualities, and devotion (Arch-deacon, Vicar General, and Registrar), and he has made for himself a name

that will be remembered wherever the history of the New Guinea Mission is recorded. We are proud to remember that he went forth from St. Matthew's.

1929 to 1937. — These years cover the ministry of the Rev. A. J. Whyte, the beloved Vicar. During this period the world felt the misery of the great "depression." It was fortunate that this parish then had a Vicar who really bore in his own heart the sorrows of others. The enlargement of the church vestry, then undertaken, represents only one of very many means by which he sought to relieve the distress of his people.

1937 to 1942. — This period was marked by the re-lining and colouring of the parish hall, and the laying of a new floor.

1942. — This year witnessed the wiping out of the church overdraft, and the provision of underground drainage to remove stagnant water lying beneath the parish hall. The next few years saw the renovation, painting, and improvement of every one of the church buildings. Through the generosity of a devout parishioner, we were able to put down a concrete footpath on the church frontage to Point Nepean Road, and erect an attractive stone fence on the same frontage. Another such gift enabled us to install a tubular heating system in the church, and to provide new electric wiring, switches, etc., for church, kindergarten, and parish hall. Portion of the Vicarage has been re-constructed, tennis courts put in order and office and lumber room added to kindergarten and parish hall respectively.



For more than eighty years, St. Matthew's has been a great source of Christian activity, with men and women bearing witness to their faith in Christ by spending themselves, their time and energy, their talents and their goods, in supporting every worthy effort to advance Christ's Kingdom and to secure the accomplishment of His will.

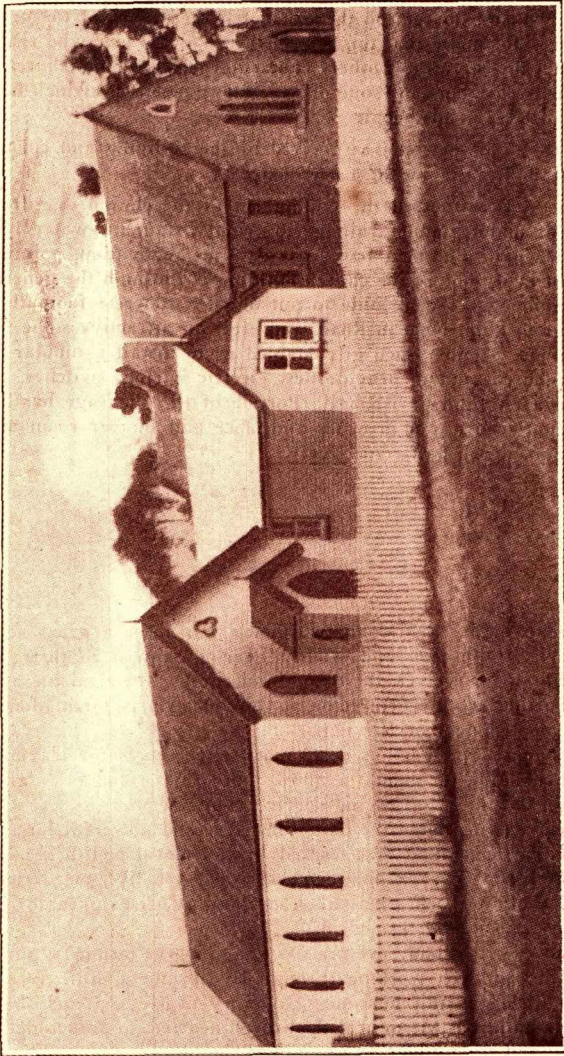
Through all those years, it has been an effective centre for leavening, influencing, and changing for good, the moral tone of our community, and doing all this through the lives and loving service of its members.

"The Church remains today the most consistent and powerful force for the direction and development of man's spiritual and moral well-being."

St. Matthew's is, as it were, one member (or, if you like, one living cell), in the great Catholic Church, ever (like the vine in Christ's parable), spreading its branches throughout the world.

Of this great universal body, we are living and active members, and Christ, the living Head; and He, working through His members, still gives this 'as the description of His earthly mission: "He hath sent Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

It is this glorious tradition that we are called upon to commemorate on St. Matthew's Day, Sunday, 21st September, 1947, and this the cause that Christ calls us to uphold in this new age, with He Himself as Leader and Guide, and with saints and heroes of ages past and present to applaud and encourage our efforts.



Church and Schools as they appeared at the time of the Diamond Jubilee, 1927