

Pioneers of Faith

St Matthew's Cheltenham

1867 - 1992

by Sue Polites



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This history has been compiled from the following:

Local History (W. Bruton)

Jubilee, Diamond Jubilee and Eightieth Celebration Souvenir Booklets

City of Moorabbin Student Information Booklet

Victorian Organ Journal (October 1991)

Parish Magazines

Church Minute Books

Diocesan Records

Probate and Titles Office Files

Recollections of parishioners, some of whom lent photographs and other memorabilia.

Special appreciation is recorded of the work done by Mr Dennis Maynard, both in research of the early years, and in photography.

Foreword

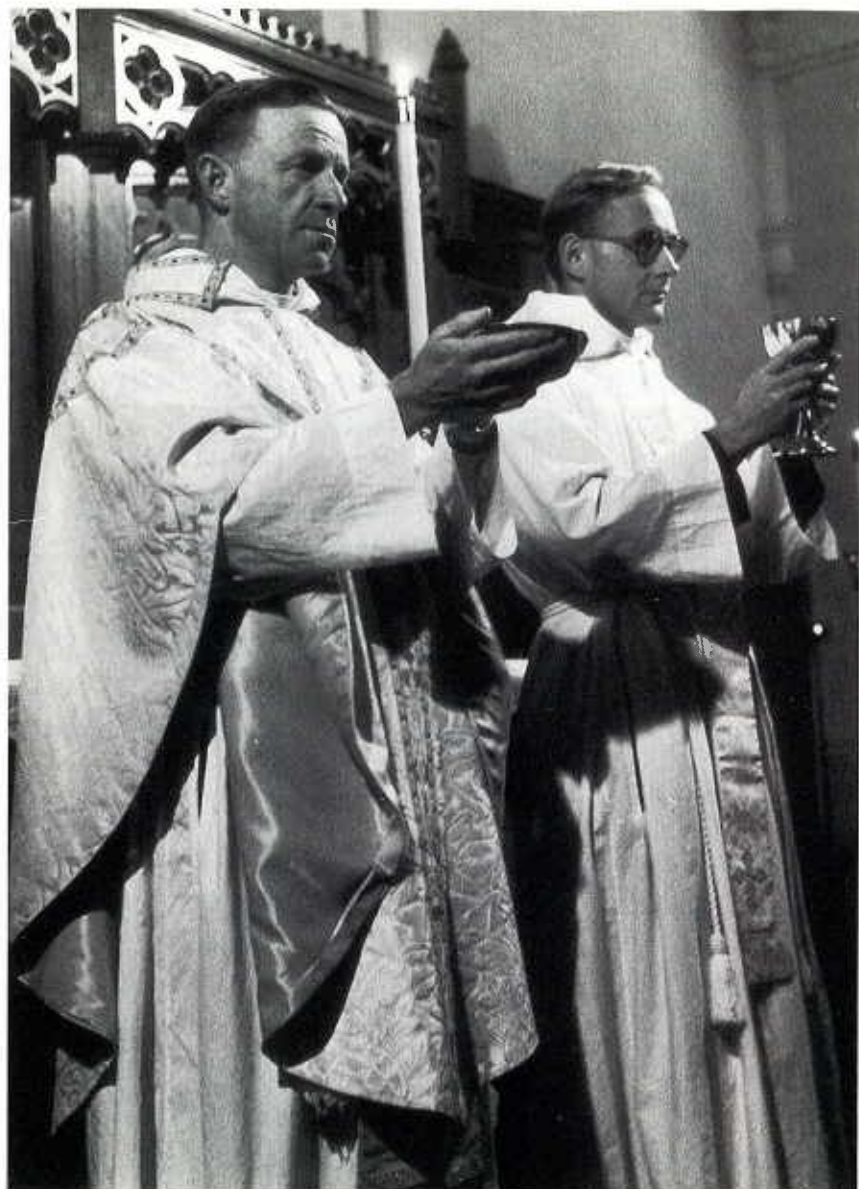
I warmly commend Sue Polites' publication of this short history which marks the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of St Matthew's Cheltenham. For all its brevity, it is satisfyingly comprehensive and is written in an attractive style.

I am impressed by the research into the earliest years. Many valuable facts have been documented of which even I had been completely ignorant — very old data which was at great risk of being lost forever. The discriminating overview of the events since those far-off days has been well done. In a few years our contemporary times will have become “history”, too. And these times have been adequately touched on, as well.

Every parish history will be of increasing value in the future, not only to the church, but to the community in general, for each represents a window on the society of the times. The Church is the longest surviving institution of all.

This parish has been very well served by this necessary brief history. And I would like to say to its author, and to St Matthew's at this important anniversary, well done!

Robert Dann, Vicar 1951-56, and Archbishop 1977-83.



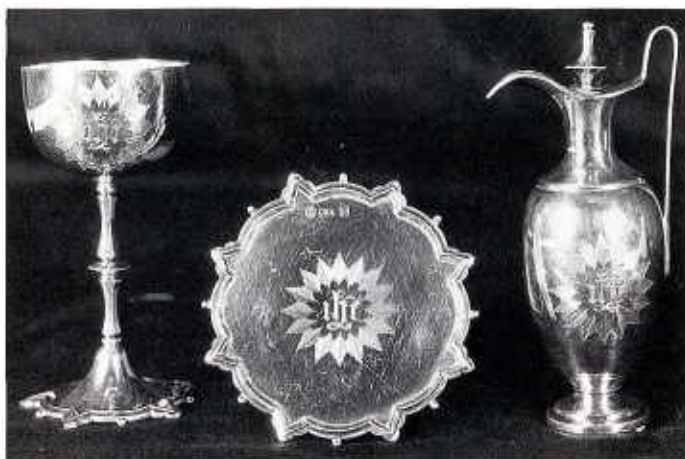
Archbishop Dann (with the Rev. Alan Pattison) during his time at St Matthew's

PIONEERS OF FAITH

St Matthew's Cheltenham

1867 – 1992

The life and witness of the Church of England in this district began long before the opening of St Matthew's Church, and it is to those pioneers of faith that we owe our Christian heritage. They laid a sure foundation for the tradition of vision and determination that characterizes the parish to this day.



The presentation made by 44 of the residents in and near Cheltenham in 1859.

Background

In the 1850s, the Moorabbin area, formerly part of a number of cattle runs, was becoming popular as a market gardening district. Cheltenham was originally called "Two Acre Village", by Josiah Holloway, who bought a large area of the land in 1852. He subdivided part of it into two-acre lots and called one area "Chester". It later became known as "Chesterville", and the track which ran between what is now Cheltenham and East Bentleigh became known as the Chesterville Track. It was later to be called Chesterville Road.

In 1853, Charles Worrall built an inn across the road from where St Matthew's now stands. He called it the "Cheltenham Inn", after the English town of that name. It was from this inn that Cheltenham took its name.

Early Days

In the 1850s, Cheltenham was part of the Parish of St Andrew's, Brighton, and was served by the Rev. Samuel Taylor, M.A. He visited this part of his scattered parish as often as possible under the difficult conditions of the day.¹

In 1859, local residents showed their appreciation of the clergy's service by presenting a set of communion vessels, exquisitely wrought in silver, to one of the Rev. S. Taylor's assistants, the Rev. J.H. Gregory.



Spring Grove Church 1854

In a subdivision at what is now Friendship Square, Josiah Holloway had allowed space for a school and church, which were never built. However, by 1854, two places of worship had been established in the bushland. One was the Spring Grove Church, a wooden building used as a school and located in Spring Grove (now Weatherall Road), quite close to Church Road. It was built by William Francis, who later became a member of the St Matthew's Church Building Committee.

The other place of worship was the Silver Street school. This was later known as the Church of England School No. 127, and was built on the site of the present Cheltenham East School. It was presided over by Miss Gott, and its first schoolmaster was Captain T.W. Courtney. It is interesting to note that Mrs Courtney also had a school, at what was then known as Gypsies' Camp, now Rickett's Point.

1. W. Bruton, in his *Local History*, remembers Charman Road thus:

"No bullocks could have got over those pits and heaps; moreover, one side was higher than the other. Such traffic as there was, went by the bush tracks on either side."

On 18th September, 1862, a public meeting was held at the Silver Street School, to form a Church Committee. Meetings were to be held quarterly, although this was reduced to half-yearly in 1863. It was decided that, after Divine Service on the third Sunday of every month, there would be a collection taken for church and other special purposes.

At a meeting of the congregation on 1st February, 1865, the Rev. S. Taylor was authorized to apply for a grant of land on which to build a church. Part of the Government Reserve was chosen – the triangular piece of land on which St Matthew's now stands. It was in use at that time as the local pound, which was looked after by Mr Francis, and was adjacent to the courthouse and the Mechanics' Institute. It was decided that the congregation should meet for public worship at the Mechanics' Hall, instead of the schoolroom.

The choice of site for the new church was approved at a meeting held on 9th May, 1865, and a building committee was formed, consisting of Mr J.M. Smith (Hon. Treasurer), Mr W. Francis, Mr H. Comport, Mr T. Tilley and Mr F. Plumridge. St Matthew was chosen as the patron saint of the new church because Matthew was the second name of Mr Smith, who both paid for the use of the Mechanics' Hall and contributed generously to the Church Building Fund.



Captain T. W. Courtney

Records show that it cost several hundred pounds to build St Matthew's, a large part of which was raised from subscriptions and private donations. One subscription list still in existence is for the raising of money "for the purpose of erecting a bell for the use of the Congregation of Cheltenham", £22.9.6 was raised. This bell was stolen in 1875.

In 1866, the Diocesan Registry made a grant of £250 towards the new building; this was paid in two lump sums.

In 1867, Mr and Miss Attenborough donated some pieces of oak furniture, consisting of a communion table, two chairs and a lectern, and the pulpit was given in memory of Mrs Martha Wells. Some of these items are still used from time to time in the present church. As was the custom in those days, pews were rented, and it is recorded that the Tuck family rented the first pew for a fee of £1.1.0 per year.

First Services

In 1867, a separate Parish of Cheltenham was created², and baptisms (of adults as well as infants), marriages and burials began to be recorded there instead of in Brighton. The first recorded baptisms in the new parish were on 24th February, 1867, and the first wedding was on Christmas Day, 1873, at Christ Church, Dingley.

After St Matthew's was constituted a separate parish, it was discovered that St Andrew's was debarred by trust deed from establishing a legal title to the land in Brighton, which had been given by Mr Dendy "for the use of the church in Moorabbin" (now Brighton), unless the vicar of St Matthew's gave his consent. A special vestry meeting was called, which graciously renounced all claim to St Matthew's share in the "family inheritance".

St Matthew's Church was dedicated on 14th April, 1867. The Rev. S. Taylor preached at the morning service, and the Rev. Canon Perks of St Stephen's, Richmond, preached in the afternoon. The first Vicar of the parish was the Rev. William Singleton M.A., whose stipend was £80.0.0 per annum. The first church committee was composed of Messrs Attenborough, J. Booker, Etheridge Wells, Mundy, Frederick, Plumridge and Mrs Hattie Plumridge.



Memorial Tablet in Old Church

It was decided on 3rd December, 1873, that the Spring Grove church should be taken down and removed to St Matthew's ground. The building does not appear to have been re-erected, although a proposal was recorded on 1st July, 1877, that a shed be built from the material removed, and the remainder disposed of.

In 1875, the Rev. W. Singleton died suddenly while conducting a service, and St Matthew's was left to the care of various lay preachers and *locum tenens*. For two years the faith and pioneering spirit that had brought the parish into being kept it going against the odds.

In June, 1877, the Rev. Plow Kane was appointed to St Matthew's, and eighteen months later, on 23rd January 1879, he performed the first marriage ceremony in the church, between James Tilley and Agnes Sophia Brooks. This was still only the fifth marriage in the parish which had been created in 1867.

The Sunday School

During the Rev. Plow Kane's incumbency the Sunday School was established, with Mr John Booker as Superintendent. Mr Booker had arrived in Australia from England, in 1842, as one of a group of immigrants assisted by Mr Dendy. He purchased land in Brighton from Dendy, then later bought land in Highett and became a market gardener. He served St Andrew's, Brighton, as verger, sexton, caretaker and clerk, and was active in St Matthew's right up until his death in 1906.

His grave in the Cheltenham cemetery bears the inscription "The last of the Brighton Pioneers". At the time of St Matthew's Golden Jubilee, in 1917, the Rev. Alfred Caffin wrote a glowing tribute to Mr Booker, concluding that his "dear wife and family seem to have all been cast in the same mould".

His son, Mr Charles Booker, was Superintendent of the Sunday School for twenty-eight years, and was greatly respected for the love and energy he put into the work. He remembered the Sunday School in its early days, when his father was Superintendent, and he was a seven-or-eight-year-old pupil:



Mr John Booker, Superintendent from 1867 for many years.

"Up to the year 1879, we had no Sunday schoolroom, the school was held in the church; and as for several years the church services were held twice a day on alternate Sundays, on the other Sundays it was rather inconvenient, as we had to meet earlier when there was afternoon service, in order to leave the church free."

The Rev. Plow Kane saw the need for a separate building and in 1879 the first part of the Sunday School was built. This was extended around the turn of the century to

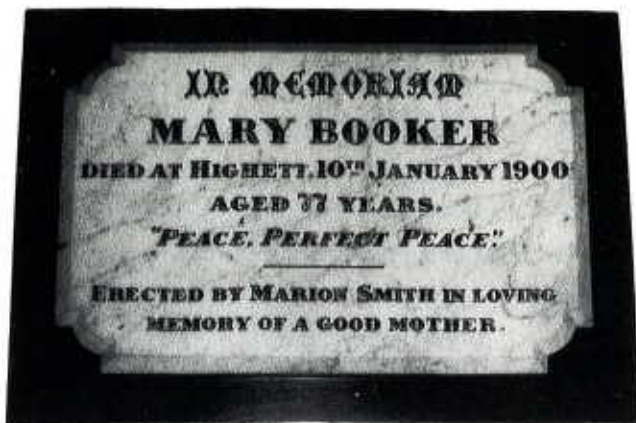
accommodate an infants' class, and later the partition between the two rooms was removed, making one large room for the use of the newly-formed athletic and other clubs as well as the older scholars. A small side room was built for the infants' school and used until 1916, when a new Kindergarten was purchased from Holy Trinity, Kew, and equipped using money bequeathed to St Matthew's by Miss Sweetnam, who had taught the little ones for many years until her death. The Kindergarten was dedicated to the memory of Miss Sweetnam's great devotion and love for the school, and its first head was one of her former scholars.



Mr Chas Booker, son of John Booker, Superintendent 1899-1926

Between 1937 and 1942, extensive renovations were made to the Sunday School buildings, including the installation of new floors, the provision of new electric wiring and switches, and the addition of an office and a lumber room.

In the 1950s the parish developed rapidly and it became increasingly evident that the Sunday School buildings were not big enough. By 1954, there were over three hundred and fifty children on the roll. A large-scale building fund and budget canvass was mounted, and on 28th April, 1956, the Most Reverend J.J. Booth, Archbishop of

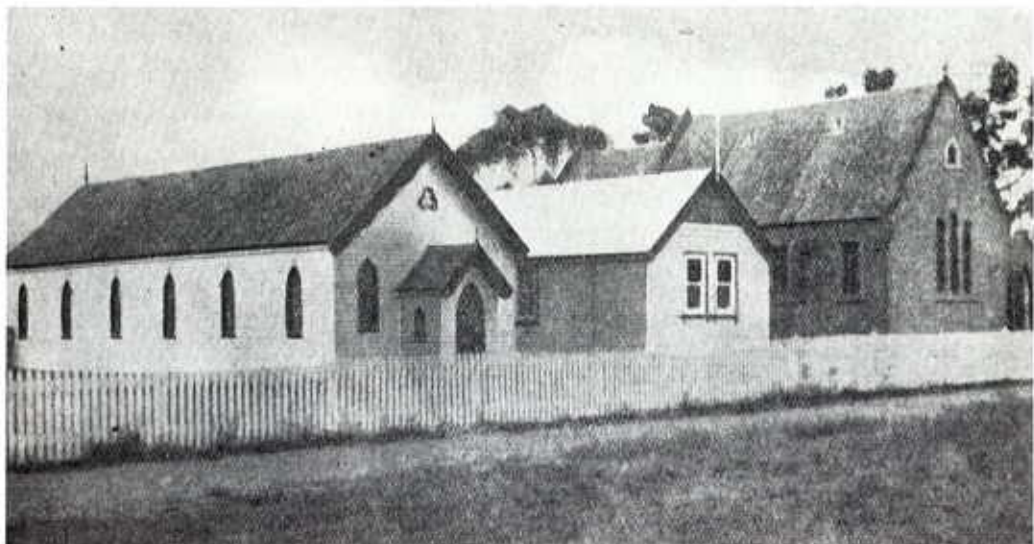


Memorial Tablet in Old Church

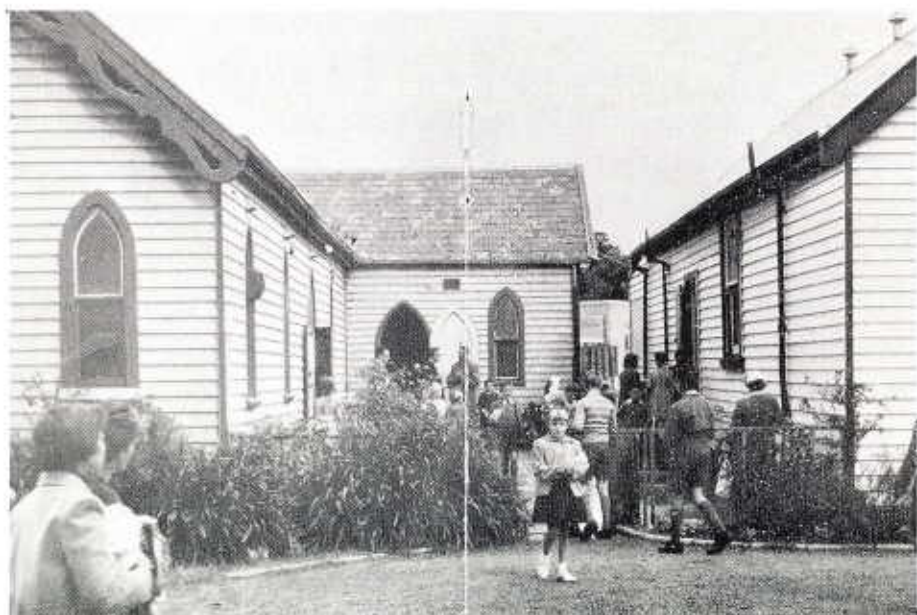
Melbourne, laid the foundation stone of an extension which would act as a Sunday School and also as part of the church on festival occasions. The new building was opened and dedicated by Archdeacon Schofield on 23rd September of the same year, and became known as "The Annexe". It had display boards, built in storage cupboards which doubled as seats, and a large folding door which could be drawn across to divide it into two rooms. Along with the old church, it is still used by Sunday School classes today.

In 1958, the number of children in the Sunday School had grown to 600, and by 1962, it was evident that the Annexe could not completely fulfil its various purposes in the face of the great expansion in the parish. Planning began for large-scale development of the whole parish site culminating, on 18th September 1966, in the dedication by Archbishop Frank Woods of the new St Matthew's. The original Sunday School buildings were removed, and a new Parish Hall was built, linking the new church with the old. The old church was converted for Sunday School and other teaching purposes, resulting in a flexible arrangement of three halls providing much better facilities for Sunday School classes and youth activities.

Although there has been a marked decline in the numbers attending Sunday School since the early 1970s, there have also been determined efforts to reverse the trend. A succession of parishioners has followed in the tradition of John and Charles Booker and Miss Sweetnam, giving freely of their time and faith in a service which has often extended over many years, and which continues to this day.



St Matthew's Church and Schools in 1917



St Matthew's Sunday School 1960

Development

In the 1890s, the parish boundaries were specifically defined, as follows: “Commencing at the corner of Roseberry Avenue and Hampton Street, south along Hampton Street to South Road, east to Bluff Road, south to Tent Street, east to Reserve Road, south to Balcombe Road, east to the Parish of Mordialloc boundary, north to the Gippsland railway line, north-west to Clayton Road, south to Centre Road, east to Warrigal Road, south to South Road, west to Tucker Road, north to Patterson Road and then west to the starting point.” It’s no wonder the vicar was not sure where his parish started and stopped! These boundaries were reviewed again in 1901.

When the third incumbent, the Rev. Alfred Caffin, was appointed in 1887, St Matthew’s was, as he put it, “the mother of a large family”, including St John the Less, Mentone, St Nicholas’, Mordialloc, Christ Church, Dingley, and All Souls’, Sandringham. The Rev. Caffin later wrote:

“Mr Budd took the care of Mordialloc entirely off my hands. Dingley was only an afternoon service. We had morning service at Mentone, alternately with the Presbyterians, in a Recreation Hall. I soon got a staff of stipendiary readers around me, and the work began to grow. My only regret was that I could not establish a theological college on the church ground.”

The Rev. Caffin’s happy memories of his ministry in Cheltenham arise largely from the enthusiastic pioneering spirit of his parishioners, among whom he mentioned Mr Plumridge, St Matthew’s first organist, his churchwarden Mr Comport (who established the iron track still to be seen at the edges of what is now Centre Dandenong Road), and the “splendid gathering of parishioners” who helped him and his wife celebrate their silver wedding anniversary in the public hall.

The House of Mercy

In 1895, the Rev. Caffin became Chaplain to the House of Mercy, a home for girls in Cheltenham, thus beginning the long and happy association of St Matthew’s with what is now the Retreat House, in Cavanagh Street.



House of Mercy, Cheltenham 1927

The Chancel

The chancel, described as “elaborate and artistic”, was added during the incumbency of the Rev. Thomas Moorhouse, its foundation stone laid by Bishop Henry Lowther Clarke on 19th June, 1905.

The Vicarage

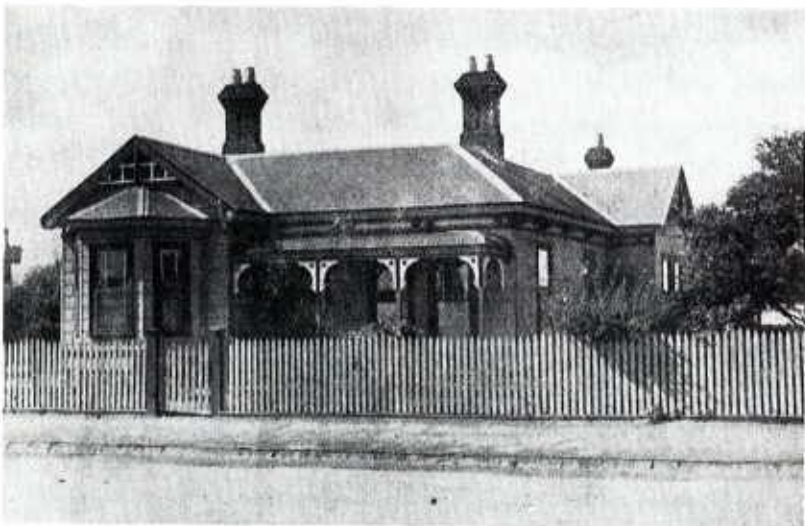
The vicarage was built during the incumbency of the Rev. Alfred Caffin. This is how he remembered his early days in the Parish:

“There being no vicarage at Cheltenham, nor any house available, we took up our residence at Mentone, but it proved so inconvenient that we availed ourselves of the first opportunity for leasing a cottage and paddock in Charman Road. This was afterwards subdivided and still bears the name which we gave, namely, The Glebe. Thanks to the dear people we soon had the commodious vicarage designed by Mr Backhouse, and built on church land as a permanent home.”

On 3rd April, 1890, the first building committee for the vicarage was formed. On 3rd June, the tender of Mr Ireland, for the sum of £623.15.0, was accepted, and work began.



The Church as it appeared before the Chancel was built (ref. p6)



The Vicarage, Cheltenham

In 1946, as part of the extensive renovations and improvements made on all the church buildings during the Rev. R. McCoy's incumbency, the vicarage was remodelled and sewerage was installed.

By 1956, the vicarage was again in urgent need of renovation. The churchwardens made an inspection of the house and decided to ask the Diocesan Registrar's advice about the quite extensive repairs which were necessary, and about the advisability of selling the land on the corner of Park Road and Charman Road. The Registrar advised that it would be unwise to sell such a valuable property at that time, so plans went ahead for the renovations.

In 1963, when the complete redesigning of the church properties was undertaken, the corner piece of land was sold and a new, modern vicarage was built. It was dedicated on 28th February, 1965, by the Right Rev. Felix Arnott. The congregation, assembled outside, listened to the Bishop as he moved from room to room, reciting the blessings with the aid of a portable microphone.



Foundation stone of Chancel (ref. p13)

The Golden Jubilee

The Golden Jubilee of St Matthew's was celebrated from Saturday 14th April, 1917, until Sunday 29th April, and the festivities included a children's picnic, a social reunion of old parishioners, a Jubilee Concert and four special services, at which the preachers were the Archbishop of Melbourne, Canon Sutton, the Dean of Melbourne and the Archdeacon of Melbourne. In preparation for the great event a new stable was built, and the church grounds edged with a new paling fence. New choir seats were built in the church.

By this time sanctuary furnishings and a pipe organ had been added to St Matthew's, along with two memorial stained-glass windows, "The Good Shepherd" and "The Light of the World", which still beautify the old church today.

This was a period of great dedication in the church, a reflection of the patriotic and private intensity of the war years. There was concern that the parishioners of St Matthew's did not see enough of their fellow parishioners from St David's, Moorabbin and Christ Church, Dingley. In 1918, it was decided to hold quarterly socials for this purpose. The sixth incumbent, Canon Macmichael, remembers the spirit of St Matthew's at that time:

"I have the happiest recollections of my short vicariate of the parish of Cheltenham, which then included Christ Church, Dingley and St David's, Moorabbin. There was plenty to do. I had three State Schools in which it was my privilege to give religious instruction, and there were four places in which I took services regularly. I remember . . . the kindness and sympathy of the people in a serious illness which I had; the numbers of young people who came to social gatherings frequently held in the Parish Hall; and the friendliness and fellowship of the people in lots of ways which are a joy to remember."

During this period improvements were made to the church buildings as technology advanced. The year 1918 saw the abolition of pew rents and the introduction of the weekly envelope scheme, the introduction of sidesmen to welcome worshippers and act as ushers each week, the installation of the telephone at St Matthew's and the first edition of the Parish Paper, as well as the end of the war.

A League of Soldiers' Friends was established, a committee formed for the planting of the grounds around the church, and the Sunday School hall was let out for the first



The Vicarage 1946 (ref. p15)



The Vicarage 1965 (ref. p15)

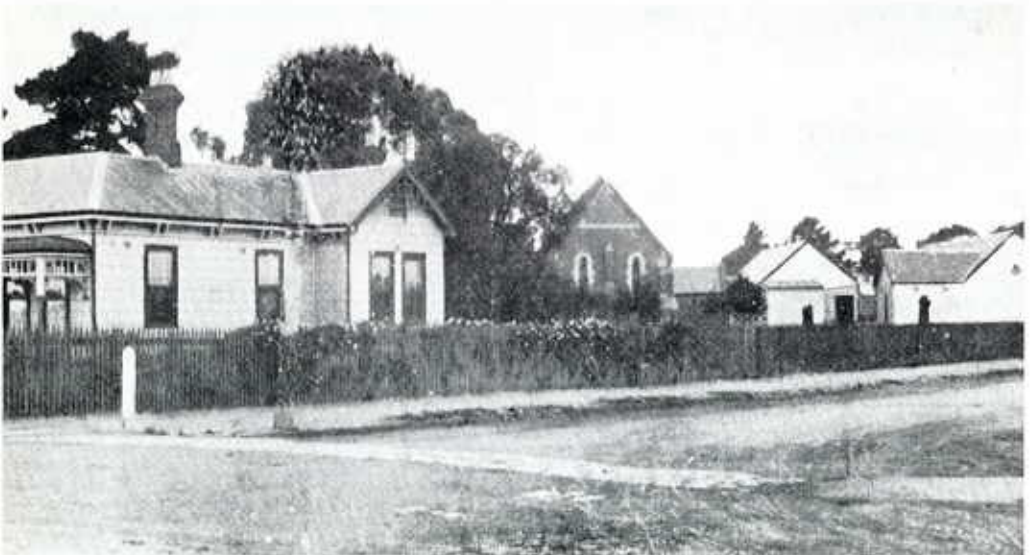
time (for Home Nursing Classes). A Men's Athletics Club and a Cricket Club were formed. In 1919, electric lights were fitted to the church, and plans were made to erect an Honour Board to commemorate those who had served, and those who had fallen, in the Great War.

In the early twenties a literary society was formed, and the first tennis court was laid down. The church was more than ever the centre of social life in the district.

A New Era

Early in the twenties, St David's, Moorabbin had become independent, and in September 1926, Christ Church, Dingley separated from St Matthew's, after fifty-three years as a daughter church.

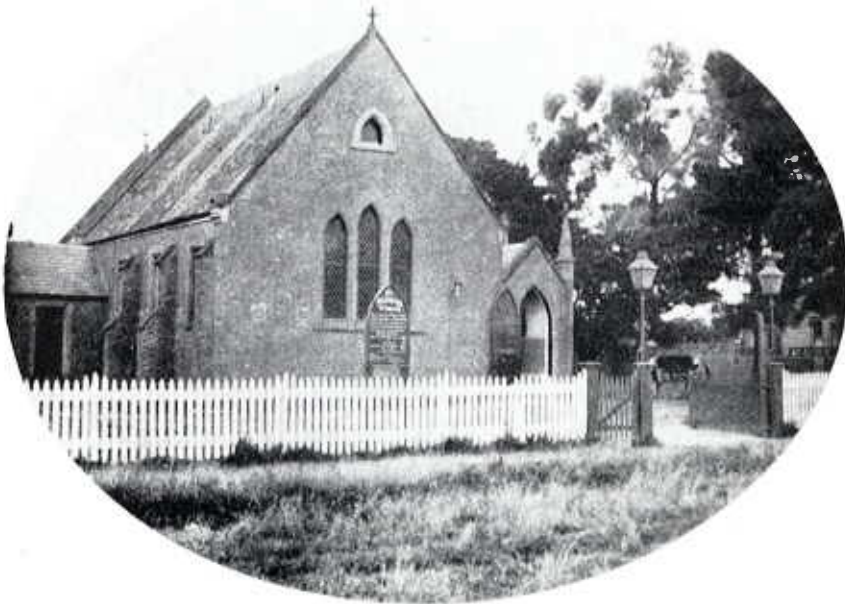
In April, 1927, the vicar's wife, Mrs North, called a meeting of all girls interested in joining a Girl Guide company, and as a result of that meeting the First Cheltenham Girl Guide Company was formed. They met in the Sunday School hall on Tuesday nights.



St Matthew's Vicarage, Church and Schools 1917 (Jubilee)

The Diamond Jubilee

St Matthew's celebrated its Diamond Jubilee from 18th September until 26th September, 1927, with a confirmation, and services featuring visiting preachers, including former vicars the Rev. A.J. Thompson (who returned from the mission field in New Guinea for the occasion) and the Rev. A. Caffin. There was also a Grand Diamond Jubilee Concert, a Grand Diamond Jubilee Dance and a Parishioners' Social. The whole of the interior of the church was renovated for the celebrations. The Sanctuary was enlarged by two feet, the organ was relocated and the Chancel draped in blue, with carpets to match. Jubilee gifts included a credence, a church notice board and a porch notice board. The festivities were a great success, and left the parish, in the words of the vicar, the Rev. R. North, "looking backwards with thanks and forwards with vision and courage."



St Matthew's in 1927 (Diamond Jubilee)

The Depression and War Years

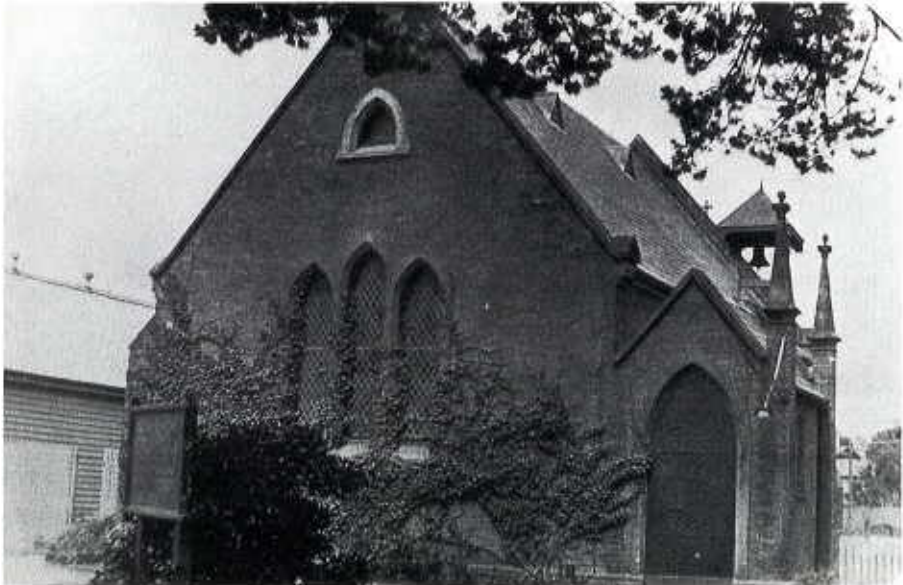
Through the difficult years of the Depression, St Matthew's was fortunate in being ministered to by the Rev. A.J. Whyte, "the beloved vicar, who really bore in his own heart the sorrows of others". Times were hard, so they created their own entertainment. The Rev. A.J. Whyte loved sport, particularly cricket and fishing, and a cricket team was formed. The athletics club and the literary society flourished. A Boys' Club grew, then declined, and in 1938 the St Matthew's branch of the Church of England Men's Society met for the first time.



When war came it pervaded every aspect of parish life, from the vicar's letter in the Parish Paper, reminding his people that "the future of this country depends considerably upon whether the people are actuated by Christian principles", to afternoon talks on "Mission Work in War-time", from information about the Church Mail Bag System (for children evacuated to the country and unable to attend Sunday School), to copies of the wording of all the inscriptions on tablets and stained glass



The Rev. Whyte and Snapper



St Matthew's circa 1940



St Matthew's Cricket Team, 1930
Standing: L. Morgan, the Rev. Whyte, T. Bentley, G. Fry, A. Bighe. Seated: W. Tapper, R. Clough,
E. Madson, E. Bighe, G. Longstaff. Front: C. Mewette.



St Matthew's Tennis Team, 1942

windows in the church, to be preserved in church records in case “anything happened” and they needed to be replaced.

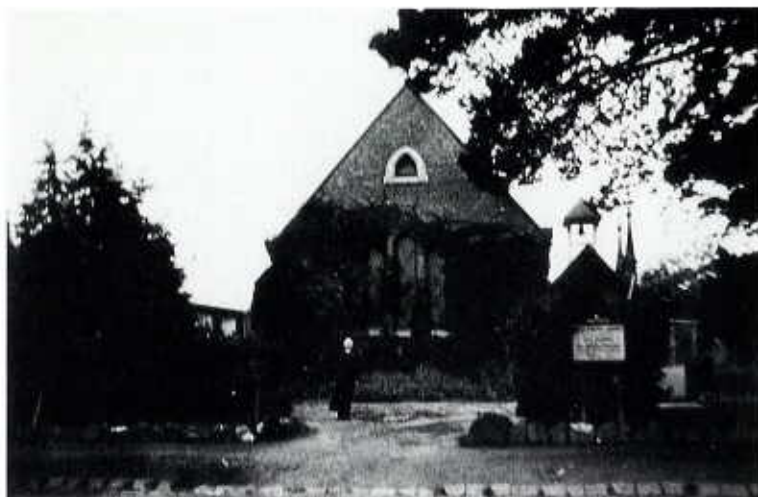
In 1942, the church overdraft was paid off, and underground drainage was provided to remove stagnant water lying beneath the Parish Hall. The next few years saw improvements and renovations made to all the church buildings. Electric heating was installed, electrical work was carried out in the halls, part of the vicarage was reconstructed, rooms were added to the kindergarten and hall and the tennis courts were put in order.

A concrete path was laid on the frontage to Point Nepean Road (now Nepean Highway), and a brick fence was erected along the front of the church property. A War Memorial Fund was also started, with the intention of beautifying the Sanctuary in memory of the fallen.

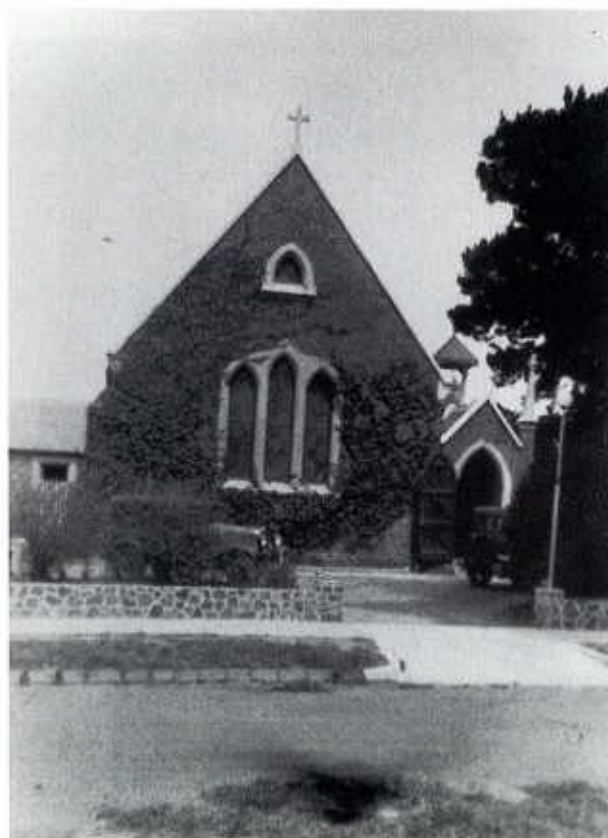
From April until June in 1943, an epidemic of typhoid swept through Cheltenham. Many parishioners were afflicted, including the vicar, the Rev. R. McCoy, who



Inside St Matthew's, 1942



St Matthew's in 1943



St Matthew's in 1944, with new fence and path

recovered after three months' absence from his post. Whole families were hospitalised; some died, including one Sunday School teacher and both children of one of the churchwardens, Mr Trevor Davidson, who was also the organist at that time. Mr Davidson and his wife later gave two standard candles for the Sanctuary, made by W. Mark, in memory of their children. The standard candles are still in use in the Chapel of the new church today.

The distress caused by the epidemic and the sorrow and hardship of the continuing war made 1943 a difficult year for St Matthew's. The Sunday School was sadly depleted during the epidemic, and a number of the social activities which cheered the lives of many had to be postponed.

The spirit of faith and determination which had brought St Matthew's from its pioneering beginnings triumphed, however. Many people worked to help the parish run smoothly during the Rev. R. McCoy's absence. The ladies of the Guild of the Holy Spirit, who visited the sick and housebound in the parish, continued their work regardless of the risk of infection. Miss Mickelborough wrote more than a hundred letters to parishioners who were in hospital. The Rev. Tunks, of St David's, Moorabbin, took over the Wednesday morning services, so that the intercessions for those on active service would continue in spite of the epidemic.

After the war ended, development of the parish continued. In 1947, the number of vestrymen was increased from eight to twelve, and the eightieth anniversary of the founding of St Matthew's was celebrated with a special Birthday Tea.

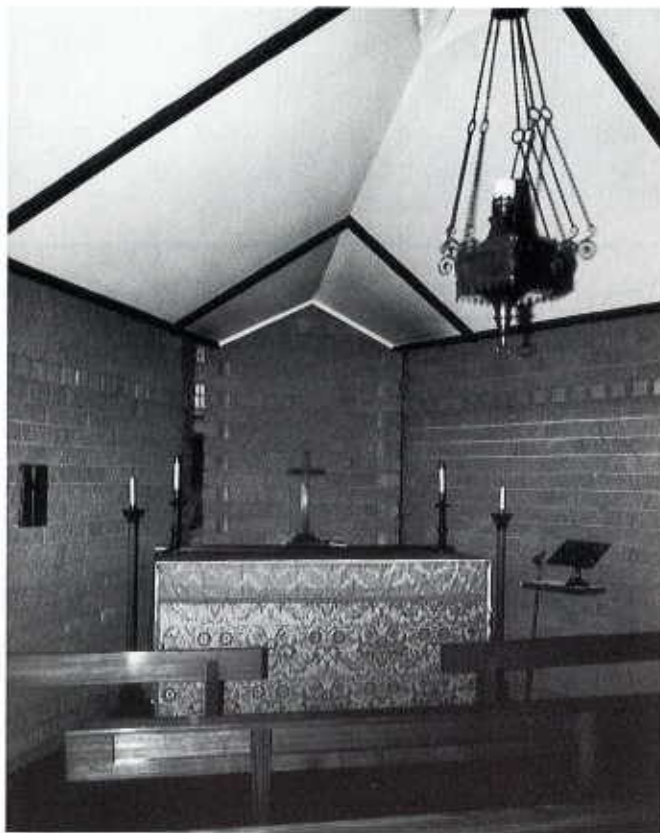
St Michael and All Angels'

In 1948, efforts began to establish a branch of the church in Beaumaris. Sunday School classes began in homes in the area, and a provisional committee was formed to plan for the building of a Parish Hall. In 1951, church services began in a garage nearby, and two years later the Church of St Michael and All Angels was dedicated. It became a parish in its own right in 1960.

In 1950, the Ladies' Guild provided carpet for the aisle in St Matthew's. Before that, every time there was a wedding, the strip of carpet from the hallway in the vicarage had been taken up and laid in the church so that the bride's train would not catch in the coir matting of the aisle. Members of the Ladies' Guild approached parishioners

for donations of 2/- each, and raised enough money to lay a permanent strip of red carpet.

The vicarage acquired a telephone, the St Matthew's branch of the Church of England Boys' Society became very popular, and a new organist, Mr Plummer, began enthusiastically to enlarge the choir. In 1951 the Rev. R. McCoy left St Matthew's, to universal regret.



Chapel in new church, showing memorial standard candles.

Expansion

The appointment of the Rev. Robert Dann in 1951 heralded a period of even greater expansion in the parish. New housing in Cheltenham and Beaumaris meant larger numbers of young people, and both the Sunday School and the Youth Group were growing.

In 1954, to mark one hundred years of parish life, a Centenary Building Fund and Budget Canvass was launched, "to provide for an urgently needed building and expansion programme, and to provide an adequate ministry both here and in the wider field of the Church's responsibility". At a Special General Meeting of Parishioners, in June 1955, plans for a new church extension were accepted. "The Annexe" was officially opened in September, 1956, on the proviso from the vestry that it not be let publicly, and that tea not be made on the premises.

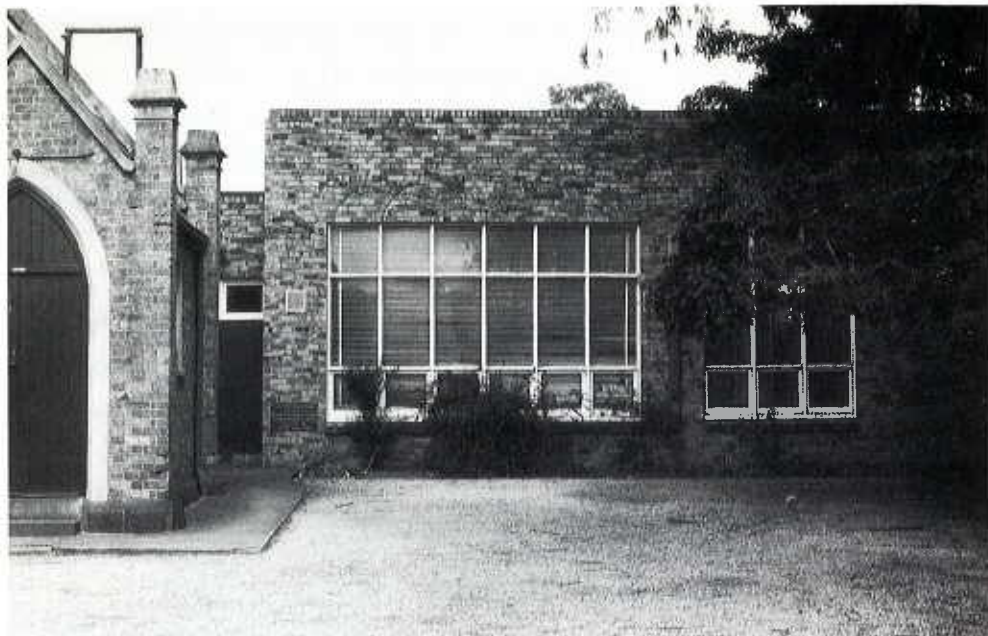
Other changes occurred during the incumbency of the Rev. R. Dann. The Parish Paper was renamed "Salt", and a branch of the Girls' Friendly Society was formed. Parish Balls became popular social occasions in Cheltenham life. Early in 1955, a motion was passed allowing women to serve on the vestry, and an office worker was employed for the first time at St Matthew's. The following year a curate was employed to assist the vicar.

By the time the Rev. Vernon Cohen succeeded the Rev. R. Dann in 1956, it was evident that the parish had once more expanded. A year after the new vicar's arrival all the rooms in the vicarage had finally been redecorated, and some necessary repairs had been completed, but it was clear that the new church extension did not completely fulfil its purpose. Over 600 children attended St Matthew's Sunday School in 1958. Discussions were held to seek resolutions to the present and future needs of the parish.

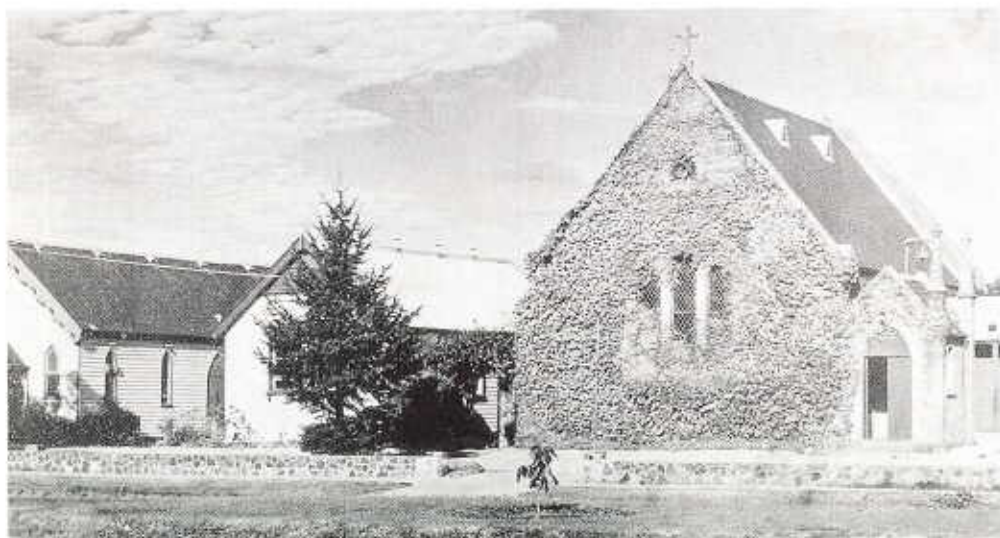
St John's

In March, 1958, a branch Sunday School was opened in Follett Road, and the vicar outlined plans to buy the site and develop it as a Church Youth Centre in the future. In April of that year, on Easter Day, the first service was held there, outside in the sunshine, and a year later the centre was dedicated in the name of St John the Evangelist.

Throughout the sixties, much good work was done at St John's, particularly in the Sunday School and the Youth Group, and many happy associations were formed there. During the Stewardship Campaign of 1969 however, an assessment of the parish was undertaken, and concern was expressed that the two centres, St John's and St Francis', were increasingly unable to justify their existence, both financially and in terms of manpower.



Annexe — officially opened in 1956



St Matthew's in 1957. Annexe can be seen on extreme right

A sub-committee of the vestry was appointed, to meet with the provisional committees of both centres and representatives from the Diocese, to decide whether the ultimate good of the parish would be better served if they were closed. It was felt that, while St Matthew's was immersed in an internal problem such as this, it was unable to play its full part in Diocesan and missionary affairs. Eventually it was decided to retain the two centres with reduced services and a rationalised financial structure.

The issue arose again in 1973 and, through the determination and hard work of the parishioners, enough money was raised to lessen the outstanding debts at both centres.



The original St John's

In December, 1976 a disastrous fire at St John's settled the matter. The centre was closed; an extra Sunday morning service was scheduled at St Matthew's, the two Sunday Schools combined forces and the various groups continued their meetings in St Matthew's Hall.

On 10th February, 1977 the Diocese decided that permission to rebuild St John's Church and Hall would not be granted and that the property should be disposed of. The Diocese, which originally purchased the land, planned to re-invest the money from its sale on behalf of a community in need of a church building elsewhere.

The decision naturally caused some distress among the dedicated workers of St John's, but the spirit of faith and determination which was now so well known in Cheltenham triumphed again, and most committed themselves with renewed vigour to life at St Matthew's.

St John's had served an essential purpose during a time of unprecedented growth in East Cheltenham, and is still remembered fondly by the parish.

In July, 1978, the Follett Road Community Hall was re-opened by the Moorabbin City Council, and a number of former St John's groups which had been using St Matthew's Hall moved back to Follett Road.

St Francis'

In September, 1958, another branch Sunday School began, in Mr Banks' garage in Bernard Street, in North Cheltenham. Within a few weeks an old shed on the property of Mrs Hale was converted for use as a Sunday School and for occasional church services. In 1960, a Provisional Committee was formed and the building was dedicated in the name of St Francis of Assisi, because of the abundant bird life in the area.

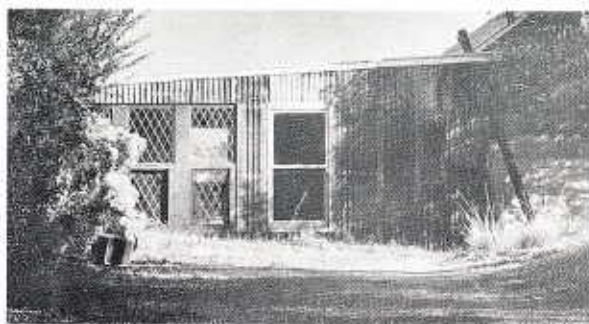
In 1961, land in Friendship Square was bought from the Community of the Holy Name, and a general-purpose hall was quickly built. The first service was held on 1st April, 1962, and the buildings were dedicated on 9th February, 1964.

There have been many ups and downs at St Francis'. The Ladies' Auxiliary supported the Sunday School right from the beginning, with card nights and lamington drives that became legendary in the parish. In November, 1989, the Auxiliary became the St Francis' Planning Group, and still holds its card nights and lamington drives. A Caritas group (originally Young Wives) still meets regularly, and the Sunday School continued for many years, inspired and strengthened by its hardest worker, Sister Winifred Muriel from the Community of the Holy Name.

The viability of St Francis' underwent the same challenges as St John's had in 1970 and 1973, when the enormous expansion of the area began to slow. The people of St Francis' responded in the same way, with renewed commitment and effort, and were able to raise enough money to save the centre.

In 1986, the numbers attending services warranted the existence of the centre, but support for meetings and other activities was very poor. Eventually, even the Provisional Committee was diminishing, and on 18th September, 1988, it was decided to form a Joint Vestry with St Matthew's, to facilitate the administration of the centre.

On 1st October, 1989, St Francis' joyfully celebrated the 25th anniversary of the dedication of the buildings, with a very successful Thanksgiving Communion and Luncheon.



The original St Francis'



The new St Francis'

St Francis' has recently enjoyed an exciting renewal under the leadership of the Rev. Chris McAleer, the curate at St Matthew's. There have been Bible studies, a "favorite hymn" segment introduced into the weekly worship, a new sign has been made and a general renovation of the buildings and grounds has been undertaken. On 4th August, 1991, the Sunday School began again with three children, under the care of Karen McAleer.

On 16th June, 1991, the first "Bikers' Church" was held at the St Francis' hall. Organized by the Pilgrims Christian Motorcycle Club, it was an ecumenical service with people coming from as far afield as St Arnaud, Shepparton and Morwell, as well as from St Francis'. The service was a joyful experience, with the singing of new songs, listening to testimonials, praying, hearing God's word and sharing Holy Communion. Over ninety people attended, and most stayed on for the barbecue after the service. The service has been held again several times, with equal success.

The Opportunity Shop

In 1960, a parishioner, Mr. C. Rae, suggested the founding by St Matthew's of an opportunity shop in Cheltenham. In June, 1961, a special committee was formed to consider the idea, and a month later arrangements were made to lease a shop in Station Road, using a £25 loan from the Parents' Club. The objective of the shop was "to raise funds for the Christian Churches or any other charitable or community object".

Since then the shop, leased by St Matthew's and staffed by volunteers from the various churches of Cheltenham, has donated many thousands of dollars to a variety of needy causes.

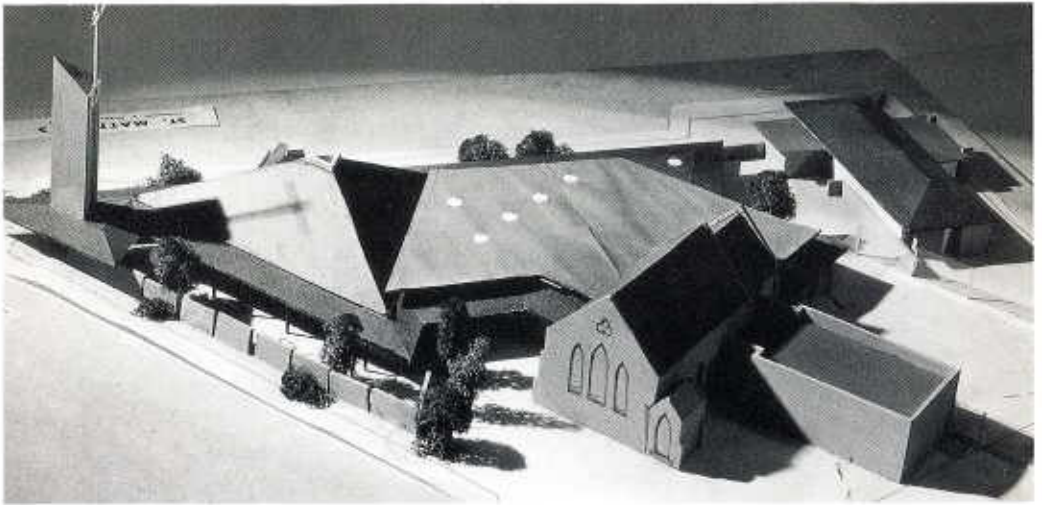
In 1984, the opportunity shop moved into the two adjacent shops, and the double-size premises remain a well-known business in Station Road today.

The New St Matthew's

At a meeting in March, 1962, Mr. Rex Patrick, an architect and a vestryman, presented plans for the future development of the site at St Matthew's — a new vicarage, church and hall link. Once the vestry had approved the plans the next step was the sale of the land at the corner of Charman and Park Roads. This was accomplished in October, 1963.

In 1964, the Rev. G.B. Lucas took up residence at St Matthew's, to find himself quickly relocated in temporary premises while the new vicarage was built. It was opened in February, 1965 and a Special Parish Meeting was called to review the rest of the plans before their submission to the Diocese for approval. The sale of the former vicarage land and a bank loan still left the parish £10,000 short of the amount needed to cover the cost of the building programme, so a campaign was mounted to raise the extra money. Private donations and many social functions held in connection with the building fund followed.

In February, 1966, extra finance was made available by the newly-arrived A.N.Z. bank in Cheltenham, and the work went ahead. A short ceremony marked the turning of the first sod as excavations for the foundations began. During the excavations a time-capsule was unearthed, containing details of the early history of the church. The



Architect's model of the new St Matthew's complex

document was reburied, along with records of the current day and age, on 27th March, 1966, when Bishop Arnott set the foundation stone of the new church.

The old church, with its annexe, was converted for use by the Sunday School. In 1974, it was refitted as a lounge, to be used as a meeting place for small groups of the various organizations in the parish, as well as the Sunday School. The chancel was turned into a stage, visible from both the hall and the lounge. The large hall, with its well-equipped kitchen, was built as a link between the old church and the new, to serve as a meeting place for larger parish gatherings.

A special supplement to the parish paper of September, 1966, explains the symbolism in the design of the new church:

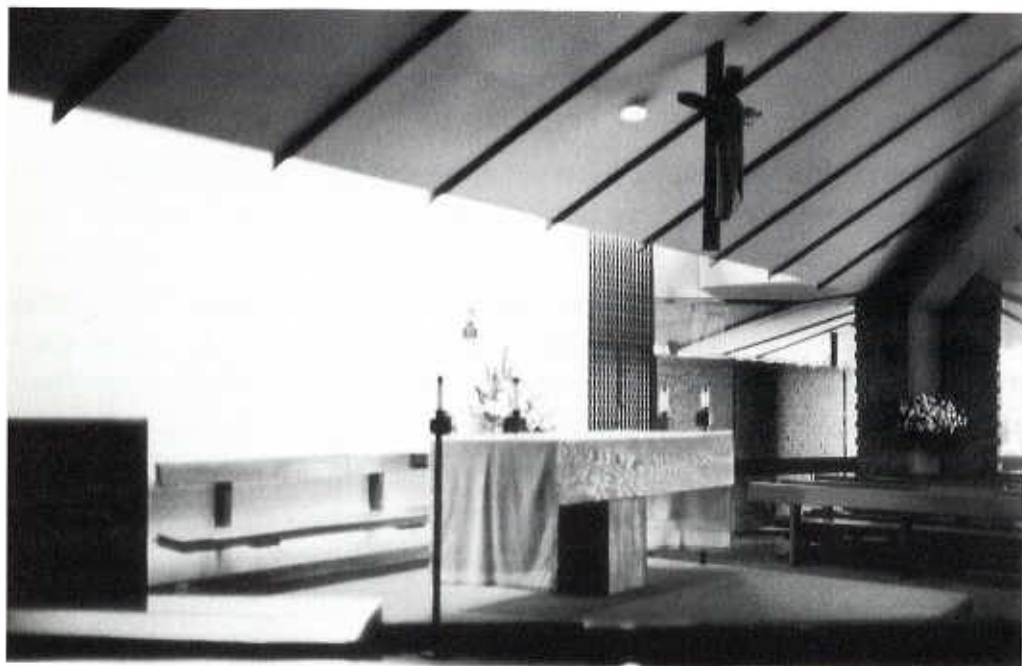
“The seating will be placed around three sides of the Sanctuary, thereby enabling the congregation to take a full part in the action of public worship and emphasising the fact that the Church is a family.

The pulpit will be situated in the Sanctuary near a free-standing High Altar, symbolising the fact that the Word of God and His Sacraments are related and complementary.

The font will be placed . . . near the entrance to the church, thereby teaching that through Baptism we are admitted into the life of the Church.



Interior of new church





Memorial Garden



The building is so planned that there will be an atmosphere of spaciousness and quiet, while a side chapel will be provided for small weekday services and for extra seating on special occasions.”

With its peaceful memorial garden visible from inside the church, its compact office, vestry, flower-room, sacristy and choir room and its planned native gardens, the new church made a beautiful focal point for the complex of buildings which St Matthew’s had now become.

After a further appeal to help with the furnishing, the new St Matthew’s was dedicated by Archbishop

Frank Woods on 18th September, 1966. The two morning services on that day, the last to be held in the old church before its deconsecration, were well attended, and the opening of the new church in the afternoon was so well attended that the congregation could only just be accommodated in the new church, the old church and the annexe.

Many favourable comments about the buildings were heard. News reporters described the church as “striking and arresting in appearance . . . The roof rests entirely upon three reinforced concrete supports, each of which weighs six tons”. It was a memorable week in the history of St Matthew’s. The dedication coincided with the Patronal Festival, so the services held on the Wednesday, St Matthew’s Day, were also well-attended by interested parishioners. A confirmation followed a fortnight later.



Font

The Centenary Year

St Matthew's did not rest on its laurels. Only five months later the pioneering spirit which had brought the parish from its determined bush beginnings to the joyful opening of the new church resulted in the holding of the first Parish Mission, lead by the Right Rev. Robert Davies, Bishop of Tasmania. It was a successful week of worship, fellowship and study, culminating in the establishment of a number of groups for Inquiry into the Anglican Faith, and the introduction of popular monthly mission services.

In April, the centenary of the dedication of St Matthew's was celebrated with a pageant put on by the Sunday School. In the new Sanctuary the children, dressed as pioneers, presented the history of St Matthew's, from the first vestry meeting at the Exchange Hotel to the missionary work being carried out in Fiji.

On April 14th, a thanksgiving service of Holy Communion was held in the old church. It was reported in the parish paper:

“How pleased those pioneers would have been to witness it! It was one of those days when time seems to stand still. There is a pause, a hush, and in the stillness of things past and present the voice of God is heard and we are at peace.”



Setting of Foundation Stone by Bishop Amott, March 1966 (ref. p33)



Setting of Foundation Stone by Bishop Arnott, March 1966 (ref. p33)

In May of that year the Governor, Sir Rohan Delacombe, paid the parish an official visit. St Matthew's had been nominated by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects as a finalist for the Gold Medal of Architects for design of a public building in 1966.

Experiments

The sixties and seventies were times of change in the parish, as in society at large. In May, 1969, St Matthew's undertook to run a Stewardship Campaign for the first time without a professional leader. The campaign was very successful; the financial result was higher than previous efforts.

When the Rev. John St. Quentin Howells was appointed to the parish, liturgical experimentation was becoming an important part of Church life in Australia and throughout the world. A monthly Family Service had been introduced at St Matthew's in 1960. Now, beginning with "A Liturgy for Africa", St Matthew's tried several new orders of service, alternating weekly with the 1662 services from the Book of Common Prayer. "Alternative Series II (English Series II)" was popular. "Australia 1969" was also tried, and the Folk Mass was used several times a year in the evening, for some years. In 1973, Series III was introduced, along with a monthly Healing Service, and

Home Communion during Lent. Finally, "An Australian Prayer Book" was introduced in May, 1978, and is still in use today.

On 14th May, 1972, the morning service at St Matthew's was televised live throughout Victoria and New South Wales. This was repeated in August, 1976. Both occasions proved to be positive experiences for the congregation, as was the recording of a service for Radio Australia in July, 1976. Experiments were also made in the use of the church for drama. Many successful plays and play-readings have been given since, using the Sanctuary as a striking backdrop.

In March 1971, a Parish Talk-back was held at St Matthew's, and was felt to be a significant milestone in the history of the parish. People from each of the centres had the opportunity to speak and to learn about every aspect of parish life and, as a result, three working groups were formed to examine and take action in the areas of worship, education and mission.

Some of the ideas put forward by the three groups have become integral to parish life today, such as the Parish Care Group, the Mission Group, the Offertory Procession at the Sunday morning Eucharists, and the use of lay people for scripture readings. Others, like the plan for lay people to sit down with the vicar and help prepare the Sunday sermon, are yet to be implemented!



L to R: Mr Staughton (Pres. Aust. Institute of Architects), Rev. G.B. Lucas, Mr Rex Patrick, Sir Rohan Delacombe, Mr D. Chancellor

Youth

The young people, too, involved themselves in the mood of change. The monthly Mission Service became a Teenage Service, with a Coffee Lounge and very popular dance to follow. In 1970, 120 teenagers at a time would attend the service and then dance the night away to a five-piece group. With the dedicated support of a band of adults who assisted with the supper and acted as “bouncers”, the dances were very successful. The Thursday Night Club was also well patronised by young people.

Youth activities then lost momentum for a while, but were revived in 1976 when the Youth Group redecorated one end of the Annexe and ran a Coffee House there. In 1978, the Youth Service, held on Sunday evening once a month, was re-introduced.



*1970 play 'Grab and Grace'
L to R: J. Glover, F. Frees, B. Reaper, T. Hedley, A. Sage. Front: M. Wilson*

At St Matthew's much good work has been done by various curates who have made youth concerns their particular area of service. It is however, in the nature of curates to move on, and in a parish the size of St Matthew's, the continuance of a youth group can depend on the availability and willingness of the curate to take on this work. It is also in the nature of young people to move on, leaving the work of maintaining the youth group to those who follow. In the eighties the population at

St Matthew's was growing older, and the smaller number of young people often found themselves with a heavy workload.

In September, 1985, a special meeting was held to discuss the needs of the young people, and a group was formed for 10-14 year-olds. In July of the following year a part-time Youth worker, Doug Bignell, was employed. He was followed by Ian Adams in 1987 and Melissa Tidball in 1988, all of whom had an enthusiastic following. During this time the Taize service was introduced at the monthly youth service.

A parishioner, Mr Bob Walker, started a junior group, known as the Younger Generation, followed later by the Young Adults. These groups went into recess when he left the parish in 1989.

Later that year a youth group once again came into being, led by Tim Holden, and is still continuing strongly under the leadership of the curate, the Rev. Chris McAleer.

Curate's Residence

In 1976, a three-bedroomed unit in Cameron Street was bought as a residence for the curate. Over the years there were various problems arising from the fact that it was a strata title unit and in 1985, after further difficulties regarding the curate's pets, the vestry rented a house in Centre Dandenong Road, then later purchased a house in McIvor Street as a permanent residence.



Curate's Residence

The Consecration

There are two main requirements for the consecration of a church: The building must be made of brick or stone, and it must be free of debt. St Matthew's had been dedicated when it was opened in 1966, but a large debt had been incurred in the building of it. Now the debt was cleared and, on September 21st, 1979, St Matthew's was consecrated by Archbishop Robert Dann.

It was a joyful week of celebrations in every way, from the perfect weather to the fact that the consecration was performed by a beloved former vicar, now the Archbishop of Melbourne. The new royal blue carpet in the church (the result of a flood on the previous Christmas night) looked beautiful, and all the former vicars of the parish who were still extant were present, including the Rev. A.J. Whyte, whose incumbency of St Matthew's had begun fifty years earlier. In addition to the consecration service there was an ecumenical service of thanksgiving, a breakfast and a barbecue, a play put on by the young people and a parish dinner dance.

Consolidation

With the induction in 1978 of the Rev. Arthur Harvey, St Matthew's began a decade of consolidation. The families which had been part of the enormous expansion of the fifties and sixties were growing up and often moving away from the parish, and the dwindling numbers of young people involved in the church and Sunday School reflected this. Nevertheless St Matthew's continued to flourish, with regular group meetings, concerts and fetes and, in October, 1980, a welcome return of the old-time Parish Picnic.

Monthly fellowship was introduced in 1980, when sherries and tea and coffee were served in the Parish Hall after the morning service. This was followed by the monthly family barbecue, which is still enjoyed by many in the grassy barbecue area behind the hall.

In 1978, the 9.30a.m. and 11.00a.m. Sunday services were amalgamated into one service, to be held at 10.30a.m. This was changed to 10.00a.m. in 1989. Daily celebrations of the Eucharist were held in the chapel, and continued through the whole of the Rev. A. Harvey's incumbency.



St Matthew's

At Easter 1981, the Holy Week Services booklet was introduced to the congregation. The booklet was put together by the vicar and the curate, the Rev. David Wood, using *An Australian Prayer Book*, the Revised Prayer Book of the American Church and the Revised Roman Missal as sources. It proved very successful and is still in use today.

In 1982, with the use of the new three-year cycle of readings and collects, both the Harvest Festival and Mothering Sunday were considered to be inappropriate, and were discontinued. Many parishioners were unhappy about these two changes however, and eventually the Harvest Festival was reintroduced with decorations and donations of produce in grander style than ever before. Mothering Sunday found a new place in the St Matthew's calendar, on Mother's Day.

In 1983, the Retreat House, in Cavanagh Street, opened its doors for the first of the Quiet Days which have become a regular feature of parish life.

There were sad moments during this time of peace. After several bouts of vandalism and a robbery the vicar reluctantly decided, on police advice, to keep the church

locked for a while. Three months after its re-opening there was a further break-in and robbery, and in September 1987, it was decided, to everyone's sorrow, that St Matthew's must be kept locked when not in use.

In November, 1989, the Ladies' Guild went into recess, after 108 years of life at St Matthew's. The advancing age of the members and lack of interest from younger women, and the fact that most of the remaining members worked for other groups in the parish as well, made it too difficult for them to continue. Apart from the vestry, the Ladies' Guild was the oldest organization in the parish.

St Matthew's continued to serve the community, however. In 1987, a Parish Care Group was set up to give help to those in need. It was comprised of volunteers who helped with cooking, driving and visiting wherever they were needed in the parish, and still forms a vital part of parish outreach today.

In 1988, Diocesan approval was given for the Rev. A. Harvey to continue as vicar beyond the statutory ten years. He retired from St Matthew's in February, 1990, leaving the curate, the Rev. Kenneth Crawford, as *locum tenens*. While continuing the work of the parish the Rev. K. Crawford carried on a valuable ministry of counselling, as the people of St Matthew's adjusted to the departure of a vicar of such long standing.

When the Rev. K. Crawford received a posting earlier than expected, the Rev. Canon Peter Whiteside took over as *locum tenens*, guiding and inspiring as the parish prepared for a new incumbent. He won the respect and affection of the parish in a very short time, and when he left after six months his departure was much regretted, even as the parish looked forward to a fresh start with its long-awaited new vicar.

Renewal

In December, 1990, the Rev. Dr. Peter Wellock took up his appointment as vicar of St Matthew's. Peter and his wife, Barbara both grew up at St Matthew's, and returned to Cheltenham after many years of service in Suva, Western Australia and Tasmania.

The parish quickly felt the benefits of change, from the introduction of computer facilities in the parish office to the renovation of the grounds. In May, 1991, a new schedule of services was introduced, incorporating Holy Communion and Evensong

according to the Book of Common Prayer, as well as Holy Communion and Evening Prayer using An Australian Prayer Book. There are also regular Healing and Outreach services, and St Matthew's takes its turn at hosting the Ecumenical service that the churches of Cheltenham have introduced.

For the Decade of Evangelism a Task Force has been set up to plan strategies for the welcome and incorporation of newcomers to the parish. St Matthew's has much to offer its members and the community.



The Rev. A. Harvey baptising Adrian Maynard



St Matthew's today

Fellowship

The organizations at St Matthew's form a solid foundation of Christianity in action that supports the constant changes of parish life and development. The Anglican Men's Society, the Mothers' Union, Caritas, the Social Club, the Mission Group, the Parish Care Group, the Flower Guild, the Choir, the Youth Group and the Sunday School cater to a wide range of ages and interests, providing opportunities for both fellowship and service.

Working bees are held to maintain the gardens; discussion and Bible-study groups are active during Lent. Parishioners and visitors enjoy a cup of tea or coffee after the 10.00a.m. service each Sunday, a monthly barbecue, and regular Parish Breakfasts after the early Sunday service.

Lay people take an active role in worship, as Eucharistic assistants, servers, readers, sidespeople and choristers.

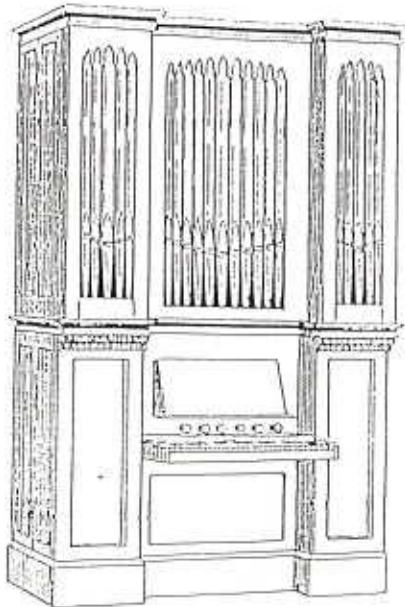
Music

Early services at St Matthew's were led by a harmonium, bought in 1867 by the first organist, Mr F. Plumridge. It was sold for £7 in 1918.

By 1917, a pipe organ, built by the English builder John Smith, of Bristol, was in place. It was probably imported to Australia as a residence organ, and was one of only a few Smith organs to be imported. It was relocated in 1927, during the renovations to the Sanctuary for the Diamond Jubilee.

Mrs Parkes was the organist in 1917, and she was followed by Mrs Johnston until 1920, when Mr Trevor Davidson took over. In that year the choir was robed for the first time. Mr Davidson retired after two years, and Miss Kingston took over, followed by Mrs Jenkyn. By 1927, the choir was thirty-five strong under the leadership of the Rev. A. Brown. In 1942, Mr Davidson took up the position for another eight years; he continued to play at the 8.00a.m. service from 1950 until his final retirement in 1970, after fifty years of service to St Matthew's.

In 1950, Mr Plummer took the position of organist and choirmaster and began to develop a very keen choir. By the next year, it had expanded so much that a wall at the end of the kindergarten had to be knocked down to create a robing room. By 1957, the need was again urgent, in spite of the building of the next annexe, with its built-in storage space.



The John Smith Pipe Organ

The Choir



THE CHOIR IN 1927 (10 Unavoidably Absent)



Rev. A. B. A. BROWN, Hon. Asst.
Curate and Choirmaster, 1926-27

The Choir.

Hon. Master: Rev. A. A. Brown.

Organist: Mrs. Jenkyn.

Members: — Sopranos: Mesdames Byrne, Cullen Flatman, and McLaren; the Misses Brown (2), Bunce, M. Courtney, Dwight, L. and B. McKnight, C. Marriott and C. Wilson. Contraltos: Mesdames Butler and North. Tenors: Messrs. Butler, Burnett, Davidson, Gibson, Lyndon, Petschack. Bass: Messrs. H. C. Boughton, F. Doward (on leave), G. Sanders, G. Sarkies. Boys: S. Reynolds, J. McKenna, D. McKenna, G. McKenna, L. Knowles, W. Barry Brown, L. Plowright, Pat. McLaren, L. Biehl. L. Gratton.

In 1960, Mr Barry Watson became organist, with Mr George Hadwen as choirmaster. The Fiander family had donated some money for an organ fund and a committee was set up to search for a suitable instrument to replace the John Smith organ. The committee examined the organ at Grimwade House and was "favourably impressed with its capacity, tone and finish". They bought it for £2286, in July 1961. The Smith organ was sold to St James the Great, East St Kilda where, following restoration, it remained until 1989, when it was again restored (by a former organist of St Matthew's, Robert Heatley) and installed in a church at Bega in N.S.W.

Mr Peter Crompton became the organist in 1963, while the new organ was being rebuilt by Davis and Laurie (now Laurie Pipe Organs). It was dedicated in 1964, "to be used only by the organist and his assistants, and others approved by the vicar". During Mr Crompton's time a junior choir began to flourish.

Mr Crompton was succeeded in 1966, by Mr Peter Bonsall-Boone and, in 1967, by Mrs Patricia Hedley. On Mrs Hedley's retirement in 1972, Mr Crompton returned at very short notice, just in time for the televised service, and remained for a further two years. In 1974, Mr Chris Meddows-Taylor took over, and was quickly succeeded by Mr Alan Farrell.



Choir 1985

*Back Row L to R: Dr R. Batterham, Mrs V. Engelsman, Mrs D. Duncan, Mrs F. Simpson, Miss O. Randall,
Mr D. Duncan. Front Row: Mrs C. Firmiss, Miss M. Moore, Mrs D. Garner, Mrs R. Rose, Miss J. Riley.
Absent: Mr C. Polites, Mrs S. Polites, Miss D. Polites*

In 1981, Dr Robin Batterham took up the position, and work began on extending the organ, using money from the fund, which the vestry wished to close off. A new diapason stop and a three-rank mixture were added (an increase of 131 pipes), thus strengthening the pedal bass and improving the tonal quality of the instrument in general.

In 1985, the choir had new robes, replacing the traditional white surplices and black cassocks, collars and caps with full-length light blue robes and white collars. These robes were given to St Mary's, East Preston in 1989, when the curate, the Rev. Kenneth Crawford, designed the maroon robes with cream trim which are now worn at St Matthew's. On both occasions the work of sewing the new robes was done by some of the ladies of the choir.

At the end of 1985, Dr Batterham resigned as organist, and in 1986 Mr Robert Heatley took on the job. Like the Youth Group and the Sunday School, the junior choir has waxed and waned in popularity over the years, and during Mr Heatley's time young people again joined the older choristers. There are now six junior members of the choir. In 1990, the choir was joined by members of the choir of St James' Dandenong, for a Choral Evensong according to the Book of Common Prayer; this proved to be a very successful event and more such services are planned for the future.

In 1991, Mr Robert Moore became the new organist and choirmaster, and is currently mounting a campaign to increase the size and capacity of the choir.

There have been many unofficial organists at St Matthew's, along with the professionals, their willing service keeping the worship constant at early and evening services, and in the periods "between organists".

"Salt"

Keeping parishioners abreast of all the meeting times and the various changes in the life of St Matthew's and St Francis' is the parish magazine, "Salt". The first edition, called The Parish Paper, appeared in 1918, and was circulated to St David's, Moorabbin and Christ Church, Dingley as well as St Matthew's. It contained parochial statistics and news from the three centres.

A letter from the vicar soon became a regular feature, along with homilies and articles relevant to the day. The Parish Paper provided a means of contact with the church for those who found it difficult to attend regularly (particularly during the typhoid epidemic of 1942), and a source of information about births, marriages and deaths as well as parish activities. In the forties a group of ladies known as the Guild of the Holy Spirit visited parish families, delivering the paper and taking note of illness and other difficulties so that the vicar would know which families needed extra care.



Acknowledgments to Weg.

"Do you ever wonder what goes on around here between Easters."

Cartoon from 'Salt', 1956

There have been changes in the format of the paper, with jokes, drawings, children's pages, personal anecdotes and regular columns appearing and then disappearing again. In 1951, the name "The Parish Paper" was changed to "Salt", from the Biblical quotation "Ye are the salt of the earth". In 1968, it was presented for a time under a variety of beautiful coloured covers. Contributions from parishioners are always eagerly sought.

For fifty years, "Salt" was sent out to be printed. In 1969, as a cost-cutting exercise, it was decided that the magazine would be produced completely by the parish. A roster of typists was drawn up, and copies were duplicated in the parish office. Today it is typed, then printed with the new S.P.9000 Roneo Scan Printer which has recently been installed in the office.

Over the years there have been many lay people involved in the production and distribution of "Salt", including typists, duplicators, folders, addressers and deliverers. In 1962, after a plea from the vicar, Mr Russ Etty took on the job of editor. He was followed by Mr Charles Kent, Mrs Oliver and Mrs Harper, and Miss Sue Patrick. In 1974, the vicar, the Rev. J. Howells, and the Parish Secretary, Mrs June Martin, took over the preparation of the paper, and it is still produced from the Parish Office today.

Looking Forward

St Matthew's is a strong and solid parish, both in its worshipping community and in its income. One of the reasons for this is its long history of Planned-giving Programmes, some professionally led, some run by the parish itself.

Another reason is the faithfulness of its parishioners, among whom many names stand out for their loving service over many years. Some have already been mentioned; to them should be added such names as Blanche McKnight, who was a teacher in the Sunday School for sixty years, a chorister for fifty years and a faithful worshipper for many years after she became too frail to serve in these ways; Henry Maude, who served the C.E.B.S., Men's Society, Sunday School and Flower Guild as well as being Sacristan from 1957 almost until his recent death; David Bacon, an original Anzac, who read the memorial to the dead every year on the Sunday nearest to Anzac Day, in spite of increasing frailty, right up until his death in 1989; Sister Winifred Muriel, whose faith and hard work did so much for the Sunday School at St Francis', and Claude Simpson who, in the words of a former vicar, "did more for St Matthew's than anyone else has done".

All these, and all the ordinary, faithful parishioners have, by their pioneering spirit of determination, brought the parish through all the vicissitudes of its 125 years, and more, of life. The words of the ninth vicar of St Matthew's, the Rev. R. North, are as relevant today as they were when he wrote them for the Diamond Jubilee in 1927:

"Looking backwards, then, we thank God for the courage, the vision, and the devoted service of those who have gone before . . . Looking forward we pray for a large measure of the same vision and courage and the same devoted service for the Master."

VICARS OF ST MATTHEW'S

The Rev. William Singleton

1867 - 1875

The Rev. William Singleton, M.A., was appointed first vicar of St Matthew's in 1867, the year the church opened. He died suddenly while conducting a service, on 14th June, 1875. He was survived by his wife, Frances, who lived until 9th May, 1890.

The Rev. Plow Kane

1877 - 1886

The Rev. Plow Kane performed his first service at St Matthew's on June, 17th 1877, and was inducted on September, 27th 1877. During his incumbency the first marriages were solemnized, and the Sunday School was established. Before his appointment and afterwards there was a series of *locum tenens* and lay readers, including the Rev. Canon Gason (then a lay reader), the Rev. J.B. Sharp, the Rev. H.E. Potter and the Rev. J.F. Stretch, M.A.D.D., who later became Bishop of Newcastle.



Rev. W. Plow Kane, M.A.
Second Incumbent



Rev. Canon Gason, who worked
as a stipendary reader

The Rev. Alfred Caffin

1887 - 1902

The Rev. Alfred Caffin, the third incumbent, was appointed in 1887 and was the vicar until 1902. He trained at Moore College, Sydney, and came to St Matthew's after a ministry at Station Peake (Lara), where he had been the incumbent from 1875 - the year he was made a deacon by the Bishop of Tasmania for Melbourne. In 1876 he was priested by the Bishop of Ballarat for Melbourne. In 1895 he became Chaplain to the House of Mercy in Cheltenham. He was the first vicar to reside in Cheltenham. After leaving St Matthew's in 1902 he was the incumbent of St Paul's, Ascot Vale, where he remained until 1913.



The Rev. Thomas Moorhouse

1902 - 1912

As a deacon, Thomas Moorhouse was curate at Traralgon, between 1882 and 1883. After his priesting his ministry was at Chiltern and Rutherglen from 1883 until 1889, and then in Seymour, Avenel and Nagambie from 1889. He was Rural Dean from 1892 until at least 1895. During his incumbency the chancel was added to St Matthew's, and the Sunday School was enlarged. After leaving St Matthew's the Rev. T. Moorhouse was Chaplain of the local Benevolent Asylum and Sanatorium. In 1960 he and his wife were killed in a car accident while driving home to Ballarat from Melbourne.



The Rev. Cassian Crotty

1912 - 1917

The Rev. Cassian Crotty studied at Trinity College (University of Melbourne), and was awarded the Australian College of Theology Th.A. (First Class Honours) in 1903, and Th.L. in 1905. He was made a deacon in 1905 and priested the following year. From 1905 until 1907 he was curate at St George's, Malvern, and from 1907 until 1908 at Holy Trinity, Kew. In 1908 he was designated Minister of Newport, where he stayed until 1910, going to St Paul's, Broadmeadows (now Westmeadows) until 1912.

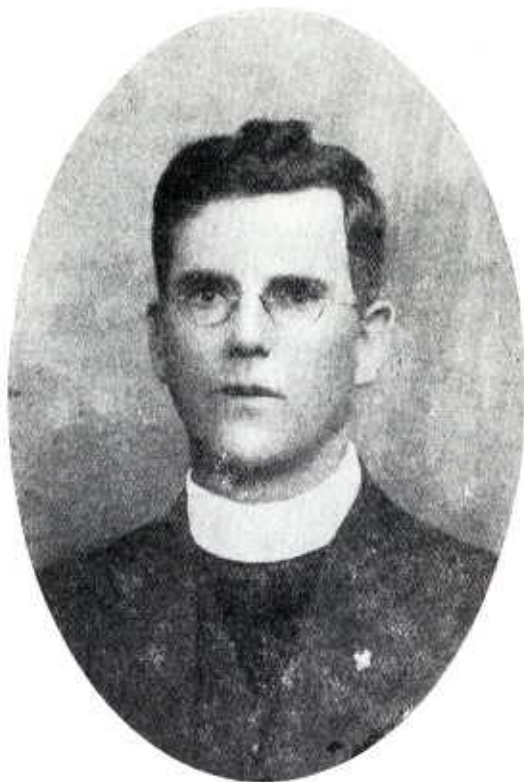
He was inducted to St Matthew's by the Archbishop of Melbourne on 2nd January 1913. From 1913 until 1915 he was a co-editor of the *Church of England Messenger*, and was a lecturer at St John's Theological College in St Kilda from 1915 until 1919. He continued studying while at Cheltenham, and was awarded the B.D. degree by Trinity College (University of Toronto) in 1916. This was followed, in 1928 by a D.D. degree.

After leaving Cheltenham he had parishes in Tasmania, South Melbourne, East Melbourne and St Kilda. In 1922 he became Examining Chaplain to the Archbishop, and was made a Canon of St Paul's Cathedral in 1928, and Dean of Melbourne in 1929.



The Rev. Canon MacMichael 1917 - 1919

When the Rev. Canon MacMichael, Th.L., was vicar the parish included Christ Church, Dingley and St David's, Moorabbin. Though his incumbency was quite short it was a time of consolidation, when St Matthew's was a central and much-loved part of community life in Cheltenham. Telephone and electric lights were fitted to the church during this time.



The Rev. Alfred James Thompson 1920 - 1922

The Rev. Thompson studied at St John's College, Melbourne, and was awarded the A.C.T. Th.L. in 1914. He was made a deacon in 1914 and was priested in 1915 by Archbishop Clarke of Melbourne. He was curate in Hastings from 1914 until 1918, vicar of Ringwood from 1918 until 1920, and then was posted to Cheltenham in 1920. During his time at St Matthew's he was Assistant Chaplain to the House of Mercy.



With his wife, the Rev. Thompson became a missionary in the Diocese of New Guinea in 1922, and served the mission for over thirty years. He died on 11th August 1963, aged 78 years.

The Rev. Herbert Thomas Fowler 1922 - 1926

The eighth incumbent, the Rev. Herbert Fowler, studied at Trinity College (University of Melbourne), becoming a B.A. in 1898. He became a deacon in the same year and was priested in 1899, by Bishop F.F. Goe of Melbourne. He was vicar of Heyfield from 1898-1902, vicar of Foster from 1902-1905, vicar of Yarram from 1905-1910 and Rural Dean of South Gippsland from 1907-1910. In 1910 and 1911 he served a curacy at St John's Camberwell, under the Rev. A.W. Crosswell. Moving to Lara in 1911, he served there until 1916 and then went on to Winchelsea until 1921, after which he became vicar of Cheltenham. In 1926 he was appointed vicar of Holy Trinity, Doncaster.



The Rev. Rupert North 1926 - 1929

The Rev. R. North studied at St John's College when it was at Armidale, in N.S.W. He won First Class Honours in his Th.L. in 1913, and was made a deacon by the Bishop of Grafton and Armidale the same year. In 1914 he was priested by the Bishop of Armidale. He was curate at Glen Iris from 1914 until 1915, then priest-in-charge of Little Plain from 1915 until 1918, and vicar of Boggabar from 1918 until 1920. Moving to the Diocese of Melbourne, he became vicar of St Matthias Richmond, from 1920 until 1926, coming to Cheltenham in 1926. He was vicar of St Matthew's during the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of 1927. On leaving Cheltenham he went to the Diocese of Wangaratta, where he became rector at Milawa. He died in 1960.



The Rev. Anthony John Whyte 1929 - 1937

The Rev. Anthony John Whyte, the tenth incumbent of St Matthew's, was affectionately known as "Friar John". He obtained his Th.L. from St John's College, Melbourne, in 1912. He was made a deacon in 1912, and priested in 1913 by Archbishop H.L. Clarke. He served as curate at St James' Melbourne, was locum for a time at Leopold, and then went as curate to St Phillip's, Collingwood, from 1913 until 1915. He was vicar of St Mary's, Warburton from 1915 until 1916, then curate (under Canon George Sutton) at Holy Trinity, Kew, from 1918 until 1920. From 1920 until 1929 he was vicar at Croydon, during which time he was also locum at Holy Trinity, Kew (1926 - 1927).

He was vicar of St Matthew's from 1929 until 1937, and was known as a keen sportsman, his main interests being cricket and fishing. In 1937 he was appointed to St Paul's, Frankston, where he stayed until 1950. During the period 1946 to 1950 he was Rural Dean of Malvern. He concluded his active ministry with an incumbency at St Catherine's, South Caulfield, from 1950-1958, but he continued to be a constant visitor to St Matthew's. He spent his last days at the Hurlingham Nursing Home in East Brighton, and died on 2nd December, 1982, at the age of 95 years.

At the time of his death it was said of him that "He was a warm, human, friendly person . . . with a touch of the ascetic and more than a touch of saintliness in his character. He was one of those individuals who won't fit into a mould and who collectively are part of the glory of Christianity and Anglicanism."



The Rev. Charles Balmain Cotes 1937 - 1942

The Rev. Charles Cotes trained at Trinity College (Melbourne University) and graduated with a B.A. and Th.L. Archbishop W.C. Lees ordained him deacon in 1923 and priest in 1924. He served as curate at St Andrew's, Brighton, from 1923 until 1925, then at Broken Hill from 1925-1927, before becoming priest-in-charge at Ardlethan, from 1927-1928. He was vicar at Marshall from 1928-1930 and then vicar of St Silas, Geelong, and Chaplain of Geelong Hospital and Goal (1930-1932). He was in Hastings from 1932-1937, becoming vicar at Cheltenham in 1937. He married the younger sister of the former vicar of the parish, the Rev. A.J. Whyte. After leaving Cheltenham he was at St Peter's, Murrumbena, until his death.



The Rev. Reginald McCoy 1942 - 1951

The Rev. Reginald McCoy, Th.L., was inducted to the charge of St Matthew's, Cheltenham by the Archbishop of Melbourne, on Tuesday 2nd June, 1942. In 1944 he fell victim to the typhoid epidemic which swept Cheltenham, but recovered to become a greatly-loved vicar. During this incumbency a number of improvements and renovations were made to all the church buildings, and his retirement in 1951 was much regretted. He died on 9th December, 1960, after losing his wife Mary, in 1956.



The Rev. Robert William Dann 1951 - 1956

The Rev. Robert Dann obtained his B.A. and Th.L. from Trinity College, Melbourne in 1943. He was made a deacon in 1945 and became Curate to the Archbishop of Melbourne. In 1946 he was priested by the Archbishop of Melbourne, and became Director of Youth and Religious Education under the direction of the Archbishop, a position he held until 1951 when he became incumbent of St Matthew's. During his incumbency St Matthew's developed and expanded and the Annexe was built.



After leaving St Matthew's, the Rev. Dann was vicar of St George's, Malvern from 1956-1961 and was Examining Chaplain to the Archbishop of Melbourne from 1960-1961. He became vicar of St John's, Footscray in 1961, Archdeacon of Essendon (1961-1969), a Canon of St Paul's Cathedral (1962-1969), Chairman of the Department of Christian Education (1960-1970), and Director of Evangelism and Extension (1963).

On All Saints' Day, 1st November, 1969, in St Paul's Cathedral, he was consecrated Bishop by the Archbishop of Melbourne, and became Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Melbourne. He was Bishop Coadjutor of the Central Region from 1971-1978, Bishop Administrator from April-December 1977, and was elected and enthroned Archbishop of Melbourne on 7th December, 1977.

The Rev. Vernon L. Cohen **1956 - 1964**

The Rev. Cohen was trained at St John's College, Morpeth, in N.S.W. and obtained his degree (Th.L.) in 1952. The same year he was made a deacon by the Bishop of Geelong, for the Archbishop of Melbourne, and was priested by the Archbishop of Melbourne in 1953. He was at Christ Church, Essendon from 1952-1954 and at Inverleigh and Meredith from 1954-1956. He came to St Matthew's in 1956, and provided inspiration during a period of great expansion, including the building of St John's and St Francis', and planning of the much-needed new St Matthew's, which was opened in 1966, after he had left the parish.

The Rev. V. Cohen was incumbent of Christ Church, Mitcham from 1964-1966, Warden of the Avalon Community at Lara from 1967-1980, incumbent of St Bede's, Elwood (1980-1985), Archdeacon of St Kilda (1983-1985), and was made an Associate Priest and Minor Canon of St Paul's Cathedral in 1985, with particular responsibility of leadership of the Cathedral Healing Ministry.



The Rev. George Bromley

Lucas 1964 - 1970

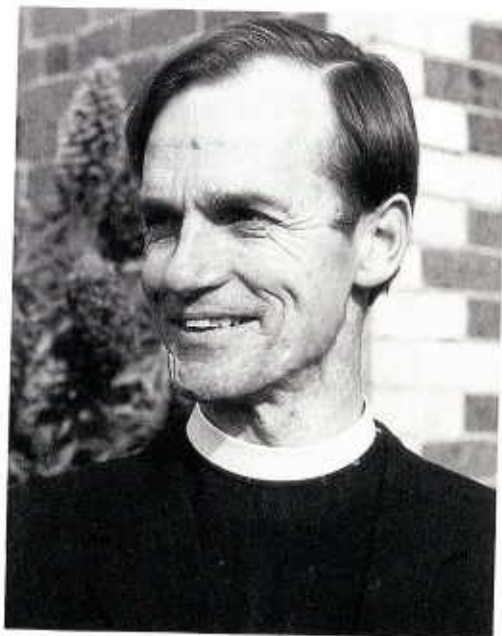
The Rev. G.B. Lucas studied at Trinity College, Melbourne, and obtained his B.A. in 1951 and this Th.L. in 1952. He became a deacon in 1953 and was priested in 1954. He was assistant deacon from 1953-1954, and assistant priest from 1954-1955 in Mildura. He was the rector at Sea Lake from 1955-1960, Director of Youth and Religious Education from 1958-1964, rector at St Matthew's, Charlton from 1960-1964, and Examining Chaplain to the Bishop from 1961-1964. He came to St Matthew's in 1964, taking over the responsibility for the building of the new church. The Rev. G. Lucas was Rural Dean of Caulfield from 1972-1975 and incumbent of St George's, Malvern from 1970-1985. He became Archdeacon of Brighton in 1982, and incumbent of St Luke's, East Frankston in 1985.



The Rev. John St. Quentin

Howells 1970 - 1977

The Rev. John Howells was the sixteenth vicar of St Matthew's. He studied at Trinity College, Melbourne, obtaining a B.A. in 1957, and at St Michael's House, Crafers, obtaining a Th.L. in 1962 and a Dip. E. in 1977. He was made a deacon by Bishop Redding for Melbourne in 1962, and a priest by the Archbishop of Melbourne in 1963. As a curate he was a member of the Diocesan Task Force from 1962-1963, and curate at Holy Trinity, Coburg, from 1963-1965. He was minister at St Peter's and St Andrew's, Braybrook from 1965 until 1970, before coming to Cheltenham. In 1977 he left St Matthew to go to All Saints', Geelong, where he remained until 1991. He is currently vicar at Shepparton.



The Rev. Edgar Arthur Calverly Harvey

1978 - 1990

The Rev. Arthur Harvey obtained his Th.L. in 1952. He was made a deacon the same year, and was priested in 1953 in Bendigo. He was curate at Kangaroo Flat from 1952-1953, and at Bendigo Cathedral from 1953-1955. He was priest in charge at Kangaroo Flat in 1955, and vicar of Rochester, in the Diocese of Bendigo, from 1955-1961.

He was Rural Dean of the Northern Chapter from 1956-1961, incumbent of Christ Church, Ormond from 1961-1969, and incumbent of St Matthew's, Ashburton from 1969-1977. In 1978 he came to St Matthew's, and in 1988 was granted permission to stay for another two years. He left in 1990 to become vicar of St Michael and All Angels', Bennettswood.



The Rev. Dr. Peter Wellock 1990 -



The Rev. Dr Peter Wellock studied first at Melbourne University, gaining a B.A. in 1956, Dip.Ed. in 1957 and B.Ed. in 1960. He was awarded the A.C.T. Th.L. in 1962, Th.Schol., N.Z.B.T.S. in 1972 and Ph.D. from Murdoch University, W.A. in 1977. He was made a deacon in 1959 and a priest in 1960, in St Arnaud. He was curate in Mildura from 1959-1962; *locum tenens* at St Oswald's, Glen Iris from 1963-64; tutor at St John's Theological College, Suva in 1964; curate at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Suva 1964-66; Off. Chaplain, R.N.Z.A.F., 1964-66; vicar of St Luke's Laucala Bay, 1967-68; Director, Pacific Islands Christian Education Council, 1969-70; Diocesan Education Officer 1971-72; Visiting Lecturer, Pacific Theol. College, Suva 1971-73; Executive Director of Churches Commission on Education, W.A., 1973-78; Curriculum Officer in Religious Studies Education Department, W.A., 1978-82; Visiting Lecturer, Murdoch University and Claremont Teachers' College 1977-78; Executive Officer of Religious Studies Curriculum Committee and Minister of Education's Advisory Committee for Religious Studies, 1980-82; Lecturer Religious Education, United Faculty of Theology, 1983-88; Dean Trinity College, 1984-88; Chaplain Trinity College, 1982-88; and Warden of Christ College, Sandy Bay from 1988-90.

