

An Historical Note

In 1854 Mr Colin Campbell (afterwards the Reverend Colin Campbell) began a Sunday School in his house 'Haverbrack'—now remembered by Haverbrack Avenue—and in 1855 services were taken there by the Reverend (afterwards Canon) Henry Handfield of Saint Peter's, Eastern Hill.

In 1856 local church people obtained a house and shopfront in Malvern Road, near Spring Road, for a day school under the Denominational Schools Board, and for Church services conducted by Mr Campbell or by the Reverend John Gregory of Saint Matthew's, Prahran.

In 1857 the local committee representing the Church of England acquired a grant of an acre of land in Glenferrie Road (the northern half of this site is today occupied by the parish hall), and built a school room, which in 1858 was licensed for Church services. The priest in charge of the district of Oakleigh and Malvern was the Reverend Henry Liddiard. The first recorded meeting of the Malvern Church Committee is dated 10 July 1861. Because the land to the south of the school block had been reserved for a police barracks, the committee in 1865 bought a piece of land to the north—about one and a half acres—for £67.13s.

In the same year the Reverend Thomas Cole was appointed to the district of Oakleigh and Malvern, and Mr Samuel Merrett offered his services as the architect for the proposed church. Mr Merrett was at the time an architect in the Public Works Department of the Colony, and with his brother Thomas Merrett he was joint architect of Melbourne's first Exhibition Building, which opened in William Street in 1854 on the site now occupied by the former Royal Mint.

The foundation stone of the church was laid on 30 November 1865 by Sir William Stawell, Chief Justice of the Colony. The ground floor of the vicarage was completed by 8 November 1867, when the Reverend Thomas Cole and his family took up residence. The building of the church proceeded slowly, as money was short, but on 19 September 1869 the nave and a temporary chancel were opened by the Reverend Dr John Bromby, foundation headmaster of Melbourne Grammar School (The Right Reverend Charles Perry, Lord Bishop of Melbourne, had been invited for the previous week, but the church was not quite ready). The building was not clear of debt until 1875, when it was consecrated by the Right Reverend Samuel Thornton, Bishop of Ballarat. The parish at that time extended to Gardiner's Creek to the north, Dandenong Road to the south, Darling Road to the east, and Orrong Road to the west. In 1878 the name of the shire was changed from Gardiner to Malvern.

The Reverend Thomas Cole died in office in 1879, being succeeded in 1880 by the Reverend (afterwards the Reverend Canon) Charles Godby. The building program began again with Mr Robert Dalton as architect for the addition of the transepts and a temporary wooden chancel and sanctuary. The program was completed in two years: that is, by 1885.

In 1887 a narrow strip of land was bought along the north boundary of the churchyard, and Mr Urban Billing (the son and business partner of the architect Mr Nathaniel Billing) was engaged as architect to complete the chancel and sanctuary. In 1888 the new work—transepts, chancel, sanctuary, organ chamber and vestry—was consecrated by the Bishop of Melbourne, the Right Reverend Field Flowers Goe. In 1891 the foundation stone for the parish hall was laid by Sir William Clarke, pastoralist, and the front (western) half of the hall was begun. In 1897 the second storey of the vicarage was added.

The Church of the Holy Advent, Armadale, was established in 1898 by Canon Godby as a chapel of ease of Saint George's in what had been a Wesleyan church. The building became the parish hall

when a new church in Kooyong Road was opened in 1910. The church closed in 2016, when the parish was reunited with Saint George's.

In 1910 Canon Godby resigned because of ill-health (although he was later appointed as Dean of Melbourne, and—much to the dismay of the Churchwardens—had to be supported in that office by Saint George's Vestry, who had wrongly supposed that his appointment as Dean would relieve them of the responsibility for his superannuation).

Canon Godby was succeeded by the Reverend Charles Dalton, who returned to England in 1916, when the Reverend Josiah Tyssen was appointed. Father Tyssen had served as locum tenens in 1914. His incumbency of thirty-three years, approached only by the thirty-year incumbency of Canon Godby, saw the growth of Saint George's long association with the Church in Papua New Guinea that dates from the foundation of the mission. The Reverend Albert Maclaren, co-founder of the mission with the Reverend Copland King, visited Melbourne in 1891, and thereafter maintained correspondence with Canon Godby. In the nave and transepts the series of stained glass windows titled *From Nazareth to the South Pacific* was devised by Father Tyssen: it traces the spread of the Gospel from the Holy Land into Britain, through Australia, to Papua New Guinea.

Saint George's was the parish church for the state governors, who lived at 'Stonington' in Glenferrie Road from 1901 until 1931, when the governors-general vacated State Government House. In 1921 Lord Stradbroke, Governor of Victoria, laid the foundation stone of Saint Martin's Chapel, designed by Mr Rodney Alsop, in memory of the parishioners who served in the Great War. Although the church as it stands is the work of four architects, it largely conforms to the original design of Samuel Merrett. The rear (eastern) part of the parish hall was opened by Lord Stradbroke in 1926. Lord Somers, a benefactor of St George's, was the last state governor to live at 'Stonington'

Father Tyssen retired in 1949. He was succeeded in 1951 by the Reverend Francis Townsend, during whose incumbency the vicarage was restored, the churchyard was landscaped, the Garden of Memory and the Book of Remembrance were instituted, and the parish began its first program of continuing planned giving, conducted by the Wells Organization.

Father Townsend died in office in 1956: he was succeeded by the Venerable Robert Dann, who was consecrated as Bishop Coadjutor in 1969, and elected as Archbishop of Melbourne in 1977. During his incumbency the parish hall was radically altered to open its north side towards the church, and to make it more adaptable for a variety of parish uses.

The Reverend (later the Venerable) Stanley Moss was incumbent from 1961 to 1970: in that time part of the land behind the vicarage became the site of the four cottages forming the then Saint George's Close.

The Venerable George Lucas OAM was incumbent from 1970 to 1985: in that time a medical centre (including free accommodation for a Citizens' Advice Bureau) was built to the south of the parish hall. Archdeacon Lucas was succeeded by the Reverend Alan Baxter, incumbent from 1985 to 1988,

In 1989 the Reverend Andrew Curnow (later the Right Reverend Andrew Curnow AM) was appointed as incumbent. He implemented and completed an ambitious program to renovate the church—reordering the interior for current liturgical use—and to renovate the ground floor of the vicarage. He was consecrated Bishop to serve in the northern suburbs of Melbourne in June 1994, and he served as Bishop of Bendigo from 2003 to 2017.

The Reverend Barry Smith (now the Reverend Canon Emeritus Barry Smith OAM) was appointed in 1994. His ministry saw an expansion of pastoral care, the development of lay chaplains to assist with

Saint George's extensive ministry to Cabrini Hospital, the consolidation of material resources, and the establishment of a comprehensive vision for the future of the parish. He retired in 2006. The renovation of the upper floor of the vicarage was completed early in 2007.

The Reverend Canon Dr Colleen O'Reilly was appointed as incumbent in 2007. She completed Saint George's Centre, an expansion of the facilities of the parish hall, was opened by her in 2008. This project was followed by the renewal of the gilding of the frame of the reredos of the High Altar, the renewal of the entire roof of the church, and the restoration and repainting of the interior of the church. As part of the Anzac Commemoration project our copy of the James Clark painting 'The Great Sacrifice' was restored, and members of the parish prepared a detailed record of the service of all of the parishioners named on the Honour Roll.

Dr O'Reilly retired in May 2019.

The locum tenens is Fr Ray Cleary.

Brian Corless OAM

Archivist

June 2019