



Church of St. Barnabas

Newnham, Tasmania

1859 - 1969

Foreword

Many of the facts behind this story of Newnham's Anglican history were supplied by Mr. S. R. Robinson. Those who are intimately connected with St. Barnabas and St. George's parish affairs would tell you that 'Robbie,' as he is known, is something of a legend.

He has been a member of the parish since its inception in 1921. As a member of the original Building Committee at St. George's, 'Robbie' has seen the growth of the parish and the eventual clearing of the debt on that church.

Minute books of both the St. George and St. Barnabas vestries record his name in many honorary positions and he has held all positions available to a lay member in the parish. As a diocesan lay reader, 'Robbie' helped maintain services at Lebrina, Bangor and Pipers Brook.

Even though he is past his eightieth milestone, Mr. S. R. Robinson is still active at St. Barnabas. He holds the position of treasurer on the St. Barnabas Vestry and is a regular teacher at the Sunday School.

OVER A CENTURY AGO

THE HISTORY OF WORSHIP IN THE DISTRICT OF NEWNHAM GOES BACK AT LEAST ONE HUNDRED AND TEN YEARS. The unpretentious little weatherboard church of St. Barnabas is but a chapter in the story.

In 1859, when Prince's Square was first opened to the public and the Public Buildings in St. John Street began to reach for the sky, the rural district of Newnham was part of the parish of Holy Trinity, Launceston. The parish boundaries encroached on the municipalities of Launceston, St. Leonards and Lilydale. The George Town Road, little more than a gravel track, picked its way across the swamp, snaked up the briar and wattle covered hillside of Mowbray and weaved its way between the paddocks of large estates, before slipping down to Dilston.

Just past the Alanvale Road turn-off one would see a brick and wooden building standing in the tree lined hollow. This was known as the Old Newnham Church of England and served the community as church and school. During the incumbency of the Rev. Aug. Barkway, before and up to 1859, services were held in this distant part of the Holy Trinity parish. On weekdays Mrs. and Miss Troy used the building as a school. Local children, from the cottages of farm hands on the neighbouring estates, would walk or ride, on horseback, to this seat of knowledge and discover the arts of reading and writing. But this was a closing chapter for the old building. When the Rev. Barkway left to become Chaplain-in-Charge at St. Paul's in Launceston, and the two ladies moved on, the solid wooden doors of the Old Newnham C. of E., were closed for a very long time.

NEWNHAM GROWS

THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS SAW THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF NEWNHAM AND MOWBRAY. The 640 acre estate of Newnham Hall, under Mr. W. D. Grubb's capable hands, forced the reluctant bush to the distant hills. Wattle and scrub gave way to paddocks of oats and wheat. In the background, against the rolling foothills of the Mount Barrow range, sturdy 'Made in England' railway engines chuffed their smoky way to Scottsdale. Black Angus cattle peered over post and rail fences where supermarkets now stand. Merino sheep travelled in their own dust cloud towards the shearing sheds at Newnham Hall.

Across the Newnham Creek stood the Cedars estate, renowned for possessing one of the most efficiently equipped racing stables in northern Tasmania. The name of William Clare was a household word among the Tasmanian Turf Club members as they gathered at the Mowbray race course to watch the cream of Tasmania's horses thunder across the lush turf. His name was soon to be a power within the church.

With this development came the increase in population and, with the increase, came the desire to possess their own church. The ride to Holy Trinity was not the best. In the summer one could expect a dust bath along the Invermay Road and, in the winter, it was quite possible to get bogged. To add insult to injury, there was always the toll gate on the corner of Landale Street and Invermay Road, where one paid a stated price, which was supposed to be used for the upkeep of the main roads.

Approaches were made to Mr. F. Archer, member for Bass 1893-1902. After representations to the government of the day the old church building was repaired and a school teacher was allocated to the area. During this period the Rev. E. G. Barry became rector of Holy Trinity and, in a desire to widen the scope of the church, he decided to hold services in the Newnham and Mowbray

districts. He used the Newnham Old Church and the Mowbray Hall to cater for the farm labourers, ploughmen, stable hands, overseers and owners of the numerous estates.

FORGOTTEN SITES

The Mowbray Hall stood behind the low, wooden building on the corner of Ravenswood Road (now Vermont Road) and known as the Racecourse Hotel. The site of both buildings is now taken by the Mowbray Hotel and its car park. Services were held every other Sunday.

During this resurgence of the Anglican Church in this rural part of Launceston's parish, the representation to the government revealed a grave oversight on the part of some church dignitary. The title deeds to the ground on which the Old Newnham Church stood had been lost. It was only after a great deal of effort by the Rev. Barry that the new deeds were secured. Unfortunately, new deeds did nothing to give the actual building a new life and it was found that Time had eroded much of the foundation and composite structure. Was it worth rebuilding? The following of the church had expanded considerably and it was felt that, even if the old building were to receive a face lift, it would not cater for the needs of the parish.

1900 – 1920

NEW LAND AND A NEW BUILDING WAS THE CRY, AND FROM THIS DESIRE ST. BARNABAS WAS BORN. The land, standing in the triangle where Alanvale Road met the main road to George Town, was purchased for £25 from Mr. J. C. McMichael. Tenders were called for the building of a structure to serve the purpose of hall and church. It was natural that, from the applicants, the tender of J. and T. Gunn was accepted. Not necessarily because it may have been the lowest but because the name of Gunn was synonymous with good building. Didn't Tamar Lea stand as a monument to the firm's integrity, built twenty five years before on the rising ground behind the Old Newnham Church? Wasn't the latest addition to Launceston's collection of imposing buildings, that of the new Holy Trinity in Cameron Street, the work of J. and T. Gunn?

The plans for the modest weatherboard St. Barnabas only allowed for an expenditure of about £300, compared with the £5,700 project of Holy Trinity seven years before, but to the parishioners of Newnham their church would be equal in splendour and importance. The new seats cost £20 and the Mason and Hamilton organ was £40. Lamps, carpet and other furnishings were gifts from various friends of the church. The prayer desk and reading desk came from the old Trinity Church, a building condemned by the City Surveyor in 1888 and which saw its last service three years before the foundation stone was laid at St. Barnabas.

RETURN OF THE MISSIONARY

A SEVERED LINK OF NEARLY HALF A CENTURY IN NEWNHAM'S CHURCH HISTORY WAS RESTORED ON THE 29th NOVEMBER 1905. The Rev. A. Barkway was invited to return to the site of his old church and lay the foundation stone of the new St. Barnabas. The newness of the timbered church in its rural setting must have seemed strange to him, as the stone was laid with a collection of £13.6.1½ in contemporary currency. His own church of St. Paul's in Launceston was more sombre, older in structure and grubby in its city surroundings.

Addressing the large gathering, many of whom had driven out from Launceston in buggies and chaise carts, the Rev. Barkway said:—"I beg to be allowed to give expression to the great pleasure and satisfaction I feel in being invited to perform the solemn function of laying the foundation stone of the new church, to be dedicated to the honour and glory of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and to hear, in future time, the name St. Barnabas. A point to be remembered is this. Though every cathedral, minster or parish church has a special name given to it at the time of laying the foundation stone, in each case the building thus set apart for sacred uses is, in reality, dedicated to the ever blessed and glorious Trinity.

A step in that direction is being taken today. The unassuming building which, for so many years, has been used as a place for worship and for school purposes, could barely aspire to take its place among the churches of the land. I heartily congratulate the rector of Holy Trinity, and you who are so loyally and earnestly rallying round him in this district, in inaugurating this work. In the old building on the other side of the road I officiated, with pleasure to myself, for twenty seven years and I look forward to being approached to officiate in the new building in a friendly way.

It is, apparently, a simple matter to lay a first stone and commence a new building to the honour and glory of God. But do they who take part in such work always recognise the great responsibilities they impose upon themselves? Nothing should be done for God lightly, or in vain. Let this question be asked: 'Do we not too often, aye, and with seemingly fervent devotion, commence a new church for God's service, attend it devotedly and regularly for a time and, afterwards, allow our zeal to flag and ourselves to become chilled, careless and indifferent? We prove to be buttresses, something outside, instead of pillars, loyal supporters inside the church. Do we need to be reminded that there is a spiritual building in which each of us has a part? Can we forget St. Peter's glowing words: 'Ye also, as living stones, are being built up into a spiritual house for the offering of spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.'

May the work beginning here today be completed with success and prove to be a house of blessing to every soul that may come fervently and lovingly to seek the Heavenly Father there."

As the sun of a perfect day warmed the backs of those attending in all their finery, Canon Beresford, as Rural Dean for Launceston, congratulated the Rev. Barry on the success that attended his efforts in Newnham.

"I hope the time will come," he said, "when the suburb has grown to such proportions that a much larger place for worship, than the one being erected today, will be needed by parishioners."

SIXTEEN YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT

EVERY CHURCH HAS ITS BELL AND THE ST. BARNABAS BELL WAS PRESENTED BY MR. W. THELWELL. It was originally housed in a wooden tower, detached from the church building. The tone of the bell was created by a quantity of silver, including coins, being collected by Mr. Thelwell from many friends and cast into the molten mass before the bell was moulded.

Nearly three months later, on 25th February 1906, the new building was dedicated for church purposes by the Bishop of Tasmania, the Right Rev. J. E. Manser. Others present were the Rev. E. Barry, Assistant Curator Rev. H. B. Atkinson, Rev. A. Barkway, Rev. A. Beresford, rector of St. John's, Launceston; Mr. C. G. Wilkinson, Master of the Launceston Grammar School and C. A. B. Champion, Layreader at Holy Trinity. The loan secured through Mr. R. Green, in connection with the building of St. Barnabas, was liquidated with interest on May 9th 1919.

In the sixteen years that followed the laying of the stone, St. Barnabas became an essential part of the community's background. The parish of the Holy Trinity still followed its old boundaries with the spiritual care and services at St. Barnabas being conducted by the clerical staff of the mother church. During the years between 1905 and 1921, thirty seven different clergymen took services in the wooden building. This total included six visits by the bishop of the diocese, the archdeacons in their respective periods and several visits by the first pioneer for Christ in this district, the Rev. Barkway. An average of two services each Sunday was maintained.

The rumblings of the First World War and the carnage of Flanders seemed far from the tranquil island of Tasmania but the War Memorial on the western wall of the church is grim testimony of the far reaching power of Mars. Its golden lettering contains the names of thirty nine men who came from the districts of Mowbray, Newnham and Rocherlea. The Bishop of Tasmania unveiled the memorial on October 24th 1917.

The names conjure up but a few of the stalwarts interested in the welfare of St. Barnabas church in the early years. On the eastern wall can be found a large marble memorial to Mrs. William Clare and Mrs. W. Luck. It was dedicated by Canon R. J. deCoetlogon in July 1920. The solid brass altar vases were a gift from the Joyce family, once the happy tenants of Tamar Lea. The vases were in memory of Mrs. Ester Joyce.

A full social life was enjoyed by the parishioners and many functions were organised to maintain the funds of the new church. Among the young folk of the period you would meet the Joyces and the Lucks; the Slaters and the Turners. The names of Russell and Draper also meant a lot in the formative years of St. Barnabas. As the paddocks pushed the bush to the hills at the turn of the century, so houses and shops began to replace crops and stock in the 1920's. The portion of the St. Leonard's municipality, which stretched to the Tamar river, was ceded to expanding Launceston. St. Barnabas, however, stayed in the Lilydale municipality.

1921 - 1934

IN 1921 SYNOD MADE A BOLD DECISION. The area bounded by the northern side of Forster Street, the Tamar as far as Dilston in the north, and back to the eastern end of Forster Street, by an imaginary line through Ravenswood, was declared a parish. The parish centre was recognised to be the Sunday School standing on a block of land near the present corner of Mann Street and Invermay Road. Due to the growing needs for such a school, Mr. Charles Kent donated the land in 1886 and the school was also used for divine purposes. St. Barnabas became an out-centre of this building.

The Bishop, the Right Rev. S. Hay, appointed the Rev. E. A. Salisbury of Wynyard as the first rector of the new parish. He was appointed with a stipend of £300 per annum and no provision for travelling. The parish assessment to the Diocese at that time was £30. It was recognised that the parish would not be a rich one as it was sparsely populated and mainly housed farm and city workers. But every parish was expected to be self-supporting and, if possible, contribute towards the administrative costs of the Diocese.

The new parish of St. George's was a parish without a church. Starting from scratch, the parish only possessed a block of land, a church hall and a rented rectory. Although an out-centre, St. Barnabas was to be the mainstay of the parish for several years. The annual offertory income from St. Barnabas for the years 1921 to 1943 was £27. This was assisted by social efforts and

fairs run by the parishioners, with a small revenue from the rented Old Newnham Church Hall, still standing in the tree lined hollow. Three parish stalwarts, Chas. White, William Clare and Sam Turner, agreed to an annual assessment of £25 towards parish liabilities.

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

THE REV. SALISBURY WAS A DYNAMIC PERSON AND ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE OF AN ENTIRELY 'NEW' PARISH WITH A BOLDNESS THAT ENCOURAGED THE PARISHIONERS IN THEIR MAJOR TASK. He felt the time had come when St. Barnabas should be more than a hall with a platform. Plans were laid and a chancel was built onto the northern end of the hall. Folding doors were provided to separate the chancel from the main building during social functions. The work was capably carried out by Mr. P. Dell and, on December 10th 1922, the opening service was held, with the Rev. J. W. Bethune as preacher. He was also well known in Launceston, being the headmaster of the Grammar School.

The financial position within the parish was anything but rosy at this time and the finalization of the Rev. Salisbury's desire for a chancel can be attributed to Mr. Clare and Mr. Turner. These gentlemen entered into a personal responsibility with the E. S. & A. Bank for the overdraft involved in the chancel's erection.

The Rev. Salisbury's efforts to cover all God's work in the infant parish were not made without greatly affecting his health. In 1922 his doctor advised that he should rest and change his location. He was reluctant to go but, after two and a half years' strenuous work in the parish, he had a rest before taking up work at Mildura, Victoria. His last service at St. Barnabas was on 25.11.23. The Rev. T. M. Devenish of Holy Trinity was Locum Tenens for several months. In referring to Rev. Salisbury's activities he said: 'It was our good fortune in receiving him as our rector.' In January 1924 the Rev. W. Witt Gregson became the new rector.

TIME TAKES ITS TOLL

The first few years of Rev. Witt Gregson's incumbency were heavy with serious problems. The need for a parish church was great. St. Barnabas was struggling with an overdraft, connected with the building of the chancel, and there was a decrease in offertories. There was a strong desire for a 9.30 a.m. service at St. Barnabas and the Rev. Witt Gregson said he was desirous of making the best arrangements possible. He was in the unenviable position of trying to meet parishioners desires for an active church in the Newnham area without having the means of achieving such wishes.

The parish had no curate and it was not easy to obtain assistance. His only means of transport was to walk or ride his cycle. He would often be seen pedalling along Invermay Road, in the dust of the loose gravel, as he made his way to St. Barnabas. Once again the medical profession had to step in and advise the rector for St. Barnabas to 'take it easy.'

No rector enjoys curtailing church activities but this was the unpleasant task facing Rev. Witt Gregson at St. Barnabas. Under the presidency of Mrs. A. Luck, a branch of the Mothers' Union had been formed. The rector pointed out that there could only be one branch of the Mothers' Union in a parish and this was attached to the parish church of St. George. Reluctantly the St. Barnabas branch was closed in August 1924, no allowance being made for the fact that transport in those days made St. George's functions inaccessible for many women. Official regret for the move was recorded by the Church Wardens of that time.

In 1926 Mr. Sam Turner retired from the position of People's Warden. He found the commitments getting too much for him but said he would help the church in the future, in any way he could. Mr. S. Luck then joined Mr. White and Mr. Clare.

It was in 1926 that the first church building in Newnham came back into the picture. The old church building had been leased to Mr. Joyce at £10 per annum. With the expiration of this lease it was decided to recover control of the hall and make it a suitable residence, thus increasing revenue. The venture was not a success. Lack of electric light and the high cost of other amenities, plus the approach road to the building, made it a liability more than an asset. It was decided to convert it into a hall but, with increasing problems concerning dampness, the historic building was eventually sold to a Mr. E. Shegog for nearly £170.

The loss of this early link with the church in Newnham was followed, in 1929, by a greater loss. Early in 1929 William Clare, one of St. Barnabas' first wardens, passed on. With Mr. C. White, William Clare had been the motive force behind the social life at St. Barnabas. His efforts had helped to establish the church in an area where he himself was a vital part of the community's welfare. His renowned stables at 'The Cedars' gave much employment to the area. Mr. N. Luck was elected to fill the vacant seat.

AFTER TWENTY FIVE YEARS

IN 1930 ST. BARNABAS WAS TWENTY FIVE YEARS OLD. The church was showing signs of wear and tear and the bell tower was unsafe. The women of the parish organised many social events and the necessary materials were bought. Renewing the foundations, improved drainage and a new coat of paint were some of the jobs where the 'labour of love' filled the parish bill. The wardens of the time, Mr. E. J. Watts, S. and N. Luck, felt that parishioners would agree to the church being supplied with electric power. The tender of Mr. C. Newstead was accepted, for the lighting and the power points, and generous donations came from Mrs. S. Luck and Mr. and Mrs. J. Stebbings. It was also in 1930 that the overdraft connected with the building of the chancel, eight years before, was liquidated.

It was possible to rejuvenate the church building but not possible to assist the pioneers of St. Barnabas in the same way. After twenty three years as Minister's Warden, and founder member of St. Barnabas, Mr. White found that age was against him. He had also lost the companionship of Mr. Clare. As though in a moment of premonition, he asked the Rev. Witt Gregson to relieve him of his duties as Minister's Warden. The request was, as the rector said, 'regrettably conceded' and Mr. E. J. Watts was appointed in Mr. White's place. In less than a year Mr. White passed on.

In 1932 a welcome addition, as People's Warden, was Mr. M. Hirst, Bursar at the Launceston Grammar School, Mr. Hirst was also a lay reader, organist and lover of sacred music. His energetic organisation for the practising of hymns and psalms developed a greater parish participation in the services.

It was at this time that many discussions took place within the parish concerning the social life of the younger set. What could the church do to assist the ever increasing teenage population of the spreading suburb, in supplying an outlet for youthful spirits? Was the charge of larrikinism always correct, or was it a case of the older generation failing to accept its responsibilities to youth? The Rev. Witt Gregson pointed out that the only way to meet the needs of parish youth was to use the church building as a hall. Although this had been the original idea behind St. Barnabas there was a strong tendency by the wardens to avoid such use of the building since the chancel had been

added. Many felt that the folding doors were not enough to separate the social gaiety from the sanctity of the church. The rector's suggestion was not accepted and so the social needs of youth remained unsolved.

Attempts to accommodate the needs of adult parishioners were more successful and in 1933 the first St. Barnabas Ladies' Guild was formed. The founder members of this essential church organisation were Mesdames Shegog, Robinson, Stebbings, Stewart, Hirst, Watts, Dale and Miss Jean Shegog. This nucleus of the Guild met monthly in the church.

THE STORY OF THE HALL

TEN YEARS AFTER BECOMING THE RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S PARISH, THE REV. WITT GREGSON ACCEPTED A POSITION IN THE NEW NORFOLK PARISH. During the decade, in which he worked strenuously for God and the parishioners, he left many memories. He conducted his last Holy Communion service at St. Barnabas on January 13th 1935. He was succeeded by the Rev. F. H. Lansdell, who was also recognised as a gifted church organist. Often, during the services, he would play full musical accompaniments, including the psalms.

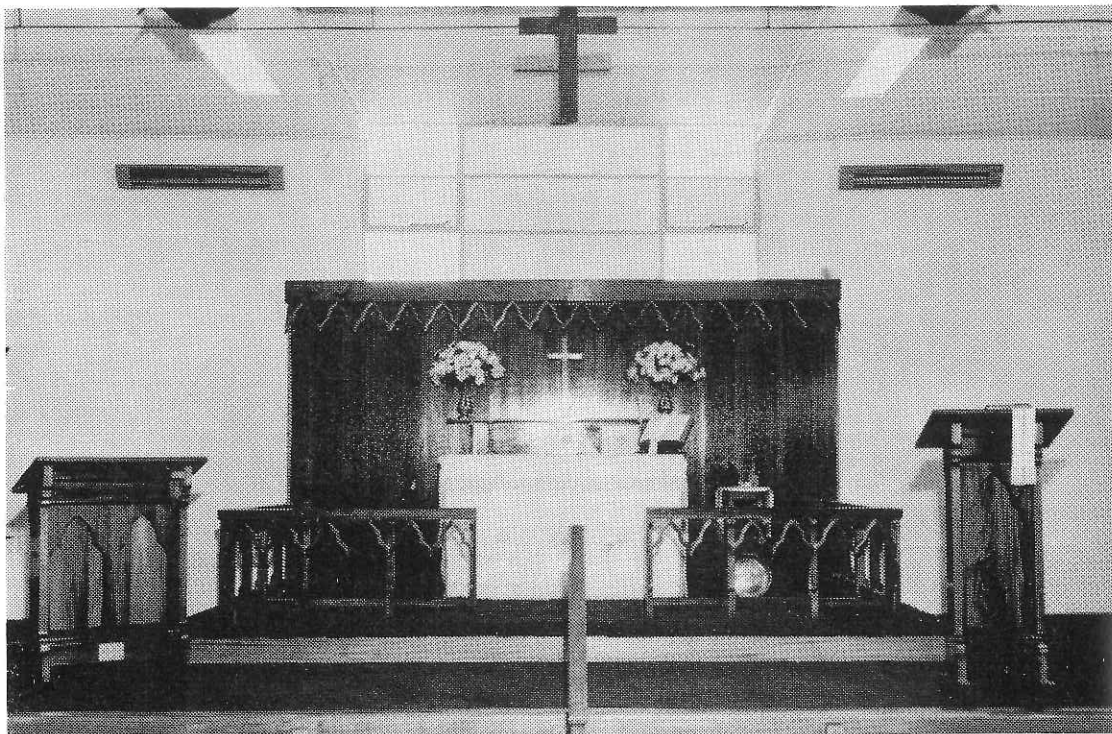
There was one vital change in parish procedure with the change over of rectors but the change was under the direction of Synod. The Vestry Act was passed in 1934, providing for the annual election of a Vestry Board. The Board consisted of three members, one appointed by the rector and two by the people, plus additional wardens up to twelve. The first St. Barnabas Vestry Board consisted of Mr. E. J. Watts, appointed as Minister's Warden by the rector, with Mr. Hirst and Mr. W. C. Abbott elected by the parishioners. These were the executive members of the Vestry. The Rev. Lansdell reserved his right to appoint an additional member at a future date. The parishioners elected Mrs. Shegog and Mr. S. R. Robinson.

The next ten years saw a gradual but real decline in the interests of the church in Newnham. Some of this was due to the scourge of poliomyelitis in 1937-38 when people were afraid to mix because of the infection. But other reasons were equally as clear. There was still a feeling that St. Barnabas was not doing all it could for the social life of the parish. The vexed question of 'hall or church' was raised once more. Many arguments followed but nothing could be resolved unanimously, either way. Since 1938 St. Barnabas has always been accepted as a church and Sunday School only.

The rift of opinion was reflected in the financial position, so much so that the assessment to St. George's for parish and diocesan purposes had to be reduced from £25 to £15 per annum. The greater part of church maintenance for St. Barnabas was carried out by donations and voluntary labour. It became impossible to encourage men to accept positions on the vestry and, on many occasions, the painting of the church was done by Mr. and Mrs. L. Stackhouse.

The latter years of the Rev. Lansdell's incumbency saw a period of rapid development in the northern suburbs. The last vestige of once noble estates had disappeared under the auctioneer's hammer. Paddocks that were once dotted with Merino sheep, black Angus cattle and thoroughbred horses, became sub-divisions of an expanding city. Only the street names remained, to point to the times that had been.

During the Rev. Lansdell's twenty five years with the parish, in which time he became a canon, the pressing need for a church hall was often discussed. St. Barnabas church was the focal point for all services and the Sunday School requirements caused great congestion. It took a second world war to shake



SUNDAY MORNING, 9.30 a.m.



FRIDAY EVENING, 9.30 p.m.

the parish from its apathy and reveal the need of an 'alive' church within the community. By 1944 the balance sheet was the most satisfactory for many years and the 425 communions made that year established a new yearly record. In 1947 the Vestry voted £5 to form the nucleus of a building fund, for the future St. Barnabas Hall. A problem which had dogged the footsteps of rectors for many years was at last tackled in earnest.

At the St. Barnabas Vestry's annual meeting in July 1956, Canon Lansdell commended the Rev. John Atkins to the prayers of parishioners. "I am sure you will find him a sincere priest and friend," he said. Canon Lansdell celebrated his last service at St. Barnabas with the 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion on 29.7.1956.

THE 'BEST EVER' CANVASS

THE REV. J. ATKINS CONDUCTED HIS FIRST SERVICE ON SEPT. 2nd 1956 AND, UNDER HIS CAPABLE GUIDANCE, THE PARISH BECAME UNITED THROUGH A PARISH COUNCIL. The representatives for St. Barnabas on the first Parish Council were Messrs. L. M. Stackhouse, G. Likeman and S. R. Robinson. As the main task of the Parish Council was to formulate policy and keep a watchful eye on the financial problems of the parish as a whole, it was not surprising that the rector encouraged some constructive thinking around the lack of room at St. Barnabas.

Acting on the advice of Bishop G. F. Cranswick and Assistant Bishop W. R. Barrett, the Parish Council engaged a recognised money raising organisation to assist in the planning of the greatest fund-raising campaign ever known in the parish. An 'Every Member Canvass' campaign was planned by the Wells Organisation, based on fellowship and goodwill to all parishioners. The appeal made a spiritual impact upon those claiming to be Anglicans and helped them to understand the needs of their church. The value of the church, in their every day lives, caused many to think constructively on their financial responsibilities to the parish. The canvass resulted in pledges being made to the amount of £12,048 over a period of three years. Due to various reasons, many cancellations were received during that time, leaving 248 families pledged to give £10,706.

The vastly improved financial position stimulated further consideration towards the building of a church hall at St. Barnabas. The problem was approached from three angles. Could the Parish Council purchase a building already constructed and move it to the church grounds at St. Barnabas? Many buildings of a movable nature were inspected at the time. Would it be easier to extend the St. Barnabas church, then fifty two years' old? Or would it be more practical to build a new hall on the ground then vacant at the northern end of the wooden church? Investigations made, with the latter idea in mind, revealed that a brick building of approximately 70' x 40' would cost £7,000.

At a meeting of the Diocesan Extension Council, on the question of extra buildings for the Newnham, Mayfield and Rocherlea areas, the members were hesitant in deciding which would be the best central position for the rapidly expanding area. The late Bishop W. R. Barrett and Archdeacon L. N. Sutton were members of that Council, which eventually decided that a more central position than that of St. Barnabas church grounds would be difficult to obtain, bearing in mind that one street in Mayfield alone housed 100 Church of England children.

STRAW, WOOD OR BRICK?

HAVING DECIDED ON THE SITE, THE PARISH COUNCIL AND ST. BARNABAS VESTRY STILL HAD TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF

FINANCE AND CONSTRUCTION. Mrs. H. T. McGivern offered to secure a loan of £5,000 with which to build the hall. Offertories at that time were only sufficient to meet parish and diocesan obligations. The general opinion of the St. Barnabas Vestry was that it should have at least £1,000 in hand before accepting any loan for the new hall.

A new slant was given to the problem in 1957 when the Rev. Atkins reported on a conversation he had with Mr. J. Smith of Mayfield Street, a local builder. It had been suggested that the hall could be built by using poured concrete. The argument put by Mr. Smith was constructive. Bricks required skilled labour. Timber required men who could handle tools. Bricks themselves were costly. Concrete, however, was more or less a labourer's work, poured under supervision.

Following many meetings between the rector and Mr. Smith, it was decided that the parish could afford a building on these ideas. Many supply and construction problems were solved and, with voluntary labour under the supervision of Mr. Smith, the foundation of the long needed hall was eventually laid.

In 1958 it was agreed to let a contract to Mr. H. Martin for the erection of walls and roof at a cost of £1,180. A total loan of £2,000 was approved by the Diocesan Council and sealed the completion of St. Barnabas Hall. The initial cost of the foundation, flooring and similar items was met by the St. Barnabas' Building Fund and by £1,386 from the Parish Council. The latter was only possible by the success of the 'Every Member Canvass' receipts.

The hall was dedicated on October 3rd 1959 by the Lord Bishop G. F. Cranswick and the Diocesan loan, plus interest, was repaid by December 5th 1968.

THE GROWING PARISH

IN 1859 THE PROBLEM HAD BEEN A CHURCH WITHOUT A RECTOR. Fifty years later St. Barnabas stood, with a beautiful freshness, amid the paddocks of Newnham. 'I hope the time will come,' Canon Beresford had said, 'when this suburb has grown to such proportions as would require a much larger place of worship.'

This statement, half challenging, half prophesy, was relevant fifty years later when the church members were pleased to welcome an assistant curate to the parish. In one hundred years the parish had grown from a collection of farmhouses to a suburb demanding the full time attendance of two rectors. Today, only ten years later, it would be possible to employ three clerics to attend to God's work in the expanding parish, but that is another story.

April 1959 saw the Rev. John Mills assisting in the St. George's parish, filling a long-felt need. He had studied at Ridley College, Victoria and, to further his studies, was later attached to the parish of Moonah. He conducted his last service at St. Barnabas on July 17th 1960.

THE FIRST LADY OF THE PARISH

THE SERVICES OF THE REV. J. MILLS WERE GREATLY MISSED AND IT WAS NOT UNTIL TWO YEARS LATER THAT THE REV. ATKINS WAS ABLE TO FILL THE GAP. In 1962 Deaconess Maree Kingston came to the parish and soon made her presence felt in the new suburbs. Having studied at Deaconess House in Sydney, she was able to assist with services and many other duties within the church.

Deaconess Kingston concentrated on the Mayfield area and her dedication

resulted in great advances being made in an otherwise neglected part of the parish. It was through negotiations with the Education Department, by the Rev. Atkins, Deaconess Kingston and the headmaster of Mayfield State School, Mr. F. Francombe, that the present Mayfield Sunday School came into being. The church was allowed the use of a classroom for Sunday School activities. Later on it was the centre for monthly church services. This was a major venture within the parish.

After seven strenuous and fruitful years in the St. George's parish, the Rev. J. Atkins — now Canon — conducted his last service at St. Barnabas on September 29th 1963. He had accepted a position in the parish of Kingston. There was no immediate replacement and the strain of maintaining the work of the parish, at a busy time on the church calendar, fell heavily on the shoulders of Deaconess Kingston.

The Deaconess was in charge of St. George's parish from September 1963 to February 1964, under the supervision of Archdeacon L. N. Sutton. Clerics from other parishes assisted with Holy Communion. Deaconess Kingston made parish history on December 15th 1963 by holding the only Confirmation Service ever held at St. Barnabas. Eleven candidates were presented for Confirmation, the majority coming from the St. Barnabas area.

The work of the deaconess was further increased in 1966 when the parish of St. George accepted the parish of Lilydale as a Pastoral Oversight. The Lord Bishop gave notice that Deaconess Kingston's duties would extend to Lilydale as from March 1st 1966. She was to devote one and a half days a week and one service on Sundays. Later on, Deaconess Kingston was allotted the task of visiting the people living in the Flinders Island group. Again, she created parish history by being the first of the parish clergy to minister to those across the sea. It was a far cry from the days when the Rev. Barkway would trot his buggy across the northern swamps for Newnham's Sunday service. One hundred years later the lady of the parish was winging her way across the blue Bass Strait in a Cessna aircraft; to be rowed to the islands surrounding Flinders and travel on foot, through windswept scrubland, to those who believed in God but never knew the comfort of His representatives. Was it any wonder that, with such a wealth of missionary service behind her, Deaconess Kingston was transferred to the Overseas Department in February 1967.

FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW

THE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX OF ST. GEORGE'S PARISH WAS A COMPLETE CONTRAST TO THE RURAL BACKGROUND OF THE NEW RECTOR'S PREVIOUS INCUMBENCY. Leaving the mellow beauty of Tasmanias' oldest existing church, St. Matthew's of New Norfolk, the Rev. M. R. Stanton was inducted at St. George's church on January 30th 1964, by the Right Rev. Bishop W. R. Barrett. Rev. Stanton conducted his first service at St. Barnabas on February 9th 1964. The spiritual leadership of the parish received great impetus from the teamwork of the rector and deaconess over the following two years. Sunday schools increased in membership and there was an added interest in youth work, culminating with the rector starting the 2nd Newnham, St. Barnabas, Scout Group.

The Rev. Stanton found himself confronted with a problem unknown by his predecessors. The early rectors needed a church. Later they needed a building for social activities. In 1964 the rector was confronted with a brand new hall, but a church too small for family services and Sunday School. A new church? The idea was good but the monetary barrier was always casting its shadow over the parish.

To obtain some constructive facts the Rev. Stanton entered into discussions with Mr. L. A. Howroyd, a Launceston architect with a flair for modern trends.

His recent successes had been two controversial bank buildings and the outstanding creation of Deloraine's community centre. From the architect's office came a model that was a parishioner's dream. After seeing the available ground, Mr. Howroyd designed a church for the twentieth century. The two pine trees would have to go but their polished, red wood trunks would form the central pillars each side of the chancel screen. The copper laminex roof would sweep to the ground in a broad vee and rest on low but substantial walls. There would be no windows, in the orthodox sense. Around the base of the church would flow a moat. Under the eaves of the low roof would be windows. Light, reflected off the running water, would enter by the windows under the eaves and give the interior a mellow, subdued light, suggesting the tranquility that one seeks in His House. A large foyer and covered drive for weddings; glass partitions to counter traffic noise . . . in fact the new St. Barnabas would be a colossus amongst twentieth century churches.

The estimated cost in 1966 was £12,000 — £15,000. Furnishings would be additional. The model was submitted to a meeting of parishioners and a committee was appointed to give full consideration to the matter. The committee's decision was to the point. "A new church is needed in the foreseeable future but the means of raising finance is not at present clear."

The problem was still unsolved when the Rev. M. Stanton took his last service on May 1st 1966, due to being elected as Director of the Overseas Mission Department. Before leaving the parish he suggested that the St. Barnabas' Vestry sought more information on possible sites for a new church so that his successor could pursue the problem.

Memories of the short stay by the Rev. M. Stanton would never be complete without reference to the finalisation of the St. George's organ fund. Parishioners at St. George's had always dreamed of the day when a pipe organ would fill the church with its scintillating harmonies. Early in 1965 the organ was ordered and the Organ Fund was really challenging the parishioners to 'buy a pipe.' Under this scheme, where individuals could cover the cost of an organ pipe, the 2nd Newnham Scout Group Committee was the first body to purchase one.

THE PROBLEMS OF A CLOSING CENTURY

IN KEEPING WITH THE RECTOR'S PARTING SUGGESTION, MEMBERS OF THE ST. BARNABAS' VESTRY TOURED THE SUB DIVIDED AREAS OF NEWNHAM, MAYFIELD AND ROCHERLEA IN SEARCH OF A SITE FOR A CHURCH THAT WOULD SERVE THE PARISHIONERS OF THE YEAR 2001. Already it was evident that northern Launceston was fully planned for the future. The Vestry's idea of going further north was not so much 'pie in the sky' as labelled by many of the more conservative parishioners. Only four sites, large enough for the erection of a church and rectory, were found in the area. These were inspected by the late Archdeacon L. N. Sutton and Canon H. A. Jerrim, members of the Diocesan Property Board. They also inspected a two acre paddock in the factory area on the East Tamar Highway.

It was suggested that the Town Planning Authority be consulted with regard to the probable development of the outer northern areas, already suburbanised to the extent of 15,000 houses. The whole matter of a new church centre was left to the new rector.

A REAL ST. GEORGE

IT WAS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT THE REV. J. A. SENIOR ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE OF THE ST. GEORGE PARISH. Nominated by the Patronage Board as the successor to the Rev. M. Stanton, the Rev. J. Senior was inducted on June 10th 1966. Leaving the tranquility of Geeveston, and the aura of affection that his former parishioners had placed around his jovial personage, he conducted his first service at St. Barnabas on June 12th 1966.

The Rev. J. Senior was a twentieth century St. George, fully prepared to challenge the dragon of poverty that held the St. George's parish at bay. His physical, spiritual, dynamic energy rode well in the saddle of an inherited Yorkshire tenacity of purpose. The parish problem of a debit balance on the erection of St. George's church, still the church without end, was solved. The renovation of an ageing rectory, the cost of re-wiring the church and Sunday School were attacked and overcome in the ensuing years of his incumbency.

There were many reasons why the Rev. J. Senior could not successfully tackle the problem left by previous rectors, that of a new church. Lack of finance was the main barrier but the ever increasing size of the congregations called for some drastic action. In 1922 the Rev. E. Salisbury had faced the challenge of a parish without a church by turning St. Barnabas hall into a church. Forty seven years later the Rev. J. Senior produced the only answer possible to the needs of St. Barnabas church. He turned the new hall into a church.

Major alterations were made to the concrete hall, involving a contract for \$2,696, plus other amounts, including a Diocesan Loan of \$2,500. The stage was lowered and the roof extended on the southern side. This enabled the kitchen to be placed in a more practical position, gave the cubs and scouts a den of their own and enabled the stage to be converted into a chancel. After the spade work had been done by an experienced builder, working bees were the order of the day. Paint brushes slapped the dingy walls, changing the atmosphere immediately by refreshing pastel shades. Sanders whined, polishers hummed, hammers beat a cacophony and dust was all around, with the rector usually in the middle of everything.

The result was the provision of a building most fitting for Sunday worship and the hall still available for social purposes in the week. The spiritual atmosphere was enhanced by substantial gifts from loving souls in the district. Robed choirs, both junior and senior, trained by the rector who was a great lover of music and master organist, contributed to the emotional depth of worship.

The task of repayment was never allowed to over-awe the parish and, as we go to press, it can be recorded that St. Barnabas has repaid the cost of the alterations, carried out by Messrs. Vimpany and Herbert.

EPILOGUE

The parish of St. Barnabas has come a long way since 1859. The "unpretentious little weatherboard church" still stands but no longer houses its worshipping parishioners. St. Barnabas, born 1905, now caters exclusively for the younger set. Partitioned into teaching areas, the ageing church is now the Sunday School, but its value to the parish over nearly three score years and ten should never be forgotten. It should always remind us of the time when Newnham was a forgotten corner of the Holy Trinity. As we view the present parish of St. George, with St. Barnabas two miles northward, Windermere some nine miles further; Lilydale and Lebrina in the north east, we should remember with a quiet pride, that such a mission area is only possible because of men such as Clare, Luck, Turner and Joyce . . . to name a few of God's pioneers in this district at the turn of the century.

The presence of four primary schools, one high school and three high school hostels; a teachers' college, an area school and the Launceston Church Grammar School, all within the bounds of the parish, should also remind us of our responsibilities to youth. St. Barnabas saw many trying times in its youth. Let the problems that confronted the Rev. W. Witt Gregson forever remind parishioners that the new church is also the hall of youth. If this must be changed, then let it be changed by the erection of a new St. Barnabas.

RECTORS OF THE PARISH

1859 Rev. A. Barkway.

1893 to

1921 Rev. E. Barry, assisted by thirty seven other clergy.

1921 to

1923 Rev. E. A. Salisbury.

1924 to

1935 Rev. W. Witt Gregson.

1935 to

1956 Rev. F. H. Lansdell.

1956 to

1963 Rev. J. Atkins.

1964 to

1966 Rev. M. Stanton.

1966

Rev. J. A. Senior.