

Chapter 15

THE PARISH FAMILY (Part 1):

A BIOGRAPHY OF THE CONGREGATION

DR Peter Hollingworth, former Anglican Archbishop and now Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, described the task of a deacon as one of “social outreach, to engage the society and to help the Church move out there”.¹ In this context, we are all called to be deacons: for it is often through a first contact made at a peripheral parish function that a person is drawn into the full life and worship of a parish family. But ask a handful of people what they perceive ‘parish life’ to mean and you will probably get ten different answers!

Over a period of 150 years the three basic tenets of parish life – worship, Mission, and the education and protection of the young – have remained unaltered, but the ways in which they have been organised and the types of activities employed have changed dramatically. This chapter seeks to record some of those past endeavours, draw on their achievements, learn from past mistakes and take stock of where we are at present.

With such a myriad of group activities to be covered – some of which are intertwined or have changed their names in different eras – it is difficult to pigeon-hole them. Based on the tenets mentioned above they have been clustered as follows: firstly, **WORSHIP**, service and prayer groups (Sunday rosters, lay visiting, Bible study, Ministry of Healing); secondly, **MISSION**, fellowship and Outreach (traditional women’s and men’s groups, and social and sporting activities); and thirdly, **EDUCATION** (Sunday School, Parish Day Schools, teaching in State schools and youth groups). The activities of this last group, the children and youth of the Parish, are reviewed in the next chapter.

Most of these organisations will also have been mentioned in the chronological story of the development of the Parish, for which the index should be consulted. Details of the musical life of the Parish can be found in Chapter 17. The roles of the clergy, Wardens and Parish Council are discussed in Chapter 18, together with the legal and financial obligations of the Parish.

Past and present parishioners were invited to contribute anecdotes about people and events, and current office bearers and leaders were approached to supply details of their group’s activities over the years. Where appropriate their names have been appended to the relevant information. At the risk of erring by omission, the following people in particular have devoted much time to researching and supplying information: Meg Nicholls (numerous topics), Olga Hardy (sacristan duties), Cynthia Kennedy (Mothers’ Union) and Heather Cooper (Lindisfarne); and the Herveys, Dibbens and Henshalls (Sunday School, youth groups, schools’ ministry and sporting clubs).

“WELCOME TO ST MICHAEL’S”

At the heart of every parish is Sunday worship (Figs 15-1 and 15-2). On any given Sunday morning numerous people will have been rostered to assist in various ways: welcomers handing out *Pew Bulletins* and greeting newcomers; sidesmen issuing prayer and hymn books; ‘tea ladies’ filling urns and setting out mugs; the choir robing and practising the hymns and the rostered ‘reader’ nervously rehearsing the given text for the day’s lessons. This is the Mitcham Parish family in full swing.

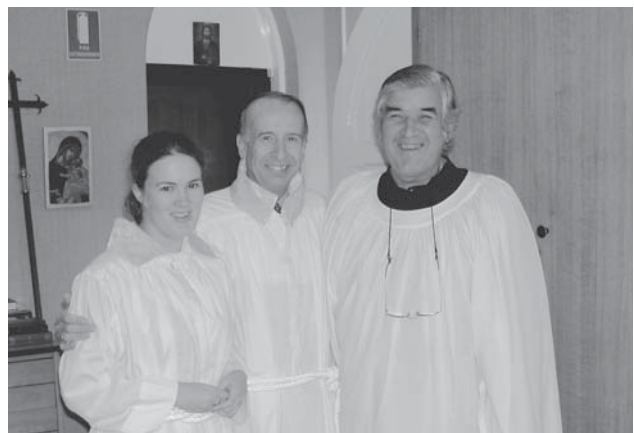
But behind the scenes are those who serve in the sanctuary: the Lay Assistants and altar servers, sacristans, brass polishers and flower arrangers who have already ensured that the sanctuary is ready. We have come to expect things to be done in certain ways, for items to be ready for use, and for people to be robed appropriately and trained efficiently. But unless a parishioner is personally involved in one of the groups that do these weekly preparations, they have little knowledge of what is involved in the smooth running of the Sunday services.

Lay Assistants & Servers

The choice and training of those who serve within the sanctuary during a service is at the discretion of the Rector (Fig. 15-3).

The Office of Lay Assistant is not one to be taken lightly and the Rector must be careful to choose committed and dedicated people. Their names must be presented to the Annual Vestry for election before an application is made to the Archbishop for a licence. They assist in the sanctuary and carry the chalice during the celebration of Holy Communion.

Fig. 15-3 Karen Waller (server), Martin Day (Lay Assistant) and Richard Irving (crucifer) preparing for the Eucharist. (Pamela Oborn, 2002)



Sadly the number of young people offering to act as altar servers has dropped markedly in recent years. In the past they were a closely-knit group, usually with a ‘Mum’ or ‘Auntie’ who organised the rosters and ensured that all robes were freshly laundered and kept in good repair. They also arranged get-togethers and outings to foster some bonding or sense of belonging to a group.

Traditionally service in the sanctuary was an all-male affair, but in November 1979 Fr Andrew Cheesman noted in the *Pew Bulletin*:

This morning we have the pleasure of inducting three new members into the Office of Server. Women have always supported the Church in various ways, but perhaps it is the first time they have been allowed to serve at the Altar in our Parish. Please remember in your prayers Sarah Mockridge, Megan Lloyd, along with a recent arrival into the parish family, Adam Nettleton.

Sacristans & Sanctuary Guild

The first reference to a Sanctuary Guild appeared in March 1926, when Archdeacon Clampett announced that a dedicated band of ladies had formed a ‘Guild’ and were rostered to assist once a month, and that an Altar Decorations Guild had also been formed. Thirty years later the ladies at St Wilfrid’s asked the Rector, Reginald Pearman, if they could form a guild, and he went to some length to make sure they were “quite clear in their minds” what sort of guild they wanted:

A Sanctuary Guild, as its name implies is concerned with the care of everything used in and about the Sanctuary and Altar. These include the keeping clean of the Communion Vessels and Cruets, and of the Altar linen. The cleaning of all brass; provision of flowers for the Altar, care of Altar frontals, and renovation of these things whenever necessary. A Sanctuary Guild should have a leader, someone who will attend to the rosters and be responsible for seeing that everything is kept as it should be kept for God’s service. A Sanctuary Guild is NOT responsible for raising money for general church purposes.

When Olga Hardy (see Fig. 12-21) retired in March 1988 after twenty-five years as Sacristan at St Michael’s, Fr Andrew Cheesman wrote: “It has been a true labour of love to the Glory of God.” In all, she had spent nearly forty years working in the vestry each Saturday morning. Olga recalls that when she arrived in the Parish in the early 1950s Amy Gamlen was Sacristan. ‘Gam’ was the housekeeper for Mr and Mrs Clifford Cornell who lived opposite the Church at ‘Coreega’, one of Mitcham’s stately homes (and the childhood home of Lord Florey):

‘Gam’ as we all called her, worked tirelessly for St Michael’s. She ‘set up’ the Communion for Reverend Reginald Pearman each evening before an early morning service. She was responsible for the flowers and also kept the altar rail polished.

In 1962 Mrs Pearman, who was never very well, asked me to take over the laundering of the purificators and lavabo towels weekly after the Sunday Holy Communion.

There were no taps in the vestry, and chalices were scalded in the Rector’s. She also asked me to keep an eye on the choir robes and Rector’s alb and surplice... About that time the first power plug was installed and some ironing could be done in the vestry. I think the only furniture in the rather stark room was a wash-stand with three drawers, a cedar table used for a desk and the Rector’s chair, and an open rack for choir robes.

Soon new furniture in the vestry was added, also a tap and handbasin generously provided by Harold Thomas. The set of shallow drawers for the four chasubles – white, red, green and purple – also contained the appropriate burse and veil, stole, amice, book marks for the altar Bibles etc., and another drawer for the stacks of laundered white linen – purificators, lavabo towels, veils, corporals, etc., generally termed ‘Fair Linen’. Along the north inner wall was a long cupboard, with hanging space for other robes, choir robes and a cope. Later all the choir material was housed in the new Hall. There were shelves for all the communion cruets, chalices, patens, bread boxes and ciboria.

The vestry was very crowded before the Hall was built. The choir and clergy robed, small meetings were held, vessels washed and linen folded. All printed matter needed space, sometimes a typewriter and the Gestetner and collections of various articles for appeals and vases for flowers. In the midst of this chaos, a curate once said to me “Shall we Dance?”

Another job was to watch all the candles to see if they needed replacement. All the short ends of candles were melted down, the wick ends removed and the molten wax poured into P.V.C. piping which was sawn horizontally and bound with a strong tape so that the mould could be opened. All the ends were used, including some from other parishes. So for years both our Churches had the altar candles and Paschal candles ‘home made’...

When a priest walks into the vestry before a Holy Communion service, he should find all the vessels and ‘Fair Linen’ ready and set out in a particular order. The preparation work done by the sacristan on Saturday should also have included: removing dust covers from the altar and credence table, and placing a corporal on the altar; also pedestal linen near the font and a towel at the handbasin; checking candles and scalding the silver if needed, also changing the reredos boards and lectern hangings according to the Liturgical Season (purple, green, red or white).

After the service all the silver has to be rinsed and polished before being put away; linen checked for candle wax, and soiled linen put in the laundry bag; a cover put back over the altar and credence table, and the priest’s garments and vestments stored correctly. They need to be checked occasionally and taken for repairs and cleaning when necessary.

These are some of the standard procedures. At certain Seasons there are Advent wreaths and candles to prepare; setting up of the Christmas crib scene and the Three Wise Men’s movements around the nave; Paschal Candle; trays for Simnel Cake and palm crosses – to mention just a few!

Currently the work is shared on a monthly roster basis, with one person overseeing vestry needs and supplies for both St Michael’s and St Wilfrid’s.

We also take for granted that the brass will be gleaming, and that the sanctuary will be decorated with attractive bowls of flowers – all the handiwork of many dedicated parishioners who give their time and talents on a roster basis.

So next Sunday, don't take things for granted: observe all the love and care that has gone into the preparation for the Eucharist.

Tea Roster

Some present-day parishioners may remember that before the Hall was built in 1980, morning tea was served on the Terrace from a makeshift servery set up in a corner of the south nave on a table loaned by Molly Legoe. If the weather was inclement it was served inside the Church.

The excellent positioning of the Hall kitchen means that morning tea can be served either on the Terrace in fine weather, or in the warmth and comfort of the Hall during winter. Welcoming cups of tea and coffee are dispensed by cheerful, well-organised teams of ladies on a roster system (Fig. 15-4). For twenty years, until Fr Andrew's retirement in March 2001, the roster was co-ordinated by his wife, Mary. It is now in the hands of Val Burton. Since the introduction of a weekly Family Service in January 2000, a separate roster has also been operating to cater for the earlier service each Sunday.

Starting in February 1990 morning tea has also been served at St Wilfrid's on the first Sunday of each month (see Fig. 13-17).

Welcomers & Parish Visitors

Sidesmen have always been a familiar sight in Anglican churches, directing Parishioners to seats, handing out books (Fig. 15-5) and taking up the collection.

The first welcomers, Doreen Callaghan and Doreen Whicker, took their places outside St Michael's on 2nd May 1978, and by the following year fourteen volunteers had offered to take turns. Most were members of a Visitors' Group which also began in 1978. In February 1980 it was recorded that:

Fig. 15-4 *Preparing morning tea after the morning service.* (Pamela Oborn, 2002)



Fig. 15-5 *Sidesman Peter Wescombe handing out books to Ann Chambers.* (Pamela Oborn, 2002)

One of the most exciting Parish meetings for years occurred on Wednesday last when some 30 Sunday Visitors and Herald distributors ... met at the home of Yvonne Myers to discuss hopes, aims and limitations of our Parish Family. Under Yvonne's skilful leadership, much positive criticism and many helpful suggestions were made. How to put these into practice will be the challenge at the next meeting...

Yvonne, who had recently returned to the Mitcham Parish after considerable service and experience in parishes both here and Overseas, had suggested that it might be helpful if Parish Visitors met for a review of their work and to discuss their aims for 1980. She also suggested that in future Sunday morning teams be called 'Welcomers' as distinct from 'Visitors'.

By handing out the *Pew Bulletins* as people arrive, the Welcomers on duty have a chance to personally greet any newcomers and make them feel welcome, also to ensure that they meet the clergy (Fig. 15-6). Parish Visitors, on the other hand, personally deliver the quarterly *Heralds* to individual households and tactfully ascertain if there are any problems that the clergy should be made aware of. Try as they might, it is virtually impossible for the clergy

Fig. 15-6 *Maisie Scott welcoming Adrienne Stott and Rosemary Carter.* (Pamela Oborn, 2002)



to regularly visit the homes of every parishioner, so the Visitor is the Rector's deputy in this important pastoral Outreach. The Parish Visitors meet as a group twice a year to exchange ideas and sort out any problems.

In September 1988 it was announced that:

After more years than probably she cares to recall, Jo Trott has passed the oversight of the Parish Roll to Meg Nicholls. Meg is busy correlating the results of the recent Visitors' survey to improve further our roll and pastoral care. As Visitor to the Visitors she has already proved a most worthy successor to Yvonne Meyers.

Thirteen years down the track Meg is still maintaining the Parish Roll! When Cicely Bungey took over the role of co-ordinator of the Parish Visitors in 1998, she paid tribute to the tremendous work done by Meg in developing and expanding this area of the Church's Mission.

At present there are about 250 households on the Parish Roll plus those who live in nursing homes.

Pew Bulletins & Parish Magazines

Throughout the long incumbency of Fr Andrew Cheesman the weekly *Pew Bulletins* always provided a rich source of information on Parish and Diocesan affairs, and this veritable treasure trove of past events and the people involved has proved invaluable in the compilation of this history! For many years the typing and photocopying was done by Mary Cheesman, who carried on the good work begun by Jo Trott and Raelene Evans. Since the retirement of Fr Andrew and Mary, Meg Nicholls has added this work to her already-overstretched Parish commitments (Fig. 15-7).

Meg also heads the 'Editorial Team' for the production of the *Mitcham Parish Herald*, a thirty-page booklet distributed four times a year. It is the latest in a long line of Parish magazines. The first copy of a monthly publication called the *St Michael's Parish Magazine* was issued in January 1889 during the incumbency of Reverend Frederick Samwell. At that time, a parish paper was a fairly new initiative in the Diocese of Adelaide. With the arrival of Reverend Albert Clampett in 1893 the name changed to the *Mitcham Magazine and the Hills' Church Gazette*. The ornate cover (see Fig. 4-3) featured beautifully-drawn illustrations of St Michael's Church, St Michael's Day School and St John's Church at Coromandel Valley – then a Mission District of which Clampett was Priest-in-Charge.

Following the opening in 1899 of the daughter church of St Columba at Hawthorn, the name was changed to *Mitcham and Hawthorn Parochial Magazine* (see Fig. 4-4) and then in 1906 to *Mitcham and Hawthorn Parish Messenger*, a title which continued to be used until Clampett resigned the cure of Hawthorn at the end of 1920. It was a comprehensive publication incorporating not only Parish news, but also disseminating all the local gossip of goings on in the Village of Mitcham and beyond (another rich source of information utilised in the early chapters of this book). After 1920 the Hawthorn connection was dropped and it was known as *St Michael's Mitcham Parish Messenger*, a name used until St Wilfrid's was opened in 1934 when it took on the



Fig. 15-7 Meg Nicholls in the Parish Office preparing copy for the next edition of the *Herald*.
(Pamela Oborn, 2002)

rather cumbersome title of *Mitcham Parish Messenger of the Church of England in the Parish of Mitcham with Torrens Park*.

The Second World War broke out soon after the arrival of Reverend Reginald Pearman, who was often absent for three months at a time doing his duty as an Army Chaplain. Like Clampett, he was also the editor of the magazine and through a combination of his frequent absences and wartime restrictions on paper products, it is not surprising that the production of the magazine became spasmodic. After the War, Pearman continued to edit the *Parish Messenger* until his retirement in April 1962. They were rather austere, dour publications without any embellishments, usually of one sheet folded.

With the arrival of Reverend Jim MacDonald as Rector, the magazine (see Fig. 7-2) underwent a substantial change. For a start it had line drawings by Rod Horner of both churches on the cover. It comprised two folded foolscap pages, was published monthly and was produced by an editorial team led by David Cain. It also had a new name, the *Mitcham Parish Herald*, which is still in use in 2002. Unfortunately very few copies of these publications from the MacDonald era have survived.

In December 1978 the new Rector, Fr Andrew Cheesman, apologised for the absence of a Parish paper since his arrival, saying:

Your editor can only plead in his defence that he has been more than fully occupied with the monthly production of the Adelaide Church Guardian. Happily that diocesan task will end with the new year and a certain amount of energy can be redirected towards the "parish press" ... there has been an increased use of the Pew Bulletin as the primary source of information...

In response to his plea for an editor, it was announced that "Mr Laurence Heard has kindly offered to undertake this work". One of the later editors was David Patterson who served as a catechist during 1990-91. Since July 1991 the *Herald* has been produced by a team of about ten parishioners. Gone are the days of cutting wax stencils on typewriters and churning out the copies on hand-cranked

Gestetner duplicating machines. Today the masters are computer generated and the pages mass-produced on fast, efficient professional machines. But they still have to be collated, stapled and folded by hand!

Copies of all publications are now required by law to be deposited in the State Library. In the past this has been done sporadically by interested persons. St Columba's Church archives holds copies of most issues between 1899 and 1916, and the State Library from 1912 to 1932. A full set of Pearman-era magazines has been deposited. The call number for all the Mitcham Parish magazines – whatever the title – is “Z Per 283.94231 S146 a”.

BIBLE STUDY & PRAYER GROUPS

Daily prayers and reading the Bible have always been at the heart of Christian worship and teaching. Over the past 150 years there have been numerous groups formed within the Parish to read and study the scriptures, particularly Lenten studies. No attempt has been made to record them all, but rather to give an indication of methods used and to highlight any special events in the life of the Parish.

In April 1979 nine members of the Parish shared in an unforgettable experience learning about prayer from Fr Mark Gibbard, an Anglican monk from Oxford, who had the rare gift of saying the most profound things in the simplest language. He left an indelible mark on all who attended, and one of his favourite sayings – “No parish worth its salt should be without Bible study and prayer group” – led to the formation of new groups within the Parish. Notes in *Pew Bulletins* over the ensuing weeks announced that “the Geytenbeek family was to convene a meeting of those members from the Parish who attended Fr Gibbard's recent course on prayer”. It was hoped that others who were interested would attend “so that the insights gained on the course may reach a wider circle”. In June it was noted that Ellen Bennett “had already intended to convene another Bible study this term”; and that Fr David Luniss (the curate) “will have the oversight of the Bible studies and of bringing to birth the Prayer Group”. A Bible Study Group met weekly at the home of Mrs Doreen Whicker.

Bible Study Groups & BRF

[Contributed by Martin Day]

In recent years there have been Bible Study groups in the homes of parishioners. The subjects have been diverse and interesting. Usually they have been led by either the Rector or his assistant and this has helped all attending to understand any complexities. Sometimes they have been self-run. On occasions the studies have been led by Reverend Geoffrey Bingham, who lives within the Parish, and these have been very informative and his great knowledge of the scriptures has been imparted to those present. He has written dozens of books on Christian Life and related subjects as well as books on specific chapters of the Bible.

There have been other Bible Study groups within the Parish given by other Village Churches. In particular there was one run by the Baptist Church, *The Story of God*,

which was attended by members of both Churches. This was one example of an ecumenical study, which is a good way of reaching out to those in the local community who are desirous of attending a Bible Study. Joint studies have also been held with the Mitcham Uniting Church.

Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) notes are another great source of study of the word of God with the helpful notes describing the passage chosen for the day.

[Martin Day]

Alpha (from 1998)

“*Alpha*, a phenomenon which is sweeping the Western world churches, across all denominations, has now arrived in our Parish”. So wrote catechist, Mark Clayton, in the *Herald* at Michaelmas 1998.

The first mention of *Alpha* came during one of Fr Peter Atherton's occasional sermons at St Michael's. He explained that video tapes were available featuring a series of lectures given by Reverend Nicky Gumbel. They emanated from Holy Trinity, Brompton, London, where up to 900 people participated, and were used by some 6,000 churches throughout the United Kingdom.

A Bible Study group had been meeting at the home of Meg and Peter Nicholls, and as a result of Fr Peter's enthusiasm for the *Alpha* series, an introductory screening was arranged there on the evening of 15th July 1998. Thirteen people attended. A month later another group of about ten began meeting on a Thursday afternoon at Anne and John Evins' home. So began the *Alpha* phenomenon in the Parish of Mitcham!

What is *Alpha*? It is a 15-session practical introduction to the Christian faith based around a series of televised talks given by Nicky Gumbel using a syllabus contained in his book *Questions of Life*. Although designed primarily for non-churchgoers and new Christians, it gives those who have been Christians for a long time an opportunity to think about their faith in a new manner. Each evening session begins with a shared meal (which is cooked by other members of the Parish), followed by a 45-minute video presentation, then small-group discussions and supper (Fig. 15-8). Day groups follow a similar pattern.

Although begun by an Anglican clergyman, it has become a world-wide ecumenical movement used in churches, homes, schools, universities and prisons. It is low-key, friendly and fun, and is supported by all main Christian denominations. In 1992 there were only five courses registered; in 1995 there were 2,500 courses with 103,000 participants, and in 1999 there were 1,556,570 people participating in 14,200 courses! Currently in Australia there are 1,520 courses running in all States.

Following the success of the first screenings at the Nicholls' home in 1998, it was decided that there should be others given in the Hall. This was set up in an informal ‘cafe atmosphere’ with individual tables set for about six people, complete with candles. It was a great success and enjoyed by all. *Alpha* courses have continued to be run in the Parish, usually two a year, and are always interesting with new faces at each one. Other events have included celebratory dinners at the conclusion of courses, and weekends away.

Fig. 15-8

*Fr Andrew Cheesman
leading discussions at
an Alpha meeting.
(MPA)*



It is interesting to note that at least one candidate has come forward for Baptism and/or Confirmation from each of the *Alpha* courses held so far in this Parish. At the Confirmation service held in St Michael's in October 1999, eight of the nine young adults who were Confirmed or re-affirmed their faith came to that step through the channel of *Alpha*. One is now a regular server.

As a follow-up to *Alpha*, a number of home groups have been formed. Martin Day describes these as being "an excellent way of continuing one's journey of faith in the company of friends who were on the same course; also a valuable pastoral care function in maintaining contact that originated at *Alpha*".

The extraordinary influence the *Alpha* course has had on participants was summed up in the words of a young mother, Lisa Daly (Fig. 15-9), in the Trinity 1999 edition of the *Herald*. She wrote in part:

We weren't regular members, but had attended the Church a few times over the past couple of years... For me it was the start of a new beginning, new experiences, new friendships and most of all my new Faith. I was totally engrossed in the course from beginning to end, learning, sharing and experiencing so much about the Christian Faith. I started out with so many misconceptions, and even ignorance of Christianity, but am now better informed and much more comfortable with, and confident of my Faith ...

The videos presented by Nicky Gumbel were all so relevant and, remarkably, seemed to be directed straight at me... I found the group discussions very important, using every spare moment to share my experiences, voice my comments and questions. I also enjoyed hearing others' experiences, and at times very tricky questions...

Throughout the course I grew from a non-committed church-goer to a faithful Christian... This is an excellent opportunity to either rekindle your relationship with the Father, or like myself, be given the chance to experience the true love of God for the first time.

Know Your Bible (KYB)

As a result of the first *Alpha* course, a women's daytime Bible study group began in October 1999 under the leadership of Ruth Fagan. A course of studies, KYB, produced in Australia by 'Christian Women Communication International' was adopted.

One of the younger members was Lisa Daly, who explained in the Lent 2000 *Herald* how KYB had affected her life:

Fig. 15-9

*Lisa Daly.
(Pamela Oborn,
2002)*



The initial group started out with only 4-5 members and has grown to a good size now of around 10 or so regulars. The studies come in a booklet form and run during the school terms. I am thankful for the children's creche, which is run by caring volunteers. Without this facility I would not be able to attend the study sessions. After the study sessions there is also an opportunity to chat over a cuppa for those who wish to stay.

The idea of the study is to read the relevant Bible passages at home, and to answer the questions which we then bring to the group sessions. We share our answers and learn a lot, think a lot and also laugh a lot... I like not only the diverse ages and backgrounds of our group members, but also the differing levels of knowledge and spirituality. I find the study sessions enlightening and informative, but most of all fun. I always walk away 'spiritually refreshed' and ready for whatever awaits me during the coming week.

I never knew that studying the Bible could be so inspiring and relevant to my life until I started in this study group, and now it is an important and large part of my ever-growing Christian faith.

MINISTRY OF HEALING

In July 1957 the Rector, Reverend Reginald Pearman, announced that the Ministry of Healing Prayer Group he had formed during Lent was continuing to meet fortnightly:

The subject is a very live question in the Christian Church of all denominations all over the world especially in

England and America, where the Ministry of Healing has been revived and used for many years. At the present time my study table is piled with a number of recent books on the subject...

Four years later he was able to report that the Group, which had been carried on each Lent, had that year culminated on the Wednesday in Holy Week with a special service of the Administration of the Sacrament of Holy Unction (Anointing) and Laying on of Hands, in which he was assisted by the Reverend L.G. Kerdel: "I hope to make this a regular part of the Church's Ministry in this Parish. The sacrament is administered only after instruction and preparation."

Prayer Healing Circle (from 1980)

At Michaelmas 1997, Fr Andrew Cheesman noted that it was almost twenty years since a Prayer Circle had been formed in this Parish upon the initiative of Fr Frank Kernot and Mrs Tommy Lyon "a former hospital matron and beloved parishioner [who] has been the convenor of the group ever since. Under her wise guidance the members have learned much".

Fr Frank was curate during 1980 and 1981, and members of the Mothers' Union had discussed the possibility of forming a Parish Prayer Circle at their meeting in September 1980. It was described as "a significant step, a sign of our growing awareness of the need to care deeply for each other and of the power of prayer in Jesus' name". The first Healing Service, implemented by the Prayer Circle, was held in August 1981.

Some ten years later the following article by Edeline (Tommy) Lyon, appeared in the *Herald*:

The power of prayer for the healing and comfort of the sick is a Christian belief. The Prayer Healing Circle provides practical application of this belief. Our Circle continues to meet in the Hall on the last Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m. The modus operandi is to update the list of people for whom we are praying, and to add any new names to the list. The meeting is followed by a Eucharist and Healing service of the "laying on of hands", and the offering up of any particular people who urgently require God's healing peace and wholeness.

The call to prayer for a particular person at any time is circulated by a clock system, with the names of members of the Circle and their phone numbers listed on the clock face. The call is initiated by Fr Andrew through me in the first instance, but if the call is urgent, and he is not available, then Fr Ken [Ken Dixon, assistant priest] or I will accept responsibility for starting the call round the Circle. We make contact with the first available person on the clock, and continue around until the circle is complete. The important thing is to get prayers started, and those not contacted initially are followed up later, when they are at home. The circle is closed when the call is completed at the Rectory.

The commitment of praying for the acutely ill, the frail, the elderly, and those undergoing surgery, or in need of God's healing grace in any situation, is a beautiful and rewarding thing.

When Tommy retired as convenor at Michaelmas 1999, Fr Andrew wrote: "Tommy's sensitive and prayerful leadership has seen the group develop into a faithful band of worshippers who pray daily for those with special needs, and her special insight will be sorely missed." Anne Evins was appointed as the new convenor.

Parish Nursing (from 1998)

The Adelaide Diocesan Synod in 1997 unanimously supported a proposal to develop the Ministry of Parish Nursing in the community as part of pastoral care and Outreach. The motion was submitted by a Mitcham parishioner, Mary Lindon (Fig. 15-10), who explained that it was a relatively new concept in Australia, although it had been at work in America for twelve years. The first Parish Nurses' meeting in S.A. was in February 1996, and in July 1997 Mary was one of thirty registered nurses who attended the first national five-day Parish Nursing course held at Immanuel Seminary in North Adelaide. An Anglican Parish Nursing Group was formed and this is now part of an ecumenical body called the Australian Faith Nurses Association Incorporated. In 1998 Parish Council set aside \$1,000 for the basic costs of this ministry. The team consisted of Mary Lindon as Parish Nursing co-ordinator, supported by Cicely Bungey (also with considerable nursing experience), and Anne Evins with her expertise as a physiotherapist. At that time a tribute was paid to Tommy Lyon and others for their "wonderful efforts over the past years in an unofficial parish nursing role".

It was envisaged that the health ministry would have an evolving role, with the main focus being the value of having an established network of contacts. Mary, in particular, has had extensive experience in Health Care and is able to seek support for specific situations. It often takes time to arrange appropriate care and support, and this is where Parish Nursing has a vital role to play in filling gaps in the State's health system.

Karen Watson, the first Parish Nurse in Australia, visited Mitcham in April 1999 and spoke to an assembled group of Pastoral Care Visitors, Prayer Circle, *Herald* Visitors, Welcomers and other interested parishioners. She explained that they all had to be the 'eyes and ears' for the Parish Nursing Team by telling those in need of the help available. As a Parish Nurse she would never visit unless the person involved gave permission for a visit and wanted help. She would help families cope with an initial emergency and then find them the correct services for their situation so that they could adequately deal with it themselves.



Fig. 15-10
Mary Lindon.
(Pamela Oborn,
2002)

Pastoral Care Visitors (from 1989)

It is virtually impossible for the Rector to personally keep in touch with every parishioner, let alone visit them regularly in their homes. He must rely on others to keep him abreast of potential problems so that they may receive his early attention. Much of this information comes via the network of Parish Visitors as they deliver the *Herald* each quarter. Once specific needs are identified they are often passed on to members of the Pastoral Care Group who meet with the Rector once a month to discuss each case and how it can best be dealt with.

It began in 1989 following a course in basic counselling skills when some of the eighteen people who attended stayed together as a group to do special pastoral visiting. Their brief was to make a friendly visit as a Parish representative to those in need: the sick, bereaved, elderly and housebound. They also visited new mothers, the recently baptised and newcomers to the Parish.

The group, now numbering about seven, has continued to provide short-term assistance where needed. With help from others, such as members of Mothers' Union, they have supplied casseroles for families when the mother is in hospital, provided transport for people requiring specialised hospital treatment or emergency care for children until other arrangements could be made.

Following Fr Andrew's retirement Mary Lindon took over from Meg Nicholls as convenor of the group. Mary, who is also the Parish Nurse, envisages that the roles of the Prayer Group, Pastoral Care Group and Parish Nursing will be redefined to become more cohesive in 2002. Mary Lindon sums up Parish Nursing as 'Helping to fill gaps' and 'Walking alongside'.

Friendship Services (from 1999)

The Parish of Mitcham offers a monthly Friendship Service for parishioners who live in nearby nursing homes such as 'Sunset Lodge' and 'Resthaven'. It was begun in September 1999 by the curate, Fr Lyndon Sulzberger. Transport is arranged to bring people to St Michael's on the second Thursday in the month for a service of Holy Communion at 10.30 a.m. This is followed by morning tea and fellowship in the Hall.

* * *

During most of the Colonial period the women of the Parish were called upon whenever it was necessary to raise funds for specific projects – they were then relegated back to their kitchen sinks! Women's groups, as such, did not appear until the late 1890s by which time the women of South Australia had gained their suffrage, voted for the first time at a general election, and been permitted to vote at Vestry meetings and to elect synodsmen (not, however, synodswomen!)

The inaugural meeting of the Mothers' Union (MU) in Adelaide was held in August 1895 and within a year there were twenty-two branches – one of them being at St Michael's. The MU has never been a fundraising organisation, but was formed as a spiritual group where members may join in prayer and fellowship. Traditionally the raising of funds has been achieved by groups of ladies



Fig. 15-11 Cynthia Kennedy with a display in St Wilfrid's in 1995 showing the work of MU. (MPA, MU Collection)

sewing items and selling them at fêtes and trading tables, together with homemade cakes, jams etc. Since 1940 this has been in the hands of The Guild, which has had various names and functions over the past sixty years. These two groups, MU and The Guild, have played major roles in the development of Parish Life in Mitcham.

THE MOTHERS' UNION (MU)

[Researched and written by Cynthia Kennedy, Fig. 15-11]

The Mothers' Union is an organisation within the Anglican Communion which is specially concerned with all that strengthens and preserves marriage and Christian Family Life. It has never been a fund raising organisation, but was formed as a spiritual group where members may join in prayer and fellowship. The MU was founded in Britain by Mrs Mary Sumner, wife of the Bishop of Guildford, in 1876. Today it is a worldwide movement with more than one million members in over seventy countries.

Unfortunately the early minute books of the Mitcham Mothers' Union branch have not been found, and most of the information regarding its activities prior to 1962 has been gleaned from existing Parish magazines.

Inauguration in Adelaide

MU began in Adelaide in 1895 soon after the arrival of the new Bishop, John Reginald Harmer, and his wife Dorothy. On 28th August 1895, some sixty women gathered at Bishop's Court to inaugurate the Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Adelaide. Mrs Harmer was ably supported by Lady Victoria Buxton who was declared the President. Lady Buxton was the wife of the incoming Governor, Sir Thomas Buxton, and had been President of the All England Conference earlier that year.²

The movement spread rapidly, and at the first annual service held in St Peter's Cathedral in August 1896 between four-hundred and five-hundred of the six-hundred members attended. By then there were 2,365 branches throughout the world – twenty-two of them in the Diocese of Adelaide.

Mitcham Branch Formed

The first reference to the Mitcham branch comes from *Church News*. It reports that a Mrs Gawler addressed the members of MU in the St Michael's Hall on Friday, 21st August 1896, and that there were nearly fifty members in the branch. Mrs Gawler's paper was "eminently practical and secured a most appreciative hearing". The branch was established under the leadership of Mrs Gertrude Culross and with the enthusiastic support of the Rector, Albert Clamptett.

With the opening of the daughter church of St Columba in 1898, Mrs Culross helped the Hawthorn women to form a new group which became a separate branch in 1906. (Mitcham and Hawthorn branches have maintained a close relationship, which continues to this day, and they take turns to visit each other annually.)

In 1902 Mrs Alice Clamptett, wife of the Rector, was the Presiding Associate of MU and Mrs F.C. Howard was Hon. Treasurer of the Provident Club. The latter was started in 1900 in connection with MU to "encourage thrift". Every shilling subscribed each month by a member earned a bonus of threepence. Thus when the member had paid in sixteen shillings, she was entitled to draw £1 with which to buy "blankets, boots, or any other useful article".

In July 1915 Mrs Culross departed for England to spend the War years with her family. Writing in the Parish magazine at that time, Clamptett noted: "We have lost a valuable worker, and many owe her lifetime gratitude. Her loving sympathy and helpful words will long remain an inspiration." In a beautiful letter acknowledging the gift of a bound, signed and illuminated address, Gertrude – ever generous to the end – enclosed a substantial donation "to keep the Provident Fund going for some time".

Gertrude Culross was the daughter of the Hon. Joseph Fisher, a generous benefactor of St Michael's, and our beautifully-carved altar was a gift from his widow in 1912. Following the death of her own husband, William Culross, Gertrude had invested the sum of £500 to establish the 'William Culross Memorial Fund' in 1911 – the interest of which still goes towards paying the stipend of the Rector of St Michael's (see page 300).

Formation of the Fellowship of Marriage (FOM)

In 1946 celebrations were held to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the MU branch at Mitcham. By then, although the Second World War had finished, members continued to collect and pack food parcels for England. For some three or four years they had regularly sent parcels to the Parish of St Michael in Bristol. These contained essentials such as dripping, dried fruit, dried milk and corned beef. They also sent money to assist with the rebuilding of English churches damaged during bombing raids, and collected used clothing for refugees in Europe. Mrs Tommy Lyon recalls that several years after the War the Rector, Reverend Reginald Pearman, asked her to form a Girls' Friendly Society branch in the Parish. She suggested instead that a Fellowship of Marriage branch would be more suitable. The FOM had been set up as an organisation within the Mothers' Union to encourage young wives and mothers by offering them friendship and support. These groups brought many into the sphere of the

Church. FOM flourished after the War with the return of ex-servicemen with young wives and with the subsequent growth of new suburbs.

During the Mitcham MU Centenary Celebrations held in 1996, Margaret Sanders recalled her involvement in starting a FOM branch in this Parish:

In the summer of 1948–49 I was approached by Mrs Pearman, the wife of our Rector, to help her start a branch of the Fellowship of Marriage – an off-shoot of Mothers' Union, intended for young wives.

It may be asked: Why the need for another organisation? The Mothers' Union was an active group and had served the women of the Parish for many years. However, with the ending of the 1939–45 War, many things were changing. Thousands of young women had met and married servicemen during the years of conflict. These men were now returning to the jobs being held for them – frequently back to the suburban homes where they had grown up, but bringing with them a stranger, a young woman whose childhood had passed in a different place and with a different background, and to whom everything so familiar and dear to their husbands was strange and alien. A home of their own in most cases was just a dream. No houses had been built during the War years and it would be some time before the massive housing developments began.

Mothers, women in their 40's and 50's, made room in the family home for the nucleus of a new family, often with a baby as well. It was hard for everyone, but perhaps hardest on the young wives, some, hundreds of miles from their own families, trying to make a family life in the home of a stranger. Most of them felt lonely and isolated; they knew no women of their own age and desperately needed young female companionship.

To start a group of young wives who would have all the foregoing in common and probably much more, was Mrs Pearman's aim. We set out to find them. Aided by Deaconess Mildred Magarey, who served this Parish devotedly for many years, we began doorknocking on foot in January heat. Very few showed much enthusiasm, many were shy, some wary of anything organised by a church, but some came from homes where church attendance was the norm. These were the easy ones.

By 1949 we had the beginnings of our group who met in the Parish Hall for the first time. By the end of the year we numbered twenty-one. Our success exceeded our greatest hopes. From that group of individuals, I saw a body of women bond together. All were ready to help and serve each other. No-one needed to be friendless and no-one ever went without help and support if sickness or trouble came to them or their families. It was one of the finest examples of women becoming one entity, women who would help other members of the groups through any emergency or disaster. Individual friendships were formed, many lifelong, and still give joy to those involved. They were, and are, an example of love in action...

Day & Night Groups

The first surviving minute book, which begins on 13th September 1962, states that the Reverend J. Y. MacDonald led prayers and the 'Mothers' Union Office' in St Michael's

Hall and that the AGM followed. Twenty members were present along with the leader Mrs E.E. (Tommy) Lyon, who was officially known as the Enrolling Member. Tommy Lyon resigned in 1965 after holding this position for six years. Nell Mitchard took the reins and was known as President. This group met during the day. The first meeting each year was usually in February with Holy Communion held in the morning at St Wilfrid's followed by formal business, a speaker and lunch in the old Hall.

The younger group, known as FOM, usually met in the evening. These members became a fully-fledged MU group in February 1965, and their leader, Jenny Cain, was then known as Vice-President from 1966.

These two groups ran separate programmes, but kept each other well informed. The committees from both groups often came together to arrange invitations to each other's activities, and to arrange rosters and other help for various projects, particularly that given to other Anglican institutions in the Diocese. Joan Horner, as Day Group secretary in 1967, declared that the liaison between the Night and Day groups "has been very satisfying".

Contacts were maintained with other MU branches in the area and with women's groups from other denominations, e.g. the West Mitcham Methodist Church, the Mitcham Baptist Fellowship (from 1988, and still happening), and the Catholic Women's League. Invitations were extended and received for each other's meetings and special events.

For a long time AGMs were held in October or November each year but this changed to June in 1981. Just for interest, in 1969 Branch subscriptions were \$1.50 for "admitted members" and \$1 for "probationers", and by 1978 they were \$3.50. In 2000 the subscription dictated by the Diocese was \$20.

Attendance at day meetings fluctuated a great deal: thirty-four present in October 1962, but only thirteen in April 1963. This was accompanied by feelings of depression. However the Rector's wife, Rebecca MacDonald, pointed out that "loyalty was shown in different ways".

In 1971 the Night Group also had concerns. While it registered a good number of financial members, regular attendance at meetings was low, and the Rector agreed that two winter meetings could be held in members' homes. As a result of discussions held at the home of Alison Haddy in August, members resolved to have morning teas in members' homes and invite young mothers with the idea of encouraging more to join. At the AGM in 1975, the future of the Night Group was in doubt, but members rallied and all positions were filled with Cicely Bungey as Vice-President.

In April 1972, the problem of continuing the Day Group was discussed, but the members who were present declared that "it was a spiritual uplift," and that many were absent "because they had to help family which was one of the ideals of Mothers' Union". They resolved to carry on.

Between May and July 1976 the Day Group had been meeting in members' homes, but at the AGM in October no member was prepared to lead the group. The new Rector, Reverend Andrew Cheesman, was contacted and at his request, the group was not formally disbanded. In the following month, Joan Horner stated that the Day Group would go into recess for twelve months, but that the

members would continue to subscribe. They would meet in each other's homes when possible and attend the Night Group when they were able to.

In July 1977 a letter was sent to all members, which stated that Mitcham Branch now had just one executive and one committee to handle all business. The meetings would be at night, and Heather Geytenbeek would be the President. Joan Horner, the former President, volunteered to be the leader of a Fellowship Group for any members who were unable to attend at night. They would meet on the second Thursday each month, beginning with a Eucharist at St Wilfrid's and followed by a meeting in a private home. This arrangement ensured that older members could be relieved of business responsibilities but continue to enjoy MU membership and fellowship. On 10th November the Fellowship Group had its own Admission Service for one person at St Wilfrid's, followed by a picnic lunch.

All told, there were fifty financial members in 1978, but in her report to the April Vestry Meeting the President, Heather Geytenbeek, noted: "We have to face the fact that an increasing number of our members will be giving witness to the Objects of the Mothers' Union at their place of work and in their involvement with other organisations, rather than at Mothers' Union meetings."

In 1980 the Day Fellowship Group extended their meetings to twice a month. A service was held in St Wilfrid's, after which they alternated between a meeting at the home of a member or serving refreshments at the Church.

Admission Services

In the earlier years, the two groups usually conducted joint Admission Services (Fig. 15-12) annually in November. For example, in 1964, at St Michael's Church, twelve women were admitted in the presence of sixty-five members. A brief business meeting followed and then "each and everyone enjoyed a chat and lunch on the Rectory lawns".

From 1976, when two women were admitted on a June evening in St Wilfrid's, the Admission Service was held at irregular intervals. Currently, there are thirty-nine financial members including two new members who were admitted in February 2001.

Fig. 15-12 MU Communion service in St Michael's c.1970. Note the wearing of hats was expected. (MPA)



Speakers & Discussions

During the time of Reverend J. Y. MacDonald, he was often the speaker on topics such as 'Early Bible History', 'The Seasons of the Church in Vestments', or a Bible study on a Psalm. Other speakers, drawn from the Anglican clergy, discussed subjects related to Christian life and concerns: 'Heresies and how to meet them', 'Faith and how to teach it to Families', or 'The Ministry of Healing'.

Later on the chosen speakers reflected a wider variety of topics. Although the work of the Church still played a big part in programmes, many talks were of a more secular nature.

Over the years there were many in-depth discussions. Some of these dealt with social issues such as the Liquor Bill in 1967 (at the request of the Diocesan Social Responsibilities Department), abortion, and drug and alcohol abuse. The ordination of women priests was of particular relevance, as was a new Charter for MU which led to each country becoming autonomous. It also involved a change in name from 'The Mothers' Union in Australia' to 'MU Australia' (pronounced "em you"). The majority of those present in 1996 were against this change in name. The shortened version is now accepted around Australia and this branch is formally called 'MU Mitcham'.

As many members are now grandmothers, 1999 and 2001 produced discussions on grandparenting under the guidance of Dr Elizabeth Puddy. Lenten studies were part of MU programmes in some years.

On many occasions the members themselves spoke on MU Aims and Objectives, or presented topics from personal interests, the workplace or volunteer efforts.

Visits

Annual programmes sometimes included visits to other places of worship to gain a better understanding of them: the Jewish Synagogue in 1967, Greek Orthodox Church in 1968 and 1974, and the Serbian Orthodox Church on Port Road in 1990.

To appreciate aspects of the Society of the Sacred Mission at St Michael's House at Mt Lofty, three visits were made and a hamper of tinned and homemade food was offered in thanks. The last visit was on St David's Day in 1978. In 1971, on one of the many visits to Retreat House, Sister Gloria conducted the service in the

chapel and gave a talk on finding time for prayer; and on a previous occasion Sister Patience spoke on "Life as a recluse". Each time, members took gifts for their pantry. Diocesan Homes such as St Mary's Home for Children and Farr House were visited. Fr Andrew encouraged MU association with Farr House, and took a combined service there in 1980 for Mitcham and St Columba's MU members. When Farr House closed, some MU members rallied to offer accommodation and continued support for several of the girls.

Assisting Outreach Projects

Whilst MU is not an official fundraising group within the Parish of Mitcham, MU members have always been generous supporters of their own Overseas work by sending money or a parcel of items to Mary Sumner House (the worldwide MU Headquarters) in London for the Annual Overseas Sale. For many years the money was raised by holding 'trading tables'; but in 1972 an element of fun was introduced when a games evening was enjoyed at Barbara Storer's home which provided funds for an Overseas parcel. In 1973 and 1974 tennis days and games evenings raised funds for Anglican Overseas Missions and MU work. Games nights continued until 1977, and from 1978 to 1981 progressive dinners were held in members' homes. Sometimes, the funds were shared with other needs such as St Mary's Home for Children, Anglican Welfare, and a Vietnamese family being hosted in the Parish.

Since the opening of the new Parish Hall in 1980, this fine venue has been used for annual fundraising dinners (Fig. 15-13). These have always been on a set theme, with the Hall decorated accordingly using the artistic talents of members, particularly Raelene Evans and Mary Cheesman. In 1984, a 'Nosen Lawen' evening reflected the branch's links with Wales. Other themes have included 'Australia's Bicentenary', 'May Day', 'Cornish Night' (Fig. 15-14), 'An African Adventure' and, most recently, 'Federation Fun in 2001'.

Apart from funds being submitted for Overseas projects such as the MU centre being built in Port Moresby, a Christian childcare centre in Nigeria, and a Landrover for a MU worker in Kenya, money was also raised for Northern Outreach work in PNG, Melanesia and the northern dioceses of Australia.



Fig. 15-13

MU fundraising dinner in the Parish Hall in 1993.

Roger Dyer, the curate, is the 'onion in the petunia patch'.

(MPA)



Fig. 15-14 MU members appropriately dressed to enjoy the 'Cornish Night' fundraising dinner in 1995.

(L. to R.) Joy Wescombe, Mary Cheesman, Libby Brammy, Rosalie Tonkin, Cicely Bungey, Phyl Prideaux, Noelle Baker. (Kneeling) Raelene Evans, Wanda McDougall. (MPA, MU Collection)

In the 1970s members were encouraged to knit squares to make rugs for children at the Mission School in Goroko, PNG. This was a continual need because the children took the rugs home with them when they left the school. Jumpers were sent too. Many members contributed, particularly Florence Wood, who kept up the supply from donations of wool. Later, when postage became prohibitive, rugs were donated to All Hallows nursing home. Cotton clothing was sent to Katherine as part of a Northern Outreach project in 1974, and in 1980 cotton clothing was sent to Uganda to the diocesan Links in that country.

Since the inception in 1984 of 'Family Aid to Mission', one night each year has usually been devoted to this cause. Toiletries, stationery, sheets and medical supplies were collected for Tanzania. Under the guidance of Meg Weightman, members cut swabs and rolled bandages from unwanted linen. Members also supported the printing of a Tanzanian prayer book.

Local & Diocesan Projects

Anglican institutions such as St Mary's Home for Children and St Lawrence's Homes were supported over many years, often through selling badges until the late 1980s, after which help was given to the amalgamated Anglican Community Services. Members also mended the children's clothes or provided new ones. Homemade marmalade was donated to St Lawrence's Homes and/or Retreat House, All Hallows, and St Barnabas' College from 1962 to 1990. The Retreat House fêtes were supported up to 1990 by stocking the craftwork stall, providing biscuits for the afternoon teas, cakes and plants. Members taught handicrafts at Farr House for girls during the winter of 1971, and supported their fêtes.

Other places were supported too. The Cottage Homes in Mitcham received marmalade; the British & Foreign Bible Society was assisted with funds; monthly markets organised by Marjorie Black House (a home for the rehabilitation of mentally ill patients) were supported, and curtains and blankets were donated to St Luke's Mission.

From 1960 patients from the Parkside Mental Hospital (now known as Glenside Hospital) were taken shopping or on other outings. May Calder, a former Leader of FOM, recalled that this was one of the most worthwhile things undertaken by members:

When our first patient, Miss Holzman died during our Rector's absence, the Rector of St Chad's, Fullarton, very kindly conducted a funeral service in his Church for us, and we followed the hearse to West Terrace Cemetery, where our patient was buried in a pauper's grave. We were her only mourners.

The next patient we had was an English woman, and we managed to help stabilise her condition to a state where she was able to return home to the care of her sister in England. The girls took her down to Outer Harbour to board her ship, and the last sight of her was climbing the gangway, complete with ironing board which she insisted on taking with her.³

MU Deanery & Diocesan Matters

MU Mitcham is part of the Southern Deanery. Over the years it has taken its turn to host Deanery Festivals: in April 1971 it was at St Michael's Church with lunch on the Rectory lawns; then in 1985 and again in 1993. However, this branch has not shown any particular interest in Quiet Days.

Mitcham members have been represented at Diocesan events, but often not in proportion to the size of the group. An exception was the Diocesan Festival at St Peter's Cathedral in November 1962 when twenty members from Mitcham attended, including a banner bearer. In 1973 there was discussion on changing the date to March, but it was not until 1976 that 25th March – Lady Day – became the new time for the Diocesan Festival. Prior to this, Mitcham had celebrated Lady Day at St Wilfrid's Church every year.

In 1994 Mitcham helped with the Diocesan MU promotion in Rundle Mall. This was the 'International Year of the Family' and the programme reflected issues concerning family. As 1995 was the Adelaide Mothers' Union Centenary year Mitcham mounted a display showing MU work (see Fig. 15-11). This was exhibited in both Churches at services on 26th November and the members carried their banner in procession as well as helping with the collection and presenting the intercessions.

Four members attended the State MU conference at Melrose in September 1997, and several members were involved in the Diocesan Pilgrimage 2000 at Goolwa. Called "The River of Life", it corresponded with a pilgrimage to Iona by Wakefield MU members in Britain.

Over the years some members volunteered for positions at other levels in the Mothers' Union. Val Baxendale was Diocesan Secretary for the Young Members Department in 1963. Jenny Cain and Jill Hurcombe were Southern Deanery President and Secretary respectively for three years to the end of 1970. Jean Medley took a turn as Southern Deanery Secretary from 1974. Cynthia Kennedy was Southern Deanery President for six years from 1985, and Diocesan Co-ordinator of the Overseas and Northern Outreach Department from 1996 to 2001 inclusive.

The MU Banner

MU Mitcham has two banners: one which is usually kept at St Wilfrid's (seen in Fig. 13-14), and a new one made in 1985 at St Michael's.

It is assumed the older one dates from 1941 when it was recorded that "a standard was presented in memory of Matilda Hales by her son and daughter". Mrs Hales, who died in January that year at the age of eighty-four, was a foundation member of the Mitcham branch. In 1962 this refurbished banner was shown to members after repairs taking 200 hours had been done by Mrs Melbourne. In 1970 Rebecca MacDonald advised the Night Group that some further repairs were being done, including the provision of tassels. By 1981 it was suggested that the cost of a new banner be investigated, and although this was agreed to, it did not eventuate for several more years. Ann Retallack carried out further repairs to the old banner in 1985. By then \$100 had been raised to pay for the new one, and members are indebted to Rosalie Tonkin, Ann Retallack, and Barbara Storer for the major part of the sewing, design and construction; and to Chris Shaw for the woodwork. The banner was dedicated at the 8 a.m. service at St Wilfrid's on 28th April 1985, and was carried for the first time on evening of 7th May at the Southern Deanery Festival held at St Michael's. By 2001 the writing on the rear panel had become worn and it was screen-printed.

A veil for use by anyone acting as banner bearer at any special events was bought in 1963: it was accompanied by instructions to wear white clothing, black shoes and no earrings! By 1975 banner bearers at Deanery Festivals could choose to wear white surplices. Currently they wear their normal clothing (Fig. 15-15).

Link Branches

It was usual for each branch to be linked with another outside its own country. The May 1914 Parish magazine indicates that Mitcham MU, through Mrs Culross, was corresponding with MU at St Saviour's Church, Herne Hill Road, London, where Archdeacon Clampett served as a curate and assistant priest before coming to Australia. Mitcham's Link branch in 1967 was St Andrew's at Killyman in Ireland, and in 1971 Betty Hamilton, daughter of a member in Killyman, visited Mitcham. In June 1967, a new Link branch was declared as St Margaret's in Dunham Massey, Cheshire, and this link remained until February 1973.

In April 1974, the next Link branch of All Saints, Sinan (near Abergele in North Wales) was acknowledged in prayers. The letters were refreshing and homely with a rural background. President Marion Lewis visited Sinan (meaning "field") in 1974, and her visit was featured in a letter from Wales which also mentioned that Sinan had organised an 'Australian Evening'.

A Link was established with St Michael's, Abergele in 1979. This came about by chance when Beryl Pitman was in Abergele asking for directions to our Link branch at Sinan – a little distance away! This meant that Mitcham had two Links in the Diocese of St Asaph. Cynthia Kennedy and her family received an enthusiastic welcome from Sinan members in 1983. Heather and Peter Geytenbeek visited both Sinan and Abergele in 1991, and presented each with



Fig. 15-15 *Lady Day Festival at St Peters' Cathedral, March 1995. Val Burton, carrying the Mitcham banner, is standing beside the banner bearer from our S.A. Country Caring Link Branch of Victor Harbor. (MPA, MU Collection)*

gifts from South Australia. These two Links have been maintained to this day by many faithful correspondents.

Victor Harbor branch as a 'Country Caring Link' with Mitcham, was first mentioned in 1989 and annual visits became the norm. Accommodation was offered when Victor Harbor members needed to be in Adelaide.

Wave of Prayer

In earlier years the 'Wave of Prayer' to uphold the Adelaide Diocesan Links, was observed on 4th September in members' homes and during the Sunday services closest to that day. In the 1960s and 1970s it was often observed at both Churches, followed by a picnic and games at the Pines Oval in Belair National Park which was enjoyed by members, their children and friends. Latterly, available members have followed the prayer leaflets on the specified day for an hour, or during the regular meeting time if it falls on 4th September. Other dioceses in the 'Wave of Prayer' cycle are remembered at every meeting.

Supporting Parish Life

Naturally, MU members support children, their mothers and families in general. In 1968, nine members were involved in the teaching of Religious Instruction at the Mitcham Infant School and the Junior Sunday School, and the following year ten others became babysitters for the children of the RI teachers.

Over the past thirty years they have provided a creche for another MU branch; organised Shrove Tuesday pancake suppers for Parish families; sponsored a family caravan holiday at Goolwa; provided morning teas and support for the Playgroup (see Fig. 16-16); supper for the Youth Group; parcels for Helen Mayo House (which has programmes for mothers suffering from *post partum* depression); food and physical help for the *Alpha* courses; mounted a stall at the Parish Bazaar, and made activity bags for children to use during services in St Michael's.

In 1978 MU started a library of books containing information for women and dealing with social issues. Later these were made available to the Parish, and books on Christian Parenting were added to the Parish Library in 2000. 'Bibles for Babies' were distributed to baptismal families as well, and members have often visited families of newly baptised children.

As 1999 was the 'Year of the Older Person', MU arranged a 'Seniors are Special' Devonshire afternoon tea with a community singalong. Guests were asked to bring a special item to share with those at their table. About eighty accepted and MU members waited on tables.

During the last decade, MU donations of food, funds or energy, have assisted St Luke's, the Magdalene Centre, Schools Ministries, the training of aboriginal women at Nungalinga College, the World Day of Prayer, theological students at St Barnabas' College, the Christmas Bowl and Anglicare.

From 1968, the MU supported confirmation candidates by providing supper after their confirmation service. In November 1970, there were sixty-two confirmees (including eleven boarders from Scotch College), parents and godparents. This arrangement continued every year until 1975 when, for the following three years, breakfasts were served instead after the first communion. MU continues to host celebratory events for candidates whenever confirmations are held at Mitcham.

The branch has endeavoured to respond to Parish needs as required, and members are involved in most aspects of Parish Life (Fig. 15-16).

Grateful thanks have been registered with Fr Andrew Cheesman for his many inspired addresses and homilies at MU services and meetings during his twenty-five years. The curates during this time also presented MU with many challenges and offered support.

Anniversary Celebrations

Mitcham MU is proud that it has been in existence for more than a century, and over that time various celebrations have been held, usually in July, to mark the passing of the decades since its formation.

The ninetieth birthday was celebrated on the evening of 2nd July 1986 which gave members a chance to share a joyful event with many neighbouring churches. The guest speaker was Mrs Captain Colling, co-manager of 'Sunset Lodge' who gave a detailed insight into the valuable work of the Salvation Army.

When the Centenary was celebrated in October 1996 (Figs 15-17 and 15-18) members felt a great sense of achievement in having maintained the branch thus far. Following a service in St Michael's at noon, the Southern Area President, Helen Kitson, presented a fifty-year membership badge and scroll to highly-esteemed member Tommy Lyon. After the service Tommy planted a Crepe Myrtle tree in the raised flower bed between the Terrace and Hall. A plaque was organised later. Heather Geytenbeek introduced a session on reminiscences which were presented by Tommy Lyon, Cicely Bungey, May Calder and Cynthia Kennedy. A letter from Margaret Sanders was read by Heather Cooper. The birthday cake was cut by Doreen Whicker, and those present signed a book.



Fig. 15-16 Presentation of special certificates in 1988 to those who had been members for 25 or more years. (L. to R. standing) Dierdre Tolley, Heather Geytenbeek, Cicely Bungey, Athalie Dart, Dianne Bradley (Diocesan President), Joan Horner, Phyl Prideaux. (Seated) Beryl Pitman, Edith Pennock. (MPA, MU Collection)

Fig. 15-17

Tommy Lyon
(assisted
by Jennifer
Henshall)
planting the
Crepe Myrtle tree
by the Terrace on
2nd October 1996
to commemorate
Mitcham MU
Centenary.
(MPA, MU
Collection)



Fig. 15-18

Doreen Whicker,
watched
by Wanda
McDougall,
cutting the MU
Centenary cake.
(MPA, MU
Collection)



Changing Rules & Regulations

One of the speakers at the Mitcham MU Centenary Lunch was a former President, Heather Geytenbeek, who recalled:

When I first joined Mothers' Union the rules of membership were very strict. One had to be a member of the Church of England, a woman, married and have at least one child. (I don't know that these conditions were spelt out as such in the actual rules of membership; but they were the practical outcome as applied by some clergy.) One could not be divorced or married to a previously-divorced man. These rules caused a deal of heart-break, and I am not just referring to the question of divorce. One member told me how she longed to join her friends as a member of MU, but it was not until after two miscarriages that she had a baby and could join.

The question of membership rules was much discussed at worldwide MU level and in ordinary branches in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Changes in divorce laws in many countries was a catalyst. It was not a matter of a local decision – national bodies had to be happy with any changes – different nationalities were sensitive to changes and had different standards.

Finally, in 1973, the worldwide body of MU agreed on a new Charter which was issued by no less a body than the British Privy Council! For me this was a big moment in the history of MU.

This Charter included a new 'Statement of Aim' and five newly-stated Objects (replacing the previous three), as well as a new Rule of Membership. The Australian Commonwealth Council adopted these proposals in 1974 and, as allowed under the new Charter, gained autonomy in the same year. Membership is now open to all those who:

1. *have been baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity.*
2. *declare their support for the Aim and Objects of the Society.*

To date, no man has applied for membership of the MU Mitcham Branch!

[Cynthia Kennedy]

THE GUILD

Writing in the first edition of the *Parish Messenger* in May 1940 the new Rector, Reverend Reginald Pearman, advised that he proposed forming "a ladies' guild in connection with St Michael's on similar lines to that of St Wilfrid's". The Torrens Park Church had only been open for six years, and this group included ladies from both a bridge club and a sewing circle. Their immediate objective was to create the nucleus of a fund to build a larger vestry at St Wilfrid's.

Prior to this the only women's groups in the Parish, apart from the MU, were an Altar Decorations Guild and a Sanctuary Guild both of which had been started by Archdeacon Clampett in 1926. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the community banded together to support 'The War Effort' and each other in times of grief. It was in this spirit that the St Michael's and St Wilfrid's Ladies' Guilds were formed.

St Michael's Ladies' Guild

At the first meeting held in May 1940 Mrs Win Pearman, wife of the Rector, was elected as the inaugural chairman, with Miss Florence Wood holding the combined roles of secretary and treasurer – a position she held for the next seventeen years.

With money raised at a bridge evening, their first objective was to supply choir robes for some of the girls from The Orphan Home (Farr House) who had joined the choir. They also tackled the job of repairing kneelers in the Church – an on-going activity over the decades! For the duration of the Second World War, and for several years afterwards, most of their activities were directed towards supplying food and clothing parcels for Britain and for the servicemen fighting at 'the Front'.

By 1956 the St Wilfrid's group had long since been disbanded, and they asked the Rector if they could "form a new Guild". He asked them to be "quite clear in their minds what sort of guild they want", and went to great lengths to ensure they knew the difference between a Sanctuary Guild and a Ladies' Guild. As he explained to them, the work of a Sanctuary Guild "was concerned with the care of everything used in and about the Sanctuary and Altar". They were NOT responsible for raising money for general church purposes:

A Ladies' Guild on the other hand is a working group who, by their activities can and do desire funds for special purposes when something is needed in the Church, or a Ladies Guild can work for one special object. For example there used to be a ladies guild at St Wilfrid's, which worked for the New Vestry Fund. The last ladies guild worked for Missions. Both of these guilds, in their respective terms of existence, organised American Afternoons, at which things were sold which had been made by the members in their meetings.

Over the years the St Michael's Ladies' Guild has changed its name many times: St Michael's Sewing Guild, Mission Sewing Circle, St Michael's Craft Guild, and Parish Sewing Fellowship. As well as keeping the choir robes and kneelers in good repair, the group has made clothes for Missions and raised money for things as diverse as a lawn mower for the Church grounds, mugs for morning tea and canvas blinds for the Rectory.

Mitcham Parish Sew and Sews

In March 1980 Mary Thomas called a meeting to form the 'Mitcham Parish Sew and Sews' with a view to making "new choir robes and other Church vestments for the Parish". Members were to pay \$2 a year towards the cost of materials and incidentals. Green material was chosen for the first set of vestments which the Rector blessed on Sunday, 8th June.

With an original gift of \$20 from Harold Thomas, the group made warm knee-rugs and cot blankets from offcuts obtained from the Onkaparinga Woollen Mills, the sale of which netted over \$67. This was then used to make further sets of vestments. The set of purple vestments was used for the first time on 29th November 1981, red on 25th July 1982 and white on 16th January 1983. They also

made green vestments for the curate, Fr Stephen Clarke, in August 1982. Other projects included seven handsome individual kneelers bearing the cross of St Michael (1983), and the restoration of the traditional faldstool hangings in seasonal colours now used on the lectern.

In May 1981 the group decided to affiliate with the A.B.M. Women's Auxiliary, and much of their work was directed towards assisting various Missions. In 1983 they received a delightful letter from New Guinea thanking them for some knitted children's sweaters which were given to families who lived and worked as evangelists in the mountains: "... the mountains is the hightest of all mountains ... none of the parents own no cold shirts ... we will be pleased if you try again for the adults." Their annual Sale-of-Work in 1983 raised over \$850 for Missionary work. Other organisations (besides the Parish and ABM) who received donations during 1983-4 included Anglican Child Care Services, Ordination Candidates Fund and the Bible Society.

Mitcham Anglican Parish Guild

In April 1985 it was announced that the 'Sew and Sews' had changed their name to the Mitcham Anglican Parish Guild, and that membership was open to both men and women. The suggestion had come from Doreen Callaghan, who felt that this name more accurately described the way in which they had evolved into a fellowship group of varied talents: "While fellowship is our main objective, we still have the pivotal incentive to raise funds for needy causes, and we hope that many more will join us in The Guild". The Guild Prayer was updated by Fr Brian Smith in September 2001 to fit contemporary times by simply altering the words from "... services of faithful women..." to "... services of faithful men and women...".

Since its inception, The Guild had always met on the 1st Monday of the month. This was changed to the 2nd Tuesday, commencing February 2000, to facilitate the newly-introduced *Alpha* programme.

Until 1997 funds were raised at an annual Sale-of-Work (Fig. 15-19), but this was discontinued in 1998 in favour of trading tables held monthly throughout the year. During 2000 the sum of \$1,300 was donated to The Magdalene Centre. This was part of a total amount of \$33,676 raised between 1985 and February 2001 by this dedicated

Fig. 15-19 Rosalie Tonkin assisting at The Guild's annual Sale-of-Work in the Parish Hall in 1994. (MPA)



group of workers. A further \$2,093 was given to various charities and other struggling parishes. A truly remarkable achievement! Maureen Gunn was the longest serving convenor during this period.

Doreen Callaghan summed up The Guild's philosophy by saying: "We are a fellowship group, of mutual help and care, meeting once a month socially, and with a common aim of raising what money we can to help others in greater need than ourselves."

* * *

Over the years there have been a variety of men's groups within the Parish or associated with it. In some cases, such as the Literary Society begun in 1890 by Reverend F.W. Samwell, ladies were admitted – but only as associates! Not only did his successor, Reverend A.W. Clampett, enthusiastically continue this Society, but he was also responsible for forming one at the Mitcham Institute Association to which many of his male parishioners belonged.

The daughter church of St Columba's opened in 1898, and in 1904 the inaugural meeting of a combined St Michael's and St Columba's Literary Society was held in St Michael's Day School Hall. Meetings were held fortnightly and attended by about forty people.

MITCHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND MEN'S SOCIETY (CEMS)

Prior to the opening of the St Michael's Day School Hall in 1890, the Reverend F.W. Samwell had rented a cottage in Welbourne Street where he began teaching. It was also a de facto 'parish hall' used for meetings, including those of a group called a 'Society of Young Men'.

At that time there existed within the Church of England in England three men's societies: the Young Men's Friendly Society, the Church of England Young Men's Society, and the Men's Help Society. In 1899, by direction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, these three Societies were 'knocked into one' to form the Church of England Men's Society. The first CEMS was founded in Australia in 1905.⁴

In October 1910 Clampett wrote in the *Parish Messenger*:

To enable us to understand, and to help us to appreciate this Society, Rev. Henry Woolcombe visited Australia about twelve months ago. Many branches have since been formed, and we hope shortly to establish a branch in our parish. Its aim is to bind men more closely to the Church, to give them an active interest in it, and to bind them to it and to each other by the simple rule of prayer and work. A meeting to take preliminary steps and to explain the principles and constitution will be held in St Columba's Hall on Tuesday evening, November 8th, to which men of both congregations are invited.

The first admission service was held on 18th December 1910 in St Columba's. Meetings were held monthly on a

Monday evening, with quarterly Sunday afternoon Church services held alternately at the Mitcham and Hawthorn Churches.

At the end of 1920 Clampett resigned as Rector of Hawthorn, and as a result of the split-up of the two congregations it was necessary to re-organise many of the Parish groups, including CEMS. A separate Mitcham branch was established on 18th May 1921. At some stage between then and 1945 it went into recess, and was not re-established until the younger men returned home after the Second World War.

CEMS after WW2

[Researched and written by John Dibben, Mitcham President 1961-3]

A meeting to consider the establishment of a branch of CEMS was held on 6th December 1945 when the Diocesan Secretary addressed a group of thirteen men, concerning the Aims and Objectives of CEMS as set out in the Constitution and the responsibilities of membership.

Following the address it was resolved to establish the Mitcham Branch to meet monthly in the Parish Hall. The first formal Admission Service was held at St Wilfrid's Church on 16th June 1946. The First Annual Meeting recorded a membership of thirty-two and average attendance of fifteen.

Monthly meetings, after opening prayers, included Bible readings, hymns, guest speakers usually with members of other branches as invited guests, and social activities. Members visited other branches. Several members attended CEMS luncheons regularly at Townsends, and in later years at Balfours Cafe in the City.

A number of working bees at the Parish Hall and both Churches were held from time to time. The CEMS branch gave significant assistance with the following Parish projects: establishment of the Mitcham Parish Cricket Club (1947); St Michael's Fête (1947); Parish Village Fair (1951); Parish Village Fair (1955); building of tennis/basketball courts at Parish Hall (1956); Church Army Mitcham Men's Rally, 103 in attendance (1961); Boys' Society Banquet (1961).

During 1960 members collected boys from the Edwardstown Industrial School and took them to services at St Wilfrid's and St Michael's. They also joined with the Warradale Parish in visiting each month residents at the Parkside Mental Hospital.

The Mitcham CEMS report to the 1963 Annual Vestry advised that the branch would go into recess as the average attendance in 1962 had fallen to five. The final meeting was held on 27th May 1963.

[John Dibben]

Men's Fellowship Group

Following the demise of the CEMS, some of the younger men in the Parish decided to form a Men's Fellowship Group. Many had young families, attended St Wilfrid's and were married to members of the Fellowship of Marriage – the younger group of the Mothers' Union. The leaders were Trevor Barr and David Cain.

Whereas CEMS had been set up on a Masonic Lodge format (Brothers, Stewards, Jobmasters etc.), the Men's



Fig. 15-20 *Men's Breakfast in the Parish Hall.*

(L. to R.) Gordon Hervey, Denis Nettleton, Max Brennan and caterer Peter Reardon listening to the guest speaker. (MPA)

Fellowship was a more informal group which met monthly in the Hall for a basket-tea before going on to Evensong.

They were part of the Southern Districts Ecumenical Men's Fellowship which was open to the various Christian denominations in the southern suburbs, and met three or four times a year. The aim was closer co-operation between Churches, with Unity the ultimate goal.

Men's Breakfasts

During the late 1980s a trend developed for busy executives to start the business day with meetings over breakfast. In line with this trend, it was decided to try and attract the men of the Parish to gather for breakfast and a talk by a guest speaker before going to the office. The original suggestion came from John Dibben, and was quickly adopted by the curate, Keith Dalby. The first Men's Breakfast was held at the Edinburgh Hotel on 2nd February 1996, the speaker being the chaplain of Urrbrae Agricultural High School, Bryan Sellars.

Since then the Breakfasts have been held about four times a year. After trying several different venues, they are now held in the Parish Hall, the catering being in the capable hands of parishioner Peter Reardon (Fig. 15-20). They start at 7.15 a.m. to allow for question-time before some of the men go to work. The subjects discussed over the years have been eclectic with many of the speakers being from within the ranks of the Parish.

ON A MORE SOCIAL NOTE

As fashions and lifestyles changed over 150 years, so too did the social life within the Parish of Mitcham. One hundred years ago the curate, Mr Huston, was the "proud possessor of a splendid up-to-date limelight lantern and a large number of slides", and parishioners flocked to see *The Land of Pyramids* and other exotic scenes of the world projected onto the wall of the Day School Hall. Children attended 'frolics' and vied for prizes for the best-dressed doll. Bazaars were held in the Institute and continued into the evening with dancing. Garden Parties and Continentals were popular ways of raising money for specific items. The Continental seems to have been the

forerunner of today's Cocktail Party, often held in candle-lit gardens with dancing to music supplied by a string quartet. Concerts were always popular, as were tableaux, charades and plays.

Dramatic Societies

During the Second World War, in an effort to boost morale and bring some enjoyment into the lives of families affected by the conflict, a Parish Dramatic Society was formed in 1940. The instigator was Mr T.H. Lane, a Lay Reader, "who had recently come from St Bartholomew's, Norwood, where he was responsible for a similar Society". He was assisted by his son Allan, and later by Ray – both were producers and both were "Repertory members of experience". When Mr Lane (Sr) died in 1942 it was recorded that: "The young people of the Dramatic Society and the Sunday School have lost an inspiring leader and helpful advisor."

Concerts and plays were given, with the proceeds going to assist the Sunday School, St Michael's Restoration Fund, St Wilfrid's New Vestry Fund, for renovations to the kitchen in the old Parish Hall, and a Diocesan Fund for an Old Folk's Home. In some of its productions the Dramatic Society was assisted by "our local Netherby orchestra, composed of a few of our own young people".

In March 1964 a meeting was called to discuss the formation of a Drama Club within the Parish. This followed the production of an innovative Nativity Tableau in five acts held under spotlights in front of St Michael's. It had been produced by Myrith Barr, who had had "long experience with the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of S.A.", with the scenery and lighting in the hands of Rodney Horner and Ainslie Gaunt.

The new Drama Group not only hoped to produce plays, but also to present "lectures on make-up, lighting and various other aspects of this art". It was to be for all age groups – age being "no barrier to enjoying the fellowship offered". By July it had "gone into recess".

One of the young people who "caught the theatre bug" at that time was Rob Brookman (Archdeacon Clappett's great-grandson) who went on to become one of Australia's leading theatrical entrepreneurs.

Fellowship for Missionary & Outreach Projects

Strong bonds of friendship and fellowship have developed over the years through informal social functions. Many of these have had a serious side, in that they have also been fundraisers for Missionary and Outreach projects. For several years they assisted the Parish of Whyalla, then in 2001 a 'mid-winter' dinner in the Hall raised nearly \$900 to help support Drs Mary and Owen Lewis when they returned to Nepal as missionaries to help train local doctors as General Practitioners.

Co-ordinating the Social Programme

[Compiled by Gordon Hervey, the Social Co-ordinator.]

Around 1990 I took on the task of arranging a social programme each year to strengthen the bonds of fellowship amongst parishioners (Figs 15-21 and 15-22). A few of us formed an 'ad hoc committee' at the start of each year and drafted a programme outline. In 2001 we still operate

this way, attempting to cater in the programme for a range of ages and circumstances – parents with young children, middle-aged parishioners and elderly people who may suffer from limited mobility. Certain activities are popular and are repeated, usually every second year, in an attempt to retain some element of freshness.

In the early 1990s we held a Barn Dance each year in the Urrbrae Agricultural High School Hall. Parishioners ranging in ages from 8 to 80 years dressed in cowboy/girl outfits and joined in square-dancing to music provided by a 'bush band'. On one such occasion Bishop Lionel Renfrey and Mrs Renfrey were active and enthusiastic participants.

During the period when our Link Parish was Whyalla (most of the 1990s), the social activity proceeds averaged around \$1,000 per year and the major part of this was given to Whyalla to assist them with their significant needs.

Wine-bottlings, an open-garden afternoon and quiz nights have been popular inclusions in the social programmes; as have Easter BBQ's at the Bungeys', and New Year's Eve parties in various homes.

During the last six years mid-winter dinners have been popular on the social calendar as a way of raising money for Outreach projects. These have alternated between Progressive Dinners (the first in 1996 involving courses within parishioners' homes); to 'theme' dinners held in the Parish Hall, such as 'Yuletide' in 1997, 'Deck of Cards' in 1999 (Fig. 15-23) and 'As Time Goes By' in 2001. The social calendar usually includes at least three Occasional Dinners each year held in nearby hotels, eg. the Edinburgh, and more recently at the Earl of Leicester, Parkside. These are not fundraising events.

Wine tastings in the Parish Hall, usually held in October/November on alternate years, have been very popular. These have been hosted by winemaker Geoff Weaver who, in his masterly way educates us in wine appreciation using particular themes, such as value-for-money wines, wines from a particular region, and comparisons between traditional reds and whites with newer emerging varieties. We have also enjoyed visits to his vineyard at Lenswood in the Adelaide Hills, where, on one occasion, Fr Andrew blessed new land being put under cultivation.

Beach picnics and picnics in Belair National Park and the Adelaide Hills have catered for a wide age range in the Parish. Visits to the Henshall's farm, Warrawong Sanctuary and Monarto Zoo have provided convivial family-centred opportunities. A Port River Sunday Afternoon Luncheon Cruise was typical of enjoyable activities arranged for all people, including those with limited mobility.

Theatre evenings, generally one per year, have catered for an interested sector of the Parish. These have included plays by the Burnside Players, Theatre '62 and groups performing at the Festival Theatre.

In recent years 'Save the Bush Day' has become an annual event (Fig. 15-24). This has been arranged by Cicely Bungey, and has involved a band of parishioners in removing noxious weeds from the Brownhill Creek region. Bush walks, mostly arranged by Richard Irving (Fig. 15-25), have been popular amongst some of the keen walkers within the Parish – generally one or two per year.

[Gordon Hervey]



Fig. 15-21 Mount Remarkable Parish camp in 1994 included members of our country link parish of Whyalla. The programme was arranged by members of the Mitcham Youth Group. (MPA)



Fig. 15-22 Hulling strawberries for the post-Communion 'Strawberries & Cream' treat in 1994. (L. to R.) Cicely Bungey, Helen & Richard Irving, Colin Bungey, Di Wells and Meg Nicholls. (MPA)



Fig. 15-23 'Deck of Cards' mid-winter dinner in the Parish Hall in 1999. (MPA)

Fig. 15-24 'Save the Bush Day' in September 1992. Volunteers enjoying a rest after removing noxious weeds from Brownhill Creek Recreation Park. (Cicely Bungey)



Fig. 15-25 Richard Irving leading a group of parishioners on a bush walk. (MPA)



Food for Thought & for Outreach

There are 'good cooks' in most parishes, and many of those parishes have, at one time or another, launched a Parish Recipe Book. Mitcham can boast a number of cooks *par excellence*, and few recipe books have been as successful as the one produced by the Parish called *Feasts and Festivals*. It followed on the success of an earlier publication called *Mitcham Morsels*. One of those involved in both books was Meg Nicholls.

'Mitcham Morsels' & 'Feasts and Festivals'

[Contributed by Meg Nicholls]

In 1971 Rebecca MacDonald, wife of the Rector Jim MacDonald, suggested to the women of the Parish that a recipe book would be a good fundraiser for the Mission of the Church, as part of a Parish fête which was being organised.

Favourite recipes were collected from parishioners and these were typed onto waxed stencils by a dedicated team. The pages of the book were then copied off on the electric Gestetner machine housed in the small confines of St Michael's vestry! It was a messy and painstaking job, and such was the anxiety of the Rector that no debt be incurred by the project, that only 500 copies were made. The cover was printed commercially on orange card, and the printer cut and stapled the thick pages of the Gestetner paper. The team bound the spines in black tape and it was ready to be launched for sale as *Mitcham Morsels*. However, there were no copies for sale on the day of the fête, as all 500 had gone as pre-orders!

Eventually, two of the team re-used the stencils to print off another 500 copies. This was an even messier and more long-suffering task, as anyone who has ever tried to re-use a Gestetner stencil will attest! These also sold quickly, and *Mitcham Morsels* soon became a cherished rarity, a sort of legend which newcomers asked for in vain. It was to be ten years before an enterprising newcomer said "Let's do another recipe book then!"

The idea for a second recipe book began in early 1981, just ten years on from *Mitcham Morsels*. The format, based on the feasts and festivals of the Church year, came from an Easter discussion with the Rector, Fr Andrew, over the origin of Hot Cross Buns. This was the genesis of the idea of using recipes for special occasions and explaining the traditions behind those foods. The name of the new book was to be *Feasts and Festivals*.

Little did that small group of people, who set out to raise some money for the Ordination Candidates' Fund and the Mitcham Parish Music Support Group (see page 290), know how that 'mustard seed' of an idea would grow. They learned an enormous amount about their subject, books and publishing, promotion, advertising and marketing, and found all sorts of other benefits, for many people, along the way.

There followed months of collecting recipes from parishioners, researching the traditions and writing about them. The recipes were listed according to the Church year, beginning with Advent. Notes on traditions and customs from around the world, associated with the various seasons and festivals, were added. Some of Adelaide's top local restaurants were canvassed for favourite recipes, and these

were added in a chapter for 'Special Occasions in Town'. It is interesting to note that there are recipes from the now-legendary Cheong Liew, then chef at 'Neddys'.

There were visits to printers to find the right person, the right paper, the correct plasticised cover card, the right spiral binding for ease of opening, and the right price. There was a test baking of recipes, collating material, typing of drafts [on typewriters, not computers!], the making of drawings, endless phone calls to the printer, choice of a cover picture and format, with ever more and more people being drawn in to help. Helen Murray and Meg Nicholls met almost daily as the year wore on, working through the mountain of recipes, traditions, illustrations from Pamela Oborn, and the dreaded index [something sorely missed in *Mitcham Morsels*].

Next came the printing, after a guarantor was found so that the Parish would not incur costs. Helen and Meg had a three-hour drive to the country printer for the proof reading, followed by the arrival by bus of the printed copy for paste-up. The 'Launch' party was planned, incorporating many Parish groups. There was anguish over delays and the books were collected from the bus station just hours before the 'Launch'. But to compensate, there was the excitement of seeing 'it' in print, and the frantic packaging of books in time to fill pre-orders and sales at the 'Launch' in November 1981 (Fig. 15-26).

Finally there was the reception it received, and the enthusiasm with which it was taken up and sold. The first 2,000 copies at \$4 each, were sold out in two months. It was a success beyond the wildest dreams of the committee, and the benefits to the Parish community were manifold. So many people were involved in the production, promotion and sales. There was a proprietary feeling; it was 'our' book, and there was a sense of really being able to contribute to the causes we were aiding. The letter from Archbishop Keith Rayner, thanking the committee for the receipt of a cheque for the first \$1,500 for the Ordination Candidates' Fund, and expressing his delight and surprise at the success of the project, has been proudly preserved, as has the letter from the Music Support Group.

Fig. 15-26
The cover of
*Feasts and
Festivals*.



A dilemma followed. Should we reprint?

Eventually in 1984 there was a reprint of another 1,500 copies. The cover was changed from white to gold, and the price rose to \$6.50. The proceeds were to be for the Music Support Group once more, with a more general cause of the Mission and Social Welfare Work of the Church. This issue did not sell out in the spectacular fashion of the original, but it reached a wider audience over a longer period, and in 2001 there are less than fifty copies remaining, with occasional requests still coming in. During 1986 *Feasts and Festivals* was able to pay \$1,725 for the renewal of rotten organ bellows in the historic Bishop organ at St Michael's. Money was given to aid Lindisfarne School, and new hymn books were purchased for the Parish among other projects.

The recipe book was joined some years later by greeting cards featuring the St Michael's Morris Window – the inspiration and execution of Rosemary Hill-Ling. These have sold steadily over the years and, as with the books, the proceeds have benefited the music of the Parish and the Mission and Outreach of the Church. Blankets for Anglicare was the goal for two years, but money collected now goes into the general Parish account. The target of over \$10,000 for God's work at Mitcham and beyond has surely been reached!

[Meg Nicholls]

* * *

THE SPORTING LIFE

It was generally accepted that a “well-rounded” person should be “healthy in mind, body and soul”, and sporting activities were an integral part of Parish life for most of the 20th century. Some sports, such as football lasted only a few years; others waxed and waned over the decades dependent on enthusiastic organisers and the availability of coaches.

Football

In 1911 it was announced that a St Michael's Football Club for the lads was “getting into shape”. A paddock had been secured just north of the Cottage Homes at Mitcham, the inmates of which were said to “take pleasure in watching the boys racing up and down”. Some “keen contests” were expected in April 1914, but by August the following year the Club had disbanded as most of the players had volunteered to go to the War. Many did not return.

One who did not return was Private Henry Tutt who was killed at the landing on Gallipoli. An obituary in the *Advertiser* noted that he was a member and sidesman of St Michael's Church, and played football for the Church team. He was “exceedingly popular with his comrades” (see page 68).

Cricket

Cricket, the ‘King of Games’, for which Mitcham in Surrey was so famous (see page 2), was introduced to South Australia by the early settlers. Writing in *St Michael's Parish Magazine* in October 1890 Reverend Frederick Samwell said: “Cricket occupies a prominent place in the

amusements which are dear to the hearts of Mitcham.” He was captain of the First Eleven of the Mitcham Cricket Club and had won the prize for bowling the previous season (see Fig. 3-14).

Samwell's successor at St Michael's, Reverend Albert Clampett, was also an enthusiastic cricketer. In 1901 he recorded that the choir boys had formed themselves into a cricket club and played their first match against the boys from St Paul's at Pt Adelaide. His daughter, Mrs Mollie Bowen, remembers that they had a cricket pitch behind the old Rectory where her father coached the team. One of his star pupils was Victor Richardson (grandfather of the Chappel boys). Mollie often accompanied her father to the Adelaide Oval in later years, and invariably Vic would come up and say “Here's my old coach!”.

Writing in the October 1911 edition of the *Parish Messenger*, Clampett advised that he had secured from Robert Barr Smith the right of using the cricket pitch at ‘Torrens Park’. For many years this had been the home ground of the Mitcham Cricket Club, now disbanded, and he was anxious to form a club to be called ‘St Michael's Church Cricket Club’: “All lovers of this noble game are cordially invited... There is a splendid asphalt pitch all ready, and no more delightful spot than the ground at ‘Torrens Park’ could be selected on which to spend a healthy Saturday afternoon.” Ted Smith remembered that pitch well and identified some remnants of it as part of the floor of a garden shed several blocks west of Balogie Road between Fife Avenue and Lochness Avenue.

At the start of the 1915 season Abel Warhurst, the organist, was captain and there was still a strong team in spite of the fact that so many young men had already volunteered for the War. By August 1916 the team had gone into recess.

Three decades passed before it was revived. In August 1947 it was reported that:

The Mitcham Church of England Cricket Club has been formed and has been accepted into the United Church Association. The Club has secured the use of the Urrbrae Agricultural High School ground for practice and for Saturday afternoon matches when not used by the School. It is interesting to note that a team from St Michael's played in the above Association just prior the First Great War of 1914-18. The committee appointed for the 1947-48 season consists of D.B. Crisp (Chairman), N. Robins (Secretary/Treasurer), J. Dibben, K. Mole and M. Doolette. Mr S.C. Neck is the team's coach. The Church of England Men's Society in the Parish is supporting the club and various members of this society will attend matches.

The team played in ‘B’ Grade and had several very successful seasons (see Fig. 6-5). During one match in 1948, under the captaincy of John Dibben, both sides scored over 300 runs: the game was won by our team “with only a few minutes to go before stumps”.

In 1951 it was decided to disband the club and sell all its equipment, which had been purchased new at ‘great expense’ in 1948.

Tennis, Basketball & Other Sporting Club Activities

[Compiled by Jennifer Henshall]

The provision of tennis courts appears to have attracted much discussion, fundraising, manual work and fellowship from 1910 until the sale of the old Parish Hall in 1979. It also appears that, although the courts may have originally been acquired for more senior members of the Parish, the number of members in the tennis team – and after 1953 in the basketball team – seems to be intertwined with the growth or decline of the Young People's Fellowship Group (YPF).

Prior to 1920 the Tennis Club, which had been formed in 1910, played on courts at the rear of St Columba's Hall (then a daughter church of St Michael's). When Hawthorn became a separate parish in 1920 two allotments of land on the northern and eastern boundaries of the St Michael's Day School Hall were purchased. In January an asphalt court was laid on the northern allotment, and St Michael's Tennis Club was formed with Marjorie Pobjoy as Secretary/Treasurer.

By 1931, when Ted Smith was Secretary/Treasurer, new ground with room for three courts was leased in East Parade. The following year the Tennis Club members won the 'B' and 'D' Grade tournaments in the United Church Association.

During the 1940s the young people were still enjoying tennis, but were hampered by lack of funds for resurfacing and providing backstops. It was hoped a Debutante Ball held in 1946 would provide funds for this (see page 91). In 1950, with no suitable courts, the teams played on St Chad's courts for matches and practised on Mr F. Barnett's court. Clive Edwards, Captain/Coach in 1951, led the Club in a very successful season to the semi-finals of the United Church Association.

In 1949 the YPF had begun running fortnightly dances through the winter months to raise funds towards paying for a block of land recently purchased on Princes Road opposite the Hall (Lot 51, see page 234). Repeatedly the subject of finance for courts was raised at Parish Council meetings, and in 1953 they requested permission to use the old court and also to clear Lot 51 and use it for a court. Council advised that finance was not available and it considered that the proposed site on the northern side of the Hall was "unsuitable and advise against money being spent thereon". Several weeks later, obviously impressed by the enthusiasm of the young people, it was resolved that: "Permission be given to the YPF to lay a tennis court on the eastern side of the Hall and/or on Lot 51 Princes Road." A rather paltry sum of £20 was to be donated "to assist their project"!

With no prospect of raising the required funds, the Tennis Club then played for a while on Mr Packham's tennis court at 18 French Street, Netherby, but disbanded in June 1954. However, the young people, especially the girls wishing to play basketball, cleared up the court on the northern side themselves.

I was a member of the first team, which Fay Clarke worked hard to establish. Weeds in the court were a problem, and at one stage bags of salt were obtained from the abattoir to kill them: the girls were horrified when spreading the salt to find that it still contained great lumps



Fig. 15-27 *St Michael's Basketball Team in the early 1950s.*

(L. to R.) Dulcie Clarke, Fay Clarke, Marilyn Builder, Coral Herft, Mary Palmer, Jennifer Dibben, Daphne Herft, Marilyn Bradely.

(Courtesy Fay Robinson, née Clarke)

of meat! In April 1954 it was reported: "The basketball teams have commenced play on the ground on the northern side of the Hall, which has been cleared and roughly graded by the young people themselves."

The first team, because of its wide differences in age and ability, was placed in 'Zd' Grade of the United Church Girls' Basketball Assn, and much to its delight won the Cup for that Grade (Fig. 15-27). The girls enjoyed playing, and with coaching and regular practices improved their skills. Mrs Pegg coached for several years. They also participated with fundraising, such as an Amateur Hour and Concert, and enjoyed social games with the boys from the YPF.

The old shelter shed collapsed in 1955 and Fred Sanders, on behalf of the YPF, again appealed for finance to assist in resurfacing courts and erecting backstops. With the plans for a Parish Fair underway, it was agreed that £120 would be set aside. In August, Margaret and Fred Sanders resigned as leaders of the YPF. They had been leaders during the formation of the Girls' Basketball teams and the reforming of the Tennis Club; had encouraged the YPF in fundraising and Margaret had organised a successful Mannequin Parade in addition to monthly dances.

Without Fred and Margaret Sanders the YPF teams became defunct, and a new group called Parish Sports Club was formed. The £120 from the Fair promised for courts was made available to them.

The push to establish the courts led to extra fundraising, and in June 1956 it was noted that:

The attendance at the two monthly functions held so far has been wonderful (exceeding in each case 220 people) and the enthusiasm shown by the audiences, particularly at the youth concert, has been amazing. Besides the financial benefit ... families from all parts of the Parish are learning to know each other.

Clive Edwards was Chairman at this time, and Col his wife was Secretary. By September it was reported that two tennis/basketball courts would be laid in November, and that half the cost was in hand. Other fundraising for 1956 included a film evening, children's frolic, bridge evening, Parish social and a pantomime. The YPF ran bottle drives as well.

By November 1956 work on the two courts was at last underway. George Prideaux gave many hours of practical assistance in the building of the tennis backstops, which were made from reject tubing. An Amateur Hour organised by the youth of the Parish in March 1957, and a Debutante Ball in the Unley Town Hall on 1st May, provided funds to pay off the final debt for the courts.

The Mitcham Parish Sports Club went into recess after a few years, but the Tennis Club and the Basketball Club continued to operate individually. Rod Horner, Secretary of the Tennis Club in 1963, reported that, at twenty-one, he was the oldest of the forty members, and that Junior Supervisors were needed. Clive Edwards and Raymond Baxendale offered tennis coaching at the Hall in 1964 and 1965. The aim at that time was to field four Senior teams, two Junior Girls' teams and one Junior Boys' team. Very little is reported after this until 1975.

[Jennifer Henshall]

Mitcham Anglican Tennis Club

[Wanda McDougall compiled the following notes in 1997.]

In August 1975 a meeting was called by John Medley at his home. He was interested in starting his two sons, Peter and Michael, in some tennis – competitive or social. He contacted a number of families at that time, including my own, and the Club then re-started with mainly young people in their teens and twenties. Previously the Club, as I remember it, consisted of slightly older people such as the Edwards brothers, Alan Lee and Richard Portus. Some moved away and new members were needed. Unfortunately there do not seem to be any Minute Books for this period.

I took over as Treasurer about 1976, soon after Fr Andrew arrived in the Parish. From that date I was involved with collecting fees, buying balls, organising teams and courts etc. After the Hall and courts were sold we played at Mitcham Girls' High School, Urrbrae, Mercedes and Unley High School at various times. My term would have finished around 1985. Some of the people involved during those ten years included the Medleys, Retallacks, Holyoakes, Chalmers, Bradleys, Mockridges, Jane Sorrell, Jane Nicholls (the latter two acting as Office bearers at one stage) and Judi Remilton. Then of course there was Elizabeth Mackinnon who coached the Juniors for many years before handing over to Diana Bungey. When Di left to teach in the country Ann Retallack took over at short notice.

They were busy, but happy, times. What a blessing, however, not to have to answer the telephone on a Friday night – knowing someone was 'ailing' and a substitute had to be found for the match next day.

[Wanda McDougall, 1997]

[Another parishioner who was involved with the Mitcham Anglican Tennis Club was Gordon Hervey who compiled these notes in November 1997 as he prepared to step down after co-ordinating the tennis teams for ten years.]

I note that the minute book dates back to 1975. My own links with the Club began in 1982 when I was aged around forty-three. I had played tennis in my late teens and early twenties for various clubs and found that my Saturday afternoons were taken up with family matters – young children and house renovations. In 1982 I was called upon to act as a fill-in, and seemed to be required from then until now!

A glance at the minute book reveals names well-known in the Parish. As with most church tennis clubs, some members are regular worshippers, while others have only tenuous links with the Church. I believe that this is part of the Church's Outreach into the community.

Following the sale of the old Parish Hall our 'home' courts subsequently moved to Mercedes College, then to Mitcham Girls High School and, when we discovered that St Columba's Tennis Club was disbanding, to Walford on Unley Road. These are our current courts and are the envy of many other clubs.

I have taken on the task of organising the team for approximately the last ten years. Around the middle of last year it appeared that we would not have sufficient players to enter a team. I happened at that time to be attending a series of ecumenical Bible studies at the Mitcham Baptist Church. I suggested to several of the young people from the Baptist Church that they might like to join with us. As a result, we became the Mitcham Anglican/Baptist Tennis Club and went on to win the Division 5 premiership for 1996-97. The United Church Tennis Association is in decline. I recall that about ten or fifteen years ago there were approximately fifteen divisions – now there are only six. I discovered that the Mitcham Uniting Church Tennis team was about to disband due to insufficient players, and invited their remnants to join with us under the banner of Mitcham Village Churches Tennis Team (this name seemed to have an historical ring to it!). Although I am presently handing over the reins to younger players and offering my services as a part-time player, I can report that the Mitcham Village Team is in Division 3 this year and has won three out of its first four matches.

[Gordon Hervey, 1997]

Netball

In 1973 the St Michael's netball team won the premiership competition for their grade (Fig. 15-28). However, by early 1976 the name had changed and it was noted that the younger girls (10 to 12 years) of the St Michael's Netball Club practised on the Hall courts on Tuesdays, whilst the older ones did so on Thursdays. They were members of the United Church Netball Association.

By 1980 they were fielding "six teams in the Winter Association with just over fifty girls taking part in the competitions". By then the old Parish Hall and its courts had been sold and the Club supervisor, Dorothy Patterson, advised that they would be able to use courts at Mitcham Primary and Unley High Schools. The Club continued until 1985, when a note in the *Pew Bulletin* of 3rd November advised that:

Following its AGM on Monday the Club has gone into recess. The lives of hundreds of girls have been influenced for good through the Club over many years. A particular vote of thanks was paid to Frank Holyoake, the Hon. Treasurer, at whose instigation the balance of funds (\$600) was handed over to Parish Council after a gift of \$300 had been made to Lindisfarne School for sports equipment.

The St Michael's Netball Club was wound up and the balance of \$666.01 paid into Parish funds in April 1986. It was used to help cover the cost of paving the drive alongside the new Parish Hall from Church Road.

One parishioner who took “more than a passing interest” in the Club was Joan Horner, who was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for services to netball and the community in 1993 (see Fig. 13-16). However, Joan's involvement was at a State level – not with the United Church Netball Association – and she was made a life member of the S.A. Netball Association in 1975, and of the Contax Club (which she helped form) in 1979.⁵

* * *

The third tenet of parish life, the education and protection of the young, is the subject of the next chapter.



Fig. 15-28 *St Michael's Netball Team, winners of the 1973 premiership.*
(L. to R. standing) Rosy Bungey (captain), Cathy McDougall, Jane Nicholls, Cassie Harbutt, Meredith Retallack. (Seated) Stephanie Ziegler, Andrea Thain, Jacinta South.
(Courtesy Rosy Brookes, née Bungey)