

Chapter 6

THE PEARMAN ERA: 1939–1962

DURING the final years of Archdeacon Albert Clampett's long incumbency at Mitcham the misery of the Great Depression had begun to lift. With increasing employment came hope – hope for a brighter future filled with peace and prosperity. But this was not to be: during the short interregnum between Clampett's retirement and the induction of a new Rector the world was again plunged into war. It was ironic that after nearly a decade of suffering and deprivation brought on by the Great Depression it was to be the Second World War that finally revived the economy and led to a period of rapid industrial expansion and full employment.

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In South Australia it could be said that this revival began with the election of Thomas Playford (later Sir Thomas) as Liberal Premier and Treasurer of the State, a position he held for over twenty-six years – a record term for any Australian or, for that matter, any British Commonwealth leader. Although a cherry orchardist at Norton Summit in the Adelaide Hills his family's roots had been planted in Mitcham. His great-grandfather, Reverend Thomas Playford, was one of the earliest settlers in the Village. His grandfather, Senator Thomas Playford, had twice been Premier of South Australia, was one of the founding fathers of Federation and a member of the first Commonwealth Parliament.

From a rural-based economy in 1939 Playford oversaw the rapid development of secondary industries to cater for 'The War Effort', and under his guidance this momentum continued into the post-war era. With the lifting of building restrictions and the mass influx of immigrants from war-torn Europe in the early 1950s came an unprecedented building boom: the Mannum–Adelaide pipeline brought much-needed water to supplement the strain on metropolitan reservoirs, the satellite town of Elizabeth was built and an airport at West Beach opened. In 1960 the Thomas Playford Power Station at Port Augusta came on line.

Playford's biographer, Stewart Cockburn, wrote that he "presided over a period of unprecedented economic growth and prosperity which he master-minded and directed with a personal authority and flair unmatched in the previous history of this State". It was his integrity in financial matters "which was a major factor in keeping South Australian public life virtually free from corruption and debt during his long regime".¹

This, then, was the climate in which the incumbency of Reverend Reginald Henry Pearman (Fig. 6-1) took place at Mitcham. The two eras are inextricably interwoven. Playford's long term in Office of 26 years and 126 days began on 5th November 1938 and closed on 10th March

1965. Pearman was Rector of St Michael's and St Wilfrid's for 22 years and 138 days, from 15th November 1939 to 1st April 1962.

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The Pearman era can be divided into three distinct periods. Firstly, the War years from 1939 to 1945 with all the sorrow, suffering and deprivation it brought to so many of his parishioners. This was followed by over a decade of good times with steady growth in congregation numbers, many events to be celebrated, a resurgence in the social life of the Church and of sporting activities for the youth of the Parish. But the final four years proved to be ones overshadowed by "concentrated resentment and bitterness" between certain groups within the Parish leading to the abolition of the Central Council of the Parish of Mitcham in 1959. Had it not been for a dire shortage of clergymen at that time St Wilfrid's may well have broken away and formed a separate parish. This was a low point in the history of the Parish and it took many years for the scars of the 'them-and-us' period to heal.

WARTIME IN MITCHAM: 1939–1945

For the citizens of Mitcham it was a case of *déjà vu* – the First World War revisited – as its quiet, leafy suburbs once again reverberated to the sound of marching feet and military vehicles. Although the old Mitcham Camp site had been transformed into 'The Garden Suburb' of Colonel Light Gardens, many other areas within the District Council of Mitcham were utilised for training purposes: a bank of searchlights and a camp were established at Urrbrae, at Clapham a gas training camp was situated south of Boothby Street and at Pasadena the bare hillsides were used for dig-ins and skirmish practice. The old railway viaduct concrete pillars at Eden Hills became targets for explosives practice and the Sleeps Hill tunnels were used to store State treasures from the Art Gallery and other Government Departments.²

In April 1942 millions of civilian identity cards were issued, restrictions placed on building and travel and the prices of half-a-million goods and services were controlled. By mid-year ration books had been issued for the purchase of clothing, tea and sugar, followed later by butter and meat. Some of these restrictions were not lifted until 1950. Petrol rationing, which had been instituted in October 1940, was not ended until 6th June 1949.

Having set the scene for the wartime years in Mitcham, our 'local correspondent' continues the story of Parish life during the Pearman era.

Monday, 15th April 1940

My dear Elizabeth,

Our new Rector, Reginald Henry Pearman, was born in England in 1896. His father died when he was only four years old and in 1911 Reg and his mother migrated to Australia. It seems that Adelaide was chosen because they could stay with his mother's sister and her husband who ran a greengrocery shop at Prospect. Reginald Pearman trained as a carpenter (and is still a skilled craftsman, so I am told) before volunteering for the A.I.F. as a signaller when the First World War broke out in 1914. On the 11th August 1918 he won the Military Medal for bravery during the Battle of the Somme at Lihons in France. He was wounded by shrapnel which badly scarred his body and destroyed his left eye. It could not be removed and is the cause of constant headaches. He now wears a glass eye.³

Before the War he had met Winifred Hemsley, a fellow parishioner at St Cuthbert's, Prospect, and they became engaged when he returned. He was influenced to enter the ministry by the Rector, Reverend 'Johnny' Moyse, a prominent clergyman who is now Bishop of Armidale. They were engaged for about five years whilst he studied at St Barnabas' Theological College and married when he was ordained in 1925. Since then he has been a curate at Mt Gambier (1924–27), Priest-in-Charge of the Pinnaroo Mission (1927–30), Rector of Auburn (1930–33), Rector of Maitland (1933–35) and, until recently, Rector of St Paul's at Naracoorte. His institution and induction as Rector of St Michael's, Mitcham, with St Wilfrid's, Torrens Park, took place at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, 15th November 1939 in the presence of Bishop Nutter Thomas and fifteen members of the clergy.

Reg and Win have only the one child, a son called John, who was born in 1932. He is a student at our Parish Day School which is still in the care of the Headteacher, Miss Lily White.

I must say that our new man has a lovely tenor voice and is very musical. He chooses all the music and hymns and conducts choir practice every Friday night. Like Archdeacon Clappett he uses a turned-wooden spindle from an old chair as a baton.⁴

Yesterday after Evensong he presided over his first Annual Vestry at St Michael's and has instigated some new methods of running the Parish. Rather than only the Wardens having the power to act on financial matters, we now have a Parish Council comprising the Rector and Wardens ex officio plus four others. This came about at the request of St Wilfrid's who passed the following motion at their Vestry in May last year: "That St Michael's Church be asked to form a Parish Council on the lines of those formed by this Church, so that the two Churches can take concerted action on Parish matters."

With Italy now entering the War on the Axis side, the Rector is exhorting us to pray for peace every day and has offered his services as an Army chaplain ...

21st July 1941

... As we anticipated the Rector has been called up as a part-time Army chaplain. He kindly offered to refund part of his stipend whilst on military duties which led the

Fig. 6-2

Padre

R.H. Pearman.

(Courtesy

John Pearman)



St Wilfrid's Parish Council to send a letter to the Senior Chaplain in May asking him:

To consider giving our Rector a little relief from camp duty, which we understand may be more frequent in the future, as he has not been very long in the Parish and has not yet had time to visit all his parishioners. The request is not made with the idea of avoiding our duty towards the Camps, but we feel that our Parish is being unduly handicapped while other Parishes are not bearing their share.

Reg is very proud of his own War service between 1914 and 1918 and well aware of the traumas being faced on the battlefields of Europe in this present conflict. I feel he is an ideal man for the job of chaplain. He joked the other day about his rapid rise through the ranks from a humble private in the First World War to that of Captain Pearman – the Padre [Fig. 6-2].⁵

During the four-month interregnum much of the day-to-day running of the Parish was in the hands of our catechist, Lionel Renfrey, who did a sterling job. He was ordained at the end of last year. We now have another catechist by the name of Reg Pettit who is also a student at St Barnabas' College.

There was a marked drop in Parish finances this year leading the Rector to mention the possibility of selling portion of the Rectory land and using the proceeds for much-needed repairs to the buildings. When the matter was looked into by the Wardens it was discovered that all the previous Trustees of the Rectory property died years ago. They were, literally, some of the 'Founding Fathers' of St Michael's: the Hon. Arthur Blyth, Alfred Hardy, Richard Hicks, James William Lewis and Henry Taylor. The original indenture was dated 30th day of October 1860! Needless to say a Special Vestry was held to elect new Trustees.

At the Easter Vestry Ted Smith explained to us that in the past St Michael's had borne the entire cost of maintenance of the Rectory and also of the Parish Hall. However, following a meeting of the Central Council, the management of the Hall has now been entrusted to a joint committee representing both Churches. This seems much more equitable. Furthermore the Wardens of St Wilfrid's have generously offered to assist with general Parish expenses...

25 January 1942

... The debt on St Wilfrid's Church has been repaid and preparations are well in hand for the consecration of the building on 1st February. Our new bishop, the Right Reverend Bryan Robin, will officiate and a large crowd is expected to attend. Only those with special admission tickets will be seated in the Church, and the overflow in a large marquee erected to the east of the building. The congregation of St Wilfrid's has worked extremely hard to pay off the debt on the building, which it has accomplished within eight years. A marvellous achievement!

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Until the end of 1941 the War was 'over there' – in Europe – but all that changed when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour on 7th December. In a New Year message to the nation the Australian Prime Minister, John Curtin, said: "...the war with Japan is not a phase of the struggle with the Axis Powers, but a new war... Australia must go on a war footing." He warned that 1942 would impose supreme tests ranging from "resistance to invasion to the deprivation of more and more amenities". Within weeks Singapore had fallen and on 19th February 1942 the first Japanese bombs rained down on Darwin killing over 240 people. In the north of Queensland consideration was being given to a scorched-earth policy, refugees were streaming south and plans were drawn up to halt an invasion.⁶

Although the immediate threat was not so great in the south of the continent, air-raid precautions (A.R.P.) were swiftly put in place. Cellars were converted into air-raid shelters and slit trenches dug in parks, schools and private gardens. Buildings were reinforced and the glass in windows taped and blacked-out at night. Street lights were dimmed or turned off and car lights hooded and reduced to a pale pool of light immediately in front of the vehicle. Men between the ages of sixteen and sixty who were not on active service were required to act as air-raid wardens to ensure that these precautions were carried out. Fire drill was practised regularly, and every home was required to keep a fire bucket, stirrup-pump and bomb rake. Air-raid sirens were placed in strategic positions and evacuation practices were regular events.⁷

Apart from their Rector being called-up as an Army chaplain, the most obvious and immediate effect on the lives of parishioners was the establishment of the R.A.A.F. No.4 Embarkation Depot (No.4 E.D.) at Scotch College on 14th October 1942. Over the next fifteen months some 5,000 airmen passed through No.4 E.D. Some remained for just a few days in transit, others for weeks as they awaited a new posting. With a resident staff of ninety, plus up to 500 aircrew at any one time living in tents in the grounds, many local women once again found themselves cooking and cleaning up at 'Torrens Park House' as part of 'The War Effort'.⁸

For decades Archdeacon Clampett and others had lobbied politicians to allow Religious Instruction (R.I.) in State schools. By 1941 the State Government had finally relented, but the ramifications of the manpower, training and talents required had not been thought through

by Church groups. About one-third of all children came from nominally Church of England homes, and the clergy suddenly found themselves committed to teaching four or five days a week. This resulted in a drop in time available for parochial work, particularly home visiting. For Padre Pearman there was the extra burden of spending one month in every quarter on chaplain's duty at Woodside Camp.

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16th June 1942

Dear Elizabeth,

Since the first raids on Darwin in February our lives have changed dramatically. Air-raid precautions are in place and our Parish Hall has been taken over as the local A.R.P. headquarters. Yesterday the rationing of clothing began. We have been told that tea and sugar will also be rationed within weeks.

Earlier in the year Mr John Tudor resigned the position of organist and recommended that his workmate, Mr Fred Harman, be appointed in his stead. Fred, who has a fine bass voice, learnt to play the organ at St Chad's, Fullarton, and what he lacks in talent he certainly compensates with enthusiasm and dedication. We also have a new caretaker, a widow by the name of Mrs Kitty Ogden, who has done much to improve the appearance of the Church. She and Mrs Amy Gamlen, the sacristan, make a great team and both sing in the choir [Fig. 6-3].⁹

4th August 1943

... The Bishop has not appointed a catechist to this Parish for the forthcoming year. Owing to the heavy military duties conducted by the Rector this non-appointment will make it very difficult for him to carry out his Parish work. A letter of protest has been sent to the Bishop requesting that, if there are any further appointments during the year, our Parish claim will receive attention.

With so many military lorries travelling between the various camps in the district all our roads are in a state of disrepair. Some of our parishioners who live in Netherby have complained about the damage to their gardens and

Fig. 6-3 *St Michael's choir c.1941. (Back row L. to R.) ??, ??, Hazel Bristow, Amy Gamlen, John Tudor (organist), Kitty Ogden, ??, John Crisp. (Front row) Maurice Neck, Elsie Godat, ?? Tudor, Beth Tudor, Valmai Smith. (Courtesy Ruth Dibben)*



footpaths caused by horses being driven to and from the Military Camp at Urrbrae. They are transferred daily from the Camp to a property in the vicinity of Springfield and because they are allowed to gallop along Claremont Avenue the footpath has become a quagmire.¹⁰

15th May 1944

... Life in Mitcham is gradually returning to some semblance of normality since the R.A.A.F. vacated Scotch College in January. No.4 E.D. moved to nearby Springbank and the students and staff returned to the School in mid-February.

At the Annual Vestry last night it was reported that, for the first time in several years, there was a credit balance. However, this was partly due to the fact that during the time the Rector was in camp he was paid only half stipend. We are still without a catechist, although Mr Pettit (who is now a curate at St Columba's) has assisted us occasionally over the past year as a 'visiting deacon'.

Our new organist, Fred Harman, has added to his duties that of choir master when the Rector is in camp. One Sunday evening recently, when the Lay Reader failed to arrive, Fred also filled in for him, moving to-and-fro from prayer desk to organ stool – but did not attempt a sermon! He is busy raising funds in the hope of one day installing electric power to the organ. His wife, Jessie, works diligently making jewellery out of bread dough which she sells to parishioners and friends.¹¹

A letter of appreciation is to be sent to the Wardens of St Wilfrid's for their generous gesture of goodwill towards the Mother Church in having the outside woodwork of the Rectory painted at their expense. Not only have the parishioners of St Wilfrid's paid off the debt on their building, but they also contribute about 25% of their total income to Overseas and local missions – a figure that makes us feel quite ashamed!

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The 6th June 1944 – 'D-Day' – marked the turning point of the Second World War after nearly five years of bloody conflict. Two days later Padre Pearman wrote in the St Michael's Vestry Book: "Liberation of Europe began with the invasion of France on 6th June 1944. The King called the Empire to Prayer." Special prayers were said – as they were every day – for the sixty-four parishioners, including three women, from Mitcham who were on active service.

Within a year Hitler and the Axis powers had been defeated and on 8th May 1945 the victory in Europe – 'V-E Day' – was celebrated with great jubilation. For the people of Australia and the Pacific region it was to be another three months before real peace was assured with the surrender of Japan on 15th August. This occurred nine days after the Americans dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, and six days after a second bomb devastated the city of Nagasaki.

Two weeks before 'V-E Day' members of the St Wilfrid's Annual Vestry were already discussing "the desirability of accumulating funds for a new vestry as a post-war venture in view of anticipated post-war expansion in the district".

POST-WAR PROGRESS & PROSPERITY

As thousands of immigrants from war-torn England and Europe poured into South Australia work was waiting for them on the numerous projects being initiated by the Playford Government. On arrival they were accommodated in Migrant Hostels, but with the lifting of restrictions on construction materials came a building boom that created numerous new suburbs. This was "the anticipated post-war expansion" predicted at the 1944 St Wilfrid's Vestry. Between 1939 and 1953 the population of the City of Mitcham increased from 20,000 to 35,000.¹²

As the population increased so too did the work of the clergy. As well as trying to keep in touch with existing parishioners, there were new homes to be visited seeking out recent arrivals who may be Anglican. The number of children in State schools requiring R.I. escalated dramatically and soon reached the point where it became too much for Reverend Reg Pearman to handle alone.

Running parallel with this increase in new families was the revival and growth of traditional groups, such as the Mothers' Union (M.U.), Ladies Guild and Church of England Men's Society (C.E.M.S.). It also saw the formation of a range of new social and sporting groups, particularly for the young people. There were activities to suit every member of the family with Parish events frequently occupying a family's entire weekend. For many the Church was the centre of their social life as well as their spiritual life. Television, Rock-and-Roll, and The Beatles had not yet arrived and, although the first Holden rolled off the assembly line at Woodville in 1948, families with cars were still the exception rather than the rule.

It was also a period filled with celebrations: in 1946 the Jubilee of the Mitcham Mothers' Union, in 1947 the centenary of the formation of the Diocese of Adelaide and in 1948 special services to commemorate the centenary of the laying of the foundation stone of St Michael's. The high point was reached four years later when great festivities were held in October 1952 to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the first service held in St Michael's. In the same month many young people from the Parish joined thousands of other young Anglicans from around the Diocese in a stirring 'Mission to Youth' which inspired a whole generation. In May 1953 celebrations were held for the centenary of Mitcham Council and in 1954 Adelaide gave an enthusiastic welcome to the young Queen Elizabeth and her consort, Prince Philip, on their first Royal Visit to Australia.

The events of the late 1940s and early 1950s are remembered with great nostalgia by our scribe.

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11th October 1946

Dear Elizabeth,

The past few weeks seem to have been ones of non-stop entertainment culminating in the St Michael's Patronal Festival Debutante Ball held last night in the Mitcham Institute [Fig. 6-4]. A crowd of 300 packed the hall for this brilliant social function – the first of its kind for so many years! Mrs Gore-Johnson (who teaches ballroom



Fig. 6-4
*St Michael's
 Patronal Festival
 Debutante Ball
 held in the
 Mitcham Institute
 on 10th October
 1946.*
 (Courtesy
 Ruth Dibben)

dancing at the Institute) gave generously of her time to train the nineteen debutantes and their partners. They were presented to the Bishop's wife, Mrs B.P. Robin. In spite of the fact that clothing is still rationed the girls and their families managed to scrape together enough coupons to buy material and trimmings to make their charming long white ball gowns.¹³

On the nights of 10th and 11th September the younger members of the St Michael's Dramatic Society presented three plays in the Parish Hall to large and appreciative audiences. They were produced by Messrs Alan and Raymond Lane, both of whom are Repertory players of repute, and a high standard of acting was seen. Amongst the cast were Ruth Smith (who was one of the debutantes) and John Dibben (her partner at the Ball), and I suspect that a romance may be in the air!

Amongst all these festivities we also found time to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of a M.U. branch in Mitcham. The men folk have not been neglected, and after many years in recess the C.E.M.S. has been reformed in this Parish and about twenty men were admitted as members.

After nearly three years on his own in this large Parish, the Rector is very pleased to have another catechist to assist him. Mr Gordon Hewitson was appointed at the beginning of March and brings with him a charming wife. He served in the Navy during the War and upon discharge took up a position as a master at St Peter's College. Now he is at St Barnabas' College continuing his studies for the ministry. On one afternoon a week Mr Hewitson will knock on doors seeking for new Church families. He will begin with Galway Estate and will then visit Lower Mitcham.¹⁴

The people of Britain are very much in our thoughts and prayers, and there have been special collections to assist with the rebuilding of your English churches which were damaged during bombing raids. Although many essentials, such as meat, butter, tea and sugar are still rationed here, nobody begrudges donating goods for the 'Food for Britain' parcels. The theme of our recent

Patronal Festival was 'Flowers and a Gift for Britain'. After the service the flowers were taken to the sick and aged in the Parish and to patients in the Home for Incurables. For some two or three years now our M.U. branch has been regularly sending parcels to the Parish of St Michael in Bristol, so after the service they packed fifty 11 lb food parcels which were dispatched to England. They contained dripping, jelly powders, dried fruit, dried milk and corned beef ...

18th December 1947

... Keep your ears and eyes open for a film depicting the "everyday life of the average Australian citizen" shown under the title of *Christmas Under the Sun*. This was filmed in Colonel Light Gardens last December for the Department of Immigration. About two dozen families were chosen to appear in the film which has been sent to the United Kingdom so that prospective emigrants can see for themselves what suburban family life is really like in Australia.¹⁵

On the 1st July the District of Mitcham became a City, which entitles us to have our own City of Mitcham Coat of Arms. The Mayor, Mr W. A. Norman, who has taken a great interest in the matter submitted a design to the Council at its November meeting. It incorporates all the principal features of the City and is very similar to the one used in Mitcham in Surrey on which it appears to be based.¹⁶

With the dreadful infantile paralysis epidemic becoming worse the Minister for Education announced that all school break-up functions this year are to be cancelled or held in the open air. At the St Michael's Day School End-of-Year prize-giving, the Rector announced the resignation of both the Headmistress, Miss White, and her assistant, Mrs E.M. Grigg. Miss Lily White is an 'institution': she has been Headmistress for twenty years! Her record has been one of success and faithful service and many of her pupils have won scholarships that have gained them entry to the best schools and colleges in this State.

Saturday, 17th April 1948

... We have just returned home after visiting friends at Glenelg and were shocked at the damage the area sustained when fierce storms lashed the coast last Sunday. They caused the almost complete destruction of the jetty. Living as we do in the valley of the Brownhill Creek, we are well protected from such storms which have very little effect on us.

In January we lost our catechist, Mr Hewitson, who is now curate at St Margaret's at Woodville. The services of a deaconess, Miss Mildred Kathleen Magarey, were offered to the Mitcham Parish. St Michael's was not interested in her appointment, but the Wardens of St Wilfrid's suggested that if her activities were confined to their end of the Parish they would accept full responsibility for her stipend of some £150 p.a. She began her duties in February for an initial period of twelve months and has already commenced an infant Sunday School at Wattle Avenue with eleven little ones on the roll.

I must confess that I was not familiar with the role of a deaconess, but on enquiring further learnt that it is an ancient order whose members are admitted by the laying on of hands by a bishop. Their function is to teach the young, to nurse the sick, to minister in spiritual things to women and, if permitted by the bishop, to read the Office in Church. Deaconess Magarey, Th.L., was ordained in 1926 and has excellent credentials. As well as working in various parishes, she has been the Organising Secretary of the Church of England Relief Fund, and M.U. Worker in the Diocese of Bunbury in Western Australia. She lives in Ashbourne Avenue, Kingswood, with her sisters the Misses Kathleen and Helen Magarey.¹⁷

With a record number of children enrolled in the Sunday School Kindergarten the decision was made by the Joint Council to purchase a block of land (known as Lot 51) on Princes Road almost opposite the Parish Hall with a view to one day building a separate Infants' School on the site, or it could be used for some other Parish purpose such as a new Rectory. The cost of £250 to purchase Lot 51 has been met partly by a bequest and partly by a loan from B.H.M.S. for five years for which the two Churches have accepted equal responsibility. The Rector is also consulting with the B.H.M.S. as to the desirability of purchasing a block of land at Springbank for future Church purposes to cater for the increasing numbers of immigrants settling in that area...

Monday, 4th October 1948

... During the past week or so we have been attending one celebration after another! Yesterday was our ninety-sixth Patronal Festival, and also the centenary of the laying of the foundation stone of St Michael's on Saturday, 30th September 1848. Nobody seems to know exactly where this stone is situated. Perhaps it became overlaid in the course of subsequent structural alterations. One of our leading churchmen, Dean Jose, says it was not the custom in the early days of the Colony to engrave or mark the foundation stones of public buildings

This has also been a memorable week for Mitcham School, with scholars, teachers, parents and old scholars

uniting in whole-hearted celebrations of the School's centenary. At the Open Day Mr Norman, who has devoted much time delving into the history of Mitcham, dropped a 'bomb shell'. He presented proof that it has been in existence since at least 24th September 1847, therefore the school was celebrating its 101st birthday – not its centenary!¹⁸

2nd August 1949

... In his Annual Report this year the Rector noted that much progress has been made by the various Parish groups, in particular the Sunday School and the Young People's Fellowship. The Y.P.F. is a dynamic group with a wide range of functions planned to meet all tastes. These include debates, participating in the annual hike and rally of the Fellowship of Christ the King, organising a social and dance for eighty young people (including visitors from neighbouring parishes) and discussions on a wide range of subjects.

The C.E.M.S. and M.U. are flourishing, also the Ladies' Guild which does a marvellous job raising money for various projects. We continue to send food parcels to Britain and another thirty-two were dispatched to Bristol recently.

At the Annual Vestry last year Mrs Pearman intimated she would like to start a branch of the Fellowship of Marriage (F.O.M.), an off-shoot of M.U. It is intended for young wives – particularly those from other countries who married Australian servicemen during the War. Virtually no houses were built during the War years, and it will be some time before building restriction are lifted sufficiently to cater for all these new families. In many cases it is the husband's family who has had to make room for them, often with a baby as well. We now have the nucleus of a dedicated band who plan to meet regularly in the Parish Hall. By the end of the year we hope to have at least twenty members.¹⁹

The sporting organisations within the Parish are doing very well. Our St Michael's cricketers had a very successful year finishing second in the Association, and will play 'A' Grade next season [Fig. 6-5]. The Tennis

Fig. 6-5 *Mitcham Church of England Cricket Club, 'The M.C.C.', 1949. (Back row L. to R.) Don Grigg, Don Robins, Bev Wilson, Andy Kinnear, Nicol Robins, Harold Levick, Bob Norwerk, John Dibben. (Front row) Maurice Neck, Jack Christianson, Don Hicks, Ken Christianson, Colin Christianson. (Courtesy John Dibben)*



Club is also thriving, and the Rector is making enquiries as to the possibility of purchasing one of two vacant blocks of land adjoining Lot 51 on Princes Road which would allow of three tennis courts being laid on the land until such time as it is required for other purposes.

24th May 1950

... The Rector is in a 're-organising mood'! He has re-arranged the service times at both Churches; the principal morning services will now be at 8 a.m. and 9.30 a.m., thus eliminating the 11 a.m. Eucharist and replacing it with Matins. Some of the older parishioners are not pleased! However, these new times do enable the Sunday School teachers to attend a Holy Communion service before classes start at 11 a.m. With so many children in attendance it has been decided to hold the Kindergarten and Primary groups in the Hall while the older children will have their lessons in St Wilfrid's.

Bishop Robin is a great advocate of family Eucharists, believing that a service at 9.30 a.m. followed by a cuppa in a parish hall is far more attractive to young families than the traditional 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. services. The great pity in Mitcham is that neither St Michael's nor St Wilfrid's has an adjoining hall! Over the past few years Bishop Robin has made many changes in the way the Diocese operates, particularly in the field of social welfare with the formation in 1947 of a separate Social Welfare Committee run by Miss Joy MacLennan. He was also responsible for bringing the sisters of the 'Community of the Holy Name' to Adelaide in 1945, and for the establishment in 1947 of a new theological college run by the 'Society of the Sacred Mission' at St Michael's House, Crafrers. It offers a five-year course to students from all over Australia and sadly, as a result, St Barnabas' College is to close this year. Naturally, many of our clergy who were trained there are most upset.²⁰

The Rector feels that the arrangements for the administration of the Parish Hall are totally unsatisfactory. At present they are left entirely to him instead of to an appointed Committee of Management. The Hall is causing considerable difficulty from a legal point of view and efforts are being made to have the building vested in Synod in lieu of Trustees. The last ones appointed died years ago! It is also hoped to create a Central Fund to care for the maintenance of all Church buildings...

10th May 1951

... At both Easter Vestries held this week the excellent work being done by Deaconess Magarey was mentioned. Through her regular visiting of families in the western areas of the Parish the Rector is kept in touch with the sick and aged. However, the parishioners of St Wilfrid's are finding their slender resources stretched to the limit paying two stipends.

Our fledgling F.O.M. branch is very active and enthusiastic, and now has forty-one members on the roll. The influence of the F.O.M. is highlighted by the increased number of adults coming forward for confirmation, which is indeed a blessing.

Apparently all is not well with the Cricket Club and the members have decided to disband and sell all their

equipment. There are changes on the tennis scene as well: our St Michael's Tennis Club has now joined forces with St Chad's, Fullarton ...

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

St Michael's Centenary Year, 1952, began sombrely as the nation mourned the death of its beloved King. In a way, the death of George VI, who had been such an inspiration to the people of Britain during the blitz, was the closing chapter on the horrors of the Second World War and its aftermath.

For the parishioners of St Michael's the latter part of 1952 was filled with joyful events celebrating the centenary of the first service held in the Church on 17th October 1852. By then restrictions on travel and the rationing of petrol and clothing had ended, food was plentiful and a new Elizabethan era was dawning.

* * *

4th November 1952

Before describing our St Michael's Centenary Celebrations, I must tell you about another event. We have just had a 'Mission to Youth' which was an unprecedented success. It ran from 26th October to the 1st November and was led by the Reverend Ian Shevill. He is on the staff of the Australian Board of Missions in Sydney and will shortly become Bishop of North Queensland. It was organised by a committee of young people led by our former catechist, Reverend Gordon Hewitson, and the Reverend D. Stuart-Fox. Large congregations packed the Cathedral each night and attended lunch-hour meetings held at the University, business premises and in factories. The climax on Saturday night was a torch-light procession of 3,000 young people, led by Ian Shevill, singing, waving banners and carrying flaming torches as they walked from Victoria Square to the Cathedral. It was an incredible experience, and one that will be an inspiration to a whole generation for years to come.²¹

But to return to the St Michael's Centenary programme. The first event, the Centenary Debutante Ball, was held in the Unley Town Hall on Friday, 19th September. The girls were presented to Lady Napier, wife of our Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Mellis Napier.

Sunday, 28th September was the 100th Patronal Festival and Day of Thanksgiving. I am enclosing a photograph showing the interior of the Church decorated with its traditional Michaelmas array of lilies and other flowers [Fig. 6 -6].

The M.U. held a special meeting in the Hall on Friday, 3rd October and on the following Tuesday we were visited by the first of three choirs who sang at our celebrations. This was the St Peter's Cathedral Choir under Canon H.P. Finnis, and as you can imagine, the 'rafters rang'.

The highlight of the month-long celebrations was Centenary Sunday on the 19th October [Fig. 6-7] when the Church was again filled with wonderful music. The

Fig. 6-6
St Michael's
100th Patronal
Festival,
28th September
1952.
Special flower
holders were
placed on
the ends of
pews to hold
arrangements of
lilies.
For many years
Amy Gamlen
created the
number of the
anniversary
year in flowers
arranged in small
vases placed
on the gradine
behind the altar.
(MPA)



Fig. 6-7 *St Michael's Centenary Sunday Celebrations,*
19th October 1952. Choir and parishioners on the path outside
the front door. The 'Centenary Memorial Terrace' was built
the following year and dedicated on the 101st Anniversary.
(Courtesy Judith Arndt)

celebrant at the 11 a.m. Sung Eucharist was Archdeacon T.T. Reed, Rector of St Theodore's at Rose Park, who brought his own choir along to augment ours. In the afternoon the St Michael's choir sang the cantata *The Rolling Seasons* and the day finished with Festal Evensong. Another wonderful musical event was a concert given on Tuesday, 28th October by the Adelaide Harmony Choir under Mr Lewis Dawe.

A 'Centenary Fund' to finance improvements opened six months ago and is now more than halfway towards the goal of £2,000. One of the proposals is to construct a terrace outside the Church. Although it will not be built until next year, it will be a still be a 'Centenary

Memorial'. Donations received during the celebrations, plus a legacy of £200 from the estate of the late Mrs Jessie Love, will go towards the construction of this terrace...

29th April 1953

... In a break with tradition the Easter Vestries of both St Michael's and St Wilfrid's were held jointly and separately last night in the Hall. Items of common interest, such as the Rector's Report and annual reports from various groups were presented to a joint meeting of all parishioners, after which we split into two groups under elected chairmen leaving the Rector free to assist either Vestry if and when required.

Two Diocesan matters required our attention. One was a letter from a Synodal committee seeking Vestry's views on a proposal to sponsor an Act of the S.A. Parliament to enable the cancellation of ancient forms of Church Trusts and the substitution of more uniform and modern Trusts having perpetual succession. Whilst generally in favour of this move (considering the problems we are encountering in this Parish) there are several items we have sought clarification on. The other matter concerns an appeal launched by the Diocese for £35,000 to provide for church halls to be erected by the B.H.M.S. in areas of recent housing expansion. Our quota has been set at £185 and St Wilfrid's at £141. As you know this is a subject close to the Rector's heart and he has been agitating for some time for the Society to purchase land at Lynton, Clapham or Springbank for another church.

St Michael's, long regarded as the 'Mother Church' of the district, can now claim to be a 'Grandmother'. After beginning life in 1923 under the care of our first 'Daughter Church' at Hawthorn, the folk of Colonel Light Gardens this year became a parish in their own right.²²

In an overview of Parish life at the time of our Centenary, the Rector noted that the Sunday School has 130 seniors and 45 in the kindergarten, there are 68 students at the Day School, the Guild has 13 members, M.U. and F.O.M. 50, C.E.M.S. 20 and Y.P.F. 35.

This year it has been Mitcham Council's turn to celebrate its centenary. At a public ceremony held on the Mitcham Reserve on Saturday, 14th March the Governor, Sir Robert George, accompanied by Lady George unveiled a memorial pillar marking the spot where the old schoolhouse is believed to have stood. Meetings held in that building resulted in the formation of the Mitcham District Council on 10th May 1853 – the first local governing body outside of Adelaide.

30th December 1953

... Well, our magnificent Centenary Memorial Terrace is complete and was dedicated on Sunday, 18th October – our 101st birthday! It makes such a difference to the appearance of the Church having this lovely slate-paved entrance instead of a rough path. A tablet has been fastened to the wall on the north side near the steps recording the fact that it is a memorial to the late John and Jessie Aitken Love who formerly resided at 'Mitcham Lawn' and were parishioners of many years standing. The names of their descendants who made contributions to the project are to be recorded in a *Book of Remembrance* inside the Church, together with the names of all subscribers to the Centenary Memorial Fund. I understand from John Sheppard that when he approached the Love family some months ago to explain that more funds would be needed to complete the work already in hand, they generously agreed to donate the shortfall of some £200.²³

St Michael's also received a legacy of £200 from the estate of the late Miss Blanche Levi, and after much discussion it has been decided that the money will be devoted to providing the above-mentioned *Book of Remembrance* [Fig. 6-8]. This is to contain a brief outline of the history of St Michael's, names of past clergy and officers, and as complete a list as is possible of all parishioners over the past century – a very ambitious project that will require a lot of research! The names will be inscribed by a calligrapher before the pages are suitably bound. Mr Edgar J. Barker, the Church's architect, is to be approached to design appropriate furniture for accommodating it so as to be continuously available for inspection. As well as being a beautiful addition to the interior of St Michael's, this *Book of Remembrance* will be constituted a memorial to the late Miss Levi. Sixteen years ago Miss Levi donated a beautiful stained-glass window to the Church in memory of her parents and brother [see page 194].

Another memorial, at present being crafted, is a Credence table which should be ready to be installed early next year. The Clampett family is giving it in memory of Albert and Alice Clampett.

Some news from Farr House. Since that institution began back in 1860 as The Orphan Home for Girls, the wife of the Bishop of Adelaide has always accepted the office of President. This year at the A.G.M. held on 14th



Fig. 6-8 *Book of Remembrance*, illuminated title page and sample of the inscribed calligraphic script. The manuscript, compiled to commemorate the Centenary of St Michael's, was never completed. The project was funded by a bequest from the estate of Miss Blanche Levi. (MPA)

August they broke with tradition and elected someone else. That 'someone' is our very dear friend Mollie Bowen who has served as Vice-President for the past ten years. It was she who first suggested that the name be changed to Farr House in 1935.

The City of Mitcham has a new Mayor, none other than James Orlando Whicker, better known to us all as 'Jim' or, predictably, 'Jo'. He, his wife Doreen and family have been very active members of the St Wilfrid's congregation for many years. Apart from a period of three years, Jim has been either a Warden or auditor ever since the Church opened in 1934. At present he is Priest's Warden and also a Lay Reader.

As I think I have said before, the people of St Wilfrid's have always placed great emphasis on allocating funds to mission work. They have already passed their target of £141 for the B.H.M.S. Appeal, whilst the folk at St Michael's are dragging their feet and have only managed £115 of their allotted £185. The Y.P.F. have been raising money for the Appeal, and instead of half going towards each Church's allocation, members of St Wilfrid's have most generously offered that the money raised by the Y.P.F. be credited in full to St Michael's. Members of the Y.P.F. show great enthusiasm and are now considering forming a Tennis Club. They have been given permission to lay another court either on the eastern side of the Hall, or on Lot 51 Princes Road...

Whilst all these celebrations had been taking place, members of the two Parochial Councils and the Mitcham Parish Central Council were grappling with problems associated with the maintenance of Parish properties. In July 1951 the first murmurings of discontent between the Councils can be detected when the Rector spoke of “dissension and destructive or disruptive criticism [that] mars Church life”. He went on to say:

In the coming year we will have to deal with the question of ancient and outmoded Trusts in relation to Church properties which hampered any attempt to make the two Churches function as ‘one Parish’ – with properties under the control of one Parish authority.

With the proceeds of a very successful Old English Fair the Central Council established two Funds in April 1951. The first was the ‘Mitcham Parish Central Fund’ which became responsible for the payment of all accounts connected with the care and maintenance of the Hall and for repairs to the Rectory. The second was the ‘Mitcham Parish Stipend Fund’. This was to be used to even up the Rector’s stipend that tended to fluctuate monthly depending on the income received from the various endowments invested over the years by Church Office on behalf of St Michael’s. An agreement was arranged to cover payment by Reverend R.H. Pearman to the Stipend Fund of all the endowments and other payments as received by him through Church Office. St Wilfrid’s grant-in-aid from the B.H.M.S. was also paid into the Stipend Fund.²⁴

The ‘ancient and outmoded Trusts’ alluded to referred to the Rectory (set on about two acres of land) and the Day School-cum-Parish Hall, both of which were later vested in Synod as Trustee. Over the years consideration had been given to selling portion of the land surrounding the Rectory and using the money “to form a useful nucleus for the purchase or erection of a new Rectory pending the sale of the old one”. Dissent arose when the St Michael’s Vestry agreed to sell some of the land to two of its own members – without discussing the matter with St Wilfrid’s! The St Wilfrid’s Council felt that the proposed sale “could have been discussed first by the Central Council as a gesture of good faith in the combined efforts of both Churches, even though the final action would be taken by St Michael’s Vestry”. The Rector explained that, although St Wilfrid’s had in the past accepted part-responsibility for the maintenance of the building, “they had no legal right to take part in any transactions which concerned St Michael’s Rectory and Land”.

In November 1951 – this time with Central Council’s blessing – Special Vestry Meetings were held and approval given to sell the Rectory “subject to a suitable house having been purchased”. In the event of one becoming available at short notice, a sub-committee was elected which, with the consent of Standing Committee of Synod, was given power “to purchase a suitable building for a Rectory if and when the opportunity arises”. The sub-committee was also requested to consider the merits of constructing a new building somewhere between the two Churches, “possibly on Lot 51 Princes Road near the Hall”.

There were innumerable delays – of both a legal and technical nature – and another two years passed before the conveyance of the excess Rectory land was settled at the end of 1953. On 2nd September Synod consented to the sale of the Rectory. Having cleared all these legal requirements, the sub-committee appointed by the Mitcham Parish Central Council to manage the affairs of the Rectory was asked on 2nd February 1954 to “more actively pursue the matter of building or purchasing a more suitable Rectory in the centre of the Parish”.

One month later a disastrous event put these plans on hold. It was to be a further five years before the saga of the Rectory was resolved.

THE EARTHQUAKE AND ITS AFTERMATH: 1954–1958

In the early hours of Monday, 1st March 1954 a substantial earthquake measuring 5.3 on the Richter Scale rocked Adelaide. It was the worst earthquake in South Australia’s history and the second most severe ever experienced in Australia to that time. It lasted about 20 seconds and was caused by slippage deep under the earth’s surface along the Eden Fault Scarp which can be traced along the edge of the Adelaide Hills between Marino and Waterfall Gully. The epicentre was placed at Darlington where the Eden Fault crosses South Road and the damage to buildings was most extensive in and around the foothills. St Michael’s stands in a precarious position in a narrow strip of land between the Eden and Burnside Faults (Fig. 6-9).

At Mitcham the earth slippage opened a spring causing the Brownhill Creek – usually dry in summer – to begin flowing at a rate of between 10,000 and 15,000 gallons per hour. A similar thing happened at Mt Barker.²⁵

The earthquake caused severe damage to Parish buildings. The architect’s initial report noted that the Rectory showed “acute damage and it was expected that about £400 worth of repairs would be necessary to rehabilitate it, which would be recoverable from the Underwriters”. The Church, however, was not insured against earthquake damage. Severe cracks existed in its structure and it was expected that the cost of repairs would be in the vicinity of £2,000. The extent of necessary work

Fig. 6-9 Major fault lines in the Mitcham area.

St Michael’s is situated between the Burnside and Eden faults.



was “difficult to establish until operations were started, and it would be necessary to carry it out in sections”.

* * *

1st May 1954

Dear Elizabeth,

It is now two months since the earthquake hit Adelaide and many people are still waiting for insurance companies to assess damage before repair work can start. It is rather sobering to think that had the ‘quake lasted several seconds longer much of the City and suburbs could have been reduced to rubble. As it was, no one was killed, and only a few were injured.

The damage to dear old St Michael’s was quite severe. Ted Smith, our Priest’s Warden, was one of the first to enter the building and he said it was “almost as though there had been a snowstorm”. The lovely new burgundy-coloured carpet was literally covered with white plaster. So much was loosened that the menfolk had to use long poles to dislodge huge slabs of plaster from the walls to ensure the safety of anyone entering the Church.²⁶

The Church and Rectory at Belair also suffered damage. Worst hit was St Jude’s Church at Brighton which has had to be demolished. The walls had moved three inches and were beyond repair and it was feared that the vibrations from passing lorries would bring the whole roof crashing down. Like St Michael’s, it was not insured. It would have been 100 years old last month!²⁷

After years of untangling red tape connected with outdated legal Trusts the Synod last year gave approval for the decrepit old St Michael’s Rectory to be sold. This will pave the way for a new one to be built on Princes Road. Unfortunately it too suffered considerable damage in the earthquake and will need massive repairs before it can be sold. Meanwhile the Pearmans are soldiering on in the crumbling old building. They don’t even have running water in the kitchen!

To add to the Rector’s problems Deaconess Magarey has been ill since February and is unable to continue her work. She was too ill to attend the St Wilfrid’s Annual Vestry last week and her resignation was tendered by her sisters. This is a great blow. She was doing a wonderful job visiting families in the western areas of the Parish. Mr Bert Crisp, who has been a Warden at St Michael’s for over fourteen years, retired at our recent St Michael’s Vestry.

A chapter in our Parish history has come to an end with the closure of the St Michael’s Day School after sixty-five years. It was a Mitcham institution having been started by Reverend Frederick Samwell in March 1889 in a rented cottage in Welbourne Street. The following year it moved into its own impressive building which, of course, has doubled as our Parish Hall...

26th February 1955

...On Sunday, 2nd January – Black Sunday – vast areas of the Adelaide Hills were devastated by bushfires. Our Governor, Sir Robert George, and Lady George were staying at ‘Marble Hill’ (their vice-regal summer retreat) when the fires struck and they nearly lost their lives in

the inferno. I shall never forget the overpowering stench of the thick, acrid smoke that enveloped Adelaide that Sunday; nor the anxious hours spent waiting for the return of our menfolk who bravely volunteered to fight those dreadful fires. Two firemen were killed and some 600 square miles were laid waste.

Our ‘English Village Fair’ was held on the Mitcham Reserve last Saturday and, although a rather hot day, it was a great success. Glowing tributes have been paid to John Dibben who took over as organiser following the death of Russell Stuart. It had been hoped to raise £2,000, but in the end the total was nearer £1,000. This is to be split three ways: one third each to the two Churches, and one third to the Central Council to renovate the Hall. St Michael’s share has already been earmarked for the restoration of the Church. St Wilfrid’s Council has not yet discussed what its share may be used for, although the two more immediate needs are a new organ and a larger vestry.

Monday, 3rd October 1955

... During the nineteen months since the earthquake struck the damage to the Church has become progressively more noticeable. The architect now advises that, in his opinion, the south wall will have to be demolished and rebuilt. He estimates that this will cost over £1,000. On top of this will be the cost of strengthening and restoring the tower and under-pinning the NW corner of the building. At a very conservative estimate it looks as if we are going to need a Church Restoration Fund of at least £3000. At present we have only about £1000 in hand!

Earlier plans to build a new rectory on Princes Road have now been changed. In June the St Wilfrid’s Vestry decided to sell its share of Lot 51 to St Michael’s and to put the proceeds towards the purchase of a home in that area. In the short term this could be used as accommodation for a curate, or it could become a rectory should St Wilfrid’s ever become a parish in its own right. In view of these changed circumstances Lot 51 is to be sold and the proceeds divided between the two Churches. St Michael’s will proceed with the building of a new rectory on the Church Acre facing Fullarton Road.

An event of some importance occurred at the Patronal Festival service yesterday: Reverend Reginald Pearman wore Eucharistic vestments at St Michael’s for the first time. Nothing ‘high church’, just simple white linen ones! Will we be calling him Father Reg next? This terminology seems to be gaining in favour, particularly amongst some of the younger clergy of the Diocese who have done their theological training at St Michael’s House, Crafers. Ted Smith first brought up the subject of Eucharistic vestments at the Annual Vestry in 1954, by giving a year’s notice of intention that he would recommend their use at the 1955 Vestry. Writing in the September edition of the *Mitcham Parish Messenger*, the Rector stated his position as follows:

When the parish was offered to me in 1939, the late Bishop, A.N. Thomas in his letter to me in which he offered the incumbency said: ‘The Patronage Committee does not wish vestments to be worn.’ I accepted the parish and have

honoured this request. Personally I have no objection to wearing vestments, though I do not consider them to be essential, but I possess a set of white linen vestments which were worn by me in my previous parish of Naracoorte.

As those present at the Annual Vestry Meeting unanimously passed the resolution requesting me to consider the wearing of such vestments at St Michael's, I have decided to comply with this request, and to use them at the Patronal Festival Communion Services on Sunday, October 2nd, at both 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. This applies to St Michael's Church only.

Ted also introduced the subject of depreciation of the Church buildings and the desirability of making some provision for their future. Vestry duly approved the idea and Parish Council has been asked to draw up a scheme for the establishment and administration of a special fund.

There have been a lot of resignations from Parish organisations over the past months and also a bit of friction between the Rector and St Wilfrid's Council. They have decided to try and secure a visiting priest for Evensong on the 3rd Sunday of each month, but he disagrees saying they are hard to come by and that it is not worth it for a small congregation. As I mentioned earlier Deaconess Magarey is no longer available to take services. Now Jim Whicker has resigned through ill health, not only as a Warden of St Wilfrid's and a Lay Reader, but also as Mayor of Mitcham and from the City Council...

* * *

Two years had elapsed since the earthquake before it was announced in March 1956 that an estimate had been submitted for "rebuilding the southern wall of the Church for not more than £1,850". Writing in the June edition of the *Mitcham Parish Messenger*, the Wardens made a spirited plea for donations:

A conservative estimate of the Architects, for the complete restoration of the Parish Church is not less than £6,000 and may be more. The southern wall has to be dismantled and rebuilt. A builder's estimate for this work alone is £1,800 of which we have only about £1,000 in hand.

In his report to the Easter Vestry the Rector threw out a new challenge, saying: "I wonder if we are wise in thinking merely to rebuild the wall as part of the Church ... sooner or later we must make provision for some building near the Church, where we can have various meetings". He went on to suggest "taking the long view and making a venture of faith now" by adding a chancel, sanctuary, vestries and an organ chamber to the eastern end of the northern nave of the Church and converting the southern nave into a hall by filling in the arches. Nothing seems to have come of this novel suggestion!

Pearman also went to great lengths to outline the future requirements of the Parish as a whole. It was "understaffed and too much for one man to cope with", and although the boundaries remained the same, there had been a vast increase in population since the end of the War:

For one Priest to keep in touch with all Church families in this huge area is a physical impossibility. To be efficiently staffed and worked from a Church point of view the Parish properly requires as a minimum, two Priests, a Deacon or Deaconess or both and at least six ladies known in the English Church as District Visitors ...

I am sometimes asked why we cannot have a curate? No doubt we could get one from another State if the Parish would be prepared to (1) Provide the accommodation, which would mean a house. (2) Provide at least a minimum stipend of £626, which of course would have to be increased for a married man. Even then, with so many parishes vacant at the present time it is doubtful if any offer from this Parish could be made sufficiently attractive to secure the services of an assistant priest, or to keep one for long.

His stated need for extra clerical assistance was to play a major role in future discussions between the Rector and the two Parish Councils. Our scribe continues the story.

* * *

1st September 1956

... In 1954 we had an earthquake, in 1955 devastating bushfires and this year we are suffering one of the worst floods in the State's history. In spite of thousands of volunteers (yes, I was one of them) flocking to the Riverland to fill sandbags, some of the shops and houses in the main street of Mannum were inundated with water up to their roofs. Over 1,400 residents have had to be evacuated from Renmark, turning it into a ghost town.

There has been a lot of activity on the Church Acre over recent months – but still, I regret to say, no sign of any restoration work on the building itself! The decision having been made to build the new Rectory on this site, the ground at the eastern end near Fullarton Road was cleared and graded. Plans and specifications are being prepared and tenders will soon be called. It is hoped that the price obtained for the present Rectory will go far towards meeting the cost of the new one.

Since Ainslie Gaunt resigned as Superintendent of the Sunday School, the Rector has been endeavouring to run it himself, which is asking a bit much of the poor man who is already overworked and in desperate need of an assistant. R.I. in the State schools alone takes an enormous amount of time.

Since Fred and Margaret Sanders gave up the leadership of Y.P.F. last year the group has been reformed as the Mitcham Parish Sports Club catering for a wider age group. Clive Edwards is Chairman and his wife, Col, is Secretary. They have been busy raising money and were thrilled with a 100% response by Parish families to their request for a donation of £1 per family. The attendances at the two monthly functions held so far have been wonderful (exceeding in each case 220 people) and the enthusiasm shown by the audiences, particularly at the youth concert, was amazing. With half the required cost already in hand, a firm contract has been let for the laying down in November of the two basketball-cum-tennis courts at the Hall.

The Diocesan Synod is meeting this week and will be considering the proposed Constitution for the Church of England in Australia. Put in a nutshell, it is expected that an Australian Church Constitution will do for the Church in Australia what Federation did for the Commonwealth of Australia: the Commonwealth became one self-governing nation while the States had their own particular rights safeguarded.

John Pearman, son of the Rector and Mrs Pearman, married a lass called Zelda Day on 19th May. He attended the Parish Day School before going on to St Peter's College, and has now taken up teaching as a profession ...

* * *

At the Annual Vestry on 24th April 1957 the Rector announced that a builder hoped to commence the Church renovations soon after Easter. A stalemate then developed because the builder would not provide a firm quotation and a contract could not be let. By mid-June a new architect and a new contractor had been appointed and on Sunday, 7th September the Rector told the congregation that services on the following Sundays would be held at St Wilfrid's Church as "St Michael's would be closed for repairs and renovation".

When it re-opened six weeks later on 20th October 1957 (more than three-and-a-half years after the earthquake) parishioners were told they would not find the Church completely restored and renovated because "there was not sufficient money given for the Restoration Fund". The work that had been done included "the whole of the south part of the Church building, with the complete renovation and almost remaking of the big west window". It also included the restoration of the ladies' choir vestry (now the narthex) and the tower.

While the work was in progress the architect and builder thoroughly inspected the northern portion of the Church. They reported that:

Several of the roof timbers (purlins) are broken and that to restore these the whole of the roof covering the north portion will have to be removed. In addition the whole of the present plaster in this part will have to be stripped from the walls and the walls re-plastered.

Parishioners were advised that it would be expensive and extensive. It was: it took another six years! [A full account of the restoration can be found in Chapter 11.]

Whilst the two Parish Councils and the Central Council were pre-occupied with all the problems associated with the sale of the old Rectory and the restoration of the southern area of the Church, Parish life and worship continued unabated. It was a time of tremendous growth and vitality, particularly in activities arranged by and for the young people. These events, widely reported in the *Mitcham Parish Messenger*, were retold by our 'local correspondent'.

* * *

16th December 1957

... The former Dean of Adelaide, Thomas Thornton Reed, was enthroned as the sixth Bishop of Adelaide on 30th May. Adelaide is the first capital city in Australia to elect an Australian-born bishop. He is a third-generation South Australian, educated at St Peter's College, the University of Melbourne and St Barnabas' Theological College. This scholarly man is conservative, an excellent administrator and extremely friendly, being known to most people as 'Tommy' Reed.

The Rector announced earlier in the year that he would no longer be giving out notices of coming events during services. Writing of this in the *Mitcham Parish Messenger* he quoted the rules as laid down in the Book of Common Prayer and went on to say:

For a long time now, I, and others, have been concerned about the types of notices which I am asked to give out in Church; dances, Bridge evenings, fêtes, and even mannequin parades... I am compelled now to draw the line. In future I intend to follow the Prayer Book direction as nearly as I can... Secretaries of various groups can supply information for inclusion in the 'Parish Messenger', and copies can go on the notice board in the porch of each Church.

In his Annual Report to the Vestries, he also expressed dissatisfaction with the timing and frequency of Evensong:

It is not in the best interests of this Parish to have two Evening services going on in two separate buildings – only a mile apart – on two Sunday evenings each month. I am aware of the opinions of the Lay Preachers and of many who attend Evensong at St Wilfrid's on the first and third Sundays of the month. But I also know that one service, well attended by 70 or 80 people, is much more helpful and inspiring than two services attended by only a handful of people...[with] uninspiring singing and empty pews... it discourages newcomers and they go elsewhere... Personally, I am very grateful to the Lay Readers, but question the wisdom of duplicated services at the same hour, in the same Parish.

Another of the Rector's innovations this year has been the establishment of a 'Ministry of Healing Prayer Group'. As you know, the subject is a very live question in the Christian Church of all denominations all over the world especially in England and America, where it has been revived and used for many years. He has been studying the subject in great depth, and his desk is piled high with recent books which he encourages us to borrow.

We really do need the help of a curate or assistant priest in this Parish. Every year the work increases, particularly for R.I. in State schools. As well as classes at Urrbrae Agricultural High School on Tuesday mornings, Mitcham Primary and Mitcham Infant School on Wednesdays and Highgate Primary on Friday mornings, the Rector is now required to provide two periods on Thursday mornings at the new Unley Girls High School which has been erected at the northern

end of Smith-Dorrien Street on twenty acres of land adjoining the Urrbrae Agricultural High School.²⁸

By far the high spot of the year has been the tremendous increase in the number of young people attending Church and joining in all manner of activities planned for them. The Mitcham Parish Sports Club, under the inspiring leadership of Clive and Col Edwards, greatly improved the grounds of the Hall and did a magnificent job preparing the courts for matches. During the basketball season matches were played on the courts every Saturday afternoon and our teams performed very well. It is now the turn of our budding tennis stars. The Sports Club has paid for the new courts by organising a variety of social functions, including regular monthly Bridge evenings. The Debutante Ball at Unley Town Hall on 1st May was voted a huge success and it certainly was a grand gathering of Parish folk. In August the basketballers volunteered to organise a Parish Social.

Making an even bigger impact has been the revitalising of the Parish Youth Fellowship. Since an encouraging inaugural meeting arranged by Jim Nelson a year ago the group has been meeting monthly in the Hall on Sunday afternoons for talks and discussions, followed by tea and games then on to Evensong at one of the Churches. The leaders, Jim Nelson, Vic Barrell and Mrs Tommy Lyon, encourage social activities as well as Church activities. Jennifer Dibben was elected to the position of Assistant Leader, which is the most senior office open to the young people at present – a fitting tribute to the enthusiasm and devotion of a family which has worked so hard for the re-forming of the Fellowship. There are a number of sub-leaders, each of whom has been given a portion of the Parish for which he or she is responsible. Full membership is open to all communicant members of the Parish and associate membership for non-communicant members of a minimum age of thirteen years, or who are attending a secondary school.

A highlight of the Fellowship's activities was a weekend camp in August at Kuitpo Forest. Reverend James MacDonald, Rector of St Paul's Church in the City, was chaplain and led the discussions. He was obviously a popular choice, as he was invited to be guest preacher at St Wilfrid's Patronal Festival in October. Earlier in the year the Rector made a presentation to Ron Williams on behalf of the young people and other friends. Ron has entered St John's Theological College at Morpeth in N.S.W. to study for the ministry.

There has also been a resurgence of interest in C.E.M.S. A couple of years ago they were virtually in recess and, being few in number, tried linking up with St Columba's. It didn't work out. Under Dem Mudie, the C.E.M.S. President in this Parish, they have reformed the branch and it is now going from strength to strength.

This year the M.U. members have 'adopted' the St Mary's Children's Home in Halifax Street in the City and have undertaken to help with the mending of clothes and house linen every month. A large parcel of beautiful new children's clothing was recently sent from this Parish to London for the annual fête at Mary Sumner House in aid of Overseas Missions.

Although we are back worshipping in dear old St Michael's there is a long way to go before the restoration of the whole building is complete. There have been so many set-backs – not only with the Church, but also trying to repair and sell the Rectory – that the Rector feels the only way of overcoming these problems is to invite an outside organisation to conduct a fund-raising scheme. As a result we are to have a canvass in June next year...

CANVASSES & CONFLICTS: 1958–1960

When the idea of conducting a fund-raising scheme was first broached by the Rector at the St Michael's Parish Council meeting on 2nd June 1957, some members "raised the important matter of integrating the Parish as a whole in this matter". They wondered if a Central Fund would "help overcome a few lingering problems arising out of two congregations with their allegiances of long custom". The Rector did not favour this approach and felt that "problems of this type were few". However, when a vote was taken in favour of inviting St Wilfrid's to join in, it was passed "with one member abstaining" – presumably the Rector!

St Wilfrid's Vestry accepted the invitation, and in August the Parish Central Council met to form a sub-committee "to formulate broad objectives" based on suggestions submitted by each Church prior to the visit of a representative of the Wells Organisation Ltd. The initial decision to invite the American-based Wells Organisation was later rescinded in favour of the newly-formed Department of Promotion set up by the Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide. By the end of 1957 both Vestries had approved the scheme and the respective Wardens were authorised to sign the agreement with the Department of Promotion. An 'Every Member Canvass' would be held in June or July 1958 and was estimated to last five to six weeks.

It was agreed that the canvass would be conducted "on United Parish lines but that individual targets be set for each Church". St Michael's initial wish-list for the three-year period amounted to £20,000: £7,000 to complete the Church renovations, £5,500 for vestries, a meeting room with kitchen and conveniences, and £7,500 to build the new Rectory (although a large proportion of this was expected to be in hand from the sale of the old one and its surrounding land). There was also discussion about "a specific missionary project not really in line with the above three and having a very high priority". St Wilfrid's hoped to raise £13,000: £10,000 for extensions to the Church and provision for a meeting room, vestries and amenities; £1,000 for a new organ and £2,000 to purchase land for an additional parish church at Clapham. Annual commitments for each Church were also given based on the number of families on the roll, missionary donations, salaries for organists, etc. In addition the Rector suggested that Central Council projects could include a curate with salary and keep. They might also "reshape the Parish Hall to make it more generally useful" and make provision for a secretary in an adequate office.

At a meeting of the Central Council in April 1958 a representative from St Wilfrid's moved:

That this Council recommends to the separate Vestries of St Michael's and St Wilfrid's that the sub-committee preparing the Department of Promotion Canvass budget be requested to make provision for Priestly Assistance in the Parish.

This need for an assistant was also stressed by the Rector in his Annual Report to the Vestries on 7th May: "The provision of increased parochial staff must be one of the first objectives of the coming Canvass." This statement was to become a bone of contention between the Rector and his two Parochial Councils.

* * *

Meanwhile, other important events had been taking place in the wider community. Following several test runs in May, Channel 9 beamed out the first television pictures to an eager, but small, audience in Adelaide on 5th September 1958. During 1959 the first women were elected to the S.A. Parliament – Joyce Steele to the House of Assembly and Jessie Cooper to the Legislative Council – and the American evangelist, Billy Graham, preached to over 60,000 eager souls at a Crusade Rally held in the Wayville Showgrounds on 24th May 1959. The following year Adelaide held its first Festival of Arts from 12th to 26th March.

Our 'local correspondent' catches up on some of the events that took place within the Parish during that period.

* * *

20th July 1958

... For nearly fifty years the electric trams have transported the citizens of Adelaide around the City and suburbs, now they are being phased out. Yesterday we had our last ride on the Mitcham line and today the new bus system begins operating.

By all accounts our 'Every Member Canvass' held last month was a great success financially. The results vindicated the enormous amount of planning that went into this, the first canvass ever undertaken by the Parish of Mitcham. Nearly 98% of the target of £18,000 was pledged: £9,088 for St Michael's and £8,461 for St Wilfrid's. The Rector is delighted and says that the income of each Church will be trebled.

The Canvass Committee [Fig. 6-10] was chaired by Mr Jim Dobbs. Under him were various sub-committees each with its own chairman: Arrangements (John Dibben), Publications (John Sheppard), Teams (Vic Barrell for St Wilfrid's and Bert Helliard for St Michael's), Follow-up (Jack Mitchard for St Wilfrid's and Hugh Gilmore for St Michael's). The Ladies' Hostess group was led by May Calder and Nell Mitchard.

Following the arrival on 9th June of the Director, Mr David George from the Department of Promotion, the groups were called together and their roles outlined. The canvass proper began with a 'Loyalty Dinner' held on 30th June. An attractive illustrated brochure, prepared in conjunction with the Director following his arrival in Mitcham, was handed to all those present at the Dinner.

After years of anxiety in trying to maintain and sell the Rectory the old building has finally been sold for £6,000. Many prospective buyers inspected (and rejected) the property. In the end the Rector was so frustrated by the whole business that he offered to move out and give 'vacant possession' in an effort to secure a sale. Construction of a new Rectory has just begun and until it is finished Reg and Win are living in a house they have purchased for their retirement years at Firlie – a 20-minute drive from Mitcham...

30th December 1959

... The blessing by Bishop Reed of our splendid new Rectory took place on Sunday, 22nd February and the Pearmans moved in on 9th March.

Fig. 6-10 Canvass Committee meeting. (L. to R.) Ralph Hardy, Bert Helliard, Hugh Gilmore, Vic Barrell, Reverend Reginald Pearman, Jim Dobbs (Chairman), David George (Director) Brian Howie, Jack Mitchard, May Calder, Nell Mitchard, Bert Roper. (MPA)



Following a very successful social held after the completion of the 'Every Member Canvass' last July it was felt by some that similar evenings would promote the social life of the Parish as a whole. As a result a committee was formed to promote such activities and the first event, a Parish social evening, was held at the end of November in the Parish Hall. A branch of the Church of England Boys' Society (C.E.B.S.) began in November under the leadership of Alan Beagley who has had previous experience with the Society in Victoria.

St Wilfrid's parishioners have fulfilled one of their Canvass objectives: a new electronic organ was used for the first time for their Patronal Festival in October. They have also installed a new font in place of the old iron contraption. It is the gift of the Misses Kathleen and Helen Magarey in memory of their sister, the late Deaconess Mildred Magarey...

* * *

Although the 'Every Member Canvass' was a success financially, there followed a period of "prolonged debate on the priorities set forth in the canvass brochure". Unfortunately, this led to "concentrated resentment and bitterness" between the Rector and the elected officers of the two Churches. It almost caused a split in the Parish.

In essence it boiled down to 'who-told-whom' to do and say what. Obviously there was a need for clerical assistance – be that in the form of a curate or of an assistant priest – and both Churches required a small hall or meeting room on site. The St Wilfrid's team of canvassers were told to concentrate on the need for more clerical assistance. St Michael's men, on the other hand, had been told to stress the urgent need for funds to complete the restoration of the Church and to build a new rectory.

Problems began in October 1958 when the Rector mentioned that: "There seems to be a view amongst some St Wilfrid's folk that St Michael's Council did not wholeheartedly support the need for clerical assistance". He said this was not the case, but that St Michael's had before them "the urgent need for funds to finish the Rectory and the restoration of their Church". This meant that they might have "some immediate difficulty" in finding funds for clerical assistance. Motions were passed confirming, firstly, that St Michael's Council did not state that clerical assistance was a priority in the canvass brochure; secondly that the budget could not afford the additional expenses of clerical assistance in this three-year period. These motions were to be forwarded to the Wardens of St Wilfrid's and it was hoped that they would continue in "friendly discussions".

In reply the St Wilfrid's Council expressed "extreme disappointment and disapproval of the proposed repudiation by the Wardens of St Michael's", particularly in view of the "definite statement" in the canvass brochure. They also quoted remarks made by the Rector in his 1958 Annual Report and the *Mitcham Parish Messenger* in September regarding the necessity for additional clerical assistance.

The Rector attended a meeting at St Wilfrid's, "by their gracious consent", in mid-December and reported

to the St Michael's Council that it had resolved itself into "an unpleasant experience, in which he had to listen to concentrated resentment & bitterness expressed against St Michael's and more particularly one of the Wardens of St Michael's". He found this a very discomforting meeting and threatened to close down the Joint Parish Council. He also refused St Wilfrid's request for an additional Communion service at 8 a.m. on the first Sunday in the month.

In February 1959 the Rector "declined to attend" a meeting of the St Wilfrid's Council at which a motion was passed requesting him to recommend to the Bishop the appointment of a retired priest to act in a part-time capacity "for the purpose of providing certain services of the Church including an additional monthly Communion Service and visiting in the St Wilfrid's portion of the Parish". They offered to pay all the expenses for a trial period of not less than six months. In reply the Rector advised "that he did not intend to proceed in the matter at present, but would bring up alternatives at the Annual Vestry meeting". At this meeting in April 1959 two proposals made by the Bishop were discussed:

1st Proposal: St Wilfrid's Vestry can apply to the Bishop through the Archdeacon of Adelaide to become a separate entity and other things being equal and in order could become a Mission District under B.H.M.S.

2nd Proposal: The Vestry can apply to the Bishop through the Rector and Archdeacon of Adelaide for an assistant Priest. He would be licensed not to St Wilfrid's but to the Rector, and St Wilfrid's would be required to guarantee the whole of the stipend which is £750 per annum plus cost of living adjustment and other expenses including car allowance, house, rent etc.

The Bishop also suggested that the St Michael's Annual Vestry should "consult their Trust Deed" in order to consider important changes: they were covered by the Church of England Succession Act and St Wilfrid's by the 1927 Model Trust Deed. In a nutshell, St Michael's Parochial Council – which had been formed in April 1940 at the suggestion of St Wilfrid's – had no authority under its Trust Deed. It was the Wardens, the elected officers of the Church, who carried the full responsibilities and the Vestry or any other body could only advise them from time to time. The following motion was passed: "That the Vestry determine that the committee in the past known as the Parochial Council be replaced by an Advisory Committee, as the former body has no legal authority or justification."

In effect the Rector had done what he had foreshadowed the previous December: the Central Council had to be abolished because he was now "unable to accept any motion which in effect created or perpetuated a Central Council". The affairs of the Mitcham Parish Central Council were wound up at a meeting of the Wardens held on 21st May 1959. Monies held in the General Fund and in the Mitcham Parish Stipend Fund were divided equally between the two Churches. St Wilfrid's was requested to continue to contribute half of the costs of maintaining the Parish Hall, the running of which would be administered by officers from St Michael's.

Meanwhile, “friendly informal talks” between the two Finance Wardens had resulted in the suggestion that should St Wilfrid’s accept the Bishop’s proposal of an assistant priest, they would pay about half of what they had paid in the past towards the stipend of the Rector. This seemed equitable as they would continue to share his services. If, at the end of three years, St Michael’s finances were sufficient, “the contribution from St Wilfrid’s could be waived”. It was pointed out that it was “inevitable that St Wilfrid’s would one day be a parish church in its own right and the proposed step would forward progress in this direction”. The Rector reminded them “that any curate would be licensed to the Parish and subject to his guidance”.

Whether for financial reasons, through sentiment or both, it would appear that the parishioners of St Wilfrid’s were not ready to cut the apron-strings with their Mother Church. The Bishop’s 1st Proposal – seeking to become a separate entity as a Mission District under B.H.M.S. – was rejected and it was resolved that there be “definitely no split in the Parish of Mitcham”. It was further resolved that: “As clerical assistance is needed, the Rector be requested to endeavour to obtain the services of an assistant priest as early as possible in accordance with the Bishop’s suggestion.” But by June 1960 – two years after the canvass – the possibility of acquiring an assistant priest seemed more remote than ever. Writing in the *Mitcham Parish Messenger*, the Rector reported that:

At a recent interview with the Bishop he stated that no one would be available for at least two-and-a-half years and even then there was no certainty of one being available. The position is that there is such a shortage of clergymen in this diocese, and in the whole Australian Church, and such rapid expansion is going on everywhere, that even retired men are back into practically full time work.

Fig. 6-11 Mrs Ogden, known affectionately to all as ‘Auntie Kitty’. (Courtesy John Pearman)



Within two months the situation had changed. In August 1960 the Rector received two letters. One was from the Bishop advising that “a deacon could be made available for St Wilfrid’s”; the other “a favourable reply from the Church Army”. A Special Vestry Meeting of the Church of St Wilfrid was called for 2nd September and after “considerable discussion” it decided to turn down the Bishop’s offer of a deacon and to accept the offer made by the Church Army. This would involve the two Churches agreeing to the employment of two Church Army evangelists for a period “not exceeding six months” to do house-to-house visitations in the whole of the Parish in preparation for a Parish Mission leading up to another canvass in July 1961.

During these two years of “bitter conflict” Parish life had continued unabated. After all, most of the discussions were “of a confidential nature” and the majority of parishioners were probably unaware of the simmering stream of discontent running below the surface.

* * *

Michaelmas 1960

Dear Elizabeth,

With little prospect of obtaining an assistant priest to help in the Parish the Rector has appealed to the Church Army for help. As you know this is a Church organisation founded in 1882 in England for special evangelistic work. It came to Australia some years ago and has its headquarters in the Newcastle Diocese. Although many of its leaders are ordained priests it also has both men and women evangelists. They are schooled in the Church Army training college and then commissioned for special work.

In outlining his ideas for inviting the Church Army to assist, the Rector said that since the first canvass was held in this Parish not enough emphasis has been placed on the spiritual aspect of Church promotion as we know it. It is impossible to keep pace with the comings and goings of families and some areas of the Parish have never had a house-to-house visitation. Two evangelists, Captain D. Quayle and Captain N. Roser will arrive in November to begin the preliminary work of carrying out house-to-house visitations for the purpose of bringing the rolls up to date. The Parish has to pay for their rail travel from Newcastle and each will be paid a small salary. Mrs Ogden [Fig. 6-11] has offered them accommodation, and two other parishioners have offered to lend them bicycles. After the visitation period there will be a Parish Mission next April. This is timed to be just before the next canvass and will be run by Church Army missionaries.

Evensong on Sundays is not well attended, in fact I think there has been a noticeable falling off in attendance since the introduction of television two years ago. The Rector has warned that, as this becomes more general, “parents will have to consider, in the training of the character of the young, if as families, we can morally and spiritually afford to let T.V. take the place of worship”.

After nearly nineteen years service at St Michael’s as organist, Mr Fred Harman has retired. In all that time he has only had two Sundays away. It was Mr Harman who

some years ago was mainly responsible for collecting the funds which enabled us to get an electric motor and blower for the organ and to carry out certain renovation work on the instrument. The new organist is Miss R. Everton, a science student at the University, who has had over six years' study of organ work...

PEARMAN'S LAST YEARS AT MITCHAM: 1961 and 1962

In April 1961 Reverend Reginald Pearman announced that, with the approach of his sixty-fifth birthday, he would retire in twelve months time, his resignation to take effect from the end of the Church financial year, i.e. 31st March 1962. Writing in the July edition of the *Mitcham Parish Messenger* of his impending retirement, he referred to the rapid growth of new residential areas and the tremendous shortage of ordained men:

This large and closely settled Parish, which stretches from the Waite Institute area on the north-east corner to Lynton and Clapham on the south-west corner, requires a much younger man, but even then will not be effectively worked until the Parish is in the financial position to support and maintain a larger staff than one priest.

When it is stated that two Church Army officers were fully engaged for six months prior to the Mission on a house-to-house visitation of the Parish and added 300 new family names to the Parish list of people who stated that they were members of the Church of England, making a total of approximately 700 families on the list, the task for one priest is impossible if it is to be done effectively. Take into consideration that most of four mornings each week are devoted to R.I. in schools, that he has to prepare and preach two sermons each Sunday, besides preparing the Day School lessons, and other addresses; add baptisms nearly every Sunday, plus parochial meetings, marriages, funerals, and interviews of various kinds, and then for four months each year, Confirmation classes, I am sure that thinking church people must begin to see – a little – the tremendous responsibility of a parish priest in such a Parish.

The Church Army Parish Mission, held from 23rd to 30th April 1961, had been “a very successful and encouraging event”. For the first time they were able to contact families in the Lynton and Clapham areas and also in the top part of Netherby. Both Councils and Vestries had readily accepted the Rector's suggestion to have a Mission before any second canvass, but when it came to making a decision as to whether or not to have a second canvass, there was a less than unified response.

At the St Michael's Annual Vestry held on 9th May 1961 it was agreed to engage the Department of Promotion to conduct a second canvass in September. By the end of the first three-year canvass they had completed payment of the cost of the new Rectory, however some £2,000 had had to be ‘borrowed’ from the general income of the Church to do so. Another item on their original list of ‘needs’, a toilet block, had been built at the rear of the Church during

construction of the new Rectory. But because of ‘extra disbursements’ the completion of Church renovations had been delayed. The outstanding ‘needs’ remained much the same: the restoration of the building, adequate funds for general Parish expenditure and diocesan commitments, and the addition of a meeting room with kitchen.

St Wilfrid's deferred its decision to a Special Vestry called for 11th July 1961. Writing in the *Mitcham Parish Messenger* just prior to this meeting, the Rector reminded St Wilfrid's parishioners that the first canvass had produced an “assured and regular income”, and that financially the Church “had never been in a better position”. However, he pointed out that of their list of ‘needs’ set out in the brochure for the first canvass, only the new organ and font had been purchased and installed. Much more finance would be required to fulfil their other aspirations of remodelling and building a vestry, meeting room and amenities. On top of this would be the cost of purchasing a dwelling for an assistant curate. If the Vestry should vote not to have a second canvass, Pearman warned:

I hope that members will come prepared to suggest some better method of church finance. But keep in mind also that at the end of March, 1962, when you are beginning to look for another Rector, that the Bishop will have to be assured that you can provide for and maintain financially whatever staff you expect to obtain, and if you want more than one priest in the parish then accommodation will have to be found, and for this you will require more finance.

St Wilfrid's Vestry voted not to hold a second canvass, opting instead to ask those already pledging to continue to do so for at least another two years. At that Vestry they also gave approval for the Council to “proceed with plans and specifications for alterations to the Church” and gave them “full authority to make any suitable arrangements regarding finance”. At another Special Vestry in December 1961 the Wardens of St Wilfrid's were authorised to purchase the adjoining house, No.2 Belair Road, as a dwelling for the hoped-for clerical assistant!

Nearly three years elapsed following the completion of restoration work on the southern nave of St Michael's before the Advisory Committee once more turned its attention to repairing the earthquake damage to the northern section of the Church. For those three years discussions had focused almost exclusively on solving the ongoing problems associated with St Wilfrid's and the provision of clerical assistance. It was not until May 1960 – six years after the earthquake – that the matter of restoration was revived, but by no means solved.

There were several other items of interest that our ‘local correspondent’ considered worth reporting on.

* * *

2nd October 1961

... You asked for news of the Church restoration. Sadly there is none, in fact we seem to have gone backwards! Some months ago it was found that the floor in the south part of the Church, which had been laid during the first phase of the restoration work in 1957, was infested with

white ants. It was in such a bad condition that the only sensible remedy was to pull it all up, thoroughly treat the whole ground area and put in a new jarrah floor. In one corner the floor had sunk six inches! Fortunately the termites do not appear to have got into the organ.

A lovely new window has been installed in the north wall of St Michael's in memory of Sir Samuel and Lady Burston. At one stage the Rector wanted to delay its installation until restoration work on the north wall is complete, but the prospect of this happening in the near future seems as remote as ever. There has been an ever-changing stream of architects, engineers and builders trying to find a solution. As far as the Rector is concerned the hold-up is due – apart from a lack of money – to “the inability to get our advisors to give a definite and decided opinion on the best way to tackle the problem”.

With such a dire shortage of clergy in South Australia moves are afoot to re-open St Barnabas' Theological College. After seventy years of valuable service it was forced to close in 1951 due to grave financial difficulties. Since then our young men have had to train in Morpeth, N.S.W., or go up to St Michael's House, Crafers, with the Brotherhood of the Society of the Sacred Mission. Our Rector has played a prominent part in the discussions directed towards the re-opening of St Barnabas' and the Bishop has indicated he intends to launch an appeal to raise funds for the project...

* * *

On 14th February 1962 a letter arrived from Bishop Reed advising that Reverend James MacDonald, then Rector of St Paul's in Pulteney Street, had accepted the incumbency and was prepared to begin his ministry in Mitcham in “about three months”.

After twenty-two years in the Parish of Mitcham, Reverend Reginald Pearman officiated for the last time as Rector on Sunday, 1st April 1962. The Wardens and Council of St Wilfrid's “generously agreed” to forgo their usual evening service and to have “one Parish Evensong at St Michael's to mark the last official service of the Rector”. As this occurred in the middle of Lent, and as there seemed no possibility of Reverend James MacDonald taking over before the middle of May, Pearman agreed to take most of the Holy Communion services at St Michael's over the Easter period.

Because he was still active in the Parish, the formal Parish farewell to the Pearmans was delayed until Friday, 27th April 1962.

* * *

To sum up. The Pearman era began with the outbreak of the Second World War. With it came heartbreak and sorrow, the need to comfort the bereaved, to balance parochial duties against those of being an Army Padre and to cope with the strict austerity measures which affected all aspects of Parish life. With peace came rapid industrial expansion and a huge influx of immigrants from war-torn England and Europe. As building restrictions were lifted large land holdings and old estates were subdivided to provide

housing for returned servicemen and their families. In turn this meant more parishioners to be visited, more students requiring R.I. in State schools and, later, a surge of interest in Parish youth organisations.

In 1952 there had been celebrations to mark the centenary of the opening of St Michael's. The building was beautifully renovated, the Centenary Memorial Terrace built and the future looked rosy. Then, in March 1954, came the earthquake which almost destroyed the Church and badly damaged the ancient Rectory. Pearman's final years were marked by contentious issues over clerical assistance, building a new Rectory and the frustration of being unable to complete the restoration work on the Church. When he left – eight years after the earthquake – the north nave and roof still awaited repairs!

Extracts from his long report to the Easter Vestry on 9th May 1961 provide, not only an overview of the Parish of Mitcham at that time, but also give an insight into the hopes and aspirations, the regrets and the disappointments of this First World War veteran whose long incumbency spanned twenty-two years:

This will be my 21st Annual Report to this Vestry of St Michael's and my last as your Rector... They have been very happy years and I am deeply grateful to God for all the help and support which I have received during my years of Ministry here. During that time the Parish has grown tremendously. When I was appointed in 1939 there were large open spaces in the Parish area, which of recent years have been closely settled.

You may, if you like, ascribe the increase to the natural growth in population, but it still indicates just so much more growth in Parish work, in organisation, and in responsibility, and it is this which, with advancing years I find is becoming a burden, which to my mind is too big for one man. Even in those early years the Parish had the services of a catechist, who did a limited amount of visiting and took some services. In addition there was then no Religious Instruction in State schools, a task which, with the increase in the number of schools, is now taking up (as many think) too large a proportion of the time of every parish priest...

Services have been maintained and I acknowledge a debt of gratitude which I owe to those priests who came to my assistance when I was in hospital, and also to Mr. E.R. Smith L.L.R. for his help at St Michael's all through the year when he so often relieved me of taking the Office of Evensong...

I would remind you all of the work carried out so ably by the Officers of the M.U., F.O.M., S.S., C.E.M.S., C.E.B.S. and Y.A.F. Some of these I have very little to do with. It has always been my policy, when there are able laymen and women to run these organisations, not to interfere. When my advice or guidance in some matter is sought, then I try to give such. But I have every confidence in the leaders in these various organisations, my personal regret is that with all my other Parish duties, I am unable to take an active part in such organisations ...

I can only say that I marvel and give thanks for the devotion, hard work and loyalty of the laymen and women who give of their time and talents to help and promote the

welfare of these various groups, and especially of those who do so much for the youth of the Parish. I wish that the members of the Church in this Parish could all see from 60 to 70 teenagers in this hall on the 3rd Sunday afternoon each month, due in no small measure to the interest, thought, planning and hard work and inspiration of Mr J. Nelson, who is also a Lay Reader and active member of St Wilfrid's Church Council, amongst other activities and responsibilities...

No Parish could properly function without the devoted leaders of the organisations for men, women and youth. I acknowledge with sincere gratitude and thanks, devotion to the work and service of God and their help and loyalty to myself. May God's blessing rest upon all their work for Him.

* * *

On 18th March 1962, two weeks before Reverend Reginald Pearman's official retirement, the Advisory Committee voted to accept a quote to proceed with the restoration work at St Michael's as from 14th May – three days after the institution of a new rector!

Meanwhile, at a meeting of the St Wilfrid's Parochial Council held on 11th February, the decision was taken to proceed with the extensions to that Church. A tender was accepted subject to finance being arranged and it was anticipated that the work would be completed within four months.

In April 1962 the situation in the Mitcham Parish bore an uncanny resemblance to that of almost a century before when, in September 1863, during an earlier interregnum the momentous decision had been taken by a handful of Vestrymen to double the size of St Michael's by building the south nave. The Reverend James MacDonald was about to be 'thrown in at the deep end', with building activity already underway at St Wilfrid's and about to begin at St Michael's.

* * *

A stained-glass window in memory of Reginald Henry Pearman and his wife Winifred (Fig. 6-12) was dedicated in March 1981. It depicts the boy Jesus as a carpenter and can be found behind the choir stalls on the south wall of St Michael's (see page 195).



Fig. 6-12 Reverend Reginald Pearman and Mrs Winifrid Pearman, c.1960. (Courtesy John Pearman)