

Part 1
1853-1900

Marion Stainsby

**PERSONAL FOREWORD
TO PART ONE**

The story of St Luke's falls into three fifty-year periods, and the first two seem to belong to a different world. Having grown up here for the last twenty-odd years of the middle half-century, and having now studied the first, I am feeling that I was bred and trained to try to record that past world.

My mother, a Melbourne girl, fell in love with this country village, with its trees and green hedges, when she came here on her marriage in 1926; and she never forgot the love and care which the church people gave her during the time she was bed-ridden in 1932. Many years later, after inheriting the secretaryship of the Highton Cemetery Trust from my father, she began making notes from its records with the idea of writing its history, but was not able to get much done because of her failing health.

My father's Leigh and Walter grandparents came to the Barrabool Hills in 1846 and 1851. They would have looked down the valley from Fisher's Hill before Highton was settled or church services were held. Perhaps it is fanciful of me to read too much into his words, but Dad always spoke about 'the church and the district', and was concerned for 'those who come after', in a way that gave us a great sense of continuity.

While belonging to a family with a sense of the past and a respect for keeping accurate records, my father was always very active in the affairs of both church and district, and I feel that 'the district' for him was something more personal than is implied in our modern talk about 'the community' or 'society'. In a country area, you knew who the other members of the community were, whether you liked them or not, and as the first settlers formed their families they

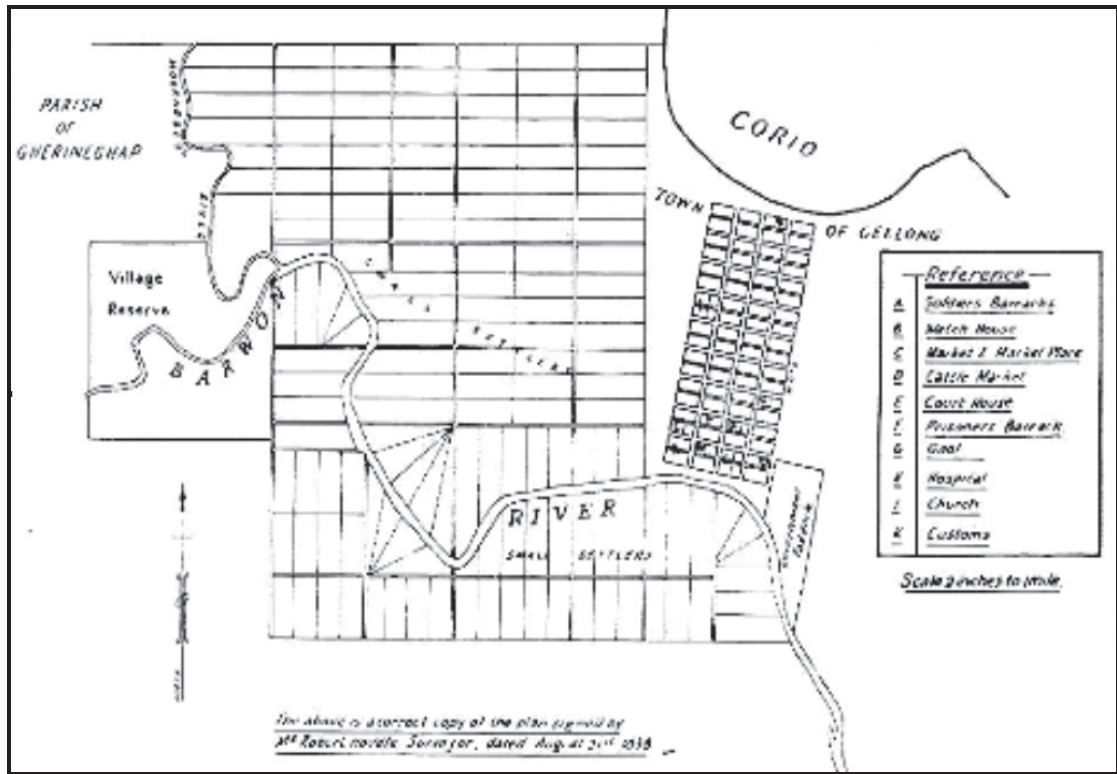
also wove a fabric of connections which in a generation or two meant that you were related by blood to many of them. For better or worse, it was 'our district', and 'our church' could not be distinguished from it, because 'we', the same people, were building both at the same time.

And physically, too, we were part of the Barrabool Hills, as our stock fed and our poultry scratched and our fruit and vegetables grew from their soil. It was a small, close world, and in writing about it I am conscious of all the interweaving threads that made up its fabric. I have tried to represent some of the complexity of their pattern, for example by naming the women and children so often lost sight of in histories that only refer to the names on committees - usually male in the early days - or by trying to be quite precise about where someone lived. If readers find this obscures the storyline, let me suggest that they skip.

But there are threads that continue to run right through into the present, and 'those who come after' are always doing their own weaving. Perhaps 'the district' has a different meaning today, but 'the church' and its people remain part of a fabric still held in the same solid frame, which remains steadfast through change.

Marion Stainsby

Steadfast Through Change



Above: 1838 Survey map of Geelong. Source: W R Brownhill, *The History of Geelong and Corio Bay, Geelong*.

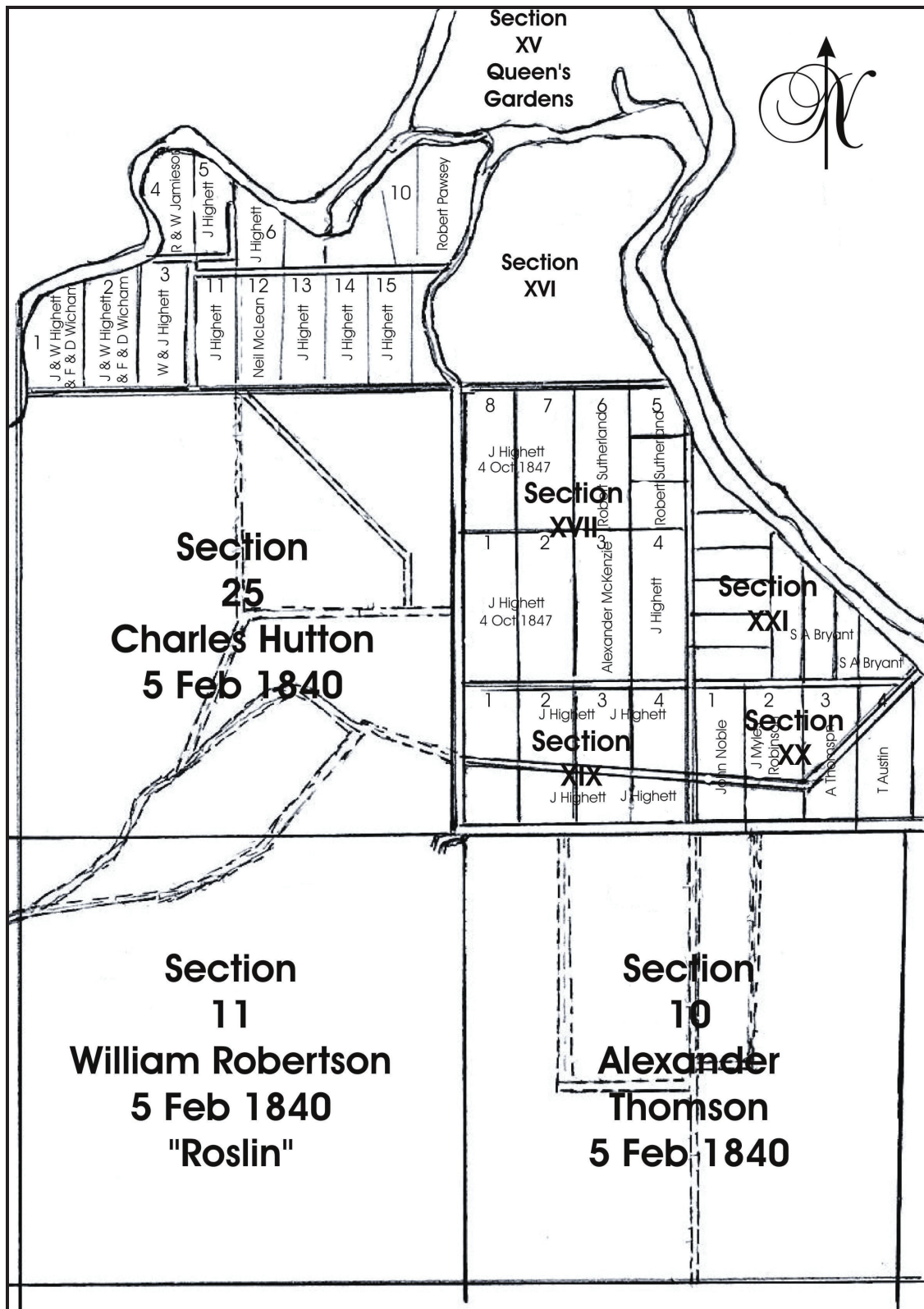
Chapter 1

THE BACKGROUND - THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF HIGHTON

While this is the history of one local church, it is part of the birth of a community, and each is related to the other; so their founding stories must be told together. No study of the first settlement of Highton has yet been published, although reminiscences have appeared in the *Geelong Advertiser*, notably articles by local historian J H Bottrell of Newtown about ‘the village over the river’ written in 1927 and 1931. Today, websites and other sources offer some inaccurate or misinterpreted scraps of information.

In recent years, the Geelong Art Gallery has acquired Eugene Von Guerard’s painting ‘View of Geelong 1856’. The Gallery also holds William Duke’s ‘Geelong from Mr Hiatt’s, Barrabool

Hills 1851’, which extends Von Guerard’s view further to the east up to Captain Fyans’ ‘Balyang’ in the curve of the Barwon. Both painters stood on John Hightt’s property. ‘Highton’, now known as ‘Montpellier’; and we can only wish that they had given us the view to the south as well, where what we now call Highton was born and christened in the years between the two paintings. But both artists added symbols of some aspects of Highton’s story. Duke shows two tribal Aborigines, already dispossessed of their traditional lands and living on the fringes of the new order; a few sheep, representing the first, pastoral, stage of settlement; and a fence and sawn-off tree stumps, asserting ownership of the land as Europeans understood it. Von Guerard has a dwelling and a patch of cultivation, roughly in the position of the vineyard to the north of Montpellier, although he adds a bullock cart going through a cutting that is not shown on any map.



Above: Part of Crown Parish of Barrarbool, showing Section and Allotment numbers, and names and dates for first purchases and grants. ('Crown Parish of Barrarbool', with the extra 'r', is used in legal documents identifying land; there is no 'Parish of Barrabool' unless in reference to a church organisation). Drawn by Lynden Smith and Marion Stainsby.

The government surveyor Robert Hoddle's assistant, H W H Smythe, drew up the first plan for Geelong in 1838, which included an area straddling the river, marked for 'small settlers' and bounded roughly by present-day LaTrobe Terrace, Church Street, the Moorabool River and Scenic Road, Roslyn Road, and the Barwon River. A 'village reserve' for Fyansford was marked out on both sides of the river, and it must have been expected that any settlement would grow up around that site. For the aboriginal inhabitants the river had been a natural focus; but for the 'small settlers' it remained a barrier for several years.

The present suburbs of Belmont and Highton were at first included under the general title of the Barrabool Hills. In the 1830s, fords at Buckley's Falls and at the site of the Breakwater further down were the crossing-places over the river; punts and bridges came later. For the first Crown land sales in 1840, the area outside the 1838 map was surveyed into 'country lands' on a one-mile grid, with allotments of 640 acres or more, and some large estates were bought by would-be pastoralists. The map on the previous page, the official survey of the Crown Parish of Barrabool (so spelt), County of Grant, gives the names of the first buyers from the Crown, and the date of their purchases; it shows that none of the mainly 25-acre allotments within the 'small settlers' boundary was sold for some years. The present Scenic Road was originally named Boundary Road because it marked the western edge of this area, and later the boundary between Barrabool and South Barwon Shires.

Alexander Thomson

Section 10, a square mile south of Roslyn Road, was bought by Dr Alexander Thomson, who was, in many ways, the true pioneer of Highton. A

Presbyterian Scot, he first settled in Tasmania (then known as Van Diemen's Land) in 1831 at the age of thirty-one, with his wife Barbara Dalrymple and daughter Jane. He obtained a grant of 4,000 acres of land there, and owned two small steamers, but he seems to have been a man who liked to have his fingers in as many pies as possible, and in November 1835 he sent fifty Hereford cows across Bass Strait with the first settlers from the Port Phillip Association. In March 1836 he came over himself, with his wife and daughter, as medical officer and Catechist to that Association.

His sheep grazed around the present site of Geelong, and soon he had brought them across the river at Buckley Falls, which by November 1837 was already known as his 'old station'.

He built his home, 'Kardinia', on the south side of the river, and the house, which he later enlarged, still stands in Barrabool Road, Belmont, at 1 Riverview Terrace; its name, which extended to his run, is an aboriginal word for 'sunrise'. From this base, his pastoral interests expanded as far as Waurin Ponds Creek, and beyond that to a run on Thomsons Creek. His social interests centred on Geelong and its welfare, and ranged from open-handed hospitality on the local level to pursuing the British Colonial Secretary to Vienna to lobby for a Bill granting a separate constitution for Victoria.

Although himself a Presbyterian, he was ahead of his time in his interest and participation in the practical affairs of other churches. The first mayor of Geelong, his activities are too many to list here, but it seems almost possible to glimpse him, a slimmer Mr Pickwick, still trotting busily around the district on his pony, 'Creamy'. It was said that his later financial troubles were due to his neglect of 'the prevailing rule of looking

well to his own interests before endeavouring to promote those of his fellow creatures'. We can certainly count his shepherds as the first white inhabitants of the Highton hills. One of his workers, John Glasscock from Suffolk, had been sentenced in January 1843 to transportation to Tasmania for seven years, for stealing half a bushel of wheat. When his term was served, Glasscock's wife and daughters came out to join him in 1853, and he and his wife brought up their granddaughter Mary Ann Wright when her mother died. Mary Ann married into the Wall family of Highton, and her great-granddaughter Carole Findlay is an active worker at St Luke's today.

No sales by Thomson within his Section 10 (Kardinia Section) were registered before 1851, so that square mile remained part of his run throughout the 1840s, and his sheep would have had access to it through the unsold land.

By the late 1840s, the collapse in the price of wool and mutton had made many of the country landholders divide and lease their land to smaller farmers, who cultivated and, in many cases, bought their individual farms. To the west of the present Highton, David Fisher, and the partnership of Swanston and Willis, offered small allotments for sale in 1850 in the proposed villages of Ceres and Merrawarp, one mile apart. Merrawarp already had its church (Holy Trinity) and school. Ceres had the Wheat Sheaf Inn; with thirsty quarry workers in Ceres, this may explain why it developed while Merrawarp did not.

David Fisher

David Fisher's Roslin estate extended for two miles westward and one mile south from the corner of Roslyn and Scenic (originally Boundary) Roads – Sections 11 & 12 on the Crown parish map, which

the original buyer William Robertson sold to Fisher two days after he bought it. In the 1840s, Fisher built his 'Roslin' on the home farm, within the angle of what is now Sunderland Road, and leased out other farms beyond it. (This home farm area was later bought back and subdivided by the Crown in 1907 into impracticably small blocks for closer settlement.) Most of the wider estate was sold in the 1850s. The estate, and the road, were probably named after the seat of Fisher's wife Charlotte Ross's clan in Scotland, Roslin Castle. The Fishers named Ceres, appropriately, for the goddess of corn and tillage, but the name may have been suggested to them by the Scottish village of Ceres (in fact named from a Gaelic word meaning 'wild cherry'). While Fisher's Hill, where the lookout stands, and Fisher's Road, which has been named Mount Pleasant Road Highton, have both lost the name of this district pioneer, at least Roslyn Road remains to remember him by.

John Highett

During the 1840s, however, another pioneer made his first appearance in this area. John Highett went first to Tasmania in 1830, when he was only twenty, with his elder brother William. They were the sons of Joseph Highett and Elizabeth Harding, and John was baptised near Weymouth in Dorset, though with family associations in Somerset and Dorset. Their father is variously described as a pastoralist, brewer, and gentleman. William, after whom the Melbourne suburb of Highett is named, crossed Bass Strait in 1838, but John had preceded him, and it is claimed that in 1836 John was the first to drive stock across the Dandenong Creek. He squatted near Carrum till 1839, bought a block in central Melbourne in 1837, and, with his cousin William Harding as an absent partner, took up two runs near Mount Hesse which he had visited in 1836. He

seems to have been always on the move. He was living at 'Petworth' on the Merri Creek in 1840, but advertised that estate for sale in 1841, and in 1842 the partners W C Haines and John Highett bought country land at Barrabool, about six miles west of Highton, between Pollock's Ford and Mount Moriac, which has been described as Highett's 'residence and home station'. John developed a reputation as a horse breeder, and in 1842 the 'Lady Squatters', Anne Drysdale and Caroline Newcomb, were hopeful of good foals after paying sixteen guineas to have two of their mares serviced by a stallion of Highett's at Pollocksford. He held a depasturing licence in Portland Bay in the 1840s, and also retained his land in Tasmania. He seems to have been a visiting landlord for most of his properties and runs, and made frequent trips across Bass Strait.

We find him taking part in a cricket match between the Melbourne and Brighton clubs on Easter Monday 1845, according to the reminiscences of 'Garryowen', who described him as 'a gentleman whose purse never ran below the high water mark'. On this occasion, he carelessly left £500 in banknotes in his coat pocket when he discarded it to play, and while the coat was returned the next day the notes were never traced. According to his family, that was just £7 short of the capital with which the brothers had arrived in Tasmania in 1830.

The partnership with W C Haines was dissolved in June 1846, and, as their employee William Hammond later wrote, Highett then 'went Westward about five miles from where Winchelsea now stands, and took up land near the Salt Lake ... now known as ... Murdeduke station.' Later that year, at the age of thirty-seven, he married Sarah Moore in Tasmania. The couple had

seven children, but it is not certain where they first lived; he seems to have retained from his bachelor days the habit of roaming. John's address on the 1848-49 Electoral Roll is given as 'Barwon River, 10 miles from Geelong' – that is, near Pollocksford, not in Highton.

Highett bought two Sections in the parish of Moorpanyal near Batesford at the Crown sales of 1846, and an adjoining six acres when George Hope subdivided in 1850. Bettina M Blackall, the author of *Batesford and its Early Families*, refers to him as having his 'first residential association' with those purchases in 1845 and in July 1850.

"He and later his widow Sarah always seemed to come out on top in any land deal involving his Moorpanyal sections, whether it concerned leasing, selling, or repossessing, an individual or the government. Many local farmers felt the effects of their business acumen."

These included the purchase of some of Highett's land near the Moorabool viaduct for the building of the Geelong-Ballarat railway. A more appreciative comment was made by J H Bottrell in 1931, when he wrote of the Highton land.

"... For some time after his father's death, the estate was managed by his eldest son, Mr John Highett. Like his father, he was a splendid type of man, strictly honest, and upright - one whose word was his bond. He left Geelong ... and soon became a Member of Parliament for Mandurang."

The widowed Sarah Highett bought Barrabool Allotment 6 Section XVIII, with other land, from Robert Sutherland in 1874. She may have returned to Tasmania, where her son Anglesea and

her sister Martha Steel lived, as her death is not registered in Victoria.

‘Highton’

Internet sites offering a brief history of Highton claim that “Grazier John Highett set up a farm and finished building his house on a hill overlooking the Barwon River in 1837”. This is incorrect, as Highett’s first recorded appearance in Highton was in 1847. The Barrabool parish map shows that on 6 October 1847 he bought four 27 acre allotments in Section XVIII east of Boundary (Scenic) Road - part of the ‘small settler’ portion of the 1838 plan. This was the site of his ‘Highton’, later known as ‘Highton House’, and by 1861 as ‘Montpellier’. The house is described as ‘unfinished’ in the 1851 ratebook. Another website claims that David Fisher had begun building this house in 1843; however, it was still Crown land at that date. Although an entry in Anne Drysdale’s 1843 diary says that Fisher was looking for a site to build his Barrabool Hills home in that year, he had already bought the location of Roslin house in 1840 and would be unlikely to build on land that he did not own; but it does remain a mystery why Mount Pleasant Road Highton was originally called Fishers Road, if he did not live there.

The eastern border of the Highton (Montpellier) estate was marked by an avenue running up from Fishers Road, later extended to Barrabool Road which had not then been surveyed. For many years this avenue was a landmark, and its line is still preserved by Montpellier Drive. In November 1847 Highett also bought Section 25, the one mile square section due north of Roslin which includes much of the Highview estate. It had been purchased from the Crown in 1840 by Charles Hutton, who sold it four months later to George McKillop and Henry Moor, all three perhaps being

simply speculators. Highett himself leased it out in small farms. In 1849 Highett bought many of the smaller blocks near Buckley Falls, owning most of the land for a mile west of Scenic Road within the curve of the river and the northern boundary of Section 25 – the site of Thomson’s Old Station, and by 1851 of Highett’s Mill which ground flour for the farmers of the Barrabool Hills, now subdivided as the Riverfalls estate.

In the late 1840s, then, Thomson and Highett were the two main landowners in what became Highton, at least on the east side of Scenic Road. Available ratebook records for the Kardinia Ward of Geelong begin in 1850, and then use only vague terms like ‘Barrabool Hills’. However, as Thomson was then definitely living at ‘Kardinia’, in Belmont, Highett can be accepted as the first major owner to live in Highton itself. His name appears in the ratebooks first in 1851: it is listed as an unfinished 8-roomed stone house and offices at ‘Highetts Hill’, a slab hut and 17 acres at ‘Barrabool Hills’ apparently occupied by Trudgen, and at the Barwon River for his water mill and a 6-roomed wooden building, which may have housed the mill’s manager Frederick C Morris - or perhaps the Highett family before the mansion was completed. This must be the house next to the mill, where Highett was living in 1859 according to his sale advertisement of January that year.

The birth registrations of the Highett children reflect the family’s mobility: John Moore, born September 1847, near Geelong; Joseph, November 1848, Hessemount; Thomas James, June 1850, Fyansford; Francis James, January 1852, Barrabool Hills; William Edward, October 1854, Geelong; Anglesea, born at sea in March 1856, named after the ship although with different spelling, and baptised in Bristol in August that year;

Sarah Jane, January 1858, Highton. The family had sailed to England on the 'Anglesey' on 24 January 1855, but John Highett, on his own, left Liverpool on the 'Royal Charter' on 18 January 1856, and reached Melbourne on 17 April 1856. Sarah and the children must have returned to Victoria, for we find her sailing to London again in March 1859 on the 'Owen Glendower' with six children, but without John, who followed on the 'Great Britain' to Liverpool in May 1861. The whole family, including both parents but without Thomas, who apparently died as an infant, entered Victoria from New Zealand on the 'Tararua' in January 1862. Although, as we shall see, John did his duty as a local landowner on the Anglican church committee, Highton does not seem to have seen very much of him.

The 'Village of Highton'

At the Crown sale in 1850 Highett bought three of the four allotments in Section XIX - three quarters of the 100 acres bordered by the present Mount Pleasant, North Valley, Roslyn, and Scenic Roads. He named the part of this purchase south of Barrabool Road 'the Village of Highton', and subdivided it into 57 lots, which he began selling in 1851. By January 1855, he had leased out the northern part of his 1850 purchase, from Barrabool Road to Mount Pleasant Road, and the part of allotments 1 & 2 of Section XVIII that were not the private grounds of 'Highton'. The fourth allotment, at the west end of this block between Barrabool and Roslyn Roads west of Valley Road, remained Crown land (see below). Highett also bought another 27-acre allotment north of Fishers Road, along the west side of Valley Road, early in 1852.

Highett soon attempted to move on from Highton, as he advertised his house and land for sale in 1855 'preparatory to his

leaving for England.' The sale of the house was unsuccessful, and it was leased in 1855 to Ambrose Neate, and in December 1858 to Edwin Hooper who converted it into the Montpellier Hotel, with picnic grounds and 'pleasure gardens'. Patrons would have earned their refreshment, as the route from Geelong was by punt and 'a few minutes' walk up the ascent.' The Highetts are said to have returned to Highton House in 1865, though John died at Queenscliff two years later. It is moving beyond our pioneering period, but 'the Highett boys of Highton' are mentioned as arranging games of cricket in Queens Park in the 1870s.

The Highett mansion was advertised in January 1855 simply as 'Highton', not 'Highton House' as it is referred to later. His workers and tenants on his land could be said to be living 'at Highton', but the addition of 'House' when referring to the mansion would become necessary as the use of the name widened. It has been said that the locality was first known as 'Highett Town', which was shortened to 'Highton'. But the dates show that while the term 'Highton' may be linked to the surname, it was the Highetts themselves who gave it to their house, completed in 1851-52, and it was they who named their 57-lot subdivision 'the Village of Highton'. An internet site on Mansfield, where Francis Highett later built his 'Highton Manor', says that John's 'Highton' was 'named ... after his family's farm at Weymouth, England', and this may be the correct explanation, though the English site has not been located.

Up to this point there was no 'town' on Highett's land. Local people remembered the nickname 'Highett Town', as a few still remember 'Mother Blow's Corner' below the entrance to Thoroughbred Drive, or 'Box Hill' on the south side of Roslyn Road where a few post-World

Steadfast Through Change

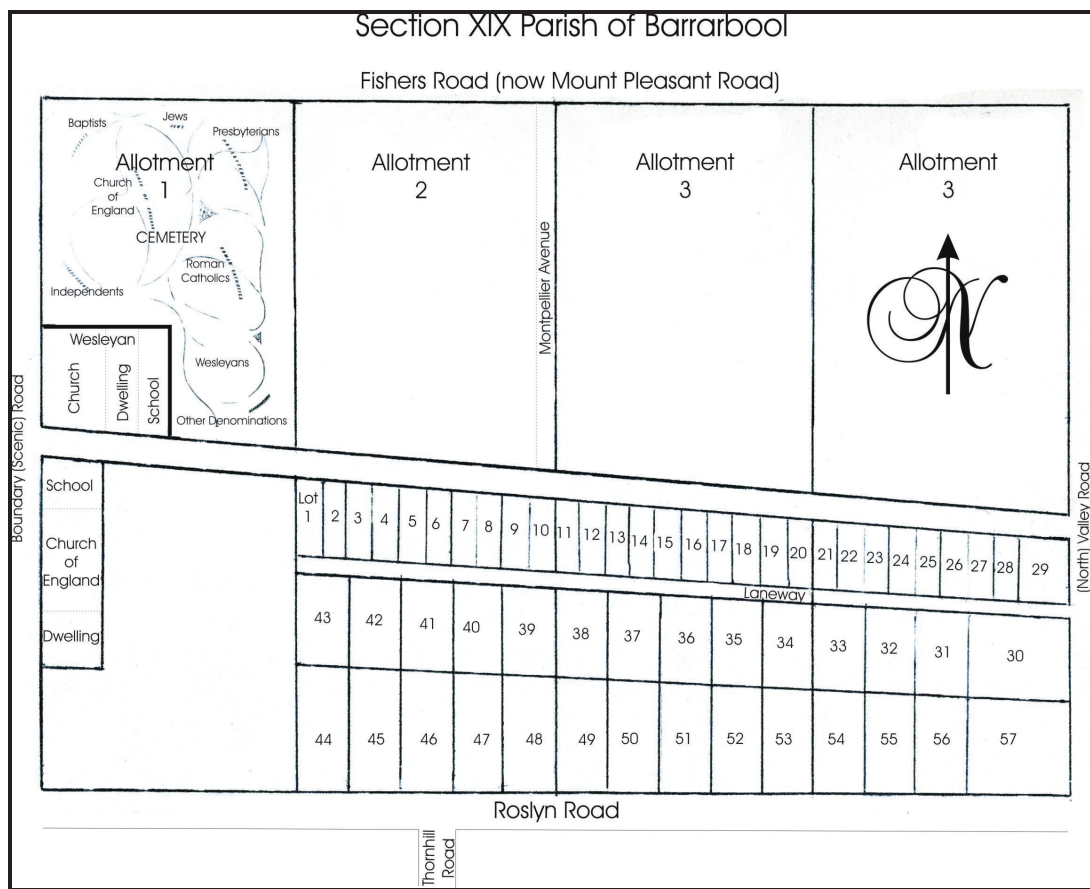
War II newcomers lived in homemade sheds made from Ford's packing cases while building their houses. 'Hightt Town' - not documented before 1854 - may conceal a dry social commentary. The fact that 'Highton House' was approached by a long avenue, with 57 blocks for more humble cottages ranged facing it at the bottom of its high hill, may have suggested to a few people the words of a well-known hymn (in a verse which has since been omitted):

The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them high and lowly
And ordered their estate.

Hightt's Village subdivision set out 29 house blocks along Barrabool Road opposite Hightt's gate, all but one with a frontage of 66 feet (about 20 metres -

about twice the width of many house blocks of that period). Behind these a private road ran parallel to Barrabool Road, with a double row of bigger blocks between them and Roslyn Road.

In the event, the Village lots were slow to sell, and seem to have been bought up in parcels by would-be investors, with no more than a dozen houses on them until over a hundred years later. The earliest sale record to hand is dated 11 June 1851, when lots 27 and 28 passed from Hightt through John Carmichael to Benjamin Goldsmith Levien, whose farm and dwelling opposite Queen's Park was later the subject of another painting by Eugene von Guerard; there is no indication if the purchase, which cost £10, was anything other than an investment.



Above: Section XIX Parish of Barrabool: Crown Grantees, and Hightt's Subdivision named the Village of Highton. Reconstructed from records of grants and sales, researched by Darcy Seller and drawn by Lynden Smith and Marion Stainsby.

While there may have been slightly earlier sales, the date should be noted; this was a crucial year in the history of the district. Only four months previously the fires of Black Thursday had swept up the gully the other side of Fisher's Hill, alerting settlers to the special dangers of their new environment.

In July 1851 the *Geelong Advertiser* reported that gold had been discovered, news that by the end of the year was emptying existing Victorian settlements and bringing a flood of new immigrants; soon the leisurely pace of development changed to a boom. A wooden bridge, known as the Barwon or Kardinia Bridge, had been built in 1848, but destroyed by a flood in 1852. Private and government punts operated there and at Levien's Crossing (Queens Park), until a new Barwon bridge was opened in 1859, and the Queens Bridge and Prince Albert (Prince's) Bridge in 1861 and 1862. But in spite of the difficulties in crossing the river, a community was coming into being at Highton.

South of the Village subdivision, across Roslyn Road, Alexander Thomson was selling off his Section 10, which was described in 1861 as being 'mostly occupied by the mercantile and professional gentlemen of Geelong, who have erected thereon beautiful and substantial residences.' In the Village itself, Levien's block was sold on by Stephen Cooke, in March 1853, to William Windmill, whose part in the founding of Wesleyanism in Highton is told in a later chapter. Another of the founding Wesleyans, William Balding, may have been a tenant of Highett's that year, in lots 49 and 50, which Joseph Balding later bought from its then owner Stephen Cooke in 1859; Cooke lost on the deal.

Joseph Asplin, a Bedfordshire man, possibly played a role in Highett's

attempt to establish a village, as he seems to be the first ratepayer in this area, recorded as occupying 'Wood 2 rooms & shop' in Barrabool Road in 1851 and 1852, although the term 'Barrabool Road' was used very loosely in the rate books. He may actually have been invited by Highett to provide the shop to attract other settlers, but his name had gone by 1853; perhaps he went to the diggings, for in 1854 he bought and resold lots 1-10 & 39-48. There is no record of another shop immediately after 1852, but James Nicol, who bought lots 23 & 24 in 1861, was running a post office and store from 1868. James was succeeded by his brother William until the 1890s, so this subdivision was the centre of the village life until that shifted further east in the 1900s.

As we saw, John Highett first appears in the Kardinia Ward rate books in 1851 (#15), and the name 'Highetts Hill' is only applied that year to his unfinished house, and to the entry which precedes it (#14), for Francois Amiet, 'Wood 2 rms & ground 35 acres'.

In 1852, there are four entries for 'Highetts Hill', one for 'Barrabool Hills' and ten for Barrabool Hills Road. This 1852 record gives a good picture of the growing settlement in that year. It lists in Kardinia Ward the following entries:

- 45, John Highett, River Barwon, 4 rooms.

Highett's Hill:

- 46, John Highett, 2 house (4 rooms) stable & mill
- 47, Highett / Trudgen, Hut & 17 acres
- 48, Francois Amiet 2 rooms 30 acres
- 49, John Highett, 8 rooms etc.

Barrabool Hills:

- 50 Joseph Aspinall [sic], 2 rooms & shop.

This was the 1851 entry described as Barrabool Road, Wood 2 rooms & shop,

immediately following the unfinished Highett house.

Barrabool Hills Road:

- 51 Theodore Mulder, 2 rooms & 3 ½ acres
- 52 John Hird, 2 rooms & 15 acres
- 53 Francis Bennett. 2 rooms hut barn stable & 100 acres
- 54 C R [sic] Thorne, 7 rooms kitchen cottage stable etc
- 55 Thomas Adcock, 2 rooms shed 15 acres unfinished
- 56 Robert McPherson, 2 room hut & 80 acres
- 57 Breguet & Amiss [Amiet], 6 rooms 25 acres
- 58 Franston [?], 2 rooms & 5 acres
- 58 Alexander McKenzie, [unspecified] rooms & acres
- 59 Francis McGill, 4 rooms & 20 acres
- 60 George Spriggins, Hut 17 acres & brickfield.

Only three of these names can be placed within the boundaries of Highett's Village subdivision.

In 1853 even Highett himself is entered under 'Barrabool Hills Road', while names from 1852, some in Section 10, are entered as 'off Barrabool Hills Road'. The term 'Highett Town' makes its first appearance in 1854, with 9 inhabitants:

- 114, Joseph Aspline, weatherboard house & ground;
- 115 Stephen Cooke, weatherboard house & ground;
- 116 Henry Clarke, Brick house & ground
- 117 George Allen, Tent
- 118 Eugene [sic] Allen, Weatherboard house & ground;
- 119 John Biebirage [Betteridge?], Weatherboard house;
- 120 William Windmill, Stone house
- 121 John Theodore [Mulder?], Brick skillion;

- 122 Evan Lewis, Weatherboard 3 rooms & garden.

Evan Lewis had bought his land further down Barrabool Road the previous year (see below), but apparently the use of the nickname had already spread a little wider than the Village subdivision. In 1854, 'Strawberry Hill' and 'Mount Pleasant', both in west Belmont, and also 'near Thorne's', around Thornhill Road, are given as locations, and Highett himself comes under 'Barrabool Hills'. But in 1855 these are all lumped together under 'Barrabool Hills' once more.

In 1859 Highett again advertised his Highton properties for sale or lease, referring to some of these Section 25 tenants as the current occupants

There were other events that must be noted before leaving the 1850s. Alexander Thomson was a supporter of the Sydney Presbyterian minister John Dunmore Lang, a fiery activist for all sorts of good causes. One aim they had in common was the wish to encourage the migration of hard-working, God-fearing Protestants to the colony. Lang, in particular, was alarmed by refugees from the Irish potato famine whom charitable Catholics were trying to resettle in Australia, seeing this as a sinister popish plot to outweigh the respectable population with ignorant and superstitious peasants. But Lang had charitable motives also, and Thomson certainly shared them. When Lang chartered ships to bring his hand-picked migrants to Victoria, Thomson was waiting to help them settle on the land that their passage fee was intended to secure. There were difficulties about this, and some migrants were unhappy with the outcome, but a number of the Geelong's leading families arrived under the scheme. The first of these ships to land at Point Henry was the 'Larpent', which arrived in June 1849. In Chapter 3,

the story of Thomas Adcock shows one way in which this event affected the landscape of Highton, as Thomas, and then his brothers, settled here in Thomson's Kardinia Section.

Owing to Thomson's general busyness and to administrative difficulties it is hard to document the exact dates of his land dealings, but an index of conveyances by him covers most of the 1850s; the actual occupation of the land could have been earlier. John Bennett, who said he was born in Highton in 1848, was the son of Frances Bennett of Kardinia Farm in Thomson's Section 10 (see 1861 map). As well as Section 10, Thomson bought, in October 1850, Allotment 3, Section XX, a 25-acre rectangle running from Fishers (Mount Pleasant) Road to Roslyn Road, and taking in the elbow of Barrabool Road at the present Highton Shopping Village. This included some of Kardinia Creek, although the parish map and McWilliams' map of 1861 are a little hard to reconcile on the subject of the exact boundaries. The two allotments to the east of this, which include the rest of Kardinia Creek and extend to Roberts Road, were bought in 1852 by Thomas Austin of Geelong, and sold or leased by him.

A 9-acre strip of Thomson's allotment was conveyed to Evan Lewis by February 1853, for £88. It did not run all the way north to Mount Pleasant Road, though Lewis bought that smaller piece for £181 three years later. Lewis was one of Dunmore Lang and Alexander Thomson's migrants on the 'Larpent' in 1849, and was thirty-eight when he arrived with his wife Ann and their four children. (From 1854, Thomson conveyed the western strip of this allotment, in separate parts, to the widowed Hannah Fitchett, who with her husband and five children had been 'Larpent' migrants also. The Fitchetts do

not seem to have lived in Highton themselves, so this may have been a purchase by their land and labour agency in Geelong's Market Square. J H Bottrell wrote in 1931.

"... Continuing along the road [from the river], we had on each side a lovely hawthorn hedge ... Behind these hedges was situated the Lansdowne Nursery. Mr William Evan Lewis, who came out in the Larpent in 1849 from Cheltenham in Gloucestershire, acquired this land. In the Old Country, Mr Lewis had a large nursery at Cheltenham, which he called the 'Lansdowne Nursery' after the Marquis of Lansdowne, the chief nobleman in that part. Mr Lewis gave sufficient land to the Government to make a road, and that is why the Barrabool Hills Road is in this part."

In fact, the course of the road had been surveyed in 1848, and the land was not included in Lewis's purchase. The farmers of the Ceres area may already have been unofficially using this gradual route as an alternative to Fishers (Mount Pleasant) Road, although it has been said that another plan, to take a road up along the Kardinia Creek valley round the southern end of Wandana Drive, was defeated by the landowners (presumably Thomson and Fisher). The parish map also shows a possible route up Thoroughbred Drive and curving round the crest of the hill to meet Barrabool Road opposite Three Springs Road.

Most of the fourth Crown allotment in Section XIX was granted in the 1850s for community uses. The Church of England and the Wesleyan Methodists shared much of it with the Barrabool Hills Cemetery. The cemetery, which the 1857 survey shows divided into curving sections allocated to different denominations, was later set out on straighter, and less sectarian, lines. It is

Steadfast Through Change

sometimes regarded even today as being attached to St Luke's, but this has never been the case.



Above: Part of Andrew McWilliams' 1861 map of the Parish of Barrarbool. Supplied by Graham Hobbs.

Steadfast Through Change



Above: 1970 version of McWilliams' 1861 Map, with names inserted, drawn by John Meehan. Supplied by Stewart McAdam

The Barrabool Hills Cemetery, Highton

A letter to the Secretary of the Cemetery Trust, R J Leigh, from the Department of Lands and Survey, dated 25 July 1952, states:

“With reference to your query concerning the Barrabool Hills Cemetery, no record can be found of any gazettal of this area as such, but information in this Department indicates that the land was set aside for a ‘General Cemetery’ in 1855, and comprised 10 acres 2 roods 5 perches ... (the present site). Trustees were appointed by the Governor in Council on 1 Oct, 1855 ... They were Messrs David Fisher, Edmond Roche, Charles Cox, John Herd and Alexander Mackenzie.”

The first surviving register book is dated 10 October 1856 and covers seven years. The entries are divided according to denomination, and the pages relating to the Presbyterians have been cut out by some irreverent hand. Of what remain, the first burial is that of Agnes Dodd, aged twenty-eight, in the Church of England section, on 11 October 1856. There are 145 burials in the book, dating up to 27 July 1863, and 111 of them are children under ten or infants, including eleven stillborn. Two women are buried with their babies, and at least six others were of child-bearing age. John Walter, interred in the Wesleyan section on 5 December 1862 aged sixty-three, is the oldest person recorded in the book.

Perhaps following the English practice of labelling anyone as ‘C of E’ unless they specified an alternative, the burials show the majority (86) were registered as Anglican, with 37 Wesleyans, 8 Roman Catholics, 3 Independent, and the 11 stillborn not classified; the absence of Presbyterian entries is unfortunate,

especially as the cemetery served the Ceres and Barrabool area also, the latter having a high proportion of Scots and eventually its own Presbyterian school and church. The Irish Roman Catholic enclave at Gnarwarre eventually gravitated to Moriac.

The Church of England, and the School

Earlier, the application for land submitted by the Wesleyan Church in November 1853 identified their requested block as ‘separated by the Church of England reserve by the Barrabool Hills Road’. The Wesleyans will be discussed in the following chapters, but this letter implies that the Church of England land had already been reserved – perhaps automatically, by authorities used to the existence of a national church in England. In England the parish of the Established Church was also a unit of civil government, and the typical school was an Anglican one. Other denominations often set up their own schools where they could. The government of the new colony of Victoria, created by separation from New South Wales in 1851, at that period made land grants to churches, regarded as agents ‘for the purposes of good order and discipline’, giving them the right to use, but not resell, the land.

The history compiled by Mr and Mrs Hedley Pott for St John’s Anglican Church begins as follows.

“The year – 1854 ... A building Committee of three members was supervising the construction of a stone school building at Highton. These three men were prominent in the life of Geelong. [They were] John Highbett ... Edward Sandford ... [and] Charles Nuttall Thorne.”

It states that the first of three financial grants of £300 by the government's Denominational Board had been made on 4 November 1853; application had been made earlier for £600, to which £300 was to be added from local subscriptions. In the end the building cost £1,100. One purpose of the Board was to encourage the different denominations to share their schools, and it is not clear whether the Wesleyan Methodists of Highton at first ran their own day school, or whether their building was used only as a Sunday School and chapel. The Wesleyans do not appear to have been granted anything more than their land. The school on the Anglican land became a Common School, after the passing of the Common School Act in 1862, and as a Wesleyan joined the committee in 1864 it must have been a joint project from then on.

Maps of the two Crown grants show each denomination's land surveyed in three sections, each with half an acre for a school, an acre for a church, and another half acre for a clergyman's residence, but there no sign that these layouts corresponded closely to what was actually built. In fact, the 1861 map suggests that the Anglican school was built in the middle of their allocation, at the top of the slight rise in Boundary (Scenic) Road which has since been almost levelled down.

This school building was the site of the first recorded Anglican service in Highton, which was held in 1858. If this record is accurate, a comparison with the Wesleyan story is interesting, though it must be remembered that Holy Trinity Church of England, Ceres, was already in existence, and had a resident vicar. A further comparison may be made between the social and financial position of the members of the building committees of the two denominations. The three gentlemen named as the

building committee of St John's were also the first trustees.

Edward Sandford was a partner in the Geelong firm of Sandford and Harwood, solicitors, from June 1853, and took over the practice of Joseph Belcher in 1854. He was an advisor to the Corporation of the Town of Geelong, but seems to have left the district in 1856 or 1857. He was later a parishioner at All Saints Church, East St Kilda. Not being a Highton resident, his role on the committee may have been simply advisory.

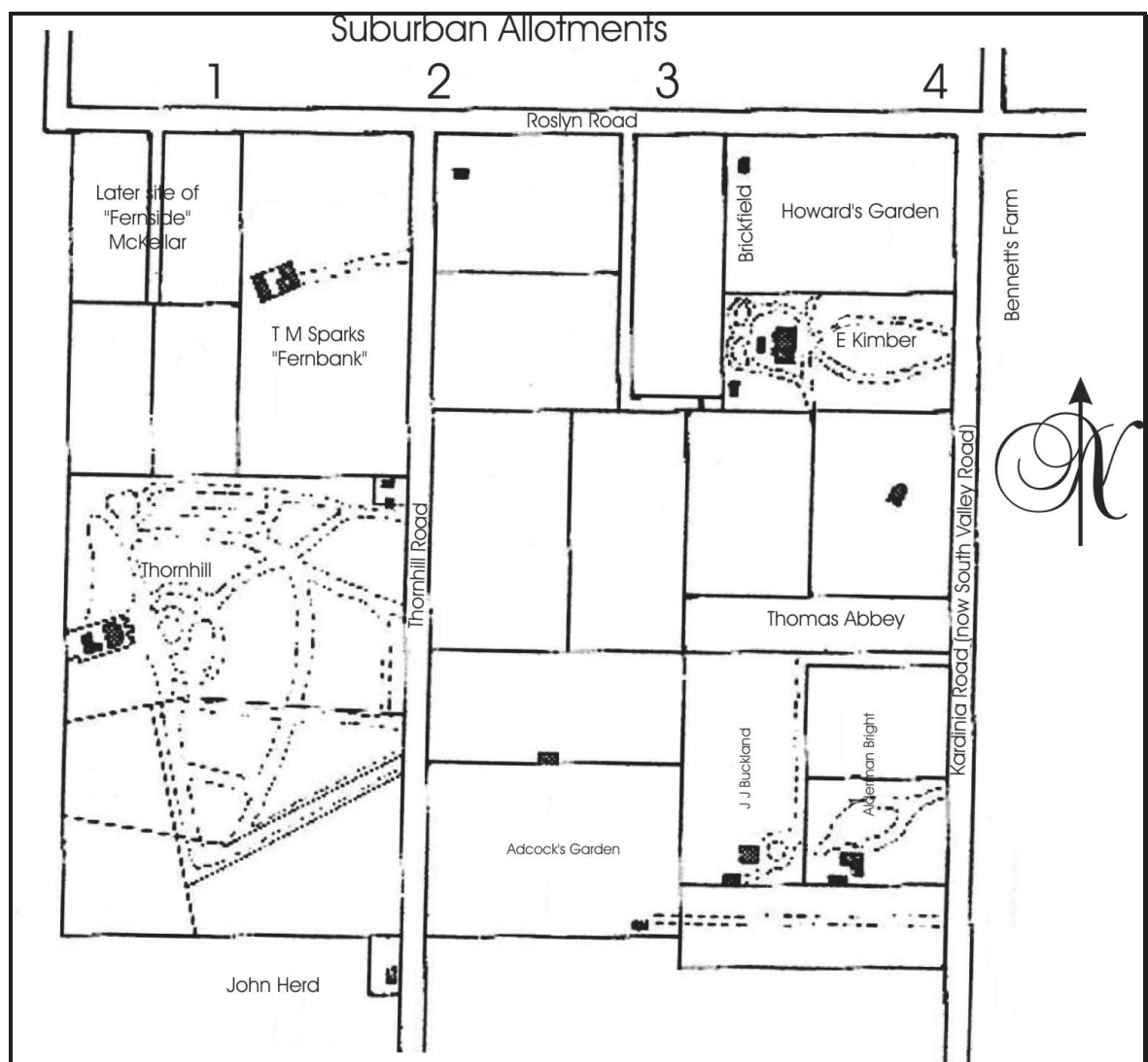
The name of Charles Nuttall Thorne is preserved in Highton by Thornhill Road, which gave access to his Thornhill Estate. He seems to have bought a large portion of Thomson's Section 10 in 1851 or 1852, the 'gentlemen's' Section. Thorne apparently left Highton for Newcastle in about 1861, and died in 1864, leaving his wife pregnant with their tenth child. Bottrell says he came to Highton in 1847, and it may be that his purchase from Thomson was sealed by a gentleman's agreement and a handshake before it was officially registered.

Thorne was a high-profile figure in Geelong business circles – a president of the company that established the Melbourne-Geelong Railway, a member of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, and one of the founding members of the Shire of South Barwon. His family believed that his failure to leave much wealth was due to his agreement with his business partners to take land instead of cash or shares when the partnership was dissolved. He appears to have been the seller or mortgagee of land in Section 10 held by J Smythe. W G McKellar, Thomas Adcock, Thomas Abbey, Joseph Howard, and T C Harwood (Sandford's partner, who succeeded Thorne at 'Thornhill'), as well as three pieces in Section XIX allotment 2, held by Joseph Asplin.

Steadfast Through Change

There is no documentation to identify the local Wesleyans involved as a building committee for their first brick church in the 1850s. But information given in the Potts' account can be compared with the Wesleyan building committee formed in 1867. It does appear that there was some attempt to link the Anglican school with other denominations, as its committee in 1862 included William Higgins, solicitor, of 'Shoubra', son of an Independent (Congregational) minister and superintendent of that denomination's Sunday school in South

Valley Road. The other members were all Anglicans: G F Belcher of 'Adzar' (now 10 Brassey Ave), government land officer, financial broker and land agent, and son of solicitor Joseph Belcher; Joseph Wiltshire, farmer, innkeeper, and keeper of the Kardinia tollgate; George Synnott of 'Fernside', a 14 roomed two storey mansion which later became incorporated into the fabric of St Catherine's Orphanage; and Robert Gould, who owned several lots in Highett's Village.



Following Page: Thornhill Estate in the early 1850s. The present South Valley Road was then called Kardinia Road, and Roslyn Road was still unnamed. Source: Geelong Historical Records Centre. Redrawn by Lynden Smith and Marion Stainsby.

George Frederick Belcher, of Irish stock, is described in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* as a man who “accepted rather than sought municipal and public office”, and was “sustained by a simple faith through shattering bereavements”. His many benefactions included the land on which St John’s Church was built in 1866-67, on the corner of South Valley and Roslyn Roads. Apparently no attempt had been made to erect a church on the Barrabool Road site.

In 1864, the Anglican School Committee included John Highett once more, and his fellow Anglicans; Rev. C S Perry, Rev. J H Edwards and Rev. W Hutchinson; Francis Bennett, farmer of 100 acres along the east side of Larcombe Street, director of Corio Quartz Mining Company, and memorable for having christened one of his daughters ‘Kardinia Park’; his neighbour William Herd, gardener, of the Iona Avenue area; Archibald Chambers (miller); Caleb Day (draper); Adam Steel Park (banker); and also John Walker Roberts, grocer and Wesleyan, who was a trustee of the Geelong Vineyard Company; as well as two to whom the Potts assign no denomination – Thomas Parker, solicitor, and Thomas Adcock, nurseryman and Congregationalist (see chapter 3).

To quote the 1931 article in the *Geelong Advertiser* by J H Bottrell:

“The foundation stone [of St John’s Church] was laid on November 22 [1866] at 12 p.m. ... by the Very Reverend Dean Macartney ... [who] said a short while ago the place was inhabited by wild animals, or, perhaps worse, savages; but it was now cultivated and inhabited by Christians. At the close [of this service] most of those present proceeded to Mr Belcher’s where they enjoyed his hospitality. This gentleman not only gave the land, but also donated £200

towards the funds, and presented a very large and handsome Bible and prayer book. In the afternoon a bazaar was held ... In the evening a tea meeting was held. It was said at the time that ‘never before has Highton witnessed such an assemblage of fashion and beauty’.”

The Congregational Church

The Congregationalists were also represented in Highton for many years, although they did not apply for a land grant. They appear to have been rather ecumenical, and met in South Valley Road on a small block that is now the mouth of Jewell Place. Margaret Frewin and Lorraine Phelan state in their book on early Geelong churches:

“In approximately 1854, a weekly prayer meeting commenced in the house of Mr T Adcock. As numbers grew, the meetings were held in a cottage lent to the congregation by Mr G F Belcher. As the cottage could be required at any time, the congregation decided to build a proper church on land donated by Mr Belcher. On the 16th November 1869, the new Church opened in Highton. The weatherboard structure measured 20 feet by 30 feet and had a capacity of 100 worshippers. Services were conducted on Tuesday evenings by Ministers of various denominations, and on Sunday evenings by preachers connected with the District Congregational Union. In April 1885, a concert was held to purchase an organ for the Church. This church was a branch of the McKillop Street Congregational Church.”

Writing of William Higgins of ‘Shoubra’, Bottrell stated the following.

“... on the retirement of Mr T Adcock, he [Higgins] became superintendent of

the little Congregational Sunday School on the east side of Valley Road where today the land has been excavated.”

Higgins, a later President of South Barwon Shire, had arrived on the ‘Larpen’ in 1849 with his parents and siblings, at the age of 15. His father, the Rev. William Higgins, was a Congregational minister, and a desirable settler in Dunmore Lang’s eyes. The second William Higgins founded the family firm of solicitors eventually known W & W Higgins, and the third William Higgins built ‘Corowa’ (later rechristened ‘Carramar’) to the west of ‘Shoubra’ in the 1880s, the two properties running along Roslyn Road from Valley to Thornhill Roads.

Another paragraph in Bottrell’s article states the following.

“... At the corner of [South] Valley Road and Bonsey Road the Rev. Mr Pawsey had his home. For many years he preached without fee or reward in the Ebenezer Independent Chapel in Marshall Street, Chilwell. This old historical building is now at the rear of the Marshall Street Baptist Church. Mr Pawsey often preached in the little Congregational School already referred to. Services were held here on Sunday evenings, and there was also a midweek service. His son, Mr. C Pawsey, the Revs. D McKenzie, C S Y Price, Messrs Davey, G Mitchell (the [State School] teacher), W Gurr and others took services occasionally.”

But before the Highton Anglicans or Congregationalists, its Wesleyan Methodists had gathered to worship and then to build.

Chapter 2

**THE BACKGROUND
- WESLEYAN METHODISM**

John and Charles Wesley

The year of the first survey of Geelong, 1838, was also the first centenary of what is celebrated as the birthday of Methodism, 24 May 1738. John Wesley was an Anglican clergyman, educated at Oxford, who throughout his life insisted that he was and would always remain a member of the Church of England. He wished the members of his 'societies' to attend and receive the sacraments of their parish church, the Church of England 'by law established', and originally saw his role as that of being a roving preacher calling people to a personal conversion. Unlike other Nonconformist denominations, Methodism was not based on a rejection of any teachings of the established church of its time. In principle Wesley was always respectful of authority and had no theoretical objection to the tradition that it was handed downwards from Jesus through the apostles to bishops and local clergy.

At the same time, in a country where ordination offered a career for the younger sons of the gentry who could not inherit the family property or purchase commissions in the army or navy, many of them had little sense of a religious calling and no training, and sometimes did not even appear in the parishes which supported them by their compulsory tithes. In such circumstances, religion often became a very shallow and formal thing, and little more than a sign of social respectability; religious enthusiasm was slightly indecent. And after two centuries of religious wars and persecutions, it was a natural reaction for the country to want calm, even at the price of stagnation.

The name Methodist was first used as a sneer at the Wesley brothers' extremely methodical way of organising the prayer life and charitable works of themselves and their friends at Oxford. Of the two brothers, John was the elder and accepted as the decision-maker, although Charles the hymn-writer was sometimes ahead of him in their religious experience.

On that May evening in 1738, an astonished personal acceptance of God's love for each individual erupted like a rocket into John's tightly-disciplined life, and this very rational man 'felt his heart strangely warmed', an experience which seems to have transformed him and became contagious among his followers. Based on a personal love-affair with God, their religion became for them an unfolding life-time commitment, and Wesley's concern was to provide pastoral care to enable this relationship to develop. He established a carefully worked out structure for the running of groups of believers, or 'societies' that he founded.

Generations after his death, certain meetings of Methodists were conducted according to the agenda he had laid down, a series of 'questions' to be discussed in turn; and one of these was always, "What more can be done to promote the work of God in this place?" – an active and forward-driving emphasis.

The main element of Methodist preaching was love – the acceptance of God's love and the expectation that once this love was accepted it would flow out naturally to other people. Wesley shared with his fellow preacher George Whitefield the Reformation stress on salvation as the free gift of God and not something earned by 'good works', but he separated from Whitefield by emphasising that Christ had died 'for all', and not just a chosen elite.

Wesleyans were called to ‘spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land’, and to Wesley holiness primarily meant active love, not just avoiding sin and getting safely to heaven. Making this world a better place for everybody before moving on to another world took a high priority. Nonetheless, Wesleyans looked forward to heaven as eagerly as others of their time, and fired their expectations with some rollicking hymns. Some of the hymns written by John and his brother Charles would acquire especial meaning for later migrants:

**“There all the ship’s company meet
Who sailed with the Saviour beneath.
With shouting each other they greet,
And triumph o’er trouble and death.”**

Many Anglican parish clergy were suspicious of all this ‘enthusiasm’, and of Wesley’s unconventional outdoor preaching, especially when it began to attract large crowds in its first years, the period of the attempted uprising of Jacobites known as ‘the Forty-Five’. To support his followers, Wesley organised what he called a ‘Connexion’ – not a separate denomination, but a system within the Anglican church for his travelling preachers to circulate around a specified area, their ‘circuit’, to found and nurture local societies.

During his long lifetime, the force of his personality and the affection in which he was held kept his Connexion together, and his preachers would gather to ‘confer’ with him. Wesley came to accept lay preachers within each circuit, but unlike the ordained they did not have to move on to different circuits, so they were known as ‘Local Preachers’. When he reached the age of 80, the leaders of ‘the people called Methodists’ began to agitate for the formation of an organisation or ‘Conference’ which could serve after his death. In the last seven years of his life, he did create a

legal body that after he died in 1791 had to decide whether they were a separate denomination, whether they could merge with the Established Church, and other questions of authority, discipline, and emphasis.

Wesley’s personal story displays one characteristic in particular – his willingness to learn from experience, or as he might put it, to obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit. His father once said of him as a child, Our Jackie would not attend to the most pressing necessity of nature unless he could give a reason for it, and people of this temperament can cling too stubbornly to all their opinions once these are formed. Perhaps Wesley with his rigid discipline could have gone this way, but his awareness that something was missing in his spiritual life laid him open to his first transforming experience. Having learnt one lesson, he was then able to assess new circumstances by his sense of God’s activity taking place within them. This led him to accept innovations that would have shocked him in the past, for by training and temperament Wesley was conservative and fastidious.

Methodist ‘Societies’, Class Meetings, and Class Leaders

When his ‘heart-warming’ occurred in 1738, he began to be open to such practices as outdoor preaching, and later to the possibility that lay men and women might be able to direct other people to God as effectively as, or sometimes better than, ordained clergy. As his movement grew, Wesley, a firm believer in authority and the apostolic succession, even found himself ordaining preachers to go to America when he could find no bishop willing to do so. His own life was a paradox, and the later story of Methodism continues his practice of openness to change.

In spite of Wesley's comparatively 'high church' views on many matters, the promotion of the work of God took priority in what he saw as cases of necessity. It could be said that as a result he constructed a network of intensive pastoral care from presbyters or elders – his 'class leaders' - operating inside the framework of a liturgical and hierarchical church.

The basic structure for Wesleyan Methodists was formed by Wesley's original pattern - attendance at (Methodist) preaching and (Anglican) worship, and then, for the converted, his distinctive innovation - the 'class'. In theory Wesley disliked the concept of democracy, but in practice he established a system that trained lay people, both men and women, for leadership.

Under the general guidance of an ordained preacher, usually itinerant, his Class Leaders would each provide pastoral care to a small group of society members. They were supposed to supervise the spiritual development of the members, and 'backsliders' could be deprived of their quarterly membership ticket which allowed them to receive communion at the hands of the ordained Wesleyan ministers (who were required to use the Anglican form of service); but not only spiritual care was provided, as the regular small class fees built up a fund to assist in cases of material need. The agenda set out for their regular Leaders Meetings included 'questions' on the state of the classes, who was sick, poor, or 'disorderly, a review of the membership roll, and the standard 'What more can be done to promote the work of God in this place?' These Leaders were a specific group, somewhat equivalent to elders, and their role is distinct from what might be covered by a modern reference to 'leaders of the church'.

Class Leaders, and others, attended a circuit Quarterly Meeting and each circuit had its Superintendent Minister. Several circuits formed a District, governed by a yearly Synod with a ministerial Chairman, and the whole body was governed by a Conference. Apart from the classes, these terms remained in Australian Methodism up to the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977.

Most of our earliest Highton Wesleyans were baptised in their local Anglican church back in England. During the nineteenth century Methodism was still defining itself, and there were some breakaway groups with slightly different emphases and variations in roles within the church; but the rifts were mainly caused by local clashes of personality rather than theological disagreements. Two of these other Methodist groups, the Bible Christians and the Primitive Methodists, later had chapels in the Ceres/ Barrabool Hills area, but the Wesleyans were the pioneers in Victoria, even before Anglican clergy. It is said that a Wesleyan local preacher from Tasmania, Henry Reed, 'read and expounded a portion of Sacred Scriptures, and offered prayer to Almighty God', for a Melbourne congregation of six – John and Henry Batman, William Buckley, and three Sydney aboriginals - in 1835. Later that year, on 18 October, John Pascoe Fawkner is recorded as having 'read prayers from the [Anglican] Book of Common Prayer and a sermon to his household and others.'

Joseph Orton

Although it has been claimed that the first ordained clergyman to lead a church service in the Port Phillip District was the Rev. Joseph Orton, a Wesleyan, this ignores the services conducted at Sorrento by the Anglican chaplain, the

Rev. Robert Knopwood, during the brief settlement there in 1803-4. Orton had recently been appointed District Chairman for Van Diemen's Land, and Henry Reed and others persuaded him to visit Port Phillip to survey the effect of white settlement on the aborigines. He held two services in Melbourne on 24 April 1836, the second an open-air service in the afternoon, and used the Book of Common Prayer on both occasions – applying the Wesleyan rule that “Whenever Divine service is performed in England on the Lord's day in ‘Church-hours’ [i.e. the Anglican church], the officiating Preacher shall read either the Service of the Church, our venerable Father [Wesley]’s abridgement of it, or, at least, the Lessons appointed by the Calendar”. [At the 11 a.m. service] “... on the premises of John Batman [the] liturgy was read by Mr Orton, the responses were led by James Simpson, Esq. The tunes were raised by Dr Thomson, afterwards of Geelong [and a Presbyterian]”.

Orton's diary says that, at the end of his discourse on the rich young ruler, he ‘took occasion to show the propriety of a consistent deportment on the part of the European settlers’, to ensure God's blessing and not his curse on all they undertook. In the afternoon, with a greater number of Europeans and about fifty aborigines present, Orton appealed to

“... the intelligent part of my audience on behalf of these poor degraded creatures, among whom they have come to reside, and whose land (which is comparatively flowing with milk and honey) they have come to possess, endeavouring to show their incumbent duty, on the principle of common equity, to use all means to promote their temporal and spiritual welfare.”

Orton was recovering at the time from seasickness after ‘a prolonged and unpleasant’ voyage across from Tasmania. His health had been impaired by his missionary years in Jamaica, where he had been illegally imprisoned in disgusting conditions by slave-owners who resented his criticisms. At the time of his visit to Melbourne, the official abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire was still two years in the future, and while his empathy seems limited, his concern for justice was clearly a passionate one. In 1807 a well-organised twenty-year campaign had finally defeated arguments about the effect on the British economy that outlawing the trade in slaves would have. But Orton knew that similar arguments about the sacredness of the property rights of slave or land owners still remained to be overcome, and there was a danger that contact with a race that was considered clearly inferior could trigger further exploitation.

Other comments by Orton were more positive, describing the aborigines as ‘a shrewd people, showing ... a latent capacity for instruction’, and he was genuinely interested in studying them further. But his best service to them was not so much in personal contact as in his administrative role. At this time Australian Wesleyanism was under the control of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in England, and Orton lobbied both them and the civil government for more support and greater justice.

The Tuckfields and Hursts

Orton returned to Hobart, but as a result of his pleas the Rev. Benjamin Hurst and the Rev. Francis Tuckfield and their wives sailed from England in November 1837, with two other Wesleyan ministerial couples bound for Tasmania and Sydney. Hurst was to be superintendent of the Mission in Port

Phillip, but his health suffered on the voyage, and the Tuckfields crossed Bass Strait before him – Sarah Tuckfield, like so many pioneering wives, already pregnant with their first child. In 1839 there was a small but flourishing society of lay Wesleyans to welcome them, two of whom, Edward Stone Parker and James Dredge, both local preachers, had been appointed by the British Colonial Office as assistant Protectors of the Aborigines. The Wesleyan cause in Port Phillip was linked from the beginning with concern for mission, which, though it was expressed as bringing the gospel to unbelievers also demanded justice and practical care.

Bunting Dale

The Rev. Benjamin Hurst settled in Geelong in February 1839, but was soon stationed with Tuckfield at Bunting Dale, where land had been set aside for the aborigines to cultivate, to provide for their own support. The Tuckfields had first arrived there with a three week old baby. Each of the two ministers spent eight days every two months at Melbourne and Geelong alternately – a gruelling programme, as travel was by no means easy in those days.

It is to the credit of the Wesleyans that in stationing their ordained ministers they had given first priority to the mission to the original occupants of the new land, and been prepared to rely on lay leadership within the white settlements. But both the government and church authorities in England were too far removed from the situation to understand the difficulties caused by differences in cultural values that the missionary families were having to master on the front line. Both bodies wanted measurable results to justify any financial outlay, and were dissatisfied with a lack of converts either to Christianity or to a European lifestyle.

Meanwhile there was considerable opposition to the chosen site from the local squatters who wanted access to river frontages and the best soil; their influence also gradually whittled down the total area reserved for the mission.

The Hursts moved to Sydney in 1842, but the true identification which the Tuckfield family developed with their people was not recognised as the rich experiment it was, and later generations must pay especial tribute to Sarah Tuckfield, who taught alongside her husband, and, while he was away preaching, also gave the Aborigines the gift of her trust and need when she reared her children without the support of her own culture.

With pressure from without and lack of support from within, the Bunting Dale Mission was finally abandoned during 1848, and the Tuckfields moved to Geelong, where their seventh child was born. That year the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Society in Geelong agreed that they had not fought hard enough in defence of Tuckfield and the Mission, and blamed themselves for neglecting to take action against white exploitation of various kinds. They asked: "... where are the poor creatures we have driven from their soil? It is deplorable, an undeniable fact, how bad has been our treatment and neglect of them ... the surrounding settlers were the cause that had so injured the Aboriginal people. Why were they such a Godless set of men? We have not wrestled with God to turn their hearts; we have refused to be our brother's keeper as well as the poor Aborigines".

Geelong Wesleyans

In those ten Bunting Dale years, the two men, and later Tuckfield alone, were also travelling over a large area, including Melbourne, to hold services and minister

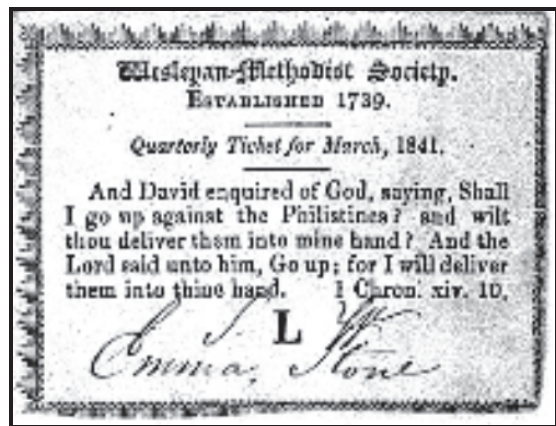
to the growing number of Wesleyans, as well as to any who needed them. When Orton visited Melbourne again in April 1839, he had found that already 'the Methodist Society had swelled to the number of thirty members'. Orton himself came to Geelong in early May that year, and conducted a service in David Fisher's barn by the Barwon (now Faggs Mitre¹⁰ extension), at which the singing was led by Caroline Newcomb. In October 1840, deferring his longed-for return home to England, he was appointed to Melbourne to take charge of 80 members, 4 Leaders and 7 Local Preachers. The first Quarterly meeting of the newly-independent Melbourne Circuit was held in January 1841. Orton died at the age of 47 on his voyage home in 1842.

Geelong Wesleyans record that 'the first sermon in this place' – that is, by an ordained Wesleyan minister – was preached by the Rev. Francis Tuckfield on 28 July 1838. His congregation met in Dr Thomson's parlour at 'Kardinia', and on other occasions in Fisher's barn. Caroline Newcomb was said to have been converted at one of these services after attending class meetings. However, it is also said that the first class meeting in Geelong was led by James Smith, a layman, who arrived in 1840. A second class was formed in 1841 under the leadership of James Sanderson, whom Caroline Newcomb succeeded as Leader.

These were the ministers and leaders of the earliest Wesleyan community in Geelong. Later, in 1841, the Rev. Samuel Wilkinson joined the Circuit, and by February 1842 the Geelong Wesleyans had their own little church in Yarra Street. As they could not get an ordained minister of their own, they appointed the layman James Dredge as a hired Local Preacher, after he had resigned his appointment as Assistant Protector. Dr Alexander Thomson provided him with a

rent-free cottage. Dredge's health failed and he returned to England, dying on the voyage like Orton. He was succeeded by the Rev. William Lowe in 1846, the Rev. W Cox Curry in 1847, and then in 1848 by the Rev. Francis Tuckfield after the gallant failure of Bunting Dale.

Tuckfield was the first minister of the new Geelong Circuit, which began in that year with a total of 134 members, and included the Barrabool Hills. He was followed by Rev. Frederick Lewis (1850), with the Rev. William Lightbody assisting him in 1852, and Rev. Richard Hart from Sierra Leone in 1853. It was asserted in 1914 that the first Wesleyan service in Highton was conducted in 1853 in the Windmills' house by Frederick Lewis.



Above: Wesleyan Methodist Class Tickets for 1841 & 1855 Supplied by Eric Thomas.

Chapter 3

**PUZZLES, AND 'A NEAT LITTLE
BRICK CHAPEL'**

While we have a precise date for the birth of Methodism, there are in fact several possibilities for the birth-year of Highton Wesleyanism: 1853, 1854, or 1855 – or even 1851! Before the Highton Church Centenary, the Secretary, R J Leigh, began making notes on its history, one of which says, “The earliest records shown in books in possession of R J Leigh 1951 date back to 1860 in the Treasurer’s Book”. In fact there are also entries for the end of 1859 on the second page of that Book, but the point he makes is that in 1951 ‘only verbal records remain’. No earlier records have since been discovered locally, so we have to work out the story of the congregation’s first years from a few scraps, up until the beginning of the extant Highton records; minutes of the Church Committee only go back to July 1867 (and the Sunday School records only to 1884).

It is obvious from these financial accounts that by early 1860 the church had been a going concern for some time. Leigh goes on “the Trust then had a debt of £288.7.0 & in Dec that year the Rev. D J Draper gave a grant of £100 & reduced the debt to £188.7.0. At that time a Mrs Morrison had a loan of £400 to Highton & Ceres which had been 3 times renewed at 5.5%”.

A loan from a Miss McCandless is also mentioned, and there is an entry “To Proceeds of Anniversary [£] 63.3.3” dated 23 December 1860. (Confusingly, this is on the Debit side of the ledger.) The two pages after this entry also show a Debit entry (of £13.12.2) “To Proceeds of Anniversary” dated 17 December 1863, which includes tickets and entry to the associated Tea Meeting. This is

followed by entries for Proceeds of Anniversary in March 1865.

So we have anniversaries of some event being celebrated from 1860 to 1865, with a switch from December to March in 1865. The Sunday School anniversaries later were held at the end of the year and its officers appointed at an annual meeting in November, so the most likely explanation is that the December entries are a reference to this; and as its Jubilee was celebrated in 1906 we can accept that the Sunday School began at the end of 1856.

But what about the church? In reply to an enquiry, the Secretary for Lands wrote on 25 July 1952: “... following an application dated 24 November, 1853, (apparently first made in connection with other sites on 26th December, 1851) by Rev. Wm. Butters, His Excellency the Governor approved on 18 February, 1855, of 2 acres, in Allotment 1 Section 19, Parish of Barrarbool, being set aside for Wesleyan Church purposes”.

Although its use was granted, the land remained the property of the Crown. By the time the land grant was officially approved in early 1855, the foundation stone had already been laid, and the letter also refers to applications made in 1851 and 1853. Mrs Morrison’s loan ‘to Highton and Ceres’, mentioned in the accounts, suggests that Ceres was one of the ‘other sites’.

Following Two Pages: Earliest local document: financial accounts.

[illegible]

In		Account Current	By	50
1859		By paid Miss Independent Loan	1200 . .	
		" " Interest on ditto	15 . .	
		" " 90 Interest on £300 Loan.	8 18 2	
		" " Mrs Morrison share of Interest		
		" " on £400 loan. Highton & Co.	15 . .	
		" " Share of Discount on Acceptance		
		for £400 - 3 times renewed	12 . 6	
1860	May 23	" " Discount on Bill	5 . .	
	26	" " Bill due	24 14 7	
	26	" " Bill due	260 4 10	
		" " Discount on two Bills	13 5 .	
	27 29	" " Bill due	260 4 10	
		" " Discount on 264.46	6 19 8	
1861	May 21	" " Bill due	264 4 6	
		" " Discount on 274.42	6 19 8	
	May 23	" " Bill due	274 4 2	
		" " Discount on 274.8.2	7 1 .	
	27 6	" " Bill due	274 8 2	
		" " Discount on 285.48	2 8 6	
	27 9	" " Bill due	285 4 8	
		" " Discount on 288.4.0	2 12 4	
	27 11	" " Bill due	288 4 .	
		" " Discount on Red Dishes Exp	8 9	
		" " ditto on 188 7.0.	11 11	
1862	May 23	" " Bill due	188 7 .	
		" " Discount on Bill due June 16 th	4 17 3	
		" " Accounts for repairs &c &c	55 8 10	
	June 16	" " Bill due	186 19 .	
		" " Discount on £190.0.0	5 . 4	
			£2900 13 1	

The application of 26 December 1851 was made by the Rev. William Butters as District Chairman; his request for sites for Wesleyan expansion would be part of a strategy for the whole Victorian District, and need not imply that there were already Wesleyans demanding their own building sites at Highton and at Ceres. (In fact, the Ceres Wesleyan Church was built in 1855 on land owned by Stephen Thomas and apparently given to the church to make up for Thomas's having occupied a nearby site reserved by the subdivider, David Fisher, for a Presbyterian Church).

The first District Meeting (later known as District Synod in Australian Methodism) of the Victorian church, which previously had been part of the Australian District, was held on 9 September 1851. There were three other ministers present beside Butters and the District Secretary, the Rev. Frederick Lewis. By the end of that year, the effects of the gold rush had brought enormous changes to society, and William Butters was writing to England asking for more ministers to be sent out.

William Butters

Butters had come to Victoria after serving the convicts at Port Arthur and the residents of Hobart. He and his successor as Chairman, Daniel Draper, were both remembered as great administrators and builders, who had to cope with an influx of population, and with changes in government policy towards the funding of denominational schools. Faithful to Wesley's concern for furthering education, the Wesleyans had the largest number of day schools for any denomination in Victoria, but in 1854 the basis of funding was altered from the number of scholars taught (a fifth of Victorian scholars were in Wesleyan schools) to the number of each denomination reported on census returns

(Wesleyans being about one fourteenth of the population). Both Butters and Draper battled, unsuccessfully against the new policy, and both worked towards the founding of a Wesleyan Grammar School, which was opened as Wesley College, Prahran, in January 1866. Butters established a Wesleyan Immigrants' Home in Melbourne to provide shelter for the floods of newcomers, and to keep them from drifting away in the upheaval of the gold rushes. Draper also reorganised the finances available for new churches by selling some of the Wesleyans' original block of land in Collins Street to fund the building of Wesley Church, Melbourne, and give 'important aid' to four suburban churches 'and elsewhere'. A Wesleyan Chapel and Building Fund was formally established in 1857, and our accounts suggest that it supplied £100 to help Highton on 16 December 1860.

Isaac Harding

The Rev. Isaac Harding was one of three ministers who came from England in 1853 in response to Butters' appeal for more. In a letter dated 1 June 1855, he wrote:

"My esteemed predecessor, the Rev. F Lewis, with his helper, Mr Hart, completed our principal Church in Yarra-street, at a cost of £3,000, of which a floating debt of £850 has lately been cancelled by our liberal people of Geelong. At South Geelong, a brick chapel has been erected ... At Chilwell one has been built ... A brick chapel is also completed at Tuckfield [Drysedale]... A stone Chapel is also in course of erection at Ceres, amidst the cornfields of the Barrabool Hills, which will cost £500, and at Highton a neat little brick Chapel was opened the other day. These, besides five other Chapels of wood, have been erected during the

past year, while five Day schools have also been established.”

R J Leigh was referring to this ‘neat little brick Chapel’ when he wrote in the 1950s: “Worship was held in a small brick building at the rear of the present Sunday School ... only verbal records remain”.

We cannot be sure whether Lewis, Hart, or Harding had the main oversight of the first Highton Wesleyans, as the later system of pastorates does not seem to have applied, but we may be sure that local preachers were conspicuous in conducting services here before the brick chapel was built. By 1858 the circuit had only two ministers, and thirty local preachers. Establishing preaching places seems to have been the first move in Methodist expansion.

The letter by Isaac Harding comes from the 1886 jubilee volume, *The Early Story of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Victoria*. The page on which it appears, frustratingly for us, opens with the words, ‘The years from 1853 come within the memory of many living and need not be amplified.’ Harding is recorded as the ‘father’ and first editor of *The Wesleyan Chronicle*, a Victorian journal first published in July 1857, just prior to his departure for New Zealand in March 1858. It is unfortunate for us that his newspaper was not there to describe the erection of that little brick building from the laying of its foundation stone to its opening, over which he must have presided.

The 1886 jubilee history says: “... Mr Harding had something of the ardour and spirit of a pioneer Bishop of the Far West. There was just at that time a danger of contracting debts in reckless fashion ... But the peril had the effect of inspiring Geelong Methodists with a wholesome dread of debt, and of

provoking those heroic efforts which have been made from time to time to encounter it, until the Church has attained a state of financial relief and repose which look in the eyes of others almost Elysian. Mr Harding ... had the ... fame of an ardent appetite for Church building, a line in which he was had some worthy ... successors”.

‘Borrowing without a probability of paying’ was one of the evils which John Wesley had told his class leaders to rebuke their members for practising, so there was a moral as well as a practical reason for this dread of debt.

Daniel Draper

Genial Daniel Draper had been a builder by profession, apprenticed to his father, a village carpenter in Hampshire. An Anglican by birth, he became a Wesleyan, and then a minister, in the face of strong disapproval from his father. He was sent to New South Wales in 1835, at the age of 25, then to South Australia, and in 1855 became Chairman of the Victorian District in place of William Butters. Unlike Butters, his talents lay in administration rather than in preaching ability; he loved to quote against himself a letter he had received from ‘A Well-wisher’: “Dear Mr Draper – permit me to give this unasked for advice respecting your Preaching; condense! Condense! Condense! More thoughts, fewer words!”

His especial contribution was his eye for a beautiful building. In England, the ‘chapels’ of denominations other than the established church tended to be plain, utilitarian buildings, and Draper acknowledged that “... some of our friends are apprehensive that in the erection of these Gothic structures we are departing from the simplicity of original Methodism”.

But he shrewdly argued that such buildings could command a much better congregation than badly constructed ones. As the 1868 freestone chapel was built the year after St John's, local pride may have supported Draper's argument at Highton.

Draper held a special place in Methodist history because of the manner of his death. He and his wife Elizabeth were returning to Australia in January 1866 from a trip home to England when his ship, the 'London', sank in the Bay of Biscay. It was recorded that when the ship was doomed he and two other clergymen on board took turns at working the pumps and conducting prayers. Survivors quoted Draper's words, "The captain ... tells us there is no hope, that we must all perish, but the Captain of our salvation says there is hope for all". Though the traditional Methodist version of this story omits the other clergymen and the pumps, they too were very much in the spirit of John Wesley.

Building – and Dating - the Brick Chapel

The 'neat little brick chapel' was probably built of local bricks made from the soil of the Barrabool Hills. The map on page 18 shows an 1852 brickfield belonging to George Spriggins, in Roslyn Road opposite the primary school. Another brickfield was owned by Joseph Spicer, who lived in Albert Terrace at Strawberry Hill. Bottrell wrote the following.

"[His] house faced Barrabool Hills Road. He came from Market Harborough, in Leicestershire, and was a brickmaker. He not only made the bricks out of a clay-hole on the same site, but also built most of the house. At the time of the diggings – the "roaring fifties" – he paid as much as

a pound for a mould for making bricks. His son, Mr Archibald Spicer ... was one of the pioneers of the Belmont Methodist Church and Sunday School, and was an early member of the Temperance Life-Boat Crew."

Spicer and his first wife Elizabeth, with three-year-old William, reached Victoria in June 1853. When Elizabeth died, Joseph married Mary Ann Bethune in 1854, and may have settled here in time to provide good Wesleyan bricks for the little chapel. As it survived for less than twenty years, it is to be hoped that it was not the bricks that crumbled.

The only contemporary dating for the building is this notice in the *Geelong Advertiser* on Wednesday 29 October 1854.

"WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH

Barrabool Hills – The foundation stone of a place of worship on the Barrabool Hills about three miles from Geelong, will be laid on Wednesday evening at five o'clock. A sermon will be preached on the occasion, and a collection made in aid of the building fund.

**Isaac Harding,
Superintendent Minister
Mission House Yarra-Street
14th October 1854"**

It is worth noting that here the location is not named as Highton, but no other place would fit the description - even though in fact the four-mile stone stood opposite the church in Barrabool Road. Note also that the circuit administrative centre was called a Mission House as opposed to a local church.

But we have no report, or date, of the opening of this chapel for worship. What would have Isaac Harding have meant by

‘during the past year’ and ‘the other day’ when writing on 1 June 1855? Until well into the 1900s, the Church Anniversary was celebrated around April – in fact, the Anniversary Tea Meetings were held on Good Friday – but that was after the second, freestone, church was opened in 1868. But as the early accounts include the proceeds of an anniversary and Tea Meeting in March 1865, it could be that this celebrated the opening of the church in the March following the laying of the stone in October 1854.

But if the Sunday School celebrations in years ending in 6 establish that it began in 1856, as we assumed, why were 1904 and 1914 the years the Church celebrated its Golden and Diamond Jubilees? It might appear that they commemorated the stone-laying, but that was not in March.

This question arose in the early 1950s, when planning for the Centenary celebrations began. After checking what counted as the beginning of Highton Wesleyanism, the Church decided to celebrate it in 1953, basing this on the belief that the first Wesleyans were meeting in people’s homes that year. The brief history of the Highton church in its Centenary booklet of 1953 summed it up as follows.

“At a meeting in 1853, when services were being held in the homes of Mr W Balding in Roslyn Road and Mr Windmill in Valley Road, it was decided to build the first Wesleyan Church, of brick, which was opened in March 1855.”

But what was the source of this belief?

J C Lawton asks Questions

An annotated letter dated 6 January 1938 is preserved in the files of St Luke’s. It was written by the Methodist historian,

Rev. J C Lawton to R J Leigh, who, as church secretary, later wrote the Centenary booklet quoted above. Lawton had previously compiled the chapter headed ‘Notes on the Circuits’ in *A Century of Victorian Methodism*, published in 1935. The dates for Highton and Ceres are given there as 1853 and 1855 respectively, and Leigh knew the book well. Whatever Lawton’s sources, it is clear that he later considered the information in the book to be unreliable.

Next to Lawton’s queries, the recipient Rowland Leigh jotted down a few answers. Lawton asked for help to locate certain places ‘associated with early Methodism in & about Geelong... dating from 1853.’ He added: ‘... all the places mentioned were places in the Geelong circuit before & after 1853 – at which regular services were held’.

The first is ‘Windmills’, and Lawton comments ‘Mr Bottrell says this was in Valley Road Highton’; beside this, Leigh has written (and misspelt) ‘Ferman’s Hotel’. Over the page, Lawton says that Highton and Ceres first appeared ‘as such’ in March 1855 and November 1855 respectively, while ‘Windmills’ and ‘McCanns’ had disappeared.

In his note on ‘Merrawarp’ at Ceres in this letter, Leigh gives his source (his cousin W L Walter); the rest of his answers must also come from local knowledge derived from other people, as he himself was not born until 1878. This would be what he meant by ‘verbal records’.

As a member of the rebuilding committee after the 1926 tornado, he had almost certainly been in touch with J H Bottrell (as the letter shows that Lawton had been), who wrote a *Geelong Advertiser* article about the church for its reopening in 1927 in which he quoted Harding’s letter. At the 1952 meeting

that decided the Centenary date, it was this article which Leigh cited, although he mistakenly claimed that it named the month. The present writer remembers Rowland Leigh using Bottrell's article in compiling the Church Centenary booklet, as well as the article on 'the village over the river', in which Bottrell thanked 'the very large number of kind friends' who gave him information. It may be that Bottrell had personally told Leigh that it was March, but we have no evidence for this.

Our only written source from an earlier time merely adds to the confusion. In April 1914 the *Geelong Advertiser* described the church's Diamond Jubilee Tea Meeting, when the church treasurer, John Harrison, 'read the report of a meeting held in 1853 ... when it was decided to build the present church'. What Harrison would have called 'the present church' in 1914 was not this 1850s brick chapel but the southern arm of the old sandstone building, which was not built until 1868; so the *Geelong Advertiser* might have simply printed the wrong decade - there is a 'List of Promises made at the Public Meeting held at Highton, Oct. 17. 1863' (which includes a total of £3 collected at the meeting) when indeed it was decided to build the second church. Certainly no report dated 1853 remains. A cutting of this 1914 *Advertiser* account is still in the church archives, and probably preserved by Bottrell as a fellow Wesleyan and a Geelong historian, as well as by local families - including that of John Harrison, who though he died in 1944 was always revered as a source of local knowledge during his lifetime. It would be by no means the first time that a 'local tradition' has been based on a mistaken report. Bottrell was born in 1855 and Harrison in 1856 near Port Fairy, so neither could draw on personal recollection.

So there are still mysteries about that first little brick chapel, as well as its builders and earliest worshippers. Although R J Leigh's notes from verbal sources in the early 1950s say it was 'at the rear of the present Sunday School' (north of the still existing freestone building), its exact site was not recorded. (An 1869 reference to planting trees 'between the old and new churches' supports this general direction.) The 1861 map on page 50 puts it actually on the northern border of the Wesleyan site, but as the original was drawn on a very large scale this may be simply due to a slight tremor of the draftsman's hand. Like its successor in 1868, it was built within the section of the original survey allotted for a dwelling for the minister.

Following Four Pages: Letter from Rev J C Lawton, historian, to R J Leigh, with annotations by Leigh.

Carsonage
60 Blyth St.
Brunswick N. 10
1937

Mr R. J. Leigh
Highton

Dear Roll.

you will be surprised
to receive a letter from me, but will appreciate what
it is that I want when you have read the contents.

There recently came into my possession some documents
which through the years have been well kept. They
throw some light on methuensis in about Geelong.

There are names of places however, about which
I know nothing - never having heard of them.
One or two of them, I think, have to do with Beres
& Highton. I thought perhaps you might help me out.
I wrote to Mr Warr, but they beat him.
Here they are - dating from 1853.

Windmills (Mr Bothwell says this was in Valley
Road Highton) Fermann's Hotel
Mc Canns Is this Beres? M. Firth's
Russell's Hill first service (Gleason's
Home)

Lawne Not known

Devonchurch Beres. I know - but where?
in Cross Rd. to Devon

Kensington & shifted Fermann's by Absolom Scholes
& afterwards shifted by Walter & Sons
Unknown by Honey & Cennick enlarged in days of A. R. Edgar

2

Hampstead

Creek (Freshwater Ck?) *Gov's Boro preachers there*

Dallawell

Emley Emley Bank

Bray's Station

Railway Works

Green Hill

Merruawair (*Mr. Bothwell says Ceres but what part.*) *W L Walter says Huggitts opposite Holy Trinity.*

Wellington (*not Wallington - at least not spelt near Mt Cemetery opposite this*) *late Sam Leake*
Dou's preached there

("Ceres") & ("Wighton") - as such first appear
 Nov. 1855) (March 1855)

"Windmills" "McBarns" have meanwhile disappeared.

I would be glad of help, as I want to write an article if possible. I have to try & get the 1st eleven years of Methodist history. There must be so early "plans" about, they would be useful.

3

If I fail to get the enclosed information, I will probably write to "The Advertiser" - & some of the old folk will put me wise.

As far as I know, the early records do not exist, but from what I have, I can see that many churches do not know their age.

I compiled part of the "Centenary Volume", & much of the data supplied is evidently quite wrong. I am hoping to go into the Melt. Library look for dairies. Mr Dredge's - the first preacher - is there.

This may or may not interest you, but I enjoy collecting old records, and if I can clear up one or two errors, it will be worth while.

Herne Hill, for instance hasn't the foggiest idea of its age, yet it was going strong in 1853. Wm Bonds declares that the ~~first~~ first service there was conducted by Rev Shells in French to the Swiss settlers - but, as a matter of fact - services were in full

⁴
many years before Stubbs was stationed in Geelong.
If I can get hold of the first 11 years of history -
I shall be pleased. I'm not very hopeful of
doing so - however.

I trust your yours are well. With best
wishes for 1938

I am
yours sincerely,
Jack Lawton

6/1/38

Perhaps I should have said that all of
the places mentioned were places in the
Geelong circuit before 1853 - at which
regular services were held.

Chapter 4

**FOUNDING FATHERS
AND MOTHERS**

Bottrell's references to 'W Balding and Windmill' as holding services in their homes seem a little more authentic. Local memories of names are less likely to slip than those of dates. Indeed, Lawton mentions 'Windmill' as appearing in other records.

Balding

W Balding has not been identified. Bottrell refers to his home as being in Roslyn Road, but he is not named in the ratebooks. In 1859 and 1862 Joseph Ingram Balding bought two parcels of land through which Glenmire Street now runs into Roslyn Road - Lots 49 and 50, and Lots 47a and 48, of Highett's Village subdivision (the present nos 244-248 Roslyn Road). This could be where W Balding had lived, if they were related; Joseph certainly had a father named William. An 'I Balding' forwarded a petition to the Education Department in support of the Anglican School teacher in 1864, and Joseph I Balding appears in later Wesleyan church minutes. The property passed in 1904 to Thomas Horwood, a later secretary of the Highton Methodist Church. (Horwood's grave in the Wesleyan section of the local cemetery bears the only record of theological dissension within the church – the uncompromising label 'A UNITARIAN'.) The family of Robert Balding, the architect of the sandstone church built in 1868, believe these Baldings may have been cousins, as both families were Wesleyans from Norfolk, and both had a habit of adding the mother's maiden name to the names of several children, but this remains to be established.

Windmill

William Windmill and his wife Elizabeth Strange landed at Point Henry with their seven-year-old daughter Elizabeth in September 1851. William was thirty-nine and his wife thirty. His elder brother Josiah, who like William was baptised at Publow Wesleyan, Pensford, Somerset, had come to Geelong in 1848, and remained in Chilwell. William's family moved to New Zealand when their daughter married in 1861. Their stay at Highton does not seem to have been very long, as William later worked as a butcher in Geelong, but they made their contribution to Methodism in those first years. The ratebooks describe him as a labourer, but he and his wife were literate, and he apparently held freehold to a stone house of two rooms and a kitchen 'off Barrabool Road' in 1853-55; as a setting for worship it was probably not spacious, so the dawn of Wesleyan Methodism in Highton cannot have been very impressive, although being of stone it was one of the more substantial houses in Highett Town. This house was just west of the south-west corner of Barrabool and North Valley Roads, later the site of Alfred Firmin's Kardinia Hotel. Perhaps the comparative brevity of the hotel's existence (1859-1871) owed something to the strong temperance preaching of the Wesleyans.

Six other families are known to have settled at Highton and may have worshipped with the Wesleyans there in the early 1850s – Abbeys, Adcocks, Hobbses, Allens, Mountjoys a little later, and perhaps Walls. The names of any others are yet to be discovered.

Abbey

One name appears in the church records only in the form of two photographs, of Mr Abbey and Mrs Abbey, which were framed in 1914 under the heading

‘Pioneers.’ It seems likely that that they were Thomas Abbey, who arrived in Victoria as an assisted immigrant in May 1847, and Mary Jakeman Williams, a Cornish miner’s daughter, whom he married in 1851.



Above: Mr Abbey

Thomas bought ten acres (four hectares) in Section 10 in July 1853 for £472, and sold half to William Bright in November for £2,400. Horses, cattle, drays and dwellings already on the site were included in the sale. Abbey retained a block behind this, together with a strip to allow access to it. While it is not clear if Abbey built on his own block, Bright began building what is now the oldest remaining house in Highton, now called ‘Greystanes’ (2 Brassey Avenue) but named ‘Hermon Lodge’ by Bright. Abbey’s block was where G F Belcher’s ‘Adzar’ (10 Brassey Avenue) still stands.

Belcher replaces Abbey in the ratebooks in 1856-57, which had earlier described Abbey’s house as being of brick, not

sandstone like ‘Adzar’. (‘Adzar’ was later the home of the Lawry family, from the early 1900s.) The name of Abbey is among others given as superintendents of the South Geelong Wesleyan Sunday School between 1854 and 1862, and they and their little daughter Mary are likely to have attended those 1853–54 services in Highton homes. T Abbey, who was elected to the Corio Road Board in 1861, is described by Ian Wynd as possibly being ‘the Thomas Abbey ... listed as a tinsmith in Geelong in 1851 and 1854.’



Above: Mrs Abbey

Adcock

At the Diamond Jubilee Tea Meeting as described in the *Geelong Advertiser*, John Harrison claimed that the report he read of the meeting that decided to build the church was “in the handwriting of the chairman’s father”. The chairman referred to was George Henry Adcock; but his father Edward Adcock came to Victoria in 1865, twelve years after the

1853 date, which we believe is a misprint, and two years after the still extant List of Promises made in 1863 (which is in the handwriting of Treasurer Laurence Mountjoy). The minutes of the meeting held 9 July 1867, when a Building Committee for that project was established, were indeed written by Edward Adcock, as the secretary appointed that evening. Edward was to retain that position until he left Highton in 1896, apart from being temporarily replaced by Walter Foster in 1889 and 1890. Another Adcock brother, Henry, was the first Highton resident to be a trustee of the church, when, with Thomas Rix and John Lowe of Geelong, he was named to that position on 23 September 1861.

The Adcock family were active in the church for many years, and their bloodline can still be traced in church circles in the Geelong district. Their family came from Edlington, Lincolnshire, where their father, John, was a gardener and nurseryman. He and his wife Sarah Brill had eleven children, some of whom died young. They were Wesleyans, although their children were baptised in the parish (Anglican) church, and it is said that they were responsible for converting the local landowner to Wesleyanism. The youngest sons who survived to adulthood, Thomas, Edward, and Henry, all followed their father's occupation. The eldest brother, George Brill Adcock, may have come to Geelong in the 1840s, as some of his family seem to have associations there. Apparently one son and some daughters remained in England, but this family reminds us that most of those who came to this country to establish families and communities probably never saw their own parents and homes again.

Thomas, the first Adcock to settle in Highton, landed at Point Henry in June 1849, aged twenty-nine. He was one of

the passengers on the 'Larpen' which was chartered by Rev. John Dunmore Lang, and he and his brothers must be regarded as one of Lang's successes. Dr Alexander Thomson owned Section 10, known as Kardinia Section, of the Parish of Barrarbool, a square mile of country land, and Thomas Adcock had acquired at least eighteen acres of this by 1861. His house – now gone – was approached from Kardinia Street (now South Valley Road) along a strip just south of the present Brassey Avenue, including the site later occupied by 'Thornbury Grange', which still stands as number 13. He established his nursery in the block which ran behind this to Thornhill Road, and down to Kardinia Creek. Not surprisingly, he named it the Kardinia Nursery.

Geelong – Past and Present, a book published in 1891, gives a vivid picture of Adcock's first two years:

"The land was purchased by Mr Thomas Adcock in the year 1851, who first visited the district while the fallen trees of the memorable 'Black Thursday' were still burning, and the remains of several cottages and huts testified by their charred and blackened appearance to the terrible nature of the conflagration, only two huts having escaped the devouring element.

No time was lost in making a commencement of fencing, but the discovery of gold at Ballarat, disjointed society from its centre to its circumference. One of the first effects was the exodus from Geelong of nearly the entire male population and consequently a sudden rise in many articles of commerce, amongst which post and rails, necessary adjuncts of fencing, rose rapidly from fifty shillings to twelve pounds per hundred.



Above: Site of the Adcocks' Kardinia and Albion Nurseries, taken circa 1948 from 'Carramar' hill on their north. Photograph by Joyce Leigh

This was too stiff for a beginner, consequently recourse was taken to other material, and there being a number of trees (burnt down by the recent fire) lying about in every direction, a strong "brush" fence was soon formed around the allotment. After this, breaking up the ground, planting, sowing, erection of dwelling houses, stables, out-buildings and plant sheds, was the order of the day.

In the year 1852, a great flood overspread all the lower portion of the nursery, carrying away fences, soil and crops of every description that interrupted its course not only in the nursery, but over all the low-lying ground at the foot of the Barrabool Hills and around Highton the flood swept with great violence, large trees being swept into the Barwon and from thence to the sea. But the greatest loss to the district was the destruction of

the wooden bridge spanning the Barwon River, which had been the only means of communication between the neighbourhood and the town of Geelong. A boat was however, soon placed upon the river and a charge of half-a-crown made for each person crossing; in a week or ten days a punt was in position, which carried a horse and vehicle over and back again at the same fare. Pressure was at the same time being brought to bear upon the Government for assistance, and after some months delay, a pontoon bridge was erected, this was afterwards removed and the present iron structure erected, much to the relief, not only of the immediate locality, but to the whole of the western district."

In his book *Growing Together*, George Jones records:

“George Mitchell in 1918 recalled, ‘In the fifties the Kardinia Creek was always running, and Mr Adcock had no difficulty in supplying his nursery with water. On the limestone hill facing the north and north-west, on Roslyn Road Mr Herd [William Herd, around Iona Avenue] used to grow French beans and other vegetables all through the summer in those early days’. Mitchell says it is clear proof that the rainfall was more regular then.

Moolap nurseryman Geoff. Rice, whose father once owned the Thornbury Grange property in South Valley Road, remembers seeing small waterholes that had been used for watering the plants.”

Thomas married Martha Port, of Chertsey, Surrey, in 1851 at a Presbyterian Church in Geelong. Thomas and Martha had no children, although he seems to have been fond of them and was a favourite of his nephews and nieces.

Whatever Thomas Adcock’s own denominational allegiance, both his brothers and later the George Mitchell referred to were associated with the Wesleyan church, and Charles Pawsey married a daughter of Wesleyan Joseph Balding, so we have here an example of the practical ecumenism of those years.

Thomas Adcock, like many other Highton residents, contributed towards the building of the freestone Wesleyan Church, but his name is not recorded in any other role there. Descendants of his Wesleyan brother Edward, however, regarded Thomas as the head of their family. It may be that he felt his work in the Sunday School near his house was enough of a contribution to the religious life of Highton. But he was active in the broader community, as a councillor and

president of the South Barwon Shire, as well as being a leading light in the Horticultural Improvement Society of the Western District, and was very innovative in his own work. His nursery was a training ground for a later well-known Geelong nurseryman, William Stinton. Bottrell says that the bell that called the nursery workers served as a public clock for Highton residents. After the nursery closed, the bell was used at State School No 304 in Roslyn Road, and some of us can still remember its sound.

The youngest of the Adcocks, Henry, married Anne Maria Campion in England in January 1854, and they arrived in Victoria together that August. Henry was twenty-seven and Anne twenty-five. Their eldest child, Edward, was born the following year in the Geelong district, so perhaps the pregnant Ann may have been especially grateful to reach solid land. They had three other children – Clement, Annie, and Gertrude - before 1860. In 1863 Henry died of diabetes at the age of thirty-six, and after Anne married George Osborne in 1869 the family apparently moved. But in that short time Henry left his mark upon the district and local Wesleyanism. He opened his Albion Nursery on the corner of Bonsey and Thornhill Roads, south of his brother’s. The 6-acre Albion Nursery was advertised for sale in October 1868.

As we saw earlier, Henry Adcock had the honour of being the only one of the first trustees of the church to actually live in Highton. Whether he was simply chosen because of his willingness to do the work, or because he was considered a sufficiently responsible and solid citizen to take responsibility for property, we don’t know; but the appointment does indicate a shift towards handing over the local church to its own congregation rather than the circuit. The other two trustees, Thomas Rix and John Lowe,

were prominent Geelong Wesleyans. John Lowe, later an MP, was a trustee for several churches around Geelong. Thomas Rix, who soon moved to Melbourne, was a very active member of church committees. It is likely that they were both circuit stewards or representatives.

The third Adcock, whose name dominates the church's records for over 30 years, was Edward. He and his wife Mary Ann (Ann) Gilbert arrived on the 'True Briton' with their three surviving children – George Henry (Harry), Annie Martha, and Charles – in October 1865. Another son, Thomas Edward, had died the previous year at the age of six, which may have been a reason for their seeking a new life overseas. A daughter, Ruth, was born in April the next year, so once again a pioneering woman had extra discomforts to put up with. Another sorrow came when Charles died in 1869, aged five.

Edward, who was five years younger than Thomas and three years older than Henry, joined Thomas at the Kardinia Nursery, of which he became manager when his brother retired in 1891. His family remembered him as a man who relished organising, perhaps more than the people he organised really appreciated; he seems to have concentrated his efforts on the Wesleyan Church, where he was a local preacher. In fact, by the time local records begin, the Highton Wesleyan congregation was moving into the hands of two very active families, the Adcocks and the Mountjoys, and apparently away from the only true pioneers whom we can name with certainty, the Windmills.

Hobbs

We cannot pinpoint the coming of another clan, the Hobbs family, to Highton before the very first house

services, but some of them would have worshipped in the first brick church, and may even have been involved in its establishment. This family was established in the Geelong area by the immigration of at least two brothers and two sisters. They were children of Henry Hobbs of Astwood, Buckingham, and his wife Elizabeth Lowe. Two of their cousins, William and George Allen, also emigrated with their families on the 'Lady Kennaway' in 1853, and George settled in Highton; and their sister, Elizabeth Hobbs Allen also came to Victoria in 1858 with her husband Thomas Glanfield, and family. The grandparents of this extended family had been married in 1787 at Olney, Buckinghamshire, when the Rev John Newton was curate there. Newton is remembered especially for his hymn 'Amazing Grace', but he and his friend William Cowper produced the *Olney Hymns* there, where they were first sung by that congregation. Some of these were favourites later in the Highton church, including 'God moves in a mysterious way', and 'O for a closer walk with God'.

The first of the Hobbs family to arrive here was Edwin (senr); he and his wife Susan Horton came on the 'Sir Robert Sale' in July 1852, aged twenty-nine and twenty-eight, with five children under ten. At first Edwin was contracted to work for one year for 'John Highett of Barrabool Hills', at £40. It is not clear whether Edwin was working on Highett's land in Highton or his property near Pollock's Ford, but by January 1855 Edwin was leasing from Highett 46 ½ acres in Section XIX (the whole area east of the cemetery between Fishers (now Mount Pleasant), (North) Valley, and Barrabool Roads). But this was a sad year for his family; the youngest child, Sarah, died in March, aged two, and her sister Mary Ann, aged five, died two days later. Then in October Edwin

himself was drowned when crossing the Barwon on his way home from Ballarat with his son Thomas; he was carrying money that was probably the proceeds of selling supplies at the gold-diggings – a total of £20.8.6. Susan had another daughter that same year, but this second Sarah also died in 1858, aged three. Three sons then remained, the eldest aged sixteen; two of them, at least, John and Joshua, must have retained a Wesleyan sense of mission, as records of the Germantown (Grovedale) Sunday School in 1878 describe their being presented with bibles and hymnbooks ‘to assist them in opening a school in the neighbourhood to which they are going.’

In August 1853. Edwin’s younger brother John Lowe Hobbs and his wife Anne Austin, both twenty-three, arrived on the ‘Lady Kennaway’ with two small children and John’s nineteen year old sister Sally, as well as the Allen cousins and their families. They all came as assisted immigrants, but when the Hobbs’s father, Henry, came alone in 1860 he paid his own passage, probably coming to his children after the death of his wife; he died in 1865, and is not to be confused with the Henry Hobbs, from Hampshire, who had an iron foundry in Fyans Street and was connected with the South Geelong Wesleyan church. Another of the Highton Henry’s children, Mary Charlotte, married George Washington Tomkins, a gardener and farmer at Strawberry Hill, and came to Geelong via Adelaide about 1852 or 1853. John Lowe Hobbs is on the Freshwater Creek postal register in 1860, and most of his twelve children were born at his Waurin Ponds farm, ‘Bexley Park’. In 1893, one of John’s sons, Edwin Austin, married Edward Adcock’s daughter Annie Martha. Both John’s and Edwin’s descendants seem to have settled in area south of the Princes Highway, so it is not clear whether John was supporting the Highton church from

a distance, or actually lived here, but he was certainly active locally. It seems likely that Bexley Park was on the Colac Road opposite what is now Broughton Drive, so they could count as being in Waurin Ponds but still keep their connection with Highton. John at first worked for his brother Edwin, which suggests that they were in Highton before the end of 1853. A newspaper cutting dated 22 August 1936 reports the sale of a block of eight and a half acres, which had been in the Hobbs family for eighty years. Both brothers are named as existing tenants of John Highett’s Highton lots in his advertisement dated January 1859 - Lot 16, over 12 acres ‘being the southern portions of allotments 1 and 2 of Section 18 leased to Mr John Hobbs until 31st December 1862’ (north of the cemetery on Fishers (Mount Pleasant) Road, extending east to Montpellier avenue), was across the road from Edwin’s Lot 17 – although Edwin was in fact dead by this time. While the 1861 map shows two features (including what could have been a dwelling, and what was later marked as a water tank) in John’s area, Edwin’s appears to be purely farming land. In 1869, John was said to hold 22 acres of ‘open land’. This is now the bowling club and tennis courts site.

Allen

The 1854 rate books show a George Allen living in a tent in ‘Highett Town’, as well as a ‘Eugene Allen’ apparently next door. If the first Anglican service was not held until 1858, it is possible that both these men, and their families if any, may have attended the services at their Windmill and Balding neighbours’ houses, whether or not they were themselves Wesleyans. According to Bottrell, ‘Mr George Allen’ lived on the north side of Roslyn Road west of Valley Road, which is supported by Allen’s purchase of Lot 52 in Highett’s Village

(No's 228-236, opposite Remony Avenue) in January 1855 for £60. George had been a farm labourer, and on first landing in Victoria he and his brother William were contracted to work for pastoralist J G Ware at Timboon for six months, for £50 and rations. William remained at Timboon, but George and his family then came to Highton, where he worked as a carter, and bought the above block, where they lived in a tent and later in a single brick room. Eventually he had a farm, but not before two little daughters had died. The second, named Mary Kennaway after the ship on which she was born, died early in 1855; in that sad year, they also shared the sorrows of Edwin Hobbs's wife Susanna Horton, who was the sister of George's wife Sarah Ann Horton as well as connected by the cousinship. These Allens were to have a total of ten more children.

The Hobbs-Allen story is further complicated by the fact that there were two George Allens, who were buried in the Highton cemetery in 1884 and 1886 respectively, born and married in the same district of Buckinghamshire, and each having a wife called Sarah and a son called George. Sarah Austin, wife of the 'other' George Allen, was the sister or stepsister of Mrs John Hobbs, Ann Phoebe Austin, and when this couple arrived in 1862 they were probably drawn to Highton by the family connection. The presence of relatives would have supported them when in 1867 their nine-year-old daughter Emma died of 'exhaustion' twelve days after her clothes had caught fire. Emma is buried at Highton like her father, though her widowed mother died and was buried in Melbourne. George and Sarah and their son Joseph later held land in Roslyn Road opposite the end of Thornhill Road, so there may have been two George Allen families living close to each other at the same time; but the 1861 map

shows the first George Allen leasing nine acres at the very top of Scenic Road, on the north corner of Leigh Road, wherever they were actually living. The widowed Sarah Allen and her son George remained active in the Highton Wesleyan church (see later photographs), and there is a suggestion that this George eventually went to West Australia. All in all, Buckinghamshire contributed a number of households to the settlement of Highton and district, and to Wesleyanism here.

Mountjoy

Around the mid-1850s another family appears in the story – Laurence, Thomas, and Caleb Mountjoy, and their sister Kuria Trewin. Like the Adcocks, the Mountjoys came from a large Wesleyan family, this time from around Kilkhampton on the border of Devon and Cornwall. Their father, James, was a cordwainer (shoemaker), and in the 1851 English census, the occupations of Laurence and Caleb are given as carrier and shoemaker respectively. Family historians have had a difficult task to disentangle them from the family of their cousin (strictly speaking, half-cousin, as their fathers were step-brothers) Richard Mountjoy, of Ceres. and his twelve children. There seems to be Mountjoy blood in many local families still, and their Wesleyan loyalties survived several generations. Richard's cousin Grace married into the Ham family, prominent in the South Geelong church. Kuria was married to William Trewin, and in 1868 a Trewin is listed in the 1868 Highton postal area, although there were other Trewins around the Barrabool Hills. Family sources say that Caleb, the Trewins, and another sister, Rhoda, arrived in Adelaide in 1851, but this is not documented. Richard's family was established at the original 'Glencairn' property in the Barwon valley between Ceres and Highton by 1857 at the latest,

and there are indications that the other Mountjoys at some stage helped farm this property. It's possible that as bachelors or when newly married, various Mountjoys lived together, so the surname alone does not always help to locate them.

The senior of the three local brothers was Laurence, who, like Thomas Adcock, seems to have been fond of children although he was childless himself. His first wife, Mary Ann Heard, whom he married in 1849, was on the 'Prince Regent' with Laurence and his cousin Richard and family when they landed in November 1852. A Mountjoy descendent wrote recently:

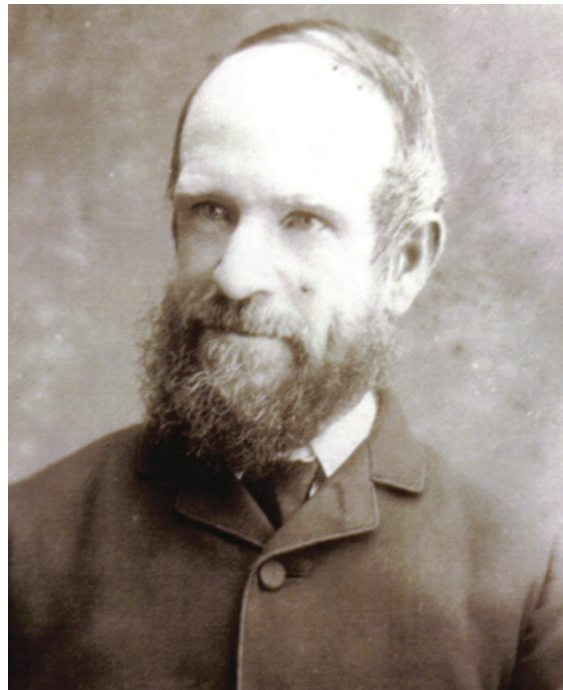


Above: Laurence Mountjoy. Photograph supplied by Marlene Bens.

"Mary Ann Heard (wife of Lawrence Mountjoy) died and was buried on the roadside near Narcoorte, as they walked and rode from Adelaide. This information was given to me by a descendant of Caleb Mountjoy, who says that it is right. Caleb is supposed to have entered Australia in Adelaide (no records of this though), so we are not sure

whether Lawrence was walking to Caleb or on his way back."

J H Bottrell claimed that Caleb and Lawrence came out to Adelaide in 1851, and to Victoria in 1853, and that Thomas arrived in 1854 with the Trewins. But the shipping records place Laurence, aged thirty-two, and Mary A, aged twenty-one, on the ship with Richard in 1852. When Caleb died in 1923, at the age of ninety-three, his obituary stated:



Above: Caleb Mountjoy. Photograph supplied by Marlene Bens.

"He arrived in Adelaide in 1852. Drawn by the gold discoveries he came to Victoria in the same year, and shared in the experiences of the Bendigo and Heathcote goldfields. He returned to Adelaide in 1854, and married Miss Harward, also a native of Kilkhampton."

Probably Laurence and Mary Ann were accompanying him to Adelaide for the wedding, a happy journey for one brother though sorrowful for the other. Louisa was the daughter of their uncle Laurence

Harward, an innkeeper of Kilkhampton, and only eighteen. Caleb and Louisa were to have eleven children, several of whom died young. Laurence married Jane Honeycombe in 1855, but again the marriage was childless. Thomas arrived in Victoria on the 'Saldanha' aged twenty-seven in June 1854, and one source says he went to the goldfields. He married Sophia Allin in 1856, and they may have settled in Highton at first (he apparently farmed here from before June 1858). The couple later had nine children.

It is not clear when the first of the Mountjoys came to Highton, or if they played any part in the very earliest Wesleyan community here. Cousin Richard's family appear to have been in Ceres in 1854, and as one of his daughters was later married at Highton they may have established some ties there before the Ceres church was built. The three brothers are remembered as being the founders of Lorne, and certainly Thomas established himself there, built a hospitable home which became a guesthouse, and started the coach that ran between there and Geelong. They farmed as partners, and were joint holders of the Loutitt Bay pastoral run on which Lorne was later built. Their names are consistently near the top of donation lists to the Highton church from 1860 onward, but it is Laurence and Caleb who appear in the minute books. Caleb, the youngest, and his wife Louisa, are shown among the pioneers in photographs taken for the church Jubilee in 1914, the year of their Golden Wedding.

Because they seem to have been so mobile, it is difficult to trace exactly where the Mountjoys lived. In these years of booming immigration after the discovery of gold, paperwork registering land dealings is often dated after the properties had actually changed hands.

Laurence's second marriage in November 1855 was conducted by the Rev. Isaac Harding, who was the minister of the pastorate which included Highton, although the ceremony took place in the 'Geelong Wesleyan Church'. The Mountjoys may have been lessees by 1 April 1857 from John and William Honey, as in McWilliams' 1861 map, but this remains to be proved, as an advertisement suggests that John Honey was in occupation of 'Roslin' in January 1861. This map shows Laurence and Caleb occupying 'Roslin', on the slope below the Lookout, with Thomas holding the farm above it on the crest of Fisher's Hill between the cutting and Three Springs Road, previously held by the brothers John and Will Leigh, (later of 'Prospect', Ceres). Descendents of Richard think that after his death in 1866, these 'uncles' may have helped his underage sons run 'Glencairn' for some years. The birthplaces of most of Caleb's and Thomas's children between 1855 and 1876 are given as Geelong, Barrabool Hills, or Ceres, but this depends on where the mother was at the time – often with caring relatives – or where the local Registrar lived. And then, as now, the same site could have different addresses at different times. The balance of evidence suggests that Laurence, and cousin Richard, could possibly have attended services at Highton earlier, but 1856-7 seems to be the earliest clear date for Mountjoys in Highton.

Wall

Another early family is that of William Wall and his wife Louisa Thomas from Cornwall, although it is not known exactly when they came to Highton. They sailed from Plymouth in 1852 on the 'Time & Truth' with three children, arriving in Victoria on 5 January 1853 with another child, Benjamin, born on the voyage. The births of two later

children, Louisa Jane and Andrew, were registered at Geelong in 1857 and Barrabool in 1859, which may suggest that they moved to Highton about 1858, but most local births were registered at Geelong. John, Benjamin and Andrew, at least, are said to have remained at Highton, and Louisa's first child was born here, although she may have simply been visiting her mother for the birth. This child was named James after his grandfather James Newland, who had bought lots in Highett Town in the 1850s; the younger James won the Victoria Cross in France in 1917. Louisa Jane's brother John married Mary Ann Wright, and the family of the youngest brother, Andrew, were very active in the church, a tradition that his grandchildren, Wynsome Penn and Ian Allan carried into the twenty-first century. Bottrell wrote that William Wall 'was a stonemason, and was kept busy erecting homes for the new-chums, making underground tanks, etc'. Members of the Wall family later lived in the freestone cottage which still stands on the west corner of Mount Pleasant Road and Elizabeth Street, which has been dated to around 1855. It could have been built by William himself, though it is said to have been the home of Philip Hoskin, a member of the later Building Committee.



Above: Highton – 1861. Redrawn by John Meehan 1969 from McWilliams' map, with some names inserted. Supplied by Stewart McAdam.

Chapter 5

**BUILDING IN STONE
– THE CHURCH**

Apart from the Leaders Meeting, another governing body in a local church was the Trustees. It is interesting that out of Highton's first three trustees, who were appointed on 23 September 1861, only one, Henry Adcock, was a local resident. The other two, Thomas Rix and John Lowe, both appear to have been very active in Geelong churches, and were possibly officials of the circuit. John Lowe, a Moorabool Street butcher and later MP, was also a trustee of both Ceres and Newtown churches. The church property seems to have been regarded as belonging to the circuit rather than the individual congregation. The three original trustees were replaced in April 1866 by Laurence and Caleb Mountjoy and Edward Adcock, and two additional trustees, Thomas Barber Hunt and Joseph Ross, were appointed. Hunt may have been a representative of the circuit and not a local resident, as in 1897 his status as a non-local was questioned at a Highton Leaders Meeting.

With the brick chapel already built, the first task was to pay off the debt. So apart from the Treasurer's entries previously mentioned, which run from 1859 to 1867, the first local records are subscription lists. The dating is a little erratic, but the lists cover 1861 to 1867, with an opening page headed "List of Promises &c, made at the Public Meeting held at Highton, Oct 27, 1863". Thirty-seven individuals are named, as well as two £1 promises by 'A Friend', and also four items: "Sabbath Collections £2.11.9, Tea Proceeds £10.0.0, Collected at the Meeting £3.0.0, and Mr Taylor's Lecture £25.0.0".

Although the names of the three Mountjoy brothers and of 'Mr Hosking',

'Ellen Ross' and 'Mr Barnes' are recognisable as Highton Wesleyans, this gathering seems to have been an attempt to raise support from other local people. The reference to Mr Taylor's lecture, at this date, may be to 'California Taylor'. The Rev William Taylor was actually on a tour, partly evangelistic and partly to raise funds by his lectures to rebuild his mission to seamen in San Francisco, which had been destroyed by fire, so when he donated the proceeds of £25.0.0 to our church debt he was being generous – though the church did cover his expenses. His visit was described as a time of spiritual revival for the Victorian Church, and his converts are said to have remained loyal. One wonders what the evening's entertainment may have been, as people were prepared to pay for it; lectures and sermons in those days had a wider appeal than they do now.

Another name on this list is that of 'Mr Fisher' who promised £1.0.0. David Fisher of Roslin was Presbyterian, and one or two other non-Wesleyan names also appear. An earlier subscription list 'at Anniversary dec 1861'(sic) includes a few Wesleyan names from Geelong (Wood, Atkin, Lowe), Ceres (McCann, Lumb, Firth), South Geelong and other neighbouring places (Bedggood, Ham), as well as Thos Adcock, and others who will appear later in church records. In March 1865, Humble, Nicholson, and Fitchett, from Geelong, all contribute, as does John Highett in March 1866.

In October 1866, a 'Subscription list to reduce the debt on Highton Church' seems to have led to an extra effort, and the collectors – Mrs Hobbs, Mr Ross, Miss Worland, Mrs Trewen, Mr Barnes. Mr Adcock, and Mr Mountjoy – went to people like Mrs Pannell (in Waurin Ponds?), Charles Wyatt (in Fyansford), and Bright & Hitchcock's shop in Geelong (Bright had built 'Hermon Lodge', now 'Greystanes' 2 Brassey

Avenue, in 1853; the Hitchcock family were prominent Geelong Wesleyans), to raise the last donations. The superintendent of the Geelong Circuit, the Rev James Bickford, signed with a flourish the page dated 'Decr 31st 1866', which records the final balancing of the books.

The following year sees the first local minutes, dated 9 July 1867, when a public meeting, chaired by the Superintendent of the Geelong Circuit, the Rev James Bickford, was held in the Wesleyan Church Highton; it carried the motion 'that a new Wesleyan Church be built at Highton'. A building committee was appointed, with fifteen members in addition to Laurence Mountjoy as treasurer and Edward Adcock as secretary, and the minister, James Bickford. These members were Joseph Ross, James Croot, Frederick Worland, Caleb Mountjoy, Ivatt Cann, Henry Johns, John Hobbs, John Foster, Thomas Barber Hunt, William Hill, Philip Hoskin, William Honeycombe, William Barnes, Henry Clark, and George Smith McKenzie. Of this committee, Laurence and Caleb Mountjoy, Edward Adcock, and John Hobbs, have already been discussed.

James Bickford

The Rev James Bickford was appointed to Geelong in 1866. A commercial clerk, and son of a Devon farmer, he had moved from his native Anglicanism to become a Wesleyan preacher, and then felt called to missionary work. He was ordained in 1838, and sent to the West Indies, where he and his wife worked for 14 years. Some of his family had emigrated to South Australia, and he applied to be posted nearer them and so he arrived in Victoria in 1854. Like Butters and Draper, he was keenly interested in church building and in education, and was an active

administrator. He was posted to Geelong in 1866, and it may be because of his organising abilities that new trustees were appointed at Highton in that year, and that fuller records were kept from then on.

From the date of this building committee, the Highton church seems to have been run for many years by a 'Church Committee', with much the same personnel, and its first minute-book holds the only pre 1884 records that remain. Not until the 1890s are there signs of an attempt to conform to Wesley's structures for a local 'Society', and there are no extant minutes of a Leaders Meeting before July 1896, nor of a Trustee Meeting as such before 1919. (But there are a few hints here and there that the classical Wesleyan Class Meetings were continuing unrecorded by local annalists.)

At this April meeting, the minister was requested to approach Mr [Robert] Balding to furnish plans and probable costs of a church described as "22 ft by 35 ft, and 25 ft by 40 ft". Mr Balding must have got to work promptly, for at the next meeting a fortnight later, the larger size was chosen, the tower was "dispensed with for the present", and it was decided that "the roof be boarded instead of drawn". Mr Balding was asked to advertise for tenders, while the committee would find and deliver the materials.

Robert Balding

Robert Balding, whether or not he was related to W Balding of Roslyn Road, was like him a Wesleyan from Norfolk, who reached Victoria with his wife and daughter in January 1853. He lived in South Geelong, and when, as town surveyor, he drew a plan of the town in 1864 he cheekily marked his own house on it. He designed many buildings

around Geelong, including the Geelong Exhibition building of 1879 in the Market Square. One of his descendants, Miriel Lenore, came to the church's centenary in 1953.

The Building Committee

Readers who wish to follow the narrative without being distracted by details of these men and their families would now be wise to skip six pages, to the paragraph headed 'The Building Work'. But looking at this sample of the church community of the 1860s does help to form an overall picture of the life they lived, their advantages and disadvantages, and the ways in which they can be compared to the church of 100 years later, when a new wave of incomers reshaped a country community into a suburban one.

The postal directory of 1868 lists forty-seven surnames of Highton residents, so allowing for two Mountjoys, this Wesleyan committee should cover almost a third of the forty-even households, but only nine of their surnames are recorded. At least another eight names on the 1868 list are known to have Methodist connections, and there would be Wesleyan families who for different reasons were not represented on the committee.

Another list, of eighty-four "Names in Highton I remember ... up to 1870", was compiled in his old age by John Bennett and of course are subject to the limitations of his memory. He was the son of Francis Bennett and Mary Herd of Kardinia Farm, and said he was born in Highton in 1848 - though registered in 1846. Fourteen of his names are those of committee members, and another five or six have definite Methodist associations.

Ross

Joseph Ross had arrived in Victoria as an assisted migrant on the 'Euphrates' in November 1856, aged twenty-four. He was the son of Joseph Ross and Nancy Lee, and his birth date is given as 17 March 1834 in the register of the Rehoboth Particular Baptists of Farsley, Yorkshire.

This woollen and manufacturing village would have been an interesting place to grow up, as it was one of a cluster near Leeds with a surprising variety of Christian denominations, and a thoughtful young man would have had a range of choices. Nearby was a settlement of the Moravians, from Germany, a sect which had greatly influenced John and Charles Wesley a hundred years before. In 1764 the Farsley blacksmith had a son, Samuel Marsden who, under the influence of the Wesleyans and the Anglican Evangelical movement became a clergyman and a missionary; he was known as 'The Flogging Parson' during his term as a magistrate in New South Wales, although New Zealand remembers him more positively. By the 1860s, Farsley inhabitants were within range of worship centres for Independents, Wesleyans, New Connexion Methodists, Baptists, Unitarians, Moravians, and Primitive Methodists, as well as the many Anglican parish churches. The story of Joseph Ross's spiritual journey could be worth examining. We know that he became a Wesleyan minister in 1871.

At Geelong in 1864 he married Annie Flint from Derbyshire, who appears to have travelled as an assisted migrant without any other family in 1858, on the 'Conway', aged twenty-four. They had at least five children, Francis Joseph, Irwin, Walter James, Lily Annie, and Joseph Collingwood. Bottrell describes Ross as a boot-maker, and places their home in

Barrabool Road somewhere between St Elmo Crescent and Glenmire Street, or perhaps a little further east. 'Mr Ross of Highton' conducted the afternoon service at the opening of the Germantown (Grovedale) Wesleyan Church in May 1869, two years before he entered the Wesleyan ministry, and presumably had also conducted services at Highton during his time here. Annie died in 1883, and Joseph in 1912. While the surname 'Ross' is shown on two pieces of land on Valley Road due east of Montpellier in the sale advertisement for that estate in July 1892, it is probably not the same family. In the 1940s there was also a Ross family of Highview in Section 25. A Miss Ellen Ross was active in the church from the 1860s until at least the 1890s, her support ranging from the financial to acting as cleaner in her later years, and in 'providing a room to carve the meat' for a church function. She may be the Helen Ross buried at Highton in 1922, but as this woman's father was Henry Ross, Ellen or Helen may not be connected with Joseph's family; her origins have not been traced, owing to the many forms of her name.

Croot

James Croot or Croote was a Devon man, baptised in 1827 at West Teignmouth in the parish (Anglican) church. He married thirty-two-year-old Mary Veysey in Newton Abbott, Devon, about 1851, and it is not known when they reached Victoria, nor where their eldest child, George, was born. The birth of a daughter, Mary Eliza, is registered in Victoria in 1859, and there may have been other children, but George aged seven and an infant, Elizabeth, were both buried in the Barrabool Hills Cemetery in 1860, eleven months apart. Both parents lived well into their eighties.

Worland

Bottrell gives us some information about Frederick Worland and his neighbours, including the Croots, and some of them can be located on the 1861 map, where they all seem to be tenant farmers in Highett's Section 25. Walking eastward down Barrabool Road from Fishers Hill, Bottrell proceeds thus.

"... passing Mr. Chapman's home just before we came to the [Wesleyan] Church, we went to the north of the cemetery where we found quite a little settlement, for the following lived around here: Messrs. I'Erson, Worland, Croot, F Worland and F Wilson; further north, Mr. Ivan [Ivatt] Cann. ... Mr F Worland's son, Walter, was the local "Blondin". This young man was a very clever tight-rope walker, and gave several exhibitions of his skill. On one occasion he walked on his tight-rope from Yarra Street Wharf to the Moorabool Street Wharf. Sometimes he caused much amusement when on the rope by performing tricks, such as tossing the pancake, etc. He could also wheel a barrow on the rope."

Walter Worland, born in 1857, was the son of Joseph Worland and Elizabeth Cooper, who arrived in Victoria on the 'Arabian' in that year. They also lived in Highton, and so are presumably the other Worland family listed by Bottrell. Both families seem to have come from the same general area in Cambridgeshire, but a relationship has not yet been established. Frederick Worland was the son of John Worland and Rebecca Bangle, and baptised at Harston, Cambridge, in October 1830. He and Elizabeth Mansfield were married in the Chesterton district of Cambridge twenty years later, and reached Victoria on the 'Maria Hay' in July 1854 as assisted immigrants, with two children, Anne

Rebecca and Elizabeth. Their six-month-old son John William died in 1856 at Chilwell, and another, Frederick was born at Geelong in 1857. Eliza and Emma were born in the Barrabool Hills district in 1861 and 1863, as was Charlotte who died in Highton at the age of one or two in 1867. The births of their four remaining children were registered at Geelong (George Henry 1867, Alfred Edmund 1869, Rubens Amos who died aged one month in 1871, and George who was apparently his twin), so perhaps the family moved after the loss of Charlotte; however, as the same change is found in other families, it may be that the system of registration was reorganised at that period. Frederick snr died at Inverleigh in 1884.

Cann

Ivatt Cann was another who lived in Section 25 as a tenant of John Highbett. Bottrell says:

“Mr Cann’s son, Marshall, was a famous walker, and at a sports meeting at Horsham, Boxing Day, 1886, he established an Australian record, for he did the mile in 6 minutes 27 ¼ seconds – the previous record was 6 minutes 40 seconds. On the same day he also won the first prize in the three-mile walk. He also won the Gatehouse belt for the 7 miles walk. His record remained unbroken for a long time.”

Like Walter Worland, Marshall represents sporting activities in the days before church cricket and tennis teams, though some of the Wesleyans may – but may not – have been accepted into the Highbett boys’ cricket games in Queens Park. Ivatt and his wife Louisa Beck also came from Cambridge, like the Worlands, and were married in 1848 at Louisa’s parish church at Madingley when she was just fifteen. Both came

from labouring families, and were assisted migrants on the ‘Marshall’.

Their third child, the walker Alfred Marshall Bennett, was born at sea in June 1854, with two elder siblings, James, and Mary Ann or Margaret, born in Cambridge in 1850 and 1852. Another eleven were born in Victoria: Mary Ann died in 1855, and her brother William’s birth in 1857 is registered at Geelong. Frances Mary Ann, November 1859, their only child registered as born at Highton. After this, as with the Worlands, the place of registration changed from Barrabool Hills or Barrabool for George Henry in 1861, Frederic in 1863, and Thomas in 1865, to Geelong for Louisa and the next four from 1866 to 1875. Joseph, aged eight, died in 1876, and is buried with his sister in the Geelong Eastern Cemetery.

When other parts of Victoria were being opened up for settlement, Ivatt selected land at Strathbogie, where their last child, Charles, was born in 1879. The parents eventually retired to Euroa, where Ivatt died at the age of ninety in 1916, Louisa having died in 1912.

Johns

With the listing of Henry Johns, we come to the beginning of a Highton dynasty. By name and blood it has retained connections with the district up to the present day, especially through Henry’s daughter Harriet and son William where this church is concerned. His origins are uncertain, although it is likely that he came from Cornwall, and that he had a twin brother, Charles, who arrived in Victoria with his wife and children in the same month as Henry, but on another ship.

A Henry Johns and an Elizabeth Johns, both aged thirty-one, were on board the ‘Ticonderoga’, which sailed from

Steadfast Through Change

Liverpool in August and arrived on 22 December 1852. They could have been the Henry Johns and Elizabeth Inch who married at Kenwyn parish church in Truro a couple of months before the voyage, where Elizabeth had been a servant in a surgeon's household. No record of Elizabeth's death has been found, but she may have died on the voyage.

Henry married again in May 1854 at the Wesleyan chapel in St Kilda, to Ellen Holden, the daughter of Elijah Holden of Highton, and Charles was a witness at this marriage. Elijah Holden was a Particular Baptist, but his family became strong Methodists, a Holden grandson being a President-General of the Methodist Australasian Conference. Henry Johns gave his occupation as farmer and agricultural labourer.

It has been said that he came to Highton in 1875, but this may be the year his name appears in ratebooks, possibly as a tenant of the Highetts. The family lived and farmed at 'Mountpellier', which they later purchased and held until the subdividing of Highton in the mid-1900s.

***Below:** William Johns & family at 'Montpellier', circa 1902. Supplied by Beverley Pullen.*



There were eight children, of whom all survived childhood except for Annie Jane, who is registered as the couple's child, but whose 1861 burial in the Wesleyan section of the Barrabool Hills Cemetery is confusingly entered as 'July 20 Anne Johns, Holding [Age] two years [No of Grave] 18'. Another daughter, Louie, died aged thirty-three, after the birth of four children by her husband Ted Rankin, a later celebrity in the church and the Geelong football team.

Foster

John Peake Foster, who was buried in the Barrabool Hills Cemetery in 1882, came from Deal, Kent. He married Elizabeth Arnold in Stepney, London, about 1849, and while it is not known when they came to Victoria, he took over the Lansdowne Nursery from Evan Lewis some time after 1855. In 1868 he was advertising 5,000 fruit trees for sale. Bottrell wrote:

"This gentleman had a vineyard, and for some time made wine; but, on being converted, he had conscientious scruples about this matter; and on coming home he staved in the heads of eight casks of fermented wine, and commenced making unfermented wine, in which he was very successful."

He was said to have had a brother who lived around the Roberts Road area, but this may refer to his brother-in-law and first cousin John Peake Arnold.

Hunt

Thomas Barber Hunt seems to have been one committee member who was not a local resident. Two years after this 1867 meeting, his name heads the list of 'Trustees and Committee', which was placed with other information in a bottle under the foundation stone of the new Germantown (Grovedale) Wesleyan

Church on 25 March 1869. In 1893 this Germantown Building Committee was formally renamed its 'Trust', with T B Hunt as its secretary and treasurer. Wherever he may have lived, Hunt was active in the city of Geelong itself. In 1856, the partnership of Barker and Hunt, who were operating as grocers and bakers in Spring Street, Little Scotland (Ashby), bought land on the south side of Ryrie St on the corner of Gheringhap St, where they established their Eureka stores. Without exploring any possible connection, W R Brownhill simply says. "In later years T B Hunt occupied the corner site". In 1873, Thomas B Hunt was also elected first superintendent of the Geelong Volunteer Salvage Corps which was formed to protect properties from looting after the all-too-frequent fires in the town.

Hill

Without some descendants to help identify which of the many William Hills on record is the one associated with the church, he must unfortunately remain just a name for the present.

Hoskin

Philip Hoskin and his wife Henrietta Giles both came from the area around Penzance and St Ives, where the western toe of Cornwall is dipped into the Atlantic Ocean. They arrived as assisted immigrants, aged twenty-nine and twenty-three, in July 1852 on the 'Euphemus'. Philip was the son of Philip Hoskin and Mary Rodda, and one of his six children was christened Philip also. Bottrell writes:

"Further to the east [from the "little settlement north of the cemetery"] Mr. Philip Hoskin had his farm, which came up to Fisher's Road, and further still to the east were the residences of Mr. C. Ellis, and Mr Wall ... Mr.

Philip Hoskin came ... in the Euphemia in 1854 [sic], and settled down as a farmer at Highton. At that time only the main roads had been surveyed, and, when the surveyors came later to set out Elizabeth Street they found Mr. Hoskin's house was in the middle of the street; but they advised him not to remove it as the street might never be used. Our respected townsman, Mr. Philip Hoskin, of McKillop Street, is a son of Mr. Hoskin, and still owns the old farm. He has been a Methodist local preacher for 43 years."

Hoskin does not appear in the 1854-55 ratebook. The property was sold as the Montague Estate when the younger Philip died in 1938. Hoskin's land extended much further to the east – probably occupying most of Allotments 1 & 2 of Section XX north of Barrabool Road - but Bottrell claims that his house was west of Ellis's and Wall's. A glance at the 1861 map suggests that the space between Valley Road and Elizabeth Street would have been very crowded. The Hoskins had at least five children, two of whom – Hannah and William Henry - died aged 3 and 4 in 1864 and 1876. A daughter, Henrietta, married the Rev. A M Taylor, and the couple's baby Ethel May is buried at Highton with the inscription "died at Yendon, Feb 24 1882".

Honeycombe

William Honeycombe from Cornwall was the father of Laurence's Mountjoy's second wife Jane. His family moved around – they were living in Bristol in 1841, their first daughter was baptised in Surrey, as was Jane in 1852, but the sixth child was baptised in Ilsington, Devon. No record of their arrival in Victoria has been found, and Jane, at twenty-eight, arrived alone on the 'Maria Hay' in July 1854, the same voyage as the Frederick

Worlands. William, who died aged seventy-nine in 1876, had been a builder by trade before farming at Echuca, and could have been a useful committee member in directing volunteer labour.

Barnes

William Barnes arrived in Victoria in July 1856 on the 'Omega' at the age of eighteen, with his father James, his step-mother Mary Ann Wright, three siblings and four step siblings. William's mother Elizabeth Thompson died on or after the birth of his youngest brother James. The family came from Foxton in Cambridgeshire, though James was born in nearby Barley in Hertford in 1817. James leased land from John Highett somewhere in the Fishers Hill area (Section 25) by the 1868 at the latest, and he died in Newtown in 1902. He and Mary Ann eventually had eight children, two dying in infancy but four daughters living to marry; one of these, who married Angus Rankin, was named Alice Omega after the ship, which suggests she was born on the voyage. Mary Ann's eldest son, John, grew up in Highton but moved to Cundare in the Otways in 1873, and later to Yielema in the Bramah Forest. William was the eldest of James and Elizabeth's family, and the 1888 publication *Victoria and Its Metropolis* says that he was a farm labourer in the Geelong district at first and then rented a farm for himself, possibly on his marriage to Alice Wright in 1858. Like many other astute farmers at the time, he worked at carting supplies to the gold diggings. Alice and William's baby son David was buried in the Church of England section of the Highton cemetery in May 1863, and three more of their ten children apparently died as infants. William farmed at Jan Juc for a year or two before selecting land in Hampden County, and eventually settling at Katamatite, selecting 280 acres and later buying a further 600 acres.

Clarke

Henry William Clarke bought Lot 51 in Hightett's Village (now 232-234 Roslyn Road) on 22 January 1855. He is recorded as leasing Allotment 6 of Section XVIII from Robert Sutherland, who had bought it from the Crown in 1852. The lease for it and other land was for fifteen years from 1 May 1866, but Clarke may have already been living there, as there seem to have been others in his Village lots. Bottrell refers to the vineyards of Messrs Fitzmaurice and Clarke "between Montpellier and the River", and a map of Montpellier Estate in 1892 shows an orchard there, on a 50 acre lot running right through to Valley Road. Henry married Ann Cooper in Bedfordshire in 1849, and would have been about thirty-nine in 1867. Three of their children later married siblings of John Wilkins Harrison, whose descendants were part of the Highton Methodist community into the 21st century. On his death certificate in 1891, Henry Clarke is described as a gardener, like so many of his fellow-Wesleyans in Highton.

McKenzie

George Smith McKenzie sold his 2½ acres of land for £60 in 1880 for the new school that was built in Roslyn Road. This is in Allotment 4 of Section XIX, and adjoining it in Allotment 3 was the later residence of the Nicol family. The Nicols kept Highton post office and shop up until the 1890s, so it was probably on the same site as this house in Barrabool Road, east of Tarring Court. Their sister Agnes Wilson Nicol, daughter of James Nicol and Margaret Hamilton, who married George McKenzie in 1863, may have been the girl next door as far as he was concerned. She had been born in Ayr, Scotland, migrating with her mother and siblings at the age of fourteen in 1858, and presumably George shared her

Scottish background. The only record of children is the death of two daughters, Agnes Florence in 1883, and Mary Hamilton in 1892. Their mother Agnes died in 1882, aged thirty-eight. George's occupation was given as 'clerk' in 1869; he became the fourth Town Clerk of Geelong 1895-1905, a position apparently combined with that of Town Surveyor at that time. Brownhill records him as reading "with dignity" an address of welcome to the Governor of Victoria Lord Brassey and his wife in 1896. In 1919, aged eighty-five, he was buried in the Presbyterian section of the Barrabool Hills Cemetery, so his support of the Wesleyan cause was an early example of church unity. He was the son of James Mackenzie and Ann Sandison, and it is not known whether he was related to the Alexander McKenzie who was one of the founding trustees of the Barrabool Hills Cemetery, and owned the 'Mount Pleasant' estate around the area of the Belmont Primary School (Section XXIII allotment 4); Alexander also bought the 27 acre allotment adjoining Montpellier on the east in 1869. George audited the church's accounts from 1869.

These families, with the ones we named earlier and others whose names are not recorded, were the human materials which built the church as a community building project. The records mainly tell the story of the church through the discussions and decisions of their men, and the later members of the Committee, which continued as the deciding body even after its building function was finished.

The Building Work

The fact that the Committee was so large may indicate that someone was shrewd enough to see them as that useful institution, a working bee, and count their labour as a contribution to the project. Indeed it was, as it was later

Steadfast Through Change

estimated that they had saved £100 by doing the carting of the stone. They may have actually dug the foundations, as their meeting of 25 July 1867 delegated Messrs Hunt, Hill, Mountjoy & Honeycombe to ask the architect to call for tenders:

- 1st For building the walls from the base course, the Committee finding the Stone. Lime, Sand, Water, delivery on the ground.
- 2nd Carpenter work viz Roof, floor, Window frames, Doors, and find all materials, the Committee will cart them to the ground from Geelong.
- 3rd Painting & Glazing. Tenders called for the whole or separately.
- 4th Inside fitting reserved for further consideration.

It was also resolved that the secretary, Laurence Mountjoy, see Mr McCann of Ceres regarding the stone. Peter McCann now owned the freestone quarry there that had been owned and operated by Benjamin Holdsworth of Highton and his partner Ezra Firth. (Firth's house in Ceres was the site of Wesleyan services there before that church was built). Holdsworth was now living next to

Joseph Ross, on the south side of Barrabool Road slightly west of Mountpellier Avenue. Holdsworth's 'new quarry' in Waurin Ponds supplied stone for the Germantown church in 1869, but perhaps was not open in 1867 for the Highton Wesleyans to use their own supplier, or perhaps delivery from Ceres via Barrabool Road was simpler. Sixty years later, when the 1926 tornado wrecked both the church and Holdsworth's house, the house's owner (Mrs F V Leigh, née Ethel Heard of 'Roslyn') donated its stone for rebuilding the church.

***Below:** The ruins of Benjamin Holdsworth's house after the tornado in 1926. The stone was donated by the owner Mrs Ethel Leigh to rebuild the church. In the background are the gateway and avenue to 'Montpellier'. Photograph by Pannell Leigh*



At the next meeting, in August, the committee officially endorsed the motion of George McKenzie and John Foster that “we build the church of free stone [sic: freestone, i.e. sandstone, and it had to be paid for] from Ceres”. It was then proposed by Ivatt Cann and seconded by John Foster: “That we accept Mr Wiltshire’s terms paying full toll for all cartage passing through his bar, and thankfully accept his bonus of Four (4) £ for the new Church...”

Wiltshire

This Joseph Wiltshire or Wilsher was the keeper of the Kardinia tollgate at the junction of Barrabool and Boundary (Scenic) Roads, and had been a tenant of Highett’s in Section 25 since at least the early 1850s. At times he rented the church ‘paddock’, the empty acre on its west side which is now the car park. His farmhouse was within the curve of Barrabool Road, on the south side. It would not be likely that he was a Wesleyan, if he indeed held the licence for the Kardinia Hotel in Highton in 1867 as is recorded in *Geelong Hotels and Their Licensees*, but as that year is in the middle of the period 1862-1871 when Albert Firman was the licensee this may represent some other arrangement such as a temporary loan. The list actually reads “1867 Jos. Wiltshire? Wm Irison?”, and as the names I’Erson and Ireson occur in other contexts associated with the church or with the tollgate there is a puzzle here for someone to solve. However, Joseph’s son Oswald Wilshire / Wilsher / Wiltshire appears between 1874 and 1881 as licensee of the Gold Diggers’ Rest and the Lord of the Isles hotels, so the occupation was not unacceptable to the next generation, at least. Joseph Wilsher, aged thirty, with his wife Charlotte (Currel), twenty-nine, and children Arthur, eight, Oswald, six, and Rose, two, arrived as assisted migrants on the ‘Six Sisters’ in January

1853. Six children of the couple had been christened in Norton, Hertford, since their marriage in 1843, and three presumably had died in infancy; two others, Edward and Joseph, were buried at Highton in 1860 and 1861. Another son, Henry, was buried there in 1879, Arthur in 1885, and Charlotte and Joseph snr in 1891 and 1898. Oswald married Jane Duncan in Holy Trinity Church of England, Barrabool Hills in 1872, which may have been the bride’s church rather than his own; he died in 1895 aged forty-eight, and was buried in the Eastern Cemetery, Geelong.

At the next meeting, in September, tenders were received, and it was agreed:

- That Hollyoak and Hunter [of Geelong]’s tender be accepted for all works (mason excepted), amount £248.3.9
- That Mr Pile [of Chilwell]’s tender be accepted for the Mason Work, amount £96.0.0
- Mason work to be completed in three months & all works to be done in four months
- That the Treasurer pay the accounts for lime’.

Perhaps someone had complained about the supplying of stone, for it was also resolved:

- That Messrs L Mountjoy, Hunt, & Hill be a Sub-Committee to wait upon Mr Lumb, Ceres, and receive from him in writing the prices at which he will supply the Quoins, coping, sills, and six inch stone for the courses, throwing the rubble into the [bargain?].
- Then to wait upon Mr McCann and give him the preference of placing the above materials at our disposal (he having been spoken too [sic]) should he be able to supply at the same price and conditions relating to the rubble.

- Contingent upon Mr McCann complying with the above the Sub-Committee have authority to close with him for the above’.

Denominational and local solidarity may have been under strain, if Addison Lumb, brother-in-law of Ezra Firth, was here competing with a fellow Wesleyan and second-generation Geelong citizen. The Lumb family had arrived from Yorkshire in 1854. Peter McCann’s unruly grandfather, another Peter, had left Ireland against his will in 1799, and his father Nicholas, a stonemason, was born at Parramatta in 1803. Nicholas opened quarries by the Barwon in the 1840s, and it was written of him in 1856:

- This gentleman has lived on the hills for many years and is much respected. In his vocation as quarrier he has perhaps enriched the colony more materially than a thousand gold hunters.

Father and son were associated with the Wesleyans of Geelong from the 1840s, and Nicholas was converted to the cause of teetotalism by the Corio Total Abstinence Society in 1844. Peter McCann’s son Jonathan Peter was to enter the Wesleyan ministry, minister at Highton in the 1900s, and later become President of the Victorian and Tasmanian Conference.

The next meeting of the Building Committee, in October 1867, came to the following decisions (spelt as in the original minutes):

- That the Foundation Stone be laid on Monday 11 November at 3 o’clock, p.m.
- That a Tea Meeting be held in connection with the same, at halfpast four.
- That E Adcock & Mr J Ross be appointed to wait upon the ladies on the neighborhood [sic] & solicit Trays etc.

- Trays promised Mrs Mountjoy, Mrs Ireson, Mrs E Adcock, Mrs Mackenzie, Miss E Ross, Mr R. Kane.
- That a Public meeting be held after tea, that the Scty be requested to write to the Common School Committee to ask the loan of the School room for the said Meeting.
- That Messrs L Mountjoy & E Adcock wait upon G F Belcher, Esqr, to invite him to take the Chair at the Public Meeting.
- That Mr Smale and his choir be invited to assist with the singing.
- That the services on Sunday 10 November, in connection with the foundation stone laying [sic].
- That the Revds G Slade [, blank] Teague be invited in connection with the Ministers of the Circuit to speak on that occasion.
- That Mr Balding’s attention be requested to the mason work in the new Church.
- That Mr.Honeycombe’s offer to make a landing at the top of the steps into the Church be accepted.
- That the Sabbath School Children have their treat on Wednesday 12 November.

The term ‘trays’ is used repeatedly in the Church minutes up to the turn of the century. They must have been a much more substantial contribution than the ‘plates’ which it was later the custom for ‘the ladies’ to bring, and the Church often had to finance them. Later Sunday School record show that the School Committee automatically arranging to ‘purchase provisions’ for their teas, often from Mr Nicol of the local store.

Laying the Foundation Stone

The Wesleyan Chronicle of November 1867 gives a long account of the celebrations held on 11 November 1867.

“The corner stone of a new church was well and truly laid ... by the Rev. James Bickford, in the presence of about 150 persons. The site selected is one of the prettiest that could well be imagined, being in the reserves just above the cemetery, in which is also situated the schoolhouse. Which for years has been made to serve as a place of worship, but has for some time been found inconveniently small. Standing at the porch the spectator can obtain a good view of the romantic valley, dotted here and there with the elegant villas of the gentry, and the lowly dwellings of the small farmers and labourers, while, looking far beyond he can perceive the undulating country in the midst of which is the basin of Lake Connewarre, the view terminating at the range of sand hills which border Bass Straits.”

The writer apparently forgot that many of his Highton readers inhabited those ‘lowly dwellings’. Less poetically, he commented that there would ‘not be anything very striking’ in the appearance of the church, but that it would be ‘a neat and substantial edifice, and, as such, an ornament to the district.’

As was common in those days, the report goes on to give a summary of the minister’s address, after telling us that the proceedings opened with a regrettably unspecified ‘hymn’, a ‘portion’ of Psalm 84, and a ‘portion’ of Hebrews 12, read by the Rev. Henry Greenwood. The Rev. G Slade, of Fenwick Street Baptist Church, offered a prayer, and Edward Adcock announced that a cavity had been prepared under the corner-stone in which would be placed a

sealed bottle containing a copy of the *Wesleyan Chronicle*, *Geelong Advertiser*, *Geelong Register*, the circuit preaching plan, and the document reproduced below from the Committee Minute Book. The report misspells some names.

“With the traditional assurance that he did not intend to deliver a long address, Rev. James Bickford said that the laying of the foundation-stones of churches was ‘the performance of the work of God, the work of good Christians, and the work of good colonists.’ He remembered ‘twelve or thirteen years ago, when travelling along that lovely valley’, he had seen ‘the little brick house adjoining where they stood, and was informed by the Rev Isaac Harding that it was used as a church and schoolhouse.’ After ‘a few remarks with reference to the truths advocated by the Wesleyan Church’, he concluded by saying, ‘May the people be good, be loving, and then shall we be a happy people’ – a very Wesleyan emphasis.

Refreshed by a tea-meeting in the schoolroom, ‘several relays having to be made before all could partake of the delicacies provided’, the assembly then moved across Barrabool Road to the Anglican schoolhouse. The meeting was chaired by the manager of the National Bank in Geelong, Robert Gillespie. Laurence Mountjoy read a statement of accounts and promises for the new building, and the three ministers all gave addresses. Following a collection, it was announced that new promises amounted to £50 had been received, and after votes of thanks; at ten p.m. the choir sang, led by Mr Smale of Ceres, another anthem, and the benediction was pronounced.”

Church Committee
L. B. Hunt, W. Hill, Caleb Mountjoy
Joseph Ross, S. G. McKenzie Henry Jones
John Hobbs, Irat Cann, Geo. Woodland,
Philip Hoskin, John Foster, Will. Honeycomb,
W. Clarke, James Croot, and Will. Barnes

Treasurer
L. Mountjoy

Secretary
Edward Adeock

Architect
Wm. Balding

Contractors
Messrs. Holyoak, Hunter,
and Fife

God Save the Queen

The foregoing document was placed in a
bottle in the foundation stone with the
following newspapers,

Wesleyan Chronicle
Geelong Advertiser
Geelong Register
Circuit Plan

Above: Copy of document placed under foundation stone November 1867

The next meeting of the Committee was held on Wednesday evening after the children's treat, indicating the stamina of the twelve members who attended it after three days of celebrations and speeches. There may have been some undercurrents, as the first business on the brief agenda was to vote that "all resolutions passed by this Committee be carried out, unless rescinded by a qualified majority". It was also agreed "that we have the Church pewed, also pulpit as per plan furnished by Mr. Balding".

A fortnight after the celebrations, the committee men described themselves as "not being acquainted with the specifications" of the tenders for the 'pewing' and were "at a loss to know which to accept"; they asked Mr Balding to call for more, as they felt the ones they had were very high. They also asked Edward Adcock to "wait upon the farmers early tomorrow morning to get them to cart stone", and authorised him to hire labour for carting if necessary. Another motion reduced the Committee quorum from nine to seven.

The only two resolutions of the following December meeting suggest a certain amount of frustration. Robert Balding was to be reminded about calling for the pewing tenders, and the following letter was to be sent to Peter McCann:

"At a Committee Meeting this evening complaints were made by the Committee who have been carting the stone, that the stones required for the Church are not ready, that they have to bring stone that is not required, that the mason (Mr. Pile) as [sic] to leave the work because he has not the proper stone required for carrying out the work, - the Committee urgently request that you will at once furnish the stone requisite for completing the contract."

The Committee should have been comforted that the 'gratuitous' work of carting the stone was estimated to have saved £100. The account of the stone-laying reports that the total cost was estimated at £500 over and above this cartage, and £130 had already been collected.

In January 1868, plans for the opening services were under way. The dates were fixed as Sunday, 5 April 1868, with a tea meeting on the following Friday. This throws an interesting light on the changes that had taken place since John Wesley's day. Wesley himself, as a good Anglican, not only respected the observance of the Christian year, but encouraged his societies to observe four yearly fast days. Now the Wesleyans of Highton were organising for a big celebration on Good Friday, and catering for feasting rather than fasting.

Mr Albert Scholes of Ceres was asked to change his tender for the internal fitting from red deal to 'Oregon pine'; the committee was willing to pay £5 - £8 more than his tender of £56.16.6. Scholes, whose half-brother Samuel became president of the Victorian Methodist Conference, had come from a Yorkshire Wesleyan background at the age of eight, with his builder father Absalom and step-mother Mary Lumb, sister of Addison. In 1867 Albert was barely twenty-one, and was keeping the carpentry business afloat since the death of his father the previous year. While working on the church, he went weekly by horse and cart, with two or three other young men, from Ceres to Geelong after their 10-hour day's work, to study to become teachers. (One of his companions on these trips later had a son who is remembered as Flynn of the Inland.)

At the same meeting it was agreed to use Hartley patent glass for the windows

instead of common glass, the three end windows to have stained glass borders. Photographs of the church before the tornado do not show the design of a stylised torch in the side windows that they now have, although the glass was still leaded, with small diamond-shaped panes.

Plans for the opening services included a prayer meeting at 7 a.m., followed by services in the morning and afternoon, and a public meeting at night. For the tea meeting, Mr Ross was to 'ask the loan of the large tins from Yarra St Church to make the tea in, & take charge of same', Mr Foster was 'to procure a boiler for heating the water', and Mr Smith was to be put in charge of the boiler to heat the water. Mr Hobbs was requested to bring the firewood, while Messrs Foster and Adcock were to wait upon the ladies to solicit trays. Mr Mountjoy was to purchase lamps for the new Church, 'also a Chair'. It was resolved to have a tank at the south end of the church, 'the pump to be inside the bell turret'. A subcommittee was appointed to arrange for the tank building, and for 'the clearing of the church grounds, breaking the stones etc.' A later reference in the 1893 minutes may suggest that this tank was underground, which would explain the need for a pump; in July of that year, Bro. Henry bought the old tank pump and pipe for £1, and:

"Bro. Mountjoy [was permitted] to remove the bricks from the old tank ... promising to fill up the earth whether he took the bricks or not."

On 2 April 1868, two days before the opening services, the committee arranged for tickets to the tea to be sold in the church grounds and collected at the door, ruling:

"That no person to be admitted without tickets, that the tea makers shall have

tickets given to them, two to each tray, that those who are giving trays shall have half tickets given them to admit their children under 12 years of age.

It was also decided that:

- In addition to the provision made for the Tea by the Ladies giving trays, the committee shall provide 24 Loaves bread (4 lbs each), Boned Beef (about 40 lbs). Mr Foster to provide the extra provisions etc.
- That the Committee meet on Good Friday morning at 8 o'clock to arrange the tables etc.
- That the first sitting down to tea be cleared out before any more be admitted.
- That Mr L Mountjoy procure a Bible & Hymn Book for the new Church, and that carpet for the platform & cushion for pulpit, also new gates for entrance, etc."

Opening Day

The April 1868 issue of *The Wesleyan Chronicle*, reporting on the opening, gave a description of the completed church, which deserves recording in case this building, still standing in 2007, is ever demolished.

"It is ... substantial and with little ornament, the style of the architecture being plain Gothic. There is a very convenient porch to the entrance which is at the south-east corner, and nearly adjoining is a neat bell tower. The pulpit is at the north end, and from the entrance there is a gradual decline in the flooring, so that although the minister will have the full over sight of his congregation, he will be raised scarcely above the level of those who sit at the back. The seats are exceedingly comfortable in their construction, having low sloping backs."

Whether the day opened with an early prayer meeting as planned is not mentioned, but at 11 a.m. the Rev James Bickford, the local minister and now president of the Australasian Conference, formally opened the church for public worship. At 2 p.m. a prayer meeting began, and:

“At three Mr Matthew Burnett preached outside the church to a congregation of some hundreds, who came from near and far; he also preached again in the evening.”

This time the journal was a little kinder in its comments.

“The residents of the picturesque locality of Highton have reason to feel somewhat proud of their ecclesiastical buildings, as they are really ornamental to the district.”

Later that week, on Good Friday, the opening celebrations continued, with a morning service at which the Rev F E Stephenson was to have preached, ‘but he was unwell, so Mr Matthew Burnett officiated in his stead.’ The unflagging Mr Burnett also preached in the afternoon, on John 3: 14-15. ‘The congregation on the latter occasion was very large, some 700 to 800 people being present.’ As the *Geelong Advertiser* reported, because of the numbers they “had to be addressed outside, Mr Burnett standing on the steps of the main entrance to the church, from which he had a commanding view of his audience.” Rounding up the *Chronicle*’s estimate of 630 people present, the *Advertiser* puts it at 650 who then “took tea in the old [brick] chapel and the Church of England school house which had been kindly loaned for the occasion” – eating in successive relays. After this, public meetings were held simultaneously in both the church and

the Anglican school, one chaired by W F Ducker and the other by James Lowe (both from Geelong). The speakers, the Rev J Bickford, Mr M Burnett, Mr R Balding, and other gentlemen, though presumably not the two chairmen, moved from one meeting to the other, after the treasurer (D Mountjoy, Esq) had read the financial statement. The *Advertiser* says that Bickford and Burnett ‘delivered to both audiences lengthy and interesting speeches’ after which ‘at 10 p.m. the services of this never-to-be-forgotten day were brought to a close’.

Financially, the two days of activity brought in a total of £117.5.2 (collections £28.19.7, proceeds of tea meeting £46.18.7, promises £41.7.0). The *Chronicle* reported that the debt on the church would be a little over £100, ‘exclusive of the loan from the Building Committee’ – probably the central Wesleyan fund. It is interesting that in 1914 the then treasurer John Harrison commented that he “had tried to get information about the cost of the ... building, but no record had been kept. It must have been about £1400”.

A newspaper paragraph dated Monday 13 April 1963, and probably also from the *Geelong Advertiser*, adds a little extra information:

“Mr Burnett has recently been engaged among the good people of Highton, and, we believe, has met with his usual success in making converts. On Friday the new Wesleyan Church was opened, the event being celebrated by a monster tea meeting, at which Mr Matthew Burnett and his choir were present.”

There are a few details about the celebration which the reports and the minutes do not record, but which, from a later perspective, arouse curiosity. Firstly, although walking from Geelong

was common enough, many would have come by buggy or on horseback; so what happened to the horses during those long hours, and where did they wait? It is surprising that there is no mention of anyone's being appointed to supervise the equivalent of parking, although there is a mention later of a stable. And what about the human visitors during that time? Someone may have had to dig handy ditches somewhere inside the church's two-acre allotment, but the minutes are too delicate to record it.

Music

Another aspect is touched upon only in the postscript that mentions Matthew Burnett's choir: what about music? Some information is given in the 1914 *Geelong Advertiser* report of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, even though this account has some flaws and relies on fallible memories:

“Mr Cooper, of Melbourne, took up the story as to the opening of the present church, and referred to the self-denying efforts of the Barrabool farmers, Mountjoy Brothers, Honey, Coomb [does this mean Honeycombe? – though both Honey and Coombes were Ceres families], Ross and many others. The Rev J Bickford laid the foundation stone. They had no organ in those days; his mother used to raise the tune, and the first hymn ever sung in this church went to the tune ‘Simeon’. He was sorry that in compiling the new [1904, Methodist] hymn book they left that out; but the authors must have felt ashamed of the omission, for they put it in the appendix. Those were the days of Matthew Burnett (he opened the church) and California Taylor. In those days the young men, as they followed the plough, sang, “For the Lion of Judah shall break every chain,” and other familiar hymns.”

Apart from the cost, some stricter churches had been as suspicious of church organs as they had been of certain building styles that they regarded as ‘departing from the simplicity of original Methodism’. It is said that up until 1854, no musical instrument had been permitted in the services at the Yarra Street church, although it is not clear whether it was banned by the local trustees or by higher Wesleyan authorities. Some churches locally had a fiddle or other instruments to lead the singing, a common tradition in the Anglican country churches back in England. The practice of having someone ‘raise the tune’ depended for its success on their having a good ear for music. The earlier method of having someone lead the hymns ‘line by line’ had probably died out with the increasing ability to read both words and music from hymnbooks which the Wesleyan stress on education had encouraged. The love of singing instilled by the Wesley brothers meant that many hymns were lodged in Methodist memories, and took little prompting. Even if Laurence Mountjoy bought the church only one hymnbook for the opening services, many good Wesleyans had brought their own from England. Thomas Rix of Geelong, one of the first three trustees, had a cherished and much-used copy of Wesley's Hymns, bound with a Bible, that the members of the class he had led in Woolwich, London, presented to him when he left for Australia. By the mid-19th century, the classic hymns of the Wesleys and Isaac Watts were supplemented by ‘camp-meeting’ style hymns and choruses like the ‘Lion of Judah’ and Ira D Sankey's *Hymns and Sacred Songs*. Later, minutes in the 1890s refer to buying hymn-books “for the use of strangers”; it may have been assumed that families would have their own books for use at home, in private devotions, family prayers, or singing around the piano or parlour organ. As

late as the 1933 hymnal, the books provided in the pews, with words but not music, bore on the cover the inscription "For the use of visitors". Those who have shared in the congregational part-singing of tunes like 'Sagina', 'Lyngham', 'Diadem', and Mrs Cooper's 'Simeon', will feel that real strangers would have been helped by having the music also. But as the introduction to the 1933 hymnbook claims, "Methodism was born in song", and a good memory and a good ear, as well as good lung capacity, were more or less expected of a good Methodist. Those who lacked these gifts still joined in with a will, and for many the world of the senses met the world of the spirit in the sacrament of the expanded diaphragm.

Cooper

The Mr Cooper whose recollections were reported is shown in a group photograph taken at the 1914 Jubilee, labelled Pioneers on page 136. While Cooper is a common enough name, the Mrs Cooper who had raised the tune must be the woman whose photograph was preserved in the same frame, with that of her husband. The 1861 map shows a John Cooper, west of Roslin and on land owned by James Huggett, north of Barrabool Road at Fisher's Hill, together with the site of 'Combe Cottage'. The only John Cooper found so far was married to Hannah Bird, and the births of this couple's children were registered at Ashby, Geelong, Modewarre and Mount Moriac between 1855 and 1866, which makes a Highton link seem less unlikely. Later the family settled at Benalla, where they were attached to the Wesleyan church. It would be pleasing to think that our first singer was a Bird, but no confirmation has yet been found. The addition of 'Mr Cooper' to the church committee in 1877 seems to tell against this possibility.



Above: Mr Cooper



Above: Mrs Cooper

It was noted that Caleb and Louisa Mountjoy's daughter Emma was the first baby to be baptised in the new church; the exact date of this event is not given, but she was born on 28 March 1868. She married a Methodist minister, James Thomas Thomas from Creswick, and

both of them appear in the 1896 Good Friday group photo on page 137.

After the Honeymoon, the Housekeeping Begins

After the opening celebrations, the tone and frequency of the committee meetings is noticeably different, and nothing quite reaches the same pitch of enthusiasm. At the next meeting, on 20 April 1868, the committee discussed the subject of pew rents in the new church. It was agreed that 'sittings' be rented out to those who wished to pay 1/- per quarter, commencing in April. 'Those Brethren who had drawn the stone &c for the Church' were to have first choice and the option of sitting free, and the hirers of family pews were allowed to put in drawers for books &c. It was agreed to have 'Coca matting for the isles [sic], mat & scraper for door &c, and Cushion or Carpet for Communion rail &c.' The pump was to be covered in and locked up, with the woodwork to be painted to correspond with the stone work. Messrs L Mountjoy and E Adcock were elected Chapel Stewards – an appointment that was properly the responsibility of the Leaders Meeting

Appointing a 'Chappel Keeper' had its difficulties, as each year there seems to have been a long discussion, and frequent change of arrangements. Tenders were called for someone to attend to "Cleaning, Lighting, &c the new Church and School Room, and other duties", and in early May 1868 Henry Clarke's tender of three pounds per annum was accepted, with Messrs C Mountjoy and MacKenzie appointed to "settle with Emily Trewin for cleaning the Church to the present time". It is not clear why Emily, aged about seventeen at the time, was not given the dignity of the title 'Miss', especially as she was to marry William Barnes's half-brother John the next year. Apparently there was

a hitch somewhere, as in March the next year the committee accepted "Mr Trewin's offer for the Chappel Ground viz 25/- for the rent, 12/6 of that amount to be paid to Emily for cleaning and lighting the Church", and Mr Clarke's tender for £5 for the same work was accepted.

But in May 1870 Mr Clarke expressed a wish to be relieved of these duties, and Mr L Trewin's tender of £8 for those and for cleaning the walks and borders for twelve months was accepted. (The relationship among local Trewins is not clear; Emily was the daughter of Emily Wonnacott and a William Trewin who was not Kuria Mountjoy's husband William, and Mr L Trewin could hardly have been Kuria's son William Laurence who was then aged eleven. Several families came from around the border of Cornwall and Devon, and were probably related.)

Meanwhile the committee may have begun to worry about finance. At the same meeting in June 1868 "a long conversation respecting Mr Burnett's time" concluded with a decision to let it stand over for future consideration; a sub-committee for fencing the church grounds was appointed; Albert Scholes' tender of £6.10 for new gates was accepted; and the committee recommended a Singing and Elocutionary entertainment, presumably as a fund-raiser. In November the committee met for the purpose of considering a letter from the Circuit Stewards asking for an additional £5 for the Matthew Burnett fund, and after another 'long discussion' agreed unanimously to the following reply:

"The Committee, having sent £5 collected for the Burnett fund cannot entertain any further claim upon them as it would be unreasonable to suppose they could make a special collection the first

week of Mr Burnett's visit when six collections were made beside the Public tea, quite sufficient for one week even in a Wesleyan Church. The Society have great pleasure in forwarding the sum of 3/- to furnish a table for the Valedictory Tea and Testimonial Fund &c."

But they were not deaf to all appeals. The previous meeting had agreed "after a deliberate and friendly discussion" that "recognising the Goodness of God to us as a people" they would grant the petition of the Brethren at Paraparap to give them the pulpit from the old church as a donation to their new church; although Bro Foster had moved a dissenting amendment which 'fell to the ground' in spite of having an (unnamed) seconder, the original motion was finally carried unanimously.

"The meeting then closed with prayer that the blessing of God might rest on the ministrations delivered from the pulpit presented."

Arrangements for the 1869 church anniversary, and others, were recorded in much less detail. Asking for trays and selling tickets became routine, although a certain Mrs Cutting was paid by the committee for her contributions of a tray – perhaps recognition of her willingness to help although financially limited. An unexplained resolution in March 1869 was:

"That the Secretary write to Mr Tuffs (surveyor) asking for permission to remove some of the wash-up near the new Church of England & Temperance Hall [the latter was on the site of the present Highton Pre-School Centre at 257 Roslyn Road]"

Presumably this was sand, perhaps to spread on paths. Mr Hobbs was regularly asked to provide the firewood, and this raises the question of whether there was

an open fire to heat the water from the pump in the bell tower. If any kind of fireplace had been built into the old brick school, it was some way from the pump; but a smoking fire near the church door could have caused some difficulties.

After the first anniversary 'The Committee and Friends' met to consider beautifying the church ground. The soil was to be trenched by the plough and hand labour, 'as far as possible ... by gratuitous labour', under the direction of Messrs L Mountjoy, J[oseph] Balding, Ross, and Clarke. Edward Adcock was to wait upon Messrs Bunce [of the Geelong Botanic Gardens], Wyatt [of Frogmore Nursery, Fyansford], and Adcock to solicit donations of trees and shrubs. Mr Clarke asked for a man to help him finish the borders, and gravel from the Chilwell gravel pits was to be used for the walks, which included one from the church to the stable.

One o'clock on Thursday 22 July was fixed for the tree planting, and it was resolved "that the Trees in the Avenue leading from the road to the Church be 1/- each for planting, those next the main road be 9d also between the new & old Church, Blue Gums 3d, those in front of the Gums 6d each".

As men had been appointed to "accompany the planters to enter the names and receive the money" it is not clear if the people doing the physical work had to pay for the privilege, or if each tree was to be a memorial to a particular donor; seeing no lists have survived, any memorial intention has been lost. Messrs Hunt, Hill, Wood, Ducker, Wyatt, Young, Kane, and Belcher, (respected gentlemen), were 'invited' to take part in the tree planting, so it seems as if it was regarded as an honour, though 'taking part' may have meant donating.

Steadfast Through Change

A 'plain tea' was arranged in connection with the tree planting 'for the accommodation of Friends from a distance', provisioned by 50 lbs of Cake & 4 doz 2-lb loaves of Bread, 3 lbs of Tea and 15 lbs of Sugar. Tea makers were to be ready at four o'clock, and the charge was adults 9d each and children 6d. The balance sheet for the occasion runs:

RECEIPTS

Proceeds of Tea Meeting	£3.7.1
Sale of provisions	£1.8.8
Proceeds of tree planting (with Mrs. Barnes 6/-)	£5.16.1
Mr. Powells donation (as per toll)	6/ 9
Mr. Hunt donation	5/ -
Mr. Ducker donation	5/ -
Proceeds of lecture by Mr. Cawdell	£1.16.0
	<u>£13. 4. 7</u>

EXPENSES

Mr Hunts bill for cake etc.	£2.16.0
Mr Nicol Tea, sugar etc.	14/ 6
Mr Mountjoy Butter 5 ½ lbs	8/ 3
Gravel 17/6 Pailing 2/ 6	£1. 0. 0
Mr Barnes labour 12/ -	
Danl Brewer labour 45/-	
	£2.17. 0
Mr Clarke for man	£4. 0. 0
Mr Powell for toll	6/ 9
Mr Ireson trenching	10/ -
Mr Thacker printing bills etc.	8 /-
Mr T Adcocks bill for shrubs etc.	£4.19.0
	£17.19. 6
	<u>£13. 4. 7</u>
	£ 4.14.11

Two names there are worth noting. The Rev J A Cawdell had "kindly offered to give his lecture on India" in aid of the planting, and although it sounds like a set piece adults were willing to pay 1/- and children 6d (Sabbath School children 3d) to attend, after ten handbills had been distributed. Thomas Powell operated the tollgate at the Prince Albert Bridge, a site now in the Balyang Sanctuary, and also from 1865 at Queens Park Bridge, so this expense was for bringing the gravel through from Chilwell.

In January 1870 the Committee met mainly to discuss a resolution by the Circuit Quarterly Meeting "respecting the Circuit debt and asking the Trustees to allow a collection to be made in the Church every Sabbath". Although only four of the ten members present were trustees, the meeting agreed after a "lengthy discussion ... that in the opinion of the Trustees it would be detrimental to the interests of the Church, and that we have collections every alternate Sabbath as usual" – something of a lapse from the Methodist Circuit spirit. But Highton had its own worries, as the meeting also resolved that bills were to be sent to the seat holders "to settle accounts before the anniversary". Collecting pew rents was to be a recurrent problem.

As that year turned towards winter, a meeting in May asked Laurence Mountjoy to "get the three pews near the door lined at the bottom to prevent drafts" – a feature that was unfortunately not repeated in the rebuilding after the 1926 tornado. The same meeting also resolved to "have a lamp against the church door", and agreed "that the Trees & Shrubs be filled up, Mr Mountjoy to wait upon Mr Bunce and if nothing suitable can be obtained from the Botanical Gardens, Mr Adcock's tender be accepted".

Apart from arranging the anniversaries, the main business that recurred each year seems to have been holding "very lengthy" discussions about the salaries for the Chapel Keeper and the person who looked after the grounds. At the May 1870 meeting, Mr Clarke was replaced as Chapel Keeper by Mr L Trewin, who was given an extra £2 for sowing grass seed as well as keeping the walks and borders cleared, "Mr Mountjoy to furnish the seeder". Clarke was back as Chapel Keeper in May 1871.

In April 1871 it was decided to plant the church grounds (probably the western half) with potatoes, Mr Honeycombe to have the offer of the ground, “potatoes not to be planted nearer than two feet from the trees and shrubs”. Mr Honeycombe, who was not at that meeting, declined, and a subcommittee was later appointed to arrange the planting, “the profit (if any) to go to the Church fund”. On the same occasion Mr L Mountjoy was asked to “ascertain the cost of a building to be erected at the end of the School room for Tea Meetings &c”, but nothing more seems to have been done about this. The committee was still watching finances, as they agreed that the Sabbath School Committee be requested to pay the interest on the £50 due on the School room – with the word ‘kindly’ courteously inserted in the minutes before ‘requested’. (The School Committee responded by agreeing to pay £3.10 per annum.)

Edward Adcock was asked to prune the shrubs and trees as they grew, and the potato crop was sold to Mr Worland in early 1872 at £1 per ton for the large ones and 10/- for the small. (Potatoes were to be sown again the next year; but what should we make of the later motion that: Mr Adcock be kindly requested to employ a competent person to cut the rosemary’?) A hoe, rake, and pair of shears were bought for tending the grounds, and Mr McKenzie was asked to varnish the church doors. Another long conversation resulted in a call to collect subscription towards “the funds of the Cabinet Organ”, and also that a concert be held, after which any deficiency under £5 was to be made up from the Church funds.

The status of this Cabinet Organ is a little hard to work out. Although 1872 is the first time it is mentioned, in May the next year Miss Hoskin is presented with 50/- for services rendered at the

Harmonium, as if this instrument had been in use for some time. Perhaps the organ had already been installed, and funds were being raised to pay off a financial loan. In any case, several concerts by the Chilwell Choir were held in aid of this fund – timed for the full moon of the chosen month. For the Choir’s visit in February 1873, conveyances were to be arranged, and “refreshments for the singers” provided; no supper for the audience, apparently. An item in April 1872 about a covering loan of £5 to the Organ Committee from the Church Committee “towards paying for the Instrument to be repaired after the concert” which was still to be held certainly suggests that something was in active use already.

At this April meeting, Caleb Mountjoy was appointed to replace his brother as Treasurer and Church Steward. Laurence “having left the district”, a motion appreciating his services was passed. This item is hard to reconcile with the presentation to him in February 1891 for having been Superintendent of the Sunday School for twenty-eight years. Perhaps these years were not consecutive and he did indeed begin the Sunday School in 1856; he did return to Highton, as we shall see. In spite of the past tense, Laurence still attended a meeting in July, although not the May meeting where it was agreed that “in order to meet the wishes of a few friends, the platform now occupied by the choir be lowered to the step around the Communion”. That meeting also decided to hire labour for the grounds as required, and to approach Mr Glanfield to take on the office of Chapel Keeper for £4.10.0. – a reduction of 10/- from Henry Clarke’s charge.

Glanfield

Thomas Glanfield and his family lived opposite the church in Barrabool Road. An amateur artist’s impression of

'Glanfield's' was on display in the Geelong Art Gallery during the first temporary exhibition of Von Guerard's 'View of Geelong', and it showed a farmhouse on a slope of land that has since been levelled. It was described as being on the corner of Scenic and Barrabool Roads, which puts it more or less on the site which was still occupied by the Common School in 1872, even though Highton Anglicans were worshipping at St John's by then. The 1861 map of Allotment 1 Section XIX seems to show a building between the school and Barrabool Road, which would have been on part of the Anglican grant from the government, and would been on a lower level. Bottrell wrote:

"Mr Glanfield's property was nearly opposite the cemetery. His son, John, when a little boy at school, conceived the idea of people flying. "We shall fly", the little fellow often said. His mates named him 'the paling wing flier.'"

Thomas Glanfield and his wife Elizabeth Hobbs Allen came from Emberton in Buckinghamshire. Elizabeth was a first cousin of Edwin and John Lowe Hobbs, and like them born in Astwood in that county. The Glanfields arrived as assisted immigrants on the 'Merchant Prince' in March 1858, with Mary Ann, aged thirteen, daughter of Thomas's first marriage to Ann Pateman, and four children of their own – Lucy, John, George, and Rachel – whose ages ranged from six down to one. The births of at least eight more children were registered later; two daughters called Rachel died in turn, but a third Rachel, who married Henry Emonson, survived to the age of ninety. Two more daughters, Martha and Eliza, were buried at Highton in 1868, with their ages written as 'four' and 'five'; these ages may have been in months or in weeks or even days, as the births of Matthew and Eliza were

registered in that same year. Eliza Tabitha, born the next year, lived to be ninety-nine, marrying George Deans in 1896; she made regular donations to the Sunday School during the 1920s. This couple, whom the scholars called 'George and Pussy' behind their backs, used to come out from Geelong in the 1930s and 1940s to train and accompany the singing for the Sunday School Anniversaries – George blasting merrily away on his cornet. John, the 'flier', had seven children, and by their birthplaces the family seems to have gone to Echuca in the mid-1870s, and then lived in the Fitzroy area up till 1880, dying in NSW in 1927; we may never know if he ever managed to fly. Statistics based on the thirteen siblings demonstrate the flaws in calculating life expectancy: three lived to over ninety and two more well into their eighties, three died under one and one under two, and three at forty-nine, seventy-three, and seventy-four spoil the average.

Chapter 6

**BUILDING IN STONE
- THE SUNDAY SCHOOL**

The Highton Wesleyans were obviously proud of their new church, judging by the lavish scale of the celebrations. Unfortunately, not long after, they were not able to bask in the glory of their achievement for long before circumstances brought them another challenge, which they faced with less exuberance. The need for further building work and the problems of financing it overshadow the records for nearly twenty years.

A brief meeting in June 1872, attended by Messrs Worland, C Mountjoy, Hoskin, Adcock, and Bennett, seems largely to have been about an account presented by Bennett for payment, (presumably Francis Bennett of St John's, who is not mentioned in other Committee minutes). After this a 'conversation' about the 'dangerous state' of the School Room is recorded, but the problem, however dangerous, was held over till the next meeting.

Laurence Mountjoy, though no longer Treasurer, chaired the next meeting, in July 1872. Though briefly filled by his brother Caleb, Laurence's leading role passed very soon to a new member of the Committee, John Henshaw.

Henshaw

Henshaw bought four acres at the eastern end of Hightett's Village from Alfred Firmin in June 1872 – all the area east of the present primary school boundary between Barrabool and Roslyn Roads. Firmin had gradually acquired all the lots previously owned by William Windmill, James Newland (whose son later married William Wall's daughter Louisa Jane), and Benjamin Levien (whose son was

the MLA for Barwon from the 1870s). Firmin's Kardinia Hotel licence was not renewed that year, and Henshaw may have been welcomed as new blood by the Highton teetotallers. He certainly became a very active member of the committee, although his time in Highton turned out to be brief. He could have been the Henshaw referred to in an 1855 incident described in the Geelong Family History Group in *Mysteries, Motives and Murders*:

“The man Henshaw was probably John, the husband of Frances Lamb (Richardson). This couple lived in the Kensington/Point Henry area where six children were born until the family moved to Collingwood.”

C and W Henshaw, who in 1871-72 were owners of the Point Henry Tea Gardens for a few months before bankruptcy, may have been related to John. However, identification of the husband of Frances Richardson with the John who came to Highton is challenged by the church's cash book entries for 1873, when six Henshaw children gave 5/- each at the foundation stone laying for the new schoolroom. Their names belong to the family of another John Henshaw, husband of Jane Mercer, who had taken over as church Treasurer earlier that year. As with the Hightett family, the place of registration for various Henshaw events suggests that the family travelled from and to England more than once, and were probably of a different financial standing from most of Highton's Wesleyans at that time. They came from the district around Liverpool, where John's father was a merchant, and their first child, Joshua, was apparently born there about 1851. Another son was born in Geelong in 1854 and died in England in 1856, although the dates of their voyages are uncertain. The family certainly returned here together in December 1871 as unassisted immigrants

on the 'Wimmera', and most of them remained here, eventually living in Kew: one daughter returned to England to marry. In Highton they may have lived in the ten-roomed 'brick villa' which had been the Kardinia Hotel. In March 1874, John offered his four acres and house for £800 when the Common School Committee was searching for a new site, but another site was chosen, though later found unsuitable. Henshaw sold his site to G.F Belcher in July 1874, for £1100.

The Communion Set

In their brief stay, John left his mark in the church story. He chaired the meetings in October 1872 and February and March 1873, and was appointed Treasurer and a Church Steward at the April meeting. He and Henry Johns proposed that "a leaf or other table be provided for the Sacrament", and in succeeding meetings the price of a communion set was examined. Quotations for Britannia metal at £3, electroplated ditto at £7 (with a box, 10/- to 12/- extra), and finally glass at 35/-, had all been shelved by June 1873 until after the new building had been erected. The search was for a 'Cup, Plate, Flagon, and Book', implying that the Anglican tradition of sharing a common cup had not yet been replaced by the later custom of using small individual glasses. On 20 July 1873 the Secretary announced that Mr Henshaw "had presented the Church with the beautiful Communion Service used on the past Sabbath" – electroplated – and it was agreed unanimously that "a suitable inscription be engraved thereon that generations yet unborn may know to whom we are indebted for this valuable present, also that a box be procured for it".

Although the box remains, neither it nor the existing chalice bears any inscription. Henshaw was re-elected Treasurer in April 1874, but 'having left the

neighbourhood' sent in his resignation and books by July 1874.

But to return to the July 1872 decision to "take immediate action on the School Room": it was agreed that it should be enlarged, and that Robert Balding be approached "to ascertain the cost of pulling down the building and rebuilding a room 30 ft by 24". A public tea meeting was arranged 'during the August moon', and Mesdames Mountjoy, Worland, Croot, Henshaw, Hoskin, Mackenzie, and Adcock were "to be a committee to provide the Tea". For once it was not recorded that they were to be "kindly requested"; in fact it seems all the husbands present volunteered their wives' service, with the exception of Ivatt Cann, whatever his reasons may have been. This never happened again.

Following 'a long conversation' at the next meeting, in August:

"The Committee were unanimous in their opinion that unless we can get some considerable assistance from the Loan Fund they cannot see their way clear to do any thing at present with the heavy debt upon the Church. Proposed by Mr. C. Mountjoy Secd. by Mr Cann (provided assistance can be obtained) the school be rebuilt at the North end of the Church."

The next month it was agreed to ask Mr Balding to prepare plans, and to give probable costs, the building to be 'at least 30 ft long, and be built from East to West'. The minutes do not record the exact measurements finally agreed upon, but the present building measures 40 ft x 21 ft. In October, plans were examined and approved, and application was made to the Loan Fund for a loan of £200. It was also decided to have the entrance gates 'altered', but no details are given. Later references suggest that this was a double gate, with one wing shut to deter

cattle; and as it was in 1890 that the local Council was asked to make a crossing into the church grounds at the corner near the Cemetery, the entrance until then may have been in the middle of the block, which by the 1830s was a pedestrian a gate only. In fact, continual references to leasing the paddock or cutting and replanting trees in the church grounds, and to selling wood or potatoes, suggest that the central half-acre, designated for a 'dwelling' in the original Crown survey, may have remained the only land built on for over 100 years, with the present car park used to raise revenue.

The next meeting was held in February 1873, but no report is given of the reply received from the Loan Fund. However, Messrs C Mountjoy, McKenzie, Henshaw and Adcock were deputed "to wait upon the Friends and solicit contributions" towards the Church extension. At the same time, a concert by the Chilwell Choir in aid of the Cabinet Organ Fund was being arranged for "an evening during the full moon".

The next mention of the building project is in April 1873, when the Secretary (Edward Adcock) attempted to resign from all the offices held by him, but when he left the room the Committee agreed that his resignation of "his offices in Church & school be not accepted", and he was persuaded to return. Edward was facing his fiftieth birthday, and perhaps with the departure of his previous team-mate Laurence Mountjoy he felt it was time for new blood to take over; perhaps there was some disagreement behind the scenes; or perhaps the prospect of presiding over a new building project, with its possibility of financial stress, had daunted him. He might have been wise, as money was to be a problem for the next 15 years or more. However, John Henshaw was appointed Treasurer at this meeting, and

seems to have been a very active organiser; he immediately began a new account book, in which he recorded receiving £40.19.11 cash in hand, and the next day £100.0.0 from the Chapel Building Fund, per the Rev. E King.

Robert Balding was asked to prepare specifications, and tenders were advertised in the *Geelong Advertiser*. At the May meeting that discussed the specifications, it was decided to defer lining the roof and plastering the walls - and, according to a later note, to defer having any internal partitions as well. It was not until September 1888 that the Committee decided to have the walls plastered and ceiling boarded to correspond with the church, and two new windows placed in the north wall. It may have been intended to divide the new building at the junction of its two gables, the north-south continuation of the church's roof intersecting at a lower level by the east-west gable. In fact, this point was marked inside the building by a projecting pillar at each side, at the east end of the present Scenic Room; the space remained undivided until 1985.

There is no record in the minutes, but the north gable wall is of brick and not of freestone like the rest. This must have been a cost-cutting exercise, in the style known as 'Queen Anne at the front and Mary Ann at the back', as the neighbours in the cemetery to the north did not need to be impressed. It looks as if these bricks were a recycling of the old 1850s chapel materials, as the slope of the land and the size of the present wall make it unlikely that this is simply the original wall as it stood, although it was probably very close to or in this position. If the stone came from Ceres and the bricks from Strawberry Hill, the existing building is still very much a physical child of the Barrabool Hills.

At the same meeting, Adcock moved that “the shed & Boiler be erected at the back of the Building as per plan”, and “the Friends” were to be asked for help in carting stone and other materials. It may have been the problem of funding which made the Committee defer the purchase of a Communion Set at this stage; perhaps the ministers were bringing their own, if a common cup was used. The May meeting also discussed giving a testimonial to Miss Hoskin for her services at the harmonium, but this too was deferred for a fortnight, when they voted her 50/- as a “small acknowledgement” while apologising that it was not more.

A fortnight later, they recorded that the canvassing for subscriptions for the building was progressing, and that they hoped to be ready to commence in a few weeks. This meeting also recorded that: “The following Brethren had been gazetted as Trustees for the Church property, viz, Messres L Mountjoy, C Mountjoy, T B Hunt, E Adcock, & G Mackenzie”. (McKenzie replaced Joseph Ross.) However, there is no hint that these men held separate meetings, or made decisions apart from the rest of the Committee.

The Committee members for 1873 were then elected, and some new names appear, and take their place in the story of planning for the new building: “Messrs. C. Mountjoy, G. Mackenzie, Henery Johns, Ed. Adcock, John Hobbs, Ivat Cann, J. Croot, F. Worland, P. Hoskin, J. Foster, Hy Clarke, J. Henshaw, Will. Cutting, J Balding, J Calvert, Will Walls, & Sam. Rankin”.

Cutting

The personal names given for Will Cutting and J Calvert make them hard to identify. We could probably assume that it was Will Cutting who according to

Bottrell lived in Bonsey Road, although he tells us nothing further about him. We saw in earlier entries that Mrs Cutting was willing to supply a ‘tray’ for church functions, but she asked for financial help to do so, so it may be that this family was less affluent than some others at this stage. There is no local burial for a Will Cutting, but James Cutting aged seventy-two, who was buried at Highton in 1887 though he died at Lara, was a labourer who came out from Suffolk with his wife Charlotte Maora (then forty-two) on the ‘Black Eagle’ in June 1857. It was Charlotte who gave the information on his death certificate, and she put him down as having no issue, but a James, who might have been their son, (his death was not registered) was buried at Highton in 1874; she may have thought that only living children were to be entered. She does say that her father-in-law was William Cutting, farm labourer, but there are no records of the immigration of a William Cutting of the right age. However, the committee member would have been related to Charlotte in some way.

Calvert

The Calverts most likely to have been connected with the Highton church are recorded as early settlers in Belmont, where in 1863 their surname appears on the roll of the first Belmont primary school. ‘Calvert’ was present at the Highton church Committee meeting in March 1872, and was formally elected the following year. The ‘J’ may have been a slip of Edward Adcock’s pen in a run of ‘Js’ and ‘Wills’, as later records refer to ‘Mr W & T Calvert’, who gave donations of 5s each in 1889 – the same year ‘T Calvert Jnr’ was elected to the Committee. This should imply that there was a T Calvert senior. But the Thomas Calvert who surely must be ours (he married J P Foster’s daughter Ellen in 1878, and had five children who grew up

in the district) was the son of William Calvert and his wife Mary Davies, who arrived aged thirty-eight and thirty as assisted immigrants on the 'Admiral Boxer' in March 1857. William's birth has not been traced, but Mary was baptised in Dean by Bolton, Lancashire, and they were married in 1852 in the same area. In 1857 they had two children with them – Thomas, aged about two, and Martha, one, who died the same year; another three were born at Belmont, one dying aged two, and a fourth was buried at Highton in 1868. So the 1873 entry should name William Calvert, unless another Calvert remains to be identified.

We have already met the name of William Walls or Wall. Later generations abandoned the final 's', but it is believed to have been a remnant of an older family name, Wallish, which appears in Cornish records in the 1500s, with other variants.

Rankin

Another name, which carries considerable weight in Geelong Methodist and football circles – Rankin – now makes its appearance. In 1829, aged twenty-two, Samuel Rankin married nineteen year old Sarah Ann Warren at Braintree, Essex, and in December 1852 they and seven of their children arrived as assisted immigrants on the 'Isle of Skye'. The eldest son, Cornelius, brought his wife with him; another son, Jabez, remained in England and became a successful brewer. Most of the children had been baptised by the Independents (Congregationalists) of Bocking, Essex, although on their arrival their religion was given as Church of England; their names – Eli, Kezia, etc – were mainly biblical, reflecting the family's piety. We have no date for their arrival in Highton. Apart from the older children, who went to work with various

Barrabool Hills employers, the family settled somewhere on the Roslyn Road site later occupied by the Presbyterian Church. Notes by the family say: "Little is known of the others, but towards the end of the century only Walter appears to have remained in Highton".

Samuel first appears in the church minute books in April 1873, presenting an account for cleaning the borders and walks, and was appointed to the committee the next month.

Both Samuel Rankin and his son Walter seem to have remained farm labourers during their lifetimes. Walter's story is linked with that of the Hobbs family, after he married John and Ann Hobbs' daughter Sarah in 1871, at the Wesleyan Church, Chilwell. The local pictorial paper *News of the Week* in July 1917 featured a photograph of five generations at Highton – Mrs J L Hobbs, her daughter Mrs Walter Rankin, her son Ted, his and Louie Johns's son Bert, and Bert's baby daughter Lorna – and perhaps this line embodies typical Methodist faith, as shown by Sarah's Hobbs' 1920 obituary, which summarises a life lived in this church community throughout the 1800s).

After their marriage in 1873, Walter and Sarah, according to an undated family source: "Occupied the farm of a Mr Balding ... east side of Valley road south, opposite the present St. Augustine's Orphanage [Christian College]".

Ten of their eleven children were born to this couple while they lived in Highton up till 1890, and:

"With this brood ... extra work had to be undertaken and one of the jobs was the fencing of the Belmont Common from Barwon Bridge to Breakwater with post and rail. ... [They worked a] farm

owned by the Barwon Heads Coffee Palace in 1890 ... [and moved] to Wallington on the Swan Bay road ... in 1897. ... [About 1902] the family returned to Highton [where the younger members spent their teens, in a home] on the North side of Barrabool Road near the present site of the Public Hall.”

The ‘Rankin Junr’ who joined the church committee in May 1884 would be Walter, who from 1873 is recorded as donating to church funds as well as receiving payment for carting. Samuel himself continued to receive payments for work on the church grounds. As Samuel and Sarah’s children grew up and left home, the parents remained active supporters of the church. Sarah Ann died in 1889, and Samuel early in 1900.

Ireson

Although there is no record of his election to the Committee, the name Ireson appears among those present at the meeting 29 September 1873. Charles James Ireson was born in Sibbertoft, Northamptonshire, about 1832, and was married to Eliza Goffing from Sampford Spiney, Devon, at Holy Trinity, Barrabool, in 1858. To commemorate this couple, a brass plaque on the west wall of the old chapel was donated by their daughters Harriet Daniel and Anne Maria Hancock & her husband John. Eliza was baptised in the Buckfastleigh Bible Christian Circuit in the Dartmoor area. Eliza married Daniel Hancock after Charles’s death, and is buried at the Geelong West Cemetery; but she and Charles are both named on the grave in the Highton Cemetery, with their fifteen year old son Frederick and three year old daughter Ada. They had eight children, and the births of five between 1864 and 1874 are all recorded in the Barrabool Birth Register kept by Robert McDowall, the postmaster at Ceres. Charles was on

the committee of the Wesleyan church there in 1864, after buying a houseblock on the edge of the village, 150 ft east from where McCann Street runs north to the Temperance Hall. He sold it again in 1872, and in 1873 was leasing the right to operate the Kardinia tollgate at the Boundary (Scenic) and Barrabool Road corner, below the hill where the previous lessee, Joseph Wiltshire, had his farm, so the Iresons must have moved conveniently nearby. Wiltshire was the lessee again in 1874, and although the tollgate was ‘restored’ in 1876 all Victorian tolls were abolished in 1878. ‘Bro Ireson’ was appointed Chapel Keeper at Highton in 1876, replacing Glanfield. He purchased two lots on the north-east corner of Pakington and Hope Streets, Geelong West, where his widow supported her young family by running a shop after he died of cancer in 1880.

The new Committee met in June to discuss fairly routine matters, including repairs to ‘the bell post’; this term may imply that the bell was not simply hanging in the church tower as it was in later years. Another interesting motion, which foreshadows more of the same in later years, was that the Secretary should write; “to the police authorities requesting that a policeman in plain clothes be sent to put a stop to the disorderly conduct outside the Church”.

This was the Committee that unanimously announced, in July 1873, that they were in a position to proceed with the church extension. They agreed to remove all superfluous soil, and Messrs Henshaw and Adcock were appointed a sub-committee to ‘carry out the above resolution’ – whether in person or not is not specified. Apparently the old brick church that was being replaced was not exactly in the same position as the proposed building, or at least not at the same level, and the extension had to be dug into the hill. The Committee

agreed to supply sand and water and to cart from town all building materials except stone, for which the contractors should provide cartage.

In August, plans and specifications were approved, and at last they agreed that the proposed building should be at once proceeded with. The Rev. E King, who chaired the meeting, was asked to advertise for tenders. On 4 September, the following tenders were approved:

- Baker & McRorie, Mason work £139.5. 0
- A. Scholes, all works, Mason's excepted £140. 6. 0

The Treasurer was empowered to borrow £100 to carry out the works, and the advertising bill for tenders, of 7/-, was passed for payment.

Foundation Stone

A fortnight later, plans were being made to lay the foundation stone at 3 o'clock on Thursday 2 October 1873, in a 'short service'. In contrast with the elaborate organisation of the church's stone-laying celebrations, the minutes now become very uninformative. The same meeting records the Committee's refusal to accept John Henshaw's resignation as Treasurer, followed by decisions to invite the Mayor of South Barwon, Cr W Higgins, to perform the stone-laying, and the Rev's E Bickford and Bunning to preach at the Sunday School Anniversary and Opening services on the Sabbath day 9 November and to assist at the Public Meeting on the 10th.

A brisk meeting on 29 September decided that 'services', in the plural, in connection with the foundation stone-laying be advertised in the *Geelong Advertiser*; Bro McKenzie to provide trowel and mallet; Bro Henshaw to provide a "bottle for the Foundation stone to contain Newspapers &

documents on Church and School matters etc"; and "Bro Henshaw & Adcock to invite speakers and Friends at the Quarterly Meeting to be held tomorrow".

The next meeting is held in December, after the celebrations were over, and we have to rely on the *Geelong Advertiser* of 3 October 1873 to tell us what happened. The main theme of their report is the poor condition of the old building.

"For some years past the Wesleyans ... have felt the want of a new Sunday School ... , as the structure where these religious classes were held was of an extremely shaky character, so much so that it was daily expected to come to the ground. ... Mr Adcock, and other teachers, ... made up their minds to have one erected. Notwithstanding the short time that has elapsed, the foundation stone was laid yesterday. ... Mr Adcock ... remarked that they did not commence the present work until they were forced into it. He pointed out the progress that Sunday Schools had made in our midst, and hoped his audience would rally round the promoters of the building and help them pay for it. The foundation stone was then laid by Mr W Higgins, the Mayor of South Barwon; under which was placed a bottle, containing copies of the Geelong Advertiser, Wesleyan Chronicle, documents connected with church affairs, &c. A bottle, in which were papers, &c., found in the abutment of the church, was also placed under the stone."

Once again, we are not told exactly where these two bottles were placed, even if the original one was apparently somewhere along the north wall of the north-and-south oriented freestone building.

“The Rev T E Ick, MA, next addressed the meeting. He congratulated the persons present ... and referred to the dilapidated condition of the school-room which they had hitherto occupied. In concluding his brief address he stated he would address them more fully when the Sunday school was opened. The Rev [Congregational minister and father of the Mayor? – or a misprint?] Mr Higgins having made some brief remarks, the Rev Mr King, MA, was called upon to say a few words, in which he dwelt upon the rapid strides the Sunday School cause was making ... [T]he proceedings terminated with the doxology. ... [I]t is expected the new school will be opened in about four or five weeks’ time.”

Opening?

The Committee meeting, on 1 December, was concerned with finance, and for all we are told the proposed anniversary and opening might not have been held. There is no *Geelong Advertiser* report, and the Treasurer’s book that was begun by John Henshaw refers to £6.16.8 laid on the foundation stone, but not to a collection taken at a later ceremony, although there are a number of sums received from individuals. However, we must assume that the building was in fact opened, and perhaps that the experience of the previous occasions had meant that everything worked smoothly.

The December meeting, attended only by John Henshaw, Charles Ireson, and Edward Adcock, with Henry Johns in the chair, dealt with the bills for the new building. They decided “to ask the Sabbath School Secretary to assist the Treasurer to get in the amount promised”. The Secretary was instructed to solicit donations in aid of the building fund from ‘J R Hopkins Esqr., G Berry, J. Richardson, G. Cunningham, G F

Belcher, Wood Brothers, F Ducker, J Highett, C Mountjoy, Miss Elder, & Mrs Highett.’ (The account books show that ‘Jno Richardson MLA’ & ‘George Cunningham MLA’ donated £1.1.0 and £3.3.0 respectively.)

Somewhat puzzlingly, the Treasurer then reported that he had “through instruction from Mr Matthews (Architect)” paid Baker & McRorie the amount of their tender, plus £4.13.0 for extra work. (In January 1874, I Matthews is paid £7.0.0 for “superintending the erection of schoolroom”, and Mr Balding received an architect’s fee of £5.0.0 in February 1875.) Other accounts passed for payment included £7.10.0 to the Loan Fund, and ‘Moullen, Interest’ £6.0.0., so it appears that the denominational Building and Loan Fund had been unable to supply the whole £200 originally suggested.

The December meeting, and the year of 1873, concluded modestly with the resolution that the pump be repaired and a brush for cleaning the church be provided. After the exertions of building, housekeeping matters and the payment of loans became the main preoccupation of the Committee.

Chapter 7

**DEBT, DOLDRUMS
– AND A NEW DAWN?**

The completion of the freestone building marks the beginning of a new phase in the church's story, and here and there we can find hints that things were changing. The records still leave a lot to the imagination, but it is possible to trace several stories developing at the same time over the next 30 years. It is now necessary to deal with separate facts that can no longer be followed through the all-purpose Church Committee.

In March 1871 Geelong Circuit was divided into two - Yarra St and Geelong West. It's not clear whether this included the later system of 'pastorates', where the minister in residence in one of the larger Geelong churches was also given special responsibility for particular smaller or country churches. This was probably not the case, if the presence of a church's own minister at its committee meetings is any indication. Several annual meetings at Highton saw both Circuit ministers appointed to its committee. At other times, ministers were not specifically elected, though a minister would take the chair at some committee meetings, and sometimes both were present. However, the majority of meetings were chaired by one of the local laymen. Sometimes the meeting moved that the minister (usually the Circuit Superintendent) be asked to request certain nominated clergy to take anniversary service, for example, so there was some acknowledgement of a central authority; but in general the locals seem to have made most of the decisions themselves, although a minister was more often present at meetings which concerned new buildings than at others.

The minute of January 1870 previously referred to suggests that, with financial pressures increasing, the Highton Wesleyans were more preoccupied with their own local affairs than with Circuit loyalties. The necessary decision to replace the dangerous old brick building apparently put more strain on their resources than they had hoped, and although the 1880s were a boom time for Victoria, the Highton church was continually holding special appeals to clear the debt, renegotiate loans, and was apparently busier putting its own house in order than contributing to the wider church community. Occasionally, a choir from Chilwell (Noble Street) or Ashby would come out to give a fundraising concert, or some other 'Service of Song' would be held with help from Geelong.

Apart from the new Sunday School building, one of the reasons for this situation was that the children of the pioneers were now growing up and moving out into new areas, following the demand that the government 'unlock the lands' leased by pastoralists and open them for settlement by smaller selectors. The wheat crops of the Barrabool Hills became infected by rust in the 1860s, and other areas of Victoria like the Wimmera began to attract the children of the pioneering generation, who went off to do their own pioneering. At the 1914 Diamond Jubilee celebrations, George Mitchell "spoke of the work in later years; how they battled along when an exodus from the district left the debt a burden on the few".

Local flour mills like Hihett's ceased to be productive. The vineyards of Highton were destroyed by the phylloxera outbreak of the 1880s, but many of the Highton 'gardeners' continued to supply Geelong with produce as well as being nurseries for the trees which settlers and homemakers were still anxious to plant.



***Above:** View over Highton north-east by east from the Brownhill Lookout, about 1910. The small buildings in the foreground are homes for the settlers who were attracted by the unsuccessful Smaller Settlement Scheme of 1908, which divided the original area of the Roslin home farm into impracticably small blocks. Roslin homestead is just out of sight in the right foreground. On the farther rise, towards the right, 'Fernbank' & 'Fernside' are among the trees which hide 'Corowa' (later Leigh's 'Carramar'). The avenue to Montpellier shows beyond the roof of the church on the left, and the roof of Holdsworth's house can be seen opposite its gateway in Barrabool Road. Just left of centre, near the corner of Fishers (Mount Pleasant) and (North) Valley Roads, is Fred Morriss's house 'Hillside', which still stands; Hoskin and Wall lived further east. Reproduced with permission from the City of Greater Geelong calendar 2005.*

But the couples who had set up house in their thirties were reaching their sixties in 1880, and had less youthful zest to rise to meet challenges. A Church Committee minute in 1886 records a long conversation about having 'such a heavy debt upon the Church, and so few to share the responsibility.'

In 1878 Laurence Mountjoy retired from the partnership of Mountjoy Brothers, and bought 'Fernbank' in Roslyn Road, shown on the map of Thornhill Estate under the name of Thorne's partner T M Sparks – an 11 acre property which together with its western neighbour 'Fernside' occupied the south side of Roslyn Road between Thornhill Road and the corner of Boundary (Scenic) Road. (In 1928 'Fernside' was incorporated into the building of St Catherine's Orphanage, while Mountjoy's 'Fernbank' became the house for the Orphanage chaplain. Both houses are visible in the photograph above.

In the same year as he bought this property, 'L C Mountjoy, Highton, gentleman' was a shareholder in the

Chilwell Gold Mining Company, launched to investigate the possibility of mining gold at Mercer's Hill, Chilwell. By August the next year the venture was abandoned, and its land in Noble Street was sold. Another shareholder was fellow Cornishman John Daniel, who owned a hardware store in Moorabool Street, and was a friend and contributor to the Highton church. Laurence – carrier, shoemaker, and son of a shoemaker – here represents the social advancement of many of the hardworking immigrants of his generation. The term 'gentleman' was more readily applied in colonial society than it had been in England, but the ownership of land and the possession of capital for investment is evidence of some concrete changes in status and security.

With Lawrence's return to Highton, it becomes harder to trace the story of Caleb in our records. 'Mr' or 'Bro' Mountjoy could refer to either, and certainly Caleb continued to support the church financially, as did Thomas to some extent. Caleb remained a Trustee until 1918, but also held property near

Deans Marsh, and appears to have been living there in the 1880s. His daughter Louie was living with her uncle Lawrence and attending the Highton school in 1879, and died at 'Fernbank' in 1881 at the age of fifteen. Caleb's eldest son Lawrence had previously died at Deans Marsh, at the age of thirty-four, leaving a wife and four children, and in 1888 another daughter, Rhoda, drowned herself in a dam at her aunt and uncle Trewin's property at Torumbarry near Echuca, aged twenty-seven. To cap this list of tragedies, Caleb's daughter Annie and Thomas's daughter Ada, aged thirteen and fifteen, accidentally suffocated from fumes from a charcoal heater at Deans Marsh in 1891. All but Rhoda were buried at Highton, just across the path from the church, so the extended family must have thought of this place as home.

The existing Sunday School minutes begin in 1884, but because the Church Committee meetings did not discuss such things as arrangements for Sunday School anniversaries or outings, we can assume that there was some body which decided these matters before then. The Church Trustees were included in the Church Committee, and held few, if any, separate meetings before 1919; they were the ones with responsibility for all the buildings, though the entire Committee had to work to raise finance.

J H Bottrell claimed that the Wesleyan Sunday School was started by 'Mr L Mountjoy and Miss Adcock', but this is hard to fit with the date of its jubilee in 1906. There was no 'Miss Adcock' in Highton in 1856. Laurence received a presentation in February 1891 for having been Superintendent of the Sunday School for twenty-eight years, which should mean that he was in the district every Sunday from 1862 at least, but as he left Highton for a few years in the 1870s, his years as superintendent must

have been totalled from either side of that break. Judging by the anniversaries, the Sunday School was started in about October 1856.

It is difficult to distinguish the Sunday School and Church Committees.

Before the available School minutes begin, there are occasional references to Sunday School business at the Church meetings. In May 1881, when the Church Committee was discussing how to meet £22.9.8 due to the Treasurer and the expenses for the coming year, it was decided to hold a Sale of Gifts in connection with the Sabbath School Anniversary. An undated note in the Church minute book records that a concert had been held in July, and a Committee of Ladies had been formed to carry out the resolution about the Sale of Gifts:

"As the Sale of Gifts was held in connection with the Sabbath School Anniversary, Minutes of the following meetings were recorded in SS Minute Book."

The next entry is dated November 1881, when the Committee met "after transacting the business in connection with the Sabbath School, when it was unanimously agreed that Bros Balding and Lane be added to the Committee".

The Church Treasurer's book records the Sale, and shows that donations of gifts or money came from the Mayor of Geelong and the local MLA, and members of neighbouring Wesleyan churches as well as businesses in Geelong. They also have a very rural flavour, and give a glimpse of the sort of craftwork that women then indulged in.

On 9 November 1881 a special effort was made, and a sale of gifts held, to liquidate the debt on the church viz.

Steadfast Through Change

£417.9.8. The following are those who kindly subscribed.

Mr Danills

- 2 Teapots, 2 Trays, 2 fancy boxes, Candlestick, looking glass, butter dish, desert knife, etc.

Mrs Anderson

- 4 tins of Salmon, 3 mustard, 6 packets of Cocoa

Mr Brady

- 6 lbs of Tea

Mr Lawry

- Tin of Biscuits

Messrs Strong Bros.

- 1 pair of Slippers

Mr J Daniel

- Half case of Oranges

Mrs T Walters

- 5 dozen Cakes

Mr & Mrs F Heard

- Butter and Cream, 3 Fowls

Mr & Mrs J Heard

- Ham, 1 pig, Dog

Mrs Humble

- Anti Macassar

Mr B Allin

- Large Ham

Mr Rankin Jnr.

- One Ham

Mr Smale

- 1 Cheese, 1 Ham

Mr Shaw

- 6 Mugs

Messrs Bromilow Bros

- 1 Ham, 2 Tongues

Mrs Heale

- 6 dozen Eggs

Mrs Wilshire

- 1 pair of Fowls

Mrs Glanfield

- Fowls

Mrs Ireson

- Fowls, babies night Dresses

Mr Trump

- 1 pair of Fowls

Mr Jas Walls

- Fowls

Mr Adams

- Nest of Hondan Eggs

Mr Jas Cochrane

- Nest of Leghorn Eggs

Mr Major

- 2 pictures

Mrs Mountjoy

- 2 babies Frocks, 2 ladies neck ties, length of Crochet

Mr Mountjoy

- 3 Knickerbocker suits, 4 dressing combs, 2 tooth brushes, 1 Flute, 3 Melons, 3 dozen Ginger Ale

Miss Ross

- 4 Woolen Scarfs, 2 pairs of wool Mats, 3 Shell Necklaces

Mrs Harcourt

- 2 Toilet Sets

Mrs Mountjoy, Lorne

- 6 pinafores, 2 pairs of Drawers, 1 Wool Petticoat, 1 Bead Watch Pocket

Mr Wm. Mountjoy

- 6 Bear Skins, 15 Walking Sticks, 4 bunches of coral ferns, 7 Shell necklaces, 1 pr Watch pockets/leather work

Miss Mountjoy, Echuca

- 2 braided Aprons, 3 Book Marks, 1 pr of fancy socks, 3 Dolls hats

Mrs Burrill

- 2 lbs of Butter

Mrs Parsons

- 3 Wool Mats, 6 Babies Shirts, 3 dozen Wool Boots

Mrs Jno Walls

- 1 pair of babies boots

Mr Cunningham, Mayor

- £2.2.0

Mr Hitchcock

- £1.0.0

Mr Levien, MLA

- £2.2.0

Mrs Rhd Mountjoy

- £1.0.0

Mrs C Mountjoy

- £1.0.0

Mr Walters

- 10/-
Mr Henry Mountjoy
- 10/-
Mr Nicholson
- 10/-
Miss Whear
- 10/-
Mr Wrigly
- 10/-
Mrs Harcourt
- 7/-
Mr Rankin
- 5/-
A Friend
- 2/6

Lane

The first years of the Sunday School minutes show the beginning of an era of change. New names appear. Robert Lane, who joined the Committee in 1881 before separate minutes were kept, was a dominant figure in Sunday School affairs for many years, and is commemorated by the Lane Memorial Hall, originally referred to as the Kindergarten. Robert and his wife Mary Thomas were married in Gloucestershire in March 1863, just before sailing for Victoria on the 'Maori'. They were aged twenty and twenty-four respectively. Their eight children were born up to 1879, the first two being registered at Newtown and Ashby, and the rest at Geelong. The 1876 ratebooks show Robert Lane, farmer, occupying 25 acres of land owned by Joseph Balding, who seems to have acquired and leased several lots around Highton, not only in the Roslyn Road area. However, Robert is later recorded as a gardener or orchardist, and held land on the western side of Thornhill Road at the end of Bonsey Road, opposite the Adcocks. Both Robert Lane and Evan Lewis, whose Lansdowne Nursery was further down Kardinia Creek, came from the area around Cheltenham in Gloucester, which must have bred nurserymen; perhaps the valley reminded

them both of home. The Lane family remained there for many years, the youngest, Mary, dying in the 1960s. Joyce Leigh remembers Oliver Lane pushing a wheelbarrow full of their produce up Thornhill Road, which was then unmade, on his way to the Harvest Thanksgiving preparations.

Harvest Thanksgiving

It was possibly Robert Lane, with his professional interest, who established the custom of celebrating a Harvest Festival at Highton. We are used to thinking of Harvest Thanksgiving services here as an old tradition brought out by the pioneers from their English country churches. But even in England, the idea of celebrating the 'Harvest Home' in a church only dates back to the 1840s, when Rev. Stephen Hawker was the Vicar of Morwenstow, the Cornish village where our Mountjoy brothers' grandmother was born. His unruly parishioners used to celebrate with strong cider and wild behaviour, and realising the importance of the harvest in their harsh existence he instituted a special service, in which he used communion bread made from the new corn. Although conditions at Highton were more secure than at Morwenstow, and actual starvation was not a threat, the produce of the Barrabool Hills was still part of their daily bread, and they thanked God for it. The first Harvest Thanksgiving recorded at the church in Highton was held on 16 February 1890, on a motion "moved by Bro Lane sec Bro Mountjoy", the Rev. A R Edgar conducting an afternoon service. Perhaps Edgar introduced the idea to Geelong; in 1895 Belmont competed for the date chosen by Highton "having given way to us on two previous occasions".



***Above:** Photo taken inside the Highton Wesleyan Church 1894. The occasion was the yearly Harvest Thanksgiving. The two texts on the wall at the rear of the pulpit read: 'Offer Unto God Thanksgiving' and 'The Lord Will Provide.' Note the partitions in the church pews.*

Although it is getting a little ahead of the story, in February 1894, there is another hint of Robert Lane's role. "It was thought by the Committee that it was not necessary to do so much in the way of decorating etc" for that year's Harvest Festival, although Bro Mitchell was asked to make a motto to put over the pulpit. Mr Gurr, a Geelong auctioneer and a Congregationalist, was asked to auction the produce at the following Monday evening; proceeds from the sale went to the Sunday School. But at the next meeting the Secretary regretted that no votes of thanks had been passed to Mr Gurr, or to Mr Lane and his helpers for decorating the church and arranging "the Fruit, Vegetables, Corn &c, which had surpassed all former efforts". (As the

funds raised by the sale were less than the previous year, it must have been the decoration rather than the quantity of the goods that was commended.) A letter of thanks was to be sent to Mr Gurr, together with a photograph of the interior of the church – presumably the picture above. But there is an appeal a year or two later from the church cleaner, Mr Calvert, for extra pay for the extra work the Festival gave him. In August 1894, the church also held a less elaborate Flower Service. Robert Lane was again a driving force.

Sunday School 'Pic Nics'

The annual functions of the Sunday School Committee were to arrange their

Anniversary in November, and their 'Pic Nic' in March or February. The same preoccupations with deciding who would be asked to boil the water, or in the case of the picnic to provide transport, are repeated from year to year. A regular destination for the picnic excursion was 'the springs near Bream Creek', although one year they went to Point Henry. The expedition would assemble 'outside Mr Johns's' or 'opposite the Post Office' (Nicol's, in Barrabool Road) at 7:30 or 7:00 a.m. Provisions were supplied by the Superintendent, paid for by either taking a collection or charging 1/6 per child (later 2/- adult, 1/- child); the young ladies were asked to serve the refreshments.

Although the 1880s were a boom time for Victoria, the Highton Wesleyans had been struggling with debt and depopulation. Of the new families recorded, only the Lanes seem to have been particularly prosperous. Calverts, Cuttings, and Rankins were paid for various work around the church and its grounds, unlike the Mountjoys and Adcocks who seem to have topped up church funds on many occasions. In 1887, the Sunday School Committee may have been angling for the support of other families when it invited the Joyce and Mitchell families to attend the annual picnic.

Mitchell

London-born George Mitchell was the Head Teacher of the Highton School from 1879, when it was still on the Church of England site, until 1902, and had at first walked out from Newtown every day. In 1880, when the new school was opened on McKenzie's block in Roslyn Road, the Mitchell family moved into the attached residence there. George and his wife Mary Walsh already had three children, and a further seven were born during their time at Highton; in

1886 the Mitchells were not given the extra room they requested, but three years later they were allowed to add two rooms, paying for the labour themselves. George was a local preacher, and conducted services at the little Congregational chapel in Valley Road. Bottrell wrote of him in 1931:

"Although Mr Mitchell is 86 years of age, yet he is still able to preach the Gospel; and is constantly employed in Christian work."

His portrait in the lobby of the primary school depicts a man with a twinkle in his eye, and a school photograph from the 1880s shows him holding a small child, probably one of his own. In two photographs of the period he is wearing a Victorian 'smoking cap' to warm his bald head.

Joyce

Robert James Joyce was a draper in Moorabool Street, Geelong, and in 1887 his eldest son, R S Joyce, joined the Wesleyan ministry. R J Joyce and his wife Harriet Bowen had twelve children, and are believed to have lived at Montpellier for some years. They were soon prominent workers in the Highton church, and a reference to Miss Joyce becoming the organist 'during her visit to Highton' before she left for India may suggest that she became a missionary. Robert was immediately active on committees, becoming Superintendent of the Sunday School from 1891 to 1896.

Chapter 8

**BETWEEN TWO LANDMARKS
- 1888 to 1901**

A R Edgar

Perhaps a change in the mood of the Highton Church may be dated from the 1888 Jubilee of Methodism, after the appointment to the Geelong West Circuit of a new minister, Alexander Robert Edgar, whose personality reflected that of John Wesley in many ways. Edgar's years in Geelong bridged two social eras – the boom times of the 1880s and the crashes of the 1890s. The impetus of the gold rush and the flood of ambitious immigrants had given the colony a taste for success and a belief in progress, which led to unrealistic standards and expectations. It also tended to blind people to the struggles of the least successful. When the Salvation Army founder William Booth visited Geelong in late 1891, he was campaigning to help some of the London needy to find a new life in the colony, but Geelong lauded Booth without offering any substantial backing for his project. A little narrowing of vision may have overtaken the wearying pioneers as they aged, and we can sense a trace of this in the sketchy Highton records.

An account written in the 1920s by Julia Leigh of Ceres for Palamounain's Biography, gives a vivid impression of Edgar's ministry in this circuit:

“The Rev. A R Edgar came to the Geelong West Circuit in April, 1887, and had as his colleagues Revs Arthur Powell and E T Cox. The country congregations were visited monthly, unless sickness or special need demanded more frequent visits. When a week-night service was held, sick ones who did not worship in the Methodist Church were never passed by. His visits to them were an

inspiration as were those to his own flock.

A very gracious revival took place throughout the circuit with steadfast and abiding results. At Ceres many were added to the church. At the concluding service was a man who had been a slave to drink. He said, ‘... I yield my unworthy life to Him’.

What a change came over that home! The little children who were often hungry came to Sunday school and said: ‘We have enough to eat now, and daddy reads the Bible and prays every morning’. This new convert, who was a most intelligent man, soon came into the Sunday school himself, first as a teacher and then as superintendent. He became a class leader, and afterwards one of the most honoured local preachers in the Geelong District.”

Methodist Jubilee Year, 1888

The date described as the ‘birthday of Methodism’ is 24 May 1738, when John Wesley felt his heart ‘strangely warmed’. In the life of the Highton Church, the Jubilee of this event saw a new influx of enthusiasm and vision. Recalling the roots of their faith may have been one of the reasons for this, as well as newcomers to the district, and the new minister.

With the Jubilee in sight, the Highton people began to spruce up their church and grounds, with cleaning, painting and general repairs, and a new fence along the cemetery boundary being built. It was also “resolved that a new seat be made for the singing pew, the curtains also to be removed”.

In 1888 the Highton Sunday School Committee agreed to let the scholars join in with other Geelong Sunday Schools in

a demonstration to celebrate the Jubilee of Methodism, but at a later meeting decided to rescind the motion, although no reason is recorded. Nonetheless the 1888 Jubilee of Methodism medal was given to the scholars.



Above & Below: Both sides of a medal issued to Sunday school scholars for the Jubilee of Methodism in 1888. Photograph supplied by Kay Preston.



The same year also local MLA, J F A Levien, began donating prizes to Sunday Schools in his electorate, but as these were limited in number the Highton people decided to top up the scheme with

a book given to each scholar around Christmas time – a custom later continued at the annual Christmas Tree treat.

The year saw a special effort to clear the debt on the church, and not all the contributors were local or Wesleyan. George Hague, a successful produce merchant of Geelong, who was connected by marriage to the Johns and Ireson families, received special thanks from the Church Committee for his large donation. George Belcher once again give support to a denomination not his own.

1888 Subscriptions for Jubilee Fund for the extinction of debt on Highton Wesleyan Church.

- Mr R J Joyce £20.0.0
- Mr Higgins £ 5. 0.0
- Mr R S Joyce £ 5. 0.0
- Mr Wm. Strong £ 2. 2.0
- Mr Geo. Hague £25.0.0
- Mr J Paterson 10/-
- Messrs Mountjoy Bros £15.0.0
- Mr Simpson £1. 0. 0
- Mr L C Mountjoy £10.0.0
- Miss Adcock £1. 0. 0
- Mr E Adcock £5. 0. 0
- Miss Amy Adcock £1. 0. 0
- A Friend £3. 0. 0
- Baby Bertram £1. 0. 0
- Mr F R Heard £2. 2. 0
- Mr W Rankin £1. 0. 0
- Mr G F Belcher £1. 0. 0
- Mr E Hobbs £1. 0. 0
- Mr Thos. Adcock £3. 3. 0
- Mr P Hoskin £1. 0. 0
- Mr J Mountjoy £1. 0. 0
- Misses Fagg 10/- each £1. 0. 0
- Mr L H Mountjoy £1. 0. 0
- Mr Rankin Senr. £2. 6. 0
- Mr E Mountjoy £1. 0. 0
- Mr Hitchcock £5. 0. 0
- Mr F Mountjoy £1. 0. 0
- Mr R Lane & Family £5. 0. 0

Steadfast Through Change

- Mr Alfred Mountjoy £1. 0. 0
- Mr J Balding £5. 0. 0
- Mr W A Mountjoy £1. 1. 0
- Miss E Ross £3. 0. 0
- Master Edmund Mountjoy 10/-
- Mr W Trewin £3. 0. 0
- Master Bertie Mountjoy 10/-
- Mr J Brown £5. 0. 0
- Master Ernest Mountjoy 10/-
- Mr L H Ham £2. 2. 0
- Miss Mountjoy £1. 0. 0
- Mr John Baker £1. 1. 0
- Miss Ada Mountjoy 10/-
- Mr H Johns £1. 0. 0
- Miss Annie Mountjoy 10/-
- Chilwell Choir £1. 0. 0
- Miss Mabel Mountjoy 10/-
- Mr W Calvert £1. 0/-
- Miss Emma Mountjoy £1.10.0
- Mr T Calvert £1. 0. 0
- Miss Rhoda Mountjoy £1.10.0
- Mr Dowel £1. 0. 0
- Mrs Honeycombe 10/-
- Mrs T Collins 3/-
- Mrs Allin 2/6

(‘Baby Bertram’ was the third generation of Adcocks, son of George Henry Adcock)

At the meeting on 11 April after this effort: “The Treasurer was asked how the Committee stood with him, re the balance due to him &c, Treasurer’s reply was very cheering and called forth expressions of gratitude to the Great Heart of the Church. Treasurer said when the small balance promised in connection with the Jubilee Fund was paid there would be a small balance in hand”.

A Thanksgiving service and Tea were held on Tuesday 21 August during the full moon. It was following this that the plastering and boarding of the Sunday School at last took place, texts were selected to decorate its walls, and Mr Pescott was to be asked to build a room

for the tea meeting forms and tables when not in use.

Another generation was moving in, and giving some direction to those who had been invigorated by the periods of revival. Not all the new names have been identified yet, but the Sunday School records suggest that it was parents with growing families who brought a new surge of activity in the church as a whole. In Nov 19 1888 – later than the annual meeting – ‘Messrs Joyce, J Henry, T Calvert Junr, and W Foster’ were unanimously elected to the Church Committee.

Henry

John Henry was born in 1851, the son of Thomas Henry and Isabella Roney who had a farm and the Norfolk Vineyard at Barrabool, in the Strathlachlan estate. In 1875 he married Eather or Esther Pegg, with whom he had thirteen children. John is recorded as farming at Fyansford from 1884 to 1889 and at 1899 to 1900 at Highton, but this may be a matter of his postal address; like the later Baum family, the Henrys may have come to church at Highton while living down by the river. The group photographs of 1891 and Sunday School records show the family as participating actively. John was a Sunday School teacher and committee member until they moved to Geelong about 1899. John was a piano tuner, but the records do not mention his playing any part in the musical affairs of the Highton Church or Sunday School, as some others seemed eager to do.

Thomas Calvert has been discussed earlier. He married Ellen Foster in 1878 and their children attended the Sunday School. Ellen’s brother was Walter Foster, the next name on the list, and they were both children of John Peake Foster and Elizabeth Arnold.

Quarter ending Dec 31 st 1889			
M & F Scholars			
No on books last quarter	Males 29	Females 24	Total 50
Admitted during "	3	"	3
Left during the quarter	3	2	5
Total	29	19	48
Average Attendance Morning	20	12 1/2	32 1/2
Afternoon	15 1/2	11 1/2	27

Above: Statistics of Sunday School attendance December 1889

Foster

Walter Foster was elected the next year to replace Edward Adcock as Secretary after 20 years of service, but in September 1890 it was recorded that 'Bro Foster ... had left the Church Militant to join the Church Triumphant.' He was aged thirty, and left a widow, Mary Ann Howarth, and two small daughters. Edward Adcock was re-elected, and retained the position until George Mitchell succeeded him in 1896.

Harrison

An important name is that of John Harrison, whose children and grandchildren became active church workers. John was the son of Charles Harrison and Mary Wilkins from Connington, Cambridgeshire, who arrived in Victoria in 1851 and first settled near Port Fairy area, where John and six siblings were born. The family moved to Victoria Terrace, Strawberry Hill, some time around 1860, and as a boy John painted Captain Foster Fyans' flagpole at 'Balyang' by shinning up it with the paint-pot in his mouth, and painting his way down. There is no record of the family's association with

the Highton church until John married Harriet Johns in June 1882. His name appears on the Sunday School Committee in 1889, and the Church Committee in 1895, and remained prominent into the 1940s. The family lived at 'Fairview', in Barrabool Road. Bottrell described John in 1931 as 'the Grand Old Man of Highton', and with his dry wit, definite views, and excellent memory, he was a notable personality.

One sign of change, though trivial, shows one Highton custom being challenged, when on 1 September 1889 the congregation was polled on the question of holding the Sunday evening service half an hour later than previously. Their opinions had been asked as a 'test of the feelings of the majority'. But it was in 1896 that the Leaders Meeting voted to set the later time, so perhaps the 1889 request was never implemented. The signatures add several names not recorded elsewhere in our church records.

Wesleyan Church Highton

September 1/89

This paper is laid before you for signature as to the advisability of altering the time of the Sunday evening Service from 6.30 p.m. the present time to 7 p.m.

I am in favour of the Alteration

Sign Here

In favour of 6.30 p.m.	In favour of 7 p.m.
Ernie Adcock	J. Cook
Robert Lane	J. Howard
Susannah Wall	J. Johns
Amey Adcock	W. Foster
A. H. Adcock	W. Hobbs
J. Mountjoy	James Hobbs
J. Allen	Mrs. Hobbs
L. C. Mountjoy	John Morris
C. Moody	Philip Hooper
A. Adcock	J. Cook
H. Lane	W. Johns
J. West	C. Rankin
C. Moody	N. J. J.
	L. H. J.
	W. Hobbs
	H. Morris
	J. Cook
	Miss Dimchen
	J. Cook
	A. J. Berry
	J. J. J.
	Julia West
	W. J. J.

By Order W. Foster Hon Secy

Above: Opinion poll, September 1889, on changing the time of the evening service

The meeting of August 1889 that decided to offer the congregation this chance to express an opinion also began to arrange a special fundraiser to make it possible to buy a new organ for the church. A Sale of Gifts was arranged, with additional 'attractions and amusements', like a shooting gallery run by Mr Harrison; and old Sunday School scholars were to be canvassed for donations. The event was to be opened by the Mayor of Geelong, and held over three days from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m.

The meeting held a long conversation about "the conduct of persons around Church Steps and Inside Church", and "Police Protection" was requested, Sergeant Dawson being thoughtfully sent a ticket. At the meeting following the Sale, the Treasurer Laurence Mountjoy was not present, but the Committee read:

- correspondence received from America Re Organ By Bro Joyce & Adcock each having received letters from different parties in America.
- After discussion it was decided to lay before the Ladies at the next meeting, two propositions *viz* Either the purchase of an Organ from Cornish & Co America or the purchase of one in the Colony. The American Organs suggested are marked £82.10.0 & £62.10.0 in the Catalogue, and it was understood that the £82.10.0 organ after deducting the percentage allowed by the firm could be landed here for about £45 and the others in proportion. The Rev E T Cox promised assistance if required in the purchase of one in the colony.

As many goods were left unsold from at the original effort, the ladies were asked to hold a further sale at the Tea Meeting in November, "such sale to be in the structure erected for a Shooting Gallery".

Reading between the lines, the 1889 minutes throw a little light on how things were done at Highton, including the roles of the sexes, and the arrival of both new blood and wider experience. Rev A R Edgar had chaired a meeting of the congregation in May, when he spoke of having correspondence with Cornish & Co of New York, who had offered an £86 organ for \$29, guaranteed for six years, but "the purchaser to be at all risks after the organ was bought (in New York)". The differences in currency may not be correctly shown in the minutes, as the £ symbol is used for both.

On 15 May 1889 'the Church Committee and Ladies' met in the State School. An *ad hoc* group was set up 'in connexion with the Sale of Gifts' and officers were elected: Mrs R J Joyce, President, Mrs E Adcock, Vice President, Mrs L C Mountjoy, Treasurer, and Miss Amy Adcock, Secretary. Meetings were to be held fortnightly in the State School, and the Church Committee supplied Mr Mitchell, the Headmaster, with 'one tree for Ladies Sewing Meetings Fires, Bro Henry promising to cut and deliver it'. On 15 October, the Committee and 'Ladies of the Sewing Meeting' met again. Present were 'Bros Mountjoy, Adcock, Lane, Joyce, Henry. & Foster. Also Mrs Adcock, Mountjoy. B Wall. & Misses Johns, L Johns, Jane Hobbs, Henry, Clarke' (Commas have been inserted; the final names on this list could refer to Henry Clarke who died in 1891, but this is unlikely. More probably the two women were Jenny Henry and Nettie Clarke.)

- 'The total amount realised from all sources was £76.1.10 & Total expenses £6.19.2, leaving a balance in Hand of £69.11.8 Cash & a lot of unsold goods...
- Bro Joyce reported that he had visited the Bell Organ Co & also Mason & Hamlin's & he

recommended the purchase of the Bell Organ. After discussion at length, Bro Lane mov & Henry sec that Organ be purchased in Colony carried.

- Miss A Johns mov & Mrs B. Wall sec that a Bell Organ be bought, the Organ marked at £60 preferred, but the Deputation appointed to purchase to get as much below as possible.
- Bro Mountjoy Strongly opposed Motion but made no amendment. Mov by Amy Adcock sec Alice Johns that Bros Mountjoy & Joyce be Deputation to purchase. Mov by Bro Mountjoy sec by Mr Lane that Bros Joyce Adcock & Mountjoy be Deputation to purchase Organ. The Amendment was carried...
- Bro Joseph Balding [was] willing to dispose of [any extra goods left over from the second sale] to best advantage & hand proceeds over to the Committee...
- ... the Ladies consented to a portion of Surplus Cash being spent to Raise a Platform for the use of Scholars in the Church on Anniversary occasions...
- Bro Joyce mov & Henry sec Bros Mountjoy & Lane be Sub Committee to carry out the erection of Platform. Bros Mountjoy & Lane both declined.

At this stage the meeting adjourned for a week, to enquire cost of Platform'.

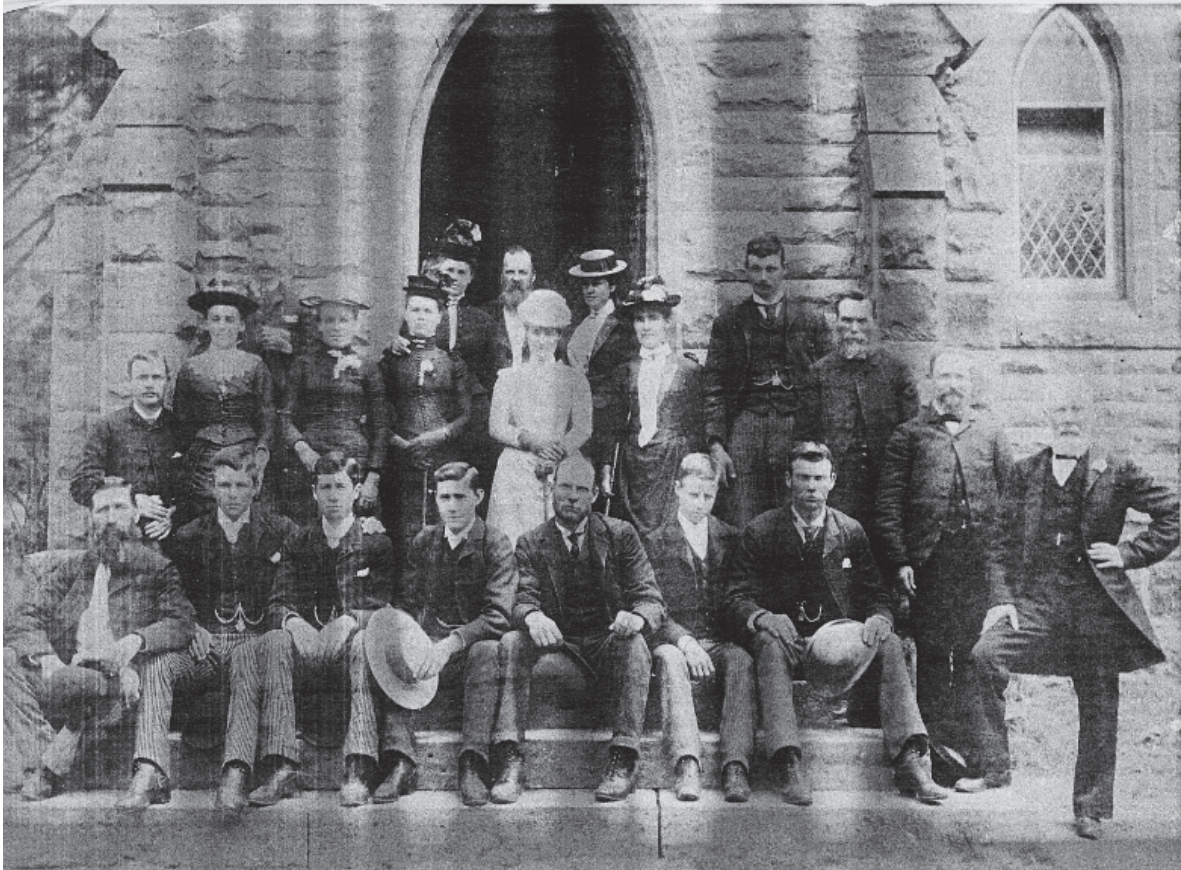
The women were absent from the follow-up meeting, which received two quotes from T Pescott for erecting a platform 8ft by 24ft 10in for £17.10.0 or a platform 6ft shorter for £13.10.0.

“Bro Adcock mov & Johns sec that we accept the offer of money from the ladies but that it stand over for the present. After a very long and heated discussion,

Bro Adcock withdrew his motion & Bro Mountjoy mov & Adcock sec that the money be used to help pay off Debt on Church. Bro Mountjoy at same time promising to do his very best towards a Platform by next Childrens Anniversary.”

The topic of the platform had kept occurring previously in both Sunday School and Church Committee meetings. A design drawn up by Mr Balding in 1890 was criticised because the pulpit would have to be removed every time the platform was erected. A modified version, that retained the pulpit with a level platform for the organ in front of it, and provided four rising seats, was built of deal timber by Mr Pescott for £13. To house the platform when it was taken apart each year, provision was to be made when a new four stall stable was built in June 1891, Bro Walls being thanked for dressing the stone. It is not clear whether a shed was attached to this stable for this purpose. More conveniently, a shed for storage was later built nearer the church, after the 1926 tornado; this was north of the room then known as the kitchen, which contained a copper for boiling water, adjoining the north side of the Sunday School. This kitchen may have been what was earlier described as the ‘boiler room’, with its floor of rubble and cement, and a 1926 photo shows it with a door opening towards the west, later replaced by one facing east.

1891 marked a generational change in the Sunday School, perhaps forshadowed in those 1889 minutes. After 28 years as Superintendent, Laurence Mountjoy received his farewell presentation in February, having resigned in November, as “he felt the infirmities of old age, his memory failing him much of late”.



Above: Church Choir & Sunday School Staff

Back Row: George Allen (very faint image), Alice Johns, Robert J Joyce, Ida Joyce.

2nd Row: Frank Hewett, Nettie Clark, Amy Adcock, Louisa Johns, Beatrice Joyce, Jane Hobbs, Tom Johns, John Henry, John Semmens, Edward Adcock.

Front Row: Robert Lane, Ted Rankin, James Cook, George Mitchell [Jnr], John Harrison, Joshua Joyce, William Johns. Note that the church door opens inwards, not outwards as it did later.

The Committee had earlier offered to find help to relieve him of some of his duties, but he would not accept this, and R J Joyce was appointed in his place, with Mountjoy as a back-up should he be absent. The Committee recorded its appreciation of his “many years of faithful service & labour of love...doing all in his power to ensure the success of the School both temporally and spiritually, not sparing himself but working sometimes amid great discouragement”.

At the Sunday School committee meeting in March 1891, the new

Superintendent reported that he had used a small balance left over from Mr Mountjoy’s testimonial to get copies of ‘the Photos of the Sunday School and Bible Class’, and had them framed to hang on each side of the Sunday School. It seems likely that these photos were taken to give Laurence Mountjoy a record of the fruits of his long labours.

When nominated to replace Laurence Mountjoy as Superintendent, Robert Joyce was said to have been Superintendent of other schools, and he brought fresh ideas to the church community in his years at Highton. He

became a driving force in cataloguing and augmenting the Sunday School library, and persuaded the Committee to subscribe to the Victorian & Tasmanian Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Union. In his first year, he got some of the scholars to sit for the V&WMSSU examinations in May, but his attempts to

provide chairs and tables for the teachers were stalled by lack of funds. He also suggested that instead of using *The Sunday School Teacher and Notes on the Lessons*, the best of the four different publications available should be selected; *The Australian Wesleyan Sunday School Teacher* was eventually chosen.



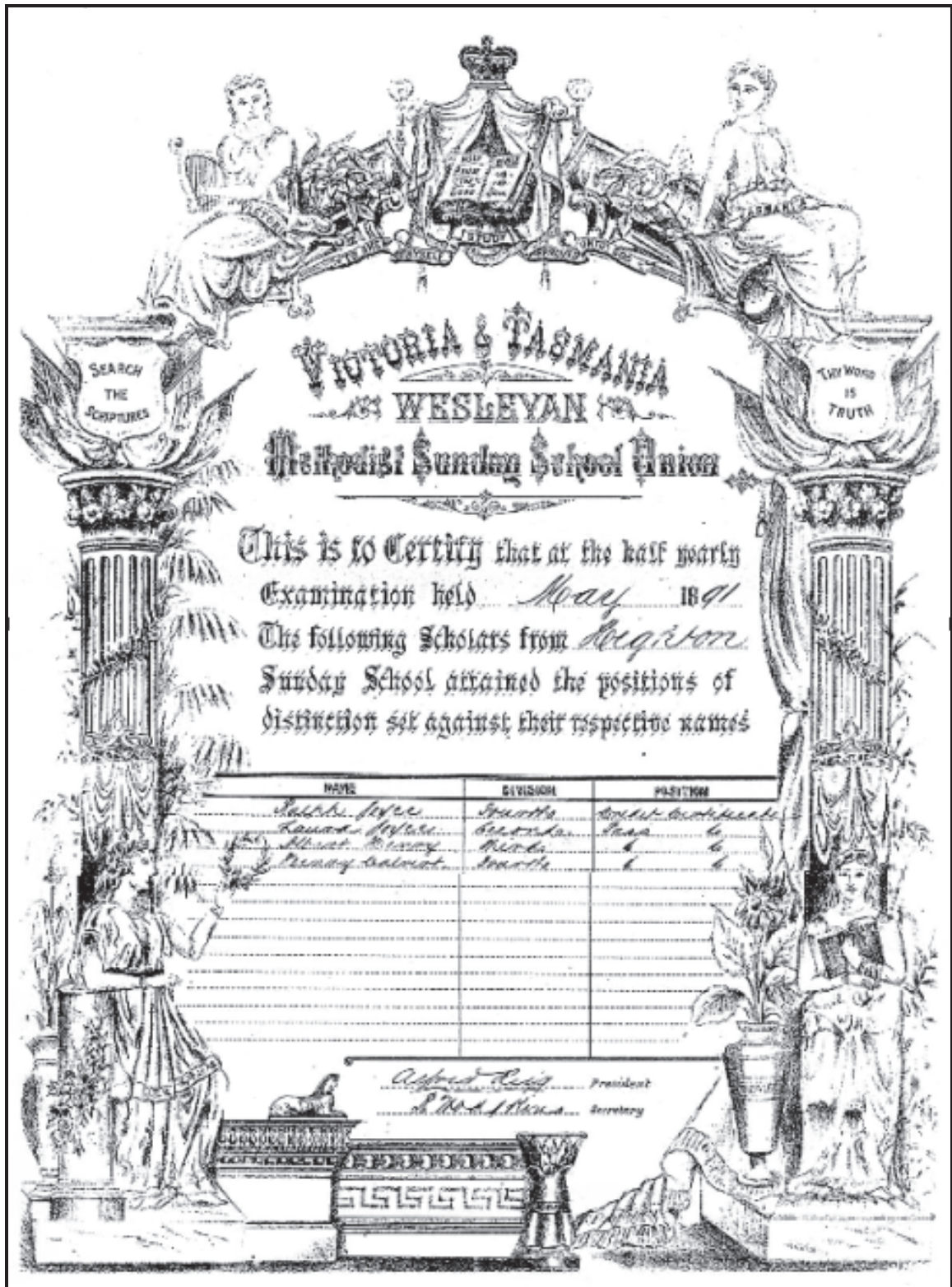
Above: Sunday School Staff & Scholars 1891. A list of names has been found, but it is not clearly set out, does not properly match the numbers or rows, and uses various dashes and blanks and inconsistent punctuation. Comparison with the previous photograph helps identify some faces.

In doorway, L to R: Beatrice Joyce, Alice Johns;

2nd Row: - (half-hidden), Amy Adcock, Nettie Clarke, Louisa Johns, Jane Hobbs, Ida Joyce, Edward Adcock, Robert Lane, Robert James Joyce, Tom Johns, John Henry, John Semmens, Frank Hewitt, William Johns, George Allen, John Harrison.

3rd Row: Ann Jane [Jenny] Henry, Jack Henry; Double row of girls; Laura Joyce, Emma Smith, Mary Sterry, Mary Lane, Edith Mitchell, Florence Lucas, M Semmens, Florence Smith, E[Emma?] Heard, A[Alice?] Wall, E[Ethel?] Heard, Caroline Henry, Adeline Harrison, -, Bertha Mitchell, -

Back Row of standing boys: Edwin (Ted) Rankin, George Mitchell, J[Joshua?] Joyce, J[Jim?] Cook, Jim Gibson, Jack Gibson, O[Oliver] Lane, S[Sidney] Johnson, J[John] Ghent, M[Martin] Mitchell, P [Percy] Gibson, -, A[Archibald] McAravey - Henry - F[Florence] Harrison. M[May] Harrison - - - - A Foster J Henry - H. Calvert Preston - - C Squires T[Ted] Sterry Preston. [Laurence?] Gibson, A[Arthur] Heard, E[Ernest] Calvert, - - R[Ralph?] Joyce.



Above: Certificate awarded to Sunday School after May 1891 examinations by the Victorian & Tasmanian Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Union. Supplied by Betty Ward

Hymns for the Sunday School anniversaries were selected each year by the Superintendent and 'Harmonist', and sometimes printed out for the occasion, and Joyce on one occasion brought in hymns used by the Aberdeen Street Baptists. He also proposed forming a Band of Hope and a Ministering League, either in connection with our Sunday School or with the St John's Sunday School as well. A busy man, he was absent from several meetings; he seems to have relied at times on other people 'taking charge' of the morning and afternoon sessions of the Sunday School, which does not fit a later idea of the Superintendent's role.

The minutes give some reassurance that these Wesleyans were as human as we are today. When John Harrison sent in his resignation in November 1889, the Sunday School committee refused to accept it, and deputed two members to ask for his reasons and persuade him to return. They reported to the next meeting that "he stated his reason ... was that the minority ruled". Six months later the committee moved that he and Henry Johns be asked to wait on the ladies to ask them to provide teaspoons, tablecloths, cream and milk for the anniversary tea, "and Mr Harrison failing to act, Mr Henry to act instead". No result is reported, but in May 1891 Harrison is back at the meeting again.

Another member, Mr Hewett, after being invited to conduct the scholars' singing for the anniversary in 1890, had to have his "ungentlemanly manner" pointed out to him by one of the committee - a version of the pastoral responsibility of the old Class Leaders. The Church Committee minutes fill out his offence a little - apparently there was a clash ('unwarranted interference') between conductor and organist, in this case 'Miss Adcock' (Annie, not her younger sister Amy, who had filled in for her during a

recent prolonged illness). Some of the choir spoke loyally of resigning. Miss Adcock actually did resign, but the Church Committee negotiated a written apology for her.



Above: Organ presented to Annie Adcock on her retirement when marrying Edwin Hobbs in 1893. Photo supplied by Arthur Adcock.



Above: The inscription on the organ presented to Annie Adcock. Photo supplied by Arthur Adcock.

The church's appreciation of Annie Martha Adcock was demonstrated on her marriage in May 1893 to John Hobbs's son Edwin Austin Hobbs. A subscription was raised, topped up from church funds to 'an amount not exceeding £20.'

Not long after, Frank Hewitt was asked take a Sunday School class, and served there until he married fellow-teacher Nettie Clarke and they left the district. Their story ended sadly, as Nettie (Antoinette), the only one of her parents' nine children to have survived infancy, died in 1898 at the age of thirty-two, apparently childless. Nettie's parents John Clarke and Eliza Squire had moved down from Ceres where John had been a wheelwright and later a storekeeper, and he may have been the Mr Clarke from whom the Church borrowed £50 in the 1890s; he had bought Holdsworth's and Ross's blocks in Barrabool Road.

An unexplained mystery are the complaints made to the Church Committee in October 1894 about "the singular and unpleasant noise made by Bro. Wall". It was decided to "ask Bro. Hosken to see him and speak kindly to him about it". It must have been assumed that the noise, whatever it was, was not completely involuntary. Some enthusiastic worshippers had been known to shout phrases like 'Hallelujah' during sermons, but perhaps Bro. Wall's singing voice was not what he hoped; or perhaps he had the habit of many hard-working people of dropping off to sleep and snoring loudly. At least Bro. Hosken was asked to be kind, which was necessary as they lived next door to each other.

Local Quarterly Meetings had to approve candidates for the ministry, and this report on Jonathan Peter McCann of Ceres gives some idea of what was asked of them; the format, which was similar for other candidates, reflects a series of

'Questions' based on those Wesley himself had set out.

"Novr 12th 1875

[signed; Rev] Thomas Grove

Peter McCann was born at Ceres in the Geelong West Circuit the Eighth day of October 1854. He was converted to God at the age of eight years and from that time to the present has been a consistent and useful member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. He was brought on the Plan as a local Preacher about two years and a half ago and has since continued preaching with great acceptance, God giving him fruit to his labours. He has fair educational advantages, having studied at the Scotch College and the Church of England Grammar School, both of Geelong. In addition to English he has given attention to Latin and can read the Greek Testament. His health is good and his manner of address pleasing. He has no matrimonial engagement, does not use Snuff, Tobacco or Drums, and is free from debt. He has read Wesley's Sermons and Notes on the New Testament, and the Large Minutes. He believes in our doctrines, approves of our discipline and offers himself for the general work of the Ministry. He was nominated at the September Quarterly Meeting of the Geelong West Circuit. The meeting sustaining the nomination by its unanimous vote."

McCann was the Highton minister 1911-1913, and later became a president of the Victorian and Tasmanian Conference.

A R Edgar was four years older than McCann, and would have had to meet the same criteria for the ministry. Unlike McCann, he was not Australian-born, having come to Victoria from Ireland with his family at the age of four. He was one of the two ministers of the Geelong West Circuit from 1887 to 1889, and presided at many Highton Committee

meetings. In 1889 he was appointed to the Yarra Street Circuit, which he left in 1893 to found the Central Mission at Wesley Church, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

It would take detailed study to find whether Edgar shaped, or just embodied, the Methodism of the late 1880s and afterwards. Certainly his Central Mission in Melbourne was a new venture in the Victorian Church, but he was appointed to this work by the Conference. The missionary zeal which had prompted the first Wesleyans to bring the gospel to the original inhabitants of the Port Phillip district, and later to the white pioneers, may have been in danger of losing its drive in the problems of consolidation and – as at Highton – the paying of debts. But it was becoming plain that there were still problems of a new kind in the cities, as an industrial society developed. Although Highton itself remained a rural settlement for another 70-odd years, many of its people had businesses or jobs in Geelong; it was not cut off from these changes.

Edgar's Central Mission activities on a Sunday were once summarised by a friend as being "ritualistic in the morning, socialistic in the afternoon, and evangelistic at night". These terms cover the three areas in which Edgar and the Methodism of his day were both like and unlike John Wesley.

'Ritualism'

In Edgar's 'ritualism' he was particularly like Wesley. His biographer W J Palamountain wrote that Edgar:

"Was brought up in the Anglican Church, and always retained a love for the ritual of that Church. Hence the morning service at Wesley was more stately and ordered than either the

afternoon P.S.A. or the evening meeting."

We can only guess at exactly what this 'ritualism' involved, and how typical it would have been of 1880s Wesleyanism. A roll-book for Class Leaders to mark the attendance of members, printed in England, was in use at Ceres in the 1870s, and still has the recommendation to kneel at prayer, and to have hassocks or kneeling-boards in all chapels, but some of its rules were already being neglected. The Wesleyans were the most formal of the branches of Methodism, but the 1902 Union of all Methodist groups in Australia brought many changes. Uniting Church members of today may not remember the years in which there were mutterings about the dangers of 'getting like the Anglicans' if we knelt or used 'read prayers', or if an occasional minister wore a preaching gown, or anyone wanted to display a cross in the church; the full Communion Service from the Anglican Prayerbook was rarely used at that time, and an attempt to include it in the Highton Centenary celebrations in 1953 had only limited success. But in those years the worshippers at Highton were still the children of active members of the 1880s church, if not themselves survivors of that period. Country congregations are said to be conservative, but which traditions were being upheld here? Highton's records are very sparse. There is an 1889 mention of the singers' appointing a choirmaster to help the Harmonist select 'chants' and tunes. In 1894 a 'very long conversation' discussed the advisability of holding a tea meeting, a lecture or a Sacred Concert on Good Friday; Bro Johns and Bro Lane moved that it be a public tea as usual, and there is no record that anyone objected on liturgical grounds, so the familiar custom continued for years. In 1897 "Mr Mountjoy ... referred to the congregation joining in the Lord's

Prayer, & also...repeating [the Psalms] verse by verse", but we are not told what he said.

‘Socialism’

The second activity of Edgar and his Central Mission certainly became part of Highton's traditions in the 20th century, when 'the wireless' brought the 'Wesley PSA' into many homes, although by that time it was less likely to be described as 'socialistic'. But under Edgar himself the introduction of the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon had overtones that many condemn as 'meddling in politics'. While John Wesley always stressed the duty of respecting and obeying lawful authority, he had, in spite of himself, given his followers a passion for justice which had led to many taking a lead in fighting social evils like slavery as well as personal sins like drunkenness, and getting into trouble with the powers that were. It was a Methodist local preacher, George Loveless, who was deported from Dorset in 1834 for leading the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs' in forming a union or friendly society for agricultural labourers.

When Edgar was posted to Wesley, that church was being emptied by the movement of population to the suburbs, and its neighbourhood had become a slum. Conference decided to remove it from the normal circuit system and make it a mission centre to the people who needed it most. It became a practice to hold discussions on a Sunday afternoon about the problems of the community, and one topic which came up for urgent attention was the subject of sweated labour. A R Edgar and Dr E I Watkin joined a deputation from the bootmakers' and tailors' trades to the Premier, and the speakers asked Edgar if they could repeat at Wesley what they had told the premier. He publicised the meeting, and held another the following Sunday with

addresses from other ministers as well. In those days perhaps church addresses carried more weight, though they may have had less publicity, and this support helped shape public opinion, and the formation of trade wages boards after a Royal Commission had been convened. Edgar was appointed as chairman of the first of these boards – interestingly named the White Workers' Board.

The Pleasant Sunday Afternoon became a Melbourne institution, with hymns, musical items, and addresses by various notable citizens of all persuasions, but with an especial emphasis on social problems and suggested solutions. Palamounain lists age pensions, opium, gambling, women's suffrage, unemployment, and a certain 'act for the protection of young girls', among the subjects that Edgar and those like him saw as part of their pastoral concern.

Again, there is not much information about what Highton people thought of all this, but what we do have may be significant. Firstly, from the days of Matthew Burnett onwards there are references to preachers and speakers who were known as advocates of 'Gospel Temperance', and the Blue Ribbon Gospel Temperance Army hired the Highton Sunday School room for a meeting or two in the 1880s. In fact, 'total abstinence' is a more accurate term for what most Methodists appear to have preached. All denominations seem to have been to some extent involved in the 1850s upsurge in disapproval of drunkenness, although it was sometimes identified too closely with unruliness of the lower classes. Highton men of more than one denomination formed a branch of the Sons of Temperance Friendly Society or Lodge in 1867, and built a hall where the Pre-School Centre now stands on the corner of Larcombe Street and Roslyn Roads.

In general, Protestant ‘temperance’ meant urging people, especially Sunday School children, to ‘take the pledge’, and foreswear taking intoxicating liquor for life. The Catholic Pioneer Association focussed on pledging total abstinence for a specific period, sometimes until the age of twenty-five and sometimes for other periods, and did not regard alcohol itself as evil, but as a pleasure to be renounced as an offering to God and a prayer for the sake of those who suffered because of its misuse. But Methodist ‘wowsers’ (said by some to be an acronym for ‘We Only Want Social Evils Removed’) became regarded kill-joys who thought pleasure was bad for its own sake.

Certainly the nineteenth century Wesleyan rules for the guidance of Class Leaders stressed that to “abstain from all appearance of evil” such things as dancing should be avoided, because they resembled “the fashions and customs of the ungodly”, and might “lead into worldly company, or promote trifling, or indispose for the use of the word of God and prayer”. Other “appearances of evil” were indulging in “uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of Magistrates, or of Ministers”, or “the putting on of gold and costly apparel”, getting into debt, or charging unlawful interest; and “failure to do good” is a category which has no limits. But these things were listed for Class members, who had already undergone ‘conversion’ and were working at becoming ‘holy’, and were unlikely to weigh heavily on the consciences of the less pious. “Drinking spiritous liquors ... except in cases of extreme necessity” was another ‘diversion’ which could not “be used in the name of Jesus”. A dramatic change from an addiction to drinking was one of the most visible signs of conversion or spiritual re-birth which evangelistic campaigns offered.

Some temperaments will always miss the point of the Protestant emphasis on being saved by faith instead of works, and treat conformity to such ideals – by themselves and by others – as necessary to salvation, respectability, and virtue. But since the night John Wesley “felt his heart strangely warmed”, the Methodist blueprint was warmth and generosity rather than an anxious straining to live up to high standards. As a result, the ideal Methodist was a basically happy and friendly person, however grim some individuals may have been; and a church’s message of forgiving love is sometimes displayed in the flaws as well as the virtues of its members.

But drink could be seen as a social evil as well as a personal sin, and ‘the drink traffic’ itself later became a focus for some campaigners. After A R Edgar had left the Circuit, we find some signs that Highton Methodists may have been open to considering wider social issues as well as personal ones.

The first of these signs is the selection of speakers in mid-1890; the names of women begin to appear in a public role. The Rev J W Crisp was one of the Circuit ministers, and he and his wife were both invited to hold a special afternoon service to ask the scholars to support the Melbourne Rescue Committee in establishing the Livingstone Home for destitute children. Apparently Mr Crisp was content to hand over to his wife, as it is reported that she conducted the service, and ‘caused sympathy to spring up in the hearts of those present’, resulting in ‘a very good collection’. The Sunday School minutes which record this also show the Committee deciding to invite Mr Crisp, Mrs Varcoe, and A R Edgar to preach the anniversary sermons that year. Mrs Varcoe was the first ‘Biblewoman’ appointed by the Home Mission Society in 1884 to work in the Melbourne slums,

and founded the Livingstone Home; the Highton Wesleyans invited her again in 1893 to preach at the Church Anniversary.

The scarcity of our local records may not give us an accurate picture of the work women did in the Highton church. It is likely that 'the ladies', so often called on to preside over the tea tables or play the organ, may have quietly got on with fundraising and charitable activities without bothering to hold meetings and record minutes. Passing references in the male Committee's minutes to supplying lighting and heating for the Ladies' Sewing meeting, and to the Junior Dorcas Society (named after the widow in Acts 9: 36-41 who made clothes for the poor), suggest that there was a lot going on un-minuted. As we saw, women were present and took part in the discussion when the Church Committee was considering the selection and purchase of a new organ in 1889. Music, like sewing and serving food, was women's work; and the Sunday School Committee minutes which we have, from 1884 onwards, suggest that there was a Teachers' Meeting, whether official or otherwise, which could make requests for funding, and which over the 1890s seems to have gradually merged its female members with the formerly male Committee. But to have women speakers in a more public and formal role shows a change of attitude.

A move towards sex equality was supported by the Highton women who signed the Women's Suffrage Petition to the Victorian Parliament. In 1891 a number of women around the State collected signatures from other women who sought that 'Women should Vote on Equal terms with Men.' One woman who signed was the wife of the State Premier James Munro, and with his support the petition was presented to Parliament in September with almost 30,000

signatures. The website which displays these signatures claims that this document played a role in Australian Federation, for in 1901 the new nation of Australia became the first in the world to give women the rights both to vote and to stand for Parliament. Not all the forty-two signatories who gave their address as Highton have yet been identified, but the proportion who were certainly Wesleyan is remarkably high. This may be simply because the canvassers were Wesleyan; but that in itself says something about Wesleyanism.

1891 Highton signatories to the Women's Suffrage Petition to the Victorian Parliament. Names with (X) were signed by the woman's 'mark'. Asterisks show those known to be Wesleyans, and *? those who are likely to be Wesleyans. The allegiance of the rest is not known.

- Adcock, Annie*
- Adcock, Ruth A*
- Allen, Sarah (X)*
- Atkins, Louisa M
- Briggs, Sarah
- Bumpstead, Sarah (X) *
- Burrell, Margaret
- Calvert, Ellen*
- Clarke, Eliza*
- Collins, Hannah*?
- Cook, Lucy*
- Fagg, Elizabeth H*
- Fagg, Esther*
- Fagg, Sophia*
- Foster, Alice*
- Foster, Elisabeth*
- Gibson, Grace *
- Harrison, Harriet*
- Harvey, Charlotte*?
- Hobbs, Ann*
- Hobbs, Elizabeth Jane *
- Hobbs, Jane*
- Horwood, Annie*
- Hoskin, Henrietta (X) *
- Johns, Ellen*

- Joyce, Harriett*
- Lane, Mary*
- Lane, Florrie*
- Seal, Sarah*
- Mitchell, Mary*
- Morriss, Mary G*
- Morriss, Sarah*
- Mountjoy, Jane*
- Mulder, Eliza Jane
- Mulder, Mary A S
- Nicol, Georgina
- Parsons, Jane A*?
- Ross, Ellen*
- Smith, C.S.M
- Wall, Mary Minnie*
- Wall, Susannah*
- Walls, Annie*

Five women from Strawberry Hill also signed, including Esther Clarke and Harriet Tomkins (both sisters of Highton's John Harrison). Kuria Mountjoy Trewin, now of Chilwell, was another of our church family to sign, and four of the Glanfield women, including Eliza Tabitha, signed in their new homes in West Geelong.

Another of the leaders involved with that petition was a Daylesford woman, Mrs Harrison Lee. Bessie or Betsy Lee, a self-educated working-class woman, had an unhappy childhood with relatives who treated her badly in their drunken fits. She was inspired by Mrs Hampson, an evangelist, in 1883, and began to speak publicly on various questions. her manner being described as 'fluent and sincere'. She was one of the founders of the Women Christian Temperance Union in Victoria in 1887, an organization which fought for justice on many social issues, but is said to have been less acceptable there because she believed that sex was sinful unless it was intended for procreation; her own unhappy marriage may have reinforced this view. Sponsored in 1890-96 by the Victorian Alliance for the Suppression of the

Liquor Traffic, she campaigned in various 'local option' battles, when districts decided on the number of hotels that were allowed, and some places even became 'dry areas'. She was known as 'The Queen of Temperance Orators', and it may have been this topic which the Highton people had in mind when they invited her to speak at the Church anniversary in April 1895. During the 1890s, a Miss Harris was also invited to speak at an anniversary, but whether she was a campaigner of some sort or simply a preacher is not known. Movements like the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Young Women's Christian Association were part of a growing drive towards educating and in today's jargon 'empowering' women.


'Evangelism'

The third theme of Edgar's ministry, and of Methodism at any period, was evangelism. The word 'revival' was often used for evangelical campaigns, and most of the audiences for such meetings would have some Christian background, and understood the language of religion. We have seen how conversion could be clearly demonstrated in the case of mastering a drinking habit, but other measurements of 'revival' could be more subtle. The Wesleyan Missionary Society had decided that the Bunting Dale venture was unsuccessful because no converts were being made, but one of the recommendations for Peter McCann was that God had given him 'fruit to his labours'. In a society where the word 'sin' was a familiar one, the idea of needing to be saved from it made sense, and a conscious act of asking and accepting God's help was regarded as a necessary step in a Christian's life. It was expected that conversion would be an event that could be dated, and should be visible to others.

Conversion may have been marked by giving up some particular habit, but in essence it was making a choice of priorities, and taking the first step on a journey. In his methodical way, Wesley had set out and labelled further steps, and the index to his 1780 *Collection of Hymns for the use of the people called Methodists* covers economically the event-filled progress he regarded as

likely for a Methodist pilgrim. He described this book as ‘a little body of experimental and practical religion’ – a kind of handbook of Methodism. It was republished in England in 1877, with a new supplement, and either edition could have been in use at Highton. The number of hymns devoted to each subject is revealing.

CONTENTS.



PART I.		HYMN
SECTION I.	Exhorting Sinners to return to God	1
II.	Describing, 1. The Pleasantness of Religion	12
	2. The Goodness of God	22
	3. Death	41
	4. Judgment	54
	5. Heaven	67
	6. Hell	80
III.	Praying for a Blessing	81
PART II.		
SECTION I.	Describing Formal Religion	91
	Inward Religion	95
PART III.		
SECTION I.	Praying for Repentance	99
II.	For Mourners convinced of Sin	108
III.	For Persons convinced of Backsliding	168
IV.	For Backsliders recovered	182
PART IV.		
SECTION I.	For Believers Rejoicing	189
II.	Fighting	265
III.	Praying	294
IV.	Watching	305
V.	Working	321
VI.	Suffering	329
VII.	Seeking for full Redemption	340
VIII.	Saved	418
IX.	Interceding for the World	441
PART V.		
SECTION I.	For the Society Meeting	478
II.	Giving Thanks	488
III.	Praying	501
IV.	Parting	533

Above: Table of contents to Wesley's original 'Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists', 1780. Later editions doubled in length, and included, among others, sections on Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and the Methodist traditions of Covenant and Watch Night Services.

To Methodists with their emphasis on a community of loving fellowship, meeting and parting could be very important events, especially with an itinerant ministry. The traditional opening hymn at every annual conference, “And are we yet alive / and see each other’s face?” may have gained poignant overtones in an immigrant society.

Both Wesley and Edgar believed in a two-pronged ministry – awakening a deeper faith in nominal Christians, and serving the needs of the unfortunate. Both men were personally likeable and popular, and were able to make their faith attractive to others, although their work aroused great opposition from those whom it threatened. During his years in the two Geelong circuits, Edgar copied, whether consciously or not, some of the methods that the Salvation Army had brought to Geelong in 1883. When he came to the Chilwell (Noble Street) church in 1887, he asked his congregation for help in establishing an open-air ministry, and one of them suggested a brass band. An enthusiastic band was formed, and services were held out of doors in Kardinia Park on Sunday afternoons, after Sunday schools had closed. He then began leading the band in a procession on Saturday nights from the old post office to the Market Square, where ‘heartly singing’ would attract a crowd, and he and others would preach. There were many who later credited Edgar’s ministry with their conversion and the practical service they then gave to others, including Alexander Miller, whose Miller Homes still stand in Geelong today.

Christian Endeavour Society

During A R Edgar’s time at Yarra Street, a young man there named Howard Hitchcock brought back from abroad an enthusiasm for a new movement known as Christian Endeavour. Hitchcock was

later Mayor of Geelong, and a driving force behind the building of the Great Ocean Road. The Christian Endeavour Society was founded in America in 1881, and described as a non-denominational evangelical society, its objects being ‘to promote an earnest Christian life among its members, to increase their mutual acquaintanceship, and to make them more useful in the service of God.’ A youth ministry, it recognised young people as being no longer children and gave them an active role in church life. In practice it was an updating of the older Class Meeting system, which would give it an appeal to younger churchgoers. A branch was formed at Yarra Street, believed to be the first in Victoria, with Edgar and Hitchcock as its president and secretary.

In August 1894 the Highton Sunday School Committee decided, on the motion of Mr Mountjoy and Mr Lane, that it was ‘desirable that a Christian Endeavour band be formed in connection with the school ... every alternate mtg to be a Consecration mtg.’ Although its lengthy title claims it as Wesleyan, a Mr Arnold who attended at its inaugural meeting bears a name associated with St John’s Anglican Church. (The father of the Arnolds active at St John’s was named John Peake Arnold, and lived next to his Wesleyan brother-in-law J P Foster. But there was also a David Arnold in Ceres, who with his wife Sarah Watts had eight children, somewhat older than the Anglican Arnold children.) Meetings were fortnightly, and the various committees were active in things like taking flowers to sick residents of Highton or visiting the homes of absentee Sunday School scholars, as well as Bible study and other activities. They also took over the responsibility of arranging the Harvest Thanksgiving decorations in the church.

1894 Highton Wesleyan Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour.

- Mr Lane Senr (President)
- Mr Mitchell (Vice President)
- Mr J J Joyce (Secretary & Treasurer)

Look-Out Committee

- R Lane
- J Preston
- A Orchard
- A Heard

Prayer Meeting Committee

- Henry Hobbs
- Henry Lane
- A Henry
- S Johnson
- W Trewin
- Mr Lane

Social Committee

- Mrs Fred Bedgood
- Ralph Joyce
- Edith Mitchell
- Walter Challis

Sunshine & Flowers Committee

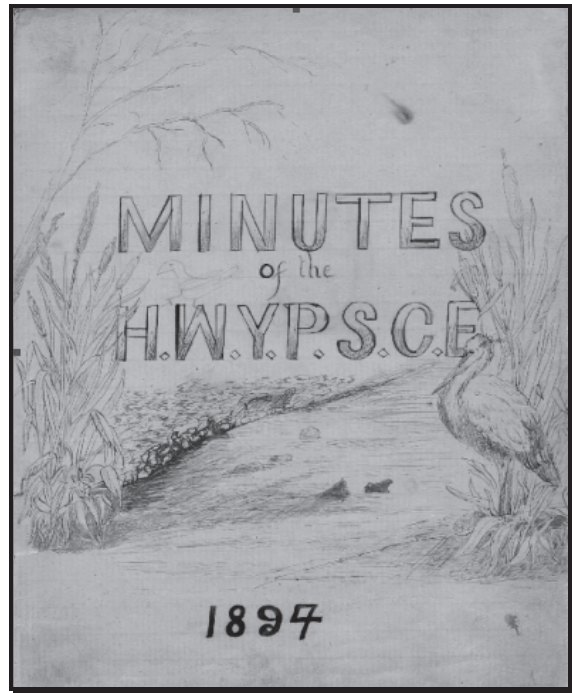
- Ruth A. Adcock
- Mr Arnold
- W Mitchell
- Bertha Mitchell

Sunday School Committee

- Laura Joyce
- Mary Lane
- Louisa Walls
- Fred Johnson

Music Committee

- Miss Joyce



Above: Illuminated front page of first Christian Endeavour Minute Book 1894

Back to Wesley

In July 1896, “the first regular Leaders Meeting which had been held for some time” was recorded in a new minute book. Those present were Messrs Mountjoy, Adcock, Lane, Jacka, Harrison, Hoskin & Mitchell. This meeting discussed the proffered resignation of Robert Lane as Society Steward. The Rev. James A Marsland, who was obviously trying to shape up Highton’s casual practices to the Wesleyan norm, “pointed out that the Meeting could not deal with Mr Lane’s resignation, as all these important Circuit Officers were appointed at the December Quarterly Meeting, and that then his resignation could then be received or otherwise”.

After ‘some discussion’ the meeting then meekly broke up. The next meeting, in October, reviewed the ‘Class Books’, removing the names of Frederick Johnstone, and John Henry and his wife, who had left the district, and altered the

time of the evening service to 7 p.m., initially just for the summer but later regularly.

1896 saw a major transfer of power in the Church Committee. In April, Edward Adcock was replaced as Secretary by George Mitchell, and the Adcocks left Highton at the end of the year. Laurence Mountjoy was still Treasurer in 1898, but was absent from meetings in 1899, dying in May that year; he was replaced by the younger Philip Hoskin.

Marsland was reviving original structures and terminology. The Leaders Meeting on 22 January 1897 gives interesting glimpses into the way the church was operating. Leaders elected Robert Lane as Senior Society Steward, John Harrison as Junior Steward, and H Hobbs as Poor Steward. Philip Hoskin was to take charge of Edward Adcock's 'society class' and "was requested to try and arrange with the Female Members of the Class for the holding of the Class Meeting on a week day afternoon. The Male Members of the Class to be asked to join Mr Joyce's evening Class".

This could have been to chastely segregate the sexes, or to protect the women from having to venture out at night.

The next entry has an interesting lapse into an already outdated style of writing, using the long 's':

"Reference was made to Mifs Adcock's Catechumen Class, The difficulty was to secure a suitable person to take charge of the Catechumens. Mr Mitchell said that he thought Mifs Adcock if asked would continue to take charge of the Class as long as she attended the State School, and when Mifs Adcock gave up the Class Mrs Mitchell would take up the work."

The earlier 'Miss Adcock' (Annie) having married, her sister Amy (Ruth Amy) had inherited the title. She was to marry George Mitchell Jnr in 1899, and it is possible that she was a sewing mistress at George Mitchell Snr's school in Roslyn Road, aged twenty-seven.

"Mr Harrison referred to the Trustees of the Church who were not Local men, Mr Marsland stated that he had gone to a lot of trouble in reference to the Trustees, he had received the resignation of Mr McKenzie, but Mr Caleb Mountjoy and Mr Hunt wish... to continue still in Office, the only way out of the difficulty would be to bring the Church Property, under the [left blank in the original] Act 391 which would give the Committee power to elect Local men as Trustees."

But it was not until 1907 that the Committee discussed bringing the property under this Act; passed in 1871 to abolish state aid to religion, it gave the trustees power to sell the land instead of holding it in trust for the government. The process here took some time.

Marsland's reorganisations took effect slowly, and with changes in personnel the story becomes harder to trace through minute books. For ten years after 1896 there is a fading attempt to keep minutes of infrequent (Class) Leaders Meetings, which elected the Stewards. George Mitchell, Robert Joyce, Philip Hoskin and his wife (or mother), and Frederick McMurdie and his wife Eliza Aspinall were mentioned as Class Leaders, but John Harrison, Robert and Randal Lane, and others, were also present. This group decided that Classes and the Christian Endeavour meetings should be held alternately, and the Endeavour eventually filled the role of the old Class Meeting. But in the same period, specific Trustee meetings are recorded, and in February 1907, minutes headed 'Church Committee' record what was described

as ‘the first meeting of the newly appointed Working Committee’ whose members had responded to ‘the invitation of the Trustees to join them.’ It was probably this group that evolved into what became known as the Leaders Meeting in the more general sense of ‘leaders of the church’.

The beginning of the new century was celebrated on 1 January 1901, with more accuracy than the celebrations 99 years later. It was also the augural date for the new Commonwealth of Australia, with the federation of the separate states; and for the followers of John Wesley in this country, their own merger in one united Methodist Church was due the next year. It was a time for celebration, and in July 1900 a fund to ‘renovate’ the church raised £44.10.1½; the differences between the two Harvest Thanksgiving photographs of 1896 on page 88 and 1910 on page 135 may date from this.

At all levels, Methodism was Methodists. At the local level, the Wesleyan Church at Highton is best represented by the following 1920 newspaper obituary of Mrs John Lowe Hobbs - Ann Phoebe Jane Austin from Astwood, Buckinghamshire, a Highton pioneer:

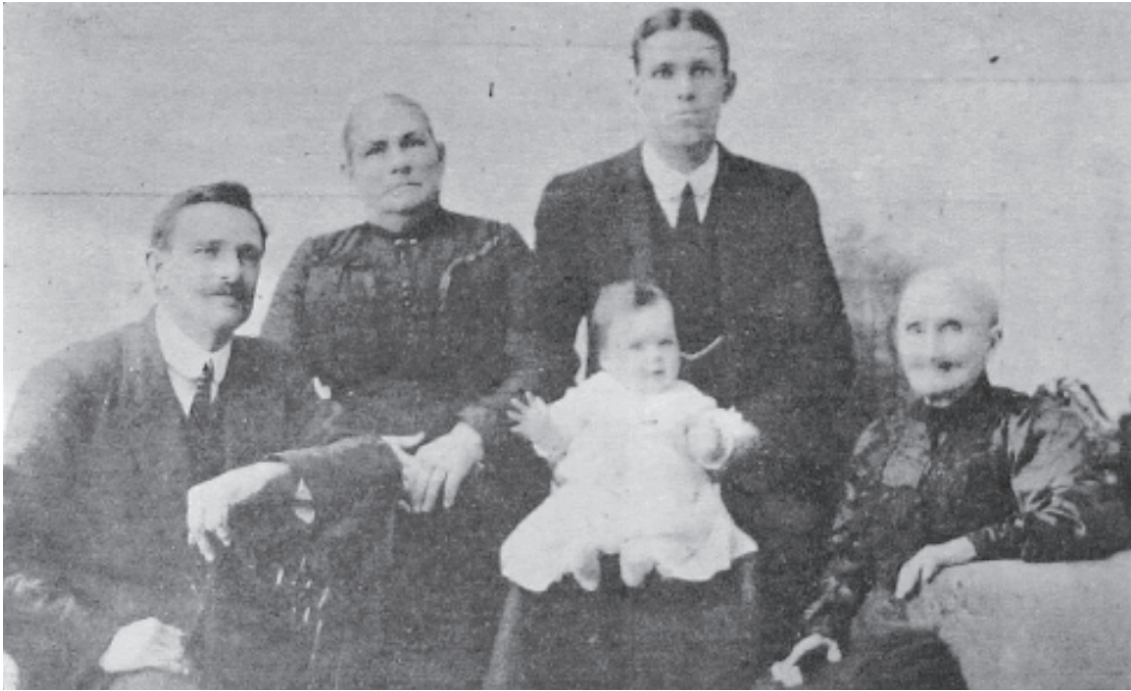
“Mrs Hobbs, of Highton, arrived from Buckinghamshire in 1851, and lived in this district until the end came. She had a large family, and her children and children’s children are well known throughout Geelong. She had 54 grand-children and 75 great-grandchildren. She was a very capable manager, the heaviest burdens of the business concerns falling on her shoulders. She was possessed of wonderful energy, her vigor and strength up to the last being astounding. She was kindness itself, always ready to give a helping hand. She took a keen interest in our church in former days. She was a strong

advocate for Foreign Missions, being collector for many years, and was a lover of the Class meeting, her testimony being always clear and bright. She was a most grateful soul, it was always a benediction to visit her. She had known troubles above the average but her faith in God never wavered, she had an abounding confidence in His goodness and love. She had just about reached the ripe age of 92 years when the call came and found her ready to enter into the joy of the Lord.”

At the official level, two stories about A R Edgar may symbolise two aspects of Wesley’s personal legacy - his universal goodwill, and his willingness to explore new paths.

On 9 May 1901 the Duke of Cornwall & York (later King George V) opened the first Federal Parliament at the Exhibition Building in Melbourne. A R Edgar was there with other church representatives, as the last President of the Victorian Wesleyan Methodist Church. The Duke asked to be introduced to “that tall clergyman”; according to his daughter, Edgar, who must have towered over his future monarch, gave him a hearty Methodist handshake and boomed benevolently, “How do you do, Sorrr?”, uninhibited by protocol.

On the same occasion, as the dignitaries paired up in procession, the Roman Catholic Archbishop T J Carr took Edgar’s arm, saying, “I’ll walk with you today, Mr Edgar”. It was the beginning of a long walk for all the churches.



***Above:** Five Generations. 'News of the Week' photograph of Mrs John Lowe Hobbs (Ann) & her Rankin descendants. The caption underneath the photo reads: Mrs J L Hobbs (Highton), Mrs W Rankin (Highton), Mr E Rankin (Newtown), Mr A V Rankin (Geelong West), Lorna Rankin – Lockwood, Photo. Proved courtesy of the Geelong Heritage Centre.*

***L-R:** Ted Rankin, Mrs Walter Rankin, Mr A V Rankin holding Lorna Rankin & Mrs J L Hobbs*

Chapter 9

**KNOWN OFFICERS & WORKERS
OF THE
HIGHTON WESLEYAN CHURCH**

Ministers

- Frederick Lewis ? –1853
- Richard Hart 1853-4
- Isaac Harding 1853, 1854-?

Local minutes begin in 1867

- James Bickford, James W Crisp, & Edmund S Bickford 1867
- James Bickford 1868
- Edward King & Thomas E Ick 1871-1873
- Francis Neale 1874-1876
- Thomas Grove 1875-1878
- James de Q Robin 1877
- James D Dodgson 1878-1880
- John Harcourt 1879-1881
- Edmund S Bickford 1881-1883
- William Burridge 1882-1884
- Thomas Adamson 1884-1886
- Arthur Powell 1885-1887
- Alexander R Edgar 1887-1889
- Edward T Cox 1888-1890
- James W Crisp 1890-1893
- J H Hadley 1891-1893
- Charles Lancaster 1893-1895
- Alexander McCallum 1894-1896
- William Worth 1896
- James A Marsland 1896-1899
- Samuel Hoban 1897-1900
- James Haslam 1899-?
- D B Bridgwood 1900-
- William Thompson 1901
- Samuel Adamson 1905-

Known Officers of Church Committee

Secretaries

- Edward Adcock 1867-1888
- Walter Foster 1888-1890
- Edward Adcock 1890-1896
- George Mitchell 1896-1899;

- John Harrison 1899-1900
- Frederick Arthur McMurdie 1900-1901
- John Samuel Camm 1901-

Treasurers

- Laurence Mountjoy 1867-1872
- Caleb Mountjoy 1872-1873
- John Henshaw 1873-1874
- Caleb Mountjoy 1874-1877
- Laurence Mountjoy 1877-1899
- Philip Hoskin (Jnr) 1899
- John Harrison 1899-

Stewards

- Laurence Mountjoy & Edward Adcock 1867-1872
- Caleb Mountjoy & Edward Adcock 1872
- Robert Lane 1882-97
- John Henry 1889-95
- John Harrison 1895-
- Henry Hobbs 1897-
- Randal Lane 1898-9
- Philip Hoskin (Jnr) 1899-1904
- Arthur Johns 1900-
- Frank Martin 1902-
- Miss Mawson (Poor Steward) 1906-

Trustees

Date of Gazette & Names

11 Oct. 1861

- John Lowe, Thomas Rix, Henry Adcock.

24 April 1866

- Laurence Mountjoy (replacing John Lowe), Edward Adcock (replacing Thomas Hunt and Joseph Ross (additional trustees)).

2 May 1873

- George Smith Mackenzie (repl. Joseph Ross).

24 April 1874

- Philip Hoskin (repl. Laurence Mountjoy)

26 May 1899

- Robert Lane (repl. Philip Hoskin), Laurence Cleverdon Mountjoy (repl. George Smith Mackenzie), John Harrison (repl. Edward Adcock), Philip (repl. Thomas Barber Hunt)

19 July 1901

- John Samuel Camm (repl. Laurence Cleverdon Mountjoy)

Known Organists

- Miss H [Henrietta?] Hoskin? – 1876
- Miss [Annie] Adcock ca 1881-1893
- (relieving) Miss Louisa Johns, Miss Joyce, Amy Adcock 1888-1893
- Mrs Rankin (née Louisa Johns?) 1894-1897
- Bertha Mitchell 1898-1901
- Miss Dora Camm (Mrs Randal Lane) 1901-1906
- Gertie Camm (Mrs Albert Tann) 1906-
- Mrs Albert Lawry 1907
- Mrs Fred Johnstone 1907-

Extra Sunday School Organists

- Isabella Cook 1890;
- Miss Capstick 1905

Known Officers of Sunday School

Superintendents

- Laurence Cleverdon Mountjoy 1856(?) –
- Laurence Cleverdon Mountjoy – 1890
- Robert James Joyce 1890-1900
- Robert Lane (acting) 1896
- George Mitchell (assisting) 1896-1898
- John Samuel Camm (a.m. school) 1900-
- Frederick Arthur McMurdie (p.m. school) 1900-1902

- J Lawton (3 months) 1904
- George William Capstick 1904-

Secretaries

- Robert Lane 1884-1892
- George Mitchell 1892-1894
- H(Harry?) Hobbs 1894-1899
- Frederick Arthur McMurdie 1899-1901
- Frank Martin 1901-2
- Beecher Hartshorn 1903-

Treasurers

- Edward Adcock 1884-1897
- (?) Arnold 1897
- Robert Lane 1897-1902
- Frank Martin (assistant) 1900-1902
- Randal Lane 1903-05
- George William Capstick 1905 –

Librarians

- Laurence Cleverdon Montjoy 1884-1888
- Thomas Johns 1889
- George Mitchell 1891
- Thomas Johns 1892 –
- Henry Lane (assistant) 1893 –
- Frank Martin 1901-1904
- Beecher Hartshorn 1905-

Known Teachers (1888-1907)

- Annie Adcock
- Amy Adcock
- George Allen
- H Arnold
- Fred Bedggood
- Miss (Emma?) Bowen
- Miss S Bumpstead
- Dora Camm
- Mrs (Hannah) Camm
- Jane Calvert
- George Capstick
- Nettie Clarke
- Miss Cother
- Miss Ellis
- Mr Ellis
- Miss Foster

Steadfast Through Change

- J. Frewin
- John Harrison
- Mrs (Mary) Hartshorn
- Stella Hartshorn (Mrs Ernest Burgess)
- Mrs (Eather/Esther) Henry
- Jane Henry
- John Henry
- Frank Hewitt
- W Herd
- Edward Hobbs
- Harry Hobbs
- Mrs Hoskin
- E Horwood
- W Hunt
- Miss (Adelaide?) Hyde
- Alice Johns
- Arthur Johns
- Louisa Johns/Mrs Rankin
- Thomas Johns
- S Johnstone
- Beatrice Joyce
- Ida Joyce
- Joshua Joyce
- Laura Joyce
- Henry Lane
- Mary Lane
- Randal Lane
- Miss (Elsie?) Lawry
- J Lawton
- Mrs (Eliza) McMurdie
- George Mitchell
- Ted Rankin
- John Semmens
- E Smith
- Miss E Smith
- Mary Sterry
- Miss Wall
- Mrs (Susanah) Wall

