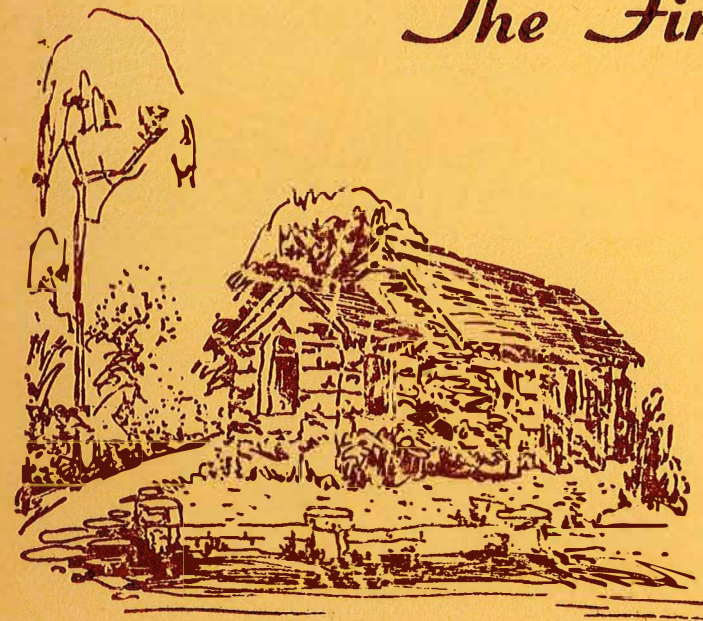


The First Hundred Years



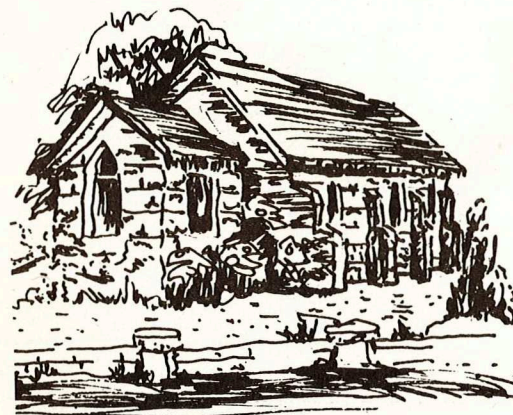
St. John's Church of England
Mona Vale Founded 1871

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The Present St. John's, Pittwater Road, Mona Vale

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF MINISTRY AND WORSHIP IN MONA VALE

1871 - 1971

COMPILED BY ERIC BLUMER, B.E.
ILLUSTRATED BY FRANCES EASTOE

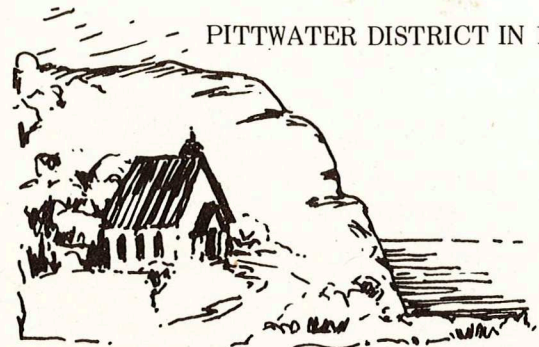
1871 - MANLY PARISH REACHES OUT

In 1871 Manly Parish had an immense area - approximately 100 square miles - and was bounded on the West by Middle Harbour and Cowan Creek, on the East by the Pacific Ocean, on the North by Broken Bay, and on the South by Port Jackson.

The Village of Manly Beach was however quite small and the first St. Matthew's had only been opened six years before. The Church of St. John the Baptist, Pittwater, was to be the first of several branch churches needed to serve out-lying settlements. Others which followed in the next 30 years were:-

St. Paul's, Middle Harbour (Seaforth)	1875
St. John's, Marra Marra (Bar Island)	1876*
St. Luke's, Greendale (Brookvale)	1887
St. Mary's, Brooklyn	1895*
St. Faith's, Narrabeen	1897

*Not part of Manly Parish until 1895



PITTWATER DISTRICT IN 1871

The settlement supported a farming and timber-getting community making much use of water transport. Road access to Manly was poor, and Manly itself very poorly served by a circuitous land route to Sydney. Small ships were built at Bayview which carried baker's wood and railway sleepers to Sydney, and also shared in the Coastal and Hawkesbury Shipping Trade.

The Original Church- overlooking Bungan Beach

THE FIRST ST.JOHN'S PITTWATER

The first Church was a "neat weatherboard building 30 feet long by 16 feet wide" and was in a commanding position on land given by Mr.Edward Darley on the hillside overlooking the ocean and Bungan Bungan Beach. The site is in the area now bounded by Grandview Parade, Orana Road and Bassett Street, East.

On Thursday 21st September 1871 it was opened in the presence of about 100 people on a cool overcast day with a brisk North-Easter blowing.

The coaches which brought visitors from Manly Beach left St.Matthew's Church at 8.30 am. It must have been a slow journey over bush tracks, then across a ford at Narrabeen Lagoon, which was not bridged till 1880, and finally a long slow pull up Sheepstation Hill at the southern end of Mona Vale with passengers on foot and probably assisting from behind. (The grade is now greatly eased by a deep cutting)

The service was read by the Incumbent, Rev.E.Smith, and the licence by Mr.Joseph Cook, Churchwarden and Lay Reader of the Parish. The sermon was preached by the Rev.Cave Brown Cave, Incumbent of St.Thomas' Church, Willoughby (now North Sydney) from St.John, 1st Chapter and 29th verse. After the address an offertory was taken up and this amounted to £9.10.10. The Choir of St.Matthew's Manly conducted the musical portion of the service.



The Original Stone Font

The feeling of isolation of the little settlement is mirrored in a contemporary account which reads:

"This small church being situated quite in the wilderness, and being the first erected in that part of the Colony, is appropriately named after John the Baptist, and it is the earnest prayer of those through whose efforts the building has so far been brought to completion, that whosoever may officiate, may like the Baptist preach repentance, and may also like him, and as the preacher did on that occasion, point always to 'The Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world'.

Those who have contributed to this good work have conferred incalculable benefits upon a locality where until recently, before a service was commenced there by the late Incumbent, the Rev.G.Gurney - lamentable to say, were found adults who had never heard the word of God."

THE VISIT OF THE BISHOP

On Wednesday the 21st May 1873, the Bishop of Sydney (the most Rev.Frederick Barker, D.D.) arrived at Manly Beach on an official visit and he remained in the Parish until the following Tuesday. On the Monday morning the Bishop and nine others on horse-back, and three ladies and Mrs.Barker in a spring cart, journeyed to Pittwater to pay an official visit to that end of the Parish. On their arrival at the beautiful spot surrounding the Church of St.John the Baptist, the Bishop and clergy robed in a cottage close by. The service was then held in the Church, the Bishop being assisted by the Incumbent, and the Rev.W.F.Clay. The Bishop preached an eloquent sermon from St.John Ch.10 verse 27. After the service a luncheon was partaken of in the open and during the afternoon the party journeyed back to Manly. The debt on St.John's Church, Pittwater was paid off during the year 1873.

MINISTRY IN THE PENINSULA

After the opening of the present Barrenjoey Lighthouse on 1st August 1881, occasional services were held either at the keeper's cottage or at the Customs House on the peninsula below. During the erection of the Lighthouse, two workmen were killed; William Stark and George Cobb, both of whom were buried alongside the original St. John's Church of England, Pittwater. The Rev. R.S. Willis and his successor, the Rev. A.G. Stoddart, had to make the journey to the Lighthouse along sandy roads that lead through miles of bush either on horse-back or by horse and sulky.

It is interesting to make mention of some of the early Church of England inhabitants of the Pittwater and Broken Bay District who had children baptized by the Rev. R.S. Willis when he visited what was then described as a very lonely part: The Wilson family, 1872; Mr. Black, Harbour Master stationed at Barrenjoey, 1872; Mr. Myers, a farmer, 1876; the Boulton family of Newport; Mr. Grant, a Customs Officer at Broken Bay, 1877.

THE CHURCH ON WHEELS: THE INLAND SITE

Inhabitants gradually moved away from the vicinity of the Church and in 1888 the Church was moved to a new site in Bayview Road (Pittwater Road) adjoining George McIntosh's selection "Winneverremy". The site is now part of Bayview Golf Course.

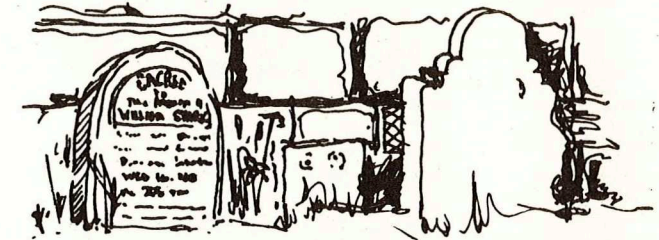
The Church was placed on wheels and drawn by a team of bullocks. Nearing the site the wheels became bogged and remained so for two weeks - Services were held in the Church on Wheels.



The Church was moved to Pittwater Road in 1888.

THE LOST GRAVESTONES

The site of the original St. John's was lost for many years. In 1946 it was reported that some of the early pioneers of Pittwater were buried alongside the first site of St. John's Church, but the graves were neglected and the headstones disappeared. In 1958, the site was re-discovered when several headstones were dug up in the back gardens of properties on the southern side of Grandview Parade, Mona Vale. One headstone has an inscription referring to William F. Stark, "accidentally killed during the erection of the New Lighthouse at Barrenjoey, Wed. 16th Feb. 1881". The headstones and the original stone font now stand in the grounds of the present St. John's in Pittwater Road.



The Lost Gravestones

CHANGES IN MANLY PARISH

During the period 1892 - 1895, the northern part of Manly Parish was separated off to become the New Conventional District of St. John's, Pittwater with Lower Hawkesbury, Bar Island and Greendale (Brookvale). The Rev. Arthur Gailey was appointed Curate in Charge, and resided in Greendale. This arrangement lapsed in 1895 and the District was again attached to Manly, making the Parish larger than ever because of the addition of territory of the Lower Hawkesbury.

MONA VALE CEMETERY

On 18th October 1905, the Government made provision for a General Cemetery in Lane Cove Road (now Mona Vale Road), Mona Vale, rightly termed the "Turimetta Cemetery". The Church of England portion consisted of two acres, and it was dedicated by the Crown on 18th October 1905, and vested in trustees on 19th September 1906. The trustees were the Rev. A.G. Stoddart, J. Blackwood, C.W. Browne, S. Stringer, S. Gray and W. Boulton.

THE PRESENT ST.JOHN'S

In 1906-7, after 35 years of service, the old weatherboard Church in a very bad state of decay, was demolished. Sale of materials fetched a sum of £6.9.0 (\$12). A new stone church with a temporary east end was built in Pittwater Road nearer the village of Turimetta (Mona Vale) on the present site, and opened for worship on 4th February 1907 by the Rural Dean, the Rev.J.H.Maclean of North Sydney, assisted by the Rev.C.B.Elwin, Acting Rector of Manly during the absence of the Rev.A.G.Stoddart in England.

The present porch was added in recent years, possibly 1955.

In 1920 Synod approved the creation of Narrabeen and Mona Vale into a Mission District, embracing Long Reef and Barrenjoey. The Archbishop appointed the Rev.F.G.Greville as Minister in Charge. In 1925 it became a Parochial District under the Rev. N.Lloyd.

In 1952 the Provisional District of Pittwater was formed to include Mona Vale, Newport, Avalon and Palm Beach. It became a Parish in 1958. Mona Vale was made a Provisional District in 1961 under the Rev. George Townend. Because, for the first time, St.John's was to have a resident minister, provision of a rectory became an immediate necessity. The present Rectory was built at the rear of the Church property in Darley Street. A plaque marking the commencement of the building was unveiled by the Ven.G.R.Delbridge, Archdeacon of North Sydney on 1st October, 1961. The debt on the Rectory was cleared early in 1970.

Mr.Townend was followed by the Rev.Victor Cole in 1964. In 1965 St.John's became a Provisional Parish, giving to members a sense of establishment and representation on Synod. The next step is full parish status and it is hoped that this will not be long delayed. In 1968 the Rev.D.E.Langshaw succeeded the Rev.Victor Cole and is the present incumbent.

In the past two years the east end has been modified by an attractive timber lining and a neat external shell. The cost of this work has been kept to a minimum by voluntary labour as the fact that it is still a temporary end has not been lost sight of.

The recent phenomenal growth of the Parish by housing development has emphasised the need for forward planning in extensions of the Church. The present building has a unique charm of its own and is greatly admired by visitors, and every effort will be made to preserve its individuality and to design extensions which are in harmony with it.

PAST RECTORS OF ST.JOHN'S

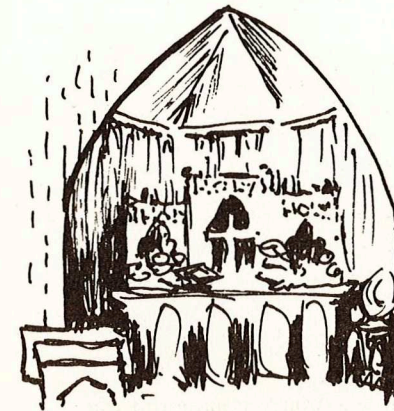
St.Matthew's Manly	1863	G.Gurney
	1869	E.Smith (1st St.John's)
	1875	T.Tress
	1876	R.Willis
	1895	A.G.Stoddart (New St.John's)

(1892-5 Conventional District of Pittwater: Rev.A.Gailey)

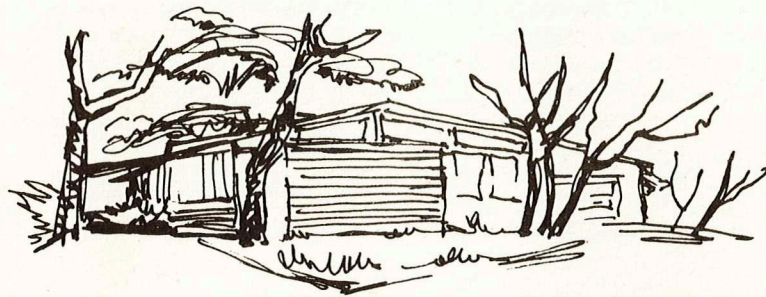
Narrabeen Parish	1920	F.Greville
	1925	N.Lloyd
	1931	T.Knox
	1934	H.G.S.Begbie
	1938	H.Standen
	1942	A.Pattison
	1946	R.Walker
	1950	W.A.Osborne Brown

Pittwater Parish	1952	K.Short
	1955	B.Richardson
	1958	N.Keen

Mona Vale Parish	1961	Rev.G.Townend
	1964	Rev.V.R.Cole
	1968	Rev.D.E.Langshaw



The Church Sanctuary



The Rectory in Darley Street

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Charles Stoddart

"History of St. Matthew's, Manly" and

"History of St. John's, Pittwater"

P.W. Gledhill

"Manly and Pittwater"

Charles Swancott

"Dee Why to Barrenjoey and Pittwater"

Victor R. Cole

"Ninetyseven Years of Christian Heritage at St. John's"