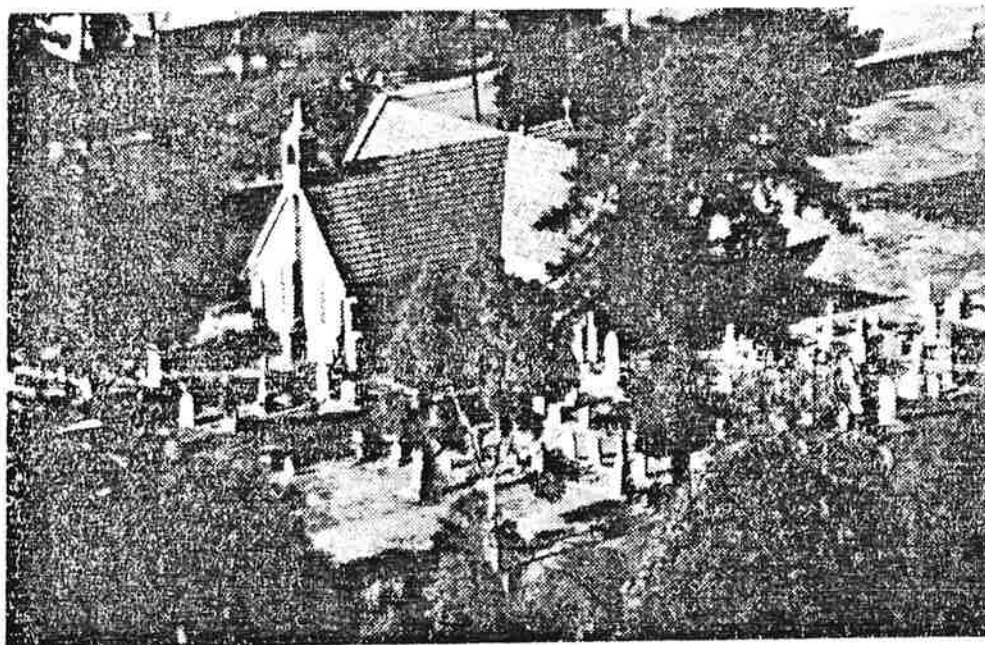


# **ST MARK'S PICTON**



**by Jan Maloney  
Kay Weaver**

**May, 1983**

*ACCESSION No. 97*



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## THE CHURCH IN EARLY PICTON

The early years of the colony of New South Wales saw a constant struggle for survival against problems such as the lack of shelter, clothing, food, fertile land and even the skills necessary to overcome these difficulties. The cattle brought by the First Fleet strayed into the bush and were lost until 1795 when a herd of about forty cattle was discovered on good grazing land near the present site of Camden, an area which soon became known as the Cowpastures.

Exploration continued in the southwest and in 1804 Governor King named the area around the present site of Picton "Stonequarry Creek". A government stockyard was built there as a central herding point for the wild cattle, which now came under government control. On 17th October, 1820, Governor Macquarie "examined a most eligible situation on the north bank of this creek for a township whenever this desirable part of the country is settled". (1)

The first land grants were made in the area on 9th July, 1822:- 2,000 acres to Major Henry Colden Antill and 1,000 acres to Charles Louis Rumker, a German astronomer. Rumker resided at his property "Stargard" from 16th June, 1823 until he returned to Sydney in 1826. Major Antill moved from Liverpool to Stonequarry in 1825, at first naming his property "Wilton", but later changing it to "Jarvisfield".

On 1st July, 1825, Antill was appointed resident magistrate for Stonequarry and hearings were held at his residence. He was a deeply religious man and conducted services for his family and staff in the room set aside for court proceedings. The use of his residence as a courthouse proved a great inconvenience, and following correspondence with the Colonial Secretary regarding the matter, "a temporary slab courthouse was erected (in 1830) by him near the Jarvisfield gate and it continued in use as such until about 1864". (2)

The Sydney Gazette of 26th April, 1832, notes that "there is no place of worship, but the Major reads prayers twice on every Sabbath to all his tenants and to his own establishment". The Reverend Thomas Hassall, the "galloping parson", of "Denbigh", Cobbitty, occasionally visited and conducted services during the years 1826 to 1839. He had a huge parish extending at first from Goulburn in the south, across to Wollongong, up past Narellan and out to Mulgoa.

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- (1) "Journal of a Tour of Inspection to the Western and Southern Countries Some Time Since Discovered by Chas. Throsby Esq. in October and November, 1820." Lachlan Macquarie.
  - (2) "Major Henry Colden Antill". J.M. Antill. Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society. Vol. XXXII 1946.

He was followed by Reverend Frederick Wilkinson who had been transferred from Wollongong to serve the area covering Menangle, Stonequarry, The Oaks and Bowral. He made his home at "The Hermitage" at The Oaks and rode around his vast parish on horseback, so visits to Stonequarry were rare.

The township of Picton began to develop when in 1841 Major Antill had a township surveyed on his land and The Sydney Morning Herald of 28th July, 1841 reported that "a new Township has been laid out on Major Antill's ground, at the bridge opposite the allotments sold by the late Mr. Harper. This new town is to be called Picton, late Stonequarry." Antill saw the site as a prime one for a township as it was on the main southern road and had "a police establishment, gaol and courthouse all on the spot. Divine Service is performed every Sunday by a regularly appointed minister." (S.M.H. 28.7.1841). The Roman Catholic Church of St. Patrick was opened in 1847 and in the same year steps were taken to erect a Church of England church. The Sydney Morning Herald of 28th July, 1847 reports the initial meeting as follows:-

PICTON - a well attended and influential meeting was held at the courthouse on Tuesday last, the 20th instant, for the purpose of organizing a committee and adopting measures for the erection of an Episcopalian church in this district, the want of which has hitherto reflected great discredit on the inhabitants. The meeting was opened with prayer, at the conclusion of which Major Antill was unanimously called on to preside. The Reverend Messrs. Hassall, Forrester, Stack together with Messrs. Templeton, J. Hassall and W.B. Campbell severally addressed the meeting in furtherance of the important object contemplated by the resolutions.

A committee with powers to add to their number was formed. As it had opened, so the meeting concluded with prayer. After which all separated, highly pleased with the day's operations, and fervently hoping that the business already transacted is but a prelude to other exertions which will never relax till we see erected an edifice in which we can worship the God of our fathers with the due solemnity and awe which a temple consecrated to His worship ought ever to produce. Upwards of £100 was subscribed in the room.

It was proposed to build a stone church at an estimated cost of £800. The first names to appear on the subscription list were:- Messrs. Lyons, R. Blackwell, W.B. Campbell; Bishop Broughton; Reverend Edward Rogers; Reverend Thomas Hassall; Dr. Redfern; James and William Macarthur; Miss Macarthur.

By 1848, Picton village contained twenty three houses and had 120 inhabitants, and was visited by Reverend Edward Rogers of Camden, who conducted a service in the court house at 3pm on the second Sunday of the month.

"The slab courthouse served as a place of worship and services were conducted there twice a month...on the second Sunday by Reverend Rogers, Church of England clergyman from Camden and on the last Sunday by Reverend Gilchrist, Presbyterian minister from Campbelltown. Fred Taylor, a Jamaican native and school teacher in the district, prepared the court house for service. By waiting until he saw Parson Rogers on his white horse come over the top of Razorback he had ample time to call the community to prayer by banging loudly on a large tin. The parsons usually spent the night at "Jarvisfield" and visited their parishioners on the Monday. On intermediate Sundays, Antill held service in his house, with "William reading the prayers and John the sermon"." (1)

The Committee met in August 1848 to consider the site for the church. Major Antill recorded the event in his diary as follows:-

THURSDAY 24TH AUGUST, 1848

This being the date appointed for the church committee to open the tenders for building the church or school room and fixing the site, we assembled accordingly at the Court House, but the tenders being too high for our limited means we adjourned till tomorrow at Mr. Crispe's at the George Inn. The Hill called Daisy Hill, but which was altered to Church Hill was fixed upon in preference to the site I had fixed upon a long time back and being the only one who voted for the same, I was left in the minority and obliged to give in against my inclination." (2)

The following day he sent a letter to the Bishop with the Reverend Rogers "offering an allotment of ground where the committee had chosen it". (3) However, despite this choice of site, the location proposed by Major Antill, who was donating the land, was ultimately chosen and in later years the church hall was built at the foot of Daisy Hill.

ST. MARK'S

The foundation stone of St. Mark's was laid by Reverend E. Rogers on 16th July, 1850, and the names of the building committee were engraved on it at a cost of £1. The stone, at the base of the eastern wall, is no longer in its original position as a result of extensions to the church in 1872.

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(1) "Major Henry Antill". J.M. Antill. Journal of RAHS. Vol. XXXII 1946 p.195.)

(2) and (3) "H.C. Antill's Memorandum Book. 1848-1850." Mitchell Library. B761. Extract from the original Manuscript in The Mitchell Library, Sydney. Used with permission.

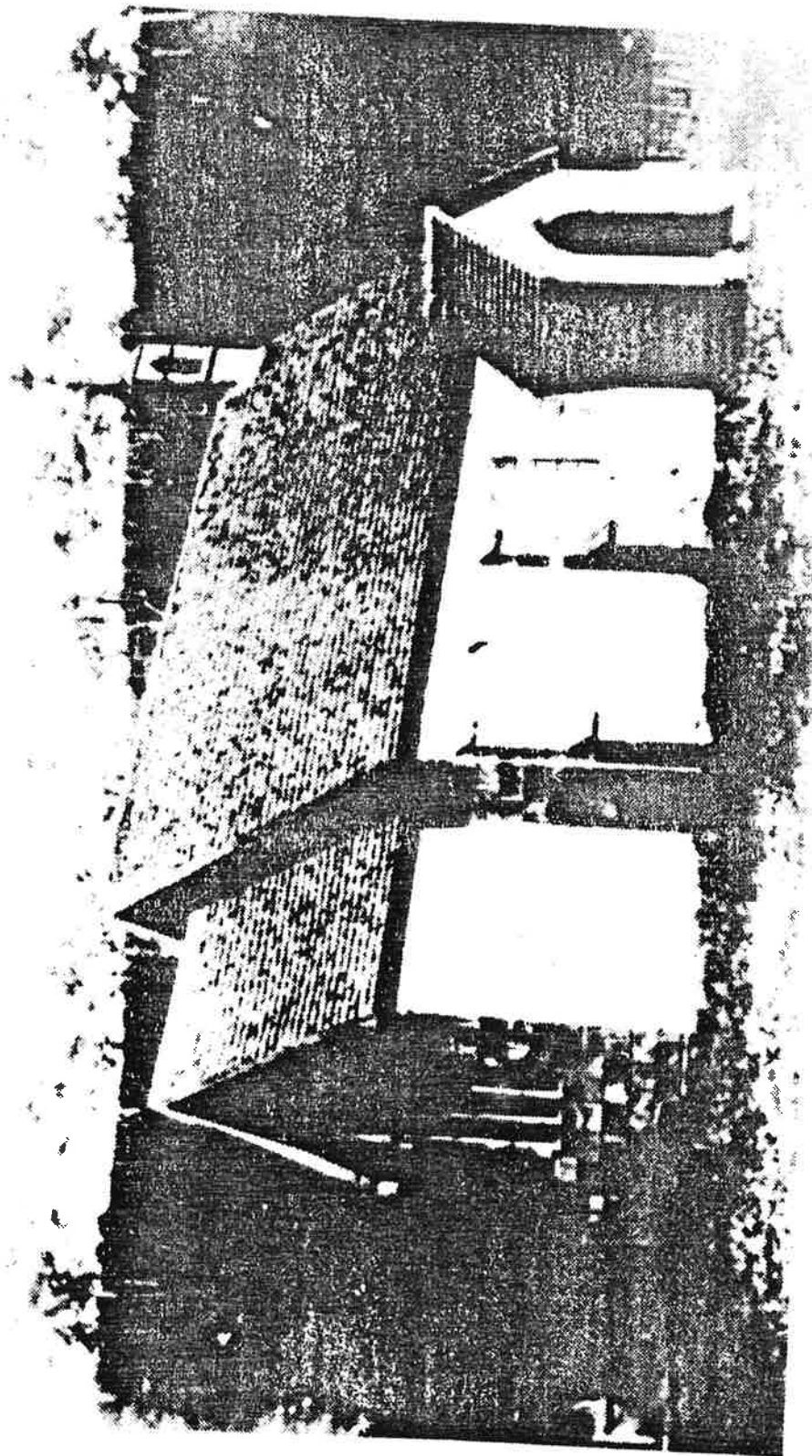


Photo courtesy of D. Harvey

ST. MARK'S PRIOR TO THE 1872 EXTENSIONS

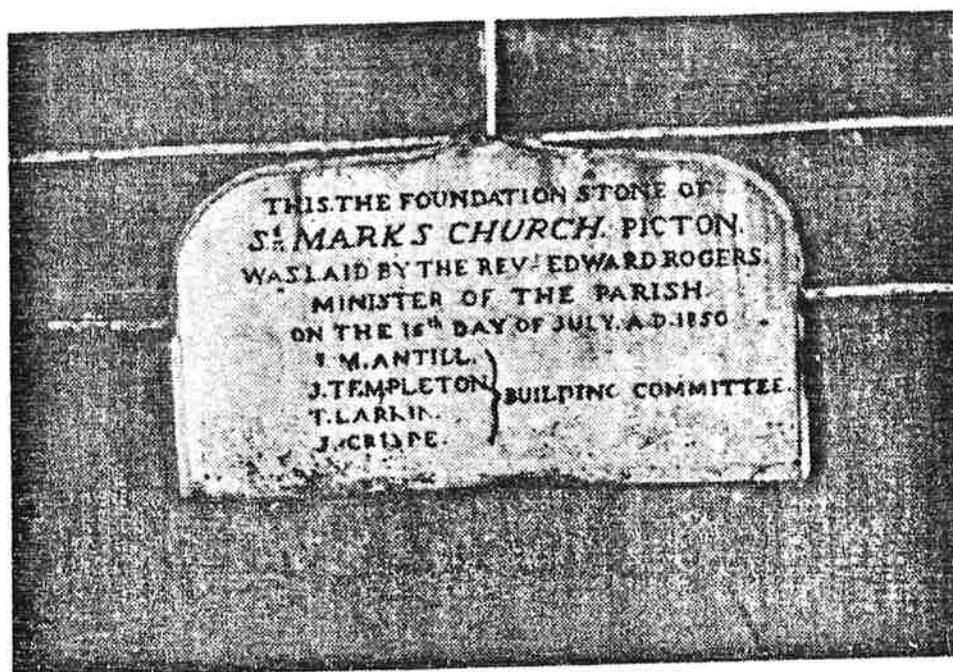
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Work on the church commenced in August 1850 with the foundations being placed and the walls built a few feet high, by Thomas Smith of the lime kilns. The rush to the goldfields in the 1850's and the consequent labour shortage caused a delay in work on the building and it was not until 1856 that the church was finished, Ramsdale and Horne having taken on the task. Flanking the east window are two carved heads reputed to be their self portraits. Church of England records show the licensing of St. Mark's to have been in August, 1856.

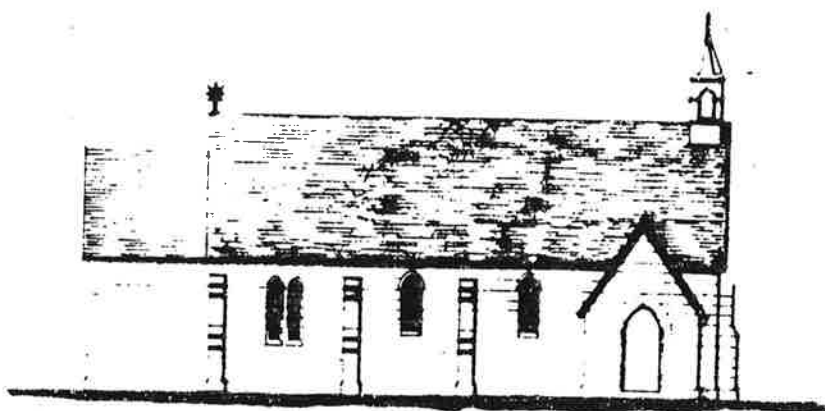
St. Mark's was designed by the Diocesan architect, Edmund T. Blacket, in 1848. Blacket, who had arrived in New South Wales from England in 1842, designed a great number of Church of England churches, parsonages, schools, private homes and commercial buildings as well as a small number of cathedrals, many public buildings and Sydney University's impressive main building. Most of his small churches were recreations of English village churches, St. Mark's Picton, Holy Trinity Berrima, and St. Mark's Greendale being local examples.

The original church was tiny. The nave was  $\frac{1}{4}$  the length of the present one with a chancel, a small north porch and the western elevation with its distinctive square bell-cote as it appears today. The windows were single lancet windows. Although the gallery was not a part of the original church it was added soon after in 1858.

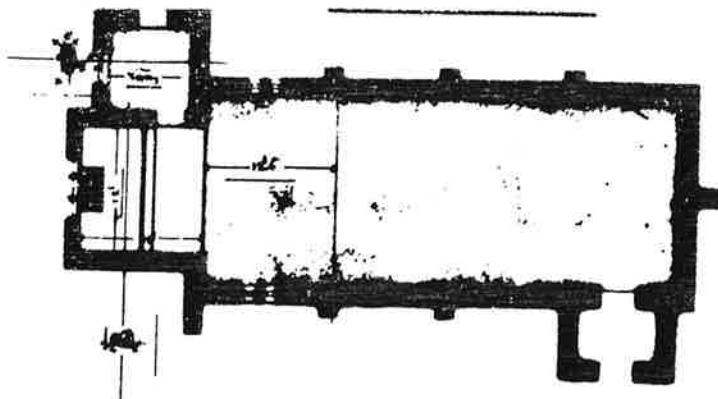
Picton's population almost trebled in the two decades following the laying of the foundation stone so in 1872 the church was extended eastwards by adding 12'6" to the length of the nave. The chancel was rebuilt and a small vestry was added also, as Blacket's plan, on the next page, will show. The windows were altered to double lancet windows in the north and south walls, although Blacket's plan shows a combination of single and double windows.



Section of tower to a floor



NORTH ELEVATION



GROUND PLAN



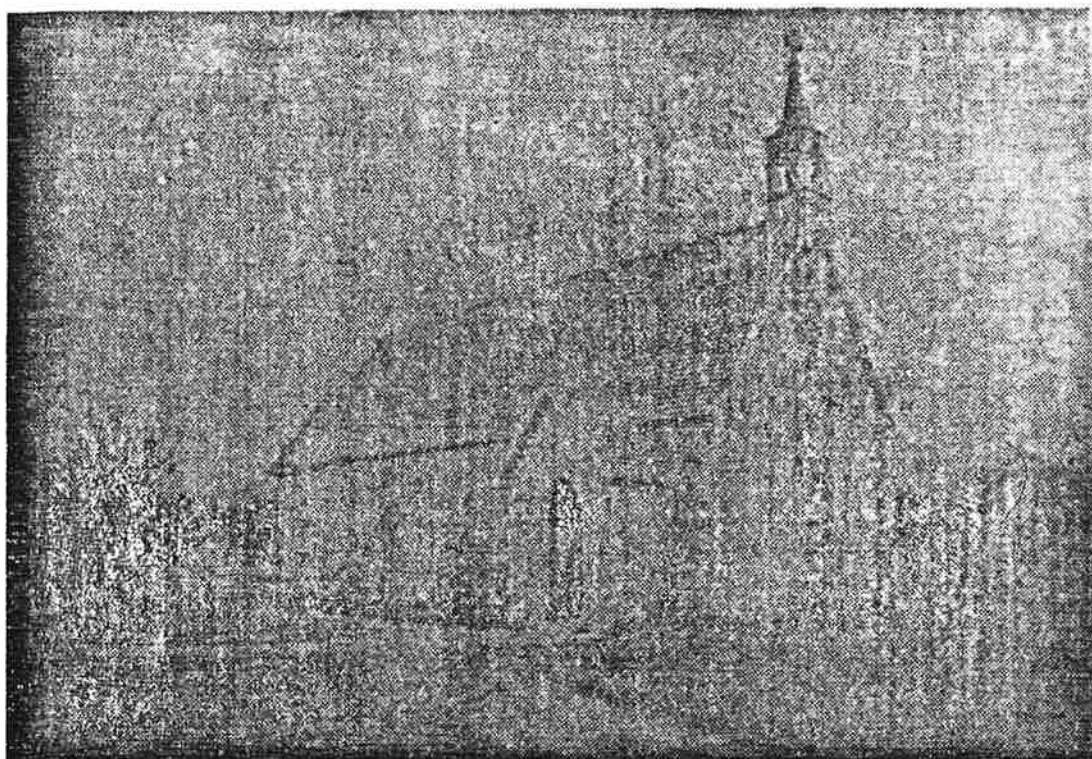
Part of Edmund Blacket's plans of St. Mark's 1872.  
From the original plans in the Mitchell Library,  
Sydney. Used with permission.

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St. Mark's after alterations and extensions in 1872

Ten years later the need was felt for a larger church and advice was again sought from Blacket. A proposal for widening the church was given by Blacket & Son in 1882, but this was not adopted. Instead, in 1885 transepts were added, to the plan of Blacket Brothers, Cyril and Arthur. The church building we have today is substantially the same as it was then. St. Mark's was consecrated by Bishop Barry, the third bishop of Sydney on 23rd May, 1885 and there is a reference in the church's financial statement of 1890 to three guineas for consecration expenses in 1885.

St. Mark's was built of sandstone, and the interior fittings were of cedar obtained from Mr. T. Larkin. The font was made by Ramsdale the stonemason. The roof was of oak shingles. This was replaced in 1904 by a slate roof. In 1930 a tile roof replaced the slate one.

Although there are several types and sizes of pews in the church now, some of the original ones are still there. One report has it that the Church of England congregation shocked the usual patrons of the Picton court one day in the 1850's by personally laying claim to the seats of the courthouse as their property (it will be remembered that court proceedings and church services had for many years taken place in the same room). Over the years pew rentals formed a substantial part of the church's income and the 1873 list of Pew Rents, on the next page, makes interesting reading today.

*List Pew Rents St Marks Church*  
*Half year ending Easter 1873*

	Antill	J.M.	---	17/6
	Antill	W.R.	---	10/6
	Anderson	W.	---	12/6
declined	Andrews	G.	---	4/
	Bent	Mrs	---	10/6
	Burnett	A.	---	3/6
	Coull	W.	---	7/
	Fiddhouse	W.	---	10/6
	Giblin	J.M.	---	3/6
	Heckham	A.	---	7/
	Hilder	J.A.	---	7/
	James	H.Y.	---	7/
	James	Jas	---	3/6
	Larkin	G.G.	---	7/
	Mt Jones	R.A.	---	10/6
	McQuiggan	A.	---	3/6
	Miller	J.	---	3/6
	Proctor	Jas	---	7/
	Rawlinson	C.	---	3/6
	Selmes		---	7/
	Temperley	Jas	---	7/
	Tremery	W.M.	---	7/
	Whiting	C.	---	10/6
				<hr/>
				8 18/6

*W.M. Giblin*  
 13/4/73

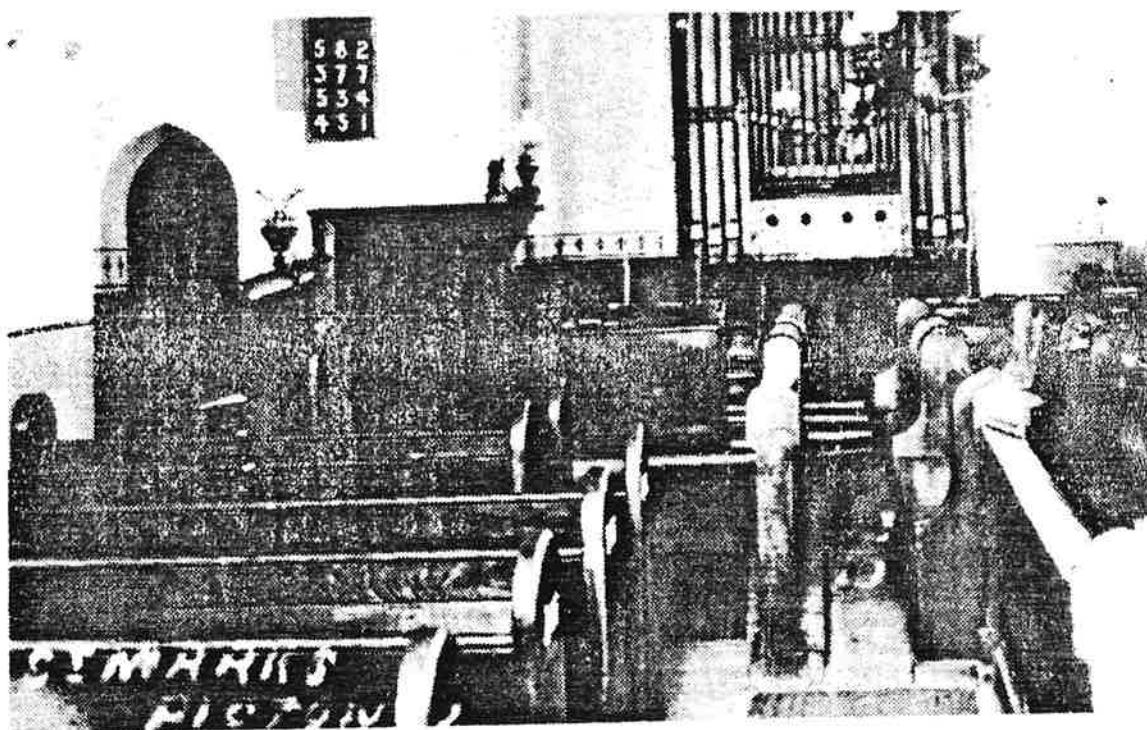
Lighting of the church was originally by oil lamp, and lamps affixed to the walls can still be seen today. Chandeliers also hung in the church; there is an account in the church records, dated August 1885, for four chandeliers, of three lights each, @ £3.12.6 each. An interior photograph of St. Mark's at the turn of the century shows some of the lamps and chandeliers.

Electricity was connected to the church in 1922, bringing an end to the era of services by the glow of lamplight. Electric light came to Thirlmere church in 1923, but evening services at smaller centres such as Bargo were referred to in a parish newsletter in these terms:

"If there are no lamps in the church, then perhaps we may each bring one of our own for the service." A quaint custom!

Renovations to the interior have occurred at various times with paint, plaster and timberwork being renewed. At times the words "Reverence my sanctuary" have been inscribed on the chancel arch. The gallery has suffered from white ants and has undergone repairs at times. Flooding has been a problem, too, over the years. In 1860 floodwaters rose to a depth of 3' in the church, and other floods since have brought water into the church, causing damage to the carpets and leaving mud and silt behind.

Despite extensions and alterations, St. Mark's remains an example of the typical 19th Century country church for which Edmund Blacket has become so well-known.



An interior photo of St. Mark's at the turn of the Century

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#### RECTORS

Rev. T. Hassall	1826-1839
Rev. F. Wilkinson	1839-1848
Rev. E. Rogers	1848-1858
Rev. J. Carter	1858-1870
Rev. S. Fox	1870-1882
Rev. F. Elder	1882-1887
Rev. R. Noake	1887-1894

Rev. D. Dillon	1894-1902
Rev. H. Begbie	1902-1905
Rev. W. Roberts	1905-1910
Rev. W. St. John Chase	1910-1912
Rev. E. Hargrave	1913-1920
Rev. A. Booth	1920-1922
Rev. H. Powys	1922-1924
Rev. F. Hall	1925
Rev. R. Tacon	1926-1928
Rev. J. Owen	1928-1934
Rev. F. Shaw	1935-1949
Rev. D. Langford	1950-1956
Rev. J. Schofield	1956-

### THE RECTORY

The Reverend James Carter who was appointed to the parish on 1st February, 1858, was the first rector to reside in Picton, where he built and lived in "Oak Villa". He was succeeded by Reverend Samuel Fox who lived for several years at "Stargard" on Picton Hill before a rectory was built in 1878. The first rectory was built on one of the loveliest sites in Picton, opposite the present rectory and overlooking the town.

"The foundation stone was laid by Mr. W.R. Antill on the first Tuesday of October, 1878 at half past three. The sum of £57 was laid on the foundation stone as was the custom of the time and hymns were sung by a large gathering. The Reverend Mr. John Langley addressed the congregation in appropriate and earnest words." (1)

The rectory, an imposing two storied building featuring a wrought iron verandah and french casement windows can be seen in several photos of Picton at the turn of the century.

Unfortunately, the construction of the railway deviation around Picton Hill forced the demolition of the rectory and it was advertised for sale by auction on 23rd June, 1915, as being a "two storied brick building with slate roof."

The church subsequently purchased the old Fieldhouse Inn opposite and refurbished it as the new rectory. The incumbent rector, the Reverend Edward Hargrave, moved to a residence in Menangle Street near Victoria Park whilst his new rectory was made ready. On 16th July, 1916, he told the council that the vestry would be renewing fences and putting a verandah on the rectory. The building was reputedly constructed in the early 1860's by the Bollard family to house railway workmen who were building the nearby viaduct and railway.

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(1) "The Australian Churchman". Vol. IV No.173 Oct, 17, 187

tunnel and it became known as Fieldhouse's Inn in about 1866.

The building has served as rectory from 1916 to the present, although plans for the future envisage a rectory as part of a parish complex adjacent to St. Mark's.



ARGYLE STREET, PICTON IN 1905. Both the old and the new rectories can be seen in the middle background...the old is the two storied building to the left of the pine trees and the new one is to the right.



THE RECTORY. 1983



The earliest music at St. Mark's that we can find record of was provided by an ensemble playing violin, cello and flutina in the gallery. This is certainly a departure from music as we know it in our modern services, but was not uncommon in churches before the organ became popular. It is hard for us to imagine some of today's bright and vigorous tunes played by this combination of instruments, but true liturgical music would no doubt be dramatically enhanced by such an ensemble.

Later, a harmonium, or small reed organ, was used for services, and we find annual payments of £10 listed in the financial statements of various years in the 1880's and 1890's for "presiding at Harmonium".

No doubt as the church building was extended in the 1880's and as the size of the congregation increased, the need was felt for a more prestigious instrument, or certainly one with greater volume. In 1894 a new pipe organ was purchased, and installed in the southern transept of St. Mark's. This was a Wordsworth & Co. instrument, built in Leeds, England, shipped out to Australia on the "SS Gulf of Mexico" in three tin-lined wooden cases and then erected in our church. The organ itself cost £193, but by the time the cost of cartage, wharfage, duty and buying commission was added on, the total was £267.11.2. As well, £4.8.7 was paid to the New South Wales Government Railways for trainage of the organ to Picton, and £14 to Chas. Richardson of Sydney for erecting the organ in the church. The organ specifications make interesting reading for those familiar with pipe organs.

#### ORGAN SPECIFICATIONS

Two full manuals and separate Pedal organ.

##### Great Organ-CC to A, 58 notes

<u>Name of Stops</u>	<u>Quality</u>	<u>Length of Tone</u>	<u>No. of Pipes</u>
1. Open Diapason	Metal	8ft	58
2. Hohl Flute	Wood	8ft	58
3. Flute Harmonique	Metal	4ft	58
No. of Pipes in Great Organ			174

##### Swell Organ-CC to A, 58 notes

4. Geigen Principal (Closed Bass)	Metal	8ft	58
5. Lieblich Gedact	Wood and Metal	8ft	58
6. Gemshorn	Metal	4ft	58
7. Oboe	Metal	8ft	46
No. of Pipes in Swell Organ			220



Pedal Organ-CCC to F, 30 notes

8. Bourdon	Wood	16ft	30
	No. of Pipes in		30
	Pedal Organ		

Couplers

- 9. Great to Pedals
- 10. Swell to Pedals
- 11. Swell to Great
- 12. Swell Octave

Composition Pedals

- 2 double acting composition pedals to Great Organ
- 2 double acting composition pedals to Swell Organ

One may wonder how the cost of the organ, a large sum at that time, could have been met. The "St. Mark's New Organ Account" of 1895 shows contributions from individual parishioners, and from the Picton Amateur Dramatic Society, as well as proceeds from a church fair and from a Musical Recital, all adding up to half the cost of the organ. Presumably the rest was raised in a similar fashion.

By 1896 the organist was receiving £12.0.0 per annum for her services, and a payment of £3.0.0 was being made to the "organ blower"...this was the unfortunate person whose job it was to stand near the back of the organ and work the handle of the pump which delivers air to the organ...quite a strenuous activity!

Musical interest at St. Mark's, and in fact in Picton as a whole, seems to have been high in the late 1800's and at the turn of the century. Mention is made in historical surveys of Picton of a Picton Choral Group and also a Philharmonic Society. We know that the St. Mark's choirmaster was paid £24.0.0 in 1901 for his services to music, and organ recitals and choral performances seem to have been frequent and well patronised. There are still copies in the church of anthems and cantatas which the St. Mark's choir purchased and performed in the early 1900's.

The choir continued to be active for many more years with concerts being given not only in the church but also in the Picton Town Hall. Choral activity and musical interest in more recent decades seems to have fluctuated somewhat, the records over the years making mention of choirs being formed, disbanded and reformed, of various solo singers, of violin/organ duets, of small singing groups and recently of the use of the folk guitar in sing-along worship.

Organists who served for some length of time include Selina Antill, who was organist for 20 years in the late 1800's

and early 1900's, and Mrs. A. Ingleton, who was organist for over 24 years in more recent times.

In 1983, we can say our 90-year-old organ continues to function well, more or less unchanged over the years. With electricity, the need for the manual blower disappeared and a motor separate from the organ supplies the air. At one stage the motor was considered so noisy that it was moved outside the church, but the outside variations in temperature were found to be detrimental to the organ. Today a new motor sits inside the church beside the organ. In electrical failure the hand pump can still be used by an energetic "blower".

Ninety years later the organ remains a worthy asset of our church services.

### MEMORIALS

St. Mark's stands as a memorial to the pioneering families of the Picton district, many of whom worshipped here for several generations. The stained glass windows, the communion table, various church furnishings and several plaques have been erected in their memory by their descendants.

The Antill family was instrumental in the founding of St. Mark's, so it is fitting that the two beautiful stained glass windows were erected in their memory. The large window in the chancel depicting the Good Shepherd in the centre with St. Mark and St. John on either side was unveiled on Sunday, 17th September, 1922 in memory of John Macquarie Antill and Jessie Hassall Antill.

On Sunday, 19th April, 1923, the stained glass window in the eastern transept and a plaque on the organ were unveiled at the morning service "to the glory of God and in loving memory of Selina Johnston Antill, twenty years organist of St. Mark's" who died on 16th February, 1920. Another plaque on the organ notes that an organ lamp was given in memory of Ruth Mulholland, a life long member of St. Mark's.

There are memorials to two rectors of the parish. In 1914 the parishioners gave the two lovely brass chancel lamps in memory of Reverend William St. John Chase, rector from 1910 to 1912, who died on 22nd December, 1912. He is buried in St. Mark's churchyard.

The credence table and alms dish were unveiled by the Vicar General on Thursday, 31st August, 1922, as memorials to the late Canon Edward Hargrave, rector of the parish from 1913 to 1920.

During the church's centenary celebrations on Sunday, 18th July, 1950 two memorials were unveiled. The beautifully carved communion table, fittingly, is in memory of Edward Gerald and Annie Larkin and their daughters Eva Jane, Martha and Annie. The Larkin family was associated with St. Mark's from its inception and Eva Larkin was for many years the Superintendent



WINDOW IN MEMORY OF SELINA ANTILL

of the Sunday School. The litany desk is in memory of Elsie New, a devoted worshipper at St. Mark's. On the following Sunday a new prayer book for the communion table was dedicated in memory of Mr. and Mrs. W. Margrie, Mr. Margrie having been a lay reader for over 60 years.

On the communion table, the brass cross is in memory of May Isabel Campbell, a member of a pioneering family, and a brass prayer book stand is in memory of William and Joseph Jessep.

The carved lectern is in memory of W. Berkeley Campbell who was Sunday School Superintendent for thirty years prior to his death in 1904. A pulpit lamp is in memory of Roy Carrington Pearce, a churchwarden, and the Psalm board was given in 1956 in memory of Jean Woods.

There are many other memorial plaques in the church. A plaque on the font is in memory of seven year old Kingsley Huggett who was killed at Picton in 1945 and a plaque on a pew is in memory of Celia Antill Wade McCallum, grand daughter of John Macquarie and Jessie Antill. Wall plaques are in memory of the following parishioners:- Margaret Campbell Wade Brown,

eldest child of John and Jessie Antill; Sydney John Warters, long time worshipper; William D. Burnett who was born in Picton and who died in 1881; Lloyd Davenport Parry who was a churchwarden for sixteen years; Corporal Edwin MacMullen Everitt who died at Gallipoli; and W.L. Rowe a former catechist who died in action in 1916.

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### ST. MARK'S CEMETERY

A stroll around the cemetery, sometimes known as Lower Picton cemetery, reveals some of the names we associate with Picton's early history: Baxter, Bell, Bateup, Campbell, Dunn, Edwards, Fairley, Larkin, Mulholland, Ray, Skellett, Trenerry, Cracknell, Crispe, Warters, Boardman, Graham, Wilkin, Whiting, Creamer, McQuiggin, Quinn. These are but a few of the names which a history of Picton would show to be those of early businessmen in the area, landowners, professional men and town identities.

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One of St. Mark's rectors, Reverend W. St. John Chas is buried close to the front door of the church: he died in 1912 from injuries sustained after a fall from his horse in Thirlmere while visiting a sick parishioner.

The earliest grave was that of Robert White who died in 1840. Early headstones still to be seen date from 1858, those of James Crispe and John McEntyre. There is a great number of unmarked graves, some of which would date from early times.

A monument in the south west corner of the cemetery was erected by fellow workmen to the memory of Lewis Cragie, William Hanham & Thomas Gillingham who died in 1863 during the construction of the railway viaduct.

There is another Church of England cemetery, at Upper Picton, which was part of the Crown Land grants made to the church in 1850 and 1855, although some of the graves bear early dates, such as that of Henry Bent, 1846.

The Antills, who played such a large part in the history of St. Mark's and indeed of Picton as a whole, are buried not at St. Mark's but in the family burial ground on Vault Hill.

### FIRST EXTRACTS FROM ST. MARK'S REGISTERS

#### FIRST BAPTISM

21 April, 1839

Alfred Wild, born 11 March, 1839, son of John Wild, "Gent", of Vanderville, and his wife Emmeline. The ceremony was performed by the Reverend F. Wilkinson, Chaplain in the Parish of The Oak and Stonequarry.

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## Partners, FIRST MARRIAGE

in Picton church. 24 July, 1839  
 eritt John Post, of Redbank and Bridget Carrick, of the same place  
 st who (sic) married in this chapel, by banns, with the consent of the  
 Governor, by F. Wilkinson, Chaplain. The witnesses were Thomas  
 Howarth, of Redbank, and John Hill of The Oaks.  
 (It is unclear as to whether the "chapel" was the court house,  
 St. Matthew's at The Oaks or some other building.)

## FIRST BURIAL

as 3 March, 1840.  
 ociate Robert White, planter, aged 30 years. The ceremony was performed  
 pbell, by the Reverend F. Wilkinson.  
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## THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION

One of the church's earliest roles in Picton was to provide basic education. In 1839 the only schooling available in Stonequarry was at Major Antill's home. It was funded by income from the Church and School Estates, seventeen blocks of land along the Razorback which had been set aside in 1829 so that their rentals would provide funds for parish schools in Camden and Stonequarry...8½ blocks were allotted to each centre. This system continued until the late 1860's when the government became responsible for educational funding. The land was sold in 1872.

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The church conducted one of the earliest schools in Picton, in a pise building between the present National Australia Bank and the Roman Catholic Church. Reports in 1866 noted that the school had fifteen pupils prior to the establishment of the

government-run Lower Picton school in 1868.

### ST. PAUL'S MISSION CHURCH, UPPER PICTON

The 1870's and 1880's were clearly years of expansion in the Picton parish. The town's population almost doubled between 1881 and 1891 and not only was the church twice enlarged and a rectory erected, but an additional church was built in Upper Picton and a Parish Hall constructed in Menangle Street. St. Paul's Mission Church was built on church land at the Redbank corner of Argyle and Cowper Streets in 1886 to serve the people of Upper Picton in the days when travel to church was by foot or horse and sulky, and the road connecting Upper and Lower Picton was a rough dirt track across hilly terrain. The church served its community for almost thirty years until services ceased in 1914 when the rector could only hold services there on Wednesday afternoons. The church was then moved to Bargo to replace the church hall which had been destroyed by fire, and it served in this capacity until 1956 when it was sold and converted to a private residence.

### THE PARISH HALL

The first parish hall, a wooden building with a shingle roof, was constructed in 1884 to house the Sunday School and various church activities. The hall was also the centre of cultural activities in Picton, with newspaper reports at the turn of the century referring to regular, well-attended sacred music concerts, presentations by the Picton Choral Society as well as Sunday School functions.

In March, 1923 it was decided to build a new school hall to replace what the Parish Paper referred to as "the old dilapidated and disgraceful building that now bears the name". Despite its age and the ravages of white ants, the old building was found to be in very fair condition, so it was given to the newly established congregation at Tahmoor, where services were being held in private homes. The building was re-erected by the men of Tahmoor under the supervision of a Mr. Robinson. Unfortunately, the building was destroyed by fire on 19th December, 1923, and the Tahmoor congregation was forced once again to consider the question of a church building.

Work commenced on the new brick parish hall in July, 1924 with the foundation stone being laid on 26th July by Mr. H. Antill. The architect, Mr. Burcham Clamp, presented Mr. Antill with an inscribed silver trowel. Many parishioners were present and the collection laid on the foundation together with promised financial support, totalled almost £70.

The building was quickly completed and the hall was opened amid festivities on Wednesday, 8th October, 1924, at 3 p.m. by the Sunday School Superintendent, Miss E. Larkin. Sunday School was held there for the first time on the following Sunday.



The Hall served the parish until it was sold in 1982 to Mr. R. Johnson, who after many months of renovations opened it as the Picton Baptist Church on 5th February, 1983.

A Larkin cottage adjacent to St. Mark's was then purchased as the site for a future parish hall.

### THE PARISH

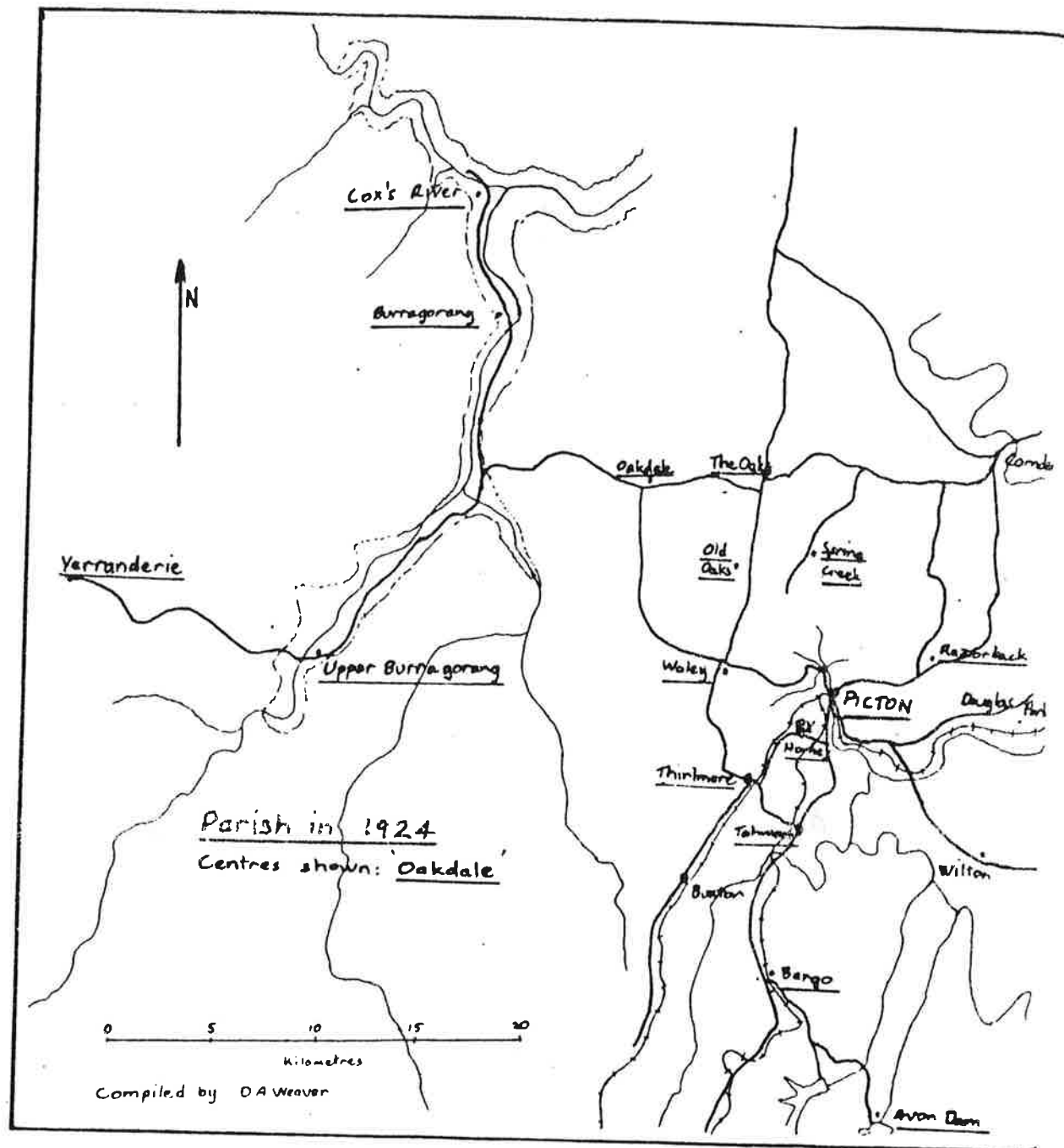
St. Mark's is the main church of a large parish area, and there has always been a need for catechists and lay readers to help the rector. But catechists need to be paid, and we find the congregation struggling at various times to meet the stipend for the rector, let alone one of a catechist. There is a letter in the church records which was sent out in 1882 to parishioners urging them to raise their contributions to the Stipend Fund, which at this time was £300 and remained the same for some decades. The "Subscriptions to Stipend Fund" was published, showing names of contributors with amounts given, ranging from 2/6 to £10 per half year. Nearly the whole of the rector's salary was collected in this way each year.

Nevertheless, at different times catechists have been employed. However, one cannot overestimate the value of good lay readers in a scattered parish as ours is, and we can be thankful God has provided men from the congregation to fulfil the need.

In 1983 we look at our parish comprising five centres: Picton, Thirlmere, Tahmoor, Buxton and Bargo, and we see that besides the rector, several lay readers are vital to the organisation of providing weekly morning services at each centre and an evening service at Picton.

However, we can only marvel at the organisation involved as we look back over the decades to times when as many as 16 centres were receiving church services and pastoral care. Back as far as 1893 the then catechist, Henry Goldsmith, wrote in his letter of resignation that he could not physically "sustain the severe strain of the very heavy work of this large and scattered parish", mentioning that he had travelled 500 miles, made 1,000 visits and conducted 150 services that year. Probably the rector was doing just as much or more, and at this time services were provided at Picton, Upper Picton, Old Oaks, Oaks Township, Thirlmere, Burraborang and Lagoon Flat.

Reverend Powys wrote in 1924 of travelling 4,000 miles by car in attending to parochial duties that year. He had introduced the motor car as the rector's means of transport but he also kept a horse, sulky and bicycle, all of which were used. The parish at this stage consisted of 16 centres:- Picton, Thirlmere, The Oaks, Old Oaks, Bargo, Cox's River, Yerranderie, Razorback, Tahmoor, Spring Creek, Burraborang, Upper Burraborang, Oakdale, Avon Dam, Queen Victoria Homes and Waley (Barnado) Homes. Not surprisingly he wrote that "the parish really hummed with activity".



Difficulties were often encountered in reaching some outlying areas. The rector wrote of Spring Creek, which "is reached in 2 ways, either by horseback over the hills by a rough track six miles in length or by car or by sulky right round the hills by road, a distance of 17 miles. A good deal depends on the horsemanship of the preacher, which road he prefers to travel." Services in the valleys were "weather permitting", sometimes cancelled because of flooded rivers.

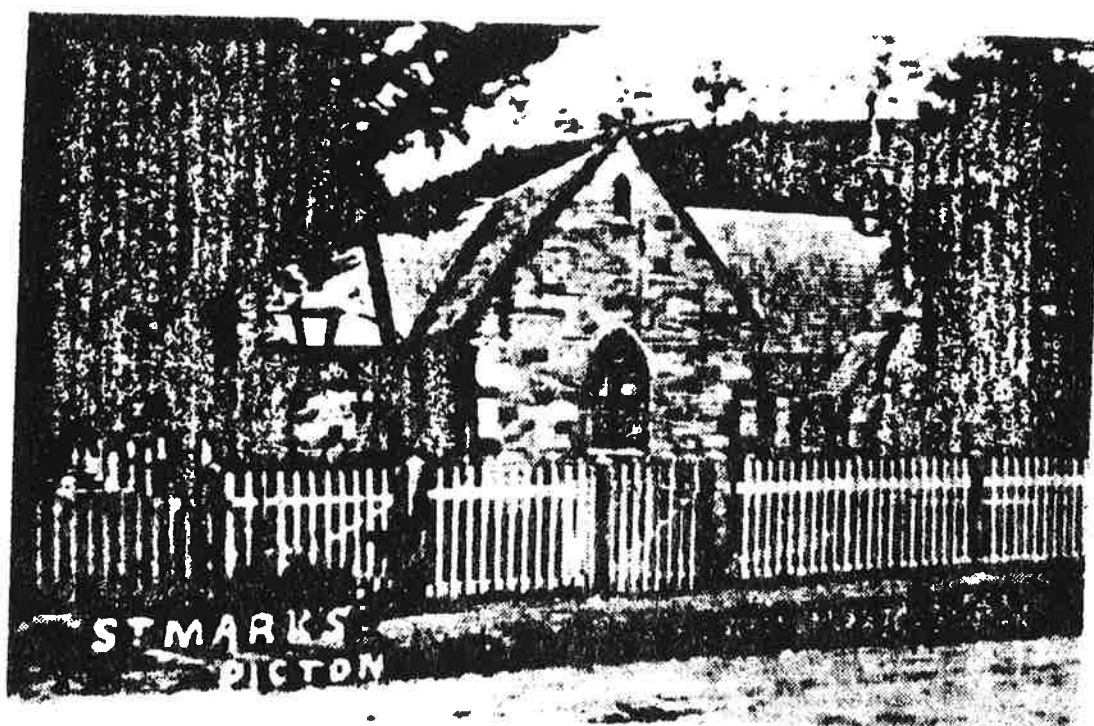
Over the years the size and makeup of the parish has varied. Now with just five centres the parish is probably the most compact it has ever been. At different times though it has included the more remote areas, not all of which had church buildings as such. But these little centres have been remarkably self-sufficient:- there are records of them conducting their own Sunday Schools, choirs and other activities. Nevertheless

There are times when all the centres need to contribute, and not just financially, to the parish as a whole. So we see instances of church buildings being moved from one centre to another to meet a need, of co-operative working bees, of lay readers going out from the stronger centres to less populated ones, and so on.

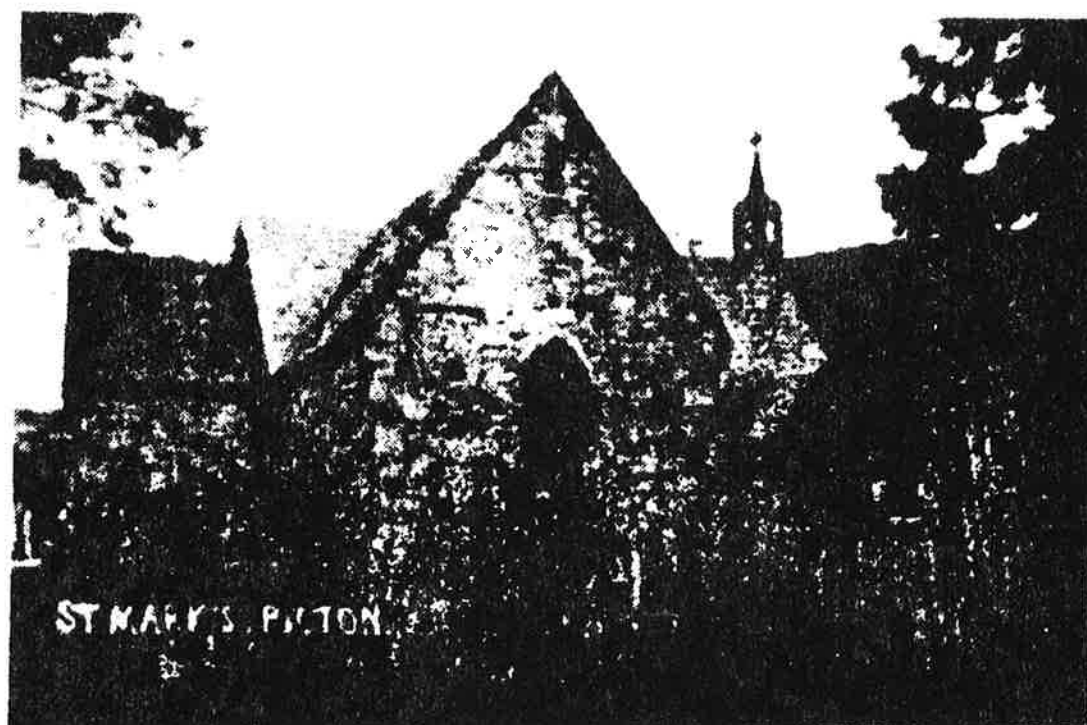
When people feel the need to meet together to worship, a church fellowship is created and so a lot of our churches started in private homes. Tahmoor church began as a small group meeting at the home of a Mrs. Gorrick in 1922, and a church building eventuated in 1924. This was when Picton's old wooden Sunday School hall was moved up to Tahmoor...after a few years it was burnt down and in 1931 the brick church was built, with extensions opened and dedicated in 1983. At Buxton, people had been meeting since 1890 in private homes and later in the School of Arts hall, and it was not until 1955 that their little church was opened. Thirlmere church also began as a small group meeting first at the stationmaster's home, then at a Mr. Pickard's home until a church was opened in 1888, with extensions much later, in 1954. Bargo's present church was opened in 1954, with extensions later. Previously the congregation had used the wooden building which had been St. Paul's at Upper Picton and moved in 1914 to Bargo, replacing yet another wooden building which had been destroyed by fire.

Wilton and Douglas Park are churches which have been in and out of Picton parish at various times. Newsletters from 1929 and 1930 show them to be an independent and active parish of their own; in 1956 the Picton rector is asked to oversee them; in 1983 they are an independent parish again.

Looking at the overall history of the Picton parish we can see that where people have wanted to worship God together, a church has sprung up...not always a building, but certainly a group of believers. Usually a church building has followed. With the resources available, in terms of personnel as well as finance, the rectors of Picton parish over the years have been able to provide a ministry to those who have required it.



Two photographs of St. Mark's taken in the early years of this century.



## ST MARK'S PICTON

by  
JAN MALONEY  
KAY WEAVER  
MAY, 1983.

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