

A SHORT HISTORY OF ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH 28 MARSH STREET, KEMPSEY

The Reverend F. Richard Kemp was appointed first rector of the Parish of Kempsey in 1857, and ministered to the Macleay district from Port Macquarie.

No church buildings existed in West Kempsey at this time.

Divine service was held either in the Court House – or in the Good Templars Hall - which was situated in Belgrave Street. (near where the Harrington Building is now.)

Although the West Kempsey site had been in the possession of the Corporate Trustees of the Diocese of Grafton and Armidale for several years previous, it was not until 1883 that plans and specifications for a Gothic style church were finally accepted, and building began.

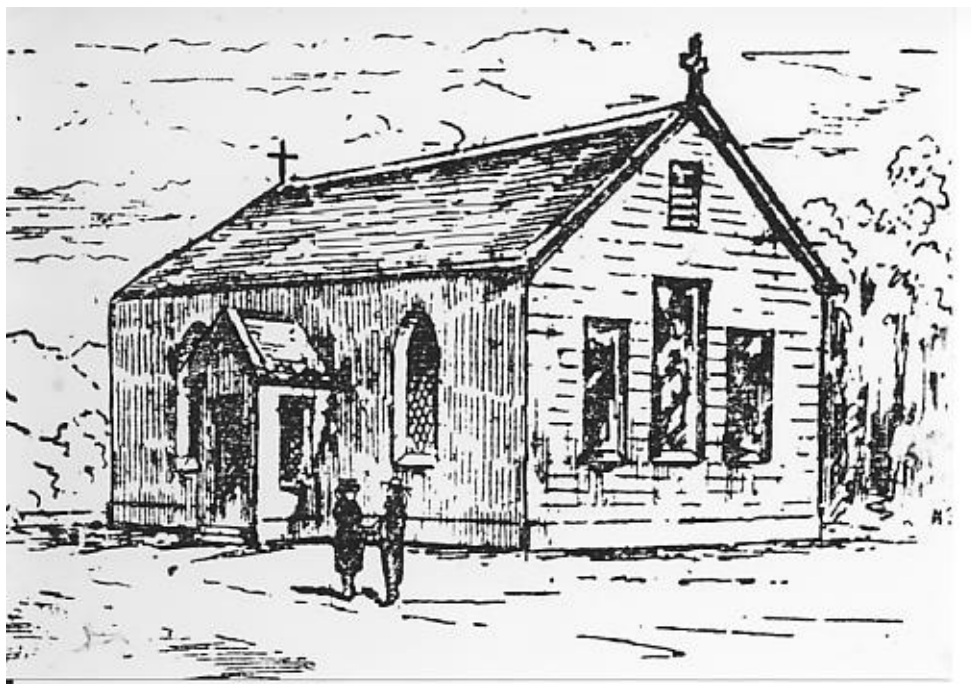
The honour of Laying the Foundation Stone was given to Mrs Sydney Verge, who set the stone in place on the afternoon of Thursday October 11, 1883, in the presence of a large congregation of churchpeople and citizens. So the great task began. It was, however, some thirty years later, in 1913 that, with the erection of the spire, the edifice was at last completed.



Church before spire was added in 1913 – view from southern side
(A replacement spire was built in 1956)

1885 – A meeting was called for the purpose of building a temporary church. This was held at the Good Templars Hall on 19th March 1885 (Macleay Argus) The

Bishop, Right Rev. J.F. Turner DD presided- the newly appointed Deacon Rev. C.F. Turner also attended.



SKETCH OF ALL SAINTS WOODEN CHURCH C.1885
(St. Albans, East Kempsey was an exact replica of this building)

1885 – April - some steps were taken to erect a temporary wooden church and school.

1885 – April 29 – the site was marked out and the late Jas. W. Wilson gave his valuable services in designing and supervising its erection. The work on this wooden structure proceeded so rapidly that on Sunday July 19, 1885 the wooden church was opened for divine worship.

1885 – October 18 – The first communion service was held on the Feast of St Luke after the Rev. C.F. Turner returned, having been ordained by the Bishop.

“The organ in the temporary church was a handsome, costly instrument and was obtained by the exertions of Mr. Alan Humphrey, manager of the Commercial Bank Kempsey, and Mr Collins.

Mr J. Lowrey was the organist. (Extract from the book “Back to the Macleay” p.63)

1885 –December 12 (from Macleay Argus) “A first class bell was acquired which was used for the first time on Sunday last. The bell has a full, rich tone and can be hear for a distance of over one mile.

It is set in Key C, weighs 187 lbs and cost 25 pounds.

The bell is from the famous establishment of Messrs. Read and Warner – England.”

1885 December (from Macleay Argus) “The new brick church in West Kempsey is progressing rapidly”

7.8.1886 (from Macleay Argus) “A bazaar in aid of funds of All Saints Anglican Church – now in course of erection at West Kempsey – will be held ”

28.8.1886 (from Macleay Argus) To builders:-
Tenders are invited for the roofing of All Saints Church of England, West Kempsey - plans and specifications to be seen at the residence of the undersigned.
Tenderers will please give separate prices for finding labour and material, and for finding labour only.
Also state what extra is required for slating.
Tenders to be addressed to the undersigned not later than 6th September, 1886. S. Verge (Solicitor?)



Church photo taken from southern side (Sea Street)



**Intersection of Kemp and Sea Streets – Funeral procession leaving Church
(Circa 1825)**





Dwelling 25 Marsh Street (site of current Youth Centre)



1886 On 2nd May the new wooden Church of England church – in Innes Street, East Kempsey, was opened. The church is called St Alban's. (from Macleay Argus)

1886-8th May (from Macleay Argus) Reference to a meeting in the vestry of All Saints School Church.

The Church Spire. The latest work was brought to a conclusion by the contractor Mr. Geo. Welsh. Ever in distress by the lack of finances, the building took 30 years to bring to fruition. The Bishop of Grafton and Armidale the Rt. Rev. H.E. Cooper dedicated the completed spire on Sunday July 29th 1913.

The Church of England
(From Centenary of St Thomas' Church, Port Macquarie"
December 1824 – December 1924)

First Vicar - Rev. John Cross 1828 – 1858

Curate appointed (? 1844) - Rev. Richard Woodward

Second Curate appointed 1846 on Mr Woodward's resignation Rev. Thomas O'Reilly who succeeded Rev. John Cross. Mr O'Reilly married Gordonina, a daughter of Major Innes of Lake House.

Rev. Thomas O'Reilly 1854 – 1860 see above (To Sydney – St. Phillip's)

Rev. F.R. Kemp 1860 – 1877 Followed by Rev. G. Innes

(Rev. W.A. Saunders 1880 – 1884)

KEMPSEY – A PARISH IN 1858

Until 1836 - Australia and Tasmania within the diocese of Calcutta (India) and under Bishop Heber.

In 1836 - Archdeacon Broughton of Sydney consecrated first Bishop of Australia – later on Bishop for Metropolitan district in 1847 when other bishops consecrated.

In 1847 – The diocese of Newcastle formed- all NSW north of Newcastle and Queensland (Bishop Tyrell in 1879)

In 1867 - North Coast districts, New England Tableland and North Western plains of NSW separated from Newcastle diocese. These districts became the Diocese Grafton and Armidale (Rt Rev. Wm. Sawyer first bishop) Followed by Bishop Turner, Bishop Green and Bishop Cooper. (Bishop Green founded St John's Theological College in Armidale).

In 1914 - North Coast of NSW made a separate diocese. Its episcopal centre being established at Grafton Dr. C.H. Druitt (Co-adjutor Bishop of Grafton and Armidale from 1911-1914 – first Bishop. Died 1921) In 1921 Rev. J.W. Ashton became second bishop.

In the year 1829 the long stretch of country from Point Danger to the Wilson River had never been trodden by a white foot and from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay, lay a 240-mile gap in the line of ecclesiastical development northwards from Sydney. At Port Macquarie the newly established convict station, the foundation stone of a church had been laid by Lieut. Carnac, Acting Commandant, on Dec. 8, 1824; the Rev. T. Hassall being the chaplain. The work was completed, and the building opened on Feb. 24, 1828, directly after the arrival of the Rev. John Cross, who was chaplain there for thirty years. From "A Short History of the Anglican (C of E) Church in the North Coast Districts of NSW) Published during Jubilee celebrations of Grafton Church, 1904

The Church of England. The Rev F.R. Kemp 1860-1877 (St Thomas' Port Macquarie)

The Rev. F.R. Kemp was the fourth son of Major Kemp, formerly of the 80th Regiment and a settler at Boonangii on the Upper Macleay. He married the widow of Captain Gall (99th Regiment) who had three sons, Hindley Herbert, Richard Herbert and Francis Herbert – Herbert being the family name of the Galls. Richard Herbert was known to his companions as Albert. Mrs Stewart, of Cote D'Or, Pokolbin was the eldest of the family.

Those who are familiar with St Thomas (Port Macquarie) will remember the three Norfolk pines which stand as guardians - north, south and east – but few perhaps know that they stand now as memorials of the three boys abovementioned, stepsons of he who, sixty years ago, was incumbent of the parish, and who, one bright spring morning, superintended the boys (his stepsons) while they dug the holes and planted the trees.

Mr Kemp's health necessitated his retiring and he died at Hobart after a long illness in August, 1877, being then only fifty years of age.

Rev. G.A.Innes, who was in charge during Mr. Kemp's illness, and for a year after his death, was the only son of Major Archibald Clunes Innes, of Lake Innes, whose wife was a daughter of Alexander Macleay of Elizabeth Bay, Sydney. On leaving Port Macquarie he went to the Diocese of Melbourne and was Archdeacon of Hamilton, (which is now the Diocese of Ballarat) where he died of diphtheria on April 19, 1880 aged forty-two years, leaving a wife (a daughter of Mr Jesse Hack, and a large family. (From "The Centenary of St Thomas' Church, Port Macquarie Dec.1824 – Dec 1924")

The Church of England, Port Macquarie and its daughter parishes (From " A Short History of the Work of the Anglican Church in the North Coast Districts of NSW " published during the Golden Jubilee of Grafton Church 1904)

Port Macquarie, at the mouth of the Hastings River, 180 miles north of Sydney, was discovered in 1818 by Lieut. John Oxley R.N. In 1821 Capt. Francis Allman of the 28th Regiment took charge of an expedition to form a penal settlement there. The Government provided a chaplain for the newly established station in the person of the Rev. Thomas Hassall, M.A. and, upon his departure in 1828, appointed the Rev. John Cross, who ministered to the needs of the town for 30 years, during the first sixteen of which he was single-handed. Among his assistant during the latter part of his incumbency was the Rev. Thomas O'Reilly, afterwards so well known as a Canon of Sydney Cathedral, who regularly visited the people of the Macleay.

This river was first settled in a very small way, at the time of the establishment of Port Macquarie, of which it formed, for many years, a sub-district.

Mr. Cross, although 77 years of age, was able to continue to preach in the old church until the last Sunday but one before his death, which occurred on August 7, 1858. His only visible memorial in the parish is a simple cedar medallion, duly inscribed and covered with glass, placed on the church wall over the vestry door. But his work remains in the lives of many who were influenced by him for good, and his descendants, in and around Port Macquarie, are numerous.

Only second to the name of Mr. Cross in the respectful memory of people on the Hastings and Wilson stands that of the Rev. F.R. Kemp, for many years Vicar of the parish. He was succeeded by the Revs. W.H. Saunders, H. Dunlop, R.W. Wilson, W.H. Kemmis, W.A.J. Wells

The present Vicar, the Rev C.M. Thomas, Rural Dean of Kempsey, is about to resign the Parish, his successor being the Rev. C.H. Barnes, of St.John's College, who was not only born on the Clarence, but is the first and only native of the Diocese to receive Holy Orders at the hands of one of its Bishops. Besides the historic Parish church there are old buildings at Beechwood and Ennis, and new and neatly appointed churches at Wauchope and Telegraph Point.

Unfortunately, Kempsey's first experience as a Parish separate from the original Parish of Port Macquarie, was of but short duration. For reasons of lack of finance,

both on the Hastings and the Macleay, the Bishop was reluctantly compelled to combine once more the ministry of the two districts. In consequence of this, the Rev. F.R. Kemp by the close of 1860 was taking up residence in Port Macquarie rectory, from whence the Rev. Thomas O'Reilly had removed to the diocese of Sydney. F.R. Kemp continued his pastoral work on the Macleay making frequent visits from Port Macquarie.

Thanks to his labours Kempsey was once again established as a separate parish with the arrival early in 1871 of the Rev. W.S. Newton as the new incumbent.

From 1877 to 1884, under the Right Rev. J.F. Turner D.D., the Reverend James Paterson, M.A. had charge of the parish of Kempsey, which included the Nambucca and Bellingen Rivers. The services at East Kempsey were held in old church building, and at West Kempsey in the courthouse, and subsequently the Good Templars Hall.

Frederickton services were held in an old building, then used as a church and denominational school. Smithtown services were held in Mr. Thomas Marshall's barn, and afterwards in a church building erected in 1876 upon a block of land purchased from the late Wm. Jeffery, this being replaced later by the present building.

The name of Kempsey appears as that of a Parish in the first Synod roll of 1873, but there was no resident clergyman. The Rev W.S. Newton having resigned the cure on account of severe illness. The next year the Rev. H. Porter was in charge, and the returns of the parish showed 57 baptisms, 2 marriages and 12 burials. There was a parsonage and a wooden church, presumably at West Kempsey. The average attendance at Divine Service was only 55, and the total income was 57 pounds, increased next year to 69 pounds when the church at Frederickton was built.

In 1877 the Rev. J. Paterson was appointed, he being followed by the Revs. C.F. Turner, R.H.D. Kelly and A.R. Martin. The present Vicar (1904) is Rev. H. Jobson, recently transferred from the Lower Clarence.

Until 6 years ago the parish included within its boundaries the whole of the Macleay settlements, its minister working amidst the wild mountain scenery of the upper river, on the great river flats and swamps below Kempsey and at the prison and township on the coast at Trial Bay. Now the large district is divided, and Kempsey, which is rapidly growing in size and importance, is at the head of a prosperous and still very extensive parish. It has a remarkably fine central church, built during the vicariate of the Rev. R.H.D. Kelly, and completed as recently as July of the present year, during the cure of the Rev. A.R. Martin. It occupies a commanding site in West Kempsey, the old wooden church nearby having been for some time used as a parsonage.

The Parochial District of the Lower Macleay was founded in 1897, the Rev. C.M. Thomas being its first minister, followed in 1899 by the Rev. E.C. Knox. It possesses a fine old church at Frederickton, a restored and much improved building at Smithtown, and newly erected churches at Kinchela and Unkya (1964 – Eungai). Until last year its clergyman was also chaplain at the prison at Trial Bay, and received as such, a small government stipend. The closing of the prison put an end to this arrangement, which had been most advantageous to a struggling and newly formed district. Its people have however, risen to the occasion, and its

financial position is by no means unsatisfactory. A vicarage is already contemplated, and, in other and more important ways, the Church is undoubtedly gaining ground.

The present minister (1904) is the Rev. H. Woodger of St. John's College (*he must have been a locum*) North of the Macleay, at a distance of 31 miles lies the Nambucca River, and 19 miles further on comes the Bellinger, the districts of both of which rivers were originally served by the Kempsey clergy, whose visits could however, only be at long intervals. In 1893 they, with the Dorrigo, Coffs Harbour and the Upper Orara, were formed into a huge parochial district, a Reader, Mr. C.G.A Munro, being sent to work therein.

Until 1893 the whole of the 130 miles of country between Kempsey and South Grafton was served by the two unaided ministers of those parishes and there were but five churches, four of which were on the Macleay, for its entire length – the work was that of a bush mission.

(Taken from A Short History of the work of the Church of England Church (now Anglican) – the North Coast District of NSW – published during the Golden Jubilee celebration of Grafton Church 1904)

THE VERGE TROWEL - Through a Sydney Antique Dealer and the local Historical Society, All Saints Kempsey (Anglican) has obtained the Ornamental Trowel used by Mrs Sydney Verge in 1883 when Setting the Stone for the new church. A report of the occasion appears in the columns of the Sydney Morning Herald dated 12th October 1883 as follows: “The foundation stone of the Church of England was laid this afternoon by Mrs. Sydney Verge. The Service was read by the Rev'd J. Paterson. There was a large assemblage to witness the interesting ceremony. Mr. W.T. Dangar on behalf of the building committee presented a handsome trowel and mallet, the gift being accompanied by a few well chosen remarks. A parchment scroll recording the event was read by Mr. D.Walker.

At the conclusion of proceedings, a collection was made, which realised over one hundred pounds and promises of subscriptions were received amounting to about six hundred pounds. Cheers for the Queen, for the Incumbent, and for Mr. Verge who has given valuable aid to the fund were then given with great heartiness.”

(This report had been sent by telegraph to Sydney the previous day Thursday 11th October, 1883. and this copy of that report has been supplied by courtesy of Dr. Lionel Gilbert of the N.E. historical Resources Centre, Armidale NSW).

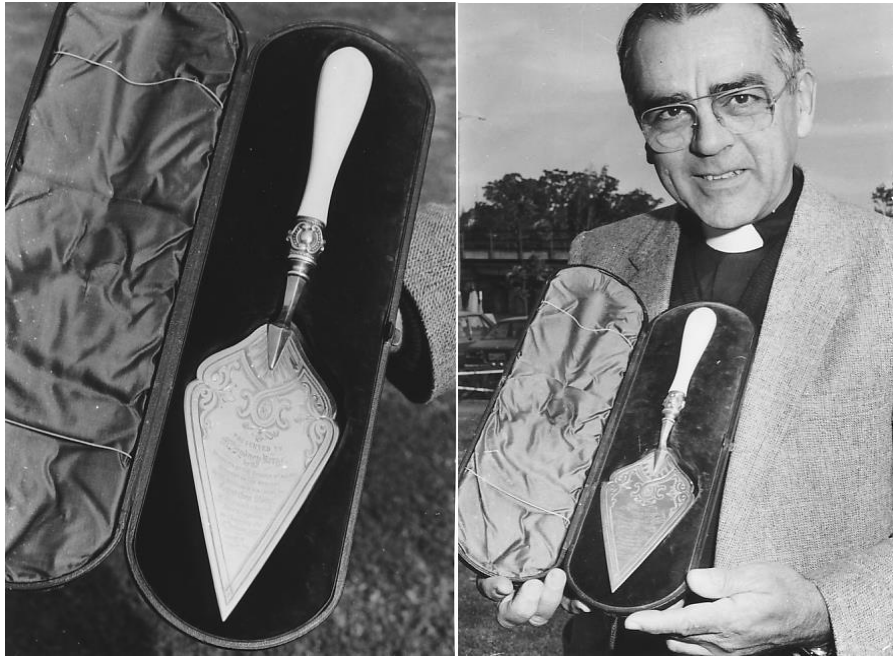


Photo of Trowel

Canon R Dyson with trowel (Aug 1985)

All Saints' Anglican Church, West Kempsey (Commissioned 1878, services terminated 1878)

Hunt agreed to design this church and to supervise its construction. His drawings, in preparation during 1878, were evidently well received for he called tenders for the work during August of that year.

However, much to Hunt's consternation, after making the arduous 36-hour steamer journey to Kempsey to see the work begin, he was informed of the building committee's decision not only to terminate the commission, but also to refuse to pay for the drawings.

Hunt resorted to the Supreme Court, where he was awarded a judgment of 30 pounds plus costs. (John Horbury Hunt Radical Architect 1838-1904)

UNITS FOR THE AGED.

1982 - A proposal by the parish Council of All Saints Anglican Church Kempsey has met with a lot of opposition.

The units would have been built on the triangular block of ground at the junction of Sea and Kemp Streets.

A petition was taken up against the proposal to build units for the aged on that land.

Various letters were received against the proposed units, including (one from) the Macleay River Historical Society.

The units would have an adverse impact on the environment – especially detracting from the church building.

1983 22nd November: (Macleay Argus) “Many expert witnesses were called to the sitting of the Land & Environment Court “

1984 14th February (Macleay Argus) The court orders the appeal by the Church Council be dismissed

1985 18th February (Macleay Argus) The church loses its appeal to the court.
No costs.

17/02/1984 to 17/02/1986 Letter from Kempsey Chief Town planner – re a conservation order on the church for 2 years.

St. George Hostel for Boys. 4 Angus Ave, Kempsey

(Macleay Argus – April 27, 1920) The fine residence which was erected on a commanding site in West Kempsey by Mr A.E. Watson and was formerly known as “Landsdowne” has become the St. George Hostel for Boys. The property was purchased by the Church of England for the purpose, the undertaking being the result of the enterprise of Archdeacon Curtis.

The situation of the building is ideal. It is doubtful if there is anything better to be obtained in the town of Kempsey. It is built on rising ground and commands a magnificent view of the town, the river, the luxurious maize flats of Euroka and the distant blue tinted hills.

The hostel itself fills a long felt want and should prove useful when the West Kempsey High School comes about. The present accommodation is sufficient to provide for about 12 pupils, but it will be possible to extend the building by the addition of sleeping-out verandahs and other quarters. The spacious grounds leave plenty of room for expansion.

The warden and matron in charge are the Rev. C.H. Clark and Mrs Clark.



Watson House, built in 1885 (restored in 2004) (Photo Macleay Argus)

ST. Albans – East Kempsey

This church was opened for divine worship at 11 am on Sunday 2nd May, 1886 by the Rev. C.F. Turner the incumbent, (from Macleay Argus) the church was finished in a similar manner to All Saints (temporary wooden) church in West Kempsey.

(from Macleay Argus) On Wednesday 28th April 1886 prior to the opening of the church, vandals broke the chancel window (4 panes) This window had been decorated beautifully by Mr. Lowry who was responsible for the glazier work.

(from Macleay Argus April 30 1886) A reward of 20 pounds was offered for any information regarding the malicious vandalism to the East Kempsey church. Signed by D.B. Walker (solicitor)

In 1940 – an oak altar – in honour of John Lancaster who died in 1912, and of his daughter Adeline Lancaster who died in 1919, was dedicated. Also an oak lectern in memory of Elizabeth Anne Lancaster and Edith Emmeline Lancaster who died in 1939, was dedicated.

Mrs A.B. Tress, wife of Archdeacon Tress, was a member of the Lancaster family. There were also two brass vases dedicated in memory of Mrs Swadling. These items are now in use at All Saints West Kempsey.

1975 July 6 (from Macleay Argus) The small Anglican Church of St Albans will have its last service tomorrow. The church - erected in 1886 – is to be closed because the church cannot afford to maintain it. The property is expected to be sold – the church was situated at 40A Innes Street, East Kempsey. The house next door at 42 Innes Street was built for the curate in the 1960s before the house at 32 Kemp Street West Kempsey was built.

The foundation stone for 32 Kemp Street was set by the Ven. Richard Hueford, Archdeacon of the South on Sunday February 2, 1986. The building was opened and dedicated by Rt. Reverend Bruce Schultz, Bishop of Grafton on April 4, 1986. It was called All Saints Lodge.

2008 This house still belongs to the Church but as we have no curate, it is now rented.

PARISH OFFICE AND MINISTRY CENTRE

1999 The need for a Parish Office was given a trial and had its “humble” beginnings in the men’s cloakroom of the Parish Hall.

The Rector worked from the study of the Rectory at 30 Kemp Street, West Kempsey.

October 1999 - The office commenced – being open three mornings a week Mrs Margaret Speer worked in a voluntary capacity.

When the curate resigned in March 2001 it was decided at the Parish Council meeting to move the Parish Office to a more suitable position – to the study at the Lodge, 32 Kemp Street, West Kempsey.

When this move happened a decision was made to open the office five mornings per week. Another volunteer became necessary, and Mrs Bev Cornelius helped out. When Mrs Cornelius resigned as she and her husband were leaving to travel, further volunteers were required.

2005 January & February Mrs Ingrid Hammond and Mrs Sally Hunt helped out.

The Rectory had been vacant since early November 2003, following the move by the Rector to another Parish in Queensland. We had locums for 21 months.

A Parish Council committee was formed in late 2004 headed by Mr Gerald Haynes to make better use of our buildings. The outcome in early March 2005 was the “Op Shop” was moved to the Rectory at 30 Kemp Street.

The Parish Office was moved to the Rector’s study in the old Rectory at about the same time – in March. This left the Lodge to be used by the Locums, who prior to this had lived off site.

The old “Op Shop” at the end of the Parish Hall facing Marsh Street was transformed by builder Mr Bob Fry into a fully functional Parish Office, combined with the Rector’s Office. The counter etc, which had been built by Mr Brian Calford, was altered a little to fit the present site.

The Parish Office moved to the present site in April 2005

Mrs Margaret Speer resigned as Office Manager on 15th April 2007. The Parish is deeply indebted to Margaret for her talents, used in a voluntary capacity for seven and a half years, and especially when we without a rector for 21 months.

The commissioning of the new Rector, Fr. Peter Richards, was on Saturday August 6, 2005.

When the new Rector and his family arrived from South Africa at the end of July 2005 they lived at the Lodge, 32 Kemp Street, West Kempsey until the new Rectory at 32 Wide Street, West Kempsey was completed.

This home was opened and dedicated by Bishop Keith Slater of Grafton on Sunday 23rd July, 2006.

Footnote: August 2008 The Lodge at 32 Kemp Street is still owned by Kempsey Parish, but is now a rental property.

The Parish Office is now managed by several volunteers, who work when required.

RECTORY – PARISH HALL

1920 Friday July 9 (Macleay Argus) “The new Church of England vicarage in Kemp Street was dedicated on Wednesday afternoon by the Ven. Archdeacon A.B.B. Tress (Administrator of the Grafton Diocese). The building cost 1700 pounds and was built by Mr George Welch.

It is constructed on bungalow lines with all modern conveniences, electric light and water.

There are four bedrooms, study, lounge, dining room, breakfast room, kitchen, laundry, bathroom and ample sleep out veranda space.”

The Rectory at 30 Kemp Street was used continuously until November 1903 when the Rector of the day, Rev. Ian Marshall, moved to the Parish of Hervey Bay in Queensland.

The building, after being empty for one year was turned into an “Op Shop” in March 2005.

1920: The old timber vicarage (Previously the old wooden temporary church) was again given a new life, and after some further alterations became the parish hall.

This building served the parish as a hall until 1959 when it was demolished to make way for the brick parish hall which we have today.

Footnote: Mr Brian Francis states that in 1959 the Rector’s wife and a few parish councillors thought the wooden parish hall could be used to serve the parish for a few more years & would be useful on the triangular block near the church (Cnr. Kemp and Sea Streets)

Mr. Ralph Richards and his team were given the job of moving the hall, but... the old building had other ideas. and after it was moved behind the western end of the church

on its way to its new home it started to break up. It was then demolished.) Some of the timber was recycled and used in a home on the Crescent Head Road.

The foundation stone for the brick parish hall which we use today was laid on Sunday 27th September, 1959 by Rt. Rev. K.J. Clements – Bishop of Grafton. The Rector was Canon C.H.S. Egerton.

The hall was built by E, E, Lahey & Co, now called Lahey Constructions. The architect was Mr. Lockley of the firm Laurie & Heath.

The cost was close to 26,000 pounds The parish had to borrow 12,000 pounds which was to be repaid in 6 years. This was done by repaying 500 pounds plus interest every three months.

The dedication and opening of the new brick parish hall was on Wednesday 4th March 1960, performed by the Most Rev. H. R. Gough, Lord Archbishop of Sydney and Primate of Australia. The Rector was Canon C.H.S. Egerton.

NOTE: This information was researched by Joan Steffensen with data from the Macleay River Historical Society, and typed by Dorothy Britten. 2017.