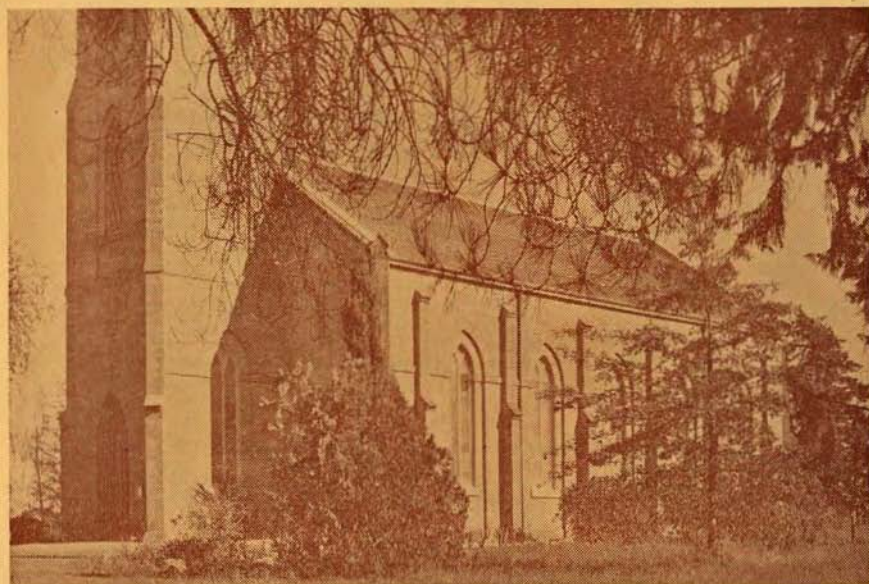


A Short Account
of
Christ Church - - Longford

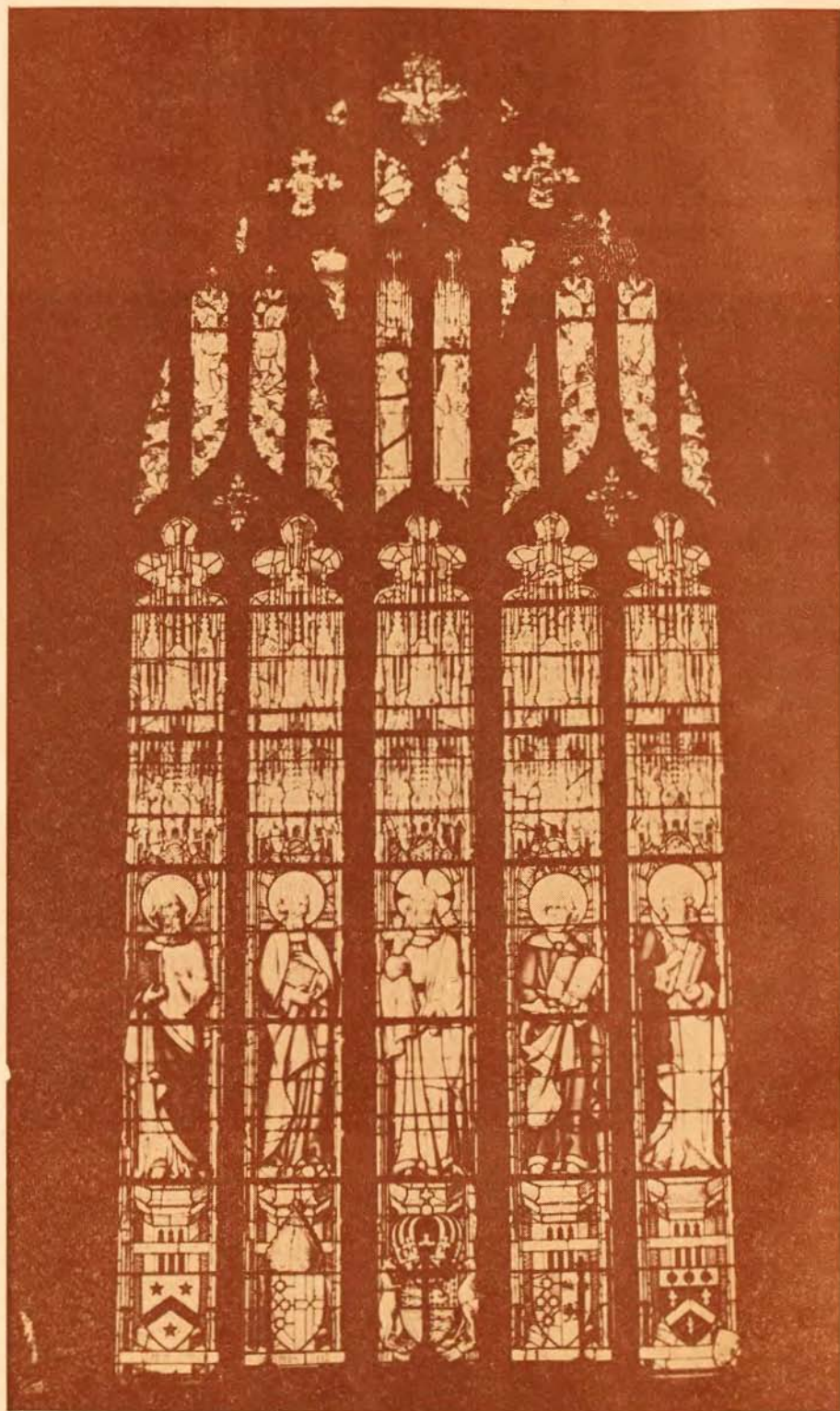


Photograph by David Brill

Erected 1839 - Dedicated 1844

PRICE 2/-

in compiling this account use has been made of the "Notes on Christ Church, Longford, and Longford District," by Mr. K. R. von Stieglitz (1939-1944), which is now out of print.



Photograph by K. Rosenfeldt

The first Church on this site was begun in 1829. The district, which comprised the plain to the north and east of the Western Tiers, watered by the South Esk and its tributaries, was called "Norfolk Plains," because its first settlers were a number of farmers compulsorily removed from Norfolk Island when the settlement there, founded by Captain King to supply Sydney with food, was abandoned by order of the Government in England. Some of the inhabitants were transferred to the Tamar in 1808, and granted land in this district, but were probably much scattered. Not till 1813 and onwards, when the Archer family came from England and were granted large areas of land and introduced merino sheep, did the district begin to be prosperous.

At Woolmers and Brickenden there were chapels, and in 1826 Mr. W. P. Weston was appointed a catechist and conducted regular services. The first known visit of a clergyman was that of the Rev. James Norman of St. John's Launceston on 12th Sept. 1827; but in 1828 the Rev. R. R. Claiborne started the "Norfolk Plains Grammar School," and was available for services.

It was now decided to build a Church, as a clergyman was expected to arrive for the district from England in 1830. The Government gave the site, the area of which was later fixed at $8\frac{1}{2}$ acres, and also provided the bricks and other materials for the building itself, while the inhabitants supplied the fittings, which cost £190, including an early form of harmonium, called a "Seraphine." This was placed at the back of a gallery behind curtains, in front of which sat the convicts employed in the district. The clock at present in use was housed in some sort of tower.

The Church is said to have had a seating capacity of 400; but this seems to have been impossible, even when taking into account the large gallery.

The Rev. R. R. Davies arrived in 1830 to take charge of an enormous parish extending from Ross to the Bass Strait. There were only seven priests in the Diocese at this time. The Church was not finished till nine months after his arrival, that is in April 1831; but it must have been very badly built, for seven years later it had to be propped up with stays, which are shown in the contemporary drawing printed at the back of this leaflet. It was also too small, probably because of an increase in the number of convicts, so plans were made for an extension of the gallery round the sides of the Church for their accommodation; but it was discovered that the foundations were unsound and the walls beyond repair, and this work was not undertaken. Tenders were therefore called for the erection of

a new Church, the corner-stone of which was laid by the Lieut-Governor, Sir John Franklin, in March 1839. The Government gave a grant of £1,500, and the S.P.C.K. lent £1,037 free of interest.

By the end of 1843 the new Church, which is the present one, was nearing completion. Plans for the tower were settled in the following February, and tenders for the tracery of the window were called in July, and the Church was opened for worship on Sunday 6th October, 1844, by Bishop Nixon, the first Bishop of Tasmania, who had arrived in Tasmania in June, 1843. The Rev. Thomas Reibey of Entally, the first Tasmanian to receive Holy Orders was ordained at this service. The Church was however, by no means completed, for the roof was supported by upright iron girders, intended eventually to be used in the erection of galleries; these fortunately were never built. The roof was then of shingles, and the walls crested with parapet and battlements.

The drawing referred to above is made from the south of the Church and shows the great window. The old Church is seen behind and more to the north; it was pulled down as soon as the other was in use, and the bricks were used for the building of the Sunday School, which seems to have been finished by December, 1845.

All this was done under the guidance of the Rev. R. R. Davies, who was responsible for the building of no less than eleven churches in three years. In 1855 he became Archdeacon of Hobart, and he died in 1880, having ministered for fifty years in Tasmania.

For 36 years Christ Church remained in its incomplete state; but in January, 1878, during the incumbency of the Rev. Arthur Wayn, it was decided to get rid of the ugly roof-supports, and to make the Church interior worthy of its outward appearance and of the great window which has always been its chief glory. The girders were replaced by iron columns, painted to look like grey granite, surmounted by large capitals which however are only plaster imitations. This is the one defect in the building. Counterfeit materials are always unworthy, and if iron columns must be used instead of stone, they should be so painted as to reveal their true nature. These columns are quite strong enough to bear the weight above them, but they would not be if they were what they pretend to be, and so they seem to the eye to be too slender. Above them are five fine arches, the eastern bay being larger than the others, forming a kind of transept.

In this reconstruction the shingles were removed from the roof and replaced by slates of large size. When the original

Church was built a wooden Cross was placed on the eastern gable, but there was such an uproar among the people that it was taken down again before the opening ceremony was attempted. Now, however, a stone Cross of good design was fixed without apparently any demur. The east window was also sent to Melbourne for repairs.

The Church was reopened by Archdeacon Hales in December 1880. The balance of debt having been paid during the next year, Bishop Bromby consecrated the Church on 27th January, 1882. Seven years later the Sunday School was enlarged, in 1893 a new organ was purchased for £346 to replace that which in 1856 had cost £232.

The Church Tower was never completed until 1960. A wooden structure housed the clock. At various times attempts were made to raise enough money to complete the tower in stone and at the outbreak of World War II a start was about to be made, but shortage of labour prevented it going ahead. However, in 1960 work was begun, the foundations were strengthened and the stone work raised 15 feet. At the same time the historic clock was completely overhauled and the faces repainted. The total cost was more than £8,000, of which a debt of £2,000 remains.

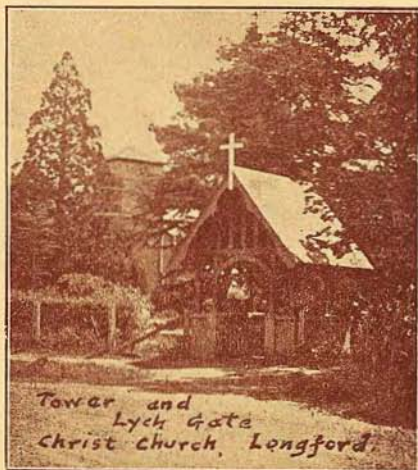
THE WINDOWS IN THE CHURCH

The most attractive feature in the Church is the great East window (the building is not oriented, but the Altar is always considered to be the East end: actually it is almost due west). It was designed by Mr. William Archer of Cheshunt, near Deloraine, who also designed Hutchins School in Hobart, and is in the style of the 14th century, usually known as 'Perpendicular.' It was executed by the firm of Wailes of Newcastle in England. The colouring is good and the details minutely finished. It is well worth a careful examination.

The five tall lower lights are all headed by five-foiled arches; the two outer ones on each side form a single pointed arch above, while the mullions of the middle arch are more substantial and run up to support the top of the window. The central light contains the figure of our Lord in vestments of beautiful shades; He is carrying the Orb and the Cross, the signs of Royalty and Sacrifice. The others have the four Evangelists, Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The first two have nothing to identify them, but St. Luke has his Gospel open, beautifully illuminated, the words being easily read with a pair of glasses. They are the first words of the Gospel in Latin: "Quoniam quidem multi conati sunt ordinare narrationem."

Above these figures is the usual elaborate canopy work of the period. There are two angels in each holding scrolls, which have no inscription. In the arches above the Evangelists are their symbols, suggested by the fourth chapter of Revelation:—the man, the lion, the ox, and the eagle, all with wings. Between them, over our lord, is the Annunciation, the Angel Gabriel and the Blessed Virgin having scrolls bearing the words spoken by them (also in Latin): "Hail Mary" and "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Going further up, below the three cross-shaped lights at the top, are four irregular panes which carry the 'Instruments of the Passion.' Of these in the left and lower one (at present broken) is the Crown of Thorns; next, the pillar to which our Lord was bound, and the ropes and scourges; next is the Cross with nails, reed (with sponge) and spear, pincers and hammer; and in the last the robe without seam; above it a white curve which closely seen resolves itself into thirty pieces of silver; on either side the money-bag of Judas, and the lantern, and, below, the dice used by the soldiers. Right at the top is the Dove, representing the Holy Spirit descending on the Church of the world.

At the base of the window are five coats-of-arms. That in the middle is the Royal Arms, surmounted by the Imperial Crown, and supported by what are intended to be the Kangaroo and the Emu; but the designer could not have been acquainted with the latter, for it is more like a native hen than an emu, while the kangaroo is a poor pathetic creature. The other shields are evidently fancy constructions, though heraldically correct. The second from the left is surmounted by a mitre and seems to be intended to be the Bishop's; but though the left-hand side correctly represents the Southern Cross, the right-hand is not that of Bishop Nixon.



Tower and
Lych Gate
Christ Church, Longford.

In the Church there are a few interesting memorials. Three of the Rectors, R. R. Davies, Alfred Stackhouse, and Leigh Tarleton have wall-tablets, also the Hon. William Dodery, who played a great part in Tasmanian affairs, and was a worshipper in the Church for 60 years. Bishop Nixon's Licence for the Burial-Ground dated 5 March, 1851, is also displayed in a case on the wall.

In the grounds is a monument to Dr. Appleyard, through whose care and interest the grounds were laid out and planted with trees from the Hobart Botanical Gardens. Mr. W. H. D. Archer of Brickenden gave a hundred pines of different varieties, many of which have long since died or had to be removed.

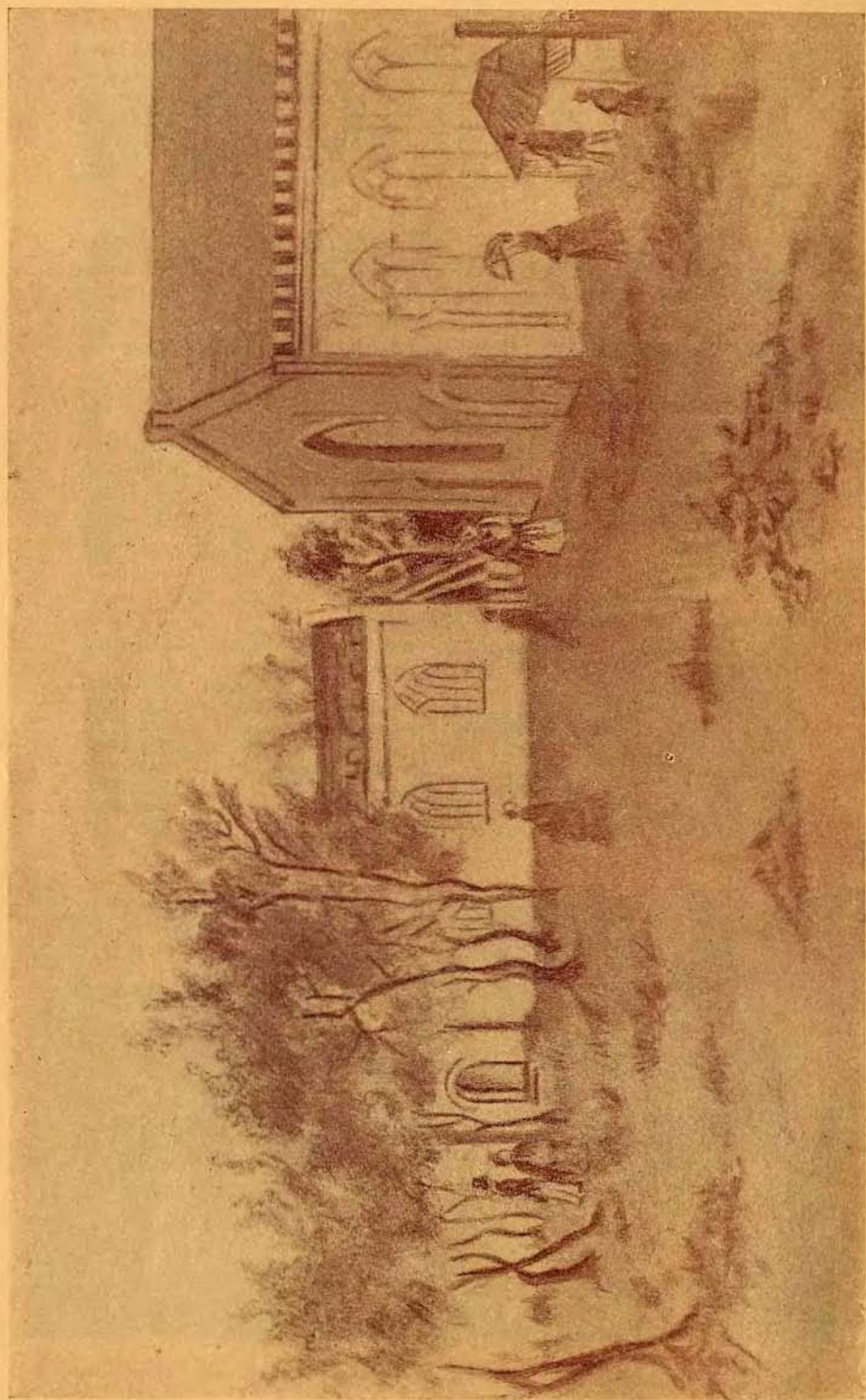
The gates of the Church grounds are also worthy of notice. The Lych-Gate (so-called, though it has never been used "for the corpse to be set down to await the clergyman's arrival," as the name indicates) is in memory of a very faithful worshipper for many years, Miss K. Hutchinson; and two other iron gates of good design, on the east and north sides of the grounds are in memory of P. A. Harrison and his daughter Mrs. Meredith, and I. C. Boyes respectively.

The following is a list of the Rectors of Christ Church :-

R. R. Davies, B.A.	1830-1853	E. G. Muschamp	1920-1921
W. Tranced	1853-1856	M.A. (Oxon.)	
M.A. (Oxon.)		H. R. Finnis, Th. Schol.	1921-1923
R. Strong	1856-1858	F. Taylor, B.A. L.Th.	1923-1924
W. Dry, B.A. (Cantab.)	1858-1860	S. Armson	1924-1927
A. Stackhouse,	1860-1876	T. J. Gibson	1927-1940
M.A. (Oxon.)		W. H. Macfarlane, Th.L.	1940-1946
A. Wayn	1876-1890	A. E. Biggs, Th.L.	1946-1948
H. I. Edwards, A.K.C.	1890-1898	F. L. Hadrill	1948-1957
L. T. Tarleton, A.A.	1898-1920	K. J. Hughes	1958-
		M.A., Th. Schol.	



The illustration above depicts the Church before the tower was completed.



Regal Press, Launceston