

The Vineyard Mission School Church

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The district now known as *Vineyard* was originally called *The Vineyard* because of the large number of grapes grown in the locality between 1850 and the 1890s. An early map of the Riverstone area c1856 shows vineyards out near Eastern Creek. Many of the vines were killed by a vine pest called phylloxera in the 1890s, but the name remained.

The Vineyard was in the Parish of St Matthew's, Windsor about 5 miles from that church. The Vineyard School Church, as it was first called, was established in 1884 by the Rev. Frederick William Stretton, Rector of Windsor. In his book *Early Days of Windsor* J. Steele mentioned that the pulpit in the Vineyard church was made from a portion of the old original St Matthew's pulpit.

There is now in the possession of St Matthew's a chalice inscribed *St Andrew's, Windsor* which could possibly have belonged to the Vineyard church.

Hawkesbury Chronicle. 1 November, 1884.

Vineyard Mission School opened on St Simon & St Jude's Day (28 October). A Tea Meeting was held in the afternoon. Tables were given by Mrs Gow, Mrs Hancock and Mrs Yeo. Mr Beveridge catered. (Mr Beveridge was a baker, from Windsor.)

At 7 pm a service of Evensong was taken by the minister from Windsor, Rev. F. Stretton.

The church was erected chiefly by voluntary labour, under the superintendence of Mr John Gow.

It was originally of slab walls and iron roof construction, situated on the northern side of Windsor Road, near Level Crossing Road at Vineyard.

Marriages were held in the church, conducted by the rector of St Matthew's. On the 21 May 1891 George Brien married Mary Jane Farrell. Another wedding was held on the 19 July 1893 when William Clout married Mary Jane Hayes.

An old book from the Vineyard Church, donated to the Museum by Jack Murray, records *Church Collections* and includes names of people who delivered *Prayers / Sermon* on various dates from 1892 - 1901.

Services were taken by Preachers / Lay readers including: Mr Simons, Mr Barnett, Rev. Mr Taylor, Rev. Mr Gillham, Rev. S.G. Fielding, Mr Wilton, Rev. Mr Gray, C.C. Dunston, Mr. Blacket

In the back of this Book are *Minutes of Meeting held in Vineyards School Church* from 1897 - 1901. Rev. S.G. Fielding was Chairman of many of these meetings.

1898 - *The Harmonium had been repaired. Mr Denman, the tuner paid £1-10-0.*

Mr Blacket was awarded a vote of thanks for his gift of a Communion Rail.

1901 - Mr Blacket proposed that Mr Jones be empowered to have necessary repairs done to interior of Church, seconded by Mr Gray. This included seats, slabs under east window, floor by the Harmonium. Mr Farrell be appointed Caretaker as per last year.

In 1902 Minutes show that Services were being held every Sunday at 3.30 pm and a Sunday School was operating. However, the building was 'decidedly dilapidated' and was to be renovated.

Some of the names of parishioners at this time were Messrs Grey, Forsberg, R. Strachan, Jones, Blacket, Forster, Farrell. Mesdames Schoeffel, Moss, Rubery, Strachan.

Another book of *Minutes of Meeting*, is dated from 17 September, 1902 to 2 April, 1912.

At a committee meeting held on 17 September, 1902 Mr Simons took the chair.

Mr Forsberg proposed (seconded by Mr White): That the Church be lengthened by 10 feet, the windows be enlarged, the roof painted with refrigerating paint, ventilators placed in the gables and a porch be added to the present structure. The Church to pay one half the money to the extent of £3, the mover the other half and any sum beyond £6.

A Meeting held on 28 January 1903 with Charles Forsberg as Chairman discussed the matter of Insurance: Building and contents were insured for £100 at 11s.9d. p.a. (£15 on the Organ, £15 on the fittings and £70 on the building.)

Mr Nigel A. Blacket resigned as Hon. Secretary & Treasurer. Mr Blacket was asked to take his son's place until Easter. (There is also an Ulric Blacket mentioned as a committee member.)

In April 1903, the finances of the Church were in a very satisfactory state, showing a credit balance of £8/14/4. (£5 per annum paid to Windsor committee.)

18 April 1904 - A working bee was to be formed to have W.C. erected at the Sunday School.

A vote of thanks was given to Mr Burnett and other Lay Readers for coming to the Vineyard.

23 April 1909 - A Stipend Fund was operating. Seven pounds to be paid to Windsor Church.

Repairs were made to windows and floor. Carpet to be obtained for Communion area.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette 23 April, 1910.

At the Easter Meeting of the local branch of the C of E, a very satisfactory balance sheet was read by the Secretary. Votes of thanks were passed to Mr & Mrs A. Blacket and family for their help in the Sunday School etc, and to Mr F. Forster, who was re-elected Secretary & Treasurer.

Notes from Vineyard Church Minute Book

In 1912 the Rector was Norman Jenkyn. A.H. Wilcher Secretary /Treasurer. Caretaker, Mrs Clarke. Parishioners include Messrs A. White, R. Strachan, H. Jones, S. Hudson, A. Wilson, Ulric Blacket.

1913 – A motion was placed on record to acknowledge the valuable services rendered to the church by Mr & Mrs R. Strachan.

In 1913 the church needed repairs to flooring and seats and Mr A. Blacket was paid £7/12/6 for same. Mr A. Blackburn was paid 17/6 for tuning the organ.

It was then suggested that no more money be spent on the present church, which was now nearly twenty years old, and the building of a new church was discussed. A building fund was proposed, however by 1915 it was found necessary to repair the old building and fences to keep the building in use.

Windsor & Richmond 21 April 1916.

It was agreed that the presentation of prizes to Sunday School classes be on Sunday 9th April, so that one of the teachers, Lieutenant Ulric Blacket, might be present.

In 1919 the subject of building a new church was again brought up, the dimensions of 35' x 19' x12' suggested. There was £43/19/1 in the Building Fund. Mr Wood gave an estimate of the cost of the new building in brick as £250. This was deemed too expensive and once again the proposal lapsed.

Church comes under the control of the Pitt Town Parish.

In the following years it would seem that the Church did not prosper, as there are no more Minutes in this book until 1926, when Rev. Stanley Howard, Rector of Pitt Town Church convened a special meeting for the purpose of re-opening the Church.

Present - Mr Wilcher (Sec./Treas.); Mr E. Bock, Assistant Sec.; Mr Godfrey; Mrs A. Davidson; Mrs E. Hodges; Mrs Godfrey Sen.; Mrs Godfrey Jnr.; Mrs Wilcher; Mr Bloodsworth.

Services were to be held on the first Wednesday evening after the full moon at 7.30 o'clock. Sunday School was also to be restarted.

A working bee was formed for the purpose of repairing the windows and the fence of the church.

A Stipend of £12 per annum was to be paid to Pitt Town Church.

Transfer of Church to Riverstone Parish.

In October 1930 the Provisional District of St Paul's became a Parish including the Vineyard Church with Rev. W. Owens as Rector. Once again the matter of a new church building was brought up with the result that in 1931 a new church building was erected on Windsor Road, next to the Vineyard Public School.

The Church News (St Paul's) December, 1931.

Church Services at Vineyard are held on Wednesday after the full moon at 8 pm. The next service, the last in the old church, will be on Wednesday December 2, at 8 pm.

Mr Brennan was paid 7/6 for carting seats and organ from the old church to the new.

The Opening Service in the new St Andrew's Hall was held on Sunday January 3, 1932 at 3.30 pm. Preacher, the Venerable Archdeacon Charlton.

The old Vineyards Church and land was sold for £23 in March 1933.

The old slab church.

At some time after the slab church was sold in 1933, soft wood partitions were erected inside the building to convert it to a three roomed residence.

In the 1940s the building was sold to Mr Bob Biddle who pulled it down and, using a horse and dray, removed the slabs, timber, windows and iron to his property at Vineyard, where some of it was used in his own buildings. Ron Cusbert who was only a lad at the time, helped in the demolition and recalls that the building was constructed of vertical slabs, with zinc strips between the slabs to cover the gaps. The slabs were rough cut, some flat, some rounded on one side. The pitched roof was covered with iron sheets. It was not a large building, being approximately 30 feet long by 15 feet wide, rectangular in shape with a door in the end facing Windsor Road. (There was no porch.) The sash windows were constructed of small square panes of glass.

The second Vineyard Church was in operation until 1978 and the history of this church will be covered in a future Journal.

Sources:

Early days of Windsor J. Steele

Hawkesbury Journey D.G. Bowd

Minutes 1897 – 1912 M. Davis

Church Collections & Minutes J. Murray. *Hawkesbury Chronicle*

Windsor & Richmond Gazette

Minute Books from Vineyards Church

The Church News St Paul's Riverstone

Vineyard Church – Income and Expenditure

Phone interviews: R. Cusbert & Y. Morley