

Royal Western Australian Historical Society's
Annual Pioneers Memorial Service
on Sunday 24th May 2008 at St Bartholomews Chapel, East Perth Cemeteries,

Commemorating the Honouring of Pioneers

Citation by the Rev'd Fr Edward Doncaster

Of the estimated 10,000 burials in the East Perth Cemeteries in the seventy years to 1899, only three of that number were of clergymen of the Church of England, as the Anglican Church was then called. This begs the question: "Were the remainder given to longevity?" Not necessarily so, for in the 19th century nineteen Anglican clergymen died in Western Australia: we have the mortal remains of the three hereabouts, three more were buried in the Middle Swan churchyard, one at the Fremantle Cemetery and twelve were buried in country cemeteries ranging from Roebourne to Albany. The remainder either continued in ministry on the other side of this continent or returned to England before their deaths occurred.

We are honouring on this occasion the three whose remains lie buried near this little church: namely, the Rev'd John Burdett Wittenoom - the first Colonial Chaplain, the Rt Rev'd Henry Hutton Parry - the second Bishop of Perth and the Rev'd Edwin Hughes - the first Priest-in-charge of St. Mary's West Perth.

Today's remembrance has been triggered by the fact that New Year's Day 2008 was exactly one hundred and fifty years after the first Anglican Bishop of Perth, Mathew Blagden Hale, had arrived off Fremantle after sailing down the East coast of South America. Following such a long journey he would have been glad to disembark the next day for more reasons than one for the ship in which he travelled was the 'Nile' - a convict vessel with 268 of them on board. However, that number was two less than at the commencement of the voyage for they had been killed in a disturbance on board. The papers of the time referred to his welcome at the Port and in Perth, recording the addresses which expressed genuine pleasure that at last there was a Bishop of their own in the Colony. The general tone was that of welcoming home an old friend, as he was indeed to so many of them. At the other end of the spectrum, it is sad to note that the mortal remains of his son Mathew, who was drowned in the Swan River in February 1862 at a young age (as was one of Bishop Parry's sons) were to be laid to rest in this cemetery, along with two of his siblings who died in infancy - John and Augusta. "The good Bishop" (as he was affectionately styled) lived until his eighty-fourth year when he died after ten years of retirement in England following his ten years as Bishop of Brisbane after his time in Perth.

JOHN BURDETT WITTENOOM

John Burdett Wittenoom was born in England in 1788 and was educated at Winchester and Brasenose College Oxford where he was granted his Master of Arts degree in 1811. After his Ordination he served as a Curate at Millbrook and became Rector of a parish in Southampton the following year. He was appointed in 1814 as The Master of Magnus College Newark, in Nottinghamshire, a post he held for fifteen years. The Master of those days was virtually the equivalent of Head Master or Principal in our day. He embarked on the 'Wanstead' from London on 15th August 1829, having been appointed Colonial Chaplain to the newly established Swan River Colony and he arrived here on 30th January 1830 with his sister Eliza Burdett Wittenoom and the four surviving sons of his deceased wife, Mary Margaret nee Teasdale whom he had wed in 1815 and who had died in October 1824. Several sources state that his mother also came out with them but she did not do so until 1835.

He was allowed to select 5,020 acres, and took up 5,000 acres at Gwambygine, south of York settling his sons there. In 1832 he took up 20 acres in the Swan District.

Although his appointment was as the first Colonial Chaplain to the Colony, he found on arrival that a priest was already present in the person of the returning Archdeacon of New South Wales, Thomas Hobbes Scott, whose ship was marooned here for about six months. It was he who was responsible for the first temporary church building in the new colony. Wittenoom gradually assumed the reins holding services in Perth, Guildford, Fremantle and occasionally at York and on the Canning. He made two trips south with the Governor to the Vasse and King George Sound. It is his signature that appears on most of the early entries in the Register of Burials in the cemetery which surrounds this church. After Archdeacon Scott's departure he was the only resident priest in the whole Colony until 1836.

He built his first house of wood and the second was a two storey brick edifice on what is now the site of the Weld Club in Perth. This had cost £250 towards which the Government paid him £60 per annum house allowance in addition to his annual stipend of £250. This house was demolished in 1891 to make way for the new Club buildings but a pencil and wash etching he did of it earned him a place in the Dictionary of Australian Artists. The first Church of St. George was opened in Perth in 1845 after eight years worshipping in the Court House - Wittenoom had the double joy of being the presiding priest at this service as well as the preacher. In his first year he set up the first Colonial school which later developed into what became known as "Perth's first classical seminary" which he began in March 1833 - in 1838 it merged with the colonial elementary school to become the "Classical and English School", but by 1847 only four boys were attending. He also fulfilled the role of Visitor of the Wallingford Classical and Mathematical Academy in York for a time. He sponsored a book society which met regularly in his home and he was also an accomplished musician, even preferring on one occasion to leave Archdeacon Wollaston at his home with one of his sons while he went off to a musical evening.

Perhaps a word ought to be said about the appointment of the one and only Archdeacon of Western Australia by Bishop Short of Adelaide in 1849 for, although Wittenoom would have been the senior, Wollaston was chosen for the work. It may well have been that Wittenoom was not interested in the administrative side of church affairs, and even if he had been it does not appear that he would have been as free as Wollaston to cope with the demands of the position and the travelling that was necessary. Wittenoom was Secretary of the Children's Friend Society and also of the Juvenile Immigration Society. He was chairman of the Education Committee for the last eight years of his life, a Justice of the Peace and a Freemason. All of which reveals that he must have taken a very active role in community affairs as well as church work. Although Archdeacon Wollaston described him as being "of the old High Church Tory Party, argumentative, somewhat stiff and unyielding in matters of secondary importance" others, like Sir Edward Stone, saw him as "a man of charming personality."

When his mother arrived she rejoiced to see her grandsons again: they were -John Burdett Jnr (1816), Henry (1820 - later buried in old church cemetery York WA), Frederick Dirck (1821 - 1862: Sheriff of the Colony) and Charles (1824). On 3rd January 1839 Wittenoom married Mary Watson nee Helms (born 1809 and died at the Bowes 1878), the officiating priest being the Rev'd William Mitchell of the Swan. Children of the second marriage were Mary Elizabeth Dircksey (1839), Augusta Henrietta Maria Burdett (1842) and Cornelius John Burdett (1854 - who died in infancy).

Wittenoom died on 23rd January 1855 so he, as well as Archdeacon Wollaston, would not have lived to see the arrival of the first Bishop of Perth. His remains were buried by the Rev'd Zachary Barry of Fremantle after a service in St. George's Church Perth led by the Rev'd Wm

Mitchell. An obituary in *The Inquirer* stated that "A feeling of deep regret for the departed extends from one end of the colony to the other. This will probably be the case more particularly with those who remember the subject of this notice in the early days of the settlement. The little flock he came out in charge of has indeed increased and altered materially...but a link in the old colonial chain has been withdrawn which cannot be replaced". The grave also contains the remains of some of his sons and his sister Eliza. A plaque was placed in the old Cathedral and transferred to the present one and is to be found on the north wall of the nave. In 1936 a room in the Weld Club Perth was paneled in jarrah in his memory and he is also remembered in the naming of a street in East Perth.

HENRY HUTTON PARRY

Was born in Antigua in 1827, the second son of Thomas Parry (then Archdeacon of Barbados) and Louisa (nee Hutton). He was educated under the great Dr Arnold of Rugby and passed out on a scholarship at Oxford. He was made Deacon in 1851 in the Cathedral at Bridgetown, Barbados, and Priest the following year by his father who by then was the Bishop of Barbados. He served curacies in Trinidad and in 1854 became a tutor at Codrington Theological College. He was appointed Archdeacon in 1861 and three years later he became Administrator during his father's illness. He was consecrated a Bishop in London on Sunday 15th November 1868, his father being one of the Bishops assisting. Henry Hutton succeeded his father when he died in 1871 but in 1874 he returned to England because of his wife's health. He served in two parishes before being called two years later to become the Bishop of Perth in succession to Mathew Blagden Hale - previously he had been offered the Bishopric of Colombo which he had declined because of his wife's continued ill-health.

Obviously it was thought that Perth might be the more healthy place in which to live! At the age of fifty years, he arrived at Fremantle on 26th May 1877 in the 'Hastings' with his wife and their three children. *The Inquirer* and *Commercial News* carried the text of Addresses presented to him upon arrival and also reported on his Enthronement by Dean Gegg in the former St. George's Perth. Another newspaper said that Parry: "in person, is a tall, well set-up man, of wiry, muscular physique; with an extremely pleasant, mobile face, embrowned but not florid." Financial conditions were very difficult in the Diocese during Parry's time, exacerbated by the withdrawal of some of the Imperial Grants. Even the upkeep of Bishop's House was too much for the Episcopal purse and he moved into less suitable accommodation nearby. Yet it is to him that credit must go for the erection in 1880-8 of a worthy Cathedral for the Diocese. Only the other week I came across one of the service sheets from the opening day. Although he was not noted as an orator he was held in very high regard for the depth of his spirituality. He travelled tirelessly visiting the far-flung settlements of his Diocese, parts of it on horse-back and it was recorded in *The West Australian* in November 1884 that on one occasion near Australind he was "riding a horse somewhat addicted to bolting, (when) the animal suddenly exhibited this vicious propensity and decamped with the Bishop, who retained his seat till arriving at a dense thicket, impassable to the rider, when he was thrown from the saddle, without however sustaining any injury; and, the steed being quickly caught, His Lordship resumed his seat in the saddle none the worse for his fall."

His diary bears but scant reference to his first journey by train in the Colony on 10th October 1879: "Left by 8 o'clock train for Oakabella (Mr L.C. Burges Junr) where we arrived about 10am - went over in the afternoon to Mr Sewell's -Evening service at Mr Burges'. N.B. This our first experience of railway travelling in West Australia, the line from Geraldton to Northampton having been opened for passenger traffic within the last few months".

By steamer he visited northern ports as far as Cossack and spent some time in Roebourne. He endeavoured to initiate missionary work among the indigenous people, he oversaw the setting up of the Boys' Orphanage at the Swan and it was in his time that the pioneering work of the church in the Yilgarn Goldfields was commenced. He opened the Bishop's Boys' College as an hostel for students attending the High School and made provision there also for theological students to be prepared for ministry. It was at his hands that the first Western Australian-born clergyman was ordained in the person of Edwin Foley Parker in 1882 but sadly he died at Roebourne three years later. The Bishop also created opportunities for the clergy of all religious persuasions to give regular religious instruction in the Government schools throughout the Colony. However, he experienced the usual round of difficulties with the appointment of clergy the greatest among these being the Gribble affair of 1885-1886. The Goldfields around Kalgoorlie were just beginning to grow as his life's strength began to wane.

After two short illnesses, he died of acute pneumonia in the Bunbury Rectory on 15th November 1893 aged 66 and there is no doubt that this must have been hurried on by the fact that he was caught in a bad storm while travelling in an open buggy on a visit to Bridgetown shortly before his passing. Following services in St. George's Cathedral Perth, his remains were buried in the East Perth Cemetery at the East side of this church. A Roman Catholic woman, upon learning of Bishop Parry's death, said: "Ah! if the Bishop does not go to heaven, we need not hope to!" It is interesting to note how the date 15th November featured in his life: it was the date of his consecration as a Bishop, it was the date of the consecration of St. George's Cathedral Perth and it was also the date of his death.

His first spouse - Elizabeth Mary nee Thomas - died in Perth only six months after their arrival here and her remains were buried in the grave in which her husband and son Theodore were later interred. Their children were Henry Ernest, Alfred Edward and Mary Edith. In 1879 he wed Mary Susanna Alexander nee Leake, the widowed daughter of George Walpole Leake. Children born to them were -Theodore Hutton (born 1880 he drowned in Swan River in February 1892), George Herbert (who became a leading architect in Perth), Lionel Walpole (who was ordained and served with distinction as Archdeacon of Perth for many years) and Maude Louise Rose (who married Archibald Sanderson). Mrs Parry returned to the England after her husband's death although she must have come back to Perth later on, for her remains lie buried with those of her husband.

A memorial plaque was dedicated in St. George's Cathedral Perth; the Chancel Screen was installed in his memory as well as of that of his predecessor, Bishop Hale. The former Archbishop's Throne was also a memorial to both bishops and there are inscriptions in their honour in the paneling in the north transept. His name is commemorated in the retirement village "Parry House" in Lesmurdie. Bell number 6 in the tower of St. George's Cathedral was named in his honour in 1903, too.

The son of the Rev'd Charles Clay, Henry Ebenezer Clay, was a Perth poet of some renown whose initials still adorn the gable of Kakulas's shop in William Street, Northbridge, and he also was buried in this cemetery. He composed a poem entitled "God's Guest" in the Bishop's memory, the last verse of which reads:

Near God's Altar lies God's Guest,
And the Cross all ills hath barred;
And dear love keeps holy ward
In the Chamber of his rest.

The final person whose memory we recall today is

EDWIN HUGHES

Of whom, sad to say, very little is known.

He was born in North Wales in 1839, the son of Daniel and Elizabeth Hughes. He came out to Australia as a young man and worked on a sheep station in NSW before returning to the UK to study theology at Oxford. He was made a Deacon in 1887 and ordained Priest at Chichester Cathedral in 1888 being almost fifty years of age, which, for those times, was quite late in life. After a curacy he went out to the lonely island of St Helena in the southern Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Africa, where he served as a Vicar for four or five years before returning to Chichester, due to the poor state of his health.

It is not recorded how it came to pass that he was offered work in Western Australia yet he arrived with his wife in late February 1899. He was appointed as the very first Priest-in-charge of the parish of West Perth St. Mary, being there in time for the opening of the first church in Colin Street. This building became the parish hall when a more permanent Church was erected in 1906 and it later served as the home of St. Mary's School for Girls, which is now situated at Karrinyup.

There is an interesting little link between the first and last of the clergymen named in today's Citation: one of the very earliest fund-raising efforts for the new church in West Perth was held at the beginning of the year 1899 in the grounds of the Colin Street home of the grand-son of Chaplain John Burdett Wittenoom - namely, Sir Edward Wittenoom, M.L.C., whose daughter we welcome here with us today.

However, Edwin Hughes died in the Parsonage in Hay Street from a heart attack early on Tuesday 24th October just eight months after his arrival, and, following a service in St. George's Cathedral the next day, his remains were buried just to the north of this church. Bishop Riley reported to the next Diocesan Synod: Mr Hughes "was taken away very suddenly, for he was found dead in his bed. Except for his wife, he was almost friendless in our midst. For this reason I am very thankful that the clergy put a memorial on his grave." Even the Christian names of his wife were not available when the death certificate was being made out! So far as we know there were no children of the marriage and Mrs Hughes returned to England. Yet her love for West Perth must have lingered for she made several Altar cloths for the new church and had them sent them out to St. Mary's.

These three clergymen whom we remember today all had connections with Oxford, and two of them had the unusual distinction of serving on islands in the Atlantic Ocean, while each of them served the church in Perth to their very best ability. We thank God for their faithfulness in the sacred offices to which He had called them. One came at the very beginning of the existence of this cemetery and conducted many of the early burials in it while another came near to its closure - may all whose remains were buried here with them, enjoy that peace which passes all understanding and may that peace also embrace such of their descendants as may be here today and others who are still living.

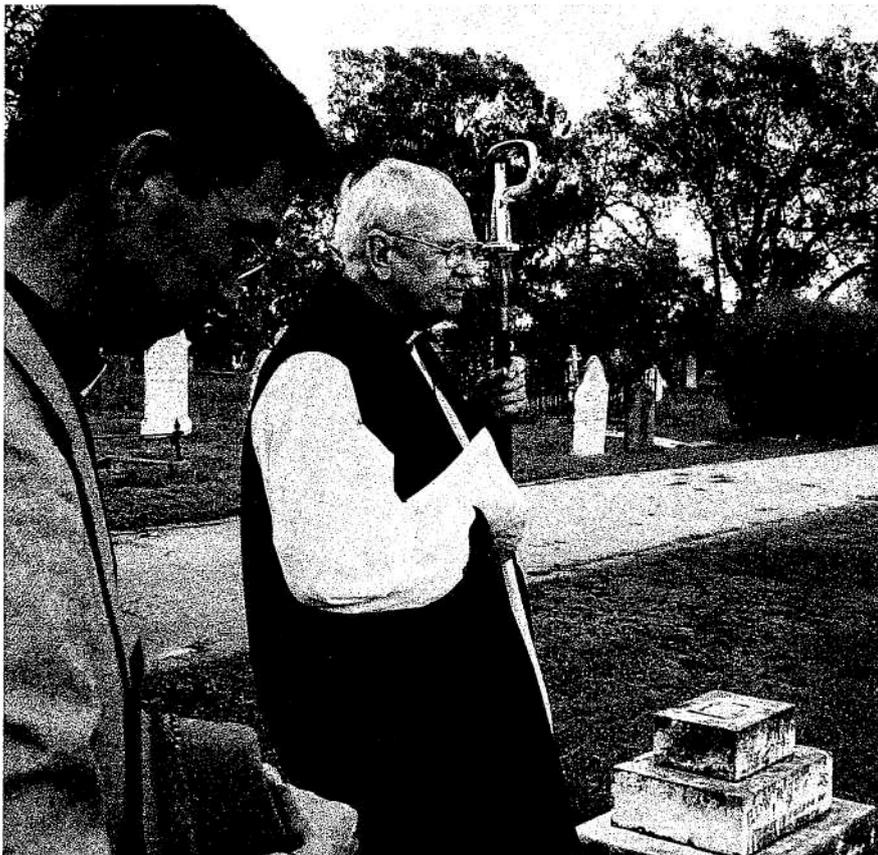
The photographs on the next pages were taken by the Rev'd Fr E.W. Doncaster

The first clergyman to be buried in the new Karrakatta Cemetery was the Rev'd Canon George Hallett Sweeting on 10th June 1900, even though the original Anglican portion of that Cemetery was not consecrated until 4th November 1900 by Bishop Riley - and that was a whole year and a half after its official opening.



above: David Parry lays a wreath on Bishop Parry's grave.

below: The present Rector of West Perth, the Rev'd Jacob Ng stands by Bishop Kyme at the Rev'd E. Hughes's grave.





The Rt Rev'd H.H. Parry Second Bishop of Perth 1877 – 1893



The Rev'd J.B. Wittenoom First Colonial Chaplain of Perth 1830 - 1855