



Anglican Parish of
Cabersham Saint Peter,
Dunedin, New Zealand

THE ROCK

June 2014—Trinity



About Bishop Nevill



Father Hugh
Bowron

By The Vicar

Last month's edition of *The Rock* had an article on "Remarkable Saint Peter's clergy of the Past". Further research has uncovered fascinating information about Bishop Nevill, whose Episcopate framed up the emerging pattern of Anglican Church life in the southern regions. Reprinted here is a masterly and incisive summary of that Episcopate from the Blain Biographical Directory, by way of his introduction to the clergy profiles of those who served in the Diocese of Dunedin.

Father Michael Blain is a retired Anglican priest, whose patient and thorough research has produced biographical profiles of the Anglican Clergy in the South Pacific up to the cut off date of those ordained no later than 1930. This article is reproduced by kind permission of the author, whose research project has produced an invaluable resource for any future parish history of Saint Peters, and whose encouragement and example had no little influence on the emerging vocation of the present incumbent of this parish.

What is particularly valuable about the article reprinted here is that it shows that the structural problems currently facing the Diocese of Dunedin were there from the beginning, and have developed further with the passage of time. The Diocese put up with its difficult Bishop because he paid many of the bills, and when he wasn't there any more these resourcing issues had to be owned and faced up to. It also helps to explain why some clergy on our roll call noticeboard of past Vicars had only short stay ministries, a recurring phenomenon throughout the

early history of the Diocese—they arrived to find there wasn't the money to pay their stipends, and then moved on.

The Nevill story begins just after Bishop Jenner, whom some would regard as the rightful first Bishop of Dunedin, has been blackballed from taking up his See because some perceived him to be a priest of advanced ritualistic tendencies. Now read on...

Uneasy and embarrassed men were keen to fill that seat with another candidate and expunge the memory of Jenner as quickly as possible. With encouraging commendations from Selwyn (in Lichfield now, but still influencing the New Zealand church from the English Midlands), Samuel Tarratt Nevill sailed out on an extended visit to family members in the North Island. It had been hinted to him that at least one bishop was needed in New Zealand, for Wellington was vacant, and Dunedin was now officially vacant.

While he lacked the high



Most Reverend Samuel Tarratt Nevill, DD, Bishop of Dunedin and Primate—watercolour by Vyvyan Hunt

CREDIT: AUCKLAND ART GALLERY TOI O TĀMAKI, GIFT OF MRS R M VYVYAN PERKINS, 1969

connections of ill-fated Jenner, Nevill had an attribute of more use in the raw colony, money from his wealthy wife. If elected bishop by either diocesan synod, he could be expected to fund himself. Wellington was not interested, and made other arrangements. Dunedin was waiting to check him over, and liked the bargain. Nevill was

(Continued on page 2)

Parish Contacts:

VICAR:

Father Hugh Bowron,
The Vicarage,
57 Baker St.,
Cabersham,
Dunedin,
New Zealand 9012.
Telephone: (03) 455 3961
Email: Vicar@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

CHURCH WARDENS:

Vicar's Warden:
Tubby Hopkins
Telephone: (03) 454-2399
Email: VicarsWarden@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

People's Warden:

Kate Paterson
Telephone: (03) 455-5384
Email: PeoplesWarden@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

VESTRY SECRETARY:

Ian Condie
Telephone: (03) 454-4316
Email: Vestry@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND PARISH CENTRE MANAGER:

David Hoskins
Telephone: (03) 455-7537
Email: ParishCentre@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

FINANCE:

Danielle Harrison
Telephone: (03) 455-0759
Email: Finance@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

About Bishop Nevill

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elected and seated as the first bishop of Dunedin.

Once in that seat (on 4 June 1871) Nevill stayed in it. He retired in 1919 after consecrating the nave of the new cathedral, a crowning satisfaction of his forty eight years in the see. Yet for generations he had been a problem for his clergy and lay church people, and a frustrating despair across the leadership of the Anglican world. Even bishops had written in complaint to the Archbishop of Canterbury, matter of factly stating that Nevill was mad. If God were gracious, so now God might kindly grace heaven with Nevill, and so relieve earth of the burden of having to deal longer with him.

When Nevill took up his office in 1871, a dozen priests had already come and gone of those licensed by Bishop Harper for Otago and Southland. Several others lasted well into the episcopate of Bishop Nevill. Notable examples are Edward Edwards in Dunedin, Algernon Gifford in Oamaru, and in Southland William Oldham and William Tanner. All but Tanner had major public rows with their bishop, with full details printed in the newspapers—and Tanner had too little personality to row with anyone.

Nevill even had rows with other people's clergy. William Cooper, the incumbent of Akaroa in Christchurch diocese, took in Nevill's dying brother and offered to raise money for the support of the orphans—Samuel Tarratt Nevill wrote in fierce complaint to the bishop of Christchurch, outraged at the impudence of the intrusive Cooper.

The initial pattern continued through all the years of his episcopate. With vision reaching high and deep, but promises outstripping possibilities, possibilities partially achieved with the inheritance of the bishop's first wife, possibilities often frustrated by the contrary and autocratic demands of the abrasive bishop himself.

All his ministry Nevill was committed to training clergy in Dunedin. In his party of 25 on arrival in 1872 came a couple of priests (Penny and Jackson Smith) to run a theological college and three students to be trained in it. None persisted. No theological college was built or likely to be built. Indignant Penny went north to a more secure post in Christchurch, Jackson Smith returned to England and of the three imported ordinands, one (Dunkley) was rejected, Leeson and Withey lasted in the diocese but three years.

A generation later in 1892 Nevill tried again, and, once again using his own money (supplemented with a grant from SPG), opened Selwyn College, a residential college at the University of Otago but principally a theological college. Attracted by the fine words and promises, the first warden, John Prince Fallowes, came out from England with his wife (Agnes Catherine Vierville Champion de Crespigny); after just two years they returned acrimoniously to England. Nevill did some tutoring himself.

Yet from the abortive beginnings in 1872 and then more securely from 1892, Selwyn College produced a better run of local priests than the neighbouring mother diocese of Christchurch could achieve. The young men did come forward for training, they were ordained and placed in parishes, and then they left. For a softer climate, for more secure pay, possibly for an easier bishop.

Nevill appears to have been particularly snobbish, attracted by big names and offering them fine positions. The Reverend William Jervis, son of the governor of New Zealand, was offered the non-existent position of dean in the unavailable cathedral church of St Matthew (for the parishioners of this parish church rejected its elevation); after a few polite months in the diocese, Jervis went home to England to a major Ritualist church in London. Similarly the Reverend William Purey Cust, with aristocratic connections and son of the Dean of York, was marked out for

great things in Dunedin, but after ten applauded months he sailed on to Tasmania and home.

No colonial bishop had grounds to hope for big names to staff his

Letters

The Rock welcomes letters to the Editor. Letters should be no more than 150 words in length and are subject to selection and, if selected, to editing for length and house style. Letters may be :

Posted to : The Editor of The Rock,
c/- The Vicarage, 57 Baker Street,
Caversham,
Dunedin, N.Z. 9012

Emailed to :

TheRockEditor@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

Ask The Vicar

For answers to questions doctrinal, spiritual and liturgical.

Write to: Ask The Vicar,
57 Baker Street,
Caversham,
Dunedin, N.Z. 9012

Or email:

AskTheVicar@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

ASK THE VESTRY

Questions about the secular life and fabric of the parish may be:

Posted to : Ask The Vestry,
c/- The Vicarage, 57 Baker Street,
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Emailed to :

AskTheVestry@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

diocese. Like other colonial prelates, Nevill took on clergy with poor track records or low ability simply because he needed them to hold parish life together. It was not far to Australia. From Hobart and Melbourne sailed ships to Bluff and Port Chalmers, easily bringing priests anxious to leave Australia and disappear into the quieter reaches of rural Otago and Southland.

Despite the mutual need of bishop and priest, the chronic lack of finance meant that unless these wanderers were gifted as well as desperate, they were unlikely to stay long. The inadequate priest would not be paid by a critical congregation. Blaming the cold weather, or the health of the family, but often because unpaid for years, the priest would sail on again.

Examples of these wanderers include Thomas Ash, George Elton, Albert Edwards, Vivian Grey, James Knipe, Appleton, Falwasser, possibly Edward Granger. Keating clearly had gifts, but also problems; he accepted and resigned one appointment four times within a year. Some had serious moral breakdowns; the lack of extant

(Continued on page 5)



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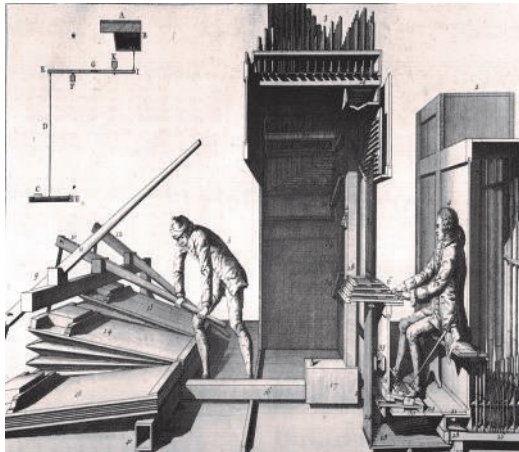
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Organ Voluntary

By Ian Condie

Half a world away and in the middle of the previous century, a certain parish church decided to modernise itself and install an electric blower for the pipe organ. It relieved the organist from worrying whether the organ blower had turned up and, as there was no communication, remembered the order of service. And since the organ loft was behind and above the pulpit and was reached by a ladder, the blower had to be in



GRAPHIC: [HTTP://PIPEDREAMS.PUBLICRADIO.ORG/ARTICLES/HOW_A_PIPE_ORGAN_WORKS/IMAGES/DOBEDOS1.JPG](http://PIPEDREAMS.PUBLICRADIO.ORG/ARTICLES/HOW_A_PIPE_ORGAN_WORKS/IMAGES/DOBEDOS1.JPG)

place before the congregation started to arrive—an empty and boring time.

The new (electric) blower worked well until, that is, a power cut was warned about—for Sunday morning. A “volunteer” organ blower was called for and a son of the Manse selected from a field of one. The lad was not worried; although the bellows was as big as a bed and the lever a six foot (two metre) beam, he had often operated it for practises and he knew the order of service as thoroughly as anyone in the congregation. All seemed set for a perfectly normal service.

Perhaps because the contents of *The Wizard* or *Hotspur* or *The Beano* that had been smuggled in under his jersey were so exciting, the lad forgot that the amen to The Lord’s Prayer was sung. Becoming increasingly aware of a ghastly silence, he rapidly reviewed the recent background then cast *Desperate Dan* aside, leaped frantically to the beam and pumped furiously.

The organist had brought her fingers down for the amen and alas had kept them down so that no matter how hard her assistant pumped, the air rushed straight through the instrument and the pipes without enough pressure to sound a note and the result must have sounded something like this - “...for ever and ever -----long silence -----whoomp--whoomp--whoomp-”

Irené Waters RIP

By Mary Barton

It is with sadness we note the passing of Irené Waters, a loyal and hardworking member of the former Ladies’ Guild—she was always willing and very generous with her time and energy at the Guild Fairs.

Irené also assisted with the collation of *The Rock*. When Father Carl produced this on the Vicarage photocopier it was sometimes not ready in the Lounge—so she would go across and “chase him and the copies up!”

Irené was a kind, vital, forward-thinking person with a direct gaze. Sometimes we would hear tales of her life in Nazi-occupied Jersey, between the ages of nine to fourteen—such as, with friends, slitting the coverings of bags of cement with a stick so it became wet, thus hindering the building (by enforced labour) of fortifications on the island.

We will miss her very much. Our sincere sympathies to Harry and her family. 📧

By The Vicar

At communion time at the 8 o'clock Service at Saint Peter’s Irené Waters was always the first to come forward to the rails and would communicate standing up, looking you in the eye. Given the way she was so regular at Sunday worship this became a memorable way in which Sunday started here at her parish Church. Indeed, this was the Church where her children were baptised, and in the main married.

What struck me in getting to know Irené was her unusual childhood on Jersey in the Channel Islands, in a close knit community located in an attractive maritime environment. Just to make things more interesting, much of that childhood was spent under German occupation in the war years, so the soldiers of the Wehrmacht were a constant presence in the streets and along the coast where she walked. She was one of the children who delighted in staging small nuisance incidents against these troops. In one particular instance Irené careered down a hill on her bike, colliding with a German soldier carrying a large pannier of soup and spilling it all over him. Perhaps because they were out of a combat zone, and having an easy war, the occupying soldiers did not retaliate in the extreme way that happened in many other parts of occupied Europe, but instead confined themselves to giving the irritating juveniles a good clip over the ear.

Irené married Harry at the age of 18. In 1953 they came to New Zealand as sponsored immigrants, and lived at Gore, while Harry travelled to building work in Queenstown, returning to the family each weekend. Later they moved to South Dunedin, living in Bellona Street, Reid Road, and then in the Cliffside house which Harry built. In these years their children were born. We extend our condolences to Joy and Alan, Carrie-Ann and Matthew, Joella and Nathan, Rochelle and Duane and Harry, and Kevin, and to all the extended family.

Irené gave of her time and energy to a number of voluntary groups, being first a volunteer worker for the Salvation Army, then assisting at Tapestry house for the Schizophrenia Fellowship, and being also an enthusiastic member of the Probus Club. She was also, of course, a beloved and much appreciated parishioner here at Saint Peter’s Caversham.

To her husband Harry she was a treasured and valued partner. He describes her as, “the brains of the house, for whom everything was marvellous”. We recall her energy, her humour, her alert interest in others, her good conversation, her optimism, and her steady faith in God. 📧





Nutritious

Have you eaten any PACs this week?

By Alex Chisholm



What, you may be wondering, are PAC—some strange new product dreamt up by a developer of future foods? Well no, and it's very likely you have eaten some recently. PAC is the abbreviation for Proanthocyanidins, which belong to a

group of compounds called flavonoids. These are found in Hazelnuts, dark coloured fruits, red wine, tea, cocoa and kidney beans. PAC contributes to the astringent mouth feel of some of these foods and studies have shown that PACs have more powerful antioxidant capabilities than vitamin C or vitamin E. As well as antioxidant effects PACs may help strengthen blood vessels, reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and lower blood pressure.

Within the category of nuts, hazelnuts scored much higher in PAC than all but pecans. Hazelnuts with skins intact had approximately three times the PAC content of nuts with skins removed (by either roasting or blanching).

The most abundant flavonoid, Anthocyanin, is found in onions and radishes but most especially in red fruits. The content is generally proportional to the colour and increases with ripening. Cranberries and black currants have particularly high levels. These are found primarily in the skin, except for some red fruits, such as cherries and red berries (e.g. strawberries), in which they are present both in the skin and flesh. Although this is not the time of year for berries Tamarillos are in season from May to October, and I was delighted to find large examples of this beautiful red fruit, at a reasonable price, in a shop in South Dunedin. Tamarillos are wonderful in fruit crumble, together with apples, pears, cinnamon and sultanas. The topping can be varied but I find whole grain oats, and hazelnut meal (which retains the skins) and or sunflower kernels make interesting and nutritious additions.

Speaking of recipes, do keep hunting for recipes for our 150th "A slice of our history" project outlined at

<http://www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz/150th/Menu.html>



Hazelnut Meal

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The most abundant flavonoid, Anthocyanin, is found in aubergine, red cabbage, red



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Tamarillo, Apple and Hazelnut crumble

Ingredients (Serves: 4-6)

5 large apples
2 pears
3 large tamarillos
½ cup brown sugar
2 teaspoons cinnamon (ground)
⅔ cup sultanas (softened in hot water)
½ cup water
½ cup Rye flour
1 cup plain flour
⅔ cup (packed) brown sugar
⅔ cup table spread (margarine)
½ cup wholegrain oats
½ -¾ cup Hazelnut meal

Method:

1. Pre heat oven to 180° C or 165° C (fan bake)
2. Peel core & slice apples & pears - place in a casserole dish.
3. Remove skins from tamarillos by placing in bowl -pour over very hot to boiling water leave to stand for 5 minutes then place in very cold water. Skin should peel off easily. Slice tamarillos into casserole dish. Add ½ cup brown sugar, water, cinnamon & sultanas.
4. Put lid on casserole dish with fruit mixture & place dish into the oven. While fruit is heating through make the crumble mixture.
5. Place flours & sugar into a large bowl - cut in table spread until mixture is the consistency of fine breadcrumbs
6. Mix in wholegrain oats & Hazelnut meal
7. Remove dish with hot fruit from the oven. Sprinkle crumble mix over top & spread evenly.
8. Bake for 30-40minutes, or until crumble topping is slightly browned, and fruit cooked through.

Note : this recipe is very flexible e.g. If you don't have rye flour use 1½ cups white flour instead.

About Bishop Nevill

(Continued from page 2)

correspondence or reports from the period make it hard to catch the facts. Platts may stand as an example of a competent trickster. And his successor at Port Chalmers, Thomas Kewley, particularly asked God to be merciful to him a sinner—but as he set that on his tombstone and in Latin, the facts are obscure.

Clearly only a wealthy bishop could have achieved so much for the diocese. Just as clearly, Nevill annoyed and distressed even those closest to him by his style and attitudes. In one year (1878) half his parish clergy resigned. A loss the more crippling with the bishop out of the country, again looking for more clergy. He lost more than he found that year.

Every bishop was stuck with those he could get. Yet for all the misfits, a high proportion of the clergy show us a patient commitment to the community and the church. Many were lightly educated, but willing to work from poor housing in isolated townships, to travel regularly over broken roads, in fierce weather, and to stay among their communities. A number of priestly vocations emerged from the town and country families. One family, the Blathways, provided four priests in two generations; three Wingfields were priests. Long respected ministries by remarkable men like William Curzon-Siggers, George Beaumont, academic contributions of such as Frank Walter Churchill Simmons, Robert Henry Belcher, and later Louis Grenville Whitehead and Robert Augustus Woodthorpe anchor the identity of the era. Vivid low church priests like Lorenzo Moore and Charles Byng stirred up excitement. With notably wide and liberal sympathies, the Fitchett family, women and men, made large contributions to Dunedin life over generations.

My own reading of the 200 clergy of his episcopate suggests that there is a higher proportion of markedly high church priests in Nevill's Dunedin than elsewhere in the contemporary New Zealand church. Yet Nevill came to Dunedin after the noisy rejection of the Ritualist Jenner. To sedate the ghosts, he had distanced himself very carefully from comment or action that might arouse similar resentment against himself. Thus he shows a particularly hostile unease about minor ceremonial gestures when Hubert Carlyon, a priest in Christchurch diocese, was put on trial for such offences. Among the judging bishops of New Zealand Nevill took a strongly hostile stand and

ensured Carlyon's admonition and suspension in 1877. A high church prelate thus had used his position and undoubted intelligence to destroy the ministry of a high church priest. Yet, as the decades calmed prejudices, even a few years ahead and certainly by the end of his reign his diocese was taken to be the most high church diocese of New Zealand.

A full range of clergy was licensed under Nevill, extremists high and low with most in the mild middle. Among the older generation running on from Harper's years, Coffey, Dasent, Fenton senior, Edward Edwards, Gifford, Barton Parkes, Keating, Kerkham (protests threw him out of Mornington) and Penny were all known and named as high church. However it is in the next generation that the


colour grows stronger. Edward Dering Evans, Harry Joseph Goldthorpe, John Lawrence Mortimer stand out among the early twentieth century clergy of New Zealand as markedly Anglo-Catholic. There were plenty more who called themselves Anglo-Catholic or aligned themselves in public with these youthful stirrers. (Examples include Whitehead, Fenton junior, Coates, Neale, Roberts, and Curzon-Siggers). Perhaps no other bishop in New Zealand would take them at the time? Perhaps they settled to the bottom of the country grateful and forgotten for a while. One such from the end of Nevill's episcopate, Alfred Laurie Canter, found another way out of the diocese—he became a Roman Catholic, and a radio sports and racing commentator.

A few were ordained from Methodist or Independent ministries (Alfred Robertson Fitchett, McKenzie Gibson, Francis White Martin, Henry John Davis). Two priests (Ewart, Jamieson) had been Presbyterian ministers, and indeed Jamieson seems to have become one again before his death.

His fellow bishops, particularly the low church ones, disliked and criticised Nevill

and often the odium theologicum (that is, the particular spiteful nastiness of theological disagreement) was a motive behind their attacks. Yet I now think the dominant issue in the controversies of his ministry was his arrogant imperialist nature and not his high church beliefs or ceremonies.

By 1919 when Nevill retired, the golden years of the later nineteenth century had long closed. Otago was no longer the financial heartland of New Zealand. The close of his episcopate also meant the end of those generous subsidies which Nevill had provided for half a century. Now, church institutions cajoled into existence by a determined prelate but set up with inadequate financial bases weighed more heavily on the diocesan budget. The

diocese needed to start again in reduced circumstances and to own its own issues for the first time on its own terms. The frustrating disappointments known by Bishop Harper, way back in the 1860s, squeezing blood from the stones of the Rural Deanery Board's penury, were fully present and now undisguised. Not two years into his retirement, Bishop Nevill died, still wealthy despite his munificence. His estate was valued at £38,000. 

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To register your ideas and interest, or to register initial interest in attending our celebrations, email 150th@stpeterscaversham.org.nz or contact The Vicar in the first instance.

Looking back

By Ray Hargreaves



Mankind has always had a desire to fly. Aeroplanes were a fascination when I was growing up in Whangarei and when a very occasional one flew over the town in the 1930s people rushed outside to have a look at it. Today we rarely bother, as flying is so much part of everyday life and we think nothing of flying, either round New Zealand or even to the other side of the world.

At the start of the 20th Century there was a number of people working hard to build a machine which could fly and not be at the mercy of wind like the hot air balloons existing at the time. Some people questioned whether it was worth the effort. One such person was a leader writer for Oamaru's *North Otago Times* newspaper. In the issue of 8 June 1903 the writer asked "what beneficial result is likely to result from a flying machine?".

He continued, "The individual

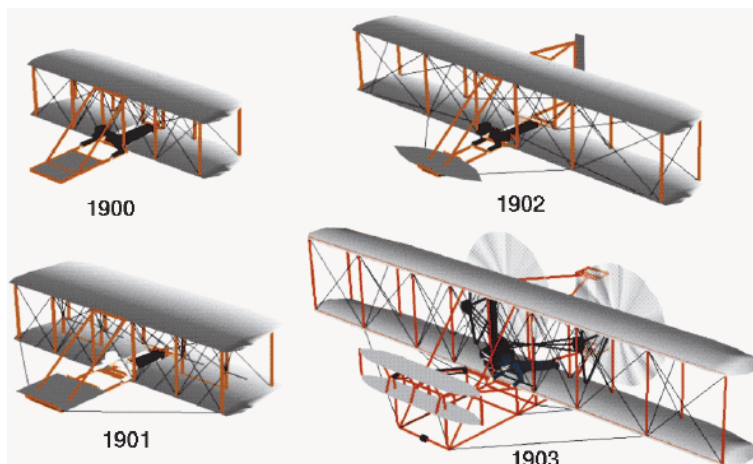
who flies would not care to take passengers with him, nor would it be to load up with grain or wool ... The motor car the ground as expeditiously as is desirable to who has hopes of reaching the age of Methuselah who would care to trust himself to a machine that



possible covers the man ... Besides, at any given moment may come

to grief in mid-air. The contemplation of such an event would appal most people and aerial navigation would only be for the daring reckless or the heavily insured with suicidal tendency. In a utilitarian age the flying machine is an unnecessary adjunct to civilisation."

In the following December the Wright brothers flew. Ignoring earlier short flights, which were really brief straight "hops", the first controlled flight in New Zealand occurred in Auckland in 1911.



Beginning in 1900, the Wright brothers built a series of aircraft to test and refine their ideas of flight

SOURCE: [HTTP://WWW.GRC.NASA.GOV/WWW/RIGHT/AIRPLANE/IMAGES/DISCOV.GIF](http://www.grc.nasa.gov/www/wright/airplane/images/discov.gif)

THE CAVERSHAM LECTURES 2014

"GREAT ANGLO-CATHOLICS OF THE 20TH CENTURY"

The 2014 series of Caversham Lectures has drawn to a close, with Austin Farrer and Archbishop Michael Ramsey being the subjects of the final two lectures which were presented this month.

Next year's series has not yet been designed, so anyone with ideas for an interesting topic line is encouraged to contact The Vicar.



The Vicar discussing Austin Farrer, subject of the 3 June lecture



Topic of the 10 June lecture was Archbishop Michael Ramsey (left). His brother (right) was brilliant in his own right.



Audio and video recordings of all the Caversham Lectures—both this year's and earlier ones—are available on our web site—go to www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz and follow *The Caversham Lectures* entry on the *Theology* menu.

Saint Peter's is most grateful for the assistance of Gillions Funeral Services with projection equipment again for the 2014 Caversham Lecture series.

Caption competition

A couple of images from the video of the Michael Ramsey lecture (see at left) caught the Editor's eye. Send your caption ideas for image A and image B to the Editor—contact details on the next page.



Image A



Image B

Regular Services

please consult The Pebble or our website for variations

All services are held at Saint Peter's unless noted otherwise

SUNDAY:	8am	Holy Communion according to the Book of Common Prayer
	10.30am	Solemn Sung Eucharist
TUESDAY:	11am	Eucharist in the Chapel of St Barnabas' Home, Ings Avenue
THURSDAY:	10am	Eucharist
FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH:	11am	Eucharist in the lounge of Frances Hodgkins Retirement Village, Fenton Crescent



Special Services

Contact The Vicar to arrange baptisms, weddings, house blessings, burials, confessions and other special services.

The Rock

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The Anglican Parish of Caversham, Dunedin, N.Z.

EDITORIAL TEAM:

David Scouler

Telephone (03)454 6004

TheRockEditor@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

The Vicar, Father Hugh Bowron

Telephone (03)455 3961

The Vicarage, 57 Baker Street

Vicar@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

ADVERTISING QUERIES:

TheRockAds@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

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Vestry Notes:

From the minutes of the June meeting

Vicar's Report:

- The present series of The Caversham Lectures has ended. Topics for the next are being considered
- Another hole has been discovered in the church roof. Roofing Systems will attend as soon as they can
- It is proposed to arrange a house group and possible extra worship occasions at Frances Hodgkins Retirement Village because of the increasing number of Saint Peter's parishioners residing there
- The Bishop has indicated he intends deferring a decision on the size of Synod until the 2015 Synod
- David Scouler will co-operate with the Vicar in filming interviews with senior parishioners for our historical archive

Closer Ties with Friends of Saint Peter's

- Individuals with a connection to the parish but who are not parishioners may be included in the *Saint Peter's People* series in *The Rock*
- The offer by an advertiser in *The Rock* to sponsor a parish event and provide editorial material was accepted in principal

Church and Vicarage security. Decided to accept a quote to replace movement sensors in the Vicarage, add a smoke sensor to the Church Sanctuary, and replace the door activated alarm in the Sacristy with a movement detector

Preparations for Patronal Festival. Kate Paterson and David Hoskins have this in hand. Drinks and nibbles are to be arranged before Evensong. A formal invitation has been extended to Holy Cross

The flag of The Anglican Communion has been ripped and must be renewed at a cost of \$660 + GST. The Vestry will underwrite \$200 and the parish be invited to subscribe the balance. 🇳🇿



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<http://www.givealittle.co.nz/org/SaintPeters>

For your diary

Sunday, 29 June : Patronal Festival

Sunday, 10 August : Feast of the Transfiguration

Sunday, 17 August : Feast of the Assumption of Mary

Weekend of 12-13 September : Diocesan Synod in Oamaru

Sunday, 2 November : All Souls

Sunday, 16 November : Commemoration of the Dedication of the Church

Sunday, 21 December : Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Michaelmas 2015 : Saint Peter's 150th Anniversary celebrations

Saint Peter's People

Neil Welch 's story

As told to Michael Forrest

Now in his early seventies, Neil was born in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe today) and grew up in Fort Victoria, living a rather idyllic life. He attended Milton School in Bulawayo, an all-boys boarding school, for the whole of his schooling, though for the first couple of years he and his only sibling, an older brother, were day scholars. School holidays were spent on his uncle's ranch or at home in Fort Victoria (Masvingo today), sometimes camping in the low-lying area known as the Lowveld with the farm managers, as his father was in charge of cattle for the National Meat-Producing Commission. Fort Victoria, said to be 180 miles from anywhere, or at least from all the major centres, was on the edge of the escarpment which one descended southwards towards Beitbridge (on the border with Transvaal in South Africa) to reach the Lowveld where many of the larger productive cattle ranches were.

On leaving school Neil attended Rhodes University at Grahamstown, in South Africa's Cape of Good Hope Province, studying English and Geography, also first year Physical Education and History. The

University had been endowed by Cecil John Rhodes, the Prime Minister of the Cape when it was a Colony, and offered fee reductions to students from Rhodesia. Neil had intended to become a teacher, but a placement at the end of his first year made him decide this was not for him so he left university without graduating at the end of that year and became a journalist for the *Evening Standard* in Salisbury (Harare today) back in Rhodesia. This worked out very well but the combination of late nights, long hours and a bad diet (he was a young lad, after all) led to his falling ill so he went home to Fort Victoria to become a writer or novelist. However his savings—and his parents' patience—ran out after three weeks.

About a week later Neil went to the easternmost town of Umtali (now Mutare) and worked on tea estates growing tea (a very important industry) for about ten years. He had wanted to work outdoors since childhood, but when Mugabe's terrorists began harassing—and even massacring—the estate workers, Neil and his wife decided to move back to Salisbury. Having studied building construction and yacht design during the evenings of his time on the tea estates he got a job in building with Richard Costain, the Southern African branch of an English firm. During the war-years (1967-1979) he was called up on a six-weeks-in/six-weeks-out basis "fighting the communist tide", which was the soldiers' perception of the war. The two anti-white factions were trained and financed by communist governments—Nkomo's lot by Russia and Mugabe's lot by China. At the end of the war he set up his own building business, later moving into designing and building yachts, dinghies and kayaks. There were many dams in Rhodesia because of the necessity of conserving water and some were quite large, which made possible a lot of water-based sport. Neil ran the whole business until he retired in 1996, when he concentrated on designing and

building steam engines for boats as a hobby. Then Mugabe's spitefulness made things very difficult for white people, so in 2001 the family came to New Zealand. He and his wife have three children—an elder married daughter who is now in England, a son with a wife and children in Christchurch and a younger daughter in Wellington.

Neil was confirmed as an Anglican while at school. Going to church was not a weekly occurrence, but nor was it just at Easter and Christmas. On the tea estates the local missionary conducted worship once a month; in Salisbury it was more regular. The local Rector invited Neil to become an ordinand and he undertook four years of training in Zimbabwe for a Diploma in Theology during his retirement. Once in New Zealand he did the four-year Education for Ministry (EFM) course and gained a second Diploma in Theology.

Neil still designs and builds steam engines, does machining and turning on a lathe, invents innovative reversing-mechanisms and so on. His other main hobby is writing children's adventure-stories, which have been published in print and electronically for Amazon Kindle Publishing, "the idea being", he says, "to give children a wider horizon than they might otherwise have". This is currently taking up most of his time. He has finished four books set in different parts of the world, with another two in the pipeline, and has received very pleasing reviews from readers.

Neil is another of the many talented and interesting Saint Peter's people with life stories much more varied than one might expect, and who thereby enrich our parish family. 📖



Neil Welch and "his" road

PHOTO.: SUPPLIED

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compassionate
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*"Buildings are only brick and mortar;
it's our people who provide such quality
service to families"*

Alan Gillion

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