

## St. Paul's Church, Cobbitty



The above sketch of the old Cobbitty Church was drawn by Rita Wenberg of "Yarraman", Cobbitty, N.S.W.

Rita says:—

"In April, 1827, Rev. Thomas Hassall was appointed to take charge of the district about Cobbitty, and used to describe his parish as 'Australia beyond Liverpool'.

His duty involved visiting places from St. Mary's to Goulburn and Wollongong.

Material had been collected to build a parsonage, but Mr. Hassall bought a property called Denbigh on which stood a partially completed house which he finished and occupied. He then decided to erect a chapel, which was dedicated on 30th November, 1828, by Rev. S. Marsden, and named Heber Chapel after Bishop Heber, of Calcutta, in whose diocese New South Wales lay.

This chapel is still standing to the rear of St. Paul's Church, the foundation stone of which was laid on 25th April, 1840, and the new building was consecrated by Bishop Broughton on 5th April, 1842.

Soon after the consecration Charles Cowper, late Premier of New South Wales, made a present to the Church of a set of vessels for the Communion Service.

The Rev. Thomas Hassall had a long association with the parish, having been Rector from 1827 until his death on 29th March, 1868."

This sketch and article wins Rita a special award.

We believe in this atmosphere we can live good and useful lives and hold up our heads in pride and satisfaction.

There are many of my people still living on the outskirts of towns under all sorts of conditions, and unless they are lifted out of that environment the younger generation cannot be improved in health or in mind.

I say quite definitely that white people living under similar conditions to those of many of my people, would experience the same difficulty and I am also certain that the question of equal status and equal conditions is not one of colour, but of environment and economic conditions.

To-day our theme is assimilation, but assimilation is useless, in my opinion, unless the white community is prepared to accept us.

You people here in the city may think that this should be a normal procedure, but in the country towns which have a large aboriginal population, the problem is a very real one.

I have gained a lot of confidence from certain people in the white community who want to help me and therefore I want to prove myself to them and not let them down.

I would like to say to my people: "Don't be ashamed of your colour . . . be proud of it; wear it like a badge. It is the symbol of your heritage to show that you, the Australian aborigines, are the only true Australians".

I thank the National Aborigines Day Observance Committee for the kind work it is doing to have this problem recognised and I hope that in the very near future their sincere desires will be realised.

(Mrs. Margaret Morris who lives in Kempsey has often made it very clear that she feels indebted to Mr. Alec Norton who was an Aborigines' Welfare Board Welfare Officer in the Kempsey district, for the encouragement he gave her, enabling her to take her rightful place in the community.)



John Smith, of Green Hills