

WHERE IS WEST KINGSTON? FROM WEST KINGSTON METHODIST CHURCH IN 1905 TO CAMPERDOWN STANMORE COMMUNITY CHURCH IN 2005

Peter Bentley

Foundation and Development

On September 4, 1904, a group of men from Annandale Methodist Church gathered at the parsonage in Johnston Street, Annandale, to discuss the proposed establishment of a branch church at West Kingston. Where was West Kingston? The area which came to be known as West Kingston covered the area we would know today as most of the suburbs of Camperdown and Stanmore, bounded by Australia Street to Parramatta Road, Stanmore Railway Station, and the Newtown side of Enmore and Newtown Bridge. The area is opposite the present day suburb of Annandale.¹

The original residents of this area were the Cadigal people, a clan of the Darug people who spoke the coastal Eora language. The Cadigal roamed through the territory, which stretched from Port Jackson Bay to Cooks River.²

The Kingston locality was a Crown grant to Captain Rowley, who was an officer in Lord Nelson's fleet, and many of the streets are named after various battles in which Captain Rowley fought, e.g., Trafalgar, Kingston, Northumberland, Corunna and Cardigan.³

Thomas Rowley received two land grants for his service. In

After being employed in councils of the Uniting Church for 15 years, Peter Bentley is presently undertaking contract church work. He has published six articles in *Church Heritage*, and co-authored the Uniting Church profile in the Christian Research Association CD on Australia's Religious Communities.

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1793 (100 acres), and 1803 (240 acres). Upon Rowley's death in 1806, his five children and wife became the legal successors to the property known as Kingston Farm. Nearby, George Johnston's Annandale estate was located (in two main parts) with the land south of Parramatta Road, next to Kingston Farm.

James Holt bought 153 acres of the Kingston Farm in 1835 and named it the Kingston Estate, but major development did not start until a group of men bought some of the Kingston estate in 1854 and created North Kingston in 1855 and South Kingston in 1857 as subdivisions with land allotments for residential development. The railway line went through the estate in the 1850s, and this became a natural dividing line for the Kingston area, with North and West Kingston north of the railway line and South Kingston to the south. Development in the Kingston estate area was slow, with many larger estate houses constructed with reasonable grounds and gardens. The Stanmore estate area, (around present day Newington College) and the suburb of Stanmore began to consolidate after the subdivision and development of the Kingston estate, with a significant milestone occurring in 1878 with the opening of the Stanmore Railway Station, which was now the next station after Newtown.⁴

Opportunity for further housing development arose with the West Kingston estate area being subdivided in 1889. It appears that several Annandale families and perhaps also people associated with the Annandale Methodist Church moved to the new area. This expansion was also related to the general move to the suburbs in Sydney. In 1850 Sydney had a population of about 54 000 people, with 82% living within the City boundaries. In the early 1890s, the population had risen to nearly 400,000 people and nearly three quarters now lived in the suburbs.⁵

A Primitive Heritage: Methodism in Australia

Even though by the time West Kingston was founded, the three

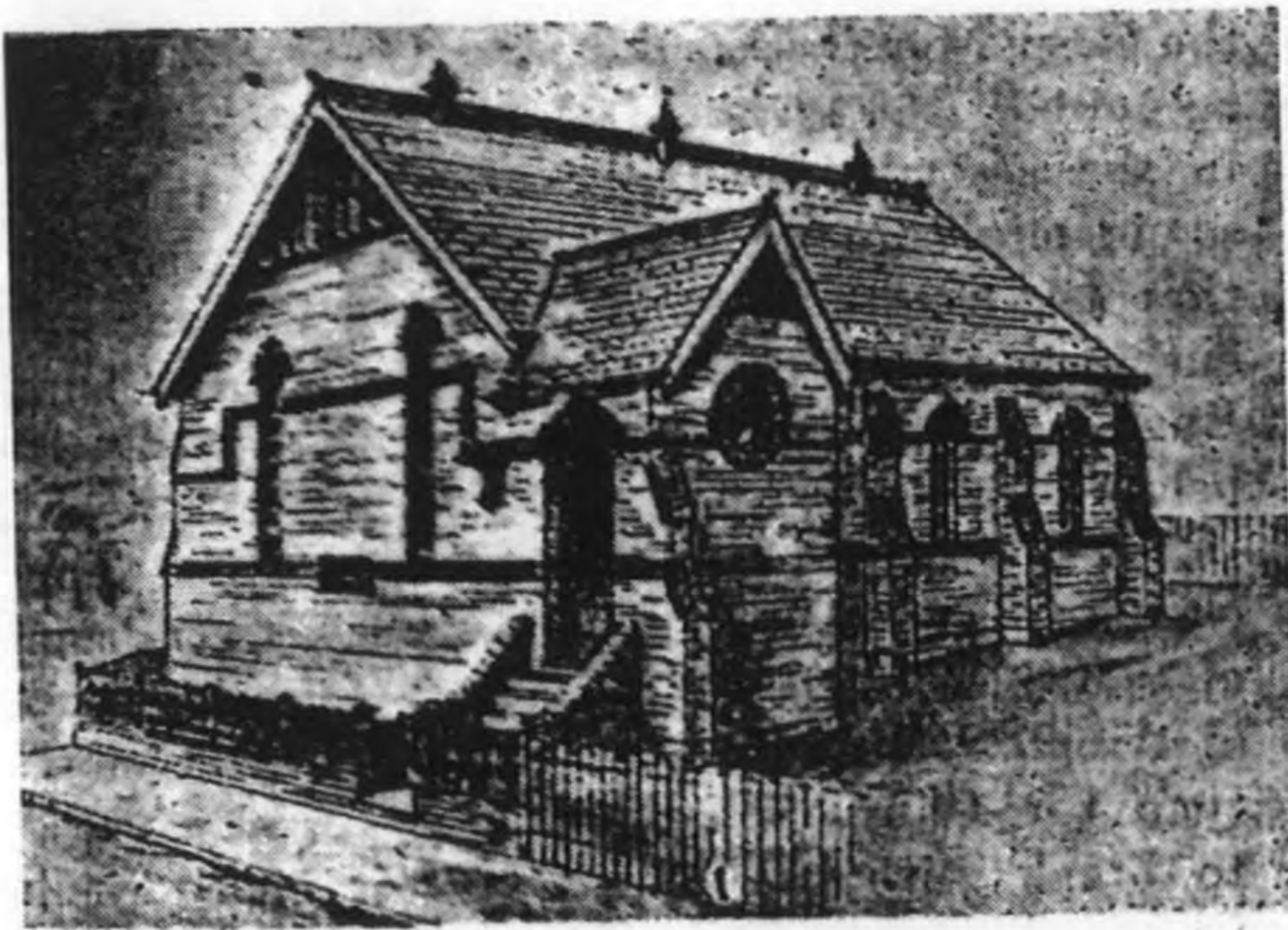
main branches of Methodism had united to form the Methodist Church of Australasia (1902), the influence of the Primitive Methodist ethos, particularly the focus on evangelism and lay involvement, was evident. The Annandale Methodist Church was part of the Primitive Methodist tradition. Worship services commenced in 1883, leading to the construction of a church in 1891. The church was keen to evangelise the local community, and a natural expansion was the new adjoining area of West Kingston.

By the close of the nineteenth century, there were three main branches of Methodism in Australia: Wesleyans (one of the four largest denominations in Australia at the time), Primitive Methodists and United Methodist Free Churches (UMFC) - a very small group. Primitive Methodism was primarily a revival movement and can be seen as a reaction to the perceived institutionalising, and perhaps gentrification of the Wesleyan Church. Though significantly smaller than the Wesleyan group, the 'Prims' still had 27 circuits in New South Wales, mainly in Sydney and Newcastle and major country regions. In the area around Sydney, including, Newtown, various Primitive causes flourished in the second half of the twentieth century, though it appears the preaching place at Kingston petered out well before the new West Kingston venture was considered. This may have also been related to the development of another chapel circuit by a 'dissident former Primitive minister', who set up Ebenezer Chapel in Kingston in 1863-64 as one of a number of preaching places.⁶

These earlier causes had ceased by the time the Annandale Methodists were considering West Kingston as a branch location, and this time, the people called Methodists wanted to establish a church with a church building, rather than a preaching place. The Annandale-based Trustees decided to look at suitable church buildings and a committee was formed to visit recently erected churches. Churches visited included Lindfield,

Turramurra and Kensington.

In the meantime open air services were arranged from the first Sunday in October 1904 at West Kingston. The Annandale Circuit minister at the time was the Rev. John W. Leadley (1904-1906). At the next Trustee meeting it was agreed to request Mr Groves 'after examining the Kensington Church, to draw up plans and specifications for a building of the same dimension (24 feet x 40 feet)', with the cost stipulated to not exceed £400, including fencing and the toilet facility (W.C.).⁷ Plans drawn by Mr William Slade were accepted after a few minor alterations. The architect was asked to advertise for tenders and on 17 April, 1905, the tenders were presented to the trustees. The tenders ranged from £400.14 to £579. The meeting accepted the tender of £400.14 from Denning and Darley.⁸ A building committee was formed with membership including the Annandale minister, the Rev. J.W. Leadley, and Mr Swynny, Mr Anderson and Mr Grozier.



West Kingston New Church.

The building fund was swiftly opened and the dedication was held on the site on the May 13, 1905. There were several

celebrations and fund-raising times, including: June 23, 1905, with two special services in July and a formal dedication and public meeting on August 1, 1905.⁹

Consolidation as a branch church of Annandale: 1906 - 1947

Methodist ministers usually had short appointments, and their appointment in the case of the West Kingston branch church was as the circuit minister of Annandale Methodist Church.

TABLE 1: Ministers 1907-51

1907-09: Ernest E. Crosby	1927-30: Ambrose Fletcher
1910-12: Frank E. Fletcher	1931-4: Frank W. Walker
1913-15: Frederick T. Walker	1935: David C. Hughes
1916-18: William N. Lock	1936-9: G. Walter Johnson
1919-21: Granville O. Cocks	1940-4: Percy M. Waterhouse
1922: Patrick J. Stephen	1945-51: Alexander W. Bray
1923-26: Lewis Hurd	

During this period, West Kingston did not appear to be neglected by the circuit minister in favour of the established church of Annandale. The church began to grow in strength, and even when families moved away from the area in the first couple of decades, loyalty to the Kingston Fellowship was such, that some maintained their membership in order to support the church.¹⁰ Anniversary services and events (usually held in August) attracted large congregations, and showed the wider connections with the society of the day, especially local leaders and political figures. The Hon. Joseph Cook, M.H.R. preached at the first anniversary of the church.¹¹

For most families their life revolved around the church, especially on a Sunday. With the development of Christian Endeavour, young people had the whole day at church. Morning worship at West Kingston commenced at 11 am (and Annandale as well); Sunday School was in the afternoon at 3 pm, and a 7 pm worship service (7.15 pm for the post-World War I years) and, of course, there were extra services for special

events.

The West Kingston Sunday School was a significant enterprise for a small church, and peaked at nearly 200 scholars in the 1920s. The Junior Christian Endeavour Society was reported to be the largest in the state.¹² A small Sunday School hall had been built in 1907, and used from 1908, but it was no surprise that in 1914, the then Sunday School Superintendent, Bertram Stevens initiated a project to build a new Sunday School building. This project that would be interrupted by World War I, and was renewed in 1921, with a scheme whereby people bought booklets of bricks.¹³ It would still take another decade before the necessary finances were raised.



**Mrs Stevens opens the Sunday
school Hall in 1934**



Bertram Stevens, who became Premier of New South Wales (1932-1939) dedicated the building site in 1933.¹⁴ Though he was a former member by then, he was still a frequent guest visitor and occasional preacher. The new Sunday School hall was opened in 1934 by Bertram Stevens' wife.¹⁵ This was a significant public event and helped the small church to consolidate its ministry in the local area. The Annandale-

Kingston Circuit was formalised in 1947 as a Mission church, reflecting the increased strength of the West Kingston Church, and its growth from a 'daughter' church to an equal partner in the Circuit during the 1930s and 1940s. The Methodist Conference had also perceived a need for the circuit to demonstrate a greater focus on providing for those in social needs, albeit within the context of outreach.

It was also during this period that two significant marks of the West Kingston fellowship developed; strong lay leadership and a missionary focus. The church became more involved with missionary movements, supporting United Aborigines Mission and the Mission to China, mainly through personal contact. The strong lay leadership foundation provided a base for West Kingston for decades to come. Prominent leaders and members included Fred Wilkins, Ken Dickson, Louis Fitch and Frank Russell, along with Miss Elsie Harvey (Junior Sunday School); Miss Summerhayes (Bible Class); Archie Pople (Senior Sunday School), and Howard Dickson (who was killed in action at the end of the Second World War - there is a memorial plaque for this former Sunday School teacher in the Kinder room), and the Jolleys, Willetts and other members of the Fitch family.

The development of West Kingston: The Annandale Kingston Parish Mission 1948 - 1961

The ministry of the Rev. Alexander Bray continued after the Second World War, and helped to consolidate and support the active lay leadership. These early years saw the development of a concentrated ministry to youth in the area, especially local boys, who were often 'rounded up' or picked up and taken to church events, Sunday School and Christian Endeavour. Bray also helped the focus on youth by introducing the OKs - the Order of Knights.

Many young people trace their conversion to these times. The young men in particular were usually given an opportunity to

preach, and encouraged to consider a call to a ministry. While the church was Methodist by denominational character, there was a primary emphasis on being a Christian first. There were also broader inter-denominational connections through training colleges like Sydney Missionary and Bible College (SMBC), and the nearby Moore College (Anglican), where prominent men's movement leader T.C. Hammond taught. Hammond had contact with West Kingston church through seminars and occasional preaching.

Two Anglican bishops, the Rt Rev. Ray Smith (retired Sydney diocesan bishop, who spoke at the Centenary Dinner), and the Most Rev. Peter Watson (presently Archbishop of Melbourne) trace their conversion and call to wider service to this time, especially through the ministry of Lou Fitch and Frank Russell.

While each church in the circuit had a distinctive ministry, the supportive nature of the circuit was emphasised more during this time, with many members attending the morning worship service at Annandale, and the night worship service at West Kingston. Kingston had a smaller fellowship until the early 1950s when adult numbers again reached the fifties. While overall the fellowship was still small in number compared with other churches, the commitment was high, and many families and individuals spent most of the Sunday undertaking various Christian activities as well as coming to the church during the week for the evening bible study classes.

With the renewal of the Sunday School and youth ministry in the post-Second World War period, the issue of overcrowding arose again. A significant property related event occurred in July of 1953 which actually helped to provide better accommodation. A fire destroyed most of the original Sunday School weatherboard building and damaged part of the new Sunday School hall which had been built in 1934. A new building (the present Kinder or Sunday School room) was

constructed mainly with the efforts of the local men and opened in 1954.¹⁶ The congregation took the opportunity afforded by the fire to link the new room to the Church.

The congregation was actively involved with the 1959 Bill Graham Crusade and among people converted were future Deaconess Shirley McLeod and her mother. Archie Pople died in 1959, having served with the local Christian Endeavour for 53 years and as church organist for 47 years. Trevor Bickerton became the organist, and continued the tradition of musical service. The illuminated sign on the front of the church was put in place in 1961, reflecting a local focus on Lordship of Christ and the Second Coming.¹⁷

Overall one could say that the evangelical emphasis was more formally developed during this period, though it was not consolidated until the middle 1950s, mainly through the efforts of key lay leaders like Ken Dickson, Lou Fitch and Frank Russell, and then Trevor Bickerton.

TABLE 2: Ministers 1945-1961

- 1945-51: Alexander W. Bray
- 1952-56: Lambert Little
- 1957-61: Rowland J. Cashin

Consolidation of the Evangelical Heritage: 1962-1972

The Rev. Stuart and Mrs Marge Somerville arrived in 1962, staying until 1972. In this time the evangelical emphasis strengthened considerably and attendance at services grew slightly more than the previous decade. There was a focus on evangelical outreach and testimony, as evidenced by special seminars, missionary support and calls to full-time Christian work. The special teaching weekends were called Missionary and Deeper Life Conventions, and focussed on different countries and themes, and missionary organisations. The special seminars, services, harvest thanksgiving, Sunday School and the

church anniversary would often have more than 100 attenders with past members coming back to join in the fellowship.

The *Mission Magazine* exemplified the theological orientation of the two churches with the verses quoted on the front (emphasis as in the magazine):

‘We preach CHRIST crucified ... the POWER of God ... and the WISDOM of God ...’ (1 Cor.1: 23,24)

‘What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’ (Acts 16: 31,32)

The *Mission Magazine* contained articles on the Bible, testimonies of God's healing and changing, news from the various people who had gone from the Circuit to minister in other places. To be admitted to formal membership a pattern developed where people had to give their testimony before they were publicly received into fellowship.

Many lay people worked tirelessly in the church during this period, notably in children's work, and the Youth Fellowship. The men and women of the church took seriously the responsibility to disciple young people and to lead by example. Several people were significant, but it would be a serious omission to not record the passing of Ken Dickson on 6 June 1967, ‘a member and devoted servant of the church for the last 54 years.’¹⁸ The illuminated front glass panel inside the church was subsequently dedicated as a memorial to Mr Dickson.

The church again supported the Billy Graham crusades in 1968 and 1969, contributing to a bus round, and visitations to homes in the area. West Kingston joined with Annandale in 1969 to purchase a landline to receive the broadcast from the Melbourne Myer Music Bowl. This was an example of the close relationship with Annandale, which also included including practical help. Men like Mr Lou Fitch helped to erect and paint the new vestibule for the Annandale church. Many of the men

also worked hard at keeping West Kingston in good condition, and made metal notice signs and tables.

The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed a number of marriages between members of prominent church families, and a number of these men and women would go into full-time Christian service. Also during this period several members of the West Kingston church, or associated with it, candidated for the Methodist ministry, missionary work or for local service. These men had been encouraged by the Rev. Stuart Somerville, who had built on the tradition of encouraging lay leaders to be involved in the life of the church and to consider a call to a ministry.

The main change to the worship life of West Kingston occurred from Sunday 4 May, 1969 when the 11 am service commenced. It was developed because it was 'hoped that the morning hour will make it easier for mothers with little families to attend worship.' Sunday School was changed from 3 pm to 9.30 am.

At the end of 1971, Frank Russell retired as Sunday School teacher and musical director (30 years) and Trevor Bickerton retired as Sunday School General Superintendent (19 years). When key leaders left, God raised other leaders from the members and provided new people who would provide similar long term service. The Somervilles wrote about their time:

Looking back on the eleven years of ministry with you, we remember so many experiences we have shared which have bound us all together in a unique way. Eleven years in any family sees significant changes - the 'growing-up' years, marriage, births, bereavements and to minister to you at such times has been my privilege. ... We have seen God call many of you into training and full-time service for Christ ... We commend you each to our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁹

1972-73 - The Move to a Link with Leichhardt

The 1970s introduced a new mission context as the Methodist Church moved toward union with the Presbyterian and Congregational churches. The NSW Methodist Conference began to consider the relationships between the inner-city churches, and rather than a new ministerial appointment, the 1972 Methodist Conference made a number of decisions which radically altered the relationship and mission of Annandale and West Kingston.

1. That Annandale-West Kingston Mission be worked by the Superintendent of the Leichhardt Mission.
2. That the Superintendent of the Leichhardt Mission be permitted to reside in the Annandale Parsonage.
3. That these two Circuit-Missions be requested to consider the possibility of amalgamation and report to the Synod (West Sydney) and Conference of 1973.

The proposal meant that the Rev. H. Collett Smith would work the previous Annandale-Kingston Circuit during 1973, while Point 3 was considered. Despite protest from West Kingston this arrangement was formalised in 1974, though it was not really an amalgamation of congregations, but a larger circuit. The Conference appointed Smith to it.²⁰

1972-1977: Attitude to Union - The Uniting Church

The Rev. Stuart Somerville wrote in the *Mission Magazine* the year before the vote on union that

It may well prove to be a momentous year if the vote for or against union with the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches be taken. Whatever the result may be let us each pledge ourselves to an ever deepening loyalty and commitment to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and pray that He will lead us, with patience and love, to the fulfilment of His will and purpose.²¹

A public meeting for members in the Annandale-Kingston

Circuit was held on 22 April, 1972 at Annandale, and there was opportunity for questions for and against, though it was evident the Circuit was not keen.

On the appointed day in June 1972, the Returning Officer, John Dixon and Scrutineers - Lou Fitch and Trevor Bickerton recorded the vote. It is interesting to record that the Annandale-Kingston Circuit was not in favour. In fact of the 72 members who voted, 88% were against union. This compared to the NSW Methodist figure overall of 83% in support of union. For Methodist churches, the decision to enter union was based on the overall vote and thus West Kingston and Annandale entered the Uniting Church, while they were still adjusting to the local union, which had made them smaller partners of a larger community service focussed Parish Mission.²²

The Leaders' meeting of 31 May 1977 took the opportunity to record a final testimony to God as the church moved from being a Methodist Church (written by Laurie Thompson).

We offer thanks tonight to God for His enabling Grace evident within the life and experience of this congregation ... We offer thanks to Him, for all those who have faithfully served and witnessed to the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ, over these many generations since the inception of this congregation. We praise God for the faithful Evangelical leadership given to this Congregation of Methodists, especially for those who have taught the Word of God by spoken word, and by consistent Christian living. For those whom God has been pleased to call from this congregation to serve Him in many places as lay people, missionaries, deaconesses, home missionaries and clergy. For those whom God has called to His presence, who stand before Him in white robes, washed clean by the blood of the Lamb, those of our fellowship numbered with the saints victorious, - for all these and

His many blessings of the past and present we offer our humble thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We acknowledge on this occasion our dependence on God the Holy Spirit for future blessings and ministry. Therefore tonight as leaders of this congregation we seek afresh the endowment of His power to maintain the Evangelical faith within the life of the Uniting Church and to witness to the love of God in Christ Jesus and this community on which He has called us. We solemnly remember the words of scripture.

Except the Lord build the House they labour in vain that build it. Amen²³

1974-1991: Leichhardt-Annandale Mission and Leichhardt-Petersham Parish Mission

On 10 March, 1974, the President of the Conference, the Rev. Colin Ritchie conducted the official service of Inauguration for the new mission at the Annandale Church. 'In spite of torrential rain there was an attendance of approximately 150 people.'²⁴ The churches comprising the circuit were Annandale, Leichhardt, Lilyfield Road and West Kingston. The Lilyfield Road Church was used for a variety of purposes after union, including storage, and eventually became an integral part of the Aged Care Ministry when it was developed as a respite centre. The Parish also later included the Petersham Congregational Church, which came into the Parish at union and resulted in the Parish being named the Leichhardt-Petersham Parish Mission.²⁵ In whatever form, the name Kingston or Stanmore was not part of the official parish name from 1973 to 1991. The 1970s were very turbulent times in the Parish, with several discussions about a new division of the Parish, or an amalgamation of all the congregations into one congregation. The Parish meetings often distracted the churches from their local mission.

During the 1970s, several people joined the church as leaders

and others continued to gain experience in practical ministry, particularly through worship leadership or involvement in youth work. The tradition of practical help was continued by the men in the church, notably by Jim Clark and Graeme Lacey in the 1980s, with Graeme contributing his plumbing expertise during the centenary year repairs and renovations.

Bob Jarman had preached at West Kingston at different times, and on arrival back in Sydney from missionary service in Ethiopia with Sudan Interior Mission, Bob and Joy Jarman became active members, with Joy taking over musical duties from Trevor Bickerton, after the Bickertons moved in 1974. Joy also helped to develop the Ladies Ministry, with bible study classes and fellowship meetings. The annual luncheon became a significant outreach for the women in the church.

Late 1975 witnessed the passing of another long-standing servant of the Church, Lou Fitch, circuit steward for 22 years, who was poignantly referred to as 'our Brother', who had been called home to be with the Lord.²⁶

In 1975 Shirley McLeod began Deaconess duties in the Parish, and would remain serving in a variety of areas until retirement in 1981. In 1977, Laurie Thompson (member in the late 1960s) started as a field work student. Laurie and Helen developed an ongoing link and became more actively associated with West Kingston. By the early 1980s Joy Lacey's interest and experience with small group ministry had led to the establishment of various groups, including a nurture group to help enquirers. It was during this time that the evening service became a more informal type of service, and bible study. Neil and Pam Morris continued a student link in the early 1980s, following their study at S.M.B.C., and during the time Neil studied at Moore College. Neil was appointed as a part-time worker at West Kingston, with some preaching responsibility at Annandale, and would go on to the Baptist ministry.

Having moved back to Camperdown in 1979 to live with Jim Senior, Ruth and Jim Clark helped to develop the Sunday School and Kids Club, which became KUCA (Kids in the Uniting Church). Bev (Harris) and Alan McGregor also helped with Sunday School and youth ministries, and later Helen Bolger came from West Epping Uniting Church to help with the Sunday School. There were many other new developments in the 1980s, including two youth groups, a Friday Club for younger children and the Teenage Group. In what was probably a unique arrangement at the time in a city area, a link was developed with Petersham Baptist Church in 1986, and a combined youth fellowship resulted. There were also some wonderful church camps to which local contacts were invited and some joined the church as a result. Anne Manuel and Gordon Griffin contributed greatly to the youth life of the congregation in the 1980s through some musicals which were brought to life in the Church and Hall.

The Newtown Community Centre began their annual festival in the early 1980s, and it was at first very much a community day. West Kingston became involved near the start (1982) and had a stall with Sunday School material and goods for sale, especially dresses from Mrs Dempsey's Newtown shop. In later years World Development Co-op Tea was sold.

Throughout this period several open air services were held in local parks, mainly at Christmas and Easter which were well publicised by letter box drops. In 1988 the church was actively involved with the personal distribution of Good News 88 New Testaments and more than 100 were given out in the local area. Other new ventures included the men's service, inter-generational nights (known as Friday Specials), prayer chains and prayer diaries, and the Sunday afternoon visits to Aged Care Homes (Carlton and LockeHaven) were formalised as regular services.

There was still tension in the Parish, but the structural arrangements were maintained during the 1980s, with a Parish Council having oversight of the Parish work and technically the congregations, but for local matters, the Parish now usually deferred to the congregation. Hugh Collett Smith finished at Leichhardt on 1 February 1985 and notice was given of the appointment of the Rev. Peter Davis. The start of the 1980s witnessed the formal development of the relationship with the Parish and various ethnic congregations, with the main ethnic group being a Fijian congregation which was located at the Annandale Church and recognised by the Presbytery in 1986.

At the end of 1985, the Rev. John Mallison began a ministry in the Leichhardt-Petersham Parish. This was linked to his move into a specialised ministry (John Mallison Ministries). One of the recommendations of the special committee set up by the Executive of the Council of Synod to consider this special ministry was that John should be in a part-time settlement with a local church so that he maintain as much of a link as possible with the denomination. Leichhardt was suggested as a possibility because John had expressed a desire to be linked with a struggling inner city parish and Peter Davis was interested in recruiting people to help with the pastoral ministry. The involvement of John Mallison had a significant impact on West Kingston. John had most of his 1/7 settlement directed to West Kingston and Annandale, and became much more involved than 'one seventh', especially helping Joy Lacey with training and development of the small group work.

Also, on the paid ministry level, Stuart Bollom was appointed for four days per week as a youth worker. Stuart was a good link between congregations and was particularly involved with West Kingston with the combined youth group and the young adults work. He would go on to candidate for the ministry.

Another ministry initiative came during 1986. David McDonald (son of the Rev. Norman McDonald) had commenced studies at Moore Theological College. David and wife Fiona joined West Kingston church. In October 1986, the arrangement with David was formalised as one day per week (1986-1988).

Late 1988 saw yet another ministry development with the involvement of the Rev. Dr Bob Hillman and Jeanette Hillman, who moved into the manse at Leichhardt to be closer to Bob's medical treatment in Sydney. They took up membership at West Kingston where Bob helped with the preaching and pastoral ministry, and also served in the Leichhardt Homes.

Moves to Division of the Parish, 1990-1991

By the late 1980s, the Parish now consisted of the West Kingston congregation, Leichhardt Wesley, Annandale English speaking and the Annandale Fijian congregation. At an ordinary meeting held 2 May, 1989, it was moved by Peter Bentley that the Parish Council request the Presbytery to investigate the viability of a new structure, based around two parishes. While this was not agreed at the time, it did highlight the ongoing difficulties between some congregations in the Parish. The Presbytery was asked to give special attention to the Parish by way of a consultation in 1989. The Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee presented a report on its consultation with the Parish on 23 January 1990. The report stated

that there are not sufficient reasons for any split of the parish at this time. No individual part of the parish is financially viable and each congregation needs the others. Leadership by a streamlined parish council is required to develop a strong parish.

There was considerable reaction to the report and some of the recommendations, and following the feedback from this consultation a new presbytery group was appointed to conduct a special consultation. Several submissions now stated that a

division was not only necessary, but inevitable.

Matters again came to a head at a special meeting on 7 March 1990, at which the largest group of Parish representatives ever gathered attended - some 52 people. The meeting had been called because Peter Davis had advised that he was leaving the Parish on 25 March 1990 to take up an appointment in Fiji. Given the division and disputes over governance in the Parish at the time, the Presbytery was persuaded to initiate supply arrangements, rather than a permanent settlement, and the Rev. Trevor Barrett arrived to undertake the first part of a supply ministry.

The new report to the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee was subsequently presented in May 1990 to the congregations. The report on the new consultation stated that

The division of the Parish is something that each Congregation sees as very desirable. The reason is the hurt that has been felt in the past and the disbelief that things will or can change.

It is recommended that in the immediate future, the Leichhardt Petersham Parish Mission continue as a single parish, but with the changes that are outlined below. ... It is anticipated that within twelve months all necessary matters will have been reviewed and satisfactorily resolved.

The Presbytery streamlined the structures to take the tension away and left the congregations to negotiate an appropriate division.

The Fijian Congregation was provided with a new church home in Canterbury, and Annandale (English) became a separate parish, with John Mallison's settlement transferred to what became known as Annandale-Lilyfield. The remaining Parish consisted of Leichhardt Wesley (including the Aged Care ministry) and West Kingston. The end of the parish

arrangements was also marked by the end of the ministry of Bob and Jeanette Hillman in the Parish, and in particular West Kingston. They moved back to Springwood, where Bob continued to write, while receiving treatment for his terminal cancer.

In 1990 as a result of a survey and consultation in West Kingston, various plans had been put into place, including the restructuring of the operations of the congregation. A series of specialised committees were formed with two key ones being Outreach and Mission and Worship, enabling West Kingston to continue with much of its own programme, while it remained part of the new Parish.

1991 – 1999 Leichhardt-Stanmore Parish Mission

A combined meeting of the Elders and Parish Council representatives remaining at Leichhardt and Stanmore met on 1 May 1991 to decide on a name to recommend to the parish meeting - The Leichhardt-Stanmore Parish Mission. The new Parish was approved by the Presbytery in June 1991. After a time of supply with the Rev. Cornelis Uidam, the Rev. Trevor Barrett came back to continue the supply ministry from October 1991 to June 1992.

While the Parish arrangements consolidated, West Kingston planning continued and some significant membership moves took place. Owing to her need to receive personal care, Mrs Thelma Fitch finally moved on from West Kingston in the early 1990s, having been a member for 72 years. She would still faithfully pray for the church until passing away in September 2000. The Clark family moved from Camperdown in 1993 and a wonderful farewell night was organised to celebrate their service over 14 years. Also in the early 1990s, Allan Miles became more actively involved in the church, becoming the pianist and eventually taking over as Church Secretary, as well as the Church Council Treasurer (with Bob Jarman as

Congregational Treasurer). Many of the continuing members of the 1980s continued to be actively involved in the 1990s, and leadership positions 'rotated'.

The Rev. Lindsay Miller was called as the first full-time minister of the now Leichhardt-Stanmore Parish Mission, taking up the settlement in July 1992. Lindsay and Coral became part of the West Kingston church family and, owing to retirement, concluded their ministry in early 1997. The Parish arrangement continued and a call was issued to the Rev. Leigh Steer in July 1997.

West Kingston still continued to look at its own ministry and mission and in this context began to consider a new name to reflecting its commitment to the two suburbs and its community orientation. The congregation formally voted on 6 September 1998 for the new name and by 1999 this had been noted by the wider church: **CAMPERDOWN STANMORE COMMUNITY CHURCH**



The new congregational polity of the Uniting Church (following the decisions of the 8th Assembly), allowed more possibilities for individual congregations, and at first Camperdown Stanmore

chose to become a congregation in a linked arrangement with Leichhardt Uniting Church. Each church had in effect an arrangement with the minister, the Rev. Leigh Steer, but had its own church council, and a combined council which met to consider joint matters related to the ministry. Shortly after this arrangement was finalised, Leigh Steer retired owing to medical circumstances (July 1999), and before moving to placement procedures, both churches again looked at the possibilities afforded under the new polity.

Camperdown Stanmore chose to be a single congregation relating directly to the Presbytery. This single congregational focus was confirmed by Leichhardt, and an amicable division of joint property and assets was negotiated. The final division of the former Parish was confirmed the Presbytery of Sydney as effective 31 May 2000. A new direction was begun with a lay ministry team under the oversight of the Church Council.

The congregation has developed and consolidated its oversight, leadership and preaching arrangements. There is now a team of preachers, including two accredited lay preachers, confirming and continuing the lay ministry ethos which had developed from early times as well as its Primitive Methodist heritage. To help the church in its new arrangements, a part-time lay ministry assistant position was developed with assistance from the Mission Resource Fund, and the church was pleased to welcome David Freeman to a two year term (2002-2003), while he completed studies at Sydney Bible and Missionary College. In 2004, Andrew Drury, a student at the Youth Works College was appointed.

The official centenary celebrations occurred over the weekend of 30 April and 1 May 2005, with over 170 people giving thanks to God for the ministry and service of the people of God in the local area known as West Kingston.

ENDNOTES

1. Richard Cashman and Chrys Meader, *Marrickville. Rural Outpost to Inner City* (Alexandria: Hale and Iremonger, 1997), p. 80.
2. For further information see the Marrickville Council website: History section: <http://www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/facts/history.htm>.
3. 'Annandale-Kingston Methodist Mission', *The Australasian Methodist Historical Society, Sydney: Journal and Proceedings*, No. 79 (January 1963). Cardigan was a general (or even the item of clothing he invented!) rather than a battle.
4. *Marrickville Heritage Study* [hereafter *MHS*] undertaken for The Department of Environment and Planning and Marrickville Municipal Council: Fox and Associates, Sydney, 1986, pp. 101-102, 112.
5. *MHS*, *op cit.*, p. 100.
6. For further information about Primitive Methodism see the series of articles by Eric Clancy in the NSW Synod historical journal: *Church Heritage*, 1982-1984.
7. Methodist Church of Australasia, Annandale Circuit (West Kingston Branch), *Minute Record of the Trustees Meeting* [hereafter *Trustees Minutes*], 12 December 1904.
8. *Trustees Minutes*, March 9, 1905
9. *The Methodist*, May 20, 1905 (p. 9); July 29 1905 (p.4); August 12, 1905, p.6.
10. *The Methodist*, September 24, 1921, p.10.
11. *The Methodist*, August 24, 1906, p.6.
12. *The Methodist*, June 3, 1916, p.11.
13. *The Methodist*, August 13, 1921, p.10.
14. Robert Thompson, 'Two Premiers', in *Heritage Magazine*, No. 4, 1988, p. 54.
15. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 12, 1934
16. *Trustees Minutes*, July 28, 1953.
17. This sign will be removed in 2005 owing to repairs and changes to the church's front wall, which is collapsing. Memorial fridge magnets are available for interested persons.
18. *Trustees Minutes*, July 6, 1967.
19. *Mission Magazine*, Dec. 1972-Feb. 1973, No. 49.
20. *Mission Magazine*, Dec. 1972-Feb. 1973, No. 49.
21. *Mission Magazine*, March - April 1971, No. 42.
22. Annandale West Kingston Methodist Mission Quarterly Minutes, 22 April 1972.
23. Minutes of the West Kingston Leaders' Meeting, 31 May 1977.

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24. *Mission Magazine*: May-June 1974.
 25. The Petersham congregation was not a viable congregation by the middle 1980s, and was formally closed. The church building became a worship centre for a Tongan congregation in 1992.
 26. *Trustees Minute*, 13 January 1976.