

60th anniversary of the foundation of St John's Women's Guild, Vacy NSW

The attached short history of St John's Anglican Church, Vacy NSW, was written in 1983 to mark the 60th anniversary of the foundation of St John's Women's Guild on 14 November 1923.

A copy was generously provided to Paterson Historical Society by Rosalie Drew in 2022 and is gratefully acknowledged.

The original was typed on foolscap paper, hence the pagination when scanned in A4.

Some of the introductory information in the second paragraph of page 1 is incorrect. Nevertheless, the record of the foundation of the Women's Guild is invaluable and Paterson Historical Society is pleased to make it widely accessible.

St. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH VACY. N.S.W.

A short history of the Church and the environment, compiled from various sources, to mark the 60th Anniversary of the foundation of St. John's Womens' Guild, 14th November 1923.

A Prologue. An extract, by a former pupil of the Vacy School, from the Library of the Armidale University- VACY 1866.

" VACY is a postal township, situated at the junction of the Allyn and Paterson rivers in the Parish of Houghton. It has a tobacco factory and one for arrowroot. It grows tobacco, maize and arrowroot. Wheat is beginning to get the rust. No public conveyance to Paterson. Three times a week a one horse post runs from Gresford to Paterson. There is one hotel, "The Halfway House". The population is thirty. Vacy is a private township, built on and belonging to the estate of Gilbert Cory. It has a school which is well attended, and an English Church both built by the owner, for his numerous tenants and their families."

Some historical records show that the Cory brothers came from the County of Devonshire, England, and that they were the original Grantees. Edward Gostwyck Cory was the eldest son of John Cory, and was born in 1797. His middle name was taken from his grandfather Sir William Gostwyck of Willington near Bedford. The second son was Captain John Johnston Cory, Royal Navy, who was born in 1800. On the 18th September 1823, Edward Gostwyck Cory received a Grant of 2,030 acres (Gostwyck) in the Parish of Barford and on the 9th January 1824, his brother John J. Cory received a Grant of 800 acres in the same Parish which he called (Coryvale). John J. Cory also held another 400 acres in the Middlehope Parish by Deed of Purchase, dated 17th May 1825. Captain John J Cory returned to England in 1831. He died on the 26th June 1839 and his estate was inherited by his younger brother Gilbert who was born in 1812. He came to N.S.W. and lived on the part of the estate named "Neyarra", which is across the Paterson river from Cory Vale where John J. Cory had lived. Gilbert Cory lived at "Neyarra" owning that property and "Cory Vale". It was from "Neyarra" that he did establish his township for his tenants and named it Vacy, a girl's name, and considered to be after a daughter or relative of the family.

Mr Gilbert Cory built the first St. John's Church and School on the old road, north of the Inn, leading to the old crossing of the Paterson river which is between the present bridge to Gresford and the river junction of the Paterson and Allyn rivers. It was a slab walled shingle roofed building considered to have been built before 1859 and used until the new St. John's Church was built in 1887. The village of Vacy was in the Parish of Paterson from the earliest development of the Church as it extended from Morpeth to Paterson in 1839 and included the settlements of Gresford and those on the upper Paterson and Allyn rivers. The clergy who served the area during those early years from Paterson were the Revds. John Jennings Smith 1839-46, F.W. Addams 1846-84, Locums, H.C. Cloughton 1860, C. Walsh 1861, F.W. Addams continuing until 1884. It was during the Incumbency of the Revd. W. Swindlehurst, 1886-88 that the new St. John's Church was built and during the Incumbency of the Revd. Canon John Shaw 1889-1903 that the debt on the Church was finalised and Consecrated. The Incumbents of the Parish who followed were, the Revds. S. Taylor 1903-08, A.C. Hirst 1908-22, Canon. P.S. Luscombe 1922-24, W. Latham 1924, H.M.R. Rupp 1924-30, B.I. Hobart 1930-34, G.B. Stephenson 1934-45, N.A. Pullin 1945-49, J.R. Kemp 1949-52, J.T. Corrigan 1952-56, K. Coaldrake 1956-7, W. Brooke, 1958-65, C. Taylor 1966- , the Rt. Rev. John Sadiq 1978-80, Locums J. Sherlock and J.V. Robinson 1981, R. Haire 1982, and the present Rector the Revd Dr. A. Jones.

The present Church was built in 1887 on land donated by Mr Gilbert Cory. It was opened and dedicated on the 8th December 1887 by Canon Arthur Edward Selwyn, Vicar General and Administrator of the Diocese of Newcastle appointed by the Rt. Revd. Josiah Brown Pearson, the first elected Bishop of the Diocese.

The Church was designed by Messrs W.M. and A.C.Lee, Architects. The Building Contractor was Mr James Richardson of Maitland. To produce the necessary bricks, clay was dug on a property almost opposite the

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farm owned by Mr. Les. Clements. It was here that Kilns were built for the firing of the bricks, by Mr. Pont, father of Messrs T and W. Pont of Maitland. During 1887 a severe flood in the area washed away some 32,000 bricks that had been stacked for burning and through the year the work of the builders was hampered by heavy rains. The contract price for the Church was £650 and the cost of the furniture and fittings brought the total to £800. Many of the seats from the old Church were used in the new building. The building debt was finalised during the Incumbency of the Revd. Canon John Shaw and St. John's was Consecrated on May 17th 1903 by the Bishop of Newcastle, the Rt. Revd. George Henry Stanton.

The interior of St. John's Church is furnished in the standard Anglican style. A central Altar stands at the East end of the Church in an Apse like Sanctuary, mounted on a single wooden footpace upon a tiled floor. The brass Altar Cross, the gift of the Cory family, is situated on an elevated retable shelf under an inverted V canopy of wood. The brass Altar Candlesticks are the gift of the Clements family. At the north and south ends of the Altar are Riddle posts attached to the Reredos and they support brocade curtains. The Reredos above the Altar contains the carved wooden emblem of St. John and on either side are the carved wooden first and last letters of the Greek alphabet-Alpha and Omega. This carved wood work, together with the whole of the wooden panels in the Sanctuary was cut and erected by the late Canon Blake Isadore Hobart Rector of the Parish 1930-34. The silver Communion set and the brass Sanctuary Lamp are the gifts of the Brooker family. The four stained glass windows in the Sanctuary, representing Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the gift of the Cory family in memory of their mother who died in 1854. The brass Alms Dish is the gift of the Horn family, as is the Bell Tower. A cedar Alms Dish is the gift of the Morcom family. A wooden pedestal and brass Jardiniere is the gift of the Fairhall family. A marble Tablet commemorates the names of John Frederick Horn and a War Memorial lists the names of those who served in the 1st World War.

The stone Font was the gift of parishioners in memory of Canon John Shaw who was Rector of the Parish 1889-1903. The beautiful organ was purchased by the Vacy people during the Incumbency of Canon B.I. Hobart 1930-34 and is still in use. Plans have been made to have it overhauled in the near future. It is a valuable instrument and worthy of regular upkeep. Cedar is predominant throughout the roof beams and ceiling panels, in the fine Sanctuary chairs, the pulpit, lectern, prayer desk and pews.

In the Church yard, a Columbarium has been built in memory of the late Jay Bramwell Horn and is the gift of his wife Mrs Elsie Horn and her family.

From the beginning of the Christian Church, womenfolk have played a distinctive part in the life of every Christian community. Guilds of churchwomen worked tapestries to mark special occasions in the history of the Church associated with Ecclesiastical and Royal events. The embroidery of magnificent vestments, dating back a thousand and more years are to be seen in the great cathedrals and abbeys of the world. Long before the development of organised Guilds in this new country, the women of the church cared for the interiors of the early buildings with weekly floral decorations, the polishing of the silver and brass, the preparation of spotless linen and in the general cleanliness of the furnishings.

In addition to these selfless duties, they organised functions to help in raising funds for the Parish, for Missions and other worthy causes. To a great extent a parochial community depended upon its church women for the finer side of Church life, and they did this work without a recognised organisation. In the last century the Guild movement came into operation in every Diocese and gradually spread into the Parishes.

The Formation of St. John's Womens' Guild. Vacy.

Sixty years ago, the Rector of Paterson Parish, Archdeacon P.S.Luscombe arranged a meeting of Churchwomen to be held in St. John's Church, Vacy on November 14th 1923, with the object of forming a Womens' Guild.

The Minutes of that meeting follow as recorded.

" Minutes of Meeting held in St. John's Church, Vacy, on November 14th 1923.

There were present Archdeacon Luscombe, (Chairman) Mrs and Miss Mills, Mrs Hudson, the Misses O.McInnes, L. Clarke, Watson, L.Watson, Bird, Brooker, E. Brooker, Morton and Mesdames Sellens, Brooker, Fairhall Clements, Presland, Cardow, Somerville, Worthington and Osborne. (20)

The Chairman opened the meeting with Prayer and addressed the ladies present on the objects of the meeting and pointed out the need of workers. He suggested certain methods of finance and avenues of work and emphasized the need of looking upon a Guild as a spiritual concern as well as a material one.

After discussion, Mrs Worthington moved and Mrs Cardow seconded, " That a Guild be formed to be called St. John's Womens' Guild" Carried.

On the motion of Mrs Somerville, seconded by Miss Brooker, it was decided that an annual subscription of 2/6 be paid for Membership to date from November 1st 1923. The following Officers were then elected.

Mrs Worthington.	President.	Miss Bird.	Secretary.
Mrs Osmond (Osborne?)	Vice President.	Mrs Clements.	Treasurer.

It was decided that the meeting should be held on the first Wednesday in each month at 3pm. The Meeting closed with Prayer. "

The full list of those who enrolled as members of St. John's Womens' Guild on November 14th 1923 are:

Mrs. P. Clements.	Mrs Hudson.	Miss. L. Bird.
Mrs. Worthington.	Miss A. Morton.	Miss. L. Cardow.
Mrs Brooker.	Mrs L. Cardow.	Miss Bowles.
Miss J. Brooker.	Mrs. A. Presland.	Mrs. J. Gillespie.
Miss E. Brooker.	Mrs. V. Osborne.	Miss. Cory.
Mrs. Somerville.	Miss. O. McInnes.	Miss. Weigall.
Mrs. G. Fairhall.	Mrs. A. Snashall	Mrs. C. Eveleigh.
Mrs. Mills.	Miss. L. Clarke.	
Miss. Mills.	Mrs. G. Sellens.	

Those enrolled later-

Mrs. J. Cann.	10th. Jan. 1924.
Mrs. F. Duck.	13th Feb. 1924
Mrs. S. Cardow.	27th Feb. 1924.
Mrs Roy Chick.	

During the first year were added, Mrs. F. Layer, Misses L and M Layer and Mrs. F. Bush. In that first year, as recorded in the Minute Book of 1923-4, considerable work took place in the form of Socials, Dances, Euchre Parties, a Ball and a Bazaar. This developed into Concerts and larger Bazaars, as well as Parish Teas. The pattern has continued through the succeeding years. The only member with a continuous membership over the past 60 years is Mrs. Elsie Horn, still living in Vacy.

The present Office Bearers of St. John's Womens' Guild are; Mrs. D. Foster, President. Mrs. C. Ryan and Mrs. J. V. Robinson, Vice Presidents. Mrs. E. Bowd, Hon. Secretary and Mrs W. J. Brooker, Hon. Treasurer.

A Special Service to mark the 60th Anniversary Year of St. John's Womens' Guild will be held in St. John's Church on Thursday 21st April at 7pm. This will be followed by a Social Tea in the Vacy School of Arts.

An Invitation is extended to surviving members of the original Guild, their families and friends, and to the families of the ladies whose names comprise the original listed members of the Guild in that first year.

The Church has experienced some delapidations in the brick, plaster and woodwork over nearly 100 years. The repairs and renovations are being undertaken by the Guild and the Vestry. The plastering has been repaired by Mr David Brooker and is ready to be painted. He is now restoring the fretted brick work.

It is anticipated that those who have been associated with St. John's Church, the Womens Guild or through any family connection within their lives, may wish to assist in meeting the expenses of restoration.

St. John's Church Vacy is the historic gem of the township and the spiritual home of past generations of pioneer families. It is used in regular services for the present families and a heritage to be preserved for the future. We hope that you will join us on this historic occasion.

A Contribution List will be available at the Social Tea.

Compiled on behalf of St. John's Womens' Guild by Archdeacon J.V.Robinson.
