

URUTI ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

Uruti All Saints' Church is an unpretentious little solid concrete building, no glorious stained glass windows, no priceless church brass or plate. Nevertheless it has an honest country church charm and holds a special place in the hearts of those of us whose parents were married there, who were christened there, attended Sunday school and eventually, in my case, were married there also. It is one building which remains intact and unaltered while so much of our village has changed or simply disappeared.

Dave Musker

"Prior to the building of the church, services were held on a regular basis in the hall. During 1923, through various activities, funds were raised to build a church. Mrs Clara Larsen and Mrs Henry from Tangitu (now Pehu), Mr George and Mrs Banks ~ (school teachers who were later married) and Mr Dan Butt, were some of the people prominently involved. Mr Jerry Murray (a catholic) donated one acre of land for the site. Built in 1924, allowance was made in the construction for the end wall to be removed for possible extension. At present the builder is not known. The Rev Gavin (later Archdeacon) of Waitara conducted the dedication service on May 24th. Recognising the interdenominational efforts and future usage All Saints was the name chosen. Mainly for practical purposes the property was vested in the Anglican church, originally in the Mokau parish but in 1950 included in Waitara. In 1939 a Queen carnival was held to raise funds for the first World War memorial, probably as part of the 1940 centennial celebrations. The "Queens" were Red ~ Ruth Oxenham; Blue ~ Dorothy Reeve; Green ~ Olive Saywell. Government funds were available for this and subsequent to WWII considerable correspondence was carried on between the local committee secretary and county and other officials. A dispensation was granted to build the wall on road reserve to qualify for the grant. It was dedicated May 29th, 1949.

Participating Clergy were Archdeacon Gavin, Rev Coldham Fussell representing Anglican and Rev Utting Methodist. The unveiling was performed by Mrs Clara Larsen (then about 80 years or more). In 1940 four of her grandsons were confirmed by Bishop Cherrington. Post 1945 Anzac services were regularly held weather permitting outside the memorial wall, mostly conducted by Mr Newton Jones with music supplied by various locals. Darcy Lange ex WWI veteran often playing the last post, RSA members taking part and reading the rolls of honour. Virtually everyone in the district attended. The services only lapsed when there were very few RSA members left in the district.

The first wedding was on 4th April 1926 when Violet Sutton married Les Taylor. At the church one bridegroom found that he had only the application for a marriage license so that he and the minister went post haste to New Plymouth for a license. Another couple arranged to have the Rev Gosnell marry them. He had shifted from Waitara to New Plymouth and being in bed with 'flu had forgotten the date. The result was a delayed wedding and a hasty exit from bed.

Both Methodist and Anglicans appointed "home missionaries", trainee ministers. George Skuse (from Wales) was one such Methodist who was appreciated outside his church work, for his ability and willingness to help farmers with harvesting etc. In 1953 WDFP donated two cherry trees for the grounds".

WEDDINGS

Most Uruti Girls were married in the local church in the 1930s and 1940s. Here are some of the weddings as reported in the newspapers.

Fankhauser ~ Musker

The wedding of Ina, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs D S Musker, Uruti, to Ira Howard, eldest son of Mr and Mrs C Fankhauser, took place at All Saints' Church, Uruti, on April 19. The Rev E D Patchett, New Plymouth, officiated and Mrs D Radcliffe was organist.

Knofflock ~ Oxenham

All Saints' Church, Uruti, was the scene of the wedding on July 21 of Dorothy Joan, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs W Oxenham, Uruti, to Norman William, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Knofflock, Westown, New Plymouth. The Rev T H Carr, Waitara, was the officiating minister, and Miss D Reeves was at the organ.

Bramley ~ Fugle

Matching the golden shaded frocks worn by the bride's attendants, the floral decorations arranged by friends of the bride in All Saints' Church, Uruti, made an attractive setting for the wedding on the morning of Monday, May 9, of Ruth Mary, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs H E Fugle, "Greenmeadows", Uruti, to Lawrence, fourth son of the late Mr and Mrs R Bramley, Nottingham. The Rev John Hickson, the officiating clergyman, celebrated nuptial mass, while Mr A W Fugle, uncle of the bride, played the organ.

Hall ~ Musker

In All Saints' Church, Uruti, Ruth Silvester, third daughter of Mr and Mrs D S Musker, Uruti, was married to Private George David, second son of Mr and Mrs J A Hall, Uruti. The ceremony was performed by Rev W

Jenkin, Waitara, and Mrs D Radcliffe was organist.

Lash ~ Boyes

The marriage of Agnes Amelia, daughter of Mrs and the late Mr F Boyes, to Eric Avelon son of Mrs H J Lash and the late Mr Lash, New Plymouth, took place at All Saints' Church, Uruti, recently. The Rev. J Phillips, Mokau, was the officiating minister, the church being decorated with spring flowers.

Hunter ~ Oxenham

A quiet wedding was solemnised on June 29 in All Saints' Church, Uruti, of Ruth Mavis, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs G K Oxenham, and Donald Hamilton, only son of Mr and Mrs W Hunter, Wellington. The Rev. H Ford, Waitara, officiated. Friends of the bride decorated the church with berries and lycopodium. Miss D Reeve was the organist.

Oxenham ~ Smith

The wedding took place at All Saints' Church, Uruti, on December 18 of Ernest, son of Mr and Mrs G K Oxenham, Uruti, and Ruth, twin daughter of Mrs Smith, New Plymouth. The Rev. Carr was the officiating minister, and Miss D Reeves played the wedding music. The church was decorated with flowers by friends of the bride.

Jones ~ Lawrence

In All Saints' Memorial Church, Uruti on June 22, the marriage took place of Nola May, only daughter of Mr and Mrs W Lawrence, Uruti, to Ernest Maxwell, second son of Mr and Mrs J L Jones, Waitoitoi. The Rev. W C Jenkin performed the ceremony. The organist was Miss Rae Duxfield, New Plymouth.

Oxenham ~ Haylock

In All Saints' Church, Uruti, on April 15 Doreen Lilian, only daughter of Mr and Mrs J Haylock, Uruti, was married to Trooper Jack Oxenham, fourth son of Mr and Mrs G K Oxenham, Uruti. The Rev W Jenkins, Waitara officiated. Mrs D Radcliffe was organist.

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

The Taranaki Herald

May 5, 1928

Uruti

The annual meeting of parishioners of the Uruti Parochial District was held on Friday, April 17. The Rev C N Luker presided. The financial statement for the year showed a very satisfactory position. The total income of the district was £272-17s-3d including the following detailed items. £22-15s-2d raised by the ladies committee from luncheons on sale days. £14-15s-3d the proceeds of two concerts and £40 total offertories while a sale of work at Awakino in May 1927 had realised £49-15s-3d, leaving a balance of £11-12s. After a short discussion the statement was adopted. The election of officers resulted as follows: Vestry: Mesdames B Anderson, S S Butt, J Bell, C H Short, S Hewlett and F L Boyes (Uruti), Sheen (Mokau) and Mr H Martin (Pukearuhe); secretary and vicars warden: Mr S S Butt; people's warden: Mrs Anderson. After the meeting the members adjourned to the vicarage where afternoon tea was provided by Mrs Luker.

May 3, 1946

Vicarage for Uruti

Erection of a vicarage at Uruti was unanimously approved by a meeting which agreed to purchase a building for removal from Mrs W Murray. A ladies' guild was formed, those elected being: President, Mrs W Murray; secretary, Mrs W Lawrence; committee, Mesdames E Jones, R Radcliffe, A Johnson, J Haylock, F Johnson, G Jones and Miss D Johnson.

January 16, 1953

Uruti Musical Evening

Friends of Mr and Mrs D Lange, Uruti, gathered at their home for a musical evening arranged to raise funds for the Anglican Church. The Rev. Clarke, Waitara, was present. The funds benefited by £4-2s-3d. Pupils of Mrs Lange and other artists presented items. The programme was: Pianoforte solos, Ellison Lange, Winston Larsen, Beverley McEldowney, Rodger Lange, Darcy Lange, Newton Lange, June Phillips, Carol Standish, Colin Whitehead, Mr S Jackson and Mrs Lange; flute solo, Miss Dulcie Phillips, vocal solos, Miss J Larsen, Mr J Johnson, Mr D Lange and Mr F Churcher; action song, Newton Lange, cello solo, Mary Bramley; action duet (vocal), Newton and Darcy Lange; piano accordion duet, Messrs A and T Larsen; recitation, Mr Lange; Violin solos, Rodger Lange and Ellison Lange; pianoforte duet, Mary Bramley and Ellison Lange; vocal duet, Miss J Larsen and Mr F Churcher. Accompaniments were played by Mrs R Larsen, Mr S Jackson and Mrs Lange.

The Daily News
Thursday, May 1, 1947

All Saints' Parish Work Reviewed

A credit balance for the year's working was reported at the annual meeting of All Saints' parish of Uruti, held at Tongaporutu. Officers elected were: Secretary, Mrs G Henderson; treasurer and vicar's warden, Mr H S Axbey; people's warden, Mrs W Murray; members of vestry, Mrs B M

Rogers, Mrs M Alley, Mrs E Carrington, Mrs H S Axbey, Mr L Hills and Mr W D Sykes.

Dec 2, 1955

£56 Raised At Fair

A sum of £56 was raised for the Uruti Methodist Church at a bring and buy fair. A dress parade was compered by Mrs Musker.

Items were, vocal solo, Mrs Keat; vocal quartet, Mesdames Musker, T Larsen, C Larsen and Miss L Jones; sketch, Mesdames L Johnson and Laurence.

Competition results were: Weight of cake, Mrs L Herbert (Waitara); name of Victorian cake, Mrs Timarande; lucky dinner, Mr T Oxenham; white bait, Mrs D Radcliffe; lucky parcels, Miss Mary Bramley, Mrs W Murray and Mrs Les Herbert.

Mrs W B Lawrence was hostess.

1956

Uruti Garden Party

Visitors from as far as Urenui, Pukearuhe and Ahititi attended a garden party at the residence of Mrs W Murray, Uruti, which raised about £16 for the Uruti Anglican Church committee.

The produce stall did brisk business.

Items rendered were Mrs Grant, vocal solo; Mrs Lange, solo; Mrs C Larsen, vocal solo; Mrs E Sutton elocution; Mesdames D Radcliffe and L Herbert, dialogue.

Jean Anderson

"During depression years, many folk used horse transport, bikes or sometimes had rides with those fortunate enough to have a car. The families on upper Uruti road and those through the Pehu tunnel met in various homes, alternately for Bible Class. Whole families joining in in some cases. The Rev George Skuse, a very popular Methodist home missionary, was the leader. There were Bible Class socials too, in the Newt Jones' wash house ~ a large unlined addition to the house. We played games and had musical items, as we were fortunate to have some good singers in the group, with of course good country suppers. It was all a lot of fun. There was a riding picnic one day, when a group went on horse back to the Waitara River, taking a picnic lunch. A photo of the horsemen and women appeared on the front cover of "The Link", the official magazine of the Methodist Bible Class, NZ! Also a church service was held monthly in Musker's school and at times a harmonium was sledged down from a nearby farm to help the singing. George Skuse had a fine

singing voice, which was a great asset. He lived in a bach at Uruti and rode a motor bike or at times a rather sluggish horse named "Lightening". He was originally from Wales and had spent time in the North of Australia in a remote area, riding camels. He was most popular with the farmers as he would lend a hand in the harvest field or the cowshed, a really good asset to the district in his time there, respected by church and non-church members alike".



PHOTO: JEAN ANDERSON

After Church ~ Musker's School 1930s

Sunday morning meant Sunday School, best bib and tucker and lessons from our good neighbour Mrs Murray. She read us lovely old classics from the bible. . ."Samson and Delilah", "David and Goliath" and enlarged our field of general knowledge of things biblical. Mrs Murray was something of a stalwart of the church, cleaning the brass, washing the alter cloths, arranging the flowers, a little bustling lady, very dear to us. She organised sumptuous Sunday School teas (occasionally watering down the fruit cordial a little too generously . . . I suppose it went further that way).

Margaret McClellan neé Hall

"I fondly remember the Sunday School teas, what a feast we had, but my best memory is of Mrs Murray's trifles, to this day I remember and enjoy trifle just as much".

We had grand Sunday School picnics too, some at Urenui beach and an unforgettable sortie into the Moki. Murrays had land in there then, we seemed to walk for miles and ended up at a waterfall where we swam in the river and had a picnic lunch, a great adventure.

It appears even Sunday School picnics were reported in the paper!

The Uruti Sunday School held a picnic at Urenui beach in ideal weather. Races, treasure hunts, games and swimming were held. Mr WB Lawrence spoke on behalf of those present, and Mrs Murray, Sunday School teacher, replied.

A Christmas tree party was held in the Uruti hall for Sunday School pupils and their parents. Games and community singing were held. Father Christmas distributed gifts to the children. Supper was served. Thelma Laurent, on behalf of the children, presented

teacher, Mrs W Murray, with a gift, and Angus MacDonald presented a shoulder spray to Miss Joy Murray, who assisted with the organising and who played the accompaniments.

Mrs Murray handed over the Sunday School reins to her niece and nephew, Owen and Beth Sutton and they were assisted by Mary Bramley. They perhaps adopted a more modern approach with literature from America. We still had the Sunday School teas and fun and games, all part of lifes rich experiences.

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Colin Bell

"I remember when the store burnt down even though I was only about three at the time. The heat was so great we took shelter down the river bank and watched the flames. At that time we were living in the tin house opposite the school. Later when a new store was built, the old post office was shifted across the road to be made into the new store house. Dad built the house at the garage and Mum ran a tea rooms from the front part of the house. She did all her own cooking as well as serve in the tearooms and on the petrol pumps when Dad was away. She also milked the house cow and of course looked after us. It all became too much though so she closed the tearooms. Mum was mortified one day on going up to milk the house cow which grazed the paddock next to the church, to see the old cow standing in the church looking out the open door. Mum was afraid of what she might find but the old cow had only chewed the flowers on the