

Church of Christ Doncaster

The first 50 years

by Lynton Clay a Great-Great Grandson of Henry William Crouch



Doncaster Church of Christ in 1913

Henry William Crouch came from Melbourne to Doncaster in 1862, purchasing 36 acres of land on Church Road.

Shortly after his arrival and as a member of the Carlton church in Melbourne, he met with several Baptists living in the area. Making their acquaintance, Henry then set about re-establishing gospel preaching in Grant's Chapel, a

small chapel that had fallen into disuse, built by the Baptists during the 1850s. The Baptist movement had collapsed when Doncaster's Postmaster and Baptist Minister, Thomas Walter Grant, moved to Lilydale in 1860.

There was much discussion at the time about establishing a Church of Christ in the area.

On 30th August 1863, a meeting and gospel service was held in the home of Thomas Porter^(snr) in Whitten's Lane. At this meeting, the Doncaster Church of Christ was formed with nine founding members. Henry William Crouch was elected as secretary, with Robert Taylor as treasurer.

Individuals	Name on Original List	Last Name	First	Joining Date	Joining Year	How Received
1	Crouch, Henry William	Crouch	Henry William	30/8/1863	1863	Carlton
1	Lawford, Jane	Lawford	Jane	30/8/1863	1863	Baptist church
1	Lawford, Sarah	Lawford	Sarah	30/8/1863	1863	Baptist church
1	Norris, John Rigby	Norris	John	30/8/1863	1863	Melbourne
1	Norris, Mary Anne, Mrs JR	Norris	Mary Anne	30/8/1863	1863	Melbourne
1	Porter, Thomas snr	Porter	Thomas	30/8/1863	1863	Baptist church
1	Porter, Elizabeth	Porter	Elizabeth	30/8/1863	1863	Baptist church
1	Read, James	Read	James	30/8/1863	1863	Baptist church
1	Taylor, Robert	Taylor	Robert	30/8/1863	1863	Baptist church
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With the Church formally established, C. G. Lawson conducted the first gospel service in "Grant's Chapel", located on the site of the Shire hall. Meanwhile, scripture lessons continued under a large peppermint tree at Lauer's corner. (Doncaster & Elgar Roads)



Robert Williamson 1823-1894
Church member 1864

During 1864 and completed in August, a new small Chapel 22'x18' was built on a portion of Lot.44 a block of land measuring 88'x50' donated by Robert Williamson. Four years later in 1868, the chapel was extended to 30'x26' accommodating 100 people. In 1886, extra land was purchased adding 10'x130' on the east side and another 50' across the rear.

This wooden building had been enlarged over the years and in 1888, it was repositioned on the site to allow for the construction of a new brick chapel in 1889. The new iconic chapel was built in the same style as the Doncaster state school across the road, built in 1886 and later the Shire hall in 1892.

While the new chapel was being built, services were held in the State School (at a rental of 5/- per week) until the new chapel was opened with special services held on the 8th and 10th October, 1889.



The township of Doncaster in 1880 viewed from the Doncaster Tower looking eastward. Upper left is Schramm's cottage, Doncaster school (later the E. S. & A. Bank), centre rear is the Post Office, the rectangular building on the right is the Church of Christ and John Petty's house behind the church. *"Grant's Chapel" once stood in the left foreground!*



30th Anniversary of the Doncaster Church of Christ - Congregation in 1893



Doncaster Church of Christ - Choir 1893

Back: Elizabeth Taylor, Percy Ewers, Henry Mc Dowell, George Petty, Frank Smedley, Caroline McDowell, Robert "Edwin" Wilson,
 Sarah Ellen "Nellie" Petty (Myers), Florence Zelius, Rosa Jane Smith (Petty)
 Front: Elizabeth Smedley (Waters), Rosina Tully (Cook), Dinah Petty (Smith), Elizabeth Charlotte Sykes (Craze), Emily Grace Ewers (Redman)



Doncaster Church of Christ - Pioneers - 2nd Sept 1903

Standing: 1. Catherine Wilson (Clay), 2. Margaret Hunter (Croall), 3. Frank Smedley(snr), 4. Henry Crouch, 5. Hannah Smith (Clarke),
6. Robert "Edwin" Wilson, 7. William Hunter, 8. Elizabeth Williamson (Caldwell), 9. Elizabeth Smedley (Waters), 10. Marion Crouch (Longmuir)
Sitting: 1. Henry William Crouch, 2. Harriet Crouch (Tainton nee Lowen), 3. Eliza Petty (Clay),
4. Henry Willmont Smith, 5. Thomas "Tom" Petty 6. Joseph Lowen



40th anniversary of Doncaster Church of Christ - Choir 2nd Sept 1903

Back: 1. Thomas "Henry" Petty, 2. Arthur Taylor, 3. Alick Crouch, 4. Herbert McDowell, 5. Albert Thompson Petty, 6. Sameul Smedley,
7. Rosa Jane Petty (Smith), 8. Albert Tully, 9. Alfred Smith, 10. Frank Petty, 11. John "Jack" Hewish 12. Frank Smedley
Middle: 1. Ada Tully 2. Emma Smedley, 3. Hilda Petty, 4. Alice Zelius, 5. Connie Smedley, 6. May Crouch, 7. Florence Zelius, 8. Mitchell,
9. Ida Smith, 10. Rose Tully, 11. Elsie Smith
Seated: 1. George Petty, 2. Elizabeth Smedley (Waters), 3. Rosina Tully (Cook), 4. Dinah Petty (Smith), 5. Sarah Ellen "Nellie" Petty (Myers),
6. Florence Chivers (Tainton)

50th Anniversary of Church of Christ in 1913, held at the Athenaeum hall, Doncaster



Doncaster Church of Christ - Pioneers 1913

Back: 2. Rev. David Amos Ewers, 3. Robert "Edwin" Wilson, 5. Frank Smedley^(snr), 6. William Hunter 7. Lewis McDowell?
 Middle: 1. David Tully? 2. Herbert McDowell, 3. William Thomas?, 4. Henry Crouch, 8. Elizabeth Smedley (Waters), 9. William Smedley,
 10. Sarah Ellen "Nellie" Petty (Myers), 11. Jane McDowell (Cameron), 12. Mrs John Smith, 13. George Thompson Petty
 Front: 1. John Tully, 3. Marion Crouch (Longmuir), 6. Thomas Porter, 7. Hannah Smith (Clarke), 10. Eliza Zelius (Furness)



Doncaster Church of Christ - Choir 1913

Back: Archibald Crouch, Herbert Petty, Frank Smedley^(snr), Phillip "Henry" Zelius, Thomas "Henry" Petty
 Middle: Gertrude Tully (Williamson), Alma Petty (Miller), Ada Tully (Petty), Elsie Allan (Wright) (minister's wife), Nellie Tully (Cameron),
 Vera Nellie Petty (Smith), Ruby Isabella Bullen (McDowell), Ruby Crouch (Caldow), Clara Neil (Waddleton)
 Front: Rosa Jane Petty (Smith), Rosina Tully (Cook), Sarah Ellen "Nellie" Petty (Myers), George Thompson Petty (Choirmaster),
 Elizabeth Smedley (Waters), Eliza Witchell (Smith), May Hewish (Crouch)

Note: the girls in white – their married names are in brackets



40th Anniversary of the Doncaster Church of Christ - Sunday School teachers 1903
 Mrs John Smith, Frank Petty, George Petty, Arthur Taylor, Alfred Smith, Mrs A. Smith
 Thomas "Henry" Petty, Dinah Petty (Smith), John Tully, Florence Chivers (Tainton)



40th Anniversary of the Doncaster Church of Christ - Deacons 1903
 Arthur Taylor, Henry Crouch (Jr), John Tully
 Herbert McDowell, Thomas "Tom" Petty, Frank Smedley, George Petty