

## CHURCHES \*\*\*\*\*

### Presbyterian

The first meeting to decide that a Charge be organised in Wedderburn was held on 1st May, 1867. Present at the meeting were Robert Steel, Angus Ross, Joseph Lockhart, Donald Ross and James Paterson. In July 1867, the Wesleyan Church kindly offered the Presbyterians the use of their church for services on Sunday evenings. The Mechanics Institute had apparently been used throughout 1867 for morning services.

Reverend Roxburgh was ordained as first Minister at Wedderburn in 1867.

Two tenders were received for the building of a church and the lower tender, submitted by Joseph Harrison, was accepted for the amount of £485-5-0d. Mr. James Paterson fulfilled the role of architect - he drew up plans and specifications, as well as supervising the construction of the church. The foundation stone was laid on 11th July, 1868 by Mr. Robert Steel and the church was finally opened on 17th January, 1869 by Reverend Abernathy.

Church services were discontinued at St. Andrew's on 1st November, 1970 because of a decision by a Joint Commission of the Methodist and Presbyterian Charges that it was neither responsible nor possible to maintain both the Presbyterian and Methodist places of worship in Wedderburn. However, it was agreed that the building would be available for Presbyterian weddings and funerals, if desired.

### Methodist

A local preacher from Dunolly was the first to preach to the Mt. Korong Wesleyans, in about 1854. His name was George Middleton and his place of worship was the store-room of the chief hotel in Wedderburn. Mr. Middleton formed a Church Building Committee which eventually arranged for erection of a building in 1856 or 1857. On 17th July, 1857 a meeting was called to elect a trust. This trust was elected and revised at a following meeting - the names of the twelve men being Thompson, Twiddy, Bunting, Jones, Letts, W. Smith, Christie, Neal, McEaten, Butterick, Steel and Standen.

A coloured preacher from Jamaica, Mr. George Bunting, was prominent in the late 1850's. He worked hard as a digger during the week, and on the sabbath he laboured even more strenuously to bring sinners to repentance.

The congregation increased so much that in 1859 the Chapel was enlarged and in 1861 the idea of a larger church was born. A large grant of land was made by the Government and the first service was held in the new Church on 1st July, 1866.

The Wedderburn Circuit had five preaching places in 1973 :-

- Kurraca - A new Church was opened in August, 1923
- Korong Vale - Church was erected in 1887
- Berrimal - A new Church was built in 1950 to replace the old one built in 1880
- Burke's Flat - Church first commenced in 1869.

### Church of England

The Rev. William Hall, M.A., of Brenanah, although not licensed to perform sacramental duties as a Priest in the Church of England, performed the sacrament of Baptism at Wedderburn first on November 26th, 1853. He visited Wedderburn occasionally until 1856 when he was transferred to Glenalbyn Grange. Here he began regular visitation to Wedderburn until 1861, when Mr. William Clarke Hose (later Archdeacon), was appointed to the District of Wedderburn. He used the old Denominational School for services, but it was found totally unsuitable for services. Volunteer labour and money subscribed finally resulted in the corner-stone of the new Church of Holy Trinity being laid on 14th May, 1866. Archdeacon Crawford laid the stone and placed a scroll containing sundry items in the stone immediately below the foundation stone. Much credit is due to Mr. Samuel Rinder, Treasurer of the Church at that time, for his physical and financial efforts to have the church completed.

David Ross was the first person baptised by Mr. Hose - the Baptismal Register shows the date as July 18th, 1861.

Captain Albert Jacha, V.C., was also baptised at the Church on July 28th, 1897.

### Salvation Army

The Salvation Army commenced in Wedderburn on 24th September, 1884 and the first officer, Lieutenant Mary Pengelly was appointed to take charge of the work on 28th October, 1885. The early history of the Army makes fascinating reading. On many occasions they faced violent opposition from the Korong Council, and the Magistrate, chiefly because of their habit of playing a drum in public on Sundays. There were many court cases as a result of this "disturbance of the peace", and in one particular instance the Court seized the Army's drums and cymbals. However, despite this opposition the Army progressed and a building was completed in 1890 at a cost of £300. The site of the building was opposite the "Express" office.

The Corps continued to operate until the 16th January, 1947, from which date, until it was officially closed down on the 6th March, 1957, it was attached to Eaglehawk.

The last officer to have charge of the Corps in Wedderburn was Captain Violet Ward.

### Roman Catholic Church

A church building was completed in 1880. Before this time services were held in the Court House or in any convenient building available. At the time of the erection of the church, the Rev. Father Meade was Parish Priest.

### Church of Christ

The Church of Christ commenced services in 1864. Mr. and Mrs. W. Burge, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Twiddy, Mr. and Mrs. W. Jones and Mr. Hugh Davis, then members of the Baptist denomination, became converted to the Church of Christ faith.

Mr. J.W. Cosh, a new arrival on the Wedderburn goldfields, who had been a member of the South Australian Church of Christ, discovered this small band of

enthusiasts. He convinced them that the establishment of a Church of Christ after the New Testament pattern, was infinitely better than a Baptist Church. The Church of Christ therefore commenced services in the Assembly Hall near the Wedderburn Hotel on July 7th, 1864. This hall was used until 1872 when an offer of land at the corner of Reef and Wilson Streets, was accepted for £5. On this site the meeting house was erected and opened in 1872. The meeting house consisted of an earth floor and clay brick walls - there was no ceiling. Soon the church rose to 100 souls and by 1900 it had 175 members and also 60 others living in the Circuit. A large brick church was built in 1903, close to the old meeting hall, which is now used as a Sunday School.