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Church Registers: Illawarra region (Wollongong) NSW, Church of England

Baptisms

Document	Start	End	Location	In BDA
Clergy returns	1828	1828	SANSW: ARK reel 5003, Vol 12	Online
Original church registers	1834	1864	ML: SAG reel 120	Online
Clergy returns	1829+			Not used
Kerrison James index	1827+		SANSW: ARK reel 5001, Vol 1	Not used

Marriages

Document	Start	End	Location	In BDA
Church Registers				Not processed
Clergy Returns				
Kerrison James Index	1827+		SANSW: ARK reel 5001, Vol 1	Not used

Burials

Document	Start	End	Location	In BDA
Church Registers				Not processed
Clergy Returns				
Kerrison James Index	1827+		SANSW: ARK reel 5001, Vol 1	Not used

Background notes on Illawarra / Wollongong Church of England registers

Original registers

The Anglican Parish of St Michael's Wollongong has its origins in chaplains posted in the 1820s and 1830s to the District of Illawarra, between Bulli and Nowra on the Shoalhaven River. The original registers dating from 1834 onwards are being progressively added to BDA. Three baptisms from 1828 also survive.

In 1827 the Rev Thomas Kendall (per *Earl Spencer* 1813), an Anglican missionary who had worked in New Zealand and South America, received a grant of land at Milton, Ulladulla, and acted as a unofficial chaplain in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven region, including Wollongong, until his death in 1832. Early church services at Wollongong were held in a barn belonging to Charles Throsby Smith, a prosperous free settler.

Records of only three baptisms performed by Kendall from 1828 have been located among NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages clergy returns. These were of children resident in Wollongong, Illawarra and Shoalhaven and seem to represent only a fragment of lost original register possibly kept by Kendall during 1827-1832. In addition to Wollongong, addresses of families baptising children in the 1830s include Dapto, Fairy Meadow, Gerringong, Shoalhaven, and Kiama.

The Rev Frederick Wilkinson (per *Grenada* 1825) was posted as Illawarra chaplain in 1833 and was succeeded by the Rev Matthew Devenish Meares (per *Mariner* 1825) in 1836. The present St Michael's

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Cathedral built in 1859 in Church Street, Wollongong, stands on the site of an earlier church built in the 1840s. Original registers from 1834 onwards survive in Anglican archives. As other Anglican parishes were established in surrounding suburbs and towns like Bulli and Kiama, the Wollongong parish shrank in size, though its population swelled with the growth of the City of Wollongong. The church has been a pro-cathedral within the Diocese of Sydney since 1970.

The original registers have been transcribed from a microfilm copy created by the Society of Australian Genealogists. The microfilms are held by the Society and in the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

For more information see:

BDA entries on this site for: Charles Throsby Smith (per *Bombay* 1819), Thomas Kendall (per *Earl Spencer* 1813), Frederick Wilkinson (per *Grenada* 1825) and Matthew Devenish Mearns (per *Mariner* 1825).

J W Davidson, 'Kendall, Thomas (1778–1832)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, published first in hardcopy 1967 (Vol 2):

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kendall-thomas-2296/text2965>.

Frank McCaffrey, *The history of Illawarra and its pioneers*, 1922.

www.archive.org

St Michael's Cathedral & Rectory, Wollongong, NSW Heritage database, Department of Environment, Energy and Science:

www.environment.nsw.gov.au

'St Michael's Anglican Church, Wollongong ' Illawarra Historical Society:

www.illawarramuseum.com

Publication	Text or abstract
<i>Sydney Gazette & NSW Advertiser</i> 21 March 1833: 3. http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2211260	'ILAWARRA. [FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.] On Sunday morning the 3rd Instant, the Rev. Thomas Hassell performed divine service in the Barrack Room at Wollongong, to a numerous congregation of the inhabitants of Illawarra, and there would have been many more assembled on this very interesting occasion had timely notice been given to that effect; the major part of the settlers were absolutely ignorant of the fact, and as this is not the first occasion we have had to complain, we sincerely hope at any rate, that it may be the last. To obviate a recurrence of this kind we would strongly recommend to the two Reverend Gentlemen who have received instructions from the Venerable the Archdeacon to visit us occasionally, that they apprise the resident-Magistrate of their intention, at least one week previously to their arrival, and that the Magistrate would cause a placard to this end to be fixed opposite the Court room, and that the constable (who is not overburdened with business) be sent round to inform the respectable and contiguous people, of the performance of Divine Service on that

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	<p>day; for it is indeed lamentable that one of the very few days set apart for this religious ordinance here, should be unattended for want of a knowledge of it. We sincerely hope this useful hint may have the desired effect. On the evening of the same day, the Rev. Mr. Wilson, of the Missionary Society, a nephew of Mrs. Allman's, commenced service, but, was unable to proceed, being very asthmatic. However, he briefly expounded the 18th chapter of Ezekiel, but the weather being unfavourable, and the hour appointed (5 o'clock) late, few persons attended. But we live in hope, that the period is not far distant when we shall be delighted every Sabbath morn by the pleasing call of the well known sound of the Church bell, resounding from field to field. The premises formerly occupied by the proprietor, Charles Throsby Smith, Esq. have been rented by the Archdeacon for the purpose of converting the barn into a chapel, and the dwelling for a Chaplain's residence, this eligible situation is in the centre of the Township of Wollongong, and consequently well suited for that purpose. A Clergyman is daily expected from England for this station; till his arrival however, a Mr, Layton, Catechist, is to officiate and to be stationed here, but we can't refrain from expressing dislike to these sort of gentlemen as a substitute.'</p>
<p><i>The Australian</i> (Sydney) 4 Oct 1833: 2. http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article42006119</p>	<p>'Government Gazette, Wednesday, October 2. 1833. His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to make the following appointments under the provisions of 4th Gul. 4th, No 7, viz,.... — Rev. Frederick Wilkinson, A.M. to be Chaplain of the District of Illawarra.'</p>
<p><i>Sydney Herald</i> 30 July 1835: 2. http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12852780</p>	<p>'MINUTES OF EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON POLICE. WEDNESDAY, 3 JUNE, 1835 W.N. Gray, Esq., Police Magistrate at Wollongong, called in and examined. The district of Wollongong extends from Bulli on the north to Shoalhaven River on the south, and from the Sea to the range of mountains which bound Illawarra on the west. The population of the district amounts to nine hundred and thirty persons. In consequence of there being no magistrate near the coast, to the south of my district, I am obliged to send mounted police and constables frequently as far to the southward as Bateman Bay [sic]. The police of the district consists of two constables, at two shillings and three-pence each per diem, one scourger at one shilling per diem, and three mounted policemen, who have a soldier attached to them for the purpose of taking charge of their barracks. There is a lock-up house now building at Wollongong, which is nearly finished and will contain two rooms and a hall. There are three cells attached. There is also a court-house there, containing one court-room, a room for the records and a room for the lock-up keeper, who is also the scourger. All these buildings are in one enclosure, surrounded by a twelve-feet paling. The court house is a brick building with a stone foundation. The lock-up is a strong log building, also with a stone foundation. The</p>

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	<p>average weekly cases at the Wollongong Bench is about four, of which three-fourths are convict cases. The great distance that the southern part of the district is from the Bench prevents many settlers from bringing their servants to trial as frequently as they would do were they nearer. I consider that one-half of the convict population of the district is at or near Shoalhaven; but, notwithstanding this circumstance, there have been only eight cases, from that part of the country, brought before the Bench within the last twelve months. I am of opinion, that in addition to the present police force of the district, one constable should be stationed at or near Shoalhaven River, and that a trustworthy person should be appointed lock-up keeper at Wollongong. Suitors have to come to the Wollongong Bench fifty miles from places*within the district; but some have also to come from as far as Bateman Bay [Batemans Bay]. About three years ago it was usual for the Police Magistrate of Wollongong to hold a Police Court once a month at Kiama; but this custom has been discontinued since the departure of Mr. Sleeman from the district. I, however consider, that it would be desirable to hold a Court there occasionally now, or rather farther south, at a boat-harbour called Geringong [Gerringong], which is, within ten miles of the southern extremity of the district, and where there is a Government-reserve for a village. There are two unpaid magistrates in the Wollongong district who attend the Bench when required. The clerk of the Bench has a salary of ninety pounds a year. He acts likewise in the capacity of deputy postmaster, from which he derives an income of about ten pounds a year. In addition to these, he holds the appointment of registrar to the Court of Requests, with a salary of thirty pounds a year. The mounted police are never employed in any but police duties. I find no difficulty in obtaining as many fit persons to fill the situation of constable, as are required for the district. The present constables are free by servitude, and the scourger is a prisoner of the crown. I should have no objection to employ a prisoner of the crown as a constable occasionally with freemen. My salary as police magistrate is one hundred and fifty pounds a year, and I am allowed a house. Wollongong is distant only seven miles from the northern, but fifty miles from the southern extremity of the district. The population of that part north of Wollongong, amounts to sixty persons the remainder of the population of the district being to the southward of it.'</p>
<p><i>Sydney Herald</i> 3 Mar 1836: 4. http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12853957:</p>	<p>'THE DIVISION OF THE COLONY INTO POLICE DISTRICTS... District of Wollongong extends from Bulli in the north to Shoalhaven in the south, and from the Sea to the Range of Mountains which bound Illawarra on the west. The Population is estimated at nearly 1,000 persons.'</p>
<p>"ILLAWARRA." <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> 17 Feb 1848: 2. http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12889874</p>	<p>'His Lordship the Bishop of Sydney has lately visited this district, for the purpose of consecrating three churches - Wollongong, Dapto, and Kiama; at each place his Lordship also held a confirmation, and was received by the inhabitants with that warm expression of feeling which is equally due to his station and his private character.'</p>

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General notes on Illawarra / Wollongong registers

Clergy returns

These are copies of the registers sent to the government and (with the exception of the three estrays from 1828) begin at the mid-1830s for Illawarra.

NSW Registry of Birth, Death & Marriage indexes

For the pre-1856 period, the online Indexes published by the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages provides index entries for baptisms, marriages and burials found in registers they hold. The BDM Indexes source entries from:

Kerrison James index

This index was not used as a transcription source for BDA entries as it is merely an index extracted from the church registers and contains errors.

NSW Registry of Birth, Death & Marriage Indexes

For the pre-1856 period, the online Indexes published by the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages provides index entries for baptisms, marriages and burials found in registers they hold.

The BDM indexes source entries from:

1. The Kerrison James Index listed above; that is Volumes 1-3 of ARK;
2. The Clergy Returns from 1827 onwards which are published in ARK.

*Not used: These sources are copies of the originals and were only used if the originals proved difficult to read.

Information Page written by Michael Flynn, January 2020

For more detailed information about the different types of church registers and for the list of other church registers included in the BDA see:

<http://www.bda-online.org.au/sources/church-registers>

Historical resources available from the BDA Shop:

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