

## CHRIST COLLEGE

Christ's College (as it was originally called) opened in 1846 at Bishopsbourne.

The foundation of a college "to provide a sound and liberal education for the sons of Colonists" on the lines of an Oxford or Cambridge college was originally proposed by Sir John Franklin, Lieutenant-Governor 1837-1843. He discussed the project for a couple of years by correspondence with the British Secretary of State and Dr. Arnold of Rugby School. Dr. Arnold recommended as headmaster John Philip Gell, who arrived in March 1840 and started a "superior" school, the Queen's School, to prepare boys for the college. Franklin then submitted his proposal to the Legislative Council which approved it and voted money for building a college and for Queen's School. Franklin and Gell proposed that the college should be established by charter, the Lieut-Governor should be visitor and the principal be appointed by the Crown and he and the fellows should manage the college. Both Dr. Arnold and Sir John Franklin considered college education must be "founded on a religious basis but Franklin wanted it "as little exclusive as possible". There should be "no religious tests, no interference with the conscience of either teacher or students and no notice taken of the distinction between different classes of Christians" although the principal should be of the church of the majority. A country site was preferred "to remove the incentive to drunkenness, gambling and low company" of a town and Franklin set apart 10 acres of the Government's farm at New Norfolk. There the first stone was laid of a college "dedicated to Christ" on 6 November 1840.

Nothing more was done, however. There was a petition from some Launceston residents that it should be equally accessible from Launceston as Hobart, there was opposition from other churches and, more significantly, there was an economic depression. The project had more or less lapsed before the Franklin's left in 1843. However, Lady Franklin gave 400 acres of land (Ancanthe) and her museum to be held in trust for any collegiate institution or university to be founded in the next twenty years with the approval of the Bishop. The grant to the Queen's School, too, was withdrawn in 1844 "in consequence of the depressed state of the colonial resources" and the school closed in 1845.

The newly appointed Bishop of Tasmania, Francis Russell Nixon, who arrived in 1843, took up the project and started to raise funds, especially in England through a committee headed by Sir John Franklin and with Archdeacon Marriott as secretary. Subscriptions were promised, including £500 from Franklin (conditional on a charter being granted to the college). Bishop Nixon proposed, therefore, to start the college in 1846 on the episcopal estate, Bishopsbourne, near Longford, and J. P. Gell, who had been ordained, agreed to stay on for a few years to be the headmaster, although Gell doubted whether the promised donations and subscriptions were either adequate or sufficiently guaranteed. Christ's College opened in October 1846 with room for 20 students. The regulations followed Gell's original proposal except that the visitor was the Bishop (not the Governor) and he appointed the warden and the trustees. According to the prospectus it was associated with the two church schools, Hutchins and Launceston Grammar. Rev. J. P. Gell was warden and there was a senior fellow to act as instructor and sub-warden, honorary fellows and divinity fellows (candidates for holy orders) a bursar and provision for senior and junior scholars. As Gell later described it to English subscribers, the College had 20 - 25 students (39 by 1854), plus 13 members - that is the warden, 3 clerical fellows, 3 lay fellows, candidates for holy orders, 6 scholars and the bursar. There was daily morning and evening chapel, communal dinner in hall with a high table, a college football and cricket ground and a college cricket club. The members formed themselves into a senior common room, like that of an Oxford or Cambridge college. Most notable was the extensive scholar's library, including many books donated by Rev. F.V. Thornton and other British clergy, J.P. Gell's own library, books donated or lent by Archdeacon R.R. Davies and Archdeacon Marriott and the Diocesan Clergy Library provided by the Associates of the late Dr. Bray of London. In 1848 Gell resigned to return to England and was succeeded by Rev. Frederick H Cox and then Rev. Samuel B. Windsor (1849-53) and Rev. Philip Valpy M. Filleul (1853-57).

Although Warden Filleul reported in 1854 that there were 39 students in residence,

more expected and the College was full and he was planning new buildings, including a new school room and an extension to the hall for the high table, Christ's College was in debt. In 1856 Bishop Nixon appointed a commission of inquiry into the past and present condition of the College, both educational and financial. The commission recommended the appointment of new trustees, the closing of the College and abandonment of the Bishopsbourne site.

From 1864 the new Bishop, Charles Henry Bromby, made various proposals for Christ's College, such as associating it with the Cathedral as a divinity school or associating it with Hutchins School, but these were opposed by the trustees, partly because the Trust was still in debt and partly to preserve the original objects of the foundation, as stated by Franklin and the Legislative Council. Requests for financial help for Launceston Grammar and Hutchins schools were also refused. In 1874 an equity case was brought in the Supreme Court and the case was settled in 1876 by a scheme certified in the Supreme Court by which 6 trustees of funds and property were appointed and provision made for a council for management of the college consisting of 6 clergy of the Church of England and 6 lay members of the Church, initially appointed by the Bishop with vacancies being filled alternately by nominations by the Bishop and by Synod. Christ's College re-opened in Hobart in 1879, at first for students of 16 or over and divinity students (aged 20 or over), but including younger boys from 1884. A house in Macquarie Street was rented and then in 1886 the premises of the former High School on the Domain were leased. In 1891, however, Christ's College was again closed because of serious debt and the insecure tenure of the High School lease but Bishop Montgomery promised that "in due time we can start again upon the true lines intended by the Founders".

Various new schemes were proposed between 1905 and 1911 and a lengthy equity case was considered in the Supreme Court concerning the terms of the trust, the intentions of the founders and a proposal that as the new University of Tasmania was now providing higher education, the intentions of the founders would be best promoted by assistance to the two church grammar schools. The judgement of the Court, however, retained the 1876 scheme. It was then recommended that Christ's College should be re-opened as an institution linking secondary school education with university education, including higher school education.

Christ's College was re-opened in 1912 for higher school education in conjunction with Hutchins School. New buildings were erected on part of Hutchins' property and Leonard Harford Lindon was appointed warden or "directing head" (in the *Diocesan Year Book* his name appears under the heading of Hutchins School as director or later as warden with a vice-master but no mention of Christ's College). In 1917 the post of joint warden of Christ's College and headmaster of Hutchins School (in effect headmaster) was offered to Rev. Charles C. Thorold, freeing L. H. Lindon for the university hostel side of the college. In 1918 Christ's College Hostel was opened in Park Street, in the old Holy Trinity Rectory, with L.H. Lindon, as Rector, offering tutorial assistance and coaching to university and matriculation students.

In 1904 a diocesan theological college, St. Wilfrid's, had been founded at Cressy. The property, Richmond Hill, Cressy had been bequeathed to the Bishop of Tasmania by James Denton Toosey (c 1800-1883), formerly one of the trustees of Christ's College Estate, for "a collegiate institution for bringing up students in classical, mathematical and theological erudition and as a . . . stronghold of learning and a school of christian gentlemen and also for the purpose of providing clerical ministration for the Church of England at Cressy . . ." to be similar to Christ's College and "as far as may be practical be conducted in connecton with Christ's College". He also left £25 a year for the Cressy clergyman and money to enlarge and improve Trinity Church, Cressy, in a fitting manner. The income from the estate was not large, however, and the Bishop established a theological college, only, the warden being rector of the parish of Cressy.

Like the two church schools St. Wilfrid's was in need of funds and in the 1920s further attempts were made to draw up a new scheme combining the four institutions and their trust funds. Finally in 1926 the Christ College Act was passed: "An Act to incorporate Christ College and similar institutions". By this Act property was vested in Christ College Trust consisting of 6 persons of which two were to be nominated by each of the three institutions, Christ College, Hutchins School and Launceston Church of England Grammar School. Christ College was to be managed by a board consisting of the bishop,

as chairman and 6 other members, 2 appointed by the bishop, 2 by Synod and 1 each by the boards of Hutchins and Launceston Grammar Schools. The bishop was to be visitor, and as visitor he would appoint the warden. Church of England prayers were to be used but there was to be no religious test and attendance at prayers would not be compulsory. Christ College might be affiliated to the University of Tasmania. St. Wilfrid's College was to continue as the diocesan theological training college but it could be closed and all theological training given at Christ College. The name used in the Act was Christ College (not Christ's as formerly). The apostrophe was actually first dropped in a draft of proposals for reopening the College by the bishop dated 17 November 1905.

Under the Christ College Act of 1926, St. Wilfrid's Theological College was merged with Christ College and in 1929 the warden and 5 theological students moved into the new Christ College building in Park Street, Hobart (the old Holy Trinity Rectory with additional buildings) together with 12 university students and in 1931 there were twenty in residence. The warden of St. Wilfrid's, W.R. Barrett, became warden of Christ College. The Order of St. Wilfrid, originally formed in 1922 for theological students and clergy who were students of St. Wilfrid's College, was adopted in 1931 for divinity students of Christ College. After ordination they became full members and could be invested with a hood (black with a maroon edge) to wear in church. The Order published a journal *The Wilfridian*.

In 1929 Christ College Board petitioned the University of Tasmania for the College to be affiliated to it and this was granted in 1933. In 1962 a new building was opened on the new Sandy Bay site of the University.