

**Opening of the New Rectory,
St. John's Anglican Church Newcastle,
Saturday, 26th June 1993**

Speech by Parish Secretary, Mr. Charles Hughes

My Lord Bishop and your Lady, Distinguished Guests, Friends of St. John's and Parishioners:

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Parish on this happy occasion.

Today we celebrate the dedication of our new Rectory, and we give thanks to God for His inspiration and guidance in turning adversity into opportunity.

On the 27th of December 1989, Newcastle lost its innocence, so far as our confidence in the stability of the ground on which we stood, was concerned. Most of us here will remember the dislocations to our daily routines, and, briefly, a feeling of insecurity not previously recognised. I detected an idea amongst Novocastrians that maybe we would be shaken again on the anniversary in 1990. Happily nothing of that nature happened.

But the Parish, and Newcastle, set about rebuilding. Our Church Hall is now better than ever. The slow process of reaching agreement on repairs to our Church building advances surely. And we have a fine, new Rectory.

With regard to the Rectory, the Parish readily agreed to the Vestry's proposal to demolish the old building and seek a financial settlement with the insurance company. We thank Mr. John Woods, then Diocesan Registrar, for negotiating an eminently satisfactory deal in that regard. The National Trust, Heritage Branch of the State Planning Department, and City Council, assisted us in the process of demolition and replacement.

It was good that the demolisher was able to recycle much of the material of the old Rectory, so parts of it will grace other buildings. Such is the stuff of local history in years to come someone will say, for instance: "That stairway, fireplace, window, or whatever, came from the old St. John's Rectory."

The foundation stone is preserved in our Church Hall.

David Rose, of Suters Architects Snell, served us a design concept for the new Rectory which sparked much interest and comment. He patiently took it all on board, while sticking to his basic views. The Property Approvals Board of the Diocese contributed constructive suggestions, and the plans were finalised.

Belkin Constructions took it from there with efficiency and skill. The smooth progress of the new building was a tribute to them, the Master Bryn Bell, Foreman Brian Boswell, and all the workmen.

From the start we have had the conviction that it would all come together in the end, and it has. Through all our efforts, God has given us a fine new Rectory. It is fitting that we have a new Bishop to dedicate it to God's service. May our new Bishop also help us to re-dedicate our hearts and minds to building Christ's kingdom here on earth.

Thank you, my Lord Bishop, for being here today, and putting the seal, as it were, on our efforts.