

Church Point

Church Point is located at the southern end of Pittwater opposite Scotland Island. It was named after a wooden church that was located there until its demolition in 1932.

In 1864 William Oliver was granted 66 acres of land on the headland here. William Oliver's family already had close connections with this corner of Pittwater, as they were granted 40 acres at Elvina Bay in 1842 and farmed in the area for many years. William donated an acre of land for a church and burying ground at Church Point. Only the cemetery remains and William Oliver and his wife Mary are buried here. To the east of Oliver's holding were granted 40 acres to George Weller and 40 acres to W. Cape. Cape's Flat was another name commonly used at the end of the nineteenth century. To the west 41 acres was granted to George Brown, after whom Brown's Bay is named.

The deep water at Church Point meant that it was a good point for loading and unloading ships, which were the main means of communication during the nineteenth century. The original wharf was rebuilt in 1885. It is still an important wharf for communication with the offshore communities around Pittwater.

Memories

"Now we shall go up McCarr's Creek to a little inlet called Brown's Bay. George Brown and his family were the owners of the 41 acres estate "Waterside", a grant made in 1880. His house of weatherboard stood on the hillside, reached by a zig-zag path from the little stone jetty. The estate extended right to the head of the bay, where there is a gully, clad in various kinds of flora interesting to the botanist. Two old peach trees grew in front of the verandah, which was supported on pillars and at the head of the bay, passion-fruit vines grew over the rocks and trees. A track from Church Point led to it and on the way round exquisite glimpses of the creek were obtained through the gum-trees. I often stayed with the Browns at this old house and in the years 1909-10, it was a sequestered spot, quite isolated even from the few inhabitants of Church Point.

More than forty years ago the visitor drifting along in his boat would have heard the strains of the piano adding glamour to the peaceful night. Our hostess is playing an old hymn or some melody of bye-gone days and an atmosphere that is almost Victorian is imparted to the drawing-room. Outside the bush is dark and dreamy and mysterious insect voices accentuate the sense of loneliness. Now that old home has disappeared and the motorist travels to Coal and Candle Creek over its site, quite heedless of those halcyon days."

JSN Wheeler, Some Old Families Of Pittwater, n.d.

Reading

"William Oliver and his family deserved to be remembered as the pioneers of Church Point. William the son of Henry and Margaret Oliver was born in Parramatta in 1805. William Oliver settled in a remote area, now known as Church Point, in 1862. He originally owned a farm

on the neck of the Peninsula, afterwards known as Flood's Peninsula. A crown grant of 66 acres was made to William Oliver on 16 June 1864. His land covered most of the area from Church Point to Ingleside.

His two eldest sons, William and Henry, were drowned around 1854 and the boys were buried on the peninsula. Frederick his grandson died of injuries suffered when he fell from his horse in 1867 and he is also buried 'somewhere' on the peninsula. At that time there was no designated burial ground. William could see the development going on and could see the opportunities for education, he wanted the best for his family, his children and their children. William gave an acre of land to be used for a chapel, a graveyard and a school.

...The block was divided into three; the bottom section was to be used for a church – so that the older people wouldn't have to climb the hill to Church; the next section was to be used as a graveyard – some of the tombstones are still there to see; and the top section would be a school because from there those on the western shores could see their children arriving and leaving school. Church Point was the hub of Pittwater and the school at the top of the hill was accessible for children walking down Lane Cove Road and also by the children coming by boat from the western shores. The chapel was to be used by all denominations and the area was known as Chapel Point, not Church Point.

The chapel was still being built when the first service was held. The first preacher was George McIntosh. The chapel was built with timber donated by William Oliver's brother-in-law, Peter Duffy from Duffy's Forest. Various individuals gave about £60 to buy other necessary materials. George McIntosh later became a Church of England minister. When a minister was available he would take the service; there was no set roster, they would just come out when they were available. In the meantime there were lay preachers who took different services – it would not matter which minister was there because it was not a church of any denomination, it was a chapel and it remained so until around about 1887 when the Methodist Church put up a notice and a picket fence. By the next year the name of the area had become Church Point instead of Chapel Point.

...The attendance at the Methodist Church dwindled and eventually it fell into disuse. The church was demolished in 1932."

Nan Bosler, *The Fascinating History of Pittwater*, 1997.

Further reading

Peter Altona & Sue Gould, *Church Point (NSW) History: Places, People and Activities*
Series of articles presenting the history of Church Point – The Schools at Church Point, The Church, Quarter Sessions Reserve, The Church Acre, The Cemetery and The Point-Part 1, 1860 to 1929.

www.pittwaterhistory.wordpress.com Also available in the vertical files under "Church Point" in the Local Studies area.

Nan Bosler, *Fascinating History of Pittwater*, 1998.
Oliver family and local history

NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL

G & S Champion, *Manly Warringah & Pittwater 1850-1880*, 1998.
Oliver family & establishment of church.

Alan Corbett, *Church Point & McCarr's Creek*, 1987.
Recollections and history from 1915.

Joan Lawrence, *Pittwater Paradise*, 1994, *Pittwater Pictorial History*, 2006
General history

Wade Orth, *From Church Point 1872...*, 1986.
Pittwater parish history.

Alan Sharpe, *Manly to Palm Beach*, 1983.
General history