



William Harrop of Albany Street, died suddenly at his residence on 22 April 1904. He was born in England, emigrated to Victoria when quite a young man, and found his way to Beechworth, where he carried on business as a butcher. However he found that there more profits to be made in carting the rich wash from the mining claims to where water was available for washing up, so he set up in that business. In some instances he received as much as one pound per load.

Although there were no roads and scarcely anything in the nature of a track, he travelled overland from Beechworth to Sydney where he was married, afterwards driving his wife back to Victoria with his own team.

On the discovery of gold in Otago Harrop decided to try for his fortune in this colony, and on arrival he made his way to Weatherstones and Waitahuna districts. When gold was discovered in the Lakes District he proceeded to Invercargill and entered business as a carrier. At that time prices for cartage from Invercargill to Kingston ranged from 60 pounds to as high as 120 pounds per ton. By dint of energy and determination William Harrop was remarkably successful, and, despite the lack of roads and the swampy nature of much of the country he made some very smart trips.

Harrop returned to Dunedin and became acquainted with John Hyde Harris who induced him to take up the business of a commission agent and the management of Harris's extensive property. Harrop was active in the lodge Manchester Unity Order of Oddfellows, and an active member of the Dunedin Bowling Club, and enjoyed a game of lawn tennis in his advanced age. Although he made a point of insisting that all monetary transactions should be carried out on strict business lines, he was ever-ready to assist any real case of necessity that was brought to his attention.

Bishop Nevill saw the need for a new cathedral and may well have been gratified to learn that good things were happening at parish level but he had more grandiose plans and there seemed little chance that they would be fulfilled. The turning point came when William Harrop died in 1904 and left the bulk of his estate for the building of a Cathedral. But the Diocese had to help itself. Nothing was to be paid over until the Cathedral trustees had £20,000 in hand and work had actually begun. There was also to be a memorial to this prime benefactor.

William Harrop stipulated in his will that, out of the £30,000 bequest to help build the cathedral, a sum of money should be set aside for a window associated with him. The fourth Bay features the Harrop window. After the opening of the nave, a dealer in art treasures, Mr. Schapiro, visited Dunedin and the New Cathedral board purchased the window from him. The window originally came from a demolished City of London church. It was placed over the altar in the temporary chancel (now demolished) and unveiled by Bishop Richards in 1921. The window depicts the four Evangelists: St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John.

In preparation for the building of the Cathedral and eventually other premises for church and diocesan activities a piece of land adjoining the Cathedral property had been acquired. Sections in Cumberland Street were exchanged for this triangular area through an agreement with the Dunedin City Council. The area, adjoining what is now Harrop Street, contained a massive building which had been used as a fire station since 1879.

St Paul's parishioners had occasionally been distracted from worship by the sound of the massive firebell in the tower of the Municipal Building and then the bustle and shouting as the horse-drawn fire engine went into action. They were able to tell in which area fire had occurred because, in addition to the clamorous summons to fire fighters, a code was used. The bell was tolled once for a fire in South Ward, twice for High Ward, three times for Bell Ward, and four times for Leith Ward. By 1912, however, the brigade had moved and diversion ceased.

William Harrop is buried in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery.

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