

Bishop Sydney James Kirkby (24 January 1879 – 12 July 1935) – **13th July**

Sydney James Kirkby was born in Bendigo. He studied at Moore College, and graduated with first class honours. He was priested in 1906, shortly after marrying. He worked as a parish priest, but continued his studies, going to Durham University in 1912 for further study. On his return to Australia he combined parish duties with teaching at Moore College. In 1920 he was appointed as the CEO of the newly formed Bush Church Aid Society. The Society was formed by a group of evangelical clergy in 1919 to address the needs of outback Australians, with the motto "Australia for Christ" and slogan "We begin where the railroad ends". Kirkby was one of the few senior clergy who supported this initiative. As Organizing Missioner (his official title) he was determined to travel to the selected sites – first Cobar, then Wilcannia, then the far west of SA before sending any staff there. He was also very successful in publicizing the mission through writing.

In 1932 he became Coadjutor Bishop of Sydney and was assigned to St Philips, the oldest church in Sydney. There he was highly regarded for his preaching, which drew large crowds, and his work on the social and financial problems of the Great Depression period. He was nominated for the post of Bishop in 1934, but worked to have Bishop Howard Mowll elected instead.

On his death in 1935 he was buried at St Philips.





Bishop Kirkby, early 1930's



"Carrying his swag"

St Philip's Church (now known as Church Hill Anglican) is known to be the oldest Parish Church in Australia, founded in 1788. It is located between York Street, Jamison and Clarence St, in the area which has been known as Church Hill after Governor King laid the foundation stone of the second church in 1800.

The first church was of wattle and daub, built by convict labour. It was used as a school (taught by the first chaplain of the colony, Rev. Richard Johnson). All convicts were required to attend church services each Sunday – it was believed that this would assist in their reform, but as one commentator wryly comments they "Didn't see it in quite the same way – in 1798 they burnt the church down."

Again using convict labour, a sandstone Church, begun in 1800, was used from 1810 to 1856. It has been referred to as "the ugliest church in Christendom".



The current Perpendicular Gothic-inspired Church was erected from 1848 to 1856. The tower was based on that of Magdalen College, Oxford.

