

Kamaruka (as it was spelt then) appears for the first time in Diocesan records in 1868.

In April of that year the Bishop preached for the Church Society and the collection was three pounds. Later in that year the Reverend JL Knight appealed for a Church Society and "Kamaruka" responded with two pounds twelve shillings and sixpence and Wolumla with twelve shillings and one penny. The next year what the Bishop called "a Church of admirable design" was built at Kameruka.

Holy Trinity is a brick Church originally built with a shingle roof, designed by Edmund Blackett and built in 1869. It was built by Charles Galli of Wolumla along with voluntary labour from Kameruka Estate at a cost of five hundred and sixty five pounds. The bricks were produced at Kameruka. Blackett also designed the pews, communion rail, low box pulpit and stone font 'in quite plain style, befitting a place of worship for modest tenant farmers'.

The Church was consecrated on 24th February 1872. A tablet of commemoration was erected in 1934. A reredos and altar lights were given in 1908 in memory of Mr & Mrs Henry Wren. Some refurnishing was undertaken in 1916. The old prayer-desk-pulpit was removed in 1918 and the present oak prayer desk introduced. The new altar (oak) was given in memory of CT Stiles. The Litany desk commemorates John S Hukins, Churchwarden and Synodsmen. The Church was re-roofed with slate in 1908.

A stipend to pay the Minister was collected quarterly at ten shillings per family. There were many marriages, christenings and funerals performed in the tiny Church perched on a hill. Sunday School picnics were welcome relief from the farm chores for the children.

A Bible was presented to the church in December 1870 by William Macquarie Cowper who became the first Anglican Dean in Australia. The Bible is displayed in the Church.

A beautiful stone memorial was erected by the Kameruka Estate Employees to the memory of those connected with Kameruka Estate who gave their lives in the Great War 1914-1918.

Holy Trinity is intrinsically associated with the Tooth Family, who came from Kent in England and took up pastoral interests in the Monaro and Bega Valleys. The Church site, the Glebe and the Cemetery were donated by Sir Robert Lucas-Tooth, Bart.

Tragically Sir Robert Lucas-Tooth's three sons died on active service in World War 1. Sir Robert himself died in 1916. An Alabaster memorial tablet given by Lady Lucas-Tooth was placed in Holy Trinity.

Sir Robert Lucas-Tooth's youngest son Leonard inherited his father's Barony to become Sir Leonard but he too died in 1918. He had two daughters, Rosemarie and Christine. Christine inherited Kameruka and married Derick Foster.

In the mid 1970's Christine's second eldest child Francis (Frank) Foster took over the management of Kameruka Estate (and ultimate ownership). In 2007 the property was sold and Frank and his wife Odile retired to a property in Tasmania.

Sir Robert endowed a scholarship for Anglican Theological students to attend Oxford or Cambridge universities for three years, and that trust is still operating today.

Holy Trinity is now a part of the Sapphire Coast Anglican Parish which includes Churches in Merimbula, Pambula, Wyndham, Candelero, Tantawangalo and Wolumla and Eden.

Although regular services are no longer held, Baptisms, Marriages and Funeral Services are still conducted by arrangement with the Parish. An annual Service is held each Spring. Visitors to the service are invited to tour the Kameruka homestead gardens, Memorial Hall and then picnic at the famous 'Lords View' cricket ground.

The Church is generally accessible at most times and regular tour coaches visit Kameruka and the Church site. With donations that are received the Parish is able to fund some of the expenses which go towards the regular mowing of the Church surrounds and the Cemetery.

Some 40 years ago two pews were removed from the Church, one from the back and one from the front. It is not known exactly when and why this occurred and over the years there has been much speculation as to what happened. Holy Trinity was part of the Bega Parish then and some thought suggests the back pew was removed to enable more room around the Baptismal Font, whilst the front pew to make room for a Choir.

A interesting set of circumstances involving a chance visit to the annual service along with a connection to St Johns Church in Bega bought the pews to light. It seems that in mid 2013 St Johns were having a clean out of an old shed and one of the parishioners who was helping found the pews. The history of the pews was not known nor where they came from. Ironically one week later the same Parishioner came to the Holy Trinity annual service and recognised where the pews had been. The pews have been restored and finally returned to their rightful place. The Lord certainly does move in mysterious ways.

Maintenance will always be an issue with a building that is 145 years old (in 2014), but the Church at this time remains in good condition and through regular inspection most work or repairs are carried out, often with voluntary help or generous tradespersons.

The Bega Valley is a vital part of the agricultural history of New South Wales and much is owed to the owners of Kameruka Estate who did so much to establish the area as it is today. The construction of a Church such as Holy Trinity was indeed a visionary act and one that today still stands proudly on the top of a beautiful site as a lasting legacy to God and his great works.

For information contact the Parish Office, Main Street Merimbula 02 6495 4353
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Local contact: Sandy Macqueen 0408 979 759.

Acknowledgements:

'Kameruka' published in 1989 by Vickie Small
'Ye Old Parish of Kameruka', published by the Sapphire Coast Anglican Parish
'Welcome to Holy Trinity Church Kameruka', a Parish publication for visitors to the Church.
Discussions with Mr & Mrs Frank Foster.
Personal research Sandy Macqueen May 2014.