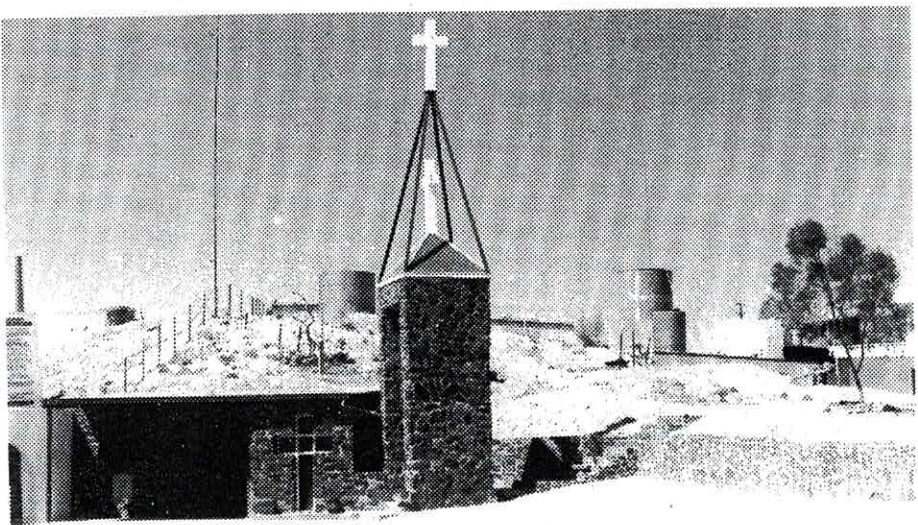


COOPER PEDY TIMES

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CHURCH EXTENDED



The new additions to the Catholic church featuring the bell tower, donated by Opal Inn Pty Ltd.

About 150 locals and tourists attended the blessing and official opening of extensions to the underground church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, in Coober Pedy last month.

Bishop of the Port Pirie diocese, Bishop Peter de Campo, officiated at the ceremony which was held in conjunction with a regular Sunday mass.

The Bishop congratulated parishioners and the local community for their "enthusiasm, energy and co-operation" in building "extensions on a church well known throughout the world."

"It is a work of great love", he said, one which had been completed in a remarkably short time. Work by local miners on the extensions began in February this year. Parish priest, Father Paul Bourke, said all manual work had been

unpaid and materials for the job had been donated by many of the parishioners.

The church was the first in Coober Pedy and originated from a dugout bought for £300 in 1965.

A single tree, still standing on top of the dugout, was then used by locals to identify the church to visitors.

When it was officially opened in 1967 it had a capacity for 50 people. The extensions have made room for up to 200 people of which 80 could be seated. All interior walls have been varnished and wiring concealed behind concrete skirtings and carpets.

Its uniqueness has been emphasised by patch and opal chips, inlaid in some parts of the walls.

After the ceremony a small function was held on the grounds outside the church.

AIRPORT COSTS MORE

At a meeting of the CPPMA on September 20th, Dr Ian McPhail, the Director of Local Government, informed the committee that repairs to the airport will cost this town an extra \$20,000.

With this new, added cost, it now means the towns share of the repair bill will rise to \$40,000. The total cost of repairs is expected to be around \$310,000.

The repair work does not mean the airstrip will be extended or widened, instead the existing bitumen will be removed and then a new surface laid.

Many pilots have complained about the dangerous and unsafe nature of the strip for some time, and the CPPMA has been periodically repairing holes, etc. ever since it was completed and passed by the Department of Transport, two years ago.

The President, Mr Malliotis, has suggested, instead of repair work being done, the Association should push for a new strip which could be capable of handling the F27 Fokker aircraft.

The cost of this type of airstrip would be in the vicinity of \$1.3m. At this stage the CPPMA has not made any final decisions as to what course of action it will take.

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