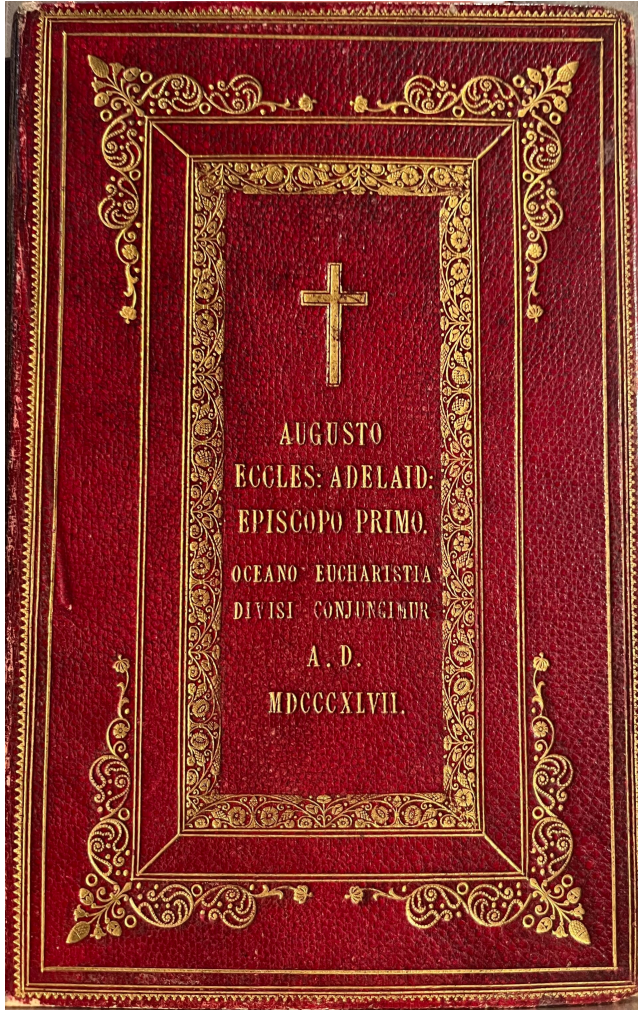


Bishop Short's prayer book donated to St Peter's Cathedral

BY BENJAMIN OPIYO

A prayer book that was once owned by the first Anglican Bishop of Adelaide, Augustus Short, and worth thousands of dollars, has been donated anonymously to St Peter's Anglican Cathedral.

The book, bound in Moroccan leather with beautiful illustrations, and dotted through with Bishop Short's handwritten notes, is believed to have been presented to him during his consecration.



It was on display at the cathedral for the first time at the patronal festival on 29 June 2025. The same date, 178 years ago when the first Bishop Short, was consecrated at Westminster Abbey.

The prayer book sits at the heart of the Oxford movement in the Church of England and signifies Bishop Short's theological contribution to Adelaide.

The Oxford movement, also known as the Tractarian movement, refers to the 19th century movement centred at Oxford University that sought to restore [traditional catholic practices](#) in the Church of England.

Bishop Short was a parish priest and taught at Oxford University, the centre of the Tractarian movement, with which he was associated.

The book, pictured right, comprises two sections: a selection of prayers from the Book of Common Prayer and a small book of a few ceremonies for the consecration of churchyards, chapels, and burial grounds. The latter was controversial because it was not in the Book of Common Prayer, says Peter Burdon, the Cathedral Administrator.

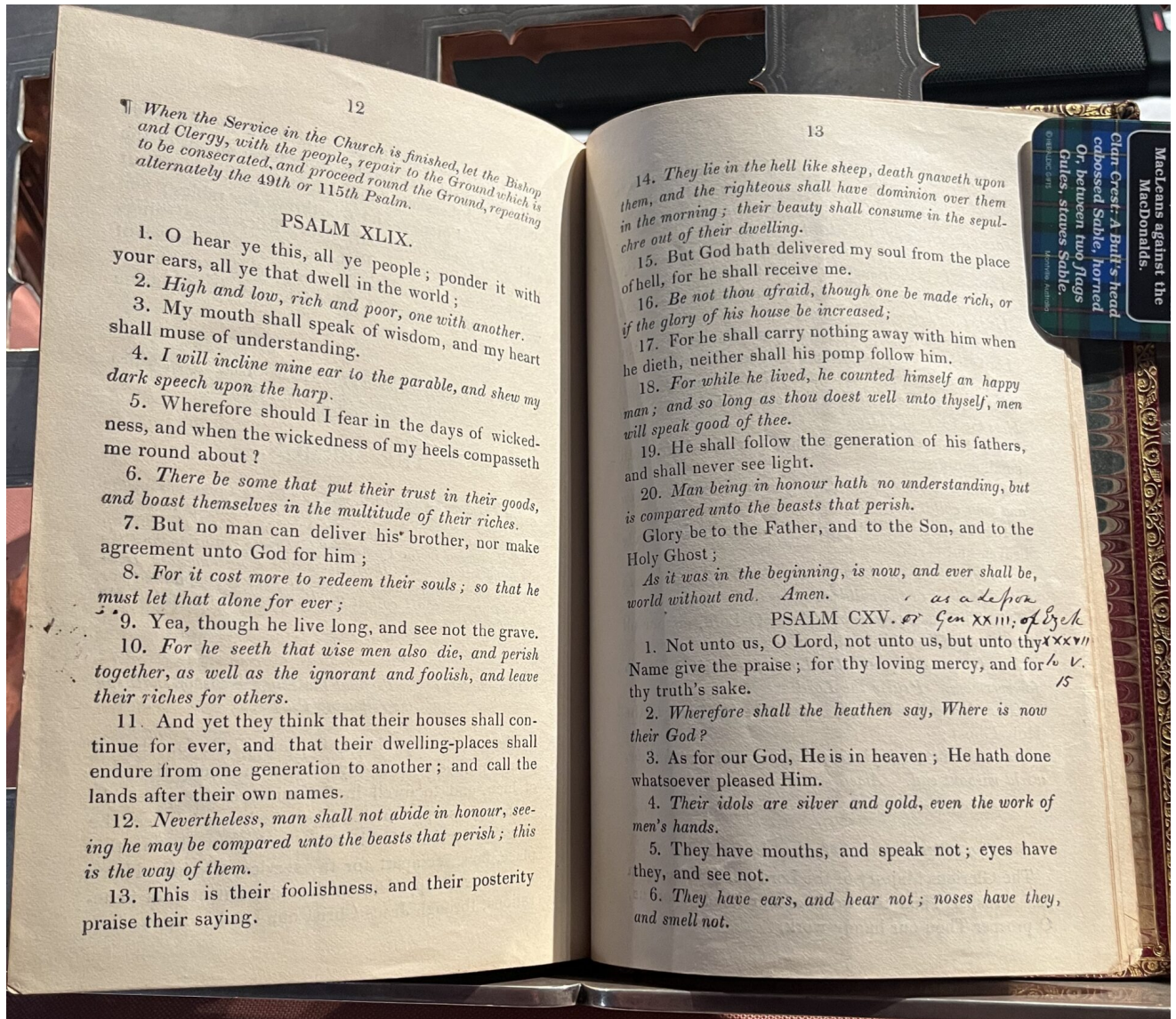
Burdon has been eager to build the Cathedral's archives, and identified the Bishop Short's book online for a sale for \$2,500, says Burdon who could not justify such an expensive purchase until a

donor presented him with the pleasant surprise of gifting it to the church.

Burdon, who has commissioned a book on Bishop Shortâ??s contribution to the founding of the University of Adelaide, explains his excitement.

â??It is unique. A unique item associated with the first Anglican Bishop of Adelaide. It is very interesting in antiquarian terms.

â??But for Adelaide Anglicanism, it is interesting because it was given to the person who made the Diocese of Adelaide what it is or what it became. And itâ??s beautiful as well, which helps.â?•



The pages of Bishop Shortâ??s prayer book feature notes in his own hand.

Burdon says that Bishop Shortâ??s story has shaped the Diocese of Adelaide and, by extension, Adelaide. He contributed to the founding of St Peterâ??s College and the University of Adelaide, of which he was inaugural Vice Chancellor, and laid the foundation stone for St Peterâ??s Cathedral, which stands tall in North Adelaide today.

His story established a Tractarian Anglo-Catholic theology and ecclesiology in Adelaide which has been strongly sustained from the time of its foundation.

The Oxford movement argued that the Church of England had departed from its historical truths, and an Anglo-Catholic sensibility to care for the poor and weak. This principle guided Bishop Short exemplified this to found the University of Adelaide, [open to every capable person, regardless of wealth](#).

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