

The Wandong History Group Inc. Quarterly Newsletter FREE with your What 's News

“WHAT’S OLD”

Issue 18—June 2021

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FROM THE EDITOR

Half the year gone, another lockdown, and delays in our Heritage permit, what next I wonder. Still overall we don't have much to grumble about, we are still living the dream in Australia. This brings me to ponder over what we have and what we loose, life's round about I guess. It was sad to see the remains of the Clonbinane Park Homestead being knocked down, but inevitable as the remains of the building were dangerous, the once grand tower had already fallen in, so it was time to go. However the real loss occurred back in February 2009 when the building was damaged beyond repair by that terrible fire. What we did see was the Wandong Terra Cotta lumber performing in the manner it was meant to, with walls still standing where the brick was used internally. The Terra Cotta Lumber brick made at Wandong was always meant to be used internally as a fireproofing brick, the few extant buildings in Wandong may have been an experiment on Robertson's part to see how it would perform when used externally, but Clonbinane Park was a great testament to the brick and its fireproofing properties.

Most will be aware that the History Group is helping the Friends of Mt Disappointment in getting a plaque installed on the summit of the mountain to remember the eight serving airmen who lost their lives there. The service is set for August the 5th at 12.45, the time and day the first plane crashed. Trevor Vienet has been the driving force to get this done and we are happy to be able to assist in getting this project completed. This project is being funded by donation, if you would like to donate you can direct credit the history groups account. BSB 633 000 A/C 147326292 Ref: DONTVPL. Council has again delayed a decision on the internment hut, we are twelve months down the track with this project and yet no decision by them as to whether we can proceed or not. Given we had council support when we applied for the grant this is very frustrating and it seems that council are now not willing to get in and help groups such as ours with projects that will eventually be beneficial for the town. The community group have been facing the same frustrations with projects they have on the go, and its very disheartening to have these constant battles.



Images of Clonbinane Park in all her glory

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH Part 2

We left St Michael's Catholic Church in the last edition around 1927, skipping a few years forward to 1953 the wedding of local girl Margaret Harper to Gordon Cleve of Wallan at the church. By this time Father Morrison (to become Monsignor later) was the officiating priest, more on his remarkable career later. It was 1954 before the first requiem mass was held at St Michael's, with the passing of local identity Ernest Thomas.

Kilmore Free Press (Kilmore, Vic: 1870 - 1954), Thursday 15 July 1954, OBITUARY- ERNEST THOMAS With the passing of Mr. Ernest Thomas on Sunday last, Wandong lost one of its most highly respected and popular residents. Although the deceased had been in failing health for some years his death in the Hospital came as a shock to his family and many friends. Born at Bendigo 73 years ago the late Mr. Thomas came to Wandong 44 years ago and conducted the store and post office until his retirement 18 months ago. During his long residence at Wandong he took a keen interest in all local affairs, being treasurer of the Public Hall and prominently associated with the Athletic Club over the years. He was also a member of the Board of Management of the Kilmore Hospital for a number of years and a great worker for that institution in the Wandong area. From the time of his arrival in Wandong the late Mr Thomas was a devout and regular attendant at St Michael's Church, and was largely instrumental in clearing the debt on that building and in improvements and additions thereafter effected. In years gone by Mr Thomas was secretary of the Catholic Federation and a pioneer member of the Holy Name Society. For some years he was a member of the Kilmore Golf Club and a keen player. During his long residence in Wandong he made a wide circle of friends throughout the district and his death will be greatly regretted. The deceased is survived by his wife, one son (John) and daughter (Teresa, Mrs. Hughes); one son (Ernest) predeceased him. After Requiem Mass at St. Michael's Church, Wandong, the interment was made in the Kilmore Catholic Cemetery and the funeral was very largely attended. The services at the Church and graveside were conducted by the Rev. Fathers F. Thomas (Bendigo) and B. Thomas. (Wangaratta), nephews of the deceased, assisted by



Rev Fathers O'Callaghan, Hennessy and Kane.



Some changes were made to the building with the west facing porch changed to face north, possibly to allow easier access or maybe to stop the hot westerly winds blowing into the building.



Changes were also made inside the church, the railing separating the altar from the nave was removed opening up the interior. The confessional was removed to the rear of the church. In the image it can be seen near the altar.

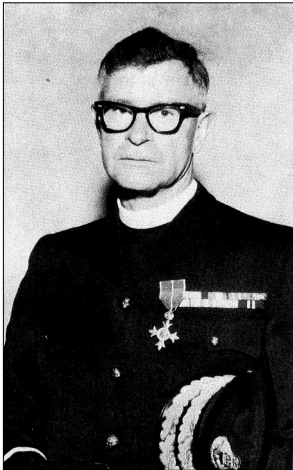
The Arrival of Fr. Kenneth Morrison.

Fr. Morrison (later Monsignor) came to Kilmore parish in 1952. He had a military history of chaplaincy having been a part time chaplain to the Point Cook and Laverton bases of the RAAF. During World War II he became the Principal Catholic Chaplain. He was responsible for 60 chaplains who served in Britain, Malta the far East, Japan and Australia. In 1952 he took up the appointment of parish priest in Kilmore. He gained support of the parishioners to restore the church which was severely damaged. He was responsible for rebuilding the school that had been condemned by the health department. In 1968 He extended the school building and organised a bus to bring students to St Patricks from Kilmore East and Broadford, driving the bus himself for 17 years. During his remaining time at Kilmore he added churches at Darraweit Guim and Wallan, he administered a circuit of six district churches. In 1962 he was awarded an OBE for his work with the Air Force.

He was fond of riding his beloved Harley Davidson motor cycle and told the story of travelling the Hume Highway and on being pulled up by a young constable and asked to display his licence, the constable immediately seeing the title Monsignor stammered an apology of sorts, the Monsignor quickly put him out of his misery with a "Bless you my son" and accompanying hand gesture was soon on his way, leaving the bewildered constable in his wake. In 1990 the Ken Morrison Memorial Centre was opened and the chapels of St Mark and St John the Evangelist were dedicated to Monsignor Morrison.

On June 18th 1977 Monsignor Morrison handed over the care of the Kilmore Parish to Fr. Peter Rankin after 25 years of service to the local community. He died on the 17th August 1990 and is buried in the Kilmore Catholic cemetery.

The church continued to attract a fair patronage throughout the sixties and seventies, christenings, and weddings took place periodically although few funerals were conducted at Wandong.



Fr. (later Mons.) Ken Morrison was appointed P.P. of Kilmore in 1951 and was to be the official head of the Church in Kilmore throughout the fifties,

sixties and seventies. At the time of his appointment he was still part-time chaplain to the R.A.A.F.



Wedding of Janette Christensen to William Boulton with Monsignor Morrison officiating.

During the 1990's patronage began to fall with the passing of some of the older members of the congregation and the younger families not continuing the tradition of church going, St Michael's like many other churches at the time saw less services being conducted. With only one priest to serve all of the Kilmore Parish it was impossible to conduct weekly services and so the frequency was reduced to monthly until in 2013 service were stopped all together.

The halting of services coincided with the formation of the Wandong History Group who were able to secure a lease of the building from the church at a low rent in return for the buildings upkeep. Recognising the historical value of the building the History group worked to have the building Heritage Listed and were delighted when that was granted in October 2016.

Since then the group has worked to secure a Living Heritage Grant to restore the building and in 2020 this application was successful. Once the Heritage Permit is provided we are ready to begin restoration of the building. It will be great to be able to set up properly and have an all access building which will mean we can open to the public and have permanent displays as well as helping people with research.

Image below shows some of the internal damage that will be repaired.



DID YOU KNOW

That is was almost twelve months after the crash that Trainee Pilot Terence Hallinan was found still in the wreckage of his plane. He was found by local forestry workers Harry Ross and Ned Quillinan who were working on a new road near the top of Mount Disappointment. The air force had made extensive searches after the accident but were looking around the Bacchus Marsh area and had responded to possible sightings near the Grampians where extensive searches were carried out. Terence's body was recovered and flown back to his hometown of Maryborough Queensland where he was buried. It is believed that Terence on a night training flight became disoriented in poor weather conditions, mistaking the lights of Kilmore for those of Bacchus Marsh, his plane crashed into Mount Disappointment. By coincidence the RAAF Chaplain at the time was Kenneth Morrison who served the Wandong area for many years.

History Matters

In this column we will try to keep abreast of the things that effect our town and its historical links. The Wandong History Group's charter is to protect and preserve the history of our area. As we are within the Mitchell Shire, we need to be informed of happenings within the shire that may affect us. We are working with Australian Rail Track Corporation on the area that will be impacted by the works for the new overhead bridge and associated road works. We need to make sure the impact area does not disturb any historic sites or if it does that appropriate investigations are done. It appears that this project is not as "transparent" as ARTC have been saying, we attended a community meeting where the aim from ARTC seemed to not be up front with the real impact of the new bridge. It took two hours of asking before we could get some idea of the damage that would occur to the town from the works, this includes houses being compulsory acquired, plus large amounts of property, Pickett Walk being destroyed and the large trees on the Epping Kilmore Rd being impacted. The works will destroy much of the archeological sites of the Seasoning Works and old police station, we are looking to Heritage Victoria for advice on these matters. Wandong always seems to be under fire we had our issues with Vic Roads and the bypass, and perhaps the bypass hasn't really gone away yet, ARTC will be putting in infrastructure that will only aid a bypass in the future. We are also looking to council to advocate for the community, so far council have had talks with ARTC but have not articulated the results of these talks to the community, why is there such secrecy about his project, its about time ATRC came clean with this community.

BOOK SALES

There Was a Soldier—Karen Christensen

(A history of Wandong at War) \$20

From Lightwood Flat to the Forest—Lynne Dore

(A history of our schools) \$20

WANDONG IN PICTURES

Book (1-5) \$7 each or \$25 the set.

Wandong War Memorial

Wandong Seasoning Works

Wandong in Business,

Wandong Timber Mills and Tramlines

Wandong Buildings

All books available at the Wandong Newsagent or contact the History Group.

DONATIONS

The Wandong History Group accepts donations of any Wandong/ Heathcote Junction, related historical artefacts. All items will be kept and displayed sharing our past and preserving it for the future generations. Thanks to Graham Neal for his recent donation of 3 glass display drawers.

2020/2021 COMMITTEE

President: Karen Christensen

Vice President: David Moran

Secretary: Di Vidal

Treasurer: Sandra Moran

Newsletter: Karen Christensen & Di Vidal

Committee Meetings will now be held bi-monthly on the first Thursday of the month 7.00pm at the Wandong Public Hall.

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MEMBERSHIP

Anybody is welcome to become a member of the Wandong History Group, and learn about our rich history.

Membership Fees : SINGLE \$10 and FAMILY \$15.