



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

“WHAT’S OLD”

Issue 2 June 2017

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FROM THE EDITOR

It was great to see a big turn out for ANZAC Day this is such an important day for us in Wandong, Heathcote Junction and it's gratifying to see so many people taking the time to stop and remember those whose lives were so changed by the wars. A massive thanks to those who help put our service together, especially Major Tony Gill (Rtd), Tony goes out of his way to make sure our service is dignified and runs smoothly, he also has two other services to carry out on the day, so a huge workload and I know his day starts early. Also Peter Dore and Denis Krake, both returned servicemen, they help us every year and we owe them a great debt of gratitude, not just for what they do now but what they have done as soldiers. Mark next years service in your diaries now, we are planning something big.



We are also planning an open day in October to coincide with History week, exactly what that will be, is not decided yet, but again we will be showcasing our history. Many towns such as ours have never had a history as exciting as we have, our aim is to ensure we pass on as much of the local knowledge as we can.

Editor: Karen Christensen

THE TOLL OF WAR

(A poem from a WW2 soldier)

THE FUZZY WUZZY ANGELS

*Many a mother in Australia, when the busy day is done,
Sends a prayer to the Almighty for the keeping of her son,
Asking that an angel guide him and bring him back,
Now we see our prayers are answered, on the Owen Stanley Track
For they haven't any halos, only holes slashed in their ears,
And their faces worked with tattoos and scratch pins in their ears,
Bringing back the badly wounded just as steady as a hearse,
Using leaves to keep the rain off, and as gently as a nurse,
Slow and gently in their paces on that awful mountain track,
And the look upon their faces, makes us think that Christ was back.
Not a move to hurt the wounded, they treat him like a saint,
Tis a picture worth recording, that an artist has yet to paint.
Many a lad will see his mother, and husbands see their wives,
Just because a Fuzzy Wuzzy carried them, to save their lives;
From mortar or machine gun fire, or chance surprise attack,
To the safety and the care of doctors, at the bottom of the track.
May the mothers of Australia when they offer up a prayer,
Mention these important angels with the Fuzzy Wuzzy hair.*

Vale - Juanita Rodriguez

The History Group, along with local residents were saddened to hear of the passing of an old Wandong resident. Juanita Rodriguez came to Wandong in 1962 with husband Tony and despite not being able to speak English, became part of the local town life. Tony and Juanita raised two girls Marito and Olga who both attended Wandong Primary School. A memory I have of them at Wandong is her wonderful cooking, as kids we would hang around hoping Juanita would make us some chips, cooked in olive oil, something we had never experienced before, she never disappointed us and was a wonderfully kind and loving person. After retiring Tony and Juanita purchased a property in Wallan and farmed there. Tony's death was a great blow to Juanita and she passed away on the 21st March after suffering from dementia. We pass on our condolences to the family, a truly wonderful woman who made her mark on Wandong.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR

Each edition we will talk to a local identity, this edition we speak to Heather Flannery, lifetime resident and great Wandong historian.

You grew up in Wandong, what was it like?

I was born at the Kilmore Hospital and came to the house after ten days in the hospital, I have lived here ever since, 71 years in this house.

That must be a record, I don't know of anyone else who has been in the same house for that long.

This house is unique in that it was part of the Coffee Palace, built by Robert Affleck Robertson, back then it was a fourteen roomed building, used as a boarding house. Later it was divided up, one part removed to Wandong Avenue, this house shifted to this block and the rest remained a bakery which my parents ran.

My memories of living in Wandong in my youth are that we lived a simple life, everyone knew everyone else, the community spirit was alive and well. Neighbours looked out and after each other and worked together for the good of all.

Your Mother was a great historian you have carried on that tradition.

I love history and all that happened back in the good old days. Mum kept records of many of the local happenings as well as photos, which I am still sorting out. But I remember well many of the stories she told about living here the people and the characters.

There's a story there but perhaps for another day.

I love to pass on to the next generation the knowledge I have, so I'm glad the History Group has formed as we have so much history to share.

You married Malcom Flannery from Kilmore and have two boys Ian and Roger.

Yes, and we kept another family tradition going by having the boys attend Wandong Primary School, like myself and my mother as well. Of course the school has changed so much since those days, the original building was in use for a long time, but perhaps the heating and cooling is a bit better now than in my day.

So you lost Malcom several years ago that was a terrible blow but you always seem to be busy.

It is hard but you have to pick yourself up and move on. I've done a bit of travelling, going to Scotland was a great highlight as that is where our family comes from. I'm about to head off to Flinders Ranges, and who knows after that.

You love your animals, what is currently in your menagerie?

I have a rabbit, guinea pigs and Ruby my dog. I'd love to have more, it's a bit hard when I'm away so much.

What do you love about living here?

All my friends are here, they get you through the tough times. I live in my family home, so there is a real connection. My family are close by so I see my grandchildren often and the boys are around to help me out with anything I need.

What do you feel is the biggest issue facing Wandong -Heathcote Junction in the future?

I am concerned that the town is growing too quickly, we don't want to lose the village atmosphere we have here. We told Council that when they did the structure plan but I'm not sure they listened as the plan doesn't reflect what we said.. I'm also not happy about the bypass, we shouldn't have to wear Kilmore and Wallan's problems. When the freeway was built it was a bypass of Kilmore and Wallan, they should have incorporated the Northern Highway in that plan, now they want us to suffer even more. The noise from the freeway is bad enough, we don't need more. I also worry that the young people of the town don't hold the same values as us long time residents, we live in a terrific town and they need to understand they have to look after it, this is not suburbia and no one wants it to be.

If you could change anything about Wandong Heathcote Junction what would it be?

I would love to change the blue bridge, if we have to have it, make it fit into the landscape more, the bridge is too bright. I'm not sure we needed something that big.

Thanks Heather it's been great to learn a bit more about you, your thoughts on Wandong & Heathcote Junction.



Heather pictured here with her mother Lottie Campbell)

WHAT'S IN A NAME



The Heathcote Junction railway station started life as a crossing, or passing loop on the Melbourne-Albury train line and was first known as the Summit loop. The loop opened in 1886 and was situated on the highest point of that track at 349 metres above sea level.

In 1884 the State Government passed an act of Parliament, the Octopus Act, which authorised the Victorian Railways to build 59 new rail lines to almost every corner of the State.

One of these lines was to be a cross country service line running from Wandong through to Sandhurst (Bendigo). The survey teams started work in 1886, and chose Summit (Heathcote Junction) rather than Wandong as the branch point from which to start the new line. Work on the line commenced in 1887, and concluded in stages through to Sandhurst on 22nd August 1890.

The Summit to Kilmore section of the line was completed and opened on 1st October 1888. A signal box and up and down short platforms were constructed. The new complex was renamed Kilmore Junction and was opened for service on 7th March 1890.

At about the same time a decision was made to link the townships of Kilmore and Lancefield by rail. This was to be a single track traversing the fourteen miles between the towns over the Great Dividing Range and formed a connecting loop with the Melbourne Bendigo line at Clarkefield.

It was a particularly expensive venture due to the steep terrain, and included five stations and seventeen road crossings, all of them had to be staffed making the seldom used line a financial disaster.

This line was opened on 6th April 1892 and became one of the most infamous white elephant rail projects in Victorian rail history it was closed on the 1st of June 1897. Protests saw the line briefly re-opened for two years in 1900 for grain traffic.

The Kilmore Junction—Sandhurst line ran both passenger and freight services for many years, but as patronage dropped away a mixed passenger-freight service was introduced.

In 1926 a rail motor was introduced to take the place of the steam trains. This regular passenger service from Kilmore Junction to Heathcote was to continue using a Walker Rail Motor, in June 1965 the service was discontinued.

The last Walker railmotor in use was retired to Daylesford where it is now in service at their volunteer railway running tourists into the Bullarto State Forest each Sunday.



The last regular goods service ran on 6th November 1968. The last train to use the track was a locomotive, sent to collect any remaining rolling stock. The Australian Railway Historical Society ran a special train from Melbourne to Heathcote and back to celebrate the closing of the line. This train was pulled by two steam engines, (a D class leader with a K class as second engine). This would have been something to see.

The line was officially closed on 7th November 1968, the Heathcote Junction signal box was decommissioned on 21st July 1970, and demolished in February 1973.

There are still many Wandong/ Heathcote Junction residents who speak fondly of time spent going to Kilmore and beyond on that Walker rail motor.

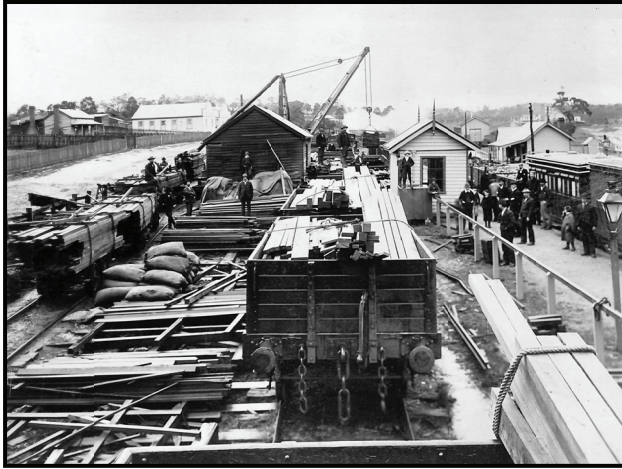
As to WHAT'S IN A NAME, the change from Summit to Kilmore Junction occurred in 1888, and from Kilmore Junction to Heathcote Junction on 15th May 1922. No matter what name you call it, our town is still a great place in which to live.

Contributed by David Moran



Did You Know?

From 1873 to 1900 Wandong was the biggest timber producer, out producing Gippsland, Macedon and the Wombat Forest.



Receiving and Consigning Company's Timber

(North End of Yard)

FIRE AT WANDONG STATION

Stated to have been caused by sparks from a camp fire, a fire broke out in the station yard today. Members of the repair gang and local residents put it out after it had damaged sleepers and destroyed much grass. Anxiety was felt for two wood mills and for Government wood nearby.

Kilmore Free Press— 3rd February 1938

2016/2017 COMMITTEE

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THE WANDONG OUTRAGE

The two men who recently broke into the Wandong railway station and gagged and bound the assistant stationmaster, have been tracked by the black trackers from Eltham to the scrub near Oakleigh and their arrest is hourly expected. They were traced from Eltham through Croydon and Ringwood to Oakleigh shortly after sunset.

Geelong Advertiser Monday 22 October 1906

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.

We would like to thank Marie Elson who has donated some school memorabilia and other personal Wandong related items

BOOK SALES

There Was a Soldier.— Karen Christensen
(A history of Wandong at War) \$20.00

From Lightwood Flat to the Forest—Lynne Dore
(A history of our schools) \$15.00

Wandong In Pictures— (Set of 5) \$7.00 ea

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

“Congratulations”

The lucky winner to receive a set of

Wandong History Books

is

Mrs Shirley McKenzie from Whittlesea