

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



WHAT'S OLD

Issue 22 - September 2022

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FROM THE EDITOR

I see the signs of Spring around the town, finally we can shake off the long cold winter and enjoy some sun and longer days. Weather is an ever changing thing affecting what we do, where and when we go places, and how we live. When I read back over the years has our weather changed much, I'm not sure it has. I read of long dry hot summers, with bushfires and periods where water is scarce. Then of cold winters, where keeping wood for the fires in plentiful supply was the biggest issue. Seems to be that life is much the same.

The History Group is slowly settling back into the church. The renovation and restoration has made the building safe and comfortable, a little chilly still but a much more pleasant place to be. We could do with a hand to help organise our collections and sorting files if anyone can spare some time. Lynne and myself have been well tutored in managing our new website and are busy setting up pages of local history interest. The site is looking great and we have been very conscious of keeping it easy to navigate so once we go live feedback would be appreciated on how people are finding it. We can still tweak things to make it easier if needed. Massive thanks to Paula and Max at Paradigm who have very patiently taken us through the steps to manage the site.

October sees a busy month with first the relaunch of St Michaels Church on the 8th October, the first of our History Month events. Members of the public are welcome to attend however to provide catering we ask that you let us know if you intend to come along. More details on page 2, if anyone has old photos of activities around the church we would love to have copies to display on the day.

Our second history month event will be the reunion of the Robertson family. This is planned for the 29th of October at the hall. We have been working hard to construct a family tree which will take some displaying as there are many generations of the family. The highlight of the day will be the launch of our new book, From Scotland to the Antipodes, Building a Dynasty a story of the vast Robertson family and the influence it had on our area. Again members of the public are invited to come along, just let us know if your coming.

Also a big shout out to Kenny Bausch who has solved our storage problems with the offer of a container for the church. We have obtained the necessary permissions for this and intend to disguise the container to make it an attractive addition as well as freeing up valuable space in the church and providing a secure place to store all those items that we only need occasionally, such as the ANZAC Day kit which is only used once a year. Kenny does a lot for this community, quietly without asking for recognition but contributions such as this make a huge difference and their worth should never be underestimated.

Happy Spring everyone.
Karen.

GRAND RE-OPENING

St Michaels Catholic Church Building

33-35 Wandong Avenue Wandong

Home of The Wandong History Group

After extensive restoration and conservation works, the 131 year old church building, now the home for the Wandong History Group, is about to be re-opened to the public. As part of Victoria's History Month in October, the History Group will celebrate the re-opening with a photographic exhibition charting the building's road to recovery. With limited space, we welcome people to register for this event by Friday 30th September, 2022.

The restoration program for "The St. Michael's Catholic Church Project was supported by the Victorian Government through the *Living Heritage Grant Program* along with support from the Parish Council of St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Kilmore. Without this major grant, it is doubtful whether the building would remain standing into the future. The funding enabled new footings to be installed beneath the sacristy, the replacement of the roof, guttering and downpipes; the demolition of the asbestos front porch entrance and to aid access by the visiting public with an all-ability ramp being installed. Our Committee are proud of this achievement with our President having overseen the project aided by the Group's members in helping to beautify the site in readiness for the opening. This has been a colossal effort by many. We owe special thanks to all involved in the project, our Heritage Advisor, Mr. Fraser Brown of Quadratum; Mr. Greg Clancy of Danesbury Constructions and his team; to Heritage Victoria for their assistance and importantly to the Parish Council of St. Patrick's Church, Kilmore who without their assistance this project would not have occurred and to Mr. Geoff Hewitt (BA) who conducted the archaeological monitoring of the works. Due to this funding, Wandong now has an historic building to be proud of, a place for the community to reconnect to its settlement history; a venue in which to stage unique and interesting exhibitions and a place to welcome visitors interested in exploring the history of Wandong/Heathcote Junction and its surrounding area. We thank all who helped to achieve this wonderful outcome for Wandong.

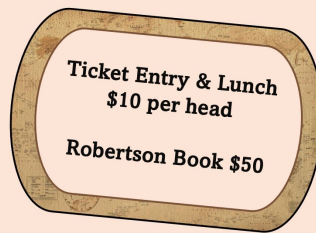
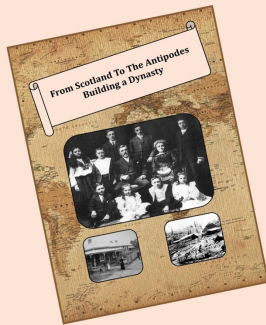


ROBERTSON BOOK LAUNCH EVENT

Saturday 29th OCTOBER 2022

11am—3pm

Wandong Public Hall - Rail Street Wandong



RSVP 20th October, 2022
Email: wandongite@hotmail.com
Phone: Karen, 0432 120736



From the memoir of Nellie Pearce (nee Harper)

Wandong was only a small village in those days and most of the men we're engaged in the timber industry. Dad's sawmill was for building timber and firewood for Melbourne as men cleared their land for grazing east of the village was all forest One busy place in Wandong in those days was the railway station and line, as it was the main Melbourne to Sydney line all goods and produce were carried by rail, trains were constantly coming and going. There were three men, stationmaster and two assistants and a lad Porter manning the station. Wandong had a general store and post office a hotel the Travellers Rest and a bakery two churches, a Church of England and a Roman Catholic, a school where I started in 1913 and a public hall which was much used. Also a Baker and a butcher from Wallan home delivered around the Township. Mr Wharton

**To register for our upcoming events
Email: wandonghistorygroup4@gmail.com**

also had a poultry farm and vegetable garden with veggies for sale. Most families had a house cow and everyone seemed to have plum and apple trees in abundance. Citrus fruits were not so common I remember when Harold Clapp, as chief commissioner of railways started an advertising campaign to promote oranges- "children yes and grownups too orange juice is good for you". this probably had something to do with the development of the irrigation areas in the North especially Mildura after the World War 1914- 18 when the soldier settlers took up land there and planted citrus and grapes. The timber truck went up to the mill each day pulled by four horses if one ventured on a trip the seating was bags of chaff going up for the horses and bullocks used on the mill. 12 to 14 men were employed on the mill and they camped in the hill on the job. Those who had homes and families in Wandong came home at weekends. It certainly was a hard life. 48 hour weeks, later reduced to 44 a lonely life for both men and their wives One of my community services at Wandong was a secretary to the public hall committee and for many years Peg and I supervised the small library we had there.

Two other efforts organised by the locals we're a minstrel show and a mouth organ band, both created a lot of interest and fun. Country people especially in small communities had to make their own entertainment .

(This is take from a history written by Nellie Pearce in 1993, the full story will be available on our website)

HISTORY MATTERS

In this column we will try to keep abreast of the things that affect 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.

There is an interesting issue developing in Wallan that has been documented in the North Central Review but I want to mention it here as its another example of how we need to ensure history is not lost.

The horse trough that for many years was in front of the Wallan East hotel has been on the agenda of the Mitchell Shire Heritage Advisory Committee for some years, yet we see that it may be threatened by a new development in the area. We hope the shire ensure that there is a place for this piece of local history to be kept in its place and made a feature reflecting times long gone. Even though this is a Wallan matter any loss of history in our shire will ultimately affect everyone, we need the Shire to understand that these things are important and consider them when allowing new development.

We are still meeting with ARTC on the new bridge and the issues that are arising from the construction and the heritage issues that may be impacted by the works. We all understand the new bridge is required and why, however the impacts will be felt by us, the residents who have to live with it for generations to come. While the history groups interest is in the heritage areas impacted we also are in the discussions with the Community group with council and ARTC around other impacts of this.

ARTC have set up shop at the Plaza, they are there to answer questions about the new bridge, however with little to go on its hard for people to know what questions to ask. So things we know so far, there will be property acquisition including at least one home, many of the Pinoaks and Sheoaks will be removed, the road height has to be increased to meet the new bridge height, there will be 12 months at least of major disruption, the new larger longer trains will mean boom gates at Heathcote Junction and Lightwood Flat will be down for longer. Noise will increase. We are waiting for full disclosure from ARTC and will keep updating as we know more. This will be a massive project for Wandong, short term there will be many disruptions, including access to the school, the shops and Kilmore as the new road height is built. Ongoing longer trains, more noise dust we don't know what the final impacts will be but if you care ask questions of ARTC

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

Ghosts Gold and a White Elephant— Ron Pickett \$50

From Scotland to the Antipodes— Building a Dynasty—
\$50

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, Clonbinane related historical artefacts. All items will be kept and displayed sharing our past and preserving it for the future generations.

2021/2022 COMMITTEE

President/Secretary: Karen Christensen

Vice President: David Moran

Treasurer: Sandra Moran

Newsletter: Karen Christensen &
Di Vidal

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