

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)