

Issue 1. March 2017

Wandong History group  
Quarterly newsletter free with your "what's news"

## "WHAT'S OLD"

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### FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the first edition of What's Old. The Wandong History Group is excited to be able to distribute free of charge a quarterly newsletter.

The Wandong Heathcote-Junction Community Group has allowed us to use the What's News distribution system to get the newsletter to over 600 homes and we appreciate their assistance.

We intend to cover a variety of local history and where space permits other articles of interest. In this edition we have included the story on the John Charlton Memorial Window.

However we remain open to suggestions and encourage your feedback, also on the last page there is a chance to win a set of Wandong History Books so fill the coupon in and return it to us. I hope you enjoy this first edition and we look forward to bringing our history alive through the pages of this newsletter.

Editor: Karen Christensen

### HISTORY GROUP NEWS

2016 Was a busy year for the group, our many activities included the history open day which was a great opportunity for everyone to see photos from the unseen photo album from 1898 of the town and forestry works. The annual combined History Group and community group raffle was a great success with the three winners more than pleased with the great prizes on offer. The most exciting and satisfying accomplishment was the nominating and acceptance of the St Michaels Catholic Church to the Victorian Heritage register. Lynne Dore worked tirelessly to prepare our nomination and ensured all requirements were covered.

The building and adjoining site is now protected for future generations and hopefully the church can at some stage be returned to its former glory.

We also produced a set of five books containing photographs of the town, these books are available for sale through the Wandong Newsagent or contact the History Group via email and we can arrange books to be sent.

The Wandong History group is still a young organisation, in our short time of operation we have assisted council in the preparation of the heritage overlay for the town, this was an important piece of work as the original document for Wandong Heathcote Junction had many sites missing from the list. We have been able to have many new sites added. We also made submissions to the structure plan and the bypass.

We have produced two history books, the first was released to coincide with the unveiling of the Wandong Heathcote Junction War Memorial and is titled, "There Was a Soldier, Who Wandered Far Away"- When Wandong went to War, written by Karen Christensen, and From Lightwood Flat to the Forest, A History of our Schools", written by Lynne Dore. Both books are essential reading and contain a great deal of local history.

In a short time we have amassed a collection of local history which we aim to share with the town as much as we can. 2017 will see us consolidating our collection, work needs to be done to catalogue all the items and photographs and any help with this task would be appreciated.

We are also undertaking a study of the tramway route which we are hoping can be preserved and developed into an interactive walking tour.

## GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR

Each issue we will talk to a local identity, this edition it's Rhonda Cole, Principal of Wandong Primary School



### Was teaching always your chosen career?

In year eleven (called "form five" back then) I was tossing up between being a teacher or a nurse. My sister was completing her teaching diploma so I headed down that track. I trained in Early Childhood Education for three years – meaning I could teach young students (preschool and those in places such as the Royal Children's Hospital) to students in year eight. I then completed my fourth year in general education after I had taught for two years – so now I have a Bachelor in Education. In my first nine years of teaching, I taught at Kookaburra Kindergarten in Reservoir. When I moved to Wandong I re-applied to teach in a primary school and have since taught at Broadford, Kalkallo, Craigieburn and Wallan Primary Schools. I then began my principal journey and have been principal at Willowmavin (acting), Tallarook, Seymour East and now Wandong Primary.

### What do you love about living here?

My husband had spent his teenage years living up past Shepparton and had come to Melbourne to do an apprenticeship – we met during that time. I was a Reservoir girl – so it was city girl meets country boy. He didn't want to live in suburbia and I didn't want to live too far away from it. My sister was married and living at Upper Plenty so we looked around this area. We settled on Wandong – my street only had four houses in it back then. We have grown our family as the area has grown. I love the tranquillity, the sense of community and the way that it's not too far from shops if I need some suburbia time! Getting the principal position at Wandong PS was a big risk – would I be able to keep my privacy and still live in the town. However the community has been amazing and I have been able to enjoy my principal role immensely.

### What do you do when you're not working?

I enjoy bike riding, going to gym and playing with my dogs. I also go and watch my boys play or coach basketball – we are a big basketball family. Of course I like watching football – sometimes Essendon (my husband's team) but mostly Carlton (my team).

### What do you feel is the biggest issue facing WHJ in the future?

Maintaining the village feel as we continue to grow will be an area of focus. I also have concerns about subdivision and hope that the large blocks we moved here to be near, don't get cut up and sold off, as this would change the whole physical environment and the feel of the town.

### If you could change anything about WHJ what would it be?

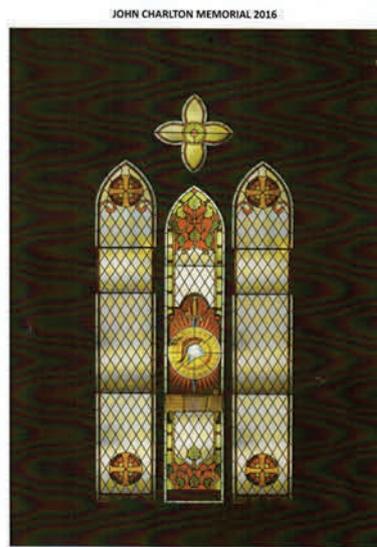
Ensure that all residents realise how lucky they are to live here and that they look after their town. Rubbish, vandalism, there is a lack of community involvement – it needs to be kept in check. We also need to educate the young people of our town about these things. It's not until you travel overseas you really realise what a beautiful place Wandong/Heathcote Junction is and we need to maintain this beauty as we grow.



Wandong State School 1890's



## SHINING A LIGHT ON THE BOER WAR



On the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at Maygar's Hill Winery Euroa, the launch and unveiling of a memorial window occurred with great solemnity.

The event was the culmination of many months of fundraising, research and hard work by local archaeologist Lynne Dore along with other Euroa locals and experts brought in to complete the project.

The window had been installed in St Pauls Anglican church Euroa in 1903 to commemorate local Boer War soldier John Charlton who died from enteric fever during his war service.

After being removed from the church in 1929 to make way for additions including a new chancel, the window was replaced with a smaller version. The original was stored at various venues. Over the intervening years. Eventually the window was donated to the Euroa Historical and Genealogical Society where it was again stored un-crated until February 2014.

Maxine Boyd was undertaking an archaeological thesis on war memorials in the Strathbogie shire and was alerted to the state of the window. After involving Wandong History group member and archaeologist Lynne Dore, a committee was formed to raise funds to restore the window which had, with thorough cleaning revealed its true beauty and significance.

Once restored the window needed to be installed in a suitable location. This proved a difficult task as the window weighs several hundred kilograms and measures 4.5m height and 3 metres in width. Although the preference for keeping it within the Euroa district was preferred the logistics of this after much deliberation was discounted.

In late Oct 2016 the Shire of Remembrance offered to house the window within their permanent collection. This offer was gratefully accepted as it means the window will be housed in ideal conditions, be available for all visitors to the Shrine (approx. 1 million visitors a year), and ensures the safety of this magnificent memorial.

Congratulations to Lynne and the rest of the team on this achievement, projects of this magnitude consume many hours of personal time, energy and emotional commitment. And the end result in this case is one that will benefit many people for many years to come.

More information on the project can be found at:

<https://boerwarmemorialwindow.wordpress.com>



### Did you know?

Wandong had its own cyanide works. Not much is known about the operation, it was situated near the freeway North bound off ramp. We recently discovered the postcard below, however we are still looking for photos and more information on the works.



### Articles from Trove

#### The Toll of War.

Kilmore Advertiser Saturday 24 November 1917,

page 3

Our Wandong correspondent writes : —The little township of Wandong has again been visited by the misfortunes of war, the last to pay the supreme sacrifice being Private W. H. (Bert.) McDonald, 2nd Reinforcement 10th Machine Gun Company, killed on October 15th. The sad news was conveyed to his parents, Mr and Mrs H. McDonald, on Tuesday evening. Great sympathy is felt for the members of his family who are well known and and highly respected in the district. Deceased soldier, who has been 18 months on active service, was very popular with all with whom he came in contact, being always willing to give a helping hand to anyone in trouble. Mr and Mrs McDonald have also given another son at the front, Hughie, well known as an axeman in this and the Warburton districts. Hughie has also seen 18 months of service.



Yea Chronicle Thursday 8 February 1917, page 2

At the annual sports meeting of the Wandong Athletic Club on New Year's day it was announced that half of the proceeds would be donated to the Kilmore hospital. The Commissioner of Taxes wrote to the secretary demanding payment of the full amount of the tax, as the whole of the proceeds were not being devoted to charity. The committee decided that rather than pay the tax to give the whole amount to the hospital, totalling £16

### Donations

The Wandong History group would like to thank local people who have recently donated articles to the group. We now have in our possession, memorabilia from the Wandong Athletic Club, a copy of the Wandong Country Music Festival program 1982 and a saw blade from the Comet Mill. These items have been added to our collection and we thank the donors for their kindness.

### History Group books For Sale.

**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— Book 1-5 \$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**

Be in the draw to win a set of  
Wandong History Books

**FREE**

**Return this coupon to**  
WHG 44 Affleck St Wandong  
Email: wandonghistorygroup4@gmail.com

Name:

Phone:

Winner  
announced in the  
next edition