



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

“WHAT'S OLD”

Issue 11—September 2019

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FROM THE EDITOR

Over the last three months there has been a lot happening for the group. We have been successful in obtaining a grant to host a community event following on from the 10 year 2009 Black Saturday commemoration. The event to be held in October in conjunction with the CFA's Fire Awareness week will focus on preparation for the upcoming fire season. See more on this attached to this What's Old.

We have also been fortunate enough to get a grant from the Victorian Government Saluting their Service grant round, this grant will allow us to produce more of the soldier profiles we did for the "Walk Through the Wars", Exhibition which we will be able to use in future displays. We are looking for more photos of our soldiers, in particular World War 2 if you can help with photos please contact us.

We currently have applications in for the catholic church restoration with Heritage Victoria, that grant should be announced anytime, also we have an application in for the removal and restoration of the old interment hut to the Memorial park, where it will be set up as a Museum and exhibition space for our military collection. So if all these grant are won we have a very busy time ahead.

We were also dismayed to be advised through the Friends of Mt Disappointment Facebook page of damage being done to the Comet Mill historic site. This is a Heritage registered area and is being damaged by reckless motorbike riders, riding over the old sawdust heap and through the registered area. We have met with the local authority and they are taking steps to protect the area. Heritage Victoria are also getting involved and we hope to be able to prevent this senseless damage from occurring.

October 11th we are running a workshop at the Wandong Public Hall. It will cover managing, communicating, conservation etc of historic collections. The course will start at 10.00am Cost is \$30 for non history group members, lunch supplied. Please contact us if you wish to come along.

Editor: Karen Christensen

A CRICKET CATASTROPHE

M. CLAYTON "Laurel Grove," Wandong

*Who did not hear the deafening cheer. That thundered through
the valley, oh ?
And echo carried straight from here, Through Kilmore to Benalla,
oh
A cheer that made the Dean's Creek quake, And left the bridge
uncanny, oh ; That even now you feel it shake, When crossing it
with, many, oh.
And now what caused this seeming joy I briefly will explain to you
trusting that I may not annoy,
Or tender praise where none is due. I could not as a looker- on,
Pass such with no remarks at all
T'would be an insult to Wandong, " and make its mighty men feel
small.
Some time ago the married men and' single had a great debate
The benedicts bet heavy then The bachelors quickly grabbed' the
bait;
And so they met last Saturday,
At Laurel Grove to test their powers; A cricket team since Adam's
day, never faced the field more blythe than ours, First came M
Cenville-bat in hand, - . And wielded it right manfully,
He made the young ones understand; He meant to make a score
that day ;
The boys at first thought-What a loan !: And lustily began to blow,
But when the ball went whizzing home, . , The. single birds forgot
to crow.
Then hot and strong the combat grew-, The men had not a word
to say ; One hit amiss, and with it too,
Poor Mitchell here do combat lay :
On came Munroe with valor then, To do his best that day and
crown: With victory. the married men,
But scored a bump on Hector Brown.
Fred, Smith then quickly followed suit, And, oh, he bowled so
mighty hot ; The slender ribs and joints to boot, He almost
squashed for Alex. Scott; " Whilst Mackay, Sifkins and Wollay .
Worked hard against the single men ; They lost not by superior
play T'was slugging got the best of them.
When time was called, both sides confessed, A greater game-they
had not seen,
And hoped some other day to test Their powers with such. another
team;
But what a change-that game had wrought' Upon those boys so
cheery, oh, Their hearty cheers-were quite forgot, When toddling
home quite weary, oh;.*

GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR



Each issue we talk with a local identity, this edition it is Wandong's Jim Chatzidimitriou, better known as Jimmy Chatz, or simply as Jimmy. Born in Greece in 1951, the young Jim moved to Australia in 1955 with his parents, five brothers and one sister. They landed in Freemantle and eventually found their way to Melbourne, where their father, a boilmaker found employment with the Victorian Railways. Jim attended school at Sunshine Tech and started an apprentice as an electrician, then changed to plumbing. At the end of his time he set up his own business around the northern suburbs. He bought his first digger as part of his plumbing business. He met Debbi Weston and they soon married and set up home in Strathmore. They have two sons, Jaron and Coby.

Jim. How did you come to be living in Wandong?

I have always been a lover of horses and had two on agistment at Cottles Bridge, and used to go over there every day or two to feed them, so decided that I needed a house that we could live in with a few acres to have my horses close by. The house we purchased in Scanlon's Road was just what we wanted, a nice home and ten acres for the horses. In 1988 we moved to Wandong. The house needed work to make it liveable, but what I liked was the people that we met around Wandong, there was not much here in the way of shops and other services, but we made do with what we had. There was a real nice small town feeling about the place.

Unfortunately you got caught in the 2009 Bush Fires.

Yes I was working on a job in Sunbury that day when I got a phone call from my mate suggesting that I should get home real quick. When I arrived

the fire was coming up the valley behind my house. We grabbed what we could and started moving the cars down to the main road to safety. I got my Valiant half way down the road and went back for my mother in laws car and got it down to the end of the road, by then the whole of Scanlon's road was in flames, that is when the television crew filmed me dashing back through the flames to rescue my Valiant, every time I see that film clip played on the television I wonder what the heck I was doing, how crazy I was to risk my life for a car. I certainly would not do it today.

You lost everything that day, did you ever consider moving on and setting up some place else?

Yes we took time to consider what we should do, but after eighteen months we decided to rebuild. We built a shed first, and then I built the new home as an owner builder, there were some cold nights that Winter but it was all worth it in the end. I cannot thank enough the people who helped us get our lives back on track. The Lions Club who helped with replacing tools and to the members of the Wandong Community for all their help just when we needed it the most.

What do you see as the future of Wandong?

The town is going to continue to grow with new estates and subdivisions, what we are going to need is more shops and better services, particular for the older folk. But it is great to have somewhere where we can meet and have a cup of coffee and a chat. There are so many great people in the town, we really need for the local shire to understand our town, and look after it better. The Community Group do a fantastic job but they cannot do it all by themselves. We do not need the Kilmore bypass flyover at the edge of our town, there has to be a better way than ruining Wandong.

Jim we see you around town most days working. So retirement is not in your plans just yet?

No, I enjoy what I do and the people I meet, but I hope to do some travel, maybe hire a motor home and just disappear for a few months. I'm planning that next year Debbi and I will hire a yacht and sail the Whitsundays for a couple of weeks.

Thanks for your time Jim, and I'm sure there are many around town who are glad you decided to stay in our beautiful town.

WANDONG COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL

In 1971 the Kilmore Lions Club met to look at ways of raising money for local charities and those in need. John Knox a member of the Lions Club committee who often travelled to Tamworth NSW for the Music Festival, put forward the idea of Wandong having its own Country Music Festival to be held on Moomba Sunday. The idea was agreed to unanimously.

And so The Wandong Country Music Festival committee was formed and among those who volunteered to be part of this ambitious project were John Knox, Alan Ryan, Ross Smith, Brian Smith, Les Purves, Bob Hemphill, Brian Fitzgerald, Kevin Gunston, Colin McKay and many others.

The Lions Club volunteers built a large stage with dressing rooms and other facilities on the eastern side of the Wandong Oval. The early festivals were a great success with more than 10,000 music fans flocking to Wandong for the event, and in March 1977 it was decided to make the event a 2 day festival.

But with success came disharmony in the town with some of the local residents vehemently opposed to the event, going so far as to handing out flyers opposing it, and lobbying the local council to stop it being run.

The first festival in 1972 was a resounding success, but on that first day 21 car loads of Police arrived under the assumption the behaviour would be similar to the Sunbury Festival which could mean bad behaviour, such as sex, drugs and booze, instead they found themselves enjoying the day listening to good music and mixing with the families.

Another attraction added was the two million dollar Truck Show, and a truck backing competition, tarp tying and wheel changing races and in keeping with the trucking theme. Dave Dudley sang "Six Days on the Road"

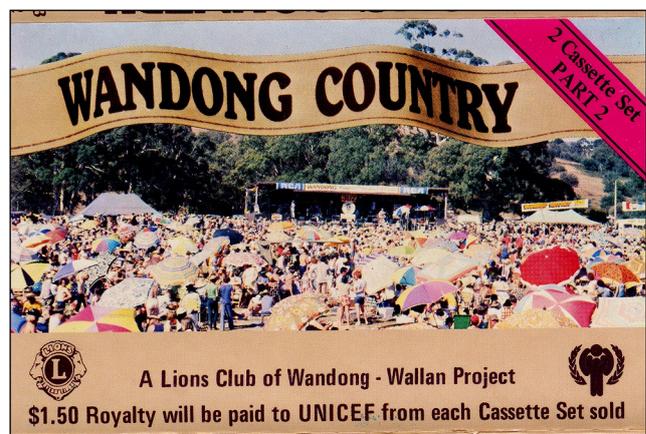
Such was the success of the festival that in 1979 a double LP and cassette recording was made of the event. From each record sold a \$1.50 donation was made to UNICEF. A quote from the record, "Wandong's sensational growth over the past eight years has created Australian music history. No other festival or outdoor music carnival can touch it for drawing the crowds. Many pop music promoters find it a frustrating fact of life that they cannot compete, let alone beat the continuing success and atmosphere that is "Wandong" Graeme Hosking a talented performer as well compered the Wandong festivals for all those years.

Some of the guest artists included, Chad Morgan, Reg Lindsay, Hawking Brothers, Lee Conway, Eureka Smith and the Great Slim Dusty who was the biggest draw card of the festival with over 20,000 fans flocking to Wandong to see him perform. The Ute show was also a great crowd pleaser and each year it got bigger and bigger.

John Minson the voice of Tamworth 2TN "Country Capital of Australia" was urging visitors to head south for the biggest country music show in the southern hemisphere an accolade that the WCMF organisers really appreciated but on the night of November 12th 1980 a suspicious fire destroyed the stage and all of the equipment. The loss of the stage and equipment brought a temporary halt to the festival but 3 years later the organisers held the festival in Wallan East, and continued there for 2 more years. It then went back to Wandong but it never regained its former glory. The organising committee then moved the event to Trackside Kilmore. Sadly, after the 2017 festival it was decided that due to lack of volunteers, rising costs and the loss of their main entertainer the next festival on March 3rd 2018 was the last Hoorah

In closing James "Gazza" Smith the editor of "Across Country Australia" country music magazine and musician wrote -"Wonderful Wandong with hustle, bustle, sweat and heat its hot dogs, pies, and coke cola, toilet queues and honky tonk blues, berets, beanies, sneakers and meanies, braless girls and topless blokes and truckies telling dirty jokes grinning grannies and crackling trannies, tapping feet, sizzling heat and a country beat".

So ends part of our local history.



A big thank you to Allan Ryan for sharing his memories about the Wandong Country Music Festival

Did you know?

Electricity came to Wandong in 1957. Angus McDonald President of the hall committee conducted the switching on ceremony at the Wandong Hall on the 6th September 1957.

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.

Just a reminder that anyone finding artefacts anywhere, it is illegal to remove items from the place they are found. Items should be photographed in place and if possible a GPS location taken. Anyone who is unsure about this can contact us and we can provide assistance.

Disappointing to see the issue that Kilmore is having with developers proposing to remove the old building from the main street, known as Mrs Mac's pie shop this iconic building would be a great loss. There are many of us who remember those pies, but in this case its more about the heritage of an area being swept up in modern development. Our Shire needs to step up in its protection of places such as this.

Diary Dates:

11th October – Managing collections workshop

19th October– RU ready 10 Years on event at Memorial park.

Wandong History Group and Wandong Heathcote Junction Community Group combined Christmas Toy raffle on sale at IGA sausage sizzles until the Wandong Christmas Carols.

On the back of our successful railway display for History Week 2017 we are putting together a book on the rail history of the area. Dave Moran is researching the book and would appreciate any information anyone may be holding.

Contact:

Dave- Mob: 0409164660

Email: mountview@ssc.net.au

The group always welcomes new members, we need people who can help with cataloging our items so anyone with a few hours to spare please contact me on the history groups email. Karen– wandonghistorygroup4@gmail.com

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.

2018/2019 COMMITTEE

President: Karen Christensen

Vice President: David Moran

Secretary: Di Vidal

Treasurer: Sandra Moran

Newsletter: Karen Christensen & Di Vidal

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