

CLARE REGIONAL HISTORY GROUP

NEWSLETTER
WINTER - 2010



Churches Lost or Saved by Conversion!

The early European settlers in the Colony of South Australia brought with them much faith. Faith in a new beginning; faith in political and religious freedom; faith in a better future for their children. As still evidenced by the many churches and chapels that enhance the towns, villages and countryside of the Clare Valley they brought with them implicit faith in Christianity. This was a diverse faith as many settlers, being free to do so, followed the beliefs of their past experiences. Whilst some of the diversity has lessened, much remains and is evidenced by the variety of church buildings remaining.



A Church Lost - Wesleyan Chapel, later Methodist Church, Penwortham c.1890

In the very early times these were simple, humble gathering places but as fortunes improved more substantial structures were built. In this Winter 2010 edition of our Newsletter we look at some of those that have been lost and some of those that have been converted. The churches, lost, converted or remaining and the congregations that have gathered within them over the past 160 years are a vital part of our history and heritage.

Sources: Clare Centenary of Federation CD-Rom – Clare Regional History Group Inc.
The Methodists of Clare 1851-1977 – Win Johnson
Clare Presbyterian Church 1856-1988 – Helen R. Dickeson
The Wakefield its Water and its Wealth – Jean V. Moyle

We are building a Collection of written and photographic items of historic value to Clare and region

News from the Group

▪ **2010 Annual General Meeting**

The Artisans Table is the place to be on Thursday, 19th August for the 2010 AGM of the Clare Regional History Group Inc. Details are set out on the enclosed booking form. All members are most welcome, and your Committee is looking forward to a great roll up.

▪ **Win's New Book!**

History Group life member, Win Johnson, author of many books recording aspects of Clare's heritage, has released a new book. While not directly related to Clare, the book is a collection of articles on chosen themes written over past times. Win says the articles follow the intrinsic philosophy of making readers, particularly women, feel good about themselves. Also included are a number of Win's whimsical, rhyming poems. Titled '*From Where I Sit*' the book is available from the Group. See list of books for sale.

▪ **History Week 2010**

The group participated in History Week 2010 with a pictorial display titled '*An Historical Ride Through the Clare Valley*'. The display included cycling related photographs from the 1890's up to the 2010 Santos Tour Down Under. As well the support of our volunteers enabled us to hold extra open days in the History Room. It was pleasing to welcome visitors from outside the region.

▪ **Progress on Historic Building Markers**

The Group's project to place heritage markers on historic buildings in the Clare township is on track. Committee member, Sue Wurst, and Curator, Helen Perry, have completed drafting the text for the initial ten locations and appropriate early photographs have been chosen as illustrations. The graphic design of the markers is now underway and expected to be available in the next month or so.

▪ **History & Genealogy EXPO**

The Group will be exhibiting at the EXPO to be held at the West Adelaide Function Centre on 30-31 July. A brochure is enclosed for anyone interested in attending.

▪ **Asset Grant from Council**

Most welcome recent advice was of the allocation of a grant of \$2,000 under Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council's Asset Grant Program. The grant is for the purchase of portable display equipment and upgraded signage. The new equipment will assist greatly in the mounting of historic displays. Our thanks go to Council for its continuing support.

▪ **Anniversaries of Note**

Fifty years ago the Clare Football Club divided and the **South Clare** and **North Clare** clubs formed. Both clubs celebrated the anniversary at functions following their local derby match on 17th July. To mark their anniversary the South Clare Club launched a history book authored by Group Research Officer, Gerald Lally, a former South Clare player. Gerald has also gathered together much club memorabilia, generously provided by South Clare supporters. Paul Tilbrook, Group photographer has scanned the historic team pictures into the Group's computer data base for record purposes.

Auburn Primary School will celebrate its 150th anniversary later this year and is seeking to trace the location of a time capsule understood to have been placed somewhere at the school during back to school celebrations in 1986. A search of the pages of ***The Northern Argus*** for that year have not provided an answer. Does anyone have a clue?

▪ **Historic Stonewall**

The granting of planning approval for the erection of a wind monitoring tower on the Camels Hump Range has revived interest in the historic stone wall. Understood to be the longest dry stonewall in Australia it stretches some 65 kilometres along the ridge of the Camels Hump and Brown Hill ranges. It is believed that the wall was erected after the granting of freehold in the Hundreds of Anne and Ayers in 1864-1866. It has been calculated that over 7 million stones were used in constructing the wall. The Group strongly supports the view that the wall be entered in the State Heritage Register.

CHURCHES AND CHAPELS LOST

The earliest church gatherings were often held in the homes of settlers or 'prayer places' where small groups of neighbours with common beliefs gathered. Services were conducted by lay men or sometimes by visiting preachers. As settlements grew and travel became a little easier larger groups gathered and the building of churches and chapels was high on the wish list of the settlers especially as they could also serve as schools for the teaching of their children.

▪ **Wesleyan Chapel later Methodist Church – Penwortham**

Early settlers in Penwortham of Wesleyan persuasion originally worshipped in the Church of St. Mark (Anglican) but were not comfortable with the order of service and sought to build their own Chapel. In September 1857 at a meeting in the Spring Farm Chapel they accepted an offer of an acre of land adjoining the village. Whilst not entirely suitable, being steeply sloping and very rocky, work on the building proceeded and the Penwortham Chapel opened a year later. In 1897 a supper room was added at the southern end to house Sunday school activities, choir practice and other community functions. In 1922 the slate roof was replaced with galvanized iron. The Church was demolished in 1968 but the cemetery remains along with a memorial cairn for the Chapel. (See picture of original 'Chapel on the Hill' front page.)



St. Patrick's Church - Undalya
c.1910

▪ **St. Patrick's Church – Undalya**

All that remains of this very significant Church is the associated cemetery. Its location was interestingly described in the pages of 'The Cyclopedia of South Australia' published in the early 1900's. *"Among the many charming drives that can be recommended to a tourist is that from Riverton via Rhynie and Undalya to Auburn. The church at Undalya is a conspicuous landmark and from the hill on which it stands the visitor looks down upon the valley of the Wakefield with 'sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plains' embowered therein.* Built in 1866 by the Jesuit Fathers of Seven Hills, the church remained in their charge until 1890, when it came under the care of the priest from Manoora. Also nearby was a convent school. The church closed in 1915 following the opening of the Catholic Church of 'Our Lady of Peace' in Auburn. (See Wesleyan Chapel –Auburn page 5). The view remains but regrettably the 'conspicuous landmark' and the convent is lost.

▪ **Wesleyan Chapel – Spring Farm**

Opened in July, 1854 *'in the presence of a rejoicing congregation'* this Wesleyan Chapel, now sadly no more, is acknowledged as the mother church of Methodism in the Clare District. The land for the Chapel and Burial Ground was donated by Samuel Bray one of the first settlers to take up land in Spring Farm. A fine history of the Chapel is recorded in the paper titled 'Methodism in the Clare District' prepared by the Rev. Stanley Forth in 1974, a copy of which is among the CRHG's collection. The following extract from Rev. Forth's paper records the loss of the Chapel: *'The Chapel has been demolished for some years now, and nothing remains to remind us of this old citadel of faith but the graveyard and a small heap of rubble where once stood the Chapel. An almond tree marks the site of the only door to the building'.*



Wesleyan Chapel - Spring Farm

Churches and Chapels Lost – continued

▪ **Bumburnie Catholic Church**

Opened in 1853 ‘the little wooden church’ was pulled down in 1868 having served the congregation for

▪ **Upper Wakefield Bible Christian Chapel**

Built in 1856 on land given by Mr. George Sandow of ‘Trelawney’ homestead, this chapel was popularly known as the *Honeysuckle Flat Chapel*, being close to the creek of that name. Closed in the 1890’s, only a carved headstone from the Chapel remains in the homestead garden.

▪ **Clare Presbyterian Church**

Perhaps amongst the saddest ending of ‘churches lost’ the history of the Presbyterian Church in Clare is recorded in a book written by Helen Dickeson and published by the Clare Regional History in 1993. The following extract from the preface to the book is worth noting. *“A church history is usually written for its congregation or with a date in mind, such as the commemoration of a century of worship. For the Clare Presbyterian Church, there is no longer a church or a congregation. The building and graves are gone, those left of its faithful have joined other churches. Houses stand on its land, and its last markers, the giant gums standing sentry near the porch, have given way to ‘progress’ this past year.”* The church was

built in 1856-7 on land in Union Street donated by William Gordon McKay, an early overseer at Bungaree. The indenture of release for the land specified that the land was ‘for a Presbyterian Church and Cemetery for the use of the Presbyterians of Clare and its neighbourhood, who unite to worship in the Premises erected’. This it continued to do for the next 115 years.



Presbyterian Church - Clare before extensions

▪ **Saint Stanislaus Roman Catholic Church – Blyth & Polish Hill River**

A substantial sandstone building, the Church of Saint Stanislaus was built following a decision in 1910, at a cost of £1,400. Local parishioners raised the money and the Church became the centre for the Catholic faithful in Blyth for the next sixty years. In 1982 when cracking appeared in the building the decision was taken to demolish it in order that the land could be donated for the building of homes for senior citizens. The Burkanendi Homes for the Aged were erected on the site in 1984. The foundation stone of the Church was salvaged and remains featured in a memorial cairn built in the grounds of Burkanendi.



Church of St. Stanislaus –
Polish Hill River

Another Church of Saint Stanislaus preceded the Blyth Church in the region being the **Church of Saint Stanislaus Kostia at Polish Hill River**, consecrated on 30th November 1871. The Polish Hill River church was built on land donated by an early settler Jan Nykiel with the Polish community doing most of the work including making their own nails. Now a museum, the restored church at Polish Hill River provides a testimonial to the significant contribution of Polish settlers and is open to visitors on the first Sunday of each month.

Churches, Chapels and Citadels Converted

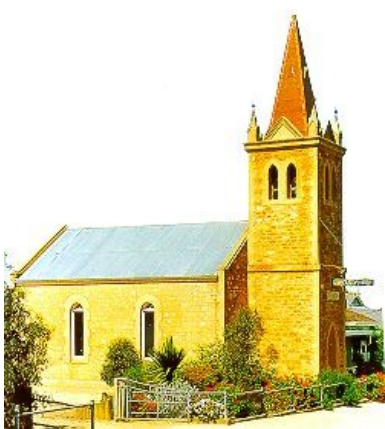
Many of the early Chapels were built not only as places of worship but also to serve as schools, initially with teachers employed by the settlers but often later taken over by the State. Each denominational group brought with them their own forms of service and beliefs. The numerous non-conformist sects from England each followed their particular rites and built their own Chapels many of which became surplus as, union of the Wesleyan followers occurred in 1900, and again in 1970 when the Methodists and Presbyterians came together as Clare United Parish. With the growth of some towns, the decline of others and improved ways of transport, many Churches and Chapels were lost or fortunately converted to other uses.

▪ **Upper Skilly Bible Christian Chapel**

This was built in 1855 on land donated by Malachi Brain in the Skillogelee Hills. It was not until 1862 that the sturdy stone Chapel with ZION AD 1862 carved into the stone above the front door was opened. The Chapel, as with many of these early buildings, served also as a school for local children. A stone residence alongside the Chapel provided accommodation for the school teacher. The school operated from 1868 to 1878. Records for the adjoining cemetery were destroyed, but remaining headstones provide a record of many of the early settlers in this beautiful part of the region.

After years of neglect and deterioration, the buildings were sympathetically restored in the late 1990's - the Chapel as a function centre and the residence for accommodation.

▪ **St. Petri's Lutheran Church - Blyth**



Saint Petri's Church - Blyth

St. Petri's was the second church building in Blyth. Built on land given by Mr. C.B. Young the church opened in 1886. Interestingly Mr. Young also donated the land on which the Wesleyan Chapel was built. At first there was no resident pastor, the weekly services being conducted by lay readers, with a six weekly visit by Pastor Niquet from the Barossa. Of note was the donation of a bell for the church by Kaiser Wilhelm 1st which followed a request from one of the lay readers, Mr. Hartwig. The bell, some two feet six inches in height, was installed in a purpose built bell-tower at the front of the church. Following the closure of the church the bell was transferred to the Blyth Trinity Lutheran Church. Now the home of Medika Gallery the original building continues to maintain an impressive presence in the Blyth township.

▪ **Wesleyan Chapel - Auburn**

The story of the conversion of this Chapel is one of ecumenical significance or is it really good common sense. Whatever, it has retained for us a building of significance and recognition of the skills of our early masons. Built in 1868 on the eastern side of the River Wakefield (Ford Street) the Wesleyan Chapel *"is a building of much beautiful stone work. The pillars capped with the open Bible design, and stones cut with fine lines to represent the leaves of a book, are symbolical."* After a short period of use as a Sunday School, following the union of the Methodists, the Chapel was, in 1915, sold to the Roman Catholic Church for £325. Dedicated as 'Our Lady of Peace' its conversion resulted in the closure of St. Patrick's Church – Undalya as the congregation transferred to Auburn (see page 3). The ecumenical nature of this conversion is noted in 'THE WAKEFIELD ITS WATER AND ITS WEALTH', Jean V. Moyle in the following way: *"The Wesleyan bell calls the faithful to Mass, and in fair exchange the bell from St. Patrick's has replaced the old cracked bell in the Methodist Church in Auburn'.*

Churches and Chapels Converted cont.

▪ **Primitive Methodist Chapel – Auburn**

Another of the fine Chapels built by Joseph Meller, the Primitive Methodist Chapel has perhaps the longest link with the spiritual beliefs of those that have lived in the area, being built on a part of the corroboree grounds of the Ngadjuri people. Another to become surplus following the Methodist Union, the Chapel was sold to the Orange Lodge in 1889 and retained by them until 1926 when it was sold to the Lutheran Church. Continuing the ecumenical journey of several of these early Chapels, many additions and improvements were made by the Lutheran community. Perhaps surprisingly the Church was named St. John's thus becoming the second Church of St. John in Auburn, this being also the name of the Anglican Church in Auburn completed in 1862.

▪ **Wesleyan Chapel – Kybunga**

Built in 1896, the Wesleyan Chapel was the only building north of the creek and served the loyal congregation for some ninety one years progressing through two periods of church union - becoming Methodist and later Uniting. Interestingly it is understood that some of the furnishings came from the Spring Farm Chapel (see page 4) with pews being let for ten shillings per annum. The building is now a private home.



Wesleyan Chapel - Kybunga

▪ **Holy Angels Catholic Church – Farrell Flat**



Holy Angels Church - Farrell Flat

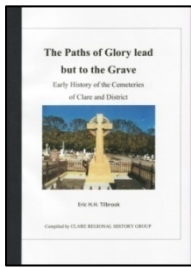
Two churches in Farrell Flat have carried the name Holy Angels, the first being opened in 1873, and having a life of some thirty nine years. There were serious structural problems encountered in the 1900's when huge cracks appeared in the walls. These distracted the worshippers it being said "*they could see wheat waving in the paddocks.*" Building of the new church commenced in 1911 with local farmers carrying building stone to the site in wagons as well as assisting in the actual building. Opened on 30th June 1912 the Church served the local congregation until it closed in May 1984. Reportedly the congregations in the 1930's were the largest with '*standing room only if you were late*'. Following closure the Church was sold. It has changed hands on several occasions, currently being used as a domestic dwelling but still providing an impressive presence in the town.

▪ **The Unknown Church**



The Group's photographic collection includes this picture of an unknown Chapel or Church in the region. Any assistance in identifying the name or location of same will be greatly appreciated.

BOOKS FOR SALE



THE PATHS OF GLORY LEAD BUT TO THE GRAVE a history of Clare Cemeteries by EEH 'Clarion' Tilbrook and Miss M Tilbrook (originally published in *The Northern Argus* in 1939) **New release – updated index \$20.00**

CLARE CAMEOS by Win Johnson (1986). 2nd ed. Includes oral histories of our older Clare residents as interviewed by Win in the State's Sesquicentennial year. **\$15.00**

TALKING HISTORY – Tales of Clare S.A. by R.J. (Bob) Noye (2003). Comprising the 50 articles published weekly in *The Northern Argus*, prior to Bob's death in August 2002. **\$15.00 (\$12.00 members)**

THE CLARE I REMEMBER by J.J. 'Boss' Simons. A series of 13 articles published in *The Northern Argus* in 1944, describing the Clare of Simons' boyhood in the 1880's and 1890's. Fully indexed. Released Dec 1994. New print. **\$15.00**

THE LAND HISTORY OF POLISH HILL RIVER 1842 - 1990 by William Pattullo (1991). Details the ownership history of 120 sections of land in Polish Hill River, to the edge of Mintaro township. **\$25.00**

CARINYA 1956 - 1989 A Peaceful and happy home Compiled by Marj. Ashby. **\$5.00**

THE METHODISTS OF CLARE 1851 - 1977 by Win Johnson (1994). 124pp. Indexed. **\$12.00**

CLARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - a history 1856 - 1988 by Helen Dickeson (1993). 120pp. Includes baptisms, marriages, burials, and extensive index. **\$14**

HARD-YACKA - The story of a Mid-North town in South Australia by Julie-Ann Ellis (1995). **\$40.00**

MAGPIE CREEK JUNCTION a history of Brinkworth and district 1892 - 1992 (1992). Compiled by Brinkworth Centenary Book Committee. 233pp. **\$40.00**

JUST AS IT WAS by Winifred Johnson (2001) Tells the story of Win's life with humour & affection. 96pp including photos **\$18.00**

BLYTH - a silo of stories 1860 - 1990 by Win Johnson (1991). A comprehensive history of the town and district of Blyth, including family stories, farming, community and sporting activities. Excellent photographs, many in colour. **\$45.00**

A BASIC COURSE IN THE HOW, WHAT & WHERE IN GENEALOGY by Donald Hortin. This is an excellent simple guide for the beginning family historian. **FREE ! get in quick!**

CLARE - A DISTRICT HISTORY by R. J. Noye (1998). Definitive history of the town and district. Includes photographs, sketches & maps. Essential starting point in Clare research. 231pp. 4th edition, with new index. **\$20.00 (\$15 - members)**

BUNGAREE – Land, Stock & People: History of Hawker family and Bungaree Station (1992). 230pp **\$45.00**

CLARE PRIMARY SCHOOL 1879–2004 by Ro Wood & 125TH Committee (2004) **\$10.00**

SADDLEWORTH - Hub of the Wheel by Elinor A. Bellman (1995) **\$35.00**

CLARE – A BACKWARD GLANCE – by J. Haynes & J. Schmaal (1980) **\$8.00 (Recently reprinted)**

HEAD OF THE RIVERS – Black Springs, Manoora, Waterloo (1992) **\$25.00**

FROM WHERE THE BROUGHTON FLOWS by Maurice B. Keain (1976) A history of the Spalding district **\$15.00**

MARRABEL AND DISTRICT – The Legend of Curio – a history of Marrabel & district **\$25.00**

MARRABEL & DISTRICT REVISITED – additional material of the 'early days' at Marrabel **\$25.00**

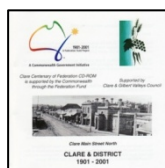
HILL RIVER A Valley of History by Gerald Lally (2004) **\$30**

A LANDMARK OF FAITH Church of the Immaculate Conception Mintaro and its parishioners 1856–2006 by Gerald Lally (2006) **\$30**

FROM WHERE I SIT A Collection of articles on chosen themes written over past times by Win Johnson **\$16.00**

CD-ROMS

HEADSTONE PHOTOS FROM LOCAL CEMETERIES (CD Rom) (2005) **\$10.00**



FEDERATION CD ROM - history of the Clare & Gilbert Valley District for all computer buffs and their friends - a great gift idea! (2002) **Special price \$10.00 (\$15 for 2)**

CLARE REGIONAL HISTORY GROUP

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Opening hours

Thursdays 10-30 – 4.00pm

(if you are travelling some distance, it is wise to ring and check)

Out of Hours Opening Fee \$20

NEW ACQUISITIONS

BOOKS

Nasht, Simon *The Last Explorer – Hubert Wilkins – Australia's unknown hero*, 2005

Mincham, Hans *The Story of the Flinders Ranges*, 1964

Norris, Keith *Australia's Heritage Sketchbook*, 1976

Jones, Alan *Curramulka, 1876-1975*, 1975 (With supplement 1978)

Robinson, Nancy (Ed) *Bend Down and Listen – Folk tales from Mannanarie*, 1972

Wilson, S.H. *Billiatt – John William Billiatt: Explorer, adventurer and tutor*, 2006

Slattery, Paul *The Church Upon the Hill: A history of St John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Laura*, 2009

Menadue, Betty *The Green Family History*, 2009

Linn, Rob *Their Sacrifice: Australia remembers 1845-1995*, 1995

Clare Regional History Group (Tilbrook, A.[Comp.]) *District of Clare – Deaths 1908-1917 (Books 27-33)*, 2010

Loney, J.K. *Wrecks on the South Coast of South Australia* (4th Edn), 1975

PAPERS ETC

Ackland, Jill [et al] *The History of Clare Camera Club on its 50th Anniversary 1956-2006*, 2006

UPRS *Clare Valley & Barossa Tourism Regions Integrated Strategic Tourism Plan*, April 2005 (CD)

Transplan P/L *Riesling Trail Extension Feasibility Study: Report and plans*, nd (CD)

DEATHS IN THE DISTRICT OF CLARE 1855

These five deaths for the period October 1855 to March 1856 were the first official death registrations for the District of Clare. They are listed on a single page which is indexed as being in Volume 4 of the State Registers. The next recorded deaths (13 for the period July to December 1856) are in Volume 24. It is unclear as to why this small group of five exist in isolation.

No. 1. 24 Oct 1855

Jonathan Bowley (male) 11 weeks,

Cause of Death: whooping cough

Informant: Henry Bowley, Carpenter, Clare father.