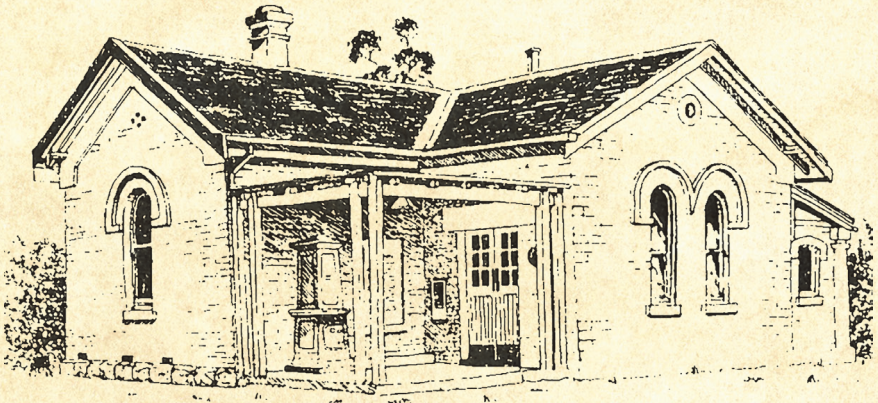


MORNINGTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC



Corner Main Street and Esplanade, Mornington 3931

NEWSLETTER

February 2024

Newsletter No. 302



President's Report

We hope you enjoy the variety of guest speakers we have arranged for you this year.

We need to bring new members to the Historical Society as the numbers are not as good as they were even ten years ago. If anyone is interested, bring them along so they can meet us and find out what we offer, there is no compulsion.

This year will be our **60TH anniversary!** We are intending to have something to commemorate this towards the end of the year. If you have any ideas that would be great.

We have also been working with the Mornington Life Saving Club who want to celebrate their history. We have put together words and some images from our collection for a plaque which will give visitors information on the former Baths. The Life Saving Club are putting together a video with images again from our collection which will be accessible via a QR Code on an interpretive panel at the Club.

If you would like to consider joining us on the Committee of Management, we have a couple of spare places as Janis found she needed to give her time elsewhere and we did have one place not filled. Remember the saying “Many Hands make Light Work”. We can promise you a laugh or two as well.

Diane White

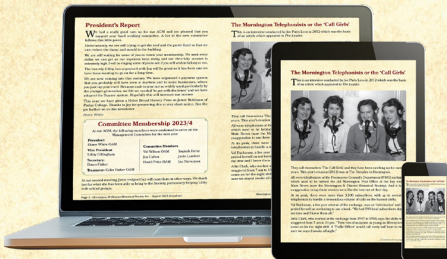
WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

A big welcome to Sue and Terry Spencer.

We hope you enjoy your time with us.

DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

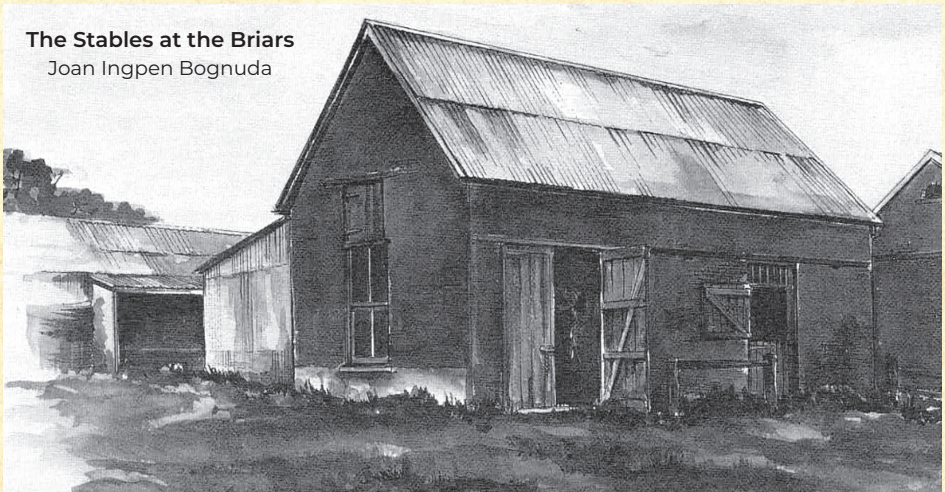
We are wondering whether you have given any thought to receiving the Newsletter in digital form via email? The one advantage is that it will be in glorious colour. If you would like to partake of this, could you please email Dawn to let her know dawnfisher@live.com.au



The following articles on the Briars and St Peters Church are from the book by Leslie Moorhead and Joan Bognuda, *Between the Bays - Mornington Peninsula*. Details on the book are on page 7

The Briars

One of the first settlers on the Mornington Peninsula was Captain James Reid who took out a grazing licence in 1840 and established himself on a pastoral 'run' near Mount Martha. Captain Reid had been in the regular army but, like many other military men of the time, was attracted to reports of good grazing leases and consequently arranged his discharge to begin a new life in the Port Phillip District.



He named his station *Checkinkurk*, the aboriginal name for the creek, now known as Balcombe Creek, which flows through the property to Port Phillip Bay near Mt. Martha.

Checkinkurk, sometimes recorded as Tichingorouke, apparently meant 'ghosts of the frogs' or 'voice of the frogs'. Reid's run extended eastwards to Three Chain Road (Moorooduc Road), an area of several thousand acres. It was described by the Government Surveyor in 1841 as 'open forest country, good grass, timbered with gum, stringy bark and wattle trees'.

Captain Reid was a man of some social standing in early Melbourne. He had a number of influential friends in the new settlement and was well received in government circles. Many of these people, including Sir John Franklin, Governor of Tasmania, visited him at *Checkinkurk*.

...Continued on page 5.

MORNINGTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

Dates for Your Diary 2024

Website: www.morningtondistricthistory.org.au

Follow us on Facebook Museum Phone (03) 5976 3203

Visitors warmly welcomed. Why not bring along a friend and introduce them to the Historical Society? The more the merrier.

Tuesday February 13th 10.30am - \$10

COFFEE MORNING

St. Mark's Community Room, Waterloo Place

HISTORY OF BALLET

Norma Evans - our Norma

Tuesday March 12th 10.30am - \$10

COFFEE MORNING

St. Mark's Community Room, Waterloo Place

POLICE HISTORY - Leading Sen.

Constable Greg Kraus from Mornington Police Station

Tuesday April 9th 10.30am - \$10

COFFEE MORNING

St. Mark's Community Room, Waterloo Place

Will Spokes has recently published a book featuring the magnificent 1920's paddle steamer Hygeia. The story is a drama based in the 1920's and not by any means an historical treatise. The influence of the ferry service on the Mornington Peninsula is however well covered in the book.

Tuesday May 14th 10.30am - \$10

COFFEE MORNING

St. Mark's Community Room, Waterloo Place

Mary Rudd will share her vast knowledge of the First Nations Peoples of Arnhem Land, the Yolngu.

Tuesday June 11th 10.30am - \$10

COFFEE MORNING

St. Mark's Community Room, Waterloo Place

TREASURES - Bring along something of historical importance to you and share its story with us. This very popular morning always brings surprises.

NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE FESTIVAL April 18 - May 18

The Historical Societies on the Mornington Peninsula will be holding a day at the Peninsula Community Theatre, Mornington. between 10a.m and 4p.m.

The Theme - Sharing the Past and Connecting Communities. There will be guest speakers and an Auctioneer can assess any valuables you may have.

We will have a table to display our wares and show some of our history. Please let Diane know if you could spare a couple of hours to be behind the table. Should be fun.

...Continued from page 3.

In 1844, or late 1843, Alexander Beatson Balcombe took over *Checkinkurk* from Captain Reid and changed the name of the property to *The Briars* after his birthplace. Alexander Balcombe was born 32 years before at *The Briars*, St. Helena where his father William Balcombe had been employed as a representative of the East India Company during Napoleon's captivity on the island.

Ten years after his arrival at *The Briars*, Balcombe was able to exercise his preemptive right to acquire his holding freehold and bought it outright at twelve shillings and sixpence per acre.

Assured of the tenure of his land, Balcombe began the building of a new house, the house in which generations of his descendants have lived. The front section of the house, the wing at the side, the stable and barn were built of bricks made on the property. The buildings begun in 1848 and completed in the 1850s. A vineyard was planted below the house and olive trees which still flourish are as old as the building. Cattle were grazed on the paddocks surrounding the homestead. Additions in harmony with the original structure were added to the homestead in the early years of this century. It is considered to be one of the most historically important buildings in Victoria and with its surrounding farm lands, provided a rare combination of quality, stability and harmony.

Alexander Balcombe lived at *The Briars* until he died in 1877 and during that time took a prominent part in the development of the Shire of Mornington. He was a member of the Mt. Eliza District Road Board, which preceded the formation of the Shires, was listed as a large landowner on the electors' roll of 1855, was magistrate and Justice of the Peace, and filled an important role in the moves to build a jetty at Schnapper Point (Mornington).

He and Mrs. Balcombe were to the forefront in the activity which led to the building of St. Peter's Church of England, Mornington and to the establishment of the first schools in the district.

In 1975 the sons of the late Elizabeth Claire a'Beckett, a great grand-daughter of A.B. Balcombe, in memory of their mother, made a generous gift of the homestead and twenty surrounding acres to the Shire of Mornington and the National Trust in common ownership for the people of Mornington. The five hundred broad acres of its environmental setting have been acquired by the Shire of Mornington so that the house and its surroundings will be preserved as a piece of living history, a property which was begun as a farm in the earliest days of settlement, and which has been worked with care and skill as a farm ever since.

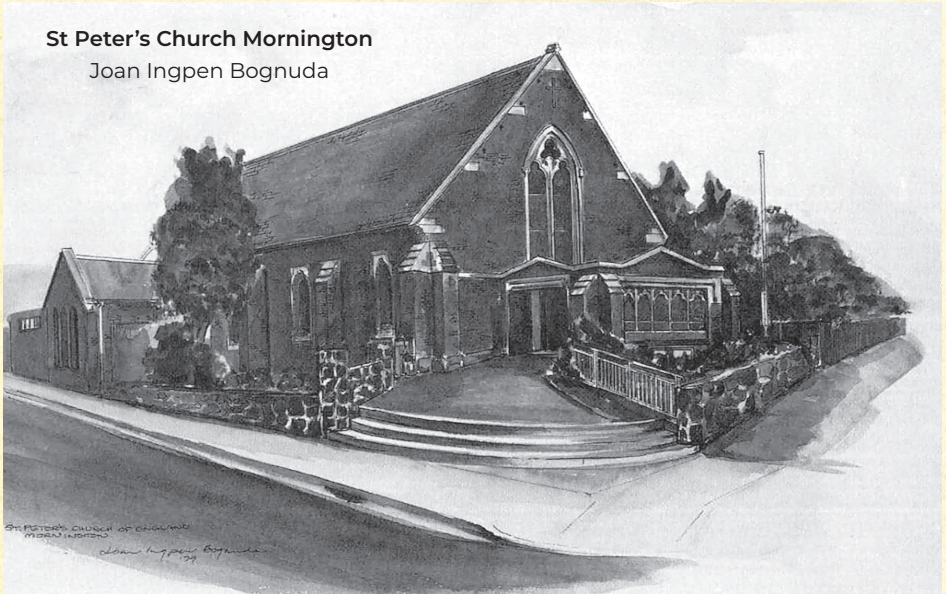
The Briars has been in the news recently and the homestead has been closed due to extensive renovations and restoration which are just about finished. We thought you may like to have a refresher or learn of its beginnings.

Leslie Moorhead & Joan Ingpen Boğnuda 1979

...Continued on the next page.

St Peter's Church Mornington

Joan Ingpen Bognuda



St. Peter's Church of England, Mornington

The farm labourers, the splitters, the fishermen and other settlers who came to Schnapper Point in the 1850s formed a stable community, whose descendants in many cases remained in the area to form the nucleus of the present [1979] Shire of Mornington. Many of these people were immigrants who were adherents of the Church of England. They must have missed the services of a minister of religion and the church going which would have been a traditional influence in the life they had left behind in 'the old country'.

The nearest Anglican Church was St. Andrew's at Brighton, remote for the settlement at 'The Point'. The remoteness was not so much caused by the distance as by the poor state of the commonly used stock routes and dray tracks which passed as 'roads'.

Until 1861 there was no local authority to make roads and the land crossing depended on what the people did themselves to ford creeks, negotiate swamps and bogs and generally find a way through the bushland to the Peninsula. People seeking a comfortable journey travelled by steamer.

A vigorous attempt by a local group with Harley Goodall of the Mornington Hotel as Secretary and A.B. Balcombe of *The Briars* as Treasurer succeeded by 1860 in collecting money to a total of two hundred and sixty-two pounds, two shillings for the building of a church. This aim was facilitated by the generous assistance of John Armstrong, a Melbourne solicitor with interests in Schnapper Point, making available the land on which St. Peter's Church and Parish Hall now stand.

Leonard Tetley was the architect of the original church which was made of hand-made bricks by local builder William Grover.

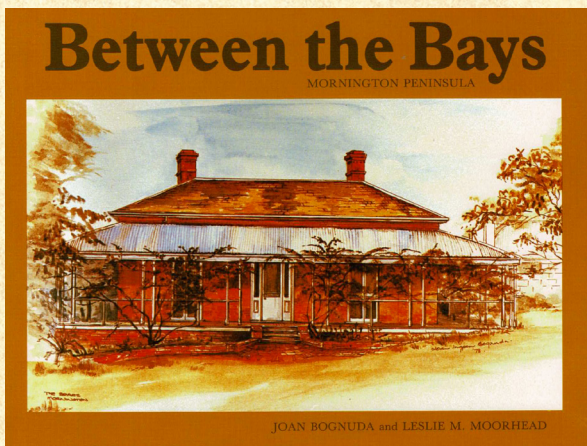
Because of a shortage of funds, a small belfry was deleted from the plan and a shingle roof laid. The slate was added later, also the remainder of the nave, the chancel and the sanctuary.

The Reverend James Glover, said to be of delicate health and a former missionary in Borneo, became the first vicar arriving by steamer on 6 April 1861. On Sunday 19 May 1861 St. Peter's Church of England, Schnapper Point was opened officially.

The Church is a storehouse of historic memorials, '*evidence of the generations of men and women who served God here in their day and have bequeathed to us that which they helped to build and establish*'. as was written in a memorial booklet published on the occasion of the centenary of the opening of the Church during the months of April, May and June 1961.

St. Peter's Church has been closed due to water damage in one of the downpours. It has taken time to resolve the insurance and to get the repairs done. They are hoping that the reopening will take place this year.

Leslie Moorhead & Joan Ingpen Bognuda 1979



Words by Leslie Moorhead & sketches by Joan Ingpen Bognuda

Between the Bays Book

The articles on *the Briars* and St Peters Church are from the book by Leslie Moorhead and Joan Bognuda *Between the Bays - Mornington Peninsula*.

This book was published in 1979 and is now out of print. Leslie wrote the words and Joan did the

sketches. We were given a box of these books in perfect condition for us to sell. We have selected a couple of articles for you if you have never seen them. We have them for sale at \$5 each.

FOR SALE - *Please contact the Museum:*

FIFTEEN YOUNG MEN

by Paul Kennedy - Published by
Penguin Random House \$25

THE WOLFDENE STORY -

**The Families and Functions of a
Mornington Historic House**

by Joy Cullen \$10

**A JOURNEY ALONG BALCOMBE
CREEK** *by Winty Calder \$30*

**READY AND WILLING,
WE STRIVE TO SAVE -**

**The story of the Mornington Fire
Brigade 1917-2017**

by Colin Fisher \$5

**OUR BOYS AT THE FRONT -
from the pages of *The Peninsula Post*.**

This award winning book including DVD
disc on World War 1 is now reduced to \$25

**THE NAMES ON THE MORNINGTON
HONOUR ROLL**

Who were they? *By Val Wilson \$15*

*Special Offer - Both Boys at the Front
and Honour Roll \$30 together*

WORLD WAR 1 POEMS

*Selected from *The Peninsula Post* \$10*

**REV GEORGE COX - A MAN OF
MANY PARTS** *by Joy Cullen*

\$10 per copy plus postage.



DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

We are wondering whether you might like to receive the Newsletter in digital form via email? The one advantage is that it will be in glorious colour. If you would like to partake of this, could you please email Dawn to let her know dawnfisher@live.com.au

*We offer our respect to the First Peoples. The members of the Boon Warrung/
Bunurong, past, present and future, the custodians of this land and waters.*

Thank you to Chris Crewther MP for printing this newsletter.

Thanks to the Mornington Peninsula Shire for their support.

Mornington & District Historical Society Inc. A00041916W

ABN 7515 1057 105 - PO Box 71 Mornington 3931

Museum: Corner Main Street and Esplanade

Open 12.30 - 3.00pm Sundays or by appointment

Donations to the Historical Society of \$2 or more are tax deductible

Banking Details:

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Mornington & District Historical Society Inc.

Account Number: 162 405 427

Please say what the payment is for.