



**FROM THE PARISH ARCHIVES**  
Number 16 November 2011

**Four Laymen and One Laywomen: Foundation Years**

Welcome to the sixteenth edition of "From the Parish Archives". We hope that you will enjoy reading about the history of the Parish. This is especially so with the 150th anniversary in 2011.

The "From the Parish Archives" aims to be factual. However, any opinions expressed are personal and may not be necessarily shared by other parishioners.

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**Introduction**

In this current issue we feature four laymen and one laywoman closely associated with the foundation of Anglican Parish at Eltham. A most prominent lay leader in the foundation years was Henry Dendy snr. and he was featured in the fourth issue. In the previous issue we featured Dixon Bertram Lay Reader and in essence our first minister. The laymen featured here are:

1. Nathaniel Billing
2. William Andrew
3. Charles Wingrove
4. Caroline Wingrove
5. Walter Wippel

Most of the information concerning these laymen comes from copies of newspaper reports held in our archives and from the minutes of the church committee, also in our archives.

## **Nathaniel Billing**

The architect Nathaniel Billing's original drawings for St. Margaret's in Eltham are recorded in the surviving folio of his architectural work in the parish archives. Billing (1821-1910) was born at Brightwell in Oxfordshire in 1821 and died in 1910.

Billing was employed as a government clerk of works at Belfast now known as Port Fairy from 1853 until 1855 and built up a considerable practice in the surrounding areas of Warrnambool and Port Fairy before moving to Melbourne in 1857.

One of his early commissions was St. John's Anglican Church, Port Fairy, designed in the Early English style (1855) and said to have the first fully developed chancel in the colony. St. Patrick's, Port Fairy (1857) is another early example of Billing's work and as at St. Margaret's in Eltham, featured stained glass windows by Ferguson and Urie. Billing also designed the Anglican Christ Church at Warrnambool in the Early English style, built in local sandstone. His design for St. Margaret's in Eltham was also in the Early English style.

Unlike the other three laymen featured here Billing was not a parishioner, but was the Architect of St Margaret's. Nevertheless, he was an important person associated with its foundation.

## **William Andrew**

William B Andrew was a leader in the Eltham church from its inception. He was the cousin of Henry Dendy and like him moved to Eltham from Brighton. He married the widow of John Harper, the owner and lessee of the Fountain Hotel. This was the venue for the public meeting held May 25 1860 that resolved to build a Church of England in Little Eltham. He served on the church committee for at least two decades and supervised the building of the church. Money paid to him was gifted back to the church.

When Andrew came from Brighton he brought records showing that he was the first secretary of the Brighton Cricket Club. He also brought records of the first matches played between Brighton and Melbourne teams. The matches took place between 1842 and 1847 and were the first records of cricket matches in Victoria. His sporting interests were kept up in Eltham. He was secretary of the Eltham Racing Club.

The Advertiser of Friday 21 November 1941 p. 5 states that *when Andrew came to Eltham he opened a business on the site now occupied by Mr F H Collis*. That business was a General Store.

In addition to being a businessman, William Andrew was a carpenter and builder and on 24 April 1862 he was presented with a set of tools by the citizens of Eltham in recognition of his work in assisting with the erection of St Margaret's Church of England.

### **Charles Wingrove**

Charles Wingrove was a prominent figure in Victorian local government, as secretary to the Eltham District Road Board and Shire Council from 1858 to 1904, and, as Shire Engineer and Secretary to the Heidelberg Road Board. He was part of the Committee to establish the Church of England at Eltham

The Wingroves were an important pioneer family of Eltham and Wingrove Cottage is one of the most important heritage buildings in Eltham as one of the few surviving 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Reputedly built in 1858, Wingrove Cottage was recorded in the 1859-60 Eltham Road District rent roll as a brick house owned and occupied by Wingrove with a Net Annual Value (NAV) of £30. In 1861, the year the Church opened, Wingrove's house was identified as a two-roomed brick cottage with an NAV of £25. By 1870, Wingrove's property had a NAV of £30 and Wingrove himself was described as a 'road surveyor'. In the late 1870s, he was listed as a municipal officer and, in the 1880s, when the NAV of his house rose to £55, with additions, as 'surveyor'. By the 1890s, the NAV was £60

Charles Wingrove is buried with other members of his family in the cemetery at the St. Helena church.

### **Caroline Wingrove**

There is a memorial tablet on the east wall of St Margaret's in memory of Katherine Rose Wingrove, wife of Charles. She died February 9 1896. The west wall window of Saint Cecelia, that dates from 1920, is in memory of Caroline Ada Wingrove, daughter of Walter and Katherine who died May 25 1919.

At the dedication of the window in St Margaret's, attended by about 50 people, she was described *as a most valued worker not only in church circles, but an enthusiastic leader amongst all public movements.* The report on her continues to say *that during the whole course of the war she very ably filled the position of Honorary Treasure of the Red Cross Branch.*

The Reverends Thomas Henry Sapsford, 10<sup>th</sup> vicar and vicar of the day and Arthur Pelham Chase, 7<sup>th</sup> vicar, according to a newspaper report *spoke feelingly of her true worth and the loss her death meant to the whole community.*

Apparently on Christmas night 1915 Misses Drew and Wingrove were thrown out of their jinker near Research. However, it is reported on 7 January 1916 that they are now fully recovered from their contusions and shock. However, the foreman Becket whose motor cycle collided with the jinker, is, at last advices in the Melbourne Hospital suffering from a lacerated scalp and an injury in both jaws. However, he is reported to be doing well.

It is difficult to document the many women who were important to the foundation of our church as they were precluded from office and therefore the official records. Caroline Wingrove is a fine example of the important role women have played both then and throughout our 150 years.

**Walter Wippel**

Walter Wippell moved from Kangaroo Ground to Eltham to take over a store there near Dendy's flour mill, in 1862, but retained his Kangaroo Ground property. He was a Eltham Road Board member and later its auditor, and a trustee of the Kangaroo Ground cemetery. An oak near the fire station is known as Wippell's Oak and Walter was the first to subscribe to the Eltham War Memorial after WW1.

On the east wall of St Margaret's is a pair of stained glass windows. One is Saint Margaret of Scotland and the other Saint Paul. The pair date from 1918. They are erected in memory of Mr and Mrs Wippel staunch parishioners of the day.