



WALK ONE: OAKLEIGH'S HERITAGE PRECINCT

Sources:

Gobbi, H.G: *Taking Its Place – A History of Oakleigh* 2004
www.monash.vic.gov.au/heritage
vdh.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au (Victorian Heritage Register)
www.sprint.net.au (for Father Moutafis information)
other various websites

Please note: some buildings included in this walk display modifications and modern signage and may therefore be somewhat different to their earliest appearance.

We suggest that you start your walk at the Cenotaph, corner of Atherton Road and Drummond Street, Oakleigh.



Oakleigh Cenotaph: Originally in the median strip at the corner of Dandenong and Warrigal Roads, this cenotaph was unveiled in November 1933 as a memorial to World War I (WWI). It was moved to Warrawee Park in November 1965 due to heavy traffic at its previous location. It now also commemorates subsequent conflicts in which Australians have served.¹

Oakleigh Avenue of Honour: Drummond Street. Planted in 1923 to commemorate WWI. The cut-leaf plane trees are replacements for the original flowering gum trees.²

Lamp-post near the Cenotaph: note the plaque with a list of the fifty-eight Oakleigh servicemen who gave their lives in WWI.³

Warrawee Park: created in 1915 from part of the cemetery land. It shares the name of the home (north-east corner of Albert and Atkinson Streets) of Edwin Corr, an Oakleigh Councillor for twenty

¹ www.vdh.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au (Victorian Heritage Register) /Oakleigh

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

years and Mayor 1916-1917. He was also a businessman and solicitor and much respected by Oakleigh citizens for his work on Oakleigh's behalf.⁴

Bandstand in Warrawee Park: brass bands were an important feature of civic life in the Victorian colony from early days. Oakleigh's brass band gave its first outdoor performance in 1890. The first bandstand in Warrawee Park was built in 1919 by the Oakleigh brass band itself, then replaced in 1920, helped by donations from local building supply companies. The current bandstand was constructed in 2000 along with the conversion and extension of the post office building which thereafter housed the Monash Oakleigh Service Centre and History Monash Inc (formerly Oakleigh & District Historical Society Inc.)⁵

Oakleigh Pioneer Memorial Park: originally known as Oakleigh General Cemetery, now listed by the National Trust. This was one of Victoria's first public cemeteries, opening in 1860, at which time the cemetery was a sufficient distance from the Oakleigh township. The cemetery was closed in 1960 and various parts of the cemetery land were subsequently allocated for Council use and car parking. It was rededicated as a Pioneer Memorial Park in 1988. See the fascinating information panels within the park.⁶

Memorial Hall: opened April 1922, built to commemorate the sacrifice of servicemen in WWI. The fete arranged to raise funds to build the hall was opened by Lt-Gen. Sir John Monash. It is the headquarters of the Oakleigh-Carnegie RSL.⁷

Now cross Drummond Street at the corner of Palmer Street and walk back towards Atherton Road.



Archangel Michael and Saint Anthony's Coptic Orthodox Church, corner Drummond and Palmer Streets: opened in 1982, the building was formerly the Presbyterian Church. The foundation stone was laid in 1928.⁸

Mechanics' Institute: 142-144 Drummond Street: The original building, opened in 1886, burned down in 1905 and was rebuilt in 1906. In the fire, valuable old photos of Oakleigh were lost, as well as many books. Mechanics' Institutes were important places for education (including a library facility), recreation for workers and community social life. The building is now known as the Oakleigh Hall and is managed by Monash City Council.⁹

⁴ Gobbi, H.G: *Taking Its Place – A History of Oakleigh* 2004 pp 123, 129, 145, 146, 151, 161, 174, 186, 187, 190, 198, 206, 211, 212, 216

⁵ Ibid pp 86, 116, 161

⁶ Ibid pp 42, 66, 75, 117-118, 167, 214, 224, 228

⁷ Ibid pp 150-151, 201

⁸ Ibid pp 169-170

⁹ Ibid pp 71,72, 114, 126-128, 144, 160, 167, 201, 225

Masonic Temple: 150 Drummond Street, opened 1923. The Freemasons were men's organisations dating back the fourteenth century in England, originally to regulate the work of stonemasons. Local groups are called lodges. The Oakleigh Masonic Temple Co Ltd still meets, having been established in 1900.¹⁰

St David's Uniting Church: opened September 1928. This replaced the Methodist Church on the Broadway, St Paul's. The smaller building next to St David's, on the north side, is the original church building at this site, now used as St David's hall.¹¹

Cross the road and walk west along Atherton Road towards Warrigal Road.

Bust of Father Nicholas Moutafis (1931 – 2001) next to the Monash Federation Centre in Atherton Road : born in Crete, Greece, Nicholas Moutafis arrived in Australia in 1950 under the sponsorship of a soldier whom his family had assisted in Crete during World War II. From 1964 until his death, Father Moutafis served at the Greek Orthodox Church of St Anargiri in Oakleigh. He was very active in establishing the current church and its predecessor building, the neighbouring Greek school and units for the aged; and in establishing local Greek cultural and community organisations.¹²

Monash Federation Centre, 3 Atherton Road: the front of this building is a former Oakleigh Post Office, opened in 1924. The earlier post office on the south-east corner of Atkinson Street and the Broadway (now Dandenong Road), built 1886, became a telephone exchange.¹³

Former City of Oakleigh Council Chambers, Atherton Road: used by City of Oakleigh between 1921 and 1994. The architectural style is Georgian-revival. Like the Post Office, land for this building was taken from the cemetery land.¹⁴

Current Police Station (1 Atherton Road, corner of Warrigal Road): formerly the City of Oakleigh Atherton Road Municipal Offices.¹⁵

Now walk along Warrigal Road towards Dandenong Road.



D. W. Nicholl Reserve: this reserve (between Warrigal Road and Drummond Street) was named after David Wright Nicoll who established the first bank in Oakleigh (ES&A) and was founder of the Oakleigh Cricket Club. In the early 1900s, when cycling was very popular for recreation and competition, there was a cycling path along the inside of the recreation ground.¹⁶

¹⁰ Ibid pp 128, 157, 167

¹¹ Ibid pp 42, 43, 77, 120, 123, 128-129, 169-170

¹² www.sprint.net.au

¹³ Gobbi op cit pp 71, 72, 91, 116, 132, 167, 186,

¹⁴ Ibid p 167

¹⁵ Ibid p 226

¹⁶ Ibid pp 54, 57, 73, 106, 107, 123-124, 128, 147, 188

Wilkinson Williams Grandstand (backs onto Warrigal Road): built in 1924, renamed in 2012 in honour of Bill Wilkinson and Rowland Williams for their services to the Oakleigh community. Bill Wilkinson was an energetic fund raiser for community causes between and during the two World Wars.¹⁷

Oakleigh Primary School, corner Warrigal Road and Logie Street: this school has existed as No. 1601 since 1875. The oldest part of the current school building was opened in 1914 and what is now the main building opened in 1977. The Logie Street entrance is flanked by the WWI Memorial Gates, dedicated in 1925.¹⁸

Logie Street: the narrower width of this street between Warrigal Road and Drummond Street is due to the school's need for playground space when its enrolments increased in the 1950s, resulting in a claim over part of the road.¹⁹



Oakleigh Bowling Club: on the corner of Logie and Drummond Streets, this club has occupied premises on this site since 1907. The club was established in 1902 and admitted women in 1912. A new club house was built in 1956 after some land was reclaimed from Logie Street (see para above).²⁰

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These walks were devised by History Monash Inc in September 2020. They are based upon information contained in H.G. Gobbi's book *Taking Its Place: A History of Oakleigh 2004*, copyright, and several other sources. (Photos in this document: History Monash Inc August 2020). For enquiries, email info@historymonash.org.au

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¹⁷ Plaque on bandstand

¹⁸ Gobbi op cit pp 50, 51, 53, 57, 97-98, 113, 140, 167-168, 192, 222

¹⁹ Ibid p 222

²⁰ Ibid pp 124, 126, 222