Catholic Education in Hawthorn

Catholic education came to Hawthorn in 1854, in the form of St Joseph's School in West Hawthorn. For the first 35 years the staff were all lay teachers. Then in 1889 came the first of three religious congregations. For the next 90 years nuns and brothers staffed the three schools of the parish, providing the children of Hawthorn and some from neighbouring suburbs with a quality education and religious formation.

St Joseph's Parish Primary School

In the mid-19th century, **St Joseph's Parish Primary School** began on the site where St Joseph's Church now stands in Denham Street. An earlier one-classroom school, begun in 1853 on Michael Lynch's Grace Park property, had a brief life. Then in 1855 Fr James Madden, the Richmond pastor, took up a government grant of land for a school and started operating a little school-chapel west of Power Street in 1858-9. Joseph Scott, a well-regarded teacher, led the school on the 1860s. By the late 1870s, after financial problems and temporary closure, Miss Burke reopened the school with a new classroom block.

Sisters Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) – the FCJ Sisters



St Joseph's School in the 1880s

In January 1889, the FCJ Sisters from Richmond took over the school and reports stated their work was excellent. They

conducted St Joseph's for the next 33 years, giving some of their best leaders and teachers to the school – Mother Mary Francis McElroy, Mother Borgia McMahon and Mother Gabriel Tevlin were among them.

In 1911, the FCJ Sisters settled in Weinberg now Wattle Road and on 24 July 1911 started **St Mary's** school for girls up to year 10. Mother Stanislaus Smith FCJ was the Headmistress from 1911 to 1921. The FCJ Sisters travelled each day from the Convent at St Mary's to two primary schools: (1) St Joseph's Hawthorn; (2) Sacred Heart School, Kew. Although St Joseph's school was successful, in 1921, the FCJ Superior General decided to close the Convent and school at Hawthorn as it was felt the schools in Richmond (Vaucluse), Hawthorn (St Mary's) and Kew (Genazzano) were too close together. The Sisters also withdrew from St Joseph's, finishing in 1922.

In 1923, the Brigidine Sisters came to St Joseph's and managed it till 1979, having completed 56 years at the school.

Recollections of Past Students of St. Joseph's, West Hawthorn are given following this summary of Catholic Education in Hawthorn.

Sisters of St Brigid- the Brigidines



Early 1922, the Parish Priest, Fr Claffey, invited the Brigidine Sisters to take over St Mary's and in October 1922 five nuns started their work there, travelling daily from their Malvern Convent.

In 1923, the Brigidines acquired a property, **"Lyndale"** in Riversdale Road where they were able to establish a convent

Kilmaire (formerly "Lyndale")

and add more classrooms to their school. Houses bought later in Lisson Grove expanded the campus.

The Brigidines developed a strong musical tradition at "Lyndale" and their Choral Society performed at many venues around Melbourne. Debating was also part of the girls' training and on one occasion in a debate with St Kevin's College boys, the adjudicator was the Hawthorn parishioner, the former Prime Minister, James Scullin.

In 1950 the school name changed to **"Kilmaire"** ("House of Mary"). In 1970, it was decided to phase out primary classes and in 1978, Kilmaire became exclusively a secondary school. By the end of 1960s, the number of religious in the

classrooms had diminished and more lay teachers were employed. Scores of Brigidine Sisters and former pupils met at Kilmaire in 1973 to mark the Order's 50 years of teaching in Hawthorn.

In 1992, the school was led by its first lay principal, Margaret Leahy. But during the 1990s, Kilmaire faced problems with changing demographics in its catchment area. At the end of 1995, after 75 years of education of girls in the Brigidine tradition, Kilmaire closed.



St John Berchmans School

In 1886 the Parish priest, Fr Peter O'Flinn, started a school for boys in Glenferrie Road (where the Glen Arcade is now situated). During the next 90 years, the school changed location a few times- with Michael Lynch, grandson of the donor of the Immaculate Conception land, helping with a land grant – before settling in 1911 on the site of the now St Joseph's Primary School in Glenferrie Road. Originally it was called St John Berchmans School and boys till age of seven attended St Joseph's Primary School and then transferred to St John's.

Marist Brothers

From 1887 to 1922, St John's was run by lay staff but declining enrolments and limited resources especially during WW1 led to its closure in 1922. Soon after, Fr Joe Hearn, Parish Priest, asked the Marist Brothers to conduct the **St John's School for Boys.** In 1925 Brothers Bertrand and Matthias relaunched the school and the Marist Brothers led the school for the next 50 years.

In 1935 the principal, Br Gilbert, a noted educationalist, made St John's a junior secondary school for students up to today's Year 10. By the mid-1930s, a judicious land purchase by Fr John Bourke, Parish Priest, enabled the Marists to add more buildings and an oval (now used by St Joseph's pupils) and to give the Brothers an upgraded monastery in Lisson Grove.

After WW11, enrolments soared, but the number of teachers



St John's Brothers' Monastery at Opening, 1937

and resources were limited. By 1975, the Catholic Education Office ruled that St John's would close at end of 1976, after 89 years providing education to several generations of Hawthorn boys.







Marist Brothers, St. John's School c 1951

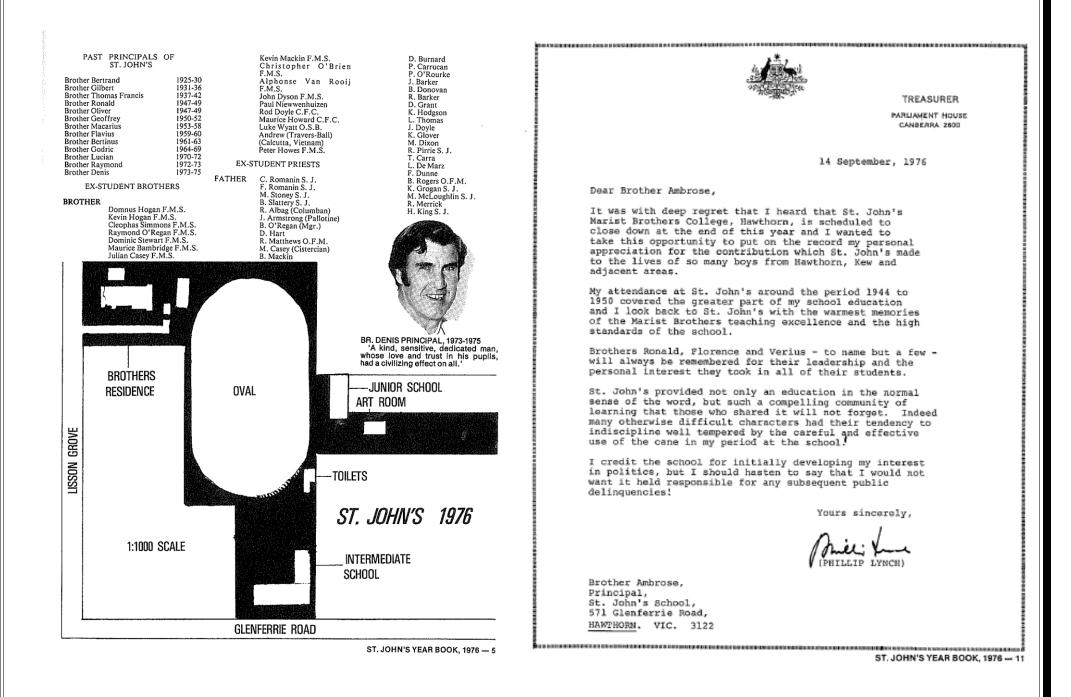


New Parish School Identified

With the closure of St John's, the parish decided it could only sustain one primary school and this would be **St Joseph's**. So in 1978 St Joseph's Primary School moved to the larger site of St John's in Glenferrie Road. The Brigidine nuns oversaw the transition and then left at the end of 1979.

Since 1979, lay principals have led St Joseph's School. Today, it is considered a modern Catholic school, with high enrolment numbers and offering its students many programs. There is a close liaison between the parish and the school. References: Information summary from "*Portrait of a Parish*" by Fr Paul Duffy, SJ. Published 2011. Additional information and photographs provided courtesy of Barbara Kowalski from Brigidine Archives, Malvern, and the FCJ Archives, Richmond. 2019.

St. John's School Hawthorn – 89 Years of Memories



REMINISCENCES - Past and Present

-St. John's school days:-

My total formal schooling was at St. John's for the years 1925 to 1933 in-clusive, and the wonderful devotion that Brothers Bertrand — Matthias — Emilian had to Our Lady I'm sure was transferred to the boys whether consciously or un-consciously, so much so, that I'm sure that devotion still remains with the boys of those early years

consciously, so much so, that I'm sure that devotion still remains with the boys of those early years. The School Choir, developed and directed by Brother Bertrand, were the winners of A Catholic Federation Musical Festival held in Octber 1927, and were constantly in demand for singing engagements at Church and School or special Social evenings. On one occasion selected members went to Sale for a wonderful few days, which concluded with the singing of High Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral on Pentecost Sunday, and I quote from a report in the Advocate at that time: "The singing of the boys was a revela-tion and deeply impressed the large con-gregation present". Apart from participation in all Primary School sporting events, a highlight was the preparation for St. Patrick's Day march each year. From 1927 to 1933 with the exception of 1931, St. John's dominated the School's marching com-petition and were runners up in 1931. For weeks before the 17th March the streets around Hawthorn reverberated with the suround of the kettle drums and the orders of Brothers Bertrand and Matthias for perfection in bearing and precision marching. I believe every boy at St. John's, whether in the choir, sports teams, or

marching, took great pride in being part of St. John's, and the spirit of loyalty, engendered by the Brothers, during those early years and through the depression, has stayed with them right through life. The Brothers had a pet magpie and often I would smuggle it into the classroom where it would settle down in the warmth of my desk or in my coat pocket. It became a firm and constant friend of mine until one inglorious day I had him swinging upside down on my finger under the desk when he suddenly let go and landed on his back letting out the most frightful squawks — Brother Gilbert, without looking up, said " J e n s e n , O u t — I ke your books with you and don't return" As I went to leave the room he added, "and take that magpie with you". Well you can imagine the aproar as I rawled under the desks trying to corner the magpie, which was enraged by his whenever I got near him. The other boys enjoyed my dilemma. As I struggle past there under the desks they gave me well directed kicks. Finally, with hands c 0 v e r (1) the magpie, L aught him and beat a hasty retreat.

ple and may He continue to shower His blessings on the families of all connected with St. John's. THE

"BROTHERS" SENTIMENTS

When, in the absence of the Provincial (Brother Cletus), I was asked to con-tribute a few lines for publication, I was delighted to do so. Not that I had ever been a member of St. John's staff, but I have known very many Brothers who did teach at St. John's and who have shown an extraordinary appreciation of the school and all it stands for.

There is no doubt that the pioneer staff, and particularly Brother Bertrand and Brother Matthias, injected a unique spirit of friendly co-operation and established the "new" St. John's on sound Christian principles. That unique spirit, thanks be to God, has never descrited the school, as countless Brothers and lay teachers would verifiv. testify.

As the time approaches for the Marist Brothers to sever their fifty years' associa-tion with St. John's, it is fitting that I ex-

REMINISCENCES - Past and Present

Assumption College Kilmore September 1976.

Brother Joseph Heinrich Acting Provincial of the Marist Brothers.

*

"MARCHING DAYS"

You modestly brush aside my congratula-tions by saying "We did think our school marched well! But then, what school doesn'(?" My reaction to this comment, Br. Bertinus, is that there was as much difference between your school and some of the others as the Coldstream Guards and a battalion of young recruits. Your boys were truly outstanding.

*

Grade 3 upwards, we graduated to the care and watchful eye of the Brothers. Many classes were combined, Grades 3 and 4 were of large numbers. The Brothers lived by the rule of discipline and

breathed fire and brimstone throughout the hours of school and sport.

ST. JOHN'S

1943-1951

Brothers should have been first class cricketers with the practice derived from delivering the cuts. I can remember many a boy ending off the platform on receipt of a 'cover drive' on the tail.

Imprinted on my memory are many friends made while at St. John's, still to this day a fellow will greet you with "Aren' tyou an Old St. John's Boy?" We then go on to laugh at old times, the prac-tices for St. Patrick's Day march, round and round the streets of Hawthorn to the beat of the drum; continual practices for athletics, swimming and football. It was an honour to be selected to represent the school at any sports meeting. I can an monour to be selected to represent the school at any sports meeting. I can remember one father, while all heads were turned to watch the end of a swimming race, diving in fully clothed, to rescue a boy from the middle of the pool, who was going under.

Recalling names of the Headmaster s during my time at St. John's, Brother Ronald, Brother Oliver, Brother Jeffery, who today, when meeting Old Boys, remember them as if it was yesterday. PETER TRAINOR.

marching. I believe every boy at St. John's, whether in the choir, sports teams, or

I did return next day so my expulsion was short lived and Brother Gilbert did not again refer to it.

I might add that our class room was a front room in the Brothers' House in Glenferrie Road, and was opposite the small Chapel.

FRANK JENSEN



Through the eyes of his son, Martin, 1976. In 1935 when Brother Gilbert was head-master at St. John's Hawthorn, my dad had just come to St. John's in, as he call-ed it, Grade 9, or F.111. My father was at the school for 1½ years. In his first year at St. John's he took out the Under 14's Sprint and Field Championships. In those days there was one teacher for all the subjects. Brother Gilbert taught In-termediate and Sub-Intermediate. My dad left St. John's halfway through FIV to go for a government job. The school was very strict then, and my dad recalls the time when Brother Gilbert

12 - ST. JOHN'S YEAR BOOK, 1976

press the very sincere appreciation of the Provincial Administration of the wonder-ful work for God that has been carried on during that period by many people:

* The Jesuit Fathers, whose pastoral oncern for the Brothers and the students has been quite outstanding

The many Brothers — some now gone to their reward — who served St. John's so well. Perhaps a special word of appreciation should go to Brother Denis, Brother Ambrose and their staffs who have had to cope with the emotionally draining task of phasing out our associa-tion with the school;

* The parents and friends of the school (thousands of them) who worked so unselfishly and mightily for the Brothers and St. John's;

I entered St. John's school in 1943, dur-ing the last of the war years, like many of the locals, we came straight from Marresa Kinda and were placed under the mother-ly guidance of Mrs McMurray for the first 2 years. * The fine body of lay teachers, who so admirably identified with the school over the years;

Finally, those countless hundreds of "boys" (some, by now, most definitely "old boys") who passed through its doors and who today fearlessly maintain the high principles instilled into them at St. John's.

Most boys that attended, felt certain

MR FLETCHER JONES. ST. PATRICK'S MARCH, 1961 THE WAR



My years at St John's were 1942-43. Brother Thomas completed his term as Principal at the end of 1942 and Brother Ronald had the reins in 1943. Other Ronald had the reins in 1943, Other Brothers whose names come to mind were Celian, Canice, Regis, Francis, Honorius, Silverius, Prosper and Ephrem. The latter was a South African who later became Provincial of that Province. There was one lay teacher, Mrs Murray, who taught in the Lower Primary.

Most of the pupils lived in the Hawthorn Parish but Kew, Burwood, Camberwell and as far out as Box Hill were represented.

These were difficult years during the war but I have fond memories of the happy spirit that existed.

This year marks the end of the era for St. John's as I knew it. Those who were part of it can be proud of its half century of contribution to Catholic education.

Br. Ray O'Regan F.M.S.

ST. JOHN'S YEAR BOOK, 1976 --- 13

May God bless all these wonderful peo-

Recollections of Past Students of St. Joseph's School, West Hawthorn

From Pat Murphy

My earliest memory of St Joseph's back in 1935, was of course, Sister Perpetua – young, fresh faced, just out of the novitiate and her loving kindness to the 'babies'. Another memory is the big fires in the great fireplace in the corner, where on cold winter days the 'babies' were read stories while the Grades 1 and 2 were doing some important work.

The pretend houses made with gravel in the far corner of the school grounds under the pine trees were a great favourite with the whole classroom.

Grades 3 and 4 were under the care of Mrs Robinson, I think, stern but fair,

Then to Grades 5 and 6 under Sister Carmelita, large and happy faced, but capable of wielding a black strap which curled around the hand.

This time must have been at the beginning of the Second World War (1940-41) as I can remember the basketball court being dug up for trenches and we would have air raid training. As I lived nearby, I had to run home until the all clear sounded. Mother Regis in Grades 7 and 8, always in control and a great personality. Grade 8 was the last of my many happy years at St Joseph's.

My sister can remember her first day at St Joseph's which would probably have been 1924. At this time school classes were run in the church.

From Barb Hume

My sister and I were at St. Joseph's between 1937 and 1939. Our memories of the school are not numerous, but vivid. We lived close by in Manningtree Road but usually had to run down the ramp to the entrance to the school to avoid being late.

Fr Peifer used to come down from the Immaculate Conception to give singing lessons and hear confessions. My sister made her first confession in what is now the sacristy – I think. We loved Fr Peifer, who was short in stature and good fun, we thought. When my brother was to be baptised, he asked my mother what names he was to be given. "Gregory James", she replied and Father said while blessing himself, "The ABC of the Catholic faith!" We never forgot that.

During playtime, we used to lay down plans of a house using pine needles (of which there were very many) to mark out the various rooms. I usually became so deeply engrossed in this pastime that I was often late for class – until the day Mother Regis, the Brigidine Head Mistress gave me the strap for unpunctuality. Being very young, about six, I took an instant dislike to Mother and kept well out of her way from then on.

We remember Veronica Luchetta who lived opposite us and walked to school with us – the only girl in a family of six. She had five identical dolls which were all named after the Dionne quintuplets.

Pat also remembers another nun, Sr Carmeletta, who taught her and was much loved by her class. There was a Geraldine O'Shea in that class who was a great Irish dancer who went on to win many awards in future years. (January 2005)

From Mary (Molly) Duffy

I started school at St Joseph's Primary School in Hawthorn in 1930 and my first teacher was Sister Gabriel of the Brigidine Order.

I received my First Communion at St Joseph's Church in 1931 and the celebrating priest was Father Healy SJ.

Some of the teachers I can remember were Miss Harney, Miss Fitzpatrick, Sister Stanislaus, Sister Xavier. Later teachers were Sister Regis who was a teacher there for many years and later taught our children. Sisters Phillip, Monica and Guiseppe were also there.

Several young boys attended St. Joseph's when I was there but later they transferred to St. John's Marist Brothers school in Glenferrie Rd, when I think they were in Grade 2. The Nuns who were teaching there had a small room for their lunches and conveniences and Eileen Murphy whose parents lived in Burwood Rd brought their lunches down from the convent each day.

I left St Joseph's at Grade 8 and attended Lyndale College in Riversdale Rd, Hawthorn.

From Betty Kitchener

My memory of St Joseph's is not that clear as to exact dates but basically near enough.

We went to St Joseph's in 1935 and I think I was there about 18 months, leaving at the end of 1936. My teacher was Sister Regis.

My mother was a very fine musician and used to train the children for little concerts. I particularly remember a Christmas concert.

Mother Xavier was in charge – she was a really lovely old nun. Kathie, my younger sister, was a great favourite of hers. Kathie was gifted at music and art which she has continued throughout her life – holding exhibitions over the years.

My brother Patrick went there also – he is the father of Pat Cash, the tennis player.

Leo, another of my brothers also started there – the boys then went on to St John's and then De La Salle.

We lived in College St which was pretty convenient.

One of my friends I particularly remember was Veronica Gooden – she came from a large family and lived in Wattle Road.

From Doon O'Sullivan

I started at St. Joseph's in 1947, shortly before my fifth birthday. I remember being taken into the classroom the day I started, the teacher was Mother Finbar for grades Prep and one combined. Grades two and three were taken by the only lay teacher Miss Dwyer, grades four, five and six by Mother Paula and grades seven and eight by Mother Regis, the principal. I was accelerated in grade one and spent six months in grades one and two. Each year there was a school picnic and we went by tram to Wattle Park. Each year there was a school dance at Manresa Hall except during the polio epidemic. The school concert and prizegiving was held annually. I remember being in many items: "Mary, Mary, Quite contrary", in my Prep year, in witches hats in grade five, doing the tarantella in grade four, a nativity play and many others. We had a phys. Ed. teacher Nancy Healy and an elocution teacher Miss Kellerly who taught us the poem about the pirate Don Dirk of Doudee. The nuns prepared us for communion, confession and confirmation and for special Easter processions. Mrs Carroll took grades seven and eight for cookery at Manresa Small Hall. Fete days were great fun with stalls, wheels and pony rides in the school grounds.

There were basketball matches on the courts in front of the shelter shed. Milk was delivered each day, the Angelus bell was rung every day by a girl in year eight. There were Education Week displays by parents. Two seniors were sent up to the local shop and the lunches were given out by a nun on the basketball court. I was a disaster at sewing and Mother Paula was always asking me to undo my sampler. School money was a shilling a week, paid on Monday morning. I remember how the Nuns helped children who came from difficult

EL. AD. D. G. CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE School St Joseph's Hawsko his is to (ertify that Sixth Standard. Cooke Mother Borgia J.C.J.

School certificate from St. Joseph's school 1910 (kindly provided by Margaret Purcell - her aunt Josie Stringer became a Sister of Charity)

circumstances with hygiene and care. Now that I am older I appreciate how hard the Nuns worked to educate the children under their care. Mr Poynton was the gardener and responsible for the care of the grounds.

While in grade six we went to a holiday camp at Crows Nest, Queenscliffe. In Year seven we went on a farm holiday for city children and I went to Boort in the Mallee to a family named Coghill. I finished with a Merit Certificate in 1954 aged 12 before continuing on to the Brigidine Convent.

From Pat Forster

I was a student from Bubs to Grade 6. The school consisted of 4 classrooms. Bubs, Lower Grade 1 and Grade 1 together, Grades 2 and 3 together, Grades 4,5 and 6 together and finally the seniors Grades 7 and 8. Each of the classrooms had open fires in the winter. The boys had a separate playground. Lunch was eaten outside in an open shelter shed with wooden benches to sit on. Bells were rung at the start and end of school and also at lunchtime. Everyday at 12 midday the Angelus was rung by one of the senior girls. My first teacher was Sister Monica who encouraged all of us to donate a penny each week to the missions – we were told to buy a "black baby".

Chalks and slate pencils were used in Bubs and Grade 1 and pencils in Grades 2 and 3. We graduated to pen and ink in Grades 4,5 and 6 and much time was spent cleaning the inkwells on Fridays. Miss Dwyer taught me in Grade 2 and 3 and Sister Declan and Sister John in 4,5, and 6. Mr O'Driscoll was the School Inspector who visited each year. Mr Poynton was the caretaker/groundsman.

We had an Annual Ball each year and much preparation went into learning how to ballroom dance – the boys reluctantly partnered Grades 1, 2 and 3. Each year the School Picnic was held at Wattle Park and the whole school travelled by tram. Speech night was another presentation of performances by all the students dancing, singing and marching.

Sport consisted of skipping, rounders, basketball and playing under the peppercorn trees in the lower playground. We all received free milk provided by the state government, which often sat in the hot sun for hours after it was delivered but we all drank it just the same.

Swap cards were often confiscated by the Nuns but most were eventually returned. Every first Friday of the month meant Stations of the Cross in the Church and we spent many happy hours in the church earning plenary indulgences in the belief that we were bypassing purgatory.

School was fairly straightforward – no reports – just an elephant stamp. Our mothers supported the school by helping with a school fete and playing cards in the clubrooms of the tennis courts (now the site of St Joseph's Hostel).

We welcomed newly arrived pupils from Italy. Greece and Hungary but made no allowances for the fact that they did not speak English, dressed funnily and had peculiar lunches.

I made several good friends during my primary school years and one friendship continues after 55 years.

I would have to say that I remember Mother Regis the principal as a fair and kind teacher who ran a great little primary school that has left me with many happy memories.