



## Newsletter – Spring 2020

The CYMCA was formed in August 2018, with the objective of restoring and maintaining the historic Cyril Young Memorial Chapel, which is registered on the Victorian War Heritage Inventory. Situated in Buxton Reserve, Shoreham, the Chapel formed part of the former YMCA Camp Buxton.

In this edition of the newsletter, you can read about –

- The history of the Chapel – why was it built?
- How the CYMCA Committee is increasing the public profile of the Chapel project
- Our latest fundraising efforts
- An amazing co-incidence
- A local heritage stonemason who is ready to take on the first stage of restoration
- The Bush Chapel Working group, formed to look after the site and surrounds
- Notice of our upcoming AGM
- How you can join the Association (or renew your membership).



*The Chapel in the 1950s.*

## The Cyril Young Memorial Chapel- former YMCA Camp Buxton

Committee members Alison Bunting and Ann Renkin tell the story of this unique feature of Shoreham's heritage –

Bordering the Buxton Woodland Reserve in Shoreham, at the rear of the former YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) property, Camp Buxton, rests a small, stone, outdoor open-air chapel, which has had a far-reaching influence belying its size.

Built of local Moorooduc stone with volunteer labour over the years 1945-1951, and now lying substantially on Shire Council land, the Chapel is now listed as a war memorial on the Victorian War Heritage Inventory.

The chapel is dedicated to the memory of Cyril Young, whose desire it was for 'a place of worship in the outdoors', and the pulpit to his younger brother Ivan. The brothers were YMCA campers in their youth and then camp leaders, with Cyril becoming Chairman of the camp in 1938. Both young men died while serving in World War 2. An RAAF pilot, Ivan was shot down over Alamein in 1942 and Cyril, a young Army Captain, died in 1945 as a prisoner of war in North Borneo.



*Ivan Young in Libya on wing of Kittyhawk fighter in 1942 (Keith Parsons)*

In December 1951, post-war, an International Older Boys' Camp was held at Camp Buxton. Boys from diverse faith traditions across the Asia-Pacific, including Japan, attended the camp and were present at the chapel dedication ceremony on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1951, a very grand affair attended by the then Governor of Victoria, Sir Dallas Brookes together with Harold Holt, then Minister of Immigration & Minister for Labour and National Service, and also the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Cr. O.J. Nilsen. The Prime Minister, then Mr R.G. Menzies, sent a warm message of greetings and good wishes for the camp's success.



*Boys from all over the Asia-Pacific attended the International Camp in December 1951*

Thousands of boys experienced services in the chapel under the canopy of stars and columns of eucalypts in a 'cathedral-like' torch-lit atmosphere including TAPS (Meditative Thought and Prayer Sessions). The YMCA's triangular logo symbolised its commitment to promoting a balance between body, mind and spirit within the youth who passed through its programmes. Later, the camp was opened to other groups and many young people, both boys and girls, experienced the bushland setting alongside the beautiful beaches of Shoreham and Point Leo.

Today, the chapel's stonework has deteriorated somewhat and a committed group of both local residents and members of the Young family, with the full support of the Shire Council, are determined to save this historic chapel, which embodies so many different facets of Shoreham's history. From the vision of the YMCA with its ethos of inclusivity, to an understanding of Australia's wartime history, but also in its spirit of reconciliation following the events of World War 2, this small stone chapel exudes a feeling of peace, and deserves to be retained for future generations.

## Recent news from the CYMCA Committee

The CYMCA committee has been meeting regularly every two months, via Zoom due to Covid19 restrictions, continuing to work towards implementing the Conservation Management Plan which was adopted by the Mornington Peninsula Shire council in March.

### Fund-raising and publicity

So far our efforts to raise money for the project through Federal, State and local government grants have drawn a blank. The Mornington Peninsula Shire, and local councillor David Gill in particular, continue to be most encouraging, but the Council is not in a position to provide further funding in the current difficult financial climate.

Local MP, Chris Brayne, is also a strong supporter of our project. With his help, and advice from an experienced MPS officer, we have re-applied for the Victorian government's *Restoring Community War Memorials* grant. We are grateful to the Flinders RSL, the Shoreham Community Association and others for providing letters of support for our application. We await the announcement of successful applicants on Remembrance Day.

We have approached local and community newspapers and magazines to publicize our project. You can see an article and photo on page 8 of the September edition of The Melbourne Anglican, available on-line <http://tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/>. We are expecting our story to be included in other publications later in the year.

Through these articles we are hoping to find people who attended Camp Buxton or had any other connection with the Chapel in years gone by. There are times, however, when things happen completely out of the blue .....

#### Serendipity – a Coincidental Re-connection

One of our Committee members, John McMahon, also volunteers with the [Blackburn Creeklands](#) bushland group at Blackburn. He happened to mention the name of our chapel to the Creeklands Chair, Megan Short. Pennies dropped immediately in her memory.

It turned out that Megan's grandparents were great friends of Stan and Olive Young – the parents of Cyril and Ivan Young, our fallen heroes. Megan's mother was one of three Fitzgerald sisters and **Ivan** was her debutante partner – and **Cyril** had partnered her older sister at her debut!

The youngest of the three Fitzgerald sisters, Megan's Aunt **Win**, is a sprightly 95 year old who lives independently in Port Fairy where she retired after being a farmer. Win was amazed and quite emotional to learn of the Chapel and was somewhat perplexed that her family didn't know anything about it. Win was very pleased to reconnect with the Young family, and immediately became a member of the CYMCA.

The coincidences don't end there – Megan's older aunt married a Young (no relation though) and Olive was the godmother of Megan's cousin - a retired GP. He has also joined the Association after learning of it from Megan.



*The brothers in uniform*

## Repairing the platform and lectern

As can be seen in the photo below, the stonework in this area is in need of urgent repair.



We have been very fortunate to find a local stonemason, recommended by MPS Council, who is experienced in repairs to heritage sites of this nature. He has also generously volunteered to work with volunteers at a later stage to reconstruct the concrete supports for the bench seats. The timber seats, no longer there, are just visible in the photo below.



*The Cyril Young Memorial Chapel in 2010 (Bob Padula)*

The Chapel is situated in an area prone to bogginess, especially during the winter months. The MPS Council has agreed to support construction activity by providing ramping to cross some difficult areas if required. Nevertheless, it would be far preferable for the work to be carried out in the next six months.

A sum of \$15,000 is needed for this initial stage of the restoration project. We are looking to donations from local organizations and community members to start the ball rolling. We would love to hear from you if you have any suggestions in this regard.

### Friends Group – the “Bush Chapel Working Group”

#### Formation

We have established the Friends group with Council to work on the Cyril Young Memorial Chapel and surrounds with the Shire Council. The **Bush Chapel Working Group** will undertake planting, maintenance and potentially restoration work suitable for amateurs. A group of seven people has formed.

CYMCA has participated in planning activities with the relevant Mornington Peninsula Shire Council coordinator and contractors. We are also pleased to be on the mailing list for Friends’ Group newsletters and events.

The group is operational even though an official Memorandum of Understanding covering their work as well as contractors undertaking renovation work, such as stonemasonry, will be formalised in due course.

#### First Working Bee

The first official working bee with Council was all set to go ahead on 11<sup>th</sup> July – commencing with planting of screening plants around the chapel as well as canopy trees there and along the pathway. Unfortunately, all working bees have had to be postponed after the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions were reinstated by the State Government on 9<sup>th</sup> July.



Nevertheless, Council contractors undertook the work instead - given that the normal planting season will soon be over. About 50 tube-stock were planted. Naturally, our group was disappointed not to be able to participate but we are all pleased that work has commenced.

#### Plant Orders for Next Year

We have worked with Council to assemble our order for plants on the Briars Nursery for planting next year. Each Friends group receives an annual allocation of 200 plants. Because Buxton Reserve is natural bushland/wetland, only indigenous species can be planted.

The list has been assembled to comply with the Conservation and Management Plan for the Chapel and the relevant Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) which apply to our distinct planting areas.

#### Liaising with neighbours

As you can see in the photo of the "planting bee", the Chapel has some very near neighbours. The committee is contacting all the immediate neighbours with a view to working together and inviting them to participate in our restoration project.

#### Annual General Meeting

We will hold our AGM, via Zoom, on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November at 2.00 pm. You are warmly invited to "attend". Please contact us via email at [ShorehamBushChapel@gmail.com](mailto:ShorehamBushChapel@gmail.com) and we will send you a Zoom invitation.

You are also invited to nominate for committee using the attached form. We meet bi-monthly on the first Saturday of the month, usually at the Shoreham School Hall, or via Zoom if need be.

#### Membership of the Cyril Young Memorial Chapel Association Inc.

If you are already a member of the Association, it would be much appreciated if you could renew your subscription for the 2020/2021 year please - see the attached membership form, which includes bank account details. The annual membership fee is \$10.00.

If you are yet to become a member, please consider joining us to help restore and maintain this important part of Shoreham's heritage for future generations.

#### Contact details

If you would like to contact the CYMCA committee, with any questions, comments or suggestions, please email us at - [ShorehamBushChapel@gmail.com](mailto:ShorehamBushChapel@gmail.com)

or write to us at - CYMCA, PO Box 307, Shoreham Vic 3916

You can also find out more about the history of the Chapel and news of the project on the Shoreham Community website - <http://shoreham.vic.au/cyril-young-memorial-chapel>