

**Saturday 27 September 10:30am to approx. 11:10: Visit to the former Brigidine Convent, 1 Wanaka Street, Johnsonville** (opposite Waitohi Library) – there will be a tour and refreshments to follow. After that, Felicity Wong will take those interested on a walking tour of some places showing the history of Johnsonville.

**Summaries of the places we will see.** Links to Felicity's northern suburbs *Independent Herald* articles are given at the end if you want to read more. This is a link to the whole issue and you will need to scroll to about page 10 to find the article.



**Former Brigidine Convent – 1 Wanaka St.**

The order of Brigidine nuns was founded in Ireland in February 1807. Their motto was (in Latin) "Fortitude and Gentleness." In 1883 some went to Australia and in 1898 to New Zealand to start a school and convent (St Bride's) in Masterton. They expanded to other areas. In 1911 when setting up a school they advertised that they would follow the state school curriculum as well as offer shorthand, book-keeping, French, Latin, music and 'fancywork, etc' and accepted pupils of any denomination. They were invited to teach in Johnsonville in 1928 and the building we will visit was completed in 1937. The nuns moved out in 1995. It is now occupied by Challenge 2000, a youth and family social services agency.

[https://issuu.com/mail-wsn.co/docs/250403\\_indy\\_s](https://issuu.com/mail-wsn.co/docs/250403_indy_s)

**Felicity Wong will lead a walk to other locations. Approx: 11.20. Memorial Park, Retter memorial**



The monument to Trooper Leonard Greenwood Retter in Johnsonville. Photo supplied.

Trooper Leonard Greenwood Retter (Len) was born on December 19, 1878, to Frederick and Martha Retter in Johnsonville, early settlers in the area. Frederick himself was born in Wadestown in 1849 and ran a blacksmith shop in the main street of Johnsonville. Blacksmithing was a family affair, with three of his sons, including Leonard, working in the shop and then another they opened. Len served in the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902) and died there in 1902.

This was more about colonial identity as part of the British Empire rather than contributing to any sense of New Zealand national identity, as the first World War did.

The memorial has had different sites and is now in Frankmoore Ave Park.

[https://issuu.com/wsn11/docs/april\\_24\\_independent\\_herald](https://issuu.com/wsn11/docs/april_24_independent_herald)

Also: <https://www.thepost.co.nz/nz-news/360630631/lamp-post-memorial-johnsonville-slain-trooper>



**Plaque on Moorefield Rd (Just north of the medical centre).**

Plaque marking approximately where Frank Johnson had his house is shown in this "History of Johnsonville" short video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wn2mkmVe9es>

Also: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/capital-life/9874957/Look-what-Frank-Johnson-started>

### ***Approx 11.30, Stables. Warwick Bunning***

26 Johnsonville Road was built as a livery stable and farriers' business in the 1880s. The stage coach would exchange horses here after travelling from Thorndon. It was one of the largest buildings in Johnsonville and a few doors away was a blacksmiths'.

The old coach building juts out into the Mall carpark. Auto repair firms have occupied it, and it is currently leased to Warwick Bunning Motors, but it is owned by the Mall company and is probably destined to be demolished.

[https://issuu.com/mail-wsn.co/docs/10\\_october\\_independent\\_herald\\_s](https://issuu.com/mail-wsn.co/docs/10_october_independent_herald_s)

### ***Approx 11:40. Methodist Cemetery. Murray Foster will talk to us here.***



Few know of the little Methodist Cemetery behind 31 Johnsonville Road (opposite the Post Office). A Wesleyan schoolroom was built in 1842, and church in 1847. A new church was built in 1872. In 1874 the burial grounds were fenced off and by 1937 all the plots were sold. A new church was built in 1904 and a new hall, which was a centre for community life, in 1922. In 1970 the Methodists and Presbyterians merged and built the Uniting Church in Dr Taylor Terrace. The Methodist buildings were demolished in 1973, leaving only the

cemetery.

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### ***Approx 12 noon, St John's Anglican Church***

Hawtrey Terrace, further north of the church, recalls Rev Montague Hawtrey who in 1836 in England lived a few doors from Edward Gibbon Wakefield. Hawtrey was in favour of setting aside 'native reserves' when the NZ Company purchased land. He argued for fair compensation of alienated land. From land he had purchased, 20 acres was gifted in Johnsonville as 'glebe' land (an income-generating farm) for an Anglican church. In 1847, the Hawtrey Chapel was built and Bishop Selwyn preached at its opening.

There have been five churches on the site – three of them burnt down; the Hawtrey Chapel in 1855. Hawtrey never came to NZ, but after the Taranaki war he published a pamphlet in 1861 proposing that Māori participate in an upper house as a check on Parliament. This was considered too radical by NZ newspapers. The current church, designed by Frederick de Jersey Clere, opened in 1922. Its historic cemetery was converted to a lawn cemetery in 1964.

[https://issuu.com/wsn11/docs/26\\_september\\_independent\\_herald\\_s](https://issuu.com/wsn11/docs/26_september_independent_herald_s)