

St Mary's Catholic Church 150th Anniversary

On the weekend of 13 and 14 August St Mary's parishioners will celebrate a milestone in Hamilton's Church history.

In 1866 construction of the first section of the current Gothic Style Church took place, making way for a special Anniversary on the same weekend 150 years on. For ten years previously historical records tell us that "the Roman Catholics of Hamilton have a wooden chapel on She Oak Hill," as the location was known at that time.

The Anniversary celebrations include a Parish dinner, Commemorative mass and luncheon, History tour & displays.

"The weekend has attracted great interest, including from past residents as far as Western Australia, who look forward to rekindling old friendships and sharing significant memories of their faith life when growing up amongst Hamilton's community." said Parish Team Member Anne Slattery

"Dinner bookings are being taken up to 15 July with other details of the Anniversary weekend found on our website www.stmaryshamilton.org.au or by phoning the Parish Office 5571 1161 Tuesday to Friday."

Parish history records reveal great spiritual strength and determination of clergy and pioneers during the struggles of early settlement. Just like their immeasurable work, an ongoing commitment continues to embrace the St Mary's faithful today. The parish is greatly enriched by the gift of its members, bringing their time and talents to some of the different activities and groups which make up the vibrant community.

The 150th Anniversary culminates at a time when St Mary's Parish have entered into a renewal program focusing on rebuilding and strengthening their community. Interested people are invited to participate in the vitality of today's Church with details of the groups also found on the parish website and through the parish office.

One notable clergyman over the history of the Church was Fr Michael Shanahan who earned great respect from all in the community and was dubbed the "Grand Old Man of Hamilton." His 45 years at St Mary's from 1886 was not spent idle, taking charge of the erection of many country churches, schools and two convents during his term. One of Fr Shanahan's greatest achievements was the completion of St Mary's Church in 1914, which stands as a monument to his ministry in the Western District. With the only mode of transport on offer being his trusty white horse, many hours of each ministry day were spent travelling on horseback between communities.

Current Priest in residence Fr Patrick Mugavin, is the 14th Parish Priest to administer at St Mary's. Together the St Mary's Parish incorporates the catholic communities of Dunkeld, Glenthompson, Hamilton, Macarthur and Peshurst.