



# Things Past

Newsletter 29, July 2010

**Mount Evelyn History Group Inc**

A0051327F

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## Dates for your diary

'Stories of your treasures', Saturday 24 July, 1pm Mt Evelyn Station House. Louise Blake will speak on recording the stories behind your family or personal treasures.

'History of the Shrine – a building with a soul', exhibition at Belgrave Library from 5 July for five weeks.

South Sherbrooke Oral History Workshops, Monday 9 August, 2-5pm, \$5 per person.

History Group **AGM** followed by business meeting, Thursday 26 August, 7.30pm Mt Evelyn Station House. Please note change of details.

'Open Day @ Link' Saturday 25 September, 1pm-4pm

October display on history of Mt Evelyn Primary School, Mt Evelyn Exhibition Space.

Mt Evelyn Primary School Centenary Celebration, Saturday 16 October, 11am-4pm, official opening 2pm.

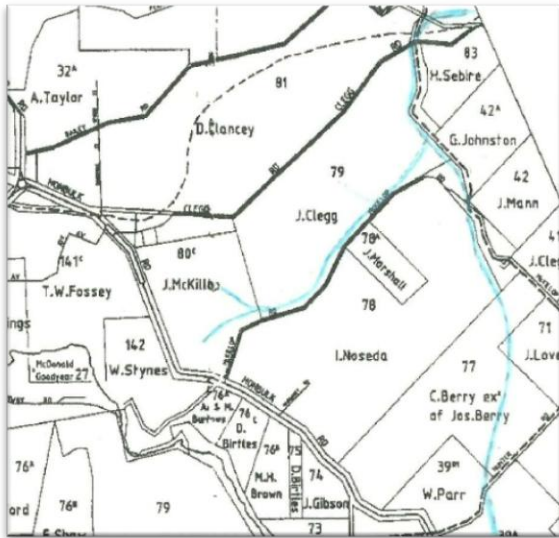
## John McKillop of South Wandin

Jean Edwards writes that she has contacted the Shire to begin the process of naming Creek 5637, which rises on Jean and David's property 'The Springs'. Jean has proposed the name 'McKillop Creek', after selector John McKillop.

On 25 March 1879 John McKillop, a labourer from Collingwood, received a certificate of registration for lot 80C of 117.3 acres in the Parish of Wandin Yallock. The block, which extended along Monbulk Road between Clancy Road and McKillop Road, was part of a selection that had been abandoned by a previous applicant. The surveyor's report described it as undulating country with inferior soil covered with bayonet grass and timbered with messmate and stringybark.

Right, John McKillop, 1890s-early 1900s. Photo Mont De Lancey Museum, photographer unknown.





**Part of the Parish of Wandin Yallock showing selections, creeks and modern road names. McKillop's selection originally extended further northwest to Clancy Road.**

After six years of residence on the property, McKillop had a house and workmen's cottage, barn, stables and outhouses built from slabs and shingles. Cultivation consisted of 12 acres of raspberries, apple trees and a kitchen garden. McKillop had dug a well, ring-barked 20 acres of timber and put in 110 chains of fencing.

He was granted a 14 year lease in August 1885. Total improvements were valued at £512 at that time. McKillop seems to have invested all profits back into the farm, leaving himself little spare cash. He stated that the block was not fully fenced due to lack of money. The *Lilydale Express* 4/2/1887 reported that a court case was brought against McKillop for unpaid labour.

We have the following first-hand description of the selector, apparently from the recollections of a former neighbour, Mr R.H. McEwin.

*McKillop was a sailor from the north of Ireland, a red-bearded man with a much freckled face. In the 1850s, on a voyage to the South American ports on a guano ship, he had been captured by pirates and had served for twelve months on the pirate ship before making his escape. Later he worked and prospected on the*

*Palmer goldfields in Queensland. McKillop's house was on McKillop Road at the foot of the hill. They had no family, and after his wife's death he left the district.<sup>1</sup>*

Jean writes, 'It would suggest that McKillop's house was on what is now the next property down – there was an old house there when we bought here in 1971 – owned by Dowden – his parents had grown raspberries there (which may be where McKillop grew his raspberries). The house was condemned in the early seventies.'

McEwin's account proved misleading on some details. For instance, McKillop was born in Aberdeen, Scotland (not in Ireland) c.1839, the son of Archibald McKillop, excise officer, and Margaret McGregor.

In May 1895, McKillop wrote to the Lands Department asking to postpone paying his rent until the sale of the summer raspberry crop.

*At present I am unable through domestic affliction to do so, having just buried my wife, who had been ill for a considerable time and whom I had waited upon during her illness, not being able to give the necessary attention in gathering the last crop – resulting in serious loss. I have also had to pay medical and other expenses [relating to] illness and death.<sup>2</sup>*

McKillop did not leave the district immediately after his wife Elizabeth died, as the previous quote implies. The rate books continue to list him as a resident, ratepayer and fruitgrower. He gained freehold title to 68 acres in 1898.

The photo on page 1 probably dates from this period. The weathered stump and dense eucalypt regrowth are reminders of the labour involved in clearing the land for cultivation, but McKillop is not in his work clothes. The well-worn coat, waistcoat and fob chain probably represent 'Sunday best'. The black bowler in his hand looks new. The photo might even have been taken on his wedding day.

<sup>1</sup> From *Silvan State School and District Centenary*.

<sup>2</sup> John McKillop, letter, Lands Department 626 1681 file 9249, in Janice Newton *The First Selectors*. All details on McKillop's selection are from this booklet.

On 30 April 1902, John McKillop married Margaret Clegg (nee Bartlett) at the church office, Cromwell Lodge, Melbourne. Both bride and groom were residents of South Wandin and both gave their occupation as 'Farmer'.<sup>3</sup>

Margaret, who was born in Warrnambool in 1862, was the widow of Jacob Clegg. The Cleggs were a large family who came originally from Yorkshire. They settled in the district in 1867 and took up various selections in Wandin and South Wandin. Silvan township is located on one of their selections. Jacob's property was on the corner of Parker and Monbulk Roads. Margaret owned a house on one and half acres in South Wandin, probably part of her late husband's property.

John, who was then 63, had no children from his first marriage. Margaret was 39 and had eight children. Margaret and John had a son, Leslie John, a year later, on 21 April 1903.

In 1905, Margaret's name was crossed off the rate books and in the following year John's name was crossed out also. He had sold up and left the district after 27 years. Charles Haworth took over John's 68 acres. The Education Department bought the original two acres for Evelyn State School from Haworth in 1909. The Edwards' 15 acre property was first owned by Winifred Izzard from 1914 to 1920, then by Mr and Mrs Smith until 1971.

The McKillops must have had the pioneering spirit. Well into middle age, they broke with their past, left the scene of all their hard work and made a new start. Like so many others around the turn of the century, they moved to Western Australia. Margaret's children from her previous marriage went with them. All of them married in WA except for the eldest, who died in 1926. Leslie John McKillop married Mary Forbes in 1925.

John McKillop died in Fremantle in 1912. Margaret married John Barber in Fremantle in 1918 and died there in 1928. On the evidence, John and Margaret

McKillop led their lives to the fullest. They were always willing to have another go.

'McKillop Creek' would be an appropriate name for the creek that rises on their old selection. The History Group has written to the Shire in support of Jean's naming application.

### **Karen Phillips**

#### References

- Edwards, Jean et al, *Mt Evelyn Primary School No. 3642*, 1985.
- Lord, A & N, *Wandin, its Origins and Early Development*, The Authors, 1981.
- Newton, Janice, *The First Selectors of Mt Evelyn*, Mount Evelyn History Group booklet, 1996.
- Pioneers' Register Warrnambool Township and Shire 1839 -1900*.
- Silvan Centenary Committee, *1876-1976 Silvan State School and District Centenary*, 1976.
- Cemetery Records, Lilydale & Fremantle.
- Index of Births Deaths & Marriages, Victoria & WA.
- Lillydale Shire Rate Books CD-Rom.
- Mont De Lancey Museum.

### **Montrose murals**

When next you're in Montrose, do have a look at the historical murals located in the shopping centre laneway off the Mt Dandenong Tourist Road.

Local artists have donated their time to transform a graffiti-covered alley into a community asset. The panels deal with themes, buildings, schools, sports, community groups and individuals of significance to the history of Montrose.



**'The Traditional Lands of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation', a beautiful panel by Justine Indigo-Rose.**

### **'Lifeblood of the City'**

We attended a screening of the film 'Lifeblood of the City' at the Upper Yarra Museum. The film, on the construction of the Upper Yarra Reservoir, was made by the former Board of Works (MMBW).

<sup>3</sup>'South Wandin' included what is now Silvan and the eastern end of Mt Evelyn, a.k.a. 'McKillop'.

The film began with a history of the Yarra since Aboriginal times. The Upper Yarra catchments were set aside as early as the 1880s. Work began at the end of WWII and continued through the fifties. The dam wall was described as a 'mountain in reverse' – rock on the outside, with earth and a core of impermeable clay inside.

Around a thousand men were employed. A temporary town, complete with school, sprang up to provide for the workers and their families. A home movie by a former worker followed the main film. Filmed over a number of years, it included scenes of the social life of the township as well as the construction of the dam wall. Water first flowed over the spillway in 1972, 15 years after the reservoir was opened.

**Bridge over the highway**

At last! Work is starting on the Rail Trail bridge over Maroondah Highway at Lilydale. The trees at the end of the embankment are being removed to make way for the construction.

The new bridge will be the third on the site. The original railway bridge was a wooden trestle structure, later replaced by a steel span. This was demolished after the line closed in the 1960s to allow more head-room for trucks on the highway.

Funding for the trail bridge has been announced repeatedly but this is the first sign of action. Did somebody mutter 'election year'?



**Decaying beauty: derelict house below the Rail Trail, Maroondah Highway, Lilydale.**

Trees have also been cleared from in front of the 19<sup>th</sup> century house below the trail, making it more visible from the highway. Now falling into decay, it must have been gorgeous in its day. The garden has huge cypresses and a handsome Bunya Pine. Can anyone fill us in on the history of this property and its likely fate?

**From Kev's rain gauge**

The further east you go the wetter you get. Rainfall in mm for June 2010 for Melbourne, Mt Evelyn (Hereford Rd), McKillop, Three Bridges (between Yarra Junction and Powelltown) and the Melbourne average:

Melb	Mt Ev	McK	3B	Mel Av
58.8	99.1	113.5	140.5	49.0

Comparison Jan-June for 2009 and 2010.

	Melb	Mt Ev	McK	3B
<b>2009</b>	126.4	220.4	288.5	301.8
<b>2010</b>	260.8	387.9	428.4	511.6

Jean tells us that this half-year has been their wettest in McKillop since 2004.

**Kevin Phillips**

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**IMPORTANT NOTICES**

**Change of meeting nights** Tuesday nights have become so difficult for so many members that we have decided to try the **4<sup>th</sup> Thursday** in even months for business meetings. Speakers/ events will still be on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of odd months.

**AGM** It's that time again, the AGM is coming up on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> August. All committee positions will be declared vacant (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Newsletter Editor). Please consider whether you could take on a committee role or would like to nominate someone. Nomination form attached. Forms may be photocopied.

**Memberships** Due from 1st July and still a bargain at \$5 per person. **But** a few over-conscientious souls paid twice in the last year. If in doubt, check with Treasurer Kevin Phillips on 9736 1643 or [kev.phillips@bigpond.com](mailto:kev.phillips@bigpond.com) Membership form attached.

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Opinions expressed in *Things Past* are those of the writers, not necessarily those of Mt Evelyn History Group.



## Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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PO Box 101, Mt Evelyn, Victoria 3796

# Nomination of Office Bearers

I hereby nominate.....  
for the position of ..... of  
Mount Evelyn History Group Inc  
Name of person nominating.....  
Signature.....

I hereby second the above nomination  
Name of person seconding.....  
Signature.....

I accept the nomination for the position of.....  
Name of person nominated.....  
Signature.....

Persons nominating or being nominated must be members of Mount Evelyn History Group Inc at the time of nomination.

Please return completed nomination forms to the above address before the AGM.

This form may be photocopied.



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## MT EVELYN HISTORY GROUP INC MEMBERSHIP FORM 2010-2011

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO

The Treasurer, Mt Evelyn History Group, PO Box 101, Mt Evelyn, VIC 3796

Name(s) .....

Address.....

Postcode..... Phone..... Email.....

Special Interest .....

Subscription \$5 p.a.

Please enclose cheque/money order payable to *Mt Evelyn History Group Inc.*