

# Things Past

Newsletter 35

January 2011

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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## Dates for your diary

January: no meeting.

The Lilydale and District Historical Society will hold an Open Day at their new premises, Lilydale Court House, Castella Street Lilydale on Saturday, 12th February 11am-4pm (see page 2).

First business meeting of 2011: Thursday 24th February, 7.30pm Old Community Link.

## Congratulations to our President

Congratulations to Paula Herlihy, who received a Shire of Yarra Ranges Certificate of Recognition at the Australia Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony at Mont De Lancey. Paula has made outstanding contributions to Mt Evelyn in the fields of education, community development, environment and history.

Over the past year alone, Paula has been Chair of the Yarra Ranges Heritage Network, Minutes Secretary of the Mt Evelyn Township Improvement Committee (METIC), Secretary of the Friends of the Aqueduct, Treasurer of the Friends of Wanderslore, tutor in the Jindi Woraback program, besides being President of the Mount Evelyn History Group and updating the Mt Evelyn Primary School History for their Centenary.



**Paula on the verandah of historic Mont De Lancey homestead. The gardens were looking their magnificent best for the occasion.**

Paula has a leadership style that is distinctively her own; she gets things happening while working as part of a team. Working with Paula enables other volunteers to identify their own strengths and see how they too might best contribute.

She tends to get taken for granted (partly her own fault - she makes everything she does look so easy). It's only when she's not around that people start wondering why nothing's getting done any more.

Paula's certificate represents a small, and long overdue, recognition of nearly 40 years of distinguished service to the Mt Evelyn community.

***Karen Phillips. Photos Kevin Phillips.***



**Paula receives her Certificate of Recognition from Cr Tim Heenan.**

## **'McKillop Creek' gets the nod**

Yarra Ranges Shire Council voted in favour of the name 'McKillop Creek' for Creek 5637 at their meeting on 25th January. There was no dissent; it was agreed that '5637' sounded more like a prison number than a creek name.

The creek rises from a spring on Jean and David Edwards' property and flows into the Stringybark Creek. Cr Tim Heenan praised the Edwards' longstanding environmental commitment and their work in restoring the creek.

The name honours selector John McKillop and also preserves the former district name of McKillop, now absorbed into Mt Evelyn. It was evident from your responses to our survey that those with connections to the area felt a strong personal attachment to both the district and the name. Mary Golds wrote:

*I think McKillop would be appropriate too, maybe many people past my generation wouldn't even know about McKillop & store ever existing .... When I was a child our life existed more around McKillop store & the area rather than Mt Evelyn, we picked up our mail there, bought groceries, smallgoods & there was a lovely area for gifts, (I still have a cake plate I bought there for my mother when I was in Primary school) & a phone box etc, so I vote for McKillop.*

As the Shire has followed the public consultation process to the letter, the Registrar of Geographic Names is likely to follow Council's recommendation on the name.

## **Station maps - the first decade**

Michael Foley has emailed us some detailed plans of the Olinda Vale station area as it was prior to about 1911 (not reproduced here, as I'm unsure of the copyright). One map has the dates 17/1/00 and 7/3/00 added by hand.

The four major roads, York, Birmingham, Hereford and Monbulk meet at an irregular crossroads. Only the first two have their present names. What is now Hereford Road is 'South Wandin Road' and the present Monbulk Road is 'Olinda Vale Road' (rather a surprise, the reverse would have seemed more logical if the starting point was Lilydale).

The printed words 'Road which Shire Council asks the Department to make' start at the top of York Road and continue into 'Olinda Vale

Road'. Wray Crescent is not shown and presumably did not exist at this early stage.

## **Dating our masthead photo**

We asked Janet Taylor about the dating of our masthead photo. We were inclined to date it to the early 1930s, but Janet put it a few years earlier:

*We caught up with Norm O'Connor (the little boy in the photo) on Sunday and went out to visit the Carlisle Street, Preston House where he and Vic were born that used to have the slipper factory behind it - it is actually 58 (not 60) Carlisle Street.*

*Norm was born in 1923 and thinks the group photo would be about 1927, 1928 - when they were holidaying before they were actually living at Mt Evelyn.*

We have updated the references to the photo on our website and brochure.

## **Correction**

In our last issue, we said that Janet was Vic O'Connor's daughter; this should have read 'daughter-in-law'. Apologies for the error.

## **L&DHS - home at last**

Sue Thompson, Lilydale & District Historical Society, writes: 'Just a quick note to all to let you know we will receive the key to the old Lilydale Court House on Friday, February 11 and have an Open Day on Saturday February 12, 11am to 4pm. Please pop in and say hello but bring a cup for a coffee as we still have to acquire lots of things. One thing we will have is tea, coffee, sugar and spoons to stir with.

Thanks for all your support over the years. It has been inspirational.'

## **Brightwell**

Sue also forwarded the following message from Jim & Debbie Christie, who are seeking information about the history of their property:

*We have recently purchased a one acre property at 143 Hereford Road Lilydale. We believe the house, though extended and renovated, was originally built in the 1940s and that the property was originally larger than one acre. The house is called 'Brightwell' and we note that there is a street of the same name nearby.'*

Does anyone know the history of this property? We will pass on any information to owners Jim and Debbie.

## Headhunters and blowpipes

On the previous trip to Sarawak we had visited the Cultural Village, where a variety of different long houses and other dwellings are set up for easy viewing and members of the different bumiputras (indigenous peoples) display skills and dances. We visited again in 2010, as getting close to museum artifacts which are on display in the longhouses can surely not go on forever.

We learned that heads taken from enemies were well looked after, as spirits were thought to live in them. Fires were kept burning under them and every so often they were taken down and treated to entertainment such as dance and food. The idea was that if the spirits were happy they would help to protect the longhouse, so all care was taken to keep them inside.

Just as the tattoos on a person's body used to tell their life story and hence act as a sort of 'passport' showing where they had been and what they had achieved, dots on the fingers between the knuckles, either in view or inside, kept a score of the number of heads a person had taken. We were told in 2008 that there are only a few older men around now with these head-count dot tattoos.



**Spoils of the headhunters: Tim goes eye to eye-socket with some trophy heads.**



**The blowpipe hunter, a man at home anywhere.**

Once at the Cultural Village the incredibly impressive blowpipe user, dressed in little but a loincloth and a few feathers in traditional style, was answering questions about his tribe and explaining (in impeccable English) that despite encouragement by the government, many of his tribe preferred to stay in the jungle, which meant the children did not go to school.

'Did you go to school?' 'Yes', he answered slowly and with amusement (no doubt because his English vocabulary was impressive). 'And could you survive in the jungle?' 'Oh yes.' And then slyly, eyeing the very plump Chinese tourist asking the questions in Chinese-English, 'and I can survive in the City as well.'

The implication was that he was a man prepared for anything, unlike his questioner! He also put on a display on stage dressed in full regalia. An amusing part was when he mimed being taken with a female member of the audience, and suggested firing the dart at the man beside her so they could be together. From memory, this man was from the Orang Ulu, river people.

The Ibans ('Sea Dayaks', notorious ex-headhunters) and the Bidayus were very fond of teasing by pretending they like the look of you, perhaps with a view to eating you!

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They are aware that such half jocular threats can worry, and are amused by it. A part-Chinese told me he would like to 'pull out my eyes'! He knew he would scare me a little by the bloodthirstiness of the statement, and assured me it was a compliment because he loved the colour so much!

### **Conclusion of Paula Herlihy's travelogue**

### **The orange bridge**

It's up! The Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail bridge over Maroondah Highway is finally in place. Built at a truck stop beside the Melba Highway near Coldstream, the huge central span was lifted into place by crane during the weekend of 15-17 January.

The unpainted steel has taken on a natural rust tinge and even the concrete pylons have been stained the same colour. What the final colour will be remains to be seen. The see-through structure should at least resist graffiti.

The previous steel bridge on the site was known as the 'Red Bridge' and the one over Hereford Road (where the tunnel is now) was the 'White Bridge'.

Will this come to be known as the 'Orange Bridge'?



**The new Rail Trail bridge - can't wait to try it!**

### **Medical Surgery 30th anniversary**

Anne-Marie Donovan, Office Manager at Mt Evelyn Medical Surgery, writes that she has set up an email specifically for the 30th anniversary celebrations of the surgery: [anniversary30@internode.on.net](mailto:anniversary30@internode.on.net)

Anyone who wishes to participate may provide a story, anecdote or a message of congratulation that will then be printed into a congratulatory book for Dr Anthony Palmer and Associate Professor Lyn Clearihan.

### **Sampler display at new museum**

Yarra Ranges Regional Museum is located in Castella Street and is due to open in mid-2011. The Museum is seeking Australian samplers dating from the 1840s to the present day for a unique exhibition showcasing this intricate handcraft, **Practice Makes Perfect: Australian Samplers**.

The exhibition will run from 30 March to 17 June 2012. If you have a sampler and would like to apply for inclusion in this exhibition, please request an application form from:

Lynette Nilaweera, Exhibitions Officer  
Yarra Ranges Regional Museum  
PO Box 105  
LILYDALE VIC 3140  
[L.Nilaweera@yarraranges.vic.gov.au](mailto:L.Nilaweera@yarraranges.vic.gov.au)

Paula and Kevin have both been contacted about the loan of other 'treasures' that will figure among the Museum's opening exhibits.

### **From Kev's rain gauge**

Rainfall for December 2010 for Mt Evelyn, Melbourne and the Melbourne average:

<b>Mt Evelyn</b>	<b>Melb</b>	<b>Melb Av</b>
189.2mm	85.2mm	59.2mm

Yearly totals for 2010 for Mt Evelyn (Hereford Road), McKillop, Melbourne and the Melbourne average:

<b>Mt Ev</b>	<b>McK</b>	<b>Melb</b>	<b>Melb Av</b>
1074.0	1154.65	730.6	648.7

Thanks to Jean Edwards for the McKillop figures.

**Kevin Phillips**

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