

Things Past

Newsletter 43 September 2011

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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Dates for your diary

Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, curator-guided tour and afternoon tea, Saturday 24 September, 2pm. Please contact Paula if you would like to attend (contact details p.4).

'The Mitchells in Mt Evelyn', our display in the Mt Evelyn Exhibition Space during October.

'Face to Face' exhibition launch, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, 2-4pm Saturday 15 October.

History Group stall, Mt Evelyn Street Party, Saturday 22 October.

History Walk, Lillydale Lake Reserve, Saturday 19 November. Brief meeting to follow.

Launch of *Aborigines of the Yarra Valley and Northern Dandenongs*, Saturday 3 December, 2pm Mt Evelyn Station House.

STOP PRESS! \$4,000 grant from wilam naling for Aboriginal booklet! P.4.

Visit to Tarrawarra Abbey

On 14 August I was one of several members of the Yarra Glen & District Historical Society who toured what is probably the oldest dwelling in the Yarra Valley. 'Elm Cottage' is a slab building located on the grounds of Tarrawarra (Notre Dame) Abbey, about one Km from the Abbey buildings and visible from the railway line.

Unfortunately the construction date of Elm Cottage is unknown. Abbot Dom David Tomlins, who led us on the tour, is inclined to think it was built around or before 1850, either by squatters William and Marianne Ryrie, or by their predecessor, John Thomson. All were resident squatters on 'View Hill', a run of some 12,000 acres between present day Yarra Glen and Healesville.

Thomson's will was signed 7 September 1844, he was buried on 5 October 1844 and his will was exhibited and proved on 10 December 1844. John Cassels Ryrie was born at View



'Elm Cottage' showing the horizontal slab construction.

Hill on 26 November 1850. The dates suggest that either Thomson or the Ryries built the cottage but it was probably not named until later.

The original horizontal slab hut faced Yarra Glen. Richard Woolcott, who purchased the property in 1872, extended the cottage and changed it to face the elm-lined driveway. Dom David quoted Maxime Palmer in *Tarrawarra: 130 years on a Victorian Property*, "Mr. Woolcott extended the 'Elms' cottage into a fifteen room dwelling, forming a U-shaped courtyard around a well". A fire has reduced the building back to the original slab cottage, along with two rooms added at what is now the front.

Vertical timbers from Herbert's farm in the main street of Yarra Glen have been used in at least two parts of the cottage and also to strengthen the roof, which still has wooden shingle on the inside. Bricks from the courtyard and well have

Continued p.3



The avenue of elms that gave 'Elm Cottage' its name.

'Life in Melbourne' – 1854

Thanks to Joan Vanderhorn for this article from the *West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser*, Friday 21 April 1854. This is an extract from a private letter, addressed to a Norfolk clergyman by his son.

Melbourne is built on the slope of a hill, laid out in Yankee fashion – streets wide, and at right angles to each other; none of the little twisting lanes that you see in all the great European cities. Many, in fact most of the houses are of stone, or brick, and built in a very handsome and solid manner, and but few of the run up wooden structures that you so often see in large American towns. I speak, of course, of the principal streets; in the outskirts of the town there are the most extraordinary looking, half wood, half canvass contrivances, you can possibly imagine, abounding in the half-horse, half-alligator genus of *homo*, that are fresh from the diggings, with lots of nuggets in their belts and hair about their faces. The streets are crowded with drags of all kinds, carrying merchandise, omnibuses, and old-fashioned four-horsed coaches, rejoicing in names of bygone days in England, such as 'The Times', 'Tally-ho', &c.; carts with horses driven tandem-wise, and, in short, all sorts and kinds of conveyances. You may imagine the bustle of the place when I tell you that it reminds me of the busiest part of Liverpool in the busiest time.

The horses and oxen are splendid beasts, and as fine as you ever saw in England, and I strongly suspect that, in sending emigrants here from the old country, you have shipped the finest men you could find, and kept the lean kind at home; for a finer and more robust looking set of fellows I have never seen than the draymen, porters, masons, carpenters, &c., that one sees about the place. The wages here would frighten the 'old Protectionist party;' a common hand would get 12s. to 14s. a day; a mason, 25s., and other crafts in proportion; so you may imagine that for a labouring man it is a small, or rather a largish kind of paradise. Board and lodging, however, are frightfully dear, and the rents that are paid for houses are something quite incredible. I was to-day in a gentleman's office who rents two rooms on the first floor in one of the principal streets – one room about 18 feet by 10, the other about a third larger; for these two rooms he pays

£1,000 a year, and is considered to have got a very cheap bargain; in fact money is spoken of as mere dirt.

Men speak of £10,000 as you would speak of 10s., and the rises in fortune from the lowest depths of poverty to actual wealth before your eyes are astounding. A gentleman who came with me in the steamer, and who has friends and relations in business, told me this morning that a young fellow he had formerly known, who had left England without a song (?) ten years ago, and who had been previously employed in some shop or other... had recently let some land for £2,500 a year, and held some more that he has been offered £30,000 for. In fact, if I had been told in England what I know to be true here, I never should have believed half; but one must come here, and then the reality of the statements is not to be questioned, as there the persons are. *To be continued*

History Group AGM

We held our AGM in the Old Community Link building on 25 August (with a slight delay due to confusion over the venue). In her President's Report, Paula mentioned our expanding network of contacts, particularly through our website. The website email has facilitated enquires and brought us new information.

The group is on a sound financial footing. Annual subscriptions will remain at \$5, to be reviewed next year. Please note that subs for the financial year 2011-2012 are now due.

Executive positions were filled as follows: President Paula Herlihy, Treasurer Kevin Phillips, Secretary/ Newsletter Editor Karen Phillips. General Committee: Louise Fitinghoff, Janice Newton, Joan Vanderhorn, Rosemary Baker, Tim Herlihy, Ian James. General committee members will assist with the duties of Vice President as appropriate.

Railway DVDs

The History Group has a DVD with footage of the Last Train to Warburton. Called 'Last Train to ... Last Run Of' by Channel 5 Productions, the DVD is available for loan to members. Others in the series with footage of local lines include: 'Rail Motor Journeys Over Lost Lines'; 'Rail Motors Across Victoria' and 'Outer Melbourne Branch Lines'. These titles are available from Transport Video International, PO Box 555 Pascoe Vale VIC 3044, <http://channel5productions.com/>

From a happy researcher

Hello again Karen – do you remember helping me back in February with research about James Black who was supposed to have worked for a Mr Brown at Mt Evelyn? You wrote a great article about our research in your magazine [*Things Past* 37 - Ed.]

Well life has proven to be stranger than fiction because we had a phone call from a Mr Neil Black, a grandson of our James Black from Koroit. We have never met Neil, nor did we know much about his line of the family.

He tells me that he lives at Launching Place and read that article in your magazine. He decided he should contact us re family history research, as he is keen to find out more about his grandfather etc. He also tells me that his wife works in Yarra Glen, where our eldest son and partner lived for 5 years until moving to Fitzroy a few years ago.

So you just never know who or what will 'come out of the woodwork' when you do family research. Your article has finally brought us a new source of possible information and we are thrilled to find another direct family member who is keen to do more.

From Vera Pickford (edited email)

Sleepers awake

It has long been rumoured that a section of old railway track remained under the bitumen at the Rail Trail/ York Road crossing. Contractors building the new intersection found these sleepers (below) and may unearth rails and spikes when they dig up the road. One of the old telegraph poles had to be removed and will be relocated. Thanks to Cr Tim Heenan for offering to the store the relics. Thanks also to Franc Smith for alerting council to the issue before work began on the site.



Sleepers found under the Rail Trail at York Road. Photo courtesy Alfred Reynald, Yarra Ranges Council.

From p.1
been used to pave the verandahs and some remain stacked on site.

Cistercian brothers from Roscrea Abbey, County Tipperary, Ireland, established the Tarrawarra community in 1954. The Cistercian order has had a presence in Australia since the early 19th century.

Text and photos Paula Herlihy

Based on a talk by Dom David Tomlins 14/8/2011 and his leaflet *Tarrawarra Property, a brief History* dated 8/6/2003. See also:

Maxime Palmer 1967, *Tarrawarra: 130 years on a Victorian Property*, The Hawthorn Press, Melbourne.

'Tarrawarra' article by the late Leigh Ahern, Yarra Glen Historical Society newsletter no.40, August 2011.

Tarrawarra Abbey: www.cistercian.org.au/pages/history.php



'Elm Cottage' with brick front extension.

Storm trail through Tarrawarra

Dom David Tomlins happened to mention a narrow swathe of storm damage that passed through the Tarrawarra property a few years back, only as wide as the property and confined to its 1,000 acres. No deaths or injuries resulted. Localised weather events like this may account for the unexplained roaring noises sometimes heard in the hills (see 'Do the Dandenongs speak?' *Things Past* 42).

Formalising our logo

Shortly after we re-established ourselves as an independent group, we adopted the photo of the Schultz and O'Connor families at Billygoat Hill in our letterhead and masthead. The photo sums up many of the themes in Mt Evelyn's history. We now feel the time has come for an official logo. Here is Paula's draft for your consideration. Let us know what you think.



wilam naling grant

There are some projects where everything just goes right. Not only did we receive a grant from Yarra Ranges Council towards printing and launching our booklet *Aborigines of the Yarra Valley and Northern Dandenongs*, we have now received an additional grant of \$4,000 from the Public Records Office *wilam naling* scheme. We can now afford a much larger print run and higher quality binding for the booklet. Paula has done it again with yet another successful grant submission!

Question of the month

Can you please assist me with information regarding my family history? During the years 1940-1950 (accompanied by my mother, who has passed away years ago), I regularly visited relatives in Mount Evelyn. Their surname was Thompson and they resided in a house which backed onto the railway easement. I do not recall the street name, but the house block was on a higher level than the rail line. The house was situated within half a kilometre of the old General Store. The first names of this Thompson family were Frederick, George, Herbert, Alfred, Phoebe, Myrtle, Nellie, Lucy.

From Diane Eastwood, Berwick.

Donations

Sue Thompson very generously donated 20 copies of her booklet *A Diva's Day Out, Nellie Melba's Return to Lilydale* for us to sell as a fundraiser (\$5 each).

Vicki and Gil from the Community Link have donated their catalogued collection of Mt Evelyn newspaper clippings (mid-2003 to 2008).

House names and Rate Books

Does your property have a name? Do you know of any other house names in your part of Mt Evelyn? I'm compiling a list of house names, past and present. I looked up our property in the Lillydale Rate Books but they list only the street, lot number and estate, not names of houses. Ours is 'Hereford Rd, Lot 5 Mountain View Estate'. The Rate Books confirmed one historical point. The property is rated for 'House and cottage'. 'Cottage' would be our corrugated iron garage/shed, painted that rather disgusting dried-blood colour. Miss Kemp (owner 1919-39) must have used the lean-to of the shed for extra accommodation and now it has outlasted her house. **Karen**

Planning resources at PROV

I have recently had to utilise the resources of the Public Records Office of Victoria. The office holds quite detailed records of planning schemes across Victoria from 1946 onwards. Various assets are provided by the PROV to assist with researching records, including digital cameras (for use and return) and memory sticks (for purchase). The records were very useful in resolving some outstanding planning issues and in understanding how our modern planning scheme has evolved.

A repository for all of Victoria's aerial photography images is located in Laverton North. Individual images can be reproduced at a cost of \$6 each. Images must be requested prior to your visit. Details below:
Land Victoria Aerial Photography Library
57 Cherry Lane Laverton 3028.

Phone: 8368 5411, fax: 8368 5401, email:
document.investigation@dse.vic.gov.au

Steve Kaylock

From Kev's rain gauge

Rainfall for August 2011 for Mt Evelyn, Melbourne and the Melbourne average:

Mt Evelyn	Melb	Melb Av
48.4mm	18.0mm	50.2mm

We are now in *Poorneet* (Tadpole) season, September-October. Temperatures are rising but the rain continues. Flax-lilies are flowering. Pied Currawongs call loudly and often. The flowering of plants such as *Murnong* (Yam Daisy) indicates the tubers are ready for eating. Days and nights are of equal length.

From 'Seven seasons of the Kulin people':
<http://museumvictoria.com.au/forest/climate/tadpole.html>

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