

Things Past

Newsletter 60

February 2013

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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Dates for your diary

General business meeting, Thursday 28 February, 7:30-9:30pm Hardy House.

Ian Stewart, author of 'Heroes of the Aqueduct' website, will be our speaker on Saturday 23 March 1:30pm Hardy House, Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn. All welcome.

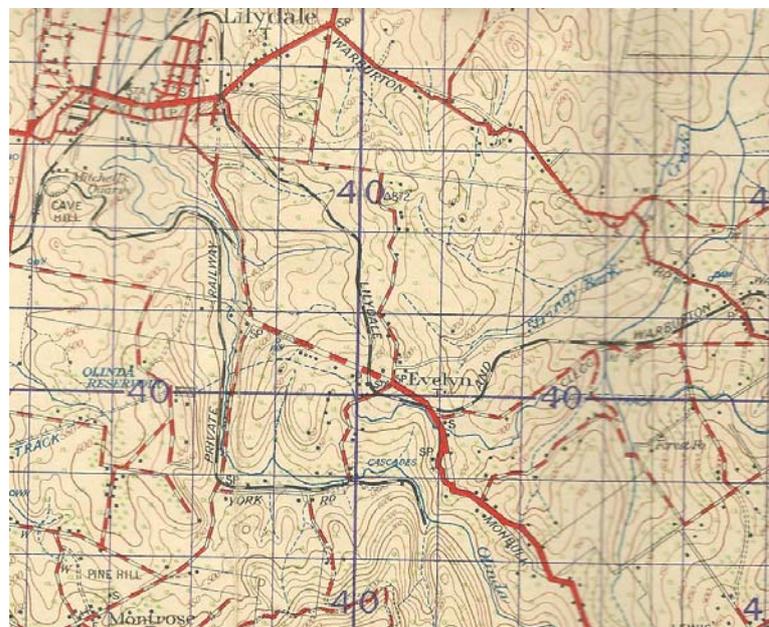
On the peak of Mount Evelyn

Where, exactly, is the peak of Mount Evelyn?

A 1922 survey map shows the highest point along the ridge at 872' (266 metres) on the south-east corner of Old Gippsland and Old Hereford Roads (the site of the Yarra Valley Water tank, Melway 118 B7). While the top of Inverness Road is at about the same altitude, it is on the slope of Mt Dandenong. The tank site is the highest peak. In the 1990s, when Mrs Ivy Arney was sketching historic buildings in the Shire, 'the hill with the water tank' was suggested. Locals remembered it as an historic site, though their memories were vague as to its significance, or what the artist would find to draw there.

An elderly family member told Bev Watkins that 'the oldest house in Mt Evelyn was on the hill off Old Hereford Road and that Ted Matthews lived in it'. Janice Newton sent the following summary of her interview with Ted.

Around 1947, when he left his father-in-law's bakery, Ted bought 20 acres from the Underwoods, on Old Hereford Road, the 'pimple' that he was told was the 'Mount' of Mt Evelyn. There were two houses on the farm and the second house was at first rented by Underwood's daughter Beryl and son-in-law Ken, then later used by Ted's daughter Laurie Dixon and family. Both houses were burned out on 8 February 1983, a week before the Ash Wednesday bushfires.



Detail of survey map 'Ringwood' correct to 1922, showing Evelyn and Lilydale. The peak of 872 feet is about halfway across, close to the number 40.

The hill was on James Raeburn's selection, which stretched from Old Gippsland Road to Dawn Court. It would make sense for Raeburn to build at the northern end, where he would have easy access to Lilydale. His house had four rooms, an iron roof and a 30' x 5' iron verandah. There was a storehouse 20' x 12', a closet, a room of slabs and shingle 13' x 13', plus a three-stall stable built of slabs with a bark roof, a shed, pig sty, dam and reservoir. (Janice Newton, notes from Lands Department files).

When Robert Sutton bought the land from Raeburn at the beginning of 1890, he immediately subdivided and sold the lots. Archibald Anderson bought the block on the Old Gippsland/ Old Hereford corner and sold

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To the Gulf of Carpentaria by Moke, part 2

Fuelled up and heading north out of Birdsville, a sunny morning and good road conditions. The first stop was going to be Bedourie, then on to Boulia for the night. We had completed about 120 kms and as we were approaching Glengyle Station we were faced with 2 on-coming road trains that produced large dust trails. As they went past we moved over to the left to give them plenty of room (and a wave, as you do) then BANG BANG BANG. The second truck went past & the same happened again.

We realized then that the dust was not dust but aggregate rock that was coming off the top of their very full loads. My windscreen took 7 major hits. I pulled over and when the dust cleared Bob was not to be seen. He turned up several minutes later with no windscreen at all (most of it was inside the car as it had blown in) and he had several cuts on his hand & lip. We both settled down & cleaned all the windscreen fragments out of Bob's car & realized there were 600kms to go to Mt Isa, bypassing Winton & Lark Quarry & we still had about 45kms to go to Bedourie.

The staff at the Bedourie roadhouse gave us phone numbers for Sunnex/ O'Briens. We still had over 200kms to get to Boulia for the night, where a motel & a pub meal went down well. Rang Mt Isa before we left and they confirmed that they could cut a laminated windscreen, rather than wait a week for one to be sent from Townsville.

300kms left to travel to Mt Isa on exceptionally good roads, warming up, a sunny day & the closer we got to the Mt the scenery changed and we were passing through rocky ranges & gorges. Arrived at the windscreen place about 3pm, dropped off Bob's Moke, then set up camp at the Sunset Caravan park on the banks of the Breakaway Creek, a great campsite.

The next morning we caught up on our domestic duties and just relaxed before we picked up Bob's Moke at around lunch time. We took it to Tyrepower for a front end alignment and to find out what was this squeaking, grinding sound that changed when you changed direction or decelerated. When we picked it up we still had no answer for the noise.

In Qld most retail shops are closed by midday so we spent the morning checking out workshops and places like Autobarn & Repco. Out back at Mt Isa is the information & booking



Glenn's Moke 'Green Pea' at Mt Isa camp site.

centre for all of the Mine Tours, all of which were booked out till the Monday or Tuesday, no one works on the weekend in Mt Isa except for the miners. Dinner at the Buffs Club (Buffalo Club) via the courtesy bus there & back.

Sunday morning we caught up with Frank & Glenys Munis at their house, looking over his cars. Frank is a Jag man, he has a couple of Mark 2 SJ 6's, a 1989 XJS V12 2 door coupé, an original VC HDT Brock Commodore which he has had since new & a great little Moke Ute. He just sold his E type, which he had for 40 years (time to reduce the fleet). Pizza & beers tonight at the camp kitchen in the caravan park which happens to be one of the best camp kitchens I have ever seen.

Monday was spent going to several mechanical workshops & they all had different opinions ranging from gear box & dif, brakes & rotors, CV & bearing hubs ... and we still had the noise. We were talking to RACV & RACQ, in case Bob's Moke needed to be freighted home. That night we were invited to the Mt Isa Restored Car Club's monthly meeting ... a nice group of blokes.

On Tuesday morning Frank had invited us back to his place for an inspection & service on both vehicles, Glenys made lunch for us and even did our washing while we serviced our cars. We did find some movement in Bob's CV nuts so we re-adjusted them and by this stage we had decided to keep on driving to complete the trip.

Back at camp we relaxed and got ready to leave the next morning. Having spent 6 nights at Mt Isa, which was far more than we had planned, Lawn Hill & Bourketown had to be bypassed. Mt Isa is a great town, great facilities,

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lifestyle & because it is desert the temperature varies from moderate winters to really hot summers. All in all we had a great time at the Mt. Next stop was Cloncurry where we tried the local bakery as it has a great reputation, from there we headed north up through the Bourke & Wills roadhouse where we had afternoon tea, then on to Normanton, arriving around 5.45pm, where we grabbed a cabin for the night. We had travelled 500+kms for the day. Before leaving we checked out Krys the Savannah King, a fibreglass replica of the largest salt water crocodile ever shot/ captured (in 1957 by Krystina Pawlowski, a professional croc shooter). It measured 8.63 metres (28' 4") and weighed over 2 ton. Krystina was still alive when this tribute to her was unveiled in 1996. A short drive to Kurumba the next morning and we booked into the Gulf caravan park, then took a tour of the town and checked out the Norman River. That evening we went out for some fine dining on the river called the Croc & Crab tour, fresh seafood, good wine and we saw the sun setting over the Gulf waters, which was a spectacular sight. While walking back to the caravan park we stopped in at the Animal Bar, where they fold back the walls and it becomes an open air pub.

Next day we drove back to Normanton, fuelled up and turned on to the Savannah Way. A lunch stop at Croydon, pies & coffee, then headed for Georgetown, lots of wildlife & cattle, a great piece of road and a changing vista as we crossed a couple of mountain ranges. Arriving at Georgetown mid afternoon, we took an un-powered site in a great little caravan park that even had unisex facilities. One of the best pub meals you could ever have in this town.

We were woken at 4am with a windstorm, thought our campsite was going to be blown away, then we had a squadron of bats that decided to take a rest stop in the tree above us, so all in all we had a great night's non-sleep.

Left Georgetown about 9.30am and drove straight into a howling wind, crossed the Newcastle Range & the scenery continued to change, valleys & hills. A coffee stop at Mt Surprise & then we were climbing up on to the Atherton Tableland. Through the misty mountains, it's now cold & raining, a quick lunch stop at Atherton, then we crossed the Gillies range & then down to the flatlands which is called 'down the Gillies'. There are



Above, Krys the Savannah King at Normanton.

Inset, all that's left of two intrepid travellers



297 bends, 60kms hour limit & downhill all the way, one of the best Moke roads ever.

Met Dave Margison at Gordonvale & followed him down to his house, which is almost in the centre of Cairns.

Glenn Golds

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it shortly afterwards to George McNaughton. The rate books show that the block owned by Anderson and McNaughton was rated for a house and 15 acres in 1891. Given the early date, this house was probably Raeburn's.

The 1922 survey map shows two houses at this site. It seems likely that these were the two owned by Underwood and later by Ted Matthews; one of them may have been Raeburn's. If it stood until the 1983 fire, Raeburn's house really would have been the oldest in Mt Evelyn at the time. Built 1877-8, it was slightly earlier even than Westhill (c.1879).



Built after the 1983 fire, the tank, above, was located high on the ridge to maintain water pressure in future fires. Photo Kevin Phillips.

Karen Phillips

Continued next month

Cumbungi in the Yarra Valley

In response to Paula Herlihy's query last month about native cumbungi in the Yarra Valley, we have reports from Paula's old stamping-ground, Yarra Glen.

There is a patch in the creek that crosses Yarra View Road just below the mushroom farm From Paula's description and photo I think it could be Typha orientalis

The patch on Yarra View Road is just near Bob Young's place (the creek actually flows into his paddocks). There are also bulrushes around his dam but I cannot tell from the road if they are the same.

This morning while walking along the Steels Creek walking track I came across [a patch of] bulrushes which matches your description



of Typha orientalis. It is on the high side of the road in the bush so it is highly unlikely anyone planted it. It is directly above a permanent dam and the site of the famous water trough.

As you drive from Yarra Glen, just past Valley Road on your left and the former

antimony mine on the right, you probably remember the dam on the right just below the road and before the conical hill where Commerfords used to live.

*The best way to get to the bulrushes is to drive past the dam and on the left, just before the conical hill, is a driveway with a letterbox (no.375). Park off the road near the driveway and then you can walk back along the track towards Yarra Glen about 200 metres until you are directly above the dam. **Helen Mann***

The large patch in the dam in Gibbs Road [opposite Japonica Drive] looks to be Typha orientalis to my untrained eye – I don't think these would have been planted, so that would indicate others in the local area & the seed probably would have been transferred by aquatic birds

*There is a good sized patch in the wetland at Tarrawarra station. As it is on public land, there is no restriction on access. **Barry Sheffield***

The sites described above are at Melway 274 J3 & F3, 266 K3, 267 B7 and 276 B1.



Above, walking track beside Steel's Creek Road with cumbungi patch on the right. The plants are growing in wet soil on the hillside. There must be a spring above them. Below left, close-up of the cumbungi. Photos Helen Mann.

Australia Day Awards

Dr Bill Hardy's family accepted his Lifetime Achievement Award at the Yarra Ranges Australia Day ceremony. Melba Support Services were Community Group of the Year. Ivor Chalkley (Friends of the Rail Trail) and Mt Evelyn RSL received Certificates of Recognition. 'Guinea pig advocate' Georgia McAleer received an award for her devotion to animals.

From Kev's rain gauge

Rainfall for January 2013 for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, Melbourne and Melbourne average.*

Mt Ev	McK	Melb	Melb Av
7.10mm	7.50mm	8.00mm	47.60mm

* McKillop readings courtesy Jean Edwards. Melbourne figures Bureau of Meteorology: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/>

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