

# Things Past

Newsletter 61

March 2013

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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## Dates for your diary

Talk by the authors of *Aborigines in the Yarra Valley & Northern Dandenongs*, Sunday 17 March, 1:30pm Yarra Glen Memorial Hall, Bell Street Yarra Glen (rear entrance).

Launch of *Flying Home*, Tuesday 19 March, 3.45pm Morrison on the Park Café.

Ian Stewart, author of 'Heroes of the Aqueduct' website, will be our speaker on Saturday 23 March 1:30pm RSL Hall, Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn. All welcome.

'The Happy Hermits' book launch Saturday 20 April, 1.30pm RSL Hall Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Rd, Mt Evelyn. All welcome.

## Vale Allan Watkins (21/2/1941 – 6/1/2013)

History Group member Allan Watkins was a lifelong resident of Mt Evelyn. He was the youngest child of Edward (Ted) and Olive Watkins, née Kentish. Allan's older siblings were Graeme, who lives in Tasmania, and Gwenda, who pre-deceased Allan on 5 September 2012.

As a boy Allan enjoyed life on the family property 'The Haven' in Silvan Road. Allan was an outdoor boy with a sense of adventure and the Dandenongs were an attraction to him. On one occasion he and his friend crossed the creek and made their way through the bush up to Mt Dandenong Road. Because it

would soon be getting dark they decided not to return the way they'd gone up so they walked down the road to Montrose. Allan rang his worried parents to say they were OK but needed rescuing by horse and jinker.

Allan and Bev married in 1966 and moved into a two room holiday house in Glenview Road. They built on to it over the years, especially when their children Douglas and Janine were small.



Above, Allan and Bev Watkins. Below left, Allan as a youngster in the 1940s.

Allan began his working life on a farm at Silvan and also delivered strawberries to the Silvan Processing Factory. He later worked with the Board of Works as a pipe layer. Allan started to work part time at the Melba Centre, and this evolved into full time work in 1980 as a gardener-handyman. He drove the bus for the Centre, and drove groups to the Licola Lion's Camp, living there for the week with Bev, who was a supervising Nursing Sister at Rosine.

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## To the Gulf of Carpentaria by Moke, part 3

After meeting Dave Margison and his mum Elsie (Elsie is 91) we settled in to our accommodation, which was a self contained 3 bedroom apartment under their Queensland house. The next morning we took a drive to Lake Morris/ Cairns main water supply, Elsie as my passenger, Dave & Bob in their own Mokes. A great drive & climb up the mountain with views over Cairns & then off to lunch at the Cairns Waterfront boardwalk where we had lunch at Dundees restaurant with all of the FNQ Mokies (10 people & 6 Mokes). They presented us with certificates that they had especially made up in recognition of our trip.

The next morning 'rain', into a taxi & off to the start of sky rail, we did the complete trip, top to bottom, with a stop half way up which is the rain forest & the old power station, with the rain still falling. Walked around the Kuranda township & market, had lunch & then did Birdworld ... fantastic, including 'Harold' who is a rather large blue macaw. We were warned that he loved glasses, earrings & hats. He destroyed the top of Bob's hat in seconds, I hid my earring but he did manage to nibble on a plastic toggle on my raincoat. He is one big bird when he is sitting on your shoulder. On to the historic Kuranda scenic railway for the full trip back into the centre of Cairns. If you are ever in Cairns the railway & sky rail have to be on your 'to do' list.

Tuesday was a catch up day on domestic duties. In the afternoon we went to Autobarn, where I purchased a new set of plugs & leads for my Moke as I still had that fluffy miss that came & went infrequently. DISASTER ... Bob's Moke had decided that the front right wheel bearing wasn't going to play the game & it was



Above, the Kuranda Railway, opened in 1891.



Above, the Mokes take in the sights of Cairns.

Inset, Harold the blue macaw at Birdworld.

the same noise that he had at Mt Isa. Both of us had new spare front wheel bearings so no mucking around, got stuck straight into it & got most of the job done before running out of daylight. Elsie had organized dinner on their back verandah for the four of us, good food & wine on a tropical Cairns evening ... jeans & shirts while the locals were continually complaining it was a lot cooler & wetter than usual.

Finished off the next morning road testing Bob's Moke but there was still a slight noise there that came & went. Cleaned up & packed all of our gear into our Mokes, said our goodbyes to Dave & Elsie then headed out thru Cairns/ Gordonvale then back up the Gillies, all 297 bends. On to Malanda arriving mid afternoon where we were going to spend the next couple of nights with my cousin Frank and his wife Errolle. They have a great home on 2+ acres of lawn, garden, rainforest, plus their dogs. Here on the Atherton Tablelands it is a totally different temperature, no humidity, misty mornings & can be damper than the coast. Started the following day with a tour of the Malanda township. The historic hotel is still operating in the original building complete with the hand built staircase that does not have one nail in it. It is over 100 years old. Hypapamee Crater & Dinner Waterfalls are situated just out of Malanda and are spectacular.

Then we went on to Herberton for a coffee break, the historic village there is a must see and we spent about 2 hours there, it is like going back to the olden days with tools, cars & trucks, traction engines, machinery & a great

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collection of bull dozers. Tinaroo Dam & camping park would be a great place to spend a number of days. Then on to the Curtin Fig Tree, there is a boardwalk around the base of the elevated root system ... what a tree, it's massive.

From Malanda, it's an easy 90 minute drive down to Innisfail where we caught up with Malinda Eaves, her partner Peter & their family. We all spent the rest of the day together at the Innisfail Show, lots of rides, machinery, sideshows etc. We set up for the next few nights under Malinda & Peter's Queenslander.



Above, avenue of Kauri pines (*Agathis robusta*) at Paronella Park. José Paronella from Catalonia, Spain, laid out the park from 1929.

Next morning, 8 people & 2 4x4s as transport headed off to Paronella Park. You have to see this attraction if you are ever in this part of the country, 10 out of 10, one man's vision & all for the woman he loved. Even came across a shortened Moke in the car park, built to go in a mobile home, the windscreen folds down.

Lunch at Mena Creek Hotel, then visited Murdering

Point Winery, local fruit wines & a fascinating history. On the way home we called in to a banana plantation that was owned by a client of Peter's, mid size in acreage. 800 trees per acre, 12 hands per tree in a good year, 30 to 40 bananas per hand.

It is now wet & windy as we make our way down the coast towards Townsville. After Cardwell, we got some sunny weather and then at Rollingson we caught up with my neighbour Cliff who comes up here every year in his campervan.

On to Townsville where we were going to spend the next 3 nights with my daughter's best friend Lauren & her husband Kym. Over the next 2 days we got our 30 minutes of fame in colour in the local paper, did the tour of the Museum of Tropical Queensland, had fish n chips at Harold's on the Strand, checked out the waterfront & the beaches, Castlehill Lookout &

on the last night after dinner at the Brewery, we were having ice cream on the Strand at 8.30pm in shorts & t-shirts ... loved the weather.

After a great few days we said goodbye to Lauren & Kym. It was 24 degrees at 8.30am as we headed out to our first stop, which was Charters Towers. Great hwy & driving conditions, climbed up & over a small mountain range after about 80kms, freezing cold now and had to stop to look for jumpers & jackets. Fuelled up at Charters and turned south, 2,540kms to home.

**Glenn Golds**

Continued next month

## 'Bush Fires'

Dangerous fires can occur late in the season, as the following extract from *The Argus* shows. Dated Monday 1 April 1940 p.5, it refers to a bushfire in the final week of March.

*PICNIC, FIRE CAUSE Mt. Evelyn Blaze. The cause of the bush fire at Mount Evelyn on Saturday was a fire lighted by picnickers last Monday. The blaze became uncontrollable, but except for a smouldering log it was extinguished. On Friday, however, sparks from the log set the bush on fire, and on Saturday a 50-mile-an-hour gale drove the blaze over 3,000 acres of scrub.*

*The chopping wind carried the fire round in a circle. Breaks, which were burnt by nearly 400 fire fighters when the wind moderated, prevented a disastrous extension of the fire.*

*The roar of the fire sweeping up a gully made Mr. H. Wilson, who was fighting the fire some distance away, realise that his home was in danger. He rushed back and drove his car on to the roadway for safety. His house was saved, but the car was burnt.*

*The owners of the five houses burnt are:- Mrs. Agnes Scott, Ferndale road; Thomas Stevenson, Hillside avenue; Miss E. M. Poole, Clegg road; Ernest Smith, Clancy road; Mrs. Barr, Billy Goat Hill.*

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/12440829>.

## Mt Evelyn en français

Some bright spark has taken the English language Wikipedia entry on Mt Evelyn and fed it through an automatic translator (Babelfish or similar) to produce the faux-French entry *Bâti Evelyn*. *Bâti* means 'mount' in the sense of an engine mounting.

[http://wikipedia.qwika.com/en2fr/Mount\\_Evelyn,\\_Victoria](http://wikipedia.qwika.com/en2fr/Mount_Evelyn,_Victoria).

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Allan ran the Melba Sunday Market for four years, and organized auctions, Christmas raffles and other fundraising events. He volunteered at the Tullamore Aged Care Centre and made magazine folders for the residents. In later years he put together folders of news clippings for nursing home residents. Allan received a number of Certificates of Appreciation for his contributions.

Allan was very community minded. He and Bev were members of MEEPPA, Scouts, Guides and the Tennis Club. He was a foundation member of the Mt Evelyn Lions Club, which was set up to raise funds for the Melba Centre. He was the Lions' 'Health Officer' and established the Blood Bank in Mt Evelyn, which ran for several years. He drove the bus for the Walking Stick Club on weekends. Bev volunteered for almost 15 years as a Community Visitor for the Office of the Public Advocate, visiting nursing homes and psychiatric centers. Bev is also an active member of Neighbourhood Watch.

Allan had bouts of ill health from 1974. He had complicated hip-surgery in his 30s, around 1975, followed by a prolonged history of medical procedures, rehabilitation and a couple of heart attacks. In 1993 a major infection really set him back. Bev gave up employed work to care for Allan. He couldn't do much at all for 12 months and always struggled to walk. In time the house was fitted with helpful modifications that enabled Allan to manage pretty well at home. More recently he contracted a rare form of angiosarcoma, which proved fatal.

Allan had a special empathy with aged and disabled people. His cheery and caring nature will be remembered. He is survived by his wife Bev, children Douglas and Janine, and brother Graeme.

***Paula Herlihy, talking to Bev and Graeme***

### **Watkins family history**

Allan Watkins was proud of his family's long association with the area. His father, Ted, was the eldest of William and Mary Watkins' three children. Mary was a Hocking, and her brother lived at what is now The Oasis between Margaret and McKillop Roads along the Silvan Road. After William died, his family moved to Mt Evelyn in 1910. Ted, who was then 6, did all his schooling at Mt Evelyn.



**Above, Allan and Ada Kentish with their daughter Olive, early 1900s. Olive, who married Ted Watkins, was the mother of Graeme, Gwenda and Allan.**

Most of the people living along Silvan Road were related to the family. Ted's mother remarried and became Mrs Buchanan. Nancy (Flora) Buchanan was Ted's half-sister. They lived at 'The Wattles' next door to the Watkins' home, 'The Haven'. Allan used to call Mr Buchanan 'Pop'.

Three Thurrowgood brothers, Fred William, Thomas (who married Rose Hocking) and Ted settled in this area, though Thomas later moved away. Ted Thurrowgood's son Herbert (Bert) married Mary Watkins.

Ted Watkins' wedding in 1933 was the first in the Union Church (now a private house in Watkins Crescent). His sister Mary's marriage to Herbert Thurrowgood was the second in the church, which by then had become the Methodist Church. Ted's younger sister, Alice, was Mrs Green, later Mrs Mettleman.

Allan's mother, Olive, was the only child of Ada and Allan Sebastian Kentish, who owned Kentish Boot Shop in the Main Street of Lilydale.

### **Donations**

Thank you to the following for donations to the History Group: Bev Watkins for family photos and memorabilia; Melba Support Services for their 40 year history DVD and Mt Evelyn RSL for Senior Citizens items found in the Hall.

## Valete

### Olwen Platt (8/6/1928 – 9/2/2013)

Olwen has supported many community groups over the years and regularly attended events and working bees such as those of the Friends of Mt Evelyn Aqueduct.

A keen long-distance cyclist in her youth, Olwen met her husband Gwyn when he and a mate invited her to join their cycling club. As Gwyn said, he'd been following her ever since!

Olwen used to organise the refreshments at meetings during the time we were merged with MEEPPA. Her support for the History Group included sharing information and photos of Guiding and co-authoring the booklet *The History of Guiding in Mt Evelyn*.

Olwen is remembered for her contribution to Guiding in Mt Evelyn, especially to the establishment and maintenance of the Guide Hall. At the opening ceremony in 1993, Olwen as Building Project Co-ordinator received the rarely awarded Good Service Award and her Twenty Years Service Badge.

Thank you for sharing your generous and caring nature with us, Olwen. You are sadly missed.

### Ian John Harris 30/3/1958 – 5/2/2013

Ian Harris was well known to the Mt Evelyn community through his work for Morrison House – first as a volunteer and then in charge of maintenance.



Above, Ian and Wendy Harris in 2012, with the bollard representing their son Mark 'Harry' Harris. Photo Paula Herlihy.

Ian's good humour, work skills and clever brain made it a pleasure to work with him. He was called on for a range of tasks, from building and grounds maintenance to creating an unusual object for some project, to planning how students could meet their learning outcomes. Never fazed and always up for a challenge, Ian was once described as 'the original Men's Shed'.

Among other projects, Ian was instrumental in the building of the Outlook Community Park and Community Link, the Youth Park adjacent to the Scout Hall, the Youth Shed, the Exhibition Space and the Café extension to the Library building. He personally located the heavy duty materials necessary for the hanging rail in the Exhibition Space and put it up as an extra-budget item, because he could see how necessary it was for health, safety and utility reasons. We think gratefully of Ian each year as we hang up heavy boards for display in the Exhibition Space.

Ian was involved in the creation of the RSL Memorial Park and relocating the War Memorial from in front of the Public Hall. He ran unsuccessfully for Council in 2005 and 2008.

One of the Station bollards represented Ian's eldest son Mark, a keen cricketer. Mark was killed in an accident in 2003. Ian and his wife Wendy were pleased to have the bollard portrait installed in their garden after it was removed from the station platform.

### Clive Stone d. February 2013

Clive Stone, a respected Silvan farmer, is known further afield as the author of *The Australian Berry Book: Preparing and Growing Your Own Berry Fruit*. His wife Annette was greatly involved in the Christian Discussion Group and Craft Market attached to Morrison House in the 1970s. Both are remembered as sincere Christians, always ready and willing to help their fellows.

*Paula Herlihy*

## New arrival

Congratulations to Karen and Adrian Mudge on the birth of their son Marlowe on 29 January – 'a little earlier than planned!' Adrian and Karen were our hosts at their log cabin home Appin in November last year.



Above, the Mudge family, Adrian, Karen, daughter Finlay Ruby and new addition Marlowe.

## Church of Christ

We've had a request for a photo of the former Church of Christ, also called the Mt Evelyn Christian Fellowship, at 31 Hereford Road. Can you help?

The Church of Christ in Mt Evelyn dates from 1947. The building on Hereford Road burned down in the 1980s (arson was suspected). A brick house now occupies the site. The organisation moved to Monbulk Road and built the modern mud brick church. Called Careforce since 2002, the church claims to minister to around 2,500 people.

## Blamire Young painting

A painting of Olinda Vale by William Blamire Young (thumbnail only) can be seen at: [http://www.artnet.com/artists/william+blamire-young/olinda-vale-AwY1s2F35eh6TMxZ06a\\_XA2](http://www.artnet.com/artists/william+blamire-young/olinda-vale-AwY1s2F35eh6TMxZ06a_XA2)

The scene may be the corner of Swansea and Edinburgh Roads, opposite Young's home.

## The mysterious hilltop

The solitary hill north-east of Morrisons has always intrigued me. The hilltop, which has been cleared of bush, has remains that could be house foundations beside a group of deciduous trees. A rustic tank stand or similar structure can be seen on the north side, slightly below the hilltop.

The hill would be almost on the boundary between James Raeburn's selection and Robert Thornton's, but most likely on Thornton's side. Access from Old Hereford Road is via Mikado Road and/or Sepik Vale.

The hilltop would make a beautiful house site. Does anyone know its history?

*Karen Phillips*



**Above, the hilltop seen from Morrisons Reserve. A magnificent site – but what was here before? Photo Kevin Phillips.**

## Woiwurrung clans

The authors of *Aborigines in the Yarra Valley & Northern Dandenongs* gave a presentation when we hosted the AOEHS meeting on 2 February. The confusing question of Woiwurrung clan names came up: was Mt Evelyn in the territory of the Wurundjeri balluk or the Wurundjeri willam?

We consulted Dr Gary Presland, who confirmed that the northern Dandenongs were in the territory of the Wurundjeri balluk clan and, within that, of the Wurundjeri willam patriline. He agreed it was confusing.

Patrilines were sub-groups within clans. Janice Newton defined a patriline as a group of descendants through the male line from a known male ancestor.

Gary Presland's book *First People* has a table of the Woiwurrung clans, patrilines, lands, leaders and moieties on p.25. The Wurundjeri were of the Waa (Crow) moiety.

## From Kev's rain gauge

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

Mt Ev	McK	Melb	Melb Av
72.40mm	70.75mm	70.40mm	48.00mm

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

*Kevin Phillips*



**Above, Owl in a Thunderstorm mural by members of the YES Shed, Mt Evelyn Skate Park. Photo Kevin Phillips.**

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