

Things Past

Newsletter 69

November 2013

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

PO Box 101 Mt Evelyn VIC 3796 A0051327F



Dates for your diary

Changing Places: The Evolution of Yarra Ranges' Main Streets, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, 9 November 2013 – 2 March 2014. Objects and stories of historic businesses, shop owners and employees that have made up the fabric of our main streets.

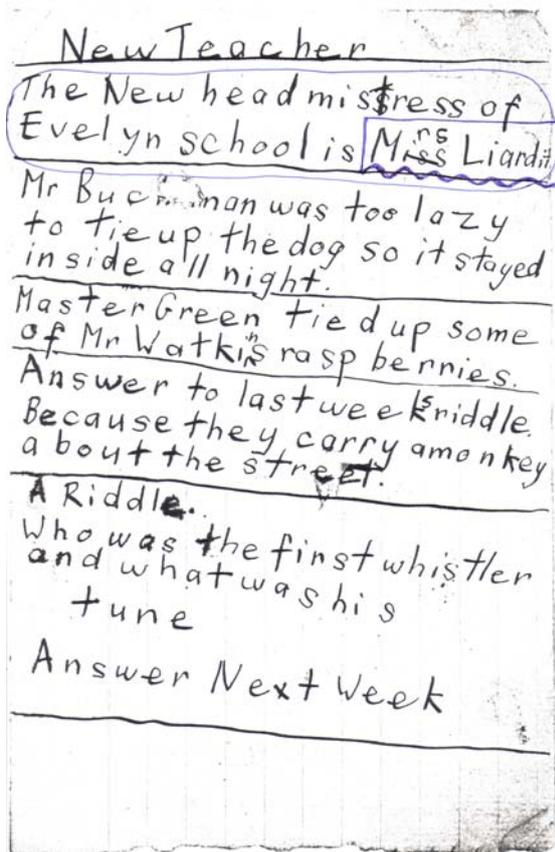
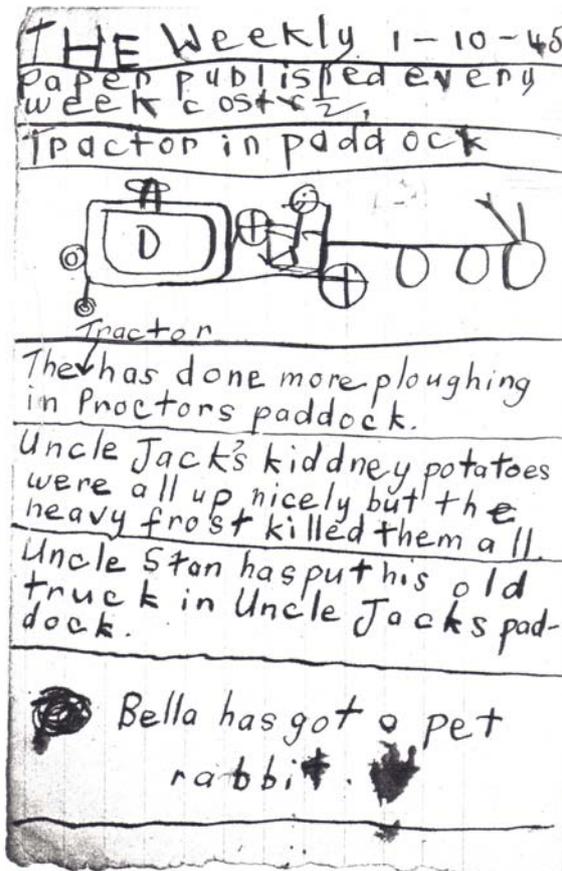
Walk to the Cascades: Saturday 23 November, 1:30 pm. Meet outside the Fruit Marketing Co-op, Monbulk Rd, Melway 120 G6. Walk 2 km return. Afternoon tea and short meeting at Penny Olive (Rail Trail/ Monbulk Rd corner). RSVP by 18 November to Paula on 9736 2935 or historygroup@mountevelyn.vic.au

A newsletter of long ago

As mentioned in *Things Past* 57, the Watkins children Graeme, Gwenda and Allan used to produce a handwritten newsletter, *The Weekly*, in the 1940s. They sold it to neighbours for a ha'penny a copy, later raising the price to one penny.

Amazingly, two issues survived in Allan's collection. *The Weekly* of 1 October 1945, below, provides a glimpse of a more rural and neighbourly Mt Evelyn from nearly 70 years ago. Most of those mentioned in the newsletter were the Watkins' relatives (see p.4).

NEWSPAPER PRODUCED BY WATKINS CHILDREN
1940's



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Another issue of *The Weekly* next month

D. Beryl Phillips, 1925-2006

The name 'Beryl Phillips Nature Reserve' was recently approved by the Registrar of Geographic Names. Beryl Phillips* was born on 4 March 1925 and grew up in Moreland and Balwyn. She had fond memories of camping in the Mt Evelyn Recreation Reserve with her family in the early 1930s. More than 50 years later she would make her home here.

Beryl's commitment to social justice was formed by the hardship she saw around her during the Great Depression. Her parents, who had a textile business, did all they could to keep their workers on. They converted the family car into a van and sent an employee out on the road as a salesman. This kept sales turning over and gave one more man a job.

Following a year of office work and another as a student teacher, Beryl completed her B.A. and Dip.Ed. at Melbourne University. She also completed some theological study and spent a year as secretary to the Master of Queens College. She taught at Methodist Ladies College, travelled to Europe and then completed a Master of Religious Education at Hartford Seminary Foundation in Connecticut, USA. Beryl worked in Christian education in Tasmania, Victoria and New Zealand. After four



Above, Beryl replies after receiving the Environmental Achiever Award at the SYR award ceremony, 1998. Photo Kevin Phillips.

months working with Aboriginal communities in the top End she returned to general teaching and taught English to migrants.

Moving to Mt Evelyn in 1985, Beryl involved herself in the local community. She joined the Mt Evelyn Environment Protection and Progress Association (MEEPPA), of which she was President from 1992 to 2002.

Beryl's passion for the environment made her a brilliant activist and advocate. She was instrumental in many community campaigns,

* Beryl always signed herself 'D. Beryl Phillips'. No one seems to remember what the 'D' stood for!



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Above, D. Beryl Phillips' 1985 charcoal drawing of the Yarra Valley from the ridge at Morrisons Reserve. Beryl gave the drawing to Jean Edwards, who has donated it to the History Group.

From p.2

including opposing the threatened sell-off of land along the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail and the battle to save land in Hereford Road from sub-division. The greater part of this land became the Owl Land Reserve. Beryl made strong representations for environment protection in the Shire's 'Vision 2020'. She was an active member of the Upper Yarra and Dandenongs Environmental Council (UYDEC), which became the Shire's reference body for the environment.

Beryl was a member of several Aboriginal rights groups, where her knowledge of Aboriginal customs and ways of life was invaluable. In 1972 she helped start Action for Aboriginal Rights and later joined the Casey branch of Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR). Beryl hosted Reconciliation forums with respected Elder Eddie Kneebone. She was a member of Pax Christi, a world wide ecumenical peace group. Music was an important part of Beryl's life – as pianist, organist, singer, conductor, composer and accompanist. Beryl performed regularly as a member of 'Music In The Hills' and held soirées at her home. Her creativity was expressed through painting, card production, photography, poetry and creative writing. MEEPPA members of the time remember her newsletters, decorated with her wildlife drawings. She produced posters of native flowers and fungi.

A founding member of the History Group, Beryl co-authored *Aborigines in the Northern Dandenongs* in 1997 (updated and published as *Aborigines in the Yarra Valley & Northern Dandenongs* by the History Group, 2011).

Beryl received numerous awards in her fields of commitment. Her work on Reconciliation was acknowledged with a Community Recognition Award from the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC). Hartford Seminary recognised Beryl's contribution to Indigenous Justice and Environmental Protection with the Significant Ministries Award. The Beryl Phillips Reconciliation Archive, donated by her, is held by Swinburne University.

The Uniting Church Augustine Centre in Hawthorn, where she was an Elder, recognised her contribution with the John Alexander Award. Beryl's work with youth was cited in *Encyclopaedia Victoria*.



Above, Beryl Phillips Nature Reserve with sign.

Beryl was recognised for her work for the environment with the inaugural Environmental Achiever Award from the Shire of Yarra Ranges in 1998. On Australia Day 2006, Beryl was awarded the Mayor's Lifetime Achievement Award. She died on 12 May the same year, aged 81.

Beryl was the face of environmental activism in Mt Evelyn for at least a decade. Naming the Beryl Phillips Nature Reserve in her honour is a fitting tribute.

Sources: Beryl Phillips CV, undated; interview notes 1997; eulogy, 2006.

Beryl Phillips Nature Reserve

The newly named Beryl Phillips Nature Reserve is a triangular block of 3.5 acres located on the corner of Fuller Road and Stubbs Avenue, adjacent to the Rail Trail reserve. Craig Sutherland from YRC states that technically the land is not a 'lot on title' or a 'traditional' reserve, but is part of the Stubbs Avenue road reserve. Signage is now in place on the Stubbs Avenue frontage.

The reserve was once the southeast corner of Lot 30C of 150 acres, described in 1876 as fair grazing quality and timbered with messmates and peppermints. The lot was selected in 1878 by a wine shop owner named James Slater. He complained that it was unfit for cultivation and divided by an 'altogether impassable gully'. David Mitchell took over the selection from Slater's widow in 1883.*

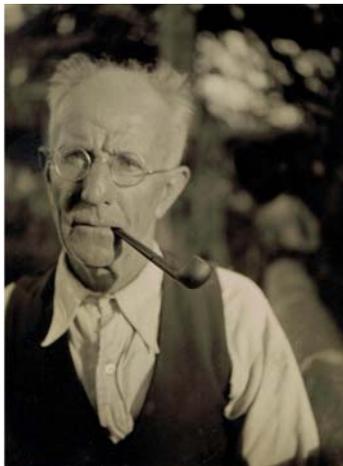
Fuller Road (formerly Mitchell Road) may have followed an early branch of Mitchell's timber tramway. His timber cutters were probably at work on the block in the 1890s to early 1900s. Slater's 'impassable gully' contains a lovely stand of manna gums.

* Janice Newton, *The First Selectors of Mt Evelyn*.

The Hockings in Mount Evelyn

The Hocking family originated in Cornwall. Mary Hocking (née Davey) had a house in Silvan Road Mount Evelyn after her husband Joseph's death. Their first son, Joseph Hocking, had a house across the road. From his Probate records: Crown Allotment 142, three roomed weatherboard house, Silvan Road, land 50/61 ft by 253/300 ft. Mary died in Mt Evelyn in 1921 and son Joseph in 1933.

William Hocking (Grandpa) lived at 96 Silvan Road. Ted Watkins and family lived at 98. 100 Silvan Road was built for Mary Hocking by her sons William & Jack. May Buchanan and family lived there originally, looking after Mary. Later the Greens lived there too. Phillis Thurrowgood is still living in the original Thurrowgood house at 102 Silvan Road. She thinks Jack (John) Hocking may have built it.



Jack lived where Oasis is now. I believe these were 5 acre properties and Grandpa's was 10 acres.

On Grandpa's property was a three room weatherboard house and a log cabin. The log cabin was originally built by

Leonard Hore (Mary Hannah Hocking's brother) as a holiday house for himself and his wife. Leonard and his wife died before I was born. The log cabin was where Grandpa lived. The old house, where visitors stayed, is still standing. A new house has been built where the football field was.



William Hocking & Mary Hannah Hore, 1904.



The Watkins family outside May & Bill's house at Mount Evelyn: Bill Buchanan, Ted Watkins, May Buchanan (formerly Mrs Watkins), Mary Thurrowgood (née Watkins, sister of Ted), John Hocking (brother of May). Photo Norman Hocking. Left, William Hocking at Mount Evelyn.

What I remember most about Grandpa was him chopping wood, smoking a pipe, and us all sitting on the dirt floor of his log cabin in front of the fire, making patterns with the lighted gum leaves. I was just amazed at how good he was at chopping wood, as he was blind. I also wondered if the Hockings had bought the land in Mount Evelyn for the wood to sell in their business in South Melbourne.

On the other side of Grandpa was the English property that John Hocking bought. John and Lizzie were living there during the period we visited, about 1936-1945. When Grandpa had a stroke he went to live with Aunty Jean (Naphine) in Lilydale.

From Jeannette Hellstron née Hocking

Jean Edwards sent a newspaper clipping of Herbert and Mary Thurrowgood on their Golden Wedding (*Lilydale & Yarra Valley Express* 18/3/1986). Mary is the young woman in the photo above.

'We were married in 1936 during the Depression and things were very hard. We had to battle because we were poor like most people, but we still got through', Herb said.

Mihintale and Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka

On the first day of our Sri Lankan trip we explored Mihintale. While NOT a World Heritage site, Mihintale had the most impact on me of all the ancient sites we saw in Sri Lanka. Perhaps it was because it was the first, or perhaps because we had it largely to ourselves.

We saw our first stupa, Kantaka Cetiya, dating from the first century BC. Stupas* are bell-shaped mounds built to protect religious relics or other important objects, which are placed in small compartments and sealed as the stupa is built over them. Kantaka Cetiya still baffles historians and theologians in its unusual construction and decoration. Later we saw a small ruined stupa at Anuradhapura and the interior was open to view.

From Kantaka Cetiya we walked on to Mihintale, believed by Sri Lankans to be the place their king was converted to Buddhism. Interestingly, the reason given for the conversion was the same I was given to explain why Bali remained Hindu in the face of Buddhism and Islam. The preferred religion was judged to have superior education, technology and knowledge, and the king wanted that superiority for his people.

At the foot of the mountain are the ruins of a hospital and the remains of its medicinal garden. Between the hospital and the steps leading to the peak are the ruins of a large monastery.



Above, monastery ruins, Anuradhapura.

Next day we began our bicycle tour of the ruins of ancient Anuradhapura at a sacred Bo-Tree. This tree is believed to have been planted in 245 BC from a cutting of the original tree in Bodhgaya under which the Buddha gained enlightenment. It is protected by descendants of the original tenders of the cutting, who are dressed in white to make their role clear to visitors.

Anuradhapura is one of Sri Lanka's eight UNESCO World Heritage sites. According to legend the Sinhalese are descendants of the exiled Prince Vijaya, who arrived in 543 BC. Anuradhapura is believed to have been their capital from their arrival from Bengal in East India until the beginning of the 11th century AD and has been continuously inhabited down to the present. The ancient city, considered sacred to the Buddhist world, is today surrounded by monasteries covering an area of over 40 square kilometres.

The layout of Anuradhapura is described in the *Mahavamsa* (Great Chronicle), an historical poem of the Kings of Sri Lanka, beginning with the coming of King Vijaya.

Religion, legend and history as we know it are intertwined in a way hard for a visitor to decipher. The *Mahavamsa* also recounts the early history of religion in Sri Lanka, beginning with the time of Siddhartha Gautama the Buddha, and records the good deeds of the kings who were patrons of the Mahavihara temple in Anuradhapura.

The *Mahavamsa* describes how King Pandukabhaya made Anuradhapura his capital in the 4th century BC. The ruins, which comprise stupas, monastic buildings and water storage and bathing pools called 'tanks', support this account.

* The Sinhalese word is *dagoba* but our guides never used it. **Text and photos Paula Herlihy**



Below, Kantaka Cetiya stupa; above, interior of a ruined stupa at Anuradhapura.

History Awards Ceremony

Kevin and Karen attended the Victorian Community History Awards Ceremony at Deakin Edge, Federation Square, on 21 October.

Professor Geoffrey Blainey gave a superb speech, taking as his starting point the venue with its view of the Yarra. Speaking without notes, he segued into a description of significant moments in Victoria's history as seen by an imaginary observer – starting with a boat trip down the Yarra when it joined the Tamar and Tasmania was still linked to Victoria.

Yarra Ranges was well represented with entries from Lilydale, Healesville, Mooroolbark and Mt Evelyn groups; also *Living with Fire: People, Nature and History in Steels Creek*, and Nick Anchen's book *The Narrow Gauge*.

Congratulations to Lilydale & District Historical Society, who received a Commendation for their online 'Faces, Places and Events Galleries': <http://lilydalehistorical.com.au/galleries.htm> The overall winner was *Victoria's Iron Lacework, the Founders* by Robin A. Vowels.

Joy Carrick designed both *Celebrating Mooroolbark* and our entry *The Happy Hermits*. Joan Vanderhorn, who set up our History Tools blog, entered her Clyde website.

Old Westhill stables?

Tracing back your Hereford Road home to Miss Kemp is amazing. It has certainly encouraged me to try and make a start on my place [in Johns Crescent].

My termite inspection company suggests the old concrete slabs underneath are the sort of slabs that were usually used for stables. It is a possibility they could have been part of Westhill. My thinking is, 'but why would you go to the trouble of building a log retaining wall?' but I suppose if you wanted to get below the ridgeline of the saddle you would.

Robyn Taylor

History Group on Facebook

Thanks to Paula for setting up an interesting and informative Facebook page for the History Group.

The address is: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mt-Evelyn-History-Group-Inc/564647756923757>

The url: <http://on.fb.me/H6TnqJ> will also take you there. Please feel free to post!

Online resources

Glen Turnbull wrote in a recent AOEHS newsletter that Melbourne Grammar School, where he has been Archivist since 2009, has agreed to put its Archives Database of around 5,000 scanned photographs on the Internet. The database is searchable at: http://dbtw.mgs.vic.edu.au/dbtw-wpd/textbase/Lodge_Archives.htm

Some of the photographs date back to the 1870s. There should not be any copyright issues. The photos were scanned at 300dpi, so would reproduce well. Glen prepared the database using Inmagic DB TextWorks software and placed this data on the Internet using Inmagic DB Text WebPublisher. Many historical societies are using similar methods.

The Age and the *Sydney Morning Herald* can be searched online through the Google Search Service:

http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=MDQ-9Oe3GGUC&dat=19810211&b_mode=2&hl=en

Another interesting resource is the *Australian Dictionary of Dates and Men of the Time*, 1879 <http://ncb.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/documents/AUSTRALIAN-DICTIONARY-OF-DATES-AND-MEN-OF-THE-TIME.pdf> (very large file).

From Kev's rain gauge

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

Mt Ev	McK	Melb	Melb Av
81.1mm	111.75mm	48.2mm	66.4mm

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

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