

# Things Past

Newsletter 72

February 2014

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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## Dates for your diary

Unveiling of plaque to 1914 Militia Camp 'mock battle', Thursday 13 February 2014, 11.00am Maroondah Highway Coldstream (opposite Boundary Rd). For more details see Facebook page 'Lilydale Militia Camp 1914'.

History Group meeting Monday 17 February, 7.30pm Hardy House.

'Some Notable Artists & Writers in the mid-Yarra Valley, 1840-1965' talk by Barry Watts, Saturday 15 March, 1.30pm at Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road Mt Evelyn.

Coranderrk Festival 15 March: [www.coranderrk.com](http://www.coranderrk.com)

## Mt Evelyn in 1983



Thanks to Geoff and Ann Welsh for this series of Polaroid photos of Mt Evelyn township, taken in November 1983. Geoff was working for the Shire of Lilydale at the time but doesn't remember the reason for taking the photos.

Mt Evelyn looks strangely deserted. There are a few cars on the roads but hardly a living soul in sight. It's like the final scene of *On the Beach*.

Top row from left: the milk bar in Birmingham Road with the old Post Office next door; the top of Wray Crescent; Flame Tree and supermarket on the Bendigo Bank site. Bottom row: the Op Shop, since demolished, on the Wray Crescent/ Station Street corner; Bowen's timber yard from the station car park; the top of Wray Crescent looking towards the Station House.

## Women's Suffrage Petition – tracing signatories

As mentioned in *Things Past* 71, there were three Clegg signatories on the Women's Suffrage Petition of 1891: 'Agnes A. Clegg, Sth Wandin, Lilydale', 'M. Clegg, South Wandon' and 'Mrs Clegg, South Wandon'.

The first is easy to identify: **Agnes Anderson Clegg** (Mrs Enoch Clegg, née Martin). Agnes was born in Melbourne in 1851, daughter of migrants John Martin and Janet Barr from Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland. She married Enoch Clegg in 1875. Agnes and Enoch had six children, the first five born in Fitzroy. Enoch took up a 320 acre selection in South Wandin on the south side of Queens Road that included the site of Silvan Primary School. A daughter, Olive Isabel, died at age 6 and another son was born. Agnes would have been 40 when she signed the Suffrage Petition. In the late 1890s Agnes and Enoch moved to Fremantle, where they opened a furniture store. They returned to spend their later years in Victoria. Agnes died in Hawthorn on 26 May 1933, aged 82.

There are three possibilities for 'M. Clegg'.

**Mary Elizabeth** (Mrs Paul Clegg, née Papworth), born 1851 in England. Mary signed with a cross, 'her mark', as executrix of her husband's will in 1890. On another document she signed her name in a shaky hand, quite different from the signature of 'M. Clegg' on the petition. The Court Commissioner stated that Mary was 'suffering from an affection of the eyes' and unable to read the affidavit but appeared to understand when it was read to her. Her late husband Paul's occupation was given as 'Signwriter' and his place of residence as 'Seville near Lilydale'. Mary inherited his estate, valued at over £1,200. It included Lot 65 of one acre at Seville with 'four roomed weatherboard dwelling house'. Mary's handwriting and her address, in Seville not South Wandin, rule her out as 'M. Clegg' on the petition. Mary died on 8 February 1894, aged 43.

**Martha** (Mrs Hugh Clegg, née Gordon). Martha was unlikely to be the petition signatory,

as she and her husband are not listed in the Shire of Lilydale Rate Books in the 1890s. We have no evidence that this branch of the Clegg family resided in the Shire of Lilydale. Our only information about them is that they had a son, George Gordon Clegg (1906-1970).

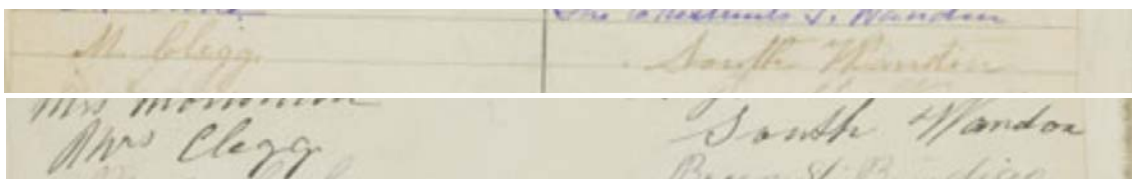
**Margaret** (Mrs Jacob Clegg, née Bartlett), born 29 July 1863 in Koroit, daughter of Warrnambool pioneers Josiah Bartlett and Jane McManus. Margaret and Jacob Clegg had 8 children. Their birthplaces on the BD&M Index show that the family was living in South Wandin in the early 1890s. Jacob died in 1895. Margaret married neighbour John McKillop, a childless widower, on 30 April 1902. Margaret and John had one son. In 1905-6 the family moved to Western Australia with Margaret's children from the Clegg marriage. John McKillop died in 1912. Margaret married shipmaster John Barber in 1918. They lived in East Fremantle, in a house called 'Olinda'. Margaret died 2 June 1928 aged 65 and was buried in the Presbyterian section of Fremantle Cemetery. Margaret is the most likely match for 'M. Clegg'. The signatures of 'M. Clegg' and 'Mrs Clegg', both of 'South Wandon', appear to be in the same hand. Margaret (if it was she) signed the Suffrage Petition twice. She was then aged 28.

Information about the signatories on the Women's Suffrage Petition can be added via the Public Records Office Victoria wiki page: [http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/PROV\\_Wiki\\_-\\_Home](http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/PROV_Wiki_-_Home)

**Karen Phillips**

### Sources:

Parliament of Victoria, <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/the-history-of-parliament/womens-suffrage-petition/>  
Index of BD&M, Victoria & WA; Cemetery records; Lilydale Rate Books; Will and Probate documents VPRS 28/PO, unit 542; VPRS 28/P2, unit 295; VPRS 759/P2, unit 167, PROV.  
Barber family history <http://www.barber.org.au/index.htm>  
See also *Things Past* 29, 30, 34, 37 & 70 and LDHS website: [http://www.lilydalehistorical.com.au/suffrage\\_Lilydale.htm](http://www.lilydalehistorical.com.au/suffrage_Lilydale.htm)



Above, the signatures of 'M. Clegg' on p.679 and 'Mrs Clegg' on p.703 of the Women's Suffrage Petition appear to be in the same hand. Images reproduced with the permission of the Victorian Parliamentary Library.

# Francis Birtles, a Mt Evelyn adventurer

Researching Margaret Clegg née Bartlett (p.2) led to her nephew, Francis Birtles (1881-1941). Birtles was a remarkable sportsman, pioneering driver, outback adventurer, writer and film maker, who grew up in the part of South Wandin that is now Mt Evelyn.

Francis Edwin Birtles was born on 7 November 1881 at Fitzroy, son of bootmaker David Birtles and Sarah Jane (Bartlett). He grew up on his father's small selection on Monbulk Road and attended South Wandin State School.

After serving in the Merchant Navy and in South Africa, Birtles returned to Australia. Having disembarked at Fremantle, he cycled to Melbourne in 1905. In 1907-8 he cycled to Sydney, Brisbane, Normanton, Darwin, Alice Springs, Adelaide and back to Sydney. By 1912 he had ridden around Australia twice and had crossed the continent seven times.

Turning from cycling to motoring, Birtles completed the first west-to-east crossing of Australia in 1912. In his Bean car 'The Sundowner', he set records for Melbourne to Darwin and Darwin to Sydney. By 1927 he had crossed the continent more than seventy times. He was the first person to drive from London to Melbourne, arriving in July 1928. His travelling time of nine months was not surpassed until 1955.



Above, Francis Birtles in the Oldsmobile 30 used for the Darwin to Adelaide overland speed record trip, 1924. National Library of Australia, <http://nla.gov.au/nla-pic-vn3300952>



Above, Francis Birtles on his bicycle. National Library of Australia, <http://nla.gov.au/nla-pic-vn3303106>

Birtles wrote a number of books on his adventures: *Lonely Lands: Through the Heart of Australia*, 1909; *3,500 miles across Australia in a Ford car*, 1913; *Darwin to Adelaide: Francis Birtles' history making journey*, 1924 and *Battle Fronts of the Outback*, 1935.

He also made films: *Across Australia with Francis Birtles*, 1912; *Into Australia's Unknown*, 1914; *Across Australia in the Track of Burke and Wills*, 1915; *Through Australian Wilds*, 1919 and *Coorab in the Island of Ghosts*, 1929. Birtles' films included his encounters with Aboriginal people. Francis Birtles died at Croydon NSW on 1 July 1941.

## Sources

Australian Dictionary of Biography:

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/birtles-francis-edwin-5244>

Use the citations in the photo captions to browse the Francis Birtles Motor Car Tour Collection, National Library of Australia website.

Birtles' famous car 'The Sundowner' is in the National Museum of Australia collection:

[http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/highlights/sundowner\\_bean\\_car](http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/highlights/sundowner_bean_car) and

<http://www.nma.gov.au/collections-search/display?irn=37917>

There is a short film segment on Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrA9P7SsZYQ>

## William Parr in the news

Last month we traced the life of Jane Parr using genealogical sources. This time we research her husband, William Parr, through newspaper reports. William held selections on Bayswater Road Croydon, Edinburgh Road Lilydale, on the Monbulk/ Hunter Road corner Mt Evelyn and in the Olinda Creek settlement.

**PARR'S RECREATION HALL,**  
Opposite the Olinda Hotel and near the Railway Station,  
**LILYDALE.**  
THIS noble room, the largest in Lilydale, is now available for  
Concerts, Balls, Dramatic Entertainments, &c.  
Terms moderate, apply to the owner—  
— PARR, LILYDALE.

Advertisement for Parr's Recreation Hall, *Evelyn Observer*, various dates 1886-7. Sale or Let notice 10/9/1886. 'Trespass', below, *Lilydale Express* 1/9/1886. The case was dismissed without costs. 'Expensive Courtship', *Lilydale Express*, 6/10/1886. Dawe was fined £5 or one month's imprisonment.

A quadrille was a square dance for four couples.

**Lilydale,**  
Near the Railway Station.  
**For Sale or to Let,**  
THOSE substantial business premises in the very heart of the township, opposite the Olinda Hotel and adjoining the Recreation Hall, at present used as a restaurant and boarding house. The building contains 9 rooms, is faithfully built, and quite new.  
A rare opportunity for a good business man.  
All particulars from the owner on the premises.  
W. PARR.

**TRESPASS.**—William Parr sued Louis C. Dawe, a carpenter, for trespassing on his premises on the 18th August. Mr. C. Scheele appeared for the defence. William Parr stated that he was the proprietor of the Recreation-hall, Lilydale; knew the defendant, and had seen him on his property. Saw him in the Recreation-hall on the 18th inst.: he ordered him off and shoved him out. On the date mentioned Mrs. Burras was engaged cleaning out the hall, preparatory to a ball that was to be held on that evening. He was often on the premises, and evidently came to see his (plaintiff's) daughter. He did not know if he had ordered him off before. The hall was let for balls and theatrical performances. Mr. Scheele: Are you aware that Mr. Dawe was president of the Imperial Quadrille Club? Plaintiff: I believe so; I have been told he was a member of the committee, or something like that. Mr. Scheele: Did you call him a crawler? Plaintiff: I did; he's a-been crawling around my place for some time. Mr. Scheele: Did you call him a villain and sneak? Plaintiff: I might 'have, 'for he's always a-sneaking around my place.

### SERIOUS GUN ACCIDENT.

#### TWO MEN INJURED.

Melbourne, April 5.

A serious gun accident happened at Lilydale last evening by which William Parr, an old resident of the district, and his son Charles received serious injuries. They were standing about 70 yards from a young man named James Thorogood in a shooting party, when a rabbit ran past. Thorogood wheeled round and fired, the shot entering the chests and stomachs of the two Parrs. One of the pellets entered the eye of the older man, while others penetrated the lungs and bowels. He is in a critical condition. The younger man was not so seriously injured.

**EXPENSIVE COURTSHIP.**—William Parr again summoned Louis C. Dawe, for wilfully trespassing on his premises, and neglecting to leave the place when ordered to do so. Mr. Daly appeared for the defendant. The plaintiff:—Well, yer worships, I caught this gentleman in my front room, and I told him to clear out, but he would not do so. It was on the 6th September, about 10 o'clock in the morning. He was a-sitting down on my sofa with my daughter, and they were both a-bellowing, or you could call it crying. I told him to clear out of my room, and about two minutes after I told him, he did so, but returned with Mr. McWilliams. I asked him on the Sunday previous to marry the gal, but he said he couldn't. I have since found out that he's a married man, and has a wife and six children living in Adelaide. When he returned with Mr. McWilliams, he said he wanted about five minutes with my daughter in my parlor. Mr. Daly: Did you invite Dawe to visit your place on Sunday? Plaintiff: I did, but he came on Monday. Thomas Henry Parr, son of the last witness, corroborated the evidence of his father, and stated that Dawe wanted to take his sister to Melbourne. Senior-constable McWilliams stated that on the morning of the 6th September he saw the defendant sitting close to Parr's daughter, in the front room, and heard the plaintiff order him out. "The conduct of the defendant had been disgraceful, and for nearly a whole day they were wandering about the paddocks together, the girl being without a hat." The following message was sent to Mr. Gill, secretary rifle club, Gawler: "Is L. C. Dawe's wife living?" to which a reply had been received that she was.

### DIED WHILE CHOPPING WOOD.

LILYDALE, Monday. — William Parr, sen., an old and respected resident of Lilydale, died suddenly on Monday afternoon while engaged in chopping wood in Mitchell's paddock. He had almost finished cutting up a large tree when he fell back and died. Senior-constable Haydon proceeded to the place, and made the necessary inquiries. The deceased was a native of Cambridge, England, and has been a colonist for over 35 years. He always appeared to enjoy splendid health, although about ten years ago, when out rabbit shooting with some friends, he was accidentally shot, the result being that he lost an eye. A magisterial inquiry will be held to-morrow.

Reports from the *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 6/4/1896, above left, and *The Argus*, 24/1/1905, above right. William, who died at age 73, had settled in the Shire of Lilydale in the mid-1870s. He came out to Sydney with his family on the ship *Kate* in 1850. The Parrs were farm labourers from Fordham, Cambridgeshire. William evidently kept his regional accent.

## Environmentalists honoured

Congratulations to History Group members David and Jean Edwards, who received the Yarra Ranges Council's Environmental Achiever of the Year Award at an Australia Day ceremony in Yarra Glen.

From 1979, when they were first alerted that the Mt Evelyn Aqueduct land could be sold off, Jean and David have worked tirelessly to create and care for the Mt Evelyn Aqueduct linear park. Jean has been active leading walks and creating the Aqueduct brochures. David is the backbone of the working bees, having qualified to use herbicides in weed eradication. Both are long-time members of MEEPPA; Jean was Secretary in the early 1980s. Jean co-authored *The Original Garden* and the history of MEPS, and was MEPS Council President 1983-1985. The Edwards' contribution to Morrison House included construction of the mud brick workshop, supervised by David.

Jean was Environmental Representative on the Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Authority. She is a member of the Yarra Ranges Environmental Advisory Committee and a representative on the Community Reference Group for Cave Hill.

The Edwards have an adventurous side. Cr Cox recalled coming across them while holidaying in the Whitsundays. They had paddled to the island in a fold-up canoe.

David and Jean were especially pleased to be nominated together for the award. They paid tribute to the friends they had worked with over the years. Jean suggested that the best way to hand on knowledge of our environment may be as an oral tradition, the way the Wurundjeri people did.

*From Paula Herlihy*



**A happy occasion: Jean and David receive their Environmental Achiever Awards from Crs Maria McCarthy and Len Cox.**

## Monash's Militia Camp, 1914

A plaque commemorating the 1914 Militia Camp on the site of Lilydale Lake was unveiled at a ceremony on 9 February. The camp of 3000 citizen militiamen was commanded by Colonel (later General Sir John) Monash and was a significant event in his pre-war career. British General Sir Ian Hamilton visited the camp and recognised Monash's leadership qualities. He recommended to the Defence Department: *if war broke out, Colonel Monash would be a man who would do them well.* Prescient words! Monash's great grandson, Michael Bennett, unveiled the plaque and launched Anthony McAleer's book *Monash's Militia Camp*. A storyboard was unveiled by Brigadier (retired) Michael Phelps AM and Captain Bell, Adjutant 5th/ 6th Royal Victorian Regiment. The event was enhanced by the pipes and drums of the 5th/ 6th RVR, a Guard of Honour of Air Cadets and a volley salute by members of the Australian Great War Association.

Thanks to Anthony, Lilydale Rotary and Mt Evelyn RSL for a great community event. Mt Evelyn's Joy Carrick designed the book and storyboard.



**Above, Michael Bennett, great grandson of Sir John Monash, unveils the commemorative plaque. Photo Kevin Phillips. Below, view of the 1914 Militia Camp, looking towards Mt Evelyn. Photo courtesy Anthony McAleer. Both photos show the same view, exactly 100 years apart.**



## World War I centenary

Some interesting websites on WWI centenary commemorations from Alan Bennett, ERL.

### Military History and Heritage Victoria:

[www.mhhv.org.au](http://www.mhhv.org.au) **Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/MilitaryHistoryHeritageVictoria?ref=hl>

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/vic/GallipoliOaksProject>

### Gallipoli Oaks Project:

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/vic/GallipoliOaksProject>

### Indigenous servicemen:

<http://www.theguardian.com/culture/australia-culture-blog/2014/jan/14/black-diggers-challenging-anzac-myths>

### Australian Great War Association:

[http://www.agwa.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=11](http://www.agwa.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=11)

### Centenary News First World War:

[www.centenarynews.com](http://www.centenarynews.com)

### Imperial War Museum First World War

### Aerial Photographs Collection:

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/listing/object-205014033>

## Correction

In Ian James' article in *Things Past* 70, p.4, '225mm' should read '25mm'. The error was a typo on my part. **Ed.**

## People in tramway photo

We included this photo of the Cave Hill tramway in *Things Past* 67. Paula recently acquired Mary Howden's 'Yarra Grange Between the Wars'. Yarra Grange is a property between Coldstream and Healesville. The opening states that 'Arthur Phillips bought Yarra Grange in 1915'. The booklet is based on memories of his nephew Gerald Phillips speaking to Mary Howden, and includes the photo with caption below.



'Charlie Mitchell (in shirt sleeves) at the Mt Evelyn timber tramway with a group of friends who enjoyed putting on plays and entertaining their friends in the valley. Arthur Phillips is thought to be sitting down, wearing a cap.'

## 'House History Victoria'

Researcher Mark Grealy from Archival Access Victoria has started up a website, 'House History Victoria', to focus on title records and what they can reveal about the history of a property. There is a blog on the website, which Mark will update weekly with details of a specific property somewhere in Victoria. Mark has put up three properties so far at: <http://www.househistoryvictoria.com/blog>

## From Kev's rain gauge



'I'm a little devil!' Above and inset, Two-spined Spider *Poecilopachys australasia* (female), on lime leaf, Three Bridges, January 2011. This beautiful spider belongs to the Orb Weaver family (*Araneidae*). Photos Kevin Phillips.

Rainfall for January 2014 for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, Melbourne and Melbourne average.\*

Mt Ev	McK	Melb	Melb Av
33.8mm	32.0mm	13.2mm	47.4mm

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

**Kevin Phillips**

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<http://www.mt-evelyn.net/thingspast>

**Mt Evelyn History Tools Blog:**  
<http://mtevelynhistorytools.blogspot.com.au/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mt-Evelyn-History-Group-Inc/564647756923757>

