

Things Past

Newsletter 74

April 2014

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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Dates for your diary

Crank Up and Wood Chop 5-6 April, 10am-4pm, Upper Yarra Museum, Yarra Junction.

History Group meeting Monday 21 April (Easter Monday), 7.30pm Hardy House.

2014 ANZAC DAY Dawn Service Friday 25 April, 6.00am Mt Evelyn War Memorial Park Cnr Wray Cres & Birmingham Rd.

Mick Woiwod will speak on his book *Paradise Lost, on and around the great Moorool* Saturday 17 May, 1.30pm Hardy House.

Pine Brae in the 1940s

Elliott Roper recalls his boyhood stay at Pine Brae (Westhill).

Visiting from England last year, I went to Mt Evelyn library looking for old photos or stories about a house I lived in briefly as a child (1944-1946). The house was 'Pine Brae' at the top of the zig zag. I found a few pages of photos in your book *Tracks to Trails*.

Since I was but a five year old kid, I don't have much in the way of useful historical data on Pine Brae. My parents sublet a few rooms from the owners (as I thought them) living in the rest of the place, Mrs Dorothea Rhind and her husband, whose name I think was Eric. *Tracks to Trails* lists a Mr Wardrop as the owner during that period. I have a nagging recollection of



Susan and Joanna Mandell with Elliott's sister Margaret between them, Kerry Godfrey at the front, c. 1950; possibly on the Pine Brae drive.

that name, but I think that Wardrop was a cloth wholesaler in Melbourne. Dad had a tailor's shop in Box Hill. It is possible that the Wardrop Dad knew introduced us to the Rhinds as prospective tenants. Thinking back, our arrangements with the Rhinds might have involved providing some help. It never felt like that, but it makes sense. We were pretty broke most of the time I was a kid. We were the only tenants other than the Rhinds.

There are a few names I remember from that time. The people in the gate cottage of Pine Brae were Philippa Godfrey, her son Kerry, who was my age, and two teenage daughters from a previous marriage, Joanna and Susan Mandell. Mr Godfrey was there, but I can't remember his first name. Mrs Rhind had a grown-up son called Walter Williams. I'd guess he was about 40 then. I remembered him for his high powered motorbikes. He'd sometimes give me a dink to school on his Vincent HRD



Kerry Godfrey on the edge of the spillway.

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Memories of the Queen's train

Maria McCarthy's photo of the Queen's train stirred memories for at least one reader.

A great picture – I was a little tacker standing on the cutting when the Queen went past. My sister Marian & I both waved to her when she passed in the train. My other sister is Jane but she wasn't born at that time (10 years younger brother Ross passed a couple of years ago). We used to live in Fernhill road when the Queen visited.

My family called me Nick Gordon back then because I used to nick off all the time & everyone seemed to pick up on it. Most people in the area would have only known me as Nick. Harold Morrison was my godfather & I was named Norm after his brother.

My father was Doug Gordon, who was the big brother of Cam Gordon & Marian Adair.

Keep up the great work with Things Past – love it.

Norm Gordon

It was Norm's father Doug who sailed home in the 'patched up ship' during WWII (TP 50) **Ed.**

Yarra Valley artists and writers

Barry Watts presented a fascinating talk on the artists and writers of the central Yarra Valley. Beginning with some of the earliest artists to depict the valley, Robert Hoddle and Charles Joseph Latrobe, he went through to the mid-20th Century with the writers C.J. Dennis and Martin Boyd.

One of the most interesting aspects of the presentation was to see the same scenes, for example the Yarra River, Yarra Glen and Mt Riddell, depicted by artists of different periods. Another was the way Barry related the works of art to the old homesteads, the families who lived in them and their positions on maps.

Many thanks to Barry for an enjoyable talk.

The Manor House restoration

'The Manor House', the lovely old house on Maroondah Highway near the Rail Trail, was mentioned in the discussion following Barry's talk. Janet Wilson told us that the house had beautiful friezes of birds in some of the rooms. Janet thinks they were almost certainly the work of local artist Victor 'Birdy' de Pury. The de Pury family were close friends of the Jansons, who owned the house in the early 20th century.



Above, the Manor House , 2010 (TP 29 & 30). Below, the house today. Photos Kevin Phillips.



Victor de Pury was well known for these sorts of friezes and murals; there is another at Yeringburg. His most famous painting was the one of Aboriginal leader Barak that is now in the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum. Barak in turn depicted his friend Victor.

The Manor House has recently changed hands and is undergoing restoration. The slate roof has been replaced with corrugated iron and the walls stripped back to the brickwork. This makes the house harder to see from the road – we thought at first it had been demolished.

Researching your house

Our new book *Researching Your House in Mt Evelyn* is now available.

The first part of the book contains suggestions specific to Mt Evelyn to help you research the history of your home. House history includes three elements: the history of the land, its owners and the house itself. In the second part, Karen Phillips puts the theory into practice, researching her own home as an example.

The book is priced at \$8.



To Angkor and the beginning of the universe

This year we achieved a dream visiting Angkor Wat and other temple precincts in Siem Reap Province, Cambodia.

A smiling middle aged man, who introduces himself as Tee, meets us at Siem Reap. He ushers us to a basic style Camry, turning on the air conditioner as we step into the vehicle. 39° with rainy season humidity is a bit of a shock after Melbourne's June!

As we speed towards town Tee offers to be our driver for the next three days. He wants \$90US. We keep Tee on for three happy days and part gratefully with \$90. He doesn't guide us but he chooses the sites to visit in a coherent order.

Importantly we learn much about Tee and how life is conducted in Cambodia. Tee joined the army at 18, in the 1980s. Currently he is stationed on the Thai border doing paperwork most of the day. It's four hours from home. With four weeks on and one week off he commutes monthly on an ageing motorbike that copes badly with monsoonal downpours. He'd like to retire but his boss has decreed that he must work for another 5 years.

One of the English words most in use in Cambodia seems to be 'corruption'. Tee uses 'corruption' a great deal. He is married with three children, two of whom are close to graduation from school. He needs our \$90 to bribe the authorities to give his daughter entry to Teachers College.

We meet Tee at 10am and he whisks us off to the temple gates where we are photographed, part with \$60 for a three day pass and are then driven to Angkor Thom. Succulent green trees and jungle vegetation line the red earth roads, stringy monkeys chatter and dive and roadside market stalls offer piles of brightly coloured clothes, sunhats and cool drinks. A group of soporific grey elephants swing their trunks awaiting tourists seeking a thrill.

Cambodia was once the greatest empire in southern Asia, when fractured kingdoms

throughout the country merged. Early records from China suggest that small Cambodian states stretched across to the coast of Vietnam in the 1st century. Trade with India introduced religion and culture; Hindu deities Shiva and Vishnu were worshipped and Buddhism also played a part in spiritual belief.

By the 6th century, independent competing agrarian communities clustered along the shores of Tonle Sap Lake. Java ruled the southern lands of Cambodia. In 802 Jayavarman II proclaimed independence from Java. Setting himself up as God King of the Angkor Empire, he vanquished dissenting rulers and created a unified state. Succeeding rulers waxed and waned until 1112 when Suryavarman II took over the kingdom. He initiated construction of Angkor Wat, designed as his funerary temple.



The city of Angkor Thom was constructed during Jayavarman VII's rein from 1181-1219. As a devout Buddhist, he promoted Buddhism as the national religion. This great empire crumbled in following centuries with power grabs, bloodshed and diverse ideologies, dovetailing into the horrific slaughter of the 20th century.

Parking at Bayon within the Angkor Thom complex, Tee suggests that he should meet us at the west gate. Vast grey walls tumble round the perimeter of successive turrets, walkways, passages, boulders and huge sculptured effigies. We consult the map and set off gingerly Gradually we learn how to avoid tripping over the uneven boulders, focusing on the timeless views from window openings and sudden quiet discoveries of small stone buddas placed in crevices and corners. Tumbled walls mask the amazing symmetry of the site but we become aware of the unique walkways and work our way from east to west, spotting the welcoming Toyota parked under some trees.



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Having cooled us down, Tee whisks us to Baphuon. We walk out of this site along a ridge which incorporates enormous stone elephant heads. Above, an enormous carved lotus forms a dish for huge candles to illuminate evening festivities. Generations have prayed to the elephants when rain was required.

Preah Khan temple, our final visit for the day, holds its own magic. Preah Khan contains many interconnecting passageways, occasional effigies, low windows and doorways. With less rubble on the ground and no one to knock into, I begin to look up at the roofline. The roof consists of large grey stone boulders, carved into rectangles carefully balanced onto each other to form a weatherproof ceiling. The perfectly laid materials formed a V shape which is solid, safe and has lasted hundreds of years; exquisite dry stone building.

Next morning we head for Angkor Wat via Banteay Kdei. Still in the strangling grip of the jungle, Banteay Kdei gives an idea of what Angkor Wat looked like when it was discovered by Europeans. Vast fig roots, two storeys high, project monstrous trees skywards. In places the enormous weight of vegetation has crushed the building but much of it has remained.

Scaffolding, carefully numbered boulders and basic tools on either side are evidence of the careful and methodical restoration in process. Then on to Angkor Wat; streams of international visitors snake along the huge promenade slicing the moat. Bright market stalls, musicians and politicians spruiking the upcoming election shimmer on the periphery. Two hours glide by as we marvel at the height



of carved turrets and climb up huge steps to tower above the sweating humans below. We find ourselves wandering through dark passageways, suddenly thrust into grottos where sunlight strikes through apertures revealing contemporary Buddas surrounded by candles, incense and orange robes.



Intricate dancing figures carved into the stone project the people who lived here hundreds of years ago; their dress, their customs, their life within this human creation. There is so much commentary on this breathtaking site that you can become overwhelmed and forget to enjoy your own journey. An image from Eleanor Mannikka's book *Angkor Wat: Time Space and Kinship*:

'the visitor to Angkor Wat who walks the causeway to the main entrance and through the courtyards to the final main tower, which once contained a statue of Vishnu, is metaphorically travelling back to the first stage of the creation of the universe'

Our visit to the temples of Angkor Wat was a lifetime experience – unforgettable!

Text and photos Janet Wilson 2013



Col. Hutton of Cooring Yering

Ms Vicki Court corrects the article on Cooring Yering in *Things Past* 73. Colonel William Forbes Hutton, who built Cooring Yering, was her great grandfather. He was no relation to the J.C. Hutton who founded Hutton's ham and bacon business.

Ref: http://www.chermsidedistrict.org.au/chermsidedistrict/01_cms/details.asp?ID=214

The incorrect reference came from The Encyclopedia of Melbourne online: <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00855b.htm>

From p.1

or his Norton 500. The Mt Evelyn fire truck lived in a shed near the house. I used to sneak out there and play in it.

My memories of the house included its massive kitchen and huge cast iron stove. It must have been a 10 holer with about four ovens. There was a long wooden table down the middle of the kitchen and wide benches on each side. Mrs Rhind spread huge enamelled steel bowls out there with milk separating for butter (food rationing was in full swing). I got the job of operating the centrifugal cream separator as part of the project of dodging the rationing. They never trusted me with the butter churning though. They had a small herd of dairy cows, I'd guess fewer than six. I have a very clear memory of the taste and smell and glugginess of the cream I centrifuged. I have not been near cream that good again. Thinking about it soaking into some Sanitarium Weetbix has made me hungry and a bit homesick.

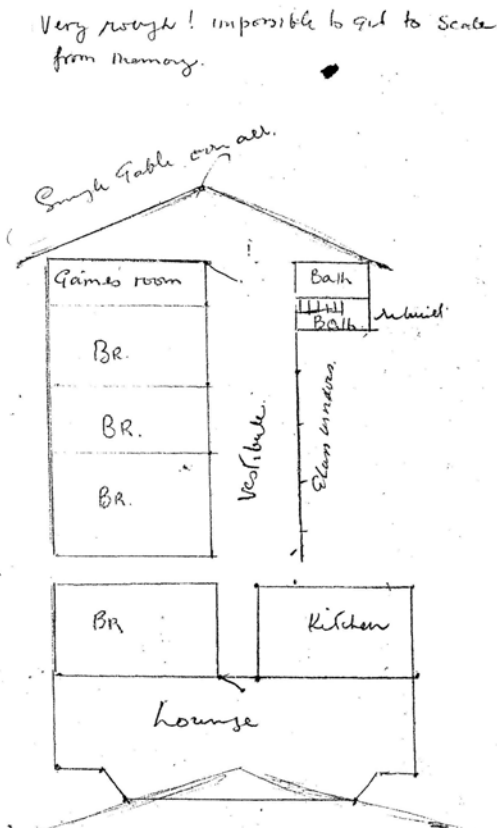
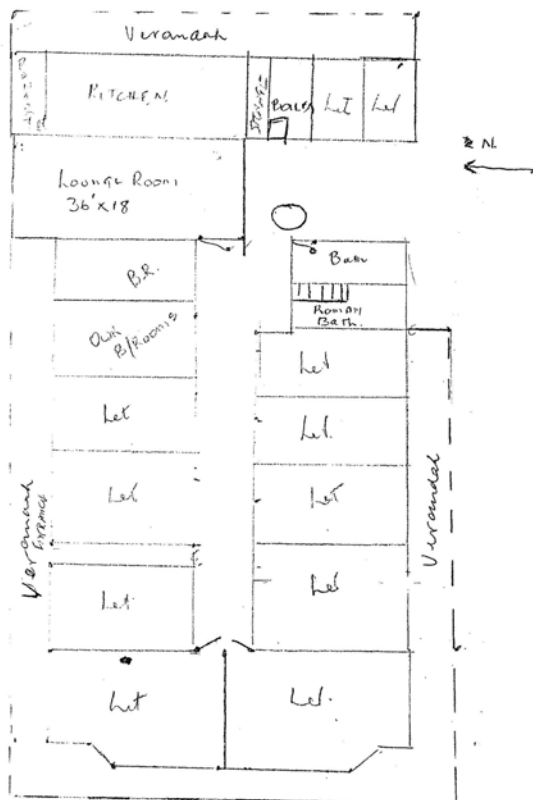
I remember there was a large drawing room / library with a rather comfortable carpet about the size of a tennis court – at least it seemed that big to me. I used to stretch out there with some of their books, teaching myself to read. I am not certain of the location of the lounge. I

remember it as a huge adventure playground, but I'm pretty sure it was not where it is on Jermyn's plan. My guess would have been behind the Rhinds' bedroom suite. I think that their apartment ran across the full width of the house at the aqueduct end and we kids never went in there much, if at all.

The 'before the fire' plan is very different to the way I remember it, but consistent with it being converted to a guest house. I'm pretty sure the lounge by the kitchen was not there. The lounge I remember was where it is on the rebuild plan.

The cooker in the photo of the burnt out kitchen (p.6) is not the one I remember. That was black cast iron. That wing to the right of the kitchen chimney I do remember. It was not all that attached to the house, even before the fire. It fits with my memory of the house being L-shaped, at variance to the Jermyn diagram.

Our bit of the house was around 'our bedrooms' on that plan. We had a bedroom for my parents, a small kitchen/dining room and a bedroom for my sister and me. I think one of our rooms had a window onto the corner where the well was (all boarded over). They were fairly close to the main kitchen, which would be consistent with a servants'



Above, John Jermyn's plan of the house before and after the fire of 1952. The 'before' plan does not quite match Elliott's recollections from the mid-1940s.

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accommodation set-up. So what was marked as 'lounge' on the pre-fire plan might have been part of our bit.

The 'Roman bath' mentioned in your book was a pretty battered affair even then. It was far too big to fill with water, so I remember it as a sunken concrete cuboid with stairs at one end. It was painted with faded and worn green paint. Us kids were sort-of allowed to climb the pine trees at the bottom of the main lawn near the aqueduct. It was a good place for kids. There was a wind powered water pump down there. I don't know if it was nicking water from the aqueduct, but that would have been a sensible thing to do. We used to race down the hill to the spillway in Olinda Creek. We'd swim there and there was a good fishing hole just downstream of it. We never got washed out by the overflow, but did see it once or twice.

I remember the rose garden, which was in need of a lot of attention but rather grand. There was a massive lime tree between it and the house. I remember some large camellias at the bottom of the lawn in front of the pine trees. The view of them from the house must have been from the verandah outside the Rhinds' apartment. They had a red setter



The ruins after the fire, March 1952, photo CFA. The stove is a later model than the cast iron monster remembered by Elliott.

called Barney and we used to romp round the garden with him.

I think my teacher at Mt Evelyn Primary (1st Grade) was Miss Hargreaves. I remember her as a grey haired old sweetie with fair but firm discipline. I remain grateful that she never belted me to write right-handed like most of her profession would have done in those days.

The Rhinds moved to Croydon some time after we left (we moved to the flat over Dad's shop in Box Hill, where I lived till about 1959). We stayed friends with the Rhinds and Godfreys for quite a while afterward. The Godfreys moved to a house on Swansea Road, more or less opposite the aqueduct spillway. I lost contact with them long ago.

We now live just outside Hayfield, in the Peak District National Park, in a farmhouse that would have been built about the same time as Pine Brae. It is about 25Km southeast of Manchester. We are due another visit to Melbourne in May.

Elliott Roper, near Hayfield, England

From Kev's rain gauge

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

Mt Ev	McK	Melb	Melb Av
29.1mm	31.5mm	23.4mm	50.4mm

Rainfall for McKillop, February 2014: 69.5mm.

* Melbourne figures Bureau of Meteorology: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/>

Kevin Phillips

Contact us

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