

# Things Past

Newsletter 80

October 2014

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

PO Box 289 Mt Evelyn VIC 3796 A0051327F



## Dates for your diary

RHSV History Week 19-26 October inclusive.

Yarra Ranges Heritage Network Open Day at Mont De Lancey, Sunday 19 October 10am-3pm. Can you help out volunteering on our stall and display?

History Group Meeting Monday 17 November, 7:30pm Hardy House. Note change of date.

Launch of *Morrison House Changed a Community*, Sunday 7 Dec., 1.30pm Hardy House.

Tour of the Lilydale Athenaeum led by Anthony McAleer, 13 Dec (to be confirmed).

## Mt Evelyn's first church

**This history of the Union Church was found among Dr Bill Hardy's papers.**

1911 the McAllister family came to Mt Evelyn as weekenders. There were no religious services or Sunday School in the area in those days. Miss E. McAllister rose to the occasion and held Sunday School and Services in the one building then available, the Mt Evelyn State School. She could see a great need for a permanent place of worship and with the help of her parents and family began to raise money for such a building.

On 20 April 1920, a large gathering assembled to see the laying of a Foundation Block for the

new church. The building was opened and dedicated on 29 August 1920 as the Mt Evelyn Sunday School Union Church. It served the local community in this way for over 20 years.

In 1921 it was agreed that the Methodist and Baptist churches of Lilydale should each hold a monthly evening service in the church. Over the years the church has also been used by the Dutch Reformed Church.

The property was taken over by the Methodist Church on 16 October 1934, for a purchase price of £250. Permission was given at the Quarterly Meeting for the monthly Baptist service to continue.



Above, Township Fence mural of the opening of the Union Church, 1920. Design by Russell Danby, painted by students of Pembroke Secondary College (now Yarra Hills).

Continued p.2

## From p.1

The first couple married in the Union church were Mr and Mrs E. Watkins. Their daughter Gwenda is still a member of the congregation. My own parents, Mr and Mrs Thurrowgood, were the first to be married in the church in its Methodist days.

The 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church was marked on 17 July 1955 by an 11am service led by Reverend L.S. Saunders, the first Methodist minister of the church, a 3pm service led by Reverend W.J. Alexander an ex-member of the Sunday School, and a 7pm service conducted by the minister of the church at the time, Reverend L. Barnard.

After Church Union in 1978, Mt Evelyn was part of the Lilydale Uniting Church parish, before joining with Croydon and Montrose in 1984. In 1995 Montrose and Mt Evelyn went out on their own.

This building was enlarged three times – in 1927, 1933 and again in the 1980s, when the back room was extended and the toilets and ramp added using materials from the Ringwood Uniting Church.

Groups active in the church over the years have included a Christian Endeavour Group, the Sunday School, Ladies' Guild, Uniting Church Adult Fellowship, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

There have been many faithful members and good leaders here over the years. Two women deserve special mention: Mrs Elizabeth Hocking and Deaconess Norma Anguey. Mrs Hocking was active in the church from 1927, and Deaconess Anguey from her retirement to Mt Evelyn in 1968 until her death last year. They were both tireless, committed and methodical workers in the church and Sunday School, leading and organising with great strength and faithfulness.

The current members of the church are Geoff Knuckey, Ken Knuckey, Dulcie Miles, Herb Pink, Peter and Lorna Richardson, Phyllis Thurrowgood, Ted and Joyce Trainer, Gwenda Watkins and Margaret Wilms.

## Read by Phyllis Thurrowgood (undated).

The final service at Mt Evelyn Uniting Church was held on 20 May 2001. A community campaign to preserve the building for worship or other public use was unsuccessful. The Uniting Church sold the building, which is now a private home.

**Ed.**

## The Sunday School bus

*There was a man called Horry Alexander (from Silvan), who had a bus drawn by a horse, with seats along both sides. He used to drive from Silvan pick up all the children who wanted to go to Sunday School, and take them to the Union Church and then take them home when it was over. No matter what the weather – a very Christian act.*

**Alma Rahilly**

## Corrections

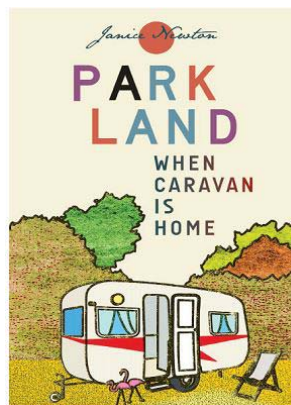
Paula Herlihy apologises for errors or misconceptions in her article on her interviews with Alma Rahilly, published in *Things Past* #79.

The child who was saved from the dam was Alma's sister Joan. The 'lovely Scots lady' was someone other than Mrs Hordern. Mr Gilrock was not a teacher at Mt Evelyn. Alma regrets the description of Italians in the article, as she regards that description as wrong.

Alma did not take up the part scholarship to MLC because she didn't want to be compared to her cousin, who was already there. Paula misheard the word 'fighting' in this context. Alma returned to the Lilydale convent at 16 for one year.

## Voices from the caravan park

Congratulations to Janice Newton, whose book *Park Land: When Caravan is Home*, was launched on 26 September.



'*Park Land* invites us into the world of the caravan park, to hear the voices of residents, to acknowledge their dignity, and to learn about their ingenious ways of responding to their living situations. For some this is a story of survival; for others a

story of choices made in the quest for suitable, affordable homes and for respect.'

*Park Land* is available at Readings Carlton and through [www.scholarly.info/](http://www.scholarly.info/)

## Request for contact

Janice asks: does anyone know how we can contact the daughters of George Newman, formerly of Bailey Road: Kerry, Denise or Lyn, so that we might access photographs to go with an article?

# The Gregarious Flower Farming Marshalls of McKillop Road

## 3. James Watt Marshall (1929–2012)

James (Jimmy), first born son of Jock and Christina Marshall, was interviewed in 1996, when he was still selling flowers outside his York Road home and shop.

James and his younger brother Harry were raised on the farm their father Jock had been allocated through the Closer Settlement Board in 1926, the property bounded by Lilly Avenue and McKillop Road. They were no strangers to horticultural work when still children.

*Before we went to school we used to have to go and pick violets. I swore I'd never grow violets for the rest of my life! It was freezing cold at the time they're out, in the winter time, and we had to go and pick them before school ... and your hands would be frozen.*

*And after school we'd have to go and pick peas or beans or plant stuff. We grew all sorts of things. That was what we did in those days. It was all carted by horse or cart or sledge from out that way to the Mt Evelyn Railway Station and put on the trains or trucks to go down to market. We also worked at the gut factory and we also worked at the Henderson's strawberry processing factory up at Silvan. Harry and I worked there after school of a night time.*

During the war (1939-1945), when Jimmy was ten to fifteen years old, Jock Marshall went to work at the Maribyrnong Munitions factory. 'I had to run the farm on my own. I'd left school and run the farm.' After the war, when his father returned home, 'Dad and I couldn't hit it off together. He came home with old ideas and I had the young new ideas and he didn't believe in them, so I went picking grapes at a place called Goodnight, just over the border on the Murray, near a place called Tooleybuc.'

Meanwhile Jimmy's brother, Harry, had left school and, after a few years working for a couple of other growers, returned home to work on the farm with his father. Jimmy was not to work on the family farm again for many years. After picking grapes at Goodnight, Jimmy worked in the packing sheds at Woorineen, where he made friends with a

Queenslander. His connection with Queensland was to become a strong one as he then, in 1950, began to work cutting cane on Bundaberg farms, beginning with this friend's brother's property.

Jimmy met his wife Joan in Mt Evelyn. She was from Bundaberg and was visiting her relation, Pauline Koolmees, who was living at that time with her husband John in Bailey Road, Mt Evelyn. Jimmy discovered that he had already been working with Joan's father and brother on his regular cane cutting sojourns in Bundaberg. 'Then we went back and got married up at Bundaberg in 1962. I was always going back to Bundaberg. Before I met Joan I used to go back every few years, but after we met and married we used to go back every year. Every Christmas we used to drive up. Even after we had the kids' (Christine, Diana, Katherine and James).

Not much later the Koolmees became their neighbours, and specialised in growing gladioli flowers. The two families shared beach holidays at Rye and many wonderful musical evenings, blending the excellent piano accompaniment skills of Pauline and the beautiful singing voices of the Marshall men. (Jimmy, in fact, was invited to sing on television, soon after its 1956 introduction to Australia.) Jill Koolmees remembers:

*Jock had a beautiful singing voice. He and Harry and Jimmy and Cecil Gear used to perform at parties at the Marshalls' – songs such as 'Larboard Watch', 'Westering Home', and 'The Bold Gendarmes' from Gilbert and Sullivan. These Marshall parties were a regular feature before TV came in – we had games (children and adults both joining in for the ABC song, pass the parcel); recitations (Mrs Crow doing 'Alfred and the Lion'), various people performing on the piano, including Helen and I from our very early piano lessons, Mum accompanying the singers, and dramatic skits created and performed on the spot. Mrs Marshall always laid on the cakes.*

**Continued p.4**

**Above centre, Jim Marshall, sketch by Paula Herlihy, ME CR 7, August 1992.**





From p.3

While Jimmy continued his seasonal cane cutting work, he worked selling Life Assurance for the AMP (1953-63) and then for Lewis Construction Company (1963-73). He then took up night-watching for five years until 1978, at the same time growing flowers and vegetables on a block of land belonging to St Mary's Catholic Church in Mt Evelyn. 'I cleaned it up ... I wasn't leasing. I used to supply them with flowers. I had an arrangement with old Father O'Callaghan. I said I'll supply the flowers for the church each week and he said, "You do that." We were good friends.' When Father Triccario took over I decided I'd rent some land up at Silvan and started growing flowers there.'

In about 1980 Jimmy started working full time on the flowers and in 1985-6 he returned to the family farm. His brother Harry had left it some years after his father died in 1974 and devoted his time to a business selling gemstones. The farm was run down and had not been used for years. Jim built the farm up and sent thousands of bunches of gladioli a year to George Basil and Sons in Sydney, as his parents had done before, and also grew chrysanthemums.

By 1996 the farm had been sold and Jim felt he was getting too old for the labouring work. In the 1980s he sold flowers near the York and Monbulk Road corner using an honesty system. They had an old stool with a tin for the money. Occasionally kids stole some or an adult short-changed him, but by and large it worked. 'They always paid. I've always said 99 percent of the public were honest. Twice the kids pinched it and just took the tin so I nailed it down.' By the 1996 the honesty system no longer operated. 'They even steal the flowers out the front now.'



Above, sale board for the family farm.



Above, the Marshall family at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Presbyterian Church, 6 November 1983. From left: Harry, Jim's children Chris, Katherine & Jamie, Jim's wife Joan, Harry's wife Margaret, Jim, Mrs Tina Marshall.

Farming and flowers did not cease for the Marshalls, however, as Harry's son John now farms in Bundaberg and Jimmy's son James works in Sydney for Tesselaars, in the flower business. Jim is survived by his children and his wife Joan, who continues to live in Mt Evelyn.

Jimmy's colourful memories of his parents Tina and Jock, and of his father Jock's stories, add richness to our appreciation of early life in Mt Evelyn. His dad often told him the following story:

*There's always been a character in Mt Evelyn, always. A gang of them up here in the early years when the Mt Evelyn dam was there (next to railway line York Road), they used to have yabby competitions and that sort of thing. They'd get up to the dam there. They'd be fishing. One frosty evening they kidded Gordon. Gordon, being a bit simple. They said, 'Guaranteed, we'll bet you so much money that you won't go into the dam naked. 'Course I will!' And he stripped off and went into the dam, freezing cold, and they all took off on him and didn't give him the money.*

*A few weeks later they said, 'We caught you, Gordon, you wouldn't be game to do it again.' He said, 'Yes I would! But you give me the money (first) this time.' So they all got together and gave him, I don't know how much money. I don't know how much money they scrounged out of their pockets and gave it to him. He stripped off and he put the money in his mouth and he walked into the dam. Then he called out, 'There, I fooled you!' and spat all the money into the dam when he opened his mouth!*

**Jim Marshall, interviewed by Janice Newton**

## **'COME TO SUNNY AWSTRALIA'**

My name is Lesley Freeman, sister of Julie Stewart [#75]. We are the family that sailed out from England, on the say-so of Dick Knowles. We met him during the war. COME TO SUNNY AWSTRALIA he said to us. We came and it rained for six months: that was in May 1949.

I have just finished reading an article from Janice Newton in newsletter 78. Aggie: I wonder if she is the Aggie that used to wobble down Hereford Road past our place, singing. She was a large woman, always wore colourful cotton dresses.

What about our lady bookie, she would stand in front of Robbie's Greengrocer shop on a Saturday, anyone remember her? My mum never talked to this lady, saying she was corrupt. I thought she looked lovely all dressed up with hat and gloves, always licking her pencil.

I pass these pages onto my friend of fifty odd years, Margaret Morgan (Martin), she used to live in Fernhill Road. I loved spending time at her house. They had hurricane lamps, and a big open fire, an iron for pressing clothes always sitting on the kitchen hob. A chip heater (a small boiler we fed with wood chips) above the bath for hot water for our bathes. And a lavatory out the back, the Morgan men would empty the pan in the vegie garden. I became hesitant, eating the vegetables at her place.

Then there was Fred Smith and his parties, that was fun. I had a standard eight soft-top motor by this time. When it was time to all go home, usually the next day, all the sailor boys would squeeze into my car. We had to put the roof down, in order to fit them all in, then drive down to the Cerberus (Flinders Navy Depot) to drop them off. Marg and Ross (now 50 years married) would stay and have lunch in the Mess. I was interested to read in the newsletter about the Outlook dam. We stayed at the Outlook for a few months. My brother Malcolm built a raft, of four 4-gallon drums and off-cuts of timber from Millard's Timber yard. He bound it altogether with string and made an oar.

Dad and Malcolm carried it down to this dam, plonked it into the shallow muddy water, Dad stood on the bank to watch while our Malcolm pushed the raft out into the centre of the dam, where it slowly, so very slowly, sank ... leaving my brother standing in this dirty muddy yabby infested water up to his armpits.

... and where was my dad? He couldn't move owing to the hysterics he was in.

Not be deterred, Malcolm jumped off his raft into this dam; then pulled what was left of his raft back to shore. Left it on the bank and slouched off, head down, hands in his pockets, with dirty muddy water dripping off him.

Oh yes I remember it well ... 1949.

*Lesley Freeman*

## **Mt Evelyn on Facebook**

In case you've been as confused as we have by the proliferation of community Facebook pages in Mt Evelyn, here's an alphabetical list. Do let us know of any we've missed.

Mt Evelyn Chamber of Commerce Inc (MECCI): <https://www.facebook.com/moutevelynbusiness>

Mt Evelyn Community House: <https://www.facebook.com/mtevelyncommunityhouse>

Mt Evelyn Community Life (Peter and Bec Stekelenburg), Public Group, 94 members.

Mt Evelyn Community Market: <https://www.facebook.com/mtevelyncommunitymarket>

Mt Evelyn Community Website on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mtevelyncommunity>

Mt Evelyn Country Fire Authority (CFA): <https://www.facebook.com/MtEvelynCFA>

Mount Evelyn Environment Protection & Progress Association (MEEPPA): <https://www.facebook.com/meeppa>

Mt Evelyn Football Club: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mt-Evelyn-Football-Club/102885609788193>

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

Mt Evelyn our town today and yesterday: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mt-Evelyn-Our-town-today-and-yesterday/234232769990710>

Mt Evelyn Returned & Services League (RSL): <https://www.facebook.com/MtEvelynRsl>

Mt Evelyn Township Improvement Committee Inc (METIC): <https://www.facebook.com/mtevelyntownshipgroup>

## Silvan-Evelyn Queen Carnival CORONATION CEREMONY.

The queen carnival which has been monopolising the social activities of the Silvan and Mt. Evelyn communities for the past two months was brought to a successful conclusion on Saturday night last, when the coronation ceremony was performed in the presence of a large assemblage at the Mt. Evelyn Hall. The effort was organised for the purpose of raising funds, to liquidate the debts of the combined football clubs, and the three aspirants for the throne were Mrs. Brown, Mt. Evelyn (Queen of Spades); Mrs. H. Beves, Lilydale (Queen of Diamonds), and Miss Bolt, Silvan (Queen of Hearts). Rivalry was keen in the respective domains, in which the claimants for royal honors did their utmost in rallying their loyal subjects, and resorted to many novel schemes to collect toll.

Anticipation ran high as the night of the crowning approached. Each queen had carefully guarded her coffers, the contents being known to only her most confidential advisers; consequently there was much conjecture as to who would occupy the central dais. The hall was gaily decorated for the occasion, the stage being decked out with all the appurtenances for the important ceremony, and presented a most impressive appearance. After a few preliminary dances the Lord High Chancellor (Mr. R. Rose), in regulation court attire, attended by two pages, ascended the dais, and after enforcing silence proceeded to read the voluminous scroll of parchment proclaiming the wishes of the populace to elect a queen, to whom all followers of the national game of football would proffer allegiance. A trumpet call by the court heralds announced the approach of the royal parties. The queens, beautifully attired, each being adorned by a gorgeous robe and attended by two daintily dressed maids, made an impressive entry.

Mrs. Brown's coronation robe was of pink brocade with white fur trimmings, while Mrs. Beves and Miss Bolt chose silver and gold robes respectively, with fur facings. Each carried a beautiful feather fan.

It was most certainly a picturesque procession, and as each of the royal personages took up her allotted position the admiration of those assembled was enthusiastically demonstrated in hand clapping and prolonged applause. Due homage was paid to each of the trio by the Chancellor, and then the exciting prelude to

the naming of the successful candidate was the counting of the votes, which were continually being augmented by additional tokens from loyal subjects.

In his most pompous manner the Chancellor again gave the signal for silence to announce the verdict of the people, and immediately escorted the rightful claimant (Mrs. Brown) to the central throne, to be crowned. The voting was as follows:-Mrs. Brown (Queen of Spades), 8500; Mrs. Beves (Queen of Diamonds), 2700; Miss Bolt (Queen of Hearts), 2200.

At the conclusion of the ceremony Mr. A. Riley (secretary of the Silvan-Evelyn Football Club) expressed the appreciation of the team and supporters of the wonderful efforts of the respective queens, which would enable the club to meet all its financial obligations. He then presented Mrs. Brown with a beautiful chiming clock, Mrs. Beves with a tortoise shell toilet set, and Miss Bolt with a manicure set, which he hoped would 'be happy mementoes of the occasion'.

A most enjoyable and successful evening continued until midnight. **Healesville & Yarra Glen Guardian 15 July 1939**

### From Kev's rain gauge

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

| Mt Ev  | McK    | Melb   | Melb Av |
|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| 66.5mm | 80.5mm | 36.2mm | 58.2mm  |

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

**Kevin Phillips**

### Contact us

As a courtesy, please address any issues with the content of *Things Past* to the Editor.

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