



Newsletter 6, May 2008

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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Dates for your diary

Anthony McAleer will speak on the history of the Lilydale Athenaeum building, Saturday 24th May, 1 pm in the Mt Evelyn Community Room.

Environment display at Mt Evelyn Exhibition Space during June. The History Group display will be on the Aboriginal history of our area. Launch date Friday 6th June.

June meeting: Tuesday 24th June, 7.30 pm at Morrison House.

The historic fire truck

We stated in our last issue that Ian Hunter restored the historic fire truck pictured. This was incorrect, as Andrew Meades explains.

The historic fire truck photographed in the Bendigo Easter Parade is a 1926 Graham-Dodge pumper, formerly owned and restored by the late Norm Meades, a well known Mt Evelyn identity. Ian Hunter was a friend of Norm's for many years and shared an interest in historic fire fighting vehicles, but the Graham was Norm's, not Ian's.

Mt Evelyn Fire Brigade never actually had a Graham-Dodge, but Lilydale did. There is a very famous photo of Lilydale's unit at Warburton in the 1939 fires.

This truck was one of four historic fire vehicles that Norm owned and restored. A 1908 horse drawn Merryweather was his pride and joy. He also had a couple of cars and motorbike and sidecar, all fully restored.



Norm with the Merryweather. Now located in Healesville, it is possibly the last one left in the world.



Norm and Andrew Meades with three of the fire trucks at a Mt Evelyn Street Fair.

The fire trucks were displayed at many events around the area, particularly at the Mt Evelyn Street/ Spring Fair on a number of occasions. Norm loved to show them off and enjoyed the interaction with an interested public.

Norm was a life member of the Mt Evelyn Fire Brigade, having served the brigade and the community for many years. He was all too often the only member around during the daytime and would head off on his own, hoping like mad that there was help on the way. Fortunately, there always was.

Hope this clarifies a little of the vehicle's history. The trucks, along with Norm's other historic vehicles, were sold due to his failing health around five years ago. Norm Meades passed away in July 2006, his wife Laurel in November 2006. Norm and Laurel had lived in Mt Evelyn since 1952. Laurel's parents built in Clematis Rd in the 1930s.

From Andrew Meades

Township fence

Russell Danby's preliminary sketches for the Township Fence panels are on display at the Link. There will be ten panels on historical themes along Bowen's fence, bordering the Rail Trail. We have requested an Aboriginal theme for the first one.

Silver tribute to Melba

The Performing Arts Museum at the Arts Centre has a display called *Silver-lined*. There is a dress Melba wore for *La Traviata* c.1899, which has been conserved. It is on loan from Melba's granddaughter Pamela, Lady Vestey. A beautiful artistic creation in silver of a similar dress commemorates Melba.

According to the website, the exhibition 'explores the creative parallels between the visual and performing arts through the work of eight contemporary visual artists'. There are also some great puppets and other historical records relating to entertainment. The gallery is adjacent to the State Theatre.

The website for the exhibition is:

<http://www.theartscentre.com.au/what's-on/event.aspx?id=1160>

Thanks to Jean Edwards for the information.

A healthy view of history

The History Group recently received an unusual historical query from a young Nursing student. She was doing an assignment on the way health and safety issues have influenced the development of the local community.

We suggested the impact of water supply features in Mt Evelyn (the Water Race and Aqueduct); bushfires and the lack of safety equipment for our early fire fighters; railway accidents and the First Aid Post; the fact that people took holidays in Mt Evelyn for the fresh air; the lack of a local doctor till the 1950s.

The student bought a copy of *Tracks to Trails* and then, at Paula's suggestion, went to interview Dr Bill Hardy.

A generous donation

Some time ago Robyn Taylor donated an original real estate plan of a subdivision on the border of Montrose and Mt Evelyn (see page 3). The document can be dated between 1907 and 1920 because the station is called 'Evelyn'.

The map shows that the practice of naming major roads after cities in the United Kingdom had already commenced by this period. Interestingly, the name 'York Road' appears on the present Cambridge Road.

A Mrs Hawkins appears as owner of the block where Mt Evelyn Christian School is now. The Hawkins family built the prefabricated iron hut that still stands in the school grounds. The Collier and Clifford selections in Mt Evelyn are also shown.

Thank you for this generous gift to the History Group, Robyn, and sorry it hasn't been acknowledged before.

MONTROSE

Close to Mooroolbark, Lilydale, and Evelyn Stations, and Montrose Post Office and Store.

BUNGALOW WEEK-END SITES

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LOCALITY PLAN

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