

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc.



Things Past

Newsletter 117

May 2020

PO Box 289 Mt Evelyn Vic 3796

Incorporation Number A0051327F

Dates for Your Diary

Unfortunately, due to the measures being taken to protect everyone at risk from COVID-19, all History Group activities are cancelled until further notice.

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'Top of the Town' Demolished



'Top of the Town' in 2015

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'Top of the Town' Demolished

It was a sad day when the old 'Top of the Town' building was demolished recently. Originally a bakery, it became a general store, a milk bar and then a pet supply shop. Commanding the south end of the main street, it had been an icon of Mt Evelyn for 80 years or so. Its history goes back still further, as there was an earlier bakery on the same site (see *Things Past* #86).



Demolition machinery at work on the old shop, 14/2/2000.

The building had stood empty from 2015, but still it came as a shock to see it reduced to a pile of rubble on 14 February 2020. All that we have as a reminder is David Monks' mural on the wall of the present bakery on the Wray Crescent/Station Street corner.



David Monks' mural showing the bakery in the background.

One by one, those old shops of the twenties, thirties and forties have been disappearing, taking many fond memories with them. Only two older-style shops are now left in Mt Evelyn: the florist and dress shop building in Wray Crescent and the former Post Office, now a gift shop, on the corner of Wray Crescent and Snowball Avenue.

Karen Phillips. Photos Kevin Phillips

A Brief Memory of Mount Evelyn

About 1948 my parents, William and Dulcie Doxford, bought a block of land at Mount Evelyn. They commenced building a holiday house on it, but a few years later sold it. My father was an asthmatic, frequently in hospital and out of work, so my guess is they couldn't afford to keep up the payments.

My only memory of it is lifting a piece of old tin sheeting up and finding a snake underneath, and my father coming with an axe and chopping it into pieces, all of which wriggled for a while. I had nightmares for weeks afterwards, and still have a horror of snakes.



My brother Graeme and I at the Mount Evelyn block.



My father, Graeme and I at the Mt Evelyn block in a half completed house.

Helen Harris OAM

Is Lockdown Becoming Boring?

Check out the Stay @ Home Festival on the website of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

The festival incorporates a number of online history-related activities, including the opportunity 'to share your experience and impressions of how CoVid19 has affected our lives, from the mundane to the extraordinary, including the ways things haven't changed at all.'

Listening to lectures, joining a book club, and various writing activities are only some of the many ways to participate.

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/stay-at-home-festival/>

Vale Reg Falkingham (26.12.1928-22.10.2019), (Part 1)

Reg was born in 1928, to Florence Caroline Lidstone and Albert Joseph Falkingham. He was the youngest of ten, his siblings being Alex, Alby, May, Alan, Doug, Totty, Tessa, Len and Bob.

Reg grew up in a small home called *Bark Rest* on Fernvale Road in Olinda Vale, now known as Falkingham Road in Mount Evelyn. The rough bush track was forged with hand tools by family, neighbours and visitors. It led to a modest home of bush timber, bark, rocks, and had dirt floors. Ten children were raised in this home that sat on the side of a mountain with commanding views across to Kalorama. Reg's eldest siblings had been born and raised in Abbotsford for their earliest years but his mother, affectionately known as Flo, visited her father-in-law for a short break from the city and never left because she loved the bush so much. Reg enjoyed a very happy childhood growing up in an environment that he continued to love for the rest of his life.

There were many challenges to raising a family in a place remote from shops and services. It was a pioneering way of life. Collecting water each day and hauling it up the hillside to where they lived. Carrying washing down the hill to wash it and then returning up the hill to hang washing for ten or more people was a daily occurrence. However, the unrivalled views from home across to the Dandenongs and quiet pace of life offered something that appealed to both Flo and Bert. Reg and his siblings grew up without toys, running water and many of the things we take for granted today. Grandfather Alfred soon had a tribe of grandkids living next door and many ring-ins who visited for weekends to enjoy bush walking, swimming in the creek and horse riding. Reg said the kids didn't mind the visitors but hated having to get 'dolloed up in their glad rags' They'd tear them off to put on their 'old garb' and head for the bush as soon as they could escape.

Reg attended the local school until age 12 and then commenced work with his father and brothers in carpentry and building, following in his father's and grandfather's footsteps.

At his sister Tess's funeral, Reg described their early life. The family didn't have much and made their own fun in the surrounding forest and bush. He said the girls played rough and tumble games

with the boys and grew up just as strong and bush-wise. The lovely Olinda Creek flowed past their home and was a marvellous place for fishing, rabbiting and swimming in summer. The Lilydale water race ran past their old house and was a beaut place to explore and sail their make-believe boats. They all carried axes in the bush, girls and boys, and all had shanghaies or catapults which were made out of forked sticks and a bit of rubber. They practiced firing them with yonnies or small stones until they were deadly accurate. They did target practice by firing them at the side of their dad's iron stable till the noise got his attention and he chased them away. After that it was hitting tins or bottles placed on top of the fence posts. If no adults were around, any moving target was fair game. Chooks, stray cats or dogs were often surprised when a harmless missile raised some dust behind them, but he claimed there was no harm to any animal.

Tree houses with very few comforts were built in tall gum trees at surprisingly high vantage points with commanding views. There was a flying fox which ran on a steel cable downhill between two tall gum trees. Reg recalled whizzing down it and abruptly stopping when colliding with a bag of bracken fern that broke the fall. Billy carts were great. Four small pram wheels fixed to a simple frame, steered by a piece of rope on the front axle. Reg said, 'we'd drag it to the top of a steep hill and aim it downhill and all pile on and take off down a steep winding track. If all went well, you'd get to the bottom of the hill, do a big swerving broadside and spill onto the ground but more likely the vehicle would overturn, or the pilot would lose control and slam into a tree. There were no brakes, you slowed up or stopped by dragging your feet on the ground. Reg said he remembers them all dusting themselves off and the laughter at such sport.

A big cricket match would take place on the road outside their home on a Sunday arvo when 20 or 30 family members, weekenders and passing bushwalkers would join the big social match.

All the kids had their fair share of duties collecting firewood and water each day and helping to lug weekly supplies from York Road up the side of the mountain through the scrub to home.

Special memories for Reg were dances at the *Do Drop In*, now the York on Lilydale, and being in

the Blue Ribbon Dance Band and Mt Evelyn Brass Bands. He loved performing with his siblings, who made up most of the band. Tot, his sister, said they all learnt to dance when the bands practiced in the lounge room at home.

Reg played drums and his other family members played various brass instruments. Years later, Reg made recordings of his brother Bob playing the cornet and they both listened to these as they got older. This love of band music was lasting. Throughout his life he enjoyed visiting Wattle Park and various country towns to watch brass bands perform. He was planning the next trip to Wattle Park, just before he died.

Whenever the siblings got together, they reminisced about the old days. They were great story tellers and kept the young ones entertained with all their antics. Growing up, I recall they all shared different memories and happy accounts of their lives and love for their parents and each other.

Reg met Cecily, aged 17, when he was 28 years old, and married her three years later. They lived in Donvale, overlooking bush and enjoyed the sounds of birds in their garden. Reg continued to work in the building industry until semi-retirement in his 65th year and full retirement closer to mid-eighties. He was a strong, fit man who remained active all his life. Reg and Cecily raised two children Dale Reginald and Caroline, and had five grandchildren Matt, Megan, Georgia, Vi and Phoebe. Cecily and Reg were coming up for their 60th Wedding Anniversary next February. Reg was close to all of his brothers and sisters and fond of his in-laws and their growing families. He was always happy to pitch in and help in whatever way he could. When his three older sisters started having their own families, he would love to be involved in helping and playing with his young nieces and nephews, some only a few years younger than he was.

Reg's eldest sister May married Bill Polkinghorne. They lived on a nearby property and had six children of their own, some similar in age to Reg and all great mates. May's children have been treasured nieces and nephews – they are Reg, Shirley, Nancy, Bill, Lorraine and Royce.



Nancy said upon hearing the news of losing Reg, that she had many happy times with him over the years and that he was like a brother to her rather than an uncle. He took her to balls and taught her how to dance because she had missed opportunities during extend bouts of rheumatic fever. They did lots together and she modelled precariously on the edge of a cliff when he took up photography. She chuckled about the risks they took and the fun they had.

Reg was close to his sister Totty who lived with her husband Jack and children Sandy and John. Many visits were made between their households. They shared a passion for walking in the bush, picnics and catching up.

Totty, a remarkable cook, was influential in Reg taking up baking in retirement. They shared this love and regularly planned cooking days. Reg enjoyed regular chats on the phone and loved sharing recipes and hearing his sister's news about the family. Totty would often reflect on the years that she and her nine brothers and sisters grew up at Mount Evelyn with very little money and would say to her family 'when we grew up we had nothing but we all loved each other'.

Reg also enjoyed visiting his sister Tessa in Sunshine, helping when she was raising her young family. Tess was married to Jack Matheson and they had Winsome, Lynette and Mark. Both Winsome and Lynette have remarked in recent years how much they loved their Uncle Reg and enjoyed his visits.

All of the nieces and nephews loved to visit the 'old home' at Mt Evelyn to see their grandparents and Reg who lived at home until he was 31. It was a gathering place for many of the family, which enabled strong bonds to be formed over many years.

These close relationships with young nieces and nephews equipped Reg with confidence and skills that prepared him for parenting later in life. He loved these children and watched them grow, some only a few years younger than himself and others closer to 20 years younger. This year, Reg was deeply saddened when Winsome passed away suddenly, some 20 years younger than he, and tragically taken without notice.

cont'd p.9

Doris McCormack (1903-2007): Niece of the 'Mayor' of Billy Goat Hill, Harold Schultz

Many Melbourne people obtained cheap bush blocks in Mt Evelyn during the 1920s and a process ensued, similar to chain migration seen after the Second World War. It is possible to trace networks of family and friends, buying up adjacent blocks in areas such as Billy Goat Hill. Doris was part of one such family. Doris' mother Caroline (Dolly) Schultz was the eldest of 14 children. Her nearest younger brother was Harold Schultz. In adulthood Harold became a city jeweller remembered by Mt Evelyn locals and holiday makers for wonderful Christmas parties, bonfires and gifts, cricket matches and yabby catching competitions. He was sometimes

referred to as the Mayor of Billy Goat Hill.



Caroline McCormack dressed as a Father Christmas.

Caroline Schultz married Walter McCormack, the son of the first police sergeant at the St Kilda barracks. Walter began worked at Myer at 17 and went on to become a manager of the linen and cutlery section.

Harold Schultz married Gwen, whose sister, Ada O'Connor, was the owner of land being subdivided along the Fernhill and Rangeview Roads and Burke Street area. Once they had purchased the blocks, in Burke Street, Doris's father Walter and brother, Johnnie, built basic houses for her mother Caroline and Uncle Harold. In fact, Caroline used her own money for the block and organised the build as a surprise for her husband, who added verandahs and other rooms to the starting structure. The houses of the brother and sister became a regular base for all visiting relatives, friends and workmates. The young ones picked blue orchids, heath and gumtips. (See masthead and previous issues *Things Past* 15, 35, 63.)



The house in Billy Goat Hill

Doris grew up in Ivanhoe where she and her sister Edie were teachers of callisthenics group that in 1928 and 1929 won the South Street competitions in Ballarat. The group often gave concerts to aid the Children's Hospital or RSL for example. Generally they charged about 1/6 and may have raised £5 or £10. Sometimes the concerts were followed by a dance and they made hundreds of gem cakes for supper (a small round cake/scone baked in metal moulds in a cast iron tray, served with butter and jam).

At least once they travelled to Mt Evelyn with their class to perform a concert. The young girls were accompanied by their mothers, many of whom stayed at the Grantully Guest House or tightly packed in beds around the verandah of the house. (The verandah had six single beds up one side!) A concert in the Mt Evelyn Mechanics Institute Hall starred their cousin Beryl Schultz (Harold's daughter). Beryl had dark curly hair and performed 'Tiptoe Through the Tulips', dancing on her toes and sported a small dinner jacket for another number called 'Burlington Bertie from Bow'

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOJp_oJgM TM).



Visiting callisthenics group

The girls and their friends got to meet several of the local youth, including nice-looking, curly-haired Max Bowring from the bakery, Dudley Wilson, a visiting rower and Jessie and Jean McGregor from an orchard off Hereford Road. They also remembered the Morrisons, Millards and estate agent Hughie Wray. Mrs Archer, who lived behind the hall (possibly on Birmingham Road), 'used to be the Third Laundress over in Glenmouth Castle in England (more likely Glamis Castle, Angus, Scotland) when the Queen Mother was a little girl' and this link with castles and royalty was often remembered by early Mt Evelyn residents, living in very different circumstances.



Tennis party at Morrisons Cherry Orchard, Fernhill Rd.

When the family visited Mt Evelyn their mother, Caroline, packed into their car really good food like joints and roasts (which they cooked over an open fireplace), and accompanying jars of chutney, preserves and so on. They had so much to pack their mother would say, 'Here, take this to the car but don't let your father see it.' They used the best linen and cutlery due to their father's position at Myer, secreting it under a trapdoor in their floor for security when they returned to Melbourne. At the back of the house they had a great big verandah 'and a table ran the length of it'.

'The verandah slept everyone. It was women on one side and men on the other. And when we all went to bed we'd sing out to the men or the men would sing out to us.' The girls got dressed up to go to the local Mt Evelyn dance, preparing their hair in curlers beforehand. They once met up with the Ivanhoe Hockey Club boys who were camped at the Recreation Reserve and had a certain amount of freedom as a cousin their own age, Ray Schultz, was able to act as a chaperone.

As a young woman Doris worked in a café called the Green Lantern opposite Myer in Melbourne and also as a dressmaker making lingerie for Cann's, a firm initiated by Miss J Cann after the 1890s crash and celebrating a new city building in 1920 (*Table Talk* 29 April 1920, p10). Here Doris organised a Charity Social Club, sometimes raising up to £1000. Later the family moved to Mornington and opened a large café.

While waiting to build a house in Mornington the family moved transitionally to Mt Evelyn. Their holiday house, named *SchulMac* (from her parent's surnames) was moved from Burke Street, Billy Goat Hill to Hereford Road in 1931 and Mr McCormack paid for an electricity pole so they could access power. They lived at the new *SchulMac*, near Dr Bill Hardy's residence from about April 1948 to 1952 before moving permanently to Mornington.



SchulMac in snow

I interviewed Doris in 1994 in her home near Ringwood which she shared with her widowed youngest sister, Lorna Clinton. The photographs she shared include some beautiful snow scenes of Mt Evelyn, the early house in Billy Goat Hill, a tennis party at Morrisons and the big callisthenics concert group.

Janice Newton

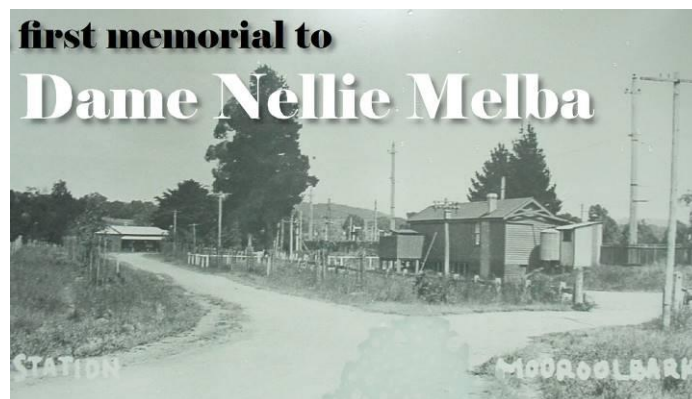
Sources:

Interview of Doris McCormack by Janice Newton, 13 April 1994.

Table Talk 29 April 1920, 10.

Timeline of Mooroolbark Railway Station, Part 2 (1921-2019)

- 1922** 11th April, Opened as an Interlocked Electric Staff Crossing Station, employees must make themselves familiar with the new Diagram and these particulars and Instructions.
Station Master appointed - Mr Charles Whitelaw
- 1924** Land on the corner of Station St & Charles St donated by Mr John Edmond Taylor to erect a Public Hall. Originally a Ballroom at Hon. H T Payne's Toorak residence, it was transported and re-erected by Mr A Pretty. Erection of an 'earthen closet' for £600.00
Next Station Master - Mr J H Smith
- 1925** Progress Association lobbied for electricity and a 'Silence' Cabinet for the Telephone in the General Store.
- 1927** Mountain View Estate passed through many hands until Harry Sherlock purchased the estate for £ 50 an acre
- 1928** Station Master - Mr T Barter
- 1930** Signal Porter - Mr E Staline. Mooroolbark will be working under Caretaker conditions, with Signal Porter in charge under the supervision of Lilydale Station Master.
- 1931** First Memorial to Dame Nellie Melba, 50 Silver Birch Trees planted by Edna Walling and friends on either side of Taylor Rd (now Brice Ave) along beside Railway line.

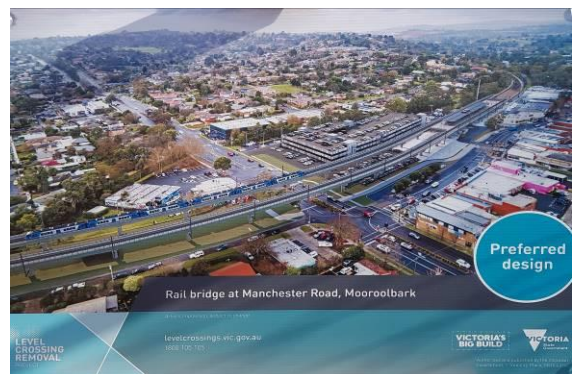


- 1933** Signal Porter - Mr J R Harris
- 1935** Landscape Designer Helps Along Avenue of Memory.
In Memory of Melba.
Party at 'Sonning,' fundraiser for seat with plaque.
Miss Edna Walling application for permission to plant Trees and Shrubs. Drawings of design, no sign of Silver Birch Trees.
- 1937** Report on 14 Poplars, 5 tubs on platform, in excellent condition.
- 1940** Porter in Charge - Mr Andy Bell, wife Vera; they had 8 children.
- 1947** Sherlocks Hill Estate, 75 building lots, sold slowly.
- 1949** Crossing Flashing Lights at Manchester Road, 20 miles 41 chains.
- 1952** Rex Whyatt built Milk Bar, Service Station then Hardware store opposite the Railway line on Taylor Rd (now Brice Ave).
- 1954** Saturday 6th March, residents shelter under Oaks to watch Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh go by. Royal Tour train went to Warburton and back, hauled by B60 and B85, crewed by Frank Meyers and Kevin Whelan. Actual carriage is up at Seymour awaiting restoration.
- 1956** Park Here Free, 14 spaces at Mooroolbark. English, Scottish & Australian Bank and Post Office move into building on Brice Ave.
- 1957** 8th September, Duplication line from Croydon Opened
- 1958** Became a Suburban Station.

- 1961** Assistant Station Master - Mr A Powell
- 1962** Taylor Rd, from Manchester to Hull Rd, re named Brice Avenue. Old Store demolished and New Store built, Nancarrow's Self Service
- 1963** Assistant Station Master - Mr J T Morgan
- 1964** Station building alterations
Assistant Station Master Mr J R Craig
- 1968** Block and Signal Inspector - Mr A C Harradence and Mr B W Varney
- 1969** Relieving Assistant Station Master - Mr P J Butler
- 1973** Station House is in structurally poor condition. To avoid further expenditure, it is proposed that the house be abolished. Eye witness to it being burned down, controlled by CFA.
- 1979** West Riding Councillors Alan Smith and Kevin Lonergan speak up re Poplar trees being threatened.
- 1983** Boom Barriers installed at Manchester Rd. 34.247 kilometres
- 1985** New Signalling arrangements implemented.
- 1990** Raising a Stink about the Drains - Lilydale Express
- 1991** Pedestrian Gates provided at Manchester Rd.
- 1994** Station Facelift, MP Lorraine Elliot announced \$ 2 million upgrade, Mooroolbark in the first 28 to be refurbished.
- 2001** Brushing up for Rail Station - painted from cream to gumleaf green.
Federation Wall painted at Manchester Primary School
- 2009** Steam Rail Victoria runs K 153 shuttle back and forth for the passengers between Mitcham and Mooroolbark.
- 2013** Derailment of passenger train between Croydon and Mooroolbark.
- 2014** \$2.4 million upgrade, new entrance shelter and ramp, removal of poplars, southern car park. \$1.4 for reconstruction of northern car park.
- 2019** Manchester Rd, no. 49, Level Crossing Removal Project, notification of proposed design of Elevated Rail line.
1st LXR Community Consultation, Saturday 24th August, 10 am - 12 noon at Manchester Primary School.
2nd LXR Community Consultation, Wednesday 13th November, 6 - 8 pm at Mooroolbark Community Centre.



Mooroolbark Station after the 2014 upgrade



Proposed design, 2019

Vale Reg Falkingham, (Part 1) from p.4

Several of Reg's brothers and extended family went to fight in WWII. It was a time when the family pulled together to support each other. Doug and Len served and returned safely. Doug married Lorna and had one child Avon. He suffered badly from bouts of malaria thereafter. He was taken tragically in 1983 when he became unwell with cancer. Visiting him at the Heidelberg Repat and observing his decline was heartbreaking for Reg. Doug was the first of his siblings to pass away.

Reg had worked with his father and brothers as a carpenter and had close relationships with them all. Len, the feistiest of them all, sometimes got them into trouble on work sites and would clear off and leave them to sort things out. Like all the boys he was a hard worker and had a way of finding new contracts to keep them going. Tragically he got cancer and fought the battle, overcoming throat cancer. He lived 'up home' for many years and this enabled family to continue to visit Len and enjoy the sensational views of Mount Dandenong and the incredible stories of growing up in Mt Evelyn. Like Doug, he died in 1983.

Soon after this the family decided to have annual family reunions to bring all the family together. A crowd of 60 – 100 people gather each year at the Mount Evelyn Recreation Reserve. The 36th reunion was held a few weeks after Reg's passing. Reg's elder brother Alan, a free spirit, raised a family of five children with his wife Lorna. They were Jean, Geoff, Karen, Heather and Colin Reginald. Reg particularly enjoyed the time he spent with Alan as they got older and shared many drives and bush walks together and days listening to old time music and reminiscing about the past. On these drives with Reg and Cecily he could be heard singing along to old time tunes. He would spontaneously grab one of his sisters and dance with them at family reunions or BBQ's. Alan had a wicked sense of humour and mischievousness that provided many a shared story about the antics they got up to as kids. Alan's favourite trip with Reg was to the Ada Tree. Alex, the oldest sibling, was raised outside of the family. He re-connected with them later in life and particularly enjoyed the annual family reunions.

Geoff, aka Bob, the closest in age to Reg, shared a very close relationship. His wife Gladys and he had three children, all quite close in age to Reg's own children, and they are Robert, Trevor and Dianne. At one stage they both worked locally at Walker Ceramics. Reg and Bob talked regularly on the phone and caught up together often. They shared a love of band music and talking about the old times when they grew up in Mt Evelyn.

Reg's elder brother Albert Charles, aka Alby, was a huge influence on him. With some 20+ years' difference in age, Alby took it upon himself to show Reg the world of classical music, theatre, musical comedy, ballet and opera. Himself an amateur actor and regular performer with the Little Theatre Company, Alby loved taking his younger brother to experience the performing arts in Melbourne and St Kilda. Reg's grandchildren Vi and Phoebe went on to perform regularly at the National Theatre in St Kilda. Reg grew up observing the way Alby respected and supported family, showing gentleness and compassion towards everyone. These qualities were a huge influence on all who loved him. Two of their father's half-brothers, in their adolescent years, loved to dress up, dance and perform comedy skits with Alby for the entertainment of their family at Mt Evelyn. These three gregarious, flamboyant characters added to the diverse tapestry of the family. Reg grew up appreciating the gentle and refined qualities of his elder brother who passed away in 1992.

To be continued

Caroline Macdonald

Comments from Cecily Falkingham

Cecily Falkingham, Reg's widow, wrote to tell us that she had enjoyed reading about her husband's mum and dad in the last edition (*Things Past* #116). Cecily writes,

'Well done Paula, I enjoyed reading about Reg's mum and dad, just one correction, you would never get a dozen snakes together, maybe a dozen sightings over a period of time. The Tiger Snake would have been around the creek as it favours moist areas such as swamps and streams. It is listed as dangerously venomous in *A Complete Guide to the Reptiles of Australia* and if confronted raises itself up and, flattening its head, will not back off. Reg and I witnessed this

behaviour on more than one occasion when walking in the bushland. We were very keen bushwalkers and tramped everywhere all over Victoria. I had Quinn's Reserve on my walking program which I ran for 30 years. It was a lovely area but I now fear it would have a lot of environmental weeds unless the Friends of Quinns Reserve still are existing.'

We can assure Cecily that the Friends of Quinn Reserve merged with the Friends of the Water Race some years back to become the Friends of the Water Race and Quinn Reserve and are a small but very active group under the leadership of Ben Ellis. The Friends run regular working bees and Weed Swap days. They were instrumental in having the Puddle Dam at the end of the Water Race on Birmingham Road signposted.

Former Church for Sale

The former Union Church in Watkins Crescent went on the market in March. The photos here were provided courtesy The Professionals, with permission from the vendors.



Drawing of the Church as it was

Work began on the church, which was a joint venture of the Methodists and Baptists, in 1920. Surrounded by native bush, it was known as 'the Church in the Wildwood'. The Methodists bought it out sometime in the 1920s. With the merging of denominations in 1977, it became a Uniting Church.

By the beginning of the new century, the congregation had dwindled to a faithful few. A decision was reluctantly taken to close the church. The local community packed the building once more for the final service on 20 May 2001. This was followed by a campaign to keep the building in community use, preferably for religious purposes.

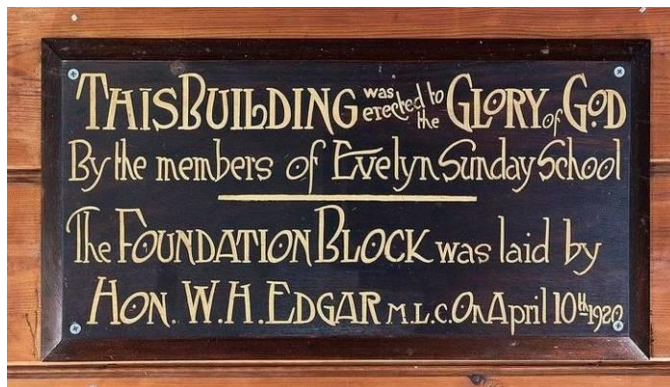


The Former Church from the Front

There was some disagreement over the best course of action: was it better to keep the building as a church but move it to another site, or keep it on the original site to be sold to a private owner? Eventually it was sold, fortunately to owners who valued its heritage. The beautiful timber interior has been preserved. Even the Foundation inscription and the Uniting Church sign have been retained.



The Timbered Interior



The Foundation Block from 1920

Karen Phillips

Vale Shirley Carn

Shirley May Carn (nee DUNSTONE), who died at her Monbulk home and garden on 11th April 2020, lived in Mt Evelyn at *Kimala*, on Old Hereford Road, during the 1990s, until around 2002.¹



Shirley Carn in her Last Garden at Monbulk: photo courtesy Mail News Group.

Shirley created several gardens in her lifetime, and was featured several times on ABC's *Gardening Australia*. She is interviewed by Jane Edmanson in Series 21 Episode 15.²

Shirley regularly opened her gardens in the Open Gardens Victoria scheme, to raise money for worthy causes.^{3 4}

Her family's death notice describes her as 'An exceptional Gardener with a passion for Australian native plants. Peace activist, feminist and fearless advocate of human rights for all. A valued and cherished friend of so many.'

In 2013 Diana Snape writes, 'Since her first garden in 1976, which had almost all Australian plants, Shirley Carn has successfully created five other Australian plant gardens on land varying in area from 3/4 acre to 10 acres. So this record of her latest garden gives just an example and indication of the many achievements of an extremely keen gardener and plantswoman (and hard worker). ... I visited her current garden in September 2013, not long before its sale was to

be finalised. It was then almost 10 years old, with an area of 3/4 acre.'⁵

Although not a member of the Mt Evelyn History Group Shirley was a member of the Australian Plant Society, Foothills Group, volunteered at Karwarra Gardens, and was a friend of several History Group members. Shirley was often to be found at Kuranga Nursery and the Paperbark Cafe, but never alone!

I am proud to have been one of her many friends.

Paula Herlihy

You Know You're Part of History When ...

You can remember 'doing the fruit' with your Mum from the age of about five.

Phil Garland, president of Southern Sherbrooke Historical Society and Chair of the Yarra Ranges Heritage Network, was reminiscing about first climbing the family plum and apricot trees and picking the fruit, and then preparing the fruit for preserving either in Vacola style preserving bottles, or as jam. For picking he used a peg bag to collect the fruit and carry it down. For bottling, he cut the fruit in half, removed the pips, and placed the fruit in the bottles. His Mum made the syrup and did the rest.

For jam, he cut the fruit in half and removed the pip, cut out any blemishes, and placed the fruit on the scales until he had one pound. He then placed the fruit in the big preserving pan, and moved a pip to a special spot as a counter. He then repeated, and when he had ten pounds of fruit in the pan (the proof was ten pips in the pile), he let his Mum know, and she started it cooking. His Mum measured out the sugar and when the fruit was soft, added the sugar and made the jam.

Phil's Mum had developed eczema, or contact dermatitis, when he was about five. She kept her hands and fingers medicated and wrapped with bandages made from torn sheets, and needed Phil to handle the fruit. He remembers he did this every year until he was about ten or older.

¹ Morrison House changed a Community, pp. 4,5.

² <https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/shirleys-native-garden/9431194>

³ <https://groups.oxfam.org.au/tag/open-garden/>

⁴ https://www.burnet.edu.au/news/1034_shirley_supports_burnet_hiv_research_in_memory_of_her_son

⁵ Garden Design Study Group Newsletter, Australian Native Plants Association, November 2013.

Vale Dot Ervine

Mt Evelyn loses another long-term resident. Dot Ervine, widow of Bill and mother of Jeannie, Deanne, Susanne, Bill and Rob, passed away January 30. Dot and Bill raised their family in Irvine Street, next door to our family, under fairly difficult circumstances. While Bill was a motor mechanic in Lilydale, Dot worked flat out doing piece work at the Ringwood Holeproof sock factory.

We children were invited in when the Ervines bought a television in about 1956-7. Dot worshipped Graham Kennedy's *In Melbourne*

Tonight and was amused by my inability to follow the plot of a cowboy show. In later life Dot was able to involve herself more in the community and she was an active member of the RSL. She was often seen supporting the efforts of the RSL in organising the sale of poppies and badges in front of IGA and at the Mt Evelyn Street Parties.

Our condolences to the Ervine children and to Deanne Webb from Mt Evelyn, in particular.

Janice Newton

From Kev's Rain Gauge				
Rainfall (in mm) for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, and Melbourne for the last three months.				
	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	YTD
Mt Evelyn	83.7	69.8	188.9	446.6
McKillop	95.5	67	199.5	464.7
Melbourne	76.2	71	138.4	400.8

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

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