



Things Past

Newsletter 26, April 2010

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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Dates for your diary

ANZAC Day Dawn Service, RSL Clubrooms, Birmingham Rd, Mt Evelyn, Sunday 25th April, 5.45am. All welcome.

History Group meeting, Tuesday 27th April 7.30pm, Old Community Link.

'History of Palmistry'. Back by popular demand, the great Steve Tucker will speak on the history of Palmistry, Saturday 22nd May 1 pm, Station House, Wray Crescent, Mt Evelyn. If you missed Steve's talk last year, enter this event in your diary now!

History Group meeting, Tuesday 22nd June 7.30pm, Old Community Link.

'Stories of your treasures'. Saturday 24th July at the Station House. Louise Blake will speak on recording the stories behind your family or personal treasures.

Queen's photo donated

Many thanks to Bob Gatherum for a recent donation of historic photos. Bob was the press photographer who took the photo of the Queen waving from the train at Lilydale during the 1954 royal tour. He has very generously donated the picture to the History Group.

Another photo shows Anthony McAleer and Bob at Anthony's talk 'We did but see her passing by'. Bob was kind enough to share his memories with us that day.



The Queen and prince Philip pass through Lilydale by train in 1954 (above). Left, Bob Gatherum receives the Shire's Certificate of Recognition, Australia Day 2009.

Youth Clubs in Mt Evelyn

We received the following letter from Mr Steve Nichols of Lillydale regarding Youth Clubs in the district.

I have just purchased a copy [of *Tracks to Trails*] and at this stage I have only browsed through it. I arrived in Mt Evelyn in August 1956 as a 14 year old and left in July 1999 to live at my present address. The book has evoked many a memory but there is one area where I may be able to give you some information.

On page 111 there is mention of various Youth Clubs in the town. During the late forties and early fifties, there were at least two attempts to get a Youth club operating. Both foundered after a brief period. Around 1960 a group of church-going young people in the Wandin North/Wandin Yallock area formed their own group: U2. Once formed, the group became self-managing with no connection to the church. The age group U2 aimed to attract was from mid-teens to early twenties.

U2 quickly became quite popular. One of their strengths was the regular dance they organised at the Wandin North Hall. Seeing what U2 offered, several young Mt Evelynites felt the same could be done in Mt Evelyn. One of these was Frank Feltham, a cabinet maker with Millard's and a drummer with Ray Kendall (a Warburton based band). In 1961 the Council sponsored a meeting at the Mt Evelyn Hall and about 50 young people turned out for it. Council agreed with the format and a steering committee was formed.

The new club adopted the name 'Mt Vale Club', as it was believed this name had been an early name for the town. The MVC was aimed at youth from thirteen years to twenty-five years and had at its best about 45 members. The last of the founding members had left by the beginning of 1966 and the Club had folded by 1967.

During its time the MVC ran regular dances, picnics, barbecues and theatre trips. One notable effort was a concert to raise money for the upkeep of the Hall. Early in the sixties, the Public Hall lost its

caretaker and the Club took on the task with relative success. During this time the Club, with help from Harold Souter, made a valiant effort to re-surface the Hall floor.

Just before the Club folded, it was rumoured that one of the executive had absconded with the funds, possibly several hundred dollars. After MVC folded, the various books were apparently left with the State Bank in Mt Evelyn, with the hope the Club could be revived. The U2 Club also folded around this time, as the originators passed retiring age.

The third group mentioned [in *Tracks to Trails*], Club 61, had nothing to do with either U2 or MVC and may have been Seville based or a district church group with similar aims. It is possible Club 61 lasted only a few months.

From Steve Nichols.

'Tales of old Mt Evelyn'

History Group members gathered at the Station House on 26th March to listen to tapes of 'Tales of Old Mt Evelyn', provided by Jean Edwards.

The recordings were made at Morrison House in 1978. Jean convened that meeting, so we were fortunate to have her to introduce the tapes. Dr Bill Hardy, who steered the discussion on that occasion, was also present. It was quite moving to hear the voices of some other old friends who are no longer with us.

There were memories of Mt Evelyn's early days as a township at the turn of the twentieth century. Topics included the squatters of Billygoat Hill, escaped criminals, riding the Flying Fox to Silvan, Cave Hill and David Mitchell's timber tramway, the Aqueduct and the typhoid-carrying nightcart-man.

An original document was passed round at the 1978 meeting recording the 1915 donation by Snowball and Kaufmann of land for the Mechanics Institute (the site of the present Public Hall). Trustees were appointed to manage the building; it was specified that Roman Catholics could use the Institute but could not serve as trustees. The document was entrusted to the Shire of Lillydale for safekeeping. It would be interesting to know whether the

document still exists. The Shire only received the title deeds to the land in 1967.

Thanks to Jean for bringing the tapes and suggesting the event.

‘My Life, My Yarra Ranges’

Maggie Solly and Kerry Rollins from the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum were present at the Station House to scan photos and collect stories (for the period 1950 to 2010) for the ‘My Life, My Yarra Ranges’ project. The images and information will be used in exhibitions, research, online displays and for introducing children to local history.

Mosaic and Turkish delight **Continuing Paula’s travel account**

The last days in Jordan promised to be very biblical. We visited Mt Nebo, the place where (possibly) Moses died and where he was given a view of the Promised Land. We could have visited one of the possible places that Moses struck a rock and water gushed forth but, since it was only the most likely of three spots, we were content to drive past it on the bus.



Mosaic map at Madaba



Doom to the diet-conscious: a sweet shop in Amman

Likewise there is a hot dispute about the pace that St John the Baptist baptized Christ, but our guide (a devout Muslim) had NO DOUBTS that the one he would take the group to was the genuine one and, from all we heard, he was correct.

We stayed in Madaba, which I had not previously heard of. We visited the St George Church somewhat reluctantly, since we could see from the outside that it was quite modern. I was unprepared to be so excited by the mosaic map that can now be seen on the floor of the reconstructed church.

Madaba had been a flourishing city during the Byzantine Empire from the 4th to the 7th centuries. Around 1850 it was a poor heap of rubble with a few inhabitants. Some Greek Orthodox Christians living east of the Dead Sea presented a petition to the Turkish government in Istanbul, asking to be allowed to settle in Madaba to escape dissension.

They were given permission to build churches exclusively on spots where churches had existed in antiquity. As a result, in 1884 they discovered a marvellous mosaic map that had been part of the floor of a large cathedral. The map has been dated to the 6th century, based on its style and content. The fragments were roughly repaired and incorporated into the new, smaller, St George’s Church.



Ruins of Roman amphitheatre, Jerash.

One fascinating feature of the Madaba map was the 'pixelation' of the representations of living beings. Cubes of the pavement representing the sailors on the Dead Sea, or the lion pursuing a gazelle, had been lifted and put back in random order. This was possibly done during an era of iconoclasm under a 'famous' iconoclast, Yazid II (720-724), or perhaps later by Bedouins, according to the book I bought (Herbert Donner, *The Mosaic Map of Madaba*, Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1992).

The book lines up features of the mosaic map with probable sources: the Holy Bible in Greek (the *Septuagint*), the territories of ancient Israelite tribes, called 'lots', the *Onomasticom of Biblical Place Names* geographical lexicon (320 A.D.), Byzantine road maps, itineraries and roads still in use. I pored over its pages happily for the next few days.

We hired a car and driver to visit the town of Amman and the ruins of the Roman city of Jerash. The main memory of Amman is the food. There are many shops full of amazing sweets – nougats and fruits and the best Turkish delight I have ever tasted. It would be worth returning to Amman for the Turkish delight. Jerash has hectares of Roman ruins, still under excavation. After Jerash, Rome paled in comparison.

Edited extract from Paula's travelogue

MEPS Archive – photos found!

Many thanks to Joan Vanderhorn and Anne Welsh, who spent hours sorting through the Mt Evelyn Primary School archives. They have unearthed the reproduction photos from the 75th Anniversary history, which will make production of the forthcoming Centenary Edition much easier. Anne has typed up a list of the contents of the archive boxes. Among other goodies was a folder of newspaper clippings from 1987 to 1995.

YRHN grant application

Paula has put in a grant application for the Yarra Ranges Heritage Network for History Week 2010, auspiced by Mt Evelyn History Group. She apologises for not having consulted more widely before going ahead with this, but time was running short. We auspiced a similar application last year, so it seemed unlikely that anyone would object.

Correction

In the previous issue, I incorrectly stated that Mr Ross Martin was the owner of West Hill. His property in Lara Court was one of 17 lots from the West Hill Estate, but the original West Hill house is opposite his. My apologies for the error.

The story about the elm planted by Melba came from a neighbour in Lara Court. We are hoping that Sue Thompson from the Lillydale and District Historical Society will be able to give us more information when she returns from overseas. Sue is, of course, the go-to lady for all things connected with Melba.

From Kev's rain gauge

Rainfall for March 2010 for Mt Evelyn, Melbourne and the Melbourne average:

Mt Ev	Melb	Melb Av
87.3mm	79.0mm	50.2mm

Kevin Phillips