

# Things Past

Newsletter 63

May 2013

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

PO Box 101 Mt Evelyn VIC 3796

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## Dates for your diary

No History Group meeting in May.

Yarra Valley Singers' annual concert, Sunday 23 June, Wandin North Hall.

History Group general meeting, Thursday 27 June, 7.30-9.30pm RSL Hall Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn.

## Book launch: *The Happy Hermits*

The launch of our book *The Happy Hermits* at the RSL Hall on Saturday 20 April was highly successful, with about 60 people attending. The book contains photos of camping holidays in Evelyn in the early 1900s and a diary by two girls who spent a week at Holly Lodge.

The Yarra Valley Singers, conducted by Director of Music Belinda Gillam and accompanied by Amanda Kepert, were in fine voice. They got us into the mood with a

medley of songs that were popular 100 years ago. One song, 'Hope will banish sorrow' ('Once again we're doomed to part'), is mentioned in the book. The two diary writers performed this song as a duet in 1911. Social historian Dr Terence FitzSimons tracked down the song, which the Singers learned especially for the occasion.

The Yarra Valley Singers generously waived their usual performance fee. 'We are a local community choir and would like to support the History Group', wrote Manager Nerida Clerk. We thank the choir for their outstanding performance and support.



**Group portrait, left to right, Cr Maria McCarthy, Bronwyn Higgs, Joy Carrick, Karen Phillips, Paula Herlihy and Anthony McAleer. Photo Greg Carrick.**

Cr Maria McCarthy spoke of Yarra Ranges Council's commitment to supporting local history. Maria herself is an enthusiast, having been part of a dedicated committee that published the award winning book *Tales from a Suitcase* about early Italian settlement in the Yarra Valley.

Launching *The Happy Hermits*, Anthony McAleer outlined the history of tourists and 'weekenders' in Mt Evelyn. Visitors were part of our identity. The prefix 'Mount' was added to 'Evelyn' largely to attract people to the town. Anthony is always coming across people who used to holiday here (see p.5 for the story of

**Continued p.4**

## To the Gulf of Carpentaria by Moke, part 5

Leaving Gulargambone on a cool but sunny Monday morning, a short drive to Gilgandra & then on to Dubbo, where we stopped for fuel & coffee. Dubbo is a large sprawling country centre. Continuing down the Newell Hwy, Peak Hill was the next stop in mind but when we were about 8 kms out of Dubbo, cruising along nicely, great driving conditions ... over the CB came the words 'trouble trouble'.

I pulled off on the shoulder of road to look back and saw Bob's Moke rolling to a stop, enveloped in a mist of blue oil smoke .... A quick turnaround & drove the short distance back to Bob's moke. The oil smell & oil trail were signs that this was not good.

Inspection time ... everything covered in oil, locked in top gear but could still roll, a split in the gear box casing & most of the 5 litres of oil on the highway. We were going to need a sense of humour. Phone calls to the RACV & the Auto club of NSW & in just over an hour the breakdown vehicle had arrived. As he braked on the hwy to pull in to where we were parked, he locked up his front wheels on the oil slick.

The Mechanic approached us and said, 'Bit slippery out there today boys? Let's see what you've done'. Lifted the bonnet, took one look at the oil covered motor, all the oil on the ground, lowered the bonnet and said, 'That's ..., I'd best order you a tilt tray'.

After another hour's wait Bob's Moke was on the tilt tray & heading to the compound yard on the other side of Dubbo. Took out some food & clothes, organized the hire car to be picked up the following day (RACV total care) & then went off & found a cabin in one of the bigger caravan parks, the temperature was -3°



**Aghhh! Gryphon guarding a property at Dubbo. Or is this the last of the pterodactyls?**



**Open cut gold mine at Peak Hill, NSW. The old diggings have become a tourist attraction.**

overnight, stayed indoors, cooked ourselves a good meal & relaxed after the day's ordeal.

First job the next morning was to pick up Bob's new wheels, a Holden Cruze from Hertz rentals, then back to the compound yard to collect all of Bob's gear & pack it into his rental car for the trip home. Driving back out of Dubbo, we stopped at a property which has a big Gryphon (dragon) statue along with a Neptune Bomber & some Army trucks as his front yard attractions.

The next stop was Peak Hill which was a gold mining town (open cut) right up to 2002, free walking tracks around the old diggings, shafts & open cut craters ... well worth the stop if you are passing by. Next was the CSIRO radio telescope at Parkes, huge, great display & when you see it, it reminds you of the movie *The Dish*.

Down to Forbes, great driving day but I've got this white Cruze behind me all the time. While at Forbes we went to McFeeters Motor Museum, a stunning purpose built building to house a meticulously restored collection of vehicles & bikes, it is privately owned and funded and worth the stop. At their suggestion we stayed the night at the Apex Riverside Park in a cabin overlooking the Lachlan River. A great place to stay in Forbes.

Out from Forbes the next morning it was cool but dry & a change of direction taking a whole series of back roads through some great farming & grazing country, down to Temora and the Warbirds Aviation Museum. This is aviation history from the early 1900s through to the Vietnam conflict & the Museum has some of the best flying restored Warbirds, world renowned. Bob & I spent 2 or 3 hours in

**Continued p.3**



## The future of Cave Hill

Lime production at Cave Hill, begun by David Mitchell in 1878, is coming to an end. A 'mini-suburb' of 3-4000 dwellings is planned for the site. Cr McCarthy reported at the May METIC meeting that the quarry will be filled in and become public open space. The quarry and its buffer zone cover an area of 161 hectares. Sibelco (formerly Unimin, which bought Cave Hill from the Mitchell family in 2002) is legally bound to rehabilitate the site. As Glenn Golds' photo of Peak Hill on p.2 shows, there are other ways to rehabilitate a quarry than by filling it in. The Butchart quarry on Vancouver Island has been turned into a sunken garden. Then there are the sink hole gardens of Mt Gambier. Cave Hill, an ancient coral reef, was famous for its marine fossils and limestone caves. The caves figure in Woiwurrung legend and could perhaps be opened to the public. There is said to be a beautiful blue lake at the bottom of the quarry. It seems a waste for the owners to spend \$40 million obliterating a feature of so much geological and historical interest.

The Cave Hill site contains the heritage listed Butter, Cheese and Bacon Factory, built 1892-4. The WWII Memorial Gates, and surviving relics of the lime kilns, water race, water tunnel and tramway, are also listed in Council's heritage overlay. Sibelco is keen to preserve the historic buildings and infrastructure.

See: *Things Past* 40.

**Karen Phillips**

[http://www.nelliemelbamuseum.com.au/cave\\_hill\\_quarry.htm](http://www.nelliemelbamuseum.com.au/cave_hill_quarry.htm)

[http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/yarraranges/result\\_details/115201](http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/yarraranges/result_details/115201)

[http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/yarraranges/result\\_details/115650](http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/yarraranges/result_details/115650)

Sibelco Community Consultative Committee: <http://www.sibcoccc.org.au/>



*Lilydale & YV Leader*: <http://lilydale-yarra-valley-leader.whereilive.com.au/news/story/have-your-say-lilydales-new-mini-suburb/>  
<http://attractions.uptake.com/blog/butchart-gardens-vancouver-island-british-columbia-canada-1030.html>



**Historic features at Cave Hill. Bottom left, the Butter, Cheese and Bacon Factory. Above, this 'drainage line' channel may have been part of the Cave Hill water race. Photos Jean Edwards, 2005.**

**Moke trip, from p.2**

awe of the fighting aircraft that our Airmen had flown in combat.

Down towards Wagga Wagga & a quick lunch stop at Uranquinty, then on to Wodonga to an overnight stop where it's getting colder & wet. It was 11 degrees when we left Temora. We got a cabin in Wodonga Caravan Park, now it is wet!!! Had dinner at Edwards Tavern across the road, great food & open fires (welcome back to Victoria).

Out early the next morning, wet. Straight on to the Hume Freeway where we took the exit to Euroa, climbed up over the Strathbogie Ranges heading to Merton & we have just run in to a storm front, black, raining, sleet & 4 degrees. A lunch & fuel stop at the Yea Roadhouse then down the highway to Lilydale ... HOME ... where Bob & I shook hands and said 'See you Saturday night at the presentation dinner'.

So, there you have it ... an excellent adventure, 37 days, 7250 kms, met some new friends, caught up with club members & relatives in FNQ. I must thank my wife Mary for letting me do the trip, considering she was not well when we left & progressively got worse. We nearly turned around and came home from Birdsville. Would I do another trip like this again? Hmm ... never say never!

**Glenn Golds**

**From p.1**

Cal Younger). Bearing out Anthony's claim that 'all roads lead to Mt Evelyn', two members of the Collingwood Historical Society were present, renewing the long-standing connection between the two areas.

Editor Karen Phillips explained how the book came about. She thanked everyone who had contributed to its content and production: Joy Carrick for design, Paula Herlihy for proof-reading and the map of Evelyn in 1911, Bronwyn Higgs for her research, writing and permission to reproduce the historic material. Bronwyn has gone to great lengths to share her family history items with interested people. Bronwyn, who wrote the history of the Hermits, told of her feelings on taking charge of the family history collection. The Hermits' photos and the diary of a trip to Evelyn were the items that most caught her imagination. Fred Higgs, one of the Hermits, was her father's cousin.

Paula thanked the speakers, the Yarra Valley Singers and everyone who helped on the day. Steve Kaylock was an imaginative MC, even displaying hitherto unsuspected talents as a tap dancer. Steve and his wife Dee also provided an antique HMV gramophone and 78 rpm records. Jaccy Mabbett adorned the Hall with Japanese Ikenobo flower arrangements. Guests were going round methodically photographing each one.

Thanks also to Louise Fitinghoff (book sales), Rosemary Baker (food supervisor), Greg Carrick (photographer), Bernard Phillips (barman); to Ian Mabbett, Tim Herlihy, Kevin, Dan and Greg Phillips, Glenn and Mary Golds for setting up, to everyone who provided afternoon tea and helped with the cleanup, and to Paula, Kevin and Karen for organisation and publicity. Sorry if we've left anyone out; the launch was a community event and so many people contributed to its success.

Thanks also to the RSL for allowing us the use of their kitchen (the Hall kitchen is being renovated) and to President Roger Boness for his assistance. The Hall has gained a new lease of life with its recently polished floor, which has come up to a mirror finish.

*The Happy Hermits* was published with a Cultural Development Grant from Yarra Ranges Council. We thank Council for their ongoing support for history publications. We also appreciate the support of METIC, LDHS and historians from neighbouring groups. The book is available from the Mount Evelyn History Group for \$12.

You can hear the Yarra Valley Singers again at their annual concert in the Wandin North Hall on Sunday 23 June. For details see <http://www.yarravalleysingers.org.au/>

**Karen Phillips**



**Clockwise from above: Belinda Gillam leads the Yarra Valley Singers, accompanied by Amanda Kepert on keyboard; Ikenobo arrangement by Jaccy Mabbett; MC Steve Kaylock with his antique gramophone. Photos Kevin Phillips.**



## Bertie and Ada O'Connor

Bertie and Ada O'Connor and their five children (Alf, Charlie, Rhoda, Vic and Norm) holidayed and/or lived at Mt Evelyn at various times in the 1920s and 1930s.

Bertie and Ada married in Northcote in 1905. They lived in Northcote and then Preston. Bertie worked with the Melbourne Harbour Trust until about 1924, when he was very ill and spent a year in hospital.

Their daughter Rhoda recalled: 'When Father went to hospital Mother had three pence in her purse, when he came back she had a factory with four girls working in it.' When he came home he used to take the shoes which they had sewn for Grosby's and others back to the factories. Ada had stalls at the Victoria and Dandenong markets. Ada and Rhoda would sell slippers while Alf's wife Eileen sold hats and dresses (Eileen's father taught ballroom dancing and ran picture shows in a hall in North Carlton, her mother had a hat shop). Ada also used to paint pictures at night to sell. One was of King Billy at the Battle of the Boyne, which Bertie gave to the Grand Lodge. Rhoda remembered the dining room walls at Carlisle Street Preston that had canvas on them on which Ada had painted pictures.

With the Depression life became increasingly difficult. In the early 1930s Ada gave up the factory and moved with Bertie and the two youngest boys Vic and Norm to Fernhill Road, Mt Evelyn. Ada had bought five acres of land at Mt Evelyn which she subdivided into half acre lots, of which she kept three and sold the rest. Her sister Gwen Schultz and family lived



Our logo picture of the O'Connor and Schultz families c.1927. Left, Ada O'Connor (in hat) holding Norm; front left, Rhoda; centre, Gwen Schultz in fur coat, Harold Schultz in cap; right, Charlie with wife Isobel; front right, Vic.

nearby and her brother-in-law John Stalker also owned land there. Growing vegetables and having a cow made it easier to live in Mt Evelyn and with their horse and dray Bertie used to cut and sell wood.

When his eldest son Alf finished his legal training, Bertie returned to Melbourne and worked for him doing conveyancing. Ada was lonely up at Mt Evelyn and Vic had to go to school so they returned to Melbourne. In about 1936 the family moved to Hutton Street Northcote, where Bertie and Ada lived until their deaths in the early 1950s.

Norm, the youngest of the family, is still alive and remembers living in Mt Evelyn.

**Family history notes compiled about 1979 by Janet Taylor (Vic's daughter-in-law). Janet attended our book launch.**

### An unexpected connection

Anthony McAleer has been working on the war diaries of Noel Anderson (ex-President of Mt Evelyn RSL), who flew with Bomber Command during WWII. One of the men Noel trained with, Cal Younger, was one of the few to have survived the war and was still living in England. Cal was shot down over France and spent 3 years as a POW. Anthony contacted him and found that he remembered Noel quite well. Cal even had a Mt Evelyn connection of his own.

*Strangely, I know Mt Evelyn very well. My aunts had a holiday shack there and I often cycled up with a friend for a weekend there. Several years after the war my aunts added an extension and went to live there. My half-sister Mab lived with them and after they died she stayed on her own. When she herself died, I think in 1988, I was her sole heir, so I owned the house for a short time.*

*Her executor was our cousin, one Sir Rupert Hamer, who was rather surprised to find himself still her executor after more than 30 years. However he did a good job. It took me days to clear the house and it would seem that I could have met Noel at that time, had I known he was in the vicinity - Cal.*

**From Anthony McAleer**

Mab Younger was editor of *Your Garden* magazine and author of *Garden Design in Australia and New Zealand* and *Practical Garden Design for Australia and New Zealand*. We have some of her family photos. One of Mab as a small child is in *Tracks to Trails*, p.193.

## In memory

Dr Bill Hardy's children, Peter, John and Christine, unveiled a plaque in his memory at the RSL rose garden after the ANZAC Day Dawn Service. Right, the garden and memorial wall. Inset, Dr Bill's plaque. Photos Kevin Phillips.



## Avenues of Honour

Victorians are invited to become involved in an innovative pilot project – The Avenues of Honour 1915-2015 – honouring the memory of more than 102,000 Australians who died in the service of their country.

The Avenues of Honour 1915-2015 project is a national initiative to honour with a tree the memory of every individual who has made the supreme sacrifice on behalf of all Australians. The aim is to document, preserve and reinstate the original Avenues of Honour and establish new ones by the Centenary of Gallipoli in 2015. The first stage of the project is capturing information about existing and lost Avenues of Honour and the people commemorated by them. TREENET, a national not-for-profit organisation based in Adelaide, has established a database of all known Avenues and is collecting other information to build a comprehensive national record.

This database will enable the development of new digital and online access to information, connecting communities and descendants to the full record of their Avenues of Honour. Promotion and participation online will help efforts to restore and, in some cases, re-establish the Avenues as part of the Centenary of ANZAC. **From Alan Bennett, ERL**

See 'Avenues of Honour':  
<http://www.avenuesofhonour.org/>

Mt Evelyn's much lamented Avenue of Honour is mentioned on the database, but only that it commemorated WWI and was destroyed. We can at least fill in some of the details.

Suggestions have been made at various times about replanting our lost Avenue. The difficulty lay in finding a suitable site.

## More on road names

Looking at more of our real estate plans (See 'The coaches stopped here', *Things Past* 62), I found another for the Evelyn Heights Estate. It calls Monbulk Road 'Main Coach Road to Silvan & Monbulk'. Another, of Adams Estate and Range View Estate, has Monbulk Road as 'Coach Road to Silvan & Monbulk'. Both are undated. A 1924 plan of the Cave Hill Estate has Hereford Road, then under construction, as 'Evelyn Monbulk Road'.

Mr Robert Nation, the mail contractor, used to run coaches from Olinda Vale to parts of the Dandenongs, including South Wandin and Monbulk. We met Robert Nation's descendant, Pam Dunn, at the book launch. **Karen Phillips**

## From Kev's rain gauge

Rainfall for April 2013 for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, Melbourne and Melbourne average.\*

Mt Ev	McK	Melb	Melb Av
24.4mm	24.15mm	27.2mm	57.7mm

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

**Kevin Phillips**

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