

Things Past

Newsletter 84

February 2015

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

PO Box 289 Mt Evelyn VIC 3796 A0051327F



Dates for your diary

History Group meeting Monday 16 February, 7.30pm at Hardy House.

Bottle collector Ron Nutt will speak on Saturday 21 March, 1.30pm at Hardy House.

The belt and the bugle

In *Things Past* #54 (August 2012), we reported on a World War I ammunition belt in the possession of Rosemary Cox. The belt, acquired at a school fête, had a label identifying it as having belonged to store-owner Ernest Pearson.

Research by Anthony McAleer showed that Ernest Albert Pearson grew up in Ascot Vale and enlisted on 5 February 1916. The slight, fresh-faced lad of 16 convinced the recruiting officer that he was an 18 year old salesman.

Pearson served with the 37th Battalion on the Western Front and was awarded the Military Medal. His citation reads:

At ARMENTIÈRES on the 2nd January 1917, he displayed great courage during a heavy enemy bombardment. He carried a despatch



Above, Rosemary Cox with Ernest Pearson's ammunition belt, RSL President Roger Boness and Eric Smith with the bugle. Below left, the bugle with cord; below, the inscription 'EAP 37^{BA} AIF'. Photos by Kevin Phillips.

to the Battalion on the left along the front line, and although knocked over by a shell, he succeeded in delivering his despatch and returning with a reply. On his return he was found to be suffering from shell shock, and has to receive medical attention.

While receiving medical treatment, Pearson was found to be underage. He was taken out of the army and made to serve in a General Hospital until he turned 19. He enlisted again in the Australian Flying Corps in 1918 (this time giving his pre-war occupation as 'Engineer Apprentice'). He trained as a

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pilot but the war ended before he could fly in action.

Pearson returned to Australia in 1919 and was discharged with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant. He moved to Mt Evelyn in the 1930s and ran the store next door to the Primary School. He passed away on 24 October 1981.

Rosemary donated Ernest Pearson's ammunition belt to the Mt Evelyn RSL, where it was placed on display.

Meanwhile, Eric Smith of Eaglemont was visiting Mr Gordon Kinghorn in Newcastle, England. He happened to mention that he had served 14 years in the RAF and had been Champion Trumpeter in 1968. This touched off a memory for his host, who produced a battered bugle that a friend's grandfather had picked up on a French battlefield in 1917.

The bugle had the inscription 'EAP 37^{BA} AIF'. The Imperial War Museum could tell him only that the 37th Battalion was an Australian unit, raised in Victoria in 1916, that fought with distinction on the Western Front. Mr Kinghorn asked Eric to try to trace EAP's descendants so that he could return the bugle to them.

Eric's research revealed only one name in the 37th Battalion with the initials 'EAP' – Ernest Albert Pearson. He googled the name and found Anthony's article about Pearson's ammunition belt in *Things Past*. Eric contacted the Mt Evelyn RSL. Finding that Pearson had no surviving family, he thought the best place for the bugle would be alongside the ammunition belt in the RSL clubrooms.

Mr Kinghorn forwarded the bugle to Eric, who presented it to the Mt Evelyn RSL on 14 January. To prove it would still play, he even blew a few notes on it. The bugle will go on display along with the ammunition belt in memory of Ernest Albert Pearson MM.

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Above, the Horn Bugle emblem inscribed on Pearson's bugle. Below left, mark of the maker, Henry Potter and Co. Below, badge of the British Light Infantry 1968-2007 (Wikipedia).

The Horn Bugle

In addition to the inscription 'EAP 37^{BA} AIF', Ernest Pearson's bugle is engraved (by the same method of hammering in a point or chisel) with a design of a Horn Bugle suspended by a cord with three loops.

The Australian War Memorial (Military Heraldry and Technology Section) states: 'during the war all infantry units wore the Rising Sun badge. However, some wore unofficial badges that were often based on badges from pre-war units but the pre-war badge for the 37th Infantry was different to this one. The badge is similar to that used by pre-war buglers. Rifles regiments before 1900 also had that type of badge. Unfortunately it rarely states if someone is a bugler on their service records.'

The Horn Bugle was also used as a badge by British Light Infantry regiments. Operating in advance of the front line, the Light Infantry evolved



a system of bugle calls to communicate commands. The bugle thus became their emblem. Military bugles derived originally from ox horns.

Pearson's bugle was made by Henry Potter and Company of Charing Cross Road London in 1912. The firm, founded in 1810, is still in business. They confirmed that they had supplied instruments to the Australian forces but could not say whether the bugle was shipped to Australia or supplied after the Battalion reached England. **Karen Phillips**

Genie Stroud: Kindergarten Play Leader with 'Chutzpah' (1920-1999)

One of the delights of doing oral history interviews in preparation for the writing of *Tracks to Trails* was getting to know the fascinating qualities of some parents of my school mates and contemporaries from early years in Mt Evelyn. Eugenie Stroud became the play leader at Mt Evelyn kindergarten in 1954, the year I attended and the year the Queen and Prince Phillip passed by on the train to Warburton. I was delighted that the Queen was on 'our' side of the train and that she waved to us, but Genie remembers some disappointment among the children that 'She' was not wearing a crown.

There were other thrills for the children, though as the railway men threw comics and balls from the train for them and there was excitement when the fire brigade would rush into their shared hall to grab their helmets and race off to a fire. (*Lilydale and Yarra Valley Express*, 23 February 1982, p.3). Many, many Mt Evelyn children and residents who knew Genie will remember, among other things, a woman who spoke very rapidly and who told an excellent story. Towards the later years of her life she accomplished a mission which, for a woman with fairly limited assets, struck me as audacious, and therefore demonstrating 'chutzpah' ...

I thought at one stage of the game I had reached my last couple of years. I was with my grandchildren and they were watching Walt Disney on television. They were saying, 'Oh we'd love to go to Disneyland'. Of course, the old brain started ticking over. I had a look in my purse and I knew it would not be enough. I said, 'Would you like to go to Disneyland, would you?' 'Oh, yes, Nanna!'

A wild, vague scheme (began to shape itself). Well, they'll get the old house when I go anyway. I might go and see the bank manager and see if I can get a mortgage on the house. I thought, well, at least that will be my legacy. I'll go with them and I can see what they've done with the money. I said to the kids, don't you say a word to anybody because I don't even know if I can do it. 'Oh, no, Nanna.' They weren't going to say a word. And with that, my



Genie and grandchildren, above, on their American holiday. Photo courtesy John Stroud.

son John's car pulled in the driveway. Up the passage went the lot of them. 'Guess what, Dad! We're going to Disneyland!'

Dead silence. Dad was stunned. They wouldn't agree for some time. You know, words like, 'You're getting on a bit, Mum', 'Not as well as you were'. The word 'senile' wasn't actually used. I think they were hoping the Bank Manager would say no, but he was very nice about the whole thing and off we went to Disneyland. All good, but a misinterpretation of the ticket return time from Honolulu, one minute past midnight, not midday, gave the airlines and travel companies a few headaches but we had a ball, an extra week in Honolulu in the swimming pool with the kids. I don't think the kids will forget that but the family were a bit grey and ragged when we got back. They had a great big banner, 'Welcome Home Mum'.

Genie Elliot was born in 1920 in East Melbourne to a family with Irish and French connections. Her electrician father was often out of work and her mother, raised in a convent, had married at seventeen and it was 'not the best job she could have ever had, poor Mum.' Embittered at her own experience in the convent, Genie's mother did not register them in any particular Church. 'We had a lovely time going to every Church's anniversary. We went to all the picnics and we had quite a good thing going when we were kids. It was about our only entertainment.'

Genie went to school at Kew, then in Richmond before gaining her Merit and a special exemption to leave school at twelve years old.

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She began work at Moran and Cato's Grocery store in Swan Street Richmond. 'Forty-eight hours work for 12/6 a week, out of which I had to pay 10/- board and buy my own clothes'. Genie loved eating the lollies and giving her friends bargains while on the lolly counter but she had an accident at work and the boss found out she was only twelve so she was 'out the door, quick smart' and had to 'retire' for the next two years. 'Retirement consisted of looking after a household of mother, father, sister, myself, Auntie Ella, Uncle Jack, Lorraine and Eila. We all had to share a two storey house in Richmond because of the Depression.'

Then at the height of the Depression 'Dad decided he wasn't particularly crazy about work anyway and he was always in trouble.' Dad was a great big six foot-four handsome man 'with a streak of larceny in him a mile wide.' 'In those days they had what they call SP bookies. Dad was the "cockatoo" for some time and thought he was onto a good thing. He began to take betting money himself, but didn't put it on the horses, so one day, when the favourite won, Dad took off to the bush. We didn't see him for quite some time.' Genie, her sister, Marie Louise, and her mother each gained factory work at Kodak, Abbotsford. 'It was a time when it was not done for women to work, so Mum put up with a lot. ... Mum got diabetes at 35 and had to give up work so it was just Marie and I working. We didn't have much of a (time in our) teenage years.'



Above, Genie, her father and sister Marie in the 1930s. Photo courtesy John Stroud.

On her 21st birthday in 1941, Genie and her sister went to a Healesville guest house for the celebration. Genie saw a young man who looked like Nelson Eddie, the singer. It was Gordon Stroud whom she married right at the end of the war in 1945.

Weddings in these times were more austere affairs, mine in particular. I had a double wedding. I was married with my cousin. The food problem! Trying to make a wedding cake ... One neighbour donated some dried up currants and somebody just happened to have a chook that had laid an egg that morning. The whole area contributed to make a wedding cake. Cream was a 'no no' unless you were an invalid or nursing mother. China ... you couldn't get a Glory Box together. We used to pinch stuff from the Railways. It was the only way you could get cups and saucers. Most of my spoons are branded 'Property of Rosella'. Wedding gowns were mostly made out of parachutes.

The newly married couple moved to Gordon's parent's home in Caulfield. There was room for only one 'Mrs. Stroud', so this didn't last and they moved in with friends in Richmond. When this house was sold they decided to make a break and move to Mt Evelyn. Genie had already visited Mt Evelyn as a Kodak factory worker on holiday. Chummy (Charlie) Flemming, Laurel Meades' father, worked with Genie's father on the wharves.

Chummy had this little old shack down in Clematis Road and he offered it to us for a weekend holiday when we were working at Kodak. So six of us girls came up here like the dwarves, you know, singing, 'Hi Ho, Hi Ho' with our suitcase and our lamp. . . . We didn't know a thing. We didn't even know they had tarantulas in the house either, till we screamed and ran. And there were little mice sitting in the corner. We didn't know you didn't carry a lit tilly lamp in the rain. You don't expect it to break. It was a silly, stupid adventure. We thought we heard someone walking past at night saying, 'There's six sheilas in there'. Well, we six sheilas were having a blue fit! We'd never seen a dunny before. It was all very embarrassing, sort of thing. A lot of giggling went on. We were only twenty, twenty-one and we thoroughly enjoyed every bit of it. It was a nice place to visit but we didn't want to live there, sort of thing.

Genie Stroud, from p.4

But one of the prettiest things I've ever seen was going home on the Monday was that old station, when the train came around the corner... It was frosty, thick on the ground and tiny little robin red breasts and blue wrens all hopping around in this white that looked like snow. And then the train came round and it was red and green and this great plume of white smoke. That was something that always stuck in my mind.

Gordon also had links with Mt Evelyn. His father had retired from the tramways and had bought a cheap block of land near Irvine Street and Gordon and Genie often came up to help build a cottage. Sometimes they stayed in the holiday house 'Rosetta', behind the old police station. On one such occasion about 1947 they also decided to visit a gymkhana at the Recreation Reserve.

And I'm sitting there watching the events and something keeps pushing me from behind and when I turned around it was horse, complete with rider of course. He kept butting me. We got talking (with the girl, not the horse) and the girl turned out to be Lena Morrison, a local from Lilydale. She said, 'Why don't you come to the pictures tonight? We just live across the road from the picture show. We'll see you at the picture show and you can come over for supper.' Well, we were townies and we weren't quite used to the openness of the country people.

Although they tried to 'nick out' of the Athenaeum Theatre Lena wouldn't let go so they went to supper. Norm, Lena's husband horrified them when he shouted 'Bloody Mosquitoes' at a mosquito on his leg and stabbed it with a knife. 'I was going to be sick. There was a knife sticking out of his leg. We looked at Lena and she was killing herself laughing. He pulled up his trousers to reveal his wooden leg. That was his favourite party trick.' They got talking and the Morrisons suggested the couple 'move up this way', declaring that with a car to get to the station they could still travel to their factory jobs.

Next time the Strouds visited Mt Evelyn they saw a sign in George Dorward's window saying '75 Hupmobile for sale', so Gordon bought it. Three weeks later they received a note from Estate Agent Hughie Wray saying there was a house available in York Road for rent at 35/- a week. That was how they moved to Mt Evelyn in 1947.

Janice Newton

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The belt and the bugle, from p.2

There is a further twist to Pearson's story: he had a 'shadow'.

Two Ernest Albert Pearsons served in the 1st AIF. Both were born in Melbourne. Both enlisted in February 1916, five days apart, in the newly-formed 37th Battalion. Both sailed to England on the same voyage of the *Persic* and both embarked for France on 22 November 1916. The 'other' Ernest Albert Pearson was a 21 year old labourer who enlisted at Wangaratta. Serving in France, he was wounded twice. The second time a shell exploded in his face and he lost an eye as a result. He returned to Australia, was discharged from the Army 15 November 1918 and then seems to have moved interstate. This Ernest Pearson was unlikely to be the 'EAP' who owned the bugle, as he was transferred to a special unit and spent only a short time with the 37th Battalion. Buglers, moreover, were usually the youngest lads in the unit.

While it can't be proved that Ernest Pearson of Mt Evelyn owned this bugle, or even that he was a bugler, it seems reasonably likely. Eric Smith speculated that Pearson might even have lost the bugle when thrown down by the shell blast. At the very least, two relics of the 37th Battalion from World War I have been reunited and are now on display together.

A group photo of the 37th Battalion shows several of the men wearing ammunition belts like Pearson's: <http://anzacresearch.tripod.com/id66.htm> Another photo on the same site includes two of the buglers. **Karen Phillips**

Sources: research by Anthony McAleer, Eric Smith and Gordon Kinghorn; Australian War Memorial; National Archives; 37th Battalion website; Henry Potter & Co. website; British Light Infantry Regiments: http://britisharmedforces.org/li_pages/index.htm.

British surname website

Here's an interesting website for anyone with a surname originating in Great Britain: <http://gbnames.publicprofiler.org/Surnames.aspx> Click on 'Search for a Surname', type in the name and see its distribution in the census of 1998. Compare that with the 1881 distribution (almost always more concentrated back then). It will give a good idea of the region in Britain where the name originated. For world surnames see:

<http://worldnames.publicprofiler.org/Default.aspx?region=!WORLD-EUROPE>

Honouring our Vietnam vets

After six years of negotiations, the long-awaited howitzer was installed at the Mt Evelyn RSL Memorial Gardens on 4 February. The howitzer arrived by semi-trailer and was swung into position by a crane. Avoiding trees, poles and power lines, the crane operators Garner & Wheeler lined up the howitzer precisely with the memorial obelisk and flagpole.

The howitzer was manufactured in 1955 by Sorel Industries Limited, Canada, and belonged to the United States armed forces.



Photos from top: unloading the howitzer; placing it on the prepared site; staring down the barrel. Photos Kevin Phillips.

The RSL plans to dedicate it as a memorial to all Vietnam War personnel who have lived in Mt Evelyn. Howitzers of this type provided support for the Australian troops in Vietnam.

Congratulations

Several Mt Evelyn people were honoured in the Yarra Ranges Australia Day awards. Roger Boness, President of Mt Evelyn RSL, received the Mayor's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Ben Ellis, President of Friends of Water Race & Quinn Reserve, was Environmental Achiever of the Year. This was the second time for Ben, who shared the award in 2003. Though now living in Mornington, Ben remains committed to improving the environment in Quinn Reserve and along Mt Evelyn's historic Water Race.

Prue Northey of Mt Evelyn, Chair of Relay for Life, was Youth Citizen of the Year. Andrew Roberts of Edge Martial Arts received a Certificate of Recognition. History Group member Gwenda Donaldson received a Certificate of Recognition from Casey MP Tony Smith in December.

Congratulations to all Award recipients.

From Kev's rain gauge

Rainfall for January 2015 for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, Melbourne and Melbourne average.

Mt Ev	McK	Melb	Melb Av
53.9mm	58.25mm	47.4mm	43.1mm

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.

Editor: Karen Phillips

karen.m.l.phillips@gmail.com

President: Paula Herlihy

herlihy@alphalink.com.au

or telephone 9736 2935 and leave message

Memberships & newsletter distribution:

Kevin Phillips, kev.phillips@bigpond.com

General enquiries:

historygroup@mountevelyn.vic.au

Postal address: Mount Evelyn History Group Inc.,

PO Box 289, Mt Evelyn, VIC 3796, Australia.

Website: www.mt-evelyn.net/historygroup

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