



Things Past

Newsletter 108

February 2018

PO Box 289 Mt Evelyn Vic 3796

Incorporation Number: A0051327F

Dates for Your Diary

General Business Meeting, Monday 26 February 7:30 – 9:30 pm, at Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn.

'Coin Collecting', Tim Herlihy, Saturday 17 March, at Hardy House.

General Business Meeting, Monday 16 April 7:30 – 9:30 pm, at Hardy House.

Seminar, Saturday 28 April, time to be advised, Lilydale Primary School U3A premises. The Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) will provide the Heritage Network (members of MEHG are invited) with a **Succession Planning** seminar. (Probably) Christine Worthington will present on collections and Dr Bernadette Flynn, Executive Officer, Royal Historical Society NSW will discuss succession planning along with Patrick Watt, Museum Program Director, YRC, who has experience in this area. The RHSV has been developing this program with the RHS of NSW, and John Petersen has negotiated this seminar with Associate Professor Don Garden, President, RHSV.

Meetings are 3rd Mondays of even months, 7:30 pm at Hardy House for General Business Meetings, and 3rd Saturdays at 1:30 pm on odd months (except January) for speaker/activity. Dates are subject to speaker availability and other factors.

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Geoff Olney (1913-2008): from ANA Mechanic to Mt Evelyn Produce Store



The Produce Store.

(cont'd p.2)

Geoff Olney (1913-2008): from ANA

Mechanic to Mt Evelyn Produce Store (from p.1)

Small farmers in McKillop, Wandin and Silvan, and students from Mt Evelyn Primary School, share memories of the Mt Evelyn Produce Store. This store was owned and managed between 1957 and 1970/5 by (Charles) Geoff Olney and his wife Archena, nee Bell (1918-2008). When researching for *Tracks to Trails* in the 1990s I came across the beautiful handwritten script of the Mt Evelyn Progress Association minutes written by sometime President and committee man Geoff Olney. I wanted to find out more. I knew three of the four Olney children – John as a scholar and prefect at Lilydale High School and Maree and Judy through our PFA (Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia) youth group. (The other son was Richard Strachan Olney). In 1995 I tracked down Geoff and Arch Olney at their home in Ocean Grove.

Early Life

Geoff was born in 1913 to a family of 11 children. His parents ran the country store in Mt Moriac, south-west of Geelong. In about 1927 Geoff began a course at Gordon Institute of Technology, studying mechanical engineering. He started work in Geelong in the aircraft industry about 1930, later moving to Adelaide Airways, which in 1936 became the Australian National Airways (ANA). Geoff worked for this airline for 21 years, during the war years rebuilding American aircraft. He left in 1957, the day Reg Ansett took over and it became Ansett ANA. Geoff said:

There comes a time in your life, if you're thinking of making a change you've got to make it. I was in my early 40s. I had a wife (met on a blind date in Melbourne about 1939 and married in 1942) and four children and I couldn't see any great future financially for myself. I (had) built a house and I owned the house – I sold that, cashed my superannuation (£1100) and bought a business.

The Mt Evelyn Produce Store

The Mt Evelyn Produce Store in McKillop (demolished in 2008) had been owned by Leggetts for some time, then sold to Hall and Hurst. A couple of young men held it briefly then. The wife of one refused to move to Mt Evelyn and the other young English man “didn't like Italians and most of his customers were Italians!” so it was up for sale again.

Geoff saw an advertisement in the newspaper for the Mt Evelyn store, checked it out, then bought it immediately, hoping his wife would think it a good idea! On a trip to Mt Evelyn soon after, Geoff called in on an old friend, Jim Lee, who managed the Ringwood Timber and Hardware Store. When Geoff informed him of his purchase Jim said, “Oh God, you're not going to Mt Evelyn are you? That's the worst part of the hills for bad debts!”

In 1957 the railway gates were still across York Road. The policeman was Smith. The train ran to Warburton twice a week. Theo Millard ran the joinery shop, Hudsons ran the newsagency. Maurie Barnes was there. Lex Lillie was the grocer and the butcher was Archie Carswell.

The family did struggle with the store in the first few years and there were problems with bad debts, particularly from the Billy Goat Hill area of Mt Evelyn, and the delays from seasonal payments from the Silvan and Wandin small farmers.

Billy Goat Hill consisted of humpies with down and outs, or people on a very low income level. We had some dealings with briquettes with these people so I had my share of bad debts. The business dealt mainly with the market gardeners from the Silvan side. They had seasonal income and there were certain times of the year when there was no money.

There was one Italian man, Charlie, who would enquire about how some of the other Italians were going with their bill paying and if they were behind. Next week the fellow would be in to pay because Charlie would have words with him.

Another man was probably a bit of a godfather, and we became pretty good friends, quickly. We used to visit them occasionally of a Saturday afternoon and his wife would make us a cup of tea and some lovely little Italian cookies. He said to me, “If you're having any troubles, drop a word,” and I had to use that occasionally and it worked. I don't know how he got it or if he paid it himself but they would always pay up.

The Italians kept mainly to themselves until intermarriages with local farmers and tradesmen began in the next generation. This Italian friend protectively maintained that his wife did not speak English. Geoff, when visiting, would leave

the living room where he was being entertained to join her in the kitchen and strike up a conversation.

He would always stop me. He would say, "Mamma, she not speaka English". But the day after he died she was on the telephone placing her order in English!

Geoff also occasionally took payment in kind. *One man owed me money for years and he had an old 1923 model Ford truck that he used to drive down the paddocks and bring back to the house with punnets of strawberries in it. I said to him one day, "When you've finished with this, I'd like to have that truck." So later on ... he'd owed me money for quite a long time ... he'd paid little dribs and drabs and finally he got the debt down to a point when I thought it equalled the value of this Ford so I took the Ford over.*

The store, which began by focusing on stock feed and fertilizer, began to prosper with supplies of fuel for cars, heating and cooking. About 1959-60, bottled gas came on the market and Geoff thought it would be a good line to get into. While at the barber's he met a friend who was Victorian Sales Manager for the gas company and he just happened to be looking for someone to take on an agency, so the deal was made.¹ Geoff rented land at the railway station and built a ramp for bagging briquettes, this part of the business probably growing to 20%. "We got a few truckloads of briquettes once a week." The petrol part of the business which had been very small became the "tail that wagged the dog". At one stage Geoff had 14 people working for him and nine delivery trucks. His fleet of trucks became useful during fires. During the 1961 fires:

I had a big petrol tanker with a pump on it for pumping the fuel from the tank to the farmers' containers. Arthur Hamilton, one of the drivers, took that truck, filled the tank with water and used the pump to pump water onto the fire.

The trucks were useful again when Millards Store and joinery burned down about the year after.

I had a semi-trailer and we were called out in the early hours. We heard the fire sirens of course and I drove up there in my semi-trailer to see what I

could do in the way of salvaging stuff ... and got it away from the fire.

In 1970 the petrol part of the business had become so big Geoff was effectively running two businesses. He sold the Produce Store in 1970 and five years later sold the petrol station.

The Progress Association and Hillside Avenue/ Leggett Drive Electricity Cooperative

Geoff was encouraged to join the Progress Association soon after he arrived by Dudley Wilson, a resident of both Melbourne and Mt Evelyn who owned a small farm in McKillop Road. The secretary at that time was Dorothy Dunn. He remembered an early environmental issue being resistance to the removal of a beautiful big tree outside the Baby Health Centre and Kindergarten in Birmingham Road. They also attempted to improve the public toilet, bus schedules, roads, road lighting, footpaths for children and playground maintenance. The Progress Association also worked hard to get one of their members, Lex Lillie, to become a member of the Lilydale Council.

Geoff was a President and committee man for the Progress Association but also became Treasurer, for about ten years, of a cooperative group formed to lobby for electrification of the area on Hillside Avenue off Clegg Road and in what is now known as Leggett Drive. "Most of the initiators of the scheme were from the Progress Association."

After selling both businesses, Geoff and his wife remained in Mt Evelyn on their one acre block for a further 10 years. In 1985 they moved to their weekender in Ocean Grove, as it was smaller and easier to maintain. In 2008 they died within months of each other, their memorials in a Geelong cemetery.

References

Interview 22 October 1995
PROV Wills and Probate
Things Past #4 & #76, images of store; Trove images
Graeme Olney Wiki tree
Websites, 'One billion gravesites', 'Births Deaths Marriages Victoria'.

Janice Newton

¹ In 1995 Ray Rigg was still continuing with this bottled gas business.

The Newtons in Bourke Street

Janice Newton sent us these photos and quotes from interviews about the house her grandfather, Edward Newton, built in Bourke Street.

'The original shack at Mt Evelyn was two rooms and had a kind of verandah on it as well. An Aunt and Uncle built next door to us and we eventually bought that as well. The shack was two rooms really. We bought these old school desks, big long wooden ones and they had six seats so they were ideal for in there, with the crowds of people going.

The other one (the Aunt's, mother's sister's) was a house ... that had a lounge room, a kitchen, and dining room, and it had about three bedrooms (and a piano).

My father had an old Tin Lizzie, an old Ford. We all used to pile on, the whole family, eight children. As a matter of fact he even took the water tank which we ordered. He put the hood down and it was tied on the back and I was the only one that would go with him. Nobody else wanted to go because it made a shocking noise, rattle, rattle, rattle. The wind caught it and it went boom, boom! And everyone in the street would look around startled and I'd just pretend I didn't know they were there.

Mother cooked outside on an open fire. Later on she got an old stove and had that outside as well.²

'Mr Newton built a shed with canvas blinds for windows and a large trestle table and school desks for furniture. The young people thought it was great to be able to just throw their tea slops out the window without moving from their seat.'³

'As soon as Marj met Ted she became part of the family and started visiting Billygoat Hill at Mt Evelyn. Ted's mother's sister Nellie and her husband Tom Laidlay (a wealthy bookmaker) had a timber holiday house in Mt Evelyn already. They let Edward Thomas Newton (Nancy's father) know when there was some land available for about £5 a block. Mr Newton bought two and put

up a tin shed. It became their "country estate" They stayed in the shed which had canvas blinds for windows and an open fire with an iron bar for a stove. The shed contained a double bed and some old wooden school forms.⁴

Roz Newton added: 'I have a very strong memory of the corrugated iron roof and the packed earth floor.' Janice too remembered the earth floor and the windows with no glass.

Tom Laidlay began coming to Mt Evelyn when he was about 12 (1925) to visit his uncle E.T. Newton. 'This was before the tin shed was built so they camped in tents.' Tom's father, who was married to Nellie Evans, bought the land close to E.T. Newton from Mrs O'Connor and here they built a wooden house.

'Auntie Fanny, a big woman of 23 stone, was married to Tom's mother's brother, Jim Evans. She had a bit of a house opposite E.T. Newton, just up the hill'.⁵

'The photos were taken near E. T. Newton's shack in Bourke Street and the cottage next door owned by his in-laws, Tom and Nellie Laidlay (about 1949-51). They are of baby Roz Newton and her mother Edna, father Claude and grandfather E.T. Newton. One shot is taken in the beautiful garden of a Miss Adams who lived very close.'⁶

Janice Newton



Edna Newton in Miss Adams' garden.

² Nancy Yaxley, interviewed by Joan Knowles 9 December 1993.

³ Gladys Chrystal (Nancy Yaxley's girlfriend), interviewed by Janice Newton 15 August 1993.

⁴ Marjorie Newton (wife of Nancy's brother Ted), interviewed by Janice Newton 4 July 1993.

⁵ Tom Laidlay, telephone interview by Janice Newton, 6 July 1993.

⁶ Janice Newton.



Edna and relatives at the Laidlays' house.



Edna and Roz Newton at the Laidlays' house.



Claude and Roz Newton.



Mr Edward Newton (at right), with son Claude and grand-daughter Roz, shack and water tank in background.

A Mt Evelyn POW

Recently Mt Evelyn residents, Peter Paterson and Anthony McAleer, visited Thailand and the sites associated with the Burma-Thailand Railway and the prisoners of war who worked and died in its construction. While there, they made sure they visited the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, not far from the River Kwai, and placed a memorial poppy in tribute on the grave of Mt Evelyn soldier Alfred Noble, who died as a prisoner of war during this period. Alfred's name appears on the Mt Evelyn War Memorial.

Anthony McAleer



Grave of Mt Evelyn Soldier Alfred Noble.

Reconciliation: A Leap Forward

One Weekend On Dja Dja Wurrung Country, Part 1

Maldon, where I spent a weekend as part of the Reconciliation Victoria, and ANTaR Victoria, Reconciliation Network Forum, is located near the geographical centre of Victoria; similarly, it is near the centre of the country of the Dja Dja Wurrung people. These forums are held about quarterly and, more recently, at least one has been held each year 'on country'. Only by spending time with the people can we start to understand their issues, and join them in spirit, to help overcome some of their appalling, long-standing problems such as: reduced health; loss of culture and language; and family disintegration.

Our weekend began late in the afternoon of Friday 31 March 2017, with a huge barbeque. As someone with a life rule of only attending meetings where there is food, I felt this augured well for our experience.

That night we listened to a presentation on the achievements of the Dja Dja Wurrung people, which followed a 'Welcome to Country' by Racquel Kerr, partly in the Dja Dja Wurrung language. During the presentation, we learned that:

- Racquel's grandparents had lived at Coranderrk. Her grandfather was a Dja Dja Wurrung man, and her grandmother was a Yorta Yorta woman.
- The area of Dja Dja Wurrung country is roughly bounded by Daylesford, Avoca, Maryborough, Boort, Rochester, and Hanging Rock.
- In 2013, the Dja Dja Wurrung people had Settlement Packages approved under the Traditional Owners Settlement Act 2010 (not the Native Title Act).
- The Settlement Package comprises: Natural Resource Agreement providing for State commitment to strategies to promote active participation of the Dja Dja Wurrung in land management, including trapping possums, fishing, wood collection etc.
- Package 1 comprises various land uses and recognition under the Act, with management under the Conservation, Forests and Lands

Act 1987; Package 2 comprises a Recognition of Land Agreement, and funding of approximately \$9.65 million. Projects include management of Lake Boort and Franklinford. Also included is joint management of National, State and Regional parks under Dhelkunya Dja (Healing Country).

- Activities on Crown Land come under several headings, such as: routine, advisory, negotiation, and agreement. Benefits to Aboriginal people include monetary, cultural and social.
- Dhelkunya Dja plans, aspirations and goals relate to: rivers, waterways, land, self-determination, traditional owner economy and enterprises.
- Dja Dja Wurrung people have at least 40,000 years of looking after 'country'. The above participation strategies aim, with Dja Dja Wurrung control, to return the country to its original pristine condition. As an example, at the Ravenswood highway roundabout, where VicRoads and Dja Dja Wurrung people cooperated, scar trees and artefacts on the proposed site were removed, relocated and reburied.

On Saturday we car-pooled and drove in a somewhat haphazard convoy to Yapeen Primary School, about four kilometres south-west of Castlemaine, where there was a joint presentation by: Dja Dja Wurrung Elder, Uncle Rick Nelson; Dja Dja Wurrung woman, Tash; and Vic Say, a highly respected non-indigenous support person for the local Dja Dja Wurrung communities. We learned that:

- The beautiful red brick Yapeen Primary School is in original condition in most respects, and is a magnificent example of the architecture of the 1880s. It is now used as an Aboriginal cultural education centre and is experiencing increased school attendances among the Aboriginal children of the area, who attend at least one day a week. Their enthusiasm for education has been boosted markedly since this desperately-needed project commenced a few years ago.
- Uncle Rick Nelson related a dreaming story involving two local mountains, Mount Tarrengower and Mount Franklin. These two mountains felt disdain for each other and this

escalated into a fearsome exchange of rocks and fire (volcanic eruptions). The evidence is still spread around the area between these two giants.

- All of the Dja Dja Wurrung had been cleared from the area by the late 1800s, and only started returning to *their* Country in the 1960s. Their 'shame' at having 'lost' their Country is slowly being replaced by a pride in being able to contribute actively to its restoration. This sense of pride in Country and cultural knowledge is being passed on to the younger generation(s).

At the break, I was able to tell Uncle Rick about the Mount Evelyn History Group, and our book, *Aborigines in the Yarra Valley and Northern Dandenongs*. He was interested in it for the school and the Nalderun Upper Loddon Aboriginal Services, who administer the school and the Cultural Education Program at Yapeen, and in Castlemaine. (Since then, the MEHG Committee has confirmed a donation of two class sets.)

We had a tour of the school and saw a lot of excellent work done by the students, indicating an impressive knowledge and understanding of their local culture, in the art and artefacts they had produced.

We then watched a production on DVD, produced by the students. It covered the period when the white workers on the properties in the region deserted for the goldfields, leaving the squatters and farmers to seek workers from among the local Aboriginal people. The story showed that a tribal Aboriginal youth had speared a farmer's sheep, which was found by one of the farmer's Aboriginal workers. When the worker sought the killer of the sheep, he found that it was his own brother. The brother held a spear, tipped with white ochre, to the worker's chest, indicating that, although the worker was his brother, there was no respect from the tribe. This was because he had chosen to join the white farmer, who earlier had shot one of their relatives. It was a short DVD but very powerful.

Ian James

More Sites From WWII

In *Things Past* #98 and #99 we looked at sites in Yarra Ranges associated with World War II. We were surprised that there seemed to be so few of them. One we overlooked was the Cave Hill works and its role in the war effort.

'During World War II, Cave Hill helped with the manufacture of armaments, munitions and Atabrine tablets. ... During this period the local Volunteer Defence Force used the estate for their tactical exercises.'⁷

We can add another site, 'The Brown House' in Belgrave, also known as the Nazi Club and the German Club. Opened in 1938, the Brown House took its name from Hitler's headquarters in Munich. Despite protests from various quarters, the club was allowed to operate until the outbreak of war in 1939. It was then closed down and the property confiscated as a prize of war by the Department of Defence. Several members of the club were interned. Most were released but at least one was confined to the Tatura Internment Camp for the duration of the war.



'Australian Nazi Party room, Dandenong Ranges', 1939.
State Library Victoria. Photographer unknown.

Architectural database

If you're tracing the history of buildings, you'll be interested in Professor Miles Lewis' architectural database: <http://www.mileslewis.net/research-database.html>. The index is at: <http://www.mileslewis.net/australian-architectural/index.html>. Do read the 'How to use the index' section first – very helpful!

⁷ Anthony McAleer, 'History of Lilydale Campus'. 'Atabrine' was the trade name of a drug used against malaria and certain parasites.

Billygoat Hill: the 1950s

The following is a collection of posts (slightly edited) to our old Facebook page of memories of Billygoat Hill. Most refer to the 1950s. Thanks to all who contributed to the discussion.

‘There was a ‘plateau’ of slums on there, back in 1930s-1940s and on into the 1960s, as I recall. It was a haven for drunken/slovenly behaviour. Dirt floors weren’t uncommon. Flea infestations were endured and accepted, and it wasn’t unusual for the children to attend school with bite-marks. Personal hygiene was somewhat neglected, as (limited) tank water was the norm I attended (school), Years 1-6, between 1950 and 1956. And during that time, I observed the meagre lunches (if any). And the lack of adequate clothing/shoes, worn by the attendees from ‘The Hill’, as they mostly referred to it’ **Don Thompson**

‘Our family and many others lived at the top of Billy Goat Hill. From our house in Russell Street, we could access Bailey Road and Hereford Road. Just follow the narrow bush track in either direction. To get to Bailey Road, go past Auntie Hilda Beer’s house and follow a bush track that runs between Miss Murray and Miss Williams’ house and Auntie’s, there you are, Bailey Road. You are scratched and bleeding from blackberry bushes, and have fallen over so many times tripping over clumps of heath and other shrubs, it was a downhill run.

To get to Hereford Road go through the ‘paddock’, take the track to the right, past the ‘frog pond’ and head down, you will come to a ‘cross track’. The other track leads to the homes of the Beavis, Hardy and Hopkins families among others. Go past or over the ‘Policeman’s Hat’ until you reach Bourke Street, a wider track with car wheel ruts, keep to the narrow track until you reach fenced-off holiday houses and shacks, go through fences, the barbed wire ones will rip your clothes, working your way up the slight incline until you reach the house of the Payne family. You have walked a long way, but over the road is the ‘Red Robin’ shop, Hereford Road.

The Policeman’s Hat was a large round rock, jutting out of the ground, shaped like an English Bobby’s hat. I forgot to add that the earth had clay in it, if it rained it was very slippery, it made

it tough to climb up Billy Goat hill, and just as tough to climb down, or slide down I should say.

We were situated in Russell Street, there was an expanse of land we called the Paddock, at the far end was a track that led down to derelict, condemned houses: big, concrete and, to my child’s eye, marble, houses from a bygone era. Large broken pieces and slabs lay all about, families lived in them. Before our house was built, my step-father grew gladioli on the land and sold them. He used to warn us of the dangers of mine shafts on the land as we made our way through the bush to the Ward family’s home in Bailey Road to watch TV.’ **Jeanette Shea**

‘Billy Goat Hill was a hill that branched off from the paddock, as we called it. My brothers and sisters walked that hill morning and afternoon ... to school and back, also used it as a short cut to the Red Robin store. Can’t remember the track’s name but there were a few houses on there We shifted to Mt Evelyn in 1953 and my dad died there. We lived in Russell Street. ... By memory, Russell Street went around to the left at my auntie’s place, then down to another little track which eventually joined onto Spring Road which came off Bourke Street. Billy Goat Hill veered off, as I said, the paddock, but at the start of it, and if you went straight down it would take you to the little road and about 20 feet to Spring Road.’

Maureen Wolff

I can recall friends from school who I would go and have a kick of the footy with. Alan and Karen Jackson lived opposite Doctor Hardy’s but closer to Fernhill Road. The Horsley family lived off Fernhill and it was really bush then. It must have been around Bourke or Russell. Straight across to Bailey where the O’Shannessys lived, the corner of Bailey and Hereford Road. The Beavis family had moved to around Hordern Road. Dennis was my age and he had older brothers.’ **Peter Millsom**

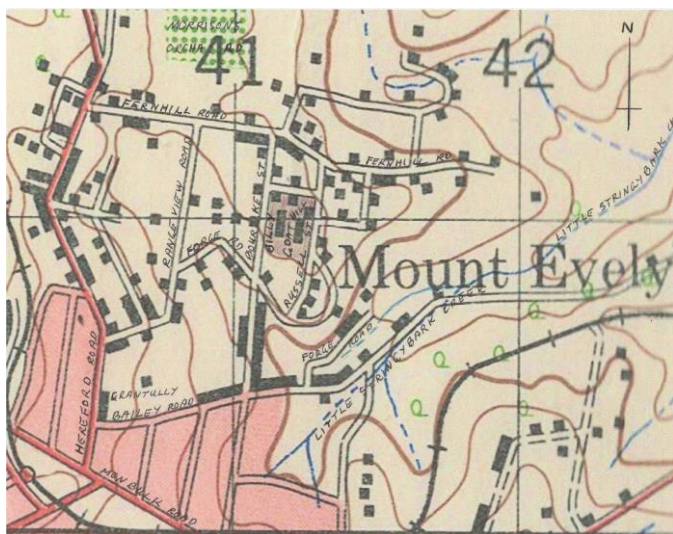
‘I too knew of the O’Shannessy family. The Beavis family moved from Billy Goat Hill to a new built house at the corner of Russell Street and Fernhill Road. ... The Horsley family lived off Fernhill Road, but could be got to from the Smiths or Taylors off Hereford Road, there was a narrow track, leading in.’ **Janette Shea**

'Buckmaster Drive used to be Wattle Street and in the early years was a track joining both ends.'
Lee Neale.

'My parents bought at the bottom of Billy Goat Hill in 1970. Property is now corner of Russell Street and Forge Road (large red brick house).'
Trilby-Roux Dewhurst

Opposite Edward Thomas Newton's shack in Bourke Street were the Calnins and on the corner with Fernhill Road were the O'Connors (and Schultzes in early days). Other block holders were Fanny (a huge woman) and Jim Evans, (opposite E.T. Newton, just up the hill, perhaps in Spring Street; just behind the Barrs, according to another informant). Further down Bourke Street when the road ran out Gladys Long and her brother had a block. Next to the Calnins was a loner called Mr Malcolm McGregor who had a big place but didn't 'mix in'. Calnin's were next to Audrey Barr and their cousins the Wallaces. This period was mainly 1920s to 1940.'

Janice Newton



The Billygoat Hill area (hilltop shaded brown), with modern road names marked. Rangeview Road extends to Fernhill Road; Russell Street runs straight down the hill; Forge Road is continuous with the curved route of Russell Street; the western and eastern ends of the present Forge Road are not yet connected. From Monbulk survey map, published 1960.

You Know You're Part of History Butchers' Shops - Responses

Kevin's butcher shop memory struck a chord with me.

When I first moved to Yarra Glen as a child of five, I lived for a few months with our friends and my parents' business partners, the Smiths, behind the Mobilgas Garage in the Main Street, next door to Olney's butcher shop. There were six of us newcomers, and the four youngest played with the Olney children, Sandra and Norma on one side, and with Johnny Lithgow from the Grand, on the other side of my parents' business.

That was when I developed a taste for raw meat. Raw sausage meat was always tasty, but Mr Olney found it amusing to line us kids up on the sawdust in the shop, and we would 'open our mouths like baby birds'. With his super sharp knives he would cut long 'worms' of steak from a large chunk and drop them into our mouths in turn like a parent bird feeding the babies!

Later at school I read about 'hydatids' and other parasites in raw meat and the dangers of eating it, but to this day I have my steak VERY rare. Raw meat is tender, sweet and nutty. I also like raw fish! Sashimi! Yum!

Paula Herlihy

Butchers' Ice-cream (raw sausage meat)!

Kevin Phillips

The last old-fashioned butchers I knew of was in the mid-1970s in Daylesford: all fly-proof enclosures, wooden chopping blocks and butchers with missing digits.

John Keane

In Memory Of Barry

The Mt Evelyn Township Group (METG) held a short memorial ceremony for Barry Callanan at the Purple Patch Community Garden on Saturday 25 November. Jacques Frich planted a fig tree in Barry's memory. Barry and Jacques worked at the Purple Patch every Saturday.

2017 Story Writing Competition

Winning Entries



Laura Harrison and Daniel Harrison, with Paula Herlihy.

A Mount Evelyn Story – A Diary Page Belonging To Susan Garnold – First Day At School.

7th February 1921

Hello dear diary,

Let me introduce myself, I am Susan and I live on a farm in Mount Evelyn. I am the youngest of seven brothers and sisters. I wear my hair in plaits. Mother or my sisters used to do them for me. Now that I'm six years old, and have practised lots, Mother says I can do my own hair as well as anyone!

Guess what! I'm going to start school today at Evelyn State School. I have done my own hair! I'm also going to get some of my lunch from the garden! Apples!

I also picked some flowers to give to Mother. After a while, we went to where school is. We rode in our wagon with our four big farm horses pulling it. My two oldest brothers, Thomas and Alexander, don't go to school anymore and stay home. They help Father run the farm, they finished school last year after doing Grade Six.

Mother kisses my cheek and gives me a big hug.

She is a bit sad and a bit proud too, she tells me. I see her wipe away a tear or two. I promise her I'll be good. I give her the flowers and kiss her goodbye.

I discovered that I have ten people in my class! My Teacher looked stubborn and very strict, so I decided to stay very well behaved. He was a man and held a cane in his hand. It looked, well, that it would really hurt if you were to be hit by it. It looked so hard and my eldest brother Thomas said it felt like ever-

lasting pain on his knuckles when he was hit last year for 'talking back'.

In the classroom later, when we were in the middle of a English lesson, a boy called Henry started calling a poor little girl called Lavender, oh so very rude and awful names about her freckles. He got called to the principal's office, when he returned his face looked cramped with pain and horror. I was sure he had had the cane for being so mean! Ouch!

Right, time to keep going, by now it was time for free play at recess! Yippee! We went outside, we played all types of games like skippy, bone jacks, hide 'n' seek, and more!

Now, I wish I could stay at school forever as I really liked recess very much!

I wish I didn't have to leave school today, because, well ... even if we have strict teachers I would miss all the new learning I am doing and the smell of the new slate boards, books and the chalk. I love being a school girl!

When it was time to come inside we did our work and nothing peculiar happened.

The bell rang and that meant it was the end of day!

When we came home Thomas was already there getting the vegetables from the garden for our supper. He was happy he didn't have to go to school.

Honey, Lydia, Carrie and I dashed to our shared room and put our school clothes (also our best Sunday clothing) in our cupboard on pegs and put on our cotton night gowns and dressing gowns.

We headed slowly down the creaky hall to the family dining table. I realised I felt very tired.

I ate quietly, but when Mother asked "How was school?" I happily said, "We did copy-work first, it was good that Honey was next to me, she helped me with my letters, mostly r's."

I also added, "My favourite part of the day was free play at recess! I played with some new children that I'd never met before."

Everyone shared about their day and after that it was time for bed.

Which is now, well goodnight, I'll see you tomorrow dear diary! Bye!

The End

Laura Harrison



Laura as Susan Garnold, ready for her first day at school.



Daniel after the presentation.

A Mount Evelyn Story – The Diary Entry Of Jeffrey Bassitt

13th November 1901

Today was my first day of official work as a train driver. 1901 has been an excellent year, the year of Federation!

I am taking some important people to Warburton from Olinda Vale. It's a brand-new line! The locals are very proud of it! The reason I'm taking passengers from there, not Lilydale, is because I'm swapping with another train driver who took them from Lilydale. I have really enjoyed doing my apprenticeship to learn how to control a steam train of any type in the city. Now I get to work close to home. The other thing is, this steam train is brand spanking new. I am very happy!

Every morning, I get ready and I put on my wool socks and polished leather shoes and a clean uniform. I have to be clean shaven except moustache. I need to bring my flags, my pocket watch and my whistle.

I get to greet everyone: 1st, 2nd and 3rd class passengers. I also oversee the loading of goods and some livestock. I give help if needed to the passengers to get on board and off. I also check tickets from the passengers.

As you can imagine I enjoy being a train driver. It is a very important job and my family is proud of me. I really think I should've created a diary long ago, recording my apprenticeship days.

I know I have had a good day when I am covered in soot, smiling, and have got all the passengers to their destinations with big smiles on their faces too! My wife wishes I did not get so sooty as she is the person that has to clean my uniform each night.

Well, off I go home!
See you tomorrow!



Evelyn Railway Station 1911. Photo Tom Miller

Daniel Harrison

From Kev's Rain Gauge				
Rainfall (in mm) for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, and Melbourne for the last three months.				
	Nov	Dec	2017 Totals	Jan-2018
Mt Evelyn	49.2	171.2	763.4	51.3
McKillop	56.3	176.1	950.8	45.9
Melbourne	46	126.4	593	65.4

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

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