

Things Past

Newsletter 112 February 2019 PO Box 289 Mt Evelyn Vic 3796 Incorporation Number: A0051327F

Dates for Your Diary

General Business Meeting, Monday 18 February, 7:30 – 9:00 pm at Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn.

Meeting, Saturday 16 March, 1:30 – 3:30 pm at Hardy House. Speaker to be confirmed.

General Business Meeting, Monday 15 April, 7:30 – 9:00 pm at Hardy House.

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.

In This Issue		
Edward Wymer (1874-1961) fr		
Wymerest	1	
Why Worry	3	
History of the Butterfly Roof	5	
The Boys' Farm at Lysterfield	6	
Worawa College Newsletter	6	
S. S. Kanowna	8	
A Different Kind of Family		
History	8	
Australian Classic Censored	9	
Vale Sandy Ross	9	
Ominous Anniversaries 9		
Shire of Lillydale War Diary	10	
'Kinley'	10	
From Kev's Rain Gauge	10	

Edward Wymer (1874-1961) from Wymerest



'Old Wymer' by Ernest Buckmaster, 1953

(cont'd p.2)

Edward Wymer (1874-1961) from Wymerest Mt Evelyn: gas lighting expert and artist

Mt Evelyn artist, Ernest Buckmaster (1897-1968), entered the 1953 Archibald Prize with a portrait of friend and neighbour, 'Old Wymer'. In the portrait Wymer is wearing a raincoat and appears blind in one eye. An art critic reported that the portrait had 'reticence and sympathy in the portrayal of aged frailty' (*The Argus* 18 Nov 1952, p6). Art students in Sydney, angered by the Archibald judges' decision in favour of oldfashioned photographic mimicry (awarded to

Public opinion

Few peopel who visited the gallery this afternoon said they liked the winning picture. A big proportion preferred Dargie's second entry, a portrait of A. K. Anderson. But the picture that captured the biggest crowds and votes was E. Buckmaster's Old Wymer, a portrait of an elderly man blind in one eye. Of 20 people questioned this afternoon only four preferred Dargie's winning portrait, although most of them said that it was "a good photographic likeness." William Dargie), demonstrated and 'brawled' at the gallery. The portrait drawing the biggest crowd and receiving most popular appeal was Buckmaster's.

'Old Wymer' was Edward Wymer who purchased 14 acres (in Adams Lane off Heath Avenue) at Mt Evelyn in 1923, joined the Victorian Artists' Society

Sun (Sydney), Saturday 24 January 1953, p 2 in

in 1932 and retired permanently to Mt Evelyn after the death of his wife in 1938. His Mt Evelyn



Edward Wymer self-portrait

home, 'Wymerest' became a meeting place for artists. Edward, born in Sydney in 1874, was the youngest son of George from England and Kate James from Sydney. His father died as a result of a fall on a steam ship in Sydney when Edward was only six vears old. Edward

most likely helped his older brother with a plumbing/building business in Sydney until, in 1896, he moved to Melbourne with two shillings

and sixpence in his pocket. He lived at several addresses in the Brunswick area, marrying Margaret King in 1898, then opening a successful plumbing business at 230 Sydney Road, Coburg in 1900.

Edward became the leading authority on acetylene gas lighting, installing, with his brother George, gas lights in a number of Melbourne public buildings and streets before the age of electricity. Family history records that on one occasion he prepared gas lighting for a World Title fight between Afro-American Jack Johnson and local hero Jack Lang. When the visitor arrived at the venue in his carriage, a tin shed in Tinnings Street Brunswick, he took one look and turned around in disgust, considering the place to be a shambles. The fight was called off and Edward was never paid for his lighting work ... something that he never forgot!

JACK JOHNSON AT BRUNSWICK

Three thousand people paid 6d. and 3d. each last night, and erowded into a roomy old iron shed in a back street of Brunswick, in order to catch a glimpse of Jack Johnson, the champion boxer of the world, and his wife. Many wise people thought that Johnson would not come, but his good nature triumphed, and at half-past 6 o'clock (the time announced) his motor-car whized up the back street, and was guided through a wide door right into the big shed. The 3000 people cheered wildly. The boxer was accompanied by his wife and Mr. S. Allen. Their feelings must have been curious. The shed, though roomy enough, was hadly ventilated, and the earthen floor had crumbled into dust, which helped to thicken the stmosphere. Braides, there were so lights, except two lamps on the rough broad platform, which served only to heighten the surrounding darkness. By striking matches in front of Jack Johnson and Mrs. Johnson, a view of them was given the people lamps were extinguished, while a few moving pictures were thrown on a screen. A male voice somewhere asing a song in the dark. Then Johnson and Mr. S. Allen mounted the platform, and one of the lamps was held close to the big man's head, so that all aw his smiling face, recognized the famous pold teeth, and cheered heartily. Then Johnson, in a few words, thunked "the eitizens of Brunswick" for their kind welcome, re-entered his motor, and whild the three thousand spectators made the old iron shed ring with cheers, the car drove off. Hoth Johnson and Mr. Allen were in full evening dress, and were spacently totally unprepared for the remarkable proceedings in the dark.

(The newspaper article from *The Argus* 11 Jan 1909, p 9, appears to refer to this incident, where a few thousand people turned up to catch a glimpse of the fighting champion in less than ideal viewing circumstances.)

Edward 'invented a gas generator which produced acetylene gas from carbide chips dropped in a pan of water. When the gas pressure

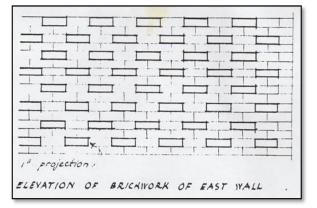
Why Worry See Wyworry, #111



Why Worry, photo Peter Paterson 2017.

Jewell Mayne purchased the land at 27 Olinda Road on 28th November 1958 and assisted Reg, Doug and Len Falkingham to build *Why Worry* there. *Wiworry* at 29 Olinda Road was then designated *Old Why Worry*. Jewell made the spouting for *Why Worry* by soldering tin cans together, and she probably made all the wrought iron for the house. According to neighbour Lorraine, she was 'good at making anything', and 'wonderful with all forms of craft'. One of the rooms was set up with a huge train set and Jewell made miniature people to populate the scene.

The plans were drawn up by F. J. Mitchell, 145 Highett Street, West Richmond, Melbourne, and



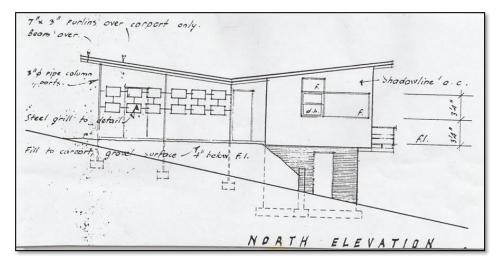
fortunately the plans still exist. The house is very quirky, with many interesting and unusual features, such as the brickwork shown in the plans above and next page. The new Why Worry is a striking 'butterfly' house of sixties design, believed to be inspired by a similar house built in Sydney and seen written up in a magazine. This house is one of only a small number of houses in Mt Evelyn known at the time to be architect designed, and according to current owners was 'the talk of Mt Evelyn when it was built because it was architect designed'.

Jack and Jewell were notable for their interests, talents and skills, which were neither common nor usual in Mt Evelyn at the time.

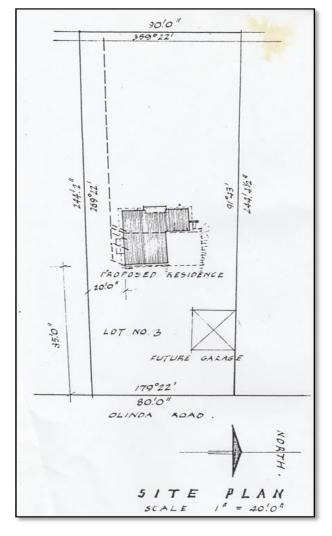
Jack was an electrical engineer, and set up a great many security devices in the new house, both physical deterrents like metal grills, and electronic surveillance. There were extensive storerooms under the house. The glass at the back of the house was frosted and the sides were covered in. The only windows in the house were at the rear and were high off the ground and inaccessible, and those downstairs had iron bars on them. All doors had padlocks and the home had an infra red burglar alarm system. Jack appeared to carry on an electronics business from the home, as after his death there remained a great many packets of electronic parts.

He was friendly with Jim Radcliffe who had the first coin operated petrol bowser at the petrol station in Mt Evelyn.

(cont'd p.4)



Jewell was a very capable and talented woman, driving and repairing cars at a time when it was uncommon for a woman to drive, much less work on a car. They had a brand new Buick, a homemade trailer, and a caravan, and went off travelling and camping throughout Victoria, at a time most Mt Evelyn people stayed close to home.



Jack died in 2010, and Jewell's teacher friend Sandra started looking for Jewell's relatives, and

found her sister Kate and niece Kaylene living in Perth. Before her death Jewel was reunited with her sister Kate. Unfortunately the last of the other three sisters had died only three months before the reunion¹.

Jewell always had two Scotch Collie dogs as companions. On her death in October 2015, her ashes

were divided between three locations. Ray took a portion over to her sister Kate in Perth, another was placed under the tree at *Why Worry* with her last dog, and her niece Kaylene took the last portion to be placed with those of her mother in Perth.



Jewell and her sister Kate.

Peter Paterson and Gwenda Donaldson purchased the home from Ray in April 2016.

Paula Herlihy, from information supplied by Peter Paterson, Lorraine Fairweather and Ray Donovan.

¹ <u>http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-04-24/the-chinese-australian-woman-who-became-a-codebreaker-in-wwii/9683878</u>

History of the Butterfly Roof

The 'butterfly-wing' roof (a roof with two sections sloping upwards from a central gully, such as the one at Why Worry) is usually associated with the 1960s. The concept in fact dates back to the International Style of the 1930s.

In 1930 Swiss-born architect Le Corbusier designed a butterfly-wing house, Maison Errazuriz, to be built overlooking the Pacific Ocean at Zapallar, Chile. The owner unfortunately went bankrupt and so the house was never built. Three years later, in 1933, the Czech architect Antonin Raymond designed a house for himself at Karuizawa, Japan, influenced by Le Corbusier's plans for Maison Errazuriz and incorporating the distinctive roof. Thus it was Raymond, and not Le Corbusier, who received credit for the butterflywing design.

In 1945 Marcel Breuer designed what was intended as a prototype for a mass-produced American house, incorporating the butterfly roof. His design took advantage of the roof form to provide windows that let in abundant natural light while preserving the privacy of the occupants. Breuer's house remained a one-off but the butterfly house came into its own when William Krisel began designing homes with butterfly rooflines for the Alexander Construction Company in 1957. They proved so popular that over 30,000 were built in California.²

Even before Krisel popularized the butterfly-wing design, there were several examples in Australia. The house built in 1948 for the silent screen actress Louise Lovely in Sandy Bay, Tasmania, is 'a butterfly-winged house with a fabulous view over the Derwent'.³

Eddie Hayes of architects Hayes and Scott designed a butterfly roof renovation for a beach house at Surfers Paradise in the early 1950s. The first house of its type in Queensland, it received the Queensland Award for Meritorious Architecture in 1953 and was described in *Architecture and Arts and the Modern Home*, 1955. Hayes' partner Campbell Scott called it 'a

https://www.curbed.com/2014/12/22/10009194/lecorbusiers-forgotten-invention-socals-iconic-butterfly-roof ³ 'Louise Lovely': <u>http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-</u> 10/remembering-louise-lovely-silent-film-star/8875284 whim and fancy, a structural delight', and confirmed that Le Corbusier's design for Maison Errazuris had been an influence.⁴ Sadly the house was sold only three years after completion and was later demolished.

The Butterfly House or McCraith House on the Mornington Peninsula, designed by Chancellor & Patrick in 1955, is an iconic example of the style. RMIT University now offers the house as a writer's retreat.⁵

Australian architect Loyd Alexander designed a butterfly home for himself and his family at Avalon on Sydney's Northern Beaches in 1957. A local landmark, the house was featured in *Australian House and Garden* in August 1958.⁶ This may have been the house and article that influenced the design of Why Worry (see previous article).

In addition to Why Worry, Mt Evelyn has another butterfly-wing house, 32 Bailey Road on the Hordern Road corner. Its construction date is not known. We would be interested to hear of any others in the area.

Mt Evelyn also has 'reverse-butterflies'. The house at 55 North Avenue has a roof in two separate sections that slope downwards, with a gully in between. The modern Grantully in Hereford Road, built for the Buckmaster family in the early 1970s, also has a roof of this type but with a wider central section.

The two 'wings' of a butterfly roof are not necessarily of the same size or pitch. The Atrium of Box Hill Institute Lilydale Lakeside Campus (former Swinburne University, designed by Glen Murcutt in association with BatesSmart, 1997) is a near-butterfly, with the main roof sloping upwards from a level rear section. Alas, the interior of the soaring Atrium has been infilled by a three-storey building-within-a-building (PRO-ARK, 2010).⁷

Karen Phillips

² 'Le Corbusier's forgotten design':

⁴ 'Two houses built for women':

http://archiparlour.org/eddie-hayes-two-houses-built-forwomen/

⁵ 'Revisited: Butterfly House by Chancellor & Patrick': https://architectureau.com/articles/butterfly-house/

⁶ The Design Files: <u>https://www.domain.com.au/news/the-design-files-inside-the-midcentury-home-of-louise-bell-of-table-tonic-20170309-guhl4w/</u>

⁷ PRO-ARK <u>http://www.proark.com.au/swinburne-university-la-building/</u>

The Boys' Farm at Lysterfield

Kevin and I visited Lysterfield Park to see the relics of the Boys' Farm. Boys of 14 and 15 were trained in farm work there in the 1930s and 1940s.

The map on the 'Park Notes' information sheet proved to be out of date but Kevin managed to navigate us to the farm site. Relics of farming activities include the foundations of the milking



Remains of the dairy

shed and piggery, the dormitory, two wells with domed covers and one uncovered, and an engine that drove the pump. We found a concrete-lined reservoir higher up the hillside, unlined water channels and unidentified brick and concrete remains.



Apple and plum trees, a date palm, and a hawthorn hedge still grow beside the ruins. Some unusual redflowered passionfruit vines that we found growing wild bush in the probably originated on the farm.

Domed well-cover and date palm

On a later visit, we were pleased to

find that the information boards at the farm site had been renewed.

The Boys' Farm had an indirect connection with Mt Evelyn. The Reverend R.G. Nichols (a.k.a. 'Brother Bill') of St Mark's Anglican Church Fitzroy established the farm in 1935. In 1939 Brother Bill set up St Mark's Holiday Camp at the Mt Evelyn

Recreation Reserve, for children from the inner suburbs to experience life in the bush. Management of the Lysterfield farm was taken over by the Church of England Boys' Society (CEBS), which held several holiday camps at Brother Bill's Mt Evelyn Camp.

The Lysterfield farm closed in 1945. when the land was taken over as part of the Lysterfield Lake Catchment. The Boys' Farm relocated to St Hubert's at Yering and later to Tatura. Things Past See #65 & #89.

Lvsterfield Park is



Pump engine

shared between Yarra Ranges and the City of Knox, with the Boys' Farm site in Yarra Ranges. The site is heritage listed.⁸



Water storage tank

Karen Phillips. Photos Kevin Phillips

Worawa College Newsletter

In our report on our visit to the Worawa Art Gallery in the last issue, we forgot to mention the Worawa College newsletter. You can read it online: <u>http://www.worawa.vic.edu.au/news/</u> or subscribe at: <u>http://www.worawa.vic.edu.au/ourschool/faq/</u>

⁸ Victorian Heritage Database,

http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/

Edward Wymer (from p 2.)

was low a hopper would open and more carbide chips would drop in the water, which would increase the gas pressure, which would in turn close the hopper. The residue was a white paste which was mixed with water and made an ideal whitewash' for hen houses etc. (Richard Wymer text). By 1910 Edward was employing ten men and was in a position to buy some extra properties, one a holiday house in Rosebud and later, as stated, a large 14 acre bush block in Mt Evelyn. In 1913 he moved his business to 300 Sydney Rd and by the 1920s he was taking septic tank contracts in rural areas.



Landscape, by Edward Wymer

The Mt Evelyn land purchased in 1923 was heavily timbered. Edward cleared a couple of acres, planted an orchard and built a rough dwelling, considered too basic by his wife, so she seldom visited. Edward, however, visited often, as by this time he had the leisure to take up his keen interest in painting. He spent a lot of his time touring the countryside on painting expeditions, sometimes chauffeur driven. He went as far as north Queensland and the Whitsunday Islands. Edward exhibited with many of the leading artists, but importantly for Mt Evelyn's history, offered his home named Wymerest as a meeting place for like-minded souls, particularly after retiring to it permanently after the death of his wife in 1938. His son continued the business in Coburg.

Besides his younger neighbour and friend Ernest Buckmaster, a regular visitor to *Wymerest* was the artist James Quinn. Born in Melbourne in 1871 and a former student at the Melbourne National Gallery School, Quinn spent 42 years in Paris and London after he received a travelling scholarship. He was an official war artist towards the end of WWI. He exhibited at the Paris Salon and became a member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters and Royal Institute of Painters in Oils in London. Quinn received rapid acclaim as a portrait painter and his famous sitters included Joseph Chamberlain and the Queen Mother (when Duchess of York and Queen). Family tragedy and the loss of two sons saw Quinn return to Melbourne alone in 1935.

According to *The Age* art critic, Arnold Shore, 'It was not a happy homecoming ... For a variety of reasons, our artists who have lived and succeeded abroad are not always heartily welcomed when they return.' (*The Age* 7 Feb 1959, 18). It was only the modernists who respected him enough to make him President of the Victorian Artists' Society. The Second Annual Exhibition of Australian Art, Hawthorn 1940 included works by J (?) Buckmaster ('Grey morning, Trawool'), Wymer ('Study') and Quinn ('A Schoolgirl', 'Head of a Girl'). (*The Age* 23 October 1940, p11.)

Through the Artists' Society, no doubt, Edward Wymer and James Quinn became friends. Edward's daughter in law, Elizabeth, was not keen on visiting her husband's father then as he was 'attracting a lot of layabout artists who would freeload off anyone of substance who would provide shelter and victuals.' She spoke



Portrait of Peter Mahoney

'resentfully of having to make and serve tea for James Quinn, who expected to be waited on.' (R Wymer text).

Quinn respected Wymer's art, however. Edward had painted a picture of a derelict Irish wood cutter who worked

around Mt Evelyn, called Peter Mahoney, in 1944. It was a sombre, serious portrait showing the hardworking Mahoney who was later killed by a tree he was felling. Jimmy Quinn took the painting to show his friend with whom he shared a whisky and political discussion, Archbishop Mannix. Mannix was impressed, saying that the painting 'revealed the face of poor old Ireland'. (Tragically, Peter Mahoney's brother 'took to the bottle' for some weeks after the death and wandered about moaning and groaning about Edward's failure to look after Peter. The brother drank himself to death and his body, mutilated by dogs, was not discovered for two weeks. Richard Wymer text).

By the late 1950s Edward Wymer had become bedridden and people started to take advantage of him 'as his personal possessions and paintings started to disappear.' In early 1961 he returned to Sydney Rd Coburg, dying six months later at the age of 87.

Janice Newton

The Age 23 October 1940, p. 11. The Age 7 Feb 1959, p. 18 The Argus Monday 11 January 1909, p. 9 The Argus 18 November 1952 p. 6. Sydney Sun 24 January 1953, p. 2 . Richard Wymer Telephone Interview 15 November 1995, J. Newton.

Richard Wymer Script 'Edward James Wymer'.

S.S. Kanowna

I noticed in the McKillop article a mention of the S.S. Kanowna [the ship on which the McKillop family sailed to Fremantle, *Things Past* #111]. That ship served well during WWI, painted as a hospital ship she made several round trips between Europe and Australia to evacuate the wounded.

Back in civil service at war's end she plied the coastal routes around southern Australia until 1929, when she had the misfortune to strike an uncharted rock. The captain was able to beach the vessel on Wilsons Prom and everybody was landed safely on the high tide. Driven by the wind she refloated and drifted well out, where she eventually sank in deep water.

About 10 years ago a concerted effort by a group of underwater explorers relocated the wreck and dived on it. It's in around 80 metres of water and is exposed to the Bass Strait weather so it's not a dive to be taken lightly.

A Different Kind of Family History



It doesn't look much, does it – an old book with tattered binding, worn corners and scuff marks on the cover? My family knows better! This is the go-to authority to settle arguments about our childhood, teenage years, family holidays, major

purchases, loans for our first cars, and a thousand and one other questions. It is our mother's household accounts book!

Vida started these meticulous accounts the day after she and Alex returned from their honeymoon, and this particular book ends on 30 June 1975. She (and Alex from time to time) maintained the same incredible level of detail right up to her death in 2008, so we have our own family economic history from 1940 for almost 70 years.

Each time I open the book, I find something new.

Here is the record of the purchase of my high chair; there are the entries showing that in winter we were given Hypol (the fish oil tonic that I can still taste!) and Aktavite to help ward off winter ills. Later we find the first television, each year's school textbooks, income from the old Commonwealth Scholarships. The list goes on...

Of course, the book changes as time passes – from the early days of setting up a home, the arrival of each child, school



expenses (always differentiated with our initials), costs of bringing up teenagers, and then as we started earning and left home one by one, our individual entries cease. This book ends at around the time Alex retired, and the next accounts book tracks their life as retirees – leisure activities and holidays starting to give way to the costs of growing older.

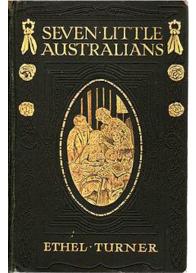
It's a wonderful record of our early lives, and as a family we treasure it!

Alison Martin

John Keane

Australian Classic Censored

2019 marks the 125th anniversary of the children's classic *Seven Little Australians* by Ethel Turner. The book that so many of us enjoyed as children was a censored version of Turner's original. The centenary edition of 1994 reinstated a four-page section with a reference to Aboriginal people that was part of the original but had been omitted from all editions from 1896 on.



Cover of 1912 Edition, image Wikipedia.

For a start, she refers to them (in 1894 no less!) by their correct and preferred tribal name of Koori, then ups the ante by having the white narrator of the tale speak of a time, "when Tettawonga's ancestors were brave and strong and happy as careless children, when their worst nightmare had never shown them so evil a time as the white man would bring their race..." And last but not least she embeds all of this in a delightful tale of how the kookaburra came to be a 'laughing' bird.

Matthew Curlewis, 'What was left out of *Seven Little Australians*'.

This act of censorship came as a surprise even to Ethel Turner's descendants. Her great-grandson, Matthew Curlewis, regretted the 'whiter, shorter version' of the book as an injustice to the author and to generations of readers. Read the full article and story at:

https://www.writerscentre.com.au/blog/what-wasleft-out-of-seven-little-australians/

Vale Sandy Ross

Sue Thompson from Lilydale and District Historical Society had some sad news for the local history community.

'It is with great sadness that I advise that our former archivist, president and Life Member Sandy Ross has passed away.

As an inaugural member, Sandy's efforts to gather and copy as many photographs of our district created a photographic collection envied by many. His research, collecting of information and objects is the backbone of the archive we now possess and are building on. Rest in peace Sandy, your contribution to the history of our district will never be forgotten.

I know Sandy also helped many other societies copying photographs for various publications over the years.'

Paula added:

'Sandy helped me many times in the early days of the Mt Evelyn History Group, with photographs and as President of L&DHS, and during the writing of *Tracks to Trails: a history of Mt Evelyn* in the mid-nineties.

Sandy's voluntary work in creating a well catalogued photographic collection of the district was invaluable. Groups attempting a similar project now, using Victorian Collections or similar software and the easy, inexpensive scanning techniques now available, will understand how much time he spent using cameras, negatives and prints, as well as arranging storage.

Unwelcome news but an occasion to remember Sandy and his contributions.'

Ominous anniversaries

2019 marks two significant anniversaries from Victoria's most disastrous bushfires. It is 80 years since the Black Friday fires, 13 January 1939 (71 fatalities), and 10 years since Black Saturday, 7 February 2009 (173 fatalities).

Shire of Lillydale War Diary

Anthony McAleer has compiled a diary of what happened to the local volunteers (including those from Mt Evelyn) in WWI. See <u>http://www.lillydalewardiary.com/</u>.

'In 2018, after receiving a grant from the Federal Government's Centenary of Armistice program, the Lilydale RSL commissioned local military historian Anthony McAleer OAM to create a project that would highlight the service of this district's men and women during World War One. What he has created is quite unique. Never before has a district like the former Shire of Lillydale had its Great War volunteers chronicled in this way. At this website you will find a day by day account of what happened to them all and the important events that affected them.' (Mt Evelyn RSL Facebook page) Lilydale RSL celebrated its centenary on 15 January 2019 and the Mt Evelyn branch its 50th anniversary on 23rd January.

'Kinley'

The section of the Cave Hill estate near Hull road is now being marketed under the name 'Kinley'. After several people queried the origin of the name, Paula asked the developers, Intrapac, the reason for their choice. Here is their reply.

The prefix "Kin" symbolizes family, and this was something we kept coming back to when we were researching the future name of the development. There will be a tight night [tight-knit?] community developed as Kinley forms in years to come. Our vision for Kinley also includes preserving the 140 year history of the property.

From Kev's Rain Gauge Rainfall (in mm) for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, and Melbourne for the last three months.					
	Nov-18	Dec-18	2018 Totals	Jan-19	
Mt Evelyn	152.5	78.3	732.6	24.9	
McKillop	190	68	832	27.9	
Melbourne	97.8	104.8	514.2	11.2	
McKillop readings courtesy Jean Edwards Melbourne figures from Bureau of Meteorology: <u>http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/</u>					

Kevin Phillips

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