



Things Past

Newsletter 115
 November 2019
 PO Box 289 Mt Evelyn Vic 3796
 Incorporation Number: A0051327F

Dates for Your Diary

Business meeting followed by afternoon tea & breakup, Saturday 16 November, 1:30pm at Paperbark Café, Kuranga Nursery, York Road, Mt Evelyn. RSVP to Paula at: pherlihy3@gmail.com

Working bee at Hardy House, Friday 17 January 2020, 10:00am - 12:00 noon. Lunch at Passchendaele Café to follow.

Business meeting, Monday 17 February, 7:30pm at Hardy House.

Douglas Knox, 'Log Cabins and the Mitchell Tram Tracks', Saturday 21 March, 1:30pm 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.

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Industrial Paintings



'Mt Evelyn timber mill' by Martin Heatherich, gouache on paper, 1956.

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From p.1

Martin Heatherich lived on Silvan Road Mt Evelyn for a time in the mid-1950s. He sent us two of his paintings of local industrial sites. Of the painting of the saw mill on page 1, Martin wrote:

My painting 'Mt Evelyn saw mill' came about by chance. I arrived with my parents from the Netherlands in 1955 and, after a few changes, my parents rented a dwelling in 1956 between the McKillop Store and the Produce Store on Silvan Road.

As I worked in the city, I left early in the morning and came home early evening. I never knew there was a saw mill at the back fence, until one day when I took a sickie. I was looking forward to a nice sleep-in, when I was woken up at 7am by a siren, followed by the loud noise of the machinery.

After breakfast I wandered to the back fence to see what all the noise was about. I was fascinated by the milling operation: the screeching sound of the huge saw blade ripping the logs, the steam, the smoke, the chaps running around, the vibration. All that inspired me to make a sketch-like painting of the scene. It was the first work I produced in my new country.

Until my recent contact with Karen, I never realised the historical value of the painting of the only saw mill in existence at that time in Mt Evelyn.

The medium is gouache on paper (it was the only paint in my possession, brought with me from Holland).



Above, Mt Evelyn saw mill, photo from Beryl Taylor. Martin's painting on p.1 seems to show the same building, which would place this scene beside the Primary School.

The building in Martin's painting seems to be the same one as in the photo at bottom left, passed on to us by Beryl Taylor (*Things Past* #98). From Martin's description, it would have been on the industrial site next to Mt Evelyn Primary School (behind Prestige Vehicle Repairs). There are cypress trees on the block, as in the painting.

A steam saw mill was opened near the school in 1912, to produce firewood. This was apparently on Charles Haworth's land, as £30 of newly sawn firewood was burnt at Haworth's sawmill in a bushfire in 1913 (*Lilydale Express*, 7/6/1912, 6/9/1912 & 7/12/1913). If this was the mill in the painting, it must have operated for over 40 years.

Martin also shared his painting of the Cave Hill Lime Works, painted in 1989 (below). He was then working as a cleaner, and so had access to the site at weekends, when the picture was painted.

Martin was one of the founders of Mt Evelyn Christian School in the early 1970s.



Above, 'The David Mitchell Quarry', oil painting by Martin Heatherich, 1989.

Yarra Valley Loop

Work is under way on the Lilydale to Yering stage of the Yarra Valley Loop. The shared-use trail will continue on to Yarra Glen and eventually to Healesville, and will link to the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail. Mt Evelyn people will then have access to a circuit trail round the valley.

The section from Lilydale to Yarra Glen will follow the alignment of the former Healesville railway.

Fox's Point Scenic Railway

Some of our readers may remember the Fox's Point Scenic Railway, which ran up the side of Mt Dandenong from the Tourist Road in the 1950s. John Keane has been researching the railway and its builder, Stanley Neil Foxcroft.

In the late 1940s Stanley Neil Foxcroft purchased a bush block with a frontage on Mt Dandenong (Tourist) Road. He built a rail haulage system to transport materials up the 45 degree slope to a house site half-way up the hillside. The system consisted of wooden rails and a flat trolley hauled by a motor bike engine.

So many local youngsters asked for a ride that Foxcroft decided to convert his system into a tourist railway to allow visitors to enjoy the views from the Dandenongs. He upgraded his system with safety features: steel rails instead of wooden, and seating on the trolley. A Willys-Overland Jeep engine was installed above the house, at the top of the property.

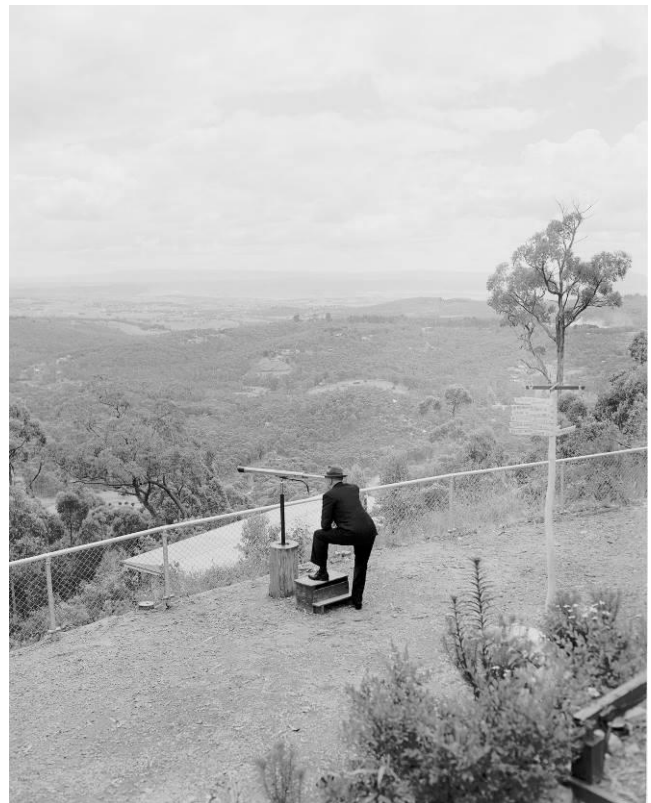
As more and more visitors came to experience the ride and the panoramic views from the hilltop, Foxcroft's entrepreneurial instincts were aroused and he decided to turn the railway into a fully-fledged tourist operation. The railway was extended to a landing higher up the property, where an engine house and control room were built. A custom-built rail car was introduced, then a second. Two cables were attached to each car as an added safety feature.



Above, Entrance to Fox's Point Scenic Railway, Victorian Railways Collection, State Library Victoria.

The cars were silver coated and named *The Vista Glida* and *The Vista Flya*. Each car could carry up

to six passengers. The railway originally consisted of a single track with a passing loop halfway down the slope. Later a second track was installed. Fares were one shilling for adults and sixpence for children.



Above, View from Fox's Point Scenic Railway, Victorian Railways Collection, State Library Victoria.

The full tourist railway was in operation by 1953. Visitors travelled by Vista car 61 metres up the slope to a landing where a telescope was installed. The buildings of Melbourne and planes at Essendon Airport could be seen. Visitors could even tell the time by the Lilydale clock, eight kilometres away. The control room and engine house were also located at this level.

From the viewing area, steps led to an upper level where there was a refreshment area, an aviary and a display of shells and coral. Loudspeakers at the various levels allowed the operator to speak directly to patrons.

The railway operated all day on Sundays and public holidays, every weekday afternoon, and after 8pm on Saturday to enable patrons to view the city lights. It was never open during daylight hours on Saturday, due to Foxcroft's Seventh Day Adventist beliefs.

Foxcroft sold the property and the working railway about 1958, when he moved to Sydney. The

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From p.3

railway never flourished under the new owner, who lacked Foxcroft's entrepreneurial flair. The bush fires of January 1962 destroyed the infrastructure, but the railway might already have been closed to the public by that time. Most of the recovered materials were sold to a neighbour in 1965.

Stanley Neil Foxcroft was born 28 January 1921 in Preston, Victoria. His trade was graphic artist and sign writer, who did a lot of work for Croydon Council. An immensely tall man, Foxcroft drove a small French Amilcar, and to see him fold himself into it was quite a sight. His place of residence was listed as Bradfield NSW in 1958 and Berowa NSW from 1968. He died on 2 June 2000 in Gosford NSW. The *Seventh Day Adventist News* dated 8 July 2000 described him as an artist, inventor, botanist, builder and a Bible student.



Above, the control level. Neil Foxcroft is the tall man standing at right, next to the control room. Victorian Railways Collection, State Library Victoria.

Earlier this year, following a planned burn on Mt Dandenong, John Keane visited the site of the tourist railway and found a few relics still in place. 'Imagine my surprise when I came across the winching engine still in situ. Now the whole site makes sense but you still need a bit of imagination, as there has been a lot of land slip there.' John would like to see signage erected at the site, giving the history of the tourist railway.

From John Keane

Sources:

'Fox's Point Scenic Railway' Parts 1 & 2, *Newsrail* Feb-March 2018.

Seventh Day Adventist News 8/7/2000.

Phil McClure, talk to Mt Dandenong & District Historical Society 15/8/2009 and telephone communication.

Victorian Railways Collection, State Library Victoria.



Above, looking down the slope where the rails used to run. Below, remains of the winching engine. Photos John Keane.



Apology from the Editors

In *Things Past* #114 we published Part 1 of an article titled 'The Peters Family of Healesville'. Due to a misunderstanding, we were under the impression that the writer was Jim Johnson. The writer was Charles Richards, who has written extensively about the Indigenous players and families of the Healesville Football Club. We regret the error, and apologise to Mr Richards.

The article was originally published as 'The Peters Family' on the Coranderrk website, and subsequently on the Footy Almanac (1 August). We have been unable to contact the author to seek permission to publish, so unfortunately we can't bring you Part 2. You can read the whole of this interesting article at:

<http://www.coranderrk.com/the-peters-family/>
or <https://www.footyalmanac.com.au/>

Japan: Fish, Fibre and Futons

The Northern Japanese People

One of my favourite anime movies is Studio Ghibli's *Mononoke Hime* (Princess Mononoke). There are several main characters representing (loosely) Nature, Spiritual Life, Wildlife, Cupidity and Stupidity, Human Indigenous Living and the Industrial Age. The movie examines the different points of view, the pros and cons of each, and the potential for Reconciliation.

Princess Mononoke is the girl raised by wolves, seen here astride her wolf foster-mother, fighting for her world's survival. The boy in the picture is a representative of the Northern Japanese people, and he is the central figure for Reconciliation. This movie led me to learn about the Ainu (the indigenous inhabitants of Japan), and other Northern Peoples.



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND (Creative Commons)

On my last visit to Japan I visited the Hakodate City Museum of Northern Peoples on Hokkaido (the northern large island of Japan) to learn as much as I could.

The story with Japan's indigenous population, as is the case with Australia's, is one of usurpation of lands and food sources. The artefacts that are being collected and studied now come primarily from early anthropologists, amateur and professional, who admired the Northern peoples. Governments and officialdom paid them little attention.

Salmon Skin Shoes

One item of clothing I saw at the Museum, but sadly did not photograph, was Salmon Skin Shoes. The Museum had at least two pairs on display. I remember one which is very likely to be that in the photo below and another which was even more fascinating because it retained the fins as decoration.



Above, salmon skin shoe at Hakodate City Museum of Northern Peoples.

Michael Touchman credits Travis S. as the photographer and says, 'This is the lateral view of one of the salmon skin shoes. The salmon skin provides a slip-resistant surface when walking on icy surfaces. Near the top is birch weave with cords that tie around the ankle. In colder times rice plant fodder is stuffed into the shoe for insulation.'

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/baggis/2079950754>



Above: traditional embroidery motif (seen here on a bookmark) from the Hakodate Museum of Northern Peoples.

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Tatami

In Nagano (home of the 1998 Winter Olympics) we were staying in an Old Style inn in a central street, sleeping on tatami on a futon under a quilt, as in the mountains. Tatami is the woven rice straw flooring in traditional Japanese rooms. Historic tatami can be hundreds of years old.

In addition to never wearing shoes inside, one is asked to wear socks to protect the tatami from body oils. The owner took pity on us and put low chairs in the room when we asked to stay a second night, as we were so loving the area. The chairs are made not to mark the tatami. Initially there were only cushions and I was struggling to dress.

Nesting Fish

I saw this set of nesting *papier-mâché* fish in the shop opposite the inn, and have added it to the nesting toy collection I described in *Things Past* #99. The lid holds the pieces in.



Above, colourful *papier-mâché* nesting fish.

The shop sold specialist paper and art products, with an emphasis on origami. Not the sort of shop we see in a main street in Australia.

North to Soya Misaka

On this our fourth trip to Japan, Tim and I decided to go to Soya Misaka (Cape Soya), the northern-most point in Japan, a bus trip on from the end of the railway line at Wakanai.

We always travel by train in Japan, as the wonderful Japan Rail Pass, only available to tourists who purchase outside Japan, makes excellent transport affordable. Japanese trains

run on time, and include the famous *Shinkansen*, or 'bullet trains', with a smooth maximum operating speed of 320 km/h.



Above, the statue of explorer Rinzo Mamiya. In the background, local community members weed garden beds.

As we travelled north, the countryside became desolate and the main livelihood appeared to be fishing. The sights were artificial reefs to break waves in the sea, and boats, fishing nets and floats drying on shore.

Arising early after an overnight stay just south of Wakanai, we made our way to the Wakanai bus terminal and travelled a few hours into the chilling fog of Soya Misaka.

In addition to the main iconic monument to the North, there is a statue honouring Rinzo Mamiya (1745-1844), one of the first Japanese explorers of Sakhalin (formerly the Japanese territory of Karafuto). His story was fascinating, as he mapped the area after threats from Russia to Japan's sovereignty. He became an undercover agent for the Tokugawa shogunate, and is popularised in the manga series *Kozure Okami* ('Lone Wolf and Cub').

I was deeply moved by the community spirit of the local people who had gathered to tidy the garden beds now that winter had passed. They knelt in the freezing fog, cheerfully hand weeding the indigenous plants, and re-edging the beds with scallop shells.

I pretended to take a picture of the Mamiya statue, while being careful to capture the working party in the background.

Paula Herlihy

Klytie Pate – A Montrose Potter

At a recent visit to *Beleura* (1863), an historic home and gardens on the Mornington Peninsula, I was directed to the Klytie Pate Treasury, a collection of potter Klytie Pate's work.

The occasion was a piano recital as a thank you to National Trust volunteers, and I accompanied Lilydale potter and artist Lesley Barnes OAM to the event as her driver and guest. Lesley pointed out the small gallery, because she knew I had taught pottery at Morrison House and at my home, and she had been a student of Klytie Pate's at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT).



Lesley recalled that 'since men had gone to war, Klytie needed help with constructing and firing some of her works', and Lesley recalls learning to attach seahorse-shaped handles to cups. One such cup is on display at Beleura,

plus a seahorse skeleton used as a model. Klytie Pate is celebrated for her glazes, many created from Australian products.

Klytie Winifred Winfield Sclater was born in Melbourne in 1912. She was raised by her aunt and uncle, Christian and Napier Waller. Christian Waller was an artist and printmaker. Napier Waller is perhaps best known for his mosaics and stained glass in the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Christian changed the spelling of her niece's name to 'Klytie' for numerological reasons. Klytie met Bill Pate at classes at the Working Men's College, later RMIT. They married in 1937, and lived in South Yarra.

Bill Pate built a small weekender, *Joliwynds*, in the hills at Montrose. The native flora

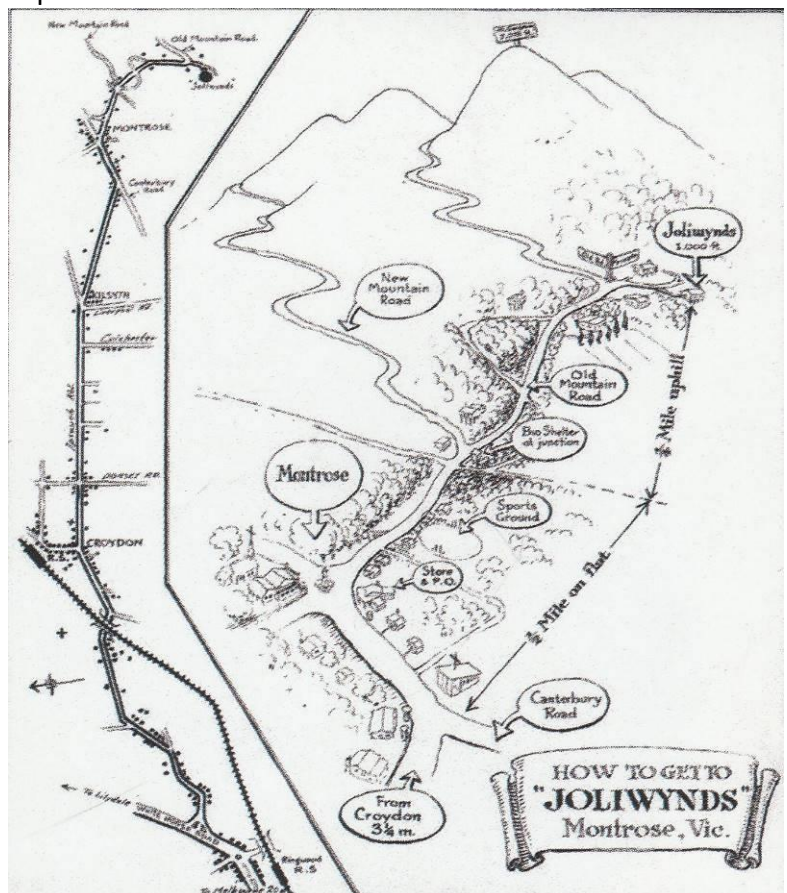
and fauna that surrounded the house provided inspiration for Klytie's designs.



Left, Klytie Pate with 'David' at *Joliwynds*. Montrose, c.1941 Above, the house at *Joliwynds*. Below, Bill Pate's 'typically meticulous and unambiguous' directions for finding the property.

While inspecting Klytie's work, my attention was drawn to a free broadsheet giving background to the artist and her work (the source for the photos and map). I purchased the catalogue also, and searched it and the gallery for any references to Montrose.

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In 1991 Klytie was awarded the Order of Australia for service to the Arts, particularly ceramic art and sculpture. Klytie died in 2010, aged 97. The house still stands below Marshall Terrace, Montrose (off the Old Coach Road); the spelling of the name has been changed to *Joliwinds*.



Above, Klytie Pate with friend Mary Twycross at Joliwinds c.1946.

Googling 'Klytie Pate' and selecting 'images' will lead you into her creative world. *Beleura* holds the most extensive collection of her works, donated by her friends Mary and John Twycross. More information is available through the link below, under 'Visitor Information: Klytie Pate Treasury'.

Map and photos reproduced courtesy the Klytie Pate Collection at *Beleura*, Mornington, www.beleura.org.au **Paula Herlihy**

Poor Man's Lion Seat

Janice Newton noticed these lions in the tiny town of Wudinna on the way to Port Augusta.



Above, Lion Seat at Wudinna, SA. Photo Janice Newton.

'Just made me think of how much better those in Mt Evelyn were! It appears the Wudinna Lions Club created the old concrete tank circular toilets and the lion seat nearby, to which someone had roughly tried to draw a lion's features. Everywhere we went, we were astounded at how hard small towns were trying to stay alive and create items of interest.'

Mt Evelyn's own winged lion seat was recently the target of a graffiti attack, fortunately on the wood, not on the concrete lions. While Paula was trying to match the green to paint over the tags, somebody (Council's anti-graffiti unit?) repainted the visible parts of the woodwork dark brown.

We hope one of our projects for next year can be to create a plaque giving the history of this Mt Evelyn icon. Draft wording for the plaque was on display at our Street Party stall.



Above, Leontyne and Leonora show off their new brown livery. They are now well established under the verandah of the Old Community Link. Photo Kevin Phillips.

Coincidentally, Jean Edwards acquired a book, *The Great Gardens of Australia*, which she kindly passed on to the group. It has a photo of the lion seat in the Botanical Gardens in Hobart. Robyn Taylor made a sketch of this seat in 2017 (*Things Past* #106).

Sad news

We were sorry to learn that Reg Falkingham passed away on 22 October 2019. Reg was the last of the generation of Falkingams who grew up at 'Bark Rest', Mt Evelyn. Our sympathy to the family.

Mullum Mullum Creek Excursion

We were fortunate to have perfect weather for our Mullum Mullum Creek excursion on 18 May. We began with a visit to Schwerkolt Cottage, Mitcham. Built by German settler Johann August Schwerkolt in 1884, the cottage has been restored to its original condition and furnished in the style of the period. The barn, wine cellar, smokehouse and orchard machinery shed have also been preserved. Our visit was followed by a leisurely walk down the Eastlink Trail to the Mullum Mullum Gorge.

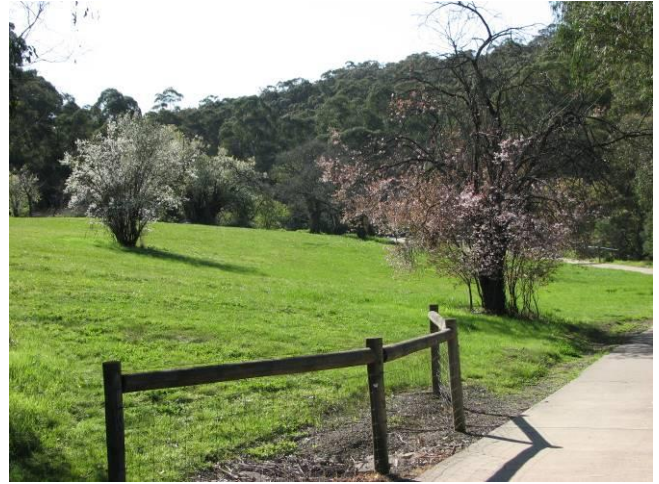
Tour leader Kevin Phillips grew up in Mullum Mullum Road, Ringwood, and used to walk to Ringwood East State School via a log across the creek. When he first started school, he walked with two older girls from a neighbouring property. One day they confronted his mother. 'Mrs Phillips, will you please tell Kevin not to jump over the snakes?' Signs still warn trail users to beware of snakes.

Mullum Mullum is one of the few creeks in suburban Melbourne to retain its native and regenerated vegetation along most of its length, providing a wildlife corridor from the Croydon and Ringwood Hills to the Yarra. The steepness of the gorge has largely preserved it from development. Part of Eastlink was routed underground to protect the environment of the gorge.



Mullum Mullum is a Woi wurrung name, thought to mean 'Place of many eagles', 'Place of many large birds', or possibly 'Place of many butterflies'. The creek is also known as Deep Creek. Its named tributaries are Sandy Creek (dammed in the 1920s to create Ringwood Lake), Loughnans

Creek, Walert Creek (the name, chosen in consultation with the traditional owners, means the Brushtail Possum), the intriguingly named Go-between's Gully, Amersham Gully and Green Gully.



Rising south of Birt's Hill, Croydon, Mullum Mullum flows southwest through Ringwood, then turns to flow northwest through Mitcham, Park Orchards, Donvale, Doncaster East and Warrandyte, to join the Yarra at Templestowe (22 kilometres). The creek forms the boundary between the Counties of Evelyn and Bourke, and between Evelyn and Mornington.



Photos, clockwise from left: Schwerkolt Cottage, Mitcham; remnant orchard trees beside the Eastlink Trail below Schwerkolt Cottage; the Eastlink Tunnel ventilation shaft towers over the head of Mullum Mullum Gorge.

In past geological ages, the upper section of Mullum Mullum was the headwaters of Heatherdale Creek, which is a tributary of Dandenong Creek. Through natural 'stream capture', Mullum Mullum cut through to the bed of Heatherdale Creek, diverting its headwaters.

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The point of capture is thought to have been near the north end of New Street Ringwood, possibly at the rapids just upstream of the footbridge (the captured creek would have been at a higher level than the captor creek). The north-south section of Eastlink follows the dry valley that was left behind when the creek changed course.



Above, footbridge and leaning Manna Gums near Yarran Dheran in the Mullum Mullum Gorge.

Relics of Wurundjeri occupation have been found under the Deep Creek Bridge (stone axe), in Currawong Bush Park (scar trees) and near the confluence with the Yarra, which was a seasonal campsite (scar trees, artefact scatters). A scar tree found in Mullum Mullum Creek was gifted to the Monash University Aboriginal Garden in 1999.

Pontville homestead near the Yarra dates from the early days of settlement. The Templestowe Hill Climb Circuit (including the famous 'Wall') is preserved in Tikalara Park.

Some of those who missed the May excursion had another chance in September. We repeated the Eastlink Trail walk and visited Currawong Bush Park. Unfortunately the Aboriginal scar tree in the park has now completely disintegrated.

Karen Phillips

References

Schwerkolt Cottage
<http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Schwerkolt-Cottage.html>
Friends of Mullum Mullum Valley
<http://web.archive.org/web/20121019221147/http://home.vicnet.net.au/~fommv/foursections.htm>
Currawong Bush Park 'Wurundjeri Wisdom' podcasts:
https://www.manningham.vic.gov.au/documents?publication_type=143&page=7
Pontville
<http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/1586>

Significant Tree Threatened

Thought you might be interested in the latest heritage issue at Lilydale. Council is currently building a new toilet block in Melba Park to replace the temporary ones built some years ago. The location however is of great concern to Lilydale & District Historical Society.

The block will be located only a metre away from the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee tree, which was planted by the people of Lilydale on 13 September 2013. The Queensland Fire Tree *Stenocarpus sinuatus* will grow 20 to 30m high and have a canopy of 10 to 15m.

The toilets will be seen from Main Street when you look down the walkway between the Crown Hotel and the Westpac Bank. Currently you see our beautiful Melba Park, which dates from 1860 when the first land sales occurred and the town began.

We would also point out the location for this significant tree was selected by the Council so it became a feature of Melba Park and could be seen from Main Street. My understanding is that no one in the heritage area of council knew anything about [the construction], until alerted by us.

Follow the story on our society's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LilydaleandDistrictHistoricalSocietyInc/> **From Sue Thompson, LDHS**

Congratulations to Monbulk HS

Monbulk Historical Society's latest publication *When Roads Were Tracks, A history of the roads of Monbulk, Kallista, The Patch and Sherbrooke* by Jill A'Vard and Armin Richter won the Local History Project Award at the Victorian Community History Awards in October.

'The names of the roads and tracks are a window into the history of the area and the families that have made it what it is today. The book also includes the history of the tourist tracks, the tracks throughout Sherbrooke Forest, and brings together a unique collection of historic photographs and maps.'

When Roads Were Tracks, is available through the society's website, <https://monbulkhistoricalociety.org.au/>

The Brightly Coloured Hills

Where are the Red Hills, the Green Hills, and the Purple Hills?

The Yarran Dheran Reserve is located beside the Mullum Mullum Creek in Mitcham. 'The creeper Purple Coral-pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*), which was once prevalent throughout the surrounding hills, to the extent that they were known as the Purple Hills, can also be found around the park.' 'Yarran Dheran', Wikipedia:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yarran_Dheran



Above, the Coral Pea *Hardenbergia violacea* used to turn the Mitcham Hills purple every Spring.

The Green Hills were mentioned in relation to a court case in 1861. An employee of Swift's sawmill on Olinda Creek claimed he was swindled out of a horse. The conman's tale was that Mr Swift had sent him on an errand to a Mr Turner, a resident on the Green Hills (*Things Past* #96).

There is a Greenhills Avenue running between Swansea Road and Cambridge Road, Montrose. Thomas Turner had a selection further west, in the angle between Mt Dandenong and Durham Roads. It seems likely that the Green Hills were in the Montrose area, before it was named 'Montrose'. The distance of several miles from the sawmill would fit in with the conman's story.

The State Library has an undated postcard of 'Red Hills Lilydale':

<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/pictoria/gid/slv-pic-aab43854> The photo shows a straight level stretch of road, running between low cuttings and bordered by scrub, with a ridge in the distance. The location is hard to identify from the card.



Above, earth-moving machines at Red Hill, on the former Cave Hill Estate. Photos Kevin Phillips.

Marion Stott commented:

'If you drive along Hull Road now to opposite the Carronvale Road corner, you will certainly see the many hues of RED HILL. They have completely denuded the area of trees, of which there were many original magnificent specimens. One day they knocked over the lot, heaped them into huge piles, then came along and mulched them all up back into large piles.

It's been very distressing for the local community I can tell you, seeing the machines driving around moving the earth about. They seem to have brought in mounds of greyish soil, to spread as top soil, we presume.'

We would be interested to hear of any other colourful place names in the local area.

Street Party and Stall

The Mt Evelyn Street Party on Sunday 27 October provided an opportunity to revisit the 1950s, and wallow in nostalgia for the costumes, music, dance and classic vehicles of that decade. The Street Party Committee has once again done an outstanding job in organising this community event.

Thanks to all who helped on our stall. Our display featured the history of the Aqueduct. We collected many signatures on the petition for a heritage overlay on the Aqueduct and its historic features. We received information that rails used in its construction are still in place at Priestley Crescent – another piece of historic infrastructure worth preserving.

Economics of Aboriginal Society

Dr Gary Presland gave a thought-provoking talk on the Economics of Aboriginal Society to the Whitehorse Historical Society on 5 October.

It was hard at first to grasp the concept of 'Economics' in a society that did not use money as a medium of exchange. But anyone who hunts, gathers food, or creates artefacts or tools, is contributing to the economy of their group.

There was trade over long distances. Green-stone axe heads from Mt William, for example, have been found hundreds of miles away. Individuals did not usually travel so far, but valued objects were passed and re-passed from hand to hand over great distances.

Members of the Kulin Nation of central Victoria traded even with non-Kulin groups, with whom they would never think of inter-marrying.

Marriage too had an economic aspect. Women traditionally were gatherers, and provided the bulk of a clan's food. Their work was valuable. If you gave your daughter in marriage to a man from another clan, you placed him under an obligation. That meant he was likely to let your clan hunt and forage on his land when times were tough. Carefully chosen marriage partners could therefore extend your range of resources.

The hunter-gatherer way of life was a healthy one. Permanent settlement in one place leads to problems: disease, a degraded environment and an exploding population. Gary suggested that adopting agriculture and a settled lifestyle was the greatest mistake humanity ever made.

Gary's talk left us with a lot to think about. Gary is the author of a number of books on Victorian Aboriginal history. He was kind enough to advise us on our publication *Aborigines in the Yarra Valley & Northern Dandenongs*.

From Kev's Rain Gauge

Rainfall (in mm) for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, and Melbourne for the last three months.

	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	YTD
Mt Evelyn	103.1	98.5	49.7	665.0
McKillop	125.2	104.4	61.0	764.7
Melbourne	51.4	41.0	24.0	313.6

McKillop readings courtesy Jean Edwards

Melbourne figures from Bureau of Meteorology: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/>

Kevin Phillips

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Website: www.mt-evelyn.net/historygroup

Archived newsletters: <http://www.mt-evelyn.net/thingspast>

Mt Evelyn History Tools Blogsite: <http://mtevelynhistorytools.blogspot.com.au/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MtEvelynHistoryGroup2016/>

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