



Things Past

Newsletter 132
 February 2024
 Wurundjeri Country
 PO Box 289 Mt Evelyn Vic 3796
 Incorporation Number A0051327F

Dates for Your Diary

General Business Meeting, Monday 19 February, 7.30 pm, at Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn.

Excursion, Sunday 17 March. Meet at 1pm approx. at Ambleside Homestead, 3 Olivebank Rd Ferntree Gully. Ambleside is temporarily closed now but we hope they can take us.

General Business Meeting, Monday 15 April, 7.30 pm, at Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn.

Conference, Saturday 29 June. Association of Eastern Historical Societies, Lilydale Lakeside Campus, 1 Jarlo Dve, Lilydale. Tickets will be arranged for members at our May meeting. More information will be sent by email.

Meetings are 3rd Mondays of even months, 7:30 pm at Hardy House for General Business Meetings, and speaker and activity times are on alternate months at times by arrangement - please check your email inbox.

Was Olinda a Pirate?

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Olinda Creek Upper Falls from above, once part of the Stringybark catchment. Photo Kevin Phillips

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Incinerator Gallery

The Incinerator Gallery is a visual arts destination in Melbourne's West, with its unusual history reflected in its name.

In 1929 the City of Essendon commissioned world-renowned American architects Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin, in conjunction with the Reverberatory Incinerator and Engineering Company (RIECo), to build a world-leading incinerator which would not look like an industrial facility.



In 1912, the Griffins' design for Canberra had won an international competition, winning the Griffins particular recognition in Australia. Eric Nicholls of REICo was a friend and business partner, and together they built twelve incinerators during the Great Depression, of which seven still survive. The incinerator at Essendon is one. The aim was to create a building that fitted harmoniously into its environment. Walter Burley Griffin stated that 'the final test of modernism is the replacement of industrial eyesores'. Praised for its beauty and effectiveness, the incinerator was in use until decommissioned in 1942. Left to deteriorate until 1984, it was used briefly as a community theatre. The site underwent conservation, and reopened in 2004 as the Incinerator Arts Complex, renamed the Incinerator Gallery in 2011.

The Gallery offers free history tours to community groups, led by Incinerator volunteers. It is located at 180 Holmes Road, Aberfeldie. It is open during exhibitions from 11am to 4pm Tuesday to Sunday, and closed on public holidays and during exhibition change over.

Based on information from

www.incineratorgallery.com.au and

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Burley_Griffin accessed 26/2/2023.

End of Year Christmas Breakup Enjoyed by All!

Thanks again to Mary and Glenn Golds, who prepared their garden for a Garden Party and then when the rain settled in switched to a lovely party in the covered outside area flanked by fern gardens and hanging pots. Our youngest member Joel hung the paper streamers.



Members brought food and chocolates to share, and flowers for Mary and Glenn. Mary's niece Corinna, who worked as a cake decorator for many years, surprised us all by making individual Christmas biscuits for us as a Christmas gift! And they taste as good as they look!



Charles Leslie Barrett FRZS, CMZS (1879-1959) Scribe and Mentor – part 2

This is the final part of three articles highlighting the lives of the three original (Waldenite) Woodlanders. MEHG has published a print-on-demand book called 'The Woodlanders of Walden Hut' available at Amazon.com. Thanks are due to grandsons of Charles Barrett, Don and Gavin Campbell, and great-granddaughter Kim Campbell for providing photographs and material.

Barrett and Aboriginal Australians

Passion for nature led to Charles Barrett's interest in the First Peoples of Australia. In his book *On the Wallaby* Barrett explained how his interest in Aboriginal culture began when he was given an Aboriginal axe from an Altona midden. Subsequently he attended lectures by Spencer and Gillen and travelled throughout central and eastern Australia learning what he could from extant Aboriginal art and people. He became *The Herald* reporter on Aboriginal issues. He made a plea for a 'National Gallery of Native Art' in every city but was heavily influenced by colleagues A S Kenyon and R H Croll who had conservative views about art and archaeology and Aboriginal technology.¹



Outback camp. Charles (reclining) and Florence Barrett and friends. Image provided by Kim Campbell.

With Kenyon he wrote a booklet on 'Aboriginal Art' (1929) for the Victorian Museum, which remained in print for about 30 years. It contained a drawing of 'The Bungaleen Memorial', a very rare wood carving made at Coranderrk, Healesville in 1866. It is thought to be by Simon Wonga of the Wurundjeri Balluk clan and can be viewed as a photograph on the Museum website.²

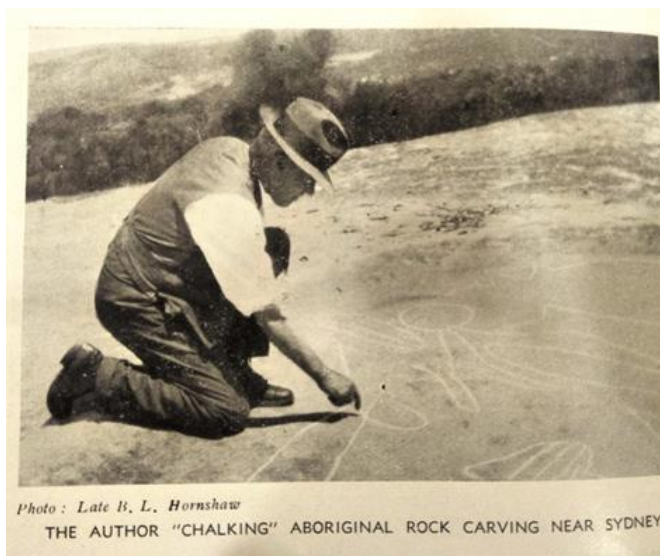


Photo: Late B. L. Hornshaw
THE AUTHOR "CHALKING" ABORIGINAL ROCK CARVING NEAR SYDNEY

From Charles Barrett *On the Wallaby*. Robertson and Mullens, Melbourne, 1942, 193.

Editing and Writing for Youth

Barrett was a member of the literary staff of the Melbourne *Herald* for 33 years from 1906, 'conducting the 'Wild Nature Notes' page, the 'Australian Boys' Page' and the 'Camp Fire' in the Weekly Times.' He edited the birdwatcher magazine *Emu* 1910-16, *The Victorian Naturalist* 1925-40 and *Pals* 1920-1927.³ In 1956 he edited the *Australian Junior Encyclopaedia*.⁴

Articles were written in Barrett's own name and initials and a number of pseudonyms: Donald Barr (for children's stories), C B Frond (for garden articles), as well as names such as Malurus (Latin name for wren, in *Pals*, *Everylady's Journal* and *Australian Town and Country Journal* 1911-14), Wurama, Koala, Jerboa and 'An Australian'.⁵

¹ Charles Barrett, *On the Wallaby*, Robertson and Mullens, Melbourne, 1942, 191. Griffiths 1989, 361-2.

² <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/items/162920>

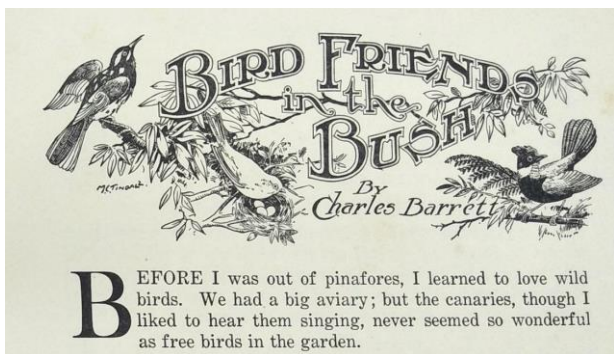
³ Griffiths 1989, www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A23382 accessed June 6 2021.

⁴ *Healesville and Yarra Glen Guardian* 23 June 1928, 3; Tom Griffiths *Hunters and Collectors: the antiquarian imagination in Australia*, CUP, Melbourne, 1996, 142.

⁵ See advertisements for *Home Beautiful* in *The Herald* 1930s. Personal Correspondence Gavin Campbell.

Charles Barrett followed the guide of his mentor from *The Argus*, Donald Macdonald, in exhorting Australian youth to aim with field glasses and to shoot with cameras rather than guns. Prior to this early century conservationist push it was common for those studying birds to steal eggs and to shoot birds for museum specimens. He was active in the nature studies programmes for the young. He reached a national and even international audience with his promotion of nature study. His series of *Sun Nature Books* attained a circulation of nearly one million.⁶

The heroes of Barrett's children's books such as *Bush Ramblers* (1913) loved nature and defended animals and birds. "I haven't a gun", he remarked, "because I never kill anything. The best sport is in watching the birds and beasts at work and play."⁷ As Donald Barr in 1922 Barrett edited a collection of poems and stories in *The Fernland Storybook*, including stories by 'The Beachcomber', (Edmund Banfield), Donald Macdonald, his wife as 'Helen Trego' and Mary Grant Bruce, as well as by two of his identities: Charles Barrett and Donald Barr.



From Donald Barr (ed) *The Fernland Story Book*, Whitcombe and Tombs, Melbourne, 1922.

During the first Australian Children's Book Week in 1924, Barrett read stories from his book, *Bushland Babies* on 3LO. Perhaps more important than his children's fairy stories and adventure

books were his regular newspaper columns for the youth of the general public and for the Scouting Movement. He wrote about camping, staying in huts, and collecting chestnuts, regularly referring back to Walden Hut and spreading his enthusiasm for nature, and birds in particular.⁸

Charles Barrett as ambassador and volunteer

Barrett was a friendly and generous host to visiting naturalists and took them to see lyrebirds and platypus. He was a Fellow of the London and New York Zoological Societies. He collected insects and sent them to entomologists in other parts of the world.⁹ Barrett took on administrative positions between 1929 and 1941 in the Field Naturalists and Royal Zoological Society of NSW. In 1953 he was awarded the Australian Natural History Medallion.

Barrett became a mentor and networker for others. He loaned his copy of Thoreau's *Walden*, which he had carried with him through his WWI service, to Gippsland garden- and nature-writer Jean Galbraith, and he welcomed Alec Chisholm to the Melbourne Bird Observers Club after seeing examples of his observation and writing.¹⁰ Chisholm went on to edit the ten volume *Australian Encyclopaedia* as well as writing many nature and history books.

Charles Barrett died at the age of 79 at Peter McCallum Cancer Institute, his final two widowed years spent with daughter Bea in Mentone. He outlived his two Woodlander companions, Brooke Nicholls and Claude Kinane, by decades but memories of those years surfaced continually throughout his life.

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⁶ Obituary *The Emu* August 59, 1959, 226-7; Griffiths 1996, 142; *The Argus* 7 Dec 1940, 9 www.eoas.omfo/blogs/P000201b.htm, accessed 31 May 2021.

⁷ Charles Barrett *The Bush Ramblers*, T Shaw Fitchett, Melbourne, 1913, 91.

⁸ See *The Herald* 4 May 1906, 2, 13 Jan 1927, 14 May 1938, 42, *Weekly Times* throughout 1933.

⁹ Obituary *The Emu* August 59, 1959, 226-7; Griffiths 1996, 142; *The Argus* 7 Dec 1940, 9 www.eoas.omfo/blogs/P000201b.htm, accessed 31 May 2021.

¹⁰ Alec Chisholm *The Joy of the Earth*, William Collins, Sydney, 1969, 161.

John Morrison and the Mt Evelyn Connection

John Morrison (1904-1998), short story writer, novelist and essayist, was for a time a resident of Mt Evelyn.

Born in Sunderland in the north of England, John Gordon Morrison left school at 14 and worked for two years in a local museum, before serving a gardening apprenticeship. He came out to Australia in 1923 as an assisted immigrant. He worked his way through the country districts of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, but returned to England because of a brother's illness. Homesick for his adopted country, he worked his passage back to Australia as a ship's steward in 1928. This episode provided the background to one of his finest stories, 'The Incense Burner' (1954). On the voyage he met an Irish-born maid, Frances Rosina Jones. They married in Victoria the same year.¹¹

Morrison had a varied working life as a farm labourer, station hand, wool presser, wharf-labourer for a decade in the 1930s and 1940s, jobbing gardener and process worker in industrial chemicals.¹² The hardships he witnessed during the Depression inspired him as a social realist writer.

Around that time I went through what might be described as a social/political awakening. I was never out of work myself, but many of my friends, good men, went through a bad time. I came to understand what was the real cause of



John Morrison, *Western Mail*
25/8/1949.

*it all, and this so influenced my attitude to writing that I turned to stories with deliberate social content.*¹³

Some of his best stories, such as 'A Man's World' and 'Powder Ground', set up a clash of loyalties in the context of work.¹⁴ 'What I believe is, in short, that writers should concern themselves PRIMARILY with man in conflict with himself, and not primarily in conflict with society.'¹⁵

Morrison was a member of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). He credited his communist convictions to the newspaper *Workers' Voice* (re-

named the *Guardian*, then the *Tribune*), which an Oakleigh fishmonger used to deliver along with the fish.¹⁶ Morrison's friends included the social realist writers and fellow communists Alan Marshall, Frank Hardy, Judah Waten and Dorothy Hewett, and artist Vic O'Connor, who had lived in Mt Evelyn as a boy.

Success came in 1945, when Morrison won the Fellowship of Australian Writers Short Story Competition.¹⁷ In 1947 he received a grant from the Australian Literary Fund, which enabled him to complete a novel. *The Creeping City* was serialised in 1947 and published as a book in 1949. The setting is Mabooda, a fictionalised Monbulk of the 1920s, when the berry farms are being sold off for holiday homes and guest houses. His

second novel, *Port of Call*, was published in 1950. Newspaper articles show that Morrison was living in Oakleigh in the 1930s and in Franklin Street Mentone from the 1940s until 1952. Sometime in the next three years he moved to Mt Evelyn. A 1955 marriage notice for his son John Ernest Morrison gives the address as 'Sylvan Road

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¹¹ *Smith's Weekly* 1/3/1947.

¹² *Tribune* 10/12/1986.

¹³ John McLaren 2013, *Melbourne City of Words*, Australian Scholarly Publishing.

¹⁴ Morrison, 'A Man's World', *The Bulletin* 11/12/1957 (Trove); 'Powder Ground', *The Australasian*, 3/11/1945, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/141805918>.

¹⁵ Morrison in Paul Galimond, 'John Morrison: Writer of Proletarian Life', *Sydney Review of Books*, 11/8/2015.

¹⁶ *Tribune* 10/7/1973.

¹⁷ *Advocate* 12/4/1945.

Joyce Evans (1922-95) – Kindergarten Teacher and Daughter of ‘Pop’ Adams (1894-1990)¹⁸

Family Background

Joyce and her sister Jean were born in Brunswick (where both their father and mother were also born and raised). They spent their early teen years at West Brunswick State School and then for years 7 and 8 they attended Moreland Central School. They then went to University High for years 9 and 10. After this Joyce went to work. One job at an estate agency in Carlton she hated, ‘as the poor people came in to pay 1/- off their rent or to say they could not pay their rent.’ She and sister Jean then worked for Ellensons, the Tailors.

Early links with Mt Evelyn

Joyce Adam’s father, Robert William ‘Pop’ Adams, was an only child born in 1894, who visited Mt Evelyn from the beginning of the 20th century, in relation to some vegetable growing along the Olinda Creek flats. In 1924 he and Claude Pitt (See image *Things Past* #75) built a holiday house in York Road which they visited every Christmas, school vacation and many other times.

On 30 March 1921, Robert Adams married Olive Jessie Johnson, and their daughter Joyce was born in 1922.¹⁹ Robert played, coached and umpired cricket and football. He stood for Council on at least three occasions.²⁰ ‘Pop was gregarious and had lots of relatives and people staying. Bedrooms were allocated for ladies, men and children. Like all country homes, cooking was done in an area outside the

house.’ In 1931 he offered his house for entertainer Bob Staven and his company of 21 people who were in Mt Evelyn to raise funds for the Carnival Queen charity organised by Mrs George Pitt.²¹

Robert Adams had been an owner of a brass foundry in Brunswick but during the 1930s Depression there was not enough work, so he took up carpentry and had a small mill.

The Origin of the Do Drop In, corner of York and Swansea Roads

In 1937 Pop bought land on the corner of York and Swansea Roads. It had been an apple and pear orchard but he cleared this. The area was right in the bush: tank water, no power, outside toilets. The property was linked up to the Croydon telephone exchange. Pop had great plans for a football ground,

swimming pool, ice works, dance hall and stage,²² but first he built a small shop, which became known as the ‘Do Drop In’. Pop, his wife Olive, and his father lived there. Joyce described how the shop gained its name.

‘Pop’s friend was staying and they played parlour games called ‘Fonso Bosco’ and ‘Reckless Ralph’. A little play was performed with cardboard and brown paper costumes and

Mother was ‘Kook’ with a sign ‘Do Drop In for Scones’ so that became the name of the corner with its general store.’

The shop was open but on rations during the Second World War. They sold groceries, green groceries, and meat, but coupons were needed. There were no icy-poles in those days but on Friday nights they made



Five women standing in the kindergarten. c 1948-53. Far left Mrs Olive Adams and third left her daughter Joyce Evans. Other women could include Miss Daniels and Mrs Pitt, Mrs McChesney and Mrs Fowler from the inaugurating committee. Photo courtesy Yarra Ranges Regional Museum. Registration No. 13338

¹⁸ Information for this article is derived for the main part from a cassette tape made by Mt Evelyn Secondary College students in 1991, held by Lilydale Historical Museum. Notes were made in the 1990s by J Newton, augmented by phone call 10 July 1993.

¹⁹ *Table Talk* 19 May 1921, 9; Victorian BD&M.

²⁰ *Lilydale Express* 17 Aug 1945, 3

²¹ *Lilydale Express* 20 March 1931, 3.

²² *Lilydale Express* 25 July 1947, 1.

their own ice blocks out of Cottee's jelly. They also dipped ice cream in chocolate and dipped wafers in melted chocolate. Their weekends were very busy.

Centre for picnics and dances

Gradually they built on different pieces to the shop and home: a large hall, a stage, joined onto a supper room. Timber was bought second hand and there were leadlight windows bought at auctions. Pop was always bringing something home (for example six 10-foot long boxes full of coloured feathers which later came in handy for kindergarten!).

'Picnics were held there and they served hundreds for meals.' Joyce's mother made 'fancywork, crochet, did the garden and cooked prize-winning apple pies and sausage rolls. (She showed them at Lilydale, Croydon and Melbourne Shows and Sarah Dunne, cookery writer for *The Herald*, commented on them.) People would get off the bus and order a pie for their picnic.'

On the property they had a menagerie of animals: cows, goats, cats (Mum had 24). Dad came home with a donkey that was part payment for something and I had a horse. A flock of sheep were agisted there for a friend. ... The animals, especially the goats and donkey, often created havoc for picnickers and their picnic baskets.

'Dances were held in the hall and people came from everywhere, bus loads from as far as Melbourne. Pop had worked on the 2-inch floor planks, separately clamped and nailed.'

Meeting Jim Evans

Joyce met Jim Evans when he came to the Do Drop In to work as a cook for a weekend camp. After they met, he would court her by riding his bicycle from Melbourne then he caught the train back from Lilydale. In 1947 they married and in 1948 he began working for the family as a driver.

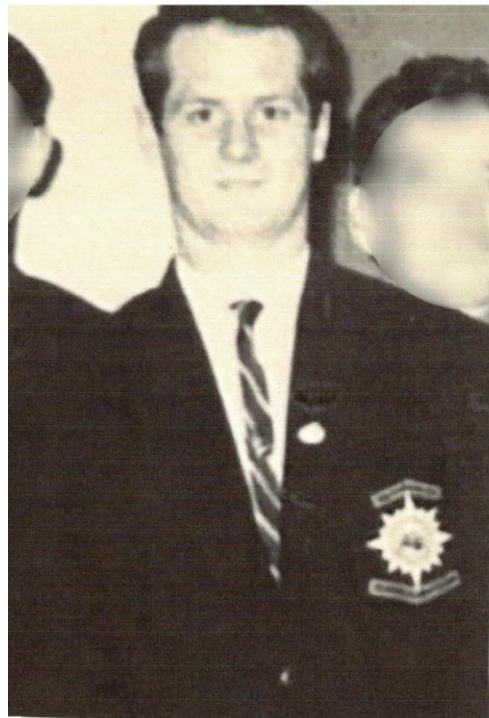
When his daughters married, Pop gave each of them a block of land opposite. When Jim married Joyce they lived in the Do Drop In home for 12 years and then moved across the road, where they built a house. Joyce had wanted six children but ended up having two sets of two: first Heather (c. 1949) and Malcolm (c. 1951), then later Fiona (1959) and Greg. Joyce's mother died in 1971 after their 50th wedding anniversary. From 1976, Pop moved in with Joyce.

To be continued in a forthcoming *Things Past*

Ken Reed and the 1962 Fires

Ken Reed was born in Fitzroy in 1942, his family moving to Mt Evelyn that same year. He began his primary schooling at Mt Evelyn Primary School, then for a longer period attended St Patrick's in Lilydale.

He left school early to work on a boronia farm in Bailey Road, Mt Evelyn, then took on an apprenticeship at a South Melbourne iron foundry. When he turned 18, he became a driver for 'Pop Adams' in the Mt Evelyn bus company. By the age of 21 he began driving for Mt Dandenong Buses then from 1966 worked for the Shire of Lilydale as a relieving driver and Superintendent of Works.



Ken Reed as a young man

After 20 years Ken left the Shire and started a business called Seville Garden Supplies, but retired from this after a back injury. He then worked as a Local Government Councillor in the early 1990s, just before the Shire of Lilydale was replaced by the Shire of Yarra Ranges. Following this he worked as a casual driver for Martyrs Bus Company and on his small farm on McKillop Road, where he resides today.

Ken was quite mobile in his working life but there was one institution that had his support since he was fourteen years old: the Mt Evelyn Fire

Brigade. Not many people would realise that he was largely responsible for saving part of the National Fitness Camp in Tramway Road Mt Evelyn in the bushfires of January 1962.

On January 12 the Mt Evelyn Fire Brigade's report in the *Lilydale Express* articulated relief that in the summer so far there had only been three small fires: an undergrowth fire in Fernhill Road, a stove and wall fire in Robertson's home in Railway Crescent and a grass fire in Bradman Avenue.²³ Four days later, fires broke out that caused 'tragedy and destruction in the hills district'.²⁴

Three terrible days followed, until rain and a wind change gave respite to more than two thousand firefighters, many equipped only with wet sacks and knapsacks, and to the Army and Air Force support teams. The firefighters battled merging blazes in the Dandenong Ranges, Yarra Glen, Warrandyte and Kinglake. Eight people lost their lives (four were two grandparents and their grandchildren from a Woori Yallock household). Seven-eighths of the Coranderrk bushland was burned and Healesville lost its rail service as the bridge across the Yarra Flats was destroyed.

At Wandin North 1000 fire fighters and the Army and Air Force worked to hold back a fire threatening to cross Warburton Road. Another large wall of fires swept down from the north and west of Ferntree Gully.²⁵

On the mountain, hundreds of residents were given only five minutes to evacuate as the fire, moving 400 feet a minute, cut a zig-zag path 'across Mt Dandenong' and 'sudden changes in winds fanned the flames'. 'The fire broke out strongly early yesterday (Monday 15 January) below Mt Dandenong, climbed the slopes at a racing pace and was turned back only 30 yards from the TV towers by a change of wind.'²⁶

Firefighters gambled with Kalorama by lighting a back fire at dusk. It met oncoming flames burning towards five houses on the edge of Jasper Road, Kalorama. 'A sudden change of wind brought the

two fires hard on towards each other and put 400 yards of blackened timber and grass in advance of the main blaze.' The gamble paid off.²⁷

In the three days approximately 300 houses were burned and 50 of these were in Mt Evelyn.

Ken Reed at 19 was a young lieutenant under Captain Peter O'Connor in the Mt Evelyn Brigade. By Tuesday 16 January they had been fighting fires for two days and taking small sleeps at the Fire Station. They were called out again to a fire on Monbulk Road, opposite Ormeau Road, believed to have been deliberately lit. Seeing the fire leap down the hill towards the Olinda Creek, Ken realised that children at the National Fitness Camp could be in danger. A support truck and crew waited for him in York Road while he rushed to the site in a borrowed Willy's Jeep.

When he arrived the two-storey main dormitory building constructed by Reverend R.J. Nichols (Brother Bill) in 1940 was already alight and too far gone to save. Thankfully the camp residents had already evacuated. The fire from Monbulk Road was spotting further down the hill and the grass behind the hall was already alight.

Ken and the crew then worked to save the hall building by pumping water from the National Fitness Camp pool. The fire however advanced up the mountain, forking because of a wind draft coming from the old tramway track. One fork climbed to the Olinda Aboretum and the other to Inverness Road and Sycamore Grove, where there were a lot of old holiday humpies and shacks (the bulk of the 50 houses lost in Mt Evelyn.) The *Lilydale Express* wrote that 'late on Tuesday night the fires flared up once again on the slopes south of York Road Mt Evelyn and raced up the hill towards Five Ways.'²⁸

Meanwhile many fire fighters worked to protect the Methodist Church and other houses near Watkins Crescent. At one stage 28 men from the Silvan Brigade trying to defend the heavily timbered country at the rear of the Methodist

²³ *Lilydale Express* 12 Jan 1962.

²⁴ *Lilydale Express* 19 Jan 1962.

²⁵ *The Age* 17 Jan 1962, 1.

²⁶ *The Age* 16 Jan 1962, 1.

²⁷ *The Age* 16 Jan 1962, 1.

²⁸ *Lilydale Express* 19 Jan 1962.

Church raced to the dense bush at the rear of the Silvan Dam 'and took a stand'.²⁹ On another edge of Mt Evelyn, the Wandin Fire Brigade unit had already forced its way through dense smoke and flames to some men cut off at Fauld's home on the crest of the hill in Swansea Road (near Edinburgh Road).³⁰



Ken Reed receiving his award in 2022

Loss of lives, homes and holiday shacks were only part of the story. Jack Hyett, the nature writer for the *Lilydale Express* estimated a 70% bird mortality in some areas and huge losses of koalas, gliders and possums. Kangaroos and wallaby populations fared better.³¹

The National Fitness Camp began rebuilding and by 1963-4 began taking camps again. Lilydale Council and the Mt Evelyn community were prompted again to think seriously about the risk of fires. Many young children had memories of imminent danger, evacuations, smoke-filled skies and a red glowing sun.

The Methodist Church put an advertisement in *The Express* to thank those who had saved the church. There were also angry letters such as that by 'Family of 5' of Wattle Valley Track who thought more should have been done to assure the safety of parents and children trapped in bushy parts of Mt Evelyn.³²

²⁹ *Lilydale Express* 26 Jan 1962.

³⁰ *Lilydale Express* 26 Jan 1962.

³¹ *Lilydale Express* 26 Jan 1962, 2 Feb 1962.

Recently Ken received an award for 65 years' service with the Mt Evelyn Rural Fire Brigade. He was Captain between 1973 and 2001.

Ken was interviewed by telephone in May 2023.

Janice Newton

Can any readers add or modify details about this fire from their own experience? Please send comments or letters to

mtevelynhistorygroup@gmail.com

John Morrison

from p 5

McKillop via Mt Evelyn'.³³ The property had a small house, large garden and outbuildings, one of which Morrison used as his studio. His most famous story, 'Dog Box' (1962), has a 'local' setting on the Lilydale train.

Morrison left Mt Evelyn after his wife's death in 1967. In 1969 he married Russian-born Rachela Anders (Amdurski) who, he claimed proudly, could read his translated works in five languages. Now living in St Kilda, Morrison had retired from work by this time. Without the inspiration provided by his work and daily commute, he wrote little in his final years. He was saddened by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the CPA in 1991. He died in 1998, aged 94, Rachela having died the previous year. His son and daughter from his first marriage survived him.

*Fair, sharp-featured, of thin build, medium height, Morrison has the slight stoop that comes from constant lifting of heavy loads He looks tough and wiry, favours the cap of his native North of England, wears a leather apron, prefers to work coatless on the wharves and at his desk.*³⁴

³² *Lilydale Express* 2 Feb 1962.

³³ *Rutherglen Sun* 8/3/1955.

³⁴ *The Sun* (Sydney) 15/4/1945.

Morrison is best known for his short story collections *Sailors Belong Ships* (1947), *Black Cargo and Other Stories* (1955); *Twenty-Three Stories* (1962), *North Wind* (1982), and *Stories of the Waterfront* (1984). His novel *The Creeping City*, serialised in the *Free Press* in October-November 1947, can be read on Trove.

John Morrison is an addition not only to our list of Mt Evelyn writers but also to our tradition of radicalism (see *Hidden Histories of Mt Evelyn*).

Karen Phillips

Sources

Australian Dictionary of Biography online. Paul Galimond, 'John Morrison: Writer of Proletarian Life', Sydney Review of Books, 11/8/2015,

<https://sydneyreviewofbooks.com/essay/john-morrison-writer-of-proletarian-life/>

John McLaren, 'John Morrison: memories, reminiscences and some judgements', *Southerly* 22/9/2001.

John McLaren 2013, *Melbourne City of Words*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, <https://sydneyreviewofbooks.com/essay/john-morrison-writer-of-proletarian-life/>

Preserving Family Records

The National Archives of Australia are running an online event on 28 February, where a National Archives Preservation team member will take you through tips and tricks for preserving your family records. The session runs for an hour from 11.30am, and is free to NAA members. Click [here](#) for more information.

Charles Leslie Barrett

from p 4

Barrett often returned in his writing to his happy days as a young man visiting Walden Hut.

Once only have I seen the Helmeted Honeyeater on Olinda Creek. It is a golden memory of "Walden Hut" days, when our "thoughts were skimming swallows" and "the brooks of morning" ran, long before the war, and the beginning of week-end home building on the slopes of the hills and in the valley. The very name has been changed; and Mount Evelyn seems prosaic to us who discovered, as nature-lovers, Olinda Vale.

Had only the place name been changed we should have cared little; but those other changes, since first we saw the wattles in bloom on Olinda; they have robbed the Vale of wild beauty that lured us so often from Melbourne and made the walk from Lilydale, with pack-burdened shoulders, seem only a step across the way.

When "Walden Hut" was our week-end retreat, we came to it, sometimes at night, along the old gray road which went down hill from the railway station, turning sharply into the valley below a reservoir. There was no store at Olinda Vale, and settlers on the fertile belt between creek and roadway in the valley were so few we knew them all, and were accepted as residents. Had we not a "stake in the country"—the tenancy of an old bush hut?

It was on a ramble along the creek that we gained just a glimpse of the Helmeted Honeyeater. I am not sure, but fancy it was near the spot where the historic nest of *M. cassidix* was discovered. If, indeed, the species still exists at Mount Evelyn, it is very rare in that locality. I was familiar with the valley from end to end, and all the hills around, but of the Helmeted Honeyeater I had only that one glimpse, when breaking through Silver Wattles and Hazel above the little bridge of logs which

Charles Barrett, 'Haunts of the Helmeted Honeyeater,' Victorian Naturalist Nov, 1933, 163. Referring to his walk from Evelyn station down the Zig Zag (Birmingham Road), to the Olinda Vale Settlement.

Barrett had found great success in writing for a general Australian audience (and a smaller audience in the US). With his contribution in writing and editing for specialist natural history journals and children's encyclopaedias and magazines, he had a far-reaching impact promoting a love of nature and of Australia among his and the following generation.

Janice Newton

Does Anyone Know of a Small Train on the IGA Site?

John Keane has a friend who has lived in Kalorama since 1970, and before that in Belgrave. His friend remembers he and his wife taking their two very young boys for a ride a couple of times on a small train that ran on the area where IGA now sits.

It sounds like it may have been similar to one of the Whittingslow carnival attractions, in which case it could have been part of a travelling carnival which returned to Mt Evelyn until Millards was razed by fire in November 1961.

John wonders if anyone remembers anything and hopes there might be some photos they are able to share? Please contact Mt Evelyn History Group or John directly on jrk1@bigpond.com.

Was Olinda a Pirate?

There's something strange about the course of Olinda Creek, which winds round three sides of the mountain, though it has had to carve a deep gorge along the way.

Edwards gives the following explanation for the course of the creek in its upper reaches.

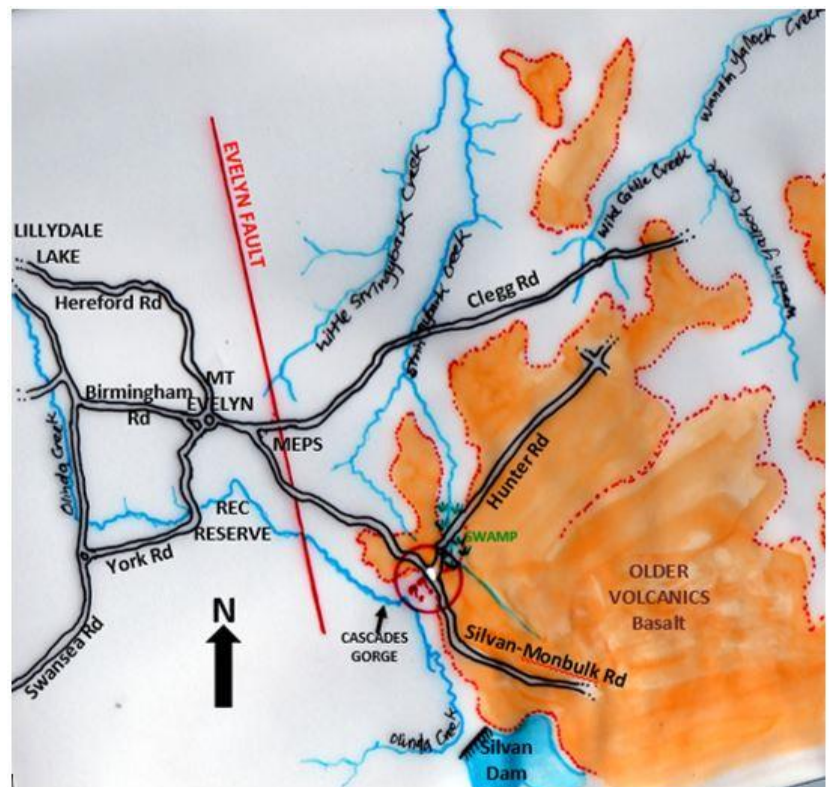
Olinda Creek ... flows from south-east to north-west through the hills, but has its source and headwaters several miles to the south, on the eastern slopes of the Dandenong Ranges, and more or less on the line of Stringy Bark Creek. This upper part of Olinda Creek originated as the western lateral to the basalt flow extending southwards from Mt Evelyn township. In pre-basaltic times its water flowed along the eastern side of the Lilydale Hills, as the pre-basaltic continuation of Stringy Bark Creek, but the basalt, in filling this section of the old valley, diverted the water across the hills, so that it linked up with Olinda Creek.³⁵

Stringybark Creek rises in the Silvan hills from a rather stunted catchment, and carries less water than its shorter tributary, the Little Stringybark. The basalt came from eruptions of the Older Volcanics in the Oligocene Era, 33.9 to 23 million years ago. The 'old valley' of pre-basaltic times would have fed into the Stringybark near Hunter Road, perhaps at the Hunter Road swamp. Edwards wrote in an earlier paper,

It seems possible that this residual [of basalt near Silvan] represents ... a local 'extensive' lava field, infilling the valleys of several streams which rose in the Dandenong ranges and trended

eastwards or north-eastwards, and also covering the interfluves between them. Some of these streams, like Emerald Creek and Sassafras Creek, subsequently crossed and breached the basalt, and joined its eastern lateral, Woori Yallock Creek. Others, like Lyre Bird Creek and Olinda Creek [headwaters, formerly of the Stringybark], were ponded into a lake behind the lava flows, and found an escape over a low divide south-east of Evelyn, being thus enabled to form a western lateral to the basalt as the present Olinda Creek.³⁶

Morris argues that faulting caused the Dandenongs to subside along their northern edge.



Olinda Creek with the area of 'capture' circled in red. The headwaters originally joined Stringybark Creek near Hunter Road, till the Older Volcanics basalt blocked the old valley.

Map by Paula Herlihy.

³⁵ A.B. Edwards 1956, 'The Rhyolite-Dacite-Granodiorite Association of the Dandenong Ranges', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria*, New Series, Vol. 68, p.113. Edwards calls the hilly area between Lilydale, Mt Evelyn and Coldstream 'the Lilydale Hills'.
<https://archive.org/details/proceedingsroya68roya/page/n145/mode/2up>

³⁶ A.B. Edwards 1939, 'The Physiography of the Woori Yallock Basin', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria*, p.341,
<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/55004110#page/348/mode/1up> An interfluve is a ridge between two watercourses in the same catchment.

*Above the Evelyn Fault, the Olinda Creek valley is very young. It is marked by rapids and waterfalls, the latter having receded more than one mile above the fault. ... This rejuvenation of the stream has probably resulted in its capturing much of the headwaters of Stringy Bark Creek.*³⁷

A 'young' or 'rejuvenated' creek flows swiftly, and rapidly erodes its bed. If the northern Dandenongs have subsided, as Morris argues, the tilting would have rejuvenated Olinda Creek by giving it a steeper slope. This could have enabled the creek to cut its gorge through the watershed and release the waters 'ponded' behind it.

The terms 'creek capture' and 'creek piracy' refer to a stream that erodes through into the course of another, and so diverts its waters. An unanswered

question is whether Olinda Creek cut through the watershed and so captured the 'ponded' waters, or if the waters banked up till they overflowed into the Olinda. Morris seems to imply the former, Edwards the latter. Was Olinda a 'pirate creek', or an innocent inheritor of the Stringybark's former headwaters?

The present course of Olinda Creek was determined by a combination of faulting, subsidence, erosion, and eruptions of Older Volcanics basalt. Morris and Edwards do not use the term 'creek piracy', but they agree that Olinda Creek has 'captured' part of the Stringybark's original flow. One way or another, Stringybark's loss was Olinda's gain.

Karen Phillips

From Kev's Rain Gauge				
Rainfall (in mm) for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, and Melbourne for the last 3 months.				
		Nov-23	Dec-23	2023Totals
Mt Evelyn	Mt Evelyn	53.4	101.3	932.2
McKillop	McKillop	58.1	113.1	1012.2
Melbourne	Melbourne	42.4	71.4	572.2

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

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Opinions expressed in *Things Past* are those of the writers, not necessarily those of Mount Evelyn History Group.

³⁷ M. Morris 1914, 'On the Geology and Petrology of the District between Lilydale and Mount Dandenong', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 26 (N.S.) Pt 2II, ART XXII, pp.359-360,

<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/8511398#page/410/mode/1up> The waterfall Morris refers to is the Cascades, located in the gorge.