



Things Past

Newsletter 16, May 2009

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

A0051327F

P.O. Box 101 Mt Evelyn Vic 3796

www.mt-evelyn.net

Enquiries, membership & book sales: Paula Herlihy (President):
herlihy@alphalink.com.au or telephone 9736 2935 and leave message

Newsletter & minutes: Karen Phillips (Secretary), karen.m.l.phillips@gmail.com

Dates for your diary – note CHANGE OF VENUE for Anthony's talk

'We did but see her passing by' – the Queen's 1954 visit 'through' the Shire of Lillydale, talk by Anthony McAleer, Saturday 23rd May, 1 pm Morrison House Room B

History Group meeting – Tuesday 23rd June, 7.30pm, Morrison House Room D

History Group AGM – Tuesday 25th August, 7.30pm Morrison House.

A letter from an Evelyn

The following is an edited extract of a letter from Mr Edward Evelyn Wright, with information about the Evelyn family.

I consider that Mt Evelyn was eventually named after the County of Evelyn.

My records indicate that the County of Evelyn started when in appreciation of civic duties performed by WILBRAHAM FREDERICK EVELYN LIARDET and his sons, SIR GEORGE GIPPS, GOVERNOR, bestowed the name of EVELYN upon a County.

LIARDET (1799-1878) landed at Port Melbourne in 1839. He built many boats and owned hotels and other property, including founding 'Ballam Park' at Frankston. His mother was the great granddaughter of John Evelyn, diarist (1620-1706). (Victorian Historical Magazine, Vol V, pp. 1-14).

Mr John Evelyn of Sayes Court was born 31/10/1620, dec. 1705, aged 85. He wrote books and a massive diary together with letters of communications and other correspondence between Charles I and Sir Edward Nicholas and others. The diaries were edited by William Bray F.S.A. and Henry B. Wheatley F.S.A., all taken from original

manuscripts held by Mr W.J. Evelyn in 1879 and published in four huge volumes in 1882. The diaries were only printed 60 times. We hold Diary No 48.

The earliest records of the Evelyn family started with WILLIAM AVELYN or EVELYN of Harrow (1440-1470). In 1778 Susanna-Prideaux Evelyn (my grandmother many times over) married John Elsworthy Fortunatus Wright. My history of the Evelyn family ends here.

The *La Trobe Journal* mentions that Liardet led the procession to welcome Governor Gipps on his visit to Melbourne in 1841 but does not include the naming of the County of Evelyn. A government website defining the agricultural area of the Yarra Valley in terms of county boundaries states that the County of Evelyn was proclaimed, not by Gipps (NSW Governor 1838-1846), but by Governor Fitz Roy in 1849.

We'd need to do more research before we could claim Wilbraham Frederick Evelyn Liardet as our 'namesake once removed', though we could be proud if he was. A prominent figure in early Melbourne, Liardet was also a talented artist. Much of our knowledge of early Melbourne scenes and buildings comes from his charming watercolours.

Later we had our own Liardet, a former Fitzroy player who was President of Mt Evelyn Football Club from 1931. People who couldn't pronounce his name called him 'Lee Hardy'.

Christine Fyffe, MP for Evelyn, provided the following:

'Over the past two years my office has gathered together some historical information about Evelyn. The Victorian upper house seat of Evelyn goes back to the commencement of the Parliament of Victoria in 1851, when we just had the Legislative Council. In 1856, when the Legislative Assembly was established, Evelyn became a lower house seat.'

Evelyn County in Victoria got its name from William J Evelyn, who served as MP for Surrey West, in the House of Commons, England, from 1849-1857. Evelyn County was in similar proximity to the current seat of Evelyn. The original Evelyn railway station was 27.5 miles from Melbourne, and was part of the Lilydale to Warburton line.'

William J. Evelyn MP may have been the same W.J. Evelyn who inherited his

ancestor's manuscripts. If anyone's going to Canberra, please look him up at the National Library. The State Library hasn't got *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament* and their copy of *History of the Evelyn Family*, with a memoir of William John Evelyn MP, has 'walked'. All I've found out about the MP was that he lived from 1822 to 1908 and that he was returned to Parliament again in later life, representing Deptford from 1885 to 1888.

The name of Olinda Vale station was changed to 'Evelyn' in 1907, but the question 'why Evelyn?' has never been answered. A place name is usually chosen to identify *that* place and no other. Why name a bush railway station, a dot on the map, after a county and/or an electorate that covered a large part of the Yarra Valley? Yet that seems the best explanation we have.

Our ultimate namesake, whoever it may have been, was likely to be a descendant of the illustrious Evelyn family. Mr Wright informs us that 'Evelyn', as a surname, is always pronounced 'Eevelyn'.

References

- Australian Dictionary of Biography: adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A020101b.htm
Australian Government, Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation:
<http://www.wineaustralia.com/Australia/Default.aspx?tabid=987>
Dictionary of Australian Artists: www.daa.org.au/main/read/3975
The La Trobe Journal: calisto.slv.vic.gov.au/latrobejournal/issue/latrobe-54/t1-g-t1.html
Cannon, Michael, *Old Melbourne Town Before the Gold Rush*, Loch Haven Books, 1991
(contains some of Wilbraham Liardet's watercolours).
Evelyn, Helen, *History of the Evelyn Family*, Everleigh Nash, London, 1915.
Greig, A.W., 'The Liardets of "The Beach"', *Victorian Historical Magazine*, Vol. V, no. 1, March 1916.
Stenton, M. & S. Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament*, Harvester Press, 1976-1981.

Pre-Gold Rush Melbourne

Speaking of early Melbourne, have you ever wondered which is Melbourne's oldest building? There is an interesting article on this topic at:

http://www.onlymelbourne.com.au/melbourne_details.php?id=3828

Churches and pubs are often the longest lasting buildings but there are a few houses and business premises among the pre-Gold Rush survivors.

The honour of 'Oldest in the CBD' probably goes to St Francis' Church in Elizabeth Street (founded 1841, opened

1845), still on its original site and still a place of worship.

St James' Old Cathedral is older (founded 1839, opened 1842) but no longer on its original site in the CBD. Tim Herlihy's great-uncle, John Stevens Gawler, was the architect responsible for relocating the building. There is an article about him in Wikipedia.

Researching your house

The History Group often receives enquiries on how to research the history of a house.

The National Trust has published a guide, *The National Trust Research Manual*, Celestina Sagazio (editor), 2004. *Restoring Old Houses* by Ian Evans (Sun Books, 1989) has a chapter on research. We may seek permission to copy and distribute the relevant pages, or possibly compile our own local version.

Explosions in wartime Wandin

In response to the finding of the tunnel in the McKillop Road area, mentioned in our last issue, Dot O'Neill came up with some startling information:

'Bill Rouget may well be able to tell you a little of the Army's use of the old channel basin between Wellington Road and McKillop Road – not sure about tunnels but my mother was one who often told of the Army exploding shells etc in that area.'

Dot added in further messages:

'I remember the channel (then empty but my mother tells of swimming in it on her way home from school), running from Beenak Road above what is now the Anglican church in Wandin.'

'As a child I remember going down to the area which was supposedly the old channel area and my mother showing me the place where the Army had been exploding the shells.'

'The part which was in my grandparents' property, Melway 120 either J1 or K1, was the area I remember.'

Bill Rouget's home in Wandin was next door to Dot's grandparents' place. Bill remembered an 'Army chap' coming round to warn the family to stay indoors during the testing. The Army wanted to test their explosives in a concrete lined depression. The basin where the open Aqueduct had formerly flowed into the pipeline provided a suitable site (Melway 120, K1).

The explosion made a tremendous noise, Bill recalled. The force of the blast went downwards, breaking through the concrete floor of the basin. Fragments of metal, probably bits of shell casing, rained down on the paddocks.

Bill thought this occurred about 1942-43 and that it happened on several occasions. Bill also remembered dispatch riders on motor cycles going back and forth in Wandin. They were presumed to be from the Army camp in Mt Evelyn.

Bill's story raises still more questions about the Mt Evelyn camp. Would an Army camp providing medical training also be testing explosives? Seems a strange mix! We need some Army people to tell us.

Many thanks to Dot and Bill for sharing their memories. This was the first time we'd heard about military activity of any kind in Wandin.

The tunnel: what and when?

The tunnel opening recently found near McKillop Road would be about two kilometres away from the Aqueduct basin that Dot and Bill refer to. At this stage we do not know of any connection between the two sites.

The owners of the property where the tunnel is located were reportedly told years ago by the Lands Department that the tunnel dated back to the 1800s, which would mean the Department had some record of it. We are fortunate that Janice Newton has researched the early selectors of the area in the Lands Department files.

It appears that the entire area bounded by Clegg/Clancy Roads (they were continuous until cut by the railway), Monbulk Road, McKillop Road and Stringybark Creek was once a single selection of 320 acres. James Yates, a ballast agent from Williamstown, applied for the selection in 1876. This was granted the following year but Yates failed to make the required improvements or meet the payments. The lease lapsed, and the selection was redrawn and subdivided.

Peter (or Joseph?) Clegg, a rural dealer from Collingwood, took up the eastern portion in 1879. John McKillop took up the western or south-western part in 1879 and made the final payment in 1899. McKillop was a colourful character, a sailor from the north of Ireland who claimed to have been

captured by pirates on a voyage in the 1850s. He later went prospecting on the Palmer goldfields in Queensland. Part of his selection was transferred to William Clayden in the late 1890s.

We don't have an exact grid reference for the tunnel opening but it would lie on either McKillop's or Clegg's selection. Improvements they made on their properties (buildings, fences, clearing and crops) were described in detail in the files, while both selectors struggled to fulfil the terms of their leases. There was no mention of a tunnel, but an entry from 1885 stated that McKillop had a well measuring 6' x 6' x 12'. Clegg, too, had an underground well.

Maybe the tunnel was associated with a well, or with one of several permanent springs in the area. There was a spring on Jean and David Edwards' property ('The Springs', part of the old McKillop selection). Another, also known as 'The Springs', was located on one of the Clegg selections in Wandin. The tunnel may even have followed an underground watercourse, now dry.

If the tunnel was man-made, what was its purpose? Mining? An unsupported tunnel, so low in parts as to be accessible only by crawling, would be unusual in a mine and very dangerous. Our only reference to 'mining' in Mt Evelyn concerns the Valinda settlement on the creek flats between Swansea Road and Olinda Creek. Some settlers initially held their blocks on miners' licences in the 1890s and early 1900s.

If the tunnel had some military connection, as researcher Mark Rawson suggests, it's hard to see what the purpose could have been. The same arguments could be made against a military explanation as against a mine. No military relics have been found.

Could it have been part of the O'Shannassy Aqueduct system? The section from Woori Yallock to Mt Evelyn was closed after Silvan Reservoir and its inflow and outflow aqueducts were completed (presumably in the 1930s, which explains why the channel was dry for the explosives testing during the war). The original route can be traced

on Melway maps 120-121, though misleadingly labelled. The piped section must have run close to the tunnel site but the tunnel has no remains of pipes or other infrastructure. Joy Carrick, who has been 'down the hole', says it runs about nine metres below the surface. That sounds deep for a pipeline.

We understand that some kind of historical investigation of the tunnel is planned. My guess: 'water related – but not necessarily Aqueduct'.

Karen

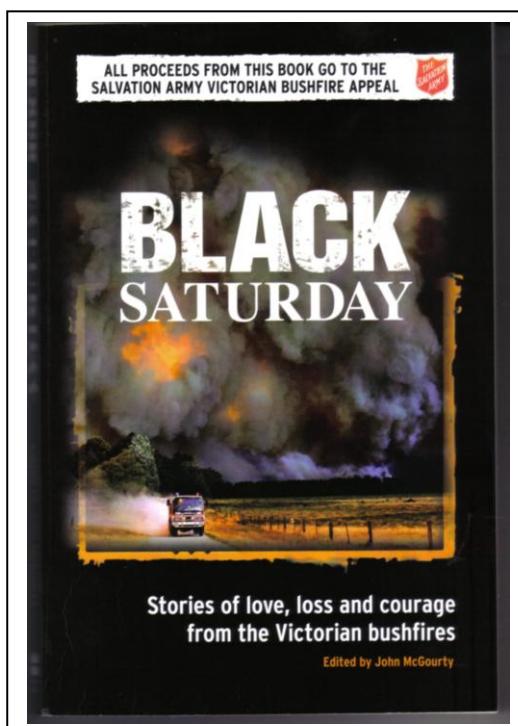
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Newton, Janice, *The First Selectors of Mt Evelyn*, Mt Evelyn History Group, 1996.

Sebire, Lily M., *Early History of Wandin*, Wandin District Historical Society, undated.

1876-1976 Silvan State School and District Centenary, Silvan Centenary Committee, 1976.

Wandin Yallock parish plan.



Stories from Black Saturday

A collection of personal stories from the recent bushfires has been published, with proceeds to aid the Salvation Army Victorian Bushfire Appeal.

Andrew Collard, son of History Group member Robyn Collard, is one whose

story is included. Andrew's CFA unit saved the lives of 19 campers in the Murrindindi State Forest.

Publication details are: McGourty, John (Ed.), *Black Saturday*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2009, price \$24.99. The book is available from Angus & Robertson in Eastland.

'Wattle Dress' portrait sold

Sir William Dargie's well known portrait of the Queen in her 'wattle' dress was sold recently.

The painting has a local connection. James Paton Beveridge, owner and builder of the log cabin 'Appin' in Commercial Road, Mt Evelyn, commissioned Dargie to paint it. Sadly, Beveridge did not live to see the portrait completed.

The painting, which commemorates the Queen's visit to Australia in 1954, became her official portrait for Australia. It was widely distributed to schools, libraries and government departments.

What we didn't know till now was that Dargie completed no less than three identical portraits. One is in the Queen's private collection. Another was presented to the Commonwealth of Australia by the Beveridge family and hangs in Parliament House, Canberra.

The third, which was painted in 1975, has been in a private collection in England. This was the version sold last week by auctioneers Bonhams & Goodman for \$120,000.

See North Coast Times

<http://north-shore-times.wherelive.com.au/lifestyle/story/wattle-it-fetch-70-000-tip/>

Kathy Smalley, Local History Librarian at Eastern Regional Libraries, has kindly made a copy of the 'Wattle Dress' portrait available for Anthony McAleer's talk on the Queen's visit.

Library redevelopment

Apologies for the change of venue for Anthony's talk.

The Library and Community Room will be closed for a month to six weeks for refurbishment. We expect that the room

will be available again by July, when we next have a speaker.

Online research at the Library

Eastern Regional Libraries have **Ancestry** and **Find My Past** available for use free of charge at any of their branches. Computer time needs to be booked in advance. The libraries also offer training in Family History and Military History on the Internet for a reasonable charge.

Public Liability Insurance

The History Group AGM is coming up in August. One issue to be decided is whether to take out Public Liability Insurance.

The cheapest way seems to be to affiliate with the Royal Historical Society. We would then be covered by their insurance. However, that would mean approximately doubling our fees. Is it worth the cost? Do we need it? Would it give us appropriate cover?

Please give some thought to these questions between now and the AGM. We would appreciate any information that would help us decide.

Anzac Day Dawn Service

Just before 6am on Saturday 25th April 2009, in the still, cold pre-dawn air, I joined a large group including several hundred local residents, at the Mount Evelyn War Memorial. We had assembled for what is believed to be the town's first Anzac Day Dawn Service. For me, it was even more significant – it was the first Dawn Service I had ever attended.

Promptly at 6am, Australian Army Major Tony Geyer welcomed those present and, following an Invocation by Padre Richard Schoenmaker (Mount Evelyn Christian Reformed Church), read an extract from *The Story of Anzac* by historian C.E.W. Bean. This describes the actual Gallipoli landing, where only 38 men survived out of 140 in the four leading boats.

We couldn't help but compare our relative comfort, under a starry black satin sky, lit faintly by the growing palemagenta glow to the East, with that

portentous approach to hell and historical greatness.

Sub-branch President Dick Crittenden then delivered a Requiescat, recalling those who have served and, especially, those who have died for the nation in a wide range of conflicts, from Gallipoli to continuing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Gemma Park, of the 1st Mt Evelyn Scouts, next read a moving, well-delivered Anzac Day Dedication to those who had died in both World Wars, Korea, Malaya and Vietnam, finishing with ‘...let their memory inspire us to work for the coming of a new light into the dark places of the world.’

Prayers were offered by Padre Schoenmaker for peace, the suffering, remembrance and for those who serve. These were followed by a Bible reading from Captain Ken Mitchell of the Mount Evelyn Country Fire Authority brigade.

Sub-branch Secretary Laurie Hollier then recited the Remembrance Ode:

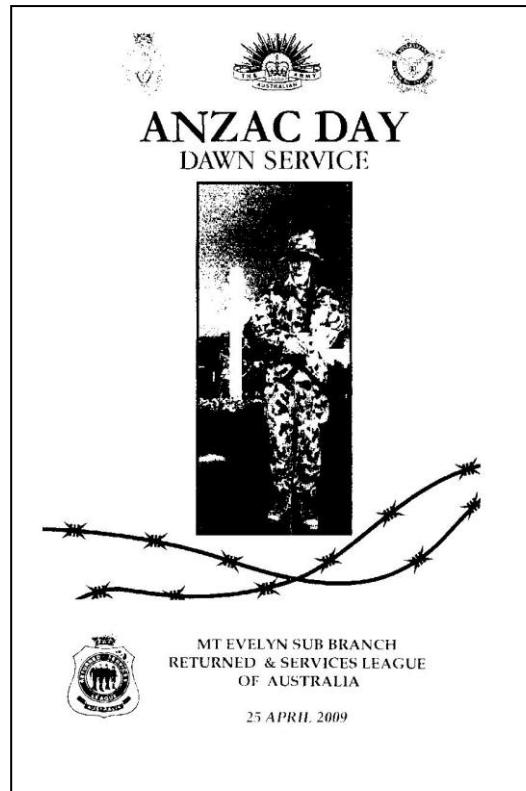
‘They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.’

Following the recital, wreaths were laid at the base of the War Memorial and a two minute silence was observed. The silence was preceded by the Last Post and followed by the Reveille, both played superbly on a cornet by Karin Ebenwalder.

A Benediction, delivered by Padre Schoenmaker, and the singing of ‘Advance Australia Fair’, concluded the commemoration.

The crowd, deep in discussion or simply reflecting on this significant event, started to disperse, to the strains of sombre and haunting music played by piper Justin Oates. He had also played incidental pieces throughout the ceremony, adding to the solemnity of this memorable occasion.



Breakfast was provided by the Mount Evelyn R&SL Sub-branch. We were invited to join them later in the day for the traditional game of ‘Two-up’ at the York on Lilydale Hotel.

Ian James

Dandenongs war memorabilia

The recently opened Running Rabbit Museum in Upwey houses war memorabilia from the Dandenong Ranges. Treasured items donated by local families cover all conflicts from the Boer War to Iraq.

The Museum is housed in the Upwey/ Belgrave R&SL in Mast Gully Road Upwey, and is open on Thursday mornings and Sundays.

The name commemorates the Australian defence of Port Moresby in WWII. General Blamey told the defenders they were failures and had let the side down. He implied they were ‘rabbits that ran’.

<http://www.defence.gov.au/ARMY/AHU/HISTORY/Battles/Kokoda.htm>