



Things Past

Newsletter 22, November 2009

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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Dates for your diary

ERL Military History Group, final meeting for 2009, **Friday 4th December** 2pm at Croydon Library. See below for details.

History Group meeting Tuesday 23rd February, 7.30pm Old Community Link.

History Group activity Saturday 27th March, 1pm Mt Evelyn Community Room, speaker/ activity to be advised.

Chinese Lion Festival

The Mt Evelyn Street Party Committee has gone from strength to strength! The Chinese Lion Festival was perhaps the most successful we've ever had.

The Central Victorian Lion Dancers put on a spectacular show, with three lions performing their stunts to the delight of the crowd. The Lion Dance has been performed in China for over a thousand years. There are northern and southern varieties of 'Lions'. These are the southern type and represent 'Nians'. The Nian is a mythical monster that preys on humans, especially on children, and must be scared away with drums, bells and fireworks. Lions from the north are more like the Fu Dogs seen outside Chinese temples.

The dance demands great athleticism and is usually performed by martial arts students. The multi-coloured Lion head undergoing restoration by Mt Evelyn Primary School was also on display.

History display

Our 'Mt Evelyn Through Artists' Eyes' ran during October in the Exhibition Space. For the Festival we set up an additional display beside our stall under the Old Community Link verandah.

One series never shown in public before was a group of sketches by Norman Valentine Haines, Vicky



In conference: the Lions rear up and get their heads together. The little girl clown at left stirs them up if they look sleepy.

Harrison's maternal grandfather. Many thanks to Vicki and her Mum for allowing us to display them.

Norman and his wife Paulina bought a block of land in Sycamore Grove, Mt Evelyn. They lived in a tent on weekends while they built a small home, probably the building sketched by Norm, titled 'Mt Evelyn' (see below). They eventually moved permanently to Mt Evelyn, to this home with no electricity and no running water – quite a change for Paulina who was used to town life.

Norm became very involved with the Mt Evelyn community. He was in the St John Ambulance and a football first aid trainer for Mt Evelyn. He also ran the kiosk at the Recreation Reserve when it was booked out for functions.

He taught Art classes at Morrison House in the early days and was involved in an Art Society that met in Silvan (probably the Mt Evelyn and Yarra Valley Arts Society Inc.) Norm was also involved in the Mt Evelyn Progress Association. He dressed as Santa and gave out lollies to the children in the Main Street for many years.

Two of the drawings displayed were definitely of Mt Evelyn, including a sketch of the former Post Office on the Snowball Avenue/ Birmingham Road corner. Norman's drawings of farm machinery, though not specifically labelled as Mt Evelyn scenes, fitted in well with a painting of the old shed at Westhill by Esmond New and a sketch of the same shed by Trevor Opray.



'Mt Evelyn' by Norman Valentine Haines.

Paula's treasured Dragon scale was framed and on display. The scale came from the hide of Loong, the original Dragon of the Melbourne Chinese community. The creation of Loong's successor, Dai Loong, helped to revive the ancient art of Dragon making, which had almost been lost in China since the Cultural Revolution.

We also drew attention to the clay plaques surrounding the Link. Created by local school children when the Outlook Park was being developed, the plaques grow outlines of moss in cool damp weather – probably unintended, but a beautiful organic art form.

And of course we seized the opportunity to have our say on the Youth mural saga.

New National Curriculum – History

I attended a very interesting lecture at the RHSV last week by Professor Stuart McIntyre on reintroducing history into the school curriculum.

Professor McIntyre spoke of his work with ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority), which has created the new curriculum in consultation with a wide range of people.

This link will take you to an ACARA page of pdf documents about their work, including two on history at the bottom of the list: <http://www.acara.edu.au/publications.html>

Historical societies might like to study these documents and consider how they can provide assistance to schools with their history program. The new curriculum is to commence in 2011.

Posted by Lenore Frost, mc2 forum – History Victoria Support Group

Military History book available

The last Eastern Regional Libraries Military History meeting for this year will be on Friday 4th December at 2pm in the Croydon Library. There will be a speaker who will talk about his service in the British Army.

For those who collect military history books, Librarian Alan Bennett has

arranged for copies of the book *My Boys: A book of remembrance* by Mrs Aeneas Gunn OBE to be available for sale at a discount price of \$10 per copy. They normally sell for \$20.

The book deals with her story of helping all of the WW1 soldiers from the Monbulk area, with a brief history of each soldier. It was published in 2000 in a limited numbered run of 1000 copies. Military historian and History Group member Anthony McAleer was instrumental in having the book published. The manuscript had been held by the Monbulk R&SL for many years.

Please contact Alan on 9298 8444 or alan.bennett@erl.vic.gov.au if you are interested in buying a copy.

Jeannie Gunn (Mrs Aeneas Gunn) was the author of the famous memoir *We of the Never Never*.

Blamire Young's house

Thank you to everyone who responded to our query about the location of Blamire Young's house 'Mutamaro'. From the information we received, we placed it somewhere between Edinburgh Road and Cambridge Road. We now know the precise location.

Paula visited the artist's grandson and his wife at their home in Chirnside Park. They told her the property was on the corner of Edinburgh and Swansea Roads, diagonally opposite the York on Lilydale. This would have been just outside the border of Mt Evelyn.

Paula bought a copy of a scrapbook of newspaper cuttings about the artist, compiled by his descendants.

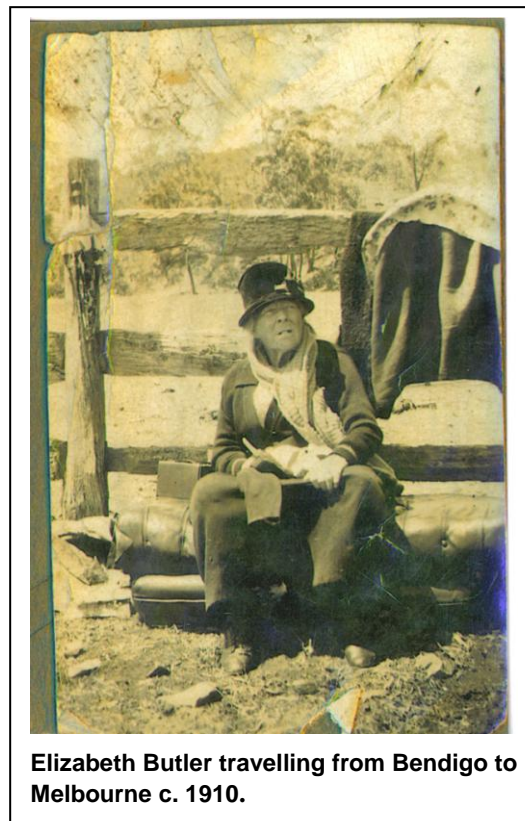
Birmingham Primary talk

Paula gave another successful talk to the Grade 2 students from Birmingham Primary School on 6th November. As always, the 'Last Train to Warburton' tickets were very popular.

The students were also interested to hear the history of the Zig Zag, which was just above their school on the steepest section of Birmingham Road.

Our own TV star

Paula featured recently in an episode of the genealogy series 'Who Do You Think You Are?' devoted to the ancestry of musician John Butler.



Their common ancestress was Elizabeth Ann Butler (1851-1930), John Butler's great-great-grandmother and Paula's great-grandmother. John is descended from her first child, Joseph, who was born when she was 17. Elizabeth later went to work for a Chinese employer, Ah Kew. They married and had eight children.

Ah Kew is believed to have come from the See Yap (Four Districts) province near Canton (Guandong) in southern China. See Yap was the home of many Chinese who came to Victoria during the Gold Rush. Elizabeth was born in Erpingham in Norfolk, England.

Elizabeth and Ah Kew were fined in Bendigo for allowing their children to play truant from school. After that, Ah Kew disappeared for reasons unknown and Elizabeth was left to raise her family alone.

Eventually the law caught up with her. The children were taken from her and sent to work on farms to pay off the debt (which would seem to defeat the purpose – the truancy laws were meant to keep the children at school!)

Elizabeth tried everything to get back on her feet, even busking in pubs. 'This really resonated with John because he started out busking,' Paula said.

After the debts were paid off, Elizabeth traced her children and brought the family together again. The youngest, Paula's grandfather, was a baby and was adopted out, but Elizabeth kept in touch with him.



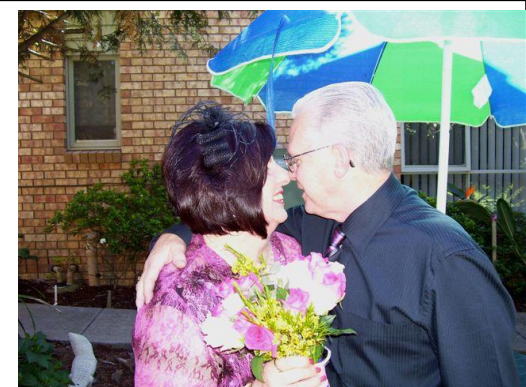
Reunited: Elizabeth with family members c.1925.

The program was filmed in Echuca. Paula had a great time and was quite star-struck at meeting her third cousin once removed, the renowned John Butler.

From Paula Herlihy

Congratulations!

Best wishes to History Group members Glenn and Mary Golds, who tied the knot at a private family wedding ceremony on Friday 6th November.



Just married: Mary and Glenn on their special day.

Insights from a scrapbook

Louise's article, referred to below, contains a fascinating account of a scrapbook compiled by her great-grandmother in the 1880s and 1890s. Research in the Public Records Office set the family heirloom in its historic context.

I thought you may be interested to know that the article I wrote on my great-grandmother's scrapbook – which also talks about the Herlihy family of Woods Point – is finally online on the Public Records Office website: <http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/provenance/default.asp> Scroll down to 'Woods Point is my dwelling place' and you'll find the article.

From Louise Blake

From Kev's rain gauge

Rainfall for October 2009 compared with Melbourne's October average:

Mt Evelyn	Melbourne	Melb. Av.
49.5 ml	22.8 ml	65.9 ml

Kevin Phillips