

# Things Past

Newsletter 37

March 2011

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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## Dates for your diary

**Business meeting: Thursday 28 April, 7.30pm Old Community Link.**

**The Yarra Ranges Regional Museum opens Saturday 14 May.**

**'Melba' talk by Sue Thompson: Saturday 28 May, 1-4pm Mt Evelyn Station House.**

**See page 4 for L&DHS program of Melba walks, talks, coach trips and cemetery tours.**

## It's all about networks

We pride ourselves on our networks in Mt Evelyn - so much so that the Mt Evelyn Township Improvement Committee (METIC) once ran a workshop on 'Esoteric Secrets of Networking' (presented by Barb Lorey).

We've seen networks of family/ friends/ neighbours/ workmates at Billygoat Hill in the twenties and thirties (*Things Past* 34) and it's always seemed likely that a similar situation prevailed among the first selectors. An inquiry from Vera Pickford from Moss Vale NSW gave me a chance to prove it.

Vera was seeking information about her husband's grandfather, James Black, who left his native Scotland in 1862. After short visits to Queensland and New Zealand (possibly visiting friends from his home town), James Black is thought to have arrived in Melbourne about 1863.

'Soon after arrival he worked for a time for a Mr. Brown near Evelyn Station who was a staff member of *The Argus* newspaper, before moving to Collingwood to learn the butchering trade. He later moved to Koroit where he opened a butcher's shop with his cousin,' Vera wrote, quoting James Black's obituary. She wondered whether this Mr Brown came to Victoria from Paisley in Renfrewshire where James Black was born. A large family of Browns were local identities in the town and friends of the Black family.

This all sounded very strange. We subsequently established that James Black had moved to Koroit by 1876. His time in Evelyn must have been between 1863 and



**Peter and Janet Clegg and family, formerly of Mt Evelyn, in Armadale, W A.**

1876, but 'Evelyn' did not exist then. Not only was there no Evelyn Station, there was no town under any name. Apart from the sawmill on Olinda Creek, there was no settlement and no land ownership. Most of the area had not even been surveyed.

A possible explanation was that, when James Black's obituary was written in 1918, someone projected the names and structures of the time back onto the 1860s or 1870s. That suggested that Black must have had correspondents in the area for many years after he left.

It looked like a network in action.

Sure enough, *The First Selectors of Mt Evelyn* booklet confirmed that a Jason Black (sic), a farmer of Koroit, temporarily took over the lease of Lot 79 from Peter Clegg in 1893. It was then transferred to Janet Clegg, Peter's

wife. The Clegg family tree showed that Janet Clegg had been born in Paisley, Scotland. The Cleggs, moreover, had lived in Collingwood before moving to South Wandin/ Evelyn.

Another possible connection was that Margaret Bartlett (who was married first to Jacob Clegg and afterwards to John McKillop) came from Koroit.

I reported these findings to Vera, who replied: 'The Jas. Black whom you mention was indeed our James Black because he was a farmer in Koroit as well as a butcher and a stock and station agent etc. In those days in small villages, it was not unusual for keen businessmen to dabble in various "careers".'

Two of James Black's cousins were married to two brothers. Peter Clegg married Janet Martin and Enoch Clegg married Janet's sister, Agnes Martin. Their brother, James Martin, was the cousin who became Black's partner in the butcher's business in Koroit. 'James Black was a very community-minded man who



**Enoch and Agnes Clegg in Fremantle, photo sent to James and Annie Black in Koroit, Christmas 1909. Agnes is wearing the same hairstyle, and possibly the same gown, as in the photo taken in front of their store (*Things Past* 30, Aug 2010).**

would have helped his cousins if they had financial problems', Vera wrote.

As to Mr Brown of *The Argus*, the obvious candidate seemed to be Andrew Brown, whose selection included the site where Evelyn station would later be built. Unfortunately we had no record of Andrew Brown in the area prior to 1877. Neighbour Francis Brown, who applied for the adjoining selection 26A in 1876, previously held a selection in Wandin Yallock parish from 1868. If his selection had been at the Mt Evelyn end of the parish, he would have been a strong possibility for our Mr Brown, but the selection seems to have been further east, near Wandin Yallock Creek. We can't link Francis Brown to the Mt Evelyn area by the required date. Neither Andrew nor Francis Brown, as far as we can discover, had any connection with *The Argus*.

Whilst we have so far failed to identify Mr Brown, we proved the existence of a network stretching from Paisley, Scotland, to the rather unlikely Collingwood-Mt Evelyn-Koroit triangle. Selectors who moved to Mt Evelyn from Collingwood, apart from the whole clan of Cleggs and the Martin girls, included John McKillop, James Raeburn, David Birtles and (in the 1850s) timbermillers McDonald and Goodyear. Peter Clegg's second wife, Laura Welton, was also born in Collingwood.

The network would eventually stretch as far as Western Australia. Peter and Janet Clegg and family, Enoch and Agnes Clegg, John McKillop, his wife and her Clegg children from her first marriage, all moved to Western Australia. 'I nearly fell off the chair when I was reading your magazines on the net and saw the photo of Enoch Clegg and his shop [in Fremantle]', wrote Vera.

Another to make the move to the west was William Clayden, who acquired part of McKillop's selection for the Railway reserve. When last heard of, Clayden's address was Great Southern Railway, Pingelly, WA.

Mt Evelyn was called 'the Collingwood of the bush' during the Great Depression. It was a reference to the poverty of the area but there may have been some dim folk memory that many oldtimers had connections with Collingwood sixty-odd years before.

**Karen Phillips. Photos courtesy Vera Pickford.**

## Paisley, pickles and pears

James Black's obituary (see article above) stated that he had served an apprenticeship as a printer in Scotland. I thought this might explain the link to *The Argus*. Not so, according to Vera – it wasn't that kind of printing.

'James Black was a printer but not of words on paper - he grew up in Paisley and the biggest printing works there was the printing of the paisley pattern on ladies shawls - there were two kinds of beautiful huge paisley shawls back then - the wealthy ladies had quality shawls with the paisley pattern woven in but the poorer folk had shawls with the paisley pattern printed on them and this is where James worked.

We have half of the printed paisley shawl he made and brought with him for his bride - the custom was that when the owner of one of these lovely long shawls died, it was cut into two sections and one section given to each of the two eldest daughters.'

In the 1830s the weavers of Paisley (near Glasgow) produced shawls based on a traditional Kashmiri design. Consisting of a leaf or teardrop motif with curled top and floral decoration, the pattern became known as 'paisley' after the town; it is also called 'Welsh pears' or 'Persian pickles'.



**Above, half-shawl printed by James Black for his bride; detail of the pattern.**

## Question of the month

**Does anyone know the location of a Mt Evelyn property belonging to one Haydn Bernard Wills in the fifties, sixties and possibly the seventies?**

We had an inquiry from a legal firm on behalf of a client (a son or daughter of Haydn Wills) about the whereabouts of this property. It was stated to lie between York and Monbulk Roads, about 2-3 kilometres from the centre of Mt Evelyn. That would probably place it in the South Avenue - North Avenue area.

**Our February question: was Mt Evelyn ever part of a pastoral run or grazing licence, what was it called, who held it, and when?**

Raymond Henderson's book *From Jolimont to Yering* (2006) includes a map of pastoral runs. It shows a run held by Paul de Castella and Adolfe de Meuron that seems to include the southern part of what is now Mt Evelyn and is even marked 'Mt Evelyn Run'! The notes, moreover, refer to 'Gardine's Run' (Gardiner's?) immediately to its north, extending from Brushy Creek to the site of the future Mt Evelyn Railway Station.

Whether the name 'Mt Evelyn Run' was used at the time (the 1850s), or the author has used the name because of the location, is unclear. The source is not referenced. I'd hesitate to rely on this map without further evidence.

If the information is correct, that would cast a whole new light on the naming of Evelyn/ Mt Evelyn. It would also mean that James Black could have worked in 'Mt Evelyn' before the era of the selectors and long before the town or station existed (see main article). But, again, no reference to any Mr Brown of *The Argus*!

## Olinda Creek Trail

The section of the Olinda Creek Trail parallel to Swansea Road has been completed with the recent construction of a footbridge near Hull Road.

The area showed evidence of Aboriginal occupation and is now covered by a Cultural and Heritage Management Plan (*Shirewide*, Autumn 2011).

It will soon be possible to take a Three Trails circuit walk from Mt Evelyn, down the Aqueduct Trail to Swansea Road, along the Olinda Creek Trail, past the wetlands and Lillydale Lake to the Lillydale Recreation Reserve, link up with

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## Memories of the eighties

**Jason Lancaster sent us his recollections of Mt Evelyn and the Primary School in the late seventies and early eighties.**

It's only been about 25 years since my family moved away.... I have so many memories of growing up there, from my primary school which has changed, the building I did Prep in looks like it's gone and part of it used for a gate. There was this one teacher and he was old and grey, and he used to tell us how as a boy he went to school there too... if I close my eyes I can almost picture him and his welcoming smile. He said he was one of the first students to go there... and he missed it still. [The teacher was probably Don Matthews.]

The [Prep] teacher's name was Mrs Robison, she was my favourite. I helped Mr Stremple build his mud brick house near the Mt Evelyn Tech (he showed me how to make mud bricks and I tried to help, he was a great teacher too). I remember as a kid we used to ride our bikes in a carpark across from a doctor's office, I think he worried about us so he built us a bmx track down near the Fletchers daffodil farm. Or riding my bike from Forge Road to Silvan Dam for lunch, then up to Olinda for afternoon tea, then the great downhill ride to Montrose, across to Bailey and back up again... and that was before I was 10. So much is gone.

I think [our house] was number 3 Forge Road. When I was little there was a lot of forested area. We were one of the first houses in the area. Eventually the Darvels cut down the forested area across the road for horses. Most of the roads in the area were dirt. My best friend's mum still lives at number 5.

We used to use the old train line to ride back from Lilydale on our bikes, the gradients were way better, and there used to be a car dumping ground under the road from Lilydale to Mt Evelyn on the train line. I don't think there was any place in Mt Evelyn or Lilydale, Montrose or Silvan we didn't ride our bikes. We even used public transport to get our bikes to and from Port Melbourne. Things were so much easier back then.

**From Jason Lancaster, combined emails**

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the Rail Trail north of the station, then back to Mt Evelyn along the Rail Trail (once the bridge over the highway is open for use).

## Melba's 150th, from L&DHS

**For details see**

[www.lilydalehistorical.com.au](http://www.lilydalehistorical.com.au) or  
[www.nelliemelbamuseum.com.au](http://www.nelliemelbamuseum.com.au)

### Talks

*The Industrious David Mitchell*  
*East West Home's Best: the Story of Melba's Coombe Cottage*  
*Coombe Cottage, the Home behind the Hedge and Melba's Life in Lilydale*  
*Melba's Lasting Legacy*

### Walk

*Walk in Melba's Lilydale*

### Cemetery tours

*Melba and Other Amazing Women*  
*Melba and Her Family*  
*Melba and Her Mates*

### 150th birthday celebrations, 19 May

**Guided coach tours** with Melba theme  
Yarra Valley Specialty Tours 5966 2035.

## From Kev's rain gauge

Jean Edwards sends the following stats for McKillop: 'January was 81mm; Feb 204.5mm. Our last fall of that order was in 1989 when the total from 24 September to 31 October was 235.5mm but then the most we had in a five day period was 61mm, whereas we had 97mm in 24 hours (5th February) and 139mm in 3 days this year!'

Rainfall for February 2011 for Mt Evelyn, Melbourne and the Melbourne average:

Mt Evelyn	Melb	Melb Av
206.2mm	131.4mm	47.4mm

**Kevin Phillips**

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