

# Things Past

Newsletter 62

April 2013

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

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## Dates for your diary

'The Happy Hermits' book launch Saturday 20 April, 1.30pm RSL Hall Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn. All welcome.

ANZAC service & march, Sunday 21 April, 2pm Mt Evelyn War Memorial Park, corner Wray Crescent & Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn.

ANZAC Day Dawn Service, Thursday 25 April, 6am Mt Evelyn War Memorial Park. Free Gunfire Breakfast to follow.

## 'The coaches stopped here'

Many thanks to Liz Gibson for the interesting real estate brochure at right. Agent Fergus Scott advertises housing lots for sale at 'Evelyn Heights' estate on the 'Main South Wandin Road' (Monbulk Road). The blocks have 'Magnificent Views of Warburton & Dandenong Ranges'.

The document probably dates from about 1919, when land at Evelyn was being subdivided and sold after WWI. The State School and a store (the old produce store) are shown but the station name is still 'Evelyn'.

Another point of interest is that 'Coaches pass twice daily'. It was part of the traditional history of Holly Lodge (that is, a story handed down by successive owners) that coaches used to stop there on their way to Marysville. While Marysville is most unlikely – it's not on the way to Marysville from anywhere – the destination could have been confused with Monbulk.

Once the railway came through, coaches used to run from Evelyn station via South Wandin (Silvan) to Monbulk. This is mentioned in the history of Silvan State School. It is also confirmed in the diary of guests at Holly Lodge in 1911, who waited at the gate for Frank Cottingham to come home on the coach.

A coach service from Lilydale to Warburton via Wandin Yallock was established in 1876, connecting with the existing coach service to Melbourne. It is not certain whether there was a service to South Wandin also. If coaches were running to South Wandin at that early date, it might shed light on another piece of



This real estate plan above, forwarded by Liz Gibson, mentions coaches passing on the 'Main South Wandin Road'.

traditional house-history. Coaches were said to stop at the original 'Nether Wallop' house in Kookaburra Lane.

This story sounds rather strange on the face of it, as 'Nether Wallop' has no frontage on either Hereford or Old Hereford Road. We need to think ourselves back to the 1870s – before Hereford and Swansea Roads were made, before the present route of Old Hereford Road,

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## To the Gulf of Carpentaria by Moke, part 4

Leaving Charters Towers late in the morning, heading south, it is now half the temperature it was when we left Townsville at 8.30 am. Climbing up on to the central highlands there are still an enormous amount of road works. At one of the 'stop & go' sections over the CB radio came: 'there are the 2 Mokes in today's Bulletin Newspaper'. Our 30 seconds of fame with the picture & write up was being noticed.

The weather was getting colder and we stopped for lunch at Belyando Crossing. This is a drop off point for road train trailers, fuel, a small private caravan & camping area and a small roadhouse. We decided on pies & coffee, which we would eat beside our Mokes, and then it happened ....

Have you ever seen the scene in Alfred Hitchcock's movie *The Birds*, when they all come swarming into town? Well, all of a sudden Rainbow Lorikeets & Choughs came in out of nowhere, landing on our shoulders, heads, arms, the cars, hanging off our aerials, on the strap of my camera, screeching loudly & demanding pieces of our pies .... We couldn't believe it, they ate about a quarter of our pies, they were like vultures. Through all of this we did not get bitten once, which was a relief I must say.

We arrived in the town of Clermont after 5pm & got the last 'Donga' accommodation, which is a single room each, sharing a bathroom in the middle & a massive outdoor common camp kitchen. Cole Seam Gas Mining, massive road works & being on the southern edge of the Bowen Basin for Brown Coal Mining means a shortage of rooms anywhere. Clermont has a large gold mining area that had been mined



'Like vultures ...' Rainbow Lorikeets at Belyando Crossing, above, demand their slice of pie.

since 1862 and still attracts many fossickers from all over Australia.

The next morning it was cool, clear & sunny. As we were leaving we came upon a whole house that was being transported, it took up the entire road. Down to Emerald which is a very large, busy mining & agricultural centre for the highlands area. They still even have Sapphire & Emerald mining. The next stop was Springsure where we fuelled up & then on to Rolleston. Here we turned off of the Dawson Hwy & on to the Carnarvon Development road, which took us past the Carnarvon Gorge.

We had intended to stop there for the night, however we decided to go to Injune. The scenery we had seen during the day had started to change as we crossed the Carnarvon Range & was now part forest & rocky outcrop but conditions were good. At Injune we hired a cabin as it was about to go to -3 degrees overnight & we were told that the biggest road hazards from dusk onward were pigs, then roos, then cattle. We got the last cabin in the park so we were lucky.

Dinner at the Hotel where the jackpot draw for this Friday night was over \$7,000. It was all done by the winner of the raffle selecting a card from the board, if you picked the 'Jack of Spades' you got the money, if not, you got 'Jack ...' and it jackpotted the next week. There are 2 house rules:

1. You must shout the bar (Friday night, town full of young miners)
2. You must give a donation to a local charity.

The week before we were there the \$10,000 went off. A bit of local info: a can of Scotch & Coke opened over the counter sells for \$10.80.

At 5am all the road trains, which had been coming in from 8pm the night before, were starting to warm up & head out of town. When we hit the road it was clear & sunny but it had been a real cold night. A short run to Roma, which was a very large & spread out town, then on to St George, which has a great fishing reputation for Yellowbelly when the Balonne is flowing.

Changing to the Castlereagh Hwy down thru Dirranbandi (which we were told not to stop at) & then on to Hebal which is a tiny little town with 1 pub, 1 general store/restaurant & a great little caravan park. The store & park are run by 'Barb' and her motto is: 'a touch of class in

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the outback', which she has achieved with her food & service. Bob & I cooked dinner then went across to the hotel at 7.30pm on the Saturday night and it was closed. We then spent the next several hours in Barb's restaurant drinking and talking to Barb. It was quite a cold night under our lean-to but the swags and stretchers kept us warm.



Above, Barb's General Store sign at Hebel.

The last 3 days travelling have shown us areas of Gold & Coal mining, Beef, Sheep, Dairy, Grain, Wheat & Cotton. Cotton was at Cubbie station, which is Australia's largest cotton producer & largest irrigation property, comprising 96,000 hectares. It has just been sold to a Chinese group, along with its water rights.

Crossing into NSW early next morning, after a short drive saw the sign for Angledool Opals, '30 people & 125 dogs'. Pulled into this private driveway after following the signs & we were met by a pack of the biggest hunting dogs you would ever want to meet, some of their heads were higher than our Mokes' bonnets. Privately operated from mined to finished product, the pure silver pendants are all 'one off' designs and all are hand finished. Bob & I made our choice for our wives (Brownie points). I was looking at a black opal ring & pendant set but it was \$4,000!

A quick look at Lightning Ridge but it is very commercialised and you would need to base yourself there for at least a couple of days to look around. Walgett is the next town we went thru and here, all external windows & doors are secured & the hotel has a 6 ft high metal fence around it. Down thru Coonamble then on to Gulargambone and a great little caravan park, onsite van for the night was \$35 for the 2 of us, chocolate damper & happy hour around the fire pit are a nightly tradition with the owners.

**Glenn Golds**

To be concluded next month

## The Heroes of the Aqueduct

Ian Stewart, author of the 'Heroes of the Aqueduct' website, was our speaker on Saturday 23 March.

Ian and his partner Shona Blackthorn researched the history of the O'Shannassy Aqueduct in the nick of time. They interviewed former caretakers and photographed surviving infrastructure. Many of their informants have now passed away. Relics were demolished after Melbourne Water handed over control of the aqueduct to Parks Victoria in June 2006.

The aqueduct carried water from a reservoir on the O'Shannassy River, along the side of Mt Donna Buang, down the Yarra Valley to Mt Evelyn. The water was then piped to Melbourne. Construction was completed in 1914.

Each section of aqueduct had a caretaker with his own residence. Only two of the houses are thought to survive, though one that Ian showed looked rather like the house on the south-east corner of Birmingham and Channel Roads, Mt Evelyn. The caretakers worked in hard and dangerous conditions to keep the Aqueduct clean and flowing.

Ian urged anyone who had not walked the upper sections of the aqueduct to do so. It is a beautiful walk but the channel could be overgrown within a few years. The main access points are: Dee Road, Millgrove, the Donna Buang Walking Track and Yuonga Road, Warburton (Melway maps 289-290).

'The Heroes of the Aqueduct' website is:  
<http://oshannassyaqueduct.weebly.com/>

## Vale Nancy Smith

Mrs Nancy Rose Smith née Benham died on 13 March at Park Lane nursing home in Croydon, aged 89. She had previously been living in Tudor Village. Nancy grew up in Bamfield Road off The Wridgeway, where her family had a farm. She attended Mt Evelyn Primary School in the 1930s.

Nancy's father, Vic Benham, came to Evelyn in 1904. Vic shared his memories of the earliest days of the town in his contribution to the tape recording 'Tales of Old Mt Evelyn'.

Nancy and her husband Keith kept the dairy in Monbulk Road. Keith had grown up at 'The Springs', where his parents had a house. Jean and David Edwards bought the land from Keith and built their own house on it. **Paula Herlihy**



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before the Warburton railway came through and Evelyn township grew up around its station. If the coach ran to South Wandin in the 1870s, it would have turned from Old Gippsland Road onto a road marked on the Mooroolbark parish plan: down the straight part of Old Hereford Road, down a steep slope that's now an easement, down the north-south section of Kookaburra Lane past 'Nether Wallop', down Government Road – and then where?

The only way the road could have gone was through the Owl Land. If it continued along the same alignment, it would have plunged down another steep hillside and up again level with the end of the present Everton Road and Harvey Street. It could have met the route of the present Hereford Road at what's now the 'Dangerous Bend' opposite Adams Lane.

A path through the Owl Land, running south from the main track, follows close to the line described above. There is even a dip in the bank beside the main track, just opposite the beginning of this path, which may be a sign that the road once came through at this point.



Above, the path running north-south through the Owl Land – a fragment of 'Old, Old Hereford Road'?

No doubt the ups and downs of the old road, as originally surveyed, led to the decision to re-align it along the ridge. The present route of Old Hereford Road was not fixed till the early 1880s. All this happened before the roads acquired their present names and before the township of Evelyn existed. A map of the station area in the early 1900s has Hereford Road, confusingly, as 'South Wandin Road' and Monbulk Road as 'Olinda Vale Road'.

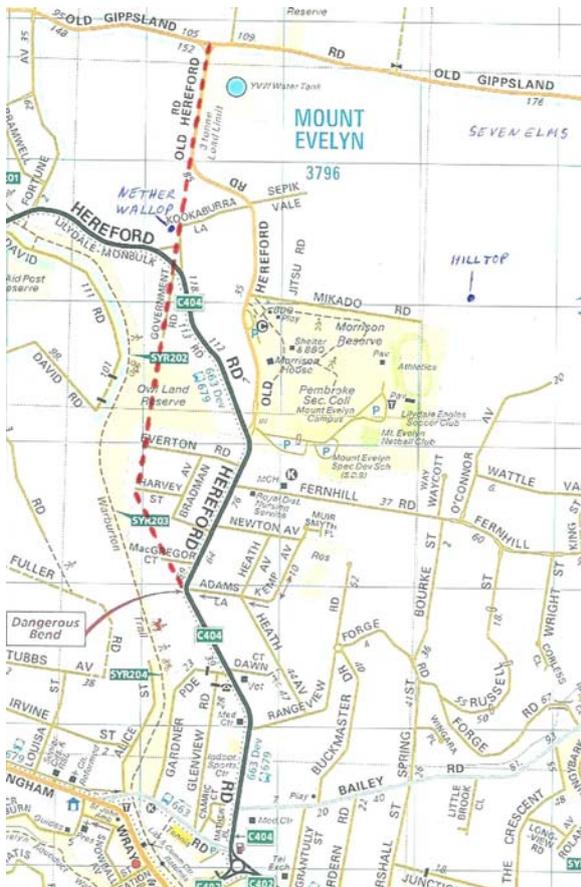
Lilydale Shire Council moved to rename Olinda Vale Road as 'Evelyn Road' in 1908, since 'the station and post office were now called Evelyn'. Liz Gibson's real estate ad shows however that Olinda Vale Road became (or reverted to) South Wandin Road. The whole route along Old Hereford, Hereford and Monbulk Roads was probably once known as the 'South Wandin Road'.

See *Things Past* 28, 35, 45 & 46; *Reporter* Box Hill 1 May 1908 p.2, [trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/90313428](http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/90313428) and our forthcoming book *The Happy Hermits*.  
**Karen Phillips**

## Goodbye, Bev

We say a regretful goodbye to Bev Watkins, who is moving back to her home town of Maryborough. With her departure, Mt Evelyn loses one of its oldest family connections. The Watkins family came to Evelyn more than 100 years ago.

Bev had a longstanding involvement with the Melba Centre, the local branch of the Labor Party, Neighbourhood Watch and MEEPPA, as well as the History Group. She could often be seen out and about in Mt Evelyn, walking her little dog Carly or delivering newsletters. We wish Bev all the best in her new home.



Above, part of Melway map 118 with dotted line showing hypothetical route of the original road. Nether Wallop and the hilltop at Seven Elms (see p.6) are also marked.

## Seven Elms

Thanks to those who have provided information about the 'mysterious hilltop' (*Things Past* 61). The approximate location is marked on the map on p.5.

*I too have been intrigued by this hill for some time. I used to walk home from the bus stop past Morrison House, pat the horses in the paddock (the current day park and carpark) and always look over to that stunning vista that was the hilltop.*

*I do remember there being a raised rusty tank on a stand for many years but I believe this has since fallen down. I don't ever remember seeing a house of any description and upon asking my family, they also only remember the tank.*

*I can confirm that access is not through Sepik Vale as there are only three lots accessed via this road (one of which is where I lived) and the boundary of lot 3 (driveway at the end of Sepik) does not include this hilltop. I don't believe access is through Mikado Lane either, but cannot confirm this.*

*I used Google maps to try and find the location. I first tried to locate the hill (the deciduous trees and rustic ruins can be seen from satellite photo imagery). I 'dropped a pin' on the hill and ruins and then changed the view of the map to show a map/street view rather than the satellite image.*

*My dropped pin is giving me an address of 176 Old Gippsland Rd, also known as Seven Elms – a beautiful property. About 6-7 years ago the property was subdivided into 6 lots – four lots which front Old Gippsland Rd and two that are battle axe blocks behind the front four.*

*If you drive past Seven Elms you can clearly see the new driveways cut out although absolutely nothing further has happened since. This is confirmed by Google maps. The satellite view of the property is one big lot and is clearly fenced whilst on street view the subdivision boundaries are apparent.*

*The boundary of Seven Elms runs right alongside lot 3 Sepik Vale and the very end of Mikado Lane.*

**Liz Gibson**

*The property is still owned by George & Yvonne Virgona (our neighbours) and they graze cattle on it. The hilltop is part of Seven Elms, at 176 Old Gippsland Rd.*

*Yvonne was a Sellick, and the Sellick family owned the farm for many years. There used to be an old farm house on the hill, but it was burned down in mysterious circumstances many years ago.*

*I have been up there and I can assure you it has the best view on three sides by far all around Mt Evelyn. You can't see the city though – due to the gum trees on Garry Paternoster's property.*

**Chris Thiele**

Joan Pinker remembered the old wooden house from when her family rented the property. The fact that the Seven Elms street frontage faces Old Gippsland Road confirms that the site was on the selection taken up by Robert Thornton in 1876. Chris and Wendy Thiele have kindly put us in touch with the owners of Seven Elms – more info to follow.

Chris has a Facebook page with photos, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mt-Evelyn-Our-town-today-and-yesterday/234232769990710?fref=ts>

## Olinda Creek Trail

The Swansea Road section of the Olinda Creek Trail has been completed, with construction of a footpath from Chateau Wyuna to a bridge at the York Road roundabout.

## From Kev's rain gauge

March 2013 was Melbourne's hottest March since 1940, which was the date of the late-season bush fire mentioned in our last issue.

Rainfall for March 2013 for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, Melbourne and Melbourne average.\*

Mt Ev	McK	Melb	Melb Av
28.10mm	37.90mm	42.20mm	50.40mm

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

**Kevin Phillips**

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