

Things Past

Newsletter 88

June 2015

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

PO Box 289 Mt Evelyn VIC 3796

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Dates for your diary

History Group meeting Monday 15 June, 7.30pm at Hardy House, 49 Birminham Road.

Working bee (sorting the archives) Saturday 18 July, 1.30pm at Hardy House.

Unveiling of plaques to commemorate the Avenue of Honour (joint project of History Group with Mt Evelyn RSL), Sunday 26 July, 2pm at the RSL Memorial Garden.

History Group AGM and general meeting , Monday 17 August, 7.30pm Hardy House.

Valinda Park and the Happy Hermits' camp

In *Things Past* 48 & 49 we reported on the camp of 'The Happy Hermits' in the early 1900s, subsequently published as our book *The Happy Hermits and Diary of a Trip to Evelyn*. Recently we received information from another quarter. Susan Byrne wrote:

In amongst my grandmother's possessions I have found a little booklet Souvenir The Hermits Camp - Evelyn December 1911.

Inside the front cover the booklet is [addressed] to my great grandparents.

I think I can recall my grandmother telling me that they (her parents) donated the land or loaned them the land. Anyway, it only has three pictures in it; one of the train station, one of the camp and one of the five men in front of the camp. Is any more known about the camp or where it was?

The souvenir booklet has the inscription, 'To Mr & Mrs Taggart [sic] Valinda Park Evelyn with T. Miller's compliments March 1912'. Tom Miller was the photographer among the Hermits.

Research started from the vital clue of the property name 'Valinda Park' but I will give the results in chronological order for clarity.

The earliest known site of European settlement in Mt Evelyn was at the present Mt Evelyn Reserve. When the area was surveyed in 1855, W. McDonald & G.W. Goodyear of Collingwood were already operating a saw mill on the site (which became Lot 27, Parish of Mooroolbark). In 1856 they sought permission to build a tramway along the side of Mt Dandenong. According to City Surveyor James Blackburn's 1857 report, the enterprise



Above, part of the booklet of photos sent by Tom Miller to the Tegarts at Valinda Park in 1912. It contains three of the photos that were also in Hermit Fred Higgs' family collection.

From p.1

consisted of a sawmill, dam, five slab huts, stable and loft, stockyards and a fenced garden. In 1872, the first rating year of the newly proclaimed Shire of Lillydale, the rate books showed S.V. Winter as the owner of 60½ acres (lot number not specified, but in later years this acreage was shown as Lot 27). The location, when given, was either 'Olinda Creek Lillydale' or 'Olinda Vale'.

Samuel Vincent Winter (1843-1904) was a journalist who, with his brother Joseph, had founded the Catholic weekly *The Advocate* in 1868. He became editor and proprietor of the *Herald* and was twice Mayor of Richmond. Samuel and Joseph Winter acquired at least three other properties in the area.

On 1 March 1888 the *Melbourne Punch* reported on an excursion hosted by S.V. Winter to his 'country residence at Olinda Creek'. After a hearty lunch, 'a pleasant hour was spent in roaming along the creek and admiring the beauties of the place'. The guests departed with pleasant impressions of 'the cosy cottage in Olinda Vale'.

The *Lillydale Express* described the same event, adding more local content.

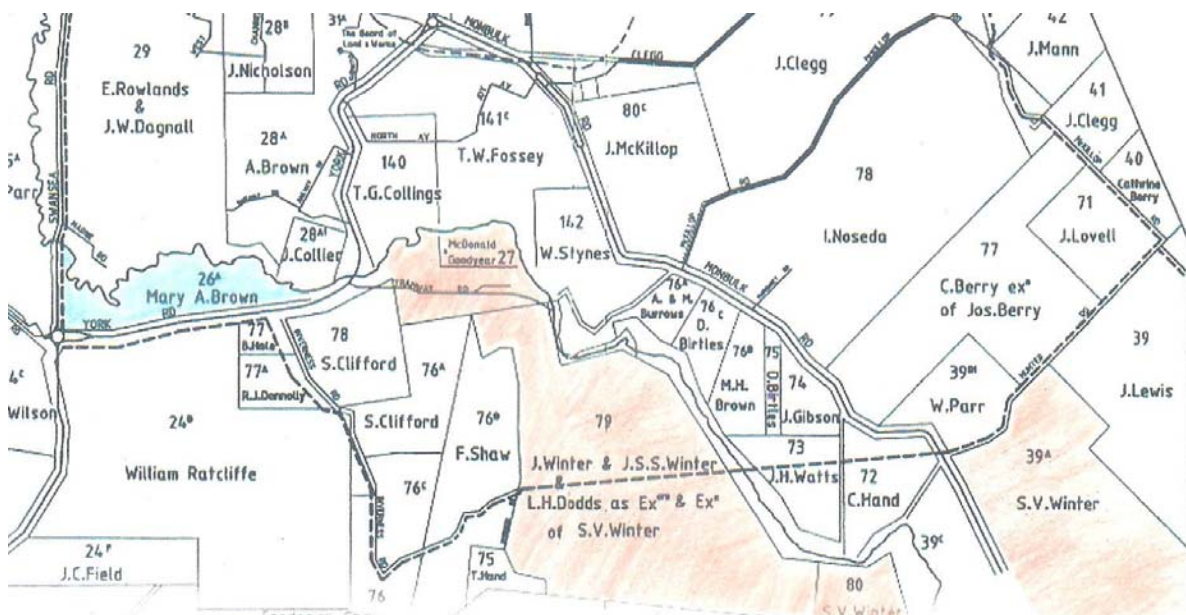
A very charming spot is Mr S.V. Winter's property at Olinda Vale, about 5 miles from Lillydale, along the South Wandin road [Monbulk Road]. The property is situated on the Olinda Creek. ...

The weir in the creek some distance above the homestead by which the water for Mr



Above, S.V. Winter, *The Advocate* , 1/3/1919.

Winter's homestead supply is diverted into a race was shown and the ease with which a supply could be sent on to Lillydale was apparent. The beautiful fern gullies on the way came in for their share of admiration, and Mr Winter's ferntree bowers with miniature water falls in the centre also evoked many warm expressions of approval.
Lillydale Express, 25/2/1888



Above, detail of combined parish plans from *The First Selectors of Mt Evelyn*, showing Winter's properties (shaded orange) and Mary Brown's (shaded blue, see p.5).

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Jean Newton (10/12/1920 - 15/3/2015)

Jean Winters met and married Lance Newton in Thornbury in the late 1940s. Together they moved with their first daughter, Gail (b.1948), to a war service home in Louisa Street Mt Evelyn in 1949. The weatherboard home surrounded by verandas had formerly been the home of the Low family. Lance was already acquainted with Mt Evelyn as he and his family had happy memories of holidays at Billy Goat Hill in the 1920s-1940s.

Jean and Lance's family grew, with Janice arriving (1950), Mark (1951) and Greg (1958). Jean became involved in a voluntary capacity with the Mt Evelyn Kindergarten and the Mt Evelyn Tennis Club and later with the Lilydale High School and the family tennis club (called 'Edenhurst', after the name of their new home in Fernhill/Rangeview Road, built in 1971).

There were stalls to support, progressive dinners for the tennis club and Millard's workers' parties hosted at home. In between the child rearing and the voluntary and leisure pursuits, Jean also worked for the National Census and had various secretarial positions with Dunlop in Bayswater, Wiggins in Lilydale, Turners Bulbs in Wandin and in Dr Hardy's surgery in Mt Evelyn.

Jean was widowed in 1979 when Lance died suddenly but she remained at Edenhurst with her mother Vera until 1994. With the death of her mother, Jean moved to Cherry Tree Grove Retirement Village in Croydon. During this time she provided regular lodging and was a key informant for me when I carried out interviews for the Mt Evelyn history project. She came along to many talks and book launches.



Above, Jean and Lance Newton in the late 1940s, just before they moved to Mt Evelyn.

Below, the Newton family at Toolangi Tennis Court in 1966. From left are Freda Blunden (her daughter Jan started kinder with Gail in Mt Evelyn 1952), then Jean, Janice, Mark, his girlfriend Carolyn Davey, Bill Blunden (family friend and Lilydale High School teacher), Greg, Lance and Gail.



Continued p.5

From p.2

The rate books show that Winter sold Lot 27 in 1894. From 1896 the property was owned by J. William Merritt, Sanitary Works Inspector, of Flemington. Several later entries include the name 'Valinda Park' (the rate books sometimes gave the property name for the address of the owner, seldom for the rated property). At that time the Mt Evelyn area was called both Valinda (the Post Office name) and Olinda Vale (the Railway Station name).

Merritt apparently leased out the property, which was occupied by Louie Peter Christie, fruitgrower, in 1904. For the first time the address given was York Road. An advertisement in *The Argus* showed that Mrs Christie was running a boarding house on the property.

From 1910-11 to 1912-1913, the occupier was John William Tegart, orchardist (Susan's great grandfather). Mrs Clara Maud Tegart, whose family had a long history in the Shire, also owned 18 acres of Lot 24B in Montrose. It seems that Mr and Mrs Tegart allowed the Hermits to camp on their land and that Tom Miller sent them the little booklet of photos in appreciation.

Some of the the people in the Hermits' photos could be members of Clara Tegart's family. 'Clara Maud's maiden name was Rexter and she had lots of brothers and sisters. ... There is a family resemblance.'

The actual camp site was likely to be on the flat land along the creek. Known informally as Mistletoe Bend in the early 1900s, it became a popular camping and picnic spot.

The house at Valinda Park burnt down in 1914, while occupied by a Mr A. Androlini and family. The report of the fire concludes:

The owner of the property is Mr Merritt, of Melbourne The property was formerly owned by the late Mr Winter of the 'Herald' and he made it one of the brightest beauty spots in the Shire.

Lilydale Express 13/11/1914

OLINDA VALE, Valinda-park.—Fishing, shooting; Olinda Creek through grounds; beautiful scenery; £1. Mrs. Christie.



Above, 'The Hermits' Friends at Dinner, Evelyn Xmas 1909'. The guests may include members of the Tegart and Rexter families. Below left, advertisement for Valinda Park under 'Hotels, seaside resorts etc', *The Argus*, 28/1/1905.

A new house must have been built soon afterwards. In 1916 John Henry Merritt, orchardist, was listed as owner and occupier of Valinda Park, Evelyn, being a house and 60½ acres, Lot 27. Alf Knowles remembered the orchard owner threatening him with a gun (that was probably later, in the 1920s).

Meanwhile, David and Charles Mitchell had bought up Winter's Lots 79 and 80. When Lot 27 came up for sale in 1919, it was purchased by David Mitchell's estate. The estate then owned all the land along the southwest side of Olinda Creek from York Road to beyond Hunter Road. That allowed for the Cave Hill Tramway to be extended towards Silvan.

Most of Lot 79 is now part of the Dandenong Ranges National Park, with a Melbourne Water reservation along Olinda Creek. A 15 acre section of Lot 27 was proclaimed as the Mt Evelyn Reserve in 1929. Brother Bill's Recreation Camp was also located on part of Lot 27. It became an Army camp during WWII and is now the YMCA camp.

As a result of Susan's enquiry and further research, we can now say that the Hermits' camp was at the property Valinda Park on Lot 27. We have an almost continuous history of this significant site from the mid-1850s to the present.

Karen Phillips

Avenue of Honour

Are you related to one of these men?

The memorial plaques to the servicemen who were commemorated by Mt Evelyn's World War I Avenue of Honour will be unveiled at a ceremony at the RSL Memorial Garden on Sunday 26 July.

We would love to have the families of these men present on this special occasion.

Corporal William Ludwig Aicher*
Sergeant John Alexander Ellis*
Gunner David England
Private William Henry English
Private George Hannah
Private John Muir Hannah
Private George Edward Joy
Private Francis Hubert Lyall
Private Thomas William McGuire
Private Arthur John Newing
Private Claude Douglas Pitt*
Private Richard Robertson
Private Donald Fergus Scott
Sapper Robert Hazel Smith
Corporal Driver Mechanic William John Teese
Gunner Ray Thomson Tregear*
Private Samuel Tucknott
Private James Alfred Varty

* Killed in action.

If you are descended from, or related to, one of these men, please contact Mt Evelyn History Group: historygroup@mountevelyn.vic.au or phone Paula Herlihy on 9736 2935.

How long was the Avenue?

Ken Reed's information about the placing of the Lion Seats (*Things Past* 86) has prompted the question: how long was the Avenue of Honour? Was it the same length as the carpark it made way for, parallel to Wray Crescent? Or did it extend as far as the Station House?

Jean Newton, from p.3

With increasing frailty as a result of two hip replacements and diabetes, Jean spent the last eighteen months with her daughter Gail in Glen Iris. She died suddenly after a fall and hospital admission. Although bodily frail, she had been mentally astute, still playing scrabble every day to keep her brain active and enjoying visits of grandchildren and trips to the restaurants or movies. **Janice Newton**

Olinda Vale – the author

Here's a turn-up on Trove: there was once an author named 'Olinda Vale' (no way of knowing whether it was her real name or a *nom de plume*).

All I know about her is that she wrote a book or story called 'Mrs Falkland's Sons', published by the *Christian Herald*, London, 26 July 1910. The University of Melbourne Library has a copy: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/13433289>

Though catalogued as a book, it sounds from the description more like a bound periodical. Quite a mixed bag: '*Christian Herald* penny stories with which are incorporated the "Pellman popular stories" and "Thrilling stories"'.

The publication includes the 19th installment of 'The Secret City' by Helen Bouchier (who was definitely a real person). Dr Helen Bouchier was a suffragist, anti-vivisectionist, theosophist and author of girls' stories, romance and mystery. She is listed in the Roll of Honour of Suffragette Prisoners 1905-1914.

Coincidentally or not, author Olinda Vale must have flourished around the same time that her name was in use here as a place name.

Mary Ann Brown at the PROV

The PROV website has a feature on Mt Evelyn selector Mary Ann Brown, who took up Lot 26A between Olinda Creek and York Road in 1877. Her land was known as 'Brown's Flat'. See plan on p.2.

Much of the information appears in Janice Newton's booklet *The First Selectors of Mt Evelyn* but the PROV adds some details about Mary's improvements to the property.

The file shows that the house she built on the land had three chimneys, which means it would have been of above-average value at that time. Mary also improved the property with a gravity-based irrigation system that ran from the creek that passed through the property.

The PROV page includes a letter from Mary's father, Francis Brown, in relation to his own property and admittance to Yarra Bend Asylum. This file is an example of the way archives can help to provide information on individuals 'who are often overlooked in the grander historical narratives'.

<http://prov.vic.gov.au/blog-only/unearth-the-stories-of-people-from-our-past-through-their-properties>

Winged Lion Seat Project

Gwenda Donaldson has located a skilled mould maker and concrete moulder to quote to make a mould and to produce the concrete ends. Concrete moulding appears to be a dying art but Paula has chased up five or six other leads. At least one has given us some idea of costs.

The cost of the two ends will be in the order of \$400, but more if we do not receive any grant support. Several groups have already pledged their support, such as Yarra Hills Secondary College, Mt Evelyn Primary School, the Mt Evelyn Township Group (METIC) and the Mt Evelyn Environment Protection and Progress Association (MEEPPA). The Men's shed will make the wooden slats.

Paula is meeting with Yarra Ranges Council staff members Gabby Haynes and Megan Rowland and will apply for a grant to create copies of these seats. The originals graced Mt Evelyn in the 1950s, with one remaining in place until 1986.

The grant application will reflect the input from the History Group sub-committee, which has had strong support from the Mt Evelyn Township Group following the Planning Days of 2014 and 2015.

How can you help? If you belong to a group that supports the idea of copies of the seat becoming Mt Evelyn icons, please provide a letter of support to Paula at: pherlihy3@gmail.com.au.

You might like to purchase a seat for your private use, or sponsor a seat to be erected in a public place such as along the Warburton Trail or the Aqueduct Walk. If so, please let Paula know.



Above, Mt Evelyn's last surviving winged lion seat when it was in storage at the Shire depot.

We have not discovered who made our seats or when they were made but we have found that they were relatively uncommon! Sphinx versions in similar style have been discovered at Kenloch and Box Hill, but no other winged lion ones.

Paula Herlihy

Trolls?



Three hard-nosed characters, above, observe the passing traffic in Hereford Road. Next time we looked, there were four of them. They're breeding! Photo Kevin Phillips.

From Kev's rain gauge

Rainfall for May 2015 for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, Melbourne and the Melbourne average.

Mt Ev	McK	Melb	Melb Av
111.1mm	118.0mm	37.6mm	55.7mm

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

Kevin Phillips

Contact us

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