

Things Past

Newsletter 99

May 2016

Mount Evelyn History Group Inc

PO Box 289 Mt Evelyn VIC 3796 A0051327F



Dates for your diary

No History Group meetings April or May.

History Group meeting Monday 20 June, 7.30pm at Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road.

'Kitchenalia': display and talk by Fabienne Harris-Smith, Saturday 9 July, 1.30pm at Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn.

Where did their kids go to school?

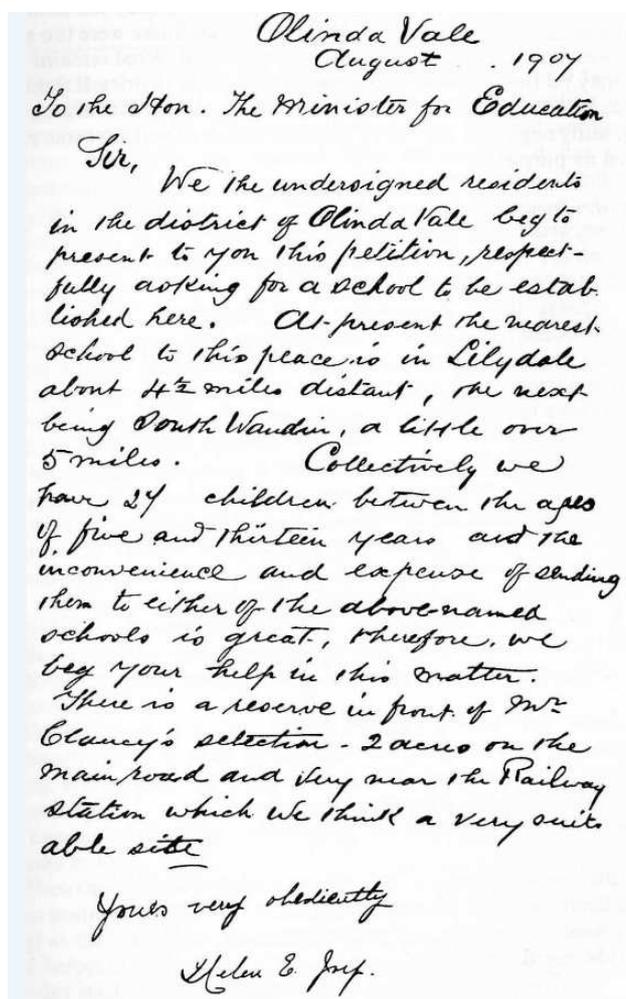
The Victorian 'Education Act' of 1872 set up the Education Department, provided for the establishment of State Schools and made attendance compulsory for children aged 6-14.

Selectors were taking up land in what is now Mt Evelyn from the early 1870s but Evelyn State School did not open till 1910. There was a period of 40-odd years when there were settlers in the area, when schooling was compulsory but there was no local school. Where did their kids go to school? *Did* they go to school?

In mid-1860s Lilydale had two Common Schools, Protestant and Catholic. Lilydale State School No. 876 opened in Castella Street in 1873.¹ The earliest surviving registers from Lilydale SS are from 1905 but earlier newspaper reports of school events are a source of names.

An article about the Lilydale SS speech day in 1885 mentions the Mitchell and Morton children. The names Bedford, Mackin and Morton appeared on the school's Honour Roll. John Winstanley contributed his gardening expertise at Lilydale SS on Arbor Day 1905, so his children may have attended the school.² His children and others living on the creek flats would have taken the track through the Cave Hill Estate – the northern section of Swansea Road did not go through until 1911.

In 1886 and 1887 selector James Slater was fined for his children's truancy.³ One of the exemptions for a fine was: 'that there is no State school which the child can attend within a distance of two miles, measured according to the nearest road from the residence of such child'.⁴ As his block on Old Gippsland Road would have been within its two-mile catchment, we can conclude that the school Slater's children 'weren't going to' was Lilydale State School.



Above, 1907 letter from Mrs Helen Joy requesting a school for Olinda Vale (Mt Evelyn), Education Department files. Mrs Joy exaggerated the distance to the nearest schools.

A Common School opened in the Methodist Chapel on the corner of Hunter, Beenak and Quayle Roads Wandin in 1869. 'In many cases parents had to cut bridle tracks through the thick bush so children could attend classes.'⁵ The Education Department leased the building in

Cave Hill Tramway – more clues from photos

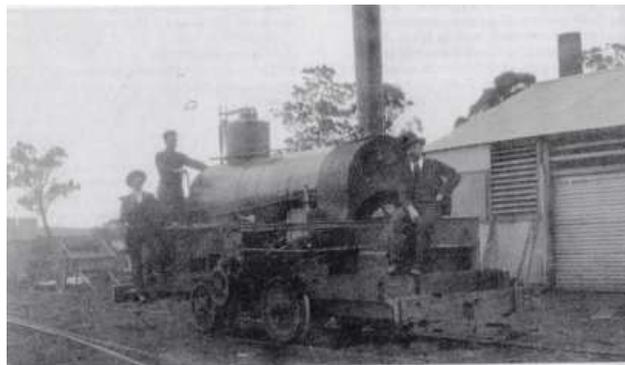
Arthur Winzenried and Ralph Alger both researched the Cave Hill Tramway in the 1980s (*Things Past* #98). Winzenried, investigating slightly earlier, apparently never suspected a branch of the tramway in the David Road area. He did however find traces of sidings and a possible turntable on the east side of Olinda creek. It was Alger who identified traces of formation leading up the hillside. He plotted the probable route of the line by aligning it to the spur that crossed the creek just north of Akarana Drive.

Passing along Swansea Road, I always peered out hoping to glimpse some relic of the tramway formation east of the creek where Alger indicated. I could never see a thing, but another resource occurred to me.

Google Maps Satellite View shows an unusual formation in the paddock bounded by Olinda Creek, Akarana Drive, Swansea Road and Glenvale School. It looks like a three-sided shunting arrangement (possibly what Winzenried took to be the site of a turntable). If the arm pointing southeast continued, meeting up with the section of formation running close to David



Above, the red arrows on this Google satellite view indicate a three-sided formation between Olinda Creek and Swansea Road. Below, the formation can be seen as a faint line through the thistles. Photo Kevin Phillips.



The figure of Will Sone on the front of the first Cave Hill engine, above, helped us to date the photo and estimate the gauge from his height.

Road, the alignment would have been slightly different to that suggested by Alger.

Once we knew where to look, we were able to make out the formation quite easily from ground level – or rather from the top of yonder grassy knoll on the north side of Akarana Drive (Kevin brought along a step ladder for a better photographic vantage point).

The photo of the earliest tramway locomotive offered further possibilities. The three men on the engine were Oliver Dolphin, Frank Dawes and Will Sone. The men became brothers-in-law and were Leonie Smith's grandfather and great-uncles (they married the Stephenson sisters of Lilydale, *Things Past* #40).

Franc and Leonie consulted their family tree. The men's birth years were: Oliver Dolphin 1878, Frank Dawes c.1881 and Will Sone 1893 (confirmed by the BD&M Index). Will Sone, seated on the front of the engine, looks like a young man in his early twenties. That would date the photo no earlier than 1913, and probably 1913-1918.

As this almost certainly was the original Cave Hill engine dating from c.1887, it's surprising to find it still apparently in working order at least 26 years later. This was a decade after David Mitchell acquired two engines from Bendigo Tramways and five years since he started laying the track southwards along Olinda Creek. The old narrow gauge track on the estate and the standard gauge line along the creek must have been in use concurrently (we don't know the exact gauge of the old engine; it may have matched the 3' gauge tracks used inside the quarry).

Interestingly, this is not a photo of 'men at work'. Frank Dawes and Will Sone are wearing hats, jackets, white shirts and ties, not work wear. The men may have been posing on the engine for some special occasion.

Karen Phillips

The grandfather from Russia

Leonie Smith's paternal grandfather had an exciting history.

Leonie's mother was Ethel Lillia May Dolphin ('Dot' because she was so small and spent some early weeks of her life in a shoe box – so the story goes), born in 1910. 'Dot' was the youngest daughter of Oliver Dolphin and Frances (nee Stephenson). Oliver was the engine driver in the photo on p.3. Dot had an elder sister, Una. Frances their mother died early in 1914 when Dot was about 3. Oliver later married Frances' sister, May Stephenson, and they had a son, Cyril.

Dot was born at 'Farnsworth', an old house in Castella Street Lilydale, and lived with the Aunts. Their father had built a 'rough house' near 'The Cedars' on Cave Hill. Later he rebuilt the house, which still stands on the Highway directly opposite John Street and is now occupied by Foothills Financial Services. Next door, a 1960s house down the hill was built by Jack and Beryl Dawes (Leonie's cousins). Jack was the only child of Frank Dawes and Polly (nee Stephenson).

Dot married George Vladimir Konstantinoff, son of John Konstantinoff (born Kaluga, Russia). John was a university student and probably devout Russian Orthodox. He refused to be conscripted and fled Russia pre-Revolution, making his way right across Siberia to Vladivostok 'where he learnt to speak English on a Japanese fishing trawler in the China Sea' His dramatic story of 'knives, guns and daggers' will make a wonderful film one day.

By trade John was listed as a Sail Maker and eventually he made passage to Apollo Bay to build a farm at Glenaire on the Aire River and became a late pioneer of the Otways. He married Clara Sone, sister to Will Sone (see photo p.3 again), who had married Elsie Stephenson of Lilydale! To reach Melbourne in 1919 they had to kill a pig for 'supplies'.

Clara contracted Spanish Influenza in the great

epidemic and died in a makeshift hospital in the Preston School Hall.

John later re-married but George always missed his mother and for all his life was very judgmental of his father. John Konstantinoff eventually found his niche with the Russian community in Geelong and died a fully practicing member of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Leonie is the only one of the sisters to embrace any of John's rich heritage (especially the hand gilded iconography). In her book of poetry *Whispers in the Dark* (published 2009 by M4 Media), Leonie devotes two of her poems to memories of her Russian grandfather and of his last days.

*They took bricks and mortar
the same that built surrounding suburbia
to build a monument, a little bit of Russia ...*

*Forever there will be a little
bit of Russia in the dust
of Geelong cemetery
Leonie Smith, 'Going Home'*

As a Station Master (SM) for 43+ years, George lived in 29 different towns throughout Victoria. Because of his expertise and troubleshooting abilities he seemed to lead a nomadic existence. It's no wonder he sent his daughters to be boarders in order to attend the one school (St Anne's Grammar School in Sale, where he had been Station Master).

George's last promotion was to Spencer Street Station but he elected to retire and set up home in Castlemaine, another town where he had served as SM. Castlemaine's incredible history combined with its cultural riches appealed to his interest in history, gemstones and gold. For many years he was Secretary of the 'Rock Hound' Castlemaine Gold and Gemstone Society.

George was buried alongside his beloved Dot in the family plots at Lilydale

Continued p.6



**Russian Orthodox Church
by Franc Smith.
Ink and watercolour
illustration to 'Going Home'.**

The Secret Life of Hoarde... errr Collectors

Part 3. Matryoshka dolls and nesting toys

I have childhood memories of building towers from wooden blocks and I had a set of nesting cups that I built towers from.

I am a maths teacher and teacher educator, and studied the Montessori education models. One major Montessori seriation task is to build a tower from cubes of different sizes, placing the largest at the bottom, and then locating the next largest to place next. An inexpensive version of this toy is the nesting cube, where cubes stack inside each other and can be used to build a tower. Such tasks increase mathematical skills.

From watching children and the pleasure they derived from this task, and the mathematical skills they acquired, I developed a passion for nesting toys in general and Matryoshka dolls in particular.

The first Matryoshka doll set was carved in 1890 by Vasily Zvyozdochkin and painted by Sergey Malyutin, who was a folk craft painter on the Abramtsevo estate near Moscow. The creators were inspired by a nesting doll set from Japan. The original Matryoshka dolls were painted as women in Russian peasant costumes with aprons and headscarves. Fairy tale characters were another popular theme.

The Russian name Matryoshka is a diminutive of the girl's name Matriona and means 'Little Mother'. The dolls are also called *Babushka* ('Grandma') dolls – you'll have seen the shop 'Babushkas' in Royal Arcade.

I bought an inexpensive set of dolls when I was about 18, and thought the itch was scratched. After I had my own children, I bought and built a range of Montessori equipment, and also bought cute toys like the nesting eggs and the nesting ducks (ending with an egg) shown below. I bought inexpensive sets of nesting dolls, sometimes cats or people, as birthday gifts for children, and they were always popular. I still give the wonderful Fisher-Price set of nesting rainbow balls as a gift for a baby or a two year old!

As I travel, when I find interesting sets of dolls, I am inclined to buy them. New Zealand Maori groups, Cricketers, The Beatles, Alice in Wonderland, The Three Bears, Robots. A set of white cooking measures.

An occasional series by Paula Herlihy



Clockwise from main photo: granddaughter Gisele playing with nesting dolls; doll sets of robots, art of Kasimir Malevich, Alice in Wonderland, The Beatles, nesting ducks. Photos Paula Herlihy.

WWII aircraft crashes

John Keane replied to our request for information on WWII sites.

I can help you out with a few answers about WWII sites in the Yarra Ranges.

I don't think there was ever any artillery on Mt Dandenong, possibly observation and radio. The furthest east for an anti-aircraft emplacement was on Burwood Highway, about a kilometre east of Blackburn Road. There are tennis courts there now and an old hall on the south side [Burwood East Reserve].

The Republic Lancer crash site is on Aeroplane Track in Toolangi State Forest. The photo I've included is of the left hand cockpit side of the Lancer hanging up in a mate's shed.



Above, fragment of the RAAF P-43 Republic Lancer that crashed in Toolangi State Forest on 29 April 1943, on a flight between Wagga Wagga and Laverton. Pilot Officer Alan Green was killed.

The Lockheed Hudson came down on Colchester Road near the motorbike riding school. I spoke with the pilot of the Hudson about 10 years ago. He lives in South Australia. That story had a very sad ending.

After the crash, the pilot and his crew were sent north to Cairns. No sooner did he arrive than he came down with a heavy cold, so his crew was assigned to another pilot. They took off on a seaward patrol, never to be heard of again.

A friend and I have been researching air crashes in Victoria for the last 20 years or so and on many occasions have been able to help families put together the story of their loved ones. Quite often the end story is nothing like the one they were hanging on to.

John Keane

Incomplete citation

The photo of the fruit packing shed (*Things Past* #94, p.4) should have been credited: 'Google Maps Street View Nov. 2014'.

The grandfather from Russia, from p.4



The grave of George and 'Dot' Konstantinoff in Lilydale Cemetery among plots of related families.

Cemetery. Only Dot's name appears on the red granite headstone in Castlemaine gold. Their grave is in the Church of England section at the top of the hill. Close by are the Dolphins, Stephenson, Phillips, Wreakes and Dawes.

From Franc and Leonie Smith

Notes to Schools article, from p.2

¹ M. Aveling 1984 *Lilydale the Billanook country*, pp.37-39.

² *Evelyn Observer* 24/12/1885; *Healesville & Yarra Glen Guardian* 3/3/1919, 15/7/1905.

³ J. Newton 1996, *The First Selectors of Mt Evelyn*, p.37.

⁴ Education Act: http://www.findingdocs.gov.au/resources/transcripts/vic8_doc_1872.pdf, pp.3-4.

⁵ *Historical documents of Wandin Yallock State School p.2 Reporter*, Box Hill, 1/12/1901

⁶ *1876-1976 Silvan State School and District Centenary*.

⁷ J. McLennan 1986, *Montrose Settlement in the Foothills*, p.27

⁸ J. Edwards et al 1985, *Mt Evelyn Primary School No.3642*.

From Kev's rain gauge

Rainfall for April 2016 for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, Melbourne and the Melbourne average.

Mt Ev	McK	Melb	Melb Av
56.9mm	53.2mm	48.6mm	57.3mm

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

Kevin Phillips

Contact us

Please address any issues with *Things Past*, or requests to reproduce material, to the Editor.

Editor: Karen Phillips

karen.m.l.phillips@gmail.com

President: Paula Herlihy

herlihy@alphalink.com.au or

telephone 9736 2935 and leave message

Memberships & newsletter distribution:

Kevin Phillips, kev.phillips@bigpond.com

General enquiries:

mtevelynhistorygroup@gmail.com

Postal address: Mount Evelyn History Group Inc.,

PO Box 289, Mt Evelyn, VIC 3796, Australia.

Website: www.mt-evelyn.net/historygroup

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