



## The Dandenongs' Lost Lookouts (from p.1)

One of the attractions of the Dandenongs has always been the view from the heights, especially from the top of the steep western face of the range. Unfortunately the best views are hard to access now, or built out, or 'grown out'.

In Mt Evelyn we have the unspoiled view of the Upper Yarra Valley from Morrisons Reserve. Magnificent views of the Warburton Ranges and Mt Dandenong once made a selling point for blocks along Hereford Road. There is no longer any accessible spot on the ridge with an unobstructed view in both directions.

Mt Evelyn people often walked up to the Observatory on Mt Dandenong. The Happy Hermits and their friends walked up the mountain to take in the view in 1911, probably via the Wilkilla or Wols Tracks. A lookout platform at the top of Wilkilla Track has become overgrown, as the forest regrowth now impedes the view. In the 1920s Station Master Rahilly and his family thought nothing of climbing Mount Dandenong every weekend. The view from the Sky High Restaurant (the site of the Observatory) is as good as ever but no longer free to all. It's \$6 to park your car if you want to catch the view from the top.

You can take the Kyeema track, which passes below Sky High. The track continues below Burke's Lookout, where there is a cleared space in front of the hang-gliding ramp. The view is spectacular. Mt Macedon, the Melbourne CBD, Port Phillip Bay and the You Yongs are visible. You

can then leap up the hillside like a mountain goat or continue along the track. Either path will bring you to the top of Mt Corhanwarrabul (at the cluster of three TV towers), but being higher up doesn't improve the view. Trees have sprung up and blocked it. Within the last few years, most of the parking space has been removed and there are signs of further earth moving underway. The walking track is the only convenient access route.

Five Ways Kalorama has a fine view southeast over Silvan Reservoir to the ranges. There's also a window through the trees on the west side of the ridge, too narrow for a 'panorama'. Woolrich

Lookout in Olinda still has its view to the north but already the growth of trees in the R.J. Hamer Arboretum is encroaching on it. Nearby is 'Lookout Rock'. This natural feature can be reached via the Rock Track from Chalet Road but the forest has blocked out the view from the Rock. While I can't begrudge the forest, I regret another lost lookout.

One Tree Hill had a wide view that was already attracting visitors by the 1860s. About 1927 a 110 foot poppet-head from a mine in Bendigo was installed to provide an even higher viewing point. The poppet-head was removed in the

1990s, with only the direction plaque left to mark the spot. Trees have grown up all round the area, blocking the view almost completely. This hilltop is the end point of the 1,000 step Kokoda Track Memorial Walk, but walkers can't enjoy the view from the top when they get there. (Continued p.6)



*Above and below: Lookout Rock, no longer a lookout.*



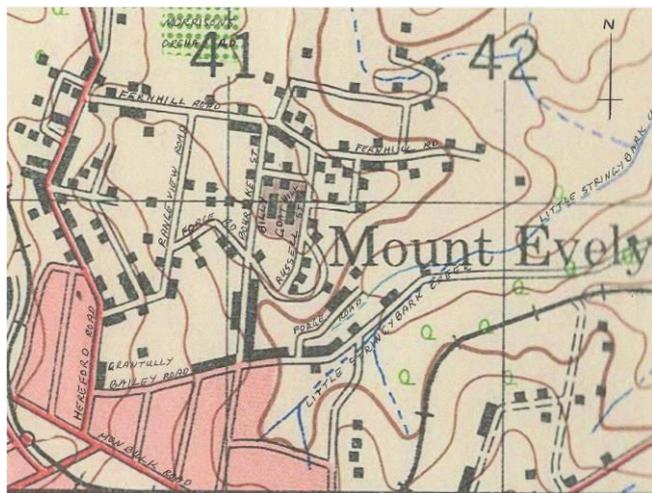
# Billygoat Hill: Origin of the Name

The following explanation of the name 'Billygoat Hill' appeared in the *Lilydale Express* in 1941.

'Visitors to Mt. Evelyn often wonder at the name "Billy Goat Hill", which is the pseudonym of a beautiful wooded rise within a few minutes' walk of Mt. Evelyn station, also known as "Eastacre Estate". The story is told by some old residents that many years ago a Frenchman settled there, with a number of goats, and after some years he suddenly disappeared, never to be heard of again, leaving behind his herd of goats, which increased and overran that part of the district; hence the name. The remains of his old homestead are still to be seen.

Visitors should see this locality, as there are lovely walks that will take them to views of some of the best landscapes one could wish to see, with the beautiful ranges and their soft shades ... A short walk from the ridge of "Billy goat Hill" leads into a fertile valley with large orchards on its slopes. The bulk of the fruit grown is manufactured into apple cider, a most healthful and invigorating drink. And so "Billy goat" Hill remains to present its legend to hordes of tourists at different times of the year, but particularly at the festive season.'<sup>1</sup>

The above article prompted Arnold Deschamps to reply, with a fuller explanation that puts the origin of the name back to the 1860s.



**Above, the Billygoat Hill area, detail of 1960 survey map. Billygoat Hill was between Russell and Bourke Streets.**

'Your Mt Evelyn correspondent's interesting article relative to Billygoat Hill and the origin of the name takes me back to boyhood days to connect a link with the starting point of Lilydale, as the following was often narrated to me by my father:-

In 1850-62 Paul de Castella and Colonel Anderson held all the country between the Acheron River and the Olinda Creek under grazing licence. In 1852 my grandfather, Clement Deschamps, planted the first vineyard, Chateau Yering, employing a body of workmen specially brought out from Switzerland, and on completion of this the Yarra Flats were drained to the river under his supervision.

This done, at the first sale east of the Olinda Creek, now known as Lilydale, he bought three properties surrounding the newly formed township and planted three vineyards for his three sons. Billygoat Hill at that period was the heaviest timbered quarter in the vicinity of their homesteads. Clement Deschamps sent most of his workmen there to fell timber, which was mainly converted into vine sticks and fencing posts.

The main strongholds of the aborigines were at Steel's Range and Billygoat Hill, and most of the workers soon became conversant with the blacks, eventually enjoying a footing so friendly that it did not take them long to be able to converse with them in their native tongue.

For fifteen years the workmen toiled there, and it was computed that ten million vine sticks and 100,000 posts were obtained from the locality. A stack of vine sticks 100 yards long by 6 ft high could always be seen adjacent to the site of the Warburton Bridge in Lilydale, and this was kept replenished from Billygoat and Bullock hills for a great number of years. The first two posts erected at Lilydale were secured from that area in 1860 and were lately removed from Anderson Street. These were the corner posts of one of the three avenues leading to the Deschamps' homestead. Lately, out of sentiment, I had these same posts re-erected near the Warburton

<sup>1</sup> *Lilydale Express*, 10 January 1941

bridge, and they appear to be good for another eighty years.

Among these French-Swiss workmen was a relative of the Deschamps family, who was regarded as the 'joker' of the small community... Of a Sabbath he would line up the young blacks and hold sports meetings, embracing running, boomerang throwing, exhibitions with swords and specially designed 'single sticks', and rewarded the winners with plugs of vile Two Seas tobacco, also some that was grown by the workers and flavoured with the residue from the 'wine lees' at Lilydale, which was not conducive to the well-being of the natives.



This joker, with a mate, then rode on horseback to Melbourne, where, on the south side of the Yarra, near the present Botanical Gardens, was a goat farm. These goats were mostly brought out from Wales by Colonel Anderson, but some were Swiss goats brought out by Governor La Trobe.<sup>2</sup> On a dark night they lassood six goats and landed back four days after with five of them.

An outcry was raised after they had been missed, and the culprit was traced. A special messenger was sent to Billygoat Hill, but not before the joker had established a goats' racecourse. The messenger got stranded through his horse knocking up and had to remain there for some days. In the meantime a program had been arranged, and the messenger so enjoyed the bush sports meeting that after reporting to the Governor the latter was so impressed that he eventually sent the joker six more goats. Many of the entourage of Government House visited the locality, with the well-known Dr. L.L. [Louis Lawrence] Smith and other notables, including a number of French sea captains, who participated in the fun.

An incident worthy of note was when Clement Deschamps, jnr., a city-bred youth, was sent to the bush to gain experience. On the first night, when he was in bed, a number of hostile blacks appeared at the tent door. Knocking down two of the foremost marauders, the youth made his escape, and in his night attire made for the narrow track to Lilydale, not to cease running til (sic) he reached the homestead, tattered and torn while making his way through the thick undergrowth. He could never be induced to return to Billygoat Hill.

I should say that the remains of the old homestead mentioned by your correspondent must be the one built by my grandfather for his workmen, but I cannot

say who carried on with the goats in that locality as, one by one, the workmen left and became land-owners in different parts of the State. Yours etc. Arnold Deschamps.<sup>3</sup>



The legendary 'Frenchman' of the first article was possibly the last of Deschamps' French-Swiss timber cutters. Goat ownership remained popular into the 1950s. 'Billy Goat Hill is so named because everyone had a goat to keep the blackberry down. I remember my mum taking the nanny goat up to meet one of the local boys every year. And she still lives at the bottom of the hill.'<sup>4</sup>

The place name has largely passed out of use but survives in the name of the Billy Goat Hill Brasserie in Wray Crescent, which opened in 2010.

**Above and top: windows of the Billy Goat Hill Brasserie. Photos Kevin Phillips.**

<sup>2</sup> A member of the La Trobe Society was adamant that Lt-Governor La Trobe never imported livestock of any kind.

<sup>3</sup> *Lilydale Express*, January 1941.

<sup>4</sup> Kathleen O'Shannessy (from Facebook discussion).

## Stan Beaumont, Mt Evelyn Collector

Stan and his wife Lorina have lived in Mt Evelyn for about three years now. Stan has collected many different things, and is known in Mt Evelyn for donating his model cars to children last Christmas (front page of the *Mt Evelyn Mail* Tuesday 6 December 2016). Thanks Stan!



He also sells the models at the monthly Community Market held at Hardy House, the RSL Hall, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn, on the fourth Saturday of each month (February – November), 9am to 1pm, to raise funds for the RSL.

His first collecting love was cigar bands, which he has been collecting for about 30 years. Though he has sold most of his collection now, he couldn't part with some of his favourites. He is shown here holding a full set of framed cigar bands showing family crests.



Another favourite set features the Standards the Roman Legions carried when they marched.



Stan explained that when you buy a box of 24 cigars, each cigar has a different, numbered, band. In addition, each box contains a single large band, of the sort Stan collects. To get a full set of 24 large bands like the ones framed in the picture is a difficult task.

Originally from Liverpool, England, Stan belonged to two Belgian cigar band collecting clubs. He attended a major cigar band collectors' event in Belgium, and purchased many of these favourite bands in mint condition.

(Continued next page)

Stan has a small number of Vintage Brass Steam Show Rally Club Badges/Plaques and still has a nice collection of match box labels and beer labels.



The article in the *Mt Evelyn Mail* was not the first to feature Stan and his collecting passions in print. The British magazine *Lancashire Life* did a full page article on Stan, and he was given a full page in the Australian magazine *Collectormania*. He is listed as the main cigar band contact in *The Lyle Price Guide to Collectibles*.<sup>5</sup>

Stan can be contacted at [lorinastanbeau3@optusnet.com](mailto:lorinastanbeau3@optusnet.com).

**Interviewed by Paula Herlihy, 2 March 2017.**

## Driving in the Dandenongs

Thanks to John Keane for drawing our attention to an interesting film segment, 'Robert Juckert: A drive through the Dandenong Ranges – late 1920s or early 1930s'. It features a drive from Olinda through Sassafras to Ferny Creek. Several modern photos of the same scenes are included for comparison.

View on Youtube:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GBoybxm\\_6A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GBoybxm_6A)

(Continued from p.2)

## The Dandenongs' Lost Lookouts



**Above, the top of One Tree Hill with Kokoda Track memorials. The directions plaque (p.1) is at centre. Forest regrowth now blocks out the views.**

A spot on Cardinia Court Kallista provides a view to the southwest over Cardinia Reservoir. *Melway* marks this as a viewing point but it's only a roadside reserve. The view will be built out if the paddock in front is ever built on for housing.

'Where in Kallista could you get a view of both Silvan Reservoir and Warburton?' I wondered, searching for the place from which Tom Roberts painted his landscapes. Poring over *Melway*, I located the only freely accessible spot in the Dandenongs that still provides an all-round panorama: John's Hill Reserve on Ridge Road, away in the furthest southeast reaches of Kallista. This view, at least, is still there. It's sad that many of the views painted by Roberts, Streeton and other famous artists are now either inaccessible or non-existent.

For some beautiful paintings of, and from, the Dandenongs, see Facebook 'Lost Dandenongs', Painted Hills, 27 July 2013:

<https://www.facebook.com/LostDandenongs/photos/a.10151711313588168.1073741849.305213398167/10151711313878168/?type=3&theater>

**Karen Phillips. Photos Kevin Phillips.**

<sup>5</sup> Tony Curtis 1983, *The Lyle Price Guide to Collectibles*, Lyle Publications, Scotland.

# Of Convicts and Gardens and Lions/esses?

During a brief Tasmanian summer getaway I visited Australia's first nomination for the World Heritage Register – Port Arthur Historic Site. Arriving by sea, thankfully not as a nineteenth century re-offender prisoner, the building which commands my attention is the four-storey Penitentiary ruin.

The settlement site is in the shape of a bowl with the seawater inlet bounding one side so arriving from this angle gives a good picture of what there is to see. I was not disappointed in my visit though a little overcome by the 'Separate Prison', imagining the terror of the poor souls

driven insane by their inhuman punishment of 60 days in a tiny cell, in silence without light. By the way, our Port Arthur guide was excellent giving a 35-minute overview of the site's history including settlement life for officers and their families, and identifying the buildings / ruins / gardens from two vantage points. Then we were free to explore on our own.

Some restoration of soul was sought the following day by wandering in botanica – a visit to the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens in Hobart. The gardens are reached via Lower Domain Road which slopes gently upward from the harbour, passing Government House and grounds, its impressive stonework peeping through the trees. According to the website it is regarded as one of the best Vice-Regal residences in the Commonwealth, and a fine example of an early Victorian country

house in neo-Gothic style – one of the largest of its type in Australia.

However I was not yet to escape the convict air. Upon entering the Gardens my knowledge was increased yet again by 'The Arthur Wall', a great structure on one boundary of the Botanical Gardens, which I have for years seen on the ABC television program Gardening Australia and wanted to visit. It too was built by convict labour, but I never knew it used to be internally heated, or for that matter, that walls could have an internal heating system with ducting and chimneys. It was built as a boundary wall and as a heated wall on which fruits such as



*'The Arthur Wall'*

apricots could be grown and espaliered, thereby giving an extended growing period. The wall also served as protection from frost. A leaflet points out its use for this purpose was unnecessary and short lived and that large orchards now abound in the State.

A quick look through the well-presented Gatekeeper's Cottage gave my thoughts a more comfortable grounding and I was then able to fully enjoy the impressive views of the River Derwent, Hobart and surrounds as I walked down the path leading me into other parts of the garden. The Subantarctic Plant House was an interesting (and cold) diversion and I remembered that my ship had docked at the Antarctic Terminal.

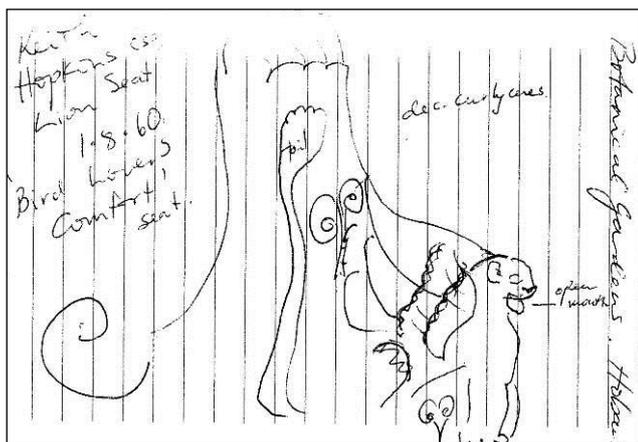
The bottom of the garden is bounded by Domain Highway – becoming the Tasman Highway and the main route through Hobart. In view is the Tasman Bridge carrying traffic across the Derwent to more suburbs and sprawling housing development, and the highway continues as the



*Inside the Subantarctic Plant House*

main route south to the two peninsulas and Port Arthur.

And finally, all this connects with Mt Evelyn via a lion seat which enters my field of vision as I turn into a small courtyard area known as the Education Pod. Yes, there it is, OUR Lion Seat, well, one that seems to be almost identical from how I remember it. Having left my mobile phone on board the ship I do a bit of a sketch to bring



home to my fellow historians. The seat has an inscription – ‘Keith Hopkins Esq. Lion Seat, 1<sup>st</sup> August 1960 – for the comfort of bird lovers’ and is positioned in sight of a rustic bird feeder. How nice – a place to rest my weary legs after a thoroughly enjoyable escapade on a beautiful sunny afternoon.

**Text and drawing Robyn Taylor.**

**Photos Alison Martin.**

## Church’s 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Mt Evelyn Discovery Church (former Church of Christ) celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 2 July.

The first services were held in 1947, in the Reverend Arthur Pratt’s home. The original church in Hereford Road, on the same block as the Pastor’s house, opened in 1953. The church burnt down in the 1980s and was replaced by the present mud brick church in Monbulk Road. Both the original and present churches were built by volunteer labour. See *Things Past* #81.

A photo of Pastor Pratt and his wife in front of the original church can be seen on Discovery Church’s Facebook page (shared to our page).

## Cheryl Griffin and the RHSV

Dr Cheryl Griffin, the newly appointed (volunteer) History Victoria Support Group Convenor for the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV), addressed us on Saturday 18 March. Visitors from other local history groups attended, including Marion Stott from Mooroolbark, Barb Sebire from Mont De Lancey, Wendy Britt from Mt Dandenong, Angela Arnott from Monbulk and Phil Garland from Sherbrooke Foothills.

This wide attendance reinforced Cheryl’s message about interconnection between groups. She is keen to see Victorian groups form partnerships with other like-minded societies for their mutual benefit, such as MEHG’s partnership with Mt Evelyn RSL. Mount Evelyn History Group is a member society of the RHSV and many of our members belong to historical societies in neighbouring areas.

Cheryl gave an overview of what the RHSV offers members. The RHSV is an umbrella group for historical societies, as well as having over 1000 individual members. The society is a ‘community organisation committed to collecting, researching and sharing an understanding of the history of Victoria’.<sup>6</sup> It has an extensive collection and offers personal assistance to researchers. Cheryl illustrated her presentation with examples from her own volunteer involvement as Secretary and Public Officer of Coburg Historical Society, the co-ordinator of Coburg Historical Society’s ANZAC Centenary project, and her work as committee member and Communications Officer of the Female Convicts Research Centre in Tasmania.

Cheryl also spoke about the need for generational change and succession plans. We need to welcome younger people into our groups and value their talents. They might be tattooed from head to foot, but that is no reflection on their commitment or abilities!

**Paula Herlihy**

## Photos Requested

Does anyone have photos of the Underwood or Olney families, Colin and Mary Dean, or Vic Smith? We have articles based on past interviews and would love some photos to go with them.

<sup>6</sup> RHSV: <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/about-us>.

# Jack Hull: Member of the Pioneering Varty Family

Jack Hull (1925-2013) talked to me about his family and entertained me with his ukulele at his home in Rangeview Road in 1995. He spoke about his pioneer grandfather Joseph Varty (1876-1954), his mother Emily Varty (1903-2001) and father Stuart Hull. The Vartys were an early family linked to many other early families of Mt Evelyn, Lilydale and Wandin.

Joseph Varty (d. 1954), son of John (b. 1853) and Christina Varty (1856-1920),<sup>7</sup> married Edith Florence Parker and farmed as a market gardener in Lower Dandenong Road, Mentone, Stud Road, Scoresby and Devonshire Road, Bayswater, before moving to his leased land at the foot of the mountain in Inverness Road, Mt Evelyn, in about 1910.<sup>8</sup>



*Joseph Varty*

At Inverness Road Joseph built a lath and plaster home by 1917. Later this original home was pulled down and a mud brick home was built in its place by Joseph's sons, Allan and Herbert, during their spare time.

Joseph's family carried on with market gardening, taking produce to markets in Melbourne and Croydon in a horse and wagon as well as becoming involved with wood carting and work for the Cave Hill Estate. Sometimes, when people were unable to pay, they gave items like a watch as payment. With a few other

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph's father John was born in Garrigill, Cumberland, England and was only 9 years of age when he arrived in Hobson's Bay with his mother and four siblings. He married Christina White, who was born in New South Wales, in 1875 in Brighton, Victoria.

<sup>8</sup> Christina, Edith, Emily, Henry and Joseph were listed as residents at Lower Dandenong Road, Mentone on the 1903 Electoral Roll. It was not until 8 May 1923 that Joseph signed a transfer of land document for the purchase from Percy Thomson of the Inverness Road property for £77. A 'W. Varty' who signed a petition to form the Mt Evelyn school in 1907, may or may not be related.

residents, in May 1912, Joseph participated in what was probably the first action uniting the various hamlets that were to become Mt Evelyn: the release of trout into the Olinda Creek to encourage visitors to the area.<sup>9</sup>

Joseph had already in 1902 married Edith Parker (1883-1978), born in Rosewater South Australia, from the Wandin Parkers, and they raised nine children: George James, brought to the marriage by Edith, Emily Doris (1903-2001), Edith Florence (Serle, 1907-1987), Edward Joseph (Ted) (1910-1984), Herbert Goldsack (1912-1982), Mary-Jane, Evelyn Elizabeth Peace (1918-1993), Allan Noel (1921-2012) and Keith.

Ted Varty, the founder of the Mt Evelyn Fire Brigade in 1939, married Evelyn Wridgway, daughter of the builder who 'had lots of land in Mt Evelyn'. His son was married to a MP for Monbulk. George Varty lived in Spring Gully Road, then Fernhill Road (behind the kindergarten) but was killed prematurely in a motorbike accident on Croydon Hill. Allan (1921-2012) stayed in Mt Evelyn, marrying and raising, with his wife Roma, children Reg and Dawn, working for years as a foreman in the Board of Works and later moving to join Keith in Western Australia. A second Christina Varty (1890-1938), Joseph's sister, married Bert (Robert Strong) Nation (1884-1946) of Lilydale and went on to have thirteen children.

When Emily, Joseph's oldest daughter and Jack's mother, was a young woman, she worked as a maid for Outhwaites at Pine Brae/West Hill, and did not appreciate having to give most of her wage to her mother Edith.

Emily married Stuart Alan Hull, a veteran who had served at Gallipoli and had his 'steam ticket' qualification to drive steam engines. Stuart also obtained work cutting timber on the side of Mt Dandenong and operated a timber mill there after the First World War into the 1920s, when he was listed in the 1920s rate books as an engine driver. A family story is that they were never paid for the timber used to construct the Union Church (later Methodist).

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<sup>9</sup> *Lilydale Express*, 17 May 1912.

Stuart also worked on the old road through the Black Spur. He and the other workers used to come home through the Healesville flats and stop for a swim in the river. The Aboriginal women who lived there 'used to go crook'. Stuart cut wood for the O'Connors at Billy Goat Hill and remembered a croquet court at the junction of Burke and Fernhill Roads. He kept a horse team in Smith's paddock on Silvan Road when doing clearing work for the Silvan Dam.

When growing up, Jack was given his first musical instrument, a ukulele, by his musical grandfather Joseph. In about 1935 (when he wasn't fighting with Doug Dorrington), he earned two shillings for transporting on his bicycle suitcases for guests who arrived by train and were staying at *Pine Brae*, where his mother had worked earlier.

Jack was a dare-devil at school. He and Tot Falkingham used to walk through water pipes on the way home from school and chew the bitumen plugs. He was also involved in such escapades as rowing across Silvan Dam in a bathtub and jumping onto a moving goods train. He survived contracting diphtheria from a school teacher and spent time in Fairfield Infectious Diseases hospital but went on to serve in the Second World War in the Militia and Navy in Queensland and Papua New Guinea.<sup>10</sup>

### **Janice Newton**

### **References**

Interview with Jack Hull 1995. Interview with Vic Smith 1995, Email from Reg Varty 2016.

Newton, J. Herlihy, P. and Leadbeater Phillips, K. *Tracks to Trails: A History of Mt Evelyn*, 2001.

*Things Past* #64, June 2013.

Web material from Ancestry.com lodged by Reg Varty and other family members.



*The photo above was taken in April 1969 at Reg Varty's wedding and shows from the left, Nola Dawn Varty, Reg's sister, Allan Noel Varty, Reg's father, Dianne King, Reg's cousin and daughter of Mary Jane Renton (nee Varty), Mary Jane Renton (nee Varty), Miss King, Dianne's daughter, Ken Renton, Mary Jane's husband, Roma Varty (nee Reed) Reg's mother, Edith Florence Varty, Reg's grandmother and wife of Joseph, and Herbert Goldsack Varty, Allan's brother.*

## **Cave Hill on Heritage Register**

On 1 June 2017, the Heritage Council of Victoria included Cave Hill on the Heritage Register, with VHR number H2366 in the category 'Heritage Place'. Executive Director Tim Smith submitted a 41 page report supporting inclusion of the Quarry Pit in the area to be protected. The report includes the proposed text for the Blue Heritage Plaque:

*The Cave Hill Limestone Quarry was established in 1878 by David Mitchell one of Victoria's most prominent nineteenth century entrepreneurs. Demonstrating three generations of lime processing, it was known for its use of innovative technologies and was recognised as one of the leading industrial plants of its time in Australia.*<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Jack's war record was the subject of an article by Anthony McAleer in *Things Past* #64, June 2013.

<sup>11</sup> <http://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Cave-Hill-Quarry.pdf>.

# Flying Saucers

Michael Foley sent us the following extract from the *Lilydale Express*, 3 June 1965.

## Flying 'saucer' seen at Wandin

Two farmhands had a clear view of a flying saucer, or a similar object, at Wandin on Tuesday last week. Reports of the sighting were at first ridiculed by friends, but after the story had been told in detail, the farmhands, Mr Fred Jacobs and Mr Don Barnes convinced critics they had not been 'seeing things'.



FRED JACOBS

Mr Jacobs, a married man who has lived in Wandin for many years, and 17 year old Don Barnes were pruning fruit trees in Mr. John Burgi's orchard, off Victoria Road at Wandin North, when they made the siting [sic] at about 3 p.m.

The day was fine and clear and from their position, on high ground overlooking the Yarra Valley, they both had an unobstructed view of the surrounding countryside, with the mountains some thirty miles distant.

Giving his version of the incident, Mr. Jacobs said yesterday he was climbing a ladder to continue pruning a tree when he looked across the valley towards Mount Toolebewong and saw a penny-shaped object travelling in a southerly direction, and at tremendous speed, just below the level of the range.

'I said to Don "Good gosh, what's that?" said Mr. Jacobs. His companion who was also standing on a ladder, looked in the same direction and saw "the thing".'

"It was about twelve miles away at the time, and for a moment disappeared behind some trees. Then it re-appeared and we clearly saw that it was shaped more like a 12-gallon drum," Mr. Jacobs said. Mr. Jacobs said he had not been drinking, and did not suffer from illusions.

"From the position we were in we could not help but see it, and I am convinced it was not an aeroplane as it was travelling too fast."

When we first saw it, the saucer was a darkish colour, but when out of view behind the trees it apparently banked as it reappeared in a matter of seconds and seemed to have changed shape and turned to a dull grey.

"I have an open mind on these things," said Mr Jacobs. "What I saw is definitely as I have described it. We had it in view for about 15 seconds and I am certain it was not a plane, balloon or some such thing."

Confirming Mr. Jacobs' story, Don Barnes said the object was travelling at great speed from north to south. It flew past the western slopes of Ben Cairn and followed the line of the Yarra Valley in the direction of Warburton before disappearing from sight.

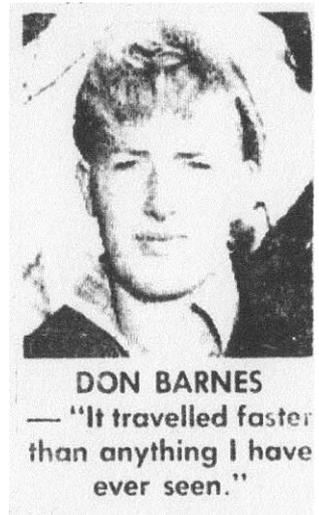
Don said he too was sure it was not an aeroplane as it was travelling faster than anything he has ever seen.

Mr John Burgi, owner of the orchard from where the sighting was made, said he was standing nearby when Jacobs and Barnes saw the "saucer." He said he only laughed when they drew his attention to it, and did not bother to look.

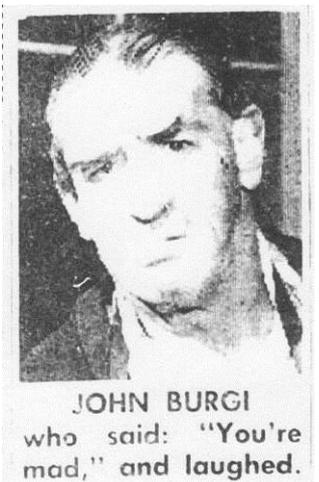
The sighting of a strange object last Tuesday was not the first to be reported in the Yarra Valley area.

About eight years ago, Mr and Mrs John Blomstrand were at the home of Mr and Mrs Brian Cahill, Gruyere, when they sighted a bright glowing saucer shaped object in the distance. They ridiculed the suggestion it was an aircraft as it was too big, and travelling too fast.

On another occasion an entire class at a district school was held spellbound by an object hovering in the sky above the school.'



DON BARNES  
— "It travelled faster than anything I have ever seen."



JOHN BURGI  
who said: "You're mad," and laughed.

## Vale Nancy Low

17/10/1920-15/9/2016

We were sorry to learn recently that our esteemed former member, Mrs Nancy Low, passed away in September 2016, aged 95.

Nancy Ruby Thomas married Robert James Low in 1941. They had met when Nancy came to Mt Evelyn in the polio scare of the 1930s. Her father-in-law ran a greengrocer's shop on the corner of Monbulk and York Roads (*Things Past* #4).

Nancy was a Guide leader and was active in community groups. She continued to attend History Group events into her nineties. She moved into a nursing home several years ago. Nancy is survived by a large family.

## Mr Low's Chestnut Trees

Nancy Low's father-in-law, James Low, helped to clear the land for the Mt Evelyn Reserve and was founding President of the Football Club. He planted the chestnut trees at the Reserve about 1931. Nancy told us that originally there were 10 trees, one for each of James Low's children.

MEEPPA has applied for a grant to create a sculpture of local wildlife from the trunk of one of the chestnut trees, which is diseased and would otherwise have to be cut down. The History Group supported the application.

### From Kev's Rain Gauge

Rainfall (in mm) for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, and Melbourne for the last three months.

	May	June	July	Year To Date
Mt Evelyn	34.5	24.2	45.6	337.9
McKillop	48.55	40.3	71.6	450.2
Melbourne	16	16.8	30.4	284.8

McKillop readings courtesy Jean Edwards

Melbourne figures from Bureau of Meteorology: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/>

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