



Things Past

Newsletter 128

February 2023

Wurundjeri Country
PO Box 289 Mt Evelyn Vic 3796
Incorporation Number A0051327F

Dates for Your Diary

Association of Eastern Historical Societies Meeting, Saturday 18th February 2023 at 1.30pm, at Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn. Dr Janice Newton will give an overview of her current research into the 'Woodlanders'. MEHG members are welcome to attend.

General Business Meeting, Monday 20 February, 7.30 pm, at Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road, Mt Evelyn.

Meetings are 3rd Mondays of even months, 7:30 pm at Hardy House for General Business Meetings, and speaker and activity times are on alternate months at times by arrangement - please check your email inbox.

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Geotourism in the Dandenongs



Lower Falls, Olinda Creek. Photo courtesy Bronwyn Hanna.

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National Australian Archives in Victoria.

‘ ... today’s data becomes tomorrow’s cultural heritage’.¹

On Saturday 7th May 2022 Tim and I enjoyed a presentation at the Victorian Archives Centre Reading Room in North Melbourne, which NAA shares with the Public Records Office of Victoria. This was a closed event for members of CAFHOV, the Chinese Australian Family History Group of Victoria.

From 2019 CAFHOV members have created an online searchable index for the Certificates Exempting from Dictation Test registers from 1904-1959, the CEDT Index. This has greatly assisted NAA’s work in answering queries about Chinese and Indian Australians who travelled overseas under this certificate exempting them from having to sit the notorious dictation test on their return to Australia.

NAA uses a ‘top down’ method of archiving, where if a file is originally created in 1948, then accessed in 1956, the whole file is re-archived under the more recent year. This is repeated on any subsequent viewing. So searching for ‘1948’ will not produce a result, and the index is invaluable, since the registers list the file name changes.

Patrick Ferry, an archivist with NAA, explained that NAA is required under the *Archives Act 1983* to make all their records available except under certain specific circumstances, such as adoption and sensitive medical issues, and CAPHOV’S voluntary input has made this more practical. Patrick used one member’s family as an example of how NAA’s records can be searched. Her mother’s file, including passports with photographs, created in 1948, was located in 1971, and she was able to view it for the first time. Once an entry is located in the index you can view digital photographs of the register online or order and examine the originals from NAA (they might come from other states or Canberra) and view

them at the Victorian Archives Centre Reading Room.

We also viewed the small exhibition on Australia and Space, led by a curator.

Paula Herlihy

Lilydale High School’s Gallery of Achievement

Lilydale High School’s centenary in 2019 produced a history (*Look to the Light*) and a Gallery of Achievement. Initial inductees included Archie Roach, who holidayed and lived at Mt Evelyn in his youth.

At a ceremony on 24th August, 2022, two other Mt Evelyn connections were added, MEHG member

Jim Johnson and Mt Evelyn’s Adam Mattinson.

We have written about Jim in *Things Past* #32, 44, 91, 114, 121, and about Adam and his Tolkien style maps (*Things Past* #120), one of which we use as illustration for our *Hidden Histories* book, with his permission.

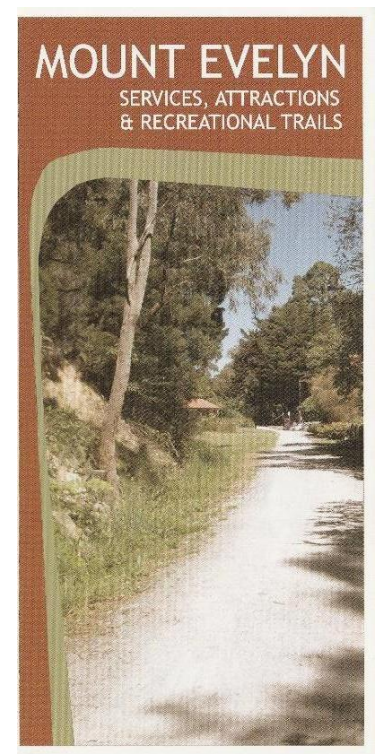
Another decorates the Emerald library.

As a student, Adam produced a

brochure mapping Mt Evelyn’s trails and attractions.

Rosemary Varty, another August inductee, is related to the Mt Evelyn Vartys by marriage, and another, Peter Harmsworth, is known to many of us. Congratulations to all!

Paula Herlihy



¹ <https://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/our-organisation>. Accessed 8/5/2022.

Geotourism in the Dandenongs

Among the many attractions of the Dandenongs, one that receives scant attention is their fascinating geology. When we spent family holidays exploring the craters and lava formations of the Western District, we were hardly aware of the volcanic landscape at our doorstep.

Inside the caldera

The whole of the Dandenongs was a huge volcanic caldera in the Devonian era (419-359 million years ago). It extended from Mt Evelyn in the north to Ferntree Gully in the south-west and Emerald in the south-east. As the eruption phase neared its end, the accumulated ash and lava faulted along the southern and eastern sides and also across the centre, collapsing into the magma chamber. The steep western slope and gentler eastern slope are results of this fracturing and subsidence.

The ranges we see today consist of the plug of hard volcanic material that remained after the softer Silurian sediments around it (444-419 million years old) eroded away.² Looking up at the Lower Falls on Olinda Creek (Melway 66 K2) really gives you a sense of being inside the volcano.

There's something mysterious about Olinda Creek, which flows round three sides of the mountain, although it has had to carve a deep gorge to do so. You can experience the depth and steepness of the gorge from Track 10, which

interweaves with the Pipeline Track from Mt Evelyn Recreation Reserve.

Lava flows

Some lava features seem to have formed on the present surface, suggesting that lava continued to seep out after the volcanic ash collapsed into the

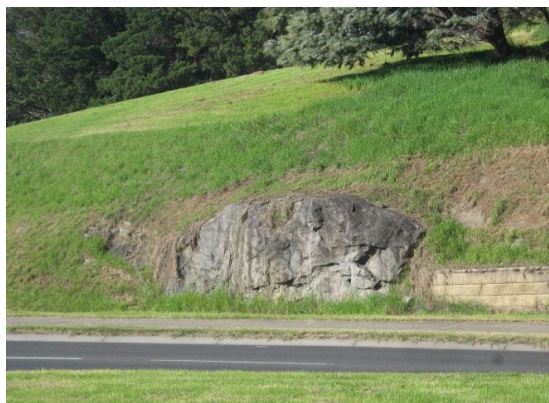


The mouth-like formation of Lookout Rock seems to identify it as a site of upwelling lava.

caldera. One is Lookout Rock (Melway 122 B7), off Chalet Road Olinda. With 'lips' at its centre, the rock appears to be a lava dome that has welled out of the earth. Lookout Rock appeared on old tourist maps but, with its view largely obscured by forest regrowth, it is now seldom visited.

There are, or were, other lava formations. Settler Thomas

Hand wrote of 'The old dray track over the Stoney Rises to Mr Richardson's 19th selection' (i.e. between Montrose and Kalorama).³ A hill in the Chalet Road/ Woolrich Road area was called 'Stony Rise',⁴ and there is a Stoney Rise Walk in Tremont. Stony rises, like those near Colac, are rocky hummocks formed from the collapsed skin



Volcanic rock in the bank above the Hereford/ Swansea Road roundabout.

of lava sheets. Formations near Olinda Creek Road are smooth-sided mounds that appear to be tumuli or lava blisters.

Even roadside cuttings have stories to tell. The bluey-grey rock in the bank at the Hereford/ Swansea Road roundabout looks like the cross section of a tongue of lava. It is probably a deposit

of Coldstream Toscanite, which was ejected from the volcano in the first series of eruptions, and later overlaid by Mt Evelyn Rhyodacite. Lilydale is built on the edge of the Toscanite flow.⁵

² A Dandy Volcano, https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC5K6A9_a-dandy-volcano?guid=538996a3-5d88-4e15-9d5c-0b5c8ac1951f

³ *The Age*, 29/12/1874.

⁴ *The Reporter* (Box Hill), 3/12/1915.

⁵ Jack Lundy-Clarke 1976, *The Dandenong volcano*, Lilydale & District Historical Society, p.3.

Kevin and I were walking the Trig Track from Five Ways, Kalorama, when – what’s this? A sudden lava trickle crossed our path, as unexpected as a serpent comes (as Robert Browning would have



A fresh-looking lava flow crosses the Trig Track, Kalorama.

said). A short distance on, there was another. They appeared almost unweathered. Don’t tell me the volcano has been oozing lava in quite recent times! That would be rather a worry. We can say only that the ridge above (Melway 52 H9) has been an eruption point at some time in the last 400 million years.

Griffith Falls at Ferny Creek/ The Basin (Melway 65 K10) flow over a sloping ‘pavement’ that may be the edge of another lava flow. If it is, the eruption point must be somewhere near Ferny Creek. Located on ‘Ferndale’, the property established by



Dandenong Ranges. Griffith Falls. A.J. Campbell, c.1890. MM 69970, Museums Victoria. Creative Commons.¹

James Griffith of Griffith Teas in the late 1880s, the waterfall was also known as Ferndale Falls or The Basin Falls, and was a popular tourist spot. Mr

Griffith even provided a kettle for visitors to make tea.

The Falls are on Griffith Creek in ‘The Ravine’. This steep-sided gully cuts obliquely across a slope and



appears to follow a rift that the creek has deepened. The Ravine and the Falls can be reached via the Inverness Track from the Mountain Highway, but access is difficult.

Granite boulders

The freestanding boulders on the southern fringe of the Dandenongs were formed from a granite batholith (rock dome) that underlies the region. There are boulders and tors in Lysterfield Park, especially at the summit of the Granite Track (Melway 83 G4), and beside the Boys’ Farm Track (Melway 83 D6). Cardinia Reservoir Park has Elephant Rock (Melway 211 F6)⁶ and strange cone-shaped formations. Further east, Ship Rock is located on the Gembrook-Launching Place Road, Egg Rock and the Four Brothers Rocks in the Bunyip State Park.

Most geological features of the Dandenongs are not well documented or signposted. Directions are easier to find on bushwalking blogs than in Council or Parks Victoria publications. It would be good to see these remnants of the volcanic past identified, mapped and preserved.

See also *Hidden Histories*, and *Things Past* #103, #106 & #120.

Karen Phillips. Photos Kevin Phillips, and as cited.

⁶ Elephant Rock has become a ‘folk art’ site, <https://www.weekendnotes.com/elephant-rock-emerald-victoria/>

Edward Dunham Brooke Nicholls (1877-1937): the Doctor who made Dreams become True

Continuing the article in *Things Past* #127

During the 1930s Nicholls published two children's books, *Jacko: The Broadcasting Kookaburra* (1933) and *The Amazing Adventures of Billy Penguin* (1934). Each of them was based on fact or possibilities of nature and was designed to educate youth. For both books Nicholls commissioned drawings by Dorothy Wall. Her illustrations proved very popular, as did her subsequent 'Blinky Bill' books.⁷

Jacko

Jacko the Kookaburra was hatched in Gippsland in 1923,⁸ and, thanks to Nicholls, became something of a cultural icon, the laughing kookaburra at the beginning of early Australian newsreels.⁹ The book was introduced by the Victorian Director of Education and received very favourable reviews throughout Australia, but was never reprinted and is now a rare book.

The story is based on real events, featuring Nicholls' wife Barbara, and Thelma Jury from Healesville.

The story begins with a fledgling being taken from a dead tree in Gippsland by a young boy and then raised in Thelma Jury's Healesville home. Here the fledgling, called Jacko, adapts to family

life with dogs, fishing and shower baths, and experiences escapades, fights and friendships. Thelma teaches him to laugh by imitating the notes of 'his parents'. Jacko appeared in films, was heard on gramophones and took part in a 4000 mile caravan tour of the eastern states. He laughed on demand at his human companion's lectures on nature.¹⁰

Nicholls introduced himself and his wife in the voice of Jacko in Chapter Ten of the book:

'You have not heard about the Doctor. He and Barbara often come up from Melbourne in their car to stay with us during the weekends. They are very fond of animals and gardens and valleys and mountains. The Doctor is a naturalist. As often as he can he gets down to the sea shore and studies the habits of the wild creatures. Barbara is also a naturalist. The Doctor says that she is better than he is'.¹¹

The Doctor organises a recording of Jacko, who laughs along with himself when he hears it. 'We have something now, they said. We have the voice of the bush on a gramophone record!'¹² They did

shows in theatres and showed films with Thelma and Jacko hiding behind the screen providing the sound.¹³ Then the Doctor got a native bear called Blinky Bill, who climbed a sapling on stage to complement Jacko's performance.¹⁴



Illustration by Dorothy Wall from B Nicholls *Jacko the Broadcasting Kookaburra*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney 1933.

⁷ 'Blinky Bill Joins the Army' State Library of South Australia <https://digital.collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/nodes/view/2147>).

⁸ *Radio Magazine* 17: 17 Feb 1928. He was on the front cover of *Listener* in 15 Feb 1928. Radio Heritage Foundation, Ragusa Media Group, Wellington, NZ.

⁹ Sarah Legge *Kookaburra, King of the Bush* CSIRO 2004, 12; Diane Collins 'The "Voice" of Nature? Kookaburra, Culture and Australia, *Journal of Australian Studies* 2011, 35:3:281-295. *The Sydney Mail* 18 Oct 1933, 13.

¹⁰ B Nicholls *Jacko, the Broadcasting Kookaburra*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney 1932, 30, 37.

¹¹ Nicholls, *Jacko* 48.

¹² The recording described does not match the one sold later. Nicholls wrote the script and the studio man and Thelma read portions. Nicholls *Jacko*, 51.

¹³ Nicholls *Jacko*, 50-54.

¹⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 Nov 1933, 1.

A FAMOUS KOOKABURRA.



Mrs. P. Jury (of Healesville, Victoria) is shown on the left holding her tame kookaburra, "Jacko," whose laugh has been heard all over Australia by radio. In the centre is Dr. Brooke Nicholls, of the Melbourne University, with Mrs. Nicholls on the right. The party are making a scientific caravan tour, and are at present in Brisbane.

The Brisbane Courier 9 July 1932, 16.

In 1932 and 1933 Nicholls took a long journey through Victoria, NSW and Queensland to give lectures and present 'Jacko' to audiences. This trip was sponsored by the Gould League. He and /or his wife were likely to have been active public relations agents, because almost every week there was an image or item about Dr Nicholls' upcoming lecture, film or introduction of Jacko, live or in a radio station. After a request in the paper, children along the way provided food for Jacko. Anthony Hordern's Department Store held a Children's Picnic in Sydney, November 1933, at which Jacko was a special guest. Jacko's laugh and Nicholls' explanation of his life and habits were recorded on a small vinyl record. Jacko's laugh became the opening sound logo of Radio Australia, Movietone News and other commercial radio stations.¹⁵

In Sydney Jacko made a broadcast on 2UW. Children wrote inviting the party to visit their towns, so Ipswich and Toowoomba were added to the itinerary. Thelma returned to Victoria with her husband when they reached Brisbane, so Brooke's wife Barbara became Jacko's minder and theatrical prompt.¹⁶ They were eight nights on air

in Toowoomba and by this stage it was estimated that 100,000 children had seen Jacko. By the time they returned home via Violet Town, the adventure had lasted eight months.

Nicholls' book *The Adventures of Billy Penguin* was also reviewed positively. Alec Chisholm in *The Argus* 'Notes for Boys' encouraged children to read it and learn the habits of seabirds. Western Australian reviewers admired the point of view of the golden crested penguin, the human feeling and the many thrills it provided the reader.¹⁷

Blue Coast Caravan

Although Nicholls submitted 20,000 words towards a third book, *Blue Coast Caravan*, the main writer and final editor was Frank Dalby Davison. In 1934 Nicholls invited Davison, recently celebrated for his book *Man Shy* (1931), to join him and his wife on a four month camping trip.¹⁸ Financially backed by Nicholls, the two couples set off in 1935, trying to create a middle-brow travel book and to have some commercial success. This they failed to do, although the book broke ground as a new travel genre where the landscape comes to be viewed through a car's windshield.¹⁹ In spite of some positive reviews, *Blue Coast Caravan* was never reprinted.²⁰ This was due in part to much negativity in the book about how capitalist development had created swathes of ugliness in rural Australia.²¹

Relations among the 'Two Happy Go Lucky Couples' became strained. The highlight and last stop of the journey was camping at Green Island, off Cairns, for two weeks. Here Nicholls' wife Barbara fell ill, arriving home in Melbourne too late for an operation and dying soon afterwards.²²

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¹⁵ *The Gloucester Advocate* 1 July 1932, 2; *The Daily Telegraph* 22 June 1932, 7, *Brisbane Courier* 9 July 1932, 12; *Herald* 4 June 1932, 4.

¹⁶ Nicholls *Jacko*, 68.

¹⁷ *The Argus* 1 Nov 1934, 4, *Sunday Times* (Perth) 28 Oct 1934, 7 and *West Australian* 13 Oct 1934, 6.

¹⁸ Jayne Regan 'National Landscapes: The Australian Literary Community and Environmental Thought of the 1930s and 40s' PhD ANU 2017, 112.

¹⁹ Regan 2017.

²⁰ Regan 2017, 107.

²¹ Regan 2017, 96.

²² *The Argus* 21 Aug 1934, 6.

TramXpresso

The TramXpresso Café on York Road attached to the Mt Evelyn Garden Centre has two connections to trams.

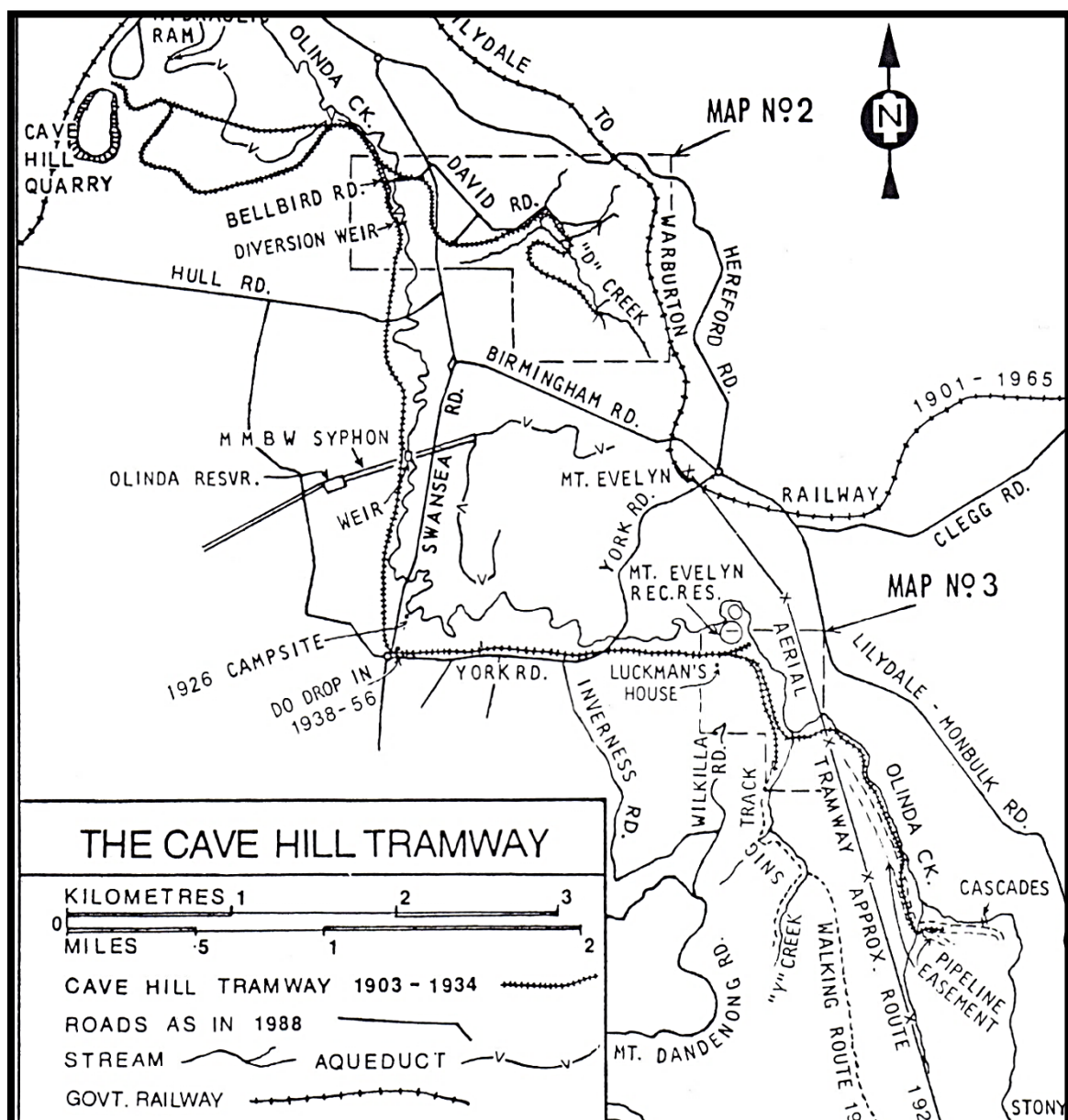
The café gives the history of their Tram 927 in their menu as follows:

'The W-class trams are a family of electric trams built by the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board between 1923 and 1956. Over the 33 years of production, 752 vehicles were constructed including Tram 927 which was built in 1942 inheriting the tramway charm.

Tram 927 travelled along Route 10 which was in and around Melbourne, travelling to and from St Kilda.'

One of the managers told me that they were visited by a past driver of that tram, and his family, who were pleased to find the tram cared for.

The Mt Evelyn History Group was pleased to see the tram appear almost exactly where the Cave Hill tram used to run beside York Road, up to the Recreation Reserve and beyond, gathering firewood for the Cave Hill lime kilns. The café has framed the information we provided about the tramway and displayed it in the tram.



Ralph Alger's map from 'Reminiscences of the Cave Hill Tramway', *Light Railways*, 111, Jan 1991, pp.3-14.

David Mitchell's Cave Hill lime works in Lilydale commenced operation in 1878. The lime kilns required huge quantities of firewood. The wood was hauled by a steam engine on narrow-gauge tram tracks, which in time reached to all parts of the estate. Mitchell's land included the north-west corner of Mount Evelyn, and it is likely that the early tracks extended into this area.

Mitchell bought two locomotives from the Bendigo Tramways in 1903. By 1907 the timber on his estate had been exhausted, and he applied for a permit to build a tramway beside Olinda Creek to collect wood cleared by settlers. The new tracks, which were standard-gauge (4'8½"), extended along the west side of Olinda Creek.

About halfway along there was a great stack of firewood, and a siding where empty trucks were left and full ones collected. Parallel to the level part of York Road, the line ran through enclosed paddocks, with the tram tracks fenced off and gates at each end. An additional person was required on the engine, to open and shut the gates.

LIGHT RAILWAYS

Number 111

January 1991

Cave Hill Tramway, Victoria
Tonalli River Incline, NSW
WA Woodlines

ISSN 0 727 8101



The Light Railway Research Society of Australia Inc.

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Wood stacks beside the tramway line about half a kilometre south of Hull Road. The photo is taken looking towards Mt Dandenong. The stacks were present in this location in 1915 and still there in 1928.



Tram lines at the Recreation Reserve, photographed at an early cricket match. From Cover of History of Mt Evelyn Football Club.

The line then branched in three directions, which can still be identified. One branch continued straight ahead into what is now

the Mount Evelyn Recreation Reserve; this route is now Tramway Road. The middle line extended up the west side of Olinda Creek to approximately level with Hunter Road.

The right branch ran up a creek gully for a short distance, following a snig track that once led to a sawmill. This branch appears on

Google Maps as 'Tramway Track'. A loading platform, much overgrown, can be seen beside it.

The tramway ceased operation in 1934. Most of the formation, including a trestle bridge, was destroyed by the construction of the Board of Works

pipelines from Silvan in the 1960s and 1970s.

Paula Herlihy

Bowling for Mooroolbark

Some Memories of the Mooroolbark Cricket Club in the Ringwood District Cricket Association of the post-war years 1945/46 to 1948-49.

Jim Johnson, a nephew of Dot Millard of Mt Evelyn, has fond memories of his brief time here. Jim's Dad, Charlie Johnson Snr, was Mooroolbark's cricket captain from 1945/46 to 1948/49. Jim and his elder brother Charlie played in all these seasons, making three Johnsons in all of the teams from 1946/47 to 1948/49.

At the age of twelve, Jim played a game against Scoresby in the first Eleven of the Mooroolbark team in the 1945/46 season. At the age of thirteen he played the full season of 1946/47, winning a trophy he still treasures as 'Most Improved Player'. Jim's Dad won the Mooroolbark Bowling Average for the 1946/47 season, receiving a small cup the same size as the cup Jim received.

At the age of fourteen Jim played the whole 1947/48 season in the Mooroolbark first Eleven, and Jim recalls he was not given the ball to bowl by his father until the last game of season 1947/48, a Semi-Final against Ringwood that they lost by just a few runs, thus missing out on playing in the Final.

Jim well remembers a match in November 1947 when Mooroolbark, on Day One, with only five men and two thirteen year old kids, defeated North Ringwood. 'What a unique record! I remember my father winning the toss and of course sending North in to bat'.

'Mooroolbark took the field with only seven players and are very thankful to North for four substitute fieldsmen and for the friendly spirit in which the game was played. With Mooroolbark's last two batsmen at the crease for the last fifteen minutes there were some very tense moments but as these two 13-year-olds kept their wickets intact, Mooroolbark should have a good chance of victory if the remaining members of the team turn

up next Saturday. [Jim Johnson] and young [Peter Hookey] were not out.'²³

The Hookey family lived across the road from the Mooroolbark ground, which was about where the Library is in Hookey Park today.²⁴

At the age of fifteen Jim won the 1948/49 Mooroolbark Bowling Average ahead of Jim Dixon. Jim Dixon transferred to Kilsyth from Mooroolbark for the 1949/50 season, where he won the Ringwood District Cricket Association A Grade Chandler Shield Bowling Average in Kilsyth's A Grade Premiership Team of 1949/50. Jim has records from the *Ringwood Mail* for the 1948/49 season covering seven of the ten games played, plus the Semi Final game which Mooroolbark lost to Wonga Park. These records describe 'Jim Johnson at age 15 years, 5ft. tall and weighing around 8 stone, taking 29 wickets for 208 runs at an average of 7.172, including a 6/24 and a 7/68.'²⁵

In the 1948/49 Season, Mooroolbark v. Soccer 16-23 October, Jim's Dad was the destructive bowler capturing 6/28. On the second day's play Soccer declared at 8/120, with bowling J. Johnson 3/31, C. Johnson Snr 2/18. With 4 wickets down, the necessary runs were scored and Mooroolbark won outright by 6 wickets. C. Johnson and son Jim took 11 wickets for 77 runs. Jim wonders how often this has happened in the Mooroolbark First Eleven where father and son have taken so many wickets in the same First Eleven game.

During the Mooroolbark v. Lilydale game 30 October – 6 November 1948/49, the young Jim made 25 not out and took 3/3, and his brother Charlie took 3/7 in Lilydale's first innings. Jim recalls Mr Binstead changing his bowling from right arm over the wicket to left arm over the wicket to try to bowl Jim out.

In this 1948/49 season Mooroolbark was again beaten in the Semi-Final. For a very small town

²³ *Ringwood Mail*, Nov 1947, in Jim's possession, with 13-year olds' names added.

²⁴ Jack Hookey was headmaster of Mooroolbark State School from 1937 to 1947, and secretary of the Park for

twenty years. In Hookey Park, which commemorates the family, there is an information board about him.

²⁵ Email, Jim Johnson, 9/11/2021.

this was a great result, finishing equal third in the last two seasons before Mooroolbark disbanded.

At this time more than three quarters of the team were from well outside Mooroolbark Town district. None of the three Johnsons, Herby Sweet, and the Jim and Des Dixon brothers, lived in Mooroolbark. Jim says, 'We did not have telephones, so contact you could say was by carrier pigeon'.

Jim's Dad Charlie had brought several cricketers to Mooroolbark, including Herby Sweet, from friends he had played with in the 'Jika Jika' competition before the war. Charlie Johnson had captained 'The Pastrycooks' team to a Jika Jika Premiership in 1934/35.

'Jika Jika' was a large cricket association that had many famous people including the Smith brothers of Melbourne and Fitzroy VFL Football Clubs as cricketers. The Jika Cricket Association was inaugurated in 1922, but is now known as the North Metro Cricket Association (NMCA). It took its name from the Parish, which was named from the Aboriginal signatures on John Batman's 'treaty'.²⁶

Jim Johnson recalls 'In Melbourne Tonight'

After the death of television personality Bert Newton (1938 – 2021) Jim contacted us about his connection to one of the early episodes of the television show In Melbourne Tonight. He recalls it was one of the first TV shows using the coaxial cable connected at the same time with the Sydney evening show, with Don Lane hosting, around 1965.

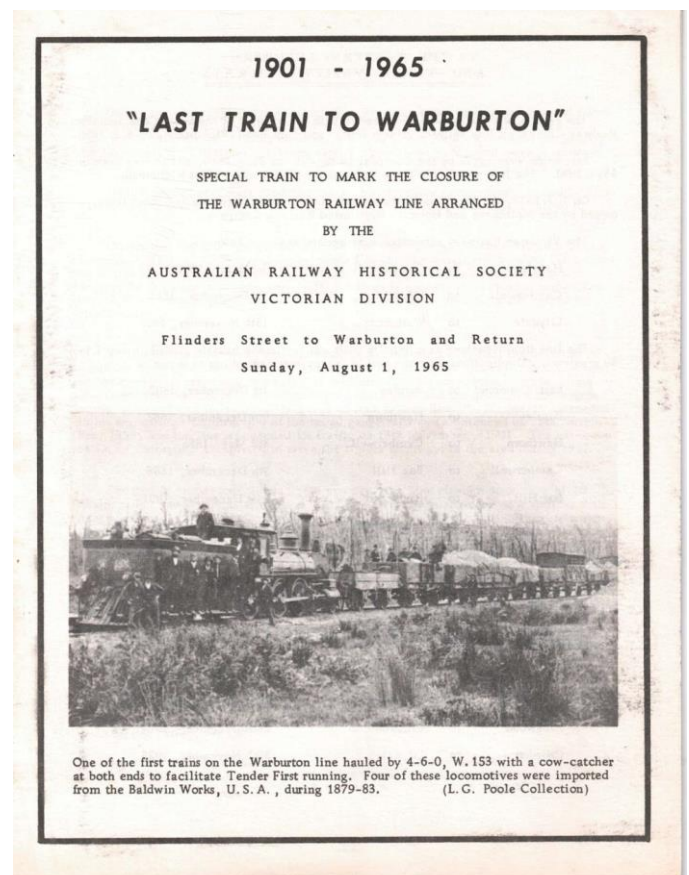
Jim had appeared on New Faces (talent show) and made it through to the finals. Mike Dyer visited Jim at his antiques business in Camberwell Road Camberwell, and said he could get him a spot on the coaxial-cabled show if Jim was interested. Jim went to Richmond and sang with the Channel 9 band backing him. Jim performed *Leprechaun*

Lullaby through once with the band. He remembers he was told it was 'good enough first time' so it was recorded in one go and it was played straight in to the show that evening. Jim has an audio copy on which you can hear Bert Newton saying, "That was good", but sadly not a video copy.

The song *Leprechaun Lullaby* has a story of its own. Jim first heard it on the Three Gong Show on 3AW radio, couldn't locate the sheet music, so recorded the song, and had someone write out the music for him. The song was one of Shirley Abicair's numbers. Since then Jim has located a copy of the sheet music with lyrics (original price 2/-).

'Last Train to Warburton'

Thanks to John Keene for sending us this advertisement for the special train to mark the closure of the Lilydale to Warburton line.



²⁶ <https://northmetrocricket.com.au/match-centre/about-nmca/> Accessed 4/5/2022.

Leah Laura Neilson 'Bonnie', nee Knowles (23 Feb 1922-3 Nov 2022)

With Bonnie Neilson's passing away in her 101st year in November 2022, Mt Evelyn has farewelled a well-loved woman who engaged with many institutions of the early Mt Evelyn township and was in the thick of the tourist boom in the 1920s-30s.

'In Name and Nature: Bonnie Neilson' in *Things Past* #116, 2020, sets out in detail how Bonnie's parents Richard and Ruby Knowles set up, in 1922, the Outlook Guest House, behind the tennis courts in Birmingham Road Mt Evelyn (near corner of York and Hereford Roads). Aged three, Bonnie began attending the Mt Evelyn Primary School and in her final year she was Dux.

Bonnie joined the inaugural branch of Mt Evelyn Girl Guides under Adelaide Falkingham in 1934.

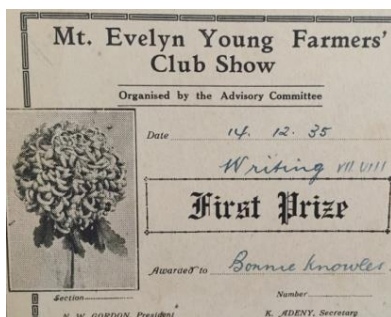


Photo courtesy Helen Luke

She began to study at Business College but a family tragedy in 1937 saw her back at the Guesthouse working long hours in various roles.



Harry Neilson and Bonnie. Photo courtesy Helen Luke

Bonnie met husband Harry when he came for a meal at The Outlook. They went on to marry in 1944 and to manage the guesthouse for some years before Harry took other work.



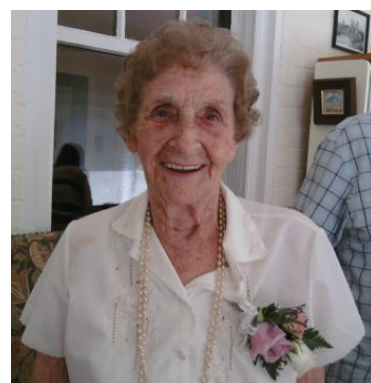
Young mother Bonnie attended the opening of the Mt Evelyn Public Hall in 1952. Seen here on the right with, from left, Tina Marshall, Alice Wray and Elsie Dorrington.

The family grew. Children John, Helen, Rick, Jill and Gaye became central and outstanding players of the Mt Evelyn Tennis Club and loyal members of the Mt Evelyn Presbyterian Church.

Bonnie's prepared prayer for her funeral service at Mt Evelyn Presbyterian Church acknowledged that God had blessed her with an abundance of joys and privileges and a wonderful life span. Through her five children, 16 grandchildren and their families, and friends Sue and John Koole in particular, she had received generosity, love and care, 'showered with all it is possible for a mother to receive.'



Bonnie with brother Alf Knowles. Photo courtesy Helen Luke.



Bonnie at her 90th birthday, February 2012

Edward Dunham Brooke Nicholls from p. 6

Death and legacy

In March 1936, a little more than a year before his own death, Nicholls married Cecily Eddy, daughter of the Rev. W.J. Eddy of Auburn.²⁷ Cecily nursed him through a prolonged illness. Nicholls died at his father-in-law's home in Auburn in 1937, and was buried in Box Hill Cemetery. Charles Barrett wrote his obituary, noting what a good companion

he had been at Walden Hut and at the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union camp-outs.²⁸ He was commemorated by a sundial, now demolished, at Healesville Sanctuary.²⁹ Nicholls bequeathed a prize in Dentistry to the University of Melbourne.³⁰

Janice Newton

From Kev's Rain Gauge

Rainfall (in mm) for Mt Evelyn, McKillop, and Melbourne for the last 3 months.

	Nov-22	Dec-22	2022Totals	Jan-23
Mt Evelyn	171.2 mm	82.5 mm	1243.3 mm	19.8 mm
McKillop	181.8 mm	94.8 mm	1360.2 mm	25.4 mm
Melbourne	73.8 mm	42.2 mm	698.6 mm	20.2 mm

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

Kevin Phillips

Contact Us

President: Paula Herlihy, telephone 9736 2935, pherlihy3@gmail.com

Editor: Paula Herlihy, pherlihy3@gmail.com

Memberships: Tim Herlihy, therlihyau@gmail.com

Newsletter distribution: Kevin Phillips, kev.phillips@bigpond.com

Newsletter layout: Alison Martin

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

Archived newsletters: <http://www.mt-evelyn.net/thingspast>

Mt Evelyn History Tools Blogsite: <http://mtevelynhistorytools.blogspot.com.au/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MtEvelynHistoryGroup2016/>

Opinions expressed in *Things Past* are those of the writers, not necessarily those of Mount Evelyn History Group.

²⁷ *The Argus* 7 March 1936, 22.

²⁸ Charles Barrett 'Obituary' *The Emu*, 246
<https://www.publish.csiro.au/mu/pdf/MU937246>

²⁹ The memorial was described as a cairn of river stone with an inscribed stone block on top to hold the sundial.

The sundial was in the vicinity of the animal hospital at the sanctuary but only the inscribed stone remains in the collection. Kevin Mason, Healesville Historical Society, email Karen Phillips 20 June 2021.

³⁰ *Herald* 11 Feb 1938, p4.