

WESTLAKE NEWSLETTER 2007

Phone calls to committee members, Roma Banks (Brien) and Hazel Kennedy (Haines) re the Westlake sign that needs some work and proposed work on our photograph board also allowed us to catch up. Roma informed me that her dear friend, Merle (Merlene Chisholm) died at home on 4th February 2007. Merle found out in December 2006 that her cancer returned. She had lived with Roma and family for many years and was tended by them in her last months. She requested that she be buried wearing her Westlake T Shirt and Cap – she was an honorary Westlake person and was part of the Westlake Team looking after the photographs, signs etc.

Hazel had a melanoma on one of her toes and it was removed leaving her limping for some time after the operation. Most of us are now of the age when the knees and other joints are playing up – but a toe with a melanoma - Oh well! I guess this says that all of us who went without our shoes better check the feet as well as face, arms, hands and back.



Our gum tree planted by our then oldest surviving Westlake men (Horrie Cleaver, Eric Menzies and Arthur Carn) next to our plaque in George Sykes' yard is doing well, but is in danger of being in the way of a proposed road that will join Empire Circuit to Marina Place. This road is known on the maps as Block 4, Section 128 and when I first asked the NCA about this block I was assured that it was just a long thin block. Conversations with the NCA this year confirmed that this block is a proposed road.

In September this year I was involved in a workshop organized by the NCA to have some input into a heritage report on Block 3, Section 128 (big area opposite Lotus Bay) and Section 22 (*The Gap* where

our cottages stood and Stirling Ridge where the sewer vent stands and the site of Ngunawal scarred trees and stone arrangements.) At the end of the discussions with the member of the firm in charge of the work I asked for a copy of the report and was told that the NCA would supply copies. I haven't received a copy, but in fairness – I didn't phone to ask – just presumed that we would all receive a copy.

In general discussion with the member of the firm, I was told that heritage – historical heritage – is now part of the criteria and that this may help in saving the sites of our former homes from development. Stirling Ridge is also the site of the endangered wild flower, the button wrinklewort. This is the major site in Australia of this flower.

Block 1, Section 128 is now Blocks 5, 6 & 8 and is under development. Block 2 is ACT land and what will happen to it is not known. On the former Block 1 are two large stone arrangements that are *in* the original clay soil of the area that was a high bit of land between the quagmire area and the big creek that came down from Red Hill. These two arrangements were to be fenced off by the NCA – or rather that was the promise. They have been surveyed but to date no fences have been put in situ and the entrance road to the block has damaged one of the arrangements.

A search on *Google* on the internet shows that we are now mentioned in the Wikipedia encyclopedia in the section under Yarralumla. The URL is http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yarralumla,_Australian_Capital_Territory

Sadly, a few more of our ex-residents have died. *Canberra Times* 20th April 2007 – death notice of Valerie Letitia Clarke nee Hawke. She died at Hervey Bay on 19th April 2007 – late of Westlake, Duntroon, Girrillang and Hervey Bay. Val was born on 19th February 1931 and married Victor Clarke who survives her.

Val's son wrote the following poem that was published in the same paper:

*Drift away mother to a place from before
To the steps of your childhood along Molonglo shore
Up through the paddock to old Westlake where Andy
and Mary still wait at the gate
There's Bill, Bruce and Keith, Marjorie too
Don't hurry mother, they wait for just for you
I'll ask one more time what sums up your life cares,
protector, mother and wife
Something you said that made you stand tall
Friends and family are sacred, family is all
Take my hand mother to a place from before
Let your soul rest in peace along Molonglo shore
Your loving son, Ray*

It is intended to spread her ashes on her parent's grave and old home sites at Westlake and Duntroon.

Lorraine Clarke, Val's daughter, during our conversation about Val mentioned that the wire hanging from the gum in their backyard at Westlake was put up by Bill Hawke before he went off to war – not his Dad, Andy.

Henry (Harry) Thomas Oldfield died 21st April 2007. He was born on 28th June 1912 and was married to Maud Phyllis Day of Briar Farm. She died a few years ago. The couple had nine children – Sandra, Gary, Wendy, Kaylene, Gail, Susanne, Deborah, Sharon (deceased) and Delise. Harry and Phyllis lived in Hackett Gardens only a few houses away from Dorothy and Arthur Maxwell. My parents, Violet and Leonard Austin, like Dorothy and Arthur Maxwell, moved from Westlake to Hackett Gardens. Nearby to both Maxwells, Oldfields and Austins were two De Smet families. Iris De Smet, who lived next door to Dorothy Maxwell moved this year into a retirement place, leaving only Dorothy of the old group still living in Hackett Gardens.

Canberra Times ANZAC DAY 2007 - Full front page photograph of Ernie Corey with the caption: *He was born near Cooma, lived for years in Canberra and is buried at Woden, but few know the story of one of the bravest Australians to fight in World War I. Ernest Albert Corey is the only soldier in the history of the British Commonwealth of nations to have won the Military Medal (For Bravery in the Field) four times. And he never fired a shot in anger.* The next two pages of *The Canberra Times* tell his story that in part is the story of the men from the Snowy River and subsequent years in the war. It also has a photograph of Ernie towards the end of his life – not changed that much from when we knew him at Westlake.

On 6th May 2007, Robert Morris (Bobby) Dixon died. He was cremated. I am not sure of Bobby's age, other than he was in his early 70s. He is survived by a grandson.

Another who died in around the same time as Val Clarke is Moya Johnston (maiden name – not sure of her married name). She was the youngest child of Cecil and Daphne Johnston.

Noel Carn's son, Noel, died in July aged 51 years.

Nona Beryl Dubbelaar nee Day died 20th July 2007. She was born on 30th January 1930. Nona wrote the family story for *True Tales*. Her family lived at 47 Westlake. Nona's parents, George and Maude were born in NSW and the couple had six children – Harry, Ron, Rex, Nona and Kevin (named by Nona – sixth child?).

Although not a Westlake person, Franz Aigner was a friend of my late husband and a family friend. He was born in Bavaria on 22nd September 1929 and came to Australia in the 1950s. Franz died on 29th July 2007.

He was from memory, one of Jennings' Germans – a carpenter by trade.

Two more deaths in August were my old teachers and colleagues at Canberra High. Muriel Ramage was born in 1909 and taught languages. She was a petite lady under five foot in height. The Master in Charge of Languages was Ralph Wilson – he was well over 6ft. I remember one meeting of the two – she stood on about the third step on the stairs and Ralph on the floor. He still towered above her. The other death was that of Terry Steinmentz who taught English. He was at Canberra High from the 1940s and moved with the school from its site near Civic to Belconnen. Terry was a bachelor and wrote his story for our book *True Tales*.

The Canberra Times 6th October 2007 has a death notice of John (Jack) Arbuckle 30.8.1914-5.10.2007 – late of Batemans Bay and Queanbeyan. His wife, Doris, is deceased. I would be surprised if Jack Arbuckle is not related to the John Arbuckle family that lived at Westlake and ran a barbers shop and general store in Westlake and at No 1 Labourers Camp. By 1928 this John Arbuckle and his wife, Elizabeth, had moved to Kingston and ran a barbers shop there.

Alma De Smet 1.9.1908-9.11.2007 & Helen Notaras, wife of Harry 21.11.1911-12.11.1007. Not Westlake people, but well known locals. Also Brenda Nerdall nee Rees of Westridge – 18.11.1932-15.11.2007. Ernest Tschannen – husband of Jane (nee O'Rourke) – died this year. Both were Westlake people.

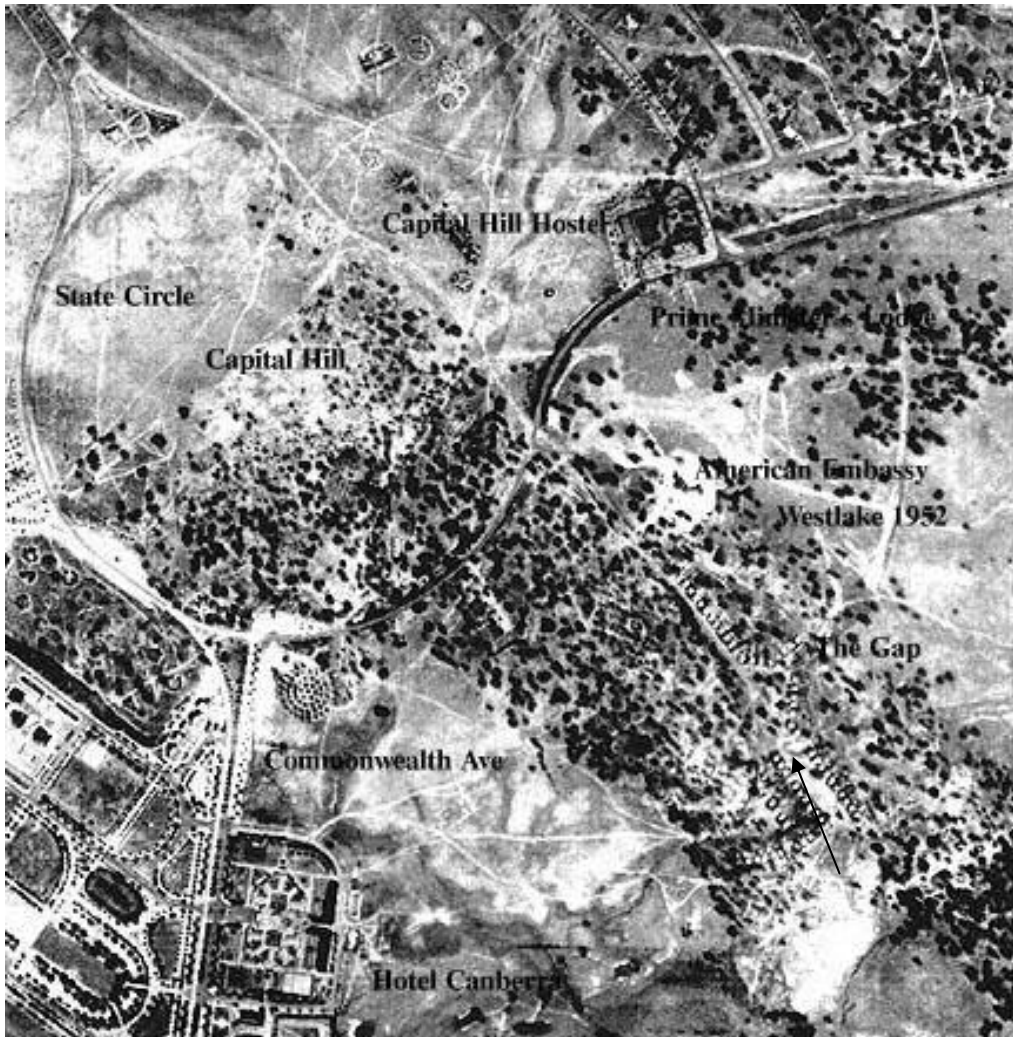
The Albert Hall, leased out for many years, is planned to come back under the control of the ACT government, but not ruled out by the NCA is further building development in the area of the hall.

At a recent National Trust walk at Albert Hall (7.11.07) I was informed that next year it is planned to collect oral histories of the hall – so any of you out there with stories – would love to hear from you. One question that came up was what colour were the curtains. I only remember them as red – but people now researching the hall have been told that they were green. Also mentioned is a resident ghost – any stories?

Esther Davies (Canberra & District Historical Society) was the person in charge of History Department at Telopea Park. She is collecting photographs of Telopea Park, students etc. The latter are being scanned and put into a folio. Anyone who can contribute information and/or photographs – please contact me.- e-mail annrobina@actewagl.net.au or phone 02 62900057.



Bill Convine on the track over to Hotel Canberra



1944 (not 1952 – my original mistake) aerial view of our old homes and the tracks across to Hotel Canberra. Close examination shows the dump between 28 and 53 Westlake. The big creek can be seen clearly on either side of the word *Commonwealth*. Much of this creek is now confined in concrete pipes hidden underground or in the waters of Lake Burley Griffin. Part of it has survived near State Circle Road and Scrivener's Plan Room where it is joined by the creek that comes down from Capital Hill. Another question – does anyone know when the full circle of State Circle was completed? I am also updating information and writing about the camps on Capital Hill – that includes the old Capitol Hill Camp, Capital Hill Hostel and Hillside. Memories gratefully received.



Above is our sign that is now a little worse for wear. I have placed a sheet of Perspex over the front, but it has now bowed out and needs another couple of screws to bring it back flat against the wood. Working party being planned with Roma & Hazel to fix it. Below is a photograph showing our tree, plaque, photographs and signs. The grass needs a trim – it has grown with the recent good rain. The NCA has kept the grass cut around both our plaques. The other plaque is opposite Lotus Bay near the apple tree. Both photographs taken 17.11.2007.



HAPPY CHRISTMAS 2007 & A HAPPY & HEALTHY NEW YEAR 2008.

Ann (Gugler – nee Austin)