

WESTLAKE NEWSLETTER 2006

16th March 2006

Yesterday was the anniversary of the official unveiling of our plaque and sign. It was also Mum's birthday. She – Violet Ann Austin - was born 99 years ago in Dunedoo – eldest daughter of Samuel & Edith (nee Chapman) Yeo. Mary Elizabeth Merrick, our first ancestor born in Australia arrived in this world on 14th March 1795. She was the daughter of a second and third fleet convicts – Edward Merrick & Mary Elizabeth nee Russell.

Yvonne Arnell (nee Gibbs) of 8 Westlake is a descendent of Mary's younger brother, Joseph Merrick. During the years at Westlake neither of us knew of our common ancestors. Nor did we know that Mrs Patterson – one of our Post Mistresses – was born at Dunedoo and went to school with Mum's younger sister, Lola Yeo. Nor did I know until I listened to Olive Menzies' story that she had left Canberra to work as a cook in the outback properties of NSW and that she had met Mum when we lived at Collarenebri.

What is the purpose of telling this information? It is a reminder that those who came to Canberra before the city to build it were working class people who came from many parts of Australia and overseas and that working class people even before the Great Depression moved in search of work.

What started off this train of thought was an interview on the local ABC yesterday morning in which a mention of the Iris Ambassador's wife, Delia Murphy (her maiden name) was made. She was a well known singer whose records are still played from time to time. The man being interviewed mentioned that her grand daughter was collecting stories about her famous grandmother.

Delia Murphy has a strong connection with Westlake. Olive Menzies (28 Westlake) was a housekeeper for the Embassy and was friends with Delia Murphy. Many an hour was spent by Delia at the Menzies kitchen table in Westlake and many cups of tea were drunk there.

Olive often mentioned to me that your friends sat in the kitchen with you and your acquaintances spent time in the lounge. Delia's lilting singing voice sang many an old song in the Westlake Hall where she performed at many a dance and engagement party.

I phoned Sylvia (nee Menzies) to tell her about the programme and was saddened to hear that she is not well. The bronchitis she had as a child has now developed into emphysema.

Sylvia is a few months younger than me – she was born in September 1937 and I in June the same year. We were born in the time of the Great Depression and I hope that this country never goes back to those times. Recent events on the political scene that

threaten to completely deregulate the industrial relations and take away all the safety nets of liveable basic wage are frightening to me and probably to most people who remember the depression years.

I found an old article on 2CA that began broadcasting from the back room of Ryan's electrical store at Kingston in the early 1930s. One of the Shakespeare family (founded Canberra's second newspaper – *The Canberra Times*) complained to the authorities that Ryan was breaking his lease conditions. The authorities said OK to Ryan and our first local broadcaster got on with the job. A few years later 2CY – ABC – began operations.

Just in case you forgot – we had to pay for a radio licence – one of you may remember how much. Not everyone had a radio and in the early years broadcasting was not 24 hours a day. Mum's favourite serial was *Blue Hills* and I recall Mrs 'Obbs and Martin's Corner along with Argonauts and the Sunday night play.

MISCELLANEOUS

AUSTRALIAN imports of goods for civil use rose to £25m. stg. in the three months ended February, 1946, as compared with £16-5m. stg. in the same three months of the previous year and £24m. stg. in the corresponding months before the war. Imports of war material were £5m. stg. as compared with £20m. stg. for the same three months of last year.

Harvesting of the new crop in Australia permitted the resumption of exports of wheat and flour in January and February, 1946. For the two months, total exports of these commodities were valued at nearly £A3m. Exports during the whole of 1945 were practically suspended.

Exports of clothing and textiles for the three months ended February, 1946, were £A2,135,000 as compared with only £A140,000 in the same three months of the year before the war.

Four Australian families out of five to-day possess a radio. In 1935, only two families in every five had radio receivers.



At February 28, 1946, wireless licences totalled 1,450,000 including 22,000 free licences which are issued to schools, blind persons and prisoners. Three years ago, 9000 prisoners possessed free wireless licences. Today, 29,000 enjoy free listening.

Radio licences issued to schools have more than doubled since 1943. Over 200 Australian schools are licensed to-day for radio receivers.

Australian Facts & Figures – Book 12, March 1946
– Issued by Commonwealth Department for information

Barbara Campbell nee Kinnane and her husband plan to move this year from Canberra to Wollongong.

She sent me a copy of the photograph shown on the next page.

Marist generations

There has been a member of the Kinnane family at Westlake (beginning in 1968 and it's still in the air) for some time.

Mr Pat Kinnane, the father of the family, came to Westlake in the early days of the College and was twice an honorary life member of the Marist Rugby Club in 1957 shortly before his death. His wife Pauline (a nurse) worked for many years at the College staffroom. The genealogical tree shows David Mead (grandson) (1952), John Blair (1959), David (1955), Stephen (1994), Tony (1979) and Gary (1977) and Paul Mead (grandson) (1994) (brother of John). Dickie (grandson) (2001, 1994), Jordan Mead (grandson) (current year 02), Mrs Pauline Kinnane, Jason Kinnane (current year 10), David (son of grandson), Chris Dickie (son) (2008), Frank Kinnane (1992), Andrew Dickie (son) (2008) and James Kinnane (19 12). Paul Mead joined the PE staff at Westlake in 1968.

Robert & Michael Kinnane not listed



Pat Kinnane Sn was one of the early Westlake SP bookies. There were others who included Yvonne Arnell's father (Gibbs) and Lofty Harrington.

I don't often buy the *Canberra Times* but did in May and sadly the paper had the notice of the death of Terrence (Terry) John Horan who lived at Westridge for most of his life. He was born 31st October 1928 and died 20th May 2006. He is survived by his wife Eileen and their children and grandchildren.

Terry showed me around the area of the Brickyards and Westridge pointing out the site of features such as the 1913 brickyard buildings, the cutting where the old rail line from the yards to Parliament House, Civic etc is and sites of buildings such as the old Westridge Hall and so on.

He also told me about the Aboriginal sites that his father showed him including the caves under Civic where a number of paintings were found.

Ilma Henskens (nee Keir) of 34 Westlake died 3rd June 2006. She was born 21st January 1929 and was predeceased by her husband Nickolaus and son Robert. She is survived by her children Douglas & David and grandchildren.

Ilma loaned me many of her photographs of Westlake including one that showed the old dump between 28 and 53 Westlake.

Below is a photograph of Ilma Keir in front of her home – 32 Westlake – in the 1940s. The dump is in the background.



Ilma Keir in yard of 31 Westlake 1940s
In the background is "the Dump".

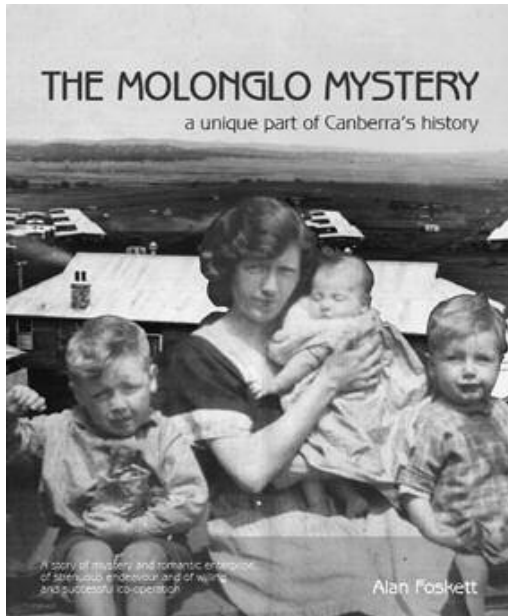
Doreen May Kerrison (nee Hawke) died on 5th June 2006. She was born 14th March 1909 and came with her parents and eight siblings from Araluen to Canberra in the early 1920s where they lived at Molonglo and later Westlake. Her father was Harry Hawke.

Reg Jackson phoned me to say hello and mentioned during the conversation that his aunt, Myrtle Brooks (nee Dixon) had died a few years back.

Alan Foskett's book, *MOLONGLO MYSTERY* was launched at the Causeway Hall on 28th May and the event was a great success and a place where many who had lived at Molonglo, Causeway and Westlake had a chance to catch up.

On the front cover was a photograph of the Convines who lived at Molonglo and Westlake. My daughter, Robina, did the graphics in the book and did a great job.

The next photograph shows the cover of Alan's book. It shows Mrs Convine and children seated on the veranda of a building near or part of the Molonglo Tradesmen's Mess. The Convine family later moved to Westlake.



Alan's work starts with the building of the Internment Camp at Molonglo and continued through into the settlement times and the period when the school was occupied by WRANS of Harman. Alan managed to find a number of ex-residents from each period of the Molonglo history and has recorded their stories in the book.

He is currently working on an update of Hostels and Hotels that should be available around March 2007.

My recent 'find' is the true site of No 1 Labourers Camp, Westlake. This camp existed between 1924 and 1927. The person to thank for the many aerial photographs of the land behind the Hotel Canberra & Capital Hill that led to this discovery is Trish Frei. She spent many hours in the Australian Archives and National Library searching their collections for the photographs.

One of the men who lived there was George Sykes who is mentioned in one of the *Canberra Times* articles in 1927 as living at the camp. The actual site is on Capitol Hill just above the area of Scrivener's Plan Room. Last year I published in the newsletter a CDHS society photograph of a camp that was thought to be No 1. This camp, I now believe, is one that probably housed visitors to the capital such as the sailors of HMAS Renown and soldiers who attended the ceremony on 9th May 1927. The Mess of this camp looks as though it is a large marquee rather than a timber building.

Careful examination of a number of Mildenhall aerial photographs taken of the area behind the Hotel Canberra in the 1920s show no sign of this camp before 1927.

Reference to No 1 Camp on Capitol Hill I found in at least one document, however, the majority of documents state – *WESTLAKE*. This new information suggests that at least one part of Capitol Hill (now Capital Hill) was considered to be Westlake.



Above detail of a 1924 photograph of men of No 1 Labourers Camp (CDHS photograph).

Careful examination of the Mildenhall aerial photographs show a few of Howie's cottages and the Hostel Camp. The area behind the Hotel Canberra and our Westlake is criss-crossed with numerous tracks that connected the homes of workers with their work sites – Hotel Canberra, Parliament House and Administrative buildings

These photographs brought back many memories of walking across to the Hotel Canberra to catch the bus. I recall walking down the steep hill to cross the plank bridge over the creek and then up the hill to the Hotel Canberra, but had forgotten just how big the creek was until I looked at the photographs. This creek, with the exception of a small section near Scrivener's Plan Room is now confined to pipes that lead the water into Lake Burley Griffin.



Above is a photograph of the Hotel Canberra around 1926. The walking track that we used is the one going across the creek. The power poles went across to Howie's settlement and then over to our houses. The photograph below shows in the

background one of the power poles that came across the hill to our places.



Below is a detail of a 1927 photograph that shows Howie's cottages in the mid distance background. The Hostel camp is hard to see – it is near the left hand track that comes down from the cottages. Briar Farm is near top right.

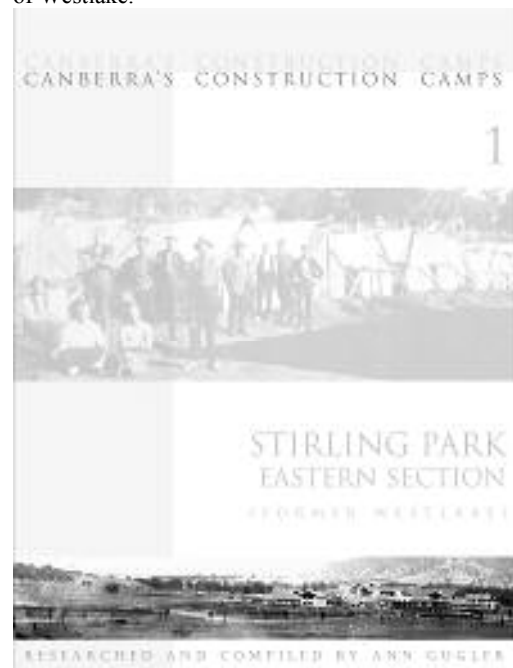


Above is a photograph of Capital Hill Hostel (right) and Hillside Hostel (left) around 1960. Many of us took a short cut across Capital Hill near the old Capitol Hill Hostel to get to school. Below is a 1950s photograph of a number of our houses. Some had already been removed when this photograph was taken.



Above is a photograph of the links taken in the years before the waters of the Molonglo covered the area.

I am currently updating the Westlake history and am beginning with No 1 Labourers Camp. Following is one of the designs for this section of the work. The lettering will change to include Capital Hill as part of Westlake.



As usual I wonder where on earth the time has gone. I am spending more and more time at the coast and enjoying the view etc. My girlfriend of 66 years, Carmel Koenig (nee Maxwell) has now moved to a house just around several corners from mine. It is a bit further to travel to visit than when we lived at Westlake – but now we drive and it takes less time than the walk at Westlake.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS 2006 & NEW YEAR 2007.

Ann (Gugler)

29 November 2006

A phone call from Mrs Dorothy Maxwell this morning informed me of the death of her brother, Claude Day. He was the youngest of the family of Charles Foster and Frances Day and was born 20th March 1928 in Briar Farm (now the site of Southern Cross Yacht Club). His nick-name was *CLOUDY* and his older brother Albie who died many years ago aged 49 years, was known as *SUNNY*.

Claude will be buried at Gungahlin Cemetery with his wife, Beryl, who predeceased him around six years ago.

Claude's grandfather, James Gallagher, who lived for a short time with the family at Briar Farm died the day after Claude was born. At the time of James' death he and his wife lived at 13 Molonglo. They had owned a farm at Bywong and walked off the property following the combined affects of a drought and a shortage of labour – sons away at the Great War.

Ann