

# Proposed Darling to Glen Waverley Railway

Continued from HH223

In HH223 we noted the report in 1911 from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways concluded with a rejection of a railway to Glen Waverley due to the large capital expenditure. However, in 1926 the Committee submitted another report to the Victorian Parliament as requested. This report recommended a line extending from Darling station and travelling east to a new station (East Malvern) parallel with Waverley Rd and then continuing to a second station at the intersection of Batesford and Warrigal Roads. And then to a third station east of Bayview (Huntingdale) Road. Through the golf course to a fourth station on the west side of Stevenson's Lane (sic). Then to a fifth station east of May's Rd (sic). Reaching the terminal station to the west of Spring Vale Rd (sic).

The track was to be constructed for electric working using 90 lb/yard rail along a gradient of less than 1 in 30. It would use about half a mile of the unused Darling to Oakleigh line. The total cost was estimated at £168,000 with an extra £49,657 for rolling stock.

Note that notwithstanding the anticipated losses for the initial years this original proposal had **no** rail level crossings with the rails over Warrigal, Bayview, and May's Rds and under Stephensons and Lawrence Rds. Also note that land was to be purchased east of Spring Vale Road (sic) immediately opposite the terminal station so that there may not be expensive shops to purchase in the event of an extension to the line authorised at a future date. Land was purchased and occupied by railway staff houses.

These costings were based on the condition that the land for the construction of the line be handed over to the Constructing Authority free of charge; and that an annual Betterment Rate be imposed to bring in a total maximum sum of £10,000 per annum for five years with a view to reducing the estimated loss on the line. In the event of the loss in any of the first five years being less than £10,000, the Betterment Tax to be abated accordingly.

It is a sobering reminder to note that our Glen Waverley line was originally planned with a possible extension eastwards to Ferntree Gully, however the escarpment leading down to cross Dandenong Creek posed a problem and would have required a route to the SE to maintain a satisfactory gradient. We must recognise that some of our early railway pioneers had foresight.

Philip Johnstone

# Steam on the Sky

Continued from p.2

Missed connections, expired car parking, tardiness for Saturday night functions, and exposure to the equinoctial coolness are not life-threatening or history-making issues.



J. Angelico

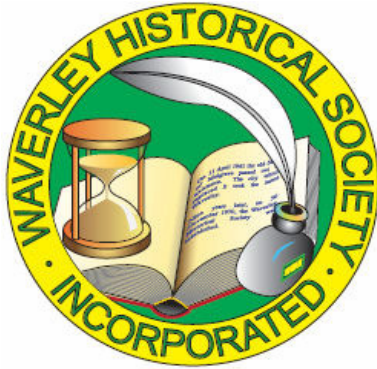
SteamRail's R707 City of Melbourne 4-6-4 speeding through Narre Warren Station at 9pm on its return trip.

Of course the structure was strong enough. It has already carried diesel freight trains and the quarry trains from Kilmore to Westall, which weigh 80 tonne in the space of 15 m. We are told that Australian infrastructure standards are that everything has to be rated for 2.5 times the biggest expected load. You can ride the Sky Rail fearlessly.

Whatever opinion is about this way to eliminate level crossings (which you will recall, the Glen Waverley line has been blessedly free from since its creation), it is interesting to note a petition for their removal was recently found at PROV, written in 1878. Even the minor roads (Power Ave, Alvie Rd and Lawrence Rd) are grade separated. Not only are level crossings inconvenient, they are dangerous.

If only more railways had been designed the way ours was!

MarJo Angelico



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# HISTORY HERE 224

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M Angelico Oct 2017

## THE HOUSE

In 1893 a Mr Benson bought some blocks in the Oakleigh Hill estate and built this pair of attached houses overlooking a large reserve that had been a clay extraction pit, and was to become Hurst Reserve. The pair are mirror-images of the other, each having two bedrooms, and symmetrical chimneys, windows, approach stairs and garages. Over the front entrances is an elaborate parapet which makes the building look impressive.

Continued P.2

## Coming Events

**Sun 15 Jul 2pm** Centenary of High Street Rd Avenue of Honour. In association with the High Street Rd Uniting Church.

**Sun 26 Aug 3pm** WHS 48th Birthday and AGM.

More Details P. 2 , P. 5

Please note that General Meetings are now held every two months and are usually afternoon meetings starting at 2.00 pm, (except where advised). Special activities will be held in most alternate months. We are located above the Mt Waverley Library 41 Miller Cres., Mt Waverley.



## Annual General Meeting Notice

The 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Waverley Historical Society Inc. will be held on:

**Date:** Sun 26 Aug 2018

**Time:** 3pm

**Venue:** WHS Rooms, first floor 41 Miller Cres. Mt Waverley (above the MW Library).

The purpose of the meeting will be to accept the minutes of the 2017 AGM, and the financial reports for the 2017/18 financial year, and to appoint a Committee to manage the affairs of the Society for 2018/19.

## Steam on the Sky

On 23rd June 2018, the first ever steam train used the new Sky Rail passing through the southern part of Monash. Why is this significant? Steam trains are much heavier than their electric cousins. The locomotive alone weighs 191 tonnes, and the carriages between 30 and 40t each. Then there is the tender loaded with fuel and water. Electric engines weigh only about 70 tonne, and they're also longer than a steam loco - 24m vs about 18m for an R-class loco and 19m for most of the wooden SteamRail carriages. This means that more weight is spread over less space, and though I am no engineer, it seems that this would put significantly extra strain on the new Sky Rail structures.

So - how did it go? Were there any problems? YES. The day was dreary and wet, making the rails slippery, and the early morning departure and late return meant that the pass over the Sky Rail was in the dark both ways. Many potential issues, but none of these caused problems. The train was held up in Warragul awaiting an ambulance for a sick passenger, so the return was about 2.5 hours late. **Cont p. 8**

### The House from P.1

Unfortunately the 1890s depression marred his plans and his building society took over and leased the homes to local labourers. No other houses existed in the street even up to 1910 and later.

## WHERE IS THE WHS?

Our rooms, which are located above the Mt Waverley library in Miller Crescent, are open each Wed (except over the Christmas break), from 1pm to 5pm, or by appointment, for individual research and working discussion groups. If the main library entrance door is locked during meetings, use the doorbell at the far left to gain entry. Members are asked to bring a plate of afternoon tea to general meetings which for 2018 are every second month.

## Our June meeting

Our June afternoon meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June was opened by President MarJo Angelico with a series of highlights from our previous events over the last 6 months. She then introduced our guest speaker Mick Woiwod.

## Mick Woiwod

Mick Woiwod, a prolific writer of local history, spoke on his book *Kangaroo Ground Dreaming* and in particular, Monument Hill and the viewing platform and its display panels erected at Kangaroo Ground. He noted that this area was very fertile and the local Wurundjeri people favoured the district. (Even now it is not uncommon to find roaming kangaroos).

The *Moor-rul* viewing platform, named in recognition of the traditional owners' description of the district, is located on the Eltham - Yarra Glen Rd, adjacent to the War Memorial tower. There are 8 double-sided display panels within the viewing platform. They depict the aboriginal history and European settlement of the area.

Mick explained the meaning of "Bad Land" (Wurundjeri word "Nillumbik") to us. This was of special interest, because a previous speaker had told us that the Carrum Downs Swamp area (now Patterson Lakes) had been called Half Bad Land, but no explanation had then been available. Mick Woiwod explained (as Jim Poulter also had when he spoke to us last year) that the dead were never to be spoken of in Aboriginal culture, nor anything associated with them. When European settlers asked the names of areas where bad things had happened, the Woiwurrung would just answer "Nillumbik" to all their questions.

Mick also spoke on the settlement of Port Phillip district and the geology of the Yarra and revealed that it was not long (relatively) about 3000 years ago when it would have been possible to travel across Port Phillip Bay on foot.

## External WHS Presentations

Ray Price and Philip Johnstone gave an audio visual talk *A Virtual Tour of Waverley Road* to some 100 members of the Syndal Combined Probus Club on Fri 22.6.18

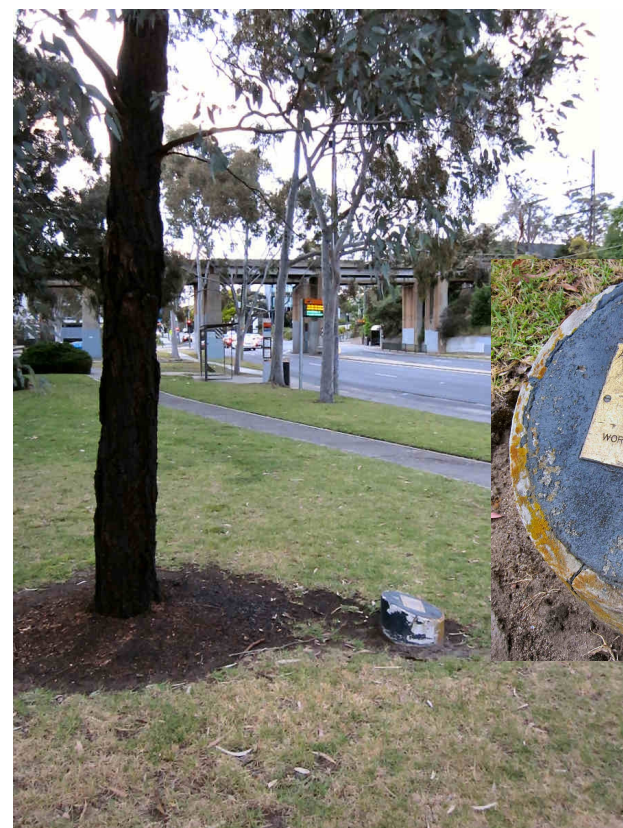
Road boundary, confirming that this was a good central site.

After WWII the Shire of Mulgrave began to grow massively and it was decided that a new centre was required, one that was large enough for the growing number of council employees and committees, and modern enough to reflect the desired image of the municipality. The location was a puzzle to many – it was constructed in Springvale Road, amid sheep farms and orchards. Alas, there was no grand Town Hall that could be used for major council events. In 1961 the Shire of Mulgrave became the City of Waverley and the new offices continued their role in the new capacity and many debutante balls were held in the Camberwell Hall.



The first Shire of Mulgrave Offices on Springvale Rd

The Council Logo was a UU. By the 1980s the story was the same – a new impressive civic centre was needed and Harry Seidler



A. Krulishoop 2018

designed it. It was completed in 1984 next to the older centre. The outstanding feature was a distinctive curved roofline facing Springvale Rd and ending in a spout that seemed to add rainwater to a fountain below. A grand Council Chamber was available for formal Council meetings, but alas, there was still no City Hall, although the atrium provides a facility for displays. Ten years later the City of Waverley ceased to be and the City of Monash began.



1983 – the new civic centre half-built beside the existing 1955 offices

The city logo was an M in the shape of the civic centre's roofline, but few realise that the building came first, not the logo. In 1997 the old offices were demolished to make way for Novotel and Century City entertainment complex.

## Do You Remember?

There is a plaque on the east side of Blackburn Rd, north of the railway line, see picture. The plaque recognises Amnesty International and was unveiled 1989 by the then Mayor of the City of Waverley, Barbara Thompson.

It is not known whether the plaque was connected with a special date, conference or award. A tree was planted adjacent to the plaque but the original tree died and has since been replaced successfully by Monash Council staff.

A check with local Amnesty International archives reveals no report on the event. The WHS Plaques database has no more detail.

Does anyone recall this event or the significance at the time?



## Our Municipal Centres

MarJo Angelico

The first local government body in the Monash area was the Oakleigh and Mulgrave Road District Board, which began in 1860, although as early as 1853 a Roads Board was empowered to collect property taxes. The Parish of Mulgrave's Roads District was proclaimed in 1857, with boundaries fairly similar to the current Monash boundary, but because settlers had no discretionary funds, it took until 1860 before an actual Board could be sworn in. The first chairman was Patrick McGrath, and the other members were all names well known to the student of Monash history.

The Board was established to do something about the roads in the area, which were nothing more than land allocations. The best of them were the oldest – old Aboriginal songlines. However none were suitable for vehicular traffic and lives were being lost to treacherous gullies, stumps and holes. One major road (Waverley Rd) was even named Breakneck Rd, and the Devil's Elbow on High Street Rd and Stephensons Rd was a spot only to be traversed in ideal conditions – not at night, not in rain, not in a crowd. Something had to be done.

The trouble was that no-one had spare time to dig out stumps or fetch and apply surface metal. Funds would have to be raised to pay local contractors to get the work done, and this would be done by rates and the never-popular toll gates. That is another story.

Until 1867 the Board met in various buildings in Oakleigh, but when a greater proportion of rural members were included because of electoral subdivision, and when the swampy part of Dandenong Rd (previously "fixed" by half logs making a bone-rattling corduroy road) was drained with the help of a government grant, the *Mul-*



Example of a corduroy road

*grave Arms* hotel became the meeting place. (see *History Here* 223.)

In 1871 the Road District became the Shire of Oakleigh, still meeting at the *Mulgrave Arms*, until in 1888 a council chamber was built in Atkinson St, Oakleigh. The Shire had come of age.

Or maybe not. There were huge differences in the needs of the more populous township and the greater land area of the rural zones. Growing tensions between them led eventually to Oakleigh Borough being severed from the Shire in 1891. Suddenly the new Shire council chamber, just three years old, was outside the shire boundary! Even more confusing was that the two councils had the same name – Shire of Oakleigh, and Borough of Oakleigh, so in 1897 the Shire decided to revert to the old Parish name, Mulgrave. In the same year the Borough, which had been meeting elsewhere, installed itself in the Shire Hall!

This shire hall became more and more of a problem to the Shire, which hired out its space and also tried to sell it. There were those who thought that the Borough would 'return to the fold', it being only three square miles, while Mulgrave had 25.5 square miles, and thus moving the Chambers would be a needless expense. Eventually though a buyer was found for the Shire offices and the Borough built its own council chambers in Atherton Rd.



The Architect's drawing of the proposed new Shire Office on Ferntree Gully Rd, Notting Hill

A public poll was conducted to vote on the site for the new Shire offices, and Ferntree Gully Rd, Notting Hill was chosen. The new offices, designed by E.W Senior, were opened in 1920.

By coincidence an avenue of honour had recently been planted on the May (Blackburn)

## Women in Council - Helen Harris

Kerrie Flynn welcomed Helen Harris to our well attended February meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2018.

Helen was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 1993 for services to community history. A Master of Arts, History, (Monash University), and a member of the Professional Historians' Association, Helen was the first member of the Australian Greens to be elected as Councillor of the City of Whitehorse, and in 2009 was the first Greens mayor of the city, serving eleven years in all. On election to Council, Helen joined the Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA), eventually becoming an Honorary Life Member in 2016. She is currently their Executive Officer.

Helen Harris was just the one to inform us of the slow, tortoise-like progression of women in local council; slow but steady with numerous setbacks along the way. Helen was the voice of experience, having been a councillor herself.

Helen has compiled a publication detailing the significant points in the history of women being allowed to stand for council - it "seeks to set the record straight how that right was achieved, and who were the main characters in the history." *The right to vote; the right to stand. The involvement of women in local government in Victoria*, published by ALGWA). Two lists are provided - those women who served on councils prior to the Kennett Government's forced amalgamations in 1994, and secondly, those who have served on the seventy-eight councils established at that time. (Waverley Historical Society now holds a copy of this publication). Therefore, there is no need to mention the historic details here. Suffice to say that the year 2014 was the centenary of women being allowed to stand for election to council. In 1914, Edmund Cotter, the ALP Member for Richmond, proposed that women be eligible to stand as municipal councillors, at the very least equalling their counterparts in England.

Helen outlined the perseverance of the earliest councillors, beginning with Mary Rogers in the City of Richmond 1920-25, the first female councillor in Victoria and only the second in Australia.

Mary's journey into local council was, simply, tough. And so it was with other women who

gradually won terms at other councils. Helen's booklet describes them all.

The antipathy towards women has pervaded the thinking and led to male ownership of local councils, right from the start. The grand notion of women staying in their domain, running the home and therefore not able to handle a council job as well was the notion which prevailed and only a few chose to oppose the trend.

One woman was actually rebuked for not wearing a hat to her first official meeting and the newspapers were quick to pick up on female councillors' attire - these sundry details did not apply to men.

Women were far more likely to insist on efficiency and courtesy during the running of meetings; at the same time they encountered hostility and rudeness from male councillors. Women's intelligence was brought into question time and time again: a chauvinistic world.

A woman entering local government was strongly disadvantaged. For a start, there was no salary or child care assistance and one would have to rely heavily on extended family support. This area of neglect took decades to ameliorate.

We warmly welcomed Lynnette Saloumi, the current Glen Waverley Ward Councillor, to our meeting.

Kerrie thanked our accomplished speaker, Helen, who admits she despairs that the topic in hand is such a neglected area of history.

Virginia Barnett

### FOR SALE

Copies of the book:

*It changed the face of Melbourne*

The story of *Norwood*

By Roland Johnson

WHS members will recall Roland's presentation in early 2015 about the history of this historic house located in Brighton. Additional copies are now available.

\$20 from M. Johnson 9807 3457



## History of *Drive-Ins* in Victoria

On Monday 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2018, Mount Waverley Library provided the venue for a talk on the 'History of Drive-Ins in Victoria', presented by David Kilderry, for whom drive-ins are almost second nature – there is nothing about them that David doesn't know. In keeping with the retro theme, we were treated to a real slide show rather than the modern-day power-point presentation. There was a unanimous raising of hands when Librarian, Nanette, asked: "Who has been to a drive-in?"

David was brought up in Reservoir in a home where his bedroom window actually took in the screen of the Coburg Drive-In in Newlands Road - he saw the first screening, and all that followed. He admitted his passion was born there and then, and he has spent his entire working life in and around drive-ins and cinemas – he now, with his brother, Matthew, proudly owns the highly successful Lunar four-screen drive-in in Dandenong: the largest Drive-In in Australia.

Cars and movies came together, to personify the twentieth century. Three requirements had to be met before a drive-in could be built: car ownership, plenty of affordable space, and a climate conducive to this semi-outdoor form of entertainment. David's slides told the story: the 'Skyline' in Burwood was the first purpose-built drive-in in Victoria and opened in February 1954 – two years before the advent of television in Australia.

The first showing was a Danny Kaye film: '*On the Riviera*'. To facilitate good screen viewing, there had to be ramps and hubs; the car was on a back tilt; we were all familiar with the set-up, which originator Charles Hollings tried to patent, only to be told "you can't patent a mound of earth". They went ahead anyway. Now we have an asphalt ramp. The first speakers were situated above the screen – local residents could hear everything – then the speakers went under each car – still not ideal – then RCA developed speakers which could go IN the car – kicking off the boom in drive-ins.

George Griffin was the general manager of Hoyts – he started Auto-theatres, his own business, and – whoosh! – the branding was 'Skyline'. David produced a slide of Burwood under construction; the screen was on the other side of Gardiners Creek in a natural amphitheatre setting – perfect!

The market at Croydon was controlled by Hoyts, and Village Theatres struggled to open in Croy-

don in 1955, after permission was given to stay 'out in the sticks'. It was named Croydon Village, a small player at that stage. Hoyts and Village were in competition.

Further slides showed the ticket-box at Burwood; attendants in their white coat-uniforms and the stick figures of '*Skyline Sam*' situated on either side of the ticket-boxes. Another slide showed a carhop (the attendant who answered patrons' calls for refreshments). Attendants were summoned with a 'switch' on the speaker. Three side-by-side FJ Holdens were photographed from the rear, one with Venetian blinds on the back window.



David Kilderry with the Philips Todd-AO 35/70mm EL 4000 – DP70 projector at the Lunar Drive-in screen 3

Gradually, the 'hard-top' cinemas closed down. The catchphrase of drive-ins was *Come as you are*, and so people did. Pyjamas and slippers became commonplace; easy entertainment, not over-priced, and if you went to sleep it didn't matter – so long as you remembered to unhook the speaker before you drove off!

Burwood went all out to procure various forms of entertainment – a carousel, pony rides, even paddle-boats! Hoyts in Footscray was the first to trial popcorn which, surprisingly, took ages to catch on. A slide of Oakleigh Skyline, with a

toot-toot train running round the screen – what next!

Slide of Burwood, with a mini golf course – anything to get the families there early. Burwood's cafeteria contained a Wurlitzer juke-box and every surface was geometrically patterned.

Amongst David's souvenirs was an old Brady speaker, which was passed around, just to add to its authenticity, and David said he even had a '*Skyline Sam*' stick figure, which he acquired in a roundabout way, but acquired nonetheless.

Bill Brady was the owner-manager of Rowville in the 60s – he and his family operated everything. He developed a 'junction box' to facilitate repairs, and added a rubber stopper to the speaker to prevent scratching. He supplied this new Brady speaker to Village Drive-Ins from that point forward; he made 120,000 all up.

Then a slide of a modern drive-in screen complete with side panels to shield house lights from behind. Also a nostalgic slide of Happy Hammond and a crowd of admirers, enjoying fairy-floss.

These old drive-in sites now function as Trash-and-Treasure markets on Sundays; the old ticket-box still functions at Wantirna. The growth of flea markets became businesses which attached themselves to the drive-in businesses. David went on to talk about the history of film, starting with silent movies. Drive-Ins and movie companies interlocked. Australia proved to be a huge market for US films; classification came with the seventies. Sir Roy Grounds designed the Altona Drive-In café/office building - very impressive. A slide of Wantirna completely surrounded by orchards and another of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Drive-In (so called) at Mildura.

For David's and Matthew's own Dandenong enterprise, they initially leased fifteen acres of prime industrial land – huge costs involved – but it all worked. He talked about his car-club nights and the know-how required for choice of films. Winter is the most profitable time for drive-ins and David is NOT an advocate of daylight saving, for obvious reasons.

David has made several trips to the US and other countries, all in the name of research and curiosity, and he concluded his talk with slides of drive-ins overseas. Such an enthusiastic, informative talk, and Nanette proposed a sincere vote of thanks from all present.

Virginia Barnett

## Street Names

**Maroondah** Road, **Sylvan** Crescent (note spelling), **Rocklands** Rd, **Eildon** Rd, **Kiewa** Street and **Hume** Court in Ashwood were developed in the 1960s.

These streets are related by their association to reservoirs for Victoria's water supply.

Their names were instigated by Sir (Lewis) Ronald EAST, an eminent civil engineer and Mt Waverley resident, who was appointed Chairman of the Victorian State Rivers & Water Supply Commission in 1934 and remained with the Commission until his retirement in 1965. He was also a member of the Murray River Commission and the Snowy Mountains Council.

Sir Ronald was a model railway enthusiast and had a garden railway on his property in Waimarie Drive which was sometimes opened for fund raising events. He was an accomplished machinist and built his own steam locos. He also spoke at the WHS on a number of occasions



Sir Ronald upon one of his miniature steam locos

## Coming Events

( *Note Day, Time & Venue* )

**Sun 15 Jul 2pm** Centenary of High Street Rd Avenue of Honour. In association with, and at the High Street Rd Uniting Church.

**Sun 26 Aug 3pm** WHS 48th Birthday and AGM.

**Sat 15 Sep** Visit to *Bishopscourt*.

**Sun 28 Oct 11 to 4pm.** Open Day in the WHS Rooms.

**Sun 28 Oct** Historical Walk in the MW Central area. Meeting place will be the rear carpark of the MW Library. The route will be about 2.5km.