

Mt Evelyn RSL News

Volume 2, Issue 1, Autumn 2012 A Sub-Branch of the Returned and Services League of Australia



PETER HENSKENS – RSL LIFE MEMBER

At the November 2011 meeting the President, Roger Boness, surprised Peter Henskens by announcing that he had been made a Life Member of the RSL. It came as no surprise to anyone else though, as Peter has long been thought of as a stalwart of the club and has earned this reward through and through.

Peter has been a continuous and active member of the Mt Evelyn RSL for over 18 years, serving on the committee and a number of times as Vice-President. In recent years he has taken on the responsibility of ensuring members and friends have access to the branch's facilities, opening up on request and particularly on a Friday evenings when members come together in perpetual mateship at the end of each week.

In Peter's application for Life Membership Roger Boness wrote: "*Peter's obliging and courteous nature is respected by his service mates. For years Peter was the first one up to make a 'cuppa' for the older veterans in the club and they thought highly of him. Every branch & club needs a Peter Henskens whose ongoing commitment and reliability have not only stood the test of time but have also assisted the sub-branch to remain viable*". Well done Peter!!

Below: Peter (centre with certificate) being congratulated by members Laurie Hollier (Welfare Officer), Roger Boness (President) and Jim Bentley.



2012 Meeting Dates

March 18th (changed)
April 15th (changed)
May 13th
June 10th
July 8th
Aug 12th
Sept 9th
Oct 14th
Nov 11th
Dec 9th

*The Mt Evelyn RSL
Meetings are held on
the second Sunday
of each month at
2.00pm at the:*

Mt Evelyn RSL
Clubrooms
49 Birmingham Rd
Mt Evelyn Vic 3796

Ph: 9737 0767
Email:
mtevrsl@gmail.com

Postal Address:
PO Box 182
Mt Evelyn Vic 3796

Website:
[http://
moutevelyn.vic.au/
mount-evelyn-rsl](http://moutevelyn.vic.au/mount-evelyn-rsl)

Important Dates **Coming Up:**

Mt Evelyn History **Group**

Are a community partnership group with the Mt Evelyn RSL. The group meets at the RSL Hall and all Mt Evelyn RSL members are free to attend their talks and tours.



History Group **Calendar 2012**

- **Sat March 24th 1-4pm**
@Mt Ev Lib

*Bronwyn Higgs –
Her family in Mt Ev*

- **Sat April 21st @2pm**
@Lily Libr

*Talk on Aborigines
in Yarra Valley*

- **Sat May 26th @2pm**

Lillydale Lake Walk

**More details to
follow in later
editions.**

New Group in
Mt Evelyn –

***Mt Evelyn
Walking and
Adventure
Group***

Phone Vanessa on
0414372618.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2012 will be a busy year for members and families as we plan for the centenary commemoration of the 1915 landing at Gallipoli in 2015. Any ideas on how members think we should commemorate this important event please pass them on to the committee.

The Branch has recently reported on the rejuvenation of the Wray Crescent memorial garden and the work Rob Sibbings undertook during 2011. I am pleased to announce that in conjunction with Billanook Ward Councillor Tim Heenan, who provided a council grant, the Australian National Flag in the gardens will be flown 24/7 as it will be illuminated at night in accordance with procedures for the display of the Flag. It is also proposed this year to relocate the World War One memorial from central Wray Crescent to the memorial garden and place a plaque on the cenotaph recording all the names of Mount Evelyn service people who were killed on active service. We may even look as well at some proper chain fencing around the park to stop people parking their cars there.

Similarly the sub-branch was recently informed that we were successful in our application and will be receiving an American M2A2 field gun for display in our community. The RSL will be seeking community input via the local media as to where the gun should be displayed. We are also keen to hear what members think – should it go out front of the clubrooms or in the war memorial park? Please pass on your ideas and comments to the committee.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has provided a further opportunity for the RSL to strengthen their relationship with local schools by including in the history component from year two through to year ten to learn about world conflicts and associated migration patterns/programs and impacts whilst improving their historical knowledge.

In closing I'd like to invite our members and the community to visit our memorial garden as it continues to develop, and spend some reflective time remembering those who served in order for us to live in a free and safe Australia.

LEST WE FORGET

Roger Boness

PLEASE NOTE:

Our March and April meetings this year have been changed as the second Sunday would have fallen on a public holiday.

Membership Subs – 2012 – due now!

Full Members – open to ex-service personnel who were in the uniformed services for a period of six months or more. **\$40 a year**

Affiliated Members – open to those who have served with the emergency services or whose relatives were ex-service personnel. **\$40 a year**

Tell us if you are over 80 years old – you no longer have to pay your subs!

Send a cheque or money order to – Mt Evelyn RSL, PO Box 182, Mt Evelyn

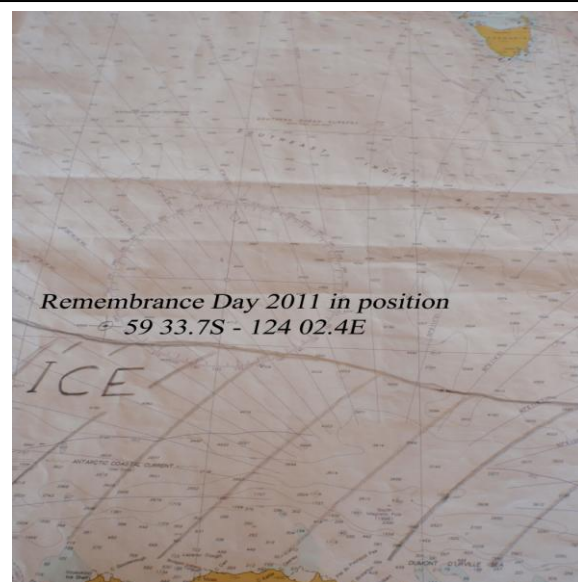
Some of the Great Mysteries of our Time:

- Why doesn't Tarzan have a beard when he lives in the jungle without a razor?
- Why do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are flat?
- Why do banks charge a fee on 'insufficient funds' when they know there is not enough?
- Why do Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?
- Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?
- Whose idea was it to put an 'S' in the word 'lisp'?
- What is the speed of darkness?
- Why is it that people say they '*slept like a baby*' when babies wake up every two hours?
- If the temperature is zero outside today and it's going to be twice as cold tomorrow, how cold will it be?
- Do married people live longer than single ones or does it only seem longer?
- How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?
- Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?
- We know all about New Zealand – but where's Old Zealand?
- Did you ever notice that when you blow in a dog's face, he gets mad at you, but when you take him on a car ride, he sticks his head out the window?
- Why do toasters always have a setting so high that could burn the toast to a horrible crisp, which no decent human being would eat?
- Why is there a light in the fridge and not in the freezer?
- Who was the first person to say, '*See that chicken there... I'm gonna eat the next thing that comes outta it's bum.*'
- Why do people point to their wrist when asking for the time, but don't point to their bum when they ask where the bathroom is?
- Why does Goofy stand erect while Pluto remains on all fours?
 - They're both dogs !
- Who was the first person to look at a cow and say, '*I think I'll squeeze these pink dangly things here, and drink whatever comes out?*'
- If quizzes are quizzical, what are tests?
- If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, then what is baby oil made from?
- If electricity comes from electrons, does morality come from morons?
- Do illiterate people get the full effect of Alphabet Soup?
- Does pushing the elevator button more than once make it arrive faster?
- Why do the 'Alphabet song' and 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' have the same tune?
- Why are you now humming that song?

Message from Antarctica

Last Remembrance Day, while we were enjoying the wonderful sunshine at our service at the Mt Evelyn Memorial Gardens, one member was experiencing the exact opposite in the Southern Ocean between Tasmania and Antarctica.

Matt Crymble works for Customs as a Marine Enforcement Officer where his role is to investigate, board and, if found illegal, apprehend foreign fishing vessels and illegal arrival vessels. Previous to this Matt served for 17 years with the Royal Australian Navy, he is still with the Naval Reserve. At 11.00am on Remembrance Day he conducted a service for the crew on the 'Ocean Protector'. It was his third at sea.



Hi All,

I thought you might be interested in where I observed Remembrance Day last year?

I was at work onboard the Customs chartered vessel Ocean Protector. I performed the service assisted by other ex-servicemen, along way south of your service in Mt Evelyn. Earlier in the day we had snow fall and ice forming on the deck. When it came time to conduct the service it was – 2 degrees. I allowed those attending to wear beanies however ball caps were removed.

Our position was, 59 33.7S – 124 02.38E (see map). Probably doesn't mean a great deal reading it like that. I have attached a photo of a navigation chart that provides our position and that of the ice pack that extends from Antarctica.

The other two photos are of our service. Attendance was almost 100%. The only personnel that didn't make it were those on watch and a few shift workers that were in bed. The crowd was a mixed bag of ships crew, Customs officers, Fisheries officers, French Fisheries officers and Navy personnel.

I hope you find this interesting.

See you at the club in the near future.

*Cheers,
Matt Crymble.*

Above: The circle with the cross through it was our position. The yellow land mass below is Antarctica, Tasmania is clear in the top right of the chart.



Photos: Matt Crymble (centre), conducting the Remembrance Day service on the vessel 'Ocean Protector'.



INTERESTING STORY OF A MT EVELYN SERVICEMAN DURING WORLD WAR TWO

On 'Remembrance Day' last year the Mt Evelyn RSL was visited by Julie Steele who had an interesting story to tell about her Uncle, Douglass Gordon, who was a Mt Evelyn resident who served with the RAAF during World War Two.

Doug's father Norman had served with the British Forces during World War One and in 1920 he bought his wife Jean out to Australia where they settled on a 25 acre property in Old Hereford Rd called 'Koo-Ka'. They had three children, Doug, Cam & Marian, who all attended the Mt Evelyn Primary School and they ran an apple orchard.

At the onset of World War Two Doug was 18 and living at Kew and working as a storeman and sales clerk at A G Healing in South Melbourne. On December 18th, 1939, not long after recruiting for the RAAF was opened, Doug enlisted in the air force and applied to be a storeman. Soon after he was sent to the training depot at Laverton where he was eventually attached to No 1 Squadron.

In July 1940 he embarked from Melbourne with No 1 Squadron and was sent to 5 HQ Sembawang in Singapore where the Squadron was issued with Lockheed Hudsons. Their role here was to conduct seaward reconnaissance and patrols. Soon after the Squadron was posted to the RAF station at Kota Bahru in northeast Malaya where they continued undertaking general reconnaissance missions.

On December 8th, 1941 No 1 Squadron became the first squadron to see action in the Pacific War when they attacked a convoy of Japanese warships shelling beach defences in Malaya. However the Japanese soon landed in Malaya and their rapid advance along the peninsula forced 1 Squadron to move to Palembang in Sumatra. From here they harassed Japanese bases and convoys.

Eventually Japanese paratroops landed at Palembang and the squadron was once again, forced to relocate, this time to Semplak in Java where the squadron began attacking shipping and oilfields. On 6 March, 1942, after weeks of heavy fighting, the remaining three Hudsons of No 1 Squadron flew to Australia carrying sick and wounded personnel. The rest of the RAAF personnel, including Doug Gordon, had to fend for themselves.

As a result a number of them, under the leadership of Flight-Lieutenant George Mocatta, decided to find a boat and escape to Australia. George Mocatta had grown up in Queensland and had served with the Royal Australian Naval Reserve for 16 years before becoming a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland. He enlisted in the RAAF at the beginning of World War Two and served as the Station Intelligence Officer. What happened next to Doug Gordon was later described in a news article.

Cairns Post – March 24th, 1942.

RAAF MEN ESCAPE

The feat of a party of Royal Australian Air Force men in patching up a ship wrecked by bombing and navigating it at four knots an hour from Java to Australia, was described yesterday by Flight-Lieutenant G Mocatta, formerly a Brisbane solicitor, who has arrived in Melbourne.

"After the collapse of Singapore" he said, "670 of us crowded on to an 800 ton ship. We sailed to Palembang Sumatra, being bombed all the way but not hit. We operated there until February 16. In one day we sank a 10,000 ton transport and set another ship of the same size on fire, and sank a 5000 ton vessel, two ships of 3000 tons, and 32 barges on the river. We bombed the invading force until we ran out of bombs. Then our boys went over their ship at mast level and sprayed the decks with machine-gun fire. The fight planes got most of the barges. At the end of the day the Palembang River was littered with dead Japanese, and the attack was smashed. But next morning there were twice as many of them on the way – they had no regard for loss of life. So we had to leave Palembang".

"We marched through the blazing oil fields – a terrifying sight – and down to Oosthaven. There was no doubt about the Netherlands scorched earth – they made an amazingly thorough job of the oilfields. At Oosthaven we took ship for Java and after landing went to Batavia. The end was near then. We were lucky to get out in the patched up ship".

The vessel was a Siamese prize ship lying in Batavia. It had suffered several direct hits from bombs, and had 63 bomb or shrapnel holes in the port side, and 30 in the starboard side. There were

no lifebelts and no wireless.

The holes were blocked, where possible, with blocks of wood and cement. A sergeant-pilot obtained two radio receiving sets and patched up a transmitter from them. To overcome the lack of life-boats, empty petrol drums were lashed to long pieces of bamboo. A permanent list to starboard had to be affected to keep the ship afloat.

The ship was manned by makeshift personnel. The skipper was a Dane, the first officer a Swede, and the third officer was Flight-Lieutenant Mocatta who has had naval experience. The first and second engineers were a Scot and a Cornishman from Malaya who had not been to sea for years. Third engineer was a Chinese and the crew also were Chinese.

When arrangements were complete the vessel put to sea with a convoy, but as the damaged engines could muster only four knots it had to drop out of the convoy inside of half an hour. Limping along the coast of Java, the ship passed through Sunda Strait in broad daylight. She was sighted by Japanese aircraft but not attacked.

After a journey of 16 days the ship reached Fremantle. She had made less than 100 miles a day. All on board were RAAF personnel, with the exception of 10 civilians. "Our first glimpse of Australia was the sweetest sight we have ever seen" said Flight-Lieutenant Mocatta.

One family story has it they the group had travelled so far south that they saw an iceberg and quickly realised they had come too far. Another story is that Doug's father was working in intelligence and was able to find out Doug was on the boat.

Back in Australia Doug served throughout the war at a number of RAAF bases in Victoria, NSW and Queensland. In 1945 he served for five months on Labuan. He married Maureen in 1943 and they eventually had three children. After the war he became a quarry manager at Montrose before relocating to North Queensland. He passed away only three years ago. His sister Marian said Doug would never speak about what had happened to him during the war.



Above: Doug Gordon in his RAAF uniform. Many thanks to Julie Steele, Marian Adair, Paula Herlihy & Dr Janice Newton for information.



Above: Roger Boness (Pres) and Derek Crittenden with his award on Remembrance Day last year.

COMPETITION

You may remember the competition run in the last edition to 'create a caption' for the photo (below)



Thanks all of those who sent in their captions. There were some great ones. Here are some of the ones we can print:

- *"Come on Prez, we're off to Kansas"*
– Laurie Hollier
- *"Vintage & effervescence"*
– Roger Boness
- *"The President wanders up Blueberry Lane"*
– Laurie Hollier

And the winner of the bottle of Red Wine is:
Luke Hollier
for –

"It's Dorothy & Toto"

Light shines on battle sacrifice

By Russell Bennett

MOUNT Evelyn's RSL is literally shining a light on the memory of the town's fallen diggers.

It has received a Yarra Ranges Council grant to illuminate its memorial and recently-repaired flagpole each evening with a spotlight at the top of the Wray Crescent shopping strip.

Government regulations say Australian flags can not fly at night unless fully lit.

The RSL has also applied for a grant to pay for a plaque containing local fallen soldiers' names, ages, and locations where they lost their lives.

The names of the six Mount Evelyn RSL members who have died in the past six months, including former president Derek Crittenden, will be remembered as well.

Mount Evelyn RSL president Roger Boness said it would tie in with a government push to celebrate the ANZAC centenary in 2015.

Mr Boness said his RSL would continue to enhance its partnerships with local schools in the lead-up to the centenary with educational programs about Australia's past conflicts.

He said the memorial garden – near the corner of Birmingham Road and Wray Crescent – was a focal point for the town.

He said it had not been vandalised since the flagpole was repaired and the memorial restored late last year.

"We're just hoping to keep it that way," he said.

He hoped the light would dissuade any potential vandals from attacking the memorial at night.

Mr Boness said he admired Benalla's regional gardens and the Baechus Marsh Avenue of Honour.

"We want this to hold the same meaning and be part of our heritage," he said.

"We're not just another town with an RSL."

"Our schools really back us and the national school curriculum really gives the RSL an opportunity to interact with schools on the history of past conflicts and what happens after they're over."

Mr Boness added: "The RSL hasn't always set the standard – not recognising fighters of certain conflicts, and migrant soldiers."

"But now, through memorials and the upcoming centenary, it has."

"We have this place – one place that brings people together, one for mates to bond and exchange their



Mount Evelyn RSL president Roger Boness flies the Australian national flag

Vale Derek Crittenden (1935-2012)

The sub-branch is sad to announce the passing of one of its stalwart members and past president, Derek Crittenden, aged 76 at Mildura on January 6th, 2012 after a long illness.

Derek served his country as a National Serviceman between 1953 & 1959. He moved to Mt Evelyn in the 1980's where he ran both a tyre business at Woori Yallock and the local milk bar. He was always community minded and was involved with the Lions Club and the Walking Stick Club.

In 2007 he was elected President of the Mt Evelyn RSL where he was instrumental in organising negotiations with the shire to have the RSL take over the lease of the hall and in organising for the club to hold a dawn service on Anzac Day – an event that is now an entrenched part of the Mount Evelyn community calendar.

Last Remembrance Day the RSL presented Derek with a 'Certificate of Appreciation' for all his efforts as president of the RSL and for what he had done for the Mt Evelyn community. At his funeral president Roger Boness told those gathered *"He was one of the few people I've met who no-one had a bad word for. He was liked by everyone"*. Our thoughts go out to his wife Betty and all his family and friends.

Academy of Human Development

On a Monday morning a group of philosophers meet at the 'RSL Hall' to discuss life's big questions:

* **Why am I here?**

* **Who am I?**

* **Is there more to life?**

The group uses book study and meditation to help uncover the truth behind these questions and to journey towards self discovery. In an informal way participants are encouraged to really start examining their lives in an endeavour to rediscover true and lasting happiness.

Anyone interested in joining should contact:
Sue Hamilton on **0428829612**.

Group sessions begin at 10am and finish at 12 midday.

Morning tea is provided.



FITNESS CLASSES

At the RSL Hall

49 Birmingham Rd, Mt Evelyn



Improve your strength, Balance & Flexibility.

Vicki provides a social One Hour Strength Training Class to suit a wide range of fitness levels. Personal attention provided & program modified as required to suit individual needs.

Living Longer Living Stronger

(Men & Women over 45yrs)

Tues & Thurs 8am – **Only \$7 per session**

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(Women only – all ages)

Mon 6pm, Tues & Thurs 9.30am –

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Beginners most welcome!! Bring a drink bottle & a smile! Bring a friend! Call in & try it – first class is free!! Weights provided.

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Ph: **9736 2980** Mob: **0408 998 045**

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RALPH PROCTOR DISPLAY

Make sure you check out the Ralph Proctor RAAF display at the 'Mont de Lancey Museum' at Wandin. Ralph has been a long time member at the Mt Evelyn RSL & served with the RAAF in Europe during World War Two. He has loaned his wartime memorabilia to the museum and it is a fascinating collection. Includes items to do with his experiences at D-Day & Arnhem.

Mont de Lancey Museum & Homestead

71 Wellington Rd, Wandin

Open: Wed-Sun 10.30-4.30pm

THE JOE CLARK STORY – pt 1

Joe Clark was the last First World War veteran to be a member of the Mt Evelyn RSL. In 1991 he sat down with Anthony McAleer and recorded his memories. What follows is Joe's life story.....

Joseph Charles Clark was born on September 30th, 1897 at East Meander, Tasmania, the son of Arthur James and Sarah Susan Clark. He was the second youngest of eight sisters and a brother.

"I was born in 1897, near Deloraine in Tasmania. You look from Deloraine up into the Cradle Mountains, very rugged country. There were ten of us in the family you know, I had eight sisters and there were two boys, James and myself. I lost my mother when I was seven and Dad was a pretty strict man. We lived and worked on a farm more or less, it was a very tough life".

It was a hard life for a child growing up on the land during this period. At an early age he learnt how to use a plough and his father taught him how to shoe horses and other aspects of blacksmithing.

"I went to the local school and when I was thirteen Dad said "Right, time you bought your things home and went to work". From then on I had to work, it was pretty tough going".

In his teens Joe worked at various labouring jobs around rural Tasmania and at a young age became a skilled axeman, even entering a number of competitions.

"I went to work for 'Solomons', they were in the timber game. Up at a place named Wondella, Aboriginal name, it was a big run and all up on the side of the mountain. They were pulling logs out with a big traction engine and they had bullocks. I use to take two bullocks up and hook the cant hook into the logs and they use to come down. I had two big bulls I looked after, 'Lion' and 'Tiger', I can remember their names as well as anything, and I use to scramble up amongst them to get the timber out. I use to get three shillings a week and me lunch".

On one occasion while working with a group of men who were erecting a telephone line on the West Coast, he came into contact with a legendary Tasmanian Tiger. He remembered being sent to collect meat for the camp and on the way back he was followed by a (now extinct) Thylacine who was after the contents of his bag. He recalls being quite scared but not as much as his dog who quickly raced off back to the camp and hid.

On August 4th, 1914 Joe's life changed quite dramatically when Australia declared war on Germany. Only a few days after the AIF recruiting offices opened in Tasmania his brother, James Arthur Norman Clark, who was three years older than Joe, left his job as an assistant at a Butter Factory in Brighton and volunteered for service in the army.

"When the war broke out my brother James was one of the first to enlist. He joined the 12th Battalion, in fact his number was 204".

Private James Clark enlisted on August 22nd, 1914, by this stage he had already had three years experience training with the Senior Cadets in Launceston. After two months initial training in Tasmania he embarked from Hobart on October 20th, 1914 on the HMAT Geelong and sailed to the Middle East where the 12th Battalion completed their training in the desert sands of Egypt.

Next issue:

James serves on Gallipoli & in France and tragedy strikes the family...



Above: Joe Clark (1996)

MT EVELYN FURPHYS

- Best wishes to Betty Ford & Dot Ervine who haven't been well lately.
- A big welcome to new members Ted Fairweather and Marion Morris. Ted has become a regular at the Thursday afternoon socials.
- Make sure you check out the new bar at the clubrooms – it's a beauty!! Thanks to Arch Carswell for organising it.
- Laurie Hollier is the Sub-branch's Welfare Officer. Should you require any assistance or advice please ring him on:
Ph: 9737 0068
- The sub-branch's Padre, the Rev Richard Schoenmaker from the Mt Evelyn Christian Reformed Church, is also available to assist members in need. Contact him on
Ph: 9736 1087

If undeliverable return to:

The Mt Evelyn RSL Sub-Branch
PO Box 182
Mt Evelyn Vic 3796

Club Opening Hours

***Every Friday Night
7.00pm – 10.30pm***

Celebrate the end of the week with a visit to the clubrooms.

Andy & Marie have a well stocked fridge and Peter is always on hand to make a brew if you so desire.

Friday night football/cricket will be playing on our big screen TV and don't forget we also have a pool table.

While you're visiting make sure you check out the fascinating display of military memorabilia that members have donated over the years. This has all been exhibited in our new display cases and arranged by an historian from Museum Victoria.

The Digger's Café

The social club operates the club rooms every

***Thursday afternoon
from 1.00pm to 4.30pm.***

If you're looking for something to do of a Thursday afternoon in Mt Evelyn why not call in for a chat or a game of pool or indoor bowls.

Hall Hire

The RSL is a great facility for anyone who requires a place for clubs or social groups to gather. Most of the time this facility lies idle and the RSL could be making (albeit a small amount of) money from hiring it to interested parties. We would greatly appreciate your input if you know of anyone who might be interested in hiring the hall on an ongoing basis. However no Bucks/Hens or under 25's parties!

The Mt Evelyn Community Link is in charge of administering hall bookings and she can be contacted directly on 9736 1177.

Mt Evelyn RSL Committee

President –	Roger Boness	Ph: 9737 0830
Vice President –	Jim Hurley	Ph: 9876 3750
Secretary –	Anthony McAleer	Ph: 9736 4384
Treasurer –	Anthony McAleer	Ph: 9736 4384
Welfare Officer –	Laurie Hollier	Ph: 9737 0068
Padre –	Rev Richard Schoenmaker	Ph: 9736 1087
Appeals Officer –	Dot Ervine	Ph: 9736 3638

Editor: Anthony McAleer

Ph: 9736 4384

Email: antmca@bigpond.com

Send me an email if you want to receive the newsletter faster via email – it also saves the club on postage costs!