

## NEWSLETTER

MAY, 1978

Newsletter Format

It has been proposed for some time that the society should produce a regular newsletter which is more than merely a notice of forth-coming society activities. An historical society newsletter should provide items of historical information and also record current happenings of historical significance. This newsletter makes a modest start on what, hopefully, will be a regular format. It will be necessary however, that items for inclusion be provided by members and your co-operation in submitting suitable items is essential to the success of the operation. Draft articles can be readily adapted for use.

May Meetings

It is intended that the May meeting be conducted in two parts:-

(1) Usual meeting at 8 p.m. on Wed. 10th May in the War Memorial Hall, 905 Main Rd. Eltham.

(2) Excursion on Sunday 21st May commencing at 1.30p.m. at the Old Lower Plenty Bridge (just downstream from the Main Road bridge over the Plenty River)

The theme will be "Historic sites and buildings from Lower Plenty to Kangaroo Ground". The meeting on 10th May will be a discussion evening, to prepare the way for the excursion. Members are asked to bring along notes of any relevant information which they may have. It is intended that any such information be used to supplement a considerable amount of material already available in preparing notes for the excursion. It is hoped that a number of local identities with specialized knowledge of particular areas will be able to take part in either the meeting or excursion.

It is intended that the excursion commence at Lower Plenty and follow the line of Main Road with minor deviations to nearby locations. It will extend through Eltham and if time permits go on to locations in Research and Kangaroo Ground. Transport will be by private car with walking between sites grouped close together.

Office Bearers 1978

At the Annual General Meeting on March 8 the following office bearers and committee members were elected.

President - Peter Bassett-Smith

Vice Presidents - Audrey Cahn, Bruce Ness

Secretary - Russell Yeoman

Assistant Secretary - Kath Stephenson

Treasurer - Graham Beyer

Committee-Mesdames J. Ness, F. Spicer, P. Macdonald, Messrs. R. Smith, J. Sidwell.

It is noted that this year sees the departure (we hope temporarily) from the Committee, of the society's Foundation President Charis Pelling. Mrs. Pelling has served the society as President, Vice President and Committee Member continuously since the foundation, but is unable to continue due to proposed absence from the area during coming months. It is appropriate to now record the society's appreciation of her valuable service.

Subscriptions

At the Annual General Meeting subscriptions for 1978 were fixed at the same level as for the past few years.

Adult \$3.00 Student \$1.00 Family or group \$5.00

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

and may be paid at the next meeting or sent to the above address. Early payment is requested as subscriptions are the society's only source of funds.

Community Centre Opening

The Eltham Community Centre was opened on 22nd April by the Premier, the Hon R. J. Hamer. It is the only mud brick community centre in Australia. The society was represented in the displays at the centre by community groups. Our display featured old photos of the Community Centre environs and some historical details of part of the site of the building which was once owned by Henry Dendy (of Brighton fame). The Community Centre occupies lots 275 and 276 of Holloway's 1851 subdivision which he called "Little Eltham". Lot 275 was purchased by Dendy in 1856 from Charles Wingrove and Alfred Armstrong. These men probably purchased the land from Holloway. Wingrove in 1853 became Secretary of the Eltham District Road Board, a position which he held for many years, whilst Dendy became a member of the Board and served one term as its President.

Dendy also purchased lots 277 to 281 on the opposite side of Maria Street (now Main Road) and extending between Pitt and John Streets. The whole of his purchase was about 5 acres. Lot 275 contained a steam flour mill near the Diamond Creek whilst Dendy lived in a house at the front of the land. Dendy's wife Sarah died at Eltham in 1860, aged 57 years and also in that year Dendy was appointed Chairman of a committee to establish a Church of England in Eltham. He donated half of one of his Pitt Street lots for this purpose. St. Margaret's Church was opened on this site and remains in well preserved state today. The old vicarage is now named Dendy House. In 1867 Dendy sold his land and business to William F. Ford of Melbourne for £600 and shifted to Waihalla where he had an interest in a copper mine. He is buried in the Waihalla Cemetery. No trace of Dendy's mill or house exist on the site today, but trees on the land could well have been planted in Dendy's time. An avenue of trees leading towards the creek may have bordered the track to the mill.

Much of this information was obtained from the book "Henry Dandy and His Emigrants" by L.A. Schuman.

"Back to Eltham"

Resulting from the suggestion of Mr. Jack Ward the society's committee has considered a proposal to stage a "Back to Eltham" festival. It has been agreed that the committee of the Eltham Community Festival be approached with the suggestion that this be the theme of the 1979 Festival. The Society would agree to take an active part in the organization of such an event.

Kingslake National Park

The society has been advised that this year is the Golden Jubilee of the Kingslake National Park. It is intended that this be celebrated by a function at Kingslake later in the year.

Coming Events.

Next committee meeting - Wed. 14th June.

July meeting - Wed. 12th

Eltham Community Festival - August.

The society intends to participate but details are yet to be finalized.

Millumbik Historical Society Bus Trip - Sun. Sept. 24th to Moundarra Reservoir and Gippsland Folk Museum, Moe.  
Contact Kevin Patterson 438 1691 for information.

R. Yeoman,  
Secretary.  
439 9717.