

shire of eltham historical society

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FEBRUARY MEETING

The first meeting of the society for 1980 will be at 8 p.m. on Wednesday 13th February, in the War Memorial Hall, 905 Main Road, Eltham. The major agenda item for this meeting is the examination of historical photographs from the Shire Council's collection. This collection was commenced in 1970 for the publication of "Pioneers and Painters" to commemorate the Centenary of the Shire in 1971. Most of the photographs were copied from private collections at about that period, but from time to time since then there have been additions of early and more recent photographs to the collection. A number of recent additions are yet to be catalogued.

Photographs from the collection have been used in a number of society exhibitions based on a variety of themes. However, the whole of the collection has not been previously available for examination and this meeting therefore presents a rare opportunity for members and friends. It is likely that individual members will not be able to examine each one of the hundreds of photographs available. However the choice will be there for each member to examine as many as possible of the photographs of their choice.

As at all society meetings visitors and new members are more than welcome.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Wednesday 12th March and will include election of office bearers for the coming year. Further details of this meeting will be provided in the next Newsletter.

ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH

Advice has been received from the Historic Buildings Preservation Council, that approval has been given for listing in the Historic Buildings Register of St. Margaret's Church, Pitt Street, Eltham, and the former vicarage behind the church which is now known as Dendy House. The recent mud brick hall at the rear of the church is not included in the listing but does not detract from the character of the older buildings. As has been previously recorded in the Newsletter the church was built in 1861 on land donated by Henry Dendy. A copy of a booklet giving details of the early history of the church is in the society's records.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS PRESERVATION COUNCIL

Newsletter No 7 (July 1979) provided for members, a brief description of the Australian Heritage Commission, the body responsible for the National Estate.

In Victoria the state body responsible for identification and preservation of historic buildings and objects is the Historic Buildings Preservation Council. The Council is a statutory authority established under the Historic Buildings Act 1974. Its aim is not to restrict or to preserve for preservation's sake. Rather it seeks to encourage and assist owners of historic and architecturally important buildings to retain and maintain the integrity of their properties and in the case of commercial premises to help make them economically viable.

Buildings identified by the H.B.P.C. as being of State wide importance are listed in Historic Buildings Register. The Council then maintains control over alterations or demolition by its permit issuing powers. It also has the power to recommend to the Government various forms of financial assistance to enable owners to retain and maintain historic buildings. The Council also has a role in advising Planning authorities on matters of conservation of historic buildings and places.

The H.B.P.C. comprises experts in a number of specified fields representing a wide range of interests. Decisions to list a building or to remove a building from the register are only made after detailed consideration of all available expert advice.

The Act provides heavy penalties for unauthorised alterations or demolition of designated buildings. In order to minimize the impact on the owners of such buildings permits may be issued for interior or exterior alterations which are consistent with the preservation of the important features. In fact it is possible to list only a part of a building such as the facade or interior if it is the only part of the building with merit.

Financial assistance available to owners can be available in the form of grants, loans or rate or land tax remission. Such assistance is generally subject to conditions which commit the building to preservation for a certain period and include opening to the public on occasions.

The H.B.P.C. works in close consultation with the National Trust and the Australian Heritage Commission. These latter two bodies provide a valuable service in the preservation of historic buildings, places etc. The Historic Buildings Act provides legislative protection for designated buildings and it is desirable that any important building which could come under threat is listed in the Register. The society intends to maintain a continuing role in promoting and assisting in applications for the listing of important local buildings.

COMBINED HISTORIC BUILDINGS REGISTER.

The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has prepared a consolidated register of all buildings in the Metropolitan area which are listed in the Historic Buildings Register, the Register of the National Estate or classified by the National Trust. Buildings are listed under municipalities and addresses are given.

The register may be inspected at the Eltham Shire Office or is available from the M.M.B.W. for \$4.00.

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