

shire of eltham historical society

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

8 P.M. WEDNESDAY 12TH MARCH, 1980

ELTHAM SHIRE OFFICE

895 MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

SPEAKER PANEL: "A DECADE OF HISTORY -
SOME IMPRESSIONS OF ELTHAM IN THE 1970'S"
VISITORS AND NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

Annual General Meeting Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 1979 Annual General Meeting
3. Annual Reports
 - (a) President's Report
 - (b) Secretary's Report
 - (c) Treasurer's Report
 - (d) Other Reports
4. Election of Office Bearers 1980.
All office bearers retire and are eligible for re-election. Nominations for all positions should be submitted in writing to the secretary prior to the meeting or will be accepted at the meeting. Office bearers required are:-
 - President
 - Vice President (2)
 - Secretary
 - Assistant Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Committee Members (4)
5. Fixing of Annual Subscriptions
6. Any other business which may be considered by the Annual General Meeting (Details of such business should be supplied in writing to the secretary prior to the meeting).

A Decade of History - Some Impressions of Eltham in the 1970's.

History does not stop at any point in time. The events of yesterday are part of our history and as we enter the 1980's it is interesting to reflect on the history of the past decade. In particular this exercise intends to examine the history of the Shire of Eltham during the 1970's. For this purpose we have invited a panel of four speakers to briefly talk on their impressions of Eltham and its shire during that period. Do not expect a recital of dates and happenings. Speakers have been selected to provide varying viewpoints and whilst little guidance has been given to them, it is expected that the result will be more in the form of a commentary on the trends of the period. The 1970's were a period of substantial change in Eltham. There was extensive expansion of the "suburban" residential subdivision commenced in the 1960's. The rural areas of the shire were also subjected to development pressures on a different scale. In common with many other areas the Community also underwent extensive social changes. The conservation movement has gained considerable ground during the decade. All of these aspects are expected to be mentioned by our speakers.

Don Maling. Don has been a resident of the Shire for about 13 years firstly in Eltham and for the latter part of the 1970's at Smiths Cully. He was a councillor from 1973 to 1976 including one year as Shire President. He is an active sportsman with many years association with the local hockey club. Don works at the Caulfield Institute of Technology where he is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Business Studies.

Peter Bassett-Smith. Peter is well known to members as President of our Society. He has lived in the area since 1928 with some brief absences. The last 15 years he has spent at Kangaroo Ground and before that he lived in Eltham. He is now semi-retired but still operates his farming property.

Neville Emerson. Neville is a local businessman, having operated as a real estate agent at Lower Plenty for the past 15 years. He has lived at Lower Plenty for 20 years and at Greensborough for about 5 years before that. His involvement in community affairs includes many years as an active member of Rotary and he is a past president of that organization.

At the time of writing negotiations are still underway with regard to the fourth speaker. A different aspect on the subject under discussion is assured.

ELTHAM, ENGLAND

The name Eltham first appeared on local maps in 1851. It is obviously named after Eltham in England but the reasons for the connection do not appear to have been recorded. There are other towns of the same name in New Zealand and northern New South Wales.

The English Eltham (pronounced "Eltam") is situated on the south eastern outskirts of London in the London Borough of Greenwich. Some of the early buildings in the Borough, rank amongst the finest in Western Europe. Eltham and its nearby neighbour Shooters Hill, boast many fine buildings which are described in "The Buildings of Greenwich" by Alan Glencross. This book was recently brought to our attention by English journalist, J. Freeman, who is writing a series of articles on Australian towns with English counterparts.

Eltham has royal associations which go back to 1305 when Bishop Bek presented his recently completed manor house to Edward, Prince of Wales. The building became Eltham Palace and was the home of British monarchs for over 200 years. The Palace was extended and rebuilt during this time and was later subjected to extensive ransacking. The only buildings of the medieval palace which remain are the Great Hall and Moat Bridge (c.1479) They have been extensively restored and are now occupied by the Institute of Army Education. Near Eltham Palace is Eltham Lodge built between 1663 and 1665 for Sir John Shaw. It is an outstanding example of Restoration domestic architecture.

While Greenwich and nearby Woolwich developed through the centuries into considerable towns, Eltham long remained a village. Eltham High Street retained the atmosphere and architecture of a village street until the early 1930's but subsequent road widening and re-building have left little trace of that atmosphere. Many fine buildings have however, been preserved in the area. Eltham Palace and Eltham Lodge are outstanding examples but many others are listed as Grade II buildings by the Department of the Environment.

The English Eltham like our own apparently considers itself a little different from other areas. Typical of the attitude of the residents seems to be the Eltham Society which terms itself an amenity organization. It is involved in historical and environmental matters, town planning and the arts.

Former President of our society, Charis Pelling established contacts between the two Elthams some years ago but they have not been pursued as vigorously as may be desirable. Perhaps the visit of Mr. Freeman and his work on returning to England may help to stimulate a correspondence between the two areas. We would be interested in hearing from anyone interested in pursuing this matter.

NILLUMBİK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Secretary, Kevin Patterson has advised of two items of interest.

1. On Sunday March 23rd there will be a bus trip to Kyneton. Former Nillumbik President Irene Turvey, who is known to most of our members, now lives at Kyneton. She will accompany visitors on a guided tour of the historical locations of the town. Enquiries should be made to Bruce Wadeson 438 1940.
2. The long awaited history of the Shire of Diamond Valley is expected to be released shortly. This book written by Dianne Edwards will be almost a compulsory purchase for people interested in the history of the area.

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