

shire of eltham historical society

p.o. box 137, eltham, victoria, 3095.

newsletter no.17 march 1981

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

8 P.M. WEDNESDAY 11TH MARCH, 1981

ELTHAM SHIRE OFFICE

895 MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

DISCUSSION PANEL - "ELTHAM REMEMBERED"

VISITORS AND NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 1980 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 1981

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 General Meeting (Details of such business should be supplied in writing to the Secretary prior to the meeting.)

ELTHAM REMEMBERED

During the lifetime of many local residents Eltham has changed from a sleepy little country village to an expanding residential suburb with a busy shopping centre. Some early Eltham buildings and other features remain but by far the greater number have now disappeared for ever. The town was traditionally spread out along Main Road (or Maria Street) and its near environs. To many of us the many early photos along the road are the only knowledge we have of its appearance many years ago.

Some local residents recall the Eltham of many years ago and a group of these people will discuss their memories of Eltham at the Annual Meeting. They will include Mrs. E. Reynolds, of Research, Mrs. H. Bird of Pitt St. and Mr. F. Burgoyne of Bridge St. It is expected that they will be joined and assisted in the recollections by some of their friends. The discussion will be on an informal basis with opportunities for members to participate.

Two recent matters involving buildings of Old Eltham have assisted in providing inspiration for the subject. President Kath Stephenson has been researching the history of the former C.B.A. bank near John Street with a view to appropriate recording of its historical significance and preservation of the building. The other matter concerns the former Police Station which is to be vacated by its occupiers, the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Destruction Section of the Department of Crown Lands and Survey. The property may be offered for sale and its future is at this stage uncertain.

HERITAGE WEEK 23rd - 29th MARCH 1981

Heritage Week is promoted by the National Trust with a large programme of property openings, tours, exhibitions and other special events. Full details are available from the Trust by phoning 654 4711. Events of local interest are as follows :-

Special Opening Gulf Station, Yarra Glen, 28/29th, 12-5pm

Special Opening Banyule Gallery, Heidelberg, 29th, 10am - 5pm, with guided tours at 11.30 and 1.30.

Heidelberg Festival 29th, including special opening of Heidelberg Court House, 12-6pm, Local historical tour and bicycle/walking tour along the Yarra Valley from Chelsworth Park, Ivanhoe, 10am.

Historical Display, Statewide Building Society, Main Road, Eltham. 16th-27th.

MAROONDAH AQUEDUCT TOUR

Following on discussion on the Maroondah Aqueduct, its past and future, at the last society meeting an inspection of unused and still operating sections of the aqueduct will be made on Sunday 22nd March. It will include walking along sections of the aqueduct with transport by private car between the several access locations. Although it will be necessary to walk back to the cars along each section of the aqueduct, it may be possible to organize a shuttle system for anyone who finds it difficult to walk long distances. Because the walk will be in several relatively short sections, some sections may be omitted for those with less time or energy.

The inspection will commence at 1-30 p.m. where the aqueduct crosses Main Rd., Research, just below Eltham College. Parking is available at the factories below the aqueduct.

The Maroondah Aqueduct was (and in part still is) part of Melbourne's water supply system. It carried water over the 66 km. from the Maroondah Reservoir on the Watts River at Healesville to the Preston Reservoir. Of this length, 41 km. were open channel, 10 km., tunnel through hills and 15 km. in 14 inverted siphons across stream valleys.

The route of the aqueduct is north of Tarrawarra and Yarra Glen, along the Yarra escarpment south of Christmas Hills and crossing Watsons Creek into the present Shire of Eltham near Henley Rd. The eastern part of the route lies entirely within the former boundaries of the shire. The aqueduct passes south of Kangaroo Ground to Research and crosses the Diamond Creek by siphon at Allendale Rd., Eltham North. It then extends to Reservoir via St. Helena, Greensborough North and Bundoora.

Water first flowed through the aqueduct in February 1891 when it was fed by a diversion weir on the Watts River. Records of the building of the aqueduct indicate that it was a significant construction achievement.

The present Maroondah Reservoir was completed in 1927 and the aqueduct was enlarged at that time to take increased flows.

Further details of the history of the Maroondah Reservoir and the aqueduct are available in the M.M.B.W. publication, Living City No. 26 (1979).

About 10 years ago the section of the aqueduct through and north of Research was replaced by a large pipe and that section of the channel is now unused. The channel has remained largely intact (unlike sections at Greensborough and Bundoora where long lengths of the disused aqueduct have been demolished or filled in). The M.M.B.W. have relinquished control of the disused aqueduct reserve which is crown land. The Shire of Eltham is to take control of this section of the reserve as a linear park. No decisions have been made with regard to the future of the aqueduct itself.

Easterly from Research the aqueduct is still in use but is to be replaced by the recently constructed Sugarloaf to Research water main. The aqueduct will then only remain in use between Maroondah and Winneke (Sugarloaf) Reservoirs.

The Maroondah Aqueduct is considered to be an important historic structure, not just to the local area but to the metropolitan area generally. The Yan Yean Aqueduct, part of Melbourne's earliest water supply system, was destroyed about 20 years ago when a replacement pipe was laid in the channel itself. The Maroondah Aqueduct and the later O'Shannassy Aqueduct remain as the only other aqueducts used to transfer water to Melbourne from the main storage reservoirs. Other aqueducts in the Board's system are located within or adjacent to mountain catchments.

For these reasons it is considered important to preserve substantially intact long lengths of the disused aqueduct, together with its bridges and other associated structures. There has been no known application for appropriate classification or registration of the aqueduct and perhaps now is a suitable time for the society to consider action along these lines.

Kath Stephenson

President

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Russell Yeoman

Secretary

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