

shire of eltham historical society

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

newsletter no.19

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NEXT MEETING 8 P.M. WEDNESDAY 8TH JULY, 1981

WAR MEMORIAL HALL, 905 MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

DISCUSSION EVENING - EARLY HISTORY OF KANGAROO GROUND

DISCUSSION LEADERS - JOY AND BRUCE NESS

VISITORS AND NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

Some years ago former society member Vera Jackson began recording the history of Kangaroo Ground on a large map of the area which she had prepared. When she left the district the map was passed onto Joy Ness to add to the collection of local material already held by the Ness family. The map has been progressively added to and, together with other material from the collection, will form the basis of the discussion evening.

Joy and Bruce have been members of our society since its inception. Their families were amongst the pioneers of the Kangaroo Ground area and the family records, together with the research that they have carried out, have resulted in quite an accumulation of local historical information. This meeting should provide a valuable contribution to members knowledge of the history of the Kangaroo Ground area of the Shire of Eltham as well as providing an opportunity for enjoyable informal discussion.

FORMER ELTHAM POLICE STATION

The Department of Crown Lands and Survey no longer requires its Vermin and Noxious Weeds Office at the corner of Main Road and Brougham Street, Eltham, and The Public Works Department is investigating the future use of the building.

The Eltham Shire Council has considered the matter and has resolved that it is of the view that the building is of historical significance and part of the heritage of the community and that it should be retained. It has asked the society to consider the suitability of the buildings on the site for use for historical purposes. This has been considered by the Society's committee and interest in the preservation of the buildings and use by the society has been conveyed to the Council. The matter is not yet finalized.

The property is the site of the former Eltham Police Station and the existing main building was the police residence. It is believed to date from about 1860. The lockup at the rear was demolished some years ago but the stables remain and have been used as garages in recent years. A licence for a police station at Eltham was first granted in 1856. A rented private house was used until a station could be constructed.

This building is of at least local historical significance in its own right, but it assumes more importance as part of a group of historical buildings which also includes the adjoining Court House.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Subscriptions for this year are now overdue. There has been a good response in payment of subscriptions but a number are still outstanding. As they are the Society's major source of funds prompt payment is desirable. Please complete the form enclosed with the May Newsletter and forward with your subscription for either new membership or renewals.

Subscriptions are :-
Adult \$3.00
Family \$5.00
Student \$1.00

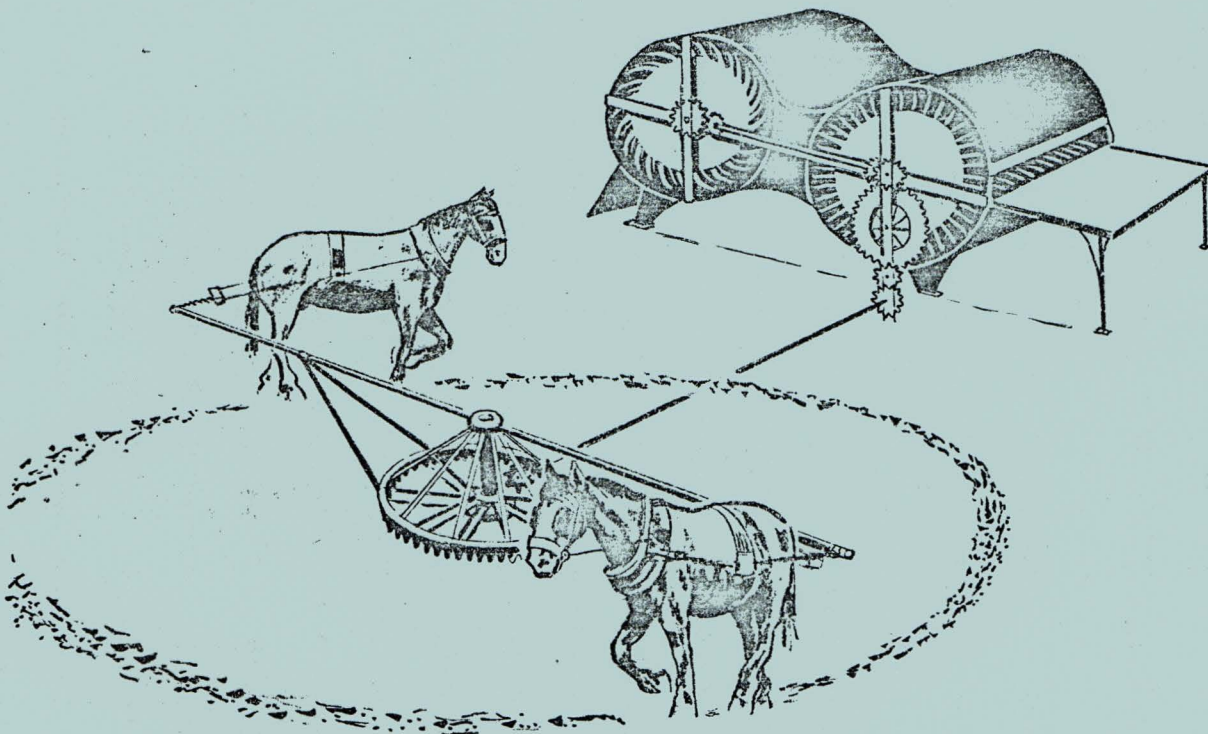
HORSE-DRIVEN THRESHING MACHINES, KANGAROO GROUND.

At a Society discussion evening earlier this year Bruce Ness briefly mentioned a number of horse driven threshing machines used at Kangaroo Ground last century. Bruce has since uncovered additional information about these interesting machines.

John Bell, grandson of William Bell was born at Kangaroo Ground in 1848. In 1910, writing about early settlers in the area he mentions that about the year 1852 Messrs. T. Bell and F. Rogerson went home to Scotland and imported a lot of ploughs and harrows and horse powered threshing machines. Apparently seven of these machines were brought out and set up on the farms of the Bells, Francis Rogerson, Joseph Stevenson, James Johnston, Andrew Harkness (later James Mess's) and another, possibly James Donaldson or John Jardine.

The machines were horse driven peg drum threshers. They were used to thresh wheat, oats and barley; also to cut oaten chaff; and grind wheat and oats. Threshing prior to this time was done by hand. The Horseworks were used at Kangaroo Ground until about 1900. After that the threshers were driven by Blackstone oil engines imported from England.

Joh Ebeli has produced the sketch below in consultation with Bruce Ness.



Kath Stephenson,
President,
439 9588

Russell Yeoman,
Secretary,
439 9717