

# shire of eltham historical society

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

newsletter no.21

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NEXT MEETING 8 PM WEDNESDAY 11TH NOVEMBER, 1981

WAR MEMORIAL HALL, 905 MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

SUBJECT: ELTHAM, 1918 TO 1981

SPEAKER: ERIC HARMER

VISITORS AND NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME

Eric Harmer was a Councillor of the Shire of Eltham from 1952 to 1964 and was Shire President for four years during that period. His involvement in community activities extends over a much longer period. When asked to talk to the Society about his period in Council, Eric volunteered his memories of Eltham from 1918 to the present day. Eric's cheerful nature and lively sense of humour is a guarantee of an entertaining evening and for those who want a little more than entertainment Eric has been known to make the odd controversial statement.

The meeting will follow our usual format of informal discussion. Come along with your questions about how Eltham used to be or your own memories of Eltham to discuss with Eric.

#### CHRISTMAS BARBECUE

The final society function for 1981 will be a B.Y.O. barbecue on Wednesday 9th December, commencing at 6.30p.m. The location will be the Eltham Town Park (or Alistair Knox Park, the name is uncertain at present). The park contains gas barbecues but bring your own portable barbecue if you wish. This function will provide members and their families with an opportunity for social contact and informal discussion with other members.

#### ELTHAM COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

The Society's float in the festival parade again won a prize. This year we won the prize for the best effort by a local group, donated by Bob Clarke's Menswear. As in previous years Peter Quirke has allowed us to use his truck as a float. Peter has formerly operated his fruiterer's business at Research and Diamond Creek and has recently opened a shop in the Eltham Village Arcade. Joh Ebeli, with a little more assistance from other members than in previous years, again did an excellent job in decorating the float.

Members of the Victorian Folk Music Club again accompanied us on the float and their music helped create the appropriate mood.

A new feature of our parade entry was the inclusion of horse drawn vehicles owned and driven by the Hennel family of Hurstbridge. They certainly added to a highly successful day.

#### THE ELTHAM AND HURSTBRIDGE RAILWAY LINE

The Society has recently arranged a photographic display in the Eltham Library on a railway theme. The extension of the railway from Heidelberg to Eltham in 1902 and the later extension to Hurstbridge came at a time when photography was experiencing a boom period. Many photos of early railway construction and operation have been preserved. The display contained photos owned by the Society, Eltham Shire Council and Nillumbik Historical Society.

Although information on the history of the railway is available from a number of sources the Society has no specific documented history of it. A chronology of events associated with the railway has been prepared by local resident Paul Sierak, mainly from the book "Victorian Railways to '62" by Leo J. Harrigan. It may be of interest to members and is set out below.

1885

Line between Clifton Hill and Alphington (2½ miles) but not officially used until 1888. Local residents arranged a local train service with a Gas engine, supplied by Messrs. John Danks & Son, fitted to a carriage. Operated between 9 am to 5 pm the service was controlled by the train driver who acted as guard and ticket seller.

(P.10?)

- 1888 (May 8) Line opened from Collingwood to Heidelberg. Connected to Melbourne via Royal Park to Spencer Street. In March of this year a public Meeting was held at the Queenstown Hall to discuss plans for a railway to serve Eltham, Greensborough and Diamond Creek.
- 1891 (Mar 24) Final section of Outer Circle railway connected to Fairfield Park from Riversdale and Deepdene. Outer Circle was not a through service. Local services operated from Riversdale to Fairfield Park. In 1892 (Oct.12) two Rowan Steam cars operated to substitute locomotives to cut down on operating costs.  
(P.104)
- 1892 Agreement was reached to start construction of the railway between Heidelberg and Eltham.
- 1983(Apr.12) Outer Circle line Deepdene to Fairfield Park was closed.
- 1901(Oct.21) Line from Princes Bridge to Collingwood completed.
- 1902(Jun.5) Line from Heidelberg to Eltham opened.
- 1912(Jun.25) Line from Eltham to Hurstbridge opened.
- 1921(Jul.21) Electrification of line from Princes Bridge to Heidelberg.
- 1923(Apr.15) Line from Heidelberg to Eltham Electrified.
- 1926(Aug.2) Line from Eltham to Hurstbridge electrified.

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