

shire of eltham historical society

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

newsletter no.26

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NEXT MEETING

8P.M. WEDNESDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER, 1982

WAR MEMORIAL HALL

905 MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

" SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE "

VISITORS AND NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

This meeting will consist of a number of different activities, most of which are intended for small groups or individuals. Where appropriate the person organizing the particular activity will provide a brief explanation to the whole meeting. Members will not be restricted to the one activity but may spend a short time at each if that suits their interests. The activities proposed are as follows:-

1. Eltham Community Festival.

This item is to be a discussion involving all present and is intended to interest those who like to participate in fun type events. The Festival will be held on 16th and 17th October. The Society will be providing a display as part of the activities at the Eltham Community Centre. In recent festivals we have entered a float in the Festival Parade and it is this aspect which requires discussion and commitment from members.

2. Old Chinaware Collections.

Local residents Mrs. J. Bakos and Mrs. K. Gaston have agreed to bring along items from their chinaware collections for inspection by members. Both have interesting collections and they will be able to discuss this subject with members. This should appeal particularly to those members interested in antiques.

3. Maps

A number of interesting old and not-so-old maps of local areas will be available for inspection. Nationwide Map Week is to be held later in September and this activity may stimulate members' interest and encourage them to visit exhibitions which have been arranged. The Secretary will discuss the use of maps both in research and recording of local history.

4. Reading/Research

A number of items will be available for members who wish to sit themselves in a corner and read. They will include :-

- (a) Research notes on a wide variety of subjects prepared for the Society by Mr. K. Chappel.
- (b) A large quantity of Victorian Government papers from the period 1850-1880. These were procured by the Society from the National Library some years ago and cover a wide range of subjects. They have been available for members' perusal from time to time, but still provide a largely unknown resource.
- (c) Local papers from the 1930's owned by Mrs. N. O. Smith.

If your particular interest in local history is not covered by any activity please advise the Secretary and we may be able to arrange additional items. However the wide range of activities should guarantee an interesting evening for most members and any visitors. As usual coffee and biscuits will be provided.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

The stock of membership cards printed some years ago has now been exhausted and cards have therefore not been issued this year. Receipts for membership subscriptions have of course been issued. The value of the cards has been questioned and it has been decided not to print further cards for this year. The matter will be further considered next year. Please advise the Secretary if you are in favour of production of membership cards.

KANGAROO GROUND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Advice has been received from the National Trust that the Presbyterian Church at Kangaroo Ground has been recorded by the Trust. Bruce Ness a member of the Society and the Church has been largely instrumental in pursuing this matter with the Trust. The citation supporting the classification describes the Church as follows:-

"Designed by the Architect C. W. Maplestone, this small church was consecrated in 1878 and has been the centre of Presbyterian life in the district since that time. It replaces a slab church and school put up in 1851 to accommodate a congregation that had just gathered in 1841 and then meeting in a barn.

The building is of brick with single buttresses, has a slate roof and is decorated with bands of contrasting colour brick in the arches of the lancet windows.

Other than for the addition of a vestry in 1892 the building is intact."

The history of this church has been the subject of two articles in the Diamond Valley News in recent years. A booklet on its history is available from the church.

The church is one of a number of important old buildings in the Kangaroo Ground area and is the first to be classified or recorded in any of the several registers of such matters. Others are also worthy of recognition and it is hoped that members or local residents may feel motivated to pursue their listing.

FORMER FALKNER COTTAGE

The Eltham Shire Council has now decided that this old cottage should be demolished. Reports in the last two Newsletters have acknowledged the ruinous condition of the building. Despite this there was a last minute move to preserve and restore the building but it has been judged to be beyond repair. The situation is most unfortunate but it appears to be the only practicable course of action. The Council has agreed to the Society's request that we keep any salvageable materials for use in some future historical project. This will necessitate removal of at least the outer cladding prior to or during demolition.

The assistance of members is required for this purpose. No programme for this work has yet been adopted but persons willing to assist should advise the Secretary. If there are insufficient volunteers, personal requests for assistance will be made to members.

The land on which the cottage stands together with adjoining land will be retained by the Council as a small local reserve. The Council decision specified that the Society be invited to submit an appropriate historical name for the reserve and to submit suggestions on means of reserve identification. These matters will be considered at the next committee meeting but any suggestions from members would be welcomed.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Victorian Mounted Rifles

A request has been received from Mrs. W. B. Calder for information on the Victorian Mounted Rifles, founded in 1885 and incorporated in the Australian Light Horse Following Federation. The information is required for a research project which Mrs. Calder hopes will result in a published history of the V.M.R. Anyone with any information should contact the Secretary.

The Status of Rivers.

The Society has received a copy of a press release by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission seeking historical information on Victorian rivers for a report on how rivers, their frontages and catchments have changed since the first settlements.

Some of the changes that have occurred are quite spectacular but they have gone on so slowly we don't even realise what has happened.

The aim is to get a general appreciation of the status of our rivers today. To do this, old pictures and paintings, or even old descriptions of rivers in letters and journals are now needed to complete the report.

So comparisons can be made, it is essential that the sites of photographs or pictures be accurately identified.

If readers have any information they think might be useful, please write to Peter Dunk, Assistant Director (Assessments), Ministry for Conservation, 250 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne, or ring him on 651-4752.

VICTORIA'S 150th ANNIVERSARY

The celebrations for Victoria's 150th Anniversary will commence on 16th November 1984 and conclude on 10th November 1985. A Citizens Council has been formed at a state level to define the policy for the celebrations and co-ordinate activities. The theme of celebrations is entitled "Growing Together" and the Citizens Council has produced a booklet under that title which provides instructions on how to develop a local community programme. The booklet sets out all relevant organizational aspects and lists project and event ideas for celebrating at a local level.

The Citizens Council has set up a procedure for appointment of a local committee under the auspices of the municipal council. This committee would then develop a local programme. The historical aspect of the anniversary is only one of the many aspects mentioned in the booklet. However local history is considered to be an important ingredient and the involvement of the Society is certainly warranted. At this stage there appears to be no initiative from any other body and it may be that we have to make the first move in setting up a local committee. The matter is to be considered further by the Society's Committee and any suggestions from members would be most welcome.