

# shire of eltham historical society

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

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## NEXT MEETING

8.00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER, 1982

895 MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

ELTHAM SHIRE OFFICE

FILM NIGHT: FEATURING DR. DONALD THOMSON'S FILMS OF

CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL TRIBAL LIFE

## CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP

B.Y.O. BARBEQUE - ELTHAM TOWN PARK

6.30 P.M. WEDNESDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 1982

## NOVEMBER MEETING

The late Dr. Donald Thomson, former Professor of Anthropology at the University of Melbourne and resident of Eltham was noted for his studies of the Aborigines of Central Australia. During expeditions to the Great Sandy Desert area in 1957 and 1964 he recorded on film many aspects of the tribal life and culture of Aborigines not influenced by Europeans. In 1966 the B.B.C. in collaboration with Dr. Thomson produced two films from this footage. By the kind permission Mrs. Dorita Thomson we are able to show these films, "Valley of the Great Snake" and "People Out of Time". These high standard productions have been extensively used by the B.B.C. "People Out of Time" has been shown in 39 countries, including such diverse places as Nigeria, Dubai, Israel, Syria, Brazil, Borneo, Thailand and the Soviet Union. The material from which this film was made is to be used by the Academy of Science for films for the teaching of Human Biology for H.S.C. students.

For those who are interested enough to pursue this matter further, recommended reading is Dr. Thomson's book "Bindibu Country" published after his death in 1970. These films are important historical and anthropological records. They assume more importance to our society because they are the work of a notable Eltham resident. This local showing deserves wide publicity. Please make it widely known amongst your friends.

Note that this meeting will be at the Eltham Shire Offices, not the War Memorial Hall.

## CHRISTMAS BREAK UP

Sunday excursions in December have in the past proved less than successful in terms of number of members attending. Last year we tried a simple mid week evening barbecue as our Christmas function. Despite rather miserable weather a large group of members attended and enjoyed a pleasant evening. This type of function is worth a repeat performance, hopefully with better weather. Details are set out above. The location is near the corner of Panther Place and Main Road. Bring your own food, drink and whatever. Electric Barbeques are available (so don't be put off by a Total Fire Ban). The date is more than a month away and apart from a reminder to members at the November meeting no further notice will be given. Note the date in your diary NOW.

## ELTHAM COMMUNITY FESTIVAL.

Although our parade entry did not win a prize this year, it was considered highly successful from a participation point of view. Despite some uncertainty as to just who was coming, members and friends kept appearing at the assembly area. As in the past years our friends from the Victorian Folk Music Club brought their instruments along and really added to the occasion. This year we concentrated on a rural theme with a tractor/trailer combination. Thanks to Peter Bassett-Smith for the tractor, Joh Ebeli for the decorations and friendly trailer owner Dennis McKay. Unfortunately the closing stages of the parade were marred by heavy rain. We just finished as the rain started but members scattered very quickly. This has prompted the suggestion for future parades that we have a tent or other suitable venue for members to gather after the event. This is worth following up.

The cold driving rain provided a special problem for Peter in driving his tractor home to Kangaroo Ground. Have you ever had to choose between standing up to warm your hands on the exhaust and having your tractor seat flooded?.



Our exhibition at the Community Centre also relied on a rural theme. It featured old farm implements and photos of farming activities, particularly those associated with the orchard industry. Many of the implements came from "Yarra Vale" in Mt. Pleasant Road, the former orchard property of the late Eddy Anderson and were kindly loaned by his brother Alf. Bruce Ness also loaned equipment from his farm at Kangaroo Ground. We are grateful to the Landscape Factory for providing timber to construct display stands.

"HEALESVILLE - HISTORY IN THE HILLS".

In 1856 when the Eltham Road District was proclaimed it embraced an area between the Great Dividing Range and the Yarra River extending from the present western boundaries of the Shire to the source of the Yarra near Woods Point. Until the early 1860's settlement extended only as far as New Chum on the western side of the Watts River. The discovery of gold around Woods Point and Matlock attracted a large population to that area and led to establishment of the Yarra Track route to those goldfields. Until 1875 the coach route to Woods Point passed through Eltham, Kangaroo Ground and Yarra Flats. In 1871 the Roads Board became the Shire of Eltham, but in 1878 the area east of the Watts River was removed from the Shire. The government had provided funds for the few roads in this area and it had never really been the responsibility of either the Board or the Council. The area remained unincorporated until the creation of the Shire of Healesville in 1887 and the Shire of Upper Yarra in 1888.

The early history of these areas and the on-going story of Healesville is told in "Healesville - History in the Hills" a recently published book by Sally Symonds. It is a relatively small book of 150 pages and obviously much of the detailed history must be left out. It can be assumed from the information in the book that more detailed information is available and that the author has deliberately aimed to provide a basic history largely for the local people. There appears to be no previously published local history and so it fills a need and should prove quite popular.

The book is well written and in typical local history fashion, contains many interesting old photos and copies of early maps. The author is a local resident and her feeling for the area shows in many passages. Healesville has historical associations with Eltham and its Shire which are closer than those of many places which are closer in physical distance. This book is therefor recommended reading for all members.

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