

SHIRE OF ELTHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 137 ELTHAM VICTORIA 3095

NEWSLETTER

№31

JULY 1983

NEXT MEETING : 8 PM WEDNESDAY 13TH JULY, 1983

ELTHAM SHIRE OFFICES

895 MAIN ROAD ELTHAM

GUEST SPEAKER : JACK McLEAN

SUBJECT: THE HURSTBRIDGE LINE -A BRIEF HISTORY

VISITORS & NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

The opening of the railway extension from Heidelberg to Eltham in 1902 was a significant event in the history of the local area. A similar comment is applicable to the further extension to Hurstbridge, opened in 1912. The railway played an important part in assisting the development of the area and certainly was responsible for influencing the development of particular locations. The present location of the Eltham shopping centre, the development of the Hurstbridge township and the suburban development in Montmorency are all examples of the influence of the railway.

A brief summary of the history of the development of the railway between Melbourne and Hurstbridge has been given in an earlier edition of this Newsletter. The early days of the line have formed the basis of several exhibitions by the Society. However members have not had the opportunity to discover much more than superficial details of local railway history.

Jack McLean is President of Box Hill Historical Society and is also Leader of the Victorian branch of the specialist railway historical group, the Signalling Record Society. He has available to him the usual detailed technical information which seems to be an essential ingredient of every railway enthusiast. His wide experience in the railway and local historical scenes enables him to selectively deal with this material according to the interests of his audience. Thus we can expect to hear a discussion on the history of the Hurstbridge line which is of general interest but with the potential to deal with matters of a more detailed nature if that is the inclination of those present.

The photo collections of the Shire of Eltham and Nillumbik Historical Society contain a number of old pictures of the railway and these will be used by Jack to illustrate his talk.

Marian Coleman, another railway enthusiast and a member of our Society, has provided copies of "Somersault", the magazine of the Signalling Record Society which provide a detailed history of the signalling arrangements on the Hurstbridge line. These articles would be interesting further reading for anyone wishing to pursue the history of the railway.

FALKINER COTTAGE, ELY STREET, ELTHAM

As previously reported in the Newsletter, this old cottage is to be demolished. Arrangements have been made with Mr. David Willis of the Kyneton Mill for him to salvage useful material from the building for use in restoring the mill. There will be an appropriate acknowledgement in the mill of the source of the materials.

As previously stated, it is unfortunate that the building has to go but because of its condition restoration is impracticable. However the fact that the materials will be used for a useful purpose with an historical interest is some consolation.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Just a reminder that 1983 subs are now overdue. Most members have now paid, so this item is just for the few who have forgotten. Subs are as follows:-

Adults	\$4-00
Students	\$1-00
Family	\$5-00

Membership/renewal forms were distributed with the May Newsletter or are available from the Secretary.

HURSTBRIDGE BANK BUILDING

The former C.B.A. Bank in Hurstbridge has now been closed by Westpac. The building was originally offered to Nillumbik Historical Society for restoration on another site in accordance long-standing comments from that society that the building should be preserved.

Following newspaper publicity of the situation, the Eltham Shire Council indicated its desire that the building should remain in Hurstbridge. Nillumbik considers that the primary objective is preservation of the building and has relinquished the gift in favour of the Council.

It is now proposed that the Council arrange relocation of the building to another nearby site in Hurstbridge. There is some possibility that the Council could purchase the site and presumably the building could then remain there.

The Society has been asked if it has any use for the building. As with Nillumbik Society our main concern is that the old building be preserved. We have no particular requirement for its use and use for any community purpose would be appropriate. If any member has a particular suggestion, please contact the Secretary. It is important for the preservation of the building that some use be found. If it is not, no funds are likely to be allocated for maintenance and it would become a target for vandalism.

The small weatherboard building is mainly worth preserving for its contribution to the character of the Hurstbridge town centre. It is said to also be a curiosity because it is on wheels. This has not been checked by the writer but if it is correct the significance is an unknown quantity. Perhaps further investigation will show that this is a particularly unusual type of building.

ST. ANDREWS SCHOOL - 125TH ANNIVERSARY

The primary school at St. Andrews is 125 years old in November and a celebration is planned on the weekend of 26th/27th Nov. An exhibition is being arranged and material is being collected for preparation of a history of St. Andrews. Anyone who can assist with either is requested to contact Nancy Mortimer on 710 1259 or the Secretary.

KINGLAKE NATIONAL PARK

The Kinglake National Park covers about 10,000 hectares of woodland and forest in the Shires of Eltham, Whittlesea, Healesville and Yea. It is an important local recreational and conservation resource and is listed on the Register of the National Estate.

Society member Arthur Hewitt is a member of the park Advisory Committee and has assumed the role of park historian. He has written a history of the first 50 years of the park 1928-78. It is at present in manuscript form but it is expected that it can ultimately be made available for reading by interested members.

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER

At the last meeting of the Society's Committee it was decided to co-opt Neil Blair as an additional Committee member.

"DONALD THOMSON IN ARNHAM LAND"

Dr. Donald Thomson's work with the Aborigines of Central Australia was the subject of films which were shown at a Society meeting last year. The late Dr. Thomson, an eminent anthropologist was a resident of Eltham. His work with the Aborigines of Northern Australia is the subject of a new book called "Donald Thomson in Arnhem Land" (Currey, O'Neil, Ross. \$24.95). It has been compiled by Nicholas Peterson from Thomson's own notes. It includes an account of the establishment of an Aboriginal Army force for the protection of the northern coastline during World War 2. This book, as well as being an important addition to Australiana collections, sheds further light on the life and work of a prominent local resident.

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