



Shire of Eltham Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

NO. 50 SEPTEMBER 1986

P.O. BOX 137 ELTHAM VICTORIA 3095

NEXT MEETING

8PM. WEDNESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 1986

METZNER HALL

JUDGE BOOK MEMORIAL VILLAGE

DIAMOND STREET, ELTHAM

(NOTE CHANGE OF LOCATION)

GUEST SPEAKER CAROLINE PHILLIPS

SUBJECT: GULF STATION, YARRA GLEN

GULF STATION/TOOLANGI BUS TRIP

SUNDAY 26 OCTOBER 1986

MORE DETAILS BELOW

"Gulf Station" is a complex of rude timber farm buildings dating from the 1850's located near Yarra Glen. It was established by William Bell and settled by the Bell family and Thomas Armstrong. The station is important for its historical associations and its unique group of buildings. It is owned by the National Trust and open to the public.

Caroline Phillips is the historian and gardner at Gulf Station. She has been a consultant historian to the National Trust and did much research on Gulf Station prior to taking up her present position. Much of her time over the past year has been taken up in restoration of the garden which was badly neglected and overgrown.

The Society will have for sale at this meeting copies of the Family History of the Bells, subtitled "The Bells of Scotland, Kangaroo Ground and Yarra Flats". It is written by Vera Jackson, a descendant of the Bells who is a former resident of Kangaroo Ground and member of our Society. The book will cost \$5.00.

Please note the change of location for this meeting. The hall is situated close to the main drive of Judge Book Village which runs off Diamond Street immediately over the railway crossing. The meeting is being held here to assist the large group of members from the village. Visitors and new members are welcome to attend. We would especially like to welcome any residents from Judge Book who are interested.

BUS TRIP:

Our second bus tour for the year will be held on October 26th. The major destination will be Gulf Station. We will also visit "Arden" at Toolangi, the home for many years of C. J. Dennis, the famous poet. The original house is no longer there but the garden called by Dennis "the Singing Garden" remains. "Arden" is now operated as tea rooms and we will have afternoon tea there.

Travel to Toolangi will be by way of Healesville and we hope to look at some of the history of that area on the way.

Cost of the trip will be \$8.50 for adults and \$4.50 for children. Bookings should be made using the accompanying form and include payment. Friends are welcome.

This trip is not as long as some we have undertaken. We will leave from the Eltham Shire Offices at 10.00 a.m. and return about 5.00 p.m. Please be present by 9.50 a.m. Bring a picnic lunch to eat at Gulf Station. There will be extra costs for entrance to Gulf Station and for afternoon tea (optional). (Devonshire teas are available at Gulf Station if you prefer a very light lunch.)

The date is some way off but there will be no further Newsletter before then. Please make your booking soon and keep a note of the date.

SOCIETY BANNER PROJECT:

The banner is nearing completion and those working on it are most pleased with the results. We have received help from a number of friends and from staff of the Community Arts Section of the Shire of Eltham. Community Artist, Jud Degan, has shown a great interest in our project and has been extremely helpful.

The banner will become part of a display of banners by various local groups in October. The opening will be at the Eltham Community Centre on Thursday, 9th. The display will then move to Woolworths Arcade, Eltham for the period Monday 13th to Saturday 18th.

Details of the opening of the display will be publicised. Watch for them.

Assistance is required by the organizers to set up and later relocate the display. People are also required to mind the display during its period at Woolworths. Please advise Opal Smith if you can help with any of these jobs.

ST. ANDREWS CHURCH:

The site of the weatherboard Anglican Church at St Andrews has been purchased by the Education Department for additions to the playground of the St. Andrews Primary School.

There have been moves to have the building re-located. However, there is a strong body of local opinion which believes the building should be preserved on its present site. Church services have not been held in the building for some time, but there are moves to revive this use.

The position of the Society in this matter is that preservation of the building is primarily a matter for the local community. However, if that community values the building, then by far the best method of preservation is on its present site.

At this stage, it appears likely that the building will be retained on its present site.

ELTHAM COMMUNITY FESTIVAL:

This year's festival will be held on 8th to 16th November. The Society will participate, as usual, in the festival parade on Saturday 8th. The next Newsletter will be issued very close to the festival date and so now is the time to be planning for the Society's float.

It is proposed to use the new Society banner in the parade.

MONTMORENCY:

The following article comes from the Bulletin de la Societe D'Histoire de Montmorency and has been translated from the French by Mrs. Judy Dean.

"How many places around the world still bear this famous name today...?"

For our part we know of only three: our native village of course - if one can still describe it thus since it now has such a large population; then the one so close to Bienne-le-Chateau that it has become part of it; lastly another more distant one on the banks of the St. Lawrence, five kilometres from Quebec, of which the writer is an honorary citizen. It is a great pity that no municipality here has agreed to pair with this last one.

To our knowledge there are three others. Two in the United States in the East of this vast country. It seems that our cherry trees brought there by French settlers before the War of Succession took root and bore fruit so successfully that they gave the name of their place of origin to these charming little villages.

Then we must not forget the one a few kilometres from Melbourne for which we compiled records at the Museum a few years ago.

Its origin is historically interesting, for after the visit of a young student from this great city in Australia, we have learnt a great deal that neither we nor our predecessors had previously known.

This young girl was hoping for the opportunity to go to Europe to visit this famous Montmorency since she was so familiar with its namesake in Australia.

Thanks to her we have discovered that the Montmorencys were formerly in the army of William the Conqueror, future king of England and victor at Hastings in 1066 after a successful landing on the Sussex coast. These Montmorencys later abandoning the royal French cause, settled there so that they might be created peers by British royalty.

They later settled in Ireland, in Tipperary in particular. Their feudal castle is no more than a ruin today. They made popular that song so well known to British soldiers in the First World War - "It's a long way to Tipperary".

This young student kindly continued to write to us after her visit and sent a cutting from a Melbourne newspaper for our archives. This announced the death of Count Henry of Montmorency a few months earlier.

She included a photo which she had taken for us of the local railway station, on which the name Montmorency could easily be read. Despite its small size, the print was framed and hung on the first floor of the Museum, beside one of the road leading into the village in Champagne which we visited.

Strangely enough, when in 1967 we were preparing to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the death of the Coustable Anne (Duke of Montmorency) and were contacting all the families descended from the Montmorencys, it was unanimously decided not to invite any of the Montmorencys living in Great Britain.

However, one of them came to Paris, having heard that something was in the air; but the general opinion was that the titles of which they boasted were only evidence of an unforgivable betrayal of France, like that of Jean de Niville who in the fifteenth century went over to the Burgundians. "Aplanos now and for ever"...

Perhaps, after all, this little village in Australia, which we would love to have known is the concrete reminder of something which is to us an act of treachery in times gone past."

ALISTAIR KNOX:

The recent death of Alistair Knox brought to an end a significant chapter in the history of Eltham. Over the past thirty or so years, Alistair has had a profound influence over many aspects of local life, attitudes and environment.

His best known role was in the field of environmental building and he was known in this regard far beyond the local area. He was largely instrumental in promoting the present day awareness of environmental issues in building and, in particular, developed the concept of mud brick construction to its present popularity.

Other fields in which he made significant contributions were as a councillor and shire president, landscape architect, social historian and an elder of the local Presbyterian Church.

At Alistair's funeral service the Society was represented by the President and a number of other members who were personal friends. Speakers at the service provided many insights into the very full life which Alistair led. Professor George Seddon of the University of Melbourne read the citation prepared when Alistair was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Architecture dealing mainly with his professional life. Robert Boyle, an elder of the Church, spoke on a more personal note. His most fitting words described Alistair as a person and local identity and were subsequently repeated as a tribute in the Diamond Valley News.

We will remember Alistair's contribution to local history and his recording of this contribution in his three books. We also remember him as a member of this Society,

Our sympathy is extended to Margot and the family.

OTHER BRIEF ITEMS:

We have advice from the Eltham Library that the Ivanhoe branch of the Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service has acquired microfiche copies of births, deaths and marriage records for Victoria from 1851 to 1895 and church records for Port Phillip region from 1836 to 1850. These records are an invaluable aid for people researching family history.

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The twentieth anniversary of our Society occurs next year. Ideas on how we should celebrate the event would be welcomed.

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We have not forgotten the commemorative certificates which were promised in association with our time capsule project. Time has proved a bit of a problem but we hope they will be ready soon.

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