



Shire of Eltham Historical Society

INCORPORATED

P.O. BOX 137 ELTHAM VICTORIA 3095

NEWSLETTER

NO 80 SEPTEMBER, 1991

NEXT MEETING

8PM WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER, 1991

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTRE

MAIN ROAD ELTHAM

(ENTER FROM SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)

TOPIC: MEMBERS' DISCUSSION EVENING

SUNDAY 27 OCTOBER 1991

SPRING EXCURSION

"THE BRIARS" AND "MULBERRY HILL"

More Details Below:

SEPTEMBER MEETING:

From time to time we hold discussion evenings to enable members to exchange information, entertaining stories or to display photos or other visual material. There is no agenda - just come along with information on a local history subject that you know something about or perhaps that you want to find out about.

One suggestion for those who think they have nothing to talk about is to find out about the origins of your street and especially its name. Blanche Shallard has promised to talk about Were Street and other nearby streets associated with the well known stockbroking family. On another subject Jock Read has said he will talk about "working up the bush". Perhaps some of our other members who have been around the area for a long while might like to talk about their work in the past.

In a minor way our Committee Meetings often finish up with discussions on matters like these. Committee members often comment how interesting these meetings can be.

As usual, we will be having supper at the end of the evening. This promises to be an interesting chatty meeting and equivalent to some of the best speakers we have heard.

SPRING EXCURSION:

As usual for October we have arranged a bus tour outside the local area. We will leave from the Eltham Shire Offices at 9.00 am on Sunday 27th October and travel to "The Briars" at Mornington and "Mulberry Hill" at Baxter. The cost will be \$16.00 for adults and \$8.00 for children. This includes admission to each of the houses and afternoon tea at "Mulberry Hill". Bring your own lunch to eat at "The Briars" and something for morning tea if you wish.

"The Briars" is one of the oldest pastoral stations on the Mornington Peninsula. It has historical associations with the early settlement of the district and with Alexander Balcombe who settled in the area about 1843. Near the house is a wetland wildlife reserve with walking paths and bird observation hides.

"Mulberry Hill" was the home of Sir Darryl Lindsay and his wife Joan. Darryl (1889-1976) was a member of the famous art family of Lindsays and was a prominent artist in his own right. He was also a noted art administrator being appointed Director of the National Gallery of Victoria in 1942. Joan Lindsay (1896-1984) was an important writer. Her best known work was "Picnic at Hanging Rock". Members may find it interesting to read her autobiography "Time Without Clocks" prior to this trip.

Members are welcome to bring their friends. Bookings will only be confirmed on payment. Please complete the attached form and return with payment to the September meeting or to our post office box.

The trip is still some time off but there is no further Newsletter before then. Note the date in your diary now. As this will probably be the first day of daylight saving you will need to remember that in organizing yourself on the day. Please arrive at 8.45 am ready for a prompt start at 9.00 am.

REG PRESTON - POTTER:

The Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston is to stage an exhibition of the works of Warrndyte potter Reg Preston. Glenda King of the museum is interested in locating items suitable for this exhibition which will be in late 1992. Anyone able to help should contact Russell Yeoman for further details.

THE ORFORD FAMILY - ELTHAM

Another in our series of family histories.

James and Sarah Orford sailed to Australia on board the "Orestes" and arrived in Botany Bay in November 1839. They were accompanied by their children George, Mary Ann and James Mathias. In 1841 they moved on to Braidwood to join his brother "Convict" George and for this journey they required a Certificate to show that they were free immigrants and not escaped convicts - a copy of this Certificate is held by the family. Their first Australian child, Sarah Amelia, was born in Braidwood and their last child, Thomas Henry, at Boydtown. In 1849 the family moved to Melbourne where they lived in Bourke Street West and when Thomas was about six years old they moved to Eltham - approximately 1853.

James Orford was a carpenter and brought some of his tools out from England. He also worked at whaling stations around the Warrnambool area before moving to Eltham. As a carpenter it is believed he worked on some of the early Churches in Eltham, including the old Catholic Church near the Diamond Creek Bridge. James and Sarah died in 1869 and 1897 respectively and are buried in the Eltham Cemetery.

Of the children we have been unable to find any trace of George. Mary Ann married James Peet and they finally ended up in the Ballarat area. James Mathias, Sarah Amelia and Thomas Henry stayed in the Eltham area.

James Mathias was granted forty acres of land out near the river in Eltham and he had a slab hut on this property where his first three children were born. He also worked on the mines at Warrandyte but found he was unable to support his family in this area so moved on to Brunswick where they started a clothing business. A family tale told about James refers to an episode which took place when the lock-up was first built in Eltham. He was invited to have a look at it and when he went in to have a look the policeman (a friend!) turned the key on him and told him he was fined two gallons. It seems at first James refused but finally had to agree to pay up before he was let out.

Sarah married Arthur Butler Young and the family had various land selections in the area - twenty acres at Watsons Creek and fifty acres at Kangaroo Ground where he had a two roomed dwelling of weatherboard and shingles built for his family. In 1875 he was granted a licence for a Smithy and so became a local blacksmith. They eventually moved from the area and finally finished up on a farm in Bunyip after having Smithys in various parts of Victoria.

Thomas stayed on in Eltham and married Helen Logan and they had seven children. Helen died soon after the birth of the last child and the children went to various areas. The children were William, Jane, Arthur, Fred, Florrie and Ernest and then Victor and Clem. Two of these children died in infancy. Bill remained in the area, Arthur went to Gippsland to the Kilpatrick family, Fred went to live with Mr Cole, the School Master at Research Primary School. Florrie and Ernie went to Ballarat, but Ernie after a short time returned to Eltham to live with his father. Clem went to live with Granny Logan. Once again the family was reduced to one or two left in Eltham. About the time the land boom broke Thomas and Helen owned a property in Pitt Street (now known as Sunnymede). Thomas worked at the Tannery near the creek, but after the land boom broke with no work they were unable to keep up the payments and so had to give up the land. All the children were born at this property but the hut they had there has since been pulled down. Fred and Bill both went to the First World War.

After leaving Sunnymede Thomas and Ernie went to live in a small slab hut at the top of Pitt Street where they paid one shilling per week rent to Watsons. They later moved to another hut in Panton Park Estate on the bank of the creek running through what is now the Morrison property (Sir William Irvine's). Panton Park was purchased by a Mr Gordon Lyons who also worked Banyule at the same time. After this a two roomed cottage was brought out from Clifton Hill by a dray drawn by sixteen horses and it was put on the land in Reynolds Road by Gordon Lyons. Thomas and Ernie lived in this house to which extra rooms were eventually added. Thomas later bought the house from Lyons in 1915 and then Ernie and his wife Kate bought the property from Thomas when they married in 1924 and it is still in the family.

About the beginning of the century Thomas was offered the position of managing the Panton park Estate in Reynolds Road - about five hundred acres divided into three blocks. There was a slip rail gate at the corner of Reynolds and Mount Pleasant Roads. It was just below this corner that the above cottage was placed. The first two years after Thomas took over the management a big part of the trees was rung and allowed to dry. Later on it was quite common to see twenty or thirty drays carting the wood from the property three days a week. They used to take it to the Clifton Hill Weighbridge and sell it for about ninepence a hundredweight to the mills, including Foy & Gibsons but sometimes they were not able to sell it at all. After the timber was cut away most of the limbs were burnt, the ground raked and sown down with coxford grass. The place then became good grazing land. Ernie remembered seeing eighty head of cattle and horses grazing there. He also remembered the place being alive with birds of all descriptions, including large numbers of fire tails. Thomas also worked at fencing on the railways when the trains first came to Eltham.

Ernie worked most of his life in the area until he died in 1982 aged 90. He spent a lot of his time working between Panton Park and Banyule, often driving cattle or leading horses. He and his brother Fred handled many horses, including race horses and polo ponies. He did not have much schooling as he claims to have wagged it most of the time and got his brother to write notes for him. It seems he was either getting the cane at school or at home for not going to school. Most of his days were spent fencing, wood cutting and clearing land. He also worked for Mitchells at Lilydale. He was married to Kate Thomas at the North Eltham Gospel Church and as the Church was only half finished, they were married near the Sunday School building where he taught Sunday School. They were the first couple to be married at the Church. Ernie and Kate had two sons, Ron and Doug who still live in the area.

Apparently many years ago the North Eltham people wanted a station siding at Coleman's corner without success. One day they learned that the Railways Commissioner was travelling by train to Hurstbridge so a number of men and women, including Kate Orford, held a rope across the line and waved the train down. All they got for their trouble was abuse from Harold Clapp, the Commissioner, and they still don't have a siding.

During the Depression there was not much work around so the property was partly used to grow fruit trees and the fruit was stored underground for storage. There was a lot of fruit growing in the area. Several people were also searching for gold in the area.

The house in Reynolds Road was surrounded by bushfires on a few occasions but fortunately was never in real danger.

One of Ernie's interests was water divining (a dowser) and apparently he was able to find water for a number of people to enable them to sink bores, including one on his own property which provided great amounts of water. This was very good as there was no water connected to the property and there still is not. He was also a member of the Eltham Cricket Club. He was a foundation member of the MUUIOF and was a delegate on three occasions on the construction of the Manchester Unity Building in Melbourne. He also held the Purple Degree of this Lodge and was a Past Grandmaster.

Arthur Orford worked for Andersons and also as a ganger on the Eltham rail line and Doug and Ron as children used to watch for him when they travelled on the train as young children so that they could throw the paper when the gangers called for the daily newspaper.

There have been four generations through the Eltham schools, beginning with Thomas attending the original school. Then his children attended Research Primary School and Dalton Street School, followed by the children of Ernie and then the children of Ron and Doug all attending Dalton Street and the High School. Ernie was on the Committee of the combined Primary/High School for about six years and attended the opening of the High School. Other related families who also attended the schools were the Logans, Kilpatricks and Brisbanes and later the children of Betty and Keith Banks, Betty being the daughter of Florrie (Orford).

SHIRE ENVIRONMENT WEEK:

The Shire of Eltham will be running a local Environment Week from Sunday 8th to Sunday 15th September. A major feature will be the launch of the Shire's Draft Conservation and Heritage Strategy at the Eltham Community Centre on Friday 13th September. Many members may be interested in the natural environment aspects of these activities but from the Society's point of view we are mainly involved with cultural heritage aspects which form an important part of the draft strategy. Members are welcome to attend the strategy launch and associated activities at 8.00 pm with displays at the Community Centre being open from 5.00 pm. Other details of the week's activities are available from Pat Vaughan at the Shire Offices.

OTHER SOCIETY NEWS:

Advance notice is given of the Eltham Community Festival on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th of November. As usual we hope to be involved in the Festival Parade on 9th. The next Newsletter is due only shortly before that date so put it in your diary now.

On the same weekend the Committee of Eastern Historical Societies is organizing a two day trip to Warrnambool at a cost of \$150.00 twin share or \$170.00 double. Registration is due by Friday 13th September. Russell Yeoman has details if you are interested.

The end of the year is fast approaching. Have you taken photos for our 1991 Photo Project yet? Remember that we want photos of everyday items or happenings or of local events of any description. Don't leave this till the last minute

From time to time the Society receives invitations to various functions and requests to provide speakers or other assistance. Members are encouraged to become involved by representing the Society wherever possible and appropriate.

Recently Peter Bassett-Smith gave a talk on local history to a Rotary Club meeting at Lower Plenty.

Peter, along with Mick Woiwod, represented the Society at the recent launching of a book on the history of Bulleen by Doncaster and Templestowe Historical Society.

Work on the Shire's Heritage Study is now under way with meetings arranged for the coming weeks to review the consultants' preliminary work. Early indications are that the consultants will now be able to proceed to the main part of the study and members who can help with information will be contacted over coming months.

Russell Yeoman
Secretary
439-9717

Sue Law
President
439-9520

Joan Ackland
Membership Secretary
439-9750