



# Shire of Eltham Historical Society

INCORPORATED

P.O. BOX 137 ELTHAM VICTORIA 3095

## NEWSLETTER

NO.86 SEPTEMBER, 1992

### NEXT MEETING

8 P.M. WEDNESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER, 1992

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

(ENTER FROM SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)

GUEST SPEAKER ISABEL ELLENDER

"SHIRE OF ELTHAM ABORIGINAL HERITAGE"

### SPRING EXCURSION - MARYBOROUGH

8 A.M. SUNDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER, 1992

STARTS AT ELTHAM SHIRE OFFICE

#### SEPTEMBER MEETING:

Isabel Ellender is a consultant archaeologist who has been carrying out a study of Aboriginal heritage for the Shire of Eltham since early this year. She briefly introduced the study at our February meeting with the aim of seeking out any information available from members. This resulted in a number of useful contacts.

Since then Isabel has been carrying out field surveys with Aboriginal assistants and seeking out other information in literature and by personal contacts. The study is nearing completion and Isabel is now able to report on the results of her survey and research. She says that some of her findings in the field of ethno-history - this is historical reports of local aboriginals - are particularly interesting. Although no recommendations have yet been prepared, Isabel is now able to give an outline of what they are likely to contain.

The Aboriginal heritage of our area has so far been poorly known. This study is intended to remedy that situation and we have here an excellent opportunity to obtain a preview of the findings.

### SPRING EXCURSION - MARYBOROUGH:

As a Spring excursion our bus trip on 27th September is well timed - Maryborough is conducting its Wattle Festival on that weekend. We are to be guests of the Midlands Historical Society who will provide a guide for our tour of the town. This is a somewhat longer trip than we usually undertake so we have an earlier start at 8.00 am and the cost is a little more than usual at \$20.00. The entry to the Midlands Society's Worsley Cottage is included. At the end of the town tour we will visit the C.W.A.'s Fair which is part of the Wattle Festival. Afternoon tea will be available there for a small charge.

Bring your lunch and something for morning tea if you wish. We will be travelling to Maryborough via Creswick and Clunes and returning via Castlemaine. We will return about 6.00 pm and transport home can be arranged if required.

Maryborough has a rich history with the gold era being particularly significant. Local historian Betty Osborne has produced the book "Maryborough - a Social History 1854-1905". You might like to try and obtain it from the library for advance reading or it will be available for purchase on the day at \$25.00.

To book for this tour please complete the attached form and return with your payment to the September meeting or send it to our post office box. Friends are most welcome as usual.

### 25TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING:

More than sixty members and guests attended our July dinner and meeting to celebrate our silver anniversary. The function was an outstanding success. The buffet dinner was catered by a group of members. Wines were arranged by Harry Gilham and included dessert wines which he produced himself from local fruit. The food and the wines received many complimentary comments.

The panel discussion "Images of Eltham" was a fitting sequel to the dinner. The diversity of the artists and their art was a significant feature of the panel. This typical Eltham subject was a most appropriate subject for this important meeting.

### MORE NEWS ITEMS:

Our friend, Andrew Mackenzie has arranged an exhibition at the Doncaster Gallery called "Old Friends - A Private Viewing". This is a personal view of the important Heidelberg School artists, Streeton, Withers, Roberts and McCubbin and includes paintings and memorabilia. The exhibition dates are September 2nd to 13th. Check with the gallery for times of opening.

Don't forget our 1992 photo project. We are expecting that the display at our Christmas break-up will include a wide variety of pictures of society activities, local events and current views of the area. Last year a number of members put together excellent collections based on particular themes. If you are doing that this year advise Russell Yeoman what your theme is so that we don't have a lot of people doing the same thing.

## ANDREW ROSS SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM:

Our honorary consultant, Wendy Bradley, has produced a report on progress with this project which is attached to this Newsletter. Further details will be provided in the next Newsletter on the proposed Community Awareness Day in November.

## ELTHAM FESTIVAL:

The Eltham Community Festival this year will be on 14th and 15th November. The theme is to be "Parties from Around the World". The Committee has considered our participation and considered that the theme is not really suitable for a historical society. We have decided not to participate in the Parade although that decision could be reviewed if any member has an inspirational idea for a float and is prepared to take on the task of organizing it. As part of the festival there will be a vintage steam train running from Melbourne to Eltham on Sunday 15th. There will also be shuttle trips between Eltham and Heidelberg. In association with this we have agreed to provide notes for a self-guided walking tour around Eltham for passengers (and anyone else interested).

## SHIRE HERITAGE STUDY:

The cultural heritage study of the Shire is running behind time but consultant David Bick and his team are now in the final stages. David has produced draft data sheets for a large number of significant properties. A copy of one of them is reproduced here to show the type of information included.

FORMER ELTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL  
RESIDENCE,  
690 MAIN ROAD,  
ELTHAM.

BUILT: 1891<sup>1</sup>

DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

### CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Constructed in 1891 as the Eltham Primary School's Head Teacher's Residence<sup>1</sup> this relatively intact polychrome brick building has significance for its associations with the origins of the Eltham township and with the early history of education in the Eltham district. Located on an elevated position, the former residence is a rare surviving example of a 19th century building constructed within the original government township. It has architectural significance as a representative example of the detached school house residences of the period constructed for the bigger country schools.<sup>2</sup>

### HISTORY:

Original Use: Head Teacher's residence.<sup>1</sup>

Later Use: School and community purposes.<sup>3</sup>

Original and Later Owner: Education Department of Victoria<sup>1</sup>

Architect or Designer: Public Works Department of Victoria (H.R. Bastow, Chief Architect, Schools Division).<sup>4</sup>

Builders: Goy and Libby<sup>1</sup>

### Other:

In July 1891, the contract was let for the erection of a residence for the Head Teacher of Eltham Primary School No.209.<sup>1</sup> John Brown, Head Teacher at the time, had previously lived in rented lodgings.<sup>5</sup> His predecessor, David George Clark, who was associated with the Primary School from 1875 until 1888, and with an earlier school on the site from the 1850s, lived in his own house nearby. This modest cottage has survived and is known now as Shoestring, 31 Metery Road.<sup>6</sup>

Existing P.W.D. plans of the 1891 school residence indicate that the building was to consist of five brick rooms, with three bedrooms, a sitting-room, kitchen and pantry. There were front and back verandahs and an out-office and fencing.<sup>1</sup> In September 1891, John Brown wrote the first of a voluminous series of letters to the Education Department in Melbourne, complaining that there was no bathroom provided in the teacher's residence. Brown said that he had a family of eight children,

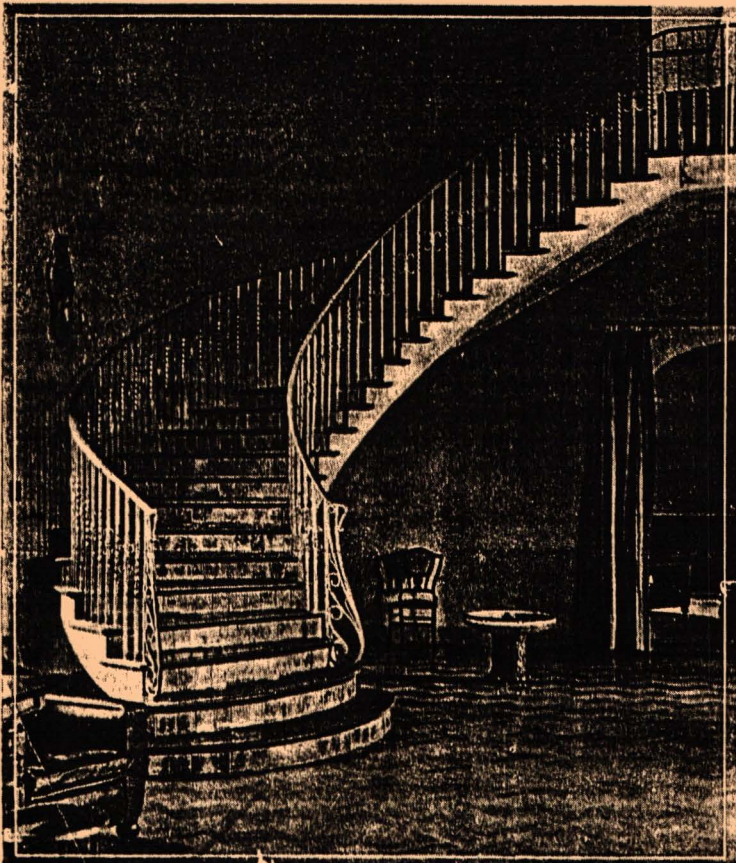
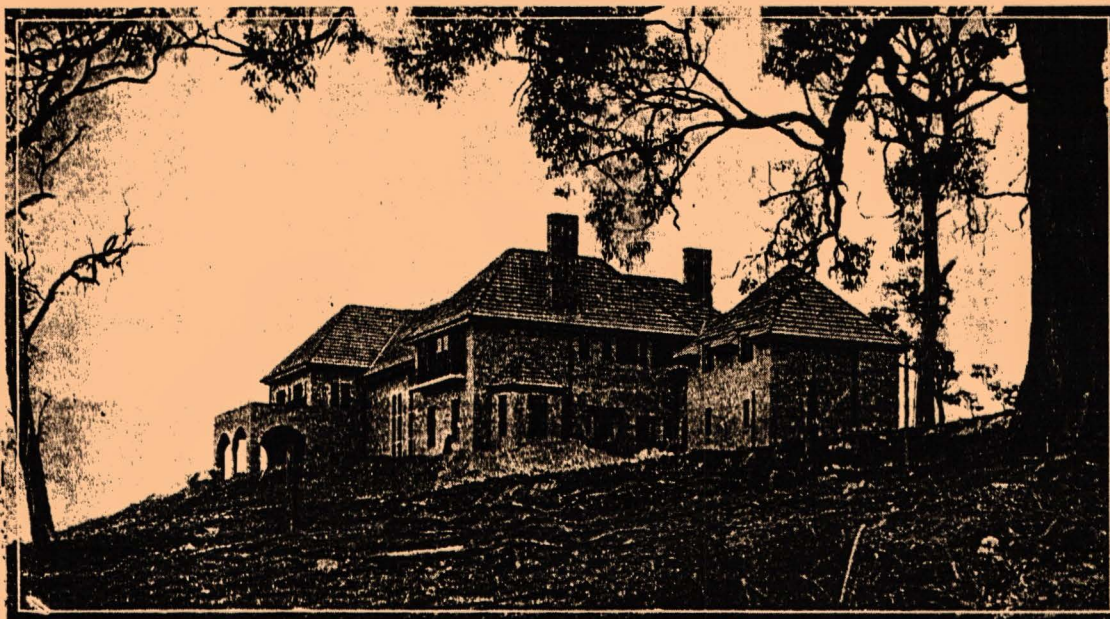
*so that a bathroom with such a large family is almost a necessity, and would be a means of enabling us to protect much better the inside of the residence.<sup>5</sup>*

The building was completed by 22 December 1891 and cost £630/3/3.<sup>5</sup> The Browns began to pay rent from 1 January 1892.<sup>5</sup> An early photograph of the Head Teacher's Residence with four children (two girls and two boys) and a dog lined up outside may have been taken during the Brown occupancy.<sup>7</sup>

An inspection of the building in 1989 showed that the former residence was relatively intact, particularly the main period features - fire places, chimneys, timber gable and tuckpointed polychrome brickwork. By this date, the building needed some repairs externally such as new gutters and downpipes and roof painting.<sup>8</sup> It is used for combined school and community purposes.

Recommendations for protection of significant buildings have generally not been completed. Usually these will include designation under the Eltham Planning Scheme and for a few buildings inclusion in the State Historic Buildings Register. In either case there is a formal procedure including advertising and possible objections before the protection can be implemented.

One of the buildings under investigation is "Amberley", the Christian Brothers Training Centre at Lower Plenty. One of the sources of information is a "1930 Home Beautiful" article when the building was constructed as a private house.



### *A River Home*

AMONG the exhibits from the office of Mr F. Keith Cheetham A.R.V.I.A., was a fine set of pictures of a home recently erected at Eltham for Mr O. W. Darch. Situated on the river cliffs and commanding a magnificent panorama of river, wooded slopes and distant mountains, this house is unusual in its general planning, requirements and construction.

Its principal feature is a desire for permanency and, as indicated in the photograph at the left, a sense of spaciousness in all the rooms. This type of plan is made feasible by the use of central heating. The formal planting surrounding the house is now taking shape, and the building, which is of brick with tile roof, will be immensely enhanced when the garden plan has developed in a few years. The approach will be along a half mile of elm trees that are already planted, whilst the sloping site has made possible the construction of a series of terraces to be introduced as part of the formal plan. The very interesting interior will be dealt with in detail in a later issue, and some of the fine photographs that were selected will be reproduced.

Russell Yeoman  
Secretary  
439-9717

Sue Law  
President  
439-9520

Gwen Orford  
Treasurer  
439-8642

## **ANDREW ROSS SCHOOL HOUSE MUSEUM PROJECT**

### **An exciting new museum for the Shire of Eltham**

**The theme? Andrew Ross.** This Scottish Presbyterian was an outstanding character in the early history of the County of Evelyn. The first School Master in Kangaroo Ground (founding what was probably the first technical school in Victoria), the earliest registrar of birth deaths and marriages, the official census taker. He operated the first post office, the first general store, and the first pub in the township. He was a driving force behind the first newspaper in the area (The Evelyn Observer), and a member of the first Roads Board (forerunner to Shire of Eltham).

The theme of the museum is Andrew Ross, and he will serve as a focus to tell the story of the history and development of the region and its people.

**Where? Kangaroo Ground School House** is stage 1 of the proposed museum. This building has been declared of local and possible regional significance. It was built c.1880 to replace the original slab building that housed Andrew Ross and his family for two decades. Stage 2 and 3 will incorporate partial use of the School Room (c.1878), attached to the School House, and development of the surrounding grounds.

The township of Kangaroo Ground was central to the County of Evelyn district, a role it maintained until more recent times. The Shire offices were here until the mid 1930s and the newspaper for the district was printed here until well into this century.

**Who's involved? The Shire of Eltham Historical Society.** The Andrew Ross School House Museum sub-committee has already recruited enthusiastic volunteers to work on the planning stages. Local residents Mick Woiwod (researcher and writer), Wendy Bradley (museologist) and Gary Patterson (architect and designer) have been busy discussing the museum with local and state government people, submitting funding applications, and planning the development of the Museum. The Ministry of the Arts - Museum Unit and The Museum Studies Department, Deakin University are both giving advice and assistance. Shire of Eltham councillors and local State parliamentarians are actively interested and supportive.

**When will it happen?** Easter 1993 is the planned date of the launch of the Andrew Ross School House Museum, Stage 1 and the inaugural exhibition.

**The last weekend in November** - a community awareness day that will include the launch of a booklet of Andrew Ross's writings about the County of Evelyn, and a pilot project to copy photographs and documents related to the history of the Shire of Eltham. In the School House and School Room, Kangaroo Ground (opposite the Kangaroo Ground Store). This will be an opportunity for everyone to take a guided tour through the Museum site, see and hear how the Museum is developing, find out how they can be a part of the Museum.

**What can you do? During the planning stages** we need people to register their interest in the Museum. We need people who are willing to offer assistance and expertise - a few hours, a few days or much more.

Some skills and assistance we require include:

- # **cataloguing** (organise a workshop run by Museum Association)
- # setting up a **Friends Group** (to support the Museum)
- # developing a recruitment and training program for **volunteer workers**
- # setting up **legal and financial management** (including policy and procedures)
- # **grant applications** to government and philanthropic trusts,
- # developing a **marketing plan**
- # developing a **fund raising plan**
- # planning and organising the **community awareness day**,
- # photographic and document **copying pilot project**
- # **conservation and preservation** of existing collection,
- # developing a **computer needs plan**,
- # developing **educational policy and programs**,
- # constructing **display furniture**,
- # planning **exhibitions policy and programs**,
- # planning for **special needs groups**,
- # planning the **restoration of the garden**,
- # building **maintenance**,
- # acting as **host at the community day**,
- # organising **afternoon tea** at the community day
- # organising or taking part in **working bees**
- # photocopying, telephoning, **general assistance**

**This Museum is different...it is not just about one man, it is not just about Kangaroo Ground, it will have a permanent thematic exhibition linking Andrew Ross into the history of the Shire of Eltham. Temporary exhibitions will look at many and varied aspects of the Shire.**

**This Museum will provide the community and visitors with an opportunity to take part in historical research, explore the historical environment, assist in the development of exhibitions and activities. It will be a valuable addition to the Shire.**

**Contacts:**

**Wendy Bradley,  
Lot 6 Skyline Road,  
Kangaroo Ground, 3097  
712 0396**

**Mick Woiwod  
Gongflers Drive  
Kangaroo Ground, 3097  
712 0563**

SHIRE OF ELTHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING EXCURSION - SUNDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 1992

Please reserve the following seats:

\* \* \* ADULTS at \$20.00 \* \* \* CHILDREN at \$10.00

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$

NAME: ..... PHONE NO.: .....

RETURN TO SEPTEMBER MEETING

OR

SEND TO:

PO BOX 137  
ELTHAM 3095

Phone enquiries to Sue Law 439- 9520 Evenings