

# Shire of Eltham Historical Society

Incorporated

P.O. Box 137, Eltham, Victoria, 3095

## NEWSLETTER

NO.89 MARCH 1993

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

8 P.M. WEDNESDAY, 10 MARCH, 1993

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

(ENTER FROM SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)

GUEST SPEAKER - GRACE MITCHELL

"MY ELTHAM"

### VICTORIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

21 MARCH - 4 APRIL

### ANDREW ROSS SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM

MEMBERS BRIEFING - 2 P.M. SATURDAY, 20 MARCH

OPEN DAY - 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M. SATURDAY, 27 MARCH



The Circus comes to Eltham - the view from Grace Mitchell's shop

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

Official notice of the AGM was given in the January Newsletter along with the agenda of the meeting. It is not necessary to repeat them here. However, it is appropriate to point out the importance of this meeting as a review of the past year's activities and in setting the scene for the coming year. In particular, we will be electing Office Bearers and Committee Members for 1993. All positions need to be filled and existing holders of the positions are eligible for re-election. New members of the committee would be most welcome and if the number of nominations results in an election then that is not a bad thing. All members are asked to seriously consider whether they can contribute to the Society in this way.

No written nominations have been received at the time of writing this Newsletter. It should be noted that under the Society's rules written nominations take precedence over nominations at the meeting, that is if a prior written nomination is received then no nominations can be accepted at the meeting for that position.

Even if you can't join the committee it is important that you come to the meeting and have your say in deciding who guides the Society through the next year.

#### GRACE MITCHELL:

Over the last few years we have established a pattern at our AGM's of hearing local identities speak on the subject of "My Eltham".

We continue the pattern this year with Grace Mitchell who is probably best known from her Eltham shop at the corner of Mt Pleasant Road and Main Road. Grace's memories cover many local identities who were patrons of her shop between 1954 and 1971. She also remembers many aspects of Eltham life during this period and particularly shopping in "The Village". From the elevated position of her shop and home Grace was able to view a varied passing parade. The Society has copies of her photos literally showing Eltham parades passing on their way to Eltham Lower Park. This series of photos also shows circuses in Wingrove Park (then Bremners Reserve), roadworks and other happenings.

In recent years Grace has taken a back seat to daughter Jenni, well known local artist and former councillor.

This meeting will give members the opportunity to hear Grace's own story and for many it will stimulate their own memories of a period of relatively recent Eltham history.

#### 1993 - OUR YEAR'S PROGRAMME:

A programme of meetings and other activities for 1993 has been planned by the Committee and a copy is enclosed. Major activities include the Open Day at the Andrew Ross Schoolhouse Museum on 27th March and our September meeting, which will include a dinner and a panel of local craft identities.

A likely event which has not yet been allocated a date is a comprehensive exhibition based on the Shire Heritage Strategy.

With planning so far ahead there may be changes to the programme and if so they will be notified in the Newsletter. However, we have made preliminary arrangements for all events and hope they can proceed as planned. Overall, we consider that we are set for another most interesting year.

VICTORIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL:

This year's festival will be held from 21st March until 4th April. The major theme set by the National Trust is "La Belle Epoque" or the Edwardian era in Victoria. Our main effort will be the opening of the Andrew Ross Schoolhouse Museum which is further reported on below.

A separate event conforming with the Edwardian theme has been arranged in conjunction with the Eltham Library. Andrew Mackenzie will give an illustrated talk at the Library on "Walter Withers and Edwardian Eltham" at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 23rd March. Andrew will bring along originals of a number of Wither's works and will also show slides of other works. Refreshments will be available. For further information phone Linda McConnell at the Library on 439 8436.

The full programme of festival events will be published in the Weekly Times on Wednesday 10th March.

ANDREW ROSS SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM:

The January Newsletter contained information about the proposed Open Day at the Museum on 27th March and the briefing for Society members at 2.00 pm on Saturday 20th March. In addition, it is proposed that the museum be open between 2.00 and 5.00 pm on Sunday 28th March and on the following Saturday and Sunday, 3rd and 4th April.

Work at the museum has been progressing in recent weeks. Mick Woiwod and Wendy Bradley and their sub-committee have been very busy utilizing the funds provided by the Shire of Eltham and Arts Victoria to prepare the first display room and the materials for display. Wendy is carrying out an intensive publicity campaign in the local community. The available funds have been considerably stretched by use of volunteer labour and works under several Government or educational schemes including the Community Corrections Scheme and an Apprenticeship Training Scheme. Mick has been very active in organizing and supervising workers under the schemes.

Joy Ness and Dorothy Markby have prepared plans for the garden and intend to restore it progressively. This will not be completed for the open day.

Work at the museum is on target for the opening but a significant amount remains to be done in the next few weeks. Wendy has produced a list of items which are required and would be better donated or loaned rather than bought. We hope that members will be able to assist with some of the items listed.

In addition we would welcome any items for display relevant to the museum theme either on loan for the festival or as a donation.

The launching of the publication on the Andrew Ross's reminiscences from the Evelyn Observer is planned for the Open Day.

The involvement of members in this project over the two weeks commencing on 20th March is essential if the project is to succeed. The very hard working sub-committee has proceeded this far with limited help from other members but this is where we must make a real effort. As well as the briefing and Open Day, a roster of members will be required for the 28th March and 3rd and 4th April. Contact a member of the sub-committee if you can help but most important, be there on SATURDAY 20TH MARCH when arrangements for the following weekends will be made.

Contacts: Wendy Bradley  
712 0396  
Doug Orford  
439 8642

Diana Bassett-Smith  
712 0260  
Mick Woiwod  
712 0563

List of things we need:-

tables for copying stands  
film for copying (details available)  
tables/trestles for cataloguers/kitchen  
chairs for each of above (2 at each)  
extension leads  
power boards  
exercise books (recording photos)  
receipt books (book sales/donations)  
visitors book (name and addresses)  
donor board (wood)  
some type of method for printing donors names on plates  
pin boards for blackboards (large)  
drawing pins  
quantity of brown paper to cover pin boards and for notices  
second hand A4 envelopes  
second hand manila folders  
glue sticks  
pens/pencils  
rubbers/erasers  
name tags (blank)  
quantity of sticky lables (tiny - 1/2"x1")  
quantity of address sticky labels  
largish quantity of mugs/cup & saucers/plates/small spoons  
urn or similar for morning/afternoon tea  
signs (Council?) toilet/carpark etc  
photocopier paper (2 colours)  
photocopier toner etc  
highlighter pens

**OTHER MATTERS**

For the Eltham Festival last year we produced an information sheet called Eltham Discovery Walks. It included 3 walks starting at Eltham Station and covering most of the well-known heritage buildings. It includes areas in John Street and "The Hill" which are considered to be typical Eltham localities because of their treed character and mud brick houses. A copy of the information sheet is included with this Newsletter.

At the February meeting we spent some time on the most extensive draft of the Shire Heritage Strategy. Members found a number of surprises amongst the list of 250 or so buildings, bridges, trees, gardens and places which are listed in it. The notes made by members will be useful to the steering committee and the consultants in finalizing the study.

Russell Yeoman  
Secretary  
439 9717

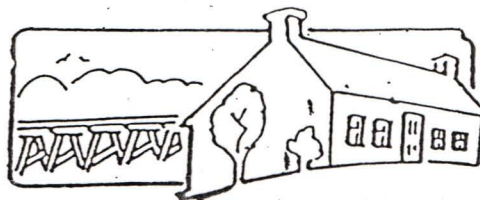
Sue Law  
President  
439 9520

Gwen Orford  
Treasurer  
439 8642

# Shire of Eltham Historical Society

INCORPORATED

P O Box 137 ELTHAM VICTORIA 3095



## ELTHAM FESTIVAL 1992 ELTHAM DISCOVERY WALKS

Eltham has a special character that comprises elements of the natural environment and cultural heritage of the area. A significant component of the character is found in the tree cover of the residential areas and the pockets of remnant bushland. In this treed setting we find some reminders of Eltham's early history and more commonly some of the twentieth century buildings which people have come to associate with Eltham. These are buildings designed to blend with their bushland environment and made from mudbrick and similar "earthy" materials.

These walks are designed to cover a range of the places which contribute to the character of Eltham. They start from the Eltham Railway Station to cater for those travelling on the Vintage Steam Train. They can be readily adapted to start at the main Festival location in the Alistair Knox Park. People returning on the train should check the departure time and choose a walk suited to their walking speed and the time available. By reference to the map and notes, walks can be shortened or combined if those suggested do not suit. Many of the places listed are private property. They are only listed if they can be seen from a street or other public place. Please respect the rights of owners and do not trespass on private land.

For more information phone Russell Yeoman on 439.9717 (H) or 430.1212(W).

### WALK 1 EARLY HISTORY 7 KM

Leave the Eltham Railway Station and turn right along Main Road at the Eltham Post Office (1) built 1977 to replace the earlier (1958) post office on the same site. This area is the Eltham Business Centre which developed as "The Village" over many years following the opening of the railway in 1902. Walk south along Main Road passing the following:

2. Eltham Fire Station with its old fire bell mounted in front and the Eltham War Memorial complex of buildings erected by public subscription following World War 2.
3. Eltham Shire Offices (built 1965 and since extended) including the three cypress trees which once stood in front of Shillinglaw Cottage.
4. Our Lady's Church and School showing two of the four generations of the Catholic Church in Eltham.
5. Shillinglaw Cottage built 1878-80 by pioneer Eltham builder, George Stebbing, on the site of the Shire Offices and occupied for 80 years by the Shillinglaw family and relocated 1964-65.
6. Alistair Knox Park named after the Architect and Councillor who was a major influence in modern mudbrick building locally and even nationally.
7. Bridge Street cutting formerly with deep cuts on all four corners. Bridge Street and Main Road (formerly Maria Street) were created in Josiah Holloway's 1851 square mile subdivision called "Little Eltham".
8. Hilltop Milkbar site of the Eltham Post Office from 1855 to 1954.
9. Uniting church (1880) and former CBA Bank (1874).
10. RSL Hall and Telephone Exchange-Modern buildings but including the World War 1 Memorial formerly situated on the Bridge Street corner.

Detour into the grounds of the Eltham Community Centre (11) to view this unique mudbrick community building opened in 1978. Also on this site (near the street corner) is a monument marking the former centre of the Eltham township. Part of the site was purchased in 1856 by Henry Dendy (of Brighton fame). He had a flour mill at the rear near the creek. Cross Main Road and walk along Pitt Street to see the following:

12. Eltham Hotel, built c 1887 but with many alterations and additions so that the appearance has completely changed.
13. St Margaret's church built 1860-61 by Stebbing on land donated by Henry Dendy together with the former vicarage now called Dendy House and the recent mudbrick church hall.
14. 88 Pitt Street built c 1861 by George Stebbing as his own home.

Return to Main Road and turn left. Detour into the grounds of the Living and Learning Centre (15) to see this former house dating from c 1858.

Continuing along Main Road we come to:

16. Eltham Court House (1860) and former police residence (1860) now the Council's Parks & Environment office. A replica of the former police station has been built adjoining.

17. 715 Main Road-Mudbrick house built in 1980.

18. Avenue of Honour-The plane trees were planted to commemorate local soldiers who died in World War 1.

19. Jarrold (White Cloud) cottage. Built 1863 or earlier for William Jarrold. The former bootmakers shop at the front was built in the 1930's. The elevated studio/residence at the rear is a more recent construction by the present owners.

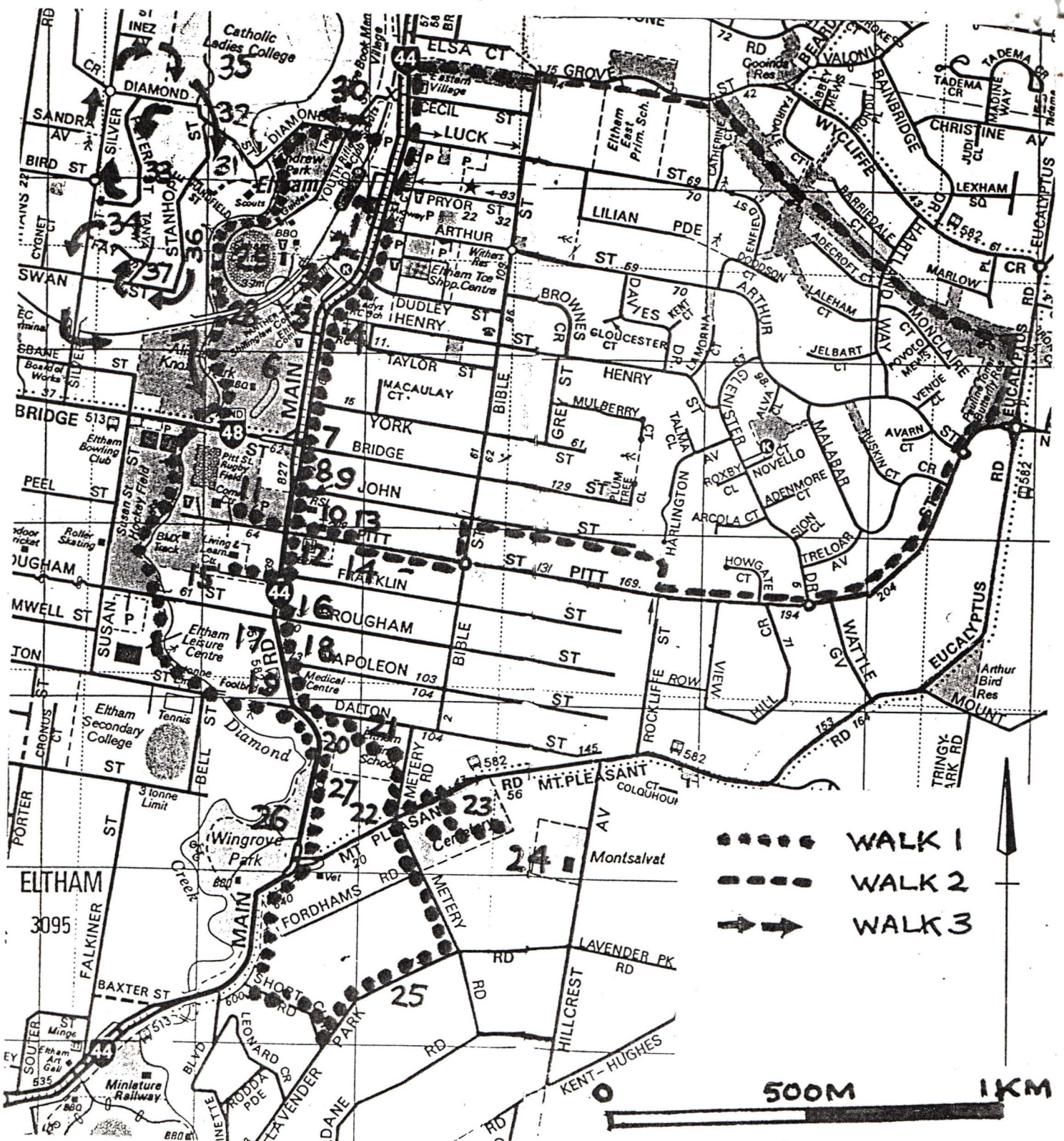
Turn left up Dalton Street past the former school residence (20). Turn into school grounds at brick ramp to view old section of Eltham Primary School (21) (1876). An earlier school was built on the site in 1857. Cross school ground or walk up Dalton Street and turn right into Metery Road. Pass "Shoestring" (22) built c1859 for school teacher David Clark. Turn left at Mt Pleasant Road and walk to the gate of Eltham Cemetery (23). Find the grave of Thomas Sweeney and his family between the pencil pines towards the lower end of the cemetery - Sweeney was Eltham's first land purchaser. Walk to the highest part of the cemetery for an excellent view of Eltham, also to see into Montsalvat (24) a complex of buildings commenced by Justus Jorgensen in 1935.

It is important for its exotic and vernacular architecture, its artistic connections and its influence on the culture of Eltham. It is open to the public for a small fee. Further views of Montsalvat can be obtained from the paddock south of the cemetery but at Festival time the grass will be long. Return to Metery Road and turn left. Turn right at Lavender Park Road. This area of Eltham mainly contains blocks of 0.4 hectares (1 acre) and larger. It retains some of the bushland character. Pass "Landscape" (25) built in 1926 for Percy Leason, noted artist, anthropologist and cartoonist. Leason's studio can be seen at the rear after you pass the house.

Turn right at Short Cut Road which becomes a rough foot track then right at the road above the Main Road embankment again degenerating to a foot track. Follow the sealed service road down to the service station then continue north along Main Road. On the left is Wingrove Park (26) and on the right Wingrove Cottage (27) built 1858 for Charles S Wingrove, Secretary to the Eltham District Road Board and Shire Council from 1858 to 1904. Cross Main Road to the bike path then turn left at the lane opposite Dalton Street. Cross the Diamond Creek by the footbridge and follow the path along the western side of the creek passing the Eltham Leisure Centre, Brougham Street Bridge formerly Kaylocks Bridge and passing under Bridge Street. Extensive areas of the creek flats were formerly used as orchards and market gardens. Cross the creek again and detour to see the mural under the road bridge. Continue north along the bike path to the timber trestle bridge (28) opened as part of the Eltham Railway in 1902. You can follow the bike path to Diamond Street or return to the station along the west side of the railway. Either way you traverse Eltham Central Park (29) purchased from the Shillinglaws in 1926 and so named to distinguish it from Eltham Lower Park (formerly Eltham Park).

### WALK 2 MUDBRICK HOUSES, BUTTERFLY RESERVE 6 KM

Follow Walk 1 to 88 Pitt Street then continue along Pitt Street, turn left at Bible Street and right at John Street. From half way up the John Street hill there are mudbrick houses on both sides of the street dating from the 1940's to the 1980's. Mudbrick houses are part of "Eltham character" with probably a greater concentration than anywhere else in Australia. These houses are set in a recreated bushland setting. Early photos show that the original bushland had been cleared from this hill. Continue on the footpath past the end of the street and turn right at the end of the group housing driveway. (This development is private property but pedestrians may pass through.) Returning to Pitt Street turn left and continue beyond Arthur Street roundabout to the Pauline Toner Butterfly reserve. The Eltham Copper Butterfly lives in this reserve on stunted plants of Sweet Bursaria. Information about the butterfly is shown on a notice board near the path at the north eastern corner of the reserve. Walk through the reserve amongst the splendid display of wildflowers which are flowering at Festival time. Turn left at the sealed path and follow the Woodridge Linear Park across Hartland Way to Grove Street. Turn left and walk to Bible Street. Cross this street and follow the parkway through to Main Road. Turn left to return to the railway station.



**WALK 3 MUDBRICK HOUSES 4 KM**

This walk features a number of houses designed and built by John and Fay Harcourt in the 1940's and 50's. Construction materials include mudbrick and stone but most are pise (rammed earth).

Go to the northern end of the railway station and walk through the subway then continue straight ahead along Diamond Street passing Judge Book Memorial Village (30) built in the 1950's and named after the head of the Melbourne City Mission. Continue across the bridge over Diamond Creek formerly known as O'Callaghan's Bridge after former residents of the Catholic Ladies College site. Over the bridge are the gate posts of Harcourt's house Clay Nunsham, now separated from the house by more recent housing. Continuing along Diamond Street past the Harcourt houses - Florrie's Cottage (31) (stone with brick extension) and Rocknall (32) (pise with mudbrick extension). Continue up the Diamond Street hill to mudbrick house No.7 and turn left into Peter Street. This street contains a number of mudbrick houses, the 1950's owner built pise at No.7 and Harcourt's pise Hazel's Cottage (33) at No.14. At the top of the street is No.10 "Stanhope" (34) built in 1910 for the artist Will Longstaff and designed by architect Desbrowe Anear. Later owners include Bishop Reginald Stephen and literary figures Clem and Nina Christesen.

Turn right at Silver Street and walk down past a number of mudbrick houses (some not so obvious - see how many you can pick) to Inez Avenue at the bottom of the hill. There are 3 more "muddies" in Inez Avenue. Continue along the foot track past Catholic Ladies College (35), built 1971 and return to Diamond Street. Cross this street to Stanhope Street. Along this street pass the back of Florrie's Cottage then No.12 "Clay Nuneham" (36) Harcourt's own mudbrick house which can only be partly seen from the street. Turn right up the hill on Swan Street with a more modern mudbrick house on the right. Right again at Fay Street and pass No.4 Harcourt's "Lange Dorn" (37). Turn left past the rear gate of "Stanhope". On the left are the backs of more Harcourt pise houses but of rather conventional appearance. Past two more modern "muddies" on the right. Fay Street continues to Silver Street as a foot track. Turn left here and go down the hill and over the railway bridge. Turn left along the track by the railway till you come to the timber trestle bridge over the Diamond Creek (see 28 Walk 1). At the top of the creek bank turn right and follow a faint foot track through the Alistair Knox Park till you come to a bike path. Cross the footbridge and detour under the nearby road bridge to view the mural and beyond is a view of the mudbrick Eltham Community Centre (see 11 Walk 1).

Return to the bike path and finish the walk to the station as for Walk 1.