

Shire of Eltham Historical Society

Incorporated

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

NEWSLETTER
NO. 91 JULY, 1993

NEXT MEETING

8 P.M. WEDNESDAY, 14 JULY, 1993

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

(ENTER FROM SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)

SPEAKER PANEL

ELTHAM LIBRARIES - PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS' INFORMATION DAYS

SUNDAYS 15 & 22 AUGUST

SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER



Quercus robur

DOGBY OVAL ELTHAM.

JULY MEETING:

We have arranged an interesting group of speakers for this meeting. The subject is libraries in Eltham and we will deal with their past, present and future. Construction of the new Eltham Library near Shillinglaw Cottage is now well under way and it is planned to be operating early next year. Apart from the vastly improved facility this will be an exciting building and will certainly contribute to the character of Eltham. This is a most appropriate time to talk about libraries and so we have invited some very involved people to share their knowledge with us.

Harry Gilham, our new President, has been researching the predecessors to the current library.

He has found out about the early children's library staffed by volunteers and various locations occupied by the Shire Library in its early years.

Linda McConnell is the Librarian at the Eltham Library. She will talk about the resources available from our library and through the network from other libraries.

Greg Burgess is an award winning architect and is responsible for the design of the new library. Greg will talk about the design of this important building. He has been responsible for some other very innovative buildings, including the Box Hill Library and Brambuk, the Aboriginal Centre at Halls Gap. He will show slides of a selection of his most interesting buildings to illustrate some of his design philosophies.

The Eltham Library is certainly a popular local facility and we think this subject will prove popular with our members. There are likely to be people outside the Society who will also be interested. If any of your friends are library users then they are most welcome and we hope you will bring them along.

SIGNIFICANT TREE REGISTER:

Recent work by Council Parks and Environment staff and volunteers has resulted in the preparation of a Significant Tree Register listing forty-one trees or groups of trees. A similar number remain to be assessed for inclusion in the register. There is a wide range of indigenous and planted trees on private and public land and extending through the Shire of Eltham from Lower Plenty to Kinglake. Most can be viewed from publicly accessible locations and we saw a number of them in our Eltham Heritage Tour. Information on trees already on the register, or on nominating trees for inclusion can be obtained from the Parks and Environment office on 439-9352 or 430-1145.

ELTHAM HERITAGE TOUR - by Bettina Woodburn:

The 1993 Eltham Heritage Tour was enjoyed by a busload of members of the Historical Society on a fine, calm day, Sunday May 23rd.

Between 10.00 am and 4.30 pm, except for a brief lunch stop at the Eltham Living and Learning Centre, we passed about thirty places of local interest and others recommended for the Historic Buildings Register and the Register of the National Estate. We admired significant trees and buildings and visited and explored some properties - delighting in the history (with the inner eye) and the aspect of Eltham in Autumn (with the seeing eye!).

On our itinerary we saw the New (Library under construction) and the Old (the ninety year old Railway Trestle Bridge over the Diamond Creek - although most of its timbers have been replaced).

Below the Shire Office the relocated "Shillinglaw Cottage" stands in the landscaped park, with its peppercorn trees and pencil pines. An historic bell still summons firefighters at the Station.

After noting the 1950 cream brick Electricity Sub-Station (there's another at Wattle Glen), candlebark trees and four Canary Island palms, the horse trough at the Research roundabout, we stretched our legs at "The Robins", 1913, of reinforced concrete for Penleigh Boyd, father of Robin. We were able to compare the present with an old photograph of the house before it was almost obscured by trees.

Then it was off to Warrandyte, with Professors Hill Wild Life Sanctuary on our left - a Spring visit a "must".

An extremely rare example, pre 1904, of a Slab Hut with bark roof and sapling framing stands forlornly under a protective shelter, well preserved since it had been encased within another building (Castle Road near Warrandyte-Kangaroo Ground Road).

Our next short walk was to view the Pound Bend Tunnel from the Reserve at the end of Bradleys Lane.

We circled about along Pigeon Bank and Menzies Roads (views to Wonga Park to the east and to the Kangaroo Ground Memorial Tower the opposite way), disturbing kangaroos, part of a 200-300 mob, in a paddock.

Then, via Henley Road, under SEC pylons, close by the Maroondah Aqueduct and the thirteen pine trees at "Wongaburra" and we left the riverside vegetation for undulating countryside used for traditional farming, evident by the hawthorn hedges.

Kangaroo Ground offers many interesting places besides the Tower and its planting, and the Andrew Ross Museum at the converted old Schoolhouse, "Coorie Bank Cottage" opposite "Garden Hill", "Pigeon Bank" opposite the Tower, the Shop, School and Church area, and "Wellers Pub". Along the roadside basalt-form manna gums grow. Eltham College is constructing new playing-fields. In Research an excellent Edwardian house stands in Ingrams Road over the Aqueduct.

Back in Eltham's streets we admire Jock Read's former home at 160 Pitt Street, an old house at No. 123, George Stebbing's at 88 and linger at 141 - "Fulling", pronounced Fu-elling, the 'display home' of Gordon Ford, landscape designer and consultant. Since 1945 he has transformed one and a half acres of treeless grassland into a splendid bush garden complete with a waterfall and ponds. He used sawdust and wood shavings as a base for the bush floor.

The mud bricks and tree trunks of St Margarets Hall and the "Dendy House" at the rear were our final sightings before the lunch stop.

An afternoon viewing many buildings of historic interest and significance followed after we proceeded down the Avenue of Honour towards the Old Eltham Village site, south of Dalton Street (1858/9), and "Wingrove Cottage" opposite the Park, named for a Council roads engineer 1858.

We turned past the Cemetery, and "Shoe-String" into Yarra Braes Road and Jean Downing's house, No. 12 owned by Downing/Le Gallienne, an Alistair Knox house built in four stages between 1948 and 1964. We were about to follow the trail of 'earth building in Eltham'. Mr Souter, a farrier, in 1855 commenced his forge and workshop in local stone. On top of this he built his cottage of adobe, or mud bricks, in which he lived with his wife and ten children.

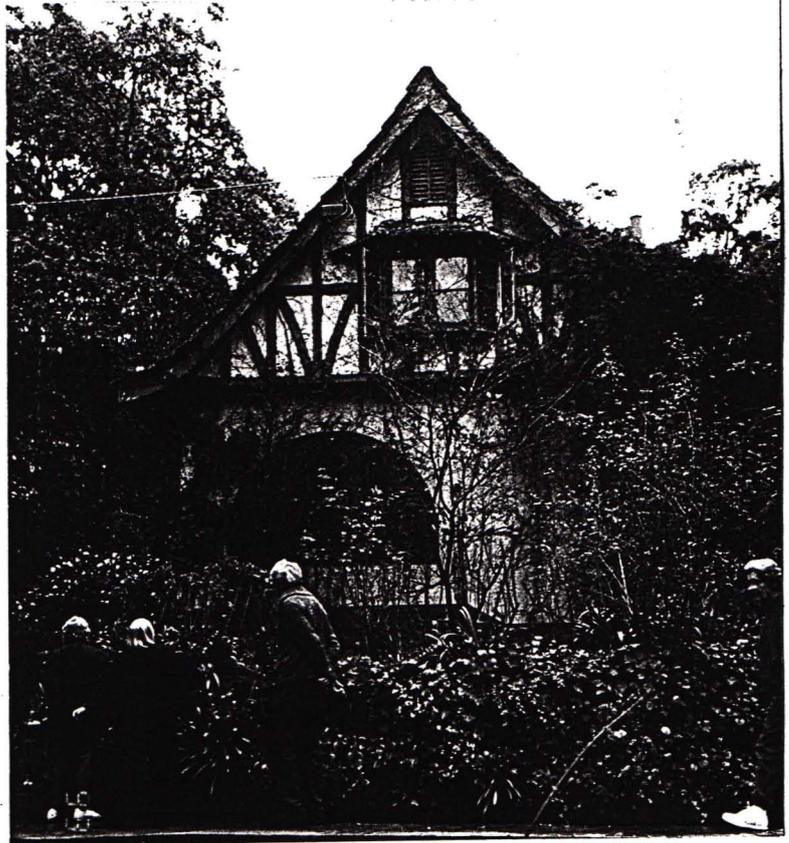
Weatherboards became the preferred constructions until in 1934 Justus Jorgensen, with students and followers commenced the fascinating complex, "Montsalvat", of local stone, earth and reclaimed materials. By the end of the 1940's an impressive array of adobe and pise-de-terre or rammed earth buildings had been completed. Those responsible included Horrie Judd, Graeme and Roger Bell, Peter Glass, John and Fay Harcourt, Ron and Yvonne Jelbart, W J Woodburn - architect, and Alistair Knox.

Our bus turned into Reynolds Road and we noticed huge yellow box trees and an enormous English oak on the Mt. Pleasant Road corner. "Knox Warrawee", 2 King Street, now a Christian home for needy young people, located in five acres of natural bushland, featuring a large mud-brick home plus outbuildings etc., offered another chance to see how Eltham had grown. There was even a display of mudbricks of various sizes, colours and ingredients.

After crossing the Railway line we toured - Silver Street, Susan Street, Peter Street. We were invited to a conducted tour, opposite No. 11 Kerrie Crescent, (actually a Silver Street address) of a 1948 Knox designed mudbrick, with a delightful inglenook fireplace. Additional bedrooms had been added on the top verandah; up the narrow stairs was a concrete bath, quite unique.

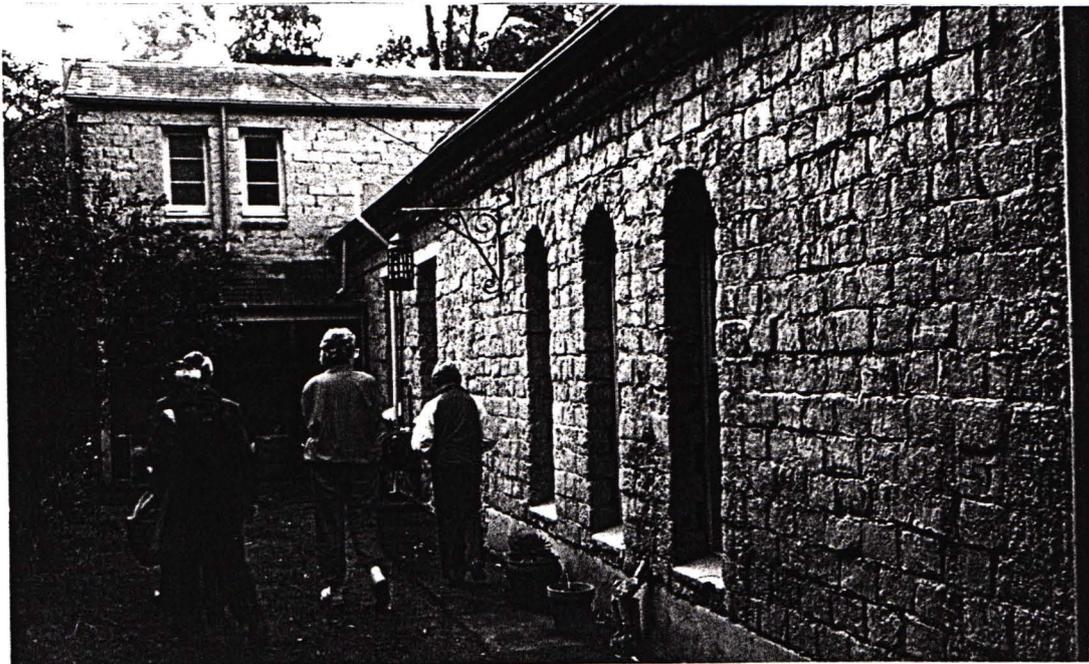
Harcourt's "Hazel's Cottage", "Stanhope" (for Will Longstaff), Fay Street, Tanya Avenue, Swan Street, Stanhope Street, "Clay Nunham", "Florrie's Cottage", "Rocknall" - all names and locations, delights to see, and even better, to think about for their part in making Eltham the environment it is today.

Bettina Woodburn.



"THE ROBINS" NORTH WARRANDYTE

"CLAY NUNEHAM" ELTHAM



ANDREW ROSS SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM:

Since the very successful opening of the Museum in March there has been some slowing of pace of Museum happenings. Given the intense effort leading up to the opening, this is quite understandable. Recently there has been increased momentum in planning for the museum's future. Both the Society's Committee and the Museum Sub-Committee have met on several occasions to consider the matter. There are a number of aspects still to be resolved including acquisition policy, times of opening, staffing, management, etc.

On the matter of management, the Committee and Sub-Committee have reached agreement in principle that a separate board of management should be set up. The structure of the board is still under consideration. It should be stressed that before any final decision is made there will be the opportunity for members to be involved in the decision making procedure.

Wendy Bradley has been working on the matters of staffing and acquisition policy. She expects to have a draft acquisition policy ready for consideration in the near future. On the question of staffing Wendy has arranged two training days on interpretation of the Museum for volunteers. These are on Sundays 15th and 22nd August from 2.00 to 5.00 pm. Different aspects are to be covered on each day so attendance at both days is desirable. Ring Wendy on 712 0396 if you would like to attend these training days.

OTHER NEWS:

Members are invited to attend the launching of the Shire of Eltham Conservation and Heritage Strategy at 2.00 pm on Sunday 25th July. This important document sets out policies of the Council in environmental and heritage matters. Its preparation has involved many months of work by Council officers and community members. The launching will include entertainment and displays by participating groups including our Society.

Following our visit to Maryborough last year, we are to have a return visit from the Midlands Historical Society on Sunday 14th November. Anyone who would like to help with arrangements is asked to contact Russell Yeoman.

Thanks to Mick Woiwod for his excellent talk on Christmas Hills at our May meeting. Researching and writing "Once Around the Sugarloaf" has taken a large slice of Mick's time over the last few years and he is now the acknowledged expert on the history of that area. With that job complete, Mick has now turned his attention to Kangaroo Ground. He has commenced researching a book on the history of Kangaroo Ground and is currently asking that anyone with stories, photos, published information, etc. give him a ring (712 0563). This work has been generously commissioned by Bruce Nixon, formerly of "Barratta" Kangaroo Ground and now of Yarra Glen.

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