

**Shire of Eltham
Historical Society**
Incorporated

P O Box 137, Eltham, Victoria, 3095

**NEWSLETTER
NO. 98 SEPTEMBER, 1994**

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER, 1994

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

(ENTER FROM SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)

6.30 P.M. BUFFET DINNER

8.00 P.M. SPEAKER PANEL

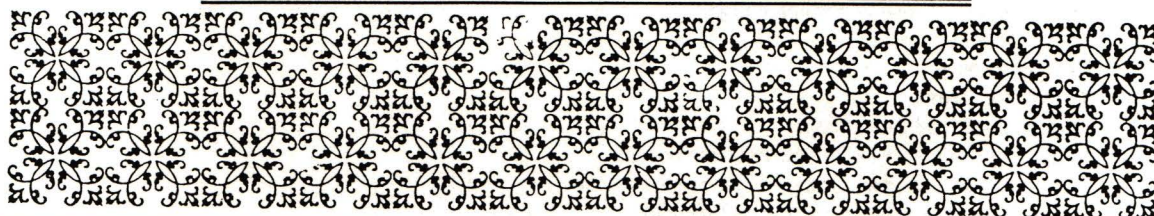
"THE PERFORMING ARTS IN ELTHAM"

SPRING EXCURSION

SUNDAY, 9 OCTOBER, 1994

CHATEAU TAHBILK & WHROO

LEAVES ELTHAM SHIRE OFFICE 8.30 A.M.



SEPTEMBER MEETING:

Over the last two years we have had meetings devoted to various aspects of the arts in Eltham. The formula has involved a panel of speakers and these meetings have been most successful. This year we have assembled a well qualified panel to talk about the Performing Arts in Eltham. Following the pattern of recent years a buffet dinner will precede the meeting. Dinner will start about 6.30 with the meeting starting at 8.00 pm as usual. Cost for the dinner is \$10 per person payable on the night. However, bookings are required. Please advise Gwen Orford on 439-8642 by Monday 12th September if you are coming. Bookings are not required if you are just coming for the meeting. As usual, Harry Gilham will be providing drinks for the dinner. These will include a selection of Harry's exotic home made wines, some more ordinary wines and other drinks.

The speaker panel will be introduced by Caroline Shaw, Manager - Community arts for the Shire of Eltham. These are the panel members:

George Barker - one of the most senior members of the well-known local institution, the Eltham Little Theatre.

Sigmund Jorgensen - of Montsalvat who is responsible for organizing the Montsalvat Jazz Festival and many other performances of music in all its forms, poetry and so on.

Cal Martin - founder and leader of the Diamond Valley Big Band and teacher of trumpet and other brass instruments.

Nerida Kirov - singer, musician and organizer of community performing art events.

This wide cross section of the performing arts community should be able to provide an interesting over-view of this field of the arts as well as the stories of their individual contributions.

Come for the dinner if you can but if not, at least try and hear these important speakers.

AN ELTHAM POEM:

In our last Newsletter Harry Gilham urged members to take up a project related to our local history. This matter was discussed at our last meeting and members were again encouraged to think in this direction.

Gwen Baker was motivated to think of how it was, and still is, in some parts of Eltham and, as a result, she wrote this poem.

The dim erstwhile misty morn shone slightly through
The tall, almost shadowy silver gums
And golden wattles

Between which straight clothes lines and prop
Held bravely in place the washing of the day afore

Weak white wisps of smoke, with blackish threads twirled slowly
From chimney of nearby nestling house.

Then all at once
The rooster crowed,
Dogs yapped; and from within
Simple solid sounds as kettle moved from hob.
The Gods had sent again from the East another chance
Another day for the wars and peace of daily life



SPRING EXCURSION:

For our excursion on 9th October we are travelling to Chateau Tahbilk and Whroo, a former gold mining town near Rushworth.

Chateau Tahbilk is the oldest family owned winery in Victoria and dates from 1860. The winery buildings resemble a small village. We have arranged a tour of the complex which will cost \$2 per person payable on the day. Wine tastings and sales will be in operation. The August 1994 issue of Australian Country Style contains an interesting article on Chateau Tahbilk as well as other stories about nearby Goulburn Valley locations.

Whroo Historic Reserve contains a number of interesting features relating to the former township and gold workings. We will have lunch at the picnic area here. There will be time for short walks to the various features but most are accessible by bus for the less energetic. The area is renowned for its wildflowers and our visit will be at time when they should be near their best. A brochure on Whroo is attached to the Newsletter.

On our way to and/or from our main destinations we will briefly visit the Major Mitchell Trail. This car based trail follows the route of the famous explorer right across Victoria. It crosses the Goulburn River near Chateau Tahbilk and Mitchelton Wineries and passes through Nagambie. The trail guidebook is available on loan from Russell Yeoman for anyone wishing to read on the subject before the trip and will be available for perusal on the day.

The cost of the bus will be \$17 per person payable in advance. Please book your seat by completing the attached form and sending with your payment to our post office box or return to Gwen Orford at our September meeting. Friends are welcome on the same booking basis as members.

We will be leaving the Eltham Shire Offices at 8.30 am and returning at about 5.30 pm. Please arrive a little before the departure time. We will stop at Nagambie on the way to Whroo. There will be time to buy a quick cuppa or whatever here if you wish. Bring your own lunch. There are no shops at Whroo. There are limited picnic tables so if you take chairs or a rug there will be room on the bus for them.

In line with our trips in past years we have tried to again provide something different and also an interesting variety of locations within the one tour. We think that this will be a popular trip and advise members to book as soon as possible.

RECENT BEREAVEMENTS:

Sadly, we must report the recent deaths of a number of members and friends of our Society.

Garnet Burges spent most of his long life in Eltham and was a Society member for many years. Garnie was well known as a local character and for his operation of a number of local businesses over the years.

Although he had been too ill to attend recent meetings his death came as a shock to his friends.

Sophie Coffey was also a long standing member who passed away a few weeks ago. She will be missed by her friends among our members.

Bruce Bence, President of Warrandyte Historical Society, died suddenly at the Warrandyte Museum for which he had been a driving force. Bruce had assisted our Society on a number of occasions, most recently as guide on our Warrandyte tour. Apart from his museum and other Society work Bruce has researched and written a number of books, booklets and historical articles.

His death is a major loss to the Warrandyte Society.



CHATEAU TAHBILK WINERY

OTHER NEWS:

In the 1920's Heather Jenkins lived as a child at the Eltham Police Station where her father was stationed. She has kept a scrapbook of photos, newspaper cuttings, etc., relating to the old Police Station and other matters of local interest. She has now presented these to our Society and we thank her for her generous donation.

The subject of "Filling in the Map of Main Road Eltham" proved to be a rather formidable task for our September meeting. There was considerable discussion and some information was recorded on our series of maps (one for each decade since 1850). This will be an on-going project in which members can share. We hope to include some of the maps with future newsletters so members can fill in any information they know.

Unfortunately, time has run out to get the project into shape for this Newsletter.

The Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies will be holding another of their Family History Open Days on Saturday October 8th - 10.00 am to 4.00 pm - venue is Blackburn High School Hall. Russell Yeoman has further details.

The matter of municipal restructuring continues to roll along at a rapid pace. The interim report of the Local Government Board dealing with the future of the Shire of Eltham (and other outer suburban Councils) is due in the next few weeks.

Eltham Council has made a comprehensive submission in support of an environmentally based municipality, tentatively titled Yarra Ranges. The Council is encouraging residents to make their own submissions and it is not too late to do that. The Committee has agreed to arrange a special meeting in September if it is necessary to consider our position in relation to the interim report.

The Committee has considered the matter of this year's Eltham Community Festival which has the theme "Echoes of Eltham - celebrating the visions of Eltham from the past and into the future". While this theme suits our Society better than some past ones, we have decided not to be involved in the Festival due largely to prior commitments by a number of Committee members. This decision can be reversed if any member feels that they can co-ordinate our involvement in either the parade or some other activity.

The Festival dates are November 11th - 13th. Contact Russell Yeoman soon if you would like to do something.

Harry Gilham
President
439 -1175

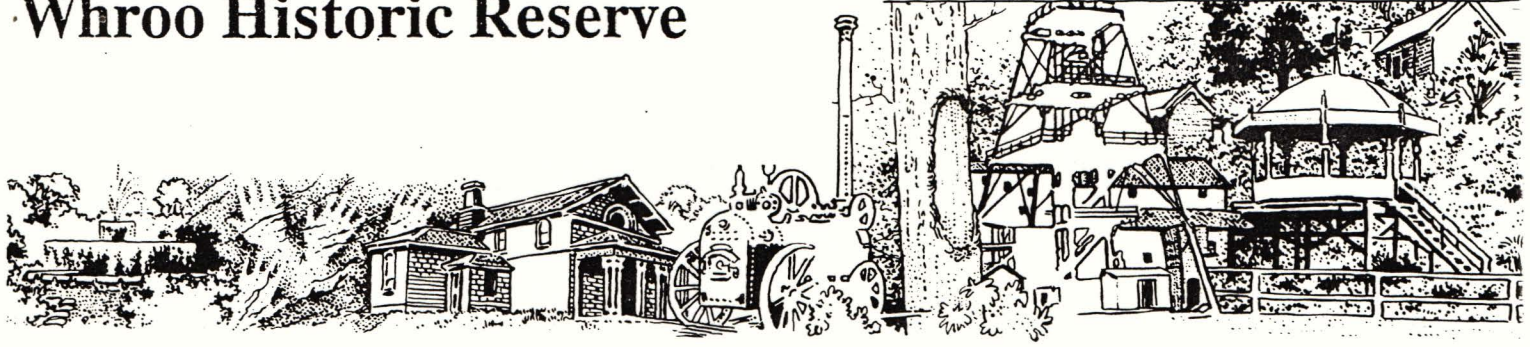
Russell Yeoman
Secretary
439-9717

Gwen Orford
Treasurer/Membership Secretary
439-8642



Major Mitchell crossing the Goulburn River (H. Gritten)

Whroo Historic Reserve



Whroo Historic Reserve consists of almost 500 ha of forested land encompassing the site of the Whroo township and part of the associated Whroo goldfields.

Alluvial gold was found at the present sites of Rushworth and Whroo in August 1853 and the resultant gold-rush brought thousands of hopeful diggers to the area overnight.

As the more easily won surface gold petered out and reef mining activity intensified, the Whroo area assumed the character it was to maintain for many years. Tents were replaced by huts of logs, slab, dry clay bricks and stone. Stores and hotels appeared, along with butcher shops, dairies, a bakery, banks and one of the first goldfields' Mechanics Institute and Library.

With the winding down of the mining activity in the 1890s the town rapidly went into decline and today little evidence of it remains other than the old cemetery.

Location and Access

The Reserve is located about 190 km north of Melbourne. Major access is along the Goulburn Valley Highway to Murchison, turn off to Rushworth then travel 7 km south through the forest to Whroo. Alternative routes are via Nagambie and Graytown.

Facilities

The picnic area at Whroo has an information centre, toilets and barbeque and picnic facilities. Camping is allowed, however few facilities are provided and the DCE Bendigo Regional Office should be contacted regarding availability of water and other conditions. Commercial accommodation is available in nearby towns.

Attractions

The Balaclava open cut mine is open for inspection through a walkway that goes through a tunnel into the open cut. The mine is a spectacular example of early quartz reef mining. Puddling machines and the remnants of areas of quartz reef and shallow alluvial lead mining areas are also located within the area.

Exploring the walking track system is one way to see the reserve and relax in natural surroundings whilst enjoying its scenic and historic values. The cemetery walking track leads walkers through the old township to Whroo Cemetery.



Balaclava Mine

Located on a lonely hillside and containing some 340 graves, the cemetery reflects the harshness of life on the goldfields last century.



Beyond the cemetery is the Ngurai-illam-wurrung rock well used by local Koories and later possibly by gold miners in the area.

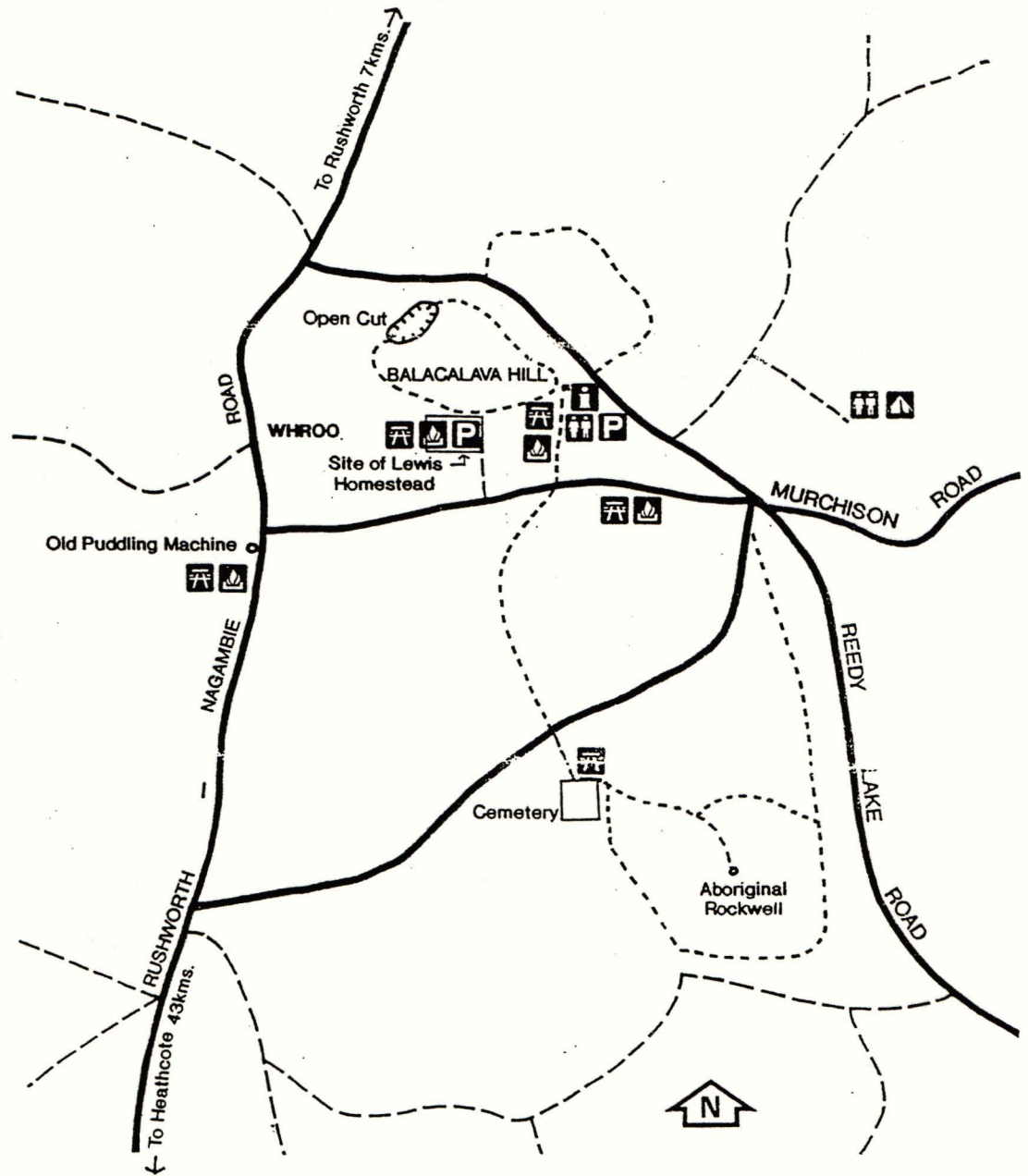
The Reserve lies within the Rushworth State Forest comprising some 24,300 ha of attractive Box-Ironbark forest. There is an extensive network of tracks throughout the forest and wildflowers including wattles provide spectacular displays during spring.



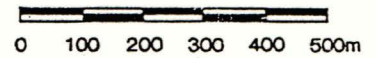
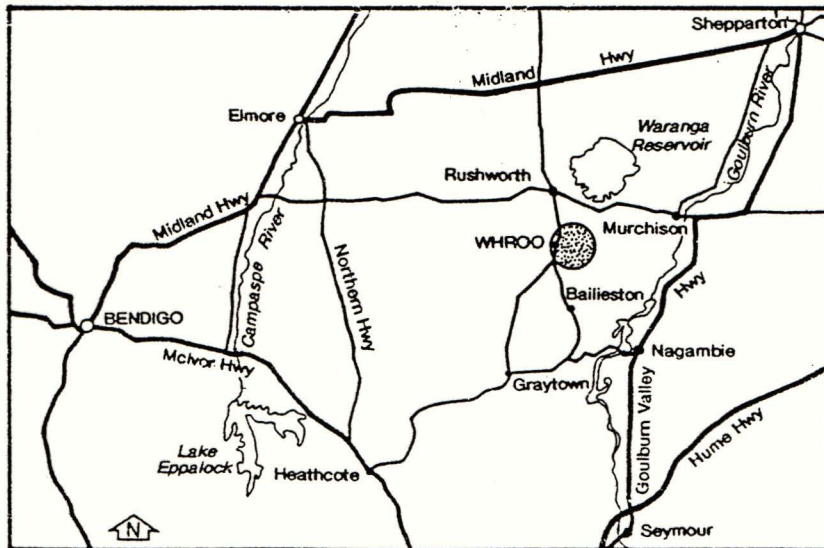
WHROO HISTORIC RESERVE

LEGEND

-  CAMPING
-  PICNIC AREA
-  FIREPLACE
-  TOILETS (Disabled)
-  PARKING AREA
-  INFORMATION
-  MAIN ROAD
-  UNSEALED ROAD
-  WALKING TRACK



LOCALITY MAP



FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact the Department of Conservation and Environment:

Bendigo Region
 Cnr Hargreaves & Mundy Sts.
 Bendigo 3550
 Telephone (054) 44 6666

Rushworth Office
 Murchison Rd.
 Rushworth 3612
 Telephone (058) 56 1434

