



Shire of Eltham  
Historical Society  
Incorporated  
P O Box 137, Eltham, Victoria, 3095

**NEWSLETTER  
No.101 MARCH, 1995**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**8 P.M. WEDNESDAY, 8 MARCH, 1995**

**ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE**

**MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM**

**(ENTER FROM SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)**

**GUEST SPEAKER : DICK TOOTH**

**"MY ELTHAM"**

**MY ELTHAM - DICK TOOTH**

Over the last few years we have been treated to a wide variety of "Eltham people" in the "My Eltham" series at our Annual General Meetings. We have taken Eltham in its widest sense, meaning the Shire of Eltham but of course the terminology has now changed. We don't have a wider or narrower identity problem with our speaker for this meeting - Dick Tooth was a resident of Eltham for more than forty years. He first came to the district in 1935 and moved to Eltham in the 1940's., He was widely known through his initial business interest which was a produce store on the site of the present Eltham Fire Station. Later he started his poultry farm in Railway Parade.

Dick says his memory is not as good as it was but with a little prompting from the audience this should not be a problem. A number of our members were here during the same era as Dick and will be able to move the discussion along with their questions. Those who know Dick will appreciate that once he latches on to a topic then he is likely to have a fair amount to say about it.

Apart from any thought that it is "politically correct" to attend the Annual General Meeting we think that this will be an interesting meeting for contemporaries of Dick Tooth and for those who have come to Eltham more recently.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

A formal notice of the Annual General Meeting and agenda were included in the last Newsletter. Annual General Meetings are often considered a bit of a bore but something that should be attended. Without the Annual General Meeting and the people who submit themselves at the meeting for various Society positions, the Society would cease to exist. We need active office bearers and Committee Members who are prepared to give their ideas, time and skills to the Society. Please consider standing for a position even if it means a challenge to someone already holding a position. Holders of all positions retire at this meeting and all are eligible for re-election.

Annual subscriptions will be fixed at this meeting and will be payable at the meeting or on receipt of a renewal notice with the next Newsletter.



Keith Gray

## WHAT'S IN A NAME:

The establishment of the Shire of Nillumbik has created a new interest in a local name that has been used by Europeans since the 1840's and before that by the Wurundjeri people who were the Koori inhabitants of the region. There have been many meanings ascribed to the name over the years and people who say they know the meaning still don't absolutely agree.

Nillumbik or Nillum-bik seems to have been first used as a European place name in the early 1840's when Surveyor Robert Hoddle allocated it as a parish name for the area beyond Warringal (Heidelberg).

The Parish of Nillumbik was established as part of the Victorian system by which land titles are described. It has been extended somewhat since Hoddle's time and now covers an area north of the Yarra between Lower Plenty and Watsons Creek. Its northern boundary is an irregular line through Plenty, Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Kangaroo Ground. Within these boundaries lies the town of Diamond Creek originally proposed as the Township of Nillumbik. The Nillumbik Cemetery is a remnant of the township name.

As to the meaning there are a number of variations on the theme of poor country, poor hunting ground and the like.

Mick Woiwod in "Kangaroo Ground the Highland Taken" says:

"The likelihood that its environs had special significance to the Wurundjeri is strengthened further when one considers the names they used for the country around - Wyenondabul, meaning perhaps 'Fiery Hills' and Nillumbik, meaning 'bad-earth' or bad-land'.

That is not to say that the Wurundjeri inferred anything evil or improper about the wonderful world created for them by their Dreamtime heroes. Rather, it would seem they implied that, compared to good country Moor-rul (Kangaroo Ground) Nillumbik was poor country, indeed, for hunting and foraging."

Wurundjeri representative, Ian Hunter, says that it means place of bad spirits.

Various organisations and businesses have adopted the name over the years, particularly in Diamond Creek. Of course, we know of the Nillumbik Historical Society. The former Nillumbik Orienteering Club has combined with another club to form Nillumbik Emus. There is a Nillumbik Farm at Diamond Creek and a large grazing property at Kangaroo Ground owned by the Abrahams Family is also named Nillumbik. A street in Diamond Creek is called Nillumbik Square.

The name is well established in the local area but not so well known beyond it. The Nillumbik Shire Council is likely to change that situation as it becomes well known in wider circles.

## SOCIETY PROGRAMME:

We have assembled a programme for Society activities for 1995 but final arrangements have not yet been made for some of the meetings later in the year. The Programme is included with this Newsletter. Any changes will be notified through the Newsletter.

## **FABBRO HOUSE:**

Subdividers are busy developing land in Falkiner Street Eltham under the imaginative title of Riverview Park (but where's the river?). It is better known to High School students and Eltham residents as Maurie Fabbro's land. This open paddock features prominently in views from many parts of Eltham.

Uncharacteristically, it contains few trees but it has been considered by many to be an important ingredient of the Eltham landscape.

Midway up the paddock sits Maurie's house built more than fifty years ago and reminiscent more of an Italian farmhouse than an Eltham building. Behind the house and less visible is an older timber house built by the West family in the 1860's. This house was shifted here by Maurie from another position on the land. Both of these buildings have been listed in the draft Eltham Heritage Study as being worthy of preservation but they don't have any legislative protection. They do not fit well with a modern residential subdivision and the Council has agreed to their demolition or removal. Recent negotiations for a private buyer to purchase the main house on two blocks of land were apparently not successful. It is currently being demolished. The old house has been donated by the subdivider for private relocation away from Eltham.

It is sad to see the passing of this interesting remnant of our local heritage. Very soon the landscape of the area will change significantly as new houses are erected on this estate. Hopefully landscaping and colour controls imposed by the Council will soften the impact.

## **OTHER NEWS:**

At this stage there is nothing new to report on the effects on the Society of Municipal restructuring. The Society's name now obviously needs to be changed and we should move fairly quickly to resolve this issue. Anyone with a view on the matter should contact a Committee Member.

Harry Gilham's talk on the Eltham Primary School at the February meeting remains uncompleted. So far he has covered less than half the history of the School and we hope to have a further instalment some time in the future. Harry's "guided tour" around the older building was most interesting.

The R.H.S.V. has asked that we publicize their tour programme for the year. A copy of the programme is reproduced below. Members of affiliated Societies receive the same concession as R.H.S.V. members. More details are available from the R.H.S.V. Office.

Harry Gilham  
President  
439-1175

Russell Yeoman  
Secretary  
439-9717

Gwen Orford  
Treasurer  
439-8642

### **EXCURSIONS 1995**

- 26 February — Sunday Traralgon — "Old Gippsland and New"
- 9 April — Sunday "Through the Kilmore Gap to Puckapunyal"
- 16 May — Tuesday "Through Jolimont to the Paddock that Has Grown"
- 14 June — Wednesday "They Liked to be Beside the Seaside" — 'Billilla', Brighton

- 18 July — Tuesday Flagstaff to the Yarra Port. A Guided Walk
- 12 August — Saturday "Puffing to the Packing Sheds" — Aboard Puffing Billy
- 5 September — Tuesday Flemington Saleyards in Retrospect
- 19 September — Tuesday Inner City Lanes — a Guided Walk
- 31 October — Tuesday, 4 days Exploring North Central Victoria from Dookie — an Extended Tour

### **OTHER 1995 EVENTS**

- 30 April — Sunday — "Tracing our Victorian Military Ancestry 1850-1918"
- 7 May — Sunday Open Day and Book Fair at the Royal Mint