

**Eltham District
Historical Society**

Incorporated

P O Box 137, Eltham, Victoria 3095

**NEWSLETTER
No.103 JULY, 1995**

NEXT MEETING

8 P.M. WEDNESDAY, 12 JULY, 1995

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

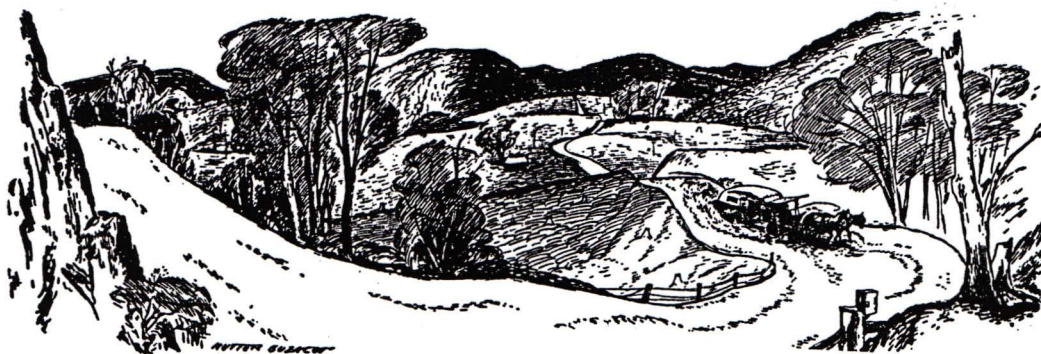
MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM

(ENTER FROM SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)

6.30 P.M. BUFFET DINNER

8.00 P.M. SPEAKER PANEL

"WRITERS IN ELTHAM"



Sketch by Nutter Buzacott from Alan Marshall's
"These Are My People"

JULY MEETING:

Over the last few years we have established a pattern of meetings where we have a buffet dinner followed by a panel of speakers on a selected aspect of the arts in Eltham. So far we have covered painting, crafts and fine arts and the performing arts. This year we have selected the literary arts. The evening will be divided into four main parts as follows:

Buffet Dinner:

This will be a roast chicken dinner commencing at about 6.30 pm. Harry Gilham will be providing wines (including a selection of his own home made wines) and other drinks. Cost of the dinner will be \$10 payable on the night. However, we need to know how many are coming for dinner.

Please ring Gwen Orford on 439-8642 by Monday 10 July if you are coming. Bookings and payment are not required if you are just coming for the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Presentation:

At the Special General Meeting on 12 May it was decided to recognize a number of members who were considered to have given outstanding service to the Society. This was done in accordance with the notices of motion published in the May Newsletter. At the July meeting presentations will be made as required by the decision and as follows:

Life Membership:

Peter Bassett-Smith, Past President

Russell Yeoman, Secretary

Sue Law, Immediate Past President, Vice-President

Presentation of Recognition:

Charis Pelling, Foundation President.

The presentations will be made by Harry Gilham.

Speaker Panel:

We have arranged for a panel of writers from diverse backgrounds to talk on the broad subject of "Writers in Eltham". Two are well known local writers and two not so well known and not so local. Some will talk of their own work and others will talk about other local writers. The panel members are:

- John Weaving - a local writer and editor, member of the judging panel for the Eltham Short Story Award and former member of the Eltham Arts Council. He is currently compiling an anthology of stories from the Short Story Award.
- Gwen Ogden Ford - a local writer who will talk about other women writers of the area, particularly those who mainly practice in other art forms.
- Archimede Fusillo - a young writer and lecturer in creative writing from Mill Park. He was a joint winner of the Eltham Short Story Award with his "The Voice in Between".
- Ted Middleton - a widely travelled journalist temporarily living at Lower Plenty. Ted will give a talk on Alan Marshall - our most famous local writer - from a writer's point of view.

Supper:

This will be the sweet course of the dinner accompanied by tea or coffee - or there might be some of Harry's wine left.

SOCIETY NAME:

At the Special General Meeting on 10 May members present voted unanimously to change the name of our Society. As you can see from our letterhead and in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee it was decided that the new name should be the Eltham District Historical Society Incorporated. The necessity for the change has been brought about by municipal restructuring which has resulted in the fact that the Shire of Eltham now does not exist.

Most of our members live in the area between the Plenty River and Kangaroo Ground with, of course, Eltham at about its centre. That has been and remains our main area of interest. The area is now covered by two Councils, Nillumbik Shire Council, generally east of Bolton Street and Karingal Drive, and Banyule City Council to the west. We hope we can continue our good relations with both of these councils as we have with Eltham Shire Council in the past.

We will continue to maintain an interest in the areas outside our main sphere of influence without wishing to usurp the role of other neighbouring historical societies. In particular, we should continue to keep records and monitor events in the northern parts of the former Shire of Eltham where there is no other designated society.

AUTUMN EXCURSION:

Only eleven members and friends attended this excursion. Bettina Woodburn wrote this account of the trip.

St Andrews Old School, now a Community Centre, was the meeting place for the Eltham District Historical Society Autumn Outing on May 27 1995.

Outside it was like Winter, but in the cosy original school room eleven members shared discussion about the building - its resemblance to Eltham Primary with its lofty pine-lined ceilings with skylights (with their blind pulleys still intact), Baltic pine-lined walls and new heating and cooling systems.

Books, photographs and written accounts of the area were on display for us to peruse before driving off in convoy to the Apted Orchard at Arthur's Creek and its amiable owners.

It was sunny when we walked along the lines of trees on the hillside with assorted pears and apples. Fashion controls their production - at one time some of the old strains had staged a come-back but now Granny Smiths, Jonathans and Red and Yellow Delicious are favoured.

The rows of each variety stand beside others which flower at the same time.

Across the Cottles Bridge Road and further up the hill stand huge sheds and old homesteads, machinery, tractors, pickers and cool stores which were all explained to us in detail. The enormous turnover of apples and pears require this very considerable equipment and facilities.

We entered cool stores containing crates stacked nine high and held at a temperature of 0°C and nearly 100% humidity.

A high-level dam stores water which is fed through pumps to automatically drip-feed each and every tree with two litres daily though this varies according to seasonal conditions. Computers control all of the functions of the watering system throughout the property.

The "high ground" is used for grazing and rainfall run-off and from here we watched all of those bountiful trees facing the northern sun and the Kinglake hills, planted down to the banks of Arthurs Creek, with their leaves turning autumnal and with only the few cider apples left to tell the story of the past seasons.

PLENTY/YARRA CULTURAL HERITAGE LEAP PROJECT:

This project, funded under the Commonwealth Government LEAP programme, involves fourteen young people operating from the Plenty Yarra Arts Research Centre in West Heidelberg. It is sponsored by Nillumbik and Banyule Councils and the Plenty/Yarra Community Tourism Association. The grant has developed a number of project proposals which include:-

- Photographic documentation of historic buildings in the Eltham Diamond Valley and Heidelberg areas.
- Research and documentation of long standing sports groups in the region and their social significance.
- Research and documentation of visual artists working in the region - focusing initially on Dunmmochin and Montsalvat.
- Research and documentation of significant performing arts groups and individual performers.

The group is seeking assistance from the Society in its research into these projects. If you think you can help please contact Russell Yeoman for further information.



Lindsay Apted explains the complexities of orchard irrigation.

Photo by Bill Woodburn.

ANDREW ROSS SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM:

The Museum Board of Management is taking steps to become incorporated in its own right. Despite its association with the Kangaroo Ground School, advice to the Board indicates that this is desirable for protection of members.

Improvements are continuing on a regular basis. Advertising signs have now been acquired. Electrical work has been carried out free of charge by local electrician Ian Marshall.

Don't forget the request in the last Newsletter for volunteers to assist with the Museum. Contact Diana Bassett-Smith on 712 0668 if you can help.

OTHER BRIEF ITEMS:

- Ted Middleton who is one of our writer's panel, plans to produce a booklet dealing with the origins of Eltham's street names. If you have any information you think could be useful please contact Ted on 9431 1582.
- A sculpture of Alan Marshall by Marcus Skipper is currently being installed outside the Eltham Library. Nillumbik Council has paid for casting the sculpture but at this stage Marcus has received no reimbursement for his work. The Eltham Arts Council is seeking public donations to pay Marcus. If you would like to assist contact Nillumbik Community Arts on 439-3109.
- Smiths Gully Land Care Group is currently undertaking a project with the assistance of TAFE students. It involves construction of a walking trail between St. Andrews (market site) and Smiths Gully (Peter Franke Reserve and cemetery). The students are also carrying out historical research on the cemetery and the environs of the trails.
- Nillumbik Shire Council has advertised the availability of Community Development Grants for community groups. We have made an application based on a suggestion that a photo copier should be made available for use by community groups.
- Members wishing to contact Russell Yeoman will no longer find him at the Shire Offices. He has now resigned from the Council following staff restructuring. Russell remains available on his home phone number shown below.
- The Diamond Valley News has reported a suggestion by Banyule City Council to have the railway line duplicated between Greensborough and Eltham. Complete duplication of this section could jeopardize the timber trestle bridge over the Diamond Creek at Eltham. Because of the heritage significance of this bridge, this is a situation that needs to be monitored.

Harry Gilham
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9439 9717

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9439 8642