



**Eltham District  
Historical Society  
Incorporated**  
PO Box 137, Eltham, Victoria 3095

**NEWSLETTER  
No. 110 SEPTEMBER 1996**

**NEXT MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 1996**

**ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE**

**MAIN ROAD ELTHAM  
(ENTER FROM OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)**

**6.30 PM BUFFET DINNER**

**8.00 PM SPEAKER PANEL**

**"ELTHAM ARCHITECTS"**

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**SPRING EXCURSION**

**SUNDAY 20TH OCTOBER**

**KANGAROO GROUND AND GULF STATION**

**STARTS 10.00 AM AT ELTHAM LIBRARY**

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## SEPTEMBER MEETING

For some years now we have been conducting an annual series of panel discussions on various aspects of cultural life in Eltham. It started as a one-off panel of local painters but we have now had representative panels from various branches of the arts.

For this meeting we are following the same format with a panel of local architects. This broadens the series from the arts into the professions although some may consider that many architectural works belong in the art category. A number of important local buildings have incorporated works by local artists and this aspect will be the subject of one of our speakers. Eltham is widely known for the quality and character of its architecture, in particular its mud brick buildings and others that have been designed to harmonize with their environment. It is expected that this theme will extend across our range of speakers.

As has been our practice with these meetings, there will be a buffet dinner prior to commencement of the meeting. This will commence at 6.30 pm and will be catered by a group of Committee members. As usual, Harry Gilham is arranging drinks including a selection of his own fruit wines.

The cost of the dinner is \$10.00 per person payable at the meeting. For catering purposes we need to know how many people are coming. Please ring Gwen Orford by Monday 9th September if you are coming. There is no need to ring if you are just coming to the meeting at 8.00 pm.

The members of our speakers panel are:-

### Les Clarke:

Les is a resident of Montmorency and a principal of a large architectural partnership currently based in Richmond. He is a former Councillor and Shire President of the Shire of Eltham and one of the founders of Eltham College. Les and his firm have designed many local buildings including the Eltham College complex and most recently the Eltham Community Health Centre. Les's talk will mainly deal with the art works which are incorporated into Eltham buildings.

### Geoff Watt:

Geoff is a principal of a local architectural partnership and an Eltham resident of long standing. He has designed many local houses and other buildings. Geoff will relate his design philosophies to a broad concept for the future of Eltham. He believes that buildings should be environmentally sustainable and sensitive. They should not conflict with our heritage buildings but should not mimic them.

### Bill Woodburn:

As an architecture student in 1948 Bill designed a mud brick house in Montmorency and then he and wife Bettina built it. Bill is an architect with a Melbourne firm and still lives in the same house. That qualifies Bill for this panel and his subject will be recognized by local examples. However, the use of corrugated iron as a building material is an Australia wide tradition and that will be the theme of the talk.

### Robert Marshall:

Robert lives in St Andrews and runs his own architecture practice at Hurstbridge with mud brick buildings being an important component of his work. He has been a long serving Councillor and Shire President of the Shire of Eltham. Robert will speak on historical aspects of the environmental building movement including his own work. His talk will include work of Alistair Knox with whom Robert worked in his early years as an architect.

## SPRING EXCURSION

Transport for this excursion is being provided by courtesy of Bruce Nixon and Cobb & Co Coaches. There will be no charge to members for the excursion but there will be an admission charge for Gulf Station to be paid on the day.

Our usual meeting place for excursions is no longer available so we will be leaving from Panther Place near the Eltham Library. To avoid conflict with later library and park users please park in the rear driveway of the former Shire Offices.

We plan to leave at 10.00 am and should return by 5.00 pm. Bring your own picnic lunch. Although there is no charge bookings must be made. Please advise Gwen Orford at the September meeting or by phone if you are coming. Members may bring friends and we welcome other regulars on Society excursions. However, in the event of heavy booking members will receive preference.

This local excursion will visit Kangaroo Ground and Gulf Station at Yarra Glen. At Kangaroo Ground we will visit the Andrew Ross Museum, War Memorial Tower and cemetery and possibly some other locations depending on time. We are currently arranging speakers for some of these locations.

This is a generous offer by Bruce and his company and will provide a pleasant social outing for our members.

## ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM

A most interesting time was had by some 600 who attended the Furphy Festival at the Museum in May

A lot of support was given by Eltham District Historical Society members and this is really appreciated by the Museum Board. Sue Law sat for hours recording snippets of information whilst Doug Orford and Harry Gilham were great M.M. (Muscle Men). To the others who helped and attended thank you very much.

Already the Board is floating ideas for 1997's big event.

The poetry competition winners are:

### Under 12 Section

1st	Laura Georgiou
2nd	Anita Cranwell
3rd	Victoria Walton

### Under 17 Section

1st	Peta Easton
2nd	Kate Briggs
3rd	Eva Pengo

### Open Section

1st	Barnaby Nelson
2nd	Paul Minty
3rd	Miss J. F. G. Host

The book, "The Boy of the Old Brigade", launched at the festival is available along with other publications at the Museum..

Opening time for the Museum is Sunday from 2.00 - 4.00 pm.

Diana Bassett-Smith

### STOP PRESS

Diana has advised the Museum has been granted Registration for Accreditation. This is the first step for full accreditation by Arts Victoria and is a recognition that the Museum has an appropriate administrative and financial structure in place.

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By the time members read this report our Secretary, Russell Yeoman (Life Member), will have returned with wife Marion and news of their visit to 'El-tam' in England where they were to meet up with the local Historical Society.

My presence at the LEAP program being run in Eltham to create a Cultural Heritage Trail has been worthwhile, particularly with being able to correct a Nillumbik Council handout which they were using as a starting point about our history. Local papers will be asked to assist in the launch of their trail on Sunday 22nd September at 10.30 am from the Railway Trestle Bridge near the Eltham Library.

The memorabilia task force (Councils of Banyule and Nillumbik) were guests of Banyule Council in the 'Heidelberg Town Hall' on August 26th when the mayoral robes of the City of Heidelberg were formally presented to Heidelberg Historical Society for perpetual display in their collection at the former Court House in Jika Street Heidelberg (open Sunday afternoons).

The other completed task can be seen in the Council Chamber at Nillumbik Shire Offices where the Honour Boards listing the Councillors and Presidents of the former Shires of Diamond Valley and Eltham are on permanent display.

The Nillumbik Council is to be asked to host an 'afternoon tea occasion' on Sunday 15th December 1996 to mark the second anniversary of the 'demise' of the former Councils and the 'birth' of the new Councils.

Again, the newspapers will be used, along with known records of past Councillors so that invitations can be sent to all concerned.

Also an Eltham task:

The Eltham Community Centre in Pitt Street now has a permanent display of items relating to Eltham Council. The President's chain of office, hand written minute books, medallions, the Shire seal, etc., are enclosed in the security glass case. This building is open during office hours 9.00 - 5.00 so just 'turn up when passing'. Presidents' jewellery from Eltham and Diamond Valley Councils are proposed to be on permanent exhibition in theft proof display cases in the appropriate libraries.

Harry Gilham

Further to Harry's comments above a public invitation has been extended to the launch of the "Nillumbik Cultural Heritage Trail" at the time and location mentioned. It is billed as a family fun day. There will be a sausage sizzle, children's activities in addition to the official opening and a short walk along the trail.

## DEMOLITION OF FORMER ELTHAM SHIRE OFFICES

Members will probably have heard or observed that the offices of the former Shire of Eltham have now been demolished. This action has been taken by Nillumbik Shire Council as part of the process of selling the site.

This building was part of Eltham's history as the meeting place and administrative centre of the Council for thirty years. However, on architectural or heritage grounds there were no strong arguments against its demolition. There have been community protests regarding the demolition and the proposed development of the site for commercial purposes.

As a Society we do not have a position on these aspects. However, through Harry Gilham we have been involved in discussions regarding the three pencil pines which stood at the front of the building. These trees are the only remains of the Shillinglaw Cottage garden in the original location of the cottage. They appear in photos from early in this century as well established trees. The Shire of Eltham Heritage Study recommends preservation of the trees. The three trees have survived the demolition operation but are threatened by redevelopment of the site. Discussion on the matter with the Nillumbik Commissioners is continuing.

## A VISIT TO THE OTHER ELTHAM

As predicted by Harry, Marion and I have (just) returned from three months in Britain including a visit to their Eltham. We were made most welcome by members of the Eltham Society with whom we have had contact over some years. They provided us with meals, including a barbecue organized for us to meet their committee members. We had a guided tour of the area including Eltham Palace. We timed our visit to coincide with their monthly meeting which had an attendance of over 100.

We took some presents from the Society mainly relating to our former Shire of Eltham. These included photos of the former shire boundaries by Doug Orford, other photos, Council videos and a pictorial map of the "Eltham Foothills".

Not content with their generous hospitality, they provided us with presents also, including a number of Society publications, a painting by a Society member of the Great Barn at Wellhall and Society tie and scarf. We also received a video of our meeting with the Committee.

These added to our growing weight of baggage so most have been included in a package currently being shipped home. A list of items available for reading by members and probably more about our visit should appear in the next Newsletter.

Our visit should strengthen the contact between our Societies and I am sure that any other members intending to visit England would be made very welcome.

Russell Yeoman

## LIBRARY DISPLAY:

The Society has use of a display cabinet in the local history section of Eltham Library. We had a long standing display from the time of the Library opening but more recently there have been regular changes.

The cabinet can be made available for appropriate displays by other groups or individual members. The Andrew Ross Museum has had a recent display.

Currently Margaret Ball has arranged an excellent display on the Shillinglaw Family.

Members with ideas for displays or wishing to use the cabinet should contact Russell Yeoman.

Harry Gilham  
President  
Phone 9439 1175

Russell Yeoman  
Secretary  
9439 9717

Gwen Orford  
Treasurer/Membership Secretary  
9439 8647

ELTHAM SHIRE OFFICE 1965 - 1994 PHOTO STAGE 1  
DEMOLISHED 1996

