



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

NEWSLETTER
No. 115 JULY 1997

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY 9TH JULY 1997

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

MAIN ROAD ELTHAM
(ENTER FROM OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)

SOCIETY 30TH ANNIVERSARY

6.30 PM BUFFET DINNER

8.00 PM SPEAKER PANEL

"OUR OWN HISTORY"



SOCIETY MEMBERS LOWERING THE TIME CAPSULE INTO THE BASE OF THE MONUMENT OUTSIDE THE ELTHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE AS PART OF VICTORIA'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN 1985.

30TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING

This meeting celebrates the 30th anniversary of the establishment of our Society in 1967. We are taking the opportunity to look at our own bit of history and reflect on our activities and achievements. The meeting will start with a buffet dinner at 6.30 followed by a panel of speakers drawn from Society members and dealing with various aspects of our Society's history.

The dinner will be fully catered and will include pasta main course, salads, finger food entrees and dessert.

As usual, wines and other drinks will be provided by President Harry. It will include a selection of his own delicious home made wines.

The cost of the dinner is \$12 payable on the night but we need to quickly know firm numbers for catering purposes. Some people have already booked. If you have not made a firm booking please ring Sue Law on 9439 9520 as soon as possible (by Friday) if you intend coming. Leave the details on the answering machine if she is not there. No booking is required if you can't come to the dinner but intend coming to the meeting at 8 o'clock.

Our speaker panel will include the following members:

- Chairperson Harry Gilham
- Peter Bassett-Smith talking mainly about the early days of the Society
- Russell Yeoman who will deal with some of our achievements
- Sue Law will introduce our collection of photos of Society activities
- Bettina Woodburn will cover Society excursions following on from her very interesting reports in the Newsletter.

The discussion will be rather informal and there may be some divergence from these topics or overlap between speakers. If you have any photos of Society activities or other Society memorabilia please bring them along to the meeting.

728 MAIN ROAD

For some time now we have been negotiating with Nillumbik Shire Council with a view to using the former Eltham Police Residence as our Society office. We have received an offer from the Council to take over the building in a caretaker role pending a more formal arrangement.

We have agreed to this proposal but do not have occupancy yet. Some painting and other internal work is required and power needs to be restored to the building. We still don't know when we can move in but it is obviously getting closer.

We are going to need furniture and other equipment to make a useable office. We received a grant from the Council which will assist with this. However, if anyone has any suitable furniture that they would like to donate or loan then that would be of great assistance. The most useful items would be tables or desks, chairs and any form of storage like cupboards, shelves, filing cabinets, etc. We could also use kitchen equipment, a heater and any other items which would help make our occupancy more comfortable. Please ring Harry Gilham if you can help with any of these.

CONSTRUCTING THE PLENTY VALLEY

The third annual conference of Plenty Valley Arts Inc. is to be held at La Trobe University on Saturday July 5th. The theme is "Constructing the Plenty Valley" and it will focus on significant urban and rural dwellings of the area including Bear's Castle at Yan Yean.

The conference costs \$40.00 for non-members or \$25.00 concession. This includes lunch, morning excursion and afternoon lecture programme.

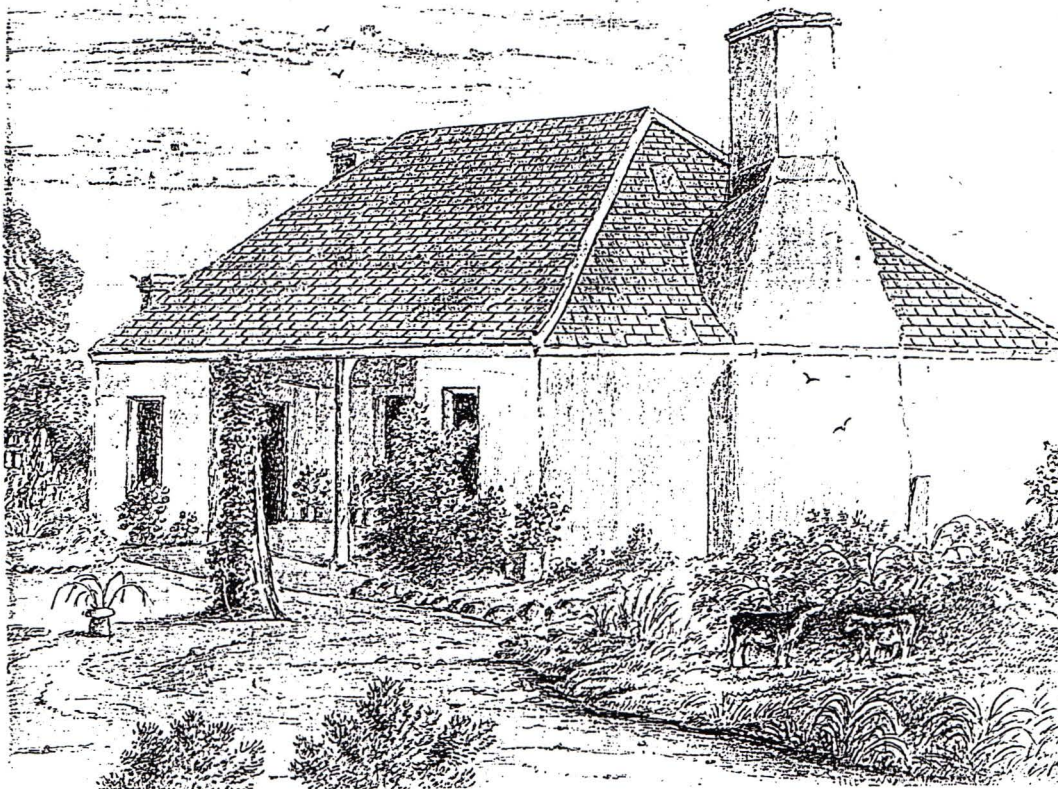
There may still be some places left if you are quick. Ring 9479 1417 if you are interested.

SWEENEYS

"Sweeneys", one of Eltham's most important historic houses, was auctioned on Saturday 28th June. Owner Vi Burston, a member of our Society for many years, is now elderly and frail and can no longer maintain the property. The Burstons bought the property in the 1940's from descendants of the Sweeney family. In recent years the farm has been subdivided into large rural residential lots and the part nearest the river has been incorporated into the Yarra Valley Metropolitan Park. The house, historic barn and garden remain on about one hectare of land.

Thomas Sweeney (1802-1867) was an Irish convict transported to Australia in 1823. He was granted a ticket of leave in 1831. In 1838 he moved to Port Phillip and in 1842 purchased 110 acres on the Yarra River south east of what was to become the township of Eltham. He first built a slab hut and later his homestead, "Culla Hill", which has been extended over the years to become the "Sweeneys" of today.

The house and barn are classified by the National Trust. Together with the garden they are listed in Nillumbik Planning Scheme and require a planning permit for any alterations. At this stage we do not know who the future owners will be but hopefully they will be people who appreciate the significance of their purchase.



"Culla Hill"

ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM

The museum has been offered a number of farming equipment items by Nunawading Historical Society. These items are very welcome and will form a significant part of a proposed outdoor display.

The Society has received a donation of farming and fencing tools which were owned by the late Alf Anderson of Rosanna. They had previously been used on the Anderson property in Mt. Pleasant Road, Eltham by Alf and his brother Eddy. These tools will be passed on to the museum.

The museum board proposed to publish the diaries of Andrew Ross and John Donaldson, Kangaroo Ground Pioneer. Mick Woiwod is currently working on these diaries.

A THANK YOU

From time to time we receive poems from Gwen Baker, usually with an Eltham theme and some have appeared in previous Newsletters. This untitled poem is her latest contribution.

*I wish to say Thank you!
How does one (ever) explain
A very good feeling
Of living here in Eltham where every day
We see changes, again and again;
Yet, its true - that mystery
Of blended differing known qualities
Of our town and environs remains in tact.
As seeing a tired face we smile
Oh! we do receive kind glances or grimaces of Hello! in return
To All of Eltham, every one person
We say Thankyou*

Gwen Baker

SOME OTHER NEWS ITEMS

- The local history cabinet in the Eltham Library has been moved again. It is now in the central area of the Library near the children's section. Dean Stewart has arranged a display in the cabinet called "Tower of Strength". Dean lives in the residence at the War Memorial Tower at Kangaroo Ground and the display features photos and other items dealing with the tower.
- Don't forget that subscriptions for 1997-98 are now due. If you have not yet paid you can pay at the July meeting or send a cheque to our post office box. Details were included in the last Newsletter.
- Our portable public address system was used for the first time at the May meeting. Members with hearing difficulties said that it greatly increased their enjoyment of the meeting and, of course, we will be using it at all meetings from now on. This system was purchased with a generous donation from the Lower Plenty Residents' Association.
- Russell Yeoman is organizing a series of walks for the Nillumbik Living and Learning Centres including a historical walk around Eltham on Saturday 25th October. The other walks will be 20km all day walks exploring the Eltham-Research area on 19th October and an area north of Christmas Hills on 16th November. Contact the Living and Learning Centres at Eltham or Pantom Hill if you are interested
- As mentioned in our programme for the year, our next excursion is on Sunday 26th November. Details will be provided in the next Newsletter. Diana Basset-Smith has raised the possibility of a Saturday excursion next year. Please talk to a Committee member if you have a particular preference for either Saturday or Sunday excursions.

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