

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

**NEWSLETTER
No. 116 SEPTEMBER 1997**

NEXT MEETING

8.00 PM WEDNESDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 1997

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

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

GUEST SPEAKER - JOCK RYAN

'GOLD IN THE VALLEY'

SPRING EXCURSION

HUME AND HOVELL STAGE 2

SEYMOUR, BENALLA, YEA.

SUNDAY 26TH OCTOBER 1997

LEAVES ELTHAM LIBRARY 8-30 AM



Miners "Panning Out" Print by S T Gill -
Source National Gallery of Victoria

846-848 MAIN ROAD ELTHAM

Nillumbik Shire Council has granted a permit for a funeral parlour on land which includes this site at the corner of Main Road and York Street. The site contains an architect's office in a building which was formerly a shop and dwelling dating from the 1920's. The proposal requires demolition of this building which is one of the few remaining old shops which formed the rather spread out "town centre" of Eltham.

Prior to making its decision the Council obtained a report from Graeme Butler and Associates, the heritage consultants who carried out Stage 1 of the Nillumbik Heritage Study. The report summarized the historical significance as follows:-

"This brick corner shop with associated residence has potential local historical significance as a late 1920's grocer's shop, now much altered and one of only a few shops of that era left in Eltham's Main Road. This significance is qualified by the many changes ----. The other examples are better preserved and still function as shops."

With this type of expert advice it is difficult to make a strong case for preservation of the building although, of course, it is a shame to see it demolished.

The report includes details of the site itself and its history based on research carried out by Carlotta Kellaway. The building dates from the late 1920's when it was owned by C. R. Nicholls.

From the early 1930's it was Charles Cockroft's grocery shop and he also ran a grain store there. According to his daughter, Edna Brown, he delivered groceries around the district taking his truck as far as Kangaroo Ground. In 1950 he shifted to Traralgon. Since then several different businesses have operated from the site including a bottle merchant and produce store.

Conversion to the present office use involved alterations to the shop front and rebuilding the galvanized iron store at the rear.

Russell Yeoman has a copy of the consultant's report if anyone is interested in reading it.

SOCIETY 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Our Society was formed at a well attended meeting in the Eltham Shire Hall on the very foggy evening of 6th June 1967. In fact, it was so foggy that the guest speaker decided not to come. The meeting was called by Cr. Charis Pelling and was in part prompted by her involvement in the Shillinglaw Cottage Preservation Committee which had then been operating for about three years.

It has always been a bit debateable whether this date is our anniversary or that of the first general meeting a few months later at which Charis Pelling became our first President.

COUNCIL MATTERS

The new Nillumbik Planning scheme currently on exhibition is part of a complete overhaul of planning schemes in Victoria. It adopts new zones and provisions which are far more standardized across the state than they previously were. There are several features of interest from our point of view.

The heritage controls over a number of important properties and significant trees which were part of the former Eltham Planning scheme have been reintroduced in a new format. Wider heritage controls based on the Shire heritage study have not yet been introduced. There are several other controls based on landscape and environmental issues. There is a widespread environmental overlay control based on the recently completed regional fauna study. Some treed parts of Eltham are also covered by a "Significant Landscape Overlay" which should be of assistance in preserving the important character of these areas.

Harry Gilham and Russell Yeoman represent the Society on a reference group set up by Nillumbik Council to deal with memorabilia of the former Eltham Council. The group has arranged a working bee for conservation and filing works on the memorabilia to be held between 10.00 am and 3.00 pm on Thursday 30th October at the Nillumbik offices. Lunch will be provided and the work comprises things like filing of photo negatives. We need a small group of volunteers (say 3) to assist with this. Please ring Harry if you can help.

Banyule Council has written to us regarding proposed new suburb names and boundaries. In our area Montmorency, Briar Hill, Lower Plenty and Eltham North remain largely within their traditional boundaries. However, we note that the name of St Helena is not used as a place name and we have advised the Council of our concern.

VISITORS FROM ELTHAM

Margaret Taylor and Clifford Crate are both former Chairpersons of the Eltham Society and are still active members of that organization in their home town of Eltham, England. Since early this year Margaret has been teaching at the Aiome Anglican High School in Madang Province, Papua New Guinea.

Margaret proposes to visit our Eltham and Melbourne generally for about a month from Christmas this year. It is likely that Clifford will fly out from England to join her.

Russell and Marion Yeoman have been corresponding with Margaret regarding appropriate accommodation in Eltham and/or elsewhere in Melbourne. Their visit will be at a time when we usually do not have any Society activities. However, we will arrange something suitable so that people can meet these visitors who have previously entertained a number of our members in their Eltham. Details will be provided in the November Newsletter.

In the meantime, Margaret has expressed a wish to have a picnic at Christmas Hills on Christmas Day. Sugarloaf Reservoir would be an ideal place for such a Christmas dinner. Are there any members without family commitments (or who could take their family) who are prepared to join Margaret for her picnic? Please advise Russell Yeoman (after the end of September) if you can help with this.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

As President of Nillumbik Historical Society for many years, Jock Ryan is an acknowledged expert on the history of Diamond Creek and the Diamond Valley area. A field of particular interest is the gold mines of Diamond Creek and elsewhere on the Caledonia Diggings.

Jock's talk "Gold in the Valley" will be based on tales from local goldfields extending from Whittlesea to Research. They include many involving the extravagant claims common among miners and many humorous anecdotes.

This talk, as well as proving a great deal of local interest and information, is also an opportunity to renew our acquaintance with Jock as representative of our nearest neighbouring historical society.

SPRING EXCURSION

Following on from last year's successful Hume and Hovell excursion, we have decided to follow further in the tracks of these two important explorers.

Last year we travelled from Strath Creek and Broadford to Avalon Beach near where the explorers reached Corio Bay. This time we will travel north easterly from Broadford, first following their return journey probably as far as Swampool near Benalla. Our return trip will follow their outward route via the Maroondah Highway and Yea.

The date of 26th October is some time off at the time of writing. Details are still being finalized and there is some flexibility in the itinerary. We should be able to visit at least seven Hume and Hovell monuments and stop at other places of interest including the historic Goulburn River precinct in Seymour.

Bookings for this tour should be made as soon as possible to guarantee your seat on the coach. Please return the booking form with payment to Gwen Orford at the September meeting or send it to our post office box. Cost of the trip is \$20.00 (children \$10.00)

We plan to leave promptly at 8.30 am for this fairly long day's driving. Please be at the Eltham Library a little before then. Bring your own lunch and possibly something for morning and/or afternoon tea (although the morning and afternoon stops are likely to be near shops).

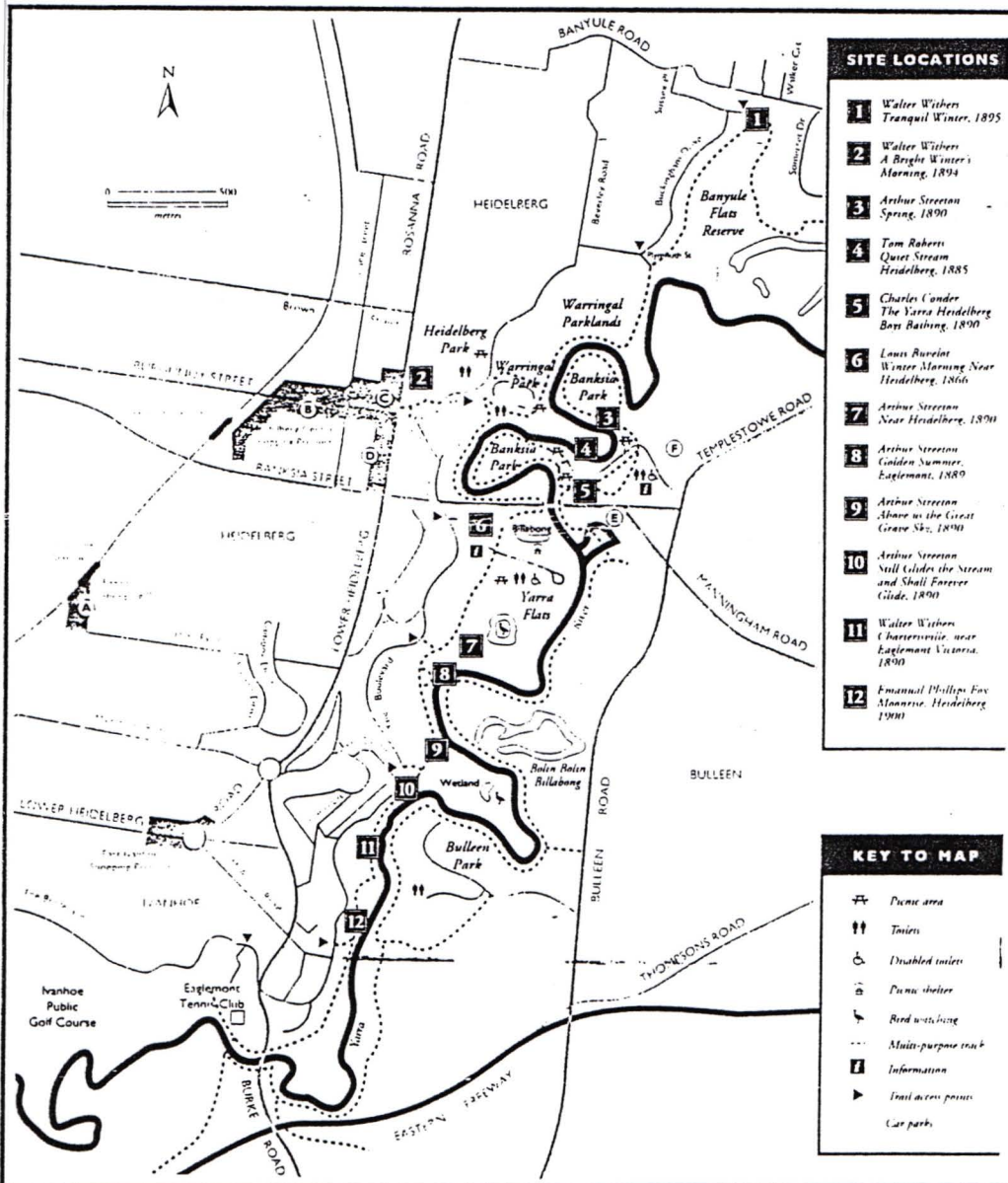
THE HEIDELBERG SCHOOL ARTISTS TRAIL

The following article is reprinted from the Newsletter of the Banyule Cultural Network. The trail may be of interest to our many members with an interest in the arts and also because it features Walter Withers who later came to live in Eltham.

The Heidelberg School was the first significant art movement in Australia. The name originated in July 1891, when art critic Sidney Dickinson wrote a review of the exhibitions of works by Walter Withers and Arthur Streeton. Dickinson noted that these artists whose works were mostly painted in the Heidelberg area could be considered as 'The Heidelberg School'. Since that time the Heidelberg School has taken on a wider meaning and covers Australian artists of the late nineteenth century who followed *plein-air* painting at one of the many artist camp sites. In the late 1880's and 1890's,

Heidelberg and Eaglemont were sites of great significance, and this historic trail recognises twelve of the works painted in this vicinity.

Visitors can enjoy a short walk in Banksia Park or set aside an hour or so to enjoy the Yarra Flats Park walk. The trail brochure also highlights a number of local shopping precincts and art centres to visit while in the area.



The trail comprises a series of 12 colour signs featuring paintings from six artists of The Heidelberg School. The signs have been erected along the Yarra River and allow visitors to experience how artists of the era interpreted the landscape.

The Trail was opened in April 1997 and a brochure with a map and information has been produced by Banyule City Council and is available by phoning 9490 4222.

Anyhow we have been celebrating our significant anniversaries in about the middle of the relevant year and this year we decided to celebrate at our July meeting.

The evening started with an excellent buffet dinner provided by caterer Emmanuel Buchanan. Drinks were arranged by Harry Gilham and, as usual, included a range of his homemade wines. The "Letterbox Plum" was a particular favourite.

President Harry introduced the speaker panel which had the task of talking about "Our Own History". The panel comprised four members of long standing including three life members of the Society. Each dealt with a different aspect of the Society's development over the years. Former President Peter Bassett-Smith talked about the early days of the Society and of some of the events that he fondly remembered. He made special mention of the extensive local history research notes produced by the late Keith Chappel. Secretary Russell Yeoman dealt with a long list of achievements by the Society and by a number of individual members. Notable among our achievements were the monument and time capsule commemorating Victoria's 150th anniversary and the Walter Withers plaque which was installed as an Australian Bicentennial project. Our association with the publication of "Pioneers and Painters" was also most important. Of individual members he particularly mentioned Mick Woiwod who has written local histories of Christmas Hills and Kangaroo Ground and been heavily involved with the Andrew Ross Museum.

Sue Law, also a former President, has recently been collating the Society's photo albums and selected a few favourite photos of Society activities to talk about. She also asked that we recall members who had passed away including former President, Kath Stephenson, Neil Blair, Jack Shallard, Joyce McMahon and Garnie Burges.

Bettina Woodburn has written in our Newsletter of a number of excursions and we look forward to her most interesting accounts each year. She spoke about a few of these excursions including the "Eltham Cultural Heritage Tour" of 1992 which visited her home. She asked the audience to reflect on these tours and listed a number of thoughts on the benefits which she thought had flowed from participating in them.

Whilst this was our formal anniversary celebration, we hope to have another achievement that we associate with our 30th year. It is likely that before the end of the year we can move into our own headquarters at 728 Main Road and, of course, the official opening will be another cause for celebration.

Harry Gilham
President
Phone 9439 1175

Russell Yeoman
Secretary
9439 9717

Gwen Orford
Treasurer/Membership Secretary
9439 8642

ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING EXCURSION

SUNDAY 26TH OCTOBER 1997

BOOKING FORM

Please make a booking for the Spring Excursion on Sunday 26th October 1997 as follows

() at adult \$20 each () children \$10 each Total \$

Name: _____ Phone No.: _____

Enclosed is payment for \$

Booking form and payment may be returned to Gwen Orford at the September Meeting on 10th September or forwarded to P O Box 137 ELTHAM 3095