

**ELTHAM DISTRICT
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**
Incorporated

PO BOX 137 ELTHAM 3095

**NEWSLETTER
NO. 123 NOVEMBER 1998**

**NEXT MEETING
8.00 PM WEDNESDAY 11TH NOV.
ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS'
CENTRE
MAIN ROAD ELTHAM
(ENTER FROM OLD SHIRE OFFICE
DRIVEWAY)**

**A LOCAL CHRONOLOGY
A PRESENTATION BY THE SOCIETY'S
COMMITTEE**

**CHRISTMAS FUNCTION
6.30 PM WEDNESDAY 9TH DEC.
ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS'
CENTRE**

**BUFFET DINNER
LOCAL HISTORY SLIDE QUIZ**

NOVEMBER MEETING:

From time to time in the Newsletter we have mentioned the Chronology of local events being prepared by Harry Gilham. This most useful document covers significant events from the early days of the Port Phillip settlement in 1835, exploration of our area by J T Gellibrand in 1836 right up to the present day. The boundaries of the area covered include the former Shire of Eltham, the present day Shire of Nillumbik and sometimes extends to a wider area where events influenced our local history.

The chronology includes only a brief summary of events but reference is made to the source of information and a bibliography of reference sources is provided. In this way the document is an important source of information for people researching local and family history and for student projects. It points the way to further information in the local history collection in the Eltham Library, the Society's collection of books and documents and other sources.

For this meeting we have divided the time span into periods of about twenty years. Each period has been allocated to one of our Committee members who will cover it in a brief talk. The style and content will vary. Some may like to quickly run through the events of their allocated period with only a brief expansion on the material in the chronology. Others may choose to concentrate on what they think are the most important or interesting events of their twenty years.

This will be a wide ranging coverage of our local history and will of necessity move rather quickly through the time period. We expect that this rather different approach will prove of interest to members and will serve as an effective introduction to this important document.

As with all our meetings, friends and visitors are most welcome.

CHRISTMAS FUNCTION:

This function will follow the successful format of recent years which is a buffet dinner at 6.30pm followed by "entertainment" with an historical theme.

Emmanuel who has now catered for a number of our functions will again provide the buffet dinner. The cost will be \$12.50 per person payable on the night. However, we need to have firm numbers for catering purposes. Please notify Gwen Orford at the November meeting if you are coming or ring her on 9439-8642 by Friday 4th December.

Harry's home-made wines are becoming quite an institution at our twice yearly dinners and usually he brings a bottle to Committee meetings also. Letterbox Plum has proved a favourite but this is rivalled by the Roadside Plum we had at the last Committee meeting. As well as wines Harry will be providing soft drinks for those who have to drive home.

The after dinner entertainment this year will be similar to last year's historical trivia quiz. However, this time it will be based on slides including historical photos and present day shots of our area.

As previously, the quiz will be a team event and there will be prizes for the winning team. Quizmaster will be Russell Yeoman who will not tolerate any cheating unless of course he happens not to be looking at the time.

If you can't come to the dinner come along at about 8.00pm for the quiz.

BANYULE COUNCIL MATTERS:

There are three current projects by Banyule City Council which are of interest to our Society. Two of these are heritage studies which have been completed to draft stage and the third is a funding application for a local history project. Ann Kirwam from the Council gave a brief presentation on the heritage studies at our September meeting.

The Banyule Heritage Places Study is a major work comprising five volumes:

- Vol 1. An Urban History
- Vol 2. Part 1 Building Citations A-L
Part 2 Building Citations L-Z
- Vol 3. Landscape Citations
- Vol 4. Heritage Areas
- Vol 5. Summary of Recommendations

The draft reports are available in the various Banyule Libraries. The Society has a copy of Vol 1.

The Aboriginal Heritage Study examines sites of archaeological or cultural significance within Banyule. It includes an ethnohistorical account of the life of the Wurundjeri tribe.

We have become involved in the third project through the reconvening of the joint Memorabilia Task Force of Banyule and Nillumbik. Banyule is applying for a grant under the Centenary of Federation programme to fund a project called Banyule's History in Words and Pictures. It comprises three parts - a local history commencing in the 1960's and running to the present, a brochure to summarize the previously published histories of the various parts of Banyule and a pictorial CD-ROM. We have provided a letter of support for the project to assist in the funding application.

NILLUMBIK COUNCIL

Most local people would by now be aware that the State Government has suspended the Nillumbik Shire Council and replaced it with an Administrator. This is a controversial move which has caused widespread local protests. It is not the role of this Society to become involved in the political aspects of the matter but rather to concentrate on how it affects our relationship with the Council and also to consider the significance of the decision in historical terms.

The Society is involved with the Council in many ways - in providing advice and assistance in local history matters, in the lease of 728 Main Road, in the funding of Society operations and sometimes we need to become involved in controversial Council decisions. We need to maintain a good working relationship with the Council and we need to monitor the situation. Already the Task Group for future development of the former Eltham Shire Office site has been put on hold. This, of course, further delays any decision on the future of the "Shillinglaw Trees".

As to the historical aspects of the decision it is too soon to tell. It may change the direction of the Council and therefore the area. Only time will make this situation clearer.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ACQUISITION FROM NILLUMBIK SHIRE'S MEMORABILIA

Recently found in a storage box of old Shire of Eltham items was a school size, blue lined black covered writing book.

It is recognized as the minute book and cash receipt book of the period 1922-1926 when the Memorial Park Committee, who it seems were part of the Shire of Eltham Soldier's Memorial League, was requested to raise funds for building the Shire of Eltham War Memorial Tower at Kangaroo Ground. History tells us that the tower, which is currently being refurbished, was officially opened by the Governor General of Australia, Lord Stonehaven on 11.11.26.

The ladies invited to the first meeting at the Shire Hall did so on 21st September 1922. The minutes book reads:

Present:

Mesdames Bell, Bouchier, McMahan, Gosling, Cockcroft, Wright, E Coutie, R Rogers, A Jones, A H White, Davies, Everitt and the Misses Lacey, Harris, N Weller, Gosling, Bell and D and G J Bouchier.

These people became the Kangaroo Ground Memorial Bazaar Committee along with others named at further meetings. They conditionally accepted the role of raising funds, their condition being that 'the Bazaar Committee be given representation on any committee empowered to deal with the memorial in proportion to the amount of money raised by the bazaar'.

The Andrew Ross Museum has the original book. We at Eltham District Historical Society have two photocopies for public perusal.

ACQUISITION FROM THE ELTHAM STATE PRIMARY SCHOOL, NO. 209

After 135 years from their commencement, the 1863 to 1913 students records are now available either at the school or with our Society for perusal by appointment. The 50 years spans a time period which in 1863 saw the formation in Victoria of the Common Schools Act. It ceases at the period of time when Classes 1 to 6 were a record of the examination levels achieved by the students. 1914 saw the introduction of Grades in schools which most of us remember in our own schooling experience.

These 50 years of records also show the historical background of the parents occupation at the time of enrolling their child - fathers if alive, mothers next or the sadly noted Orphan title. The educational requirements by the government also changed over the period and the latter records show an increase from two pages per child to four pages.

HELPING OTHER PROJECTS

The Eltham Society was asked to support the Warrandyte Historical Society in their request for the Government body Parks Victoria to fund a steel structure with a roofed shelter to assist them in preserving the old miners slab hut in North Warrandyte.

Apart from the deterioration of the former wooden shelter the hut requires stabilising and storm water protection including site grading and drains. The old security fence is also in need of extension.

The Eltham Society is pleased to support their endeavours with this heritage property in the Nillumbik section of Warrandyte which dates from the gold mining era.

Harry Gilham

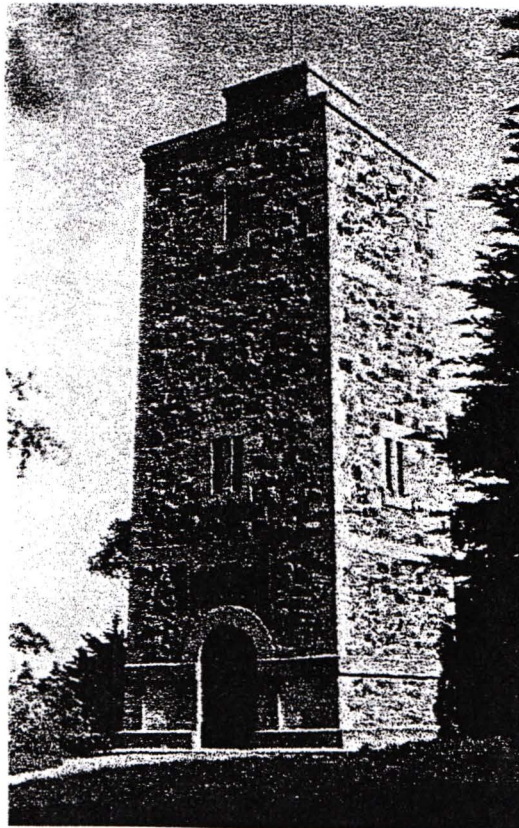
MUD BRICK HERITAGE EXCURSION — AND THE FUTURE

A small group of members attended the excursion on 4th October. We visited a number of earth houses listed by the Eltham Heritage Study in a very pleasant day's outing.

The first visit was to the home of Jenny and Brian Ellis in York Street, formerly the home of Jenny's father Professor William McMahon Ball. We were made very welcome with inspection of the inside and outside showing the various stages of construction. We then walked through the grounds of "Kinloch" the Jelbart property in Arthur Street where we saw their large mud brick house and barn. Lunch was at Marion and Russell Yeoman's house in Peter Street. This pise house was built by the Moore family in the early 1950's.

In the afternoon we visited the home of artist Jenni Mitchell in Fordhams Road, one of the last examples of the work of Alistair Knox. Then we travelled to Laughing Waters Road where we saw two interesting houses owned and built by well known landscape gardener Gordon Ford. Along the way we stopped to view a number of other properties from the street.

This year we have held two local excursions instead of the more distant annual excursions of past years. This was prompted by falling attendances resulting in difficulty of filling coaches in recent years. Although these local excursions have been enjoyable for those attending they have not been a success in terms of the numbers attending. This has prompted the Committee to consider the future of excursions and that will be a matter to be discussed in formulating next year's programme.



The Shire of Eltham War Memorial, Kangaroo Ground
taken at the time of re-dedication in 1951.

OTHER BRIEF MATTERS

Our application to the Nillumbik Council for a Community Development Grant has been successful. We have received funds which cover the operating expenses for the year of our Local History Centre and also to make a start on restoration and presentation of the material held there. This application was made on the basis that these functions are the "community service" aspect of our Society as against the "recreational" function represented by meetings, excursions, etc.

An enquiry has been received from Michael Challinger of Nunawading who is researching court house buildings in Victoria. He is interested in finding information on the Eltham Court House. We have some limited records but if anyone has further information, particularly on interesting court cases, please contact Russell Yeoman.

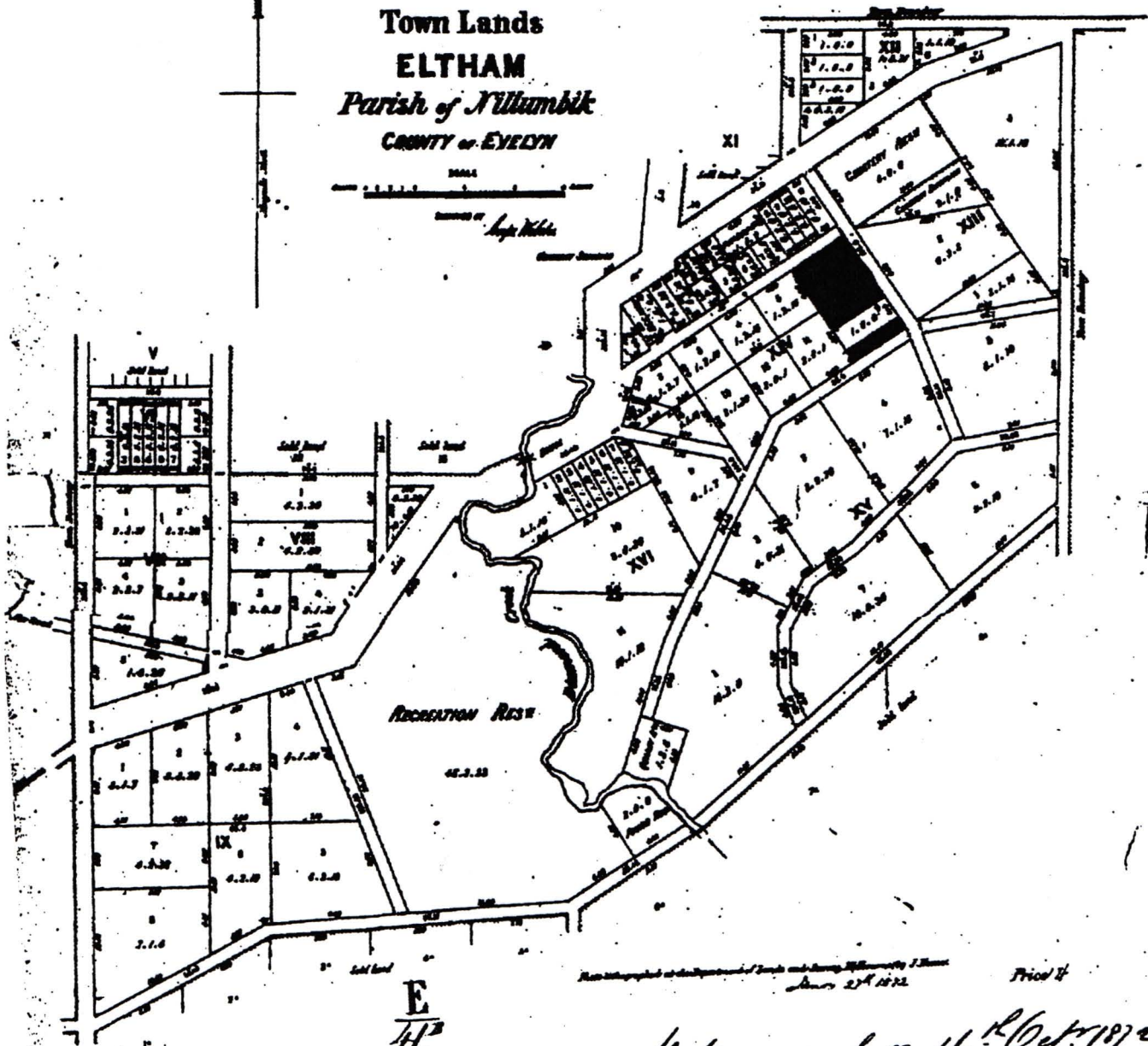
Harry Gilham
President

Russell Yeoman
Secretary

Gwen Orford
Treasurer /
Membership Secretary
Phone 9439 8642

Phone - 9439 1175

Phone - 9439 9717



Melbourne Sale 4th Oct 1872
Arthur Freeman