



ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

728 MAIN ROAD (PO BOX 137) ELTHAM 3095

NEWSLETTER

NO. 134 SEPTEMBER 2000

NEXT MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

MAIN ROAD ELTHAM

(ENTER FROM OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)

SPEAKER PANEL

"PERSONAL PROJECTS"

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ELTHAM CEMETERY VISIT

2-00 PM SUNDAY 15TH OCTOBER

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SEPTEMBER MEETING

We have changed this meeting from that shown in our programme. We hope to have the "Yallambie" meeting in November. We have brought forward the item on personal projects to this month. There are a number of members and friends who have been working on their own specialized section in the historical or local interest fields. A similar meeting last year showed that there is a great deal of member interest in these projects and in some cases assistance can be provided just by finding out a little about the subject. The programme includes four people who have recent or on-going projects. Anyone else who would like to tell us about their project or ask for assistance is most welcome to do so. These are the people who have projects to talk about.:-

Margaret Ball - Central Eltham Photo Records.

Over past months Margaret has been assembling a photo record of the houses in the streets of Central Eltham on behalf of the Society. She now needs whatever stories she can glean from members and others to accompany the photos as a permanent record.

Harry Gilham - *Evelyn Observer* Odd Spots.

Harry seems to have a multitude of research projects on the go and these necessitate significant research of early newspapers and other sources. He has assembled a series of cuttings from the *Evelyn Observer* noted as incidental to his other areas of interest. Many have to do with health related matters. Harry plans to involve other members in this item, so beware.

Russell Yeoman -

For years now Russell has been progressively walking various long distance tracks and linear features such as the Victorian coast and the Great Dividing Range. On his previous visit to England he noted the Green Chain Walk passing through the other Eltham and in his most recent visit the opportunity arose to walk part of this route with our friends Margaret Taylor and Clifford Crate.

Gayle Blackwood - Knox in Nillumbik

Gayle is not a member of our Society but has developed a keen interest in a number of Eltham heritage and planning issues. She has researched local mud brick houses designed by Alistair Knox and has co-ordinated an application for Centenary of Federation funding for a publication based on this project.

During supper Russell Yeoman's photos of his recent trip, including Paris and the Lot Valley in France, the Cinque Terre Coast in Italy and various English and Scottish locations will be available for inspection.



ELTHAM CEMETERY VISIT

Our second excursion for the year will be a visit to Eltham Cemetery on Sunday 15th October. We will meet outside the main gate of the cemetery in Mt Pleasant Road at 2pm or ring a committee member if you need transport. Bring some afternoon tea to finish the afternoon at the top of the hill enjoying the panoramic view of the Eltham valley.

There will be a series of short talks at notable grave sites around the cemetery and Harry Gilham will talk on his ideas for providing a cemetery "trail". We hope to have someone from the Cemetery Trust to talk on their development work at the cemetery. This will be an informal afternoon and friends will be most welcome.

KANGAROO GROUND BOUNDARIES

Official changes to the boundaries between Research and Kangaroo Ground were gazetted last year but apparently slipped past un-noticed by many people. The new boundaries incorporate large areas of the traditional area of Kangaroo Ground within Research and there is a strong argument on historical grounds for their reversal. Both sides of Main Road extending from Eltham College to Pitmans Corner (Wellers Pub) are now part of Research. This includes a significant portion of the original Donaldson Kangaroo Ground square mile and additional areas of the rolling black soil hills of Kangaroo Ground. Apparently some local residents support these changes but a move has been started by the Andrew Ross Museum to revert to the historical boundaries. This Society supports these moves by the Museum. It is considered that there are very powerful historical arguments which far outweigh any illusory town planning or postcode reasons.

CHRONOLOGY

The second edition of our "Chronology of Known Local Events" has now been printed. While this has very largely been the work of Harry Gilham, Harry readily acknowledges that the increase in entries from 240 in the first edition to 974 has resulted from submissions by members and other local societies. The significant word processing task of assembling the entries into a presentable form has again been carried out by Sue Law. Congratulations to Harry and Sue for this excellent work.

Copies of the second edition are available to members but, if possible, a \$10 donation to the Society should be made to help defray printing costs.

Dr. BUCHAN'S INVIGORATING ESSENCE,
for NERVOUS RELAXATION and GENERAL
WEAKNESS, at once restores and invigorates with
magical rapidity the most debilitated constitution,
thereby insuring permanent health, increased
strength, energy, and a redoubled development of
the muscular system. Failure is impossible, for
success is as certain as that daylight follows dark-
ness. The only infallible remedy for acquired local
and general debility, nervous prostration, depres-
sion of spirits, diminution of vital energy, emacia-
tion, and for all female complaints. 4s 6d, 11s, or
four quantities in one. 33s.

"NOT JUST A PRETTY PLACE"

The latest addition to the Nillumbik Art in Public Places collection is a sculpture by Aleks Danko located at the junction of the Yarra River and the Diamond Creek and named by the artist "Not Just a Pretty Place". The sculpture was launched on 9th August by Cr Diane Bullen and welcomed by Annette Xiberras of the Wurundjeri community. Annette said that the work was a practical reconciliation project as distinct from some of the rhetoric often associated with this subject.

Aleks Danko says that the carved bluestone sculpture resting on the ground plane above the two waterways references the following two aspects:-

- "A larger than life-size river stone/pebble that would echo the spirit(s) of the waters nearby"
- The shape/form of the TARCOOLA that was presented to the Wurundjeri people to the Nillumbik Shire in May 1998 as part of the Nillumbik "GAYIP" celebration of reconciliation. (GAYIP is a Woiworrung word meaning a celebration of joy, unity and future after trouble between different peoples.) The Tarcoola form is also present within Greg Burgess's architectural designs and motifs at the new Eltham library."

His description goes on to say:-

"Given the work's allusions to these historic signs and rituals, this site-specific sculpture would act as a contemporary (stone) message stick. A simple form, yet replete with a multitude of readings, it would become a marker of/for time, nature and human existence.

As stated in my initial response and proposal, this is "NOT JUST A PRETTY PLACE" (sic) but one that impressed me for its serenity. A site that would become a place for contemplation, memory, fascination, and pleasure.

Over time the sculpture would develop a patina from human contact as people touch, sit, rest and engage with the physicality of the work.

The revegetation of the site will continue to develop its resonance and relationship to this evolving environment."

Aleks sees particular significance in the fact that waterway junctions were of particular importance in Aboriginal customs as meeting sites between different peoples and where various rituals and ceremonies took place.



The selector for this award was Jason Smith, Curator of Contemporary Art, National Gallery of Victoria who said:-

"Aleks Danko's proposal will result in an enigmatic and poetic work that is rich in this formal and symbolic associations with the site. The concept of reconciliation is being widely debated at many levels in Australian and international communities. Danko's work expands the theme of reconciliation beyond the primary convergences between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples to the wider issues of all people's reconciliation with the personal, social, political and geographic environments of which they are a part. Danko's research into Aboriginal connections to his chosen site and the shire generally is a key feature of his work. *Not Just a Pretty Place* will function as an elegant and appropriately scaled object of contemplation; a meeting site or point of reference; and a celebration of the productive and constantly evolving relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians."

The Society has taken a keen interest in the Art in Public Places Award over the years but mainly for its artistic and local interest aspects. This year's award introduces important historical and geographical components which add significantly to our interest. A walk around the path past Lenister Farm to view the work is well worthwhile.

FAMILY HISTORIES OF ELTHAM

I have been asked to help with the care and collection of Family histories to be held by the Eltham District Historical Society and as I have always been fascinated by biographies, family anecdotes and family trees I should find this a very interesting task.

We already have on file some twenty Family Histories compiled by Blanche Shallard as well as some very interesting accounts of the beginnings of the Eltham Band, the Eltham Rural Group and an early effort at getting a horse racing track organised.

However, we would very much like to keep adding to our collection and I am sure that there must be many more fascinating stories waiting to be told.

If our Society members could ask around among their friends and neighbours I am sure that we could uncover many more folk with connections to Eltham's past.

We have had some leaflets printed which give an outline of what we would like to know about the family backgrounds, and as a starting point perhaps for anyone who is not sure where to start on their families' stories

Anyone wanting to talk to me about this project can contact me at 17 Livingstone Road, Eltham. Telephone – 9439-4822

Jo McCormick

OTHER NEWS ITEMS

Ken Eckersall's talk at the July meeting attracted a large attendance of members and Ken's supporters. His book "Eltham Inhabitants – For Most the Serious Part" has since been published and is a welcome addition to the local history collection. It traces the history of the Eltham Methodist/Uniting Church and relates this to the wider history of the Eltham township. Ken has presented a copy of his book to the Society.

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Russell and Marion Yeoman's recent two day visit to Eltham, England included a number of other briefer activities in addition to the Green Chain Walk mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter. When Margaret Taylor and Clifford Crate visited us we had them plant a Grevilea to start off the front garden at our Local History Centre. Margaret is now co-ordinating the landscaping of the grounds of the Eltham Church so Russell and Marion were asked to plant a rose, aptly named "Heritage". A buffet dinner with the Eltham Society Committee was arranged at the home of Chairman, John Towey and his wife Gill. John presented a book on the 20th Century in Greenwich, (which includes Eltham) on behalf of the "U.K. Eltham branch of the Society"

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On Saturday 28th October the Kangaroo Ground School will be conducting a town fair. The Andrew Ross Museum will be operating a book stall at the fair which will run from 11am to 8pm. On that day also the Museum will be launching the plaque commemorating Donaldson's Oak in Donaldsons Road, Kangaroo Ground.

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Harry Gilham
President

Russell Yeoman
Secretary

Gwen Orford
Treasurer/
Membership Secretary
Phone – 9439 8642

Phone – 9439 1175

Phone – 9439 9717

What People Say.

MISS EVA BROWN, ALBURY, N.S.W., writes: "The following particulars of my case are furnished on behalf of the afflicted, trusting they may be the means of restoring others to health: For eighteen months I was extremely debilitated, the doctors being of opinion that I had outgrown my strength. My disease is known in medical circles as anaemia or poverty of blood; I suffered from general languor, extreme weakness, listlessness, dejection of spirits, indigestion, fickle appetite, and disturbed sleep. My body presented a bloodless appearance; my lips were pale and the skin like wax, I was under several doctors who prescribed for me; but their treatment did not alleviate my sickness. I imagined that my constitution was breaking up, and as the disease progressed I became more nervous and hysterical. My sufferings were also greatly increased by a shock to the nervous system received last year, when a railway carriage in which I was seated caught fire. When my