



ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

728 MAIN ROAD (PO BOX 137) ELTHAM 3095

NEWSLETTER

NO. 153 NOVEMBER 2003

NEXT MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER

"ELTHAM IN RETROSPECT"

A SELECTION FROM THE SOCIETY'S SLIDE COLLECTION

PRESENTED BY RUSSELL YEOMAN

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

903 MAIN ROAD ELTHAM

(ENTER FROM OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)



CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

BUFFET DINNER

7.30 PM WEDNESDAY 10TH DECEMBER

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

NOVEMBER MEETING

Over many years now the Society has built up an impressive collection of photos on slides. They include copies of historical photos, more recent photos of our district extending from the 1960's to the present day and some special collections such as the series on mud brick houses and a series made from an historical trivia quiz. A major component of the collection is the audio-visual program on Eltham, England presented to us by the Eltham Society as a gift for Australia's Bi-centenary.

Most of the slides have been shown at meetings over the years but some of them not for quite a few years. At our November meeting Russell Yeoman will present a selection of slides from all parts of the collection as a representative sample.

This will be an informal meeting with plenty of opportunities for discussion.

We hope you can come and bring along a friend or more to introduce them to the pictorial history of the Eltham District.

CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

This year's Christmas breakup will take the form of a buffet dinner at the Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre. This follows on from the dinner at our September meeting where members said that they enjoyed the informal discussion during the meal. The Society will be providing cold meats and bread etc. Members should bring a salad or sweet to share. As usual Harry will be providing drinks including a selection of his own very special wines. There is no charge for the dinner but remember to bring something to share. If you need advice on what to bring talk to Sue, 9439-9520 or Gwen 9439-8642. We would like to encourage some of our long-term members who now don't usually come to meetings, to come along to this event to renew our contacts.

For interest before and after the dinner members are encouraged to bring along an item of interest for show or discussion. This could include family history items or historical items of general or local interest. We will have some of our photo albums of Society activities on display.

ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM

Congratulations to the Andrew Ross Museum and its dedicated band of volunteers on being awarded Accreditation by Museums Australia. The lead up to the assessment has meant much hard work on the part of supporters of the museum. Accreditation has significant implications for on-going recognition and potential funding for the museum.

The spring issue of the Museum's Kangaroo Ground Chronicle continues the 2002 celebration of the centenary of the birth of Alan Marshall with a series of articles about the famous writer. He had a number of associations with Kangaroo Ground, including his first job at the Eltham Shire Office at the age of 20.

SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

The Society has been involved in a busy round of activities over recent months, many involving Nillumbik Council. At the October Committee meeting there were some 27 items of correspondence to consider as well as various reports by Committee members on

activities with which they had been involved. Some of these matters are reported under separate headings and others are the subject of brief comment below.

A Cultural Development Grant of \$750 has been received from Nillumbik Council for Stage 1 of the development of the "Little Eltham Trail". This project is the work of Dennis Ward. The first stage will involve copying pictorial and other material for display on an internet website dealing with the trail, that is being developed by Dennis. The concept is similar to the "Batman Trail" at Greensborough which Dennis has developed to the stage of a completed website. We are grateful to the Council for this grant for an important cultural heritage project.

The Society was unsuccessful in its application to the Council for a Community Group Support Grant. Grants of this type over recent years have enabled us to operate our Local History Centre without depleting Society funds. Further consideration needs to be given to future funding of the centre's operations.

Artist Joh Ebeli has donated to the Society a sketch he did in 1979 of his friend and neighbour, the author Alan Marshall. A copy is reproduced here. We are grateful to Joh for this addition to our Alan Marshall collection.



Alan Marshall
19.10.79
a portrait of the artist as a
young man and the subject as
an old one.

The visit to Eltham by members of Camberwell Historical Society on 20 September included sites of historical, artistic and environmental interest. The visitors seemed most impressed by their walk through the Ford garden, "Fulling". We have been invited on a return visit to Camberwell and we will consider that as part of our 2004 program.

The Society has agreed to a proposal by Nillumbik Council for the Society to accept custody of memorabilia of the former Shire of Eltham. This comprises mainly paper-based items such as photographs, books and other documents. There are a small number of other items such as medals, crockery, signage, etc. Photographic negatives and art objects will be retained by the Council. Items specifically relating to other areas of the Shire of Eltham may be allocated to other historical societies. Insurance will remain the responsibility of the Council. The Council will provide shelving for storage of the items.

The input of Society records on our database is proceeding slowly. Further assistance is required if this work is to be carried out within a reasonable time frame. The next scheduled records workshop is on Monday 17 November at 9.30am but we can arrange other times to suit people who are able to help. There will be a committee meeting in lieu of the records workshop on 2 December to discuss our program for 2004.

There was a good attendance at the September meeting and members enjoyed both the buffet dinner and the panel of speakers on Eltham builders. It was a different situation for the Walter Withers excursion on 12 October when only a few Committee members attended. Those who did attend enjoyed a shortened version of the intended Withers trail. We may have to re-think the value of having excursions of this nature due to poor attendance.

WINGROVE COTTAGE

It has taken many months but the illegal demolition of part of the historic Wingrove Cottage has finally been considered by the Heidelberg Magistrates Court. The owner of the property has been required to pay \$5,000 to the court fund and substantial costs. Perhaps, more importantly, the court has ordered that a conservation management plan be prepared and that restoration work on the cottage be carried out in accordance with the plan. It has directed that a committee be formed to oversee the restoration work. Harry Gilham has been appointed as the community representative on the committee. Russell Yeoman also has a role in protecting our Society's interest in the cottage.

In assembling information for the Council in relation to the court case Cr. Greg Johnson prepared a report on the cottage and our own Jock Read prepared a statement of his memories of the cottage. These documents provide interesting insights into the history of the cottage and are worth repeating here.

Wingrove Cottage – Eltham - A Report by Cr Greg Johnson

Evidence as to the age of the rear part of the dwelling which was demolished on 14th October, 2002

This statement is based on the following documents/ statements and sources:

1. Shire of Eltham Heritage Study, which lists sources used on page 1194.
2. Signed statement from Mr Jock Read who lived next door to the Wingroves from 1921 to 1927.
3. Article from the Diamond Valley News of 1976 which reports an auction of the property by Neville Emerson Pty Ltd.

Main structure was built of hand-made bricks in 1858-59 (bricks made on site). This makes the main part 144 years old.

There were additions to the building in 1888. The additions would now be 114 years old.

In the 1880's the NAV of the house rose from 30 pounds (1870) to 55 pounds, mostly as a result of the additions.

A 1950's subdivisional plan shows... (the house with)... a small weatherboard section at the rear.

In the description of the cottage, "the construction in two stages visible in the brickwork", is mentioned as one of the features.

From the 1976 newspaper article we learn that: "At the rear a formerly detached timber building has been incorporated as a bedroom wing. Another brick wing has provided additional sleeping and bathroom accommodation."

(The house consists of).... "five bedrooms, a parlour, sittingroom, diningroom and kitchen and two bathrooms..."

From Mr Jock Read's statement we learn that in 1921 the rear part of the cottage had a weatherboard section and a brick section and that these were "add-ons".

The cottage was owned and occupied by the Wingrove family over many years: first by Charles S Wingrove (from 1858 to 1905) and then by his children, Walter and Bessie Wingrove. (1905 to ?) so the cottage with its add-on rear section tells the story of this family and how they used their home. One can surmise that Charles had the rear section built when his children needed bedrooms and the growing family more space, and that this was done in 1888. Over 75 years ago, (in the 1920's) a neighbour, Jock Read, remembers the rear of the cottage being very much as described.

It is very likely that the part of the cottage demolished in October last year was built in 1888 and was therefore 114 years old.

Jock Read's statement regarding what I remember of Wingrove Cottage, Eltham.

I had relatives in Eltham when I was living with my family in Brunswick as a boy. My family and I used to travel in the steam train to Eltham to visit two aunties. This would have been in 1917 or 1918. One auntie lived in Metery Road, the other was in York Street.

My family came to live in Eltham in 1921 for health reasons. We were prone to bronchitis and our local Brunswick doctor recommended a shift to a place with cleaner air.

My family rented an Eltham property known as "Yanakie" (now called Shoestring) in Metery Road, which was owned by a Mrs. White. This property was next door to the Wingrove property (south of them). They were our neighbours. We lived there from 1921 - 27.

The Wingrove property went from the Main Road all the way through to Metery Road at the back, encompassing the present State School football oval.

The Wingroves (Miss Wingrove - Bessie, Miss Mapleston and Wally - Walter) ran a dairy with about half a dozen cows. A small creek ran east to west through their property. This stream ran from near the eastern extremity of Dalton Street (near Dalton/Mt. Pleasant Road junction) directly west and down across Main Road at the front of the Wingroves, and then

into the Diamond Creek . The Wingroves had a small footbridge in their cow paddock at the back to get across this stream. They also had several cow bails at the back near their house.

I remember there were buildings on the property that have since been removed. The Wingroves had a barn immediately north of their home (on the State School side), and on the other side at the end of the drive (south of the house) was a summer house surrounded with fly wire. It was at ground level. Miss Wingrove entertained her friends in this summer house. I can remember Mrs. Rutter from Sweeneys Lane and Mrs. Morrison from Yarra Braes Road used to have afternoon teas there.

For the seven years we lived next door on the "Yanakie" property, (now known as "Shoestring") there were no building alterations made to Wingrove Cottage. I remember that the rear of their house (which was an add-on) had a weatherboard section and a brick section.

NILLUMBIK COMBINED HISTORICAL ORGANISATIONS

A series of meetings organised by Nillumbik Council has been promoting combined activities by historical societies and similar organisations in the Shire. The most recent meeting discussed a proposed "Heritage Week" to be held in March or April 2004. At the meeting there was widespread support for an "expo" involving all societies to be held at one location, possibly leading on to individual events by societies. It is planned that the joint event celebrate the differences across the shire but also create a record of the highlights of our shared history.

The theme that has been suggested is "Dirt Farming" which opens a wide range of possibilities extending from the subsistence farming of the early residents through to gold mining, mud brick building, and even the more modern environmental gardens or bushland regeneration.

The project will be supported financially by the Council and there is the possibility of a State Government grant.

The next meeting on 13 November will decide on dates for the event and a more detailed framework.

The October meeting also discussed the Council's newly developing "Cultural Map" project, an interactive website featuring people, places and events in Nillumbik. Video footage from our Local History Centre has already been incorporated into this project.

MORE NEWS

Gwen and Doug Orford attended the recent Annual General Meeting of the Association of Eastern Historical Societies. They purchased for our Society collection a copy of "Along the Length" by Fred Sadlier of Yarra Glen Historical Society. This book tells the story of the Maroondah Aqueduct and particularly Fred's experience patrolling the Yarra Glen "length" of the channel.

Nillumbik Council has decided to name the road around the former Eltham Shire Office site, Library Place. This roadway extends from Main Road to Panther Place adjacent to the library. We suggested that Shillinglaw Place was a better option but that was not accepted.

Harry Gilham
President

Russell Yeoman
Secretary

Gwen Orford
Treasurer /
Membership Secretary
Phone 9439 8642

Phone - 9439 1175

Phone - 9439 9717