



ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

728 MAIN ROAD (PO BOX 137) ELTHAM 3095

NEWSLETTER NO. 156 MAY 2004

**NEXT MEETING
8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 12TH MAY**

**ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE
903 MAIN ROAD ELTHAM
ENTER FROM LIBRARY PLACE (OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)**

**GUEST SPEAKERS
NIGEL LEWIS & CARLOTTA KELLAWAY
"A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON WINGROVE COTTAGE"
ALSO
SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING
CONSIDERATION OF LIFE MEMBERSHIPS**



Wingrove Cottage from a 1970s sale brochure..

MAY MEETING

Wingrove Cottage is probably Eltham's most important heritage building. This is the opinion of Nigel Lewis who has been commissioned by the owner of the cottage to prepare a conservation plan for the site.

The unauthorised demolition of part of Wingrove Cottage has been of great concern to the local community as reported in our Newsletter, the Diamond Valley Leader and in reports to Nillumbik Shire Council. Subsequently, court action has resulted in a most detailed conservation study carried out by Nigel Lewis with research assistance from Carlotta Kellaway.

Nigel is an architect with heritage expertise whose wide ranging experience includes work on the important gold mining town of Maldon. His connections with Eltham include boyhood memories of visits to family friends such as the Fitzpatricks and the Downes. Carlotta is a historian who is well known to many of our members for her work with David Bick on the Shire of Eltham Heritage Study.

The work on the conservation plan is on-going and still to be approved by the Council. But, at this stage of the project, Nigel and Carlotta are able to tell us of their research work and their conclusions regarding the cottage. It has significance in its own right as a building but this is enhanced by its association with the important local government figure Charles Wingrove.

This meeting is a rare opportunity to hear the results of some original research into an important component of Eltham's early history. Members are encouraged to invite others who have shown interest in this Eltham landmark as a result of the unfortunate origins of this study.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given in accordance with the rules of the Society that the meeting to be held at 8.00pm on Wednesday 12 May 2004 will include a Special General Meeting. The sole purpose of the meeting will be to consider a motion to confer life membership on Gwen and Doug Orford.

Gwen and Doug have been committee members for many years with Gwen holding the position of Treasurer/Membership Secretary and Doug that of Vice President. They also have enthusiastically accepted the role of delegates to the Eastern Region of Historical Societies.

Gwen has tendered her resignation as Treasurer for health reasons effective from 1st July. She will continue as Membership Secretary. This seems an appropriate time to recognise the excellent service to the Society by both Doug and Gwen. Approval of these life memberships is recommended by the Society's Committee.



Charles S Wingrove, Secretary and Engineer to the Eltham District Road Board and later Eltham Shire Council from 1858 to 1904.

NILLUMBIK HERITAGE WEEK

The collaborative effort of Nillumbik Council and the historical societies of the shire produced two most successful weekends of heritage events covering various locations in the municipality.

The main event was the "Dirt Farming Expo" held at Panton Hill Hall. It included displays by eight historical groups, audio-visual displays arranged by the Council and others, a display of a schools heritage art project and a genealogy workshop. The official opening was performed by Danielle Greene, State Member for Yan Yean and newly elected Nillumbik Mayor Tony Raunic. It has been estimated that more than 750 people attended over the three days. This included about 250 school children on the Friday. A "treasure hunt" of display items was held over the weekend but was particularly successful for the school groups.

The dirt farming theme of this event was enhanced by the hessian and straw bale display areas set up by designer Raelene Marshall. Our display was also assisted by a structure of mud bricks provided by manufacturer Richard Provan.

Historical groups in Nillumbik have been meeting for the past year and this is the first joint project —hopefully the first of an on-going program of collaborative events.

On the second weekend each society or group held their open day. We were organising our own event and so could not attend those of the others and there has not yet been a joint meeting to find out how they went. We considered ourselves reasonably successful with about 60 visitors to our Local History Centre and the Court House over two days. In terms of success however, we could not match Plenty Historical Society. The newsletter of this relatively young society reports that their attendance was about 250.

Thanks to those of our members who assisted with both weekends. Thanks are also due to Sandra and Jessica from the Council for their excellent organisational skills and for their tireless work before and during the event. Some members of the various organisations were involved in co-ordinating roles that made an important contribution to the success of the event.

An evaluation of the event is to be carried out as a requirement of State Government and Council funding and also to identify good and not so good aspects for future events. Members who assisted or attended and have observations to make should pass them on to Russell prior to 13th May.

SOME EVENTS OF INTEREST by Harry Gilham

The Advertiser newspaper of May 13, 1920 reported from a meeting of Shire of Eltham residents in the Council Chambers at Kangaroo Ground that in relation to erecting a 'monument' in the War Memorial Park on Garden Hill that "Plans to compile a complete record of the names of all persons who enlisted from the Shire (Eltham) and those who made the supreme sacrifice whilst doing their duty" be made up.

The (now refurbished) bronze plaques above the Tower of Remembrance entrance erected in 1930 show only the names of the 'fallen'. The proposal to record the names of 'all persons' may have been completed then lost in the 1934 fire that destroyed the Shire Office at Kangaroo Ground.

The Advisory Committee of the Nillumbik Council has been refurbishing many items at the Park over the last seven years and has recently put in seating and a new toilet block. Member John Haines of the Eltham R.S.L. has taken up the challenge to find all the names of those who enlisted in the 1914-1918 period. Apart from the township monuments there are many boards and plaques existing in buildings throughout the former Shire which in some cases show all the enlistments and asterisk those who died. Others simply show the deceased.

John has been adding to names collated by Dean Stewart, another member of the Committee who now lives at Dromana.

The Evelyn Observer newspaper in August 1916 set up the same action by listing 285 names as known at that time and sought assistance from its readers to add to or correct spelling and notify the newspaper accordingly.

Those of this Society who receive quarterly newsletters from the Nillumbik Shire Council will find the "now known in 2004" names published with the same request for any additions/corrections to be passed on to John Haines at 9439 1778. The Diamond Valley Leader is being asked to support this action later in this month.

Also from the past (i.e. century before last) the Heidelberg Primary School, built in 1854, is to have its 150th celebration on August 8th next. For those with access to a website www.hps150.org.au, or contact the school in Cape Street and receive their newsletters by using self addressed stamped envelopes.

For further information on these items call Harry Gilham 9439 1175.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2004 Annual General Meeting was held on 10 March and resulted in all office bearers and committee members being re-elected for a further year. The respective positions are as follows:-

President	Harry Gilham
Senior Vice President	Doug Orford
Junior Vice President	Jim Connor
Treasurer/Membership Secretary	Gwen Orford
Secretary	Russell Yeoman
Committee Members	Diana Bassett-Smith, Sue Law, Jan McCauley, Jo McCormick, Jock Read, Mary Regan.

Subscriptions remain unchanged from last year and are as follows:

Newsletter	\$10.00
Adults	\$15.00
Students	\$ 2.00
Family	\$20.00
Business Organisation	\$25.00

Subscriptions are due on 1st July for 2004-5 but Gwen will be happy to accept advance payment at the May meeting.

The President's Report was presented verbally and as promised a copy is included below.

Following the formal business of the meeting we had the pleasure of a "double-act" talk on a double subject. Harold and Yvonne Bird operated as a tag team to tell us about the Bird family's significant contribution to the early history of Eltham and Harold's worldwide musical adventures with the National Boys' Choir.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

The six general meetings each year of the Society held in the Eltham Senior Citizens Centre with guest speakers allows members to hear of events that broaden our interest in historical 'happenings' that others wish to share with us.

We started with Max Dimmack telling about his research into the Eltham R.S.L. and writing it all up for publication.

Local Bookshop proprietor, Meera Govil, gave us an insight into books that relate to Eltham literary connections.

We heard and saw slides of an early 1900's pioneer Hydro-Electric Scheme in the Victorian high country.

Local builders came to share our evening meal and later to be a speaker panel on what the past and current trends were in their trade.

The slide collection of the Society was sifted through for local discussion in a show of "Eltham in Retrospect" for our final night of 2003.

With the use of cars we went visiting sites which had some historic place in the life of artist Walter Withers and joined in walks with other historical societies.

Yet again I thank the members of our Committee for their activities in keeping us together and informed on Eltham and District events of interest. To Marion Yeoman the gardening task at the 728 Main Road office is again appreciated by all.

Harry Gilham, President – 1993-2003.

10th March 2004

THE MT. EVERARD CONNECTION

Mt Everard in the Kinglake National Park commemorates William Hugh Everard, State Member for Evelyn and father of our member Blanche Shallard who died some eighteen months ago. Doug and Gwen Orford represented the Society at the unveiling of an interpretive sign at Mt Everard. Doug has written this account of the event on 22nd April.

We all travelled to Kinglake and met near the Fire Station where we were picked up by two buses provided by Parks Victoria to take us to the top of Mt Everard. There we enjoyed morning tea (needed too as we from the first bus had to walk the last hill when the bus broke down) while we waited for the official party to arrive.

While waiting we had a look at the open four sided interpretive feature donated by Mrs Betty Lynch OAM (sister of Blanche) in memory of their father Bill Everard who was the State Member for the area for many years and in recognition of Kinglake National Park's 75th birthday.

The information display describes the Blue Ant Butterfly, the Coconut Ant and the Swamp Pea, all of which are indigenous to the area.

The Chief Executive of Parks Victoria welcomed everyone on this warm windy day after which Betty explained how the blue ant butterfly cohabited with the

ants and survived. The swamp pea is described as a rare indigenous plant to the area. She also spoke of her father's interest in the area. The Governor, John Landy, then spoke before he and Betty moved up to the display board and cut the red ribbon from around it.

TIM BURSTALL 1929-2004

Australian film pioneer Tim Burstall has died after collapsing at a screening of some of his work at the Eltham Community Centre. Tim spoke about his films to the crowd of about 300 people at the screening. The main film was "The Prize" produced in 1960 by Tim's company Eltham Films. It was shot in Eltham in 1960. It featured local characters and children, a number of whom were in the audience to see their efforts of 44 years ago. This short film later won an award at the Venice Film Festival.

From this small beginning Tim went on to become a major figure in the Australian film industry, directing many feature films and television productions. His death is a significant loss to the film world and to his friends in Eltham where he lived during his early career.

OTHER SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

The Andrew Ross Museum has issued an invitation to our Society for a group visit to the Museum on a Sunday of our choice. We are currently considering a date in August.

Harry Gilham has commenced a series of local history classes for the Yarra Valley campus of the University of the Third Age (U3A). These include guided walks and a visit to our Local History Centre.

Our 2004 Program shows that in July we had planned a talk on "Bohemia on the Urban Fringe" which is the subject of a thesis by Heath Paynter. Heath is now not available in July and so we have moved that talk to September. The July meeting will be a panel discussion on Heritage Trails. We are planning to run the meeting in conjunction with a buffet dinner but we may have to change our venue to do that. Feedback to the committee on preferences would be welcome.

Coming dates for records workshops at the Local History Centre are:-

Mondays 9.30am	17 TH May, 21 st June
Tuesdays 7.30pm	1 st June, 6 th July.

Help from members at any of these times would be appreciated. We have received shelving supplied by Nillumbik Council for storage of memorabilia of the former Eltham Council. That is likely to be transferred from Council storage over the next month or so and some additional assistance may be called for to arrange this material in its new home. The next scheduled committee meeting is 8th June.

Our display cabinet in the Eltham Library currently features a series of paintings and sketches of the Memorial Tower at Kangaroo Ground. This project by a group from the

Nillumbik Health Care Centre had been co-ordinated with assistance from Harry Gilham.

At the April Committee Meeting Diana Bassett-Smith presented a number of items to the Society. These included some writings by Peter Bassett-Smith on his memories of Eltham and a framed set of agricultural award certificates won by Diana's ancestor Joseph Stephenson. She also presented a small display case from Bruce and Joy Ness. Thanks to the Bassett-Smiths and the Nesses for these additions to our collection.

STILL MORE NEWS

Keith Lauder of Jan Juc has written to us seeking information about his ancestors, Henry and Elizabeth Churchill. They arrived from England in 1855 and soon after were living in the Eltham area. Four children were born in this area and in 1860 they moved to Talbot. We seem to have no records of this family. If any member has information please pass it on to Russell Yeoman.

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria has advised of the formation of the History Victoria Support Group. This group replaces the former State Committee of the RHSV. History Victoria will comprise all member societies. The Support Group will be a committee of the RHSV with four members of affiliated societies, a convenor and a secretary. Its purposes include conducting seminars and workshops, publishing of information and visiting societies to help with information technology. The convenor is Joan Hunt who has had significant involvement with societies, regional associations and the RHSV through the State Committee.

Nillumbik Council and its Literary Reference Group are looking for short stories that show us the history and flavour of Eltham, then and now. They are asking people to send in stories of no more than 1000 words, preferably by 30 June. The intention is to publish stories on The Council website. Entry forms are available from Katrina Rank at the Council, phone 9433 3126.

The Australian Friends of the SS Great Britain is seeking new members. This famous ship made 37 voyages to Australia between 1852 and 1876. The remains of the ship have been rescued from the Falkland Islands and are being restored in England. There is an interesting local connection with the Great Britain. Kangaroo Ground school teacher records in his reminiscences for 1852 that he watched the "noble vessel" with his telescope from Garden Hill. The Friends group may be contacted through the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

Harry Gilham
President

Russell Yeoman
Secretary

Gwen Orford
Treasurer/
Membership Secretary

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Phone – 9439 9717

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