

ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

728 MAIN ROAD (PO BOX 137) ELTHAM 3095

NEWSLETTER NO. 169 JULY 2006

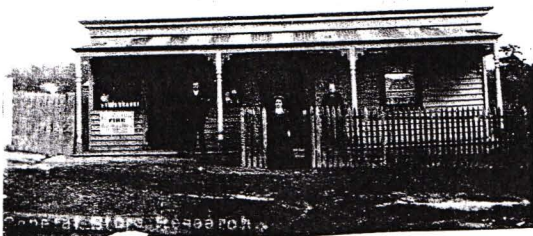
**NEXT MEETING
ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE
LIBRARY PLACE, ELTHAM
(FORMERLY OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)**

**8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 12TH JULY
GUEST SPEAKER MICHAEL WILSON
"THE BARN" - A UNIQUE ELTHAM HOME**

HISTORICAL WALKS PROGRAM

**SATURDAY 5 AUGUST
SATURDAY 2 SEPTEMBER**

**2 PM AT ELTHAM LOCAL
HISTORY CENTRE
BOOKINGS 9439 9717
94391175**



Doneys' Research Store. See Page 4
From the Reynolds/Prior Photo Collection

JULY MEETING

Michael Wilson is widely known to Eltham residents as a goldsmith and jeweller operating from his distinctive studio premises on Main Road in the Eltham Gateway. In 1993 he joined a speaker panel to talk to our Society about his work under the title of Eltham Creations. For our July meeting Michael will talk to us about his unique home on a secluded Eltham hilltop. Michael has provided the following synopsis of his talk.

Russell Yeoman recently asked me to talk to the Eltham Historical Society about my house which is "The Barn" in the Kinloch Gardens Estate. I was most happy to accept his invitation and as an introduction to my presentation I would like to quote from a wonderful Eltham Character.

"One such independent development that was taking place was the Jelbart Barn. It commenced before the war ended. This development comprised two of the biggest mud brick buildings in Eltham. The first, the Great Barn – as it was referred to was begun in 1945.

No one viewing these buildings, this landscape and its history can remain unmoved by the saga of life that has been developed by the Jelbart Family."

The words are those of Alistair Knox from his book "We Are What We Stand On". Alistair was a mentor of mine as well as my referee for my Australian Council Arts Grant in 1974.

I make no pretence to be any sort of authority on the history of the Barn: that must always be the prerogative of Ian Jelbart and his family.

My presentation will focus on what I know from our six years of living in this wonderful building.

AN HISTORICAL FINDING

The coming together of the Diamond Creek (formerly Nillumbik) township as we know it today.

The Eltham District Road Board correspondence file shows that in December 1870 the standard usage of the centre-line of the Diamond Creek through the townships was clearly designating that there were two settlements, one on the west side being the early township near the road crossing of the creek, the other on the east side where land had been taken up.

A 'Memorial Document' (today's 'petition') was organised by the east side group to have the creek boundary line moved east to enclose their land holdings and thus link up with the west side group.

At this time of 1870 the east side group were within the boundary of the Eltham Road Board, the west side group were in the area of the Greensborough Road Board.

The request was granted by the Eltham Road Board as the amount of rate income from the east side area only amounted to around ten pounds.

The revised maps following this action show that this roughly triangular area of land had as its southern boundary Allendale Road to the east, then turning north along Reynolds Road to a point near today's Wattle Glen Railway Station on the Diamond Creek boundary.

By early 1871 the Victorian Government had formed the Shire of Heidelberg which extended from Fairfield in the south to Hurstbridge in the north. By engulfing the Greensborough Road Board area the now whole of Diamond Creek township became part of the Heidelberg Shire.

On April 6th 1871 the Government proclaimed the Shire of Eltham which in its east to west boundary made use of the Yarra River with the Eltham Village Reserve land on the Diamond Creek confluence with the Yarra River and its eastern edge being at the top of the Black Spur Road which starts up from Healesville (Mt. Dom Dom).

Both these local government areas have had a number of adjustments since 1871.

For the citizens of Diamond Creek township they have changed through the years from the Greensborough Road Board to the Shire (and later City) of Heidelberg, then to be part of the Diamond Valley Shire until 1994 when municipal restructuring placed them in the Nillumbik Shire.

Harry Gilham

ELTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

As previously noted in our Newsletter, Eltham Primary School will celebrate its 150th Anniversary on 12th August. The society will be involved by setting up a historical display at the school. This important anniversary will also be the subject for our September meeting. Carlota Quinlan, convenor of the anniversary committee has issued an invitation through our President for members to attend the school celebrations. Details are contained in her letter which is worth reproducing here in full.

As you are aware, Eltham Primary School is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year – quite a milestone.

We would be honoured if you and other members of the Historical Society would join us at our special birthday celebrations on 12th August 2006. The official ceremony commences at 11am and is anticipated to last around 30 minutes. Visitors and guests will then be able to tour the school, take a peek into the past, share memories and enjoy refreshments.

The school will be open to visitors from 9.30 to 3pm. We would be most appreciative if EDHS were able to mount a display in one of the rooms – the sandstone building seems most appropriate – to give both present and past members of the community a better feel for our history.

Please contact either me or the school regarding details of set up times, amount and type of space required or any other queries.

I am looking forward to the day. We have many interesting activities planned to which the involvement of the Historical Society will add another dimension.

THE REYNOLDS/PRIOR PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION

The special June meeting to accept the photo collection donated by Ivy Reynolds was an outstanding success. More than 60 people attended, including our members, representatives from the Andrew Ross Museum and visitors, mainly residents of Research.

The collection includes photos taken by Ivy's uncle, Tom Prior, and the subjects include scenes at Eltham and Research as well as views of local rivers and creeks. Copies of some of the photos are already in the Society's collection but many have remained only in the family collection until now. As well as a projector display of the pictures on the night, we have been presented with an album and a digital set. Copies have also been presented to the Andrew Ross Museum.

Unfortunately, Ivy was not well enough to attend but Ross McDonald provided an excellent commentary on her behalf.

Thanks to both Ivy and Ross for arranging this excellent presentation.

In recent times Mick Woiwod has conducted a number of interviews with Ivy. Mick has provided an edited version of Ivy's reminiscences based on these discussions and some notes written by Ivy. There is too much material to include in one edition of the Newsletter but we thought it was worth including one excerpt dealing with Ivy's early life at Research. We will try and include other excerpts in future Newsletters.

IVY'S MEMORIES - Edited by Mick Woiwod

'My Memories of Elizabeth Doney and the history of the Anglican Church, Research'

Elizabeth Doney was part of my early childhood days in Research as were all the Doney family. Elizabeth came with her mother Agnes, brother Charles, and his wife, Blanche, about 1911.

They were well educated people with a background in the Anglican Church. They came originally in the 1880s from Cornwall after living a while in Queensland. Charles later moved to Bendigo where he married his cousin Blanche in 1911.

The family first settled in Victoria at Fitzroy where they had friends and mutual connections. From there, they bought land at Research; and built a substantial house with a general store attached, although I'm not sure whether they actually built the house or planted the garden, since that was way before my time.

It was on a large block fronting the Main Road, opposite the Research Hotel. It joined on to the school land to its north, and went all the way south to Butcher's Gully then followed the gully back up to the Main Road.

Charles grew a fine orchard of cherries, apples, pears, quinces and plums and down near the house were two fine mulberry trees, which grew beautiful mulberries. We did enjoy the mulberries! Nearby was an underground well.

The school building was opened in 1889 and, before that for a while, classes were held in a weatherboard cottage across the road from the store. When the new school finally opened it filled all the needs of a growing community.

The Anglican Church used the school building for services alternating with the Methodists. Equipment for the church had to be stored under the building (the harmonium and the seats) and brought out as required which of course involved considerable effort on the part of its small congregation over a long period of time. It was 1926 before all this changed!

I remember 1920 when I was three, being given peppermints from a lady dressed in black sitting on the form behind me to keep me quiet. About the same time too I remember sitting on a form beside Elizabeth where she sat playing the harmonium. I remember she wore a fine, white felt hat smartly turned up on one side which I would stand on the seat and turn down. I remember her smiling expression as she expertly turned the brim up again. I don't remember being removed for this, but I don't think I was allowed to sit there next time.

The Sunday School concert was the big event of the year in our lives back there. It always took a whole lot of preparation. At these Sunday School concerts every child was given a book. I remember the lively cantatas being sung with all the men taking part. One year, the Sunday School organised a pantomime, which also needed a deal of preparation. One year a large pine tree was even brought into the church to be decorated. That particular year a Mr Randall, who had a toy factory in Collingwood and travelled daily, donated a toy as a gift to every child. I still have a round, wooden stool, which was my gift that year. I still use it at times. Another annual event was a lantern-slide night which of course had a religious theme also.

Church lighting was by way of large kerosene lamps which hung from the ceiling and also required a deal of attention and care. Everything had to be carried around by hand – no transport in those days. The suppers at church events were tremendous events. The milk for the coffee would be boiled in large kerosene containers on an outside fire. I remember particularly a fancy-dress evening some time around 1926. Everybody dressed up for the big event. The store-keeper, Elizabeth Doney, became involved as she was in most of these local activities. She was a fine musician and would play whenever she was involved.

When the Doney family first came to Research, Elizabeth's brother, Charles, had not long been married. Hopes were high and despite there being much work to be done they entered into their new life here in Research with enthusiasm. I think these were happy days for Elizabeth! She was young, and strong and a talented musician. Horse-riding, socialising and entertainment were always high on her agenda. She was also a fine cook. The clergy from the church in Eltham passing through on their journeys to Panton Hill, Hazel Glen and Christmas Hills were always keen to make contact and have a friendly chat.

Blanche and Charles had two children. William, their first, was born in 1912; Lance in 1914. No doubt Elizabeth was very much involved in these since the babies most probably were born at home. There was a district nurse, a Miss Moore living in Research at the time who was very much in attendance at home births.

Elizabeth had a lot to do with the young children despite having to serve in the shop more and more as the business grew. Elizabeth's mother, Agnes, also lived in Research; she died in 1924 at the age of seventy-nine.

In those days, goods used to be delivered to shops in bulk. I particularly remember the bags of potatoes and onions; the sugar, rice, sago and salt, and as a child the many tins of biscuits and things. All of these had to be weighed out or measured. No pre-packaging or self-service in those days. Much later the shop was enlarged and a post office installed inside which created a lot more work for the Doney's.

AWARD OF MERIT

The RHSV has granted an Award of Merit to Sue Law on the recommendation of our Society. The award will be presented at one of our meetings in the near future. In announcing the award the RHSV's History News said the following:

Sue has made a distinguished contribution to the Society serving as President and Vice President between 1985-1998 achieving the smooth administration of the Society as well as more permanent accomplishments such as the establishment of the Andrew Ross Museum at Kangaroo Ground. Since retiring as President Sue has maintained her involvement with the Society particularly in the computerisation of the Society's records.

MORE NEWS

The Combined Historical Societies of Nillumbik are planning a joint exhibition for the Hurstbridge Wattle Festival on Sunday 3 September. Please tell Harry Gilham if you would like to help with our section of the display.

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Coming dates for our records workshops and heritage walks program are as follows:-

|           |                  |          |             |
|-----------|------------------|----------|-------------|
| Workshops | Mondays 9.30am   | 17 July, | 21 August   |
|           | Tuesdays 7.30pm  | 1 August | 5 September |
| Walks     | Saturdays 2.00pm | 5 August | 2 September |

Members are encouraged to attend the workshops to assist with our records management program or to carry out private research or reading. The walks are open to the public but members are most welcome to come along – perhaps you could introduce a friend to Eltham's history in this way.

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The Eltham Library has made a donation to the Society of bound volumes of the Diamond Valley News/Leader from 1990 to 2004. These are a useful addition to our ever-growing collection of local records.

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Don't forget that subscriptions for 2006-7 are due as of 1 July. Many have already paid but if you have not then David Johns would be happy to see you at the July meeting. Full details were provided in the May Newsletter.

Harry Gilham  
President

Russell Yeoman  
Secretary

David Johns  
Treasurer /  
Membership Secretary  
Phone – 9434 3357

Phone - 9439 1175

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