

ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

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NEWSLETTER

NO. 189 NOVEMBER 2009

NEXT MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 11th NOVEMBER

SPEAKER RUSSELL YEOMAN

THE STREETS OF LITTLE ELTHAM

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

LIBRARY PLACE ELTHAM

(FORMERLY OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)

CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

6.30 PM WEDNESDAY 9th DECEMBER

OLD ELTHAM COURTHOUSE, 730 MAIN ROAD

ELTHAM CEMETERY EXCURSION

2.00 PM SATURDAY 7th NOVEMBER

SEE PAGE 3 FOR DETAILS



Some streets of Little Eltham. Ross Street and Charles Street have now disappeared. Peel Street has been closed at its western end because of severe topography.

THE STREETS OF LITTLE ELTHAM

Over the years the story of Josiah Morris Holloway's Little Eltham subdivision has been well documented. Most people with an interest in Eltham's history know that Holloway's subdivision was more successful than the adjoining Government township of Eltham and eventually went on to include most of Eltham's township facilities within its square mile area.

At our November meeting we will examine Little Eltham in some detail by looking at the original streets created in Holloway's 1850s subdivision.

Most of these streets remain, forming the rectangular grid pattern of central Eltham. Some have disappeared in whole or in part as some areas have been re-subdivided, often to take better account of the steep topography. Most of Holloway's street names remain and we will examine the origin of a number of these.

This will be a talk by Russell Yeoman based on many years of examination of records relating to Holloway's subdivision and comparison with Eltham as it exists today. Digital slides to accompany the talk have been prepared with the assistance of Jim Connor.

For those not so familiar with Eltham's early history and by way of background we can turn to the late Keith Chappel's notes based on his 1970s research into Crown land sales in the area. Keith deals with the Holloway purchase in this way:-

"On the west and south-west of W. R. Belcher's 158 acre allotment were two 316 acre half sections extending west to S. A. Donaldson's purchase of 1840 – across the Diamond Creek – and south to the Eltham Village Reserve. The northern half was described as Portion 13 of Section 4, the southern half as Portion 12 Section 4. Both were offered for sale at public auction early with reserve price of one pound (£1) per acre. There was no bid for them at that auction; then they were made available for selection at that £1 per acre price.

Josiah Morris Holloway became Crown grantee of both allotments. Within Portion 13 is the present day Eltham Railway Station. Portion 12 became the first Nillumbik subdivision of rural land into township allotments, a subdivision named Little Eltham by surveyor A. M. Ross.

It extended northward from Dalton Street to Brisbane and York Streets and eastward from Bolton Street to beyond Bible Street.

The 1856 Electoral Roll listed J. M. Holloway as a land agent enrolled for his freehold at Brighton. He was also enrolled for his freehold land at Benalla, in that entry he was described as a 'land jobber'.

Other acquisitions of J. M. Holloway from the Crown were lands in the towns of Melbourne and Eltham, also Moorabbin Country Lands."

These notes refer to purchase of two portions totalling one square mile, but only to subdivision of the southern portion purchased in 1850. The parish plan indicates that purchase of the northern portion was finalised in 1853 and the plan of subdivision appears to indicate that it was carried out in two stages.

Reference in the notes to Surveyor Ross ties in with the reminiscences of pioneer Kangaroo Ground school teacher Andrew Ross. Writing about his first visit to the area in 1851 Ross says:-

"The dray-track through the scrub took a more direct route than the road subsequently adopted. At this period Holloway had recently made his purchase, and I knew that surveyors (my brother one of them) had been down here to lay off the future township; which, as the allotments began to be occupied and fenced off, presented for some time, a serious obstruction to traffic with the upper country."

The difficulties observed by Ross soon led to the Colonial Government acquiring a line of road through the land it had recently sold and that fact is an important element in discussing the street layout.

Later a number of the streets were also affected by the Government acquisition of land for the railway line to Eltham.

This talk will show how an early land developer played a dominant role in providing the framework of Eltham as it exists today.

CEMETERY WALK

Eltham Cemetery was established in 1858 and is the final resting place of many of the district's early settlers as well as a number of interesting characters of more recent years. At our September meeting Harry Gilham provided an excellent introduction to the historical importance of the cemetery and the stories of those that are buried there. Later in September Harry led a walk through the Cemetery, stopping at the graves of some of the more interesting characters.

But this single excursion was not sufficient to do proper justice to those who lie there. And so there will be a further cemetery walk on Saturday 7th November, commencing at 2pm at the Metery Road carpark within the Cemetery (Melway ref 21 K9). Again Harry will lead the walk, stopping at different graves to those visited on the earlier walk.

The walk is open to Society members and the general public. Please register for the walk by ringing Russell on 9439 9717.

CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

The format will be the same as for the last few years. We will be using the Local History Centre as well as the adjoining Courthouse commencing at 6.30pm. There is no formal agenda item but Jim Connor has agreed to again provide a background screening of local historical photos and pictures from his own collection. The Local History Centre collection will be available for browsing. For convenience we may bring some of the displays into the Courthouse.

The Society will supply meat and cheese platters and desserts. Members are asked to bring a salad to share and any other items, such as nibbles, that they would like to contribute. Ring Sue on

9439 9520 if in doubt about what to bring. Wine and soft drink will be available and, of course, there will be coffee and tea. Bring along any other types of drinks that you think you will need.

Limited parking is available in the back yard of the Local History Centre. There is plenty of parking on the wide verge on the west side of Main Road but there are some issues in getting across the traffic at this time of day. Otherwise, you can park in Brougham Street.

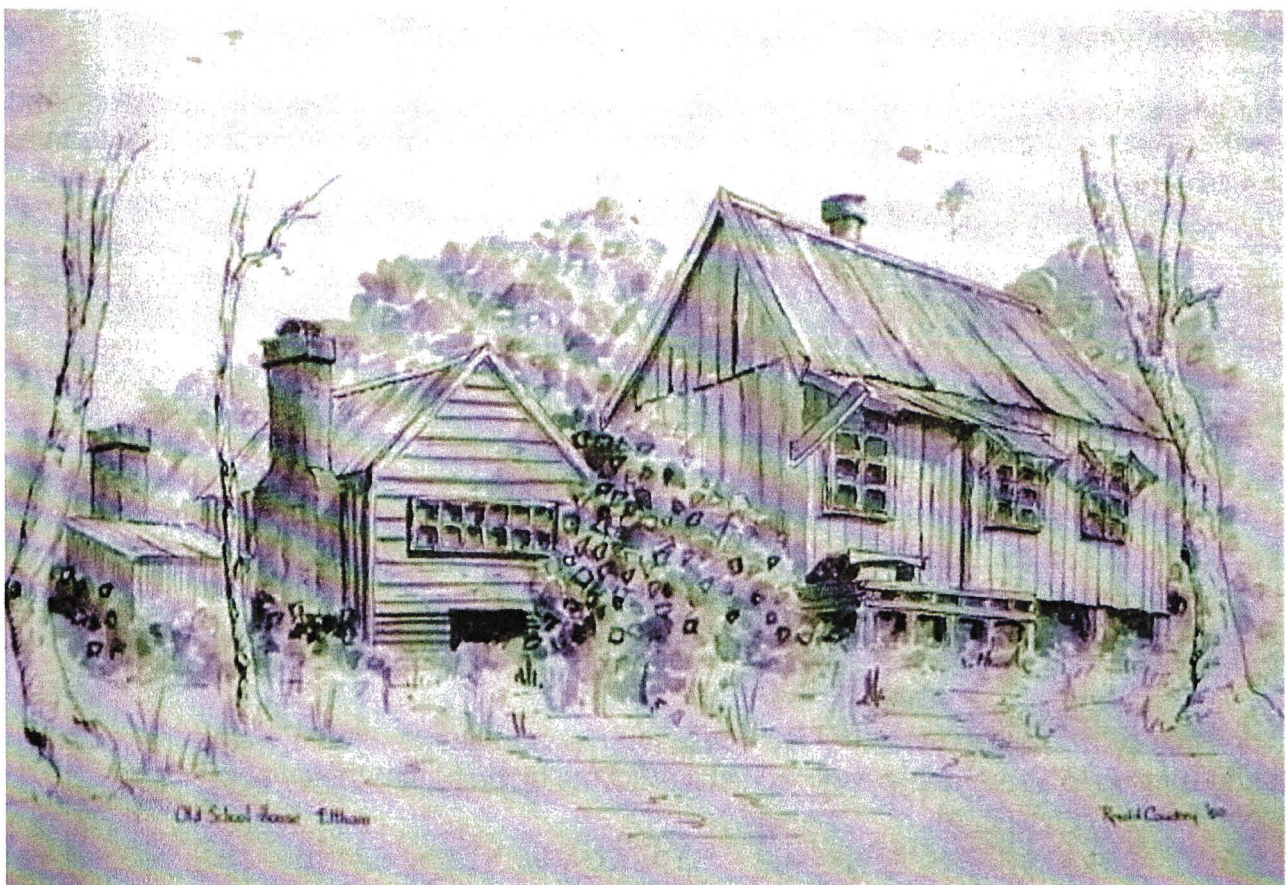
DONATION

Lesley Rickards of South Australia has made a donation to the Society of a painting by her father Ronald Coudrey, who was a well known artist in that state. The water colour painting reproduced below, is titled "Old School House, Eltham" but has been identified as an old cottage that once stood in Ely Street Eltham near the Eltham High School.

In the late 1970s and early 80s this building was the subject of a campaign by our Society with the objective of its preservation. It had been identified as having associations with Eltham pioneer Frederick Falkiner. Suggestions that it was an old school building shifted to this site were not supported by any evidence.

The land developer donated the cottage and a small area of land to the Eltham Shire Council. However, due to its poor condition and vandalism, it was decided that the cottage could not be retained and ultimately it was demolished. The land on which it stood has recently been sold by Nillumbik Shire Council.

The Society has a number of photos and another painting of this building but this recent donation is an important addition to our collection and we are grateful for the donation.



IN THE NEWS

Our Society often contributes to items in the local press about matters of historical interest but it is rare to an article about the Society itself. The Diamond Valley Leader of 28th October 2009 contains an article about the Society based on an interview with Harry Gilham and Jim Connor. Articles of this nature are useful in raising the profile of the Society in the community and hopefully resulting in additional members.

Eltham Town Community News is a quarterly magazine published on behalf of Eltham Traders. Recent editions have contained articles of historic interest and our Society had provided input to a number these. The current issue contains three articles that are worthy of mention.

Historian Dr Andrew Lemon has written an article about "The Tree Project". Blacksmiths from local areas and in fact from other countries are making metal leaves to commemorate bushfire victims and these are to be assembled into a memorial tree at Strathewen.

Well known author and broadcaster Phillip Adams has written about growing up in Eltham and the significant role played by his dog. Maol Harrop has written an article titled "The Festive Reason" detailing the early history of the Eltham Community Festival.

MORE NEWS

Each year Nillumbik Shire Council provides financial support to each of the nine historical societies and heritage groups operating within the shire by way of a Heritage Grant. We have received a grant of \$500 for the 2009-10 financial year which will be applied towards the operating costs of our Local History Centre. We are grateful to the Council for its support.

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The Hurstbridge and District Local History Group has joined a number of other Hurstbridge groups and businesses in producing a brochure for the Hurstbridge Heritage Trail. This excellent brochure enables a self-guided walk around the parklands and township area of Hurstbridge.

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Since the terrible fires of Black Saturday in February, Gwen Orford has been collecting newspaper cuttings and other material relating to the fires in Nillumbik and nearby areas. Gwen has now assembled material from this collection relating to people lost in the fires into an excellent memorial folder. The folder will be available for inspection by members at the November meeting. Gwen is still working on a scrapbook of other information about the fires.

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Coming dates for records workshops at our Local History Centre are as follows:

Monday - 9.30am : 16th November

Tuesday - 7.30pm : 1st December

Members are encouraged to attend the records workshops to assist with filing of records or to carry out private research or reading.

A Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 2nd December for the purpose of considering the Society's program for 2010. Talk to a Committee member if you have any subjects you would like to see in our program next year.

Conservation Volunteers Australia is seeking volunteers to assist the Kinglake Historical Society. They are looking for volunteers to help out one day a week for six months, to organize, sort, catalogue and store their collection. Ring CVA on 9326 8250 if you can help.

Members of our Society are invited to the launch of the photographic exhibition "Reflections of Diamond Valley" at 2.00 pm on Tuesday 17th November at the Diamond Valley Library, Civic Drive Greensborough. The exhibition presents the story of the former Shire of Diamond Valley. RSVP 12th November Kerryn McEvey 9401 0710 or kmcevey@yprl.vic.gov.au. The exhibition is also available on line at www.yprl.vic.gov.au – User Services – Search images.



Bridge Street is the main east – west street of Holloway's Little Eltham Subdivision. This early 1900s view looks west across Main Road (Maria Street) in the foreground and the Diamond Creek valley.

From the Reynolds – Prior Photo Collection

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