



# **ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Incorporated**

**No. A0016285F**

**728 MAIN ROAD (PO BOX 137) ELTHAM 3095**

**Website: [www.tinyurl.com/elthamdhs](http://www.tinyurl.com/elthamdhs)**

**Email: [edhs1@bigpond.com](mailto:edhs1@bigpond.com)**

## **NEWSLETTER**

**NO. 190 JANUARY 2010**

### **NEXT MEETING**

**8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 10<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**

### **PANEL PRESENTATION STORIES FROM OUR FILES**

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



Clem and Nina Christesen at "Stanhope"  
One of the stories at our  
February meeting

### **HERITAGE WALKS & EXCURSIONS PROGRAM**

**2PM SATURDAY 6<sup>th</sup> MARCH.  
HERITAGE WALK**

**2PM SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup> MARCH.  
KANGAROO GROUND  
EXCURSION**

**DETAILS IN MARCH  
NEWSLETTER**

## FEBRUARY MEETING

At our meeting in July 2009 members of our Committee presented a series of short talks entitled Stories from Our Files. This worked very well but barely scratched the extensive store of information available in the Society's records. It was decided that this meeting format should be continued on a regular basis and so it is repeated for our first meeting for 2010.

Four of our office bearers will each give a short talk on a subject selected from the records that is of interest to them and, hopefully, to the wider membership. These are:-

- Jim Connor - - The Changing Face of Eltham
- Russell Yeoman - Benjamin Baxter
- Sue Law - "Stanhope" – The Residence and Residents
- Doug Orford - "Laughing Waters"

Jim Connor has arranged a digital slide presentation of pictures, maps, aerial photos etc relevant to each subject.

## 2010 PROGRAM

On the last page of this Newsletter is the Society's program for this year. It is also available on the Society's website and extra copies are available for anyone wanting it separate to the Newsletter.

It includes topics and speakers for each meeting as well as dates for other activities, Committee meetings, records workshops, heritage walks and other excursions. Any changes through the year will be notified in the Newsletter.

A small group of members continue to make progress with getting our records into systematic order but there remains much work to be done. Members are encouraged to come along to our records workshops to assist with this task. They are held on the first Tuesday (evenings) and third Monday (mornings) of most months. Dates are listed in the program with the 2010 workshops commencing on 2<sup>nd</sup> February.

## AN 1856 STORY FROM OUR RECORDS.

In the research notes prepared by Keith Chappel is this Eltham story from *The Argus*, Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July 1856.

### ELTHAM DISTRICT

(From a correspondent ... July 24<sup>th</sup> 1856)

The inhabitants of this locality are exceedingly gratified by the steps Government are at length taking towards giving them some kind of road worthy (of) the name, even though the operations have not as yet progressed beyond the surveys of the line of road; and, considering that it is now seventeen years since this district was first opened up by the farmers of the Kangaroo Ground, and not a single bit of road has as yet been made by the Government, it surely is not too soon to make surveys.

Indeed this part of the country – only a dozen or fifteen miles from Melbourne as to distance, but more than double that distance practically, owing to bad roads, etc. has hitherto been most strangely neglected; and notwithstanding the most strenuous exertions on the part of both the Kangaroo Ground and Eltham farmers, nothing has



yet been done by Government to help them out of their troubles. It is to be hoped, therefore, that now a beginning has been made, in the way of surveys, we shall really have something done before long. A more beautiful district does not exist in the colony, and once fairly started, none will outvie it in prosperity.

More loss and hardship have perhaps fallen on the farmers of this district than on any others, owing to the immense labor required in clearing, grubbing, etc., over most districts: for this part of the country, though so extremely fertile and luxuriant when in full cultivation, presents a very unlikely appearance to the intending farmer: but when to this is added the absence of any road, save stump-strewed bullock-tracks, it is quite enough to dishearten any man, and helps to prevent that speeding of the plough which most assuredly for many years will prove the greatest source of prosperity to the colony. There is little doubt but that your efforts lately on behalf of the agricultural interest have done much to awaken the Government to the necessity of unusual exertions in assisting that class of the community, and this neighborhood feels very grateful to you.

But it is not only the agriculturists who desire roads, bridges, etc. in this neighborhood. We have no less than three or four sets of diggings lying near Eltham, to find out which the poor diggers are sometimes sorely puzzled, and which, from their proximity to Melbourne, would prove useful to the diggers of little capital, as not involving great travelling expenses. There are the Old Caledonia diggings, which are at present paying very fair wages; then there is the New Caledonia, which have not turned out permanently remunerative, probably owing to insufficient search; then we come to the lately discovered diggings at Bell's paddock. I visited these diggings a day or two since, and from replies to my questions to the diggers learned that they can depend upon half a pennyweight to three buckets of washing stuff. The holes are sunk in the bed of the creek to the depth of from eight to twelve feet. Many of the holes are driven some distance, after going down about six or eight feet. The sand is of a golden colour, but does not show any signs of gold to the naked eye. The largest nugget taken out as yet weighed 13 dwts (pennyweights). There were about twenty diggers at work, but the number was increasing. The diggers have requested Mr. Bell to allow them to enter his paddock through which the creek runs higher up; but that gentleman has hitherto declined to accede to their request.

The diggers seem confident that they would do well should Mr. Bell kindly permit even a small portion of the creek in his paddock to be worked. This creek is called the Dry Creek; just now, however, there is rather too much water. These diggings are but three miles from Eltham, by the short cut, which runs across the ranges by the farm of James Buchanan, Esq. at the east side of the township.

Lastly, there is Anderson's Creek, the oldest gold-field in Victoria. Between Bell's diggings and Anderson's Creek is but three miles by the short cut across the ranges, but, from the fact of there being no bridge across the Yarra hereabouts, the traveller has to go round by way of Templestowe – a distance of about fifteen miles.

At Anderson's Creek some are doing very well, and the only hindrance to the well-doing of all seems to be the absence of machinery. It certainly does seem strange that some few capitalists do not turn their attention to the development of the treasures hereabouts.



From Anderson's Creek the transition is easy to Mr Anderson, one of the candidates offering himself for this district. I regretted that when he addressed himself to the Eltham electors yesterday (Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup>) he was not explicit as to the question of roads for his district. He merely said that the roads must speak for themselves, which they certainly do as far as those who travel on them are concerned; but, alas! none of the members of the Government are in the habit of travelling on them.

The land is now pretty generally ready for the seed, but the late wet weather has hitherto prevented the farmers from sowing. A great quantity of new land is being turned up in this neighborhood, so it is evident there are plenty who have faith in the agricultural interest. It would be much to be regretted if the Protection heresy were to take root in the minds of the farmers in this locality, as one might be led to fear by the fact that the most influential farmer of the Kangaroo Ground asked Mr. Anderson, when at Eltham, if he would be prepared to support a prohibitive duty on imported corn. It is due to Mr Anderson to say that he at once stated that if his success in that district depended on the support of such a duty he would at once retire from the field. Mr Anderson's views seem likely to win him success.



Dry Creek Eltham, site of one of the diggings mentioned in the 1856 Eltham District report.  
From the Reynolds – Prior photo collection.

## **MORE NEWS**

Nillumbik Shire Council has arranged a commemorative service to mark the first anniversary of the tragic Black Saturday bushfires. It will be held in the Panton Hill Memorial Park at 6 pm on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February. It will include musical items and be followed by a barbecue dinner. Further details are available for those wishing to attend from Kirsten Jenkins at the Council on 9433 3111.



The latest issue of Kangaroo Ground Chronicle published by the Andrew Ross Museum announces the launch of a new book by Mick Woiod, "Another View of Kangaroo Ground the Land and its People". The book is available from the museum for \$20.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To satisfy the requirements of the Society's rules, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Eltham District Historical Society Incorporated will be held at 8.00pm on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at the Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre.

The agenda of the Annual General Meeting is set out below in accordance with the rules. Further details will be given in the March Newsletter.

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2009 Annual General Meeting
3. Reports
  - a. President's Report
  - b. Treasurer's Report
  - c. Any other reports
4. Election of office bearers and ordinary members of committee positions to be filled as follows:
  - President
  - Senior Vice President
  - Junior Vice President
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer/Membership Secretary
  - Ordinary Committee Members (not less than three and not more than six)
5. Fixing of entrance fee (if any) and annual subscription
6. Any other business of which at least two weeks notice has been given to members

It should be noted that under the Society's rules nominations of office bearers should be made in writing to the Secretary not less than seven days before the meeting.

Nominations should be signed by two members of the Society and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate. If insufficient nominations are received further nominations shall be received at the meeting. However, it should be noted that where a valid prior nomination is received it will have priority and no nomination for that position can be accepted at the meeting.

Each year we urge members to contribute to the running of our Society by becoming an office bearer or committee member and we have the same message again this year. Please give the matter some consideration and, if in doubt, discuss it with one of our office bearers. The work load is not great. There are usually just six committee meetings each year, alternating with our general meetings. We warmly welcome fresh ideas to help us run a vibrant organisation and increase our membership.

Jim Connor  
President

Russell Yeoman  
Secretary

David Johns  
Treasurer /  
Membership Secretary  
Phone - 9434 3357

Phone - 9439 5916

Phone - 9439 9717





# Eltham District Historical Society

Incorporated No. A0016285F

## Local History Centre

728 Main Road (PO Box 137)

Eltham Victoria 3095

## Email

edhs1@bigpond.com

## Website

www.tinyurl.com/elthamdhs

## General Meetings held at:

Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre

Library Place

Eltham

## Eltham District Historical Society

### Program 2010

#### FEBRUARY

*Tuesday 2nd 7.30pm*

Records Workshop

*Wednesday 10th 8.00pm*

**General Meeting** – Speaker Panel:

Stories from Our Files

*Monday 15th 9.30am*

Records Workshop

#### MARCH

*Tuesday 2nd 7.30pm*

Records Workshop

*Saturday 6th 2.00pm*

Heritage Walk

*Wednesday 10th 8.00pm*

**Annual General Meeting**

Guest Speaker: Andrew Lemon

“They’re Racing at Eltham”

*Monday 15th 9.30am*

Records Workshop

*Sunday 28th 2.00pm*

Kangaroo Ground Excursion

#### APRIL

*Tuesday 6th 7.30pm*

Records Workshop

*Wednesday 14th 7.30pm*

Committee Meeting

*Monday 19th 9.30am*

Records Workshop

#### MAY

*Saturday 1st 2.00pm*

Heritage Walk

*Tuesday 4th 7.30pm*

Records Workshop

*Wednesday 12th 8.00pm*

**General Meeting** - Guest Speaker:

Ken Eckersall - “Tales from the 1930’s”

*Monday 17th 9.30am*

Records Workshop

#### JUNE

*Tuesday 1st 7.30pm*

Records Workshop

*Wednesday 9th 7.30pm*

Committee Meeting

*Monday 14th 9.30am*

Records Workshop

#### JULY

*Saturday 3rd 2.00pm*

Heritage Walk

*Tuesday 6th 7.30pm*

Records Workshop

*Wednesday 14th 8.00pm*

**General Meeting** - Panel

Presentation “Jo at Belle Vue”

*Monday 19th 9.30am*

Records Workshop

#### AUGUST

*Tuesday 3rd 7.30pm*

Records Workshop

*Wednesday 11th 7.30pm*

Committee Meeting

*Monday 16th 9.30am*

Records Workshop

#### SEPTEMBER

*Saturday 4th 2.00pm*

Heritage Walk

*Tuesday 7th 7.30pm*

Records Workshop

*Wednesday 8th 8.00pm*

**General Meeting** – Jim Connor

“The Changing Face of Eltham”

*Sunday 12th 2.00pm*

Eltham Cemetery Excursion

*Monday 20th 9.30am*

Records Workshop

#### OCTOBER

*Tuesday 5th 7.30pm*

Records Workshop

*Wednesday 13th 7.30pm*

Committee Meeting

*Monday 18th 9.30am*

Records Workshop

#### NOVEMBER

*Saturday 6th 2.00pm*

Heritage Walk

*Wednesday 10th 8.00pm*

**General Meeting** – Guest Speaker

Mike Ridley “Montsalvat”

*Sunday 14th 2.00pm*

Eltham Cemetery Excursion

*Monday 15th 9.30am*

Records Workshop

#### DECEMBER

*Wednesday 1st 7.30pm*

Committee Meeting

*Tuesday 7th 7.30pm*

Records Workshop

*Wednesday 8th 6.30pm*

**Christmas Function** – Local History Centre