



ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

728 MAIN ROAD (PO BOX 137) ELTHAM 3095

Website: www.tinyurl.com/elthamdhs

Email: edhs1@bigpond.com

NEWSLETTER

NO. 192 MAY 2010

NEXT MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 12th MAY

SPEAKER KEN ECKERSALL

"TALES FROM THE 1930S"

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

LIBRARY PLACE ELTHAM

(FORMERLY OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)



HERITAGE WALKS & EXCURSIONS PROGRAM

**2PM SATURDAY 1st MAY.
THE SHILLINGLAW FARM
WALK**

**2PM SATURDAY 3rd JUNE.
HERUTAGE WALK**

The war memorial at the Eltham RSL.
See story page 3
Photo Jim Connor

MAY MEETING

Dr Ken Eckersall has written a number of books and smaller publications. They include 'ELTHAM INHABITANTS – For most, the serious part' a history of the Methodist Church in Eltham and an important contribution to the social history of the area.

Ken's latest book "Eltham's Serious and Their Neighbours" was launched on 18th April at a well attended function. It continues the theme of church and community developed in "ELTHAM INHABITANTS".

This book and the research for it will form the basis of Ken's talk at our May meeting. "Tales from the 1930s" will include many references to our Society records which Ken says were a great help to him in researching the book.

Some of the stories to be related by Ken come from the Society's family history project and include reminiscences from Peter Bassett-Smith and Max Spence. Another personal story is that of Robert D Taylor of Bible Street. Incidentally, Ken now lives on part of the former Taylor farm. Ken has also collected some interesting stories from the establishment of Montsalvat in the mid 1930s.

Ken has put together a series of photos to illustrate his talk, some from our Society records and some recent views that he has taken himself. They have been assembled into a digital slide show with assistance from Jim Connor.

Copies of "Eltham's Serious and Their Neighbours" will be available for purchase.

THE SHILLINGLAW FARM WALK

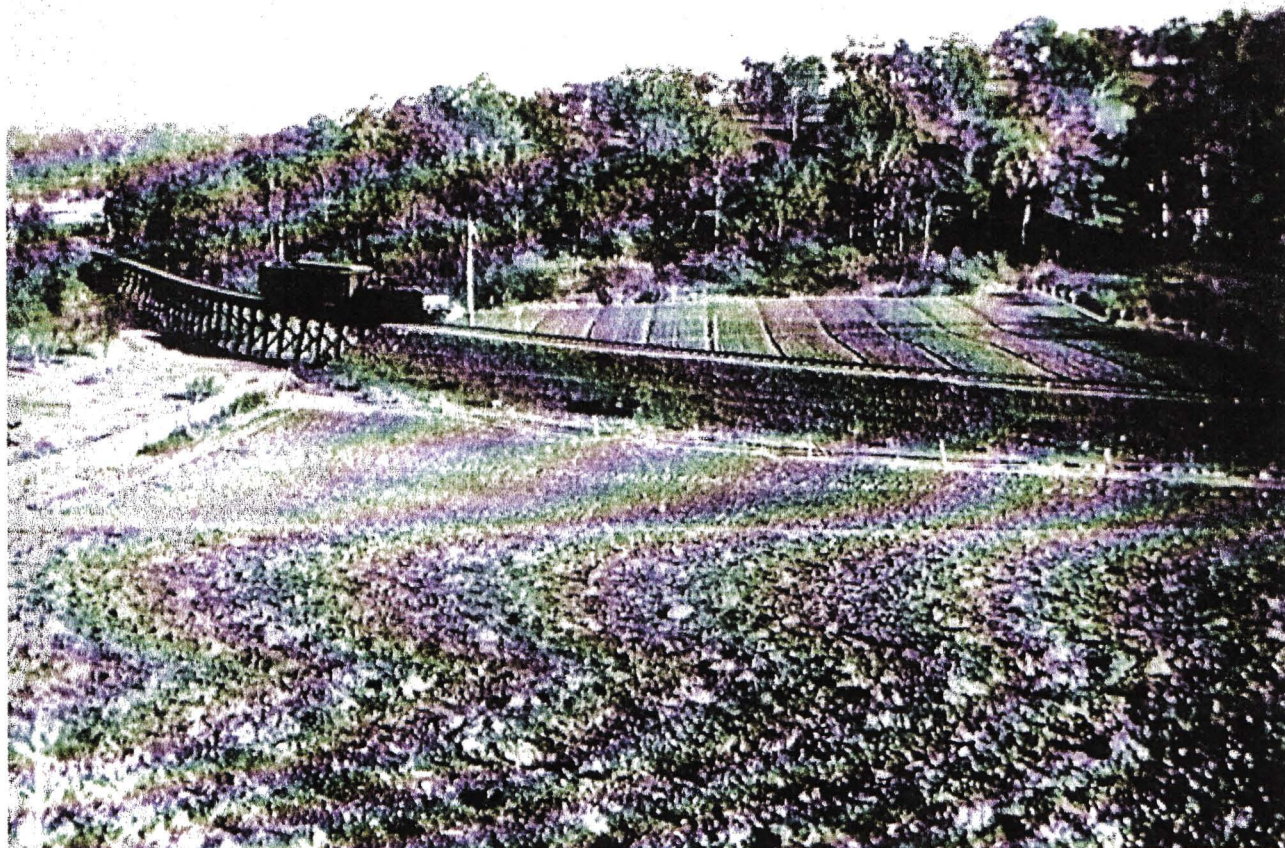
Our heritage walk on 1st May will follow the boundaries of the original Shillinglaw Farm in central Eltham.

This will be a short walk with a large number of stops to look at early photos and maps of the farm. It will start at 2.00pm in Panther Place outside the Eltham Library (Melway Ref. 21 J5).

The Shillinglaw farm comprised lot 90 of Holloway's 1851 Little Eltham subdivision. It was originally 30 acres in area and situated east of the Diamond Creek and north of Henry Street. Before Phillip Shillinglaw purchased the property in the 1870s the eastern part had been acquired by the Colonial Government to establish the main road to Kangaroo Ground. In subsequent years the size of land was reduced in stages, mostly by Government or Council acquisition. These included purchase of land for the railway including Eltham station in the early 1900s and the acquisitions for Council parkland between the railway and the creek. The final part of the land came into Council ownership in 1964 when the site of Shillinglaw Cottage was purchased for its new shire offices. The cottage was saved by community action and moved to its present site just outside the original farm boundary. Part of the Eltham Town Centre is included within the original boundaries of lot 90.

This walk will illustrate the gradual reduction of the Shillinglaw farm and also the early history of the railway. It will include many photos of the Eltham Town Centre.

This free walk is open to Society members and the public and will take about two hours. Shillinglaw Cottage Cafe will be open at the conclusion for those who might like a coffee or something else. Ring Russell on 0409 021 063 for further information.



The train to Eltham crosses the Shillinglaw farm

ELTHAM RSL AND WAR MEMORIAL

As reported in the local press the Eltham sub-branch of the RSL has been closed and the premises in Main Road is likely to be sold. The Eltham RSL had its origin in 1927 when it was formed as a branch of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League. The history of this local organisation is told in Max Dimmack's book "We Will Remember Them" published in 2002. Max was guest speaker at a meeting of our Society shortly after the book was launched.

The RSI site contains the Eltham War Memorial which takes the form of an obelisk inscribed with the names of Eltham servicemen who died in the First World War. Later the names of those who died in the Second World War were added.

The obelisk is one of several local war memorials. Soon after the First World War the Avenue of Honour of Plane trees was established along Main Road. In the 1920s the Shire of Eltham established its war memorial at Kangaroo Ground and the Tower of Remembrance was built. Later it was re-dedicated following the Second World War and in more recent times for later conflicts. Following the Second World War the Eltham War Memorial Trust was established. It raised funds to purchase part of the Shillinglaw land and

build the war memorial complex of buildings that included a kindergarten, children's library and infant welfare centre. Later the Senior Citizens' clubrooms were added to this complex. Other local townships have their own individual war memorials.

The obelisk was first erected at the north west corner of Bridge Street and Main Road. Its location was on a high bank above the road but with road widening that bank has now disappeared and the location is within the road carriageway. The memorial was unveiled on 3rd August 1919 by Sir William Irvine then Lieutenant Governor of Victoria. Photographs of the ceremony show a large crowd of people occupying the whole of the intersection. It was moved to its present site in the 1950s well before the road widening occurred.

The likely scenario is that the site will be sold and the obelisk will need to be removed. It is covered by a Heritage Overlay under the Nillumbik Planning Scheme and a planning permit would be required for its removal. The Society has written to both the state office of the RSL and Nillumbik shire Council expressing our interest in the future of the memorial. We have suggested a new location near the corner of Panther Place and Library Place adjacent to the Eltham Library. The RSL building contains many items of memorabilia but the future of that collection is a matter for the RSL.

EDENDALE FARM

Edendale Farm is Nillumbik Shire Council's environment centre situated in Gastons Road, Eltham between the railway and the Diamond Creek. The homestead on the property was built in 1896 and is of historical significance, being the subject of a Heritage Overlay under the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.

The property has been brought to our Society's attention in two unrelated ways in recent weeks. As part of an extensive works program on the property the homestead is currently being restored. Project Co-ordinator Lisa Walton has advised that an old set of keys has been found hidden behind a flue. The keys match the door locks of the house and probably date from the time of its original construction.

There are few early photos of Edendale but we have recently received two photos from the 1930s on loan for copying for Society records. They come from Cheryl Mutch who lived at Edendale when her husband managed the property for the Council.

The Edendale property was originally part of an extensive land purchase from the Crown by pioneer Eltham farmer Henry Stooke. It comprised several Crown Allotments extending northerly from Josiah Holloway's Little Eltham subdivision. Stooke did not build on this property, choosing to live on his property "Rosehill" at Lower Plenty.

In 1896 Thomas Cool purchased 7 acres of the original Stooke land and built the house now known as Edendale. In 1918 he purchased an additional 7 acres but in 1919 he sold the property.

In the 1980s the Eltham Shire Council purchased the site for use as a Council depot but this use did not proceed. Subsequently, it was used as the Council pound and then developed into a community farm. In recent times its use has been oriented to environmental education.



Edendale Farm and the homestead in the 1930s
The top view is taken from the present day Coleman Crescent
Photos by courtesy of Cheryl Mutch

SUBSCRIPTIONS

At the Annual General Meeting subscriptions for 2010-2011 were fixed at the same levels as last year and are as follows:

Single member	\$25.00
Newsletter	\$15.00
Family	\$30.00
Business organization	\$30.00

Subscriptions are due on 1 July but earlier payment is welcomed. David would be happy to receive your money either at the May meeting or through the mail.

RECORDS WORKSHOPS

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

Tuesdays 7.30pm -	4 th May and 1 st June
Mondays 9.30am -	17th May and 21 st June

Members are encouraged to become involved in these workshops, but if you would like to come and browse through records that is most welcome too.

The committee has decided that the workshop on 1st June should be devoted to local road names and particularly to their origins. The plan is that it will be a discussion or "brainstorming" session to record the known origins of street names. Members who are not normally involved in these workshops are invited to attend either to contribute from their persona, knowledge or research or simply if they have an interest. If you cannot attend and know the origin of even just one local street name, write it down and pass it on to a Committee member.

OFFICE BEARERS 2010 -2011

At the Annual General Meeting in March office bearers and committee members were elected for the coming year.

The full list of office bearers and committee members is as follows:

President	Jim Connor
Senior Vice President	Sue Law
Junior Vice President	Doug Orford
Treasurer/Membership Secretary	David Johns
Secretary	Russell Yeoman
Committee Members	Diana Bassett-Smith, Alison Delaney, Harry Gillham, Gwen Orford, Mary Regan, Gabrielle Turner.

After many years of service Jock Read has retired from the Committee due to health constraints. We thank Jock for his valuable input and his wealth of knowledge of old Eltham.

Jim Connor President Phone - 9439 5916	Russell Yeoman Secretary Phone - 9439 9717	David Johns Treasurer / Membership Secretary Phone - 9434 3357
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