



ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

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NEWSLETTER

NO. 194 SEPTEMBER 2010

NEXT MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 8th SEPTEMBER

**“THE CHANGING FACE OF ELTHAM”
DIGITAL SLIDE SHOW AND DISCUSSION
LED BY JIM CONNOR**

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

HERITAGE WALKS & EXCURSIONS PROGRAM

**2PM SATURDAY
4th SEPTEMBER
RESEARCH HERITAGE WALK**

**2PM SUNDAY
12th SEPTEMBER
ELTHAM CEMETERY VISIT**



Ingrams Road

when orchards dominated the Research landscape

SEPTEMBER MEETING

President Jim Connor is well known as an avid photographer of the things and places that he comes across in his everyday life. His large collection of photos has been the source of many digital slide presentations at Society Meetings. Jim also often presents digital slides of historical photos from the Society's collection in conjunction with speakers or other agenda items at meetings.

For our September meeting Jim has arranged a digital slide presentation showing past views of Eltham, together with present day views at the same location. Some of the recent photos are from Jim's collection and some have been specially taken for this presentation.

Jim's intention is that the photos will promote discussion about the places that are shown and thereby provide information for our Society records. This informal discussion should also provide a most entertaining evening.

Please come along to this meeting if you can contribute to the discussion on "The Changing Face of Eltham" or you want to learn something about it. As usual visitors are most welcome at this meeting.



The Changing Face of Eltham's Trains

RESEARCH HERITAGE WALK

The small village of Research began in the gold era of the mid 1800s and later was a significant orchard district. Today it is a suburb on the very fringe of Melbourne's urban area. Beyond Bells Hill and Eltham College lie the rolling hills and rural properties of Kangaroo Ground.

Few buildings remain from the early days of Research but we have photos of many of them that can be viewed as we pass on our circuit walk. Part of the walk will be along the now disused Maroondah Aqueduct. Much of the commentary for this walk is based on the work of member and Research resident Jim Allen.

The walk starts at the Research shops in Main Road (Melway Ref. 22 G2) at 2.00pm on Saturday 4th September. The distance is about 3.5 km and it will take about two hours. There is no charge for this walk which is open to Society members and the general public. For enquiries prior to the day ring Sue on 9439 9520. The phone number for contact on the day is 0409 021 063.

ELTHAM CEMETERY VISIT

In 2009 Harry Gilham led two visits to the Eltham Cemetery, visiting the graves of Eltham pioneers and other interesting former local residents. Harry's large folder of information on the cemetery contains particulars of many more people who are buried there and so Harry has arranged two further visits this year.

The first is on Sunday 12th September commencing at 2.00pm at the cemetery car park near Metery Road, but it is better to use the entrance from Mt Pleasant Road (Melway Ref. 21 K8). Bring along whatever you fancy for a picnic afternoon tea. To help with arrangements please ring Russell on 9439 9717 if you are coming.

The second cemetery excursion will be on Sunday 14th November.



DISTINGUISHED LIFE MEMBERS

by Jim Connor

Following on from a special resolution by our committee the Eltham District Historical Society respectfully bestowed the inaugural title of 'Distinguished Life Member' on our valued and long-term Society members Mr Peter Bassett-Smith and Mr. Jock Read.

Our immediate Past President, Harry Gilham, undertook the presentation to Peter, at our general meeting on 14 July 2010. In doing so Harry noted the range of contributions that Peter has made to our Society, not only as a foundation member and President, but also as an active committee member for many years.

There was also mention of Peter's lifetime achievements and the extensive contributions made by Peter and his wife Diana to various community organisations in the Eltham and Kangaroo Ground districts.

Committee and other Society members attended a separate presentation to Jock Read to acknowledge his ongoing involvement with our Society, including his many years as a committee member. In making the presentation to Jock, Doug Orford warmly recounted his early recollections of seeing Jock in his Naval uniform during the time of the Second World War and told tales of Jock's lifetime of activities spent in and around the Eltham area. Generations of school children will well remember Jock and his horse, either in his role as a school crossing supervisor or leading the ANZAC Day March through Eltham.

The Eltham District Historical Society is indeed proud to have Peter Bassett-Smith and Jock Read as our first Distinguished Life Members. Our thanks go to Harry Gilham and Doug Orford for undertaking these presentations.



**Peter Bassett-Smith, Jock Read
and Doug Orford (standing)**

JOCK READ'S EARLY HISTORY

An edited version taken from interviews with Jock Read by Peter Bassett-Smith and with contributions by Doug Orford and others.

I was born in 1915 and visited Eltham on and off until we came to live here about 1920, when I was about 5.

I went to school at the State School in Dalton Street and then over to the High School. They started off using a slate at school and then graduated to books, which later had lines in them. There were copybooks with the alphabet and you copied onto other books and learnt to write. Games they played were marbles (alleys), hopscotch, skipping, cricket and football. There was another game called tick-tack – this was played with a large stick with a point on each end. The schoolroom was comfortable and there were not very many in the class. We wore shorts at primary school and ordinary clothes at High School (no uniform).

I learned how to milk cows and used to do the milk round before school on horseback. I had to get up very early. I took two or three cans with two or three gallons of fresh milk. I had a nice quiet pony and used to go along and people would have their billy-cans on the fence. I would ladle the milk into them. I did that until quarter to nine and then went to school.

I didn't have any real hobbies - I used to go rabbiting but didn't go fishing very much. We used to go camping a lot - three or four of us would go and cook up some chops and spuds for lunch, then we might walk to Diamond Creek or somewhere out the back here -

out through Laughing Waters. We had no means of transport, there were horse drawn vehicles and pushbikes, but I didn't have one for quite a while. We mostly walked.

I went to the Higher Elementary School when it first opened in 1928.

I worked on Eddie Anderson's orchard when I left school and also for Arthur Bird in Pitt Street. I had a few pigs, which I used to fatten up to sell for bacon - I knew a butcher bloke who used to cart them for me when I used to send them into town. I got 3/- for them after they had taken the commission out. That was during the depression.

My Father came from London. He came out to Australia when he was about 5 or 6 years old with my grandmother and my grandfather. My grandfather worked in London on the Railways. My grandmother came from Scotland - up north somewhere. She belonged to the Fraser clan - on the Firth somewhere.

My grandfather lived in Brunswick and he started a wood yard as far as I can recall. My father and his two brothers worked in the wood yard and then they started a carrying business about 1920 and they were going fine until the depression wiped them out. They were then just doing odd jobs around here so they bought a horse and cart and were doing odd jobs including ploughing, so I learned to plough, my father taught me to plough. He used to do odd jobs fencing, clearing scrub and so I helped him and then he got a job on the Council later on. That is how I learnt about horses and so on, I also used to spend time breaking in horses. I worked with heavy horses as well and that's how I learnt to plough with a horse and scoop, digging, building dams, using a one-horse bucket. When I was working on the orchards they had two horses so I worked with the two horses.

1932 - This was in the depression time and my father said I had better go out and get myself another job so I started a mail run for people around the area. I had about 30 customers and charged them 1/- per week. I used to go to the Post Office to pick up letters and deliver them to the people and then pick up their mail and take it back to the Post Office. The mail was picked up from the Post Office run by Miss Hunniford. I did that for a long time. I also delivered newspapers for Mr. Andrew.

It was 1934 when I was on the baker's cart. It would have been Trevenas at the old bakehouse at the corner of York Street. We drove all the way up to Wellers Pub and went up to Pitmans. I used to go south as far as Lower Plenty pub, then down Bonds Road and those places. Also Kent Hughes Road and out the back to Reynolds Road, in a horse and cart.

I left there and went to Ingrams Bakery in Research. I worked there for 3 years - they had a motor vehicle so I had to drive a motor then. I used to mix the dough at the bakery, I put the loaves in the oven and pulled them out again and put them on the bench to cool. I used to weigh the dough and when the dough was ready you would pull it out on big long troughs. You would pull it out and slap it on the benches and cut it into 2 pound loaves. You weighed the dough and then you cut it after you kneaded the dough and put them in the tins, and then into the oven. The ovens were wood fired. They used to use three-foot lengths of wood.

When I was on the baker's cart I used to get their daily paper for them. Their mail and groceries - any little message they wanted. I picked up the mail and delivered it with the bread. I did not get paid. The customers were very nice people. You knew everybody, it

was just a village. They would always have a cup of tea for me you know, some even would give me a hot lunch.

It used to cost me about 5/- a bag for my horse - chaff and bran - that would last me about a week. The oats and chaff came from Burgoynes. Chaff was about 5/- a bag, cow chaff 4/- a bag - that was rough cut about a couple of inches long. Instead of cutting it up fine like you do for the horses it was cut up a bit longer for cow chaff, and it was good. It could have come from Kangaroo Ground, or sometimes it was from Shutt & Barry - a big chaff and hay and corn place from down Footscray way.

It would come up by goods train and they would ring up whoever ordered it and they would go down and cart it from the station. There was chaff, wheat, oats, barley, bran and all that. The place was full of gigs and jinkers and carts.



Jock Read and his horse

I went into the Navy cadets from about 1934 at Bay Street, Port Melbourne - down near "Lonsdale" Naval depot. Then I went into Naval Reserves - did all the naval things. During the war I was trained in the Navy on HMAS "Vampire" and then the "Yarra". I was on a minesweeper training in 1939 for about 4 months or so - just outside the Heads in Port Phillip Bay. I then went on to the "Manoora" in Sydney in 1939/40. I was a seaman's gunner in the Navy and we went around Australia, Darwin, New Guinea, Singapore, Java and the Indies and then all around Borneo and the Phillipines. I was lucky I was never wounded. I was discharged in 1945/46 and was drafted to the Corvets.

After the war I was in and out of hospital and then I joined the Corps of Commissionaires in 1955. They got me a job at an Architects firm - Stevenson and Turner. I drove Sir Arthur Stevenson - he was a top architect. I used to do the messages etc. and I stopped there for 20 years. He passed away after about 10 years and his son took over and I drove him around. At 60 I told them I have had enough and that if I carried on much more I might not last, but I have.

LOCAL ROAD NAMES - THE NORTH-SOUTH ROADS

The early crown land surveys of the Parish of Nillumbik were based on a square mile rectangular grid. Government roads were created along some of these property boundaries - straight lines taking no account of the topography. This article looks at two long roads extending northerly from the Yarra River.

Bolton Street/Ryans Road

This road forms the western boundary of the Government Township of Eltham and Holloway's Little Eltham subdivision of 1851. It extends further north to form the western boundary of the Nillumbik (Diamond Creek) Township. Various parts of this road have never been open to traffic and some parts have been formally closed. This has led to the adoption of a variety of road names for the various sections of the road.

Most of this road now lies within the Shire of Nillumbik although a section north of Progress Road, Eltham North forms the boundary with the City of Banyule. Prior to municipal restructuring the southern part was in the Shire of Eltham and north of Kerrie Crescent was in the Shire of Diamond Valley. The Eltham section was named Bolton Street and the Diamond Valley section was Ryans Road through to Diamond Creek Road although there was a short unopened section isolating it from that road. North of Diamond Creek Road there was another un-opened section and then it continued further northerly as Lambert Street, terminating at Starling Street, Diamond Creek. Further reference to the Lambert Street section is outside the scope of this article.

The name Bolton Street appears on the 1851 Eltham Township Plan but the reason for the name is unknown. Bolton is an industrial town in northern England but could also be a family name.

Ryans Road is named after the Ryan family, early residents of Diamond Creek. Jock Ryan, a driving force in the Nillumbik Historical Society, is a member of this family.

There is no crossing of the railway line at Bolton Street within the present industrial area of Eltham. In the 1970s Eltham Council renamed the section north of the railway as Ryans Road to reflect the fact that it was continuous with that road in Diamond Valley. A short section of the road south of the railway was formally closed and sold.

A section of Bolton Street towards its south end runs parallel to and adjacent to Fitzsimons Lane, the main road to Templestowe. For traffic management reasons a section north of Rosehill Road has been closed. The isolated section of the former Bolton Street south of Rosehill Road runs to the Yarra River and has been named Yarra Hill Close.

Reynolds Road

This road starts at the Yarra River and extends northerly through Research to Old Hurstbridge Road at Wattle Glen. It is named after the Reynolds family, long-time and well known residents of Research who had a house at the corner of this road and Main Road.



The 2 houses Ivy Reynold's grandfather built

photograph from the Reynold/Prior Collection

Because of steep grades, various sections of the road are not open to traffic.

North of the junction of Ingrams Road and Orme Road Research a section that appears on the Nillumbik Parish Plan as a road is now private property.

South of Yarra Braes Road extending to the Yarra River the road has been incorporated into the Yarra Valley Metropolitan Park and is open to pedestrian and cycle traffic only.

North of Main Road the road passes along the boundary of Research Park. This section has never been open to traffic because of steep grades with the result that there was no practical access from Research Park to the Maroondah Aqueduct. In the 1980s residential development provided access from Maroong Drive and other streets. The name Maroong Drive was continued for this section of the former Reynolds Road.

Although part of the same continuous north-south line, Reynolds Road now exists as two distinct parts separated by Maroong Drive and various unopened sections. In the south Reynolds Road extends from Main Road to Yarra Braes Road. In the north it extends from Wattle Glen to Lorimer Road.

MORE NEWS

On Friday 13th August 125 students from Eltham East Primary School visited our Local History Centre and the old Courthouse. Harry Gilham, in his usual role as tour guide, entertained the students in groups of 25 including a practical demonstration of the use of the portable lock-up.

Box Hill Historical Society has advised us of the Whitehorse Heritage Week which runs from 6th to 16th September. The theme is Whitehorse @ Work – Celebrating Our Industrial Heritage. A program of the many events and displays is available from Whitehorse City Council.

For those who have not yet paid their 2010-11 subscription, this is a gentle reminder that it became due in July. Please see David at the September meeting or send it to our post office box.

Records Workshops for the next two months are as follows:-

Tuesdays 7.30pm - 7th September, 5th October
Mondays 9.30am - 20th September, 18th October

A small but increasing group is making steady progress with filing and indexing of our collection of historical records. Some members have taken the opportunity of these workshops to carry out research on particular projects. In addition to advancing these projects, valuable information is often provided for Society records.

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