

ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

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NEWSLETTER

NO. 197 MARCH 2011

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 9th MARCH**

**“ONE TREE HILL MINE”
DVD FILM PRESENTATION INTRODUCED BY GAYE PONTING**

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



One Tree Hill Mine
in operation

HERITAGE WALKS & EXCURSIONS PROGRAM

**2PM SATURDAY 5th MARCH
HERITAGE WALK
ORCHARDS AND BUTTERFLIES**

**2PM SUNDAY 7th MAY
HERITAGE WALK**

SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our March meeting each year is the Annual General Meeting, which includes the presentation of annual reports and the election of office bearers for the coming year. The official notification of the Annual General Meeting and the agenda were published in the January Newsletter.

As always, we are encouraging members to contribute to the operation of the Society by becoming an office bearer or committee member. Please give this careful thought and, if in doubt, discuss it with one of our present office bearers. We warmly welcome fresh ideas and enthusiastic participation in the tasks involved in running our organisation.

Due to poor vision the position of Secretary is becoming increasingly difficult for Russell Yeoman. While assistance is available from other Committee members the preferred option is that an enthusiastic member take over this position. Please talk to Jim or Russell if you think you might be able to contribute to the Society in this way.

ONE TREE HILL MINE

One Tree Hill Mine is situated in a bushland reserve between Christmas Hills and Smiths Gully about 15 kilometres north east of Eltham. Its entrance is a tunnel on the hillside bordering Happy Valley. The mine consists of a complex system of tunnels and shafts extending under the One Tree Hill ridge to its northern slopes in the Smiths Gully valley.

This area forms part of the Caledonia Diggings and from the 1850s alluvial gold mining flourished in the numerous creeks and gullies. Later underground mining tapped the deeper quartz reefs that were the source of the gold. One Tree Hill Mine was one of the most significant mines on the Caledonia Diggings.

Alec Bone and Bill Wallace held the rights for this mine in the 1920s and 30s. Alec's son Stan has a long association with the mine and has operated it until recent years. Stan's friend Paul Ware has produced a DVD film covering the history of the mine and its more recent operation. This film will follow the formal business of our AGM and will be introduced by Gaye Ponting from the St Andrews-Queenstown Historical Society.

This film should be of interest to our members as a contribution to the gold mining history of the Shire of Nillumbik. It is likely to be of interest also to members of other historical societies within the Shire and we would warmly welcome their attendance.

The following article was written by Stan Bone for "St Andrews, a Village Built on Gold" and is reproduced with the permission of the publishers.

DINNER PLATE NUGGET

In the 1930's Alec and Bill were working One Tree Hill's mines and were almost broke. They had bought heavy equipment to work the mine and were '*up to their eye balls in debt*'. In one of the tunnels they had put a winze to extract the mullock and quartz from a lower section of the mine and began to use a bucket to lift it all out. The problem was there was this lump of rock that the bucket kept hitting half way up the shaft, spilling part of their load each time.

As smoko approached, Alec said to his partner Bill Wallace to get the billy going and he would go in and pop off the offending rock then come out for a smoke and a cuppa. Time went on and Bill started to wonder what was taking Alec so long. Then came a knocking sound as Alec Bone rapidly banged on the pipes that were laid into the mine to get Bill's attention. So Bill went into the mine and found Alec sitting there, deep inside the heart of One Tree Hill, chipping quartz off a 115-ounce nugget of gold, '*the size of a dinner plate*'.

MARCH HERITAGE WALK – ORCHARDS AND BUTTERFLIES

Our March excursion will be a guided walk on 5th March through the eastern part of Eltham, including the Pitt Street and Woodridge areas. It will commence at 2pm at the corner of Pitt Street and Glenister Drive (Melway Ref. 22 B7). Street parking in Glenister Drive is probably safer than in Pitt Street. The distance is about 4km. and it includes one steep uphill section. It will take about two hours.

The walk takes in residential streets and parkland walkways. In the last 40 or 50 years this area has undergone a transformation from orchards and bushland to residential subdivision. Some bushland areas have been preserved, particularly reserves dedicated as habitat for the endangered Eltham Copper Butterfly.

Main features of the walk include View Hill Crescent, the former Bird family orchard, Pauline Toner Butterfly Reserve and Woodridge Linear Park. There will also be a rare viewing of the secluded mud brick dwellings built by the Jelbarts who formerly owned much of the Woodridge Estate.

This is a free excursion open to Society members and the public. However, numbers are limited so bookings are required. Please book with Russell on 0409 021 063 or by email, edhs1@bigpond.com.



Mr Bird spraying his orchard

(A painting by David Armfield donated to our Society by the artist)

LOCAL HISTORY CENTRE ROOM NAMES

The Society's committee has decided that names should be allocated to the various rooms at our Local History Centre, 728 Main Road Eltham. The rooms need to be identified so that the locations of our records, furniture, equipment, etc. can be readily described. It has been decided to name them after important characters from Eltham's history, rather than a more mundane numerical or alphabetical identification. The room names agreed to are as follows (proceeding clockwise from the front north corner):

Barak Room after William Barak (1824-1903) an important Aboriginal leader and member of the Wurundjeri Tribe.

Wingrove Room after Charles Symons Wingrove, Secretary and Engineer to the Eltham District Road Board and Eltham Shire Council from 1858 to 1904, his wife Katherine and other family members including daughter Bessie who lived at Wingrove Cottage until her death in 1955.

Lawlor Room after Senior Constable Peter Lawlor, first Eltham police officer 1857 to 1872.

Clark Room after David Clark, first Headmaster of Eltham Primary School from 1855 for about 35 years and also his sister Catherine who also taught at the school.

The passageway which contains a number of photographic and other displays will be the Withers Gallery after Walter Withers an important painter of the Heidelberg School who lived in Eltham from 1903 until his death in 1914. It also recognises his wife Fanny whose writings are an important source of information about Withers and his art.

From time to time we will include more information in the Newsletter about these people. We start below with a draft of the proposed caption that explains the reasons for naming the Clark Room.

This room is named after David George Clark and his sister Catherine, who in July 1855 opened their first school in Eltham in a slab hut on the east side of Diamond Creek in Little Eltham. He was subsequently recorded in official reports as the head- teacher and Catherine the work mistress. By 1856 the school had transferred to a more substantial building on the school reserve in the Government township of Eltham. In 1876 they moved into a new stone building with a slate roof on the common school reserve and this building is part of the current Eltham Primary School complex.

The Clark Room commemorates the significant contributions that they, and all teachers who have followed them, have made in providing education services to generations of children within the Eltham district.



David Clark with students at his school (late 1800s)
The taller woman on the right is probably his sister Catherine

STOKES ORCHARD - AN INCOMPLETE HISTORY

This article is inspired partly by our March Heritage Walk, which goes to the boundary of the former Stokes Orchard, but due to constraints of time and distance, does not pass through it. An added factor is the recent donation to the Society of an album of photos of the Eltham Christian School in the 1980s. The album was donated by Helen Hillas, a former teacher at the school. The school's place in the history of this land will be explained later.

The history of the land has not been fully researched. This article is based partly on Society records and partly on the recollections of Doug Orford and Russell Yeoman.

The land in question is Crown Allotment 15 Section 5 Parish of Nillumbik (CA15). It is a square allotment of 158 acres or approximately a quarter of a square mile. It lies just beyond the eastern end of Pitt Street and extends from Eucalyptus Road to Reynolds Road.

Reynolds Road has been the subject of a previous Newsletter article. Eucalyptus Road is a straight north-south road with its northern end at the north west corner of CA15. Until the end of the 1970s this road was an un-named Government road and was largely not open to traffic. With residential development in the 1970s the road was constructed and the council allocated the name obviously in recognition of the predominant species of the local bushland.

CA15 was purchased from the Crown by George D'Arley Boursinquot, a prominent Melbourne printer, on 28th October 1852. The history of subsequent ownership has not been researched but it seems that the land remained as unused bushland for very many years.

In the 1920s CA15 was subdivided into 48 lots that could be described as small rural properties or large residential lots. A typical lot size was one hectare or 2.5 acres. The subdivision created two roads, Nyora Road and Diosma Road, each following an irregular alignment between Eucalyptus and Reynolds Roads. However the lots were not sold off separately nor were the roads constructed. The land effectively remained as one parcel for many further years. In 1971 Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme amendments adopted Nyora Road as the boundary between a residential zone to the north and a rural zone to the south. This determined the future development of the land.

In the 1940s CA15 was owned by a Frank Stokes who built a house at the corner of Nyora Road and Eucalyptus Road and established an orchard on the western part of the land. Aerial photographs from 1958 clearly show the orchard with most of the site remaining as bushland.

The topography of CA15 is generally steep, sloping up to a hill near the centre of the land. In the early 1950s the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works acquired land on the hilltop for a high level service reservoir to augment Eltham's water supply. The project also included pipe tracks for the necessary water mains. The reservoir has now been superseded by higher level water tanks east of Reynolds Road and its former site is now a public reserve.

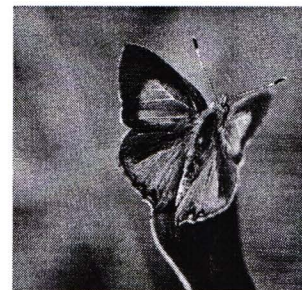
In the early 1960s an easement was acquired through the eastern part of the land for a major electricity transmission line that augmented supply from the La Trobe Valley to Melbourne. Later the easement was widened and a second transmission line was constructed.

In the 1970s land between Nyora and Diosma Roads and west of the electricity easement was sold and subdivided into residential lots and known as the Stokes Orchard Estate. New streets were created and most were named after trees, although one, Stokes Place, commemorates the former owners. There were difficulties with sewerage for the land immediately south of Diosma Road and so the conventional residential lots were abandoned in favour of larger lots. These included a low density group housing development by the Graves family.

The Stokes family were associated with the Eltham Christian Church. In the 1970s this church had met in temporary premises in Eltham. Lots of the original 1920s subdivision remained south of

Nyora Road and a number of these lots were utilized for the Eltham Christian School, which was established by the Eltham Christian Church in 1981. The school operated on this site until 2000. The premises are now used by the Nillumbik Community Church.

By the mid 1980s the whole of CA15 had been developed for residential and school purposes, except for the sections north of Diosma Road and between the transmission lines and Reynolds Road. Sewerage issues had been resolved for the section north of Diosma Road and in 1987 it was in the process of being subdivided into residential lots. The development coincided with the discovery of colonies of the rare and endangered Eltham Copper Butterfly on the site. This resulted in a community and political campaign to save the butterfly habitat. With the co-operation of the land developer the subdivision was altered to create two bushland reserves in the critical butterfly habitat areas.



In the late 1980s the State Government was investigating options for establishing a metropolitan ring road link between Diamond Creek and Ringwood. The chosen route was adjacent to Reynolds Road and so this created a freeze on development of CA15 between Reynolds Road and the electricity easement. The ring road proposal was eventually abandoned and this part of the land was subdivided into low density residential lots. Diosma Road has been discontinued at the electricity easement and the eastern part incorporated into View Mount Court with access from Reynolds Road.

The whole of CA15 has now been developed for residential or associated purposes, ranging from conventional density to quite low density south of Nyora Road. The butterfly reserves comprise significant areas of remnant bushland. Linear reserves through the estate link with central Eltham via the Woodridge linear reserve and with Research along the electricity easement. CA15 as it exists today has a complicated history of rural use, Government acquisition, urban development and community action.

AND ALSO

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

Tuesdays 7.30pm - 1st March and 5th April
Mondays 9.30am - 21st March and 18th April

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.

From time to time the Society receives requests for historical information, particularly in relation to family history. Some of these can be very simply answered but others can potentially involve extensive research. The Society is considering ways of charging for this information and this includes input from other local Societies, who also have similar issues. The committee would be pleased to hear from any members who may have thoughts on this matter.

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President

Russell Yeoman
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