



ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

728 MAIN ROAD (PO BOX 137) ELTHAM 3095

Website: www.tinyurl.com/elthamdhhs

Email: edhs1@bigpond.com

NEWSLETTER

NO. 200 SEPTEMBER 2011

NEXT MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 14th SEPTEMBER

SPEAKER PANEL

"HOUSES WITH HISTORY"

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

LIBRARY PLACE ELTHAM

(FORMERLY OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)



HERITAGE EXCURSION

2PM SATURDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER – WALK TO "KILLEAVEY"

WELCOME

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the 200th edition of the Newsletter of the Eltham District Historical Society.

Russell Yeoman initiated this Newsletter and has continued to produce an interesting, topical and informative publication through most of the 200 editions. Edition number 1 was published in May 1978 and edition number 100 was in January 1995. Russell has researched and written many of the Newsletter items on local history and these now form a valuable resource for members of our Society and others who may wish to undertake research into related matters. In the opening paragraph of edition number 1 he discussed the intended format and requested items for publication from members. We are thankful that since that time many members and others have taken their time to contribute to the varied content of our Newsletter.

We are indeed indebted to Russell for his ongoing commitment to regularly producing our Newsletter, as well as the many other tasks he has undertaken since the foundation of our Society in 1967.

For many years the Newsletter was copied at the Eltham Shire Offices with consent of Council management. For some years now printing is done by courtesy of Local Member, Steve Herbert MP.

In commemoration of this milestone we reproduce in this Newsletter, some articles from past editions.

Jim Connor
President

SEPTEMBER MEETING

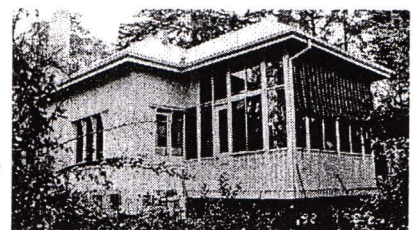
Eltham and nearby areas contain many houses that are considered important because of their history, architecture, association with important people, being representative of a particular theme and so on. Some of these have been the topic at meetings or of articles in our Newsletter. Some examples of these are "Winegrove Cottage", "Belle Vue" and "Edendale". Most have been recorded in either the Shire of Eltham Heritage Study or the later Nillumbik Heritage Study and most are protected by Heritage Overlay controls in the Nillumbik Planning Scheme. From time to time others come to our attention, such as the house "Kiama" that is one of the subjects of the September meeting.

For this meeting a panel of members will speak about the history of three Eltham houses. Two of the speakers will tell the story of their own houses. As usual these talks will be accompanied by digital slides.

The speakers and their subjects are:-

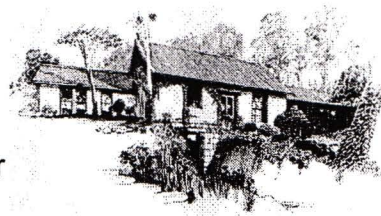
Russell Yeoman – "Stanhope".

"Stanhope" in Peter Street was designed by noted architect Harold Desbrowe Anear and built in 1910/11 for artist Will Longstaff and his wife Mary. The house and its 15.5 acre site have a colourful history, including as the home for more than fifty years of academics Clem and Nina Christesen.



Tony Brocksopp – “Souter’s Cottage”.

The original part of this house in Falkiner Street is of mud brick construction and dates from the 1850s when Charles Souter was the owner. Today the house includes several extensions, including one designed by well known local builder and designer, Alistair Knox for Tony’s mother Pat Brocksopp.



Jim Connor – “Kiama”

The most modern of the three houses to be discussed is one in Brougham Street, Eltham that was designed and built by Alistair Knox in 1958. Since it was built it has had four owners, who have each extended what was originally a small two-bedroom cottage. We will explore the history of this early Knox house through the different stages. It is named ‘Kiama’ after the aboriginal word; one meaning of which is ‘a mysterious spirit’.



This meeting will add to our collective store of local knowledge and should be of interest to members and visitors who are, of course, most welcome.

SEPTEMBER EXCURSION – WALK TO “KILLEAVEY”

“Killeavey” was the home of Sir William Irvine, Victorian and Federal Parliamentarian and Supreme Court Judge. Later it was the home of his daughter Beatrice Morrison, a significant personality in the Eltham community. The original house was destroyed by fire and its replacement has been demolished by Parks Victoria. The site sits high above the Yarra River near the south end of Reynolds Road. It contains garden remnants, including significant trees and a stone wall.

We will start our walk to “Killeavey” on 3rd September at the corner of Mt Pleasant and Reynolds Roads, Eltham (Melway Ref. 22 E7). Parking is available in Reynolds Road south of Mt Pleasant Road. This walk of about 3km will start at 2pm and take about two hours. It will be on unsealed roads and bush tracks that are mainly quite solid but with a few muddy patches, so appropriate footwear is recommended. The walk is mainly within a bushland section of the Yarra Valley Metropolitan Park where dogs are not permitted.

Doug Orford will join us on this walk and will talk about the former Orford family property in Reynolds Road.

Bring some afternoon tea for our stop at “Killeavey”. Those who would rather remain active could explore around this interesting site. This free walk is open to Society members and the general public. Contact phone number on the day is 0409 021 063.

PETER BASSETT-SMITH – 1911-2011

Distinguished Life Member of our Society Peter Bassett-Smith died on 4th August at the age of 100 years.

Peter’s long and eventful life was celebrated at our February meeting this year and our January Newsletter recorded many of his life achievements. A number of members attended Peter’s funeral service at St Margaret’s Anglican Church Eltham.

Our sympathies are extended to Diana and the family.

Jim Connor prepared a eulogy for Peter that was read by Nillumbik Mayor, Cr. Helen Coleman, at the Council meeting on 23rd August and we include it here in honour of Peter.



Peter was an active member of the Nillumbik community, having moved to Eltham with his parents in 1928. He was named Nillumbik Citizen of the Year in 2001 in recognition of his impressive list of community achievements throughout his life, including being actively involved in the Eltham Youth Club, the War Memorial Trust, the CFA, the Andrew Ross Museum, the War Memorial Tower at Kangaroo Ground and the North Warrandyte State Park. He was an Honorary Life Member of a number of community-based organisations, including the CFA for his work as a volunteer for over 30 years, the Kangaroo Ground Pony Club and the Eltham District Historical Society, where he was a founding member from 1967.

Peter was indeed a remarkable man who experienced an adventurous life, including time in the Australian Army during and after the Second World War, as a Cine Photographer in Arnhem Land with National Geographic, the Smithsonian Institute and Department of Information Canberra Scientific Expedition in 1948 and as honorary photographer for the visit of the Queen in 1954 and for the 1956 Olympic Games.

In 1951 he married Diana who he said was 'the love of his life' and they recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. After their marriage they lived in Peter Street, Eltham then later moved to their property in Kangaroo Ground, where they raised their family.

Peter Bassett-Smith was a true gentleman; he was dearly loved by his family and respected by those who had the good fortune to associate with him. He will be sadly missed by generations of people within our Shire.

COMMUNITY CENTRE OPENING

From Newsletter No. 1 May 1978

The Eltham Community Centre was opened on 22nd April by the Premier, the Hon R. J. Hamer. It is the only mud brick community centre in Australia. The Society was represented in the displays at the Centre by community groups. Our display featured old photos of the Community Centre environs and some historical details of part of the site of the building, which was once owned by Henry Dendy (of Brighton fame).

The Community Centre occupies lots 275 and 276 of Holloway's 1851 subdivision which he called "Little Eltham". Lot 275 was purchased by Dendy in 1856 from Charles Wingrove and Alfred Armstrong. These men probably purchased the land from Holloway. Wingrove in 1858 became Secretary of the Eltham District Road Board, a position which he held for many years, whilst Dendy became a member of the Board and served one term as its President.

Dendy also purchased lots 277 to 281 on the opposite side of Maria Street (now Main Road) and extending between Pitt and John Streets. The whole of his purchase was

about 5 acres. Lot 275 contained a steam flour mill near the Diamond Creek whilst Dendy lived in a house at the front of the land.

Dendy's wife, Sarah, died at Eltham in 1860, aged 57 years and also in that year Dendy was appointed Chairman of a committee to establish a Church of England in Eltham. He donated half of one of his Pitt Street lots for this purpose. St Margaret's Church was opened on this site and remains in well-preserved state today. The old vicarage is now named Dendy House.

In 1867 Dendy sold his land and business to William F. Ford of Malmsbury for £600 and shifted to Walhalla where he had an interest in a copper mine. He is buried in the Walhalla Cemetery.

No trace of Dendy's mill or house exist on the site today, but trees on the land could well have been planted in Dendy's time. An avenue of trees leading towards the creek may have bordered the track to the mill.

RECENT EVENTS

From Newsletter No. 46 – January 1986

Our 150th Monument and Time Capsule Project has been successfully completed. All that remains is to organize the printing and distribution of Certificates which will be done in the near future.

At a ceremony on November 10th the plaque was unveiled by Shire President, Cr. Mary Grant, the capsule was lowered into position and its container sealed. A list of people and organisations who helped with this project was included in the November Newsletter. We again thank all of those who assisted, particularly Graham Beyer who was the driving force behind the project. The financial viability of the project has been assured by a grant from the State 150th Committee.



RECENT ACTIVITIES

From Newsletter No. 58 – January 1988

There was a busy and varied round of Society activities in November and early December.

It started with a most successful entry in the Eltham Community Festival Parade. Our float with its colonial washing day theme won the trophy for the best display. Bruce Ness arranged items from the Society's collection on his truck. Joh Ebeli and Russell Yeoman set up further items on the trailer loaned by Denis McKay. An important part of the event was the members who came along in their "old gear" to complete the picture. As usual musicians from the Victorian Folk Music Club helped us out with their lively music.

WHROO AND CHATEAU TAHBILK – by Bettina Woodburn

From Newsletter – No. 100 – January 1995

It was grey and damp, with an early Sunday morning quietness when we climbed into our deluxe coach. Accompanied by chatter and soothing music, from our high

viewpoint, we escaped from suburban North Eltham, Diamond Creek and Yarrambat. Yan Yean's water was calm and silvery and over the Great Divide we hoped for more sunshine than we actually got!

But now we were on the path of Hume and Hovell and later Major Mitchell and in Nagambie's main street the Monument showed that his party had been through exactly 108 years ago. On their journey from near Mildura to Portland, then diagonally towards Albury, crossing the Goulburn River nearby, this green and pleasant land dotted with great red-gums, our Victoria, they named "Australia Felix".

On the Nagambie-Rushworth Road we visited interesting features relating to the former township and gold workings of Whroo. Spring wild-flowers and a magnificent blooming pear tree, walks around the Balaclava mine, the Cemetery of 304 graves and an aboriginal rock-well, made the Historic Reserve an ideal spot for a picnic lunch. An excellent adobe building had pictures and maps of earlier times on display. In 1845 a Census recorded pastoralists and 302 natives. By 1853 the Gold Town's population rose to over 1,000. 1890 saw the winding down of mining operations and by 1960 the last inhabitants left the town.

We drove past Reedy Lake, on flat but unsealed roads, to Chateau Tahbilk, established in 1860, to enjoy a tour of the old cellars and wine-tasting. It claims to be Victoria's oldest and most beautiful winery, set in 1,150 hectares on which thirteen classic varieties of grapes are grown.

On the way out of this glorious riverland we read on another plaque that Major Mitchell had camped there on October 8th 1836.

Our obliging driver then treated us to more changing scenes as he completed the round trip – to the Hume Highway and off it at the Kilmore exit, then straight to Epping, Childs Road and the new Greensborough by-pass back to Eltham.

President Harry Gilham spoke for us all when thanking all those who helped make the day such a success. He remarked that the behaviour of the over 80's and even the over 70's was exemplary!

MUNICIPAL AMALGAMATION AND THE FUTURE OF OUR SOCIETY

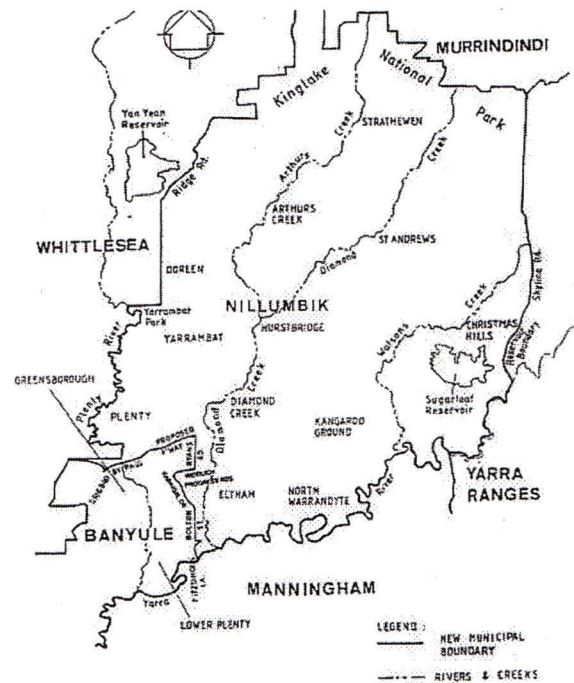
From Newsletter No. 100 January 1995

The Shire of Eltham as a Council and a geographic area ceased to exist in December. As a result we need to at least consider a new name for our Society and following on from the new municipal boundaries we should also consider other aspects of our future role.

Most of the former Shire of Eltham is now included in the Shire of Nillumbik together with parts of Diamond Valley, Whittlesea and Healesville. Details have been well documented in the local press and in Council publicity. Montmorency, Briar Hill and Lower Plenty areas of the Shire of Eltham are now included in the City of Banyule. Many of the residents of this area are very disappointed with the decision that separates them from Eltham (in at least the local government sense).

The boundaries (and the name) of Nillumbik have changed several times since the interim report referred to in our last Newsletter. We have included a map showing the boundaries as they now stand.

Three commissioners have been appointed to run the Nillumbik Shire Council and they have moved very quickly to set up a new structure for the Council. It is planned that the Council offices will be the former Diamond Valley offices at Greensborough. They are situated just within the boundary of Nillumbik. Already Nillumbik Council meetings are held there. However, Nillumbik staff remain at Eltham for the present. The Greensborough offices are occupied by former Diamond Valley staff who now work for Banyule City Council (confusing isn't it!).



There are three historical societies operating within the Shire of Nillumbik. As well as our own Society, there are Nillumbik and Yarrambat. Warrandyte Society continues to cover its area within two municipalities. Around the fringes we have societies at Heidelberg, Kinglake, Yarra Glen and Doncaster/Templestowe. Presumably the Whittlesea society maintains an interest in the Doreen and Arthurs Creek areas. This is a complicated situation which requires some resolution.

The Committee has considered the matter. At this stage the consensus is that we restrict our main area of interest and become an Eltham District society. Before making any firm recommendations we propose to discuss this with other societies. No changes will be made until members have been consulted. In the meantime, our name remains the same even though there is no longer a Shire of Eltham.

THE ELTHAM CONNECTION

From Newsletter No. 135 – November 2000

Marion and Russell Yeoman have had a letter from Margaret Taylor of Eltham England which includes the following:-

"I think we may have found the answer to how/why your Eltham got its name...the missing link at long last! John Kennett went on a tour of West Norwood cemetery with the 'Edith Nesbit Society' and his eye was accidentally drawn to a mention of John Edmond SCHLOTEL 1838-1905 who was buried in ELTHAM VICTORIA. His mother was an Eltham girl.

Sophia (Sophie) Rowley, 1802-1870 was the daughter of James Rowley of Eltham (U.K.) who was an assistant teacher and married to Ann, maiden surname Tyhurst. She had older brothers and sisters baptised in Eltham 1795-1801, namely Charity, Maria, Arthur Partridge, James Union and then Sophie, born 9th October and baptised 31st October 1802.

We have no idea where or when (not Eltham we think) but she apparently married Mr Charles Schlotel, who was possibly three years younger than

herself. Their offspring included John Edmond SCHLOTEL 1839-1905 who was buried in your Eltham, Victoria.

Now it seems to me that SCHLOTEL is such an uncommon surname ... (though it may not be unusual in Austria/German or Switzerland, I suppose) ... that any researcher is in with a good chance of a breakthrough here.

Can you or some other person in the Eltham Historical Society please look for John Edmond Schlotel 1839-1905 in your records? Is he buried at St Margaret's or where? What was his job? When did he make the move to Australia? His mother and her parents and siblings were "OF ELTHAM" U.K. My fingers will be crossed until I get a reply."

This seemed like a bit of challenge to Marion who paid a visit to the Eltham Cemetery and almost immediately located the grave of Edmund John Schlotel who died on 12th May 1905 and was buried there on 14th May. The headstone says he was late of Brixton England. This is a double grave with no indication of who else is buried there. Cemetery records show that Elizabeth Schlotel was buried there in 1917. The records say that Edmund Schlotel came from Brighton England but a hand written version of Brixton or Brighton could easily be confused. Death records in the La Trobe Library record the death at Eltham in 1905 of Edward John Schlotel, son of Charles Bartholemew Schlotel and Sophia Ann Rowley. There appears to be nothing in the Evelyn Observer about Schlotel's death.

Marion's investigations are continuing. Another possible line of investigation is the Council rate records, now in the Public Records Office. Would anyone with further information please ring Marion on 9439 9717.

WALTER WITHERS IN 1903

From Newsletter No. 150 May 2003

This year marks the centenary of when the renowned artist Walter Withers came to Eltham to live. The Withers family had previously lived in Heidelberg. Walter's wife Fanny, writing in her manuscript "The Life and Work of Walter Withers, Landscape Painter-Melbourne" (published as part of "Walter Withers, The Forgotten Manuscripts" by Andrew Mackenzie) says that he moved to escape the ever-growing suburban appearance of Heidelberg.

She goes on:

"This place where he elected to build yet another Studio, was on the outskirts of Eltham, also a beautiful English-looking village, one of the earliest settlements in Victoria, with the primitive houses still standing, and still inhabited by the early settlers, or by their children; themselves married, with children and grandchildren of their own.

The place abounded in new subjects. An old English Church, with the vicarage in the same grounds – Hedges of hawthorn and Monthly roses; poplars, oaks, elms; ivy growing over brick buildings; foot bridges over the creek; a public park of ideal beauty, studded with magnificent gum trees; the semblance of a village green in the tennis courts, lying at the side of the main road, with the creek nearby; everything a painter could wish.

A small well-built cottage, with an orchard in full bearing; old sheds for cattle and a paddock of 2 ½ acres for a cow, constituted the small holding bought for the new home, to which was added a fine studio, picturesquely designed and furnished as to its

interior, with a small stair-case leading to the hall and the added charm of an inglenook, and an open brick hearth, on which big logs burnt on Winter nights. The studio, living rooms and entrance hall, being panelled [sic] with dark wood.

A large estate of 1000 acres lies opposite, within a few yards of this new home, and some magnificent white gums adorned the sloping sides of undulating landscape, while small saplings grow closely together on the higher ground, giving a bush-like look to the place.

This then was the painting ground for the last eleven years of the painter's life. No more beautiful, no more diversified spot could have been found. And here his output of work was prodigious, and his sale of paintings continuous."

The Withers' house "Southernwood" remains today at the corner of Brougham and Bolton Streets.

On 30th March Russell Yeoman led a group of 20 people from the Nillumbik Living and Learning Centres on a walk from Eaglemont to Eltham visiting sites associated with Withers. These included his homes in Eaglemont and Eltham and many Withers sites on the Heidelberg School Artists' Trail. For our Spring excursion on 12th October we plan to do a car-based tour along similar lines. We will probably leave off some of the Artists' Trail sites which we have already visited but include the sites of Withers' homes in Heidelberg and his grave at St Helena. There will be more information in the September Newsletter.

AND ALSO

The Committee has recently been seeking assistance from members for some of the duties carried out by Secretary Russell Yeoman. Gabrielle Turner has offered to help and is now dealing with the tasks of incoming correspondence and Committee minutes. Gabrielle has now been appointed as Assistant Secretary.

We have just been advised that our application to the Bendigo Bank for a grant to support our activities has been successful. The Board has agreed to a grant of \$1800.00, which will be used to purchase items of equipment, including public address systems to improve amplification at our meetings and also on our excursions. We are very appreciative of the generous support provided by the Bendigo Bank.

A variety of tasks is available for members at our regular records workshops. These include filing, cataloguing, research projects and even "housekeeping" of our Local History Centre. It is most pleasing that we are seeing an increasing number of members at these workshops. Coming dates for records workshops are as follows:

Tuesdays 7.30 pm	6 th September	4 th October
Mondays 9.30 am	19 th September	17 th October

Jim Connor
President

Russell Yeoman
Secretary

David Johns
Treasurer /
Membership Secretary
Phone - 9434 3357

Phone - 9439 5916

Phone - 9439 9717

Printed by courtesy of Steve Herbert, MP, State Member for Eltham