



ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

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NEWSLETTER

NO. 203 MARCH 2012

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 14th MARCH

SPEAKER DR. GEOFF SANDY

"ST MARGARET'S 150th ANNIVERSARY"

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

LIBRARY PLACE ELTHAM

(FORMERLY OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)

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

**SATURDAY 3rd MARCH**

**ELTHAM GATEWAY**

**NORTHERN WALK**

**MEET AT THE**

**LOCAL HISTORY CENTRE**

**728 MAIN ROAD, ELTHAM**

**2.00PM**



**St. Margaret's Anglican Church, Eltham**



## **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.

## **ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH**

St. Margaret's Anglican Church, Eltham, is currently celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a year long program of events. Since it opened in 1861 this church has played a important role in the Eltham Community.

In addition to its significance to Eltham and the Shire of Nillumbik, the church has state heritage significance and is included in the Victorian Heritage Register. There are a number of factors warranting its inclusion in the Register. Architecturally it is the work of Nathaniel Billing, a prominent architect of the period and it is an early example of unusual polychromatic brick construction. It has historical associations with Henry Dendy who had earlier been the founder of Brighton. From a local significance viewpoint it is the work of prominent Eltham builder George Stebbing.



St. Margaret's Anglican Church, Eltham



The former vicarage (1873) is noted as part of the site's significance. It is now named Dendy House and is used as church offices.

Dr. Geoff Sandy has recently retired from his position of Associate Professor Information Systems at Victoria University. Earlier in his career he taught history at secondary level. He is a Warden of St. Margaret's Church and holds the positions of Parish Historian and Parish Archivist. He has produced a small book on St. Margaret's and is currently researching a more detailed church history.

After the formal business of our Annual General Meeting, Geoff will talk to us about the 150 year history of St. Margaret's. As well as details of this important church building, Geoff will cover interesting stories of the church community and its relationship to the wider history of Eltham. Geoff will illustrate his talk with a digital slide presentation.

Members and visitors are most welcome at this meeting to hear this interesting story about an important component of the history of Eltham.

### **MARCH EXCURSION – ELTHAM GATEWAY NORTHERN WALK**

The Eltham Gateway is the name adopted for the section of Main Road Eltham leading from the roundabout at Fitzsimons Lane to the Eltham town centre.

The name has its origin in a 1987 planning report for Eltham Shire Council that identified this precinct as having special characteristics that warrant special planning protection. The area includes historic and other "Eltham character" buildings, significant parkland and extensive canopy tree cover. The land fronting this section of Main Road now has its own special planning controls that are intended to preserve the character that is so important to Eltham and its residents.

This part of Main Road has been the main entrance to Eltham from the earliest times of European settlement. Originally the only access was through Lower Plenty but 50 years ago the Fitzsimons Lane Bridge over the Yarra River was opened, providing alternative access. This joined Main Road at Eltham South and from there the traditional road into Eltham was followed.



Evelyn Hotel - a former landmark in the Eltham Gateway



Part of today's Main Road follows Maria Street of Josiah Holloway's 1851 subdivision of Little Eltham. It is well known local history that before the coming of the railway in 1902 the Eltham "town centre" stretched along Maria Street, generally between Brougham and Bridge Streets. The remaining buildings from this period provide a significant character component of today's Eltham Gateway.

Our Eltham Local History Centre at 728 Main Road (cnr. Brougham Street, Melway ref. 21 J7) is about halfway along the Gateway and so provides a convenient starting place to walk the northern part. The walk is on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, starting at 2pm. The length is about 2km. There are many stops along the way so it will take about two hours. There is no charge and the walk is open to Society members and the general public.



Eltham, Main Road duplication c1968 – looking south towards Bridge Street  
- a major change to the Eltham Gateway

The walk will extend northerly as far as the Eltham Library. It will pass many old Eltham Township buildings and we can look at photos of how they appeared in earlier times. In Alistair Knox Park we can see modern sculptures and signs on the Heidelberg School Artists' Trail. The return walk is along the Diamond Creek path.

The Local History Centre will be open at the conclusion of the walk for those who want to view the displays, have a cuppa or a chat.



## IS THIS THE FIRST MARRIAGE IN MONTMORENCY?

by Maureen Jones

When William West and Mary Kierce were married in 1855 on the Montmorencie Estate it was still a 925 acre farm. It would be another 60 years before a plan of subdivision was drawn up and further 10 years before the area became officially known as Montmorency, thanks to the coming of a new railway station half way between Greensborough and Eltham.

When the Australian Auction Company, advertised the property on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 1840 in the Sydney Gazette, it was described as

### *Montmorenci –*

*Situated on the River Plenty, within two miles of the celebrated Heidelberg Estate and within ten miles of Melbourne, extending at the back portion to within one mile and a quarter of the Yarra Yarra River, having a frontage to the Plenty of one mile and a half.*

The following week the Australian Auction Co. reported in the same newspaper that

*The Montmorenci Estate containing 925 acres has been sold for 2 pounds 10 shillings an acre.*

Stuart Alexander Donaldson, later to become Premier of New South Wales was registered as the purchaser on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 1840 with an amount recorded of One thousand one hundred and seventy nine pounds seven shillings and six pence, and with a further consideration of "Quit-rent". By January 1841 the property had changed hands and Donaldson's business associate James Donnithorne, a retired Judge with the East India Company was registered as the owner with an amount paid of 2312 pounds and a massive mortgage of 2000 pounds to Marcus West Loane.

The Montmorency Estate then remained in the hands of the Donnithorne family for four generations, always absentee owners, either in Sydney or the United Kingdom. Over the years various people acted as agents, but the Donnithornes were never to live on the Montmorency Estate.

In 1845 James Graham, of Preston Hall, reporting to Judge Donnithorne about his property on the Plenty wrote that a man named John Edward Stone had approached him with an interest in leasing the 925 acres for three or four years and had offered 30 pounds per annum plus a commitment to construct about half a mile of fencing, but could not be persuaded to offer more. This arrangement lasted three years.

**By The Australian Auction Company,**  
THIS DAY the 28<sup>th</sup> Instant, immediately after the splendid Port Phillip Farms offered for sale by the Company on that day, will be submitted to Public Competition, the finely Watered Estate of  
**"MONTMORENCI."**  
**SITUATED** on the River Plenty, within two miles of the celebrated Heidelberg Estate, and within ten miles of Melbourne, extending at the back portion to within one mile and a quarter of the Yarra Yarra River, having a frontage to the Plenty of one mile and a half.  
Mr. Coultstock's well-known Farm is on the opposite side of the River Plenty, the Crops grown on which have been most abundant.  
The Montmorenci Estate contains by measurement 925 Acres, and will be sold in one Lot.  
Terms very liberal, made known at Sale.  
**The Montmorenci Estate, Port Phillip.**  
**A FINISHED PLAN** of this Estate, shewing its position with regard to the River Plenty, and Yarra Yarra, as well as a general sketch of the neighbouring Properties, is now ready for the inspection of intending purchasers, and lies at the Auction Mart.  
**Terms for the Montmorenci Estate.**  
Ten per cent. cash deposit; the residue by approved bills at 6, 9, and 12 months, the last to bear Bank interest; or, at the option of the buyer, 25 per cent. cash deposit; residue to remain secured on the property by mortgage for five years, at 10 per cent. per annum.

Cutting from the Sydney Gazette  
28<sup>th</sup> March 1840



When Stone refused to pay more rent per annum William Seaville became the leaseholder. It was in William Seaville's home that probably the first marriage for Montmorency took place.

The marriage certificate, kindly offered to the Eltham District Historical Society last year by Karen Hough, a descendant of William West, provides the following information:

The Rev. David Boyd officiated at a marriage at the house of Mr. William Seaville, Montmorenzie (sic) between William West a labourer, from Norwich, England, living in Melbourne and Mary Kierce a servant, from County Clare, Ireland, living at the River Plenty. They were married according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of Scotland. Whether Mary was a servant living in William Seaville's house is uncertain, but William and Mary West went on to acquire property in the Eltham area and they are buried in the Eltham Cemetery.

If anyone has any further information Karen Hough may be contacted on 9878 3227 or Maureen Jones, Montmorency History Researcher may be contacted on 9439 1545.

**MONTMORENCY: (From Newsletter No. 50. September 1986):**

The following article comes from the Bulletin de la Societe D'Histoire de Montmorency and has been translated from the French by Mrs Judy Dean.

"How many places around the world still bear this famous name today..?"

For our part we know of only three: our native village of course – if one can still describe it thus since it now has such a large population; then the one so close to Brienne-le-Chateau that it has become part of it; lately another more distant one on the banks of the St. Lawrence, five kilometres from Quebec, of which the writer is an honorary citizen. It is a great pity that no municipality here has agreed to pair with this last one.

To our knowledge there are three others. Two in the United States in the East of this vast country. It seems that our cherry trees brought there by French settlers before the War of Secession took root and bore fruit so successfully that they gave the name of their place of origin to these charming little villages.

Then we must not forget the one a few kilometres from Melbourne for which we compiled records at the Museum a few years ago.

Its origin is historically interesting, for after the visit of a young student from this great city in Australia, we have learnt a great deal that neither we nor our predecessors had previously known.

This young girl was hoping for the opportunity to go to Europe to visit this famous Montmorency since she was so familiar with its namesake in Australia.



Thanks to her we have discovered that the Montmorencys were formerly in the army of William the Conqueror, future king of England and victor at Hastings in 1066 after a successful landing on the Sussex coast. These Montmorencys later abandoning the Royal French cause, settled there so that they might be created peers by British royalty.

They later settled in Ireland, in Tipperary in particular. Their feudal castle is no more than a ruin today. They made popular that song so well known to British soldiers in the First World War – "It's a long way to Tipperary". This young student kindly continued to write to us after her visit and sent a cutting from a Melbourne newspaper for our archives. This announced the death of Count Henry of Montmorency a few months earlier.

She included a photo, which she had taken for us of the local railway station, on which the name Montmorency could easily be read. Despite its small size, the print was framed and hung on the first floor of the Museum, beside one of the road leading into the village in Champagne, which we visited.

Strangely enough, when in 1967 we were preparing to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the death of the Constable Anne (Duke of Montmorency) and were contacting all the families descended from the Montmorencys, it was unanimously decided not to invite any of the Montmorencys living in Great Britain.

However, one of them came to Paris, having heard that something was in the air; but the general opinion was that the titles of which they boasted were only evidence of an unforgivable betrayal of France, like that of Jean de Niville who in the fifteenth century went over to the Burgundians. "Aplanos now and for ever".

Perhaps, after all, this little village in Australia, which we would love to have known is the concrete reminder of something which is to us an act of treachery in times gone past."



Anne de Montmorency, 1530  
By Jean Clouet

#### Footnote:

If interested in obtaining more information on the history of the House of Montmorency you could look this up in Wikipedia, on the internet.

Go to: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House\\_of\\_Montmorency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Montmorency)



## AND ALSO

It is good to see an increasing number of members assisting at our records workshops, particularly the Monday morning sessions. If you would like to assist but cannot come on the specified dates then individual arrangements can be made for appropriate tasks and dates. Talk to a Committee member if you are interested. Coming dates for our scheduled workshops at our Local History Centre are:

|                  |                        |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Tuesdays 7.30 pm | 6 <sup>th</sup> March  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> April  |
| Mondays 9.30 am  | 19 <sup>th</sup> March | 16 <sup>th</sup> April |

In the 1950s Tim Burstall, later to become one of Australia's foremost film directors, was living in the Eltham area. His diaries from that time provide an insight into the local artistic and intellectual community. These diaries now form the basis of a book edited by Hilary McPhee and titled "Memoirs of a Young Bastard".

Hilary McPhee will talk about her book at 3pm on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> March at the Light Factory Gallery, Brougham Street Eltham and at 5.45 pm on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. Bookings are required for the Eltham talk. Contact the Eltham Bookshop for details. The cost is \$10.00, which includes a glass of wine.

*The Eltham District Historical Society appreciates  
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Near the northern end of  
the Eltham Gateway c1920s

The fence lines leading to the trestle bridge define the former line of Henry Street, now closed and replaced by Panther Place. This is the current site of the Eltham Library.

