

ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

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NEWSLETTER

NO. 205 JULY 2012

NEXT MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 11th JULY

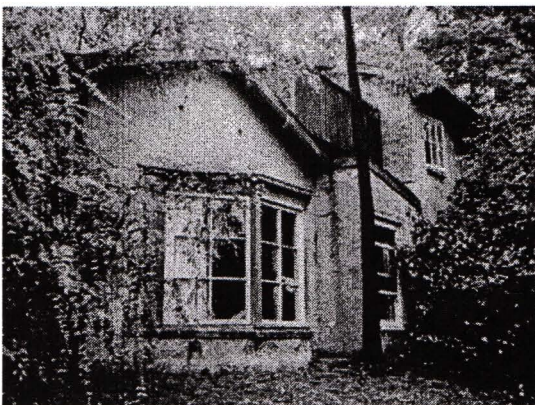
SPEAKER JIM CONNOR

"A MUDDY HISTORY"

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

LIBRARY PLACE ELTHAM

(FORMERLY OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)



**The Ford property
in the John Street precinct, Eltham**

HERITAGE EXCURSIONS PROGRAM

2PM SATURDAY

7th July

JOHN STREET MUD BRICK PRECINCT

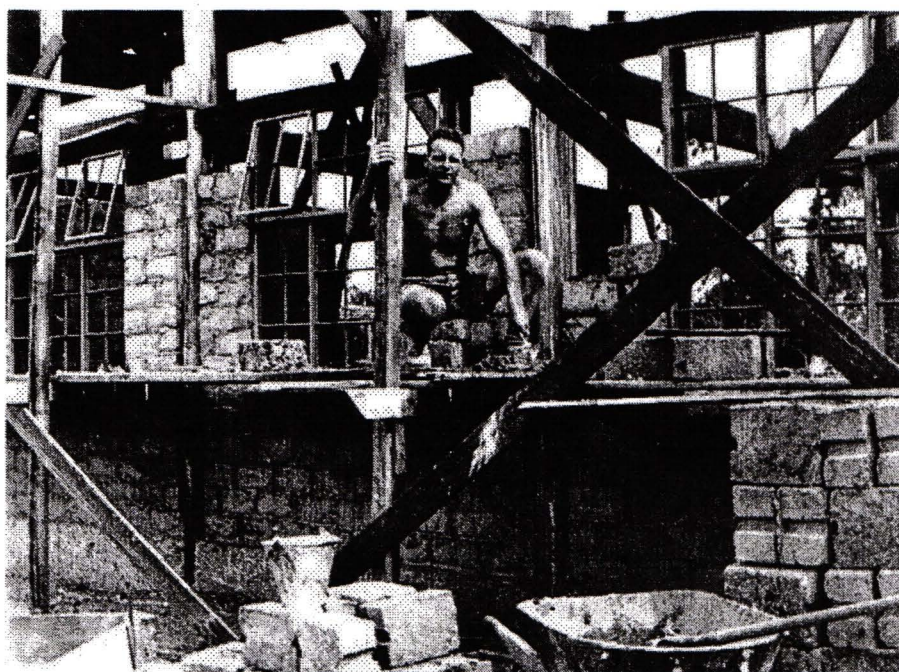
2PM SATURDAY

1st SEPTEMBER

HERITAGE EXCURSION

JULY MEETING

Earth has been used as a building material for centuries. The presentation titled 'A Muddy History' by Jim Connor at our next general meeting will look at how earth has been used in various styles of building in many countries. Jim will also consider different influences that have contributed to the look and feel of earth buildings on different continents. This is a most appropriate subject for our Society to consider as the Eltham area is well known as having been influential with the development of the modern earth building movement.



Construction of the Jelbart barn, Eltham – c1940s

JULY EXCURSION – JOHN STREET MUD BRICK PRECINCT

This excursion is planned to be complementary to Jim Connor's earth building presentation at our forthcoming July meeting. It will comprise a walk through the precinct covering John Street, Eltham and nearby streets where there is a concentration of mud brick houses dating from the 1940s through to quite recent times. This free guided walk passes houses built by Alistair Knox, Gordon Ford, Peter Glass and others who made significant contributions to the Eltham tradition of earth building.

The walk will start at the Eltham Local History Centre, 728 Main Road, Eltham at the corner of Brougham Street (Melway Ref. 21 J7). at 2.00pm on Saturday 7th July. The distance is about 3km. and will take 2 to 2.5 hours.

Most of the route traverses streets of Josiah Holloway's 1851 Little Eltham subdivision. We will discuss this subdivision and the origin of some of the street names. On the way to and from John Street we will view some other places of historical or heritage interest such as the Kooringarama property in York Street (see separate article in this Newsletter).



Peter and Cecile Glass's mud brick house
John Street, Eltham

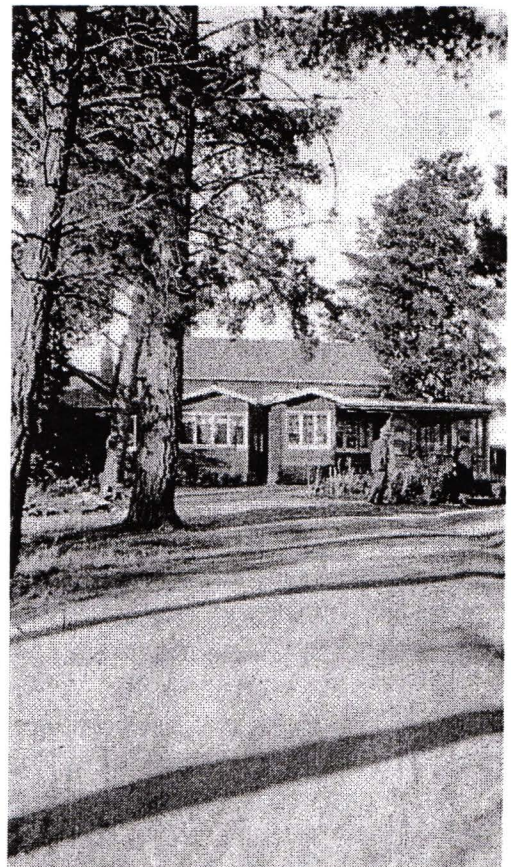
The walk is open to Society members and the general public and you are welcome to join us for afternoon tea at the Local History Centre at the conclusion. The phone number for contact on the day is 0409 021 063.

"KOORINGOORAMA" – AN INCOMPLETE HISTORY

An enquiry to the Society regarding Florence Garner and her association with "Kooringoorama" has led to the assembly of information available from Society records regarding this former guest house in York Street, Eltham. Sources of information have included the 1992 Shire of Eltham Heritage Study by David Bick and others and personal knowledge of Diana Bassett-Smith. The spelling of the name varies. Apart from Kooringoorama, Koorinigarama is commonly used and there are other variations.

According to a 1979 article in the 'Diamond Valley News' Eltham identity Harry Burgoyne said that "Kooringoorama" was built by his grandfather, John James Thomas Neville Burgoyne. It was originally named "The Pines" and later "Pinetrees". This article does not specify a date for the building but the Bick study estimates that the earliest part of the building dates from the late 19th or early 20th century.

JJTN Burgoyne sold the property to Florence Garner and Mrs Boak who used it as a guest house. At some stage during their ownership it was used as a convalescent home and possibly as a T.B. clinic. These owners are



said by Harry Burgoyne to have named the property "Kooringoorama". Photos from this period have been provided to the Society by Wendy Abbey in relation to her enquiry about Florence Garner.

In the 1950s and early 60s "Kooringoorama" was the home of mud brick designer and builder Alistair Knox. At the rear of the property was a factory where components of Knox's houses were constructed.



Florence Garner and Mrs Boak with other staff when "Kooringoorama" was a convalescent home

The Bick study describes "Kooringoorama" as a large rambling single storey weatherboard building. There have been many additions over a long period. There are a number of detached cottages, probably dating from the guest house period. The study describes a separate mud brick building probably dating from Knox's ownership.

"Kooringoorama" remains today as a private house well set back from York Street on its large treed site.

ELTHAM'S WAR MEMORIALS

by Harry Gilham

In our last Newsletter we reported on the relocation of the War Memorial Obelisk from the former R.S.L. site to the War Memorial complex of buildings further north along Main Road. These memorials to the first and second world wars are two of a number of war memorials established in Eltham. This story is largely based on articles from the 'Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser' issues in 1918 and 1919.

It was during this early period towards the end of WW1 that Eltham township citizens formed two committees. First, a Peace Celebration Committee was formed to plan practical steps to honour those men from the Eltham township area who had served

overseas in WW1. The second was a Welcome Home Committee to 'meet and greet' servicemen returning to their homes and to raise funds for other local projects.

The need for a fitting memorial to the twenty seven Eltham men killed during the war resulted in the Avenue of Honour being planted using English Plane trees, 100 of which lined both sides of Main Road from Mt Pleasant Road to the Eltham Hotel. Each of the trees displayed a copper plate recording the name of an individual WW1 serviceman. Some time after 1950 these copper plates disappeared. Each tree also had a wooden guard fence placed around it to mark its site for watering and protection from passing traffic. This planting commenced June 1918 and was completed on December 13 1919.

Meanwhile; the Peace Celebration Committee had decided in 1919 on a memorial obelisk of 14 feet in height (4 metres), with names of the fallen inscribed on its face. Also it was to be sited at the north-western corner of Main Road and Bridge Street. Following WW2 another panel of names was added for the fallen in WW2. This memorial was moved to the Eltham R.S.L. site in the early 1950s and now (2012) stands in Main Road on the War Memorial Trust land of WW2.



Eltham's Avenue of Honour

Turning again to the Welcome Home Committee records it is found that further to the tree planting assistance to the Avenue of Honour, a subscription was made to an Honour Board which cost £16.14.6. It contains the names of the Eltham Primary students who went to WW1, with a star notation against those who died in the war. This Honour Board hangs in the 1876 stone building of the present primary school. Funds to repair and replace lettering on the board came from the Commonwealth welfare funds in 2006.

Post WW1 following a request to have an artillery type weapon added to the obelisk, the Army gave the Eltham Shire Council two machine guns on their stands. One was given to the Yarra Glen community for their local memorial of names. The other gun has been recorded near the base of the obelisk – then on a shelf under the Honour Board at the

Eltham Primary School, Dalton Street. It then disappeared – people looked under the school building but it had 'just gone'.

As the 100th anniversary of WW1 will be recognised in 2014 this Society needs help in searching for:

- Early photographs of the Avenue of Honour
- A metal strip with a brass plate upon which is the enlistee's name.
- A gold medal from the Welcome Home Committee's presentation to each returned serviceman in 1918-1919.
- The final fate of the Lewis Machine Gun, which was last seen in the Eltham Primary School classroom.

Please contact Harry Gilham, 7 Leonard Crescent, Eltham 3095 or phone 03 9439 1175.

AND ALSO

Subscriptions for 2012 – 13 are due on 1st July, but many members have paid already. Details of current subscriptions were given in the last Newsletter. Payment can be made to David Johns at the July meeting or sent to the Society's post office box.

It is good to see a significant 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	3rd July	7th August
Mondays 9.30 am	16 th July	20 th August

One of the major challenges for our society is the digitisation and appropriate cataloguing of our extensive collection of documents and photographs. Without this work being undertaken our collection is at risk, as we do not have any back-up copies of these valuable resources. As there is an opportunity for members to undergo training to assist with the required scanning and cataloguing Jim Connor would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in being involved in this project.

*The Eltham District Historical Society
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