

ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

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NEWSLETTER

NO. 207 NOVEMBER 2012

NEXT MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 14th NOVEMBER

SPEAKER JENNI MITCHELL

"MY MOTHER GRACE"

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

LIBRARY PLACE ELTHAM

(FORMERLY OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)

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### **CHRISTMAS FUNCTION**

**6.30 PM WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**

**OLD ELTHAM COURTHOUSE 730 MAIN ROAD**

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JOINT MEETING WITH

GREENSBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2.00 PM SATURDAY 8th DECEMBER

OLD ELTHAM COURTHOUSE 730 MAIN ROAD

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### **HERITAGE EXCURSIONS PROGRAM**

**2PM SATURDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER**

**RESEARCH VALLEY VIEWS WALK**

**2PM SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER**

**ELTHAM CEMETERY VISIT**



## **JENNI MITCHELL – “MY MOTHER GRACE”**

Over the years there have been a significant number of Eltham residents who are thought to be local legends. One of these was Grace Mitchell who died in 2011 at the age of 95.

Grace is probably best remembered by local residents for her pastry shop attached to her house at the corner of Mount Pleasant Road and Main Road. However, she had many other skills and interests. She had worked as a dietician and tailor and maintained a lifelong interest in her fruit and vegetable garden.

Grace's work supported the family because her husband Arthur had been incapacitated by an accident. After Arthur died Grace enrolled in sculpture and other art courses. In later life her artistic talents came to the fore. She was prolific in her output, both in quantity and variety of subjects and genre.

Jenni Mitchell is a well-known local artist whose painting subjects include trips to Antarctica, Central Australia and Mongolia. She has a history of community involvement, including as an Eltham Shire Councillor and a founder of the Eltham and Nillumbik Artists' Open Studios. She has now established a gallery in the home of her mother. A retrospective display of Grace's work will run at the gallery until 18<sup>th</sup> November.

At our November Meeting Jenni will talk about Grace's life and work. It will be illustrated with pictures showing Grace's work and some items from the collection will be on display.

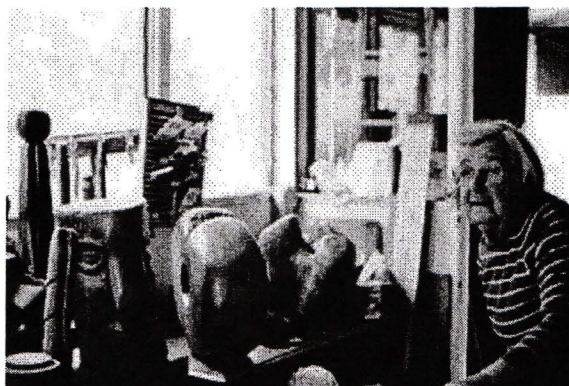
## **NOVEMBER HERITAGE WALK – RESEARCH VALLEY VIEWS**

This walk follows on from the Research Heritage Walk that we did in 2010. It includes sites of historic interest close to the Research Shops and a walk through the 1940s subdivision that forms the southern part of Research. However, the main feature of the walk is the view of Research Valley and beyond as we walk back into the valley along the power line easement track.

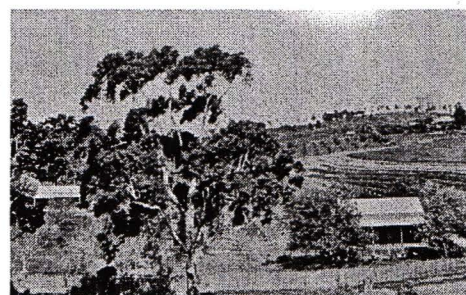
This walk will start at 2pm on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November at the Research Shopping Centre in Main Road (Melway Ref. 22 G2). The distance is about 3.5km and it will take about two hours. There is no charge and the walk is open to Society members and the general public. For enquiries prior to the day ring Sue on 9439 9520. Phone number of contact on the day is 0409 021 063.



Grace Mitchell's shop attached to her house



Grace in her studio



Reynold's family property, Research



## ELTHAM CEMETERY VISIT

The Eltham Cemetery is the custodian of more than 150 years of Eltham's history. Harry Gilliam's research on the cemetery includes information on Eltham pioneers from those early years, service personnel from both world wars, as well as details of interesting and important locals buried there in more recent times.

Harry will lead a further tour of grave sites on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November at 2.00pm. It will include many sites not visited on previous cemetery visits.

Enter the cemetery from Mt Pleasant Road (Melway Ref. 21 K9) and proceed to the car park near the south western corner.

This tour is free and is open to the general public as well as Society members.



Earlier cemetery visit

## CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

The format for our Christmas function on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December will be the same as for the last few years. We will be using the old Eltham Courthouse annexe and it will commence at 6.30pm. There is no formal agenda item but Jim Connor has agreed to again screen some local historical photos and pictures from his own collection.

The Local History Centre collection will be available for browsing. For convenience we may bring some of the displays into the Courthouse.

The Society will supply meat and cheese platters and desserts. Members are asked to bring a salad to share and any other items, such as nibbles, that they would like to contribute. Ring Sue on 9439 9520 if in doubt about what to bring. Wine and soft drink will be available and, of course, there will be coffee and tea. Bring along any other types of drinks that you think you will need.

Limited parking is available in the back yard of the Local History Centre. There is plenty of parking on the wide verge on the west side of Main Road but there are some issues in getting across the traffic at this time of day. Otherwise, you can park in Brougham Street.



2011 Christmas function - the set up team



Members enjoying the 2011 Christmas function



## **JOHANNES (JOH) EBELI – 1918-2012**

Joh Ebeli, who died on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2012, had been a member of our Society for more than thirty years. However, his long standing commitment to the Diamond Valley Arts Society meant that he was rarely able to attend meetings.

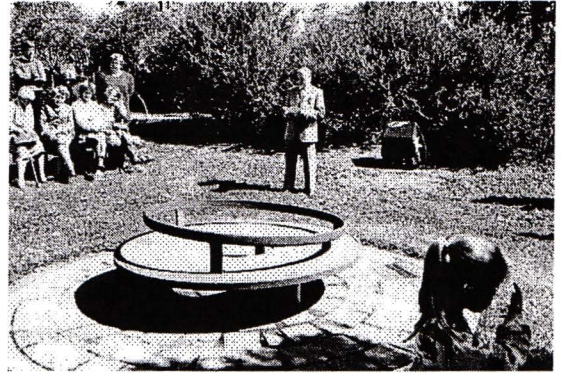
Joh made a significant contribution to the Society in other ways. From the late 1970s he used his artistic talents to design and construct the Society's floats for Eltham Festival Parades spanning many years. He designed the Society's Victorian 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary monument in the grounds of the Eltham Community and Reception Centre and the plaques associated with it.

The Society's Australian Bi-centennial project was a monument to artist Walter Withers at the corner of Bible and Arthur Streets. Joh designed the plaque for that.

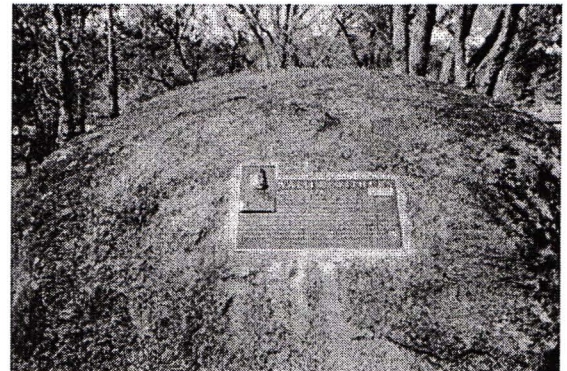
In 1986 Joh produced a sketch featuring Shillinglaw Cottage and the Railway Trestle Bridge and it has been used as our Society logo ever since.

These historical Eltham landmarks also feature in Joh's painting "Beautiful Eltham" that is included in Nillumbik Council's Art Collection.

In recent years Joh's activities have been limited by health issues. He will be greatly missed by Society members.



Joh Ebeli at the launch of the monument



The Walter Withers monument

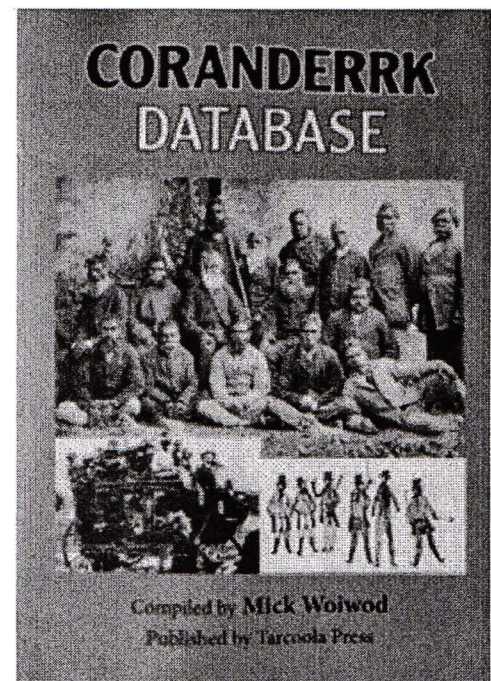
## **AWARD FOR MICK WOIWOD**

At the recent Victorian Community History Awards at the National Gallery Mick Woiod was awarded the Local History Project Award for the Coranderrk Database that he prepared.

Our congratulations go to Mick for this award.

This event was jointly hosted by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and the Public Records Office Victoria.

There were a record 160 entries this year, which were all described as being of an exceptionally high standard.



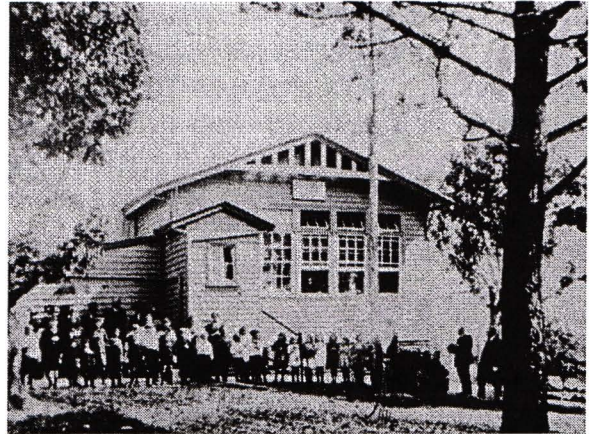


## **RESEARCHING RESEARCH**

In 1989 Andrew Lemon wrote the book "*Return to Research*" as part of the Centenary Celebrations of the Research Primary School. At that time Andrew had written a number of local histories but, as an Eltham resident, this could be considered the most local. In recent years Andrew has concentrated his writing efforts on a number of volumes on the history of Victorian and Australian horse racing. He is currently president of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

Recently Andrew has presented our Society with a large collection of material on Research and its school dating from the time that he was writing "*Return to Research*".

A list of the material has been prepared by Jim Allen. It includes copies of the School Register, class photographs and material relating to the school and the Centenary Celebrations. It also includes general information on Research; photos, numerous newspaper clippings, maps and much more. We are grateful to Andrew for providing this valuable addition to our records.



Research Primary School assembly c1900

## **JOINT MEETING WITH GREENSBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Following on from a suggestion by Harry Gilham, our Society will host a joint meeting with members of the Greensborough Historical Society at the Eltham Courthouse on Saturday 8 December, between 2.00pm and 4.30pm.

We are pleased to have developed a good working relationship with the recently established Greensborough Historical Society and look forward to welcoming their members to Eltham. This meeting will focus on the Eltham Courthouse and its former use. We encourage all EDHS members to attend and share time with our visitors. Afternoon tea will be provided.

## **AND ALSO**

November is Local History Month at Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries. Talks and other events will be held at all branches of the Library throughout the month. Details are available on the Library website.

On Thursday 8 November (10.30am and 11.30am) there will be a presentation about the Laughing Waters area of Eltham. You are welcome to go along and learn about its rich history including its use as an artists' residence, share your memories and contribute to a new local history project that will weave together the narratives of this special place.

Also of interest is a session at the Watsonia Library on Tuesday 13 November between 2.00pm and 3.00pm when Local and Family History Librarian Liz Pidgeon will introduce researchers to the National Library of Australia's treasure, which is Trove, and will conduct a tour of local historical newspapers online.



Subscriptions for 2011/12 were due on 1<sup>st</sup> July but unfortunately some members have not paid yet. The Society does not have large cash reserves so it is important that subscriptions, which are our main source of income, are paid promptly if we are to continue to service our members. Outstanding payments would be appreciated or your advice if you no longer wish to receive the Newsletter.

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Our regular Records Workshops continue to attract a good number of members but more are always welcome. At recent workshops we have been allocating specific projects to individual members with the idea that they can follow through with the one continuous project each time that they come. Examples are typing of handwritten family histories and co-ordination of photos from the Society's collection with those at the Eltham Library. Workshop dates for the rest of this year are:

Monday 19th November - 9.30am

Tuesday 4th December - 7.30pm

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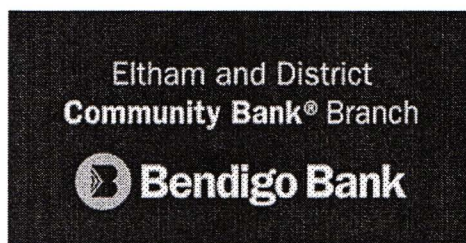
Each year Nillumbik Shire Council provides financial support to each of the nine historical societies and heritage groups operating within the shire by way of a Heritage Grant. We have received a grant of \$600 for the 2011-12 financial year, which will be applied towards the operating costs of our Local History Centre. We are grateful to the Council for its support.

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We are continuing to work with the Yarra Plenty Regional Library service on a project involving the large collection of photographs established by the former Eltham Shire Council. These photographs, which cover all areas of the former shire, were collected in 1971 in conjunction with Alan Marshall's history of the shire, 'Pioneers and Painters'.

It is hoped that this project will lead to funding of the digitisation of the photograph collection. The longer-term security of this collection is an ongoing challenge for our Society and the Library.

*The Eltham District Historical Society  
appreciates the financial support provided by the  
Eltham and District branch of the Bendigo Bank*



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