

# **ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Incorporated**

**No. A0016285F**

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## **NEWSLETTER**

**NO. 209 MARCH 2013**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 13th MARCH**

**“LAUGHING WATERS STORIES ”  
PRESENTED BY JANE WOOLLARD**

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



Jane Woollard interviewing Doug Orford  
and Russell Yeoman for her  
Laughing Waters Stories project

**HERITAGE EXCURSIONS  
PROGRAM**

**2PM SATURDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH**

**KARINGAL YALLOCK  
CREEK WALK**

## **LAUGHING WATERS STORIES**

At our Annual General Meeting on 13 March 2013 Jane Woollard from Nillumbik Shire Council will present material relating to her local history project *Laughing Waters Stories*. The talk will cover the history of Laughing Waters Road, Eltham, from pre-settlement through the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and up to the 1970s, when many properties in Laughing Waters Road were acquired by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, to create what is now part of the Yarra Valley Parkland.



Laughing Waters

Two historic homes in Laughing Waters Road are used by Council for the Artists-in-Residence program that has operated for some years. These are located in natural and secluded bushland and Jane will be in residence in one of these in May to write *Laughing Waters Stories*, a history of the area. We look forward to hearing her story at our meeting.

## **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.

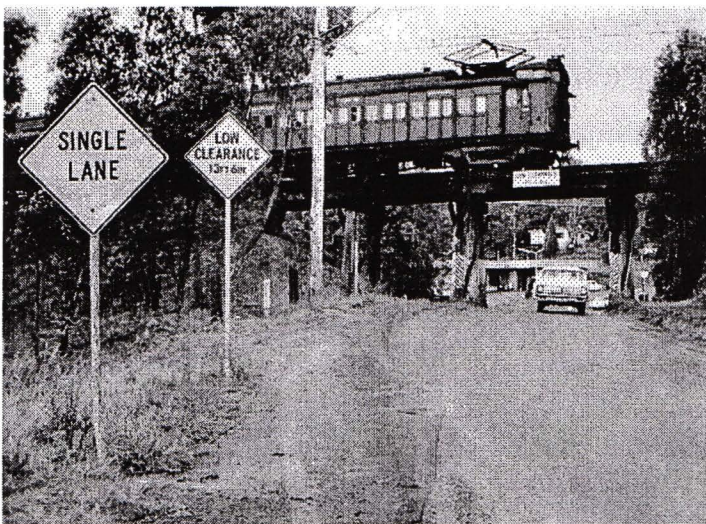
## **MARCH EXCURSION – KARINGAL YALLOCK CREEK WALK**

The Karingal Yallock Creek is a tributary of the Diamond Creek and it joins that creek near Brougham Street, Eltham. This creek drains an area including parts of Greensborough, Briar Hill, St Helena and Eltham North. For much of its length it runs parallel to Karingal Drive. Through the Eltham industrial area it is a large underground drain. In the grounds of the former hat factory in Sherbourne Road (Fort Knox Storage) the creek forms part of a significant landscape feature. Near the corner of Karingal Drive and Weidlich Road there is a major flood retarding basin at the junction of the two branches of this waterway.

Karingal Yallock Creek is a recent official name. Other names by which this waterway is known include Eltham West Drain, Karingal Creek and St Helena Creek.

Our walk on 2<sup>nd</sup> March will include the section of the creek around Meruka Park and extending to Ramptons Road. The return walk is through Eltham North streets higher up the creek valley.

The area covered by this walk is now part of Eltham, but originally most of it was the north eastern corner of the extensive Montmorency Estate. It was operated as a farm until it was subdivided in 1911. The history of the Meruka Estate and adjoining areas was told in Newsletter No. 202, January 2012. The walk will pass a number of places of interest mentioned in that story including the site of J. B. North's home, "Tralford", and the concrete arch dam built on the creek by D. B. Smith. The return walk will pass a number of interesting houses.



The former railway trestle bridge over Sherbourne Road, adjacent to the Meruka Drive bridge over Karingal Yallock Creek

The walk will start at 2pm at the Meruka Park car park, Meruka Drive, Eltham (Melway 21F5). The distance is about 3km. This is a hilly walk but it avoids climbing the steepest hills in the area.

Members and the general public are welcome to join in this free walk. Please note that in accordance with a decision of the Society's committee dogs will not be permitted on Society excursions. The phone number for contact on the day is 0409 021 063.

If the weather is too hot or too wet we will meet at the site and consider adjourning to the Local History Centre for an alternative activity.

### **THE OLD GRINDING STONE**

Sitting in the back yard of our Local History Centre is an old circular grinding stone in a wooden frame. It was donated to the Society by the late Jock Read. During school visits to the centre Harry Gilham sometimes joked that the stone was used to sharpen his sword.

Late last year members visiting the centre noticed that the stone was dislodged from its frame and stored it in the portable lockup nearby. They notified President Jim Connor by email.

Jim replied:

“Poor old stone...what has it done to be thrown in the lockup...after all it has just been hanging around for years waiting for anyone to take it for a spin, as it ground its way through a hard life ...although it has been said that at times it can be a bit abrasive!”



## **SAFE IN THE COURTHOUSE**

Sitting in the old Eltham Courthouse is a very solid looking safe. It is located in the office area behind the old courtroom.

The Courthouse is part of the Eltham Justice Precinct that is managed for Nillumbik Shire Council by Living and Learning Nillumbik (L & L). In recent times the safe has been open but has had no keys so L & L arranged for repairs to the lock, including new keys.

Knowing of our Society's interest in the Courthouse and, in particular, that of Harry Gilham, Leonie Truffitt from L & L sent an email to Harry's wife Sue Dyet advising of the repairs.

Leonie continues:

“.....the Locksmith advised that the date on the safe is 1876 and it was made in Cheapside, London.

And, just as an aside, the Locksmith said when he was at TAFE they said that the word “Cheap” came from Cheapside, London. Apparently goods from there were like cheap Asian made goods now. But, he did say that the safe was well made and it was the best job he had all week – he just loves the old safes and this one was one of the oldest.”



Sue replied:

“Being of UK birth I thought the connotations of cheap = shoddy was more of a modern meaning.

As Wikipedia said:

“Cheapside is the former site of one of the principal produce markets in London, cheap – broadly meaning “market” in medieval English.

Many of the streets feeding into the main thoroughfare are named after the produce that was once sold in those areas of the market, including Honey Lane, Milk Street, Bread Street and Poultry.

In medieval times, the royal processional route from the Tower of London to the Palace of Westminster would include Cheapside. During state occasions such as the first entry of Margaret of France (second wife of King Edward I), into London in September 1299, the conduits of Cheapside customarily flowed with wine.

During the reign of Edward III in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, tournaments were held in adjacent fields. The dangers were however not limited to the participants: A wooden stand built to accommodate Queen Philippa and her companions collapsed during a tournament to celebrate the birth of the Black Prince in 1330. No one died, but the King was greatly displeased, and but for the Queen's intercession the stand's builders would have been put to death.

On the day preceding her coronation during January 1559, Elizabeth I passed through a number of London streets in a pre-coronation procession and was entertained by a number of pageants, including one in Cheapside.

Meat was brought in to Cheapside from Smithfield market, just outside Newgate. After the great Church of St Michael-le-Queme, the top end of the street broadened into a dual carriageway known as the Shambles (referring to an open-air slaughterhouse and meat market), with butcher shops on both sides and a dividing central area also containing butchers.

Further down, on the right, was Goldsmith Row, an area of commodity dealers.

From the 14<sup>th</sup> century until the Great Fire, the eastern end of Cheapside was in the location of the Great Conduit."

## SCHOOL DAYS

For some years our Local History Centre and the Eltham Courthouse have been the venue for tours by children with teachers and parents from the local primary schools. Harry Gilham has been at the forefront of hosting these days, with able assistance from other members of our Society.



Harry Gilham, teachers and pupils

It is encouraging to see and hear so many young people excitingly discovering their way around our part of the local history. Hopefully their experiences will help instil future interest in their own family and local stories.

Some of the pupils later write to Harry expressing their thanks and commenting on their experiences. The following quotes are selected examples of some of their thoughts:

- "I really liked it when you locked us in the lock-up and it went all dark"
- "I enjoyed learning about all the interesting things that have happened over the past years and crimes that have been done"
- "I loved how there was a role for everyone in the Courthouse"
- "Who would have known that there were so many things that we didn't know about Eltham"
- "I find it hard to believe it only costed £536 to build mind you it is quite small and they did have a different currency in those days"
- "I was just wondering what got you so interested in history and when did your passion start?"
- "I enjoyed the lock up and learnt that if you do the wrong thing you went to Melbourne jail"
- "You have taught me more about Eltham than anyone else has"

Our thanks to Harry and his helpers for their contribution to the learning journeys of so many young and eager minds.

### **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    5<sup>th</sup> March    2nd April  
Mondays 9.30 am    18<sup>th</sup> March    15<sup>th</sup> April

*The Eltham District Historical Society  
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