



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. 210 MAY 2013

NEXT MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 8th MAY

**GUEST SPEAKER SAMANTHA WESTBROOKE
NILLUMBIK HERITAGE ADVISOR**

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



HERITAGE EXCURSIONS PROGRAM

**2PM SATURDAY 4th MAY
BRIDGELAND PARK WALK
ELTHAM SOUTH**

**2PM SATURDAY 6th JULY
HERITAGE EXCURSION**

This Main Road bridge over the Diamond Creek
was replaced at about the time the adjoining
Bridgeland Park estate was subdivided

MAY MEETING

Samantha Westbrooke is a heritage consultant and as part of her varied practice, she acts as heritage advisor to Nillumbik Shire Council.

At our May meeting Samantha will talk about the various aspects of her work. These include the preparation of heritage assessments for inclusion of places in the Heritage Overlay, reports on development proposals involving heritage places and provision of advice to owners of heritage properties. Mention will be made of the role of historical societies and their members in identifying places of heritage value not yet provided with protection by heritage overlays. Samantha will draw on examples of places in Eltham she has worked on, such as the Fabbro farmland in Bell Street and the War Memorial complex of buildings, but there will be other examples too. The talk will be illustrated with digital slides from Samantha's collection.



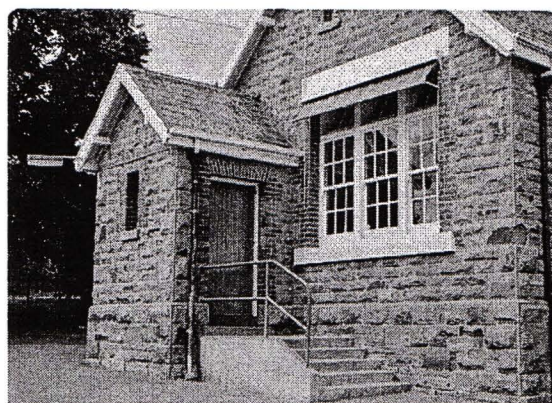
Eltham War Memorial gates

As with all of our meetings, visitors are most welcome to attend and join us for supper after Samantha's presentation.

MAY EXCURSION – BRIDGELAND PARK WALK

Bridgeland Park is the name of a residential estate in the southern part of Eltham. It lies south of Main Road and adjoins the east side of the Diamond Creek extending to Lavender Park Road. It was subdivided in 1925 but housing appears to be mainly from the 1940s and later. This part of the Government Township of Eltham was originally small rural properties or large residential lots. More recently low-density residential zoning has ensured that large lots continue to predominate. Bridgeland Park with its "suburban" sized blocks is somewhat out of character with its surroundings.

For our excursion on 4th May we intend to walk along nearby streets to reach Bridgeland Park where we will walk around the winding secluded streets. At the end of Lavender Park Road we will visit the hillside quarry that provided stone for the old Eltham Primary School building and look out from this hill over Eltham Lower Park. On the way we will pass some heritage properties, including "Shoestring" in Metery Road and "Landscape" in Lavender Park Road, once home to the noted cartoonist, artist and anthropologist, Percy Leason.



Eltham Primary School includes stone from Lavender Park Road quarry

The walk is about 3km in length and will take about 2.5 hours. It will start at 2pm at the car park in Metery Road adjoining the side of the Eltham Primary School. (Melway Ref. 21 K8) This free walk is open to the general public as well as Society members. Dogs are not permitted on Society excursions. The telephone number for contact on the day is 0409 021 063.

ELTHAM CULTURAL HERITAGE TOUR 1992

In recent Newsletters we have reprinted articles by former member Bettina Woodburn about past Society excursions. The following article is from Newsletter No. 85.

"Commencing with a quick walk to see the magnificent bell at the Eltham Fire Station, we then drove along Arthur Street. Here were examples of what constitutes the building environment of Eltham. Massed among the wattles and eucalypts were golden cypress and pines; No. 50 was an exotic 'old English' manor-house, No. 93 had bluestone gateposts from Fenton Road Toorak (as with Montsalvat, using re-cycled building material was very much the trend); past the natural Reserve dedicated to the artist Walter Withers, a plaque on a huge boulder; and on both sides houses in the various modes – timber with wrought iron decor, brick – some more recent than others – decades of 'suburbia'.

The land was unprofitable for intensive farming, but there was always water in the Diamond Creek. The railway, a technological advance, followed the valley, and was provided to transport produce. At North Eltham we were privileged to tour a surviving farmhouse of the 1860-70 era at the Shire's Edendale Farm, with the as yet unfinished Sculpture for a front fence – bulbous tree-trunks decorated with salt pots, with cross members from the old trestle bridge. As was usual these six veranda-posted houses faced South (or East, away from the sun!) with the scullery, kitchen and pantry "out the back". The veranda, which must have been very narrow, no longer exists. It probably wrapped around three sides.



Edendale Farm homestead c1938

The drive took us past the Dutch Windmill, only twenty years old and in the Shire of Diamond Valley, then the Diamond Creek Cemetery with impressive gateway, to a detour to see another old farmhouse, isolated on a hill off Murray Road, Wattle Glen. Here was a particularly thick patch of exotic planting of pines and cypresses. Subsistence farming no longer pays.

Following the rail-line, we noticed on the left near Silvan Road, an Edwardian cottage and on the right near Yates Road the old school residence for this Upper Diamond Creek area.

Leaving the cars at Hurstbridge, we walked the main street of the old village settlement, now a suburb. Near the station was a fine Edwardian house, complete with palm and pines. Opposite was the Police Station, 1930-60 with a portable lock-up behind and the residence beside it. No. 794 was the Post Office 3099, the original shop-front window now has mail-boxes below. Close to the Railway entrance the butcher's shop remains unchanged, but across the road the linear shopping centre tries to keep the character of the olden times.

The Fire Bell once hung on a tall gum outside No. 832. Palms in front gardens indicate the age of some of the homes, about 70 years. A corrugated iron shed still stands on the front fence line next to No. 840.

Adding to the streetscape is an example of the standard timber early 20th century four veranda post suburban villa.

At the crossroads stands Allwood House with its well laid-out garden. The original owners, the Hurst family, ran a nursery; the aligned palms, the cactus clumps, the introduced trees and shrubs show the plants then in fashion. On the other corners stand an old corrugated iron Garage; a Restaurant, designed and built 1980, but by using old materials it tries to retain the rustic character of its surroundings; and open space where a two-storied Wineshop/Saloon once stood. The old Bank, now in the grounds of Allwood House, has been moved a few doors down the street.



View at Hurstbridge, including the Monash Bridge - Rose Postcard series 4093

On the Arthurs Creek Road is a bridge designed by Monash, which we admired before walking across the little park with a mud-brick and timber shelter, to the Hurst family graveyard. There are two marked graves, one, Henry who was shot by Burke the bushranger, and a cairn has a plaque listing others buried here from 1866 onwards. Burke was captured and tied to the wheel of a dray under the eucalypt near the waterhose/standpipe.

Close by the kindergarten at this place are three trees on the National Trust Register, a Canary Island pine, a Canadian cedar and probably a spruce. Radiata pines and a thick balled peppercorn surround the little cemetery.

Continuing along Main Street we notice elm trees planted as a war memorial, then on the left a 1930 timber house, a 1910 store and residence, resplendent with wrought iron trim, a double fronted Hardware Store and cypresses on the back alignment of a new vacant block.

On the right side of the street is a less interesting attempt at an 'in character' shop. Further on are more early homes, one tucked away at the rear with two tall palms by the front steps. Another curiosity is a rounded veranda corner and there are more galvanised iron sheds or garages, before a mud-brick Dentist's Surgery. Beyond the round-a-about is St Peters Church, of mud-brick construction shared by Catholic and Anglican parishioners, overlooking the river flood plain.

Leaving Hurstbridge on the Kinglake Road, we ate our picnic lunch beside the communication tower and enjoyed views of Melbourne, Yan Yean Reservoir and the distant Dandenongs beyond the spreading suburbs.

Next we drove to the North West boundary of the Shire at Masons Falls Road towards Whittlesea. On the way to the North East Boundary we passed St Peters, a yellow wooden Church with a Tudor Archway, built in the early 1920s in the style of the 1860s.

From the Healesville – Kinglake road the rolling hills had European aspects, the hedged fields and chestnut trees. Then it was back down the Hurstbridge Road through 'Aussie' bush of towering gums, with bracken and scrubby understorey, the Kinglake National Park, before more open country with deciduous trees planted in line, and a creek lined with willows.

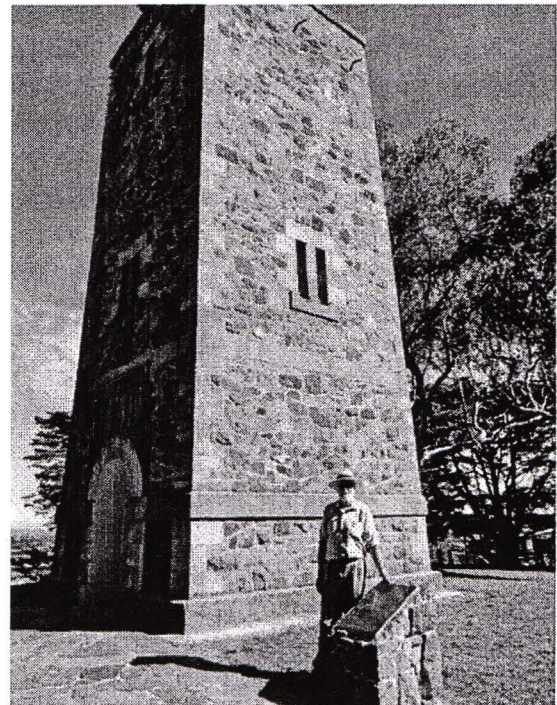
At St Andrews we noted the old and new schools, the Anglican Church, the Hall, the Bakery and the pub – still a popular watering and eating place. Climbing towards Panton Hill the soil was not rich and supported only scarce growth.

Perfunctory prospecting and mining had taken place in this area, though not with the diligence applied at Research. Again we saw the ingredients of a settlement, this one organised by Government, the Hotel, the Store, the School. Down from Memorial Park the School grounds had original tree planting and the School Bell dedicated to Maud Rattray who died in 1922. There is a new Hall and opposite in the grounds of the Church and Sunday School a memory of four 'fallen comrades'. This small section of the main road retained the small village atmosphere; although the population had increased there had been little alteration.

Now we drove through stands of pines to the Kangaroo Ground Lookout Tower, a most unusual War Memorial, World War I. The tower and a shed/residence (it had a chimney) were built from local sandstone. Below to the south and east of Melbourne spread 'suburbia'. Close by the landscape seemed so contrived – English fields and hedgerows! Although only about twenty inches deep, the soil of this ancient volcano, its crater lost under subsequent weathering, was rich, deserving the name of "Garden Hill". Now native trees are taking over again.

In Kangaroo Ground itself stand the inevitable Store, School and Church – and two Norfolk pines and a monkey-puzzle tree.

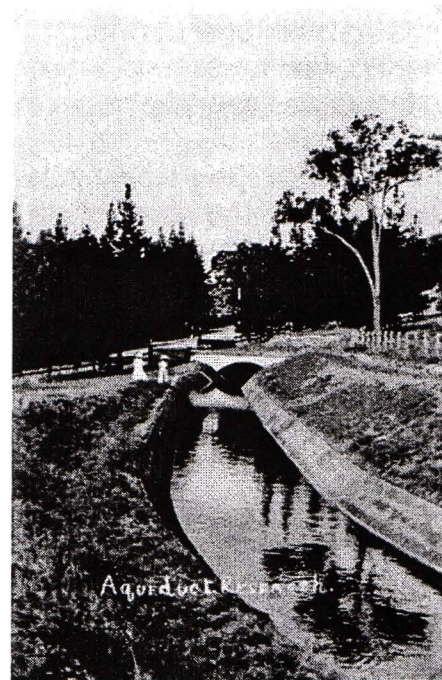
On a right-angle turning of the Eltham Road is Wellers Pub, a Cobb & Co. Coaching stop on the way to distant gold-fields and places north of the Yarra River. The Hotel dates from the 1870s. Daily distances for a bullock team was eight miles, horses could do double that distance.



Kangaroo Ground Memorial Tower
with Harry Gilham in the foreground

We turned into Cassells Road and on the corner of Ingrams Road we admired an elaborate Edwardian villa, 1900 style. The Aqueduct conveying Melbourne's water supply was a communication line and a technological advance in 1891. It has been enlarged and re-faced and no longer used here but piped underground. Proclaimed a linear park it has reverted to Crown land, controlled by local Council. Maroondah Dam was constructed in 1920 to replace the original weir and at that time the Aqueduct was established into the landscape – with bridges and tunnels and pine trees were used to stop rubbish polluting the water.

In some respects Eltham is a 'back-water' and it has its own distinctive flavour. On the outskirts the homes date from the 1960s, 70s and 80s with a sprinkling of 'earth homes', mud-brick or pise, rammed dirt. Crossing Main Road into Beddoe Street and Thompson Crescent a very pleasant drive past pines and old fence lines, front lawns unfenced, the occasional old farm building, we eventually looked down on a huge circular roof of a 1992 adobe home.

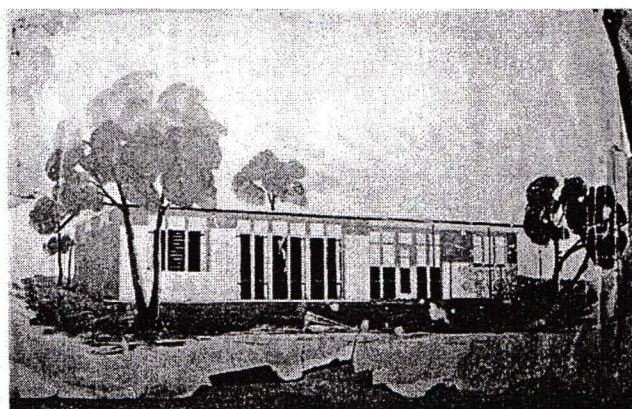


The Maroondah Aqueduct at Research

Other distinctive places included the Pauline Toner Butterfly Reserve, Gordon Ford's splendid garden at "Fulling" in Pitt Street, cypress hedges and old houses in Bridge Street and in every direction Eltham's special feature – a totally treed horizon.

We were now in the part of the Shire closest to Melbourne – Montmorency – not on the way to anywhere, with no through road going across it, developed in the 1950s and 1960s with conventional gardens, now converted to native plants. The rail looped between Greensborough and Eltham and a shopping street (Were Street) served the area, growing up the hill from the station. It was a typical outer Melbourne suburb with lawns and roses with patches of originality. The shopping precinct still has 1950s characteristics – walls which sloped back, projecting roofs, the original shop fronts are nearly all tiled below the old windows. There's an air of past times about the School, the Dairy, the Butcher's (now a milk bar) and the Castlemaine stone face of the Commonwealth Bank.

The final stop for the tour was at the mud-brick Woodburn residence, adobe of 1949 with additions. After War Service, Bill Woodburn had commenced an Architecture course at Melbourne University and after second year in the Christmas vacation, with his wife Betti, built the two bedroom house – with amazing saving of costs. In the three and a half months they made over 3000 bricks (external walls 18" x 12" x 4", internal walls 12" x 9" x 4"), sifted top soil for mortar and laid them, on concrete foundations and slab floor, made all the structural window frames, door frames and roof members to carry 'super six' asbestos sheets, laboured for the electrician and plumber, did all the glazing



Contemporary illustration of the Woodburn House

and, still without electricity, moved in in March 1949. Rooms have been added, at first with glass walls, later using concrete blocks, to accommodate three daughters and a son. The house not only grew from the earth, but also with the family.

David Bick managed during the day's tour to demonstrate many aspects of the growth of Eltham – it was a most enjoyable and comprehensive survey.

Bettina Woodburn"

THE RETRO ELTHAM SHOW

The current gallery exhibition at Eltham South Fine Art (6 Mount Pleasant Road, Eltham) will be of interest to followers of Eltham's artistic history. It includes paintings and other works by many of the artists who helped create Eltham's artistic heritage from the 1960s to the 80s. Some are well known names in the local artistic community, such as Matcham Skipper, Justus Jorgensen, Neil Douglas, Peter Glass and many more. Others are not so well known but have made an important contribution.

The exhibition runs until 9th June. Gallery hours are 10.00 - 5.30 Thursday to Saturday and 11.00 - 5.00 Sunday.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

At the Annual General Meeting subscriptions for 2013 - 2014 were fixed at the same levels as last year and are as follows:

Single member	\$25.00
Newsletter	\$15.00
Family	\$30.00
Business organisation	\$30.00

Subscriptions are due on 1 July but earlier payment is welcomed. David Johns would be happy to receive your money either at the May meeting or through the mail.

OFFICE BEARERS 2013 - 2014

At the Annual General Meeting in March office bearers and committee members were elected for the coming year.

The full list of office bearers and committee members is as follows:

President	Jim Connor
Senior Vice President	Sue Law
Junior Vice President	Doug Orford
Treasurer/Membership Secretary	David Johns
Secretary	Russell Yeoman
Committee Members	Diana Bassett-Smith, Alison Delaney Jim Allen, Maureen Jones, Gabrielle Turner, Tony Brocksopp.

We welcome Jim Allen and Maureen Jones as new members of the Committee.

HARRY GILHAM AND MARY REGAN

Harry Gilham and Mary Regan have both decided not to continue serving on our committee after many years assistance in helping to run our society. We appreciate their commitment and contributions, which has often not always been obvious, as they have both been society members involved in arranging activities and undertaking tasks 'behind the scenes'.

Harry joined our society in 1988 and is our immediate past president, having served in that role between 1993 and 2009. He was also a committee member during the periods 1992/3 and 2009-2013. He has initiated a number of research projects, created a range of society publications and printed resources and for many years has represented the Eltham District Historical Society at formal activities, including on various council committees and working groups. We thank Harry for his contributions, which are immeasurable.

Mary joined our society in 1985 and was a long serving committee member between 1987 and 2013. She has been a stalwart on so many occasions and is well known for her assistance when helping prepare and cater for our meetings and other functions. Mary has often represented the Eltham District Historical Society at regional network meetings with other historical societies and is a regular participant on our heritage excursions.

We value all the work that Harry and Mary have contributed over so many years and look forward to their continued involvement in our activities.

AND ALSO

Some newer members have been assisting at recent records workshops. We try to tailor tasks to members' individual interests as much as possible. All help at these workshops is appreciated.

Coming dates for records workshops at the Local History Centre are:

Tuesdays 7.30pm - 7th May, 4th June

Mondays 9:30am - 20st May, 17th June

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

Eltham and District
Community Bank® Branch



Jim Connor
President

Russell Yeoman
Secretary

David Johns
Treasurer /
Membership Secretary
Phone - 9434 3357

Phone - 9439 5916

Phone - 9439 9717