



ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

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NEWSLETTER

NO. 211 JULY 2013

NEXT MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 10th JULY

MEETING PRESENTATION

MAIN ROAD ELTHAM 1968.....AND NOW

ELTHAM LIBRARY MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM

PANTHER PLACE ELTHAM

..... (NOTE CHANGE OF LOCATION)



Eltham Shopping Centre, Main Road c1968

HERITAGE EXCURSIONS PROGRAM

2PM SATURDAY 6th JULY

"THE HILL" WALK

**MUD BRICK, PISE AND OTHER
CHARACTER HOUSES**

2PM SATURDAY 7th SEPTEMBER

HERITAGE EXCURSION

JULY MEETING

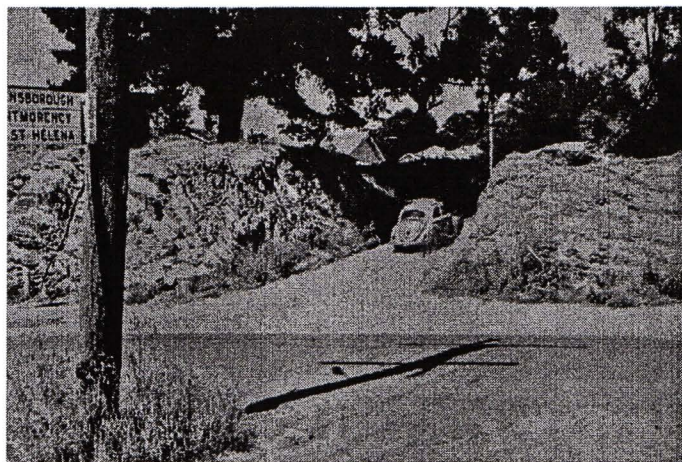
In our 2013 Program the topic for our July Meeting is "The Eltham Library Story". There have been difficulties with this proposed video presentation and so we have arranged an alternative topic. **Note also that there is a temporary change of location to the multi-purpose room at the Eltham Library, which is entered from near the main Library entry.** This is required because of renovations to the Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre.

Over 45 years ago, in February 1968 an unknown person took a series of photographs while walking north along Main Road Eltham from the Eltham Hotel at the corner of Pitt Street, through the shopping centre to Elsa Court. These photos are mounted on a display board at our Local History Centre and have now been converted to digital images by Jim Connor and these will be shown at our July meeting.

The pictorial presentation of Eltham 1968 will be accompanied by some present day views in the same locations.

The pictures will be accompanied by a brief description. It is hoped that they will bring back memories of the time and prompt some lively discussion.

Visitors and new members are always welcome at our meetings and are invited to join us for supper after the presentation.



Main Road, Eltham c1968 – can you guess where?

JULY EXCURSION – MUD BRICKS, PISE AND OTHER "CHARACTER HOUSES"

The area of Eltham around Diamond Street to the west of the Diamond Creek is one that contains all of the elements of what is often referred to as the "Eltham Character". They include the hilly terrain, extensive indigenous tree cover, some unmade streets and a significant proportion of "character houses". Many of these interesting houses are of mud brick (adobe) or pise (rammed earth) construction.

In the 1940s journalist turned builder, John Harcourt, built a number of pise houses in this area known to locals as "the hill". He also built in stone and mud brick. Other houses in these materials include the work of renowned local designer and builder Alistair Knox and many owner built houses.

This excursion will be a walk starting in Diamond Street, west of the Diamond Creek bridge (Melway Ref. 21 J4) at 2pm on Saturday 6th July. The distance is about 3.5 km and it will take about 2.5 hours. The terrain is quite hilly. On the way we will discuss some other aspects of the history of this area including the 1924 subdivision of the Stanhope Estate that set the pattern of development of "the hill".

This free walk is open to Society members and the general public. The phone number for contact on the day is 0409 021 063.

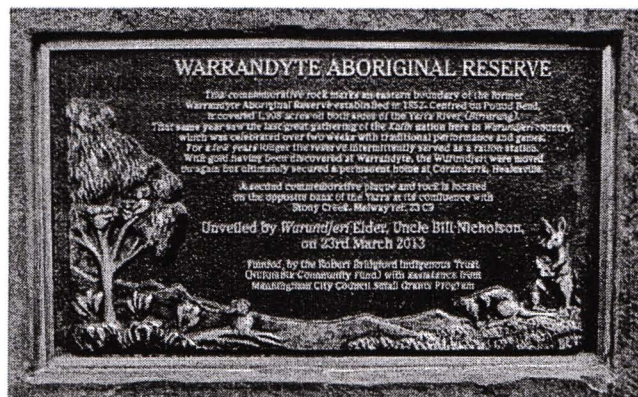
NILLUMBİK RECONCILIATION GROUP PLAQUES

On Saturday 23 March 2013 during the Warrandyte Festival the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group, in partnership with Reconciliation Manningham, unveiled commemorative plaques mounted on large rocks on two boundaries of the former Aboriginal Reserve at Pound Bend, Warrandyte.

This Reserve was established in 1852 and covered 1908 acres on both sides of the Yarra River. These plaques are now located at the confluences of Stony Creek and of Anderson Creek with the Yarra River.

The plaque on the Manningham side of the river was unveiled by Wurundjeri Elder, Uncle Bill Nicholson, while the plaque on the Nillumbik side was unveiled by Wurundjeri Elder, Auntie Diane Kerr.

This project was initiated by respected historian and author Mick Woiwood, who is also a valued member of the Eltham District Historical Society and is shown seated in the centre of the group photograph.



Uncle Bill Nicholson speaking at the unveiling of the commemorative plaque on the Manningham side of the Yarra River

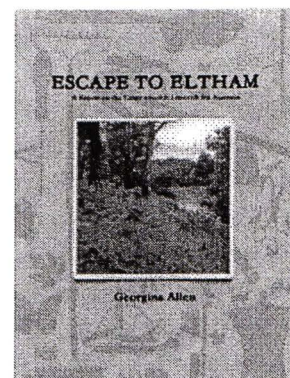
A BUSY TIME FOR ENQUIRIES, DONATIONS AND OTHER THINGS

Over the past month or so there have been a large number of enquiries to the Society for historical information and several donations to the Society. It may be of interest to members to know of the range of activities that go on "behind the scenes", mainly involving Committee members. Sometimes questions can be simply answered, some involve research and sometimes we are unable to help, but can point people to other sources.

An enquiry was received from someone known only as Lavinia about the location of the Eltham Cottage Hospital where her mother was born in 1930. She thought it was in Pitt Street, but Doug Orford quickly advised that it could not have been in that street and must have been the hospital in Main Road near Bellevue Road. The hospital was demolished many years ago, but a 1951 aerial photograph held by the Society identified the location. By that time it was a private house. Lavinia's research identified a number of press references to the hospital and she has listed these for our records.

Another enquiry came from a university masters student about an assignment on two early twentieth century surveyors/engineers/town planners, Robert Hopper Woodcock and Charles John McCormack, who owned and subdivided the important "Belle Vue" estate at Eltham in 1920. Reference to this partnership was found on estate plans held by the Society and in the "Belle Vue" Heritage Study. These surveyors were also responsible for the significant "Panorama Heights" estate at Montmorency.

Georgina Allen (nee Lane) from Western Australia visited our Local History Centre about eighteen months ago seeking information about her Lane ancestors. We were able to provide some details and she donated a painting by her father of the former Falkiner cottage in Ely Street. Now Georgina has sent a copy of her book "Escape to Eltham, a Report on the Lanes who left Limerick for Australia". It is essentially a family history but tells the story of Richard Lane who migrated from Ireland in 1841 and purchased ninety acres of land east of the road that later became Sweeneys Lane. The Lane family were significant players in Eltham's early history. This story celebrates the tenacity of a family whose members left adversity in Ireland hoping for a kinder life in Australia.



Following our "Bridgeland Park" walk in May, but not related to it, we received an email from South Australia offering copies of newsletters of the 1980s from the Bridgeland Park Residential Association. Following an exchange of emails between members, Sue Dyet donated additional copies of the newsletter from this Eltham South estate.

Following contact with Jim Connor at a Nillumbik Shire Council volunteers evening Joan Long has donated papers from the early days of the Eltham APEX Club. These had been collected by her late husband, Graeme, as part of his involvement with APEX.

John Parker who lives in the Cleveland Avenue area at Lower Plenty is researching the history of that rural residential area. George Porter bought this land from the Crown in 1838, becoming the first land purchaser in what was to become the Shire of Eltham. In 1924 Porter's land was subdivided resulting in today's street and lot pattern. John's enquiry to the Society resulted in him spending several hours looking at information available at our Local History Centre and he has since joined the Society.

Some other matters in this category are included as separate articles below.

MAC BALL

Member Jenny Ellis has advised of the recent launch of a biography of her father Professor William Macmahon Ball.

Mac Ball (1901-1986), who lived in Eltham for over 40 years, was a well-known broadcaster in the radio days. He provided regular weekly Sunday talks on Australia and foreign affairs, particularly in Asia. He was the foundation Professor of Political Science at Melbourne University. Also, after the war he was appointed by the Federal Government to several overseas posts and missions. These included being the representative for the Commonwealth on the Allied Council for Japan. A little park is named after him at the eastern end of Bridge Street.

The book: "W. Macmahon Ball. Politics for the People." by Ai Kobayashi is published by Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne. The Eltham Bookshop will soon have copies.

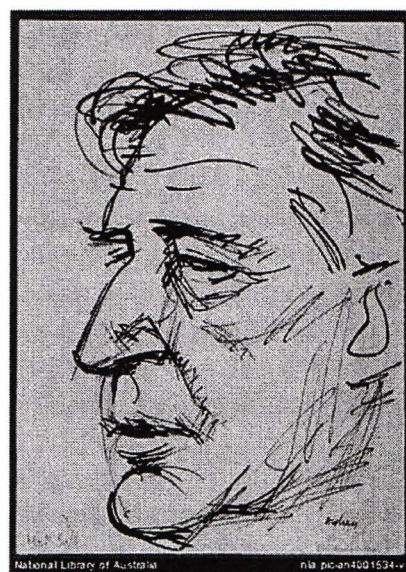


Illustration of William Macmahon Ball by Louis Kahan from the National Library of Australia

FORMER HAT FACTORY

An enquiry was received from Fort Knox Self Storage which operates from the former hat factory in Sherbourne Road Eltham. They were interested in the history of the premises but, although various people could contribute anecdotes, little was available in the Society's records.

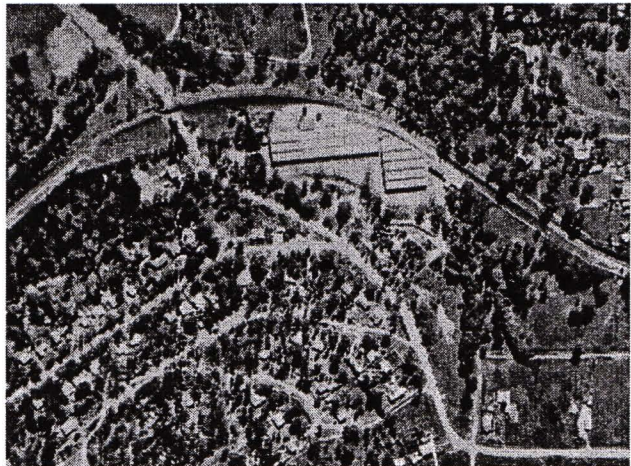
The Karingal Yallock Creek passes through the front of the land and the creek environs are the subject of significant and unusual landscaping works. The landscaping has been damaged by the Christmas Day floods of 2011, but the main elements remain intact.



Site of former bridge over the Karingal Yallock Creek from the 2006 Heritage Report

The landscaped area (as distinct from the factory itself) is the subject of a Heritage Overlay under the Nillumbik Planning Scheme. The basis of this overlay is a Heritage Report by Graeme Butler and Associates in 2006, that has recently been provided to the Society by Nillumbik Council. As well as an assessment of the landscaped area, it includes background information on the history of the site (although a complete history would require more research).

The site was part of Crown Portion 3 of the Parish of Nillumbik that remained as the Montmorency Farm until early in the twentieth century. The 1911 subdivision of this farm created Lot 7 of some seven acres, which is the site of this factory. The Heritage Report lists the various owners of the site. From the rate records and aerial photos it is concluded that the site was used as an orchard and farmland until the 1940s. William F Crellin, orchardist, owned the site from 1912 to 1923. Then Edmund Williams owned it until 1951. In 1955 the site was owned by Rupert V. Kirsch and this is the name anecdotally associated with the hat factory. An aerial photo from the early 1950s held by the Society shows that part of the factory complex had been built.



Aerial view of the Hat Factory area c1950

The well-known brand of Fayrefield Hats was manufactured at this factory.

AVENUE OF HONOUR

There is an opportunity to apply for the Centenary of ANZAC funding and Jane Woollard from Nillumbik Shire Council is coordinating an application that can include proposals from historical societies and heritage groups within the municipality. Our committee has discussed this and agreed to suggest the installation of informative signage at each end of the Avenue of Honour, along Main Road in Eltham. It is only a preliminary proposal at this stage and further information will be provided in due course.

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In keeping with the 1968 theme for our next meeting these advertisements are from the Diamond Valley News on 20 August 1968

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AND ALSO

Subscriptions for 2013 – 14 are due on 1st July but some 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 2nd July 6th August
 Mondays 9.30 am 15th July 19th August

We are asking members to check their bookshelves to see if there are any outstanding books you may have borrowed from our library at our Local History Centre, that need to be returned. We are also asking for any donations of Eltham related books or photographs that you might like to give to our collection. If so please contact one of the members listed below. We are able to pick up any donations.

The Rotary Club of Eltham has invited the Society to arrange a display at the Eltham Festival on 10th November. The Committee has agreed that we should participate. This is a preliminary notice to members who might be available to assist on the day.

*The Eltham District Historical Society
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