



Welcome Home Medal

by Jim Allen and Jim Connor

In our last newsletter (No.215, March 2014) we asked if anyone had a Welcome Home Medal that was issued to acknowledge service during World War 1. We mentioned then that as groups of servicemen returned and were discharged a local welcome home function was held in their honour. The welcome home committee decided that to commemorate the occasion a medal should be presented to the returned servicemen and also to the nearest relations of those who had fallen during the conflict.

Well in response to our request we found not one, but two medals. The medal shown below was presented to W.H. Orford, an uncle of Doug Orford, one of our members. Apparently Eltham was not the only district that issued these as Harry Gilham has also provided one given to his uncle from Kardella in South Gippsland. This is similar in concept to the Eltham Medal.

Inscribed on the front of the medal is:

SPR W.H. ORFORD
FROM ELTHAM
WE HONOUR YOU
GREAT WAR 1914 – 1919



On the back of the medal is the image of a soldier standing at ease with a rifle. Smaller than originally stated the Eltham Districts medal is midway between a 10 and 20 cent piece in size. The medal is a fine piece of craftsmanship and is understood to have cost £4 to make.

On 22nd April 2014 Society members were pleased to attend an announcement by Mr Damien Drum, Victorian Minister for Veterans Affairs and Sport of funding for installation of signage for the Eltham and Hurstbridge Avenues of Honour.

Doug Orford was there and created much interest with his Welcome Home Medal, including from Minister Drum.

Our thanks to Harry Gilham and Doug Orford for responding to our request and bringing these medals to our attention.



Doug Orford with Minister Drum

Next Meeting

8.00 PM Wednesday 14th May 2014 *

Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre

Library Place, Eltham (Melway Map 21 ref J5)

* This date is different to that shown in the Annual Program

Heritage Excursion

The 1901 Eltham Railway Walk

2.00 PM Saturday 3rd May 2014

See further details on page 2

May Meeting

Maps, Manuscripts and Menus: telling local stories via heritage collections

Liz Pidgeon is the Local and Family History Librarian for Yarra Plenty Regional Library and the 2012 recipient of the Margery C Ramsay scholarship from the Library Board of Victoria for her project "Local and family history services in the UK and USA". In 2013 she attended two international conferences and visited libraries and archives in the UK and USA. Come to our meeting at 8 pm on Wednesday 14th May 2014 and hear her findings and how public libraries are facilitating local and family stories.

As at all of our meetings, new members and visitors are most welcome, we hope you can join us.

May Excursion – The 1901 Eltham Railway Walk

The railway from Heidelberg to Eltham was opened in 1902. Over the previous year railway construction cut a curving swathe through Josiah Holloway's 1851 Little Eltham subdivision. The survey plans for the railway show the owners and occupiers of land within Little Eltham affected by the railway alignment and for some distance each side. The plans show houses and other buildings but development at that time was rather sparse. Copies of these plans from the State Library of Victoria collection have been provided to the Society by Alan Sheehan.

For our walk on 3rd May we intend to follow the railway from the Eltham Station to Ryans Road, which was the boundary of the adjoining Montmorency Farm.

The return will be by way of nearby streets. Along the way we will discuss the details shown on the railway plans as well as more recent railway documents and photographs. At the conclusion and if time permits we can inspect the historical display at the Eltham Station.



Eltham Railway Station c1912

The walk is about 3 km in length and will take about 2.5 hours. It will start at 2 pm at the Eltham Railway Station car park (east/Main Road side) (Melway Ref. 21 J5).

Some of the route is over rough ground so solid footwear is recommended.

This free walk is open to the general public as well as Society members. Dogs are not permitted on Society excursions. The phone number for contact on the day is 0409 021 063.

Subscriptions

At the Annual General Meeting subscriptions for 2014-2015 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 essential for our Society to remain financially viable and are due on 1st July but earlier payment is welcomed. As we don't like to need to continually remind members about payment David Johns would be happy to receive your subscription either at the May meeting or through the mail to: The Treasurer EDHS, Unit 6 / 50 Scotland Avenue, Greensborough 3088.

Vera Addison

The life of Stanley Simpson Addison was the subject of the presentation at our Annual General Meeting on 12th March 2014. We were pleased to have his nephew Bill Glasson and his wife Anne as our guests on the night. During the evening there were a number of references to Stanley's wife Vera who was also very active in the Eltham district and following our request Bill has provided the following additional information about Vera.

'Here are my memories of Vera Addison nee Staley who married my uncle Stanley Addison. As they lived in Melbourne and I lived in Adelaide we seldom met until I married Anne and we moved to Melbourne in 1959.

Every month or so we would take the train to Eltham and walk to Kangaroo Ground. After lunch we usually inspected the garden and then settled down to enjoy long conversations sometimes on current matters, often on past exploits but always lively and interesting. Vera was a commanding figure with firm views. Several times we crossed paths with Alison and Brian Charlton who lived in the area and often helped Stanley and Vera.

In 1963 Anne and I moved to Sydney and apart from occasional letters had no contact until Stanley died in 1972 when I came to Melbourne to support Vera during and after the funeral. By that time they lived in North Balwyn.

A year or so later Vera travelled overseas to visit servicemen she had befriended during the Second World War while working in a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD). In USA she fell ill and was invalided home. We were on standby to meet her in Sydney but in the event she flew directly to Melbourne.

She must have sold the house in North Balwyn because when I visited not long before she died she was living in a retirement home. After her death in 1974 I sorted through the papers she left and kept those relating to Stanley.



Vera Addison

To these personal memories I have added further material based on secondary sources mainly Stanley's notes, third parties and civil records.

Vera was born in 1889 the eldest child of Henry Staley. Her father died in 1908 not long before she met Stanley who was based in Melbourne as General Secretary of the Student Christian Movement. She had three brothers James, George and Harold. In 1916 she travelled to England almost certainly as a VAD to work as a nurses aid in military hospitals and by this time Stanley and at least one of her brothers were serving in France.

Vera and Stanley were married on January 8th 1917 at Christ Church, Brondesbury near London. They remained in London after the war ended and returned to Australia in 1920. In the years that followed I believe that Vera was active in the Victoria League and certainly the VAD during the Second World War. They moved to Kangaroo Ground in 1947 and were both heavily involved in community activities. Others are better placed to expand on Vera's contribution to these activities. Anne still uses the book of country recipes compiled by the Women's Auxiliary of the Eltham War Memorial Trust in 1958 and given to her by Vera soon after they met.'

Bill Glasson 16th March 2014

Our thanks to Bill Glasson for this additional information about Vera Addison.

Vale John Cohen OAM

19/9/1919 – 18/3/2014

Sadly we report that John Cohen passed away on 18th March 2014 at the Caritas Christi Hospice in Kew following an extended illness. John has been described as 'a great educator and social activist who gave so much to the community'.

Following Army service during World War 2 he gained an Honours Degree in History at the University of Western Australia then with Shirley his wife moved to Victoria and began a career as a teacher. Throughout his long life John taught thousands of young people and adults at many institutions and organisations. He felt his greatest contribution to education was to adult education.

John was a member of our Society, an Eltham Shire Councillor and Shire President (1983-1993) and was involved with many organisations including local groups the RSL, the Eltham Gateway Action Group, Friends of Nillumbik, Eltham Living and Learning Centre and Yarra Valley U3A.



John Cohen
when Eltham Shire President

We value John's many contributions and send our condolences to Shirley his wife and their family.

Mayoral Chain of Office

R.C. McLellan and family donated a Chain of Office to the Shire of Eltham to be worn by the Shire President on formal occasions. With the amalgamation of councils in 1994 this was transferred to the Shire of Nillumbik to be used during the mayoral year. Eltham had a Shire President whereas Nillumbik has a Mayor.

Many municipalities have a collar or chain of office for ceremonial purposes. Traditionally these symbolise or denote the formal leadership role of office. This chain is part of the Visual Art Collection held by Nillumbik Shire Council and is now on display in the Council Chamber area in the Civic Centre at Greensborough.



Nillumbik Mayoral Chain of Office

Matcham Skipper and Myra Skipper were commissioned by the McClellan family to create the gold plated silver chain shown being worn by Eltham Shire President Peter Graham in 1990, with Bob McLellan and Matcham Skipper (centre).

Nillumbik Shire Council has asked that the following credit information is used when the chain is displayed or images reproduced.

Matcham SKIPPER (1921-2011) and
Myra SKIPPER (1920-1996)
Mayoral (Presidential) Chains of Office 1976
Gold plated silver 60cm x 32cm x 1cm (variable)
© The Estate of Matcham and Myra Skipper
Donated by RC McLellan and Family
Visual Art Collection: Nillumbik Shire Council



Bob McLellan, Matcham Skipper and
Eltham Shire President Peter Graham -1990

Eltham Library – 20th Anniversary

On Sunday 22nd May 1994 the new Eltham Library was officially opened. This innovative library designed by Gregory Burgess received an Award of Merit for outstanding architecture in 1995 from the Royal Institute of Architects (Victorian Chapter) and the Library has since been heritage listed. In 2010 refurbishment works were undertaken including extension of the popular children's' section.

On Saturday 24th May 2014 the twentieth anniversary of this opening will be a family day of celebrations at the Library for children and adults, including art tours, a Punch and Judy puppet show, farm animals, a treasure hunt and balloon sculptures.



Aerial view of Eltham Library - 1994

St Margaret's Church Eltham

In a recent newsletter (No.214, February 2014) we mentioned the launch of a new book by Dr. Geoffrey A Sandy about the history of St Margaret's Church in Pitt Street Eltham.

On 30th March 2014 another book was launched at St Margaret's Church, titled 'Connecting Threads & Thoughts'. This explores and documents the history and stories behind the making of many needlepoint kneelers from St Margaret's Eltham and St Faith's Montmorency.

Through researching and publishing these stories the Creating Spirit Group at St Margaret's have woven together creative aspects of some of the histories of both churches and their parishioners, both past and present. The quality of the stories, photographs and overall presentation of this book is a credit to all involved in documenting this important historical record of the joint congregations.



Connecting Threads & Thoughts



The 'Time Capsule'

In conjunction with this book launch there was also the opening of a 'time capsule' found buried under the floorboards of St Margaret's Church during current extension works. This 'time capsule' consisted of a sealed jar placed there in 1963 by a local painter John Grimes when he was replacing damaged flooring. John was well known in the area for his paint and stains and the Grimes and Sons business is now continued by Alan and Una Grimes in Research.

It was fitting that Alex Grimes the grandson of John was on hand at St Margaret's to open this capsule and gently remove the remnants of the local Rosanna Diamond Valley News (September 3rd 1963) and a ticket for a dance at the Watsonia Methodist Church Hall on Saturday 27th April (Donation 4/-).

Office Bearers 2014 - 2015

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	Alan Butler (Assistant Secretary), Diana Bassett-Smith, Alison Delaney, Jim Allen, Maureen Jones, Tony Brocksopp

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 – 6th May, 3rd June
Mondays 9.30am – 19th May, 16th June

Please note that our next meeting is on Wednesday 14th May, which is a different date to that shown in our Annual Program distributed earlier this year.

We appreciate the generosity of Ken Eckersall in donating copies of his book 'Eltham Inhabitants' to Society members at our recent Annual General Meeting. There will still be some available at our meeting on 14th May if other members would like to obtain a copy.

Contacts for the Eltham District Historical Society

- Jim Connor, President – Telephone 9439 5916
- Russell Yeoman, Secretary – Telephone 9439 9717
- David Johns, Treasurer / Membership Secretary – Telephone 9434 3357

*The Eltham District Historical Society
appreciates the financial support provided by the
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Committee of Management*



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