

Newsletter

No. 234 June 2017



A Hotel or two!

Jim Connor

While this is a tale of two hotels in Eltham, only one has survived,...if at least in name only.

The Eltham Hotel as we know it today stands resolutely on the corner of Main Road and Pitt Street in Eltham. While this hotel is very different to the original building shown in earlier photographs and etchings it still retains the Eltham Hotel name. It is thought the original building was constructed by Benjamin Wallis c1855 for Richard Warren, but when Warren fell into financial difficulties in 1858 he had to sell the hotel and it was purchased by Wallis, who obtained a publican's licence in 1861.

In 1886 Wallis sold the hotel to Christopher Watson (Snr.) and when he died in 1887 it passed to his son Christopher Watson (Jnr.) who owned it for many years, eventually then passing to his son Herbert. This hotel may have been demolished about 1925 and a new hotel built, which included some of the façade still at the front of the current building.

Opposite the Eltham Hotel a vacant site, also on a corner of Main Road and Pitt Street, is a vague reminder that another hotel once stood there, until burnt down in 1931.



Watson's Eltham Hotel
Photograph from the EDHS collection

Originally called the Fountain of Friendship Hotel, it was built in 1852, when Main Road was known as Maria Street. This building was constructed of prefabricated wooden sections shipped from Singapore and for the greater part was built of cedar, including the floors.

Originally a part two-storey structure, there was a hall on the ground floor often used for dances. In addition to the bar and ballroom there were 14 rooms for the owner and visitors. Horse and coach stables were at the rear, accessed from Pitt Street. In the late 1800s this hotel was a stopping place for Cobb and Co coaches travelling between Melbourne and Woods Point. The two-storey section of this hotel was altered to a single storey building in the early 1900s.

(continued on page 8)



The Evelyn Hotel
Photograph from the EDHS collection

Next Meeting

8.00pm Wednesday 14th June 2017

Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre

Library Place, Eltham (Melway Map 21 ref J5)

Heritage Excursion

Eltham Lower Park, Main Road

2.00pm Saturday 1st July 2017

See further details on page 2

14th June Meeting - Walter Withers in Eltham

Our meeting at 8.00pm on Wednesday 14th June 2017 is at the Eltham Senior Citizens Centre in Library Place, Eltham (Melway Map 21 ref.J5)

We will be pleased to welcome Andrew Mackenzie OAM, a regular friend of the Eltham District Historical Society. Andrew is an Art Historian, Lecturer, Heritage Consultant, Archivist and Author of many books, including a number about the life of Walter Withers (1854-1914). At this meeting Andrew will speak about *Walter Withers in Eltham*.

There are a number of strong connections between the Withers family and early Eltham, which Andrew will touch on. Not only did Withers establish his home in Eltham from 1902, he painted a number of his significant paintings around Eltham and the local area. He even captured William Capewell, the local Eltham butcher, in his famous painting 'The Drover'.



'The Drover' by Walter Withers
Painting held in the Bendigo Art Gallery

Heritage Excursion - Saturday 1st July - Eltham Lower Park - Walk and Talk

Eltham Lower Park has played an important part in the history of our area since the early days of European settlement when it was used by local residents as an informal racecourse. Prior to that its location at the junction of the Diamond Creek and the Yarra River made it an important meeting place for the Wurundjeri people.

The park combines formal elements and sporting facilities with remnant bushland that is of environmental significance. It is home to sporting and horse riding clubs, popular play spaces and the Diamond Valley Miniature Railway, which attracts large numbers of visitors.

The park will be the venue for our July excursion which will comprise a walk of about 3.5 km around the park and adjacent areas. Along the way we will discuss the history and natural history of the area. The path along the creek and the river provides a pleasant and scenic walk.



Eltham Lower Park
Photograph from EDHS collection

This walk on Saturday 1st July is about 3.5 km in length and will take 2 to 2.5 hours. It will start at 2pm at the Main Road car park at the front of the park. (Melway ref 21 H 10). 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.

Some Important Changes - Please Note

All future evening Records Workshops at our Local History Centre will be replaced by morning workshops, from 9.30am on the same date.

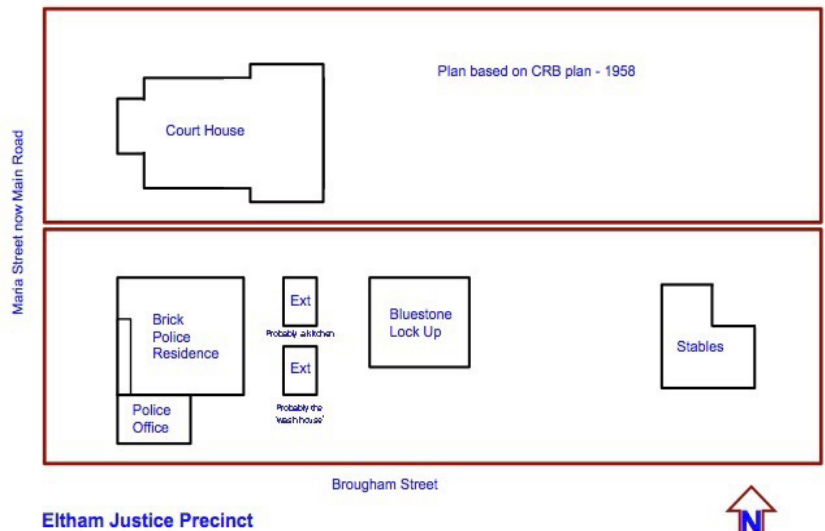


The 50th Anniversary celebration luncheon planned for Saturday 10th June has been postponed until later in the year and further details of an alternative date will be provided, when available.

Eltham District Historical Society moved into the Eltham Justice Precinct 20 years ago. The Society is located at 728 Main Road, Eltham in the former police residence (1859), part of the stables (1859), and the timber lockup (post 1880s - moved from another site). The Society also has the occasional use of the courthouse and the annex. The precinct originally included a two cell bluestone lockup which was demolished c1959. This article is about that lockup.

The discovery of gold in 1851 led to a population explosion creating a crisis in law and order. Local well built brick police stations were established at permanent sites, replacing tents and portable timber houses, offices and lockups. Typically a police station would comprise a residence, lock up and stables plus a sufficient area for grazing for the policeman's horse, usually shown as the police paddock.

From 1856 the Public Works Department began constructing the more substantial buildings of stone and brick and the lock ups consisted of a standard rectangular plan, square coursed basalt with gabled entry porch and iron grille gate.



The gabled roof was clad in slate and the wall construction was of square coursed basalt. They had moulded timber barge boards, broad eaves, small window openings and narrow ventilation openings in the gabled ends. There were many erected throughout Victoria, but few survive.

The Eltham Justice Precinct demonstrates the development of early policing infrastructure in a small community. The lockup was a temporary holding place for prisoners attending the court and overnight miscreants. Other uses were found as this item from the Argus of 3rd September, 1868 demonstrates.

An inquest was held at Eltham by Mr. Candler, on Wednesday on the body of a man named Edward Tresaine, who on Monday last died in the Eltham lockup. On Saturday deceased was found by Constable Ardill in a hut, where he lived alone, in Watery Gully (Wattle Glen), and he was seen to be very weak and ill. He was asked by the constable if he would go to the hospital, which he declined to do. Ardill told some neighbours of deceased to look after him, and returned on Monday with a spring-cart, to take him to Melbourne. He was conveyed as far as the Eltham lockup where some gruel was prepared for him. The constable in charge was absent, when on his return he found deceased lying dead. Post mortem examination proved that death was due to lung disease; and in the opinion of the medical witness the removal of deceased had nothing to do with his death. Verdict "Death from lung disease".



Bannockburn Lockup - similar to the Eltham Lockup
Photograph - courtesy Golden Plains Shire Council

Edward Tresaine was a 38 year old Cornish miner who was probably suffering from the miner's disease phthisis. He is buried in the Eltham Cemetery.

Whatever happened to Jailhouse Rock?

(continued from page 3)

Eltham District Historical Society member, Doug Orford, has a story to tell of his great uncle James Mathias Orford. Soon after the lockup was built the policeman of the time invited him to have a look through the cells. While doing so the policeman quietly slipped out and locked the door. He then told James he was fined “two gallons” (9 litres). James eventually agreed to buy the two gallons of beer.

Our Eltham Justice Precinct has retained most of these elements including living quarters, stable, and courthouse with a timber lockup being brought in to replace the demolished bluestone building. The bluestone lock up appears to have been demolished soon after 1958, most likely to accommodate new buildings for the Division of Vermin and Noxious Weeds, part of the Works Depot for the Department of Crown Lands and Survey, which was then located on the site. A number of bluestone blocks from the lockup were taken to the intersection of Main Road and Wattletree Road and used for traffic islands. After the intersection was realigned in the 1980s the stones were then brought back to the original site and incorporated into landscaping carried out in the 1980s at the front of the property and along the northern side of the rear car park.

In hindsight how interesting it would be to have the original bluestone lockup as part of the Justice Precinct today, especially as there are very few bluestone buildings in the Eltham area. Some bluestone blocks have wandered further afield. Some have been known to appear like mushrooms in Elthamites’ gardens and fences.

The timber lockup was relocated from Youth Road in Eltham in March of 2001. It is believed to have been used by the Council, probably for storage, but its original location is unknown at this stage.



Timber Lockup at rear of the Local History Centre
Photograph by Jim Connor

References:

Conversations with R. Yeoman, D. Orford, and H. Gillham, EDHS

Eltham Justice Precinct, Conservation Management Plan, Dept. Of Sustainability and Environment, January, 2006, EDHS

D.V. Leader March 2001

NLA Trove, Argus, 3rd September, 1868, P6

Rowe, Dr. David, Golden Plains Shire Heritage Advisor, Golden Plains Shire Heritage

2001 Victorian Heritage Database Report – Lock-up Bannockburn (B2174)

Support from Eltham Rotary

EDHS has been fortunate to have recently received a generous grant of \$1400 from Eltham Rotary, which has enabled EDHS to purchase specialised equipment to progress our digitising and cataloguing program. This is an investment in retaining and protecting the valuable records (photographs and documents etc.) we hold on behalf of our community.



This generous contribution by the Board and members of Eltham Rotary is greatly appreciated by our small not for profit organisation and will provide practical support for our on-going commitment to encouraging interest in our local history. Through their fund raising activities Eltham Rotary assists many local people and community organisations, as well as their international initiatives.

During this 50th Anniversary year we are revisiting the history of our Society, including those who contributed to the establishment of the Shire of Eltham Historical Society in 1967, known since the local government restructure process in 1993/94 as the Eltham District Historical Society. In our last edition we discussed Stanley Simpson Addison. This time we consider Alistair Knox, another member of the interim committee set up to consider establishment of an historical society for the then Shire of Eltham.

Alistair Knox

Alistair Knox was later elected to the inaugural committee and at the first formal meeting on 24th October 1967 he moved and Stanley Addison seconded the motion to establish our Society.

Upon returning to Melbourne in 1945, from active service during the Second World War, Alistair recommenced work as a bank clerk and then undertook part time studies in building, construction and drawing design at the Melbourne Technical College (RMIT). In 1948 he resigned from the bank and commenced the building and design journey he encompassed until his death in July 1986.



Alistair Knox

Photograph provided by Hamish Knox

Moving to Eltham in 1949, where he was inspired by individuals within the creative community there, including at Montsalvat, he later established an environmental based landscape and building design practice. His designs incorporated active recycling of building materials while using, stone, timber and especially mud brick. He developed a collaborative approach to his projects with other local identities. His ideas and philosophies were influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Burley Griffin and other progressive and alternative thinkers.

During his life he published three books as well as contributing many articles to newspapers and other publications. Alistair encouraged and inspired many people to be involved in thinking and building for themselves. In many respects he was well ahead of his time in initiating sustainable design and building practices, cloaked within his own philosophies of environmental responsibility. In doing so, his influences have positively cast a long shadow over the development of the modern Eltham region, as well as in other parts of Australia.

As an Eltham Shire Councillor in 1972-75 including as Shire president in 1975 he actively promoted his ideas, encouraged sustainable design and building practices and influenced council thinking on various projects, that have subsequently proved to be of long term benefit to local communities.

Hamish Knox, one of Alistair's sons, continues this tradition of constructing unique organic type buildings incorporating recycled materials, stone and mud brick. His work looks and feels like it has been there for years..... he 'builds old'!

So while the ideas, philosophies, encouragement and enthusiastic engagement of Alistair Knox has left many valued personal and physical legacies across Australia, we are fortunate he also effectively assisted the establishment of the then Shire of Eltham Historical Society, now known as the Eltham District Historical Society. Our communities are so much richer through the commitments and contributions of such individuals.

The Co-op. was incorporated in May 1971 in Christmas Hills South (now Bend of Islands), with 12 Shareholders on 80 acres of land and the purpose of the Co-op. was to protect and conserve a large parcel of land while living on it. Later the same year an opportunity to buy the neighbouring property of 246 acres came about and it was decided to purchase the land and add another 20 Shareholders to create the current Co-op. with 32 Shareholders on 326 acres of land.

The Co-op. was the fruition of an idea by Neil Douglas who wanted to bring conservation minded people into the area to help look after and conserve a relatively intact piece of Australian bush near Melbourne. Tim Ealey and Randell Champion joined with Neil to get the idea transferred into reality by recruiting members and organising a Non Profit Co-operative under the Victorian Co-operatives Act. This meant that the Co-op. would create a constitution allied to the Model Rules in the Act and organise members to elect a Board of Directors (7) to run the Co-op. on a yearly basis.

The first challenge was to get a permit from the planning authority and we had to deal with two at the same time. The Shire of Healesville was our Council at the time and the MMBW had just created the new plan for the Greater Melbourne Area called the Green Wedge. The initial response from both organisations was negative and we were labelled hippie dropouts looking for an alternative lifestyle. It was the presentation of our Management Plan and our constitution that impressed the planners that we were serious about the land and plans around its preservation for the long haul. Something we have validated by still carrying out the plan after 46 years with good evidence of our successes.

The Co-op. decided to set out a program to eliminate and control weeds, repair erosion, use fire as a tool to stimulate regrowth of native species and reduce fuel loadings on the bushland floor.

We also maintain 3 access roads on the property that allow access to the houses that have now been built over the 46 years on the land.

The Management Plan gives members guidelines on what duties are needed to complete the tasks as set out above.

This is a detailed and thorough series of documents that has had many years of discussion and effort to keep it up to date and effective. Members have recorded native birds, plant species (even rare ones) and many different fauna.

The Directors meet monthly to discuss various issues that involve the running of the Co-op. and monthly Work Parties are carried out by available members to put into practice the works as laid out in the Management Plan. All major policy decisions have to be ratified by the total membership and three General Meetings are held each year to keep the members in touch and to discuss and vote on any new policies.

There are 24 houses on the Co-op. spread between the 3 access roads into the property, eight as yet are still unbuilt. A shareholder is entitled to 1500 squ. metres for a house site. This is leased to the member under the rules of the Co-op. and must contain the house and any ancillary buildings plus the garden site. The garden site can be used for non-indigenous plants for food or decoration as long as they do not spread into the bush as weeds e.g. Plum trees, Passionfruit etc.



A Controlled Burn on the Co-op

Photograph courtesy of the 'Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative

(continued on page 7)

One of our biggest tasks in the 1970s was to get the power connected to the various house sites. The government authority at the time was the SEC and when we approached them with our intention to put the power underground they refused permission. It took many months of negotiations by a few members (one Electrical and 2 Electronic Engineers) before we were able to convince them to agree. Now of course it's compulsory.



When we started weeding our land the most obvious targets were Bone Seed and Pine Trees and for many years we attacked the problem gradually removing them from the property to the extent now that if any are found it is almost a trophy.

Putting the electricity underground 1977
Photograph courtesy of the Round the Bend Conservation Co-operative

We are currently concentrating on grasses and more specifically Erhata and thistles with some other woody plants that sneak in on the wind or are carried in by birds.

During the 1970s when members started to build their houses other members pitched in and helped to build each other's houses. This trend continued when new members joined and more houses were built. The houses are mainly constructed from mudbricks, but some are concrete/hebel block and corrugated iron. The design has been left to members but the siting of the house is discussed on site to enable the member to create the least impact on the land. A building committee was created from experienced builders to help new members when starting out.

I have been a member since 1971 and I'm still living the dream.

www.roundthebend.org.au

Not Far Away

Not far away from the Round the Bend Conservation Co-op others also 'live the dream'. Our local history comes in all shapes and sizes and here people have created their own, by attending and competing since 1937; 80 years ago this year, at the Rob Roy Hillclimb in Christmas Hills, the second oldest purpose built hillclimb in the world.

At the Victorian Historic Racing Register meeting on Sunday 7th May 2017 there were a number of cars there that are history on wheels. One was the Cooper Irving, arguably the most successful sprint car in Australian motor sport history. It was built in 1956 by Phil Irving for Lex Davidson, who was a four times Australian Grand Prix Winner and went on to win many titles in this car. It is now owned by Graeme Noonan who intends to compete with it at as many venues as it did in the 1950's, as still exist today.



The Cooper Irving

Another vehicle on display with a most interesting history was the record breaking Kleinig Hudson Special built by Frank Kleinig in 1936. Based on an MG Magna chassis, it originally had a 1500cc Miller engine that was later replaced by the current eight cylinder Hudson engine. It is now owned by Tom Roberts.

www.robroyhillclimb.com.au



The Kleinig Hudson Special

A Hotel or two!

(continued from page 1)

Over the years both hotels played an important role in the local community, often beyond that of a traditional pub. In 1856 the Fountain of Friendship was used as the meeting place for the formation of the Eltham Roads Board and in 1860 it hosted the inaugural meeting of the Eltham Church Committee, which later built St Margaret's Church of England in Pitt Street, on land donated by Thomas Dendy. At times this hotel even provided prisoner rations for the Eltham Police Station. Originally known as the Fountain of Friendship, it was later the Fountain Hotel, then The Evelyn.

Various people, including some prominent local citizens owned this hotel, including James Purcell c1883, Mr. Harper c1887 and William Morris (a local Shire Councillor) c1890. It was then left to his widow, Mrs. Morris when he died in 1922, by which time it had been de-licenced and was known as a rooming house. Mrs. Morris was still the owner when the building and stables were destroyed by an extensive fire on 8th February 1931. The heat from this fire was so intense that windows in the Eltham Hotel opposite were cracked.

Prepared from research by Christopher Wallis, as well as from detailed notes compiled by Harry Gilham and from an article in 'The Advertiser' on 10th February 1931.

Subscriptions

At the recent Annual General Meeting subscriptions for 2017-2018 were fixed at the same levels as last year and are as follows:

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

We encourage members to take the popular three year subscription option that is three times the annual fee. **Subscriptions are due on 1 July but earlier payment is welcomed.** David Johns can receive your money either at the June meeting, by direct debit or through the mail.

Office Bearers 2017 - 2018

At the Annual General Meeting in April office bearers and committee members were elected for the coming year. Some changes have occurred and the full list of office bearers and committee members is as follows:

President	Jim Connor
Senior Vice-President	Maureen Jones
Junior Vice-President	Peter Pidgeon
Treasurer / Membership Secretary	David Johns
Society Secretary	Russell Yeoman
Committee Members - Alan Butler (Assistant Secretary), Diana Bassett-Smith, Doug Orford, Alison Delaney, Tony Brocksopp, Joan Castledine	

Jim Allen has retired from our Committee after some years of valuable service, including when he effectively represented our Society on the Nillumbik Shire Council's Memorial Committee, which was involved with a number of initiatives and projects to recognise the contributions of residents of the Eltham region during wartime conflicts. We appreciate Jim's contributions on behalf of members of our Society.

One Hundred Years Ago Eltham and District - January - December 1917

Liz Pidgeon

The following comments obtained from Trove were in local papers during the period January - December 1917

January Railways Standing Committee investigates why non-paying railways do not return a profit. Railways include the Eltham to Hurstbridge line.

February New Church Hall opened at Montmorency Presbyterian Church

March Eltham - News has been received by Mrs Miller that her daughter, Nurse Frances Miller is seriously ill at the front in France.

March A recent issue referred to the mice plague in several districts. Last week, near Tanck's corner, (Yarrambat) Mr. James Jeffries, orchardist, had occasion to chaff a stack of hay, and an onslaught was made on the mice, and, without much exertion, 244 were killed and then quite a number escaped. If farmers emulated Mr Jeffrey's example the number of mice would be materially reduced.

March Death of Mr Motchell, of Panton Hill, who met with a fatal accident at the beginning of the week. He took a load of fruit into town on Monday, and in the evening was riding on an electric tram at Windsor, and in getting off he fell and was rendered unconscious. He was taken to the Alfred Hospital, where he died the following day. The funeral took place yesterday, his remains being interred in the Queenstown cemetery. He leaves a wife and family of eight children to mourn their loss.

April Our Eltham correspondent writes:—Claude Morris, at the front in France, son of Cr. Wm. Morris, has been reported wounded. No adverse news of any other local lads lately.

May The Railway Standing Committee has considered the reasons advanced by residents of the Hurst-bridge and Diamond Creek districts for the failure of the Eltham to Hurstbridge line to show a profit.

September An interesting function was held Saturday afternoon last, when the residents turned out in full force to plant an Avenue of Honour to memorialise the brave deeds of our soldiers. Trees, to the number of 115, are planted from the "Flat" to the inter-section of Pitt St.

September The Queenstown and Warrandyte Police Stations are closed. The Warrandyte lock-up is to be removed to Hurstbridge.

October Capt. Arthur J. Phillips, 5th Battalion, only remaining son of Mr. and Mrs. George Phillips, of Eltham, has been wounded in France. He left with the first contingent, and was previously wounded at Gallipoli and Pozieres.

October On Friday next, November 2nd, at the Nillumbik school (Diamond Creek) Flower Day will be celebrated. During the afternoon an Honour Board, inscribed with the names of between 50 and 60 old pupils of the school, will be unveiled.

November Panton Hill State School Committee decide to "perpetuate the bravery of the old scholars of this school".

November New Bridge over Diamond Creek at Hurstbridge is opened in the presence of over 500 spectators. Mr Hurst, son of the founder of the town, has been in the district 61 years, and lives on the hill overlooking the new bridge.

To read more, visit this list on Trove: 100 Years ago Eltham and District 1917 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/list?id=102508>

Victorian Collections

As mentioned at our Annual General Meeting the Eltham District Historical Society is now utilising Victorian Collections, delivered by Museums Australia (Victoria). This free web-based collection management and publishing system acts as a cataloguing tool for cultural organisations of all shapes and sizes. Many historical societies use this process to host their collections of photographs, artifacts and records.

We value the ongoing commitment of some of our members who have been busy sorting, scanning and uploading information and photographs from our collection, which can be viewed at *Victorian Collections.net.au* and then search for *Eltham District Historical Society*.

Our Sponsors

Over the last year our Society has undergone noticeable changes, including refurbishment and reorganisation of our Local History Centre and upgrading of our technology including computers, scanners, software and wi-fi equipment. Much of this has been achieved by generous donations from a number of our members and has enabled commencement of our long term program of scanning and digitising of photographs, records and documents. This has incurred on going costs for the licenced use of required software, as well as other expences.

In order to help offset these costs we have approached some local businesses for support and are pleased to acknowledge that **Morrison Kleeman Real Estate** and the **Eltham Branch of the Bendigo Bank** have agreed to sponsor the Eltham District Historical Society, for three years from 1 July 2017. We greatly appreciate their contributions and encourage our members and friends to remember to support our sponsors.

Please support our sponsors - they support our Society

 morrison kleeman  <i>Contact: Gayle Blackwood - 0408 776 070</i>	Eltham and District Community Bank® Branch  Bendigo Bank
---	--

Contacts for the Eltham District Historical Society

- Jim Connor, President – Telephone 0418 379 497 – edshistory@gmail.com
- Russell Yeoman, Society Secretary – Telephone 9439 9717 – edhsoffice@gmail.com
- David Johns, Treasurer / Membership Secretary – Telephone 9434 3357

We appreciate the financial support provided by
Nillumbik Shire Council and the
Eltham Community Craft and Produce Market
Committee of Management

Printed by courtesy of Vicki Ward MP, State Member for Eltham