Past, Present, Future

Jim Connor

An ongoing challenge as members of a historical society is how do we balance the pressures of possible future development against our desires to protect and honour our valued past, our local history.

As a historical society representing the interests of our community we strive to remain steadfastly non political, yet at times get caught between individual political positions.

Three current local 'hot' topics of historical significance are the Eltham Trestle Bridge, the Eltham Avenue of Honour/Eltham Gateway and the former Eltham Shire offices site and adjacent War Memorial buildings complex.

The Eltham District Historical Society has clearly stated that the valued trestle bridge is of local historical significance, should remain as is and should not be compromised, if and when the railway line is duplicated between Greensborough and Eltham. The sitting State member has indicated it can remain as is and there will be improved scheduling, with no advantage to be gained with duplicating the bridge. Despite claiming 'the trestle bridge remains' the political opponent has stated in a meeting with EDHS that, if elected, a new bridge will be constructed beside it and that his position is 'not negotiable'.

Eltham Trestle Bridge 1981
* Shire of Eltham Pioneers Collection

Similarly, possible duplication of Main Road through the Eltham Gateway and World War 1 Avenue of Honour is being considered, which we believe would totally destroy the historical and cultural significance of this meandering, tree enhanced entrance to Eltham.

What are the options, what is the cost vs benefit? Should we need to compromise our heritage even further to possibly save a couple of minutes in travel?

The third topic is that Nillumbik Shire Council is currently considering redevelopment of the former Eltham Shire offices site in Main Road, Eltham, which includes the Shillinglaw trees, together with the adjacent War Memorial buildings complex.

What do we value of our past to preserve in the present for the 'future', do we restrict our creative options by honouring our heritage, where is the balance?

These are decisions we will all need to consider……sooner rather than later.

Next Meeting
**8.00pm Wednesday 13th June 2018
Eltham Senior Citizen's Centre.**

Heritage Excursion
**2.00pm Saturday 7th July 2018
Along the Diamond Creek**

Our Next Meeting - Wednesday 13th June 2018

Prior to Shillinglaw Cottage (c1878-80) being relocated to where it is now operated as a popular cafe near the Eltham Library, it was within Josiah Holloway's 1850s subdivision known as Little Eltham, which later became the centre of the first Eltham township. Originally a farmer's cottage it is historically significant because it is one of the Shire's oldest dwellings and a fine example of the work of the well-known pioneer builder George Stebbing.

In 1964 the then Shire of Eltham purchased the Shillinglaw property with the intention of demolishing the cottage and constructing new Shire offices on the site. However extensive community action resulted in funds being raised to have the building saved and relocated further south to the Eltham Common, where it was joined by the Eltham Library 1994.

New Shire offices opened in 1965, but following municipal restructure in 1994 these were demolished and the land sold to a developer, which precipitated a dramatic trail of community angst, threats of legal action, the sacking of a newly elected council and several unsuccessful development proposals, by subsequent councils.

After all these years the vacant site there is still guarded by the three trees that were outside the front of the Shillinglaw Cottage.

Former Eltham Shire offices
* Shire of Eltham Pioneers Collection

At our Society meeting on Wednesday 13th June 2018 Jim Connor will speak about the dramatic tale encompassing the history of the former Eltham Shire office site and the adjoining War Memorial Buildings complex, which are now being considered for sale or redevelopment by the current Nillumbik Shire Council.

As always, Society members and visitors are most welcome to attend this meeting at 8.00pm on Wednesday 13th June, in the Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre, Library Place, Eltham.

July Excursion – Along the Diamond Creek

The Diamond Creek is a major feature of the open space spine that runs through the centre of Eltham. From the time of the first European settlement of the area most of the land along the creek valley was private property extending to the centre of the creek. Over many years land has been purchased by the Council and the State Government to create a continuous open space system along at least one side of the creek, from central Eltham to the Yarra River. The area contains many places of historic interest.

Our July excursion will comprise a walk along the creek path from central Eltham to Fabbro Fields finishing at Ely Street. This is about 2 km one way and should take about 2 hours including plenty of time to stop and talk. There will be a return walk without much commentary but those who wish to can catch a bus back from the corner of Main Road and Dalton Street. A particular point of discussion along the way will be the historic railway trestle bridge as to its history and its future given the proposal to duplicate this section of the railway.

This walk on Saturday 7th July will start at 2pm near the scout hall at the southern end of Youth Road (Melway ref 21 J 5). 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.

Eltham 1950s – Childhood Reminiscences – Part 4   Ann Constable

(earlier parts of Ann's story are in previous newsletters available on our website at www.elthamhistory.org.au)

Now, I must write about Eltham village as it was in 1950, we reached it by a track through the scrub from Taylor Street to Henry Street, and then there was a rough street to Dudley Street. It had no name and I think perhaps was part of the Catholic School grounds, then later it and I think also the paddock were encompassed into the school.

The Catholic School playground was on one side and on the other a paddock that always had a cow in it, to the west of the paddock was the Presbytery where the Catholic priest and his housekeeper lived. We then turned down Dudley Street, on the north side was a shoe factory and the Catholic School grounds continued down opposite to the Main Road. On the east side of Main Road was firstly a milk bar called The Celina Café. Then a weatherboard house, next was the toy shop. This was run by Mr. Mills who was also a cobbler, he worked behind the counter mending shoes, and on the right hand side of the shop were three shelves containing toys. At the back of the shop was Mr. Williams who tinkered with, and repaired, wirelesses and crystal sets, he later had his own electrical repair shop over the road near the garage.

Next door was the fire station with its big red fire engine. There was a fire alarm outside behind glass, and when the glass was broken the alarm was set off. The first time we heard this alarm, my mother was in the sitting room with a cup of tea in her hand, and she got a dreadful fright and dropped the cup because the alarm sounded exactly like the air raid sirens during the war, and brought back terrifying memories. Nearly every man in Eltham seemed to be a voluntary member of the Fire Brigade, when the alarm was sounded a blackboard was put outside with the name of the location of the fire, and the engine would leave the station with all the volunteers hanging on for dear life. It would not be allowed today!

Early Eltham Fire Station, Main Road   Eltham Shire Offices and Shire Hall
* Photographs from the Shire of Eltham Pioneers Collection

 Along from the fire station was the Shire Hall, on the corner of Arthur Street, and at the side was the Children's Library, a small room full of books, and to my sorrow it was not open every day, and I could only borrow one book at a time. On the other corner of Arthur Street was the house of Dave Lyon. He and his wife had two children, Betty who was much older than I, she taught Sunday School at St. Margaret's Church of England in Pitt Street, and I think also played the organ, and then there was Ian who was three or four years my senior. Dave and his brother John owned the garage on the western side of Main Road, and behind the house was their workshop.

Mrs. Lyon seemed to be permanently standing at her front gate, she wasn't tall but to a child   she seemed majestic; she was quite stout, had wavy white hair to her shoulders, and wore long beaded dresses either blue or black. She accosted everyone who went past, and I always had to inform her of the health of my mother and grandmother before I was allowed to proceed along the Main Road.

Lavender Park Road Mysteries

Heather Eastman

Have you ever wondered how the street you live on came by its name? People, places and events shape where we live and provide us with an insight into the past and what was important at the time. For instance, Lavender Park Road in Eltham was once known as New Street. Why would they change a perfectly good name for the street, when it did not need to be, or did it?

LAVENDER PARK RD

Maybe it was because on the 29th of May 1954, a local Eltham carpenter by the name of John Swallow committed a double murder at his home on New Street. This happened on the same day as the federal election of that year.

John 53, his wife Mary 47, and step daughter Patricia 25, all went to the Eltham Court House on Main Road to cast their vote in the election that Saturday. After voting they returned home to their New Street house around midday. Patricia would later recall to ambulance officers, that she was feeling unwell, and so went to lay down when she heard an argument erupt over voting between her mother Mary and step father John.

A concerned neighbour heard loud thudding noises and yelling coming from John and Mary's house, he went to investigate. When he arrived at the house he was met by John at the front door. He would later describe John as "having a frantic look upon his face, and manic eyes". John must have been a sight, bleeding and clutching a cut throat razor by his side. He then announced to the neighbour, "they voted commie!" before turning and going back inside. The distressed neighbour immediately raced home to call the Police.

When the police arrived, they found Mary dead on the kitchen floor from catastrophic head injuries; her daughter, Patricia, clinging to life, slumped on her bed. Both women had been attacked by the same weapon, a large hammer, or sledge hammer as reported by the newspapers. John was also discovered in the house, bleeding from self-inflicted wounds from the razor and had attempted to ingest caustic soda.

Patricia was taken to St Vincent's hospital, but died the following day, the 30th of May. John was also taken to St Vincent's, where he remained under constant police guard for several months while he recovered from his injuries, at least the physical. He was eventually well enough to be taken to the City Watch House and then Pentridge Prison before his trial in October that year.

When it came time for John to face the courts, the Judge called a mistrial, the Crown would not prosecute on the grounds of insanity. John was led away from the dock of the Magistrates' Court and taken directly to Willsmere, the Kew Lunatic Asylum.

On the 9th of August 1962, John Mervyn Swallow died of heart failure, he was 57. He had been a resident of Kew for four years. John's body was returned to Eltham Cemetery and buried in the same grave as Mary. There is no mention of his name on the head stone. Patricia's grave is next to Mary and John. A sad irony, there is an angel upon her grave, "its head missing", possibly vandals or just an accident of time and events.

What became of the home where all of this took place on New Street remains a mystery. Within six months of this horrific event the street had been re-named Lavender Park Road after the house called Lavender Park, at the western end of the street. To this day, there still stands a small weatherboard cottage, mostly obscured from view due to the overgrown garden. Nobody has lived in it for a very long time. If you have a keen eye and a sense of mystery, you might even discover it, when walking along Lavender Park Road. Perhaps you should also be keeping an eye out behind you, on the lookout for something old or perhaps 'New'.

Was the David Clark "Victoria's Mayflower"?

Irene Kearsey

The October 1839 arrival of the David Clark brought the first British assisted immigrants direct to the Port Phillip District. Speaking at a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the arrival, a descendant described the ship as "Victoria's Mayflower." At that time, the descendants of the 229 passengers were estimated at 3,000, "and its passengers and their descendants have been a powerful influence in the progress of Australia."[i] The passengers were all Scots, and almost all without much in the way of resources other than their trades and hard work. However, most did achieve some success in life and, in some cases, great wealth.

I have no personal connection to any passenger: my interest started from volunteering at Gulf Station, the historic farm at Yarra Glen, held from the 1850s by William Bell, who was a David Clark passenger with his parents and siblings. I have limited my research to the passengers, although sometimes I have come across information about their descendants. Here I've itemised some influences on Victoria including on the geography of Victoria, where streets and other features have been named for them (passenger names in bold).

This David Clark image is courtesy of Lance Pymble from an original painting by Nicholas Cammillieri, 1820

Close to Eltham, there's Bell Corner at Research after **William Bell** senior who settled at Kangaroo Ground, as did a number of passengers from the David Clark. In Yarra Glen, there's Bell Street named for **William Bell** junior, and Armstrong Grove, for **Simon Armstrong** who settled there. In Ballarat, Armstrong Street remembers Simon's brother, **David**, who was Gold Commissioner for Ballarat.

The families of the two McMillan brothers are remembered in several ways. For **John McMillan** there was McMillan Street (now part of Warrigal Road) and possibly Scotchman's Creek (there were other Scots that settled in the area). For **Archibald McMillan**, Clonaig Street in Brighton is named for the house he built (it's still there) and McMillan Road in Sheep Hills, the township itself named after the family sheep run. Campbell Street in Sheep Hills is named for **John's** son-in-law, **James Campbell** and wife **Isabella McMillan.** Archibald McMillan is perhaps the best example of what these immigrants could achieve: he arrived with only a few shillings in his pocket (earned from doing odd jobs during the voyage) but, with purse strings held by wife **Catherine** (Kate), the family amassed a huge fortune.

Farming families around Melbourne gave their names or those of their farms to streets and areas. Notable are McNabs Road in Keilor (after **Angus McNab** and family), Oaklands Road and Oakland Junction near Tullamarine (Oakland was the first McNab family farm), and Green Gully Road, Keilor, after another McNab family farm. McNae Street, Moonee Ponds, is named for **James McNay**. Gowrie Park Drive through Melbourne airport remembers the farm of **William Thomson** and **David Duncan**. Greenvale is named for the farm of **Catherine McNab's** husband, John McKercher. Brunswick farmer **John Beith** is remembered in Beith Street (incongruously, in 2013, the site of a Beyonce video clip).

Some farmers moved away from Melbourne. Hawkins Creek runs through the property of **Samuel Proudfoot Hawkins** (he became the grandfather of Vida Goldstein, who had an incalculable effect on achieving the vote for women and also on workers' rights and was the first woman to stand for parliament anywhere in the British Empire).

Was the David Clark "Victoria's Mayflower"?

Mathiesons Road, Nirranda, is named for brothers **John Conly Mathieson** and **Archibald Mathieson**. Pastoria Road in Piper's Creek was named after the farm of **Susanna McKindlay** and her husband Thomas Brown.

The passengers included men with building trades and others who took to building. **John Conly Mathieson** had a mid-life career as a builder; works still standing include the historic Police Building at Beechworth, and the lovely Commissioner's Bridge,Yackandandah.

Commissioner's Bridge, Yackandandah

Some men were employed immediately on arrival by Peter Bodecin (who had a building contract for the original St Francis Church on Lonsdale Street) and Alexander Sim (who had a contract for St James Cathedral on its original site and another for St Francis Church): these passengers were **David Aitkin** and **Alexander Robertson** (for Bodecin) and **James Lawrie** and **Archibald McMillan** (for Sim).

Some passengers moved into hotel-keeping. In Melbourne, McLean Place, Fitzroy, is named for **John McLean**, publican of what is now the Terminus Hotel in Queens Parade (a plaque to him is still on the wall). In Dunkeld, Templeton Street remembers **Andrew** and **Jacobina Templeton**, publicans of the Woolpack Inn (sketched by La Trobe when he visited it in 1850). Middlemiss was the original name of the Winding Creek settlement (later re-named Longwood) after **Hugh** and **Jane Middlemiss**.

David Clark passengers influenced horticulture in the new colony in various ways. **John McEwin** brought seeds and plants including, apparently, the first willow trees. In Heidelberg's Botanic Gardens, the two "wishbone" grafted elms were planted by Peter, one of **John** and **Hester McEwin's** sons. Another son, **Andrew**, later moved to New Zealand and published *The Best Method of Saving Seeds* and a section in *The Hand-book to the Farm and Garden arranged for the Seasons and Climate of New Zealand* (1865).

Son **Robert** became the grandfather of Sir Alexander Lyell McEwin, for 40 years a member of the South Australian parliament. Son George (not a David Clark passenger) emigrated to Adelaide in 1839 and published *Catalogue of plants introduced into South Australia* by George Stevenson Esq (1840), *The South Australian vigneron and gardeners' manual* (1843), and *A description of the Adelaide Botanic Garden* (1875) and established the Glen Ewin company. Through George, **John** and **Hester McEwin** were great-great-great-grandparents of Douglas Mawson's grandchildren. By 1932 a grandson and a great grandson of **John McEwin** were on the staff of Burnley Horticultural College.

Another bringer of seeds and plants was **John Arthur**. In Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, on a rock-face inscribed with the names of all the directors, **John Arthur's** name appears at the top as the first superintendent. He is also remembered by Arthur's Elms, the oldest planted trees in the Gardens; unfortunately, **John** died a few years after establishing the Gardens.
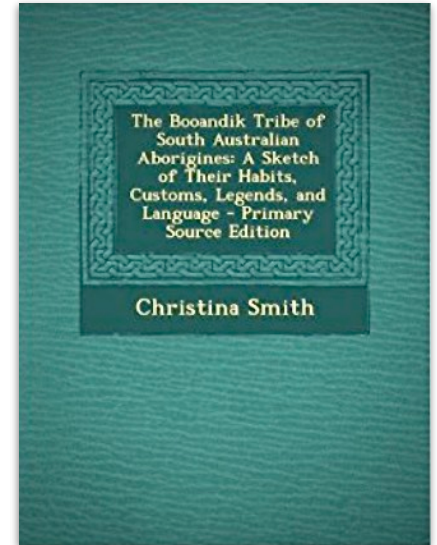
Was the David Clark "Victoria's Mayflower"?

Mary McMaster married David Dunlop and they became bakers. They settled eventually in Beechworth and had a bakery "in Camp Street opposite the Post Office" which is how one would now describe the location of the famous Beechworth Bakery (I am still to confirm that the buildings are the same).

A sad claim for **Archibald** and **Elizabeth** McIntyre is that a granddaughter was the last person to be buried in the Old Melbourne Cemetery; she shared the grave of grandmother **Elizabeth** and one of Elizabeth's daughters, **Ann**. The bodies and stone were later transferred to Fawkner Cemetery. **Martha Ronald** became the aunt of George Reid, Australia's fourth Prime Minister; he had earlier sat in a colonial parliament (New South Wales) and later in the British House of Commons, a unique achievement.

Only one David Clark passenger appears in the Australian Dictionary of Biography: **Christina Stewart** (nee Menzies), a widow who re-married in Melbourne. As Christina Smith, she took an interest in Aboriginal affairs and published *The Booandik Tribe of South Australian Aborigines: a sketch of their Habits, Customs, Legends* (1880). Christina is also featured in a display in the Lady Nelson Discovery Centre, Mount Gambier. Her son, **Duncan Stewart**, later published a vocabulary for the tribe.

Does all this equate to *"Victoria's Mayflower"*? The passengers certainly had an impact on Victoria, most especially in Kangaroo Ground where so many of them settled and intermarried: **William** and **Agnes** Bell and 5 children, **Thomas** and **Mary Armstrong** and 8 children, **Thomas Armstrong** (not related), siblings **Francis** and **Janet** Rogerson, **John** and **Janet** Barr, and **Elizabeth Arthur** (John's widow) and 2 children. *My research is ongoing!*

The Booandik Tribe of South Australian Aborigines by Christina Smith

[i]*The Age*, 15 November 1939, p.10.

Jalna Yoghurt

Wendy Wilson

Many of us enjoy eating yoghurt each morning for breakfast. I was 22 when I first travelled to Europe and went on a skiing trip to Westendorf, Austria. There, I discovered yoghurt and thought it was delicious. Recently I was surprised to learn that Jalna yoghurt originated in Eltham.

In 1959 Simon Goldman, a Polish migrant, bought a small farm in Eltham and called it "Jalna". He had a few cows for milking and made cottage cheese and sour cream. Many of his European friends were missing their yoghurt due to the lack of natural cultured dairy foods in their new country so he started producing the pot set variety.

The street in Eltham South called 'Jalna Court' is the only physical reference left of this original dairy farm.

The McLaren family bought the business in the 1970's and have retained the original name of the property. Jalna Yoghurt now operates from a factory in Thomastown and their dairy farm in northern Victoria.

Office Bearers 2018 - 2019

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	Peter Pidgeon
Junior Vice-President	Liz Pidgeon
Treasurer / Membership Secretary	Lesley Mitchell
Society Secretary	Russell Yeoman

Committee Members - Heather Eastman (Assistant Secretary), Tony Brocksopp, Joan Castledine, Alison Delaney, Richard Pinn, Wendy Wilson.

We warmly welcome our new committee members.

Diana Bassett- Smith, Doug Orford, David Johns and Alan Butler have retired from our Committee after many years of valuable service. Diana and Doug are honorary life members, as now is David.

We appreciate that each has contributed many hours over many years to guiding, supporting and contributing to the operation of our Society, as without their efforts we would not have developed as we have.

As Assistant Secretary Alan has been most helpful with assisting the operation of our administration and committee activities. Our sincere thanks are extended to Diana, Doug, David and Alan and we look forward to their continued involvement as members.

Subscriptions

At the Annual General Meeting subscriptions for 2017-2018 were fixed at the same levels as last year, 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, which is three times the annual fee.

Andrew Ross Museum

The Shire of Eltham Historical Society, as our Society was known prior to municipal restructure in 1994, actively assisted with the establishment of the Andrew Ross Museum, that was opened in March 1993. It is located in the former teacher's residence at Kangaroo Ground and is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

Bruce Ness suggested to our Society that the former residence, which was no longer needed by the Education Department, be used to establish a museum. A sub-committee was subsequently formed and Mick Woiwod, who was a committee member offered to coordinate the project. Mick along with Diana Bassett-Smith, Margaret Woiwod, Wendy Bradley, Gary Paterson, Harry Gilham and others worked hard to convert this idea into the reality that the Andrew Ross Museum is today. It is well worth a look and is open to the public on Thursdays between 10am and 12 noon and on Sundays, by appointment only. For further information see www.andrewrossmuseum.org.au.

New Life Members

Russell Yeoman

In accordance with Section 7iv of the Society's constitution the Society may elect honorary life members. At the Annual General Meeting on 11th May 2018 David Johns and Jim Connor were elected as honorary life members and they join seven other members who have received this award.

The following brief summary of the reasons for each award was given to the meeting:

David Johns

David has been a member of the our Society for many years and has acted in the role of treasurer and membership secretary since 2006. In doing so he has fulfilled the financial management responsibilities of the Society and maintained required membership records.

During 2011 when our Society was investigating the purchase of a new public-address system David was instrumental in analysing and providing technical advice to support the selection and the ultimate purchase of our current system. Since then David has been responsible for setting up the equipment at each meeting and in recent times recording meeting activities.

David's valued contribution to the operation of the Eltham District Historical Society has been significant over the term of his membership. While he has now decided to retire from directly assisting our Society we are pleased he wishes to maintain his connection with our activities.

Jim Connor

Jim has been the President of the Eltham District Historical Society since 2009 and before that was Vice President from 2002 to 2008. This period has been a time of significant change to the Society with much of it being due to Jim's efforts.

Past presidents of the Society have generally been awarded life membership of the Society after they have retired. However in view of the major contribution by Jim I think it is appropriate that it be formally recognised while he is still in office.

Most of the significant achievements of the Society during Jim's term as President are known to members and I cannot list them all in the time available. Most are based on Committee decisions but have originated with Jim and he has been the driving force behind getting them done. Just a few examples are the recent refurbishment of our Local History Centre and the purchase of new computer equipment and other technology.

Jim has now largely taken over responsibility for production of our much improved newsletter. Jim also works behind the scenes such as in raising funds through sponsorship and donations and also fostering good relations with Nillumbik Shire Council. Jim's promotion of the Society is at least partly responsible for our recent Nillumbik Community Group of the Year award.

Membership Subscriptions for 2018 - 19 are due on 1st July
We appreciate those members who have already renewed their membership. Your payment would be welcome to Lesley Mitchell at our June meeting or by direct credit to EDHS Bendigo Bank BSB 633 000 Account 141820902 or by mail to PO Box 137 Eltham 3095. **If paying by direct credit** could you please email details, including your name and address, to edhstreasurer@gmail.com to ensure your payment is recorded.

Contacts for the Eltham District Historical Society

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