



## Finding a Home

Russell Yeoman

For more than 30 years following its establishment in 1967 our Society had no permanent “home”. Society meetings were held in various places, firstly in the Eltham Shire Hall, then the War Memorial Hall in the War Memorial complex of buildings and finally in the Eltham Senior Citizens; where we still meet today. There were other one-off meeting venues such as the Great Hall at Montsalvat, Metzner Hall at Judge Book Village and once in the Eltham Shire Offices. Committee meetings were originally held in these halls but later in the homes of committee members. A favourite place for a number of years was the home of Blanche and Jack Shallard in Montmorency. Supper here consisted of Blanche’s excellent cheese scones.

The Society was significantly involved with the Eltham Shire Council. The President was Cr. Charis Pelling, Shire Secretary Max Watson was Vice President and Secretary Russell Yeoman also worked for the Council. From 1967 the Society began accumulating historical records but was somewhat inhibited by lack of a place to store them. Many records were stored in the Shire Offices and there was little distinction as to what was owned by the Society and what was owned by the Council. The collection of historical records and photographs was significantly augmented in 1971 by the Council collecting material for the publication of “Pioneers and Painters”.

As the volume of Society acquisitions grew further storage locations were required. As well as records some artefacts were added to the collection including items collected by the Shillinglaw Cottage Preservation Committee. Although the cottage had been preserved the plan to use it as a museum did not eventuate. Some items that were to be donated remained with the donors pending a suitable place to keep them. An example was a large collection of farming and other artefacts donated by Bruce and Joy Ness of Kangaroo Ground that was kept in their barn. Storage of the Society’s paper based records fell in large part to Russell Yeoman as Secretary and these were kept at his house, generally in less than optimum conditions. There was a filing cabinet in the laundry and various boxes in other parts of the house and in the shed. Large plans were kept in a cardboard folder under a bed. Workshops to get these records into some sort of order were held at the Yeoman house.

Fast forward to 1998. Nillumbik Shire Council has succeeded the Eltham Council. Much of the Society’s collection of artefacts has been passed on to the fledgling Andrew Ross Museum. Society President Harry Gilham has successfully negotiated with the Commissioners in charge of the Council to secure the long term use of the former Eltham Police Residence by the Society. This State Government owned building had been used by Eltham Council as its Parks and Environment office. The long task of moving the Society’s collection from its various storage locations began. This historic building has become our Local History Centre and it has enabled the acquisition of far more historical material than had previously been possible and has helped secure the future of the Eltham District Historical Society.



As we celebrate the 20th year in our Local History Centre we acknowledge and are forever indebted to Harry Gilham and the other members who worked so hard to establish and maintain our “home”.

## Next Meeting

**8.00pm Wednesday 8th August 2018**

**Eltham Senior Citizen’s Centre.**

**Library Place, Eltham**

## Open Day - Local History Centre

**1.00pm Saturday 1st September 2018**

*See further details on page 2*

## Our Next Meeting - Wednesday 8th August 2018

How do you consider designing an extension to a church that was built in 1861, just where do you start, especially when it is a church of local significance and listed by Heritage Victoria?

The church in question was designed by architect Nathaniel Billings, built by well-known pioneer builder George Stebbing on land donated by Henry Dendy and is St Margaret's Church in Pitt Street, Eltham.

Adjoining this church is a large mud brick hall known to many of our Society members. It was also the venue for our 50th anniversary celebration dinner on 21st November 2017.

At our Society meeting at 8.00pm on Wednesday 8th August 2018 architect David Wagner from Atelier Wagner will speak about the opportunities and challenges experienced in designing and constructing a contemporary style extension to this revered historical building, valued by the local congregation.



St Margaret's Church, Eltham  
Photograph by Jim Connor

Prior to becoming involved with St Margaret's the Atelier Wagner architectural practice has, among an extensive range of projects, renovated and extended several churches. With this project there was also the challenge of incorporating, modifying and connecting the adjacent buildings that shared an entrance foyer. As always, Society members and visitors are most welcome to attend this meeting in the Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre, Library Place, Eltham.

## Open Day at our Local History Centre - Saturday 1st September 2018

In place of our listed heritage excursion for Saturday 1st September 2018 the Eltham District Historical Society will hold an Open Day at the Eltham Justice Precinct, on the corner of Main Road and Brougham Street, Eltham.

The intention of this event is to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of our Local History Centre, which was opened on 12th July 1998 and is located in the former Police residence adjacent to the Eltham Court House. Our Centre was established through the dedicated work of some of our members.



Eltham Local History Centre and replica Police Station  
Photograph by Jim Connor

As part of this celebration we will also be launching our use of the replica Police station next to our Local History Centre. The intention is to have this small timber building reflect a 1920s era Police station, that will be used as part of our regular heritage tours for schools and community based groups.

This Open Day will be between 1pm and 4pm and is free for the general public as well as Society members. Dogs are not permitted at this event.



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

Next were two wooden buildings with roofs out over the pavement. The first was the Newsagent owned by Mr. Raines who ran this with his son Murray, I think the family lived above this shop. I had a run in with Murray when I was nine, I was walking along past the newsagent's with my cocker spaniel Chips, there were metal holders containing posters with the news headlines outside the shop, and unfortunately Chips lifted his leg on one of these. Murray rushed out of the shop and kicked Chips so hard he yelped. I burst into tears and to the edification of the people in the street, I shouted out: "How dare you kick my dog, he was only having a wee, how would you like it if I kicked you when you were weeing?" and I actually tried to kick him, but luckily for us both, Mrs. Raines rushed out of the shop and diffused the situation.

Next door was the Barber's shop this was owned by Mr. Lear known as "Killer Lear." Above this shop and reached by wooden stairs was the Chemist shop run by Mr. Brown. This was small and dark, on one wall was a poster of a young woman with shingled hair and a dress from the twenties advertising Kodak films, which must have been twenty years old at least, I would not have been surprised to have seen a leech in a bottle as well.

Further on was Mr. Sumpter's shop, he sold electrical goods. Mrs. Sumpter always sat behind the counter, and on the counter was a glass vase with the first artificial flowers I had ever seen; three paper roses, pink, white and red. I thought they were lovely and secretly coveted them! When we first came to Eltham, my mother bought an iron and a wireless from this shop. Their son Les was the local post man.

Now, for the western side of the Main Road. The first shop was a grain merchant, and the store had several resident cats, I suppose to keep the inevitable mice at bay. I loved crossing over the street to walk past the store, as there was always at least one cat to talk to and play with.

Next door was Garnet Burgess who had a second-hand shop, and after that was Ray Staff's store. This was half grocer and half milk bar. They had an enormous Saint Bernhard dog called Bruce, who always lay on the pavement outside so pedestrians had to walk around him. I used to feel so sorry for him in the summer, as he would lie there in his big fur coat panting, he was never shorn.



Eltham Produce Store Main Road Eltham c.1960

\* Shire of Eltham Pioneers Collection

Then came the garage, this was owned by the Lyon brothers Dave and John. The brothers had married two sisters, and as I have mentioned Dave had two children, but John had none. I do not know where John lived, but he was always at the garage, working on and repairing cars or driving one of the two black Holden taxis. I knew these taxis well, as when my mother had to take Granny to Melbourne they hired one of these. The taxi number plates were US139 and TK 016, funny how they stay in my mind. There were petrol bowsers on the pavement near the road.



Lyon Bros. Eltham Motor Garage,  
283-287 Main Road Eltham c.1963

\* Shire of Eltham Pioneers Collection

The Lyon brothers also ran the red buses. Two buses were always at the station in the morning, the smaller one took children firstly to Eltham North Primary School and then on to Research Primary School. The second larger one met the train that brought children to Eltham High School, some of the pupils came from as far away as Ivanhoe; in 1955 Heidelberg High School opened, and took some of these pupils. There were three other school buses for the High School; one went to Kinglake, the second to Doreen, and the third to Strathewen.



Group of Eltham High School students  
with Lyon's School Bus c.1950

\* Shire of Eltham Pioneers Collection

I must mention John Lyon, he was one of the kindest men I knew. When Granny was in St. Andrew's Hospital, he often drove my mother there, and one Sunday we came too, but were not allowed to visit as we were nine, so John took us over to the Fitzroy Gardens and amused us until visiting hours were over. On the way home he taught me to sing "I see the moon, the moon sees me".

When I first met him, he used to tease me, and called me "Little Miss Pommy." I would say "My name is Ann not Miss Pommy" and we would both laugh, children instinctively loved "Uncle John". When my mother bought the Morris Isis she asked John to come with her for a test drive as she had not driven for several years. She had bought her first licence when she turned eighteen, there were no tests needed in those days, and my Grandfather taught her to drive. John was very impressed at how she managed the engine, and her double-de-clutching skills! Dear "Uncle John" was killed in a level crossing smash in Rosanna in c1958, and poor Ian was the one who took the tow truck to the smash, not knowing at the time who was involved. John had a private funeral at a Lodge as he was a Freemason, but most of Eltham including my mother went to the burial in Eltham Cemetery, it was packed.

After the garage was a paddock and then the station yard where the buses waited. On the southern side was a Milk Bar. On the northern side behind a paling fence was the station master's ugly brown weatherboard house, he was called Mr. Johnson. Also on this side of the station yard were several enormous peppercorn trees, they had a lovely smell, but the bark was very rough so they were difficult to climb.



Frank Page of Briar Hill has made a generous donation to the Society of a copy of the Melbourne newspaper The Times dated April 12 1851. We are grateful to him for the gift of this important historical document. The paper contains a notice by J. M. Holloway advertising land for sale at Little Eltham.

Holloway's square mile of land was subdivided in stages commencing in 1851 so this advertisement probably represents the beginning of township development in Eltham. In all, the subdivision contained over 850 residential and small farm lots. It included the main part of today's Eltham including the town centre. Apart from its historic importance the advertisement is an interesting example of how real estate was marketed at that time; how things have changed since. The advertisement reads:

### NEW TOWNSHIP of LITTLE ELTHAM

Adjoining the Government Township of Eltham on the Yarra River.

Half-acre allotments for sale in the above Township, at 35s, each.

*Title - A Grant from the Crown to the Vendor*

The advertiser feels persuaded that to recommend the above property he need only state the three following undeniable facts:-

First, - The Diamond Creek, which yields a never failing supply of the purest water, runs through the whole length of the township.

Second, - The boundary of the Government township reserve was fixed years back, when Melbourne itself was not expected to rise beyond a mere village and when the valuable building ground at Collingwood was sold in allotments containing about twenty-seven acre each.

Third, - Immediately beyond the Government township the bank of the Yarra is so steep that water could with difficulty be obtained from the river, making certain that the town will extend itself in the direction of the creek.

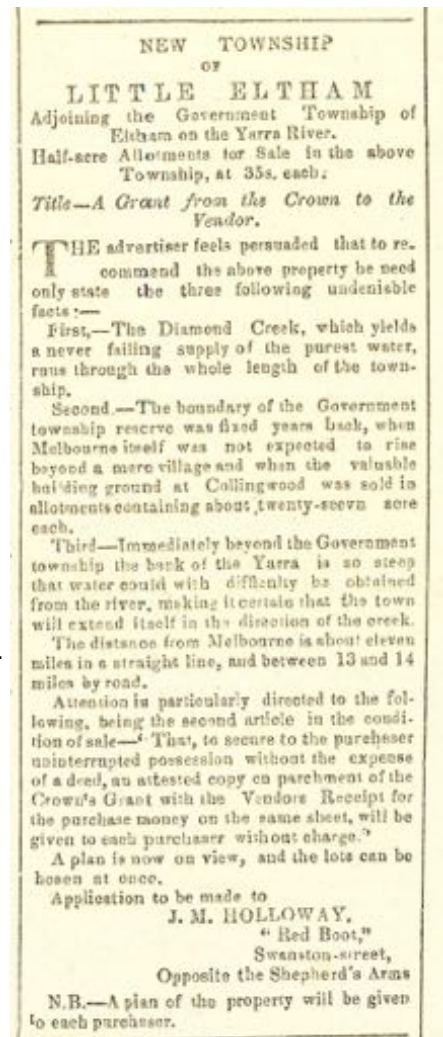
The distance from Melbourne is about eleven miles in a straight line, and between 13 and 14 miles by road.

Attention is particularly directed to the following, being the second article of the condition of sale - 'That to secure the purchaser uninterrupted possession without the expense of a deed, an attested copy on parchment of the Crown's Grant with the Vendors Receipt for the purchase money on the same sheet, will be given to each purchaser without charge.'

A plan is now on view, and the lots can be hosen at once.

Application to be made to  
J.M. HOLLOWAY  
"Red Boot,"  
Swanston-street,  
Opposite the Shepherd's Arms

N.B.- A plan of the property will be given to each purchaser.



From the earliest times of European settlement in Victoria the sale or granting of land has been based on a series of counties into which Victoria was divided. Counties were divided into parishes. Eltham is situated within the Parish of Nillumbik within the County of Evelyn. In more recent years Nillumbik has been chosen as the name of our local shire.

Although it includes more than one parish it is located almost entirely within the County of Evelyn. Similarly the former Shire of Eltham was located within the County, except for a small area at Lower Plenty that was in the County of Bourke and an area north of the Great Dividing Range at Kinglake that was in the County of Anglesey.

Generally the County of Evelyn comprises the whole of the catchment of the Yarra River east of the Plenty River on the north side and Mullum Mullum Creek on the south side. The northern boundary is the Great Dividing Range and the southern boundary is the ridge line separating the Yarra catchment from those watercourses flowing towards Westernport Bay and Gippsland. It extends easterly to the source of the Yarra near Woods Point. As well as towns in our shire the County covers the suburbs and towns of Ringwood, Lilydale, Healesville and Warburton.

For many years I have been curious about the origin of the name Evelyn but I have never researched it. So I was interested to see an article in Placenames Australia, the Newsletter of the Australian National Placenames Survey (June 2018) titled "How Mt Evelyn was named".

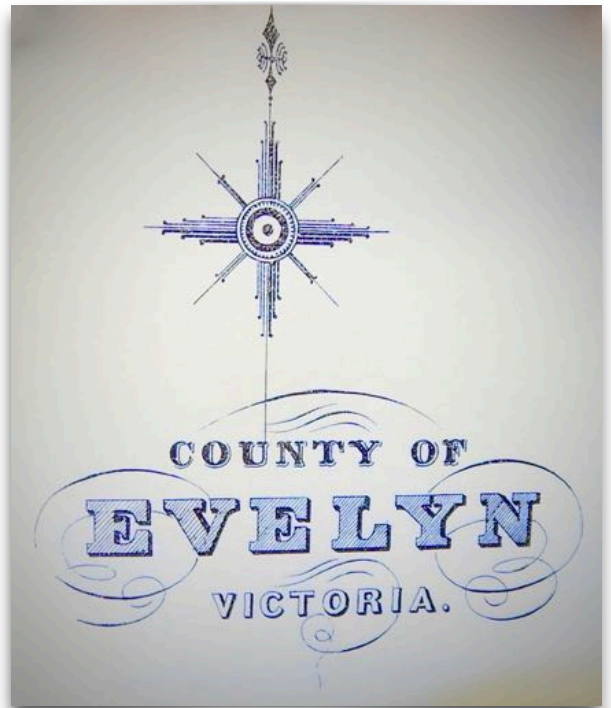
Mt Evelyn is a town in the Dandenong Ranges near the southern boundary of the County of Evelyn. The article by Karen Phillips tells how Mt Evelyn went through many name changes eventually settling on its current name based on its location in the County.

Under the heading "The County of Evelyn" the article says the following.

*"Governor Fitz Roy of New South Wales proclaimed 31 counties in the Port Philip District including the County of Evelyn, in January 1849. The origins of county names were not given, but most were the names of titles of British parliamentarians. Saxby states that Evelyn was named after "William J. Evelyn, MP for Surrey West 1849 - 1857"*

*This is a little misleading, as William Evelyn was not elected to Parliament until September 1849, eight months after the county was proclaimed. The Evelyn family, however, had contributed at least seven MPs to the British Parliament over two centuries. As William John Evelyn was head of the family at the time the county was proclaimed, we can reasonably say it was named after him".*

That article is based on a booklet by Karen Phillips with the same title and which provides more detailed information particularly about the Evelyn family. It is available from the Mt Evelyn History Group.



*(continued on page 7)*

## The County of Evelyn

(continued from page 6)

The County name has given rise to other uses of the Evelyn name. The State electoral province of Evelyn was once identical with the County. These days the Evelyn Province still exists but covers an area in the Yarra Valley east of suburban Melbourne. Prominent members for Evelyn in the days when Eltham was included were Ewen Hugh Cameron of Kangaroo Ground after whom Strathewen is named and William Everard, commemorated by Mt Everard in the Kinglake National Park.

The name Evelyn is not so well known by local residents today, unless of course they live in Mt Evelyn. However in the mid to late 1800s it was in far more common usage.

The name was used for local facilities such as the Evelyn Hotel in Eltham and the Evelyn Arms hotel between Greensborough and Diamond Creek. In the 1870s pioneer schoolteacher Andrew Ross established the Evelyn Observer newspaper at Kangaroo Ground. Years later Ross contributed a series of reminiscences for that paper regularly referring to events in the county of Evelyn by way of referencing the local district.



Morris's Evelyn Hotel and Butchery,  
Main Road, Eltham c1860  
Photograph EDHS Collection

For example in Reminiscence No 19 dated 12th October 1888 he wrote:

“In the annals of Evelyn county the year 1855 will stand memorable for the discovery of gold within its borders leading thereby to a great increase of population and eventually of settlement”.

## An ‘enlightening’ tale

Jim Connor

Recently while showing some visitors our Local History Centre we investigated one of the large journals from the former Eltham Shire Council held in our collection. This particular one was a wages journal covering the period from 1954 onwards.

Looking through some of the well worn pages we noted the various jobs listed, such as labourer, truck driver, shire engineer, typiste, patrolman, grader driver and handyman etc. What really surprised us was to see that, up until the fortnight ending 15th August 1956, the Eltham Shire Council employed a person for 1 hour per day, for 7 days each week, as ..... a lamplighter. His name (we presume he was a male) was listed in many pages of the journal as A.E. Saville, yet when he signed each entry on receiving his pay he signed E.A Saville.

O Kacey	Inspector (cas)	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	64	73.3
A.E. Saville	Lamplighter	1	1	1	1 1/2	1	1	1	1 1/2	14	6/8.4 4 13 10
H. Young		8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	50	76.2

As he was only employed for one hour per day it may be reasonable to assume he did not need to attend to very many lights. Perhaps there were some lamps remaining somewhere in the Shire in 1956 that still needed daily attention. We would indeed be interested to know if any of our readers has any further information to share about this ‘enlightening’ tale.



*These articles were written by Mick Woiwod and published in the Nillumbik Mail during 2000 and are included now to commemorate and celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Andrew Ross Museum in 1993. We are pleased our members assisted Mick Woiwod and others to convert the idea for this museum into a reality.*

## **The Andrew Ross Museum**

Mick Woiwod

To say Andrew Ross was the first Kangaroo Ground schoolmaster tells us little of the man after whom the Andrew Ross Museum is named. There's a lot more to Ross than that.

At one time or another, during his 25 years in Kangaroo Ground, Andrew Ross was also the local Sunday preacher, the local publican, postmaster, storekeeper, registrar of births and deaths, electoral officer and the first publisher of the 'Evelyn Observer'. He was dubbed 'the father of Australian Steam Navigation'. The museum is a celebration of Ross' life.

Much of what we know today of the European settlement of the Yarra Valley comes from the hand of Ross. For 60 years he kept a diary which carefully chronicled everything within his ken. Whenever an event of importance was planned for Melbourne, Ross would be off on his horse to observe and record it.

In many ways Andrew was a big fish in a small pond, eager to emulate, in his own way, other members of his family who in England were knights of the realm and led armies into battle. One uncle, who was the Admiral of the Swedish Fleet, later became the first to reach the North Magnetic Pole, while a cousin was the first to explore the Antarctic shoreline - recognised in the naming of the Ross Sea.

What better way to celebrate a schoolmaster's life than within the former schoolmaster's residence standing today on the site of the school he once taught in (1851-1876) - a heritage building in its own right within which the country newspaper he founded was once published.

## **Kangaroo Ground – Centre of the Shire**

Mick Woiwod

Driving through Kangaroo Ground today one might find it difficult to believe that for 69 years it was the centre from which the entire region was governed.

Not that it ever pretended to be anything other than what it is today, simply a village. It's just the hard-working Scots of Kangaroo Ground for many decades were the power in the land. Sure, some early meetings of the Eltham District Roads Board were held in the front parlour of the 'Fountain of Friendship Hotel', Eltham - a few too in the Eltham Court House - after that, all the action was in Kangaroo Ground.

When first constituted as the Shire of Eltham in 1871, the council met in Kangaroo Ground's early slab and shingle school house, after which it moved a hundred metres up the road to the Andrew Ross Kangaroo Ground Hotel where it met until 1885. That year it returned down the road 50 metres to Stevenson's Hall where it continued to meet until 1904, when it moved yet again. This time it went across the road to the two front rooms of the present Kangaroo Ground Supply Store.



Kangaroo Ground Hotel  
Photograph - EDHS Collection



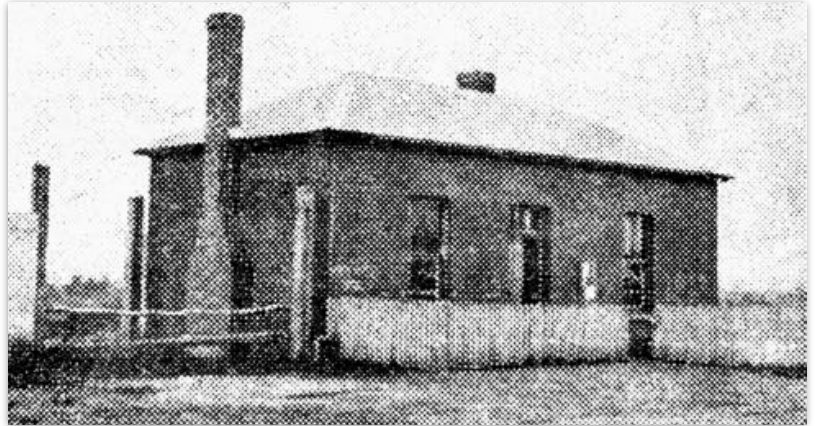
## Kangaroo Ground – Centre of the Shire

*(continued from page 8)*

It stretches one's imagination to understand how the shire managed to govern its then far larger shire from the tiny room today serving as post office and storeroom. It did so for 13 years (1904-1917) after which it returned up the hill, this time into the vacated offices of the Evelyn Observer newspaper alongside the Kangaroo Ground Hotel.

At last able to spread its wings, it moved its book keeping section, previously held within 'Wingrove Cottage' into the premises, with future novelist Alan Marshall serving a while as junior book-keeper.

Then, 17 years later (1934) the building was destroyed in an overnight fire. The catastrophe, however didn't release Kangaroo Ground's tireless grip. Instead, the shire offices relocated down the road to 'Kialta' on the Donaldson square-mile where it remained a further three years, with Eltham all the while challenging its right to rule.



Evelyn Observer offices Kangaroo Ground  
Photograph - EDHSCollection

In the end Eltham won out, but it didn't win easily! The farmers of Kangaroo Ground joined up with their countrymen in Yarra Glen and fought to have the shire relocate to Watsons Creek, midway between their two towns.

## On the Thirsty Road to the Diggings

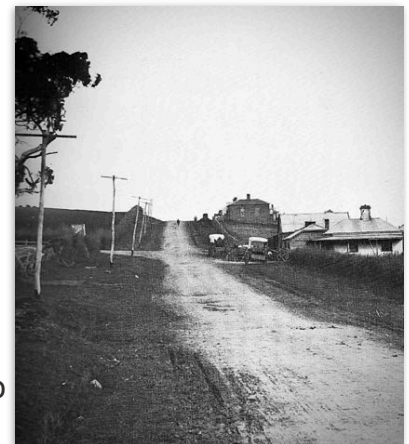
Mick Woiwod

News of gold in September 1851 saw the Scottish farmers of Kangaroo Ground abandon their farms and head to Bendigo and Castlemaine to try their luck on the diggings. Within weeks they were back, convinced gold could be more easily won from their farms.

Three years later gold was discovered in Smiths Gully giving them a market closer to home. By the mid 1850's Kangaroo Ground was producing 500 acres of grain. In 1864 the Yarra Track opened through the mountains to the incredibly rich goldfields of Woods Point and the Jordan - it too passed through Kangaroo Ground.

Pubs and grog shops sprang up at every turn. Eventually an amazing thirteen had been built between Eltham and Yarra Glen to serve the stream of thirsty diggers passing through. Upon arrival in Eltham the digger had a choice between the Fountain of Friendship and the Eltham, opposite each other on the main road. A few miles further along a pot could be had at Research in the Wallaby Arms on the corner of Main Road and Beard Street.

From there the thirsty digger had to climb into the hills of Kangaroo Ground with a choice there of either Wellers, now a restaurant, or the Andrew Ross Kangaroo Ground Hotel on the top of the hill, above the present tennis courts.



Eltham - Yarra Glen Road  
at Kangaroo Ground  
Photograph - EDHSCollection

## On the Thirsty Road to the Diggings

(continued from page 9)

Alternatively he could push on a mile or two to the Caledonian Hotel on the corner of Dawsons and St Andrews roads or the Councillor's Arms at the bottom end of Dawsons Road. From there he had a mere five minutes stroll to Clive Watson's Creek Hotel at the Don Fox Garage site for his next drink. Now in the hilly Christmas Hills there were a further three watering holes to quench his thirst, the Sawyer's Arms, Lowman's Folly and the Flying Squirrel. Having successfully negotiated these it was fortunately all downhill to the next.

The Junction Hotel stood at the foot of the escarpment on the outskirts of Yarra Glen. If this wasn't up to scratch he could always push on to the Yarra Flats Hotel alongside the present Grand Hotel.

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