

Newsletter

No. 244 February 2019



A Playful History

Jim Connor

In our April 2018 newsletter we mentioned how the disastrous fire that destroyed the popular, community built Eltham North Reserve Adventure Playground, on Saturday 16th December 2017, highlighted the importance and value of a playground, to a person's memories.

This disaster resulted in widespread community feelings, including anger, disappointment, loss and despair. For many people, of different ages, a physical part of their own history had vanished.

What followed was an intense response from community, council, government and business, underlined by a dedicated commitment to achieving the construction of a new playground, in a ridiculously short timeframe of 12 months. This process in itself produced many memorable moments, for so many people, who came together and overcame various challenges to passionately produce a lasting legacy, for current and future generations.

On the 19th December 2018 the replacement playground was officially opened by Cr. Karen Egan, Mayor of the Shire of Nillumbik, instantly followed by the invasion by hundreds of excited young children, who swarmed all over the play space. In their own way these experiences will become part of their histories.

Many people who contributed to this project, which reflects loved features of the old, together with opportunities of the new, perhaps don't fully appreciate the significance of establishing this new source of playful history.



Children swarm the play space after the ribbon is cut by Cr. Karen Egan, Mayor of the Shire of Nillumbik

Everyone actively involved with this playground, (*and they know who they are*), can rest assured they have assisted with creating, for many children and adults, the potential for positive memories they can carry into their own histories.

Next Meeting

8.00pm Wednesday 13th February 2019

Eltham Senior Citizen's Centre.

Library Place, Eltham

Heritage Excursion

2.00pm Saturday 2nd March 2019

Return to Research

See further details on page 2

Our February Meeting

As has happened previously at our first meeting of the year, we are going to again have a night when we will investigate some treasured pictures from our archives.

The difference this time is that we will view and discuss some photographs of Eltham, in earlier days, that you may never have seen before.

These are available due to the consistent efforts of our collections team, who over the last 2 years has been active in scanning and cataloguing a range of images to our pages on the Victorian Collections website.

Members and visitors are welcome to attend this meeting, on Wednesday 13th February 2018, at 8:00 pm at the Eltham Senior Citizen's Centre. We look forward to seeing you then.



Eltham Feed Store, corner of Main Road and York Street, c.1985
Photograph - EDHS Collection

March Excursion - Return to Research

For our next excursion on Saturday 2nd March 2019 we will spend some time revisiting Research.

It is well steeped in the history of the former Shire of Eltham and is an area that has experienced many changes over the years. Many of the older buildings no longer exist.

We will meet at 2.00pm at the Research Shopping Centre in Main Road (Melway ref 22 G2). The planned walk is about 3.5 km in length and will take about 2 hours, but can be shortened in the event of hot weather. Commentary will reference Andrew Lemon's 1989 book 'Return to Research'.

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.



Research Hotel, early 1930s
Photograph - EDHS *

You May Notice

As you read some of the articles in this newsletter about early life in the Eltham district you may notice that some individuals, or their families, are mentioned in more than one of the stories being told. This is not intentional, but just an interesting coincidence reflecting on the significance of some early pioneers and their dedicated efforts in contributing to the development of an engaged local community.

Early Days Recalled At Eltham

The following article was sourced from TROVE: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/57495642> - *Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser (Melbourne, Vic.:1940-1942) Friday 21 November 1941 (page 4)*

Probably the oldest living pioneer of the Eltham district still resident there is Mr. Edmund Williams, who is over 91 years of age. Mr. Williams was born in the Goulburn River district, but came to Eltham when a baby and has continued to live there ever since.

Although he admits to his 91 years, Mr. Williams would pass for a man 20 years younger and still tends a small orchard and has excellent sight and hearing. He is keenly interested in the development of the district; and considers that the new hall and offices will be a marked asset to Eltham.

With faultless memory, Mr. Williams recalled yesterday that 90 years ago Eltham consisted of heavily timbered bush country wherein friendly blacks used to roam at will. "As long as we provided them with food and tobacco there was never any trouble," said Mr. Williams. "They used to ask us for rum, too, but we were careful never to give them that. They used to camp on a site between the original Eltham Hotel and the present Church of England sometimes for a week at a time. On those nights we used to have a great time throwing boomerangs."

Hard Times

"The district was divided up into two acre blocks and people used to live in bark houses. Later, I bought a lot of these out and established a large orchard. I think this district was the 'cradle' of the fruit growing industry in Victoria. That came later, though.

"The people of our parents' generation had a very hard time here. They lived in poverty, really. We grew wheat and potatoes, and all they could do was to grow enough of these to provide enough flour to last through the next winter.

"Bread and spuds. That was our staple diet in those days and we got heartily sick of it. But we thought ourselves lucky. As long as we got the bread, we didn't ask about butter. There was no outside work available at all.

"When we went to town, it took us half a day there and the same back. It didn't give us much time there, but then we had so little money that it didn't take us long to complete our business. The only meat we had, had to come from town, and even then we had to take just what we could get.

"At that time," added Mr. Williams, "There was a steam flour mill, owned by Mr. Henry Dendy who formerly had large properties at Brighton and a brewery and a tannery in Eltham. We took our wheat to the mill to have the flour made.

Beer From Creek Water

"The brewery used to use water from the creek to make the beer, and there were a dozen beer shanties between here and Kangaroo Ground that did nothing else but sell beer. "Ultimately, all these businesses were forced to leave this district because we had no railway and the cost of bringing the raw materials here by bullock waggon was too costly.

"We had bush-rangers and cattle thieves to contend with, too. We couldn't say anything to them, because if we did they would pay us out at night."

60 Years In Eltham

Mrs. Morris, widow of the late Mr. William Morris who conducted the hotel which was first known as the 'Fountain Inn' but which was later renamed the 'Evelyn Hotel', has been living in Eltham for nearly 60 years.

For 33 years, prior to its being delicensed, Mr. and Mrs. Morris conducted the hotel. Mrs Morris recalled that in the year Glenloth won the Melbourne Cup, Mr. Morris went to the Cup for the first and only time. While he was away a party of picnickers just took possession of the hotel - and of Mrs. Morris' baby - and did terrific damage.

"Despite hard times - some days we might make 3d. and others 6d. - we lived and reared families," said Mrs. Morris. 'It was a struggle, but we got through. A lot of our business came from passing market gardeners and wood carters.

"The roads could hardly be described as such. We travelled by coach from the Globe Hotel in Swanston Street and always changed horses at the Old England Hotel at Heidelberg. "Later I began catering, and soon built up a reputation. It was a renowned fact that 'You could always get a good feed at 'Morris' Hotel.'

Racing Club - 1867

Councillor E. J. Andrew recalled that his father, the late Mr. W. B. Andrew, came to Eltham with his cousin, Mr. Henry Dendy who built the flour mill. Mr. Andrew sen., was also a member of the Eltham Council. Mr. Andrew was secretary of the old Eltham Racing Club which used to hold meetings on the lower park. The first meeting was held on February 28, 1867 and the prizes were quite good.

"The first market held in Eltham was in 1875 and this flourished for a considerable number of years. Mrs. Andrew sen., with her first husband, Mr. Harper, used to conduct the 'Fountain Inn', and when Mr. Andrew came to Eltham he opened a business on the site now occupied by Mr. F. H. Collis.



Fountain Hotel
Maria Street, (Main Road)
Eltham - later known
as the Evelyn Hotel

Photograph - EDHS
Collection

Councillor Andrew was born there more than 60 years ago. In addition to being a business man, Mr. Andrew was a carpenter and builder and on April 24, 1862 he was presented with a set of tools by the citizens of Eltham in recognition of his work in assisting with the erection of St. Margaret's Church of England.

First Cricket Team

"When he came here from Brighton, my father brought with him records showing that he was the first secretary of the Brighton Cricket Club and he also brought the records of the first matches played between Brighton and Melbourne teams," said Cr. Andrew, " The matches took place between 1842 and 1847, and were the first recorded cricket matches played in Victoria. Since then my brother and I presented the records to the National Museum.

Councillor Andrew, referring to the bad state of the roads, said that in early times there was a toll gate at Lower Plenty. The cottage had since been removed and was now occupied by his sister, Mrs. Kilpatrick, in the Main Street of Eltham. One of the four red gum posts which formed part of the toll gate was also there and still giving yeoman service.

Mrs. Kilpatrick recalled some of the early settlers in the names of Holloway (after whom the township was first named), Sweeney, Fawkner, Kilpatrick, Williams, Carrucan and Hannaford. The descendants of these families are still living in the district and Mr. Neville Burgoyne who is at present conducting the post office is a descendant of Mr. Hannaford. He is the fourth or fifth generation to conduct the post office.

Eltham has never been the scene of any particularly large gold discoveries. There has been gold found there, but it has chiefly been small amounts on private properties and not enough to cause a rush.



St Katherine's Church of
England - St Helena

Photograph - EDHS
Collection *

Landmarks

Of the landmarks in the Eltham district, probably the most notable is St. Katherine's Church of England at St. Helena.

This was erected by Major Anthony Beale and named 'Rose Chapel' after his wife. Major Beale served on the island of St. Helena in the employ of the East India Company during the time Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled there.

The chapel was the first place of worship in the district and, probably, the first burial ground. Many of the pioneer settlers are found in the little graveyard.

Another, but much more recent landmark, is the War Memorial at Kangaroo Ground which was erected to commemorate those residents who had served in the Great War. A committee was formed under the title of The Shire of Eltham War Memorial League and after the memorial was completed a balance of £125 was handed over to the council. At the wind up meeting it was decided to forward a letter to ex-Councillor Rutter informing him of the satisfactory conclusion of the work which was initiated by him as founder of the League.

The League then disbanded, but the Memorial Tower on the highest point in the district will stand for all time as a tribute to the heroes of the 1914-18 conflict.

Montmorency Progress Association – 1927

The monthly meeting of the Montmorency Progress Association was held at St Faith's on the evening of August 6, and a large number of members attended. Appreciation was expressed at the repairs to the main road from Eltham to Greensborough.

Loads Too Heavy – It was decided to ask council to insist upon the limit of loading, viz., two tons, on the Montmorency bridge, being enforced. Three horse teams of firewood and other heavy traffic use the bridge, which was never built for that traffic, and they should be compelled to use one of the other available roads where no bridge trouble exists.

Police Protection – A letter was read from the Under Secretary to Mr. Everard, M.L.A., re local police protection, and whilst it was not much improvement on present methods, it was thought that now Eltham police station was supplied with an up-to-date telephone service, the local constable would be more in touch with Montmorency than formerly.

Post Office - Local efforts to obtain a daily mail to Melbourne at 6.30pm, have been successful, and it is largely patronised. It is hoped shortly to have a telegraph office, as the telephone to Heidelberg is already installed.

TROVE - Advertiser (Hurstbridge, Vic. :1922-1939) Friday 12 August 1927 (page 4)

An Eltham Road – 1911

A deputation from the Eltham Shire Council, which was introduced by Mr. E. Cameron. M.L.A., yesterday placed before the Minister for Lands (Mr Mc Kenzie ?), a request for a track which ran through the local State school grounds should be excised from the school property, in order that it might be made into a regular road. The Minister was informed that the track had been in use for 50 years and that the Education department had indicated it had no objection to giving up the area involved if it were allotted a certain other strip of land in its place.

The surveyor-general (Mr Reed), who was present, expressed some doubt as to the possibility of the Education department being given the second area referred to, but the Minister intimated that if a satisfactory arrangement could be made with that department he would recommend the granting of the deputation's request.

TROVE - The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. :1848-1957) Thursday 27 July 1911 (page 5)

An Eltham Old Resident

Miss Edith Harper, an old resident of Eltham, passed away at the Eltham Cottage Hospital early on Tuesday morning. Her death was a happy release from suffering, as she had been bedridden for just on eight years. The late Miss Harper, who was well known locally, was perhaps one of the earliest natives of Eltham, having been born at the Fountain Hotel in 1856. This building, which was later known as the Evelyn Hotel, was destroyed by fire two years ago.

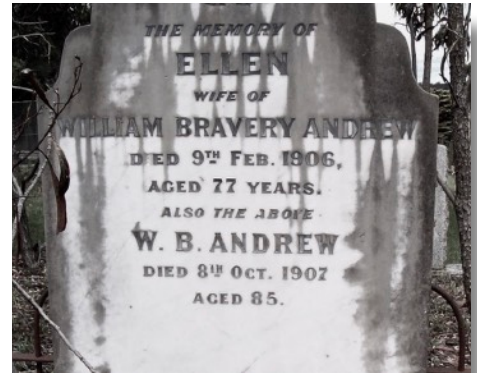
She had many relatives in the district, being closely related to Cr. Andrew, Mr. W. Andrew and Mrs. M. Kilpatrick, who were step-brothers and sister respectively. The funeral took place at the Eltham Cemetery on Wednesday. An impressive service was conducted by the vicar of St. Margaret's (Rev. T. Mappin). The pall-bearers were - Messrs. R. D. Taylor, E. Williams, M. Carrucan, S. McColl, G. Smith, W. Wingrove, W. Walker and F. Clark, the first four named being childhood friends of the late Miss Harper. The deepest sympathy is extended by residents to Cr. Andrew and other members of the family.

TROVE - Advertiser (Hurstbridge, Vic. :1922 - 1939) Friday 19 Aug 1932 (Page 6)

These stories are primarily based on the extensive research undertaken by Harry Gilham on the lives of people buried at the Eltham Cemetery.

William Bravery Andrew

William Bravery Andrew, born in England, came to Melbourne in 1842 and settled in Brighton, where he became acquainted with Henry Dendy. He moved to Eltham in the 1850s and opened a produce store on "Policeman's Hill", at the corner of Maria Street (now Main Road) and Franklin Street. He took a lively interest in the public affairs of the town and district, and with his wife Ellen continued to run the store for some fifty years. He died in 1907 and is buried with his wife in Eltham Cemetery.



Photograph - Richard Pinn

His son Ernest James Andrew took over the business, which became a general store and news agency. Later, it shifted to the main Eltham shopping centre as a combined news agency and haberdashery/clothing shop. Ernie too was married to an Ellen and they lived in Arthur Street at so-called "Cook's Cottage" (due to its resemblance to Captain Cook's Cottage in the Fitzroy Gardens). He was an Eltham Shire Councillor between 1920 and 1950 and was Shire President for a time. Andrew House at Eltham High School and Andrew Oval in Diamond Street, Eltham are named after him. Ernie died in 1950 and is buried with Ellen in the Eltham Cemetery.

The original weatherboard building at the corner of Franklin Street is long gone and was replaced by a brick structure, which is now a cafe called Zen Den.

Alfred Patrick Armstrong

Alfred Patrick Armstrong was born in England in 1825 and was employed under the renowned Isambard Kingdom Brunel as a civil engineer during the construction of the Great Western Railway and the South Wales Railway. He came to Melbourne in 1852 and purchased property in Eltham. He became a mining surveyor and was Inspector of Mines and the Mining Registrar for the St Andrews Division of the Castlemaine Mining District.

In 1855, he chaired a meeting calling for a bridge to be erected across the Yarra River between Eltham and Temple Stow. He was registered as an innkeeper in 1858, was involved in raising money for the establishment of Eltham Primary School, and was on the Eltham Cemetery Trust in 1860. He was elected to the Eltham District Road Board (forerunner of Eltham Shire Council) from 1867 to 1871 and then served as an Eltham Shire Councillor from 1871 to 1878 (including Shire President in 1873).

Alfred died in 1893, having been in ill health for some time, and is buried in the Eltham Cemetery with his wife Margaret. The monument features a tall pillar capped with a draped urn: a symbol of death.



Photograph - EDHS Collection

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Each year Nillumbik Shire Council provides financial support to each of the historical societies and heritage groups operating within the Shire by way of a Heritage Grant. We have received a grant of \$600 for the 2018 - 2019 financial year, which will be applied toward the operating costs of our Local History Centre. We are grateful to the Council for this support.

Contacts for the Eltham District Historical Society

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We appreciate the financial support provided by Nillumbik Shire Council, Eltham Rotary, the Eltham Community Craft and Produce Market Committee of Management and Hamish Knox and Associates

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*Any images displayed in this newsletter from the Shire of Eltham Pioneers Photograph Collection are held in partnership between Eltham District Historical Society and Yarra Plenty Regional Library (Eltham Library)



Eltham Cemetery provides an **environment** of tranquility, where the living and the deceased are able to be at peace; where contemplation and celebration of life may be experienced.

The services that the Eltham Cemetery provides are efficiently performed with an **awareness and respect** shown to its natural setting.

ELTHAM CEMETERY

EST. 1858

Burial Grounds: Mt Pleasant Road, Eltham
www.elthamcemetery.com

For further information contact Rita Woolley:
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