

Newsletter

No. 246 June 2019



Still A Part of Our History

Jim Connor

In our October 2018 newsletter (No. 242) we highlighted our concerns about the future of the World War Two War Memorial Complex of three buildings at 903-907 Main Road, Eltham and how this complex is a very definite part of our history and once gone can never be replaced.

At that time Nillumbik Shire Council had offered for sale the extensive site area between the Eltham Library and the former Eltham Fire Station, and extending west from Main Road to the railway line. This land contains World War One and the World War Two memorials, the Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre, the former Eltham Shire Office site and the significant Shillinglaw trees.

Since then the Eltham District Historical Society has publicly and privately advocated strongly for the retention and protection of the World War Two War Memorial Complex and the Shillinglaw trees. There have been extensive community reactions, demonstrations and meetings against the proposed sale of this extensive area, including these historic buildings and trees. An application has also been submitted to Heritage Victoria for the inclusion of these buildings on the Victorian Heritage Register.

While we understand there has been ongoing negotiations between Council and at least one potential developer, no defined proposal or development concept has been made available for community consideration.

On 20 May 2019 Nillumbik Shire Council issued a media release, including advice that:

“Negotiations with developers have ceased on Council-owned land at 895, 903-907 Main Road, Eltham. Market conditions and funding difficulties in the current banking environment have resulted in no feasible outcome”.

EDHS is extremely pleased to see the immediate risks to the War Memorial Buildings complex and the Shillinglaw trees have been removed and we now encourage Council to take appropriate action to actively protect these buildings and the trees, into the future.

We thank everyone who strongly supported protection of these historic buildings and trees. At a Nillumbik Shire Council meeting on Tuesday 29th May 2019, Councillors voted to request council officers to provide a briefing on future options for the former Eltham Shire Office site at 895 Main Road, Eltham.



Shillinglaw trees
895 Main Road, Eltham
Photograph - Jim Connor

Next Meeting

8.00pm Wednesday 12th June 2019

Eltham Senior Citizen's Centre.

Library Place, Eltham

Heritage Excursion

2.00pm Saturday 6th July 2019

Exploring Lower Plenty

See further details on page 2

Our Next Meeting - Wednesday 12th June 2019

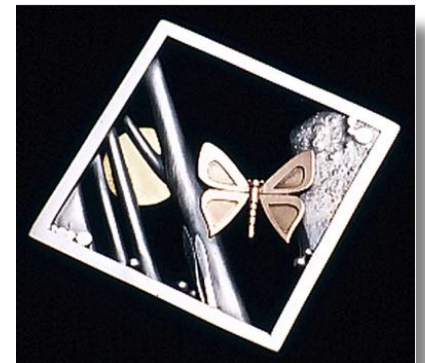
At our next meeting on Wednesday 12th June 2019 at 8.00pm we are delighted to have Grace Longato, from Nillumbik Shire Council, as our guest speaker to talk about the Nillumbik Shire Art Collection.

Grace is the Curator and Creative Industries Officer at council and looks after this extensive collection, which contains over 400 works of art, including 16 sculptures in public places throughout the Shire. We are fortunate to be able to share her knowledge and experience.

A number of the works in this collection originally formed part of the Shire of Eltham Art Collection, prior to municipal restructure in 1995, when these art works transferred to the new Shire of Nillumbik.

Our meeting will be held at our usual venue, the Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre in Library Place Eltham. Members and guests are welcome to attend.

We look forward to seeing you then.



Jewellery (Brooch): Michael Wilson
Butterfly Landscape Eltham
Nillumbik Shire Art Collection

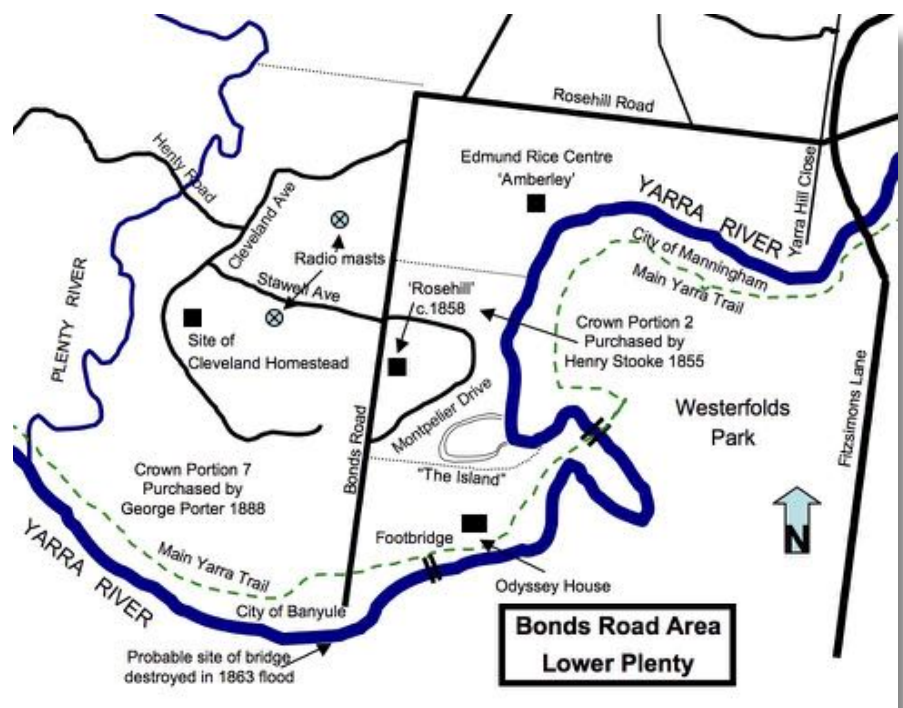
July Excursion - Exploring Lower Plenty

The predominant feature of this walk in the Bonds Road area, Lower Plenty is the large number of magnificent old River Red Gums that line the route. These trees are of the spreading woodland form of this species indicating that they must have been originally growing in a reasonably open setting. The walk also includes parts of the historic Cleveland Estate and the homestead "Rosehill" established by pioneer farmer Henry Stooke.

This area was the site of the first recorded European settlement in what was to become the Shire of Eltham when the Willis brothers arrived in the late 1830s. From the southern part of Cleveland Avenue there are extensive views across and along the Yarra Valley. An article on the history of this area was contained in Newsletter edition 201, November 2011.

The walk will start at the corner of Bonds and Stawell Roads, Lower Plenty (Melway Ref. 33 B1) at 2.00pm on Saturday 6th July. Street parking is available in Montpellier Drive. The distance is about 3km. and will take 2 to 2.5 hours.

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



George Coop was a teacher of Art, Craft, Woodwork and Graphics. After teaching in Canada for three years, he returned to Australia and in 1968 he and his wife Helen purchased an early Alistair Knox designed and built home at 68 Mount Pleasant Road, Eltham where they raised their two daughters, Stephanie and Elizabeth. George taught at Lalor High School for ten years. He then moved to Nunawading High School, which was eventually amalgamated in 1989 with Burwood Heights High and Blackburn South High to become a junior campus of Forest Hills Secondary College; at which point George retired. In 2005 George and Helen moved to their current residence in Box Hill; Helen's childhood family home.

During their 36 years at Eltham, local builder Graham Rose extended their original Alistair Knox home over new foundation excavations dug by George. Graham organised the brick walls where required, raised all frame work and laid the steel tray roof. George did all external and internal wall cladding, made all opening windows, sliding and swinging doors, stairs and general interior timber cabinet work. Bedroom wardrobe doors came from scrapped Victorian Railways country coaches. Most of the timbers used in the extension were re-purposed from the Templestowe Cool Store and the Port Melbourne wool, hide and skin store.

George has always had an interest in photography. He liked having a camera with him wherever he went. He never had a dark room and relied on commercial processing. He had a Kodak Retina 1B camera, essentially a German camera developed by Kodak and manufactured in Melbourne, which he bought in the late 1950s - early 1960s. It was a 35 mm format with a folding Schrader lens and bellows. He retained that camera for his black and white photography when later, colour became more prominent. At that time, he purchased a Pentax 35 mm SLR for colour photography and would generally walk around with two cameras.

George also has a keen interest in trains, both real and model, and over the years has taken many images of trains. More than ten years ago George donated two large prints of a Tait (Red Rattler) train to the Society. These were taken in 1981; one being the iconic image of the Red Rattler train crossing the Eltham Trestle Bridge with the former Eltham Shire Council offices in the background.

In November 2018, George approached the Society offering another donation of an image he took of the Carrucan Dairy on Dalton Street (see page 1, April 2019 newsletter). The image was taken from the corner of Metery Road and Mount Pleasant Road circa 1969. As a consequence, our Collections team contacted George and asked if we could borrow his negative for scanning and if he by chance he had any other images that we might be interested in and could borrow.

In April 2019 George loaned the Society some 400 unique images, mostly negatives, and mostly of trains in the Eltham and Diamond Valley areas. Also included are some other images of trains from other districts and some images of Melbourne in 1962 which are all note-worthy. These were returned in May 2019 following some 80 hours of digitising, editing and cataloguing; the results of which are now available for review in our catalogue on Victorian Collections.

Thanks to George's generosity, the Society now has another new and unique collection focussing on the Hurstbridge Railway line in the early 1980s, capturing four generations of Melbourne's electric trains.



Station Master's House, Eltham Railway Station, August 1983
Photograph - George Coop

Three years spent with the Royal Australian Navy in small ships in the wild waters during the Second World War generated in me a sense of eternity and restless wonder that I believed would never be assuaged. In 1948 I moved to Eltham, where the wonder of the bush provided a god created mystery to replace the one I had lost from the sea.

I was experiencing the unique heritage available to every Australian - the distance, silence, colour and immutability of a eucalyptus song-less scented landscape. It was a whole world apart from the magnificent man-evolved garden vistas of Europe and the pines-clad slopes and mighty rivers of North America. There is a conscious sense of arrival that can be sensed and observed, and which distinguishes the Australian landscape from all others.

An Australian garden should not, in my mind, be merely a well-ordered selection of native trees and plants arranged in careful masses and voids, so much as an overall segment of the natural environment which expresses the power of sunlight, water hunger and survival consciousness. It should remind us that we occupy this continent by permission and not right.



Alistair Knox

Photograph - Knox Family Collection

This article by Alistair Knox c1970s

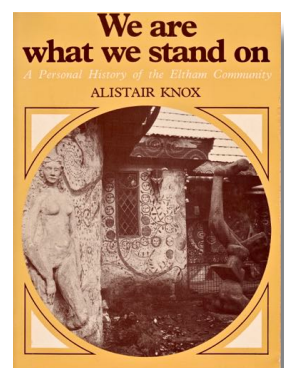
Adam Lindsay Gordon's lament that the bush was full of 'bright scentless flowers and song-less bright birds,' indicates how hard it is for even the most sensitive foreigner to comprehend it. D.H. Lawrence saw it correctly when he called it 'the morning of the world'. It is this quality of untouched creation that eludes many who are seeking to discover in it some sort of counterpart to the wonderful man-made landscapes of the northern hemisphere.

The Australian continent is the largest desert island in the world, set between the three great oceans, the Pacific, the Southern and the Indian. The flora over the whole land mass expresses an extraordinary unity of common birth that occurs nowhere else. At the same time there is a subtle variety that is breathtaking. England, the land of poetry and beauty, boasts over 1,600 varieties of flowers. Australia has more than 18,000.

When constructing landscape, I merely aim to replace what was originally there on a modified scale, so that the end result is a sun-bleached and primeval confusion which expresses the sense of red-gold colour and light that bewildered the continents discoverers and has been the source of inspiration of its artists ever since.

Alistair Knox - Author

Alistair Knox (1912-1986) was a designer, builder and a passionate advocate for living and building an alternative lifestyle. He actively encouraged people to build utilising recycled materials and mud brick, including in houses they could construct themselves. Alistair was a prolific writer of magazine and newspaper articles, as well as three published books titled: *Living in the Environment*, *We are what we stand on* and *Alternative Housing*.



From the pages of historical newspapers via the National Library of Australia's Trove.

Private Wm. Barrett, son of Mr Alfred Barrett, Pitt Street, who returned from France, received a welcome in the Eltham township, which was bedecked with flags. A number of visiting boy scouts formed a double line standing at attention.

Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser and Diamond Creek Valley Advocate, 10 January 1919

First Port Melbourne Troop of Australian Imperial Boy Scouts spent the Christmas and New Year holidays under canvas at Eltham. The Scoutmaster organised a welcome home for a soldier who was just returning that day from the front. Altogether 150 scouts from the various camps formed a guard of honour. The father of the soldier warmly complimented the scoutmaster and scouts on the splendid manner in which they rallied and welcomed his son home. On Boxing Day a lad from Port Melbourne was at Eltham shooting. As the day was warm, he went in to bathe. While swimming he got into difficulties. Two of the scouts dived in the creek with all their clothes on and rescued him.

Port Melbourne Standard, Saturday 11 January 1919 p. 4

A "very pleasant little function" took place at the Eltham State school when a goodly number of parents and children met under the shade of the pines to do honour to Mr Overman, the late head teacher, on his leaving the district. He was presented with a handsome travelling rug and a pocket wallet with monogram. He was also presented with a dainty silver hot water jug. Mrs Overman was also the recipient of a pretty sea grass easy chair for her new home. It may be said that few teachers, in so short a time as two years, so completely gain the good-will of not only the pupils and their parents, but of the whole community.

Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser and Diamond Creek Valley Advocate, 31 January 1919

Letter to the newspaper from W. Hubbard Eltham Shire President re in the event of the epidemic of Pneumonic Influenza assuming extensive proportions it may be necessary to equip at very short notice a temporary hospital for the treatment of residents of this Shire. A list of requirements for a hospital to accommodate 25 patients has been supplied by the Health Department, and as a sudden large demand would probably lead to delay in the articles being obtained from the city, it is desirable that as many as possible of the articles specified should be available locally.

Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser and Diamond Creek Valley Advocate, 14 February 1919 p. 3

A service is to be held at St. Margaret's, Eltham, 16th March, when a handsome brass missal tablet, with furnishings for baptising, will be dedicated to the memory of the late Sgt. G. A. Williams, who died from wounds near Peronne, France, last September, as well as a brass baptismal basin and ewer, in memory of the late Mr D G. Clark, an old schoolmaster who died in 1911.

Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser and Diamond Creek Valley Advocate, 14 March 1919 p. 2

The Bend at Eltham presented a pretty sight last Saturday afternoon, when about 80 returned soldiers were entertained by the ladies of the Red Cross and their friends. The visitors contained a sprinkling of sailors, their blue forming a pretty contrast to the khaki of the "diggers." The visitors came out in motors, and appeared to thoroughly enjoy their outing, and the cars on returning were loaded with gum leaves, bracken, dogwood, etc. One of the motor men thanked the local Red Cross for their kindness, to which a local resident made a suitable response.

Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser and Diamond Creek Valley Advocate, 28 March 1919 p. 3

The Eltham I.O.R. (Rechabite) Hall was well filled on the evening of Thursday, the 10th, the occasion being the reception given to several of the local lads who have recently returned from the seat of war, viz., Driver Louis Thomas (Anzac), Privates Percy Thomas, Sid Scott, Wm. Barrett, Sargt. G. Warne-Jones (Anzac), and Corp. R. Coventry. Only three of the lads were present, viz., Warne-Jones, Scott, and P. Thomas, and they each responded to the presentation of the medals handed to them by the Rev. T. H. Sapsford, who acted in the absence of Sir Wm. Irvine and Mr. Everard, M.L.A.

Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser and Diamond Creek Valley Advocate, 18 April 1919 p. 3

Residents of Eltham were considerably shocked to hear of the sudden death of Miss Caroline Wingrove on Sunday... She was the eldest daughter of the late Mr. C. S. Wingrove, who was Engineer and Secretary of the Eltham Shire for many years. The late Miss Wingrove was universally loved and respected for her untiring efforts and self-sacrifice for her Church, Red Cross, and all worthy causes. She was born in Eltham and for half-a-century practically was a recognised leader in all good works. There are many who can give testimony to her many kindnesses and there are many the poorer for her sudden call to a higher sphere of service. The funeral took place on Tuesday at the St. Helena Cemetery.

Last Friday Serg. J. Jarrold and Private Vivian Thomas were welcomed home from the front. The main street was gay with bunting: and as night closed in before the warriors arrived lights and flares were in evidence, which lent to the enthusiasm of the expectant residents.

During the last few months the Eltham Rechabite I.O.R. Hall here has been undergoing re-construction. It has been considerably enlarged and added to, and is now an up-to-date building.

Eltham and Whittlesea Shires Advertiser and Diamond Creek Valley Advocate, 16 May 1919 p. 3



Our Collection



The Blacksmiths' Tree - Strathewen
Photograph - Jim Connor

The Blacksmiths' Tree:

A Portrait by Debbie Qadri

was recently donated to the Society by the author. Debbie is an artist who is also interested in community art projects in public spaces.

The book is her PhD research at the College of Arts and Education at Victoria University.

It follows the story of the Blacksmith's Tree, public art work constructed mainly by many blacksmiths and installed at Strathewen as a memorial following the Black Saturday bushfires of February 2009. The book includes the authors own drawings and text in addition to a time line and references. It can also be accessed from her website: <https://theblacksmithstree.blogspot.com/>

The Blacksmiths' Tree

A Portrait



Association of Eastern Historical Societies - Regional Conference 2019

The Association of Eastern Historical Societies is holding their 2019 Regional Conference on Saturday 22nd June, between 9.15am - 4.00pm, at the Karralyka Centre in Mines Road, Ringwood. This network comprises historical societies throughout the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

As historical societies are facing various changed circumstances the theme for this popular conference is *'The times they are a-changin'*. There will be a range of expert speakers on various aspects of the operations of historical societies. Dr. Andrew Lemon will be the Keynote speaker, with the title of his talk being *'Heritage Advocacy - the role of historic research and historical societies'*. A most appropriate topic in our current circumstances.



Other speakers will highlight recent projects covering a range of relevant topics. Earlier conferences have been very popular and well supported by EDHS members. You are invited to register your interest in attending by contacting the conference convenor, Russ Haines at president@RHS.org.au or telephone 0418 103 256. Tickets for this full day event are heavily discounted at \$40, which includes all meals.

Office Bearers 2019 - 2020

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

President	Jim Connor
Senior Vice-President	Peter Pidgeon
Junior Vice-President	Liz Pidgeon
Treasurer / Membership Secretary	Lesley Mitchell
Society Secretary	Russell Yeoman
Committee Members - Irene Kearsey, Tony Brocksopp, Joan Castledine, Alison Delaney, Richard Pinn, Wendy Wilson.	

We warmly welcome Irene Kearsey as a new committee member and thank Heather Eastman for her work as our Assistant Secretary during the past year.

At the Annual General Meeting subscriptions for 2019-2020 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.

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**A. BRINKKOTTER AND SON,
RESEARCH POULTRY FARM,
RESEARCH.**

From: The Advertiser, Friday, September 17, 1926

These stories are part of a series about the lives of people buried at the Eltham Cemetery.

Beatrice Wanliss Irvine

Beatrice Wanliss Irvine was the daughter of former Victorian Premier Sir William Irvine. From age 13 she lived at "Killeavey" off Laughing Waters Road (later accessed from Reynolds Road). In 1923 she married James Morrison and the couple received Killeavey as a wedding gift. The property supported fruit and vegetable growing as well as an impressive botanical garden. But James died in 1936 after a period of ill health, leaving Beatrice to support their six children. To make matters worse, the house was totally destroyed in the Black Friday bushfires in 1939, but was rebuilt.

Beatrice became involved in community issues. In particular, she was an active member of the Eltham Women's Auxiliary, which was formed in 1945 to raise funds for the establishment of an Eltham War Memorial. From the outset, it was decided that this would take the form of a Baby Health Centre, a Pre-School and a Children's Library, set in a garden of remembrance. Thanks to tireless fund-raising, the project came to fruition in the 1950s when, one by one, the three children's welfare buildings opened in Main Road (having previously been in temporary premises): they are collectively known as the Eltham War Memorial site.

Beatrice continued to live at Killeavey and became well regarded as a botanist and naturalist. She died in 1989 and is buried in Eltham Cemetery with her husband and one of their sons. The (rebuilt) house has since been demolished. All that remains is a fragment of the garden.

This article is sourced from "Laughing Waters Road" by Jane Woollard and from a recent essay by Dr Andrew Lemon.



Beatrice Wanliss Irvine
Photograph from "Laughing Waters Road"
by Jane Woollard

Anton Brinkkötter

German-born Anton Brinkkötter, a skilled metal-worker by trade, migrated to Australia in 1880. His initial job was to supervise the installation of ornamental ceilings in the Melbourne Exhibition Building. He moved to Research in about 1900, working first as a plumber and tank-maker. But he is best known for having established a poultry farm (on Main Road between Research Primary School and the Maroondah Aqueduct) in 1906, which steadily grew to become one of the largest in Victoria, supplying customers all over Australia. By 1935 it was a thriving business, with buildings housing 6,000 birds and incubators capable of hatching 8,000 eggs. He died suddenly from a heart attack in 1938 and is buried with his wife Anna in Eltham Cemetery.



Brinkkötter Family Graves - Eltham Cemetery
Photograph - EDHS collection

The business was carried on by his son Anton William Brinkkötter. When electricity came to Research in 1940, the Brinkkötter Poultry Farm was the very first customer, enabling further expansion and modernisation. Two electric incubators were installed with a capacity of 10,000 eggs each. Anton William Brinkkötter became active in public affairs and was an Eltham Shire Councillor between 1941 and 1961. He died in 1970 and is buried with his wife Bridgene in Eltham Cemetery, alongside his parents.

Main sources: Obituary in Hurstbridge Advertiser 10th June 1938, private research notes held in EDHS collection.

RHSV Award of Merit

For over 30 years the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) has annually presented Awards of Merit. Nominations are received from the local history community. The nominee is a person who has given meritorious service to an affiliated member society of the RHSV or to the RHSV. The service should be exceptional and go beyond the routine holding of office. The nominee should have been involved in the work of a member society or the RHSV for a minimum of ten years, unless special circumstances occur, in which case a minimum of eight years would suffice.

The RHSV is a community organisation committed to collecting, researching and sharing an understanding of the history of Victoria and has over 1,000 individual members, as well as functioning as the umbrella organisation for more than 320 local, regional and specialist historical societies throughout Victoria.

In 1998, co-founding EDHS member and long-term Secretary Russell Yeoman was honoured. In 2006, former President Sue Law was honoured and in 2009, former President Harry Gilham was honoured.

On May 21 at the RHSV Annual General Meeting, EDHS President Jim Connor was presented with an RHSV Award of Merit for 2019.

This is an edited version of the nomination:

Jim has worked tirelessly and continually since becoming the EDHS President in 2009. He served as Vice-President from 2002-2008 and has been a member for over 25 years, regularly dedicating 20–30 hours per week to the benefit of EDHS. He led the Society through to its 50th anniversary in 2017. Jim has been key in advocating significant relationships within the community. Through these EDHS has achieved a renovation of the Local History Centre without cost to our society. Jim regularly presents talks to schools and community groups. He is the editor of the bi-monthly newsletter, using it as an important advocacy tool, distributing to community members and promoting local stories and the work and activities the Society participates in. Membership has continually increased under his leadership. Over the previous two years, flow on effects of his leadership include the injection of new technology, implementation of a digitisation program, collection management incorporating Victorian Collections, revamped weekly collection workshops, and a revamped education program with local primary schools, Scouting groups and others.



Richard Broome RHSV President presented the award to Jim Connor
Photograph - RHSV

Jim was pleased and surprised to receive the recognition along with friend and colleague Russ Haines (Ringwood and District Historical Society) with whom they collaborate every two years to present the Association of Eastern Historical Societies Regional Conference. We are also pleased that Jim has been recognised for all his hard work. Congratulations Jim on your RHSV Award of Merit.

On receiving this award Jim highlighted the extensive contributions and support he has received, over many years, from many members of EDHS. He also thanked members of the EDHS committee who nominated him for this award.

Membership Subscriptions for 2019 - 20 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

Sadly we report that David Johns, our former treasurer and a life member of our Society, passed away on Friday 24th May 2019, aged 80. David was a member of the Eltham District Historical Society for many years, including as a dedicated member of our committee. He was also our treasurer and membership secretary from 2006 until 2018. David is fondly remembered and his valued contributions to the operations of our Society were much appreciated.

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- Russell Yeoman, Society Secretary – Telephone 9439 9717 – edhsoffice@gmail.com
- Lesley Mitchell, Treasurer / Membership Secretary – edhstreasurer@gmail.com

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

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

*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

EST. 1858

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



Our Eltham, Our History

For further information contact Rita:

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Ph: (03) 9432 1963 Email: admin@elthamcemetery.com