

Newsletter

No. 270 June 2023

Recording Our History

Jim Connor

Early civilisations used cylinder seals to certify documents written on clay tablets. Other early forms of writing included block prints, pottery imprints, stone and bronze blocks and cloth printing.

Woodblock printing in China by the seventh century led to the spread of book publication and printing, which also encouraged economical book publishing throughout the world.

Of course the world changed again when Gutenberg created the first printing press using metal type.

....and how the world continues to change, now with ever developing technologies the use of printed materials is diminishing, due to the ongoing rapid expansion of computer and online options. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is also on the horizon for us to consider.

Perhaps early records may even last longer than current technologies?

So where does this place historical societies and groups, including the Eltham District Historical Society? Thankfully we have progressed from needing to use hammers and chisels on stone tablets or later quills and ink to record our history.

The majority of our valued historical collection has, in the past, consisted of printed materials; being books, plans, photographs and reports. An ongoing challenge is to convert our records to digital data to protect and store these for current and future use.

In recent years we are fortunate this process has been undertaken by our dedicated Collections Team, with many of our records now available online, either on our website, Facebook or on Victorian Collections, where we have over 13,000 images, accessible from anywhere in the world.

We never know how wide our audience is, which was highlighted recently when we received an email from a person expressing his enjoyment of reading about our history online.

...and he lives in Scotland.

Next Society Meeting

2.00pm **Saturday** 10th June 2023

Eltham Senior Citizen's Centre

Library Place, Eltham



Gutenberg's printing press in 1450

Next Heritage Excursion

2.00pm **Saturday** 1st July 2023

Research Valley South Side

See further details on page 2

Our Next Meeting - 2.00pm Saturday 10th June 2023

At our next meeting at 2.00pm on Saturday 10th June 2023 we are pleased to have Dr. Geoffrey Sandy to present to us on the WW1 Soldier Welcome Home Committees, with specific reference to Eltham. Geoffrey is an author, parish historian and parish archivist for St Margaret's Anglican Church in Eltham.

Soldier Welcome Home Committees (SWHC) were established throughout Australia during WW1 by the soldier's local community - their home. Despite WW1 being a well-researched area of Australian history, little has been published on the SWHCs. The work of these committees is an important part of our war history, and our volunteer history.

As women were often well-represented, and active within the SWHCs, it is also important to our history of Australian women. Geoff has undertaken a detailed case study of the Soldier Welcome Home Committee at Eltham (SWHCE). During the WW1 period Eltham can be described a small rural community.

What is fortunate is that the Minute Books of the SWHC Eltham meetings are extant and readily accessible, as these are held in the archives of Saint Margaret's Anglican Church Eltham.

As always, Society members and visitors are most welcome to attend this meeting, at **2.00pm on Saturday 10th June** in the Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre, Library Place, Eltham.



The Welcome Home Medal presented to W.H. Orford, an uncle of Doug Orford
Photographs - Jim Connor

Heritage Walk - Saturday 1st July 2023 - Research Valley South Side

This walk was planned for Saturday 6th May 2023, but due to anticipated weather conditions it was reluctantly decided to cancel this event.

Due to popular demand we will now hold this walk on Saturday 1st July, weather conditions permitting. This walk includes sites of heritage interest close to the Research shops and a walk through the 1940s subdivision that forms the southern part of Research. However the main feature of the walk are the views of the Research valley and beyond as we walk back into the valley along the power line easement track. This will include views to the site of the former Eltham Barrel restaurant.

This walk on Saturday 1st July will start at 2.00pm at the Research shopping centre in Main Road (Melway ref. 22 G2). The distance is about 3 km and it will take about 2 hours.



Eltham Barrel c.1969
Photograph from EDHS collection

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.

While we usually report on past historical matters, it is worthwhile to remember we are continually creating history, so our actions today do become our history tomorrow.

Some recent happenings of note include:

On 20 April 2023 there was a launch of the installation of the **Eltham Roll of Honour Board** at the **Eltham Library** Community Gallery. This valued historical artefact was removed from the Eltham War Memorial Buildings complex, some years ago, by the Montmorency Eltham RSL, who have been reluctant to return it until recently, following protracted negotiations by Nillumbik Shire Council councillors and officers.

Eltham Library and the Eltham Library Community Gallery will be closed till Monday 3 July. The library is undergoing a minor refurbishment. Changes will include an updated floor plan that includes an expanded young person's area. The service desks will be consolidated into a single service point and the existing colour palette will be refreshed with bright pops of colour. There will be an increase in shelving, particularly in the junior and young adult areas. There will also be an increase in power and charging stations in new study booths and reading seats, while there will be a reduction in the number of public computers. There will be an increase in powered study booths from five to sixteen, acoustically treated for noise control.



Roll of Honour Board in the
Eltham Library Community Gallery
Photograph - Nillumbik Shire Council

After 26 years at 970 Main Road, Eltham, **Eltham Bookshop** is relocating to 10 Arthur Street, which for many years was the site of the local National Australia Bank branch.

The **Eltham Gateway Project** has now been completed with the installation of a sculpture, on the northern side of Main Road, made of weathering steel by artist Maureen Faye-Chautan. Wurundjeri Elders chose the title for the sculpture, 'Gunga winhanga warr bundha ba winhanga warr djurring' in traditional Woi wurrung language, meaning 'Take what you need and not what you greed'.

There has also be substantial landscaping works and plantings, including community plantings, undertaken on the southern side of Main Road, as part of this project.



Eltham Gateway sculpture
Photograph - Jim Connor - May 2023

Reconstruction of the Susan Street oval shared bridge at Eltham has been completed, following substantial damage recently incurred when the Diamond Creek flooded.....*again* !

Works have commenced on the site of the former **Hassells Gallery** at 1215 Main Road, Eltham for the construction of four dwellings and an entry road, in a development known as 'Eltham Heights'. The initial site excavations have exposed a shaft accessing what is thought to possibly be the remnants of a stone quarry or gold workings.

We may sometimes look at an old photograph and take in the overall scene, perhaps wonder what life was like then, or even imagine who are the individuals shown there.

There is one such image in the Shire of Eltham Pioneers Photograph Collection, (SEPP), held in partnership between the Eltham District Historical Society and the Yarra Plenty Regional Library (Eltham Library). It is a significant historical photograph taken outside of what was then the Burgoyne's general store in Main Road, Eltham.

At a recent public display at Montsalvat, which included this photograph, Rita Woolley who has recently retired after many years as secretary of the Eltham Cemetery Trust, just happened to mention *'There is young Frank Burgoyne, wearing shoes'*.

Rita said he was excited to have his photograph taken as it was a special occasion, and he was wearing new shoes. Rita knew Frank well, as an older man, when a Trustee of the Eltham Cemetery Trust, between 1981 and 1995.

He is honoured there with a section named the Frank Burgoyne Lawn.



Burgoyne's general store Main Road, Eltham c.1929

* Photograph - EDHS SEPP Collection

Frank told her many stories about early Eltham, as the Burgoyne family were Eltham pioneers involved in several local businesses, including this general store, the adjacent post office and the local bakery, then on the corner of York Street.

This photograph captures a moment in time when this group gathered outside the store to have their photograph taken. We think this was around 1929 when Frank would have been about 13 years old, as he was born in 1916, during the First World War. It shows a c.1928 Chevrolet truck near a group of people, including members of the Burgoyne family, who operated the business. While the 'modern' truck is featured, note there is still a horse hitching post just in front of Frank.

Rita thinks there is Frank's sister Mary behind their brother, John (Jack) William Burgoyne, with Mary's boyfriend wearing a hat. It would not be surprising if young Frank was excited standing there in shorts, wearing shoes and possibly a school blazer. Apparently, Frank often went to school barefoot and was young when he left school to work for the family.

Frank was involved in various community activities until his death in 2002. In 1996 when commissioners were overseeing the operation of the new Nillumbik Shire Council, following municipal restructure, there was a council meeting regarding a planning application to redevelop the former Shire of Eltham offices site. Frank spoke strongly against this proposal and at this meeting stated 'there would be much creaking and rumbling in the Eltham cemetery, the writhing of those who wisely gave Eltham much of its character by commencing the process of setting aside the valley as open space'. Frank was not one to be easily disregarded!

Over the years these premises have housed several different businesses. While the general store and adjacent Post Office are long gone, thankfully this photograph provides a small glimpse of what life was like then..... it allows and encourages us to remember.

Many Hands Make Flags Fly!!

Terry Beaton

The origins we all know, that “*many hands make light work*”, but this recent ANZAC period saw the emergence of a new version of this age old saying, when so many EDHS members pitched-in to put out the 900 odd flags at Eltham Cemetery, to make them fly in tribute to those who served. After the plea for help at the EDHS AGM, it was incredible to see Jim Connor, Rosemary Aitken, Alison Delaney, Liz Pigeon, and Mel Lomulder front up to help Sheila and Terry Beaton.

The first-timers, were quickly assigned to the better marked lawn areas and armed with bunches of identity tagged flags for each row of graves, then faced the challenge of locating the respective recipient; as 70% of veterans buried in Eltham Cemetery have no identification of dedicated service on their plaque or headstone, unlike those buried in War Cemeteries overseas. Some plaques also have no plot number and only 30% may have a badge to assist the search.

Knowing the complexities of finding ashes plaques amongst the rocks and niches in the various areas around the chapel and lakeside, EDHS member, Julia Drew, had skilfully recruited the former long standing Secretary of the Cemetery, Rita Woolley, to undertake this challenging task with the help of two cemetery assistants. Despite only recently starting work at the cemetery, Mel Lomulder didn't hold back and recruited her father John to help. Also wishing to help, her mother generously baked delicious ANZAC biscuits for tired workers to enjoy with a welcomed hot brew.



Terry Beaton installing flags - Eltham Cemetery
Photograph - Jim Connor

A poignant highlight was to have Thijs De Backer join the group. Thijs lives adjacent to the cemetery's eastern boundary and had approached Julia to help with the flags, as he hails from Flanders in northern Belgium; which saw great Australian sacrifices at Passchendaele and Ypres, commemorated by the renowned poem “*In Flanders Fields*” and its solemn “*Ode of Remembrance*”. Thijs immediately pitched-in placing flags in the Metery Road Lawn area, helped by his young daughter Charlotte, in whom he wanted to instil the sense of gratitude still felt by many people living in the Flanders region.

When thanked for all her efforts, Rosemary responded by saying, “*I had a lovely time*”. A special vote of appreciation goes to Alison Delaney, who also tirelessly helped with the flag collection on the day after ANZAC Day. A mammoth task undertaken by just three people. The first tribute in 2019 took two people almost three days. Yet with the help of so many, all flags were placed and flying in just one day.

However, not all visitors to the cemetery respect the flag tribute and cheeky Cockatoos and Corellas pull them out and chew them for mischief. Each tribute results in over 20 flags being replaced due to native bird damage. Sadly, Joan Castledine was a victim this ANZAC Tribute, when the flag marking her father's service in WW2 was removed from the Mount Pleasant Lawn area.



Cheeky Cockatoos and Corellas
Photograph - Julia Drew

The Eltham district has seen numerous cases of murder and manslaughter over the years (and it's unlikely that this list is exhaustive). The changing circumstances of each seem to reflect the gradual changes in everyday society.

1860: Incident at the Fountain Inn. John Watts was sitting at the bar of the Fountain Inn, Eltham. John Castle entered and said nothing, but pushed Watts over a settle and kicked the side of his face. Watts was taken home, badly injured, and died some weeks later. Castle was convicted of manslaughter.

1861: A Delusional Lunatic. James Montgomery presented himself to the Eltham police station and stated that he had shot his enemy Richard Lane. He took Constable Lawlor to his "miami" (bark hut) where Lane's body was found. A jury found Montgomery guilty of murder. Several months earlier, Montgomery had alleged to the police that certain persons were poisoning him and that they had a chemical apparatus enabling them to read his most secret thoughts. In an attempt to pacify him, Lawlor arranged for a warrant to apprehend any such persons.

1862: Murder at the Diggings. Edmund Cuckson was a brewer at the Wild Dog Gully near Queenstown. He was found shot dead on the track from Queenstown to the Mountain Rush (Kinglake). The motive appeared to be robbery. A verdict was given of wilful murder by person or persons unknown. William Roberts (who had previously been charged with jewellery robbery) was subsequently charged with Cuckson's murder, but several witnesses who had seen a stranger in the area at the time of the murder were unable to identify Roberts as the man. The charge was dismissed.

1866: Bushranger Burke. Robert Burke turned up at Henry Hurst's property on the Diamond Creek one morning, initially claiming to be a traveller seeking breakfast. But when he boasted that he was a bushranger, the two men got into a gunfight. Hurst was shot in the abdomen and Burke in the thigh. Hurst died that afternoon and Burke was arrested and charged with murder. A public petition called for the death sentence to be commuted to life imprisonment but he was nevertheless hanged.

1874: Fisticuffs at the Research Hotel. James Dennis and William Cameron got into a fist fight (instigated by Dennis) in a paddock at the Research Hotel. Dennis, a little the worse for drink, fell against a stone and was taken to hospital, where he died from a fractured spine. Cameron was found guilty of manslaughter.

1898: Body in the Well. Mr Brown operated a bakery at the corner of Main Road and York St in Eltham. He reported to the police that his wife had been hauling water from the well behind the bakehouse when she suddenly disappeared. The police used a ladder to climb into the well and discovered her drowned body. Despite public speculation that she had been pushed, the official finding was that Mrs Brown had fallen in accidentally after suffering a coma.



Research Hotel c1910
Photograph - EDHS collection

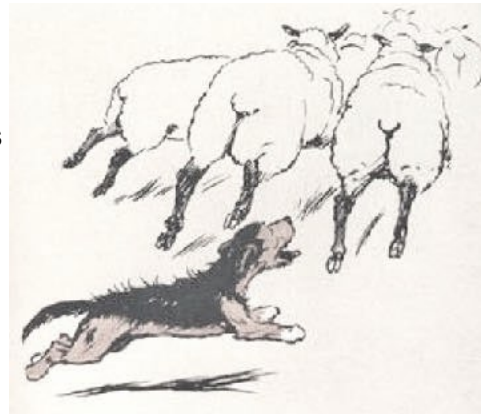
1902: Criminal Neglect. Annie Walker was an epileptic who was living at the Research house of her uncle Joseph Rodda. Annie was kept in a small outhouse in appalling conditions, not fit for human habitation, and was locked in overnight. One morning she was found lying on the floor covered in blood; she died half an hour afterwards. It was presumed that she had fallen in a fit and had struck her head on the edge of a kerosene tin. The jury found that Annie died from exhaustion following epileptic fits and haemorrhage, her death accelerated by neglect on the part of Rodda, but acquitted him of manslaughter.

1911: Youth with a Pea-Rifle. Frank Capewell (aged 11) was playing with a pea-rifle beside the Diamond Creek in Eltham when he fatally shot Jack Deegan (aged 14). Capewell said he did not realise that the rifle was loaded at the time. A verdict of death from misadventure was recorded; it would have been a case of manslaughter if Capewell had been of age.

1922: Little Girl Accidentally Shot. Four-year-old Rosie Woods, who was living with her grandmother at Queenstown, was being looked after by a neighbour. The neighbour's son was pretending to shoot some chickens with what he thought was an unloaded gun, but it was in fact loaded and he accidentally killed Rosie. He was charged with manslaughter.

1926: Collision at Lower Plenty. William Thomas was driving a horse-drawn wagon (loaded with potatoes) towards Melbourne one evening when he was struck in the rear by a speeding motor car driven by John Williams. Thomas was thrown onto the roadway but Williams callously drove off, ignoring Thomas' plea for help. Thomas was discovered by a passing motorist and taken to hospital, but he died there. Williams was subsequently arrested and convicted of manslaughter.

1953: Dispute over a Dog. Clarence Richings and Bill Wilson were neighbouring property owners at Research. Richings informed Wilson that he was going to lay poison baits, as dogs and foxes were worrying his sheep. When Wilson discovered that his dog had been poisoned, he confronted Richings and the two men got into a fight. Richings was badly beaten up by Wilson, but he sought revenge a few days later armed with a shotgun. Richings shot Wilson dead and was charged with murder. A plea that the case be downgraded to manslaughter was rejected.



1954: Double Murder on Election Day. John Swallow and his wife and daughter lived in New Street Eltham (now Lavender Park Road). When they got home from voting at the federal election, John became incensed that the two women had voted Communist. He killed them both with a large hammer and attempted to kill himself with a cut-throat razor and by ingesting caustic soda. He was charged with murder, but the Crown declined to prosecute on the grounds of insanity.

Sources: Trove and local newspapers

Membership Subscriptions for 2023 - 24 are due on 1st July

We appreciate those members who have already renewed their membership. Your payment would be welcome to Robert Marshall at our June meeting or by direct credit to EDHS Bendigo Bank BSB 633 000 Account 141820902 or by mail to EDHS 728 Main Road, Eltham 3095.

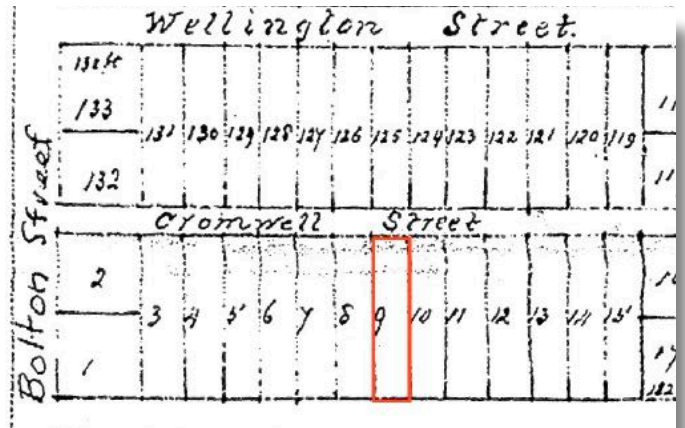
Membership fees are Single member \$25.00 - Family \$30.00 - Business organisation \$30.00

Early Land Sale Documents

From the Shire of Eltham Historical Society newsletter, March 1979

In 1854 Robert Gathercole, a carpenter of Richmond, purchased from J.M. Holloway, lot 9 of Holloway's subdivision called Little Eltham. The land was a residential lot extending from Cromwell to Dalton Streets and was purchased for the sum of four pounds.

Original documents connected with the transfer of this land have been presented to the society by Mrs. Rogers of North Melbourne, a descendant of Robert Gathercole. The presentation was arranged by society President Peter Bassett-Smith after initial contact by society member Mrs. N. Bishop.



Lot 9 in Holloway's 1851 subdivision
Photograph - EDHS collection

The main documents are on parchment and in good order. They comprise the actual transfer document and an attested copy of Holloway's 1851 Crown Grant of the 316 acres, which comprised the southern half of Little Eltham (Crown Portion 12 Section 4 Parish of Nillumbik).

ELTHAM BUTCHERY.

WM. MORRIS

BEGS to thank his customers for their liberal patronage in the past, and also desires to inform the public that he has extended his round to Diamond Creek and district, up as far as Hursts' bridge, and will run his cart there three days a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Kangaroo Ground will be visited every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Evelyn Observer 1 March 1895

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Annual General Meeting - Saturday 15th April 2023

The Annual General Meeting for the Eltham District Historical Society was held on Saturday 15th April 2023. The result of the elections at this meeting are as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| President | Jim Connor |
| Vice President | Peter Pidgeon |
| Vice President | Liz Pidgeon |
| Society Secretary | Russell Yeoman |
| Treasurer/Membership Secretary | Robert Marshall |

Ordinary Committee Members:

Joan Castledine, Alison Delaney, Andrew Lemon OAM, Irene Kearsey, David Taylor, Terry Beaton

Membership Sub-Committee: Rosemary Aitken, John Fecondo, Peter Thomson.

We welcome our 2023/24 committee members, including new members David Taylor and Terry Beaton and thank them for their commitment to supporting the operation of our society.

Anne Hunniford, (Burgoyne) nee Hamilton, 1813-1899, Pioneer

Anne Hamilton was born in Country Tyrone, Ireland between 1813 and 1820. She married Michael Burgoyne in 1839. She had a daughter Charlotte, then later while pregnant with their son John, Michael died in 1843.

Anne migrated to Port Phillip, with her children and soon re-married, to Thomas Hunniford in 1854. In 1855 Thomas was appointed Eltham's first gazetted Post Master. That same year their daughter Anne Jane Hunniford was born in Eltham.

It is very likely that Anne and Thomas operated the Eltham post office together from their general store in Maria Street (now Main Road) near Bridge Street (originally facing Bridge Street but later altered to face Main Road).

Anne's older daughter Charlotte married Charles Roberts in 1857 but after the birth of three daughters, Charlotte died aged 27 in 1867. She was buried at Arthurs Creek. Anne senior died in Eltham 1899 aged about 85 years, fourteen years after her husband. She was buried at Eltham Cemetery.

Anne Jane Hunniford 1855-1927, Post Mistress

Anne Jane Hunniford was a teacher at Eltham Primary School in her early adult years from age 15 and a half until her resignation in April 1876.

In about 1880, the management of the post office passed from Thomas Hunniford to his daughter who was about 25 years old. Anne Senior was by this time about 67. A telegraph office had been installed in 1877, so perhaps Anne was in the best position to work with the new technology. Thomas died on the 23 March 1885. Anne would have been very busy both caring for her mother till her death as well as running the Post Office.

Anne knew everyone and was respected for her kindly actions in her official and private capacities. In her time there was no official letter delivery to houses; residents would have collected their mail at the post office. But if an important letter or telegram arrived, Anne would try to find someone willing to deliver it.

In 1895 she wrote to the Council together with her neighbours requesting maintenance for the cutting on the Post Office Hill, which had become very slippery.

Anne would have played a leading role in the community delivering letters connecting families with their young men who had joined up during the war years 1914-1918. In fact, some men on enlistment cited their address as "Post Office Eltham" or simply "Eltham". She may also have been the bearer of telegrams with notifications of their "highest sacrifice" – an unenviable task.

During 1923 a manual telephone exchange was provided at Eltham, - more new technology to get used to! Anne managed the Eltham Post Office and was well-known in the local community for the best part of 50 years. She never married. Illness forced her to retire in 1928 and she died soon after just before Christmas, aged 73. She had outlived both her half-siblings. Her half nephew John Neville Burgoyne inherited her estate.



She was buried in Eltham Cemetery with her mother Anne. They are buried with John's granddaughter two-year-old Brenda Mary Burgoyne who died in June 1958. She was the daughter of Elspeth Burgoyne, nee Muir and Royston Burgoyne.

Many years later a plaque was placed on the site to mark the grave.

We appreciate the support our Society receives from our local sponsors and encourage you to support them



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

Our postal address is 728 Main Road, Eltham 3095

We are always interested to consider local history stories or articles for publication in our newsletter

Experience Eltham Cemetery

Monument preservation and restoration

We are often asked about the state of historical monuments within the cemetery; monuments and memorials are the property of the Holders of the Right of Interment (owners) of a site and trusts are not permitted to use funds for the maintenance of monuments within their cemetery. Monuments are an important part of the cemetery history, and it is incredibly fulfilling to see monuments renovated and restored. Two recent renovations are shared below.

Annie Lyon and Helen Bird

This gravesite, in the Methodist monumental section has been completely renovated. Ironwork and several pieces of stone from the original monument have restored and reinstated.

The original headstone was replaced with a new white marble headstone, and the original inscription replicated in black.



Nina Mikhailovna Christesen and Clement Byrne Christesen

Originally a bronze plaque on large boulder, this headstone has been recently renovated and a large black granite headstone with a detailed inscription and ceramic photograph. The original monument, including the headstone in recognition of Nina's parents, remains unchanged.



The Lyon, Bird and Christensen families are captured in the EDHS collections and archives, with information available on the EDHS website and published in previous newsletters.

The Trust appreciates the opportunity to share information and news from the Eltham Cemetery with the EDHS readership. If you have any feedback or questions for the Trust, please feel free to get in contact me on 03 9432 1963 or via email at admin@elthamcemetery.com.

Julia Drew
General Manager