

Newsletter



No. 277 August 2024

Vale - Doug Orford - 22nd August, 1929 - 8th July, 2024

Doug Orford, was a life member of the Eltham District Historical Society, whose family has resided in the district since the 1850s.

Doug was actively involved in EDHS over so many years, in so many ways, including as a committee member and vice president. Contributions by Doug and Gwen, his wife, assisted EDHS to continue to develop as a not-for-profit group intent on promoting and preserving our local history.

His significant work with assisting to establish our valued Local History Centre helped develop our home base and supported the continued growth of our society. Doug's local knowledge, suggestions and family connections were highly valued. Until recent times, he continued to regularly attend our Collections Team workshops providing his insights and historical information about photographs and society records.

Many of our members remember Doug fondly.

Joan Castledine said 'A beautiful man, he had something special about him. As an "Elthamite" he told me stories about my family, to my delight'.

Andrew Lemon commented 'Lovely Doug Orford, such a big help to me back when I was working on the Research Primary School history in the 1980s. I have always appreciated his clear memories and enjoyed his stories. That ends a very long link with Eltham's past.'

Alison Delaney said 'Such a dear man, and a wealth of knowledge of our local history story. I was so touched when we discovered that our relatives, Doug's uncle and my great grandfather, Joseph, had both been in the same Tunnelling Company together during WW1. Rest in peace Doug, you're such a treasure, and we will never forget you.'



Doug, during a heritage excursion in 2011
Photograph - Jim Connor



Doug, with his uncle W.H.Orford's
Welcome Home medal - 2014
Photograph - Jim Connor

Vale Doug

Our Next Meeting

2.00pm Saturday 10th August 2024
Eltham Senior Citizen's Centre
Library Place, Eltham

Heritage Excursion

2.00pm Saturday 7th September 2024
Eltham Cemetery Tour
See further details on page 2

Our Next Meeting- 2.00pm Saturday 10th August 2024



At our next meeting at 2.00pm on Saturday 10th August 2024 we will be exploring the development of the Stanhope Estate, west of the Eltham town centre.

This extensive estate was a subdivision of Mrs. Theo Handfield's family property in 1924 and resulted in the creation of approximate 80 residential blocks along Peter, Diamond, Stanhope, Swan and Silver streets. The Stanhope House property was retained on an allotment of approximately 2.5 acres.

So, one hundred years later we will revisit this development, which introduced significant changes to the hillside area west of the Eltham town centre.

This presentation will include stories of the land and its development, as well as some of the interesting residents and their houses.

We look forward to seeing you there, at **2.00pm on Saturday 10th August 2024**. Members and visitors are most welcome.



Stanhope House sketch
Source - EDHS collection

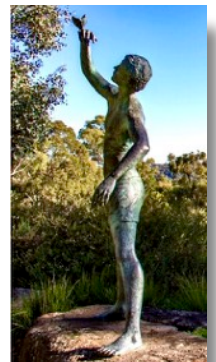
September Excursion - Saturday 7th September - Eltham Cemetery Tour

For our excursion on Saturday 7th September 2024, we will hold another of our popular tours of the Eltham Cemetery.

We will recognise the contributions of some local women to our community, now interred in these grounds.

Car parking is available via the entry on Metery Road. **Please meet at the Gazebo beside the lake for a 2.00pm start.** The tour will take about two hours.

This walk is on uneven ground in places. This free excursion is for Society members. Dogs are not permitted.



Young Man Awakening
Source - Eltham Cemetery

The Eltham Cemetery Trust - a little history

The Eltham Cemetery Trust, established in 1858, selected the existing burial site at Mount Pleasant Road on high ground overlooking the village of Eltham. The first recorded burial took place in 1861 in the Church of England section.

In the 1950s, the Eltham Cemetery Trust amalgamated with the Warringal Cemetery Trust to become the Warringal Eltham Cemetery Trust. In the late 1970s, the amalgamated trust was dissolved and the Eltham Cemetery Trust was reinstated.

In 1961, the previously purchased six acres of contiguous land, was gazetted for cemetery purposes and brought the total size of the Cemetery to twelve acres.



This is part two of the Robert Hoddle story, following on from part one in our June newsletter.

Surveyor's Field Work

The work of colonial surveyors was very difficult, moving through unknown territory, forests and waterways. As well as surveyor assistants, the early surveyors were assigned teams of convicts.

This drawing by ST Gill is a great image of surveyors at work. Note the Gunter's chain spread between the blue coat man in the centre and brown vest man to right in distance. The axeman is marking or blazing a 'surveyors' tree, which was then chiselled with Roman numerals. The Surveyor in Charge, with notebook and pencil in hand, is using a circumferentor, as did Hoddle. It is essentially a large compass with sights, mounted on a tripod. It was used in rural settings to measure horizontal compass bearings relative to magnetic north.



S. T. Gill, Surveyors, 1864.

Source: National Library of Australia

How Gunter's Chain was used

To measure a section of land, a surveyor marked the starting point with a stake, stretched the chain to its full length, then placed another stake at the end of the chain to mark the 66 feet. This continued until the desired amount of land was surveyed. The chainman dragged or carried the chain between the stakes, under direction of the surveyor. The whole process was repeated for all the points required, and from this it was a simple matter to make a scale diagram of the plot of land. The process was surprisingly accurate.

The stake at the boundary was usually a log, 6ft long buried 2ft in the ground, chiselled with allotment numbers, with trenches dug to indicate direction of boundaries lines. If available, a nearby tree was blazed, in case the stake disappeared. At locations like a river, a pile of rocks with trenches on the approach and departure side were used in lieu of a stake.

Surveying with the chain was simple if the land was level, but difficult across large depressions or waterways, as it required levelling on sloping terrain.

From 3D Field Survey to 2D Plans and Maps

Surveyor's measurements were recorded in their field notebook, along with sketch maps and notations on vegetation and soil type. The surveyor would then calculate and plot the information from his field notebook including dimension and area, marks such as survey posts and reference trees, the location of waterways and a description of the country.

Plans from the survey were the basis for the issue of title deeds and leases, gazettal of reserves and the compilation of cadastral maps. (Hesse, K. 2018). No doubt mistakes were made, shortcuts taken and directions overlooked. Some can be understood given the challenges faced with terrain and equipment, while others are difficult to understand.

Robert Hoddle has been praised for his work but also criticised for errors, including overlooking directions from NSW Surveyor-Generals office to provide an access road or right of way to Crown Land Portions, so that the property owner could access their land.

A local example is Martins Lane in Viewbank, the road referred to in the preamble. It forms the boundary between Crown Land Portions 6 and 7 to the south and 8 to the north.

An early map shows Martins Lane was originally called 50 Links Occupation Road. (McBriar, M. 1985) An odd name until the Gunter's Chain Links and Hoddles road reserve omission are considered. Accordingly, a ½ chain (50 links) wide section was excised off Portion 6 in 1840 to enable Portion 7's owner, George Porter to access his property.

A letter to authorities from Porter in 1841, showed he still didn't have access, presumably as Portion 6's owner, Richard Browne had fenced his land to the original survey boundary. The irony is that Porter was one of the few original selectors to actually farm their land, while most just subdivided and speculated.

This was not an isolated case and it ultimately cost the government as they had to purchase land back from landowners to provide road access.

On the positive, another directive from the NSW Surveyor - General's office to record Aboriginal place names appears to have been followed by Hoddle and his team, at times. This was decades ahead of Imperial practice elsewhere, and while often suffering distortion in form and meaning, it likely gave us local names such as Warringal, Nillumbik, Keelbundora and Banyule. (Moyal, A. 2017)

Surveying equipment has changed considerably since Hoddle's time. The Gunter Chain was replaced by a steel tape in the 1890's and chain men replaced by linesmen. Professional training of surveyors became mandatory in Australia in the late 1800's.

Today's recording equipment is sophisticated and aided by GPS, drones and computer software, but at the end of the day the surveyor relies on his measurements and recordings to transfer 3D into 2D.

And Gunter's Chain lives on as the length of the cricket pitch.

Robert Hoddle's Career

As for Robert Hoddle, he settled in Melbourne, unlike many of his contemporaries who, fortunes made, returned to the old country for their golden years.

With the separation of the colony of Port Phillip from New South Wales in 1851, Hoddle was appointed Surveyor-General. However, he was 'eased' out of the office in 1853, to make room for a younger person, after questions of his suitability, age and temperament were raised by Governor Charles La Trobe. (Moyal, A. 2017)

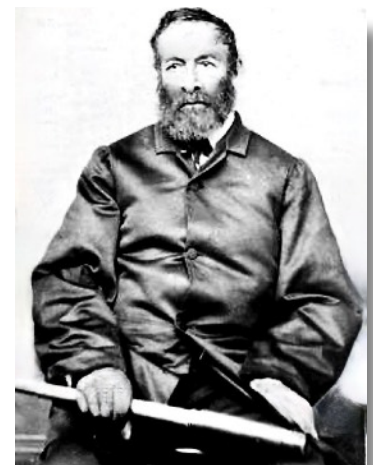
Hoddle married twice and had five children. The family lived in a fine house on the corner of Bourke and Spencer Streets, built in 1842. In retirement he continued his interest in sketching and music and was also active in the Old Colonists Association, being elected a life Governor in 1873. He died in 1881, aged 87 years and is buried in Melbourne General Cemetery.

...Anne's story to be continued in our next newsletter



Details of Parish Keelbundora, Portions 6, 7 & 8, with the 50 Links Occupation Rd/Martins Lane (red)

Source - Anne Paul



Robert Hoddle (1794-1881)
Hyman's Portrait Rooms, c1865
State Library of Victoria

Some forty to fifty years ago Bob Eaton found a book discarded amongst others, outside a house in John Street, Eltham and has kept it in a cupboard since then, not sure what to do with it. Thankfully he decided to donate it to our Eltham District Historical Society.

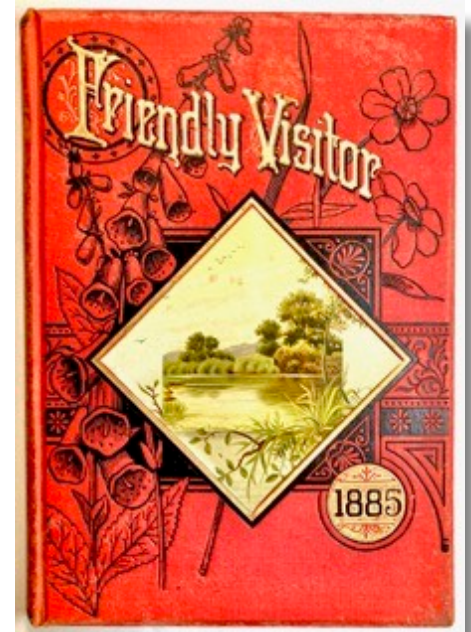
This book is in very good condition, especially given it was published in 1885. It was given by the Eltham Primitive Methodist Sabbath School to William Shillinglaw.

The hand written inscription inside the cover says:

*Eltham Primitive Methodist Sabbath School
Presented to William Shillinglaw
as his share of the W Thompsons
Special Prize
For Second best attendance at Sabbath School
Equally divided between him and his sister Cassie
September 13th 1886*

We know that William Shillinglaw, was one of eight Shillinglaw children to attend Eltham Primary School. He was born in 1878 and attended the school between 1883 and 1890, having started there at the age of 4 years and 2 months in April 1882. He left the school in 1890 when 12 years of age.

We are thankful Bob acted to save this book from being discarded, as he has preserved a valued part of our local history.



The Prize
Photograph - Jim Connor

Eltham Library - 30th Anniversary

One earlier definition of a library is: *a place set apart to contain books, periodicals, and other material for reading, viewing, listening, study, or reference.*

Thankfully, libraries are now not what they once were, they are now just so much more.

In this newsletter we reflect on the Eltham Library, which on 22nd June 2024 celebrated its 30th anniversary, having opened on 22nd May 1994. This treasured library not only lives up to that general definition, it actively provides a broad range of community supportive services.

It is a memory generator, as well as a keeper of memories, and in the thirty years it has operated from this creatively designed building it has adapted to continue to serve the community well.

Various activities occurred throughout this celebration day, some of which are covered in the following articles by Sue Dyet and Frank Taylor.

A special contribution was that of Peter Carrigy, the sculptor of 'Platy' the much appreciated carved platypus, arising out of a Bunya Pine burl, that evokes the swirl of a stream of water. Peter visited from South Australia to restore and refresh his artwork, which had experienced thirty years of tactile exploring, by little and sometimes big hands. This was donated to the library by Shire of Eltham councillors at the opening in 1994. If you haven't seen this, you could next time you visit the library.

We look forward to this wonderful library continuing to provide much joy to our community, for many years to come.



Peter Carrigy and 'Platy'
Photograph - Jim Connor

For those of us who remember the previous Eltham Library as the functional room at the end of the old Shire Offices in Main Road Eltham, you went there to return books and choose others. It was not what you could describe as a joyful, exciting and interesting place, it was functional and silent. Certainly not a destination for more involvement – it was a library of its time.

But if a stranger happened to walk into the current Eltham Library, especially around lunchtime on June 22nd 2024 firstly, you would pass through an interesting art gallery, maybe going up the ramp that makes a joyful noise for people running down or up the enveloping steps that lead to the main library. There, you would have seen a vibrant and buzzing, joyful place, busy with people of all ages talking to and laughing with others and, remarkably for a library, eating CAKE and drinking juice, tea and coffee – all inside the library. Other people were returning and borrowing books, others on computers, others reading newspapers and some chatting quietly with a friend and a whole roomful of young children were captivated by a storyteller.

Why all this extra activity and CAKE – that's the hint – our wonderful library turned thirty!

Special events, singing and drawing, stories, displays, speeches and CAKE had been organised by library staff and volunteers for all the community.

The speeches were from people with different perspectives on our library.

Firstly, Jane Cowell CEO of the Yarra Plenty Regional Library recognised that the library had been built on Wurundjeri country, then spoke about the importance of libraries to the whole community and how the libraries evolve to serve the changing needs of society.

Ben Ramcharan, Mayor of Nillumbik, reflected on the fact this special library existed for the whole of his life and that it was marvellous and important resource for our community.

Greg Burgess, the multi award winning architect of this remarkable building, spoke about how designing and constructing this unique building had been a creative challenge designing a building where the interior could change as needed and also reflect the natural environment and the artistic and creative interests of many residents, both past and present.

Jim Connor, President of EDHS was the final speaker. He has been actively involved with the library since its inception in one way and another. Jim briefly talked on aspects of the construction and the involvement of the general community on this project. The library now houses a large reference collection of local historical information, in the form of books and photographs available to the public on request at any time the library is open.



Greg Burgess
Photograph - Alison Delaney

As a note, when Greg Burgess was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Melbourne, the citation noted a number of his world recognised buildings and Eltham Library was first on that list. In 1995 Greg was awarded the Merit Award for a new Institutional Building by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects specifically for his work designing our Eltham Library. That award is one of the 40 plus Australian and International awards he has received for his work.

As for the CAKE - it's the first time I have seen an edible A4 sized photo of a library on a cake, but I did and there was plenty available for everyone to share!

Congratulation to all who were involved with recognising the first three decades of Eltham Library, in such a memorable way.

On Saturday 22nd June 2024 the community was treated to a special event to commemorate the opening of the iconic Eltham Library, thirty years ago in 1994.

This building, which was protected by a heritage overlay just ten years after it was constructed - a record I believe - was designed and supervised during construction, by the renowned architect, Greg Burgess.

Following events and activities like face-painting and craft works, performances by the Eltham High School quartet, some speeches and the Nillumbik U3A choir, there was a chance to meet Greg Burgess, who is in semi-retirement, in a “meet and greet”, round table chat chaired by Jim Connor, president of EDHS.

Jim was well placed to do so as he was an Eltham councillor at the Shire of Eltham at the time the library was opened, on 22nd May 1994. Although he was at pains to point out that he was not a councillor when it was decided to appoint Greg as the architect, following submitted proposals, he was a committed and interested participant during the construction phase, both representing his constituents and his personal interest of the built environment, particularly in the local context.

The chat was informative and engaging, both reflecting on the process and the result. Participants asked Greg several interesting and leading questions, which both proved illuminating and revealing, with Jim adding at times some observations he had from his intimate observations at the time of construction, and since.

It came to light that Greg, being a former Hawthorn VFL player, had actually played for the Eltham Panthers (firsts) in 1967 and 1969 and was a part of their 1969 Premiership! During this period, he spent time working with, and learning from Alistair Knox.

We were also treated to a history of the site by Jim, a site which contains Shillinglaw cottage - a cottage that holds a real place in history, as it was the first re-located brick pioneer building in Australia since settlement. It was carefully numbered, de-constructed and rebuilt with support from the local community.

This raising of awareness of the value of our local history indirectly contributed to the formation of the Shire of Eltham Historical Society in 1967, now the Eltham District Historical Society, which is the reason a sketch of this cottage is part of the EDHS logo.

Greg also shared his major influences, design processes and on-site practicalities.

Some of his early major influences Greg spoke about were the Art and Craft Movement, a movement which also influenced architects including Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Burley Griffin and a bevy of other notable world architects, whose style and elements he consciously absorbed, along with his experiences with the fore mentioned Alistair Knox, who Greg admired.

Naturally, having some experience in the Eltham Shire, siting and orientation were the first hurdles for Greg to consider. The historic trestle bridge and proximity to Alistair Knox Park were also major considerations.



Jim Connor and Greg Burgess - a special conversation
Photograph - Lynnsay Prunotto

The discussion then moved to the design process which, illuminating in itself, as to how areas of activity intersect and how these “intercepts” are critical to the final success of the project. With public buildings - particularly libraries - it can be very hard to marry all these needs and constraints. Public areas, staff/user interface, amenities and quiet, intimate and contemplative areas are all critically important to the workings of libraries. From concept, to working drawings, to the construction phase, there were many challenges that were overcome stage by stage.

The use of engineered timber beams with folded plywood into their chords creates a series of waves or dunes in the entrance/exhibition area and distract from the straight lines of the support beams. The use of unseasoned yellow stringybark, bent while green and still pliable, kerf batons, again creating many curves and vaults behind which black, covered heat insulation also consciously enabled sound absorption, so critical for the building’s use.

The local vernacular mud bricks combined with special order, coloured, fired bricks from Krause Brickworks enabled a local palette, finished with timber and adobe render from the local firm, Grimes and Sons. Colours chosen reflected those of the adjacent Shillinglaw cottage.

Exposed, structural iron work, simple but specially detailed by local tradesmen, combined with round, bark-free naturally termite resistant native pine support poles also soften the eye. The design modelling meant rain and weather were sensibly and practically dealt with so these wouldn’t cause problems into the future.

Greg also debunked the myth that, because he had played footy on the oval on the other side of the railway, he had designed a raised roof section to look like a football. This was purely a happy accident.

..... though doubted by some in attendance.....

The buildings flexibility also stands the test of time having adapted to the modern internet generation and electronic communication very successfully. Indeed, with just minor remodelling and re assigning some areas to reflect current needs, it could be argued that today’s library serves the community just as well, or even better than when originally commissioned.

Greg’s sense of space and function – the use of curves, ceiling heights, light, fireplaces and materials all coalesce to form a wonderful building, that is functionally near perfect and a thing of beauty to behold.

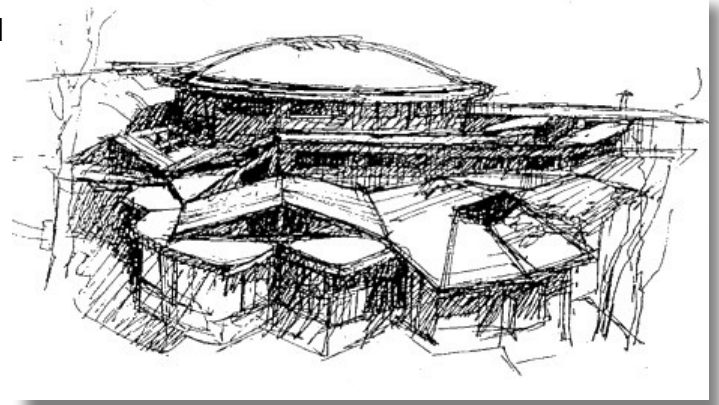
Indeed, a participant, Elisabeth, who had first visited the library only three weeks earlier was compelled to attend as she was truly moved by this building and shared her thoughts. The way it just “felt”. A public, but intimate building. Cave like and embracing. A building which truly raised her consciousness, both intellectually and importantly, emotionally.

This observation is universal and was shared by the attendees.

It has been generally agreed that Greg nailed the brief here.

Thank you, Greg, and thank you Eltham councillors who had a vision well beyond the bottom line, a vision which lives and continues to give well now, and into the future.

It was a lovely day honouring an iconic building and its many creators.



Eltham Library sketch - 1993

Source - EDHS collection

History and geography explain why Eltham and its immediate surroundings, which are closer to central Melbourne than many suburbs, did not become suburbanised earlier. In a nutshell, Eltham was hard to get to: a picnic destination. It was not linked to Melbourne by rail until 1902, Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge not till 1912, and then (as now) by a circuitous route.

Otherwise, Eltham was tedious to access by road until the Fitzsimons Lane bridge was built in 1961 and the road through Lower Plenty to Eltham was duplicated in stages late in that decade.

There are historical oddities about the development of Eltham and why it became the town gateway to this region. You should know that what is still the land parish of Nillumbik was first named and surveyed for sale as agricultural land in the early 1840s, before separation of Victoria from New South Wales, when Charles La Trobe was lieutenant governor. Not much of Nillumbik was actually sold as Crown Land at the time. But the surveyors provided for a village area near where the Diamond Creek meets the Yarra, and this was given the name 'Eltham'.

There was no actual township then, but the bones of that township, if you like, remain visible on current maps and the land today in the Eltham High School precinct, on streets such as Porter, Baxter and Ely Street and what is now called Withers Way.

What then happened is that an entrepreneurial shoemaker, recently arrived in Melbourne, Josiah Holloway, bought what in 'the old' was called a square mile, 640 acres, in two tranches, immediately abutting this proposed square mile Village Reserve. This he bought for one pound an acre and called it Little Eltham and divided it - at least on paper - into 300 allotments. His land was on both sides of the Diamond Creek and it extended from Dalton Street - opposite what is now Eltham Primary - one mile north to beyond Grove Street, and from Bolton Street one mile eastwards to beyond Bible Street, which he named after his wife whose maiden name was Bible.



Holloway was in luck (at least for a time), because he bought and theoretically subdivided this land just before gold was discovered in Victoria and sold it after. Property prices rose, and Eltham found itself on one of the meandering roads to gold fields and was even on an early route from Melbourne to Gippsland. A service town of sorts developed here, with a scattering of houses, in Holloway's Little Eltham.

Every Eltham suburban subdivision later tagged onto this, a process that could be said to have begun when the rail came through and came to its conclusion in the 1970s and 80s after the building of the Fitzsimons Lane bridge, the duplication of the road from Rosanna to Eltham gateway, and the opening of the Eastern Freeway.

Taken from Andrew Lemon's talk to Nillumbik U3A - 22nd May 2024

This is a sequel to the article “*Serendipity in Eltham*” in issue No 272, which reported the bizarre connection to once having lived on Le Gallienne Street in Canberra, with the discovery last year that this unusual French name belonged to an acclaimed Australian composer, who lived much of his short life in Eltham.

Dorian Leon Marlois Le Gallienne suffered diabetes from the age of 16 and died aged 48 on 27th July 1963. Four years earlier in 1959, his Australian mother, Charlotte Edith Estella (Stella) Le Gallienne, neé White, passed away. The same year Dorian started working with Tim Burstall at Eltham Films composing music scores for films such as “*Dance of the Angel*”, “*The Crucifixion*” and “*The Prize*” shot in Eltham.

Some twenty years earlier, apart from composing symphonies, Dorian was working with Matcham Skipper, John Percival and others in the local artistic community. Thus wanting a weekend retreat in the vicinity that had privacy, Dorian purchased a large acreage on Yarra Braes Road in South Eltham, with a friend, Richard Downing in 1948. A mudbrick house was built in stages, which was designed by Alistair Knox and grew to become one of the notable mudbrick dwellings in Eltham. Some readers may know that during WW2, Richard had risen to prominence as a consultant, later chief economist in Canberra, as well as an advocate for social welfare and its reform.

After using his Jubilee Scholarship to study for two years under Maestro Gordon Jacob at the Royal College of Music in London, Dorian returned to Eltham in 1953. He became a music critic for “*The Argus*”, until its closure in 1957 and then for “*The Age*”, which he continued doing as well as composing film scores until his death in 1963. As he never married nor had any other family, Dorian was laid to rest in the Eltham Cemetery by Richard Downing.



Dorian Le Gallienne at rest on the right hand side
Photograph – Terry Beaton

As a further occurrence of serendipity, two years later Richard married Jean Olive Norman, nee McGregor, at the Chapel at Scotch College on 15 February 1965.

Incredibly, my mother’s sole Christian name was Olive; not a common name. Jean was a widow and mother with six children, who then moved into the property at Eltham. A daughter was born to the couple in 1967 and later Jean became an Eltham Shire councillor. Apart from Richard being on the boards for the Melbourne Theatre Company, National Gallery of Victoria and Australian Ballet School, in 1973 he joined the Australian Council for the Arts, as well as being appointed Chairman of the ABC.

He died two years later of a sudden coronary occlusion on 10th November 1975, aged 60, after attending an ABC Concert in Canberra. Reportedly in his eulogy, Richard was referred to as “*one of the Founders of the Welfare State of Australia*”. He was buried adjacent to Dorian’s resting place in an impressive bluestone monument with his mother, Blanche Pauline Downing, nee Domec-Carré, aged 69, who died in 1957 and his stepson, Murray Edwin Norman, aged 27, who died six years after Richard in 1981.

It is therefore truly serendipitous to find that not only has a chance residency in Canberra led forty years later to the discovery of two remarkable local men buried in Eltham Cemetery, who had actively influenced the development of the arts in Australia, but that the Yarra Braes house exists as an example of mudbrick construction that immortalises the unique architectural skill and style of Alistair Knox.

(As 2024 marks the 90th anniversary year of the establishment of Montsalvat, our EDHS newsletter during this year will feature a series of articles by Richard Pinn about significant people who lived and worked at Montsalvat.)

Sue Vanderkelen (1899-1956)

Sue (real name Sylvia) Vanderkelen grew up in Toorak as the daughter of the Belgian Consul. She was described as "a beautiful girl, with a distinctive air of personality and chic" who (as formal Sylvia) became a belle of society in the 1920s.

She had a close relationship with the artist Colin Colahan until he dumped her and went off to Ireland with his latest flame. But through him she had mixed with Justus Jørgensen; the name Montsalvat for the proposed artists' colony was reputedly her idea. She became attracted to Montsalvat, where (as informal Sue) she cooked meals for the workers, kept the grounds tidy and provided some financial support to create the buildings, one of which is known as "Sue's Tower".

And while at Montsalvat, she observed Justus Jørgensen's relationship with his wife Lily and with the Skippers. He had an ability to control and influence people: what were his motives? She later wrote "Symphony in J Major and other poems" and a book "The Cruel Man" about (in part) her experience of Montsalvat. Her manuscript used fictitious names but these were replaced with real names when the book was published long after her death.

Disenchanted with bohemian life, in 1940 she was back at Toorak (as Sylvia), raising funds for Belgian refugees in England.

Main sources: book review by Garry Kinnane in Eureka Street magazine; social gossip in Melbourne newspapers 1916-1933

Sebastian Jorgensen (1938-2019)

Sebastian Jorgensen (son of Justus) grew up at Montsalvat. A childhood friend was John Williams, now a renowned classical guitarist. Seb followed the same path. After training under guitar virtuoso Andrés Segovia, he went on to perform at prestigious venues world-wide, including London's Wigmore Hall, to critical acclaim. Returning to Australia, he gave recitals at Montsalvat and elsewhere, with a repertoire ranging from the European classics to South American works and his own adaptations of indigenous Australian music.

He opposed Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. When Prime Minister McMahon visited Montsalvat, Seb slipped past a police guard and shouted abuse. Things heated up and Seb publicly challenged one of the policemen to a duel. The PM's visit became a farce. The press loved it. But Government funding for Montsalvat events mysteriously dried up.

Seb suffered from ill health in later life, spending much of his time at a farm at Christmas Hills owned by the Montsalvat Trust.

Main sources: SkyscraperCity Forum (blog), Upper Yarra Star Mail 5/8/08, Diamond Valley News 12/7/83, Canberra Times 5/4/71



Sue Vanderkelen - 1930
Photograph -
The Home magazine



Sebastian Jorgensen
Photograph - Sam Bienstock

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