

Newsletter

No. 221 March 2015



Benjamin Wallis and The Eltham Hotel

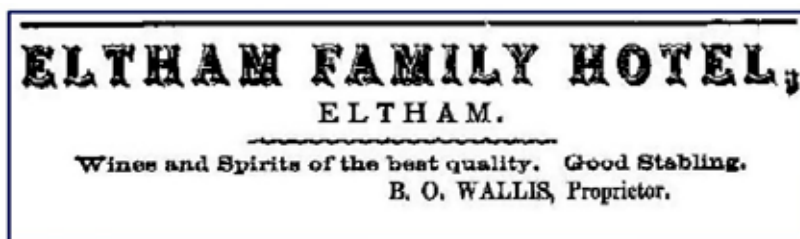
by Russell Yeoman

In our Newsletter No. 217 July 2014 there was an article about Benjamin Oliver Wallis who was a prominent Eltham resident, publican and Councillor during the second half of the nineteenth century. He owned the house that is now the Nillumbik Living and Learning Centre at 739 Main Road Eltham. The article concluded by indicating that further research was required on Wallis' ownership of the Eltham Hotel.

That previous article followed an enquiry from Christopher Wallis, a resident in Germany and it transpired that Benjamin Wallis was a member of the same family that came from the Cornish village of Newlyn. Christopher Wallis has now provided the results of his research complete with reference sources and it includes significant additional information on Benjamin Wallis and his connection with the Eltham Hotel.

What follows here is summarised from Christopher Wallis' article, which starts with the background of the Wallis family in Cornwall where Benjamin trained as a mason and built a number of houses. He migrated to Melbourne in 1853 but his wife and children remained in Cornwall for a further 10 years. Later in 1853 Richard Warren engaged Wallis to build the Eltham Hotel and it opened in 1854 or 1855. The Fountain of Friendship Hotel on the opposite side of Maria Street (Main Road) opened at about the same time.

In 1858 Warren fell into financial difficulties and had to sell the hotel. Wallis bought the hotel and obtained a publican's licence in 1861. In the 1850s the Fountain had been the more popular hotel but after that the Eltham Hotel became more popular.



Benjamin Oliver Wallis' advertisement - Victorian Post Office Directory 1866-1867 (page 23)

The article argues that in about 1857 Wallis probably built the "Living and Learning house" for tanner John Pearson. In 1868 Pearson became bankrupt and Wallis acquired the house and he lived there until his death in 1896. For some of this time the house was in the name of Benjamin's son Richard but he died in 1888 and ownership reverted to his father.

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Next Meeting - Annual General Meeting

8.00pm Wednesday 11th March 2015

Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre

Library Place, Eltham (Melway Map 21 ref J5)

Heritage Excursion

The Belle Vue Farm Walk

2.00pm Saturday 7th March 2015

See further details on page 2

March Meeting - Annual General Meeting

Our March meeting each year is the Annual General Meeting, which includes the presentation of annual reports and the election of office bearers for the coming year. The official notification of the Annual General Meeting and the agenda is on pages 6 and 7 in this Newsletter.

At this meeting Jim Connor will speak about 'World War 1 - Eltham Connections'. He will look at the lives of some people with connections to the former Shire of Eltham who contributed to this war effort, either as soldiers, nurses or in other roles.

As many young men from our area lost their lives during this conflict it is considered to be a relevant topic given the increasing interest in this war and being close to ANZAC Day, 25th April 2015; one hundred years from the landing of Australian forces at Gallipoli.



As at all of our meetings, new members and visitors are most welcome.

March Excursion - Belle Vue Farm Walk

Belle Vue farm comprised about 56 ha (140 acres) extending northerly from the northern boundary of Holloway's 1851 Little Eltham subdivision. On the present day map the southern boundary was just north of Elsa Court and Grove Street. The western boundary was the Diamond Creek and extended northerly to Main Road where it turns easterly towards Research. It was traversed by the main road to Kangaroo Ground and beyond and from 1912 by the railway to Hurstbridge. From 1895 the farm was owned by William Williams and his wife Mary Ann. In 1914 -15 they built a new house now known as "Belle Vue".

They sold the land in 1920 and residential subdivision began soon after that. "Belle Vue" remains today on a large residential lot in Livingstone Road. The house and many old trees on the site have been subject to a heritage overlay under the Nillumbik Planning Scheme. Despite that overlay it is disappointing that most of the heritage trees have now been removed.

For our excursion on 7th March we intend to walk through the former farm area that is now a residential neighbourhood. The route will include views of "Belle Vue" and a number of other interesting houses and features of historic interest.

This walk is about 3.5 km in length and will take 2 to 2.5 hours. It will start at 2pm at the northern end of the Eltham railway station carpark in Main Road opposite Luck Street. (Melway ref.21 K4).

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.



'Belle Vue' 2007



'Belle Vue' 2015

The following men are known to have enlisted for the Boer War from the Shire of Eltham:

- Private Allan/Allen Frederick Humphrey of Diamond Creek - 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles,
- Private Walter Frederick Beard of Research - 3rd Victorian Bushman later 2nd Scottish Light Horse,
- Trooper Frank Rueben Browning of Kangaroo Ground - 4th Victorian Imperial Bushmen,
- Private Cecil Harris Button of Yarra Glen - 4th Victorian Imperial Regiment,
- Trooper Mark Cummings of Kangaroo Ground - 2nd Scottish Horse,
- Private William Sheeton Cunningham NOK Dixon's Creek - 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles,
- Private John Gordon Finlay of Diamond Creek - 3rd Victorian Bushmen (Cameron's Scouts),
- Private Frederick Greenaway of Panton Hill - 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles,
- Private Shelley Harris of Kinglake - 3rd Victorian Bushmen,
- Private Hamilton Hugh Sloan of Christmas Hills - 4th Victorian Imperial Regiment and later Corporal with 6th Australian Commonwealth Light Horse,
- Private Herbert Nicol Staff born at Queenstown - 4th Australian Commonwealth Horse
- Private James Wilson of Yarra Glen - 3rd Victorian Bushmen,
- Captain Joseph Henry Brabazon of Diamond Creek - 6th Australian Commonwealth Horse, Victoria,
- Private Robert French of Christmas Hills - 4th Victorian Imperial Bushmen,
- Private Andrew Norman Mische of Diamond Creek - 6th Australian Commonwealth Horse, Victoria,
- Andrew Thomas Woodman of Yarra Glen - 4th Victorian Imperial Bushman

But this story is not about a group of servicemen from a particular area it is about one man Walter Frederick Beard. Born on the 13th April 1871 to Henry George Beard and Ann Beard (nee Edwards) of Canterbury Cottage in Sale, Victoria. Henry was the oldest of a family of four siblings. The Evelyn Observer noted at a later date that he was the Grandson of the late Captain Edwards who died in the Crimean War when a Captain of the Submarine Engineering Admiralty staff.

The year 1900 finds Walter a 29 year old bush laborer working and living with his mother Ann at their property in Research, his father having passed away in 1878. Walter gave his address at the time as the Eltham Post Office. On the 5th February 1900 he enlisted as a Private (Regimental Number 521) in the 3rd Victorian Bushmen to fight in the Boer War in South Africa. His enlistment documents describe him as being of the Church of England faith, 5 foot eight inches tall with a chest measurement of 34 inches.

Prior to him embarking for overseas two collections were taken up to present him with a memento from his friends, one collection from Eltham and the other from Research and Kangaroo Ground. Neither of the two collectors was aware of the other. A set of field glasses valued at £9.9s was presented to him. He embarked on the Euryalus which sailed on the 10th March 1900 disembarking on the 3rd April 1900 at Beira to join the Rhodesian Field Force.



Walter Frederick Beard

His service during the period April 1900 to April 1901 was as part of Major Viall's 3rd Bushman Contingent in Rhodesia under General Carington, West Transvaal. These actions included a skirmish at Koster River where six were killed (22nd July 1900), and under General Plumer in Northern Transvaal including the battle of Rhenoster Kop (29th November 1900), the great De Wet hunt, including a charge at Wolwekuil (14th February 1901) and the advance on Pietersburg. He returns to Victoria on the Morayshire arriving in Melbourne on 6th June 1901 and was discharged on 8th June 1901. He received a Welcome Home at West's Hotel at Research on 10th June 1901. On this smoke night men attending honored their guest with speeches and praise. In turn Walter spoke of his exploits with the Bushman Corps and exhibited some trophies he had brought back.

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Walter Frederick Beard *(continued from page 3)*

However he is drawn back to South Africa and joins the 2nd Scottish Light Horse (Regimental Number 39668). This time he embarks on the Britannic which sails on the 24th September 1901. Perhaps it is a young lady that draws him back to South Africa as the Age Newspaper reports that on the 29th March 1904 he marries Matilda Jane Walker (Born Sebastopol Vic) at Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This time Walter serves during the period 20th September 1901 to 30th April 1902 and is promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal.

His period of service in South Africa earned him the award of the "Kings Medal" which was only awarded to servicemen who served in excess of eighteen months. He was the only man from the Eltham, Heidelberg or Whittlesea Shires to earn the award.



Kings Medal - South Africa

Over the next decade Walter and Jane have four children:

- Thomas William "Bill" Beard in 1904, (In later life he resided in South Africa)
- Walter Frederick Beard 15th May 1906 at Collingwood - Died Surrey Hills 19th January 1959
- Eva Annie May Beard 1910 - 1966, and
- Dorothy Olive Canberra "Doll" Beard 1913 - 1980

After taking his discharge he enlists in the Natal Police (Number 3238) at Durban on the 15th October 1903 and is believed to have been a gaoler in Nongoma, Zululand. He returned to Australia c.1906.

Census Returns on Ancestry finds Walter residing in Brunswick West during the period 1931 to 1942 (Age 60 to 71). On the 21st June 1948 he passed away at 4 Cadman Street, West Brunswick and was cremated at the Melbourne Crematorium, Fawkner. His death is noted in the Argus newspaper of Monday 21st June 1948. Matilda and his children survive him with Matilda passing away at the age of 85 in 1963 at Parkville. In accordance with her wishes her remains were cremated and scattered at Fawkner.

Ellis Cottage Celebrates 150 Years

On Sunday 22nd March 2015 there will be a celebration to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Ellis Cottage, which is now home to the Nillumbik Historical Society in Diamond Creek (Melway 12 F 5). The Society houses a large collection of historic photographs and documents of pioneering families from Diamond Creek and its surrounds.

The celebration program commences from 1.00pm with some musical entertainment then a talk by Associate Professor Don Garden, President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. Afternoon tea will be available from 3.00pm in the adjacent barn.



Ellis Cottage

Ellis Cottage was constructed in 1865 by William Ellis of local uncut stone, which is unusual as most residential buildings of the era were of timber weatherboards. It is a typical farmers residence and is reminiscent of past lifestyles in the local area. The cottage is also open on the first Sunday of every month, except January from 2pm - 4pm or by appointment.

Further to the article "At the Movies" (November 2014 Newsletter) the Society has been able to acquire from the Australian National Library some stills from the movie "Borrowed Plumes".

Further research has unearthed details of the interesting family surrounding Kooringarama Films. The movie was filmed by amateur enthusiast Eric Lyall. Eric Cecil Lyall was born in Tooradin in the Westernport District in 1904. His mother Cecile Garnet Warburton (nee Carr) Lyall died in childbirth. Eric was raised by his maternal aunt Ethel May Geraldine (nee Carr) Boake and his uncle Alfred Hogarth Boake. The Boakes lived at Kooringarama in York Street, Eltham. The house, later owned by Alistair Knox, still exists.

Eric was the grandson of William Lyall, born in Foveran, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, who had followed his father John Lyall a farmer who had migrated to Van Diemen's Land in 1832. In 1847 his son William moved to the Port Phillip District and began trading in fat bullocks for the Tasmanian market. In 1851 in partnership with John Mickle and John Bakewell he acquired Tooradin Station in Westernport adjacent to the Kooweerup swamp. The partnership also acquired Yallock, Monomeith, Tobin Yallock Swamp and Red Bluff. He built his substantial homestead Harewood at Tooradin which is now open for tourists. Apart from his farming interest William was a local Councillor, and became a Member of the Lower House of the Victorian Parliament in 1859. Following on from the making of "Borrowed Plumes" Eric Lyall went on to make another film for the Eltham Fire Brigade, and it appears that he may have made one for the local Anglican Church. No trace of these films has been found.

In 1929 a four reel, one hour film was produced locally with the title "As Ye Sow". The principals in the cast were Jack Cornwall, Norman D'Arcy, Marie Bucknell and Gwen Pritchard. The film was directed by Mr. Stanley Walpole of St. Kilda who had had considerable experience in motion picture work in Hollywood, U.S.A. Eric Lyall was one of the photographers. No copies exist of this film either. Eric married one of the "movie stars", Marie Bucknell in 1930. Eric became a radiographer and was the manager of a company providing tuberculosis screening for servicemen during the Second World War. He died in 1944 at 29 The Ridge, Canterbury, aged 40.

His aunt, Ethel Boake, along with Miss Florence Garner operated Kooringarama as a guest house and at one time it was a convalescent home for tuberculosis sufferers. Eric's uncle Alfred Hogarth Boake died in Eltham in 1940 and it appears that soon after Ethel Boake left the district. She died at Camberwell in 1954 and with her husband Alfred and nephew Eric is buried at Fawkner Cemetery.

This photograph from the Australian National Library Collection depicts a dramatic scene from the movie "Borrowed Plumes". With Doug Orford's expertise we have narrowed the car down to a Jowett "Short 7 1924"; 7 hp 907cc side valve flat twin engine.

11,444 vehicles were produced (including both Short and Long 7s) between 1919 and 1930. It was a 2 door fabric saloon, with a three speed gearbox. Jowett's was founded in 1901 by brothers Benjamin and William Jowett with Arthur V. Lamb. They started in the cycle business and went on to make V – twin engines. In 1904 they became the Jowett Motor Manufacturing Company based in Bradford, Yorkshire and their first Jowett car was produced in February 1906.



Scene from 'Borrowed Plumes' - from Australian National Library Collection

Annual General Meeting

To satisfy the requirements of the Society's rules, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Eltham District Historical Society Incorporated will be held at 8.00pm on Wednesday 11th March 2015 at the Eltham Senior Citizens' Centre.



**Eltham District
Historical Society**

The agenda of the Annual General Meeting is set out below in accordance with the rules.

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2014 Annual General Meeting
3. Reports
 - a. President's Report
 - b. Financial Report
 - c. Any other reports
4. Election of office bearers and ordinary members of committee positions to be filled as follows:
 - President
 - Senior Vice President
 - Junior Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer/Membership Secretary
 - Ordinary Committee Members (not less than three and not more than six)
5. Fixing of entrance fee (if any) and annual subscription
6. Consideration of a report by the Committee on the adoption of amendments to the constitution for the Society

Proposed Motion: That the Constitution of the Eltham District Historical Society Incorporated be amended as presented, in order to comply with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

7. Consideration of a report by the Committee on the matter of Honorary Life Membership of the Society.
8. Any other business of which at least two weeks notice has been given to members.

It should be noted that under the Society's rules nominations of office bearers should be made in writing to the Secretary not less than seven days before the meeting. Nominations should be signed by two members of the Society and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate. If insufficient nominations are received further nominations shall be received at the meeting. However, it should be noted that where a valid prior nomination is received it will have priority and no nomination for that position can be accepted at the meeting.

As an incorporated association the Eltham District Historical Society Inc. is required to modify its constitution in accordance with The Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. A subcommittee has amended the constitution and this will be presented to the Annual General Meeting for approval prior to its presentation to the Department of Consumer Affairs for their approval.

Interested members may have a look at the draft constitution by approaching any member of the committee of management. If there are any comments or queries please address them to Russell Yeoman, the Secretary of the Society. For ease of reference we have listed on page 7 the matters that have to be addressed because of the changed legislation and the sections in the drafted constitution where they are covered.

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Annual General Meeting *(continued from page 6)*

Matters to be addressed	Sections in draft constitution
Statement of purposes of the Society now to be included in the Constitution	Section 2
General rights of members to inspect and obtain copies of documents as provided for under the rules	Section 6
Expulsion of a member	Section 6
Disputes and mediation	Section 7
Changes to the function and composition of the committee	Section 9: a, d
Change to the role of the treasurer	Section 9: i
Role of secretary (formerly public officer)	Section 10
Change in management of financial records	Section 11: g
Changes to the custody and inspection of books and records	Section 12

Under the requirements of the new act the former public officer position is now known as Secretary. To distinguish this role from the current office bearer position of Secretary the Committee recommends that the latter position be called Society Secretary. However it should be noted that until the new constitution is approved the current one is still in operation and that is the basis for this election of office bearers.

The Committee is grateful to Adrian Jones for his work in preparing the draft constitution.

Each year we urge members to contribute to the operation of our Society by becoming an office bearer or committee member and we have the same message again this year. Please give the matter some consideration and, if in doubt, discuss it with one of our office bearers. The workload is not great. There are usually just six committee meetings each year, alternating with our Society meetings.

We warmly welcome fresh ideas to help us run a vibrant organisation and increase our membership.

Our new online presence

As our Society meeting on Wednesday 11th February 2015 we were pleased to announce the launch of our new online presence for the Eltham District Historical Society; spearheaded with a major upgrade to our website and a new domain name URL, www.elthamhistory.org.au.

We hope you will find it a refreshing modern update; easier to navigate and quickly locate newly added material and featured content. The site now also has the ability to easily share content with your friends via social media connectivity buttons as well as the capability for providing feedback and comments.

To complement our new website and further extend our online presence, we have also established a new Facebook Community Organisation page, Eltham District Historical Society Inc, as well as a new presence on Twitter, @ElthamHistory.

We encourage you to feel free to share with us your own family stories of people, places and life in the Eltham district.



Benjamin Wallis and The Eltham Hotel *(continued from page 1)*

Much information is provided about Wallis and his family and especially his standing in the Eltham community. He was a member of the Eltham Jockey Club and in 1867 his wife Anna rode her horse Charlotte in the Annual Races. Anna was also an angler and is reported to have caught a large perch in the Yarra River. She died in 1887.

On 16th September 1886 Wallis sold the hotel to Christopher Watson (Snr). Watson died in 1887 and the hotel passed to his son Christopher Watson (Jr) who owned it for many years. It eventually passed to his son Herbert. Our Society records have to date not recorded the fate of the original Eltham Hotel although diligent research of the local press would have answered this question.

Assumptions have been made that the hotel gradually evolved from that building to the present day complex. However Christopher Wallis' article and other recent research by Alan Sheehan shows that the hotel was demolished in 1925 when Herbert Watson was still the owner. A new hotel was built that included the façade currently standing at the corner of Main Road and Pitt Street. Many subsequent extensions have completely changed this hotel from its beginnings in the earliest years of Eltham's development.



Watson's Eltham Hotel

.....and also

It is good to see an increasing number of members assisting at our records workshops, particularly the Monday morning sessions. If you would like to assist but cannot come on the specified dates then individual arrangements can be made for appropriate tasks and dates. Some jobs can be done on a "take home" basis. Talk to a Committee member if you are interested. Coming dates for our scheduled workshops at our Local History Centre are:

Tuesdays 7.30 pm	3rd March	7th April
Mondays 9.30 am	16th March	20th April

Contacts for the Eltham District Historical Society

- Jim Connor, President – Telephone 9439 5916
- Russell Yeoman, Secretary – Telephone 9439 9717
- David Johns, Treasurer / Membership Secretary – Telephone 9434 3357

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