

D. Flaherty

**YARRA GLEN & DISTRICT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.
FOUNDED 1973**

NEWSLETTER

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Editor, Eric Tetlow. 9730 1445.

During April we will be mounting our annual photographic display at "HOOGIE'S HARDWARE". Do be sure you call in a view the display.

Many thanks to "HOOGIES" for allowing us to show some of our collection.

Our members will be pleased to know that our friends at the Healesville Historical Society are at long last moving from the "Dungeon" to decent quarters at the front of the old Council Chambers. We wish them well.

Notes from the General Meeting of "Committee of Eastern Historical Societies" 26 February 2000. At this meeting your editor was appointed to a sub-committee to expedite the incorporation of the organisation. However it was found to be difficult to agree on the wording of the proposed constitution due to the word "Committee" being used as a name. It was decided by the sub-committee to recommend that the name be changed to "Association of Eastern Historical Societies" This matter has been listed on the agenda for the Annual Conference to be held 29th April. If the conference agrees to the name change then incorporation will proceed immediately.

" KANGAROO GROUND WAR MEMORIAL TOWER"

Following on from our article in the last issue we have been presented with some more details, these are taken from a publication produced at the time of the dedication 16th November 1951 by The Governor, General Sir Dalla Brooks.

"A resident of the Shire of Eltham, Mr. W.A. Wipple, was the first to suggest a Memorial Park; then Mr. B. Hall, of Panton Hill, suggested a Tower being a replica of the Old English and Scottish Watch Towers, and he organised a public committee to work for its erection, and the general public generously supported the project with donations.

The Tower was designed free of charge by Messrs. Stephenson and Meldrum, Architects of Melbourne, from a sketch supplied by the Artist Harold Herbert. Professor Osborne donated the stone from his property at Kangaroo Ground.

Mr. G. Rousell, of Mordiallic was the contractor who carried out the building, which is 50 feet high, 16 feet at the base, and tapering to 15 feet by 15 feet at the top and is constructed of stone and reinforced with concrete with sandstone rubble facings and concrete quoins and dressings.

On the 11th November 1926, His Excellency the Governor-General, Lord Stonehaven, unveiled the 1914-18 Honor Plaque midst a gathering of 1500 persons.

The Public Committee then committed the care of the Tower and grounds to the Council of the Shire of Eltham.

The Shire recently erected a Caretaker's Cottage to further assist in caring for the Memorial and grounds."

YARRA GLEN'S MEMORIAL HALL.

At the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, the population of Yarra Glen was approximately 300. During the savage years of conflict to follow, 30 young men of the district, Yarra Glen, Dixons Creek, Steels Creek and Christmas Hills - many no more than boys - were die on the battlefields of France and the Dardenelles.

The land on which the Yarra Glen Memorial Hall stands was purchased 2nd October 1925. On that date it had a frontage 70 feet to Bell Street and 311 Feet to Rudolph Street (Anzac Avenue). The original hall cost approximately £ 2500 but by June 1928 the debt had been reduced to £ 900.

On 13th September 1929 the Shire Council presented a copy of Longstaff's "Menin Gate at Midnight" to the R.S.L. The Shire President, Cr. Colin Bell, in a few interesting remarks, related the history of the Menin Gate, through which led the roadway to the famous Ypres Salient, which for five years was a central position in the activities of the allied forces.

The present memorial gate was, he explained, erected to the memory of those soldiers who laid down their lives, but whose resting place was unknown, and therefore unmarked by any other monument. Among these was one from Yarra Glen, John Jell whose father was present that evening.

Cr. Bell mentioned that the picture, the original of which had been procured for Canberra at a cost of £2000, had been painted by an artist who had long resided in Eltham Shire.

On the 15th February 1951 disaster struck Yarra Glen when the original Memorial Hall burned to the ground. However the second Memorial Hall was opened 27th May 1954 and cost £12,500.

Next Meetings.

9th April and 14th May 2000, Living & Learning Centre,
Anzac Ave., Yarra Glen, 1.30 pm.

President, Mrs Evelyn Smith.

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