

Yesterday's Eltham on film

A talk to The Eltham Society by Ray Andrew
5 November 2009

In November it was the turn of another member, Ray Andrew to present an incredible cine film archive dating back to the 1950s. What was remarkable was that the majority had come from members and Ray professionally incorporated the old film into digital format, which provided such a crisp and fresh look at these films. Ray showed us a range of events and places that captured the development of Eltham into today's suburb. It was interesting to see the J Metcalfe's premises in Pound Place whose business changed from blacksmith's work to lawn mower repairs. The premises were demolished in the late 1980s for Sainsbury's and the business relocated to Passey Place.

A well known factory building, Grafton's was captured externally as inside it was busy making office machine equipment. This ornate building gave way to demolition in the late 1980s when the B&Q store was constructed in Footscray Road. All present must have admired the fact that there were few factories to have had a fort like frontage like Grafton's! A short walk away from the site another piece of film was taken in 1986 which showed the unveiling of the blue plaque on the home of famous writer and naturalist, Richard Jefferies at 59 Footscray Road with the then Society's Chairman, Margaret Taylor, reminding all those present of the great contribution he made to literature.

Ray's films took us on a tour around all parts of the Eltham area and included Glenlea Road and around Eltham station before the building of the Rochester Way Relief Road, the Sun Yard development, now the site of the Eltham Centre, fascinating film of the now demolished Eltham Park Lido, the now closed Eltham Pools, showing its intriguing 1930s interior, the Boys Brigade inspection of 1956 in Mottingham and the mixture of ancient and modern building around the Eltham Palace site.

Ray must be congratulated for digitally preserving this old film which made for a very enjoyable evening. *Copies of this Eltham Society Film Archives presentation are available on CD at £10 each, postage extra, from Ray Andrew on 020 8857 1351. Details on any other films that can be copied will also be welcome.*

David Sleep