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# KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the  
**ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC**

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## I Do NOT like lockdown! BUT!

Carol Leeson

The reality of living in a society is that we have a responsibility to ourselves and to our community to do the ‘right thing’ and this has come out in our response to the COVID outbreaks. Rights and obligations to others come with individual rights and freedoms and are mutually balancing factors. You can’t take one and forget the other.

There are **NO GOOD OPTIONS** just the least bad of bad options. There is a cost to “lockdown”. There is a cost to “no lockdown.”

**BUT!** It does have an end in sight, (even though life will be different) if we continue to do the right thing!! And get vaccinated, wear a mask and use QR codes!!  
The Museum does have a QR code or sign in requirement, - for when we eventually re-open.

## **WE COULD SAY “THANK GOODNESS FOR TWO WEEKS OF THE OLYMPICS” DURING COVID LOCKDOWN!**

### **BUT! SOME ANCIENT GREEKS WONDERED WHETHER IT WAS ALL WORTH IT ?**

Winners at the Olympics were thought to have come as close to a god as any man could. But that did not stop some Greeks wondering whether it was all worth it.

The poet Xenophanes commented that ‘a noble boxer would not make a city better ordered, nor keep its granaries filled’. Diogenes the cynic once met an athlete boasting about how fast he was. Diogenes replied: ‘But not faster than a rabbit or deer, the swiftest of animals, and also the most cowardly.’ Aristotle was not hostile to the games *per se* — just to the extremes to which they drove people: ‘The athlete’s habit of body does not produce a good condition for the general purposes of life... some exertion is essential, but it should be a general exertion, directed to all the activities of a free man.’

The satirist Lucian imagined a conversation on the topic between the wise Scythian Anacharsis and Solon, the Athenian reformer. Anacharsis cannot believe that athletes, having amicably oiled each other and scraped the oil off, then attack each other, ‘grappling, tripping and throttling each other like pigs wallowing in mud’. Another is punching his opponent, leaving him ‘spitting out teeth, mouth full of blood and sand... while the officials actually encourage them’. In reply, Solon enthuses over the popularity of the Games and the stakes — honour and glory.

Anacharsis cannot credit that combatants enjoy fighting or spectators appreciate seeing them dripping with blood and knocking each other about — and all for a wreath of olives or parsley! Is receiving a kick in the stomach really the only way to get hold of those products? Solon talks of their symbolic value and conjures up a world of ‘courage, beauty, skill, strength, enterprise’ and the value of ‘endurance and discipline... for the defence of one’s country’. Anacharsis mockingly wonders whether oiling up and sprinkling yourself with dust, and then trying to trip the enemy up, will put them to flight, and reckons he would rout the lot with his little knife.

*Plus ça change*: is there anything new to be said on the still relevant topic?

written by [Peter Jones](#) for *The Spectator*

## **ANDREW ROSS MUSEUMS AGM SQUEEZED IN BETWEEN LOCK DOWNS!**

### **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT 2020**

**Warwick Leeson**

A Pandemic has made a difference even if it seems as if nothing has happened in relation to our Museum. Actually, nothing could be further from the truth.

Like all such institutions, ARM has been closed to the public, but plenty has been going on behind the scenes.

Our safety survey found that there was a significant amount of asbestos in the Museum building and the Education Department have now removed all the asbestos and, as a result of having to remove a substantial amount of flooring, replaced the carpet and tiling at no cost to the Museum.

The building exterior has been painted, new lighting installed, office storage increased and new benches installed.

Through our website, we continue to have enquiries for information about specific families and we have had some book sales fulfilled.

Our future depends upon the challenge of finding volunteers, keeping abreast of recording collections, storage and display of historic knowledge and artefacts as significant.

**A community without a history becomes a community without a memory!**

## **THE GUEST SPEAKER AT THE ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM'S AGM, ROSS MCDONALD - WALTZING MATILDA CONNECTION TO PANTON HILL!**

Ross has lived in the district for many years and has been active in a number of local organisations – Friends of the Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park, St Matthew's Anglican Church, Pantan Hill and Rotary Club of Eltham. His pioneering family were farmers and orchardists dating back to the 1850s from Arthurs Creek and Kangaroo Ground.

He spoke on Sarah Riley who lived locally in her later years and who played a pivotal role in the ballad Waltzing Matilda. Sarah Riley and Christina MacPherson, Sarah's close school friend, were both educated at an exclusive private girl's boarding school 'Oberwyl' in St Kilda. Both Sarah and Christina had relatives and family in the Winton area of Queensland.

**Banjo and Sarah** were very different characters. **Banjo** was adventurous, described as a handsome dashing chap, very popular with the girls, sportsman and later a freelance journalist in South Africa covering the Boer War. Banjo was a serious club man – polo, tennis, rowing and a member of the prestigious Australian Club in Sydney, just to mention a few character traits people attributed to him.

**Sarah** was more homely into needlework and sewing, but was also an extensive traveller, usually first class.

Sarah's addiction to needlework was well known. She was publicly recognised as very capable. She was selected to do some embroidery for a gift to the Duke and Duchess of York when they made a royal visit to Australia in 1927 to open the new parliament house in Canberra (later King George VI\* and Queen Elizabeth).

*\*Besides opening Parliament the Duke also thanked the Australian and NZ Government for sending so many young men to fight in the Great War. Sarah's talents were called upon to embroider a gift box containing two dresses for the then baby Elizabeth II in 1927.*

### ***An Invitation to Dagworth Station (Western Queensland)***

Whilst in Winton, Sarah and her fiancée Banjo Paterson received an invitation from Christina to attend a house party at the 100,000 hectare sheep station at Dagworthy Station – owned and managed by Christina's brother, about 84 miles from Winton; an invitation which Sarah and Banjo accepted. The journey would be over 2 days in a four in hand horse and buggy.

**Music was generally essential for the success of a social gathering like this.**

During the course of the evening, Banjo Paterson heard a tune played by Christina MacPherson, an amateur musician on a zither. The tune was an adaptation of a Scottish folk song "Thou Bonnie Wood of Craigielea".

"Where did you hear it" asked Paterson – "it was played by a military band at a steeplechase at Warrnambool in Western Victoria she replied." "Did it have words, asked Banjo?" "No I don't think so".

Banjo Paterson, the young lawyer and bush poet, making a brief visit from Sydney was instantly attracted to the single lady who could remember tunes by ear.

Using the song as a basis they worked together over 2 days creating the unique bush terminology for the chorus and lyrics. It was a good bush song with a rebellious spirit about it. Perhaps Paterson was showing off to the two ladies his skills with the lyrics.

Geoffrey Blainey, our eminent historian said that Banjo ‘heard her music, and harnessing his own imagination, as well as the local landscape and way of life, produced words that had a touch of magic’.

However, following this collaboration Paterson was suddenly asked to leave the property, leading historians to conclude that he was a womanizer and had engaged in a scandalous romantic liaison with Christina MacPherson.\*

As a consequence Sarah terminated the engagement with Banjo Paterson and the 3 friends went their own way – with the song doing the rounds of the district. People were learning it by ear and it became very popular. The rest is history.

\* there are many views on the split up. The decedents of Sarah Riley think that the on off nature of the engagement culminated in Sarah trying to get away from Banjo by going bush to Winton.



### ***Sarah's Return to Kangaroo Ground–St Andrews Rd, Panton Hill***

After breaking the engagement to Paterson, Sarah left Australia for Scotland and England. There may have been embarrassment since their engagement had been widely known.

Paterson was no longer welcome at the Macpherson's Dagworthy station, and the painful break up with Sarah may have been responsible for his reluctance to ever speak about the circumstance of the poem's composition, nor give credit to Christina MacPherson.

Meanwhile Banjo's *Man from Snowy River and other verses* was breaking publication records and he was on the path to becoming Australia's best loved poet (selling 7000 copies in the first year and ultimately over 100,000 copies).

Banjo married Alice Walker in 1903, a grazier's daughter.

Sarah returned a number of times to “Wharepuke”, Panton Hill, living there in the 1920s and 30s where she shared a house with her companion Miss Maud Rattray. The elegant weather board house with a long drive on the corner of Alma Rd still stands today.

**Sarah lived her remaining days at this residence and passed away in 1935. She never married and nor did Christina MacPherson.**

## Conclusion

The part played by Sarah Riley, a local in the composition Waltzing Matilda is not widely known, yet she played a pivotal role in bringing to light Australia's unofficial anthem.

Without the invitation from Sarah's girlfriend Christina to Dagworth station, the social evening with music and lyrics to Waltzing Matilda would not have taken place.

No other song is guaranteed to create so much controversy than the origins of Waltzing Matilda. It was a magical collaboration.

*\*The name Banjo came from a racehorse owned by his family*



**A.B. Paterson, Christina McPherson and Sarah Riley**

## ANZAC DAY 25.4.2021

### *Some thoughts from ARMs Deputy Chairman, David Sharpe, at the ANZAC day service, about his personal connection to WW I and Kangaroo Ground*

I am honoured to have been invited to speak on this ANZAC day. I have some personal connections with the ANZAC story and shall share my thoughts with you.

#### **Sharpe Family Connection**

My great grandfather Robert Sharpe came to Australia from Scotland in 1884 and settled in this district with his wife and four sons. He had two more sons and three of his sons enlisted in WW1. I know well the stories of four young Australians known to me and who volunteered for service in the first world war. Three of them were all involved in the catastrophe at Bullecourt on the western front. They were David Wallace, my wife's grandfather who lost a leg and suffered head injuries. Before Bullecourt he was at Gallipoli. Also, Harold McDonald of Arthurs Creek, a great uncle of my friend Ross McDonald, who died at Bullecourt, and my year 10 maths teacher, Frank Potts who was seriously injured by a bomb blast at Bullecourt.

There was also my grandfather's brother, Kenneth Sharpe who died of the flu three days before war's end. I have visited Gallipoli and most of the World War 1 battlefields including Bullecourt, a small tactically useless village where the Aussies counted 10,000 casualties so General Gough could report back to high command that Bullecourt was captured, and the battle won. Reduced to rubble but at what price. There were a number of other young men from this district who also served at Bullecourt.

I served in the Melbourne University Army Reserve Officer training course in the early 1970s and have a keen interest in Australian World War 1 history. I can fully understand why these young men volunteered as I would likely have volunteered too had I been born in the late 1800s instead of the early 1950s. As a direct family connection to WW1, I mention my great uncle Private Kenneth Sharpe. He married Eunice Henderson when he was 19 and she 17, before he volunteered for World War 1 service at the age of 25. They had 4 children. Here was a family man who, with a wife and 4 children, volunteered for a war which he must have known might result in his death or injury. Die he did, but not of wounds, but of the flu three days before the war ended. Before he went to war, he was a resident of this district and memorials to him can be found on this KG Tower and the Greensborough War Memorial. He is buried at Wiltshire in England and his military funeral was attended by two of his brothers who also served in World War I. This is one example of the commitment young men had to volunteering, even with the responsibility of a young wife and four young children. I am unaware of his wife's views on his decision to volunteer but I am aware that she remarried one year after his death. With four young children to look after and no welfare available, remarrying was not a surprise if a man was available. But most widows remained widows.

### **Slouch Hats made of rabbit skins**

Men who volunteered after the war had started and knowing of the prospect of death, were known as "fair dinkums". Kenneth Sharpe was a "fair dinkum". Kenneth's other three brothers, which included my grandfather, stayed behind to assist with my great grandfather's hat making business which included making slouch hats for the diggers. Each digger had two hats all made out of 80 rabbit skins. So over 50 million rabbits were required to make all those hats. My great grandfather made enough money to donate funds for land for the establishment of the Montmorency Presbyterian church.

### **106<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2021**

My family's connection to this area goes way back. So today we gather once again to pay homage to all the other incredible men of ANZAC. This year as we celebrate the 106th anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli, we remember how those magnificent men whose courage, in the face of great adversity and the appalling hardships which they had faced, now more than one hundred years on, is still hard to comprehend.

### **The Legend of ANZAC**

Today all the myths and misconceptions of Gallipoli and the Western Front have been enshrined along with the bitter truth and the facts of that great epic, out of which both Australia and New Zealand have appeared to have won their awakening as nations. We their descendants owe a great debt to those young men of Australia and New Zealand who on that day created the legend of ANZAC; and they, no doubt, would also be proud of the way their sons and daughters have continued to mould both of these great nations of ours.

### **Our Duty of Honour**

Now we, their Grand Children and Great Grand Children have a duty of honour to ensure that those who follow in our footsteps never forget the sacrifice and deprivations that those young men endured ensuring that, we their descendants, could live in a free and democratic society in the best countries in the world.

**This ANZAC legend, which is now part of our heritage stood for, and still stands for, reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, comradeship and an endurance that will never admit defeat.** Their sons and daughters lived up to it and enhanced it in the second great conflict of that century. This ANZAC spirit which was epitomised by their mateship and their willingness to "give it a go" despite all the odds, is still in evidence today as a new breed of ANZACs are working tirelessly in many parts of our troubled world keeping the peace, assisting

some nations with security while their people strive to establish a democratic form of government and providing assistance to rebuild other nations whose circumstances are less fortunate than ours.

### **The Original ANZACs**

They were the flower of the youth of two young nations eager to prove their worth to their mother country in her time of need. They left our shores full of adventure and excitement not fully realising the horrors and dangers that awaited them.

### **Facts and Figures**

When war broke out in 1914 Australia's population at the time was only 4.5 million; New Zealand's was only 1 million, but by the war's end in November 1918, 417,000 Australian men and women had enlisted in the armed forces of which 330,000 of them had embarked for service overseas. 63,000 of these died on active service and would never return to their homeland and a further 153,000 were wounded. 65% of all those who sailed from these shores were killed or injured. New Zealand suffered similarly. These figures show that the tragedy of that war was felt in nearly every Australian and New Zealand home. But it was not altogether tragic, for from it came something fine and lasting, paid for by the lives of those ANZACs who stayed behind and is what we celebrate today as "The ANZAC legend." In the eight months of that campaign Australia landed 60,000 men on Gallipoli of which 8,709 were killed and 19,367 wounded. The allies combined had a total of 500,000 men involved in this campaign of which 265,000 of them became casualties and of those 62,000 were killed. The ANZACs displayed much dash and courage for untried troops in this epic struggle and cemented their place in history for all time.

Lord Kitchener, England's wartime leader had this to say of them:

*"Prior to Gallipoli who had heard of the ANZACs; after this who will ever forget them...."*

As testimony to their courage **ten Victoria Crosses** were won by the ANZACs at Gallipoli, nine by Australians and one by a New Zealander. Many more acts of bravery went unrecognised but not un-noticed. The ANZAC evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula took place during the third week of December 1915 and as the Aussies trudged down the tracks of the escarpment to the waiting ships and boats, they did so with the overwhelming feeling of having walked away from thousands of their mates whose bodies lay in the shallow graves they had dug for them. They made their way back to Egypt where the heat, the sand and the flies did little to help them recover from the exhausting and debilitating campaign. Yet they were back in training within a few weeks and between March and June 1916 they moved onto the Western Front of France and Belgium. In 1934, Ataturk, the father of modern Turkey who in 1915 led the Turkish forces at Gallipoli had a monument installed at ANZAC Cove with these few simple words engraved on it:

*"Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours.... You, the Mothers, Who sent their sons from far away countries Wipe away your tears Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well." Ataturk*

# KANGAROO GROUND WAR MEMORIAL PARK

## 100 YEARS OLD

The Shire of Eltham community from 1918 to 1922 funded and built up the 2-acre **Soldiers' Memorial Park** at Kangaroo Ground which was opened on **Saturday September 3, 1921.**

### Shire of Eltham Memorial Park

The Memorial Park at Kangaroo Ground will be formally **OPENED** by W.H. Everard, M.L.A. at 2.30 pm on Saturday, **September 3 1921.**

All residents of the Shire are cordially invited to be present and hot water will be provided for picnic parties.

R.C. WHITE  
Shire President



Another community committee was later formed to put in place a monument that became the **Tower of Remembrance** which was dedicated on 11/11/1926.

### PRESENT DAY: KANGAROO GROUND WAR MEMORIAL PARK AND TOWER OF REMEMBRANCE



### A Report of THE MEMORIAL PARK EVENT was in 'The Advertiser' September 9<sup>th</sup> 1921

*The site acquired for a Memorial Park by the Eltham Shire Council in honour of those who fought and died for their country is an ideal one.*

*From it may be seen one of the finest panoramic view in the country. The park is situated on Garden Hill, Kangaroo Ground, and from it the very limits of the Shire of Eltham can be seen, and far beyond.*

*Mr. Cameron M.L.A. endorsed the eloquent sentiments expressed by Mr. Everard regarding our boys on the battlefields and praised the fine panoramic views. It was 80 years since the old residents came to Kangaroo Ground. Garden Hill was their landmark. Old residents would be proud that the site was now reserved for a Memorial Park. Mr Wippell and the Councillors could be commended for their public-spiritedness in obtaining such a grand everlasting memorial.*

*A vote of thanks was passed to the Mess (Ness) Bros. for selling the (park) land for a reasonable figure.*

*A portion of the Park for road entry was given by Mrs White, late of Kangaroo Ground.*

*The National Anthem was sung and afternoon tea taken at the conclusion of the ceremony.*



## YARRA BRAE 1941 – “STANE BRAE”

In our MUSEUM records there is a reference on March 10 1941 of an ARMY Camp at ‘Stane Brae’ where one thousand men, who were RAAF, learning combat training, came. There were gun emplacements and a Rifle Range at the ‘Piggeries’ along the Yarra River. (There is a Rifle Range Rd and rifle range, in St. Andrews where, after WW11, land was bought by ‘Weary Dunlop’).

## AIRCRAFT CRASH 1942 IN CHRISTMAS HILLS

15<sup>th</sup> March 1942 at approx. 11.15 pm, a Lockheed Hudson bomber, while on a night training flight crashed at Christmas Hills. All of the crew of five were killed when a 250 lb bomb exploded.

### Recording of Recollections of Charles Young as taped by Eric Tetlow of Yarra Glen Historical Society

*“During the war, one night on a weekend when I was staying at the Muir’s, we heard an aeroplane roaring around in trouble!*

*Suddenly flares started to drop out of the plane.*

*We thought oh, obviously it’s an airforce plane. We didn’t know what was wrong. So, it flew along and then a few minutes later there’s a terrible bang and this aeroplane had clipped the top of the ridge...the trees at the top of the ridge along what is Skyline Road. And it crashed. All of us Perc, Jack, me (Charlie) and everybody all just piled into the cars. So, we go up there and by this time the police from Yarra Glen are there and everybody else – a lot of other people. Five crew had perished, and it was loaded with four- or five-hundred-pound bombs, one of which had exploded.*

*So, we all go back the next day, and the airforce investigators are up there too, and there’s only one thing they can do. In amongst the wreckage are these bombs and they’re unexploded. I don’t know whether the fuses were set. So a couple of these airforce blokes get... after they take the bodies and that away, they get 303 rifles, and they build a few sandbags around and they start shooting at these bombs to set them off. They set them off eventually. It was all smoking and banging and trees getting blown to.. you know, chopped off. We’re all being pushed back down the hill a bit behind trees and things . But this shrapnel from the bombs was going everywhere. Ah, and that caused a fair bit of excitement for a while.”*

Details from Les Lewis, who did some research into the crash of a Lockheed Hudson Bomber on One Tree Hill on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1942 in which five airmen were killed and one bomb that it carried exploded.

The aircraft was based at Benalla (No. 7 Squadron) and was involved in a ‘night triangle exercise’. One role of the Lockheed Hudsons was submarine surveillance in Bass Strait. The plane carried four 250 lb bombs.

Because of secrecy, the wreckage, such as it was, was quickly cleaned up so that no evidence of any use to the enemy remained on site.

The crew were: Pilot Officer Richard George Banks, Pilot Officer Ronald Loris Nall, Sergeant Alan William Amey, Sergeant Norman Leslie Thomas and Leading Aircraftman Keith William Higgin. It is believed the plane crashed at “Four Winds” Skyline Road (at the Northern end). However, this is to be confirmed.