

KANGAROO GROUND

CHRONICLE

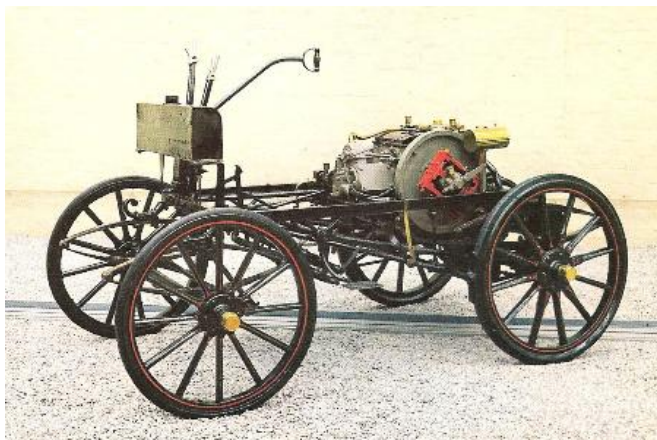
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Newsletter of the

Andrew Ross Museum INC

School House, Kangaroo Ground, 3097

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The first transport through Kangaroo Ground was a horse-drawn dog cart similar to the one above, running twice a week from Eltham, commencing January 1855.

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INFORMATION WANTED

Sarah Cameron, the daughter of Ewen Cameron and Mary Cameron (née McTavish). Sarah married Augustus Andrew in 1876 and resided in Templestowe. Reply to Museum or Fay on 9848 4389.

James Fulton, blacksmith. Reply to Ross McDonald on 9437 1205.

The Panton Hill Football Club seeks information regarding the Sparks' Collection photograph of the group of 1906 **Panton Hill Footballers** featured on Page 252 of *Kangaroo Ground: the Highland Taken*. Reply to Tony Cahir, Kings Road, Kangaroo Groud, or phone 9712 0344.

Another query from a local restaurant is for an old menu from the former **Hotel De France** of Panton Hill.

The Friends of One Tree Hill are searching for photographs of **One Tree Hill** taken before the commencement of their present projects. Contact: Diane Silveri on 9710 1331.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Kangaroo Ground Museum. As most of you will already be aware, it is now a little over two years since the museum was officially opened with the launch of its first publication, *Reminiscences of Andrew Ross* on 27 March 1993. Since then (until quite recent months) it has only been possible to have the facility open to the public at odd times such as during Heritage Week each year and over the Christmas holiday break. One notable exception was the launch of the Kangaroo Ground book when over five hundred visited the facility.

As was to be expected, the setting in place of a first museum in the Shire presented wide-ranging problems that have taken time to resolve. However, one by one, these have been tackled and overcome. Now at last we are poised to move forward towards our continuing goal of making the museum a facility about which the shire can feel proud.

But first, a brief outline as to where we have been and where we are going. Initially, when work commenced in September 1991, the project was administered as a sub-committee of the Eltham Historical Society which co-opted assistance from two local residents invited in as advisers. Later (on Launch Day), a "Friends of the Museum" was formed.

However, as time passed, it became increasingly apparent that the museum's management required urgent restructuring. The Eltham Historical Society had found itself unable to provide the assistance it had hoped due perhaps to an aging membership and its primary focus on Eltham itself. It was agreed, therefore, that a Board of Management be set in place composed of three representatives of the Eltham Historical Society (now the Eltham District Historical Society), two representatives from the Kangaroo Ground School Council, two from the "Friends" organization already formed, and one Shire Councillor. In order to provide added viability it was further decided to this Board be empowered to draw upon the services of one additional member, as Chairperson, should the need arise.

This, of course, has all taken time. Nevertheless throughout, progress has been maintained towards our primary goal of setting in place a museum of quality open to the public on

a regular basis. Recently, in response to a generous offer of funding from its chair-person, Bruce Nixon, the Board has been able to engage the services of local resident, Harriet Dance, as weekend supervisor, thus allowing the opening of the Museum each Sunday afternoon between the hours of 2 and 4 - an arrangement that will continue a further five months. Furthermore, another local resident, Allen Williams, has generously offered the services of a gardener to maintain the museum grounds free of charge.

So, at long last we are up and running with the museum essentially in the hands of the local community and going places. Its long-term well-being depends now upon the willingness of those within our local community to provide support and by doing so assist in the preservation of the marvellous heritage attributes of Kangaroo Ground. In this regard, we ask only that those willing to share that ideal offer a few hours of their time each year towards helping whatever projects the Museum has in hand.

An important first step in this direction therefore will be the setting in place of a roster of volunteers to assist museum staff during the two hours it opens each week. Since, all of use value our Sunday afternoons, we ask that such volunteers offer just two each year - be assured it will prove time well spent since it will allow those participating an excellent opportunity to meet opportunity to meet people and learn more of the region's history.

Membership of the Friends of the Museum is the best way to contribute. Some may have particular skills in the setting up of displays, or in computer work, photography or writing, others perhaps an interest in family history or in the establishment of a nineteenth century cottage garden within the museum grounds. Whatever it might be you have to offer, volunteer those few hours and learn how they contribute to the long-term goals of both the museum and the district. For example, one plan for the years ahead is the setting in place of a permanent out-door exhibition of early farm machinery. This, of course, would be a major undertaking requiring a deal of forward planning by someone with an interest in that direction.

A first step would be to come along on a Sunday afternoon and offer your services, or phone Diana on 9712 0668 or Mick on 9712 0563 to find out more precisely what is offering.

- Mick Woiwod

Elizabeth Wraight, who together with her husband Cornelius, operated the Kangaroo Ground Store for over four generations (1904-1945). For the first ten years few cars passed through Kangaroo Ground and the driver of an odd one that did purchased petrol from the Wraight store in four gallon tins. These cans, when cut down and fixed with handles, then became the all-purpose farm containers of all manner of things.



DID YOU KNOW?

... that in 1930 petrol cost 2/6 a gallon or 7c a litre, and that the average wage then was just £2/10/00 (\$5) a week. If the \$5 earned were to be spent entirely on fuel it would purchase 20 gallons or 90 litres of petrol. Today the average weekly wage is \$666.00 and its purchasing power would provide you with 951 litres of the same fuel. Petrol, therefore, is over ten times as cheap today as in 1930.

.... that a driver's licence cost 5/- in 1950, and butter in 1953 just 4/11 a pound, and a candle to read by just 5d.

.... who was the original owner of the land upon which your home is now sited? **Visit the Museum and find out!**

FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

The Friends' group was formed at the very beginning of the Museum, that is, April, 1993. Currently, there is a membership of 37, consistign of local families, groups, individuals, other historical societies, and interested people from afar who wish to be kept appraised of progress.

Friends have been involved in working bees in the grounds and building, gardening, setting up the displays, recording the audio tapes for the rooms and providing material to be housed in the Museum. So, you see, it is very much a "hands on" experience at the Andrew Ross Museum. Andrew Ross would have approved, as he was most definitely a man who was involved in all aspects of his community.

Have you noticed, on driving past, how neat and tidy the Museum looks? The new paint work was certainly contributed towards this, but we are also most fortunate to have the services of a professional gardener, who cuts the grass regularly and keeps the garden in good order. For this, we are indebted to Allen Williams, who has kindly provided the services of his gardener, Len Muir.

If you or anyone you know would like to join the Friends' group, please fill in the membership form enclosed in this newsletter and return it to the Museum, c/o Post Office, Kangaroo Ground, 3097. The cost of membership is just \$20, this gives you free admission to the Museum, newsletters, and accessibility to workshops conducted from time to time. You will also gain a wealth of interesting information on many aspects of your local district.

- Denise Denyer

OPENING TIMES

The museum is currently open every Sunday between the hours of 2 and 4 and upon request at other times during the week. Currently its Board of Management is working on the development of a proposal (involving three local schools) designed to provide its pupils with background material and information suited to a range of projects. Should you know of other schools interested in participating in similar such projects please contact Mick Woiwod on 9712 0563.

SAMMY CRACKNELL



With the horse and buggy, the cart and wagon the principal means of conveyance and the plough forever at work, the district farmers were all competent horsemen. For example, Andrew Ross, the district's first school master, arrived in Kangaroo Ground riding William Bell's mare, "Sally", a week later he carted his furniture and books out on board John Barr's dray. Later that year young Willie Bell borrowed Ross's own horse on the pretext of riding to Melbourne. Instead, he rode all the way to Ballarat to try his luck on gold. Later on, the breeding of draught horses became a prime

industry in the district.

For years the main road through Kangaroo Ground supported three blacksmiths - one alongside Weller's pub, another couple close by to the Kangaroo Ground Hotel on the slope of the hill. Others stood opposite the cemetery and at the Yarra Glen and Dawson Roads corner.

Races were held regularly at Eltham, Diamond Creek and Yarra Flats. The district's most famous horse rider was jockey, Sammy Cracknell (pictured) who won the Melbourne Cup in 1879 on "Darriwel".

STAFFING

Volunteers are urgently required to assist our supervisor, Harriet Dance, for the two hours the Museum is open each Sunday afternoon (2pm to 4pm). Come along and spend a pleasant couple of hours learning more about the museum and the surrounding district. Pick up the phone and called Denise on 9712 0530 or Diana on 9712 0668.



- photo
courtesy
Sparks/Sly
Collection

Before the advent of the motor car the horse was king of the road. Every farmer had at least a horse and dray

whilst hawkers had their wagons. The covered wagon of Albert Jones of *Golden Glen*, Kangaroo Ground (above) travelled the district taking photographs on his specially prepared glass plates. Known today as the Sparks Collection, the 500 or so that have survived the years tell us much of a world long gone.



Another of the local hawkers was Fred Parker, the Watsons Creek market gardener (right), who between the years 1902 and 1956

weekly visited homes between the Plenty River and Christmas Hills. The wagon pictured was built at Kangaroo Ground by local blacksmith William Everitt.

PRESENT STATE OF PLAY

Currently the Museum has three of its rooms open to the public and is working on cataloguing and storage projects in the remaining two. **Room One** consists of a mainly textual and photographic display backed up by a recently compiled quality audio on its theme, "The Life and Times of Andrew Ross" (the early history of Kangaroo Ground as seen through the eyes of its first school teacher, 1851-1867). **Room Two** is titled "The Farms of the District's First Scottish Settlers". A feature of this room is a three dimensional scale model of the Kangaroo Ground landscape showing the location of the local homesteads portrayed on the walls in photographic form, also an audio explaining how the district developed. **Room Three** houses, among other things, the apparatus of the Shire's "Listening to the Landscape" tapes, also a copy of the Diary of Andrew Ross. Here visitors may sit and listen a while to the voices of former residents of the region talking of life in the 1920s and 1930s.

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

- *Kangaroo Ground: the Highland Taken*, Mick Woiwod, Griffin, Adelaide, 1994.
- *Family Story: The Bells of Scotland, Kangaroo Ground and Yarra Flats*, Vera Jackson, Wilkinson, Albury, 1989.
- *Reminiscences of Andrew Ross*, Mick Woiwod (ed.), Andrew Ross Museum, Kangaroo Ground, 1993.
- *Hear the Siren*, Sido Hilvera, Panton Hill Volunteer Fire Brigade, Panton Hill, 1990.
- *Pioneers and Painters: One hundred Years of Eltham and Its Shire*, Alan Marshall, Shire of Eltham, Nelson, 1979.
- *Wildwood Days at Panton Hill*, Marjorie Smith Motschall, Braidwood Press, 1983.
- *The Historic Post Office at Warrandyte*, Bruce Bence, Warrandyte Historical Society, 1988.
- *The Kangaroo Ground Photographic Collection: Index*, Bruce Nixon, Andrew Ross Museum, Kangaroo Ground, 1994.
- *The Cultural Heritage Map*, Shire of Eltham, 1994.
- *Listening to the Landscape: Stories and Places*, Duncan King-Smith, Shire of Eltham, 1988 (set of 3 quality tapes).
- *Heritage Walks Around Eltham*, Eltham District Historical Society.

WORKSHOPS

The Museum is currently considering holding a cataloguing workshop later in the year. Already, Denise Denyer of the Friends has attended a workshop conducted by the Victorian Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Material, held at the Port Phillip Library, St Kilda on preventative conservation. This not only provided valuable information, but also an opportunity to learn who to contact at Arts Victoria for help in conserving materials and where to locate supplies of storage equipment. These workshops are also an invaluable networking experience.

COTTAGE GARDEN

Over the past year much work has been carried out by the Kangaroo Ground Garden Club and Joy Ness especially establishing the basis of a 19th Century Cottage Garden to the Main Road frontage of the Museum. The present stage of this project is being maintained through the good offices of local residents Allen and Libby Williams. Currently Jacinta Bartlett is looking into the feasibility of developing the project further to provide visitors with an environment reflecting more adequately the heritage values of the museum building.

CATALOGUING PROJECTS

Volunteers are urgently required to assist in the proper cataloguing of cultural, textual and photographic material currently held by the museum. Already an Acquisition Policy has been set in place to ensure that each item be properly tagged as to provenance, history and relevance to the district. This of course will be an ongoing project requiring all newly acquired material to be adequately processed and curated.

ARCHIVES

Now that our cataloguing program is under way the Andrew Ross Museum is prepared to accept cultural material relevant to Kangaroo ground and nearby districts provided such items fall within the criteria of its Collection Policy.

YOUR COMMITTEE

Bruce Nixon (Chairperson). Bruce, a former resident of Kangaroo Ground, has long had an interest in the history of the region. In 1994 he commissioned the writing of the book *Kangaroo Ground: the Highland Taken*, and funded the production of the Museum's *Photographic Collection* - seven fully indexed volumes containing 534 large-format photos of the district and its people.

Diana Bassett-Smith (Hon. Secretary). Diana, a descendant of pioneer settlers Joseph and Ruth Stevenson and long term resident of the district, is one of the three Eltham District Historical Society's nominees on the Board of Management. The founder of both the Eltham and Kangaroo Ground Pony Clubs, Diana and her husband, Peter, maintain a keen interest in the collation and preservation of the region's history.

Jan Becker (Hon. Treasurer). Jan, a local resident, is principal of the Kangaroo Ground Primary School and involved in the Pony Club.

Denise Denyer, a local resident with a strong concern for the natural environment and heritage values of the region, has played a leading role with husband John in, among other things, the Shire's Waste Management Committee, the annual Kinglake Lyrebird Survey, and the Bend of Islands Conservation Association. Denis is the contact person for the Friends of the Museum.

Mick Woiwod, the author of *Once Around the Sugarloaf: The Transformation of Victorian Landscape and the Story of Its People*, and *Kangaroo Ground: the Highland Taken*, also (as editor) of *Reminiscences of Andrew Ross*. Mick, another of the Eltham District Historical Society's nominees on the Board, lives in the Bend of Islands Environmental Living Zone.

Jacinta Bartlett, a landscape architect, resident in St Andrews, Jacinta and her environmental consultant husband, Gary, have been involved over the years in various projects to do with the Shire's heritage. Both are members of the Eltham District Historical Society. Jacinta is the Friends of the Museum's nominee on the Board.

Gary Patterson is an architect with a strong interest in history. A resident of the Environmental Living Zone, Gary is one of the two Kangaroo Ground Primary School nominees on the committee.

Until the recent shire restructuring, the committee included also a Shire Council nominee, namely local resident and councillor **Bill Penrose**. In March 1997, when councillors again resume, we shall require that this vacancy be again filled.

In addition to the above committee members, we are fortunate in having the services of weekend supervisor, **Harriet Dance**, who recently graduated from Monash University's School of the Visual Arts and English Literature.