

KANGAROO GROUND

CHRONICLE

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Andrew Ross Museum INC

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Sue James and friends stitched this Andrew Ross Museum Patchwork Banner, displayed here by Reuben and Charlee Hawkes.

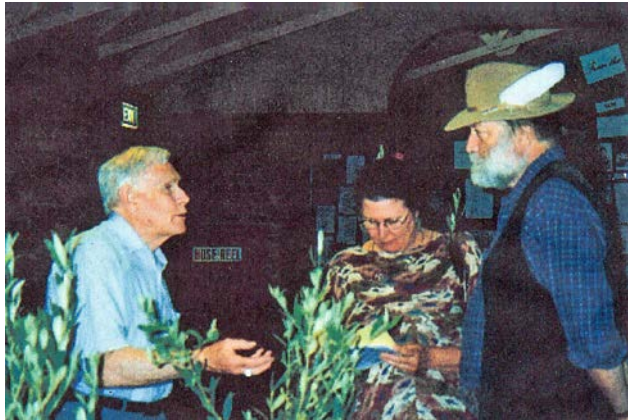
IN THIS EDITION

- Seen on the cover is the wonderful Andrew Ross Museum Patchwork Banner, stitched by Sue James and friends in time to be included in the Dirt Farming Expo.
- Mick Woiwod opens this edition with his report on the recent Heritage Week Dirt Farming Expo.
- Already commended by the Royal Historical Society of Australia, Dick Austin's series of articles on Arthur Calwell and his connection with this district continues on Page 3.
- Museum Patron Bruce Nixon traces his association with some of Kangaroo Ground's pioneer settlers, the Donaldsons, on Page 9.
- Wenda Fleming has more to tell us about *Birds of Kangaroo Ground* on Page 12.
- In the early 1900s Kangaroo Ground woke up to hear shocking news regarding the family of its blacksmith, John Weller. Read about this on Page 14.
- Items from the Chairman's Report given at the Annual General Meeting in May, may be seen on Page 17.

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THE HERITAGE WEEK 'DIRT FARMING' EXPO

Heritage Week 2004 was celebrated in grand style in Nillumbik Shire. Its three-day opening Expo took place in the Panton Hill Hall with eight of the Shire's leading history groups strutting their wares under their chosen banners. The overall theme, 'Dirt Farming' saw the hall's interior decked out in hessian to create what the event's co-ordinator saw fit to describe as 'a giant chook-run' enclosing all manner of productions from mud-brick and wattle-&-daub to tombstones and mining gear. The Andrew Ross Museum chose as its theme 'From Yam Daisies to Olive Groves', the idea being to convey to the 1,000 or more who attended the full range of products grown in Kangaroo Ground. The first of these were the yam daisies that Wurundjeri people harvested so long in its rich soil — rare today, our display held but a single specimen donated by the Friends of the Warrandyte State Park.



Dr Peter Fleming discusses olive growing with "Dirt Expo" visitors.

The message for K.G.'s next two crops took the form of bags of wheat and oats backed up with matching samples of its black and Nillumbik's shallow grey soil. And so the story rolled on with bales of hay, baskets of fruit & vegetables, dairy produce, grapes — and olives in the form of four olive trees, courtesy of Sam & Christine of Saragucce Olive Grove, corner of Warrandyte & Main roads. Central to the museum display was its ancient chaff-cutter lovingly restored for the Expo by our artist-in-residence, Don Brown and a workshop conducted by the museum's in-house genealogist, John Austin.

A highlight of the event was the St Andrews-Smith Gully combined effort under the banner 'From the Cradle to the Grave' complete with miner's cradle, tombstones and a coffin courtesy of Eltham Little Theatre. Eltham focussed on mud bricks, Warrandyte and Nillumbik on gold, and so on, until each portrayal of the local scene had been appropriately show-cased.

After a five day break, Heritage Week resumed within each group's home base, the Andrew Ross Museum opening on both Saturday and Sunday 3rd & 4th April during which time it hosted successful tours of the K.G Cemetery and the Gawa Aboriginal Trail.

A strength of this year's Heritage Week was the bridges built between the eight participating societies which in coming months should hopefully see reciprocal visits arranged for members to learn more about each others projects. The Andrew Ross Museum thanks all who helped make the Expo a resounding success by the provision of produce and time — in particular the good people who donated such excellent prizes for the Expo Treasure Hunt,

namely: Weller's Restaurant, Watson's Creek Antiques, Sampson Hill Estate, Ken King's Post Office, Ritter's Tandara Olive Grove and Lovegroves & Panton Hill Wineries.

- Mick Woiwod



Mick and Marg Woiwod discuss "Dirt Farming" arrangements with a Plenty Valley radio presenter at the Panton Hill Hall.

HIGH ACHIEVERS OF KANGAROO GROUND

Arthur Calwell (Part 3 of 4)

Government (1940 to 1949) The 1940s were Calwell's big years, during which he made his greatest contributions and from which his legacy derives. These were the years he was a member of the ALP Federal Government, first in the Curtin and then the Chifley Governments.

He was elected Member for Melbourne in 1940, the second year of World War II, and he remained in this seat until his retirement in 1972.

His first substantive position was as Chairman of the Aliens Classification Committee. In 1942 Australia had interned nearly 7,000 people, mostly Italians. Calwell felt that many had been arrested with insufficient reason, particularly in Queensland, where 43% of 'aliens' were interned, whereas only 3% were interned in Victoria and only 2% in Britain. He took on this issue and released nearly 5,000 people over the next two years.

After the 1943 election Calwell was elected to Curtin's second ministry and appointed to the position of Minister for Information. This was a small ministry formed by Prime Minister Menzies at the outbreak of war to control press censorship and propaganda. Menzies had appointed Keith Murdoch as the Director-General of the Department, putting him into a conflict of interest position given that he was, and remained, the owner and operator of the Melbourne *Herald*.

In 1945 Calwell was elected to Chifley's first ministry as Minister for Information again, and also as Minister for Immigration, and he held both positions until the ALP government defeat in 1949, when Menzies was returned to power.

Calwell was the country's first Minister for Immigration, the portfolio being created by Chifley on Calwell's suggestion. During the 1930s migration to Australia was minor, with an average annual intake of just 3,200. The ALP was anti-immigration, seeing it as a threat to the living standards of Australian workers. Against this background Calwell initiated a program of massive European

(rather than just British) migration that has had a major influence in shaping the Australia of today. Paul Kelly writes “This decision was, possibly, the most important ever made by an Australian government since it would significantly change the nation’s size and character” (*100 Years: The Australian Story*, 2001, p.65).

Calwell administered his new immigration program with great energy and success. He went to Europe and the US in 1947, visiting 23 countries in 12 weeks and agreeing to take 12,000 refugees each year from the International Refugees Organisation if it supplied the shipping. He developed the plan that migrants would be shipped here for free provided they worked for Government for two years. By 1949 there were 10 ships solely devoted to Australian migration. His program broke the British monopoly on Australian immigration, which would never be restored. Calwell personally coined the term ‘new Australians’ in 1948 as an alternative to the more pejorative terms like ‘displaced persons’ and ‘Balts’.

This change was achieved against a background of significant resistance and opposition, including from within his own party. The RSL issued statements of dismay that so many ‘aliens’ were being shipped to Australia. When he shipped 2,000 Jewish migrants from European concentration camps to Australia, they were as unpopular then as Muslim refugees are now, and the RSL objected to preferential treatment being given to ‘alien Jews over British migrants’.

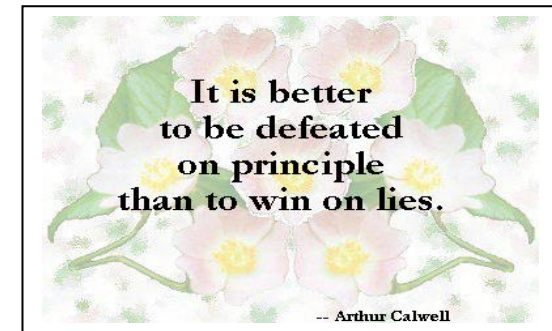
Calwell’s immigration program can be understood as emerging from his personality, his experiences, his origins and his beliefs.

- Humanitarianism: it was a large scale and practical attempt to assist Europe’s war victims.
- Socialism: he saw mass migration as enabling the development of Australia as a worker’s paradise with a new, egalitarian social order.
- Pluralism: Calwell was proud of his own diverse background (American, Irish and Welsh), and he saw the American cultural melting pot as what made that country great. Motivated by a desire to remove the ghetto status of Irish Catholics, he created an Australian society where Britishness and Protestantism were no longer the defining characteristics.
- Economic stimulus: Calwell saw large scale immigration as the solution to the horror of unemployment and depression, and in this he was correct. Australia was to enjoy decades of growth during the European migration years.
- Optimism: Calwell’s contact with ‘enemy aliens’ during his time as Chairman of the Aliens Classification Committee convinced him that most were excellent citizens, so he had few fears about bringing more of such people to Australia.
- Defence: Japan’s advance on Australia during World War 2 convinced Calwell and many others, that to keep Australia white (i.e. not Japanese), required a massive increase in population - “We need to fill this country; if we do not fill it, we shall loose it” (quoted in C. Kiernan, *Calwell, A Personal and Political Biography*, 1978, p.168). This became known as the ‘populate or perish’ doctrine.

- Nationalism: Calwell was an Australian nationalist. Whereas many Australians saw Australia as a little England in the southern hemisphere he saw it more as a New Jerusalem, a country with its own vision, values and future.

Calwell changed Australia from being a British country to a European country. However, he had no intention of Australia becoming multi-racial, and he remained, as were all other political leaders of the day, a supporter of the White Australia policy. He believed that only Europeans could be successfully integrated and he did not want to repeat what he saw as mistakes in the UK and US of trying to integrate non-Europeans. Yet by teaching Australia to be pluralistic, to accept new arrivals, to overcome fear and suspicion with tolerance, and to see non-British people as new Australians also, he was to sow the seeds of the end of the White Australian policy and the beginning of a multicultural Australia. Today one Australian in four was born overseas and one in 25 are of Asian background.

After the 1949 election of the Menzies government, Harold Holt become the Minister for Immigration, and the new government continued and benefited from Calwell's immigration policy, although increasing the proportion of British migrants. Menzies and Calwell were the last two great supporters of the White Australia policy and it disappeared quickly after their demise. Gough Whitlam, Don Dunstan and Jim Cairns removed it from the ALP platform in 1965 and when Menzies retired in 1966 the coalition cabinet immediately overturned it (carefully making no public announcement). Calwell's legacy had finally flowered into a fully multicultural Australia.



Calwell's other legacy from his government years was proportional representation in the Senate. He was the sponsor and architect of a major electoral reform in 1948, increasing the House of Representative from 74 to 121 and the Senate from 38 to 60. In the Senate he introduced proportional representation, significantly, the electoral method used in the Republic of Ireland. This change allows parties or even independents with levels of support of around 10% in the community, to gain roughly the same percentage of the Senate seats. Ironically, this proved disastrous for the ALP, which had 33 of the 38 Senators in 1948 but has almost never had a majority since. Many in the ALP lost confidence in Calwell's political judgement after this – it was a win for democracy over the interests of his own party. Without this change to proportional representation, parties such as the DLP, the Australian Democrats and the Greens would never have gained a seat.

In 1948 Calwell was to suffer another of the great personal tragedies that plagued his life. His son Arthur Andrew (Art) died of leukaemia. He was only 11 years old. Calwell wore a black tie from that day on as a permanent expression of his state of mourning.

(to be concluded)

- Dick Austin

A KANGAROO GROUND CONNECTION

In late 1850, Kangaroo Ground pioneers James Bruce Donaldson and his wife Isabel purchased nearly 100 acres on Waterdale Road, Ivanhoe. The western boundary of the property bordered Darebin Creek, and a small creek running through the property is now called Donaldson Creek. The farm was to become the halfway farm located between Kangaroo Ground and the Melbourne stockyards so that one day's droving from Kangaroo Ground meant an overnight stay at Ivanhoe. Whether there was a house or a cottage on this property in 1850 I don't know. A local identity, the late Alma White (née Clinton) was born in a bluestone house bordering the Donaldson property close to Darebin Creek. Alma Road in Kangaroo Ground was named after Alma White, and she provided an abundance of information from her memory regarding the Kangaroo Ground Thomson and Donaldson families – back to the early 1900s. Alma Clinton's family had much to do with the Donaldsons and Thomsons in later years.

In 1840 Alexander and Isabel Donaldson arrived in Melbourne and possibly recommended the square mile (640 acres) Lot 19 in Kangaroo Ground for their parents' purchase when the rest of the family arrived in 1841. Alex had two brothers, John and James, and two sisters, Isabel and Margaret. In 1856 James junior inherited and lived on the farm at Ivanhoe and built his colonial homestead which he named *Wellington*. Shortly after, he married Jane Thomson from Kangaroo Ground whose family ended up owning much of *Garden Hill* and acreage bounded by two main roads and Dawson Road. Jane died childless some four years later, having collapsed after milking their herd of cows.

In the meantime, James' brother John Donaldson was given some acres in Ivanhoe south and next door to *Wellington*. John built a substantial two-storey bluestone house *Bellevue* which was unfortunately demolished in 1958. *Wellington* was demolished earlier – in 1956. James Donaldson, after Jane Thomson's death, married Caroline Tiley but had no children. Their Clinton relatives and close

Jane THOMSON b: 1832 in Scotland m: 1873 d: 20 March 1877 in Victoria, Australia	James Thomas DONALDSON b: 30 January 1832 in Craignish, Argyllshire, Scotland d: 24 January 1916 in Victoria, Australia	Caroline TILEY b: 1851 m: 1886 d: 1 September 1930
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friends had eight children, two of whom, Bill and Carrie, went to *Wellington* to live with their childless Aunt Carrie and Uncle James. Bill Clinton grew up at *Wellington* probably expecting to inherit James Donaldson's property. He later, in 1940, became Mayor of Heidelberg and went his own way establishing Clinton's Garage in Burgundy Street, Heidelberg and Carrie stayed on at *Wellington*. About the turn of the century she had been engaged to a Boer War soldier but later married Jack Thomson from the Thomson family at Kangaroo Ground and they lived on at *Wellington* and had four children: Jim (1905-1988), Janey (1908-1993), Colin (1916) and Wallace (1919). James Donaldson was a man of the earth and had become noted for his gardening expertise. He died in 1916.

He was Elder at the Heidelberg Presbyterian Church. When his wife Carrie Donaldson (née Tiley) died in 1930 she left *Wellington* to her niece Carrie and Carrie's husband Jack Thomson.



Wellington, Waterdale Road, Ivanhoe, c. 1923.

Unfortunately Jack Thomson died soon after this, in November 1930, and Carrie Thomson (née Clinton) inherited *Wellington*. The farm was subdivided into many house blocks and my parents bought a home adjoining the Thomson *Wellington* homestead where I enjoyed many years of growing up. The old homestead has now become the Ivanhoe Aquatic Centre. All that remains of the pioneer days are a couple of Moreton Bay fig trees, a few peppercorns, and some vivid memories.

- Bruce Nixon

BIRDS OF KANGAROO GROUND

Grey Shrike-thrush

The grey thrush is a bush bird (the size of an English black bird) found throughout Australia (except in extremely arid country) and is best known and loved for its strong melodious song. That song is part of my earliest memories when my mother used to whistle along with them and encourage them to continue. We especially heard them during the warm spring rain as they were busy building their nests. Much later Peter and I drove into the Bunyip State Forest one day and found ourselves in a natural garden of tall pink and white flowering boronia. In the midst of a sun shower a grey thrush pair put on a virtuoso performance. Something never to be forgotten.

So when we came to live here we listened for the single note which is their only sound outside the breeding season. It didn't come. We heard so many calls, but not that of the grey thrush. I was really disappointed. But then one day we heard it; and we've had a pair living here ever since. For years they built their nest of russet brown strips of stringy bark on top of the power box at the old cottage, putting up with the monthly visits of the electricity man. In recent years their nest has been built on a high shelf, out of the rain, near its back door. Each year they rear two young and for some time we see four thrushes on our front lawn feeding on worms. Then we see only two again; the young have moved on.

The grey strike-thrush is sedentary and mates for life. Established pairs hold to year-round territories of about two-ten hectares, or may wander a little farther afield in winter. Unattached birds travelling more widely are mostly young of the year, expelled from parental territories. Usually only one brood is reared in a year, both sexes building the nest, incubating, and rearing the young.¹

The breeding season can begin as early as July and extend to January or February depending on the year. Apparently it is the male that does most of the singing and the female sits on the nest at night. Male and female adults can be distinguished from each other. Here in Kangaroo Ground they are both a beautiful soft grey with some brown shading their backs. The males have black bills and a definite white patch in front of the eye. The female bill is grey and the white patch is not so obvious. Juvenile and immature birds are more russet coloured and strongly streaked on throat and breast.

In flight the grey thrush is easily identified. It is a grey, middle sized bird with an undulating flight. With each dip you see the wings folded into the sides.

- Wenda Fleming



¹ *ReadersDigest Complete Book of Australian Birds*, 1998, p. 407.

100 YEARS AGO

It was an all too common story in this locality in the early 1900s.

John Weller, the Kangaroo Ground blacksmith, strapped his horse into the trap and set off towards Panton Hill to fetch the midwife, Dorothy Scarce. It was a quarter to ten on the night of 13th October, 1901



John's house and blacksmith's shop faced the Yarra Glen, Road, at the T intersection in Kangaroo Ground. It was about a kilometer to the Scarce property "Summerhill" on the road to Panton Hill. When they entered the room

where John had left his wife Elspeth in labour, they found that she had delivered the baby herself and was sitting up in bed.

Mrs Scarce later reported that Elspeth had been in good spirits and seemed well. To her suggestion that a doctor should be called in, Elspeth replied, “No, don’t send for the doctor, I’ll be all right.”

“Soon after this, Mrs Weller appeared to be in pain,” Mrs Scarce later reported. “Sadly, she quickly became weaker, and within ten minutes she was dead. Nothing could have been done to save her.”

“Seeing her gradually get weaker,” reported John Weller at the inquest into his wife’s death, “I sent for Dr Phillips of Heidelberg, but the deceased died about 2.30am, two hours before the doctor’s arrival. She had been in good health prior to her death.”

The child, a girl, was the eighth child born to John Weller, 35 and his wife Elspeth Johnston, 32 in their nine years of marriage. Four had died, but the new baby, Lily Annie Weller, motherless within a few hours of her birth, lived to be 80.

- John Austin, with illustration by Joan Pickard

(Sourced from material, including copies of inquest papers, added to the Weller Archive at the Andrew Ross Museum by a John Weller descendant, Rochelle Haines, Wyndham Vale, 3024.)



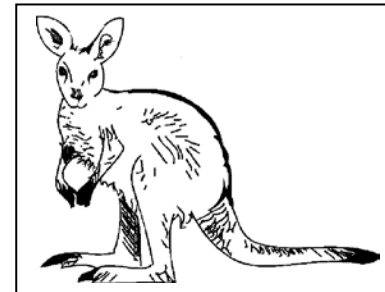
Included in the recent Dirt Farming Expo was this chaff cutter made at Maldon, Victoria, in the late 1800s. It came to the Andrew Ross Museum by way of Bruce Ness, and has been restored by artist Don Brown. Photo by Peter and Wenda Fleming.

GLEANINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

- The most significant event was the recognition of the Museum by Museums Australia in awarding it accreditation late in 2003. Congratulations to all involved!
- The mural on the southern wall of Room 1 is growing before our eyes as our artist-in-residence, Don Brown, recreates scenes from the 1850s including Andrew Ross's school and the view from Kangaroo Ground towards Melbourne. This will be a wonderful addition artistically and educationally.
- Several events were held including our annual Happy Hour and the formal presentation of the accreditation certificate by the Mayor, but the biggest event was the Expo in March (see Page 1) which was the culmination of twelve months of planning and creative thinking.
- A renewal of the seven-year lease with the Kangaroo Ground Primary School Council was signed last June.
- The Thursday morning working group has been a hive of activity throughout the year and, as well as achieving much, has provided great fellowship for all involved.
- A display illustrating the history of the Memorial Tower was mounted in Room 2 by Harry Gilham, and a number of collages of local historical features by Eltham College

Year 9 students, produced for the Expo, were on display at the Museum during April and May.

- Grants were obtained from the Shire for the mural in Room 1 (\$900), photographic albums (\$300) plus \$444 which will be used to frame copies of historical photos salvaged from the Pantan Hill Hotel fire. Our patron, Bruce Nixon, generously donated \$3,000 to celebrate the accreditation of the Museum. In addition \$1018 was obtained from Museums Australia to assist with small infrastructure projects following accreditation.
- Diana-Bassett Smith, after many years as Secretary to the Museum has relinquished that role, but will remain as an active member of the board. Jannine Taylor has agreed to be Minute-Secretary in the interim. Thank you Diana and Jannine.



- A gift of \$1,000 from Bruce Nixon will fund the Andrew Ross Local History Competition for schools in Nillumbik Shire. May Leckey is organizing this new venture aimed at the development of high quality curriculum units in local history.

- Peter Fleming