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KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the
ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC
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END OF YEAR GATHERING.

Please join us
for coffee and
cake at K.G.
store on Thurs.
16th Dec. at
10am.

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Kangaroo Ground Rural Fire Brigade 1892-2010

Kangaroo Ground Rural Fire Brigade - A brief history of the brigade (when it was formed, significant events etc)

Kangaroo Ground was formed at a meeting held in the then Eltham Council Chambers (located in Kangaroo Ground) as a Bush Fire Brigade on **Saturday, 6 February, 1892**. The area had been agitating for a fire fighting capability since 1887 and the fires in the late 1880's was a spur to this. Being formed as a Bush Fire Brigade (and not having been an offshoot of urban brigades formed in goldfield townships and later reclassified as the gold rush abated), Kangaroo Ground lay claim to being one of the earliest Bush Fire Brigades formed.

By 1914, the Brigade was well endowed with equipment – having purchased (or acquired by various means) a number of rakes, beaters and axes, and a semi-rotary pump and a fire cart constructed by the local blacksmith.

Ironically, the Eltham Council Chambers in Kangaroo Ground was itself burnt down in a fire in Feb 1934.

It is valuable to look at the history of major fires in the area and consider how many times fires have spread from the Kinglake Ranges, through Christmas Hills, St Andrews and Kangaroo Ground to threaten areas closer to the city.

Kangaroo Ground was registered with the Bush Fire Brigades Committee on 27 January, 1939 and joined with Warrandyte, Wonga Park and Panton Hill in November 1941 to form the initial Lower Yarra Group.

In 1959 land was purchased for the first station, capable of storing a Willy's tanker, and in 1977 work commenced on the new station at our current site.

The community we serve and our assignment area, demographics, local community issues

Kangaroo Ground is part of the 'green belt' of Melbourne – predominately bush land and blocks of land 6ha or greater (residential, hobby farm and farming) with little in the way of any industry. The geology of the area is very old, where broad plains formed of slates and sandstone have been uplifted to form a plateau that itself has subsequently formed into a series of hills.

The indigenous community of plants that has evolved on this plateau is typically a forest dominated by box and ironbark eucalypts (in CFA terms, 'medium forest') interspersed with large tracts of open grassland. The topography of the land, the common fuel types and their distribution (vertically and horizontally), plus differences in local climate and weather patterns support the history of major fires running through this area.

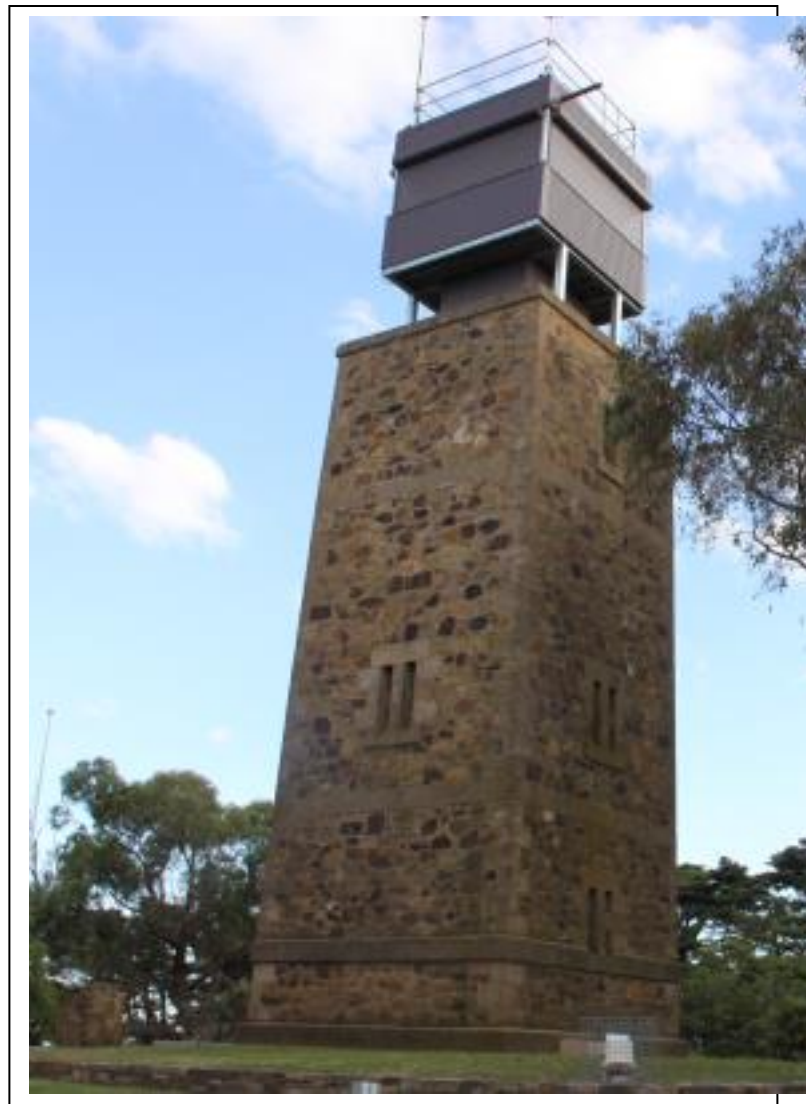
Our assignment area nestles between Christmas Hills, Panton Hill, Wattle Glen, Research, North Warrandyte and the Yarra River. Bisected by four main Vic Roads thoroughfares, the area is home to a small township with local Primary School, General Store, Kindergarten and Church. We have the privilege of having an (if not the only) Australia Post Office agency that operates within a functioning Winery. Kangaroo Ground is the location of a large Bible Translation Service complex with associated print facilities and accommodation for up to 200 people from many countries around the world.

Our local area is best known for:

Kangaroo Ground which is well known for its wineries, restaurants and open spaces – oh, and lots of kangaroos

Kangaroo Ground is “home” to the Kangaroo Ground Memorial Tower – used since the late 1940s as a fire spotting tower and a key resource over the course of the Feb 2009 fires. The outdated fire spotter’s cabin atop the reserve’s 17 metre high stone memorial tower was replaced by something more befitting its function as an early warning station for major and minor bushfire threatening the district.

From the old cabin, on ‘Black Saturday’ (7th February 2009), Gavin McCormack, a Kangaroo Ground fire brigade member was on duty at the tower, and described “waves of fire” as he reported the situation on that day. A big plus in the new cabin is that it is roomier and cooler than the old cabin.



The viewing area is more readily accessed by the general public via an internal spiral staircase which replaces the existing antiquated and dangerously steep stairs. Climb the new staircase and gaze out into the green Yarra Valley across to Melbourne, Australia's second largest city, and make up your own minds as to whether or not it's the place to be!

Brigade make-up

Kangaroo Ground has around 40 calls pa and over fifty members, thirty-seven being operational. We have a CFA supplied 2.4D Izuzu Tanker, and Brigade owned Mitsubishi 1000 litre tanker and Toyota HiLux car.

Written by Peter Grant, Captain of Kangaroo Ground Rural Fire Brigade.

St John's Church of England Congregation's visit to the Andrew Ross Museum

On the morning of Friday 21 October last, the Andrew Ross Museum became a hive of activity when some 35 members of St John's Church of England Diamond Creek MMM Group (More-Mature Members) arrived for a prearranged visit during which light refreshments were served.

Organised by Elizabeth Thorsen, the group took it in turns to visit the museum's various displays — most interest being on Don & Joan Brown's recently completed Room 2 'Missing Bits?' Jig-Saw Exhibition — one visitor, Jock Ryan, being able to identify the exhibition's 'Football Team' photograph as that of a long ago Diamond Creek team with his father and other named local personalities represented. Of particular appeal among the visitors was spritely Beryl Smith who'd turned 100 earlier in the month and had celebrated her centenary by taking a helicopter flight over Melbourne and the Bay.

Afterwards, the group visited the War Memorial Tower on Garden Hill for a picnic lunch on and around the reserve's recently installed picnic tables plus a brief talk on local themes in company with museum volunteers. The weather was just perfect with some of the more active participants making good use of the tower's recently installed spiral staircase to climb up to the top platform and enjoy the hill's magnificent panoramic view while others strolled across to the Moor-rul Viewing Platform to learn a little more of the district's rich history.

Mick Woiwod



How other people see Kangaroo Ground

Last week, Mick Woiwod received the following email from Barry Sheffield of the Yarra Glen Wetlands Group who in January 2007 had assisted him in having a large rock memorial set in place and unveiled on the site of the January 1840 Battle of Yering between fifty armed Wurundjeri and Capt. Henry Gisborne's Border Police.

I thought that you would be interested in the burial service that I attended at Kangaroo Ground on 21st October.

It was for Robin Corfield OAM, a military historian & author of "Hold Hard Cobbers" (57th & 60th Battalion history), "Don't Forget Me Cobber - The Battle of Fromelles" & "Give Me Back My Dear Old Cobbers" (58th & 59th Battalion history).

He was also a co-founder of the Friends of the 15th Brigade (57th, 58th, 59th & 60th Battalions)

The funeral service was held at the chapel at Geelong Grammar but he chose to be buried at Kangaroo Ground as he had visited the area many times when he was a child with his father.

His father had served in WW1, & that had prompted Robin's interest in military history & he visited many WW1 battlefields whilst living & travelling overseas.

The common theme in his books was the term "Cobber" & the phrase "Don't Forget Me Cobber" that was spoken during the retrieval of the wounded from no man's land following the Battle of Fromelles. This phrase has been perpetuated as the title of the bronze statue at the Australian Memorial Park at Fromelles. A second casting of that statue was unveiled at The Shrine in 2008 and is the only official memorial to the Battle on Australian soil, which was the most tragic 24 hour period in Australian history, and yet was a forgotten battle & unrecognised for such a long period of time.

In 2002 Robin was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) "for service to the community through the preservation of Australia's military history in association with The Friends of the 15th Brigade".

During the burial service, Lambis Englezos, who discovered the mass burial pits at Fromelles, had arranged, through his friends in France, for the bells of the church at Fromelles to be rung, in recognition of Robin's connection with the village. A mobile phone was used so Robin's family could hear those bells tolling.
cheers,Barry

The ringing of the Fromelles church bells brings to mind Will Longstaff's painting 'Midnight at Menin Gate' on permanent display alongside the War Memorial Tower on Garden Hill here in Kangaroo Ground, its connection with the district being that the famous war artist lived in Kangaroo Ground in the days when his son attended school in the local primary school next to the museum.



Since then, at precisely 8:00 pm very night of the year since Longstaff created his famous World War I painting, the villagers of nearby Ypres have expressed their sincere gratitude to the fallen by arranging to have up to six members of the regular Buglers from their local fire brigade (in full dress regalia) line up in the memorial's Hall of Memories to play *The Last Post* followed, after a brief silence by the sounding of *Reveille* — Bugle calls able to be heard by anyone interested at any hour of day by simply going to www.greatwar.co.uk/events/minin-gate-last

Mick Woiwod

It is anticipated that Mick Woiwod will be a tutor with the University of the Third Age, Hurstbridge Campus, in 2011. Following is an outline of the course.

University of the Third Age 'Pre-History of Nillumbik Country'

Have you ever wondered what it would have been like where you live today back in the days when both black and white people walked the land? Where do you think Aboriginal people would have camped and hunted in the bush around you?

Who were these people? What do you think happened to them and what is there still known about them today? Why is it that they so seldom feature in our present day lives? These are all questions able to be readily resolved.

Mick Woiwod has lived in Nillumbik country for thirty years and over those years has written eighteen books dealing with both the Aboriginal and European stories of the district.

This series of talks is designed to fit the needs of its participants with every opportunity provided for class interaction. Particular emphasis will be given to the region's pre-settlement story, language, culture, spirituality and dreamtime stories relative to the local wildlife.

Permission has been granted by the Principal of the Kangaroo Ground Primary School for this series of U3A classes to take place in its '1878 Old Classroom' on a Monday or Friday afternoon. Each class is designed to run to approximately 90 minutes, including a break for afternoon tea with ample opportunity for further topics to be raised.

There will be no charge for the use of the room which comes fully equipped with chairs, electric jug, cups & saucers, etc., plus a suitable range of IT technology. Participation in this series of talks includes free access to the displays of the adjacent Andrew Ross Museum

The venue is in the grounds of the Kangaroo Ground Primary School on the main road directly opposite the Kangaroo Ground General Store.

For further information phone Mick on 9439 5679 woiwodgongfler@bigpond.com or Carol Leeson on 9712 0801

New Publications written by Mick Woiwod

“The Christmas Hills Story: Once Around the Sugarloaf II”

This is a highly revised and formatted edition of Mick’s 1992 book – now selling at \$30.00

“The Birrarung Database”

This is a publication of 331 pages of carefully chosen historical citations from some 200 books dealing with the Aboriginal story of the Yarra Valley, all neatly catalogued under 220 headings. The intention of the author (and ARM museum) is to have it spiral bound and a copy presented to university libraries, local and secondary school libraries, local historical societies, free of cost, as an easily accessible reference book.

“The Forgotten Country”

This 75 page A4 publication also breaks entirely new ground and deals with the Yarra Valley story between 1836 and 1851 when practically the country between Heidelberg and Healesville was the sole preserve of 20 or so squatters – men such as Arthur, Watson, Gardiner and the Ryrie brothers – who by and large remained in control for less than a decade then disappeared from the region’s history books. - now selling.

“Another View of Kangaroo Ground: Its Land and Its People”

This booklet is designed to meet the needs of lay people seeking a deeper understanding of how the Kangaroo Ground we know today came into being. It is designed to kindle in the mind of the reader an appreciation that today’s Kangaroo Ground landscape and built environment are worthy of preservation for future generations to enjoy. Starting with the geology and finishing with “How will Kangaroo Ground present in, say, the year 2050?”

“The Andrew Ross Diary and Reminiscences”

We are close to publishing this work and launching it in 2011!!

ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM WEBSITE

Further information about the Museum can be found on our new website www.andrewrossmuseum.org.au It includes all available publications, present displays, what is going on, and possible future events.