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# **KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE**

Newsletter of the  
**ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM**

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## THE HISTORICAL MILESTONES OF THE KANGAROO GROUND STATE PRIMARY SCHOOL No. 2105

For the first twenty-seven years (April 1851 – September 1878), school to the children of Kangaroo Ground was the original slab and shingle church of their patriarchy. Over most of those years their master was Andrew Ross, their sewing mistress, Andrew's wife, Mary Ann. It fell under the jurisdiction of the Denominational School Board until transformed into State School No. 352 by the Education Act of 1873. It had run as –in effect- the first Technical School. The original slab and shingle building by then was in a tumbled down dilapidated condition and the School furniture was also in a broken down condition.

It took a further five years before the wooden building of school and residence was completed; originally the community had been promised a brick classroom with a four-roomed teacher's residence. The slab school closed its doors on Monday 1st October 1878. It opened the following morning with classes in a spanking new schoolhouse some fifty metres to its north, and from then on was officially known as the Kangaroo Ground State School No. 2105.



Photo 1890

### 100 YEARS AGO

#### Taken from the Evelyn Observer Friday July 25, 1913 A NEW FLAGPOLE

(By Milanion)

No attempt at teaching British History would be complete if it failed to impart some instruction on flags, how they came into existence and their specific uses. The term "The British Flag", conveys more protection and freedom than any other term in the English language; hence the necessity for flagpoles and flags as part of the State School equipment. For some months the above school has been without a flagpole, but now it is adorned with on 30 feet in height and made to order by Mr. Rouch, timber merchant of Heidelberg, It stands out well to the front, and when the flag is hoisted and 'trimmed to the breeze' it will be an attractive feature to visitors passing through and a source of pride to the local residents. The School Committee rendered the account to the Department, expecting it to be paid out of their allowance, but they were notified that such authority could not be given, as it was expected that the money for flagpoles should be raised by local effort. Mr. John Bell, the Committee's Chairman, assisted by Messrs. C. W. Wraight, Everitt, L. Nelson, J. Mess, R. Steavenson, E.W. Smith, C. Bell and others were busily engaged last Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> inst. in erecting the pole, which piece of workmanship was executed in good style.

#### School Residence

The school residence which had been used since 1873, firstly by James Rossiter, who set up Andrew Ross's *Evelyn Observer*, then by a succession of schoolmasters now has become, since 1993, the home of the Andrew Ross Museum.

(Dates and information referenced from Mick Woiwod's book 'KANGAROO GROUND The Highland Taken'.)

## 1950s

Ron Love, the second youngest of family of nine children, remembers that in 1950 the school building had a well at the rear corner of the school behind the residence. (It appears as a dome by the fence in the photograph of 1890).

He also remembers that in July 1953 or 4 there was snow storm and the now large cypress trees out the front of the school were only hedge height and were covered with snow as was the ground. He and his mates created a large snowball that they rolled up and down the play area until it was about 6ft, tall. It lasted for well over week.

### **Graham Rd.**

It wasn't until 1974 that a planning permit was issued to the Shire for a road which was then named Graham Rd. this then allowed for side road access to the school. The Shire then provided a bus-standing area and car parking for the school.

### **The Current Buildings**

That same year, 1974, saw the completion of the present brick school block of two class-rooms, with offices, staff-room and amenities. By 1977 a temporary classroom had been located and negotiations opened for additional land alongside for a community oval. As the pupil numbers continued to grow the temporary class-room was replaced with additional permanent amenities added in 1993.

In 2008 the roofing/shelter of the outdoor basketball court was erected and has been a brilliant outdoor addition creating a dry area in which children can play, take part in Phys. Ed. Lessons and have whole school activities.



2009 saw an artificial surface put on the basketball court and play area under the outdoor roofed area.

In 2011 a new additional building was completed using GFC money from the Federal Government. This includes four versatile classrooms with moveable walls and a multipurpose room which can cater for whole school activities.

With the financial support of Rotary, 2013 saw the addition of a covered BBQ area with two BBQs and sink, which has added to the recreational facilities of the school community.

We are lucky to have such an historically rich and progressive school in Kangaroo Ground. The Andrew Ross Museum, as part of the school community, appreciates the support of the Principal Laurie Murray and School Council.



## **THE DANCING POSSUMS OF KANGAROO GROUND**

The roof cavity of the old Kangaroo Ground Primary School building, which houses the Andrew Ross Museum, has, probably since the days of its construction, been home to a family of Common Brushtail Possums.

In keeping with the breeding proclivities of the times, the resident possum family grew in number to the extent that the ceiling was unable to support their combined weight and, as a result, was beginning to collapse.

So bad had the problem become that, when the possums decided it was time for a dance (or a fight, or a game of chasey), the noise level they generated made human communication in the Museum office impossible.

The only solution was to re-house the possums and, with the aid of a professional possum removalist, baited traps were set and a total of 9 possums were captured and re-located in accordance with the legislated conditions, and their entry point sealed.

We have now replaced the damaged ceiling and no longer have to contend with possum droppings falling through the broken ceiling and on to our computers.

Without our noisy, and messy, former tenants, our Museum volunteers can now attend to the running of the Museum business and actually hold conversations, between themselves and with people visiting the Museum.

If you haven't called into the Museum recently, I suggest you do so; you can see our new computing and scanning equipment, enabling the ARM to become interactive, both with Museums Victoria and the general public, and the changes we have made to the layout and operations of the Museum.

**Mick Woiwod's new book:  
"PARADISE LOST"**

***On & around the Great Moorool***

Mick Woiwod's latest book, *Paradise Lost: On & Around the Great Moorool*, is the story of the Upper Yarra between Croydon and Launching Place as relayed to today's world by old *Wurundjeri* bards such as 'Billibellary, Barak and Wonga. Unlike today's Yarra Valley — a virtual monoculture of grass and grapes — theirs had been a living water-world with central within it a *Great Moorool* (a 20 km<sup>2</sup> lake), alive with fish and eels upon which had thrived flocks of migratory birds — with around them on every side, ancient sclerophyll foothill country alive with kangaroos and tier upon tier of mountain range clothed in eucalypt rainforest towering up into the heavens.

Central to the book's storyline is a Dreamtime Story relayed to the white settler world by 'Old Billibellary' describing how in the days of the *Great Moorool*, Port Phillip Bay had been dry land upon which their neighbours, the *Boonwurong* had hunted and gathered their wild-foods. White settlers had of course taken little notice of such an implausible tale passed on to them by an old blackfellow — it had, nevertheless, been written down and quietly forgotten until latter day geologists had rediscovered it and found it to be essentially true. A thousand years ago Port Phillip had indeed been dry land and a great lake had indeed formed on the Yarra upstream of Brushy Creek triggered by the blocking effect of land uplift along the region's Yarra and Brushy Creek geological faults.

*Paradise Lost* takes the reader into that *Wurundjeri* wonder-world with its vast flocks of waterfowl, its rich aquatic life and its marsupial game — indeed a paradise that the *Wurundjeri* had revelled in over the millennia but had then regrettably lost in the blink of an eye to the white invasion.

Today, the regions sole unresolved mystery has to do with the extent and the duration of that *Great Moorool* and the ultimate fate of the people who had thrived on its resources over the millennia — issues now able to be more fully assessed and treasured by the thousands who today live on and around Billibellary's vanquished *Great Moorool*.

Scorned by the settler world of the 1840s as just another unpretentious blackfellow, old Billibellary has at last been vindicated and shown to instead have been a century-and-a-half ahead of the settler-world who'd laughed at his suggestion that Port Phillip Bay had once been dry land and that a twenty kilometre long lake had occupied their Yarra's upstream floodplain.

As such, *Paradise Lost* is a journey into a long forgotten past designed to more clearly identify and interpret the Yarra Valley's present day ecology and changing climate and see it instead through Indigenous eyes — an attempt, if you like, to go 'gammaging' in the light of Prof Bill Gammage's latest insightful book *Australia: — the Biggest Estate on Earth*, highlighting the worth of understanding the

land by perceiving it as it had once been under Aboriginal management rather than in its current degraded state.

**MICK'S BOOK WILL BE LAUNCHED AT  
TARRAWARRA MUSEUM OF ART ON SUNDAY  
17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER AT 4.00PM. and will be available  
for purchase on the day or through Andrew Ross  
Museum or Nillumbik Reconciliation Group.  
twma.com.au**

Also at Tarrawarra, Coranderrk *Future Memorials project* will be launched with a display of sculptures by Tom Nicholson and Johnathan Jones.

**Coranderrk**

Coranderrk's history is extraordinary, but probably unknown by many. Set up in 1863 by the government to "protect" dispossessed indigenous people, the Coranderrk reserve became a successful enterprise for the Aborigines living there, producing crops and crafts that were sold in the area and in Melbourne's markets. It also became what is widely considered the seat of the local indigenous rights movement.

But the land was coveted by European settlers and in order to appropriate it, authorities in the 1890s relocated Coranderrk people aged under 35, making the farming unviable: the remaining inhabitants were moved to Gippsland's Lake Tyers in 1924. Some elders stayed in the still existing homestead until they died. All other buildings were demolished. 81 of the original 2000 hectares were returned to the Wurundjeri community in 1998.

Acknowledgement to The Saturday Age September 28, 2013.

**CEMETERIES TOUR PROGRAMME 2013**

This year there will be a Cost \$5 per head per Cemetery. All attendance will need to be booked with Dennis Ward by 12<sup>th</sup> October.

9457 1867 or 0418 356 768

The Final arrangements for this years Closed and Pioneer Tours are:

First

1. 10am Saturday October 19th. Kangaroo Ground Cemetery, KG with Mick Woiwod and Guests. Followed by a visit to the Andrew Ross Museum and the KG Presbyterian Church to check out the graffiti. Then on to former Aboriginal Reserve on north side of Yarra River marked by a large stone. A matching stone is placed on the other side of the Yarra River where Andersons Creek joins the River.

Lunch Noon STONEHOUSE GALLERY CAFÉ, Warrandyte (menu being discussed this week and sent to attendees separately)

2. 1:30pm Saturday October 19<sup>th</sup> Anderson Creek Cemetery, Warrandyte (maximum 20 people only). With 2 Tour Guides, the tour takes about 90mins.

3. 2pm-5pm Warrandyte Historical Society, "Buried Treasures Exhibition" on display.

Second

4. 9am Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup>. Hawdon Street, Heidelberg with David Weatherill.

5. 11am Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup>. Children's Cemetery, Plenty River, Greensborough with Noel Withers, Dennis Ward and descendants of the Whatmough and Partington Families.

6. Noon til 4pm Open Day at GHS Resource Centre. This is the Second Anniversary of the GHS Resource Centre and there will be a Barbeque, a chance to sit and chat with descendants of the Whatmough and Partington Families and all the inter-related Families. Look through the Archives, Search your own Family History, ask about Victorian Collections. (GHS Greensborough Historical Society)

Third

7. 12.30pm Sunday October 27<sup>th</sup>. History Walk along the Lower Plenty Area of the Plenty River. Come and Hug a Tree. Beautiful Open Natural Bushland and Historic Homesteads: Leader Anne Paul, GHS 2hrs Walk Rated Moderate. Gold Coin Donation, booking essential to Noel on 9435 4513 or to 9435 9060, Diamond Valley Learning Centre, Greensborough Park.

**FROM OUR SUPPORTER OFFICER Sharon Wiggett**

**It is renewal time for Supporter dues and we are updating our records, so if you are still interested in supporting the museum and receiving the Chronicle please return the supporter form and fee to the museum.**