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# KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the  
ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC

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***Take the opportunity to go to the Andrew Ross Museum website  
to find out more about us.***

## THE KANGAROO GROUND STORE

The Kangaroo Ground Store was established in 1885 and a description of the establishment appeared in the Evelyn Observer of 22 May, 1991.

*It is only some six years ago since Mr Burns stated in a small way, but ever since his commencement he has steadily increased and improved his business until now he is the possessor of, we may venture to say, the largest and best stocked store between here and Melbourne, on the one side, and of the county in all other directions. To keep pace with the times and also to provide for increasing business, more improvements have been made in the past few weeks, and indeed are still being made. Mr Burns has now a room 25 X 35 feet well stocked with groceries, drapery and hundreds of pairs of boots; he has two large store-rooms stocked well with flour, corn, chaff, and also a special room for oils and paints, besides a commodious cellar. Indeed all who wish to support local industry should pay a visit to the Kangaroo Ground General store where they can procure anything and everything from "a needle to an anchor" at reasonable prices.*

Having brought the store up to what he was proud to describe as ‘the highest standard in the county’ Jimmy Burns suffered a major blow.

At 3 o’clock on the morning of 31<sup>st</sup> December 1898 disaster struck. It was harvest time, and being a full moon with a hot day predicted on the morrow, harvest hands on nearby Pigeon Bank were busy carting hay by moonlight rather than face the heat of the following day – besides it was Hogmanay.

Suddenly, flames were seen rising from the roof of the general store. Tom Boardman, head teacher at the nearby school, and George Smith were the first on the scene to assist. By the time they reached the store, Ruth Burns, the distraught mother of eight young children had just frantically hustled her offspring from separate rooms in the smoke filled building to safety when the building erupted into flames and all the onlookers could do was to watch.

So fierce were the flames that water had to be thrown on the school-house across the road to prevent it catching fire. Absolutely nothing was saved from the dwelling house, store or post office. The damage done by the fire is between 900 pounds and 1000 pounds ... the State School was used temporarily as a post office. Evelyn Observer Jan. 1899

It was a severe blow – none of the stock was insured. Undeterred, James set about the construction of the present building. When finished he named it the ‘*Kangaroo Ground Supply Store*’.



**Figure 1: Wraith's Store and Post Office**

### **Beginnings of the Post Office**

In November 1891 the post office transferred from alongside the Kangaroo Ground Hotel to the general store, hence James Andrew Burns became the district’s new postmaster. Mail arrived daily at the store from Melbourne aboard the Queenstown Coach, there to be picked up at leisure by local people much the same as it is today (although not from the store but now picked up from local winery over the road.)

March 1899 saw Burn’s Post Office Store connected to Melbourne by electric telegraph. The telegraph line passed through Warrandyte to the local Member at Pigeon Bank, then on to Burn’s Post Office Store.

With only Cameron (of Pigeon Bank) connected by telephone, telegrams were the order of the day. These were hand-delivered to the farmer’s door. Those addressed to destinations further afield, attracted a surcharge of a shilling of a mile.

In July 1900 its post office facilities were transferred to the Schoolhouse, opposite, where Jessie Burns the daughter who had so courageously dragged a small brother from the burning store, became district Post Mistress. It returned to the store in 1904 and remained there until 2003 when it moved across the road to the local winery, 'Kings of Kangaroo Ground'.



**Figure 2: Store and Stephenson's Hall (1885-1969)**

The year of the Wraight's arrival, 1904, saw the post office return and the store's front room become, for one day a month, the Council Chamber of the local Shire. For the better part of sixty-nine years (1868-1937) the Council had met at Kangaroo Ground at various venues.

Few country stores have served their communities as well as the 'Kangaroo Ground Store' (as it is known today) which as the focal point of the district, local events and information are displayed on the notice board and snippets of information are shared as locals pick up supplies, papers and DVDs or stop for a coffee, cake and chat.

The store has had very few business owners over the years, the succession appears to be:

- *James and Ruth Burns - 1885 to 1904*
- *Cornelius Wraight - 1904 to 1945 (the longest serving storekeepers, of 41 years)*
- *Stanley Addison - 1945 to 1949*
- *Bert and Dorothy Wills - 1949 to 1962*
- *The Town's family - 1962 to 1989*
- *Charles Challis*
- *Ron and Bernadette Semple to 1985*
- *Gill and Judy Aussems 1985 to 1989*
- *Stewart and Sue Whiffin - 1989 to 1993*
- *Bob and Ann Moloney - 1993 to 2003*
- *Serge Politi - 2003 to 2005*
- *Mark Carurana - 2005 to 2009*
- *Nabil (Bill) and Ghada Moussa - 2009 to present day.*



**Figure 3: Bill and Ghada Moussa  
Friendly present day owners**

## 100 YEARS AGO

Taken from the Evelyn Observer, Friday March 13, 1914

### KANGAROO GROUND CHILDREN'S PLAY PAVILION

#### Contributed

The Kangaroo Ground State School has been privileged with a useful Committee, and better still, been possessor of a first class master during the past year or two, Mr E. W. Smith. The head teacher is qualified, scholastically, far above the standard required for a school such as this, and in addition to these attainments, he is gifted with the teaching faculty which many scholarly men cannot claim. The result is the scholars have made unusual progress during the past year or two. This fact, coupled with the activity of the Committee, with whom the head teacher has always worked most harmoniously, has made education from the State standpoint at least a vital force in that immediate centre.

Quite recently, the Committee organised a working-bee for the purpose of erecting a play pavilion in the school grounds, a commodious wooden structure with iron roof. On Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> ult., Messrs. R Doyle and E. W. Smith put in a good day's work, and although not completed the erection got it well under way. It will in due course be completed. Afternoon tea and refreshments were very kindly dispensed to the workers by Mrs E.W. Smith, Mrs C. Wraight and Mrs Gosling. The building will adorn the school grounds and be a great boon in sunshine and rain to the scholars.

*Researched by Jack Stock (ARM Member)*

## WHO WE ARE AND HOW TO CONTACT US

### Andrew Ross Museum

#### Address?

<b>Website:</b>	<b>www.andrewrossmuseum.org.au</b>	<b>Email:</b>	<b>wcleeson@primus.com.au</b>
<b>Phone:</b>	<b>9712 0801</b>	<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Carol Leeson</b>
<b>Chairperson:</b>	<b>Warwick Leeson</b>	<b>Patron</b>	<b>Mick Woiwod</b>
		<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	<b>Carol Leeson</b>

**The Museum is open:**  
**every Thursday 10 am – 12 noon**  
**1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday**  
**2 pm – 4 pm**

## ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM QUIZ

Try your knowledge of the Andrew Ross Museum.

We have prizes for the first six people to answer the quiz correctly

Return your quiz to the museum on Thursday between 10 am – 12 noon to pick up your prize.

**Multiple Choice – circle the correct answer.**

**Who was Andrew Ross?**

- a) The first schoolmaster at Kangaroo Ground
- b) The first publican of the Kangaroo Ground Hotel
- c) The first editor of The Evelyn Observer News
- d) The first storekeeper
- e) The first postmaster
- f) The first preacher
- g) All of the above

**Why is the Andrew Ross School Museum named after Andrew Ross?**

- a) He was good at riding horses
- b) He was the first schoolmaster
- c) He had sixteen children

**When did Andrew Ross first arrive in Kangaroo Ground and from which country?**

- a) In 1666 from England
- b) In 1964 from America
- c) In 1851 from Scotland

**What was the name of the boarding school he started in Kangaroo Ground?**

- a) Kangaroo Ground School
- b) Melbourne Technical School
- c) Evelyn Commercial, Industrial and Agricultural School

**He kept a daily diary which he:**

- a) typed up on a typewriter
- b) wrote the 300 pages by hand
- c) recorded on a computer

**What is the significance of the Furphy casting on the Museum's front veranda?**

- a) It looks good hanging on the wall
- b) Both Joseph Furphy, the author, and John Furphy, the water-cart manufacturer were taught by Andrew Ross
- c) It was left on our doorstep

**The Stevenson's vine growing in the Museum grounds is:**

- a) There for decoration
- b) There for us to eat the grapes
- c) The grapes have been used to make Stevenson's wine