



ISBN 1324-6437
Volume 25
Spring 2018

KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the
ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC

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ANDREW ROSS SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM TURNS 25

Andrew Ross Museum turned 25 in 2018 with a very appropriate event of a Tour of the Kangaroo Ground Cemetery. We learned about the first European settlers who were interred at the Cemetery on land where it is thought that Aboriginal, Australia's First People, had for many years previously been buried.

Original settler families were Scottish who took up and farmed square miles of land, founded a Presbyterian church, then a school and sadly, a cemetery, for the first interment of a 9 year-old girl, Judith Furphy, daughter of Joseph Furphy. He came to Kangaroo Ground with his family, to build the slab hut which was the first school room in which Andrew Ross, the newly employed school teacher, taught.



CEMETERY TOUR

COLD WEATHER, BUT INTERESTING COMPANY!

Eighty people braved the weather and visited graves at Kangaroo Ground Cemetery. They listened to the very interesting histories of past Kangaroo Ground residents, to whom many had connections or an interest in the history of a by-gone era. Afterwards there was a lot of chatter and exchange of information over a warm cup of tea and cake.

At the Andrew Ross Museum we have a mud map and notes for a self- guided tour of a number of interesting historical sites at the cemetery.

JUDITH FURPHY

Judith Furphy, 9 years old, had attended school for only two weeks when she caught a cold from resting on wet grass at Crow's Nest (originally situated to the east of the now Eltham College). In the evening of 15th May 1851 Ross borrowed Mr Furphy's horse and rode to Melbourne for advice and medicine, returning the next morning but Judith only survived another day.

There was no public burial place nearer than Melbourne. "The case being considered urgent, a general meeting of the settlers took place on the evening of 17th and the result was (the present site) the selection of unoccupied crown land at the N.E. side of the purchased land, which was subsequently granted by Government for a public cemetery" Here on the afternoon of Sunday 18th May, 1851, the remains of Judith Furphy were deposited, always to be noted as the first interment performed by Andrew Ross."

Details taken from Andrew Ross's diary entry

**Other local people, of historical interest, with interesting life stories include:
BELL, ARMSTRONG, ROGERSON, STEVENSON, NESS.**

BELL

William & Agnes Bell, 3 sons and 2 daughters came out on the sailing ship '*David Clark*'. William and his son-in-law **Thomas Armstrong** leased a sheep station on Diamond Creek out past Eltham waiting for Kangaroo Ground to be surveyed. The government surveyed Kangaroo Ground into 160 acre farms which '*David Clark*' passengers and fellow Scots snapped up, every single acre.

The Bell's eldest son moved to Yarra Flats (Yarra Glen) and established '*Gulf Station*'. Descendants of William and Agnes Bell lived until recent times in '*Pigeon Bank*'.

STEVENSON

In 1847, Stevenson sold his Christmas Hills station and moved to Kangaroo Ground, building '*Bank Head*' on the KG/Yarra Glen Rd. Joseph Stevenson in the 1870s planted the district's first vineyard. Years later his son, Robert Stevenson managed the vineyard and wine production. Joseph was a trustee of the common, the cemetery and a member of the Eltham Road Board.

James Mess married Jane Stevenson/the family name was later changed back to Ness.

Together they founded a line of industrious farming folk whose descendants remain in the district today. Purchased land, built a home from local bush timbers and hand-made bricks, overlooking the rolling hills and called it *View Hill*. James later purchased the 78 acres, *Garden Hill*, and grew vegetables. Descendants Bruce and then his son Don Ness produced just about everything a family needed. Both, at different times, were Captains of the Kangaroo Ground Rural Fire Brigade.

Joy and Don were an instrumental part of the establishment of the Andrew Ross Museum.

ROGERSON

Simon Rogerson bought his 160 acres in 1849 in partnership with another '*David Clark*' passenger, **John Barr**, a blacksmith. That's the land behind the Kangaroo Ground store bounded by Yarra Glen and Warrandyte Roads. Having bought the land the partners tossed a coin to decide who'd take the Highland and who the Low. Barr won the high and Rogerson the low. Unhappy at the result, Rogerson offered his companion a bottle of whiskey to do a swap which Barr – a thirsty blacksmith – eagerly accepted. **John Barr** built his Blacksmith Shop where the Kangaroo Ground Store now stands and for many years farmed the land behind it.

CLEAVES

William Cleaves who was killed by a kangaroo!

Built a hotel in *Watson's Creek* next to *Stevenson's Bridge*, opposite the present day '*Dark Horse Café*' on the Yarra Glen Rd. He didn't benefit from it for very long because he was killed by an old man kangaroo at the saw pits.

Not having children he bequeathed his estate to his 3 year old nephew William Cleave Calwell. When he came of age, he purchased land locally and after his death the land passed down the line to his own nephew, Arthur Calwell. Arthur Augustus Calwell was a man destined, one day, to become the Leader of the *Australian Parliamentary Labour Party*. (ALP)

BUNKER (Past meets present)

When one of the Andrew Ross Museum volunteers moved to Kangaroo Ground a few years ago from the UK she was amazed to discover that she wasn't the first of her family to put down roots here.

Edward Bunker, grandson of first fleet convicts, left Tasmania to try his luck on the mainland. After marrying his young bride the couple settled in Kangaroo Ground in the 1850s where they raised a

family, farmed the land, and eventually became linked through marriage to many well-known families in the area. As an upstanding member of the community he was also involved in local affairs and donated money towards several road and bridge improvements.

Through a strange twist of fate, our ARM volunteer actually lives on land formerly owned by her relatives 150 years ago.

ALBERT NORTON JONES

Albert Norton Jones was born in 1868. He became a small land holder and orchardist. His home, 'Golden Glen' still stands on the north side of the Wattle Glen Rd.

In his spare time he devoted himself to his passion for photography. Albert processed his plates in a dark room beneath his home. Their numbers grew to a thousand or more. There were shots of such significant local events and native wildlife.

The new home owner A.J. Spark, discovered the dusty boxes stashed in the musty cellar. Today the "Spark Collection", the lifetime work of Albert Jones, carefully catalogued by his descendant, Paul Sly, survives as the most important pictorial record of the district's life and times.

EWEN HUGH CAMERON (first member of Parliament for the local area)

A canny Scot who built homes for wealthy gold prospectors and built the first Warrandyte pub and general store. A year later he moved to Kangaroo Ground and built a hotel at the corner of Dawson and St. Andrews roads.

He married John Bell's daughter Agnes and they set up home at 'Pigeon Bank'.

He was the first President of the Shire of Eltham and a councillor for 39 years. Kangaroo Ground was the seat of local government for **69 years** of the Eltham Shire's 130 year history. In 1871 he was elected to the **State Government** Victorian Legislative Assembly, as the member for Evelyn for **40 years**.

The Cemetery Book is for sale for @ \$20.00.

'TREAD SOFTLY you tread on dreams' Author Mick Woiwod

Our tour of grave sites included an information sheet and mud-map of grave sites (which we have at the Andrew Ross Museum for people to follow on their own visit to the cemetery).

THE COMMEMORATIVE FURPHY END

In May 1996 cousins Roger and Andrew Furphy unveiled a FURPHY casting presented to the people of Kangaroo Ground by Furphy foundries Shepparton in recognition of the family's roots in this district. It was at the 145th anniversary of the death of young Judith Furphy.

It had proudly hung on the outside wall of the museum until in August 2018 it was stolen!!!

ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM AND THE FURPHY FAMILY CONNECTION

The Kangaroo Ground connection goes back to 1851 when the Irishman Samuel Furphy and wife Judith came with their family to live in Kangaroo Ground. There Samuel built a slab hut, the first school room, which was to have Andrew Ross as the first school teacher. Unfortunately, his

daughter, Judith 9 years old, died of a chill and she became the first interment in the newly set up Kangaroo Ground cemetery.

Later, in 1852, the family moved to Kyneton because Kangaroo Ground offered few opportunities for those without land. Kyneton was on the road to the goldfields with excellent prospects for employment. Samuel opened a grain store and his son, John was apprenticed to the local blacksmith, which stood him in good stead for the development of John Furphy's foundry at Shepparton in 1873, where the Furphy's Farm Water Cart was designed and first assembled. Brother, Joseph travelled the country in charge of a mechanical thresher and along the way gathered the country yarns that one day would see him as the successful writer of 'Such is Life'

The second tank end designed by William Furphy (grandson of John Furphy) used the tank end as if it were a message board to make a political statement. It had a message in Pitman's shorthand "Water is the gift of God but beer and whiskey concoctions of the devil. Come and have a drink of water. And a drawing of a stork with a baby, visually emphasising the message "Produce and populate or perish", about the need to populate which was a variant on the campaign of former Prime Minister W.M.Hughes of the 1930s.

The origin of telling a 'furphy'

A furphy 1. A false report or rumour 2. An absurd story

This adjective came about after WWI due to the habit of Australian Army members, when they had respite from action, gathering to have a drink of water around a Furphy water wagon and gossiping, often telling tall stories.



After conversations with Adam Furphy at the Furphy Museum in Kialla West (well worth a visit) he was able to set in motion a search for a replacement of a 1942 end, of which we are now in possession, and which we will display internally in the museum, secured under an alarm system.

KANGAROO GROUND MEMORIAL AVENUE

Have you wondered about the history of the beautiful large sugar gums on Kangaroo Ground road? One at the entrance to the tennis courts parking area and a similar gum 100 metres further north up the road. How did they come to be planted there and how old are they?

According to reports in the *Eltham & Whittlesea Shires' Advertiser*, they were planted 100 years ago in 1918 as part of a Memorial Avenue. It was an initiative of the Kangaroo Ground School community for Arbour Day 1918 as acknowledgement of Eltham Shire service men and women who participated in World War I.

June 28th 1918

The Committee and Head teacher of the Kangaroo Ground State School have decided to plant a Memorial Avenue between the School and Shire Office on Arbour Day 5th July at 1.30 pm. The Shire councillors will be asked to assist, and the Committee hope to see old friends and new faces present to make the affair a success. Ladies will be asked to provide refreshments and the gentlemen to give labour, skill and a silver coin. The use of the Hall has been kindly given for the after and a most enjoyable time is anticipated.

Researched by ARM member Jack Stock 2018

ELTHAM SHIRE COUNCIL SUPPORT OF THE PLANTING ORDINARY MONTHLY MEETING 1ST JULY 1918

The ordinary monthly meeting of the Council was held at the Council Chamber, Kangaroo Ground, on Monday 1st July 1918.

Present: The President, Cr R C White and Crs. Bath, Gray, Hubbard, Mann, Morris, Murray, Smedley and Taylor.

Memorial Avenue

From School Committee, Kangaroo Ground, stating that, at a meeting of the School Committee, held on 25th June 1918, it was decided to plant a Memorial Avenue between the Shire Hall and the School on Friday 5th July, and that the councillors be asked to join in making the affair a success.

Cr Gray moved that the matter be left in the President's hands, and that he arrange with the Engineer as to positions the trees should occupy. Seconded by Cr Hubbard and carried.



As the photograph shows; the newly planted gums with their wooden guards in a row along the roadside outside the KG school in 1918. (note the English flag flying in front of the school.) *Photo courtesy of Sly photograph collection*

The two remaining trees as they stand in 2018 (in the foreground at the tennis court carpark). The top of the other can be seen over the brow of the hill

INTERESTING WORLD WAR I STATISTICS

The statistics of WWI are staggering in the recorded numbers: 35 million civilians and combatants killed or wounded. In proportion to population the French had 78 percent of their troops killed or wounded. Our Australian casualty rate was high with 65 percent of all Australian troops overseas killed or wounded. We were considered to be a formidable foe and military victory was achieved. Not with-standing, legions of returned soldiers carried lifelong wounds to mind and body whilst their loved ones and parents of the fallen carried the grief.

The Museum is open:
every Thursday 9.30 am – 12 noon
Sunday
Open 2 pm – 4 pm by appointment

Supported by Nillumbik Shire Council