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# KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the  
ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC

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**180<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY of the *'David Clark'*  
Sunday, 27 October 2019, 11am – 4pm  
Gulf Station, 1029 Melba Highway, Yarra Glen**

**Are You A Descendant *or* Interested in the *History* of the 229 Families that came  
to Australia on the *'David Clark'*?"**

To mark the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the David Clark's dropping of anchor in Hobson's Bay Melbourne, on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1839, a reunion is planned for Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2019, at Gulf Station.

Descendants of those 229 passengers are invited.

*'The David Clark'*.... was a barque that departed Greenock Harbour on 15 June 1939 with 229 fellow Scots. 125 from the Highlands and 94 from the Lowlands.

**Why a Reunion at Gulf Station? There's a history that began in Kangaroo Ground .....**  
the Bells, William and Agnes and their children arrived in **Kangaroo Ground** and settled at *'Hitchill'* from where two Bell sons moved to Yarra Glen and lived at Gulf Station.

**Gulf Station**, Yarra Glen, was the farm purchased in the 1850s by William Bell senior and Thomas Armstrong, both *David Clark* passengers. After arrival, Armstrong had married one of Bell's daughters. The farm remained in the hands of his children until the last one died in 1951.



*The "David Clark"*

Booking is now open on the web site: <https://ww.trybooking.com/542336> or email estimated numbers to [davidclark1839@gmail.com](mailto:davidclark1839@gmail.com) so that some idea of numbers will be known. Please spread the word to any others who may be interested in attending.

## THE FINAL TENANT

### *Some memories of living in the Kangaroo Ground Primary School Residence*

*Written by Alan Bluhm*

In 1979, having recently returned from fourteen months overseas I was temporarily living with my friends Bill and Sue in Fitzroy. With the intention of getting onto the waiting list for a permanent Primary School teaching position I was emergency teaching in the meantime. I soon became familiar with the schools in my area, like Fitzroy, Carlton and Albert Park.

I woke one morning with a hangover, and asked Bill to tell schools I was unavailable, if any rang.

While I was under the shower trying to transmogrify into something vaguely functional the phone rang. I then heard Bill say "Yes... yes, OK, I'll put him on." I muttered words like @%##^% (and perhaps even worse) to myself, turned off the lovely soothing hot water in the shower, wrapped a towel around me and picked up the phone, ready to say the words that Bill hadn't been able to.

The voice at other end said, "It's Bob McDonald, principal of Kangaroo Ground Primary School here. We know we're a bit of distance from you in Fitzroy, but we have a lovely little school community, it's a perfect sunny day here, and we'd love to have you. We won't mind at all if it takes you a while to get here. Just take as long as you need and we'll look forward to seeing you."

Incredibly, I heard myself say "Ok, I'll be there as soon as I can." I hung up the phone and thought "Why on earth did I say that? What just happened?"

For my trip to the country I set off down the Eastern Freeway in the Mark 1 Cortina that I was borrowing from Dad, with Melway on the seat beside me. After a surprisingly short commuting time I found myself in the country, approaching Kangaroo Ground. The first thing of note was paddocks lined with Hawthorn bush hedges like an English country town from the past. The next item to catch my eye was the word WRAIGHT in large letters on the roof of the General Store, curiously with a Norfolk Island Pine towering beside it. Then the cute rural 1870 something brick Presbyterian Church came into view, with its kindergarten at the side. A tennis court and the school with its residence completed the picture.

The school consisted of a modern brick building, a double portable and the original classroom attached to the residence. On closer examination the brick building was only half a building, with the usual classrooms on one side of the corridor but not the other. Before I knew it I was welcomed by Bob and was escorted to my grade in the double portable. It was also open plan, so I could see and hear the teacher at the other end.

The kids made me feel at home and I had just got stuck into some work with them when two girls arrived from next door with a cup of tea and two biscuits for me. I was rapidly warming to this little rural school! I thanked the room-service girls and waved to Ric Lloyd, the teacher at the other end, as it had clearly been his welcome gesture.

Despite my earlier hangover and disgruntlement I enjoyed my day at Kangaroo Ground Primary school so much that when Bob next called me I didn't hesitate. On that occasion I was sitting in the staff room with the other teachers at afternoon recess when we realised we'd had a very generous amount of time for our cuppa. After twenty minutes someone asked "Where are the bell monitors?" Someone else replied "On the bus for the swimming excursion." A teacher ambled down to the office and rang the bell. I was now hooked on this laid-back place of learning.



Easter was imminent and I was lucky enough to be teaching at my new favourite little school for their Easter Bonnet parade. What a wonderfully imaginative and colourful array of bonnets arrived at school that day. I was so entranced that I captured many of them in black and white photos that I still occasionally pull out and reminisce over.

Bob lived in the school residence with his wife Judy, their two children Craig and Gail, and their Labrador dog. They had outgrown it and brought a house at the other end of town, opposite the cemetery. Bob told me he wished to sublet the residence and wondered if I was interested. Was I interested? Is a bear a Catholic? I jumped at the idea.

There was one catch. Subletting from the Teacher Housing Authority wasn't strictly kosher, so I would need to lay low. During the annual inspection I would need to be Bob's visiting brother. It seemed a small price to pay, so I excitedly bundled my miscellaneous possessions and the one piece of furniture I owned – my small student desk – into the Mark 1 Cortina and became a resident of Kangaroo Ground.

Coinciding with my arrival at my new abode I caught the flu. It was a coolish September holiday period in 1979, and I was shivering more than most with this devilish virus. I shifted my mattress into my new living room and turned the oil heater on. Suddenly September was positively tropical in my cocoon! It was not quite the kind of housewarming I'd intended, but flu or not, I was very happy to be at the beginning of a new adventure.

Ian Toohill, the teacher I'd replaced on my very first day, had an interest in photography and was the mover and shaker behind the school's darkroom (that the architect had intended to be a sick

bay). It was common practise in schools at that time for children to make books of their stories bound with a spiral binder and illustrated with photos processed in the darkroom. As I had been borrowing Bill's camera and developing photos in his bathroom, this school focus on photography came at just the right time for me.

Ian was preparing a photo trail for an upcoming nature day in the bush beside the Yarra at a property in Henley Road, and asked me to come along. I realised that wearing thongs in the bush was a bit of a mistake at the moment I unwittingly stood on a bull ants' nest. What I couldn't have predicted was that someday I'd be living just up the road from there on my own patch of bush.

Like most Government-owned houses the rooms at the school residence were a modest size and the toilet was in the backyard, but I loved the place. Technically there were three bedrooms; two at the front and a smaller one behind. One of the front two became my dining room, and the smaller one my study.

My study window looked out onto the path between the old school building and my bathroom. Bob McDonald had planted a palm beside the window. It thrived in this narrow spot that received just the right amount of shade and sunlight. Later on I hired a concrete cutter and narrowed the path in anticipation of creating an arbour between the two buildings with an arched trellis entrance, but alas, the plan never advanced beyond the modified path – still in evidence today.

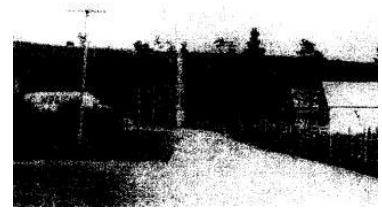
The house has some features that were probably common for its era, such as picture rails. When I saw those I rushed out to buy picture hooks to hang my framed photos from them. Some walls also had dado rails with vertical boards below and plaster above. The ceiling of at least one bedroom was made of tongue and groove boards which had a slanted section on two sides. The floors were Baltic pine, painted black around the edges in the lounge, in expectation of a carpet square. My friend Virginia Little gave me a red one no longer required in their Chiltern holiday house that was perfect for the job.

On the way to the toilet was an outside laundry, complete with concrete trough. I installed cupboards and benches to transform this small shed into my workshop. One year, on the day before the school was having a Saturday market, I toiled feverishly in this workshop right through the night and into the morning to construct a timer for Ric Lloyd's computer game arcade. By dawn I had a computer game timer that was an assembly of two boxes, 15 power sockets, 10 light sockets and pilot globes, 54 nuts bolts and washers, six power cords and plugs, five press-buttons, five relays, 66 drilled holes and 79 short lengths of wire connecting all the bits. If only that laundry could talk; I'm sure it would have many tales to tell from the many decades of its life.

The kitchen was fitted with ample inbuilt cupboards for utensils and a pantry along one wall. However, I soon found out that mice also admired them and knew how to access them even when the doors were shut. I mounted a two-pronged offensive; locating and blocking rodent entry points and purchasing glass storage jars for all food that came in packets. After a thorough examination of the house I was surprised at just how many entrances the rodents had to choose from, including a hole chewed through a junction in a skirting board. I screwed a tin patch over that one and it remains there to this day; painted over many times since.

The chimney had been cleverly designed to service two fireplaces; one in the lounge and another behind it in a front bedroom. The lounge fireplace had been fitted with the oil heater that had made my flu bearable on arrival, and the bedroom fireplace had been sealed over. A modest mantelpiece surrounded the bedroom fireplace, but the lounge sported a much grander one, which if my memory serves me correctly was installed by my predecessor, Bob McDonald. I was eventually able to do it justice by placing an old Winchester chimes clock on it.

The first year or two of my time at the residence coincided with the building of Sugarloaf Reservoir in Christmas Hills. During that period there was a constant flow of tip trucks hauling themselves and their heavy loads of crushed rock up the hill past my front door, while another convoy was coming back empty. This made crossing the road to get to the post office and store quite an extraordinarily hazardous procedure! The reservoir was completed in 1981 and Kangaroo Ground became a peaceful place once more, although it had been some time since it was as quiet a place as in this picture.



In 1980 my friend Janette Rhodes was unable to take her cat Melanie with her to a new flat, so I adopted this beautiful black feline. I made a little shelf on the kitchen wall for her to sit on and look out of the window, and also fitted an interim step halfway up so she could get to the shelf. How little I knew about cats. From day one Melanie simply took a one-and-a-half metre jump to her new shelf and ignored the interim step completely.

So that Melanie could come and go I fixed my study window sash in a slightly open position. However, another local cat soon began helping itself to my hospitality, so I sought to exclude it by constructing a miniature electric sliding door in the window space, which only Melanie would know how to operate. With the construction completed I set about teaching Melanie to press the button near the window on the outside, and another on the inside. Having provided her with lessons that were a credit to all my heroes, like Montessori, Rudolf Steiner, Alexander Sutherland Neill, Piaget and perhaps Pavlov, Melanie nonetheless refused to press the buttons. She preferred to meow until I let her in. Several weeks later, as I was about to abandon the cat-operated door as a failure, I was in bed one night when I heard a whirring noise. Melanie appeared, looking very proud of herself!

One winter after Melanie had four kittens I decided to confine my heating to the lounge, so I used a jig saw to cut two little spring-loaded doors into the bottom of the lounge door to the passage; one for in and one for out. All the cats had to do to enter or exit the lounge was to push through the relevant door. The kittens got the hang of it immediately, but Melanie was confused and searched for a button to press.



As I washed my dishes in my kitchen sink I looked out at a row of majestic pine trees beside the school carpark. I loved this view. After some years it was announced that these trees were to be cut down; the event I had been dreading. I took a photo of them and another of the accompanying view towards the city, combining bits of these under the darkroom enlarger with a photo of me in my lounge room as a montage of memories.

For a short time my dining room became a mad professor's laboratory, as several children used a Super 8 movie camera from the Regional Education Office to make a movie involving the school, called Mental Monday. Some of the filming took place in my converted dining room, and in one scene a girl appears to be protruding through the residence roof.

Occasionally children would present me with one of their classroom artworks, and I somehow acquired quite a number of pastel drawings of characters from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. I decided to cut around each character and stick them to the passage wall above and beside my study door. One day artist Hilary Jackman's mother, Elsa Jackman knocked on my door and I invited her in. As she walked along the passage she looked at all the Tin men, the Scarecrows, the Cowardly lions, the Totos and the Dorothys on the wall and was totally entranced by them. I suspect that children's drawings have had that effect on most of us at one time or another.

Eventually Bob left the school and I confessed to Kevin Berry the district inspector that I had been keeping the residence warm for Bob who had been keeping his options open. With the help of Kevin and possibly others behind the scenes, to my relief I was given official tenancy.

(to be continued)

## **RULES FOR TEACHERS .... 1915**

### *Rules for women teachers*

- **You will not marry during your term of contract or will be dismissed.**
- You must not keep company with men.
- You must be home between the hours of 6 pm. and 6 am. unless attending a school function.
- You may not travel beyond the city limits without permission of the chairman of the board.
- **You may not ride in a carriage or automobile with any man unless he is your father or brother**
- You may not smoke cigarettes.
- **You may not dress in bright colours.**
- You may under no circumstances dye your hair.
- **You must wear at least two petticoats and your dresses must not be any shorter than 2” above your ankles.**

### **To keep the school room clean you must:**

- Sweep the floor at least once a day.
- Scrub the floor with hot soapy water at least once a week.
- Clean the blackboard once a day.
- **You must start the fire at 7 am. So that the room will be warm by 8 am.**

### *Rules for male teachers*

- Men may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
- After ten hours of school, the teacher may spend the remaining time reading the bible or other good books .any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or get shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.
- The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay, providing the board of education approves.

## **LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK; SUMMER FUN IN YARRA PLENTY**

The Yarra Plenty District has great spaces for summer fun, including parkland and waterholes.

This exhibition looks back on outdoor recreation in the Yarra Plenty district over the years. The exhibition combines historic photographs from community history groups, including Kangaroo Ground, with artworks by the Nillumbik U3A Drawing and Painting Group.

The exhibition will be in the **Eltham Library Community Gallery from Thursday 5 December 2019 – 6 January 2020.**

Andrew Ross Museum is contributing five photographs from the eras of the 1934 until 1950 depicting Summer scenes of swimming in the Yarra, horse riding, including the Pony Club and past local people enjoying Kangaroo Ground in the sun.