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# KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

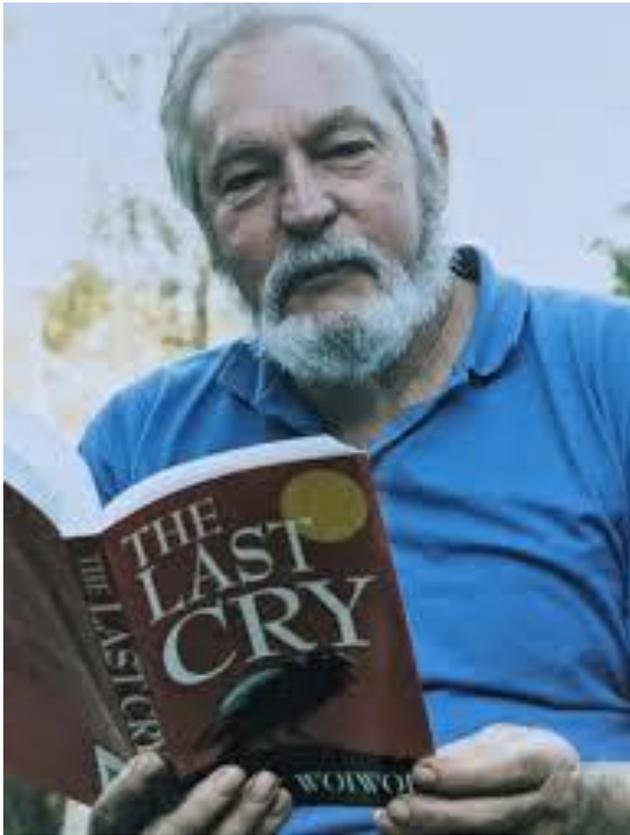
Newsletter of the  
**ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC**

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## **Mick**

### **MICK WOIWOD'S FAMILY AND WORK LIFE**

Mick was born in Ferntree Gully in 1929, married Margaret in 1954 and they had four children, Louise, Christine, Debbie and Graham. In the 1970s he did courses in archaeology and geology and in May 1975 began a journey around Australia arriving home on Christmas Eve.

He and Margaret purchased land in Gongflers Drive, Bend of Islands and as they drove through BICA he felt that he had arrived where he

was meant to be. He felt that it was Paradise. They had architect Ross Henry to design a house and Mick, with the help of friends, built their mud brick home. Here they lived a simple life, on the land, with little environmental impact.

It was on retirement from a working life in building that Mick launched into his second career, after a suggestion from a university lecturer that he should sign up to a degree course. Mick's chosen subjects reflected his deep interest in Indigenous culture, majoring in Aboriginal History, Aboriginal Religion and Archaeology.

He was invited to undertake an Honors Year but unfortunately ill health prevented its completion. Undeterred, Mick decided to turn the thesis he had been writing into his first book, **'Once around the Sugarloaf: The Transformation of a Victorian Landscape and the Story of its People'**. Mick stated that he wrote it to look back into those past worlds, and in doing so, sought to identify the essential patterns marking the interaction between man and his environment, asking the question *"have we really succeeded in transforming our landscape, or instead have we, ourselves, been substantially transformed in the attempt?"*

The book sold out within a month. Mick, in his own words 'was hooked' on writing and telling the story of the area. The new chapter in Mick's own life had begun.

Mick went on to research write and publish 24 books about the area. These included **'Kangaroo Ground The Highland Taken'** which charts in great detail the lives of the early European settlers and people of Kangaroo Ground; **'The Diary and Reminiscences of Andrew Ross'** (who was Kangaroo Ground's first school teacher), which is a daily record of events in Kangaroo Ground over the period that Andrew Ross and his wife, Mary Ann, lived and ran an Agricultural school there. Amongst his other books is **'Auld Duncan's Kangaroo Ground Tales,'** which is an illustrated volume aimed at younger readers.

His books on indigenous culture include the novel ‘**The Last Cry**’ charting the tragic disappearance of the Wurundjeri people from their prized local hunting grounds and ‘**Barak versus the Black Hats of Melbourne**’ examining the rationale behind the closure of Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve and William Barak’s fight to maintain a Wurundjeri presence in his people’s home country.

Mick was a founding president of the Nillumbik Reconciliation Group and a valued past member of Eltham Historical Society as well as a founder and life patron of Andrew Ross Museum.

He was on numerous committees in the Nillumbik shire including Christmas Hills South CFA, Friends of Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Tower and Park of Remembrance.

Mick and Marg jointly received the Nillumbik Citizen of the Year Award in 2006.

He remained enthusiastic about his projects, particularly with indigenous reconciliation, and was writing until his passing in August.

*Jane Cook – Andrew Ross Member.*

## **MICK WOIWOD 31.3.1929 – 26.8.2020** **A FOUNDER AND A PATRON OF THE** **ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM**

The Andrew Ross Museum is saddened to record the death of one of its founders and life patrons, local historian Mick Woiwod. He was 91.

Mick and others from Eltham Historical Society formed the Andrew Ross Museum in 1993, converting a building formerly used as a school house by Kangaroo Ground Primary School, into the perfect period setting for the artefacts of yesteryear.

His books and research have been invaluable to the museum and the many visitors who have passed through its door looking for information on their ancestors.

He and his late wife, Margaret, remained keen supporters of the museum and were, for many years, involved in and drivers of much of its work.

Mick believed in enlivening history with events including twilight cemetery tours, poetry competitions and theatrical re-enactments. Mick influenced Peter Oyston, a local playwright and friend, to write two plays to be performed by local people, for ARM; one with the local theme of Bushrangers and a 3-act play specifically written for the launch of the Andrew Ross Diary 'The Squire of Kangaroo Ground.'

The museum was awarded the distinction of Community Group of the Year by Nillumbik Shire Council in 2002.

Mick was very generous with his work over the years and distributed copies of many of his books to local schools and local libraries at his expense. He was also instrumental in developing a Wurundjeri Kit of units of work for schools, which were workshopped with teachers in the Nillumbik Shire before being introduced into schools.



*Mick and Margaret Woiwod (2nd & 3rd from right)  
at the Jessie Bull Sanctuary opening.*

Over the years Mick's research has produced a wealth of knowledge and the ARM is fortunate to have copies of his books for sale to the public. Mick kindly donated all of his research notes on the area and its inhabitants, providing a comprehensive account of early local families and events which are archived and available through the museum. His two books "*Kangaroo Ground the Highland Taken*" and "*Once Around the Sugarloaf*" along with the "*Andrew Ross Diary*" have been the regular references for many people wanting to know about the history of the local Kangaroo Ground area.

He had a tremendous memory and could recall and talk with confidence and authority on the area's history and individual families and events.

Mick's legacy will live on in his books and research and the Andrew Ross Museum will be forever grateful for his passion and record keeping of the Kangaroo Ground story.

## **JESSIE AGNES BULL (CAMERON, HAUGHTON) 1923-2020**

Jessie Bull's Daughter, Paula Bull spoke of the family's wonderful memories of staying at Bend of Islands, at 'The Three Bears' and 'Rapid Sounds'. She remembered their good luck, during the bushfires, which burned to within metres of where they were staying. She wanted us to know of Jessie's love for the area.

Jessie Bull donated a plot of land, in the Bend of Islands, alongside the 'very sharp' bend in lower Catani which was the residue of a 1920s subdivided land in the Bend of Islands.

Jessie's father Ned Haughton, in the 1920s, subdivided all land in the Bend of Islands, with a river frontage, (other than the Oxley and Tallwoods Estates), into thirty-five bush blocks. A decision had been made by the owner of an adjacent five acre block to cut it up into four little pieces. The surveyor contracted to do the cutting – without

apparent reference to anyone – cut also the corner, thereby excising a patch of orphan bush with no owner, other than the resident wombat and a few itinerant bush critters.

Forty-four years later, when the owner of the adjacent block died, Jessie, as next of kin, and therefore owner had a dilemma. The land was too tiny to build upon and when offered gratis to the Shire, it declared it had no interest in it. This saw Jessie, whose family had once owned all of the Bend of Islands, decide to declare the plot a sanctuary for the wildlife who, anyhow, seem always to have seen it as their own.

Jessie was inspired to name the plot after her family, who had owned the plot for over a hundred years. Hence the plot is named after Jessie Agnes, (her mother) E.H. Cameron MLA (her Grandfather), Ned Haughton (her father), Bull (her own married name).

At the small naming gathering; Alan Bonny fixed the sign to the tree, Carol Bonny planted a home - grown manna gum and Jessie pulled the cork. Marg Woiwod poured the champagne for all, including Mick Woiwod and two of Jessie's Mt Martha neighbours. The sign "Jessie Agnes Cameron Haughton Bull Sanctuary", was a few days later taken! It wasn't returned but another sign has replaced the original.

It stands as a legacy to Jessie Bull, who has had a long family link with Kangaroo Ground and she had donated many photographs and interesting anecdotes in person and by letter. She had maintained contact with and supported all events held relating to the Andrew Ross Museum.

**Appropriately, this information is from an article written by Mick Woiwod in 2001 for the BICA Newsletter.**



## **WORLD WAR TWO REMEMBERED 75 YEARS ON 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945**

Fighting in Europe ended in May 1945, but continued on in the Pacific. Finally, the end of WWII was 15<sup>th</sup> August 1945, when war was over in the Pacific. (Victory over Japan) VJ Day. The official surrender documents weren't signed until 2<sup>nd</sup> September aboard the USS Missouri battleship in Tokyo Bay.

A website representing World War II at Home, Response, Reflection and Rejuvenation Project, launched on line, has 18 sites of significance that represent the transformative impact the Second World War had on Victoria. Click on <https://wwiathome.com.au> to view the pictorial representation. *(with acknowledgement to EDHS for this information)*

We have a beautiful Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park and Tower of Remembrance. A Legacy of Remembrance and Honouring. It is the 4<sup>th</sup> most visited site in Nillumbik.

It is sacred ground, a place for quiet time and a place with magnificent views across the Great Dividing Range, Melbourne and even Port Phillip Bay, as Andrew Ross recorded in his diary when he

used his telescope to look right into the shipping lane of Port Phillip Bay.

The park was opened in 1921 with a small memorial cairn of rocks, with a flag pole, erected in the slight depression on top of the hill, which was the highest point in the then Eltham Shire.

It was then decided to erect a tower that became the Memorial Tower we see today; it was opened on 11.11 1926.

ARMISTICE DAY 1918 is remembered at 11 o'clock on 11th November (end of WWI)

**"Here, we remember, with gratitude, all those who fought in all wars, to keep Australians safe in our homeland".**



**Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park and Tower of Remembrance**

## WHO WE ARE AND HOW TO CONTACT US

<b>Museum Board Members</b>	
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Treasurer:	Rob Shackleton
	Geoff Ritter
Supporter Officer:	Robert Thornton

The Museum is not open  
due to COVID 19 restrictions

Supported by Nillumbik Shire Council and Kangaroo Ground Primary  
School



