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# KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the  
**ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC**

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## VALE - MARGARET HINKLEY

BY LONG-TIME FRIEND CATHERINE THOMSON - 30/01/2021

It is with great regret that we record the passing of Margaret Hinkley. Margaret was a resident of Kangaroo Ground and an active community participant. She came to Kangaroo Ground in 1975 with her husband Bruce and their son Matthew. Their daughter Abbey was born in Kangaroo Ground. One of three children Marg leaves a sister, Peta and brother Doug. To the family we send our condolences.

Marg was a keen horsewoman – she had ridden in the Kangaroo Ground area as a child, she was a member of the Adult Riding Club and was an instructor at the Kangaroo Ground Pony Club for many years. In this role she generously gave her time helping the local children with the training and well-being of their horses. She was always more than willing to share her expertise.

When her children were a little older, she returned to study and obtained her certificate in Accountancy. Subsequently, this led to work in the Education Department and other private accounts. In recent years she worked with the Kangaroo Ground Cemetery as Secretary. She has been an integral part of the running of the Cemetery over more than a decade. Her competency, hard work and understanding made a long and

respected contribution to the Cemetery. She was known and will be fondly remembered by many people both inside and beyond the Kangaroo Ground Community.

Marg was a loving and very supportive Grandmother to Matt and Bianca's children, Ella and Emily, and Abbey and Nic's children Kiah and Brayden. They will miss their Grandma. Marg was a friend to so many people.

Vale Marg

## TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

During 2020 we took advantage of being closed, and thanks to Laurie Murray (principal of the Kangaroo Ground School), the outside of the Museum has been painted and renovations have taken place inside the Museum. These include new flooring, carpet and vinyl, painting, new benches, bookshelves and new lighting. We will complete the office area with new filing cabinets and extra storage space. This will be followed by further sorting out of paperwork and reduction of displays in the three display rooms.

We hope to be fully open after Easter to continue our work of showcasing the history of Kangaroo Ground.

While the Museum was closed and with a grant from the Nillumbik Shire, we were able to have an external display of Christmas past (including homemade decorations of paper chains and paper lanterns etc.); I hope you saw and enjoyed it.



In researching past Christmases in Kangaroo Ground, we found out some very interesting facts about the community of the first Scottish settlers who, as Presbyterians and non-drinkers, (so they claimed) did not celebrate Christmas as we now do. They welcomed the coming year by celebrating Hogmanay (New Year's Eve) for five days, including a ball, first footing (with a bottle of whiskey, a pinch of salt and a lump of coal) also with 'Nips behind the Door'. **Read on for an interesting history lesson.**



Scarce boys Christmas c1890

## **NO TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION IN KANGAROO GROUND**

It may surprise many people to note that Christmas was not celebrated as a festival and virtually banned in Scotland for around 400 years, from the end of the 17th century to the 1950s. The reason for this dates back to the years of Protestant Reformation, when the straight-laced Kirk proclaimed Christmas as a Popish or Catholic feast and as such, needed banning.

And so it was, right up until the 1950s that many Scots worked over Christmas and celebrated their winter solstice holiday at New Year when family and friends would gather for a party and to exchange presents which came to be known as Hogmanay.

### **THE HISTORY OF HOGMANAY (NEW YEAR'S EVE)**

The Scots all over the world celebrate Hogmanay with passion and revelry! But what are the actual origins of Hogmanay, and why should a tall dark-haired stranger be a welcome visitor after midnight?

It is believed that many of the traditional Hogmanay celebrations were originally brought to Scotland by the invading Vikings in the early 8th and 9th centuries. These Norsemen, or men from an even more northerly latitude than Scotland, paid particular attention to the arrival of the Winter Solstice or the shortest day, and fully intended to celebrate its passing with some serious partying.

In Shetland, where the Viking influence remains strongest, New Year is still called Yules, deriving from the Scandinavian word for the midwinter festival of Yule.

### **HOGMANAY IN KANGAROO GROUND WITH THE FIRST SCOTTISH SETTLERS**

In the past, in Kangaroo Ground, the Scottish people followed the Hogmanay (New Year's Eve) tradition of cleaning the house, clearing old food from the cupboards, and using the last of the flour and butter to make Scottish Shortbread. The story of shortbread begins with the medieval "biscuit bread". Any leftover dough from bread making was dried out in a low oven until it hardened into a type of rusk: the word "biscuit" means "twice cooked". Gradually the yeast in the bread was replaced by butter, and biscuit bread developed into shortbread.

## Scottish Shortbread

6 oz. plain flour ~ 2 oz. caster sugar ~ 1 oz. icing sugar ~ 2 oz. rice flour ~ 5 oz. butter  
~ pinch of salt

**Preheat oven to 140°C (280°F or Gas mark 2). In a mixing bowl, cream together the sugars and the butter. Sift in the flours and salt: work by hand to a stiff dough. Roll out the dough to 1/2 inch thickness. Form either into a round or into fingers and prick with a fork. Bake in the oven until light golden brown, around 30-40 minutes.**

**Hogmanay** is when they gathered at midnight and had shortbread and a ‘wee dram’ of whiskey (even though they were mostly ‘tea totalers’) to toast the health of each of the families of the area. Then at New Year, a tall dark stranger would knock on the door. it was to welcome friends and strangers with warm hospitality and of course lots of kissing for all.

## The Singing of Auld Lang Syne

There are several traditions and superstitions that should be taken care of before midnight on the 31st December: these include cleaning the house and taking out the ashes from the fire, there is also the requirement to clear all your debts before “the bells” sound midnight, the underlying message being to clear out the remains of the old year, have a clean break and welcome in a young, New Year on a happy note.

Immediately after midnight it is traditional to sing Robert Burns “Auld Lang Syne”. Burns published his version of this popular little ditty in 1788, although the tune was in print over 80 years before this.

*“Should auld acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot and auld lang syne  
For auld lang syne, my dear, for auld lang syne,  
We’ll take a cup o kindness yet, for auld lang syne.”*



## First Footing

“First footing” (or the “first foot” in the house after midnight) is still common across Scotland. To ensure good luck for the house the first foot should be a dark-haired male, and he should bring with him symbolic pieces of coal, shortbread, salt, black bun and a wee dram of whisky. The dark-haired male bit is believed to be a throwback to the Viking days, when a big blonde stranger arriving on your doorstep with a big axe meant big trouble, and probably not a very happy New Year!

The firework displays and torchlight processions now enjoyed throughout many cities in Scotland are reminders of the ancient pagan parties from those Viking days of long ago.

## Fire Works

One of the most spectacular fire ceremonies takes place in Stonehaven, south of Aberdeen on the north east coast. Giant fireballs are swung around on long metal poles each requiring many men to carry them as they are paraded up and down the High Street. Again the origin is believed to be linked to the Winter Solstice (northern hemisphere) with the swinging fireballs signifying the power of the sun, purifying the world by consuming evil spirits.

## HOGMANAY (NEW YEARS EVE) - KG SECRETS

As recorded in Andrew Ross' Diary, New Year was often celebrated with a Grand Public Ball in a local's barn, and attended by local neighbourhood people, friends and many visitors.

Almost a tradition of the district, it seems, had been a disposition on the part of its Scottish farmers to consistently preach against the evils of drink, yet themselves, whenever a suitable occasion presented, to have been prime participants. We hear of New Year revels with young men, bottle in hand, First Footing the district, and of haystacks exuding mysterious halos from the 'whisky stills' hidden within – even of the local preacher being the owner of a hotel.

### NIPS BEHIND THE DOOR

Poem by William Bell Armstrong 1800

There's a push in Kangaroo Ground,  
They're the meanest lot around,  
For in public, all strong liquor they abhor,  
But you take my bloomin' tip,  
They all love a little nip,  
In a secret little nook behind the door.

They are very fond of preaching,  
And of temperance maxims teaching,  
But in practice all their precepts they ignore.  
They don't care a bang d'you mind,  
For when they feel inclined,  
They will take their little 'nips' behind the door.

You will be surprised to learn,  
They're all girls in this concern.  
'Tis sad indeed I know  
That to that place they'll go,  
When their journey in this weary world is o'er,  
They will gnash their teeth and wail,  
All adorned with horns and tail,  
Just for taking little 'nips' behind the door.

And I will tell you it's a fact that I deplore,  
For I'm sorry such deceit,  
Should be found in damsels sweet,  
When they think of taking 'nips' behind the door.

When they're finished with life's race,  
I'm afraid they'll find a place,  
Where old Beelzebub doth make the furnace roar.  
Where they'll writhe in agony,  
As they're roasting merrily,  
And they'll long for little 'nips' behind the door. W.B.A.

## WELCOME TO NEW YEAR (HOGMANAY) 2020

On the Kangaroo Ground Notice Board the good folk of Kangaroo Ground were invited to visit our Christmas/Hogmanay display on the veranda of the Andrew Ross Schoolhouse Museum.

With thanks to the Nillumbik Shire Council support, through a grant, we displayed the history of Christmas (or lack of) and Hogmanay (New Year's Eve) as celebrated by the first Kangaroo Ground settlers, who were Scottish, and who followed the Scottish traditions.



Proudly supported by



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