

ISBN1324-6437
Volume 29
Autumn 2022

KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the
ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC

www.andrewrossmuseum.com.au

Email: wcleeson@primus.com.au – 0422 307 630

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----------|
| CHARLTON REUNION 24TH APRIL 2022 | 1 |
| GOOD TIMES WERE HAD BY THE FIRST SETTLERS IN KANGAROO GROUND!! | 2 |
| THE KANGAROO GROUND HALL (LATER TO BE NAMED STEVENSON'S HALL) | 2 |
| CREATING MYTHS AROUND THE MYSTIC LAKE | 4 |
| KANGAROO GROUND REMINISCENCES | 5 |
| The aircraft 'crash on private land | 5 |
| The Chemical Hazard Incident in Donaldson Rd | 5 |
| YES! GOLF IN KANGAROO GROUND | 5 |
| WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN AN INNOCENT CHILD ASKS YOU SOMETHING FROM THEIR VIEW OF LIFE? | 7 |

CHARLTON REUNION 24 APRIL 2022

The Charlton Reunion will (Covid permitting) take place at 12.00 noon at the Christmas Hills Hall in Christmas Hills on Sunday **24th April 2022**.

We are expecting about 150 guests from various parts of Australia to attend. Unfortunately, overseas guests from Northern Ireland, England, Canada, the US and New Zealand would also have been attending if it wasn't for travel restrictions.

The Kangaroo Ground, Christmas Hills and Yarra Glen areas were prominent in the Charlton family at various times from the mid 1870's to well into the 1900's.

Three brothers emigrated to Australia in the mid 1850's with two of them, James and Robert Charlton, spending many years in the Kangaroo Ground and Christmas Hills area. **One of Robert's daughters, Elizabeth Charlton married John Bell, a descendent of the Bells who established Gulf Station at Yarra Glen.**

A book is currently being published and will be launched at the event. I am the author of this book and to date I have orders for 200 copies from relatives in all of the countries mentioned above as well as every State and Territory of Australia with the exception of Tasmania.

The book includes details of James and Robert's contribution to the Kangaroo Ground, Christmas Hills and Yarra Glen areas and Victoria more broadly. The other brother, Samuel spent the majority of his time at the Ballarat goldfields and later at the Great Northern goldfields near Rutherglen in Northern Victoria.

Phil Charlton
0408 382 971

GOOD TIMES WERE HAD BY THE FIRST SETTLERS IN KANGAROO GROUND!!

In 1857 dance classes were held in connection with the Kangaroo Ground School of Mr. Andrew Ross school and as a consequence, a public ball was organised.

A Ball committee was formed and Mr. Barr would allow the free use of his large barn. Tickets were one guinea each (1 pound 1 shillings or \$2.21). The tickets sold quickly! Many willing hands prepared furniture and decorations.

When the fixed day for the grand entertainment had arrived (30th December) there was great excitement as people came to view the preparations and visitors from Melbourne began to investigate. In the early evening the band which had been engaged arrived on the Ground from Melbourne, and their appearance on the brow of the hill, by Rosebank, was hailed with loud acclamations. The ball was opened at nine o'clock with the old country dance of "cross hands and down the middle" in which all could join. Polkas and quadrilles varied the dancing throughout. At midnight the place was very crowded; the weather being favourable. More visitors came from a distance and it was late in the morning when the company began to disperse and the musicians despatched on their return.

So it came to pass and concluded the first public ball at Kangaroo Ground. And this began the era of the Annual Hogmanay (New Year's Eve) Ball.

Until the erection of the hall at Kangaroo Ground the use of various barns were put to good use.

Information accessed from Andrew Ross's REMINISCENCE No 31



Barr's Barn where the first ball was held

Stevenson's Hall next door to the school and over the road from the store (demolished in 1969)

THE KANGAROO GROUND HALL (later to be named Stevenson's Hall)

'The Kangaroo Ground Hall' was registered as a place of amusement in 1885 and was said to be 'second to none in the County of Evelyn' (later Shire of Eltham). It was originally owned by John Donaldson and the supports for the floor were huge logs dragged there by bullock teams. It was built of weather-boards and the interior was lined with tongue and groove pine. It had a stage and a double door at the front. A later addition was a kitchen at the rear and a cloakroom.

Dances were held regularly with luscious suppers, with the wash copper outside being used to make the coffee. For balls, and special occasions, the hall would be decorated with gum leaves, coloured paper streamers and crepe paper flowers. The dance floor would be sprinkled with candle wax and polished with bags being pulled along carrying small boys for weight.

Concerts and meetings of local sporting clubs, the CWA, and the Advancement League were held there, as well as euchre parties, wedding receptions and the annual Presbyterian Ladies' Guild Flower Show. About 1993 the hall was renamed Stevenson's Hall in memory of a great local community worker. In 1969 local state school infant classes were held in the hall.

The Shire of Eltham decided that the tilt on the hall had reached quite alarming proportions. On 2 April 1969, the infant class was bundled off to the Fire Brigade building alongside, (where the tennis courts now are). They moved in to demolish it quickly before any of the local people had time to protest.

Reproduced from the authors of 'These Walls Speak Volumes' A History of Mechanics Institutes in Victoria.



A Ball was organised to celebrate the turning on of electricity in Kangaroo Ground on 10th April 1958

CREATING MYTHS around the MYSTIC LAKE

Have you had the wonderful experience of driving from Kangaroo Ground through Christmas Hills, then down the escarpment to Yarra Glen? From the top of the escarpment on a cool, early, foggy, autumn morning, you may come upon the phenomenon known locally as the 'Mystic Lake'.

Andrew Ross, school teacher, in 1852, paused for a while at the head of the Breakneck, and recorded for posterity, his thoughts, as he stood transfixed on the spot, contemplating the enchanting scene laid out before him.

'Much, I think of the sublimity and even the beauty of the magnificent sight of the grand theatre of mountain range to be scanned from this point on the original track.'

A. Ross, Evelyn Observer, 17 Feb. 1888

A century later in a brochure originating from the guest house era and Real Estate blurbs which placed emphasis on the atmospheric phenomenon.

Riding suddenly on to the edge of the Christmas Hills early on a late autumn morning you may find at your feet the wonderful Mystic Lake... Looking east the whole of the Yarra Valley has been blotted out with a silver sea about twelve miles wide...its coastline bluffs and capes with bays here and bays there, then a long gulf up Steels Creek Valley....Monda, Black Spur, Juliet, and Riddell making a mountain background ...watch the silvery billow as they roll and lift and you will suddenly be surprised to discover that your lake has an island in it. Yeringberg Hill has come through the mist.

Panorama of Panoramas: Melbourne's Mystic Lake. Brochure of Banool Top Estate, c1950, Edward Haughton. (Haughton – Vale Map Collection, State Library)

The 'Gulf' formed in the Mystic Lake by the valley of Steels Creek is believed to have inspired one early pastoral pioneer to name his Run 'Gulf Station'.

To the Wurundjeri, the valley below, running through the very heartland of their country, was 'Birrarung' the Valley of Mists.

Perhaps there are those who prefer the technical explanation which sees the phenomena as simply a 'radiation fog' occurring when there is a high pressure system over the region. According to the meteorologists, moist air above the river is cooled overnight by loss of heat to radiation (due to lack of cloud cover), and by contact with the colder low-lying ground surface. When cooled sufficiently, normally to its dew point, a fog forms. The process is accentuated in valleys because of additional drainage of cold air into lower lying areas. When the sun rises, 'Insolation' heats the fog-layer and the ground, causing a turbulence which swirls the fog upwards, thereby mixing it with drier air, causing the water droplets to evaporate, and so causing the fog to disperse.

'Once Around the Sugarloaf' Mick Woiwod

Did you understand that???

Actually I prefer the Mystic Lake look that seems to invite you to drive into it, especially if there are hot air balloons floating above it all! Beautiful!! (Editor)

KANGAROO GROUND REMINISCENCES

from a member of Kangaroo Ground CFA

The aircraft 'crash on private land

The aircraft 'crash' was on the private landing strip at 70 Donaldson Rd on 15 December 2001. I remember it well. When the pagers went off they had no details and Ben and I jumped into Tanker 2 and asked where we were going. Sando calmly said "Plane crash!" I thought 'Bugger' – burning bodies from a 747 etc! But it was just a light plane flipped on landing. We just kept it wet until it was righted by a tractor!!!

The Chemical Hazard Incident in Donaldson Rd

On 12 March 2005 Ben, David Rowe and I turned out in Tanker 2 on a Saturday afternoon when it was 42C. As we arrived on the scene a policewoman said:

"There's a crashed ute in the ditch up there, the driver's unconscious and a passer-by says there are explosives leaking chemicals in the back. Over to you, I'm out of here."

Yes, it turned out to be chemicals on their way to a drug house. The driver was rescued by KG and Research guys in BA (Breathing Apparatus) and Splash Suits. The driver came round as he was being dragged away and nearly had a heart attack as he thought he was being kidnapped by aliens! Thanks to the recollections of John Astbury, a KG CFA member.

YES! GOLF IN KANGAROO GROUND

Prior to the 1960s the nearest golf club to Kangaroo Ground was at Greensborough where Bruce and Don Ness used to play a round or two. When it was forced to close to make way for a housing estate then embarked on setting up a course on land they owned along the Wattle Glen Road and Ness Lane.

The Ness brothers had, to some large extent, moved out of farming into a greater involvement in earth-moving operations. The farm that had so long been in family hands, like most others in the district, had become a less and less viable proposition because of diminishing returns. Many solved their problem by sub-division.

However, the brothers saw such a course as detrimental to the district's proud farming heritage. The solution they came up with, instead, was the construction of a nine hole golf course on their Wattle Glen Road frontage. As it turned out, it was a course with a difference! Centrally within it was a 20 000 mega-litre dam located on the property in 1913 to provide sluicing water for the nearby Pretty Hill Gold Mining Co. (a story for another time).

The Course opened on 16th March 1963 under the banner of its vanished predecessor, the "Greensborough Golf Club". It has been described as a '*course presenting a challenge to all those who played on it*'. Its twin hazards were a steeply sloping terrain and a formidable expanse of water.

Never what might be considered a championship course – its greens were sand scrape – its clubhouse a simple shed where green fees were paid on the honesty principle. The club served the golfing fraternity of the district for thirteen years, finally closing in January 1973 after failed moves to have the Shire take over its operation and redevelop it into a more viable proposition.

BUT! THERE IS MORE

PUBLIC NOTICE

“PITCH & PUTT” GOLF COURSE PROPOSAL

(North-East Corner of Eltham – Yarra Glen Road and Kangaroo Ground – Warrandyte Road)
December 20th 1993.

A Community Meeting was held at the old classroom at Kangaroo Ground Primary School “To prevent the proposal from going ahead, so to preserve Kangaroo Ground as we know and love it.”

The Council received five objections, including one signed by four property owners and three from residents in a neighbouring shire.

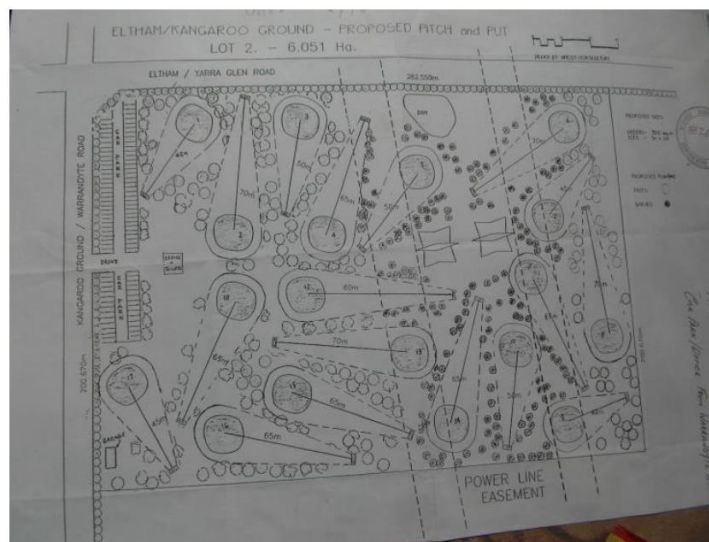
The proposed development covered about 2.8 hectares with space for 75 cars.” It would involve excavation for the greens and 75 cars, which would involve significant traffic.” (Cr Robert Marshall). “It would be a major development on a hillside in one of the few areas to enjoy an urban setting which would be disastrous.” (Cr David Essex).

A recommendation was made that the plan would “be out of character and detrimental to the surrounding area”. Eltham Shire’s director of environment and planning, Mr Richard Allen said the case wasn’t a simple one. “It was a borderline case that could have gone either way. The land is zoned Landscape Interest C which allows the use of large areas of land but doesn’t encourage commercial use.”

The councillors had to ask themselves: “If there was going to be a golf course where would be the best location?”

Eltham Council refused a permit for an 18-hole “pitch and putt” golf course in Kangaroo Ground. The councillors decided in favour of the policy and resources committee’s environmental concerns.

The application was defeated five votes to seven.



**WHERE IS THE GOLF COURSE NOW?
AT YARRAMBAT!!! On Yan Yean Road, still part of Nillumbik**

WHAT DO YOU SAY WHEN AN INNOCENT CHILD ASKS YOU SOMETHING FROM THEIR VIEW OF LIFE?

JACK(age 3)

was watching his Mum breast-feeding his new baby sister...After a while he asked: Mum why have you got two? Is one for hot and one for cold milk?

STEVEN (age 3)

hugged and kissed Mum good night. "I love you so much that when you die I'm going to bury you outside my bedroom window"

BRITTANY (age 4)

had an ear ache and wanted a pain killer. She tried in vain to take the lid off the bottle. Seeing her frustration, her Mum explained it was a child-proof cap and she'd have to open it for her. Eyes wide with wonder, the little girl asked: "How does it know it's me?"

DJ (age 4)

stepped onto the bathroom scale and asked: "How much do I cost?"

CLINTON (age 5)

was in his bedroom looking worried. When his Mum asked what was troubling him, he replied, "I don't know what'll happen with this bed when I get married. How will my wife fit in it?"

JAMES (age 4)

was listening to a Bible story. His Dad read: 'The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and flee out of the city but his wife looked back and was turned into salt'. Concerned, James asked: "What happened to the flea?"

This particular Sunday sermon

"Dear Lord" the minister began, with arms extended toward heaven and a rapturous look on his upturned face. "Without you, we are but dust ..."He would have continued but at that moment my very obedient daughter who was listening, leaned over to me and asked quite audibly in her shrill four year old girl voice, "Mum, what is butt dust?"