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KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the
 ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC

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Photo: Ken King



Photo: Ken King

SOPHIE (aka PUSS)

KANGAROO GROUND'S LITTLE BLACK POST OFFICE CAT

Much loved "Puss" died peacefully in her sleep on Friday night 6 September 2025. She looked like a little black kitten to the end; however, she was 17 years and 5 months old.

Tears have been shed by many locals, both children and adults as she was a much-loved icon at the Post Office for most of her happy life.

Born in April 2008, her first home was in Moonee Ponds where she was left alone indoors for most of the day as her owner was nearly always at work. Somewhat neglected she was offered up for adoption in 2010 and came to Kangaroo Ground for a new life with the King family. Those first few months in her new home were somewhat daunting; she would not venture out of her safe place, the ensuite bathroom. But then one Friday evening she timidly "tippy toed" into the TV room having decided she might as well be part of the family. Slowly but surely, she got used to her new home and spent a lot of time looking out the windows at the Kangaroo Ground happenings: kids playing in the school yard, folk collecting their mail and watching grapes being pressed. Her confidence grew day by day.

It was then time for her to move into the Post Office/Winery to keep the mice away, a role she relished. Whilst she had a comfy bed, it was seldom used as she chose a different place to sleep every day, sometimes she would emerge from an empty wine box crying for her breakfast or peering down from the mezzanine level having spent the night snuggled up in the vineyard netting.

Sophie thought she owned the place! Seeking out the sun every morning she would shelter in her favourite wine barrel peeping through the grevillea bushes at locals collecting their mail and parcels. One of her favourite pastimes was to sunbake in the middle of the carpark, always with one eye open. This little black cat used up her nine lives over and over again.

The shy little cat overcame her fears and started greeting people as they came to the Post Office. She loved being patted, especially by the children. We all got to know when she had had enough, her tail would twitch from side to side.

And what a courageous little cat she was! One day I witnessed her chasing a fox off the property, she was all puffed up, fur bristling. She strutted around proudly for hours after.

She never ventured far from the post office doors and immediate surrounds unless I was working in the vineyard where she would be my companion for hours on end. She would peer down rabbit holes and then climb to the top of a vineyard post to survey the Kangaroo Ground landscape. If there was a rustle in the grass, she would let me know, thankfully nearly always a blue tongue.

She loved playing tricks in the post office. She would hide and soft paw smack the first to walk past, and her all-time favourite was to ring the post office bell when no one was there. She had a sense of humour!

A healthy little cat was she except for a gastric reflux. If she ate her meal too quickly it would almost instantly reappear, and with an indignant look she would want another fresh sachet, refusing to salvage the first meal. So, we had to slow her down and make her work a little harder for her meal, the solution was to scatter her sachet across an ice block tray and give her lots of small meals during the day. Her top weight was just 3.4kg, just a little moggie. Mostly her preference was for meat sachets, chicken especially. But then with no warning she would want fish and if I didn't have it in stock, she would go on a starvation diet. The occasional cat treat was hers thanks to Lucy.

Special mention to Jean from the Bend of Islands, for always ensuring that Sophie had clean water in her outside bowl.

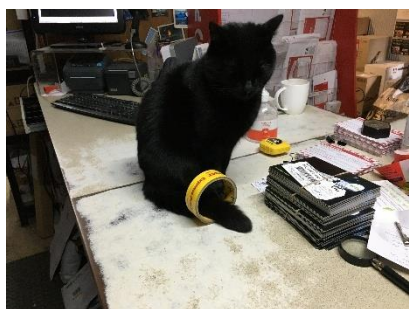
Her demise was kidney failure and old age to boot. As usual, I checked on her each night at 10pm and she would always be wanting something to eat. On September 6th bedtime I cheered her up by telling her the AFL Geelong Cats were well in the lead against the GWS Giants. She was acting thrilled but truth was she knew there was a Lucy treat in the cupboard. She devoured it in a flash, curled up in her bed, said a “meow goodnight” and then died peacefully in her sleep.

Her final resting place is in the garden “pet cemetery” alongside Jake the Rottweiler Kelpie X also 17yrs, Joe #1 the red boxer died of a heart attack eating his dinner at 11yrs and Joe#2 died of kidney failure also 11 years. All fondly remembered by Kangaroo Ground people who visited the Post Office and Winery.

Ken King

RIP Sophie

The courageous little black cat of the Kangaroo Ground Post Office resident 2010-2025



Photos: Ken King

KANGAROO GROUND WAR MEMORIAL TOWER RESTORATION

O.C Stone are happy to be undertaking restoration work at the Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Tower ahead of its centenary year in 2026. Working alongside Nillumbik Shire Council and RBA Architects and Conservation Consultants, we are focused on using methods and materials that are sympathetic to the historical nature of the building, while increasing its longevity so that it can continue to serve as a symbol of remembrance and peace for the Kangaroo Ground community and beyond.

One of the key aspects to preserving the tower is the removal of old cementitious pointing and replacing it with a traditional lime mortar. As lime is permeable to water in a way that cement is not, this mortar will elongate the lifespan of the stonework by providing an outlet for water that would otherwise be trapped in the stone and hasten natural erosion. We are also renewing damaged areas of the tower's capping, replacing sections of rotten floorboards and giving the internal walls a fresh lick of paint so that the Tower of Remembrance can continue to be enjoyed by locals and visitors alike for years to come, while preserving the heritage nature of this beautiful and important structure.

As a stonemason, the most enjoyable aspect of my job is being able to work on buildings that have a rich history and that is particularly true of this project. The War Memorial Tower was funded and built by locals a century ago to commemorate those who served their country and it is an honour to play a role, however minor, in that continued remembrance.

Niall Smee, Stonemason



Photo: OC Stone

OC Stone Mason



Photo: Alan Bluhm

Tower with Scaffolding

A CHANGE OF VENUE FOR REMEMBRANCE DAY

The Remembrance Day Service held annually by the Friends of Kangaroo Ground War Memorial Park had a change of venue for 2025. Due to restoration works being undertaken at the Memorial Tower Nillumbik Shire advised that a Service could not be held on site. The Friends then looked about for a suitable alternate site, rather than cancel the Service, after 10 years of commemorating Remembrance Day at the Tower.

Our approach to Group Officer Matt Knight of the Nillumbik Group of Fire Brigades was met with much enthusiasm and his agreement to provide the venue and to be involved in the Service. Around 50 residents and representatives turned out on Sunday 9 November, during somewhat changeable weather, to attend the Service at the Emergency Operations Centre in Ness Lane Kangaroo Ground. Group Officer Matt Knight presented an excellent Address during the Service, pointing out the connection between volunteer services such as the Country Fire Authority and State Emergency Service and the Armed Forces.



Photo: Jean Verso

Demonstrating the selfless commitment of volunteerism, the Kangaroo Ground Fire Brigade intended on sending a contingent to the Service, but duty called and they were required to attend a vehicle accident which occurred just before the Service was to begin.

As always, the Friends welcomed the participation of senior students of Kangaroo Ground Primary School who opened proceedings with their recitation of the poem “We Shall Keep the Faith”. The Ode of Remembrance for the Fallen was led by Timothy Riley, Commemorations Officer at Montmorency-Eltham RSL, very ably accompanied by Eltham College Student Lucas Shen playing the Last Post and Rouse on his trumpet.

Springtime in Melbourne presented one of her better performances, with sunshine, wind and showers all occurring during the short Service. Eltham Men’s Shed, who provide excellent assistance for our Services, set up marquees and seating for the guests, which was much appreciated on the day. The short, sharp downpour during the Ode of Remembrance thankfully abated in time for the Laying of Wreaths. The Service concluded with a 1938 recording of Waltzing Matilda, the unofficial national anthem of World War I, following by the actual National Anthem before we all enjoyed morning tea in the sunshine.

2026 will be a special year for the Memorial Tower, as we will commemorate 100 years since the unveiling of the Tower by Governor General Lord Stonehaven on 11 November 1926. A re-dedication of the Tower is being planned, to be incorporated into the Remembrance Day Service on Wednesday 11 November 2026.



Photo: Jean Verso

NEW BELL APPEAL KANGAROO GROUND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We appreciate the community's concern about the loss of our bell. We have purchased a second-hand cast steel bell made by Naylor and Vickers of Sheffield, England, to replace it. We do not know its exact age or provenance, but it was made in the mid-19th century and is possibly one of a batch that were sold at auction in Melbourne on 29 April 1856.

If you would like to help us pay for the bell and its installation, you may:

- Make a direct deposit to the Church bank account, Westpac BSB 033-091 Account 192386. Please include "For the Bell" as a description. If you include your name, we will issue you with a receipt that can be collected at the Post Office.
- Make a cash or credit card donation by speaking to Ken King in the Post Office.



Photo: KG Presbyterian Church

Barry Anderson

WHERE DID THE NAME KANGAROO GROUND COME FROM?

We all know that Kangaroo Ground was so named because of the abundance of kangaroos, but that only explains the word *kangaroo*. Why the *ground*?



Photo: Dick Austin

If Kangaroo Ground was named by a British settler, I would expect it would have been named something like Kangaroo Hills or Kangaroo Hill. The *ground* confuses people. That is why we can always tell when someone doesn't know the place as they feel compelled to call it Kangaroo Grounds (or even worse, Kangaroo Flat).

Let's go back a step. The simple reason there was an abundance of kangaroos in the area is that the Wurundjeri wanted it like that. For centuries they had 'farmed' kangaroos here with annual burns to encourage grasses and remove undergrowth but leave undisturbed the huge Manna Gums for easy stalking. When the Wurundjeri wanted a feed of kangaroos, this was the place they could reliably get them.

Kangaroo Ground isn't a translation of the Wurundjeri name for Kangaroo Ground. Their name for central Kangaroo Ground was *Moor-rul* (good earth) and their name for the surrounding red box and stringybark country was *Nillum-bik* (not so good earth). But if asked for a description of central Kangaroo Ground, rather than the name, I think a Wurundjeri would have said something like *kangaroo country*. Note *country* is singular. Given no British settler was proficient in Woiwurrung and probably no Wurundjeri at the time was proficient in English, *kangaroo country* could have come out as *kangaroo ground*.

If I'm correct, it means the British settler who first used it as a descriptive name was someone who had been prepared to converse with the Wurundjeri and have enough trust to overcome the language barrier.

Dianne Edwards (*The Diamond Valley Story*) suggested it was James Donaldson, but I think that unlikely as he doesn't strike me as someone who was up for a chat with the Wurundjeri and, more specifically, he didn't use the name himself. In his will, written in 1854, he described himself as living at Kangaroo Hall near the Diamond Creek in the Parish of Nillumbik – a long-winded description that looks like he went out of his way to avoid using the name Kangaroo Ground.

Jack Bell, one of Kangaroo Ground's earliest historians, wrote in 1911 that he heard it was the Ryrie Brothers (of Yering Station, a pastoral run established in 1837). There are two things about the Ryries that make me think Jack was right. They were known for their ability to get on with the Wurundjeri (they named their station *Yering*, a Woiwurrung name, and they did nothing to help the mounted police at the Battle of Yering) and the access track between their station and Melbourne went through Kangaroo Ground.

Acceptance

The name Kangaroo Ground was used for the Donaldson pastoral run in 1840 and then the emerging town but only sporadically.

The Electoral Roll of 1850 for West Bourke lists the Kangaroo Ground landowners. Not one of them has the name Kangaroo Ground next to them. Most are listed as *Near Nillumbik* or *Near Nullumbik*, one is *Parish of Nillumbik*, one is *Kangaroo Land* and two are *Kangaroo Grove*.

Andrew Ross's first reference to Kangaroo Ground in his diary was in 1851 when he called it *Kangaroo*. A couple of weeks later he used the name *Kangaroo Ground*. Three days later it had already become *KG*. I can't find any births, deaths and marriages registered as at Kangaroo Ground prior to 1851, but I can for 1851.

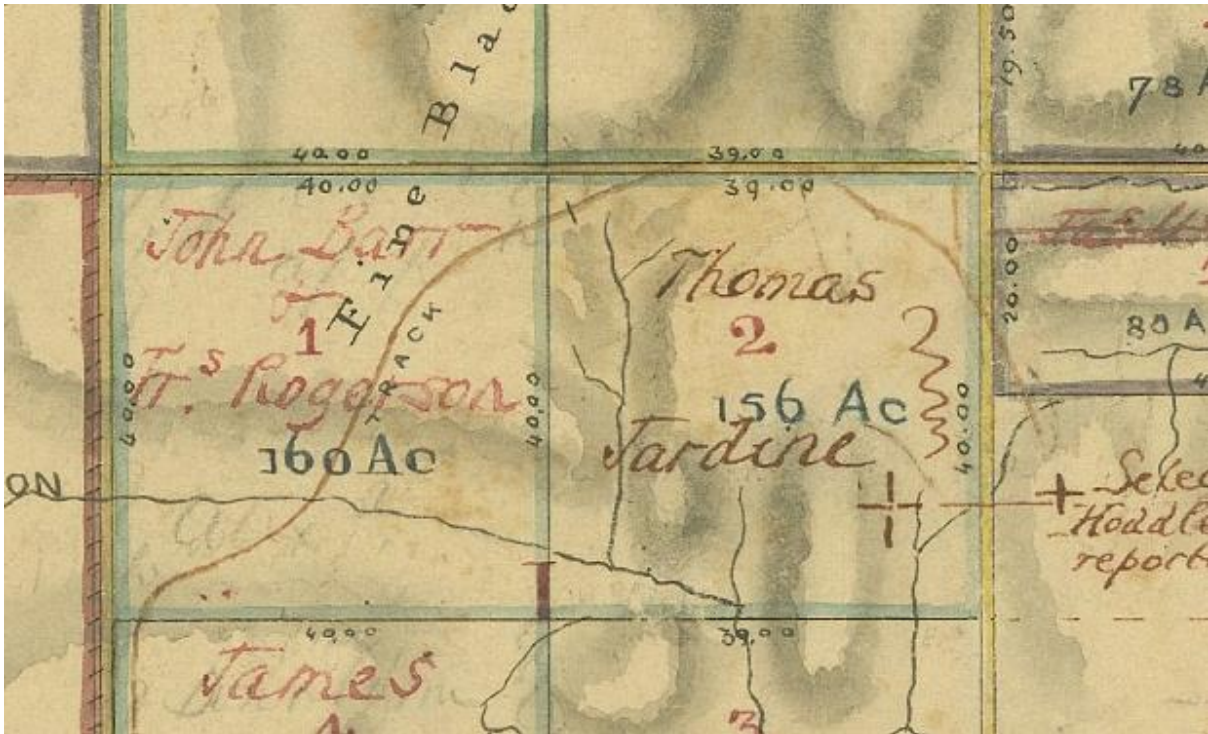


Figure 1: excerpt from 1848 Survey Map

Note the track marked on the map across the property bought by John Barr and Francis Rogerson in 1848. The track already existed and was soon replaced by the surveyed roads. To help get your bearings I've drawn the track on a current Google Map.

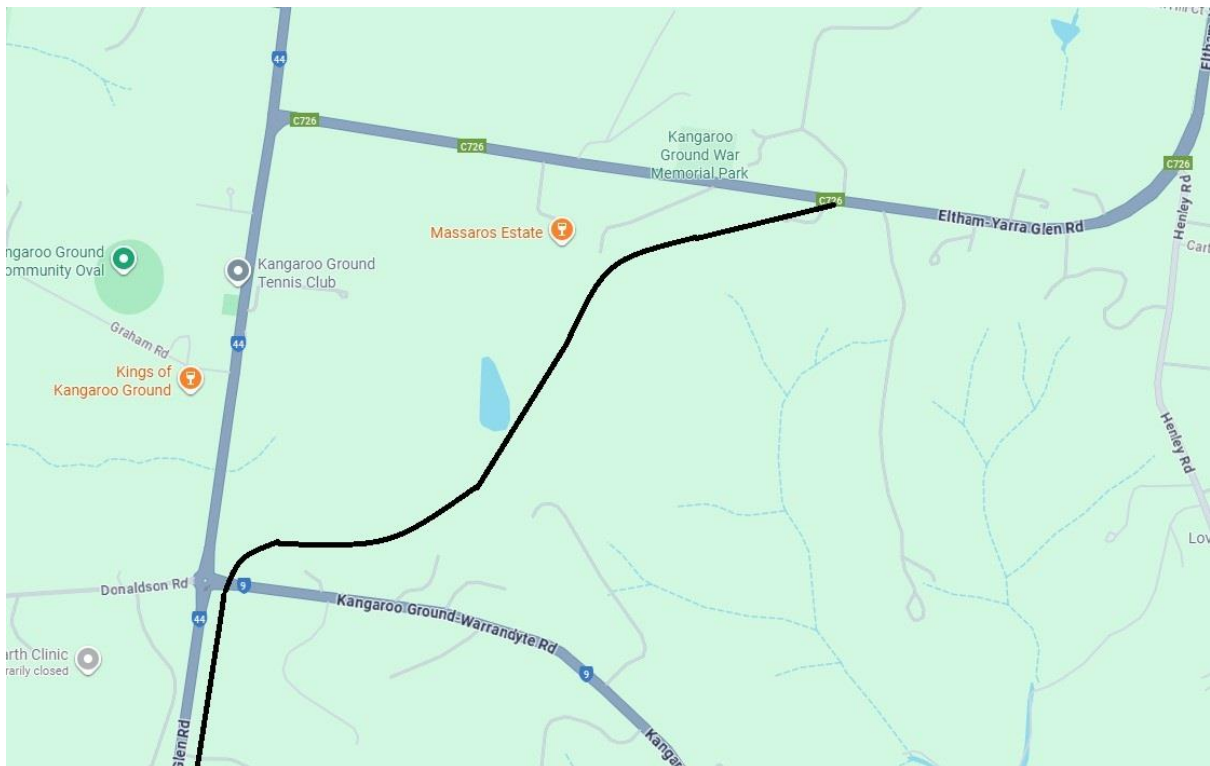


Figure 2: pre 1848 track to Yering Station (over current Google Map)

Conclusion

I think the description *kangaroo country* had been used by the Wurundjeri for centuries to describe (but not name) Kangaroo Ground. In the late 1830s one of the Ryrie brothers in discussion with a Wurundjeri heard or translated this as *kangaroo ground*. It was then used informally to name the Donaldson pastoral run and the associated area and it was formalised in 1851, although not universally.

Dick Austin

MILKING TIME IN THE 1950s

This is an account of how milking was carried out on my grandfather, George Robert Charlton's farm.

To give some context, George was the eighth of twelve surviving children of Robert George Charlton and Margaret Kirk. They had emigrated to Australia, he in 1854 from Northern Ireland and she from Scotland in 1853. They were married in Heidelberg, where they worked on land owned by John Donaldson. Margaret was responsible for feeding ten workmen and was paid ten shillings and sixpence a week for doing so. Three or four of their children were born in Heidelberg.

A disastrous flood in 1867 washed away their home and the family was rescued and swam out with only their horses left to them. This led to their move to Kangaroo Ground to *Cunis Nillen*, a 320-acre property just below the church. The land was owned by John Donaldson and George was born there in 1870. Robert farmed a portion of it as a tenant for 22 years, growing crops and hay. (Donaldson had donated part of the land for the church/school and more eventually went for the township). Robert was also a respected member of the church and its treasurer for many years.

As a 14-year-old, George used to regularly drive wagon-loads of hay and firewood to sell in Heidelberg. He moved with his two older brothers and other relatives to take up land in the Stony Creek area of South Gippsland in 1889 when he was 19 and his parents and other family members followed in 1896. Prior to that, the family's eldest daughter, Elizabeth, had married John Bell Jnr of *Violet Bank*, the first marriage in the current church. Their third daughter, Agnes, had become a teacher at the Kangaroo Ground School and they'd laid to rest their second son, William, in the Kangaroo Ground Cemetery. George settled at Grassy Spur near Stony Creek and established a successful dairy farm there.

The life of a dairy farmer was hard in the 1950s, with the responsibility of a milking herd leaving little time for leisure. Milking took place twice a day, starting about 6am and again at 4pm. I imagine what happened on my grandparents' property in South Gippsland would have been common for the time. The majority of the work then was done by my two bachelor uncles, but my Grandpa, George Charlton, assisted them until well into his eighties.

The milking shed was a hive of activity and the cows, all Jerseys, would be moving about in the holding yard, mooing occasionally, with the regular clack-chuff, clack-chuff of the milking machine a constant noise. At one end of the shed was a small room where the large stainless-steel vat that collected the milk sat on a stand with the cream separator underneath. Outside the little room was a sink and a wood-fired water heater. A passage alongside this room went through to the barn where the remainder of the year's pumpkin crop was nestled on hay bales stacked adjacent to the area where the milking machinery was housed. The barn also housed a chaff cutter and an old Lister engine that used to provide the power for the milking machine, but electricity had come to the



George Charlton in the milking shed

district by the 1950s, so it was no longer used.

The leather belts and wooden pulleys that drove the milking machinery were uncovered and spinning on the wall of the passageway to the barn. We children were always warned to keep well away from them and regaled with stories of the terrible injuries suffered by other children who had been caught in such things elsewhere. Needless to say, if we had to pass while the milking machine was going, we made ourselves as thin as possible.

Further along was the ten-bail milking shed. Each cow would enter in turn, put her head through a gap in the rails at the head of the bail to be fastened there by a rail that swung across behind her ears and was locked in place by a horizontal piece at the top. Cows were able to graze from a trough of straw while being milked. Most preferred to just chew their cud. Cow-height walls separated each twin stall. The cow's near side hind leg was fastened to this wall with an ankle hook and chain and her tail tassel was hooked over a nail.

There were several three-legged stools situated conveniently around the shed for the low jobs associated with milking. These stools were very rustic, being made from a split shingle for the seat with rough natural branches set in for the legs. All were highly polished from decades of buffing from the seats of rough drill trousers. They were usually tucked into the shed's woodwork when not in use.

Each stall had a metal bucket (possibly an old nail drum) of hot water and a coarse cloth for washing udders. That done, the vacuum was turned on and the cups placed on the cow's teats. The cows knew the procedures and were patient, with few trying to kick the cups off. Young cows were most likely to misbehave, particularly if accidentally left until last, as they relied on the old girls to show them what to expect. After each cow was milked, it was unfastened and would calmly stroll to a race at the far end of the shed that led out to the paddock. After one left, the holding yard gate would be opened and another would be ushered through and into the vacant stall. They usually found their way by themselves.

Milking complete, a large jug of whole milk would be set aside for Grandpa to take down to the house. A layer of yellow cream about 2 cm thick would harden on this by lunch time and would be scooped off to dollop on whatever Grandma had prepared for dessert. Enough buckets of whole milk would also be put to one side to feed any calves. The rest was separated into cream for the butter factory and skim milk for the pigs. The cream was poured into cans that were carried through a side yard to be put into a tiny shed called the dairy, where they were kept cool until it was time to put them out on the stand to await collection by the truck from the butter factory. I think the truck came a couple of mornings each week.

Once the last cow had left the milking shed, the clean-up started. All the milking equipment had to be washed, the shed hosed out and the concreted holding yard scraped out and hosed. After this, the men went down to the house to enjoy a substantial breakfast at 9am.

After breakfast, any remaining cleaning of the milking equipment would be done. There were many little stainless-steel discs inside the cream separator, so it was quite a task to take it apart and clean all the nooks and crannies. The cream that stayed in the crevices was nearly as thick as butter and needed to be scraped off. The scraps of it were always put into an old cream can lid for the benefit of the farm's collection of cats and any dog game enough to push in amongst them.

Between milkings, there were many tasks to occupy everybody. Grandpa fed the chooks and maintained Grandma's flower garden and worked his own magnificent vegetable garden, which supplied all the household needs. Grandma cooked a midday roast every day and cleaned for everybody. Our uncles fed the pigs and calves, mended fences, dug out rabbit warrens, checked the pump on the dam or welded broken machinery. There was always something to be done.

When afternoon tea was over around 4pm, it would be time to get the cows in. If they'd spent the day in a nearby paddock, they'd make their own way up to the shed and be bunched around the gate to the holding yard, waiting to be let in. If they were further away, a gate would need to be opened, so one of our uncles would take his horse to do this.

The evening milking was a repeat of the morning's and the washing up would be done in the dark in winter. Many an evening we'd be there in the shed while this happened, the electric light transforming the drops of light drizzle just beyond the shed's roofline into a misty waterfall against the dark backdrop of night. We'd make our way back to the house for tea around 7 pm.

Jenny Anderson

(When I moved to Kangaroo Ground in 1979, my daily encounters at the store were with the friendly McNamara family. Some years later, when “Kangaroo Ground The Highland Taken” listed the store proprietors, the McNamaras were inadvertently omitted. Kevin and Helen McNamara are sadly no longer with us, but I was recently in contact with Amanda Cleeland, the eldest daughter, who has jotted down some of her memories; thereby writing the McNamaras back into the long history of the store. Alan Bluhm)

STORE GIRL

Our family, the McNamaras, lived and worked at the Kangaroo Ground General Store from 1974 until about 1982. There were our parents, Kevin and Helen, myself and two sisters – Julie and Michelle.

This 1968 photo is also exactly how it looked during our time there.

Our residence occupied the north side of the building, accessed by a corridor with a front door to the left of the store entry. The store has long since taken over this space and new living quarters built at the rear, but as you sit and sip your coffee you can still see traces on the ceiling of where our corridor and bedrooms were.

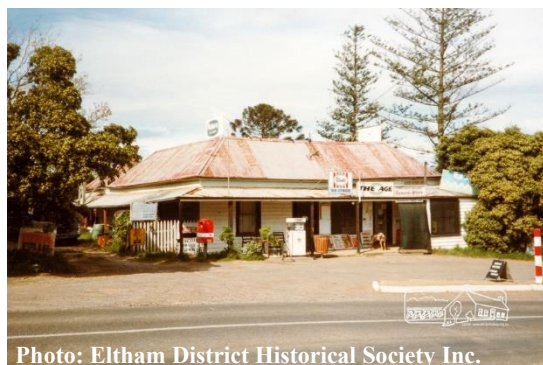


Photo: Eltham District Historical Society Inc.

My sisters and I slept in the front bedroom, and Mum and Dad in the next one. The lounge and kitchen at rear were only joined to the shop by a tin roof and shade mesh. The lounge fireplace was covered over but still there. We had an old enamel briquette heater; no other heating.

In those days the post office was at the back of the store. Later, after we left, it was moved to what had once been my bedroom!

In the kitchen was the other chimney area, behind a door, where the chip heater was, for the hot water. In photos you can see the header tank for it on top of the roof.

There was a cellar under the floor on the south side, which was often full of water up to our calves, but usually dry in Summer.

The two Norfolk Island Pines and one Monkey Puzzle tree were already very big. We were told by someone that they had been planted by Royal Botanic Gardens director Ferdinand von Mueller. There was a well-established bougainvillea, a loquat plum, oranges and a fig tree. The entire block was surrounded by large pittosporums, hawthorn bushes and some blackberries too!

A lot of Kangaroo Ground was lined by hawthorn hedges, and gang gangs in large numbers would hang out in the bushes. You could ride your horse right past them quite close and they would just observe you as you passed.

We knew everyone by name, as they came to pick up their mail and supplies. Tom Ellis, I was told by Dad, was a retired policeman from Melbourne. It was implied that he had seen the likes of Squizzy Taylor. He lived without power or running water in an old weatherboard shack on top of the hill past the current fire station.

I often babysat for Malcolm White in Henley Road, and looked after peoples' animals if they were away.

Mr and Mrs Guy lived where Kings Winery and post office is now. They bred dachshunds.



My horse Trigger and me in our driveway at the store

My sisters and I all had horses, which we kept at Mr Guy's, The Fishers and in a paddock owned by Wycliffe behind the school. The Pony Club was originally in a paddock behind the primary school, then it moved to a paddock at the telephone exchange, before its current location opposite where Mr Ellis's shack was.

We loved the store. It was home. It was tough and isolated, but charming and safe. We felt part of a community. We knew nearly everyone, where each lived, and what they did. And they all knew us.

During our time at the store the building was owned by Lloyd Stewart. Dad tried to buy it from him but he would not sell. So that's why we left. None of us wanted to go, but the rent was unreasonable. I believe Lloyd died not long after we moved. It's a shame we didn't stay a bit longer.

Even though we went on to study at universities and raise families we were always thankful for our time at KG. Even today all of us miss KG and the wonderful days there!

Amanda Cleeland

FACES OF THE CFA



Photo: CFA Brigade Magazine

KATE LAMBLE, KANGAROO GROUND FIRE BRIGADE, DISTRICT 14

What is your CFA role?

I'm the 2nd lieutenant. In the past I've been 1st lieutenant and the brigade training officer. I am also a District 14 driving instructor and trainer and assessor for General Firefighter, low structure and BA.

Why did you join?

I had grown up in a volunteer family with dad being a volunteer ambulance officer in the 80s. In those days the 'special phone' would ring and dad would race off and come back with lots of stories. I remember mum and dad doing a lot of bushfire preparation when I was a child, and my uncle was on summer crew with the then Forestry Commission. Then as I was finishing my Masters and wondering

what I would do with my spare time, we were faced with the 2005 bushfires in Gippsland. That was my trigger to join CFA and I have never regretted it. I remember my dad saying to me when I joined: don't get on the back of a truck with a bad driver. He loved it when I got my truck licence.

Who have been your mentors in CFA?

There are too many to mention but those that stand out for me are Di Simmons from Christmas Hills for being amazing and showing me I could aspire to any role in CFA, and Steve Riley and Clem Egan at Eltham for teaching me so much. Not to forget Pete Grant at Kangaroo Ground and Lindsay McHugh from District 14 driving, for believing in me. Many other volunteers and career staff have also been mentors and they will know who they are.

What incident has had the greatest impact on you?

It probably goes without saying - Black Saturday. I was still a reasonably new firefighter and it had a profound impact on me. It taught me that you can't control much in those situations and that situational awareness and crew safety are paramount. I was on the Eltham brigade truck that responded into Kinglake West just after the initial fire front went through. I remember driving up from Whittlesea past the first burnt-out car and thinking the occupants were lucky to get out. When we passed a third burnt out car on that small stretch of road, I was hit with the reality that not everyone might have survived. That night was a steep learning curve.

The highlight was rescuing a scared and slightly burned dog who I handed to a police officer. Thankfully, the dog was reunited with its owner. Many other incidents have had an impact on me. I love trying to learn something from every incident I attend.

What have been the highlights of your time in CFA?

Becoming a driver educator has to be one of my biggest achievements. I never believed in my wildest dreams I would actually drive a fire truck, let alone teach others. Being an educator and watching others develop is such a privilege, especially those I've known since Juniors. The connections and long-lasting friendships that develop between members is also one of my biggest highlights. There is truth in the saying that CFA is family and to work alongside people you know and respect is one of my favourite things, whether at local calls, training or on strike teams. Having been a part of two fabulous brigades in a great group (Nillumbik) also helps.

How do you motivate your brigade members?

By doing. Not standing back and letting someone else do it. I love teaching and mentoring newer members and showing them what they are capable of. I also like to have a bit of fun and I think that helps. Doing things the right way is easy when you have a great group of people with you.

What lessons are you keen to pass onto other members?

CFA does not have to consume you. If you want longevity don't say yes to everything! Pick and choose as there are endless ways to be involved. In turn, CFA can be a great source of stability when other parts of your life are a bit rubbish. For a time many years ago, CFA was the only constant I had. Also, you get out of CFA what you put in. You can dare to dream but always be prepared to hang off the end of a hose. That's fundamentally why we joined.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

As a full-time working mum, my spare time is spent hanging out with my special people, my annual camping trip with friends, gardening and occasionally sewing.

Source: BRIGADE MAGAZINE August 2025

MEMENTO OF KANGAROO GROUND ARRIVES AT THE FINAL RESTING PLACE OF ANDREW ROSS

Regular readers of the Chronicle may recall in the last edition we featured a story on the famous oak trees of Kangaroo Ground - and the beautiful cyanotype picture made of a leaf that fell from the Donaldson tree, and the epic journey ahead of it.

The picture was made by Bundoora resident June Wills who, with husband Trevor, was fascinated to learn of the tree's history, particularly as Trevor has family links to the Donaldsons. The heritage listed tree, growing on Donaldson Road, sprouted from an acorn collected by John Donaldson in Windsor Great Park, England, back in 1857.

With a trip to the UK already planned, June and Trevor decided to take the cyanotype print with them in the hope they would be able to leave it on the grave of Andrew Ross.

His final resting place was believed to be in the graveyard of St. Mark's Anglican Church in Highcliffe, near Bournemouth but its exact location was unknown.

Undaunted, after landing in the UK in late October, June and Trevor shook off the jetlag and made their way to St. Mark's, where they checked along the headstones until they found the resting place of Ross and his wife, Mary Ann Brimmer.

Taking time out of their holiday to report the news to the Andrew Ross Museum, liaise over wording to go on the cyanotype print and send lots of photos, June wrote: 'Trevor and I found Andrew Ross's headstone. It's in the main church graveyard only a metre or so from the church wall.

It's a really lovely old graveyard with tall oak trees with lots of golden leaves carpeting the ground. There were also mass wild plantings of Cyclamen plants. The English know it by the common name, sowbread.

'We decorated around the headstone with oak leaves and then placed my framed cyanotype'.



June decorated the grave site with local golden Autumnal oak leaves after placing the cyanotype of the Donaldson leaf from Kangaroo Ground

'I have collected some oak leaves from the graveyard to make another cyanotype from there'.



The cyanotype print left on the grave of Andrew and Mary Ann Ross

'Trevor is going to email the church to let them know, perhaps they may want to save and preserve the cyanotype for a connected history we've helped to further.'

Trevor did email the church, giving further information on both the Donaldson family pioneers who settled in Australia and also the history of Andrew Ross and his importance to Kangaroo Ground. St. Mark's parish administrator replied, saying:

'Thank you for your email and information about Andrew Ross. We had no idea of this history so thank you for sharing. We have retrieved the picture for safekeeping and I have asked the Church Wardens where we should store for safekeeping.'



The wild plantings of Cyclamen carpeting the graveyard.



Trevor standing by the grave of Andrew and Mary Anne Ross

The inscription on the headstone reads:

**In Memoriam
Andrew Ross
Late of Gardenholm, Dumfries. N.B.
And of Evelyn Colony of Victoria
Died August 14th 1896
Aged 82 years
And of
Mary Ann, his wife
Who is also laid to rest at this place
The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God. Wisdom 111.1**

Jane Cook

Photos for this article: Trevor & June Wills

WHO WE ARE AND HOW TO CONTACT US

Museum Board Members	
Patron:	Laurie Murray
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Vice Chairperson:	David Sharpe
Minute Secretary	Carol Leeson
Treasurer:	Rob Shackleton
General Committee	Anna Pelling Robert Thornton Jane Cook Robyn Reed
Office Assistant	Ben Banner

The Museum is open every Thursday 10.00 am – 12 noon
and 2 pm – 4 pm on the first Sunday of every month or by appointment
Supported by Nillumbik Shire Council and Kangaroo Ground Primary School



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