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KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the
ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC

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Photo: Emma Rush, Rushwood Photographic

Ingrid Crichton on Inspector Kelly at the Royal Melbourne Show

INSPECTOR KELLY IN KANGAROO GROUND

Many interesting characters have lived in this area. Including Inspector Kelly, a Victoria Police *horse*!

Kelly was bred by Mounted Branch, and had a distinguished career as a police trooper. However, after a number of years he was kicked out of the Force for bad behaviour! But he was successful in a number of other jobs and adventures, and eventually spent a happy retirement in Kangaroo Ground, with me and my partner John.

Many locals who use Menzies Road to get to Warrandyte might have noticed a large horse being worked on a small riding arena, quite close to the road. Through the trees, they may have glimpsed an imposingly tall, (17.2 hands) “white” gelding, with legs like tree trunks, and an uncommonly big head. (Horse people use the term “grey” for a white horse, as such a horse is almost always born a “colour” {our Kelly was a gangly *chestnut* baby!}, but soon lose their foal coat, and become steel grey, which slowly lightens to white as the horse ages.)

But belying his impressive presence, Kelly was the classic gentle giant, and a very sensitive soul. He served honourably in the Mounties for many years, but the pressures and dangers of his job gradually accumulated. Eventually, he became so anxious that he couldn’t be relied on to be a calm, obedient trooper.

But a sacked police horse is still a valuable animal for a more ‘normal’ civilian life. Kelly went on to have a wonderful new career as a competition horse with Research local, Ingrid Crichton. Ingrid also took him foxhunting with the Yarra Glen and Lilydale Hunt Club, and won blue ribbons at the Royal Melbourne Show.



Ingrid Crichton riding Kelly (centre) on their way to winning the blue ribbon in the prestigious Hunter Trios Event at the Royal Melbourne Show

When my own mare was injured and had to be spelled for a while, Ingrid lent Kelly to me to ride. But basically, I never gave him back!

Initially Kelly was a wonderful “schoolmaster” for me. That is, he was more educated than I was at that stage, so he taught me the feel of riding some of the higher movements of dressage. Later, Diana Bassett-Smith had regular rides on him. Many people will know Diana was active in the Andrew Ross Museum, and was heavily involved in many other community groups. She founded both the Eltham and Kangaroo Ground Pony Clubs. She was in her 80s at the time of her sessions on Kelly, and had great joy in reliving earlier memories of ranging over the district on horseback, when much younger.

Once I was back on my mare, my partner (on Kelly) and I would ride out along Menzies Road. Again, long-time locals might remember seeing two big grey horses, initially thinking we were cops on patrol, and wondering what we were doing on such a quiet trail on a Sunday morning! John and I both wore high viz vests that closely resembled those of Victoria Police. On first seeing us, cars would almost screech to a respectful stop behind us!

But now, alas, about 20 years later, it seems the high viz vests have lost their power to keep us all safe. I still wear one when I ride 'out', but many drivers fail to slow down at all. It seems that everyone is in a furious hurry, and hardly see a horse near the road, let alone consider the potential dangers posed by an animal hard-wired to bolt away at the first sign of trouble.

A couple of times a week Terry Wallace, the ex-footballer and coach from Hawthorn, Richmond and Footscray/Western Bulldogs used to jog past Kelly and me on the arena. He ran with two dogs, and always gave a cheery wave. But Wallace no longer runs this route. Unlike the traffic, perhaps *he* has slowed down a little! I sometimes see him out walking up the hill near the KG Tower.

Over his lifetime, Kelly also saw a growing appreciation of animal sentience, and moves to protect their welfare. The use of animals in circuses has been banned in many jurisdictions, and some people believe horses (and dogs) should no longer be part of the racing industry. One local ex-copper now believes horses should not even be used as working creatures in Mounted Branch. Participation in foxhunting in Australia has dramatically declined. Evidence is emerging of shocking horse abuse at even Olympic level competition, and more ethical training methods are being demanded. Knowledge is also increasing of better horse husbandry; equines have evolved needs for a herd, low grade feed, and constant movement.

Kelly certainly had "friends, forage and freedom" in his retirement. He had three mares to supervise, and about 18 acres of varied terrain, where he was free to roam. He could always find something interesting to browse and chew, a shady tree on a hot day, or a sheltered slope in a winter wind.

Eventually, I wrote a book to record his interesting and varied life, and what we had learned together. Kelly went over the Rainbow Bridge some years ago, but my love of equines and riding continues. I can still be seen with a horse, most mornings on that little arena.



Shan Shnookal is pictured here with her book, Inspector Kelly, the Life and Lessons of a Police Trooper. There is a drawing of Kelly on the cover. Another of Shan's horses, Looli, is looking on. Looli has been taught to smile on cue. The book is out of print, but is available at many local libraries. Borrow the book to learn more about Kelly's life.

Shan Shnookal

REFLECTIONS ON THE 2026 FIRE SEASON

I see my role within the brigade as assisting our community, and others, whenever the call comes. This season has been a whirlwind of deployments, often as part of a strike team (typically five appliances with five crew each, supported by a Field Control Vehicle).

My first strike team this year was to a deliberately lit fire in **Wollert** in early January. Dealing with burning building and plant material, our crew worked to cool the area while navigating heavy machinery. It was a tight, busy scene; we had to be incredibly mindful of dozers pushing material and covering it with soil. After a few hours of suppression, we moved into a relay, delivering water from a source several kilometres away.

Soon after, we turned out to a grass fire along the **Hume Highway in Wallan** for blacking out, before being deployed to **Harcourt**. This was two days after an "extreme" danger day, the scale of loss was huge. We drove past untouched bushland only to find apple orchards and homes completely destroyed. On this deployment, I stepped into the role of Strike Team Leader's Assistant/Scribe, recording important information in the logbook and sharing the driving.

Australia Day was a long, 40-degree slog. We rendezvoused at Seymour before being tasked to **Highlands** an area already 80% burnt out, in the KG tanker. We spent the day patrolling and blacking out, but the afternoon shifted gears into a running grass fire in a farmer's paddock.

It turned out to be the last unburnt paddock for a local CFA member who had already lost two houses and 100 head of stock on January 9th. He was incredibly appreciative, and a message shared with the brigade by a member on the truck later that night really captured why we do this. "I'll admit, I didn't initially want to head out that day, I had emails to catch up on prior to returning to work Tuesday and chores at home, but the sense of achievement in making a difference for someone doing it so tough and lost so much made it all worth it."

I finished the season with one more stint in Highlands as the Strike Team Leader's driver. It was a great opportunity to meet some locals and continuing to patrol the area. Let's hope the season is now behind us.

Jen Fidler
Kangaroo Ground Fire Brigade





Fire fighters from the Nillumbik group at Harcourt attacking the fire in public land where it met private property. We kept it at bay until air support took over.



BLUEPRINTS OF HISTORIC OAKS FROM KANGAROO GROUND TO THE UK RESTING PLACE OF ANDREW ROSS

A new display is ready to be exhibited at the museum, featuring beautiful handmade cyanotype prints of leaves from the area's historic oaks – along with a very special memento from the graveside of Andrew Ross.

In the last couple of editions of the Chronicle we have featured the story of Bundoora couple June and Trevor Wills who came across the Donaldson Oak whilst walking in Kangaroo Ground. Fascinated to learn of the tree's history, and discovering Trevor's family link to the Donaldson family, June decided to immortalise leaves from the tree using the cyanotype technique. Developed in the 19th century, it is a camera-less photographic printing process using a light-sensitive iron salt solution that produces cyan blue prints using UV light, typically just sunlight.

Delving deeper into the history of the Donaldson family June and Trevor visited the Andrew Ross Museum and were fascinated to learn of the area's other famous oak trees – all believed to be descended from acorns collected by John Donaldson on a trip to Windsor Great Park in England in 1857. With an upcoming trip to the UK already planned, June and Trevor decided to turn detective whilst there and track down the grave of Andrew Ross so that they could pay their respects and leave a print of the Donaldson Oak leaves there.

Not only did they succeed in their mission, tracking down the grave to a beautiful spot in the cemetery of St. Mark's Anglican Church in Highcliffe, near Bournemouth, but to their delight they discovered beautiful oak trees growing all around. June tended the grave and decorated it with the cyanotype print and also golden leaves from the Autumnal oaks. She also tucked a few leaves away, ready to commemorate in a print she could give to the museum. June and Trevor also contacted the church which



June and Trevor with the prints



Cyanotypes ready for exhibition

agreed to safeguard the cyanotype print, along with information supplied on Andrew Ross and the Donaldson family.

Just before Christmas June and Trevor returned to the museum to present us with five beautiful cyanotype prints. These were made from leaves and sometimes flowers from the following trees:

- Donaldson Oak on Donaldson Road, Kangaroo Ground;
- Wippell Oak which stands outside the CFA building on St. Andrew's Road, Kangaroo Ground;
- Stevenson Oak, on the nature reserve off Calwell Road, Kangaroo Ground;
- Ivanhoe Oak, grown by the Donaldson family at their home in Ivanhoe, which now forms part of the Donaldson Reserve; and
- leaves from an oak by the grave of Andrew Ross and his wife, Mary Ann Brimmer, in St. Mark's Anglican Church graveyard, Highcliffe, UK.

All these prints now feature in the new display, along with a photo of June tending to the grave, and a few of the preserved graveyard oak leaves.

Many thanks to June and Trevor for their wonderful detective work, for the stunning cyanotype prints and for the photos and link to the peaceful resting place of Andrew Ross, Kangaroo Ground's first school teacher, and his wife Mary Ann.

Jane Cook

AU REVOIR AND THANK YOU!

Over the last year the museum has been fortunate to have the volunteer services of Ben Banner. Diligent, focussed and very quick to learn, Ben has completed a range of clerical tasks, including the scanning of a huge number of documents and the in-depth and very detailed audit of museum exhibits.

Ben has also been involved with the museum's volunteering days at the Diamond Creek Rotary Tram Café, and attended committee meetings.

Always with a smile and a willing can-do attitude, Ben has become a much-valued member of the Andrew Ross team. Now it's time for Ben to become a full-time student in pursuit of a career in education.



Ben at work in the museum

We wish you well Ben, and would love to see you again if you find you have any spare time in the future. So we won't say goodbye, just **Au Revoir and Good Luck** in all you do.

A MINI ANTIQUES ROADSHOW AT CHRISTMAS HILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

On Wednesday 18 February, Carol, Jane and myself carefully wrapped some well-chosen artifacts from the museum and transported them to Christmas Hills Primary School for an “olden days” presentation.

We laid out twenty items on the classroom table, but had calculated that our allotted hour would only permit the discussion and demonstration of twelve treasures. Our table of antiques had the attention of the thirteen children sitting on the carpet, who make up the entire school.

We wanted to briefly highlight what life had once been like in Christmas Hills, so we started with a mention of the traditional owners of the land, the Wurundjeri people. Carol had brought along a “killer” boomerang. Although she was holding it up to talk about rather than throw, we told the children to be ready to duck in case she slipped!

Jane recounted the story of the naming of Christmas Hills. Shepherd David Christmas became hopelessly lost when coming out from Melbourne to start work with his new employer Joseph Stevenson, and was eventually guided to the right place by the sound of a cow bell. The children passed around a similar bell, and asked questions such as “Why did cows have bells?”

There was a brief gold rush in Christmas Hills in the mid-eighteen-hundreds. We had some quartz to show, with tiny gleaming veins of specks in it that might or might not be gold. One of the kids had been to a One Tree Hill Road mine with his dad.

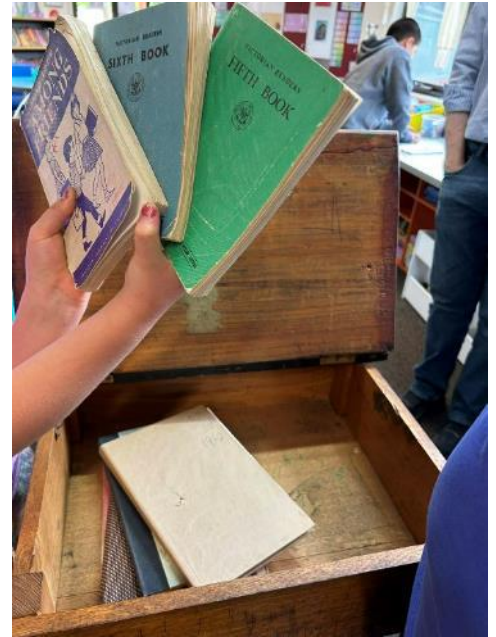
Electricity was not connected to Christmas Hills until 1960. We had a series of devices used by households in pre-electricity days: candles, candle-making moulds, charcoal irons, bellows for the fire, and laundry equipment.

Some of the children washed my woollen socks in a bucket of water using a long-handled laundry plunger, and then others put them through the wringer, which we held in position on a table in the classroom’s wet area. My socks have never been so clean!



Three children tried a quick sit at the one-person school desk we had brought along, and wrote their name using a dip pen using ink from the desk’s inkwell, while others wrote on slates with chalk. Lifting the lid on the desk revealed some school readers of the kind that children in bygone days had enjoyed for each

year at primary school, and binders containing copies of *The School Paper*, which were crammed full of interesting stuff, came out monthly and cost one penny.



Lastly, we looked at a device that enhanced the leisure time of early families: the box camera. Although primitive by today's standards, these relatively cheap cameras allowed ordinary people to take photos for the first time in history, after a long period of this having been the realm of professional photographers with their glass plate cameras. We looked at a glass plate negative and a large film negative, next to their processed prints.

Of course, we went way over time as the children passed around things, operated things, and talked about things. I don't think any of us really noticed. We were having such a stimulating time back in the olden days.

Thanks to school principal Maria Parks, and teachers Svetlana and Dani for helping us to set up, and quietly ensuring that participation was evenly spread in the course of the session. We loved being at this very active little school, with its thirteen interested children who were a delight to work with.

By taking the museum on the road there is always a risk of damage to the items it is our responsibility to preserve for future generations, so we're unlikely to make a habit of it, but on this occasion it all went smoothly, and a good time was had by all.

Alan Bluhm

KANGAROO GROUND TOWER



KG TENNIS CLUB ACED IT (THEN ICED IT)

On Sunday 8 February the Kangaroo Ground Tennis Club put on an Open Day, with a generous 50% off new memberships. All four courts were operating, and people could test their serve speed with a radar gun, play tennis or pickle ball, and pose with a giant tennis racquet.

Kangaroo Ground Fire Brigade volunteers were there with their well-equipped truck, ready to show interested people its modern fire-fighting technology.

The Andrew Ross Museum opened specially on the day, for those who wanted to delve into some of Kangaroo Ground's rich history.

Some lucky raffle winners took home a supply of local wines.

But the highlight for me was the BBQ and Spit Roast lunch put on by the tennis club crew. And to top it off, a drink from the bar and a tennis-themed cupcake.

If you would like more information about the club, contact president Tim Miller on 0414 391 102, vice president Shannon Halford on 0409 938 393, or email kgtc@live.com.au

Alan Bluhm



Top left: Shannon Halford seems to have an unfair advantage. Top right: KG Fire Brigade Captain Duncan Bucknell explains the truck's cabin-operated monitor to Emma and Jazz Leckenby. Bottom left: Players having a hit. Bottom right: Tennis-themed cupcakes.

KANGAROO GROUND CEMETERY PUBLIC EXTENSION

Many of you will have driven down Eltham-Yarra Glen Road and seen the work going on over the past year to develop the extension of the Kangaroo Ground Public Cemetery. The existing cemetery site which has been there since 1851 will be at capacity for burial plots in the next couple of years, so the development is important to ensure we are able to continue providing the community an important service.



Photo: Kangaroo Ground Cemetery Trust

Over the past 10 years, the cemetery has experienced rapid growth as other cemeteries in the area have reached capacity. We are also seeing families from all parts of Melbourne choosing Kangaroo Ground as it is a tranquil, natural bush setting whilst being less than 30kms from the CBD.

With the existing cemetery moving closer to capacity for burial sites, the cemetery Trust has been planning the extension for many years and the work you have been seeing in the past 12 months is the culmination of that planning. The new site which was formed from the realignment of Eltham Yarra Glen Road decades ago is triangular and does present several design challenges.

Unlike the existing cemetery, there are very few established trees, the proximity to Eltham-Yarra Glen Road presents a noise challenge and the changing needs of families and communities means the new site whilst drawing on the history of the existing site will look different. We also have the benefit of using contemporary cemetery design themes where the original cemetery was laid out in 1851 using the methods of the day. While slightly smaller in size, the new site will offer more burial and ashes plots than the existing site and it is expected it will extend the life of the cemetery by several decades.

The Trust engaged well-known local Landscape Designer, Robert Boyle to create the Masterplan which is on display at the cemetery. The first sections are expected to open around Easter this year. The weather creates a timing challenge so we will announce the opening closer to the date.

The theme is based around using predominantly native plantings with feature areas utilising more exotic species. The plant selection is intended to attract bird life and once established, be capable of surviving the variations in weather. You may have seen the construction of memorial walls using Coldstream rock. The varying colours in Coldstream rock is intended to be complimentary to the surrounding landscape whilst providing a place for families to memorialise their loved ones. Where possible, the Trust has

engaged local suppliers and contractors, and you will start to see the addition of beautiful artwork featuring renowned local artists such as Tim Read from Tread Sculptures.



Photo: Kangaroo Ground Cemetery Trust

Back in 1851, there were mainly Christian-based communities and religions where now in 2026, there are many different communities, cultures and religions and the Trust has worked hard to ensure the cemetery will be inclusive and welcoming to all. Cemeteries remain an important asset and our objective is to ensure what we are developing is something that is seen as contributing positively to the community.

We always welcome feedback which you can submit via our website at www.kangaroogroundcemetery.com.au.

*John Kelly
Manager
Kangaroo Ground Public Cemetery*

WHAT IS IT?

(Answer on page 17)



BEE KIND TO BEES

The “Bee Boat” Hack: A Simple Way to Save Thirsty Pollinators in Your Garden.

As summer temperatures rise, the pollinators in your garden work overtime. While most gardeners remember to plant nectar-rich flowers for food, many forget that bees, butterflies, and wasps also desperately need fresh water to survive. However, providing hydration isn't as simple as filling a bowl. Deep water sources like birdbaths or buckets can actually be dangerous traps where insects easily drown. The solution is a clever, floating hydration station often called a “bee boat.”

Why Bees Need a Life Raft

Bees are notoriously poor swimmers. If they land on the surface of a standard birdbath, the surface tension can trap them, leading to exhaustion and drowning. They require a safe, dry landing zone right at the water's level. A floating piece of wood serves as the perfect life raft. Because wood is porous, it wicks up moisture, allowing bees to land on the damp surface and drink safely without ever risking falling into the deep water.

Constructing Your Bee Boat

To build this, start with a durable, waterproof container. A small galvanized metal tub is an excellent choice because it is rust-resistant and holds enough water that you won't have to refill it every hour. The depth of the tub keeps the water cooler for longer, which is essential on hot days.

Next, find a piece of untreated lumber, such as a scrap of cedar or pine. It is vital that you avoid pressure-treated wood, which contains chemicals that can harm the insects you are trying to help. Cut the wood so it fits loosely inside your tub with plenty of room to float freely.

The Secret is in the Drill Holes

The most important modification to the wood is adding texture. Take a drill with a small bit and bore shallow holes all over the top face of the board. You do not need to drill all the way through. These partial holes will fill with water as the board floats, creating tiny, individual drinking pools. This mimics the shallow puddles found in nature, which are a bee's preferred water source.

Location and Maintenance

Place your new waterer directly in your garden beds, nestled among flowering plants. In effective setups, you will often see the tub placed right next to pollinator favourites like catmint or lavender. This allows the bees to stumble upon the water source while they are foraging, rather than having to search far and wide for it.

Finally, remember to refresh the water regularly. While the movement of the floating wood helps prevent some stagnation, you want to ensure the water stays clean and does not become a breeding ground for mosquitoes. A quick spray with the hose every couple of days is all it takes to keep your local pollinators happy and hydrated.



Article supplied by Rotary Club of Diamond Creek

WHERE WAS THE BUNKER/CRICHTON FARM?

Edward Bunker leased 80 acres from Thomas Armstrong in 1848, buying it seven years later. In 1946, almost a hundred years later, Edward's daughter Mary Crichton still owned nearly all of it and still lived there. Somehow this century-long chapter in Kangaroo Ground's history got lost so that in his Kangaroo Ground: The Highland Taken Mick Woiwod introduced the family and knew they owned 80 acres in central Kangaroo Ground, but he didn't know where it was.

I've gathered all the information used here from titles, land selection files, rate books and probate documents. The births, deaths and marriages and electoral roll information is from FindMyPast and Ancestry.

Late 1840s

At the 1848 land sale Thomas Armstrong bought the newly surveyed 160 acre Lot 3 Section 20 Parish of Nillumbik for £160. The property had a road easement on the eastern side, the Donaldson Section 19 property on the southern side (leased at the time to Alexander Innes) and Lot 4 Section 20 (Pretty Hill) on the western side, which was bought at the same sale by James Johnston.

Thomas Armstrong immediately leased the southern half of Lot 3 to Edward Bunker. At that time Edward and Ann were newly married and the family consisted of Ann (27) and Edward Bunker (24), along with Ann's two surviving children from a previous marriage, John Cummings (3) and Ellen Cummings (1). They had Mark Bunker at Kangaroo Ground in 1849.

1850s

In 1850 Thomas Armstrong formally subdivided the property into two 80 acres halves and sold the northern half to George Kirk, who owned it until 1855, when he sold it to William Mitton, Edward Bunker's brother-in-law. William Mitton had married Rachel King, Ann Bunker's sister, in 1845.

In 1855 Edward Bunker bought the property he had been renting for seven years from Thomas Armstrong.

By now Edward and Ann had also had James George (1851) and Edward Thomas (1852), followed by Sarah Jane (1855) and Mary Ann (1856).

In 1858 William Mitton mortgaged his property to his neighbour James Johnston.

A year later ownership was transferred to James Johnston and the Mitton family moved to Queenstown (St Andrews).



Figure 1: Lot 3 boundaries at 1850 over current Google Map.
Note the Kangaroo Ground – Wattle Glen Rd didn't yet exist.

I'll leave their story and the subsequent history of the northern half of Lot 3 here

In the late 1850s 40 of Edward Bunker's 80 acres was under cultivation.

What follows are some snapshots of the Bunkers during the next five decades:

1860s

- At 1860 Edward had three working horses, eight working bullocks and 16 other cattle.
- In Andrew Ross's diary of 1864 he records that Edward helped him brand calves. They were neighbours for Andrew was leasing the adjacent part of Section 19 as the school farm.
- At 1866 Edward was employed as a herdsman for the Kangaroo Ground Farmer's Common. The Government Gazettes published weekly lists of the livestock he had impounded.

1870s

- In 1870 Mark selected land in what is now Calwell Rd.
- Mark Bunker must have been ill during 1870 as Andrew Ross, briefly a lay Presbyterian preacher again, lists him in his diary as one of a number of people requiring his attendance.
- Mark Bunker married Bridget McGrath in 1872. I think she was born in London to Irish parents. They were both 23.
- Mary Bunker married Alex Crichton in 1874. Alex was born in Scotland and had migrated with his family when he was five. His family were at the Caledonia diggings and Alex was recorded as a Smiths Gully miner when he married Mary. He was 25 and she was 18. They then had Mary Ann Margaret (1875), Sarah Jane (Jinnie) (1876) and Margaret Younger (1878). Mary was born at Queenstown (presumably Smiths Gully) but all the others were born at Kangaroo Ground.
- At 1875 the house had five rooms.
- By 1875 Edward had selected two properties in what is now Menzies Rd.
- In 1875 Alex Crichton selected 20 acres adjacent to Edward's selections. In 1879 Alex applied for an adjoining 105 acres and was then awarded a licence for the entire 125 acres.
- Edward died in 1876 aged 52, recorded as a Kangaroo Ground farmer. He is buried at the Cemetery. His executors were James Andrew and E.H. Cameron.
- At Edward's death he had three properties which were valued at £722. He had three horses valued at £55, 13 cattle at £39, farming implements at £30 and furniture at £10. He owed £38 of which £11 was to Edward Weller for stores. Edward Bunker left his Lot 3 to Ann, then to Sarah if Ann died. Mark already had his own selection and Edward left his two selections to his sons James and Edward junior.
- By 1877 both Mark and Edward junior had moved to Collingwood and Fitzroy with their wives and were working as dairymen (i.e. milkmen). Mark was killed that year at Panton Hill during a visit from Collingwood. He is buried at Kangaroo Ground. His selection was valued at £90 and his furniture at £15, but he owed £129 so Bridget inherited a debt. Mark and Bridget had been married for five years and had no children. Bridget successfully applied to have Mark's selection licence transferred to her. She was supported by a letter from her employer, Sir Charles Gavin Duffy. Bridget remarried and owned and lived on the property until 1923, then she left it to her nieces.

1880s

- Alex and Mary Crichton had David (1880), Minnie (1883), Katie Florence (Florrie) (1885), Evelyn (1887) and Agnes (1889) during this decade.
- In 1881 Sarah Bunker married William John Taylor at her home. William was born at Eltham to Abraham Taylor and Ann McLelland. Sarah and William then lived at Eltham.
- The Rate Books of 1881-1882 list Alex Crichton as a carrier of Yarra River, so they were living on his selection.
- In 1884 Alex Crichton began leasing the family farm from his mother-in-law Ann Bunker. Ann still lived in the house.
- Ann Bunker died at home in 1886 of liver and kidney disease. She was 68. She is buried at Kangaroo Ground. She didn't own the property as Edward had only given her use of it in his will, and it now passed to her daughter Sarah Taylor, as specified in his will.

1890s

- In 1890 Alex Crichton bought the property from his sister-in-law Sarah Taylor. He had been leasing it for the previous six years. He sold his Menzies Rd property that year presumably to fund his purchase of Lot 3. Alex and Mary had their last child Elsie in 1891.
- Alex Crichton sold 2.5 acres at the south east corner of the property to Jack Weller. Jack was a blacksmith and he established his home and blacksmith business on this block.
- Jinnie Crichton married Edward Weller junior at Kangaroo Ground in 1895. She was 19 and he was 31.
- Alex Crichton died at Kangaroo Ground in 1899. He was only 50. Newspaper reports indicate he had been ill for some time with a painful illness. He is buried at Kangaroo Ground. His probate documents contain a description of the property: a 5-room slab and paling dwelling with a barn and outbuildings with 14 acres under fruit trees, 15 acres under hay and the rest scrub. He left the property to his wife Mary, then to David if Mary died. Mary, of course, was a Bunker so she was not just inheriting her husband's farm, but she was also inheriting her parents farm where she was born.

1900s

- David Crichton leased his mother's property from her from 1905. He was now 25. In 1910 the Business Directory listed him as a Kangaroo Ground farmer.
- In 1906 Minnie Crichton's sister Jinnie Weller died aged only 30. She died during or soon after childbirth, but the child, Edward Alexander, survived. The following year Minnie married Jinnie's ex-husband Edward Weller junior. Minnie was now 24.

1910s

- By 1912 the property was called *Daisy Bank*. It may have been named prior to this.
- In 1917 Mary Crichton sold land to the Shire of Eltham for the construction of the new road from Kangaroo Ground to Wattle Glen. The property was now divided down the middle, although Mary continued to own both parts. The property now measured 70 acres.
- David Crichton died in 1928 aged only 48. He had never married. He is buried at Kangaroo Ground. He was worth £1,509, but his main asset was the family farm, which was only his when his mother died. He left £150 to his nephew Edward Alexander Weller.
- In 1928 Edward Alexander Weller (Minnie's son) leased the *Daisy Bank* property from his grandmother. He was now 22. For the next six years he was recorded in the Electoral Roll as a Kangaroo Ground farmer.



Figure 2:
Mary Crichton in old age

CONCLUSION

Mary Crichton still owned the property when she died in 1946.

I can't explain why a family who lived near the centre of Kangaroo Ground for a century and left a legacy as much as any of the other families, left such a sketchy local memory. I hope this article moves them back to centre stage.

Dick Austin

THE SCRAPBOOKS OF JOY NESS

Longtime Kangaroo Ground resident Joy Ness kept scrapbooks from 1938 onwards, which her descendants have generously donated to the museum, and are available to read at the museum on request. They are a mix of newsletters of the church ladies' guild, fire brigade ladies' auxiliary, local historical societies, family memorabilia, and newspaper cuttings. We will feature snippets from Joy's scrapbooks from time to time in the Chronicle. In this issue we recall a Ladies' Guild story from 1973.

SMILE!

The Diamond Valley News of 13 March 1973 reported that seventeen members of the Kangaroo Ground Presbyterian Ladies' Guild had met at the home of their president, Mrs H Beavis with two important items on the agenda:

1. Clothing and household goods were to be brought to the meeting for delivery to an elderly citizens opportunity shop.
2. A photograph of the attending members – no doubt dressed in their finest for the occasion – would be taken and then sent to the Vietnamese girl whom the guild was sponsoring.

Four weeks later, the Diamond Valley News of 10 April revealed that the donated goods had indeed gone to the opportunity shop. However, the camera used to take the photo for the Vietnamese girl had inadvertently been bundled up with the goods. On enquiry, the op shop said the camera had been sold shortly after its arrival. As the DV News observed, if the film was developed, a stranger would have a photograph of seventeen smiling ladies!

ANSWER TO WHAT IS IT?



It's a boot jack, possibly from the early 1900s. Unlike the modern boot jack you may have outside your back door for removing gumboots and work boots, this one appears to have been designed to be used with more genteel boots inside the house. Like all boot jacks, one foot is placed on it to hold it down, and the boot heel of the other foot is placed in the "v" and the leg lifted. Small, lightweight and foldable, it could be stowed in a drawer or suitcase and retrieved at the end of the day to remove dress boots.

DO YOU HAVE KANGAROO GROUND MEMORABILIA, DOCUMENTS, PHOTOS OR STORIES?

Next time you declutter, if an item in that box for the op shop relates in some way to the history of Kangaroo Ground, we'd love you to consider checking with us to see if we could put it to good use on display or in our files.

Thank you to all the people who have donated items from their local family history to us. Rosalind Meadmore and daughters recently popped in to present us with a watercolour painting of the Kangaroo Ground Store, along with a photobook of the Werner family history.

This week, Amanda Cleeland (nee McNamara) handed over some documents relating to her family's tenure at the store and post office.

Perhaps a local story has been passed down through your family that would be of interest to others. We'd love to hear it.

As we're often reminded, *history starts today*, so items and stories don't necessarily have to be ancient. (But please don't leave items on our verandah. We need to appraise them and hear their story.)



WHO WE ARE AND HOW TO CONTACT US

Museum Board Members	
Patron:	Laurie Murray
Chairperson:	Alan Bluhm 0488 599 665 andrewrossmuseum@outlook.com
Vice Chairperson:	David Sharpe
Minute Secretary:	Carol Leeson
Treasurer:	Rob Shackleton
Chronicle:	Robyn Reed
General Committee:	Anna Pelling Robert Thornton Jane Cook Robyn Reed

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

