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KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the
 ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC

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Photo supplied by Kangaroo Ground Primary School

Ian Jones and his Grade 1 granddaughter with the giant pumpkin grown by the KG school children.

GIANT PUMPKIN



At Kangaroo Ground Primary School, we're lucky to have one of our wonderful past teachers, Ian Jones, look after our magnificent school vegetable garden. Throughout the year we have been watching the giant pumpkins grow, with the hope that one would grow big enough to carve out so we can have our traditional 'Preps in the pumpkin' photo shoot. We grow these pumpkins annually and enter them into the Biggest Pumpkin contest. This year, our school grew one of the biggest ones we've grown yet!

This year, Mr Jones went above and beyond, spending the holidays creating a golden carriage inspired by Cinderella's pumpkin carriage. Our Grade 1 and 2 students were involved in the carving process and also used their maths skills to measure the giant pumpkin.

Mr Jones put the pumpkin on the back of the carriage and the parents were invited to come and watch the show. All the Preps (and some teachers!) got to have a go riding the carriage around the basketball court, with one holding the reins and steering and one sitting inside the massive pumpkin on the back. Their Grade 6 buddies were put to work pulling the carriage! No one wanted to miss out, so our grade 5s and 6s even had a turn, as well as the kinder kids from Kangaroo Ground Pre-School.

Everyone had a lot of fun, and we hope to do it again next year. We are so grateful to Mr Jones for helping to keep our garden growing so beautifully and for building the amazing pumpkin carriage!

*By Eve, Amber, Willow & Penni
Grade 6 students at Kangaroo Ground Primary School*



Grade 1 student Billie-Mae with the pumpkin during its preparation for the pumpkin carriage.



Preps riding in style – hauled by their Grade 6 buddies

THIS MONTH - FIFTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO



In June 1969, Kangaroo Ground resident Bruce Ness was awarded a British Empire Medal in the annual Queen's Birthday Honours awards. He received a well-deserved letter of congratulation from the Governor, Sir Rohan Delacombe.

Bruce was a member of the Kangaroo Ground Fire Brigade since he was old enough to join, and both Bruce and wife Joy were active participants in community affairs.

TROUBLE IN PARADISE

Whenever I'm approaching Kangaroo Ground from any of its feeder roads, I'm instantly soothed by the beauty of the rolling hills on all sides. But some clippings in one of Joy Ness's scrapbooks record that Kangaroo Ground came within a whisker of looking very different.

In February 1960, six Kangaroo Ground landowners woke to find strangers on their properties; knocking pegs into their paddocks.

George and Noel Williams had a dairy farm just up the hill from Pitmans Corner. They called it "Nermone", which according to a book of Aboriginal names they had seen, means *beautiful pastures*. When Noel looked out of the window one morning to see her beautiful pastures being pegged without so much as a by your leave, she went out to ask what on earth was going on.

It turned out that two quarry mining companies had, between them, published notices of application for a mining lease on six individual Kangaroo Ground farming properties. Their intention was to mine for basalt, with open cut mines, over a period of up to fifteen years. The total area covered by the applications was a whopping 415 acres (168 hectares).

Most residents of Kangaroo Ground did not want to see their town turned into open cut mines, and girded their loins to defend it. Informal residents' meetings were held, and a groundswell voted to oppose it. Bruce Ness made the case that quarrying would be bad for farming, because animals would not do well where there was dust and noise. And the milk produced by local dairy farms would be spoiled.

Landowner Orwell Gepp said if quarrying went ahead it would ruin some of the richest and most scenic farming land near Melbourne.

Only one affected landowner did not oppose the applications: real estate agent and investor, Mr Keith Mann. "The companies have told me they will level out all the land and re-sow it when they are finished with it." He said. (*The Sun News-Pictorial* 29 February 1960.)

But others were not convinced, and some even suspected that the quarrying project was aimed at eventually releasing acres in the district for general subdivision. A petition with many names was submitted.

Eltham Council opposed the lease applications, and MLA Russell Stokes took the residents' objections to both the Minister for Mines and the Minister for Lands.

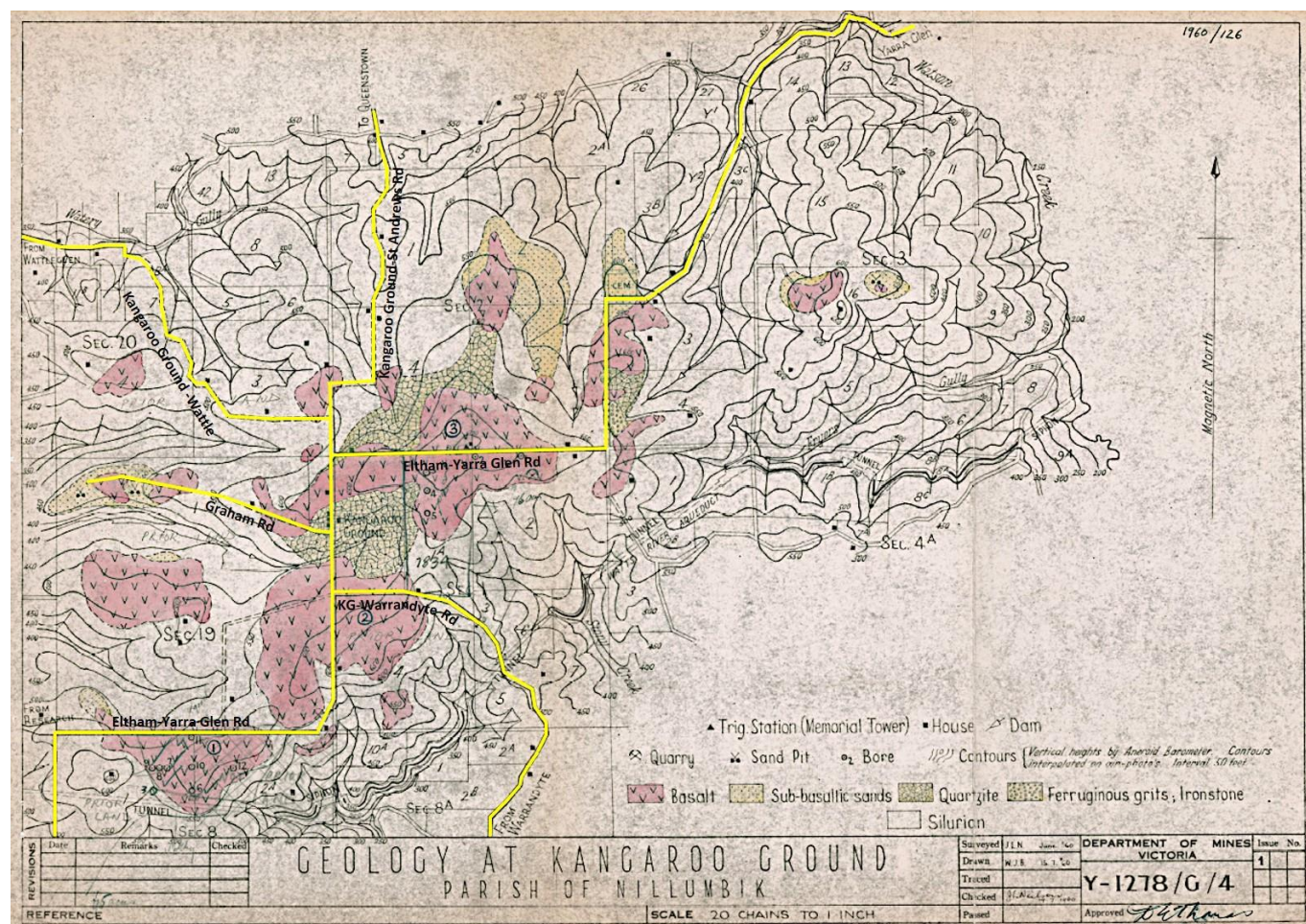
On 5 December 1960, geomorphologist John Neilson studied the geology of Kangaroo Ground, and wrote a paper describing his findings, titled *The Basalt of Kangaroo Ground*, mainly based on previous research by others, and the results of drilling in various areas. He considered that the smaller deposits were generally too small, too thin or too weathered for major quarrying, but the three largest areas, marked (1), (2), and (3) on the map below, warranted detailed drilling.

I was a little shocked to find that Garden Hill (on top of which the Kangaroo Ground Memorial Tower sits) was one of the prime drill sites.

However, John Neilson concluded that the Garden Hill basalt was too weathered to be of use. He thought a large area near where Eltham College now sits warranted further exploration by drilling, but said the chances of finding good stone were far from certain. He thought the area encompassing George and Noel Williams' property was worthy of drilling from its south-eastern edge where it was thickest.

Meanwhile, one of the two quarry owners involved, produced a report from geologist Eric Webb, which concluded: “It seems imperative that such a deposit of basalt, situated so advantageously, must be exploited. Such unworked deposits are no longer common.”

The Department of Mines Victoria 1960 map below, shows basalt areas in pink. I have added yellow highlighting and names to the roads to make areas easier to identify. (The Eltham-Yarra Glen Road has more recently been remodelled in a couple of places near the cemetery.)



Also in December, when the two mining companies appealed the refusal to grant them permits, Eltham Council brought out the big guns, and three Melbourne University experts testified in support of Council at the appeal hearing. Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Professor Sir Samuel Wadham, pointed out that the area was “of tremendous importance to the teaching of agriculture.” It was volcanic, and superior to the Western District due to better drainage. Significantly, he said that “all the talk in the world by quarrying interests about disguising operations would not alter the fact that if quarrying started it would become an eyesore. There were not only the holes in the ground, but the topsoil which would have to be moved onto other ground.”

Dr Ledger said that from a town planner’s perspective, the unique sweep of the countryside would be ruined no matter how the quarrying was undertaken. Dr Tattam talked about basalt deposits closer to Melbourne. Councillor Butler emphasised that theirs was not a mere short-term response. Council had implemented a long-term planning scheme for the whole of North Riding, and believed that Kangaroo Ground with its famous memorial tower “was something it held in sacred trust for the entire community.”

Neville Roennfeldt weighed in for the National Trust, expressing the view that “no one body of people has any right to sacrifice our national heritage, something that belongs to the whole of the people of Victoria.”

On 30 June 1961, Russell Stokes MLA brought the good news that at a meeting the previous evening, Minister for Local Government, Murray Porter, had refused to grant permits for quarrying at Kangaroo Ground, and the efforts of residents, Eltham Council and others, had been successful. And that seems to be where the matter ended, as Joy's scrapbook quarry clippings ran out at that point.

George Williams died in 2005, and nearly-ninety-one-year-old Noel has moved to Eltham, but here is a recent photo of the *beautiful pastures* they once looked out at. I'm so glad it didn't become a quarry.

Alan Bluhm



Views from George and Noel Williams' house. Their milking shed is in the foreground at right.

Thanks to current owners Dean and Martine Alexander for providing access for these photos.

WHAT IS IT?

(Answer on page 15)



WAS KANGAROO GROUND SCOTTISH?

There is an often-repeated assertion that Kangaroo Ground was nearly exclusively Scottish. I thought I'd test this by picking a year, 1850, and listing people by what variety of English they spoke. I'm assuming that people inherit their accent from the region where they are born, rather than from their parents, so people born in Australia would have an Australian accent. This is hard to demonstrate, although we know that the Australian accent emerged very quickly. I'm excluding people such as George Kirk who owned land at Kangaroo Ground but didn't live here. Of course, I might be missing people who lived here who I don't know about. Please let me know if you can think of anyone. So, if we could time travel to Kangaroo Ground in 1850 this is what it would sound like.

The most common single accent was Australian English with 20 speakers:

- Anderson: Willie (lived with the Thomsons after his mother Ellen died)
- Barr: William, Janet junior, Mary and John junior
- Bell: (Nicholes, Agnes, William and Jack (the children of John and Janet)
- Bunker/Cummings: Edward Bunker, John Cummings, Ellen Cummings and Mark Bunker
- Stevenson: David, Jane, Isabella, Margaret, Robert, Ruth junior and Joseph junior

All these people except Edward Bunker were children.

The next most common accent was Southern Scots with 14 speakers:

- Armstrong: Thomas and Dinah
- Bell: William, John, Janet, Thomas, Jane and William junior
- Harkness: Andrew
- Jardine: John, Abel, Isabella and Betty
- Rogerson: Francis

There were 12 Northern Scots speakers:

- Innes: Alexander
- Johnston: James
- Stevenson: Joseph
- Thomson: Alexander, Jane, Margaret, John, James, Annie, Geordie, Jeanie and Willie

There were 8 Central Scots speakers:

- Barr: John and Janet
- Donaldson: James, Isabel, Isabella, Alexander, John and James junior

5 people had Welsh accents:

- Ellis: Margaret
- Walters: Mary, Thomas, Margaret and James

4 people had Ulster (Northern Ireland) accents:

- Brown: James and Robert (they leased some of George Kirk's land)
- Bunker: Ann
- Stevenson: Ruth

There were 4 instances of single accents, all from England:

- Agnes Bell = Cumbrian
- Henry Scarce = East Anglia
- Sarah Harkness = Midlands
- William Ellis = West Country

So, the Scots accents were dominant with 34 people speaking them. Next came Australian with 20, then Welsh with 5, Ulster with 4 and the accents from England totalled 4.

Therefore, Kangaroo Ground in 1850 was indeed very Scottish, but the Australian English speakers were close behind and would overtake the Scots over the following decade. And there were Welsh and Ulster accents also. What is noticeable is how few accents from England there were.

Dick Austin

IS IT A BIRD? IS IT A PLANE? NO, IT'S OUR SCIENCE ROOM LEAVING US!

On Thursday 5th March, the portable classroom was removed by the Department of Education following an audit showing we had an over allocation of classrooms due to a reduction in student numbers. The school had resisted the removal for quite some time so we were disappointed when the final decision was made to remove it. It was the classroom which housed our Science program and was refuge for Christmas Hills Primary School on extreme fire danger days.



The removal process was rather quick and quite impressive for any onlookers, and the students were amazed at how their classroom could fit on a truck. An impressive display of human ingenuity.

*Maree Magnabosco
Acting Principal Kangaroo Ground Primary School*

WHO WAS ANDREW ROSS AND WHY IS THE KANGAROO GROUND MUSEUM NAMED AFTER HIM?

It is a good question! And many visitors to the museum, situated across the road from the general store, ask as soon as they step through the door!

Scotsman Andrew Ross was a key figure in the development of the European settlement of Kangaroo Ground.

He was its first schoolteacher and established a school which was so highly regarded its students included boarders from outside the area. He was also the area's lay preacher, inaugural postmaster, opened Kangaroo Ground's first hotel and launched a successful newspaper. His legacy is still present; from the cemetery he helped to create, to the local shire council which grew from the roads board he was instrumental in developing.

However perhaps Ross's most lasting achievement is the historical record he made of Kangaroo Ground and its surrounds through his keen observations, recorded in the diary he kept throughout his adult life, making the area the best documented in the Yarra Valley.

Ross was born in 1814 in Edinburgh, into a family with strong roots in Wigtownshire in the Dumfries and Galloway region of Scotland. It was a family of keen adventurers. His father and three uncles all journeyed and worked abroad and the Ross Dependency in Antarctica is named after his explorer cousin James who also took part in a privately funded Canadian expedition from 1829-33, discovering the Magnetic North Pole.

No surprise then, that Ross would also have an urge to travel overseas to seek his fortune.

Ross and his wife, Mary Ann Brimmer, sailed to Australia in 1838. By this time he had been keeping a diary for nine years and he would continue writing in his journal for the rest of his life. The final entry was on December 31 1895, just a few months before his death the following August at the age of 82.

Ross's first attempts at business in Australia failed, but his fortune changed in 1847 when he secured a position and regular income as teacher at the Scots School, run by the Presbyterian ministry in Melbourne.

The move to Kangaroo Ground came four years later when he took up the role of first teacher at its planned Presbyterian school.

His workplace was made of a single-roomed timber slab and shingle hut, measuring just 9 x 5.5 metres in size. Despite its humble appearance it served not just as a school, but also doubled as a church, where Ross acted as lay preacher when the minister was unavailable. For the first few years the building was also home to Ross and his wife, until the community built a small cottage for them alongside.

As a man of vision, Ross embraced the challenges of his role and soon looked to expand the school with boarders. Within a few years he had a couple of staff, extra accommodation and 20 boarders. Seizing the potential, he leased 20 acres for a school farm and in the process created what was probably Victoria's first technical school and first agricultural college, the Evelyn Commercial, Agricultural and Industrial School.

He went on to lease 100 acres of better soil for the farm and, at its peak, the school had around 60 students. It was a canny move from the Scotsman. Farming folk often needed all hands on deck for critical work at home and may not always have seen the use of learning the Three Rs of reading, writing and arithmetic. But teaching the children practical skills at school would be met with understanding and approval and therefore better attendance.

Ross remained involved with the school for the next 25 years alongside his other business ventures. He became Kangaroo Ground's first postmaster, was appointed an electoral official for the county of Evelyn, deputy registrar of births and deaths and was, for many years, secretary of the board of trustees of the new Kangaroo Ground cemetery.

In 1853 Ross organised a petition to improve the state of the roads and bridges in the area through government funding and local subscriptions which resulted in the creation of the Eltham Roads Board, with Ross as secretary. This later evolved into the Shire of Eltham Council, now Nillumbik Council.

Ross always had a keen eye for opportunity, and in 1864 he established Kangaroo Ground's first hotel, to cater for the passing gold rush trade. This also served as its first general store and home to the local post office.

In 1867 Ross returned to Britain to visit family, leasing out the school farm and cottages. His wife, Mary, remained behind in Kangaroo Ground. On his return in early 1869 Ross found his hotel failing, the post office closed and the school abandoned by the person he had left in charge. Undeterred, he re-opened the post office and store, took over again at the school and also worked as a lay preacher and church elder.

His final business venture was in 1873 when Ross launched the Evelyn Observer weekly newspaper, appointing a highly paid editor/printer. The paper was read throughout the Yarra Valley and produced in Kangaroo Ground for 44 years before moving to nearby Hurstbridge in 1917 and re-branding as The Eltham and Whittlesea Advertiser.

Ross didn't stay in the area to see the longevity of the paper's success. Just three years after launching it he and Mary left Australia for good, returning to Britain in 1876. Mary passed away eight years later after almost 50 years of marriage.

In his twilight years Ross's thoughts strayed back to that little part of Victoria where he had worked and lived for most of his adult life. At the age of 73, in 1887, he began writing his reminiscences of life in Kangaroo Ground and these were published over the next six years by the Evelyn Observer.

Andrew Ross died in August 1896 just a few months after his final diary entry. He is buried next to his wife in the cemetery of St. Mark's Anglican Church in Highcliffe near Bournemouth in Dorset.

In 1986 the Ross Diary was acquired by the State of Victoria and is housed in the state library La Trobe Manuscript Collection.

In 1993 more than 40 of the Andrew Ross reminiscences were collected, transcribed and published by the Andrew Ross Museum as the Reminiscences of Andrew Ross.

Perhaps ironically, for someone who painted such a detailed and wonderful word picture of Kangaroo Ground and further afield for so many years, Andrew Ross remained a very private figure. He put few personal details into his diary and there are no known definitive photographs or paintings of him, although tantalisingly, he could be amongst the figures depicted in a scene outside the Evelyn Hotel. A copy hangs in the museum – be sure to have a look and tell us what you think!

As Ross preserved so much history from the area's early European settlers and was such an important figure in the development of Kangaroo Ground, we hope you agree it was certainly fitting for the museum to be named after him.

The museum is open each Thursday from 10am – 12 noon and on the first Sunday of the month from 2p.m. – 4p.m. It is also open by arrangement for group visits.

More details are on the website: **andrewrossmuseum.org.au**



The Andrew Ross Museum, Eltham-Yarra Glen Road, Kangaroo Ground

Jane Cook

WATER FLOWS UPHILL IN KANGAROO GROUND



What was the purpose of all earthworks at the Graham Road corner last November and December? It seemed to take forever to fix a little footpath outside the Church, many would say. Well, it was much more than a little footpath and curbing, it was an attempt to control stormwater that was flowing uncontrolled into Kings Winery and the resident Post Office.

In a storm event, water would rush down the culvert outside the Andrew Ross Museum on its journey to the creek. On its way, it was joined by stormwater off the tennis courts completely overwhelming the drainage system under Graham Road that was clearly designed in a drought!

The torrent of water would split at Graham Road, one portion continuing past the church on its way to the creek, the other travelling down Graham Road. In doing so, it had to flow up a gentle grade and got pushed along by the pressure of the water still coming from up the hill.

So, stormwater can flow uphill in Kangaroo Ground.

This torrent of water would team up with flow off the school carpark and plunge into the Winery and Post Office carpark and continue through Kings Vineyard creating erosion as a consequence. An overgenerous watering that the vines never need with our deep black volcanic soil in this part of Kangaroo Ground. Finally, this diversion ended up in the creek joining up with its “buddy” flow on its way to the Diamond Creek and the Yarra.

For more than a decade Nillumbik Shire had this drainage project on their books as it is responsible for controlling unwanted stormwater onto private property. One solution was to create a drainage culvert to take the water further down Graham Road, but this just shoved the problem further down the road impacting other properties.

The Nillumbik engineers therefore opted for an underground drainage system and large collection pits in Graham Road. The collection pits feed high-capacity pipes that take the water back to the main road and onwards to the creek. As we all saw, this was quite a mammoth project underground and had a benefit at the surface in the form of a new footpath, retaining wall and safety fence.

There was one epic event during the project.... the Graham Road town water supply was accidentally burst at the corner. It was hiding in an old asbestos six-inch pipe that was invisible to the contractors’ instruments. There was enough water flowing past the post office to host an international kayak slalom event.

Does it work? Largely yes but still needs monitoring as the school carpark water is not being directed into the pipes so there may be some follow-up works required.

There we go, water can flow uphill in KG.

Ken (the Larrikin) King

DRIVING UP FUNDS FOR THE MUSEUM

Question: What do you get when you serve up coffee, cakes and the occasional toasted sandwich?

Answer: Funds for the Andrew Ross Museum!

Since last year the museum has been involved in a scheme organised by the Rotary Club of Diamond Creek that benefits community groups in the area whilst providing refreshments for local families, walkers, cyclists and runners using the Diamond Creek Trail and Regional Playspace.

The Tram Café is the largest ongoing project the local rotary club has ever run. Staffed during the week by a disability support service it provides training opportunities for clients to gain hospitality and customer service skills. At weekends it is the turn of community groups to share in the profits with volunteers working alongside paid professionals to earn a welcome bonus for their group's fundraising coffers.

It is a fun and interesting way to earn additional funds for the museum in a truly unique setting.



The photo shows volunteers on a museum shift earlier this year, pictured together at the lunchtime staff changeover. Tram café staff Em and Clay (second and third from left) are seen with museum volunteers Ben (far left) Carol, Jane, Robyn and Alan.

Tram number 812, which had been languishing in storage for around 20 years, was delivered to site in mid-2019 after the rotary club, Diamond Creek CFA and Men's Shed put in a successful joint application to the Victorian Government. It was one of 134 retired W Class trams being offered to not for profit groups and other public institutions.

Generous donations from local businesses and the community helped restore and refurbish the tram ready for its new life as a café nestled amongst the gum trees. Outside there is a huge decked space with many tables and seating areas, toilets and storage facilities. The tram even has a working bell – which is occasionally rung, much to the delight of children!

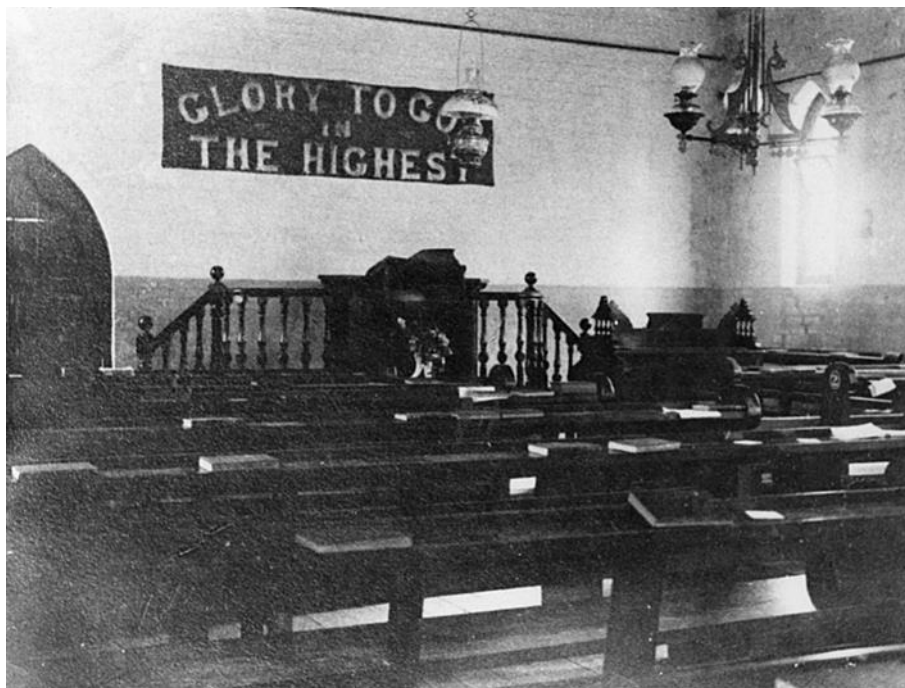
The CFA and Men's Shed stepped back into a supporting role and the café is now owned solely by the Diamond Creek rotary club.

Volunteer weekend slots are hotly sought after and the Andrew Ross Museum takes its turn along with many other local community groups. A full day at the café usually involves four or five volunteers split over the morning and afternoon shift working under the direction of the café's baristas.

Jane Cook

WHERE ARE THE CHURCH'S OIL LAMPS?

These days, we think nothing of travelling at night. In the early days of the Church, if meetings were held at night, they were always held close to the time of a full moon, so that people did not have to travel home in the dark. So, what sort of illumination was provided in the Church when it was built in 1878? We only have one photograph of the interior of the Church in the early days and it was taken around 1907.



We have identified the single lamp in the middle top of the picture as a Miller Jumbo hanging lamp with a glass shade. These were normally supplied with a tin shade and were made in the USA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The second light in the top right corner of the picture is a three-armed iron chandelier with anucapnic burners and chimney/shade combined with glass fonts (bowls) that could have been made in the USA or England and would be from about the same era.

An anucapnic lamp was a type of smokeless oil lamp having two metallic globes over the wick that served to conduct air to the flame, avoiding the need for a chimney. It was first developed by Scottish firm Thomas Rowatt and Son and patented in Britain in 1864 and in the USA in 1867. The original patents do not mention the word anucapnic, but there are many advertisements for the lamps in both British and Australia papers where the word appears boldly. It is derived from the Greek, meaning “without smoke”. (Given these would not be a cheap lamp, is it an example of clever marketing to people who studied Greek at school?)

The late Don Ness remembered these lamps as being suspended on chains in ways that allowed them to be lowered to light the wicks and top-up the kerosene. Whether they were the original lights is not known. After electric lights were installed in 1958, these lights were offered for sale by the Board Secretary, E. W. Smith, but no one was interested. Are they sitting in someone's shed?

(The six rather plain pendants that were installed in 1958 were sold and replaced in 2009 by six *Isabelle* pendants. These were selected to increase the level of and distribution of illumination to modern standards in a fitting reminiscent of the age of the Church.)



An Isabelle pendant

Barry Anderson

AN ENQUIRY FROM SCOTLAND

Recently we had an enquiry from Sandra Scobbie and her mum, Jessie, all the way from Scotland. They wondered if the Andrew Ross Museum might have any information that their Scottish ancestor, William Henderson lived in Kangaroo Ground.

They had found the photo below, with names written on its back. The two standing adults are William and his wife Violet. The child at left is Violet's daughter, Violet Ada, from a previous marriage. The seated woman is Violet's mother, Jane. The two young children are daughters Catherine (Kitty) and Margaret (Peggy).

Sandra and Jessie believed the name of the property was Astral Glen. The Hendersons had lived at various locations around Melbourne, but might this photo have been taken in Kangaroo Ground? And would someone recognise it if it is still standing?



We got off to a false start when the only reference we could find to Astral Glen was a listing for a racehorse of that name in Race 2 at Moe on Tuesday 13 November, 1984. But then Sandra and Jessie discovered the name was actually *Austral Glen*, and that unlocked some more of William's history.

On 29 May 1924, William was elected to the Kangaroo Ground Primary School Committee, alongside Robert Mess and wife, John Macey and wife, William Andrews, and Andrew White. On Tuesday 4 August 1925 he had the pleasure of accompanying headmaster Mr Cheong and a number of school children on an outing to Port Melbourne to view the ships of the American Fleet.

William was a farmer, and according to the Advertiser (successor to the Mount Evelyn Observer, started by Andrew Ross) he exhibited honey and beeswax at Panton Hill for Country Promotion Week in March 1926, alongside members of the Bell and Stevenson families.

Then came a blow to Sandra and Jessie's hope that someone might identify their photo. On Friday 3 September 1926, while Violet was visiting Melbourne and William was erecting a fence, a spark from the small kitchen fire burned their house down. However, we know the story takes a somewhat happier turn, because William placed an ad in The Advertiser on Friday 26 November that year to offer his sincere thanks to those who so kindly assisted him in the re-erection of their house.

With the help of electoral rolls we were able to establish that William and Violet's period in Kangaroo Ground was from at least 1922 to 1935. During that time, he tried his hand at blacksmithing as well as farming. They then seemed to move about to allow William to work as a gardener or fruiterer in inner suburbs.

In their retirement years, the couple lived for a time in the ranger's cottage at Mount Buffalo with their daughter Peggy and her ranger husband. They finally settled in Altona, and lived there until their deaths in 1964 and 1972.

Of course, no Kangaroo Ground family history enquiry would be complete without consulting local historian Dick Austin. It shouldn't have come as a surprise to find that Dick had a file on the property, the address of which had been listed as Watsons Creek Road, Kangaroo Ground. I was able to forward the information gathered by the Andrew Ross Museum and Dick to Sandra and Jessie, much to their delight.

By all reports, Kangaroo Ground was the richer for the presence of William and Violet Henderson during the twenties and thirties.

Alan Bluhm

KANGAROO GROUND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH REPLACEMENT OF OUR HISTORIC BELL



Dear Kangaroo Ground Community

We advised previously that we had purchased a second-hand cast steel bell made by Naylor and Vickers of Sheffield, England, to replace the bell that was stolen. 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 of bells that were sold at auction in Melbourne on 29 April, 1856.

Valley Engineering of Research modified the support frame for the bell to our design and installed it on April 13, 2026.

We discussed at length whether the bell should be installed "as is", or refurbished so that it looked "brand new". We have had feedback from people on both sides of the question. At present it is in the same condition as when we received it.

We are not happy with the way it rings and are still working out what can be done to improve it. That may mean changing the clapper support from a chain to a rigid rod, installing better bearings, improving the balance or lengthening the swinging arm.

We are proposing to have an afternoon tea to celebrate its installation sometime in the future and you will all be welcome to attend.

Thank you, once again, for your support and interest.

Barry Anderson
Treasurer
Kangaroo Ground Presbyterian Church

AN OUTING FOR YOUR GROUP

TRYING TO THINK OF AN OUTING FOR YOUR GROUP?

The Andrew Ross Museum can open specially for your group outing by prior arrangement.

Spend some time immersing yourselves in artifacts and displays showing Kangaroo Ground's rich history.



Consider combining a visit with coffee or lunch at the Kangaroo Ground Store across the road, and perhaps a look at the Kangaroo Ground Memorial Tower and Moor-rul Viewing Platform.

Simply Email us at andrewrossmuseum@outlook.com or phone Alan on 0488 599 665

ANSWER TO WHAT IS IT?

A conker. The ancient children's game of conkers would no doubt have been evident in the Kangaroo Ground School playground at some time in its history. Two players each have a conker, and take it in turns to strike the other's conker with theirs until one breaks.

Horse chestnuts are the most popular conkers, although hazelnuts, acorns and snail shells have also been used. A hole is bored through the centre, and string, leather cord, or a shoelace, is threaded through and knotted at the end. One player lets their conker dangle, and the other swings theirs forcefully using various tried-and-true methods to try to break it. When a conker breaks – even if it's the attacker's conker – the other player scores a point.

Some children invent additional rules, such as if the strings tangle, the first to shout "stringsies" gets an extra turn. And if a conker is accidentally dropped, the other player can call "stampsies" and stamp on the conker to try to break it – unless the first player has already called "no stamps", to disallow stamping.

Obviously, the hardest conkers win, so there are popular methods to harden them, such as soaking in vinegar and then baking them in the oven at 250 degrees Celsius for one-and-a-half minutes, or baking at low temperature for two hours. There is a fine line between toughening them and making them brittle. Even covering with clear nail polish or injecting with glue has been tried. But the time-honoured method for serious players is to store your conkers in a cool, dark place for one to two years.

Our conkers can be found in the Room Two cabinet of historical children's games, where hopefully they are hardening nicely in readiness for when our volunteers enter their second childhood.



DESKS FOR SALE

LOOKING FOR A HOMEWORK DESK?

Andrew Ross Museum has a limited supply of old wooden single desks for sale, of the kind used in schools a very long time ago.

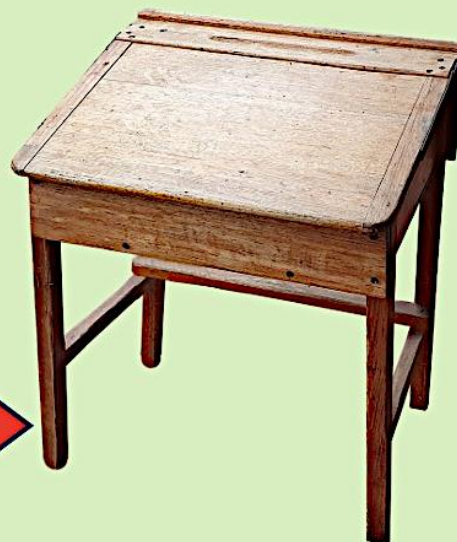
Ideal for a room with limited space. Hinged lid, and storage inside.

Height 840mm, Width 600mm, Depth 480mm.

Proceeds will go towards improvements at the museum.

Interested? Send us an email at andrewrossmuseum@outlook.com

Or phone 0488 599 665



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
Clerical Assistants:	Ben Banner Natasha Ransley-Raven

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



KANGAROO GROUND
PRIMARY SCHOOL No 2105

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