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KANGAROO GROUND CHRONICLE

Newsletter of the
ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM INC

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*How the Carrington Event might have appeared
at Kangaroo Ground in 1859. (Story next page.)*

THIS WEEK 167 YEARS AGO IN KANGAROO GROUND

The diary of Kangaroo Ground's first teacher, Andrew Ross, has a typically brief and understated observation for 2 September 1859:

“Sept 2 Bright Aurora Australis 10 to 12pm.”

In fact, what Andrew saw – hopefully along with his wife Mary Ann and farming families all over Kangaroo Ground – was the most intense geomagnetic storm in recorded history! Lasting several days, it peaked on the night Andrew observed it from his humble abode in Kangaroo Ground.

Now known as the Carrington Event, it was seen around the world in both hemispheres. Telegraph systems everywhere were disrupted by geomagnetically induced current. The arrival of the telephone in Australia was still two decades away, so telegraph was a vital information carrier in 1859, but on this night, messages were delayed or garbled by hopelessly malfunctioning and damaged equipment. (Telegraph would not come to Kangaroo Ground until twenty-five years later, so Kangaroo Ground people were able to enjoy the Aurora Australis without disruption.)

There appears to be no further mention of the 2 September phenomenon in Andrew's diary nor in his reminiscences, but one can imagine it made for a rather exciting evening before the usual daily grind was resumed in this little farming hamlet.

Alan Bluhm

FROM THE SCRAPBOOKS OF JOY NESS LIVING LIFE WITH COUPONS DURING WORLD WAR TWO

Three years into World War Two, in 1942, The Commonwealth of Australia introduced food rationing to cope with shortages and to try to curb inflation.

Tea was limited to half a pound (a little less than a quarter of a kilogram) every five weeks per adult, while sugar began at one pound per person per week and was later reduced even more. Each person was limited to 8 ounces of butter per week, and adults could have 2.25 pounds of meat per week.

Clothing, tobacco and petrol were also rationed.

A Rationing Commission was created, and ration coupons for each item were printed.

Despite the threat of fines of up to £100 or up to six months imprisonment for breaching regulations, a thriving black market sprang up. The government responded with the *Black Marketing Act*, which allowed it to impose a minimum fine of £1000 for serious breaches. Large posters were positioned in public places, imploring people to do the right thing and not be tempted by the Black Market.

Prime Minister John Curtin in a weekly radio broadcast appealed to people to ‘make do’, and as an example he said “The darning needle is a weapon of war these days”.

The Australian Women's Weekly awarded a prize to a reader for her *recipe for mock sausages*, which contained rolled oats, egg, breadcrumbs, onions and herbs, but no meat.

By the time the war officially came to an end on 2 September 1945, many people had become adept at juggling their coupons over the previous three years. But the Government felt an obligation to continue its support for Britain, which was doing it even tougher than Australia. It appealed to Victorians to return any unused vouchers to help out. One such volunteer was Kangaroo Ground's Joy Ness. We know this because the Deputy Director of Rationing sent Joy the following letter of thanks:

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF RATIONING (VICTORIA)

18th October 1945

Cavendish House
5th Floor, 159 Flinders Lane
Melbourne C1

Mrs RB Ness
"View Hill"
Kangaroo Ground

Dear Sir/Madam.

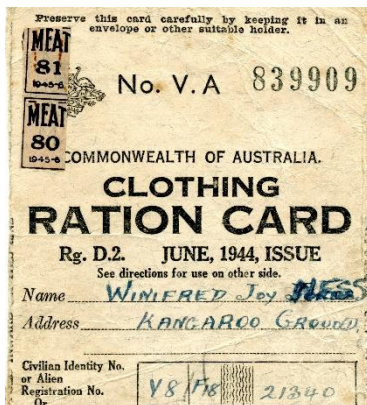
I desire to acknowledge receipt of 16 tea, 5 butter, 2 sugar coupons which you have seen fit to voluntarily surrender to the Rationing Commission in response to the recent appeal made by the Lord Mayor of Melbourne.

Your public-spirited action is fully appreciated by this Directorate, as every unused coupon helps to reduce the consumption of food stuffs in Australia and consequently makes it possible for increased supplies thereof to be exported to Britain where it is much needed at the present time.

It is very gratifying to find that many others are similarly surrendering their unused coupons to this office thereby assisting in providing some measure of relief for those people who have so long and so willingly submitted to the strain of severe food rationing necessitated by the horrors of war.

Yours faithfully,

A.S. PENROSE
Deputy Director.



Because supply shortages could not be immediately restored with the signing of the Japanese instrument of Surrender on 2 September 1945, rationing continued in Australia in one form or another for another five years. Clothing rationing was lifted in 1947, meat rationing ended in 1948, and petrol, butter and tea rationing were the last, in 1950. It took a while after that for many everyday items to return to plentiful supply.

Twenty-two kilometres down the road from Joy Ness, in Mahoney's Road East Burwood, my orchardist father and grandfather were eligible for a *Motor Spirit Consumer's Special Licence* as primary producers – right up until July 1950. This enabled them to make their regular trips to the Queen Victoria Market to sell fruit, without being subject to the petrol rationing imposed on others. As it turned out, the Queen Victoria Market was discovered to be the hub of early-morning clandestine black-market deals that bypassed the coupon system. My father and grandfather were both honest men, but it must have been interesting, to say the least, to have been in the thick of a thriving black-market environment with its illegal traders and undercover police.

We don't know if Joy Ness made further coupon sacrifices and received more letters of thanks from the Deputy Director of Rationing, but I do applaud her community spirit at a time in history when people were doing it tough.

Alan Bluhm

ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM, WHAT A DAY!

The incredible museum staff designed learning experiences that aligned with our Humanities Unit about First Australians and The Colonisation of Australia.



“Alan helped us make a Wilam used by the Wurundjeri people. A Wilam is like a house or shelter. This was the best activity. “

Hudson.



“Lewis and I were hanging the washing like they did long ago. It was fun, we used a stick to lift the clothes up high. You need a lot of strength to wring out the washing. I loved today”. **Mila.O**



Tools used by first Australians. Children were able to hold and examine a coolamon (receptacle from the curved bark of a tree), a “killer” boomerang – longer and heavier than a boomerang designed to return, a woven dilly bag and a stone axe head. They were also able to try their hand at swinging a bullroarer – used for communication over long distances, and for ceremonies.

“Here we were learning about First Nations artefacts. There was a ‘killer’ boomerang and a digeridoo. We liked the sharp rock for cutting. It was an awesome day.” **Boston, Flynn & Lewis**

The First European Settlers made their own bread.
“We practised with playdough to plait the bread, then we made it flat like damper. Finally into a stove. Today was great.” *Lewis*



“Here I am trying to play the didgeridoo with Lewis, Mila and Boston. It was fun. We also used the clapping sticks. The excursion was fun.” *Wyatt.*



What a fun day.
Krista Scott, KGPS teacher

In June we went to the Andrew Ross Museum. I learned about washing clothes with old-fashioned washing machine. I really enjoyed making bread with playdough.

By Billie-Rose



Museum Recount

In term 2, both the 3/4 classes went on an excursion to the Andrew Ross Museum. We had a terrific time and learnt a lot about First Nations People.

Firstly, our group (Cobblers) made 'bread'. We started by discussing what it would be like to be an English person having just arrived in Australia. We discussed what they would use to make flour. Then, we made a type of bread that they made back then out of play dough.

Then, heading outside, we started making our part of the class willam (First Nations hut). The group before us made the structure and we made the first layer of the roof. As we finished early, we looked at some photos of other First Nations willams.

Thirdly, we did some washing. The museum had heaps of old fashioned washing machines. We each took a glove or sock and dipped it in a tub of water. Then, we held them as we churned the handle (see image below). When it came out the other side, it was dry.

Finally, we went back inside to look at some old Aboriginal tools and artifacts. There were many things, such as baskets woven of dried grass and a didgeridoo that only Ella could successfully play. We talked about how they made string out of the women's hair and made axes out of sharp rock and smoothed sticks.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped us have an amazing time.

Report by Riley Polson



Last week, we went to the Andrew Ross Museum. It was very interesting to learn about early settlers and first nation people. First, my group (The Early Settlers) washed some socks and hung them up after ironing them. It was not very fun but we had to do it for...experimenting? Anyways, I really enjoyed making a Willam/Willum out of sticks and large branches. A museum worker told us how to do it. Then, we learnt how they made bread. And lastly Mr Chenhall played the didgeridoo.

By: Cailen



Last week we went to Andrew Ross Museum. It was okay. First my group (early settlers) tried washing. It was hard labour. I really enjoyed it because it was hard. Then we went to the exhibit. After that we cooked, Finally we built a wilam that I really enjoyed.

By Rachit



Was really fun. We made a Wilam, did hard labour, looked at artifacts and made fake damper. We made the base of the Wilam. I played the didgeridoo. We made fake damper with play doh, and did hard labour, aka doing their washing.

by marshall

Museum reflection

I saw cool stuff at the Andrew Ross Museum in June and it was so cool I loved it. It was like I was back in the olden days, I love it. I washed socks and dishwasher machine, but it was man made. Also, I made a stick house. I learned that Aborigines did hard stuff. It was hard labour. I made bread and it was cool. My group was blacksmith.



This happened to my stick shelterrrr so saadddd ☹ *

By Finn

* **Editor's note:** When Finn created his little stick shelter joke some weeks ago, he had no way of knowing that a flood disaster in Tibet and Nepal would come along that might make his work seem insensitive. Our thoughts are with everyone affected by the current tragic event.

FRESH RESEARCH REVEALS A NAMING ERROR FOR MARY ANN ROSS

Local historian Dick Austin has discovered that the wife of Andrew Ross, Mary Ann, has inadvertently been referred to by the wrong maiden surname by the Andrew Ross Museum.

Previously documented research, used by the museum, named her as Mary Ann Brimmer before her marriage to Andrew Ross which took place in London, England, in May 1836.

Now fresh investigations by Dick have revealed that Mary Ann's maiden surname was, in fact, Glass.

Dick explained the cause of the confusion was that Mary Ann's sister, Amelia, was a Brimmer. 'We know that Mary's sister Amelia was a Brimmer, but that's because she married a Brimmer. She was born a Glass.'

'Once I worked out Andrew Ross married into the Glass family, I of course found a reference to Amelia Glass in his diary.'

Dick's research showed that Andrew and Mary Ann married at Saint Pancras, London on May 3rd 1836 and that her name at marriage was Mary Ann Glass.

He added: 'We also know that Andrew's brother Alexander married Mary's other sister Jane. Dick's exploration uncovered the date of the marriage to 1838, when Alexander was married in Hampshire, England to Jane Glass.'

Dick said records proved Mary Ann's sister Amelia was married in Scots Church, Sydney, NSW in 1842 to Henry F Brimmer.

Jane Cook

LOOKING FOR A HOMEWORK DESK?

Andrew Ross Museum still has some 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. (No inkwell hole.)

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

Proceeds will go towards funding our rear courtyard display area.

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

Or phone 0488 599 665



A steal at \$50!

WHAT IS IT?



Each side of this mystery item is about 20cm long. It is made of iron, has two sharpish edges, and a handle. Part of the edge containing the handle is bent at right-angles.

Have you seen one before? Can you guess what it might have been used for? The item was not necessarily facing in this direction when in use.

Answer on page 16

CONVICTS AND KANGAROO GROUND

At least one Kangaroo Ground settler was a convict and many were the children of convicts. In this article I'll give a background to transportation to Australia, list the Kangaroo Ground people descended from convicts and introduce the one convict I can confidently identify, Richard Brook. The overview section is heavily indebted to Robert Hughes' wonderful book **The Fatal Shore: A History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia, 1787-1868**.

Origins of Transportation from Britain to Australia

Transportation (forced exile) turned a prisoner into a free labourer who could be sent to distant colonies and it freed up jail space. From 1717 minor offenders were sent to America and the Caribbean for seven years instead of being flogged and branded, and over the following 60 years 40,000 people were sent to these places. However, the American colonies rebelled, preferring big African slaves to underfed British ones.

With jails quickly filling again, the British began using hulks to house prisoners until the American insurgents were crushed. Of course this didn't happen, and over 1,000 prisoners a year were being added to the hulks, which became a political problem as the British population feared diseases spreading from the old ships to the shore. The government chose Australia as the solution.

Common Misconceptions

There are a number of misconceptions we have about convicts that we should leave behind:

- Convicts were not murderers and rapists. These crimes resulted in a death sentence, along with protesting and stealing something worth more than 40 shillings. Convicts, by definition, were the petty criminals not sentenced to death. The bulk of convicts committed crimes of poverty such as petty theft. Killing a wild animal in Britain was a crime (called poaching) unless it was done by someone who earned more than £100/year from a freehold estate (called hunting). From 1801 to 1841 the population of England nearly doubled, while workers suffered reduced wages and rising prices. Mechanisation of hand trades created acute unemployment. In the 1830s ten percent of the English working population were classified as paupers. This led, not unexpectedly, to a petty crime wave.
- Female convicts were not transported for prostitution as it was not a transportable offence. 80% of female convicts were transported for theft.
- Only ten percent of convicts spent time at the horror locations such as Sarah Island, Port Arthur, Moreton Bay and Norfolk Island. These were reserved for people who committed crimes while a convict. Most convicts served a few years of their sentences in assignment to a free settler, never wore chains, got their tickets-of-leave and then were absorbed into colonial society as free citizens.
- The children of convicts proved to be surprisingly law-abiding. The British government thought they were expelling their criminal class, but in Australia the existence of such a class was proven to be false.
- Very few convicts wanted to return to Britain at the end of their sentence.

Transportation to Australia Statistics

Britain shipped more than 160,000 men, woman and children to Australia in 825 shiploads during the period of convict transportation, 1787 to 1868. Initially a trickle, from 1815 the rate increased and it reached a peak in the 1830s. In 1821 53% of the population of Van Diemen's Land were convicts under sentence.

The Average Convict

The average height of a male convict was about 5'3", and 80% were less than 5'8". Only one third could sign their names. They were underfed, undereducated, poor people.

End of Transportation to Australia

Transportation to NSW ceased in 1840 and to Van Diemen's Land in 1853. The final 15 years of transportation were only to WA. By now the Australian colonies didn't want convicts and the British penal system no longer urgently needed to send them. By the 1850s Britain had built enough jails that there were now vacant cells, and prisons were now cheaper to run than the transportation system.

However, it was gold that primarily led to the end of transportation. Australia was now an exciting destination full of promise. Its value as a deterrent to crime was now zero. Even prior to the gold rush the British government was losing the fight to convince the 'criminal classes' that Australia was such a terrible place to be sent. Compared to the slums, small farms and unemployment of Britain and Ireland, the freed convict in Australia got higher wages, better living conditions, a better climate and better food.

Convicts and Kangaroo Ground

The Kangaroo Ground people I know of who had one or two parents who were convicts were Edward Bunker, Ruth Stevenson, William Mitton, Edith Ramseyer, Euphemia Jones, John Yates, Matilda Jones and Nellie Bartlett.

Richard Brook

Richard was born in 1812 at Baildon, Yorkshire, England to Thomas Brook and Elizabeth Ratcliffe. Richard's parents had married the year he was born and were aged 37 (Elizabeth) and 29 (Thomas). After Richard they had Jeremiah (1814), James (1816), Hannah (1819) and Mary (1822). Richard's father was a weaver and Richard became one too.

When he was 20 Richard married Ann Normington at Baildon. She was born in 1813 at Baildon to David Normington and Mary Pallan, so she was 19 when they married. She signed her name with an X.

Richard and Ann had three children, all born at Baildon: David (1834), Carmi (1837) and Athalia (1840). At the 1841 census the family lived at Spring Garden, Otley, Yorkshire.

In 1843 Richard, now 31, was sentenced to seven years transportation for perjury at York and sailed for Van Diemen's Land on *The London* the following year. Ann remarried at Otley in 1847 and Richard's children now had a step-father. Both Carmi and Athalia had died by 1850.

In Tasmania Richard was allocated to a landowner at Snake Banks, now Powranna (near Evandale).

By 1851 Richard had completed his sentence and he sailed to Melbourne on the *City of Melbourne*.

In 1853, now 41, Richard married Maria Whorwell in Melbourne. By now he was a carpenter.

Maria Whorwell

Maria was born in 1825 to Nathaniel Whorwell, a carpenter, and Mary Ann Hubbard at Woolwich, Kent, England. This is now part of London.

Her parents had married 12 years earlier and she was born into a family consisting of Nathaniel (47), Mary (41), Nathaniel William (9), Isaac (5), William (4) and Rebecca (2). After Maria came Naomi (1827) and Thomas (1828).

At the 1841 census Maria was living at home with her family at Meeting House Lane, Woolwich.

At the 1851 census, when she was 26, Maria was a live-in domestic servant at 24 Rectory Place, Woolwich. Two years later she was marrying Richard Brook in Melbourne. I can't find a shipping record, but most of her family died in Greenwich or Woolwich, so I think she came to Australia alone. She was 28 when she married Richard.

Emerald Hill

During the first three years of their marriage Richard and Maria were living at Emerald Hill (South Melbourne), where Rebecca and Richard junior (both 1854) and Nathaniel (1856) were born.

Kangaroo Ground

We know that the Brook family was at Kangaroo Ground by 1858 as Whorwell's birth was registered here.

In Andrew Ross' diary of 1857 he records in his shorthand method "engage Brookes family; Brooke, 'Dan', Kidd at work: farms, garden, etc". Despite the name being spelt incorrectly I think this was the Brook family. In 1857 Andrew Ross was busy moving his industrial school from the poor site to the south of Kangaroo Ground to the Alexander Innes farm.

At 1857 the Brook family at Kangaroo Ground consisted of Richard (45), Maria (32), Rebecca (3), Richard junior (3) and Nathaniel (1). I don't know where they were living.

Over the next few years Richard and Maria had Joseph (1860), John (1862), Herbert (1864), James (1866) and Mary (1868), all born at Kangaroo Ground. James died at 14 weeks.

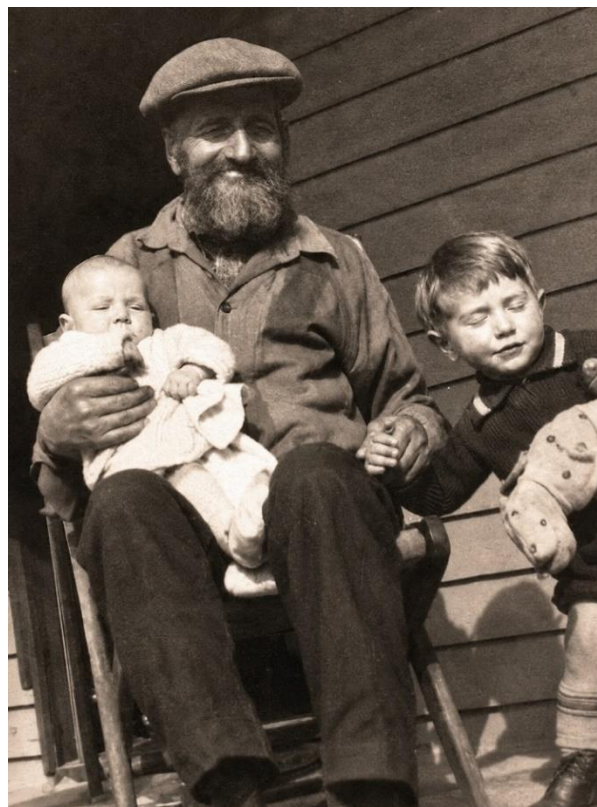


Figure 1: Richard with James (baby) and John in 1866

In 1868 Richard applied to select the 5 acres that became Lot 11A Section 20.



Figure 2: Lot 11A at 1869 (over a Google map)

Richard's selection was north of the existing *Pretty Hill* property and to the west of Arthur Connor's Lot 7 selection. It relied on the Watery Gully diggings tracks for access.

Five acres was far below the maximum allowable size for a selection, so I think it unlikely Richard intended to farm the land. Rather, he either selected it as a place to build a home and a workshop, because it was close to the Watery Gully diggings, or maybe he worked for James Johnston and so selected land that was near *Pretty Hill*.

By 1872 Richard had cleared and cultivated three acres on his selection, had built a bark hut and had dug a small waterhole. On this basis he applied for freehold, which was issued the following year.

In the 1876 Rate Book he was listed as a miner of Kangaroo Ground. From 1877 to 1879 he was listed as a labourer of Kangaroo Ground.

In 1878 Richard sold his property to James Johnston and it became part of *Pretty Hill*.

Avenel

Richard died at Avenel of pneumonia in 1880 aged 68 and Mary died there nine years later aged 64. Joseph died there in 1890 at only 30, recorded as a Locksley sawmill proprietor. He was in partnership with Herbert as J & H Brook.



Figure 3: Richard Brook and sons, Longwood Mill ~ 1880

The above photo from Ancestry is a treasure and it tells us much about the family, apart from showing us what the sons looked like. I'm assuming it was taken in 1880 and the ages are based on that date. From left to right are Richard junior (26), Whorwell (22), Nathaniel (24), John (18), Herbert (16) and Richard (68). In the background is a stationary steam engine with a shelter built around it. I don't think it was a timber mill as there are no facilities for handling logs and no stacks of sawn timber. Rather, I think it was a firewood mill. Firewood mills were often built at a railway station rather than being in the bush and the building at the left of this photo looks like a church. Longwood railway station (between Avenel and Euroa) opened in 1872. Burnt Creek station opened in the 1880s and was renamed Locksley in the 1900s, so it was probably taken at one of these stations

Dick Austin

ANDREW ROSS MUSEUM WELCOMES GROUP VISITS

Although usually only open Thursdays 10am to 12pm and First Sundays 2pm to 4pm,
we can arrange to open up out of hours specially for your group.

Call 0488 599 665 or email andrewrossmuseum@outlook.com to book

MUSEUM'S NEW OUTDOOR AREA TAKES SHAPE

It was a dream for years, the subject of many long discussions, and now, thanks to skilled hands, a reality in days.

The idea of a covered, secure, area at the ARM has long been a hot topic of conversation. We had a place in mind, a little courtyard between the museum and the old school building, but how to fund the necessary work to design and implement what was needed to make it secure and covered was a conundrum.

The dream became even more attractive when Kangaroo Ground Primary School, during its recent renovations, fenced off the rear of the building, supplying the museum with even more space for outdoor exhibits.

This prompted the museum to approach local retired architect, Ross Henry, who provided concept drawings which were presented to the school council for approval.

With the approval granted, the main stumbling block remaining was how to get funding for the project. The museum committee has now solved that problem by taking part in volunteer days manning the Rotary Club Tram Café in Diamond Creek. With a number of weekend sessions undertaken over the last year the museum has accrued enough funds to put towards the work. A \$500 bequest from museum patron Diana Basssett-Smith, who passed away last year, topped up the necessary coffers.



Brendan and his son, Jack, transforming the outside area.

Local tradesman Brendan McOrrie and his son, Jack, were then approached and asked if they could finally turn the museum's outdoor dream into reality. They lost no time in making the vision materialise and set to work at a cracking pace. Heavy duty wood, painted in the museum's deep Manor Red colour, was assembled to make a framework for both the laser light roofing and also for displaying outdoor exhibits. The museum has a number of tools which can be hung from reinforcing mesh attached to the framework, effectively creating an outdoor room for visitors to explore.

The area will be secured with a new, heavy duty, lockable, door. When open, this will lead to the rear of the museum and further exhibits, possibly in the form of weatherproof photos and information panels, some of which may be on the walls of the old schoolhouse dunny which was moved to its current position behind the museum during the school renovations.

A small garden alongside has also been cultivated with native plants to add a splash of colour.



Carol and Jane at work on the native garden.

The work was continuing as the Chronicle went to press. We are looking forward to showing visitors our newly transformed outdoor area and hearing your comments, suggestions and feedback.



Brendan McOrrie inspecting the newly installed safety rails.

Brendan and Jack are becoming very familiar with the old museum building as they also recently installed safety rails on the front verandah, work which was kindly funded by the school.

Jane Cook

A HOLLYWOOD MOMENT IN KANGAROO GROUND

On 4 June this year I saw a man walking south along the roadside in Kangaroo Ground, towards the store. He had a pack on his back, with something undefined sticking out the top, and he had a dishevelled appearance as though he had walked a long way, or might be struggling to make ends meet.

I watched from the museum's front yard to see if he would enter the store and perhaps get a bottle of water or some lunch. But just then, one of the roadworkers in hi-vis vest who had put up traffic cones along the shoulder of the road, called the weary traveller from behind. I was expecting our man to ignore the worker, but was surprised to see him instantly turn around. The worker ran down and at first seemed to be putting a jacket over the walker – perhaps a kind gesture to keep him warm on his travels. But no, he was putting something like a blanket over the thing protruding from the pack.

It wasn't until I wandered into Graham Road to pick up the mail and spotted a convey of parked wardrobe, hair and make-up and props vans that I realised that my sympathy for the walker's plight was perhaps unnecessary. I spoke to some movie props people who kindly called the location manager with some slick jargon on their lapel-clip walkie-talkie. He arrived and gave me a little bit of friendly but vague information.

Apparently, they had chosen parts of Kangaroo Ground to represent parts of Queensland for a forthcoming documentary about a shooting from some years ago that we've all forgotten. Before they moved to the school for more shooting – perhaps I should say *filming* – I was promised a synopsis to be sent by email, but alas, nothing arrived. My guess is it might be about a Lockyer Valley shooting in 2017.

So, if you happen to be watching a documentary about a shooting in QLD anytime soon and you think the landscape looks remarkably like Kangaroo Ground, it probably is.



Alan Bluhm

KANGAROO GROUND AND THE SOLDIER SETTLEMENT SCHEME

The Andrew Ross Museum AGM was held on 22 July. The venue was the Wycliffe conference room, where we were once again made most welcome. Our guest speaker was local historian Dick Austin.

In a nutshell, Dick spoke about how we usually associate the Soldier Settlement Scheme with the Mallee, but it also involved at least 9 properties in or near Kangaroo Ground. The scheme was well-intentioned but often resulted in already traumatised returned soldiers abandoning their properties within a few years with heavy debts and broken dreams.

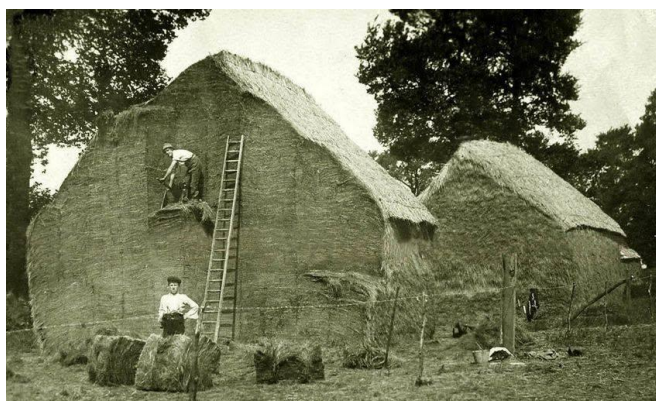
Thanks to Dick we now have quite detailed information about some of those Soldier Settlement families and properties, and a few more pieces of the Kangaroo Ground history jig-saw have been put in place.

ANSWER TO WHAT IS IT?



Donated by Eltham Historical Society, possibly at the museum's inception, the item's label in our display cabinet describes it as a hay or silage cutter.

When we asked the internet to confirm this, the only other item we could find of the same shape and size was described as a kerosene tin cutter, from the days of four-gallon rectangular kerosene tins that were commonly used as buckets when empty, by cutting the top off and attaching some 8-gauge fencing wire as a handle. Not sure about you, but if we were making a tool to cut the lid off a tin, it wouldn't be this big, so we're discounting this explanation as a red herring.



This photo shows pre-mechanisation hayricks, where loose hay has been stacked and settled into a compact mass under its own weight. Sections are being sliced from the front stack with a sharp tool. However, most documented hay cutters were large serrated knives with offset wooden handles, so there remains some mystery regarding our hay cutter.

If you have seen a tool like this one before, and can add to our scant information, we would love to hear from you at andrewrossmuseum@outlook.com

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

Proudly supported by

