

BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Number 33

WHAT NATIVE'S FLOWERING?

Botanical name: *Kunzea ericoides*
(formerly called *Leptospermum phylicoides*)

Common name: Burgan

Family: Myrtaceae
(same family as Eucalypts, Callistemons and Leptospermum)

A dense to open weeping medium to large shrub, 2-5 metres high x 2-4 metres wide, dry and valley sclerophyll forests.

The leaves are narrow, dark green, 8-25 mm long by 0.5-5mm wide and usually in clusters. The flowers are small and white, crowded among the leaves, and on slender stalks up to 10 mm long also in clusters. The many stamens of the flowers are longer than the petals and spread outwards. The many conspicuous stamens are a similar feature in the flowers of the Eucalyptus species.

Burgan is a fast grower and seeds annually and vigorously. Consequently this species can invade cleared land or regenerate quickly after a bushfire, so dominating the vegetation and reducing the variety of plants that would normally regenerate. Other species that have similar colonising characteristics are bracken and *Acacia verticillata*.

Burgan burns readily due to the high oil content of the leaves, and should be thinned out when doing the fire clearing around the house. In particular the plant tolerates hard pruning and can be cut right back to the ground. However it is preferable to thin out the stems so that the regrowth is not so vigorous. A useful shrub, particularly in controlling gully erosion and providing shelter for many small birds and food for many insect-loving birds



Cric Henry

APOLOGY TO CONTRIBUTORS TO THE LAST ISSUE

In the last issue of our newsletter a number of articles appeared without the names of the authors. This is not the way that we like to do things and it was not intentional. Here is a list of the articles and authors.

•'REPORT ON VEGETATION CONTROL UNDER POWER LINES IN THE ELZ' was by Frank Pierce.

•'FIRE AND THE ENVIRONMENT' was by John McCallum.

•'THE WONDERS OF THE ELZ' was by Alan Bluhm.

Also, Sheila, we spelled your name incorrectly Sorry!

John McCallum

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Delivered at the 1994 AGM

This is our last meeting for '94 which has been a particularly active year involving much of our membership and a degree of innovation when it came to events. We have continued to use the sub-committee structure so that people with different interests and capacities can have involvement. We have also continued to relate our activity to community activity and have communicated, perhaps more than normal, to the full membership whether it be by newsletter, news-sheet, special open meetings of the by the new community notice board.

Our involvement has been expanded by joining the Landcare movement as well as the Yarracare group. We have also helped four different student groups from RMIT, Monash and Melbourne universities undertake case studies in the ELZ as part of their planning or environmental science courses. It is heartening to realise that the result of over 20 years of community involvement in establishing it, the ELZ is now so widely recognised and even copied. We all hope that our recent change to the Shire of Nillumbik will preserve what we have by having our zoning supported and by adequate representation. The issue of deciding which 'direction' to go with regard to the municipal



restructuring was difficult for BICA working to its charter to ensure the integrity of ELZ. As early as June we aired the issue through a news-sheet with subsequent news-sheets, newsletters and meetings.

Opinion about our meeting format was surveyed with a questionnaire which involved personal contact. As a result of this we proceeded with a number of new ideas ranging from the field night experience in March to a night general meeting. Our traditional working bee activity as resulted in the planting of hundreds of native plants and we have been involved in National Clean-up Day, World Environment Day setting guidelines for road grading with the local council.

It is difficult to sum up the whole year's activities and particularly to thank all members who have participated but, on behalf of the membership, I do! We are fortunate as an organisation to attract the continued involvement of ex-members of the committee as well as that of new members and we can look forward to a stimulating time ahead

Michael Pelling

WHY I LIVE WHERE I LIVE

In 1971 I was living in Ringwood East with my wife, seventeen year old son and fifteen year old daughter. For many years my interest in environmental and health matters had been growing and my liking for suburban life declining. I cannot recall the circumstances in which I noted the following article by John Larkin in the 'Age'. It could have been in the morning train to the city when it was my habit to pass the time reading the paper on my way to work at the Antarctic Division of the Commonwealth Department of Science where I was field equipment, clothing and field training officer for eighteen years. I was greatly impressed by the article which I cut out and have kept ever since.

1980 was an eventful year for me. I was invalided out of the Commonwealth Public Service, my wife and I were divorced and the property settlement necessitated my finding a new home. By a fortunate chance I met a friend of Hazel Rich, a shareholder in the Co-op. Soon I was visiting the Co-op with Hazel and friend Ruth and getting to know some of the residents and others who were in the process of building their houses. In 1981 I was accepted as a shareholder and I bought Cathy Alexander's mud brick house where I now live.

Coincidentally, Randall Champion, one of the three founders of the Co-op (the others being the artist Neil Douglas and Dr Tim Ealey who is well known to us) shared a tent and igloo with me at Mt Hotham in 1967 where I was conducting snowfields training for two of Max Corry's party of four who wintered on the Amery Ice Shelf in 1968. Randall wintered at Casey base where he was surveyor/glaciologist.

So that is why I live where I live.

Norm Linton-Smith

Here is the article from "The Age" that inspired Norm. It is complete with grammatical errors and idiosyncrasies of punctuation as it appeared nearly twenty four years ago!

SANCTUARY WILL BE NO ANIMAL FARM

Who these days is still content with his discontent and his dreams? Who still feels his individual life-style is out of his hands, moulded by other people who

insist still on fighting the environment, instead of living with it? The evidence is growing that more people are rejecting second and third-hand existence, beginning with their environment.

There are three ways of doing this. The first is to go it alone. The second is to unite and fight intrusions and mistakes by such people as the Housing Commission and greedy councils.

The third way is the one being now organised by a group of people in Kangaroo Ground. They are joining together, not to fight anybody, but to set up a world of their own, the environment of which will be completely within their control and supervision.

Fifteen people have come together from around Melbourne to form a co-operative on 80 acres near the Bend of Islands on the Yarra. Negotiations are just about finalised to buy the land for about \$17 000. The money is being raised privately within the group, each member of which comes in with a minimum of \$400. The project involves such people as architects, academics and teachers and includes Neil Douglas the painter, Mr Randall Champion, a professional conservationist and the senior lecturer in zoology at Monash university, Dr Tim Ealey.

The group, which is forming a legal co-operative, will begin at the beginning with virgin native bushland. A minimum of the 80 acres will be used for housing and growing vegetables, leaving about 60 acres of uncleared country for all things wild and growing to stay that way. It will be a human, animal, plant and mineral sanctuary. Dr Ealey, who is the co-operative's vice-president, said last night everything would be done to fit in with the natural ways of the area.

There would be strict rules, including: no chemicals and pesticides, no dogs or cats, no exotic trees or plants and no horses on the area, trampling things down, and no grass grown that will require motor mowers, and no rough-riding around on motor bikes.

All the houses will be in the one area, on a ridge, but there will be privacy, with bush between them. There is much interest in the idea of building the places out of mud bricks. A few people, who are interested in more communal living, may

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do this a one end of the residential section.. The only uniformity in the design of the houses is that it is not going to be a shanty-town. Plans will have to be prepared for every building and submitted to the co-operative's directors, as well as conforming with building regulations.

Carefully prepared propositions are being submitted to the Healesville shire council, who have become very sympathetic to conservation. Dr Ealy said it was thought necessary to have the rules strict and almost all of the people involved are agreeing with them. If they don't want to follow the rules, they don't have to be in it. "Conservation has to have some restrictions. If they want a mini suburbia or farmland, they should not come into this co-operative. If you want some peace there has to be some restrictions." The co-operative will work on organic growing and will recycle such things as rubbish. There will be no waste. Consideration is also being given to a private sewerage system so that clean effluent can be used for second-class water.

Already, the co-operative is working on buying other land around the first project. It is hoped that other co-operatives can be set up on these. Some will have farms on them and can be used by people who want this sort of life - some people then will go to work in the city, while others will stay at home, looking after the cows. The whole concept could involve up to 400 acres. Careful surveying will be made before three dams are built - for wildlife, the vegetables and swimming.

It is hoped the project will set an example to other sections of the community of what so-called little people can do to establish how they want to live where they want to live. How will the co-operative take care against such possibilities as power struggles, tribal factions, ego tripping and take over bids? How will they ensure that it does not become another '**Animal Farm**'. Dr Ealy said anything like this would be handled in the context of its situation. But it was thought unlikely that any such groupings would occur. After all these people will want, first and last, peace. That is what it is all about.

John Larkin, "The Age", Friday, May 28, 1971

NOTICES FROM THE COMMITTEE

1. Subscriptions. Now that the annual general meeting has been held, subscriptions are due. The annual sub. is still \$10 per person or \$20 per family and may be sent to

BICA inc.

c/- PO

Kangaroo Ground

Vic. 3097

2. Wine Raffle. The winners of the last wine raffle drawn at the AGM in November 1994 were as follows.

1st prize: V 87 blue Denyers

2nd prize: V 58 yellow Kammingas

3rd prize: V 70 pink Millingtons

Congratulations to these lucky people. The rest of us will have to keep trying!

3. The details on the computer records used for mail-outs are currently being reviewed. Are the details on your address label correct or would you like them altered? If so drop a note to BICA at the above address.

For mailing purposes a cut-off time of 6 months has been adopted. Help yourself and the Bend of Islands by staying financial. Please make the committee task easier by renewing your membership promptly.

4. BICA events, unless otherwise notified, are on a sharing and caring basis, ie., BYO chair, mug and afternoon tea to share. The venue with any provided facilities, BBQs etc will be advertised

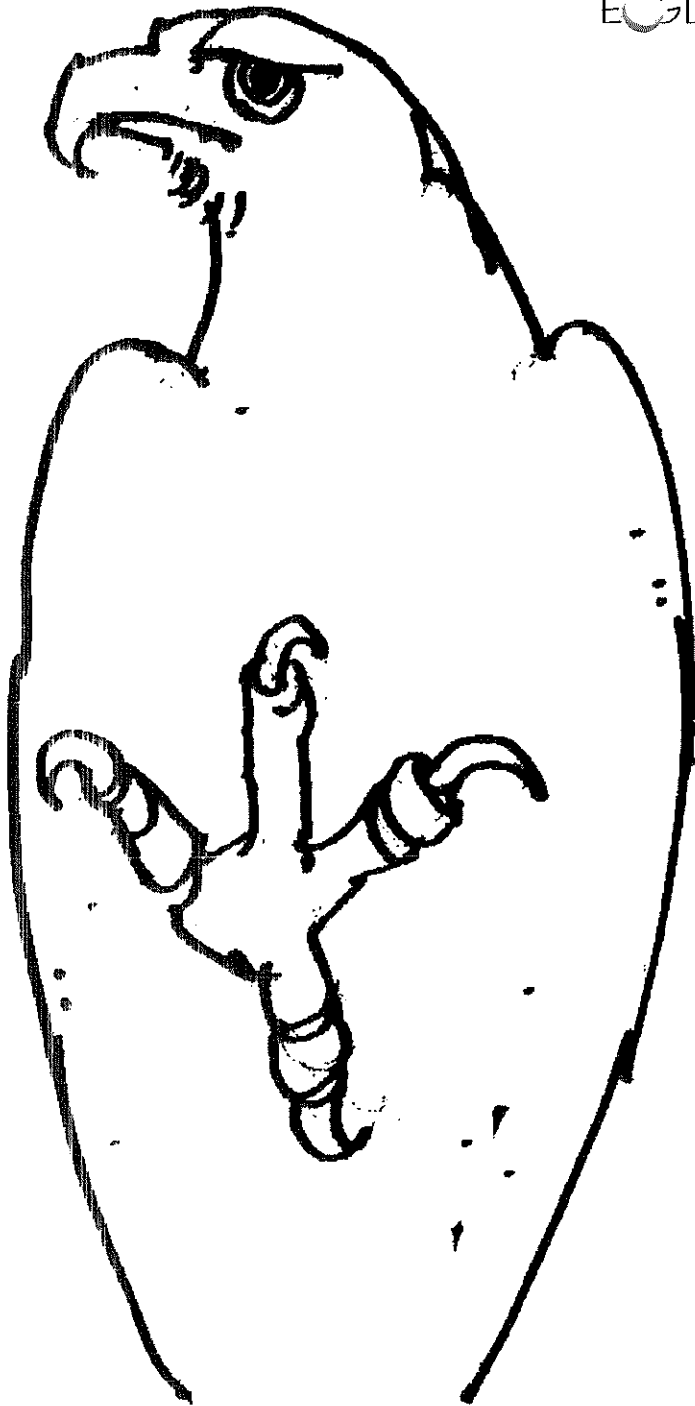
5. Wildlife Care Network

Wildlife Care Network is manned entirely by volunteers, who hold Shelter Permits issued by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and should be your first call if you need assistance with sick, injured or orphaned wild-life.

24 hour telephone number is 016 373 931

Postal Address: PO Box 276
Eltham 3095

EAGLES IN THE BEND OF ISLANDS



The greatest thrill so far living in the ELZ has been to find a wedgetail eagle nest in a manna gum in the gully below us. We have often seen wedgetails soaring over Mt Lofty and after Wolfgang saw one carrying a branch, we thought they had chosen a nest site over there.

One day heard a lot of noise (squeals and shrieks) and on investigating saw a pair of wedgetails performing spectacular acrobatics in the air. I have since realised this was probably their courtship. On several different occasions after this I would disturb a wedgetail in different locations when walking down to the river. Then one day in early August after one bird took flight ahead of me another flew off below me. I suddenly realised there might be a nest nearby and finally saw it in the upper fork of a large manna gum.

I restricted my walks so as not to frighten them away. Occasionally, with binoculars, I would watch one of the birds on the nest. Late September, as I approached, a bird flew off the nest and while I watched a fluffy, creamy white head and neck appeared. Since then I have seen the chick stand on the nest, fluffy all over and more recently looking very mottled with wings outspread. With luck we hope to be around the day it takes its first flight!

Over time the nest has become less visible because of new growth from a silver wattle in the foreground and branches with fresh gum leaves being added to the nest by the parents.

Meanwhile, over this period, the wedgetails have had to put up with a lot of harassment, particularly from ravens and magpies. We often hear their cries as they are being dive-bombed while flying or perched in trees overlooking their nest.

They appear to be a young pair as they are very colourful with golden head and shoulders and strong markings on their wings. The female is much larger and darker than the male. Apparently wedgetails become darker with successive moults. It is believed that this pair has nested elsewhere in the past. Wedgetails can have several nests in their territory and choose between them.

They have given a lot of pleasure over the past few months and we hope that in the future they will again choose this site.

Marie Krause

POWER: OF LINES AND PEOPLE

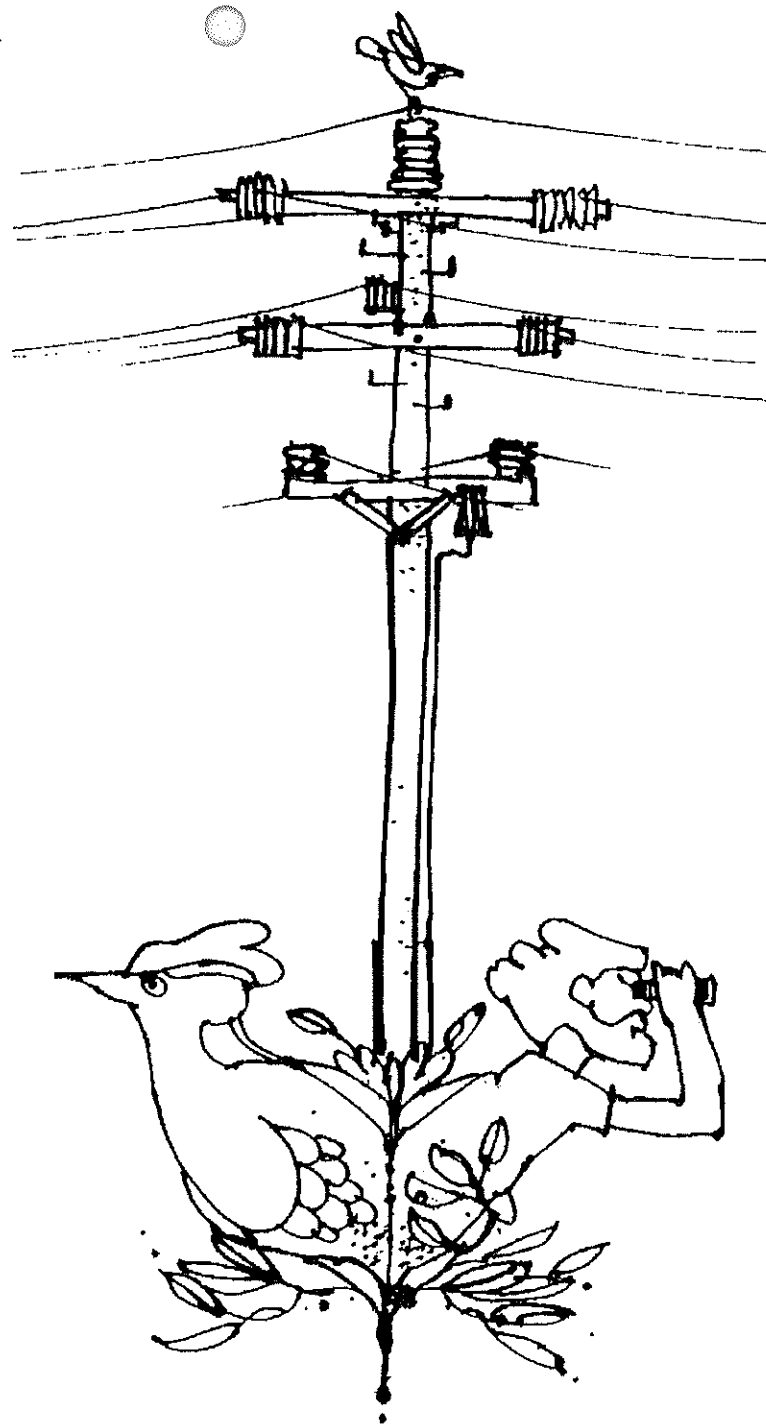
I write to muse on power dominance. Is there an ethical dilemma for the person in charge of the switch for the electric chair? Do we face similar choices when we flick similar-looking switches? Do the lines contain more power than people? I write to acknowledge the work of one person who helps me to put things into perspective

The article in BICA newsletter No 32 about vegetation control under power lines in the ELZ started me thinking. It gives a good summary of the situation but I wonder how many of your readers comprehend some of the human dimensions that lie behind the agreements that have been negotiated with the SEC to achieve the results outlined in the article.

From countless phone calls and on-site meetings with concerned residents in the wider region, I can attest to the very real and distressing impact that can accompany the removal of vegetation in order to comply with the requirements of the SEC to make their 'assets' safe. The reaction of residents of the Bend of Islands area is probably stronger than most, but it is not atypical.

What is unusual is the unremitting determination to demonstrate that your area is not to be despoiled by the vegetation management practices which do not recognise the special qualities of the area. There is always a reaction to works proposed in the ELZ and this reinforces the importance of the area in the eyes of bureaucrats such as myself who administer this issue in wider forums.

The Authority has a special charter to perform



The region and we, as much as any, are affected by this constant reminder of the special qualities of the area. It is obvious that the approach adopted to protect this area is not a reactionary response to ad-hoc occurrences of long-term proposals to trim trees, but a rigorous campaign to overcome that problems caused by the need for maintenance. There are individuals allocated responsibilities to look after the specific interests of the area which has resulted in a policy basis which has been proposed by BICA and adopted by the SEC and the Authority for application in the area. Impressive results from a handful of residents.

Of course, this has not been achieved without sacrifice. Frank Pierce seems to carry the main burden of the load. You may have noticed that Frank has an unusual stance resulting from many hours gazing with tilted neck at power lines and encroaching vegetation. I have listened to his explanation of the BICA policies for vegetation management so many times I sometimes wake up at night finding myself mouthing a mantra based on a three year cutting cycle. You will find after a while, that the way he makes circles in the dust of the roadway with the toe of his shoe is almost hypnotic as he explains to each new crop of SEC engineers that red box just doesn't grow that fast. And his silences following the annual delivery of the speech on the role of the SEC in wildfire management seem to get longer each year. Yet not once has the implacable Frank lost the plot.

I'm sure that many ELZ residents don't know of the long hours Frank puts into this activity. They could not recognise the importance of his strength in the face of apparently immovable propositions. It is a classical Greek drama: the all-powerful Goliath against the persuasive little David standing up for his community. I have certainly come to value his contribution and to rely on his expertise and common sense. It's comforting to know that not all power is provided by flicking a switch.

George Wright

RED HOT ROBINS!

There are five species of red breasted robins in Australia and all of these have been seen in the ELZ. The most common is the Scarlet Robin which is sedentary here. The Pink Robin and the Rose Robin are seen occasionally in the winter; they go to the mountains in summer. The Flame Robin is also occasionally seen and the Red-capped Robin was seen once or twice about ten years ago.

These robins all have distinctive features which enable identification. The males are vividly coloured and are fairly easy to identify. The females are more nondescript but nonetheless do have distinguishing features. The following table sets these out and will assist in identification. It should be used in conjunction with the field guides. Features entered in bold type are key ones in identification.

The robins that occur in the ELZ and that aren't included in the table are the Eastern Yellow Robin

and the Jacky Winter. The Yellow Robin is fairly common and the differently coloured juvenile is particularly interesting to see in November / December. The Jacky Winter is not as common but this year was observed nesting in the eastern end of Henley Rd.

It should be remembered that there are red breasted birds other than robins, for example the Mistletoe Bird which has been seen a number of times in the ELZ.
Frank Pierce

MALES	SCARLET	FLAME	ROSE	PINK	RED-CAPPED
BREAST	Red	Orange-red	Pinkish red	Pink	Red
FOREHEAD	White	Small white mark	Small dull white mark	Small dull white mark	Red
CHIN (above breast colour)	Black	Very small grey, almost none	Grey	Black	Black
HEAD & BACK	Black	Grey	Grey	Black	Black
WHITE IN WING?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
WHITE IN TAIL?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
OTHER		Reddish breast extends almost to beak	White belly Smaller than others		
FEMALES	SCARLET	FLAME	ROSE	PINK	RED-CAPPED
BREAST	Pale red	Brown clouding (faint orange in some)	Greyish-white, with or without pink clouding	Brown clouding	Sometimes faint pink
FOREHEAD	Small white	Small white	Small buff	Small buff	Faint pink flush
EYE RING	White	Fine white	Fine white	Buff	Fine white
HEAD & BACK	Brown	Brown	Brownish grey	Darker Brown	Brown
COLOUR IN WING	White	White	Pale buff	Rich buff	Small amount of white
WHITE IN TAIL?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
OTHER	Grey chin				
TIME OF YEAR IN ELZ	All year	Generally winter	Winter	Winter	Winter? rare

NO NERVOUS LADY STIRRING THE POSSUM

All of us have friends who sometimes see us as somewhat strange living out here among the gum trees away from what to their minds are the comfort and security of suburban life. We, on the other hand, see their urban existence as stressful and exposed to hazards we can well do without.

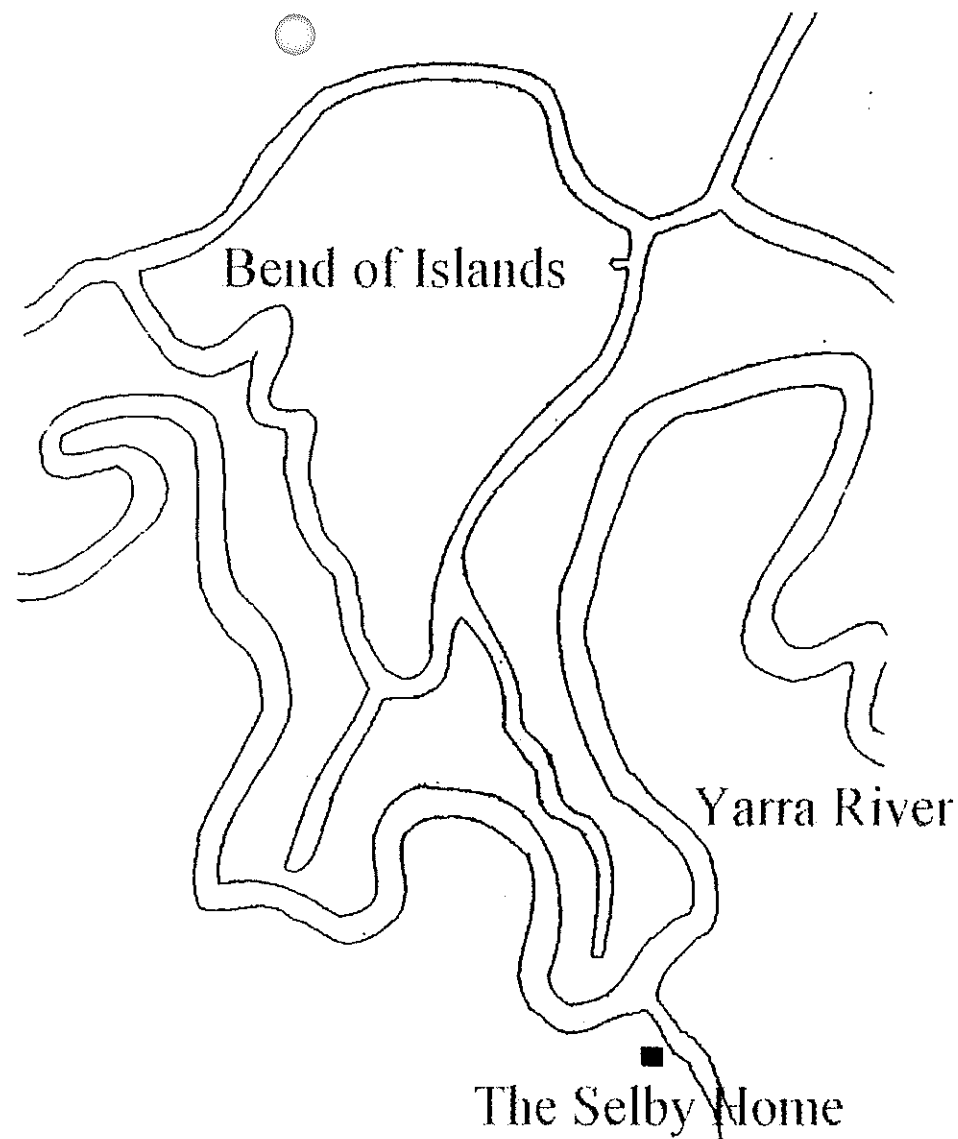
Spare a thought then for Penelope Selby, the earliest European woman to live around what is today the Bend of Islands. From December 1840 to October 1844, Penelope's home consisted of a rather rustic slab cottage a few hundred metres from where I now write in Gongflers Drive. In her way, she, too, was a refugee from suburban living; her early years being spent in rural Hackney as it became increasingly incorporated into nineteenth century London's grimy industrial sprawl. In Port Phillip, Penelope grew to love her creek-side home on the Yarra. She loved, too, its prolific wildlife. Hers was a love that saw its bush animals as a very welcome change from the sole alternative available - salt beef. In letters back home, she wrote of an animal 'about the size of a rabbit, feet like a kangaroo, and head like a rat'. 'They are very nice, and eat much the same as rabbit. We call them Bush rabbit, not liking the idea of eating rat'. Her favourite animal though was the brush-tail possum. She saw these charming creatures as larger and of a finer flavour than the 'rat'. Better still, the most delicious of all, she felt was a pigeon 'with wings a beautiful bronze'. 'We eat [also] black magpies, cockatoos and paroquets all in their turn as we can get them.

The 'Bush rabbit' she spoke of can of course be none other than the beetong, extinct on the mainland these past one hundred years; the black magpies, perhaps, were choughs - or perhaps pied currawong; the paroquets, the crimson rosella, and the tastiest morsel of all the bronze-winged pigeon.

Of course, the Selbys were indulging in little more than the gathering of bush tucker much the same as their black equivalents, the Wurundjeri, had before them since time began.

Although Penelope's arrival on the Yarra was very much that of a prim middle-class lady, her rustic sojourn on the frontier saw her willingly cast aside much of her former prudishness. Shortly after taking up residence on Brushy Creek, she wrote of discarding her petticoats and fashionable clothing to wear instead just 'shoes stockings, shift and cotton gown'. Her two young sons, she described too as 'not burdened by many clothes.'

George, her husband, an accountant by profession, ran a small herd of cattle on Mt Lofty. By July 1841, he had strung across its narrowest point a two mile fence to



deter his stock from wandering off into the trackless forest. With the freedom of a horse to ride the countryside, George appears seldom in his wife's letters.

It was a lonely existence for Penelope and her young sons, Prid and Will. Whilst her husband busied himself with stock, she kept a small milking herd. The twenty pound of butter it produced each week, she dispatched to Melbourne by the odd passing dray. The forty shillings it fetched saw to

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all family needs and station expenses.

Her closest neighbours were the Gardiners eight miles away and the Dawsons whose homestead stood in Pigtail Gully (close-by to today's 'Stonehouse' in Warrandyte). 'We seldom have visitors', she wrote in 1842, 'even the blacks have been away for some time.'

The appalling isolation of life on the Yarra in the 1840s saw its scattered female population cling together for mutual support. In November 1841, Penelope wrote of a visit to Mrs Anderson on Anderson Creek 'who was unwell and is now dead'. In 1842, she attended the birth of her neighbour, Joan Dawson's child, 'it being her first child and she so delicate ... we managed admirably.' Penelope, herself, was not nearly so fortunate! In all, she lost seven children in childbirth - another to die was a child she adopted.

Penelope's affection for the Yarra comes through cogently in a letter she wrote home in November 1844 after her family and the Dawsons had trekked cross-country to the Port Fairy district to set up a run in more promising country. 'My old friend, the Yarra Yarra' she wrote, 'has overflowed beyond the calculations and remembrance of any persons here and done great damage. Entire houses have been washed away. The blacks still say as they said of the last flood, "This is only piccaninny - big one coming!". My affection for the Yarra is still great!'

Despite the isolation, life for Penelope Selby was without doubt happier on the Yarra than at any other time in her short life. The pioneer woman of the Bend of Islands was tragically killed, aged just forty, on her *Newlands* farm in 1851 when thrown from a horse.

In 1984, her letters were collected with those of other pioneer women for publication in Lucy Frost's *No Place for a Nervous Lady: Voices from the Australian Bush*. The letters make excellent reading, and have the capacity to help us, too, understand our place in the Australian bush.

Perhaps we no longer see the district's wildlife as the resource she did. However, it doesn't necessarily follow that our impact upon it is any the less.

The odd animal that finished in the Selby cooking pot had little impact on the district's wildlife. The beeton that disappeared, did so, not because of pioneer cooking pots, but because of the same rabbit and fox that continues to decimate our own wildlife today.

Perhaps its time we took an active role in rectifying the matter! Surely it is just not good enough to feel warm about 'no cats and dogs' when the rabbit and its natural predator, the fox, continue on their merry way. Both should be looked upon as ferals to be destroyed! Unless we take an active role now, future generations might well be excused for looking back in askance at our own sojourn in the Australian bush.

The recent address by Dr Hugh Wirth, Director of the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals, to the BICA Annual General Meeting provided surprisingly good insights into how fox numbers might be dramatically reduced. A program developed along the lines he outlined, when combined with other well-established methods of rabbit eradication, has, I believe, the capacity to see the fauna and flora of the Bend of Islands restored to something like its former glory. Perhaps, we too, ought develop a taste for bush rabbit!

Mick Woiwod

FIELD DAY TRIP TO HEALESVILLE SANCTUARY

Have you ever been in a mouse-breeding room on a day when it's over 30 degrees C outside?

Well, many intrepid folk did just that and called it a learning experience on Sunday 16 October this year!

It was just one of the many fascinating insights we gained from our guided tour of the 'backyard' of the Healesville Sanctuary — the places where usually only the keepers wander.

Other areas we were taken by Kevin Mason, Head Keeper, were the plant nursery and propagation areas where the co-ordinators were on hand by special request just for us to explain what and when and how they do what they do — it was a fascinating insight to a well-run local native propagation organisation. He also led us past the huge heaps of mulch and general 'backyard stuff' to see the shores of Lake Coranderrk, and then he spoke about the soaring and flexibly-used aviaries where the Helmetted Honeyeaters are bred and its close relative the Yellow Tufted Honeyeater helps out by raising even more young Helmetteds. And then it was into the food production kitchen and the mouse-, fly- and cricket-breeding rooms.

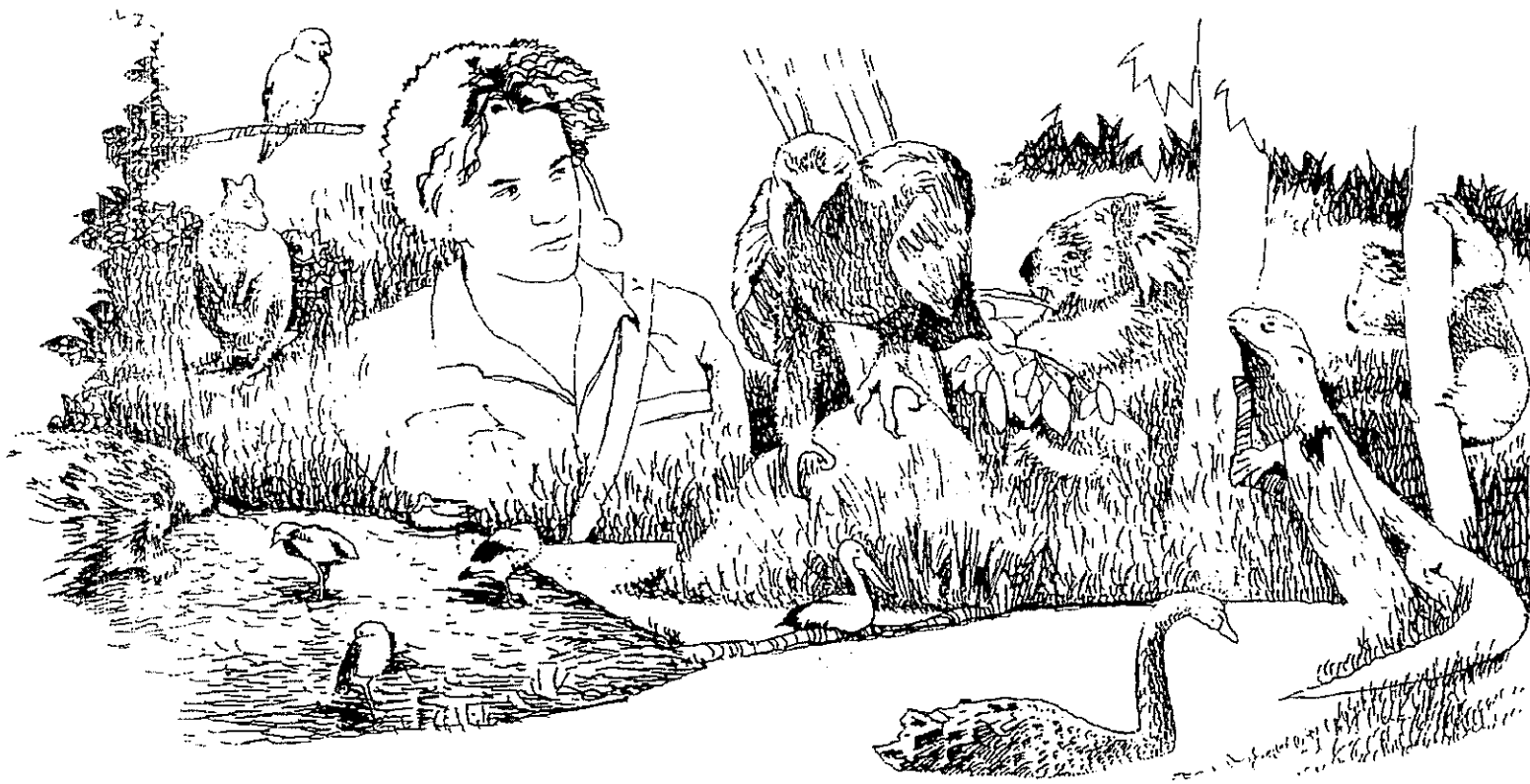
This food production kitchen was definitely not your average suburban home kitchen. Well, it was much bigger for a start and then there was the wall of see-through refrigerators, and the wooden bins and scoops available along the opposite wall for the dry foods such as seeds which helped to make it different. There was a real kitchen with an oven or two and sinks etc in the far corner and then there were the meal worms, live flies and other tasties

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just waiting to be dinner to some lovely furry native creature. The keepers just came in and helped themselves to the correct measurements of each item for their charges, mixed it all up in a container on a central bench and took them away.

Opposite this building were the small rooms devoted to breeding mice, flies etc for the animals and within this building there was a baby wombat nursery — the resident was rather small still and had a large teddy bear for comfort during waking hours. Sleep-time saw the baby all snuggled down into a jumper which was hanging so it was just above the floor level. Gee, it looked cosy!

Kevin also walked us through the building site of the nearly-there Platypus House which will be having its opening in mid-December. It has been designed by the same architect who designed the soaring Eltham Library and many of those spacious elements have been incorporated into the Platypus House. It will be a wonderful addition to the Sanctuary.



And all these experiences were after lunch when we had already spent over two hours walking around the Sanctuary 'proper'!

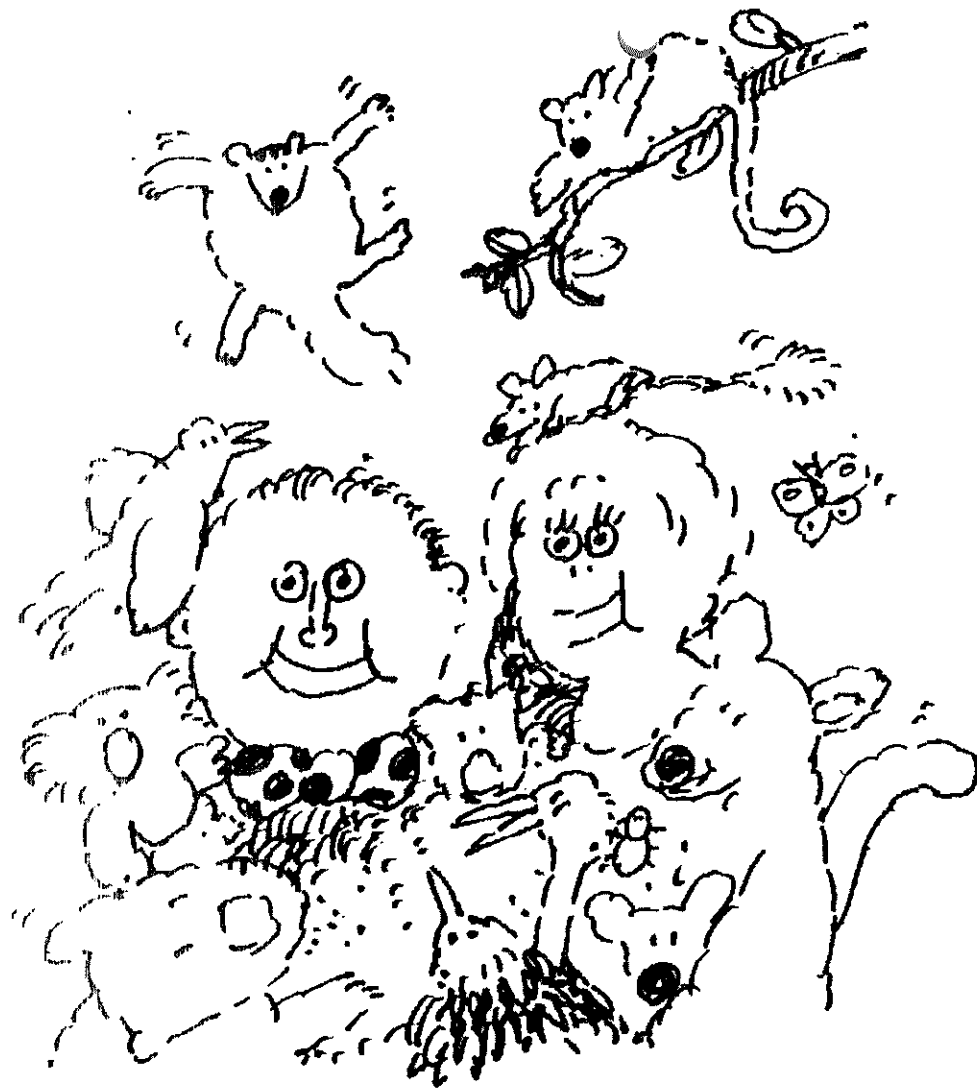
On arrival we were divided into two groups and led through all the major areas including birds, kangaroos and wallabies who were all by now stretched out under all the available trees as it was becoming pretty warm! One group managed to keep their guide in sight and were taken to everything via the shortest possible way, however, there are always some in every crowd and it seemed that the other group lingered too long somewhere near the birds and their guide began guiding many others instead!

We all swapped stories when we were reunited at the ~Where Eagles Dare' exhibition around noon where the keeper was upstaged by a cheeky and adventurous hawk who decided not to come down from the trees surrounding the amphitheatre to collect her bounty (dead mice). Another keeper brought out a pretty barn owl which we were told was affected by the heat of the day as they would normally hunt in the cool of the evening, and who had to be encouraged

to collect her reward for flying! However, we missed the star of the show, Gabrielle the eagle, because of the hawk's playfulness. As all the humans filed away to get lunch or to see other animals the first keeper was still trying to encourage her down!

Most of us staggered back from Kevin's tour of the behind-the-scenes areas to go straight to the kiosk for an ice-cream and a drink, and to chat about all that we had tried to take in on our behind-the-scenes tour. We all certainly ended up knowing heaps more about the work the keepers do to sustain the calm and happy-looking animals out at 'front-of-house' than we knew at the beginning of the day.

Barb Whiter



Welcome home
Tari & Carolyn O'Brien
- you have
been missed.

BICA MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION

If you have not yet renewed your application for 1995 or wish to become a new member you may do so by completing this form and mailing it with your subscription to:

Hon. Sec., BICA inc.
c/- P.O.
Kangaroo Ground
Vic., 3097

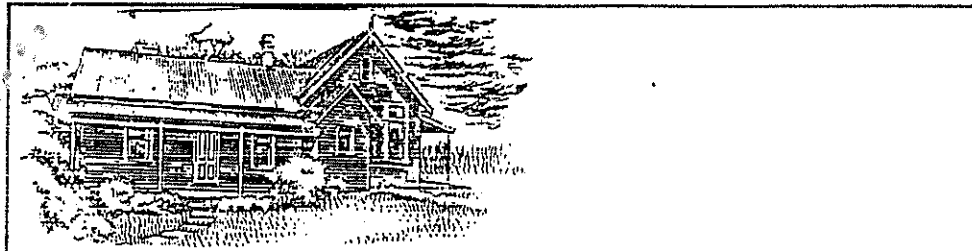
Application for membership of BICA Inc., 1995

Name(s): _____

Postal Address _____

Telephone _____

Ordinary membership (single)	\$10.00
Concession membership (single)	\$6.00
Family membership	\$20.00

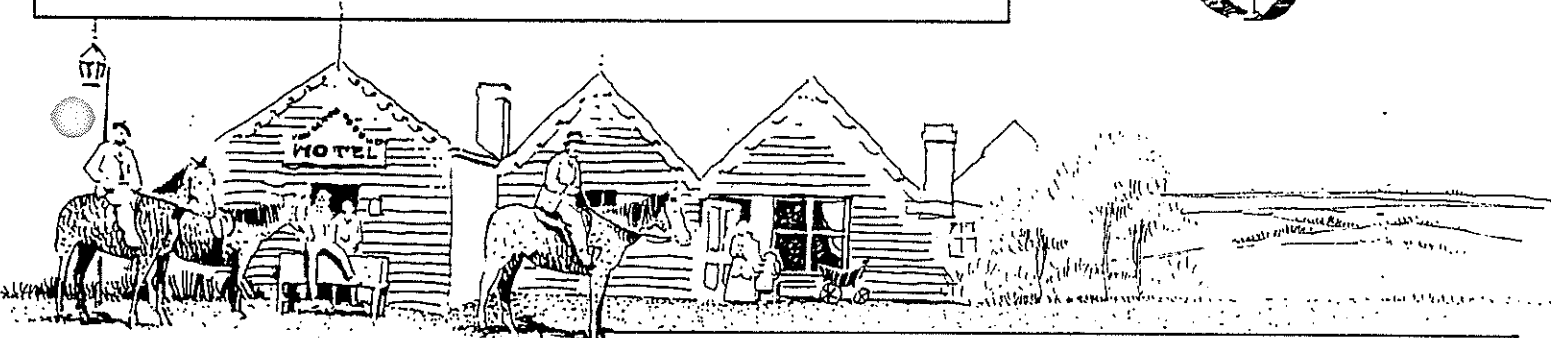
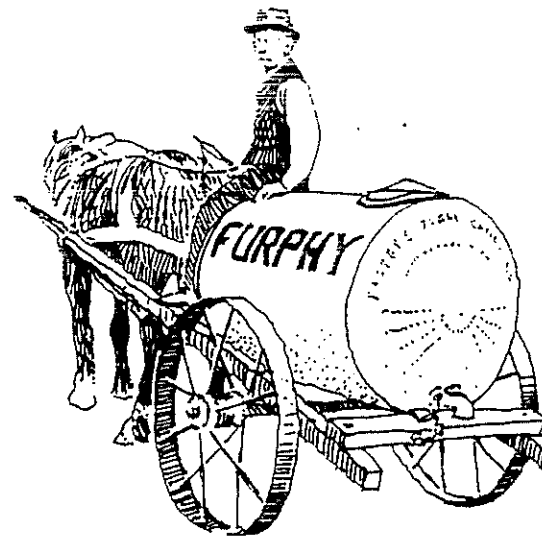


ANDREW ROSS SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM

The Andrew Ross Schoolhouse Museum was officially opened in March 1993 and is still in the process of being fully developed: The building itself dates from 1878. Until recent times it was the residence, in turn, of the teachers who taught in the adjoining classroom.

Until head teacher Thomas Boardman took up residence in 1886, the building housed the *Evelyn Observer*, the newspaper founded on the site in 1873 by Andrew Ross. The slab school Ross taught in from 1851 till 1876 was located just above the present Kangaroo Ground Church. Like most other settlers in the district, he was Scottish. Much of what is known of the district's early days comes from his hand - from either his *Diary*, his *Reminiscences* or his newspaper, the *Evelyn Observer*.

It is early days yet for the Museum. Why not become part of the action? For further information regarding the *Friends of the Andrew Ross Museum* ask at the desk, or write to Denise Denier c/o Kangaroo Ground Post Office - or give her a call on 712-0530.

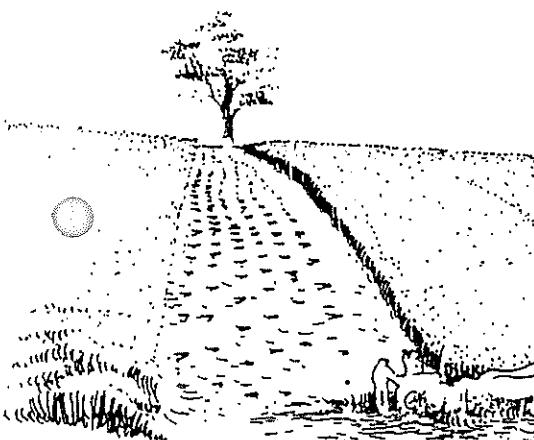


Room 1 - The Life and Times of Andrew Ross

Andrew Ross was the district's first school-master. Between April 1851 and December 1875, he taught in a slab and shingle building (doubling as a church on Sundays), located between this museum building and the present church. By 1857 Ross had expanded his establishment to incorporate what he was fond to describe as his *Evelyn Commercial, Industrial and Agricultural School*, a boarding school able to claim the distinction of being Victoria's first technical school.

The texts on the walls of Room 1 are taken from the schoolmaster's *Reminiscences* written between 1887 and 1893. These were serialized in the *Evelyn Observer*, the newspaper Ross founded in Kangaroo Ground in 1873. For two years (1884-1886) the *Evelyn Observer* was published in these rooms of the museum building. Later, the printing presses were moved into brick offices further along the Main Road where the paper continued publication until transferred to a Hurstbridge rail-head in 1917.

Located in Room 1 is a photocopy of the diary Andrew Ross kept throughout his adult life. Copies of the *Reminiscences of Andrew Ross*, published by this museum, can be purchased at the desk.



Room 2 - Farms of the District's First Scottish Settlers

Because of its rich black volcanic soil, Kangaroo Ground was settled earlier than other parts of the Yarra Valley. The district's first permanent settlers, the Donaldsons arrived in 1841. James and Isabella Donaldson, fearful of attack from bushrangers and Aborigines, invited on to their productive *Square-Mile* of black soil other Scots who, when further land became available, eventually settled on farms of their own. These farms are featured on the walls of the museum's second room.

By the mid-1850s, with grain fetching premium Gold Rush prices, each of the families featured were cropping, on average, fifty acres of wheat. Throughout the early phase, ploughing in the district was performed by bullock, harvesting by the sickle and threshing by the hand-held flail.

By 1856, wheat from the Kangaroo Ground farms was being processed in Dendy's Steam Mill on the banks of the Diamond at Eltham. When the horse came into its own in the 1870s, district farmers concentrated mainly on fodder crops such as oats.

