

GLENROWAN

NOTES FOR A TALK FOR
THE NATIONAL TRUST (QUEENSLAND)
AT BOGGO ROAD GAOL

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March 2018

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Introduction

Ned Kelly needs no introduction. As one of Australia's most well-known historical figures, the story of Kelly has sat in the public imagination since the series of events that culminated in the Glenrowan siege in June 1880. For many he is a hero of the working classes, and of the Irish, and encapsulates the Australian larrikin spirit. For others he is a violent thug and a murderer.

In much discourse around Kelly there is little room for nuance and complexity. The siege at Glenrowan is characterised by violence: two civilians and three Kelly gang members were killed by police gunfire and Ned himself seriously wounded, with gang member, Aaron Sherritt murdered at Beechworth, and three policemen having been killed at Stringybark Creek in late 1878, the event which precipitated the siege. Yet, the site is one of our first popular culture sites, with sympathisers and media photographers arriving to witness and document the siege as it unfolded. It has remained a popular tourist destination since then, buoyed by Kelly's continued prevalence in films, art and literature. Soon after the event, police and onlookers were posing for photographs at the main siege locations and even in Kelly armour.

In 2017, Lovell Chen was commissioned to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the siege site, which incorporates the key sites of the final Kelly conflict, including the original railway platform, the site of Ann Jones's Inn (which was burnt to the ground during the siege) and the site of Ned Kelly's fall and capture. While this report addressed a range of matters which affect and relate to the Glenrowan Heritage Precinct, its primary focus is heritage significance and heritage values, and the conservation and management of these values.



Figure 1 Policeman equipped in Kelly armour, 1880 — an image that shows the level of interest (already an iconic look) and indicates the souveniring aspect.

Source: Victorian Patents Office Copyright Collection, State Library of Victoria

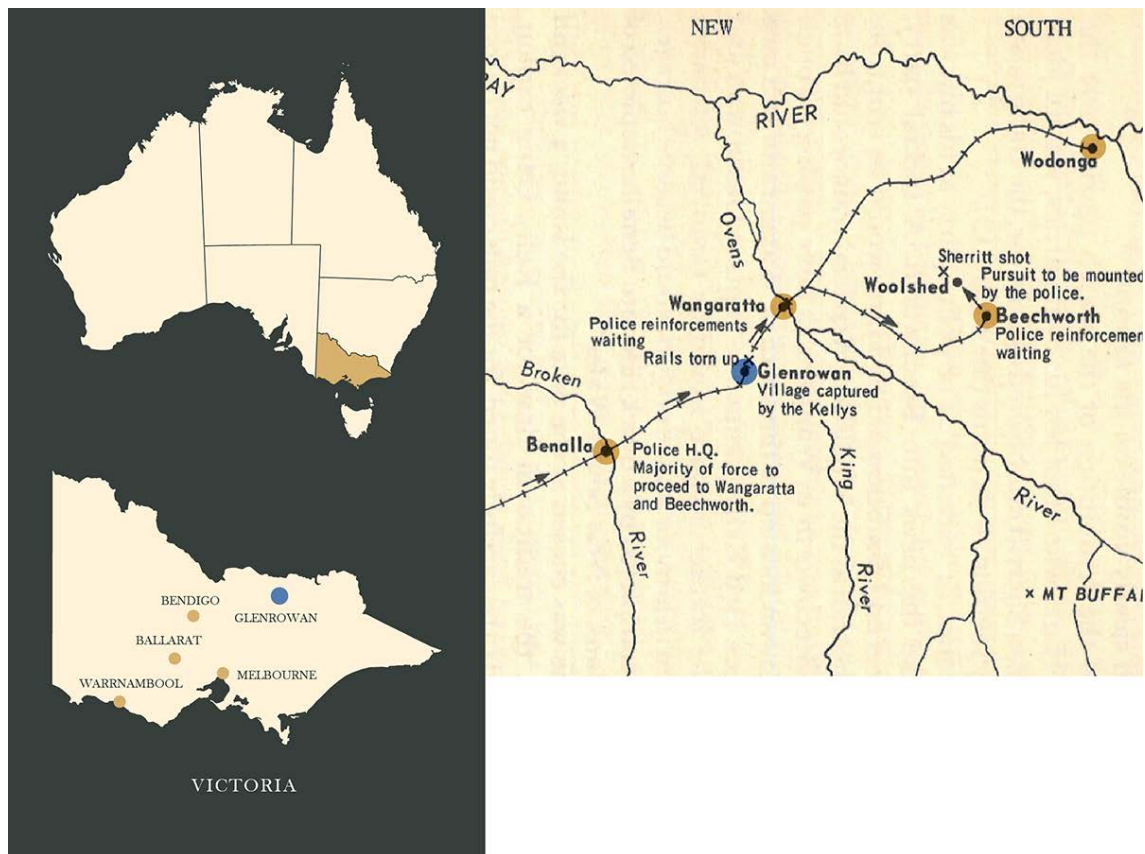


Figure 1 Location of Glenrowan

Background to the siege

Glenrowan is a small town in the north-east of Victoria, located between the larger towns of Benalla and Wangaratta. To the north of the township is the Warby Ranges. The railway line through Glenrowan was opened in 1873, two years before town allotments were put up for sale and three years before the primary school was opened. 'Old Glenrowan' was the original small township and survey west of the current town centre, sited around the Old High Street (also known as the Old Hume Highway). The early township followed settlement of the broader area by Europeans from the mid-1840s, including pastoral stations to the south-west of Mount Glenrowan (aka Mount Morgan). Then, in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the town focus shifted further east and south, to take advantage of growing development and activity around the railway station, which in turn followed the arrival of the rail in 1874.

Ned Kelly was born in 1855 in Beveridge, Victoria, a small town to the north of Melbourne. He was the eldest sibling of five daughters and three sons to the Irish-Catholic John and Ellen Kelly. In 1866, Ned's father died, leaving Ellen with seven children aged from 18 months to 13 years, and Ned subsequently became the main breadwinner.¹ Over the following decade, he had numerous encounters with the law, including two terms of imprisonment, for various offences including horse and cattle stealing.

Matters escalated from 1878, following an incident between Ellen Kelly, her son-in-law, William Skillion, neighbour William Williamson, and police trooper A Fitzpatrick. The latter had gone to Ellen's house apparently to arrest her son Dan. There is uncertainty about what transpired, with Fitzpatrick claiming to have been shot by Ned Kelly, who may or may not have been present. Ellen Kelly, Williamson and Skillion were subsequently arrested for aiding and abetting the attempted murder of a police trooper.

Ellen was sentenced to three years' jail, and Ned and Dan went into hiding in the ranges near Mansfield, with rewards of £100 offered for their arrest. The Kellys were later joined by Joe Byrne and Steve Hart, the group becoming known as the Kelly Gang.



Figure 3 Prison photograph of a young Ned Kelly, 1873
Source: National Museum of Australia

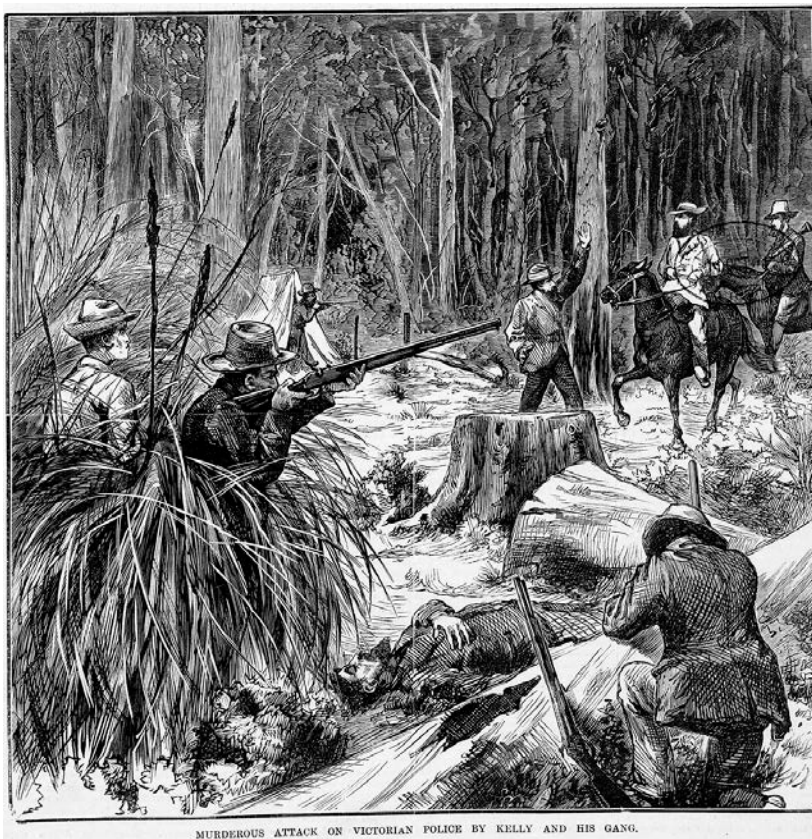
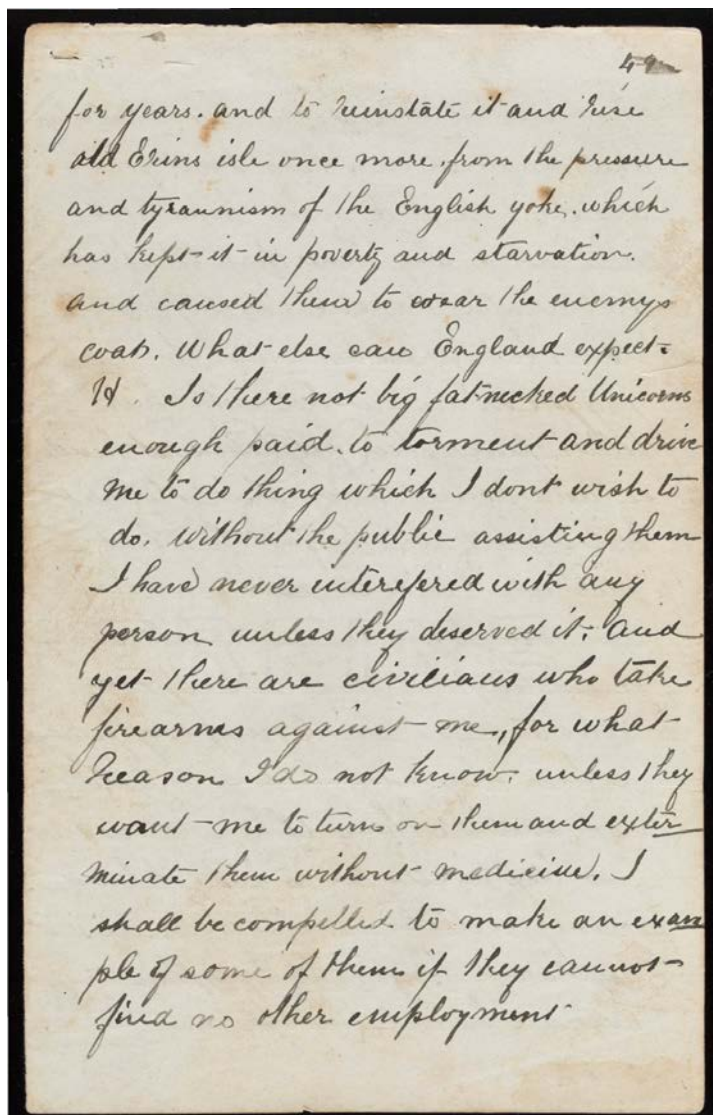


Figure 4 Attack on Victorian Police by Kelly and his gang, 1878
Source: *Illustrated Australian News*, held by State Library of Victoria

On 26 October 1878, a group of four policemen set up a camp at Stringybark Creek, and were confronted by the Kelly Gang. Three of the policemen were shot and killed at the site, with only one, Sergeant McIntyre, escaping to report the murders.² The rewards for the apprehension of the gang members — dead or alive — were increased to £500 and again to £1,000 as the gang evaded police and committed further crimes, including bank robbery, in towns in north-eastern Victoria and southern New South Wales.

In late 1878 and early 1879, Ned dictated what became known as the 'Jerilderie letter' to Byrne, an eloquent and powerfully written manifesto intended to justify his actions, including allowing McIntyre to escape as 'I did not like to shoot him after he had surrendered'.³ The letter was widely reported on and published in newspapers, contributing to the public fascination with the Kelly Gang, and to the characterisation of Ned as a folk hero, particularly for the poor and oppressed. As noted in the National Museum of Australia entry on the letter, along with a call for the rich to share their wealth with the poor, Ned's writing reveals a man who believed he had been deeply wronged. It ends with the phrase: 'I am a widow's son outlawed and my orders must be obeyed.'⁴



for years. and to reinstate it and free
all Irish isle once more, from the pressure
and tyranny of the English yoke, which
has kept it in poverty and starvation.
and caused them to wear the enemy's
coat. What else can England expect.
14. Is there not big fat-necked Unicorns
enough paid, to torment and drive
me to do thing which I don't wish to
do. without the public assisting them
I have never interfered with any
person unless they deserved it. And
yet there are civilians who take
firearms against me, for what
reason I do not know. unless they
want me to turn on them and exter-
minate them without medicine. I
shall be compelled to make an exam-
ple of some of them if they cannot
find no other employment.

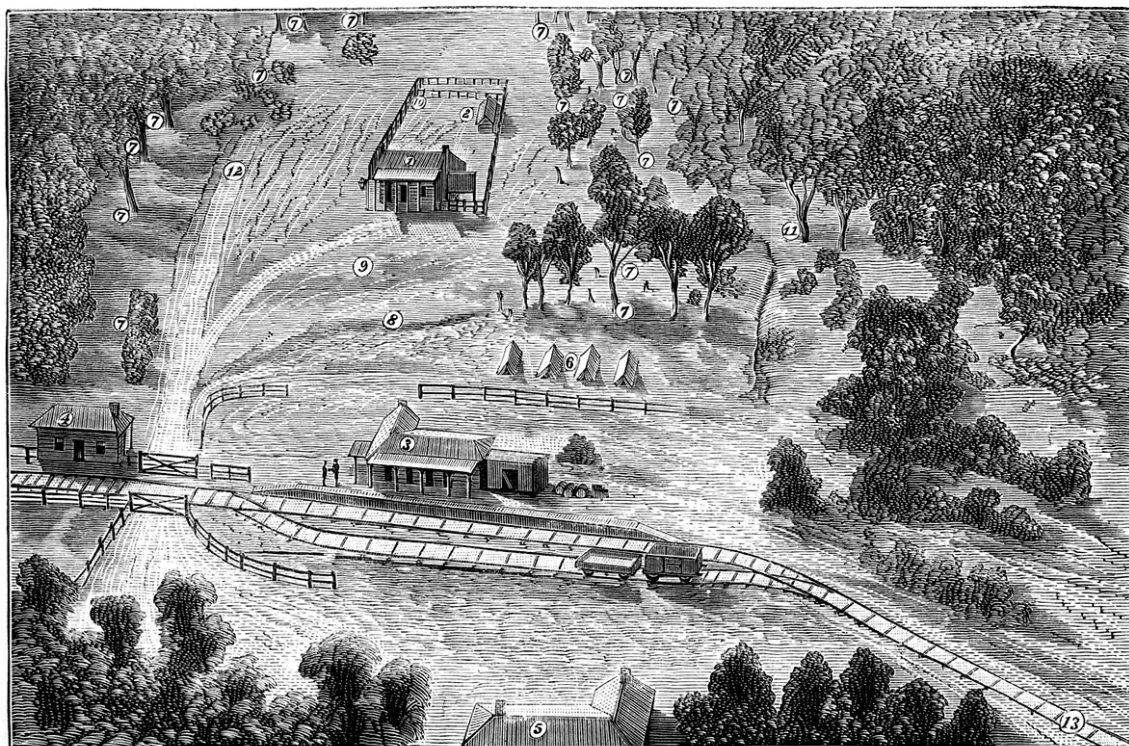
Figure 5 Ned Kelly, *Jerilderie Letter*, 1879
Source: State Library of Victoria

Newspapers devoted much column space to the whereabouts of the gang, and the public sympathy given to them. As noted in the *South Australian Border Mail*, the 'out-lawed murderer' was 'looked upon as a hero all over the north-eastern district ... the sympathisers are more numerous than the law-loving people in the district'.⁵ Indeed, a correspondent in the *Tasmanian* expressed some frustration over the "amount of culpable indifference to the capture of the murderers exhibited by a portion of the public" when compared with the crimes the gang had committed:

But all such sympathy and all such considerations are totally inapplicable to the bloody-thirsty ruffians who now hold the roads in Victoria ...⁶

By mid-1880, the reward for capture of the gang members had increased to £2,000 each, and Aboriginal men, skilled in the art of tracking people through the bush, were brought down to Victoria from Queensland. In June 1880, four police officers were assigned to protect a friend of Joe Byrne's, Aaron Sherritt, who had reputedly become an agent of the police.

It was in this context that the Glenrowan siege began.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF GLENROWAN.
 1.—JONES'S HOTEL. 2.—OUT HOUSE. 3.—RAILWAY STATION. 4.—STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE. 5.—MCDONALD'S HOTEL. 6.—PLATELAYERS' TENTS.
 7.—POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE POLICE. 8.—TRENCH: LIEUTENANT O'CONNOR AND BLACK TRACKERS' POST. 9.—SPOT WHERE MR. HARE WAS SHOT. 10.—PADDOCK
 WHERE HORSES WERE SHOT. 11.—TREE WHERE NED KELLY WAS CAPTURED. 12.—ROAD TO BRACKEN'S STATION. 13.—HALF A MILE FROM HERE THE RAILS WERE TAKEN UP.

Figure 6 Bird's eye view of Glenrowan as it appeared in 1880: main sites, hotels near the railway and main town to the west of the railway.

Source: *Illustrated Australian News*, held by State Library of Victoria



Figure 7 Ann Jones' Inn at Glenrowan, with plate layers tents on the right.
Source: State Library of Victoria

Kelly Gang at Glenrowan

On the evening of Saturday 26 June, members of the Kelly Gang descended on Glenrowan to implement what would have been their grandest and most ambitious scheme, and which they hoped would prompt the formation of a republic in north-eastern Victoria.

Dan Kelly and Joe Byrne travelled to Beechworth to murder Aaron Sherritt, whom they believed had become a police informer. Sherritt was shot at his house in Beechworth by Byrne and the police officers were allowed to escape, to bring attention to the murder, and to later draw them to Glenrowan.⁷

Meanwhile Steve Hart and Ned Kelly planned to tear up the railway line on the outskirts of Glenrowan, in order to derail the police train travelling to Beechworth in response to Sherritt's death. The chosen site was east of the town, where the railway alignment curved. Skyrockets would then be launched to rally sympathisers, who would join the gang and move on to Benalla. There the inbound railway line was to be similarly vandalised, rendering the town entirely inaccessible by rail and allowing the gang to take over the police barracks and to rob a local branch of the Bank of New South Wales. This would then trigger a guerrilla war that it was apparently envisaged would lead to the eventual foundation of the so-called Republic of North Eastern Victoria.

The grand plan, however, went wrong from the very beginning — they could not lift railway lines. Ned sought 'assistance' from the plate layers, and the railway line was duly pulled up, with an entire length of rail, with sleepers still attached, removed and dumped down the adjacent embankment.

In order to prevent news of the gang's grand scheme from reaching the police, any locals who passed by were taken 'captive'. The women and children were taken to the stationmaster's house, where they were guarded by Steve Hart, while the remainder moved up the hill to Ann Jones' Inn (also known as Ann Jones' Glenrowan Inn) to the north-west of the railway station. By this time, Dan Kelly and Joe Byrne had returned from Beechworth and the gang set up in the two-roomed skillion at the rear of the

Inn. By midday on Sunday 27 June, the police train had still not arrived in Glenrowan. Late in the afternoon, the large number of captives, originally believed to number more than 60, was reduced when about many were allowed to leave.

One of the last allowed to leave was local schoolteacher Thomas Curnow, who was released some time after ten o'clock that evening. However, Curnow determined to warn the police of the impending derailment and informed the train guard of the situation at Glenrowan.

At about three o'clock in the morning, the four members of the gang emerged from the Inn in full iron armour, taking positions along the front of the building. Recognising Superintendent Hare coming through a gate, Ned fired the first shot, hitting Hare in the wrist. The other gang members opened fire as the police took cover behind trees, on the ground, and in a deep ditch.

Although by this time seriously wounded, Ned Kelly continued to fire on the police. He took cover in a clump of three trees, some 100 metres to the east of the Inn, where he had tethered his mare. When Ned returned to the Inn, entering from the rear, the police were still firing on the building. Joe Byrne, standing at the bar, was killed. Ned retreated to the trees again, where Lloyd remained, but with Dan and Steve still at the Inn, he prepared to return and assist them.



Figure 8 Railway Station (with spectators gathered) and Ann Jones' Inn still standing (at left), June 1880

Source: State Library of Victoria, photographer John Bray



Figure 9 Police in position to fire, possibly staged for the photograph after the siege, by Oswald Thomas Madeley
Source: Victorian Patents Office Copyright Collection, State Library of Victoria

Again, in what must have been a chaotic situation, police opened fire on the ironclad figure of Ned as he emerged from the bush. Ned, with his energy rapidly diminishing from his wounds, moved towards a nearby fallen tree. It was Sergeant Steele who closed in on the bushranger and fired rounds into the figure at close range. The collapsed Ned was finally captured, and taken to the stationmaster's office, where he was attended to by a doctor who believed the bushranger was dying.

A huge crowd of spectators had gathered by this time, including the three Kelly sisters and a considerable number of sympathisers.

Dan Kelly and Steve Hart meanwhile had remained inside the Inn. A ceasefire was called at ten o'clock that morning to allow the remaining captives to vacate the building. Finally, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, Senior Constable Johnson set fire to the building in an effort to end the siege. The Inn was engulfed in flames, and later the bodies of two young men, assumed to be Dan and Steve, were found in the ruined building.



Figure 10 The smouldering Ann Jones' Inn immediately after the siege
Source: State Library of Victoria, photographer Oswald Thomas Madeley



Figure 11 Glenrowan Inn after the fire, June 1880
Source: Victorian Patents Office Copyright Collection, State Library of Victoria



Figure 12 Glenrowan Railway Station with the remains of Ann Jones' Inn in the background (left hand side)
Source: State Library of Victoria, photographer John Bray



Figure 13 McDonnell's Railway Tavern following the siege
Source: photo: State Library of Victoria, photographer Oswald Thomas Madeley

Public interest

Such was the fascination with the Kelly Gang, that during the siege when many people gathered to watch the unfolding drama, journalists and photographers were included in their number.⁸ Their presence has helped make the siege one of the most highly documented events in nineteenth century Australia. There was enormous press coverage, with hundreds of articles written and syndicated across the country in the week following the siege.⁹ The Beechworth newspaper, the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, produced a detailed description of the events as they unfolded, and photographers including John Bray and Oswald Thomas Madeley depicted the scene through the siege. The *Argus* also noted the 'crowds of persons collected at the newspaper offices and at street corners, eager for further information.' After Ned Kelly and the body of Joe Byrne were transported to Benalla Police Station, Byrne's corpse was propped up outside the building for viewing by onlookers and photographers.

Where photographs did not suffice, illustrations and oblique plans were produced to give readers a sense of the siege site, and the sites of the events associated with the downfall of the gang and the capture of Ned Kelly.

The Glenrowan siege site also soon became a tourist destination. In September 1881, over a year after the event, the *Australasian Sketcher* reported on a Sunday school picnic at Glenrowan. Several siege-related landmarks were illustrated including Thomas Curnow's schoolhouse, the derailment site, Ann Jones' Inn and the 'Kelly Tree'. It was duly noted that 'the children seemed quite alive to the historical associations of the place, and all spent the day very agreeably'.¹⁰



Figure 14 Kelly Gang armour and a rifle

Source: Victorian Patents Office Copyright Collection, State Library of Victoria

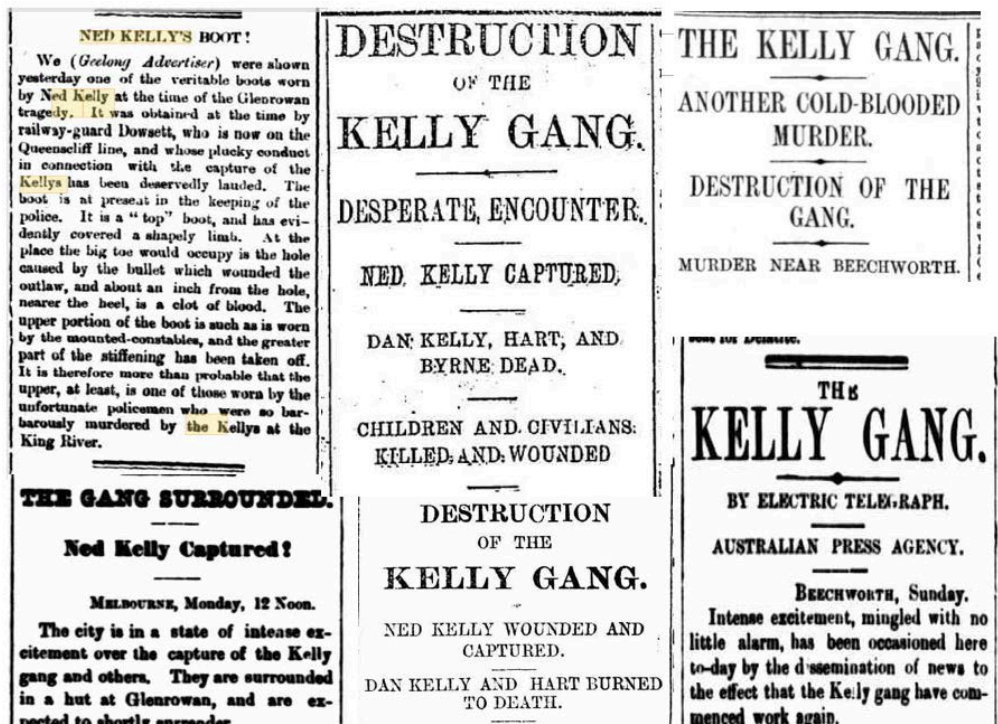


Figure 15 Newspaper reports of the siege
Source: Digitised newspapers via Trove, National Library of Australia

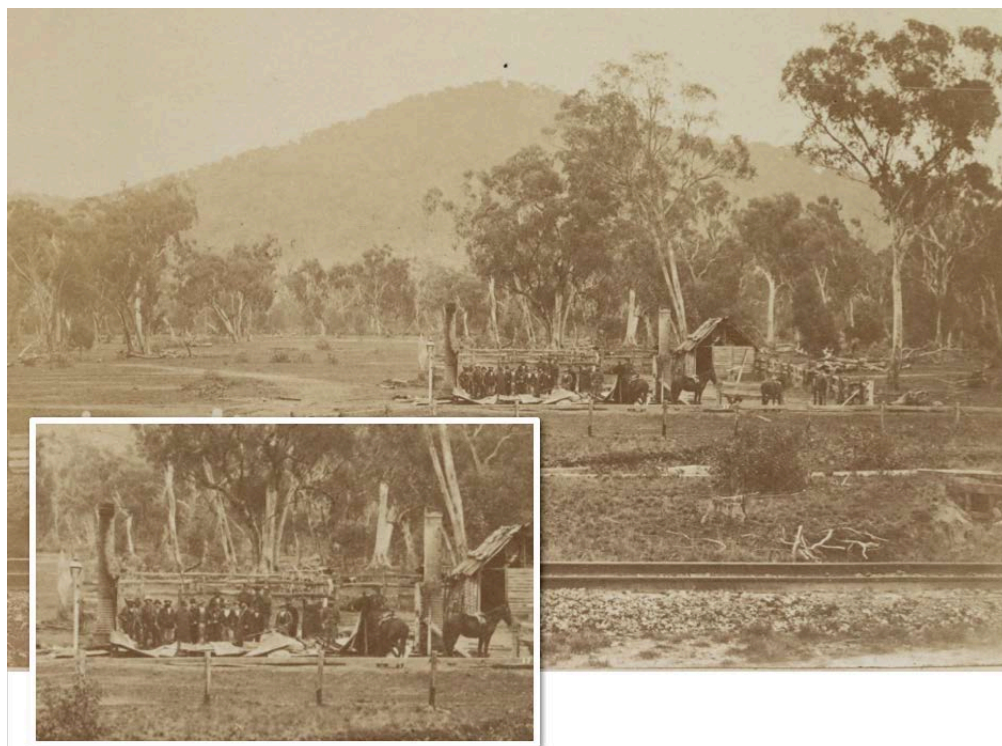


Figure 16 Crowd gathered in ruins of Ann Jones' Inn, 1880
Source: Victorian Patents Office Copyright Collection, State Library of Victoria

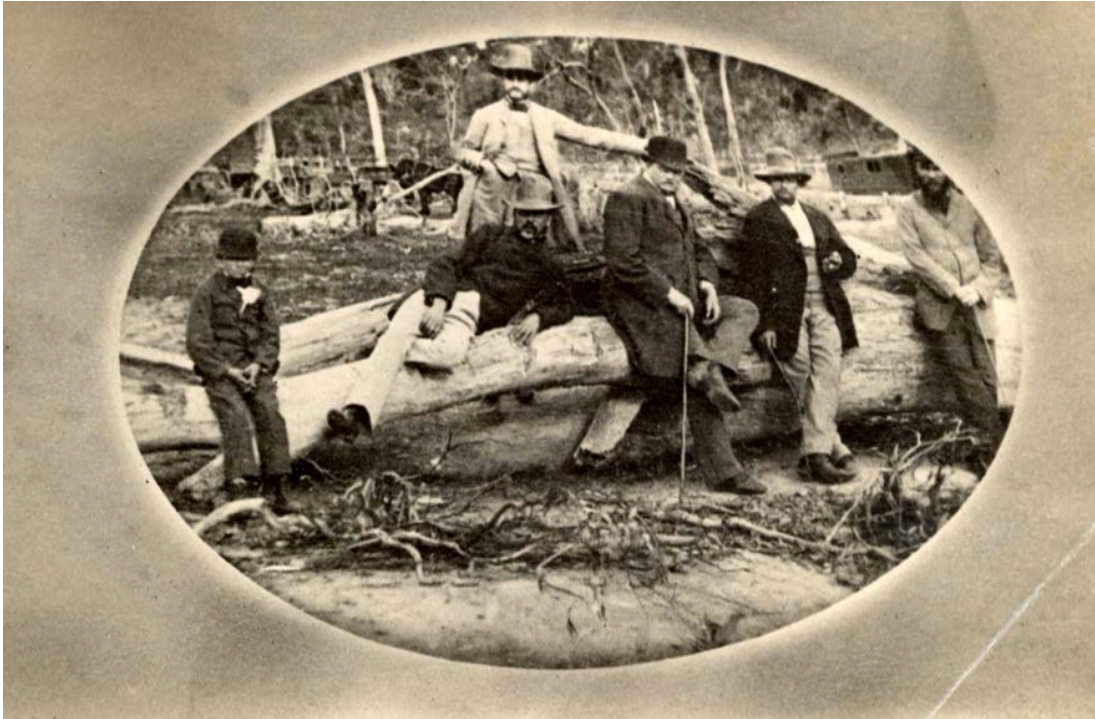


Figure 17 Group on the 'Ned Kelly log', two days after Ned's capture, July 1880
Source: State Library of Victoria, photographer John Bray



Figure 18 The body of Joe Byrne outside Benalla Police Station
Source: State Library of Victoria

Glenrowan after the siege

The siege site remained largely recognisable for the next six decades, as can be seen in a mid-1930s oblique aerial photograph (below). Photographs taken in the late 1940s show the site as a grassed expanse with mature Eucalyptus trees, timber post and rail fences, unsealed roads, and the original railway level crossing still intact. More dramatic changes in the post-war era have altered the appearance of the site, including the demolition of McDonnell's Railway Tavern, removal of timber fences, sealing of dirt roads and the construction of the railway overpass on Beaconsfield Parade in place of the original level crossing.



Figure 29 Looking south across Glenrowan, 1890
Source: State Library of Victoria, photographer W.H. Ferguson

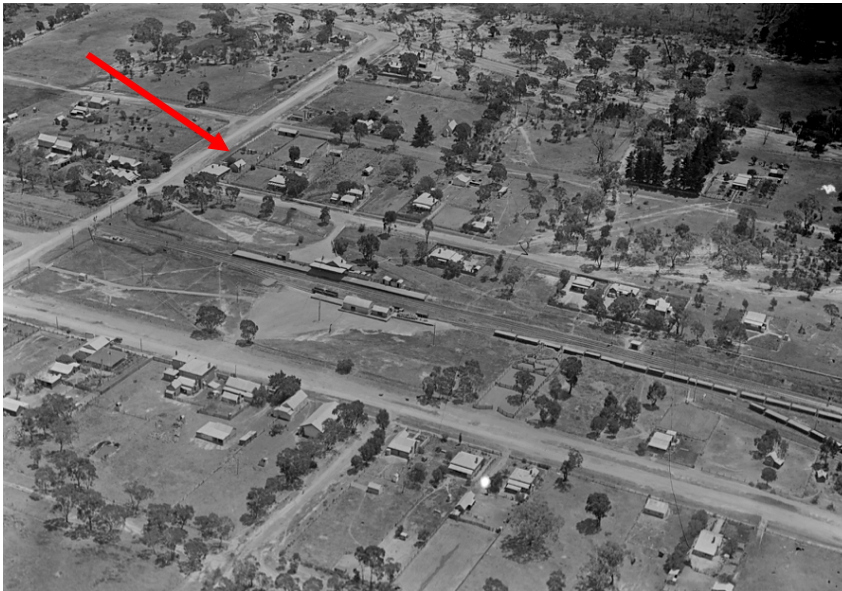


Figure 19 Aerial view of Glenrowan showing siege site in 1932. New building on Ann Jones' Inn site indicated
Source: Airspy Collection, State Library of Victoria

Glenrowan Heritage Precinct

The Glenrowan Heritage Precinct is located within the township of Glenrowan in north-eastern Victoria, includes both public and private land, and is approximately eight hectares in size. It incorporates the key sites of the final Kelly conflict, including the original railway platform, the site of Ann Jones's Inn (which was burnt to the ground) and the site of Ned Kelly's fall and capture.

The significance of the Glenrowan Heritage Precinct is widely recognised, as reflected in the following statutory heritage listings:

- National Heritage List (105729)
- Victorian Heritage Register and Heritage Inventory (VHR2000/HI H8125-0015)
- Rural City of Wangaratta, Heritage Overlay (HO170)



Figure 20 Glenrowan Heritage Precinct — the area covered by heritage controls
Source: based on a Nearmap image of 18 December 2016

National Heritage List

The Glenrowan Heritage Precinct is included in the National Heritage List under Criterion A (events, processes), Criterion B (rarity), Criterion G (social value) and Criterion H (significant people). A summary of the significance is below:

Criterion A:

- The Glenrowan siege established Ned Kelly and the Kelly Gang as cultural symbols, fostered the notion of bushranging as an attempt to come to terms with established authority and added new stories to Australian folklore.
- The association of the event with the place is well documented, as is its impact on the nation. Ned Kelly, in his armour, has become an iconic Australian image, featuring in paintings by Sidney Nolan and at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.
- The precinct's attributes include the following:

- the original railway platform and the alignment of the railway siding
- the site of Platelayer's tents
- the site of Anne Jones' Glenrowan Inn and its outbuildings
- the remnant of the creek used for shelter by the police and various police positions
- the site of Ned Kelly's fall and capture
- the site of McDonnell's Railway tavern
- as well as a suite of archaeological sites, locations and buildings, which relate to the events of 1880

Criterion B:

- The legend of Ned Kelly and the Kelly Gang is an important part of Australia's national consciousness. The Glenrowan Heritage Precinct has been graphically and historically celebrated as the site of the Glenrowan Siege since 1880, and is uncommon as a site associated with a nationally important story.

Criterion G:

- The Glenrowan Heritage Precinct has social and cultural significance to members of the wider Australian community for its defining role in the creation of the Ned Kelly 'myth' or 'legend'. The place is directly associated with a nationally important story, which has become part of Australia's cultural traditions

Criterion H

- The Glenrowan Heritage Precinct has heritage value to the nation for its special association with the final days of Ned Kelly and the Kelly Gang, during the Glenrowan siege in 1880.

Victorian Heritage Register

The Glenrowan Heritage Precinct is included in the Victorian Heritage Register for its historical and archaeological significance to Victoria. A summary of its significance is below:

Historical significance:

- As the place most intimately connected with the legend that surrounds Ned Kelly, among the most well known of Australian historical figures
- Glenrowan was central to the history of the Kelly gang. The members lived in the district and spent much time there among a population generally sympathetic to the outlaws. The plan for a final showdown with police by derailing a train was a feasible if reckless plan that suited itself to the topography of the town where the railway line between Benalla and Wangaratta makes a sweeping curve on a steep embankment.
- Many of the mature trees existed at the time of the siege and one group, the 'Kelly copse' where Ned tethered his horse, is of particular note. The stump and log where he was captured are no longer visible but remnants of the stump may exist below ground

Archaeological significance:

- The Glenrowan Heritage Precinct is archaeologically significant for its potential to reveal artefacts from the siege event, including ammunition, and the potential of the sites of demolished early buildings associated with the siege, such as McDonnell's Hotel and the Glenrowan Inn.

Conservation Management Plan

The conservation management plan (CMP) for Glenrowan included history; physical description and analysis; an exploration of heritage significance; overview of the statutory framework which applies to the precinct; and includes management and conservation policies in relation to the landscape and built form of the precinct. The report also addressed historical archaeology, as this is a significant component of the study area; the landscape and vegetation; and includes plans and graphics.

The siege site is characterised by its open landscape and a range of interpretation. The Ann Jones' Inn site remains vacant, and the railway station building was reconstructed to broadly its nineteenth century form. This is a site where limited physical evidence, especially buildings, of the 1880 siege remains. However, the sites of hiding and refuge and shooting during the siege are scattered throughout the landscape of the precinct. Later landscaping treatments have also generally been introduced to these sites and their contexts, which have not necessarily reflected the landscape character at the time of the siege.

The existing interpretation has a 'boys' own adventure' feel, with a strong focus on Ned himself, with little which addresses the experiences and involvement of victims and the police. As such, the complexity and violence of the event is not conveyed. Furthermore, there is no memorial to the victims of the Kelly Gang.

Notwithstanding, the siege site still retains some of its original topography and has not been rendered entirely unrecognizable by subsequent works. Moreover, the locations of specific events associated with the siege can be, and have been, identified with some confidence. The approach to policy was to encourage the building upon existing authenticity and to seek to reinstate or reintroduce generally minor elements – such as plantings and fence lines – which would help re-establish the informal character of the precinct. This, along with the highest quality interpretation would reinforce the tangible link with the past which is such a strength of the precinct and which should not be trivialised.

Glenrowan is a live town – it is not a museum – and it can continue to nurture and protect the siege sites, with some enhancement as outlined here. Reconstruction of buildings associated with the siege is not encouraged in this precinct; instead the focus of policy was to come up with practical, inexpensive ideas to improve visitor experience. Well-planned, thoroughly researched and considered, and comprehensive interpretation is preferred for sites such as this. There is no hint of fakery or faux 'heritage'; rather a helpful and analytical guide to the site, via appropriate interpretation mediums. Likewise, the approach to landscaping was to balance the conservation and restoration of period landscape conditions (and landscape informality) with contemporary expectations around accessibility and aesthetics, and environmental conditions.

The story of Ned Kelly and Glenrowan is one of fame, or more correctly infamy, capturing the popular imagination from the time of his outlawry through to the present day. It is characterised by violence, or the threat thereof, and the town has long drawn visitors fascinated with the Kelly Gang. With some practical interventions, as guided by the CMP, the presentation of the precinct and the twenty-first century visitor experience can be enhanced.



Figure 21 View of Glenrowan Heritage Precinct, 2018. View is looking from railway reserve towards Ann Jones' Inn site.
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 22 The site of Ann Jones' Inn, Glenrowan, 2018 (Mt Glenrowan in the background)
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 23 Archaeological excavation undertaken at Ann Jones' Inn by archaeologists DIG International, 2008
Source: Border Mail



Figure 24 Reconstruction Glenrowan Railway Station building
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 25 Railway line, looking east
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 26 Signposted Kelly Copse site
Source: Lovell Chen



Figure 27 Ned Kelly statue
Source: Lovell Chen

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- 1 Jacqueline Zara Wilson, 'Kelly, Ellen (1832–1923)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kelly-ellen-13021/text23543>, published first in hardcopy 2005, accessed online 21 September 2017; 'Ned Kelly', Australian Story, <http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/ned-kelly>, accessed 21 September 2017.
 - 2 John V. Barry, 'Kelly, Edward (Ned) (1855–1880)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kelly-edward-ned-3933/text6187>, published first in hardcopy 1974, accessed online 21 September 2017.
 - 3 *Age*, 18 February 1879, p. 3.
 - 4 'Jerilderie Letter', National Museum of Australia, <http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/highlights/jerilderie-letter>, 21 September 2017.
 - 5 *Border Mail*, 19 February 1879, p. 3.
 - 6 *Tasmanian*, 4 January 1879, p. 6.
 - 7 John V. Barry, 'Kelly, Edward (Ned) (1855–1880)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kelly-edward-ned-3933/text6187>, published first in hardcopy 1974, accessed online 21 September 2017.
 - 8 'The siege at Glenrowan', Culture Victoria, <https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/the-last-stand-of-the-kelly-gang-sites-in-glenrowan/the-siege-at-glenrowan/the-seige-at-glenrowan-1/>, 22 September 2017.
 - 9 Based on a search of the National Library of Australia's Trove digitised newspapers for the keywords 'Kelly' and 'Glenrowan', between 29 June 1880 and 7 July 1880, which brought up 723 results. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>, 22 September 2017.
 - 10 'School Picnic on the Glenrowan Battle field', *Australasian Sketcher*, 24 September 1881, p. 310.